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“Leapfrogging the Catastrophe of Our Times”

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45. 〈「蛙越」這個時代的災難〉，2013年，徐麗松譯，呂岱如編，《這不是一座台灣館——第五十五屆威尼斯雙年展》，台北：台北美術館，頁36-39，

「蛙越」這個時代的災難

文 | 蘇哲安 (Jon Solomon) 翻譯 | 徐麗松

一九七八年夏天，我在美國納瓦霍族保留區 (Navajo Nation) 擔任英語教學志工。鄰近的霍皮 (Hopi) 族朋友帶我到沙漠高原上一個非常偏遠的地方，那裡的一塊石頭上刻了一個關於「人類」未來的神喻。朋友告訴我這些鐫刻代表世界會經歷的三場重大戰爭，其中前兩場已經在二十世紀發生，第三場則將在未來某個時間點爆發。神喻認為這場大戰將由「最初接收到原光」的一些地區啟動，或人們為了爭奪這些地區的領土而發生。一九七〇年代後期的思維中充斥著冷戰意識形態對殖民歷史的打壓，所以我一開始猜想這個神喻所假定的大戰爆發點代表的大概就是以色列／巴勒斯坦地區。但那年在納瓦霍族保留區的「僑居」體驗使我終於對孕育我的美國產生一種「外國」的疏離感，因之我對那個預言又有了一種新的理解，它逐漸取代了冷戰意識形態的解讀方式。在這個替代性觀點中，古文明所遺留的資產，亦即**現代人對古文明的挪用**，與**災難和神喻**有著剪不斷理還亂的糾結關係。

後來令我再度憶起那個霍皮族神喻，並驚覺至少對我而言它的意涵是如何地隨著時間而發生質變的，是白伯恩 (Bernd Behr) 在《時托邦》(Chronotopia) 創作中對美國科幻電視影集《星際爭霸戰》(Star Trek) 其中一集——〈所有的昨日〉(All Our Yesterdays, 一九六九年) 所做的引述。讀者可能記得那集節目的情節圍繞著一個即將面臨星際毀滅的文明，為了避免命運的劫難，這個文明決定逃入過去。最後終於讓那個他方星球的人類驚險逃過大災難的，是一部非常巧妙的機器，它可以透過一個蒐藏**過去影像**的檔案資料庫，開啟一扇時間之門，穿越這扇門以後就可以進行時光旅行（但只能回到過去，無法前進未來）。這扇門本身其實就是法國思想家紀德堡 (Guy-Ernest Debord) 在一九六七年提出的「奇觀社會」(society of the spectacle) 概念中所論及的一個典型機制：雖然乍看之下它的作用像是定義中所謂影像的必然構成要素之一——外框，但經過進一步觀察，我們發現這道門卻取代了影像，本身即可讓各種虛擬效果毫無限制地奔流而出。〔註一〕弔詭的是，這些效果總是將人導回「認同－差異」的累積。無論那個垂死的星際文明的人們最後返抵的時空距離他們逃離的「現在」是遠是近，他們終究發現自己依然置身於一個版本無限變化的、持續進行的，關於「他們那個族群」的人的故事中。〈所有的昨日〉劇情中那個文明透過科技巧妙地操縱「認同－差異」的影像，藉此對所謂「過去」進行一種令人驚嘆的挪用，並似乎因而獲得了解脫——亦即它找到了成就毀滅的奇觀方式；然而〈所有的昨日〉絕不只是一個關於那個後現代「他

