EDITED BY CHRISTOPHE THOUNY & MITSUHIRO YOSHIMOTO

Planetary Atmospheres and Urban Society After Fukushima

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Editors

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Planetary Atmospheres of Fukushima: Introduction

Christophe Thouny

Is Japan over? This simple question must have entered the minds of countless souls on 12 March 2011 when it became clear that the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant had exploded following the magnitude 9 earthquake and the ensuing tsunami that ravaged the coast of the Tōhoku the previous day. No statistics are available to tell us how many at this moment felt that Japan was over. And then it was not. People kept working, consuming, loving. Not only people, nature bloomed. Humans left and bees returned to abandoned rice fields, safe from deadly pesticides. Cherry trees blossomed in the contaminated perimeter, weeds invaded houses and roads, life grew back. Now, 5 years after Fukushima, the Japanese government is enforcing a policy of return to Fukushima, reopening the contaminated area around Fukushima Daiichi, cutting back on subsidies to refugees and refuge centers while getting ready for the 2020 Olympics. According to the twenty-first annual poll organized by the Japan Kanji Aptitude Testing Foundation, security, explosion, and war were the three characters chosen by the Japanese to represent the year 2015.[1] And indeed since 2011 and the return to power of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) headed by Abe Shinzō, security and war have become the keywords of a national policy based on the denial of radioactivity (all is under control), the return to the

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nuclear with the planned sale of nuclear plants to India and Kazakhstan, and the affirmation of a strong position in Asia against Chinese imperialism, all thanks to a postwar American order without which Japan would never be able to sustain its present way of life. And it apparently works. According to recent estimates by the Japan National Tourism Association, the number of foreign visitors in August 2015 was 63.8 % higher than the previous year.[2] Japan is back, Japan is strong, Japan is wealthy. Fukushima Japan is on the map to stay.

The tsunami-proof seawall now being built in the Tōhoku area in northeast Japan might be the most representative project of Fukushima Japan: 6.8 billion dollars have been allotted by the Japanese government to build a series of seawalls on the Japanese coast of the Tōhoku.[3] The project, criticized by numerous local groups and politicians, is now underway, a great wall that resonates with other walls being built all over the world between nations, ethnics groups, and geographic areas. As Wendy Brown explains, these walls built or proposed between Israel and Gaza, the USA and Mexico, and now the Japanese land and the sea have a deceptive ideological function, to figure a desire for a national state of sovereignty aligned with an ideal past by appealing to a logic of containment.[4] According to this logic, it would be possible to contain risk behind fixed boundaries in order to guarantee the existence of a national sovereign subject, protected against risks of any kind, natural (earthquakes, tsunamis, typhoons) or human (global terrorism, economic crisis), both subsumed under a generic category of inhuman threat. What happened on March 2011 would then be the effect of an external aggression from the earth, an external threat that must and can be contained. The commonly accepted denomination "3.11" precisely aims to cancel the eventfulness of the catastrophe, its possibilities for change and opening, by reinscribing it inside a well-known postwar narrative of reconstruction and development and circumscribing its effects to a limited and closed time and place. "3.11" is indexed on the world time line, nicely finding its place in an American-led neoliberal order, "3.11" beside "9.11," side by side, each its own trauma. A planetary event is thus neutralized by a containment that captures and internalizes the eventfulness of the catastrophe within a neoliberal world of risk societies. The premise of this book is that to engage with the eventfulness of Fukushima Japan, to understand why and how we come to care for this contaminated land in which we live, we need to depart from this deceptive if efficient logic of containment and start thinking the event of Fukushima in terms of planetary atmospheres.

This project is the result of a series of workshops organized at the University of Tokyo by Christophe Thouny and Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto on the topic of Fukushima Japan. From spring 2012 to summer 2014, the writers of this book met every few months to discuss what happened in March 2011 with a mixed crowd of academics and other professionals. What happened has been endlessly documented, explained, and represented in various media forms circulating in social media, blogs, and video platforms. As Ramona Handel-Bajema argues, this is one of the most documented events in Japanese history. Japanese bookstores now have an entire section devoted to March 2011. We know that the earth shook, we know how the tsunami hit the coast of the Tōhoku, we know more or less what actually happened inside the Fukushima nuclear plants. Recent satellite scans of Fukushima Daiichi have confirmed what scientists had already guessed, that the radioactive fuel has almost completely disappeared from reactors 1 and 2 and that a serious meltdown has happened, irremediably contaminating the Japanese soil.[5] We know the series of small events that happened in March 2011 and after—but do we know what was, and still is this event? Several publications in English have already examined what happened in March 2011 in terms of national politics, social movements, regional history and development, and more recently cultural politics.[6] These studies have successfully attempted to explain and make sense of what happened, opening onto new possibilities for action and change in Japan. Yet post-3.11 policies implemented by the Japanese government have mobilized a postwar rhetoric of survival and reconstruction that aims precisely to forestall any possibility for change or action, reducing the event of March 2011 to a Japanese problem. But Fukushima is not a Japanese problem. It is place-specific, which is why the name of Fukushima remains important, but place specificity only makes sense if understood in terms of a planetary movement through local places, in terms of a planetary situation opened by the event "Fukushima Japan."

Our starting point for these meetings consisted in a critical attitude to the closed discourse of "3.11" and its logic of containment. We thus started from this question, "what is the eventfulness of 3.11?" and a sense of disquiet and frustration at the emerging discourses and policies reducing the triple catastrophe to an us-them logic, a Japanese problem, a Tōhoku problem, a Fukushima problem, falling back onto well-known tropes of victimization, resilience, and national reconstruction. As in a farcical repetition of the postwar narrative of reconstruction, "3.11" was to lead toward a new Japan, in rupture from its past, finding a new place

in the world. The Democratic Party of Japan led by Naoto Kan was forced to step down after the disaster, due to its inefficient management of the crisis, to be replaced by the Liberal Democratic Party after the December 2012 elections. Prime Minister Abe Shinzō has since successfully implemented his faction's postwar agenda in compliance with USA's neoliberal policies, in this case, reopening of nuclear plants, forceful revision of the constitution's article 9 to allow Japanese troops to participate in American-led wars, national identity-filing of the population under the "my number" registration policy, and of course "Abenomics," a Japanese version of trickle-down economics. As the discourse of "3.11," the Abe government repeats and in this repetition accomplishes the national narrative of postwar Japan written by the LDP and culminating in the coming 2020 Tokyo Olympics, echoing the postwar 1964 Olympics.[7]

In his now classic study of postwar Japanese popular culture, Igarashi Yoshikuni argues that the postwar narrative of reconstruction and development did not allow for the Japanese to deal with the trauma of the war. As such, and contrary to James Dower's claim, the Japanese never embraced the defeat, and the repressed past kept returning in popular culture in an ongoing series of apocalyptic figures of destruction, contamination, and nostalgia.[8] However, despite the agenda of the Abe administration, the temporality of Fukushima Japan radically resists this capture by the postwar narrative of reconstruction and development. In *Toward a Deep Awakening From the Dream: Philosophy After 3.11* published 1 year after the catastrophe, the Japanese social critic Ōsawa Masachi distinguishes between two temporalities in Fukushima Japan.[9] There is first the temporality of a punctual event coming from the outside and redrawing the map of society, what he calls "the 9.11 paradigm," juxtaposed with the temporality of an ongoing everyday eventfulness that keeps redefining our very ground of experience, what I call a "nuclear time." The 9.11 paradigm is aligned here with the earthquake and tsunami, abiding by a postapocalyptic temporality of rupture, survival, and reconstruction. This first temporality, emblematized by the material destruction of the Tōhoku area, is particularly favored by state organs of communication, because it falls in line with the postwar narrative and the agenda of the Abe administration to put Japan back on the global map of nation-states. This is the same temporal logic of victimization and reconstruction that is mobilized by the writer Murakami Haruki in his comments on the disaster, reducing this planetary event to the occurrence of the fleeting and insubstantial reality of the world in the face of which the Japanese humans, helpless, must learn to endure and go on.[10]

This project was also inspired by a pioneering volume edited by Professors Imafuku Ryūta and Ukai Satoshi, *Lecturing After the Tsunami*, in which a group of Japanese academics reflected on their teaching practices in the aftermath of the triple catastrophe.[11] When we started working on Fukushima, we decided to follow a similar approach, asking ourselves how this ongoing event might affect our everyday practices wherever we are—in Fukushima, Tokyo, or anywhere else on the planet. And the concept of the planetary immediately imposed itself as a necessary alternative to other more accepted denominations, be it the global, the earth, or the world. In the essay "Dying Wisdom, Living Madness" that opens this book, Satoshi Ukai makes a useful distinction between the earth (*chikyū*) and the planet (*wakusei*). Ukai defines the earth as the finite spatial unit that constitutes both the common dwelling place of the human and its shared and finite material resources. On the contrary, the planet is defined first by movement, the wandering star as opposed to the finite ground: the planet is an open totality. In the context of this book, we discuss this opposition between planet and earth in terms of two opposite movements, respectively, the movement of planetary atmospheres, circulating and crossing borders of all kinds, and the logic of containment. The logic of containment relies on an old political paradigm that considers the national territory and its internal administrative subdivisions as real divisions for self-contained spaces, opposing an us to a them. The us-them logic of containment can be seen at work also on a global scale, when the Fukushima disaster is presented as a Japanese problem. We argue that this logic forecloses any actual engagement with what happened in March 2011, with the event of Fukushima. What we call planetary atmospheres are as such opposed to the us-them logic of containment and in this respect ontologically closer to the present global space of circulation of goods, ideas, images, and also radiation. The present reality of neoliberal states is constituted by a global space of atmospheres, while the logic of containment is a deceptive if highly effective ideological mode of management of local places and populations. However, the planetary as we understand it is not a *global* space of atmospheres. The global remains a finite closed space of commodity circulation. The concept of planetary atmospheres on the other hand questions and destabilizes this closed and finite global space, because it is about local experiences that become planetary as soon as we ask ourselves why and how this matters to us all. And in this sense, there is no them, only an us.

The problem is that not everybody is equal in the face of a disaster. Not only are individuals touched unequally by the disaster, some are undeniably more responsible than others, because what happened in March 2011 is as much a human as a natural catastrophe. As the Japanese cultural critic Sawaragi Noi remarked in an interview with Azuma Hiroki, Japan is still a bad place, bad because it is a place of forgetting and repetition.[12] The Tōhoku area was hit by a tsunami three times in Japanese modernity (1896, 1933, and 1960), and yet urban development continued on the coast despite recurrent warnings from survivors. With the nuclear catastrophe, the human nature of the catastrophe and the responsibility of politico-economic circles become obvious, albeit still denied, since someone has still to be held accountable for the ongoing nuclear meltdown while the population of Fukushima continues to live in shelters, soon to be closed by the government as it implements its policy of forceful return to the contaminated areas.[13] Cécile Asanuma-Brice's chapter documents the plight of the refugees and argues for what she calls a principle of "precaution." For her, it is necessary to defend such a principle precisely because there is no scientific evidence that low-level radiations will not harm the population. There is no answer as to who or what is responsible for the triple catastrophe, but this does not mean that nobody should be held accountable. In the end, the triple catastrophe is a human catastrophe with impacts on both the human and the natural environment. And in order to understand this question of responsibility, of the national state, nuclear corporations, local authorities, and individual dwellers, it is essential to fully address the eventfulness of Fukushima Japan. There are many ways to define eventfulness, but since we are here starting from the question of everyday experiences, it must first be discussed as a question of temporality, a temporality that, as Ōsawa argues, is dual, both punctual and finite—something happened and some must be held responsible for it—and ongoing, a nuclear time in which responsibility becomes an indefinite process of reparation and care, literally a labor of love.

According to Ōsawa Masachi, the nuclear catastrophe inaugurates a new temporality that radically disrupts our sense of linear time in that it relies on the belief in the continuity of the present, a present that in postwar Japan is always defined in rupture from a traumatic past. In opposition with the postwar narrative, nuclear time emerges as an ongoing everyday eventfulness that keeps redefining our very ground of experience. Contrary to the 9.11 paradigm, there is no end in sight, only an endless beginning, pushing us forward and generating an atmosphere of risk

and anxiety over the future. In this respect, it is perfectly understandable that the government preferred to adopt the 9.11 paradigm to promote the well-known narrative of reconstruction and claim that everything is under control for the coming Olympics in 2020. To quote Abe Shinzō at the 125th session of the International Olympics Committee held on 7 September 2013, "It would be a tremendous honor for us to host the Games in 2020 in Tokyo – one of the safest cities in the world, now… and in 2020. Some may have concerns about Fukushima. Let me assure you, the situation is under control. It has never done and will never do any damage to Tokyo."[14] The problem is that his predecessor Naoto Kan had to envisage the possibility of a complete evacuation of Tokyo, numerous hotspots have been found in the prefectures of Chiba and Tokyo, and the damaged nuclear plant still leaks radioactive water into the ocean while the nuclear core is now contaminating the Japanese land. The question becomes why, or rather how, we should care about this contaminated land. How can we learn to dwell in these contaminated atmospheres of Fukushima Japan, how can we inhabit this nuclear time without falling for a discourse of security, risk, and containment—a discourse of sacrifice for the nation, another *shūdan jiketsu*?[15]

The earthquake and the ensuing tsunami and nuclear meltdown in the TEPCO facility have combined both temporalities, bringing the hidden ground of postwar Japanese society to the surface and revealing its unresolved tensions and contradictions. More importantly, it has, as Jean-Luc Nancy argues, made visible the interconnectedness of our present reality and the continuity between places and events on a global scale.[16] The question of a global continuity of disasters, what Nancy calls the "equivalence of catastrophes," is as much a question of temporality as of spatiality, particularly in urban spaces where infrastructures invisible in a normal everyday time, functioning smoothly without systemic disruption, are brought to the surface and made visible in times of crisis. The urban scholar Stephen Graham has recently analyzed the banality of catastrophes brought about by the cascading effect of a networked system of infrastructures, a network which, as Takashi Machimura argues, "implies that an accident in one system can be the cause of unexpected troubles in another system."[17] This in turn compels us to redefine the nature of urban places in terms of a nonlinear dynamic system that remediates accepted hierarchies of the global, the national, and the local, and forbids any easy claim for rupture. Simply put, radiation respects no boundaries, especially those arbitrarily drawn on a map by government officials.

As Ramona Handel-Bajema explained in our first workshop, the cartography of radioactivity is extremely complicated because it is in constant movement. We are familiar with the series of concentric circles mapping the distance from the crippled nuclear plant. But as the refugees painfully learned, radioactive atmospheres do not respect our linear sense of place. When some escaped to the mountains, they ended up in areas far more contaminated than their original place of departure. Despite successful mapping of the radiation, rain and snow along with wind and typhoons will carry it in other directions, while its effect on bodies will vary depending on the mode of contamination, rhythm of accumulation, and each individual's physical constitution. Moreover, governmental policies are based on the understanding that there is a direct causal relation between radiation exposure and bodily harm, what Adriana Petryna calls "the linear hypothesis."[18] In her excellent anthropology of the Chernobyl disaster, Petryna deconstructs the linear hypothesis in the case of radiation effects by distinguishing stochastic from deterministic effects: "Deterministic effects occur when levels of absorbed radiation doses are significant enough to kill cells that, if not adequately replaced, produce clinically observable pathologies. The severity of the effect is dependent on the radiation dose, with steep linear dose-effect relationships. This is opposed to stochastic effects, which, based on gene damage, confer a probability of chance that a harmful outcome will develop." [19] For this reason, Petryna argues that the "linear hypothesis" is as much an ethical as a political and economic issue. Fukushima Japan is not Chernobyl, but Petryna's penetrating analysis forces us to rethink the continuity between disasters and global places while questioning the calculability of risks and benefits that defines the neoliberal global space.

Ulrich Beck, the German theoretician of risk societies, declared after the nuclear catastrophe that Japan had entered the "world risk society."[20] If "post-3.11" Japan is now part of a global "world risk society," this means it is defined by an everyday state of uncertainty generated by the development of our modern societies and the concomitant possibility of a crisis anywhere and anytime. Beck elaborated his concept of global risk society in the wake of the Chernobyl catastrophe of 1986, the Asian financial crisis of 1989, and the World Trade Center attack in 2001. For him, these various global risks create a state of explosive uncertainty that forces the implementation of risk calculation to attempt to foreclose the dreaded global collapse. This creates a tension between the impossibility of certainty about the risk to come, on the one hand, and on the

other the desired possibility of changing the future by anticipating the catastrophe's arrival. For Beck, this desire to change the future allows for a new form of cosmopolitanism, bypassing the level of nation-states because "global risks tear down national boundaries and jumble together the native with the foreign. The distant other is becoming the inclusive other. Everyday life is becoming cosmopolitan. Human beings must find a meaning of life in the exchange with others and no longer in the encounter with the like."[21] Beck thus sees hope in global risk societies, which in turn compels the theoretician of ecocriticism Ursula K. Heise to argue for the possibility of an eco-cosmopolitanism. The prospect of a coming global catastrophe could generate a change of consciousness in the human population, because such a catastrophe can hit anywhere, anytime, without any possibility of knowing the consequences. There is indeed a possibility here for a new form of planetary consciousness—but only a possibility. The global interconnectedness of our ecologies of living—natural but also social, mental, and infrastructural—defies any linear understanding of a catastrophe and thus the very possibility of an accurate prevention of risk. In other words, risk cannot be the ground on which to build a planetary consciousness, because in doing so one misses the planetary nature of the event of Fukushima Japan while embracing neoliberal strategies of global control and capital accumulation.

This understanding of post-3.11 as part of a global risk society thus poses a number of problems, starting with an understanding of the future that embraces the temporality of preemption characteristic of neoliberal capitalism. Preemption means prevention of the future by precisely generating situations in which the future becomes controllable, and from which can be generated profit and power. This is the argument of Naomi Klein in *The Shock Doctrine*, where she argues that global situations of crisis, particularly wars, are intentionally engineered to generate economic profit by capitalizing on the ensuing reconstruction; she calls this "disaster capitalism." In a 2005 article, she explained how disaster capitalism became a central tenet of the post-9.11 Bush administration: "Last summer, in the lull of the August media doze, the Bush Administration's doctrine of preventive war took a major leap forward. On August 5, 2004, the White House created the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, headed by former US Ambassador to Ukraine, Carlos Pascual. Its mandate is to draw up elaborate 'postconflict' plans for up to 25 countries that are not, as of yet, in conflict. According to Pascual, it will also be able to coordinate three full-scale reconstruction operations in different countries

'at the same time,' each lasting 'five to seven years.'"[22] Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto proposes to read recent policies implemented by the Abe administration in light of this concept of disaster capitalism.

In her most recent book, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate*, Klein argues that climate change is a direct effect of capitalism's excessive use of planetary resources, and that there is unsurprisingly "a clear connection between a refusal to accept the science of climate change and economic privilege."[23] There is indeed a clear link between this class-based denial of climate change and the denial of Fukushima Japan, the denial of an ongoing catastrophe that is as Japanese as it is planetary. Because this denial is only economically profitable for one class, and the individuals who identify with and reduce themselves to their belonging to this class, a class that benefits from the nuclear industry and the status-quo of the cold war era precisely at a time when it is endangered by the politico-economic rise of China. Immediately after the crisis, Japanese academics denounced the collusion of political and economic interests in the Japanese nuclear industry, what is now called the Nuclear Village (*genpatsu mura*).[24] The journalist Korin Kobayashi in particular has shown how the Japanese Nuclear Village is an integral part of the global nuclear industry.[25] Any "natural disaster" must then be understood in continuity with a global market economy, which forces us to rethink our practice of places, our understanding of the connection between places, and the role of national territories in framing a deceptive understanding of disaster places. This is not to deny the singularity of places and of place experiences, but rather to emphasize that disasters are as much about place as about the way they force us to question the use of the category of "place" in a global neoliberal world. Returning to Fukushima Japan, it is both a punctuating event and an ongoing catastrophe that conjoins multiple temporal rhythms—of economic dynamics, historical memories, individual stories, bodily contamination, and radioactive life—rhythms that cannot ever be accounted for simply on an individual human scale. As we know, cesium 137 emitted by Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant has a half-life of 30 years, but other existing radioactive substances such as Uranium 238 have a half-life of 4.5 billion years.[26] In other words, what we are trying to engage with here is a human catastrophe that has pushed us into an inhuman, planetary reality.

In his work on the discourse of the nuclear, Joseph Masco revisits postwar history to argue for the emergence of a new form of totality in the wake of the nuclear age and climate change, a planetary totality. He argues in a recent article that "being able to assume a planetary, as opposed to a global,

imaginary is a surprisingly recent phenomenon. Although the depictions of an earthly sphere are longstanding and multiple, I would argue that the specific attributes of being able to see the entire planet as a single unit or system is a Cold War creation."[27] What is peculiar about this planetary age is, more than the image of the earth, the imagination of the planet in terms of pervasive atmospheres that circulate across local and global places, undermining any simple opposition between global and national, human and nonhuman, past and present. This planetary age emerged with the bomb, radioactive fallout turning the environment into "a potentially deadly space," and demands the implementation of what he calls "planetary atmospheric politics." In this respect, Ukai's distinction between the earth and the planet still remains valid, but only if understood as a modern opposition. This after all was Heidegger's point when he criticized the homogenization and instrumentalization of nature in the postwar.[28] Fukushima Japan is as such particularly representative of the planetary if understood as a historical age; however contrary to Masco's analysis, the planetary is not a question of scale but of movement across atmospheres, in an open totality. The planetary is indeed toxic, Fukushima Japan is toxic, but this toxicity cannot be reduced to the rhetoric of survival and risk of neoliberal governance. Before planetary security, what is at stake is to embrace this toxicity that is nothing else but an imperative, nonsovereign love for the planet and for the human and nonhuman beings that dwell together, in continuity with each other, across planetary atmospheres.

As such, Fukushima Japan is as much a question of material destruction and contamination as of collective care for human and nonhuman life forms, local places, and planetary becomings. To return to the case of the Olympics, while the construction projects dampen reconstruction projects, mobilizing human and financial capital still urgently needed in devastated areas, it is undeniable that 2020 does open a possibility for a future life, when many had already given up hope for their country. For this reason, we attempt to displace the form of denial and nostalgia characteristic of the postwar narrative of survival and reconstruction onto a possibility of planetary love. This book thus explores the various ways in which the experience of Fukushima Japan opens our closed and finite local experiences to an expansive planetary experience in a labor of love. There are several ways to understand and define love, and for the purpose of this book, I would like to understand love as a relation of attachment and care marked by melancholy. Melancholy, in psychoanalysis, is about the refusal to let go of the loved object and is usually understood as a delusional

endeavor. We can however propose another understanding of melancholy that emphasizes the necessity to engage with the loved object rather than calling for rupture: "let go and move on." In short, melancholy as a relation of love never lets us think this event in terms of a break. This is precisely what allows us to think a continuity before and after Fukushima Japan, to think and experience the planetary atmospheres of Fukushima.

In this introduction, I have thus attempted to uncover the contradictions hidden by the name "3.11" and in particular stressed the logic of containment of its rhetoric and how it hides the eventfulness of the catastrophe by translating it into a "linear hypothesis." In opposition with "3.11," I want to propose "Fukushima Japan" as an umbrella term for the various chapters contained in this volume. There are of course problems with this denomination, and not all contributors agree with it. There are reasons to push forward the term "3.11," notably its efficacy in giving shape to actual policies in Japan, and in fact bringing Japan back into a global world of nation-states—albeit one centered on a hegemonic American order. We can then define "3.11" as the series of discourses that emphasize the punctual and finite nature of the event in a national space, Japan, usually by prioritizing the question of material destruction caused by the earthquake and tsunami over the ongoing nuclear disaster and the radioactive contamination. In this discourse, "3.11" is already becoming "post-3.11." "Post-3.11" in turn designates a discourse concerned with reconstructing social structures in the Tōhoku and Japan by aligning this event with a global space of geopolitics, a post-9.11 situation defined by an ongoing state of risk. The "post-" here points at a desire for a rupture with the past to inaugurate a new start. This "post-" is chronological and in the end only repeats the same linear temporal structure of postwar Japan based on denial and the repression of the past. But "post-" also implies that something has radically changed with the catastrophe, generating a new situation without any possibility of going back. In this second acceptance of the expression "post-3.11," there is no going back, no return to the idealized past of postwar Japan, only an ongoing state of survival in a global world defined by risk and fear.

"3.11" and "post-3.11" thus actualize a desire for rupture, mourning, and forgetting in the form of a community defined by finitude, survival, and anxiety in the face of an unknown and dreadful future. Ulrich Beck might find hope in this forceful opening toward a collective future, yet it remains doubtful that a forced cosmopolitanization will really make us care when we are so used to living in denial. Why should we care? We

might want to start from this question, because as the scholar of postcolonialism Pheng Cheah remarks, if it is clear that the world is interconnected with transnational mobility on the rise, this situation does not automatically translate into the emergence of a global, cosmopolitan, or planetary consciousness.[29] Why should we care, and why should we even write and read about Fukushima Japan? In a collective volume of essays entitled *3.11 as Thought*, the social critic Sasaki Ataru expresses his disquiet regarding the imperative and coercive demand for public statements after the catastrophe, for taking a stand as a public scholar.[30] Quoting Gilles Deleuze, Sasaki argues that we should not write in the name of the victims, the refugees, the Japanese, the planet, but in front of, that we should be ashamed in front of the victims, in front of the event of Fukushima Japan.[31] This is in fact what compels us to move, to be moved and write, from our position, anywhere in on the planet.

At the 2015 meeting of the Asian Association of Japanese Studies, the French film scholar Élise Domenach proposed a provocative analysis of a movie realized by the French director Philippe Rouy in 2012, "Four Buildings Face the Sea."[32] In this 42-mn movie composed of images from an official webcam set by TEPCO in Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant, we see one anonymous nuclear worker dressed in full gear who interminably points an accusing finger at the camera. This accusing finger, Domenach argues, "bypass[es] the accusatory significance" of documentary films produced after Fukushima. As Philippe Rouy explains in an interview, the accusation is uncompromising, "but the addressed [are] multiple: TEPCO, Japanese authorities, all the actors of the history of military and civil nuclear history, even us, passive spectators and potential accomplices, and again others."[33] The power of this movie that Douglas Slaymaker understands as a call to move, an imperative gesture that moves us if not into action at least into a position in front of the event that is Fukushima Japan, is that anybody in anyplace-whatever is affected, is moved to take a position. As Domenach explains, for Rouy this is not an injunction to go to Fukushima Daiichi as such, and Rouy himself never grounds his claim in the authentic experience of a local place. What is at stake in this image is rather the tension between the local place and its planetary situation, between here and there, and how the pointing finger becomes an imperative demand from the planetary, how it moves us into planetary atmospheres.

The present book is composed of three parts, oriented by a movement from Japan to a planetary space. In the first part, we question the

discourse of "3.11" and attempt to displace it onto a planetary experience. Satoshi Ukai's essay sets the tone by defining the planet in opposition with the earth, while Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto efficiently deconstructs the contradictions of the "3.11" discourse. Through a reading of the writer Shōno Yoriko, Christophe Thouny then proposes to understand Fukushima Japan in relation with 1990s Japan melancholic atmospheres. The second part then proposes to think urban places in the immediate context of March 2011 by looking at both the situation of refugees in Tōhoku (Ramona Handel-Bajema and Cécile Asanuma-Brice) and repercussions in the Tokyo area in the case of collective housing in the Tokyo Bay (Yamamoto Tadahito). The last part examines cultural practices after the catastrophe that attempt to rethink what love and planetary dwelling mean in the time of Fukushima Japan. Ueno Toshiya discusses the novel *Chernobyl II* written by the writer and activist Eiichi Seino in terms of Félix Guattari's ecosophical thinking, followed by Phil James Kaffen's provocative reading of Nobuyoshi Hidehiko's film *Casting Blossoms to the Sky* as a critical engagement with the act of filming, and of loving. The book concludes with Douglas Slaymaker's reading of Furukawa Hideo's novel *Horses, Horses, In the Innocence of Light* as a gesture and a call to be moved into Fukushima Japan's planetary atmospheres.

Notes

1. See http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/12/15/national/meaning-safety-named-japans-kanji-year-2015/#.VqMAP5N94zF.
2. See http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/09/16/national/tourist-numbers-continue-to-surge-in-japan-with-china-underpinning-rise/#.Vqb1eZN94zE.
3. David McNeill and Justin McCurry, "After the Deluge: Tsunami and the Great Wall of Japan", *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 12 no. 30.1 (July 28, 2014); more at: http://www.japanfocus.org/2014/12/30/David-McNeill/4152.html#sthash.Wq8UxfC3.dpuf.
4. Wendy Brown, *Walled States: Waning Sovereignty* (New York: Zone Books, 2010).
5. See http://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/english/news/20150926_07.html http://www.globalresearch.ca/a-serious-meltdown-is-underway-the-fukushima-daiichi-plant-no-2-nuclear-reactor-fuel-is-missing/5479049.
6. Richard J. Samuels' analysis of the Japanese government's policy answers gives a brilliant account of what happened, and why nothing has really changed after the catastrophe: *3.11: Disaster and Change in Japan* (Ithaca:

Cornell University Press, 2013). Jeff Kingston's *Natural Disaster and Nuclear Crisis in Japan: Response and Recovery After Japan's 3.11* (New York: Routledge, 2012) and Tom Gill, David H Slater, and Brigitte Steger, eds., *Japan Copes with Calamity*, revised edition (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2016) are the most comprehensive, discussing the March 2011 Japanese catastrophe from a variety of angles: political, economic, ethnographic, and media discourse. Noriko Manabe's work in ethno-musicology is also representative of recent discussions of Fukushima Japan in terms of cultural politics : *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised: Protest Music After Fukushima* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015). See also Daisuke Naito et al., eds., *To See Once More the Stars: Living In a Post-Fukushima World* (Santa Cruz, Calif.: New Pacific Press, 2014).

7. The 1964 Olympics held in Tokyo constitutes a landmark of Japanese postwar history and has been associated with the optimism of postwar reconstruction and an ideology of developmentalism that, in the context of the Cold War, brought Japan to the second economic rank of the world. After the end of the economic bubble in the early 1990s and the ensuing Asian crisis, 1964 has been regarded as a nostalgic golden age, a time with a future.

8. Igarashi Yoshikuni, *Bodies of Memory: Narratives of War in Postwar Japanese Culture, 1945–1970* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000). John W Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 2000).

9. Ōsawa Masachi, *Yume yori mo fukai kakusei e: 3.11 go no tetsugaku* (Deep awakening after the dream: philosophy after 3.11) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2012).

10. Murakami Haruki, "Speaking as an Unrealistic Dreamer," *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 9, no. 29.7 (July 19, 2011): n.p. more at: http://japanfocus.org/-Murakami-Haruki/3571/article.html#sthash.kEZU-B1iv.dpuf. Reiko Abe Auestad recently argued that by blurring the line between victim and victimizer, Murakami's healing narratives potentially end up justifying a forgetting of the past and condoning of the violence of post-9.11 world politics. While Abe remains cautious and avoids reducing the appeal of Murakami's work to Komori Yōichi's ideological reading, I still find it necessary to stress the continuity of structures between Murakami's narratives, the postwar Japanese narrative, and the post-9.11 order, each working and building on the other for its effectiveness. Reiko Abe Auestad, "The Problematic of Border-crossing in *Kafka on the Shore*: Between Metaphor and Reality," in *Essays in Honour of Irmela Hijiya-Kirschnereit On the Occasion of her 60th Birthday*, ed. Judit Árokay et al. (Munich: Iudicium-Verlag, 2008), 295–309.

11. Imafuku Ryūta and Ukai Satoshi, *Tsunami no ato no daiikkō* (Lecturing after the tsunami) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2012). The editors of the volume made the problematic choice only to address the earthquake and tsunami, and not the nuclear catastrophe. This could be explained for several reasons, including the difficulty of assessing the reality of nuclear contamination and also the growing concern immediately after the catastrophe for a discrimination of the Fukushima population by the rest of the Japanese population.

12. Sawaragi Noi, Azuma Hiroki, and Kurose Yōhei, "3.11 go no warui basho—Tokyo (The bad place after 3.11—Tokyo)," in *Nihon 2.0*, ed. Azuma Hiroki, *Shisō chizu β* 3 (Tokyo: Genron, 2012), 346–74.

13. While government funding for temporary housing is gradually being cut, the 20-km area is now being reopened to the public with the city of Naraha, the space 15 km south of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant being the first to lift the evacuation order completely: Androniki Christodoulou and David McNeill, "Inside Fukushima's Potemkin Village: Naraha," *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 13, no. 41.1 (October 19, 2015): n.p.

14. Abe declaration: http://japan.kantei.go.jp/96_abe/statement/201309/07ioc_presentation_e.html.

15. The expression *shūdan jiketsu*, literally "group decision," refers to the mass suicides that happened in Okinawa at the end of WWII in fear of the arrival of American soldiers. As was later made clear, these suicides were orchestrated by mainland Japanese soldiers pushing the population to acts of despair by capitalizing on ideological brainwashing during war time. Norma Field translates the expression as "compulsory mass suicide": Norma Field, *In the Realm of a Dying Emperor: A Portrait of Japan at Century's End* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993) 33–106.

16. Jean-Luc Nancy, *After Fukushima: The Equivalence of Catastrophes*, trans. Charlotte Mandell (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015). Equivalence does not mean here that all catastrophes, natural and human, are equal and thus reduced to a homogeneous phenomenon. On the contrary, what is equivalent here is the sheer singularity of all catastrophes.

17. Stephen Graham, "Disrupted Cities: Infrastructure Disruptions as the Achilles Heel of Urbanized Societies," in *Disaster, Infrastructure and Society: Learning from the 2011 Earthquake in Japan* 3 (2012): 12–26. Takashi Machimura, "'Normal' Disaster in the 21th Century? Understanding Cascading Effects of the East Japan Great Earthquake," in *idem.*, 7–11.

18. Adriana Petryna, *Life Exposed: Biological Citizens after Chernobyl* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 10–11.

19. Petryna, *Life Exposed*, 10–11.

20. Ulrich Beck, "Fukushima, Aruiha Sekai Risuku Shakaini Okeru Nihon No Mirai" (Fukushima, or the Future of Japan in the World Risk Society), *Sekai*, July 2011, 68–73.

21. Ulrich Beck, "The Cosmopolitan Condition: Why Methodological Nationalism Fails," *Theory, Culture, and Society* 24, no. 7–8 (December 2007), 90.

22. Naomi Klein, "The Rise of Disaster Capitalism," *The Nation*, April 14, 2005, http://www.thenation.com/article/rise-disaster-capitalism/

23. Naomi Klein, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014), 46.

24. The catastrophe has been explained by using the expression *genpatsu mura* (nuclear village) to refer to "the institutional and individual pro-nuclear advocates who comprise the utilities, nuclear vendors, bureaucracy, Diet (Japan's parliament), financial sector, media and academia": Jeff Kingston, "Japan's Nuclear Village," *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 10, no. 31.1 (September 9, 2012): n.p.; Kainuma Hiroshi, *"Fukushima" ron: gen-shiryokumura wa naze umareta no ka* (Fukushima theory: Why was the nuclear village born) (Tokyo: Seidosha, 2011). The sociologist Yoshimi Shun'ya then criticized the existence of the nuclear village, arguing for the existence of conflicting strategies among political factions and industrials that would undermine such vested interests' forming a calculated alliance. This critique, however, problematic, makes clear that the collusion of political and economical interests is complex and dynamic, in constant negotiation, with single individual ever taking the place of the sovereign responsible for the outcomes, any outcome, of the policies implemented: Kurihara Akira et al., eds., *San ichiichi ni towarete: hitobito no keiken o meguru kōsatsu* (Questioned by 3.11: Reflections on people's experiences) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2012).

25. Kobayashi Korin, *Kokusai genshiryoku robī no hanzai: Cherunobuiri kara fukushima fukushima he* (The crime of the international nuclear lobby: from Chernobyl to Fukushima). (Tokyo: Ibunsha, 2013).

26. Adam Broinowski, "Fukushima: Life and the Transnationality of Radioactive Contamination," *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 11, no. 41.3 (October 13, 2013): n.p.; more at http://www.japanfocus.org/-Adam-Broinowski/4009/article.html#sthash.IxnZjxcD.dpuf

27. Joseph Masco, "The Age of Fallout," *History of the Present: A Journal of Critical History* 5, no. 2 (Fall 2015), 137.

28. Bernhard Radloff, *Heidegger and the Question of National Socialism: Disclosure and Gestalt* (Toronto & Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 36–61.

29. Pheng Cheah, *Inhuman Conditions: On Cosmopolitanism and Human Rights* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006), 40–41.

30. Sasaki Ataru, "Kudakareta daichi ni, hitotsu no basho wo" (In a broken land, one place), in *Shisō to shite no 3.11* (3.11 as Thought), ed. Kawade Shobō Shinsha (Tokyo: Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 2011), 2–29.

31. Ukai Satoshi made another important claim as to the role of shame in postwar Japanese public discourses: "The Future of Affect: The Historicity of Shame," in *Specters of the West and the Politics of Translation*, ed. Naoki Sakai and Yukiko Hanawa, *Traces* 1 (Ithaca, NY; Hong Kong: Cornell University; Distributed by Hong Kong University Press, 2001), 3–36.

32. "Gesturing at the audience in films after 3.11," presentation to the Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, Chicago, 26–29 March, 2015.

33. Philippe Rouy, "Entretien Avec Philippe Rouy Au Sujet de *4 Bâtiments Face à La Mer*," FIDMarseille—Festival International de Cinéma—International Film Festival, July 6, 2012, http://www.fidmarseille.org/index.php/fr/component/content/article/151-videofid/article-journal/1241-article-journal-4-batiments-face-a-la-mer. My translation.

Planetary Thinking After Fukushima

"Dying Wisdom" and "Living Madness": A Comparative Literature of the Errant Star

Satoshi Ukai, translated by Philip Kaffen

The Discovery of the "Planet"

The word "planet" (*wakusei*) is rooted in the Greek word πλάνης. What influence has this philological fact exerted on thinking—in philosophy, or literature—during the second half of the twentieth century? I would like to begin my report from this question. If we refer to a Greek dictionary, we can see that during ancient times, this word held the meaning of "wanderer" (*hōrōsha*) and then subsequently came to mean "planet" in several modern European languages. That is to say, in an age guided by the Ptolemaic theory, this word, born through observation of planetary bodies such as the moon and the sun, referred to those things which, among the phenomena that move through the skies, are out of sync or display irregular movements. Globe (*chikyū*) is a word indicating a form of *Terra, Earth* (*daichi*), that had to be proved by innumerable hypotheses, over many centuries of speculation; planet, to the contrary, is a phenomenon given to our intuition directly; a word that refers to the heterogeneous movement of something "up above"; thus, we might say that this word attests to the profound vertigo induced by a reversal: in the realization that the "earth" "beneath our feet," *is* one of those planets.

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For Kant, in *Towards Perpetual Peace* (1795), the task was to grasp the "secret intention of nature," in "globality"; that is to say, the fact that the earth beneath our feet is the globe. In the third definitive article, he says the following with regard to universal hospitality (*Allgemeine Hospitalität*): "the right to visit, belongs to all human beings by virtue of the right of possession in common of the earth's surface on which as a sphere, they cannot disperse infinitely but must finally put up with being near one another; but originally no one had more right than another to be on a place on earth." The structure of Kant's teleology is enormously complex, and I cannot enter into it here in any depth. For the time being, I would like to pay attention solely to the radical thesis that the right to territorial possession, up to and including the establishment of a global order of citizens, is declared on the basis of a closed totality, that of the geometrical shape of the "sphere"; a transcendentally idealist position is appended to this spherical form, which, while it may not actively determine the content of thought, nonetheless, could change its direction.

In contrast, the expression "planetary" was apparently introduced in the context of European philosophy by Heidegger's *Introduction to Metaphysics*, which he wrote in 1935, though it was not published until 1953. With this work, which immediately followed his resignation as rectorate at Freiburg University, he aimed to distinguish the planetary from the official philosophy of the Nazis. In explaining "the inner truth and greatness of this [national socialist] movement," Heidegger used the expression "*Begegnung der planetarisch bestimmten Technik und des neuzeitlichen Menschen* (the encounter between modern human and planetarily determined techniks of the totality of the globe)." The word "planet(ary)" appears repeatedly in his postwar writings, such as *The Question of Being* (Zur Seinfrage, 1959). There, owing to the oblivion of being, the pursuit of truth itself, the fate (*Geschick*) of the human who has lost its fixedness and drifts about within the errancy of technologies' domination over the entirety of nature, is expressed intensively. In *Overcoming Metaphysics* (Überwindung der Metaphysik, 1936–1946), this situation is described from the perspective of the "loss of differentiation":

> [The] lack of differentiation (*Unterschiedlosigkeit*) bears witness to the already guaranteed constancy of the unworld (*Unwelt*) of the abandonment of Being. The earth (*Erde*) appears as the unworld of erring (*Irrnis*). It is the erring star (*Irrstern*) in the manner of the history of Being.[1]

Within the French-speaking sphere, the philosophical question that unfolded on the basis of such a moment of thought in late Heidegger gave

a different sort of cast to this motif of "wandering"; by giving it this distinct twist, various efforts were made to shift subtly the direction of thinking. That said, it does not appear as if the word "planet" was used with any frequency in the works of Jacques Derrida. However, he did put forth his thoughts [on the planetary] in his lecture "The Final Word on Racism," printed in the art catalog for the UNESCO-hosted "Exhibition Against Apartheid," a traveling exhibition destined to wander outside South Africa until the day when the system of racial segregation would be abolished:

> The movement of this exhibition does not yet belong to any given time or space that might be measured today. Its flight [course] rushes headlong, it commemorates in anticipation – not its own event but the one that it calls forth. Its flight, in sum, is as much that of a planet as of a satellite. A planet, as the name indicates, is first of all a body [*corps*] sent wandering on a migration which, in this case, has no certain end.

Eighty-one artists submitted works to the exhibition from every corner of the world, and eleven writers, historians, philosophers and scientists contributed writings for the catalog, but Derrida, hoping to withdraw the "site" opened up by this exhibit from any ontological determinations, presented this movement at that time as something "planetary." Where Heidegger had seen a "loss of differentiation," we could say that Derrida tried to see a movement of "differance," an alternative differentiation that could only be thought on the condition of that loss itself. More, perhaps for the first time in a public statement, he sought to affirm the concrete political implications of that movement.

Teleopoesis

I cannot say for certain whether Gayatri Spivak had Derrida's lecture in mind when she appealed to the motif of the "planetary" in her work *The Death of a Discipline* 20 years later. At the very least, it would appear that there is no explicit reference to the genealogy of thought that can be traced back to Heidegger in tandem with this word and its etymology.

Jacques Derrida had extracted a peculiar textual movement that he names "teleopoesis" through the analysis of several of Nietzsche's aphorisms in *The Politics of Friendship*. Spivak reorients this movement, building it into her own method for a "planet"-ary comparative literature. Let us begin by looking at Derrida's project.

For Derrida, the thought of friendship always involves "distance." Nietzsche called for a perspectivalism that could actively and creatively

determine what is near or what is far, insofar as the conventional measurements of time or space, or existing value judgments afforded by the past philosophical and cultural heritage he invariably inherited as a philologist, offered no basis. One might add that before this perspective was established, there was nothing to determine the very meaning of "nearness," or "distance," or their respective values. Additionally, friendship, insofar as it is an experience that involves "separation," constitutes not simply one value to be established through this system of perspective, making the foundation and extension of this perspective identical, nor is it merely one of the themes of Nietzsche's *ecriture*; rather, this anomalous movement penetrates into its every crevice.

Teleopoeisis is a word that Derrida devised to describe the effects of the power of friendship operating in Nietzsche's text, one that is constative at the same time as it is performative, or rather, one transcending every kind of performativity that takes as its basis some kind of contract or will, an event that therefore deviates even from the teachings of Nietzsche's own "will to power." In the prefix *teleio*, the Greek words τέλειος ("perfect," "last") and τέλος ("distantly," "distantly removed") overlap within a single word; through that word, a certain "distance" is created, and at the same time, covered; friendship is sought and at the same time, made, brought into being, rendered; therefore, in merely reading it, readers acquiesce to it. This indicates a kind of "poetics of distance." What follows is somewhat long, but allow me to quote directly from Derrida's own words:

> By way of economy – and in order, in a single word, to formalize this absolute economy of the feint, this generation by joint and simultaneous grafting of the performative and the reportive, without a body of its own – let us call the event of such sentences, the 'logic' of this chance occurrence, its 'genetics', its 'rhetoric', its 'historical record', its 'politics', etc., *teleiopoetic*. *Teleiopoiós* qualifies, in a great number of contexts and semantic orders, that which *renders* absolute, perfect, completed, accomplished, finished, that which *brings* to an end. But permit us to play too with the other *tele*, the one that speaks to distance and the far-removed, for what is indeed in question here is a poetics of distance at one remove, and of an absolute acceleration in the spanning of space by the very structure of the sentence (it begins at the end, it is initiated with the signature of the other)…[2] but, given that this happens only in the auto-tele-affection of the said sentence, in so far as it implies or incorporates its reader, one would – precisely to be complete – have to speak of *auto-teleiopoetics*. We shall say *teleiopoetics* for short, but not without immediately suggesting that friendship is implied in advance therein: friendship for oneself, for the friend and for the enemy.[3]

The Politics of Friendship attends to the transmission of words attributed—perhaps through misreading—to Aristotle on his deathbed by Diogenes Laërtius. Just as there is good reason to read the words "Oh my friends, there is no friend," philologically, as "Those with many friends do not have a single friend," because a similar sentence can be located in Aristotle's *Eudemian Ethics*, the Japanese-language translation of *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* also adopts this reading. However, Montaigne, Kant, Nietzsche, Blanchot and many other philosophers across the centuries preferred the paradox that stems from this odd grafting of appeal and lament and have pinned some facet of their own thought to it. Why is this paradox so beloved? Derrida's philosophy of friendship repeatedly interrogates this question, unfolding as it essays multiple interpretations. And within this tradition, it is Nietzsche who offered the boldest and most profound parody of these words:

> And perhaps to each of us there will come the more joyful hour when we exclaim: 'Friends, there are no friends!' thus said the dying sage; 'Foes, there are no foes!" say I, the living fool.[4]

In the future, "perhaps," "it could be the case that" (*vielleicht*) a "joyful hour" may arrive. This is an anticipatory quotation, a complex entanglement of the future tense of the narrative sections, and the past and present tenses in the quotation mark-less quotations. Insofar as no one is excluded from it, this event is one that could descend upon any person; even the reader, hailed by the writer as an absent friend, or enemy, is already written into the text. Friend/enemy, past/present, dying/living, sage/fool, "Aristotle"/"Nietzsche"….Yet, as Derrida points out with regard to all of these binaries, it is as if the contrast were being excessively emphasized in order to whisper into the ears of the reader the suspicion that perhaps the "sage" and the "fool" are not different people. With the incontrovertible "logic" of telepoesis, even the interpretation that a "dying sage" is, in another sense, "living," is attractive.

Like a Comet

Derrida's primary claim in *The Politics of Friendship* is that the category of friendship in the West always privileges the form of "brotherhood," and thus that the concept of the political remains structurally determined at a fundamental level; "sisterhood," insofar as it is not absorbed into "brotherhood," may indeed be exempt. Nietzsche's inversion—turning friend

into enemy, enemy into friend—affirms the indeterminability of friend and enemy to the point of madness, marking the end of the thought of friendship since Greece that has demanded security as a necessary virtue. This affirmation presents the dreadful premonition of a "planetary" twentieth century that would come to experience the "loss of differentiation" between friend and enemy. That said, while the Nietzschean inversion thoroughly exposed the inner contradictions of these categories, it was by no means outside the male-centric tradition of friendship.

