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LIVING OUT THE CONTRADICTION OF OUR TIME _____

SOCIAL INNOVATION & GOOD SOCIETY

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Note on Romanization | This book uses Jyutping Cantonese romanization system for Chinese characters followed by Hanyu Pinyin in parentheses, except when the Chinese is already commonly known or referenced in the West by its Hanyu Pinyin romanization (e.g., Lu Xun) or other romanization (e.g., Chiang Kai-shek).

Chan Koonchung is a sinophone writer from Hong Kong and he now lives in Beijing. His novel *The Fat Years* has been translated into 14 languages. His latest novel is *The Unbearable Dreamworld of Champa the Driver*. He is also the author of *Hong Kong Trilogy* and many non-fiction books including *My Generation of Hongkongers*, *Marxism and Literary Criticism*, *Notes on a Hybrid City*, *Hong Kong's Unfinished Experiment* and *Chinese Celestial Imperialism and Hong Kong*.

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Head of Speech

This book discusses hope, our hope for the future.

Our hope for a good society, a good society of the future.

Social innovation is a strenuous hike toward hope, a future, and a possible good society.

There is no future without hope. No discussion on social innovation is worthwhile if no imagination for a good society is possible.

Granted, we live in a world rife with contradiction and increasing anomie, in which the sensible is partitioned and the centre cannot hold. We should not make empty promises for a utopian good society or a blueprint for the future, nor should we delude ourselves thinking that a grand solution that will put all unresolved issues to rest will come our way. Gone also are the righteous canon, totalizing narratives, and deterministic historical paths. What then are we talking about when we single out the relationship between social innovation and good society?

In this small volume,⁰¹ I assume that readers, too, have the same questions. Perhaps they are more insightful than I am, yet I would still like to share my

thoughts with others. Nobody will have answers to all questions, and all social innovators and thinkers need companions, those walking in your direction and those in the opposite direction, as well as strangers.

In the first section of this book, "Utopia, Dystopia, and Heterotopia," I will attempt to imagine the possibility of social actions from the reality of a decentric, non-linear, fractal, and oscillating heterotopia.

In the second section, a "Chinese bag of tricks," I attempt to discuss as many relatively solid trains of thought as possible in limited pages in order to lay some groundwork on fleshing out a good society.

A serious contemplation on social innovation⁰² and good society has to be done as in the labyrinth at risk of getting lost and retracing steps. To put true innovation into practice is akin to a rickety sailboat passing between Scylla and Charybdis, or as Li Dazhao, the co-founder of the Communist Party of China said a hundred years ago, a whirling and winnowing yet unprovoked torrent.

Society is full of uncertainties, and it takes courage and passion of an adventurer to innovate.

At a tumultuous moment and in a ferocious storm, social innovation is not an extravagance; it restores our faith in humanity in order to calm the storm.

Social innovation is more aptly conceived as a plural noun. Social innovations are never mere directives coming from the top down, they are community members' initiatives, public action of people who enter into voluntary association, and nobody else can monopolize them.

No good is too little, and it is better late than never to do social good. Similarly, social innovation welcomes contributions of all disciplines, skills, forms, and sizes. Anybody can start social innovation, but he or she cannot do it alone. It calls for co-creation.

Needless to say, nobody can guarantee that it will bear fruit.

Even the collaborative process itself might not be too pleasant. Friedrich Nietzsche cautions us that "when fighting monsters, [we ourselves] do not become a monster."

Here, I do not offer any panacea to the world, but I know that I should

refrain from writing Chicken Soup for Society or indulging in pop psychology.

To avoid misunderstanding, I would just add by saying that social innovation also includes the innovation of social preservation. As all that is solid melts into air, the mechanism of preserving of all good things seems to fail, so it is imperative for preservation to be innovative.

In the third section, I want to say that "living" in these times of contradictions, there is no choice but to live a life that is true to oneself. Only if we proactively overcome the absurdity of the present conundrum and break the curse, then we can "live out" the contradiction of our time.

I view social innovation, good society, and living out the contradictions of our time as three related concepts. They are not mere concepts, but together, they form a maxim to lead a physical, mental, and intellectual life with which we do not only live in, but live out and rise beyond it.

This book is a collection of essays, and each chapter does not need to be read in any order. Following each chapter are endnotes and further readings.

I wrote this piece, "Head of Speech," as the preface. "Head of speech" is a Zen Buddhist term, and when coupled with the title of the last essay, "Afterthoughts," or in Cantonese, *sing mei*, which could be roughly translated word-for-word as "a stimulating coda," Cantonese speakers will get the double meaning. *Sing* in colloquial Cantonese has many related meanings when used in conjunction with other characters in various expressions. *Sing muk* is the common spoken expression for "smart" and "resourceful," *sing wai* for "appetizing" or "mouth-watering," *sing sun* for "refreshing" or "invigorating," and *sing nei loeng geoi* and *sing zoeng hou paai nei soeng* for "to offer" and "to gift." *Sing* means "to awake," "to remind," "awakening," or "consciousness" as in *tai sing*, *cing sing*, *sing ng*, and as in the popular Cantonese song adopted from *Les misérables* "Do you hear the people sing?" for the Occupy Central protest, *si man seoi mei gau gok sing*, "consciousness" takes on another meaning as the harbinger of something more tangible. *Sing* could be replaced with its homonym, then the "afterthoughts" in *sing mei* could be understood as reflection at the end of a thought process.

Since this text is a collection of essays, this book is ill equipped to serve

as a textbook or a practical guide. Each essay is a very rough roadmap, or a rudimentary observatory that I built for reconnaissance. As a seeker of the good society beyond the horizon myself, this book's readers are my counterparts in this quest. Many readers may find my text in need of further elaborations or missing an occasional logical step, but as I am able to share my insights and have my voices heard, my faith in good society and social innovation is strengthened. To me personally, my work is complete.

Endnotes and Further Readings

01 This book's origin and acknowledgments: in early 2014, Alvin Yip, Director of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University's Jockey Club Design Institute for Social Innovation wrote and invited me, on behalf of its management committee, to serve as the 2014 Thinker-in-residence who will speak at the Social Innovation Festival. I would have to finish a small book about social innovation in order to carry on the fine tradition commenced by the inaugural Thinker Professor Matthew Turner. I felt deeply honoured and thanked the management committee and Alvin in particular. Honestly, I was a bit anxious at first when it came to writing this book, hence I did not dare to accept right away. Alvin came to Beijing to coax my acceptance, and I was finally determined to write this book ahead of my existing writing plans. Without the Institute's invitation and Alvin's encouraging words, this book would not have come into being.

This book is bilingual. The original was written in Chinese. As I took the liberty of having modern, classical, and colloquial Chinese interwoven in the text, I am indebted to the Institute's Dr. Alan Chan, who thoughtfully edited the text and translated it into English, and I thank Richard Hsiao for his meticulous proofreading. My gratitude also goes to renowned book designer Hei Shing for turning this book into a visual feast.

02 Last year, Professor Matthew Turner, the Jockey Club Design Institute for Social Innovation's inaugural thinker-in-residence published *Tête-à-tête*, and offered a fantastic explanation as a scholar who knew the concept "social innovation" inside out. I think his book has been overlooked by Chinese readers. After collecting and studying over a hundred definitions of social innovation, Turner gave a bold and copious "working definition": social innovation is a "collaborative action to change or go beyond institutions that marginalize collective needs or preserve inequalities."

Turner also pointed out that "most serious scholars" say that Frances Westley's definition of social innovation (2008) is best, namely that social innovation is "programs that profoundly change the basic routines, resource, and authority flows or beliefs of any social system."

Turner's broader definition and Westley's procedural definition both underscore social innovation's desired outcome: the (re)distribution of resource and authority, as well as a profound or systemic change, are intended in order to achieve equality or empower those who are marginalized in the system.

Turner also summarized three complimentary approaches to social innovation, namely, the two-century-old progressive social innovation, the half-century-old activist social innovation, and the twenty-year-old entrepreneurial social innovation. From protection of freedom, universal education, labour movements, civil rights, women rights, environmental movement, gay rights, rights of the underprivileged, consumer protection, as well as preservation of heritage, local development, building there public sphere, cultural development, the Third Space, fair trade, animal rights, microcredit, alternative energy, holistic care, local agriculture, safe food, corporate social responsibility, social investment, cooperatives, all kinds of NGOs, etc., are all included. Turner also

thoughtfully reminded us of China's century-old "history of social innovation."

Godin (2012) was cited in Turner's book to document the changing valence of the terms "society," "innovation," and "social innovation," which, over time, evolved from negative to positive in order to support Turner's broad definition and the three approaches to social innovation. On the basis of his definition and the three approaches, I ground my understanding of the notion of social innovation in history and spatial specificity.

The widespread use of social innovation as a term is a recent phenomenon. Since the last few years, social innovation has started to encompass many terms related to society from various traditions or disciplines, such as social action, social dynamics, social improvement, social progress, social invention, social engineering, social practice, social need, social mobility, social force, social equilibrium, social problems, social harmony, social construction, and even socialism, as the term was used in earlier times.

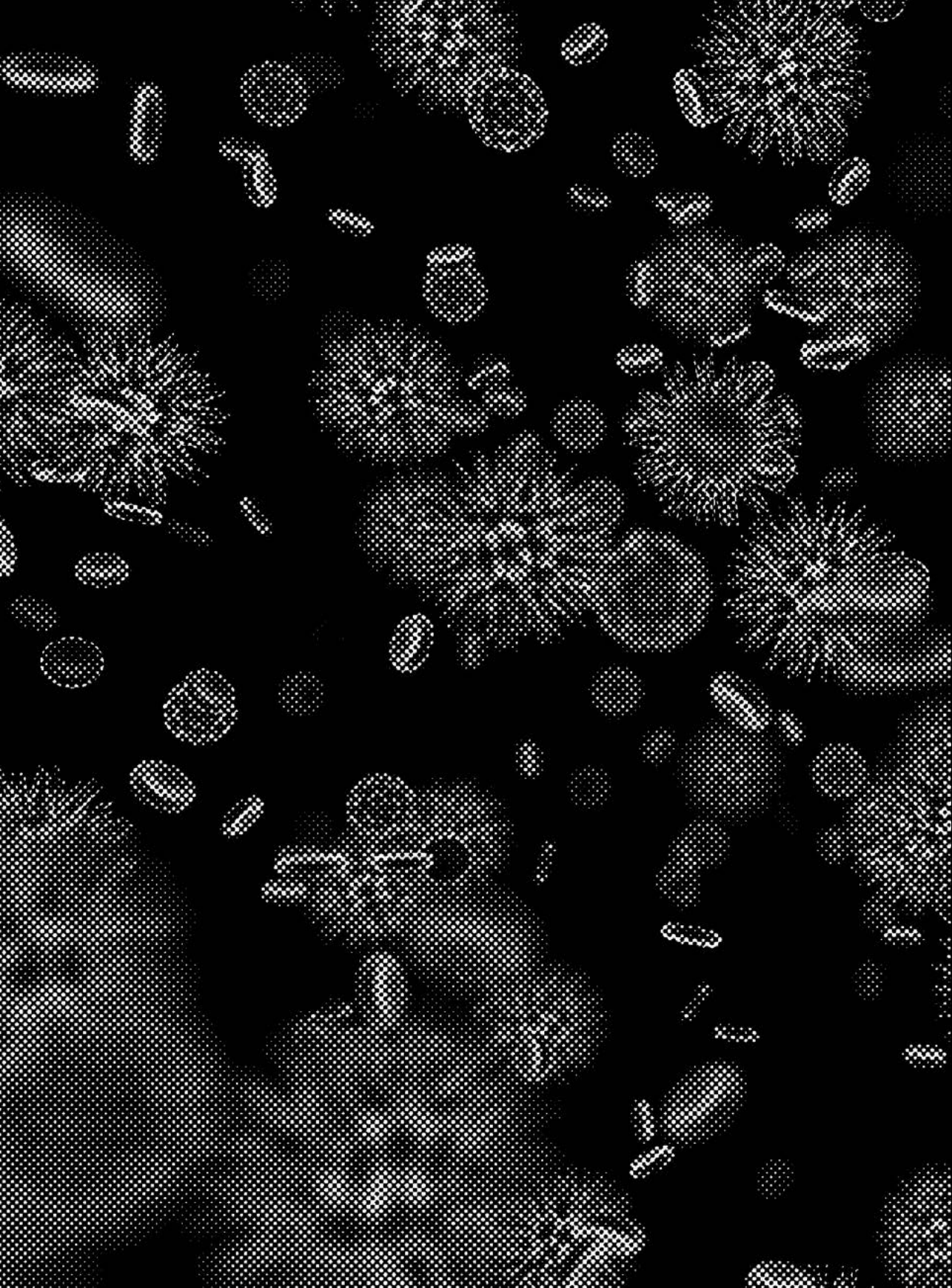
The term social innovation seems to fit what the linguist Roy Harris (2005) calls the "supercategory," as it "integrates what would otherwise be separate activities and inquiries," and warrants the remapping of knowledge. I do have some reservation on this understanding. Take an important term "social movement," for instance. While it may have a symbiotic existence and co-evolve with social innovation, the term "social movement" itself has stood for rich and diverse contents, so it cannot be conflated with "social innovation" and obscured by it.

We should not be all after social innovation because it is *à la mode*.

Turner is Professor Emeritus, and was a long-time design faculty member at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Besides the introduction, "what is social innovation?", he critically constructed some worthwhile frameworks suitable for our reference in each the chapters of his book *Tête-à-tête*, namely, "what is design for social innovation?" "Can social innovation be designed?" "Toward a model of design social innovation in Hong Kong?" As he did not elaborate too much on "society" itself, I tried to fill in the gaps.

Tête-à-tête also includes an appendix with fifty definitions of social innovation, providing ample cases and further readings in the form of book, journal, and website.

If readers are interested in the bibliography and websites in Chinese about social innovation, as well as the most up-to-date bibliography in English, googling "social innovation" will yield some good results.



CHAPTER I—
Utopia, Dystopia, and Heterotopia

Utopia, Dystopia, and Heterotopia

Theoretical Cross Examination on Ideal, Reality, and Social Innovation

This short collection of essays are the product of imagining myself pondering over social innovation in a non-utopian, non-dystopian, and heterotopian⁰¹ world, and I do not shy away from discussing a lot of controversial ideas. The book's first chapter is the reinterpretation of Western theoretical terms in familiar and not-so-familiar Chinese, and in the second chapter, I will single out a couple of Cantonese sayings that I find inspirational and have multiple meanings in order to unfold their progressive significances, novel ideas, and potential clues.

In other words, the word is displaced from its existing homestead to the underworld of thoughts. All these efforts are not only meant for defamiliarization, but also for setting meanings and thoughts free from the fate of the distribution of the sensible.

Destabilizing the distribution of the sensible and traversing the fantasy, in addition to the old-fashioned social and political commentaries, could be very transgressive in the documented histories of China and the world. No rulers welcome commentaries except those of the rulers themselves, and particularly,

they do not like those coming from people outside the bounds of the system, social code, and social roles. In Plato's city-state, citizens who do not play their proper roles and, instead, make their voices known—publicly in writing—are punishable by expulsion. In his Utopia, everybody assumes a single role, or to each his own art, and the blame is put on whoever fails to conform to his role. Obviously, who gets to do what for a living is determined by birth or the ruler. To put it in modern terms, a student should become a good student, a labourer should do the job of a labourer, a farmer should work as a farmer, a foreign worker forever a foreigner worker; to each his, or her, own line of work, with no chance of crossing over. In this worldview, every person engages in one craft (one way of making a living, one role, one profession, and one function), as if it were the one way of achieving lasting peace and social order. For our readers who are knowledgeable about Chinese history, Plato's city-state may resemble today's household registration regime and the agricultural regime in Qin China and the four castes in Han China. On the other hand, for the avid local activists, they might recall how the government has long encouraged students to mind their own studies but not to be concerned with public affairs. Other episodes also come to mind: the electoral committee that elected the first Chief Executive, and treating foreign domestic helpers as exceptional sub-residents who are excluded continually from permanent residency. This so-called social order is designed to benefit the ruler or vested interests, simply by virtue of their sheer luck, because we are destined to be governed by this select group of people whose *techne* is governing. Plato could be said to have prepared an "alibi" for himself. As a self-appointed philosopher, his *techne* was writing and making commentary about other people and things. He could become the adviser of the polity, and lamented that the city-state's affairs are trampled on by everybody else's unwise comments. In this Platonic world, the subtle distribution of the sensible, regime to control our imaginary, division of labour, narrative delimitation, and the repression of gratuitous social commentary set the social stage. Needless to say, bottom-up social action will not be welcome. Furthermore, thinkers such as Jacques Rancière would say that all hierarchical order of government and repression—for Rancière, there is almost

no hierarchical order that is not oppressive—are all Platonic, and in Rancière's eyes, Plato is the grandmaster of retrograde thoughts.⁰²

The distribution of the sensible manifests itself in the narrative and experiential delimitation, the bodily domination (for instance, household registration regime, forced migration, etc.), as well as the surveillance "police" of our privacy (as unveiled by Edward Snowden) in order to maintain a non-inclusive hierarchical order. As the new normative governmentality—PAnoptical surveillance, procedural operation, separation of classes, Network management, DAta tracking and mining, BIoPower, POLicing of privacy (referred to as PaNDa-BioPol thereafter)—allows omnipresent and asymmetrical control and discipline, the policed ruling order is no longer the exception but the norm. Under this regime of power, the creative collusion between capital and power is fostered, distributive justice is not served, global justice is usurped by national power, and the logic that sustains life on earth is not respected. Secularism, human rights, democracy, egalitarianism, internationalism, and social justice,⁰³ which were sought after by courageous pioneers and social visionaries, still remain the unfinished projects of modernity.⁰⁴ Good people lack confidence to do good, while evil finds its way to every corner on earth. Even a relatively decent society⁰⁵ seems to have no future, and it goes without saying that the Anthropocene⁰⁶ which human beings have attempted so hard to sustain may not last long.

The issue at hand is not about representing the world, it is about how to change the world.

Are changes possible?

Perhaps Foucauldians wonder if I am one of them or I am in the anti-Foucauldian camp as represented by Jacques Rancière, while either camp will not be entirely satisfied with my vocabulary evocative of liberalism (indeed, the terms mentioned earlier, namely, secularism, human rights, democracy, egalitarianism, internationalism, and social justice come from Etienne Balibar, and have roots in the left wing) or my Habermasian problematics (questions are reframed as unfinished business of modernity, but not some counter-

enlightenment thinkers put it, modernity as the problem itself). I think what I want to say is more complicated than "neither this nor that" labels. As Marx analyzes the anatomy of capital, I think Foucault's interrogation of power and affirmation of micro politics of resistance within the institution are inspirational in today's PaNDa-BioPol world. We are faced with several forms of lure: first, we need to avoid Foucault's impossibility of emancipation, which may lead to melancholia. Second, we cannot depend on Jean Baudrillard's illusive simulacra, which frustrates us just as easily. Third, we should stay clear of contemporary fans of Plato Alain Badiou and the theoretical *tour-de-force* Slavoj Zizek, who could be said to be chimerical communist theologians refusing to learn the not-so-distant lesson of the gulag. If social movement were a dish, then the following could be the seasonal ingredients. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's multitudes,⁰⁷ or roughly translated into English as "crowds." We also have Jacques Rancière's abrupt turn, and peppered with Zizek's transgressive "acts" to free imagination. Finally, we add Paolo Verni's European autonomist about-face. It seems that these ingredients will be more likely be able to mobilize more people to the streets, fight, and engage in all forms of disobedience, such as civil disobedience (the fight for constitutionalism), community disobedience (first form of communitarianism), ethnic disobedience (second form of communitarianism), professional disobedience (first form of the politics of common interest), disobedience by those whose interests have been affected (second form of the politics of common interest), disobedience by trade groups (first form of class politics), class disobedience (second form of class politics), disobedience by marginalized or minority groups (first form of identity politics), generational disobedience (second form of identity politics), disobedience by multitudes (anarchism), disobedience for social progress (humanitarianism, equal rights, animal rights, environmentalism, internationalism, etc.), disobedience by a cross section or multitudes (mass movement, united front, popular front). In short, these are disobediences by different but sometimes overlapping, subjectivities. When politics *à la* Rancière has become an exception, acts of disobedience are typical, or normal acts in a state of urgency, holding the promise to break the rules of

the game. Rancière underscores these breakthrough acts of disobedience and call them genuine "politics" (and everything else, "police"), as they are the share of the shareless, or in Žižek's term, they are "events," whose outcomes are greater than their causes.⁰⁸

Up to this point, liberal public intellectuals in the Chinese-speaking world (if they have not given up reading this essay) will ask, "have we done the research on change?" Perhaps, Rancière would not be motivated to answer this question, as, for the French thinker, there is only movement besides movement, and he does not trust any accumulative social achievement. Žižek would tease the liberals for asking the question, but would not give an affirmative answer, as usual. The multitude and autonomist camp would advocate for collective autonomous organization (an anarchist, informal communism without borders). Nevertheless, will this kind of attitude or answer be approved by the motley multitudes? When you hear the crowds sing "Do you hear the people sing?", haven't the multitudes already internalized some concrete values and other opinion on some ultimate choices on what is right and what is wrong for tomorrow? Over a century of utopian wet dreams followed by dystopian nightmares, who can prevent the multitudes whose collective memory still lingers on to ask the following question? What happens on the day following the revolution?

In two interviews that explore the current state and tradition of the Chinese left wing,⁰⁹ I lament the fact that Chinese liberals seem not to have read anything outside their own liberal oeuvres. On the other hand, I attempt to remind the New Left not to overlook the relatively tangible social democratic movements existing in China and around the world over the last century.¹⁰ I also say that among the group of theorists associated with Louis Althusser, only Etienne Balibar is qualified to offer us useful insights. Balibar underscores that equality and freedom are complementary values and should continue to coexist (for this, he even created a portmanteau word: equaliberty or *l'égaliberté* in French). He is willing to use words that are uninspiring and uncool, such as "social welfare, equal rights, education, morality, and religious tolerance," and claims that after the subject, the citizens enter the stage. Citizens are inseparable

from equality, freedom, and democracy. His inexorable investigations on the notions and categories of secularism, human rights, democracy, egalitarianism, internationalism, and social justice are profound,¹¹ and have inspired me to think about China's (including Hong Kong's) issues in Beijing, helping intellectuals and social activists from all backgrounds to find a common discourse, an overlapping consensus, and collaboration nodes.¹² Although Balibar was branded by Badiou as a reformist, such accusation indeed shows that revolutionary rhetoric and the high profile regurgitation of communist ideology have no practical place in actual social movements.

Granted, advocates of the multitudes and the autonomists do not want to use Thomas Hobbes' understanding of "the people." Rather, they insist on the plurality of the multitudes but never the uniformity of the people. For them, the term "people" gives rise to the oppressive sovereign state, including its government. For instance, *La République française* was formed by the French people, and the Chinese "people" rose up, in 1949, as the People's Republic of China was founded, and in other uncountable instances, state crimes were committed in the people's name. Baruch Spinoza's term, the multitudes, is the antonym of the people in a nation state. However, the multitudes subjectively tend to cling onto the image of "the people." Take the recent rally to stop the service trade pact from passing the legislature in Taiwan, for example. The multitudes, claiming to represent the people, imagine a democracy within an existing institution or system, and merely challenge—let alone overturn—the existing legal-political apparatus and hierarchical order.

This leaves us with two understandings of the social movement's process and outcome. One is similar to what Chantal Mouffe says the Left's ontology for radical democracy.¹³ With the first assumption, the Proletariat or multitudes are ultimately able to redeem themselves by bypassing the governmental mechanisms and sovereign state, and create a harmonious society that resolves all social conflicts. The second assumption is that discord exists in all genuine diverse societies, and clashes between different social forces are inevitable. Politics, in this view, is Gramscian struggle for leadership, and the battlefields within and without the institutions, on the streets, in the assemblies and the

political establishments, both in "spirit" and in material life. For this struggle, all classes and multitudes sometimes need to set up nodes or even organize a united front, in which the participants attempt to reach—if albeit temporary or incremental—core values, overlapping consensus and goals. Even if this group does not call itself "the people" (or the collective consciousness, solidarity) it should lead to this awareness of "us," vis-à-vis that of "them" as constructed in the process of the struggle. The people need not be democrats bringing about liberation, as they too could be Fascists bringing about oppression.

