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Editorial

In this issue of *e-flux journal*, deep glances at the past hope to make sense of the present by diving into history's original abysses and early promises. Mi You brings us a refreshingly constructive analysis of this year's documenta fifteen, its curators, its intended organizational structure, and its audiences. Olga Olina, Hallie Ayres, and Anton Vidokle chart suppressed, banned, and otherwise disappeared languages in a resource that sprawls over geography and time from 1367 to today, showing an ongoing process of erasure and survival that corresponds with the rise of nation-states.

Sometimes it's only possible to understand the present by seeing what was later scrubbed away. Nicola Perugini and Tommaso Fiscaletti explore fascist lineages that keep reemerging in their research of bathhouses that proletarian Italian youths were sent to each summer in the 1930s for regimens of strict hygiene, sunshine, and outward worship of Mussolini. Leon Dische Becker and Cosmo Bjorkenheim argue that some things are better left in the past, recommending against Hollywood directors mounting a fourth remake of H. G. Wells's *The Island of Doctor Moreau*. Better to leave its curses and racist colonial critiques in the dust.

In issue 23 of *e-flux journal* (March 2011), Bruno Latour recounted an uneven 1922 conversation between Henri Bergson and Albert Einstein, in which Einstein almost entirely dismissed Bergson's deep, yet critical, engagement with the theory of relativity. "After Bergson spoke for thirty minutes," Latour wrote, "Einstein made a terse two-minute remark, ending with this damning sentence: 'Hence there is no philosopher's time; there is only a psychological time different from the time of the physicist.'" Latour, looking at the end of the twentieth century from 2011, highlighted this typical scientist's dismissal of philosophy, politics, and art. At the time, he asked, "Can we do better at the beginning of the twenty-first century? In other words, is it possible to give Bergson another chance to make his case that, no, he is not talking about subjective time and space, but is rather proposing an alternative to Einstein's cosmology?" Bruno Latour died this October, and in this issue his colleague Martin Guinard shares memories of a thinker who never stopped asking massive questions and drawing connections. Through his boundless writing and expansive collaborations, he never stopped marveling at our world.

By following okra, mustard greens, freekeh, and other flora through various times and places, Pelin Tan shares the entangled, exiled existences and resiliences of human refugees and the plants that survive with them. In a conversation between Matt Peterson and Sabu Kohso about radiation and revolution (also the title of Kohso's recent book), Kohso traces deep, interconnected fault lines between the ongoing aftermaths of the Fukushima disaster and the Covid pandemic, as well as the imperial and also liberatory history of activist movements in Tokyo,

New York, and all places where people rise up against a disintegrating world.

In the second installment of Su Wei's essay on emotion in post-1949 art in China, he writes explicitly about looking at the past to understand China's present. Within this, he also describes historical, forward-looking views of late-twentieth-century artists, such as artist and theorist Zhang Anzhi and his belief that art was a force for "creating emotions for a new world." Su Wei asks, "Might brief flashes of emotion in historical moments of uncertainty help us to see the maze that we are currently in?"

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Whether this documenta should be defended is not the question. The question is how it can be defended in a way that also allows for a constructive critique of the exhibition.

Anti-Semitism allegations have cast dark clouds over what is arguably the world's largest contemporary art exhibition. The culmination of these events was documenta's decision in June to remove a banner made by the Indonesian collective Taring Padi depicting the political violence of the Suharto regime, in which the public noticed two clearly anti-Semitic figures. But by that point a cascade of events had been fermenting for months. These include a January blog post by a small Kassel-based organization decrying members of the Palestinian collective The Question of Funding as anti-Semitic; a cancelled series of public debates on anti-Semitism and racism in May; various instances of inadequate crisis management; and even before the opening, the exhibition space of the Palestinian collective was vandalized with a cryptic death threat. All the while, pressure was building up at the top level of German politics, where the Green cultural minister had been involved in mitigation since the very beginning.

Mi You

What Politics? What Aesthetics?: Reflections on documenta fifteen

documenta fifteen: The Question of Funding hosts Eltiqa, 2022, installation view, WH22, Kassel, June 15, 2022. Photo: Nils Klinger.

Hosted in Kassel, a small city in central Germany, the hundred-day event with a budget of €42.2 million[1] included 1,500 artists participating in the exhibition and public programs and welcomed over 730,000 visitors. The Jakarta-based artist collective ruangrupa were appointed artistic directors and proposed "lumbung" (rice barn) as a curatorial approach, a concept in which collaboration, redistribution, and collective governance are key to the process and material realization. The exhibition venues were transformed into buzzing showcases of art and activism, collaborative community-building processes, and archives that are revisited and kept alive. The accompanying activations, from talks to DJ sets, from

Dan Perjovschi, Anti War Drawings, 2022, three banners. Photo: Nicolas Wefers.

shared meals to cleansing rituals, extended the gesture of hospitality to the audience and lent the event a festive character. The media was split between homing in on perceived instances of anti-Semitism (such as the German weekly *Der Spiegel*'s overstatement of "Antisemita 15") and cheerleading for the "good vibes" provided by ruangrupa's inclusive exhibition concept.

It is regrettable that the potential for anti-Semitic content was not mitigated—and could not be, as multiple parties kept on talking over each other. While one side referred to the specific German historical burden of preventing hate speech, the other pointed to the perpetuation of racial prejudice, counter-charging the initial allegations of anti-Semitism as racist and made in bad faith—which, of course, they were. But it is even more regrettable to see that in this febrile, frequently hostile atmosphere in the media, when faced with political headwinds, art practitioners, curators, managers, and the public all turned on one another. No one came away from the turmoil unscathed. Except, that is, for those on the far right clamoring for the defunding of this event in the future.

It is perhaps not altogether surprising that international leftist art critics have broadly aligned with curators and artists against what is considered a German bureaucratic managerial machine that enforces what it purports to be benevolent censorship. The media's[2] simplistic deployment of the term "Global South" to homogenize disparate realities and serve as a placeholder in a political morality play—in which the West is always already cast as the baddie—are rightly subject to critique. However, it is easier to take an antiestablishment view than to build an institution. Many from the Global South intimately know how important it is to build and maintain institutions. Working with various governmental actors, representatives of the private sector, foreign funding bodies, and diverse community actors is difficult but extends a much-needed lifeline to Global South initiatives. When so much is at stake in what is both a crisis of the institution and of the hitherto hegemonic Global North, could the South champion decolonization by putting its know-how into a spirited defense of institutions? Could this be done, if only to acknowledge that it is possible to build something—something institutional—together despite considerable geopolitical and ideological differences? How could this be done with defiance, in order to rise above being cast as the permanently

victimized junior partner?

Admittedly, this is a counterintuitive, perhaps even unfashionable and untimely ask. The cognitive divide between the North and the South runs deep. One might therefore be forgiven for assuming that the antiestablishment thrust of documenta fifteen issues from an anti-Western, counter-hegemonic framework, as cultural commentators in Germany have noted with an air of haughty disapproval. Upon first seeing the exhibits, I immediately thought that the World Social Forum must have been the curatorial reference for this documenta. An umbrella for the alter-globalization movement with the bold claim that "Another World Is Possible," the annual World Social Forum, founded in 2001, has hosted diverse groups of activists from worker, peasant, transgender, Indigenous, and peace movements, deliberately accompanied by an art and culture program, which was visited by 150,000 people at the Forum's peak in the mid-2000s. Where else but ruangrupa's documenta would one expect to see (a bit of a throwback to) so many artistic and cultural manifestations of grassroots activism and organized causes across the world? But when invited by the World Social Forum to present their work in 2004, ruangrupa declined the offer by saying, "It's too political for us."

A constructive critique might take as its starting point the transnationalization of political alignments and the instrumentalization of the arts in the Global South today.

Keimin Bunka Shidosho office in Jakarta. License: Public domain.

The Socioeconomic Context

ruangrupa is a collective that was established in 2000, two years after the collapse of Indonesia's Suharto regime and the concomitant New Order that reigned from 1965 to 1998 and deliberately stymied mass participation in the political process. Originally a small group of artists who wanted to open a meeting space to engage with diverse artistic practices, ruangrupa has deftly navigated between foreign funding bodies, local government agencies, and the private sector to support their activities. A large sum that ruangrupa received around 2018 from the Ford Foundation caused a schism in the collective. Those who remained used the money to build a space and cultural infrastructure in Jakarta. Clearly, foreign donors not only carry the danger of the "NGO-ization" of the art sector in the Global South[3] but also risk presenting artists and art organizations in increasingly interchangeable ways, whereby a type of art collective is asked to solve a type of social issue.[4] ruangrupa's approach to institutions could be described as "tactical," combining activism and populism while trying to find their own place in the food chain of sponsors.[5] One could argue that this dilemma informs a practice that transcends the critique of the instrumentalization of art—a critique rehearsed ad nauseam in Western art discourse—and focuses instead on the embeddedness of art in society. But when asked to curate documenta, ruangrupa had to ask themselves how to carve out a place for this approach in the "hegemonic center" of the art world.

Lumbung, the central concept of documenta fifteen, refers to Indonesian rice barns where surplus crops are stored, to be redistributed within the community in times of need. The term is held up as a paradigm and serves as a model for ruangrupa's modus operandi of resource allocation and sharing among the participating artists and surrounding society. However, the use of the concept is not devoid of self-exoticization, and the image of community life and self-governance is not as simple, or simply good, as it seems. Lumbung also symbolizes the perennial issue of food insecurity, with Indonesians caught between the aspiration for self-sufficiency and international marketization and development. The moral order of sharing and exchange through lumbung coexisted with centralized management of decentralized lumbungs in historical empires such as Ubud. Later, the imperative for self-sufficiency was as much on the political agenda of Suharto's government as in now-president Jokowi's development of a national food reserve called "Lumbung Pangan Nasional."[6] The latter emerged to manage the downsides of global food conglomerates and development agencies. But there is more to the curatorial use of lumbung than an uncomfortable terminological affinity with the populists in power. Marxian cultural theorists will rightly recognize the incorporation of a residual practice (communal culture based on surplus) into a dominant system of practices and values (as rhetorics serving neoliberal statecraft).[7]

There is nothing natural, spontaneous, or, for lack of a better word, innocent about public and community art in Indonesia. The brief episode of Keimin Bunka Shidosho (KBS, literally "Institute for People's Education and Cultural Guidance," popularly known as "cultural center")

formed part of the propaganda machine during the Japanese occupation of Indonesia from 1942 to 1945 and has left a lasting legacy in modern art history. The Japanese pursued three propaganda objectives that left an imprint on Javanese art. Locals were encouraged to engage in artistic practices emanating from everyday life, to foster public involvement, and to exhibit in places easily accessible to the public. In this vein, Takashi Kono, graphic designer and supervisor of the Fine Art department of KBS, contended that art "should not be above but right in the middle of society."[8] Now, as ever, one needs to articulate what collectivity means and be clearheaded about cooptation.

Other Indonesian traditions of collectivism harkening back to the pre-independence 1930s include *gotong-royong* (mutual cooperation) and *sanggar*, a collective space where members share their learning experiences under the auspices of a mentor.[9] The group Seniman Indonesia Muda (SIM, founded in 1946) played a prominent role in popularizing sanggar, becoming a "national model" for artist collectives in Indonesia. The key difference between sanggar and more conventional master classes and workshops in the Western tradition is the centrality of political discussions, if not of indoctrination,[10] that helped to promote the anti-colonial agenda, both in its nationalist and leftist iterations. In this sense the sanggar model is closer to the Artists' Union of the USSR, which arose at approximately the same time.

Another key feature of sanggar is the collective production of art. In the authoritarian New Order era the tendency to form art collectives remained prevalent, but they were strongly depoliticized, even as they exalted their commitment to a modern understanding of nationhood. The sanggar system of training was replaced by art academies and eventually transformed into a mere space to study or produce paintings together.[11] Since 1998, new "alternative" models of collective production have proliferated, growing out of the *reformasi* mindset and its liberal and individualistic tendencies that resonated with an era that was neoliberal in its economic outlook and postmodern in its aesthetic sensibilities. Reminiscences of the sanggar or New Order hierarchical academic models can be seen in cases where a senior artist (usually the founder) acts as a "mentor" to educate or guide young artists.

ruangrupa's management, although it aims to overcome vertical authority in favor of horizontal structures, has itself fallen victim to the siren song of hierarchical organization.[12] It owes something to the representational logic of the New Order, practicing a hodgepodge of activism and populism.[13] At the same time, the instrumentalization of art and its collective coproduction conjure the original sanggar spirit. Like other concepts invoked by ruangrupa such as lumbung, sanggar constitutes a peculiar hybrid of artistic autonomy and social responsibility. The conceptual duality of these notions means that the artistic activities can be both antagonistic and ameliorative.[14]

documenta fifteen: Jatiwangi art Factory, installation view, Hübner areal, Kassel, 2022. Photo: Frank Sperling.

What Politics? What Aesthetics?

If the roots and operations of collectives in the Global South merit more attention, the ways in which they become projections of politics for the consumption of audiences in the Global North also require further investigation. The transformation of community-based, collective, and participatory art from a formal principle to a method of merging art and politics stands in need of a sustained inquiry. As Claire Bishop described in a recent talk reflecting on her 2012 book *Artificial Hells*, the kind of participatory art she set out to criticize in her book substituted politics for art. In other words, faced with a perceived political gridlock in the late 1990s and early 2000s, artists transposed political discourses and practices onto the field of art and its adjacent institutions. On the other hand, later artistic practices tended to pick up elements of participatory, community-based, but also relational art in support of political activism (Occupy Wall Street, Black Lives Matter, Gilets Jaunes, environmental activism, the ongoing protests in Chile, etc.).[15] Bishop's reflections thus outline the different modalities of collective and community-based art in the West, channeling in new ways Benjamin's distinction between the "aestheticization of politics" and the "politicization of aesthetics."

From a Global South perspective, perhaps the best one could have hoped for in this documenta is an energizing "anti-aesthetics of anti-politics" celebrating the efficacy of art and the positive sense of "anti-politics," at least in the particular places where they happen.[16] The World Social Forum has vanished into relative insignificance mostly because of global socioeconomic transformations and the lack of adequate institutional fora to articulate protest. What remains of the original impetus can be observed at

documenta, an institution that has historically always reflected on the social function of art, but has also functioned as a conduit for art-driven internationalist politics (paving the way for the "First Transnational," as Peter Osborne wryly termed it[17]).

When institutions in the Global North showcase contemporary art from the Global South—sometimes mediated by Global South curators—there is a tendency to abide too readily by the idea that the separation of art and (everyday) culture[18] is completely irrelevant to artistic discourses in the Global South. Projecting the solution to the problem of art's social function on an absolute "other" creates a convenient shortcut to bypass the issue. Typically, institutional programs take the form of proposing either an immanent synthesis, in which art is defined either in utilitarian terms within a given society, or as a transcendental medium, if not to say a spiritual force that possesses agency within everyday life (see the oversupply of rituals at documenta). Regardless of the form that is emphasized in individual cases, such artworks are presented as fully incommensurable within the logic of autonomous art associated with the Global North, thereby foreclosing any political or even aesthetic critique based on distinctions between art and nonart. At the same time, art from the Global South is not necessarily framed as an intentional and radical counterpoint to depoliticized global art, but rather as integrated social practice, with individual artists and collectives supposedly representing the tenets of "their culture."

FSC Dynamo Windrad, Kassel.

Arguably, the greatest opportunity inherent in this documenta was to go beyond such sterile oppositions and to encourage the practice, and not just the display, of different ways of doing and making art/culture. ruangrupa visionarily incorporated the thriving ecosystem of local—often small—social and art initiatives into its "*ekosistem*" and offered space for them to work, network, and create programs. Dynamo Windrad, a local Kassel football club with strong leftist leanings, has long been offering political education alongside its sports activities, reaching out to children with migration backgrounds in particular. In this spirit, documenta fifteen hosted a "Fussballalla" event to coincide with the UEFA European Football Championship in 2021, and collaborated with Dynamo to put together a program for this year's exhibition. However, it was hard to cut through the wall of scandal and outrage surrounding the latest edition of documenta to offer something meaningful to the crowds usually drawn to Dynamo games. By all means, the football club has already cultivated a well-functioning ecosystem that is both social and artistic; documenta fifteen aspired to achieve something similar (with added artistic elements) but was not geared towards long-term commitment. As part of documenta fifteen, artists could be led to draw inspiration from Dynamo's negotiation with political parties for funding, not just piggyback on its successes and subsume it into the art machine. In return, Dynamo stood to benefit from entering into exchanges with other initiatives present in Kassel. Neither happened enough. At documenta fifteen, even among initiatives of the Global South, extended interactions were in short supply.

Those intent on learning from non-Western operational models would be well advised to immerse themselves in the context in which they originated. One example of artists operating beyond the art machine is Jatiwangi art Factory based in rural West Java, which has brought back to life a local clay roof-tile factory, successfully keeping it afloat for more than twenty years. In addition, it established a practice of making music with clay tiles. With local and international support, the collective has opened a terracotta museum and art biennial, integrated its music program into school curricula, and hosted spectacular live performances for enraptured audiences. Jatiwangi's presentation at documenta was a clever mix of artistic installations, interactive works, and performances, where the audience was invited to join in the celebration of grassroots DIY creativity. Yet from a curatorial point of view, one might object that if the stated point of the exhibition was to deliver more than moments of collective elation, then the curators should have provided an account of how Jatiwangi art Factory juggles grassroots creativity at a small scale and a much larger playing field with regimented politics, both of the municipal government and international NGOs. Here, things may not be all that joyful after all. Does a public oath to protect Jatiwangi culture and cultivate clay sworn by local political leaders and repeated by thousands of villagers and students really lend itself to being a paragon of emancipatory politics?[19] And if that's the price to pay for collective self-empowerment, are there any lessons from this experiment that practitioners elsewhere might heed?

For starters, practitioners in Germany, or anywhere else in the more privileged parts of the world, should learn not to

take their cultural funding for granted. Indeed, given the multiple crises engulfing Western societies, even in Germany art funding may not be sustainable at current levels in the long run. Demonstrating one's own social relevance and tapping into alternative funding sources, whether political, developmental, private, or otherwise, are surely skills that will come in handy—so is anticipating the compromises that different types of funding entail. Add to that a healthy distance from the more excessive outgrowths of the puritanical morality that, over the last decade or so, has made significant inroads into the art world.[20] Emancipatory politics could be possible even under compromised funding conditions if one is articulate about one's own politics. The critique is a means to an end—a horizon of progressive politics, not an end in itself.

Artistic Team and ruangrupa members at ruruHaus in Kassel, 2021. From left to right: Lara Khaldi, Iswanto Hartono, Gertrude Flentge, Mirwan Andan, Frederikke Hansen, Julia Sarisetiati, Reza Afisina, Ajeng Nurul Aini, Ade Darmawan, and Indra Ameng. Photo: Nicolas Wefers.

Money and What To Do With It

There is a recognizable ecosystemic turn in organizational and curatorial practices today. Ecosystems strive to structurally integrate different "stakeholders" including artists, audiences, and their wider communities, administrators, and curators, as well as infrastructures. Writings on ecosystems thinking have proliferated since the 1960s, most notably in the wake of the "systems ecology" championed by, among others, Eugene Odum. Key elements in this development were the rise of eco-energetics (the analysis of functional attributes like flows of matter and energy), efforts at resource conservation, comprehensive recycling systems, and a broader awareness of the dynamics of ecosystems. In the 1980s and '90s, ecosystem studies shifted from a descriptive to a more prescriptive regime, especially as far as resilience, sustainability, and a new ethics of preservation were concerned in spheres such as business and technological innovations. This is not surprising, given the cybernetic undertones of the term "ecosystem" and the techno-social managerial imaginaries inherent in it. In arts and culture, one finds Ian David Moss's "ecosystem-based arts research" and recent calls to conceive of museums as ecosystems, for example at the Taipei Biennial in 2018.[21]

By enumerating the different actors within the field of art, ecosystem thinking is supposed to help adjust and improve the system. Concretely, however, it is often aimed at a more or less comfortable form of artistic survival in places lacking the appropriate infrastructure. ruangrupa cofounder Ade Darmawan explains the role of self-organized art collectives this way: "In the absence of formal art infrastructure, they work to improve the local system. They attempt an ideal system … Artistic strategies are developed in accordance with the ecosystem in which the initiative of artists lives."[22]

On a slightly bigger scale, the art organization Koalisi Seni (Indonesian Art Coalition) is working directly within legal and administrative spheres to promote (and ratify) the goal of a "healthy" or "balanced" art ecosystem.[23] Policy papers from cultural politicians and legislative texts in Indonesia teem with "ecosystem" terminology. For example, Law No. 5/2017 on the Advancement of Culture, ratified in 2017, discusses the role of cultural ecosystems (*ekosistem Kebudayaan*) at length.[24] The current left-leaning cultural minister has injected terms such as "participation," "empowerment," and "social entrepreneurship" into his policy dispensations, all the while diminishing the room to maneuver for artistic initiatives and cultural organizations.

Talk of ecosystems can be an exercise in shrewd political PR as much as it can point to a conceptual edifice built on sheer material necessity. All too often, the curators' use of the term at documenta fifteen mistook one for the other. Several endogenous initiatives and ecosystems on display in Kassel came into being in places where infrastructure development lagged behind, making it necessary to assemble the resources needed for cultural production under conditions of scarcity. But now, bolstered by generous funding from documenta fifteen, such initiatives are faced with the unnerving question of what to do with this money.

At the heart of documenta fifteen was a curatorial concept striving for the construction of collectivities and new forms of self-organization. Such experiments and reconfigurations do not occur in a vacuum. They have blossomed, admittedly on a smaller scale, under such monikers as "infrastructure critique," "para-institutions,"[25] "translocal organizations,"[26] "alter-institutional and para-institutional organizations,"[27] and "instituent practices."[28] Yet the flourishing of these concepts raises an intriguing question: Does the organizational become an end in itself, a kind of institutional self-actualization of

the artists, curators, and community organizers? Are we entering an era in which artistic curatorial practices are merged into organizational development, or even entrepreneurship?[29]

That institutional funding irrigated, as it were, the ecosystems of many local initiatives around the world might indicate that ruangrupa managed to reconfigure the biennial format from the "back end." documenta fifteen relied on a governance structure of "mini *majelis*" ("gathering" or "meeting" in Indonesian): based on their affinities, five collectives or individual artists from the documenta artist list were grouped together in order to share ideas, skills, programmatic outlooks, and a common space. They were also expected to oversee the management of their financial resources. In addition to the seed funding (or honorarium) of €20,000 and the €50,000 to €60,000 production budget allocated to each participating collective or individual artist, there was a €20,000 allowance for each group or artist that went into the collective pool of each mini *majelis*. The five collectives were to decide jointly on how to spend the €100,000.

In reality, spending the money was subject to certain rules imposed by the institution. Most importantly, it needed to be spent within the documenta framework, which meant that artists ended up inviting their friends and colleagues to put on "something" at documenta. By spreading the money too thin, what was heralded as collective self-empowerment was reduced to an assemblage of small gestures. The contacts between the invited artists, their peers, and the audience often did not amount to anything resembling a learning experience worthy of the name. The back end of a biennial is still the back end of *a* biennial, and those in the South should know that the resources of this back end run downstream.[30] While attempts to rethink the economy of biennials and to reconfigure their organizational structure are not only welcome but overdue, at the end of the day, redistributing downstream from a fixed-use pot will not affect, let alone threaten, the status quo in the art world.

Given that the value chain in the art world is predictably short, it only takes two or three levels of downstream redistribution to reach the much-vaunted "communities." The exhibition's lumbung shop, rather than generating revenues upstream, embodied everything that is problematic about value chains in the art world. Handcrafted goods from small communities in the Global South, created in association or coordination with artists, were sold at documenta and beyond its duration. This is the well-worn value-adding mechanism of eco-minded artisanal consumer goods, with the added veneer of art. The art world's fetishization of handicraft has invited objections as early as the Arts and Crafts movement in nineteenth-century England, and yet there was little engagement with diverse and complex value chains at this documenta.

To be sure, artists with nuanced understandings of economics were present, but the lack of explicit curatorial framing detracted from the critical propositions—or even better, critical viabilities—of such nuanced projects. Inland, an art and agriculture initiative based in Spain, advises the EU on the use of art for rural development policies while facilitating shepherds' and nomadic peoples' movements.[31] It is also reconstructing an abandoned village for collective artistic and agricultural production. Over the years, the group has set up a Shepherds School and a multidisciplinary syllabus shedding light on the relationship between art, farmers' know-how, and agro-ecology. Their presentation at documenta fifteen was a safe balance of art, documents, ethnographic objects, and a cheese pavilion. To highlight how Inland's practice aligns with larger public and private interests, my colleague Vienne Chan and I have designed a Social and Environmental Investment Plan to create sustainable funding for the Shepherds School.[32] At the same time, Inland, together with artist Hito Steyerl, has been working on a "Cheesecoin" to model a noncapitalist economy that has its supply tied to annual cheese production, and hence to ecological well-being. The coin, endowed with a gift-like or even talismanic character, is supposed to circulate in the community. At documenta, Steyerl produced a video driven by her signature tongue-in-cheek narrative that framed Cheesecoin as a fictive currency fueling the struggle against a reality TV show encroaching on Inland.

