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NAM JUNE PAIK ART CENTER

백남준의 선물 1

The Gift of Nam June Paik 1 Seminar
Nam June Paik Art Center Now Jump Festival

Programme

DAY 1		DAY 2	
Date	February 4, 11am to 5pm	Date	February 5, 11am to 5pm
Venue	Gyeonggi Cultural Foundation, 3rd Floor	Venue	Nam June Paik Art Center 2nd Floor
Schedule	Moderation by Jung Hun-Yee	Schedule	Moderation by Kim Nam-Soo
	11:00 - 11:15 Welcome		11:00 - 11:15 Welcome
	11:20 - 11:50 Hannah Higgins		11:20 - 11:50 Lee Young Chul
	11:55 - 12:25 Midori Yamamura		11:55 - 12:25 Kim Jin-Sok
	12:30 - 13:00 Discussion		12:30 - 13:00 Discussion
	13:00 - 14:15 Lunch Break		13:00 - 14:15 Lunch Break
	14:20 - 14:50 Kim Suki		14:20 - 14:50 Bazon Brock
	14:55 - 15:25 Mary Bauermeister		14:55 - 15:25 Yi-Jinkyung
	15:30 - 16:00 Haam Seong-Ho		15:30 - 16:30 Discussion
	16:05 - 17:00 Discussion		

Speakers

Hannah Higgins

Associate Professor of Art History at the University of Illinois Chicago, Hannah Higgins is the author of *Fluxus Experience* (University of California Press, 2002) and the forthcoming *The Grid Book* (MIT Press, March, 2009). Higgins is the daughter of Fluxus artists Alison Knowles and Dick Higgins.

Midori Yamamura

A lecturer at the Museum of Modern Art and an art history PhD candidate, Midori Yamamura is currently a 2008-2009 resident fellow at the City University of New York Graduate Center, Center for the Place, Culture, and Politics. She has curated exhibitions and written critical essays in both Japanese and English.

Kim Suki

Kim Suki is the director of Hyunsil Munwha Publishers and lecturer at the Korea National University of Arts. Kim's fields of research include art criticism, cultural studies, and post colonial modernization. His views on these subjects inform his activity as a cultural mediator.

■ **Mary Bauermeister**

Mary Bauermeister is an artist renowned for her Atelier Mary Bauermeister. Between 1960 and 1962, she hosted many performances by artists and composers associated later with Fluxus and experimental music, from John Cage, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Lamonte Young, George Brecht and David Tudor to Nam June Paik.

■ **Haam Seong-Ho**

Haam Seong-Ho, poet/architect, is the author of the poetry anthologies *Very Beautiful Illness* and *Taj Mahal*. *Haam* has also published a travelogue of Tibet titled *Document of Nothingness*. Currently he is focusing on his architectural practice.

■ **Lee Young Chul**

Young Chul Lee is Director of the Nam June Paik Art Center and artistic director for its inaugural festival Now Jump. He has been curator or artistic director of the 1997 Gwangju Biennial, 2000 Busan Biennial, and 2005 Anyang Public Art Project, as well as Professor at the Kaywon School of Art and Design.

■ **Kim Jin-Sok**

Kim Jin-Sok is professor of Humanities at Inha University. Kim's critical writings span from the political to the literary. Kim is the editor of the academic journals *Literature and Society*, *People and Philosophy*, and *Social Criticism* and is also the author of several books.

■ **Bazon Brock**

Professor of Aesthetics and Communication Design at Wupperthal University, Bazon Brock is widely known as a leading German theoretician of art. Brock participated alongside Josef Beuys, Alan Kaprow and Nam June Paik in many happenings, action teachings, and performances.

■ **Yi-Jinkyung**

Yi-Jinkyung is humanities professor at Seoul National University of Technology. His field of research includes nomadism and communism with an emphasis on the practicalities and ethics of revolutionary lives. Yi-Jinkyung is the author of *Nomadism, the capital beyond capital*, and *The Future of Marxism*.