As this logic goes, if Karl Marx could be viewed as the first form, and Max Weber as the second form, then Hart and Negri, Virno, and the communist theologians belong to the first form, and Antonio Gramsci, Mouffe, Balibar, the social democrats, and even Isaiah Berlin all belong to the second form. The early utopian socialism and communism, the spontaneous, cooperative, and anarchist society as favored by Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, the free market fundamentalism, and the Confucian harmonious society are all manifestations of the first form. The first form of cognizance means the political realm will eventually cease to exist. The second form of cognizance brings us never-ending political strife, and antagonism between different social parties becomes the norm of our diverse community.

Mouffe (and Ernesto Laclau) endorse the second form and view of the Left, seeing society as diverse and dynamic. This type of agonist democracy is the product of adroitly transforming Schmittian antagonistic politics into contesting political coexistence, but the political form is not limited to representative democracy, deliberative democracy, republican participatory democracy, direct democracy, democracy by plebiscite, presentist democracy, as democratic politics is based on truly diverse disagreements and competition.

If the firm form of cognizance still bears the trace of utopia and dystopia, then I think the second form is a testament to our ambiguous situation that we are neither in a non-utopian and a non-dystopian world. At this moment, the multitudes' subjectivity is waking up from a utopian wet dream or a dystopian nightmare, with its genital reacting to the stimuli. While it appears that the

plot of the dream may develop according to its unconscious wishes, the faint echoes of the song "Do you hear the people sing?" reach the subject's ears. Some choose to wake up thanks to their will, but some prefer snoozing and rolling in bed, and many more seem to realize that they are in a dreamscape and yet are unable to wake themselves up.

To use another metaphor, I want to discuss the state of heterotopia. Heterotopia, as a noun, is a term coined by Michel Foucault (as an adjective, "heterotopic" has an even longer history), and I can't help but appropriate the term to discuss my ideas. The notion of heterotopia fosters imagining a society from multiple angles, similar to the compound eyes of a fruit fly, or feline night vision, with which humans can see what they are unable to see now. As the early modern Chinese writer Lu Xun puts it poetically, "those who love to go about life in the dark of the night need a pair of retooled eyes to see and a pair of retooled ears to hear in the dark: at ease in the dark, and see in the dark."¹⁴ Nevertheless, my use of the term may be different from Foucault's, as I use it to contrast another mode of social thinking, and that is the utopian and dystopian thinking.

The stem "topia," as we know, comes from earlier "topo," is a concept related to place, field, topology, and space. "Hetero" means different or other, as in "heterosexual," "heteromorphic," and "heterozygote," connotes difference or multiplicity. In its broadest sense, heterotopia is a field or space marked by differences, and that includes physical space, private space, public space, virtual space, imaginary space, outer space. Moreover, it also covers naturesscape, artificial landscape, technoscape, semioscape, virtualscape, and mindscape. It could also be any alternative space, or any banal, everyday field, as a heterotopia is devoid of an essence or clear boundaries. Its border is not only porous, but also allows infiltration of difference, as we can visualize in the Tai Chi ideogram (black in the white field, and white in the black field). Heterotopia could be polycentric or decentered, or a heterotopia's centre is no longer tenable (as in one of now famous maxims attributed to Jacques Derrida, "the centre is not the centre."). With this notion, the falcon cannot hear the falconer, and non-linearity, transposition, and whirl trajectory may appear in the heterotopia.

In this book, I will adopt an expansive meaning of the term to envision the possibility of social innovation in the twenty-first century.

When the word Utopia appears in the sixteenth century,¹⁵ the letter "u" encompasses both "ou" (non-existing) and "eu" (good), and in the utopian novels of the late nineteenth century, such as *Looking Back* by political reformist Edward Bellamy, and *News from Nowhere* by social innovator and conservationist William Morris, the authors imagine what they think is a good but presently nonexistent future world in order to highlight the current world's imperfection. Therefore, the Utopian novels have two aims, namely, they serve as the grand refusal¹⁶ of the current world, and they uphold the belief that a brand new and good society will come. Robert Owen, a great social innovator, even attempted to build a utopian community in the world on his own. In the last two centuries, a lot of people have utopian dreams and realize them. Fortunately, these attempts have mostly failed, and even created the greatest calamity in human history in the twentieth century. What human beings have experienced is not the utopia as many predicted, but its perverse anti-thesis, the dystopia. Therefore, around the First World War in the twentieth century, novelists began writing dystopian novels as cautionary tales. They urge us not to give in to other's easy promises to a perfect future. Although these futures serve as an allegory of the present-day, they are nonetheless vivid portrayals of our beautiful dream turned nightmare.

Generally speaking, two forms of authoritarian society in the twentieth century are viewed as closest to the archetypical dystopia.¹⁷ These instances are undeniable, evidence-based, and historical human experience, and for which, we have paid extremely high humanitarian costs, but it is also possible for every form of society to become its proper dystopia. In the 1924 novel *We*, Yevgeny Zamyatin depicts a high-tech dystopia, and in the 1932 novel *Brave New World*, Aldous Huxley portends a hedonist dystopia. As early as 1907, Jack London's novel, *The Iron Heel*, warns the public that American democratic institutions, too, can degenerate into a Fascist dystopia. Till this day, dystopia and the end of the world are important themes of the science fiction genre.

This essay does not aim to underscore the optimism and naiveté utopian

thoughts, or the pessimism and defeatism of dystopian thoughts. Rather, in the context of this book, I see that utopia as the grand acceptance, and dystopia, on the contrary, as the grand refusal. These two represent the dichotomy between heaven and hell, us versus them, all or nothing. In Chinese scholar Zhang Ning's words, this is the logic of King Midas, the choice is always between all-good and all-bad.¹⁸

Utopian and dystopian narratives mostly depict a self-contained, monolithic future society, and its hierarchal order (or the lack thereof) is stable and complete. In postmodern terms, it is a totalizing, homogenized grand narrative. In such society, particularly the dystopia, queers and dissidents are either unseen or already rendered invisible as the majority's senses are distributed in order to exclude these outsiders. There is not a space for social or political commentary, let alone a civil society in which people can innovate. As these few and lone outsiders are isolated, their situation can be compared to the powerful image in the preface of Lu Xun's 1922 book, *Call to Arms*, a few light sleepers waking up in an iron house without windows or air.

Hollywood has repeatedly produced cinematic images of the utopia and dystopia, which are also embedded with moral messages and romance. These big production action films follow the formulaic plot that is easily recognizable. There usually exists a utopian and peaceful society, but as the evil forces invade, the utopia is wiped out. But when the windowless iron house's door is about to close, or it is moments before the triumph of the evil forces, a few people, usually the lead actor and actress, act on their sheer positive will, turn the tide, annihilate the evil, and rebuild the utopia. Take last year's Disney animation "Frozen" for instance, Princess Elsa has the magic power to turn every object she touches into ice. As she is kidnapped and her Midas' touch abused, the utopian kingdom completely turns into a frozen dystopia. Thanks to the true love of her sister, the spell is removed and the kingdom thaws and restores to its former utopia. This is the fable of saving the utopia. The recent examples are too numerous. The master builder in the animation "The LEGO Movie" reverses the course at the most critical moment. The ability to change the course completely relies on the plot structure that is based on a set of

binary oppositions: us vs. them, good vs. evil, and the utopia vs. dystopia. The Hollywood formula indicates that utopian and dystopian imagination, hero romance, and prince and princess are real crowd pleasers. This is the reason why Fredric Jameson thinks what Ernst Bloch calls the "concrete" utopian dreams and energies—with them come hope and control—are alive and well in our popular culture and everyday life.¹⁹

For social activists, this is a paradox: without the utopian call to arms, how do we mobilize the crowds? Without projecting a dystopian future, how do the multitudes constitute a villain object? For most people who are more sensitive to realism, without the notion of the dystopia, without the lessons of history, and without allegories depicting the dystopia, it will not be easy to comprehend how evil and ugly it will get. Without the mediation of the dystopia, history may repeat itself. Nowadays, only crooks and ignorant people can only present a blueprint for a utopia. The quest for utopia competes with our consciousness of reality for attention and energy, but we end up with hopelessness, despair, and utter abandonment. The more we hope for, the more we are in for disappointment. Similarly, focusing on the dystopian qualities in the existing world brings hopelessness, despair, and utter abandonment. We do not even believe that we are the creator of history, and out of desperation, we need to cry out Martin Heidegger's famous quote, "only a God can save us."

Hopelessness, despair, and utter abandonment. Under an evil regime, the people work tirelessly to become good citizens. The situation has been duly surmised by Tony Judt in *Ill Fares the Land*, "something is profoundly wrong with the way we live today. [...] And yet we seem unable to conceive of alternatives."²⁰

The older generation of Marxist blames the "false consciousness" imposed on them by the ruling class, the blindness caused by ideology, or the lack of scientific knowledge for their political inertia and complacency. They do not act, because they do not know. However, Slavoj Žižek describes the situation as "they know, but they still do not act." This subjectivity, rooted in dystopian imagination, does not allow oneself to see agency in a defeatist world. It

manifests itself as model citizens, escapist, defeatists, cynics, opportunists, collaborators, relativists, pococurantes, and so on. Some have ulterior motives, some have vested interests, some serve two masters, and some just exploit the others. These characters fall within a spectrum: at one end, some see only futility; in the middle, some evade any responsibility as they do no wrong; and at the other end, some do wrong because they are never accountable. They know, but they still do not act differently.

Contemporary model citizens and the ruler's collaborators exist in different societies for different reasons, and here I am not going to elaborate on each society's specificity and the features that are common to all societies. I have perhaps talked too much about why people do not want change. For the social activists who do want change, I move back to the imaginary space for an alternative diverse society: the Heterotopia.

If our reading of Foucault does not dance to the tune of his peculiarities and idiosyncrasies, we could see heterotopia as a little inscrutable, polymorphous, polycentric, and decentric field, contained within the windowless iron house. As the readers may recall, the windowless iron house is the metaphor from early modern Chinese writer Lu Xun to represent the dystopian traditional Chinese society. This field could be a grand but labyrinth in ruin, its shallow surface covered with a vast network of Deleuzian rhizomatic connections and disjunctions. At times, the root sprouts, buds, and the new stem grows to a considerable length, and yet it could shrink to its original size. The shape of a rhizome cannot be predetermined, and the sprouts at one end may affect the growth of the other end. Once the growth has reached its critical point, it may even become an *event* that demolishes the labyrinth's structure. Perhaps its effects are only temporary and existing structure can be restored. Rhizome is such a polymorphous embodiment.

In the labyrinth, power is only a glorified gown infested with fleas, whoever wearing it will feel uncomfortable, and each monadic individual moves at a snail's pace, and is overtaxed and overburdened. Snails are an apt metaphor for these monads (but probably not in the same fantastic portrayal of the hero in the animation "Turbo"). Each has its own way to till the land, but needs to

make sure it does not get eaten first by a predator. Social change is slow, and its direction unpredictable, but not impossible.

Here, I must add, my choice of metaphor, a snail, is motivated by my faith in human capacity to rise above personal constraints and the human agency to enact social change, and I by no means want to hamper my readers' imagination. They may think of themselves as sea gulls ruling the coastal skies, stray cats hopping from one roof to another, or a Bodhisattva, whose goal is to save the sentient beings drowning in the sea of attachment. Agents of change could also be androgynous, cyborg, or cybernetic, and be compared to ants, worker bees, dogs, rats, sheep, and wolves, which playfully destabilize these common derogatory labels one often uses, and in the process, unfold these metaphors' multiple and potentially emancipatory meanings.

The world of Heterotopia is not flat, nor is it fluid, but a jigsaw puzzle, a parcourse, a series of cognitive, psychological, and ideological obstacle courses. The heterotopian "reality" is not a mere simulacrum, or a constructivist world. Heterotopia has a basis in reality, and this reality is at least partially predictable, describable, foreseeable, and culturally transmittable. It is derived from multiple sources. Its constituent elements clash with one another. Its boundaries are blurry. It is fragmentary, fractal, and volatile. It exists at many levels, and is present in both physical and metaphysical realms. Through the conscious and unconscious actions of many, the Heterotopia keeps generating, disappearing, constructing, and deconstructing. It allows for a contextualized cognizance, which can also be sensed and experienced. Nevertheless, without lived, embodied existence, without context, without presence in the process, without the mediation of literature, images, and cinema, the Heterotopia is an aporia whose representation is foreclosed. You have to hit the "enter" key every time.²¹

Although Heterotopia is decentric, non-linear, fragmentary, amorphous, institutional or organization oppression remains, and the power structure stays intact. The persistent tensions of class, ethnicity, gender, geography, nation state continue to pull us apart, and the police and the "PaNDa-BioPol" are still there to enforce discipline and surveillance. On the contrary, they might be more virulent and menacing, although not to the extent of a windowless iron house.

Change is possible with this imagination of the Heterotopia. It replaces the utopian and dystopian imaginations most familiar to the public, and ascertain the existence of multiple spaces in which movements, discourses, and organizations are permitted. However, in this kind of society, clashes between the multitudes and interests are unavoidable. Each will vie for leadership in different sectors of society, get together and get organized, which will sprout up everywhere in the following forms: citizens (constitutionalism), community (first form of communitarianism), ethnic groups (second form of communitarianism), professionals (first form of the politics of common interest), those whose interests have been affected (second form of the politics of common interest), trade groups (first form of class politics), class (second form of class politics), marginalized or minority groups (first form of identity politics), generations (second form of identity politics), social progress (humanitarianism, equal rights, animal rights, environmentalism, internationalism, etc.), multitudes (anarchism). The have-nots will have a stake, although not a political form of Putschism (often belonging to the all-or-nothing logic of utopia and dystopia), but their inclusion could necessitate institutional and policy reforms, or social innovation at any point in different social fields. This kind of change in the way people think give social innovators more space for imagination and nodes for fostering actions and movements.

In this essay, I offer a mere critique—and not an outright refusal—of the utopian and dystopian imaginations. I am concerned that conventional utopian and dystopian thoughts may have already shaped and conditioned the collective imagination of social movement, and therefore, the notion of Heterotopia, an alternate reality, will open up more doors to movements in disparate social fields. Utopia has long been sought throughout human history, the "Great Unity" in the *Book of Rites*, the Peach Blossom Spring, the Shangri-la from the past, to the contemporary singer John Lennon's interpretation in "Imagine," as Balibar remarks that Utopia allows us to imagine a replacement to exploitation, domination, and hate. As our memory of the dystopian nightmare is still fresh, we should keep proposing utopian demands that are not rooted in a naïve and totalizing utopian dream.²² They are wishes for a good society, and our

hope for the future. Perhaps, it is our non-homogenized, heterotopian utopian imagination.²³

Let's turn back to the question "have we done the research for the shift?" Intellectuals tend to be overcautious and one step ahead of the rest of society, but first they, like everyone else, should not fall into the trap of the utopian-dystopian dichotomy. It would be naïve to think that getting rid of one centre of power will be followed by the predetermined plan and the voice of reason to establish a second centre of power. Politics will never be a one-off coup and Putschism, and it will be reckless to conceive of an ultimate solution to every problem. A quest for an exclusive and totalizing answer will short-circuit our thoughts and lead to nowhere.

If one arrives at the following conclusions, then they become the spokesperson for the ruler: a one-sided and sporadic action is futile! Any action without a plan for the superstructure is futile! A plan for the superstructure, then change! No plan leads to chaos! Chaos will lead to more chaos! No chaos at all costs! These self-appointed advisers and think tank staffers speak for those in power, or at least, they turn into a social control freak, articulating dystopian messages.

Events are contextual, and are never isolated. The outcome can be greater than the cause, but there will always be a cause. There may be multiple outcomes. Events are more aptly conceived as nodes in a chain, which are movements, struggles between candidates for leadership, clashes between values, beliefs, and social cognition, or micro-movements initiated by the multitudes. Perhaps all my eyes can see is a still, lifeless body of water, but your compound eyes and night vision will paint a very different picture. Piercing under the deceptive surface of the muddy water, you see microorganisms flourish. You see currents underneath ferrying creatures. You see rivers and other water systems joining the sea after a long terrestrial march. You see people dive in the water. You smell their adrenaline rush. Perhaps you can even feel the wave washing onto shore, as the swimmers await their chance to work their bodies to the limits.

Endnotes and Further Readings

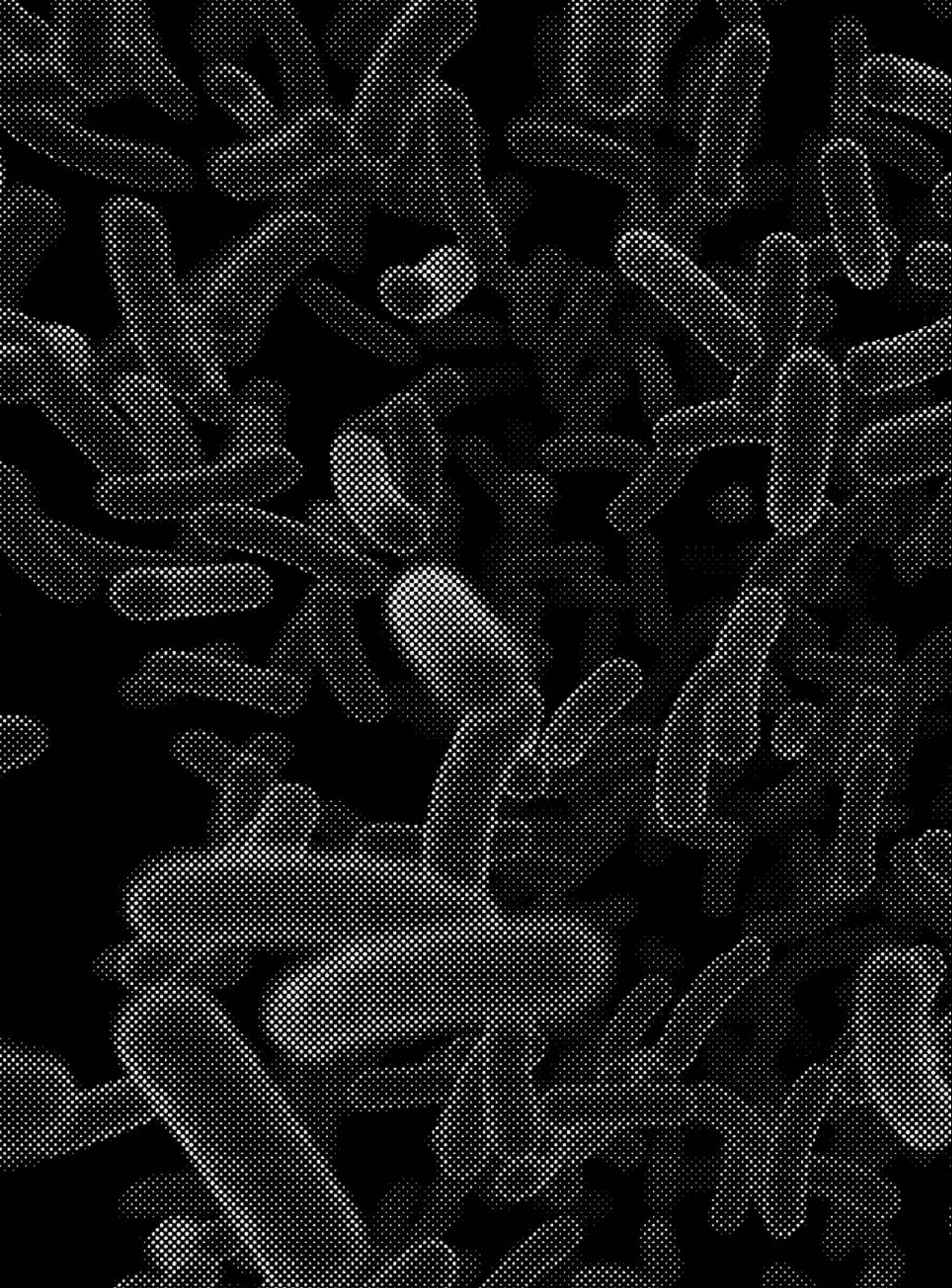
- 01 Michel Foucault uses the term "Heterotopia" in numerous instances to discuss this notion of space. In particular, a lecture note entitled "*Des espaces autres*" ("Of other spaces" in English), published right before his death in 1984. For more information, one can browse heterotopiastudies.com I am inspired by a 2011 essay (in Chinese, see the footnote in the Chinese edition) and a 2013 essay "Utopia, Dystopia, and Heterotopia: a Hong Kong Perspective" by David Der-wei Wang and borrow their essays' title for this chapter.
- 02 For the notion of "the distribution of the sensible," see Jacques Rancière's *The Philosopher and His Poor* (1983), and *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation* (1987).
- 03 See Etienne Balibar's *On Universalism: A Debate with Alain Badiou* (2007).
- 04 See Jürgen Habermas' *Modernity, an Unfinished Project* (1980).
- 05 The decent society is a model for the good society, and was sought by many from Adam Smith to Karl Polanyi. In John Rawls' *The Law of Peoples* (1999) argues that the decent society could be a hierarchical society that affords habeus corpus, but no liberal democracy. As long as the hierarchy is based on the principle of justice, it will gain legitimacy among the stakeholders.
- 06 "Anthropocene" refers to the era when human beings began dominating the Earth's ecosystem. As life on earth and the natural environment co-evolved in the geological eras, the human-centered era began around BC 2000 or even earlier. The advent of the Industrial Revolution only precipitated human's effects on the ecosystem.
- 07 Refer to Chapter 2.6 for more discussion on the multitude; see Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (2004).
- 08 See Slavoj Žižek's *Event: Philosophy in Transit* (2014).
- 09 The two Chinese-language interviews of Chan Koonchung are by Qi Ke (2014) and Zhou Lian (2014). See the Chinese edition for the full citation.
- 10 Prior to 1949, besides the communists, the Chinese left wing included anarchism and social democrats, and the latter was popular among the intellectuals; for instance, Hu Shih ("liberal socialism") and Chinese social democrats such as Carsun Chia-sen Chang and Zhang Dongsun (Chang Tung-sun). In *Ill Fares the Land* (2012), Tony Judt states that social democracy "represents neither an ideal future nor an ideal past, it is better than anything else to hand." Jon Cruddas and Andrea Nahles summarize the democratic left wing's goal to build a "good society," a "more egalitarian economy," and a "secure, green, and fair future;" for more on social democracy in Europe, see Berman Sheri's *The Primacy of Politics: Social Democracy and the Making of Europe's Twentieth Century* (2006) and *The Future of European Social Democracy: Building the Good Society* by Henning Meyer

and Jonathan Rutherford (eds., 2012).

- 11 See Etienne Balibar's *Equaliberty: Political Essays* (2014); and "A racism without Races: an Interview with Etienne Balibar" by Clément Petitjean (2014); and "Citizen Balibar: an Interview with Etienne Balibar" by Nicolas Duvoux and Pascal Sévérac, translated by Michael C. Behrent (2012).
- 12 For instance, we can discuss with the Rawksean left wing liberal intellectuals in the Chinese-speaking world, see Chow Po-chung (2014), Sechin Yeong-Shyang Chien (2014), and I-Chung Chen (2014). See the Chinese edition for the full Chinese-language citation.
- 13 See Chantal Mouffe's *Critique as Counter Hegemonic Intervention* (2008) and *The Democratic Paradox* (2000); see also Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (1985).
- 14 See Lu Xun's "Ode to the Night" (1933). See the Chinese edition for full Chinese-language citation.
- 15 See Thomas More's *Utopia: On the Best State of a Republic and on the New Island of Utopia* (1516).
- 16 The term "grand refusal" is from Herbert Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (1964). The first generation and second generation of the Frankfurt School tended to issue a grand and totalizing refusal to existing institutions; for instance, Max Horkheimer's "The Longing for the Totally Other" and Theodor Adorno's notion of "instrumental reason," are described by Richard Wolin as the two figures' Nietzschean dimension; for details, see Wolin's *The Frankfurt School Revisited and Other Essays on Politics and Society* (2006).
- 17 George Orwell's 1949 novel *Nineteen Eighty-four* is the best representative work of a Communist dystopia. Katharine Burdekin's *Swastika Night* (1937) depicts the Fascist dystopia that rules Europe for centuries as the "Thousand Year Reich."
- 18 In Greek mythology, King Midas adored gold, and had been given the power by Dionysus to turn everything he touched into gold. His daughter was turned into gold, and his food was similarly turned into gold and became inedible. Zhang Ning uses this myth to compare characters who made absolute all-or-nothing choices throughout Chinese history. See the Chinese edition for the full Chinese-language citation.
- 19 See Fredric Jameson's *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions* (2005) and "Reification and Utopia in Mass Culture" (1979).
- 20 See Tony Judt's *Ill Fares the Land* (2011).
- 21 See Donna Haraway's *The Haraway Reader* (2004); this essay uses a lot of animals and non-human life forms as metaphors, and I am partly inspired by Haraway's "posthuman" thought as a response to erase dichotomies.
- 22 For instance, in Ernest Callenbach's 1975 utopian novel *Ecotopia: The Notebooks and Reports of*

William Weston, the author imagines the states of Washington, Oregon, and the northern part of California secede from the United States in an attempt to establish a progressive utopia, but the new nation wants to keep weapons of mass destruction to prevent the union from launching revanchist attacks. This is a contemporary utopian imagination, and on this novel, Ralph Nadar says, "none of the happy conditions in Ecotopia are beyond the technical or resource reach of our society."