The push of Inland to go beyond art cannot evade the pull of the art world, which collapses serious endeavors to change society into speculative narratives. Still, the actual practice of Inland exceeds the attention economy of the art world, and some of the initiatives do carry out situated and long-term social and cultural work beyond the exhibition format accorded to them by documenta. If the political battles of the art world were the only battles that they—and all of us involved in art—were waging, then some complacency in curatorship and in viewership could be allowed. Instead, we might very well flex the wrong muscles for too long, until we realize politics is happening somewhere else.

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1
According to the exhibition's five-year economic plan for 2019 to 2023, this budget is made up of the following: admission fees €12.5 million; third-party funds and other income €4.7 million; the shareholders—the city of Kassel and the state of Hesse—€10.75 million each; and the German Federal Cultural Foundation €3.5 million. On top of that, a buffer of €5 to €6 million is set aside for contingencies.

2
Florian Cramer made a detailed mapping of the German media and the political factions behind the documenta debates in his contribution to the symposium "(un)Common Grounds: Reflecting on documenta fifteen" hosted by Framer Framed on September 23, 2022. A video recording of the symposium will be available in the near future. In the meantime, see https://framerframed.nl/en/projecten/uncommon-grounds-reflecting-on-documenta-fifteen/ .

3
Hanan Toukan interprets the depoliticizing effects of the "NGO-ization" of society as resulting from the professionalization of activism and a shift from a grassroots "political society" to a professionalized elite "civil society." See Toukan, "On Being 'The Other' in Post-Civil War Lebanon: Aid and the Politics of Art in Processes of Contemporary Cultural Production," *Arab Studies Journal* 18, no. 1 (2010). See also Minna Valjakka, "Arts and Ecosystems: Building Towards Regeneration of 'Cultural Resilience' in Indonesia," in *Forces of Art: Perspectives from a Changing World* , ed. Carin Kuoni et al. (Valiz, 2021).

4
See, for example, Justin Malachowski's study on documenta fifteen member El Warcha: "Staging Arts in the Historic City: Development Funding, Social Media Images, and Tunisia's Contemporary Public Art Scene," *Journal of City and Society* , forthcoming.

5
David Teh, "Who Cares a Lot? Ruangrupa as Curatorship," *Afterall* , no. 30 (2012) https://afterall.org/article/who-cares-a-lot-ruangrupa-as-curatorship .

6
Lula Lasminingrat and Efriza, "The Development of National Food Estate: The Indonesian Food Crisis Anticipation Strategy," *Jurnal Pertahanan & Bela Negara* 10, no. 3 (2020). See also an analysis on the deployment of lumbung, both historical and in policy speak, in Graeme MacRae and Thomas Reuter, "Lumbung Nation," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 48, no. 142 (2020).

7
See, for example, Raymond Williams, "Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory," *New Left Review*, no. 82 (1973).

8
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Sabu Kohso in conversation with Matt Peterson

The Catastrophe Revealed: On Radiation and Revolution

On the very first page of Franco "Bifo" Berardi's recent book *The Third Unconscious*, he writes, "The concepts that emerge in Sabu Kohso's understanding of the Fukushima 2011 apocalypses are key for interpreting the global apocalypses of 2020: the ubiquitous, unstoppable proliferation of the principle of dissolution (radiation, viruses), the erosion of all symbolic and political orders, and the comeback of the long-denied Earth."[1] Bifo is referring to *Radiation and Revolution*, the first book in English by Japanese theorist, translator, and activist Sabu Kohso, published by Duke University Press. In the book Kohso uses the Fukushima disaster and its aftermath to think the question of revolutionary decomposition in both Japan and the world. Kohso takes us through the formation of the insular and imperial Japanese nation-state project, its embeddedness within American empire, and its resulting history of nuclear devastation. Out of this wreckage of planetary ecological breakdown, Kohso says we are now newly able to imagine a revolution of terrestrial inhabitation, freed from the failure of historical materialism to imagine an apocalyptic communism, what he calls a "rediscovery of the Earth amidst the decomposition of the World."[2]

I recently spoke with Kohso about Covid as a global Fukushima event, Tokyo and New York as sites of imperial disaster, and his political ontology of revolution and power.

—Matt Peterson

Matt Peterson: Your book uses Fukushima as both a narrative device and conceptual framework to think through the last decade of struggles, offering a schema of disaster, catastrophe, and apocalypse. In many ways Covid serves this same function of revealing the disaster we're living in. Almost instantly it was clear that Covid would come to delimit a global paradigmatic shift along the lines of 9/11, with an unmistakable before and after. How can you transpose your research to think about Covid as a worldwide version of this Fukushima experience?

Sabu Kohso: Yes, naturally, I compare the Fukushima experience with the Covid pandemic, because really both disasters are global, and they are in a sense both endless. The nuclear disaster has been eclipsed by the pandemic, but it's not over. The Fukushima reactors are still releasing radionuclides into the planetary environment, so we are now living through a synergy of Fukushima and Covid, along with other ongoing disasters, and the mutations that accompany them.

We can think of this situation as a kind of chaos in which we are exposed to all these mixing and mutating planetary forces, and we cannot grasp the way our bodies are being thrown into this reality. If there's one conclusion to draw from my experiences with Fukushima, it is that traditional politics cannot help us to deal with this situation. By that I

Reactor control room at Fukushima 1 nuclear power plant in Japan, 1999. License: CC BY 2.0.

mean the geopolitics of capitalist nation-states, based upon their territories, and on their ontology of "the World," or the global totality that is the end limit of the capitalist state mode of development. Of course, we have no choice but to go on dealing with the geopolitical crises triggered by planetary phenomena such as radiation and coronavirus, climate change, the toxification of the environment, and so on—these crises will continue to determine the conditions for governance and profit-making on national and global scales. But what Fukushima has revealed is that we are also living in an age of climato-politics in which we must confront the chaos of planetary flows that trespass the borders of nation-states and evade their attempts at control.

The revelation of the Fukushima disaster was twofold. It revealed the powers that have made Japan and the World in this way, but it also revealed the powers of people's lives-as-struggle on earth. For me, what was most inspiring in the post-Fukushima struggles were not just the huge protests or the direct actions, but also the way that so many autonomous initiatives appeared and flourished, especially in the first years after the disaster. Household reproductive workers were especially active. These were mostly women who self-organized to check water and food for radioactivity. There were local radiation monitoring centers established everywhere, and there was the movement of voluntary evacuees who left not only from Fukushima and the Tohoku region, but from Tokyo as well. Many were experimenting with different ways of living in different places, further from the center of the Tokyo metropolis and its hyper-consumerist forms of life.

If these post-Fukushima struggles have a message for us now amid the Covid pandemic, it is that we can and must confront these planetary flows, like radioactivity or coronavirus, in our own lives. This means that we must wage our struggles for survival not as national citizens or residents, but as planetary inhabitants. This shift ultimately entails an ontological dimension.

Fukushima nuclear plant after the tsunami hit.

Despite the similarities between the Fukushima disaster and the Covid pandemic, the natures of radiation and the coronavirus are very different. In a way, they each show us what is essential in our lives and relations, by the dangers that they pose to them. Radiation is invisible, and it travels uncontrollably over great distances, along complex flows of planetary movements. The threat of radiation contamination is everywhere, and it destroys our trust in the land. It breaks the fundamental rapport of people with their living environments. On the other hand, Covid is this sometimes-deadly virus that spreads by person-to-person contact, so it threatens any and all social relations that involve corporeal, intra-human interactivity.

The disaster of the Covid pandemic reveals the crucial roles of mass corporeality: sensuality and physicality, assembly, mass events, and international movement and traveling. Its effects accentuate and intensify class and social divisions. The effects of the virus itself hit poor and marginalized populations harder, while the political measures to confine social activities and gatherings make them poorer. But at the same time, it was in the middle of this disaster that the 2020 uprisings took place. The peak of insurrection against the police corresponded to a peak in the pandemic. And an incredible series of riots, lootings, mass demonstrations, autonomous zones, and statue demolitions liberated us from the depression of confinement and social isolation, as it fed anti-colonial currents throughout the US and across the planet. As you and others have discussed, these uprisings went hand in hand with mutual aid projects, or with autonomous, community-based organizations, which had already been activated in response to the pandemic.

One idea that I've been thinking through lately, about the struggles of planetary inhabitants, is that they must involve at least three territories of practice, which can be designated by three principles of action: the first is protection of life, the second is militancy for confrontation, and the third is autonomy to connect the two. If there is some hope for the grim futures of disaster and crisis to come, it's that in confronting apocalyptic situations, these three initiatives can especially flourish and enhance each other.

MP: In your book you speak of Tokyo as a site of both disaster and empire, both of which were central to the project of Japan as a capitalist nation-state project, and your hope that the events of Fukushima would lead to Tokyo's abandonment and decomposition. I know you've lived in New York for many years, which seems to serve much the same function for the American project. I'm curious how you think of the potential for lives-as-struggle within places like New York and Tokyo. How should we relate to the fight-or-flight dynamics in facing the catastrophe of the present?

Unpo Takashima, Great Kanto Earthquake, ca. 1920s. Source: Unpo Takashima / Artelino.

SK: To say something about my hope for Tokyo's decomposition, I should first say a little about Tokyo itself. The history of Tokyo is also a history of modern Japan, which is also a history of disaster. Inevitably there are the periodic earthquakes, which in the case of Fukushima became a nuclear disaster. In 1854 there was the Ansei earthquake, and in 1923 there was the Great Kanto earthquake. Tokyo's infrastructure was also nearly completely destroyed by US firebombing in 1945. And on every occasion, Japan has used the catastrophe as a fulcrum to expand its power. Each time the city gets bigger, and the reconstruction of Tokyo provokes state expansion, and vice versa. In particular, the 1923 earthquake became a driver for Japanese imperialist expansionism. The earthquake sparked fires that engulfed Tokyo and Yokohama and killed 150,000 people. Many more lost their homes and livelihoods, and so there was a tremendous mobilization of immiserated people leaving the Kanto region in need of work, organized by state and corporate interests towards Manchuria and other places, to serve the expansion of the Japanese empire. So there's a vivid collective memory of catastrophe triggering nationalism and fascism, along with totalitarian state operations and imperialist expansion. And Tokyo is always the main driver. This continues in a contemporary form with the post-Fukushima Olympics and the mega-developments of the Tokyo Bay, with their crazed utopian megalomaniac vision.

In a longer historical perspective, Tokyo is a relatively recent invention. Osaka, to the west, represents an older capital, and it embodies a more heterogeneous Asia. There's a more visible presence of foreigners, Koreans, Chinese, Okinawans, and a more visible otherness in the culture there. But Tokyo is through and through the modern capital of Japan. This was signified symbolically with its name change from Edo to Tokyo, meaning "eastern capital", with the 1868 Meiji Restoration, which marked the beginning of modernity in Japan. Since then, Tokyo has always been the leading power in the nationalist state capitalist project.

With Fukushima there was an opening when, for the first time, we could begin to imagine Tokyo's end. The distance from Fukushima to Tokyo is not far, so Tokyo was well within the sphere of radioactive fallout. In the peak moments of the threat of apocalyptic disaster, many of my friends evacuated Tokyo—maybe 60 percent of them, and their perception of Tokyo was changed in a radical way. Before, they could have imagined that their lives would be in Tokyo forever, and then all of a sudden this ended. The permanence of Tokyo was shaken. Without knowing how it would play out, this rupture and opening inspired a hope for the abandonment of Tokyo, which could play a crucial role in the decomposition of Japan.

With this in mind, the tendency of "voluntary evacuation" after Fukushima becomes significant. It includes not just Fukushima and the surrounding Tohoku region, but also Tokyo, and other parts of the Kanto region, with many inhabitants fleeing to western Japan, or further north to Hokkaido. Even though the majority of evacuees eventually returned, Fukushima marked the beginning of a slower, longer exodus from Tokyo. Away from the consumerist metropolis, some evacuees have collectively embraced different forms of life, as they start farming, or hunting, or finding other techniques for surviving more self-sufficiently.

Meanwhile, among radical activists, there were serious conflicts between differing perceptions and practices regarding radiation, polarized geographically between "those who go north" and "those who go west." Those who went north were the activists going to Fukushima to support disaster victims, and to attempt to organize nuclear workers. Those who went west were those dedicated to protecting themselves from radiation hazards, which included exodus and also community building. To many of us, it seemed that this latter tendency especially nurtured a potential for decomposing the post-nuclear disaster governance.

But then too, within that tendency there was a group that called themselves "zero-becquerelists," who became extremely fanatical. They started criticizing not only those who went north, but also anyone who continued to live in an area where radioactive contamination could be traced, especially Tokyo. These arguments had a substantial impact in the activist milieu, at least in the first two or three years. But ultimately they became futile, and we stopped hearing anything from them at all. The futility of their arguments was also their arrogance. Most people had no choice but to live in the irradiated zones. Similarly, across the planet, most people have no choice but to live in extremely polluted environments, or in places facing increasing disaster by catastrophic climate change. These places are people's homes, and the inevitable grounds of their lives in struggle.

In the complex realities we are facing, there's a dimension of the event that we cannot control, we can only follow it, and the migration of people for survival is such an event. Also now, in Japan, there are two major declines taking place: depopulation and deurbanization, or de-Tokyo-ization, and I would like to affirm these politically. For one, the depopulation of Japan should be a chance for the nation to open its borders and to learn to cohabitate with heterogeneous others. As for de-Tokyo-ization, now it continues and expands not only in response to radiation, but to all the disasters that followed Fukushima: gentrification, recession, flood, and Covid. While life in cities is becoming harder, real estate values in the countryside are going down dramatically. This is a kind of reversal of the concentration of the metropolis that grounds the expansion of Tokyo/Japan; it is a dispersion from it.

The hopeful potential of deurbanization is not cut off from the potential for urban struggle. To share a personal story, I'm thinking of a group of close friends from Osaka who've been based in a day-laborers' ghetto called Kamagasaki. In many ways, life-as-struggle there is harsh, and getting grimmer. But they're always looking for ways to empower their collective struggles for survival. And so, a few months into the Covid pandemic, several of them moved to the nearby countryside. Now they are very busy, fixing up old houses, growing rice, hunting, learning about herbal medicines. They hope that their efforts can support struggles in Osaka. It is also very important for them to welcome friends from other places, to share in collective living there, and to make it a part of a global nexus of communes.

MP: As a philosophy of revolution, your book is an important intervention, as it breaks from the dominant American or Western frameworks of democratic socialism and anti-fascism to talk of geo-philosophy, onto-politics, and a planetary becoming, where Deleuze and Guattari are seemingly your major references. How did you hope to challenge what and who we think of when we talk about revolution today?

SK: My thinking on revolution is based on my experiences of struggles since the early 1970s up until today. That includes not just broad, sociopolitical movements, but resistances in many different forms, which are always happening somewhere, somehow. And these form an impetus that continues, from the global '68, through the so-called molecular revolutions of minoritarian resistances, to the local resistances to the violences of development, such as eviction and pollution, which in Japanese we call inhabitants' movements. And then there was the global justice movement, inspired by resistances in the Global South and the uprisings around the 2008 financial meltdown, and then the Arab Spring, up until we reach the present of the post-Fukushima struggles, and now the pandemic-era insurrections against police.

Cold War–era billboard at the Hanford site. License: Public domain.

People will never stop revolting. For various reasons, no matter the consequences, people will always rise up. And these uprisings with different characters, across different times and places, seem to energize each other in some dimension. Without command or political program, or international organization, there's a planetary horizon where they reverberate. And I believe that it's the experience of these reverberating uprisings which allows us to think of revolution, to conceive it as a project of completely changing the world. From their singular experiences in history, people elaborate new ideas of revolution.

But what does "changing the world" involve? The ideas of revolution seem to become more nuanced or multidimensional. There's been an expansion of the existential dimension of "struggle" itself: it is not just sociopolitical, economic problems, it involves reproduction, the body, our living environments. And so the sites of struggle also multiply, in different dimensions: from city to periphery, production points to reproductive horizons, the spectacle to the invisible. This is what in *Radiation and Revolution* I have conceived as a shift in political ontology, moving from the horizon of national and international politics to the existential struggles of planetary inhabitants.

To be honest, sometimes I can't help but compare the post-Fukushima struggles with the more militant struggles I experienced as a high school student in Tokyo in the late sixties and early seventies. Compared to the near-revolutionary situation of popular insurrection at that time, the post-Fukushima struggles are totally disappointing, and yet they give us a model of the sort of existential practices that may be necessary for our lives-as-struggle in worlds to come. If we view the militant

struggles of the sixties and seventies as embodying the limits of national revolution, on the horizon of "the World," then perhaps the post-Fukushima struggles indicate a political ontology of the future.

Philosophically speaking, the politics of the World involves totality, dialectics, and synthesis, while a politics of the earth would entail immanence and omnipresence. But this is not a clear-cut transition from A to B. I see it instead as an irreversible tendency, or as a tendency which has emerged irreversibly, and which may possibly be endless.

This is the dynamic that I wanted to interject into the debates on revolution, to look at forces and events from a planetary perspective, to show how they operate in a dimension beyond the World and its totalizing expansion, toward singularization and dispersion. For me this was an explicit challenge to historical materialism, with its thought grounded on an implicit or explicit totality. Although historical materialism has given us this elaborate system, which works for analyzing the World of the capitalist state mode of development, it is much less useful for approaching our struggles vis-a-vis the earth and planetary events. Instead, revolution becomes this idealistic projection involving the synthesis of humanity, or the unification of human and nature.

I do respect Marxism, and I love Marx's writing, but as a revolutionary idea, it's important to acknowledge its particular limits. With the First International, people really expected the proletariat of the world to unite, and we have to seriously consider why it didn't happen, and why it's still not happening through this internationalism. In any case I want to go along with this shift where historical materialists are losing their leading role in the thinking of revolution, and precisely what they cannot talk about is becoming more important.

Another aspect of this shift involves thorny problematics around power and violence. For thinking post-Fukushima, I was primarily interested in the ontological difference—which is an asymmetry—between the power of the state and capitalism as power-over, and the power of peoples' lives and struggles as a power-to. For struggles that seek to change the world without taking power-over, they must find their strategic advantage within this asymmetry. Militaristically, of course, they are always inferior, but they are vastly superior in terms of their productive and reproductive powers, or their powers to create worlds. But between power-over and power-to there is a relationship of parasite and host. How can our lives-as-struggle change the worlds we inhabit without assimilating to the parasitic ruling powers, instead embracing the autonomy of the creative power of our own lives?

MP: When you speak of revolution you break from its twentieth-century imaginary, where even the New Left aspired to taking over the nation-state, and instead speak of an "anarchy in the apocalypse," an "existential communism," the "rediscovery of the Earth amidst the decomposition of the World." You've used the phrases "life-as-struggle," "living among the ruins," the need to create "existential territories," forgetting and relearning, "earthly singularities." In an America still recovering from the Trump administration and Covid, with some of these frameworks in mind, what potential orientations could we look towards?

SK: I don't know if this answers you philosophically, but speaking from my personal experience of Japan and the US, people tend to seek stability, but I cannot imagine that this could ever be attained, not even for the majority, especially not in America. And now, at this point in the ongoing disasters and crises, a return to stability or normality seems quite unlikely. But the alternative imaginaries are really quite scary.

As you know, I was born in Japan and came to the US in my early twenties. Since then, I've been going back and forth, so comparing these two countries has been my life, and often they seem like polar opposites. Japanese society is extremely homogeneous, relative to the US and other nation-states. It's remarkably stable, and it really feels like what can happen in Japan is limited. Meanwhile American society is so heterogeneous, and America is this terrain of conflict where it seems that almost anything could happen, for better or worse. Looking at this difference in terms of geohistory, it makes sense. Since the end of WWII, Japan has arguably been America's most faithful client state. The whole Japanese archipelago became a US base for its wars with its enemies on the Asian continent, especially the Korean and Vietnam wars. So when even America itself was in turmoil, Japan had to be stable and under control. Today, the Nansei Islands are increasingly militarized as a frontline against China.

America is an empire, yet the US government tries to govern its territories as if it were a nation-state, and to represent its unity to its populace as a nation of freedom. If anything, the American populace is the embodiment of America's colonial histories, between Native peoples, slaves, colonizers, and immigrants from all over the planet. America internalizes the conflicts and crises of the World, and America's governance over its fissured populace cannot be delinked from its wars and imperial expansion. To sustain its sovereignty, America goes on expanding as an empire. This is why the American populace is especially haunted. There's an inherent paradox in the hope for America to create a free and peace-loving cosmopolitan society.

What orientation can people in America take at this moment, in this darkest present? I have no overarching vision, but a few possibilities seem clear. First, with all the political, economic, social, and environmental crises that will inevitably continue to immiserate people's lives, local attempts to organize around mutual aid are going to

become increasingly necessary. I think you all have been experiencing this already with Woodbine in New York City, and everywhere there are similar radical grassroots organizations that we can look to as models.

Another thing that seems clear is that we cannot assume a unity among different impetuses for change. Instead, we must assume that there are conflicts between diverging orientations. Personally speaking, I can never trust democratic socialism as a tendency, which tries to realize egalitarian reform for American society by taking state power. In my experience, its pattern is to first embrace all the various oppositional forces as it initially seeks to expand its influence, and then, when it achieves certain seats in governance, it immediately turns to oppress or exclude the most radical. At its core, it considers itself the only authentic major party, and it treats all others as a minority of left oppositions. Its "real politics" tends to actually conflict with revolutionary impetuses to decompose the American empire, which connect struggles both within and without the empire, among the planetary populace.

For me the planetary tendencies toward decomposition are the only plausible paths. It is difficult, and can be scary, to imagine where they lead, but I have to believe in that as a hope. Philosophically speaking, this is where the challenge of ontology appears, because it is a matter of people's relations on and to the planet, which are themselves at stake. This is what I mean when I say "the rediscovery of the Earth amidst the decomposition of the World." For lives-as-struggle across the planet, everything is at stake, within singular relations. These include relations between individuals and every sort of social relation, but also ecological and climatological relations, and cosmic and spiritual relations, which involve not only people but all kinds of planetary forces and beings. And in the decomposition of the World, these are all at stake.

X

Sabu Kohso is a political and social critic, translator, and a long-time activist in the global and anti-capitalist struggle. He has published several books on urban space and struggle in Japan, and has translated books by Kojin Karatani and David Graeber. His most recent book is *Radiation and Revolution* (Duke University Press, 2020).

Matt Peterson is an organizer at Woodbine, an experimental space in New York City. He co-edited the books *In the Name of the People* (2018), *The Mohawk Warrior Society* (2022), and *The Reservoir* (2022). Since 2014 he has collaborated with Malek Rasamny on "The Native and the Refugee," a multimedia documentary project on American Indian reservations and Palestinian refugee camps.

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2
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Martin Guinard

Homage to Bruno Latour

Some years ago, Bruno Latour told me what one of his teachers had said to him as a young student: "Bruno, we ask you to fill one glass of water with your ideas, and you give us a flood!" It was indeed this inexhaustible flow of ideas on science, law, arts, and politics that Bruno invited us to climb aboard with—not to drown in its downpour, but to find ways of navigating an Earth that had changed by entering what he called the New Climatic Regime.

While the impulses of his thought were dazzling, the empirical philosophy he defended had to feel its way through long and often collaborative investigations. This was the case for *An Inquiry into Modes of Existence*, probably the most comprehensive entry into his work, and an interface between two of its major stages—the anthropology of the Moderns and the eruption of the New Climate Regime.

For one who defined the social in terms of "irreductions" in which "nothing is, by itself, either reducible or irreducible to anything else," everything had to be described and articulated.[1] As a theorist of networks, Bruno was also a thinker of diplomacy, investigating scientific, legal, religious, and political modes of existence by studying their specific veracity. Hence the question of what it means to speak scientifically, and how it differs from speaking politically or legally. The goal was to identify the "distinct tonality" of each of these modes of existence and the kind of truth they could convey, not as different domains, but as different networks. Although they could intersect, each would unfold with a specific "signature."[2]

Diplomacy also meant creating a procedure to negotiate between incompatible ways of living in the world (as was the case for the 2020 Taipei Biennial and a related issue of *e-flux journal*). Negotiation did not mean ignoring adversaries and allies, but clarifying positions. What was strategic in this redefinition was the integration of nonhumans. One of the last times I saw him was at the end of August 2022 during the Environmental History symposium at LUMA in Arles. The botanist Véronique Mure had presented the virtuous effects of the *Ailanthus*, a plant considered to be invasive, and Bruno asked her about the allies and enemies of this plant. When he was told that this plant had a tendency to destabilize slabs of concrete by piercing through them, he exclaimed: "Magnificent! Let's applaud!"

It was striking to see how easily Bruno moved back and forth between theoretical propositions and ethnography. I remember when he was almost seventy years old after writing *Facing Gaia*, he said he was tired of writing about ideas and wanted to return to fieldwork. It was precisely through his field observations and the experimental workshops he organized that he intended to remain grounded. The stakes were high, as this ground was precisely what the Moderns had lost to a dissociation between the territory where they live (common living spaces) and the territories they depend upon in order to

Sarah Sze and Bruno Latour walk-through the exhibition "Night into Day" by Sarah Sze, 2020. Photo: Edouard Caupeil

live (notably the places from which they extract resources).