When Spivak reorganizes "teleopoises" into a method for comparative literature in *Death of a Discipline*, she anticipates the problematic of *The Politics of Friendship*, of what happens when a woman enters the space of friendship, as in Virginia Wolfe's *A Room of One's Own*; due to time constraints, I cannot engage this with the attention it deserves, but it is extremely important from this perspective. For Spivak locates literal teleopoeisis relations in between the educational activities she has long conducted with the subaltern group of women in Western Bengal, and the significance of "working" for the possibility that "she would come"—a woman who is the reincarnation of Shakespeare's sister, who died without leaving any written traces, as the female British writer insisted in 1928. Through this operation, Spivak kept enlarging, as much as possible, the range of application of the words that were limited to a reading of Nietzsche in *The Politics of Friendship*. When all manner of poeisis is seen as telepoeisis, what peeks through the cracks could be what Spivak calls the "planet."

Spivak's approach to the interpretation of Nietzsche by Derrida referred to earlier twice cites Husserl's concept of "appresentational analogy." [According to this concept], other egos are precisely those which are composed through analogy to the mind of the self; an other that is not other ego is never given to intuition within the realm of phenomenological evidence, and it is for this reason that Nietzsche's friendship does not repose, that friend becomes enemy, that good becomes evil, suggesting that incessant reversibility is the condition of "teleopoesis."

On the other hand, with regard to the motif of the "planet," Spivak notes the following: "When I invoke the planet, I think of the effort required to figure the (im)possibility of this underived intuition."

Several paragraphs later, the expression "alterity remains underived from us" appears; we can see that the additional line of Husserl ties together the two motifs of the planetary and "teleopoeisis":

> To be human is to be intended towards the other. We provide for ourselves transcendental figurations of what we think is the origin of this animating gift: mother, nation, god, nature. These are names of alterity, some more radical than others. Planet-thought opens up to embrace an inexhaustible taxonomy of such names.

If we reread the word "figurations" in the first line as poesis, a "planet of others" as a site of "teleopoeisis" appears before us rather than an environmentalist "our planet." The figures/figures of speech as "mother" "nation" "god" "nature" and so on are severed from the desire of the "I" and "our" to repossess them; such names demand to be rethought within the singular otherness of each, and through these names indicating an opened totality, not dissimilar to Spinozan substance, we can think that Spivak aimed at a "planet."

Of course, Spivak herself, not long after the book was published, ceased to use the word "planet." She touches on the reason for this in the Q&A after her talk in July of 2007 at Hitotsubashi University, "Academic Activist in the Humanities," a talk which is reprinted in *Spivak, Speaking in Japan*. There is no time left for me to go into any further detail about this point. The motif of the "planet," like a so-called comet, cast a streak of light through her works and then vanished. However, in its wake lie no small amount of attractive, provocative thought, and readers cannot cease to expose themselves to its call.

Notes

1. "Overcoming Metaphysics," in *The End of Philosophy*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 108–109. The English translation features the pronoun "it" where the Japanese indicates "planet." A literal translation from the Japanese of the last line would read: "The earth, in the manner of its historical being, is a planet, which is to say, a wandering star." The German reads: "Die Erde erscheint als die Unwelt der Irrnis. Sie ist seynsgeschichtlich der Irrstern." There is no "planet" in the German, either.
2. *Rendering*, *making*, transforming, producing, creating—this is what counts.
3. Jacques Derrida, *The Politics of Friendship*, trans. George Collins (London: Verso, 2006), 32.
4. Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, trans. R. J Hollingdale (Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 149.

Nuclear Disaster and Bubbles

Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto

INTRODUCTION

The Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station, which was owned and operated by Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO), suffered a series of catastrophic accidents caused by the Great East Japan Earthquake on March 11, 2011.[1] The level 7 meltdown of Fukushima Daiichi was the worst nuclear disaster since Chernobyl in 1986. The leakage of contaminated water continues to be a major problem, and it will take years to decommission the damaged reactors completely, if that is ever possible. Numerous books and articles have been already written on the Fukushima accident and nuclear questions since the earthquake in 2011. Many of them are excellent works by nuclear experts who have been warning about the danger of nuclear accident for many years, journalists who investigated with dogged persistence what went wrong at Fukushima Daiichi, academics and critics who studied a wide range of accident-related topics including media coverage and government/TEPCO's crisis response, and even by workers who wrote about their own experiences of working at the severely damaged nuclear energy plant under extremely dangerous and arduous conditions.

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Without either scientific expertise or fieldwork experience, there seems very little I can contribute to a critical debate on the Fukushima accident and radiation issues. At the same time, I feel strongly compelled to think about the accident and its aftermath despite my lack of professional or experiential qualifications. There is no question that the Fukushima nuclear accident marked a decisive turning point in the history of modern Japan. However, despite the nearly unimaginable enormity of the problems created by the melting of the nuclear core and hydrogen explosion, the daily life in parts of Japan not directly affected by the earthquake, tsunami, and radiation outwardly returned to its pre-3/11 "normal" state without much delay. Given the urgency of the ongoing crisis, there is something strange and puzzling about this speedy return of apparent normalcy. How can we explain this strangeness? What exactly is responsible for bewilderingly swift normalization? The following is written as a preliminary attempt to find answers to these questions from the perspective of a nonexpert.

This essay consists of three distinct sections. The combination of the earthquake, the tsunami, and the nuclear catastrophe are often referred to as 3/11. In the first part titled "Sign and Meaning," I will try to tease out the historical meanings of Fukushima by focusing on "3/11" as a sign, and discuss how this sign, when it is juxtaposed with 9/11, can help us perceive the dimensions of the Fukushima accident which may not be transparently apparent at first glance. Then, in the second part "Rhetoric and Symbol," I will shift my attention to a prevalent rhetoric of what may be called "Fukushima discourse," through which the state and capital try to reinterpret the nuclear catastrophe as a severe and yet manageable accident posing no fundamental threat to the reality of everyday life. The final section, "The Prison House of Commodities," will attempt to explain the quick post-3/11 normalization by scrutinizing the roles of consumerism and mass media in governmentality and reproduction of the everyday in contemporary Japan.

Sign and Meaning

The use of the sign 3/11 is not without controversy. Renaming of the Great East Japan Earthquake as 3/11 can come dangerously close to erasing the absolutely irreducible specificity of people's suffering and destruction by replacing proper names with numerical symbols. Because it inevitably reminds us of 9/11, the use of 3/11 also cannot escape from a

risk of uncritically valorizing the 9/11 discourse as a fundamental cognitive framework, which reassigns meaning and value from a US-centered perspective. Nonetheless, there are—at both rhetorical and historical levels—concrete, yet entangled, connections between 3/11 and 9/11.

To begin with, many of the words and symbols used in the representation of 9/11 are related to Japan, the Pacific War, and its aftermath. When it happened, 9/11—a surprise attack on US soil by a foreign enemy—was directly compared to Pearl Harbor. This recoding of an act of terrorism as a beginning of another major war was apparent not only in such front-page headlines as "This is the second Pearl Harbor" and "New day of infamy" but also in public discourses of policy makers, security analysts, and pundits at that time.[2] The site where the World Trade Center once stood was called "Ground Zero," the term originally signifying the central point above which a nuclear bomb is exploded. The famous flag-raising at Iwo Jima was reenacted by firefighters on the rubble of the World Trade Center, and the picture of this scene was widely circulated as a symbol of the American spirit and determination to fight against terrorism. The US invasion and occupation of Iraq in the name of war on terrorism was compared to the US occupation of Japan after World War II, which was hailed by conservative ideologues and Iraq war supporters as a successful historical precedent to be followed.[3] The US justified its invasion of Iraq by claiming that Iraqis possessed weapons of mass destruction (WMD), but this claim turned out to be totally untrue. As a result, the legitimacy of the US invasion crumbled, signaling an end of the geopolitical hegemony enjoyed by the US since the end of World War II.

Although 3/11 has nothing to do with war or terrorism directly, it is not purely a case of natural disaster either, for what happened in Fukushima is closely tied to the US occupation of Japan and the subsequent development of the US-Japan alliance in the global geopolitical context of the 1950s and after. The history of the civilian nuclear program in postwar Japan was inseparable from that of the Cold War, the US agenda to maintain its dominant position among the members of the nuclear club, and a secret—or perhaps not so furtive—ambition of some Japanese politicians to develop Japan's own nuclear weapons program.[4] What made the construction of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station possible was the post-WWII world system maintained by the US as its hegemonic center, and it was precisely the collapse of this system that the Iraq war so convincingly revealed to the entire world.

According to Japanese literary critic Yamashiro Mutsumi, the name Ground Zero articulates Americans' unconscious desire to deny their position as perpetrator of violence in Hiroshima and Nagasaki during the Second World War.[5] But we should also consider the possibility of a diametrically opposite reading. By calling the former site of the World Trade Center "Ground Zero," the USA unconsciously endeavors to project its own image as the globally hegemonic superpower of the twenty-first century. WWII/Japan-related allusions mentioned earlier are therefore all part of this imaginary attempt to recode the radically unpredictable historical conditions of the early twenty-first century as a repetition of the mid-twentieth century, in which the USA firmly established itself as the unparalleled hegemonic power on the world stage. If the US response to 9/11 as a discursive event tries to fantasize the continuation of the post-WWII world order, 3/11 as an irruption of the real radically problematizes this fantasy. The so-called myth of the nuclear power plant's infallible safety has turned out to be just that, a myth. The peaceful use of nuclear power is another powerful myth of postwar Japan that made even those who were opposed to nuclear armament blind to the impossibility of separating peaceful and military objectives unequivocally.

Some pundits argue that 3/11 is Japan's second defeat since the end of the Asia Pacific War. But this argument misses the most important point about the defeat. As Shirai Satoshi has pointed out, the history of postwar Japan is that of continuous disavowal of Japan's defeat in WWII; in other words, according to this dominant logic of disavowal, Japan was not defeated, but rather the war just ended.[6] What has become apparent in the aftermath of 3/11 is not that Japan was defeated again. Nor did 3/11 simply open the people's eyes to the dark side of the postwar nuclear program. Instead, 3/11 has revealed that by stubbornly refusing to accept its own defeat in WWII, Japan never came to terms with the full implications of this historical event. Therefore, calling 3/11 Japan's second defeat is another unconscious attempt to disavow the first defeat as a historical event and to preserve the fiction of the postwar as a national narrative.

Neither 9/11 nor 3/11 was a random accident or an aberrant event whose occurrence could have been averted if necessary measures had been taken and carefully designed preventive plans perfectly executed. Instead, terrorism, nuclear disaster, environmental pollution, and so on are all systemic by-products of capitalism, advancements in science and technology, and planetary integration. 3/11 has shown how fundamentally vulnerable nuclear technologies are. The objective calculation of the risk of a

reactor meltdown would yield different results depending on what kind of hypothetical scenario is used in the first place. The more a nuclear power system advances technologically, the more potentially vulnerable the system becomes to human errors or simple mechanical breakdowns. When nuclear power plants are constructed in an earthquake-prone country, there will obviously be a much higher risk of nuclear accidents and disaster. But more importantly, no matter how small the statistical probability of a nuclear accident may be, once it occurs, its catastrophic consequences far outweigh any potential benefits nuclear power might bring to humanity.

The 9/11 terrorist attacks tried to create a maximum shock effect by destroying the Twin Towers, an epitome of capitalism and globalization, but this symbolic assault on globalization was totally dependent on the material means that had become available precisely as a consequence of globalization.[7] Moreover, instead of halting the development of globalization, 9/11 has accelerated it even further. Nation states are now increasingly integrated into intra- or interregional political relationships. In the name of war on terror, clandestine intelligence operations have been conducted worldwide. The National Security Agency's (NSA's) secret surveillance of phone conversations and email messages on an extraordinary scale has touched off a public outcry in the USA and elsewhere. Meanwhile, there is no end in sight for abatement of global financial risks.

Comparing 3/11 with 9/11 is also not completely arbitrary because both nuclear disaster and terrorist attack have been favorite topics of movies and popular culture for many years.[8] What is important is that they have generated spectacular visual effects and ubiquitous narrative motifs for very different reasons. Terrorism is a form of spectacle staged with the explicit purpose of shocking and traumatizing people. Therefore, it is no surprise that terrorism has a natural affinity with movie spectacles. In contrast, the nuclear disaster fuels cinematic imagination precisely because it defies the logic of spectacle. In a global nuclear war, there would hardly be any survivors, and the absolute horror of nuclear apocalypse cannot simply be represented. But more importantly, since radiation is invisible to the human eye, any nuclear-related subject, even when it has nothing to do with all-out war and total human annihilation, still poses a challenge to the cinema as a system of representation. Whereas terrorism appears as a popular movie subject due to its deeply "cinematic" nature, the nuclear disaster, which is fundamentally anti-spectacular, is turned into such a subject as a means of disavowing its unthinkable consequences.

The fundamental principles of democracy were put to the test by both 9/11 and 3/11. To launch an attack on Iraq and remove Saddam Hussein from power, President George W. Bush and the US government produced a series of deceptive statements and images through spinning, intentional concealment of information, and even outright lies. Although there was virtually no evidence of Saddam's involvement in 9/11 terrorism, Iraq was chosen as a target of military strikes shortly after 9/11. In the months leading up to the US invasion, the crucial question was whether Iraq had weapons of mass destruction. Despite the lack of hard evidence supporting its claim, the US accused Iraq of possessing WMDs and unilaterally commenced a military attack. Although the invasion was justified in the name of democratizing Iraq, without any coherent policies for democratization, what the USA created in occupied Iraq was nothing but political disorder and socioeconomic chaos. Similarly, in the immediate aftermath of 3/11, the Japanese government put unsuspecting people's lives at grave risk by not releasing crucial information on the spread of radioactive substances over extensive areas in Fukushima and beyond. Prime Minister Kan Naoto's Cabinet, bureaucrats, TEPCO management, and nuclear science experts endlessly made deceptive statements about the severity of the accident and ongoing crisis at the Fukushima Daiichi power plant. They denied time and again the possibility of nuclear reactor core meltdown, and even after the cover-up became impossible, continued using various euphemisms for "meltdown" as whitewash. Such devaluation of language as a means of communication irrevocably damaged democratic governance, and resulted in the spread of public cynicism toward government and politics.

Naomi Klein's idea of "shock doctrine," whose importance for the post-9/11 world is widely acknowledged, also gives us a valuable insight into the conditions of post-3/11 Japan.[9] The state of exception created by the traumatic aftershock of 9/11 was exploited by the US government to implement neoliberal economic policies in occupied Iraq, to defend the widespread use of violence and torture as an allegedly lawful means of extracting information from so-called enemy combatants, and to set off the uncontrolled invasion of ordinary citizens' privacy by wiretapping, eavesdropping, and other methods of surveillance. In Japan, it was not just the shock of 3/11 but also the ineffectual response to the disaster by the then-ruling Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) that brought about a political vacuum, which has been fully exploited by the Liberal Democratic Party since the DPJ lost an election by a landslide in 2012. The idea of

shock doctrine can explain to a great extent why Prime Minister Abe Shinzō can so confidently pursue, despite the strong voices of criticism and objection, his ultranationalism (e.g., the government's reinterpretation of Article 9 of the Constitution to open the possibility of using the armed forces for the purpose of collective self-defense, the new secrecy law potentially curtailing people's right to have open access to government information) and neoliberal agendas (e.g., a new phase of—or "another dimensional" [異次元の]—monetary easing by the Bank of Japan and the increase in the consumption tax rate from 5 to 8 %, both causing a further widening of income inequality).

Rhetoric and Symbol

Collusion of the state, industry, and academia (a so-called nuclear village or 原子力ムラ) was heavily criticized immediately after 3/11.[10] Numerous books on Fukushima, nuclear energy, nuclear power stations, radiation, and risk management have been published ever since. This is clearly a sign of how seriously people are concerned with problems of the nuclear. Although not sufficiently covered by the mainstream media, antinuclear demonstrations have been regularly organized at the epicenter of state power right in the middle of Tokyo.[11] It is, however, far from clear if these criticisms have had any lasting impact on the triumvirate of actors just mentioned who have a vested interest in the maintenance and expansion of nuclear program. Despite the fact that TEPCO cannot control radiation-tainted water at Fukushima Daiichi, and that many nuclear scientists and bureaucrats have completely lost their credibility as experts, the Liberal Democratic Party, which has returned to power after the self-destruction of the Democratic Party of Japan, is determined to resume operations at as many nuclear power plants as possible. Judging by their brazen behavior, the nuclear village must believe they can dodge responsibility by pretending that nothing catastrophic happened at Fukushima Daiichi, and that critical situations have long ceased to exist.

3/11 was not a product of "catastrophism" but a series of real catastrophes marking a point of no return for the entire Japanese society.[12] Yet as pointed out earlier, the sense of normalcy returned relatively quickly in those areas which did not directly suffer damage from the earthquake and tsunami. There is something peculiar about the quick restoration of normal everyday life when the outcome of the ongoing crisis was far from certain. Of course I am not at all suggesting that people should have panicked

at the time of the accidents, nor that we should be witnessing growing social unrest now. But why do we have this peculiar situation where a real catastrophe did happen and yet was not universally recognized as such? Is it the case that a calm and level-headed reaction on the part of people resulted in the state of normalcy? Or is it more accurate to see it as a reflection of their indifference? These are not either/or questions: that is, there is the appearance of normalcy neither simply because people have an ability to handle a critical situation without losing composure, nor merely because they are not interested in learning what is really happening within and beyond the compound of Fukushima Daiichi. There are many visible signs of popular dissent and demand for alternative energy sources; at the same time, antinuclear demonstrations and publications have not succeeded in bringing people's dormant anxieties about the nuclear out in the open on a genuinely massive scale.

What accounts for the contradictory air of great concern and indifference pervading the entire nation? This is a very complex question, to which there is no simple answer. But the agonistic coexistence of two diametrically opposite reactions shows that there are real struggles going on over the meaning of the Fukushima nuclear accident, which is hardly self-evident or predetermined. The control of information by government and the mainstream media's skewed coverage (or noncoverage) of radiation-related issues tend to leave people in the dark and, as a result, either encourage many of them to become unconcerned about the ongoing crisis or, on the contrary, make them highly suspicious of any reassuring messages communicated by the media or the authorities. All types of deceptive tactics, including lying, spinning, and concealment, have been employed to create meanings which best fit the particular political and economic agendas of interested parties. It is in fact worth taking a second look at a history of public relations and propaganda campaigns for nuclear power in postwar Japan in order not to lose sight of the larger context in which the Fukushima accident must be situated.[13]

What may be called the rhetoric of Fukushima discourse relies on a set of keywords to obscure where responsibility for the nuclear disaster resides. For example, the phrases "subjective safety" (*anshin* or 安心) and "objective safety" (*anzen* or 安全) have been routinely used by those who are deeply involved in the national promotion of nuclear power "for peaceful purposes."[14] The nuclear power industry, government, and pronuclear experts often stress the importance of the subjective safety or the perception of risk by laypeople. They argue that no matter how scientifically

sound or trustworthy, the objective data on the issue of nuclear safety are beyond nonexperts' understanding. In order to give people peace of mind, it is therefore imperative to focus on the subjective dimensions of safety issues, which are not reducible to scientific theories, data, or numbers. The problem with this line of argument is obvious. The nuclear village is keenly interested in promoting the idea of subjective safety not because what they regard as objective risks could not completely be trusted, but because they believe people are incapable of comprehending the scientific truth of nuclear energy and radioactivity. By emphasizing the importance of subjective safety, the nuclear experts (and the institutions whose interest they serve) try to seal off the question of objective safety from public debate, and monopolize knowledge as their sole property or fetish. A more pernicious effect of this rhetoric of a subjective/objective binary is that it makes the idea of objective truth totally irrelevant. Even though the question of subjective safety is hardly insignificant, that has nothing to do with, for instance, the question of a permissible level of radiation exposure. Regardless of whether one feels safe or not, the exposure to radiation has a real physical effect. But the essential message of the ubiquitous discourse on subjective and objective safety is as long as people feel safe, no matter how dangerous the actual situation may be, it is perfectly OK. Needless to say, this line of thought leads straight to mass deception and propaganda.

Another key term of the post-3/11 nuclear discourse is "reputational risk" or *fūhyō higai* (風評被害), which refers to financial and other damages caused by harmful rumors that have no basis in verifiable fact. There is nothing particularly wrong with the concept of reputational risk in itself; in fact, the negative impact of reputational risk can never be overstressed. However, when it is examined as a favorite rhetorical device of the nuclear village, it quickly becomes clear that the phrase "reputational risk" is used to confuse cause and effect deliberately. The socially dominant discourse on reputational risk blames people for both spreading and believing unfounded rumors, and through their irresponsible actions, hurting innocent individuals, small businesses, local communities, and so on. But unfounded rumors spread not necessarily because people act irresponsibly but because facts are concealed by government, corporations, and experts in the first place. The cause of the problem is not primarily so-called uninformed, irresponsible people who have irrational fears about radiation. Instead, it is TEPCO, the government, pronuclear-power researchers and radiation experts, parts of the mainstream media, and other stakeholders in the nuclear industry who

have been using the concept of reputational risk as a means of dodging their own responsibilities for a still ongoing nuclear catastrophe.

As is clear from the discussion so far, what underlies the prevalent ideas of reputational risk and subjective safety is the thinking that once irresponsible rumors and hearsay are all cleared away or brought under control, the transparency of social communication returns, and as a result, the system functions smoothly without being disturbed by any noise or glitch. But there is something much more sinister about the alleged miscommunication due to the irresponsible use of language. As soon as it became clear that the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station was in serious trouble, Chief Cabinet Secretary Edano Yukio repeated numerous times his now-infamous remark: "There is no immediate health risk." Presumably, Edano chanted this mantra over and over again to reassure people that the accident at Fukushima Daiichi was not as serious as it might seem on television or the Internet. But did he seriously believe that his announcements of reassurance would bolster people's morale? A meta-message of such phrases as "There is no immediate effect on people's health" or "X poses no immediate health risks" was that the government was most afraid of public chaos, and that as long as they could maintain social order, the veracity of these statements was not their primary concern.

What is common to all three examples above (i.e., "subjective safety," "reputational risk," and "no immediate health risk") is a rhetoric of irresponsibility, which allows those in power to pursue their own interest at the expense of people's welfare. Moreover, this rhetoric of irresponsibility is exploited for maximum effect under the pretense of protecting the interest of people and maintaining social order. Although people were told not to panic by the authority, the actual situation was the opposite: it was not the people but the government and TEPCO that were in a state of panic.[15] The nuclear village dismisses as unrealistic any call for the abandonment of nuclear power generation. Alternative energy sources may or may not be unreliable, too expensive, or in short supply. But one of the difficult lessons we have learned from the Fukushima accident is that the cost of nuclear power generation is, contrary to the claim of the government and the electric utility industry, astronomically high. Once an accident happens, the human and material damage it causes is simply unimaginable and irreparable, so that any talk about the cost-effectiveness of nuclear power generation is nothing but a joke. The question is, therefore, who has a truly realistic vision for the future of nuclear energy in

Japan? Is it those who created the myth of the infallible safety of nuclear power plant and still claim that "nuclear power is an important baseload electricity source"?[16] Or is it those who warned people about the dangers of nuclear power plants and now call for decommissioning of all nuclear reactors? On the pretext of pursuing the most realistic solution for protecting people's welfare, the government and the nuclear village in reality usurp the sovereignty of the people whose interest is seriously damaged by their irresponsible actions.

No matter how catastrophic it may be, the Fukushima accident is treated by the government and the electric utility industry as a fortuitous accident whose occurrence was simply beyond human control. To those who are determined not to change the pre-3/11 policy of promoting nuclear energy, Fukushima Daiichi is little more than a bump in the road. What they are working so hard to prevent is a transformation of the nuclear catastrophe into a symbolic event, which can deliver a fatal blow to the system. Circulation of data does not damage the system as long as they remain mere data. This partially explains why the publication of numerous books and articles on Fukushima Daiichi and nuclear power has not so far led to the formation of an effective political force seriously challenging the nuclear village. The Fukushima nuclear accident has failed to become what Jean Baudrillard called a symbolic event.[17] Until coalescing into an articulate symbol, accurate or even obviously damaging information would not threaten the normal functioning of the system at its fundamental core. This also means that in order to bring about a radical change in the nation's nuclear power policy, a single-minded focus on nuclear-related issues in the narrow sense may not be sufficient.

The Prison House of Commodities

Superficially, the social system did seem to return to its normal state shortly after 3/11, in the areas that were not severely afflicted by the catastrophic disaster. But the reason why the sense of normalcy was restored relatively quickly was not that people in those areas were indifferent to the plight of disaster victims or the threat of a radioactive plume. Instead, it was because everyday normalcy was actively manufactured through a variety of mechanisms and institutions including the government and the mainstream media. Does it sound too far-fetched if we say that many Japanese were under mind control? There is one person who does not hesitate at all to use such a notion to expose the problem with contemporary Japanese

society. According to Prime Minister Abe Shinzō, the postwar Japanese educational system, despite its inbuilt defects, has remained intact up until now because the Japanese living under the postwar regime have been literally, in his own words, "under mind control."[18] This remark, which Prime Minister Abe made at a meeting of the Lower House Budget Committee, is simply not correct. It may be tempting to assert that if there is any sign of mind control, it should be found in the popular support for Abe and his regime of right-wing political agendas. However, this is not an accurate description of the so-called right-wing turn in contemporary Japanese society either. The transformation of Japanese society must be reexamined not in terms of mind control but habit, which is, according to Jonathan Crary, "a way of understanding actual social behavior as located somewhere between the imagined extremes of a manipulated society of sleepers and a mobilized nation of 'awakened' individuals."[19] Abe literally tries to awaken Japanese who are equated with a multitude of somnambulists under mind control or hypnosis, but whatever his final goal may be, his attempt will inevitably fail because the habituated sedimentation of every practices has little to do with mind control or ideological indoctrination. What underlies a dominant habit in contemporary Japanese society is nothing other than a culture of consumerism, and Abe himself is a product of this culture.

"To embrace the modality of the consumer," writes Zygmunt Bauman, "means first and foremost falling in love with choice."[20] But there is nothing permanent about the act of choosing because, according to consumerism, "nothing should be embraced by a consumer firmly, nothing should command a commitment forever, no needs should be ever seen as fully satisfied, no desires considered ultimate."[21] The ephemeral and fluid nature of consumerism is perhaps best exemplified by television. On Japanese television, every inch of broadcast time is so absolutely commodified that many viewers are slowly but surely being led to a state in which they can perceive the world only from the perspective of consumers. Take, for instance, the sudden disappearance of television commercials in the immediate aftermath of the March 11 earthquake and tsunami. Why were they replaced with public announcements by Advertising Council Japan on social issues, ethics, and public moral? It was presumably because regular television commercials were deemed too frivolous or inappropriate when people were in a state of extreme shock and mourning for the dead. More importantly, however, when the entire nation was in a state of exception, TV commercials would have inadvertently revealed how thoroughly

the everyday life in normal times is commodified. This embarrassing and painful truth must be concealed at all cost. Otherwise, it will become so blatantly apparent that consumerism and a parade of image commodities in everyday Japan function as an opaque screen, which renders the real conditions of everyday experience virtually invisible to people.

It is of course too simplistic or outright wrong to dismiss Japanese television or media as a mere pawn of the state and capital. There are in fact many programs and publications which successfully reveal the fallacy of the myth of the nuclear technology's infallible safety. Hardly a monolithic entity, television networks broadcast a variety of programs which do not necessarily cohere as a single unified voice. The biggest problem with television is neither the homogeneity nor the quality of individual programs; instead, it stems from the fact that a diverse group of programs—including critical documentaries on Fukushima, or their diametrical opposite, conservative news shows blindly supporting official data and announcements—are completely embedded in the flow of commodified images. No matter how oppositional or critical a particular program may look, its impact is in the end offset by a logic of consumerism. To actualize the potential value of critical information found on television, we need to learn how to disembed what seems potentially useful from the relentless flow of commodified rubbish, and then reconnect it to other networks of critical discourses. Recognizing this problem is relatively easy; however, it is much harder to actually resist the anesthetic effect of Japanese televisual spectacles.

Consumers everywhere are obsessed with their right to make a choice freely. If there is anything unique about consumerism in Japan now, it is a general lack of interest on the part of many consumers in such questions as what other choices may be conceivable, who decides on the available choices based on what criteria, and so on. Consumerism in the Japanese context—that is, what is "conspicuous" about Japanese consumer culture—is ultimately reducible to a formal exercise of consumers' rights rather than the substantive content of choices made. In fact, the more trivial or vacuous their choice of a commodity, the better it serves the purpose of maintaining the Japanese capitalism system. According to Asada Akira, "in Japan, there are neither tradition-oriented old people adhering to transcendental values nor inner-oriented adults who have internalized their values; instead, the nearly purely relative (or relativistic) competition exhibited by other-oriented children provides the powerful driving force for capitalism."[22] Even though Asada actually wrote these words during

the height of Japan's so-called bubble economy in the 1980s, many of the same sociocultural phenomena he observed then still persist almost 30 years later. Nonetheless, Asada's argument and his notion of Japan's "infantile capitalism" now seem too idyllic to be applied to the present condition of Japanese society because there is nothing playful or childlike about today's income inequality, deflationary economy, or astronomical national debt.

"Liberal democratic capitalism," writes Renata Salecl, "glorifies the idea of choice, but with the proviso that what is on offer is primarily a consumerist model of choosing. The choice of a new form of social organisation, of different ways in which society might develop in the future and especially the possibility of rejecting capitalist society as we know it all appear not to be available choices."[23] What Salecl says about liberal democratic capitalism is very much applicable to contemporary Japanese capitalism. But we need to pay special attention to the degree to which consumerism can encroach on the realm of the political. In Japan today, liberal democracy is not simply based on a "consumerist model of choosing"; instead, politics is completely replaced by consumerism, which is not just a system of economy but a central means of governance. According to the dominant ideology, there should not be any political debate, movement, or action in a truly democratic society because all of these signify social unrest and subversive propaganda. Regarded as a taboo or evil, politics should be avoided and left untouched by ordinary Japanese citizens; instead, they are encouraged to immerse themselves in a culture of consumerism. As consumerism penetrates every facet of everyday life, political demands have been gradually replaced by consumers' demands. Both industries and consumers have been preoccupied with a relentless pursuit of convenience and comfort (the "convenience store" or *konbini* as its symbol). While largely remaining apathetic about politics, people are easily energized when they make demands as consumers, and even become vociferous if they think their rights as consumers—not as citizens or political subjects—are violated by, for instance, a delayed train, unfair treatment of customers playing fair by the rules, mislabeled restaurant menus, or something more serious such as tampered packaged food. For nearly a quarter of a century, since the spectacular bursting of the economic bubble, another kind of bubble has been steadily growing to engulf an entire nation. It is a self-contained collective sphere where people are relatively free to do anything except get involved in politics in the broadest sense.

What dominates the atmosphere of today's Japan is a feeling of "claustrophobic suffocation" (Paul Virilio), which is not necessarily a direct reflection of long economic stagnation but created by a stubborn determination to resist any changes ubiquitously observable at every level of social formation. As priority is always given to the maintenance of internal bureaucratic structure and organizational protocol, collectives inevitably become insular and parochial regardless of their type or size. The inner-oriented activities of these collectives have no bearing on what is happening outside the closed sphere, and a myopic focus on the immediate communal situation does not lead to the expansion of exchange relationships with the outside either. It is therefore extremely hard for individuals to imagine alternative modes of human relations and networking outside old communal traditions. When they try to do things differently or fail to conform to the communal rules, they are severely punished, harassed, or ostracized. Enormous pressure is constantly exerted on people to observe the rules and rituals without exception. Here we can see a peculiar idea of fairness: not that the same set of explicitly stated rules should be applied to everybody equally and openly, but that everybody must voluntarily conform to the community's implicit rules and expectations to be accepted as its member. If particular individuals are regarded as threats to the communal harmony based on sameness, vicious attack and insidious obstruction will immediately ensue. "Eccentrics" will come under anonymous pressure to get into line, and out of resentment and jealousy, other members of the collective will actively try to hold the eccentrics back from achieving their "devilish" goals. This highly regimented system of controlling the populace and creating an appearance of social harmony has no centralized position of repressive power; instead, it is the ubiquity of micro-repression and mutual surveillance that constitutes the operational core of this system.

For the continuous reproduction of this inner-oriented bubble, the media's role is crucial. In fact, one of the biggest obstacles to destroying the bubble is ironically the mass media. Most of what really needs to be communicated to people never gets reported. Instead, television and newspapers too often obscenely focus on trivial issues or inconsequential aspects of a larger incident, ending up artificially manufacturing scandals as if employing a diversion tactic—what Roland Barthes calls "inoculation"[24]—for concealing systemic problems or frauds. As a result, regardless of their intentionality, the Japanese media not infrequently function as a mouthpiece for the government and those in power.

One of the most conspicuous and disturbing features of Japanese television recently is the uncontrollable proliferation of variety shows, news magazines, and program segments focusing on the alleged *uniqueness* of "Japan." Every day from early in the morning to late into the night, the Japanese airwaves are inundated with audiovisual discourses on Japanese food, fashion, technologies, hospitality (a new buzzword *omotenashi*), popular culture (anime and manga as usual suspects), daily customs, behavioral and thought patterns, aesthetic sensibility, business models, and so on. Usually there is no critical analysis or reassessment of what are presented as Japanese products or customs. As a result, the overwhelming majority of televisual *nihonjinron*—that is, the discourse on Japanese uniqueness (日本人論)—portray things Japanese in a highly positive way, and very few programs deal with "uniquely negative" aspects of Japanese society or culture. A crucial element in the construction of these nihonjinron images is the presence of foreigners, who are literally present in a television studio as guest panelists commenting on Japanese culture or appear in a videotaped interview conducted in the streets of Tokyo, Seoul, Paris, or Moscow. If the foreign other played the role of vanishing mediator in historical nihonjinron discourses, today's televisual nihonjinron seems to be obsessed with direct responses of actual foreigners. According to televisual nihonjinron, it is not enough to exalt simply the superior quality of Japan's traditional craftsmanship or hi-tech products; instead, what is crucial is to show how foreigners actually react to them. In other words, it is less about the immanent superiority of things Japanese and more about the process of discovery by television viewers—needless to say posited as Japanese—the superiority of things Japanese through the eye of foreigners. (This explains why there are recently many programs featuring Japanese living overseas for work or international marriage and their foreign counterparts living in Japan.)

The state-media-industrial complex, including television as its privileged apparatus, has been openly promoting Japan as the ultimate horizon of commodified experience in a relentless fashion. It is important to note that this obsession with "Japan" can be observed not just in nationalism and national populism but in any type of nation-centered thinking, even a certain variety of antinationalist discourse. Within this larger context, what makes televisual nihonjinron so problematic is not necessarily its relentless effort to assert the unique superiority of things Japanese. The problem would not disappear if Japanese television took a more "objective" stance and started showing both positive and negative aspects of Japanese

culture. The fundamental issue here is the configuration of a critical framework within which the sign "Japan" occupies a central position, rather than what is specifically said about Japan.

Televisual nihonjinron is a symptomatic manifestation of ideological thinking which locates the dichotomy of Japan and foreign countries (*gaikoku* 外国) as the constitutive binarism for reproduction of social relations and cohesiveness. A tightly linked network of commodified images transforms everyday life into a self-enclosed bubble of simulated environment, in which criticism of nationalism can easily fall into a trap of reinforcing what it intends to control, that is, the obscene obsession with Japan and the imaginary geography consisting of Japan and the rest of the world.

Flooding society with inconsequential information and images to assert the unique superiority of Japanese culture is not only propaganda but also a form of media censorship.[25] As they fill more airtime, there is little room left for other types of images and programs. Even when serious topics are taken up without reducing them to a variant of the Japan-versus-the-world paradigm, trivialization still occurs. In today's Japanese television, a panel of commentators is an indispensable feature of many news and current affairs shows. What makes this popular format so baffling is that commentators often have no expertise in a particular field of knowledge necessary for making an informed comment on the issue under discussion. Even when real experts—whose position is comparable to "native informants"—are invited to a program, they are mainly expected to supply specialist knowledge on the issue, which is then used by nonspecialist commentators to make their own superficial remarks. Needless to say, it is the trifling observations of nonspecialist commentators, not the opinions of experts, that are the main attraction of these television shows. As for a more serious form of investigative report, in-depth analyses of truly important issues by individual journalists are few and far between. It has been pointed out that this is due to collusion among politicians, bureaucrats, business leaders, and journalists, which is created by, for instance, the "press club" system. "Essentially newsgathering organizations attached to the nation's top government, bureaucratic and corporate bodies," writes David McNeill, "press clubs have traditionally been elite closed shops, banned to all but journalists working for Japan's top media."[26] Press clubs ensure that the major media industry closely cooperates with the establishment, by tightly controlling access to information and by fostering an aura of exclusivity. Because television networks, newspapers, radio, and magazines are all financially dependent on income from corporate

advertisement, it is very unlikely that major media outlets disseminate any information potentially hurting the business interests of their corporate sponsors (e.g., TEPCO and the nuclear industry). Consequently, the ideas of media censorship and freedom of press do not have much meaning in such a media environment, where "news" is consensually manufactured by elite media, big business, and political and bureaucratic authorities.[27] Rather than being censored by external power, the mainstream media first and foremost function as an apparatus of censorship.

As fixtures on television programs, the commentators and media pundits offer empty opinions on a wide variety of issues. Even though televisual commentators and a recent surge of anti-intellectualism are not two mutually unrelated phenomena, we can still end up misunderstanding the proliferation of empty commentary if we simply see in it a manifestation of anti-intellectualism or a direct assault on knowledge.[28] This is because, regardless of its actual value, commentary as a form or medium has hardly been dismissed as obsolete or meaningless: knowledge still seems to be valued at least on the surface. The problem is that a type of knowledge now widely circulating is so completely fragmented and decontextualized that it neither has any organic link to an already existing body of knowledge nor responds to the real conditions of the world. What matters for those in power is to maintain the appearance of liberal democracy as a world of make-believe, and for this ideological purpose, the daily appearance of self-proclaimed sociologists, philosophers, brain scientists, education specialists, and so on in the media is a highly desirable phenomenon. In this world of make-believe, where collective amnesia and commodification reign supreme, "the general election" for some time did not mean an election held in the wake of the dissolution of the Diet's Lower House. Instead, it referred to a process of ranking members of the girls' idol group AKB48 by popular vote. Unlike in a real election, anybody can vote for his or her favorite girl idol regardless of age or citizenship. The only catch with this "free" election is that voting is literally not free: in order to cast a vote, people must be members of AKB48's fan club or purchase the group's single CD, which comes with a ballot. Because there is no restriction on the number of CDs that can be purchased, those with deep pockets can freely buy as many CDs, and thus votes, as they wish. Is this a cynical commentary on or a simple mockery of free election and representative democracy? Is AKB48 and idol culture a symptom of dysfunctional democracy in the midst of total commodification? Or is this general

election in the world of make-believe precisely a means through which the nation is now virtually controlled and governed?

Another conspicuous symbol of blurring boundaries between make-believe and reality is Tokyo Disneyland. But the enormous success and extraordinary visibility of Tokyo Disneyland does not mean that a large number of Japanese are eager to escape into a fantasy world. Because what they presumably leave behind—that is, the socioeconomic reality of every-day life—is already a world of make-believe, the idea of escape cannot adequately explain why Tokyo Disneyland has consistently remained so popular. À la Baudrillard, some might argue that the purpose of Tokyo Disneyland is to create an illusion that the rest of Japan is real. Yet this argument is not convincing. Ubiquitous idol culture, with which Tokyo Disneyland forms a symbiotic relationship, is not at all dependent on the concealment of the possibility that what is believed to be real is nothing more than a fantasy. Idol culture, which is highly reflexive and sometimes also cynical, flaunts its own artificiality as a game or play. It does not simply give consumers (=citizens) a momentary relief from the hardship of everyday life. Nor does it function as a means through which everyday life is reaffirmed as real in an unproblematic fashion. Subjectively, the consumers are not completely absorbed in the fantasy provided by idol culture or Tokyo Disneyland. Instead, they see themselves as enlightened critics who, situated outside the system, understand very well the concrete mechanism and economy of fantasy production. By occupying the subjective position of exteriority, they believe they enjoy fantasy as a meta-critical play without naively being captured by its allure. In other words, reflexivity is reductively equated with knowledge; however, it is precisely reflexivity that is an illusion underlying the world of make-believe. Many enlightened consumers are unable to recognize the world of make-believe as such, so that, unlike protagonists of the 1970s' Hollywood sci-fi movies, they remain trapped inside a self-enclosed dome, nonreflectively thinking that a hemispherical wall absolutely separates the interior space of the dome from the outside world.

What is missing in Japan's self-enclosed bubble is not necessarily imagination per se but the ability to imagine from the perspective of what one does not know or even what one cannot know. Political complacency, oppressive communalism, and highly regulated consumerism make it very difficult to foster such imagination. All hope is not lost, of course, but it is not at all clear what can be done to transform the bubble into a genuinely open space for democratic rights and individual freedom.

NOTES

1. Preliminary versions of this paper were presented at Princeton University and Yonsei University. I would like to thank Professor Steve Chung at Princeton and Professors Helen Lee and Han Seung-Mi at Yonsei for their kind invitations, hospitalities, and stimulating discussions.
2. Front pages of major US newspapers reporting 9/11 can be found at Newseum's website (http://www.newseum.org/).
3. For a criticism of such misuse of history, see John Dower, "Occupations and Empires: Why Iraq Is Not Japan," *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus*, available online at http://www.japanfocus.org/-John_W_-Dower/1624 [Accessed January 31, 2015].
4. See Arima Tetsuo, *Genpatsu to genbaku: "Nichi · Bei · Ei" kakubusō no antō* (Tokyo: Bunshun shinsho, 2012); *NHK supeshal shuzaihan*, *"Kaku" o motometa Nihon: Hibakukoku no shirarezaru shinjitu* (Tokyo: Kōbunsha, 2012); Chunichi Shinbun shakaibu, *Nichibei domei to genpatsu: Kakusareta kaku no sengoshi* (Tokyo: Tokyo shinbun, 2013).
5. Yamashiro Mutsumi, *Renzoku suru mondai* (Tokyo: Genki shobō, 2013), 333. On the other hand, W. J. T. Mitchell writes, "The destruction of the World Trade Center in New York has provided the most memorable image of the twenty-first century so far, destined to join the iconic mushroom cloud as the principal emblem of war and terror in our time, leaving behind it a space known as 'Ground Zero', a label that links it (quite inaccurately) to a nuclear bomb": W. J. T. Mitchell, *Cloning Terror: The War of Images, 9/11 to the Present* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 78.
6. Shirai Satoshi, *Eizoku haisen ron: Sengo Nihon no kakushin* (Tokyo: Ōta shuppan, 2013).
7. Slavoj Žižek argues that the violence of Islamic fundamentalism does not stem from a reaction against globalization promoted by the West; instead, it shows how thoroughly the systemic logic and values of globalization have been internalized by fundamentalists: "Fundamentalist Islamic terror is not grounded in the terrorists' conviction of their superiority and in their desire to safeguard their cultural-religious identity from the onslaught of global consumerist civilization. The problem with fundamentalists is not that we consider them inferior to us, but, rather, that they themselves secretly consider themselves inferior. This is why our condescending politically correct assurances that we feel no superiority toward them only makes them more furious and feeds their resentment. The problem is not cultural difference (their effort to preserve their identity), but the opposite: the fact that the fundamentalists are already like us, that, secretly, they have already internalized our standards and measure themselves by them": Slavoj Žižek, *Trouble in Paradise: From the End of History to the End of Capitalism* (New York: Allen Lane, 2014), 88.

8. Kawamura Minato has compiled a list of 252 films (and some TV dramas) featuring "atomic/nuclear horror"—distinguished in principle from nuclear warfare—as a main narrative motif. It is a very useful list for anybody interested in doing research on cinematic representations of the nuclear. But the list also includes, as Kawamura himself admits, many films whose main focus is clearly nuclear war. See Kawamura Minato, *Shinsai · genpatsu bungaku ron* (Tokyo: Inpakuto shuppankai, 2013), 176–285.

9. Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (New York: Henry Holt, 2007).

10. See, for example, Kainuma Hiroshi, *"Fukushima" ron: Genshiryoku mura wa naze umaretanoka* (Tokyo: Seidosha, 2011); Iida Tetsunari, Kaneko Masaru, and Kōno Tarō, *"Genshiryoku mura" o koete: Posuto Fukushima no enerugī seisaku* (Tokyo: NHK shuppan, 2011).

11. Oguma Eiji, *Genpatsu o tomeru hitobito: 3.11 kara kantei mae made* (Tokyo: Bungei shunjū, 2013).

12. Sasha Lilley, David McNally, Eddie Yuen, and James Davis, *Catastrophism: The Apocalyptic Politics of Collapse and Rebirth* (Oakland: PM Press, 2012).

13. Cf. Hayakawa Tadanori, *Genpatsu yūtopia Nippon* (Tokyo: Gōdō shuppan, 2014); Honma Ryu, *Genpatsu kōkoku* (Tokyo: Aki shobō, 2013).

14. Ulrich Beck, *World as Risk*, trans. Ciaran Cronin, (London: Polity, 2009), 11–12.

15. Funabashi Yōichi, *Kaunto daun · meruto daun* (Tokyo: Bungei shunjū, 2012).

16. Mari Iwata, "Japan Sees Key Role for Nuclear Power: Draft Energy Policy Effectively Overturns Reactor Phaseout," *The Wall Street Journal*, February 25, 2014.

17. See Baudrillard's analysis of differences between 9/11 as a symbolic event and the sarin gas attack on the Tokyo subway system as a form of acting out: Jean Baudrillard, *Bōryoku to gurōbarizēshon* (Violence and Globalization), trans. Tsukahara Fumi (Tokyo: NTT Shuppan, 2004), 64–65.

18. He made this remark at a meeting of the Lower House Budget Committee. See *Tokyo Shinbun*, morning edition, February 21, 2014.

19. Jonathan Crary, *24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep* (London: Verso, 2013), 77.

20. Zygmunt Bauman, *Work, Consumerism and the New Poor*, 2nd ed. (Berkshire: Open University Press, 2005), 30.

21. Bauman, *Work, Consumerism and the New Poor*, 25.

22. Asada Akira, "Infantile Capitalism and Japan's Postmodernism: A Fairy Tale," in *Postmodernism and Japan* , ed. Masao Miyoshi and H. D. Harootunian (Durham: Duke University Press, 1989), 275.

23. Renata Salecl, *The Tyranny of Choice* (London: Profile Books, 2011), 149.
24. Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (London: Vintage Books, 2009), 178.
25. Paul Virilio, *The Original Accident*, trans. Julie Rose (Malden, MA: Polity, 2007), 27.
26. David McNeill, "Japan's Contemporary Media," in *Critical Issues in Contemporary Japan*, ed. Jeff Kingston (London: Routledge, 2014), 67.
27. There are many books dealing with the collusion of media, government, and big business. See, for instance, Kōno Tarō and Makino Yō, *Kyōbōsha tachi: Seijika to shinbunkisha o tsunagu ankoku kairō* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2012).
28. This is why Sakai Takashi argues that "anti-intellectualism" does not exactly characterize a dominant sociopolitical trend in contemporary Japan. Instead, he tries to analyze the current state of affairs in terms of what he calls "anti-anti-intellecturalism." See Sakai Takashi, "Gendai Nihon no 'han-hanchiseishugi'?" *Gendai shisō* 43.3 (February 2015), 30–38.

