Eco-Citizenship, Technology and Aesth/Ethics

Sigurd Bergmann*

Life-Embracing Spaces of Peace

> "Peace on earth and reconciliation between the sexes presupposes peace with the earth."[1]

Is the claim of Elin Wgner, the Swedish writer and pioneer of womens right to vote (b. 1882), still justified today, also in North East Asia?

While, at the beginning of the 20th century, Elin Wgner and many with her departed from a distinction between human and other beings in nature, my perspective will be embedded in a more ecological view, where Life is regarded as a manifold of the circles of birth, evolution and passing away.

Life in this sense is understood as a process in natural space, which embraces human as well as other beings in time. Space is in this way not a life-less container but a life embracing existential. Sociocultural processes are in such a space specific parts of Life. Even thinking must in this sense be regarded as a natural process: Denken ist ein Naturproz e.[2] Social events can never be separated from life processes, even if

1) Elin W矢ner/Elisabeth Tamm, *Fred med jorden* (Peace with Earth), rev.ed. Knivsta 1985, (Stockholm 1940).

humans are marvellously creative to construct artefacts and systems and a whole 'modernity', which gives us the illusion us that society can exist without nature. Who would like to live without a body in a world of pure ideas?

A bank account e.g. does not have a physical existence, but it still needs built environments and human bodies to be used for what is has been created for. A military missile e.g. can be used to transcend territorial borders, but it still needs human persons who could map its location, and it needs a target in place. Globalised economic processes are, at the same time as they are mainly characterised by radical 'de-spatialization' and 'disembeddedness', even more dependant on capacities to connect back to bodies, places, regions and the Earth. The disembeddedness of financial capital, which on the one side guarantees its success, makes it on the other side very vulnerable. If the monetary system fails to be embodied again on Earth, it will immediately loose its power, due to its purely religious character. If one cannot 'believe' in the value of a money-based price for a transaction and belief still has to do with embodied processes of valuation in market space then money will loose its value, and the belief in the vehicle for valuation will be turned from money to other artefacts for exchange.

Anthony Giddens has characterised the process of modernisation as an increasing 'dis-embeddedness', and Arjun Appadurai has described this process as 'despatialization'.[3] It is of course correct that globalisation speeds up the dissolution of relationships that individuals and groups have to specific places and spaces, but one cannot ignore that the contemporary despatialization also triggers countering forces in the form of re-localising movements, which take many different forms.

The de-spatialization assisted by monetary and technology systems provokes the emergence of a countervailing power, where re-localisation stands against de-spatialization and where citizens all over the planet develop a new multiple longing for belonging. Try to uproot a plant and it will do everything to send its roots back to Earth. Uprooting provokes

2) Georg Picht, *Der Begriff der Natur und seine Geschichte,* Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta 1989, 12.
3) Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity,* 3. ed.. Cambridge 1992, (Stanford 1990); Arjun Appadurai*, Globale ethnische Räme,* in: Ulrich Beck (ed.), *Perspektiven der Weltgesellschaft,* Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp 1998, 11-40.

re-rooting.

To express it in a patristic theological metaphor: As a human being I flow downward and yet am borne upward.[4] Humans do grow from above to below. At the same time, their bodies are rooted in the Earth, which gives the 'Imago Dei' a unique potential to root oneself both in heaven and on Earth. What happens to him/her when both roots loose their soil?

There seem to be many good and strong reasons to mine the concept of peace for life in a way that does not only start with the threats and conflicts of security, but to start the other way around and ask what concepts, practices and visions of Life could help us to reconstruct the sources for peace-keeping. How do the conditions and landscapes look like, where reconciliation of those who are different and strange to each other could take place?

My essay will focus on the three themes of eco-citizenship and globalisation, technology and aesth/ethics. Its aim is nothing more than to offer a suggestion for to widen the discourse on Peace for Life in Asia with these themes. Before we dive into them, although, I will first discuss what North East Asian movements could (or could not) expect from European power constellations at present.

What is Europe?

The immatureness of Europe in geopolitics

Europe is not a kind of the 'United States of Europe', as some would have liked it once. Therefore, North East Asian movements seeking for peace should approach the peoples of Europe and the EU in a different way than for example the USA. They should try to involve both the European countries and the European Union (EU), which in fact only gathers 25 of the 46 countries who are members of the 'Council of Europe'.

Europeans have never in their history before acted as a *common* political

---

4) Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio 28.22*. Cf. in this regard Plato, *Timaeus*, 90A, who describes the human being as a plant rooted in heaven rather than in earth. Cf. S. Bergmann, *Creation Set Free: The Spirit as Liberator of Nature*, (Sacra Doctrina), Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans 2005, chapter III.

unit. Certainly, monistic ideologies and practices have characterised European history. Europe has been the dwell of several colonialising processes of suppression, where different alternating empires have conquered and ruled over lands and peoples. Certainly, in more than five hundred years Europeans have developed power constellations, which have colonised large parts of the Ameri-Indian, African, Australian and Asian continents. Also the ideology of the global financial system, which colonises all of us at present, has its origin in European history.[5]

My point is here, that Europe itself never has been a united continent, and it has never developed a *common* foreign policy for its relation to the other continents. This, although, is the case today. Recently, the EU has begun for the first time in its history to take international actions outside the Non-European sphere of world politics, and it has therefore put on the top of its agenda the so called common politics of foreign and security affairs.

Both in the political affairs of military security and trade, the European institutions have begun to develop a self-understanding beyond their former empires in antiquity, the medieval times and the enlightenments so called progress.

Or have they not? Might they sooner like to give new skins to the old dragon of colonisation? How do they transform European history with its dark and bright sides in the ongoing globalisation, and what could this mean for peace in Asia?

Unfortunately, I cannot offer an answer. Here, it would be enough for me to state the ambiguity of the present EUs foreign politics. The fresh appearance of the EU on the stage of global politics might offer new chances to find partners in the present power constellation, which Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt rightly have described as Empire.[6] The immatureness and inexperience of the EU as a new player in global peace

---

5) Cf. Ulrich Duchrow, *Europe in the World System 1492-1992: Is Justice Possible?* Geneva 1992.
6) Cf. Michael Hardt/Antonio Negri, *Empire,* Cambridge Mass./London: Harvard University Press 2000, and Ulrich Duchrow/Franz Josef Hinkelammert, *Leben ist mehr als Kapital: Alternativen zur globalen Diktatur des Eigentums,* Oberursel: Publik-Forum 2002, (english ed. *Property for People, not for Profit: Alternatives to the global tyranny of capital,* Geneva/London: WCC and the Catholic Institute for International Relations).

politics might not only offer a hinder but rather a chance for creative experiments with communication and alliance building.