Moderators

■ **Jung Hun-Yee**

Jung Hun-Yee is a professor and art historian at Hansung University. Her field of research includes Nam June Paik and various modes of artistic production. Jung's writings include *Zen Times in Nam June Paik's Works*, *Pornography and Metaphysics*, *The realm of the imaginary in Art History*.

■ **Kim Nam-Soo**

Kim Nam-Soo is a performing arts and dance critic. Currently he is at the Nam June Paik Art Center and is also on the editorial board of the performing arts magazine titled *Pan*. Kim's field of research centers on the interdisciplinary development of theatre, dance, media and installation.

■ Hannah B Higgins

“The World’s Oldest TV: Time and Spacetime in the Early Work of Nam June Paik”
Nam June Paik Art Center, Seoul, Korea, February 4, 2009

This paper seeks to situate Nam June Paik’s early video work within the discourse regarding the emergence of time-based art forms in the 1960s. The paper both uses and critiques art historian Pamela Lee’s important book *Chronophobia*, which argues that the decade was chronophobic, meaning afraid of historic or linear time and therefore predisposed to the quality of timelessness associated with film loops and static film¹⁾. The attitude toward historic time characterized both by the artists in her book and by the generations of historians, art and otherwise, clearly demonstrate the rightness of her argument as regards the convention of the timeline. Paik’s musical compositions, TV clocks and works involving multiple television sets as markers of time, such as *Moon is the Oldest TV* (1965-7), indicate that Paik’s sense of time was perhaps not predicated on the kind of anxiety theorized by Lee. Rather, as Paik’s writing makes clear, he was interested in spacetime as well as other models of time. His background in musical composition offered him a uniquely sophisticated sense of how spacetime might operate which he explored in musical notations as well as the ‘physical’ music (his term) of his television works. By comparing a few of these early works to other master works from the decade, points of shared attitude and departure will be explored.

¹⁾Pamela Lee, *Chronophobia: On Time in the Art of the 1960s* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004).

■ Midori Yamamura

Nam June Paik in a Global Context: The Whole Human Being Is Ontology

My paper seeks to illuminate Nam June Paik’s legacy differently from what has been conceived of to date. It will decentralize post-World War II art history defined mainly through the United States perspective, by looking at parallel developments in Japan and Europe—developments influenced by the fascist-totalitarianism such artists as Paik had experienced.

In the 1950s, the artists and intellectuals who had grown up under fascist-totalitarian regimes—the former Axis nations (Germany, Italy, Japan) and their territories—and who were witnessing new technologies of mass communication that could control the play of people’s imagination, began questioning the rationality of knowledge. When a Korean “gentle and shy student” of Tokyo University, Nam June Paik left Japan for Germany to further study the works of Schönberg in 1956, European thinkers were in the middle of critically reexamining their intellectual legacies. Among them was the Lithuanian-born Jewish philosopher, Emmanuel Levinas, who in his 1951 treatise “Is Ontology Fundamental,” attempted to transcend the ontology postulated by Husserl and Heidegger by including every contingent element in human life. Central to Levinas’s postwar philosophy was the notion that the “whole [hu]man is ontology.”

Further, in his groundbreaking book of 1961, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, Levinas examined postwar society and essential human freedom through two distinctive ideas: totality and infinity. Totality, according to Levinas, sought to integrate distinctive individuals into a homogenous mass. In contrast, the idea of infinity looked upon each individual as an essentially free being who would produce infinite thoughts from infinite contents beyond socially imposed ideas, by having moral encounters with, and being responsible for, the other; these, in turn, would lead to a new postwar society.

Paralleling Levinas’s ontological attempts were artists involved in the Düsseldorf-based Zero movement. Symbolized by their trademark “zero to infinity,” two of its founders, Heinz Mack and Otto Piene, in 1958, proposed to build a new postwar society outside conventional frameworks. In a now famous 1961 gallery photograph Paik is seen for the first time with Joseph Beuys who was part of the German postwar art revisionism. Both Paik and Beuys attended Zero’s demonstration that accompanied the exhibition. Earlier, in 1958, Paik had been a student of the avant-garde composer John Cage at Darmstadt.