How Can I Love My Radioactive Tuna? Planetary Love in Shōno Yoriko

Christophe Thouny

> All of this happened last summer. I was upset about a dream of being in love with a tuna when I got a call, from that tuna, or Super Jetter, I wasn't sure which, but he kept pestering me about going somewhere and I ended up having to go to Umishibaura station.[1]

Time Warp Complex (Taimu surippu conbināto) is a story about love and Japan after the end of the bubble economy and before Fukushima. The narrator receives a phone call from an anonymous alien being, a voice emerging from a global network of communication, and is summoned to make a short trip to Umishibaura station in the Tokyo Bay. This is an imperative order coming from the beyond that suspends for a moment this ending cold war order of economic growth and in this suspension opens a space where it becomes possible to navigate together a postindustrial landscape, memories of childhood and a romantic relation with a Tuna. As Shōno Yoriko explains in a later interview, this is a story about love *without* a lover, and I would like to read this "*without*" as a positive affirmation, as the embrace of an ongoing situation of decay from which emerges a different relation to the world, a planetary love.[2]

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When I presented this work in a panel on Japanese ecocriticism, one audience member asked a genuine question, "how can I love a radioactive tuna?" The tuna is emblematic of the postwar nuclear state, and reading about a tuna lover in 2014 immediately summons past memories of radioactive tunas. When the fish boat Lucky Dragon No. 5 was irradiated by hydrogen bomb testing in 1954, a media panic ensued and 500 tons of tuna were discarded.[3] This fear is manifest in the first *Gojira* movie, when on her way to work in a train, a woman remarks "It's terrible, isn't it? Irradiated tuna and radioactive fallout, and now this Godzilla to top it all off! What will happen if he appears out of Tokyo Bay? Oh Awful. I survived the bombing of Nagasaki at great pains, yet I have to go through this again."[4] Tuna, Japan and Tokyo, are in *Gojira* held together by the fear and anxiety of radiation, challenging the postwar nuclear state and its urban aesthetic of security, peace and prosperity[5] in denial of an ongoing natural, social and mental pollution. Nuclear pollution is as much about radioactive fish as it is about an urban aesthetic, a specific atmosphere that grounds the attachment to the postwar Japanese nation in a national love.

Although *Time Warp Complex* does not address the issue of radioactivity or nuclear pollution as such, this work does ask similar questions, making us wonder how to dwell in and learn to love a dying place. *Time Warp Complex* shares the same temporality of ongoing loss and decay that characterizes Fukushima Japan, and proposes "love without another" as a possible answer to this everyday condition. My tuna lover might be irradiated or contaminated by mercury, it presents the image of my life in Tokyo with its gray skies, its greasy waters and cemented land, as I am moved from place to place, station to station, apartment to apartment. Tokyo is polluted. Most importantly it is polluted by the global media sphere that builds a state of expectation and everyday dreams for something that is not there, not absent but not quite there either. As the narrator of *Hiroshima mon amour* repeats, "tu n'a rien vu à Hiroshima": there was nothing to see at Umishibaura but its name and the dream that led the narrator there, at the center of a world. Like Hiroshima, Fukushima makes us face the impossible task of narrating an ongoing disaster without knowing what comes next, precisely the same question faced by Shōno Yoriko as she traveled the ruined landscapes of neoliberal Japan. As the post-Bubble economy only reveals the ongoing decay of postwar Japan, Fukushima Japan in a way only makes visible the compromised reality of the postwar nuclear state. This particular urban experience does not even allow for an aesthetic of the sublime too easily now recuperated by a national desire.[6]

And rather than the celebrated postwar narrative of loss, mourning and development, we are in need today of a melancholy ethics: we have to learn to love without our tuna lover.

Tzvetan Todorov famously argued that the minimum form of the plot can be seen as the movement from one state of equilibrium to another, the narrative movement itself consisting in a period of imbalance.[7] However, in this story, the dynamic is reversed. If anything, the only stable point of the story is the train travel to Umishibaura commanded by this alien and familiar voice pointing at memories of childhood and at the dream of a tuna lover. The narrative of *Time Warp Complex* is organized along three lines: the imperative order "Go to Umishibaura," a series of places (the train stations leading to Umishibaura) and a hybrid figure of love, a tuna lover. The starting point of the journey is the narrator's apartment, at the moment of awakening between dream and reality when she receives the call, the apartment being itself just one temporary home in a long series of homes in the western suburb of Tokyo. The original state of equilibrium of the story is then a state of precarious balance, an urban condition of non-sovereignty. In this article I discuss how Shōno Yoriko takes this condition of non-sovereignty as a premise to explore other forms of intimacy in a planetary world without others.

A World Without Others

> Umishibaura is the last station on the Japan Railways Tsurumi Line. It has one long platform that runs right out over the sea at one end. At the other end there's an exit of sorts, a staff-only entrance to a Toshiba factory, but it's strictly "no entry allowed" to anyone but Toshiba employees. At one end the sea, at the other the Toshiba factory, so to leave the platform you have two options: jump into the sea, or show your Toshiba staff ID. If you happen to get off at that station, and you're neither fish, sea snake, nor Toshiba employee, but rather just a person, you have no choice but to stay put on the platform until the next train comes along. This was where I had to go.[8]

Umishibaura is the terminus of the Tsurumi-line in the Keihin industrial area.[9] It is a space of transit, at the frontier between a decaying industrial land and a polluted sea that has "the dull grey sheen of greased metal." It is a station where one can only pass through, or rather where one can only be circulated, a station without exit. The anonymous urban commuter cannot leave the space of this peculiar train station where trains only

come every hour or so. Not only is it long and expensive to get there, but there is literally nothing to do, nothing to see but the dull gray sea, suspended between both worlds of global commodity images and industrial production.

When I visited Umishibaura in June 2014, things had changed little from the mid-1990s station depicted in the novel. While Google maps have replaced the folded transit map used by the narrator, it still remained a rather unexciting trip propitious to *rêveries* when thinking about what could possibly have compelled someone to visit this place. In the case of Shōno Yoriko, this was for a freelance job, answering the call of her boss, and at the same time, it was something else, the call from an other, a tuna lover, another me. The train traveler, neither fish nor human, is a mix of both, and the tuna lover a double, the *doppelgänger* of the writer/narrator, a voice that keeps expanding across train lines, places and words. The train station and the train travel are here mobilized by Shōno Yoriko to stage the condition of urban dwelling, a condition of non-sovereignty in which she is able to encounter a planetary reality.

When preparing my trip, answering to the call of this novel, I found that this station had become a sort of hot spot known for its views of the Tokyo Bay, and even used by some as a date spot. There is even a Facebook page and several web pages dedicated to the station, documenting its short history with pictures of the Bay and the little park next to the Toshiba exit. Entering the park, I virtually exit the station when in fact, as in Shōno's story, only a fish or a Toshiba employee could physically exit its grounds. The installation of a SUICA station in 2002 apparently corrects the double contradiction of a train station from which one cannot exit and yet still travel to and from freely. When arriving at Umishibaura station, it is now possible to pay for the trip to and from Umishibaura by tapping a SUICA train card once, virtually exit the station without leaving its grounds. This financial adjustment that is at the discretion of the passenger makes all the more clear that there is at this point no exit to Tokyo and a planetary urban condition.

I propose here to read Shōno Yoriko's travel narrative of 1990s Tokyo as a fantasy that explores the impact of a planetary urban reality onto the experience of local places at a point in time when life only manifests itself in a state of ongoing decay. It is a form of melancholic writing which, engaging with local places at both an individual and planetary level, powerfully resonates with the present condition of Japan after the triple catastrophe of March 2011, a time when it has become necessary to learn how to live

in an ongoing state of crisis. This particular condition is also characteristic of what Neil Brenner calls a process of planetary urbanization, defined by a dual process of implosion and explosion of urban places.[10] Drawing on Henri Lefebvre's theory of urban society, Neil Brenner argues that it is impossible now to discuss any place without considering its integration into a planetary process of urbanization, always already embedded into urban flux of commodities, individuals and images. In this planetary urban space, the opposition between the city and the country has been replaced by a continuous field of urbanization, a world without others. In her writing, Shōno Yoriko explores this shift toward a continuous space of urbanization by playing on the tension between two modern urban fantasies, the open network of places and the closed rural community.

In *Floating Monsters of Tokyo*, published in 1996,[11] Shōno Yoriko portrays the narrator as a woman who moved from the country to the city, entering the capital at Tokyo station. Tokyo station, completed in 1914, precisely follows the Parisian model of the train station as discussed by Wolfgang Schivelbusch,[12] composed on one hand of a monumental red brick facade facing the Imperial Palace, and on the other of the train lines connecting the capital to the rest of Japan. Her new individual life as a single middle-aged fiction writer constantly moving from apartment to apartment in answer to the fluctuations of economics is initially opposed to her communal life in Izu, a rural prefecture in the south of Tokyo. As she explains, "loneliness is the biggest taboo in the community."[13] When a new girl arrives, she is thoroughly questioned about her personal life in order to be localized in the hierarchical communal structure, so that others can decide on the appropriate form of address to use with her. Then communication can start. This mode of communication proper to Izu is based on a structure of otherness, where the self is defined in relation to an other that must be captured and tamed by being integrated into a closed set of social positions.

In Shōno Yoriko's words, this structure of otherness is also masculine and associated with Orikuchi Shinobu's idea of the *marebito*, the god visitor periodically coming from the land of gods.[14] In Orikuchi's work, the visiting god effectuates a structure of otherness that both preserves the other as other and integrates the other into a communal social order where it can be safely encountered. In a recent article, Ueno Toshiya discusses this dual structure of the *marebito* and stresses how the Emperor historically comes to embody this relation to otherness by being both a sacred being, a *kami*, and a mediator, transmitting the words of the god.[15]

The structure of otherness of the *marebito* thus preserves and appropriates the other as absolute other through a structure of mediation that places the mediator Emperor in a situation of liminality. Interestingly in the Japanese case this mediating role is what grounds the central position of the Emperor in Japanese society. The rural mode of communication with the foreign girl discussed above is based on this very imperial structure. As such, the *marebito* constitutes the Japanese national subject as a centered and unmovable self to which comes the world.

In Shōno Yoriko's fiction, however, the space of Izu never becomes a space of authenticity opposed to urban modernity. Though associated with the past, with childhood, the communal life in Izu never becomes the ground from which to evaluate, criticize and articulate her adult experiences in Tokyo. For Izu has already been absorbed and consumed by Tokyo to become one additional polarity of a flat, urban space of movement. This is why in a recent interview, Shōno Yoriko rejects the masculine structure of identity characteristic of Orikuchi's *marebito*. In short, for Orikuchi, "the world comes to me," when for Shōno, the self rather goes to the world and disseminates its soul into a multiplicity of fragments.[16] Shōno thus opposes an immanent and emergent subjectivity to Orikuchi's transcendental structure of otherness, this desire for a lost rural and communal space of authenticity that is at the heart of the Imperial system. It is then possible to read her fictional narratives as an exploration of forms of subjectivity that open, beyond the national space of Japan, onto a planetary urban reality. What makes the urban, and Tokyo, planetary, would be this particular subjectivity emerging in a world *without* others, in a constant movement of expansion and dissemination.

Not only does Shōno Yoriko contest the imperial model of the community, but she also challenges modern theories of urban space inherited from Georg Simmel and the Chicago school that have defined urban experience in terms of the figure of the stranger.[17] The copresence of a multiplicity of individuals, of a multiplicity of individual worlds in a limited space, posed new problems of distance, precisely because it was not possible to engage the other as "other," as in the mode of communication of rural communal life discussed by Shōno Yoriko's narrator. The appeal of the figure of the stranger in classical urban sociology is then based on a reactive desire to reestablish communal rules of conduct, the rules of civility characteristic of bourgeois urban life. This is why in his writings on the urban space, Jean-Luc Nancy rejects this "refinement of urban customs" characteristic

of bourgeois urbanity that attempt to reintroduce a partial sense of otherness for dealing with a mass of anonymous urban dwellers.[18] Instead, he proposes to discuss the urban experience as one of movements from station to station, the temporary stay in the station opening onto a spectacle of urban life. The kind of urban experience described and performed in Shōno Yoriko's work is thus essentially distinct from the bourgeois paradigm of urban experiences, that is, the modern urban subject defined by a longing for home as a lost place of origin and national belonging, and by love as an opening to otherness.

This planetary image of Tokyo then never crystallizes into a total image but keeps receding and exploding into a multiplicity of fragments in a continuous movement from station to station, as the narrator meets a series of *doppelgängers*. The literature scholar Nakagawa Shigemi astutely describes Shono Yoriko's writing in terms of three movements: fragmentation, expansion and repetition. Not only is the urban everyday indefinitely fragmented, but these fragments are caught in a continuous movement of expansion, each morphing into the other. In *Time Warp Complex*, there is no separation of human, things and animals, all urban forms of life leaking into each other; the narrator becomes an impossible tuna lover, itself alternatively comic superhero, disincarnate voice, or cat food. Urban space is a space of differences, but difference is not here defined by an encounter with an absolute other. Rather, the other is always another other, in a serial movement of differentiation in the everyday *local* encounter with a planetary urban space. She is a cyborg, half human and half fish, a tuna lover, loving and being loved by a tuna-ish urban atmosphere. In short, the urban experience is one of movements, a movement of encounter of differences where there is no separation between humans and things.

In that respect, difference is primary to otherness, which only comes in a second moment as the effect of a play of perspectives. The urban everyday is in continuity with itself, defined by a continuous contraction and expansion, unanchored from any reference to a fixed and lost origin, or to a transcendental other. If anything, what structures urban space in this narrative is really the train station as a minimum unit of dwelling experience, the station as a dwelling place and an interface. In the next part, I discuss the question of urban dwelling and argue that the temporality of melancholia characteristic of urban experiences can open onto another relation with urban places and a planetary reality.

There Was Nothing in Umishibaura

The narrative of *Time Warp Complex* plays on the tension between every-day urban experiences and the illusion fostered by a global space of image commodities, here, the postindustrial landscape of Tokyo Bay in tension with the consumerist ideal of urban life advertised on TV screens. Initially expecting to find in Umishibaura a beach resort as in advertisements of Okinawa, or at least a comfortable coffee shop with a view on the bay, the narrator's expectations are immediately crushed by her anonymous caller: "It really is the world of *Blade Runner*, after the end of an industrial dream now in ruins. It's like you are going to look at a landscape after the end of everything."[19] However, it is not a question of representation and of the gap between images and the real; what we are concerned with here is mediation, the continuous movement between collective desires and individual worlds in a planetary urban landscape. The question is not that the dream does not fit with reality but rather that one continuously leaks into the other, without any clear sense of mediation. In other words, in Shōno's fantasy, urban space becomes a planetary space of mediation and urban dwelling implies then dwelling in an everyday state of transit and of non-sovereignty, dwelling in a station.

Urban dwelling is a question of mediating in a local place, a station, the ongoing planetary movement between a multiplicity of worlds and desires. And what is precisely at stake here is that in this movement, urban space traverses the general level of the global market and the nation-state to engage this planetary space of mediation locally. As Henri Lefebvre famously argued, urban space is essentially resistant to the modern State, yet at the same time also its necessary ground of action for the mobilization of a national population in a global market economy.[20] This is how, as literature scholar Shinjō Ikuo argues, Shōno's writing can be read as a form of resistance against the neoliberal state.

In the special edition of *Gendai Shisō* dedicated to Shōno Yoriko's work, Shinjō Ikuo explains how he was struck by her mobilization of the concept of possession, *shoyū*, to practice literature as a form of political activism. As Shinjō explains, the term s*hoyū* designates the historical relation that constitutes the material ground of modern subjectivity. For this reason, *shoyū* always already opens onto the horizon of an activist discourse of resistance and struggle.[21] What is at stake in Shōno Yoriko's work is then to explore the potential of literature to resist the neoliberal state, which starts by denouncing the appropriation of the land by the Imperial State. Shōno

Yoriko however does not call for a return to the sovereignty of the individual over the land, much less a Japanese local identity. She rather stresses that any practice of resistance must necessarily start from our everyday lives, in the very condition of non-sovereignty that defines our intimate relation to places and other beings. For resistance to the state is only possible from within local conditions of experience. As Shinjō argues, Shōno Yoriko discovered that "it is precisely by being possessed in the network of beings consummated by the state that 'I' exist."[22] In other words, the individual "I" can become the locus of resistance to the neoliberal state only in its very local subjection to a national space. It is only by virtue of this very subjection that a "hyper-individual" (*kokukojinshugi*)[23] self can come to embody a practice of resistance to the state and open onto another form of subjectivity beyond the national state.

Shinjō Ikuo brilliantly underlines the relation between subjectivity, writing and place in Shōno Yoriko's writing, showing how a radical condition of dispossession can be the ground for a literary practice of resistance to the neoliberal state.[24] This condition is itself not limited to the Japanese case, and can as such allow for lateral alliances with other practices of resistance to the neoliberal state outside of Japan. Throughout her writing and in particular her 1990s fictions such as *Time Warp Complex,* it appears clearly that this condition of non-sovereignty is grounded into the experience of the urban everyday, a local experience never entirely reduced to a logic of national reproduction in a national territory. The state of mediation that defines urban subjectivity is one of non-sovereignty, and this non-sovereignty is what opens the urban subject to the possibility of dwelling in a planetary urban space without submitting to the dual structure of desire of market capitalism and national belonging, a structure defined by loss, lack and otherness.

As the narrator explains, the Keihin area, where Umishibaura station is located, was already decaying in the 1970s and 1980s, when she started living in a cheap studio in the western suburb of Tokyo in an area frequented by foreign workers.

> I live in a one-room apartment on the third floor. My window looks out over a shopping district, with a view of everything from parades of Awa-odori dancers to election speeches, to patrol-car arrests, drunken brawls, and lovers' tiffs between heavy-metal types in the early hours. When I don't feel like going out, I just pretend that I'm looking out at the whole world from up there.

> Now some kind person might say, "but you can't actually see other countries from up there now, can you?" just by way of giving me a chance to explain that in fact foreigners constantly pass under this window after dark, even though you hear that their numbers have dwindled since the recession set in. Dhaka and Dub and Hong Kong – just like the words in the song… – workers of every nation. Now that I think of it, didn't I hear something recently about chocolate from Zimbabwe being sold for Valentine's Day? Or was it from Kenya?[25]

From the window of her studio, the narrator can see the whole world: she is already at the center of the world. There is no need to travel to discover another planetary reality, it is already here, emerging in the ongoing movement of decay of urban places in the margins of Japan Inc., in a decaying world of global travelers and cheap labor supporting the prosperous nation. For there is nothing special in Umishibaura, not even the cathartic spectacle of a post-apocalyptic landscape; Umishibaura never becomes *Blade Runner*. There was nothing to see in Umishibaura.

Time War Complex is not nostalgic for the glorious time of the 1980s in Japan, the mood of the narrative is rather melancholic, expressing the loss of something that was never there, this state of balance, of equilibrium grounded into the national home of Japan and its ideal of social reproduction in the family. As Marilyn Ivy has shown, the nostalgic desire for a home that has always already been lost is characteristic of any national desire and in particular of the Modern Japanese State.[26] The temporality of melancholia however does not allow for a nostalgic longing, nor for the mourning of a lost state of plenitude. It is an essentially transformational affect and in this sense might be the most urban of affects, grounded in the everyday experience of an ongoing temporality of evanescence and decay.

Decay as such is not loss. It is the reality of an everyday that blurs the distinction between presence and absence, life and death, human and nonhuman, national and foreign, as does our radioactive tuna. The idea of love without another is thus not simply the fancy of a narcissistic lonely individual, but what Foucault called "a new relational mode,"[27] a relation of intimacy allowed by the very transitory nature of urban space. It is an expanding and impersonal narcissism that, not relying on the idea of a sovereign subject of love, opens urban dwelling places to a planetary space of experiences. *Time Warp Complex* is a melancholic fantasy of Japan in the mid-1990s, a powerful experiment in writing where Shōno Yoriko embraces the relations of attachment and subjection that ground our urban everyday life to explore other forms of intimate relation beyond the state, the self and the nation.

In her 1997 collection of essays *The Psychic Life of Power*, Judith Butler discusses melancholy in terms of the fear of having lost the capacity to love, of having had to renounce homosexual love—that is, of having had to renounce a possibility of attachment not relying on the opposition of sameness and difference.[28] This is why in the end for her melancholia is at the service of normative power, functioning as "a form of containment, a way of internalizing an attachment that is barred from the world."[29] At the same time, this foreclosure of homosexual love in melancholia and the ensuing impossibility to mourn this attachment precisely reveals melancholia contingent and as such historical nature. Melancholia would then be at the foundation of modern subjectivity, and, because its temporality is both based on contingency and an ongoing process of decay—in melancholia, one continuously loses the object of love without ever becoming able to mourn its complete loss—this melancholia could be mobilized for exploring other modes of attachment, agency and identity.

However seductive Butler's reading of melancholia is, it stops short of imagining what could be a homosexual attachment, a form of love that does not rely on the desire to possess and be possessed by an other, that is, by this very structure of otherness that defines romantic love. As Eve Sedgwick argues, Butler's early work, like her own, is caught in a paranoid narrative of denunciation and resentment, a narrative of loss and victimization dangerously flirting with national desire, with the desire for the lost national home.[30] So maybe this imagination of another form of love should start at an exploration of this desire to be possessed by love, by the very relation of attachment that defines love. This I believe was the agenda of Shōno Yoriko when she set out to write this novel about love without a lover.

Love at the Center of the World

Love without a lover would be the most perverse relation, love of love, attachment for the sake of attachment; it would undermine the very premises of modern romantic love by embracing its basic tenet, that it is first a relation of attachment, indeed, that it starts by falling in love with the idea of love. Niklas Luhmann defines romantic passionate love as a self-reflexive system where "one loves loving and, therefore, loves a person whom one can love."[31] This would allow for freedom by remaining centered on oneself while respecting the integrity of the other as other, without in the process turning the loved other into an individual possession. Romantic love as love of love needs to posit as its limit the loved object as an absolute

other to maintain itself as a reflexive system closed on itself. The other lover must be both other and in its otherness compatible with me, both other and the same, my other. In this regard, romantic passionate love is essentially a perversion. It is self-love denying itself in the pursuit of otherness by relying on a desire to appropriate the desire of the other.

As Simmel and others have stressed, the structure of desire of romantic love is homologous with the structure of desire of the commodity system, in that it is a desire for something that cannot ever be gained and ultimately relies on the forgetting of an essential lack. As capitalism relies on the canceling out of history, of the emergence of contingency, love is defined by its hate for the future, its fear of change and loss of love. And the classical solution to this fear of the future has been the elaboration of a familialist ideology of the national home. Leo Bersani argues that "the assumption that in love the human subject is exceptionally open to otherness"[32] is what breeds our most aggressive instincts of possession and/as destruction of otherness. This is why he proposes to recover narcissism as an alternative to romantic love and its passionate desire to possess the other. What he calls an "impersonal narcissism" relies on the idea of passive subjectivity, in the subjection to a network of relations not defined by a structure of otherness. Shōno Yoriko's love without a lover is thus extremely provocative in its radical narcissism, grounded in a complete subjection to a historical and spatial order that paradoxically reopens subjectivity to the everyday encounter with difference, contingency and a more affirmative and non-sovereign relation with the world.

We have come back to our starting point, this world without others that defines our planetary urban experiences. Love without another would be the form of intimacy characteristic of a planetary state of mediation and transit, when we can only dwell in passing through a series of stations. This planetary urban experience resonates with Jean-Luc Nancy's definition of the city as "the place of a hospitality – the hotel and the hospital – which is not the welcoming in the place and symbolic bond of the house, but the *halte*, itself mobile, the punctuation of an itinerary and its freeze-frame."[33] In short, we should understand the city as a temporary dwelling place, a suspended moment, a station in an ever-expanding urban space.

This understanding of urban space has three immediate consequences. First, the opposition of city and country is not primary but itself an integral part of a heterogeneous and expansive movement of planetary urbanization and an ongoing state of mediation. This implies as well that urban space cannot be captured in a total image but remains a fragmented space

in constant expansion from station to station. Second, planetary urban space is a world without others, in which love without a lover means first being in love with the idea of love, with something tuna-ish, with an atmosphere. Love without a lover would be the form of intimacy corresponding to this planetary urban space explored by the narrator: not love of someone or something, but love as an atmosphere. Third, dwelling is itself experienced in the state of transit, transience and non-sovereignty of the traveler. It makes perfect sense then that the traveler in *Time Warp Complex* has become the iconic image of the urban dweller. For the urban dweller, any-place-whatever of this planetary space can become a place of meeting and dwelling; the urban dweller is always already at the center of a world.

> I had just got off at Asano, a station leading to either Anzen station or Umishibaura. Before the platform, behind, left and right, all was hardened by rail tracks, steel pipes, power transformers and high-voltage wires. Which should not be strange, having got off here to transfer trains. Its surroundings too, *foodries*, factories, and oil tanks. So I had ended up coming to the centre of the world. Cranes and chimneys on the water side, the centre of the world was shiny with the color of steel and light reflections, overflowing with explosive materials connected in some unknown way I could not guess.[34]

Asano station is at the center of the world, like Anzen or Umishibaura, or in fact any train station on the transport map of Tokyo. In a planetary urban space, any-place-whatever "can become a focus where everything moves."[35] Any place can for a suspended moment become a station, a *halte*, because in urban space differences continuously meet and transform. In short, urban space is a transformational form, where centrality is defined by "the association and encounter of whatever exists in one space at the same time. Thus it corresponds to a logical form: the point of encounter, the place of coming together."[36] The whole world is connected at Umishibaura, at the periphery of Tokyo, hanging on the side of Tokyo Bay. And there is nothing there. Being at the center of the world means first being anywhere and nowhere in particular, in a state of transit, a place only existing as a proper name, as letters that string together a multiplicity of image memories.

Place names, earlier in the novel associated with the name of global corporations—Pioneer, Asahi and then at Umishibaura, Toshiba—are the only things standing out in this deserted landscape, painted in large, bold

letters on the facades of nondescript industrial buildings. Umishibaura and the surrounding Keihin industrial area are images of the city as space of production of image commodities sold on TV screens. All buildings look the same, their names flattened out, empty signs of commodities circulating between screens, memory images and department stores. For example, "the Mary chocolate factory.… At the thought of the pink and brown chocolates sold in department stores, and the chocolates in assortment boxes so light when I held them in my fingers, superposed now with this huge and dried up building, I trembled."[37] The shock of recognition that literally shakes the body of the narrator has the effect of ideological critique, when the hidden gray space of production emerges at the surface of the commodity and breaks the spell of commodity fetishism.

However, this surfacing of the industrial landscape in the world of commodity images does not so much disturb the quiet dream of consumerism as flatten out everything onto anonymous surfaces and empty words. The shock of recognition, this tremor that runs through the narrator, means precisely the frightening experience of lack of mediation between both worlds, brutally juxtaposed, of reality leaking into the dream. The question becomes how to find a way to rearticulate the movement between worlds in this urban landscape through the mediation of places and words in their association with childhood memories and postwar geopolitics.

The narrative of *Time Warp Complex* is thus oriented by the doubts of the narrator about the reason, value and even possibility of going to Umishibaura. She is a subject of doubt, but doubt here does not ground a critical self, the Cartesian ego. The narrator is submitted to the imperative call of an other, *her* other, emerging out of her childhood, her dreams and her urban experiences. The submission to the call of *her* urban world, the decaying world that possesses her, is what grounds her agency as writer, storyteller and traveler. The narrator keeps saying that she will never get to Umishibaura, for this is the only possible agency allowed by the imperative call to delay arrival in Umishibaura and, more importantly, to engage with the singular mediation of this planetary space, to experiment with "other relational modes."

As the narrator tries to make sense of her anonymous caller's demand that she travel to Umishibaura, she is suddenly asked to go and take snapshots of a "strange place," as if leaving her rented apartment, taking a camera, and getting into a train would "make her see other countries" and educate her about politics and economics. She only has a disposable camera and cannot afford to buy one of the ¥50,000 new ones sold in Shinjuku. The most she can afford is a ¥200 train ticket.

The moment I'd spoken, my mind – agile for still being half-asleep – cut to a memory of a camera. I'd taken a picture of a weasel, nine years earlier. I took the picture through a glass door, and this caused something called halation. The image of the weasel and the Japanese-style garden in the background came out cracked and cloudy, while in the center of the photo there was a corona of light radiating from the weasel's back. Sort of a Weasel-of-God effect. Actually, I would have opened the door to take the picture, but that would have scared the weasel away. This was the extent of my photography career.[38]

This one experience of photography is exemplary in its rejection of the representational use of cameras. Photography has been discussed in terms of the digital and the analog, defining the analog as indexical, materially related to a time of origin from which the digital would be detached, literally becoming a seamless field of emergent images. Elizabeth Freeman remarks that analog technology, if always a material trace of the past, is not as smooth as digital technology: "Digital code effaces the visible seams, audible noise, palpable textures that accompany analog transitions from one medium to another, or state to another."[39] In other words, the analog is not exactly about a lost past, but rather about the movement between media, between temporalities and worlds, a movement that is never smooth but marked by noise, interruptions and machine jam. The indexicality of the analog camera points at a particular experience of urban places, not so much alienated from its subject as defined by a continuous movement of mediation.

What is recorded in the end is nothing else but the process of mediation, the only clear thing being not the weasel nor the background, but the halo effect of the camera itself, the light made visible by the window, in the tension created by the window screen. So there is no point trying to record the real: one only records the process of mediation without ever accessing the real. However, representation, and the impossibility of accessing the past indexed by the photographic image, is not the point here. This is why the narrator cannot find *Blade Runner* in Umishibaura. As Slavoj Žižek famously argued, *Blade Runner* relies on a Kantian conception of subjectivity in which it is the very impossibility to know what I am that defines me as human. The replicant is thus the figure of the human, a decentered subject absolutely other to itself. The use of photography in the plot only emphasizes the lack at the heart of human subjectivity in a world of copies. *Time Warp Complex* follows a logic distinct from this postmodern world of simulacra, a logic more akin to a Derridean dissemination.[40] There is

no point in going to Umishibaura: the narrator can already see the world from the windows of her apartment. The novel instead explores the gap opened by the very movement of planetary mediation in place, examining an expansive and affirmative process of fictionalization emerging in the gap between me and my lover, Tokyo and the world, places and words.

In the end, what the novel asks is what holds together this center of the world, bridging the spaces of image commodities, urban everyday life and childhood memories. And it is nothing else but this process of fictionalization in the train station. For it is the name of the station that connects all places and times together in a planetary urban fantasy:

> "What was that name again?"
> "Umishibaura. U-mi-shi-ba-u-ra."
> I must not quite have made it from the Showa era to the Heisei. That was one tough name to catch....
> "Um, I'm sorry, but...what was that again? Umishinagawa? Umashiroura? What was it? Something -shimaura?"
> "What I said was, U-MI-SHI-BA-U-RA."
> "Ohhh.... Ki-mi-shi-ma-na-ra. Kimishima-Nara, is it? In the mountains, right?"
> I was sure I'd heard of a place called Kimishima near Nara, so I put the two together immediately. That's because I'm from Ise, and most of the places around there seem to have that sort of double-barreled name, like Ise-Matsuzaka or Ise-Kawasaki – except for Ise itself, of course. So I just assumed that some person born in Nara and living in Kimishima had fond childhood memories and started calling the place....[41]

There is here an interesting play between the place and the name of the place that reminds us of traditional *meisho*, the famous places celebrated in fiction and poetry. As here, it is the gap between the place and the name that opens a space of experiences. From their "use as a device to signify the relation between the Emperor and his land,"[42] to the ascetic Buddhist monks visiting those places of historical memory in order to experience the evanescence and truth of life, classical *meisho* have constituted a landscapism associated with movement in space. They are places to be visited, and this travel is allowed by a name that literally makes the place a place. In addition, a *meisho* was experienced as part of a network referring to a cosmological order centered on the Imperial court in Kyoto. Landscapes were experienced as part of this closed network of poetic associations of places and emotions, and as such always implied a temporal movement and tension between the name and the place, between a geographical position and one's actual experience of place. Yet Shōno Yoriko's *meisho*

are urban stations, rejecting the imperial cosmology and the hierarchy of places and beings it entails. Stations are anonymous places abstracted from the imperial cosmology and flattened out in an urban landscape of circulation structured by the train system. This is still a national territory, yet it opens through the gap of language itself onto a nomadic planetary space.

In an essay on Paul Celan, Jacques Derrida gives us an approximate image of this planetary space:

> [The Greek word] *planētēs* means "wandering," "nomadic," and it is sometimes said of errant animals as a matter of fact. *Planetikos* means unstable, turbulent, agitated, unpredictable, irregular; *planos* is used to describe an errant course but also a digression, for example, in the articulation of a discourse, of a written text, and so also of a poem.[43]

Shōno Yoriko's nomadic writing is however more than a digression or *exercice de style*, as in too many of Derrida's works. For she really performs here a "reparative reading," opening a space of fantasy in which it becomes possible to inhabit and be inhabited by a decaying world, decaying, and dying, because alive.

So how can I love my radioactive tuna? Maybe by starting to fantasize my planetary experience in local urban places:

> This was how I came to know the station's name. Umi and shiba and ura. U-way-mi-way-shi-way-ba-way-uway-ra-way, as kids playing with the sound of the word would say nowadays. We'd have said u-yay-mi-yay-shiyay-ba-yay-u-yay-ra-yay…but things have gotten stranger.
> My sleepy-agile mind leapt into overdrive, bringing forth a completely unsolicited image to match this name, a sea as artificial as a backdrop, like a piece of glittery cloth. You couldn't see any islands, but there were several large patches of grass on the shore. A ghostly hand popped up from within my mind to pluck a single blade of this grass. But the blade seemed to be connected to the rest of the grass by a thread which the hand was rapidly winding in, like the stitching of a piece of fabric, and the sea unraveled together with the grass and everything got tugged up. Then from out of nowhere, riding on a stuffed, decorative, endangered sea turtle, came a crumbling mummy dressed in bright, kabuki-colors. It was Urashima Taro in a grass skirt, the boy from the folk tale who returned from beneath the sea to find everything changed. He swished on his turtle through the white space which the tugged-up sea had exposed, and when he disappeared, there finally emerged a realistic seacoast worthy of the word shore. It was pretty similar to the sea where I'd met the tuna.
> This wasn't obsession, just obstinacy. But…I loved him. My love-tuna.

NOTES

1. Shōno Yoriko, "Time Warp Complex," trans. Adam Fulford, *Review of Contemporary Fiction* 22 no. 2 (Summer 2002): 171 (partial translation). I use this translation except as otherwise specified.
2. Larry McCaffery, Sinda Gregory, Kotani Mari, Takayuki Tatsumi, "This Conflict Between Illusion and Brutal Reality: An Interview With Yoriko Shono," *Review of Contemporary Fiction* 22 no. 2 (Summer 2002).
3. The price of tuna plunged due to fears over radiation, and some 75 tons caught from March through December 1954 were found to be unfit for consumption and destroyed: Mark Schreiber, "Lucky Dragon's Lethal Catch," *The Japan Times*, March 18, 2012.
4. Quoted in Tanaka Yuki, "Godzilla and the Bravo Shot: Who Created and Killed the Monster," in *Filling the Hole in the Nuclear Future – Art and Popular Culture Respond to the Bomb*, ed. Robert Jacobs (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2010), 165.
5. Yabu Shirō, *Genshiryoku toshi* [Nuclear city] (Tokyo: Ibunsha, 2010).
6. Inoue Mayumo made a good point of contrasting the nuclear sublime of *Hiroshima mon amour* and its problematic relation with a national aesthetic, to the aesthetic of ruins in the recent movie by Suwa Nobuhiro, *H-Story* (2001). Inoue Mayumo, "On Bright Humor: Cinematic Sensoriums of History in Recent East Asian Films," unpublished paper, Association for Asian Studies, Chicago, March 2015.
7. Tzvetan Todorov, "Structural Analysis of Narrative," trans. Arnold Weinstein, *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 3 no. 1 (Autumn 1969): 70–76.
8. Shōno, "Time Warp Complex," 114.
9. Richard Samuels gives a well-informed analysis of the rise and fall of the Keihin industrial area in postwar Japan: Samuels, *The Politics of Regional Policy in Japan: Localities Incorporated* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983).
10. Neil Brenner, ed., *Implosions/Explosions: Towards a Study of Planetary Urbanization* (Berlin: Jovis, 2014).
11. Shōno Yoriko, *Tokyo Yokai Fuyū* (Tokyo Floating Monsters) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1998); first published in the literary journal *Herumesu* (May and July 1997) and *Sekai* (January–April 1998).
12. Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19th Century* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985).
13. Shōno Yoriko, *Taimu Surippu Konbināto* (Time Warp Complex) (Tokyo: Bungei Shunjū, 1994). I refer to the Japanese original here, as the second half of the novel has not been translated. All translations are mine.
14. For an outline of Orikuchi Shinobu's thought in English, see Harry Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity: History, Culture and Community in Interwar Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 293–357;

Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, *The Monkey as Mirror: Symbolic Transformations in Japanese History and Ritual* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987). In Japanese, a good introduction is Nakazawa Shinichi, *Kodai kara kita miraijin – Orikuchi Shinobu* (The man who came from the future – Orikuchi Shinobu) (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 2008).

15. Ueno Toshiya, "Monogurui no sonzairon" (Ontology of craziness), *Gendai Shisō* 42 no. 7 (May 2014): 260–281.

16. Andō Reiji and Shōno Yoriko, "Kokushi to shūkyō: jikoni naizai suru yui-itsu zettai no tasha vs 'ichi' no tayōsei to kanōsei ni tsuite" (The hyperself and religion: the absolute other that dwells in the self vs the possibility and multiplicity of the 'one'), *Gendai Shisō* 35 no. 4 (March 2007), 72.

17. Georg Simmel, "The Sociology of Sociability [1910]," trans. Everett C. Hugues, *American Journal of Sociology* 55 no. 3 (Nov. 1949): 254–261; Robert E. Park, Ernest W Burgess, and Roderick D. McKenzie, *The City* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1925).

18. Jean-Luc Nancy, *Trafic, déclic* (Strasbourg: La Phocide, 2010). All quotes are my translation.

19. Shōno, "Time Warp Complex," 26.

20. "…the incompatibility between the State and the urban is radical in nature":
Henri Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution* [1970], trans. Robert Bonono (Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 180.

21. Shinjō Ikuo, "Kokka ni hansuru 'watashi' – Shōno Yoriko shiron" (The self that resists the state: Shōn Yoriko's theory of the self), *Gendai Shisō* 35 no. 4 (2007): 158–168.

22. Shinjō, "Kokka ni hansuru 'watashi'," 164.

23. Instead of the postmodern rejection of individuality in favor of a networked fragmented self, Shōno proposes first to embrace neoliberal subjectivity as state of destitution in order to open onto an expanding sense of the self as viral dissemination.

24. For Shinjō Ikuo, this condition of dispossession is rooted in the appropriation of the land, and is as such first a question of sovereignty. Although Shinjō does not use the term sovereignty (*shuken*) in the essay, his reference to the violent resistance of Narita farmers and Okinawans in Shōno Yoriko's work links the question of possession to that of sovereignty, and asks us to imagine a form of subjectivity grounded in a radical state of non-sovereignty.

25. Shōno, "Time Warp Complex," 117.

26. Marilyn Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing: Modernity, Phantasm, Japan* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995).

27. As Leo Bersani often remarks, Foucault asked, "How can a relation system be reached through sexual practice?" Bersani's own work is precisely an

attempt at trying to articulate new relation modes. Michel Foucault, "Friendship as a Way of Life" (1981), in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth,* vol. 1 of *Essential Works of Foucault 1954–1984*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: New Press, 1997), 137; Leo Bersani, "Sociability and Cruising," in *Is the Rectum a Grave and Other Essays* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 45–62. My reading of urban experience as grounded in a state of non-sovereignty finds its origin in this essay by Bersani, which I attempt to open onto a form of positivity moving away from the image of an association of isolated social monads.

28. Judith Butler, "Melancholy Gender/Refused Identification Keeping it Moving," in *The Psychic Life of Power* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 132–150.

29. Butler, "Melancholy Gender," 143.

30. Eve Sedgwick, "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, or, You're So Paranoid, You Probably Think This Essay is About You," in *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 123–152.

31. Niklas Luhmann, *Love: A Sketch*, trans. Kathleen Cross (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010), 32.

32. Leo Bersani and Adam Phillips, *Intimacies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 75.

33. Nancy, *Trafic/Déclic*, 11.

34. Shōno, *Taimu Surippu Konbināto*, 60.

35. Christian Schmidt, "Networks, Borders, Differences: Towards a Theory of the Urban," in *Implosion/Explosion: Towards a Study of Planetary Urbanization*, ed. Neil Brenner (Berlin: Jovis, 2014), 71.

36. Schmidt, "Networks, Borders, Differences," 71.

37. Shōno, *Taimu Surippu Konbināto*, 39.

38. Shōno, "Time Warp Complex," 116.

39. Elizabeth Freeman, *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2010), 110.

40. Slavoj Žižek, *Tarrying with the Negative* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993).

41. Shōno, "Time Warp Complex," 118.

42. Jilly Traganou, *The Tōkaidō Road: Traveling and Representation in Edo and Meiji Japan* (London & New York: Routledge/Curzon, 2004), 69.

43. Jacques Derrida, "Rams: uninterrupted dialogue – between two infinities, the poem," in *Sovereignties in question: the poetics of Paul Celan*, ed. Thomas Dutoit and Outi Pasanen (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), 153.

Urban Life After Fukushima

Brave New Sanriku: Recovering from 3.11

Ramona Bajema

In 1935, anthropologist Yamaguchi Yaichiro visited the Sanriku coastline to investigate why people still lived there. The Showa Tsunami of 1933 had just pummeled the Pacific side of Tōhoku only a few decades after the devastating 1896 tsunami.[1] Possibly influenced by his teacher, ethnographer and folklorist Yanagita Kunio, Yamaguchi posited that locals on the Tōhoku coastline felt responsible for taking care of their ancestors' graves and, for that reason, could not leave. His research revealed an even stronger pull back to the water. Instead of ancestral obligations, economic necessity drove fishermen to build their homes progressively closer to the sea despite its regular destructive force. Fishermen, who lived at the water's edge, had a competitive advantage over those on higher land. By the time Yamaguchi published *Tsunami to Mura* (Tsunami and the Village) in 1943, people displaced by the Showa Tsunami were already moving back to the shoreline.

Primroses and landscapes have one grave defect: they are gratuitous. A love of nature keeps no factories busy.
—Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*, 1932

R. Bajema (✉)
Ojiai, USA

I cannot offer a better explanation than Yamaguchi's as to why people still live in Sanriku after the 2011 triple disaster. Like Yamaguchi, I too have searched through the post-disaster remains to understand what cannot be washed away by a 100-meter high wave that obliterated entire cities, leaving only scraps, shards, and severed lives. The wave left debris in its wake, but there were intangible forces that it could not erase—traces of memory, ghosts, and rituals that gave new life to long-abandoned public works projects, *machi-zukuri* (town-building) plans, and disaster tourism. A second wave called Recovery and Reconstruction swept into Tōhoku powered by slogans of hope and solidarity to people in despair wishing they could go back in time.

After a major disaster, a survivor's longing for what was lost in seconds fuels the capitalist machine, which demands growth in order to survive. Naomi Klein describes responses to survivors' post-disaster state as a "shock treatment," whereby a corporatist government can rapidly enforce its goals on a "clean slate."[2] In 2011, Tōhoku looked to its leaders to rescue them from the detritus that engulfed them. They depended on their mayors, governors, prime minister, the bureaucracy, reconstruction agencies, foreign aid groups, and even the military to act as comforting parents, hoping they would make everything right again.

Survivors walking through a destroyed landscape were not only disoriented, but also emotionally wrecked. Their wounds were deep and visible. Although commended for their "stoicism" (*gaman-zuyoi* said the press), Tōhoku's walking wounded cried, became hysterical, dazed, were impatient and grief-stricken like anyone else living through hell. Survivors of the 2011 disaster needed nurturing and healing as much as new homes and heating.

The triple disaster allows us to observe the rivalry between capitalist and communal forces along Japan's northeastern coast during the recovery period. Dedicated volunteers and aid workers from all over Japan and around the world gathered to help survivors. Volunteers mucked out fishing factories of tons of squid, visited the temporary housing communities to drink tea with elderly survivors, work on origami projects, and repair fishermen's netting. While trucks carried loads of dirt away and dropped off tons of cement, college students and Tokyo businessmen worked with survivors to plant flower gardens along highways.

Disasters in developed countries are not as costly in terms of lives lost as those in other parts of the world, but they are exponentially greater in terms of capital loss. Haiti lost 240,000 lives in its 2010 earthquake and suffered $14 million worth of damage. Japan lost 20,000 lives, but experienced at

least $235 billion in damage. Capital's vengeance for this loss would be great. Sanriku's "Mountains, Ocean, and Sea," which inspired the founder of the MOS Burgers restaurant chain, are under threat since 2011: cut down the mountains and trees, build a wall to block the sea, scrape off the top soil, and elevate the land. Although the Sanriku coast had evaded becoming part of what Alex Kerr calls the "world's ugliest country" during Japan's push to become an advanced economy, reconstruction rather than the tsunami threatened to convert it.[3] Recovery from the disaster was an economic opportunity.

Evacuees from Fukushima awoke from the nightmare faster than their neighbors to the north. Their hellscape did not look much different than it had on March 10. Unlike the Sanriku survivors, who walked through asbestos-covered debris, puddles of Freon from submerged cars, and rivers of pesticides gathered from rice paddies, Fukushima's residents confronted an even greater "invisible enemy," a manmade poison infecting the area with fear and distrust. Before riding hours away from their homes, Fukushima's evacuees were stunned to hear that they were not going home again. When commanded to board the buses, they were given no information, so they did not turn the rice cooker and water heater off, nor remove perishables from the refrigerator. Residents of Namie and Futaba left their dogs, cats, and cows outside with no food, because they expected to be right back.

Fukushima's residents felt less trust than Sanriku's surivors, since they were witnessing the government's failed response to the nuclear meltdown. Katsunobu Sakurai, mayor of Minami-Soma, pleaded for assistance on March 26 to a domestic and international YouTube audience. With businesses closed, tens of thousands in temporary housing and no hope of returning to contaminated areas, Fukushima's evacuees became completely dependent on the government and TEPCO for livelihood support.

A stunned Japanese populace began to voice their anger toward a government that had guaranteed their safety from nuclear accidents. Now, they doubted all of the government's assurances about its response to the meltdown, the validity of its dosimeters, and TEPCO's capacity to fix the situation. Eventually in 2012, in front of the National Diet Building, people protested the restarting of nuclear plants throughout Japan. They successfully halted the restarting of the Oicho nuclear power plant in Fukui's "Genpatsu Ginza," but did not prevent a pro-nuclear power Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) from regaining its majority position in the 2012 nation-wide election. Biding its time on the nuclear power plants, the LDP quickly enacted controversial laws such as the state secrets

law and the "Peace and Security Preservation Law," which threatened the remilitarization of Japan. Naomi Klein's "shock doctrine" prophecy was being realized as the LDP raced to enact such laws while the Japanese people focused on the threat of more nuclear power plants located on seismic fault lines.

The earthquake shook the foundations, the wave obliterated everything in its wake, and the nuclear power plant contaminated areas unlucky enough to be in the March wind's arbitrary path to the northwest. The disaster, however, did not end in March, but has been ongoing. While the media focuses on the Daiichi plant cleanup, further disasters have unfolded during the post-3.11 recovery. We have been contending with Nature by demanding unconditional surrender from the ocean and land under the guise of reconstruction. The survivors' broken hearts have blinded them to the marauding forces that trample what is left of their landscape. By tapping into their reservoirs of hope, the construction state has convinced survivors that the rebuilding efforts are in their best interest.

Zone of Sacrifice

Tōhoku's economic importance to Japan is negligible. Its six prefectures, 20 percent of the national territory, contribute 6 percent of the country's gross domestic product. In 2010, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry described Tōhoku's economy as in a "severe state."[4] Exports were falling due to a higher-valued yen and decreased demand. A declining job market in Tokyo meant that more young people had to compete for limited jobs in Tōhoku. After the triple disaster, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) urged the Japanese government to not only reconstruct damaged parts of Tōhoku, but also use the disaster as an opportunity to revitalize Japan. Here was a "clean slate" for the government and business to apply economic magic for the future of the country.

