

Between Oracle and Suspicion: Dissecting Technocracy through Allegories of Beliefs
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“Could it be possible?
This old saint in the forest has not yet heard the news,
that God is dead!”
Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

1

Today, it might sound anachronistic to talk about gods. Because it is an era where humans, who are supposed to have been created by gods, are competing over intelligence with AlphaGo that they created by means of technological progress including artificial intelligence and machine learning. Entering the new millennium, evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins dissected in *The God Delusion* the deception of ‘god’ created by humans and criticized the contradiction of brutal war or famine orchestrated by religion, as if to restate Nietzsche’s sentence “God is dead” from the 19th century.¹ Since Nietzsche, throughout the rise and fall of socialism that naively distributed Marx’s declaration “religion is the opium of the people” until today, where cutting edge genetic engineering and replication technology get ever renewed, the value of a sacred being seems to lose hope for its rise.

Recently, in *The Selfish Gene* which was even mentioned in a Korean soap opera as mandatory reading for college admission, Dawkins proposed the principle of genetic evolution based on self-replication rather than in the individual or species unit and stipulated humans as “survival machines.” His assertion is criticized to be a biological reduction, but it surely is a strong punch line striking idealistic philosophy that defined human essence to lie in reason and mind. Moreover, the term ‘meme’ he coined to indicate the genetic unit of human culture appeared as a powerful mechanism for mimicry, communication and spread in the recent development of Internet culture. Observing such a series of phenomena, the human who is accessing the Internet everyday is neither the God’s creation formed after him nor the subject of individual judgement anymore but a communication machine consisting of stimulating inputs and responsive outputs as well as the body replicated from mimicry and modification.

Indeed, God himself is not the one who lost the value. It is the narrative of transcendence that he represents that has lost its values, from Platon’s idea to the Christian narrative that human temporality is the history of saviour realizing the oracles of saviour and resurrection of God. The grand narrative of history as the progress of secularization and humanization of the Christian narrative fell as well. This has already become the axiom of the postmodern as ‘the end of history.’ Since

¹ Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion*, Bantam Books, 2006.

the 1960s, postmodernism has summarized the ends of the fallen world view, values, subjects and grand narratives of modernism. It was a timely stipulation that the things which people sought, followed and believed ended and a new principle has arrived. However, in reality, postmodernism never made it to have a clean cut from the past but was ceaselessly entangled with the modernist objectives to overcome such as the notions of subject or history. To some, this entanglement meant something like a specter of the past, while to others, a return or a dated question. Nonetheless, reminding how the 'posteriority' of the past as origin always gets recomposed by present incidents, we could finally recognize that this entanglement belongs to the process of an oedipal self-alienation or its construction that the 'present'—be it postmodern or contemporary—art inevitably and repeatedly experiences.

Compared to the miserable fall of the values of ideology, religion, nation, myth, story or history, everything that is currently rocketing in value have the prefix of "post-" in common: post-Minjung², post-Internet, post-cinema, post-photography, etc. Such "post-" discourses in art seem to have become the master key to all the new contemporary tendencies. But apparently the prefix foregrounds the illusion of the new, of 'the next' thing that comes 'after' something, rather than a meticulous or constant examination of its objective to overcome.

The new inevitably operates as a trend in every history. Boris Groys, who is still willing to defend the concept of the new as an aesthetic value, insists that the new has to accomplish becoming more than a mere trend. According to him, the trend creates—temporally limited in a narrow range of course—new homogeneity, social codes, specific behavioral norms and a new collective adherence that corresponds to the norms, so as to result in sharp differences between 'us' and 'the other.'³ Out of this difference, the trend sacrifices the other to be defined as something valuable and important, enabling the evaluative system through the approval of the elite or specific groups. On contrary, the core of the new that Groys asserts doesn't lie in differentiation or difference. The new is a 'reevaluation of values' and therefore it takes the recognition of the principles of currently operating cultural mechanism as its premise. In other words, the new excludes homogeneity or universal validity yet in its relation to the tradition, it is a cultural action that "is distinguished from the merely different," the value of the other having been "set in relation to the valuable and old preserved in the social memory."⁴ If so, how could the old legacies such as religion, faith and myth grafted to the valuable others in the era of 'post-internet' accelerating under the dominance of transnational neoliberalism and technocracy? Today, under the highly developed system of consumer capitalism, we are living in the saturation

² [Translator's Note] Minjung art was a South Korean socio-political art movement that emerged in 1980 after the Gwangju Massacre, in which some 200 peaceful demonstrators were killed by government troops. <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/m/minjung-art> (accessed in December 2020.)

