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Climate Change in Visual Communication: From 'This is Not a Pipe' to 'This is Not Fukushima'

Kiyomitsu Yui

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How can we mediate the global risks such as climate change? The aim of the paper is to explore the problematic through sociological inquiry into the capacity of visual communication. In the first half of the paper, main discussion lies in the direction from the visual to the social in mutual construction process of the two (F. Kurasawa). In the section the power of the visual per se is emphasized as it is thought that in the tradition of sociological theory the power has been relatively neglected (W.J.T. Mitchell). The argument is related to the process of cosmopolitization in the consideration that the visual as the easiest 'world traveler' becomes more and more relevant in contemporary society. In the second half of the paper, the opposite direction from the social towards the visual is focused.

Working Papers Series

Climate Change in Visual Communication: From 'This is Not a Pipe' to 'This is Not Fukushima'

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The text

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Abstract

How can we mediate the global risks such as climate change? The aim of the paper is to explore the problematique through sociological inquiry into the capacity of visual communication. In the first half of the paper, main discussion lies in the direction from the visual to the social in mutual construction process of the two (F. Kurasawa). In the section the power of the visual *per se* is emphasized as it is thought that in the tradition of sociological theory the power has been relatively neglected (W.J.T. Mitchell). The argument is related to the process of cosmopolitization in the consideration that the visual as the easiest 'world traveler' becomes more and more relevant in contemporary society. In the second half of the paper, the opposite direction from the social towards the visual is focused. To the direction, the contextualization in mediating climate change in the region of East Asia becomes most relevant. In the contextualization the paper suggests the need for serious consideration on historical occurrences and their social impact in the region; warfare in the area. Facing the warfare in the region we can explore and analyze the mediating process of the global risks (nuclear energy plant explosion in Fukushima, climate change / climate destruction) in visual communication in both directions between the social and the visual.

Keywords

the visual, mediation, contextualization, regionalization, climate change

Le changement climatique dans la communication visuelle : de « Ceci n'est pas une pipe » à « Ceci n'est pas Fukushima »

Résumé

Comment pouvons-nous médiatiser les risques globaux tels que le changement climatique ? L'objectif de ce papier est d'explorer cette problématique à travers une enquête sociologique sur la capacité de la communication visuelle. Dans la première moitié du papier, la discussion principale suit la direction qui va du visuel au social dans le processus constitutif mutuel du deux (F. Kurasawa). Dans cette section le pouvoir du visuel pour soi est mis en avant car nous pensons que dans la tradition de la pensée sociologique ce pouvoir a été relativement négligé (W.J.T. Mitchell). Notre propos se veut en lien avec le procès de cosmopolitisation vu que dans la société contemporaine la conception du visuel comme « le voyageur le plus agile » devient de plus en plus importante. Dans la deuxième moitié de l'article, nous nous attachons au parcours opposé, qui va du social vers le visuel. Dans cette direction, la contextualisation de la médiatisation du changement climatique dans la région de l'Asie de l'Est devient plus importante. Dans la mise en contexte, notre article suggère le besoin de considérer sérieusement des cas historiques et leur impact social sur la région. Face à la guerre dans cette région, nous pouvons explorer et analyser le processus de médiatisation des risques globaux (l'explosion de la centrale nucléaire à Fukushima, le changement climatique/la destruction climatique) dans la communication visuelle en suivant les deux directions qui vont du social au visuel.

Mots-clefs

communication visuelle, médiation, contextualisation, régionalisation, changement climatique

The *visual* has been a second citizen in academics, and the tendency as such seems to be especially the case in the 'Western' tradition where the language is a phonetic symbol system and supposed most advanced when it keeps sharpest and farthest severance from the visual imitation / copy of the nature. It is only the language discourse as the articulated system of phonetic elements that can create critical thinking and other means of human communication should be ranked as secondary level and idle way in constructing the critical argumentation, that is supposed in the tradition. As W.J.T. Mitchell points out that idol in the context of idol worship in the 'West' is the image of false and illusional vision and it is the most sinful mistake academics can ever commit that the idol worship, from its Western philosophical tradition of Plato (the allegory of the cave in that projected images are deep-seated illusion of human beings) via Francis Bacon (listing the idols including that of the cave, see Mitchell, 2005, p.189) to Theodor Adorno in his criticism on 'photological proof' in culture industry as a dialectical opposite to the language of Enlightenment (Horkheimer and Adorno, trans. by E. Jephott, 2002, p.118).

