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Tropical Futurisms: Making Futures

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Abstract

Tropical Futurisms situates the making of futures in the geo-climatic zone of the tropics with its shared—yet always specific—histories of colonialism(s) and ecological biodiversities. At the same time, this special issue acknowledges the pluralities of tropical cultures and their cosmological insights, technological imaginings, and multispecies vitalities. This second part of the double Special Issue on Tropical Futurisms emphasises creative practices of future-making. It recognises the diverse ways of making futures by positioning them back in tropical material experiences in this time of escalating climate crisis. As with the previous issue on Thinking Futures, this second issue on Making Futures seeks solidarity in the tropics via imagining the future together in plural forms through creative practices. This issue offers insights from theatre performance, architecture, urban planning, street art, arts-nature exhibition, ethnography, photography, activism, film documentary, poetry, translation, and storytelling. It includes works from Tropical Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America, Tropical Australia, India, and the Southeast Asia countries of Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Sarawak on the island of Borneo. We are interested in the ways these creative works intersect across the pan-tropics, creating new rich and complex forms of future-making.

Keywords: tropical futurisms, making futures, future-making, tropical futurity, tropical materiality, creative practices

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Making Futures: Crafting Alternative Tropical Futures

The first part of our double special issue on Tropical Futurisms comprises papers that primarily address the theoretical dimensions of Thinking Futures. As a continuation, this second part focuses on papers that are interested in practical methodologies for Making Futures. As articulated in the first issue (Muñoz-Martínez et al., 2025, p. 4), in the field of Strategic Foresight and Futures Studies, there are numerous theories, tools, and methods for exploring alternative futures. These include scenario development, statistical forecasting and modelling, storytelling, future labs or foresight workshops, gaming, back-casting, computer and social simulations, systems thinking, and horizon scanning, among others. All these constitute different and endless possibilities—both online and in-person—of "Futures Making."

Futures Making is a common practice that all humans engage with in one way or another—whether as menial chores or when planning career paths. Nonetheless, the growing field of Future Studies has specifically conceptualised Futures Making attending to practices that purposefully envision and work towards the futures of broader communities. Thompson and Byrne (2022) define futures making in terms of "how practitioners make and enact imagined futures" (p. 247), while Whyte et al. (2022) suggest that it is "the work of making sense of possible and probable futures, and evaluating, negotiating and giving form to preferred ones" (p. 2). More focused on the question of sustainability, Knappe et al. (2019) clarify that "Future-making practices are social and political endeavours that implicitly or explicitly establish relationships or refer to future situations" (p. 891). We emphasise here how such endeavours are also centred around communities across different scales. Hence, in this second part of the Tropical Futurisms double issue, we turn to the practices taking place in the tropics, which necessitate a distinct engagement with futurity for these spaces as they confront existential and epistemological challenges.

The future is about the now. In times when nationalistic and neoliberal oligarchies destroy public infrastructure and erode trust in public institutions, creating new partnerships for a stronger future of liveability in the tropics is essential. At the time of writing, for example, radical cuts in international aid agencies in the United States pose increasing risks, leaving many communities in the tropics with yet another layer of vulnerability (Hale & Duangdee, 2025; Kyobutungi, 2025; Mohammed, 2025). While these phenomena occur at a relatively rapid pace and their restoration may take considerable time, the new circumstances require stronger alliances to shape the future. Addressing these concerns, this issue aims to promote shared visions for the future of the tropics. Hence, the present iteration centres on unfiltered and radical futures as imagined by different practitioners of tropical Futures Making.

This is a multidisciplinary project, and the papers presented here discuss various perspectives, including the performative arts, architecture, urban planning, the arts in relation to natural sciences, ethnographic methods, verbal expressions, and activism. Although we witnessed considerable innovation in the theoretical approaches elucidated in the previous issue on Thinking Futures, this current volume on Making Futures underscores the necessity of foregrounding creativity and action to create or co-create more tangible images of tropical futures. These images are concerned with their environments and social necessities. Hence, this second part brings together the creative endeavours of authors, offering translations, short stories, poetry, visual art, photography, documentary filmmaking, and projects of various natures, which actively contribute to shaping unique futures in the present. Several papers also draw attention to collaborative ways of co-creation that include a multispecies perspective, demonstrating in practice the much-needed reclamation in the fields of environmental humanities. They present transdisciplinary methods that connect knowledges and methods from the natural and social sciences as well as the humanities and the arts. Many of these works also shed light on collaborative methods, which transcend disciplines or regions, connecting the tropics among themselves and to other regions worldwide.