Bruno's thinking could destabilize his readers with an explosion of several categories—the end of the Great Divide between nature and culture, society and the individual, subjects and objects, facts and values—but he also wanted to transmit his theoretical displacements in an intelligible way. He therefore multiplied his ways of expressing himself, writing an abundance of texts, of course, but also repeatedly scribbling diagrams and drawing up summary tables. When thinking aloud he was guided by the gestures of his hands, which helped him to formulate his thoughts and make them understood. When his students were stuck, he sometimes advised that they "dance the movement of their arguments."

To explore problematics, Bruno would read (at an incredible speed), but he would also follow his persistent need to write, which was a daily practice. For him, writing was not the juxtaposition of ideas, but a way of mobilizing beings, of triggering actants in hopes that they would seize their reader. As the problems he confronted were of such magnitude—from modernity to the New Climate Regime!—it was necessary to constantly multiply the ways of approaching them. This was done through all sorts of experiments and projects—workshops, theater plays, and exhibitions—that I was lucky to work on alongside Bruno for six years.

While his projects led to many experiments beyond the academic sphere, he didn't see himself as a master of all trades. According to him, philosophy was not a metalanguage, but one medium among others—with its own specificities and richness, but also its own limits. And it must take care not to crush other modes of expression. Bruno therefore relied on close collaborations with people whose skills he lacked, and he gave them great freedom of initiative. He did not impose a path, but invited us to explore problems with him, always remaining incredibly

open to discussion. Around each project, a collective would be created, and then for each collective he would become the collector.

Working with Bruno was as addictive as it was funny and profoundly stimulating. I remember a moment that disoriented me a few months after I began. We were preparing an exhibition, and he told me serenely, without a care in the world: "Don't hesitate to betray me." This sentence confused me, especially after I had been so enthusiastic about working with him, spending long hours trying to establish correspondences between an exhibition and his abundant ideas. Yet there was no reproach on his part. He was simply referring to a concept in science and technology studies, namely that there is no translation without transformation, so to translate is therefore to betray. In completely accepting the transformation that must take place when ideas pass into becoming an exhibition, he showed how the freedom he gave to his collaborators, but also to the medium of an exhibition, would inevitably act on his ideas in return.

Criticisms understandably arise when philosophers curate exhibitions and use artworks merely to illustrate ideas. But in fact we took a very different approach, which was to imagine an encounter between artists' works and his ideas, each of which followed different trajectories. This encounter had to take place without the work being hierarchically subjected to a theoretical proposal that would reduce it to a simple illustration of a subject. It was therefore necessary to try grasping what the work "did," to not dictate what the works should say. This often implied rewriting, reformulating, or reworking the effect that the works produced, but also conscientiously considering how they were placed in space, and sometimes proposing new commissions to artists.

Introducing artworks to Bruno was a jubilant exercise, but also a risky one. Not finding the right way to describe the artwork's sensitive displacements, the networks it unfolded, the affects it stimulated would mean immediately losing his attention, without any hope of return. On the other hand, if the work began to speak, Bruno would show visible pleasure in opening himself to a new experience, discovering previously undetectable aspects of the work, connecting it to unexpected references, and then expressing deep gratitude.[3]

Bruno approached the exhibition space as a laboratory for deploying thought experiments intertwined with sensory and bodily experiments. "Laboratorium" was the first time he participated in an exhibition, thanks to an invitation from Hans Ulrich Obrist, after which he worked on large-scale exhibitions for nearly twenty years, notably at ZKM with Peter Weibel and then at the Taipei Fine Arts Museum for the 2020 Taipei Biennial, upon the invitation of Ping Lin. The exhibitions we curated had to be like a "scale model" of unsolvable problems that were too important to be ignored. At the opening of the exhibition "Reset Modernity!" at ZKM in 2016, a journalist said, "I'm going to play devil's advocate: What's the point of having exhibitions about ecological issues?" Bruno replied in one breath that aesthetics affords a "becoming sensitive." And the exhibition is a place of dialogue between three different types of aesthetics: scientific, artistic, and political. Scientific aesthetics, thanks to its instruments, allows knowledge of problems such as climate change to emerge. The artistic aesthetic allows the metabolizing of affects. Finally, political aesthetics allow us to gather and mobilize various stakeholders.

But perhaps the most important aesthetic question for Bruno concerned tone. I remember an email addressed to the cocurators of "Reset Modernity!," Donato Ricci, Christophe Leclercq, and I, just a few days before we completed the exhibition booklet text. The email contained only an attachment and the subject line: "What matters is the tone." The attachment was a World Wildlife Fund poster for COP21 depicting, in a miserable photo montage, the scene from Eugène Delacroix's *Liberty Leading the People*, but replacing the main protagonist with a panda bear climbing a barricade, while other people took selfies or rode electric scooters. Of course, this was a bit of irony on Bruno's part, but still reflected a deep preoccupation of his, both in writing and in art, which was the question of finding the right tone—one that, on its own, could absorb shock and mobilize people. He was thus not interested in postures from what he called "critiqueland" unveiling an underlying truth rather than describing the networks deployed around a situation. He also disliked overarching visions proclaiming to be political without having been immersed in meticulous field investigations. This was why he felt closer to activists—who try to activate yet remain open to learning from situations—than to militants, who think they already know.

In 2015, the crucial question was how to become sensitive to climate change. Six years later, in preparation for the "Critical Zones" exhibition at ZKM and the 2020 Taipei Biennial, it was no longer a matter of transitioning out of denial, but of helping the growing number of people who felt lost in the immensity of the shock. As Chantal Latour said, let's not leave people at the edge of the cliff.

The work of facing the New Climate Regime is immense, and Bruno has "equipped" (as he would say) many, thanks to his observations, his methodology of mapping controversies and identifying attachments, the concepts he created, but also his profound intellectual and human generosity. For this, I can only say: Thank you, Bruno.

Like microbes entering a body, he has spread to all those who will continue to work on these issues. Although Bruno was deeply concerned with issues of survival raised by the New Climate Regime, he kept his ability to be astonished by the world until his final days, less with regard to the infinite cosmos and the stars, but instead marveling at all the interactions making life possible in the Critical Zone.

Bruno has given this priceless gift to those who have known him and those who will continue to know him through his work—of having made life more interesting than life.

X

Martin Guinard has been a curator at LUMA Arles since 2021. Before this, he worked on several interdisciplinary projects dealing with ecological mutation, in close collaboration with Bruno Latour. He was a curator of the 2020 Taipei Biennial, titled “You and I Don't Live on the Same Planet,” as well as its reiteration at Centre Pompidou Metz (2021). He also cocurated the exhibitions “Critical Zones: Observatory for Earthly Politics” (2021) and “Reset Modernity!” at ZKM (2016). He was in charge of the reiteration of “Reset Modernity!” in the form of two workshop platforms in different geographical contexts: the first in China, “Reset Modernity! Shanghai Perspective,” as part of the 2017 Shanghai Project; and the second in Iran, “Reset Modernity! Tehran Perspective,” curated with Reza Haeri at the Pejman Foundation and the Institute for the History of Science at Tehran University.

1
Bruno Latour, *The Pasteurization of France* , trans. Alan Sheridan and John Law (Harvard University Press, 1988), 158.

2
Bruno Latour, *An Inquiry into Modes of Existence* , trans. Catherine Porter (Harvard University Press, 2013), 370.

3
It is also important to note that he continuously expressed his deep gratitude—to the artists, scholars, and activists with whom we worked; to the team at Sciences Po médialab, notably Donato Ricci, Christophe Leclercq, and Valérie Pihet for their editorial, design, and curatorial work; to the team at ZKM, notably its director and Bruno's friends Peter Weibel and cocurator Bettina Korintenberg, as well as Margit Rosen, Philipp Ziegler, Daria Mille, and Barbara Kiolbassa; to the Taipei Fine Arts Museum, especially its director Ping Lin, chief curator Sharleen Yu, and and Biennial cocurator Eva Lin; and to the Centre Pompidou Metz, especially its director Chiara Parisi and chief curator Jean-Marie Gallais.

Leon Dische Becker and Cosmo Bjorkenheim

A Cursed Franchise: Reliving Colonial Nightmares Through Endless Sci-fi Remakes

In times of civilizational crisis, people turn to the old stories for guidance. Religiosity surges. Nineteenth-century conspiracy theories (and older pseudoscience) get a new futurist gloss. Even the most secular politics are inflected with apocalyptic fervor. Hollywood, in this respect, is only human. Responding to the unrest among its audience, the big studios are quick to reheat popular franchises that fit the current strain of anxiety.

In a delayed response to Covid-19, for example, they have now given us a new *Matrix* and a new *Jurassic Park*—two franchises that have become synonymous with public fears of technology and science. *Jurassic World Dominion*, which features a subplot about a biotech corporation destroying the world's crops, seems like a particularly clear shoutout to the anti-vax internet. As Hollywood's metabolism gets back up to speed, we can expect to see a glut of these kinds of paranoid sci-fi blockbusters. Expect another renaissance of the mad-scientist trope, in its contemporary guise: the reckless science corporation. Expect another *Alien* and another *Planet of the Apes*. Most curiously, expect at least one attempted remake of *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, the most cursed intellectual property in Hollywood history.

H. G. Wells's 1896 gothic horror novel, about a rogue physiologist who crossbreeds animal-humans and rules over them like a colonial dictator, always seems to get readapted when public suspicion of scientific innovation peaks. Wells wrote it in such a time, in response to public outrage in his native England around the vivisection of animals. It was first adapted to the silver screen in 1932 during the era of applied eugenics; readapted in 1977 after the Vietnam war implicated big science in mass murder; and remade again in 1996 during the freak-out over stem cell research. It's only a matter of time until we get a Dr. Moreau for the age of speculative biotechnology and lab-leak theory—particularly now that actual chimera embryos (monkey-humans) have been successfully CRISPRed in a lab.[1]

At least one such adaptation is reportedly already in the works. Screenwriter Zack Stentz (the mind behind *X-Men: First Class*, *Thor*, and *Agent Cody Banks*) has signed on with former Viacom CEO Van Toffler's new studio Gunpowder & Sky to develop the old gothic horror tale about eugenics and colonialism into a prestige television series. Like every adaptation, it is being updated to speak to the hopes and fears of the present: "World-renowned scientist Dr. Jessica Moreau's pioneering work in genetic engineering catches the eye of a billionaire backer willing to stop at nothing to reach the next step of human evolution."[2] As promising as this all sounds, Stentz faces a daunting task. At the outset, he must have been struck by the lineage of world-class talent that has perished along this same path. Every adaptation of Dr. Moreau has belly-flopped at the box office, directors have lost their shit and their jobs, great actors have tarnished their legacy.

The Island of Dr. Moreau, directed by John Frankenheimer, 1996 (film still).

What is it about H. G. Wells's weird third book that compels Hollywood studios to keep retelling it? And why has it given its adapters so much trouble? Does the novel just have too many unsavory layers (gory animal experiments, neurodivergent chimeras, nineteenth-century European racial attitudes) to compress into a viable sci-fi blockbuster? These questions lead naturally to bigger ones: Why do we keep reliving the fears and follies of the nineteenth century through endless sci-fi remakes? And, crucially, what kind of intellectual baggage is being smuggled along the way?

Imperial Hang-Ups

The Island of Dr. Moreau appalled London's literary critics. Repulsively gory, morally obscene, and scientifically implausible: that was their consensus. Fresh off his best-selling *Time Machine* (1895), the empire's most popular young author seemed intent on dashing all his good will. Critics didn't just think the book was bad; they thought it was irresponsible. *Dr. Moreau* was sure to stoke the already long-running public hysteria around animal experiments. It would make excellent propaganda for the anti-vivisectionists.

In the early nineteenth century, physiologists started dissecting animals to better understand human anatomy. The ethical outrage surrounding this practice spread from scientists to doctors, and—in the second half of the century—started to infect their patients, the English public. By the 1870s, London saw its first animal rights protests, uniting suffragists, socialists, humanists, and Quakers in a call for the legal protection of all species. The same concern spread simultaneously as a kind of folk knowledge through the public imagination. One might think of it as the scientific conspiracy theory du jour. In that variation, demonic (usually French) scientists were tampering with nature and would soon conduct their horrific experiments on human beings. Rumors abounded about the unnecessary cruelty of their experiments, and their unbridled ambitions to remake everything. H. G. Wells brought this nightmare to life and common English readers face-to-face with their bogeyman: a continental pervert playing God.

In his old age, Wells came around to agreeing with his critics, describing *The Island of Dr. Moreau* as an "exercise in youthful blasphemy."[3] He grew especially disgusted with the material when he saw it boiled down to

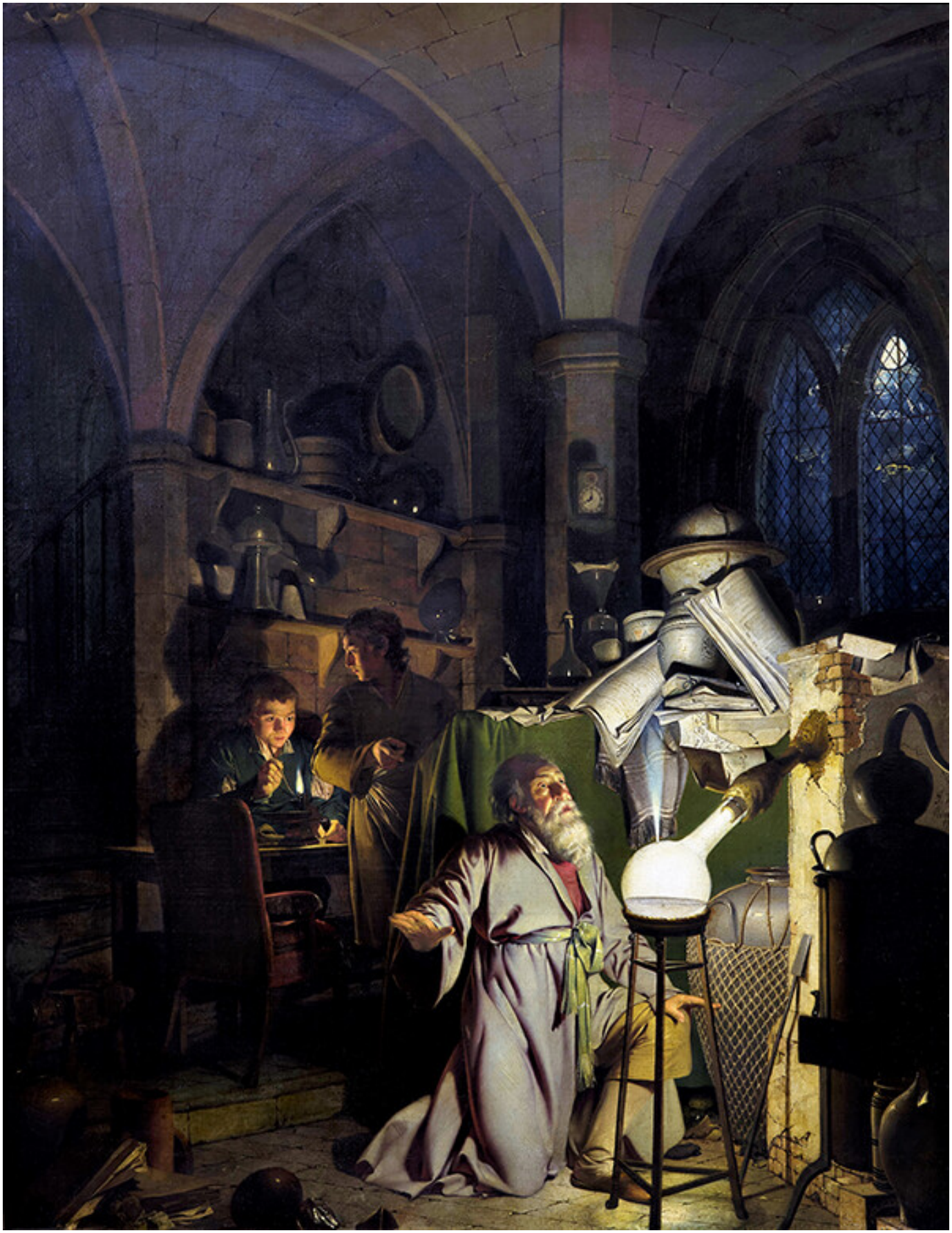
Woodcut of a manticore from Edward Topsell's The Historie of Foure-footed Beastes (1607). License: Public Domain.

its coarsest elements in its first Hollywood adaption (*The Island of Lost Souls*, 1932). By then, he must have had a pretty good idea of what kind of nightmares he had unleashed on the world, and that in posterity he would have little control over what they would convey. This is the perk and the risk of great sci-fi writing: the long-standing influence of your vision, and your lack of influence over its interpretation.

Hardly anyone was as enduringly influential, in ways intended and not, as the man routinely described as either the Father or the Shakespeare of Science Fiction. Wells's great scientific romance novels would establish whole subgenres. Every alien-invasion blockbuster is indebted to his *War of the Worlds*; every time machine refers to his *Time Machine* (he coined the term); many invisible men owe something to his *Invisible Man*. Though obviously building on the myth of Prometheus and Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, *The Island of Dr. Moreau* is the first example of a subgenre called "Uplift," where people (or aliens) intervene in the evolution of more primitive species, often with the goal of making them more intelligent. Though it may sound niche, this theme would echo prominently in Bulgakov's *Heart of a Dog*, Keyes's "Flowers for Algernon," Boulle's *Planet of the Apes*, the Jurassic Park series, as well as numerous other nineties dystopian biotech flicks.

Traditionally, this kind of intergenerational resonance has been chalked up to the genius of great men, but that doesn't really tell us very much. Wells was just a supremely adept plotsmith, who happened to be a science nerd during a time of great scientific revelation. Born in 1866, the son of a trifling businessman, he came to intellectual maturity just as Darwin's theory of evolution, Mendel's theory of genetic heredity, and Mendeleev's periodic table were being absorbed into the public consciousness. At university, he studied biology under the preeminent Darwinist Thomas Henry Huxley (grandfather of writer Aldous), who had responded to Charles's famous theory with the line: "How extremely stupid not to have thought of that!" By the time Wells realized he was too stroppy for real science and dedicated himself to fiction, streetlights were springing up all over Europe's cities; astrophysicists were starting to compute the infinite possibilities of outer space; and crude race science was considered educated conversation, even among avowed socialists.

Wells' overview of all this reckless innovation, paired with a knack for turning speculation into standard-bearer plots, set the stage for his crazy run in the 1890s. Reading his



Joseph Wright, The Alchemist in Search of the Philosopher's Stone, 1771. License: Public Domain.

Frankenstein, directed by James Whale, 1931 (film still).

scientific romances now, one apprehends an author who was able to balance his biases. They are dialoguing with each other, particularly in *Moreau*: The utopian scientist who thought science (even eugenics) could uplift humanity in unimaginable ways. The socialist who worried that, in the wrong hands, the same innovations would solidify a permanent underclass. The progressive Englishman of the late nineteenth century who was a cautious critic—but completely the product—of empire. The mischievous young plot-craftsman trying to both engage and trigger his readership.

Keeping all this in mind, the plot is worth beholding. We see the island through the horrified middle-class gaze of our shipwrecked narrator Edward Prendick. At first, he's chuffed to be standing on solid ground and to get a room in Moreau's compound. But then he starts to piece together who the doctor is: a notorious scientist who was banished from polite society for performing horrific animal experiments. Our narrator peeks into the compound lab and witnesses an animal being vivisected. Fleeing out into the jungle in disgust, he starts bumping into the products of Moreau's lab work: several generations of animalistic humans living in a slum, celebrating their maker like a God.

When confronted, Moreau explains his project with considerable satisfaction. He and his alcoholic sidekick Montgomery have been grafting human features onto different animals. He believes this may yield the perfect race, particularly once the chimeras have internalized his distillation of civilized human morality. The beastfolk recite a chant, vowing "Not to go on all-fours … Not to suck up Drink … Not to eat Fish or Flesh … Not to claw the Bark of Trees … Not to chase other Men." Only to conclude: "That is the Law. Are we not men?" If they break this pledge, they are literally reformed by their maker. For "His," they acknowledge in chorus, "is the house of pain!"

Moreau blends science and philosophy into smooth arguments. He is more complicated than a caricature of a mad scientist. He is Wells expressing his utopian argument in dialogue with Prendick, who himself channels the author's fear of degeneration and dystopia. At least the doctor is clear-eyed enough to see that his beastfolk are a work in progress. They require constant surgeries and endless propaganda if they are not to devolve back into their animal ways. This is the only way to guarantee human safety on the island. Prendick finds out this for himself when he discovers a rabbit carcass, which suggests that one of the beastfolk has broken Moreau's monopoly on violence. The suspect, Leopard-man, is identified and pursued by Moreau's cavalry. Prendick catches him and, seeking to spare the valiant rebel a visit to the House of Pain, shoots him on the spot. This outbreak of bloodshed awakens Moreau's chimeras to the hypocrisy of the doctor's dictates, causing them to rise up in rebellion.

Whether Prendick likes it or not, he is now in the same boat as Moreau, his associates, and the house chimeras. But the poison is in the wound. Moreau and his associates are killed by their creations. The compound burns down. Prendick is forced to live among the beastfolk, who revert evermore to their animal forms. They turn out to be—and the book dwells on this considerably—entirely incompetent at running the society Moreau leaves behind. Prendick eventually rafts out to sea, and in a second miraculous turn of fate is picked up by another ship, which returns him to his native England. Back in imperial London, he can't help but see the beastfolk in the people that surround him.

There are layers to this plot. On the surface, it's a gothic thriller about the humanity of animals and the animality of Man. Delve deeper and you find a story about scientific overreach: the great scientist, unbound by convention, unleashes unspeakable tragedy; the colonial gentleman who sees himself as the very pinnacle of civilization—indeed, on the cutting edge of evolution—turns out to be the most barbaric. However, this progressive interpretation doesn't tell the whole story.

Like the book it may[4] have partially inspired— *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad—Dr. Moreau critiques imperial folly while still suffering from it. To the extent that it can be read as a critique of imperialism, it is an entirely white-facing one. It follows a popular notion at the time: *our attempts to civilize lesser beings are leading to our own degeneration*. Conrad's great work captures the bestial violence and hypocrisy of the white civilizing mission in the Congo while at the same time dehumanizing its subjects, portraying them as the grunting antithesis of civilization. Wells seems to do something very similar in Moreau, with a little roundabout trick. In this case, the "natives" are rendered as actual semi-animals.

Once you see this layer, it's hard not to identify the contours of allegory. The doctor dressed in his white colonial suit, with his whip on the ready, experimenting on society as he pleases. His subjects arriving on the island courtesy of the naval arm of the empire. The new world where laws from the homeland no longer apply. The allegory becomes most clear in the laws Moreau draws on to mollify his creation (an obvious reference to the attempts to pacify colonized and enslaved people with the Bible); in the beastfolk's quasi-anti-colonial uprising; and in their apparent inability to self-govern—a common colonial concern.

As if all that were too subtle, the protagonists in the novel regularly liken the beastfolk to other races. When Prendick runs into the first chimera, M'ling (who he later finds out is "a complex trophy of Moreau's skill, a bear, tainted with dog and ox"), he literally thinks he's meeting a Black person. "This man was of a moderate size, and with a black negroid face," he says, unsettled. Another unlucky creature has a "face ovine in expression, like the coarser Hebrew type." And so on. One may be tempted to read this as a commentary on the characters, as a portrayal of racism rather than embodiment of it, but Wells' views on race tell us otherwise.

Writing about his dream of a world government in 1901, he pondered:

> How will the new republic treat the inferior races? How will it deal with the black? How will it deal with the yellow man? How will it tackle that alleged termite in the civilized woodwork, the Jew? Certainly not as races at all. All over the world its roads, its standards, its laws, and its apparatus of control will run. This will make the multiplication of those who fall behind a certain standard of social efficiency unpleasant and difficult … The Jew will probably lose much of his particularism, intermarry with Gentiles, and cease to be a physically distinct element in human affairs in a century or so. But much of his moral tradition will, I hope, never die … And for the rest, those swarms of black, and brown, and dirty-white, and yellow people, who do not come into the new needs of efficiency? Well, the world is a world, not a charitable institution, and I take it they will have to go.[5]

This is the final screed of Conrad's Kurtz ("exterminate all the brutes") performed in a higher register. It was also, one must say, not an unusual position for a science-minded English gentleman of that period, all the way down to the genocidal philosemitism. In those circles, different races were commonly believed to be at different stages of evolution, somewhere on the continuum from animal to Christian white man. Accordingly, the above quote is not something Wells scribbled in his diary, but a paragraph he laid out in a multipart essay about his worldview. His defenders have cited many of his later writings to show how his views on race softened later in life, but for the book he wrote in 1896 the implications are clear. What are the beastfolk, after all, but an "inferior race" that have failed to develop "sane, vigorous, and distinctive personalities"?

By the end, *The Island of Dr. Moreau* points as much to the impossibility of civilizing the subhuman as it does to the inhumanity of the civilizers. Naturally, this comes with a fear of revenge. Wells's next work, *War of the Worlds*, seems to follow very naturally from that: what if another race treated us the way we treated them? This question can sensitize a person to oppression. More often, as we can see acutely today, it has the opposite effect.

Of course, this now-unpalatable layer is probably not the reason why Moreau keeps getting readapted. It's just a memorable plot by a canonical writer with lots of popular

elements: animal-humans, moral intrigue, scientists playing God. In fact, the subtleties of Wells's politics were the first thing to get lost when Hollywood started working its way through his catalog. The overtly racist bits would be spliced out of *Moreau* gradually, with every remake, just as they became publicly unacceptable. But can you really liberate a novel from its history? How did the bioethical paranoia and racism of *The Island of Dr. Moreau* fare in readaptations over a century?