Though this article is not trying to overturn the tendency to the opposite pole, but to balance it for the theory of communication via *visuality* AND language, even for that purpose it seems that we need, say, the 'affirmative action' first, for the *visuality*.

The fundamental irony in doing this 'affirmative action' concerns the mode of expression of the article itself; I need to 'write' (express) this in its intrinsic phase through the combination of language AND the visual materials to 'show' and indicate the significance of the shift towards the visual.

Now the first material is a 'famous' polar bear on the tiny piece of melting ice. If you click any internet site by the keywords such as 'global warming,' one of the images first appears is the melting ice in North (and South) Pole and then you will see these 'cute' animals in endangered situation popping up in front of you. For some people this is one of those iconic images when we talk about the climate change. Actually these visual images themselves have some impact by their own right, and the first half of the article

will concern this capacity or power these visual images themselves have.



To make it sure I am not saying that there are no contested discourses around these images; actually when we say that this image is such a clear and severe indication of symptom of global warming we have just in front of us, some people would say in counter arguments that 'no, no problems with them and the environment surrounding them, first of all, polar bears can swim, and they have been survived even severer situation of less ice in its unconscionably long history of the earth.'

Even when some people suggest that because of the ice melting, it becomes the situation that the less food for polar bears and it leads them to the miserable situation of feeding on each other, yet some other people respond that 'no, no, they have a habit of devouring one another as their nature long before we started talking about the global warming.' We could have actually contested arguments around one visual image.

Same here as this 'famous' island Tuvalu; with the caption of 'Tuvalu in danger' of submergence by the effect of melting ice and the image itself has again its own impact.



Some news reporters including the one who was once Japanese TV newscaster and then became an official of United Nations in its public relation sector, have visited this island to report its serious situation of the people's daily life in this small island and the report has been broadcasted as

one of those documentary programs in Japanese TV station. Yet again there is no rigid consensus among scientists or specialists as to the exact cause of the phenomenon. Rather, there are still some contested discourses around the issue, meaning that some people say that there are no scientific proofs, and it actually the case that, to say the least, scientists do not reach to common consent and their scientific observations and opinions differ, if the melting ice by global warming is the exact cause of the Tuvalu phenomenon.

Set aside these contested arguments, or exactly among these very contested disputes, you can easily see in the internet the images such as follows; The image like below with the caption, say, 'This is not Tuvalu,' and, of course, it is not, but (the photo of) New York in a composite picture.



<This is not Tuvalu>

This type of the caption, 'This is not Tuvalu,' with the photo of New York, we can also do if you like with the photos of Hamburg, Seoul, Osaka / Kobe, Copenhagen, Liverpool, Rotterdam, London, Paris and so forth. As I will touch upon the issue, this *combination* of caption and photo could imply a certain 'critical' stance of insight towards the interpretation of meaning of it. The possibility of the 'critical' communication via certain combination of the visual and the social (meaning) is the main target of the subject matter of the paper.

In the paper it is argued that, in the cosmopolitizing globe, it becomes more and more the case that the *social* is constructed via *visual* image, and at the same time, *the visual* is constructed via *the social*. The social and the visual is mutually constructed (F. Kurasawa, 2012). There are some sociologists who are now committing to this new insight in sociology termed as the visual turn of sociology such as J. Alexander, F. Kurasawa among some others.

In the first half of the paper I will focus upon the aspect / direction, from the visual impact to the social, and in the latter half of it the focus will be on the aspect / direction, from the social to the visual.