Tōhoku was on the wrong side of the Meiji restoration. Its loyalty to the Tokugawa shogunate rather than the imperial forces led to an image of recalcitrance. Rather than hopping on the train of modernization, Tōhoku locals clung to their "backward" folk beliefs. Neglected by Tokyo's national development goals, northeastern Japan became even more vulnerable to famine than it had been in the centuries before. Families sent their daughters south to work in textile factories and brothels. Tōhoku became a source of labor, natural resources, and the occasional writer and scientist, but not the beneficiary of imperial Japan's bounty. Yanagita

Kunio sang Tōhoku's praises with the publication of *Tōno Monogatari* (Tales of Tōno) in 1910, but the wider public was not nostalgic for a pre-modern past until the 1930s. By this time, Tōhoku had become what some considered an internal colony of imperial Japan. In more arcane terms, it was considered the site of legend, darkness, tradition, crafts, rice, sake, folklore, shamanism, animism, and superstition.[5]

People in Tōhoku, however, do not understand themselves in these terms. They acknowledge that they are on the periphery of national decision-making and economic development, which accounts for their infamous stoicism. They, too, want to be part of modern Japan and share in its global economic prowess: a developed infrastructure, highways, internet service, cell phones that do not fall out of range, active ports, trains for commuting.

Tokyo officials and businessmen did not have to cram reconstruction projects down Tōhoku's throat, but residents had no say in the scale, purpose, and prioritization of the recovery projects. There seemed to be little consultation with locals about what form the recovery should take: Father Tokyo knew what would be best for them. Later, as the post-disaster adrenaline wore off, survivors realized that they needed more than cement and conveyor belts to recover. Healing their grief required a lighter touch than what the government was capable of giving. As they slowly healed from loss, their eyes readjusted to a reconstructed scenery totally unlike the hometowns they knew.

Recovery from the triple disaster required plastic surgery for the Tōhoku coastline: a hillside cut here, a filled-in marsh there, a scoop of contaminated soil moved yonder. Only the ten kilometers around the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant would be allowed to age gracefully. With these nips and tucks, it was hoped that life could return to what it was like before 2011. Whether anyone wanted to go back to pre-2011 was a question that created nervous tittering, given the area's faltering economy. Nevertheless, calls for recovery required a quick solution, and by late 2012, the landscape was undergoing major surgery.

Never Let a Serious Crisis Go to Waste

Reports from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development suggested using the disaster to revitalize Japan, but where should it start? There was no discussion about whether or not to rebuild harbors that had not been used in decades, or to rebuild hamlets where only a lone 80-year-old woman lived.

The OECD suggested focusing on the agricultural sector, a major, historical obstacle in global neoliberal agendas when Japan was at the negotiating table. The LDP and Ministry of Foreign Affairs was notorious for protecting its farmers from foreign competition when establishing trade deals: neither California nor Thai rice was welcome through Japanese ports. The OECD did not seem aware that since LDP support was no longer dependent on rural farmer votes, it was already signaling its willingness to sell out farmers in backroom dealings around the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). With the Tōhoku rice basket in jeopardy, the OECD thought this might be the time to lower the drawbridge.

In addition to entire towns, four million acres of rice paddies were soaked in salt water on March 11. The OECD urged the Japanese government to use the opportunity to reform the agricultural sector by consolidating farms and ending subsidies to farmers. Farmers presented one of the most formidable blocks to Japan's joining the TPP. Liberalizing the agriculture sector would prepare Japan for acceptance of the massive trade deal, which demanded that the government stop protecting its farmers. Although acknowledging that Tōhoku's share of the agriculture labor force was double the national average, the OECD report insisted that the 3.11 shock should pave the way for yet another blow to farmers grappling with salt water in their rice paddies.

Another faltering area in Tōhoku since before the disaster was the fishing industry. Fishermen in Tōhoku lost 80 percent of their boats on March 11. Residents on Sanriku's coastline, famous for its seafood, feared that without the recovery of the fisheries, the harbor towns would never survive.[6] Only 20,000 people have been employed in the industry, and that number has dropped since young laborers destined to become fishermen decided to go into safer and more lucrative construction jobs. Their fathers and grandfathers have offered little protest, since the number of fish available to catch has plummeted.

Construction was once again a growth industry in Tōhoku after being in steady decline since the 1990s. Since 1997, the number of construction jobs in Japan had steadily dropped from just over seven million to slightly over five million in 2011, when it was at its lowest. Since 2012, there was an uptick in the number of construction jobs in the country, which climbed further as the country prepared for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. The timing of the disaster was unfortunate, because many Tōhoku construction companies had just gone bankrupt following the Lehman Shock of 2008. The unlucky companies sold their equipment and let their employees go only a few years before the need to rebuild entire towns.

After 2011, construction workers came from Akita, Yamagata, and as far away as Kyushu to work temporary jobs. This helped the hotel, food service, and pachinko industries, since these young men had money to spend and nothing to do when they were not in the mud. Sendai, the political and economic capital of Tōhoku, experienced a "bubble" as construction executives flocked to its drinking neighborhoods like Kokubun-chō, where Tōhoku's young women were also in demand. Car sales climbed after 2011 as residents in the countryside replaced the cars that washed away. In Sendai, luxury car sales increased: more BMW cars sold in 2011 in Sendai than any other year. A few local actors obviously benefited, but many more who commuted to Sendai took their earnings with them to their head offices in Tokyo and Osaka.

The construction industry was the fourth largest provider of jobs (470,000) in Tōhoku following sales (750,000), manufacturing (700,000), and health and welfare (690,000). Asked why the construction of permanent housing was taking years longer than initial estimates in 2011, government employees responded that the cost of labor and materials had risen and slowed down the process. Demand for construction materials like plywood and cement increased 8.9 percent. In the meantime, public works projects like highways, tunnels, and bridges proceeded on time. The 2011 disaster provided jobs, but for a region where an economy and population has been shrinking year by year, new construction might be an unsustainable economic pillar.

The 2011 disaster could not solve Japan's demographic story—an aging population and falling birthrate—that has given bureaucrats sleepless nights since the 1990s. Since 2000, Tōhoku's elderly population (65 years and higher) has increased from two million to two and half million. By 2020, the elderly would account for almost three million Tōhoku residents, one-third of its overall population. Since there have been more deaths than births, temples handling funerals were faring better than shrines that blessed newborns. The migration of people out of the region—particularly following the 2011 disaster—was speeding up the depopulation process.

The depopulation issue was an economic problem rather than a social one: fewer people meant less production, consumption, and tax revenue. Residents seemed to long not for the imagined halcyon days before March 11, but for the post-World War II boom era. Billboards in Ishinomaki's old downtown area showed enlarged street-scene photographs from the 1960s, the postwar high economic growth era. The arcade had been a bustling shopping area populated by women in hats and dresses holding the hands of small children. Construction companies, which had posted the billboards,

suggested that their post-disaster rebuilding was bringing the town back to this era of abundance. No one advertised images of the arcade area empty of customers just before the disaster as the point of return. Reconstruction, the billboards suggested, would lead to economic recovery as well.

In 2012, a few stores did reopen along Ishinomaki's arcade: a vegetable and fruit store that had nothing fresh to sell, a miniature-sized Mitsukoshi that sold suits for funerals, and a shoe store that had rain boots priced three times higher than those sold at the Aeon shopping mall. No one returned to old-town Ishinomaki, but Aeon's parking lot was full. In Rikuzentakata, Aeon was the first store to be rebuilt. Rational consumers were making rational economic choices. No one bought *futon* at a street-side store anymore. Teenagers and housewives lined up at the Starbucks in Aeon. They ordered matcha tea lattes rather than picking tealeaves with their grandmothers to sell along the arcade. Old-town's only bustling business was disaster souvenirs, such as pendants made out of scattered slate rock from Ogatsu, or T-shirts that read, "*Ganbare Ishinomaki!*" The free market was better able to work now that the arcade shopping area was swept clean (Fig. 5.1).

Fig. 5.1 Ishinomaki, June 2011

2011: Kizuna (Unity)

Survivors and people in charge of recovery operate at different tempo-
ralities following a disaster. Tsunami survivors rarely remember details of
their experience from those first few days. Construction companies and
government officials can start developing a reconstruction plan within
weeks or days of a disaster. Survivors, however, experienced years of
activity and emotion in a single day. When asked to remember the days
after the disaster, survivors will tell you that they were simply busy: find-
ing food, shelter, information, family, and friends. Medical teams, vol-
unteer groups, Self Defense Forces, foreigners, and journalists rushed
around in a blur. Many residents only remembered how cold the follow-
ing days were, or seeing more stars than ever before. One man walked
from Kesennuma over the mountain pass to Rikuzentakata to check to
see what was left of his family and home. (His family was fine. His home
was gone.) A director for an elderly facility spent a month tracking wards
with dementia who had been rescued off the roof by helicopters and then
taken to various evacuation centers. No one knew how to identify them
when they arrived, and since patients did not know who they were either,
it was a tricky task to find them all.

At some point, the adrenaline wore off and boredom set in. In July
2011, the sense of urgency to move survivors out of evacuation centers was
understandably high. Eighty-five-year-old great-grandmothers had been
living on flattened cardboard boxes in school gymnasiums since March.
Their dentures had washed away, so they were unable to eat the standard
onigiri (rice balls) fare. For months, women's hands were chapped and
sticky from molding ball after ball of rice. Evacuation centers only occa-
sionally received fresh food. Children's teeth were rotting, because they
were eating candy and rice crackers that stuck in their un-brushed molars.

One woman in Higashi Mastushima said that the toilets were the worst
part. She realized that someone needed to clean them and she took it upon
herself to do so. What surprised her, she said, was that people allowed her
to do it on her own and did not step in to help. Other centers were differ-
ent: people recounted that because they were used to dividing up cleaning
tasks as schoolchildren, they applied that spirit to cleaning the evacuation
centers. Volunteer groups that had distributed bedding returned to the
centers to clean futons infested with lice. One volunteer group created
T-shirts showing a cartoon of a 1950s-style pin-up girl, vacuum in hand,
with text that read, "Lice Busters."

In tsunami-affected areas, cleanup began almost immediately. In Fukushima, however, residents continued to evacuate their homes for several months as they received more information about how the airborne radiation had moved across the prefecture. As late as mid-May, city officials from Iitate Village and Kawamata began to knock on residents' doors to inform them that they had to leave their homes. Hundreds of people who thought they had been safe from radiation contamination found out that they had been living for the last two months with high levels of radiation. City administrators, most of them locals with friends and family in the area, had to tell old women to leave their homes and dairy farmers to kill their cows (Fig. 5.2).

As the summer temperature and humidity levels soared, people wanted to get out of the evacuation centers and did not understand why the building of temporary housing was taking so long. Government welfare workers came to take surveys on the mental health conditions of the evacuees.

Fig. 5.2   Kawamata clean-up

For those who did not run away when they saw the mental health teams enter the shelters, the response to questions about their wellbeing was, "I want to get out of here." It was still too early to talk about "that day." They filled out the forms requesting to be moved with family members or with members of their former communities. Although the officials did their best to meet requests, not all first or second choices could be granted, and tens of thousands were scattered randomly: fishermen in the mountains, grandmothers hundreds of miles from their grandchildren, the ill hours away from hospitals.

Barraged by the media in the weeks after the triple disaster, most evacuation centers refused visitors and prohibited cameras. Even humanitarian aid workers who visited the Tōhoku coastline to conduct needs assessments were barred from entering the gymnasiums and convention centers where evacuees waited. As survivors' lives were otherwise on display, with no privacy from each other or the outside world, volunteer groups and government officials were vigilant in protecting what remained of the survivors' dignity.

However, this tendency to shield evacuees from prying eyes had a somewhat dehumanizing effect. Rather than looking a survivor in the eye, visitors used protection of individual space as a pretense for averting their gaze. In a sense, this effort to protect the survivors' dignity worked to erase their humanity. Evacuees seemed like animals in a zoo: available to look at from afar without entering their artificial habitat much less engaging in conversation. Surely these evacuees, who had seen hell and survived it, must speak a different language than you and I. No one, in other words, visited the evacuation centers to gather opinions about how their communities should be rebuilt. Instead, the recovery budget was discussed and decided in meeting rooms far from the crowded gymnasiums in Minami Sanriku and Miyako.

During this time, big decisions about the future of the Tōhoku coastline were being decided in Tokyo, Fukushima City, Sendai, and in Morioka. By December 2011, the national government had presented "all or nothing" budgets to mayors and city council members for their approval. One mayor, who believed more time was needed to discuss the 10-meter high seawall, was told in December 2011 that he could take all of the pre-structured recovery funding or none of it. In the meantime, survivors from Rikuzentaka, now living 45 minutes away in Sumita temporary housing, were establishing commuting schedules for getting the children to school, the parents to work, and the grandmother to her dialysis appointments. Town hall meetings about city planning were not on their list of priorities.

By midsummer 2011, the government relocated evacuees to 27m² box-like structures lined up in parks, parking lots, sports stadiums, school playgrounds, and small bits of land wherever they could be found. Long-term consequences varied: mothers complained that their children did not receive enough exercise, because the boxes covered school playgrounds and parks. Many elderly residents never ventured outside of their boxes and suffered from physical disuse syndrome, that is, muscular atrophy. The trauma of living in evacuation centers as well as dehydration had contributed to a high number of cases of early-onset dementia. Doctors prescribed medication for those unable to sleep at night, which led to falls the next morning. High blood pressure was commonplace. A short-term housing solution was producing long-term health consequences.

With few exceptions, the pre-fabricated housing was uniform across all three prefectures. They looked the same as temporary housing built after the Hanshin-Awaji (1995) and Chuetsu (2005) earthquakes. Some complained that a single firm won the bid to build the 150,000 temporary homes for residents. One Miyagi prefecture-based environmental group made a bid to the government to build temporary houses using recyclable materials in one coastal town. Their attempt was rejected, because in the weeks following the disaster, the government had already decided on the company that would receive the bid for the entire region. The boxes were built to last two years, when the government said permanent housing would be complete. Four years later, there were still nearly 80,000 people living in temporary housing.

Many residents complained that their assigned temporary housing block was too far from places to buy food. Traveling produce and fish salespeople had to make deliveries at each hamlet across the Ogatsu peninsula. In many locations, *konbini* (convenience stores) were the first on the recovery scene, and quick to build next to temporary housing blocs. Construction and humanitarian aid workers welcomed the *konbini*, thanks to their 24-hour supply of water bottles, and bathrooms. For fishermen traumatized by the loss of their boats, homes, and families, and miles from the sea, *konbini* provided ready access to alcohol, cigarettes, and oblivion so as to live out the day. Health workers in Kesennuma claimed that although they expected people to start making their own meals again once they moved into temporary housing, they were concerned that survivors were still eating most of their meals at *konbini* and chain restaurants.

Local restaurants moved into the temporary *shōten-gai* (shopping areas) to restart their businesses. One of these was the Kesennuma dining favorite, Sekai, built in the 1930s and as famous for its garden as its food. Sekai also lost its collection of antiques, which had been donated for display by locals. The family-run business decided to reopen in the temporary unit, because locals and former customers as far away as Tokyo encouraged them by insisting that their food was what made it special—not the place. Instead of wandering through its dry-rock garden, guests climbed a metal staircase and entered a sterile, fluorescent-lighted room. The family's familiar faces lent warmth to the atmosphere, but their rescued photographs of the old building hanging on the walls were ghostly reminders of what was (Figs. 5.3 and 5.4).

Fig. 5.3 Memorial for 3.11 victims

Fig. 5.4   Ogatsu, summer 2011

2012: KIBŌ (HOPE)

As the first winter since the disaster approached, many observers wondered how the temporary shelters were going to keep people warm. Surely, since Tōhoku's winters were infamously long and cold, the boxes had been designed with heating in mind. When residents started complaining about wind howling through the cracks in the siding, the prefectural governments sent crews out to reinforce them. For those evacuees who were relocated in subsidized apartments (*minashi kasetsu jūtaku*) that did not have pre-installed heaters, aid groups had to make emergency deliveries of space heaters at the request of local governments, which had not included them in the budget. The unlucky ones were those people who chose to stay in their homes after mucking them out (*zaitaku hinansha*) rather than move to temporary housing. Because they chose to stay, they received no financial support or goods distribution.

The owner of a soba shop in the old part of Ishinomaki said that the *nomigai* (drinking area) was still active at night. But she was concerned about what would happen when these "outsiders" left again. When asked

how she knew that the drinkers were not from Ishinomaki, she said that their dialects indicated that they were from all over Japan. But, she said, they would leave someday and the town would be "quiet and full of only old people again." Indeed, by the end of winter, the aid workers and volunteers began to depart Tōhoku.

Something magical started to happen when the snow melted. Towns obliterated by the tsunami became fields of green. Hip-high grasses blanketed the area. Egrets stood guard over riverbanks and flew overhead. Bees and butterflies were visible outside car windows. One non-profit worker claimed that indigenous bees had returned to Minami Sanriku for the first time in generations. Since rice paddies had been flooded with salt water and could not be cultivated, there were no pesticides or herbicides, and the bees could repopulate the area. He was organizing elderly evacuees to make honey.

Although finding former homes in the green-covered patchwork of concrete foundations was difficult in these verdant months, evidence of the disaster was still visible. An occasional stone entranceway, where a family's name was etched, stood taller than the grass. They were reminders that the area was not a nature preserve, but a former town. Scattered offerings—flowers, a happy Buddha, packs of cigarettes, a stuffed animal, "one cup" sake—were left for the spirits of the dead at some of the homes. Rebar jutted out of concrete like weeds seeking sunlight. An occasional flower from a former garden made some of the survivors stop in their tracks: "I was busy just surviving every day, but this flower made me stop and think and appreciate beauty again," one survivor from Miyagi prefecture wrote.[7]

Volunteer groups with names like "Smile!" planted pansies to provide color to the warzone-like landscape. To highlight the region's recovery, newspapers featured articles with survivors' quotes about "hope for the future" accompanied by photographs of smiling young people brandishing gardening gloves, shovels, and plastic containers of pansies bought from a near-by Komeri store. The flowers were planted in neat rows that lined streets: one purple row and one yellow row, straight as the roads they bordered. The flowers' uniformity and planting precision started to reflect the civic engineering efforts that tore up the landscape around them. Soon the wildness of the fields of weeds was replaced with scenery dominated by flattened mountains and elevated soil mounds all lined with pansies in equally straight lines.

The boundary between "manmade" and "nature" had blurred long ago in Japan for the sake of postwar economic development. In Tōhoku,

nature was not natural. The government had planted the mountains with cypress (*sugi*) to grow for lumber after the war. These monoculture tree plantations were Sanriku's equivalent of Iowa's cornfields. When the trees were full of pollen, a windy day guaranteed allergy attacks throughout the country and the morning news recommended wearing masks. No one minded clear-cutting the *sugi*. "We won't miss those," said one Rikuzentakata local. "Look! You can see the ocean from Otomo now." An old lady standing next to him remarked that it looked like that when she was a girl.

Hogweed (*butakusa*) composed more than half of the weeds. Though lovely and yellow in July, the invasive weed was not indigenous and it was fierce in its imperial claim to the land. One older lady in Fukushima maintained that United States forces brought it with them during the Occupation after World War II. Despite her conviction that the Americans were to blame, online resources stated that the weed was introduced during the nineteenth century. The lady from Fukushima might rest assured that "Japanese hogweed" was wreaking havoc on the English countryside.

Hogweed ruined rice paddies and caused worse allergies than *sugi*. While a group of older women cleaned up tsunami debris from rice paddies in Minami-soma, Fukushima, another group sprayed herbicides. But why spray the paddies, if you cannot grow or sell rice due to radiation contamination, I asked? "Well," said one woman, adjusting her frilly bonnet in the harsh August sun, "someday they will plant the paddies and the *butakusa* will have to be removed. It's no easy job."

To heighten the summer color, miles of sunflowers were in full bloom during festival season. At first the sunflowers appeared to be an attempt, like the endless rows of plastic pots of pansies in Miyagi and Iwate, to make the scene more colorful and "hopeful." In fact, the Reconstruction Agency had planted the sunflower fields to absorb cesium, based on successful studies done with sunflowers in the Chernobyl area. By the end of summer 2012, it was clear that they had only absorbed 0.05 percent of what researchers had hoped and were not replanted in 2013.

2013: Fukkō (Recovery)

Volunteer groups still appeared to plant pansies in March 2013, but the green was gone. Towns like Shinchi-machi, Rikuzentakata, and Minamisanriku had completely removed their grassy shrouds and replaced them with tidy piles of dirt. The earth shifted about 15 centimeters on

March 11, and thousands of backhoes seemed determined to move it back. While local residents reeled from their losses and learned how to function again in their daily lives, no moss had grown on the stones of the government officials, business interests, and engineers. At some point along the path to healing, the reshaping of towns had started. Someone decided that reconstruction must include pouring concrete in every harbor (even those that had not been used prior to the disaster), elevating land in every neighborhood (even those that had not been inhabited by more than two households), and leveling off hillsides (regardless of future landslides due to heavy rain).

The sea, which had invaded on March 11, did not complete its departure when the wave ebbed. It reclaimed much of the shoreline and stayed in large puddles, which vaguely suggested the wetlands that had been filled in years ago. The tsunami had an uncanny ability to identify and ravage landfill areas along the coastline. According to town blueprints, the water was going to be forced out again by covering it with dirt and asphalt.

In order to elevate the land by 10 meters and flatten hillsides for new housing, Rikuzentakata built a 17-meter high conveyor belt stretching 3 kilometers in 2014. The belt moved 20,000 cubic meters of soil per day, or, the equivalent of what 4000 ten-ton trucks could do in a day. Mayor Futoshi Toba said that the conveyor belt itself was a tourist attraction, along with the Miracle Pine, which decorated tote bags, plastic folders, and coffee mugs. Elementary school students joined Mayor Toba at the opening ceremony for the Rikuzentakata conveyor belt, naming it the "Bridge of Hope," a softer way to describe the installation of a machine that looked as though it belonged in a dystopian science fiction movie. Given the rates of migration out of the area, few of those children would be around to see the completion of the Rikuzentakata landscaping project. And, ironically, it was almost guaranteed that they would never come back if their town looked like a leveled parking lot with a manicured park surrounded by a 12-meter high concrete wall.

Planned long before the 2011 triple disaster, but unable to pass due to budgetary constraints, a highway that would link the coastline from northern Tōhoku to Fukushima was fast-tracked by that summer.[8] The project received a new name—"Recovery Highway"—and a new budget. While tens of thousands waited in temporary homes, by 2014 Ofunato residents saved 15 minutes of travel time by taking a highway that ran above Rikuzentakata. Some Tōhoku residents justified the prioritizing of the highway over housing in economic terms: the highway would

facilitate trade in the area. Photographer Hatakeyama Naoya, whose hometown is Rikuzentakata, saw the highway as a more effective way to take people *away* from the area. Now, families could move to Sendai and return to their hometowns for day-trips.[9]

Did the residents have a say in how their towns would be reconstructed? Were there town hall meetings to capture their views? One Kirikiri man, who had opened his private garden as an oasis from the debris, attended town meetings on occasion. He always returned home "in a rage," according to his wife, because he was frustrated with the lack of leadership in Otsuchi. The previous city officials—including the mayor—had all died in the disaster, and Otsuchi's new leaders had little experience. Pointing at the construction of the Recovery Highway about 800 meters from his house, the gardener wanted to know why some projects proceeded at breakneck speed, but permanent housing for evacuees was stalled.

Gathering residents to participate in the planning meetings was logistically difficult. Survivors had scattered: they moved in with relatives, evacuated young children from the threat of radiation, or found temporary work in Tokyo. Meeting space was limited in broken cities. Some attempts were made to reach out to residents, but their effectiveness was questionable. The city of Rikuzentakata opened a room on the second floor of their offices and displayed large blueprints for residents to come and see where the planned public housing would be. In the room next door, the town's voluntary fire brigade was participating in a psychosocial (*kokoro-no-kea*) session designed to help rebuild confidence within their team following the loss of so many of its members. No one in that group used their break time to see the plans next door. The room received few—if any—visitors. Understanding of the large blueprints would, in any case, be limited to those with an architectural degree and excellent eyesight.

The town plans all included parks, designated areas where the tsunami had done the most damage and could not be rebuilt as business or housing. Some residents praised the parks, but others argued that they would leach money from towns and attract no revenue like museums or concert halls could. A plan to reshape downtown Ishinomaki along the lines of Omotesandō a wealthy shopping district in Tokyo, appeared at one of these meetings. Where the wealthy customers would come from was not part of the blueprint. Other residents asked why there would be a 12-meter seawall blocking the view of the ocean, yet there was no plan to make clear evacuation routes with stairs up to higher ground. It took three years, but residents were finally in a position to ask questions about

rebuilding. The answer to all these questions was, "It's too late. It was already decided."

CONCLUSION

According to a 2010 report by the Long-term Perspective Committee established by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT), 40 percent of Japan's currently inhabited areas will be uninhabited by 2050. Between 2004 and 2013, Tōhoku's population fell by 600,000 people. It is now home to 7 percent of Japan's population, but by 2040 it will account for 6 percent or less. Its working-age population will have dropped by nearly 2 million. Scholar Ichinose Tomohiro suggested investing in restoring sustainable communities rather than reconstructing new ones. He suggested that "backcasting"—defining a desirable future and then forming strategic policies and programs that reflect current realities—was preferable to thinking in terms of future growth in the area.[10] Since all demographic and economic signs indicated that quantitative growth was untenable, Ichinose argued for qualitative change.

Many local residents agreed. A director for a daycare facility for the elderly said that she hoped the next few years would not bring a rush of building more "hospital rooms with beds." By 2020, the postwar baby boomers will peak in population numbers and then sharply decline. She argued for training spouses in basic nursing and nutrition skills so they could take better care of each other, in their final years, in the comfort of their homes. But few people seemed to apply her logic to rebuilding towns that would only be inhabited for one more generation. Her solution was categorized as a "soft" approach, whereas the construction effort was thought of as "hard." Economists, who encouraged the revitalization of Japan, favored the latter.

Despite herculean efforts to prevent future disasters, nature has always won in the past. After the Chilean tsunami that struck the Sanriku coast in 1960, Yamaguchi Yaichiro wrote numerous editorials expressing his frustration at seeing lost lives in Tōhoku.[11] He cited the example of the village of Tarō (incorporated into the city of Miyako), where 1407 people died in 1896 (80 percent of its population at the time) and 363 died in 1933 due to tsunamis. By 1958, the town was completely enclosed by a 10-meter tall wall that extended 2.4 kilometers long. Convinced that casualties were the result of people moving once again to lower ground, Yamaguchi was unsure about the Tarō wall, which he, like many others, compared to the

Great Wall of China. Without the constant drilling of local people and the volunteer fire brigade, he claimed Tarō's wall was inadequate by 1960. Yamaguchi died two years before the 2011 tsunami, which breached the Tarō wall by 5 meters and once again destroyed the town. Social media entreaties for city planners to stop building walls and instead establish escape routes received thousands of "likes"—but no political traction. Walls were evidence that the government was protecting its people. They also provided jobs and profits. Escape routes had no quantifiable outcomes until they were necessary.

Residents witnessed the dirt moving from here to there, men in construction uniforms walking to and fro while holding large architectural plans, and trucks spinning cement on their way to another town. "Yes, we are recovering from this disaster," they can say as they listen to the trucks rumble by their temporary homes. They can feel confident that the government—the nation?—was doing *something* to help them. Recovery in terms of construction and civil engineering feats can have a schedule, a beginning and ending date. A budget based on labor and inputs can be set.

Emotional and spiritual recovery has no set schedule, is difficult to budget, and is uncertain how to evaluate. Psychological recovery means repairing broken hearts and release from sleepless nights; it is progress characterized by peaks and valleys rather than a straight line. This recovery was left to a few bureaucrats staffing mental health departments, volunteer groups, non-profit workers, and international non-governmental groups. To demonstrate that residents were not forgotten, volunteers made regular visits, ready to listen to complaints and provide an hour of cheer. They walked up and down the rows of boxes looking for people on the verge of cracking. If an 80-year-old woman who lost everything dances and sings, is that recovery? When a man builds a vegetable garden where his family home once stood so he can share his harvest with neighbors, is that recovery?

Recovery in Tōhoku was a rush to cover up a scene of apparent nakedness, a primitive landscape devoid of civilization. Civil engineering projects are the pride of a modern state. Tōhoku did not want to transform its image as land of folklore to land of disaster. Surely, the Rikuzentakata conveyor belt was evidence of its modernity. Although the Kirikiri gardener might be frustrated with the slow pace of recovery in Otsuchi compared to Rikuzentakata and Minami-sanriku, those towns proceeding at less of a breakneck pace might come out the winners. Like the turtle and the hare,

slow might win the race. The towns that succeed in raising, covering, elevating, and flattening might become models of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* rather than models of survival: "The machine turns, turns and must keep on turning – for ever. It is death if it stands still."

"Thanks to the eye-catching machine that symbolizes the reconstruction by operating every day, survivors can experience step-by-step progress," he said, adding that the conveyor system, which has rarely been used for ordinary construction work, has also drawn sightseers.

Seeing the progress with their own eyes is "much more encouraging for people" than what officials can do behind closed doors, the mayor said. (Shusuke Murai, *Japan Times*, March 2015)

Notes

1. At the time of the 1960 Chilean tsunami, Yamaguchi was stunned by Sanriku residents' persistence to stay in harm's way. He used the media to implore people to understand that the tsunami threat would never leave the doomed coastline. Yamaguchi died two years before March 11, 2011.
2. Naomi Klein and Antony Loewenstein explain this phenomenon as "disaster capitalism," which Klein defines as "orchestrated raids on the public sphere in the wake of catastrophic events, combined with the treatment of disasters as exciting market opportunities": Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (New York: Henry Holt, 2007), 6. Loewenstein expands on Klein's theory of disaster capitalism to include international aid following the Haitian earthquake in 2010.
3. Alex Kerr, *Dogs and Demons: Tales from the Dark Side of Japan Tales* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001), 14.
4. Summary of the 34th Regional Economic and Industrial Research, METI, December 2010: http://www.meti.go.jp/english/policy/economy/data/regional_201012.html
5. See Marilyn Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing: Modernity, Phantasm, Japan* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995); Nathan Hopson, "Takahashi Tomio's 'Henkyō': Eastern Easts and Western Wests," *Japan Review*, no. 27 (2014): 141–70.
6. "Economic Overview of Tōhoku Region 2015," METI Tōhoku Bureau of Economy, Trade, and Industry, pp. 12 and 15.
7. *Toru, katari-au, hasshin suru: Watashitachi no PhotoVoice*, 2015 (unpublished report submitted to AmeriCares).

8. Oguma Eiji, "Nobody Dies in a Ghost Town: Path Dependence in Japan's 3.11 Disaster and Reconstruction," *Asia-Pacific Journal* 11.44, no. 1 (November 4, 2013): n.p.

9. Hatakeyama Naoya, *Kesengawa* [The Kesen river] (Tokyo: Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 2012), pp. 149–150.

10. Tomohiro Ichinose, "The Reconstruction of Transportation and Environmental Infrastructure in Rural Areas," IATSS Research 36, no. 1 (2012): 24–29.

11. Yamaguchi Yaichirou, "Sanriku tsunami to wa Chiri jishin tsunami no hi de ha nai" [The Sanriku tsunami does not compare to the Chile earthquake tsunami], *Kahoku Shinpo* May 27, 1961.

From Atomic Fission to Splitting Areas of Expertise: When Politics Prevails Over Scientific Proof

Cécile Asanuma-Brice

"Hiroshima is everywhere," wrote Günther Anders, and everything suggests that, despite all manner of humanist discourse, mankind has not yet chosen that it be any other way. During the commemoration of the seventieth anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, the Japanese Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe, omitted a key phrase from his speech in homage to the victims, namely, the three principles of nuclear non-proliferation reaffirmed each year by his predecessors: [Japan] "will not possess, produce, or import nuclear weapons" (*koku heiki wo motazu, tsukurazu, mochikomezu*).[1] The omission was no mere oversight, for his government has just made a unilateral decision to revise the constitution so as to allow for Japan to carry out military operations abroad, as well to facilitate nuclear agreements on the commercial side. We will very likely be accused of confusing two distinct notions: nuclear energy and nuclear weaponry, as if, passing from a civil to a military function will change its fundamental nature.[2] A review of the history of the nuclear industry's beginnings, though, will quickly dispel such naive arguments[3]; and, of course, it must be remembered that it is from our "peaceful" uranium plants that the military is able to acquire its plutonium.[4] That it is in fact the same entity that is reinforced

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by the government's actions: the drive to pave the way for Japan's return to armed conflict has been accompanied simultaneously by a concerted effort to put the Fukushima disaster into the past, and as quickly as possible. Capitalizing on the fact that, although the effects of the catastrophe are still being dealt with, the menace is more and more a familiar, even annoying, presence, the government made the decision to resume operations at the Sendai nuclear plant on Kyūshū on August 14, 2015.[5]

But irrationality and contradictions that strain belief also play a large role in nuclear matters, as evidenced by another change in government policy. Just as an important international study announced its results showing a clear link between leukemia and long-term exposure to low-dose radiation, the Japanese government—with the support of the International Atomic Energy Agency—increased the acceptable dose for nuclear workers from 100 to 250 msv/year in cases of emergency.[6] It is worth recalling that this same norm had been set at 20 msv/year prior to the explosion at Fukushima Daiichi, and was then raised following the accident to 100 msv/year for nuclear workers and 20 msv/year for the civilian population.

Because this threshold is used as the basis for all measures protecting and managing the population, its importance surpasses the purely epidemiological domain to have multiple and wide-ranging consequences.

The first is the increase by the authorities of the radiation dose considered acceptable for the general population. Despite all the epidemiological evidence signaling the grave health risks of an environment below 100 msv/year, the political authorities are henceforth using this as a basis of reference, so as to stabilize the benchmark for the whole of the population at 20 msv/year.[7]

Other consequences appear in civil protection policies, since it is this threshold that is used to determine which zones should be evacuated for their health hazards and which not. From there derives the totality of measures for protecting residents, most notably the housing policy under which a government can control the movements of its population and where it is settled.

THE EPIDEMIOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF NUCLEAR EXPOSURE: EVEN INWORKS DOESN'T WORK

An international cohort study called INWORKS (International Nuclear Workers Study), on "ionizing radiation and risk of death from leukemia and lymphoma in radiation-monitored workers," was undertaken to dispel

the uncertainties regarding the connection of these diseases to protracted exposure to low-dose radiation. This study, carried out by 13 researchers in epidemiology, each from a different laboratory, was made public in June 2015.[8] Its funding came from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (USA); the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare of Japan; the Institut de Radioprotection et de Sûreté Nucléaire, AREVA, Electricité de France; the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (USA); the US Department of Energy; the US Department of Health and Human Services; the University of North Carolina; and Public Health England. Financing was thus provided in part by those directly involved in the interests of the nuclear microcosm, but the authors of the study specify that at no time did they intervene in the either the research or its publication: their sole role was to allow access to data. This study consisted of following no fewer than 308,297 workers who had been employed in a nuclear facility for at least one year. The employers were as follows: in France, the Atomic Energy Commission (CEA), AREVA Nuclear Cycle, or the national electricity company (EDF); in the USA, the Departments of Energy and Defense; in the UK, nuclear industry employers listed in the National Registry for Radiation Workers. The method used to follow the health of the workers was Poisson regression, a linear model of logarithmic functions, in order to quantify the associations between the dose absorbed by bone marrow and the mortality rate for leukemia, lymphoma (tumors that develop from lymphatic cells), and multiple myeloma.

The principal source of information for evaluating the link between ionizing radiation and cancer has long been the body of data amassed through epidemiological monitoring of the survivors of the two atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the USA in August 1945. Their analysis proved the causal link between exposure to ionizing radiation and the development of leukemia. However, these results concerned only exposure to acute, high levels of radiation. Yet it is sustained or repeated exposure to low-dose radiation that is more and more an issue in today's society. It has been shown, for example, that average annual doses of ionizing radiation (from medical exposure) in the USA rose from 0.5 mGy per person in 1982 to 3.0 mGy per person in 2006. This phenomenon has also been observed in most other high-income countries.[9] For its part, the study carried out by the team of INWORKS researchers proves the correlation between the risk of death from leukemia and prolonged exposure to low doses of radiation, through the monitoring of the subjects over a period of 60 years.

But since nothing stops those who insist on applying the cost–benefit norm ALARA—As Low As *Reasonably* Acceptable[10]—our lives depend less on any epidemiological evidence than on the notion of "reason." In this way, demagoguery on the matter has led to the term "victim" being replaced by the less charged term "affected persons." This change of terminology, notably in the documents of the ICRP,[11] is not without consequence: in psychology, *affect* is opposite to *intellect*, and as such engenders behaviors that are not rationally based. In psychology, too, *affectivity* is contrary to *cognition*, that is, the capacity for rational reasoning, although this dichotomous approach has become more nuanced over time. Additionally, the use of the term "affect" here alludes to the idea of *radio-phobia*, the irrational fear generated by a (nuclear) danger that is little understood, according to its defenders. Recently, the ICRP decided that the term "radio-phobia" as previously used was an error. According to their new approach, it is normal for people to be afraid, given their relative ignorance. Therefore, it is important to put into place a program of education to correct the widespread lack of knowledge. This logic, however, contradicts that developed by the same people in applying ALARA: "we don't know scientifically what the health effects are of low levels of radioactivity, so we must just deal with the situation on the ground." The key, therefore, is to find a way to teach what one does not know. This says a lot about the weight given to simple communication in the matter. Communicating does not equal informing; *communication* amounts to inculcation, through public relations, propaganda the goal of which is to make people accept a doctrine that has been politically (but not scientifically) established.

To go "as low as reasonably acceptable" (ALARA) also means, according to Jacques Lochard, speaking at a June 2015 symposium on the ethics of radioprotection, that "the right of refuge could not be one of the radioprotection rules. We have to accept the situation and deal with it." Deborah Oughton (CERAD) added that "we must educate people as to the risks in order to make the risk more acceptable."[12] What's important is to know by whom this risk must be accepted and why. These couple of extracts, of talks chosen from among many others, lead us to question what is certainly one of the major preoccupations of society today, namely, the fact that those who actually do the risk-taking are rarely the ones who benefit from the risks taken, and as such the situation cannot be acceptable.

The Residential Effects of Nuclear Exposure: "Because Housing is Life..."[13]

Who then, in the present case, are those who have taken the risk, and how have they managed this risk-taking?

The people who fled the territories contaminated by radioactivity, following the explosion at TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant, have been classified into two groups: the 80,000 inhabitants of the 11 communes within the evacuation zone (see Figs. 6.1 and 6.2 below), and those who migrated of their own initiative, having received no government directives that might have protected them. (The evacuation zone extending 20–30 km around the plant covered but a paltry section of the contaminated land.) Our societies, which produce the illusion of control over social, natural, and human disasters by the use of measurement, thereby become producers of castes. In this way, a new category

Fig. 6.1 Refugees and their legal advisors demand the prolongation of their access to free housing before the Japanese Parliament, May 20, 2015 (Photo Cécile Asanuma-Brice)
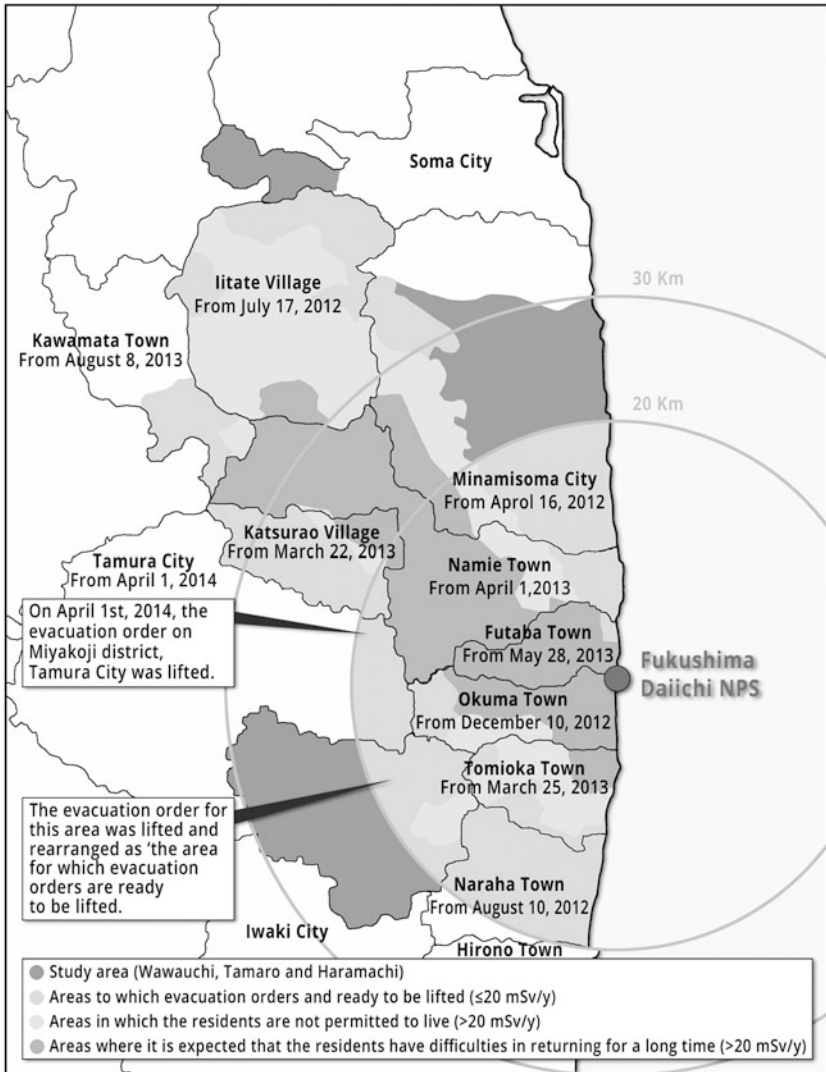
Fig. 6.2 Map of the restricted area

was born to identify these people, thereafter designated "voluntary refugees" (*jishūhinan*). It is very difficult to determine their exact number, because most of them were not included in the prefectures' registration system, which caused them to miss out on certain benefits (free medical monitoring, loss of possible indemnization, etc.). They have nevertheless been officially estimated at 36,000 people as of May 2015.[14] To put into context, the Japanese government counts a total of 118,812 displaced people, 45,735 of whom left Fukushima, while the other 73,077 moved within the prefecture[15]; these numbers represent a decrease, as the official statistics posted a total of 160,000 people displaced in 2011, some months after the catastrophe.[16]

Not distinguishing between those designated by the government as voluntary refugees and those not, the Fukushima prefecture, obeying the law of assistance in the case of disaster, provided them, at no cost, with temporary housing in pre-fabricated buildings (*kasetsu jūtaku*), or 16,800 housing units in Fukushima prefecture alone, as well as apartments from the private sector (*minashi kasetsu jūtaku*), or 25,500 lodgings.[17] The legal limit for residence in these apartments is two years, which has, however, been prolonged by one year on an annual basis. This situation lasted until the prefecture announced in the press on May 17, 2015 that this system would be discontinued as of March 2017, provoking a wave of protest within the refugee population. The possibility for people who had been ordered by the government to evacuate to continue to benefit from free housing is, it seems, still under discussion.

The government is behind this decision, which follows the announcement of the near total reopening of the evacuation zone to habitation in 2017 (only the most contaminated section close to the plant, termed the "zone of uncertain return," is not concerned), some of the stricken communities have asked the prefecture to act to end the policy of housing allocation, the only one in place for refugees. They justify this position by their desire to have their former populations return to their homes, in accordance with governmental directives. They consider that the availability of free housing has hampered the return of migrants to their hometowns and has, moreover, led them to develop attachments to their new host communities, further undermining any eventual plan to return home. This stance is at odds with the wishes of the migrants themselves as expressed in various surveys: they believe that they cannot, and consequently do not want to, return to live in their home communities.[18]

As for the prefecture, it justifies its decision by the fact that extending refugee conditions acts as a brake on reconstruction. One might, however, question the pertinence of a reconstruction that would subject the population to low doses of dangerous radiation, as evidenced by the results of the INWORKS study previously discussed. Without waiting any longer, the Japanese government reauthorized, for the first time, part of the full evacuation zone to be habitable once more. The town of Nahara thus reopened its doors on September 5, 2015. Fewer than 10 % of the municipality's 7500 residents applied to return to the town, which lacks basic commercial and medical services.[19]

The Progressive Reopening of the Evacuation Zone

Behind these measures lies a determination to reopen the evacuated zone, following the decision by the Japanese government to pursue its use of nuclear energy. The issue then is to show that a government is capable of handling a nuclear disaster, by minimizing its management of it, even though, in order to do so, it must put part of its population in danger. Add to that the decontamination policy, a colossal undertaking, which is just one more calamity given the damage it causes, and even then is only partially effective: it is impossible to clean all the foliage, mountains, and waterways. Tons of radioactive waste have been stored in sacks, some already torn, along the oceanfront, just waiting for the next tsunami to spread out again upon the continent. Thus, all the analytical elements line up together to demonstrate that the international political management of the explosion at the Fukushima nuclear plant is mired in a layer of conscious deception, built upon the fundamental infrastructure of all politics: the lie.[20]

The Psychological Effects of Nuclear Energy: A Point of No Return

We established a first assessment in December 2014 of the number of victims of this management of the crisis, as disastrous as the disaster itself, accounting for 1170 deaths related to the explosion at the TEPCO nuclear plant.[21] Contradicting the rumors circulated by some researchers, notably at the Fukushima Medical University, according to which cases of depression and suicide had multiplied within the refugee population due to their estrangement from their hometowns, a recent study led by

professor Takuya Tsujiuchi, director of the Waseda Institute of Medical Anthropology on Disaster Reconstruction, on 16,000 refugees show that over 40 % of them suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). These results further indicated that the number of traumatized individuals was equivalent between those who had been ordered to evacuate and those who took refuge voluntarily. Professor Tsujiuchi, interviewed by the national broadcaster NHK on May 27, 2015, explained that to constrain these people to return to live in the place where their psychological disorder began, while its environment remains unstable due to current contamination levels and the decaying state of the nuclear plant, could have dramatic consequences. He points out that, in contrast to the results of post-traumatic testing following an earthquake, this study shows that the victims are not confronted by a single stress in managing their everyday lives, but suffer from genuine mortal anguish faced with the nuclear menace. According to Professor Tsujiuchi, "we act today as though the catastrophe is over, but that is not the case. We're cutting housing aid, and then indemnities for psychological suffering, then financial compensation for loss of belongings.… Soon, there will be no more aid. The situation is very dangerous."

The "voluntary" refugees are, for the most part, single-parent families, who worry about the health consequences of educating their children in contaminated areas. The loss of housing aid would thus greatly accentuate their already considerable vulnerability. Legal aid associations have argued that the law that limits refugees' stay in the emergency housing units to two years is based on their instability due to hasty construction and the use of flimsy materials, yet this is not true of the *minashi kasetsu jūtaku*, which are ordinary lodgings. In addition, the policy of reconstruction is advancing very slowly: the number of public housing units actually built on the refuge site is just 509 out of the 4890 that were planned. Yet despite three calls for applications, the occupation rate for these 509 units remains very weak. The principal reason for this resistance comes from the fact that the prospective inhabitants would not only lose their current rent-free arrangements, but they would have to live in collective housing. For this population, who were mostly farmers consuming the fruits of their own production, to accept such housing would mean entering into a costly system of consumption that they had always avoided; worse, in doing so, they would definitively give up hope of ever living again in a rich, natural environment as had been theirs. The words of Mrs. Monma, a 75-year-old

Buddhist nun from the town of Namie, put this in clear terms: "we simply want houses where we can farm the land (Fig. 6.3)."[22]

The remarks of Ulrich Beck come to mind: "Risk societies uniformly place humanity in a situation where it puts itself in danger through the intermediary of civilization."[23] This example shows us how this process of self-destruction is set up in our societies, which nonetheless continue to boast of their level of civilization achieved through the development of the system of economic production that sustains them. Likewise, the Japanese government calls for a return to life in the contaminated areas, all the while refusing the massive investment needed to reconstruct the depopulated countryside, an area that it had in fact already abandoned in favor of urban economic viability.

Fig. 6.3 Ms. Monma, a 75-year-old Buddhist nun from the town of Namie, living as a refugee in the village of Ōtama: "I went to demonstrate before the Parliament, I said to them…, we have lost everything…, we simply want houses where we can farm the land" (Interview conducted May 21, 2015; Photo Cécile Asanuma-Brice)

Lies and Punishment

As we have seen through various angles of approach, the disconnect between reality and political acts is deepening, so a philosophical approach to the problem is needed if we are to understand, and thus better confront, the cause of such commitment to this self-destructive behavior.