Communicative political culture

A significant skill for such a new alliance building between Europe and Asia can be found in the political culture and history of the European nations after the Second World War. While citizens and institutions in the USA usually debate internal national issues, they avoid critical debates about external issues of common national interest. Not even unjust wars seem to be able to provoke self-critical public debates in their own media. Europeans, on the contrary, love to rhetorically argue about nearly everything.

Jrgen Habermas has delivered the well-known theory for understanding the whole society as a process of communicative action. His theory is, as you know, widely achieved both in North America and Europe. Though the methods of discourse ethics are applied also to foreign affairs in Europe, in the USA they seem to me to be limited to internal affairs, while international affairs often are negotiated without any interest or sensitivity for the perspectives of the many others who are affected by the superpowers decisions. Sensitive business-makers in the USA have noticed intercultural disabilities like this and they complain over loosing chances on the global market. Maybe one of the deeper reasons behind this difference of Europe and the USA can be found in the educational systems where every European country almost offers two or three foreign languages (compulsory) to every young citizen, while schools in the USA do not provide their citizens with even one compulsory foreign language.

What Europeans really could contribute with in Asian processes of reconciliation might be the depth and constancy of communicative negotiations around small and large round tables, where all those who are affected by substantial problems also are acknowledged as the experts and architects for the solution of their problems. Reconciliation and peace for life needs to be modelled and designed in verbal discourses as well as in transcultural practices *before* it is transferred into formal contracts. The post-war experience of European social and green movements offered many significant instruments after the Helsinki process, like the smooth and non-violent revolutions in the GDR, the former USSR, and at latest in

Ukrainia. These social transformations have clearly shown, that the communicative power of words is a much more sufficient tool to achieve peace than military interventions. In order to achieve constellations like this, military tools for the de-militarization of the conflicting parts are needed sometimes.

It is, of course, not my intention to profile good old Europe on the cost of the USA. Deep ideologies of political communication, supported by pragmatist philosophy, are strongly characteristic in the American History through the Ages. It might be that the best of the European political ideals have been applied rather in the early history of the US than in Europe itself. In this context, I only want to draw our attention to the need of a political philosophy and culture where communication about common problems is a key for solving problems rather than by military wars against this and that, which fits into all kinds of ontologies of evil. In the classical Christian doctrine of sin, we pray to the Father to redeem us from evil, and we do *not* pray for the strength to redeem ourselves by starting war against the demons. This would have been in fact be regarded as a heresy in the Early Church because it is a sin to replace God the Redeemer with ourselves in the drama of the creations liberation. Violence only gives birth to more violence. Conflicts are always signs of common problems, where the one is the problem of the other and vice versa, and where common problems need to be solved by common solutions.

Multiple alliances

A second problem with Europe is the contemporary democratic deficit in the EU. At the same time as the elites of the membership nations and the EU commission would like to enter the global political scene, the institutions of the EU are revealing a remarkable democratic deficit. While the European parliament still not has a satisfying mandate for decision-making, the Commission is a strange hybrid, which represents the governments somehow but without mandate from the peoples.

Obviously we face a development of citizens' disenchantment of politics. The political processes themselves are not any longer experienced as a social sphere where human persons can negotiate, exchange and develop a meaningful life with regard to their ordinary life worlds. Shifts in

patterns of voting for decision-making bodies are only one of many signs of this disenchantment.

While many European citizens in fact behave as if they were members of a common culture, they argue and have voted against the new constitution. The distance between elites and citizens in Europe seems to be all too great. In spite of what I discussed above, the political communication between power sharing constellations and ordinary people is unsatisfying. Furthermore the experiences of unemployment and increasing exclusion and social violence against the poor affect also the middle class. The permanent crisis of Social Democrats and Conservatives, who both believe in the taming of the dragons of capital by a mixture of more or less neoliberal and Keynesian economic strategies, makes it difficult for citizens to partake in elections, which now usually do not attract more than 60% of the voters. Green and euro communist parties are successful as far as they are not responsible in governments; populist and racist ideologies are increasing due to social exclusion and frustration.

This picture makes it even more complicated to expect a strong mandate for a common foreign politics from an institution like the EU. Nevertheless, I do not want to be negative in my vision. Asians should develop a *manifold* of alliances with Europeans. Both critical social movements, which seek long-term alternatives to the contemporary state of late modern capitalism, and national institutions, should at the same time be involved in Asian peace politics. A multitude of alliances on problems of common political, environmental and social issues in Asia would probably be the best way to promote the inner Asian development as well as it would strengthen the inner European democratisation of the EU.

Globalisation and Eco-Citizenship

Transculturation

The term 'globalisation' describes the economic dynamics in word trade and financial markets, which erodes the territories of the national states and promotes a cultural globalisation that affects and changes the understandings of the human person, the human community and its natural surroundings and nature. The ongoing globalisation without any 'telos',

except the accumulation of finance capital, catalyses a homogenisation of the manifold of cultures in the world as well as it at the same time stimulates a pluralisation of intercultural encounters. The ongoing cultural changes, which are determined by the information technology and its use in economics, which break through the borders of space and time, cannot be grasped by older theories of culture.

Instead, they need to be understood in the frame of a theory of transculturation.[7] Identity in late modernity is not any longer a question of a single belonging but a phenomenon of developing multiple longings and belongings, which the human person can construct with different kinds of tools, such as education, profession, nomadism, life-style, or ideological tribe. The understanding of the Christian community is challenged deeply by this cultural transformation, but it should not in the first place be regarded as a threat but better as a challenge to renew and reconstruct the essentials of belonging to the communion of the saints in a sighing creation.

The inner differentiation of culture, its external networking and the hybridization of individual and collective identities makes it necessary to look for new concepts of 'culture' and religious correlations of tradition and situation. Religious traditions are regarded as cultural elements in a dialectics of both renewal and continuity.

The old concept of *single cultures* is characterized by social homogenization. Culture is here understood as that what gives meaning to the whole of life for a limited population. Culture is meant to be the culture of one people, which could be clearly differentiated from other cultures.

Modern differentiated societies cannot be understood by this concept. They are not any longer characterized by uniformity. Gender distinctions, generation distinctions, different working contexts are some of the aspects that makes life meaningful in a lot of different ways for people in the

---

7) Wolfgang Welsch, *Transculturality: The Puzzling Form of Cultures Today,* in: Mike Featherstone/Scott Lash, (eds.), *Spaces of Culture: City Nation World,* London: Sage 1999, 194-213. Cf. S. Bergmann, *Transculturality and Tradition Renewing the Continuous in Late Modernity,* (in Russian) in: Evgeny Arinin (ed.), *Candle 2000,* Arkhangelsk: Pomor University 2001, 13-18, and (in English) in: Studia Theologica: Scandinavian Journal of Theology 58, 2/2004, 140-156.

same area and population. The concept of a single culture does not highlight the aspect of intermingling and cultural exchange.

The classical concept of culture is not only analytically wrong but it is also politically dangerous. Unfortunately it is still used in many contexts as a tool for power construction.

