

88. *The Rain*, lines 21–29, in Richard Hamer (ed. and trans.), *A Choice of Anglo-Saxon Verse* (London: Faber and Faber, 1970), pp. 26–7.
89. Derek Jarman, *Smiling in Slow Motion*, ed. Keith Collins (London: Century, 2000; repr. London: Vintage, 2001), p. 191.
90. Jarman, *Blue*, p. 9; Jarman, *Chroma*, 111.
91. Mills, *Derek Jarman's Medieval Modern*, pp. 124–9.
92. Sigmund Freud, 'Mourning and Melancholia' (1917), in James Strachey (ed.), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 14 (1914–16): *On the History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement, Papers on Metapsychology and Other Works* (London: Hogarth Press, 1957), pp. 237–58.
93. Catriona Mortimer Sandilands, 'Melancholy Natures, Queer Ecologies', in Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands and Bruce Erickson (eds.), *Queer Ecologies: Sex, Nature, Politics, Desire* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), pp. 331–58.
94. Jarman, *Modern Nature*, p. 178.
95. A few passages in the preceding paragraphs are adapted from Mills, *Derek Jarman's Medieval Modern*, pp. 102–3, 125–6. I have purposefully reproduced contemporary photographs of the Prospect Cottage garden, rather than the images produced in Jarman's lifetime, as a means of capturing the site's lingering vitality and significance as a site of queer memory and history.

Apocalypse, Now

Queer hope for the end of the world
and Dew Kim's *Succulent Humans*

ANDREW CUMMINGS

Introduction

At the Seoul Queer Culture Festival (SQCF), held annually since the year 2000, anti-LGBTQ+ protestors often hold signs emblazoned with apocalyptic slogans such as ‘same-sex love spells the collapse of the nation’.¹ Formerly the Korea Queer Culture Festival, SQCF has seen an explosion in numbers of attendees in the last decade and is now accompanied by events in other cities and regions across South Korea (henceforth Korea), such as Incheon and Jeju.² There has undoubtedly been an increase in the visibility and awareness of queer people and politics in the country—that is, people engaging in non-normative sexual practices or expressions of gender. But in tandem with this shift, the Protestant Right has emerged as a loud and powerful anti-LGBT minority.³ In 2007, under pressure from conservative Christian groups, the Ministry of Justice removed ‘sexual orientation’ from the Korean Human Rights Bill, effectively decriminalising discrimination on the basis of sexuality.⁴ Their slogans at protests like the SQCF draw upon a longer history in Korea of framing homosexuality as a threat to national security, external to the national body whose integrity it threatens. As historian Todd A. Henry writes, discrimination against sexual and gender nonconformity in Korea ‘extend[s] far beyond the stigmatizing confines of one’s biological family, transforming individual expressions of non-normative sexuality or gender variance into national threats that purportedly demand vigilant surveillance, repeated punishment, and even further marginalization’.⁵

Apocalyptic pronouncements about queer people—in particular, gay men—can also be found online. Over on Ilbe, the country’s prime right-wing forum, one user lists their ‘legitimate reasons to oppose same-sex love’, observing that queer people, and in particular people who engage in anal sex, are a ‘zombie force that is driving the nation to ruin’ and an evolutionary anomaly that ‘disrupts the order of humanity’.⁶ Extreme conservative narratives are the stuff of sci-fi horror, framing homosexuality as dirty, diseased, and antithetical to the ‘natural’ human condition. These narratives posit that gay men, especially those perceived as effeminate, have contracted an anus worm with a voracious homosexual appetite (and indeed, a common slur for gay men is *ttongkkocho’ung*, or ‘anus worm’). For example, reporting on the activities of Hong Seok-cheon—one of South Korea’s first publicly gay celebrities who came out in the early 2000s and consequently retired from public appearances for almost a decade—one blog user wrote in 2017 that Hong ‘contracted an anal worm at the age of 11, before infecting over three hundred more people’.⁷ For the socially conservative, non-normative expressions of sexuality and gender threaten to unravel the fabric of the national, social, and even human orders. No wonder, then, that queer people in Korea and elsewhere have often found themselves described in apocalyptic terms, figured as less-than-human beings with depraved desires which tease apart the threads of civilisation as it is known and, if these beings are left to flourish, risk shredding it apart completely. As this chapter



Fig. 1
Dew Kim. *A Succulent Human* (2018). Sponge, polyurethane foam, artificial plants, silicone, collected toys, sand, single channel film, 1m 18s (looping), dimensions variable. Installation view. Art Space Grove, Seoul, South Korea. Image courtesy of the artist.

contends, implicit in this apocalyptic homophobia is a utopia of the ideal human body as bounded, discrete, and sovereign, and the monstrous queer body as open, porous, and intimately enmeshed with non-human existence.

What, though, might the apocalypse look like from the perspective of a *ttongkkocho’ung*, a zombie, a sexual deviant? This chapter focuses on one example of a queer response to conservative framings of homosexuality as an apocalyptic threat: *Succulent Humans*, a collection of works by the Korean contemporary artist Dew Kim (b. 1985, Korea). Kim has repeatedly described his practice in terms of queerness, for its critical engagement with norms of gender and desire and its often irreverent references to queer popular and sexual cultures, often focusing on the Korean context, specifically. His work has been displayed across Europe, South America, and Asia; more recently, he has exhibited in various institutions in Korea, where he is based, including Seoul’s Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art.⁸ *Succulent Humans*—his first solo exhibition—marks his most pronounced engagement with the apocalypse through the lens of ecology. In the exhibition, the end of life on Earth and the accompanying breakdown of the social and ecological orders become the occasion for imagining the body and social relations beyond fixed and highly stratified categories of biology, gender, desire, and the human. The body of work consists of a foam landscape with pink sand spilling out from its side (Fig. 1); several glittering polyvinyl wall hangings, emblazoned with cartoons, photographs, and bursts of white (Figs. 2 and 3); an acrylate polymer island, shot through with neon lighting and housing a series of toy figurines, entitled *The Survivors* (Fig. 4); and layers of acrylate polymer arranged into the shape of a pelvis (Fig. 5). Artificial succulents that seem to be growing from ribs are nestled in glass planters, suspended from the gallery ceiling using translucent nets (Figs. 6 and 7). The

Fig. 2
Dew Kim. *Faster than a Kiss* (2018).
Digital printing on polyvinyl chloride, silicone tubes, epoxy putty, artificial plants, digital printing on wallpaper, dimensions variable. Installation view. Art Space Grove, Seoul, South Korea. Image courtesy of the artist.



Fig. 3
Dew Kim. *Zero Gravity* (2018).
Digital printing on polyvinyl chloride, silicone tubes, aluminium, chains, dimensions variable. Installation view. Art Space Grove, Seoul, South Korea. Image courtesy of the artist.



eerie purple lighting, the wallpaper displaying a gloomy grey landscape, and the empty space opened up between the sculptures all make the gallery space appear desolate and cold (Fig. 4).

In the future envisioned in *Succulent Humans*, ecological destruction has muddied the borders between bodies, be they human or not; likewise, fixed and striated categories of sex, gender, and desire have also dissipated. In the exhibition's story, the last remaining humans are unable to reproduce as before, and survive only by bioengineering a new generation of post-gender plant-human hybrids, or 'succulent humans'. From a cisheteropatriarchal perspective, this future is monstrous, apocalyptic, and 'failed': rather than hoping for the successful reproduction or perfection of the existing social and biological order, the exhibition appears to fantasise about its end. Thus, in the narrative Kim writes which draws the exhibition's works together, environmental catastrophe and the accompanying breakdown of social life form the very foundation upon which a queerer world can be built. This chapter traces the ascendancy of the notion of the body, in tandem with the development of capitalist modernity in Korea, as autonomous, bounded, and sovereign. It then mobilises Paul B. Preciado's notion of a 'countersexual' queer utopia to examine the alternative, more fluid understanding of the body, its organs, and its orifices as displayed in *Succulent Humans*. In its proliferation of near-indecomposable materials such as silicone and plastic, the exhibition also foregrounds the body's porosity vis-à-vis its increasingly polluted environment. It playfully deploys and transforms tropes from eco-horror and the science-fictional grotesque which—as uncanny reminders of the body's permeability and plasticity, and of the instability of hierarchical categories such as male and female, human and non-human—would typically evoke fear and disgust. Thus, this chapter also explores the ecological implications of understanding the body as open and porous and asks how *Succulent Humans* intervenes in mainstream environmentalist discourses of pollution and toxicity. My conclusion examines how queer reimaginings of disastrous and monstrous futures might bolster us against the supposed doom of the apocalypse and its harbingers (queer people among them), or perhaps even carry us beyond this doom, by transcending fatalistic narratives of utopia versus apocalypse, life versus death, and 'us' versus 'them'.

Preciado's story of (counter)sexuality is avowedly 'Western', drawing upon philosophers and theorists Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, Michel Foucault, and Guy Hocquenghem; thus, this chapter begins by sketching a brief history of sexuality in Korea, focusing on its military modernity in the latter half of the twentieth century. This history includes the increased visibility of LGBTQ+ people in Korea, the more widespread awareness of LGBTQ+ issues, and the development of an LGBTQ+ movement, particularly since the 1990s. My sketch also explores historical connections between homosexuality, disease, and dirtiness in the Korean context, and suggests that modern discourses on homosexuality are underwritten by the notion of an ideal, bounded, sanitised body.

Fig. 4
Dew Kim. *Succulent Humans* (2018).
Installation view.
Art Space Grove,
Seoul, South Korea.
Image courtesy of
the artist.