Approaches and methods of Futures Making share creativity as their common denominator. While some are obligatorily participatory and collective in nature (e.g., foresight workshops, scenario planning, social simulations), others can be partially or completely individual endeavours, such as visual art production and virtual exhibitions, filmmaking, storytelling, and speculative fiction writing (prose, poetry, drama). Futures Making, thus, comprises both “hands-on and generative” (Whyte et al., 2022) and more imaginative practices aimed at generating future possibilities. In this regard, the papers in this part depict a melange of these participatory and individual methodologies. Against this backdrop, it is worth repeating that storytelling and speculative fiction (including science fiction or sci-fi in general and particularly climate fiction or cli-fi in this age of ecological emergency) are strongly connected with future-making practices in foresight and futures studies (e.g., Bartosch & Hoydis, 2025; Braun et al., 2024; Bina et al., 2017; Milojevica & Inayatullah, 2015). The advantages of these artistic and fictional approaches to Futures Making include the ability for artists to weave together experiences from the past, present, and future, as well as their propensity to reach wider audiences. In this regard, and referring to Paul Ricoeur’s work (1990), Bina et al. (2017) contend:

> By drawing on the desire to reflect upon the past and present, artists imagine more or less plausible futures, often resulting from the extrapolation of tendencies and trends in their social, environmental

> and economic context. These texts of popular art, which in our study arise from both novels and films, can offer a form of social and historical critique through their account and analysis of social structure, power, politics, and agency. Moreover, filmic and literary representations convey future visions to a much broader public through their narrative configuration, compared to more theoretical approaches (Ricouer, 1990). They transmit cultural codes and values, thus they reflect cultures and ideologies of specific historical moments and societies. (p.68)

The creative writers and artists featured here are acutely aware of and deeply embedded in the cultures, ideologies, and challenges or crises of their tropical societies, as well as the current Anthropocene, Capitalocene, and Plantationocene epochs. This is to be expected given that scholars such as Bartosch and Hoydis (2025), drawing on Davidson and Kemp (2023), argue for the usefulness of fiction and climate imaginaries: "Since climate imaginaries are unobservable for the climate sciences, the role of fiction as a future-making technique is crucial, especially when it meaningfully and productively engages questions of value as well as extreme cases of future scenarios" (p. 2).

Artist Kent Chan, in his audiovisual work *Future Tropics*, puts the question bluntly: "Is the future of the tropics the future of all humanity?" His imagined world, one where global warming stretches tropical climates to their limits, pushes the thought experiment further: "If the entire world became tropical, what would it mean to have an Old and New Tropics? How would global culture and geopolitical relations be reshaped in a mono-climatic world?" (2023). This visioning provocatively engages with distinct contemporary urgency and offers a futurist glimpse into the orchestration of multiple future imaginaries emerging from global tropical communities. If the past is layered, so is the future.

In response to both colonial and neocolonial exploitation, capitalist commodification of nature, and anthropogenic climate change, the contributions to Tropical Futurisms examine practical examples of how to utilise art and fiction in crafting alternative tropical futures that are both disempowering (as they take away agency) and empowering (enforcing agency). Agency, politics, and power dynamics are crucial in negotiating not only the past and present but also in forging new futures. In line with Logue (2023, p. 59), we suggest that the tropical artists and storytellers featured and examined here "don't leave it up to individual celebrities [and billionaires] to tell us what the future will look like" and consequently employ their future-making arts as "a powerful tool that may generate new ideas and forms of innovation that we desperately need to transform existing systems and radically rethink how we organize and govern

for social impact" and the climate emergency. Drawing on Beckert (2021), Hungnes et al. (2025, p.3) rightly remark that "Power is in play during the process of accepting, suppressing or discrediting imagined futures, with certain voices and narratives counting in their projection." Thus, the artists and writers here adopt future-making practices that foreground tropical agency and power dynamics while fostering multispecies relations that include future bonds between humans, nonhuman biodiversity, and technology. By doing so, they employ fiction in future-making to "guide, inspire, predict and warn about the future, leading to potential action in the present" (Bina et al., 2017, p.169).