What is the reality here? The reality is scientific proof of the dangers of nuclear radiation even at low doses (see the INWORKS study); the demonstration that social management of such an accident is impossible, no matter the level of wealth or education of the country involved; confirmation of the fact that nuclear energy is not economically cost-effective, that is, profitable or feasible (the soaring deficit at AREVA in 2014 reinforces the two reports of the Cour des Comptes, the French Auditor General's Office, which had already called into question the deplorable financial situation of the nuclear industry)[24]; and scientific confirmation that nuclear energy is not the perfect solution to reducing CO_2 emissions, since it itself produces them, as for example during the extraction and processing of uranium. Therefore, nuclear production is not necessary—in the philosophical sense of the term, that is, what is and must not be—to life in our societies. It should also be noted that we possess today other means of meeting our energy needs, the performance of which could be rapidly increased if our governments decided to devote even a quarter of the budget that now goes to developing nuclear research.[25] Finally, our energy consumption could be considerably lessened, if we address the wastefulness—at the industrial level as much as among individuals (e.g., dependence on home automation)—that characterizes the modes of over-consumption in the rich countries of our planet.[26]

What, therefore, are the motivations of those who, counter to all good sense, make the decisions to pursue and develop a form of energy that holds the ultimate power of *to be or not to be*?

When the Deaths of Some Become a Bull Market for Others

As we noted in a previous article, Mitsubishi, the prince of Japanese home automation and electric cars, having expanded into the armament industry, participated for the first time in 2014 in the international armament exhibition Eurosatory. Mitsubishi Heavy Industries created a joint venture with AREVA under the name ATMEA, beginning in 2007, with the goal

of developing sales of the EPR (European Pressurized Reactor) and the APWR (Advanced Pressurized Water Reactor). On May 3, 2013, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe signed a $22 million contract to construct the Sinop Nuclear Power Plant in Turkey. The owners of the power plant are Mitsubishi Heavy Industries and Itochu for Japan, who, together with the French AREVA and GDF Suez, account for 65 %, and the Turkish public energy producer EUAS with 35 %.[27] Political instability in the region can only increase our concern regarding the resolve of the Japanese government to do what is needed to join with the various countries of the coalition against the Islamic State (ISIL, Daesh) who came together in 2014, during the war in Iraq and the civil war in Syria, to intervene militarily against the Islamic State and the Al-Nosra Front in Iraq and Syria. These military actions, primarily undertaken by the Americans, involve 21 other countries, including France and the other principal countries of Europe, but also Canada, one of the world's primary sources of uranium. These wars are an arms market without end. For example, in February 2015, France sold 24 Rafale fighter planes to Egypt; in April, 34 to India; then Qatar decided to buy 24, for a total of 6.3 billion euros.[28] To make matters worse, the use of weapons and munitions containing depleted uranium in these various conflicts has yet to be regulated, the USA, UK, France, and Israel all rejecting a UN resolution on the matter in October 2014.[29]

From the Illusion of Citizen Participation to Shaking the Democratic System

The reflections that follow carry on from the works of Günther Anders, Hannah Arendt, and Hans Jonas on the subject. They put forth the idea that man had arrived at a stage where knowledge and thought had become disconnected in the face of the impact, in a distant future, of what he produces. The enormity of the consequences over the long term—and in the short, as the influx of migrants fleeing Syria demonstrates—of what we produce, weakens our capacity to represent those consequences, faced with a capacity to produce that is quasi-immediate. Accompanying this temporal dislocation, modern science allows domination of nature to take the place of its contemplation, establishing a technological power that sets itself up as an invincible opposite to nature's vulnerability. In this way, humanity becomes aware of its power to influence the planet's entire biosphere, thereby generating a new approach to the principle of

responsibility. Furthermore, the existence of ethics constrains prescient knowledge to the recognition of ignorance, in that it is slight in comparison with technical knowledge. The managers of nuclear matters have well grasped the necessity of an ethical showcase to mollify public disquiet, and will go to the lengths of promoting ignorance, even scientific falsification, as a means to ward off potential attacks on their actions.

As Hans Jonas remarks in *The Imperative of Responsibility*,

> The sacrifice of the future is logically no more open to attack than the sacrifice of the present for the future. The difference is only that in the one case the series goes on, and in the other it does not.… However, the new imperative says precisely that…we do not have the right to choose, or even risk, nonexistence for future generations on account of a better life for the present one.… [The statesman's] endeavor is to create a viable political structure, and the test of viability is in the enduring of his creation.[30]

Nuclear industrialists thus assume an untenable right and, by doing so, unleash an imperative of responsibility that is much too heavy to be borne by its holders alone. It is the reason that the nuclear sector introduced the participative system, so that rather than minimizing the risks, it ensures that they are accepted, and even that the responsibility for them is shared, by giving the parties concerned the illusion that they participate in the decision-making process. But another characteristic of the nuclear industry is that its increased stature—which is purely a product of public policy— enables it effectively to ignore the opposing masses to which it accords but a semblance of meaningful involvement. This dictatorial nature is inherent in the nuclear establishment, which makes a mockery of the democratic system, pushing it to the outer edges, as we can see in this photo taken in October 2014, while the Japanese government was deciding to restart the country's first nuclear operations (at the Sendai plant on Kyūshū) in four years, even though the population energetically expressed its opposition (Fig. 6.4):

A small number of Japanese politicians thus made the decision to relaunch Japan's nuclear power plants, despite intense and increasing volcanic and seismic activity (the two being closely linked).[31] And yet, as we have shown, the epidemiological, residential, and psychological effects of nuclear power cannot be managed, so one must question what drives the determination to persist on this path. It seems that the only remaining motivation is the ultimate power, the right of life or death over the

Fig. 6.4 Scene of the vote deciding to restart the Sendai (Kyūshu) nuclear power station: Minister of Trade Y. Miyazawa, in reading out the decision, got the name of the plant wrong, thus betraying his disinterest and lack of involvement in local affairs, to then declare: "The committee is in unanimous agreement for restarting the power plant." This scene shows how, in democratic systems, the participation of the public is respected, indeed required, even if their opinions are not taken into consideration. One of the characteristics of the nuclear state is that it stages such demonstrations of the democratic process. (NHK News, October 2014; Photo Cécile Asanuma-Brice)

whole of the earth's ecosystem. This quasi-divine right assumed by certain politicians is bolstered by an institutional system that contains enough safety valves to allow the strongest tensions to escape along the margins and ensure that the current system, democratic in name only, is self-sustaining.

The central role of deception in all of this initially revolted my naive self, but a reading of the works of philosophers of the 1970s—which emerged out of two of the most terrible episodes of twentieth-century history, that is, World War II and the Vietnam War—taught me to temper my anger in order to transform it into more productive reflection. Hannah Arendt wrote on this subject:

Secrecy – what diplomatically is called 'discretion', … – and deception, the deliberate falsehood and the outright lie used as legitimate means to achieve

political ends, have been with us since the beginning of recorded history. Truthfulness has never been counted among the political virtues, and lies have always been regarded as justifiable tools in political dealings.[32]

The process of lying goes hand in hand with the disconnection between knowledge and thought previously evoked, because it is necessary to extract our thinking from our environment so that it might imagine another, invented world (whether conceiving a better alternative or constructing a web of deceit). This removal of thought from the present reality is also, according to Arendt, what permits action. As action is the foundation of politics, so deception is inherent to political action. Nevertheless, that does not mean that one must accept the lies, cease denouncing them; on the contrary, it enjoins us to not be deceived by the elaborate political strategies of our different governments, nor to just passively await improvements in the situation that will never come.

Notes

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3. Sezin Topçu, *La France nucléaire: l'art de gouverner une technologie contestée* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2013).
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Japan Focus 12.47, no. 1 (November 16, 2014), http://www.japanfocus.org/2014/12/47/C-cile-Asanuma-Brice/4221.html.

8. Klervi Leuraud et al., "Ionising Radiation and Risk of Death from Leukaemia and Lymphoma in Radiation-Monitored Workers (INWORKS): An International Cohort Study," *The Lancet Haematology* 2, no. 7 (2015): e276–81.

9. The INWORKS authors do not mention the databases collected and analyzed following the accident at Chernobyl.

10. The precautionary principle with regard to radioprotection when there is uncertainty as to the dose-effect connection.

11. As may be seen in the documents of the Symposium June 2–3, 2015 at the Fukushima Medical University: workshop on questions of ethics in the area of radioprotection, organized by the Fukushima Medical University and the ICRP.

12. Informal Comments, Second Asian Workshop on the Ethical Dimensions of the System of Radiological Protection, Fukushima Medical University, June 2015: http://www.icrp.org/docs/9/Second%20Asian%20Workshop%20Programme.pdf.

13. Interview with a refugee mother, by Cécile Asanuma-Brice, May 18, 2015.

14. "Jishu jinan jūtaku teikyō, ninengoni shūryō he Fukushima-ken ga hōshin" (Fukushima prefecture plan to end housing for voluntary evacuees in two years), *Asahi Shimbun*, May 17, 2015. http://www.asahi.com/articles/ASH5J5H83H5JUTIL00M.html

15. Results of a survey of the Fukushima Prefecture, January 30, 2015.

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21. Asanuma-Brice, "Beyond Reality."
22. Interview by Cécile Asanuma-Brice, village of Ōtama, May 21, 2015.
23. Ulrich Beck, *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity* (London & Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1992).
24. "Perte Astronomique de Près de 5 Milliards D'euros Pour Areva En 2014," *Capital*, February 23, 2013, http://www.capital.fr/bourse/actualites/perte-astronomique-de-pres-de-5-milliards-d-euros-pour-areva-en-2014-1014891; Patrick Roger, "La facture du nucléaire a flambé depuis 2010," *Le Monde*, May 27, 2014, sec. Économie, http://www.lemonde.fr/economie/article/2014/05/27/facture-du-nucleaire-l-alerte-de-la-cour-des-comptes_4426678_3234.html; See also: Jusen Asuka (Tōhōku University), Seung-Joon Park (Kwansei Gakuin University), Mutsuyoshi Nishimura (Former Ambassador for the United Nations climate change negotiations), Tōru Morotomi (Kyōto University) (2014): "The figures for nuclear power generation costs did not include sufficient back-end costs of nuclear waste storage, decommissioning costs of failed reactors, and especially indemnification insurance. If these costs were included, the cost would no doubt exceed 100 yen/kWh, as indicated in some studies (Mikami, 2013).… In other words, the cost of nuclear power generation seems to be lower than other energy sources simply because such cost does not include external costs, which are quite significant. In terms of not reflecting the true cost, operating a nuclear power plant is like driving a car without automobile liability insurance and its relatively high cost competitiveness is decreasing rapidly." In *Nuclear Power is not the Answer to Climate Change Mitigation,* January 2014, http://www.cneas.tohoku.ac.jp/labs/china/asuka/_src/2014/nuclear_power-climate_change_enver2.pdf
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32. Hannah Arendt, "Lying in Politics: Reflections on the Pentagon Papers," in *Crises of the Republic: Lying in Politics; Civil Disobedience; On Violence; Thoughts on Politics and Revolution* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972), 4; originally appeared in *The New York Review of Books* 17 no. 8 (November 18, 1971): 30–39, available online at http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/1971/nov/18/lying-in-politics-reflections-on-the-pentagon-pape/

Reconstruction of Marginality: The Tokyo Bay Area in the Great East Japan Earthquake

Tadahito Yamamoto

AIM OF THE PAPER

The Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011 had a devastating impact on the northeast of Japan, a region which has played important roles in supplying food, electric energy, and labor force for modern urban economic growth. Rapid overconcentration to the Tokyo metropolitan region after the 1980s exaggerated inequalities between urban and rural areas. Many municipalities in the northeast were forced merge under neoliberal regional policies after 1990, because the continually shrinking population made it difficult to maintain public services. The spectacle of the disaster dramatically revealed such hierarchical structures embedded in the relationships between center and periphery in the country.

Another aspect of the disaster, generally less noticed, was the experience of the complex urban catastrophe in the Tokyo metropolitan region, one of the most vital centers of globally networked capitalism. Though the visible, built environment saw minimal destruction, traffic stoppages and the Fukushima Accident utterly disrupted urban life, while the radioactivity cast around the region terrified people, companies, and states.

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This paper discusses such urban aspects of the disaster. Concretely, I focus on the large-scale liquefaction in the Tokyo bay area caused by the earthquake, working from there to rethink spatial and social marginality embedded in Tokyo urban space.

Rethinking Urban Political Economy and Its Physical Background: A Political-Ecological Perspective

Since the 1980s, one of the dominant frameworks of urban and regional studies has been global city theory, which primarily focuses on economic factors in urban restructuring and polarization of social classes.[1]

Disaster suddenly and irregularly attacks urban spaces, problematizing the hidden physical structure of capital accumulation in global networks of capitalism—structures that tend to be obscured in economic-oriented urban theories. According to David Harvey, geographically uneven damage caused by natural disaster can have a dramatically destabilizing impact on the structures of capital accumulation.[2]

Stephen Graham discussed "infrastructural disruption" as one of the intrinsic risks of a globally—but precariously integrated economy.[3] On our rapidly urbanizing planet, the everyday life of the world's population is increasingly sustained by vast, unknowably complex systems of infrastructure and technology stretched across geographic space. Since every aspect of people's lives tends to become more dependent on precarious networks of urban infrastructure, such "infrastructural disruption" examines how critical events bring to light the ordinarily invisible mechanisms sustaining urban life. Though inadequate as a total framework for explaining the Great East Japan Earthquake and the Fukushima Accident, Graham's theory does afford a valuable starting-point for the urban aspect of this complex disaster.

Such a focus on the infrastructural in globalized networked urban society leads to more general issues: how we integrate physical conditions into urban studies, how political-economic systems respond to such disruptive events, and how such systems reshape the spatial configuration of society. The theory of urban political ecology tries to explain the mechanisms of uneven development in the socio-environmental process of urbanization and its political dimension: who benefits and who suffers from particular processes of socio-environmental transformation.[4] From this viewpoint, production of the uneven spatial structure of center and periphery can be linked with uneven distribution of risks, as well as the production of hierarchical relationships among social classes.

Social practices to respond to disaster, and therefore, to take hidden environmental risks away from ordinary life can be indispensable to making urban society more sustainable and democratic. On this point, the theory of urban political ecology seeks renewal and redefinition of urban grass-roots democracy, responding to historical shifts from the sort of post-war Fordist-type society in relation to which Manuel Castells formulated urban social movement.[5]

For these political-ecological concerns, "disrupted Tokyo" is an exceptional instance, a crucial case for analysis. At stake is an evaluation of how deeply and broadly the Great East Japan Earthquake influenced an urban social system as complexly intertwined with global networks of capitalism.

Junko Ueno describes the "rolling blackouts" after the Fukushima Accidents by considering the cascade-effect caused by infrastructural disruption. She concludes that its geographically uneven effect manifested vertical structures linking center and periphery inside of Tokyo urban space.[6] Ueno's point raises questions as regards the liquefaction in the Tokyo bay area. I will seek to correlate how social marginality is produced and reproduced through the integrated effects of uneven spatial development in ordinary times on the one hand, and on the other by physical reconstruction caused by contingent change in environmental condition—that is, disaster.

Outline of the Disaster

The Great East Japan Earthquake occurred on March 11, 2011, at 14:46. Its magnitude measured 9 on the Richter scale, the fourth biggest in world recorded history, and it caused a huge tsunami around the Pacific coast of northeast Japan. On March 12 came the accident at Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Plant, casting radioactivity broadly around eastern Japan. A total of 15,891 people died. Some 225,000 were evacuated.[7] Those from around the power plant itself cannot go home because of radioactivity, and they have to way to know when—or if—they can return. 2584 persons are still missing.[8]

While the northeast region was deeply shocked by the tsunami and the Fukushima Accident, these catastrophic events cannot be reduced to the "northeast" great disaster. In complexly networked and infrastructure-dependent society, no region can be an island. Indeed, the 2011 disaster damaged not only on the countryside, but also the Japan's largest urban region: Tokyo.

Just after the earthquake, all trains stopped, forcing people to become "one-night-refugees" or else walk long distances home. Ordinary urban life was disrupted, and the rolling blackouts beginning three days after the disaster caused a marked depression in people's activity.

Many were surprised at the scale of liquefaction around the Tokyo bay area. The worst liquefaction occurred in Urayasu city, Chiba prefecture, a typical housing area developed on land reclaimed from Tokyo bay. Such liquefaction inside the metropolitan region, far from the epicenter, shocked Tokyo residents, who had watched towns and villages washed away by the tsunami and Fukushima plant explosion.

Within Tokyo itself, the Kōtō ward, on the east side, saw the worst liquefaction effects. Facilities damaged can be classified into two general types: old public apartment buildings constructed in the 1960s–70s, and industrial sites.

Tatsumi apartment, on the Kōtō ward waterfront, housed 3306 residents, making it one of the largest of the many public apartments constructed by Tokyo metropolitan city in the period of post-war economic growth.

Just after the earthquake, a huge volume of sand and water spurted out from cracks in the ground around the complex. Fortunately, the buildings did not lean, but gaps formed between their bottoms and the ground because the liquefaction caused serious land subsidence. There was no damage to electricity or gas, but the water supply and sewerage systems were largely disrupted when both the drainage pipes and the main pipes from the water tank to each household ruptured.

Residents established a countermeasures headquarters immediately after the disaster. At first they could not understand why the water supply had stopped, but discovered broken water pipes when they opened the door of the empty water tank.

At 22:00, they telephoned to the Kōtō ward office, asking authorities to send a water wagon. The officer rejected their request, because management of the public apartment was outsourced to a semi-public corporation, Housing Supply Corp, as a result of the Tokyo governance reforms since the 2000s.

Tatsumi forest park, on the opposite side of the apartment complex, across the main street, was designated as an emergency shelter for the residents, and a water tank with enough water for the 20,000 people was buried under the park's ground. The Ward office requested that the residents carry the water from the tank to their apartments by themselves, because staff of the ward office were urgently needed elsewhere. But most residents were aging, and it was dangerous for elderly people to lift and

carry the heavy water in the dark. After hearing the response, the residents gave up on the ward office and instead asked Housing Supply Corp to distribute plastic bottles of water to all households. This began at 1:30 on March 12, and finished at about 8:00 in the morning.

This failure of communication between the ward office and the residents revealed a significant problem. Specifically, the recent process of neoliberal-oriented local governance restructuring had made it unclear who should rescue the residents in a disaster.

The water supply and sewerage systems were restored about ten days after the earthquake, and the countermeasures headquarters was dissolved. But these solutions were only temporary. The work of permanently restoring water pipes and repairing the stairs from the ground to the unit entrances continued until August of 2011. Indeed, while liquefaction also affected the primary and junior high school which the children of the Tatsumi complex attended, repair of the school buildings required a large budget and approval of the ward assembly. Even half a year after the disaster, work had not yet begun.

In the wake of these events, the biggest issue facing the complex was whether or not the buildings should be totally reconstructed. More than 40 years have passed since the Tatsumi apartments were constructed in the late 1960s. The buildings have deteriorated badly, and the population is aging year after year. These conditions cast a deep shadow on reconstruction policies, because big investment in a redevelopment project for such an old complex may be inefficient in this period of population shrinkage and low long-term economic growth.

Under so-called "modern reconstruction" model in Japan, post-disaster efforts present an opportunity to modernize urban infrastructure fundamentally, causing dramatic growth in the urban economy. Unfortunately, the Great East Japan Earthquake overlapped a turning point in environmental rhythm, a point at which a great deal of the infrastructure and facilities constructed during the post-war urban development had begun to deteriorate. The existing model of "modern reconstruction" therefore applies poorly to the case of the 2011 Earthquake. This is one reason to be uncertain about future reconstruction policies.

Turning now to the second type of damaged facilities, the industrial ones, the Shinkiba district contained many warehouses acting as nodes linking distribution networks around the country. Distribution and traffic networks through this district were temporarily stopped, because both the warehouses and the main streets in front of them were damaged by the liquefaction.

Just after the earthquake, 4700 cubic meters of sand—roughly 10,000 truckloads—spouted up from the cracks of the streets. Warehouse floors and streets became separated by as much as a meter vertically and 20 centimeters horizontally. Seeing the situation, the police station decided to stop traffic flow, causing an enormous jam in the district's main thoroughfare.

The Kōtō ward office began carrying the mountain of sand out at 17:00 on the day of the disaster, and reopened the streets at 1:30. A survey of the damage spanned March 12–15. Temporary repair of the streets finished on March 18.

A website managed by a business group of the construction industry reported on March 17 that many building contractors procured stocked timbers from the west region of Japan because of the land subsidence and sand deposit in Shinkiba district, where the distribution industry in Tokyo metropolitan region was heavily concentrated.

Kōtō ward office sent staff to a seminar held by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism at the Real Economic Estate Institute in August, 2011 to collect expert knowledge of how to prevent liquefaction if such an earthquake should shock the Tokyo region again in the near future.

The Niigata Earthquake in 1965 for the first time made liquefaction a focal issue in national disaster prevention policy. When the 1995 Kobe Earthquake caused major liquefaction in the waterfront area, scientific research on liquefaction and its countermeasures developed considerably. The national government therefore collected the staffs of local municipalities facing liquefaction effects in the 2011 disaster, informing them of this historically accumulated scientific knowledge as quickly as possible by mobilizing the networks of related professional scholars.

We can understand from these processes that staff in administrative organization have superior access to the professional knowledge needed for reconstruction planning. This is a case in which an administrative organization is stronger than the residents' voices in setting a standard for reconstruction and repair methods and technology.

The bay area is also a place where so-called NIMBY (not-in-my-backyard), but indispensable facilities are concentrated. For example, the East Sludge Plant on the coast side of Tokyo bay, disposes sludge from sewage treatment facilities around the east area of Tokyo city. When the Fukushima Power Plant Accident spread radioactivity all around the eastern region of Japan, it dropped on the ground with falling rain, ran through the river, and finally flew into Tokyo bay. Many residents around the East Sludge

Plant were deeply worried about scattering radioactivity through burning sludge, and the Plant was stopped for a while.

Although no one was directly affected, liquefaction was widespread in Toyosu, Kōtō ward, the planned site for a new fish market. Originally, Tsukiji fish market was constructed as the central wholesale market of Tokyo city in 1935, after the Great Kanto Earthquake; more recently, it has become one of the most popular sightseeing spots for foreign travelers. In order to link the main Olympic Game stadium with other smaller sport facilities intended for the waterfront area, the Tokyo government planned to relocate Tsukiji market to Toyosu. But unfortunately soil contamination by lead, arsenic, benzene, and so on was discovered in Toyosu site, and many wholesalers pushed strongly against relocation. After the disaster, the liquefaction brought wide awareness of yet another type of risk, in addition to the soil contamination.

In spite—or because—of such problems at industrial sites, information about the disaster itself was often tightly controlled. The companies and governmental agencies which possessed the damaged land feared that sharing the true facts among ordinary persons and critical social media could negatively affect their businesses or planning. Clearly, democratizing information is an essential issue in pursuing the realities of disaster-stricken industrial facilities and their broad influence on urban economy (Figs. 7.1, 7.2, and 7.3).

Spatial Development and Social Production of Marginality: Historical View

The great disaster in 2011 revealed not only physical risks embedded in modern urban space, but also social inequality ordinarily concealed. A close examination of the historical background of the damage at Tatsumi apartment complex will help clarify the relationships among spatial development and lower-middle-class marginalization in contemporary urban space.

The site of the Tatsumi complex was reclaimed from 1922 to 1935. After the defeat of Japan in the Aisa-Pacific War, much of it was requisitioned by GHQ, which gradually released it over the period from 1948 to 1959.

The land was integrated into Kōtō ward, and the Tatsumi apartment complex was constructed in 1967–69. The first occupants took up residence in 1968. There were 85 units, initially containing 3230 households, expanding over time to the present 3306.
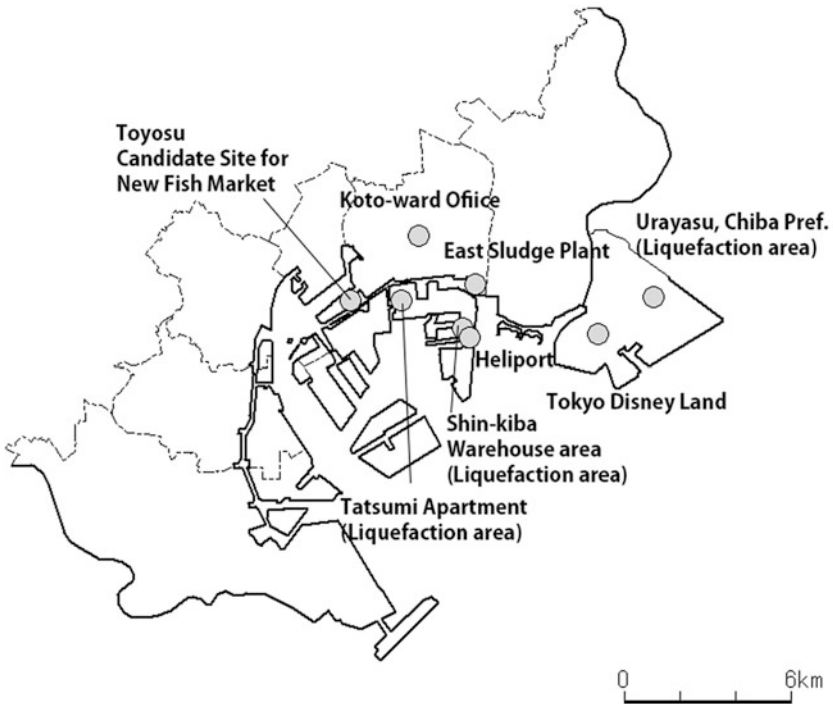
Fig. 7.1 Map of liquefaction area and related facilities in the Tokyo bay area

The characteristic tendency of national housing policy in this period was that the scale of complexes became larger and larger, and development concentrated in the Tokyo bay area, where considerable room for construction remained. In addition to Tatsumi during this period, the Shinonome complex was constructed, and the older Toyosu complex renewed from wood to reinforced-concrete.

In those days, reinforced-concrete apartment was a symbol of modern living. The reclaimed Tokyo bay land was a crucial location for housing the overflow population from central Tokyo, and large-scale development projects were deliberately aimed at meeting this demand.

If the land had not been reclaimed from Tokyo bay on such a scale, the city could not have absorbed the huge population influx from the

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Fig. 7.2 Repaired main water pipe in Tatsumi apartments (Sep. 8, 2011)

countryside in the age of high economic growth. In this sense, the bay area was a kind of "frontier" for Tokyo, at least in the first stage of post-war development.

But there was a gap between that commercialized image of the bay area and the difficult conditions which the residents actually faced when they moved in. Immediately after the development, there was insufficient infra-structure; streets, park, school, and shopping facilities were inadequate. Tatsumi apartment complex was called "an isolated island" by residents because only an inconvenient bus system led to the central district.

In the 1970s, residents founded their own co-op store, because there were not enough shopping facilities to meet daily demand. Remarkably, the Tatsumi co-op thus became one of the foundations of the co-op move-ment, in which similar developments spread around the new residential districts of Tokyo suburbia.

In addition, large factories and a heliport near the apartment district threatened such environmental pollution as noise, soot, and so on. These

Fig. 7.3   Repaired land subsidence in Tatsumi apartments (Sep. 8, 2011)

dangerous facilities were now removed into other areas as a result of enthusiastic grass-roots movements spurred by the residents.

Though the landscape of Tatsumi complex ultimately seems peaceful at a glance, in fact this environment has been created and maintained by the long and patient efforts of residents. In this sense, the amenities of the complex are sustained by large, hidden social and physical costs borne by the residents who continues to live in the district.

Neoliberal-oriented housing policy after the 2000s eroded these social conditions, making it difficult for the residents to continue producing and reproducing their own living environment. In 2001, the Tokyo metropolitan government published a council report, subtitled "Big Bang of Housing Policy," which announced a turn away from direct construction of public housing, instead emphasizing using existing stock or supplying by private companies. The Housing Bureau of the Tokyo metropolitan government was integrated with other bureaus related to urban planning, and a Bureau of Urban Development was newly established in 2004.

At the same time, ordinary management of public housing facilities was entrusted to Tokyo Metropolitan Housing Supply Corporation, founded as affiliated organization through investment by the Tokyo metropolitan government.

Because construction and reconstruction of public housing were suddenly stopped, good quality public housing, indispensable for increasing the younger generation's occupancy, was drastically restricted. This situation forced lower-middle-class people who needed public housing to concentrate into older, cheaper public apartments.

This policy reform further strengthened spatial class segregation between marginalized public apartment districts in the reclaimed land, and the central urban district where the wealthy had historically had ample infrastructure. At the time of the disaster, the Tatsumi apartments had many single-living persons, fatherless families, and victims of the Asia-Pacific War or their relatives who had returned from China. As a result, the complex was particularly vulnerable to external social and environmental shock.

The Great East Japan Earthquake and liquefaction in the bay area manifested the potential cost of reproducing the amenities in such marginalized urban spaces, as well as the spatial and social inequality, ordinarily hidden, that was historically structured through urban development. In this sense, the disaster had a greater impact on socially and spatially marginalized persons, making them even more marginalized in Japan's hierarchically reorganized urban society in this age of neoliberal globalization.

The Politics of Reconstruction Scenarios

Just after the period of post-disaster chaos, one of the largest tasks undertaken by the Tokyo metropolitan government was to conduct rolling blackouts, thereby reserving adequate electric power. In the bay area damaged by liquefaction, distribution was restored by the rapid response of the government and by the companies which managed warehouses themselves. By contrast, temporary repairs to the damaged public apartment complexes and community roads with lower economic importance took some five months to finish.

More fundamental countermeasures to remove vulnerability to liquefaction have not been taken, however, as the problem originate from the environmental condition of the site itself, having been reclaimed from the sea. Indeed, reconstruction of the bay area is a major issue for the longer-term policies of the Tokyo metropolitan government.

The ongoing crisis of the bay area and its reconstruction presents a significant opportunity to consider how we should redefine relationships between physical environment and urban political economy in today's globally networked societies.

One proposed "clearance-type" scenario would totally redevelop the disaster-stricken and outdated apartments and industrial facilities.

According to the Tatsumi complex residents' association, study of a redevelopment project began in 1970s. Actual planning, however, was delayed, as housing policy in turned in a neoliberal direction in the 2000s, preventing large-scale renewal of public apartments. That discussion has reopened since the late 2000s, and since the 2011 earthquake construction work has proceeded gradually.

In addition, because the Olympic Games will be held in 2020 in Tokyo, and the metropolitan government has decided to place many facilities in the bay area, additional urban renewal projects will necessarily be concentrated in the bay area. This is the principal positive factor in favor of a "clearance-type scenario" reconstruction policy.

However, this scenario has potential risks to enhance social cost, by maintaining a huge infrastructure as against a modest standard of welfare services, despite the rapidly aging local society. For example, ideal countermeasures against liquefaction in the surrounding area may be too costly for a single municipality, which may force the metropolitan government to choose cheaper countermeasures: investment in preventive measures might be restricted only to part of the residential area, with contingency plans covering other types of facilities. Thus, every time disaster strikes industrial sites, streets, water supply, sewerage system, and so on, the government will necessarily respond to individual damage case by case.

Such countermeasures are more realistic, but cause serious problems for residents in the liquefaction-stricken area. As we have seen, the living environment in the bay area is sustained by complexly intertwined networks of infrastructure, managing logistics of goods and services from the distant central urban district. If only one part of these networks is destroyed, ordinary life itself will suddenly be disrupted.

Thus, consideration of the reconstruction after liquefaction clearly brings us face to face with a hidden dilemma: a choice between security and cost is embedded in urban space, structured though urban Tokyo.

Another risk raised by the "clearance-type scenario" is social. The Tatsumi complex residents have been aging since long before the disaster.

Yet networks of mutual assistance and resilience, so essential in time of disaster, have been undermined by neoliberal housing policy. Clearance of the buildings will grossly disrupt the existing community which the residents have nurtured so long; isolation of this kind carries serious dangers, as shown when the Tatsumi residents were completely without a water supply and having no official recourse to the ward office.

A variant scenario, the "shrinking type," would repair existing facilities as long as possible while gradually shrinking the residential area. By retreating inland from the over-extended reclaimed area, the social costs of maintenance will be lowered, since the residents will be less vulnerable to disaster and nearer to the traditional urban core where social infrastructure is more richly embedded.

Yet this scenario has another danger, in that it leaves existing facilities in an inadequate condition of social infrastructure. That is, it will cause the spatially and socially marginalized persons who have lived there for a long time to become yet more marginal, more vulnerable to physical and social shock.

In this sense, reconstruction of the bay area depends on empowering the people who have lived there and improved their own living conditions. Not economic efficiency but grass-roots urban democracy will be key in evaluating reconstruction policies.

Until now, however, democratic communication between the residents and the metropolitan government has not been active. One of the reasons is likely a dearth of information regarding methods and technologies which they can use to improve their environment. Residents have scarce access to professional knowledge and to the scholars who develop the reconstruction scenarios. Engagement of disinterested scholars in post-disaster discussion may help reinforce grass-roots democracy against pressures to promote economic efficiency alone.

The "clearance-type scenario" also appeals to many in the industrial district. A consortium was established in 2006 to promote the redevelopment of Shinkiba, an area among the most liquefaction-stricken in the bay area.[9] This consortium is even now planning to reconstruct Shinkiba, shifting away from nodes of the distribution industry toward complex facilities composed of housing and shopping malls, and emphasizing the waterfront landscape as good for tourism (Fig. 7.4).

Fig. 7.4 Temporary repaired infrastructure, Tatsumi apartments (Sep. 8, 2011)

CONCLUSION: TOWARD RE-INVENTING GRASS-ROOTS URBAN DEMOCRACY

The Great East Japan Earthquake took place during a gradual transition from a Fordist-type industrial society to a post-Fordist-type informational society in Japan. The complexly and densely developed Tokyo bay area is an icon of post-war urban economic growth. But the disaster in 2011 dramatically revealed potential risks, as well as social groups, marginalized not only spatially but also socially, embedded in urban society.

Reconstruction policy can become a turning point in urban development policy, which has constructed large urban facilities on the blank paper created by land reclamation and has used the area to contain an overcrowded population flowing into Tokyo during the age of the post-war economic growth. It can potentially transform socio-environmental conditions integrated in the capitalistic mode of production in urban political economy toward a new type of sustainable society.

For this purpose, we need to re-invent and re-conceptualize grass-roots democracy in the context of a precariously changing, globally integrated urban society. Reconstruction of the Tokyo bay area must become a laboratory to test our future society.

Notes

1. See, for example, Saskia Sassen, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001); Neil Brenner and Roger Keil, eds., *The Global Cities Reader* (London &New York: Routledge, 2006).
2. David Harvey, *Justice, Nature, and the Geography of Difference* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1996).
3. Stephen Graham, *Disrupted Cities: When Infrastructure Fails* (New York: Routledge, 2010).
4. Nik Heynen, Maria Kaika, and E. Swyngedouw, *In the Nature of Cities: Urban Political Ecology and the Politics of Urban Metabolism* (London & New York: Routledge, 2006).
5. Manuel Castells, *The City and the Grassroots: A Cross-Cultural Theory of Urban Social Movements* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).
6. Ueno Junko, "Breakdown of Infrastructures and Urban Disconnection: Tokyo in Post-Quake Chaos," *Disaster, Infrastructure and Society: Learning from the 2011 Earthquake in Japan* 4 (March 2013): 11–21.
7. Data in March 11, 2015, Reconstruction Agency.
8. Data in March 11, 2015, National Policy Agency.
9. A panel of university scholars and the members of the consortium made the redevelopment plan of Shinkiba area in 2010, which referred to the redevelopment project in Hamburg as a "waterfront" city.

Literature, Cinema and Love in Fukushima Japan

Ecosophy and Planetary Writing: On *Chernobyl II*

Toshiya Ueno

INTRODUCTION

Just three years after the Chernobyl nuclear catastrophe, Félix Guattari published an influential work in ecological thinking entitled *Three Ecologies*.[1] The book generated a breakthrough in the theory of ecology by arguing for the necessity to juxtapose three ecological registers: the ecology of nature (natural environment), the ecology of society (social and political sphere), and the ecology of mind (mindscape and psychosphere). This trilogy was inspired by Gregory Bateson's *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*.[2] Now, five years after the Fukushima disaster that followed the earthquake and tsunami of March 2011, it is appropriate to apply the arguments and concepts developed in *Three Ecologies* to the present situation in Japan and the world.

This essay, however, does much more than simply apply Guattari's concepts to analyze the issue of Fukushima. Beyond mere appropriation, it attempts to develop this thought through a close-reading of *Chernobyl II* (2014), a novel written by Fukushima-born Japanese novelist Eiichi Seino.[3] Seino has published several novels and travelogue essays while being actively engaged with the organization of free open-air techno parties as DJ and party organizer since the mid-1990s. He traveled in many places

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around the world from the late 1980s to the early 1990s, and after "3.11," he has been commuting back and forth between Fukushima and Tokyo in order to care for his elderly parents. He has long been interested in contemporary philosophy, such as post-structuralism and some anarchist theory, as he explains in numerous essays and blogs. Being part of the "new breed" (*shinjinrui*), the Japanese equivalent of the X generation in Europe and North America, although he has never claimed this appellation for himself, he is relatively familiar with the legacy of contemporary thought and critical theory which would include Deleuze and Guattari. Building on this intellectual genealogy, I would like to propose in this essay a reading of *Chernobyl II* that draws on both Guattari's ecosophy and recent discussions in object-oriented ontology. This essay argues for a form of ecological writing that both mirrors the present closed state of Fukushima Japan and, in this mirroring, imperatively calls for a re-attunement to the atmospheres of the planet.

To begin, I briefly summarize the novel. *Chernobyl II* is a first-person narrative in which the male narrator tells the reader about the events that happened in his life. The nameless protagonist, who lives in Kaizuka, a suburb of a rural city. The novel only gives hints of what happened, but it seems that the town was ravaged by the tsunami, and is now part of the area polluted by the nuclear incident that ensued. In Japanese, the term "kaizuka" denotes the archeological garbage sites of ancient communities called shell-grave or shell-mound sites. This reference to geological layers of Japanese society makes an interesting parallel with Deleuze and Guattari's own use of geological metaphors in their work. In addition, the relation between geological layers and the nuclear catastrophe hinted at by the novel is all the more significant in the present age of the anthropocene. For in this new geological era, the Fukushima nuclear event raises serious questions about the nature of the humanities and the place of the human on the planet. In a sense, the choice of this proper name for a fictive town is quite significant.

Although the narrator lives alone in a high apartment building, he pretends to live with his wife, who, it seems, died during the tsunami, albeit the novel remains very ambiguous about what actually happened. Every day, the narrator has a strange conversation with a photograph of his wife, in their room. In other words, he lives with the phantasm of his dead wife in an everyday time, suggesting the process of Freudian mourning. He works as a photographer and staff member of an IT business firm, which provides the service for a huge virtual community called "Cher." At the beginning of the novel, his close friend Muraki, one of the vice presidents

in the firm, asks him to find new concepts and visual materials to develop a new version, "Cher II." One day, while location-hunting, the narrator encounters a young guy who is also a user of Cher and lives on the polluted hillside of the town controlled by the local authorities. The young guy reveals the extent of the ruin and devastation of Cher. After a couple of encounters, they are caught by the local police while violating the regulations on polluted sites. As it turns out, this incident is related to a secret insurrection organized by a group of political activists as well as a financial crisis now hitting his own firm. Thrown into a chaotic situation and what Guattari would call a "chaosmic" psychological spasm, the narrator has to take decisive steps and enter the unknown realm of his everyday life.

While *Chernobyl II* is not a typical confessional I-novel, the question of subjectivity, and in particular the production of subjectivity, is essential, and resonates with Guattari's ideas about production of subjectivity in the ecosophy he developed. The term "ecosophy" was coined by Guattari to articulate a philosophy of virtual ecology. A "virtual ecology" is concerned with poetry, music, plastic arts, cinema, media art, and activism, as well as the more general media ecology or ecology of the info-sphere.[4] In the same vein, Guattari also used the word "chaosophy" to articulate a philosophy of chaos. I will use both terms interchangeably in this article to engage with Guattari's theory of the "production of subjectivity in the present age."

How should we understand this "production of subjectivity"? Is subjectivity the intentional product of a cognitive labor? For if that were the case, what difference would obtain between this and the conventional idea of producing objects and things in material labor? To begin with, production of subjectivity must not be confused with the idea of intentional production of cognitive agency taking part in psychological, informational, and/or affective labor formations. Production of subjectivity has a deeper, wider meaning centered on the relation between subjectivities and environments. For one thing, subjectivity in ecosophy emerges before discursive communication and signifying systems; it is pre-egoic and pre-individual, both a pre-discursive and an a-signifying process. For Guattari, ecosophy is primarily concerned with the "ambiance" or field that defines a singular subjective sphere. Metaphorically speaking, if subjectivity be defined as an ocean, then the subject is akin to a wave.[5] We should then understand Guattari's "partial subject" as these singular waves, and "absorbent subjectivity" as this immense ocean. Subjectivity thus emerges in a collective process of enunciation that, withdrawn from objective reality, crystallizes concurrently with its own living environment. The production of subjectivity in ecosophy is defined by this process of collective

individuation taking the form of a particular ambiance. The production of subjectivity is then not concerned with the production of a unique individual subject, but with the production of a myriad of subjectivities. As such it cannot be reduced to the mere binding of subjects to objects. The crucial point of Guattari's ecosophy is that subjectivities can at any time and anywhere *take place* in the form of a field or ambiance.

The Fukushima disaster is still ongoing, and its widespread impact on the planet points to the emergence of a singular event. I believe such a planetary event can enable us, along with other beings and even things, to start existing now as singular occurrences of the world. For an event, though it always emerges alongside ordinary realities, does not simply copy and repeat but generates a multiplicity of possibilities, incipient inventions, and creations that can help us overcome our daily challenges. At the same time, singular events like Fukushima allow for a radical critique of everyday life in its daily repetitions. An event always emerges from the banal repetitions of the everyday. It is from within those banal regularities that the eventness that makes the event can emerge. And fictional writing plays a central role in both expressing events and making sense of the process of subjectivation they trigger.

Guattari's ecosophy can help us explore the planetary event that happened and is still happening in Fukushima, and understand how literary fictions like *Chernobyl II* rework our daily perceptions to figure a new production of subjectivity. In turn, such planetary fictions give us a critical perspective from which it becomes possible to engage with ecosophy itself. After a brief definition of key terms borrowed from Guattari's ecosophy, I will propose an analysis of *Chernobyl II*'s multi-layered worldview while engaging with recent debates in object-oriented ontology and speculative realism. In conclusion, I argue that it is only by defining nature as a machinic assemblage that we can start imagining, even as Fukushima Japan becomes trapped into a permanent state of emergency of neoliberal politics, a planetary love, and a planetary cosmo-politics.

The Four Functors, Machinic Assemblage, and Machinic Animism

In the following analysis of *Chernobyl II*, I will refer to several concepts developed by Guattari in his later work, starting with what he called the "four functors": Flows (or flux), Machinic Phyla, Incorporeal Universes, and Existential Territories. All of these functors are functional units that

constitute unique moments of a theoretical practice of virtual ecology.[6] Let me briefly define each of the four functors.

Flow, or flux (hereinafter *F*), designates the stream of materials, things, signs, phonetic tones, electric signals, info-data, physical energies, libidos, desires, capital, and so on. This concept originally derives from the science of fluids and is mobilized in opposition to systematic conceptual totalizations in a series of binary oppositions or dualisms as in structuralism. As we know, from the mid-1970s to the 1980s, Guattari was directly inspired by theoretical currents of the sciences such as complexity theory.

Phylum (*Ph*), adapted from biology, addresses the reality of machines that, like living organisms, have their own quasi-autopoietic evolutionary deployment and mutations. This dynamic material genealogy of technological innovation is applied to tools and machines in general and is therefore called Machinic Phylum.[7] For example, the invention of the airplane was initially inspired by the shape of birds, actualizing a particular machinic phylum. Phyla also regulate the linguistic concepts that articulate the exchange and permutation of the semiological triad of form, matter, and substance. The term *substance*, borrowed from Hjelmslev's linguistics, does not here mean a raw material but an already organized virtual field of signification that plays the role of mediator or intercessor between form and matter. Substance can thus be understood as the "abstract machine" of the machinic phylum.

Incorporeal Universes (U) imply more than the common idea of a cosmos or a world functioning as a container of things. Incorporeal Universes are linked to a specific territory of existential experiences rather than to a universal truth. They are not "worlds" because what is at issue here is not an actual reality, material, or symbolic but immaterial, invisible, intangible, and incorporeal moments that can effect non-linear chaotic leaps through both social systems and the psycho-sphere.

Existential Territories (E) are existential spaces for humans, living beings of any sort, as well as objects and machines. Existential Territories constitute an effective spatial range of capacities and potentialities for a given agency. They emerge when retaining expressive moments through particular repetitive rhythms (*refrain* or *ritornello* in Deleuze and Guattari's terminology). A *refrain* composes a territory in the passage across or the mutual superposition of heterogeneous environments.[8] In Seino's novel, we find a particularly important *refrain* in the sentence repeated by the narrator when he looks each day at the image of his wife: "You are here as well."

These neologisms are not mere play, nor do they collapse differences into an interdisciplinary eclecticism. The four functors never fall into relativism, obscurantism, and indeterminism, and are crucial to the development of a proper ecological consciousness and practical initiatives as advocated by Guattarian ecosophy. Because of their speculative (abstract) and cartographic (a-signifying) conceptual mode, it does not really make sense to try understanding these terms by drawing on concrete examples. I will however now provide a possible illustration of these concepts in the case of tuna. As we know, the tuna that we use for cooking is not at this point natural in any way. In Japan, the fatty parts of tuna, nowadays valued as a precious resource, were carelessly discarded during the Edo period (1603–1868). In addition, the fluctuation of its price is determined by regulations on total volumes of haul themselves relying on the present state of technology and the cost of fuel oil used by fishing boats. Fatty parts of tuna no longer belong to Nature as such but exist as a product of plural forms of engineering: logistics and circulation (the complex of technologies such as fish-radar or freezing in boats) (F); artificial farming (Ph); qualitative or affective value which cannot be reduced its mere use in a linear process of accumulation (U); the zone of influence of advertisement for aquatic resources or simply fishermen's hunting area (E). Likewise the price of fossil fuel is no longer measured in relation to a natural environment but is constantly manipulated in relation to the market system of investments and speculations in incredibly complicated financial engineering systems.

In addition to these four functors, I will use two additional concepts: *machinic assemblage* and *machinic animism*. The term machinic here does not indicate anything mechanical. In short, machinic means a mutual immanent coupling of heterogeneous moments.[9] As soon as there is an encounter between heterogeneous things, a machinic assemblage is at work. A machinic assemblage does not follow an exclusive dialectic movement but instead is driven by the logic of inclusive disjunction or mutual inclusion. The best example provided by Deleuze and Guattari is the machinic assemblage of an orchid and a wasp that makes visible an uncanny symbiosis: the wasp becomes the bio-apparatus for the reproduction of orchids, and the orchid becomes the sexual organ of the wasp. The machinic is thus constituted as a mutual process of deterritorialization, what Deleuze and Guattari also call "the body without organ." This example is relevant as well to think a coming ecosophy given the radical decrease of honeybees and wasps caused by the excessive use of agricultural chemicals. In this case, a biochemical machine causes a radical transformation of the natural

environment, and plants are then unable to communicate and negotiate with insects like bees in order to reproduce themselves. As I argue in the following sections, Nature should be understood then as a peculiar kind of machinic assemblage.

