Yuk Hui
One Hundred Years of Crisis

If philosophy ever manifested itself as helpful, redeeming, or prophylactic, it was in a healthy culture. The sick, it made ever sicker.
– Nietzsche, *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*

§1. Centenary of "Crisis of the Spirit"

In 1919, after the First World War, the French poet Paul Valéry in "Crisis of the Spirit" wrote: "We later civilizations ... we too know that we are mortal."[1] It is only in such a catastrophe, and as an *après coup*, that we know we are nothing but fragile beings. One hundred years later, a bat from China – if indeed the coronavirus comes from bats – has driven the whole planet into another crisis. Were Valéry still alive, he wouldn't be allowed to walk out of his house in France.

The crisis of the spirit in 1919 was preceded by a nihilism, a nothingness, that haunted Europe before 1914. As Valéry wrote of the intellectual scene before the war: "I see ... nothing! Nothing ... and yet an infinitely potential nothing." In Valéry's 1920 poem "Le Cimetière Marin" ("Graveyard by the Sea") we read a Nietzschean affirmative call: "The wind is rising! ... We must try to live!" This verse was later adopted by Hayao Miyazaki as the title of his animation film about Jiro Horikoshi, the engineer who designed fighter aircraft for the Japanese Empire that were later used in the Second World War. This nihilism recursively returns in the form of a Nietzschean test: a demon invades your loneliest loneliness and asks if you want to live in the eternal recurrence of the same – the same spider, the same moonlight between the trees, and the same demon who asks the same question. Any philosophy that cannot live with and directly confront this nihilism provides no sufficient answer, since such a philosophy only makes the sick culture sicker, or in our time, withdraws into laughable philosophical memes circulating on social media.

The nihilism Valéry contested has been constantly nurtured by technological acceleration and globalization since the eighteenth century. As Valéry wrote towards the end of his essay:

> But can the European spirit – or at least its most precious content – be totally diffused? Must such phenomena as democracy, the exploitation of the globe, and the general spread of technology, all of which presage a *deminutio capitis* for Europe ... must these be taken as absolute decisions of fate?[2]

This threat of diffusion – which Europe may have attempted to affirm – is no longer something that can be confronted by Europe alone, and probably will never be completely overcome again by the European "tragist" spirit.[3] "Tragist" is first of all related to Greek tragedy; it is also the logic of the spirit endeavoring to resolve contradictions arising from within. In "What Begins after the End of the Enlightenment?" and other essays, I have tried to sketch out how, since the Enlightenment, and after the decline of monotheism, the latter was replaced by a mono-technologism (or techno-theism), which has culminated today in transhumanism.[4] We, the moderns, the cultural heirs to the European Hamlet (who, in Valéry's "Crisis of the Spirit," looks back at the European intellectual legacy by counting the skulls of Leibniz, Kant, Hegel, and Marx), one hundred years after Valéry's writing, have believed and still want to believe that we will become immortal, that we will be able to enhance our immune system against all viruses or simply flee to Mars when the worst cases hit. Amidst the coronavirus pandemic, researching travel to Mars seems irrelevant for stopping the spread of the virus and saving lives. We mortals who still inhabit this planet called earth may not have the chance to wait to become immortal, as the transhumanists have touted in their corporate slogans. A pharmacology of nihilism after Nietzsche is still yet to be written, but the toxin has already pervaded the global body and caused a crisis in its immune system.

For Jacques Derrida (whose widow, Marguerite Derrida, recently died of coronavirus), the September 11, 2001 attack on the World Trade Center marked the manifestation of an autoimmune crisis, dissolving the techno-political power structure that had been stabilized for decades: a Boeing 767 was used as a weapon against the country that invented it, like a mutated cell or virus from within.[5] The term "autoimmune" is only a biological metaphor when used in the political context: globalization is the creation of a world system whose stability depends on techno-scientific and economic hegemony. Consequently, 9/11 came to be seen as a rupture which ended the political configuration willed by the Christian West since the Enlightenment, calling forth an immunological response expressed as a permanent state of exception – wars upon wars. The coronavirus now collapses this metaphor: the biological and the political become one. Attempts to contain the virus don't only involve disinfectant and medicine, but also military mobilizations and lockdowns of countries, borders, international flights, and trains.