These seminal encounters undoubtedly influenced Paik’s artistic growth. Like other artists of his generation who also grew up under Japan’s military totalitarianism, such as Yoko Ono and Yayoi Kusama, Paik encouraged latent independent creative responses from viewers through his art. Paik’s aim was to create not the fragmented subject, as described by Frederic Jameson, but a plurality of being, as opposed to the single, heroic figure beloved in master narratives of modernity.

■ Kim Suki

The intellectual and cultural field during the adolescence of Nam June Paik

This article is not about Nam June Paik, but about Korea during his adolescence. There are few studies on the adolescence of Paik for various reasons. Since Paik's art has been seen from a Western perspective, it is difficult to draw a relation between the young Paik in Korea and the avant-gardist Paik that emerged after that. That there are few resources about his adolescence is also a serious obstacle.

However, shedding light on Paik's adolescence will generate new topics in Paik studies. He states, in his characteristic trivial manner, that he had been deeply interested in Schoenberg and Marxism since childhood, far before he engaged with the Fluxus group. This is a very productive clue to his adolescence. If he had learnt them in middle school, as he says, he was highly advanced for his age of 14-15. That the intellectual and cultural experiences in those days formed the basis of Paik future artistic pursuits suggests that the young boy was not flippant. He wrote the thesis on Schoenberg at Tokyo University, and went to Germany to study further on the composer.

How did Schoenberg fascinate the young Korean boy, and what does it mean? Schoenberg was not yet internationally famous at the time, and his music was never easy to appreciate and understand.

Now let me examine the situation of Korea when Paik was born and raised. They were tumultuous years: in 1931, one year before his birth, the Manchurian Incident occurred; in 1937, when he went kindergarten, the Sino-Japanese War began; and in 1941, the Pacific War followed. Japan carried out these serial invasions by making the Korean Peninsula their supply base. This means, that Fascism was much harsher and broader in Colonial Chosun(*the old name of Korea) than in Japan. The people around him say that he was frequently absent from school, suggesting that he had some trouble with formal education; he was very brilliant but his school record was not so good. The school was highly militarized—actually a sort of preliminary army—in those days.

In terms of his family history, on the other hand, he was raised in a very exceptional situation. His father sided with Japan and his collaborationism made him a leading businessman in Chosun. He was a living example of the collusion of Japanese Fascism and Capitalism. Paik did not get on well with his father throughout their life.

The circumstances in which the youngest boy of the richest family in Chosun indulged in Marx and Schoenberg from childhood can be an important clue to the art and life of Paik. And the unsolved problem of his nationality, which always raises doubts to Koreans, should also be considered in this context.

At present, however, it is all I can do to draw a vague picture about young Paik in that specific historical context; I cannot make any conclusion about the relationship between his early experiences in Korea and his later works. Prior to broader archival research and studies, this article is merely a preliminary commentary.

■ Mary Bauermeister

9th January 2009-01-09

NamJunePaik

.....Asked to writesomethingaboutPaik.....

I hesitate –

While I cantalkabout him – in whatevercontext – sometimesforhours, at openings, paneldiscussions, withstudentsor art critics

Now : to putintofewwordsmeanreduction : on theessentials.

Letmecircumscribethetopic !

LetmecomparePaikwiththeothergeniuses of mankind.

Socrates comes to my mind.

Socrates, whomweknowonlythrough his students : (Plato, Xenophon, Euklid – latergeneration = Aristoteles) whosethinking he hadnotonlyinfluencedbutshapedfromthebeginningthrough his method of questioning to bring forwardthewisdomwithineach and everyone. Wehavenothingwrittenbyhim, butPhilosophywithouthim ? – Unthinkable !

Paik, of whomwehavefewwrittencrypticcommentarieslike : „iftooperfect, lieber Gott böse“, (iftooperfect, dearGodevil), cannotevenbetranslated, as `böse` and `gut` - evil and good, arethepolarities of theeternalheretic fight – canthecreator of all omniversesbeevil – and ifnot, howdoesevilenter-thescene ?

One sentence and he opensthequestioning and searchforthesense and meaning of life itself ...what a teacher ! Paik as a landmark to thefuture. He opened his students' and otherartists' minds to

the unimaginable, he freed them from the burden of ties to the past, having to conform, of fulfilling art critic's „criteria“, of expecting praise for something which could not yet be fully grasped. He encouraged them to become authentic beings, to only follow their inner voice...

