

*You Saw Nothing:*

*Sight, Digital Video, Post-3.11 Japan*

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree  
of Doctor of Philosophy

Submission: March 2021

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# ABSTRACT

This practice-based PhD research auto-ethnographically situates the artist in the socio-political centre–periphery structure in post-3.11 Japan with her camera. The camera observes the irreducible details of the contemporary periphery, questioning what an understanding of the nation and the other means. The concealed power and sacrifice in modernity and capitalism are exposed through her production of digital video. The doctrine of growth that Japan embraces within the modernity is examined from the peripheries of Fukushima, Niigata, and Okinawa. These examinations establish the semiotics of speed conceptually engaging with the forward movement of digital video. They reconsider the apotheosis of growth with a focus on digital video as data and information, an embodiment of time–space compression.

The auto-ethnography positions the artist contradictorily between research subjectivities, as both the researcher and the researched. This dual positionality creates a conflicting investigative force in representation. From this conflict, the artist manifests the knowledge of unknowability in the realm of sight, from which new boundaries arise between the self–other. The trope of “you saw nothing” refutes reductionism involving the viewers/readers in the politics of seeing, knowledge, and representation, an invitation to the realm of sight as a space of contemplation.

This PhD thesis employs a multimodal narrative of an introduction and three chapters encompassing the presentation of four art works, and *Waiting Room*, an intermediate text between the chapters. Theatrically involving the readers in the intermediate space of waiting before the next chapter, *Waiting Room* centres the artist’s lived experience of art making over the objectivism of knowability.

# LIST OF STUDIO-PRACTICE WORKS

*All the video links require the following password:  
Ayano Hattori PhD*

## CHAPTER 1:

### ***You Saw Nothing in Fukushima*** (2012–) HD video with sound

2012 trip, 8' 46"

<https://vimeo.com/438116969>

First shown to a public audience in 2016 at the solo exhibition Fukushima Mon Amour: You Saw Nothing in Fukushima (Pure Art Foundation, Hong Kong) in the format of photography. First shown in the format of video installation in 2018 at the group exhibition Still Life (NAFA Gallery, Singapore).

2014 trip, 15' 33"

<https://vimeo.com/438052137>

First shown to a public audience in 2016 at the solo exhibition Fukushima Mon Amour: You Saw Nothing in Fukushima (Pure Art Foundation, Hong Kong) in the format of photography. First shown in the format of video installation in 2018 at the group exhibition Still Life (NAFA Gallery, Singapore).

2018 trip, 17' 57"

<https://vimeo.com/438052535>

***Dead End*** (extract), 4' 51"

<https://vimeo.com/438113330>

First shown to a public audience in 2016 at the solo exhibition Fukushima Mon Amour: You Saw Nothing in Fukushima (Pure Art Foundation, Hong Kong).

***Shore*** (extract), 0' 48"

<https://vimeo.com/438115135>

First shown to a public audience in 2016 at the solo exhibition Fukushima Mon Amour: You Saw Nothing in Fukushima (Pure Art Foundation, Hong Kong).

***A Seabird*** (extract), 0' 38"

<https://vimeo.com/438113534>

First shown to a public audience in 2016 at the solo exhibition Fukushima Mon Amour: You Saw Nothing in Fukushima (Pure Art Foundation, Hong Kong).

*Wind and Rain (extract), 1' 31"*

<https://vimeo.com/438113647>

First shown to a public audience in 2014 at the 6th Cairo Video Festival (Gezira Art Centre, Egypt).

## CHAPTER 2:

**Family Story** (2019) Three-channel HD video with sound

*Hands, 7' 57"*

<https://vimeo.com/434238402>

First shown to a public audience in 2019 at the symposium Perform/ Performance/ Performative (White Conduit Projects, London).

*Objects, 21' 33"*

<https://vimeo.com/437519981>

*Structure, 8' 09"*

<https://vimeo.com/434237913>

## CHAPTER 3:

**I Told Our Story** (2018) Single-channel HD video with sound,  
intended for viewing on personalised equipment  
13' 16"

<https://vimeo.com/434578960>

First shown in a public environment in 2018 at an artist talk at LASALLE College of the Arts, Singapore.

**Hidden Tides** (2020) Digital photography, 8 diptychs accompanied by a text

Reproduced in chapter 3.