This said, how do two components of the machine, the wasp and the bee for example, actually relate and interact with each other in machinic assemblages? And how do machines relate with each other? For machines always presuppose other machines in which plural units are connected despite being in mutual isolation. I call altruism the basic condition of machines in which "partial enunciators" (the participative, active, and expressive agency found in objects and things, also called "partial subjects") articulate incorporeal universes in multiple constellations of values and references.[10] Machinic assemblages thus work through partial connections achieved by non-human processes of selection. "In fact the machine speaks to the machine before speaking to man and the ontological domains that it reveals and secrets are, on each occasion, singular and precarious."[11] And this process does presuppose an *a priori* unity of machines.

In this view, even human beings are objects and machines. To insist that all humans and non-humans exist and function in the same immanent, flat plane might sound too metaphysical, if not reductive. An incorporeal universe is, by definition, always plural and multiple (economically, culturally, cosmologically, symbolically, ethnically, and ontologically), and its existential territories are divergent. In such a transversal plane all moments lock into each other and assume an immanent consistency without transcendence. As such, human agency is always constituted, enabled, and woven by non-human objects and machines.

In the following sections of this essay, I will attempt to explore further the purchase of such concepts for understanding the present situation of Japan and the planet after Fukushima. Fiction writing and/as speculative thinking is necessary to a practice of ecosophy, and in this respect, I will try to understand how and why animism has been revisited in various contemporary theories, from post-autonomist Marxist critical theory[12] to recent anthropology after the "ontological turn"[13] and the revival of panpsychism in speculative and ontological philosophy.[14] Although Guattari never actually used the term machinic animism, this notion has been elaborated by thinkers after the post-modern turn, and I believe it can be a heuristic and productive concept for the elaboration of an ecosophy able to embrace the *future terrors* in the aftermath of the Fukushima disaster.

The Transversal Structures of the Novel

The novel's worldview is defined by several crisscrossing layers of reality. The subjectivity of the narrator is cracked or rather layered, inscribed within the numerous foldings of the world. We can however identify three distinct yet interrelated spatial locations in the novel, which can then allow us produce an interpretive reading of the novel.

First, Kaizuka's natural environment appears to be defined by radioactive pollution—the land is contaminated. It is particularly important that the site called "Mountain X" is located on the hillside of Kaizuka, where daily wage-workers sent from the local authority work on the de-radiation of the land. Some are forced to do this work for financial or other reasons, while others are working with hidden political or anarchistic intent. The unnamed young guy, one of the main characters of the novel, is aligned with the latter group. No explanation is given for the situation of the town under the siege of radiation. The site of Mountain X is certainly part of a natural environment. At the same time, the site is characterized by an uncanny ambiance, constantly traversed and redefined by the dark side of society, radioactivity, an underground economy of squatters in "the ghetto," bio-political control of radiation clean-up, and so on. Once, wandering on the hillside, the narrator remembers a conversation he had with his father, who hinted at the presence of sacred territories and networks of vital and spiritual energy flow associated with the indigenous shamanistic cults of mountains (*sangake shinkō*) in the northeast parts of Japan where Kaizuka is located.[15] Nature worship in this shamanistic or primitive Shinto relies on a specific mode of territorialization, the local definition of taboos and sanctions. There is here an interesting, and uncanny, parallel drawn between shamanic taboo and radioactive pollution, a parallel that I argue is better understood in the context of recent debates in object-oriented ontology.[16]

In this recent perspective, objects always withdraw and recede from one another and from their own interrelations.[17] As such, humans cannot ever have direct access to objects themselves. Similarly, in spiritually charged places like Shinto shrines defined by strong taboos, things and objects (for instance, religious instruments) are withdrawn from their conventional use in everyday life.[18] Objects always contain something excessive within themselves, something which makes interiority richer than exteriority. In the case of social taboo, things or objects generate a particular force of repulsion, and it is this force that imperatively excommunicates humans from these objects and their usual context of use. Thus with taboo,

things are doubly detached and distanced. The same might hold true for the issue of ongoing radioactive pollution in Japan after the Fukushima disaster. Now, both forces of sacred taboo and radioactivity are emitted from objects, permeating everything with, to borrow Timothy Morton's expression, a "trans-local viscosity."[19] In radioactive pollution, there is an unfolding of all three effects of contamination, duration, and volatile phasing, in which something non-human, poisonous, and fatal relentlessly sticks to and haunts human agency and society.

In summer 2011, for instance, the municipality of Kyoto refused to receive the debris of pine trees given from the Sanriku coast in northeast Japan. These were to be used for fire decoration on the occasion of a famous traditional summer festival, but because of concerns for possible radioactive pollution, the gift was rejected. When this happened, the decision seemed to rely on a notion of symbolic pollution or religious impurity (*kegare*), a vague sense of spiritualism combined with an almost religious context of folklore rather than actual scientific measurements. We see here a case of "hyperobjective" effects, where sacred and radioactive "things" force us to become attuned to the world and think both ecologically and cosmologically.[20] This never happens the other way around—it is not the human tuning itself to the world—because Nature has its own monstrous forces deployed through the various spheres of the symbolic, the physical, the mental, and the real, that is, forces that impose and imperatively affect us, humans, and objects.[21]

Second, social life in *Chernobyl II* is defined by a multiplicity of layers that in turn define multiple incorporeal universes. These layers are as much natural as urban, and resonate with Guattari's late work on urbanity, in which he stresses the relationship between urbanity and subjectivity: at this time he used the expression "subjective city."[22] For Guattari, the contemporary condition of urbanity is defined by a multiplicity of urban sub-ensembles linked with and through technologies of telematics and informatics into what he called "archipelagoes of cities." While pointing at the delocalization and immaterialization of urban life in the environment of info-semio-capitalism, Guattari here also wants to stress the plurality of layers through which subjectivity is located and unfolds. Similarly, in Seino's novel, subjectivities are also constituted through a space of "archipelagoes" defined by urban sub-ensembles, radioactive pollution, and shamanistic taboo.

Urban society, the existential territory of *Chernobyl II*, constitutes the defining narrative setting of the novel. Kaizuka is a half-gentrified suburban area located in Tōhoku. It is a ruined suburb, a cityscape broken by the

attack of the tsunami and the ongoing radioactive pollution, and in this desolate state now reveals the multiple layers it is made of—physical, symbolic, emotional, and informational. As Seino shows, this state of decay and devastation generates a unique mindscape in which the narrator and his wife entertain a strange state of conviviality in the form of a daydream fantasy. The fact that the narrator's wife seems to have died in the tsunami is only briefly addressed in a cell phone conversation with Muraki. We do know the tsunami poured into the streets of Kaizuka, but there is no narration of the disaster. The narrator's apartment building is almost empty, abandoned from the ground to the fifth floor. Some apartments have remained untouched since the tsunami. The wife once (before the catastrophe?) compared the atmosphere of their apartment on the 15th floor with the control tower of an airport, figuring the work of bio-power in their everyday life as a post-panopticon universe. After the catastrophe, people living in downtown Kaizuka continue to live, shop, and work normally, as if no catastrophe had ever happened, or so it seems at first glance. The everyday reality of Kaizuka is undeniably the mirror image of Japanese society after "3.11."

As already mentioned, in the marginal part of the town near the irradiated hillsides (including Mountain X), there is a special zone called "the ghetto," populated by squatters, punks, gangs, hackers, criminals, anarchists, and various other counter- or sub-cultural tribes. This is where the young guy lives. "The ghetto" is not just the name for a spatial location but is in fact closer to a symbolic or cultural formation. I prefer for this reason to call it a "zone." In some critical sense, a zone seems to operate as a kind of vital ambiance, an atmosphere in which material, symbolic, and libidinal flows are in constant circulation. Like things in object-oriented ontology and shamanistic taboos, activities in the ghetto seem to be hidden or withdrawn from everyday life, and it is this condition of withdrawal from normal everyday life that induces the intervention of the police and the subsequent actions of social resistance.

The existential territories of individuals in this city are multi-layered, multi-dimensional, and transversal, which is why the residents have to keep "earthing" themselves on a particular existential territory renewed at each occasion, despite, or rather because of their continuous attempts to dive into the abyss of chaos, launching onto the "umbilical chaotic zone" of chaosmosis.[23] This tension between "earthing" and "diving" is unavoidable and must be continuously negotiated, because, as Guattari explains, "a world is only constituted on the condition of being inhabited by an umbilical point – deconstructive, detotalizing and deterritorializing – from which a subjective positionality embodies itself."[24]

Guattari put brackets around the word "earthing" to convey the sense of a grasping of the ground.[25] The original French *prise de terre* refers to an electric ground. But this term also resonates with Whitehead's concept of "prehension." As we know, Whitehead was often addressed in Guattari's later works, and despite critics of this use of Whitehead for a lack of academic rigor, the relation between both thinkers and thoughts is crucial. According to Whitehead, there are always mutual prehensions or grasping among things, beings, and entities in the actual world and universe. The same goes for machinic assemblages for which Guattari expected to find similar effects of prehension, allowing him to conceive an idea of plural universes, the incorporeal universes discussed above, for different ontological entities and agencies in existential territories. Even in a state of psychological, social, or economic crisis, one always needs some kind of grip on the earth (the ground in an ontological sense). All moments of reality are mutually clinging on the earth and chaos.

Third, along with natural and social environments, cyberspace—the virtual game Cher—also plays a significant role in this novel as part of the spheres that define the ecology of mind. In his *Three Ecologies*, Guattari frequently discussed what he calls "Integrated World Capitalism," an advanced state of capitalism defined by information and semiotic systems, and not limited to the psycho-sphere as such. The term "mind" that I use here must have a larger acceptation than the original definition given by Gregory Bateson, and in the context of info-semio-capitalism, I am for this reason tempted to add a fourth ecology, along with ecologies of nature, society, and mind, what I call an info-ecology or media ecology. The addition of this fourth ecology is I believe crucial to our understanding of and present engagement with ecosophy.

"Chernobyl" is in this novel the name of a virtual cityscape constructed as an augmented reality in the net. This game, produced and maintained by the corporate firm in which both the narrator and Muraki work, is often abbreviated "Cher"—pronounced *cheru* in Japanese. It is a virtual cityscape, accessible with a paid membership and populated by a million clients who can choose to stay, play, or have a variety of experiences through their own individual avatars. The name Chernobyl does not directly point at the incident in the former USSR, or rather, it figures a general imagination of the end of the world. Both the narrator and his wife know about the Chernobyl accident and its effects, following on nuclear experiments conducted by the USSR in the 1960s: during their childhood, they had to breathe air contaminated by irradiated clouds and learned about the terrible effects of micro-level radioactive fallout.

As the narrator is not a programmer but a professional photographer, initially only making use of digital data, his job is limited to a search for photographic resources usable for construction of the virtual landscape. He does not invent a narrative but simply creates photographic resources for rendering the multiple of the virtual environment. What is then the narrative of *Chernobyl II*? Has it been replaced by an atemporal spatial game? In a crucial scene where the narrator re-encounters his wife in cyberspace, it appears that he might himself *be* the narrative, or rather that the narrative emerges from his own very writing. This process of awareness constitutes the integrative theme of this novel, a process that is in fact enacted in a narrative movement of retelling. In his recollections, he explains how the virtual world Cher passed through a succession of stages. Before opening as a virtual cityscape, Cher was first a radio program called "Radio Chernobyl," created by his wife.[26] Later, the narrator undertook to develop Cher using his own photographic resources. This led to its realization as an IT cyber community business established by Muraki.[27] The basic narrative structure of Cher was thus constructed by the narrator and his wife, and the photographic materials he shot were then used for the initial version of the cyberworld. Cher emerged from his wife's oracular story, a fictional account of the real Chernobyl accident that describes the situation of the abandoned town after the evacuation of local residents.[28] She imagined these ruined cityscapes as a no man's land, and in her own disturbed state of mind, caused by an unspecified mental disorder, wove together unknown memories of the victims. To welcome the unlikely return of the residents, loud music played continuously from the central tower, an architecture that recalls their own apartment in Kaizuka. The narrator transcribed her story and turned it into the general scheme of the world of Cher.

During his location-hunting for photographic resources, the narrator remembers how his wife invented the first version of Cher.[29] But the new version, Cher II, prepared by Muraki, is composed of vulgar stereotypes characteristic of mythic, mystic, apocalyptic, and fantasy-oriented narratives. Muraki aims for a more entertainment-oriented format, which the narrator is very uncomfortable with. The updating process of Cher is however independent, separated from and prior to human intention and commitment, because it relies primarily on the role of machinic phyla. For tools and instruments in our everyday surroundings, always assume independent machinic processes, even in the absence of actual technical machines. The machinic, as Guattari argues, preexists the mere technical and, by definition, exists in micro-socio-political assemblages. I will now

show how these machinic phyla are expressed through the various behaviors and expressions adopted by its characters when confronting the virtual incorporeal universe of Cher.

In Seino's novel, mathematical equations, diagrams, and software with which the narrator creates and manages Cher participate in the very process of production. Guattari was well aware of the significance of inhuman moments lurking in and behind objects and things and directly taking part in the production of subjectivity. Curves and equations in diagrams and schemes drawn and used by humans to guarantee the stable operation of technological machines are on the side of the inhuman. And as inhuman objects, they facilitate the process of partial subjectivation potentially enacted in all objects and now becoming central to info-semio-capitalism.

Info-semio-capitalism in the current era of globalization and neoliberalism forces us not only to participate in the production of signs, symbols, and knowledges in our cognitive labor but also to engage in the very production of subjectivity. The hegemonic power of info-semio-capitalism sanctions and controls "sub-ensembles of large cities connected by telematic and informatic means."[30] In this sense, the virtual environment of Cher constitutes both a mediated sphere or informatic spatiality and a singular cartography in which players/users can navigate. This singular cartography is essentially distinct from a map that pretends to copy the reality of the world; it is a cartography of collective becoming.

When the narrator accesses Cher on his personal computer in order find ideas for the new version demanded by Muraki, he realizes it has become increasingly ruined and emptied of its inhabitants, just as happened in the town of Kaizuka. The virtual environment does not appear any longer as a free or emancipative zone. For example, "Area 25," named in reference to the US military base Area 51 so often connected with conspiracy theory and UFOs, appears to be a completely free and emancipative zone where anything goes. Yet the popularity of suicide attempts among several its users also reflects the condition of everyday life after the tsunami, mirroring as well the condition of Japan after 3.11. After a serial epidemic of virtual suicide bombings, Cher's population dramatically decreases to become almost a no man's land. The young guy explains this epidemic of virtual suicides, arguing that only ego-tripping kids would inaugurate such a game and become addicted of it. Virtual suicide becomes a pandemic because in virtual space, sympathetic drives, functioning on the basis of contiguity-oriented communication, proliferate and intensify to take the form of a "becoming child," turning feral against Nature. The young guy, however, seems to find some real potential in the very fragmentary

moment of political resistance and resurrection. In his interactions with the young guy and the police, the narrator in turn finds a possibility of healing and rehabilitation. *Chernobyl II* is then not advocating militant action but rather what can be called, as Franco "Bifo" Berardi proposes, a "medic," or a therapeutic action.[31] "Becoming child" in that respect does not mean a mere regression as infantilization of the kind found in info-semio-capitalism. In order to better understand this therapeutic effect of the becoming child in *Chernobyl II*, I will now turn to Heidegger's discussion of technology and objects and its reappropriation by OOO.

Any technology, tools, instruments, and machines are available for use. And at the same time, each technological object retains a certain degree of resistance to its functional use, what we can call its potential unavailability. More simply, tools and equipment embrace their own specific resistance in their very process of actualization as objects of use, just as an electric resistance facilitates fine conductions of electric circuits. In his famous essay on technology, Heidegger called the availability of machines and technology "standing reserve" (*Bestand* in the German original). "Standing-reserve" can for example be comprehended and "unveiled" in the aircraft ready for takeoff on the runway.[32] It designates and *is* the stockpiling of potentiality in technological machines. *Cher* also functions as a standing reserve which, however, given the essence of nuclear technology case, brings about unknown and unexpected communications. Nature as such is a stockpiling of resources as/for both matters and means. But nuclear power plants are another case of technological stockpiling that constitutes a radical provocation against Nature, redefined in the technological process as expropriated being and appropriated matter. This is why with nuclear technology one can no longer hold the Heideggerian idea of salvation or overcoming in the very crisis.

Heidegger appropriated the idea of salvation or overcoming in the very crisis from Hölderlin. Returning to the question of crisis and technological breakdown in relation to the virtual world of Cher, I would now like to offer a more emancipative interpretation of Heidegger's argument on technology. There is in technological crisis a catastrophic rupture, an alternating crack of un/availability which forecloses access to the propriety/authenticity of Being. Heidegger persuasively argues that when machines and tools break down in conditions of malfunction, their crucial moment of interrelations and interconnectedness is unexpectedly revealed and unfolded to us (as human agency). This ontology of the broken tool constitutes the basis for Graham Harman's ontology of the object. Similarly, Guattari remarks that machines are by definition constituted by and cursed with "a desire of abolition."[33] The machine is always marked

by breakdown, catastrophe, and the death drive of technology. But this "desire of abolition" never becomes the unveiled manifestation of "Being" in a Heideggerian sense. As Guattari argues, "Being does not precede the machinic essence; the process precedes the heterogenesis of being."[34] The breakdown of technology and the machinic accident do not unveil being; they express at the same time the crucial delusion and potential of any machinic assemblage to lead us toward a more faithful attitude regarding the temporary, fragmentary, and fragile truth of machinic being. To explain this idea, Guattari takes the example in contemporary art of Tinguely's "delirious machines."[35] And following the same line of thought, we could say that all residents of the Japanese archipelago after "3.11" have been endlessly experiencing this delirium and delusion of technology. While Nature is by definition a meta-stockpiling, the fatal technology of nuclear plants constitutes an almost eternal minus-negative sphere of standing reserve. In the nuclear plant, paradoxically only unavailability can achieve a certain degree of availability for the very simple fact that human agency is never able to directly access or touch its core being.

In this sense, the coming ecosophy called forth by Guattari is to be eco-oriented and anti-nuclear. This claim does not come from a faith in a pure and unpolluted Nature but on the contrary emerges from an understanding of Nature as artificial or technological. Drawing on Heidegger's theory of technology, one always has to relentlessly negotiate with the dark side of technology and the absolute limits of standing reserve. The characters of Seino's *Chernobyl II* are engaged in a similar hopeless task in their everyday practice and acceptance of multiple technological worlds: nuclear technology, paraphernalia for nuclear decontamination, urban forms, cyberworlds, and the very psycho-geographies where take place the production of subjectivity. In what kind of Nature or environment are we as characters in the novel living? How is the artificial or technological multi-layered scape accounted for as natural environment and eco-system? I would like to try answering these questions in terms of Guattari's concepts of machinic assemblage and machinic animism.

Nature as Machinic Assemblages and Machinic Animism

Can we say that any animal, plant, mineral, microbe—and, why not, celestial entity—constitutes a sort of machinic or sentient being?[36] If one were to accept this view, then both our perspective on the universe and our attitude on the globe would radically change. For such a view relies

necessarily on the idea that all organisms and the universe are operative within a movement of infinite machinic series. In the machinic, as mentioned in the first part, heterogeneous moments between two or more units are brought together into a functional totality by coupling and interlocking them with each other. In this process, the machinic generates unintended effects while presenting an immanent consistency. When the components of the machinic interact with each other, their operations generate something new in a peculiar movement of affects among living and non-living, human and non-human things. A machinic assemblage as such is a combination and interconnection of machines. In the late Guattari, the machinic is, rather than mere operation, more concerned with becoming, that is a capacity for generating new variations and as a catapult jump toward another dimension from/within a given reality. Such an understanding of the machinic and machinic assemblages shares similarities with animism and panpsychism since both assume the hidden presence of a spiritual energy, vital flow, or vibrant matter. While mechanism and vitalism are usually understood as distinct from each other, we can claim for a machinic animism or a machinic vitalism in which something machinic (the dynamic coupling of heterogeneous moments) is envisioned in the form of energetic flows immanent to things, objects, and all material beings, rather than vital or spiritual agencies as in traditional animism.

In addition, machinic assemblages tend to assume a "speculative cartography"[37] that enables new arrangement and ongoing combination. A speculative cartography is opposed to concrete cartography, the latter merely replicating of real geography. Insofar as it is the site of emergence of creative sets of reservoir for potential activities and desires, the virtual space of Cher constitutes such a flat speculative cartography populated by myriad of objects moved by a multiplicity of affects. In machinic assemblages, to *be* an object is to impose on, unify, and crisscross infinitely with other objects. Put differently, to be or *become* an object is to invent new alliances, to negotiate with other objects not directly as individual agencies but through fragile links and temporary becomings, a process which is best understood in terms of affect circulation.[38] This procedure is repeated and rebooted in human communication and negotiation like those held between the four main characters of this novel, the narrator, his ghostly wife, the young guy, and Muraki.

The notion of affect is not a psychological concept; it is a philosophical concept. The affects circulating among characters in this novel do not

merely indicate psychological or human affections categorized in terms of passion, emotion, feeling, and sensations. Affects cannot be reduced to psychological phenomena even though they present at times similar characteristics. This is how Guattari illustrates this idea of affect in *Schizoanalytic Cartographies*: "The affects speaks to me, or at least it speaks through me. The Dark red of my curtain enters into an existential Constellation with my dusk, when darkness is falling, to engender an uncanny Affect which devalues the clarities and urgencies which imposed themselves on me several instants earlier and it makes the world sink into a void which seems irremediable."[39] Building on Spinoza, Guattari defined "affect" as a capacity to affect and to be affected, that is, a singular dynamic in which different moments approach and influence each other by being directed toward something different from themselves. In this case, the forces at work within a given dynamic become a varied sets of capabilities and competences in each individual in a given micro-/macro-political context. This is how we should read the relationship between the narrator and the other characters in this story. Within the dynamics of affect, one enters into a pre-trans-individual process which can no longer be ascribed to phenomenological inter-subjectivity within an inter-personal horizon.

Affect is not merely a part of human consciousness or emotion, and any agency in affects should be treated as machinic agency. This is why, as Guattari insists, Nature as such constitutes a complicated machinic assemblage. Similarly both the mind-sphere and socio-political formations constitute "artificial environments" defined by auto-poietic and as such spontaneous natural process. This can be illustrated by mobilizing the psychoanalytical image of the oral lip that absorbs nutrition from breasts of the maternal body, or the anal-work that formulates habits and rituals by an alternating rhythm of exhausting and enduring shits. These moments, oral, anal, which determine the mind of human subjectivity are undeniably machinic moments. By extension, we can contend that Nature itself is figured out as a relentlessly intersecting series of machinic assemblages. In this respect, it makes sense that Timothy Morton claims that "Nature doesn't exist" and instead proposes the insightful idea of an "ecology without Nature."[40] The environment and its ecology exist here as an implicated or immanent order operative in overlapping mesh-works. Morton's idea of mesh is a subtle figure of the uncanny interconnectedness of things in the world. While an object, always alone and solitary, does not enter into any direct relationship with other objects, it still can be constantly enmeshed with other objects that become assembled around their immanent void or

vacuum, what we earlier discussed in terms of a movement of withdrawing. The notion of mesh-work used by Morton can be understood in relation with the Guattarian notion of machinic assemblage, which explains why we can explain Guattarian ecosophy without using the concept of Nature. Ecosophy without Nature in fact might be more useful than the conventional concept of Nature to make sense of how global warming impacts upon the earth by affecting oceanic temperature and provoking drastic changes of plates dynamics, as in the case of the earthquake and tsunami of March 2011.

Both ideas of nature as machinic assemblage (Guattari) and interconnected mesh-work (Morton) express a gradual propensity in contemporary philosophy toward an animist perspective. Animism is generally defined as a belief system which envisions spirits or souls everywhere in the world and in all things. In animism, humans anthropomorphize things, animals, plants, minerals, and so on. The universe, for a number of primitive tribes as well as some over-developed societies, is thus populated and charged with myriads of ghosts, anima, souls, and spirits. In *Chaosmosis*, Guattari referred to the French sociologist Lucien Lévy-Bruhl to define his notion of "participation" as "a collective subjectivity investing a certain type of object and putting itself in the position of an existential group nucleus."[41] As in psychoanalysis, participation points toward a certain object-subject fusion which is also visible within symptoms of schizophrenia, hysteria, or hypnosis. This state of fusion operated by "the law of participation" presupposes a cosmic transference and correspondence among things, animals, plants, minerals, humans, and all elements of the world,[42] as in any machinic assemblage.

Unlike archaic or traditional animism, however, machinic animism understands Nature as machinic assemblage by envisioning the machinic enunciations built within Nature itself through non-discursive forms of expressions. Anything in the world can be treated as an effect of the machinic, of the constant dynamics of mesh-working. This is why Nature as machinic assemblage becomes a sort of nucleus of ecosophy.[43] Although Guattari never particularly discussed animism, one can easily find numerous remarks on animism or tribal ritual objects in his later works. While Guattari never argued for a regression toward a pre-modern condition, let alone a naive universe of childhood or a schizophrenic state of mind, he often used the term animism affirmatively in his later works. In *Three Ecologies,* for instance, he takes note of a global phenomenon of return to totemism and animism happening paradoxically at the moment great religions, monotheistic or not, face an increasing decay. He wondered in particular why

some hyper-developed technological societies could co-exist with animistic rituals and sensibilities. This phenomenon should not be reduced to the superficial current of new-age spiritualism but rather should be understood as a more universal and trans-local transformation of a planetary consciousness. That is the reason why Guattari got very interested into Candomblé in Brazil (which he perceived as a combination of African tribal mysticism with Catholicism and Native American religious practices) and Shinto in Japan. Furthermore, in *What is Philosophy?* Deleuze and Guattari present a positive view of animism because it valorizes the position of the "partial observer," also defined as a "partial enunciator" over the individual isolated observer.[44] In addition, Deleuze and Guattari discussed animism in direct relation with science, finding significant similarities between both practices of grasping the world on a planetary level.

How could we then define machinic animism? Machinic animism can be conceived as a certain form of animism in the age of mechanical reproduction and media technology. However, it should not be reduced to the popular idea of fetishism in info-semio-capitalism. Machinic animism has existed before reifications brought by capitalism came to prevail, and as such, it retains the characteristic of the machinic regardless of a superficial shift of capitalism toward info-semio-capitalism. It is not surprising then that when Maurizio Lazzarato and others make use of the term "machinic animism" in their discussion of contemporary capitalist societies, they are inspired by recent theoretical works in anthropology by Eduardo Viveiros de Castro.[45] In *Cannibal Metaphysics*, Viveiros de Castro proposes a thesis that might sound odd at first but is persuasive enough in light of recent currents of anthropology and ethnology inspired by Deleuze and Guattari, arguing that some humans envision animals as humans and that some animals as well see themselves as humans.[46] This phenomenon observed in South-American tribes is a kind of perspectivism which enables human and non-human to shift and mutate each others' view point. Viveiros de Castro's work productively draws on Deleuze and Guattari's work to bridge conceptually between OOO and Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy. In the context of this essay, this thesis is very helpful for thinking together the concept of machinic animism and a possible "machinic-oriented ontology."

In my view, machinic animism is a kind of animism built into, and driven by, machinic phyla. Machinic animism is constituted by mutual immanent dynamics within the plane of consistence where the mecanosphere permanently includes, and merges with, the biosphere. As such, it

shows affinities with info-semio-capitalism, although, and this is crucial, is never entirely captured by processes of capital accumulation. Info-semio-capitalism compels us to assume and even submit to animistic feelings in which everything seems to be interconnected by some vital agencies functioning like spirits or anima. For info-semio-capitalism is dependent upon the kind of movement of contagion characteristic of the mimicry and mimesis of affections we find in animism. Fashion operates through transfer and transmission, just as vampires proliferate by sharing blood, feeding on machinic animism. This explains how, under the condition of info-semio-capitalism, cultures are *animated* and *subjectivated*.

Machinic animism however cuts through and re-conjugates (with) these processual, partial, and polyphonic singularities of our societies and cultures. In machinic animism, these singularities are complicated in (in the sense of the Neoplatonist *complicatio*) the surroundings of living and non-living beings, they are reintegrated within an immanent totality and reorganized proto-subjectivities, in the sort of objects discussed earlier in relation to taboo. In this respect, the production of subjectivity must rely on a sort animism where *matter* (see earlier) is always fused with souls or spirits, which implies a radical change in our understanding of the relation between subject, object, and environment. I already hinted at this earlier in the article in the case of OOO but this will now make more sense in this discussion of machinic animism.

In the end, a subject is just one object among other objects and is never in a position of transcendence over the world of objects. As such, the term object is not necessarily opposed to the one of subject, because *an object is always already a proto-subjectivity*. An object is potentially a sentient being, while a subject is a potential object as "sensing thing" or "sensible matter," traversing the two registers of corporeal bodies and incorporeal universes of values. In other words, the production of subjectivity in machinic animism does not evacuate subjects in favor of a world of objects. Rather, it is viewed as the process of emergence of an objective environment of/ as proto-subjectivity. Like all other objects, subjects result from a process of objectification or rather of "becoming objects/things." Animism is thus the very proto-ontology that generates a perspective on the world, a worldview such as the one of *Chernobyl II*. In Seino's novel, we can find countless examples of machinic animism or more classical animism, in the encounters with the ghostly wife or within the virtual environment of Cher. More than these at times stereotypical references to animism, it is the transversal structure of the novel visible in both the multi-layered

narrative setting and the complex interrelations between the characters that enacts the mutually inclusive participation of things characteristic of machinic animism.

Another central notion of machinic animism is the one of participation, as fusion or contagion of ideas, numerous examples of which can be found in the modern context of psychoanalysis and literary theory. I will here refer to the case of partial objects and audience consumption to further elaborate on this notion of participation and its role in the production of subjectivity. In the case of psychoanalysis, the concept of partial object designates a fragmentary piece of the desired object which is adjacent to a specific part of the body and functions as nodal points of the libidinal drive. Guattari proposed to relate partial objects to "partial enunciations" since the notion of partial object itself necessarily expands across the various layers of production of subjectivity through machinic, architectural, ecological, and religious formations. If "partial objects" in the discourse of psychoanalysis can only be conceived as the effect of a failure of integration of the objects of desire, in machinic animism they express the wild creativity of the environment emerging as the effect of transference and permutation of "partial subjects," what I will now discuss in terms of pathic subjects.

In Mikhail Bakhtin's literary theory, consumers (readers or audiences in media studies) can become co-creators as they consume and in this consumption attempt to separate the content of the artwork from conventional significations. Consumer-artists are no longer passive consumers-spectators, receiving the artwork from an author-creator, they are rather "pathic" subjects. As a creative process, the production of subjectivity transverses and includes both objects and subjects, not relying on a conventional distinction between passive and active. It is a recursive process of auto-production that emerges where neither creator nor producer as such exist. This is why we should say that the production of subjectivity takes place *on the side of objects* as a process of "becoming subject."

Surprisingly the notion of the pathic is somewhat negligible in Guattari's later works. I would like however to recover this term and understand it as the very relation to what has been excluded, because a discourse is always dependent on that which it tends to exclude symbolically as well as micropolitically. In short, pathic subjectivity comes before the subject-object distinction, before or between, in the intermedial realm of participation populated by partial objects and partial subjects. The dimension of the pathic fluctuates back and forth between universes (incorporeal and the virtual), and the existential territories which are deployed into an actual

reality. If the pathic originally supposes a reactive posture stuck in negativity (desire based on lack), it is in the perspective we take in this article more concerned with a zero point of activity and cognition, which is never mere passive mode of perception. In this sense the pathic is very far from the idea of pathos as passion or empathy and rather expresses how an objective world (constituted by a machinic phylum and an existential territory) is always withdrawn and receding from a human individual agency and perspective. For pathic subjectivity subsumes and comprehends both subjects and objects and even transverses obliquely the very mutual relation that constitutes them as subject and objects.

How does this relate to *Chernobyl II*? Given the storyline discussed so far it would appear that the narrator is simply a passive subject without any agency, withdrawn from the world. But what if instead we talk about a pathic subjectivity and an "engaged withdrawal"? The narrator does not join the young guy in his anti-nuclear/anti-governmental activism, nor will he be endlessly working for *Cher* with Muraki in info-semio-capitalism. His life can be described as a "pathic existential absorption"[47] that follows a line of flight from melancholy to mourning (his absent wife). It is a sort of spiritual healing that we could call a *machinic mourning*, realized in the virtual time-space of fiction. For Guattari, this is an "absorbent subjectivity," the very pathic process of subjectivation that one desperately wishes to encounter.[48] This "absorbent subjectivity" is not limited to human agencies but also applies to non-human ones, of things, objects, and machines. Put differently, the production of subjectivity occurs regardless of, or beyond, human agency. It posits itself as a sort of field of incorporeal universes in which one is involved without necessarily being able to access it directly. This emergent process of production of subjectivity could also be called an "environment" in its allusive vagueness, while subjectivity itself should be conceived as an ambiance or atmosphere**.** That is the reason why Guattari opted for the term "participation," as "grasping" or "earthing," drawing productive parallels between the scene of ethnography and folklore, and everyday life under contemporary info-semio-capitalism.

Of course a stone or a leaf cannot think as humans do, because they exist through another mode of expression. This is particularly interesting because this "expression" proper to stones or leaves forces us to think the possibility to actively hold a position of stability within a continuous process of change at infinite speed. As Guattari explained this kind of expression is part of a process of chaosmosis, which can explain how panpsychism directly relates to academic interests in animism in the neoliberal age.

In chaosmosis, anything can happen without any specific determination. We can quote Guattari on the relation between a heap of stones and a wall to illustrate the relation between chaosmosis and machinic animism: "a heap of stones is not a machine, whereas a wall is already a static proto-machine, manifesting virtual polarities, an inside and outside, an above and below, a right and left…"[49] The wall already becomes a machinic assemblage, and as such presents a "supplement of soul"[50] over a mere agglomerates of objects and things.

Sometimes things and objects operate hyper-objectively in the reality of the world. A human subject can see something strange in objects, something uncanny, a "thing" (*mono* in Japanese). As discussed above, machines and objects present sometimes an uncanny fusion, becoming somehow partial subjects. As Guattari explains: "Objects constitute themselves in a transversal, vibratory position, conferring on them a soul, a becoming ancestral, animal, vegetal, cosmic. These objectivities-subjectivities are led to work for themselves, to incarnate themselves as an animist nucleus; they overlap each other, and invade each other to become collective entities half-thing half soul, half-man half-beast, machine and flux, matter and sign.…"[51] Conversely human subjects can become partial objects through shamanic and animist practices in primitive societies or in the emergent stage of proto-modern subjectivity. This condition is not specific to primitive, archaic, and pre-modern cultures and societies but can also be found in the hyper-modern context of contemporary information societies.

Guattari introduced the perspective of machinic assemblages into humanities after the "linguistic turn" as a counterpart of nominalism in the modern era. In this sense one can call Guattari's way of thinking "machine-oriented ontology" rather than "object-oriented ontology."[52] With his notions of machinic phylum and incorporeal universe, we can say that Guattari strived to extend the meaning of animism in the context of info-semio-capitalism, which led him to further elaborate on the notion of "unnatural participation" and the concept of becoming in his work with Gilles Deleuze. Already in *Dialogue* published in 1977, Deleuze used the term "strange ecology" to define a singular symbiosis which consists not in a feeling of pity but in "a participation against nature."[53] Deleuze and Guattari made a similar claim in *A Thousand Plateaus* when they declared that "Unnatural participations or nuptials are the true Nature spanning the kingdom of nature.… They are interkingdoms, unnatural participation. That is the only way Nature operates – against itself."[54] The notion of unnatural participation as used by Deleuze and Guattari

indicates something beyond nature while still pointing at a "becoming Nature" through an uncanny symbiosis among humans, non-humans, living and non-living agencies. Deleuze and Guattari's argument, the notion of "unnatural participation or nuptials" or "participation against nature" never represents nor depends on Nature as commonly understood in a romantic sense. Ecosophy (or virtual ecology) rejects any cult or idealization of Nature to instead posit a strange symbiosis. Deleuze and Guattari coined the term "unnatural participation" in order to elucidate their concept of "becoming," defined as a changing transversal combination of heterogeneous components of the world which includes, subsumes and comprehends all things, objects and living or non-living entities. Unnatural participation thus does not indicate a mélange with Nature. Nature here is simply envisioned as the machinic and chaotic assemblage of all layers of permutations of multiple agencies. This understanding of nature as machinic assemblage of heterogeneous parts is particularly helpful to develop initiatives of bio-regionalism, bio-diversity, and their socio-cultural counterparts (multiplicities in cultures, multitudes in politics, pluralities of mind-states, dispersion and diversity of minor languages in literature, etc.).

In Seino's *Chernobyl II*, the dead wife makes uncanny appearances a couple of times but without any sense of horror. The starkest appearances happen during the daily ritual of conversation with her photographic image located in front of a three-sided mirror. A photographic image and a mirror image already constitute virtual images that affect actual beings. The wife takes a visual appearance but her voice comes from a virtual world of Cher. Cher, if a program, also constitutes her existential territory, while the mirrored images and the photograph allow for an exchange or short-circuit between the actual world in which the narrator is living, and the virtual worlds of Radio Chernobyl and then *Cher* in which his wife finds her existential territory. Later, in the novel, it becomes unclear whether the tsunami and the nuclear accident where the event at the origin of the separation between their two lives. This is not to deny the affective and psychological crisis induced by the catastrophic event but the novel hints at another, prior disjunctive event, as if they had already part ways before the catastrophe, as if the catastrophe only repeated a previous separation.[55] Readers of the novel cannot easily identify the moment at which the couple cracked and split, nor if they should look for a fixed chronological date, because it remains unclear whether the narrator's wife was engulfed in the huge tsunami or if she already fallen into some psychic breakdown.

The wife keeps appearing as if she were a ghost or spirit in the virtual environment of Cher.[56] For example, she appears once in the form of a double, when the narrator meets a girl looking with her father for her brother in the central square of Cher. But the strangest appearance happens when the narrator, wandering through the main sites of Cher just before the program is to be shut down and updated to Cher II, finds her photo-picture inside a book in a virtual library that we learn was built by hacking into the programming process of Cher. In one crucial passage of the novel, the protagonist even says: "you [his wife] are here as well, not only on the sea but also in Cher."[57] The wife's uncanny omnipresence is enabled by Cher's program, and at the same time, the narrator's own existential territory in Kaizuka is also "contaminated" by a strange symbiosis with her virtual environment. The daily repeated virtual (but real!) conversation between husband and wife constitutes a crystalline moment. Each conversation, his life and actions are oriented by visual-vocal *refrains*, machinic assemblages composed of optical-audible fragments.

With ecosophy, it is thus no longer adequate to rely on the dialectics of life/death and cosmos/chaos. And what is at stake for Guattari and Seino is rather to find a way to somehow reconcile complexity and chaos. The concept of chaos is inspired by the theory of complexity. Chaos does not mean complete indifferentiation or indisinction but retains "a specific ontological texture"[58] that is articulated by a dated event. As I said earlier, animism is attractive because it forces us to think the possibility of a point of anchor in an ongoing state of change, that is the fixity that grounds the event in which I exist or rather become. As Guattari explains, "it is not therefore Being in general which irrupts in the chaosmic experience of psychosis, or in the pathic relationship one can enter into with it, but a signed and dated event, making a destiny, inflecting previously stratified significations…. But the event is inseparable from the texture of the being brought to light."[59] This is why the name and date of the event is central to Deleuze and Guattari's work, as well as Seino's fictional world of *Chernobyl II*. Here both the supposed nuclear catastrophe and psychological crisis can be interpreted altogether as a form of virtual alterity and singular potentiality, an event. The psychotic crisis is juxtaposed with affective encounters with the end of the world. However, this end of the world does not necessarily signify the end of incorporeal universes. On the contrary, it is the alternate fluctuation between a psychotic evacuation of sense and a catastrophic circulation of affects that allows for a solitary encounter of the "minor victim" with chaosmosis.

Returning to the question of subjectivity discussed alternatively as partial and pathic subjectivity, I would now like to consider the position of the victim in the context of both the novel, and the triple catastrophe that hit Japan in March 2011. The wife and the narrator might have been the victim of a catastrophe, either in the form of the tsunami or the nuclear radiation, they are just one of many victims an anonymous population that has no other existence but that of statistical data. Nothing singular exists in this bio-political reality that is also the one of Japan after Fukushima. These victims are part of a molar counting of suffering people. However at another, molecular level, they become "minor victims." It is important to stress here that the term "minor" has nothing to do with numbers (less than 50 %) or even the idea of a suffering minority commonly found in identity politics and conventional PC politics. By definition, the "minor victim" cannot be represented nor articulated in a discursive mode, whereas major or molar victims are always represented and over-exposed in mass media discourses. The narrator's wife as a minor victim never becomes the active subject of a historical narrative. And indeed in the novel diegesis she is posited as one objects among other daily living paraphernalia.[60] She still exists as victim if a disembodied virtual one, but she has no religious or mystical coloration. The "minor victim" is not an embodied subject. She exists virtually within occurrences of the incorporeal universe of values through which objects emerge as unidentified proto-subjectivities. She is the subjectivity that determines the relation within which she is always entangled. As such, she is not looking for a resolution of world-historical conflicts or trauma. As "minor victim" she rather becomes a kind of "reserve," a reservoir, left by an event that actualizes a world-history.[61]

Potentially any population tends to become a minor victim in the Japanese archipelagoes, although the numbers as much bigger than "the so-called silent majority" constructed by conventional mass media. Seino's novel stages this new reality of Fukushima Japan in a strange fiction. By mobilizing the concepts of machinic assemblage and machinic animism, I have tried to show how in this new reality the dead and the living strangely come to meet, how things, objects, animals, plants, and pictures of the deads come to interact in machinic assemblages that enact a new realism, a planetary writing. In conclusion, I will now discuss the aesthetic and political implications of this new reality of Japan.

The Task of Aesthetics and Planetary Love

Since the Fukushima disaster and the ensuing and ongoing radioactive pollution via the ocean and rain, and despite the denial of this reality by ordinary people, the everyday ambient reality of Japan has been deeply colored by anxiety. Nobody knows the long-term effects of internal radiation exposure through food and atmosphere. While effects of permanent radiation can be taken into account in terms of statistical stochastic processes, ordinary people have no way to evaluate the risk individually. Tools like Geiger counters are available for ordinary users, but with very limited capacity. It is then up to ordinary people in Japan to elaborate a critical knowledge and evaluation of risk while resisting the dissimulation of reality by the Japanese government and the TEPCO electric firm, whatever the actual measure of radiated pollution in their living environment.

Once again the question of naming is central in how this anxiety is communicated and lived. When the name of Fukushima is written in the Roman alphabet, appealing to a larger audience in the world, this anxiety takes on a different, more dramatic tone than when it is part of the "Japanese language environment" (*nihongo kankyō*). The alphabetic Fukushima now generates demagoguery, stupid rumors, and superstitious urban folklore, where the reality of radiation becomes vague and misleading. We should expect scientific research to sweep away these mistakes, but obviously there are a myriad of undetermined factors to consider when explaining what actually occurred in the catastrophic accident and its aftermath. The same was the case for Chernobyl after 1986. For this reason, aesthetics or more generally expressive culture must, besides investigative journalism and scientific research, play an important role to enable alternative interventions in this new situation. Aesthetics can always overcome a given, limited, condition: that is its very (machinic) nature. Seino's novel precisely reveals such a potential of aesthetics through the affective micro-politics at work between its characters, and more importantly, the contagious spiritual-information life of local situations.

Vice president Muraki works and lives in an environment in which the information economy—info-semio-capitalism—has almost become a natural environment. For this reason, he cannot easily relinquish his involvement in the market economy to adopt a more conventional mode of social control. In the end, his only options of survival in this economy are to sell out, cheat, or run away. As such, Cher is just an object of investment and speculation. Muraki is a figuration of the scrap-and-build logic emblematic

of capitalism in Japan. On the other hand, the streetwise young guy met by the narrator on Mountain X is a figure of the anarcho-punk sub-cultural tribe, and a possible opponent to Muraki and the system of info-semio-capitalism. He embodies contemporary anger in the face of a world in which networked information (Cher, or in our reality, SNS and the blogosphere) has become a totalizing environment. At first an engineer of a net security service, he became unemployed because of restructuration of the firm, and is thus emblematic of so many who have fallen to late capitalism's drive for flexibility and precarity.

The narrator's attitude regarding the young guy is however unclear. He locates himself ambiguously between the young guy and Muraki because of, or rather despite his exchanges with both. The narrator does not express anger against the reality of radiated pollution, nor is he inspired by the (un-narrated) catastrophe to contest the capitalist system. He cannot decide whether to position himself on Muraki's side (pro-capitalist) nor on the young guy's street scene (sympathizing with anti-state and anti-capitalist activism).

On Mountain X, the narrator and the young guy are threatened with arrest on suspicion of terrorism or violent activism, at a moment when a quasi-state of emergency is ready to be declared following the eruption of cyber attacks against nuclear authorities. It does not really matter whether the young guy was actually involved in a conspiracy against the government's energetic policies. The very fact that he was already marked and followed by the police is more significant for our reading. His professional activity as programmer or "builder" of Cher already implied for the government a potential involvement with criminal or anti-social activities. The narrator decides in the end to let the young guy escape from the police and let himself be arrested instead, even leaving some amount of money to support their activism:

> You don't know nor understand me, you are a completely different human being, and that is why I can entrust you with it [the money]. You told me that only ego-tripping children who have no sense of others could play at suicide bombing, and you need money to do something. You, who told me all this, are really unique, and you are the only one I can have this relation with.[62]

But the narrator did learn something from this encounter: he learned the tactics of engaged withdrawal or withdrawn desertion in non-militant actions, a sort of line of light or exodus into a virtual (incorporeal) universe. We can call this an aesthetic practice.

For Guattari, aesthetics holds by definition a potential to overcome or surpass the given in any determined circumstance although without needing an individual subject of action as creator or author—aesthetics comes before the distinction between subject and object. *Chernobyl II*'s narrator never comes to occupy the position of an activist or an intellectual in a conventional sense. Rather his attitude following the police investigation when he re-encounters the young guy appears closer to the strange position of a virtual intellectual or a disengaged activist, one whose cause is not determined ideologically nor has anything to offer to either history or to real politics. And yet, as aesthetics, the narrator's new attitude brings about a potential vector toward an emancipatory mode for an alter-native society.[63] To some extent, the young guy seems to convince the narrator to engage in direct action following quasi-logic of vengeance against the current state of radioactive contamination. But *Chernobyl II* also suggests that radical movements do not have to cling on a militant mode of activism, and could rather make the tactical choice to undertake a "pathic" attitude.

This "pathic" attitude adopted by narrator allows him to open up a new ambiance for the production of subjectivity. This is Cher II, the updated version of Cher, but this time reappropriated for the purpose of a generating new form of love. As the narrator explains:

> In order to throw the first sacred territoriality in a void before everything has its beginning, I don't need any help from program engineers. The phrase in the monolith [one of the landmarks of Cher II] which articulates a vacuum into the earth and the sky, the light and the shadow, began to propagate and distribute itself through the all networks like a virus.[64]

Thus, begins the narrator's exodus into a strange form of love beyond humans and other living things. We know that the narrator kept loving his wife after her presumed death, although, while keeping a deep memory of her past existence, he could barely remain attached to this world and society. However, just by touching the display surface of his laptop, he is now able to continue his commitment to the world and society in the new virtual reality of Cher II.

The relationship between the narrator and his wife reminds us of the non-relation between Ulysses/Odysseus and Penelope, especially the challenging task of making them a couple, if a strange one.[65] Ulysses is a survivor of the shipwreck and exodus, but Penelope locates herself at the same time in a solitary immobility and a virtual mobility. In Seino's novel the thread is the original narrative setting of Cher for the radio

drama designed by the wife. The narrator on the other hand is a survivor and weaves nothing. He only allows the landscape to emerge in the process of programming Cher as machinic phyla and incorporated universe, whereas the wife weaves constantly the same long thread for its narrative in/as Cher. The eternal recurrence of the fabric constitutes their unnatural nuptial, just like the strange symbiosis between a wasp and an orchid, Deleuze and Guattari's favorite example.[66] However, unlike both classic and modern versions of Ulysses, the man (narrator/protagonist) is here condemned to wait for the woman (wife). Put differently, for the narrator a gesture of waiting is turned into an act of writing while the cyberghostly wife appears everywhere he visits without being located in any fixed position. The narrator's position is then somehow similar to Bloom, the hero in Joyce's *Ulysses*, because Bloom is also a figuration of a typical business person engaged in advertisement at the early stage of info-semio-capitalism. But Bloom lets his wife be free from his serious mental and possible socio-political predicaments, while the protagonist of *Chernobyl II* keeps looking for his wife's ghostly presence in the existential territory of his everyday, to escape his life and the situation of crisis he is facing. And he succeeds in migrating into the virtual universe of Cher II precisely by mobilizing both flows (of data and money) and machinic phyla.