Suzuki another comparison, calm, gentle, integrity, wisdom

Duchamp same depths, same absurdity, not only new objects, but more important a new consciousness

Samurai courageous, incorruptible, goal oriented, aiming for his goal without looking right or left (focussed/ single minded)

Now let me come back to Socrates and his death taking the poisoning cup when sentenced to death...

what could his last words have been?

„Know thyself“.

What could have been Paik's last words, dying as a martyr for „freethinking“ in another century of censorship and dogmatism ?

„Don't even try to know thyself“

or

„Cheers“

or

„What's next?“

Once at an art opening of Paik I heard somebody say :“He cannot even paint“. I answered on his behalf: „Why should he?“

Painting is something you can learn like many other skills – but to think genuine thoughts cannot be taught. To start something, which did not exist before one cannot learn. Only those minds who reach into the realms of intuition and inspiration can be touched by the „future Zeitgeist“. Paik's influence even from the „beyond“ might inspire many more young artists'.

I thank Korea, his home country, for giving him the honour he deserves. May the Nam June Paik Art Center be effective in following the footsteps of this great human being and may the center get all the support it needs to do so.

To end my praise of Paik I want to reveal a secret. There is an old saying that East and West will never meet. The news saying for the future is that East and West have met in the art, the teachings and the thoughts of Nam June Paik.

Also in reality they have met in the person of.....

Now take a pencil

and complete this sentence

Mary Bauermeister in Korea, October 2008

This speech happened without preparation; Mary Bauermeister spontaneously got up and added a few words to the many official speeches, at the opening of the NJP ArtCenter, in October 2008.

Paik! Your spirit - Could you have imagined, that - two years after your death - you already

have a museum - named after you, that ´s wonderful!

We met when we were young - now, I ´m a fossil from the sixties - and he was my protégé. I

don ´t want to talk about him as an artist - you can read about him as an artist in all these

books, but I want to mention him as a human being - he was an excellent mind, a philosopher, a musician, an artist, an object maker - performer, and he was a human being with incredible virtues - without corruption.

We were very poor and hungry, actually hunger was our „consciousness raising drug“ at the time, and we had to help each other - there was not yet competition in art „who ´s the best“.

We needed each other. Artists were the only ones who understood each other. It takes longer for the society to understand, because artists have crazy ideas - but remember, artists are the early warning system of our society, and they can function as such, because they have the freedom of being called „crazy“....anyway. They can say a lot of things which politicians,

scientists, futurologists, doctors and economists can ´t say.

When we were young, he said „I only want to become famous as an artist, to become a

politician afterwards, and then we will change the world!“ . Maybe he forgot about it later, but he changed the world through his consciousness anyway . Once he said, when he was twentyfive, „I will give up art when I ´m forty, and I will study Keynes.“ (Keynes was an economist from the prelast century, and he is actually the critic of the Chicago school of the free unregulated market, which is now running down our world.). Paik was already in those early days warning against the influence of shameless, irresponsible handling of the financial resources.

We wanted to get rid of money, of interest and interest on interest and all of that, and we realized, that we artists were not enough, we could not change the system, but one day it would change, and we are now at the point of life, where pure materialism is coming to its end, and a value system, where human character, integrity, responsibility as virtues count again.

So, Paik in your spirit, I hope you will be around and inspire the young artists, to be as integer as you have been, and thank you Korea, that you praise your artists. Not all countries do that - they look for foreign prophets somewhere else. You, in Korea, are aware of the genius you had, and you have created this centre, and you give him the honor, and thank you for what you are doing for him, and please, dear audience, listen to your artists, they have the „Antenne“ (antenna) open for the future, as the spirit of time „Zeitgeist“ (spirit of the age) gets the impulse from the future.

Thank you!