The first issue lies on the basic shift of people's action orientation in contemporary society. The following is a quotation from one of Japanese sociologists, T. Maruyama who is a specialist on the theory of globalization, and who is particularly interested in the different aspects of symbolic expression in terms of globalization. He developed his arguments from the basis founded by T. Parsons in the field of cultural sociology, namely symbolic system in relation to social structure. Maruyama's focus is especially on expressive aspect in the visual or digital modes of orientation in contemporary society. Among others, his major contribution to the renovation of the theory is on the aspect of the expressional dimension of culture, which was relatively weak in Parsons' theoretical configuration, contrasted to the age of globalization. Maruyama comments:

"It cannot be deniable to consider that in the age of the formation of action theory, the expressional element was treated as a residual category comparing to cognitive and evaluative elements. ... though to deal with contemporary culture, in relation to the advancement of facsimile duplication technology that involves with the popularization of electric media, it is needed to incorporate the elements of expression into a unified theoretical frame of culture" (Maruyama, 2010, p.56).

Maruyama's argumentation, in other words, concerns the issue of which aspects of the symbolic system (culture) can be globalized more easily than other aspects. He states further:

"If I dare to put the discussion forward, as the result of globalization, when globality is emerged with emergent property, the essence of it should be explained as the symbolic constitution mediated by symbols. In this context, we should identify the symbolic domains that can be prone to globalize and that of inseparable from local places" (Ibid., p.145).

In conclusion, Maruyama refers to, these aspects as cognitive and expressive ones:

"To apply the assumption of autonomy and globalization of symbols to the elements of

cultural system in the Parsonian sense, because the empirical / cognitive system of culture has a most distinctive code and symbolic autonomy, it fits to the manipulation of simulation. Therefore it is featured the possibility of constant reconstruction and reproduction on the global level....

Then, expressional cultural elements based on emotional cathexis, by constant reproduction as the object of desire beyond necessity, in the domain of visual symbol and image, become to constitute the core of consumer culture. Simulation involves with elaborate technic of duplication by digitalized mode, creates things of emotional satisfaction with 'persuasive power' because of its reality and visuality" (M. Maruyama, *Globalization of Culture*, p. 175).

In the age of visual turn in sociological theory concerning global public sphere, I consider that Maruyama's contribution to the field is significant. Meanwhile, we should point that his arguments tend to stick on to Parsonian terminology deeply so that we can have a more freed imagination of globalization. Another issue is that the other sectors of society as a whole (political, economic, and social) remain to be investigated from Maruyama's point of view.

As I pointed in the beginning part of the paper, visuality has been a second citizen among academics but not necessarily the case in ordinary people, and the problematique becomes more serious and relevant in contemporary society where visual communication / transmission is penetrating into our daily life much more deeper than before for both of academics and 'ordinary' people (the distinction between the two per se is now one of the problematiques in our time).

In this context we can quote A. Appadurai as well.

"they [electronic media] are resources for experiments with self-making in all sorts of societies, for all sorts of persons....Because of the sheer multiplicity of the forms in which they appear (cinema, television, computers, and telephones) and because of the rapid way in which they move to through daily life routines, electronic media provide resources for self-imaging as an everyday social project." (Appadurai, 1996, p. 3-4). "The link between the imagination and social life, I would suggest, is increasingly a global and deterritorialized one." (Appadurai, 1996, p. 55).

Considering Appadurai's idea in combination with Maruyama's arguments leads to the insight that the power of the capacity of the digitalization / electric media upon construction of people's daily consciousness lies in the vividness of the visuality.

The mode of the relevance of the visuality to the shift of people's basic orientation lies in its very 'nature'; the aspect of orientation of the visual, especially in the shape of digital mode, can be supposed as the easiest world 'traveller' through the three aspects of cultural symbols, namely cognitive (including language, mathematics, linguistic...), cathectic (feelings, emotions...), and evaluative (suppose traditional type of religions).

In this regard, the visual concerns most, among others, cathectic phase of human communication (and these arguments are needless to say, always in the mode of 'relatively speaking'). Digitally reproduced images = visualities are, as Maruyama put it, emotionally penetrative into our mind, and shaping 'easily' our daily life and daily consciousness. Here we have one of the most relevant connections of *the visual* with the age of cosmopolitization.