In Seino's novel, the relation between man and woman is reversed: the figure of Penelope is moving and traveling but Ulysses is stuck and keeps waiting for her (impossible) return and his own departure into a line of flight. In Guatarri's vocabulary, this unnatural nuptial can be defined by disjunctive synthesis, mutual inclusion, and unnatural participation, in short, it is a strange non-relation. Their desires are cursed wishes that fatefully mirror each other, back to back, in solitude and betrayal. A nuptial is different from mating or coupling in animals and other living entities. Animals are concerned less with making alliances than with keeping filiation exclusively based on bloodline inheritance. But the kind of unnatural nuptial we find in *Chernobyl II* retains an implication of symbiosis and "agonistic conviviality."

The implications of this non-relation of love go further as shows Deleuze and Parnet's discussion of God and man. "The movement of betrayal has been defined as a double turning-away: man turns his face away from God, who also turns his face away from man. It is in this double turning away, in the divergence of faces, that the line of flight – that is, the deterritorialization of man – is traced. Betrayal is like theft, it is always double."[67] This relationship of love does not allow for the mediation of a third instance that could mediate and bind the multiple agencies of the world

into a smooth mode of communication harmonizing a social whole. This is why ecosophy cannot embrace the ideal of a horizontal, mutual-helping solidarity of equals and must instead ground itself into a fragile, temporary, and vanishing relationship marked by double turning of absolute betrayal. In short, Guattari's ecosophy is not a philosophy of plantary civilization.

Should the coming cosmopolitan democracy correspond to a planetary love? Is this the aim of ecosophy? This does indeed sound like a nice objective, but how can we achieve such a global integrated empathy between human populations showing such a widespread range of cultural, ethnic, religious, and moral values, notwithstanding the violent conflicts and acts of terrorism between ethnic or cultural communities, both inside global metropolis in the first world and marginalized cities in under-developed parts of the world? Do we even want that kind of global unity? Does it even have to be about the human? In my view, a consciousness of planetary love should not be envisioned as an ultimate objective of ethics and politics. It should rather be engaged pragmatically within an aesthetic practice in which any possible alter-native and tolerant initiatives can be relentlessly created and enacted. This might sound very banal, but I believe that this is at least a humble and decent attitude. More importantly, such a planetary love is by definition ontologically prior to an ethical and political practice because it is "always already" given as machinic assemblage and unnatural participation. And it can never become Being in the veil of truth politics. For this reason, planetary love cannot be defined as an ideal form of solidarity or mutual help among human beings transcending all barriers of class, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, and so on. In fact, this is not a question of transcending the fragmented given reality to unify the planet into a global totality. On the contrary, the coming planetary cosmo-politics is always waiting in the open-ended process of transformation, unfolding, and becoming of machinic assemblages of nature and society.

Constantly returning to edge of the world without ever sticking to the fixed position of the marginal, a planetary cosmo-politics remains in the middle, in the incorporeal universe of values, in its process of emergence. But to locate ourselves in the middle does not mean to adopt convenient political or ideological neutrality by preserving a liminal zone of ambiguity. The only true choice is to dive into the dark umbilic zone of chaosmosis. For only the movement of betrayal can provide us with a model for planetary cosmo-politics and love. Only the mutual affective touch without contact, the grasping or earthing without roots, the mutual inclusion and disjunctive synthesis can allow for the aesthetic composition of a new ontology of plan-

etary love. This corresponds in the social sphere to a co-belonging, a mesh between squatting and gentrification, or a strange co-presence between direct political actions and engaged withdrawals in exodus.

It is often said that cosmology tends to neglect the various political and economical predicament and ongoing contradictions of existing societies. But the idea of a planetary cosmo-politics must embrace a certain kind of cosmology, a logical structure of incorporeal universes that literally inaugurate a politics within cosmology or a cosmological-cosmopolitan politics. A "becoming cosmic," the elaboration of alliances with various machinic assemblages oriented toward a cosmic and chaosmic force embedded within the universe-world is more important than building another system. The aim of ecosophy is thus not restricted to efforts of refraining pollution or preserving endangered species, although this is very significant and crucial for us, but at the same time enjoins us to invent new creative assemblages that allow for the emergence of objective (proto-subjective) and absorbent subjectivities without relying on an idealized Nature. Another aim of ecosophy is to invent an alter-native conviviality of singularities, in the translation of an uncanny symbiosis onto a flat transversal universe. This is planetary conviviality would be radically distinct from a horizontal relationship based on an equality of power and resources. Guattari called this initiative "the democratic chaos,"[68] a gathering of cultural, social, economic, and aesthetic agencies passing through the machinic assemblages of nature. This contingent process has nothing to do with the aleatory mode of control of neoliberalism and financial engineering. In this ongoing democratic chaos, cosmo-politics, planetary love, and aesthetics continuously intersect with each other without transcendental integration into a nature. This is planetary love without nature, nor answers to the predicaments of this world.

After the day of the investigation in the local police station, the narrator returns to the place where he gave money to the young guy and finds a small note: "I go first" or "I go forward" (*saki ni ikuze*).[69] But in what direction is he going? wonders the narrator. This is exactly the point, this is the situation we, all minor victims, are condemned to live under the present state of permanent emergency and long-term nuclear contamination. The novel does not provide any answer, only imposing on us, the readers, a strange perplexity and an imperative to think and act transversally, not starting from a moral system or political ideology but from the affective and aesthetic value of incorporeal universes, across machinic nature. And this could well be pointing at a beginning opening into virtual ecology and ecosophy after Fukushima.

Notes

1. Félix Guattari, *The Three Ecologies*, trans. Ian Pindar and Paul Sutton (London: Continuum, 2012).
2. Gregory Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind: Collected Essays in Anthropology, Psychiatry, Evolution, and Epistemology* (San Francisco: Chandler, 1972).
3. Eichi Seino, "Chernobyl II," *Shinchō* 111 no. 9 (September 2014): 65–108.
4. Félix Guattari, *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm*, trans. Paul Bains and Julian Pefanis (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 91.
5. I borrow this explanation from the Japanese translator and scholar of Guattari, Masaaki Sugimura. See the postface to Felix Guattari, *Mittsu no ekorojī* (The three ecologies), trans. Sugimura Masāki (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2008).
6. I refer here to the vocabulary and diagram introduced in Félix Guattari, *Schizoanalytic Cartographies*, trans. Andrew Goffey (London & New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 60.
7. Valera and Maturana never admitted the possibility of applying the logic of autopoiesis to machines, societies or organizations, and restricted its use to the analysis of living organisms. However Guattari suggests an adequacy of the concept of autopoiesis for machines and institutions: *Chaosmosis*, 39.
8. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 11.
9. By the term *moment* this essay means the partial units constituting the immanent interactions of a whole, not pertaining to the totality of an integrative system. Moment is frequently included and compiled in the series of power-signs or sign-particles of a-signifying processes. Guattari also often used the term *components* with much the same meaning.
10. Guattari tries to explain how machinic assemblages combine heterogeneous elements without fusing them into a harmonic whole. Rather, what holds the machinic assemblage together is a complex ambiance or atmosphere composed of universes of reference and value located within complex domains of alterity: alterity of proximity of machines, of their different constitutive parts, of their material or diagrammatic consistency, and of their evolutionary phylum and antagonism among war machines. *Chaosmosis*, 45.
11. *Chaosmosis*, 47.
12. Maurizio Lazzarato, *Signs and Machines: Capitalism and the Production of Subjectivity*, trans. Joshua David Jordan (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2014).
13. Eduardo Kohn, *How Forests Think: Toward an Anthropology beyond the Human* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013).

14. See Steven Shaviro's mapping of these recent philosophical trends in *The Universe of Things: On Speculative Realism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014).

15. "Chernobyl II," 72.

16. Tristan Garcia, *Form and Object: A Treatise on Things*, trans. Mark Allan Ohm and Jon Cogburn (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 24.

17. For Graham Harman, objects are not simply human-made objects that can be used like tools but any existing thing, from rocks and colors to ideas, shadows, fictional characters, etc.,: Graham Harman, *Towards Speculative Realism: Essays and Lectures* (Winchester, UK: Zero Books, 2010).

18. Harman, *Towards Speculative Realism*; Garcia, *Form and Object*, 24. Harman expands on Heidegger's distinction between things and objects to elaborate his own theory of objects.

19. Timothy Morton, *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013).

20. Morton, *Hyperobjects*, 48.

21. In this philosophy, humans are ontologically the same as things, i.e., things functioning with a singular mode of being.

22. Félix Guattari, "Ecosocial Practices and the Restoration of the 'Subjected City,'" in *Machinic Eros*, ed. Gary Genosko and Jay Hetrick (Minneapolis: Univocal Publishing, 2015), 101.

23. *Chaosmosis*, 81 and 111.

24. *Chaosmosis*, 82.

25. *Chaosmosis*, 82.

26. Coincidentally, Itō Seikō's novel *Sōzō rajio* (The Imaginative Radio) also deals with illusory or phantasmic radio program storytelling before and after the earthquake and tsunami of 3.11. In this piece, the DJ seems to be the ghost of a young guy who died during the catastrophe. As far as I know, there is no influence or mutual reference between the novels, although it would be insightful and productive to read them together: Itō Seikō, *Sōzō rajio* (Tokyo: Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 2013).

27. "Chernobyl II," 90.

28. "Chernobyl II," 91.

29. "Chernobyl II," 68.

30. Guattari, "Ecosophical Practices," 101.

31. Franco "Bifo" Berardi, *The Uprising: On Poetry and Finance* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2012), 133.

32. Martin Heidegger, "Die Frage Nach Der Technik," in *Die Technik und die Kehre* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1982), 8. Guattari also addressed Heidegger's work on technology in *Chaosmosis*, 47.

33. *Chaosmosis*, 37.

34. *Chaosmosis*, 59.
35. *Chaosmosis*, 42.
36. According to the notion of panpsychism, also called perspectivism, all living beings, including slime molds and bacteria, have or show a certain extent of decision-making and cognition. Hypothetically the same holds true for non-living beings such as things and objects, and machinic assemblages in general. This remains a form of speculative thinking, and for this reason the term "sentience" is more appropriate and commonly accepted than "intelligence."
37. According to Guattari, a speculative cartography is different from conventional cartography. Cartography usually consists in copying real locations and territories. On the contrary, a speculative cartography does not reproduce territories but rather invents and opens movements of superposition between existential territories and incorporated universes of values without mobilizing any real referential.
38. Objects affect each other by being modulated in machinic assemblages as trans-monadic units. Guattari used the term "transmonadism" a couple of times in his *Chaosmosis*. Based on the very partial and suggestive use of this term, never clearly defined, Brian Massumi develops his own argument on aesthetics and politics: Massumi, *Semblance and Event: Activist Philosophy and the Occurrent Arts* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2011), 59.
39. Félix Guattari, *Schizoanalytic Cartographies*, trans. Andrew Goffey (London & New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 205.
40. Timothy Morton, *Ecology without Nature: Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007).
41. *Chaosmosis*, 25.
42. Guattari's interest in animism is related to his interest in Shinto and its (potentially fascist-oriented) ideological abuse in the Imperial System established in Meiji Japan. Just as Christianity provided new types of subjectivity that enabled the dynamics of deterritorialization necessary for European capitalism, the Imperial system, unlike simpler European monarchies, offered to Japanese society a conformist type of subjectivity resulting in molar, totalizing assemblages.
43. The term machinic animism itself is introduced in Angela Melitopoulos and Maurizio Lazzarato, "Machinic Animism," *Deleuze Studies* 6, no. 2 (2012): 240–49.
44. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 130.
45. Eduardo Batalha Viveiros de Castro, *Cannibal Metaphysics: For a Post-Structural Anthropology*, trans. Peter Skafish (Minneapolis: Univocal Publishing, 2014).

46. *Ibid*, 69.
47. *Chaosmosis*, 79.
48. The process of subjectivation is a processual vector pointing toward a sub-ject, while subjectification posits an identity between the process and the resulting subject, producing a unified and closed subject. Subjectification is thus similar to the production of subjectivity in a conventional sociologi-cal sense.
49. *Chaosmosis*, 42.
50. *Ibid*.
51. *Chaosmosis*, 102.
52. Levi Bryant, one of the main proponents of OOO or speculative realism, also began recently to use this term, although without addressing Guattari's works with Deleuze: Levi R. Bryant, *Onto-Cartography: An Ontology of Machines and Media* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014).
53. Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 75.
54. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 241–242.
55. "Chernobyl II," 88.
56. Of course, the notion of the virtual elaborated by Deleuze has basically nothing to do with the concept and technology of "virtual reality." However, Guattari does not seem opposed to think both virtualities together as show his later works, *Schizoanalytic Cartographies* and *Chaosmosis*.
57. "Chernobyl II," 86 and 88.
58. *Chaosmosis*, 81.
59. *Ibid*.
60. "Chernobyl II," 92.
61. As Deleuze and Guattari explain in *What is Philosophy?*, "The event is immaterial, incorporeal, unlivable: pure *reserve*" (156).
62. "Chernobyl II," 98.
63. Not *alternative*, another category of consumer society without any value in itself but alter-native, an other native reality. The term *native* as well does not point toward a fixed and essential origin but rather at the singular occurrence of a new society.
64. "Chernobyl II," 108.
65. This comparison of Seino's novel with the story of Penelope and Ulysses is indebted to Suely Rolnik's brilliant section entitled 'A New Smoothness' in her book with Guattari: Félix Guattari and Suely Rolnik, *Molecular Revolution in Brazil*, trans. Karel Clapshow and Brian Holmes (Los Angeles, CA; Cambridge, Mass.: Semiotext(e); Distributed by MIT Press, 2008), 417–426.

66. This comparison can be extended readily to Joyce's *Ulysses*, with which Guattari's late works (*The Three Ecologies*, *The Schizoanalytic Cartographies*, and *Chaosmosis*), and his life-long interest in Kafka and Proust, are related.
67. *Dialogues*, 30.
68. *Chaosmosis*, 117.
69. "Chernobyll II," 105.

In Time for the War: 3/11 After Cinema

Philip Kaffen

Over four years later, the disasters of 3/11 continue to reverberate and refuse to stay put, implicating apparently irresolvable dilemmas and crises—from radiation to sovereignty to privatization to the role of media. Concepts like responsibility, judgment, deception, sacrifice, and collusion proliferate with multiple and contradictory valences, and with an urgency that seems both to demand response and to keep one at arm's length. To engage disaster threatens to appropriate those affected to other ends,[1] even as avoidance suggests another kind of privilege.[2] The 3/11 disasters seem to position us between the Scylla of necessity and the Charybdis of impossibility. In the most profound ways, the disasters utterly disrupt and force a reconsideration of our very sense of place, of proximity, and of safety.[3]

While the role of art in light of disaster may seem secondary, we also cannot discount the ways that arts can reshape our imagination of even the most intransigent events. Nor can we ignore the role of media images that ostensibly convey the events as pure data. Cinema and other aesthetic, technical images (*eizō*) operate between data and spectacle, and their critical forms aim to reflect on this sense of technical mediation and distance. This critical orientation has largely been the province of documentaries in the wake of 3/11, which have become among the most salient trends

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of twenty-first-century Japanese cinema.[4] Others have followed different routes, however. The filmmaker Obayashi Nobuhiko recently abandoned "cinema," claiming it lost its power in the wake of 3/11. After his 50 years working in experimental and commercial films, such a statement seems exaggerated.[5] But the eruption, in quick succession, of the tsunami, earthquake, and nuclear collapse while he was making a film about the history of war—*Casting Blossoms to the Sky*—forced a rethinking, not only about what kind of film to make but about whether he was making a "film" at all. It also forced him to reconsider war.

The term he used to describe what he made "cinemaguernica" is perhaps misleading in that he does not consider it *cinema* at all but a kind of journalistic essay.[6] It links multiple arts with a digital concatenation of media to present the site of disaster as an unexpected "wonderland."[7] At the same time, his recourse to a portmanteau assures us that reference to Picasso's *Guernica* cannot be reduced to a reflection on modernism or media alone, as it is the twentieth century's most famous portrait of the terror of war. While Obayashi is known as a director of "hometown movies" (*furusato eiga*), his confrontations with the war he experienced as a child are equally important while drawing considerably less attention. *Casting Blossoms* threads the filmmaker's pre-occupations with media and art through a reflection on war after 3/11, and the hometown as a site of security.

What is the relationship between 3/11 disasters and war? How should we understand the insistence on the digital as the appropriate means of confronting war after 3/11? How are these related to the "hometown" as a site of security? Using *Casting Blossoms to the Sky* as a springboard, this essay sets out to explore these intertwined questions through an analysis of spectacle images of war. Spectacles play an ambivalent role: while on the one hand, they dramatize the horrors of war, at the same time, the very nature of spectacle implies distance and remove, reinforcing the distance of the image. In presenting war, the image establishes its own "hometown" for the viewer, its spectacle form often triggering the desire for greater security. At the same time, security can be understood as the protection of the "hometown" by exporting violence elsewhere. Security is thus not opposed to war, but simply about keeping the war at a distance, and out of the "hometown." In a very literal sense, security makes a *spectacle* of war. In its focus on the legacy of war after 3/11, *Casting Blossoms* brings these senses of the "hometown"—as a political and topographical site of security, on the one hand, and as a relationship with the image and

the spectacle on the other—into relation with one another. By digitally dismantling the image, it opens up the spectacle, allowing for forms of refuge distinct from security.

An Unsafe Film

Casting Blossoms to the Sky follows a young reporter, Endō Reiko (Matsuyuki Yasuko), from Amakusa in Kumamoto Prefecture, who visits Nagaoka, in Niigata prefecture.[8] She is inspired to go by a letter from her ex-boyfriend, Katayama Ken'ichi (Takashima Masahiro), who now lives in Nagaoka, where he works as a high school teacher. He urges her to visit and see the famous fireworks display there. These fireworks are intended to commemorate and mourn the war dead, and also to encourage peace, as Nagaoka was subject to intense firebombing in August of 1945, just prior to the end of the war. At the same time, Nagaoka served as a nearby refuge for displaced persons after 3/11, and another source of inspiration for Reiko comes from the articles about the area as a refuge penned by a local reporter there, Inoue Wakako (Harada Natsuki). These two sources of inspiration converge around a peculiar claim: that there is still time before the war (*mada sensō ni ma ni au*). This phrase is both the title of the series of articles written by Inoue, and the title of a play written by a mysterious, unicycle-riding student, Hana Motoki (Terashima Saki), who suddenly appears in the town after 3/11. For everyone involved, 3/11 has rendered the past in a new light: "After 3/11, the past rushed up to me," Katayama intones early in the movie, momentarily breaking the fourth wall to speak directly to the viewer. And this rush is largely what guides the disparate stories and figures.

The movie engages in a journey to revisit this past in the present, by hearing the voices of those who lived it, or in some cases, their relatives or ghosts. The major narratives begin upon Reiko's arrival in Nagaoka, when her taxi driver offers a horrific tale of the air raids, incendiary bombs, and the mock-up bombs (*mogi-bakudan*) that were dropped throughout Japan at the end of the war. Then the fireworks creator Nose (Emoto Akira) explains to Katayama the history of war through a discussion of fireworks. Another major narrative involves Reiko and the local reporter, Inoue Wakako, walking through Nagaoka city. Here the narrative of comfort women in China is broached. Finally, the movie snakes through the intertwined narratives of Hana Motoki's play, "There is Still Time Before the War," and a *kamishibai* story of the death of Hana during the air raids and the failure of the bomb

shelters, told by her mother, Liliko Motoki (Fuji Sumiko). Scattered throughout are additional testimonies of various people in the town, replete with gruesome details of the damage brought to the lives and bodies of people decimated by incendiary and "mock-up" bombs.

The movie sutures all the hallmarks of Obayashi's brand of effects-laden fantasy and childlike wonder uncomfortably to the darker histories of war and disaster, largely centered on the firebombing of Nagaoka.[9] As a war film steeped in nostalgia, set in a rural area, and replete with various claims about Japanese spirit and the return to traditional ways, the movie certainly trades in many problematic clichés about the experience of war in Japan. Critical writings on war films in Japan that aim to expose their nationalism or nostalgia for empire often point to the absence of any discussion of East Asia, portraying Japanese as victim-heroes, deceived by military authorities. From this perspective, one cannot but judge *Casting Blossoms* as a full-blown paean to nationalism. More, the call for "peace" through fireworks seems naive, while the pummeling media assault in the presentation of air raids raises additional questions about the aestheticization of war, drawing connections between spectacle and victimization, particularly by focusing on a baby and her reincarnation as a young girl.

The few critics who have reviewed the movie outside Japan, while they have in some cases noted its bizarre and ornate composition, have called it "tiresome," an anti-war screed "with little worth digesting."[10] Within Japan, responses to *Casting Blossoms* have also been ambivalent. It is not clear whether the movie is a masterpiece or a dog. Some of the more intriguing reporting on the movie has come not from film critics (who mostly ignored it) but from critics working in other media, such as video games or contemporary arts.[11] Even as the movie celebrates traditional Japanese spirit, its treatment of comfort women has provoked consternation on right-wing blogs and in bulletin boards like 2channel. But for most, the onslaught of graphics, information, multiple narratives, complicated histories, temporal sliding, surrealistic touches, nonsense dialogue, and intense pathos—arguably the very hallmarks of Obayashi's work[12]—has inspired feelings of bewilderment and uncertainty.[13] Obayashi has described his approach as "very chaotic.…[S]hooting was very similar to 3/11."[14] Not simply picturing catastrophes, these strategies become their very extensions.

Obayashi was not the only one to note connections between 3/11 and war. Some films, including Hirabayashi Isamu's short *Soliton* (2013), have even rendered these visual resonances of destruction explicit, creating unsettling connections and juxtapositions. Yet, as Takahashi Gen'ichirō

put it in his first essay written about 3/11, only a week after the event, the almost immediate connection made by many between 3/11 and war was not simply about an apparent or visual similarity.[15] In a column written immediately in the wake of the earthquake, the reporter Katsuya Masahiko employed language familiar from wartime to describe the new disaster: national crisis (*kokunan*), a time of emergency (*hijōji*), national salvation cabinet (*kyūkoku naikaku*), invasion (*shinryaku*), and fight on (*tatakaou*). Such language points to a phenomenon which "appeared before the eyes of many Japanese as the real thing – the 'war' itself they had been anticipating and dreading all along." The war was already there like a wound. 3/11 seemed to expose it festering beneath everyday life. To get to it, one must get beyond mere images. But how is this possible *through images*?

Air Raid Aesthetics: On the Natural History of Refuge

Image as spectacle is central to *Casting Blossoms* from its opening frames, marked by a digital iris—not unlike the entrance to a rabbit hole—onto a "wonderland" that will also be the site of disasters past and present. No one could fail to note the onslaught of effects and media operating throughout the film: rudimentary graphics of incendiary bombs; monochrome photographs of the war dead; topographical and digital maps; *kami shibai;* paintings; split screens; dolly zooms, irises, and other chroma key and masking techniques; museum displays; children's picture books, comic books. Obayashi described *Casting Blossoms* as "an experiment to produce a movie that could *only be made through digital means and not through film*; a cubism of actual footage+anime+theater+documentary+narration+dialogue+the camera gaze+on-screen writing and images."[16]

These many aspects constitute the basis of Obayashi's "cinemaguernica." I will discuss the medial dimension of this portmanteau—the "cinema" portion—below. Here, however, I want to follow the "guernica" in a different direction, to consider the famous painting as an iconic representation of the horrors of war in relationship to security and refuge. What follows will be a genealogy of those relations, one rooted in the unstable iconicity of the painting itself.

The history of *Guernica* makes clear that every confrontation with war spectacles must contend with the issue of security. Writing on the relationship of the painting to modernity as a whole, T.J. Clark poses the stakes clearly:

> Suppose that in the bombing of Guernica modernity in some sense encountered its future and saw a whole form of life collapsing – ceasing to exist as the determinant form of the human. How on earth was painting to represent such an ending *without falling itself into a spatial rubble*?[17]

The painting could not rest with a depiction of war, a spectacle, but had to locate some form of refuge. Clark argues that Picasso's solution to the problem was multifold and processual, but ultimately came to rest on two final, decisive gestures. The first gesture—painting commas on the horse—could draw attention to the surface by providing texture, making the figures more palpable, and diminishing the sense of abstraction. But the general feeling of vertigo introduced by falling figures required, all the more, some kind of ground. Thus, a second and final gesture—a grid on the "floor" of the scene, anchoring the unsteady movement of the figures within the mural—achieved proximity, rather than intimacy or distance.

> To make his humans and animals come near us and place them on the ground; and a ground that was neither outside nor in, exactly, but the floor of a world as it might be the very instant the "world" was destroyed.[18]

By allowing "flatness to find its feet," Picasso created a considerable ethical gesture, that of "making room." This paradoxical proximity, "neither outside nor in," as Clark has it, might also help to mark *Guernica* off from the ongoing appropriation of cubist techniques in futurist paintings, some of which envisioned air raids from the clear-eyed perspective of attackers.[19]

Regardless of Picasso's aesthetic strategies, however, the painting was greeted with ambivalence by some and has continued to provoke controversy and division; it did not manage to sway any of the events of the war it depicted.[20] If Picasso's painting remains relevant today, it must be partly because the issues are far from settled, that its iconicity is not due to the clarity of its message, as a stable image, but to its instability, which has challenged any number of people to "intervene" in the painting.[21] At stake is always a staving-off of the painting as a mere image, where it can become no more than a sign of security and privilege.[22]

In the postwar period, the famous filmmaker Alain Resnais made an experimental documentary about the painting, also called *Guernica*. A short work that collages the painting with photographs of the town of Guernica and other images drawn from Picasso's earlier works, the film is narrated with a voiceover, equally marked by poetry and outrage. Resnais' film served as a basis for one of the most influential writings on the politics

of mediation and representation in postwar Japan, namely, Matsumoto Toshio's theory of "avant-garde documentary" or "neo-documentarism." Matsumoto writes, "The film casts aside all lukewarm sentiment and analyzes Picasso's passionate image by *tearing it to pieces*."[23] This strategy echoes Andre Bazin's unexpected defense of Resnais' short as "the best critic" of the original; in addition, both concur on the ethics of aesthetic violence to the "original" as a form of critique. [24]

In Matsumoto's case, to tear to pieces, to bring violence within the frame, speaks to the formal force of Resnais' editing, its refusal to stand back and observe, even as a documentary. Instead, the film leaps into the painting and beyond it, blurring the boundaries of the frame. And it is this that marks its ethical stance for Matsumoto, precisely because it avoids the totality of Picasso's mural. To present the painting "objectively" would seem to preclude subjective intervention. In the immediate postwar, "subjectivity" was not some abstract theoretical claim, but a key to figuring and taking responsibility. At the same time, the relentless subjectivity of surrealism—Picasso's own milieu—was not free of conflict. Cubism could lend itself readily to war advocacy, as with the futurists. Resnais' refusal of the totalizing frame allowed for a new synthesis of two postwar turns: the first war's subjective (surrealist) and the second's objective (documentary). The absence of a frame, the refusal of a closed totality, links Resnais' documentary with Picasso's mural. It opens up a space, both outside and in, a ground in which a proper dialectic could unfold.

A closer analogue to *Guernica* in Japan, however, though it lacks any explicit reference, may be in literature. In "On War" (*Sensō ni tsuite*), literary critic Yamashiro Mutsumi takes up the question of air raids and technology in the wake of the first Gulf war. The title of the essay is a reference to an essay by Kobayashi Hideo, written in 1937, the same year as the air raid that provoked Picasso's *Guernica*.[25] Kobayshi's writings on war have extensive implications for a discussion of media aesthetics in wartime. Indeed, the starting point for Yamashiro's reflections is the photograph that appeared in newspapers in 1941, taken by the pilots who bombed Pearl Harbor, allowing Kobayashi to link the technology of the photograph with the view of pilots dropping bombs, through recourse to transparency and clarity of vision. This sense of clarity is intended as a reflection on the appropriate response to war on the part of artists, eliminating any obfuscating thoughts or feelings. According to James Dorsey, "Kobayashi convinces us to accept the surface of the scene in much the same way that the camera passively records it…without effort and without judgment or interpretation."[26]

In his essay, Kobayashi had argued that he would take up a gun rather than a pen in a time of war because there is "no room" for literature. His praise of the camera-like view is rooted in his romantic refusal to see photography or cinema as an art form at all. In such media, unlike literature's layer of abstraction that allows for aesthetic reflection, there is no escape. In response, Yamashiro advocates commitment to "literature" as "virtue" (*chikara*) that can confront "power" (*chikara*) in a time of war. It is not as simple as trading the gun for the pen, however. Indeed, the romantic Yasuda Yojurō was "ironically" committed to literature precisely as the highest contribution to war. At the same time, one must not take too great distance. Tosaka Jun's critique of fascism, for example, is too far removed from the fascination engendered by the wartime spectacle to be effective. Where Kobayashi could see only poetry in war, Tosaka could only see ideology amenable to logical critique. They were, in effect, reversals of one another, neither adept at confronting the war, both, in different ways, turning away. Both fall within the logic of security.

How can one not turn away? How can one find a mode of refuge distinct from security? For security obscures and even precludes forms of care and responsibility. Yamashiro locates an alternative to Kobayashi's dilemma in the writer Sakaguchi Ango. In his postwar short essay "On Decadence," Ango famously extolled the beauty of the air raids seen from the rooftop of a neighborhood movie theater in the Ginza. His capacity to view war in terms of beauty made him an uncomfortable bedfellow for conventionally conservative or even fascist writers like Yasuda or Kobayashi. Ango also noted that he would take up a "hammer rather than a pen," just as Kobayashi had argued he would take up a gun rather than a pen. Yamashiro highlights small but significant differences between them, however. One point of distinction lies in the fact that Ango continued to affirm the beauty of war even while subject to its violence. To write of the air raids as beautiful in 1945 from the ground is quite different from writing of their beauty from a pilot's view in 1941. But this exposure itself was not enough. From the perspective of pilots and the US press, this "urbicide" was "beautiful."[27] Ango could only see the spectacle as something beautiful insofar as it could be observed without "thinking," and insofar as the "human" was absent. Through this lens, he renders the spectacle of the air not simply empty or superficial, but literally *thoughtless* and *inhuman*.

Yamashiro draws the strongest ethical impulse from Ango's 1942 "A Personal View of Japanese Culture." In the middle of the essay, a brief, odd section on "home" appears, in which Ango notes that "Going home

means a reprimand," in spite of the fact that he lives alone, without angry children, a nagging mother, or a scolding wife. Literature and writing are permeated by this sense of "going home." In effect, Yamashiro turns Kobayashi's argument against him: just like cinema or photography, literature too does not allow for "escape." Far from this being the end of the argument or the war, however, Yamashiro knows this is only the beginning. He writes that today (1993) we are "en route to war," just as those critics were in the 1930s and 1940s. Yet, he notes, they were more astute about the necessity of return, not solely to "Japanese ideology," but insofar as they could not remain free from the situation of war within which they were embedded. Today, he seems to suggest, critics and scholars do not have a sense of their embeddedness and the appropriate mode of response or responsibility that stems from it. How does one consider the role of "home" and "hometown" in relationship to war and art? This is to pose questions of security and refuge.

The History of Cinema and the Medium of Security

In the above genealogy of *Guernica*, we see various strategies at work to explore refuge: making room, tearing to pieces, refusing totality, dehumanizing beauty, and going home. While each of these modes is tied directly to the specificity of the medium, as a particular mode of organizing sensory perception, much recent work has tended to downplay such "medium specificity," contesting the lingering values of modernism in order to confront a larger problem of war.[28] Yet, while war has no necessary connection with any particular technology, the relationship between technological media and war remains important. Miriam Hansen has highlighted this fraught intersection, calling it the "unresolved legacy of modernity."[29]

Obayashi's "cinemaguernica" concurs with the refusal to privilege specific forms, while acknowledging the continued importance of technological media in engaging the unresolved legacies of modernity. Obayashi's orientation toward each medium and its milieu—television commercials, 8 mm films, studio films, and so on—privileges no specific form nor its putative essence.[30] Rather, he incessantly seeks out anomalies, not only within a specific form or medium, but also with regard to institutional relationships.[31] Thus, if 3/11 precipitated at least a temporary loss of faith in cinema for Obayashi, and a turn to the digital, this turn will involve more than one dimension.

In order to chart this movement, and to come to terms with the question of why the digital might be suitable for investigating the history of war in light of 3/11, I want to chart the relationship of security—of war's intersections with the hometown—through Obayashi's earlier works. If, as D.N. Rodowick notes, the digital provides "a powerful creative option for fabricating imaginary worlds,"[32] we can already see this at work through compositing experiments in Obayashi's earlier films. Just as digital technology was emerging, though not yet widespread, Obayashi deployed compositing techniques (in analog form) in his well-known 1977 war film *House*. This makes his usage of these techniques synchronous with experiments in Hollywood by major directors such as Steven Spielberg and George Lucas.[33] However, in spite of their shared provenance in commercial and experimental cinema, Obayashi while directing his first film for a major studio—Toho—differed from his Hollywood peers insofar as he did not attempt to integrate his compositing effects into a fluid, photorealistic mise-en-scene.

We can see this most clearly in the train ride taken toward the beginning of the film, when Gorgeous takes her friends to her aunt's house in the countryside. During the train ride, Gorgeous tells her friends about her aunt who will be hosting them. This story reveals how she became a war widow. As she tells the story, we see it unfold visually. The narrative is introduced by the flash of a film projector and shift to sprocket-hole adorned celluloid strips, embodying the photograms in a way that draws attention equally to the sepia-toned images and the black bars separating them. On-screen writing announces, in the form of silent intertitles, that Japan once embarked on a major war. The film advances unsteadily, in starts and stops. Black-and-white or sepia images that move with a velocity which appears to stem from undercranking the camera further enhance this disjointed sense of war in tones of nostalgia and distance.

Throughout, we hear Gorgeous' narration of her family and the way it is affected by the war, as well as the commentary of her companions, who remark on the visual qualities of the narrative *as images*. One misreads the characters in one of the intertitles, transforming the meaning of the phrase, "I'll wait for you forever" (*itsumade mo*) uttered by her aunt to her would-be groom who is about to go to war, to "I'll wait for you any time" (*nanjimade mo*). This misreading, one cinematically shared with the spectator since the viewer see what she sees, is not limited to her incorrect pronunciation. It refers to the ways in which war is read and seen. Its consequences become clear in the second half of the movie, when they reach the aunt's hometown.

The notion of "hometown" (*furusato*) was especially fraught at the time. A major ad campaign was encouraging young girls to discover themselves by "discovering Japan."[34] *House* plays with this sense of hometown, already evident in its very title, an uncanny mix of the intimate and the alien. Before the girls depart, a destination sign on the train platform reads "hometown," rather than indicating a specific place name. When the girls finally arrive at their stop, they are greeted by a flat sign with a landscape painted on it. The words "Let's go back to the hometown and become wives" appear in on-screen writing as if they were part of the landscape, creating resonances with the intertitles. The narrative reveals the irony of the sign. It is the bitterness of loss and violence of war upon which the aunt, widowed and left standing at the altar, feeds. Her "house," haunted by the vengeful spirit of war, consumes the young girls in a series of grotesque vignettes. The girls can only look on the war as some distant silent film from the presumed security of the hometown in which mushroom clouds appear like cotton candy. This vengeance shows how war is no longer just an image from the past, but has permeated the house, exposing the violence of security that lurks within it. "Discover Japan" indeed.

The supersaturated palette and endless string of visual effects can be misleading if we think of them solely in terms of "images." It may be this misunderstanding that blinds so many critics to the centrality of war in *House*. The canny "misreading" scene seems to anticipate this. But Obayashi's engagements with war are not limited to spectacle. In its focus on the relationship between the innocence of childhood play and the ominous threat of war, *House* shares a certain preoccupation with a later film—the only film he made for the Art Theater Guild—the 1986 *Bound for the Fields, the Mountains, and the Seacoast* (Noyuki, yamayuki, umibe yuki). *Bound for the Fields* focuses on children growing up in a rural area as war comes ever closer. The history *in* the film seems to overlap not only with his own history[35] but with the history *of* film itself, as if it had moved forward from the undercranked, manic character of silent cinema in *House*, toward the admixture of creeping shadows, emergent romance, and tottering authority—inevitably around the home and hometown—informing the rich cinematic imagination of Shochiku's *shomingeki* films of the 1930s.[36]

But as important as are the specific stylistic choices and references, be they Ozu's low camera angles or Shimizu Hiroshi's focus on rural winding roads, we might be struck by the fact that this film—made for an independent company and an adaptation of the modernist, avant-garde poet Satō Haruo's work no less—assumes the restrained visual language of a studio film from the classical era. This is even more striking given that

the riotous *House* was made for a conservative major studio. *Bound for the Fields* is almost devoid of special effects, preferring instead to let the weight of a distant war hang ever more heavily on the children's games, which are small-scale "wars of mischief" (*wanpaku sensō*) complete with rules (including the forbidding of weapons). Obayashi tracks the ways in which these wars of mischief themselves give way when their rules are loosened and lost, and finally gradually overtaken by the encroaching "real" war. When the young girl and idol of the town boys—OShōchan (Washio Isako)—is to be sold off as a prostitute to offset her parents' debts, the boys find a kind of common cause, though this unity is precarious, still marked by tensions and skirmishes.

With a couple of small exceptions, it is not until nearly the end of the film that a more spectacular sensibility emerges. While subdued by comparison, as with *House*, the eruption of violence in the hometown is marked by a transformation of media: a bullet striking a body—OShōchan's pacifist boyfriend, Hayami Yūta (Omi Toshinori)—transforms the milieu of the film from color to monochrome (or monochrome to color).[37] This "shot" destroys the "hometown" of cinema itself as past history, driving the final sequences of the film into increasingly surreal territory, as the townspeople vanish into clouds of smoke; this catapults its narrative of strange love into an unsettling final shot, a distant view of an unfurling mushroom cloud against summery blue skies, returning to and recasting the scene from *House*. What is bound for the fields, the mountains, and the seacoast is nothing if not war itself.

De-compositing the Security of the Hometown

The role of the hometown—not only as a place but also as a site, implicating time, history, image, and memory—is indispensable to thinking war in Obayashi's work. These dimensions' intersection, or possible intersection, charges the site with the force of security, and Obayashi seems to privilege this intersection, the ways and moments in which the hometown is punctured by "war," which is never simply battles but something that permeates the whole world at multiple levels. More, these intersections are inextricable from the operations of media aesthetics, implicating stylistic choices, but also informing the practice of filmmaking in relationship to its industrial and institutional affiliations.

It would seem as if the advent of the digital presents yet another chapter in the saga. Obayashi's take on the digital, however, is idiosyncratic, and can-

not easily be assimilated into typical understandings. It is common parlance to speak of "digital images" and "digital media," but Obayashi's understanding suggests that the digital is not an image or a medium; rather, it rewrites the foundations of images and media, re-constitutes their relations to one another. "D.N. Rodowick notes that the strongest manifestation of the digital is *compositing*—a combination of captured and synthesized elements, an interactive process." It is also common to consider the digital in terms of data and order.[38] Obayashi indicated to me in a recent interview that while he shares the sense of the digital as primarily about data, he sees it as less process- than effect-based, presenting "everything at once."[39] Cinema, by contrast, is process-based, directed by and toward imagination, trafficking in senses of visibility and invisibility.[40] Because the digital presents what it does all at once, the task of a work like *Casting Blossoms* is less multiplying layers than dismantling the all-at-once of the spectacle image. We might call this work the de-compositing of the image, in order to convert the hometown as a site of security into one of refuge.

Two key segments in *Casting Blossoms*—both revolving around the hometown as a site of security and violence—can demonstrate the ways this de-compositing works. The first is in the juxtaposition of the two women reporters as they promenade through the town, a walk that winds the legacy of comfort women through present-day Nagaoka. When the two reporters, Reiko and Wakako, meet, they walk along the Shinano river through the city of Nagaoka. The fluid camera movements following the women constitute a mapping, weaving the place visually into the personal narratives of the women and the socio-political and historical narratives of such war sites as Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and Hainan Island. As they walk, Wakako asks Reiko what kind of reporter she is. Reiko explains that she "disappeared" after her divorce and decided to visit the "Apo," on Hainan.[41] Obayashi intersperses maps of Hainan Island with photographs and newspaper clippings from Reiko's stories, often using split-screen techniques, with the headline "unheard voices" (*todokanatta koe*). He then inserts banal images of a woman sweeping and some chickens rooting around. The footage is grainy and degraded, though clearly intended to be of women on the island in the present day: it is not archival or newsreel footage. Hard wipes swipe between this footage and close-ups of the faces of the two women, who echo one another's words, "*comfort women.*"

The footage of Hainan Island, a "wretched of the screen,"[42] stands in stark contrast to much of the bright, shiny feel of the digital patina stretched over the rest of the film, and forges an especially unsettling,

inverse image of the two young women. This is even more important insofar as Hainan Island is spoken of as a lost homeland. The women Reiko interviews declare they "have no hometowns." When we hear the words, "the power of the hometown," then, we should hear in them the legacy of violence that it also touches. When Reiko notes that "no one can say they are completely disconnected from the war," viewers are likewise mapped onto the town.

The second set of sequences weaves two intertwined narratives of firebombing across media: a high school play and a *kamishibai* story. The scenes ricochet off one another, building into a frenzied depiction of firebombing, pushed to dizzying levels of affective and visual intensity, as well as emotional exhaustion. The scenes of Hana's play are multilayered and chaotic, with fire effects dancing about, and a backstage painting that becomes animated, lit up in dark red with the shadows of planes sweeping across it, drawing attention to the proscenium of the play's stage—its frame. Liliko passes through the scene on the way to tell her story of Hana's death to young children at a nearby school, using *kamishibai*, a visual art form, popularized in the postwar period, in which someone narrates a story to children, accompanied by a series of painted images presented in sequence within a stationary frame.

The role of the frame is suggestive for thinking about the place of images more generally. While the frame has always had a deeply contested relationship with cinema, we should also note that for whatever new media emerge, the frame remains, promising security. With *Casting Blossoms*, however, rather than containing anything, frames allow for movement and mixed narrative worlds. The movie is never content to rest with a given scene or space. It jumps back and forth between scenes, rehearsals, the play, daylight, and night. Sometimes past scenes come through regular film footage, and at other times are told through the rough painting style of *kamishibai*. They are linked through frames: the wooden frame of the *kamishibai* gives way to the wooden frame of a bomb shelter. Characters (and viewers) see through this frame as well, and speak across it, as they do when they break the fourth "wall" throughout the film, their voices leaping out across times and media, life and death, play and history, as incendiary bombs swarm across the scene and the characters struggle to put out the flames with water. The bomb shelter ends up trapping people inside with the flames. While it remains intact, the frame cannot protect us.

To be sure, the experience of being launched into this sprawling, enveloping array of times and effects is bewildering, like being at war, both because of the speed of editing, and because the narrative strategies

involved seem to push past simple compositing, mere placing one image on top of another image; rather, it is as if one image smashes through another. Some shards get embedded in the primary image, while parts are cast off and become embedded in other images. It would be easy to see this chaotic spectacle as a rehashing of the modernist impulse toward fragmentation, the refusal of meaning, the chaos of war, or the critique of representation. In other ways, it might even be tempting to read Obayashi's foregrounding of mismatched media and willfully naïve effects as a kind of political modernism that would keep the spectator conscious of—outside– the work. But his aim is not to create a counter-cinema, or to destroy the image. It is not iconoclasm, or the blurring of the frame, as with Resnais, but rather, its multiplication. The question becomes how to locate accidents in relation to the various frames.

We can understand this when we examine *Casting Blossoms* against the conventional understanding of politics informed by classical cinema and counter-cinema. Where critics of the classical system tended to locate fissures in relation to a narrative, figural, human world (epitomized by eyeline matches, shot-reverse shot, and other forms of "continuity" editing), optical effects and compositing tend to stress ruptures between humans and their environment or within the environments and objects themselves, the milieus. Obayashi's is less a political than an ecological modernism. He explains his editing process:

> It's almost like making a sculpture and taking out little pieces and then putting them back in. That's the editing process. But what I do is take that little piece out and put it somewhere else and see what happens, maybe create a little dent and then put it back. The whole process is pretty chaotic and I create this whole chaotic monster and give it to the audience with no explanation and no clarity. I call it a 'charming chaos', I want to communicate with the audience, I want them to get lost first and have them find their own way back.[43]

The idea of getting lost imagines viewers wandering in a three-dimensional space, a milieu of mixed media. While certainly aiming at an "immersive" experience rather than assuaging any anxieties by smoothing out the various media into a seamless unity, the point is to let the seams show to highlight those tensions in a playful, "charming" way. That viewers leave the movie consumed not with sadness and despair but confusion (whether elated or exhausted) also speaks to the effects of this strategy that privileges charm over penitence.

At the same time, as with *House* and *Bound for the Fields*, the chaotic scenes unfolding and their relationship to security are not limited to narrative strategies and formal techniques, the ways that a political modernist critique might operate. Here, contingency infiltrates the production, the process of shooting itself, and even the realm of post-production, the latter where most effects work operates at present.[44] While the digital is often said to involve control and manipulation within the image, we find in this case that the digital certainly enables control, but not without allowing for and even encouraging contingency elsewhere. It operates in the process of framing, at the limits of the frame and beyond it, rather than within, up to and including allowing 3/11 to redirect the entire project. When we consider the preponderance of documentaries in the wake of 3/11 that aim to document the events, we might note that the more "critical" those films are, precisely in the interest of preventing accidents, the more safe they become by speaking to a known set of concerns. From this perspective, we can only see Obayashi's intervention in this sphere as yet another anomaly, not easily assimilated. Too right wing for some, too left wing for others. Too sentimental for some, too experimental for others. But whether good or bad, nothing else in response to 3/11 looks or feels like *Casting Blossoms*.

This sense of anomaly is key to distinguishing refuge from security. It infects the worlds and histories in which *Casting Blossoms* is enmeshed. Alongside disaster, war itself emerges in anomalous fashion. The ways that the past reappears in new forms in the present, through the medium of war as it appears within and across different frames, complicates the discussion of "the war" or "the postwar" (the most conspicuous discursive figures of security in Japan). Throughout the movie, comfortable reference points are scrambled by the narratives. When Reiko asks the taxi driver where he was during "the earthquake," his response is to ask, "The Chūetsu?" The reference is to an earthquake that hit the northwest of Japan in 2004, at a magnitude of 6.8, just under the 7.0 earthquake that devastated Hanshin in 1995, albeit much less known. The history of war parallels this layered history of disaster: the Boshin war,[45] the Russo-Japanese War, and the escalation of the war on the mainland from 1937 are interwoven with images of children playing war games, including setting off bombs in ponds and burying their own mock-land mines, again reminiscent of *Bound for the Fields*. Viewers are in the midst of a string of wars and disasters of multiple scales that are part of the land and its history; the reference points assumed by "outsiders" (even nationals) are not necessarily the same as those for "locals." In this sense, *Casting Blossoms* is less a movie on "the

war"—whether we call it the 15 Years' War, World War II, the Pacific War, or any other name—and more a question of war as such, of why it returns, and of the centrality of home that it mobilizes and idealizes. The two—catastrophe and hometown—begin to become detached not only from a specific site in time or space but also in relation to one another, even as we see them in juxtaposition, as if they were spinning off into new directions. We have to begin to ask, where is the hometown? When is the war?