In late January, *Der Spiegel* published an issue titled *Coronavirus, Made in China: Wenn die*

Globalisierung zur tödlichen Gefahr wird (When globalization becomes deadly danger), illustrated with an image of a Chinese person in excessive protective gear gazing at an iPhone with eyes almost closed, as if praying to a god.[6] The coronavirus outbreak is not a terrorist attack – so far, there has been no clear evidence of the virus's origin beyond its first appearance in China – but is rather an organological event in which a virus attaches to advanced transportation networks, travelling up to 900 km per hour. It is also an event that seems to return us to the discourse of the nation-state and a geopolitics defined by nations. By returning, I mean that, first of all, the coronavirus has restored meaning to borders that were seemingly blurred by global capitalism and the increasing mobility promoted by cultural exchange and international trade. The global outbreak has announced that globalization so far has only cultivated a mono-technological culture that can only lead to an autoimmune response and a great regression. Secondly, the outbreak and the return to nation-states reveal the historical and actual limit of the concept of the nation-state itself. Modern nation-states have attempted to cover up these limits through immanent infowars, constructing infospheres that move beyond borders. However, rather than producing a global immunology, on the contrary, these infospheres use the apparent contingency of the global space to wage biological warfare. A global immunology that we can use to confront this stage of globalization is not yet available, and it may never become available if this mono-technological culture persists.

§2. A European Schmitt Sees Millions of Ghosts

During the 2016 refugee crisis in Europe, the philosopher Peter Sloterdijk criticized Germany's chancellor Angela Merkel in an interview with the magazine *Cicero*, saying, "We have yet to learn to glorify borders … Europeans will sooner or later develop an efficient common border policy. In the long run the territorial imperative prevails. After all, there is no moral obligation to self-destruction."[7] Even if Sloterdijk was wrong in saying that Germany and the EU should have closed their borders to refugees, in retrospect one may say that he was right about the question of borders not being well thought out. Roberto Esposito has clearly stated that a binary (polar) logic persists concerning the function of borders: one insists on stricter control as an immunological defense against an outer enemy – a classical and intuitive understanding of immunology as opposition between the self and the other – while the other proposes the abolition of borders to allow freedom of mobility

and possibilities of association for individuals and goods. Esposito suggests that neither of the two extremes – and it is somewhat obvious today – is ethically and practically undesirable.[8]

The outbreak of the coronavirus in China – beginning in mid-November until an official warning was announced in late January, followed by the lockdown of Wuhan on January 23 – led immediately to international border controls against Chinese or even Asian-looking people in general, identified as carriers of the virus. Italy was one of the first countries to impose a travel ban on China; already in late January, Rome's Santa Cecilia Conservatory suspended "oriental" students from taking classes, even those who had never in their life been to China. These acts – which we may call immunological – are conducted out of fear, but more fundamentally out of ignorance.

In Hong Kong – right next to Shenzhen in Guangdong province, one of the major outbreak regions outside Hubei province – there were strong voices urging the government to close the border with China. The government refused, citing the World Health Organization advising countries to avoid imposing travel and trade restrictions on China. As one of two special administrative regions of China, Hong Kong SAR is not supposed to oppose China nor add to its recent burden of underwhelming economic growth. And yet, some Hong Kong restaurants posted notices on their doors announcing that Mandarin-speaking clients were unwelcome. Mandarin is associated with virus-carrying Mainland Chinese people, therefore the dialect is considered a sign of danger. A restaurant that under normal circumstances is open to anyone who can afford it is now only open to certain people.

All forms of racism are fundamentally immunological. Racism is a social antigen, since it clearly distinguishes the self and the other and reacts against any instability introduced by the other. However, not all immunological acts can be considered racism. If we don't confront the ambiguity between the two, we collapse everything into the night where all cows are grey. In the case of a global pandemic, an immunological reaction is especially unavoidable when contamination is facilitated by intercontinental flights and trains. Before the closing of Wuhan, five million inhabitants had escaped, involuntarily transporting the virus out of the city. In fact, whether one is labelled as being from Wuhan is irrelevant, since everyone can be regarded as suspect, considering that the virus can be latent for days on a body without symptoms, all the while contaminating its surroundings. There are immunological moments one cannot easily escape when xenophobia and micro-fascisms become common on streets and in restaurants: when you involuntarily cough, everyone stares at you. More than ever, people demand an immunosphere – what Peter Sloterdijk suggested – as protection and as social organization.