In this former half of the paper we are considering the focus of the impact of the visual image per se. In other words, that is the focus of the direction in that people are contesting with each other based upon the image, around the image, and with the image (say, of the image, by the image, for the image). Whatever issue we are talking about in these days we cannot escape from this image as (to say the least) the first impact. In this sense, if we use one of those 'traditional' terms in communication studies, the visual has the capacity of 'agenda setting.'

To indicate the point I use the following example; Fukushima. The capacity of setting agenda is also the case in what occurred in Fukushima disaster in 2011.



As you watch this image of the very moment of the explosion of Fukushima Daiichi (the First) Nuclear Power Plant in your living room, TV news reporters, casters and critics were talking *around* this image and the impact of the event itself still remains with us with this image. We still are not able to escape from this visual image when we talk about Fukushima.

There is a conception coined by F. Kurasawa, the 'foresighted cosmopolitanism' (Kurasawa, 2007, p.109). This visual image of the explosion, in this regard, had a function of the 'foresighted cosmopolitanism' in global media, for the people on the globe, in the 'capacity of 'wake-up-call' and in the 'awakening the sense of concern (Ibid., p.109). As in the case of Chernobyl, this is the second really global awakening call for global risk society.

F. Kurasawa is one of the most brilliant sociologists who are doing the sociological theory in the visual turn of sociology and in his case the original virtue lies in his developing the focus on *critical theory*. In the paper which he submitted to the conference held in Kobe Japan he argued like following framework for the critical sociology of visibility (Kurasawa, 2012). The explanation that follows below is not exactly by his own but in my understanding of the paper.

To do the critical sociology of visibility there can be considered an analytical framework that consists of three main aspects in consideration and that also concerns to do the empirical research program; symbolic structure, network of circulation and iconographic field.

The aspect of symbolic structure concerns the quality of organizational structure of the symbolic work itself, for instances, say, beautiful, ugly, good or badly structured, that matters after all. In case of the polar bears, this 'cute' looking ('kawaii') animal in 'snow white' color on also purely white background in combination with tiny melting chunk of ice on which they are barely hanging should be an appealing one than other images in its structural arrangement of the elements.

Network of circulation concerns how these symbolic works reach to the people. How are CSOs or NGOs (for example, eco movements practitioners) involved in the circulation, effectively or not so, depends on the network of the circulation. In case of the polar bears, there have been plentiful of events organized by environmental

protection groups both in governmental and non-governmental sectors. For instance, Kochi prefecture in Japan has its Environmental Activity Support Center and they regularly do the event called 'Eco-Labo' (meaning ecology laboratory). In one of those events, they invited a director of NHK (Japan Broadcasting Agency, the biggest broadcast agency in Japan) as a speaker who is in NHK in the section of Science and Environment and the Kochi Center organized the Forum for prevention of global warming. The director actually made and broadcasted a program for the NHK entitled *Great Transformation of North Pole: When Polar Bears Disappear*.

Also we have many books featured on the animal. Among those, Nicola Davies' *Ice Bear: In the Steps of the Polar Bear*, 2005, or Jean Davies Okimoto's *Winston of Churchill: One Bear's Battle Against Global Warming*, 2008 are famous, and these have been translated into Japanese. National Geographic Society also issued some DVDs featuring this animal in relation to global warming. There has been a campaign by WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature) on naming two mother polar bears that were object of the research operated by the Fund called Polar Bear Tracker in North Pole area.

The third analytical aspect in Kurasawa's theoretical frame is the Iconographic field and it concerns the situation / field in which a competition among the symbolic works takes place. The relevant notion is P. Bourdieu's 'field' of competition in cultural distinction. Why polar bear (or island Tuvalu, or something else), why one particular work wins in the competition and not other ones in this iconographic field is the issue here.

In the context of the polar bears, for instance there are photographic genres such as animal photos, eco-photos, or more broadly natural / scientific quality of photos like *Natural Geography* type. Each genre has its own accumulated cultural memory and collective taste. Upon these cultural resources used as cultural capital photographers compete with each other to try to create persuasive 'next' trend, in-fashion piece of work in the genre. From overlapping trials among them somehow the photos of those polar bears won in the cultural / photographic field. We can trace it more empirical manner that the detailed process of the competition.

