

Beyond Imperial Aesthetics

Theories of Art and Politics in East Asia

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Introduction

Theorizing beyond Imperial Aesthetics in East Asia

Mayumo Inoue and Steve Choe

Imperial Aesthetics and “East Asia”

This book begins with the premise that politics materializes as aesthetic process and that its categories are intimately linked to a collective sensorium that subtends or critiques it. To think about politics as an inherently aesthetic process, whereby fundamentally heterogeneous people are organized into a hierarchical grid of nations, races, and populations, requires critical theories of sense. More specifically in the context of East Asia, the politics of sense has provided a perceptual basis for multiply competing imperialisms, including the Japanese imperial formation prior to 1945 and its American counterpart after 1945 whose increasingly *biopolitical* modality of dominance requires the production of allegedly unique cultures and peoples as their condition of possibility. As we shall see throughout the volume, imperialism’s gradual shift from its previous emphasis on repressive power to a new emphasis on the productive regime of policing proceeds through an aesthetic regime whereby bodies, cultures, and localities are particularized and codified.

Historically overdetermined by the dissolution of the British Empire, Wilson and Lenin’s strategic adoptions of the logic of national “self-determination,” as well as Imperial Japan’s similar attempt to promulgate the Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere with its constituent ethnic nations, imperialism has gradually transmogrified into a larval network of nation-states that enforce the modalities of life and death of their citizens. These local nation-states’ will to “self-determine” the fate of their populations replicates ways of governing according to protocols of productivity permitted within a global network of power. Departing from the traditional notion of imperialism that emanates from the metropole and conquers its peripheries, such an imperial formation of nation-states in East Asia occurs through and as a production of categories that are the naturalized grounds of operation for the workings of power. One well-known example of such an imperial

formation is Imperial Japan's formulation of spatial orders such as the "East Asian alliance" (*Tōa Renmei*, 「東亜連盟」) and "East Asian community" (*Tōa Kyōdōtai*, 「東亜共同体」) in the 1930s. These spatial imaginaries were characterized by their desire to epistemologically fix the notion of productive native populations in the colonies and to institute a network of populations that would, as some Japanese intellectuals hoped, be coordinated as sovereign nation-states someday.¹

We call imperial aesthetics a dominant mode of perception in the formation of nation-states that simultaneously causes and is an effect of global-scale biopolitics of capital in East Asia. The chapters in the volume critically foreground the notion that such a sensorium is not the secondary layer of ideology that adds up to the already existing material structure of politics. It is the very cause and effect of imperial formation whereby an assemblage of capitalist and military powers is enabled through and as the figurations of nation, culture, and population as their local points of legitimation and effectuation.

Fast-forward fifty years, and we have the US Defense Department's so-called Nye Report—officially titled *The United States Security Strategy for the East-Asia Pacific Region* (February 1995)—that affirms a multistate security regime as if it were the air one breathes in East Asia. As Nye writes, "security is like oxygen," and "the American security presence has helped provide this 'oxygen' for East Asian development."² This "oxygen" of multinational militarism provides the invisible and indispensable condition of possibility for policing local populations militarily and economically.³ While Imperial Japan ultimately failed to stabilize its larval network of nation-forms in East Asia, the US post-World War II production and arrangement of local nation-states in the region enabled the global proliferation of power to make live and die through legal and cultural apparatuses provided by these local nation-states.⁴

The US production and placement of nation-forms in East Asia has provided the institutional and ideological backbone to this multinational security arrangement whereby the logic of policing effectively blurs the distinction between the suppression of democratic politics within a so-called

1. On the pre-1945 Japanese leftist intellectuals' active engagement in the formulation of these imperial spatial notions, see Yonetani Masafumi, Kobayashi Hideo, and Ishii Tomohisa, eds., *Senkyū hyaku-sanjū nendai no ajia shakairon: "Tōa kyōdōtairon" o chūshin to suru gensetsukikan no shosō* (Tokyo: Shakai Hyōronsha, 2010).
2. Department of Defense, *The United States Security Strategy Report for the East Asia-Pacific Region* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 1998), 1.
3. Department of Defense, *The United States Security Strategy Report for the East Asia-Pacific Region*, 6, unnumbered page in preface.
4. Naoki Sakai and Hyon Joo Yoo, "Introduction: The Trans-Pacific Imagination; Rethinking Boundary, Culture and Society," in *The Trans-Pacific Imaginations: Rethinking Boundary, Culture and Society*, ed. Naoki Sakai and Hyon Joo Yoo (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing, 2012), 12.

national border and eradication of increasingly nonstate combatants across such borders. At the same time, these very nation-forms have also served to incorporate the aspirations of people for better lives into their own project of development and capital's demand for abstract labor. Policing thus gives us a heavily narrowed parameter of life where, as Foucault has argued, our productive capacity as abstract labor is maximized and our desire and agency as political subject is minimized.⁵ This poses two types of intellectual challenges. On one hand, intellectuals today face the task of confronting East Asia as an ultimately imperial concept that provides a spatial and cultural legitimation for the historical encounters between capital and the nation-state. At the same time, such a critical awareness should lead us to seek out new routes of solidarity, sympathy, and mutually transformative encounters within, across, and beyond the space currently codified as "East Asia."

Radically egalitarian art and politics in East Asia must therefore resist and overcome the culturalist logic of governmentality that has been practiced by Imperial Japan's biopolitical spatial order and US-led imperial formations. Especially in the case of the latter, local nation-states provide the institutional hinge between two forms of global politics as a mode of policing: multinational militarism and national developmentalism. While mainland China's (PRC) oceanic and continental hegemony today seems to repeat the model of preceding imperial orderings of land and sea by Japan and the US, the critique of PRC's potentially imperial formation also needs to be articulated in vigilantly nonnational and nonnativist manners to avoid the same pitfalls that we have articulated as the global logic of politics as policing.

Aesthetic Critique of Asian Studies under Globalization

We treat aesthetics as a crucial site of inquiry where globally immanent—and hence *imperial*—coordination of biopolitical borders by way of the local nation-states in East Asia can be contested and potentially undone.⁶ The essays in this volume foreground the ways in which aesthetic sense making, in its critical moment, can produce a sense of enigma, excess, and problematization, which then critically intervenes in the often complacent ways in which two related acts are practiced today to stabilize imperial categories:

5. Michel Foucault's famous formulation in the English translation is as follows: "Let us say that discipline is the unitary technique by which the body is reduced as a 'political' force at the least cost and maximized as a useful force" (*Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan [New York: Vintage, 1977], 221).
6. On the constitutive link between culturalist supposition of identities and capitalist hypostatization of identitarian *socius*, see, for example, Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson, *Border as Method, or, The Multiplication of Labor* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013); Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 166.

theory and politics. Aesthetic inquiry performs an act of sense making whose transformative power may be differently registered as material traces in these two sites of practice that are mutually yet disjunctively linked. At the same time, sensation—or *aisthesis* in Greek—does not present itself as a pre-discursive hypostasis of experience that is later distorted by discourse. Rather, the very materiality of the aesthetic event can only be registered as a temporal disruption of the nexus of discourse and power. The term “aesthetics” in this volume serves as a conjunction or disjunction between sensation and signification, the sensuous and the discursive, and poetics and politics. If aesthetics can function in this twofold manner, how can this disruptive force of sense—at once sensual and cognitive—be differently taken up by artistic practice, theoretical production, and political activism? How do these three areas of making relate to one another? How are they differently yet resonantly engaged in interrogating and potentially going beyond imperially imagined categories that produce and police lives in East Asia?

Beyond Imperial Aesthetics aims to highlight its own aesthetic intervention into the ongoing critique of the area studies paradigm in Asian studies whose residual essentialist notion of nation, culture, and population has variously upheld what Deleuze and Guattari might call a “socius” or a social arrangement of identities that is organized by capital as the “natural or divine presupposition” of abstract labor.⁷ In fact, Deleuze and Guattari’s critique of capitalist socius as naturalized “presupposition” solicits us to revisit some of the well-known disciplinary critiques in East Asian studies in the 1990s, which have already offered their implicitly *aesthetic* interrogations of the culturalist presupposition as implicit critiques of the capitalist socius. Here, we cite two such examples: Rey Chow’s *Writing Diaspora: Tactic of Intervention in Contemporary Cultural Studies* (1993) and Naoki Sakai’s *Translation and Subjectivity: On “Japan” and Cultural Nationalism* (1997). In the former, Chow’s effort to free up both the colonial and colonized bodies from the interlocking grip of guilt-laden orientalism and grief-struck self-mimeticism usefully draws inspiration from Michel de Certeau’s notion of the “tactic” as “a calculated action determined by the absence of a proper locus.”⁸ In the latter, Sakai’s critique of the “schema” that “cofigures” the imagined nation-states in their mutually complicitous referentiality critically traces the Kantian notion of schema as a grid of images that enables rational organization of the world into coded categories.⁹ Chow’s opening up of

7. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 10.

8. Rey Chow, *Writing Diaspora: Tactics of Intervention in Contemporary Cultural Studies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 16.

9. Naoki Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity: On “Japan” and Cultural Nationalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), see especially Chapter 2, “The Problem of ‘Japanese Thought’: The Formation of ‘Japan’ and the Schema of Configuration.”

"para-sites" where we might resist "the turning-into-property of oppositional discourses" and Sakai's theorization of translation as "difference in repetition" that fractures the identity of the speaking "I" and immediately disperses such nonrepresentational difference to an emergent "we" involve types of sense that are recalcitrant to the heretofore commonsensical ways of perceiving the codified figures of nation and nation-based disciplines.

Our volume thus seeks to resituate Chow's and Sakai's earlier works as an implicit critique of the complicitous link between local nation-states and global capital. Such a positive reevaluation of the earlier deconstructive and genealogical critiques is necessary precisely because the complicity between the capitalist mode of production and its production of cultural(ist) identities in East Asia since the late 1990s seems to have been further entrenched. This has been ongoing as the area studies paradigm has been made increasingly commodifiable and consumable in institutions of higher education not only in the US but also in East Asia.

Beyond Imperial Aesthetics therefore seeks to extend yet another critique of US-based Asian studies that casts its critical gaze upon this discipline and its relation to the states and capital: *Learning Places: The Afterlives of Area Studies* (2002), coedited by Masao Miyoshi and Harry Harootunian. Their collection critically charts the shift from the historical collusion of Asian studies with Cold War apparatuses in the US, such as the CIA and various foundations, to its more recent financially motivated subservience to the increasingly economically powerful donor countries in Asia such as Japan, Taiwan, China, and South Korea. Writing at the beginning of the twenty-first century, Miyoshi and Harootunian argue that the field's previously held Cold War imaginary has largely shifted to a new one that provides "highly visible public relations services devoted to providing 'balanced' (read as uncritical) images of donor societies to the American public."¹⁰ In an age when America has begun to decline economically, Miyoshi and Harootunian argue that the field's collusion with increasingly neoliberal Asian nation-states has compromised efforts to fully interrogate the triangulation of knowledge, power, and capital within East Asia and between East Asia and the United States. Crucial to this compromise, they argue, are the ways in which a type of cultural studies has been used to buttress colonial difference, which then upholds the identitarian assumptions that are politically manageable by nation-states and economically valorizable by capital.¹¹

Fifteen years after the publication of *Learning Places*, we recognize the continuing need to problematize Asian studies in both the United States and Asia. There is an alarming tendency whereby cultural studies research on

10. Masao Miyoshi and Harry Harootunian, *Learning Places: The Afterlives of Area Studies* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 2, 5.

11. Miyoshi and Harootunian, *Learning Places*, 13.

Asia oftentimes refuses or fails to offer thoroughly genealogical or deconstructivist accounts that implicate the very constitution of “Asia” itself in imperial history. These studies tend to reproduce the figure of Asia and its cultures as the pre-imperial substrates that are only thereafter modified. Such an unfortunate grafting of cultural studies and culturalism often leads its practitioners to merely pluralize Asian objects of analysis and then put them into mutual dialogue—for example, “Asias” or “inter-Asia.” The cultural effects of imperial processes thus often tend to be misconstrued as cultural essences predating the very processes they invoke. Insofar as such knowledge production assumes rather than historicizes the category of Asia, it easily facilitates rather than contests the structures of power and knowledge that constitute the imagined figures of the exemplary local subject, the culturally unique population, and the local nation. To cite Deleuze and Guattari’s notion of capitalist socius again, such knowledge production fails to critique the “natural and divine presuppositions” that further studies of social processes in Asian locations must interrogate.

If the critiques of cultural studies’ slippage into culturalism in East Asian studies offered by Chow, Sakai, Harootunian, and Miyoshi have warned us about a proprietary understanding of an allegedly proper Asian nation or culture within the larger *imperial* assemblage of global capitalist and military powers that require these local apparatuses for its effectuation, an attempt to merely compare or put into dialogue such pluralized Asian particularities that are, in fact, effects of imperial processes aggravates the reproduction of the capitalist socius and its essentialist presumptions. This is why various strains of intellectual populism that are presented as “Asianism-from-below” are easily susceptible to the state logic that uses the same figurations of nation, culture, and population to discipline, control, and police people on behalf of capital. The categories that are held onto in resistant nativism or Asianism “from below” ineluctably overlap with the categories prescribed by state-led “nativism-from-above,” and the two strands of nativism operate commensurately in managing people’s lives according to these received categories of culture or locality.¹²

Therefore, before we begin to specify the terms through which artistic, theoretical, and political contestations of imperial aesthetics in East Asia are possible, we would like to critically address two relatively well-known formulations of Asia that preclude the possibility of contesting East Asia as it is imagined by imperial politics: “Asia as method” and “other Asias.” Kuan-Hsin Chen’s *Asia as Method: Toward Deimperialization*—despite its unquestionably laudable political goals concerning “deimperialization,” “decolonization,” and “de-cold war”—ultimately espouses what its author,

12. Achille Mbembe, “Necropolitics,” *Public Culture* 15, no. 1 (2003): 11.

following Neil Garcia, calls “revisionist nativism” as the prime methodology against the material and epistemic dominance of “the West.” This form of nativism risks replicating a type of naïve metaphysics that ideologically naturalizes the capillary points at which global politico-economic powers are effectuated.¹³ Many local elite intellectuals who are subjectivated within such a schema of cultures are then often only able to figure themselves as representatives of the local cultural forms within a larger imperial formation and cannot mount any viable critique of this very formation itself. Moreover, their seemingly defiant figuration of their own allegedly unique culture or locality further codifies their dissent within a colonial grid of difference and risks reducing a task of political transformation into a more or less conservative desire to receive recognition and redistribution from the very center they seek to contest. This only allows “local” intellectuals to further redistribute their gain to less powerful subjects in their locales.¹⁴ Chen’s static figuration of the West as a *pre-imperialist* category that only thereafter intrudes into the rest of the world does not explain the tenuous formation of these categories in history: “The West is able to enter and generate real impacts in other geographical spaces without experiencing the same type or intensity of impacts from the outside.”¹⁵ Coupled with his attempted hypostatization of Asia as an equally *pre-imperialist* cultural substrate, Chen’s static postulation of the West and Asia risks overlooking what Ann Laura Stoler calls a “*circuitous imperial route*” in which imperial discourses are not repressive but “productive of racial distinctions” in and across the colonial spaces and metropolises.¹⁶

Indeed, Stoler’s astute relocation of the crucial import of Foucault’s theorization of nexus between sexuality and race into the colonial space of the Dutch East Indies illuminates the “force fields in which imperial knowledge was promoted and desiring subjects were made.”¹⁷ If Chen’s attempt to rescue “the analytical value of concepts that existed prior to Western influence” repeats the very *effect* of imperial encounters through which cultural practices and figurations are *discursively* coded as somehow prior to discourse, Stoler’s genealogical inquiry reveals how imperial rule is tenuously

13. Kuan-Hsing Chen, *Asia as Method: Toward Deimperialization* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 221. On the inseparable nexus of the production of subjectivities and the emergence of the mode of production as the two constitutive elements of capitalist socius within East Asia, see, for example, Gavin Walker, “The World of Principle, or Pure Capitalism: Exteriority and Suspension in Uno Kōzō,” *Journal of International Economic Studies* 26 (2012): 15–37, esp. 18; and Wendy Matsumura, *Limits of Okinawa: Japanese Capitalism, Living Labor, and Theorizations of Community* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015).