方」星球的神話。它也寓含著一個關於未來的「我們」的故事（一個從一九六九年的時間點所想像出的未來）。觀眾在故事中目睹那個他方星球的人們如何「逃入過去」，以免除自己的文明被捲入超級新星即將帶來的星際毀滅中；他們搭上一艘名為「企業號」（Enterprise）的未來太空船，以光速逃離當下。這艘船的名稱讓我們不禁想到，一切彷彿都與**資本累積計畫**作為一種人類生活方式的概念有關。因此〈所有的昨日〉絕不只是一個關於如何透過影像對過去進行挪用的故事，它也是一個關於如何透過資本以挪用未來的寓言。故事在敘述前者的同時，似乎更隱約歌頌著後者；而我們不禁要深思一些嚴肅的問題：棲居地球的脆弱生態物種，如何能支撐人類在資本累積的既有條件下癡狂地前進未來的集體運動？資本主義的前提是在金錢創造與物品生產流動的不同階段取得時間性的延遲，藉以製造剩餘價值營取利益，但當資本流通的速度大幅提高到接近光速，也就是資訊革命儼然已經塑造出來的情況，這時到底會發生什麼樣的深層變動？我們是否受制於某種「價值偶然性」，不得不在關於一個從未發生的過去（例如我們在所有國家的電視節目中都會看到的歷史劇、古裝劇等）的影像，以及一個必須被迫放棄的未來（例如恍惚矗立台灣北海岸，宛如未來世界殘骸的飛碟屋〔註二〕）的影像之間進行抉擇？

這類問題提醒我們，我們身處的時代充滿著令人不安的轉折與過渡。在二〇一三年的今天，我們週遭隨處可見一個巨大的歷史性過渡正在發生的跡象。但我們該如何理解這個過渡？就人類社會的社會秩序及政治秩序觀點而言，如果要點出這個過渡的特徵，最好的辦法就是將它描述為一種從工業型資本主義到認知型資本主義的過渡，或者如前所述及，一種從過去透過殖民主義所建立的民族國家霸權秩序到一個混亂型全球國家霸權秩序的過渡；從一個不是那麼嚴謹的分析角度來看，這個過渡還可能通向一種透過新自由主義全球化運動所建立的「全球帝國」。^{〔註三〕}但無論如何，現階段這個過渡的特徵之一在於，以人類中心主義的政治、社會、經濟觀點量度變動的論述已經顯得不再足夠。我們可以看到自然科學開始探討「災難性過渡」扮演的角色何在，相同地，現今關於所謂「巨大轉變」的論述除了涉及人類社會本身，也海納生物、生態，關注多元物種及其所居環境。

呂岱如在「這不是一座台灣館」（This Is Not a Taiwan Pavilion）中讓不同藝術家交疊錯置的作法，展現出一種獨特的策展觀點。它同時交織著一些源自重要性似乎依然不減當年的人類中心主義論述元素——特別是映透在白伯恩作品中的「跨國遷移」（transnational diaspora）概念，以及凱特里娜·色達（Kateřina Šedá）作品所折射出來的「資本主義去疆域化」（capitalist deterritorialization）、「跨文化再挪用」（transcultural reappropriation）的可能性等概念——，以及特別是在許家維的作品中可以看到，透過生態及環境論述（生物多樣性、生態神話）對上述觀點進行移位的嘗試。我認為這個合成觀點和「台灣」這個概念之間是有一個鏈結點的，確切來說就是關於一個在國家與認同之間的想像關係中所發生的危機。

長期以來一套空洞的倫理觀一直企圖將認同與地域進行連結，將此種意識形態加諸人民身上，藉此挾持、宰制他們，以便攫取最大化的剩餘價值。當前在全球範圍內通過無數地方社群脈絡可以感受到的政治及社會焦慮之所以泰半持續從這套倫理機制中透析而出，恰恰足以暗示人類的集體命運約略等同於史尼育晤／中村輝夫／李光輝的個人命運〔註四〕。這位傳奇的「台灣魯賓遜」同時是一名有國籍人士與失格外邦人、一名福爾摩沙原住民與漂泊海外的離散者、一名能說多種語言卻沒有發聲權的沉默者。史尼育晤／中村輝夫／李光輝的境遇提醒我們，當人類的身分變得僅僅等同於國族，而國族變得僅僅等於企業（或公司）時，我們所可能遭遇的危險。奠基於國族的「安全認同」（securidentity）倫理體系大張旗鼓宣示保護人民，但卻隱含著一種由國家一手打造的、具有毀滅性形式的去疆域化（deterritorialization）程序；人民一個個被轉變為潛在性的海盜或恐怖分子，必須嚴加監控。^{〔註五〕}這股意