- 23 See Anupama Mohan's *Utopia and the Village in South Asian Literatures* (2012), in which she argues that many utopian imagination is merely homotopia imagination, and these homogenized utopias should be distinguished from the future, good, and genuine Utopia that allows for differences. Dystopian imagination also connotes homotopia; see Chan Koonchung (2004). See the Chinese edition for the full Chinese-language citation.



CHAPTER 2—

A Chinese Bag of Tricks

A few clusters of ideas for the coming good society

A Chinese Bag of Tricks

A few clusters of ideas for the coming good society

"Learning without thought is labour lost, thought without learning is perilous." —Confucius

"Practical men, who believe in themselves being quite exempt from any intellectual influences, are usually the slaves of some defunct economist. Madmen in authority, who hear voices in the air, are distilling their frenzy from some academic scribbler of a few years back." —Maynard Keynes

"Whoever teaches without emancipating, stultifies." —Jacques Rancière

The Local Patron Deity

The Chinese local patron deity, *tou dei gung* (*tu di gong*), is merely a member of the polytheistic universe. His power does not extend beyond the boundaries of his jurisdiction, and his main duties are to protect the local people, including the passersby, to deliver them from harm, to intercede for prosperity on their behalf, and to mediate conflict. He is not very powerful, which the local people know all too well, and for that reason, they would rather not request him to do anything exceeding his powers. The local people revere the patron deity out of tradition, so his aura stays with him among the local populace and he feels his importance in the neighbourhood. He is inseparable from the place, and he forever will be the local patron, belonging exclusively to the place. His presence is felt as an embodiment of local culture⁰¹ and spirit, and the local scene is turned into the humanity of all of those calling it home, which is more than just a geographical locale. The local patron shows his face to boost the spirit of the site, and in the event of foreign invasion, he fights alongside his adherents, and when a young person leaves home to serve in the military or in search of a better career, he wishes him or her the best of luck.

He is supported by his adherents who celebrate his birthday, but none of them will ever make a huge sacrifice. However, if his ego is not in check, the local people might replace him with another deity, tossing him in the gutter.

2.1.1—

In the west, the patron deity's counterpart should be Genius Loci, who protected the local communities in ancient Roman times, before the advent of Christianity as the state religion. Many communities and cultures in different eras had similar animistic traditions, as trees, rocks, and animals, which have a spiritual essence, if not a soul and a personality as well. Every community has its own Genius Loci. It is not a universal monotheist entity, but a bunch of particular, diverse, and exclusive genii. Genius Loci and *tou dei gung* are similar in the way how the spirits are in a large part defined and delineated by the land, and symbolize the delicate relationship between humans and the land.

2.1.2—

Nowadays, Genius Loci already is many architects, landscape architects, urban planners, designers, and ethnological artists' magical mantra, as they use this incantation to endow their designs with a sense of place, engender a Genius Loci in their place-making practices, including considerations of local folkways, social contracts, local particularism, contextualism, neighbourhood preservation, social inclusiveness, convenience to the residents, user-friendliness, and glo/cal integration, to name a few.

This local notion of Genius Loci has been mobilized to contest mechanical modernism, sample international style, imperialism, excessive rationalism, pork barrel projects, capitalism-led large-scale developments, isolated island developments, McMansions, and Mega Malls and Big Box Stores, urban renewal projects that destroy community networks, and urban planning projects prioritizing automobiles over people, zoning leading up to functional divisions, and unchecked urban sprawl, etc.

French viticulture has a lot to do with the geography, terroir, and the winemakers tailor make the technique to fit the grape culture. The resulting

wine becomes a brand that stands out from the rest, as it is the crystallization of the local climate, land, and water. For the master sommeliers, they can magically distinguish the essence of one terroir from its neighboring one with just one sip of the wine. This is the French version of Genius Loci.

Genius Loci is said to be instrumental to high-end agriculture, such as Blue Mountain Coffee of Jamaica, the black truffles of French and Italian regions, and the Iberico Ham from pigs feeding on acorns in Spain.

Needless to say, the prevalence of *feng shui* in modern society is yet another instance. It is awe-inspiring.

2.1.3—

Whether it concerns architecture, landscape, community, produce, *feng shui*, sense of belonging, family roots, homeland, or nation state, the notion is grounded firmly in the land, and the land is not only a physical entity, but possess a metaphysical, or even romanticized transcendental quality—everything that is local, rooted in the earth, from the terroir, and related to land is given an anthropomorphic personality, such as desires and emotions, so people can see a face and easily identify with the land and its history. Developments can never be built solely for the utilitarian purpose: no efficiency, no return on investment, and even no aesthetics can compensate for the need for affective identification. The land is what we call home, and a source of our being.

It is a shift in the manner in which we think through our situation. We no longer merely use the land for a living; we invest our emotions in her, view her as a living organism, and give her the respect and aura she deserves. In this secular age of disenchantment, the land is re-enchanted. Everything coming from the land now has a soul, even if it is only an average soul.

The soul or the anima invokes the spirit, the *tou dei gung* and Genius Loci are two manifestations of the icon. The love of a land is turned into an aura. Identification with the land is almost like being possessed by her spirit.

2.1.4——

Although more and more people realize the importance of Genius Loci, the growing population the land needs to support and the migration of people also undercuts people's willingness to take it seriously. The new way with which we view the land, one that allows for the land's improvement in the twenty-first century, as symbolized by *tou dei gung* and Genius Loci, will necessarily put itself in conflict with the spectre of the old ways of thinking.⁰² Sadly, people with this view inexorably put up good fights, and lose the battle most of the time. In face of an ever-expanding population and even more uncontrollable desires, the ballet of the good city sidewalk, as Jane Jacobs puts it, to describe a pleasant medium-density mixed-use neighbourhood⁰³ has its loyal supporters, but they alone are not enough to become the default model for urban development.

Similarly, in a kingdom ruled by capital and power, initiating a community-centered struggle as championed by Saul Alinsky⁰⁴ without severing the chains of capital and power is akin to the myth of Sisyphus.

Hard-core environmentalists have long been underscoring land and Mother Nature's spiritual essence, sacredness, and the notion that land should not become the supplier of raw materials subject to abuse. If people's view of land is to change, then we need to transcend the self-other dichotomy. The attempt to harmonize humans and their environs hints at the re-enchantment of land, if not a new form of ecological animism or pantheism. These die-hard activists might think folkways such as *tou dei gung* could be articulated. Nevertheless, the wheel of modernism will not grind to a halt thanks to these local deities alone, not to mention romanticized, sentimental, and anti-modern rhetoric or ideologies.⁰⁵ As Arne Naess duly summarizes, "decisive improvement requires considerable change: social, economic, technological, and ideological."⁰⁶ If the *tou dei gung* does not enjoy popular support, and lacks political, technological, economic, ideological allies, he by himself will not be able to protect the local land. He cannot be removed from his community and society.

2.1.5——

Tadao Ando proposes another set of difficulty: "I begin to raise questions due to the distance between the modern 'concept' of symbolism, uniformity, and consistency and the 'reality' of geography, environment, and history. In other words, it is the difference between universality and particularity" (translation mine).⁰⁷ As a modernist architect, Ando read philosopher Tetsuro Watsuji's *Climate and Culture* and began problematizing the issue. In the 1930s, Watsuji attempted to account for the differences in history, culture and national characteristics with those of climate and geography, or in its original Japanese term, *Fudo*.⁰⁸ Regardless of the validity of his claim, Watsuji had indeed influenced many, including Lee Teng-hui who leans toward Taiwanese independence.⁰⁹

What the *tou dei gung* and Genius Loci symbolize is a worldview that favors particularism, as opposed to universalism.

The localists, independence movement activists, irredentist and revanchist, racists, nationalists, people advocating cultural particularism, and even isolationists, all seem to generally underscore the following narrative. A piece of land historically belonging to a group of people, who share a high degree of homogeneity, and in relation to others, they are different from other groups. *La négritude*, the anti-colonial struggle ideology popular in Africa and the Zionist movement each used a distant homeland in its imagination. Their imagined territories vary in size. "The local" may cover different extents, be it a small residential block, be it a community held together by familiarity or a throne, be it a community armed with its political authority and ideological apparatus. "The local" could be as large as an entire modern nation, state, and society.

In the West, beliefs of cultural particularism and nationalism owe their large part to Johann Gottfried von Herder.¹⁰

Herder was a student of Kant, but he could not accept the universalism of the Enlightenment, so he instead emphasized the differences and particulars of various cultures. In 1765, at age 21, he published an essay mentioning the term "fatherland."¹¹ Herder's portmanteau word of "father" and "land" refers to the land belonging to the ancestors and forefathers.

In English, the etymology of the word "patriot" is Greek word "*patrios*," meaning "belonging to the fathers." Herder made use of this meaning and called a designated land area as the "fatherland," on which we can find genealogy and a shared history and culture.

Germanic languages tend to use "fatherland" and the use of "motherland" is found in other languages. However, both "fatherland" and "motherland" are translated into *zou gwok* (*zu guo*) or "ancestor's country" in Chinese, confusing the state and the forefathers' land. Also, it is customary in Chinese to say *gwok gaa* (*guo jia*), or "country family" as a term to denote the "state," so that this notion linked to the land is semantically tied up with the "country," "country family" is a Confucian construction in order to use "family" to reinforce "country," so it goes without saying that "families do not exist without a country."

2.1.6—

So we can see from the notion of "the local," if it can be extended to cover the fatherland or motherland, or a vast mass of land held together by genealogical relationship, culture, and history. After manipulating the assertion that a community shares the same language and the same genes, one could turn "fatherland" and "motherland" into a modern nation state. In the modern nation state, the very local in its original form are prone to the state's abuse. In many instances, the very local are disenchanting and appropriated as resources with vested business interests behind the scene and under the guise of state intervention. Recently, the localists worldwide attempt to re-enchant "the locals" and deny the outside capital to target them. This is a welcome development. However, the modern nation state, one should not forget, is the agent that has successfully re-enchanting the land, or an extensive version of the local.

2.1.7—

When Ancient Rome changed from the Republic to the Empire, Emperor Augustus initiated personal worship trying to turn himself into a demigod,

and his likeness are spread throughout the Empire in a plaque reminiscent of the Genii Loci guarding the communities. He becomes the de facto guardian patron for all of Rome, or Genius Augusti. In this example, we can see the interchangeability between the local and the land or the territory. In other words, the jurisdiction of a *tou dei gung* now extends to the imperial lands under the sun, as one *tou dei gung* assumes national office in the central government.

Why do people accept a *tou dei gung* with an inflated ego? Perhaps it is out of necessity, but part of it may be voluntary. Slavoj Žižek uses the Kantian idea of the "sublime" to do a Lacanian reading of it.¹² Žižek's text is interesting but also a bit complicated, so I run the risk of being ridiculed and try to give the gist of his arguments. Through the ideology of the sublime, the subject gives up its critical agency and welcome formerly unacceptable, unintelligible, and unreasonable phenomena, such as nation, God, the leader, party, people, "our" culture, civilization, way of life, etc. As the subject creates identification with these objects elevated to the level of the sublime, identification itself is enjoyable as such, hence Žižek says "subjects enjoy their Nation as themselves," and the subject's superego is hard pressed to construct foes and other bad objects to be repressed in order to attain more jouissance as an end in itself.

2.1.8—

What if we reinstate the *tou dei gung* back to its humble origin? What if the *tou dei gung* desires no more than a little bit of reverence, aura, and in return, he cares about what the people care about?

In general, it should be the way it is, not going to either extreme. As said earlier, the Genii Loci and *tou dei gung* could symbolize the delineation between humans and their land.

However, the real world is not always sympathetic to the middle path between the extreme; on one hand, land is treated as an inorganic matter or exploitable resources. On the other hand, we glorify the fatherland, motherland, and our way of life in the highest.

Small communities dwelling in small pieces of land generally need re-enchantment and self-promotion, but it is generally a good idea to disenchant

artificially constructed sublime phenomena.

2.1.9——

This is not to say the state should be abolished, or as some free market fundamentalists put it, we should starve the government to death. The modern sovereign state is a huge topic, and cannot be exhausted by any one metaphor or simile. *Tou dei gung* or *Genii Loci* could be viewed as a synecdoche of sort, and pave the way for a more profound understanding. I think this is a better way, and suits my political temperament, therefore, even if the metaphor or simile is judicious, it does not equate reality.¹³ Especially if we infer from history, these inferences cannot tell the whole story in modern times (we will discuss modern government further in Chapter 2.3).

So I will not say the following things: the governor of the state is just a *tou dei gung*. I will rather say, using the southern Chinese folk tradition, the *tou dei gung* will help us associate one concept with another, fix the frame of reference, and at the same time, debate on the topics of the local and the state can proceed in a more temperate manner.

2.1.10——

Who is afraid of *tou dei gung*? Nobody should be. We need him to provide public service, and afford us protection. He still enjoys some aura, and we feel heartened when we think of him. If he carries out the duties of his office satisfactorily and honestly, then we should revere him appropriately.

Endnotes and Further Readings

- 01 Here, I borrow A Cheng's definition of the Chinese term "culture" as the opposite of "physical violence" (2006). See the Chinese edition for the full Chinese-language citation.
- 02 See Chan Koonchung (2005, 2007, 2013). See the Chinese edition for the full Chinese-language citation.
- 03 See Jane Jacob's *The Death of Life of Great American Cities* (1961) and Chan Koonchung (2007). See the Chinese edition for the full Chinese-language citation.
- 04 See Chan Koonchung (1976, 2004). See the Chinese edition for the full Chinese-language citation.
- 05 See Michael Zimmerman's "Ken Wilber's Critique of Ecological Spirituality" (2001) and *Deep Ecology and World Religions* by David Barnhill and Roger Gottlieb (eds., 2010).
- 06 See Arne Naess' *Life's Philosophy: Reason and Feeling in a Deeper World* (2008).
- 07 See Tadao Ando (Chinese edition, 2003) and Qian Yong Wa (2007). See the Chinese edition for the full Chinese-language citation.
- 08 See Tetsuro Watsuji's *Fudo* (Chinese edition, 2006).
- 09 See Chan Koonchung (1996). See the Chinese edition for the full Chinese-language citation.
- 10 See Isaiah Berlin's *The Crooked Timber of Humanity* (1959). There are many works in this area.
- 11 See Johann Gottfried von Herder's "Do We Still Have the Fatherland of the Ancients" (1765).
- 12 See Slavoj Zizek's *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (1989).
- 13 The rhetoric of metaphors does have its practical use, as people use metaphoric language to compete for discursive leadership. Fortunately or unfortunately, people of different political orientations and persuasions now speak "different" languages as a result; see George Lakoff's *Don't Think of an Elephant! Know your Values and Frame of Debate: The Essential Guide for Progressives* (2004) and *The Political Mind: Why You Can't Understand 21st-Century American Politics with an 18th-Century Brain* (2008).

Kungfu Smart

"We are potentially men, but are in an alienated state." —R.D. Laing

As we know, modern humans are *Homo sapiens*, an anthropoid endowed with wisdom. We are also *Homo faber*, an anthropoid knowing how to create things. Let's not forget we are also *Homo ludens*, as Friedrich Schiller puts it, "Man only plays when in the full meaning of the word he is a man, and he is only completely a man when he plays."⁰¹ Play represents humans' "state of freedom," as we take cues from members of the creative class and cultural industry whose playfulness is ironically part of their job requirements. Humans' other dimensions, such as the moral man, the social man, and the economic man,⁰² should not be overlooked. As Adam Smith remarked, "man, according to the Stoics, ought to regard himself, not as something separated and detached, but as a citizen of the world, a member of the vast commonwealth of nature."⁰³ Nevertheless, we are often unable to develop all the sides of us, as there has been a tendency, in the trajectories of culture in both China and the West, to compartmentalize these dimensions implicitly or explicitly, and selectively

promote one or two of them, and repress the others lest they become socially dominant.

Perhaps in the upcoming good society, these six sides of being human could be reintegrated, in a manner similar to the young Marx's notion of species being.⁰⁴ If this indeed is the case, then the juncture might perhaps symbolize the beginning of the perfection of humanity, and all struggles would have existed only in the perfect tense. However, I cannot be overambitious and therefore have to refrain from making teleological and essentialist claims, this essay will only discuss *kungfu*, *techne*, and human capability, in an attempt to redeem the fullest sense of the terms, *kungfu* and *techne*, as well as to offer a few clues on how existing civilizations could be rebuilt. Echoing Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum's⁰⁵ Human Development Approach, I am building basic capabilities for building a good society in the existing world.

The title of this chapter is "*kungfu smart*," which is relative to "book smart" and "street smart," meaning people who have some practical skills, or in Cantonese, *gung fu zai*. A line in a Cantonese popular song puts it succinctly, "it is never enough to be able to use just one or two sets of *kungfu*;" whether one be man or woman, whether one deals with private life or communal life, everybody has a lot to offer society.

2.2.1 —

When we Cantonese give compliments on a surgen's *kungfu* or skill set, the skills that impress us is the outcome of diligent learning and great capacity, including books, theories, techniques, practical experience, repetitive training, art, imagination, body and soul, improvisation, endurance, focus, ethics and moral character, responsibility, commitment, honesty, dedication, professionalism, good institutions, pride, teamwork, IQ and EQ, as well as an unwavering willingness to serve.

Similarly, whether one be a carpenter, subcontractor for the interior, chef, hairdresser, chauffeur, film director, animator, designer, musician, *fung shui* master, craftsmen, *qi gong* master, scientist, engineer, manager, and all other tradesmen, their skill sets should all exhibit the abovementioned characteristics.

Business executives, civil servants, and political figures should also be the same.

From this perspective, one can feel that *kungfu*, a familiar Cantonese word for skills, has much potential as we unfold every sense of the term,⁰⁶ and we can even say it encompasses all six dimensions of being human.

Gung fu zai could potentially be the personal interface between the intelligent human, maker human, moral human, and social human, while taking account of the utility of the economic human, and even the pleasure of the player human. This understanding of *gung fu zai* provides for a spectrum of values leading to different goals or destinations, such as Abraham Maslow's needs and fulfillments well-known in the Chinese-speaking world,⁰⁷ or the debate among feminists on whether the most fundamental human value is justice or care,⁰⁸ or even Robert Frost's lyrical imagery of "My object in living is to unite / my avocation and my vocation / as my two eyes make one in sight."⁰⁹ However, why don't we construe *kungfu* generally as such? We might have been blindsided in the way we make sense of this world. In other words, for Chinese native speakers, understanding *kungfu* intuitively in the fullest and at different levels does not take too much effort. However, we often do not know how to articulate the word's multi-faceted meanings. Unless be reminded, we might be repeating prevalent clichés. Allow me to discuss the Western analogy of *techne* first, and then return to Chinese-speaking civilization's narrower understanding of *kungfu*.

2.2.2 —

In the West, *techne* is also understood in a narrow sense, so it is beneficial to go back to its origin. I quote from my review article¹⁰ of Martha Nussbaum's *The Fragility of Goodness*:

From Greek tragedies we know the two basic categories of the Ancient Greek, luck and *techne*. "Many, many years ago, humans wandered on the plains, were bereft of the ability to protect themselves from external harms," life was transient and contingent on luck, until the advent of *techne*, humans began to escape considerably from total contingency, and life expectancy rose relative to that of the past. Armed with a sense of security and predictability, humans

could finally lead a genuinely meaningful life.

"*Techne*" is the general term opposite in meaning to "luck."

According to the ancient Greeks, *techne* goes beyond the confines of modern techniques, technology, and even science. *Techne* not only included building houses, cultivation, hunting, animal husbandry, ironwork, and shipbuilding, but also language, writing, creative and literary apparatus, arithmetic, weather forecast, dream interpretation, prophecy, knowledge, theories, etc. Together they allowed humans to dodge threats and improve their chances in life. Anything that freed humans from the effects of sheer luck was known as *techne*, whose purpose was to help humans pursue happiness and lead a more secure lifestyle, therefore, *techne* covered ethics, management, and politics, and in the later Hellenistic era, *techne* also referred to spiritual exercises, conduct and morality.

Nevertheless, luck still played a role in human life, and could not be completely conquered by *techne*. Also, when we found out that our mastery of *techne* was insufficient, a good life, or the pursuit of happiness, was often fragile. Passion in the form of *eros* and *thanatos*, promises made in everyday life, and individual quests for different values brought chaos and contradictions in the human world. Authors of Greek tragedies splendidly unfolded the pursuit of happiness and its fragility, and numerous metaphysicians in the West ventriloquized their arguments through Greek tragedies, in hopes of overcoming the fragility of good life.

From Plato in the Classical Period to the Age of Enlightenment, and the modern period in particular, many schools of thought underscored the self-sufficiency and self-evidence of reason and morals, and downplayed the influence of affects, body, luck, and other contexts on humans. As a result, they also provoked its antitheses, non-rationality and relativism. Similarly, *techne* in modernity was fragmented, truncated, and relegated to the mere status of technology and art, while theory, knowledge, rationality, and science were elevated and compartmentalized, therefore, such fragmentary understanding also led to various romanticized but unwise anti-science and anti-theory movements.

2.2.3—

Obviously, the classical Chinese view of *kungfu* was different from that of *techne* in ancient Greece, yet there were striking similarities.

Our ancestors had to be very grateful for those inventors, when we now think about it, our highly revered mythological forefathers, such as the Yellow Emperor, Leoi Zou or the Goddess of sericulture, Jau Caau (*You Chao*) or the Inventor of House, Fuk Hei (*Fu Xi*) or one of the Three Sovereigns who invented writing, fishing, and trapping, Emperor of the Five Grains, Duke of Zhou, Mung Tim (*Meng Tian*) or the inventor of ink brush, and Seoi Jan (*Sui Ren*) the discoverer of fire. These figures might not have actually existed and were just myths, but their canonical status in Chinese legends is a testament to the glory accorded to inventors of techniques or apparatuses.¹¹ As the saying goes, "the wise men created useful things to benefit the people." "They mastered *techne*, applied it to become makers of things, and improved life for all, hence they won the people's deepest admiration and highest respect." These great minds got the recognition they duly deserve, because they helped the people overcome part of their unpredictability in life.

Following the Mythological Period, the thinker-philosophers of the Warring States Period were racing to re-construct the world in a competitive forum of ideas and discourse so as to provide answers to the fragility of good life. At this moment, *techne* was repressed and branded as a form of excess. The worldview that elevated the "morals" and degraded the technical was formed and resulted in the separation between thinking and making, with the moral human occupying the top of the food chain. At the time, only the moralists were able to claim the top spot in the social hierarchy, which entitled him to propose a solution to the fragility of good life.