14. For a critique of the liberal capitalist state’s use of right-based identity politics, see Wendy Brown, *States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), especially Chapter 3, “Wounded Attachments.”

15. Chen, *Asia as Method*, 222.

16. Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault’s History and Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), 7, 8. Italics in the original.

17. Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire*, 15.

enabled by the production of the very codifications such as “the Western” and “the native” so as to stabilize the flow of power and privilege across the colony and the metropole.¹⁸ Here, it is worthwhile to recall that Takeuchi Yoshimi, a Japanese scholar of Chinese literature and the original promulgator of the notion of “Asia as method” (*Hoho toshite no Ajia*), remained fundamentally skeptical about the transhistorical presence of the cultural substrate that is somehow uniquely Asian or “Eastern.” Takeuchi’s thesis is self-consciously torn between his deep awareness of humanity’s universally applicable species-wide commonality and his strategic embrace of Asia as the paradoxical point from which “superior Western cultural values” such as “freedom” and “equality” could be practiced even better than in the West.¹⁹ In short, Takeuchi’s use of particularism for the sake of universally human values is more nuanced and hesitant than that of today’s Asianists, who are mostly interested in his particularism for its own sake. At the same time, Takeuchi’s logic is self-defeating insofar as it confounds the effect of imperial process (“Asia”) with the privileged subject of the latter’s undoing. As a critique of Takeuchi’s culturalist logic, Richard Calichman’s study of Takeuchi’s “Asia as method” argues, “Whatever the political or strategic import of this gesture by which resistance is identified with Asia, it must nonetheless be recognized that resistance finally resists Asia just as surely it resists the West.”²⁰ What then needs to be thought about fully is the non-essentialist tactics—as opposed to the strategic essentialism—that allows us to *undo* the very structure of differentially hierarchical domination that proceeds through the schematization of nations and cultures and, in doing so, subtends the abstraction of labor and its modes of discipline.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s insistence upon what she loosely calls “critical regionalism” in *Other Asias* seems to replicate the same problem of region-based identity politics, albeit at a more sophisticated level. In the essay titled “Our Asias—2001: How to Be a Continentalist,” Spivak begins by effectively bracketing the essentialist hypostatization of Asia. She does so by pointing to the term’s own European origin and its historically adjectival—and not therefore substantial—use for indexing “Anatolia.”²¹ As Spivak aptly muses upon the term’s elusive origin: “my ‘Asia,’ a place I have never

18. Chen, *Asia as Method*, 222.

19. Takeuchi Yoshimi, “Hōhō toshitenō ajia,” in *Nihon to ajia* (1966; Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 468–69. [English translation, “Asia as Method” In *What Is Modernity? Writings of Takeuchi Yoshimi*, trans. Richard F. Calichman, 149–65. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.]

20. Richard Calichman, *Takeuchi Yoshimi: Displacing the West* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University East Asia Program, 2004), 65.

21. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Our Asias—2001: How to Be a Continentalist,” in *Other Asias* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007), 209–10.

been.”²² Thus, on one hand, Spivak’s genealogical attention protects her from a kind of naïve essentialism:

We are not looking for an Asia before Europe. We are looking at the claim to the word “Asia,” however historically unjustified. To search thus for an originary name is not a pathology. Yet it must at the same time be resisted. The desire is its own resistance. Today more than ever, “Asia” is uncritically regionalist, thinks “Asia” metonymically in terms of its own region, and sees as its other the “West,” meaning, increasingly, the United States.²³

On the other hand, if such a statement wards off the temptation of a pre-critical empiricism that reproduces received spatial or cultural designators, it remains worrisome that Spivak’s argument about desire remains resistive and not transformative. While Spivak’s Derridean rhetoric seeks to engage in transforming the imperial category Asia into different “Asias,” each of which is supposed to operate as “a place-holder in the iteration of a citation” or “the instrument of an altered citation,” the resulting formulation that seeks to postulate her Asias as an articulation of singularities constantly slips into an aggregation of preconstituted particularities: “The singular is singular by virtue of its plurality—each named region is its own different and singular Asia.”²⁴

As our volume seeks to foreground, the logic of singularity is that which precisely questions the structure that sustains itself by reproducing the figures of the particular as the necessary nodal points of global power. While her invocation of Asia without origin is strategic or, as Spivak herself puts it, “historically unjustified,” this justification of the strategic logic by way of Freud’s notion of “the uncanny” or the homely that is haunted by its *unheimlich* (un-homely) others remains a conservative use of deconstructivist logic whereby the term’s internally ruptured status becomes an alibi for its continued institutionalization and canonization.²⁵ When we get to the actual contour of Spivak’s pluralized Asias, it seems to merely aggregate the names of the states east of Turkey and west of the Pacific Islands: “Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, . . . Uzbekistan, Vietnam. Asia.”²⁶ As she is politely put to task by Judith Butler in the published dialogue between the two (“I guess I want to know a little more about critical regionalism”), Spivak’s understanding of these plural state-forms as Asias becomes clear: “that structure of redistribution, welfare, and constitutionality from within the state that’s

22. Spivak, “Our Asias—2001,” 210.

23. Spivak, “Our Asias—2001,” 213.

24. Spivak, “Our Asias—2001,” 220, 217, 221.

25. Spivak, “Our Asias—2001,” 220.

26. Spivak, “Our Asias—2001,” 236. For a resonant critique of Spivak’s analysis of imperial process that does not adequately examine the production of “the racial” itself, see Denise Ferreira da Silva, *Toward a Global Idea of Race* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 11–13.

being eroded.”²⁷ As Kojin Karatani argues in his *Transcritique: Kant and Marx*, state-led redistributive justice at once relies upon and is a means to merely ameliorate capitalist forms of subsumption and expropriation through which resources and wealth to be “redistributed” are violently extracted in the first place. “Redistribution,” as Karatani argues in his critique of Karl Polanyi, is “essentially a form of usurpation and has been practiced so as to continue to engage in this usurpation in the long run.”²⁸ We might add that the notion of the redistributive state, even in its most democratic variant without nationalism that Spivak espouses, risks putting into motion a biopolitical process that seeks to police the lives of those who are deemed “productive” and differentially distinguishes these lives from those of others that can be “let die.”²⁹

Sense Making in Art, Theory, and Politics in East Asia

Efforts to critique the linkage between the proprietary notion of culture and biopolitics of capital among a diverse array of scholars such as Chow (“parasitic tactic”), Stoler (“critical intimacy”), Calichman (“singularity”), and Sakai (“non-aggregate community of foreigners”) indicate how critically theoretical inquiries into the schema of cultures illuminate that which escapes this imperial divide of dominant and subordinate identities. Moreover, the terms they invoke to critique and transform the schema of cultures indicate critical theory’s necessarily aesthetic dimension whereby *metaphors* index alternative methods of synthesizing sensibility and understanding outside the grid postulated by imperial aesthetics. Somewhat paradoxically, theoretical critique’s avowedly universal aspiration draws inspiration from its necessarily metaphorical indexing of singularity that is irreducible to its representation as particularity.

In this regard, it is worth revisiting Immanuel Kant’s hesitation to postulate the “schema” as the cognitive grid of images and exploring in the very hesitation a certain origin of critical aesthetics that sheds light upon an alternative sensorium that is critical of our hegemonic cognitions of space and people. Here, we can discern a secretive “underside” of Kantian schematism whereby a notion of demarcated space and its image (e.g., “imagined nation”) is constantly eroded and transformed by the embodied imagination that is conducive to an alternative synthesis of sensibility and

27. Judith Butler and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Who Sings the Nation-State? Language, Politics, Belonging* (Oxford: Seagull Books, 2007), 84, 90.

28. Karatani Kojin, *Torausu kuritiku: Kanto to marukusu* (Tokyo: Hihyō Kūkan, 2001), 302.

29. On the intimate linkage between the socialist state and its implicitly biopolitical aspiration, see the concluding lecture (on March 17, 1976) from Michel Foucault’s *Society Must Be Defended*, ed. Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fontana, trans. David Macey (New York: Picador, 2003), 260–61.

understanding. As Kant famously implies but then perhaps refuses to specify in both the first and second editions of *Critique of Pure Reason*, imagination is the “common but . . . unknown root” from which sensibility and understanding develop and across which they are put into communication: “There are two stems of human cognition, which may perhaps arise from a common but to us unknown root, namely sensibility and understanding.”³⁰ Famously, Kant later retracts his notion of “productive imagination” as a faculty of synthesis between sensibility and understanding that is developed in the first edition³¹ and ends up arguing for “synthetic unity” that is “the combination of the manifold of a given intuition in general . . . in agreement with the categories.”³²

Kant’s initial lodging of the “common but . . . unknown root” between sensing and knowing allows us to rethink the constitutive mobility of *theoretical imagination* in its necessarily double movement: movement of theory from place to place as it mounts its attempt to undo dominant categories of thinking and movement in theory of “metaphor” that provides a singular instance of aesthetic synthesis between sensibility and understanding that critically departs from the currently dominant accord between sense and knowledge. Kant’s initially hesitant and ultimately effaced notion of “productive imagination” as “the common root” for both sensibility and understanding is taken up and made radical by Heidegger’s rereading of the *First Critique* in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*:

This original, essential constitution of humankind, “rooted” in the transcendental power of imagination, is the “unknown” into which Kant must have looked [in the first edition of *Critique of Pure Reason*] if he spoke of the “root unknown to us,” for the unknown is not that of which we simply know nothing. Rather, it is what pushes us as something disquieting in what is known. . . . In the radicalism of his questions, Kant brought the “possibility” of metaphysics to this abyss. He saw the unknown. He had to shrink back.³³

In this passage, Heidegger gives further traction to Kant’s already *metaphorical* illustration of imagination’s productive synthesis of sensibility and understanding by redescribing it even more metaphorically: “something disquieting” and “this abyss.” Here, Kant’s hesitation in his attempt to subordinate sensibility and imagination to understanding is retraced more positively in Heidegger’s reillumination of the Kantian schematism’s “underside”: imagination that is “productive” of the “unknown root” of

30. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. and trans. Paul Guyer and Allen Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 135 (A16/ B30).

31. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 240 (A 123).

32. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 262 (B 161).

33. Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, trans. Richard Taft (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 112, 118.

sensibility and understanding is also an “abyss” across which different faculties must be disjunctively or dissonantly synthesized.

Crucially, Naoki Sakai’s critique of the colonial categories of understanding such as the West and Asia that has informed many critiques of Asian studies as a discipline extends Heidegger’s reading of Kantian schematism. Sakai comments on Heidegger’s reading of Kant’s *First Critique* in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* and argues, “As Heidegger clearly understood with regard to Kantian schematism, the representing of the rule is the schema. And, as far as the regime of translation is concerned, the rule thus represented is an inversion in retrospection.”³⁴ At this point, it becomes clear that Sakai’s critical effort to undo colonial categories is an attempt to similarly illustrate the secretive underside of “the schema of co-figuration” through various metaphors that seek to bridge sensibility and understanding differently, for example, a “nonaggregate community of foreigners” and the mimetic disruption of schematism in translation as “a paean to the social.”³⁵ In this movement and morphing of metaphors from Kant to Heidegger to Sakai, we are made aware of the necessarily aesthetic “underside” of schematic thinking, a necessarily metaphorical or imagist underside in any act of thinking and theorizing.

An act of theorizing that seeks to undo colonial categories such as the West and Asia must necessarily exemplify its own uniquely and irreducibly aesthetic method of inquiry. Moreover, schematic thought’s secret “root” in imagination also *secretes* a “route” of disquiet soundings, a traversal of intersecting paths along which different thinkers try to bridge, in each of their own ways, the abyssal gap between sensibility and cognition by way of new metaphors that constitute new ways of thinking. It is this “route” that constitutes an emergent intellectual space, an aleatory conversation among thinkers and their texts whose critiques of imperial schematism span and interrogate geographical designators that include Europe, Asia, and East Asia.³⁶ Despite his alleged status as a Western thinker within the canon of institutionalized philosophy, Kant is then one *origin* (*Ursprung*) among many radical aesthetic theories that move beyond imperial aesthetics. His work on imagination traces the earlier sources of its theoretical current and flows into

34. Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity*, 54.

35. Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity*, 9, 36. Also, in an important footnote, Sakai summarizes his critical assessment of Tanabe Hajime’s critique of Heidegger’s reading of the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Tanabe’s departure from Heidegger led to the former’s spatialization of world historical time and resulted in his infamous “logic of species” that helped to legitimate Japanese national subjects’ alleged superiority to other human “species” in Asia. See Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity*, 202–3n11.

36. Our reading of Heidegger’s notion of “root” of transcendental imagination as always already “routed” is indebted to Masato Goda’s reading of Heidegger and Tanabe in his *Tanabe Hajime to Heidegger: Fūin sareta tetsugaku* [*Tanabe Hajime and Heidegger: Philosophies that were sealed off*] (Tokyo: PHP Kenkyūjo, 2013).

other springs of thought such as Heidegger's and Sakai's. Our exploration of the productivity of imagination in the volume thus pays attention to theory's constitutively *aesthetic* synthesis of sensibility and understanding, or experience and cognition. Such a theory does not see (and hear) this synthesis as rooted in any particular sense, faculty, or place, but rather perceives it as routed disjunctively across senses, faculties, and places.

Artworks take up critical theory's necessarily aesthetic effort to think beyond categories by agitating us to feel and think about the problematic. As Deleuze tells us, "the problematic" names a certain sensuous enigma, which forces us to break free of the currently collusive alignment of human faculties—for example, intuition, imagination, cognition, and reason—whereby we can only recognize the objects as part of the dominant common sense. Instead, artistic sense making brings us an event wherein faculties are passively and passionately related to one another through an "exercise" of their powers to act at their heretofore unknown limits.³⁷ This can be differentiated from Jacques Rancière's notion of "distribution of the sensible."³⁸ That is, Rancière's aesthetics of "egalitarian distribution" only labors to let "various individuals have a part in this distribution" from which they have been previously excluded and thus risks hypostatizing the very notions of the "common"—"humanity" or "the worker," for example—as the basis for more inclusion and visibility. In contrast, our focus upon art's proliferation of aesthetic *problematics* points to the ways in which collective politics emerges through the very rupture of distributive commonality, whereby notions of equal agency, intelligence, and visibility are still merely distributive and thus require a dominant apparatus that is capable of such a distribution.³⁹ In our view, artistic sense making not only distributes the sensible but introduces the problematic, challenging us to sense what has been thought of up until now as the insensible.

Finally, artistic sense making as a mode of sensuous problematization brings a certain productive tension vis-à-vis the pragmatic conception of politics espoused not only by dominant political formations but also by oppositional political movements. While individual artists often come

37. See, for instance, Deleuze's notion of "parasense," whose disruption of received common sense is *communicated* across multiple faculties. "The elements of this para-sense are Ideas, precisely because Ideas are pure multiplicities which do not presuppose any form of identity in a common sense but, on the contrary, animate and describe the disjoint exercise of the faculties from a transcendental point of view. Ideas are thus multiplicities with differential glimmers, like will-o'-the-wisps, 'virtual trails of fire,' from one faculty to another, without ever having the homogeneity of that natural light which characterizes common sense. That is why learning may be defined in two complementary ways . . . a matter of raising a faculty to its disjoint transcendental exercise, raising it to that encounter and that violence which are communicated to the others" (Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton [New York: Columbia University Press, 1994], 194).