Constructing the Modern Body in Twentieth Century Korea

During its colonisation by the Japanese from 1910 to 1945, the Korean Peninsula—not yet divided into North and South—witnessed the dissemination of novel knowledge concerning the body, gender norms, and hygiene. During this time, bodies were categorised, standardised, and differentiated in the service of colonial capitalist modernity. The Japanese state explicitly desired to emulate and adapt the Western model of development, Enlightenment, and modernisation, which, as philosopher Rosi Braidotti and others have argued, developed from Humanism.⁹ At its centre, Braidotti continues, was the ideal of a ‘perfectly functional physical body’, modelled on ideals of (white) masculinity, heterosexuality, and health. Three points are significant when discussing the ‘perfectly functional physical body’ in the context of Korea’s colonial modernity. Firstly, men and women in Korea came to be defined in increasingly binary and biologically dimorphic terms. Ideals for male bodies focused on virility and strength; the ideal woman, meanwhile, was one who could reproduce, maintaining colonial capitalism and increasing Japan’s forces against its foes. Secondly, the male body became an icon of the healthy body, while the female body was consistently portrayed as unruly, the icon of illness, and the object of remedy and reform.¹⁰ Finally, though traditional eastern medicine (*hanüihak*) continued to be practised and adapted, Western biomedicine and its various cures were essential in the colonial state’s construction, maintenance, and enforcement of bodily norms and ideals centring around reproductive heterosexuality.¹¹ As the scholar of gender and sexuality Ed Cohen has argued, biomedicine constructs a ‘modern body’ limned by a ‘bellicose ideology’ which defines the organism ‘as a

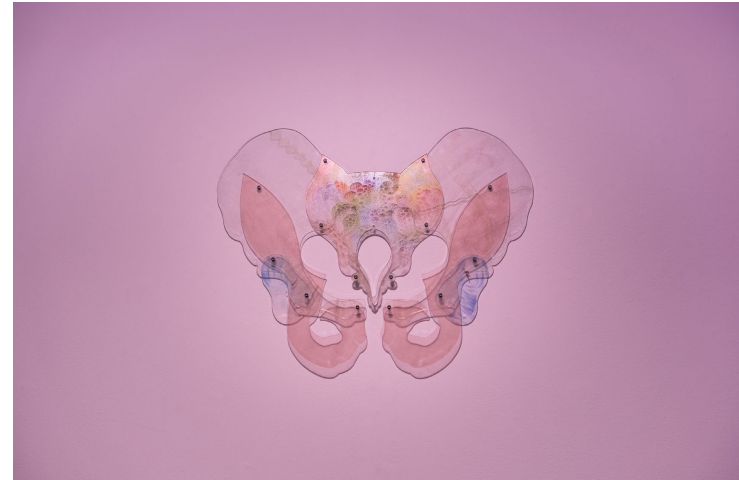


Fig. 5
Dew Kim. *To Find the Missing Horn or Tail* (2018). Digital printing on acrylate polymer, 50 x 35 cm. Installation view. Art Space Grove, Seoul, South Korea. Image courtesy of the artist.

defensible interior which needs to protect itself ceaselessly from a hostile exterior’.¹²

As many scholars have noted, the norms and disciplinary mechanisms deployed by the Japanese Empire intensified during the postcolonial period in the newly-established Republic of Korea (or South Korea), and in particular during the three decades of authoritarian rule lasting from Park Chung-hee’s rise to power in 1963 until the first democratic election in 1988.¹³ Sociologist Seungsook Moon coins the notion of ‘militarised modernity’ to refer to the coexistence in Korea of Foucauldian disciplinary power and militarised violence against those who did not conform during the country’s formation as a modern, industrialised nation-state.¹⁴ The dynamics of Cold War politics meant that the South Korean state equated modernity with strengthening the military to protect the nation against its Northern communist aggressor.¹⁵ In its pursuit of its own modernity, the state constructed and mobilised its subjects as a unified people composed of *kungmin* (‘people of the state’), and interpellated them along rigid gendered and heteronormative grounds.¹⁶ This mobilisation selectively invoked and reshaped principles of neo-Confucian social relations which had been the state ideology from 1392 to 1910, especially the patriarchal family—and not the individual—as the base unit of society. Men were mobilised as ‘providers’, employed by the military to fulfil various roles in service of industrialisation; conscription was mandatory, and military service remains compulsory for men even today. Women, on the other hand, were mobilised as ‘reproducers’ or ‘breeders’, but also worked in factories, where their labour was marginalised.¹⁷ Though examples of non-normative sexual practices, intimacies, and expressions of gender can be found throughout Korean history, during the authoritarian era, images of the nation in popular culture began to explicitly disavow queer subjects to bolster the cisheteropatriarchal bases of anti-communist development.¹⁸ Meanwhile,

Fig. 6
Dew Kim.
Incubation
Experiment (2018).
Ceramic, glass,
silicone tubes,
artificial plants,
sand, dimensions
variable. Installation
view. Art Space
Grove, Seoul,
South Korea. Image
courtesy of the
artist.



the state redoubled its attempts to intervene in and govern the bodies of its people through an extensive family planning programme (*kajok keyeboek*), including the mass distribution of new birth control technologies, knowledge about contraception, and the anti-abortion law.¹⁹ There were also anti-parasite initiatives (*keisaengh'ung pangmyŏl*), in which schoolchildren were required to send stool samples twice annually until 1995.²⁰ The 'military model' for the body discussed by Cohen in the European context was bolstered by the dynamics of Cold War binary logic in militarised Korea, which relied on strategies of otherness and exteriority in its formation.²¹ Thus, Korean bodies were increasingly considered as bounded, and in need of defending from infectious diseases and parasites, for the well-being of the nation. In the 1980s and early 1990s, women sex workers and gay men were the targets of anxieties relating to AIDS, coded as foreign and exterior to the nation: one scholar writes that the perception of gay men during this time was as 'AIDS-spreading aliens hiding in the dark'.²²

The decade immediately following the post-authoritarian period witnessed significant shifts in the ways that bodies were conceived, categorised, and organised, owing to the transition to democracy, accelerated globalisation, and advances in science and technology. First, civil society was revitalised; as Moon writes, Koreans moved from 'people of the state' towards 'citizens', 'willing to struggle and negotiate to obtain and protect rights and fulfil obligations' and 'able to redefine the substance of entitlements and obligations'.²³ Second, and in particular, since Korea hosted the Olympics in 1988 and eased restrictions on overseas travels for its citizens, there were the increased and uneven flows of people, ideas, and capital, known as globalisation. Importantly, the democracy (*minjung*) movement of the 1970s and 80s, the transition to democracy, neoliberal individualism, and globalisation all enabled the emergence

Fig. 7
Dew Kim. Detail
from *Incubation*
Experiment.



of a dedicated Women's Movement in Korea in the 1990s. Born out of the struggles over labour rights in the previous decades, the Women's Movement focused on the reduction of women's economic marginalisation.²⁴ Meanwhile, the enduring legacy of heteropatriarchal values and disciplinary mechanisms from the colonial and authoritarian periods meant that in the 1990s, as sociologist and cultural critic Seo Dong-Jin wrote at the time, 'homosexuality had no social existence', no presence in public discourse.²⁵ A small number of identity-based social and activist groups were established, including *Ma'im001*, *Ch'odonghoe*, *Ch'ingusai*, and *Kkirikkiri*.²⁶ These groups were moreover not connected to the Women's Movement, which at the time valorised the 'pure heterosexual woman' and positioned non-heterosexual women as abnormal.²⁷ The IMF crisis had lasting effects on the women's and (much more nascent) LGBTQ+ movements. 1997 witnessed the beginning of the IMF crisis and the mass layoffs of men, the traditional and legal 'family heads'. As many scholars have argued, this event heightened the sense of crisis felt among conservatives regarding gender, the family, and the nation's future, and has had enduring consequences for Korean society and queer politics. On the one hand, government-led economic and legislative restructuring revalorised what anthropologist Jesook Song calls 'heteronormative familism' as the basis of personal survival.²⁸ This included the passing of the 'Healthy Family Act' for the 'maintenance and development of healthy families'.²⁹ On the other hand, LGBTQ+ activists responded with renewed vigour, organising the Queer Culture Festival and actions to raise awareness about the discrimination they face.³⁰ A 'sexual politics of difference' also emerged in the Women's Movement, which began to display a wider recognition of the experiences of non-heterosexual women.³¹

Today, cisheteropatriarchal norms continue to subordinate queer individuals and

Fig. 8
Dew Kim. *Analufu*
No. 33 (2018).
Digital printing on
paper, frame, 59 x
85 cm. Installation
view. Art Space
Grove, Seoul,
South Korea. Image
courtesy of the
artist.



