Nuclear Futures in the Post-Fukushima Age

and German (often intertwining both languages in a single work) defy linguistic boundaries while calling our attention to the way language constructs reality. Recently translated into English, Tawada's The Emissary (2014) envisions a post-catastrophe Japan that has sealed itself off from the world and rewrote its history of international exchange by converting foreign loanwords into nonsensical character combinations, for example "Pseudo Opium" for a German black bread. Animals have all but disappeared, children are frail, and the elderly, now possessing the "gift" of immortality, care for the children who are paying the price of their disastrous mistakes. With humor and a light touch, Tawada speculates on the (nearly dystopian but sometimes unexpectedly intriguing) consequences of the unsustainable present for language, family structures, material practices, and human life in the future.

Popular media also function as articulators of information about and public dialogues on nuclear issues. In Japan, this is attested to by the tremendous consumption of a wide variety of testimonial, fictional, and scientific manga since 2011. Nice Weather Again Today: The Nuclear Disaster Volume (Chamru Yamamoto), Manga Savvy Oday (Kobukuro Shiki no 3-korin) and Goodbye Atomic Dragon (Yuka Nishikawa) flesh out multiple facets of the nuclear predicament and have prompted dynamic national debates when officials attempted to censor individual works. Comparing Susumu Katsube's manga Fuku- shima Devil Fish from the 1980s to the recent Ichi-F: A Writer's Graphic Memoir of the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant (2014-15) highlights the long-term practice of hiring "nuclear gypsies," the all-male contract labor pool that performs the most dangerous clean-up jobs, shifting the focus from "accidents" and disasters to the inherent and persistent dangers of the nuclear power industry. At the same time, Japanese hip-hop artists fuse potent messages about the precarious state of planet earth with the musical sensibilities of the younger generation. Shingo2 (Shingo 2), who performs fluently in both English and Japanese, accumulates the complicity of government with business interests, characterizing official media advocacy of nuclear energy as "propaganda from a sponsored podium." In "Rokkosha" (2008), he sings, "wake up the nations, we need ventilation of tainted information/gathered in the bottom of a nuclear reactor in nothing or clear about the cloudy factors/chaotic tactics/ army of paid actors/ heart and dark like cotton/ black rain back in the day prove disastrous." In "I won't see World Trade Center," one of the most entertaining and incisive music videos is "You Can't See it or Smell it Either," a product of the collaboration between reggae artist Rankin Taxi and the Anu music revival group, the Oki Aina Dub Band. While noting that "radiation doesn't discriminate," Bigfish, now arguably one of the most recognized symbols of the spon- cious promises of the nuclear industry. A focus on nuclear problems is also broadly evident in recent popular culture and art from Germany, where responses to the Fukushima triple disaster forced a new reworking with the environmental consequences of atomic energy. The first original German-language Netflix series Dark (2017) focuses on the fictional German town of Winden, where the local nuclear plant will be taken offline as part of Germa- ny's nuclear shutdown. Dark presents a time-travel narrative with interwoven plotlines from 2019, 1986, and 1953.

The myth of 'safety died at Fukushima'

An image of the Fukushima Dachi Nuclear Plant from Japanese hip-hop artist Rankin Taxi & Dub Aini band's "You can't see it, and you can't smell it either." Screen grab. Photo courtesy of the authors.

Artist in the world by ArtReview, making her the first woman ever to top the magazine's "Power 100" list. In Steyer's 2013 digital video installation "How Not to Be Seen: A Fucking Di- dactic MOV File," a demarcationless video target in the California desert, which was used by the U.S. Air Force during the Cold War era to calibrate aerial photographs, forms the stage for an intimate exploration of the paradoxes of the present, when heightened visibility due to the global proliferation of images and desire for a difficulty of comprehending changed forms of intimacy, of seeing weaponized drones, or of apprehending the multiplicity of transna- tional corporations (https://www.artforum.com/video/films-steayer/). How not to be seen--a fucking didactic educ- ional mov-file?2013-51651. At the automated voiceover in Steyer's video puts it: "Today, most important things want to remain invisible. Love is irres- tible. War is invisible. Capital is invis- ible." In Steyer's work, the remnants of nuclear pasts offer a reminder of the contingency of visibility in the digital age.

In 2015, the United Nations established seventeen distinct Sustainability Development Goals as part of its con- sciousness and ambitious "2030 Agen- da." Notably, the initiative's approach to global environmental concerns in- cludes not just the predictable items—climate action, affordable and clean energy, and responsible consumption and production—but also agendas for peace, strong institutions, gender equality, eliminating poverty, and qual-