It seems that immunological acts, which cannot simply be reduced to racist acts, justify a return to borders – individual, social, and national. In biological immunology as well as political immunology, after decades of debate on the self–other paradigm and the organismic paradigm, modern states return to border controls as the simplest and most intuitive form of defense, even when the enemy is not visible.[9] In fact, we are only fighting against the incarnation of the enemy. Here, we are all bound by what Carl Schmitt calls the political, defined by the distinction between friend and enemy – a definition not easily deniable, and probably strengthened during a pandemic. When the enemy is invisible, it has to be incarnated and identified: firstly the Chinese, the Asians, and then the Europeans, the North Americans; or, inside China, the inhabitants of Wuhan. Xenophobia nourishes nationalism, whether as the self considering xenophobia an inevitable immunological act, or the other mobilizing xenophobia to strengthen its own nationalism as immunology.

The League of Nations was founded in 1919 after the First World War, and was later succeeded by the United Nations, as a strategy to avoid war by gathering all nations into a common organization. Perhaps Carl Schmitt's criticism of this attempt was accurate in claiming that the League of Nations, which had its one-hundred-year anniversary last year, mistakenly identified humanity as the common ground of world politics, when humanity is not a political concept. Instead, humanity is a concept of depoliticization, since identifying an abstract humanity which doesn't exist "can misuse peace, justice, progress, and civilization in order to claim these as one's own and to deny the same to the enemy."[10] As we know, the League of Nations was a group of representatives from different countries that was unable to prevent one of the greatest catastrophes of the twentieth century, the Second World War, and was therefore replaced by the United Nations. Isn't the argument applicable to the World Health Organization, a global organization meant to transcend national borders and provide warnings, advice, and governance concerning global health issues? Considering how the WHO had virtually no positive role in preventing the spread of coronavirus – if not a negative role: its general director even refused to call it a pandemic until it was evident to everyone – what

makes the WHO necessary at all? Naturally, the work of professionals working in and with the organization deserves enormous respect, yet the case of the coronavirus has exposed a crisis in the political function of the larger organization. Worse still, we can only criticize such a gigantic money-burning global governing body for its failure on social media, like shouting into the wind, but no one has the capacity to change anything, as democratic processes are reserved for nations.

§3. The Bad Infinity of Mono-technologism
If we follow Schmitt, the WHO is primarily an instrument of depoliticization, since its function to warn of coronavirus could have been done better by any news agency. Indeed, a number of countries acted too slowly by following the WHO's early judgment of the situation. As Schmitt writes, an international representational governing body, forged in the name of humanity, "does not eliminate the possibility of wars, just as it does not abolish states. It introduces new possibilities for wars, permits wars to take place, sanctions coalition wars, and by legitimizing and sanctioning certain wars it sweeps away many obstacles to war."[11] Isn't the manipulation of global governance bodies by world powers and transnational capital since the Second World War only a continuation of this logic? Hasn't this virus that was controllable at the beginning sunken the world into a global state of war? Instead, these organizations contribute to a global sickness where mono-technological economic competition and military expansion are the only aim, detaching human beings from their localities rooted in the earth and replacing them with fictive identities shaped by modern nation-states and infowars.

The concept of the state of exception or state of emergency was originally meant to allow the sovereign to immunize the commonwealth, but since 9/11 it had tended towards a political norm. The normalization of the state of emergency is not only an expression of the absolute power of the sovereign, but also of the modern nation-state struggling and failing to confront the global situation by expanding and establishing its borders through all available technological and economic means. Border control is an effective immunological act only if one understands geopolitics in terms of sovereigns defined by borders. After the Cold War, increasing competition has resulted in a mono-technological culture that no longer balances economic and technological progress, but rather assimilates them while moving towards an apocalyptic endpoint. Competition based on mono-technology is devastating the earth's resources for the sake of competition and