communities, justified through the politics of national division. Notable examples that scholarship has spotlighted are the resident registration system and the military. Transgenderqueer scholar Ruin argues that the resident registration system—which took root during the reign of Park Chung-hee (1961–79) as a means of justifying violence against ‘anti-communist’ individuals but which became entangled in Korea’s systems of military conscription, labour mobilisation, family registration, and medical regulation (structured around dimorphic conceptions of biological sex), and which remains in place to this day—renders transgender and intersex Koreans as internal exiles in a post-authoritarian society that continues to define itself in rigid terms of anti-communist militarism and cisgender heteropatriarchy.³² To this day, all men are required to undertake two years of military service, usually in their early twenties; transgender women who have chosen not to or who have yet to undergo gender confirmation surgery (that is, the majority of trans women conscripts, since they tend to be in their early twenties) are forced either to serve as men during their compulsory two-year conscription, or else need a ‘severe’ diagnosis of gender identity disorder, provided by a medical doctor.³³ Moreover, as Timothy Gitzen shows, those whose sexual practices and gender embodiments fail to conform to military norms suffer torment and persecution during mandatory military service, and even ‘pre-traumatic stress’.³⁴ This includes many cisgender gay men. Notably, in 2017, a top-ranking official encouraged his subordinates to infiltrate GPS-based gay dating apps to ‘out’ soldiers seeking same-sex encounters. A clause in the Korean military penal code was also used to imprison dozens of soldiers who had purportedly engaged in anal sex, even though they met partners when on leave and using off-base facilities.³⁵ As Henry summarises, then, ‘pursuing a gay life can still turn a soldier on his path to becoming a glorified citizen into a stigmatized criminal and

an enemy of the state’.³⁶

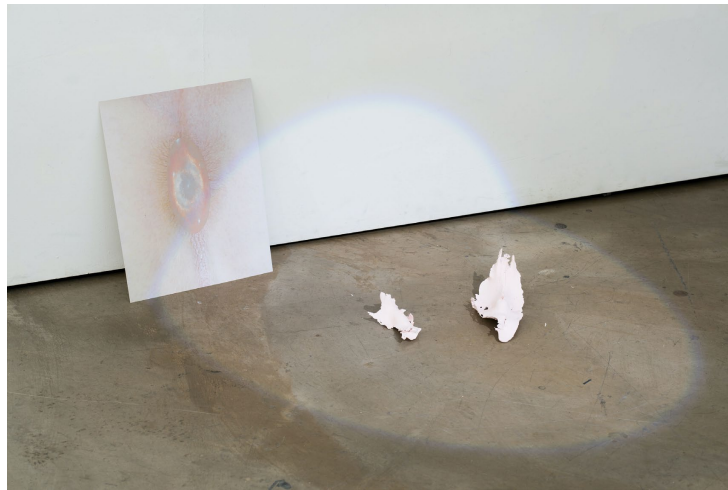
Thus, Korean socio-politics still foreground ‘healthy’, closed, individualised, heteronormative bodies and pathologise ‘defective’, queer, porous bodies and practices. Like several of Kim’s other works, *Succulent Humans* interrogates the parameters of success and failure that these biopolitics establish, pivoting particularly around the queer contexts that have arisen in the contemporary cultural moment in Korea and globally. The exhibition takes an apocalyptic scenario and transforms it into a queer utopia: here, the breakdown of the human body’s supposed sovereignty, the obsolescence of its reproductive capacities, and its subsequent entanglement with the nonhuman bodies of plants all offer the possibility of conceiving of the body and social relations beyond fixed and stratified categories of gender, desire, and the human.

Succulent Humans, Anal Utopia, and Phallic Apocalypse

In the same spirit of perversion that characterises *Succulent Humans*, I begin with the (rear) end: the image of the anus that depicts the survivors’ spaceship (Fig. 8). This image has a history in Kim’s work: it appeared in his 2017 installation *The Peach Blossom Land* (Fig. 9). The title of that installation is taken from a fifth-century Chinese fable, known in Korea as *murŭngdonŏn*, about a man who squeezes through an orifice in a cave surrounded by peach trees and discovers a thriving community living in harmony on the other side. Teasing out the peach’s historical connections with paradise in Korean history, and its more recent associations with buttocks (via the ‘peach’ emoji), Kim’s exhibition *The Peach Blossom Land* playfully examines the subversive and utopian potential accorded to the anus by the Spanish philosopher Paul B. Preciado, whose work Kim recommends as further reading in his description of that exhibition.³⁷ I take the ‘upcycling’ of this anus in *Succulent Humans* as an invitation to use Preciado’s work to think through *Succulent Humans*, too, in particular, what Preciado has called an ‘anal’ or ‘countersexual politics’ in his writing over the last decade or so, in particular in his essay ‘Anal Terror’ (first published in Spanish in 2009) and his *Countersexual Manifesto* (first published in French in 2000).

Preciado posits sexuality as a ‘technology’ or ‘machinery’ which ‘prescribes the context in which the organs acquire their meaning (sexual relationships) and are properly used in accordance with their “nature”’.³⁸ In the Western context Preciado describes, ‘natural’ sexuality is reproductive and therefore heterosexual, and so the sex organs are the reproductive organs—the penis and the vagina—organised into a hierarchy. By the same token, other organs are understood as nonsexual, and erotic practices involving these organs (in particular the anus) are deviant or abject. Preciado’s playfully overwrought tale of the construction of the modern body—not dissimilar to Kim’s own storytelling—relates that the anus needed to be ‘close[d] up’ or ‘castrate[d]’ for the ‘honourable and healthy’ flow and expression of sexual energy. The bodies of women

Fig. 9
Dew Kim. *How Homo Sapiens Can Evolve* (2017).
Digital printing on paper, acrylic acid, dimensions variable. Installation view. Art Space O, Seoul, South Korea. Image courtesy of the artist.



and queer men, moreover, are considered particularly deviant and in need of disciplining because of their openness.³⁹ Preciado compares sexualities to languages: both are ‘complex systems of communication and reproduction of life’ and ‘historical constructs with common genealogies and biocultural inscriptions’. And ‘like languages, sexualities can be learned ... we can learn any other sexual language with a greater or lesser sense of alienation and strangeness, of joy and appropriation’.⁴⁰ Preciado draws upon a Western history of sexuality shaped by particular psychoanalytic, medical and juridical discourses, among others. As this chapter has already demonstrated, heterosexual, reproductive sexuality was naturalised in Korea in the formation of ‘modern’ bodies during the twentieth century. Preciado looks to language as a reflection of the primacy of reproductive heterosexuality (in his case, Spanish). The Korean language also reflects this primacy, to the same extent that it does in Spanish: *Uri mal saem*, the largest Korean-language dictionary, defines the penis (*umgyōng*) as ‘the male’s external reproductive organ’, while the vagina (*chil*) is ‘the female’s reproductive passageway’ that ‘receives the penis during intercourse’ and ‘becomes the route by which the child emerges during birth’.⁴¹ Business as usual, then: the vagina is merely a receptacle for the comings and goings of the penis (and the child being born).

Preciado asserts that prevailing understandings of gender, sex, and sexuality—like many of the objects in Kim’s exhibition—are plastic: that is, they are artificial but also malleable. They are also prosthetic: again, artificial or constructed, but also organic, an extension of the body. Through what he has called an ‘anal politics’, Preciado invites us to estrange ourselves from predominant topographies of the body and its desires, to recognise these topographies as plastic and prosthetic, and to invent other prostheses or sexual technologies. Practising anal or countersexual politics means reclaiming as sexual



Fig. 10
Detail from *Zero Gravity*.

‘any organ (organic or inorganic) that has the capacity to channel the *potentia gaudendi* [orgasmic force] through a nervous system connecting a living body to its exteriority’.⁴² It means acknowledging the body’s porosity, that is, its openness to penetration and sensual pleasure by means of various erogenous zones beyond the reproductive organs. The anus is especially useful for Preciado because it escapes the rhetoric of sexual difference—every body has one—and because it has historically been maligned, unlike the mouth, for example. Beyond this, sexual practices involving the anus allow for fluid and reversible sexual roles: anyone, regardless of their genitalia, can be a penetrator and a receptor. In short, the goal of an anal politics is the end of the social order predicated on phallocentrism.

Echoing Preciado, Kim has stated that he considers the work ‘a democratic symbol representing all regardless of sex and gender’, a ‘sexual communist symbol of public joy’, and ‘the symbol of the liquidity of power from behind and from below’.⁴³ In a knowing wink to Preciado, in *Succulent Humans* the anus is literally the vehicle for a community whose relations are not predicated primarily on heterosexual reproduction, nor, therefore, on fixed and striated categories for gender, sex and desire. The anus may represent the end of one kind of social order, but it is the beginning of another one. In the scenario that the exhibition imagines, the last surviving humans’ reproductive organs—the ‘natural’ sex organs—no longer function as such, and so the discursive scaffolding that designates these as the primary or only zones for pleasure is weakened. The interrogation of hegemonic technologies for understanding the body is sustained in the sculpture of a pelvis, which consists of several layers of acrylate polymer laid atop one another (Fig. 5). The sculpture can be likened to a Rorschach test, in which individuals are asked to identify images from an ink blot. The shadows the

Fig. 11
Detail from *Zero Gravity*.



acrylate polymer casts on the wall obfuscate the sculpture's shapes, layers, and lines, redoubling the effects of illusion and estrangement. In its evocation of the disciplines of psychology and medicine, the sculpture critiques these frames for understanding the body.

The exhibition is scattered, as well, with references to sexually nonreproductive practices. A transparent sheet embroidered with silicone tubes and suspended from chains (Fig. 3) recalls the slings associated with BDSM practices which, as Preciado has written, 'expose the erotic power structures underlying the contract that heterosexuality has imposed as natural'.⁴⁴ A clear studded fisting glove hangs from one of the chains, while over another chain hangs a viscous glob of semen, 'wasted', in reproductive terms (Figs. 10 and 11). Meanwhile, a video embedded in a Styrofoam landscape portrays a person, naked apart from a pair of shoes, wandering around a lush forest, now freely, now stealthily (Fig. 12). The video's images are suggestive of cruising: walking or driving around a public space in search of a sexual partner, a practice historically associated with gay men. The wide shot of the camera imitates the furtive glance of someone peering through the foliage while cruising, implicating the viewer in the act. Preciado connects the castration or closure of the anus and sexual repression to the suffocating division between public and private, and the relegation of sexual pleasure to the private; thus, cruising espouses an anal or countersexual politics because it makes public space the site of a supposedly private, erotic act and enacts the 'public redistribution of pleasure'.⁴⁵ The video sculpture's title, *A Succulent Human*, draws a connection between the practice of cruising and the alternative understanding of the body and desire represented in the idea of the plant-human hybrid.