38. Jacques Rancière, "The Distribution of the Sensible: Politics and Aesthetics," in *The Politics of Aesthetics*, trans. and introduced by Gabriel Rockhill (London: Continuum, 2004), 13.

39. Rancière, "Distribution of the Sensible," 17, 13.

from the progressive sectors of society and align themselves with the goals held within oppositional political movements, their acts of sense making provide sensitive critiques of the schema of knowable identities that activist communities may assume or adopt for their practical struggles on site.⁴⁰ At numerous sites of political struggles in East Asia, artistic sense making problematizes the commonsense understanding of politics as a teleological project. By doing so, it enriches the very notions of political imagination and practice.

Summary of the Sections and the Chapters

Beyond Imperial Aesthetics begins with three essays that problematize aesthetic delineations of region and nation in East Asia, while opening up the possibility of going beyond these delimitations. The opening piece by Naoki Sakai examines how Edmund Husserl and Paul Valéry's attempts to consolidate "Europe" as a privileged space of transcendental inquiry, over-against "the Rest" (or "Asia") as a realm of merely empirical observation, is dialectically reiterated by "Asianist" counterdiscourses. As Sakai explains, Takeuchi Yoshimi's attempts to substantialize Asia as a privileged space for resisting and reforming the pernicious aspects of Western modernity not only mirrors but also reinforces Husserl and Valéry's Eurocentrism. All of these thinkers fail to comprehend what Sakai calls a more fundamental "*microphysics of power relations*" that necessitates and reproduces hierarchized civilizational markers. Calling these relations "the imperial aesthetics of the modern international world," Sakai sets up the way in which the book's subsequent essays gauge how a sensuous regime reinstalls markers of civilization, region, or nation as seemingly self-evident. Moreover, if theory is to be defined by its openness to universal repetition and refutation, it must also be attuned to the potential for disrupting the spatialization of the division between theory and empiricism, an imperial formation that is echoed in the very relation between the West and Asia. All the essays in the volume seek to theorize a form of a potential collectivity that critically cuts across the imperial division between "we" (the universal Europe) and "you" (the provincial Asia) by routing their modes of theorization through aesthetic analyses of cinema, literature, painting, performance, and architecture.

40. It is, of course, interesting and important to see how the recent trend of "activist art" really fulfills its *aesthetic* potential in undoing the sensuously perceptual basis of identity politics and, by doing so, opening a different type of communal or communist articulation. For such an attempt, see *AAir II: Art-Community-Activism* (Hong Kong: Wooferten's Art/Activist in Collective, 2016), especially Lee Chun-Fung's essay "Imagine If It Weren't All for Nothing: A Few Musings on Communities, Art and Activism."

Petrus Liu's chapter exemplifies such an aesthetically attuned mode of theorizing that interrogates the division of intellectual labor within imperial modernity that continues to define the invisible structure of feeling and knowledge about East Asia. Liu reveals how the question of aesthetics has become elided by empirical and civilizational discourses within the dominant regime of knowledge production about East Asia during the Cold War. Liu's attention to "the poetics of social forms" and their "enigmatic meanings" and "emotional responses" in his readings of the film *The Martian* and Chen Yingzhen's memoir allows him to theorize about emergent types of form and affect, ones that recur in all the chapters of this book. Examining a number of key contemporary American films set in Japan and produced during the Iraq War (2003), Akira Mizuta Lippit performs an image-based deconstruction of imperial aesthetics that is latent in these films. While the Iraq War has encouraged a new mode of seamless cooperation between the American and Japanese militaries, the aesthetic regime of translation that was needed to represent the two nations as mutually commensurate unwittingly also produces an economy of transnational mimicry, whereby the question of national identity becomes invariably citational, always lost in translation, and open to becoming spectral. As spectral transference in these films critically exceeds civilizational transference between "the West" and "Asia," it allows what Lippit calls the "imperceptible" to come to the fore. Liu's materialist aesthetics and Lippit's image-based deconstruction open up the possibility of literary and cinematic ruptures of what Sakai calls "the imperial aesthetics of [an] international order."

The second section relocates the book's aesthetic inquiry to the body as the locus of affectivity, whose unpredictable flow and impingement disrupts the dominant modality of gender and gendered nations and opens up East Asia to a radically new imaginary of community that has heretofore not existed. Ikuo Shinjo's essay examines a novella written in US-occupied Okinawa in the 1950s to propose a general theory of queer erotics whereby the sensuous practices of mimicry between colonizer and colonized not only disrupt racial taxonomies but also point to their radical abolition. By demonstrating how a queer erotics latent in the mutual mimicry between the male colonizer and the male colonized in US-occupied Okinawa refigures these characters as singular beings who no longer belong to their respective national cultures, Shinjo's chapter sounds a strong resonance with Lippit's exploration of transferential spectrality. Rey Chow's analysis of Fei Mu's 1948 film *Spring in a Small Town* similarly addresses a modality of love that remains irreducible to "the telos of heterosexual libidinalism, matrimonial or adulterous." Chow's meticulous reading of the protagonist's oneiric voice-over and her peripatetic foray along the city wall tracks the movement of feminine desire that remains illegible within the patriarchal order of

decolonizing China. But more tellingly, Chow locates the protagonist's desire at the nexus of what critics have so far bifurcated into the analytic categories of culture and nature, seeing them as mutually supplementary to one another. Chang-min Yu's essay recalibrates Hong Kong's New Wave cinema and treats it as a movement in which bodies are grotesquely depersonalized, thus enabling an understanding of this cinema that is no longer tied to national or cultural grounds. Irreducible to either form or story, these corporeal images of irritation and disgust index an impossibility of sovereign identity and national time, a productive difficulty that traverses both immigrants and nonimmigrants in Hong Kong. Differently yet resonantly, Shinjo, Chow, and Yu attend to the body as a place from which to theorize the forms of "a possible heterotopia" (Chow) that critically transgress the gendered borders within and between nations in East Asia.

By exploring the productive tension between radical aesthetics and radical social movements in East Asia between the 1960s and the 1980s, the third section of the book does not aim to simply revisit this history but, as Walter Benjamin says, to brush history against its grain.⁴¹ While mindful of the ways in which student and labor movements contested authoritarian developmentalist and militarist state regimes in locations such as South Korea, Taiwan, and Okinawa, the essays in this section reilluminate critical aesthetic practices whose rigorous imagination of a coming community operate in tension within radical social movements that often adopted culturalist terms of struggle. Mayumo Inoue's essay on abstract painter Adaniya Masayoshi examines this artist's novel abstraction of bodies and landscapes in US-occupied Okinawa as an attempt to critically undo the biopolitical construction of racialized "populations" that have stabilized the structure of the occupation. Adaniya's practice is not only critical but also creative of a new landscape where bodies within the biopolitical space begin to relate through their "parergonal" singularity. Youngune Lee's essay illuminates the radical aesthetics and politics of photographer Kim Kichan who, despite his allegiance to South Korea's minjung movement in the 1970s and the 1980s, imagined a type of nonhumanist assemblage among dispossessed workers, animals, and the landscape beyond the scope of minjung nationalism. Lee's attentive reading of Kim's photographic work foregrounds an often overlooked aspect of minjung aesthetics that is, in fact, conducive to post-national politics and its nonanthropocentric ethics of becoming. Chun-yen Wang's study of performance artist Stan Li in Taiwan illuminates how Li's *xiangsheng* play turns the traditional cross-talk performance into rapturous instances of the performative, disclosing a space where the anticolonial struggle in China at large is irreducible to the nation-states now known as

41. Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn (1968; Schocken Books: New York, 1968, 2007), 257.

China or Taiwan. Li's performative iterations of history through absence and fragmentation thus reveal a space unimaginable within the typical configuration of the national (China) or the local (Taiwan) often espoused by the *xiangtu* (home soil) cultural movement of the 1970s.

The book's last section theorizes the mutations of both imperial aesthetics and its theoretical critique from the 1980s to the present, an era that is increasingly marked by neoliberal restructuring of finance, production, logistics, labor, and civil society in East Asia. Yuriko Furuhashi's analysis of the Japanese architectural research group, Tange Lab, offers an extended critique of this neoliberal formation and its aesthetics through an analysis of its prehistory in both Imperial Japan's use of metaphors pertaining to "life spheres" and their continued use in postwar Japan. By doing so, Furuhashi's chapter demonstrates how the aesthetic modality of global biopolitics in the long twentieth century has been actively promulgated by architectural practice and infrastructural imagination. Following Furuhashi's genealogical inquiry into a particular origin of neoliberalism in East Asia, Jecheol Park's essay examines what he might call a neoliberal sense of history in two South Korean films about the *minjung* movement in the 1980s and analyzes their reduction of South Korea's radical struggle into those memories that are resolutely national, readily consumable, and highly individualized. The residual nationalism of such a modality of memorialization, Park argues, conforms to an ultimately conservative notion of the Deleuzian-Bergsonian "time-image." Cautioning against the uncritical use of Bergson within post-colonial studies, Park calls for a different kind of cinematic time-image, a Nietzschean-Deleuzian one that inspires us to demand what has been heretofore thought of as impossible or insensible within the social. Serving as a coda to the entire volume, Jon Solomon's essay calls for an emergence of an "affective multitude," an assemblage that is not organized according to the imagined binary between the universal (the West) and the particular (Asia). Instead, such an affective multitude produces its own resonance through an endless distribution of singularity to *all sentient beings* that traverse the presumed division between humans and nonhumans, and life and matter. Aligning Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna's notion of "dependent origination" to Althusser's concept of "overdetermination," Foucault's reconceptualization of Kant's notion of "enlightenment," and a more recent strand of object-oriented theorizations about causation as a constitutively aesthetic event, Solomon rethinks "enlightenment" as an irruption of singular beings that are solitary but never alone, always undergoing and practicing change through their mutual exposition and articulation. In doing so, his contribution reveals ways of thinking and feeling beyond imperial aesthetics, simultaneously contesting the biopolitics of East Asia and opening up more capacious links among material beings.

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On the Form's Edge

Adaniya Masayoshi's Abstract Paintings and Biopolitics in US-Occupied Okinawa

Mayumo Inoue

The Schema of Imperial Biopolitics in US-Occupied Okinawa

"Okinawa" as an imagined race and nation has been effectuated through Japanese and American imperialisms' constructions and management of their biopolitical "population" since the mid- to the late nineteenth century. While Okinawa's islands, located between mainland Japan and Taiwan, have been home to a heterogeneous mix of residents, Japanese postulation of Okinawa Prefecture in the years between 1872 and 1879 and American hypostatization of the Ryukyu Islands in 1945 racialized and *speciated* a population to be managed in the islands, and largely determined the imaginations of both imperial and local elites *and* radical intellectuals who contested them in Okinawa. Such a construction of Okinawa forms part of the American and Japanese imperialisms' gradual shift from "the vulgar racism in its biological form" to the much more subtle use of "culture" to facilitate their total war projects that produce and utilize minoritarian categories.¹ If so, Okinawa's antimilitary and anticapitalist radical politics needs to be mindful of the ways in which today's global and therefore imperial biopolitics continues to rely on and foster essentialist figurations of race and culture.

This chapter examines the radical aesthetics of postwar abstract painter Adaniya Masayoshi (1921–1967) by offering a reading of his experimental lineations of bodies and things in US-occupied Okinawa (1945–1972). Adaniya's oeuvre can be understood as an attempt to undo the limits of imperial biopolitics, whereby the lines he paints critically retrace the

I would like to thank Masahiro Adaniya for his permission to reprint the images of the painter's works in this chapter and Masashi Kajihara of the Okinawa Prefectural Museum of Art for producing their electronic images.

1. Takashi Fujitani, *Race for Empire: Koreans as Japanese and Japanese as Americans during World War II* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 9, 21. For a systematic critique of the logic of "speciation," see Jon Solomon, "The Transnational Study of Culture and the Indeterminacy of People(s) and Language(s)," in *The Trans/National Study of Culture: A Translational Perspective*, ed. Doris Bachmann-Medik (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014), 69–92.

hegemonic delimitations of race, culture, and nation and open up an alternative possibility for a communal formation that is non-totalizable. His aesthetic critique of the figurations of Okinawa's culture and tradition as part of the imperial process needs to be situated within the historical spectrum in which Okinawa and Ryukyu have been posited as the population to be managed, governed, and increasingly self-governed. As Wendy Matsumura's work illuminates, the first such transformation occurred in Meiji Japan's militaristic "disposition" of the Ryukyu Kingdom (1872–1879) during which Japan (re)invented the "traditional" systems of land tenure and taxation in Okinawa, profiteering from purchasing Okinawa's sugar from peasants at significantly below-market prices.² Consequently, local capitalist elites also mobilized the culturalist designation of Okinawa so as to fashion themselves as the vanguard of the vulnerable local peasantry and to wittingly and unwittingly profit from them in the process. Moreover, the growing tourist industry within Imperial Japan exacerbated this trend toward (self-)racialization by encouraging the orientalist consumption of Okinawa as a place where the forgotten substrata of Japanese culture were said to be preserved.³

The second moment of racialization-as-speciation came when the US military emerged as the victor from the devastating Battle of Okinawa in June 1945, leading to the establishment of the US military government (US Military Government of the Ryukyu Islands from 1945 to 1950 and USCAR, or US Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands, from 1950 to 1972) that ruled Okinawa from 1950 until the latter's "reversion" in 1972 to Japan, to which the US recognized "residual sovereignty" in Okinawa while militarily occupying it to avoid being accused of its colonial rule of the island.⁴ In its twenty-seven-year occupation of Okinawa, the American regime partially utilized prewar Japanese ethnological materials to produce the figure of the "Ryukyuan" race in order to index a population that is markedly different from that of the "Japanese." This proved highly effective in prefiguring a population to be governed and developed by the Americans. US military publications such as the navy's *The Civil Affairs Handbook: The Ryukyu (Loochoo) Islands* (1944) urged US officers to make use of "the politically useful elements" from the handbook's armchair ethnographies that hypostatize the Ryukyuan culture in minute detail. As part of its cultural policy, the USCAR published two propaganda periodicals, *The Light of Shurei* and

2. Wendy Matsumura, *Limits of Okinawa: Japanese Capitalism, Living Labor, and Theorizations of Community* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015), 21.

3. Tobe Hideaki, "Hōgen ronsō o tadorinaosu: Senjika Okinawa no bunka, kaihatsu, shutaisei," in *Okinawagaku nyūmon: Kūfuku no sahō*, ed. Katsukata-Inafuku Keiko and Maetakenishi Kazuma (Tokyo: Shōwadō, 2010), 36–37.

4. Of course, such a relatively smooth transfer of "sovereignty" from one state to another explains how the state's sovereign power as such often serves as supplementary to the global flow of biopolitical powers.