# INTRODUCTION

When the horrifying sequence of the 3.11 disasters in Japan reached the international media I had already been based in Singapore for some years. I was in my early twenties. I had started a master's course and been away from my family. I only came to know of the tragedy through a text message from a man I was dating at the time. It was a very short message informing me of what he had seen on the news media at his office. I was on the train heading to college. It had been a banal afternoon until I found this unreal, foreign mail in my inbox.

On the next day, Saturday, I was on a boat sailing with him and some other people. At the sailing club, its members, most of whom had multinational backgrounds and came from different parts of the world, were engaged in a conversation about whether their Tokyo offices were safe and how the disasters would affect their businesses. I wondered if my dad would sound like them as he was in his Tokyo office when the earthquake happened. I listened to them chatter under the familiar tropical sunshine, free from the savageness of winter that still held northeast Japan in its grip. Many of the disaster victims had spent the night without heating systems.

It was on one of the TV monitors at the gym that I first saw the video footage of the explosion at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant. The sequence of the footage was repeated over and over mechanically. The female presenter repeated "evacuation" over and over again. The merciless mechanical repetitions seared into the bland daily landscape of Singapore and created a different texture in my memory. The still images and videos of the disasters I saw were all on those monitors inserted between news headlines. It was a weird experience to look into a monitor displayed in a public space to find my own country facing a hydrogen explosion, narrated by a serious foreign voice.

I spent the week of the unfolding triple disasters in a hotel room in downtown Singapore. At night on the balcony with the man, looking down, the upper floor of the hotel gifted a bird's-eye view of the cityscape; between the hills of skyscrapers of the central business district on the left, and the inexhaustible fluorescent canal of Orchard Road on the right, I recognised myself increasingly being split and torn apart.

It was only in July 2011 that I returned to Japan for the first time after the disasters. It was the first time to be surrounded by Japanese people again and physically in a Japanese community and society. I came to realise that my experience of March 11, 2011 as a Japanese national was very different from the experiences told, shared, and known nationally in Japan.

It took me some time to understand that this was a time during which I faced a critical point in the identification of myself with Japaneseness. The fissure questioned my identification as Japanese. The mass-produced imaginaries of the bonded nation (bond: 絆 *kizuna*) excluded me by virtue of the fact that I did not witness or experience the 3.11 disasters, or simply was not in Japan on that day and those that followed. It was alienating. This feeling was old; something I had not recognised until now but felt all the time growing up. I fell into a dark hole with the feeling of alienation that had lain dormant in my mind. There were several triggers that led to and evoked these feelings.

## Research Framework

This diasporic cultural experience and autobiographical reflection on the 3.11 disasters in 2011 characterises an experience central to this auto-ethnographic PhD research. It formulates the voice as a researcher and frames the context from which my research questions emerge. With Singapore remaining as my place of residence and home, and the location of the mediated experience of the 3.11 disasters in the autobiographical reflection, the research discloses my history of displacements. I was born to a Japanese family in Niigata in the central northwest region of the largest Japanese island of Honshu, in the mid 1980s, and was raised and educated between Japan and Singapore. I grew up in these two countries with a father who worked for a multinational Japanese corporation and travelled across the world as his business globalised. I then resided in Hong Kong, a financial centre in Asia. I returned in 2015 for the first time to post-3.11 Japan. Subsequently I relocated to Okinawa in the south of Japan for three years. This research focuses on these three Japanese peripheries – namely Fukushima, Niigata, and Okinawa – which I visited after 2011 from the contemporary Asian centres of Tokyo, Singapore, and Hong Kong. These peripheries are viewed through a lens coloured by the experiences of this multicultural background and displacement since my childhood in the 1980s.

The 3.11 triple disaster, officially known as the Great East Japan Earthquake (*東日本大震災: Higashi-nihon Daishinsai*), was not only a significant event in my life as a Japanese national on a personal level but also lies at the centre of this research. The Earthquake induced the natural disaster of a tsunami afflicting the coastal areas of northeast Japan and the technological disaster of nuclear accidents at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant. This research focuses on the nuclear accident from a sociological perspective.

Sociologist Hiroshi Kainuma explains the topology of nuclear energy in his *Theory of 'Fukushima': Why the Nuclear Power Village Was Created* (2011):

Nuclear energy is not merely advanced science and technology for power production and weaponry. At the global level, it is a significant factor of the geopolitical order. At the national level, it is significant for the stability of the electricity supply. At the local level, it is significant for regional development and for the environmental

movement. It should have been addressed in the field of social science, not only in that of science and technology, even before the post-3.11 disasters occurred.<sup>1</sup>

As Kainuma notes from a sociological perspective, nuclear energy, ever since the inauguration of its civil use in post-war Japan, has been an index for economic growth as a stabiliser of the electricity supply for the resource-starved nation. Growth was the doctrine for the post-war nation left in the ashes and rubble of World War II and it was inevitably positioned at the core of the grand narrative of the nation.