Assembling Tropical Futures Making Practices

In this discussion, it is paramount to reflect on how the creation of this issue contributes to shaping the possible futures of the tropics and the scholarship on the subject. As points of departure, we consider that Tropical Futures have already been featured in the programmes of various institutions and projects, primarily those with an art-focused orientation.[1] Notably, Alex Quicho (2022) coined the concept of Tropical Futurism as a response to the question: "If normative futurisms value difference only in order to exploit or overcome it, continuously reduce social relations to the unit of the individual, and coerce us into thinking planetary problems—such as hunger, extinction, and climate disaster—are practically unsolvable, how can we then construct a future constituted of difference and collectivity?" Against teleological visions of futurity, Quicho draws on projects primarily located in the Philippines and one in Brazil to arrive at a definition of Tropical Futurism that is relevant to understanding how these futures are imagined and constructed.

Together with an emphasis on "slower" and "regenerative" futures, Quicho (2022) considers that "tropical futures are in step with wider calls to decolonize technology, governance, and society at large; and to innovate with, rather than against, nature." We see many of these observations in the contributions to this *eTropic* double issue on Tropical Futurisms. This collection is thus the first effort to gather what the concept means for different actors across this vast, diverse, and rich region known as the tropics. Without prescribing a rigid framework for what this flourishing field of study can be, our call for papers was met with an exciting and overwhelming response from scholars and practitioners eager to be part of the conversation, enriching, expanding, and even challenging any preconceived notions of what Tropical Futures and Futurisms entail. Questions about language, intra and transregional connections, specific visual cultures, transdisciplinary methods, and multispecies conviviality,

[1] For a compilation of online publications and projects that have recently used the terms tropical and futurism, see https://monoskop.org/Tropical_futurism. The examples include music, scholarly works, fashion, and online exhibitions.

among other provocations, inform a vibrant field concerned with futuring in the tropics, which, as a practice, has always been present in the tropics, despite colonialism's attempted imposition of temporalities (Muñoz-Martínez et al., 2025, p. 5).

Honouring such vibrancy, it is pertinent here to mention the creative way in which this special issue of Tropical Futurisms arose. The first discussions on the possibility of creating this special issue took place in 2023 when PhD candidates Jueling Hu and Ysabel Muñoz met during the summer school "Bouncing Forward: Future Narratives, Scenarios, and Transformations in the Study of Culture" at the University of Giessen in Germany. As often occurs, aided by the infrastructures of the Global North, these tropical scholars ventured to push ideas of what it meant to think of futurity in their regions of Southeast Asia and the Caribbean in the face of dominant Western counterparts through their experiences in visual art and literary studies, respectively. After listening to each other's presentations, they realised that a project addressing these concerns and expanding the discussion was necessary, even amid their hectic lives as doctoral students. The experienced Editor-in-Chief of *eTropic* journal, Anita Lundberg, recognising the vital potential of the idea, gave space and incommensurable support and expertise to germinate this project. Finally, with the addition of the poet-writer, environmental humanities, sustainability science, foresight and futures studies expert Nsah Mala, the team was complete, and we undertook the review and revision of numerous articles to bring this two-part issue to publication, with the express hope that these conversations will continue to flourish. As we learn from many of the papers throughout the double issue, such communities, personal connections, and insights inform our epistemologies of tropical futures in relation to local, pan-tropical, and global contexts, as well as ideological systems. In this sense, the task of Tropical Futurisms becomes a project of self-affirmation, survival, and agency in constructing futures that respond to the needs and desires of people and eco-cultural systems within these complex tropical spaces. Rather than being defined by exoticizing views from abroad, Tropical Futures are designed from within.

A Tropical Cartography of Making Futures

The papers collected together here demonstrate how Making Futures in the Tropics decolonizes the dominant notion of the future as singular, Western-centric, and universal. The papers offer various insights into future-making in the form of creative practices: from theatre performance to architecture, urban planning, street art, arts-science and Indigenous wisdom, photography and activism, documentary filmmaking, poetry creation, the practice of translation, and the writing of speculative short stories. Here we encounter rich examples of making futures as they zig-zag across Tropical Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America, the pan-Tropics, Australia's Tropical North,

India, and the Southeast Asian countries of Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Sarawak on the island of Borneo.