識形態勢力造成青蛙神明「鐵甲元帥」〔註六〕在中國江西省原鄉的居所於文化大革命期間被摧毀，而祂遷居馬祖後居民供奉祂的廟宇也在蔣介石以戒嚴法〔註七〕統治台灣時遭到拆除。這股勢力後來卻又會迫切渴望能吸引大筆資金，以國家文化遺產之名重建那些文化性地標，將其納入觀光業體系的生財機制之下。在觀光客拍攝的蛙神慶典照片中，我們看到地方官員在身披清朝復古服飾的同時，也不忘穿戴台灣政客（特別是日前執政的國民黨官員）普遍採用的「非官方制服」元素——棒球帽與運動夾克。這個景象讓我們不禁想到國家——任何一個國家——是如何在企盼能籠絡全世界所有「蛙神」參與它的大軍，浩浩蕩蕩地進行以資本占據生命的行動。〔註八〕

許家維作品的存在向我們揭示的是，儘管今天的後殖民與後帝國國家認同一致對過去進行挪用，這個狀態會同時無可避免地形塑出一個**提醒標誌**（reminder），並留下一個無法消弭的**餘項**（remainder）。它一方面提醒著我們關於人類受壓迫的歷史事實，進而進行某種反彈，並偶而透過幾聲「青蛙呱呱叫」〔註九〕，設法突破人們對一些呈現一個從未發生過的過去的影像自我陶醉地反覆臨摹的現況，一方面又映現著那些無法消化的剩餘物質，或說那個除不盡的餘項，也就是大眾——法國哲學家傅柯（Michel Foucault）所謂「國家這個怪獸」汲取養分的來源——中頑強地殘存下來的分子。正如現代人類對古代文明的挪用與災難和神喻的關係密不可分，當一千年前一隻青蛙變身元帥，取得神明的地位，那個時間點也被百姓（而非國家）視為與神喻（此指不含災難成分的神喻）的力量有關聯。但雖然評比機構（即那些對績效進行實時評估的官僚體系）和境外對沖基金（它將廢物變成價值，並將所有價值——當然，只有一個除外——變成廢物）最容易體現出今日新自由主義全球化運動的國家主義勢力所提倡的「神喻」模式，我們卻可以看到大眾所偏好的神喻模式就位在此間，在一片「在此地卻遙遠的沼澤」中。或者類似色達所言，「沼澤是週遭的中心；週遭是沼澤的中心」。對大眾而言，「神喻」宣告的並非國家口口聲聲強調的「神聖國族」（divine nation），而是語言與民族（「語言」及「民族」的概念，或不同語言和不同民族）的不確定性，它們之間根本上存在著的模糊與曖昧。這種不確定性一而再再而三地昭示著，人類真正需要的是攜手打造共享的未來，而非一味建立累積影像的資料庫。

在當今此起彼落、盤錯堆陳的論述、創作與身體語言中，充斥著太多關於「自我」（self）與「他者」（other）的譬喻，這就我的哲學品味而言不免顯得氾濫。面對這種景況，當然我寧可表達自己在「理論性」（在此我其實是引述許家維的想法，他在一篇早期文章中用此種詞語描述一位研究青蛙神明的學者）層面的保留態度。我料想，一旦我們走完目前處於進行式的「巨大轉變」程序，我們將不再以形質本體論（hylomorphic ontology）的觀點標記這個世界，而「自我」與「他者」這種語彙也將不再像今天這般大規模地動員我們的肢體、唇舌與心靈。但是，除非我們不小心出了差錯，否則我們只有一種方式能夠獲致那樣的未來，也就是穿越一道導向災難性全球大戰的「門徑」；打這場戰爭的原因與其說是為了撫平未獲正視的歷史不公（這種不公的存在著實不勝枚舉），不如說是因為關乎「過去」的**現代**影像持續阻礙我們共同建立一種合作形式的視野，以關照我們所可能變成的存在。