Sung Shee-wu once described the epistemological change following the Early-Han Period: "In the Western Han Period, economics was debased further to even lower levels, and the renowned scholars were too proud to discuss economics. For those who did, the discussion was limited to the technical, utilitarian, and practical aspects, rarely did anybody talk about economics at the academic, philosophical, and theoretical levels. Sadly, some of the

techniques were not transmitted and lost for the next generation. In the Eastern Han Period, the society had already been segregated: the scholars took no interests in production, and people engaged in production did not study much. In this segregated society, the realm of knowledge among Chinese scholars was devoid of economy, production, agriculture, manufacturing and commerce related contents. Anything concerning the livelihood, economy, manufacturing, commerce, and craftsmanship was excluded from knowledge. The society took a turn to avoid economics and livelihood, and stigmatize artisan skills and handicraft as well.¹²

The scholars of the later eras shunned production and practical skills even more, as Han Yu of Tang dynasty remarked, "Gentlemen despised becoming medicine men, musicians, and craftsmen." But the three faiths promoted *kungfu* in their own rights: in Confucianism, the *kungfu* to cultivate moral character, in Taoism, the *kungfu* to perfect internal alchemy, and in Zen Buddhism, the *kungfu* to meditate, practice mindfulness, and achieve enlightenment. Particularly important in Zen Buddhism was a training regime (*kungfu*) to seek self transformation, so that the desires, biases, karmic forces could be sublimated into compassion or freedom. This transformation required *kungfu* or continual practice.

On this remark, the Stoics in the Hellenistic Period was somehow comparable to the classical Chinese, as the Greek counterparts also viewed philosophy as the individual practice of the mind. Indeed, I admire their take on philosophy. Philosophy is not for the pursuit of truth; rather, it serves as values to guide and give meanings to one's life.¹³

To summarize, this essay intends to point out one cross-cultural similarity. From Plato to the Hellenistic Period, *techne*, which was originally in contradistinction to luck, called for a holistic understanding in the age of tragedy. It was unfortunately fragmented by metaphysics, or became an individual's cultivation of the mind. The development in ancient Greece is rather analogous to the Chinese notion of *kungfu*, as the wise forefathers entered the canon for their material contributions in the mythological period, but it has later become a training regime in life in order to help achieve

transcendence.

Fortunately, the notion of *kungfu* to integrate *Homo sapiens*, *Homo faber*, *Homo moralis*, *Homo socialis*, and *Homo economicus* can still be found among the average people. In the premises of many trade guilds, the patron saint, or the inventor who supposedly founded the trade was still worshipped, such as Lou Baan (*Lu Ban*) for the carpenters, the Emperor of Five Grains (*Shen Nong*) for the farmers, Mui Fuk (*Mei Fu*) and Got Hung (*Ge Hung*) for the dyers, Syun Ban (*Sun Bin*) for the shoemakers, Laozi for the ironsmiths, the God of Culture and Literature for the book printers, Faan Lai (*Fan Li*), Baak Gwai (*Bai Gui*), and Zi Gung (*Zi Gong*) for merchants, are all from the Early Ancient Period to the Warring States Period.

Average folks in classical China have passed the technical aspect of *kungfu* on, such as martial arts (*kungfu* fighting), brewing tea (*gung fu caa*), cuisine, handicraft, Chinese medicine, astrology, and fortune telling, etc. Scholars usually shunned *kungfu*, be it a form of statecraft or a technique to cook a savory dish, with the exception of those regimes destined for moral cultivation and character development. The *kungfu* remaining with the folks were never reified in the textual form or systematically studied, so the knowledge, limited to its technical, utilitarian, and practical aspects, is even more prone to loss and corruption.

In the long history of Chinese civilizations, some emerged to challenge the status quo, especially in late Ming dynasty,¹⁴ but they were marginalized at the end. Luminary Song Yingxing (1587—1663) published the encyclopaedia, *The Exploitation of the Works of Nature* or *Tiangong Kaiwu* in 1637, but copies were mostly lost during the Qing dynasty as it had not been archived in the official libraries. Fortunately, the work has been resurrected in China with scant copies kept overseas in Japan, Korea, and Europe.

The post-Han Chinese pantheon referred exclusively to men with the highest morals.

2.2.4—

The six dimensions mentioned at the beginning of this essay, namely, *Homo sapiens*, *Homo faber*, *Homo ludens*, *Homo moralis*, *Homo socialis*, and *Homo economics*, none of the existing societies can be said to give equal weight to all. *Kungfu* and *techne* had started to be removed from our cognitive zones since the early modern period, and became more ghettoized in modern times. Zealous utopian plans, ruthless regulations in the name of moral good, initiatives sacrificing the people's happiness to realize the dream of an all-powerful nation, or unchecked developments for the sole benefit of the economy have had brought disastrous outcome. Misunderstanding and abusing technology,¹⁵ privileging intelligence while ignoring emotional needs, and proposing holistic and character education that would not be carried out are a laundry list of follies that have hindered human thoughts, obliterated our full receptiveness of *kungfu* and *techne*, and foreclosed our imagination of "species-being" as well.

Given these obstacles, we still have to wonder if somewhere there exists a development trajectory that takes into consideration relatively more dimensions of human capabilities, offers insights to correct our biases in moulding modern civilization, and allows us to take concrete steps towards laying the good society's foundation. With this direction in mind, we need to ask what the pursuit of happiness is, and what a good life is in the Aristotelian sense.

We know all too well the development approach that measures only the GDP. Also, we have some common ground on which we all seem to agree. We agree that children should go to school and get an education. We agree that it is acceptable for members of different races to date each other. We agree that no social institution should prevent some people of a certain caste from leading an equally good life. We are more vigilant on all forms of fundamentalisms that exclude others and shortchange human capabilities.

In the 1980s, Martha Nussbaum had collaborated with Amartya Sen, who later won the Nobel Prize in Economics, proposed the notion of positive freedoms (for instance, a normal life expectancy, access to nourishment, literacy and knowledge of basic arithmetic, self-respect, and political participation,

and so on) to assist the United Nations institutions to develop an alternative development approach known as the Capability Approach, or the Human Development Index, which allowed the international community to shift the measure of development from the exclusive economic performance and figures to a more comprehensive view of each nation's development of human capabilities.¹⁶

Building on this notion, Nussbaum later continued to propose a list of "central human capabilities," articulating ten core capabilities that are shared by all humans and the necessary conditions for their realization as follows in brief.

1. Life: being able to live a life to its end and free from premature death due to a drop in the quality of life.
2. Bodily safety and integrity: being able to move freely from place to place and free from violent assaults and threats, having opportunities for sexual satisfaction, etc.
3. Health: having reproductive support, having access to adequate nourishment, having adequate shelter.
4. Being able to use senses, emotions, imagination, and thought: Being able to feel, think, imagine, and rationalize in a truly human way, to be cultivated in writing, reading, mathematics, and science, to think protected by the freedom of speech, and to have pleasurable experience and avoid unnecessary pain.
5. Being able to express emotions: being able to have attachment to other things and people, to love and be loved, to show concern toward others and be cared by others, and not having one's emotional development blighted by fear and anxiety.
6. Practical reason: Being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about oneself and one's life, which entails the freedoms to conscience and religion.
7. Affiliation: Being able to live with others, to recognize others, show concerns toward others, to help one another, and to have the basis for self-respect and non-humiliation, etc.

8. Showing concern toward other species: being able to co-exist with other species and to respect them.
9. Ability to play. Being able to laugh, play, and have fun.
10. Control over one's environment: Politically, being able to participate in the making of public choices, and to enjoy the freedom of speech and assembly. Economically, being able to enter into employment relationship on an equal basis with others, to be free from seizure.

Relatively, a good life should exclude bad fate and realize *techné* in the general sense of the term, which include founding good political and social institutions. With these safeguards, humans can flourish and actualize themselves, and enjoy the prescriptive human capabilities in this environment.

Nussbaum states that every society, nation, culture, or civilization should at least provide for these ten areas of guarantees and developments, and any political philosopher and institution should be able to ensure these ten areas, so that humans can enjoy the liberty and opportunity to realize their capabilities. These ten areas should become the bottom line applicable to all political systems. No political bodies should evade these basic responsibilities under the pretext of cultural relativism or phases of national development.¹⁷

Nussbaum personally believes that this list of human capabilities has taken aspirations to good life of all places and all cultures into consideration, so it could be said to be the basic, or the lowest common denominator for universal human life. Various political institutions, societies, and ways of life could remain very different, but they all must safeguard or even promote the actualization of these basic human capabilities, while using these capabilities to assess their merits or failings of governance. Nussbaum claims that her political ethics is that of social democrats. While she criticizes Kantian enlightenment ethics, her position is not an anti-enlightenment one, and she aims to expand the enlightenment brand of liberalism based on the teachings of the ancient Greeks. However, Nussbaum's view of social justice does not need to use the social contract theory or utilitarianism as a basis. Her capability approach is founded on first, a close reading of Greek tragedies, Aristotle and the Stoics;

second, a critique of Plato; and third, lived human experience. As such, she ran the research course from the classics to international relations, constructed the ethics and political thought of the good life. While Nussbaum affirmed that individuals are the end, she also underscored the importance of community and diversity of values at the same time.

This is just a point of departure of a good society, or a necessary safety net, and one of the more practical approaches.

2.2.5——

2.2.5 A long journey begins with a single step. The transformation of the individual subject is as important, as the world that has one more *kungfu* smart person living in it is better than one that has one fewer. As I have already discussed in this essay that the Stoics approached philosophy as giving directions in life, I equally admire their Chinese counterparts, the Confucians, the Buddhists, and the Taoists' *kungfu* to cultivate the self. I am just disappointed with their traditional emphasis on only one or two dimensions while sacrificing the others. Following Friedrich Nietzsche's call to action, "will a self and thou shalt become a self" (or Kant's serve one's intelligible world, or Jean-Jacques Rousseau's "follow your rules"), there are plenty of great minds to correct the modern society's biases in shaping cultures. Ludwig Wittgenstein famously said that "ethics and aesthetics are one" and proposed that improving everyday life is more valuable than his philosophical legacy. Michel Foucault's "Techniques of Self" have changed the worldview of many, and even the body has been recreated and turned into art. John Dewey also highlighted the somatic practice and techniques of working on oneself and advocated "self-realization as the moral ideal."¹⁸ Two relevant special abilities, the ability to reflect and that to regenerate, are the source of society's hopes. The top innovators are those *kungfu* smart renaissance men and women, encompassing different dimensions of being human: *Homo sapiens*, *Homo faber*, *Homo ludens*, *Homo moralis*, *Homo socialis*, and *Homo economicus*.

Endnotes and Further Readings

- 01 See Friedrich Schiller's *Letters upon the Aesthetic Education of Man* (1794).
- 02 There are obviously other dimensions, such as ones that underscore human psyche, sympathy, sentiments, emotional quotidian, or passion, as well as ones that show mystery and charisma. To facilitate discussion, this essay focuses on the six dimensions mentioned at the beginning of the essay. The essay will conclude with human's reflexive and transcendental dimensions, and the re-assessment of the human body's importance after Nietzsche.
- 03 See Adam Smith's *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759).
- 04 See Karl Marx's *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 and The German Ideology* (1845).
- 05 See Amartya Sen's *Development as Freedom* (1999) and Martha Nussbaum's *Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach* (2011).
- 06 In Hong Kong's everyday Cantonese, *kungfu* is used frequently. In the folk tradition, I can easily think of over twenty expressions that are related to *kungfu*. It shows that *kungfu* is part of daily life and common knowledge not only to Hong Kongers but to the wider Chinese-speaking public. We can even say that the interlocutors may not give or get the exact meaning of *kungfu* used in different instances, but they both understand the situation and referent intuitively, so *kungfu* could be viewed as one shared cultural DNA. The Modern Chinese Dictionary defines *kungfu* as "time, ability, and mastery." The character *kung*, in Chinese, could also be defined as honouring the nation, which is in line with the Confucian definition. In the Buddhist tradition, *kung* can mean a function. Hong Kong's martial arts films are called *kungfu* movies, and Chinese martial arts is also known as *kungfu*, indeed martial arts is only one form of *kungfu*. An average Chinese speaker will have a deeper understanding of *kungfu*, but he or she may not have unveiled all the word's potential. See Chan Koonchung (2014). See the Chinese edition for the full Chinese-language citation.
- 07 Abraham Maslow argues that humans have many levels of need, from the most basic physiological needs, to personal security, then to love and belonging, self-esteem, and finally self-actualization. His view is a popular one in China, but is also met with criticism; see Abraham Maslow's *Motivation and Personality* (1954).
- 08 See Chan Koonchung (2004). See the Chinese edition for the full Chinese-language citation.
- 09 From Robert Frost's "Two Tramps in Mud Time" (1934).
- 10 See Chan Koonchung (2008). See the Chinese edition for the full Chinese-language citation.
- 11 According to legends, the Yellow Emperor invented boat, vehicle, clothing, Lei Zou invented seri-

culture, Jau Caa (You Chao) invented house, Fuk Hei (Fu Xi) or one of the Three Sovereigns who invented net fishing and trapping, Emperor of the Five Grains invented agriculture, Duke of Zhou, Mung Tim (Meng Tian) or invented ink brush, and Seoi Jan (Sui Ren) discovered fire.

- 12 See Sung Shee-wu (2002). See Yu Ying-shih (2010) for his work on Confucian ethnics entering the world of commerce throughout Ming and Qing dynasties.
- 13 Pierre Hadot says that ethics is not an outcome of metaphysics; rather, metaphysics is the outcome of ethics. See Pierre Hadot's *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault* (1995).
- 14 The representative figures were Li Shizhen, Xu Guangqi, Xu Hongzu, Fang Yizhi and Song Wingxing. See Yu Ying-shih (2010). See the Chinese edition for the full Chinese-language citation.
- 15 See Chan Koonchung (2004). See the Chinese edition for the full Chinese-language citation.
- 16 Thanks to the influence of the capability approach, the United Nations Development Programme has published since 1990 the sovereign state-based Human Development Index and the Arab Human Development Reports. Since 2008, France has established the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress. Moreover, in an attempt to complement the GDP indicator, Bhutan proposed "Gross National Happiness," the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) published the *Better Life Index*, which have all predated the United Nations' Universal Human Rights Index. Martha Nussbaum says that the capacity approach is an ally of human rights movement; see her *Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy* (2001).
- 17 In this stage, one should be able to observe that the social organization in different countries uses different approaches, and the variations are in terms of stability vs. progress, authoritarianism vs. freedom, equality vs. efficiency, autocracy vs. democracy, collectivism vs. individualism, energy consumption vs. energy conservation. However, it will be impossible for Statism, ethnocentrism, exceptionalism, theocracy, cronyism, and market fundamentalism to accept the human capacity approach.
- 18 See Richard Shusterman's *Practicing Philosophy: Pragmatism and the Philosophical Life* (1996).

About-Face

The black and white Cantonese-language classic films have taken up the story of consort Zung Mou Jim (*Zhong Wu Yan*) and consort Haa Jing Ceon (*Xia Ying Chun*). In 1955, there were even two versions produced in the same year. Tang Pik-wan starred as Zung Mou Jim, and Fung Wong Lei as Haa Jing Ceon. In another version, Law Yim starred as Zung and Pauline Cheng as Haa. Both films were major Cantonese opera productions with a notable cast.

For readers unfamiliar with Chinese culture, Zung was immortalized in popular Chinese saying as the loyal and capable consort who unfailingly came to the king's aide when he needed her. Unfortunately, a disfiguring birthmark covered half of Zung's face. Perhaps for that reason, the king spent most of his time with a second consort, Haa, who was cunning, well-versed in all forms of pleasure, and never failed to win over the king with her physical beauty. Even today, the competing consorts from the classical period form the staple of this immediately recognizable genre. Legend has it that Zung was the usual victim of Haa's knavish plot, and the king was totally oblivious. When, and only when the king was faced with an immense danger or threat did he summon the

obliging Zung who ended up saving the throne.

When the crisis was over, however, the King did not seem to have learned his lesson. He would immediately make an about-face and return to Consort Haa's embrace. For many generations, the popular saying that "in times of crisis, it is Consort Zung whom the King would summon for help; when the impending crisis is over, it is Consort Haa's company that the he would seek" is deeply ingrained in the collective memory of all. For men, they probably admire the fact that the king enjoys two consorts serving him in two equally important ways. For women, Consort Zung earn their sympathy, but many covertly want to learn from Consort Haa.

An average Joe probably does not see the reason why someone should be upset. Mortals are inclined to welcome pleasure and avoid discomfort. Only when necessary do we resort to our Consort Zung to make things right.

Readers should know that I am just making an analogy in order to discuss politics.

2.3.1 —

Some might believe that the role of the government should be that of Consort Zung: it should stay dutifully behind the scene, and come to our assistance when needed.

In the 1960s, an essay in the popular conservative American magazine the *Reader's Digest* compared the government to a stomach in a human body along this line: a stomach works very hard day in and day out but is rarely noticed. When we realize the stomach's presence, our body is usually ailing and needs attention.

The American conservatives of the time could still be reasoned with, admitting that the government is still necessary as it often works without being seen. In the 1980s, market fundamentalists became crafty and sought to starve the government, and the public sector in general, to death. They wanted to reduce the public sector to a dysfunctional fraction, so the private sector can usurp its power. To use the analogy again, Consort Zung is locked away in the palace dungeon, her teeth pulled out, her muscles severed in order to disable her

kungfu capabilities, so as to secure Consort Haa's power. Or perhaps, the neo-conservatives came up with another trick to get rid of Consort Zung. As she is so capable, the King might as well send her out to fight in overseas campaigns.

Nonetheless, the right wing's plan to shrink the public sector and give the private sector a free pass backfired. The excessive grease at Wall Street caught fire and triggered the financial crisis, and the government was held hostage and hard pressed to rescue the private capital with public funds. *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*. It was Consort Zung to the rescue again.

2.3.2—

The teenagers who grew up watching these Cantonese operas back then might have begun to ask why anybody would want to help the inept king. Their progressive inclination would also suggest the unthinkable: Consort Zung could overthrow the king and do a much better job governing. For the Consort herself and the subjects alike, it seems to be a better proposition. Growing older, the progressive teenagers took the critique even further, noticing that the classic Hong Kong films were still rife with "feudal" thoughts,⁰¹ and revolution in China still had a long way to go.

With this same understanding of feudal China, two Republics were founded in mainland China.

The following scenario emerged in the First Republic: Consort Zung overthrew the king, and became an absolute ruler. In the Second Republic, Zung became a dictator in the name of the people, and increasingly thought that she was omnipotent, and wanted to engineer everybody's lives from cradle to grave. She wiped out any average Jane who reminded her of the corrupt ways of Consort Haa, and even stamped out all the petty scrooges, as everybody needed to model his or her life after Lei Feng.

The Consort's Plan A did not work eventually so the Republic resorted to Plan B. Plans to collectivize and monopolize everybody's life were scrapped, but power remained in the hands of a few. Those who dissented were thrown into jail, and absolute power had bred consistent corruption. Everybody went with the flow, and the new-found wealth made the impossible possible.

Consort Zung was able to recruit the best surgical talents and procure the latest cutting-edge technology, and removed the unsightly birthmark. The cosmetic procedures went well, and the people were mesmerized by her beauty, which rivaled that of Consort Haa's. As if the two consorts fused into one, the public face of the Republic came up to the international stage and seduced the lecherous men of all nationalities in her global campaigns.

2.3.3—

What would Consort Zung have to do in order to make us happy? That is the key question. Readers know that I am discussing politics. "We need to learn to rethink the state," says Tony Judt.⁰² But how do we rethink the state? On one hand, Judt thinks that the Left still have not fully admitted to their biggest mistake, which was the belief that the government is the best solution to all problems. The Left pandered to over-mighty sovereigns and brought about disasters in the past, and are just as prone to repeat the same mistakes in the future. On the other hand, the Left cannot fall into the trap set by the Right, and treat the government as the worst available option. He even puts it bluntly, "the only thing worse than too much government is too little."

2.3.4—

In 2004, I wrote an essay called "The Six Fallacies of Social Institutions," introducing the political views of Claus Offe and Anthony Giddens, and it is very helpful to offer a synopsis here to explain the role of the government.⁰³

The market may fail; the government may fail; and the community, too, may, fail.

On one hand, the market cannot be left unchecked, the government cannot be left unchecked; and the community, too, cannot be left unchecked.

On the other hand, we cannot afford to have a weak market; we cannot afford to have a weak government; and we cannot afford to have a weak civil society too.

In 1998, Offe presented a paper at the seminar on "Society and State Reform" in Brazil, and discussed current historical changes and some choices to

design social institutions. He pointed out that the choice for social institutions tends to be "homogenous," or that government, or market, and or community took up the role of the final guarantors of social order and cohesion. However, a "mixed" or "hybrid" design is most suitable for today's world, as society is not dependent on only the government, market, or community, but the three all play a role equally in this "mixed" system.

Government, market, and community each depends on but also mobilizes the three capacities with which humans shape the world, namely, rationality, interest, and passion respectively. Each underscores a different value. Government and its underlying rationality call for equality (including rights and responsibilities), market and its underlying interest call for freedom and choice, and community and its underlying passion call for identity, and they are expressed in political philosophy as big government (Statism), market liberalism, and communitarianism, respectively.

Offe believes that none of the three components can dominate in the design of orderly and stable social institutions, and not even two will suffice; rather, all three (government, market, and community) must work together. By designing appropriate institutions, it means that the three elements together will provide checks and balances in order to avoid six "pathological" fallacies.

1. An over-expansive government: A big government does not necessarily mean a strong government. The latter specifically refers to the good governance that can influence the distribution of chances at a good life in civil society. A big government could just be one that is bloated and highly inefficient, one that financially benefits an elite "club" instead of the general public. A big government wants to be seen as a capable government; however, the test of a government's capacity is whether it manages to benefit the citizens and enable marginal gains for all, as measured by the following indicators: legal protection, medical service, education, housing, transportation, and equal opportunities. Offe observes that the proponents of big government must first convince everybody, and should not take the advantages of having a big government for granted. Oftentimes, a big government causes tremendous

problems, such as dependency, inertia, rent seeking, bureaucracy, cronyism, authoritarianism, irresponsible finance, cynicism, unaccountability, passivity, and hostility to innovation. Of course, all these problems are relatively minor if we assume that the government is not completely corrupt in the first place.

2. Lack of capacities to govern: Achieving Lockean liberalism means decreasing the size of the government to its bare minimum (the protection of life, property, and civil liberties), but the provision of schools, vocational training, housing, as well as medical policies, labour laws, social security, civil courts and the bailiffs, and residents' safety and military forces also fall under the government's jurisdiction, and the government levies tax in order to finance them. Governments in developing countries are hard pressed to build capacities on good governance urgently (Anthony Giddens says that government and state carry out many functions that are vital to any civilization.).
3. Overdependence on the market mechanism: Offe points out that if left entirely alone, the market does not possess the ability to self-sustain and self-regulate. The rational participants in the market will form monopolies in order to stifle competition from other participants. The myopic market is also unable to deal with external costs, such as pollution and other long-term social issues. The market fails to delineate what is allowed and what is not (for instance, the moral problem related to underage prostitution), so market competition, freedom of choice, and the setting of boundaries are to be maintained by the non-market forces as represented by the government and community (Giddens claims that if the market is allowed to permeate other institutions, the failure of public life will ensue.).
4. Over-regulating the market: Besides its everyday functions, Offe lists out the market's four advantages. First, at the micro level, market transactions are generally peaceful and non-violent. Second, individuals learn self-responsibility and "sympathy" from the marketplace. Third, despite large swings, the market allows people to adjust and fine-tune. Fourth, the market liberates people from bureaucracy and authoritarian bodies (Giddens also says that if a society does not provide enough room for the market, then

economic prosperity cannot be achieved.)

5. Excessive communitarianism: Multiculturalism of today underlies the politics of identity and difference while ignoring citizenship, national belonging, and class. Although there are still some basis on which different classes are interdependent, identity politics pushes itself to the extreme and leads to intolerance, to the point of ethnic cleansing in some cases (Giddens asserts that if the community becomes too strong in a civil society, then democracy and economy will be under threat.).
6. Ignoring community and identity: Identities inseparable from the individuals, such as gender, age, occupation, church, religion, clan, neighbourhood, residence are usually the starting point of political reform, and families, associations, churches, races, and nations are where social capital such as culture, morals, honour, commitment, belief, and love are found (Giddens also says that if the civil order is too weak, government efficiency and economic growth will also be at risk.).

Giddens finds Offe's essay helpful as it establishes that any sound political theory must avoid these six fallacies, and we have already or should have learned our lessons on each of them in the last couple decades.