Spatial Practices and Future Scenarios

The following four papers take up spatial practices towards futurity through theatre performance informed by the blue humanities, traditional architecture as a precursor to solarpunk futurism, speculative fiction and digital art as a literary method for urban design, and women's urban street art as a practice for social change.

The first paper, "Water Fights Back in Lagos: A Performance Reading of Aqua-Terrestrial Futures in Ojo Bakare's 'Ekun Omi,'" is co-authored by Princewill Chukwuma Abakporo, Abdulmalik Adakole Amali, Fidelis Enang Egbe, and Stanley Timeyin Ohenhen. Drawing on ecocriticism and the blue humanities, these authors offer a critical reading of Ojo Bakare's play entitled *Ekum Omi* [When Water Cries], which confronts the devastating environmental effects of water pollution in Nigeria's populous coastal city of Lagos. Their analysis of this play, mixing textual interpretation and visual representations (from the play's performance and evidence of pollution and floods in Lagos), highlights the dangers of anthropogenic water pollution on both aquatic lives and humans as well as both the victimhood and agency of water and nature in a manner that resonates with Nsah's (2022) study of water pollution and disorderly urbanisation in some plays from the Congo Basin. According to the four Nigerian co-authors, "[a]s a character in the play, Water (Omi in the Yoruba language) actively participates in the narrative, voicing her annoyance at human carelessness, pollution, and exploitation" (p. 28). Ultimately, their aim is not only to portray current environmental and aquatic devastation in Lagos but also to warn against the catastrophic environmental futures for this tropical city (and beyond) if nothing is done to arrest the current alarming situation. Thus, they conclude, "This performance reading of aqua-terrestrial futures challenges us to re-evaluate our presumptions regarding sustainability and development, calling for a more thorough examination of the environmental issues posing a growing threat to the life of tropical coastal cities such as Lagos" (p. 41).

From African theatre, we move to African architecture through a reading of speculative protopian futures. In his paper titled "Protopian African Futures: Demas Nwoko's Tropical Architecture, Natural Synthesis—and Solarpunk," Ayodele Arigbabu engages with the multifaceted work of revolutionary Nigerian artist and architect Demas Nwoko. He argues that Nwoko's post-independence practice blends insights and methods from Indigenous African (Nigerian) and Western practices in terms of architecture, creativity, and cultural production, thus heralding concrete aspects of solarpunk in the Nigerian tropics. Arigbabu notes that among all punk genres (solarpunk, cyberpunk,

steampunk, dieselpunk, biopunk, nanopunk, desertpunk, etc.), "solarpunk stands out as the sub-genre that distinctly favours a utopian outlook and goes on to not only idealize how this may be achieved through political consciousness and activism but also transcends the confines of fiction and the fantasy world and fandom traditions to inspire and co-opt prefigurative endeavours in the real world" (p. 51). Arigbabu traces Nwoko's groundbreaking architectural and artistic work and his hybridity to "the Natural Synthesis movement of the Zaria Rebels" (p.55), arguing that this has had resonances beyond Nigeria. He furthermore lauds Nwoko's work for its demonstration of "aesthetic maturity" and excellence in terms of utilising cement-stabilised earth blocks which are noted for "high durability and weather resistance, excellent thermal and sound insulation properties, and low maintenance profile" (p. 59). After making a foray into some of the architect's plays, Arigbabu concludes that "Nwoko's entire oeuvre is a multi-decade exercise in prefiguring a desirable future for Africa" (p. 65).