To develop the sociology of visuality especially in connection with critical theory, as I am going to touch upon the issue in the next section, we need to construct this sort of analytical framework for the breakdown (to subdivide) of the ideas in the theory and also for doing the empirical research.

We have so far dealt with the direction / aspect, from the visual to the social, in the mutual construction processes, now in the next section we proceed to the direction of, from the social to the visual which is fundamentally concerns *critical sociology*.

In this direction we start with the argumentation of 'this is not a pipe.' 'This is not a pipe' is a title of Rene Magritte painting as well as that of the article written by Michel Foucault upon the painting.



<This is Not a Pipe>

Foucault sees the core of mystery of the painting as follows;

“What misleads us is the inevitability of connecting the text to the drawing (as the demonstrative pronoun, the meaning of the word *pipe*, and the likeness of the image all invite us to do here)—and the impossibility of defining a perspective that would let us say that the assertion is true, false, or contradictory.” (*This is Not a Pipe*, M. Foucault, translated by J. Harkness, 1982, p.20)

“Magritte secretly mines a space he seems to maintain in the old arrangement. But he excavates it with words. And the old pyramid of perspective is no more than a molehill about to cave in.” (p. 37)

“*Ceci n'est pas une pipe* exemplifies the penetration of discourse into the form of things; it reveals discourse's ambiguous power to deny and to redouble.” (p. 37).

Here we have the issue of the capacity of the combination of visuality and language discourse. Through this very *combination* or *encounter* we see the points of 'excavate' visual with words or 'the penetration of discourse into the form of things' and then the 'discourse's ambiguous power to deny and to redouble.'

To look back the example of 'This is not Tuvalu' type of caption, it was also able to be considered as the one in which the 'encounter' of the visual and the discourse reveals its 'ambiguous power to deny and to redouble.'

In other words, this is the 'penetration of discourse into' *the visual*, and from this point on we have the issue of the penetration of *the social* into the visual.

To connect the issue of penetration of language discourses with *the social* more definitely we can consider W.J.T. Mitchell's ideas. In one of his books, entitled *What do pictures want?* (2005), Mitchell has developed the analytical frame for delineating the relationship between the visual and the human agency.

Mitchell proposes three different modes of the relationship between human agent and icons (visual images); Modes of fetish, idol worship, and totem.

The mode of the relationship of Fetish is basically connected to the desire to touch the icons and to attach them to the body, to make them as a part of one's body. This can be said that it is in a psychoanalytical mode which is exemplified in the practices like tattooing, devoted love with stuffed toy doll, high-heeled shoes, and so forth. In regard to this paper, it could be an example that there are stuffed toy doll of polar bears beloved by children and the children could be activists in the future in the fields related to the climate change issues.

The mode of Idol worship is the one in which people adore icons, have a desire to become them and posse them, to be belonged to them. Practices that are exemplified in the mode include costume play, adoring comic figures, idol singers, movie stars, celebrities in general, and so forth. In the context of this paper, it could be an example that famous idol / star actors or actresses will appear as enthusiastic activists for climate change issues and thus people engage their attention to the issue in adoring them.

The mode of Totem is familiar to sociologists. This is a Durkheimian idea of solidarity among tribe, community and society in which the visualized thing called totem is the core symbol of the solidarity. In the context of this paper, as objects in fetish mode and idol worship are able to be used as totems as well and those stuffed toy doll of polar bears or idol stars can be appeared as 'totems' in a more direct connection with solidarity among people in the 'community' of movements in above mentioned sense.

Beyond the positioning of Durkheim by Mitchell, actually Durkheim can be considered as a founder of visual turn of sociology in general from sociological point of view. In his *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, Durkheim wrote as follows;

"..., we arrive at the remarkable result that *the images of the totemic being are more sacred than the totemic being itself.*" (Italic by Durkheim, Durkheim, trans. by Fields, 1995, p.133).