2.3.5—

Classical Chinese culture has documented more than its fair share of bad governance. According to the *Book of Rites*, bad governance is more dangerous than a wild tiger. Laozu even said that great sages can do bad things, treating common people as used straw dogs. Tao Yuanming created the Peach Blossom Spring, which was imagined as a utopian refuge from the unforgiving life of the Qin Empire. Oral history has been passed on from generation to generation with the theme of escaping from bad governments in various non-Han Chinese groups in China's mountainous southwest. However, how do we resist the bad government in our midst? Couldn't we place all our hopes on a handful of great men, virtuous officials, and benevolent monarchs? As we enter the republican era, what kind of republic should we organize to replace the empires of the past? In the Chinese-speaking world, it not only took a hundred years of painful

reflection and experimentation, but also resulted in tremendous humanitarian costs. Nonetheless, the tide of change is clear— whether it be high or low— as the people finally came to the realization that they became equal citizens of a republic and royal subjects no more, and they wanted to take matters in their own hands. The etymology of "republic" comes from the Latin *res publica*, which means "the substantive (matter) of" (*res*) and "public" or "of the people" (*publica*).

This saying that "in times of crisis, it is Consort Zung whom the King would summon for help; when the impending crisis is over, it is Consort Haa's company that the he would seek" is a lively analogy to the public and private sectors, but such analogy has its blind spots as it presents a false dichotomy. The *Reader Digest's* simile that the government is like a human body's stomach, too, is imperfect. Whether we like it or not, the government is constantly working and influencing our quality of life. The government is materially different from our stomach because somebody else will take charge of it on our behalf if we do not do so.

I remember those black-and-white movies I saw when I was young. What irritated me the most was that good characters were always the victims, as they swallowed their grief and kept quiet about their sufferings. On the other hand, bad characters did all the egregious deeds but flew under the radar. As a result, the good characters looked stupid as they did not read people well and did not respond to the situation. "Happy" is not an adjective that can describe their lives as these characters took a battering till the very last moment.

I wonder if these black and white classic cinema inspired my generation of Hong Kongers in the following ways. Even if we want to be—and do— good, we cannot model our lives after those helpless characters portrayed in the movies. The new generation therefore took off to search for a good life. We have to pursue and enjoy happiness presented right in front of us. We strive to get ahead in life, learn to read other people, and use the situation for our benefit. Morally, we are not the best of the best, but neither are we the worst of the worst, although we probably are the busiest of the busiest. This is the experience of this generation. The major lingering question is: should this generation

swallow their grief and keep quiet about their sufferings without protesting in the same fashion as those good characters in the classic movies?

Endnotes and Further Readings

01 The black-and-white Cantonese classic films of the time were actually more progressive than the popular historical novels that are allowed to be published in China today. For instance, in the Cantonese classic films, the emperor is an incompetent ruler, and women (such as Consort Zung) are often heroines. In today's historical novels available in China, even if they are bold political allegory of present day China, the emperor is usually a competent ruler and the women are merely tools.

02 See Tony Judt's *Ill Fares the Land* (2011).

03 See Chan Koonchung (2004); see the Chinese edition for the full Chinese-language citation. See Claus Offe's "The Present Historical Transformation and Some Basic Design Options for Societal Institutions" (1998) and Anthony Giddens' *The Third Way and its Critics* (2000).

Through Sloth the Roof Sinks in, and Through Indolence the House Leaks

All Cantonese speakers will know the meaning of the colloquial expression *zap syu*, which could be loosely translated into English as "to lose out" in a competitive environment. The Cantonese, according to legends, are one step ahead of people from other provinces, and the fear of merely being too slow—let alone being indolent—resulting in not gaining an edge, or even worse, being disadvantaged or deprived of an opportunity is very real.

According to some, Hong Kong people are so afraid that they fail to gain an advantage, that they compare such opportunity cost to be worse than losing one's family fortune.

Interestingly, if there is a truly "collective" consciousness among the Cantonese and Hong Konger (the Hokkien, too, have similar saying) predicated on this fear of losing out, then we should be curious about its origin, as it is quite different from the grand Chinese tradition that downplays material gains. Yu Ying-shih argues that since the sixteenth century, commercial ethics entered the Confucian world. Although in some regions many left scholarly pursuits to become merchants, they still upheld and applied Confucian ethics and values

in their trade.⁰¹ Yu explains that the merchants of the time underscored the joining together of justice and profits, as they took their trade seriously, if not holding it a bit sacred as well. The merchants believed that their service to the nation and contribution to heavenly peace might not be inferior to those of the scholars.

Even today, this reconciliation of values is still a morale booster for Chinese merchants. However, it is still a far cry from the Cantonese popular notion of *zap syu*. How this notion was spread throughout the Cantonese-speaking region will warrant serious ethnological⁰² and cultural historical studies, and here I offer a sociological explanation. In the broader context, the saying of *zap syu* was popularized by the Chinese who changed ahead of their fellow countrymen, and in the more localized context, we can look for the root of this fear of losing out in local history. For instance, after 1949, Hong Kong's population increased exponentially. Hong Kong, unlike other undeveloped lands, possessed very little natural resources, and lacked an agricultural sector that could produce cash crops for export. All Hong Kong could rely on was labour-intensive and highly competitive small-scale manufacturing and service industries. In addition, the colonial government at the very beginning did not have any policy to foster industry, nor did it offer social security or adequate welfare, hence the people developed this view and work ethics aiming at self-sufficiency, or epitomized by the saying "you snooze, you lose." The whole populace was engaged in work rewarded with bread on the table, and hard work and entrepreneurship were the number one priority above all else.

Becoming resourceful, taking care of oneself, being smart and crafty (*sing muk*) were axiomatic in Hong Kong, and this value of doing more with less are expressed in many popular sayings, some with speed and timeliness as the central message, such as *hang dak faai, hou sai gaai* (the Cantonese equivalence of "the early bird gets the worm"), *sau faai jau, sau maan mou* ("you snooze you lose"), some with getting the most as the theme, such as *zap gei do, syun gei do* and *jau saat co, mou fong gwo*, and of course, one of the worst insults anybody could receive, *jau dak zap dou zap syu gwo gwo jan*, which can loosely be translated as "everything is free and up for grabs, but you still lose

out to others." In other words, Hong Kong suffers from an anxiety of losing out, and each person reminds himself that *zap syu hang tau caam gwo baai gaa* (the equivalence of the biblical proverb, "Through sloth the roof sinks in, and through indolence the house leaks," but the Cantonese saying seems to connote a lot more dread).

The fear of losing out or *zap syu* is a competitive mindset, a form of opportunism, a constant expectation of quick response and immediate answer, and a rush to get ahead, but for most of the time, this anxiety is over small gains, small opportunity, and a short time frame.

This fear is also predicated on a zero-sum view of the world, as there might not be enough for all, and if one does not become the first, then one may become dead last, and lose out to the competition. Formerly, this view was more judicious for the past generations as they lived in a world of scarcity, but this trait to benefit oneself (or one's own family and clique) has now been passed onto this generation that grew up in a world of plenty.

In the post-Fordist image of global competition, expeditious response to gain market share or opportunity is a positive value. Nevertheless, for true and world-class entrepreneurship, this mental proclivity to rush is not enough, because it lacks not only the depth of *techné* and morality,⁰³ but also the much needed situational awareness in the world. With only the idea of *zap syu* in mind, even if one is given the opportunity, he or she may not be able to use it for his or her benefit. Rushing out of panic is often the evil twin of following the crowd, and oftentimes, one loses more than the however small advantage that one gained in the process.

Moreover, rushing to do something does not mean doing the right thing or the good thing. The small edge does not allow one to take up a huge and important role or responsibility. If one's ambition is to become a successful contemporary Confucian business with a moral backbone, or even just a *Homo economicus* who can stand tall, this impetus to rush is perhaps the first weakness (and instinct) that one has to overcome.

If *zap syu* mentality permeates to even the highest level of government and policy, then, as the late comer in developing countries, economic policies will be

dictated by a myopia that will lead to excess, such as hyper-growth, unchecked privatization, lack of moderation, beggar-thy-neighbour policies, growing income and wealth inequity, a ruthless "every man for himself" attitude, and the unfortunate few will always be left behind. Policies can take two kinds of camouflage, first, the exploitations by a group of world-class street smart punks, or the elite fat cats running the show in the national capital to benefit themselves.

This essay will propose something different from these two ways of thinking: first, a practical view to a fairer and more egalitarian economic development, and second, the importance of egalitarianism to society. Unfortunately, either view will not be easily accepted by anxiety-stricken Hong Kong people.

2.4.1 —

In the early phase of the high economic growth cycle in East Asia, explanatory theories have not caught up. At that time, the American view of linear development trajectory that emphasizes an economy to "take off" as the model for the "free world" cautioned developing countries not to use national industry to substitute imports. Left wing critics, on the other hand, drew on the dependency theory and argued that the Third World would lag behind further as they developed further. However, the actual trajectory of three export-led and government-participated economies, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan was different from the above-mentioned theories. Select scholars from the United States or Australia suggested that the East Asian development model was neither one that always lagged behind in development, nor was it one that "took off" or succeeded in benefitting from its comparative advantage, and therefore they proposed that there could be an alternative development model for developing countries.⁰⁴ Unfortunately, when they began to be noticed, they were overshadowed by Neoliberalism (or known more simply as the "Washington Consensus") for the next three decades.

Neoliberalism had its institutional backers: the financial capital,

multinational corporations, big conglomerates, successive administrations in Washington and London since the 1980s, renowned university-based economists, many rounds of negotiation at the World Trade Organization, and the International Monetary Fund and World Bank,⁰⁵ whose constitution and policies had not yet been revised, and Neoliberalism came with a huge clamour with both well-crafted propaganda and violent might.⁰⁶ It paved the way for the following that are known today as the root cause of later meltdown: open markets (free but unequal international trade, so "comparative advantage" will work its magic out to decide which industry stays and which industry leaves), free (and extremely swift) flow of capital, unchecked privatization (national and public goods become private ones, government minimization, corporatization, and abuse of patents that limit the application of invention and innovation, tax cuts, financial deregulation, relaxation of anti-trust laws, limitation on collective labour bargaining rights, as well as reduction of worker welfare programmes. Those Chicago Boys sold these policy initiatives to the governments and elite class in developing countries on different continents. The deal was that as long as the money flow is inhibited, the ruling class and capitalists on both sides of the border will benefit, whereas the rest of the country becomes just an afterthought. There were natural and manmade calamities, income and wealth inequity, regional disparity, financial crises, social unrest, perhaps, in this order of things, someone had to lose out and be left behind? Therefore, Korean economist Ha-Joon Chang calls these salespeople of Neoliberalism "the bad Samaritans,"⁰⁷ which implies that they have good intention but their actions have gone awry. It is a polite and diplomatic way of describing how these international street smart punks take advantage of the whole world, if not all the way to our doorstep.

The beneficiaries of this system are the financial capital, multinational corporations, big conglomerates, developed countries, whereas the victims are the people of the least developed countries. Dominated by neoliberalist economics, the mid-level developing countries see ups and downs, and finally resort to a mixed economic model (or a "cocktail economy") in order to make it to the mid-range of national economies.

It turns out that on their way to developed economies, today's developed nations closed or half-closed their doors in the past, strictly controlled the flow of currency, protected their home-grown industries, nationalized private goods, introduced a progressive tax regime, limited monopolies, and set up laws and regulations to ensure market competition.

But these developed nations' advice to the developing nations contradicts with their own developmental trajectory, and specifically caution the late comers not to follow the developed nations' past. Chang calls this tactic "burning the bridge," which practically prevents the late comers from catching up with the developed nations. If the developing nations heed to this advice, then they will be subject to international and national capital's manipulation.

The voice of those researchers who studied East Asian and Latin American developments—and who have seen the ravage of Neoliberalism—have recently re-emerged. They attempt to consider economic development, stability, full employment, relative egalitarianism, social inclusiveness, and sustainability to counter-propose a nation-based new developmentalism,⁰⁸ which aims to replace the Washington consensus that has proven to be unworkable. Their model underscores the macroeconomic structure, complementary institutions, and governmental functions.

These are the more progressive and dependable proposals to national economic development.

Market economy has its merits, but it cannot replace society. Market economy yes, but a "market society" no; we need as much market as possible, and as much state as necessary.

Economic development contributes to poverty relief, and more egalitarian growth is also beneficial to human capacity (please refer to Chapter 2.2 "*Kungfu Smart*" for a discussion of human capacity). Nonetheless, nation-based developmentalism is still subject to beggar-thy-neighbour interactions (such as exchange rate manipulation, unfair competition, resource depletion, and pollution), and new behavioural norms based on international principles of equality are few and far between. Today, international affairs and principal international institutions are still led by developed countries and big nations,

and oftentimes there are only temporary measures to patch up the wounds, but no solutions to the fundamental problems. To make things better, there are some international organizations calling for fair trade and global justice, some best practices that can serve as models, some sets of international laws, and the regimes of voluntary compliance as proposed by the United Nations.⁰⁹ We have not yet seen steps toward a paradigm shift for international development that brings prosperity for all. Moreover, as countries compete to develop, the ecology is already under a lot of stress. We need to ask ourselves whether the Anthropocene can sustain itself, and whether the ecological changes have reached the tipping point. The shortcomings of developmentalism are obvious. The latecomer developing countries now have an increasing share of current pollution, but the developed countries, such as the United States, emit a huge amount of carbon gases per capita and in absolute terms. If the world does not change the production and consumption models, the international community cannot only target the latecomer nations as the situations in developed and developing countries are both alarming. Today, countries with big populations such as China and India have reached mid-level development, but they did not take leadership in promoting good global governance. On the contrary, these countries seem to exhibit anxiety of losing out, or *zap syu*, and implement policies that will impoverish their descendants, or beggar thy neighbour and take advantage of others. Last but not least, regardless of developmental levels, as development speeds up in many countries, from China to the United States, the income and wealth inequity grows even faster, which leads to more social inequality.¹⁰

2.4.2——

Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett's 2009 work, *The Spirit Level*, points out why social inequity is bad. They investigate many social issues of developed countries and compare empirical data from many countries in order to use their findings to support "evidence-based politics." I only reproduce a few conclusions from the book. First, when a country achieves prosperity, material wealth, per capita income, marginal economic growth will not lead to the same proportion

of health and happiness in society. Second, if one compares two developed countries, the more unequal countries are worse off than the more equal countries in terms of mental health, life expectancy, physical health, infant mortality, alcohol abuse, obesity, educational performance, violence, homicide, public safety, incarceration rate, teenage pregnancy, gender discrimination, social mobility, aggression, anxiety, loneliness, sense of security, sense of trust, etc. Fourth, the worse social performance is not caused by the society not being rich enough, or even being too rich, but by the scale of material differences between people within each society being too big. Fifth, the broken society is attributed to inequality. Sixth, as the subtitle of the book, "why more equal societies almost always do better," suggests, equality is better for everyone, and not only the poor, but also the middle class and the upper class. The two authors use education, social class, and income to gauge the effects on different population segments, and evidence supports that equality is better for all.

2.4.3——

People against equality should remember Adam Smith's words. He states, "no society can surely be flourishing and happy, of which the far greater part of the members are poor and miserable." Latecomer developing countries should relieve their peoples from poverty. For them, the implementation of the right kind of economic policy has a direct correlation with improving the people's livelihood, and is the most pressing issue. But as every country else, they need to face the grave challenge of inequality. This is what Wilkinson and Pickett emphasize in the book. For the affluent, developed countries on the other hand, the authors think inequality is the root cause of all their social problems.

Joseph Stiglitz even goes as far as saying that unequal affluent societies such as the United States are practicing ersatz capitalism, and eventually their economic growth will not be doing as well as the more equal affluent societies such as the Scandinavia and Germany, let alone social problems and human capacity.¹¹

Absolute equality is undesirable, and relative equality is necessary. Scarcity and inequality plague the modern society, and when we achieve abundance, the

more equal society wins out in every indicator.

Hong Kong became an affluent society some time ago, and its people understood the importance of freedom and the rule of law, and are discussing democracy's necessity. However, due to this ideology of *zap syu* predicated on the anxiety of losing out, Hong Kong people are not predisposed to understand equality's importance. Even worse, some dance to the tune of the vested interest and propagate the idea that welfare breeds laziness and propose a ruthless and unregulated form of capitalism to their own benefit. Recently, inequality grows wider and upward social mobility is hampered due to the hegemonic order imposed by property developer interests, collusion between the public and business sectors, and hard-ball played by multinational and local conglomerates. As Hong Kong people's dreams are crushed, they begin to realize the ills of distributive injustice and structural inequality. Hong Kong will have to catch up in this regard, which is an important direction for social innovation.

Let us review what Matthew Turner, the last Jockey Club Design Institute for Social Innovation's Thinker-in-Residence says, "Social innovation [is a] collaborative action to change or go beyond institutions that marginalize collective needs or preserve inequalities."

Endnotes and Further Readings

01 See Yu Ying-shih (2010). See the Chinese edition for the full Chinese-language citation.

02 Regional studies underscore the tension between the nation and the local in the contemporary context; see David Faure and May-bo Ching's works. Commerce emerged as an important force and sector in Southern China throughout Ming and Qing dynasties. Family businesses with some continuity and business relationships galvanized the contractual and credit relationships between merchants. As Faure states that regional cultures need to be seen in the cognitive structure and categories of the local people, how the notion of *zap syu* emerged in Cantonese culture relative to the grand Chinese tradition and how this notion changed the Cantonese people remain to be explained.

03 In the 1950s, when material conditions were unsatisfactory, the following factors all played a role in Hong Kong's industrialization and modernization: the basis of industry and commerce before the Second World War, the perseverance of the Chinese, the tradition that the Cantonese are one step ahead of the rest of the country, the entrepreneurial spirit and knowhow coming from Shanghai, the capital brought in by immigrant capitalists. What was later known as the Hong Kong character—entrepreneurial spirit and "can-do" spirit—was the product of the economic necessity of the time. See Chan Koonchung (2008, 2010, 2014). See the Chinese edition for the full Chinese-language citation.

04 At that time, there is also an older generation of Third World development economists, such as Raúl Prebisch (The John Maynard Keynes of Latin America, who proposes the deteriorating trade terms theory for primary products), Arthur Lewis (the Lewisian turning point). Moreover, Chalmers Johnson, Robert Wade, Alice Amsden, Linda Weiss are the earlier researchers writing on the developmental features of East Asian countries. In many of my essays, I say the Hong Kong elite have been heavily influenced by Neoliberalism, and are blind to the difference between the East Asian development model and Neoliberalism, as well as the significance of government, justice, and equality in good governance; see Chan Koonchung (1989, 1998, 2004, 2008, 2010). See the Chinese edition for the full Chinese-language citation. See also Koon-chung Chan's "Hong Kong Vicera" in *Postcolonial Studies* (2007).

05 The International Monetary Fund made a lot of disastrous policy recommendations, and Joseph E. Stiglitz is one of the early challengers and critics of IMF's decisions; see *Globalization and its Discontents* (2003). The World Bank has adjusted its policy in recent years, and its management has proposed over 40 internal reforms. For more recent criticism of the two institutions, see Stiglitz and Paul Krugman's works.

06 On Neoliberalism's violence around the world, see Naomi Klein's *The Shock Doctrine: the Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (2007).

07 See Ha-Joon Chang's *Bad Samaritans: the Guilty Secrets of Rich Nations and the Threat to Global Prosperity* (2007).

08 For more on the major tenets of new developmentalism, see "Ten Theses on New Developmentalism" available online (2010).

09 For instance, the United Nations' "UN Millennium Development Goals 1999-2015 and "UN Global Compact's Ten Principles;" see David Held's *Global Covenant: The Social Democratic Alternative to the Washington Consensus* (2004).

10 For more on the growing inequality in developed countries, see Thomas Piketty's *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* (2014). The Gini coefficients of China in 2010 reached 0.55 in 2010, and was higher than that of the United States, see a 28 April 2014 Bloomberg report on a study conducted by the University of Michigan.

11 See Joseph Stiglitz's "The Great Divide" series in *The New York Times* (2013); and Amartya Sen's *Inequality Reexamined* (1995).

One Kind of Rice, a Hundred Kinds of People, or *E Pluribus Unum*

The unofficial motto of the United States, *E Pluribus Unum* or "one out of many" could be said to be the Western analogy of the popular Chinese saying, "just one kind of rice can nourish a hundred kinds of people." A deceptively simple phrase offers a big lesson on ethics. Implicit in our understanding, we learn that, first, there are many different kinds of people, and it would be a folly to expect otherwise. Second, if we have enough experience in the world, we ought to know that others are not the same as ourselves. What is surprising for us is the fact that others who come from the same class, ethnicity, and language background are still quite different from us. Third, we can infer from the last observation that in the world, there are many, many more who do not come from the same background, class, culture, or ethnic group, and needless to say, these people must be very different from us. Fourth, we do not have any options other than having this array of people living in our midst. Fifth, despite all these differences, everybody feeds on this land's bounty, or "one rice." Besides this, Cantonese tends to deliver short and sharp verbal or proverbial punches on the most obvious facts. For instance, Cantonese say that we are all born out of

the womb, and we all eat rice as a staple, and these sayings underscore what is shared among us.

Needless to say, as "rice" is closely associated with livelihood, many expressions dealing with making a living in Cantonese are derived from "rice" and its imagery.

When we say, albeit reluctantly at times, that "just one kind of rice can nourish a hundred kinds of people," we attain some sophistication in understanding the ways of the world, and show tolerance toward other people, and the colloquial and idiomatic expressions in English are: "let them be," "let them alone," "leave it to them," "different strokes for different folks," "to each his own" or "to each his own is beautiful" (*suum cuique pulchrum est*), and allow others to lead a life that they please.

How do we treat and tackle differences, diversity, alternatives, queers, contingencies, others, pagans, strangers, outsiders, and the Other? How do we accommodate these differences while being able to live together and share some commonality? These are important ethical questions for the contemporary society to ponder. How do we put universalism to the service of particularism? How do distinct groups of people participate in the general public, yet they are still able to keep their distinct identities or subjectivities?

Arguably, consuming "one kind of rice" is not entirely true. Rice as a staple has many varieties, and is an apt metaphor for cultural differences across regions. However, people who are gratuitously and fastidiously literal might challenge me along this line: so only somebody who eats rice as a staple is one of us, even if they are very different from each other. Those who don't eat rice everyday are in a separate category, and hence not one of us. Could we say that, as the logic goes, northern Chinese are not one of us because they feed on wheat flour, whereas Japanese and Vietnamese feeding on rice are closer to Southern Chinese? Perhaps we shouldn't use Nietzsche's *ressentiment* to read these kind of people after all, as we all consume the same kind of rice. What is more important is discussing and articulating the progressive morals behind the saying.

The saying "just one kind of rice can nourish a hundred kinds of people"

captures Chinese-speaking people's practical spirit and conventional wisdom on tolerance. It epitomizes the latent cultural and structural potential to face, acknowledge, and understand "the other." We are no stranger to this ethic, but we need reason and persuasion to convince ourselves once again.

What is equally important is not to be convinced to be intolerant of others.

2.5.1—

The Other in French, or *l'autre*, means other or another person. Not the self, but the other. It is the usage of the other by French philosopher Emmanuel Levinas.⁰¹

I attempt to discuss the "philosophy" toward "the other" in the following four approaches.

The first approach underscores the commonality. In popular Chinese sayings, everybody was born "from the mother's womb" and feeds on rice. For the faithful across cultures, humans share more than physical similarities. In Confucianism, *jan (ren)* or benevolence is extolled as the quintessential human quality. In Buddhism, every human soul can transform itself into Buddha if compassion is practiced. In Christianity, human commonality is expressed in the chosen people, the advent of natural rights with the Enlightenment, or the assumptions that men are rational beings, and that men are born equal and free.

The second approach is quite the opposite. In this view, the difference between the self and the other is emphasized. As the other is unfathomable, so it is the self's burden to deal with—to conquer, to use, and to restraint—the other. The Sartrean notion that the subject is seen as an object, or the subject behaves as an object, is also another instance of this approach. The other maintains its monadic existence, as each human being is an individual monad according to Gottfried Leibniz. The Other is unknowable and irreducible in the Levinasian philosophy. The idea that the other is an individual who is unlike you is the beginning of ethics. If a stranger collapses in front of you, the stranger and you immediately form a relationship based on ethical

responsibility. The ethical scenario is formed before you to use reason, feeling, or language to handle the situation, and ethics is a set of principles with which we face others.

The third approach is precisely Levinas' critique of one dimension of Hegelian philosophy. By devising a framework to incorporate the other, the self imposes itself on the other, label and describe the parties in order to compartmentalize or homogenize them. Orientalism, the object of critique bearing the same name in Edward Said's seminal work, is how this approach manifests itself in the humanities.