³ Boris Groys, *On the New*, Verso, 2014.

⁴ Ibid, 47.

of things, commodities and information. Indeed it is an epoch of surplus, where the new becomes trash and the old reappears as the new. Now, the nominal mission for art is to reproduce or recontextualize already created cultural products. Likewise, through the notion of 'postproduction,' Nicolas Bourriaud explained the dominant tendency of today's art that remixes and restructures available data in the era of digital reproduction. In other words, art as postproduction of the capitalist production system can intervene to the reality, which is projected with an absolute scenario, by reprogramming the technique and tools for composing reality. Here, the logic of reversal establishes the most significant insight, according to which 'postproduction,' that indicates the editing and compositing phase in film, is not to be reduced simply to a complementary process of production but it rather structurizes the mode of production. However, his statement that art can create an alternative narrative by means of the act of rematerializing another version of reality sounds quite optimistic and timely updates the mission of avant-garde art (or the 'relational aesthetics' that he had advocated previously), because it sounds as if the reality as material and the technique and tools for reconstructing it were provided rather freely, equally and variously to every artist. And he seems to postulate that this alternative narrative that artists of 'postproduction' are reproducing as a 'community' is fairly capable to construct the narrative space that will further liberate us at large.

As you might have noticed, I am complaining about the series of optimisms and the critical imbalance occurring amidst the indigestion of such post-discourses. Instead, in the saturation of the 'post-' discourses, we need to focus on what kind of new stories will be possible as a rupture for the circuit of cultural reproduction, overcoming the impossible and naive configuration of countervisuality or counter-discourse. And this discussion should go beyond the simple distinction of media (form) criticism or subject (content) criticism. What Bourriaud stresses in his *Postproduction* as the strength of art's recontextualization and reprogramming of cultural products is nothing but the possibility of another narrative. Here, 'another' doesn't indicate the one or the other side, but the multiple and infinite expandability. If this grand narrative of the history of human progress as a projection of invisible ideology created our reality so far, how can art intervene to the narrative in the current dominance of politics of technology, ceaseless polarization of society and their accelerations? Now that the interlude of technological utopia such as 'the fourth industrial revolution' propagated in various media continues the upgraded version of the narrative of progress, how could stories for a different future à la Haraway, a new storytelling for the companion species rather than the human kind and the endless 'string figure' based on the situational knowledge become possible in practices of art?

2

Starting from the horizon of such questioning, I will delve into Sylbee Kim's work that reconfigures and reprograms the notions of myth, religion and faith, that are

regarded to be old, through another framing. This is motivated by the possibility of identifying a detour toward a new critical narrative apparent in her works, even though their aim isn't to propose a new storytelling. Unusually, Kim has started in the field of art with studying art theory and after the subsequent study in media art at the University of Arts Berlin, she's been continuously presenting works in Berlin, Seoul and other cities in the world. Mostly working with mixed media installation including video, she uses composited images employing green screen and performance with persons to graft technological sphere to the mythical sphere.⁵ And the method of grafting is anti-narrative and hypertextual, running through allegories as fable or periphrasis. Onto the digital screen where time and space remain extremely fluid, why does she introduce old 'fables' or 'icons' at the cost of ineffective and ambiguous modes of communication? Moreover, why does she utilize the supernatural and transcendental codes of religion and faith to reflect the political and social symptoms of the contemporary world? These questions toward Kim's work appeared not easily explicable to me and it is in these questions that I wish to discover a sort of method for hyperstitional narratives as a form of a new 'string figure.'

Kim's video narrative takes up the theatrical form of numbered chapters or predefined stages like game quests, but the actual development of the plot doesn't follow causality or a clear diegesis. Instead, multiple and fragmented sequences dot an elliptical formation or unfold in an extended structure of satellitic three or more. Of course, such discontinuity and montage-like composition is a common aspect in numerous video works nowadays and it is also a syntax deriving from the actual condition of exhibition space rather than cinema, where one is bound to watch the work through. As Hito Steyerl pointed out, such video work "operates under the condition of partial invisibility, incomplete access and fragmented realities"⁶ and requests the multiple view of 'the multitude' that differentiates from the sovereign gaze of the subject or the gaze of 'the crowd.' In this way, due to this structure that disables the mediation of both overview and a narrative in full, what the work articulates could be easily imprinted by means of superficial and momentary metaphors or a few impressive punch lines. Moreover, such videos employ repetitive motifs or 'performative'—in other words, still incapable of reaching any decisive meaning—narrative apparatuses that vary to transit to another meaning on one hand, while being accompanied by sculptures or paintings on the other hand, unresponsive of the status of an independent work. These works, read from the perspective of film, could imply the structure of alternative narrative. But rather than configuring a completely open structure or a certain structure, within which the