Architecture leads us to the next paper on urban design, as the making of futures requires creative and interdisciplinary approaches. Alan Marshall presents such perspectives in the illustrated essay "Visioning Tropical Cities of the Future," weaving together future studies, speculation, literature, and urban designs in a novel proposal. He embarks on a creative journey from the streets of Bangkok (Thailand), Aracataca (Colombia), and Bhopal (India), following emblematic literary narratives that describe these places. Inspired by the works of Paolo Bacigalupi, Gabriel García Márquez, and Indra Sinha, Marshall critically visualises possible social and environmental futures for these urban spaces, translating literary loci into speculative scenario artworks. The Literary Method of Urban Design (as coined by the author) is an "interdisciplinary and community-centered" (p. 90) proposal that "focuses on imaginative or speculative forecasting by blending fictional stories with social narratives" (p. 76). Marshall shares the potential of this method as an invitation to continue envisioning and re-visioning futures differently, combining and creating textual and graphic narratives. Through including a thorough revision of the scholarship and practice that combines literature and urbanism, the project presents a pedagogical dimension that aims to encourage audiences, urban planners, and students "to envision cities not only as functional spaces but as dynamic socio-psychological and cultural landscapes" (p. 80). In a collection of four interconnected images that span across tropical regions worldwide and one "tropicalized" version of a temperate city, this article features striking artworks that rely on humidity, vegetation, multispecies relations, and exuberant architectural tropes to represent future tropicality, showing how "intertwining the evocative power of literature with the strategic goals of urbanism…offers a pathway towards more inclusive, imaginative, and sustainable cities" (p. 90).

Also interested in visual art and urban interventions, the piece "Tropical Futurism Aesthetics: The Impact of Latin American Women's Urban Art on Social Change" transports viewers to the tropical Americas. The author, Bladimir Enrique Cedeño-Vega, considers how Latin American and Caribbean feminist street art reclaims tropical futurisms by advocating for gender justice and disrupting hegemonic narratives. In doing so, these artists contribute to reconfiguring notions of tropicality, shifting "from a narrative of marginality and exoticism to one of agency, reflexivity, and interconnectedness" (p. 98). The article explains how "feminist visual narratives are [simultaneously] enriched through decolonial, tropicalizing, rhizomatic, and tropical futurism aesthetic approaches" (p. 96). The study presents a compelling analysis of the artists' strategies—namely employing "elements from advertising visual language, popular culture, and pluralistic feminist thinking" (p. 98)—accompanied by numerous vibrant and colourful images of artworks displayed across city walls. With an emphasis on urban settings as spaces of accessibility, participation, and democratisation, Cedeño-Vega demonstrates that the works by Lady Pink, Panmela Castro, Bastardilla, Gleo, Mariela Ajarás, Pau Quintana, Eva Bracamontes, Martanoemí Noriega, and the collectives Mujeres Creando and Moriviví exemplify novel forms of visualising tropical futurisms centred in justice, resilience, and transformation. The author attends to the differences in formation, styles, techniques, and contexts of these artists and creates a visual cartography of tropical futurisms that evoke a heterogeneous preoccupation with Indigenous and African cosmologies, psychology, identity, race, politics, colonialism, and environmental and social justice, among others. These issues are often represented on large-scale murals with images of women of colour embedded in tropical landscapes. Ultimately, the article, similarly to the art practices analysed, "celebrate[s] tropical spaces as sites of empowerment and boundless creative possibility" (p. 98). Hence, it invites new visualisations of the tropics in critical and intersectional conversations with decolonial and feminist perspectives.

Art-Science-Knowledge Practices for Futuring

The materiality of art as a recording of futures is the emphasis of several papers envisioned though various relations involving ecology, science, and Indigenous knowledges. Here we are taken across the pan-tropics via art-science futurisms, to Tropical North Australia through weavings of human-grass futures, over to Maluku in Indonesia following photographic bird walks and local ecological activism, then to the ultra-wet tropics of the Khasi Hills in Eastern India and the co-creation of living root bridges involving humans with ficus trees.

"Lost Specimens from Neotropical Futures: Evolutionary Species of another Place and Time," exhibits Helen Mitchell's art-science insects from a future neo-Tropics. These speculative hydridised creations are comprised of rainforest detritus (seed pods,

sticks, leaves). In her article, she discusses how global warming is impacting the expansion of tropical regions (further north and south) and individual species of plants and animals are already adapting. Along with species loss, there is individual species genetic mutation, leading to evolution. In a critical reflection on past centuries of discovery and colonisation, and concomitant age of collecting, the specimens are displayed in a replication of an exotic "fetishization of 'preserving' a moment in time under glass" (p. 125). "Coined *vegan taxidermy*, every Lost Specimen comes complete with a Latin name, common name and year 'discovered', along with a scientific description detailing their habitat, ecology, evolution, reproduction, and lifespan" (p. 126). The basic information is displayed on small brass plaques at the front of each showcase plinth. The common names are themselves instructive of future environmental change and species survival: Cyclone Clam from AD 2032 (of the former Philippines); Garbage Patch Itsumade from AD 2058 (originally from the old world of Africa, Europe, Asia, and Madagascar, but evolved to inhabit ocean garbage patches); Mimic Heliconia Assassin Fly, named in AD 3106 (from the American Tropics, across to the Pacific Islands, and Indonesia); Miasma Milly, AD 2267 (oldest fossil records from the rainforests of Borneo). On the back of the display mount is a brass QR code that can be read via a smartphone. It gives the history of the insect including its discovery, adaptation, and breeding patterns. This art-science practice is a meeting of tropical colonial history with tropical futurism.