Samuel Huntington's famous and influential but nevertheless controversial and untrue claim of a 'clash of civilisations' is founded on the idea of clearly identifiable civilisations. The idea of single cultures as a conceptual tool of contemporary world politics is obviously not in accordance with the processes of global migration, cultural hybridisation and economic unlimited flows, which are characterising globalisation in late modernity. With regard to religion Huntington's thesis has no empirical evidence at all, and it has been faulted with reference to the same kind of political processes going on in fundamentalist approaches in different religious and cultural traditions as Hinduism, Islam and Christianity as well as in different political ideologies.

Another concept is centred on the term of *multiculturality*. This vision of one society that is built up by several different cultures is perhaps the only concept that is applied in the political ideologies of the European nation states today. But also this concept presupposes the idea of a single pure culture as an isolated island with clear characteristics. Even if the values and intentions of promoting this concept are rooted in humanistic traditions for the best of all it necessarily leads to ghettoization and cultural fundamentalism.

All these concepts of culture are analytically incorrect and normatively deceptive. Cultures do not any longer have the forms of homogeneity and distinct identities. Present cultures are passing through the classical cultural boundaries. They are characterized by mixtures, fusions, synergies and exchange processes. That is why we need a concept of transculturality.

Cultures today are much more externally connected than the single culture concept shows. The modern society is complex and highly differentiated, also in the economic silent zones of the world. Migration processes do not any longer make you belong to a single territory. Mobility makes people more or less global or regional. Cultures are in late modernity

characterized by hybridization.

The understanding of transculturality does not encourage the capacity to become different and exclusive in a hierarchical power system but the ability to relate to each other, to communicate and to exchange ideas and action patterns and to undergo transition.

Discussing processes like this on the peninsula of Korea seems a bit anachronistic, due to the fact that transculturating processes are specifically characteristic of the Korean history, which has taken place in the location between Japan, Siberia and China through the ages. Here, the encounters of the local and the translocal, the familiar and the strange, the outside and the inside have been, even if they have caused many blood and pain, transformed into many peaceful life enhancing syntheses.

As a stranger, it seems evident to me that Kim Yong-Bocks thesis is right, that Korea due to its location in the midst of global conflicts today also might offer the central area for solving these conflicts, which in fact also affect Europe and other continents. A significant question then would be, how the interpretation of Koreas history and its spiritual and cultural transculturation could strengthen peace processes today and tomorrow.

Could the traditional Korean meal with all its many colourful dishes, which are inspired from several different cultures, offer both a metaphor and a bodily being together that holds a strong potential of care for life?[8] A simple anthropologic insight says, that the last taboo in late modernity that still exists everywhere, is the rule: Do not eat up those with whom you eat together!

In other words, we should not threaten those with war and violence with whom we would like to share a meal. Slowly learning the lessons from global environmentalism, we understand that the food, which we need in order to stay alive, should grow in an interconnected world of ecosystems from which we never can escape. Food production and food sharing takes us directly into the discourse of geopolitics. Kinhide Mushakoji used in our discussions (the Korean dish of) the Bibimbap as a metaphor of cultural

8) Cf. Maria Jansdotter, *Makten och måltiden: Ett ekofeminsitiskt perspektiv pånattvarden,*[Power and the Meal: An ecofeminist perspective of eucharist] in: S. Bergmann/C. Grenholm, MAKT i nordisk teologisk tolkning, Trondheim: Tapir 2004,181-192.

pluralism. It signals that a local identity never only can be local but needs to be embedded in a translocal belonging. For Christians, this should not be a problem remembering classical theology, which makes it very clear that all human beings in the first place must be understood as Gods creatures at home in creation. Cultural and natural diversity must be regarded as a revelation of being imago Dei. Cultural identity, therefore, is subordinated to belonging to the Earth and its Triune Creator and Liberator.

This takes us to my second point. The disembedding and de-spatialization processes of globalisation make it necessary to develop new modes for the production of locality.[9] The new locality production, which is not necessarily related to places and communities but sooner results in translocal ethnoscapes, furthers the development of a global citizenship, where the embedding of the self, the land and its people is rooted in a general mood of belonging to the sacred Earth.

An explosive question today is how this cosmopolitan Earth citizenship interacts with local and national identities. Should we talk about the emergence of a terrestrial eco-citizenship and its diversity unfolding in different regions and contexts of the planet?

Eco-citizenship in globalised space

The ongoing change in processes of becoming-a-citizen is especially significant in the field of human interaction with *nature*. The understanding of 'nature' has been crucially though the ages, and it has been at the heart of the self-understanding of European civilisation through its whole history.

In the perspective of the history of ideas we could characterise the so-called Western civilisation in comparison with others by locating the concept of nature at the very centre of the understanding of reality and the concept of the human person. Citizens have identified themselves as both parts of nature internally and externally, and they have also acted as rulers and/or guardians of it. The notions of 'physics' and 'nature' have

---

9) Arjun Appadurai, *The Production of Locality,* in: Peter Beyer (ed.), *Religion im Prozeβ der Globalisierung, Würzburg*: Ergon 2001, 99-123, (originally published 1995).

made it possible to develop connections between the subjective and sociocultural spheres on the one hand and the surrounding space of life on the other. The dialectics of inside and outside is crucial for the evolution of citizenship in general and it should be regarded and investigated as an elementary dimension of the identification of the human person. Especially with regard to the moral understanding of reality the so-called doctrine of 'natural law' represents a basic code in the European culture by determining an inner connection between moral order and natural order that has been reflected in fundamental theories of ethics and law which still form a strong civic foundation of the European integration process.

Human progress for example has been understood in general as emancipation from nature affected by ruling over the natural world that surrounds us, and by dominating our inner nature. Ideas of a return to nature have been circulated in modern theories of society, even if Rousseau himself never idealised the so-called original state of nature. German philosopher Gernot Bhme formulated in his latest works the demand to reflect the human 'being-nature' (Natur-sein) as a main challenge. Not the emancipation from and against nature but the 'bodily-being-nature' in him/herself must be the main task of the human self-understanding.[10]

With regard to earlier and contemporary research one could state that the elementary dimension of how the understanding of citizenship and the civil society is influenced by different concepts of nature constituting the evolution of citizenship has not been dealt with to a satisfactory extent. Theories of citizenship and civil life cannot be analysed in a satisfactory mode without including 'nature' as a concept.