⁵ On this aspect, a critic recently commented on Kim's performance and digital composition technique with a pejorative of 'green screen fantasy.' He reviewed that "the layer monotonously repeats the equivalence of technological and mythical desires as well as the interchangeability of data and primitive tools." I don't agree that the symmetry of technology and myth in Sylbee Kim's work ceases at repeatedly telling their equivalence and interchangeability.

⁶ Hito Steyerl, *The Wretched of the Screen*, Sternberg Press, 2012, 72.

viewer has to find the missing link by means of interactivity or imagination, they arrange the contact and shutdown of simple but intersectible stories and wirings of discontinuous flows. In other words, a video narrative is set up like a double circuit for the viewer, (virtually) given with the options to cut off a terminal and connect to another, while it is a circuit made to detour and circumnavigate a different path each time, with neither a clear conclusion nor a specific exit. Likewise, Kim's narrative is not a series of representations but approaches an accumulative circuit of information open to such eventuality, various formalistic and narrative interventions and expandability. In this sense, it has the property of a 'database'⁷ which Lev Manovich set as a concept against the narrative.

Such narrative method clearly appears from *Stone and Donkeys* (2014), where she reconstructed martial arts novels' motifs into video game structure. The protagonist of the game learns one by one from characters called Donkeys, who are not clear whether they are friends or enemies, while the reason of their sequential deaths also remains uncertain.⁸ The sites of library, theater, mosque, playground, temple and demonstration inserted between the three quests are also hardly related to each other. As the protagonist of the game simply realizes, returns and reproduces the lessons given from the Donkeys, she unexpectedly fulfills all the quests, resulting in a truly 'game-like' conclusion of a departure to the world of a vast and infinite network. In fact, the inserts that appeared in-between the scenes could be defined as places of 'lessons,' doctrines and for sharing thoughts, including the sites of plays and demonstrations. The narrative full of intricate allegories show a game field of learning without any judgement or exact lesson, only appropriating the canons of the lessons given by the master (or rabbi) like those typical in Talmud, the Bible, the Quran or Sutras.



Sylbee Kim, *Stone and Donkeys*, 2014

2ch video, HD, color, sound, 12'06"; digital prints, framed; gold paper, spangles, thread, cobblestones, dimensions variable

Installation view of *Malfuction Library*, Seoul Museum of Art, 2014, photography Cheolki Hong
Collection of Seoul Museum of Art

⁷ Han Bum Lee referred Kim's non-hierarchical narrative to Lev Manovich's notion of 'database.' Han Bum Lee, "Ready-made Allegory," *K.NOTE* no. 54, Total Museum of Contemporary Art, 2018, 12. https://issuu.com/k.note/docs/knote_no54 (Accessed in December 2020.)

⁸ After learning a doctrine from each Donkey, the protagonist enacts certain actions to kill them one after another. In the first quest, she takes off the glasses of the Blind Donkey; in the second quest, she stabs the Dumb Donkey with a flower to bring him to speak and in the third quest, she repeats after the Assassin Donkey to stop time and clear the final stage.

3.

Above all, Kim's syntax is an allegory enabled by superposition and interference of forms and texts. She's been investigating how global capitalism intruded in our daily perception and structuralized our desires within the changing media environment. Almost every time, her work consists of videos that are produced based on a performance and mixed media installation, yet such investigation curiously takes up the skin of iconologies from classical art history or religious symbols. Thus, at the first glimpse, they seem to present macroscopic speculation or rather academic references, yet on the contrary, those images are applied to reflect the most present and detailed mechanism of reality. In *Lover Boys* (2009), the story of the emperor Hadrian's love for his lover boy Antinous transcending to the religious dimension is a parallel to the origin of desire and fetish that grounds the fandom of K-pop idol groups. *Misread Gods* (2015) refers to the fall of Aztecs and narrates the past colonialist fiction that describes how they misunderstood the conquerors as arriving gods. The work is a digital fable implying that the contemporary fantasy and blindness for urban development is also melted down in the structure of misreading. Since then, today's new god in Kim's work corresponds to the capital itself and the misread universal history of wars and invasions become the old testament's 'oracle' about our destinies subject to various statuses under global neoliberalism.