The war may rain down from above, from the horizon, not yet here; at the same time, it is already "here." It has quite literally entered the environment, penetrated the soil of the hometown, as we learn at the beginning of the film. Indeed, the first story told about air raids is not that of incendiary bombs, but rather, the making of "mock-up bombs," large bombs that were modeled on Fat Boy but did not actually contain atomic weapons (they were deadly, nonetheless). While initially it was thought that these bombs were intended as vengeance because Nagaoka was the hometown of Yamamoto Isoroku, the general who planned and carried out the attack on Pearl Harbor, it turns out that they were dropped throughout Japan.

This history only becomes apparent in the 1990s, after the end of the Cold War. Rob Nixon has argued that "the post- in post-cold war has never fully arrived" for societies that are littered with its remnants—land mines, buried bombs, and so forth. "Instead, whole provinces inhabit a twilight realm in which everyday life remains semi-militarized by slow violence and in which the earth itself must be treated with permanent suspicion, as armed and dangerous."[46] The land is already stratified, and volatile, already at war. Even when we see the sprawling, overly verdant vistas of "home" and "Japan," we know that they are incubating war in their very earth, that the frame is touched quite literally by this "slow violence." Only later do we learn that the "entrance to wonderland" is marked by the site of the Atomic bomb dome in Hiroshima.

War at a Distance: The Charming Chaos of 3/11

The sense of a hostile earth returned again after 3/11, raising the paradox of security that not only reflects on the complicity and irresponsibility of the "postwar" as a security state jointly operated by the United States and Japan[47] but also highlights the anticipatory nature of security.[48] No one is untouched by war, the film notes repeatedly, and yet the war is still "to come." The logic of security seeks not only to maintain the present purity

of the hometown but also to pre-empt any possible violation of that safety. Here we should return to the odd phrase, *mada sensō ni ma ni au*. Recall that it is the name of a play that does everything it can to immerse us in the experience of war. At the same time, while subtitled as "there is still time before the war," the phrase could also be read, more disconcertingly, "in time for the war," as if the war were a train we hope to catch. A sense of being both within war, while at the same time both fearful and desirous of a coming war, is the odd experience of security and war after 3/11 the film renders. This orientation provokes questions of that gap in time and space between "here" and "war," and the security that both maintains and abolishes it. This gap poses sharply the primary conundrum of our present: how can an age of the utmost security also be a time of the utmost precarity?

Do alternatives exist to security? Throughout this paper, I have made regular reference to forms of refuge that are distinct from security. Yet it remains unclear precisely what constitutes refuge. *Casting Blossoms* does not offer us a positive image of refuge, since this would only be another image. It would convert refuge back into security. The only way, at the moment, to get to this is negatively, through the negation of security. There is no positive image because the movie simply acts *as* that refuge, by dismantling the image and spectacle through its "charming chaos."

Perhaps this charming chaos available through (but far from coincident with) digital technologies must also be seen as something like love, marked by contingency and risk. Abbas Kiarostami, for example, notes that it is the digital which truly offers contingency, a refusal of any kind of certainty (what he calls "an absolute lie"), that is like the feeling of being in love.[49] We may then consider love—an extraordinary anomaly itself—an indispensable element that distinguishes refuge from security. But what kind of love is this? While the movie never says, we can surmise that it must be a love not contained by narrative or image. At the same time, it is not transcendent. It extends beyond the frame while remaining in touch with it.

In an open letter introducing *Casting Blossoms* on the movie's website, Obayashi compares movies to fireworks, to something that erupts in a burst of light and then dissolves into the darkness. In this way, Obayashi notes, cinema may show us "more than simply what is on-screen." While the fireworks seem to fall endlessly, they will eventually fade, returning us to the quiet darkness of war.

Notes

1. Sasaki Ataru has warned of the dangers lurking in the notion of the "responsibility of intellectuals," when they are required to make statements or offer comments about one issue or another. This "pressure" can make them complicit in exploiting victims: Sasaki, "Kudakareta daichi ni, hitotsu no basho wo" [In a broken land, one place]. *Shisō to shite no 3.11* (Tōkyō: Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 2011), 2–29.

2. As Maurice Blanchot put it, "to be silent is still to speak": *The Writing of the Disaster*, trans. Ann Smock (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), 11.

3. This is reflected in the very difficulty of naming. The official sobriquet of "Great East Japan Earthquake" (*Higashi Nihon Daishinsai*) or "2011 Tōhōku Earthquake" seems barely adequate, and even the terminology of "triple disaster" – which at least includes the tsunami and nuclear meltdown in addition to the earthquake – only begins to touch on its sprawling, multiform nature. I continue to use 3/11 as an approximation, but note that the problem may not be "3/11" as a natural accident, but rather, the political fallout of heightened security and state power – more 3/12 than 3/11, as Yabu Shirō has argued. See Yabu, *3.12 no shisō* [3.11 thought] (Tōkyō: Ibunsha, 2012).

4. Often independently produced, these films attempt, in the face of a deceptive mass media, to self-consciously engage and represent the events of that day, their causes and effects. Mark Roberts, "Social Documentary after 3/11," paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society For Cinema and Media Studies, panel on "Post 3/11 – Representing Disaster," Seattle, 2013.

5. Obayashi Nobuhiko and Suzuki Namiki, "Interview with Nobuhiko Obayashi," trans. Sasaki Mariko and Jerry Turner, *Eigagogo: Exploring Japanese Cinema*, accessed January 23, 2016, http://eigagogo.free.fr/en/interview-nobuhiko-obayashi.php. Obayashi discusses the ways he navigated the worlds of independent, art-oriented film and the commercial environment at Dentsu, Japan's biggest advertising agency.

6. "I decided to create a 'movie journal' like *Essays in Idleness* in Japanese literature, which is a collection of information that one sees or hears." The standard English translation of this fourteenth-century collection of miscellaneous writings by the monk Yoshida Kenkō is *Essays in Idleness: The Tsurezuregusa of Kenkō Yoshida*, trans. Donald Keene (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967). Here, Obayashi is referring to his most recent film, *Seven Weeks*; however, I take this statement to be representative of his methodological change in the wake of 3/11.

7. The first words Alice utters when she reaches wonderland and comes upon the initially elusive white rabbit suddenly sound resonant and ominous in the wake of the 3/11 disasters: "Dear, dear! How queer everything is today! And yesterday, everything happened as usual. I wonder if I was changed in the night?" Given that Carroll's wonderland is hardly bereft of violence (recall the Queen of Heart's repeated outburst, "Off with their heads!"), this reference may be less far-fetched than it initially seems.

8. The Japanese title is *Kono sora no hana: nagaoka hanabi monogatari* (literally, the flowers in tonight's sky: a tale of the fireworks of Nagaoka).

9. For a discussion of the Nagaoka air raids, see Philip A Seaton, *Japan's Contested War Memories: The "Memory Rifts" in Historical Consciousness of World War II* (London & New York: Routledge, 2007), esp. chapter 8, "Regional memories," 153–168. In addition, the website Nagaoka Air Raid (in both Japanese and English) is also helpful: http://www.echigonagaoka.com/index.html (last accessed Jan. 23, 2016).

10. For example, Nicholas Vroman writes that the film "falls under the burden of cliché, failing even in the so-bad-it's-good arena. The ostensible message of the film is an antiwar screed.… Over its two and half hours plus there's plenty to ruminate on, little worth digesting": Vroman, "Kono Sora No Hana," *A Page of Madness*, June 2012, https://pageofmadness.wordpress.com/2012/06/03/kono-sora-no-hana/. Alison Frank notes, "the director's style quickly becomes tiresome, particularly once the film is heading stubbornly for the 150-minute mark, letting loose the violins, and maddeningly drawing out its conclusion as long as possible": Frank, http://www.themovingarts.com/new-japanese-cinema-at-nippon-connection/. One exception is Don Brown, the reviewer for the English version of the *Asahi Shimbun*, who called it one of the best movies of the year: Don Brown (Ryuganji), "Best of 2012," *Asian Movies on WildGrounds*, n.d., http://www.wildgrounds.com/2012/12/30/best-of-2012-don-brown-ryuganji/.

11. For example, Yonemitsu Kazunari, a video-game creator, wrote-up a long, bewildered review of *Casting Blossoms*, expressing a sense of strangeness and exasperation: "Obayashi Kazuhiko kantoku 'kono sora no hana'ga chōmondaisaku! jijiiga sugoi koto wo gatsun to yatta! – ekirebi!" (Director Obayashi Kazuhiko's Casting Blossom is such a controversial work! That old guy really did it!) accessed January 23, 2016, http://www.excite.co.jp/News/reviewmov/20120515/E1337009807196.html. The art critic Sawaragi Noi, who has written extensively on the relationship of art and war, meanwhile, championed the movie on twitter, going so far as to travel to Nagaoka after he watched the movie and to write up an extended series of posts on his experiences there: "n: saisetsu 'bakushinchi' no geijutsu (8) koku to niigata (zenpen), to shin ART iT," accessed January 23, 2016, http://www.art-it.asia/u/admin_ed_contri9_j/FkejS6RuDYmOWfc5rZH3/.

12. According to Paul Roquet, Obayashi's work represents a "unique combination of formal experimentation and melodramatic romanticism," with the "complexity of this visual spectacle," "paradoxically woven through with nostalgia for the simple straightforwardness of youth:" Paul Roquet, "Nobuhiko Obayashi, Vagabond of Time," *MidnightEye*, November 10, 2009, http://www.midnighteye.com/features/nobuhiko-obayashi-vagabond-of-time/.

13. For a collection of tweets about the film, see "Kono sora no hana" on the twitter aggregator site *Togetter*: http://togetter.com/t/この空の花.

14. Obayashi came to abandon scripts and rehearsals, and to employ up to four cameras at a time for any given scene, sometimes supplementing these with a phone camera: Christopher O'Keeffe, "Yubari 2014 Exclusive Interview: *House* Director Obayashi Nobuhiko Talks *Seven Weeks* and the Art of Cinema," *TwitchFilm*, March 17, 2014, http://twitchfilm.com/2014/03/yubari-2014-exclusive-interview-house-director-obayashi-nobuhiko-talks-seven-weeks-and-the-art-of-ci.html.

15. See "3/11 nippon no 'sensō' – Post-Postwar," in *"Ano hi" kara boku ga kangaeteiru "tadashisa" ni tsuite* (Tokyo: Kawade Shobō, 2012), 173–177. Translated as one section of a multi-part essay, "The Country's Lasting Aftershocks," composed by Takahashi, Ikeuchi Satoru, and Numano Mitsuyoshi. *New York Times*, March 19, 2011. http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/20/opinion/20superhed.html?_r=0. Last accessed 7/15.

16. Asai Takashi had been hosting a series of events that essayed the shift to digital and the various possibilities and anxieties it provoked. On his twitter, he wrote, "At the 'Side by Side' event, I asked the director Obayashi Nobuhiko why he shot *Casting Blossoms* with digital." The quote above is Obayashi's response, tweeted by Asai: Twitter post, December 24, 2012, 4:11 am, emphasis added.

17. Italics added. See the chapter "Mural," in T. J. Clark, *Picasso and Truth: From Cubism to Guernica* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013), 237–282.

18. Ibid, 282.

19. For a discussion of the dynamics of cubism in relation to war in French thought, see 1. Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), esp., chapter 2, "The disenchantment of the eye: Bataille and the surrealists," 211–262.

20. A tapestry of it hangs today in the hallway of the UN Security Council in NY, before which politicians have given speeches advocating for war (although in other cases the painting has been covered up). For an in-depth history of the painting, see Gijs van Hensbergen, *Guernica: The Biography of a Painting* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2004).

21. The famous example of this is the artist Tony Shafrazi writing "Kill Lies All" on the painting in New York in 1977. His explanation speaks to his desire to revitalize the painting for the present by intervening in it: "Here we have the greatest painting that the greatest artist of our time, Pablo Picasso, ever painted, *Guernica* – which is an absolute masterpiece, the greatest depiction of the horrors of war.… And yet the horrors of war at that time were exaggerated on such a massive scale that art had no effect whatsoever.… So I felt that by doing something, by writing across the painting, I was giving it a voice-and by giving it a voice, I was waking it up to scream across the front page of the world": Owen Wilson, "Interview with Tony Shafrazi," *Interview Magazine*, April 3, 2009, http://www.interviewmagazine.com/art/tony-shafrazi. /#

22. As it does in the dystopic film *Children of Men*, dir. Alfonso Cuarón, 2007, adorning the dining room of the elite while the rest of "society" is consigned to camps and terror.

23. See Matsumoto Toshio, "A Theory of Avant-Garde Documentary," trans. Michael Raine, *Cinema Journal* 51, no. 4 (Summer 2012): 148–54, emphasis added; see Raine's introductory essay for context of debates in film journalism during the late 1950s: *ibid.*, 144–47.

24. "The often exaggerated reading of Bazin as a "realist" who emphasizes the "long take" of mise-en-scene" editing tends to overlook his more open and even contingent relation to critical or ethical cinema. If we stick with the conventional reading, we can only be shocked to find his judgment about Resnais' film: "It is in pulling the work apart, in breaking up its component parts, in making an assault on its very essence that the film compels it to deliver up some of its hidden powers": André Bazin, "Cinema and Painting," in *What Is Cinema? Vol. 1*, trans. Hugh Gray (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 164–72.

25. Yamashiro Mutsumi, "Sensō ni tsuite (1995)" [on war], in *Bungaku no puroguramu* [The program of literature], Kōdansha bungei bunko (Tōkyō: Kōdansha, 2009), 68–109.

26. See James Dorsey, *Critical Aesthetics: Kobayashi Hideo, Modernity, and Wartime Japan* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2009), 225–6. Kobayashi would insist that photography could never be art, echoing the romantic sentiments of Baudelaire and others.

27. David Fedman and Cary Karacas, "A Cartographic Fade to Black: Mapping the Destruction of Urban Japan during World War II," *Journal of Historical Geography* 38, no. 3 (July 2012): 306–28.

28. In his work *Watching War*, Jan Mieszkowski argues, "Many contemporary academic analyses of both still and moving images of battlefields have become more concerned with the specificity of the informational medium – photography, television, the internet – than with what it imparts, treating

war as merely one object of representation among others rather than as the defining phenomenon of the age": Mieszkowski, *Watching War* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012), 179. Rather than technological change, he locates the source of representational confusion around war in the Napoleonic era, when large scale battles already exceeded the boundaries of sense.

29. "In the age of the global and digital proliferation of images and sounds, the issue of technologically generated and enhanced violence is still of paramount importance and remains one of the unresolved legacies of modernity. Now as then, the industrial-technological media constitute as much part of the problem as they do the primary public horizon through which solutions can be envisioned and fought for. Now as then, the issue pertains to the organization and politics of sensory perception, of aesthetics in the wider, etymological sense of *aesthesis*": Miriam Hansen, *Cinema and Experience: Siegfried Kracauer, Walter Benjamin, and Theodor W. Adorno* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 164.

30. "Since Edison we've been trying to figure out the possibilities of what movies can do but after 3/11 I feel like the whole medium of film has lost its power. So right now I think I'm trying to break out of this regular format which I feel is very commercial and give film the power of free fantasy and make it more deliverable to the people": O'Keeffe, "*House* Director Obayashi Nobuhiko Talks *Seven Weeks.*"

31. Indeed, in a recent talk, Obayashi noted that there is no reason to privilege the digital over celluloid, 3D over 2D, sound over silent, widescreen over standard presentation, color over monochrome, or any other technological "advance," up to and including drones over 8 mm cameras. Nor is it the case that we should value the other binary as somehow older, truer, or more authentic. Rather, any particular form or format, as with any mode of production, exhibition, warrants and requires its own attention and possibilities to be explored and inverted. Rather than citing any particular mentor in film, Obayashi considers himself a "disciple of Edison," an orientation geared toward shifts in media technologies and relentless invention, rather than in film history, genre, auteurs, and so forth: "A Conversation with Obayashi Nobuhiko," November 21, 2015, The Japan Society, New York.

32. See David Norman Rodowick, *The Virtual Life of Film* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007), 167.

33. For a discussion of the history of compositing in classical Hollywood film and the changes brought about in the 1970s by the shift to optic (postproduction) rather than process (on-set, in camera) compositing, see Julie A Turnock, *Plastic Reality: Special Effects, Technology, and the Emergence of 1970s Blockbuster Aesthetics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), esp. 21–62.

34. "Discover Japan" was a 1970s advertising campaign launched by Dentsū for Japan National Rail; see Marilyn Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing: Modernity, Phantasm, Japan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 29–65. The ads incorporated pastoral landscapes of unspoiled nature, juxtaposing "modern" urban girls with older rural residents in a melange of nostalgia and exoticism. The ads can also be read in reverse, however – with older, rural residents "discovering" the modern, urban Japan in their midst. This is thus the perfect milieu for Obayashi, given his involvement in advertising – employed by Dentsū, his affiliation with hometown films, his focus on young girls, and his tendencies toward nostalgic fantasy and romantic wonder.
35. Indeed, Obayashi experienced the war as a child, and lived near Hiroshima in the town of Onomichi. He made a famous trilogy of "hometown films" about Onomichi for Kadokawa Pictures in the 1980s.
36. I.e., films that focused on everyday life in lower middle-class families, a staple genre of the Shochiku studio during this time. Many of the films of Shimizu Hiroshi, Ozu Yasujirō, Naruse Mikio, Shimazu Yasujirō, and Gosho Heinosuke, to cite some of the most prominent, fall into the category of *shomingeki* during this time.
37. There are two versions of the film, one in black and white and one in color, released at the same time. In the version I have seen projected, the narrative is in color and the shooting recasts the filmic space in monochrome. The DVD also contains the other version, in black and white, which the shooting transforms into color. I would like to thank Aaron Gerow for informing me of this. This dual nature also helps to avoid fetishizing a specific form in making claims toward meaning.
38. "Digital media point to fundamental tasks of order and maintenance, the ways in which data ground our being, and techniques that lie at the heart of human dwelling on earth": John Durham Peters, *The Marvelous Clouds: Toward a Philosophy of Elemental Media* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 8.
39. "A Conversation with Obayashi Nobuhiko," November 21, 2015, The Japan Society, New York.
40. The idea of cinema as a process was popularized in Japan by the famous poet and critic Yoshimoto Takaaki. Yoshimoto was interested in the various stages prior to and constitutive of the appearance of an image, rather than an analysis of the image solely after the fact. See his "Eiga hyōgen ni tsuite: eizō katei hyōron" [On cinematic expression: a critique of the process of image-making], in *Mosha to kagami* [The copy and the mirror] (Tōkyō: Shunjūsha, 1964), 341–362.
41. The Apo are older Chinese women who were recruited as "comfort women" (*ianfu*) for Japan's war effort. Right-wing activists protested the

use of the term "*jūgun ianfu*," (comfort women serving the military) in the script. *Jūgun ianfu* implies forced prostitution as a form of sexual slavery by the Japanese military during the war; see, e.g., "Nagaoka hanabi eiga 'kono sora no hana'ha dare no tame no eiga ka?" (Whose film is Casting Blossoms to the Sky?), Blog of Fujii Morimitsu: Mayoral Candidate for Nagaoka City, November 2011, http://blog.fujii.nagaokashi.jp/2011/11/blog-post20.html, accessed January 23, 2016. It would seem that a certain amount of controversy, and the fact that Obayashi was making use of public funds to promote his film, led to the erasure of the prefix. The dialogue in the film merely says "*ianfu,*" which absolves the military and the state from any institutional participation in procuring comfort women for soldiers. While (if true) this does constitute censorship, and this cannot be ignored, I feel the distinction is less significant in light of the context of the term and Obayashi's use of it in the movie.

42. See Hito Steyerl's essay, "In Defense of the Poor Image," *The Wretched of the Screen*, trans. Franco Berardi (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2012), 31–45.
43. O'Keeffe, "*House* Director Obayashi Nobuhiko Talks *Seven Weeks.*"
44. *Casting Blossoms* did not follow the typical channels of production, distribution, or exhibition. The film's production history is detailed on the committee's website through directed writings and clipped newspaper articles; see http://konosoranohana.jp (last accessed 8/15). Obayashi chose to form a local production company, rather than working with major studios or a typical assortment of international media production companies, carrying on a long-running engagement with the local. The movie played in various community halls, as well as some of the (increasingly dwindling) smaller, independent theaters in Japan. Outside Japan, it has been picked up by a few film festivals, largely on the strength and reputation of the director's well-known "cult" film, *House* (1977).
45. In the Boshin war, the leaders of the *han* opted to fight for the Shogunate rather than the emperor, causing a civil war. This war lasted a year and a half, straddling the better-known event inaugurating "modern Japan," the Meiji Restoration of 1868. The new Meiji government won decisively, crushing Nagaoaka and reducing it to rubble. The civil war is but a footnote to that monumental event.
46. Rob Nixon, "Ecologies of the Aftermath: Precision Warfare and Slow Violence," in *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011), 199–232.
47. As Takahashi Tetsuya has pointed out, while broadly condemned and subject to public censure and "people's trials," not one person in government or the nuclear industry (the nuclear village) has been prosecuted officially. Not one person has claimed responsibility, nor been subject to prosecution, in spite of the report making clear the man-made component of the

disaster: 1. Takahashi Tetsuya, "What March 11 Means to Me: Nuclear Power and the Sacrificial System," trans. Norma Field, Yuki Miyamoto, and Tomomi Yamaguchi, *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 12, no. 19.1 (May 12, 2014): n.p.

48. Indeed, the "conservative" turn toward re-militarization that has taken place in the wake of 3/11, the strongest sign of which is a deepening of the security state. As Shirai Satoshi has argued persuasively, throughout the process of Japan's most recent conservative turn, the attitude of leaders before the United States is as deferential as ever, while the sometimes dismissive attitude toward some of the concerns of its East Asian neighbors has also been extended: Shirai Satoshi, *Eizoku haisenron: sengo Nihon no kakushin* (Everlasting defeat: the heart of postwar Japan) (Tōkyō: Ōta Shuppan, 2013).

49. See the interview with Jonathan Robbins: "Interview: Abbas Kiarostami, 'Like Someone in Love,'" *Newsletter of the Film Society of Lincoln Center*, February 11, 2013, http://www.filmlinc.org/daily/abbas-kiarostami-interview-like-someone-in-love-new-york-film-festival-nyff/.

The Gesture from Fukushima Daiichi: The Voice in Furukawa Hideo

Doug Slaymaker

There is something in a gesture: it is compelling, pulling, beckoning, incriminating.

The gesture, the catalyst, that prompted this article comes from a riveting intervention with the planetary, namely a scene in a film compiled in France from video material streamed from the post-meltdown nuclear reactors in Fukushima, Japan.[1] That impetus is in the unexpected gesture found about 14 minutes into Philip Rouy's understated and compelling film *Four Buildings Face the Sea*. Rouy edited footage from a stationary cam that the Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) has trained on the site of its Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant and that is streaming online. The key moment for my consideration occurs in the long take where little is ostensibly happening but that is interrupted by (what we assume is) a TEPCO worker in white protective gear who enters the frame and wordlessly confronts the camera—which is to say us—by pointing, beckoning, walking closer, and gesturing again and then again. That particular gesture began the series of thoughts that is this article.

The triple disasters associated with "Fukushima" (earthquake, tsunami and nuclear meltdown of March 11, 2011) are ongoing and horrific; this quiet film, and this scene in particular, is successful in part by drawing from the aesthetics, the compulsions, of the horror genre. With the capabilities

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of cell phones, 3.11 is the first obsessively recorded disaster, recorded in real time, and now available online; in the aftermath of 3.11, we have catalogs, hours of easily accessible video footage of things horrific, things that cannot be, things that should not be. Rouy's film scene struck me in that vein, as a moment of horror, certainly of suspense, capturing a moment when something happens that portends the worst, portends something that should not be. It felt akin, to me, to the frisson and impulses of horror and suspense films.[2] The pointing finger of Rouy's film pins the viewer to the wall: we anticipate that something terrible is certain to happen; it feels as though I should not watch this; that I should turn away. But I keep watching, hoping against hope that this will not turn out badly. And this is similar to the reaction many of us have to the now-iconic images of post-3.11, of things impossible and wrong, of things ominous and seeming to evidence supernatural forces: flattened landscapes, ships on top of buildings, for example.

One basic definition of horror theorizes that "Horror presupposes a *threat*, building tension with its promise that something hideous will occur, and there is no escape."[3] Sipos goes on to note that many things are "threatening" but horror introduces the "unnatural" threat that is outside the realms of normalcy. These definitional impulses quickly devolve to hairsplitting, it seems to me, but it was this combination not of just the "threatening" but of a threat that is unnatural and inescapable, one filled with tension, something hideous, that is resonating for me with the ongoing experience of 3.11. I do not mean to imply that 3.11 was, in any technical sense, "unnatural," because we humans had set it in motion and we knew it was coming, sometime, somehow, somewhere. Neither is it supernatural, that is, an act of god, nor really even a natural disaster, given the completeness of human interventions with nature all along the way, but that is a different discussion; the point here is that it certainly felt like all those things—supernatural, god-sized—in the initial overwhelming moments, days, weeks, months following the disasters. It felt like something bigger than mankind and society, that is, supernatural and god-level; it was threatening and menacing to the degree of rendering us speechless and frozen, pinned to the wall; it was a harbinger of something that seemed ominous and inescapable. And which only becomes all the more threatening because the nuclear threat is nonsensical, non-sense and beyond-sense, out of the range of sense and senses.

So what does one do?

In Rouy's film, a person dressed in the Hazmat gear of post-disaster cleanup crews appears on the screen, ambles over to face the camera and

thus the viewer, stands there and "gestures" —that is the gesture I am focused on here. The suited person points, compels, threatens, judges, demands reaction, response, action. The gesture requires us to move. Points from outside. Unnatural. Again, this is another of those things that *should not be*: TEPCO workers are vetted and should not, are not expected to, be in a position to confront me in this way.

Elise Domenach has noted how Rouy's film, like many contemporary 3.11 films, "bypass[es] the accusatory significance" of much documentary film, particularly those produced after 3.11.[4] Nonetheless, I feel such accusatory compulsion when pointed at by this white-suited worker; I, as a particular viewer, register accusation; I, this particular individual, feel the gesture toward, the compulsion toward, action. There is an accusatory gesture here, but to what end? What is it that I am to do?

The "author" of this video, the worker himself, asserts a post facto intention not of accusation or protest about nuclear power but only of protest toward the working conditions and the terms of employment for cleanup workers.[5] Nonetheless, in the very ambiguity that results from a gesture without accompanying speech, the outcome registers as some form of accusation. This may be the sly beauty of such a gesture, and a part of the history of "documentary film": the fact that the source and object of pointing and intent is unspecified transforms it from "documentary" to the horror film that I, as this particular viewer, see. Forces unnatural, outside, accusing. And compelling thereby, because it works on, it mobilizes, my own psychological impulses and anxieties.

My other point of reference in this consideration of gesture comes with Furukawa Hideo's *Umatachi yo, sore demo hikari wa muku de* (*Horses, Horses, in the Innocence of Light*).[6] It is Furukawa's genre-defying book that I want to use to think through this thing I have put under the name of the "gesture." Furukawa's book is sort of memoir, sort of fiction, sort of essay, something of a road trip, entirely rambling and completely hectic, overwhelmed and overwhelming. It chronicles a trip from Tokyo to Fukushima in the summer of 2011. *Horses, Horses* was published in its entirety in the journal *Shinchō* and almost immediately thereafter in book form, in July 2011, four months, that is, after the earthquake/tsunami/meltdown now known as 3.11. And while Furukawa bristles at being labeled a "Fukushima writer," the fact that this work chronicles a return through the Fukushima prefectural towns of his childhood, where his family still lives, adds another layer to the telling. And it is marked by the compulsion to do something in the face of it.

Furukawa Hideo (b. 1966) is one of the most powerful and energetic of contemporary Japanese writers. He was awarded the Mystery Writers of Japan Association Prize and the Japan SF Grand Prize for *Tribes of the Arabian Nights* (Arabia no yoru no shuzoku) in 2002 and the Mishima Yukio Prize for *LOVE* in 2004. He published the massive *The Holy Family* (Seikazoku) in 2008; his 2015 *The Book of the Women's 300 Betrayals* (Onnatachi Sanbyakunin no uragiri no sho) is a remix of the *Tale of Genji*; and he is currently engaged upon a translation into contemporary Japanese of the *Tale of Heike*. He has a long tradition in theater which has become, in the aftermath of the March 11, 2011 disasters, evident in his activities with memory work and commemoration. Most notable and extensive has been the rewrite and retelling of Miyazawa Kenji's *Night on the Milky Way Railroad*, through the media of theater and film.[7] Furukawa draws much from Miyazawa (1896–1933), the elliptic and multilayered, hard-to-characterize poet and storyteller from Iwate Prefecture born in the year of another great tsunami. The *Hontō no uta* (True Songs) performance/film, based on Furukawa's rewritten script for *Night of the Milky Way*, was billed as a public reading, but is better characterized as a theatrical performance: it includes poet and translator Suga Keijirō, one of the forces and the impetus behind the project; the musician Kojima Keitaney Love; and translator Shibata Motoyuki.[8] A similar impulse is evident in the workshop Furukawa has organized and held in Tōhoku under the name of "A Drifting Classroom" (*Tadayou manabiya*). The classroom is designed for participants to explore, through "literature," the individual narratives that have arisen in response to the triple disasters.[9]

In all of these efforts one sees the compulsion to *do something*, respond to and initiate a gesture. But in the face of doubt about the concrete efficacy of action, while plagued by anxiety about the abstract ephemerality of words (to paraphrase Furukawa in other contexts), what does one do? Furukawa (and Suga), in the interviews contained in *Hontō no uta*, claims that one can only do what one has always done. To paraphrase: as writers, we write and hope that what we are doing, even if largely to assuage our own feelings and to articulate our own responses, might mean something.[10] Furukawa phrased it similarly following the July 2015 screenings of *Hontō no uta* in Ōfunato city and Sumida city in Iwate Prefecture. He wrote of the many times that audience members would relay to him ways in which the production powerfully moved them and "remained within them" (*kokoro ni nokoru*). This is taken to mean that something important and even concrete has been accomplished in this activity; something real, or true, has been *done*. It is as though the most concrete of activities—or the

desire for the concrete and durable—is found in the telling and retelling via non-material media. Gestures all, movement in the direction of a concrete action, but gestures that effect change.

In Furukawa's *Horses, Horses, In the Innocence of Light*, this compulsion and gesture to activism is well-articulated. *Horses, Horses* records Furukawa the narrator/character hearing, and responding to, a voice commanding that he "go there," that he "write this." That voice is not to be denied. That voice is ominous, it contains threat and possibility of harm. Furukawa's story is about gesture as compulsion, about the pointing finger, the voice, the command that comes from outside, from somewhere else, unnatural, ominous, supernatural (perhaps), and that will brook no dissent. It is a disembodied gesture; the narrator responds to a pointing, accusatory, gesture. *Horses, Horses* records the narrator in the midst of this onslaught as he tries to prevent the meltdown of sense that he refers to as "brain overload" (*handanteishi*) and "the short circuit of sense" (*shikōteishi*). What is in that gesture, that compulsion?

Gestures are oblique. Gestures occur in the space between speech and act, or throw into relief the "act" in both. Christophe Thouny has phrased it as being "between being, what is, and action, what could be." It is a something existing in the space between what "is" and what "could."[11] R.P. Blackmur discussed it this way: "Language is made of words, and gesture is made of motion.… Words are made of motion… and gesture is made of language – made of the language beneath or beyond or alongside the language of words."[12] Here it is language as words, words as gesture, gesture that is motion and action, language and words that are the motion of gestures. It is the "beneath or beyond or alongside" that intrigues me: the gesture in the utterance, verbal pointing toward or at. There is a question in this that haunts writers: if one *writes* then how does one *act* in the face of such an occurrence? Is *writing* sufficient *action*, or is it mere *gesture*? Does it remain, that is, a mere pointing-toward, the acting-toward, but somehow empty? The gesture, as wordless word, perhaps, as voiceless communication, occupies an interspace between writing and action.

Or as Nadine Gordimer writes, in *The Essential Gesture*, that Roland Barthes wrote of how "a writer's 'enterprise' – his work – is his 'essential gesture as a social being.'"[13] Gordimer writes from South Africa where these gestures, the bearing of witness, which she takes to be the writer's task, come with high stakes, will get one thrown in jail. This is not easy witness; this is not empty gesture. It also happens at the space of overlap, or of between, words—writing and speaking—and action. Witness comes at cost.

There is also a relevant piece in here from Giorgio Agamben, who states that "Politics is the sphere of pure means, that is, of the absolute and complete gesturality of human beings."[14] He builds on Deleuze, whose "movement-images" Agamben uses to show that there are "no images but only gestures" having broken down the distinction between image as psychological reality and movement as physical reality. That's what happens on screen, and even if not on screen, the gesture/action is equally compelling. There is more to be developed here, and more than I am capable of teasing out, but this tie of image/gesture to, in Agamben's case, the place of politics and political action pushes in on our discussions; in the context of these post-3.11 works, it asks, "what is action?"

And this, it seems to me, is Furukawa's haunting place, the place between (which may be why this feels like horror to me, why the scene from Rouy matters so much, resonates so fully). The desire is to do something in the face of this, but as a novelist, having only insubstantial words, when action, something more substantial, might be, seems to be, called for. Worse, as Furukawa phrases it in *Horses, Horses*, there is the fear of meaningless gesture, of diluting, of substituting words for the actual reality; words, that is, that dilute the reality of the piles of broken concrete and asphalt (*gareki*), the skeletons of buildings, the stuff on the ground, the silent vinyl records scattered and broken across the now-empty lots, gesturing toward sound but silent. A compulsion to embrace activism be a witness, which may be a compulsion to activism without becoming an activist (which is my sense of one of Furukawa's spaces). (And, if I understand Agamben, this distinction is the false one—they are equally gesture, equally action.)

There are other haunting places in Furukawa's imaginative world. They appear as time slips, the losing track of time that was experienced by many in the chaos following the shaking, of being "spirited-away" (*kami-kakushi*). As the Furukawa/narrator expresses it:

I experienced one day "like" it was a week. Or three days that "felt like" a month. This is "spirited-away" time. I was not the only one who lost all sense of days of the week, I was not the only one for whom the dates of the calendar disappeared. (Everyone I was talking with seemed to be experiencing the same thing.) Meantime, everyone living outside the places deemed a "disaster zone" was able to escape the "spirited-away" time; that includes me.[15]

Horses, Horses is organized around the Furukawa-narrator, who is from Kōriyama in the center of Fukushima Prefecture but who has been based in Tokyo for his writing career, and who was in Kyōto on March 11, 2011

researching a novel to be set in Kansai. Listening to the news of the disasters in his Kyōto hotel room, he thought of many things, of course, and *Horses, Horses* is an attempt to come to terms with those things. Location is important in Furukawa's writing: one of the associations here is to another place-specific writer, Nakagami Kenji. Furukawa's work is multilayered in the same ways as many of Nakagami's, comprised of complicated voices and chronologies but also of stories that are not Tokyo stories. The fact that Furukawa had completed a Tōhoku story, a mega-novel (in his words) centered on the six prefectures of Tōhoku, some two years prior, is important; the characters from that novel, *Seikazoku*, intrude on the *Horses, Horses* narrative in concrete ways. And of course the guilt, the sense of guilt of being Tokyo-based, working on a Kansai narrative, working in Kansai, at the time of the Tōhoku disaster, centered in his hometown.

But in this context it is the gestures and feelings of all that is ominous and unnatural that deserve mention, the supernatural aspect: *Horses, Horses* opens with a conversation about extraterrestrials. We should not be surprised by a parallax tracking of the god-like, ominous, supernatural, extraterrestrial nature of these disasters taking place outside the narrative space. The section ends with a command from outside, a command to go, to see, and eventually to write. Not so much gesture as much as command and injunction; and it is insistent throughout the novel, as I have described above. I see the commanding presence of the TEPCO worker urging this narrator, and all of us, to something. Furukawa records his reaction, and this compulsion, in this work. *Horses, Horses* opens like this:

There's this scene:
    An older brother questions his younger brother. He wants to know,
    – What if there were this extraterrestrial, and the extraterrestrial is riding in a UFO, and this UFO were outfitted with a stereo system; what kind of music would you have the extraterrestrial play? Flying through the air, there, what would you want him to listen to?
    Not a question the younger brother can answer, so he asks something else.
    – What if there were this extraterrestrial, and they are in their UFO, and you could pick just one Beatles song for them to listen to, what would you pick?
    Younger brother answers immediately: "Strawberry Fields Forever"; the answer suggests no other possibility.
    […]

An open atlas brought the scene to mind. The scene calls up many related emotions. Not a map of England. It had nothing to do with England, or even Europe, or North America. It is a 1:140,000 scale map of a place labeled "Nihonmatsu." The city of Nihonmatsu occupies the center. But I wasn't looking at the center of the map but up to the north and east. In the upper right hand corner of the open page, along Route 114, you can find the "UFO Friendship Center." Everyone who lives there calls route 114 the "Tomioka Highway." There is a "UFO road" close to the UFO Friendship Center complete with statues of extraterrestrials, according to the explanation in red letters. I read the whole thing.

[…]

I didn't even make sure: the UFO Friendship Center might be within the Fukushima city limits, or maybe it was Kawamata City, or maybe some other city. Anyhow, north of Nihonmatsu, then East.

…

"North" plus "East" adds up to Tōhoku.

There's the voice again. It overlaps with the song. A clear command: "Go there."

This is the start of this "I-Novel like fictional non-fiction," to borrow a phrase that Hideo Levy has used in reference to his own writing.[16] Here, the voice, the command is to "go there." More than a gesture I think, more than an invitation, but a *command*, an order. The compulsion, the drawing in, the sending forth. Fukushima exerts the force of a black hole that sucks up the energy and draws us into its order. And self-destructive: there is something dangerous, suicidal about traveling to Fukushima, perhaps; it is ominous, threatening, oppressive, for sure.

To quote again from Furukawa's narrative. Furukawa is an obsessive writer; he tells us that he has had no days on which he has not written, for many years, has taken no breaks. He asks himself:

But why did I continue writing like this? An internal necessity, drive, compulsion, relentless. […]

I began writing this essay on April 11, 2011. I was about ten pages in when there was an aftershock off the coast of Fukushima. Just over magnitude six.

Every time there was a strong aftershock, I would rewrite.

The aftershocks left no options. A clear voice: "Revise completely and thoroughly." Same voice as that earlier voice that said: "Go There." So I followed the voice, waited for some things to fall into place, and started writing this.

The compulsion, the disembodied gesture, the invitation, the push comes from outside, maybe, but also internally. But it does not go away, it cannot be known, but it cannot be denied either. External, vaguely threatening, ominous, with a possibility of harm—this is why I keep thinking of horror and suspense. The voice continually ominous, awesome coming from outside and that takes on a god-like position vis-à-vis the narrator. He continues by asking,

> Am I really blameless in this? Give us the reasons for your hemming and hawing.
> The voice.[17]

Which seems to be a compulsion to confront the desire to ignore, to look away. These are also the emotions of guilt, the voice is playing on guilt, using the hooks and cables of the horror genre. As the narrative continues the voice becomes more insistent, with rising levels of implicit danger. There is nothing particularly ominous about a desire to go to the affected site and observe; this feeling is common to many of us, the desire to do something. But this narrator continues:

> Can anyone explain how, or the reasons why, the people that "remained" there were polluted in this way? A voice again. "Go." "Get yourself radiated." Or perhaps, just, "Go, See." I was born in the central Nakadōri section of Fukushima prefecture. Now I had to go to the ocean side, the Hamadōri, section.
> But how, with pain as companion?[18]

This command to write, go act, do something is consistent throughout. It is one of the axes of this book. It comes at the juncture we know so well in the aftermath: writing is not really impossible, but it certainly feels impossible; it feels petty, insignificant, unimportant, incommensurate, impossible. Nonetheless, there is a gesture, injunction to write, to do something.

And this is the thing: the gesture comes from outside, the injunction is to go, the ominous sense of horror that overshadows and threatens, threats of physical danger and mayhem behind me, fear and bodily harm ahead. This thing threatens to dissolve bodies out of range of sight, inexorably, according to no rational timeline—a classic horror storyline, is it not? The injunction is not to activism. We don't know where these gestures come from. Furukawa does not know either. They threaten danger; they are not to be denied. They emanate from the disasters. They haunt and horrify.

NOTES

1. The first impetus for the "Planetary," in this context, comes from Christophe Thouny and the series he organized at University of Tokyo in spring 2014. These conversations grew into a panel at AAS in 2015. I thank him for getting this started.
2. I use these terms in the widest possible meanings and forgo strict definitions.
3. Thomas M. Sipos, *Horror Film Aesthetics: Creating the Visual Language of Fear* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2010), 5.
4. Elise Domenach "Gesturing at the audience in films after 3.11," Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, March 26–29, 2015, Chicago.
5. See website: http://pointatfuku1cam.nobody.jp/e.html (accessed July 7, 2015).
6. Furukawa, *Umatachi yo sore demo hikari wa muku de* (Tōkyō: Shinchōsha, 2011). Excerpts are available online: "Horses, Horses, In the Innocence of Light," trans. Douglas Slaymaker, *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 13, no. 10.3 (March 15, 2015): n.p.; "Spirited Away: Hideo Furukawa's *Horses, Horses, in the Innocence of Light*, Part 1," trans. Douglas Slaymaker, *Words Without Borders*, March 11, 2015, http://www.wordswithoutborders.org/dispatches/article/spirited-away-hideo-furukawas-horse-horses-in-the-innocence-of-light. A complete translation is forthcoming: Furukawa, *Horses, Horses, in the End the Light Remains Pure: A Tale That Begins with Fukushima*, trans. Douglas Slaymaker (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016).
7. The *re* prefix is important to Furukawa—rewrites are often, as in this case, remixes, and reorganizations of the source text. They are also, as is especially evident in the case of *Horses, Horses*, as a restart, a reboot, that marks a new beginning point.
8. http://milkyway-railway.com (accessed August 20, 2015).
9. See "*Tadayou manabiya/* The Drifting Classroom," http://www.tadayou-manabiya.com/index.php#outline (accessed January 23, 2016).
10. Suga is behind another project that serves as the first step in the *Milky Way Railroad* project that I am describing here, and provides another metaphor. One of Suga's responses to the feeling of helplessness following the disasters was, again, to do *something*, no matter how ephemeral and insignificant it seemed. He called on artists and acquaintances to gather for public poetry readings. The impetus for *The Milky Way Railroad* project came from Furukawa's contribution and reading. The poems were published in book form with an accompanying CD: *Rōsoku no honō ga sasayaku kotoba* (Words quivering in the light of candles) (Tokyo: Keisōshobō, 2011); captures the sense of words as individual points of candlelight that when combined form something seemingly ephemeral and intangible, but also larger and significant.

11. Domenach, "Gesturing at the Audience in Films after 3.11."

12. R.P. Blackmur, "Language as Gesture," in *Language as Gesture: Essays in Poetry* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1952), 3.

13. Nadine Gordimer and Stephen Clingman, *The Essential Gesture: Writing, Politics and Places* (New York: Knopf, 1988), 286.

14. Giorgio Agamben, "Notes on Gesture," in *Means without End: Notes on Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 59.

15. Furukawa, *Umatachi yo*, 8.

16. Hideo Levy with Tawada Yōko, "A Conversation on Transnational Writing," conference on Transnationalism and its Discontents, University of Colorado, Boulder, March 14, 2015.

17. Furukawa, *Umatachi yo*, 24.

18. Furukawa, *Umatachi yo*, 27.

Conclusion: Capitalism and Atmosphere

Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto

The year 2015 marked the 70th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. Although it was not necessarily clear what specific significance the number 70 might have in itself, the anniversary provided many Japanese with a valuable occasion to reflect on the war and the radical changes Japan had gone through since 1945. At the same time, it has also become apparent that the idea of "postwar" still plays a foundational role in both official discourse on and popular images of Japanese history. For reactionary conservatives, the immediate postwar situation or "postwar regime" (in Abe Shinzō's words) is nothing more than a scandalous sham, one they believe to have been a fundamental cause of ambiguous sovereignty, social breakdown, and cultural inauthenticity. They argue that the postwar regime must be thoroughly dismantled to correct deviation and reclaim an authentic—"robust" and "beautiful" —Japan of the prewar period. For the political right, even after Fukushima, giving up on the nuclear power program is hardly a realistic option because they claim it is essential for Japan's energy independence. Although not openly discussed, the potential diversion of nuclear technology to military use is on their mind, too. Interestingly, the political left also finds postwar Japan very problematic. It is said that despite the promulgation of a new

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constitution, numerous institutional reforms, Japan's defeat in the war, and the war's aftermath did not create a radical historical break. Shirai Satoshi, for instance, argues that the prewar elites came back to power after the US occupation of Japan had ended and, without taking responsibility for their wartime actions, consolidated their positions as new leaders of postwar Japan. What made it possible for them to avoid confronting the issue of responsibility was the successful propagation of a dominant fantasy, according to which Japan was not defeated (*haisen*), but rather the war simply ended (*shūsen*). Shirai claims that Japan's ruling elites and part of the populace disavow the fact of defeat even now, and that the system of irresponsibility underlying this disavowal is also an indirect cause of the reactor meltdown at Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant. The Fukushima nuclear disaster, the immediate responses by the government, and the lack of thorough reexamination of nuclear power programs are all manifestations of a collective disavowal that has sustained the postwar regime of what Shirai calls permanent defeat.[1]

What is most striking about these two diametrically opposite political positions is not their obvious differences but similarities. Although their views on history, democracy, energy policy, national security, and so on are irreconcilable, they agree that postwar Japan is phony or fraudulent because of its consistent failure to deal effectively with the legacy of the Second World War. As Shirai and others on the left have convincingly pointed out, the right-wing project of erasing the history of postwar democracy to reinstitute an imperial Japan under the US nuclear umbrella is fundamentally flawed, because it is dependent on the continuation of the postwar system in which Japan, through disavowal of its defeat, maintains a subservient position to the US. In other words, the more the right insists on the necessity of breaking away from the postwar regime, the more deeply they are trapped by the negative legacy of the postwar. Yet, despite their compelling criticism of the rise of ultranationalism and neo-conservatism, left-wing intellectuals are themselves not free from the spell of the postwar. Indeed, they agree on the pivotal significance of the postwar as a problem and the necessity of overcoming its legacy—the postwar regime for the right and the regime of permanent defeat for the left—in order to set a new course for Japan in the twenty-first century.

The question that needs to be asked is whether this fight over a true meaning of "the postwar" holds the key to the sociopolitical crisis Japanese people face right now, or whether instead the idea of "the postwar" creates a critical impasse and a widespread sense of entrapment. History must be

remembered, and the Second World War will continue to occupy a crucial position in Japanese historical imagination. This does not mean, however, that the idea of the postwar need remain a dominant chronotope through which historical imagination is formed. If it is so difficult "to awaken us from the dream that the world is about to end"[2]—or alternatively that, with new safety measures implemented, no catastrophic nuclear accident will ever happen again—it is not because the postwar regime of permanent defeat continuously controls our critical faculty and imagination. Instead, the difficulty of awakening is much more directly linked to capitalism and neoliberal rationality. The "pre-emptive formatting and shaping of desires, aspirations and hopes by capitalist culture"[3] makes the dangers of nuclear power and other inconvenient truths invisible. We live in the age of what Mark Fisher calls "capitalist realism," which is "like a pervasive *atmosphere*, conditioning not only the production of culture but also the regulation of work and education, and acting as a kind of invisible barrier constraining thought and action."[4] The idea of the postwar, and "Japan" as a floating signifier, functions as atmospheric component of capitalist realism. What we need now is a new method of cognitive mapping, a way of "visualizing or narrating capitalism"[5] more than ever before.

Notes

1. Shirai Satoshi, *"Sengo" no bohimei* (Epitaph for the postwar) (Tokyo: Kinyōbi, 2015).
2. Timothy Morton, *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 7.
3. Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* (Winchester, UK: Zero Books, 2009), 9.
4. Fisher, *Capitalist Realism*, 16.
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[1] Note: Page numbers with 'n' denote notes.