As photojournalist Kenji Higuchi writes, upon the republication of his 1979 original version of *Nuclear Power Plant* in 2011 as *Nuclear Disintegration: Kenji Higuchi Photo Collection* in the midst of the 3.11 disasters:

The real face of the civil use of the nuclear energy is the imposition of sacrifice (radiation exposure) on the weak (subcontractors). 'Absolutely safe', 'nuclear energy for peace', 'clean energy that does not emit CO<sub>2</sub>', 'low cost', 'the dream energy for the resourceless country' – these safety myths brainwashed the nation. This is 40 years of true history of civil use, called atoms for peace. It is natural for me as a photojournalist to focus my lens on this. This publication is a requiem for the nuclear exposed who were erased in the darkness.<sup>2</sup>

The eyes of the photographer, who witnessed the respiratory diseases induced by industrial pollution in the western city of Yokkaichi in the midst of the high-growth period, and received an award for his work documenting this issue in 1974, observe the horrifying and exploitative position imposed on the nuclear labourers as the shadow of the growth and material wealth attained in post-war Japan. Through his camera lens, Higuchi's eyes focus both on the light of the growth and wealth achieved nationally and exploitatively in post-war Japan by the powerful and on the shadow of the sacrifice imposed on the nuclear labourers.

Thinker Tetsuya Takahashi in his *The System of Sacrifice: Fukushima and Okinawa* (2012) also contemplates the light and the shadow, through which he defines sacrifice. This theory constitutes a framework of this post-colonial PhD enquiry into the attainment of growth in post-war Japan, through which the light and the shadow of the centre and the periphery, a power relation, are investigated from a post-3.11 perspective.

Just as the three publications in the spheres of sociology, photojournalism, and philosophy by Kainuma, Higuchi, and Takahashi in post-3.11 Japan expose the shadow of growth and the assignation of power to the centre, I engage myself as the artist-researcher of auto-ethnography in the three peripheries of Fukushima, Niigata, and Okinawa and produce a studio-practice of digital photography and video, through which the light and the shadow are investigated in the realm of sight. Light and shadow represent a power relation in this

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<sup>1</sup> Hiroshi Kainuma, 「フクシマ」論 原子カムラはなぜ生まれたのか [Theory of 'Fukushima': Why the Nuclear Power Village Was Created], Tokyo: Seidosha, 2011. p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Kenji Higuchi, 原発崩壊 樋口健二写真集 [Nuclear Disintegration: Kenji Higuchi Photo Collection], Tokyo: Godo-shuppan, 2011. pp. 180–181.

research. The analysis of power is a large and well-established field of research. Grounded in the discourses by Michel Foucault and Antonio Gramsci, this practice-based research examines the complex notion of power that emerges in and through the production of the realm of sight.<sup>3</sup>

This thesis employs Takahashi's theory of the system of sacrifice as a determination of power relations. Within his theoretical framework of sacrifice, the power relation between the centre and the periphery regarding growth is defined as follows:

Growth is produced and maintained by the periphery's sacrifice of life, health, everyday living, assets, dignity, and hope etc. The benefit accrued to the centre is never produced or maintained without the sacrifice imposed on the periphery. The sacrifice is normally either concealed or glorified as a holy sacrifice by the community, such as the nation state, nation, society, and corporations etc.

Grounded in his theory, the three peripheries of Fukushima, Niigata, and Okinawa fall into the position of the sacrificed and comprise the three main chapters of this thesis that focus on the studio-practice works produced at each periphery. In total, there are 3 digital video works and 1 digital photography work produced.

### **Positionalities of the Researcher**

With critical aspects being shaped by my experience of living in a diasporic and formerly colonised space of Asia, my research on the theoretical front employs Takahashi's theory of the system of sacrifice that identifies the power relation between the centre and the periphery. The auto-ethnographic aspect of this research, however, encompasses myself within the research subject. This embeddedness of self sets up unique subsets of research contexts and questions as the thesis unfolds along with Takahashi's theory. This is to say that the positioning of the artist-researcher towards Japan's domestic periphery simultaneously describes the other locations: Singapore and Hong Kong, the locations of her displacements since the 1980s. Hence, this research delineates a path of enquiry through globalisation and corporatism since the 1980s, and the periphery is viewed within this flux and change of globalisation and fluidised boundaries.