Since the multimedia installation presented at the *SeMA Biennale: Mediacity Seoul 2016*, her tendency of using religious iconology as a mimetic element became more apparent. *A Sexagesimal Love Letter* (2016) reminds of public advertisements or Internet memes but it has the style of scriptures consisting of 59 verses. However, those verses are rather apostate praises and a love letter for beings who share life and death and confides the only equality given to us beyond regions, strata, ethnicities and creeds is the destiny of death.⁹ In *Sisters in the Plutocratic Universe* (2016) projected in the background, two circling figures perform ritualistic movements charged with tension, while their bodies are rendered as negative space through green screen effect where vivid natural space, environment, bodies, finity and infinity alternate. According to Jean-Luc Nancy's theological and speculative ontology of body, "the body is also a dead body and the body of a dead person" in the span of its lifetime,¹⁰ giving death a place of existence. Bodies that ceaselessly symbolized in our world "take place at the limit, qua limit: limit—external border, the fracture and intersection of anything foreign in a continuum of sense, a continuum of

⁹ "§ 27. My homeland, § 28. it exists in the hearts of people § 29. who welcome me heedlessly § 30. without any shared obligation. § 31. That is the only place § 32. where I can return from time to time § 33. into the unlocked arms of my fellow warriors. § 34. O God! Neither woman nor man! § 35. Thy power is stripped. § 36. Thou hath no knowledge § 37. of what we share! § 38. The egalitarian inevitability of death § 39. is what binds us together. § 40. Together we sing, § 41. together we dance, § 42. together we march

§ 43. to our deaths." Sylbee Kim, *A Sexagesimal Love Letter*, 2016.

¹⁰ Jean-Luc Nancy, *Corpus*, Fordham University Press, 2008, 15.

matter. An opening, discreteness.”¹¹ *Sisters in the Plutocratic Universe* is projected upon the backdrop of *A Little Warm Death* (2016) appearing as a Buddhist mandala and lingering like the skull in Hans Holbein’s *The Ambassadors* (1533). The reddish mandala doesn’t neutralize as an aesthetic geometric pattern but shape a *memento mori* consisting of “feverish and visceral flesh and entrails”¹² as an ontological body. I assume that for Kim, such limbs, organs and senses of the body are the actual anamorphosis that allows ontological intrusion to all the secularized communions.¹³



Sisters in the Plutocratic Universe, 2016, 4K transferred to HD, 16:9, color, sound, 11'04"

A Sexagesimal Love Letter, 2016, HD, 9:16, color, sound, 6'18"

A Little Warm Death, 2016, digital print, 700 x 260 cm

Installation view of *SeMA Biennale: Mediacity Seoul*, Seoul Museum of Art, 2016, photography Sylbee Kim

Essentially, museum as white cube must have been perceived as a sacred space distinguished from the mundane, yet today’s museum is required to become an open space of educational experience and public sphere for cultivated citizens. Amidst that space, Kim drapes a curtain heretical to the veneration of the aesthetic, adorning it with the aura of a fake ritual. However, as one enters it, the suggested priests are not at all ‘purebred’ and their instruments accompanying the rituals are the most worldly and mundane readymades. In other words, references such as archaic scriptures, mandalas, altars, Asian worship of pagoda and Buddhist temple layouts, etc. appear as spatial structures or geometric forms, yet the components filling them up are the utmost secular ‘flesh-pieces.’ They are reproduced images in circulation; remnants of life that could be almost seen as blasphemous and even deteriorated memes of reality.

The series of works she presented over the past two years through two solo exhibitions and one group exhibition are *Garden of Regrets* (2018), *Cradle of Regrets* (2018) and *Shrine of Regrets* (2018). Taking the architecture of each exhibition space in consideration, the site-specific works challenged the

¹¹ Ibid, 17.

¹² In an email interview with the author, Kim explained that “because life and death are notions directly connected to the body,” she “needed a *memento mori* consisting of feverish and visceral flesh and entrails instead of a skeletal image that already indicates death.”