With regard to common theories of citizenship we have to conclude in fact an ecological deficit, in that they appear to make too little reference to the human being as a political animal: as sustaining and developing itself through ecological change. The environmental debate has exposed the very restrictive way in which mainstream political theory has conceived of the nature and extent of political community.[11]

_____

10) Gernot Böhme, *Die Natur vor uns: Naturphilosophie in pragmatischer Hinsicht*, Kusterdingen 2002, 10. Cf. Gernot Böhme, *Leib-Sein als Aufgabe*, Kusterdingen 2003.
11) Noël O'Sullivan, *Introduction*, in: Noël O'Sullivan (ed.), *Political Theory in Transition*, London: Routledge 2000, 11. This analysis is in detail worked out by Andrew Dobson,

The common concepts of citizenship have been developed under the authority of the state. In the last years these have been contested and broadened by the inclusion of various struggles around the themes of difference and identity. Claims in these discourses have been articulated as claims of citizenship, and the discourse on environmental issues together with Gender, Postcolonial, Immigrant and Urban Studies creates a crucial challenge to the Studies of European citizenship which is shown by a spectacular growth of books, articles and theses.[12] The theme of ecological citizenship therefore should not be regarded as a marginal phenomenon but as a central part of a crucial challenge to transform and renew the established concepts of citizenship.

Not only human rights for a healthy and good environment but also the rights of the not yet born future generations and even the so-called rights of nature (aiming at the rights of organisms and ecosystems to exist and to develop in accordance with their place in evolution) offers a highly explosive agenda to the understanding of moral order in the concepts of active and inclusive citizenship.

Becoming an ecological citizen requires a transformation in our moral identity.[13] The Enlightenment conception of moral agency might be in itself problematic if one wants to achieve new forms of active citizenship. If the understanding of citizenship is defined by public practises, the question is whether these should only aim at the accumulation of individual wealth or whether they should aim at the achieving of cooperative goods for the more-than-human community.

The emergence of environmentalism is only just one of several signs of the significance of this constitutional force with regard to the strategies for how citizens could increase their governance with regard to the sustainability and life-worthiness of their built and natural environments in Europe. Environmental problems encourage in a strong way the development of global citizenship, even if the problems themselves always appear in local and particular contexts.[14]

Political theory and the environment: the grey and the green (and the in-between), in: O'Sullivan (ed.), 211-224.

12) Engin F. Isin/Bryan S. Turner, *Citizenship Studies: An Introduction*, 2, in: Engin F. Isin/Bryan S. Turner (eds.), *Handbook of Citizenship Studies*, London: Sage 2002.

13) Deane Curtin, *Ecological Citizenship*, in: Engin F. Isin/Bryan S. Turner (eds.), *Handbook of Citizenship Studies*, London: Sage 2002, 293-304, 302.

14) Cf. Robin Attfield, *Global Citizenship and the Global Environment*, in: Nigel Dower/John

Historically the understanding of citizenship has passed through three phases, from civil through political to social citizenship. Within the term of social citizenship experiences such as unemployment, sickness, etc have become subject to state interventions. Each of these forms of citizenship is connected to a particular idea of justice as well as to ideas of the distinction between public and private. Ecological thinking, however, breaks through this distinction and we now face the challenge of a fourth phase: ecological citizenship.[15] Ecological citizenship transforms the nature of moral community itself, and it widens the idea of justice in a complex and radical way. Anthropocentric ways of dividing society and nature are questioned by ecocentric understandings, which would involve significant shifts in human assumptions, behaviours and institutional structures.

The metaphor of the 'global village' and its success in ruling ideologies shows clearly how the understanding of sovereignty, political authority and communal identity has gone through a shift from a nation-based to a global mode of identity construction. It seems to be not any longer the national identity to be at the ground of the human person, but his/her localisation as a citizen in the global horizon. An important question arises from this: Is a conception of political community and citizenship mainly built o the central basis of cosmopolitan or terrapolitan identity?[16] The global village is mainly understood as the Earth itself and that the views of nature, life and Earth are at the heart of the changing self-understanding of persons, also citizens in political and moral communities.[17]

A consideration of democracy would be vital at this point. How does the practice of democracy interact with the theme of citizenship? How should democracy be developed in ecological directions? How might religious communities contribute to the development of democracy as a place for

Williams (eds.), *Global Citizenship: A Critical Reader*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2002, 191-200.
15) Mark J. Smith, *Ecologism: Towards Ecological Citizenship*, Buckingham 1998, 96-100.
16) Cf. Daniel Deudney, *Global Village Sovereignty: Intergenerational Sovereign Publics, Federal-Republican Earth Constitutions, and Planetary Idenities*, in: Karen T. Litfin (ed.), *The Greening of Sovereignty in World Politics*, Cambridge Mass.: MIT 1998, 299-325, 303.
17) For a differentiated systems approach on responsible global citizenship with great significance for Europan developments see Chris Blackmore/John Smith, *Living with the Big Picture: A Systems Approach to Citizenship of a Complex Planet*, in: Nigel Dower/John Wiliams (eds.), *Global Citizenship: A Critical Reader*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2002, 201-212.

learning a political language other than that of the state?

The concept of imaging the rights of not yet born human beings is a new but strongly emphasised tool to resist the uncontrolled growth of technological human power over and against life. Already the idea that not yet born generations could make a claim on those who are living at present is a very exciting phenomenon, which makes it even more interesting and necessary to investigate the religious and cultural conditions for the distribution of such an argument in ongoing debates in several spheres of politics. Is such an argument just rhetorical speculation, or are human beings also as ecological citizens religiously capable of imaging their heirs not yet born, and are they able to let them generate moral obligations? How are images of our common future developed from images of those not yet born but already, in our imagination, alive in their common future?

My suggestion is to explore the power of eco-citizenship especially in North East Asia. What, for example, happens when the majorities of people move from the rural human ecology into urban settlements? Do they transform the best of their former traditions and culture in the development of their new built surroundings?

How could for example, regional and local national institutions support small-scale perm-culture? Is there a potential for what social movements in the USA have developed as a bioregionalism. How could a Christian theology of Creation and creativity in urban built surroundings be developed?[18] And how could the cultural and religious manifold of Asia be transculturated into a new urban colourful religiosity?

What happens with religion in the city and what will be the new meaning and function of rural areas after the majority of the population has left? Will rural areas offer significant places for recreation, memory and encounters with the ancestors and the land of the past? Will they offer protected places for endangered non-human species? Will the mountains

---

18) Cf. T. J. Gorringe, *A Theology of the Built Environment: Justice, Empowerment, Redemption,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2002; S. Bergmann (ed.), *Architecture, Aesth/Ethics and Religion,* Frankfurt am Main/London: Verlag f琥 interkulturelle Kommunikation (IKO)/Transaction Publishers 2005, and S. Bergmann, *Making Oneself at Home in Environments of Urban Amnesia: Religion and Theology in City Space,* in: International Journal of Public Theology 2, 1/2008, 70-97.

become even more holy when the majority of people work and live their ordinary life indoors and in dark valleys in the shadows of skyscrapers? Would the Earth with all its complex forms and colours become even more sacred for believers, whose only straight lines and heavy blocks normally surround eyes? What would Seoul be without the woods, waters and the shrines of the hills, which still proudly raise their bodies out of the mouldering city?