The threads of the research question are confined, as we shall see below, to the identification of the nation. However, its context is drawn by the auto-ethnographic nature of this research, which goes beyond the national. This is to say, for example, not only is the centre-periphery relation investigated within Takahashi's theory in the domestic sense, but also this research delineates the location of the centre and periphery in the contemporality of the interrelation of globalised Asian spaces. Although the identification of the nation is investigated within the confines of Japan's grand narrative, the artist-researcher's mobility creates layers of space in this thesis, it encompasses the drifting and floating space of the in-

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<sup>3</sup> See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, translated by Alan Sheridan, New York, NY: Vintage books, 1995, and *History of Sexuality Volume 1–4*, translated by Robert Hurley, New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1990, 1988, 1988, and 2021, and Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks Volume 1–3*, translated by Joseph A. Buttigieg and Antonio Callari, New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1992.

betweenness of the artist-researcher's own identification and disidentification with the national identification. These spaces are also where my research questions are formulated and constitute the beginning of this research.

The identification of the nation in this research is, in other words, equal to the grand narratives in Japanese culture. The nation is an imagined community, as Benedict Anderson states in his *Imagined Communities: Reflection on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983).<sup>4</sup> The identification of the nation is imagined and performed. The nation does not have an ID to identify itself with. The identification is, rather, as being imagined and performed in Anderson's sense, plural and situated. The identification often takes the form of a narrative encompassing collectively shared memories, sentiments, dreams, and beliefs. The identification includes and excludes some members of the nation. For example, today, many of the readers of this thesis, including the Japanese, do not know that Japan invaded Singapore during World War II. The memories and narratives of the war between the two nations lie in the fissure of the national cultural constructions, which as cultural devices identify the post-war nations. Sharing these two narratives means that the fissure is also located in my personhood. Understanding the nationhood of the Japanese people is to understand one side of the fissure, which this research speaks to. Both Singapore and Japan are today business centres, economic powers, and affluent spaces of Asia that have grown rapidly through developmental stages in the different periods of the post-war era. The young populations of both nations live with the fading memories of the past that these narratives began with. The vertical cityscapes we dwell in are no longer capable of remembering the memories of the perishing generations.

There is always the scent of nationalism in the identification of the nation. To negotiate with one side of the fissure built by the national cultural construction, I drift from the old feeling of not being Japanese enough and towards a safe space of in-between, where I can face the alienating question: what is the Japaneseness that I lack and that marks the nation? The following research questions are posed in order to understand the Japanese nation in terms of identification through an auto-ethnographic positioning of myself as an artist-researcher in post-3.11 Japan.

## Research Questions

Who are the Japanese nation? How did they identify themselves in the narrative of growth that began from the ashes of World War II? What did the landscape of the debris of cement in the news footage of the 3.11 disasters mean for them and for the narrative that identified them? Is the attainment of growth a recovery of masculinity, a sense of national pride, which means something beyond the attainment of affluence? What are the shadows within this growth? Who has been sacrificed and marginalised to attain it? Is there any logic to legitimate that? How are we complicit in it? Who is we? What are the strategies which could be employed by the sacrificed and marginalised to emerge from this position in the periphery?

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<sup>4</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflection on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London and New York, NY: Verso, 2006.

This research, *You Saw Nothing: Sight, Digital Video, Post-3.11 Japan*, draws a complex constellation of elements into the incomplete projects of identification, reidentification, and deidentification of the nation, in which the artist of auto-ethnography is positioned. The digital video works produced as studio-practice materialise fragments of these incomplete projects in order for them to be discussed, reconfiguring them into the realm of sight.

Each chapter uses different strategies in the production of digital video, reflecting my positionalities as an artist in the centre and the periphery, and in front of and behind the camera. Making art means for me a journey in the search for answers and is equally the embracing of questions. Making art is making answers. The answer from *art making as making answers is the making of another question*. It is endless chains of questions, an arborescence of questions. Within this close looking into the connection between the questions in the very process of answering, I find the recurring nature in those questions or put those elements into a tripartite relationship and create a situated answer. Answer–question is situated in the material conditions, the constellation of elements of identifications, and the reconfiguration into digital video, specific to each chapter.

Each chapter attempts to find situated answers and also leaves questions open.