The Trouble with Remakes

Watching all three major adaptations of Moreau in order, one witnesses what some biologists like to call "human-driven evolution." Undesirable facets are grafted off and new desirable features (mostly sex and explosions) are added to allow the old thing to succeed on a new market. This process is mediated by a vast cultural supply chain. With American enthusiasm, innocence, and capital, generations of producers, writers, and directors simplify and amplify the colonial tale, trying to calibrate it to the fears, lusts, and sensitivities of successive generations.

Paramount's *Island of Lost Souls* (1932), the first cinematic adaptation of the novel, directed by Erle C. Kenton, is a paramount example of this process. It brings to mind Eddie Izzard's legendary bit about bombastic American remakes of quaint British films.[6] Charles Laughton's portrayal turns Moreau from an uncompromising man of science into a more or less total madman. His science has evolved with the times; he's giving the animals plastic surgery while meddling with their "germ plasm." Prendick has been given the requisite "my girl is waiting for me" backstory. He even dabbles in some unwitting bestiality, when Moreau tries to persuade him into procreating with the Panther Woman. The crescendo of the book—the beastfolk overthrowing Moreau—becomes the end of the film, and is enhanced with a walk-away-from-explosion tableau worthy of a Marvel movie. The second half of the novel—where the beastfolk run their society into the ground—is wisely cut altogether.

The new manic Moreau evokes early Hitler. But this was long before the Nazis' race science reached its genocidal conclusion, or any of its lessons could sink in. Largely inured to the kind of bigotry presented in the novel, the makers reproduce it faithfully. Accordingly, the beastfolk's looks align with race-based morphologies. The actors seem to have been cast with an eye for supposedly primitive phrenological features like low foreheads and wide jaws. Where Wells's speculations had been guided by his mentor Thomas Huxley, Paramount recruited Thomas's son, Julien Huxley, a famous eugenicist, to make sure the science was on point.

Dressed like a colonial officer, Moreau boasts that he acquired his techniques of population control in Australia. Our narrator, renamed Parker, is also a creature of Empire. "Strange-looking natives you have here," he says upon arrival. The Panther Woman (a bulked-up and racialized version of a bit character from the novel, the Puma Woman) is introduced by Moreau as "a pure Polynesian," a background Parker apparently finds alluring. This is late-Empire leisure chic, with all its tropes of palm fronds and exotic temptresses. Despite combining two then-popular forms, the horror flick and the minstrel show, *The Island of Lost Souls* bombed at the box office and disgusted critics. It would serve as a warning to future interpreters, but also as inspiration. Its plot updates would be picked up by all future Moreau reboots, which are as much corrective remakes of the first film as adaptations of the novel.

Don Taylor's 1977 attempt is widely considered the best adaptation, though one might remark that it's just the one that takes the fewest risks. This is a calm, picturesque, almost nostalgic Moreau. Its slow pace and handsome cinematography evoke the spaghetti Westerns of the period. The film is set in the 1890s and our hero (Michael York) is a perfect Edwardian gentleman. Burt Lancaster is the kind of Moreau envisioned by Wells: handsome, urbane, intellectual to the point of cruelty. He is a great man of science with only a touch of mania. "If one wants to study Nature, one must become as remorseless as Nature," he proclaims.

Strangely, his knowledge of genetics is contemporary to the 1970s, as are the cultural attitudes of the film. By then, social Darwinism was more popular than the theory of evolution, and eugenic ideas remained polite conversation across the silent majority. On the other end of the political spectrum, a generation of activists had wised up to the relationship between science and the military-industrial complex. With these culture wars in mind, perhaps, this Moreau hedges its bets. By fleeing into the past, it manages to speak to contemporary concerns while avoiding all contemporaneous debates. It accomplishes this also by casting off many of the racial motifs of the original. The drastic improvement in film makeup allowed for the creation of manimals that look both very human and very animal—that Star Trek alien look. Characterologically, however, these are the most "human" beastfolk we get to see among the three films. Many of the chimeras—most notably, Richard Basehart's unforgettable Sayer of the Law[7]—just seem like hairy, confused, simple, but ultimately decent people. Their efforts to become "civilized" are deeply moving—their disappointment when Moreau's hypocrisy reveals itself, painful to watch. Ironically, this humanizing approach has the side effect of making the colonial overtones of the story more obvious. Parts of the beastfolk's rebellion are shot to look like a political protest.

The Panther Lady, however, remains Polynesian. Our open-minded narrator falls for her not knowing she's part animal, and what is merely hinted at in the 1932 film is consummated on camera. This being the late seventies,

Friedrich Justin Bertuch, mythical creatures from Bilderbuch für Kinder (picture book for children), illustrated between 1790 and 1822. License: Public Domain.

the interspecies liaison is shown to be tastefully erotic. Moreau himself insinuates that he has had relations with Panther Woman after plucking her from her native island, combining sex tourism and animal research. And yes, this is *The Island of Dr. Moreau* at its most subtle.

The same cannot be said of the universally panned 1996 adaptation, which isn't only the weirdest Moreau, but probably one of the most galaxy-brained features ever greenlit. Jampacked with over- and underacting, counterintuitive plot innovations, unnecessary gore, and hilariously extra-aesthetic choices, this centennial adaptation would go down as one of the worst films of its era.

If Hollywood's third swing at Moreau would establish *The Island* as cursed material, this has a lot to do with the chaotic way it was made. Eccentric director Richard Stanley (a weird British cowboy stoner) was such a fan of Wells's novel—so amused by the 1932 version and so bored by the 1977 remake—that he invested a big chunk of his life in finally getting it right. He spent four years working on a script: a wild, subversive Moreau for the nineties. But after acquiring the project, New Line Cinemas quickly tried to replace him with Roman Polanski(!). Stanley survived this coup by back-channeling with Marlon Brando, the studio's desired Moreau. Explaining the novel's complicated history in impressive detail (and hiring a voodoo priest to sway Brando), Stanley convinced the old contrarian that only he could do the job.

More good news followed. Bruce Willis signed on to play Prendick. But that's when the alleged curse started to take hold. Demi Moore left Bruce Willis and America's most broken action hero dropped out. The famously impossible Val Kilmer signed on to replace him under the condition that his shooting hours be reduced by 40 percent, leaving just enough time for him to play Moreau's sidekick, Montgomery. Brando's daughter committed suicide and the actor took a leave of absence from the set. The studio jumped at this second opportunity and replaced Stanley with the more experienced John Frankenheimer (*The Manchurian Candidate*, *French Connection II*). In the ultimate meta-narrative, Stanley fled the compound. Staking out in the woods, smoking inordinate amounts of weed, getting increasingly paranoid, he started building IEDs to attack the set from outside. The production would go down as the most toxic set in Hollywood history.

This arrangement partially accounts for the almost frightening disjointedness that ended up on screen. Everyone in this *Moreau*—and indeed, behind the camera—seems like they're either on tons of uppers, tons of downers, or an unstable combination of the two. The trippy aesthetic is perhaps best described as a Nine Inch Nails–inflected *Donkey Kong*, or like if Chris Cunningham directed an episode of *Lost*. By the time we meet the Panther Woman, henna-tattooed and dancing to ethnotronica from a Discman, we're waist-deep in the nineties.

Brando's decidedly drowsy Moreau is a giant, pasty blob who is allergic to the sun and gets his minions to carry him on a curtained litter. Depressed, perverted, neurotic, solemnly proud of his subjects, he is more of a fallen hero than a villain. This creates a weird dynamic with his counterpart, the shipwrecked narrator, played by the acerbic David Thewlis, who somehow manages to come across as the more unstable and unlikable of the two. A horny British do-gooder—a UN negotiator, shipwrecked on his way to negotiate a "peace settlement"—Prendick spends the first half of the film in frankly disrespectful contempt of the beastfolk, which at times makes him seem rude and ableist. He is disgusted by their appearance and expresses his outrage about their creation in strangely Christian tones. He is every bit as colonial as Moreau. Wired to maximum intensity, Kilmer's Montgomery is an academic in nineties alt-hunk disguise, sort of like a biotech Tyler Durden. How exactly he and Moreau combine humans and animals is ill-defined, except that it involves microinjecting human plasmids into their cells. Montgomery administers a complimentary psychedelic cocktail to the chimeras just for kicks. Despite these scientific advances, most of the beastfolk in the film—aside from Moreau's perfect Panther Girl, played by the tweaky and ethnically ambiguous Fairuza Balk—have devolved from the humanizing seventies remake. They are deformed in all shapes and sizes—experiments that didn't quite work out. The ferocious leopard man and hyena swine look perpetually haggard and slumped over.

In the best and worst nineties way, this *Moreau* is all affect. Things happen because they're crazy, wild, intense, dark. Even the doctor's eugenics talking points and chimera-pope ceremonies just seem like provocative meta-jokes. Decontextualized from everything, the colonial attitudes of the original persist only as subtext—a structural bias baked deep into the plot—perhaps only ascertainable to the kind of people who are sensitive to that sort of thing for professional or historical reasons.

The bioethical paranoia, meanwhile, has been dumbed down into nineties stoner attitudes. It seems to say: *The world is a fucked-up place. Scientists are psycho. Don't mess with nature*— all those nineteenth-century hangovers reinterpreted at the end of history. The specific fears of the original are rendered general, reflecting whatever biological practice triggers a collective gag reflex today. We still get strong hits of Wells's proto-Christian concern with scientists playing God and his fixation with degeneration. In this way, classic sci-fi novels can behave a bit like conspiracy theories. With every movie directly or indirectly inspired by Dr. Moreau, the fears and follies of late-nineteenth-century Europeans are recycled for a new generation. What is the cumulative effect of all this inherited paranoia? And what does it mean for those of us working in science and science fiction?

Re-Animator, directed by Stuart Gordon, 1985 (film still).

Bursts of Bioethical Conservatism

Sociologists have long tried their best to measure the impact of popular sci-fi on public attitudes. Though methodologically tricky, the consensus seems to be that the genre informs lay people's feelings about science more profoundly than anything they learn in school. While sci-fi is often lauded for inspiring scientific innovation, it has arguably inspired more fear of science. Starting in the mid-1990s, this fear has been directed increasingly at biotech.

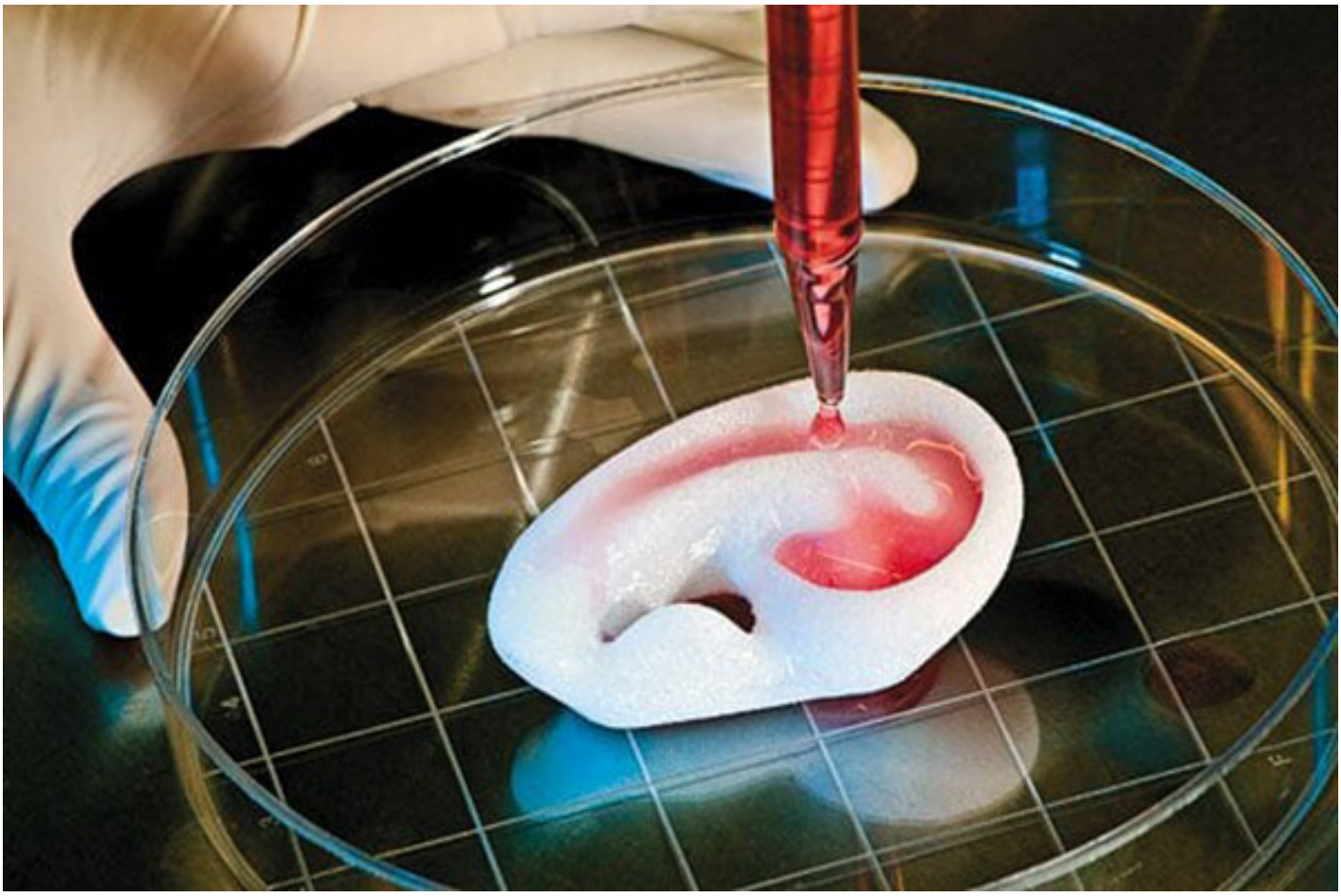
In 2013, a team of Austrian sociologists analyzed forty-eight sci-fi blockbusters that deal with "synthetic biology-relevant aspects and ideas" to identify how they "influence the public awareness and understanding" of the field.[8] Research in these films, they find, is often being conducted in the shadows; motivations are often initially understandable (or even humanitarian) but deformed by ambition. The culprits are either independent researchers, rogue employees of a company conducting their research in secret, loyal employees openly carrying out sanctioned (though controversial) research, or corporate or governmental entities conducting secret experiments. They can be plotted on a spectrum from deranged loners (Herbert West in *Re-Animator*) to urbane extroverts (Seth Brundle in *The Fly*), while the corporations are on a continuum from naive (InGen in *Jurassic Park*) to sinister (Umbrella Corp in *Resident Evil*). The old themes of Promethean hubris and devil's bargains are still present, but modified by the migration of scientific research from the academy into the private sector. The results generally threaten humanity.

Thematically and aesthetically, at least, today's popular anti-science conspiracy theories seem heavily influenced by these dystopian blockbusters about biotech. The lab-leak theory of Covid-19's origins, for example, is so dynamic a story that it manages to encompass all of the archetypes mentioned in the above study. The mainstream incarnation of the theory speculates about naive and reckless gain-of-function researchers accidentally unleashing Covid-19 on the general population. The fringier version sees a sinister plan by demonic scientists and pedophile elites to spread a novel coronavirus in a roundabout effort to microchip the global population and establish—Wells's great dream—a world government. Some polls have shown this alternative explanation to be more popular than the official narrative about Covid-19.[9]

This is not to blame popular sci-fi for the now-endemic suspicions of science. Certainly, the long history of atrocious experiments committed in the name of biology and chemistry—along with sociocultural factors like underfunded education, religious bioconservatism, and political polarization—have contributed to this paranoid view of innovation. It's merely to say that the strain of Manichean sci-fi brought into the world by stories like *The*

Island of Dr. Moreau has helped limit our dystopian imagination. This responsibility is worth beholding, particularly by those working to continue this troubled lineage.

corruption of nature begins. The very fact that it hasn't been done well, but that even the two worst Moreaus are cult favorites, adds to the luster of the challenge. What's more, the central innovation predicted by the book—a technology that can finally combine animal and man—only



Regenerating a human ear using a scaffold. License: CC BY 2.0.

Notes for Future Adapters of Dr. Moreau

Unfortunately, it is inherent to the way movies are churned out in Hollywood that—to paraphrase Dr. Ian Malcolm—whether you *can* make a film matters a lot more than whether you *should*. This applies particularly to readaptations of popular novels. *The Island of Doctor Moreau* keeps getting remade because it's been remade before. People know the story already, whether directly or indirectly, and to Hollywood producers that suggests a certain level of interest. In this case, however, the *should we?* question deserves particular emphasis. If you have to scrub many of the major elements of an old novel to turn it into a viable film, perhaps you shouldn't remake it at all.

And yet, the temptation is perfectly understandable. The plot is very exciting. It takes us right to the heart of our scientific paranoia, our inner conflict over where the

seems more plausible with time. The monkey-human embryos that were created and dashed in late 2020 suggest a vast range of future possibilities. These chimeras could become organ donors. They could perform jobs people don't want to do. They could fight our endless wars. All of this remains far beyond current capabilities and anathema to even the most permissive interpretation of bioethics. But in the current climate of paranoia—where many people seem willing to believe almost anything about each other, not to mention politicians and scientists—it seems a profitable area of speculation for dystopian blockbusters.

The latest prospective remakers certainly seem to think so. Talking to *Deadline* in late 2020 about his work on the forthcoming Moreau remake, screenwriter Zack Stentz said that now feels like "the perfect time to bring Moreau

into our own 21st Century world of transgenic animals, designer babies and other scientific advances Wells never could have dreamed of."[10] Completely apart from the fact that Wells did literally dream of all these things, one can only assume that the team working on this remake has struggled to grasp what kind of material they have on their hands here. No news has dropped about the production recently,[11] so perhaps they're still on that path—stranded somewhere among that long lineage of Hollywood talent. The supposed curse they're facing, we humbly suggest, is just an abundance of irreconcilable history. It's just very hard to whitewash this kind of material without losing it altogether.

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1
CRISPR (clustered regularly interspaced short palindromic repeats) is a family of DNA sequences found in the genomes of prokaryotic organisms. CRISPR-Cas9 is a specific protein in bacteria that can be used as a gene-editing technology to cut out specific parts of a cell's DNA and replace them with new sequences. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CRISPR#CRISPR_gene_editing and https://massivesci.com/articles/crispr-dna-editing-designer-babies/ .

2
James White, "Ready For an Island of Doctor Moreau TV Series?," *Empire*, December 11, 2020 https://www.empireonline.com/movies/news/island-doctor-moreau-tv/ .

3
Quoted in Roger Luckhurst, "An Introduction to *The Island of Dr. Moreau* : Science, Sensation and Degeneration," *The British Library*, May 15, 2014 https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/an-introduction-to-the-island-of-doctor-moreau-science-sensation-and-degeneration .

4
Wells certainly thought so. There are notable similarities to the texts. And there is evidence that Conrad had read *Moreau* while working on *Heart of Darkness*, which came out a year later.

5
H. G. Wells, *Anticipations of the Reaction of Mechanical and Scientific Progress upon Human Life and Thought* (Chapman & Hall, 1902).

6
See https://youtu.be/TjC3R6jOtUo .

7
See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lvIipmfdmVA .

8
Angela Meyer et al, "Frankenstein 2.0.: Identifying and Characterising Synthetic Biology Engineers in Science Fiction Films," *Life Sciences Society and Policy* 9, no. 9 (October 2013).

9
For example, see Alice Miranda Ollstein, "POLITICO-Harvard poll: Most Americans Believe Covid Leaked from Lab," *Politico*, July 9, 2021 https://www.politico.com/news/2021/07/09/poll-covid-wuhan-lab-leak-498847 .

10
Quoted in White, "Ready For an Island of Doctor Moreau TV Series?"

11
Though a three-year turnaround isn't unusual for a Gunpowder & Sky project.

Nicola Perugini and Tommaso Fiscaletti

Fascist Sunbathing and the Decolonization of Architectural Memory

Breakfast: a quarter of a liter of milk and coffee accompanied by "bread galore." Lunch and dinner: a minimum of ninety grams of pasta, followed by one hundred grams of meat or fish, fruit, and a dessert. As specified in the first report of the colony of Villa Marina XXVIII Ottobre, published in October 1932, all the meals at this fascist youth colony had to be of "the finest quality and strictly controlled."[1] Every summer, the proletarian children would arrive in Pesaro, a small town in central Italy, on trains organized from every corner of the country by the National Fascist Party. They were welcomed by the local Fascist authorities and organizations before starting their regimen, including sun and sea therapies in addition to their strict diet.

In short, the youth were subjected to strict hygienic-sanitary scrutiny. Every morning, the colony doctors monitored the cases of weak or sick children. "No deaths this year," reads the 1932 report. To wrap up the pedagogical and edifying routine, every evening, at sunset, the children were assembled in the main square in front of a large rationalist building and asked to sing fascist and nationalist songs.

The Refectory (capable of hosting 500 people) of the Villa Marina colony, Pesaro. Source: Istituto di Assicurazione e Previdenza per i Postelegrafonici (1932), Villa Marina XXVIII Ottobre Pesaro. Estate MCMXXXII A. X.

Benito Mussolini sent a message to celebrate the inauguration of the colony in 1928, dedicating it "to the sons of the Italian post and telegraph workers." The colony was named after the infamous March on Rome of October 28, 1922, when the National Fascist Party organized a massive demonstration in the Italian capital, leading to Mussolini's eventual coup d'état. Pesaro's youth colony was erected a few years later on one of the main beaches of our hometown, on the Adriatic coast. The huge rationalist construction was part of a system of more than

Stairs on the beach side, Villa Marina Colony, Pesaro, 2021. Photo: Tommaso Fiscaletti and Nicola Perugini.

two hundred similar institutions built on Italian seashores during the fascist period. They were meant to provide the sons of the Italian proletariat with a summer holiday of "climatic care," strengthening the bodies and souls of the "Italian race."[2]

As part of an extended research project about the youth colonies, we visited the crumbling building during the summer of 2021. At first, we did not imagine that many of the official documents related to the fascist past of Pesaro's colony had been lost.[3] It took us a few months but we finally started to make some initial discoveries, connecting the scattered written and visual fragments available online, in local libraries, and in personal archives. We managed to access the above-mentioned 1932 report with the help of a man who was part of the Pesaro section of the Communist party (PCI). As part of his political activism, Luciano Trebbi dedicated his life to collecting objects and publications from the fascist period to keep the memory of the Italian partisan resistance alive. He drove us to a local printing studio that had scanned the original copy of the report. "This document should be printed and distributed widely to the local population. We should never forget the history of these institutions," Luciano told us. He then asked: "Can you print 1,300 copies and distribute them to the local population through your project?"

During the final years before the fall of fascism, the colony of Villa Marina became the local headquarter of the Nazi occupying forces. The building was the last eastern bastion of the Gothic Line, the fortification shield created

Villa Marina colony, view from the beach, Pesaro, 1932. Source: Istituto di Assicurazione e Previdenza per i Postelegrafonici (1932), Villa Marina XXVIII Ottobre Pesaro. Estate MCMXXXII A. X.

by the Nazis in order to fight the Allied forces and the Italian partisans. The Allies bombed the colony and, with the support of the local resistance, liberated Pesaro. A year ago, one of us was going through our family archives and found a photo that belonged to one of our grandparents. It showed the aftermath of the renovation of the colony, after Italy's liberation. The relative was a member of the National Fascist Party and later, after the fall of the regime, he participated in the restoration of the colony.

Fascist Heritage

These dispersed archival objects allow us to rediscover Villa Marina and its post-fascist afterlife. After World War II, the colony became a space administered according to new democratic principles. However, its summer camp functions remained somewhat similar: children of post and telegraph workers continued to be hosted every summer on Pesaro's seashore in the renovated colony, until the end of the last millennium. They continued to enjoy the sunbathing therapy instituted by the fascists. They continued to remain confined and monitored. Their weight and health conditions were systematically checked.

But their daily education was sanitized of any aspects of fascist and nationalist indoctrination. The memory of the fascist past of the building in which they spent their summer fell into oblivion, even as it haunted the complex.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the building was abandoned and started to deteriorate. The Pesaro municipality scaffolded the colony building and sealed its doors and windows with concrete to protect the decaying structure. The local authorities wrapped it in white cloth, giving it a spectral, ghostly aspect. In so doing, the history of the colony was thrown further into obscurity and forgotten memory. Its haunted aspect was bolstered by local newspapers often referring to it as the "ghost building." In 2018, less than a century after Mussolini came to power, there was one last coup de théâtre. The

Villa Marina Colony, Pesaro, 1961. Source: Perugini Family Archive.