Ryukyu Today, in which lavishly colorful photographs provided a binary figuration of America's "modern" technology and Okinawa's "traditional" culture/nature.⁵ The result, as sociologist Tomoyoshi Doi examines through an appositely Foucauldian perspective, is a tripartite production of populations that mutually figure one another: the mainstream "Ryukyuan" race, who is mandated to manage its colonial state with the American-backed, loosely developmental agenda; the "non-Ryukyuan," who were retained as the highly exploitable reserve of "free" labor; and the US military personnel, whose mobility in and out of Okinawa was conveniently obscured precisely by the domestic and domesticating codification of people as populations.⁶

Such a biopolitical imaginary that is productive of Okinawa as a unitary space and species influenced the ways in which some of the island's radical intellectuals envisioned their resistance to imperial politics. As sociologist Masashi Tokuda astutely analyzes, instances such as anarchist writer Arakawa Akira's valorization of the distinctively "Okinawan structure of consciousness" and mainland-born photographer Tōmatsu Shōmei's public avowal of his desire for "the vast spiritual realm that resists Americanization" in Okinawa in the late 1960s unwittingly gave more credence to the imperial figuration of locality that has been promulgated by the USCAR.⁷ A more recent attempt by a small group of so-called sovereignty theorists to propose an amalgamation of cultural essentialism and economic neoliberalism is a warped example of the same naïveté concerning the transnational production of races. While its proponents have argued that the Ryukyuan nation-state they wish to establish should reproduce its own "pure" race—equipped even with its unique "mitochondria"—whose members would then open up Free Economic Zones to compete against Singapore, Ireland, and Taiwan, well-respected radical intellectuals such as Arakawa and award-winning novelist-cum-activist Medoruma Shun have voiced concerns about these theorists' essentialist conservatism and yet remained sympathetic to their hypostatization of the race. While the sovereignty theorists and the radical intellectuals often differ greatly in their political aspirations, they invariably fail to acknowledge the ways in which anticolonial desires, insofar as they are essentialist, risk being reduced to colonial *ressentiment*, a psychological modality where a hatred of the colonizer slides into a desire to "have what

5. Yasuhiro Tanaka, *Fūkei no sakame: okinawa, senryō no ima* (Tokyo: Serika Shobō, 2010), 54. See also Masanao Kano, *Sengo okinawa no shisōzō* (Tokyo: Asahi Shinbunsha, 1987), esp. 174–77.

6. Tomoyoshi Doi, "Beigun tōchiki ni okeru zaioki amami jūmin no hōteki shogū ni tsuite: ryūkyū seifu shutsunyūkoku kanribunsho o chūshin to shite," *The Annual Bulletin of Okinawa Prefectural Archives* 16 (2014), see especially 11–21.

7. Masashi Tokuda, "'Han-fukki han-kokka no shisō o yominaosu,'" in *Okinawa toi o tateru 6: Han-fukki to han-kokka* (Tokyo: Shakai Hyōronsha, 2008), 198–201; and Masashi Tokuda, "Senryō to color shashin: Tōmatsu shōmei to shimajima," *Gendai Shisō* (May 2013) (Special Issue titled *Tōmatsu Shōmei: Sengo nihon mandala*): 203–8.

the other had" or to "[destroy] the other so that one can be in his place."⁸ But insofar as the interlocking formation of imperialist *desire* and colonial *ressentiment* continue to sustain what Naoki Sakai calls a "schema of co-figuration," whereby imagined nations and cultures are figured in the relation of mutual referentiality and valorized as the locally legitimated conduits for global capital and military, it becomes a matter of urgency to reexamine Okinawa as a site where multiple contestations of such an imperial schema has been attempted. Abstract painting, as we shall see, is one site in which such schematism's subordination of the operation of imagination to the categories of understanding is contested as it opens an alternative passage of *sense* across sensation and signification.⁹

Adaniya's Refraction of the Kantian "Reflection" in the Occupied Space

Born in Tokyo in 1921 and having grown up in prewar Okinawa mostly, Adaniya Masayoshi attended the Tokyo School of Fine Arts (now Tokyo University of the Arts) with fellow painters from Okinawa, including Tamanaha Masayoshi and Ashimine Kanamasa. Adaniya returned to Okinawa in 1945 immediately after the Battle of Okinawa had claimed more than 100,000 local people's lives and the island's surviving population was detained in the American refugee camps. In Okinawa, now renamed and governed by the US military government as the Ryukyu Islands, Adaniya worked as painter, critic, and teacher and, along with Tamanaha and Ashimine among others, founded the artist collective known as the Nishimui Art Village in Naha in 1948. He remained at the forefront of Okinawa's postwar abstract painting movement until his unfortunately premature death in 1967, five years prior to Okinawa's reversion to Japan.

Adaniya's practice and theorization of abstract painting in the context of US occupation in post-1945 Okinawa distinguishes him from his fellow painters and cofounders of the Nishimui collective. While all three painters—Adaniya, Tamanaha, and Ashimine—occupied the leading positions within the burgeoning movement of abstract painting in Okinawa, Adaniya rigorously critiqued the invented "tradition" that entrapped other painters' aesthetics and thus was different from Tamanaha and Ashimine, who often used abstraction as a means to distill the symbolic elements of that very tradition. Such a divergence, already palpable in the late 1950s, became

8. Rey Chow, *Writing Diaspora: Tactic of Intervention in Contemporary Cultural Studies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 32.

9. Naoki Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity: On "Japan" and Cultural Nationalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 52, 202–3n11, Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, trans. Richard Taft (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 112.

more pronounced in the 1960s, as Adaniya increasingly used his abstraction as a necessary prism through which he sought to differently illuminate the bodies and the objects enclosed in US military spaces.

Adaniya's rather peerless status as a critic and painter of unprecedented rigor in Okinawa led to a plethora of personal reminiscences about his life and character written by his friends in the wake of his passing in 1967, leaving his posterity a sheer lack of critical analyses devoted to his work. But a younger surrealist-Marxist poet, Kiyota Masanobu (1937–), whose aesthetic politics of *objet* partially resonated with Adaniya's aesthetics, provided an exception to this trend. In an essay titled "Execution of a Method: On Adaniya Masayoshi" (1979), Kiyota points to a certain "material resistance" that emanates from the figures in Adaniya's early portraits and meditates upon these figures' potential flight from familial and institutional relations.¹⁰

Although any painter must go through an initial stage where he struggles with figurative techniques in drawing, it is worth noting that this painter began his career by drawing portraits of his father, his mother, and himself. People who are immersed in daily life inhabit feelings of love and hate that are rooted in kin relations and cannot take an objective distance from them. While an act of living is most spontaneous when one lives without much conscious thought, an artist has to actualize the beings that are experienced unconsciously in one's lived experience as figures by struggling to mediate them through both sensibility and thinking. That is to say, if the artist lacks the strength of his feet to walk away from the coupling of love and hate, only silence would pervade. In other words, since the words you or I use daily cannot directly constitute expressions, a mere transcription of things as they appear onto a canvas will not constitute a painting either. To further add words, when one senses the presence of a world that cannot be spoken about even when one does speak about it, or when one recognizes with a certain shock that there is a territory that is deeper and richer than one that is lived daily but our daily language can only actualize it through silence, one finally becomes someone who engages in a task which I call expression.¹¹

Adaniya is important to Kiyota for his ability to materialize affects that otherwise remain inarticulate within the quotidian space of the family or society. Kiyota is especially struck by Adaniya's early portraits such as *The Portrait of the Father* (1951) and *Portrait of Setsuko I* (1949), whose respective figurations of the painter's father and wife foreground their "objective resistances" of the terms of sociality permitted in the patriarchal family. As Kiyota argues, it is Adaniya's use of paint that substantiates the father's "intense

10. On Kiyota's own aesthetics and politics that brings together his notions of surrealism and Marxism in Okinawa in the 1960s, see my "Ishi tachi no 'kyōkan'iki'—1960 nendai no Kiyota Masanobu ni okeru 'obuje' tachi no kyōdōsei," *Las Barcas* 2 (2013): 39–51; and "Objects across the Pacific: Poetic Interruptions of Global Sovereignty in Charles Olson and Kiyota Masanobu," *Discourse: Journal for Theoretical Studies in Media and Culture* 38, no. 3 (2016): 297–326.

11. Kiyota Masanobu, *Zōkei no kanata: Okinawa no kaiga, shi, eiga* (Naha: Hirugisha, 1984), 20.

look" toward the painter and the wife's certain "fullness" on her face that goes toward "the interiority of her being," materializing the former's resistance of and the latter's withdrawal from their familial relations.¹² Adaniya thus "actualize[s]" these desires that are otherwise foreclosed in the quotidian space by giving them an "expression," a new figuration that emerges at the nexus of "sensibility and thinking."

Although Adaniya most likely did not maintain close contact with Kiyota, his own meditation of abstract painting similarly situates an emergence of "beauty" in the traversal of sensuous shock across "intuition," "content," and "form." In a 1958 newspaper article, Adaniya implicitly critiques the preceding generation of painters in Okinawa and their self-exoticizing representations of the island's culture that impeded the growing interest in abstraction among younger painters. Implicitly targeting artists such as Nadoyama Aijun (1905–1970), an academic painter known for his depictions of traditionally clad women, and Ōmine Seikan (1910–1987), a fauvist-inspired realist whose renditions of "turtle-shaped" old graves were much praised, Adaniya characterizes their works as appreciable only within the context of habituated "mood" and "sentiment" within the stereotypical understanding of "tradition." But by reappropriating the very term "tradition," Adaniya reconceptualizes it as a sedimentation of efforts to find new forms and to think *anew* through such forms.

Tradition lies hidden in the midst of the flush of vitality and not in the interior of the museum. Tradition lies in that which is incessantly renewed and not in the past world of sentiment. Generally speaking, within the mood of those who feel repelled by the new lies this attraction to the past world of sentiment. This world of sentiment is one of mood that has been dragged from past experiences, and differs in taste from the artistic world of intuition.

This world of intuition is one that directly links with a form itself in painting as well as a form of rhythmic melody in music. Such a form is then elevated into its content, whereas the world of sentiment is one that is enjoyed only if one imagines a certain preexisting mood. . . . The latter differs in taste from the essence of beauty itself. Its characteristics only keep floating around, remaining dependent on each shifting era.¹³

Adaniya's conceptualization of "form" as an origin of "the essence of beauty" traces and alters Kant's notion of reflective judgment of aesthetic form that is produced in and, as we shall see, *as* the limit of the subject's imagination. As Kant in *Critique of Judgment* famously defines it, reflective

12. Writers such as Kiyota and Okamoto Keitoku differently critiqued the patriarchal family as an institution that served as the conduit for Imperial Japan's ethos and demands in the late 1960s "pre-reversion" intellectual context in Okinawa.

13. Masayoshi Adaniya, "Dentō towa nanika" [What is tradition?], *Okinawa Times*, 1958, reprinted in *E to bun* (Naha: Adaniya Masayoshi Sakuhinshu Kankokai, 1973), 19.

judgment engages in a disinterested reflection of “non-purposive” form that is occasioned by nature but needs to be resubstantiated as an image in one’s imagination. Thus, the Kantian “reflection” implies a subjectivating turn, that is, turning away from the object that incites the very reflection and veering toward the self’s imagination that now operates as the privileged producer of such a nonpurposively purposive and thus beautiful image. As the following definition by Kant shows, the pleasure that is supposed to arise out of one’s “disinterest” in such a reflection is, in fact, not only self-reflexive but, as Adorno suggests, “hedonistic”: “If pleasure is bound up with the mere apprehension of the form of an object in intuition, without reference to a concept for a definite cognition, then the representation is thereby not referred to the Object, *but simply to the subject; and the pleasure can express nothing else than its harmony with cognitive faculties which come into play in the reflective judgment.*”¹⁴ But while Kant wants to shield aesthetic reflection from the sensuous world that encompasses the body and to sequester it in the closed circuit of an allegedly free play between imaginative and cognitive faculties, Adaniya refracts this Kantian “reflection” back into the phenomenal world. Adaniya posits his own intuitional exposition to the world as an opening to a sensuous event, one that challenges his and our heretofore habituated use of the faculties.

But Adaniya also carefully distinguishes his formulation of the body’s exposition to the world from his understanding of the same body’s socially imposed docility. That is, he defines the former as an origin of a “compulsion to paint” while describing the latter state of subordination as one of “heteronomy.” As Adaniya writes on this tension between aesthetic “compulsion” and socially imposed “heteronomy,” “the forms within a painting are immediately determined by a compulsion to paint” while such a desire to paint remains situated within a social reality that is “not directly created by the hands of the Okinawans themselves, a state of heteronomy that resembles an arrival of typhoon that engulfs us each year.”¹⁵ For Adaniya, this “compulsion to paint” not only refracts the subjectivism of the Kantian “reflection” but critically inflects the heteronomous structure of military occupation by discovering in its midst a possibility for what he calls “autonomous” imagination and thinking. The passage between passion and passivity

14. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. J. H. Bernard (New York: Dover, 2005), 20, emphasis mine. As Theodor Adorno formulates his critique: “Pleasure masquerades beyond recognition in the Kantian disinterestedness” (*Aesthetic Theory*, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997], 13).

15. Adaniya, “Okinawa gadan no kongo no mondai ni tsuite” [On future problems for the community of painters in Okinawa], *Konnichi ni ryūkyū* 2, no. 2 (1958), reprinted in *E to bun*, 20. Kiyota similarly writes of the two types of alienation, whereby the first refers to the structure of the occupation that produces multiple forms of alienated labor in Okinawa and the latter points to the aesthetic possibility to sense and be touched by the sensuous singularities that seductively put into motion an alternative politics of desubjection.

("compulsion") and "autonomy" that Adaniya reflects on could break the oppressive circuit of heteronomy and its habituation. As such, the passively induced "compulsion to paint" puts into motion "one's striving to first recognize the new social reality whereby change has been heteronomously imposed and to then let this world turn around autonomously somehow."¹⁶

If Adaniya's theoretical texts conceptualize an origin of aesthetic *passion* that helps him to critique and exceed the mere reception of hegemonic norms and forms, he discovers through the work of his fellow painter Ashimine Kanamasa a possible method for painting a potentially "autonomous" image, one that nonetheless arises within the "heteronomous" state of the occupation. In Ashimine's abstract paintings of postwar Okinawa, Adaniya witnesses a "cut" that not only indexes the destruction wrought upon the landscape by the American and Japanese militaries but also constitutes the very landscape as an effect of violent incisions. Using words such as "shock" and "astonishment," Adaniya registers a sense of surprise and liberation gained through Ashimine's work. The latter seems to have elevated Adaniya's sense of "compulsion to paint" to a certain method, one that enables him to inscribe an image in social space that nonetheless escapes the cfigurative grip of militarism, developmentalism, and traditionalism:

I still vividly recall the shock that came to me when I approached Ashimine from behind and looked into his canvas. The white line of the military road cuts through the landscape and continues northward from Sashiki, Ōhama, Nishihara, all the way to the Katsuren Peninsula and finally touches Nakagusuku Bay.

It was indeed this white line that immediately came into my view when I was loaded upon a military LST [tank landing ship] in Sasebo and had a distant view of Okinawa where the battle had just ended. It was this line. These white sharp lines seemed to crisscross and cut apart the island where I could see no ships at sea or no red roofs on land.

This image left a burning impression upon me, but I never dreamed that I would be able to produce a painting of it. But, now, it is in his painting. Ashimine, who felt my presence behind him and turned to me, squinted his eyes to first look at the landscape and then compare it to his own painting. And he said, "It is a mere norm of impressionism that insists upon the [areal] perspective, i.e., what is near is in focus and what is far appears hazy. Look how, in Okinawa, what is far looks clarified even in rain. A road should bear colors if we look at it closely. But in the midst of the green landscape in Okinawa, a road appears only as white." His remark seems to have an effect of at once admonishing me and providing a confirmation of his own concept of painting.¹⁷

16. Adaniya, "Okinawa gadan no kongo no mondai ni tsuite," 20.

17. Adaniya Masayoshi, "Kokuhakuteki kaigaron" [A confessional theory on painting], the *Okinawa Times*, October 10–12, 1963, reprinted in Adaniya, *E to Bun*, 23.