If peace is not only about the reconciliation of peoples, who transform their swords into ploughs, but also if it is also about the reconciliation of natural and built surroundings in our common natural life space, then the challenge to explore what ecological citizenship means in Asia would be a crucial challenge. Especially the Christian churches and other religious denominations should commit themselves to such a task, due to their belief that the world always is more than man-made and that Life is nothing else than a gift. Gifts can only be received in gratefulness and shared with each other; they can never be ordered and dominated.

Exploring the potentials of earth cosmopolitanism in Asia would imply an important strengthening of global environmentalism and the marginalised ecological movements in the West. Needless to say, that the spiritual traditions of religion offer a significant deepening and crucial driving forces for global and local environmentalism.[19]

Life-Enhancing Technology

Technology and social transformation

One of the essential characteristics of modernity and globalisation is found in technology. The history of human inventions turned into technical artefacts has, as we know, changed the history of humankind and the planet several times.

The invention of ploughs, for example, and the use of animals have accelerated human ecology to step from nomadism to agriculture. The

---

19) Cf. Gary Gardner, *Invoking the Spirit: Religion and Spirituality in the Quest for a Sustainable World,* Worldwatch Paper 164, Washington, December 2002.

development of the printing press supported the religious Reformation in Europe. The printed texts and their Lutheran theology moved into the centre of the culture, where the Reformer's translation of the Bible from the translocal elitist Latin to the regional popular German broke through social borders with the assistance of the Gutenberg press.

The introduction of technical systems for mobility in the 18th century have changed the whole landscape of Europe, where the straight lines of railways cut apart the curved lines of paths and windy roads. The straightification of the complex landscape forms was further developed when automobiles were introduced. These are radically changing both landscape and urban planning and the global climate at present. The so called 'selfsubsistant movers' (Greek 'auto' means self) represent nowadays the main cultural symbol for identity formatting and belonging to a modern tribe and place. This might be seen in continuity with Aristoteles' metaphysics where he regards the highest state of divine being to be able to move others without being moved itself.[20]

Grey perception

We can ask whether humans today have achieved this state of full divinity by moving around like disabled beings with distorted bodies in their wheel chairs taking them from one computer terminal to another, where they sit on similar wheel chairs using only eyes and finger tops. Have we really reached the end of geography, as the French media philosopher Paul Virilio calls it? Have we lost the ability to experience the distance and route where we move bodily and slowly from one place to another?

In a modern city, the inhabitants have almost no influence over the spatial design of their living environment. Even the countryside is ruled by socio-economic factors, which affect mobility, and a common late modern experience is a great loss of control over and responsibility for one's natural and local surroundings. Thus it is not surprising that so many people are interested in gardening, their homes, parks and trees nowadays.

The loss of a connection to the natural and local surroundings creates a

---

20) Aristotle, *Metaphysics* XII,8,1073a.

special kind of alienation, and Virilio's much discussed 'end of geography' expresses that this alienation is continually reinforced by the current global economic trends.

Virilio has shown how the desire for the contemporaneous destroys the ability to experience the unique. The electronic communication media restrict in a spatial sense people's experience of complexity and also destroy the permanence of things. The principle of the contemporaneousness destroys the uniqueness of place and the uniqueness of contemporary time.[21]

The sensual experience of, for example, physical movement along a certain path in the physical world is reduced[22] because we mainly move through the world with the help of technical artefacts. Humans have become computer terminal citizens.[23] Perception becomes imprecise. When everything becomes blurred, out of focus, and intermingled, differences and the other becomes difficult to detect. The technical dominance of spatial boundaries, and our freedom of movement within them, does not in any way contribute to making the world larger. On the contrary, we shrink the world, make it uniform, and change it into a withered windfall apple, which in the end is threatened by destruction.[24] Virilio demands that we rediscover our existence in the physical world.[25]

While Virilio suggests a minimalist type of resistance, by refusing to adopt a certain type of perception, I wish to promote the value of aesthetic education as the most important tool for critics of civilisation. Education and pedagogic within the fields of art, museums, religion, and environmental studies offers unforeseen and rich possibilities for making citizens aware of the moral problems of space. Besides, the process of developing the human senses is highly enjoyable and pleasurable for the individual and the community before it reaches the politically troublesome

---

21) Paul Virilio, *Fluchtgeschwindigkeit: Essay,* Frankfurt/M.: Fischer 1999 (1995), 19.
22) Virilio, op.cit., 28.
23) Virilio, op.cit., 34.
24) On the acceleration of time and the shrinkage of space through modern technologies of transport see Michael Carley/Philippe Spapens, *Sharing the World: Sustainable Living & Global Equity in the 21st Century,* London: Earthscan 1998, 149ff. Mobility, however, does not only shrink space but it also widens it. Cf. S. *Bergmann, The Beauty of Speed or the Discovery of Slowness*–Why Do We Need to Rethink Mobility? in: S. Bergmann, T.Sager (eds.), MOBILITIES IN TRANSIT: *Rethinking the artefacts, images and surroundings of human motion,* forthcoming Aldershot: Ashgate 2008.
25) Virilio, op.cit., 96.

arenas of social and environmental ethics. If one cannot feel a moral problem personally, then one is not suited to find its solution either. If the desktop is turned into something like a home and 'Heimat' for global nomads how should and could we perceive, negotiate and solve our common moral problems?

The normativity of technology

With regard to the crucial dimension of technology in modernity it seems hard to understand why ideologies of technology are so seldom mined in critical intellectual discourses. Even if already Socrates have criticised the use of the pen and writing as a threat to human memory, and even if Herbert Marcuse has delivered an excellent analysis of the materialisation of values in technology,[26] the ethics of technology is still at the margin while its applications rapidly changes Life.

The dominant ideology for technology today is poorly reductionist and simplicistic. Artefacts are seen as tools for humans who would like to realise purposes. Technology, although, is more than that. Artefacts are part of a complex and dynamic interaction of humans and their surroundings.

They are both a tool for the human body to reach out and they transcend bodily limits. Artefacts, furthermore, are part of the human surrounding, which the artefact transports from the outside to the inside of the human and his/her embodied mind.[27] Nevertheless, an artefact is, in a similar way as an art object, also a piece with a 'life' of its own. Artefacts are able to create atmospheres, which influence both our surrounding and us. They are in some kind living beings that develop an autonomous potential to influence those who use them and those who are used by them.

Technology might sometimes be reduced to be a simple tool, mainly it develops a dynamic power of a specific kind, which even manages to

---

26) Cf. Andrew Feenberg, *Heidegger and Marcuse: The Catastrophe and Redemption of History,* New York/London: Routledge 2005, 199. Cf. S. *Bergmann, Technology as Salvation? Crtical Perspectives from an Aesth/Ethics of the Spirit,* in: European Journal of Science and Theology 3, 4/2007, 5-19.
27) Cf. James J. Gibson, *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception,* Boston: Houghton Mifflin 1979.

steer and dominate social and individual powers, which cannot longer control the self-going dynamics of technology. Do I really drive my car, or does the car drive me? Does the nuclear power plant produce energy for us, are is it sooner a hungry monster, which imposes decision making bodies to throw the food of rare minerals from the Earth into its mouth? Does the machine exist for the engineer or does the engineer live for the machine?