In "Plant-Human Futurisms in the Australian Tropics: Native Grasses and the *Carbon_Dating* Art Project," the interdisciplinary research team of Tania Leimbach, Keith Armstrong, Jane Palmer, Delissa Walker Ngadijina, and Gerry Turpin incorporate social sciences, Indigenous knowledge, and the art of weaving as they ponder human relations with native grasses of tropical far north Queensland. They argue that the future is interwoven with the past and with native ecology. This human and more-than-human collaborative project engages in a multi-practice involving "socially engaged art, grass growing, consultation, journaling, critical writing, yarning, and art-making to generate a deeper engagement with Australian native grasses among its many diverse participants" (p. 151). First Nations participants, including a traditional custodian knowledge-holder and ethnobotanist and a master weaver and artist, were crucial in bringing into relation grasses and humans with Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledges in discussing "the role of art in enabling a re-imagining of future plant-human relations and the connection of imagination with hope and an ethics of care…most urgent in the context of the tropics" (p. 151). The authors argue that "creative works of Indigenous Futurisms are different from scholarly futures inquiry" (p. 152). They use creative future-making "to forge new imaginaries that refuse those of the State or colonisers…a refusal of current non-Indigenous relations with the world" (p. 164).

Danishwara Nathaniel's article, *"Envisioning Multispecies Tropical Futurity: Image-Making in North Maluku's Frontier Zone,"* draws together visual anthropology and environmental activism to examine how communities in Ternate, Indonesia, are reshaping tropical futurities through everyday acts of image-making. Set against colonial legacies, extractive capitalism, and ecological degradation, the article follows a network of local students, photographers, journalists, and environmentalists who engage with visual media—murals, wildlife photography, and drone footage—to document biodiversity and contest dominant narratives about development and conservation. Nathaniel begins with the legacy of 19th-century British naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace, whose work in the region is being reinterpreted by local actors: in the first case, a striking mural places Wallace's overlooked assistant, Ali, alongside him, reclaiming local authorship in the history of science. This re-centring continues in the second case, the Maluku Bird Walks, where participants document endemic species such as the Papuan Hornbill through photography. These walks cultivate what Nathaniel calls "arts of attentiveness" (p. 185), blending citizen science with embodied environmental care and responsibility. The third case presents drone imagery used to expose the ecological devastation caused by nickel mining—an industry championed by the state as part of a "green" energy future. Together, these visual practices generate a counter-archive that contests extractivist visions of science and development. Nathaniel positions them as "world-making" tools (pp. 193-194) which sketch alternative imaginaries rooted in multispecies ethics, regional knowledge, and ecological solidarity. Through image-making, these frontline communities not only assert their place in shaping the future but insist on one that is more just, attentive, and shared across species. Ultimately, he uses image-future-making to suggest, "In this process, both the image-making practices and the images they produce are generative of imagining a more multispecies tropical future in their own image" (p. 185).

Randolph V. Langstieh transports readers to the Khasi-Jaiñtia Hills of Meghalaya, in India, through his piece "Indigenous Futurity in the Living Root Bridges of the Khasi-Jaiñtia Hills of India: A Documentary Essay." The article delves into the film *Ki Thied Ka Lawei (Roots of Sustainability)*, directed by the author, and the culture of growing these bridges, which he describes as "a century-long process which epitomises the Indigenous futurity of the Khasis" (p. 211). The lively images accompanying the text describe the building process in detail, documenting this industrious, community-centred task and the sophisticated techniques and materials employed. The creation of bamboo bridges (as supports for growing) offers a glimpse into Indigenous time as intrinsically futuristic, given that these "slow" infrastructures support present and future populations, as summarised in the statement: "The involvement and participation to ensure the complete formation of a root bridge stretches to one or two generations,