This PhD research as an autobiographical practice reflects on the feeling of alienation I experienced within the unfolding of the 3.11 disasters. It is valid only as a cultural experience analysed and accounted for from a Japanese diasporic perspective. It neither encompasses nor represents the nation.

The remainder of this introduction consists of three parts.

Part 1 introduces methodologies. The nature of auto-ethnographic research employs the duality of the researcher being both the researched and the researching as methodology. In the case of this research, the duality of the artist-researcher is actively employed. We look at the different phases of this employment in the materialisation of this research and how it structures this research and this written component of the thesis. A strategy of intimacy and opacity emerges as one such methodology and aesthetics practised both in the written component and in the research-led studio-practice.

Part 2 considers theories and backgrounds relevant to the enquiry of this research: the identification of the nation with speed and its variations, and explains why such an enquiry needs to be examined from the aspect of the periphery. The detailed enquiries of each chapter are also introduced in terms of the use of digital video in studio-practice. The definition of digital video within this research is also explained.

Part 3 conceptualises the realm of sight. The realm of sight is, for this research, defined broadly as a site of contemplation on society through a camera. Since the foremost orientation of this research is the production of artwork, the enquiry of this research discussed in part 2 is manifested within the perception of sight. Part 3 characterises this research that encompasses sociology, photojournalism, and philosophy from this

perspective. At the end of part 3, various art and film works that have informed and shaped this research are introduced.

# 1

## **Auto-ethnography**

Carolyn Ellis et al. define auto-ethnography as “an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyse (*graphy*) personal experience (*auto*) in order to understand cultural experience (*ethno*)”.<sup>5</sup> Through this perspective this practice-based research investigates identification of the nation (cultural experience) from a post-3.11 perspective through the production of digital video and photography. Within this framework of examination the third-person reference of myself, the artist-researcher of auto-ethnography, as the investigative force, parallels the first-person narrative of a female member of the Japanese diaspora using autobiographical reflections. Auto-ethnography first and foremost encompasses the researcher within his or her research subject. The duality of the position, being both the researcher and the researched, becomes the paramount element of the methodology.

In this framework of auto-ethnographic positioning of the self as a research subject and as the investigative force, I position and analyse myself within the cultural, political, and economic constructions of the periphery and decentre the hegemony by elevating the periphery through the production of digital video, image, aesthetics, and knowledge. The camera of the artist-researcher is directed at moments of fragility, loss, flux, and change in post-3.11 Japan and examines these within the realm of sight that digital video creates. Digital video, hence, emerges as a triangulated medium of methodology, contemplation, and material embodiment within the practice-based, auto-ethnographic research into the identification of the nation in the post-war to post-3.11 era.

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<sup>5</sup> Carolyn Ellis, Tony E. Adams, and Arthur P. Bochner, “‘Autoethnography: An Overview’ Forum”, *Qualitative Social Research*. Volume 12, No. 1. 2011.

## The Politics of Knowledge and Representation

Catherine Russell, in her book *Experimental Ethnography: The Work of Film in the Age of Video* (1999), sees ethnography as “an experimental practice in which aesthetics and cultural theory are combined in a constantly evolving formal combination”.<sup>6</sup> This interrelation between aesthetics and cultural theory unfolds the scope of the politics of knowledge and representation in this practice-based, auto-ethnographic research.

With her concerns in documenting culture, she argues that ethnography, as a branch of anthropology, often implies a regime of veracity with the much taken-for-granted notion of realism. Hence, “Ethnographic film theory and criticism are an ongoing discussion of issues of objectivity, subjectivity, realism, narrative structure, and ethical questions of representation.”<sup>7</sup> This research examines these issues outlined by Russell through the realm of sight manifested by the studio-practice works of digital video. As digital video within this enquiry is the tripartite medium of methodology, contemplation, and material embodiment, the realm of sight is not only a site of contemplation but also a site of operation and materialisation through corporeality (the gaze or the act of seeing and looking) and aesthetics/cultural theory. This raises the question of whom the knowledge is produced for, and where the locations of the production and consumption of knowledge are, as ethnography often divides the locations of production and consumption.