What kinds of gardens do we enjoy to flourish, those of flowers or those of robots and chemicals? Why are technical artefacts often decorated in harmony with aesthetical design principles? Do they need to get a skin of beautiness in order to hide their ugliness? Are we still able to experience the ugliness of capitalism?[28] What does the aestheticisation of economy do to our senses and how does it change our skills of perception?

Questions like these can hopefully open the readers eyes for the perception of another approach to bodily-seeking peace for life.

The most problematic example of life-threatening technologies has already been discussed in other contributions, namely the nuclear and other military weapon systems, which have only been constructed with one single purpose, i.e. to destroy life.

While weapons are easy to critique, other technologies strangle life to death in a slower and smoother way, as for example private car use catalysing the majority of global climate change, which offers a much more significant threat to secure survival than terrorism. Why start a war against terrorism and ignore the human warfare against natural surroundings?

Ethically some say, referring to the tree of life in the biblical paradise, technology can never be good or bad in itself. Moral judgements can only be valid for humans and their usages, virtues and purposes. This is a dangerous simplification. It is often expressed in public discourses but still it remains simply rubbish, because it excludes a critical investigation of an essential element of our social body.

---

28) Cf. Camille de Toledo, *Die Toleranz der Goldfische: Oder: Warum ertragen wir die kapitalistische Hㄷslichkeit?* in: DIE ZEIT Nr. 26, 23.6.2005, 44.

Decision-making processes on what kind of technology will get the large resources to be developed are heavily normative. In spite of their explosive social relevance, although, they are seldom discussed publicly. No national government really controls the subpolitical sphere that gives birth to new high technology developments.

If a technical system, as for example biogenetics, once has been developed in the subpolitical dark sphere, and if it starts to promise financial profits, it is often all too late to discuss its ethical implications and consequences. Sometimes, public discourses can limit some of the worst consequences, but often technology represents a power of its own, which usually does not fit into the essential democratic principle: All power emerges from the people. The power of technology is definitively not in harmony with the power of the people. The many poor of the world are definitively not the ones who influence the decisions about what technology needs to be promoted for the survival of their lives.

New alliances

I will not continue this reflection any longer here, but only offer a preliminary conclusion. For the peace seeking processes in Asia it seems to me crucial to develop alliances that do not fall into the gap of either technology reductionism or technology pessimism. Instead, it seems much more fruitful to experience how technical skills can be transformed for the enhancement of Life. This could be experimented in alliances of critical engineers, architects artists, craft artisans and scientists. The academic institutions sometimes offer a creative space for such transdisciplinary programmes, sometimes they assimilate them into old fashioned utilitarianism where inventions are turned into simple tools for accumulating capital through so called innovation. Innovation must not be interpreted as knowledge or even wisdom. Innovation, as it is used in present academic discourses is a reductionist anthropocentric mode of controlling technical development. Wisdom, instead, means the complex criteria of judgement and evaluation of what is life enhancing in opposite to the commodification of life.

A wonderful example for a life-enhancing technology is the composting practice of gardeners and farmers.[29] Compost is a mixture of decomposed vegetable or animal matter that is collected in an open or closed container

in order to transform dead matter into fertilizing substance. In earlier agriculture, composting was a natural part of the recycling of substances. Critiquing modern society the compost in green movements also serves for the re-valuing of garbage, shit and waste that are turned into nearly sacred artefacts representing the flow of nature.

Premodern religions include differentiated understandings of the planet's surface, e.g., the earth as mother, while modern worldviews have forgotten or eliminated these. A look at biblical and classic traditions in Christianity shows that the earth was regarded as in cooperation with God in regard to the history of salvation. The earth took care of the dead bodies until their final resurrection. The Early Church transformed Antique beliefs in the goddess Gaia to an understanding of the Earth as a holy element of the Spirit's life-giving. The late modern culture of composting in the rich and poor countries should be regarded as a strong religious symbol for a new cyclic way of understanding life in general and the human bodily self-concerning it. The cycle of life from birth to flourishing to a death, which gives new conditions for furthering life, could easily be experienced as a transformative material, social and religious praxis.

Composting is strongly encouraged and legitimized through green ideologies in the nations' environmental policies. Garbage volumes can be reduced with up to 80%. The diminishing layer of productive earth for farming could especially in the third world be again increased. Pedagogical programs for the education of teachers and children have been developed around the compost.

Transdisciplinary research of life-enhancing technologies should be developed in alliances of academic institutions, and national and international bodies in cooperation with committed social movements and religious communities. One of my suggestions for the ideological and theological support of such an approach is found in my programmatic concept of 'aesth/ethics'.

---

29) Cf. my essay *Erde, Kultur und Heiliger Geist: Praktische Theologie des Kompostierens,* in: S. Bergmann, *Geist, der lebendig macht: Lavierungen zur 撮ologischen Befreiungstheologie,* Frankfurt/M.: IKO-Verlag f琥 interkulturelle Kommunikation 1997, 296-328, and for example the investigation of composting in agriculture by prof. Lee in Jirisan.

Towards an Aesth/Ethics of Life

Global ethics and cultural difference?

One of the main contributors to the concept of a universal or global ethics in the pluralist society was the German Catholic and Ecumenical theologian Hans Kng, who published a proposal for a global ethics 1993.[30] It was received positively and widely, and rendered a lot of discourses. The small and efficient foundation Weltethos distributes the concept all around the world.

What could such a universal consensus contribute? Should we try to formulate universal human norms and standards, which could guide us in practical discourses about normative problems? Or should we reject all kinds of universal values because these can and have been used as oppressive tools to discipline and control fro above?

Hans Kngs position is that universal norms and standards are necessary for a global ethic in harmony with culturally divergent contexts. Some think that they can be founded ontologically, for example in the Stoic and Christian doctrine of the natural law, while others offer a more pragmatist argument for the need of social conventions shared by a majority. A critical objection says that modern ethics lifts the responsibility of human persons from their shoulders by offering universal codes that make it unnecessary for the individual to feel, think and act morally him/herself. What about moral intuitions, conscience and moral individual impulses? Does a universal ethic continue the tradition of a moral code above, which minimises the individual responsibility of citizens? And what about the significance of contextual differences? Can a universal ethics become more than a minimalist consensus on a few standards for the regulation of human interaction?

I do not want to step into the investigation of the pro et contras of a global ethics, which has been discussed for a while, but draw your attention to a dimension, which is not at all developed in such a concept.