The turn towards the vegetal in *Succulent Humans*, represented in humanity's

Fig. 12
Detail from *A Succulent Human*.



becoming-vegetal for its survival, also gestures to the expansive possibilities for sex and sexuality beyond the binary of penetration and/or reception. The video component of *A Succulent Human* may evoke the act of cruising, but no recognisable sex act is pictured here. The fact that succulents reproduce asexually through propagation does however imply that sex, in this world, is not only, or not primarily, penetrative-receptive or even genital. Indeed, the succulent human offers a way of thinking about human sexuality in terms of what Michael Marder describes as 'the fluidity, pliability, and plasticity of vegetal sexuality', for instance, the hermaphroditism of many plants, or their ability to change between masculine and feminine in their lifetimes.⁴⁶ Nor is there a clear indication of the roving figure's potential sexual partner; the distorted, undulating effect added to the video, however, suggests that the desiring gaze of the camera is a more-than-human or not-quite-human one, and, by extension, that desire and the erotic in this world are directed at more-than-human bodies and lifeforms. The only glimpse here of arousal and the channelling of orgasmic force comes when the figure runs its hands through a body of water, recalling the notion of ecosexuality practised and described by artists Elizabeth Stephens and Anne Sprinkle.⁴⁷ As Michael J. Morris summarises, the artists' project *The Love Art Laboratory* frames ecosexuality as an orientation towards the nonhuman that views it as something with which the human is materially entangled in a reciprocal relationship.⁴⁸ This porous model for the body, therefore, has wider, ecological implications for sex and desire beyond the human, moving beyond ideologies regarding where human and nonhuman bodies begin and end, as this chapter will shortly address.

While a kind of reproduction survives in *Succulent Humans*, the exhibition's celebration of the end of the world aligns it somewhat with queer fantasies about

apocalyptic futures, where the apocalypse has typically been understood as the end of biological and social reproduction. Emblematic in this regard is Lee Edelman's 2004 polemic *No Future*, in which the queer theorist famously critiques what he calls 'reproductive futurism' and the figure of the Child that it deploys. The Child, Edelman argues, is 'the organizing principal of communal relations' and 'remains the perpetual horizon of every acknowledged politics, the fantasmatic beneficiary of every political intervention.'⁴⁹ The logic of reproductive futurism makes appeals on behalf of children (in Edelman's case, American children) impossible to refuse at any point on the political spectrum; it also ensures that the future exists only as the 'mere repetition' of the heteronormative social order with the Child at its centre.⁵⁰ In other words, reproductive futurism is the very powerful fantasy that the social, economic, and cultural frameworks of power that organise life should remain the same. Considering the exhibition's narrative of ecological destruction, it is pertinent to note, as well, that a great deal of mainstream environmental activism continues to appeal to the assumption of continued heterosexual reproduction as the norm. Here, as scholar of culture and media Heather Davis writes, 'the notion of reproductive futurism' and 'a particular way of life' are 'precisely what we are called to protect, in the almost ubiquitous appeals to "protect our children."⁵¹ Environmental humanist Nicole Seymour, too, acknowledges that reproductive futurism is the 'fundamental rhetoric of environmentalism', and that 'such sentimentalized rhetoric ... suggests that concern for the future qua the planet *can only emerge, or emerges most effectively*, from white, heterosexual, familial reproductivity'.⁵² Edelman's critique of reproductive futurism proposes a queerness that "'knows nothing about 'sacrifice now for the sake of future generations'" and even 'delights in that mortality as the negation of everything that would define itself, moralistically, as pro-life.'⁵³ In its staging of a post-apocalyptic queer utopia, *Succulent Humans* heeds Edelman's polemical call for queers to embrace the apocalypse, death, and negativity with which they have historically been associated, including in Korea.⁵⁴

At the same time, *Succulent Humans* also differs from Edelman's conception of queerness in *No Future* in which, as Bernini writes, the theorist 'condemns the queer to a solitary existence' and champions a queerness that is 'a purely negative force, compulsively geared toward fracturing ties with the other, indiscriminately, without judgement, without imagination'.⁵⁵ This fracturing of ties is, I think, its own kind of 'barricading', 'a fiction of independence and impenetrability', to use Davis's phrasing.⁵⁶ Instead, *Succulent Humans* turns towards and not away from the other, particularly non-human others. It does this in part by clinging to a form of reproduction without reproductive futurism, asexual reproduction *with a difference*, one which sees humans becoming vegetal and more obviously porous.

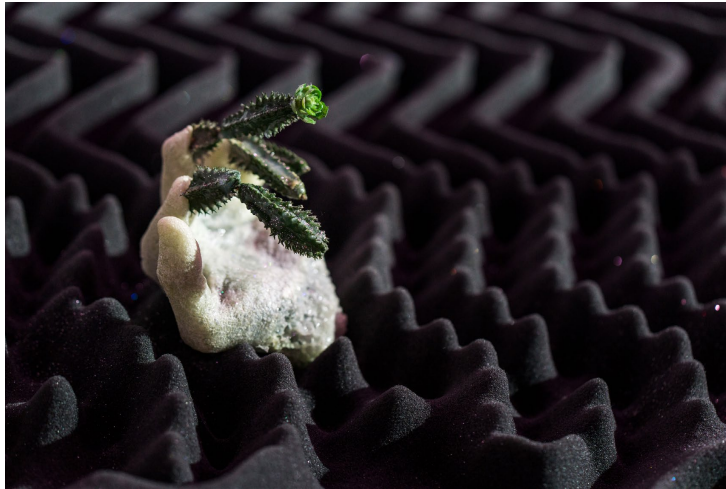
Indeed, and as the remainder of this chapter will contend, *Succulent Humans* highlights that, much like the succulent, the human body is porous, not only in terms of its openness to penetration through multiple zones of pleasure, but also vis-à-vis the so-

called 'natural' environment, which is exterior to and supposedly separate from it. And although the exhibition seems to revel in environmental collapse, in its divestment from discourses of toxicity and the alternative understanding of the body, ecology, and the human that it presents, the exhibition nonetheless has something to offer us as we move forward into an uncertain ecological and social future. It suggests that the notion of the independent, closed, sovereign body, with its emphasis on the ideal (white, male) body as inviolable and impenetrable, denies the fact that bodies, human and non-human alike, are being altered and queered by toxins released by environmental pollution. Thus, the same thinking that sanctions and undergirds discrimination against queer people (who, incidentally, are considered 'toxic' for the social order) also contributes to the ongoing destruction of the environment and the extinction of the lives of those who are most vulnerable to it. Therefore, while *Succulent Humans* appears to celebrate the body's vulnerability to alteration by toxins, it also turns a lens on the heteronormative anxieties that produce discourses of toxicity and cleanliness.

Porosity, Plasticity, Ecology, Toxicity

Although the reasons for the ecological apocalypse in *Succulent Humans* are not divulged, the exhibition's orgy of non-biodegradable synthetic materials suggests that the catastrophe is of human provenance. The proliferation and saturation of plastic and silicone here trigger anxieties about the unbridled consumption and disposal of near-indecomposable materials in the Anthropocene, anxieties which today seem more heightened than ever.⁵⁷ While plastics do decay over an extremely long timeframe, the continued and abundant production of them effectively renders them eternal. The consumption, disposal, and circulation of plastics are closely linked to the global economy, which, even in the age of so-called 'sustainable development', permits no 'unproductive' release of energy. For Davis, for example, plastic indexes the cheap replication and distribution of goods under global capitalism; for contemporary art historian Amanda Boetzkes it is 'the new material of the Anthropocene par excellence'.⁵⁸ As I have argued, this same system, according to Preciado, naturalises heteronormative, reproductive sexuality, and consolidates a hierarchy of the organs which places the reproductive organs at the top and the anus—the waste-producing organ—towards the bottom. In *Succulent Humans*, the enlarged image of the artist's anus is one reminder that humans are not, in environmental humanities scholar Stacy Alaimo's words, 'rarefied rational beings distinct from nature's muck and muddle'.⁵⁹ Rather, we are waste-producing beings, and our waste must go somewhere—or (more precisely still) nowhere. For while plastic circulates in the global economy and is designed for disposability, it cannot be disposed of, owing to its near-indecomposability. In other words, plastic will likely outlive us. This contributes to the material's queer temporality as a 'distinctly present futural form'.⁶⁰ Plastic's futurity is precisely its

Fig. 13
Detail from *A
Succulent Human*.



existence as a tensile mass that refuses growth and degeneration', writes Boetzkes: it will never decay.⁶¹ Plastic, moreover, is already altering human and non-human bodies and networks. It is already merging with the so-called 'natural world': in the ocean, for example, plastics host microbial communities and develop their own ecologies, or 'plastispheres'.⁶² Further, our ingestion of plastics is affecting the body's capacity to produce oestrogen. Katie Schaag reminds us, as well, that plastic particles enter the human body through the consumption of contaminated food and water, as well as via the lungs and skin, making the body 'a biochemical assemblage of performative plastic and non-plastic actants'.⁶³ Thus, plastic is a deeply ambivalent material, holding within it the jubilant affects of play, accumulation, and consumption, and all the while being a 'profoundly anxious substance' marking an uncertain, uncanny future of destruction, transmutation, and extinction.⁶⁴

Succulent Humans turns on the various affects and associations evoked by its plastic compositions. On one level, these compositions gesture towards the death and destruction wrought by toxicity, that is, the increased presence of plastic in the environment. Emerging, for instance, from the landscape sculpture entitled *A Succulent Human* (Fig. 1), is a zombified, crystalline hand (Fig. 13); and in a perverse twist on the flood narrative from the Book of Genesis, a slew of plastic corpses is caught in the fluorescent sand spewing from the landmass's side (Fig. 14). The plastic figurines that form *The Survivors*, meanwhile, represent the last humans marooned on a plastic isle, as the sculpture's title suggests (Fig. 15). These abandoned figurines—which depict characters from Disney films (*Bambi*), children's cartoons (*My Little Pony*, for instance), and religious figures—index the circulation of plastic goods in the global economy, particularly cultural products from the West. Saint Christopher (Fig. 16) is the patron



Fig. 14
Detail from *A
Succulent Human*.