profit, and also prevents any player from taking different paths and directions – the "techno-diversity" that I have written about extensively. Techno-diversity doesn't merely mean that different countries produce the same type of technology (mono-technology) with different branding and slightly different features. Rather, it refers to a multiplicity of *cosmotechnics* that differ from each other in terms of values, epistemologies, and forms of existence. The current form of competition that uses economic and technological means to override politics is often attributed to neoliberalism, while its close relative transhumanism considers politics only a humanist epistemology soon to be overcome through technological acceleration. We arrive at an impasse of modernity: one cannot easily withdraw from such competition for fear of being surpassed by others. It is like the metaphor of modern man that Nietzsche described: a group permanently abandons its village to embark on a sea journey in pursuit of the infinite, but arrive at the middle of the ocean only to realize that the infinite is not a destination.[12] And there is nothing more terrifying than the infinite when there is no longer any way of turning back.

The coronavirus, like all catastrophes, may force us to ask where we are heading. Though we know we are only heading to the void, still, we have been driven by a tragist impulse to "try to live." Amidst intensified competition, the interest of states is no longer with their subjects but rather economic growth – any care for a population is due to their contributions to economic growth. This is self-evident in how China initially tried to silence news about the coronavirus, and then, after Xi Jinping warned that measures against the virus damage the economy, the number of new cases dramatically dropped to zero. It is the same ruthless economic "logic" that made other countries decide to wait and see, because preventive measures such as travel restrictions (which the WHO advised against), airport screenings, and postponing the Olympic Games impact tourism.

The media as well as many philosophers present a somewhat naive argument concerning the Asian "authoritarian approach" and the *allegedly* liberal/libertarian/democratic approach of Western countries. The Chinese (or Asian) authoritarian way – often misunderstood as Confucian, though Confucianism is not at all an authoritarian or coercive philosophy – has been effective in managing the population using already widespread consumer surveillance technologies (facial recognition, mobile data analysis, etc.) to identify the spread of the virus. When the outbreaks started in Europe, there was still debate on whether to use personal data. But if we are really to choose between "Asian

authoritarian governance" and "Western liberal/libertarian governance," Asian authoritarian governance appears more acceptable for facing further catastrophes, since the libertarian way of managing such pandemics is essentially eugenicist, allowing self-selection to rapidly eliminate the older population. In any case, all of these cultural essentialist oppositions are misleading, since they ignore the solidarities and spontaneity among communities and people's diverse moral obligations to the elderly and family; yet this type of ignorance is necessary for vain expressions of one's own superiority.

But where else can our civilization move? The scale of this question mostly overwhelms our imagination, leaving us to hope, as a last resort, that we can resume a "normal life," whatever this term means. In the twentieth century, intellectuals looked for other geopolitical options and configurations to surpass the Schmittian concept of the political, as Derrida did in his *Politics of Friendship*, where he responded to Schmitt by deconstructing the concept of friendship. Deconstruction opens an ontological difference between friendship and community to suggest another politics beyond the friend–enemy dichotomy fundamental to twentieth-century political theory, namely hospitality. "Unconditional" and "incalculable" hospitality, which we may call friendship, can be conceived in geopolitics as undermining sovereignty, like when the Japanese deconstructionist philosopher Kōjin Karatani claimed that the perpetual peace dreamed of by Kant would only be possible when sovereignty could be given as a gift – in the sense of a Maussian gift economy, which would follow the global capitalist empire.[13] However, such a possibility is conditioned by the abolition of sovereignty, in order words, the abolition of nation-states. For this to happen, according to Karatani, we would probably need a Third World War followed by an international governing body with more power than the United Nations. In fact, Angela Merkel's refugee policy and the "one country, two systems" brilliantly conceived by Deng Xiaoping are moving towards this end without war. The latter has the potential to become an even more sophisticated and interesting model than the federal system. However the former has been a target of fierce attacks and the latter is in the process of being destroyed by narrow-minded nationalists and dogmatic Schmittians. A Third World War will be the quickest option if no country is willing to move forward.