---

30) Hans K濠g/Karl-Josef Kuschel (eds.), *Erkl殖ung zum Weltethos: Die Deklaration des Parlamentes der Weltreligionen,* M濠chen: Piper 1993. Cf. also the approaches to develop a global ecological ethos in: Hans Kessler (ed.), *kologisches Weltethos im Dialog der Kulturen und Religionen*, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft1996.

To start with, I do not believe in 'the human' or 'the humanity' in general, but I do believe in other humans who exist in my surrounding. Born after the Second World War in a Germany that somehow has managed to learn almost something from its responsibility for two world wars, it seems for me unappealing to speculate about the essence of humanity, while some are starving and others are struggling with obesity due to all too much of food. It seems more exciting to reflect about the sameness and difference of human and other beings than to understand 'the human nature'.

While philosophers in Europe for more than thousand years have developed anthropology by explaining 'the human nature' in the Stoic frame of one humanity, it might be the time to break with the central Greek antique principle of knowledge, that only the same recognises the same. Can the same recognise the strange? Or does it simply project itself to the strange? What can we learn about human beings when we start with the differences of people and cultures that in a common encounter create a community? Is it possible at all to start immediately with an image of the unity? Are visions of unity sooner dangerous than healthy for the good community?

This sociophilosophical agenda has an interesting root in Eastern Church patristics where the Eastern theologians claimed that the triune community only could be understood as a full and perfect community of the three who are different and the same, The Spirit, the Son and the Father.[31] In the West, on the contrary, the image of the triune God was immediately described as a perfect unity, where the difference of the three was regarded a secondary. European worldviews operate since then with two different models understanding communion with regard to difference: either from unity to difference, or from difference to communion. Church leadership ideologies reflect this split by choosing either the monistic papal line or the communitarian line of a group of spiritual leaders.

The present dispute between those who defend the sameness of all humans and those who defend the opinion that we all differ seems even more destructive than an old fashioned universalism. Also the ideology of identity and difference has its dangers. It might be the case that the so called postmodernism designs a new uniform that is oppressed to us from above: Now, we all should be different, while we earlier were made into

---

31) Cf. S. Bergmann, *Creation Set Free*, op.cit., chapter III.

the same!

Is this uniform of difference more comfortable than the old of sameness? Or is it sooner a new sublime form of alterity control[32] that can use cultural differences as tools to manipulate a growing market of exchanges?

In the same way as it problematic to depart from 'the human nature' in general it seems problematic to depart from 'nature' in general, which in fact has been one of the real essentials of the European worldview through the ages. Can I really perceive nature purely, or do I only see, hear, smell and touch life that surrounds me?

In my elaboration of an 'Aesth/Ethics' it is important to differ theoretically between the natural and the built surroundings, which offer the concrete conditions for life on the one side and the Nature, Life and Earth in general on the other side.

Of course, we do live on one single planet, and we are affected by one single climate and now also by one common climate change. I do not at all want to get rid of the universal method. The capacity of the image of belonging to one common earth, one humanity and one common history of life are crucial for our self-understanding, especially for our production of locality.

But in the same way as the classical Christian theology in its Eastern patristic apophaticism clearly states that it is impossible to know anything about God's essence, it is crucial to develop the same argument with regard to nature. Human beings cannot produce full knowledge about the essence of Life and its space and time. This can only be a preliminary and limited knowledge. Science and technology, therefore, should learn the lesson from religion and theology that the longing for perfect knowledge about nature leads to its destruction. The famous question of German philosopher Georg Picht has not been answered yet: How can a science be true, when its applications destroy its object, life?[33]

This does not mean that we should stop to seek for knowledge about God and nature. The same apophatic principle of the limits of knowledge about

---

32) Michael Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses,* New York/London: Routledge 1993, 249.
33) Georg Picht, op.cit., 5.

essence offers furthermore a second sentence: knowledge about God is only available through the experience and reflection about God's *works*. Therefore, while being conscious about the *negative* knowledge about Gods nature, we can and should produce *positive* knowledge about God through the experience of his/her works.

The same epistemology should be made valid also for human knowledge about Life. Nature reveals itself as a manifold of surroundings for the living creatures. These surroundings are highly complex and different. The octopus, for example, perceives it's surrounding and acts in it in another way as the fish. Their surroundings overlap, cross each other and they are radically different and sometimes also in some aspects identical.[34] They are both the same and different. According to ecology, this diversity of interactions of organisms and surroundings seems to be one of the foundational patterns of life, which also can help us to interpret sociocultural processes among humans.

With regard to our discussion about universalist or contextual ethics, my point is here to focus much more on the aesthetical dimension of ethics than to only seek to agree on minimalist universal standards. Standards could help, but moral problems usually emerge in contexts, and contexts are surroundings for the bodily being of human and other creatures where normative and moral problems of survival take place.

That is why I programmatically have started to develop the concept of aesth/ethics.[35]

Aesthetics is here understood, not as a theory of beauty in the narrow philosophical sense, but as a discursive and artistic reflection and production of practices and discourses on synaesthetic perception, creation and reception. The scientific branches and genres of Arts, Culture and Images offer for me new prioritised partners for a transdisciplinary dialogue in environmental science beyond 18th and 19th century's philosophy or 20ths century's sociology dominating the concepts of knowledge and society.

34) Cf. Jakob von Uexküll/Georg Kriszat, *Streifzüge durch die Umwelten von Tieren und Menschen, Bedeutungslehre,* New edition Frankfurt am Main 1983 (1970).
35) S. Bergmann (ed.), *Architecture, Aesth/Ethics and Religion,* Frankfurt am Main/London: Verlag für interkulturelle Kommunikation (IKO)/Transaction Publishers 2005.

If ethics is defined as a discursive reflection on moral problems, it becomes difficult to exclude people's mental capacities and to separate aesthetic competence from moral competence. The challenge to create aesthetic sensibility in human beings through a specially designed pedagogy of art seems to me to be a very relevant ethical requirement, especially in today's society, and especially if we want to counteract the steadily increasing mystification of the moral problems of our human and non-human neighbours.

It takes a sharp mind and the ability to see our neighbour's misery, to answer Cain's question 'Lord, am I my brother's keeper?' There are strong forces at work seeking to impose a media-structured reduction on our ability to perceive social and ecological injustice in the world. For this reason aesthetic sensibility is needed in order to create a counterbalance to our contemporary and ongoing superficial aestheticization.[36] We can thus discover an ethical function in aesthetics, both in theory and in practice.

Aesthetical justice

Theodor W. Adornos reflections on justice can guide us in the challenge to re-integrate ethics and aesthetics.