¹³ A Christian sacrament in which consecrated bread and wine are consumed as memorials of Christ’s death.

reconstruction of religious spaces. In *Garden of Regrets* which took place in Sindoh Art Space which is basically a corridor gallery, she took Korean Buddhist temple layout as reference and created the superposition and resonance between religious acts and public norms through visual motifs of pagoda and pilgrimage. Through multiple videos and installations, *Cradle of Regrets* held at Hapjungjigu realized a spatial narrative that reminds an intimate ‘catacomb’ where differences and secrets of rootless condition of lives are shared. The artist is conscious of both utopian wishes and skepticism toward the real and such consciousness is implied in the paradoxically paired structure of *Prayers for Emptiness* and *Hollow Tombs*. Finally, what we encounter on the verge of aspirations, yearning and altars are fundamental questions about conditions of life and death as well as communities where the will to live can be shared. *Shrine of Regrets* presented in Gwangju¹⁴ is the final stage as well as the initial conception of the *Regrets* series. In the video, installed as tetrahedral projection in the center, flows the watercourse of Poseokjeong,¹⁵ as seven guardian gods for different human groups play the 14-sided dice, Juryeonggu. It was a gadget for noble banquets in the Unified Silla period and on each side of it, the game to play during a drinking session was engraved instead of a number. As the seven gods in Kim’s work play, they utter human destinies such as “refugees,” “lost children,” “unemployed,” “cryptocurrency speculator” and chant together ambiguous human reactions like “learning,” “projection,” “rescue,” “yearning,” “resolution” and “dismissal.” If gods of Greek mythology played with the destinies of heroes, the gods of this *Shrine* are indeterminate and mimic the destinies of humans at crossroads. The double mirroring of humans believing in gods and the gods mimicking humans leads us to a further reflection of today’s internalized norms and communal faiths and the condition of life and death differently desperate to each individual.



Sylbee Kim, *Shrine of Regrets*, 2018

4-channel video installation, 4K transferred to HD, color, sound, 10'25", loop; digital print on PET, mirrors

Installation view of *Monstrous Moonshine: Hello! Artist*, Collateral Exhibition Gwangju Biennale, Naver Partner Square, Gwangju, 2018, photography Sangtae Kim

¹⁴ Presented at *Monstrous Moonshine: Naver Hello! Artist*, Collateral Exhibition—Gwangju Biennale, Naver Partner Square, Gwangju, 2018

¹⁵ [Translator’s Note] Built in the 9th century during the Unified Silla period, Poseokjeong was a site of party for loyals, known for its abalone-shaped watercourse. Its engineered design allowed rhythmic rotation and stops of cups floating on the water for ritualistic drinking.

Through the arbitrariness of its iconology and title as well as the presence of text behind the text, Kim's work gains allegorical aspect, at times becoming an obstacle to the reading her work. Originally, an allegory indicates the adhesion of referent and reference whose relation is defined by arbitrariness than inevitability or by artificiality than naturalism. Allegories appeared as medieval emblems or cult fables and through the renaissance by the twentieth century, it gradually faded, making way to symbolism. When Walter Benjamin reconsidered the position of allegorical method, its core was to suggest that his era was no more in need of stable and inevitable referentiality and to assert that the semantic effect of an allegory doesn't simply arise from the relation between the referent and the reference but that it enlightens the incomplete structure of temporality that such relation implies. Namely, allegory is a momentum of perspective shift that discerns the temporality and history of semantic relevance inherent in texts and forms.¹⁶ It is a layer that could be called as a meta-perspective that traverses time, thus a form that opens up the meta-layer of a metaphor. In Kim's work, religious iconology or metaphors don't operate just in the dimensions of analogy or equivalence but take up the role of a mirror that reflects the meta-structure of another layer. This is comparable to Nietzsche's strategy, who declared God's death yet still appropriated the biblical fables to reveal the world behind the precepts and ethics still believed by contemporaries in his writing of *Zarathustra*.

4

Today, as the condition of life and death is more and more entrusted to capitalistic high technology, Kim believes that its motivation is still connected to the primordial desire for wealth, prosperity and eternity. Spirituality or religion are the predecessors that continue to our present, whose successors just varied their appearance as ideology or capital. In *Trinity: Finance-Credo-Spirituality* (2019) presented at *Vertiginous Data* at the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul, contemplates how such promises of prosperity and eternity transit to the recent techno-financial paradigm of cryptocurrency. Here, the question of time and space of sacred beings she's been pursuing come closer to the phase of financial technocracy, mediated by the multiple meanings of the word 'credit.' Terms like trust, fidelity, confidence and conviction, etc. range on the spectrum between religion and economy. This question of faith is an urgent ticket estimating today's destination for life, be it on this or other side. To credit delinquents, persons with no stable home, the ones with ambiguous nationality or identity and the ones who live under terrorist threat among neighbors, it is not a mere problem of evaluation or numbers. Perceived on the grounds of awareness of such sensitive situations, the luring advertisement of cryptocurrency speculation or nonmonetary institutions as well as the promise of eternity suggested by religion can only be a powerful and attractive