When Russell published her book in 1999, the films that she discussed had a limited audience and were labelled as “marginal film practice”, “experimental cinema”, and “culture” within western academia.<sup>8</sup> With Internet technology improving access to information, the sense of a *distanced* cultural Other might have been dismissed radically on such daily informational levels. As Russell states, “critical distance and geographical distance were important criteria for modernist aesthetics and anthropological representation. Postmodernity entails a collapse of these distances”, and goes on to say, “the distance between signified and signifier closes down, and a new realism of identity politics emerges”.<sup>9</sup> Her statement, made in the context of postmodernity and post-colonialism specific to the 1990s in the West, now appears overly simplified as the topological constellation of distance in today’s world is rather more subtle and intricate. I would argue that the continuity and complicity of colonialism, Eurocentrism, and racism exist today, and representation is first and foremost a site where these operations are concealed and reproduced.

In this research I use both “the Other” (capitalised) and “the other” (uncapitalised) to distinguish my usage of the established sense of the Other.<sup>10</sup> For example, in the context of

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<sup>6</sup> Catherine Russell, *Experimental Ethnography: The Work of Film in the Age of Video*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999. p. 14.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>10</sup> See Edward Said, *Orientalism*, New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1979, and *Culture and Imperialism*, New York, NY: Knopf, 1993, and Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. by Hazel E. Barnes, New York, NY: Washington Square Press, 1993.



subaltern subject groups, political scientist Kuan-Hsing Chen, a major reference in chapter 3, states from a perspective of critical syncretism that “‘others’ refers not just to racial, ethnic, and national categories but also includes class, sex, and gender, and geographical positions”.<sup>11</sup> Being cognisant of this plurality as described by Chen, this thesis aims to explore the subtleties and intricacies of relationships between the boundary of self and other through art, and the boundary is not always clear. Therefore, I use “the other” in order to dissociate with any one established distinction of the Other and to embrace complexity.

The assumption of postmodernity as a collapse of distances is today invalid. The Internet, a means for time–space compression, in Russell’s words “collapse of these distances”, is today pejoratively referred to as the “Splinternet”.<sup>12</sup> The term refers to the Internet as split, regionalised, and nationalised, rather not mutual and reciprocal. As the amount of cross-border data grows larger, the Internet is drawn towards fragmentation through data localisation as data seen as resource. Digital video from this context as data is itself flux and change, crossing borders, being subject to privacy protection and government surveillance, and being circulated on the platforms of giant technology companies.<sup>13</sup>

## Location

The drifting nature of the mobility of the artist-researcher described in the vignettes in this introduction and the following chapters, manifested in the first person narratives of mobility between the Asian centres and the Japanese peripheries, creates layers of space infusing the texts, post-colonial, intimate, and opaque. In this context of the politics of knowledge and representation, her drifting mobility is metaphorical in thinking whom knowledge is produced for and where the locations of the production and consumption of knowledge are. Her drifting mobility remaps Japan within Asia. It is a contemporary delineation of these Asian metropolises by the first-person narrative of the autobiographical reflections and is a map of the various locations of home true to an Asian diaspora in the age of globalisation after the 1980s. The fluidity decentres the hegemony of the colonial construction of a mapped Asia from the Western perspective. The ex-British colonial spaces of Singapore and Hong Kong are also World War II sites of Japanese aggression in 1942 and 1941. The hotel in downtown Singapore in the opening vignette, for example, overlooks the statue of Stamford Raffles, the British colonial ruler, and the city named after him. The contamination of colonial and local names constitutes the cityscape of contemporary Singapore. Singapore is also where Ozu – whose work I later discuss – was stationed as a war filmmaker. The contemporary delineation of the ex-colonial space of historical Singapore is juxtaposed with the contemporary locations of home for the Asian diaspora. The texts of the vignettes offer a map, a situated form of knowledge of these personal locations of home, which at the same time informs the political, economic, cultural, and historical interrelations of the

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<sup>11</sup> Kuan-Hsing Chen, *Asia as Method: Toward Deimperialization*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000. p. 99.

<sup>12</sup> “割れるインターネット 米中逆転の情報勢力図” [“Splinter Net”], Nikkei, 23 November 2020. <<https://vdata.nikkei.com/newsgraphics/splinternet/>>.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

region and the technology of mobility and communication. The intimate details and opaque intricacies in the texts of the vignettes, as we will see in the next section, are the practice of an aesthetic.

