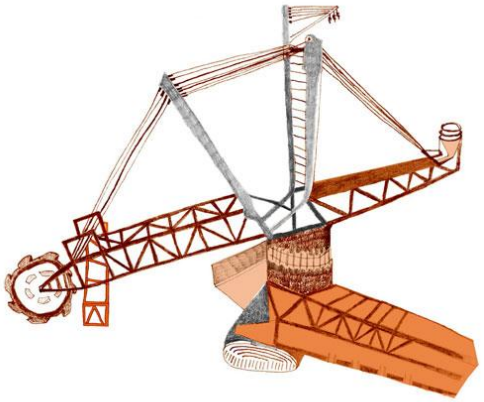
Environment & Society Portal

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Mining

Wang, Ruohan

Humans affect their environment through the coal mining process in three ways. First, because mines require a lot of space, the mining process frequently requires the resettlement of entire towns. Second, giant bucket-wheel excavators, which dig up the earth, together with industrial farming and construction shift significantly more sediment than any natural process. Finally, by burning coal to produce energy, carbon dioxide is released into the atmosphere, substantially contributing to global warming. The atmosphere can hold up to 1,500 billion tons of carbon dioxide and still keep global warming under 2°C; the consequences become uncontrollable once this limit is breached. One third of this volume has been emitted since the start of the industrial revolution. If the current carbon dioxide emission rate remains constant, we will exhaust the atmosphere's capacity within the next 20 years.



Coal Mining
Ruohan Wang

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Mining

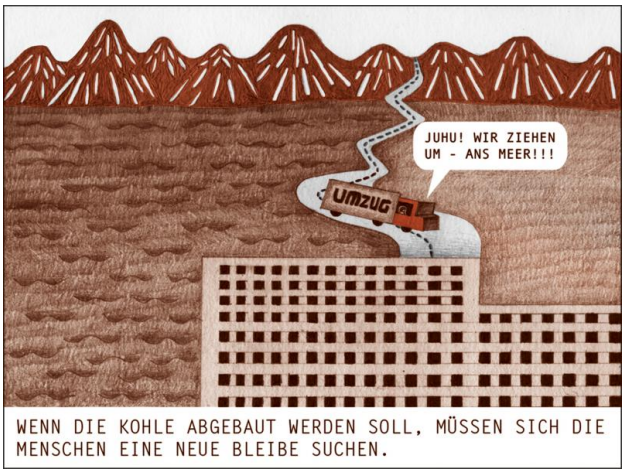
Text and images by Ruohan Wang
University of the Arts (UdK), Berlin



Mining

"You have to move, we found coal under your farm."
For millions of years, layers of brown coal lay buried beneath the Earth's surface.

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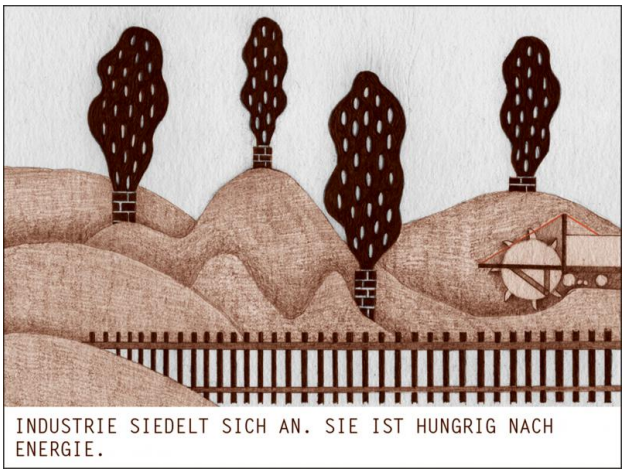
"Yay! We're moving—to the sea!!!"
When coal is to be mined in an area, people have to look for a new home.

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"The shovel is digging into the bedrock."
Coal mining affects the ground water, vegetation, and the environment as a whole.

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Industry settles nearby. It takes up a lot of energy.

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The coal lorries are ceaselessly transported to the factories. Coal is burned there to produce energy.

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The carbon dioxide previously contained within the coal is released. It rises into the atmosphere along with the smoke.

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"The sea level is rising!"
Carbon dioxide contributes to global warming. The results are natural disasters and rising sea levels.

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"Where are we going now?"
The people have to move again. Where can they be in safe in the future?

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Artist's comment

My story focuses on the consequences of coal mining. The countryside is being destroyed and burning coal results in carbon dioxide, the primary cause for the so-called greenhouse effect which is the source of many natural catastrophes. I hope that my comic will warn readers about the dangers of carbon dioxide. Humanity needs to think more about the environment and the future of the Earth and not just about profit and short-term growth.

How to cite

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The comic also appears in Alexandra Hamann, Reinhold Leinfelder, Helmuth Trischler, and Henning Wagenbreth, eds., *Anthropozän – 30 Meilensteine auf dem Weg in ein neues Erdzeitalter. Eine Comic-Anthologie* (Munich: Deutsches Museum, 2014).

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Further readings:

- Sources and Literature for the Anthropocene Milestone Comics

Related links:

- Welcome to the Anthropocene. The Earth in Our Hands. Special exhibition at the Deutsches Museum http://www.deutsches-museum.de/en/exhibitions/special-exhibitions/archive/2015/anthropocene/
- Welcome to the Anthropocene. The Earth in Our Hands. Virtual exhibition on the Environment & Society Portal https://www.environmentandsociety.org/exhibitions/welcome-anthropocene
- Comic-Anthology, Deutsches Museum Website http://www.deutsches-museum.de/sammlungen/entdecken/comics/
- RCC curated collection: Energy Transitions by Nuno Luís Madureira https://www.environmentandsociety.org/mml/energy-transitions

Websites linked in image captions:

- http://www.deutsches-museum.de/ausstellungen/werkstoffe-produktion/bergbau/salz-und-kohle/