"..., and the animals and plants used as totems would play the leading role in religious life. But we know that the focus of the cult is elsewhere. It is symbolic representations of this or that plant or animal. It is totemic emblems and symbols of all kinds of that possess the greatest sanctity. And so it is totemic emblems and symbols that the religious source is to be found, while the real objects represented by those emblems receive only a reflection" (ibid., p.207-8).

"Now what does he see around him? What is available to his senses, and what attracts his attention, is the multitude of totemic images surrounding him. He sees the waninga and the nurtunja, symbols of the sacred beings. He sees the bull roarers and the churingas, on which combinations of lines that have the same meaning are usually engraved. ... Repeated everywhere and in every form, how could that image not fail to stand out in the mind with exceptionally sharp relief? Thus placed at center stage, it becomes representative. To that image the felt emotions attach themselves, for it is the only concrete object to which they can attach themselves." (Ibid., p. 222)

Durkheim's logic here goes like follows; for Durkheim ultimate sacredness lies, as you know in collective consciousness, and the sacredness in this context is the core of the human solidarity,

yet reading the book thoroughly he at the same time puts the greatest importance upon the materialized shape of it, that is the totem. Totem is from the bonds between the individual and those sacred animals, plants, and natural beings, but as the quoted passage clearly shows, for him furthermore, the core of the sacredness of totems lies nothing but in the images of them, materialized image per se, such as tattoo on the body, churingas, painted images, "combinations of lines" on soil, rock, or wood, materialized sign, emblem, and so forth. In short, it is this visual image shaped in materiality that is ultimately sacred for the solidarity as a society.

It is worthwhile to note that Durkheim's insight on the sacredness of the relationship between visual image and solidarity is now becoming more and more relevant to the mind-set of contemporary 'ordinary' people. Actually Durkheim puts it in the beginning part of the book, *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, that his own interest is on the 'present-day man,' "More especially, it is present-day man, for there is none other that we have a greater interest in knowing well. ... I have made a very archaic religion the subject of my research because it seems better suited than any other to help us comprehend the religious nature of man, that is to reveal a fundamental and permanent aspect of humanity." (Ibid., p.1) . Thus we have yet another significant and relevant issue here; there are two lines of the relationship between images and human beings. The idol (as visual illusion) disdain in intellectual tradition from Plato via F. Bacon to Adorno on the one hand, and on the other, deeply intrinsic and emotional tie between the image and human being among 'ordinary' people.

At the same time, serious question comes from critical social sciences, namely Adorno's criticism upon culture industry, which raises the critical issue of what kind 'solidarity' that the relation of visibility to human agency construct; that can be only very superficial, pseudo solidarity, "a caricature of solidarity" (Horkheimer and Adorno, trans. by E. Jephott, 2002, p.112). Also as to the issue of communication via visibility ("photological proof") in relation to culture industry they wrote as follows; "The mere cynical reiteration of the real is enough to demonstrate its divinity. Such photological proof may not be stringent, but it is overwhelming." (Ibid., p.118). Actually in this book of Horkheimer and Adorno's, especially

in its chapter entitled Culture Industry : Enlightenment as Mass Deception, almost all the significant issues related to culture industry and visual communication have been laid out, from essentially paradoxical nature of commodity named culture, forceful urge through visual image (“photological proof”) penetrating into people’s mind, blurring the boundary of high and low arts, mass as manipulated or subjective agency in (counter) interpretation, culture industry in re-enchantment and visual turn, to the issue of what kind of solidarity can it be that the fandom cohesion. But I have spelled out more or less in detail all these issues in another paper, though in Japanese, here I just mention the problematique (Yui, 2013, A Portrait of East Asia in the Age of Popular Cultures Inter-Penetrating with Each Other in the Region: in the Middle of Social Transformation via Globalization, in *Collected Papers* of Joint Conference co-organized by Japan Society for the Promotion of Science and Chinese Academy of Social Sciences).

Though Mitchell himself does not necessarily / clearly touched upon the following mode I will add the forth one to develop the line of the discussion.