while the utility of the living root bridge may serve the next seven to ten generations" (p. 211) A mutually beneficial and intergenerational relationship exists in which humans and plants become co-creators. The essay describes the Khasi people's cosmovision, oral histories, connection with temporal landscapes, and deep knowledge of local ecosystems. In response to new challenges and pressures, such as tourism, the community continues to rely on traditional knowledge, observation, and communication with the forest, continually practicing a "Pedagogy of Nature" (p. 208). The article presents a compelling account of tropical Indigenous futurisms, suggesting that the Khasis' root bridges radically reconfigure a reified Western understanding of infrastructure. This Indigenous group engages with bridges not as inert but as alive, dynamic, and collaborative, evoking truly sustainable visions of futurity in the tropics.

Poetry as Creative Practice and Tropical Embodiment

Two collections of poems add another dimension to the creativity of making futures. One set of poems arise from the experience of the monsoonal coastal regions of India, while the other collection is experienced through the embodiment of queer relations arising from the Philippines.

Kathryn Hummel's contribution, titled "'Play Wisteria for Me': Poetry as an Augury of Tropical Future(s)," is an exercise in creative practice as research or practice-led research. The paper draws inspiration from the author's multiple tropical travels between Australia and India. In this regard, Hummel remarks, "For many years now, I've travelled from coast to coast: south to north and back again from where I come from in Australia to where I have been living in India—along the sultry coastlines of Goa, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh, the composition sites of these poems" (p. 228). Her paper comprises two interconnected parts: a collection of five previously unpublished poems—namely "Flirtation in the Time of Nowhere," "Touchstone," "Pix/elation," "Urumu," and "Play Wisteria for Me"—followed by analytical commentary on the poetry. The poems evoke a number of thematic concerns, such as solitude, longing/belonging and community, futures of pandemics and viral infections, technological engagement and multispecies vitalities, climate change and tropical precarity, demographic expansion and impacts of rapid development, and changing urban and natural landscapes, among others. In terms of how these poems address tropical futurisms, the author suggests that "the everyday events and perspectives explored through the poems reflect or hold the potential to shape futures in regions where tradition intersects—easily or not—with contemporary concerns" (p. 228).

In *"Decolonial Exhumation, or the Future Where No One Is Home,"* B.B.P. Hosmillo offers a powerful poetic intervention that explores same-sex intimate partner abuse at

the intersections of trans, queer, and feminist political tropical thinking. Drawn from their autobiographical book project *SUNNY*, the poems grapple with how queer suffering, particularly in domestic and diasporic contexts, remains marginalised under the forces of heterosexualism, racial classification, and capitalism. Writing from a Philippine diasporic perspective, Hosmillo develops a method they call **"**decolonial exhumation,**"** a creative and political practice that draws on Saidiya Hartman's "critical fabulation" and Banu Subranmaniam's plant evolutionary biology to "develop an epistemology and aesthetics that celebrates the fragmentary, lost, partial, incomplete, and perpetually unrecoverable" (p. 231). Structured through an archipelagic set of forms—poems, confessional searches, and daily routines of survival—the works intertwine ficitionalised and remembered experiences of queer and trans Filipinx subjects, weaving through personal histories and collective traumas. The future, Hosmillo writes, is "maternal…the streaming touch of oil on burnt skin" (p.233), yet remains marked by "ruination" and "a hill's destruction." Hosmillo's poetry highlights how "a queer narrative of victimisation…is systematically erased" and rendered unspeakable (p. 231). The author's poetics of tropical futurity envisions "a place not here but consisting of many (incommensurable) places reached from here" (p. 231)—a speculative "elsewhere" where pain is remembered, not resolved, and where queer tropical lives resist disappearance through acts of witnessing and writing.

Translating and Writing Speculative Futures

The last two papers are speculative fiction short stories. The first is a story within a story of the future demise of translation based in colonial and vernacular languages of the Philippines—and the control of language in both the future and the present. The second is speculative fiction mixed with climate fiction, set in the future of independence movements across the South China Sea between Peninsula Malaysia and Sarawak on the island of Borneo.