Italian Ministry of Cultural Preservation and Tourism included the fascist colony in its list of national cultural heritage sites, publishing a long report in which it defined Villa Marina as a building of "cultural interest" subject to preservation.[4]

According to the ministry's description, the colony was designed "not only for therapeutic goals, but also for those of education and propaganda." It had to be "welcoming and reassuring in order to leave an indelible trace in the mind of the Italian youth" and create fascist political consensus. The summer colonies, the ministerial report concludes, were among the "most successful" institutions created with these goals by the fascist regime.[5]

The research we are conducting and the archive we are assembling about the summer colony are specifically aimed at interrogating the fascist heritage that the ministry wants to preserve in a watered-down way. We hope the material we are gathering can serve as a counter-archive to official, institutional, whitewashed memory. In

Facade on the beach side, Villa Marina Colony, Pesaro, 2021. Photo: Tommaso Fiscaletti and Nicola Perugini.

particular, we are spurred into action by the fact that our hometown was recently nominated to be the Italian Capital of Culture 2024, opening a new opportunity for civic initiatives that would either expose the past or relegate it to being forgotten or rewritten.[6]

Decolonizing the Colony

Completely absent from the report by the Italian Ministry of Cultural Preservation and Tourism, which focuses on the technical and bureaucratic aspects of the conservation of the architectural features of the building, is a critical understanding of how Villa Marina XXVIII Ottobre and the myriad summer youth colonies situated on Italy's seashores played an important role in the fascist regime's policies of colonial and imperial expansion. The architecture of the building cannot be separated from the broader international political architecture it embodies.

After we discovered a "Manual for the Directors and Assistants of the Climatic Colonies," the intimate relationship between "internal colonialism"—the construction of youth colonies on Italian national soil—and the regime's colonial plan of overseas racial domination in Northern and Eastern Africa became much clearer. Published in 1935 by the National Fascist Party, while Italy was invading Ethiopia, the manual describes the goal of the youth colonies as one of preservation of the "bodily and moral health" of Italian children. The youth had to be subjected to a process of "hygienic propaganda and moral elevation." According to the fascist manual, the summer camps represented a symbol of "Italian genius" and were a fundamental tool for "containing the decline of [the Italian] race."[7] In other words, the fascist renovation of the "Italian race" in the homeland's summer colonies went hand in hand with the extension of Italy's racialized domination in the fascist empire in Africa.

This connection between internal and overseas colonialism became even more obvious to us when we found an old copy of the fascist magazine *Il Legionario* ("The Legionnaire," named for the Roman soldiers of antiquity). The magazine's cover portrays a group of joyful boys playing at the seaside. The image creates a sense of familiarity for viewers—especially those who live near the sea—while revealing something unexpected. In fact, the boys are the sons of Italian settlers from Libya hosted in one of the Adriatic summer colonies. In 1940, the fascist regime transported thirteen thousand Italian children from Libya across the Mediterranean—that very sea that has become a huge cemetery of nonwhite migrants in recent decades—to the Adriatic summer colonies to "rediscover their homeland" and train their bodies and souls in order to become future imperial conquerors in Africa. "Hurray Italy! Hurray the Duce! Hurray Hitler! Hurray the Empire!" the Italo-Libyan children were forced to sing in the Adriatic heliotherapic structures.[8]

The political and cultural question at stake with the summer colonies does not merely concern how to understand, challenge, and reuse the fascist architectural structures of the colonies—a question that has generated an important debate in Italy in recent years.[9] It is also imperative to understand the racialized and colonial nature of these institutions that constituted a pillar of the fascist regime's "biological policy" and how their colonial and imperial history persists in our present. Of course, this becomes yet more urgent today after neofascist political forces gained a parliamentary majority in the September 2022 Italian national elections. Understanding the realities of the past has become an acutely important task for building anti-fascist movements in the present. Just as Luciano, the Resistance fighter we met, understood the necessity to not forget past struggles, we must also emphasize the continuation of colonial and racist programs in the present to better combat them.

Digital mockups by Tommaso Fiscaletti and Nicola Perugini, Studio for Installation #1 (billboard), 2022.

A major question for present-day Italians is what it means to decolonize our internal colonies, in light of their deep connection to Italy's fascist expansionism overseas. This

expansionism played a role in the constitution of forms of transnational anti-racist solidarity that have inspired current global struggles to defend people of color and others against attacks by white-supremacist power. In the words of W. E. B. Du Bois in his article on the Second Italo-Ethiopian War, the resistance to Italy's attempts to subject Ethiopia to its racialized order was a cornerstone in the process of the international formation of a new Black consciousness:

> Black men and brown men have indeed been aroused as seldom before. Mass meetings and attempts to recruit volunteers have taken place in Harlem. In the West Indies and West Africa, despite the efforts of both France and England, there is widespread and increasing interest. If there were any chance effectively to recruit men, money, and machines of war among the one hundred millions of Africans outside of Ethiopia, the result would be enormous. The Union of South Africa is alarmed, and in contradictory ways. She is against Italian aggression not because she is for the black Ethiopians, but because she fears the influence of war on her particular section of black Africa. Should the conflict be prolonged, the natives of Kenya, Uganda, and the Sudan, standing next to the theater of war, will have to be kept by force from joining in. The black world knows this is the last great effort of white Europe to secure the subjection of black men. In the long run the effort is vain and black men know it.[10]

The fascist summer youth colonies must be rediscovered as key sites of the production of Italy's racial identity, playing an important role in fueling Italy's colonial aggressions against the nonwhite world. Though some Italians might think that they are living in a post-fascist Italy, internal colonies must still be liberated and decolonized. The scope of our research is to help trigger this process, inviting readers and viewers to understand and participate in anti-racist struggles of the present.

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This essay was written as part of a larger project on the fascist summer colonies. The written and visual fragments of memory we are accumulating will be exhibited to the citizens of Pesaro in the form of a public installation, made with the support of the local municipality. Our objective is to "reawaken" the colony in the coming two years, leading up to the city becoming the Italian capital of culture. The aim of the project is to interrogate the relationships

Villa Marina Colony, Pesaro,Studio for the Installation #1 (billboard), 2022. Digital Layout of the final photograph. Tommaso Fiscaletti and Nicola Perugini.

between the heliotherapic structure of Villa Marina XXVIII Ottobre, the history of Italian colonialism, and their relevance to contemporary anti-racist struggles. The project will ultimately unfold into a series of multimedia works and public interventions.

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Tommaso Fiscaletti is a visual artist and photographer, based in South Africa. Over the last six years he created, with Nic Grobler, *Hemelliggaam or The Attempt To Be Here Now*, a multimedia archive. His work has been exhibited in private and public venues and is included in public collections. He teaches photography at Creative Academy, Cape Town.

1
Istituto di Assicurazione e Previdenza per i Postelegrafonici, "Villa Marina XXVIII Ottobre" (Estate MCMXXXII A. X., 2013), 21.

2
On the summer colonies as a pedagogical project, see *Colonie per l'infanzia nel ventennio fascista: Un progetto di pedagogia di regime* , ed. Roberta Mira and Simona Salustri (Longo 2019); and Francesca Franchilli, *Colonie per l'infanzia tra le due guerre. Storia e tecnica. Ediz. illustrata Colonie per l'infanzia tra le due guerre. Storia e tecnica* (Maggioli Editore, 2009).

3
After the end of World War II many official fascist documents disappeared for a number of different reasons. In certain cases, they were destroyed as the result of Allied bombardment. In other instances, they were kept hidden by the postwar Italian authorities to protect the identity of fascist functionaries and supporters, or to protect the documents themselves from destruction. Some of them are still hidden and one of our objectives is to explore local state archives to search for traces of the colony during the fascist era.

4
Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali e del Turismo, Commissione Regionale per il Patrimonio Culturale, "Ex convitto Villa Marina. Relazione Storico Artistica Architettonica," 2018, 2.

5
"Ex convitto Villa Marina," 4–5.

6
Every year the Italian Ministry of Culture nominates a national capital of culture. The designated town or city receives funds from the ministry in order to showcase its cultural heritage and development, usually spawning cultural events, exhibitions, and so on.

7
Partito Nazionale Fascista, *Lezioni tenute al corso per direttrici ed assistenti di colonie climatiche* (Torino: Tipografia Barattini 1935).

8
Anna Arnese Grimaldi, *I tredicimila ragazzi italo-libici dimenticati dalla storia* (Savona: Marco Sabelli Editore, 2014), 52.

9
See Ruth Ben-Ghiath, "Why Are So Many Fascist Monuments Standing in Italy?," *The New Yorker* , October 5, 2017; Igiaba Scego, *Roma negata: Percorsi postcoloniali nella città* (Roma: Ediesse 2014); and Emilio Distretti and Alessandro Petti, "The Afterlife of Fascist Colonial Architecture: A Critical Manifesto," *Future Anterior* 16, no. 2 (2019).

10
W. E. B. Du Bois, "Inter-Racial Implications of the Ethiopian Crisis. A Negro View," *Foreign Affairs* , October 1935.

Continued from " **Emotional Patterns in Art in Post-1949 China, P Emotional Patterns in Art in Post-1949 China, Part I: Community of Feeling** *" in issue 129.*

Su Wei

Emotional Patterns in Art in Post-1949 China, Part II: Internality and Transcendence

Emotional production in China after 1949 was not a carefully directed romantic melodrama. Radical transformations in national ideology, the artistic politics that accompanied those transformations, new creative forms established by artistic institutions, the ideological transformation of artists, and the left-leaning or ultraleft atmosphere that permeated the whole country all endowed emotional production with complexity and conflict. Just as political rationality concealed the ambition to change the world overnight, emotion at this time was not just committed to understanding individual existence, but also to narrating the new world order through art. And it did so by expressing critiques of the bourgeois and feudal classes of the old order, and by shaping ideals within and beyond the socialist order.

The hesitant farewell to the layers of individual existence and the near-inescapable obsession with modernism were mixed with the rationalized pursuit of a revolution in subject-object relations and of ultimate freedom to create a unique aesthetic determination. Looking back at this period today, these aspects all portray variations on themes of desire and illusion. However, in the period's complicated historical development, we can still carefully distinguish paradoxical manifestations of states such as "construction," "subversion," and "indulgence." Emotion creates a unified linkage between the vast body of the nation and the complex heart of the individual, becoming a fable by which we can now understand our own history.

1. Problems of Creation and Problems of Framework

After 1949, the cases of artists Wu Dayu, Shen Congwen, and several others could be said to stand in opposition to the official art framework. This framework was produced by bureaucratic art organizations and socialist collective directives or mobilizations, as well as through the tenets and controversies over realism in periods of political tension. When these artists were criticized or completely rejected by the official art system, they responded with silent and self-sustained periods of creative effort, opening up island-like realms of the individual. However, in further instances post-1949, artists would inevitably come to be enveloped by political discipline, leading to irreconcilable conflicts between hearts and hands.

Art theorist and painter Zhang Anzhi (1911–90), who once studied under Xu Beihong, poured most of his energy into the creation of a national painting tradition. He also attempted to redefine the remit and value of state painting in socialist art from a theoretical perspective. On one hand, he took great pains to adapt the realist "art for life" approach that Xu had proposed as a response to formalism in art during the May Fourth Movement. At the

Zhao Yu (赵域), Land Reform and Collectivization, ca. 1948.

same time, he drew on theory from numerous sources to link Chinese traditional ink painting to natural scientific relationships, the inheritances of ancient art for the new man, and traditional brushwork techniques, with the goal of reconstructing a universal connotation and legitimate place for China. The comprehensiveness of this theorization not only avoided political risks, but also demonstrated that the theorist sincerely believed art to be capable of "creating emotions for a new world."[1] Unlike many theorists and high-ranking artists, Zhang Anzhi took a more relaxed and tolerant approach to the tensions between Republican art and the New China, and managed to avoid sinking into the boundless pain of ideological transformation. Whether addressing a Chinese ink painting depicting the construction of a reservoir or the transformation of nature, or paintings answering the call for "revolutionary romanticism" inspired by Mao Zedong's poetry, for Zhang Anzhi these all carried emotional connotations of the new era.

In a review of an exhibition in the early 1960s, Zhang Anzhi wrote: "Many painters try to reflect life from one side, prizing more subtle techniques and pursuing a lyrical wit; others use symbolism and metaphors to enhance their expression of character."[2] In the same article, he euphemistically discussed a diversity of styles and themes. Through discussion of topics such as lyricism, vitality of character, and diversity of theme, he alluded to the broadness of the creator's "thoughts and feelings" ( ) as unrestrained by dogma. [3] At the same time, he also hinted to those in power that it is only when an artistic carrier is loaded with the rich "expression of the soul" ( ) of its author that it can move the emotions of its audience.

Many of Xu Beihong's disciples, including Li Hu (1919–75), Wang Linyi (1908–97), Zong Qixiang (1917–99), Dai Ze (1922–), Li Ruinian (1910–85), and Zhang Anzhi, in spite of being within the post-1949 official art system, still could not compete with the political status of artists from the Yan'an Revolutionary Base. Even so, they played an important role in the making of art in the New China, especially in art education. Having been trained in realist methods under Xu Beihong, they had absorbed Xu's

Students participate in demonstration as part of the May Fourth Movement, 1919.

schematic ideas on national art education and creation, in which fusing Chinese and Western approaches could situate a broadly framed interaction with the world through art.[4] Their role in education meant that their reasoning and logic was still broadly disseminated within the new official artistic framework, profoundly influencing the artistic efforts of the new generation.

Compared with the individuals outside the official art system, those who worked for a long time within it were required to be more specific in their technical handling of line, color, and form. They had to be more consistent in feeling and expression, while also finding a balance between style and the political requirements placed on their work. Confined by the nature of their time, they were caught amid an "art-politics" debate that had already lost sight of its original aims and direction. While many works were produced during organized creative activities and strongly reflected discussions on collectivism, often those works did not represent the whole of an artist's career. In China there have recently been a succession of exhibitions revisiting and researching the artists of this era, with some works appearing for the first time today that seem to completely contradict the art history we have grown accustomed to. Works donated to state-owned art institutions, research funded by foundations established in the names of older-generation artists (alongside work done by the families of these artists), and the socialist-period works that occasionally come onto the market provide us with sufficient reference to comprehensively examine the careers of different individual artists.

Many painters emphasize the importance of "sincerity" in their work, a simple expression that belies a much more complex entanglement of history and personal feeling, and the continuous movement of art returning to itself from the disciplinary politics surrounding it. Specifically, "sincerity" also refers to the mobilization of the artist's hands and eyes by the principles of realism and the new

Zhang Anzhi, Looking Out.

era's demand to balance the effects of tremendous interventions into objective and subjective worlds. Abstract moral standards are not adequate to measure this form of limited sincerity from the perspective of the present, since for artists it included a general belief in the ideal world declared by the new regime, a loyalty to art within their own respective contexts, and a desire to transcend the here and now. The work of artists to restore or reconstruct a sincerity in their actual work helps us understand how individuals are able to partially transcend the framework of socialist art, but also to more accurately analyze its substantive transformations.

2. Unseen Sketches

Artists' preparatory drafts and artistic studies often transcend the scope of mere practice. They can be based on the principle of sketching from life or aim at capturing the feeling or a certain moment. They can be recollections and manifestations of pre-1949 art or lingering echoes of a certain mood or emotion. Drafts and studies convey the artist's desire for sincerity, and to a certain extent, release the possibilities of artistic language itself under the principles of realism. These can include studies exhibited publicly in the "Chinese Painting Study Exhibition" ( ) held in Beijing in October 1961—which included some stylistically unique Chinese ink paintings from the new era connotating experimentation and exploration—but also works that were not legitimized through public display during the socialist period and are only now being excavated or shown in the present.

These drafts and studies are significant partially because they were created in the socialist period but could not be exhibited, and also because they bear limited traces of Soviet-style art education. More importantly, the artistic discourses and techniques they carry conceal the rupture of different artistic traditions around 1949, and attempts to retain and explore them through the volatility of socialist society. The artist Wu Dezu (1923–91), who had once studied oil painting with K. M. Maksimov (1913–93), once said about sketching:

> Slow drawing and fast sketching are both mostly about practicing with our hands; using our hands to quickly convey the feeling of the outside world, using hands to sketch out one's own courage and bravery, using hands to convey one own's weight onto the page. Paint as you wish, don't get bogged down, this is akin to practicing use of the brush in Chinese painting.[footnote *Symphonies of Color: Famous 20th Century Oil Painter Wu Dezu*, ed. Wu Weishan (Wenhua yishu chubanshe, 2018), 210.]

Wu Dezu arrived in Yan'an in 1941 and studied at the Lu Xun Academy of Arts and Literature. Like many painters of his time, his works were often concerned with real life on a revolutionary basis. He dealt with people engaged in production as a starting point, and through listening, observation, and personal experience came to a three-dimensional understanding of his subjects. He would use his paintbrush to swiftly record his own creative journey as he went. He retained many pencil sketches completed before 1949, studies that not only reflected the universal, sincere pursuit of art to serve the people in the Yan'an period, but also encoded the artist's own understanding of the relationships between tradition and modernity, "local" ( ) and "foreign" ( ). Wu Dezu was a talented portrait artist, and skilled in the use of color. In his teaching, he stressed that "colors should be deployed quickly, and if they become dirty, they should be wiped off."[footnote *Symphonies of Color*, 303.] This can be differentiated from Xu Beihong's principles for color mixing, but also hints at the importance of feeling in the moment of sketching. Although Wu had been extensively trained in sketching and drawing from life, he was not confined to any academic creative dogma. He attempted to establish a direct relationship between "I" and the "object." This kind of sincerity approaches "the people" with a humanistic simplicity, and molds the figure of the "simple man" through a dialogue between technique and feeling that cannot be completely reduced to "the people" as framed by political discourses after 1949.

In fact, in the early phase of China's importation of Soviet art education, technical training was conducted simultaneously alongside the cultivation of artistic sensibility rather than merely as a new codified or limiting creative method, as the Maksimov oil painting class, which opened in 1956, can partly verify. After 1957, however, the idea of carefully cultivating artists was swiftly abandoned and the art world was rapidly politicized. A series of dogmatic standards for art were adopted, and those artists who had received early Soviet-style art education—many of whom had grown up during the establishment of New China, some having begun their artistic careers in revolutionary bases like Yan'an—still retained the artistic habit of following one's own emotions and sensibilities as well as the principles of realism. After the mid-1950s this habit was increasingly suppressed and called into question by the entire art system, and the "studies" that artists completed privately were rarely displayed in public. Yet the small sketches created on the road at home and abroad, or the lyrical works created during periods of political relaxation, often intentionally or unintentionally show a commitment to this portrayal of emotion.

3. Regulating Emotion Between Mainstream and Fringe

On the other hand, in addition to a dogmatic tradition of art education, the new era also gave rise to new forms of painting. This led to differences in political status for certain kinds of art, and thus also in the sincerity and forms of emotion assigned to them. New Year Paintings, comic strips, and propaganda images ( ), all of which had been important in Yan'an-era propaganda and

mobilization, had long occupied a dominant position. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, works on themes of revolutionary history by local Chinese painters also matured.[footnote *The Path of China's Modern Art*, ed. Pan Gongkai (Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2012), 354–57.] Traditional Chinese ink painting in the new era elevated sketching as a methodology, and hugely influenced the fields of character sketching and colored-ink figure painting.[footnote *The Path of China's Modern Art*, 382.] The enthusiasm for oil paintings on national themes during the Hundred Flowers Campaign and the Great Leap Forward seemed to provide oil painting in the New China with an internal impetus to escape Soviet influence for the first time. Once this style of painting and reforms to it were officially recognized, it was introduced across the whole of China through organized efforts and political decree.

However, as with other kinds of painting—landscape oil painting, portraiture, literati painting traditions, watercolors, abstract painting, and the works in colored ink ( ) briefly developed by Jiang Feng (1910–82)—this national style of oil painting also encountered fierce ups and downs. In a volatile and polarized landscape where mainstream faced off against fringe, many issues of concern for Chinese art became merely secondary: China's regional artistic traditions and cultural heritage, modernism's continuing influence, and attempts to integrate dialogues with the West, the Soviet Union, and different regions of Asia. If we are to look at what kind of emotions were encoded in the different genres of painting by their creators, we must first think about the overall situation they were in. We need to carefully distinguish between performance and political/artistic appeal rather than use "sincerity" as the only yardstick for measurement.

The political status of certain genres of art represents their legitimacy in the public domain due to political reforms, but also due to the collective will and joint efforts of the art world. For example, "Paintings after Mao Zedong's Poetry" ( ) rose to prominence in the Chinese art world after Mao Zedong's eighteen "classical" ( ) poems were first published in the first issue of *Poetry* ( ) in 1958, yet the portrait and landscape paintings of Russia's late-nineteenth-century Wanderers (Peredvizhniki), which were introduced to China alongside Soviet realist art and were hotly debated by artists prior to 1957, had little political legitimacy after the late 1950s. This was not because the educational foundation for landscape and portrait painting was lacking, as Wu Zuoren (1908–97) once concluded in a discussion of landscape painting, nor was it necessarily due to political orientation.[footnote *Selected Writings of Wu Zuoren* (Anhui meishu chubanshe, 1988), 144.]

Taking landscape painting as an example, if the landscape is seen as a kind of "epistemological constellation" (, according to Karatani Kōjin) or an historicized form for perceiving nature, then landscape paintings in the new socialist era could not or would not be permitted to be products of "naturalism" ( ). Instead, they must accommodate the ideological requirements of the new era and its perceptual experience. This inevitably requires creators to provoke a new subjectivity, and to create images presenting the ideological requirements and ideal landscapes of the new era. As with mainstream genres, landscape and portrait paintings needed to be "consistent" ( ) with the objects they represented.[footnote *Selected Writings of Wu Zuoren*, 154.] This "consistency" is a basic principle of socialist art, but is also a reflection of the creator's own thoughts and feelings. The emotions of the artist as conveyed in landscape paintings shared with mainstream genres of painting and the novel genres of the era an understanding of the new world and its subjectivities.

We cannot make a clear distinction between regulated emotion and sincere emotion. On the creative level, artists working in landscape themes could more easily immerse themselves in a private and more equal sensory encounter with the subjects of their art. In mainstream art, this immersion was obviously more tortuous for being subject to significant restrictions and ideological demands. This was particularly the case in 1958, when "the combination of revolutionary realism and revolutionary romanticism" became the guiding principle, and when the demand for the *creation* of reality far exceeded that for the *description* of reality. However, we cannot identify in the emotional states depicted in mainstream/secondary genres of painting any schism between public/private, political/artistic, or state/self. The distance between mainstream and fringe was relatively wide in times of political crackdown, but in periods of political relaxation, it was often mainstream discourse itself that proposed to give more space to the techniques and emotions of suppressed or fringe genres of painting. Rather than create a moral distinction between regulated emotion and sincere emotion, it would be more appropriate to clearly recognize the common historical "dynamic" that encompasses both mainstream and fringe genres, whether within the socialist art framework, transcending it, or both.

The confrontation between creative activity and the socialist framework for the arts was in fact present throughout the entire Maoist period, more obviously in periods of political relaxation. And while the confrontation took place under the principles of socialist art, such principles could also themselves be questioned—in their manifestation as dogmatism, for example, or in the indiscriminate use of vulgar sociology to promote work calculated to please rather than to challenge or educate the people. Sometimes confrontation between questions of creative practice and artistic framework also meant that neither was able to penetrate the other field, each forming a closed circuit, while at other times dialogue between the two fields was sufficient to generate new paths forward,

Isaac Levitan, Over Eternal Peace, 1894.

both shared and divergent. The interactions between creative work and artistic framework during the socialist period were by no means a simple antagonism or irresolvable conflict between public and private. This determines the basic situation in which artworks and artists, and their internality and transcendence, are defined by the socialist framework.

From the perspective of the artist, a choice between internality or transcendence is not derived entirely from individual consciousness, nor from being required to either follow or fight against official demands in a collectivist context. Since there is no framework for art that is either completely contained or entirely able to transcend the official socialist framework, there has to be an unconscious realm—a position by which residing within the framework does not exclude transcendence and transcendence need not abandon the framework. This "unconscious" is historical in nature, i.e., it exists within the inexorable laws of history. On an emotional level, when artists and artworks are in this unconscious realm, it is possible to open up slightly amid the political atmosphere, to express emotions through the cracks of collectivism and describe being an autonomous individual in a time of heightened ethnic or national emotion. These expressions may be reenactments of modernity or may revisit national artistic heritage, or may emerge simply from revolutionary sentiment. Adopting a naturally decentralized rhetoric, such expressions may appear asocial, ahistorical, and not so "real," thus avoiding any invasion or desecration of the framework in its essence.

Some controversy emerges from amid the internality/transcendence dialectic. Precisely due to this unconscious realm, both artist and framework have the space to extend their own internality, activate their own vitality, and even deny their own staleness ( ) in order to open an orientation toward the future. We can take two specific controversies surrounding the question of "innovation" as examples. In 1962, the film theorist Qu Baiyin (1910–79) published a widely discussed article entitled "A Monologue on Film Innovation" ( ) in the magazine *Film Art* ( ). The author describes the distress of art

Wu Zuoren, Panda, 1975.

workers plagued by political regulations and artistic dogma, calling for innovative practice based on the principles of art alone. This article, published during a period of political relaxation, raised the question of "innovation" as a discussion of what he referred to as "truth." Qu wrote: "Truth and rhetoric are two different things. Truth must be repeatedly told, but we must not use rhetoric, but rather use new ideas to tell it. The use of rhetoric causes truth to lose its crystal clarity, whilst new ideas will allow the truth to radiate an eternal light."[5] Rather than accuse the state for its comprehensive control of "truth," the author uses artistic "innovation" to pierce the closure of "truth," to stimulate its renewal and opening.