Fig. 15
Dew Kim. *The Survivors* (2018).
Collected toys, neon lighting, acrylate polymer, 65 x 65 x 40 cm.
Installation view: Art Space Grove, Seoul, South Korea.
Image courtesy of the artist.

saint of travel; his presence here indicates the flow and disposal of goods on earth as much as the extraterrestrial movement of the last surviving humans in the exhibition's fictional narrative.

These elements are offset, however, by the exhibition's overriding, and at times unsettling, playfulness and irreverence. Notably, the garish colours of the figurines make them appear at once jubilant and excessive, even cloying. The figurine of Jesus,

Fig. 16
Detail from *The Survivors*.



Fig. 17
Detail from *The Survivors*.



Fig. 18
Detail from *The Survivors*.



Fig. 19
Detail from *Zero Gravity*.



Fig. 20
Detail from *Zero Gravity*.



for example, appears camped up, sporting a blonde beard, bright pink hair, and tacky, sparkling robes stoned with gold (Fig. 17). Similarly, Bambi is provocatively positioned with its rear in the air and looking coquettishly behind (Fig. 18). The appearance of similar images and plastic materials elsewhere in the exhibition yokes these figurines more closely to queer cultures and countersexual practices. Notably, Bambi also appears on the polyvinyl hanging (Fig. 19), nestled among a photograph of buttocks (Fig. 20) and images that are resonant of transnational, intra-regional queer popular and media cultures in East Asia, including queer-coded characters from Japanese anime popular among queer viewers in South Korea since the 90s, such as Kaworu Nagisa from the post-apocalyptic series *Evangelion* (Fig. 21) and Sailor Uranus from *Sailor Moon* (Fig. 22).⁶⁵ Similarly, in the landscape sculpture, the zombified hand contrasts with the jubilation of the sedimented layers of gaudy polyurethane foam (Fig. 1). The video depicting a figure cruising naked in a countersexual paradise is also embedded in this chaotic, tawdry landscape, redoubling its affective ambiguity.

To my mind, this jubilation is a call to embrace the porosity of the human body and its enmeshment with more-than-human worlds as described by Davis, Schaag, and others.⁶⁶ Davis and Schaag, in particular, are quick to question the ethics of this position even as they tentatively espouse it, and rightly so: under the current conditions of toxicity and pollution, economically privileged, white inhabitants of the Global North remain the least affected.⁶⁷ Indeed, *Succulent Humans* pictures humanity at the moment of its escape and transformation, and in so doing, it does not attend to the painful reality of the 'slow violence' of ecological destruction that many of the earth's species, and humans, are already facing.⁶⁸ Any call to embrace porosity should take account of the already existing disparities in embodied experiences of porosity, which are broadly

Fig. 21
Kaworu Nagisa
(centre). Detail
from *Zero Gravity*.

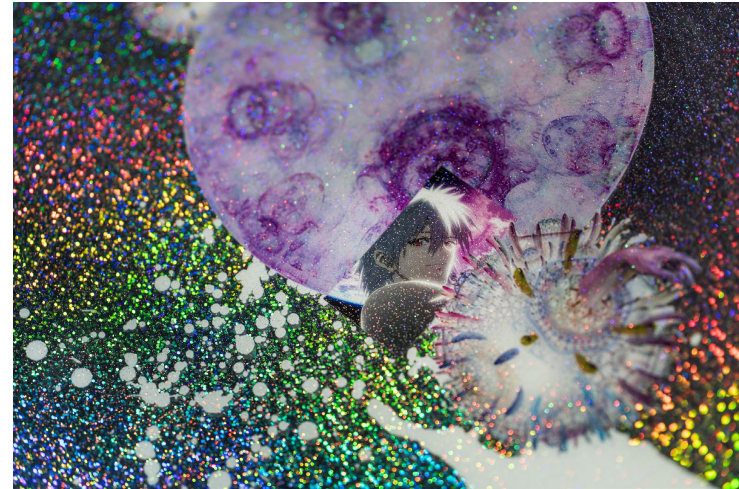


Fig. 22
Sailors Moon
and Uranus kiss
(centre). Detail
from *Faster than a Kiss*.



differentiated along the lines of class, race, and geography. These disparities are not, it should be said, accounted for in the utopia plotted in *Succulent Humans*, in which there is no longer a need to accommodate sexual or racial difference because it no longer exists: each succulent human appears the same.

Succulent Humans does, however, invite us to take pleasure in porosity. As Seymour notes, the mobilisation of affects of pleasure, irreverence, and irony may open more productive avenues for engaging with environmental crises compared to guilt and

shame.⁶⁹ The exhibition invites us, too, to ask how porosity might be placed in the service of a radical politics. It tethers the respective biological and social ‘toxins’ of plastic and queerness, and suggests that a future that is more hospitable to the lives of non-human *and* queer others may lie in an alternative conception of the human body and of toxicity itself. Citing Ed Cohen, Mel Y. Chen writes that toxicity is generally ‘understood as an unnaturally external force that violates (rather than informs) an integral and bounded self’.⁷⁰ Yet toxicity also, Davis surmises, ‘forces us to reveal the ways in which we are multiply composed—of plastic, of toxins, of queer morphologies’.⁷¹ This revelation goes against the heteronormative, masculinist assumption that the body, and in particular the body sexed as male, is inviolable. It also contradicts the ‘bellicose antagonism’ that fuels the insistence of separation between self and world, between body and its environment.⁷² An acceptance of the human body’s porosity entails an acknowledgement of, on the one hand, its various orifices and capacities for pleasure and existence outside of heterosexual reproduction; and, on the other, the body’s integral relation to its environment, including the toxins released into the environment by human industrial activity and a wilful ignorance of our own porosity. At the very least, Chen writes, ‘[a]n uptake, rather than a denial of, toxicity seems to have the power to turn a lens on the anxieties that produce it’.⁷³ An attention to queer morphologies and to porosity may, as Davis and Schaag tell us, also form the grounds for practices of care that extend not only to queer subjects but also to the various forms of life—human and nonhuman—precluded, begotten, or destroyed by conditions of environmental toxicity.⁷⁴

Succulent Humans, finally, asks after the queer ecological potential of considering not just the porosity but also the *plasticity* of the body, its capacity for transformation and mutation even as it might, like plastic, hold temporary form.⁷⁵ Pertinent here is the exhibition’s playful subversion of tropes associated with ecohorror. Christy Tidwell writes that ecohorror as a genre ‘deals with our fears and anxieties about the environment’.⁷⁶ Usually it involves an encounter with the nonhuman, which is horrifying because it is ‘inexplicable, irrational, and implacable’.⁷⁷ In their introduction to a series of articles about ecohorror in *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* (ISLE), Stephen Rust and Carter Soles propose an expanded definition of ecohorror beyond the limits of a genre, a definition which ‘includes analyses of texts in which horrific texts and tropes are used to promote ecological awareness, represent ecological crises, or blur human/non-human distinctions more broadly’.⁷⁸ They add that ecohorror ‘assumes that environmental disruption is haunting humanity’s relationship to the non-human world’.⁷⁹ In *Succulent Humans*, the idea of the plant-human hybrid is reminiscent of ecohorror narratives such as John Wyndham’s post-apocalyptic novel *The Day of the Triffids* (1951), in which a sentient, alien carnivorous plant species begins killing humans and proliferating across the world, or the film *Annihilation* (2018, adapted from a 2014 novel by Jeff VanderMeer), in which human and animal bodies mutate and become plant-like

owing to an extraterrestrial intelligence.⁸⁰

What is unsettling about *Succulent Humans* is precisely its playful invitation not to give in to apocalyptic fantasies of our complete non-being, and instead to imagine a future that sees the survival of a form of human life that is also somehow botanical. As in Octavia Butler’s *Xenogenesis* series (1987–89), in which the human survivors of a nuclear disaster must either reproduce with betentacled alien beings for the sake of both species or else accept extinction, the last surviving humans of the exhibition’s story choose to become vegetal. Living like a plant, Michael Marder offers, entails ‘welcoming the other, forming a rhizome with it, and turning oneself into the passage for the other without violating it or dominating it’.⁸¹ This rhizomatic existence not only disrupts staid but enduring conceptions of nature as never changing, or as having an idealised, pure form sullied by human interference and to which it must be returned.⁸² It also explains, I think, the artificiality of the plants hanging in the exhibition space: coated in a plastic-looking membrane, it is as if these succulent human beings have found a way to adapt by merging with, or acting as a passage for, the plastics and pollutants which, according to the exhibition’s narrative, have flooded the earth. These plastic, test-tube succulents, moreover, represent a strange and queer ecology that transcends the limits of total human understanding or control.