Christian Benitez translates into English the short story "The Flower of Heidelberg" by Alvin Yapan. Set in the future of 2577, the story follows the diary entries of a translator in a world where vernacular languages, once so famously abundant across the tropics, have all but disappeared and only a few imperial languages still exist. In this dystopian future, the world is corporatized and translators have become mere peddlers of words. An early diary entry gives a sense of this future: *"English*: the language used by Corporation Domain, the largest among the five Corporations. It includes Coco-Mango Land, the name given by my fellow traders to the place where I live" (p.246). As the peddler of languages explains, "Long ago, José Rizal, a prominent patriot, called the place Filipinas. The language used by those who live here is *Filipino*" (p.246). This fictive translator, a peddler of this vernacular language, has found an ancient poem

titled “A las flores del Heidelberg” by the same José Rizal. Although not a peddler of Spanish, he is offered a great sum of money for the poem by the German Koerperschaft which makes him both suspicious and nostalgic for the poem. In the second part of the article, the non-fictive translator situates the making of the translation in the present era of the Frankfurt Book Fair, the irony of which is noted: “there I was, a nascent translator…about to attend the world’s oldest and largest trade fair for books, which is more precisely a venue for selling publication and translation rights (perhaps not too different from the envisioned bidding in the story)” (p. 256). The short story and its translation constitute a sophisticated meditation on tropical language futures.

In “Straddling the South China Sea: Tropical Speculative Futures of Borneo and Malaysia,” L. Han’s short story combines speculative fiction and climate fiction (cli-fi) to craft an alternative tropical future where the devastating effects of anthropogenic climate change and political rupture have reshaped the geopolitics of Southeast Asia. In a politically fractured Malaysia divided by the South China Sea, Sarawak and Sabah have declared independence and, together with Brunei and Kalimantan, have formed the Borneo Alliance Treaty Organisation to secure land sovereignty and resource protection—while Peninsular Malaysia has incorporated a drowning Singapore under the shadow of climate change and rising sea levels. Described by some as a civil war and others as a war of independence, the story unfolds through the voices of two sisters—Jules, located in independent Sarawak, and Nina, living in the newly reconstituted Malaysia-2117—as a deeply personal and intergenerational meditation on identity, belonging, and resilience. Jules teaches in the Sarawak highlands, helping children understand the countries long and complex history. As she reveals, “these are the offspring of the generation fighting for survival in a world rife with disasters and corporations and governments that start wars for limited resources (p. 263). In the meantime, Nina in mainland Malaysia, contends with rising militarization, dwindling resources, and struggles regarding her Sarawakian identity. The story interweaves major themes such as climate crisis, decoloniality, and nation-building into the subtle discussion of kinship and memory. While the narrative resists neat solutions, the recurring metaphor of “swimming dragons”—an evocation of childhood qigong practice—beautifully encapsulates the sisters’ transoceanic connection, shaped by love, estrangement, and the enduring call of home. As Han writes, “My sister and I are still swimming dragons, and we’re finding our way” (p. 273).

Conclusion: Material Tropicality of Futures Making and Futures Thinking

The ways of making futures in the tropics are multiple and varied. Nevertheless, a common thread throughout these papers is their tropical material entanglements.

Futures Making and Futures Thinking are never separate; rather, their tropical materiality demonstrates how "humans are always entangled with non-human/material agents; [how] such entanglement is necessary for any creative act to take place; and [how] these same entanglements allow us to interrogate and re-evaluate preconceived notions about the world (Benitez & Lundberg, 2022, p. 1). The rich images they create of the intertwinings of cultural, linguistic, visual, and ecological systems also relate to how the two collections of papers that form this double special issue of Tropical Futurisms constantly circle back to inform each other, thus creating multiple resonances between individual papers as they are brought into relation.

In this second part of the special issue, we have offered a significant array of creative future-making scenarios that help to further the imagining and practicing of tropical futures that offer ideas towards alternative tropical futurity. The authors collected together in Tropical Futurisms encourage us to create ways of being and becoming through the material specificities of local tropical communities, both real and imagined. The creative practices presented in this second and final part of the special issue utilise methods from multiple disciplines and interdisciplines—from theatre performance, tropical architecture, creative urban design, street art, science-art praxes, photography, ethnography, activism, film documentary, poetry, translation, and short stories—to examine the material possibilities of tropical futures.

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