Before that day arrives, and before an even more serious catastrophe brings us closer to extinction (which we can already sense), we may

still need to ask what an "organismic" global immune system could look like beyond simply claiming to coexist with the coronavirus.[14] What kind of co-immunity or co-immunism (the neologism that Sloterdijk proposed) is possible if we want globalization to continue, and to continue in a less contradictory way? Sloterdijk's strategy of co-immunity is interesting but politically ambivalent – probably also because it is not sufficiently elaborated in his major works – oscillating between a border politics of the far-right Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) party and Roberto Esposito's contaminated immunity. However, the problem is that if we still follow the logic of nation-states, we will never arrive at a co-immunity. Not only because a state is not a cell nor an organism (no matter how attractive and practical this metaphor is for theorists), but also more fundamentally because the concept itself can only produce an immunity based on friend and enemy, regardless of whether it assumes the form of international organizations or councils. Modern states, while composed of all their subjects like the Leviathan, have no interest beyond economic growth and military expansion, at least not before the arrival of a humanitarian crisis. Haunted by an imminent economic crisis, nation-states become the source (rather than the target) of manipulative fake news.

§4. Abstract and Concrete Solidarity

Let's return here to the question of borders and question the nature of this war we are fighting now, which UN Secretary-General António Guterres considers the biggest challenge the UN has faced since the Second World War. The war against the virus is first of all an infowar. The enemy is invisible. It can only be located through information about communities and the mobility of individuals. The efficacy of the war depends on the ability to gather and analyze information and to mobilize available resources to achieve the highest efficiency. For countries exercising strict online censorship, it is possible to contain the virus like containing a "sensitive" keyword circulating on social media. The use of the term "information" in political contexts has often been equated with propaganda, though we should avoid simply seeing it as a question of mass media and journalism, or even freedom of speech. Infowar is twenty-first century warfare. It is not a specific type of war, but war in its permanence.

In his lectures collected in "Society Must Be Defended", Michel Foucault inverted Carl von Clausewitz's aphorism "war is the continuation of politics by other means" into "politics is the continuation of war by other means."[15] While the inversion proposes that war no longer assumes

the form Clausewitz had in mind, Foucault hadn't yet developed a discourse on infowar. More than twenty years ago, a book titled *Wars without Limit* (□□□, officially translated as *Unrestricted Warfare* or *Warfare beyond Bounds*) was published in China by two former senior air force colonels. This book was soon translated into French, and is said to have influenced the Tiqqun collective and later the Invisible Committee. The two former colonels – who know Clausewitz well but haven't read Foucault – arrived at the claim that traditional warfare would slowly fade away, to be replaced by immanent wars in the world, largely introduced and made possible by information technology. This book could be read as an analysis of the US global war strategy, but also more importantly as a penetrating analysis of how infowar redefines politics and geopolitics.

The war against coronavirus is at the same time a war of misinformation and disinformation, which characterizes post-truth politics. The virus may be a contingent event that triggered the present crisis, but the war itself is no longer contingent. Infowar also opens two other (to some extent pharmacological) possibilities: first, warfare that no longer takes the state as its unit of measure, instead constantly deterritorializing the state with invisible weapons and no clear boundaries; and second, civil war, which takes the form of competing infospheres. The war against coronavirus is a war against the carriers of the virus, and a war conducted using fake news, rumors, censorship, fake statistics, misinformation, etc. In parallel to the US using Silicon Valley technology to expand its infosphere and penetrate most of the earth's population, China has also built one of the largest and most sophisticated infospheres in the world, with well-equipped firewalls consisting of both humans and machines, which has allowed it to contain the virus within a population of 1.4 billion. This infosphere is expanding thanks to the infrastructure of China's "One Belt, One Road" initiative, as well as its already established networks in Africa, causing the US to respond, in the name of security and intellectual property, by blocking Huawei from extending its infosphere. Of course, infowar is not waged only by sovereigns. Within China, different factions compete against each other through official media, traditional media such as newspapers, and independent media outlets. For instance, both the traditional media and independent media fact-checked state figures on the outbreak, forcing the government to redress their own mistakes and distribute more medical equipment to hospitals in Wuhan.