This “burning impression” that Ashimine’s landscape work has etched upon Adaniya’s consciousness mimetically replicates the ways in which Okinawa’s postwar landscape appears burned by the war between the Japanese and American Empires and reshaped by the US occupation after the war.¹⁸ If that is the case, Adaniya also remains apprehensive about Ashimine’s use of the then-fashionable technique and rhetoric of abstract expressionism within the narrow parameter of cultural essentialism.¹⁹ As shown in his somewhat naïve understanding of a lack of perspectival space in Okinawa, Ashimine’s “flat” painting indeed flattens Okinawa as a timeless substrate of “green” nature, facilitating its viewers to imagine the prediscursive bedrock upon which the foreign forces of modernization and militarization are laid. Ashimine’s effort through abstraction to extract such a substrate of culture/nature, however, is commensurate with the US regime’s cultural policy that justifies its occupation through the rhetoric of improving and modernizing a premodern race and culture. In Ashimine’s paintings too, this neat juxtaposition of Okinawa’s arboreal “green” that permeates its nonperspectival space and America’s technological “white” that spatiotemporally extends to the vanishing point exacerbates the colorful grid of colonial difference.

In contrast, Adaniya theorizes the same “cut” in the landscape as one of many “capillaries,” figuring it as one among many points in society that are constantly made and unmade within the ever-shifting flow of power and affect they themselves constitute.

What I want to paint is that white road. However, the road passes through the green farm field. If I don’t paint the farm field, I cannot paint the road. And when I look at the field, there are footpaths traversing the field like numerous capillaries. I cannot ignore their presence even if I want to.²⁰

Predating Foucault’s well-known formulation of the fundamentally “capillary” circulation of power, Adaniya’s microscopic attention to this vast network of “capillary” roads and elements in postwar Okinawa defies the facile opposition of modern road and premodern nature and helps him instead to visualize the scattered presence of both American and non-American elements as contiguous and *coproduced* in the asymmetrical process of the military occupation (Figure 7.1).

18. Educator and literary scholar Nakasone Seizen registers a very similar sense of double destruction wrought by the war’s devastation and the postwar militarization (Nakasone cited in Atsushi Toriyama, *Okinawa: Kichi shakai no kigen to sōkoku 1945–56* [Tokyo: Keisō Shobō, 2013], 1–2).

19. Inamine Seiso, a painter and Ashimine’s former student, thinks that the idioms of abstract expressionism exerted influence upon Ashimine as early as in 1954. Seiso Inamine, “Ashimine Kanasama to sono shuhen” [Ashimine Kanamasa and his surrounding], in *Midori no jojō: Ashimine Kanamasa ten* (Naha: Okinawa Prefectural Museum of Art, 2013), 8–12. See also Ashimine’s essay “Color, Color” (*Okinawa Times*, July 27, 1969).

20. Adaniya, “Kokuhakuteki kaigaron,” reprinted in Adaniya, *E to bun*, 24.

is nonetheless and paradoxically vibrated by an infinite series of other bodies that have touched his (or her) epidermis. Adaniya's other works that thematize US bases and the lives encased therein from this period also produce and proliferate such finitudes that are both singular and singularly touched, mortally finite but infinitely exposed to other mortal bodies. His paintings from the early to mid-1960s such as *Runway* (1963), *Guidepath* (1964), *Military Base* (1964), and *Fence* (1966) sketch the births of such finitudes, whose expositions to other finite bodies and also their own finite materiality reverberate as the critical deconstruction of limits imposed by an interstate regime that seeks to administer its Vietnam War in Okinawa.

Parergonal Singularities across the Biopolitical Field

Adaniya's forms arise at the border of the delimited form of the subject and unlimitable force of the object. These forms in Adaniya's works emerge as beautiful forms that are silhouettes of objective forces. Or, to put this differently, their forms that are beautiful are constitutively vibrated and supplemented by the dynamism of the sublime.

As Jean-Luc Nancy shows, the typically Kantian notion of disinterested reflective judgment remains a "dream of Narcissus" as it merely indexes a moment in which the subject's imagination is reflexively satisfied with its own ability to "re-present" an image.

The imagination—which is the faculty of presentation—plays at finding a form in accord with its free play. It presents (to itself) this: that there is a free accord between the sensible (which is essentially multiple or manifold) and a unity (which is not a concept, but rather free indeterminate unity). . . . It is not the placing-in-form of something else but form forming itself, for itself, without object: fundamentally, art, according to Kant, represents nothing in either the beautiful or the sublime.³⁵

But Nancy proceeds to reconceptualize the binary pairing of beauty and sublime as their mutual supplementation or contamination. Any attempt to figure the subject as the self-reflexive origin of schema and its figures fails insofar as the beautiful form that is said to ultimately produce such a schema cannot be stabilized but appears only in its vibratory reformation and deformation by way of the sublime that touches it. Such a shifting form does not emblemize imagination's auto-formation and auto-image but rather is a trace of the imagination's constitutive self-difference from and impropriety to itself. The sublime, as Nancy continues, then, is "that through which the beautiful *touches* us and not that through which it pleases us. It is joy and

35. Jean-Luc Nancy, "Sublime Offering," in *A Finite Thinking*, ed. Simon Sparks, trans. Jeffrey Libbrett (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), 215.

not enjoyment."³⁶ The sublime offering is an object offered to "the limit of presentation, and it takes place on and along this limit, along the contour of form." The sublime thus moves as the "sublimitus," vibrating right beneath the delimited border of the self-reflective form as an opening to the sense of the object, of the world, of their heretofore unknown sensuous gifts: "To be touched is sublime because it is to be exposed and to be offered."³⁷

Nancy's conceptualization of mutually supplementary form and force or beauty and sublime is indexed by an ornamental frame that Kant calls "parerga," a seductive supplement to reflective judgment that Kant duly theorizes but predictably denigrates in *The Critique of Judgment*. Kant's relegation of parerga to the overlooked margin between the analytics of beauty and that of the sublime in the *Third Critique* nonetheless illuminates an almost imperceptible *movement* of the ornamental that constantly shuttles between beauty and the sublime or, more precisely, materializes as the very interface of force and form. Kant's reluctant hosting of the ornament at the very end of his analytic of beauty as "foreign sensation," "alien" elements, and "indulgences" that initially add "charms" to beauty but ultimately "do injury to the judgment of taste" remains unresolved. At the same time, his equally ambivalent inclusion of the same ornament as "the vital force" within the vocabulary of the sublime constantly confounds his own effort to institute a clear border between beauty and the sublime.

Kant's effort to demarcate between "the *delineation*" of formal beauty and the chromatically and rhythmically seductive "complements" of parerga continuously fails because the very process of delineation is in fact a temporary formalization of parerga's own erotic appeal. Although Kant's formulation seeks to bifurcate form and ornament—"[the] colors which light up the sketch"—the sketch's form arises as an effect of its being touched or lit up by the exterior colors.³⁸ Thus, all the examples of what Kant calls formal ornament in his rather vexed attempt to institute an innermost limit, which, like an estuary between sea and land, can perhaps demarcate force and form, appear to be always already moved by certain wavering forces: "draperies of statues" and "the colonnades of palaces."³⁹ From here on, it is not very hard to imagine that the very artforms Kant enlists here—statues and palaces—are temporary outlines of mobility that also manifests as the shapes of their frames: draperies and colonnades. He cannot help but explore the outside of this inner limit where a form's self-enclosure expires through and *as* the rhythm's vibration and color's movement. Kant's depiction of what he denigratingly calls the emotionally appealing ornament that

36. Nancy, "Sublime Offering," 240.

37. Nancy, "Sublime Offering," 240.

38. Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 45.

39. Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 46.

enframes the formal ornament once again reveals how colors and rhythms are in fact *constitutive* of the beautiful form's necessary limit. His exemplification of this affective ornament as a "golden frame" illustrates how its energy cannot be excluded from an artwork's orderly form of beauty, attesting to the latter's constitutively provisional materialization of the very energy of its frame, its ornament. Unable to draw a border at which beautiful form ends and seductive force takes over, Kant decides to explain the strange appeal of his "golden frame" through the vocabulary for his analytic of sublime: "a momentary checking and a consequently more powerful outflow of the vital force." Inserted rather appositely at the very end or at the border of his analytic of beauty, the "golden frame" cannot fully enframe itself as the limit between form and force and instead outlines its own conspicuous presence as a forceful form: the golden frame outside an artwork is ultimately indistinguishable from the "framed gold," as it were, within the work.⁴⁰ Each additional layer of protection Kant adds to the original frame of a beautiful form thus repeats the ways in which the very frame appears as a provisional stabilization of the sensuous force of the sublime.⁴¹

In Adaniya's paintings and sketches, human bodies are no longer subjectivated to produce and reproduce according to the imperial schema of racialized populations. Rather, they are touched, traced, and thus unlimited by the mortal presence of others' bodies and also of one's own. They become silhouetted, doubled, and gilded by their "vital force" that is being extirpated in Okinawa and Southeast Asia. Adaniya's works sketch the nascent singularities within and against the schema of biopolitical populations, borne out through their exposition to the bodies of others in suffering and endurance of their own bodies that witness them. They reemerge in Adaniya's incomplete oeuvre as the parergonal or ornamental singularities, the shifting traces of the others' vitality and potentiality that have been stunted by the coordination of capital and military in post-1945 East Asia, Southeast Asia, and the United States. They are the color-lit sketches and golden frames, tracing and transmitting the potential to live against the life-limiting schema of races and populations.

The parergonal singularities in Adaniya's work articulate a constantly shifting image of a nonessentialist community in the midst of the imperial field of nation-states in their mutually competitive collaboration or

40. Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 46.

41. Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 46. By close-reading Kant's own example of a wild tulip as an instance of "purposiveness without purpose" that is said to inhere in and as a bound form of beauty, Jacques Derrida points to a more fundamental sense of the same tulip's sensuously purposeless singularity, a certain sensation of its "lack" of "finality" and "end," which renders one's experience or sensing of purposiveness both infinitely continuous and finitely material. Derrida appositely locates this process through a "parergonal" logic that only temporarily materializes the fundamentally nonlocalizable wavering of beauty upon the very frame (*The Truth in Panting*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987], 71).

complicity. The shifting image of this community, insofar as it is a form, is also an access to thinking.⁴² Sensuous challenges from the objects—and their sublime offerings—not only bring about vibrating forms but attune us to their singularities that are mutually incomparable and immeasurable. I am not allowed to favor a certain singularity over another, and this foreclosure of comparison and comparatism opens a possibility of equality that is nonetheless based upon the principle laid out in this chapter about singularity. Adaniya's work is a necessarily incomplete oeuvre that inspires those of us who live in the present to extend an instance of this community of incomparable singularities in and against the biopolitical co-figuration of nation-state forms across and beyond Okinawa and East Asia.

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42. In the first chapter of *Aesthetic Theory*, Adorno locates a uniquely sensuous aspect of artistic beauty that is delinked from both the covertly hedonist loop of reflection and pleasure that masquerades itself as "disinterested" in Kantian reflective judgment and the similarly narcissist understanding of art in Freud that reduces it to "the theory of the instincts" and "seal[s] it off from art's spiritual essence" (11). For Adorno, like Nancy, there is a certain "ecstasy" that can be felt in relation to the aesthetic object that exceeds the mode of subjective enjoyment of the observer (Kant) or the maker (Freud): "Something compelling can be grasped of aesthetic experience only on the basis of a relation to the aesthetic object, not by recurring to the fun of the art lover" (14). Curiously, Adorno's discussion of this "ecstasy" beyond the perimeter of subjective "enjoyment" ends by touching upon the topic of the sublime. As Adorno writes, "Aesthetic hedonism is to be confronted with the passage from Kant's doctrine of the sublime, which he timidly excluded from art: Happiness in artwork would be the feeling they instill of standing firm" (15). Both the argument and the structure of this chapter in *Aesthetic Theory* replicates and highlights the *parergonal* limit lodged in-between Kant's analytics of beauty and the sublime as their mutually constitutive and co-implicative border. More curiously, this sublime limit of aesthetic pleasure leads to a call to sensitize one's cognitive act in facing a work of art: "What the work demands from its beholder is knowledge, and indeed, knowledge that does justice to it" (15).

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The Affective Multitude

Toward a Transcultural Meaning of Enlightenment

Jon Solomon

Since the early nineteenth century, Buddhist realization has been translated into English by the word “enlightenment.” At the turn of the millennium, however, this translation no longer seems accurate.¹ Although the Sanskrit term does not contain any etymological reference to light, the association between waking up, from which the Sanskrit verb *budh* draws, and light would certainly not be hard to imagine within the context of agrarian societies before electrification. Yet our purpose is not to dwell on the notion of fidelity. The debt of translation is not compiled simply from accounts of mistranslation, for the act itself is always intrinsically bidirectional, if not multidirectional. Although it would seem that we have had to wait a couple of centuries for a “correct” translation finally to appear, before abandoning “enlightenment” altogether, in this chapter I would like to explore the historical opening created by the implicit equivalency established through translation between a Buddhist notion of awakening and the philosophical and political ideas collectively known as enlightenment that inaugurate and emblemize modernity. Just as the spiritual connotations of *bodhi* can no longer be excluded from free communication with the English word “enlightenment,” so the ideals of modern enlightenment thought can no longer be considered external to Buddhism. Might we not see the mistranslation itself as a historical event, just like Gautama’s awakening and the French Revolution?

Perhaps this is to say nothing but that we are still awaiting the elaboration of what enlightenment means *for others*—in the dual sense intended both by the Mahayana practice of a bodhisattva and by the inauguration of a single world through colonial encounter (i.e., the event that brings Buddhism and enlightenment thought into contact).

1. See Luis Gómez, *The Land of Bliss: The Paradise of the Buddha of Measureless Light* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1996).

An elaboration of this transcultural meaning undoubtedly has to begin with a reevaluation of what C. B. MacPherson, author of *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism* (1962), confidently termed “the Western democratic ontology.”² As Etienne Balibar notes, “According to MacPherson, it is in Hobbes’s philosophy that we find the clearest formulation of these axioms [the classical foundations of possessive individualism].”³ In this chapter, the aim of which is ontological and anthropological, I would like to focus not on Hobbes but rather on the Kantian part of that legacy. Two centuries before MacPherson, Kant had famously described enlightenment as a maturation or majoration of the individual, turning it into a kind of *developmental state* in the natural law of species progress. Here we have the basis for the anthropological project of modernity—a belief that technological progress and aesthetics can be joined in a single effort to develop, according to hylomorphic presuppositions, the perfect race/species. Within this context, the modern nation-state is a developmental state devoted to the representation, cultivation, and final maturation of specific difference.

While there exists some debate within Buddhist schools about the gradual nature of the path,⁴ the basic premises are reversed with regard to Kant: “buddha nature (*tathāgatagarbha*)” (emptiness + cognizance) is inherent and cannot be the object of any developmental technique (although the accumulation of *merit* and *wisdom* through practical techniques is in most cases necessary). Buddhism, as I will argue, rejects the anthropological project of modernity. Liberation arises neither from the maturation of the individual nor the perfection of a species (in the image of a higher being) but rather from abandoning the illusion of both individuality and oneness. This is what is called *dependent origination* (Sanskrit: *pratītyasamutpāda*, hereafter abbreviated as DO).