Through the various engagements with the politics of knowledge and representation in the thesis, I refer to and build a post-colonial orientation on a theoretical framework derived from the works of Tsunehisa Abe, Kuan-Hsing Chen, Stef Craps, Georges Didi-Huberman, Okwui Enwezor, Frantz Fanon, Tadao Furumaya, Édouard Glissant, Kenji Higuchi, Hiroshi Kainuma, Yoshimichi Nakajima, Kota Nezu, Shuntaro Ono, Tetsuya Takahashi, Trinh T. Minh-ha, Lorna Simpson, Alexis Peskine, and Lee Wen. Several of the Japanese texts discussed have not been translated into English. The translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

Artists' and authors' names in this thesis in the English language are presented in the most commonly recognised formats for English-speaking readers. The title of each artwork or film to which this research refers is written in the script of the original language and also translated into English. Therefore, titles in languages other than English are given in the original languages. However, considering the difficulty of reading the Japanese script for the expected majority of the readers of this thesis, the English translations of titles are used for Japanese works after the second mention of their titles.

A decentring practice is also evidenced in the location of the production of knowledge in this research. Except for a year spent in London, a centre, under a training programme funded by the Japanese government, this research has been produced in the Japanese peripheries of Fukushima, Niigata, and Okinawa, and online. I chose the mode of study as online distance-learning with Kingston University. This research is, hence, not only an instance of research into peripherality, but also a *practice* of allowing the periphery to emerge from its subjugated, marginalised, and exploited position in the politics of knowledge and representation.

### **The Aesthetics of Intimacy and Opacity**

We have seen that the practice of decentring is a notable characteristic of this thesis, reflected in the aesthetics of the studio-practice and this written component. In this section we look at the aesthetics of intimacy and opacity within the politics of knowledge and representation.

On intellect, Shoshana Rosenberg and Hannah Reardon-Smith state that “much of the contemporary western sociopolitical landscape has been shaped by ways of thinking and doing that place high value on the notion of objectivity”.<sup>14</sup> This objectivist view of the world is driven for finding truth. Truth is “formed with a particular set of bodies, practices and ways of thinking in mind, dictated by the ‘common sense’ of the time and place”.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Shoshana Rosenberg and Hannah Reardon-Smith, “Of Body, of Emotion: A Toolkit for Transformative Sound Use”, *TEMPO* 74 (292) 64–73, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020. p. 65.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

“Therefore, bodies, practices and ways of thinking that exist outside of this ‘common sense’ are inevitably Othered, leading to exclusion, marginalisation and victimisation.”<sup>16</sup>

Rosenberg and Reardon-Smith argue against objectivism and its exclusivist characteristic as a location of power. The dualism in this research also functions to refute the dominant power designation. The aesthetics of intimacy and opacity is an example of resistance against the dominant designation in knowledge and representation, a dominance of “transparency” in philosopher Édouard Glissant’s words.<sup>17</sup>

The aesthetics of intimacy and opacity is a product of the critical uses of the duality: the oscillation and destabilisation of the boundary between the two oppositional positionalities and the resistance against the hegemony, the dominant power designation. It is an aesthetics originated and politicised from the sense of intimacy and opacity experienced in the production of digital video in the three Japanese peripheries of Fukushima, Niigata, and Okinawa. Through this aestheticisation of the sense of intimacy and opacity as a form of resistance, the periphery aesthetically emerges from its subjugated, marginalised, and sacrificed position. Both the studio-practice and this written component are not a report of fieldwork research, the production of an objective transparent truth, but an aesthetic practice of decentring the dominance of the objectification and transparency and accommodating intimacy and opacity. It centres the artist.

In her argument on the seemingly closed distance of postmodernity, Russell refers to “unknowability”.<sup>18</sup> In her framework of argument, unknowability is aligned in the following way: “The uncanniness of the Other in representation is the knowledge of its unknowability, the knowledge that to see is not, after all, to know.” Although she goes on to say, “from that unknowability unfolds a resistance in and of representation”, and seems to accept the concept of opacity claimed by philosopher Édouard Glissant.<sup>19</sup> Coming from the former French colony of Martinique, Glissant’s concept of opacity is shaped by his experience of the post-colonial transcultural and globalised context of the 1980s and 1990s and argues against the prevailing sense of knowability. He states:

There still exist centers of domination, but it is generally acknowledged that there are no exclusive, lofty realms of learning or metropolises of knowledge left standing. Henceforward, this knowledge, composed of abstract generality and linked to the spirit of conquest and discovery, has the presence of human cultures in their solid materiality superimposed upon it. And knowledge, or at least the epistemology we produce for ourselves from it, has been changed by this. Its transparency, in fact, its legitimacy is no longer based on a Right.<sup>20</sup>

Glissant conceptualises transparency and opacity:

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Édouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, trans. Betsy Wing, Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1997.