The coronavirus renders explicit the immanence of infowar through the nation-state's necessity to defend its physical borders while extending technologically and economically beyond them to establish new borders. Infospheres are constructed by humans, and, in spite of having greatly expanded in recent decades, remain undetermined in their becoming. Insofar as the imagination of co-immunity – as a possible communism or mutual aid between nations – can only be an *abstract solidarity*, it is vulnerable to cynicism, similar to the case of "humanity." Recent decades have seen some philosophical discourses succeed in nurturing an abstract solidarity, which can turn into sect-based communities whose immunity is determined through agreement and disagreement. Abstract solidarity is appealing because it is abstract: as opposed to being concrete, the abstract is not grounded and has no locality; it can be transported anywhere and dwell anywhere. But abstract solidarity is a product of globalization, a meta-narrative (or even metaphysics) for something that has long since confronted its own end.

True co-immunity is not abstract solidarity, but rather departs from a concrete solidarity whose co-immunity should ground the next wave of globalization (if there is one). Since the start of this pandemic, there have been countless acts of true solidarity, where it matters greatly who will buy groceries for you if you are not able to go to the supermarket, or who will give you a mask when you need to visit the hospital, or who will offer respirators for saving lives, and so forth. There are also solidarities among medical communities that share information towards the development of vaccines. Gilbert Simondon distinguished between abstract and concrete through technical objects: abstract technical objects are mobile and detachable, like those embraced by the eighteenth-century encyclopedists that (to this day) inspire optimism about the possibility of progress; concrete technical objects are those that are grounded (perhaps literally) in both the human and natural worlds, acting as a mediator between the two. A cybernetic machine is more concrete than a mechanical clock, which is more concrete than a simple tool. Can we thus conceive of a concrete solidarity that circumvents the impasse of an immunology based in nation-states and abstract solidarity? Can we consider the infosphere to be an opportunity pointing towards such immunology?

We may need to enlarge the concept of the infosphere in two ways. First of all, the building of infospheres could be understood as an attempt to construct techno-diversity, to dismantle the mono-technological culture from within and escape its "bad infinity." This diversification of technologies also implies a diversification of ways of life, forms of

coexistence, economies, and so forth, since technology, insofar as it is cosmotechnics, embeds different relations with nonhumans and the larger cosmos.[16] This techno-diversification does not imply an ethical framework imposed onto technology, for this always arrives too late and is often made to be violated. Without changing our technologies and our attitudes, we will only preserve biodiversity as an exceptional case without ensuring its sustainability. In other words, without techno-diversity, we cannot maintain biodiversity. The coronavirus is not nature's revenge but the result of a mono-technological culture in which technology itself simultaneously loses its own ground and desires to become the ground of everything else. The mono-technologism we live now ignores the necessity of coexistence and continues to see the earth merely as a standing reserve. With the vicious competition it sustains, it will only continue to produce more catastrophes. According to this view, after the exhaustion and devastation of spaceship earth, we may only embark on the same exhaustion and devastation on spaceship Mars.

Secondly, the infosphere can be considered a concrete solidarity extending beyond borders, as an immunology that no longer takes as its point of departure the nation-state, with its international organizations that are effectively puppets of global powers. For such concrete solidarity to emerge, we need a techno-diversity which develops alternative technologies such as new social networks, collaborative tools, and infrastructures of digital institutions that will form the basis for global collaboration. Digital media already has a long social history, though few forms beyond that of Silicon Valley (and WeChat in China) assume a global scale. This is largely due to an inherited philosophical tradition – with its oppositions between nature and technology, and between culture and technology – that fails to see a plurality of technologies as realizable. Technophilia and technophobia become the symptoms of mono-technological culture. We are familiar with the development of hacker culture, free software, and open-source communities over the past few decades, yet the focus has been on developing alternatives to hegemonic technologies instead of building alternative modes of access, collaboration, and more importantly, epistemology.

The coronavirus incident will consequently accelerate processes of digitalization and subsumption by the data economy, since it has been the most effective tool available to counter the spread, as we have already seen in the recent turn in favor of using mobile data for tracing the outbreak in countries that otherwise cherish privacy. We may want to pause and ask whether

this accelerating digitalization process can be taken as an opportunity, a *kairos* that underlines the current global crisis. The calls for a global response have put everyone in the same boat, and the goal of resuming "normal life" is not an adequate response. The coronavirus outbreak marks the first time in more than twenty years that online teaching has come to be offered by all university departments. There have been many reasons for the resistance to digital teaching, but most are minor and sometimes irrational (institutes dedicated to digital cultures may still find physical presence to be important for human resource management). Online teaching will not completely replace physical presence, but it does radically open up access to knowledge and return us to the question of education at a time when many universities are being defunded. Will the suspension of normal life by coronavirus allow us to change these habits? For example, can we take the coming months (and maybe years), when most universities in the world will use online teaching, as a chance to create serious digital institutions at an unprecedented scale? A global immunology demands such radical reconfigurations.