我不知道當那些札斯塔夫卡（Zastávka）的孩子們以游擊隊的方式，在台灣館外的場域介入二〇一三年威尼斯雙年展（由凱特里娜·色達策劃）時，他們是否會答應穿戴蛙頭裝束，我也不知道台灣館中蛙神鐵甲元帥所寓居的綠幕空間，是否能化身為一道通往時光旅行的時空大門，足以擾亂人類以災難性方式對過去進行挪用的行徑。但吉崎觀音的《Keroro軍曹》這

<http://billylo.pixnet.net/blog/post/28683840-%E3%80%8A%E5%AE%97%E6%95%99%E6%B4%BB%E5%8B%95%E3%80%8B2011%E9%>

[A6%AC%E7%A5%96%E5%8C%97%E7%AB%BF%E8%8A%B9%E5%A3%81%E5%A4%A9%E5%90%8E%E5%AE%AE%E5%AE%97%E8%97%9D%E7%9B%9B](#)，二〇一三年一月X日搜尋所得。

九、「呱呱」也就是中文裡模仿青蛙叫聲的擬聲詞，如同北美英文裡的「ribbit」。

十、<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frog>，二〇一三年一月X日搜尋所得。

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When I was working as a volunteer English teacher on the Navajo Nation in the summer of 1978, friends from the neighboring Hopi tribe took me to a remote area on the high desert plateau in which a divination concerning the future of humanity had been etched in stone. The etchings, I was told, represented the three major world wars through which the world would go, the first two having been those of the 20th century, while the third and last world war would happen at some time in the future. This war would be started by or fought over, it was said, the regions that had “first received the original light.” In the atmosphere of the late 1970s, dominated by the Cold War ideological repression of colonial history, the assumption was, I think, that this region represented Israel and Palestine. But as that experience on the Navajo Nation launched me into a diasporic experience that has finally made the United States into something of a foreign country for me, an alternate reading of that divination gradually superseded the Cold War one: in this reading, the legacy of ancient civilizations, which is to say, our modern appropriation of ancient civilizations, is tied together with catastrophe and divination.

It was the reference in Bernd Behr’s “Chronotopia” series to “All Our Yesterdays” (1969), an episode of the United States science fiction television series *Star Trek*, that recalled to me that Hopi divination and the way its meaning, for me at least, has changed over time. The plot of that episode revolves around a civilization faced with planetary destruction that averts its catastrophic fate by escaping into the past. What enables the human population of that “other” planet to escape imminent destruction, finally, is an ingenious machine that relies on an archive of images of the past in order to open a portal that will permit time travel (only into the past, not the future). The portal itself is a typical device of Guy Debord’s “society of the spectacle”: while it initially seems to act like the frame that is, by definition, an integral part of any image, further consideration reveals that the portal has substituted itself for the image, unleashing unlimited virtual effects.¹ Curiously, these effects always lead back to the accumulation of identity and difference. No matter how close or how far back in time they go, the people of that dying planetary civilization always find themselves in the midst of a continuous story, with endless variations, about “their” people. Yet “All Our Yesterdays” is not just a tale of that postmodern “other” planet, which seems to have fully resolved itself, i.e. consummated its destruction, in a spectacular appropriation of the past by a technologically-manipulated image of identity and difference. It is also a tale of a futuristic “us” (an imagined future from 1969) that witnesses this escape-into-the-past and narrowly averts being itself swept up in the drama of planetary destruction (caused by a supernova) only by escaping at the speed of light in a futuristic spaceship named *Enterprise*—a name that reminds us that what is at stake is nothing less than the project of capitalist accumulation as a way of life. Hence, “All Our Yesterdays” is not only a story about the appropriation of