¹⁶ In *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* Benjamin elucidated that allegory "is not convention of expression, but expression of convention."

text, simultaneously accompanied by doubt and skepticism. Therefore, the *Trinity* on Kim's screen who perform about solidarity, propaganda and relief following the motif of The Three Graces is a choreography of 'serpent' as well as 'eve,' who evoke both the fascination and doubt toward the new world and perception. It is an initiation to the new world of cognition and a testing board for all who rather live with the slight hope accompanied by skepticism, in uncertainty than optimism.



Sylbee Kim, *Trinity: Finance-Credo-Spirituality*, 2019

Single Channel 4K transferred to HD, color, sound, 11'22"; wall painting; 3D PLA print, polymer clay, dyed cotton, acrylic spray paint, adhesive PVC tape, UV varnish; dimensions variable

Installation view of *Vertiginous Data*, National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul, 2019, photography Hyunmoo Lee

Collection of the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea

Be it the performers in Kim's video or the found footages using their bodies as negative space, they are neither 'proxies' nor 'counter-information' but appear staged as 'body-energy-image' as a field of contradictions and complements collectively contracting and releasing, in bilateral movements and contacts. Especially the performers in *Trinity: Finance-Credo-Spirituality* are by no means automata but rather a memplex that visualizes the replication and junction of cultural genes. What they form are the subtle relations of "financial modalities," "credit-belief" and "spirituality," as "inorganic organisms" and "networked beings." Then again, humans believe in gods and gods carnificate as mediums composing human failure and oblivion as well as solidarity and game.

One of the fake myths that govern our society is that scientific technology or knowledge is neutral. I mean the myth telling us that biology, genetic engineering, artificial intelligence, robotics and the Internet, etc. carry out the values for a better life of the entire human kind. In fact, the newest information technology including aeronautics or the world wide web, etc. was developed for military operations under national guidance and support, whereas war is the actual place of origin for all previously mentioned scientific technologies. Another fake myth tells us that science and religion are entirely separate and antagonistic. They seem to be opposites, yet they are rivals of a paradigm in which they mutually and continuously refer to each other. Sociobiologist and feminist Donna Haraway affirmed that "there has been

no clear distinction between objective science and abusive ideology.”¹⁷ Our (recognition of) nature is not pure but theoreticized and developed within capitalism and patriarchy throughout the construction of life science and consists of deficiency and competition as logics of socio-economy—or more precisely, as logics of market capitalism. The apparently antagonistic dichotomy of nature and culture, body and artificiality ultimately are similar structures made of control machines, transmission media and parameters like how the twentieth century communication theory and genetic engineering proved. Paul Virillio articulated how “the principal theme in science fiction films comes down to *science technology of other worlds*,” and that the revival of science fiction seems to be linked to that of religions and sects. “Responding to a new anxious question, this type of narrative only adapts, faithfully enough, the Judeo-Christian version of Genesis *in having science and especially the technical media play the logistical role initially acted by the first woman*.”¹⁸

Likewise, our attempt to re-read the visions and narratives of financial technocratic world through religious allegories or in other words, to re-interpret our desires as technological algorithm, nature as a social symptom, faith as operating mechanism of socio-economy is not merely to show the equivalence of these worlds. Following Adorno’s assertion that the history of nature is nature grasped as historical and natural history is the historical grasped as natural, we need to investigate the archetypal governance of the structures that seemingly appear to be of separate categories. As part of such attempts of investigation, Kim proposes diagrams of religion and belief as an anatomy about today’s socio-economic conditions around life and death. Therefore, what always sharply protuberates from her forms of archetypal and mystic rituals are the snaps of desire and uncertainty floating in-between the blindnesses and hopes of our time. Yet, what we see there it is neither a simple criticism of blind pursuits nor a skeptical melancholy. Like how an old saying dictates, we need to detour to the farthest to reach the closest; Kim’s narrative dissects the structure of the primordial desire residing in the technocratic control and envy in the era of post-Internet.

(Translation: Sylbee Kim)

¹⁷ Donna J. Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, Routledge, 1991, 67.

¹⁸ Paul Virillio, *Aesthetics of Disappearance*, Semiotext(e), 1991, 67.