The fourth approach is a more well-known dimension of Hegelian philosophy. In this view, humans are social animals emerged from a constructed intersubjectivity, and struggle for recognition at all costs in order to affirm the self. This school of Hegelian thought has developed into the ethics of recognition. Whether it be for an individual or a group, self-identity as well as its recognition and affirmation are essential. Although difference between individuals cannot be overcome, dialogues and communication are still possible. Seeking recognition for one another and even fostering mutually beneficial arrangements are conducive conditions for individuals to go about their lives in the same place, perhaps these conditions will also lead to what Hans-Georg Gadamer calls "the fusion of horizons," or a Rawlsian "overlapping consensus." Today, in an increasingly diverse world, in which ethnic identity and personal rights are also rising, this fourth approach becomes necessary as one of the normative political arrangements.

My following discussion centers on the first and fourth approaches.

2.5.2—

When I was young, I witnessed new social movements,⁰² in which the recognition of the others was sought. The civil rights movement, feminist movement, gay rights movement, minorities and indigenous people movement, anti-colonial movement, marginalized groups movement all made their case in the public arena and sought social recognition of their existence and acknowledgment of their distinct needs. They made themselves seen and their

voices heard so that their particularity cannot be obliterated or glossed over.

For me, every movement is an education. As each of these movements come into view, I came to the realization that my existing view of the world is too narrow, and other people are indeed very different, and the differences are only visible to me after someone else opened my eyes. According to Richard Rorty, our compassion is an effect of seeing others and knowing their predicaments. In the words of Joseph Raz, this is the "new moral sensitivity."⁰³

People tend to stick with their same kind. They (others) are different from us, and their (others') problems are different from our problems, but they (others) live in our midst, so they (others) should have their rights and identities recognized.

Compared to the days when I was young, nowadays different groups know better the importance of speaking out and being recognized in society. This new attitude fostered a lot of social change, and helped some groups to be liberated, and redressed the repression, disgrace, and cruelty from the past. This is the main reason why I think the present day is better than the old days.

2.5.3——

As a student of sociology and political science, I saw the political demands for recognition accompanying the new social movements and multiculturalism. The notion of the rights of a citizen has extended from basic human rights to Thomas Humphrey Marshall's civil rights, political rights, and social rights,⁰⁴ and then it further encompasses cultural rights, educational rights, linguistic rights, bodily rights, sexual rights, reproductive rights, housing rights, migration rights, labour rights, eco-citizen rights, world citizen rights, and even the rights of non-citizens, such as the rights of foreign labourers, international migrants, and refugees.

At the same time, I think three rights movement with a long history, namely, the constitutionalism, democratization, and labour movements, were the pioneers of politics of recognition and have laid an important foundation, and should be complementary to the new social movements.

2.5.4——

Multiculturalism only began to win over the public since the 1970s. This movement for recognizing diverse identities has generated a number of laws and behaviors, and triggered wholesale changes in the social mores of many places. As such, many people's rights, welfare, and identities are enhanced and better secured, and the marginalized groups and minorities are protected, assisted, empowered, and treated more fairly.

Some say minority empowerment (called "affirmative action" in the United States, and "positive action" in the United Kingdom, but they refer to the same thing) contradicts the equality principle. We can see that "minority rights not as unfair privileges or invidious forms of discrimination, but as compensation for unfair disadvantages, and so as consistent with, and even required by, justice," Will Kymlicka explains.⁰⁵

There are a hundred kinds of people, whether they speak the same language and belong to the same race or ethnic group (which itself is a historical construct), speak the same language and not belong to the same race or ethnic group (such as the Sinicized minorities in China's southwest and the highland peoples living across national borders on the Indochina peninsula), or not speak the same language and not belong to the same race or ethnic group (such as the Han, Uighurs, and Tibetans), that it is now commonplace for different peoples to live in the same place within the same national border. Moreover, in many societies, people are more accepting of interracial marriage.

There are virtually no countries that are not multiethnic, and even the "most homogenous" Korea has its fair share of ethnic minorities, hence, every country faces the challenges posed by minorities. Here, it is useful to specify that ethnic groups could be broken down into the majority group, minority group, mixed heritage group, indigenous inhabitants (first peoples or aborigines), later settler immigrants, new immigrants, illegal immigrants, foreign residents, dual citizenship holders, foreign labourers, international students, travellers, trans-border groups, refugees, etc., and the demands from each group are different.

In 1992, the United Nations passed the "Declaration of Rights of Persons

Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities" to protect minorities, and was followed by adopting the "Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples" that advocates indigenous rights in 2007.

First peoples and ethnic minorities similarly demand rights to cultural and heritage preservation, education, one's own or indigenous language, citizenship, but the former can also demand from the dominant society, made up of latter-day settlers, the right to self-government and land rights.

Kymlicka also says that multiculturalist policy is the government's recognition and accommodation of increasing ethnic cultural diversity in the framework of liberal democratic values and a shared institution of language.

2.5.5—

Since the majority of the world's countries are multi-ethnic ones, from the state's perspective, any patriotic call relying on the attachment to a single ethnic group is divisive to the diverse social fabric. Similarly, in a multicultural country with religious pluralism, the call to patriotism cannot be based on a single culture or religion. Nationalist ideology is necessary for the construction of loyal citizens and national cohesion. In this case, what is the object of patriotism? In the 1980s, Jürgen Habermas *et al.*⁰⁶ proposed "constitutional patriotism," and argue against using ethnic kinship and identification to promote political adherence to a political community in which diversity and cultural differences are present. In a free and diverse society, searching for the common root or shared sentiment toward such an origin should not be a priority, as political consensus is not based on these *a priori*; rather, it should be constructed in political participation. The constitution represents this transparent process of consensus-building that results in black and white. Since such a document is most qualified to reflect the norms and values, constitutionalism can most likely command the people's loyalty.

2.5.6—

In the earlier paragraphs, I have attempted to accommodate—and not replace one with another—two approaches toward the other. One is

a multicultural attitude based on the saying, "one kind of rice, a hundred different kinds of people," another one is a universalist attitude based on insights into the plasticity of human thoughts and behaviours. So far we have talked about the former, but should we pause as we ponder over the expression "one kind of rice," go further and think about the common human plasticity?

For instance, is the particularist politics that is evident in new social movements, multiculturalism, and patriotism compatible with the universalist civil rights, liberal constitutionalism, and cosmopolitanism? Could it achieve what Joseph Raz sees as the challenge of multiculturalism, which is the union between truths of universalism with those of particularism?

I would like to use the notion of "double consciousness" in answering this difficult question. I owe this idea to African American scholar and activist W. E. B. Du Bois who describes the African American predicament, sensation, and strife of being both American and African in 1897.⁰⁷ As Americans, blacks are excluded and discriminated against. Thus, they feel the special African-ness in their blood, even though mainstream white Americanism also gets firmly ingrained in their souls.

Using an ethnic minority's special consciousness to discuss particularism in this essay's context is the most apt. I believe members of any minority have experienced similar double consciousness toward the mainstream, and even those with "new moral sensitivity" should see no problem understanding it.⁰⁸ At least, we all were young at some point, and the youth are more sensitive to strife resulting from double consciousness.

Prior to Du Bois, Thoreau Emerson has used the term "double consciousness," and the American transcendentalists of the time and the even earlier European romanticists also expressed similar inner struggles, and many were torn between their service to God and fellow humans. Du Bois used the term to expound the minority's collective consciousness and subjectivity that had been slighted by the mainstream.

Du Bois was a student of William James, and the latter and the psychologists of the day also used double consciousness, but this use referred to a form of mental disorder involving alternating consciousness. However,

James speculated that the possibility of a real cure for alternating consciousness involved not the victory of one over the other but a process whereby the dissociated systems came together resulting in the third new self.

Du Bois used both Emerson and James' opinions and the term "double consciousness" to talk about the psychological strife of a racial minority, and advocated merging his double self into a better and truer self, while not losing neither of the older selves. However, Du Bois was uncertain if this synthesis could be achieved.⁹

Here, I appropriate and adapt Emerson, James, and Du Bois' term "double consciousness" for my own use, and personally attempt to accommodate two approaches toward the others. When it comes to the different political and social visions coming from the particularist and universalist points of view, I am uncertain if they could be synthesized, but neither one should be lost.

Armed with the minority's "double consciousness" and the openness that comes with contemporary new moral sensitivity, we are more willing to construe a world in which multiculturalist particularism, liberal constitutionalism, cosmopolitan universalism coexist, and perhaps "an uneasy equilibrium" as suggested by Isaiah Berlin can also be achieved in the world.¹⁰

2.5.7—

Berlin thinks "positive values" are incommensurate between one another, let alone synthesis, but he seems to agree that they can coexist consensually. In this essay, I begin with the simple saying that "one kind of rice can nourish a hundred kinds of people" and further discuss two approaches to the other, as well as positive values such as multiculturalism, patriotism, and cosmopolitanism, and I conclude with a discussion of how double consciousness can accommodate them without having to choose one over another. Owing to the fact that the nation-building of modern nation-states tends to overemphasize homogenization and repress difference, the promotion of multiculturalism in one country runs the risks of sowing the seeds of social unrest. Although multiculturalism should be what Raz describes as aiming to redress some excess of nationalism, it is an impetus to recognize—and at times

exaggerate—various struggles. When differences among groups are blown out of proportion, identities are reified, differences are essentialized, extremist social agenda is adopted, and fundamentalist tendency may gain a foothold. Needless to say, particularism is pushed to the absolute and such social environment will be hostile to intergroup contact or interaction.

When identity-based struggles and the politics of recognition extend to the levels of national conflict or cultural conflict, racism and clash of civilizations will easily be triggered. In today's world, many conflicts and animosity are bred from the reification, essentialization, and polarization of identities, religions, castes, ways of life, and values. As Arjun Appadurai says, "one man's imagined community is another man's political prison."¹¹

To address this, in "Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism," Martha Nussbaum reminds us that the best supplement to multiculturalism is not patriotism, but cosmopolitanism, as defined as the embrace of higher ideals toward human community. She asserts that the so-called patriotism and nationalism are just enlarged stand-ins for multiculturalism in the international context, as the subject is no longer a distinct group within a nation, but a nation state itself. As this logic goes, giving up multiculturalism and regressing to homogenizing policy to obliterate difference is not a solution to multiculturalism's shortcomings, one should look to cosmopolitan values for possible answers.¹²

Cosmopolitanism has taken another turn after going through the last century's anti-colonial movements and the multiculturalism and nationalism of the last fifty or so years. Cosmopolitanists can even engage in dialogue with liberal nationalists. Kymlicka says that the disagreement between enlightenment cosmopolitanists and liberal nationalists is very limited. It is misleading, according to him, to portray liberal nationalism as a refusal to cosmopolitanism. If there are numerous similarities between liberal nationalism and enlightenment cosmopolitanism, and both sides agree on universal values such as freedom and equality, then Kymlicka will rather say that liberal nationalism is a redefined brand of cosmopolitanism.

This redefined, or third-wave (multicultural, anti-imperialist, and compatible with liberal nationalism) cosmopolitanism will neither

unconditionally support globalization, nor will it easily accept neoliberal, global capitalism. It does not advocate a world government not subject to democratic institutions, and does not pursue a homogenous and unitary world culture. As Ulf Hannerz says, "genuine cosmopolitanism is first of all an orientation, a willingness to engage with the Other." Hannerz trenchantly argues that cosmopolitanism is a "search for contrasts rather than uniformity."¹³ We can also refer to Anthony Appiah, who remarks that cosmopolitanism believes that different groups of people, despite their differences, can learn from each other. "Universal concern" and "respect for legitimate differences" are two ideals that clash at times. Cosmopolitanists all share one belief, and that is regional loyalty cannot undermine one's obligations toward all others.¹⁴

In other words, today's cosmopolitanism has been christened by multiculturalism. At the same time, different particularisms will have to adjust themselves in face of the challenges posed by universalisms such as cosmopolitanism. Within the boundaries, this will be complementary constitutionalism and cosmopolitanism, with which the indigenous peoples, minorities, foreigners, and marginalized groups are protected and empowered. This brand of multiculturalism fosters intergroup exchanges and guarantees universal civil rights. Beyond the boundaries, there will be an equilibrium between, on one hand, the sovereign state and its practical interests, and, on the other hand, a cosmopolitanism that underscores good governance and integration with the international community.

Endnotes and Further Readings

- 01 "The Other" in Levinas' work includes three terms, one is capitalized, *l'Autre* (the Other), the other is in lower case, *l'autre*, and *Autrui* (others); see Emmanuel Levinas' *Totality and Infinity: an Essay on Exteriority* (1961). More on Levinasian ethics toward the Other and emancipatory politics, see Enrique Dussel's *Ethics of Liberation: in the Age of Globalization and Exclusion* (2013).
- 02 On the academic discussion, see Charles Taylor's 1994 essay, "Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition."
- 03 Joseph Raz states that multiculturalism should not be limited to the new moral sensitivity, and he proposes the liberal perspective on multiculturalism; see Joseph Raz's "Multiculturalism" (1998).
- 04 See Thomas Humphrey Marshall's *Citizenship and Social Class and Other Essays* (1950).
- 05 See Will Kymlicka's *Politics in the Vernacular: Nationalism, Multiculturalism, and Citizenship* (2001).
- 06 See Chan Koonchung (2008). See the Chinese edition for the full Chinese-language citation. See also Jan-Werner Müller's *Constitutional Patriotism* (2007).
- 07 See W. E. B. Du Bois' *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903). African and Jewish diaspora studies also use the notion of "double consciousness," see Paul Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double-Consciousness* (1993).
- 08 Recently, Nancy Fraser also discusses new social movements such as the Feminist movement in terms of "bifocal" and "bivalent" to tackle both the distributive justice and the politics of difference; see Nancy Fraser's *Justice Interruptus: Critical Reflections on the "Postsocialist" Condition* (1997).
- 09 See Dickson D. Bruce, Jr.'s "W. E. B. Du Bois and the Idea of Double Consciousness." In *American Literature: a Journal of Literary History, Criticism, and Bibliography* (1992).
- 10 Isaiah Berlin is a realist and a liberal, as well as a value pluralist who is a skeptic of positive values and monist universalism. However, he argues that the plurality of values is different from relativism. He sees the incommensurability between plural values (he uses the incommensurability between music and art as an example) or the opposition between them (he uses the opposition between republican ethics and Christian ethics as an example), while the mere conflict of positive values alone is enough to cause unavoidable social and political collisions. However, he believes that the clashes can be minimized by promoting and preserving an uneasy equilibrium, which is constantly threatened and in constant need of repair. This kind of equilibrium to minimize clash is done through making necessary choices and compromise, and "that alone, [Berlin repeats], is the precondition for decent societies and morally acceptable behaviour." See Isaiah Berlin's *The Crooked Timber of Humanity* (1959).

11 See Arjun Appadurai's *Modernity At Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (1996).

12 Identity politics needs to be balanced by cosmopolitan values; see Martha Nussbaum's "Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism" in *Boston Review* (1994). Cosmopolitanism as a political thought first originated in fourth century B.C. Greek philosopher Democritus, who said, "the home of a great soul is the whole world." Then, Diogenes the Cynic, when asked where he came from, he responded, "I am a citizen of the world (cosmopolites)." The term "cosmopolitanism" is derived from this Greek word. For Cosmopolitanism's cultural and intellectual history in the Chinese-speaking world, see Chan Koonchung (2013). See the Chinese edition for the full Chinese-language citation.

13 See Ulf Hannerz's *Transnational Connections: Culture, People, Places* (1996).

14 See Kwame Anthony Appiah's *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (2007).

***Gong Wu*, or Rivers and Lakes**

"We are living in an age of flows—flows of capital, cultural flows, flows of information and risks, of which the terrorist risk is only the latest..."

—Ulrich Beck

"A sociology of mobilities disrupts a sociology of the social as society."

—John Urry

"On the one hand, we live in the immanence of the information flows. On the other, we mourn the disappearance of the ground..." —Scott Lash

Can the Chinese term "*gong wu*" (*jianghu*), or literally "rivers and lakes," help us visualize "society"?

If the "society" we are referring to here is what Beck, Urry, Lash, and Zygmunt Bauman⁰¹ describe in their works, then there is no word better than "*gong wu*" to convey its meaning and imagery. The words that these scholars use to describe society all suggest flow and fluidity: such as liquid (liquid

love, liquid fear, liquid times, and liquid modernity), flow, flux, fluid, leaks, mobilities, etc. If the metaphor for society—flow (*lau*)—is the mantra for contemporary reflexive critical sociology, then the Chinese word "*gong wu*" is indeed performative. In the popular literary world as in colloquial Chinese expressions, a person—not necessarily a *flanneur*, vagabond, or wandering mercenary—"floats on rivers and lakes," and this imagery does not only conjure up the fluidity of human world, but it also lends itself to describe other sociological phenomena and theories related to mobility, also expressed with the Chinese character *lau*, such as wandering, exile, "human wave" (or more well-known term in French, *la marée humaine*), logistics, transient and mobile population (a term coined by Wang Xuetai).

Gong wu and society are common nouns, but for some, the two are interchangeable. For instance, adults tend to use *gong wu* more, as they say "being in *gong wu*" while young people, in order to become adults, tend to say "joining the society [workforce]," which seems to suggest that society is a positive, hierarchical, orderly structure of the larger world. *Gong wu* and society both have a long history in the Chinese language, and their modern meanings and usage are only recent developments. Even Chinese-speaking readers can use a refresher in the history of language: modern standard Chinese and its vocabulary are only about 110 years old. The notion of "society" fostered the building of modern China, and reflected the state-led investments into and vision for the future, such as the overthrowing of the "old society," building a "new society," and "move toward a "middle-income society" full steam ahead. *Gong wu*, on the other hand, is the spontaneous form of the public body left unabsorbed by the society heavy-handedly constituted by the state. These two are complementary but also essentially different trains of thought and depictions. In the past, society and *gong wu* were antagonistic to one another, but now, there is a clear hierarchy of status. Society occupies the upper rung and has its cachet. For instance, modernity is sought in the name of society. The *gong-wu* underworld occupies the lower rung sub-site, or becomes the literary-constructed heterotopian imagination.

Until the recent two to three decades, anthropologists and sociologists

began to pay attention to the ever-growing trend of new human interactions in the age of globalization. These interactions and vehicles include transnational physical networks, virtual networks, new technology, new media, and micro organizations. Using the "flow" as a metaphor to describe the new form of society is akin to shifting our gaze from society to *gong wu*. As a concept, *gong wu* is like a torrent; society, on the other hand, is like the reflection on a still body of water. However, when the body of water and the torrent meet, then the reflection will be disrupted, and bubbles, waves, and multicolored foams will emerge.

2.6.1—

For scholars of "fluid sociology," the conventional understanding of sociology as defined by the study of "societies" as discreet groupings based on nation states is unable to cope with the new form of society. Gone is the view of society as structural, functional, hierarchical, and contractual as sociologists reassess their object of study as a chaotic and complex human system replete with changes, exchanges, fluctuation, instability, and risks. Globalized capital, technology, information, image, population, logistics, viruses, and garbage all become torrents that turn all that clot into liquid. Today's society is no longer the society of yesterday. Regarding society, perhaps the Baudrillardian reading would be that people may still cling onto the reflection of the past. If society has turned to a liquid state and a networked state, then it traverses its boundaries to spill over at the risk of being infiltrated from the outside. In other words, society is moving toward *gong wu*, or has even become *gong wu*. *Gong wu* is uneven, it has its own conflicts but it also has its capacity to resolve them. *Gong wu* is not subject to the state's existing institutions. It has a life of its own, as its members are not homogenous, but consist of the multitudes as defined by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri. *Gong wu* is decentric, non-linear, fractal, and oscillating, with its own microstructures, nodes, path of dependence, and the "line of flight" as discussed in the works of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. It keeps emerging, changing, and disappearing. In the words of Lash and Urry, as reproduced earlier in this chapter, the fluid society, or more aptly

called *gong wu*, is an immanent self-organizing vitalism.

2.6.2—

The problem is, has society become genuine *gong wu*? Is *gong wu* the new social image? From the perspectives of the multitudes in the global empire, as proposed by Hardt and Negri, Lash and Urry's organized capitalism, the society becoming an island, the community becoming more exclusive, the hate and intolerance between groups living in the same place, the areas on turmoil in the Middle East, Africa, and other regions and the failed states with incompetent or inexistent governments, deterritorialized production and consumption, the mobility of some groups in post-welfare Europe, increasing urbanization and complexity in the world, the virtual world of the Internet, the rapidly changing new technology, and increasing refugees and illegal immigrants worldwide, the intricacies of global human flow and logistics, we can say that society is indeed turning into the fluid *gong wu*, whose *topos* is a torrent that disrupts the old society. As compared with the old metaphors, such as the machine, organism, body, function, structure of labour division, interactivity, homostasis, superstructure and base, community, home, role play, power structure, polity, national body, abode, wind and land (*fudo*), regional network, the new metaphor is more convincing and performative. Urry really emphasizes the continual changes in how we coin metaphors for society, as the old metaphor is only an image of the past, and will hamper the understanding of the new reality.

Nonetheless, in other regions of the world, such as China, Russia, and other emerging countries, the power in the authoritarian state is not too weak but too strong (or more exactly, what is supposed to be a strong aspect of state power is too weak whereas what is supposed to be its weak aspect is too strong), and the will of the state still shapes the society. These societies are not characterized by depoliticization, but a perverse form of politicization. They are not led by democratic and participatory politics but by a total infiltration of political power (often with the collusion of capital). Therefore, these societies are said to be "in name only" and the unfinished project to transform society

into a genuine one will necessitate a long struggle of definition between two asymmetric forces, those who fight in the name of the state and those in the name of the citizens.

Fluid sociology's view of reconceptualizing society as *gong wu* is perhaps not the most concerned topic of the intellectuals in these countries. Rather, they think building a domestic civil society⁰² is their highest priority. In their estimation, there needs to be rules to regulate the current social mess known as *gong wu* because *gong wu* is caused by the state and the lax—or even the lack of—rules and values. They tend to respond with a question. How do citizens heal the corrupt and wounded *gong wu* and achieve a genuine society?

2.6.3—

In Chinese rhetoric, many expressions are related to "water" and "land." For instance, *sei hoi (si hai)*, or literally "four seas," originally referred to the land belonging to the four barbarian groups outside the Chinese states, which were collectively called *hoi noi (hai nei)*, or literally "within the bounds of the sea." Outside this realm is *hoi ngoi (hai wai)*, or literally "outside the bounds of the sea." The "sea" also meant the land.

Gong wu is similar, as the body of water can also refer to the land. Originally, it referred to the land within the realm, not only the lakes and rivers. But too many levels of imagination have been superimposed on the word *gong wu* historically, so we will not think of *gong wu* merely as space.

Zhuang Zhou tells a story in *Zhuangzi* of two fishes trapped in a small, drying pond who helped each other out by spitting froth to keep their skin wet. It would be better if both find their way out and got lost in the giant rivers and lakes. Here, we can see that *gong wu* refers to rivers and lakes as well as a big enough space in which each fish does not have to be forced to rely on others, as each can enjoy its independence. For Zhuang Zhou, the fish is like a monad in Leibniz's metaphysics. Thanks to lakes and rivers' sheer size, a monad can co-exist with other monads while forgetting each other's presence.

The word *gong wu* moves slowly away from collective life and institutions, and toward a reclusive life.

Gong wu gains another layer of meaning, in Confucian view, *gong wu* and the temple are like two autonomous spaces but there are areas where they are in opposition. Therefore, *gong wu* is not tolerated by the temple, family, local magistracies, and the imperial court, which similarly constructed and sanctioned by society.

Even if Song dynasty statesman and member of the literati Fan Zhongyan attempted to accommodate both the temple and *gong wu* (as he lamented that being in the temple, such a high place, he began worrying about the peasants, and being in the *gong wu*, such a faraway place, he began worrying about the ruler), the two are still incommensurately in opposition. From Fan, we can also see a spatial metaphor, the temple is elevated, and *gong wu* is distant from the centre, temple, and imperial court.

The temple and *gong wu*, similar to the dichotomy between the imperial court and commoners, became the vivid metaphor for the most rigid notion of political hierarchy—namely, the officials and the people—in the Chinese-speaking world.