Dependent Origination

Dependent origination is a theory of causal arising, transformation, and cessation that was expounded by the historical Buddha, Shakyamuni. “This existing, that comes to be,” is the essential formula that describes being as a process of continual mutual cogeneration. The paradigmatic cycle is described in terms of the twelve links of existence: (1) ignorance, (2) formation, (3) consciousness (4) name and form, (5) perceptual entrances, (6)

2. C. B. MacPherson, *Democratic Theory: Essays in Retrieval* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), 24.

3. Etienne Balibar, “‘Possessive Individualism’ Reversed: From Locke to Derrida,” *Constellations* 9, no. 3 (2002): 300.

4. See David Seyfort Ruegg, *Buddha-Nature, Mind and the Problem of Gradualism in a Comparative Perspective: On the Transmission and Reception of Buddhism in India and Tibet* (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1989).

contact, (7) sensation, (8) craving, (9) grasping, (10) becoming, (11) rebirth, and (12) aging and death. In terms of form, the twelve links appear to describe a subjective process linked to the birth, life, and death of a conscious, presumably human, being. While some texts, such as Vasubandhu's fourth- or fifth-century *Treasury of Abhidharma* (*Abhidharmakośa*), speak of "unconditioned" dharmas or phenomena that would not fall under the purview of dependent origination, in this chapter I will argue for an interpretation more in line with that upheld by the Madhyamaka school of Nāgārjuna (circa 150–circa 250 CE), arguing that DO applies to all types of being in the cosmos; it is of the nature of existence. From this perspective, the twelve-link series of DO shows that matter is intrinsically *affective*, regardless of any division into subjects and objects. This affective quality is not subjective. Affect concerns the capacity to affect and be affected. The subject is not a cause for affect (not an auto-affective subject) but is rather caught "in between" (allo-affective), produced by a series of conditions among discontinuous domains that we normally call physical, mental, and back to physical again, ad infinitum. The twelve links of dependent origination are adamant in their refusal to create autonomous spiritual and physical domains, while also refusing the category of a subject, or substratum, to the process.

The doctrine of dependent origination receives canonical treatment, and critique, in Nāgārjuna's *The Stanzas of the Root of the Middle Way* (*Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, circa 150 CE, abbreviated as MMK). This text, written in verse (a *kārikā*) to aid memorization and recitation, consists of a succession of arguments that present the idea, fundamental to the Madhyamaka school, that all things are empty and devoid of intrinsic nature. Causality and classification are the two essential themes that concern the attempt to establish intrinsic existence, and much of the text is devoted to accepting the consequences for taxonomic knowledge in the wake of the definitive refutation of final causality. Causality is what enables taxonomic schemes to assume the pretense of correlate reality. In place of causality, a theory of processual relations is proposed. According to this theory, individuals are the result of a contingent process of dependent origination. Individuals themselves have no essence and cannot be identified simply by a list of properties. The first result of this displacement is that taxonomic knowledge based on species difference can no longer aspire to any kind of correlational status with regard to reality. In place of correlationism, the Buddhist idea of DO substitutes an operation that is the same in any context or medium, whether psychic or physical—even before this division exists.

There are strong methodological reasons to believe that DO cannot be thought of as a principle (in which case it would be a thing with its own properties, not aesthetic but ethical, i.e., causes are responsible for effects) but must be understood as a singular operation, specific each time to a singular

contextual constellation. Nāgārjuna's *Stanzas of the Root of the Middle Way* is largely composed of a series of interventions into singular contexts, such as the relation between fire and fuel, seed and plant, mind and object, this life and that life, and so on, that demonstrate DO while refuting taxonomic schemes based on causality. In this way, Buddhism displaces the problem of ontology to aesthetics. Were we to begin with the assumption of DO as a principle that precedes the modes of DO, that assumption in itself would constitute a particularly trenchant way of understanding relationship—one that ultimately shares a fundamental affinity with the apprehension of ontological individuality in MacPherson that Buddhism explicitly eschews. As Ruegg observes, even terms like “buddha nature,” “do not appear to define a single, constant and unitary core-notion or essence.”⁵ Rather than force DO into a nominal category, we want to keep it processual: “DO-ing” rather than “the DO.”

Yet the primary concern of the *MMK* is to show that even the notion of DO is characterized by emptiness. None of the entities that engage in DO have any intrinsic existence, and DO “itself” is pervaded by emptiness. The basic logical strategy employed amounts to a refusal of any point of contact, or third space “in-between,” two entities that might be thought to be causally or temporally related. Fire and fuel are interdependent yet never touch; the act of going appears to lie between the gone and the to-come yet never occurs. It is a strategy designed to defeat both substantialism and processualism.

We might venture the thesis that the Madhyamaka project described by Nāgārjuna is not designed to be a negation of dependent origination on the basis of emptiness but rather a displacement of logical truth claims to the realm of the analogical. Lacking space in this chapter to do justice to the concept of the analogical, we will return to it near the conclusion to suggest its importance for the operations of translation and comparison that play a fundamental role in contemporary scholarship in the human sciences.

Aesthetic Causality, Aesthetic Compassion

One can detect an underlying Kantian tendency in modern commentary on Buddhism, according to which Buddhism is mainly concerned with, and begins, just like Kant, from the question of the limits or conditions of possibility for human access to objects and the objective world. Starting from this position, it becomes possible to claim that humans are a product of biological evolution, and the constraints imposed by biological evolution, such as the development of language and symbolic systems, as well as sensory organs such as eyes, ears, and mouths, impose themselves on what

5. Ruegg, *Buddha-Nature, Mind and the Problem of Gradualism in a Comparative Perspective*, 5.

humans are capable of knowing. Buddhism, according to this reading, is an epistemological realism. According to this Kantian reading, phrases like the oft-cited line from the *Avatamsaka Sutra* that say, “everything is mind” are understood in what contemporary speculative realism calls a “correlationist” manner, like Berkeley’s famous dictum that “things cannot exist without being thought.” Everything is reduced to the question of our access to it, which is hopelessly reliant on flawed sensory relay systems that create the impression of sensory “objects” where there are either none to begin with or else objects vastly divergent from the way in which our epistemological limitations portray them. Modern interpretations of Buddhism have tended to see Buddhist ontology through a Kantian lens, assuming that ontology must be subordinated to epistemology, as it was for Kant.

Yet the Four Noble Truths, Shakyamuni’s first oral teaching after remaining in silence subsequent to his enlightenment, do not begin with the question of epistemology. They begin with what might be best termed an aesthetic approach to ontology. The basic ontological premise is impermanence, from which is drawn an aesthetic conclusion for entities-in-and-of-themselves: life is “suffering,” in which suffering is defined as the experience of impermanence regardless of emotional content. I am using the definition of aesthetics that is developed by Steven Shaviro: “Aesthetics is about the *singularity* and *supplementarity* of things: it has to do with things insofar as they cannot be cognized or subordinated to concepts and also insofar as they cannot be utilized, or normatively regulated, or defined according to rules.”⁶ Shaviro’s Whiteheadian aesthetic refers to something about each and every extant being “for its own sake,” something that escapes epistemological limits to perception. Supplementarity arises not from some form of internal lack but rather from an excess of potentiality. From this perspective, the main form of interaction among entities is aesthetic, that is, it occurs regardless of whether animal perception and cognition are present or not. Aversion and attraction, which constitute the basis of the Second Noble Truth, reinforce the turn from ontology to aesthetics initiated by the First Noble Truth. Rereading Buddhism in conjunction with Shaviro’s rejection of epistemological Kantianism opens up a way to explain Buddhism without reducing it to Kantianism.⁷

6. Steven Shaviro, *The Universe of Things: On Speculative Realism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 53.

7. Michel Bitbol’s attempt, “to implement,” between Kant and Nāgārjuna, “the idea of dependent arising of philosophical positions” (“The Co-emergence of the Knower and the Known: A Comparison between Madhyamaka and Kant’s Epistemology,” in *Buddhist Thought and Applied Psychological Research: Transcending the Boundaries*, ed. D. K. Nauriyal, Michael Drummond, and Y. B. Lai (New York: Routledge, 2006), 131), by “emphasizing . . . the mutual alterations . . . two philosophical positions may undergo by the very fact of their being compared” (137), shares important affinities and differences with our project here. A starting point of affinity lies in the attempt to think relation from the point of view of the relation itself, “before” (or simultaneously with) the

A fruitful comparison might be made with contemporary speculative realist philosophies such as Graham Harman's idea of object-oriented ontology (OOO) and responses to it by contemporaries such as Steven Shaviro and Timothy Morton. Yet it is important to underline from the outset what I take to be a crucial difference: unlike OOO, the Madhyamaka Buddhism of Nāgārjuna does not have ontology as its central concern. Although Madhyamaka certainly deals with ontological questions, they are ultimately subordinate to a specific goal: enlightenment or liberation. Even if it may be construed as an ontology, liberation from ignorance points to another "dimension" that takes priority. While keeping this difference (still to be explained) in mind, we find that Morton's and Shaviro's understanding of OOO's contribution to a concept of *aesthetic causality* provides an interesting point of departure from which to consider Buddhist ideas of enlightenment.

The key elements to the aesthetic notion of causality advanced by Morton include irreducible uncertainty,⁸ an emphasis on the duration of appearance, indefinite past and futurity,⁹ singularity,¹⁰ distance,¹¹ shape,¹² and illusion that cannot be identified.¹³ This list is designed to suggest a sequence among these terms. The first and last, irreducible uncertainty and illusion, are of course integrally related, initiating and ending the chain in nonidentity, thereby eliminating the law of noncontradiction as the exclusive principle of ontology. Morton, followings terms advanced by Priest and Routley,¹⁴ calls

establishment of the two terms that ostensibly constitute the relation. In our estimation, however, Bitbol runs into trouble with his Weismannian paradigm of germinal individuation by linear descent with modification, which locates the site of generative potentiality within the structure of species difference: "After all, in order to produce an offspring, one must unite two individuals with compatible genotypes" (125). This perspective repeats the assumptions of germinal transmission of genetic material, leaving aside the challenges posed by endosymbiosis (Cf. Luciana Parisi, "Biotech: Life by Contagion," *Theory, Culture & Society* 24, no. 6 [2007]: 29–52). Hence, it is no surprise to find out that the part of the *common* discovered by this methodology is deterministic: "One feels as if a sort of Indo-European common epistemological framework had been disclosed by a pluralistic comparison" (Bitbol, "Co-emergence of the Knower and the Known," 138). Pertinent to our discussion below of color perception, Bitbol's account, while respectful of the mutual constitution of faculties and objects, neglects to mention the *indeterminacy of correlation* that distinguishes the phenomenal experience of color vision from other human senses. Nevertheless, Bitbol's conclusion ("the true specificity of Nāgārjuna, with respect to Kant and to any theory of knowledge, . . . [can be seen in] . . . Nāgārjuna's insistence] on 'what it is like to be'" (146) completely accords with the notion of aesthetic causality and aesthetic compassion advanced here.

8. Morton cites examples from quantum physics. Timothy Morton, *Realist Magic: Objects, Ontology, Causality*, (Ann Arbor, MI: Open Humanities Press, 2013), 96.

9. Infinite regress or progress; one relation leads to another. Morton, *Realist Magic*, 90.

10. This not that. Morton, *Realist Magic*, 90. Cf. Gilles Deleuze, *Kafka : pour une littérature mineure* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1975), 14.

11. Morton, *Realist Magic*, 73.

12. Morton, *Realist Magic*, 81.

13. Morton, *Realist Magic*, 74.

14. G. Priest, R. Routley, and J. Norman, eds., *Paraconsistent Logic: Essays on the Inconsistent* (Munich: Philosophia Verlag, 1989).

this the “*dialetheic* (double-truthed) quality of objects.”¹⁵ The temporality that marks the duration of appearance-disappearance is a processual oscillation between infinite progress and infinite regress. The indefinite futurity cannot be conceived as the totality of all possibilities, for each and every object that composes it is a singularity; nor can it finally be a temporal category at all. Between these singularities lies a distance that can only be understood, in the wake of quantum physics’ demonstration of nonlocality, as discontinuity.

In the word “shape,” I see an imprecise correlate to what is called *sè* (色) in Chinese Buddhist translations of Sanskrit *rūpa*. Conventionally translated into English as “form,” the Chinese term *sè* refers primarily to color, a meaning that is also covered by the semantic range of the Sanskrit term. This might be seen as a Derridean attempt to conceive of materiality in a differential way, rather than simply in terms of identity and structure. A further connection with Buddhism might be sought in Derrida’s claim¹⁶ that the spectral is associated first and foremost with the question of what is neither dead nor alive, present nor absent. Inasmuch as it is understood as a space *between* life and death, Derrida’s spectral afterlife approaches the notion of causality across lives theorized in Tibetan Buddhism as the interstitial space of the bardo. Ultimately, this type of cause bears an irreducible strangeness that cannot be finally distinguished from illusion but is for that reason singular (i.e., this cannot be that).

Buddhist-inspired interpretations will ultimately find more traction, as Thomas Lamarre has suggested to me, in the recent philosophical debates on the ontological implications of color perception spawned by neurobiological and other scientific research. While the debate pits various forms of objectivism (physicalism, dispositionalism, and primitivism) against different flavors of subjectivism (eliminativism, projectionism, and interactionism), what is really fascinating about color from a philosophical point of view is not simply its amphibological status between the subjective and the objective but also the important phenomenal differences that distinguish color perception from other human perceptual relay systems. For that reason, the general theoretical interest that Buddhism reserves for color above and beyond the other senses must be explored for its value as a strategic choice. Ultimately, color (as *sè/rūpa*) is to be understood as emblematic of conditioned existence in general. What should probably be of greatest interest here is the singularity of color perception. Among the five senses, sight occupies, particularly with regard to color perception, a singular position not just because of its difficult amphibological aspect between physical properties, neural relays, and affective resonance but also because of its irrelevance to considerations

15. Morton, *Realist Magic*, 68.

16. Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (London: Routledge, 2006).

of efficient causality normally taken to determine physical properties of an object and the inherent indeterminacy of the correlation between color perception and the physical information that constitutes it as an event.¹⁷ These two qualities (indeterminacy of correlation and irrelevance of efficient causality) make of color perception more than just an exemplary case of DO¹⁸ or an analogy for progressive levels of attainment.¹⁹ Color perception is the signature of aesthetic causality.

Makransky's discussion of the *rūpakaya*, literally "color body" but generally translated as "physical form," is paradigmatic. Emphasizing the epistemological dimension of the *rūpakayas*, or "physical forms" (of enlightened beings, for instance), Makransky's account appears to neglect the significance of the modification affect brings to epistemology. Even as the *rūpakaya* is what appears in place of *dharmakaya* to those without the full realization of a Buddha, it is also a manifestation that occurs precisely for the sake of others. Contemporary theories of color perception reveal that color cannot be simply defined in either an extensional or intentional way. In other words, the taxonomy of generic difference does not apply. Although part of a species-specific faculty, color perception is always singular, not individual/generic. It is not the product of the meeting between an individual object and an individual subject but a singular interaction of aesthetic causality defined by distance, indeterminacy, strange correlation, and an affective "state" beyond knowledge of "what it is like to be X."

Some of the above aspects of aesthetic causality are to be found not in Morton but in the important modifications to the concept brought independently by Shaviri. What he calls "supplementarity" is related to the affective quality that marks every object in its status as a singularity. Affect names the relations among singularities. Knowledge does not have to play any part for a relation to be affective. "Fire *affects* even those aspects of the cotton that it cannot come to 'know.'"²⁰ The move is clearly away from epistemology. "No amount of information can ever *exhaust* the thing."²¹ "Objects are always more than what they do."²² In its singularity, every object has an affective component that exceeds knowledge. Arguing at the limits of panpsychism, Shaviri attempts to downplay the importance of cognition while allowing for the existence of other forms of sentience and knowledge. The affective component is both endogenous and exogenous. It concerns both the way

17. Christophe Al-Saleh, *Qu'est-ce qu'une couleur?* (Paris: Vrin, 2013).

18. William Waldron, "The Co-arising of Self and Object, World, and Society: Buddhist and Scientific Approaches," in *Buddhist Thought and Applied Psychological Research: Transcending the Boundaries*, ed. D. K. Nauriyal, Michael Drummond, and Y. B. Lai (New York: Routledge, 2006), 175–208.