The dramatist and filmmaker Xia Yan (1900–95) noted that Qu's article ponders already "old problems" of artistic creation in that period.[6] However, Qu's perspective for tackling the question of "innovation" is entirely new, and accurately captures the unconscious field as a common driving force for both artistry and the artistic framework it confronts. For Qu, "innovation" in art is not only its essential characteristic, but also a new (and even radical) grasp of a new reality of the times. At the same time, the artistic framework of the new era must be constantly renewed through artists' innovation in order to coordinate art practice. Further, Qu argues that new subjectivity is a prerequisite for discussing "innovation." The emotional, moving passages of the monologue and the power of its sincerity not only cry out for humanistic and artistic independence, but also reveal a reflection on subjectivity in which "the 'revolution of the soul' that transforms or remakes the people's subjectivity" is a kind of "truth," hinting that this "truth" is constantly being created.[7] At the same time, socialist art, as another form of creation, echoes the creativity of "truth," and must also seek innovation and motivation from art itself.

Looking back on the art history of the socialist period, the process of self-transformation according to the will of the state emerges as the heart of the problem. Socialist art has clear modern characteristics, and it never completely abandoned the understanding of the modern individual that emerged from capitalist production and culture: an individual that can surpass itself infinitely, is unrestricted by natural conditions, exhibits a spiritual refusal of Man's limitations, and possesses a belief in endless expansion supported by reason. The artistic transformation of art under socialism took the modern individual's continuous transcendence to an extreme. In addition to the endless debates on form and content, theme and thought, reality and progress, each individual's presentation to the world was no longer as a vulgar self, but rather as something transcending the self—a higher, abstract self that embodied the will of the nation. But then in a Hegelian respect, works that embody the will of the state are not merely narrations of history that legitimate the history of a party, but also narrations of the self. Or we might say that works appearing to be merely "sketches" in nature—unrelated to the ferocity of realism—are not only a view from within the confines of one's own feelings, but also a form of historical narrative, centered in the knowledge of the self as an alternative expression of an intrinsic discourse.

In this fashion, the layers obscuring emotions can be removed to escape ceaseless interrogation under socialist conditions. Emotions are nothing more than the condition of mind revealed when the individual, driven by self-knowledge, ascends to the collective; or alternatively, when dialogue and conflict occur between the individual and the collective. In terms of art itself, emotion can often act as a bridge between narrative and lyrical poles, opening the possibility of dialogue with modernism, Chinese tradition, and popular culture. Here, emotion carries the silence, resistance, and hesitation of the artist undergoing the process of self-transformation. From the perspective of the entire cultural process, it was through emotion that art praised (rather than simply reflected on) the process by which new subjectivities of the socialist period shaped themselves—inspired by the demands of forming a new collective.

4. Emotion: A Perspective for Analysis of Conceptualism

In the changed landscape of the post-1980s art world, emotional expression was once again transformed to suit new trends. With the obsolescence and transformations of "emotion" seen in contemporary art, how can we open a space for dialogue with conceptual art practice? Let us briefly turn to a few conceptual artworks created from the 1990s onwards and explore whether a framework can be established.

In 1994, the artist Yan Lei (1965–) made up his own face to look as though he had been beaten up, and then took a close-up photograph, titling the work *Face* (1994). The image reminded viewers of the turbulent situation of 1990s China, in which ordinary people found themselves engulfed by the torrent of the times. Starting with this image, Yan Lei's practice revealed the complex emotions and attitudes with which he confronted commercialized society and the art system controlled by it. Another artist, Hong Hao (1965–)—who once forged, together with Yan Lei, an invitation letter to the 1997 Documenta and sent it to Chinese artists—bound a selection of his prints into a volume that purports to be a classical text. Entitled *Selected Scriptures* (1995), Hong used the medium of screen printing to mimic the printed texture of ancient texts. The works in his classical text include fictional maps such as the "Map of the Missile Defenses of the Myriad Nations" and "Map of World Defense Installations," sketching out an artist's imagination of the world order. The authority represented by such ancient classic works and the rules they encode for understanding the world became the object of ridicule, also showing the drastic changes that occurred within the inner worlds of artists undergoing the processes of globalization in the 1990s.

Jiang Feng, Kill the Resistersi, 1931. Reproduced from Selection of 50 Years of Chinese New Printmaking, vol. 1, 1931–1949 (Shanghai People's Fine Art Publishing House, 1981).

The artist Ma Liuming (1969–), who resided in the Dongcun ( ) area of Beijing in the 1990s, had an experience of dressing up as a woman once, which prompted him to use the classically feminine features of his face to create a gender-fluid new identity—"Fen-Ma Liuming." "Fen-Ma Liuming" wears makeup, and has a feminine face but a male body. This androgynous creation became the subject of a series of performance pieces. In the images of Fen-Ma Liuming, there is an anger towards prescriptions of identity, but the works also show a complex, intimate feeling ("Fen" is the name of the artist's girlfriend). The artist Sui Jianguo (1956–), who has been in dialogue with the realist sculptural tradition, recorded his observations on his daily life in his collection *Drawing Hand Scroll* (2006–7). All recorded on the litmus paper used in industry, the works give the impression of emotionless contemporary engineering drawings. The artist Ma Qiusha, born in the early 1980s, condensed her own adolescent education, family, and emotional experiences into a video monologue titled *From No.4 Pinguanli to No.4 Tianqiaobeili.* At the end, the artist who has been speaking indistinctly throughout the video removes a bloody blade from her mouth.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, the Chinese art world has seen new orders and new trends take hold, both pragmatic and authoritative. Some artists who had arrived onto the stage in the nineties began to be wary of the status quo but were also disappointed by the grand narrative that had held through the eighties. At the time, globalization was gradually becoming a visible reality. Following the collective reappearance of Chinese artists at the international level in 1993, international exhibitions and debates also became a driving force. Within China, the

art business flourished in the private sector, and the art market and art discourse became closely tied to each other. China had once again gone through a period of conceptual reformation and was swiftly becoming a commercial society. As compared with the eighties, the "reality" that art was in dialogue with had utterly transformed. This new situation gave rise to a further transformation in emotional structures. In their creative works, the artists who arrived in the nineties tried to transform their emotions, cultivated in a complex reality, into criticism of rules and functionalism, of the myth of the artist and prevailing hegemonies.

Strong emotions can allow art to transcend the confines of reality, and also prevent art from falling into the trap of vulgar sociology. Though we often see conceptual work as dry, cold, and without feeling, the spiritual depth of such works is found beneath their expressionless posture. Just as emotions have their own inner depths and are not simply unprovoked thoughts or unreliable intuitions, concepts cannot be only products of pure rationality or logical judgment. The active relationship between emotions and concepts can help us reimagine the real historical situation in which the individual is located, and the complex worlds constructed by different artists from within their respective systems. Emotion itself can be a fact, an awareness of the status quo, or a medium for conveying ideas. This understanding of emotion is not unique to China. When discussing Euro-American conceptual art from the 1960s onwards, art theorists Boris Groys and Jörg Heiser have used the term "romantic conceptualism" to articulate the dialogue between conceptual art and the realities of its cultural and social settings. However, these conceptualist practices are also contradictory, because they cannot display an understanding of the self within the art system, even though that same art system determines the conceptual strategies they employ. Emotion here is not a footnote to the dilemmas of an alternative modernism or an alternative present; it can be used as a medium to perceive the psychological states and mechanisms of art practitioners amid a framework of wide-reaching influence—the mechanisms of which may indicate the true dilemma, and perhaps suggest a few possible directions.

The new structure of emotions is once again being shaped by a unifying, normative power. Around the turn of the new millennium, Chinese contemporary art threw itself completely into the discourses of globalism. But the globalization of art is not predicated first and foremost upon multiculturalism or an imagined open world system, but upon the art system itself—a fact not recognized by all art practitioners. The practice of art presents itself as reflective participation (or a reflective performance) of the possibilities of its own system. The Chinese art world has attempted, over a brief period, to simulate a local art system consistent with (or as a feasible route to) the Western and imagined global system. Permeating this process is not a comprehensive understanding of the art system and its systemic violence, but rather a feeling for the collective process at the moment of production/reception in artistic practice.

Contrary to the version of contemporary art that imagines an infinite number of unique individuals, China's entry into the global art system retained a strong collective character mixing a variety of desires and emotions. Whether seeking legitimacy in local or international realms or eagerly drawing a boundary between nationalism and unilateralism, whether in completely commercialized spaces or in elite alternative spaces, whether through "state" art institutions (which still exist today) or through self-proclaimed "unofficial" nomadic art practices, Chinese contemporary art has generally questioned and undermined rituals and shared consensus—and it has done so collectively. While this is not uncommon in China's history of conceptual art, at this point almost everyone is walking in unison—collective dependence on the system and belief in power remain ubiquitous, and almost everyone has been influenced by elitism.

China's conceptual art is, after all, connected to the history of the socialist period. Under the influence of many emotional and psychological mechanisms, the true shape of contemporary art in China remains hidden, even if it operates within the customary binaries of mainstream/fringe, elite/mass, and global/local. The changing subjects that art discusses cannot conceal the absence of change in art itself, especially amid the complex, entangled hardships we experience today, in the postrevolutionary period. At the same time, the increasingly intense political situation in China today can also make us hear the echoes of the past more clearly. Might those brief flashes of emotion in historical moments of uncertainty help us to see the maze that we are currently in?

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This article was written in Chinese, translated by Hannah Theaker, and is published here with abridgements. The original article is based on the exhibition Community of Feeling: Emotional Patterns in Art in Post-1949 China (Beijing Inside-Out Art Museum, 2019), curated by the author, and will be included in the forthcoming eponymous catalogue to be published by Zhejiang Photographic Press in Hangzhou, China.

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of the legitimacy and rupture of contemporary Chinese art history in a global context.

1
Zhang Anzhi, *Collected Writings on Art by Zhang Anzhi* (Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1999), 29.

2
Zhang Anzhi, "A Brief Discussion on Portraiture—After Viewing a Portrait Exhibition," in *Collected Writings on Art by Zhang Anzhi* , 22.

3
Anzhi, "A Brief Discussion on Portraiture," 49.

4
For debate on Xu Beihong's vision of a Chinese painting and creative method that fused China and the West, see Wan Xinhua, "A Discussion of the Teaching of Chinese Painting in the Department of Art, Normal College of the National Central University" in *Art for Life: Collected Art Writings of Xu Beihong's Students* , ed. China National Academy of Painting (Zijincheng chubanshe, 2010).

5
Qu Baiyin, "A Monologue on Film Innovation," *Film Art*, 1962, 55.

6
See Qin Suquan, "The Complete Story of 'Innovation Monologue,'" *Film Art* , 1999, 5.

7
Wang Hui, *Depoliticized Politics: The End of the Short 20th Century and the 1990s* (Shenghuo/du shu/xin zhi, Sanlian shudian, 2008), 18.

Pelin Tan

Entangled Exiles

> ... not some joyous
> possession of mine
> full of sweet dreams
> laden with goodness,
> but an ancient land
> belonging to others, where
> life has the anguish of exile.
> —Pier Paolo Pasolini[1]

In March 2010, migrant workers gathered in Piazza della Repubblica in Rome to protest labor conditions. I was walking there in search of the Bangladeshi leader of this struggle, and I was carrying okra (*bamya*) that I had got from the market at Piazza Vittorio. I wanted to ask him how to cook this okra in the traditional Bangladeshi way. Okra is strong and can survive the precarity of exile and migration: it can be found in a Bangladeshi vegetable stand in Rome, an Ezidi camp in Diyarbakır, or a guerilla garden along the highway in Kowloon. Okra is one of the world's oldest cultivated crops, spread by the processes of colonization and the slave trade from Africa and India to the Mediterranean and westward to the new world. Its versatility makes it well suited for states of dispossession and survival.[2] For centuries, the region surrounding the Mediterranean Sea has been a migratory route, and southern Italy has long received refugees and immigrants from across the Mediterranean as cheap, seasonal agricultural workers. As most of these laborers are from rural backgrounds, they often travel with not only their seeds but also the knowledge of how to cultivate them.

Artist Leone Contini highlights the heritage of migrant communities on a planetary scale in both the past and current flow of refugees to the region of southern Italy. A vital question for him is: How are heterogenous plant, seed, and flora heritages linked to these flows of global migration?

In recent years Leone has followed Chinese migrants who work in the agricultural lands of Tuscany. He searches for cohabitations of migrants and traditional ingredients. He focuses on the unexpected biodiversity that becomes part of an imagined new landscape which, together with vineyards and olive trees, mirrors an inclusive, sustainable community:

> In [the] case of Tuscany, I think there is a rural ideology still active beneath the commodified landscape shaped by the food and wine industry, tourism and the movie industry. This ideology is rooted in fascist policies during the period of autarky. It can reemerge in a very violent way—the idea that not every rural landscape belongs here. So there is a dominant ideology that promotes a dominant and standardized landscape.

Tuscan cohabitations: olive tree and patola. Photo: Leone Contini.

The colonization and standardization of landscapes is always rooted in controlling the cultivation and erasure of localities. James C. Scott has pointed out how the cultivation and dissemination of grains and a variety of crops contributed to the formation of states, institutions of human slavery, and administrative governance in ancient Mesopotamia and across the Mediterranean region thousands of years ago.[3] Today, the same region is inundated with wars and oppressions that destroy not only biodiversity but also the intangible heritage of ingredients and their narratives across our earth.

"Survival-with" and "through" is something of an entangled kinship that can be described as migrating ingredients, refugee seeds, and exiled foods. Works by artists Seçkin Aydın and Gülsün Karamustafa deal with forced eviction and exile from their homelands in different historical periods in the last century in Anatolia. Aydın is a Zaza minority from an evicted Kurdish town called Kulp (Diyarbakır Province). His work *I can't carry my grandma, i can also not eat her or wear her* (2015) uses the metaphor of Aydın's grandma keeping small fruits in his pocket during their journey of exile when he was a child. As they walk day and night from their village that the military forced them to evacuate, the grandma, who is old and frail, is left behind. The work is a shirt made of grape pulp—dried fruit pulp is a local staple in the region. Karamustafa's work *Heimat Ist Wo Mann Isst* (1994) depicts three spoons wrapped in an old cloth. The title means "Homeland is not where you were born, it is where you are fed," which refers to cross-Balkan and Anatolian transnational migration.

Practices of collecting and archiving heirloom seeds are a form of solidarity and resistance against extractive capitalism and industrialized agriculture. Such projects protect and aim to restore natural habitats and biodiversity.[4] They are critical of dominant monocultural approaches and embrace interspecies hybridization and circulation. Last year, I visited Vivien Sansour's Palestinian Heirloom Library in the village of Battir in the West Bank, where in 2014 Sansour established her archive to preserve ancient seed varieties and traditional farming practices in collaboration with the villagers.[5] Battir has Roman garden terraces that have been used for cultivating food for over two thousand years. It is also one

Gülsün Karamustafa, Heimat Ist Wo Mann Isst, 1994, detail.

of the many cultural landscapes in Palestine threatened by Israel's plans to build a separation wall through the area.

Sansour's library consists of heirloom seeds from the villages of the West Bank as well as from Gaza and other local communities. Palestinian farmers work under great strain as irrigation and water access are controlled by the Israeli government. Saving and sharing seeds for cultivation has impact beyond feeding human-centric needs; it also works toward preserving biodiversity and ancestral heritages that are under threat from colonial and structural violence. The West Bank is divided into three areas—A, B, and C—and Palestinians cultivate land in Area C. Israeli satellite housing projects occupy the lands, destroying Palestinian villages and farmland. Sansour's and the villagers' efforts toward uncovering and preserving seed stories is also about creating an infrastructure of seeds that is a form of decolonization. This work fights against the ongoing settler colonialism that continuously destroys and erases the ancestral knowledge of the Indigenous communities tied to that natural landscape.

How can we consider a more-than-human ethics around seed and seed heritage? How can we collect cross-narrative assemblages of seed heritage? Artist Luigi Coppola, who is also a cofounder of Casa de Agricultura cooperative in his village in Salento, Italy, participated in "Gardentopia: Cosmos of Ecologies," a project that I curated in Matera, in Italy's Basilicata region, based on a locally engaged process. In his ongoing evolutionary garden project, Luigi is not only developing a relationship to landscape through seed and soil relations, but also engaging in social collectivism with local people—urban and rural citizens as well as refugees and migrants. The scale of ethical responsibility also includes protection of the entangled relationship between nonhuman entities such as seeds, soil, and insects. Furthermore, as seed and soil represent heritage, they are the most important elements in a nomadic life of forced eviction or displacement due to war or colonial oppression.

In our contemporary times, thinking of species as seeds is also a metaphor for survival during the Anthropocene, where humans are the main decision-makers—through neoliberal global companies and states—involved in extracting resources from the landscape and other parts of the earth. The idea of protecting species as seed for

human needs must transform into an approach that questions how we might coexist together. How do we show solidarity with seeds? How might we create an entangled kinship with seeds? How might we create a collective empathy for this kinship?[6] As the effect of the Anthropocene creates catastrophe and near-future dystopias, we must act in solidarity with other species for our collective survival.

The idea of seeds as Indigenous heritage helps to surface forgotten, destroyed, and oppressed histories of Indigenous communities. Seeds are often kept (especially by women) and carried through eviction and displacement during periods of colonialism and slavery. The Hudson Valley in upstate New York, where Bard College is located, is the ancestral homeland of the Muhheaconneok, or Mohican, people, known today as the Stockbridge-Munsee Mohican Nation. Bard Farm is coordinated by farmer Rebecca Yoshino, the former director of Wozupi Tribal Gardens in her hometown of Minneapolis. Through the work of Bard Farm, Yoshino aims to preserve Indigenous seeds of the Hudson Valley like the teosinte, Haudenosaunee cornbread bean, Seneca Buffalo Creek squash, and Dakota yellow flint corn, literally planting a "reconnection of seed relatives to communities of origin and sacred homelands."[7]

Most of the practices and knowledge production of the abovementioned comrades are also reflected in my ongoing engagement in the landscapes of the Tigris River in southeast Turkey where I live. Indigenous phenomenologies are essential for tracing food heritage and the ingredients that are tightly connected to local communities of Zazas, Ezidis, Armenians, Suryanis, Kurds, and others who are continuously exiled by force in the ongoing extracted landscapes of the Tigris. Often with colleagues we find ourselves discussing, for example, the *giyayê xerdelê* (mustard greens) that can be easily foraged in the hills of Heskıf, a millennia-old archeological heritage site that has almost been destroyed by the nearby Ilisu Dam, which justifies the expropriation of lands from Kurdish villages and from many nomadic shepherds who were forced to leave.[8] Military surveillance of farmers and of the common grazing grounds of Ezidi, Suryani, and Kurdish villages leads to a loss of the network of animal herding that is embedded in transhuman nomadism. Kurdish ecology activists Bişar Içli and Zeki Kanay, who were banned from their municipality and their university positions by the Turkish government in 2017, started an agro-ecological solidarity commune in Diyarbakır. They archive, exchange, and create networks of seeds around the Tigris River basin, producing an entanglement of solidarity infrastructure among Kurdish communities against military surveillance and capitalism-led extraction in this region.

Cineria, an Ezidi village near Batman, Turkey, was nearly emptied out in the 1980s due to conflict in the region between the Kurdish movement and the Turkish state. Most of its inhabitants left for Germany as migrant workers. For them, the most important thing is to preserve the sacred sites around the village. Soil, stone, rocks, caves, and water are fundamental cosmological elements of Ezidi cultural practice connecting the past, present, and future. Each year the village hosts semi-nomadic Zaza shepherds who migrate from another southeastern Turkish city, Bitlis, with their herds of animals. The Ezidis accommodate the shepherds for six to seven months in Cineria; both communities communicate using the Kurmanji language. Female Zaza shepherds are hardworking laborers who forage edible plants, make cheese, lead the animal herds, and care for their children. Natural caves in the region served as shelter and housing for most communities until the 1980s. Using these caves for preserving wheat or cheese is a non-extractivist practice in this landscape.

Okra field in Hevsel Gardens with the old city walls of Diyarbakır, Turkey in the background. Photo: Pelin Tan.

Long walks through landscapes are a basic practice of Ezidi women, where they learn about the land and the cultivation cycle connected to Ezidi cosmology, which is about keeping and protecting ingredients, seeds, and healthy soil. Honouring nonhuman elements is fundamental to Ezidi cosmology. As Ezidi women walk through the lanscape, they tell stories of dispossession, mourn for lost soil and seeds, and whisper continously: " *av*, *agîr*, *erd*, *ba*, *roj*."[9]

Anthropologist Gülkızılca Yürür often writes on the food-gathering behaviors of local populations influenced by urbanization, military violence, and the expropriation of use rights to common grazing grounds. In her ethnographic research on the political economy of wild edible "oak manna" (*gezhemgen*) in Dersim/East Anatolia, she focuses on the effects of extractive capitalism on sedentary subsistence herding and the loss of traditional knowledge in the Dersim region (an Armenian-populated

Left: Zaza female shepherd making cheese, Çinerya village, Turkey. Photo: Pelin Tan; Right: Hanife Gevci points out the rock hole used for the preservation of pwheat in the past, Çineriya Ezidi village. Photo: Pelin Tan

region before 1915, and currently mostly populated by Kurdish Alevi and Zaza communities). Yürür's research methodology consists of looking to the local narrative cycle that explains the relationship between oak forests, climatic conditions, and the agricultural cycle in Eastern Anatolia:

Gezhemgen is a sign of a good harvest and signifies the power of fertility (being also called "the power of *Hızır*," a deity). Pastoralist practices are affected by intrastate war and the appropriation of governance rights to grazing. There is a relationship between accessibility of pastures and the vertical transmission of knowledge on the flora of the highlands to young generations.[10]

Palestinian geographer Omar Tesdell, who created the Palestinian edible plants archive,[11] tells us that landscapes move in slow, deep time, and that all wild plants, seeds, and healthy soil are our heritages. These heritages will not only support our precarious societies but may create an ethical, responsible entanglement of resilient coexistences for our collective future.

In May 2022 I visit the Turkish city of Antioch, near the border with Syria. I am standing near a refugee camp facing the Syrian city of Idlib, on the far side of the border. Surrounding me is an ancient region that still produces large amounts of olives and olive oil. Fields of grain and olive trees covering the region used to be one of the most important parts of the Levant area. Nestled among olive tree fields, Boynuyoğun Refugee Camp hosts some 8,500 Syrian refugees, most of whom work as day laborers in the agricultural fields. Established as a tent camp in June 2011, it was transformed into a container camp in 2016. Between six in the morning and eleven at night, refugees are allowed outside of the camp to work.

James Scott writes: "Hominids have, after all, been shaping the plant world—largely with fire—since before Homo sapiens." Later he writes: "In a grain state, one or two cereal grains provided the main food starch, the unit of taxation in kind, and the basis for a hegemonic agrarian calendar."[12] In the current borderlines of Turkey and Syria, state-making is entangled with the realities of Syrian refugees working as day laborers, and with harmful, state-led agricultural policies in the region—a region that used to be famous for bountiful, high-quality olives, olive oil, and wheat. My friends Apo and Shiraz, who are farmers and olive oil producers in Antioch—they are from Tokatlı,

In Arabic, freekeh means “rubbing/crushing.” Freekeh bulgur is a durum wheat harvested before it has fully ripened, and then burned to remove the stalks and reveal the green freekeh kernels. Photo: Pelin Tan

"State of Displacement: Entangled Topographies", Arazi Assembly, 17th Istanbul Biennale, Gazhane Museum, Istanbul, 2022. It shows local heirloom seeds from the Diyarbakır region and 4 types of Wheat.

the only remaining Christian Arab village there—explain that one field in the Antioch region used to produce two tons of freekeh (frik) bulgur a day.

Collective learning and the creation of decolonial methodologies against slow violence, extraction, and forced eviction/migration leads to pedagogies of the commons. Following an okra plant through narratives, infrastructures, forgotten languages, and entangled exiles is not a metaphor. As artist Jumana Manna writes, we strive toward "imagining alternative/affirmative care structures that remain, within and beyond the current reality, aligned towards plant and human life alike."[13] Navigating through migrating ingredients, refugee seeds, and exiled foods, we witness and learn about extractive strategies, state-making, and slow violence. This essay on non-extractivist practices in dispossessed and cohabited landscapes is about "survival-with" and "through" foraging, composting, preserving, landscaping, and burning ingredients, which together create relational phenomenologies.

Recipe: Bamya (okra)

I cut and clean the top of the okra—this dish avoids the okra "saliva." Combine with onion, thin-cut tomato, and some preserved boiled chickpeas in a pot. Cook for thirty minutes, then add *koruk suyu* (sour/young grape juice). Cook for an additional forty-five minutes, then add olive oil and let cool.

Pelin Tan is a Turkish art historian and sociologist based in Turkey. She is a researcher and writer working on methodology and in the fields of critical spatial practices, alternative pedagogies, and the commons. Currently, she is a professor and head of the film department at the Faculty of Fine Arts, Batman University, a senior research fellow at the Center for Arts, Design and Social Research, Boston, and a research fellow at the Architecture Faculty, University of Thessaly.

She was a postdoc fellow at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (2011), DAAD Art History, Humboldt University of Berlin (2006), The Japan Foundation (2011), and Hong Kong Design Trust (2016). Tan is the lead author of the report "Urban Society" by ipsp (Cambridge Univ.Press 2018) and has contributed to several publications, including *Climates: Architecture and The Planetary Imaginary*(Columbia University, 2017), *Refugee Heritage*(Art & Theory, 2021), *Radical Pedagogie* s (MIT Press, 2022), *Autonomous Archiving* (dpr, 2017), *The Silent University: Toward-Transversal Pedagogy*(Sternberg Press, 2016), *Designing Modernity: Architecure in the Arab World*(Jovis, 2021), and *From Public to Commons* (Routledge, 2023).