The novella, novels, and the contemporary martial arts and chivalry novels, in Chinese have established the best known association between *gong wu* and the martial arts world, in which the code of honour trumps the imperial law as in the context of *les romans de cape et d'épée*.

Chivalry declined since the early Han, let alone the professional tradition of wandering knights, who were accompanied by their entourage. As the four hierarchical castes and classes—scholars, peasants, craftsmen, and merchants—were firmly established in Eastern Han, China's social structure was rigid with the scholar-officials at the top, who were supported by the peasants tied to their land. With the clan and household registration systems in place, the mobile and transient population was a very small minority,⁰³ and there would unlikely be knights and warriors in *gong wu* as they lacked the material support basis.

Their only space remains in the imagination of the writers and readers. From Yuan dynasty until present day, martial arts and chivalry novels have largely shaped the Chinese-speaking world's interpretation of its past. The past

has become a world where wandering warriors rule with their swords and skills, and this world is called *gong wu*.

Only much later that *gong wu* is tainted with the connotation of the gangsters and mafia. It is the intensified and dramatic facet of *gong wu*.

One does not need to be a knight, warrior, or gangster to understand the unwritten rule of *gong wu*. The unwritten rule is that the ordinary rules and norms of family, neighbourhood, and temple do not apply in *gong wu*, and the code of honour here is not the same of those propagated or practiced by the teachers, social elite, or government.

Gong wu, hence, is the alternative space within the ancient establishments and institutions, and for this reason, it is subversive and antagonistic in nature. Nevertheless, *gong wu* will never go beyond the current establishments and institutions. Even if elements in the *gong wu* revolt, they only want to pave their way to the temple's doorsteps.

If the ancient *gong wu* stood—or is portrayed to stand—in opposition to the temple (and the family, neighbourhood, imperial court, and the institutions of the state as well), then its modern version is still different from society, government, political authority, and nation.

2.6.4—

It will be difficult to imagine how we have a discussion on society prior to having the word "society" enter our vocabulary.

For instance, there was no word with the contemporary connotation for "society" in ancient China.⁰⁴ But once humans constructed the totalizing concept of society, the ancient past became the ancient society, traditional society, and today's world became modern society. Without the word, it seems impossible to talk about the past, present, tradition, modernity, old society, new society, capitalist society, socialist society, industrial society, information society...

In Chinese, prior to the end of the nineteenth century, *se wui (she hui)* did not refer to the society to which everybody belongs. It used to mean the congregation of people during festivals, or associations of common interest. Its

use was very specific and limited.

When Western thoughts and learning arrived in the East, Japanese appropriated the *kanji* characters to translate the Western concept of "society," which was then re-introduced to China. At that time, scholar and translator Yan Fu was against translating it as *se wui (she hui)*. He proposed the word *kwan (qun)* for society, and sociology to be called *kwan hok (qunxue)*. This bit of history shows that the word "society" in Chinese was constructed in the West, and has a little more than a hundred years' history.

However, the Western concept of society speedily entered the intellectual and popular discourse in China, and became a necessary word in everyday life and for any average Chinese. Although the understanding of the concept is different, the term is now firmly embedded in the Chinese epistemological structure and cultural DNA.

Coincidentally, society was a contemporaneous "new" word with nation, empire, revolution, republic, science, and the pursuit of happiness, as these words witnessed together the painful late Qing era and the birth of the Republic. Therefore, the modern Chinese vocabulary was inseparable from nation-building.

In the West, the emergence of the modern notion of society was earlier than China, but it was still rather recent, and was also in connection with modern nation-building. Therefore, the society as discussed in sociology that Beck and Urry refer to as a nation state society. Accordingly, the study of this society is nation-state sociology.

2.6.5—

Yan Fu's preferred the word *kwan (qun)*, and translated John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty* as *Kwan gei kyun gaai leon (Qun ji quan jie lun)*, or literally, "the demarcation between the rights of the mass and those of the self" and sociology as *kwan hok (qun xue)*. However, in the West, the two concepts do not belong to the same epistemological genealogy. If "society" was constructed by Enlightenment rationality and nation state, then "masses" belonged to what Lash calls the next modernity and the alternative reason. Whether it be Niccolò

Machiavelli or Baruch Spinoza's multitude, Hardt or Negri's "multitudes," Leibniz's "monad," Gabriel Tarde and even Bruno Latour's "actor-network," Bergson and Deleuze's "vitalism," Georg Simmel's "LebenSoziologie," Gustav Le Bon, Sigmund Freud, or Elias Canetti's "crowd," the mass is still a different image other than the people in a Hobbesian state, a Durkheimian society, or the people sharing enlightenment rationality. Perhaps, crowd is closer to *gong wu* while remaining in contradistinction to the homogenizing "people," a nation state society, and "class" in academic discussion. In China, although the party state did portray crowd in a positive light and oftentimes use it in the place of "people," in expressions such as "relying on the crowd's reporting," and "mass mobilization," the cadre and elite in power were still vigilant about the crowd that often had a mind of its own. Imagine replacing people's democracy with crowd's democracy, and renaming the "People's Republic" as the "Crowd's Republic," then one should understand right away the subtle difference in Chinese. For instance, one can say the cadre leads the masses, but saying the cadre leads the people will land someone in trouble.

Recently, the multitude proponents elevate the revolutionary potential of the crowd, and fluid sociologists, too, underscore the difference or opposition between the crowd and society. Society, in their view, is tied with the state and imperial institutions. However, fluid sociologists think that the current social "ground" has already seen enormous changes, and became a "post-social" fluid society, or more aptly, it became a "post-social" *gong wu*. The nation state society of the past is a stage constructed by the state. The performance on this spectacular stage, all presented in the name of the people or citizens, occludes the internal schisms of class and groups. Nonetheless, in the post-social *gong wu*, the old class division broke down and the audience become restless, and the multitudes now begin to take the stage in order to oppose the establishment.

This multitude approach shares many similarities with one Marxist approach that had been suppressed by the Soviet communists—or the Oriental despotism called by Marx, Engels, and Lenin, which is a social form with continual class conflict between the officials and the people.

Generally speaking, historical materialism sees history as developing in

stages, and in every stage, there are two opposing classes (for instance, the slave owners and the slaves in slavery society, the landlords and the tenant farmers in feudal society, the capitalists and the proletariat in capitalist society), but Marx (and Engels) had pointed out that all these class distinction do not apply to some oriental societies, whose economic base is the Asiatic mode of production. The main opposition in these Asiatic societies, they claim, is the ruler and the ruled, or the officials and the people.⁰⁵

The world of reality as seen by the multitude advocates goes back to this perennial opposition between the officials and the people, the temple and *gong wu*, as well as the establishment and the multitudes.

2.6.6—

Fluid sociologists argue that the post-nation-state "post-social" society has moved beyond the portrayal made with old metaphors. For them, the new facet of society is a fluid *gong wu*, where self-organizing microstructures continue to transcend the nation state society, from the microstructure of financial investment to that of contemporary art, and from the microstructure of Occupy Wall Street to the Arab Spring uprising to international terrorism.⁰⁶ Fluid sociologists assert that the trend is full of both risks and potential, and the original foundation stone of society is nowhere to be found. Everybody will now dwell and wander in *gong wu*.

In reality, nevertheless, most people are still living in a relatively organized community called "society." Even though the torrents of *gong wu* are getting stronger, they come and go, crisscrossing borders, foundations, cities, and the countryside. They do little to change, undermine, or destabilize any structure, function, class, local power, or assigned role, even if they have successfully challenged and disrupted our static and monolithic view of society. In the real world, those who possess concrete power may lose some of their cachet, but their omnipresence is unmistakable. This, I am afraid, is the real experience of most people today.

2.6.7—

Fluid sociology allows us to see the underpinnings and effects of a globalized information age, the oscillation, risks, and opportunities of the "post-social" *gong wu*. Traditional sociology will not be able to deal with this new and interesting facet of society. Its contribution is also inspirational to innovative models for social movements.

However, fluid sociologists should also understand that privileging only the "post-social" *gong wu* while ignoring the still important and relevant organizations and institutions in society is tantamount to giving up the good social institutions that have been sought by our forbearers in many difficult episodes of social struggle. If we shortchange the current society, we will only benefit the neoliberals, today's Thatcher faithful, as it were, who will advocate policies favoring the so-called free market to the detriment of welfare society and existing community and way of life.

2.6.8—

If I also take a step back to an authoritarian state, I think the vision presented by multitude advocates and fluid sociologists is imperfect.

The proponents of multitudes affirm that the contradiction between the officials and people, and the temple and *gong wu* cannot be overcome, and for this reason, place all their hopes on the vitality of the multitudes. Fluid sociologists, on the other hand, underestimate the stronghold of the geo-historical power known as the state, while overestimating the force of the torrents in *gong wu*. They also understate the realm of traditional politics and social foundation in which the fierce struggle for formal democracy and basic civil rights take place.

Indeed, in lieu of the unavoidable contradiction between the officials and the people, turning the people into citizens and officials into civil servants, is a viable line of flight. As the people are no longer the multitude outside the institutions, the clash between the political establishment and civil society is overcome by the practice of social innovation in a heterotopian society, and not by a wholesale abandonment of society in order to enter the world of *gong wu*.

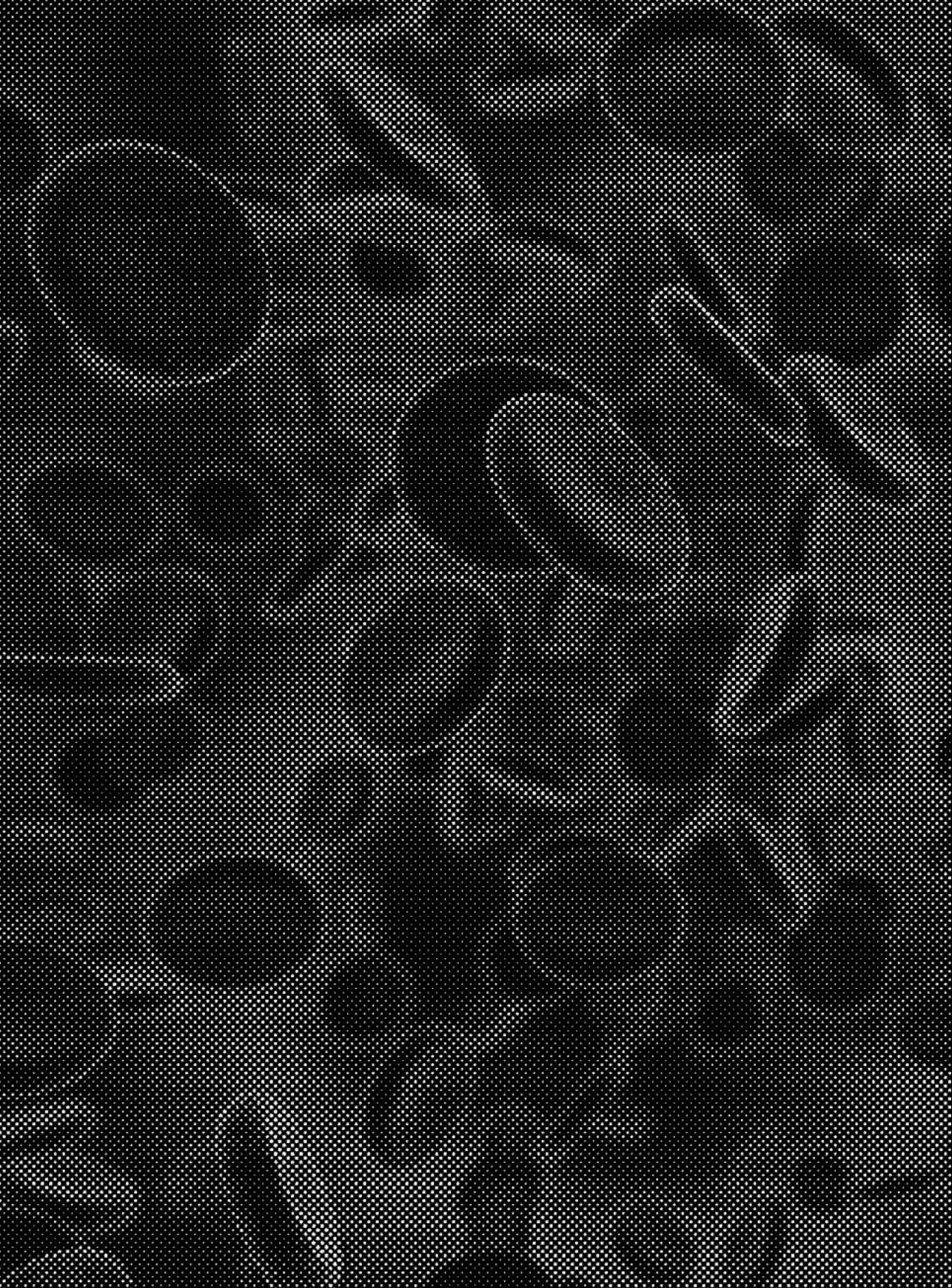
As the rights and responsibilities of the crowd and the self are duly demarcated, building a better representative and participatory democracy will foster civil society and a just, fair, and decent society, and unleash society's progressive meanings⁰⁷ and emancipatory potential throughout history as well. Social needs must be above those of politics and economy⁰⁸ so as to liberate the society perverted by the logics of capital and power. Only on a common foundation of a just society, the Life and Planet Earth Logic⁰⁹ supported by vitalists such as the proponents of the multitude and fluid sociologists will have a chance to win.

Endnotes and Further Reading

- 01 See Nicholas Gane's *The Future of Social Theory* (2004); Scott Lash's *Intensive Culture: Social Theory, Religion and Contemporary Capitalism* (2010) and *Another Modernity: a Different Rationality*; John Urry's (2000) *Sociology Beyond Societies: Mobilities for the Twenty-First Century*; Scott Lash and John Urry's *The End of Organized Capitalism* (1987); Bauman Zygmunt's *Liquid Modernity* (2000); Ulrich Beck's *World Risk Society* (1999). For more literature with related perspectives by anthropologists and sociologists, see the works by Arjun Appadurai, Manuel Castells, Bruno Latour, and Anthony Giddens.
- 02 The civil society is also known as the citizen society, and has different meanings in different periods. For Hegel, Marx, and Weber, citizen society is the competitive field between class interests under the state, Antonio Gramsci sees political society and civil society as separate, but they both vie for leadership in the field of struggle. Recently, the civil society is viewed as a spontaneous, reflexive, and participatory Tocquevillean democracy in which citizens take part in public affairs and associate themselves with one another for welfare, state power is in check, social autonomy is protected, and social capital empowers public and social endeavours. For more on the relationship between pluralist democracy and civil society, see Nancy Rosenblum's *Membership and Morals: the Personal Uses of Pluralism in America* (2000). For civil society in the Chinese-speaking context, see Xiong Peiyun (2010) and Chan Koonchung (2014). See the Chinese edition for the full Chinese-language citation.
- 03 See Wang Xuetai (2007). More on the ancient Chinese chivalry culture, see Yu Ying-shih (2010). See the Chinese edition for the full Chinese-language citation.
- 04 Ancient China is similar to the organization of *Gemeinschaft* ("community") as coined by Ferdinand Tönnies. Blood family, clan, and hometown folks are natural communities. In the early feudal states, the throne was hierarchical but essentially, they can be viewed as an extension of the family. The familiar folks and neighbour of a small village and town are also communities. After Qin dynasty, the size of the country increased, and the officialdom and hierarchical structure were solidified. Although the institutions of the temple, clan membership, and household registration system compartmentalized small communities sharing the similar characteristics, they together do not form a "society" in the modern sense of the term. The notion of *Gesellschaft* ("society") is inseparable from market economy, large-scale urbanization, industrialization, the rise of the modern nation states, social contract, the institution of law, citizen politics, and pluralist culture.
- 05 This Marxist theory was later suppressed by the Soviet Union, see Chan Koonchung's "Asiatic Mode of Production" in *Marxism and Literary Criticism* (in Chinese, 1982). See the Chinese edition for the full Chinese-language citation. See also Karl August Wittfogel's *Oriental Despotism: a Comparative Study of Total Power* (1957) for a discussion of the particularity of Chinese civilization using the notion of the Asiatic mode of production, which has drawn controversy and criticism from Ulrich Vogel, Benjamin Schwartz, Joseph Needham; see Tu Weiming's "A Note on Wittfogel's Science of

Society" in *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* (1979). Recently, Chinese nationalists support the view that China is an exception case because Chinese officialdom and bureaucracy has a long history, tradition, and many salient features. Unintentionally, this view seems to reaffirm the once forgotten discussion of Oriental despotism by Marx.

- 06 The four characteristics of microstructures are: they are light; they possess non-Weberian effectiveness; they cannot be reduced to networks; and they exhibit temporary complexity. See Karin Knorr Cetina's "Complex Global Microstructures: the Terrorist Societies" in *Theory, Culture and Society* (2005).
- 07 More on the evolution of social innovation and socialism in the early 19th century, see Benoit Godin's "Social Innovation: Utopias of Innovation from c. 1830 to the Present" available online (2012).
- 08 Proponents of social democracy have always underscored that society, politics, and economy develop in tandem, and their political principle is to place democracy and society above the realms of market and state; see Jon Cruddas and Andrea Nahles' "Building the Good Society: The Project of the Democratic Left" available online (2009) and Sheri Berman's *The Primacy of Politics: Social Democracy and the Making of Europe's Twentieth Century* (2006).
- 09 More on the justice society and its relationship with the capitalist logic, power logic, and Life and Planet Earth Logic, see Chan Koonchung (2014); see also Chapter Three. See the Chinese edition for the full Chinese-language citation.



CHAPTER 3—
*Living Out the Contradiction
of Our Time*

Living Out the Contradiction of Our Time

In this book's "Head of Speech" chapter, I promised my readers that I was not merely offering a Chicken Soup for society. I intend to fulfill my promise. Besides the following three quotes from Friedrich Nietzsche and the quotes in the "Afterthoughts, or Coda" with which my critics may take issue, other chapters do not seem to offer any practical Chicken Soup that soothes or helps, nor do they give any prescription. They do not even offer any hangover remedies, detox agents, or dietary supplements. Nietzsche says,

"There is more sagacity in thy body than in thy best wisdom."

"For believe me! —the secret for harvesting from existence the greatest fruitfulness and the greatest enjoyment is: to live dangerously!"

"What does not kill me, makes me stronger."

This chapter is concerned with the innovative but precarious co-evolution and co-adaptation of the stakeholders in the Anthropocene, and I hope, but cannot guarantee, that we all live out the contradiction of our time.⁰¹

3.1 —

In 1964, Marshall McLuhan compared technology to the human body, senses, and the nervous system, and likened it to the extension of the body's natural abilities.⁰² As early as 1959, a Hong Kong science-fiction film "Ten Brothers" (*Sap Hing Dai*) seemed to give McLuhan an illustration of his ideas. In the film, each of the decuplets born in the Republican period had a different amazing ability. For instance, the second eldest had a pair of antenna ears, which could hear sounds from miles away. The third eldest had superman arms, which could lift tons of weight. The fourth eldest had impenetrable skin, so he was immune to cuts from sharp objects. The fifth in the middle could fly. The sixth had a head as strong as steel. The seventh had a pair of roadrunner legs. The third youngest could drill into the earth. The second youngest had a mouth that could propagate sounds across an ocean or a continent. Nowadays, all these amazing superhuman abilities have been actualized by modern technology.

From satellite television network to the recent WeChat, Facebook, and LINE, everybody today is the eldest brother, who had a pair of eyes that could see far off distances. This guy knew what it feels like to be able to see images from afar.

It does not mean today's society does not need the youngest brother, whose special ability was to cry a lot. Indeed, there are too many events that warrant a good cry. Toward the end of the film, the nine brothers had exhausted their bag of tricks, the youngest cry baby, who was deemed to be useless as he would stand idle when his brothers were busy, finally redeemed himself as his tears showed its prowess by winning sympathy to save the day.

Using empathy to move others and call for others' compassion is one of the most effective and common social skills.

The film "Ten Brothers" imagined what the special abilities that could be of practical use to an average human being. In Buddhism, the power of

Abhijñā, or "higher knowledge," also includes some forms of superpower, namely, the heavenly eyes, the heavenly ears, mobility-at-will, telepathy, the power to know the karmic past, and the power to cease all negative thoughts in order to go beyond the samsaric cycle. "Ten Brothers," a film with a pantheist undertone, did not imagine the last three power.

Today, with big data, your informational footprints are being tracked, and in the near future, if not now, the market specialist will propose products tailored to your desires with this valuable information. Also, the government will archive your past on your behalf, perhaps it will know more than you do about yourself and gain the power to control your thoughts. Possibly, everyone in the future will be given a potion to clear their anxiety and negative thoughts, akin to Soma, the hallucinogen portrayed in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, and in addition simulate the effect of Samadhi and a lengthy stay at Samatha and Vipasana to achieve mindfulness, and consuming the potion can effectively erase the difference between life and death.

Where do human beings stand now? Is technology the extension of human abilities, or are humans the extension of, or even an attachment to technology?⁰³

3.2—

It is no longer science-fiction imagination, but happening in the world and affecting our lives. At the practical level, workers in the manufacturing and service industries are being replaced by technology. Advances in cognitive technology will automate transportation and logistics and eliminate manpower, driverless bus and taxi cab will reduce the demand for professional drivers, indoor robot will clean and maintain the interior of buildings or sell fast food in lieu of humans, and big data, cloud technology, and the Internet will not only replace salespeople and retailers, but many more "professionals" will also lose their jobs. The often cited recent example is the Symantec Clearwell eDiscovery Platform, with which 57,000 documents could be analyzed within two days, and as such, eliminated the jobs of many analysts and paralegals in law firms.⁰⁴

If this is the case, then the education one receives as one grows up will

become preposterous. How should society educate its next generation? What kind of skills should the next generation possess? What exactly are the so-called "transferable skills" and how do we better prepare the next generation for creative destruction?

The dual economy once proposed by the Hong Kong government divides the workforce into the upper and lower echelons.⁰⁵ In today's world in which technology and economy change rapidly, it is obvious that such view is myopic and irresponsible.

In the last chapter, I discuss the tremendous fluid changes in society that will be triggered by technology. Technology also brings new found social possibility and human connections, for instance, the Internet and WeChat in China have allowed incredible and unprecedented social and commercial interaction, and have even drawn people who usually do not discuss public affairs into public issues and discourse in the public sphere. However, on the flip side, this virtual space of the new media is still monitored closely by the authorities, and it is also an avenue for venting and disseminating hatred, bigotry, and lies.

Technology contributed to the adverse changes in the ecology of the Anthropocene, but it may be able to redeem itself in the future.

Genetically modified crops and food, cloning technology, artificial life, the human genome project, genetic fingerprinting, and eugenics, etc. all present us with trying ethical challenges.

Besides the technologies listed above, the development of nanotechnology will make it even harder for humans to monitor technology's impact on our lives. In the April 2000 issue of *Wired* magazine, Bill Joy, the Chief Scientist at Sun Microsystems delivered an alarming message as it is summed up in the essay's title, namely, "Why the future doesn't need us. Our most powerful 21st-century technologies - robotics, genetic engineering, and nanotech - are threatening to make humans an endangered species."

The humankind should not forget that the threats of high-tech warfare and weapons of mass destruction continue to loom over us.

What should we do?

3.3—

Technology is very important, but does it mean that we have to give up our control of technology? This question shares a similar logic with the following question: economic growth and environment are important, why are we not able to build a sustainable economy adequately? In other words, as human beings almost possess an all-encompassing knowledge on life, which is complemented by a social, economic, historical experiential cognition as well as the planetary thinking as proposed by the late Martin Heidegger, then why can't we use the Life and Planet Earth Logic to organize technological and economic development that is beneficial to all? My preliminary answer is as follows. First, the Life and Planet Earth Logic is not the one logic that allows human society to operate, and it is not even a strong logic. On the contrary, the Capitalist Logic and Power Logic are more inclined to dominate human organization, and these other logics overshadow the Life and Planet Earth Logic. Second, in this global age, it is increasingly difficult for a single man, a single group, or even a single country to make things right without succumbing to external influences. Third, some form of fair and just society must exist prior to initiate social, economic, and technological change that benefits everybody. As things are today, only those armed with capital or are in power become the beneficiaries.