Mary Bauermeister

■ Ham Seong-Ho

The colonial period, the war, and the twentieth century—a wound of Nam June Paik

In 1950, the Korean War began. At the age of eighteen, Paik spoke out when he took refuge on the train: “Sometimes, I felt that I was standing on the wrong side. In 1950, we were on the refugee train and the bombing began. We were escaping, and I was not sure where I stood. Suddenly, I thought, yes, it was a sort of spiritual awakening. ‘Now I will watch all things like a baseball game. There is nothing to think seriously.’ I was that cynical.” This story has two layers: the chaotic period that he experienced, and his own chaotic personal history.

Having lived through such a chaotic period meant that he was exposed to the tragedy of fratricidal war. In those days, the poet KO Un was overwhelmed by the total annihilation of his homeland; he gave himself up to nihilism and poured potassium cyanide into his ear. The poet KIM Su Young was drafted into the North Korean army and taken to the Geoje POW camp, a hell on earth where anticommunist and communist prisoners fought until death every night; he doubted whether any ideology was correct and suffered the perverse reality of his wife and his friend sharing bed and board. While Paik was no exception to this terrible war, he refused to live with the bare violence of the times; he decided to avoid the weight of history by looking on this reality as a spectator: as if it were “like a baseball game.” He actually left the ‘baseball park’ for Japan. However, did he ever become free from this repressive reality?

Paik says that he was not sure where he stood. His confusion is reminiscent of the 'horrible light' that the writer LEE Chung Jun describes in *The Wall of Rumors*. In the age of dizzying violence, when the Southern Korean army rules under the sun and the Northern Korean army under the moon, they come to a small village in Mt. Jiri in the middle of the night; they flash a lantern and ask, "Where do you stand?"; the light dazzles you and they urge you; but your answer can be fatal when you don't know where they stand. The story shows that this violent age forced everyone to take a stand. Paik's refugee train of Paik reveals his crisis of identity, his inability to say on which side he stands. Paik learnt music from socialists such as LEE Gun Woo and KIM Sun Nam. Marx taught him less about the proletarian masses including laborers and farmers than Schonberg did ("My discovery of Schonberg was probably caused by Marx.") That he stayed in Seoul when his family took refuge in Busan suggests that he considered himself a socialist even in the early days of the Korean War. The socialism Paik actually encountered was, however, far from his ideal. Finally, he took the refugee train and experience the doubts about where he stood.

The onlooker's position he chose against the overwhelming reality allowed him to avoid taking a position but failed to deliver him from the dark violence of history. His extreme performance is the agony of the colonial experience of his youth and the cry of an individual attempting to escape from this cruel dichotomy. Wherever he was, in Japan, in Germany, or in Paris, Paik suffered felt the wound of the situation in the Korean Peninsula. It is this intensity that I believe is the foundation of the art of Nam June Paik.

Lee Young Chul

The anthropological implication of the art of Nam June Paik

“On a boring afternoon, I was listened to NHK radio in Kamakura (Japan). Making a terrible cacophonous sound, a soprano with a sensual voice cried. I murmured, ‘it must be one of Schoenberg’s’. It was ‘Pierrot Lunaire’. I still feel that I am ‘looking at’ the small brown plastic radio box.”(Nam June Paik, from Words to Christo)

Nam June Paik was like a ‘Pierrot Lunaire’, born under the astrological sign that can be described as “moon fallen in the water,” like in *TV fish* where there is a TV behind the water. This non-scientific and non-Western reading of how I see the landscape characteristic of Paik’s horoscope may also be suggested in works like *Moon is the oldest TV* where Paik creates a temporal link between the Neolithic age and contemporary times. This link is transformed in *Good morning, Mr.Orwell* when Paik uses an artificial satellite to establish a global connection. The space opera series including *Good morning, Mr.Orwell* particularly express the power of the moon against the artificial satellite, which is an imitation of the Earth’s only satellite. It might not be such a great exaggeration to say that Paik reinvented the role of the moon by using the artificial satellite. In this respect, video art was inevitable to him; it is a figure of the electronic moon. For me, these works referring to the moon are telling examples of how Nakazawa Shinichi’s concept of ‘symmetrical thought’ is present in Paik’s thinking.