1 Guy Debord, *La société du spectacle* (Paris: Buchet/Chastel, 1967).

the past by the image; it is also a story about the appropriation of the future by capital. While the story seems to valorize the latter over the former, serious questions remain: how long can frantic movement headlong into the future under the conditions of capitalist accumulation be sustained by the fragile living species that inhabit our planet? What happens when the circulation of capital, which requires a temporal delay between different stages of money and commodity in order to produce surplus value, is accelerated to speeds that approach that of light, as now occurs in the wake of the information revolution? Are we consigned, by an accident of value, to choose between the images of a past-that-never-happened (like those of the period dramas that fill up the screens of every nation) and those of a future-that-will-have-to-be-abandoned (like the “Futuro” home in Taipei, left like ruins of the future)?²

Questions such as these remind us that ours is an era of uncomfortable transitions. Today, in 2013, the signs of a massive historical transition currently underway are everywhere in evidence. But how should we understand this transition? In terms of the social and political order of human societies, the best way to characterize it might be as a transition from industrial to cognitive capitalism, or, again, from a hegemonic order of nation states established through colonialism to the hegemonic order of a chaotic global state or, less persuasively, a global empire, established through neoliberal globalization.³ Yet one of the particularities of the current transition is that the narratives of change measured in anthropocentric political, social, and economic terms are no longer sufficient. Just as the natural sciences have begun to inquire about the role of “catastrophic transitions,” the narratives of today’s great transformation are as much about biology—the multitude of living species and their environment—as about the societies of human beings.

The juxtaposition of artists featured in Esther Lu’s “This Is Not a Taiwan Pavilion” reveals a curatorial vision that weaves together elements from ever-important anthropocentric narratives, referenced particularly in the work of Bernd Behr (transnational diaspora) and Kateřina Šedá (capitalist deterritorialization and the possibility of transcultural reappropriation), along with their displacement by biological and environmental narratives, seen particularly in Chia-Wei Hsu (biodiversity and eco-mythology). The point of contact between this synthetic vision and Taiwan, it seems to me, concerns precisely a crisis in the imaginary relation between the state and identity.

Much of the political and social angst felt on a global scale across myriad local contexts continually coalesces around an empty ethics, the only vocation of which is to enforce a way of linking identity and area that captures and manages populations in order to maximize the extraction of surplus value. This is merely the best indication that our collective fate is roughly equivalent to that of Attun Palalin Teruo Nakamura Lee Guang-Hui. Both a national and a foreigner, an aborigine and a diasporic migrant, a man with many languages and no voice, Atun Pallalin/Lee Guang-Hui/Teruo Nakamura Attun Palalin Teruo Nakamura Lee Guang-Hui reminds us of the danger that awaits a time when humanity becomes identified *tout court* with stateness, and stateness with enterprise (or corporations). Ostensibly designed to protect us, this state-based ethics of “securidentity” (Bigo 2006) hides the destructive form of deterritorialization at the hands of the state that has turned everybody into a potential pirate and terrorist who must be kept under surveillance.⁴ This is the same force that has resulted in the

2 Also referenced in Bernd Behr’s work. Many people outside of Taiwan are probably familiar with the UFO houses in Sanzhi which received considerable attention in 2008 before demolition. See “Sanzhi UFO houses.” *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia* (Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., 3 Feb. 2013).

3 Jacques Bidet, *Théorie Générale* (Paris: PUF, 1999). For an English summary, see Jacques Bidet, “The Rule of Imperialism and the Global State in Gestation,” trans. Jon Solomon, in *Translation, Biopolitics and Colonial Difference*, eds. Naoki Sakai and Jon Solomon (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2006), 175-210. Also see Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt, *Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 2001).