As Murray Bookchin says in *The Ecology of Freedom*, "the very notion of domination of nature by man stems from the very real domination of human by human," the fundamental reason why the Life and Planet Earth Logic is sacrificed should be attributed to the unequal distribution of capital and power. We need to ask further why technology, market, society, and government, once the tools designated to serve humankind and practice the Life and Planet Earth Logic, have now become part of the unholy alliance with capital and power that does us disservice?

The book's earlier chapters investigate the dimensions of heterotopia and the possibility for innovation, the re-enchantment for the preservation of the local, the *techne* of the whole person, the relationship between the government, market, and community, the importance of equality in thinking through

development and growth, the double consciousness of identity diversity and universal ethics, and the good society being the foundation of our way forward. I think these chapters are interrelated, and offer some more reliable clues and insights. In the discursive tropological space, the views are organized and solidified while running the risk of tautology. However, as in the words of Niels Bohr, "clarity is best achieved through breath." Also, to quote Nietzsche once again, "to be truthful means to employ the useful metaphors." Here, I still want to use the Capitalist Logic, Geo-historical Power Logic, and Life and Planet Earth Logic as three metaphors that can illustrate what is happening in the world in order to point out their asymmetry as they are applied in the world. Through these metaphors, I want to establish that only in a just society (at the national and international levels) can the three co-evolve in an agonistic and cooperative mechanism. Humankind can then live a diverse, equal, non-oppressive, and productive life.

3.4—

I think that, throughout the last two decades, virtually the entire world has been permeated by the Capitalist Logic, whether the good is in public ownership or private ownership, or whether the economy is state-led or market-led. Perhaps some Southeast Asian enclaves or parts of the Islamic world, as the non-West and non-globalized exception, are able to construct, as their proponents claim, an alternative modernity that is not prompted by industrialization, European capitalism, and Communist "modernity." China, on the other hand, is not on this list. Since the land reform, the Communist Party has brought its version of "modernity" to the villages and other rural areas, and has completely transformed the traditional communities into the one "modern" society with the same state institutions everywhere. The modernity that originated in the West has already rapidly globalized the world, and the China in the last century is no exception, as the last three decades serve as a prime example of globalization's effects on China.

Inspired by David Harvey's idea that power can be divided into a capital logic and a territorial logic,⁰⁶ I specifically want to call various forms of

Capitalist Logic, and "the geo-historically inflected power logic," or simply "the Power Logic" in the following.

The Capitalist Logic and the territorial logic predicated on history and geography of the land work differently. The Capitalist Logic, in essence, is not the same as the natural market logic as discussed in Adam Smith. The goal of capitalist logic is very clear, once capital is accumulated, it is reinvested for further gain (or sometimes loss) which can be put into expanded accumulation and investment. The Geo-historical Power Logic has its own trajectory and past, its own characteristics or habits, so therefore its manifestation is very different in different countries. Every nation will go on its own proper path. Statism is one manifestation of the Geo-historical Power Logic. On the contrary, the Capitalist Logic is unitary in every corner on Earth, and with this logic, money flows to where more money can be made, and there is no centres in this logic. No matter where the money comes from, whether it be Chinese capital overseas, or American capital in China, the monies will come into contact with the Geo-historical Power Logic. The Capitalist Logic and the Geo-Historical Power Logic operate differently. The capitalist logic casts a wider, common net around the world, but the Geo-historical Power Logic holds on to a particular location or is confined to a locale.

The so-called "Chinese characteristics" pretty much end there, as it does not mean that the Capitalist Logic has not permeated China and allowed it to build a new and alternative modernity that is untainted by the global Capitalist Logic. This is not the case. The geo-historically inflected power in China, like everywhere else, has its special characteristics and trajectory.

As for capital, as Giovanni Arrighi says in *The Long Twentieth Century*,⁰⁷ there are risks associated with capital at all times, if it expands too much it will contract.

Roughly, I think the contemporary crisis will materialize itself in three ways. First, capital hits the wall. For instance, from the Asian financial crisis to the subprime mortgage crisis, capital's excess will lead to capital market's implosion, and market adjustments will have to be made.

Second, the Capitalist Logic (actually, the Geo-historical Power Logic

as well) clashes with what Karl Polanyi calls the self-protection of society and the civil society's resistance around the world,⁰⁸ and there are local or communitarian struggles everywhere. Resistance could be at the regional and national levels, or mobilized by international religious movements, or pan-national movements.

Third, the organizations propagating the Geo-historical Power Logic, among which the nation state is the most prominent one, make use of capital and power to protect their society and resist the capital offensive, but are also capable of colluding with power to infringe on society. Taking the so-called practical consideration of state interests, the state wants to exploit capital, but at the same time, it does not want to be limited by capital, so it maximizes state interest or some interests within the state in order to expand its power, capacity, and reach to the scale of global hegemony or regional sub-hegemony. The sub-hegemon is a concept I appropriated from Kuan-Hsing Chen's notion of the "sub-empire."⁰⁹ Conventional definition of the empire includes the imperial force and territorial ambitions, while a hegemon is mainly concerned with control and influence. The nation state, as the organization following and propagating the Geo-historical Power Logic, aims to become a hegemon and flex its national power. Currently, the United States is the only global hegemon, but a number of regional sub-hegemons are emerging. Of course, China is a world-class sub-hegemon and the regional geographical hegemon. There are more regional sub-hegemons, such as Russia, India, and perhaps Turkey, Iran, and Saudi Arabia are vying for leadership in the Middle East. Possibly, Indonesia could want to interfere in Malaysia and the Philippines again. As these countries wish to become a nation-state-based sub-hegemon in order to gain some bargaining power with the global capital, chances of these sub-hegemons wanting more say in their neighbour's affairs are high. In today's world, players on the international stage do not deal with ideals. The international organizations have their functioning but limited role. The more decisive force in international matters will be found somewhere between G2 and G20. When Capital and Geo-historical Power come together, the Capitalist Logic wins out, but all nation states still want to use capital more to

their own advantage, and this dynamic results in a situation of endless conflicts. These fundamental conflicts cannot be resolved, and is beyond the capacity of all world organizations, and there is no one hegemon that is completely capable of keeping the conflicts in check.¹⁰

The major differences between now and the early twentieth century are that global capital and the commodification of society are more complete. No big countries can fantasize about pursuing a path of its own and be completely detached from the capitalist world, for instance, the Soviet Union of the last century, Maoist China, and corporatist Italy (after the Great Depression of 1929, Italy intended to attain self-sufficiency). Nowadays, the economies of the largest countries have integrated, and this could be the reason why geo-historical powers are unwilling to wage wars for territorial gains. Indeed, before the First World War, many people thought that many nations shared common interests and another war was not likely. However, as history taught us, there were two world wars that ensued. Nonetheless, today's globalization not comparable to anything in the past.

I want to underscore the meanings derived from the notion of hegemony. The word "hegemony" means influence or control over others, but also refers to leadership or dominance (especially cultural dominance), and is associated with the history of imperialism, or indirect control to subjugate others or to create identification with the hegemon even without resorting to violence.

Who needs leadership or dominance in the world? Many self-serving sovereign nation states (geo-historical power) all compete in an era of world capitalism, and are driven by the same Capitalist Logic. They each desire more to serve their development and interests, and their elites and interest groups, too, will use nation states to advance their international agendas, and within the national boundaries, they tend to collude with power and money for internal domination.

The Capitalist Logic and the Geo-historical Power Logic at times clashed, but also co-created the virtuous cycles following the Life and Planet Earth Logic, and oftentimes, such instances were just a marriage of convenience. When they clash, we cannot concern ourselves with social justice, and the Life

and Planet Earth Logic falls short of becoming the guiding principles of society, economics, and technological development.

This book's message is the stakeholders of the Anthropocene continue to co-evolve and co-adapt, but as they are under the domination of the Capitalist Logic and Geo-historical Power Logic, technology, economy, and new social development increase these stakeholders' risks, and bring individuals and groups closer to the extremes and conflicts. As mutual trust and sense of security are missing, individuals, groups, and nation states will be guided only by their self-interest, and the power logic is enhanced as a result. Due to competition, the anxiety of losing out, or *zap syu*, those with vested interests serving nobody but themselves, and everybody clamouring to jump on a bandwagon named "desire," individuals, groups, and regions will only organize themselves according to the Capitalist Logic. This is the root cause of sacrificing social justice and sacrificing the Life and Planet Earth Logic, even if everybody knows that social justice is achievable, and that the Life and Planet Earth Logic is the right thing to do. They know, but they still do not do things differently. This is the contradiction of our time.

3.5—

The Life and Planet Earth Logic, the Capitalist Logic, and the Power Logic are ideal-type metaphors, which are heuristic and performative in their own right. However, ideas or metaphors are not reality, nor is life reducible to a representation or figure of speech.

Besides Western metaphysics, technological reason, social regulations and Power Logic, the framework of "living—life—body" has its supporters in Western philosophy and social thought after Nietzsche, and is followed by many who are seduced by the ideas generated within this framework to practice resistance or become activists in an age of money and power collusion and unchecked globalization.¹¹ Approaches informed or inspired by New Vitalism, new philosophy of life, Emergentism, dissipative structure, and self-organizing system, and the likes¹² are more popular in intellectual circles.

The influence is not limited to the humanities, but also has its adherents

in natural sciences as biologist and neuroscientist Francisco Varela professes, "at the very centre of this emerging view is that the proper units of knowledge are primarily concrete, embodied, and lived."¹³

At the same time, the Capitalist Logic of the post-Fordist era allows for expertise in using the body to promote consumerism,¹⁴ while the power of modern technology also makes its imprints on the trio of "living—life—body." However, for the activists in the heterotopia who understands the network's fluidity and immense possibility, the trinity of "living—life—body" still portends the eventual destabilization and subversion of the Capitalist Logic, Power Logic, and any fixed idea. "Living—life—body" is not a mere thing or object. It is immanent and an embodied process with its own desires and will. It draws on self-emergent energy, ability, and potential. It is a subject that can innovate. However, it is not a mere being: as it emerges as a presence in itself and not merely for itself, it should be more aptly be conceived as a becoming for the future. "Living" is living in and for the time and space "to come," and living is expressed as one lives to do, to make a living, to desire, to improvise, to stay alive, to pass the structure of time, which is living in a world created by humankind, and thus living out of the original constraints is a constant possibility.

Here, the intellectual circles of the Chinese-speaking world should add the importance Taoism places on the human body. According to Taoism, all living things have bodies and the soul is embedded in the body. Taoists believe that one's mind, not the heavenly will, is the steward of the body and life. Taoists also mention the social body, as social configuration is compared to that of the human body. Taoist emphasis of the body, which one cultivates for his own salvation, has become a central tenet of its theology,¹⁵ and may serve as the post-Deleuzian New Vitalist's reference to the philosophy of the body.

As for Taoist political actions, there are some mentions in history, but not many, have remarked its subversive potential. Besides one's cultivation of the body, early Taoism's teaching contains many political messages relevant to the contemporary world. For instance, Taoists talked about the practice of kingship, the harmony between heaven and man. Also, there are some

inspirational metaphors for good governance, such as the highest order of good deeds as being akin to what water can do for nature, as it nourishes all and takes none of the credit. Also, there is the Taoist saying that a great country is like a low-lying estuary; it is a place where all the lesser streams mingle and merge. A lot of work needs to be done on the mediation between the body and the Tao, as the political implications could surprisingly lead to legalist or even Fascist conclusion, but they could also lead to emancipatory and ecological ones. This is similar to the multiple political dimensions of the "living—body—life" approach.

3.6—

The Catholics and the Protestants have different Chinese translations of the Gospel of John. In the Catholic translation of the first sentence in the Gospel, the Chinese word for the Greek word *logos* is *yin (yan)*¹⁶ or word, whereas in the Protestant translation, the word for *logos* is *do (dao)*¹⁷ or the way (or even more popular now as the transliteration "Tao"). Are word and way the same concept?

In Chinese, when "*dao*" is used as a noun, it literally means the way and has special "metaphysical" significance.

However, the metaphysical noun "*dao*" ("way") and the Greek noun *logos* ("word," "speech") are very different.

When put into the contexts of early Chinese culture and Greek classical thought, the difference between the Way and the Word is substantial.¹⁸ Take the work of two classical scholars Geoffrey Lloyd and Nathan Sivin for instance, they use the Way and the Word to interpret the civilizations of ancient China and ancient Greece respectively, and compare and discuss many aspects of the two civilizations, from social and political institutions and the wisdom of the creators to how political participation influenced technological development. The authors aptly entitled their book *The Way and the Word: Science and Medicine in Early China and Greece*.

The debate between the Way and the Word was also going on in Western civilization. If the tradition of "Living—Body—Life" is closer to the Way, then

the tradition of Plato, Descartes, and Kant could be viewed as the Word. If Life and Planet Earth Logic is categorized as the Way, then a just society is one truth in the Word.

The genealogies of the Way and the Word are different. Can the two be reconciled?

In the last chapter, I attempt to use "double consciousness" to propose taking both the Capitalist Logic and Power Logic into consideration in the struggle, and incorporating both Life and Planet Earth Logic and a just society in the future. Moreover, Life and Planet Earth Logic must be built on the foundation of a just society in order to make its ideals a reality. It is the crucial tool all social innovators will rely on.

Taking more than one into account is a balancing act, but not a mastery of everything, amalgamation of two schools of thought, or the making of uneasy compromise. Many ideas and things are incommensurate and are still incommensurable in our age. Nonetheless, it does not mean that they cannot co-exist or run parallel to one another.¹⁹ This observation is most pertinent and judicious when we live the ideas and their contradiction out in our concrete, embodied experience, as Marx teaches us, "to rub together these conceptual blocks in such a way that they catch fire."

3.7—

Human beings as a species create conditions to their benefit and to their detriment simultaneously through *techne* and social innovation. Today, with blazing speed, humankind, technology, society, and nature co-evolve and co-adapt, a development that carries its own promise but also risks. Every generation can only live in their own time, and some will go to great lengths in order to live out the contradiction of the time. Some succeeded in the past, but future results are never guaranteed.

"Big History" is an attempt to a heuristic narrative, and in so doing, clarity is characteristically achieved through breath. David Christian says in his big history on "the Evolution of Humans" that "all species adapt to their environments, but most have only one or two adaptive tricks in their repertoire.

In contrast, humans seem to constantly develop new ecological tricks, new ways of extracting resources from their environments. In the jargon of economists, humans seem to have a highly developed capacity for "innovation." And they innovated not on the Darwinian scale of hundreds of thousands or millions of years, but on a scale ranging from thousands of years to decades and even less time."²⁰

Endnotes and Further Readings

- 01 "Living out the contradiction of our time" is the theme of many of my lectures and interviews, which is similar to the theme of this chapter, whereas the contents are different. This chapter continues the themes of the two previous chapters, and elaborates on the ideas behind "living" and the "contradiction of our time." Tang Xiaobing summarized my last talk on this theme, he writes, "last December, Chan Koonchung talked to 500 college students at Peking University and told them that in the context of China's swift changes, young people need to "have roots" and be grounded in the banality of everyday life. On the other hand, they also need to "have wings" and uphold their true selves and ideals, so that they are not dominated by Capitalist and Power Logic. Young people need a transcendental dimension. At the same time, as Chinese society remains corrupt, unjust, and in constant distress, young people cannot indulge in material escapism or follow the ill-fated path as everybody else. They should turn the toxins into nutrients. As Nietzsche says, one should overcome the time, fight its *ennui*, and live out the contradiction of the time. Chan's words caution the young men not to escape from the difficult time, or to imagine its dissolution, having the illusion of a grand époque of prosperity. Chan proposes an existentialist attitude reminiscent of Lu Xun, asking young people to be bold and confront the imperfect world." See Tang (2014). See the Chinese edition for the full Chinese-language citation. I proposed to "live out the contradiction of our time" as early as 1986, appropriating a line on "the contradiction of our time" by Roland Barthes. See Chan Koonchung (1986). See the Chinese edition for the full Chinese-language citation.
- 02 See Marshall McLuhan's *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (1964).
- 03 More on the philosophy of technology, see *Philosophy of Technology: the Technological Condition, an Anthology* by Robert C. Scharff and Val Dusek (eds., 2003); more on the philosophy of technology's turn, see *American Philosophy of Technology: the Empirical Turn* by Hans Achterhuis (ed., 2001). See also Chan Koonchung (2004). See the Chinese edition for full Chinese-language citation.
- 04 See Carl Benedikt Frey, "Creative Destruction at Work" available online (2014).
- 05 On the criticism on Hong Kong government's view of the dual economy, in which the high-income profession is at the top, and the lower-income service industry on the bottom rung, such as fast food workers, janitors, hawkers, and Disney park attendants, see Chan Koonchung (2005). See the Chinese edition for the full Chinese-language citation.
- 06 "If territorial logic blocks the logic of capital, there is a risk of economic crisis. If capitalist logic undermines territorial logic, there is a risk of political crisis." See Bob Jessop's "Spatial Fixes, Temporal Fixes and Spatio-Temporal Fixes" in *David Harvey: a Critical Reader* by Noel Castree and Derek Gregory (eds., 2006); see David Harvey's *The New Imperialism* (2003) and "Interview: Conversation with History" (2004).
- 07 See Giovanni Arrighi's *The Long Twentieth Century: Money, Power, and the Origins of Our Times* (2001).
- 08 See Karl Polanyi's *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time* (1971).
- 09 See Kuan-Hsing Chen's *Asia as Method: Toward Deimperialization* (2010).
- 10 More on Capitalist Logic, Power Logic, and the discussion on just society and Life and Planet Earth Logic, see Qi Ke's interview of Chan Koonchung (2014). See the Chinese edition for the full Chinese-language citation.
- 11 After Nietzsche, Baruch Spinoza, and Henri Bergson, the body began to replace the subject. The pioneers were Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Michel Foucault, and Gilles Deleuze. Deleuze's dissipative and immanent ethics are viewed as conducive to emancipation. Another approach was Norman O. Brown's turn to Sigmund Freud and underscored the body and a "Dionysian consciousness" to drum up support for the emancipation of the body in North America. See Norman Brown's *Love's Body* (1966) and *Life Against Death* (1959) and Susan Sontag's *Against Interpretation and Other Essays* (1966). The Left had its fair share of criticism on Nietzschean politics, and I recommend only one. See Murray Bookchin's *Re-Enchanting Humanity: a Defense of the Human Spirit Against Anti-humanism, Misanthropy, Mysticism and Primitivism* (1996).
- 12 More on New Vitalism and new philosophy of life, see Chapter 2.6; Emergentism underscores the immanent, self-organizing, and irreducible network, which distinguishes itself from empiricism, rationalism, and transcendental thoughts such as Hegel's dialectical synthesis. For more on Emergentism, dissipative structure, self-organizing system, and the notions of co-evolution, co-adaptation, and co-creation, see these interdisciplinary works, such as Stuart Kauffman's *Reinventing the Sacred: A New View of Science, Reason, and Religion* (2008); Gregory Bateson's *Steps to an Ecology of Mind: Collected Essays in Anthropology, Psychiatry, Evolution, and Epistemology* (1972); Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela's *Autopoiesis and Cognition* (1980); and Ilya Prigogine's *From Being to Becoming* (1980).
- 13 See Francisco Varela's "Making it Concrete: Before, During and After Breakdowns" in *Revising Philosophy* by James Ogilvy (ed., 1992).
- 14 See Christopher Lasch's *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations* (1979); Naomi Klein's *No Logo* (1999); and Joseph Heath and Andrew Potter's *The Rebel Sell: Why the Culture Can't be Jammed* (2004).
- 15 See Yang Rubin (ed., 1997) and Huang Junjie (2002); see the Chinese edition for the full Chinese-language citation. See Kristofer Schipper's *The Taoist Body* (1994).
- 16 The latest canonized gospel of Christianity's New Testament covers approximately the first century A.D. The theological centre of Judaism was in the Roman Empire's Alexandria, Philo, a contempo-

raneous Judaic theologian used the ancient Greek notion of "*logos*" to explain the relationship with God. Philo's influence was huge, and the Gospel of John circulated among the neighbouring Christians probably was under the Hellenized Judaic influence, so the word "*logos*" appeared in the Gospel (it was later translated into English as the "word").

- 17 The translator of the Protestant's Chinese edition of the Bible borrow the "Tao" from the Chinese metaphysics to interpret the ancient Greek notion of "*logos*." The translation could be said to be confusing. Of course, in some instances, *dao* (*do*) simply means "to say" as a verb.
- 18 The Way carries with it the sense of process, of change, which is not implicit in the Word. The Word is principles, spirits, essences, etc. The Way and the Word are both self-consistent; see Geoffrey Lloyd and Nathan Sivin's *The Way and the Word: Science and Medicine in Early China and Greece* (2003). Awareness of orientalism, reverse orientalism and essentialism can give us revealing readings of related texts of different periods. See Rabindranath Tagore's *Talks in China* (1925); Liang Shuming's *Eastern and Western Cultures and Their Philosophies* (1922); Carl Jung's *Psychology and Religion West and East* (1970); Zhang Longxi's *The Tao and the Logos: Literary Hermeneutics, East and West* (2006); François Jullien and Sophie Hawkes' *Detour and Access: Strategies of Meaning in China and Greece* (2000); Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki's *Mysticism: Christian and Buddhist* (1957); Fritjof Capra's *The Tao of Physics* (1975); John B. Cobb's *Beyond Dialogue: Towards a Mutual Transformation of Christianity and Buddhism* (1982); *Buddhism and American Thinkers* by Kenneth K. Inada and Nolan P. Jacobson (eds., 1984); *Heidegger and Asian Thought* by Graham Parkes (ed., 1987); and finally one important illustration of the difference between the Way and the Word is found in the case of Japanese Buddhism, in a debate between its topo Buddhism and critical Buddhism, see Jamie Hubbard and Paul Swanson's *Pruning the Bodhi Tree: the Storm over Critical Buddhism* (1997).
- 19 The "double consciousness" approach to the Way and the Word could perhaps be used to answer the question on the coexistence of Confucianism and Western democratic thought. See David L. Hall and Roger Ames' *The Democracy of the Dead: Dewey, Confucius, and the Hope for Democracy in China* (1999); Sor-Hoon Tan's *Confucian Democracy: A Deweyan Reconstruction* (2014). See also Deng Xiaojun's (1995) and Bai Tongdong (2009). See the Chinese edition for the full Chinese-language citation.
- 20 See David Christian's *Maps of Time: an Introduction to Big History* (2007).

3 —

Afterthoughts, or Coda

1 —

"Headstrong, forward-moving, questing for myself. Coming here, going there, without a foothold base." —Cui Jian, Chinese Songwriter and Singer

"One does not become fully human painlessly." —Rollo May

"Two roads diverged in a yellow wood, and sorry I could not travel both." —Robert Frost

"Human reality is so complex that one can only live it by using simultaneously or successively the most different methods: tension and relaxation, engagement and detachment, enthusiasm and reserve, certainty and criticism, passion and indifference." —Pierre Hadot

"The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, and still retain the ability to function."

—F. Scott Fitzgerald

"What I claim is to live to the full the contradiction of my time, which may well make sarcasm the condition of truth." —Roland Barthes

"How wonderful we have met with a paradox. Now we have some hope of making progress." —Niels Bohr

2 —

"The times test the mettle of youth. In meeting the test, youth creates a new era." —Chiang Kai-shek

"You cannot take a purely aesthetic interest in a disease you are dying from; you cannot feel dispassionately about a man who is about to cut your throat." —George Orwell

"Unless we burst out, we shall perish in this silence." —Lu Xun

"I cannot help fearing that men may reach a point where they look on every new theory as a danger, every innovation as a toilsome trouble, every social advance as a first step toward revolution, and that they may absolutely refuse to move at all." —Alexis de Tocqueville

"Forgive me if, in this life, I indulge myself for the love freedom, even if I fall down. One can betray one's ideals, but I will uphold mine even if there is only the two of us left." —Wong Ka Kui, Hong Kong songwriter and singer

"First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win." —Mahatma Gandhi

**"I still remember watching tidal bore,
The town poured out on rivershore.
It seems the sea had emptied all its water here,
And thousands of drums were beating far and near.
At the crest of huge billows the swimmers did stand,
Yet dry remained red flags they held in hand.
Come back, I saw in dreams the tide o'erflow the river,
Awake, I feel my heart with fear still shiver."**

—Pan Lang (translated by Xu Yuan Chong and Xu Ming)