Adornos well-known work Ästhetische Theorie discusses theories of justice in the horizon of aesthetics. He offers a challenging and provocative argument with regard to the encounter of different cultures in pluralistic contexts. This could also be applied to problems in the encounter of humanity and nature. Adorno criticises the conventional understandings of justice and he offers a widening of them in an alternative way by linking aesthetics and heterogeneity to each other:

> "Ästhetische Einheit empfngt ihre Dignitt durchs Mannigfaltige selbst. Sie lßt dem Heterogenen Gerechtigkeit widerfahren."[37]

---

36) On the contemporary processes of "aesthetization" see Welsch, 9ff., and on their relevance for pictorial theology cf. Bergmann (2008), chapter IV.3. Wolfgang Welsch, Grenzgänge *der Ästhetik,* Stuttgart: Reclam 1996; S. Bergmann, in the Beginning is the Icon: A Liberative Theology of Images, Art and Culture, forthcoming London: Equinox 2008.
37) Theodor W. Adorno, *Ästhetische Theorie,* 13. ed.. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 1995,

(Aesthetic unity receives its dignity through the manifold itself. It does justice to the heterogeneous.)

Rightly, he enlightens us about the need of every conception of justice to integrate the strange and the stranger. But neither Adorno nor Levinas offer a reflection about the human person as a natural and environmental embodied mind. Therefore, the question how the natural surrounding or the space in and around us affects our practices and discourses about justice still remains an open one.

Should we regard nature as the other of mankind? Is heterogeneity in justice only about strange brothers and sisters? Surely not, but it is not either enough to confess the ecosophical credo that everything is connected to each other and that a butterfly could cause an earthquake.

Holism tends easily to turn into a fascist projection of human ideologies unto the screen of what we define as nature, where life is reduced to be a mirror of ourselves. The intrinsic value and autonomous power of space is violated then.

Should we, therefore, regard natural space both as the strange of ourselves and at the same time as our inner and surrounding existential? A human being is never integrated in all world places at the same time. He and she never exist in general but only in particular. How should an aesth/ethics of space be worked out in a contextualist mode and at the same time stay in connection with Earth in different scales?

Adorno can teach us to include heterogeneity into a concept of justice. Also ecojustice needs to learn this, so that the dialectics of the one and the other, the own and the strange is integrated in the human ecological model of religion. Such a model would analyse the quality of just relations between those who are strangers for each other in a reciprocal interplay. In such a model worlds are prior to words, and the image of God is reflected in nature sooner than in a dogmatic of the Word as in Barthian systems. The worlds that embed, carry and nurture the gardens where also the words flourish, would in such a model offer the vision of longing for justice and belonging to just communities.

285.

Following Adorno's demand to anchor ethics in aesthetics and to do justice to the strange, allows us to develop a truly post-modern model of relating autonomy and heteronomy to each other. His concept of an aesthetical justice would imply an important step beyond the limitations of modernist moral philosophy, and by the way, also of communitarian or virtue based late modern ethics. But the concept of an aesthetical justice still needs to be transformed into an ecological approach.

Following Zygmunt Bauman,[38] we can see how the subordination of some over the many others, the subordination of spaces for a few and poor places for the many others not only affect chances of survival and developments of territories.

The accumulation of finance capital on some places called bank accounts transforms not only the living spaces, the blood and earth of the many poor but it transforms also the eye of the rich, and it changes radically the communities where some are not any longer able to perceive what others experience as violating their rights.

Sharing or not sharing place affects directly our modes of bodily being and moving. It affects our body languages, our liturgies, rituals, and festivals. It also changes radically our planning processes when designing and building urban and rural land- and townscapes.

The potential for a critique of globalisation, which departs not only in economic or ideological arguments but also in a metanoia of our minds and sensitive bodies. The religious and the aesthetic offer deep dimensions of ongoing globalisation processes, both those that accumulate capital and those who long for an alternative vision of belonging to the Earth.

If such an Aesth/Ethics could contribute to eco-justice and an aesthetical justice that promotes heterogeneity, we could use it as an analytic tool to resist and transform the ongoing homogenisation of the world in the hegemony of the Empire of money and weapons. Empires need gods, Nina Koshy formulates in his contribution. Also the idols of homogenisation have their own specific aesthetics. Kinhide Mushakoji has formulated it

---

38) Zygmunt Bauman, *Globalization: The Human Consequences,* (New York: Columbia University Press 1998).

already in our discussions straight up to the point: Homogenisation is the real threat to Life.

On the other side it must also be asked whether all kinds of heterogenisation are good. To reflect further about the criteria for a good heterogeneity would make the agenda of geopolitics more constructive. How do we promote the practices and ideologies for a life-enhancing manifold in opposite to the systems of homogenisation and alterity control?

My final conclusion from this somehow preliminary and fragmented discussion is that peace-seeking processes in North East Asia should not place bodily and aesthetical aspects in the margins of the discourse. Instead, they should regard them as prioritised areas of fertilising the development of countervailing power. How can we explore the dynamics of the strange and the familiar? How could we develop our aesthetical skills of perception so that we really can see, hear, smell, touch, feel and understand the sufferings of my sister and brother? What would it mean to develop a spiritual aesthetical education programme for the love of the strange in society and nature?

Abstract
The essay approaches Life as a process in the natural space. Space is not a life-less container but a life embracing existential. Financial capital and the global market appear in such a perspective as disembedded and despatialized artefacts, which are totally dependent of living environments as well as of humans who believe in the power of money. The de-spatialization assisted by monetary and technology systems provokes the emergence of a countervailing power, where re-localisation stands at the core and where citizens all over the planet develop a new multiple longing for belonging.
After an introductory discussion of the history and potentials of a common European foreign politics in alliance with Asian social movements, three themes are investigated.
  a) Departing from a theory of transculturation, ecocitizenship is analysed as a continuation of the development from civil through political to social citizenship. How could earth cosmopolitanism in Asia imply an important strengthening of global environmentalism? How are the spiritual traditions of religion offering a significant deepening for global and local environmentalism?

b) The dominant ideology for technology today is simply reductionist and poor. Artefacts are seen as tools for humans who would like to realise purposes. Technology, although, is more than that. Artefacts are part of a complex and dynamic interaction of humans and their surroundings.

How can life-threatening technologies be separated from those which enhance life?

c) A central suggestion for the ideological and theological support of such an approach is elaborated in the programmatic concept of 'aesth/ethics.' Aesthetics is here understood not as a theory of beauty but as a discursive and artistic reflection and production of practices and discourses on synaesthetic perception, creation and reception.

Aesthetical justice is about the need of ethics to integrate the strange and the stranger, and to include heterogeneity into the concept of justice. The potential for a deep critique of globalisation, which departs not only in economic of ideological arguments, is found in a metanoia of our minds and sensitive bodies. How could you develop your aesthetical skills of perception so that you really can see, hear, smell, touch, feel and understand the sufferings of your sister and brother? What would it mean to develop a spiritual aesthetical education programme for the love of the strange in society and nature?

The article offers a revised version of a contribution to the "International Conference on Peace for Life in North East Asia," arranges by the Korean Christian Faculty Fellowship in Uiwang, Kyunggido, 16-20 May 2005.