Forth mode of the relationship between the visual and human agency can be called *Critical Idol Destruction Through Visuality*. This mode expressively indicates the effect of very *combination* of language discourse and visual image, like the case of ‘This is *Not* a Pipe,’ that is the mode which reveals the moments of ‘excavation of visual with words’ or ‘the penetration of discourse into the form of things.’ Then, what is the difference between traditional pattern of the criticism upon idol worship by intellectuals and this mode of *Critical Idol Destruction*? The difference lies in the way that the destruction is performed *through the visuality per se*, just like the case in *the painting* of ‘This is Not a Pipe’ by Magritte.

Instead of starting with human action, Mitchell suggests that we can start / initiate the analysis with pictures themselves. Picture as a subject / initiator evokes human action and human collectivity. Therefore the approach can lead us to both of the text analysis and social context analysis at the same time.

Put it yet differently, fetish, idol and totem have their own ‘wants’ towards humans; totems want to be a core of human solidarity, therefore want to

be their friends, comrades, coteries, while fetishes want to be embraced by people, people immerse into them, and attach them on their body, and finally idols want humans to be sacrificed for them, and to be adored by them. This approach starts its analysis with pictures per se as the initiating point of reference, so I will call this way of analysis as ‘text-*subjectism*.’ That is why pictures as original point of power do have the power to connect people.

Yet in these four modes of the relationship between the visual and human agency, the last one, critical idol destruction is the closest window to the direction from the social to the visual and the factors from the social is the most crucial in the mode.

Now we can suggest the point that in the direction / aspect of the mutual construction process of reality, which is from the social to the visual, one of Beck’s projects, regional contextualization of cosmopolitization is the most relevant.

In responding to the project of this regional contextualization of cosmopolitization, I will focus in the following section, on the case of East Asia as the region.

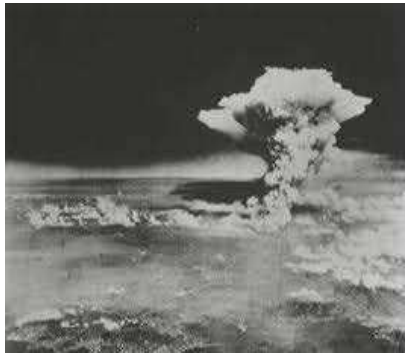
As a case study in East Asia in relation to the issue of Climate Change, I suggest the following themes.

1. Territorial dispute in recent East Asia with its background of the history of invasive wars by Japan in the region.
2. After Fukushima
3. Kyoto Protocol and COP 18

I will start with the last issue of the Kyoto Protocol and COP 18. With respect to the regional mediation of climate change in the area called ‘Japan,’ one of the issues of concern has been the regulation of carbonic acid gas exhaust. Japan has (had) supposed nuclear energy plant as the main technical condition to clear the regulation of the Kyoto Protocol. What happened in Fukushima blew off this plan. Because of that, now Japan is reluctant to declare any serious commitment to COP18. While, *after Fukushima* we realized that the very existence of nuclear energy plant can be the source for fundamental risk to climate change or more exactly put, to climate destruction.

My point here is that in the situation of After Fukushima, we could do the visual communication

like this; This sort of photo with caption of ‘This is not Fukushima.’



<This is not Fukushima>

Actually this is not Fukushima because this is Hiroshima. <This is not Fukushima but Hiroshima>, can be an example of *Critical Idol Destruction Through Visuality per se*, namely in its mode of *visual communication* combined with language discourse of captions that ‘excavates the visual with words,’ like it occurred in the case of ‘This is not a pipe’ in combination of the visual and the language discourse, that penetrate ‘into the form of things.’

Put it differently, in connection with *the social* more directly, Japan in its post WW2 history, has been failed to connect these two, Fukushima and Hiroshima until the time of actual explosion of the nuclear energy plant in Fukushima. But why has it been so? The question leads us to broader relation in terms of both axes of time and space, with the region of East Asia.

Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombings per se are of course tragic events for Japanese people, not confined to the direct victims but for Japan in general. And this led to significant peace movements after WW2 Japan. That is true. Given this positive side, yet at the same time, it can be said that Hiroshima / Nagasaki bombing has been a symbol for Japanese ordinary people as war-victims, and not as offenders. Meanwhile, from other Asian people’s perspective, it was the ending effect of suffering by Japanese invasive wars. Japanese (ordinary) people’s consciousness as victims, it could be said, has been functioned as a ‘barrier’ towards the imagination of Asian people as victims, their sufferings, their traumas caused by the wars. Consciousness as victims by the atomic bombing of United States of America has brought to Japanese people, in the very heavy relationship with the USA after WW2, through

overlapping areas of political, economic, and socio-cultural terms, deeply confined imagination to the relationship only to the USA. As Japan has been under the umbrella of nuclear weapon of the USA, the Archipelago has been like cocooned by the power of USA separated from other Asian countries in its imagination.

It is not just about the matter of official apologies, but in general, that Japan has failed to commit to co-construct the traumatic experiences in Asia as a whole with other Asian people. Meanwhile, in its long historical process of the period of after WW2, the meaning of nuclear energy for Japanese people has transformed from ‘monstrous other’ (atomic bomb) to Utopian technology (nuclear energy plant) in scientific development by which, it has been said, that Japan can contribute to international world in peaceful manner. In all these processes, imagination vis-a-vis Asian others has been tended to be totally lacked. We know that European past also has full of warfare histories, but the process after the WW2 in Japan in this regard has been quite different from that of Europe and the difference led to significantly different result of the practice in EU in case of Europe, while in East Asia, we see rather very recently the *territorial dispute*.

It has passed a certain period of time after the end of cold war. During the course, we witnessed the collapse of former regime of Soviet Union and that of socialist block in Europe. We first talked about the monopoly of the USA, then after that we saw the different course of scenario, and realized that we tended to have decentralized / dispersed powers. In regard to East Asia as a region, rise of China is one of those most significant occurrences in the situation as region in these days. Countries in East Asia now have their own multiple connections in multiple routes with many different countries on this globe as a whole. It is this multilateral interconnectedness widespread on this globe as a whole that is one of the meanings of cosmopolitization indicates and the regionalization has actually brought about here because of this very situation of trying to block the regional interest in the globally developing, say ‘anarchy’ of multilateral interconnectedness. And because of the very process also, the USA now declares its shift to the serious commitment towards Asia, yet the declaration itself, it seems to me, ironically indicates that the fundamental trend of loosening of its grip of the USA on East

Asia including Japan. In this sense, it can be said that the USA's deep grasp on Japan in its fundamental trend after the end of cold war, has been transforming to the direction of loosening its power of grasp. Say, loosening of the cocoon, the umbrella. To be sure I am not saying that the presence of the USA in this area becomes not significant, rather on the contrary is the case. Again the reason why Japanese and the USA politicians are now bringing up the issue of importance of the ties between the two countries lies in this situation per se.

In the situation, East Asian countries are now crushing with each other in a more direct manner than before in the relatively loosened shadow of the USA. Finally after 67 years from the war ended, we are now in a situation that we need to commit to the dialogue more directly with each other in this region of East Asia than before, while we cannot of course neglect the presence of the USA that is for sure.

Perhaps, in this regard, recent territorial dispute could be the real chance towards Asian Community or Asian Union (AU) like the case of EU with, it should be the case, so painful and winding process.

In this process *perhaps*, as I mentioned, the issue of Fukushima in relation to Hiroshima can be significant in constructing the co-experience as East Asians. Because nuclear plant explosion in Fukushima as in the case of Chernobyl, *perhaps* can be the moment of opportunity of practice in the cosmopolitan risk communication and as this paper suggests, practice in the contextualization of it in East Asia.

There should be these 'perhaps' in a dialectical mode.

To put it a bit generally, we have to take it into serious consideration when we think of the mutual construction of the visual and the social, the historical occurrences / events in the area/ region and that is especially the case in contextualization process of the broader / global phenomenon like cosmopolitan risk communication, climate change.

In the paper I tended to emphasize the direction from the visual to the social because it is thought that it has been relatively neglected side in sociological theory, but for the further development of the visual turn of sociology especially for the

critical sociology of visibility, it is needed to be aware keenly of the mutuality in the construction process in both directions.

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