19. John Makransky, *Buddhahood Embodied: Sources of Controversy in India and Tibet* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997).

20. Shaviri, *Universe of Things*, 106.

21. Shaviri, *Universe of Things*, 117.

22. Shaviri, *Universe of Things*, 143–44.

in which an object “feels” for itself and the way in which objects are always “feeling” their relations to other objects. Through readings of contemporary philosophers in the analytical tradition, Shaviri contests Morton’s (and Harman’s) view that the withdrawn quality of objects is implicitly totalizable (Harman’s “vacuum”). He describes it rather as aesthetic. “Causal relations are never complete and never entirely deterministic; they are *always* partial and indirect.”²³ “Where Harman speaks of ‘touch without touching,’ therefore, I would rather designate this causal and affective process positively as *contact at a distance*.”²⁴ Aesthetics, for Shaviri, “is the realm of immanent, non-cognitive [affective] contact.”²⁵

Although Nāgārjuna would certainly agree that objects do not touch, he also upholds the immanence of dependent origination. Hence, DO speaks of objects without objectivity, relations without substance. But these are “objects” that have the quality of sentience. Standard English translations of Buddhism regularly refer to a technical term, “sentient beings.” In Buswell’s *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, Getz explains, “*Sentient beings* is a term used to designate the totality of living, conscious beings . . . living things . . . possessing consciousness.”²⁶ Does this mean that beings can be divided into two, or more, classes, those with sentience and those without? How can we be sure that our understanding is not clouded by the opposition between the organic and the inorganic introduced by the life sciences at the end of the eighteenth century?²⁷ Based on the fact that Nāgārjuna’s *MMK* explicitly includes all phenomena within the purview of DO, I would like to argue for the most expansive definition possible. My working hypothesis amounts to admitting all forms of arising—physical, mental, and the like—without exception into the field of DO.²⁸

From that perspective, how shall we understand the ascription of “sentience” to objects? Significantly, the Chinese translations of Buddhism (to which I have recourse in the absence of a knowledge of Sanskrit or Tibetan) never speak of “objects” or “beings.” There are three Chinese terms used to denote the term normally translated in English as “sentient being.” The first, *yǒuqíng* (有情) refers to “having sentience,” but a more common translation

23. Shaviri, *Universe of Things*, 144–45.

24. Shaviri, *Universe of Things*, 147.

25. Shaviri, *Universe of Things*, 148.

26. Daniel A. Getz, “Sentient Beings,” in *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, vol. 2, ed. Robert Buswell (New York: Macmillan Reference, 2004), 760.

27. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), 232.

28. Canonical support for this nonmainstream view might be found, as Thomas Doctor indicates to me, in *The Noble Sutra on Maitreya’s Setting Out* (*Maitreyaprasādhāna-sūtra*): “Perceiving sentient beings and phenomena as being distinct is a fault for a bodhisattva.” The statement appears on p. 284b in the Tibetan translation of the *Arya-maitreyaprasādhāna-nāma-mahāyāna-sūtra* (Tib. *phags pa byams pa ‘jug pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po’i mdo*) contained in sDe dge edition of the Tibetan canon (also known as the Degé Kangyur). English translation by Thomas Doctor.

of the term *qíng*, glossed here as “sentience,” would be “affect.” To substitute affect for sentience is a move that takes us out of the assumptions of interiority, into the realm of causality. Hence, the second part of my expanded definition of DO, which does not distinguish between different spiritual and physical realms, reinterprets the notion of sentience as affect, thereby enlarging the category to become inclusive of all types of existent being within the realm of DO. Whether animate or inanimate, organic or inorganic, all existent being is affective and participates in DO. The second term in Chinese, *yǒuqíng zhòngshēng* (有情眾生) adds the word *zhòngshēng*, the “multiplicity (*zhòng*) of births or arisings (*shēng*).” The third is an abbreviation, simply *zhòngshēng*. The key elements of these Chinese terms are affect, multiplicity, and birth or arising. As a substitute for “sentient beings,” which seems to invite associations with life and would thus exclude beings that we consider inanimate yet display causal qualities of arising, duration, and cessation, another term is needed. Perhaps we will soon be ready to consider alternate translations, such as “the affective multitude.”

In that case, one might wonder what the *liberation* of “the affective multitude,” which composes part of the bodhisattva vow, would really mean. How does one assist the liberation of a rock, a snake, or a neutrino? Rather than try to answer the question directly, let us pose it in a negative sense: What are the obstacles to liberation? The answer, given by the theory of dependent origination, is *ignorance*. Ignorance is a condition not relative to knowledge but relative to dependent origination and emptiness. It is, we might say, relative to an experience akin to what Shaviro describes as an aesthetics of the beautiful as opposed to that of the sublime. “Beauty is appropriate to a world of relations . . . sublimity is appropriate to a world of substances.”²⁹ The distinction between beauty and the sublime is ontological yet can only be seized aesthetically.

Shaviro pursues this distinction to describe a notion of beauty that does not adhere to the formal logic of specific difference. It is “not a genus of which particular beautiful things would be the species.”³⁰ It is not something individual but rather singular, and, in that singularity, it is the bearer of something universal. Yet this universality is not that of a law, given in advance to cognition. In fact, it does not correspond to any object whatsoever. It is something that occurs only in the circumstances of aesthetic judgment. Shaviro calls the relation between singularity and universality a kind of “short circuit” that bypasses all mediation.

If the “aesthetic” in this context refers to affect and affectivity, then the “short circuit” that it produces is precisely the moment, in Buddhism, that stops the illusory circulation known as *samsara*. Hence, the Buddhist aesthetic

29. Shaviro, *Universe of Things*, 42.

30. Shaviro, *Universe of Things*, 149.

is also the realm in which *compassion* emerges. Although compassion is not directly mentioned in the theory of DO, the fact that the Buddha emerged from silence after enlightenment to begin teaching dependent origination is said to reveal a compassionate motivation. *Aesthetic compassion* means appreciation not in the sense of recognition but rather in the sense of an infinitely amplified analogical relation. If neuroscience suggests that human compassion starts with mirror neurons, this means that compassion itself can never be understood in terms of a closed, mechanically causal circuit. The operation of mirror neurons is analogical, establishing causality at a distance in a “circuit” that includes corporal discontinuity. The Buddhist notion of compassion takes this discontinuity a step further, breaking the link with species-specific biological faculties, amplifying the short-circuit to include all beings. Compassionate appreciation aims to maximize the potential of amplification by caring for the affective nature of things “in themselves.”

To say that Buddhist understanding of ignorance and compassion is relative to aesthetic judgment isn't to say that *satori* (enlightenment) can be realized only while drinking ritually prepared beverages in assiduously groomed rock gardens. It is rather to understand first that perception and cognition are not the main categories that define causality. Causality defined by emptiness is aesthetic. Second, it is to understand that the view of emptiness alone does not lead to liberation/enlightenment. It is not enough to use the view of emptiness to “access” the real that is not empirical. Aesthetic causality has to be deployed together with aesthetic compassion. Yet compassion, like ignorance, is not a subjective category. It rather concerns the infinity of the affective multitude. Taking a cue from Morton, I might call it compassionate “interobjectivity.”³¹ Aesthetic compassion in addition to aesthetic causality is, in the final analysis, what distinguishes Buddhism from philosophy.

Enlightenment Must Be Defended: Critique versus Historico-philosophical Fiction

Speculative theories of aesthetic causality might not explain “why things happen,”³² but they do have great interest for both transcultural studies and Buddhist studies today. Caution is required, however, in the recuperation of mechanical causality through historical narrative, as seen, for instance, in Morton's account of, or story about, aesthetic causality. This story begins with a review of theories of causality since the seventeenth century that try to

31. Morton, *Realist Magic*, 64.

32. For a scathing critique of Morton and Harman, see Nathan Brown, “The Nadir of OOO: From Graham Harman's *Tool-Being* to Timothy Morton's *Realist Magic: Objects, Ontology, Causality*,” *Parrhesia*, no. 17 (2013): 62–71.

is one good thing about shame, it is that it may serve as a positive motivation to definitively abandon colonial modes of relationship, domestication, and mastery to other beings. By contrast, to free oneself from shame would be tantamount to rejecting the notion of commonality with those other beings essential to any true and lasting reconciliation. Instead, Sakai suggests that shame associated with past injustice be cherished as the basis of a common, shared relation.

But what kind of commonality is this? In the present we might feel, in fact, an overwhelming sense of insurmountable myriad differences, many of which find strong resonance—we might lazily call it cause—in the past. Yet this kind of reconciliation does not need to wait for the wounds of the past to heal. It does not, in fact, need to wait at all but, unlike denial or resolution, is rather immediately part of the present. But what kind of present is this? While the wound is not present, the commonality is, but it is not a present that could be accounted for through cumulative addition. This is where the path of the bodhisattva, who defers enlightenment for the sake of infinite other beings, is instructive. Here, waiting is displaced from the impossible healing of past wounds that occurred to bodies that no longer exist in that form to the advent of a common body that has no substantial existence yet constitutes a community based on deferral: deference to others in a time deferred not to the future but to the end of historico-philosophical time—the temporality of specific difference. To rejoin the theme of political enlightenment, we could do far worse than consult with Etienne Balibar, who writes, “‘Men’ or ‘subjects’ in this sense are never their own contemporaries, are never building a totality or a whole *in the present*, least of all in an eschatological *future present*, but must indefinitely *wait for one another*, wait for the unpredictable event of ‘their’ community, which in turn will acknowledge their non-identical singularity.”⁵⁵ This indefinite waiting-for is not waiting for the passage of time but rather waiting only for each other, thus instantly forming a community whose principle is not identity but singularity and supplementarity. Needless to say, it is my express intention here to conceive of this community beyond the categories of men and subjects explicitly referenced by Balibar, extending it to the entirety of the affective multitude.

Translating Enlightenment

Let us use this insight to turn our attention to the translation of enlightenment.

There are several ways to imagine the multiple directionality of translation in the context of “enlightenment.” Beginning with the initial connection between *bodhi* and enlightenment, we might then look at the various ways in

55. Balibar, “‘Possessive Individualism’ Reversed,” 312.

which each of the terms has separately been the object of other translational series. For instance, while keeping in mind, on the one hand, the translation of Sanskrit *bodhi* into sinic characters a millenia ago by terms such as *júe* (覺), which might be glossed in English as “awareness,” and *púti* (菩提), which is a transliteration, we could also turn our attention to the way in which terms such as “enlightenment” and *Aufklärung*, the German term that corresponds to the English word “enlightenment,” were translated into sinic characters a millenium later in Meiji Japan, first as *bunmei kaika* (文明開化), or “civilization,” and then finally as *keimō* (啟蒙), or “the removal of youthful folly,” leading to their widespread circulation in the modernization projects of East Asian populations and states with a linguistic investment in the imperial sinic heritage. The early Meiji translational context (as well as that of the late Qing, grafted onto that of the Meiji), clearly highlights the connection between enlightenment and evolution as a matric concept articulating various domains of cultural, biological, and technical individuation through the category of species difference.

Undoubtedly, this connection was not simply a Meiji invention elaborated independently by seminal figures such as Onishi Hajime (1864–1900) and Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835–1901) and subsequently taken up in similar fashion by late Qing translator-intellectuals such as Yan Fu (1854–1921), but rather a profound gloss on the nature of modernity. Arguably forming the archaeological principle of modernity’s dichotomous imperial/colonial organization, the juxtaposition of evolution and enlightenment establishes an equivalence between temporality and subjectivity, placing human history under the sign of infinite evolutionary progress. The temporal scale of evolutionary species development is collated with the subjective scale of “(rational) enlightenment.” Things get tricky, however, when the amalgamation of the two has to be assigned a precise location in an era obsessed with technologies of mapping. For philosophy, this entails the project of trying to locate and identify the seat or ground of reason. For political economy, this entails the project of designing social institutions that will favor rationalized forms of exchange. This is where the role of the modern state, as the representative of a nation, becomes crucial. On the one hand, the state is the site of rational mediation among the members of a polity. As such, the state is the organizational form that distinguishes the society of *homo sapiens*, the uniquely rational animal, from other species. At the same time, within the species, the ethnic particularity associated especially with the modern state is taken to be analogous to evolutionary specific difference. Ethnicity or culture is to humans what species are to organic life. It is this dual role of the state as the instance of an analogical mediation between evolutionary progress and rationalized relations that confers legitimacy upon the modern nation-state as it goes about enabling capitalist accumulation. Evolution and

enlightenment thus tell the same story, the story of the accumulation of, and by, species difference. The successful species is the one that most efficiently, or rationally, organizes accumulation. Early modern East Asian intellectuals understood this connection—which was hardly East Asian but rather global—as they developed a series of strategies, burdened by the premise of the nation-state, to manage the challenge of evolutionary enlightenment through the model or schema of cultural translation and exchange.

There would be much to say about the itinerary of accumulation through specific difference and the articulation of evolution and enlightenment in the East Asian context, but within the context of this essay, I would like to focus on the implications of the idea of the mediating role of the nation-state. If the modern state is associated with the figure of rationality and progress for the benefit of everyone, that is because it supposedly defines the location at which evolutionary temporality and enlightenment subjectivity are bound together. It is precisely in that sense that the modern nation-state becomes an anthropological figure of species difference that legitimates and even glorifies accumulation for its own sake.

What I find truly fascinating about the mediating role of the nation-state is that its aura of rationality is actually constructed in this way on the basis of a series of analogies.

Analogy

Analogy has been proliferating throughout this discussion. In the first place, enlightenment appears to us as nothing but an analogy. The Madhyamaka project described by Nāgārjuna is designed to show that none of the terms of dependent origination, taught by the Buddha himself, have anything other than analogical significance. Madhyamaka distinguishes between two types of truth, so-called conventional truth and ultimate truth. Dependent origination describes a chain of causality that is ascribed to the conventional level. With regard to what Madhyamaka calls “ultimate truth,” all descriptions and arguments are themselves finally deceptive, marked by emptiness. Yet the phrase “everything is emptiness” is impossible to verify, since it will ultimately run onto its own defeasibility. Morton cites Gödel’s incompleteness theorem in support of the notion that emptiness (or causality) is thus metaphorical.⁵⁶ We are left with analogies: emptiness, enlightenment. Yet the level of conventional truth persists. Flowers do not grow in the sky; seeds lead to sprouts. Analogy thus appears both as an essential tool of categorization for a brain ill-equipped to deal with too much information and as an operation that describes the emptiness of both that brain and all of the objects, each in

56. Morton, *Realist Magic*, 27.

its own infinitesimally small, yet infinitely large, vacuum, to be found within and outside the mind. Analogy thus marks a limit that is both ontological and epistemological. And yet, since analogy is always the expression of a relation whose distance cannot be measured but is withdrawn, it inevitably has a primarily aesthetic, rather than rational, quality.

It seems to me that what Madhyamaka is really arguing for is an idea that analogy is not just one of the a priori properties of mind, an invaluable and fundamental tool for categorization, but is also an operation that characterizes the relation between epistemology and ontology. The difference between being and thought is not one of kind but rather one of analogy. But this difference itself cannot be grasped or reflected; it is, rather, an aesthetic experience of the real.

Analogy has played a central role in cybernetics and artificial intelligence ever since Norbert Wiener (1894–1964) and then Warren McCulloch (1898–1969) introduced the idea of an analogous relation between the human brain and computing. Yet the analogous relation posited by cybernetics, and taken up by both AI and cognitive science, is based on the premise of identity. According to Sowa and Majumdar, a series of three propositions have been debated by cognitive scientists concerning the status of analogical reasoning. Although they adopt a conventional dialectic format (thesis-antithesis-synthesis) to describe—and legitimize before their peers—their ideas, the dialectic in question here is merely formal.