On this point, it is apt to return, once more, to the cruising figure glimpsed in *A Succulent Human*. Though the figure wanders around a forest, the video depicting its perambulations is embedded in the form of a synthetic landmass, drawing the forest and the artificial landmass into a generative friction, suggestive of the strange, new, flourishing forms of more-than-human life and enmeshment evoked elsewhere in the exhibition and in its narrative. Indeed, as well as evoking a nonhuman gaze, the distortions through which the images of the forest are filtered recalls the undulations of the landscape sculpture. Jayna Brown writes of the ‘new forms of sociality and modes of being’ opened up by the practice of estranging ourselves from ‘the life of our species’ and engaging, instead, with the ‘plasticity of life’ occurring even at the cellular level.⁸³ We might, then, see the figure in *A Succulent Human* as cruising for untold and unknown forms of more-than-human sociality, for what Benjamin Dalton calls a kind of ‘queerness-without-us’, a porous, plastic, and entangled existence that continues beyond life as we know it.⁸⁴

Conclusion: Queer Utopias, Monstrous Futures

In *Queer Phenomenology* (2006), Sara Ahmed cautions against ‘idealiz[ing] queer worlds or simply locat[ing] them in an alternative space’, because ‘what is queer is never, after all, exterior to its object’.⁸⁵ In their invocation of science fiction and utopia, the works examined in this chapter might literally appear to locate queer worlds in another space and time; after all, the genre has long suffered charges of escapism and frivolity. Yet

science fiction worlds can indeed tell us about the world that is presently ‘in place’, to use Ahmed’s phrase. Braidotti writes that while science fiction representations appear oriented towards a fanciful future, they act as fantastical social imaginaries about modernity.⁸⁶ Likewise, Ursula Le Guin writes that ‘science fiction properly conceived ... is a way of describing what is actually going on’.⁸⁷ And for Ramzi Fawaz, the ‘encounters with figures of radical otherness’ engendered in fantasy worlds ‘provide tools to subvert dominant systems of power and reorient one’s ethical investments towards bodies, objects, and worldviews formerly dismissed as alien to the self’.⁸⁸ What precisely, then, can we draw from the world dreamt up in Dew Kim’s *Succulent Humans*? What does it have to tell us about the worlds already ‘in place’, about the futures these worlds are oriented towards, and about alternative orientations and futures that might be possible?

On the one hand, Kim’s works accommodate the viewer to a future that is, to quote Jacques Derrida, ‘necessarily monstrous’. Derrida explains that

the figure of the future, that is, that which can only be surprising, that for which we are not prepared, you see, is heralded by species of monsters. A future that would not be monstrous would not be a future; it would already be a predictable, calculable, and programmable tomorrow. All experience open to the future is prepared or prepares itself to welcome the monstrous *arrivant*.⁸⁹

The future glimpsed in *Succulent Humans* may appear monstrous precisely because it attests to the futility of clinging to fantasies of reproductive futurism and offers alternative fantasies of life-to-come. The exhibition’s orgy of plastic underscores that the reproduction of the social and biological order arranged by capitalism cannot continue in perpetuity, for, as we have seen, capitalism is destroying the ecological conditions for its own subsistence. Moreover, the altered levels of toxicity brought about by capitalism and industrial activity are queering our bodies, whether we like it or not. The notion of the body as independent, discrete, and bounded, as well as fantasies of a ‘future perfect’ in which this notion is sustained (as in the homophobic statements with which this chapter began), cannot account for these actualities.

Rather than the reproduction of sameness, survival, whatever it entails, will necessarily involve transformation—the unspooling of this order rather than its indefatigable continuation. Notably, survival-as-adaptation and -transformation are an altogether different kind from the survival-as-conquest that characterises many science fiction blockbuster films and, increasingly, entrepreneurial framings of space exploration.⁹⁰ Instead of conquering, domesticating, or eradicating monstrous and non-human others, *Succulent Humans* invites us instead to draw closer to these others and to become intimate with them, in part through a recognition of our own bodily porosity and already-existing enmeshment. For Davis, embracing an ethics of porosity and permeability might open onto greater attention and hospitality towards others, both

our ‘non-filial human progeny’ and the ‘new bacterial communities’ and ‘plasticized, microbial progeny’ produced by conditions of toxicity.⁹¹ Yet, as I have argued, by imagining future humans that are at once succulent and synthetic, the exhibition goes beyond Davis’s position and encourages us to recognise our own *plasticity*, as well: that is, the ‘biological plasticity of living organisms’ and ‘the capacity to adapt and change’, as Schaag puts it.⁹² *Succulent Humans* suggests that we might take pleasure in this plasticity. It articulates a more hospitable orientation to an unknowable future populated by radical others and invites us to be open to becoming radically other ourselves. A hospitality to monstrous futures might also facilitate hospitality to those framed as monstrous others in the present, too—to those who do not conform to constructed boundaries of normativity and their ideals.

Succulent Humans also reminds us that the reproduction of the social and biological order also entails the foreclosure of the possibility of other orders and other lives. In this way, the exhibition evokes the necropolitical—the consigning of certain populations to physical and social death—as much as the biopolitical, or the governing of life.⁹³ Following a reading of Butler’s *Xenogenesis* trilogy, Neel Ahuja tells us that

reproduction is at once a negation and transition, and that the living incorporate extinct lives that could have been. At the heart of the body and the future lies the corpse.⁹⁴

Similarly, in her analysis of waste in contemporary art, Boetzkes calls for us to think of waste ‘as a systemic pattern of creating the world through the *foreclosure of life and diversity*’.⁹⁵ In other words, if ‘life’ and ‘success’ are understood as the reproduction and perfection of the existing social and biological order, then life always entails the deaths of other beings, human and non-human, who are excluded from this order, and success always entails failure: the failure of other beings to survive or thrive. The future is not a question of utopia versus apocalypse; one person’s utopia is another person’s apocalypse, as conservative, Protestant responses to LGBTQ+ activism in Korea make clear. However, as the works examined in this chapter suggest, we might yet learn another language of the body, attune ourselves to its porosity and plasticity, and bring human and non-human others into our present and into our visions for the future. Only then might we move beyond fatalistic narratives of ‘life’ and ‘death’, ‘success’ or ‘failure’, or ‘us’ versus ‘them’, as well as binaries of open, porous, and contaminated bodies versus closed, contained, uncontaminated ones. Life will go on; it just may not be human.