This essay's opening quote is from Nietzsche's incomplete *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, written around 1873. Instead of alluding to his own exclusion from the discipline of philosophy, Nietzsche identified cultural reform with philosophers in ancient Greece who wanted to reconcile science and myth, rationality and passion. We are no longer in the tragic age, but in a time of catastrophes when neither tragist nor Daoist thinking alone can provide an escape. In view of the sickness of global culture, we have an urgent need for reforms driven by new thinking and new frameworks that will allow us to unbind ourselves from what philosophy has imposed and ignored. The coronavirus will destroy many institutions already threatened by digital technologies. It will also necessitate increasing surveillance and other immunological measures against the virus, as well as against terrorism and threats to national security. It is also a moment in which we will need stronger concrete, digital solidarities. A digital solidarity is not a call to use more Facebook, Twitter, or WeChat, but to get out of the vicious competition of mono-technological culture, to produce a techno-diversity through alternative technologies and their corresponding forms of life and ways of dwelling on the planet and in the cosmos. In our post-metaphysical world we may not need any metaphysical pandemics. We may not need a virus-oriented ontology either. What we really need is a concrete solidarity that allows differences and divergences before the falling of

dusk.

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1
Paul Valéry, "Crisis of the Spirit" (original translation "Crisis of the Mind"), trans. Denise Folliot and Jackson Matthews, 1911 https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Crisis_of_the_Mind. "La Crise de l'Esprit" originally appeared in English in *The Athenaeum* (London), April 11 and May 2, 1919. The French text was published the same year in the August issue of *La Nouvelle Revue Française*.

2
Valéry, "Crisis of the Spirit."

3
"Tragist" is a new term I use in my forthcoming book *Art and Cosmotechnics* (University of Minnesota Press, 2020).

4
Yuk Hui, "What Begins After the End of the Enlightenment?," *e-flux journal* no. 96 (January 2019) https://www.e-flux.com/journal/96/245507/what-begins-after-the-end-of-the-enlightenment/.

5
On the autoimmune character of the 9/11 attacks, see Giovanna Borradori, *Philosophy in a Time of Terror: Dialogues with Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida* (University of Chicago Press, 2004).

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"Wenn die Globalisierung zur tödlichen Gefahr wird," *Der Spiegel*, January 31, 2020 https://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/coronavirus-wenn-die-globalisierung-zur-toedlichen-gefahr-wird-a-00000000-0002-0001-0000-000169240263.

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Peter Sloterdijk, "Es gibt keine moralische Pflicht zur Selbstzerstörung," *Cicero Magazin für politische Kultur*, January 28, 2016.

8
See Roberto Esposito, *Immunitas: The Protection and Negation of Life*, trans. Zakiya Hanafi (Polity Press, 2011).

9
See Alfred I. Tauber, *Immunity: The Evolution of an Idea* (Oxford University Press, 2017).

10
Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, trans. George Schwab (University of Chicago Press, 2007), 54.

11
Schmitt, *Concept of the Political*, 56.

12
See Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Josefine Nauckhoff (Cambridge University Press, 2001), 119.

13
See Kōjin Karatani, *The Structure of World History: From Modes of Production to Modes of Exchange*, trans. Michael K. Bourdaghs (Duke University Press, 2014).

14
We also have to carefully ask if a biological metaphor is appropriate at all despite its wide acceptance. I contested this in *Recursivity and Contingency* (Rowman and Littlefield International, 2019) by analyzing the history of organicism, its position in the history of epistemology, and its relation to modern technology, questioning its validity as metaphor of politics, especially concerning environmental politics.

15
Michel Foucault, *"Society Must be Defended": Lectures at the Collège de France 1975–1976*, trans. David Macey (Picador, 2003), 15.

16
I develop this diversification of technologies as "multiple cosmotechnics" in *The Question Concerning Technology in China: An Essay in Cosmotechnics* (Urbanomic, 2016).