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1
The Selected Poetry of Pier Paolo Pasolini , ed. Stephen Sartarelli (University of Chicago Press, 2014), 22.

2
"The first recorded reference to okra was made by the Egyptians in 1216 AD, although the plant explorer Vavilov indicated that there was strong evidence that the crop flourished even before that date in the tropical climate of Ethiopia, while others have identified its origin as India." William James Lamont, Jr., "Okra—A Versatile Vegetable Crop," *HortTechnology* 9, no. 2 (A pril–June 1999).

3
James C. Scott, *Against the Grain: A Deep History of Earliest States* (Yale University Press, 2017).

4
Pelin Tan, "The Care of Seed," *MOLD Magazine* , no. 5 (Winter 2021).

5
See http://www.visibleproject.org/blog/project/palestine-heirloom-seed-library/ .

6
Donna Haraway proposes the term "Chthulucene" to replace "Anthropocene" in order "to renew the biodiverse power of terra is the sympoietic work and play of the *Chthulucene*." The latter is an epoch "made up of ongoing multi-species stories and practices of becoming-with in the times that remain at stake, in precarious times, in which the world is not finished and the sky has not fallen—yet." *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Duke University Press, 2016), 55.

7
Teosintes are a group of wild grasses that are believed to be the progenitor of corn. Yoshino's seed archive includes sunflower seeds from the Arikara Tribe (North Dakota), squash seeds from the Miami Tribe (North-Central Indiana), and mother corn seeds (Dakota flint corn). Bard Farm collaborates with Ken Greene (founder of Hudson Valley Seed Library, the United States's first public seed catalog) and Vivien Sansour in supporting the exchange of seeds as well as disseminating ancestral knowledge.

8
Pelin Tan and Zeynep S.Akıncı, "Waterdams as Dispossession: Ecology, Security, Colonization," in *Climates: Architecture and the Planetary Imaginary* , ed. James Graham (Lars Muller Publishers, 2016).

9
In Kurmanji: "water, fire, earth, wind, sun)."

10
Kızılca Yurur, "How *Gezhemgen*, the Oak Manna, Has Been Forgotten in Dersim (Tunceli) in the Upper Euphrates Basin: Extractive Capitalism and Local Knowledge," *Journal of Political Ecology* 28, no. 1 (2021).

11
See https://archive.org/details/palwildfoodplants2018 .

12
Scott, *Against the Grain*, 11, 128.

13
Jumana Manna, "Where Nature Ends and Settlements Begin," *e-flux journal* , no. 113 (November 2020) https://www.e-flux.com/journal/113/360006/where-nature-ends-and-settlements-begin/ .

Compiled by Olga Olina, Hallie Ayres, and Anton Vidokle

Muted Tongues: A Timeline of Suppressed Languages

Throughout most of written history, since the invention of writing by the Sumerian civilization, languages coexisted in relative harmony even when their speakers didn't.[1] *Some thrived and others waned, yet there are no examples of systematic attempts (that we could find) to prohibit or extinguish a language during antiquity. It is mainly with the emergence of nation-states that some languages became designated as official while many others were discouraged, suppressed, or banned altogether. Such destructive policies towards languages and dialects seem to originate in Europe and are then spread globally during colonization, although one must keep in mind that the sheer volume of documentation centered on European history at the expense of all other civilizations often tends to produce an optical distortion. Linguists calculate that at the current speed, almost half of the world's 7,151 languages will disappear before the end of this century. This timeline is an incomplete account of language politics in many parts of the world, starting roughly from the beginning of nation-states.*

1367: The first English law in colonized Ireland that specifically banned the use of the Irish language is enacted as Article III of the Statute of Kilkenny. The Article makes it illegal for English colonists in Ireland to speak the Irish language and for the native Irish to speak their language when interacting with them.

1380: Under Olaf II of Denmark, Danish replaces Faroese as the official written language in education and administration in the Faroe Islands.

1482: The Valencia Bible, the first bible in the Catalan language, is burned.

1492: *Gramática de la lengua castellana* by Antonio de Nebrija is the first grammar book dealing with the Spanish language and the first grammar book of a modern European language to be published. The book is deemed "the companion of the Empire." About his work, Nebrija notes in a letter to Isabella I, Queen of Castile: "After Your Highness has subjected barbarous peoples and nations of varied tongues, with conquest will come the need for them to accept the laws that the conqueror imposes on the conquered, and among them our language; with this work of mine, they will be able to learn it, as we now learn Latin from the Latin Grammar."

1535: The Laws in Wales Act decrees that English is to be the only language used in Welsh courts and that Welsh speakers are barred from holding public office.

1536–1814: Danish is made the official language of Norway.

1537: The Statute of Ireland – An Act for the English Order Habit and Language prohibits the use of the Irish language in the Irish Parliament. In 1541, further

Tower of Babel, by Lucas van Valckenborch, 1594, Louvre Museum. License: Public Domain

legislation is passed banning the use of Irish in the areas of Ireland then under English rule.

1567: King Philip II of Spain makes the use of the Arabic language illegal.

1570: King Phillip II of Spain declares Nahuatl the official language of the colonies of New Spain, in order to facilitate communication between natives and Spanish colonists.

1633: Philip IV of Spain decrees that Roma people do not exist, effectively banning the Romani language and traditional culture.

1652: The Dutch East India Company establishes a trading post in Cape Town. European colonizers (Afrikaners) moved to the Cape and gradually establish farms in the Dutch Cape Colony, which functions as a Dutch slave state.

1650–1707: Ehmedê Xanı, a Kurdish intellectual, is considered to be the founder of Kurdish nationalism. Xanı stressed the importance of the Kurdish language within the ongoing struggle against the Ottoman and Persian empires.

1697: Under Peter the Great in Russia, Belarusian loses its status as an official language and is banned from all court and state documents.

1707–1716: La Nueva Planta decrees signed by Philip V, the king of Spain, constitute the first attempt to centralize several territories under a single administration. Imposed by force, Castilian Spanish becomes the exclusive language of the government, administration, publications, commerce, education, and religion, banishing Andalucian, Aragonese, Catalan, Galician, and other languages of Spain.

Shipbuilding yard of the Dutch East India Company. License: Public Domain

1737: The Administration of Justice Act is passed by the Irish Parliament, forbidding the speaking of Irish within the courtroom and prohibiting the completion of legal documents in Irish. The Act imposes a financial penalty of £20 each time Irish is spoken in court.

1757: Joseph I, King of Portugal, bans the indigenous Tupinambá language in colonized Brazil.

1760–1764: The Savoy government replaced Sardinian with Italian in all sectors of public life. Prior to 1720, when Sardinia was ceded to the House of Savoy, the island was part of Spain, and Castilian, Catalan, and Sardinian languages enjoyed freedom in all domains.

1770: King Carlos III of Spain issues a decree that prohibits the use of Indigenous languages in all colonies of Spain.

1772: Following the First Partition of Poland, the lands that became part of the Prussian state under the reign of Frederick the Great are subjected to several measures of ethnic cleansing. The Polish language is replaced by German in administration

1775: The Marquis of Pombal, a Portuguese diplomat, prohibits the use of Indigenous languages in Brazil.

1782: The Rebellion of Túpac Amaru II, an uprising of native and mestizo peasants against the Spanish Viceroyalty of Peru, ends after two years of struggle. As a result of the uprising, Spanish colonial administrator José Antonio de Areche bans the Quechua language and most aspects of Inca culture.

1789: The French Revolution begins. At first, the revolutionaries declare liberty of language for all citizens of the Republic; this policy is subsequently abandoned in favor of the imposition of a common language that was to do away with the other languages of France.

1795/1806: Invasion of the Cape Colony by the British Empire as part of the fight for control over diamond and gold mines. Dutch farmers are forced to migrate towards the north, where they establish settlements in the interior of South Africa.

1810: Hawai'i becomes a unified kingdom.

1819: Prussian officials abolished Polish from courts and partially from schools, introducing educational programs in German.

1831: The first residential school opens in Canada. The school system, funded by Canada's Department of Indian Affairs and administered by Christian churches, is designed to deprive Indigenous children of their native languages and cultures by forcing them to speak English and cut ties with their communities.

1837: In India, the British East India company forgoes Persian as the official language of government offices and the courts and replaces it with local vernaculars, primarily Hindi. In northern India, Urdu replaces Persian.

Pa-Li-Kiao's bridge, on the evening of the Battle of Palikiao (Baliqiao), which took place on September 21, 1860 during the Second Opium War (1856–1860). The Anglo-French victory opened a path to Beijing for Western armies. License: Public Domain

1839–1842: The First Opium War between the Chinese Qing Dynasty and the British Empire. The conflict terminates through the Treaty of Nanjing, according to which the Qing Dynasty cedes Hong Kong to the British Empire. English becomes Hong Kong's only official

language of politics and administration.

1842: Teaching Romanian in Bessarabia is forbidden.

1848–1871: Unification of Italy.

1850s: In the second half of the nineteenth century, speakers of languages other than German are labeled as *Reichsfeinde* or "foes of the [Prussian] empire."

––––By the 1850s, only about half of the population of Wales can speak Welsh, compared to almost 100 percent in the eighteenth century, partially due to the increased number of English-speaking migrants, but also because of the British government's destructive policies aimed at eradicating the Welsh language.

1851: Norway passes a law forcing Sámi schools to teach in Norwegian.

1857: The September 19 issue of *The Cape Argus*, an English-language newspaper, describes Afrikaans as a "miserable, bastard jargon," not worthy of being called a language, and advocates for the "atrocious vernacular" to be stamped out.

1860: Speakers of Occitan form over one third of the French population. By 1993, discriminatory French policy has reduced this proportion to less than 7 percent, and then less than 1 percent by 2012.

1864-1904: Books in the Lithuanian language are illegally published abroad and smuggled into Lithuania, where printing Lithuanian in Latin script is forbidden by the imperial Russian authorities. Lithuanian book smugglers are known as *knygnešiai*, or "book carriers."

––––Belarusian, Polish, and Lithuanian are banned in public spaces in the Russian Empire.

1867: The Native Schools Act is established in New Zealand, creating a national system of primary schools, where instruction is to be conducted in English. The Act stipulates that it is the onus of Maōri communities to request a school, form a school committee, supply land for the school facilities, and pay for half of the building costs and a quarter of the teachers' salaries.

1868: Ezo Island is annexed by Japan's Meiji government and renamed Hokkaido. As Japanese settlers colonize the island, the native Ainu are forced to attend Japanese schools and their language is banned.

1873: German becomes the primary means of instruction in all Prussian schools in the Polish-speaking territories.

1879: Japan annexes Ryukyu and begins a policy of forced Japanization. Ryukyuan languages are suppressed, and children are punished for speaking their native tongues in school. Today, the Ryukyuan languages are severely endangered.

1880: The Second International Congress on Education of the Deaf is held in Milan. The conference declares that oral education is superior to manual education and passes a resolution to ban sign language in many European countries and the US. In 2010, at the 21st iteration of the Congress in Vancouver, the members issue a formal apology for the ban.

1880–1902: Under US rule, the number of schools in Hawai'i where Hawaiian is the language of instruction drops from around 150 to zero.

1880s: Polish schooling is banned in the Russian Empire.

Left: The 98th Regiment of Foot at the attack on Chin-Kiang-Foo (Zhenjiang), 21 July 1842, resulting in the defeat of the Manchu government. Watercolour by military illustrator Richard Simkin (1840–1926). License: Public Domain Right: Cartoon from Marumaru Chinbun, May 24, 1879, with the caption "Japan trying to obtain sole possession of the 'Colossus of Riukiu' by pulling China's leg." License: Public Domain

––––German East Africa, a colony spanning territories of present-day Burundi, Rwanda, and Tanzania, is founded. German colonists start the process of de-Arabization, relying on Swahili in administration and encouraging its spread by developing an educational program and creating teaching materials. The Swahili word for school, *shule*, is a borrowed word from German. Although German is taught at schools, Swahili is the medium of instruction. Today, Swahili is a predominant and official language in numerous East African countries.

1881: Under Alexander II, the Russian Empire becomes an immense multilingual state with over 150 linguistically distinct groups. The Tsars pursue a policy of ruthless assimilation of ethnic minorities: Alexander II prohibits the use of Ukrainian in all schools, theaters, and public performances until 1919, and Belarusian is prohibited until 1905.

–––Jules Ferry Laws in France. Educational reforms aimed at improving literacy rates in rural areas make free primary education compulsory. Any languages other than French are forbidden, even in schoolyards, and any transgression is severely punished.

1885: Mandatory use of Russian in Baltic governance.

1887: Esperanto, an international auxiliary language，is created by Warsaw-based ophthalmologist L. L. Zamenhof. It is intended to be a universal second language to improve communication between nation-states and prevent wars.

–––The United States of America Indian Affairs Commissioner bans Native languages in schools.

1890s: Russian becomes the language of instruction at all schools in the Baltic countries.

1892–1907: At tribal schools in Kurdistan, the teaching of Kurdish, "the barbarian language," is forbidden. The sole medium of education is Turkish.

1893: United States troops invade the Hawaiian Kingdom without just cause, which leads to a conditional surrender by the Hawaiian Kingdom's executive monarch, Her Majesty Queen Lili'uokalani.

1895: Taiwan becomes a dependency of Japan after Japan's victory in the First Sino-Japanese War, and Japanese becomes the island's official language. By 1941, nearly 60 percent of Taiwanese can speak Japanese.

1896: Teaching and learning in Hawaiian is banned by Act 57, Section 30 of the Laws of the Republic of Hawai'i. The use of Hawaiian is from now on restricted to the recitation of the Lord's Prayer during chapel services.

1898: Norway and Sweden pass laws that completely forbid the use of Sámi in the education system.

1899: The Philippine-American War ends in victory for the United States. As a result, the US declares English to be the primary language of education, ending the centuries-long usage of Spanish. The change does not go into widespread effect until after WWI, when major Catholic universities phase out Spanish in favor of English.

1900: The Language Manifesto, a decree by Nicholas II, makes Russian the language of administration in Finland.

1901–1902: Września children strike in response to the banning of the Polish language in schools. Pupils refuse to participate in class activities, for which they are punished with detention or beaten up. Their parents are arrested by the Prussian police, and the strikes are eventually suppressed.

1905–1970: Australian government agencies carry out a campaign of forced removal of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, now known as the Stolen Children, relocating them to church missions where they are punished for speaking their native languages. In some regions, it is estimated that one in three Indigenous Australian children was forcibly removed in this manner.

1908: The Kurdish Society for Cooperation and Progress is the first political Kurdish organization to advocate for a political, social, and economic awakening of Kurdistan. They issue newspapers and publications that highlight the importance of developing the Kurdish language. The organization does not, however, support the idea of an independent Kurdistan.

1910: The Union of South Africa is created as a self-governing dominion of the British Empire. Only Dutch and English become the official languages of the new country.

–––Japan bans Korean and forces Koreans to adopt Japanese names.

Japanese marines landing from the warship Unyo at Yeongjong Island, which is near Ganghwa. woodcut print, 1876. License: Public Domain

1913: The Commission on the Unification of Pronunciation is established by the new government of China, with an aim to create national standards for written and spoken language use. During the talks, there is great disagreement between the delegates as to which variant of Chinese should be chosen as the basis for the new standard. Eventually, the northern dialect of Mandarin Chinese becomes the language of the Republic, though several others, including Manchu, Mongolian, Tibetan, and Uyghur, are recognized as national languages.

1914: World War I begins.

1917: *Declaration of Rights of the People of Russia.* Lenin believes in absolute freedom and equality of nations and languages and in self-determinism. He aims to reinvent post-tsarist Russia as a multilingual state.

––––In the United States, the Trading with the Enemy Act (50 USC Appendix) passes in June, suppressing the American foreign-language press and declaring non-English printed matter unmailable without a certified English translation.

––––As the United States enters WWI, German is banned in a number of states.

1918: The world's first Kurdish newspaper is published in Cairo and distributed for free. Due to the language ban in the Ottoman Empire, the newspaper has to be illegally smuggled in.

––––The use of German in Alsace-Lorraine is forbidden.

––––The Armistice of Villa Guisti ends warfare between Italy and Austria-Hungary. The region's transferal to Italy marks the beginning of the linguistic genocide of the Slavic-speaking population.

––––During the Weimar Republic, ethnic minorities receive protection, and the previously employed methods of severe linguistic discrimination come to a temporary end.

––––Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia gain independence, and the majority-spoken languages become the official state languages of the newly independent states.

––––In an effort to standardize the language, Estonia implements policies that exclude the use of South Estonian in education. South Estonian is diachronically a separate branch of Finnic language from North Estonian, which serves as the basis for modern standard Estonian.

1919: The *Dictionary of National Pronunciation* is published in China.

1920s: At the end of WWI, the British take control of Tanganyika, the mainland part of Tanzania, and English becomes the official language of the country. Swahili is accepted only in administrations at the provincial or district level. The use of Swahili as a language of instruction in education becomes limited to the first five years of primary school. English is introduced as a subject in the third grade and replaces Swahili as a medium of instruction in secondary school and in higher education. Swahili is available only as a subject.

––––Nativization/Indigenization in the USSR. The writing system of several languages is changed to Cyrillic in an attempt to "unify" the languages. Only languages with long-standing literatures, such as Georgian and Armenian, escape this trend. The Romanization/Latinization of Arabic script affects, among other languages, Azeri, Kazakh, Turkmen, and Uzbek. The USSR operates on a hierarchy of four types of languages:

A. Small languages without scripts of the tiny and territorially scattered ethnic groups: mostly in Siberia. Education and literature should be created in Russian.

B. Small to medium-sized languages without their own scripts of territorially ununited agricultural peoples. Political propaganda, literature, and primary schools in native languages; secondary education in Russian.

C. Medium-sized to large groups using traditional scripts. Everything in native language. Russian shall be introduced no later than the third grade.

D. Bigger languages with their own literatures, typically coinciding with more economically developed nationalities: Ukrainian, Lithuanian, Latvian, Azeri, Georgian, Uzbek, etc. Russian shall be introduced no later than the third grade.

––––Gradual territorial dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire, culminating in the Treaty of Sèvres, according to which Kurds are to be given local autonomy with the right to appeal for independence to the League of Nations within a year. The treaty, however, is never ratified and is later replaced by the Treaty of Lausanne, which considers arguing for separation of any part of Turkey to be a crime.

––––Following the treaty and annexation of the Austrian Littoral (later Julian March) by Italy, the new government starts a harsh process of Italianization of the region: three political parties are banned; around seven hundred Slavic-language institutions are closed (youth and sport clubs, social and cultural institutions, libraries, businesses, banks and other financial institutions, etc.); thirty-one newspapers and journals are forbidden. Also, 488 Slovene and Croatian primary schools are closed.

1921: Members of the Omoto religion in Japan adopt Esperanto as their official language.

––––The rise of Reza Shah Pahlavi in Iran, who believes in the "one nation, one language" policy. Persian (Farsi) is chosen as the only official language, and the use of Turkish is banned. Students who speak Turkish in schools are fined.

––––New York state institutes English literacy tests for voters.

––––The state of Louisiana bans the use of Cajun French from its school systems.

1922: The end of the Ottoman Empire.

1922–1943: Italy under fascist rule led by Prime

Reza Shah Pahlavi (1878–1944) and three emperors of ancient Iran: Daryush, Shahpur I, and Siroos (Cyrus). Aqa Mirza Habibullah Khan, Shiraz, Iran, circa 1920.

A meeting of the Soviet Republics' Esperanto Union, held in Moscow in 1931. License: Public Domain

Minister Benito Mussolini. During his dictatorship, oppressive means are employed to eradicate all other languages but Italian. Numerous war crimes are committed by Italian fascists to transform German- or Slavic-speaking regions into ethnic Italian territories.

1923: Croatian and Slovene are banned from administration in fascist Italy.

1924: Turkish Constitution: Article 12 states that citizens who do not speak and read Turkish cannot become members of parliament.

––––Lenin dies.

––––Belarusian is banned from use in the upper echelons of government and education. Belarusian history is revised to create a single Belarusian-Russian narrative. No more publishing, theater, movies, lectures, choirs, etc. in Belarusian.

––––In the United States, the Immigration Act of 1924 slows immigration from the non-anglophone countries of Europe to a trickle and denies admission to anyone from just about everywhere else (Asians are banned completely, and, in the debate over the bill, Jews are singled out as particularly unassimilable).

1925: The Dutch language is replaced by Afrikaans as the official language of South Africa.

––––The Committee on Unification of the National Language in China decides to adopt the Beijing variant of Mandarin as the new national language.

––––French politician and scholar Anatole de Monzie, as minister of public education, states that "for the linguistic unity of France, the Breton language must disappear."

1926: The First All Union Turkological Congress held in Baku mandates the Latin alphabet for all Turkic languages.

––––Italianization of German, Slovene, and Croatian names. Claiming that they would be returned to their original form, foreign first names and surnames are amended to sound Italian. After World War II, many of the oppressive laws are lifted, and the ideology of forced Italianization is abandoned. South Tyrol is granted autonomy within Italy on the grounds of its peculiar linguistic situation.

1927: The Communist Party of the Soviet Union recognizes the danger of "petty bourgeois nationalism." Widespread regional languages with their own literatures are perceived by Stalin as dangerous and capable of their own nationalisms that need to be repressed so as not to pose a real threat.

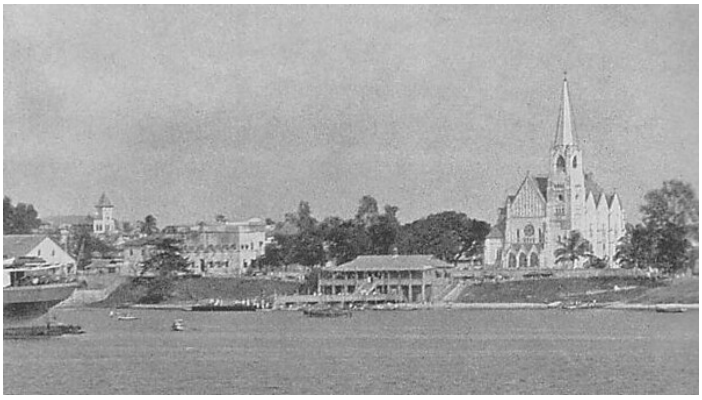
1928: The Latin alphabet is adopted for writing Turkish in place of Arabic script. The goal is to further undermine the influence of religious leaders and break ties with the Ottoman past. The expected increase in literacy is supposed to aid in the spread of the concept of the nation.

––––In Germany, the Minorities School Act allows children to receive education in their native tongue.

1929: Decree of the Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party of USSR: the use of Arabic script is prohibited and its proponents are seen as class enemies. All publishing houses are ordered to cease printing in Arabic

Vladimir Ilyich Lenin on his death bed

1930s: In Tanzania, the Language Committee is founded to standardize and promote the development of Swahili.



Tanzania, Dar es Salaam, 1930s, with the Old Boma and St. Joseph's Cathedral prominently in view. License: Public Domain

––––In the USSR, Azerbaijani, Kalmyk, and smaller languages of Siberia shift to Latin-based scripts, though they return to Cyrillic by the late 1930s.

––––The Sun Language Theory is developed as a pseudoscientific nationalist theory, according to which all human languages originate from Turkish. The theory claims that Sumerians were Turks who originated in Central Asia and developed language as a response to being awe-struck by the sun. The sun, as a deity, was the first thing to which a name was given, and all words were derived from this spark of language creation. This conception of Turkish history gains some following and is taught in some schools.

1932: Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia. Approved by 99 percent of voters, the Statute is the first to implement autonomy for Catalonia and make the Catalan language the co-official language of Catalonia, along with Spanish.

Front cover of the first Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia, 1932. License: Public Domain

––––Under the military dictatorship of Prime Minister Plaek Phibunsongkhram, Thailand enacts the Primary Education Act, which makes Thai the compulsory language of instruction. Following ongoing protests by Thai Chinese, in 1939, the government allows students to learn in Mandarin for a maximum of two hours per week.

1933–1945: Nazi Germany under Adolf Hitler.

1934: The XVII Communist Party Congress in USSR mandates the end of the nativization campaign and a shift from Latin to Cyrillic scripts. This also marks the start of a deliberate Russification policy.

––––The Constitutional Convention in the Philippines sets 1940 as the date by which Spanish will cease to be the

Participants of the First Turkologic Congress, 1926. License: Public Domain

Women soldiers, fighting on behalf of the Republic in the Spanish Civil War, 1936. License: Public Domain

official language of the legislature and courts.

1936: Stalin's constitution. According to Stalin, the USSR is made up of approximately sixty nations, nationalities, and ethnic groups (during Lenin's time this number was 180). Of seventy-one different alphabets previously in use, only eight were not "unified." Unification of alphabets was seen as an integral measure toward developing the international language of the proletariat. A proposal is advanced to write Russian in the Latin alphabet, but the peak of the movement has already passed, and the proposal gains little support.

––––Following the example of Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia implement the Statute of Autonomy of the Basque Country and Statute of Autonomy of Galicia, granting the Basque and Galician languages, respectively, co-official status together with Spanish.

––––The Spanish Civil War begins.

––––Italian becomes compulsory in schooling and public life on the Dodecanese islands, which are ruled by Italy between 1912 and 1945. Greek becomes an optional subject at schools.