1. The original, a placard at the 2015 edition of the SQCF, reads 'p'it'amhillyö saeu nara tongsoŋgaero munöchin'da.' Translations are my own unless otherwise stated.
2. This chapter uses the McCune-Reischauer system for transliterating Korean terms and names. For readability, I make an exception for cases for which well-known or established transliterations are already in common circulation.
3. For more on the politicised nature of homophobia in Korea, see Judy Ju Hui Han, 'Kw'io chönggh'iwa kw'io chichöngghak (Queer Politics and Queer Geopolitics)', *Munhwa Kwahak* 83 (Autumn 2015): pp. 62–81.
4. Kim, Hyun-young Kwon and John (Song Paek) Cho. 'The Korean Gay and Lesbian Movement 1993–2008: From "identity" and "community" to "human rights"', in Gi-wook Shin and Paul Chang (eds.), *South Korean Social Movements: From Democracy to Civil Society* (New York: Routledge, 2011), p. 218.
5. Todd A. Henry, 'Introduction', in Todd A. Henry (ed.), *Queer Korea* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2020), p. 10.
6. Amsiraeng, 2 December 2014, 'Tongsöngae pandae-hanlin chöngdanghan iyu (Legitimate reasons to oppose same-sex love)', Ilbe, accessed 9 October 2019, <https://www.ilbe.com/4784758398>.
7. hi7ju12, 16 July 2017, 'Sahoek tongkkoch'ung taehae arabocho (Let's learn about the social evil of *tongk-koch'ung*)', Naver Blog, accessed 29 October 2020, <https://blog.naver.com/hi7ju12/221052292268>.
8. 'Looking for Another Family', Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art Seoul, n.d., accessed 17 February 2021, <https://www.moca.go.kr/eng/exhibitions/exhibitions-Detail.do?eshId=202001140001261>.
9. Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2013), pp. 13–16. For an explanation of Japanese imperial modes for modernity, see Michael Robinson, *Cultural Nationalism in Colonial Korea, 1920–1925* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1988). It is worth noting that the same model was embraced by the Korean nationalists, but for a contrasting purpose: they believed that a modernised, stronger Korea would free the country from colonial rule: see Jin-kyung Park, 'Managing "dis-ease": Print media, medical images, and patent medicine advertisements in colonial Korea', *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 24:4 (2017): pp. 420–39; and Todd A. Henry, 'Introduction', p. 431–432.
10. A further example is outlined by Todd A. Henry. Henry notes that towards the end of the colonial period, Japan's 'imperial subjects' in Korea (*hanjunggukimin*) were categorised as abiding by or deviating from bodily norms aimed at maintaining colonial capitalism through reproductive heterosexuality: Henry, 'Introduction', p. 12.
11. Ed Cohen, *A Body Worth Defending: Immunity, Biopolitics, and the Apotheosis of the Modern Body* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009), pp. 6, 14. For an example in the Korean context specifically, see Jin-kyung Park's discussion of tuberculosis in the late 1920s, which in popular magazines was framed by nationalist intellectuals as a threat to the nation's very existence: Park, 'Managing "dis-ease"', pp. 424–5.
12. The Republic of Korea was officially established in 1948: Seungsook Moon, *Militarized Modernity and Gendered Citizenship in South Korea*, (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005), p. 24.
13. Seungsook Moon, *Militarized Modernity*.
14. Moon, *Militarized Modernity*, p. 8. Moon (p. 20) also notes that the precolonial notion of *tongdosögi* ('Eastern way, Western technology'), which prioritised adopting advanced technology from the West to 'modernise' the military and financial systems, while preserving the neo-Confucian social order.
15. Moon, *Militarized Modernity*, p. 21.
16. Moon, *Militarized Modernity*, pp. 8–12.
17. Henry, 'Introduction', p. 18. For earlier examples of queerness, see Young-Gwan Kim and Sook-Ja Hahn, 'Homosexuality in Ancient and Modern Korea', *Culture, Health and Sexuality*, 8:1 (Jan–Feb 2006): pp. 59–65.
18. John P. DiMoia, *Reconstructing Bodies: Biomedicine, Health, and Nation-Building in South Korea Since 1945* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013).
19. DiMoia, *Reconstructing Bodies*, p. 7.
20. Moon, *Militarized Modernity*, p. 21.
21. Youngshik D. Bong, 'The Gay Rights Movement in Democratizing Korea', *Korean Studies* 32 (2008): p. 89.
22. Moon, *Militarized Modernity*, p. 12.
23. Shim writes that a 'genuine' feminist movement, one that directly addressed sexual discrimination and inequality, solidified in Korea in the early 1990s, although there had been earlier women's movements such as the nationalist liberation movement (1920s), the family law revision movement (1960s–1980s), and the labour movement (1970s–1980s): Young-Hee Shim, 'Feminism and the Discourse of Sexuality in Korea: Continuities and Changes', *Human Studies* 24 (2001): p. 144. Park-Kim, Lee-Kim, and Kwon Lee add that the women's rights movement was bolstered by the introduction of the academic or theoretical subject of feminism in the 1990s: Soo Jin Park-Kim (Park Tong), Soo Youn Lee-Kim (Siro), and Eun Jung Kwon-Lee (Yuri), 'The Lesbian Rights Movement and Feminism in South Korea', *Journal of Lesbian Studies* 10:3–4 (2007): pp. 161–90.
24. Seo Dong-Jin, 'Mapping the Vicissitudes of Homosexual Identities in South Korea', *Journal of Homosexuality* 40:3–4 (2001): p. 66.
25. Seo Dong-Jin, 'Mapping the Vicissitudes', pp. 71–2. See also Kim and Hahn, 'Homosexuality in Ancient and Modern Korea', pp. 62–3; and Kim and Cho, 'The Korean gay and lesbian movement', in particular their discussion of the move towards 'sexual citizenship', which can be linked to the broader movement towards citizenship described by Moon in *Militarized Modernity*.
26. Joo-hyun Cho, 'The Sexual Politics of Difference in Post-IMF Korea: Challenges of the Lesbian Rights and Sex Workers' Movement', in Stevi Jackson, Liu Jieyu, and Woo Julyun (eds.), *East Asian Sexualities: Modernity, Gender, and New Sexual Cultures* (London and New York: Zed Books, 2008), p. 141; see also Park-Kim, Lee-Kim, and Kwon-Lee, 'The Lesbian Rights Movement and Feminism in South Korea'; and Ruin, 'Discussing Transnormativities Through Transfeminism: Fifth Note', *Trans/Feminisms*, ed. Talia M. Bettcher and Susan Stryker, special issue, *Transgender Studies Quarterly* 3:1–2 (2016): pp. 202–211.
27. Jesook Song, *South Koreans in the Debt Crisis: The Creation of a Neoliberal Welfare Society* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009), p. 61. See also Layoung Shin, 'Avoiding T'ibu (Obvious Butchness): Invisibility as a Survival Strategy among Young Queer Women in South Korea', in Henry (ed.), *Queer Korea*, p. 311; and John (Song Paek) Cho, 'The Three Faces of South Korea's Male Homosexuality: Pogal, Iban, and Neoliberal Gay', in *Queer Korea*, pp. 263–294.
28. Cho Uhn, 'The Encroachment of Globalization into Intimate Life: The Flexible Korean Family in "Economic Crisis"', *Korea Journal* 45:3 (2005): p. 9.
29. Direct action was also taken by activists to protest the removal of sexual orientation from the Human Rights bill. Kim and Cho give the example of the 'Rainbow Intersection Surprise Protest' at one of Seoul's busiest intersections in November 2007: Kim and Cho, 'The Korean Gay and Lesbian Movement', pp. 219–220.
30. Cho, 'The Sexual Politics of Difference in Post-IMF Korea', p. 142.
31. Ruin, 'Mobile Numbers and Gender Transitions: The Resident Registration System, the Nation-State, and Trans/gender Identities', in Henry (ed.), *Queer Korea*, pp. 357–376.
32. Horim Yi and Timothy Gitzen, 'Sex/Gender Insecurities: Trans Bodies and the South Korean Military', *Transgender Studies Quarterly* 5:3 (2018): pp. 378–393.
33. Timothy Gitzen, 'Ripple of Trauma: Queer Bodies and the Temporality of Violence in the South Korean Military', in Henry (ed.), *Queer Korea*, pp. 323–356.

34. Gitzen, 'Ripple of Trauma', pp. 323–4.
35. Todd A. Henry, 'Introduction', p. 29. Regarding transgender women, Seungsook Moon notes: 'This group is treated as a category of "physical handicap," along with serious mental illness and mental retardation, dwarfism, epilepsy, and other forms of "physical abnormalities." This practice in military recruitment suggests that individuals with fluid sexual and gender identities, who therefore do not have a definitely sexed body that fits into the normative sex dichotomy, are not "normal" males suitable for military service: in other words, that unequivocal biological maleness, considered to be a fixed anchor of masculinity, is crucial to fitness for military service.' See Seungsook Moon, *Militarized Modernity*, pp. 127–8.
36. Previously, Kim had collaborated with Argentinian artist Luciano Zubillaga on their project *The Church of Expanded Telepathy*, initiated in 2016. They met when Kim was studying for his MA at London's Royal College of Art. During their collaboration, Zubillaga introduced Kim to Preciado's 'Anal Terror': e-mail correspondence with the author, 17 March 2020.
37. Paul B. Preciado, *Countersexual Manifesto*, (trans) Kevin Gerry Dunn (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2018), p. 29.
38. 'Anal Terror', in *Badan* 3, 'Journal of Queer Time Travel' (Contagion Press, 2015): pp. 123–6. In this passage Preciado echoes Leo Bersani, who argued that 'the rectum is the grave in which the masculine ideal ... of proud subjectivity is buried', and that sexual practices involving the anus are maligned precisely because they indulge in the passivity, vulnerability, and (temporary) disintegration of the self, the value of which is denied in phallogentrism. See Leo Bersani, 'Is the Rectum a Grave?', *October* 43, *AIDS: Cultural Analysis/Cultural Activism* (Winter, 1987): pp. 217, 222.
39. Preciado, *Countersexual Manifesto*, p. 8.
40. For *ünyöng*, see *Uri mal saem*, accessed 2 November 2020, https://openidict.korean.go.kr/search/searchResult?focus_name=query&query=음경. The Korean reads 'kwidu, yodogu, gohwan taiwiro iroechin namchali bakkar saengsik kigwan'. For *chil*, see *Uri mal saem*, accessed 2 November 2020, https://openidict.korean.go.kr/search/searchResult?focus_name=query&query=질. The Korean reads 'chil kumöng chagunöngmok sae itmün yösöngü badadürogo ch'ulsan taeha agga naonin kiri toenda'.
41. Preciado, *Countersexual Manifesto*, p. 12.
42. E-mail correspondence with the author, 17 March 2020. Kim's reference to 'sexual communism' here is strongly resonant of Guy Hocquenghem's *Homosexual Desire*, the Spanish-language version of which 'Anal Terror' was written to introduce.
43. Preciado, *Countersexual Manifesto*, p. 31.
44. Preciado, 'Anal Terror', pp. 124–5, p. 165.
45. Michael Marder and Luce Irigaray, *Through Vegetal Being: Two Philosophical Perspectives* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2016), p. 115. On the plasticity of non-human sexuality, see also Timothy Morton, 'Queer Ecology', *PMLA* 125:2 (March 2010): p. 276, and Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands and Bruce Erickson, 'Introduction: A Genealogy of Queer Ecologies', in Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands and Bruce Erickson (eds.), *Queer Ecologies: Sex, Nature, Politics, Desire* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 2010), pp. 6–12.
46. For an introduction to Stephens and Sprinkle's practise and understanding of ecosexuality, or what they also call sexecology, see Elizabeth Stephens, 'Becoming Eco-Sexual', *Canadian Theatre Review* 144 (Fall 2010): pp. 13–19.
47. Michael J. Morris, 'Material Entanglements With the Nonhuman World: Theorizing Ecosexualities in Performance' (PhD diss., The Ohio State University, 2015), pp. 69, 96–101.
48. Edelman, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2004), pp. 2–3.
49. Edelman, *No Future*, p. 31.
50. See Davis, 'Toxic Progeny', p. 239.
51. Nicole Seymour, *Strange Natures: Futurity, Empathy, and the Queer Ecological Imagination* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2013), p. 7, emphasis in the original. Although Davis and Seymour find Edelman's critique of reproductive futurism somewhat useful, both emphasise the ethical limits of his analysis when transposed to debates about ecological destruction and the future of the planet: see Davis, 'Toxic Progeny', pp. 239–243; and Seymour, *Strange Natures*, pp. 7–8. Note, as well, that while appeals to the Child remain pervasive, they are not always successful, as the case of the group of young climate activists from various countries makes clear. The group, most closely associated with Greta Thunberg, has appealed to the United Nations' convention on the rights of the child to encourage legal action on climate change. Fiona Harvey, 'Greta Thunberg and children's group hit back at attempt to throw out climate case', *The Guardian*, 5 May 2020, accessed 25 September 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/may/05/greta-thunberg-and-childrens-group-hit-back-at-attempt-to-throw-out-climate-case>. Thank you to an anonymous reviewer for pointing this example out.
52. Edelman, *No Future*, p. 31. Here Edelman cites Hocquenghem. For a powerful critique of Edelman's invocation of Hocquenghem and an analysis of the differences between the two thinkers, see Lorenzo Bernini, *Queer Apocalypses: Elements of Antisocial Theory*, (trans) Julia Heim (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).
53. A recent book by queer Korean activist Si Woo discusses the Christian right's framing of the LGBTQ+ movement in South Korea in detail: Si Woo, *Kw'io Ap'ö'allipsä. Saranggwa Hyömöi Jöngch'ibak (Queer Apocalypse: The Politics of Love and Hate)* (Seoul, South Korea: Hyunsil Munhwa, 2018).
54. Bernini, *Queer Apocalypses*, p. 78.
55. Davis, 'Toxic Progeny', p. 244.
56. Although silicone is not usually grouped under plastic because it does not derive from petrochemicals, Heather Davis connects the two, writing that they share the same issue of non-decomposability: Heather Davis, 'Toxic Progeny: The Plastisphere and Other Queer Futures', *philoSOPHIA* 5:2 (2015): p. 231.
57. Amanda Boetzkes, *Plastic Capitalism: Contemporary Art and the Drive to Waste* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2019), p. 185. For connections between plastic, the global economy, and petroculturalism, see Davis, 'Toxic Progeny', and Boetzkes, *Plastic Capitalism*, pp. 177–226.
58. Stacy Alaimo, *Bodily Natures: Science, Environment, and the Material Self* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), p. 8.
59. Boetzkes, *Plastic Capitalism*, p. 201.
60. Boetzkes, *Plastic Capitalism*, p. 206.
61. Heather Davis, 'Toxic Progeny', p. 235. Davis takes this term from Erik Zettler, Tracy Mincer, and Linda Amaral-Zettler, 'Life in the "Plastisphere": Microbial Communities on Plastic Marine Debris', *Environmental Science and Technology* 47 (2013): pp. 7137–46.
62. Katie Schaag, 'Plastigomerates, Microplastics, Nanoplastics: Toward a Dark Ecology of Plastic Performativity', *Performance Research* 25:2 (2020): pp. 14, 19.
63. Boetzkes, *Plastic Capitalism*, p. 184.
64. As well as an attempt to queer mainstream science fiction, Kim frames this as an explicit attempt to de-Westernise both science fiction and queer pop culture. He states: 'I wanted to express sci-fi stories in my queer culture, which is not based in dominant paradigms found in Europe and America' (emphasis Kim's own). E-mail correspondence with the author, 17 March 2020.
65. See, for example, Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010); Mel Y. Chen, *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2012); Donna Haraway, *Staying With the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016); and Timothy Morton, *Dark Ecology*:

- For a Logic of Future Coexistence* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2016).
67. Davis, 'Toxic Progeny', p. 244; Schaag, 'Plastiglomerates, Microplastics, Nanoplastics', p. 20.
 68. Davis, 'Toxic Progeny', p. 234. Davis takes this term from Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011).
 69. Nicole Seymour, *Bad Environmentalism: Irony and Irreverence in the Ecological Age* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2018).
 70. Chen, *Animacies*, p. 195.
 71. Davis, 'Toxic Progeny', p. 244.
 72. Chen, *Animacies*, p. 195.
 73. Chen, *Animacies*, p. 220.
 74. Davis, 'Toxic Progeny', p. 245; Schaag, 'Plastiglomerates, Microplastics, Nanoplastics', p. 16.
 75. As Benjamin Dalton notes, philosopher of plasticity Catherine Malabou distinguishes between fluidity, rigidity, and plasticity: whereas fluidity tends towards dissolution and rigidity towards an illusory reification, plasticity is situated between the two, 'able to take form in a way that allows this form to remain open to mutation'. Benjamin Dalton, 'Cruising the Queer Forest with Alain Giraudie: Woods, Plastics, Plasticities', in Jon Hackett and Sean Harrington (eds.), *Beasts of the Forest: Demigods of the Dark Woods* (East Barnet: John Libbey Publishing, 2019), pp. 75–6.
 76. Christy Tidwell, 'Ecohorror', in Rosi Braidotti and Maria Hlavajova (eds.), *Posthuman Glossary* (Bloomsbury Press, 2018), p. 115.
 77. Tidwell, 'Ecohorror', p. 115. Here Tidwell is quoting a blog from film scholar Dawn Keetley, not cited.
 78. Stephen Rust and Carter Soles, 'Ecohorror Special Cluster: Living in Fear, Living in Dread, Pretty Soon We'll All Be Dead', *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* 21:3 (Summer, 2014): pp. 509–10, cited in Tidwell, 'Ecohorror', p. 116.
 79. Rust and Soles, 'Ecohorror Special Cluster', p. 510, cited in Tidwell, 'Ecohorror', p. 116.
 80. In the different incarnations of *Triffids*, various explanations are given for the creatures' origin. In the original novel, the triffids arrive after a meteor shower but the protagonist suspects they were bioengineered in the USSR. In the 1982 TV adaptation, the protagonists' suspicions are revealed to be true. In the 1962 film adaptation, however, the triffids are shown to be extraterrestrial lifeforms carried to Earth on comets.
 81. Michael Marder, *Plant-Thinking: A Philosophy of Vegetal Life* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2013), p. 185.
 82. On this point, see Schaag, 'Plastiglomerates, Microplastics, Nanoplastics', pp. 14–15.
 83. Jayna Brown, 'Being Cellular: Race, the Inhuman, and the Plasticity of Life', *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 21:2–3 (2015): p. 325.
 84. Benjamin Dalton, 'Cruising the Queer Forest', p. 79.
 85. Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006), p. 106.
 86. Rosi Braidotti, *Metamorphoses: Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002), p. 185.
 87. Ursula Le Guin, 'The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction', in *Dancing at the Edge of the World* (New York: Grove Press, 1989), p. 154.
 88. Fawaz's study examines the figure of the superhero in American comics in the 1960s to the 1980s, specifically Ramzi Fawaz, *New Mutants: Superheroes and the Radical Imagination of American Comics* (New York: New York University Press, 2016), p. 30.
 89. Jacques Derrida, 'Passages—from Traumatism to Promise', in Elisabeth Weber (ed.), *Points ...: Interviews, 1974–1994*, (trans.) Peggy Kamuf et al (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), pp. 386–87. Elsewhere, Derrida explains that the future is in a state of constant arrival (or deferral), drawing on the similarity between the French word for future (*avenir*), to come (*venir*), and that which is forthcoming (*à-venir*). Parallels can be drawn with the

- Korean word for 'future', *mirae* (미래), which derives from the Chinese characters *wei* 未 ('not yet') and *lai* 來 ('come'). See Jacques Derrida, 'The Force of Law: The "Mystical Foundation of Authority"', in Drucilla Cornell, Michel Rosenfeld and David Gray Carlson (eds.), *Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice* (New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 3–67.
90. I take the point regarding science fiction films and survival-as-conquest from Anna Loewenhaupt Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Rains* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2015), p. 27. Regarding the business of space travel, Kim sets *Succulent Humans* against Elon Musk's SpaceX travel initiative: Dew Kim, 'Succulent Humans', accessed 29 September 2021, <https://www.hornyhoney.dew.com/Succulent-Humans-2018>.
 91. Davis, 'Toxic Progeny', pp. 244–246.
 92. Schaag follows Catherine Malabou's understanding of neuroplasticity elaborated in *What Should We Do with Our Brain* (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2004), discussed in Schaag, 'Plastiglomerates, Microplastics, Nanoplastics', pp. 19–20.
 93. For a foundational account of necropolitics, see Achille Mbembe, *Necropolitics* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2019), which appeared in a much abbreviated form in a 2003 article. For queer and feminist interventions in studies of necropolitics, see, for example, Chen, *Animacies*; Jin Haritaworn, Adi Kuntsman, and Silvia Posocco (eds.), *Queer Necropolitics* (Routledge, 2014); Jasbir Puar, *The Right to Maim: Disability, Capacity, Disability*, Durham (NC and London: Duke University Press, 2017); and Neel Ahuja, *Bioinsurrection: Disease Interventions, Empire, and the Government of Species* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019).
 94. Neel Ahuja, 'Intimate Atmospheres: Queer Theory in a Time of Extinctions', *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 21:2–3 (2015): p. 380.
 95. Boetzkes, *Plastic Capitalism*, p. 199 (emphasis added).

A Dystopia Called Fukushima? Sōno Sion's The Whispering Star and the Post Modern Apocalypse¹

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