4 Didier Bigo, “Globalized-In-Security: The Field and the Ban-Opticon,” trans. Anne McKnight, in *Translation, Biopolitics and Colonial Difference*, eds. Naoki Sakai and Jon Solomon (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2006) 109-155.

Hsu's work reminds us that the inevitable appropriation of the past by today's postcolonial and post-imperial state identities always creates or leaves a rem(a)inder. This is not just a *reminder* of the historically repressed that hops around and, via an occasional "*gua-gua*," breaks through the self-satisfied repetition of images -of -a -past-that-never-really-happened, but also an indigestible part, or *remainder*, of the multitude upon which feeds the Michel Foucault's monster that is the state.⁷ Just as the modern appropriation of ancient civilizations is tied together with catastrophe and divination, the moment a millennium ago when a frog became a general and assumed the status of a god is associated—by the people, not by the state—with the power of divination (without catastrophe). Yet while the model of divination favored by the statist-forces of today's neoliberal globalization is to be found in the ratings agencies, real time performance evaluation bureaucracies, and offshore hedge funds that turn junk into value and all values but one into junk, the model of divination favored by the multitude is located right here, in the middle of a remote swamp, or, to paraphrase Katerina Sedá: the swamp is the center of the surroundings; the surroundings are the center of swamp. Divination for the multitude is not the "divine nation" of the state, but rather the undecidability of language(s) and people(s), a fundamental indeterminacy that calls forth again and again the need for shared futures rather than images-to-be-accumulated.

I do not know if the children of Zastávka running guerrilla interference out of the Taiwan Pavilion at the 2013 Venice Biennale (organized by Kateřina Šedá) can be persuaded to wear frog head costumes, nor if the green screen room in which Marshal Tie Jia, the Frog God, is housed at the Taiwan Pavilion can be made into a portal for chronotopic time travel that disrupts the catastrophic appropriation of the past. Alien fictions like Mine Yoshizaki's *Sgt. Frog (Keroro Gunsô)* would seem to bear an important clue: stranded on Earth, Sgt. Frog—whose external appearance looks for all intents and purposes like the Earth-based amphibian order of *Anura* (i.e., like a frog)—surprisingly finds his most effective disguise among the *Homo sapiens* by wearing the mask of a frog. Living-on, sur-viving at the end of the

7 *"Gua-gua"* is the way speakers of Mandarin Chinese describe the sound that frogs make, like
 "ribbit" in North American English.

hylomorphic age, when social ontology is still roughly based on a pseudo-biological taxonomy that equates nations with orders, the best we can do is to disguise ourselves through doubling. Not in order to become what we are supposed to be, but rather to disrupt the system of "securidentity" via alien fictions. If we are successful, perhaps it would be possible to leapfrog over the catastrophic war over images of the past that awaits us.

Since I am one of those people who wishes that he had never left Taiwan yet has been forced, or lured, like so many others seeking to survive the anthropological divisions of labor, to seek work elsewhere, I can certainly appreciate the pact between Esther Lu and Kateřina Šedá: this is not a Taiwan Pavilion; Taiwan is everywhere. Yet for many of the people whose daily reality is defined precisely by that precariously allotted slot in the global division of labor, "Taiwan" (which by some figures has the longest working hours in the world), that pact will, unfortunately, remain indecipherable unless definitively related to the catastrophe of our times and the possibility for deep, profound, and meaningful change. Once again, Marshal Tie Jia is an inspiration and a sobering rem(a)inder:

"Frog populations around the world have declined significantly since the 1950s. More than one third of species are considered to be threatened with extinction and over one hundred and twenty are believed to have become extinct since the 1980s. The number of malformations among frogs is on the rise and an emerging fungal disease, chytridiomycosis, has spread around the world."⁸

8 "Frog." *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia* (Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., 5 February 2013).

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