The first stage, which is qualified as a thesis, considers analogy to be a form of mapping between different structures. Both a cat and a car have a structure, and analogy can map from the cat's eyes to the car's headlights. The antithesis that follows comes from negating the possibility that structure can be separated from mapping (and, one might add, perception from analogy, as I shall explain in a moment). Among cognitive scientists, this point of view has acquired certain acceptance as part of "high-level perception" theories that reject earlier AI notions of cognitive representation. The production of analogical associations is not just a module tacked on to perception but an integral part of perception's order at a higher level. Curiously, Sowa and Majumdar do not consider the discontinuity between mapping and structure but seem content to stick with the conventional idea of analogy as an identification of similarities between structures.

From the perspective of speculative realism, the first and second stages, thesis and antithesis, are still bound to correlationist epistemology and rationally consistent causality. Yet the epistemological understanding of analogy remains persuasive for many, as a recent work by two psychologists, *Surfaces and Essences: Analogy as the Fuel and Fire of Thinking*,⁵⁷ might

57. Douglas Hofstadter and Emmanuel Sander, *Surfaces and Essences: Analogy as the Fuel and Fire of Thinking* (New York: Basic Books, 2013).

suggest. While the reference to fire and fuel inevitably raises associations with the kind of ontological concerns that were at the heart of speculative realism and the aesthetic liberation of Mahdyamaka, the authors essentially remain within the Kantian privileging of epistemology. Analogy is a response to the epistemological limits of human animal perception, one of the principle ways in which our limited brains create categories that permit action in the face of unforeseen circumstance and change. It is only on the basis of this limitation that we can grasp the ontology of appearance and essence. This notion of analogical thought basically amounts to a theory of associationism, which attempts to explain perception of individual entities rather than undifferentiated continual flux on the basis of experiential analogies that develop through the growth of an individual organism. In the final analysis, associationism is also an implicit, causal theory of cognition.

Perhaps aware that this view of analogical reasoning merely passes the buck down the line, like the “hot potato” of mechanistic causality,⁵⁸ Sowa and Majumdar discern a third view in cognitive science, which they qualify as a synthesis. This new step is realized by “integrat[ing] the structure-building processes of perception with the structure-mapping processes of analogy.”⁵⁹ Sowa and Majumdar’s synthesis relies on the classical assumption that analogy occurs between different structures. But what happens when we look at analogy, as Gilbert Simondon does, as a relation between operations rather than structures? Analogy, in that case, would no longer be limited to “structure-mapping processes” but would also occur within “structure-building processes.” From this perspective, the integration, or “synthesis,” of which Sowa and Majumdar speak, would be transductive, not dialectical.

Simondon understands analogy as an act that puts into relation two operations, while an operation is the conversion of one structure into another structure. It is this latter conversion that is generally taken to constitute the classic, four-term (A:B is similar to C:D) definition of analogy. This is what Sowa and Majumdar call “the structure-mapping process of analogy.” Yet, for Simondon, this type of conversion, which occurs between structures, is only a “resemblance,” rather than an “analogy.” A full-fledged concept of analogy, for Simondon, does not focus on the identity of elements within a structure but rather focuses on the function that relates them. “Structures must be known by the operations that energize them and not the inverse.”⁶⁰ A structure itself is always part of a processual mutation that he calls, after physics and chemistry, “phasing.” Phase shift does not just happen

58. Morton, *Realist Magic*, 46.

59. John F. Sowa and Arun Majumdar, “Analogical Reasoning,” in *Conceptual Structures for Knowledge Creation and Communication*, ed. A. Aldo, W. Lex, and B. Ganter (Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 2003), 16–36. <http://www.jfsowa.com/pubs/analogue.htm>

60. Muriel Combes, *Gilbert Simondon and the Philosophy of the Transindividual*, trans. Thomas LaMarre (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013), 10.

according to properties or characteristics internal to an entity but rather is the result of a relation between the potentiality of an individual entity to individuate and the metastability of the milieu in which individuation occurs (and “the milieu is not only external to form or structure but also internal to it”).⁶¹ Hence, analogy signals not just a relation between structures but also a relation between operations. The reason why Simondon looks at operations in addition to structures is because of a critical understanding of the limits of the structural model for science. The challenge is that while structure easily lends itself to being an object of positive knowledge, operation can only be known by the discontinuities it negotiates.

Simondon thus develops an explanation of analogical acts that are based on the “themes of non-deterministic causality and of non-substantial identity.”⁶² What this allows Simondon to do is to establish a parallel relation between thought and being such that each operates according to the same paradigm of individuation through transductive relation. “Analogical knowledge thus establishes a relation between the operations of individuals existing outside thought and the operations of thought itself.” This kind of knowledge enables a means to conceptualize the passage from one domain of being to another “by the transfer of operations from one structure to another.”⁶³ The strict parallelism established here also means that no entity is privileged over any other as a vantage point from which to understand existence. LaMarre explains, “And so, in styling both organisms and mechanisms as ‘objects,’ [Simondon] reminds us that these beings or modes of existence are ontologically different in degree (analogous), not ontologically different in kind or nature (substantially).”⁶⁴ On the basis of these two parallel aspects—between epistemological individuation and ontological individuation on the one hand and between organisms and mechanisms on the other—we can say that the analogical act enjoys a status that is not just epistemological but also ontological. Yet it is not an act that could be attributed to anything other than the entities themselves, each and every instance in their singularity.

I am not going to be able to do justice to the highly dense and complex nature of Simondon’s attempt to “definit[iv]ely depose ‘hylomorphic’ substantialism from the throne of the whole of occidental metaphysics,”⁶⁵ but rather I hope to call upon it in a minimal way both as a “witness” (to another possibility) and as a guide for the creative resistance to the

61. Combes, *Gilbert Simondon and the Philosophy of the Transindividual*, 87.

62. Andrea Bardin, *Epistemology and Political Philosophy in Gilbert Simondon: Individuation, Technics, Social Systems* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2015), 8.

63. Combes, *Gilbert Simondon and the Philosophy of the Transindividual*, 87.

64. Thomas LaMarre, “Afterword: Humans and Machines,” in Muriel Combes, *Gilbert Simondon and the Philosophy of the Transindividual*, trans. Thomas LaMarre (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013). 90.

65. Bardin, “Epistemology and Political Philosophy,” 16.

historico-philosophical theme of specific difference incarnated by, or rationalized by, the state. In that sense, Simondon's thought appears here in this essay in the form of what Pignarre and Stengers name "yearning."⁶⁶ Yearning seeks for transformation beyond specific difference at the same time that it offers protection against the ways in which knowledge is "mobilized" and organized for the sake of accumulation. Yearning seeks, in other words, potentialities that are not mediated by the history of evolutionary enlightenment. The way in which I would like to concretize "yearning" in this context concerns the translational encounter. Inspired by Simondon, let us see if the analogical process that is translation can be understood as more than a conversion from one structure to another.

Translation

To construct a story about the accumulation of tradition that effaces the repeated indeterminacy of translational practice, it is necessary to pretend that translation is an operation external to quotidian linguistic practice, thus classifying it as "exceptional" and not normal. Naoki Sakai's theory of translation, about which I have previously written many articles, begins with the assumption that translation names something essential about the indeterminacy inherent in all forms of linguistic practice, no matter what language (as long as it is a language) they occur in. What I would like to do here is to transpose Sakai's theory of translation into Simondonian terms, to effect as it were an analogical translation, and then suggest that all of this accords perfectly well with elements of Buddhism.

The connections that I am drawing here require us to distinguish between a *metaphorical* understanding of translation and an *analogical* one. Morton writes, "*Metaphor* is just Greek for *translation*, since *meta* means *across* and *-phor* means *carrying*."⁶⁷ In Sakai's theory of translation, this is the epistemological-representationalist view of translation, against which he advances a temporal-practical view. By contrast, an analogical understanding of translation à la Simondon would look at it not as a transferential correspondence between two structures but as a relation between two operations, each of which is related to the transformation of structure. The distinction between the two enables Sakai to show how translation or, really, the representation rather than the actual practice of translation, is mobilized by the accumulative modern nation-state defined by specific difference.

66. Philippe Pignarre and Isabelle Stengers, *Capitalist Sorcery: Breaking the Spell*, trans. Andrew Goffey (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 48.

67. Morton, *Realist Magic*, 70.

Morton asserts that translation is an implicit theory of causality: "Causality is much better thought as translation."⁶⁸ This is not a linear process but reticulative and transductive. "When an iron bar clangs to the floor of a warehouse, it retroactively posits the warehouse floor in a certain way. That's what *translation* is."⁶⁹ The notion of retroactivity is essential to Sakai's critique of the epistemological representation of translation:

Only retrospectively and after translation, therefore, can we recognize the initial incommensurability as a gap, crevice, or border between fully constituted entities, spheres, or domains. But when represented as a gap, crevice or border, it is no longer incommensurate. . . . [I]ncommensurability is more like "feeling" that is prior to the explanation of how incommensurability is given rise to and cannot be determined as a represented difference (or species difference in the abodescent schemata of the species and the genus between two subjects or entities).⁷⁰

The epistemological representation of translation as an encounter between two systematically defined entities that preexist the translational situation transforms incommensurability and discontinuity into a representational form of the commensurable and the continuous. In this sense, the epistemological representation of translation posits an implicit theory of causality that is basically mechanistic. It is not the incommensurability between/within languages that calls forth the need for translation but rather the structural equivalence between two discrete unities. Against this form of causality, Sakai's use of the term "feeling" (derived from his earlier study of Itō Jinsai (1627–1705), Norinaga Motoori (1730–1801), and the "stillbirth" of Japanese national language) easily suggests the form of aesthetic causality that we discussed above.

It will be noticed, of course, that what we have been calling the epistemological representation of translation essentially adopts the analogical form that Simondon calls "resemblance" as opposed to "analogy." Resemblance, we remember, exclusively concerns the relation between structures. In the case of translation, this would be the structuralist view of language as a system constituted prior to its deployment. Against this truncated understanding of resemblance (which Simondon associates with early cybernetic theories of information exchange), the analogical perspective promoted by Simondon takes into account not just structures but also operations (the latter meaning "relational process"). The importance of the attention that Simondon devotes to operation, or relational process, in conjunction with structure is reflected in the way in which Muriel Combes begins her seminal work on Simondon.

68. Morton, *Realist Magic*, 83.

69. Morton, *Realist Magic*, 145.

70. Naoki Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity: On "Japan" and Cultural Nationalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 14.

The first chapter, which aims at what is termed “the reality of relation,” opens with a section titled, “The Operation.” In this section she explains how atomism and hylomorphism constitute, for Simondon, the primary ontological errors of previous philosophy, which equates being with the givenness of an individual. “In privileging the constituted term, [traditional ontology] has ignored the *operation* constituting the individual, that is, *individuation as process*.”⁷¹ I do not have space here to explore fully Simondon’s solution to the ontological and epistemological problems called forth by the introduction of operation into structure, but clearly the aim is to develop a science of discontinuous processes that preserves discontinuity without turning it into the commensurable. Andrea Bardin summarizes, “What Simondon calls ‘operation’ is—in evident consonance with a Bergsonian matrix—an actual process, inaccessible *as such* to objective knowledge.”⁷²

While the critique of stucturalism seen in Simondon’s work constitutes a broad attack on the organization of the relation between the humanities and the hard sciences that is significantly different from the philosophies of difference (such as deconstruction) that gained notoriety from events like the so-called Sokal affair, our interest here is dialed in on those disciplinary divisions that are internal to humanistic knowledge inherited from the colonial-imperial modernity. While inroads against an exclusively structuralist view were made at the end of the twentieth century, the WTO’s redefinition of higher education as a “service industry” has exercised an overwhelmingly mitigating effect on attempts to reorganize the disciplinary divisions of the humanities, inherited from the colonial-imperial modernity, in a way that would account for social phenomenon from the point of view of *relations* rather than structures. From the perspective of the humanities, thus, contemporary *restructuring* has come to mean much more than just a series of adjustments in the institutional interface between capital and labor. In the circular dynamic unleashed between evaluation and valorization, humanistic knowledge production overwhelmingly returns to what Simondon terms structure through disciplinary divisions that favor preconstituted objects. A restructuring, indeed.

With regard to Sakai’s theory of translation, a point of conjuncture with Simondon’s notion of operation can be seen in Sakai’s understanding of the position of the translator. If, as Combes claims, “being can be adequately known only from its middle, by seizing it at its center (*by way of* the operation of individuation and not *on the basis of* the term of this operation),”⁷³ then it makes perfect sense to examine the role of the translator situated between the two audiences for whom translation is necessary. Yet as Sakai observes

71. Combes, *Gilbert Simondon and the Philosophy of the Transindividual*, 2.

72. Bardin, “Epistemology and Political Philosophy,” 7.

73. Combes, *Gilbert Simondon and the Philosophy of the Transindividual*, 2–3.

at the beginning of his discussion of the position of the translator, "As long as the position of the translator is set aside and viewed to be secondary [with regard to linguistic practice in general] . . . two different language communities [will inevitably be] posited as separate from one another in the *representation of translation*, and . . . translation [will be] understood to be a transfer of a message from one clearly circumscribed language community into another distinctively enclosed language community."⁷⁴ The way in which Sakai overcomes this problem hinges upon distinguishing a moment that is distinct from the structure of communicational transfer. The name for this moment is "address."⁷⁵ As a performative, address names the instantiation of a relation (between addressor and addressee) that occurs prior to, and without any guarantee of, the informational exchange that characterizes communication. To summarize, address thus names an operation in the Simondonian sense, "inaccessible *as such* to objective knowledge," to be judged rather by its performative, individuating effects.

From this perspective, while there is strictly speaking no meaning to be transferred and no communities organized around the taxonomy of individual-species-genus between which to effectuate a transfer, the process of translation itself is precisely a practice of enlightenment.

The Apparatus of Area and the Affective Multitude

This chapter began with a discussion of the way in which the anthropological project of modernity creates a division and reversible feedback loop between the production of knowledge and the geocultural organization of populations, and pursued this idea through an itinerary critiquing the way in which a structural vision of comparativism, based on an epistemological representation of translation, has become the vehicle for that anthropological project today. Knowledge production in the humanities is never simply concerned with constative utterances about social objects but is always also socially performative. Disciplinary divisions within the humanities become meaningful in differential ways, precisely because they are thought to correspond, in some general way, both to divisions among global populations and to the distinction between species-universality and group variation. This correspondence constitutes what we call *the apparatus of area*. The affective multitude is neither a regulative principle nor a formal ideal but an ongoing, practical translation-in-common that deactivates the apparatus of area, as well as the "species" and "specialists" associated with such "milieu." To redirect a phrase from Fritz Breithaupt, "[Walter] Benjamin's goal is not the

74. Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity*, 5–6.

75. Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity*, 4.

constitution of new schools or trends within the safe frame of the institution of academia—*das kleine Spiel der Positionen und Positionenchen*—but rather the act of making the institutionalized intellectual unnecessary. . . . Thus, Benjamin distinguishes sharply between the ‘delivering of an apparatus of production [such as the university, I might add] and its change’ [*Belieferung eines Produktionsapparates und seiner Veränderung*].”⁷⁶

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76. My thanks to Peter Button for alerting me to this passage from Benjamin via Breithaupt. This is also an opportune moment to thank the editors of this volume, Steve Choe and Mayumo Inoue, for their work in putting this collection together. Fritz Breithaupt, "History as the Delayed Disintegration of Phenomena," in *Benjamin's Ghosts: Interventions in Contemporary Literary and Cultural Theory*, ed. Gerhard Richter (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002), 202.

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