Paik’s art is loose and light. Although the term ‘yupjun’(a Korean brass coin with a hole in the middle) usually has a negative connotation, he makes use of the humbly-made to reject the common notion of capitalist economic exchange. Resisting the typical restrictions on art imposed by capitalism, Paik highlights that art is more universal than capitalism. The pure gift, according to Marcel Mauss’s notion of the gift, is given without the image of giving. Shinichi Nakazawa’s concept of ‘symmetrical thought’ has this act as it’s core. Perhaps it also originated with the Moon and it’s thousands of shadows on thousands of rivers?

Zarathustra says that the superhuman is not a hero but a child. The political quality of Paik’s art could be addressed in this context. Although contemporary politics criticizes art’s impracticality, today Paik offers a new riposte against such criticism.

We still have few biographical facts about Paik, and we need more time to recontextualize his art. The path he traversed is broader than the Silk Road; the light he touched is a whole like a hologram. However, it is time to think how his art and life achieved pure gift-giving through symmetrical thought and how this may enable us to intervene politically in contemporary fields of practice.

■ Kim Jin-Sok

Practical flight, and from there, aesthetical flight : On the 'stationary nomadism' of Nam June Paik

While the artworks of Nam June Paik are usually called 'nomadic art,' the term is not so clear. He was not a mere nomad, as he called himself a 'stationary nomad'. The term of 'stationary' as well as 'nomad' designates ordinary but highly complicated contexts. This article does not intend to appreciate Paik's art in perspective of art history, but to evaluate the 'stationary nomadism,' which is characteristic of the art and life of Paik, in terms of culture and aesthetics

This is a thorny and uncomfortable fact—especially in Korea—about Paik's life. It is neither a matter of common knowledge, nor a big secret, just a culturally unappreciated fact. Especially when they admire Paik as an international artist from Korea, Koreans cover up this fact. The fact is that he left Korea for Japan during the Korean War in 1951. He escaped, actually. In terms of his nomadic life and art, this fact should be seriously considered. Although his 'flight' has been usually ignored or only evasively mentioned, I want to openly examine and evaluate this factor in the perspective of cultural nomadism.

Paik's Nomadism includes various flights. At first, there was the shameful line of flight; the singular line engraved the unique nomadism of Paik's life and activities. But it was not the final flight. From there, Paik seems to have drawn the second flight in a cultural and aesthetic dimensions: the flight from bigoted nationalism. Therefore, his nomadism consists of two disparate flights. Escaping from the nation at war was the practical flight, followed by an instance to make an aesthetic freedom out of a dishonorable incident. Escaping from strict nationalism implied an aesthetic flight in the name of artistic freedom. This aesthetic moment would have various effects on his art and life. The two lines of flight can be regarded as Paik's escaping nomadism.

On the other hand, he would have felt that the nomad always moves at a crawl. However enthusiastically the electronic nomad runs away from the catastrophe, he would have experienced that material disasters are not avoidable. As the flowing body in the electronic circuit is finally stuck in the wheelchair, matter appears heavy and slow, and inevitable. This might be the situation expressed by the petty term 'stationary' of the 'stationary nomadism'.

He escaped from cultural patriotism again and again. It seems the last step of flight that he distributed his legacy to three countries before he died. Then, what is the country admiring him as 'international nomadic artist from Korea' doing now? The country, which failed to catch him when he took refuge from war, seems to try to hold on fast to the tail of him, even after he succeeded in the greater flight. This is the wrong way of the 'stationary,' improperly bringing nomadism to a halt.

■ Bazon Brock

Paik's impact on the development of art between 1958 and 1990 was generated by his ably anthropological view on the European scene. With this Korean alienating view he discovered ambivalences and ambiguities, in short: productive misunderstandings, which would have been inconspicuous to Europeans. Paik fulfilled the mission of a travelling anthropologist pointing out the strange in the familiar, thus turning it into a productive discourse. Paik gave European artists the confirmation that their work was more profound than they were conscious of. The most important maxim of Paik's anthropology was: "God angry if too perfect". In this way he achieved the fusion of technical perfection and aesthetical difference (of the imperfect). Through Paik technology regained its mythological-theological significance. One of the master pieces of this achievement is to be seen in the ZKM, Karlsruhe, where Paik's last assistant (Michael Bielicky) is still teaching today. The "triumphal arch" of TV monitors differentiates and consolidates triumph in the sense of Roman hero worship with triumph of the recording systems over vanity. Technology turns into machinery for resurrection or for the management of perpetuity.