1938: Compulsory teaching of Russian is decreed by the Central Committee of the Communist Party for all students of all nationalities in the USSR.

––––The Mingrelian language is abandoned in favor of Georgian.

1939: World War II starts.

––––Military dictator Francisco Franco comes to power in Spain. During his regime, use of other languages in Spain, such as Catalan and Basque, is banned outside of the home, prosecuted, discouraged, or frowned upon. Castilian is declared the sole official language of Spain.

––––The Yiddish newspaper *Der emes* (The Truth), which was published in Moscow, is closed. Only seven Yiddish newspapers are left, compared to an estimated 170 periodicals in 1917.

––––Sōshi-kaimei is a policy of pressuring Koreans under Japanese rule to adopt Japanese names.

1940s: Cyrillic script is used for almost all languages in the Soviet Union. A handful of exceptions: Armenian and Georgian have their own scripts; Karelian retains Latin script; Yiddish uses a modified Hebrew script; Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian (occupied and annexed to the Soviet Union in 1940) use Latin script.

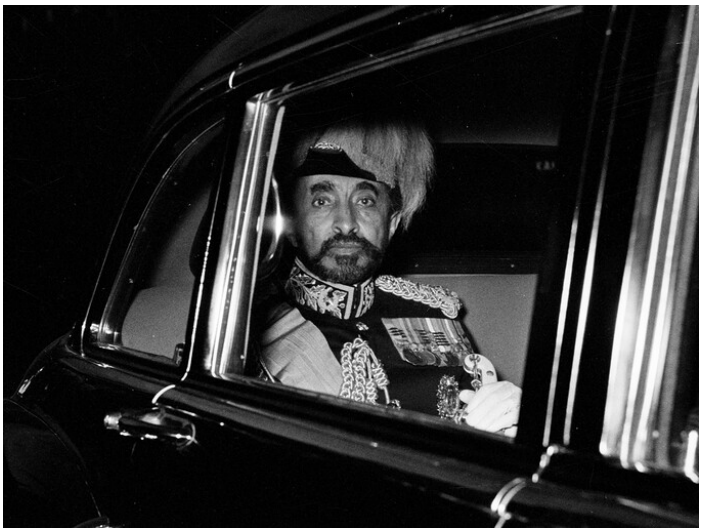
––––More than one million people of all ages in Brittany speak Breton as their main language. Today, there are around two hundred thousand speakers of Breton left, most of whom are elderly.

1941: Ionian islands (Corfu, Cephalonia, Zakynthos, Lefkada, and some minor islands) are annexed by Italy, leading to the installation of a fascist government led by Piero Parini. Italian immediately becomes the only official language, and Greek is made illegal in almost all spheres of life.

––––Germany invades the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Despite the fact that the Yugoslavians are seen as racially salvageable by the Nazis, Hitler encourages his followers to "make this land German again." In an attempt to do so, the use of Slovene is prohibited in public; the names of places are changed; all culturally important Slovene institutions are closed and associations dissolved;

intellectuals, professors, and linguists are exterminated.

––––The Oromo language is banned from political life and schools under the dictatorship of Haile Selassie in Ethiopia. The Amharic language is forced upon the Oromo people.



Haile Selassie, Emperor of Ethiopia in Bern, Switzerland, 1954. Source: Swiss National Museum

Left: Haile Selassie, Emperor of Ethiopia in Bern, Switzerland, 1954. Source: Swiss National Museum; Right: The Terrible Inspection woodcut by Rong-zan Huang depicting a scene from the February 28 Massacre in Taiwan in 1947.

1942: Alsace-Lorraine, formerly a French territory where German was banned, is annexed by the Germans. Speaking French is prohibited under the Nazi occupation. German becomes the official language and is an obligatory subject at schools.

––––The Japanese take over control of Indonesia from the Dutch and mount a campaign to ban all Dutch influence, including the Dutch language. The Japanese encourage the use of Malay, in an effort to win support from Indonesians.

1943: The Japanese government phases out all Korean language courses in occupied Korea. Teaching and speaking of Korean is prohibited.

1944: The Abkhaz language is forbidden at schools in favor of Georgian. All Abkhaz cultural institutions are forbidden.

––––Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are reoccupied by the Soviet Union. Russian becomes an official language, alongside Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian, respectively.

1945: The Republic of China establishes rule over Taiwan and forbids the use of Japanese in newspapers and schools. Officials promote Standard Mandarin by penalizing primary schools teaching in local languages and by banning local languages in mass media.

1946: With the occupation of Azerbaijan by the Iranian Army, teaching Azerbaijani is banned, and educational books printed by the national government are burned.

1948: India's Uttar Pradesh, known as United Provinces until 1950, issues a regulation that children should be taught exclusively in Hindi, effectively banning Urdu as a language of instruction until it could be studied as an optional subject beginning in the sixth grade.

––––The government of Pakistan declares Urdu and English to be the only national languages of Pakistan, despite a majority of East Pakistan speaking Bengali and West Pakistan speaking Punjabi as their mother tongues.

––––The National Party of South Africa wins elections with the slogan "our own people, our own language, our own land."

––––Under the colonization of Palestine, Israel embarks on a campaign of Hebraization of Palestinian place names.

––––With the Home Rule Act of the Faroe Islands, Faroese regains its status as the national language over Danish.

1949: In the Soviet Union, all Jewish schools are abolished, and all Jewish cultural institutions are closed.

––––Under the Law on Provincial Administration, Kurdish names of places are changed into Turkish.

––––The People's Republic of China is declared.

1949: The government of India approves a resolution deemed the "forty-ten plan," which states that primary schooling must be conducted in the mother tongue of the child and that arrangements should be made to facilitate this in areas where the mother tongue differs from the official state language. These arrangements entail appointing one teacher to instruct in the mother tongue, provided there are at least forty students speaking the language within the whole school, or at least ten students in a class. The implementation of this rule significantly stalls in regions with Urdu-speaking majorities. In Uttar Pradesh, education officials explicitly refute the resolution and issue an order that bans instruction in Urdu in primary schools controlled by municipal and district boards.

1950s: Attempts to establish Russian as the official language of the Soviet Union.

––––During the Fourth Republic in France, the policies regarding minority and regional languages are relaxed slightly. Speaking languages other than French at primary schools is no longer forbidden, and the teaching of regional languages in secondary schools is allowed.

1950s–1980s: The Chinese government declares most languages other than Mandarin as mere dialects.

1952: After the government of Pakistan outlaws public rallies in order to quell demand for Bengali to be added as an official language in addition to Urdu, University of Dhaka students organize a series of public protests. On February 21, Pakistani police open fire on protestors, killing five students and injuring hundreds. Since 1999, the day is now recognized by UNESCO as International Mother Language Day.

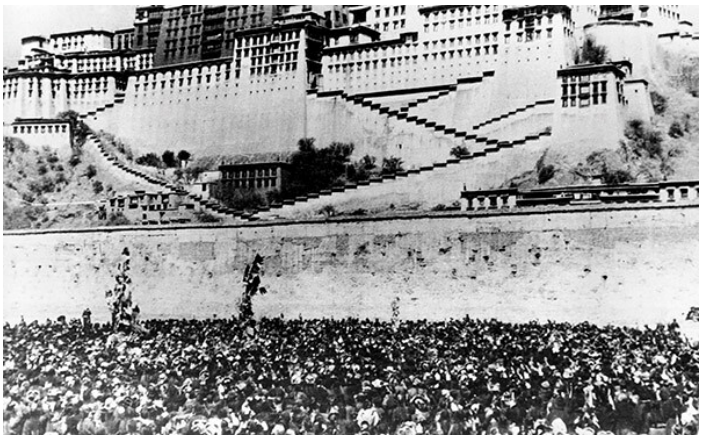
1954: The Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) is formed. TANU uses Swahili as its official language. Members of TANU attempt to mobilize the population in the struggle for independence.

1956: Mandarin becomes the only national language of China. It is based on Beijing pronunciation and standardized *báihuà* grammar. Mandarin is made the mandatory medium of education for schools throughout China apart from "autonomous" areas. The government spreads posters with slogans such as "love the national flag, sing the national anthem, and speak Mandarin.'

––––Pakistan grants official status to Bengali.

1958–59: Education Reforms under Khrushchev begin an open shift toward Russification of the USSR. Education in one's mother tongue is no longer compulsory, and Russian-language instruction comes at the expense of smaller native languages, which are relegated to study as a secondary subject.

1959: As the Communist Party of China puts further restrictions on Tibetan language, religion, and culture, unrest in Tibet grows, and the Dalai Lama is forced to flee from Tibet to India.



Tibetan uprising, 1959. License: Public Domain

––––Russian becomes the main language of the Soviet Union, occupying a central position in education, administration, and government.

––––Hawai'i becomes the fiftieth state of the United States. The government funds a Committee for the Preservation of Hawaiian Language, Art, and Culture at the University of Hawai'i.

1961: After clashes with the Indian armed forces, Goa, a province on India's western coast, is freed from nearly four hundred years of Portuguese control. Portuguese ceases to be the official language, though it is still used in newspapers and in legislation, alongside English, until 1972 and 1969, respectively, when it is replaced by Marathi and Kōṅkaṇı.

––––In Hawai'i, schools start offering elective courses in the Hawaiian language.

1964: The United Republic of Tanzania gains independence. It consists of Tanganyika, or mainland Tanzania, and the Zanzibar Archipelago. Swahili becomes the national language of Tanzania.

For the first time, one and a half minutes of Breton are heard on regional television.

1966–1976: The Cultural Revolution in China under Mao Zedong continues the promotion of Standard Mandarin. The government denies the use of local languages in schools. All minority languages are suppressed at schools, and those who raise questions about the curriculum are denounced as supporters of capitalism and enemies of the state. During this time,

literacy rates fall for every minority region. Numerous crimes against ethnic minorities are carried out: language schools in ethnic Korean areas are destroyed; countless books of the Uyghur people are burned; of almost 790,000 persecuted people in Inner Mongolia, 22,900 are beaten to death and 120,000 maimed; over six thousand Tibetan monasteries are destroyed.

1966–1998: Military dictator Suharto bans the Chinese language in Indonesia.

1967 The Soviet press is tightly controlled by the government, which carries out censorship of published content. The three major newspapers are published in Russian.

––––Prohibition of the distribution of foreign material in the Kurdish language in Turkey.

––––Presidential Instruction No. 14/1967 on Chinese Religion, Beliefs, and Traditions effectively bans any Chinese literature and culture in Indonesia. This includes the prohibition of Chinese characters.

––––The Welsh Language Act passes in the UK. It enables the use of Welsh in Welsh court proceedings.

1968: Joan Manuel Serrat is banned from participating in the Eurovision Song Contest because of his wish to sing in Catalan.

1969: The state of Haryana in India makes Tamil the state's second official language, alongside Hindi, despite there being no Tamil speakers in the state. The ruling was politically motivated in order to demonstrate the state's differences from Punjab, despite Punjabi being one of the most spoken languages within the state.

1970s: Lithuanian can no longer be used in official documents. Despite the fact that most of the Central Committee members are Lithuanians, all meetings are to be held in Russian.

––––Nationalist movements in regions such as Brittany, Corsica, and Occitania emerge. These lead to the opening of schools—Diwan in Brittany, Ikastola in the Basque Country, Calandreta in Occitania, and La Bressola in Northern Catalonia—where regional languages are taught.

1971: Bengali nationalism culminates in the Bangladesh War of Independence, in which Bangladeshi guerilla forces are aided by India. Once independence from Pakistan is won, Bengali is declared the official national language.

1972: Members of the Legislative Council of Hong Kong are permitted to use Cantonese for the first time.

––––Georges Pompidou, the president of France at the time, states that "there is no place for minority languages in a France destined to make its mark on Europe."

––––Sindh province in Pakistan passes the Sindhi Language Bill, which establishes Sindhi as the sole official language. After protests by Urdu-speaking residents, Pakistani Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto compromises and announces both languages to be official.

1974: The Official Chinese Language Ordinance is enacted in Hong Kong: Chinese becomes a "co-official" language alongside English. The Ordinance mandates that all laws are to be published in both English and Chinese, and the use of Chinese becomes legal in courts. However, it does not specify the variety of Chinese to be used.

1975: Doctoral dissertations in Lithuanian are no longer permitted.

––––After Indonesia annexes East Timor, authorities ban Portuguese and impose Indonesian. Portugal had controlled East Timor since wresting control from the Netherlands in 1859.

––––The Republic of China government in Taiwan adopts the Radio and Television Act, which restricts the use of local languages on radio or television.

––––The Liberation of Saigon in Vietnam. The new Vietnamese government establishes Vietnamese as the only official language in the country, ending the supremacy of the French language, which had been in place since the 1890s.

––––Peru becomes the first country to recognize Quechua as one of its official languages, with Ecuador following in 2006 and Bolivia in 2009.

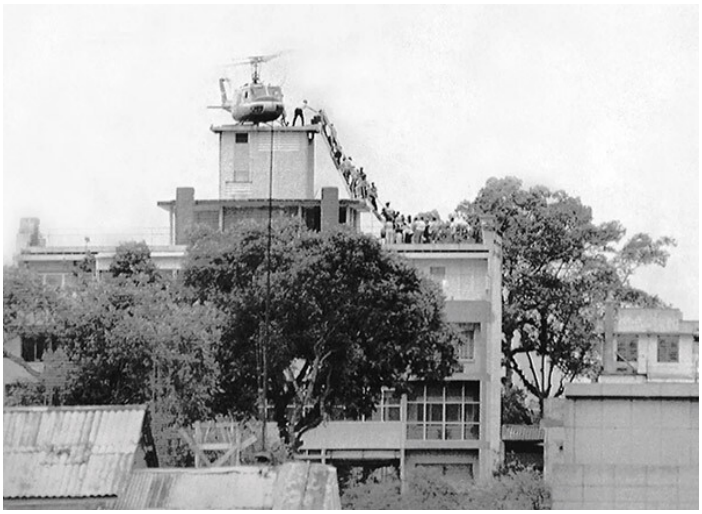
1976: In Georgia, doctoral dissertations should be published and defended in Russian.

––––The Afrikaans Medium Decree bans languages other than Afrikaans and English as the medium of instruction in all Black schools from the last year of primary school. While English is associated with the colonial past, Afrikaans is seen as the language of the oppressive white government, the language of apartheid.

––––"To hell with Afrikaans" becomes one of the central slogans of the Soweto uprising.

1978: In the Baltic states, instruction in Russian is mandated from preschool to university. Russian spreads to the level of local administration in accordance with Brezhnev's goal of fusing nationalities into a supra-nationality.

––––Abdullah Ocalan founds the Kurdistan Workers' Party



Air America helicopter evacuating Vietnamese officials and their families from the roof of an apartment building at 22 Gia Long Street in Saigon, South Vietnam, April 29, 1975. Photo: Hubert Van Es—UPI/Newscom

(PKK).

––––The new democratic constitution of Spain recognizes linguistic plurality.

1979: The Education and Training Act in South Africa: racially segregated schooling continues, but the use of native tongues is allowed until the fourth grade. In later education, pupils may choose between English and Afrikaans; the majority prefer English as a means of not learning Afrikaans.

––––The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran recognizes only Persian (Farsi) as the official language.

1980: Military coup in Turkey. The suppression of the Kurds intensifies. The Kurdish population is targeted by new laws forbidding speaking or publishing in Kurdish.

1981: Brezhnev proclaims the triumph of the creation of a united Soviet people. Until 1989, language policies remain unchanged. Afterwards, laws in Union countries are passed to strengthen non-Russian languages.

1983: Law no. 2932 concerning Publications and Broadcasts in Languages other than Turkish is enacted and remains in force until 1991. The law strictly prohibits the use of the Kurdish language and results in numerous prison sentences throughout the 1980s. The names of Kurdish villages that had not been previously changed in the 1960s are adjusted into Turkish. Kurdish families are forced to give Turkish names to their children. This repression results in the survival of the PKK as the only organization supporting the Kurdish people in Turkey.

1986: Hawaiian is allowed to be used as the language of instruction in public schools.

1987: Spanish loses its official language status in the Philippines after the ratification of a revised Philippine Constitution that lists the official languages as Filipino and English.

––––Maōri becomes an official language of New Zealand.

1989: A Syrian decree prohibits the use of Kurdish in workplaces and in wedding ceremonies.

1990s to present: In many post-Soviet countries, a systematic process of de-Russification occurs following the breakup of the Soviet Union. The number of Russian speakers decreases tremendously, as many Russians migrate to newly independent states. Many languages that previously used Cyrillic script—Azerbaijani, Moldavian, Turkmen, and Uzbek—switch to Latin-based alphabets.

1991: Turgut Ozal lifts the ban on speaking Kurdish in private.

––––Adoption of a Latin-based script, instead of Cyrillic, for writing in Turkmen.

––––Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia gain independence, and the majority-spoken languages become the official state languages of the newly independent states.

––––Ethiopia's Derg regime is overthrown and the ban on the Oromo language is overturned.

1992: Dissolution of the Soviet Union

––––The French Constitution is amended to explicitly state that "the language of the Republic is French."

––––Syria prohibits parents from using Kurdish names when registering children.

––––Paraguay establishes itself as a democracy and ratifies a new constitution that establishes Guaraní as on the same legal level as Spanish.

1993: The Welsh Language Act makes the Welsh language equal to English.

1994: Sixty-three languages in Russia are considered to be endangered as a result of Russification.

––––Apartheid in South Africa ends, with Nelson Mandela as the first Black president.

––––The Toubon Law mandates the use of French in official publications by the government, in advertisements, in all product packages, and at the workplace and government-funded schools. The law makes many schools that teach in local languages ineligible for funding.

1996: The New Constitution of South Africa recognizes

eleven official languages of the Republic: Afrikaans, English, Ndebele, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, Swazi, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Xhosa, and Zulu. The Constitution also recognizes the historically neglected and thus diminished indigenous languages.

––––The Guatemalan Civil War ends and Guatemala formally recognizes twenty-one Mayan languages. The Civil War, begun in 1960, was fought between leftist rebel groups and the Guatemalan government, which had been led by a series of US-backed military dictators. The government forces are condemned for widespread human rights violations against civilians, including mass genocide of Maya populations, throughout the Civil War.

1997: The UK returns Hong Kong to China.

––––The last residential school closes in Canada. Between 1831 and 1997, it is estimated that around 150,000 Indigenous children were forcibly subjected to the residential schooling system, which aimed to assimilate them into Canadian society by displacing them from their languages and communities.

1998: An annual Mandarin Proficiency Test is conducted in China. A passing grade is necessary in order to obtain qualified jobs.

––––The state of California adopts Proposition 227, which bans bilingual education. It is repealed in 2016.

1999: Abdullah Ocalan is captured in Kenya by the Turkish military.

––––Turkey is officially recognized as a candidate for joining the EU, but on the condition that the government changes its language policy regarding national minorities to allow for broadcasting and schooling in their mother tongues.

––––A report written for the French government by French linguist Bernard Cerquiglini identifies twenty-four languages indigenous to the European territory occupied by France that would qualify for recognition under the government's proposed ratification of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. The Charter has still not been ratified by France.

––––In Italy, twelve historical minority groups and their languages are recognized as such by the national law.

––––Thailand enacts the National Education Act, which grants twelve years of free education in the Thai language. One-third of teens in Thailand are still considered functionally illiterate as a result of a monolingual education system that disregards majority Malay-speaking communities. The Thai government has historically treated other minority languages as mere dialects of Thai, in an effort to strengthen Thai national identity.

2000: TV Breizh, a private TV channel, is launched in Brittany. The initial goal is to provide a wide range of programs in Breton, but their number gradually decreases in favor of French-language broadcasting, until they disappear completely by 2010.

2002: President Niyazov of Turkmenistan prohibits the National Library of Turkmenistan's access to Russian-language publications.

Separmurat Niyazov with Barack and Michelle Obama. License: Public Domain

Actors from the Amed Municipal Theater in Diyarbakır (Amed) performing a previously banned Kurdish-language adaptation of Cervantes's famous Don Quixote in Kartal, Istanbul, 2022.

––––East Timor gains independence from Indonesia and reinstates Portuguese, along with Tetum, as the official language, in an attempt to differentiate from Indonesia.

2003: The ban on use of the letters Q, W, and X, necessary for writing Kurdish names, is lifted by the Turkish government.

2004: The first broadcast in Kurdish on the Turkish state TV channel TRT. Prior to this, programs in the Kurdish language were only broadcast on private channels. Two dialects are broadcast: Kurmanji and Kırmancki/Zazaki.

––––Latvia requires at least 60 percent of school instruction to be in Latvian.

2005: In Turkmenistan, all Russian schools are shut down due to apparent lack of demand. Instruction on the Russian language is reduced to one hour per week. Russian-language media is entirely banned.

––––Irish is made an official language of the EU, though it remains the least routinely spoken.

2006: AfriForum, a white nationalist NGO promoting the use of Afrikaans, is formed.

––––The European Parliament's Bureau approves a proposal by the Spanish government to allow citizens to address the European Parliament in Basque, Catalan/Valencian, and Galician.

2008: A revision to the French Constitution, according to which regional languages are formally recognized, is implemented by the French Parliament. The move angers the Académie Française.

2009: Slovakia limits the use of Hungarian and other minority languages in public and in state institutions and enacts fines for anyone "misusing" language.

2010: Mass protests erupt in Guangzhou in response to the proposal for the city's principal television channel to switch from Cantonese to Mandarin.

––––The Indian state of Haryana removes Tamil as an official language and replaces it with Punjabi.

2014: The Russian Federation occupies Crimea

––––Narendra Modi comes to power in India, igniting a spike in anti-Urdu sentiment that includes hate crimes targeted at those with Urdu names.

2015: All Tibetan schools are forbidden to recruit teachers who teach in the Tibetan language.

2017: A draft of a new Latin-based alphabet is presented in the Parliament of Kazakhstan, a gradual transition that is expected to be complete by 2025.

––––The Turkish government shuts down Kurdish-language theaters in Diyarbakır, Batman, and other majority-Kurdish cities.

Zahra Mohammadi makes the victory sign as she registers her candidacy for the upcoming presidential election at the interior ministry in Tehran on Shandiz May 11, 2013. Photo: Mohsen Shandiz/Corbis via Getty Images

––––Ukraine passes legislation that requires teachers to use only Ukrainian in secondary schools, despite sizable Hungarian, Russian, and Romanian minorities. Hungary responds by threatening to block Ukraine's EU aspirations.

2018: Documents issued by the government in Kazakhstan are to be published only in Kazakh.

––––In Latvia, the Saeima approves amendments to the General Education Law for a transition to instruction in Latvian in secondary schools by the 2021–2022 school year.

––––South Korea bans English-language classes for first and second grade students, citing a 2016 Constitutional Court ruling that states that teaching English may hinder students' proficiency in Korean.

––––Israel downgrades Arabic as an official language and declares it a language with "special status." Meanwhile, Hebrew remains official.

––––Iran bans the teaching of English in primary schools, calling the study of the language a "cultural invasion."

2019: Mass protests in Hong Kong expressing dissatisfaction with Chinese rule. Cantonese is closely connected with the unrest and becomes the language of the protestors. Some restaurants in Hong Kong refuse to take orders in Mandarin as a sign of protest.

––––Ukraine's Parliament approves a law that grants special status to the Ukrainian language and makes it mandatory for public sector workers.

2020: The government of China passes a new security law for Hong Kong. Within hours of its passage, many anti-government protestors flee the city, political parties are disbanded, numerous pro-Hong Kong social media profiles are deleted, and pro-Cantonese posters in shops are removed. Any defense of Cantonese is seen as promoting Hong Kong's independence.

––––India, for the first time since independence, stops offering primary schools where the main language of instruction is English.

––––In Iran, authorities sentence Kurdish language teacher Zahra Mohammadi to ten years in prison for "forming a group against national security." The sentence is later reduced to five years.

2021: The Molac Law aiming to protect and promote regional languages in France is approved by a majority vote in the French National Assembly. The French Constitutional Council immediately contests the law, striking down the Assembly's vote. The Constitutional Council forbids the use of the letter ñ, which is not necessary for writing in French.

X

Olga Olina is a polyglot, historical linguist, and an advocate for Indigenous and minority languages. She is enchanted by faded manuscripts and absorbed by language puzzles. Fascinated by linguistic diversity, she collects languages and writing systems in her *Idiomarium*. Olga teaches Sanskrit as well as other ancient Indo-European languages and researches texts in Old Lithuanian at Humboldt University of Berlin. Presently, Olga is mastering her tenth modern and tenth ancient language.

Hallie Ayres is a researcher and art historian living in New York. Her writing has been published in *e-flux Criticism* and *e-flux Journal*, and she has lectured at the Academy of Fine Arts, Prague. She is a research fellow at the Institute of the Cosmos, where she edited *Cosmic Bulletin 2021*. Hallie has coordinated many exhibitions and projects around the globe and has produced a number of experimental films, including in New York and Turkey. She works as Associate Director at e-flux.

Anton Vidokle is an editor of e-flux journal and chief curator of the 14th Shanghai Biennale: Cosmos Cinema.

1
This timeline was originally developed as part of a presentation of the film *Gilgamesh: She Who Saw The Deep* , by Pelin Tan and Anton Vidokle. The film was shot in Kurdish language (Kurmanji) in South East Turkey, where it is illegal to speak it in public spaces.