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The Acceleration of ‘Critical Thinking’ in the Asian Global Knowledge Enterprise

The transformation of higher education in Asia does not occur in quite the same way as in the West. While many European universities had to leave their *Bildungsideal* behind for a more ‘pragmatic’ model, many Asian universities in the new global cities are suddenly emphasizing *critical thinking* above old vocational pedagogies. This change in the Asian educational context might be welcomed by humanist academics, for which critical approaches like ‘questioning’ have always been fundamental to the ideal of justice. The rise of critical thinking in Asia thus incites hopes of an ‘Eastern’ counter-voice to Western neo-liberal imperialism. However, this paper will question the rise of critical thinking in higher education in Asia by analysing the intersections of the neoliberal economy, new media technologies, and such new ‘thinking’ in the postcolonial context of Singapore and its National University (NUS). It will conclude that the very performance of ‘the humanist university of thought and justice’ in Asia has itself become complicit in the ongoing usurpation of ‘thought’ and its ‘others’ in technological acceleration.