■ Yi Jinkyung

Nam Jun Paik: Politics of performance and machinistic ontology

"I made use of TV against TV."

This statement includes three important aspects of the art of Paik. First, artistic work is highly political for him; he tries to confront the world expressed by the term 'TV', in which Heidegger might have discovered its essential nihilism. If politics is to confront the given world and the power to maintain the world, his works are explicitly political. The term politics certainly refers to more than the superficial meaning of 'confrontation, but Paik does not repeat the old mistake of confronting the world. He does neither long for a poetic voice of Being with resentful nostalgia for a lost paradise like Heidegger, nor blame the sterility of science-technology for withering away life, or art and philosophy, like many other humanists. On the contrary, he holds fast to the technology and attempts to create a new possibility of art and life. This shows his characteristic optimism, which can be reminiscent of the nomad that Deleuze and Guattari define as a 'non-moving one,' one 'who sticks to the wasteland and invents the way to live there,' in contrast to the moving ones who leave the land whenever it seems exhausted. Third, he recognizes that using TV against TV means that he and his TV should stand on the same plane, on the same ground of his enemy, the 'TV-world'. Beyond the strict border between the enemy and the friend, he accepts the inevitable common ground where 'we' and 'they' are often jumbled together. It means that we should give up the old ground of think-

ing that strictly divides machine and life, TV and humanity. It demands an ontological ground where machine and humanity, machine and life meet and relate to each other on the same ground. In other words, the confrontation that he keeps in mind includes a fundamental change in ontological dimension beyond the anthropocentric or organism-centric hierarchy. When he often says that his works are ontological, he seems to know the point.

In order to deal with this topic, first I want to understand the early works of Paik as 'politics of performance'. Strictly speaking, I want to say that a politics of performance can be discovered from his works. Without referring to Foucault or Butler, we can say that life is a repeated set of modalized performative practices. The same thing is true not only for everyday, but also for philosophy and art. By repeating the modalized practices, we get used to the mode of life and operate it. However, the 'performance' of Paik, Fluxus, or John Cage opens another life and thought by disturbing the mode of life and breaking its seemingly firm border. They attempt to subvert the mode of production of artistic works and the mode of re/production of life; in this respect, it coincides with the Marxian 'revolution,' which is defined as the subversion of the modes of production and life. That this sort of politics is far from the so-called politics commonly referred to cannot be a criticism for the political and revolutionary quality of Paik's performance.

And yet, it is more important that his radical politics of performance drives us to the far more essential point to think life and being as well as art. For instance, John Cage's <4' 33"> establishes the equality of sound and silence, beyond the previous attempts of Russolo and Schaeffer to found the equality of musical and non-musical sound. Silence can be played; and the silence makes all the other sound audible, which is usually covered with piano sound. It reveals that silence is an empty space that any sound can occupy, as emptiness (sunya) can be anything because of its lack of self-ness (invariable nature). This might be the reason why Paik gradually indulged in Cage's performance, despite his earlier cynical stance. From this moment on, Paik extends it to the new dimension of ontological equality of play and non-play, TV and cello, humanity and cello, humanity and TV. In this way, he jumps over the ontological chasm between machine and humanity, machine and life; now machine and nature, machine and humanity is located on the same ontological plane, which might be called 'machinism' that Deleuze and Guattari distinguish from mechanism. From there, a ground of construction and creation is invented where heterogeneous things rely upon and connect each other to make a new relationship. A new ontological thought begins that TV and vegetation, TV and fish coexist and 'communicate'. Here communication does not mean the transmission of message from sender to receiver; rather, it is to traverse and deconstruct the wall between machine and humanity, East and West, art and non-art. The machinistic ontology of Paik is a proposal to think a new ground of Becoming where TV and humanity, TV and vegetation, machine and life meet and coexist.