<sup>18</sup> Russell, *ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>19</sup> Glissant, *ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 111.

Transparency no longer seems like the bottom of the mirror in which Western humanity reflected the world in its own image. There is opacity now at the bottom of the mirror, a whole alluvium deposited by populations, silt that is fertile but, in actual fact, indistinct and unexplored even today, denied or insulted more often than not, and with an insistent presence that we are incapable of not experiencing.<sup>21</sup>

“The right to opacity” is an ethical and political claim against the reductive and transparency-imposing force of the dominant culture.<sup>22</sup> Glissant also states that “difference itself can still contrive to reduce things to the Transparent”.<sup>23</sup> In this thesis, I use the word translucency to connote the same meaning as transparency in Glissant’s sense.

Marxist philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy, in his *After Fukushima: The Equivalence of Catastrophes* (2014), argues that the quantification of disasters leads to the notion of their being exchangeable and comparable, dismissing their non-equivalent nature. Citing Marx’s conception of exchangeability, Nancy states:

The word *value* should not make us think of those idealist entities that were and for some still are ‘values’, those fetishes, reductions of meanings called ‘homeland’ or ‘honor,’ ‘justice’ or ‘family,’ ‘man’ or ‘care.’ Meaning here is reduced, since it is fixed in place, registered, represented – and these representations are precisely the reified residue of the loss of meaning that takes place in the endless fluxes of equivalence.<sup>24</sup>

Nancy says this reduction is “the law of our civilisation”.<sup>25</sup> He further states:

The incalculable is calculated as general equivalence. This also means that the incalculable is the calculation itself, that of money and at the same time, by a profound solidarity, that of ends and means, that of ends without end, that of producers and products, that of technologies and profits, that of profits and creations, and so on.<sup>26</sup>

Chapter 2 particularly investigates the reductive representations of family and solidarity in post-3.11 Japan within Nancy’s observations on the notion of incommensurability in the calculation. He comments on the nuclear accident of the 3.11 disasters in terms of the incommensurability:

The incommensurability of the same and the other cannot be related to the incalculability of what challenges our power to decide. No one can truly calculate the consequences of Fukushima, for humans, for the region, the earth, the streams, and the sea, for the energy economy of Japan, for calling into question, abandoning, or

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 111.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 189.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 189.

<sup>24</sup> Jean-Luc Nancy, *After Fukushima: The Equivalence of Catastrophes*, New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2014. pp. 31–32.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

increasing control of nuclear reactors all over the world, and thus for the energy economy worldwide. But all this is incalculable because it challenges the capacities of calculation whereas, at the same time, what we plan or project remains within the order of calculation, even if it is out of our reach.<sup>27</sup>

Nancy further states that “The incommensurable is of a different nature: It is not even involved in the order of calculation; it opens onto the absolute distance and difference of what is other.”<sup>28</sup> From this point, the notion of the incommensurability is similar to the transparency in Glissant’s concept of opacity. It also refutes the notion of knowable in the objectivism of intellect. The aesthetics of intimacy and opacity that I practice here reject the force of reduction, namely equivalation, objectivism and transparency. Hence the concepts of the irreducibility, the incommensurability, and the unknowability emerge as paramount in the aesthetics of intimacy and opacity.

The readers of this thesis, therefore, will experience the intimacy and opacity of the lived experience of art making as a form of aesthetics at various phases: from examination to materialisation, and from the production of digital video to text. Rosenberg and Reardon-Smith suggest:

Frameworks of intellect leak into every aspect of western society, including the sonic arts. This *sound use* of intellect reflects its parent framework, supplanting the ‘messiness’ of sound users’ lived experiences, and their interactions with the wider sonic ecosystem, for technical and hyper-intellectualised content which seeks ‘objective’ value.<sup>29</sup>

The aesthetics of intimacy and opacity is a resistance against the kind of supplanting described by Rosenberg and Reardon-Smith. The aesthetics of intimacy and opacity respects the lived experience of the known/researched/represented and acts from their position. As emphasised, this written component is *not* a presentation of research outcomes but is a practice of exercising the aesthetics. In the remaining paragraphs in this section, we look at examples of various phases where the aesthetics is exercised and what the reader should expect.

As the writer of my own artworks, I deliberately leave the intimacy and opacity in the text, and the employment of visual images in this thesis as an artwork leaves space for the audience and does not objectively explain what it is, how it should be felt, and why it would be felt in that way. It does not answer these questions for the audience. Katy Macleod and Lin Holdridge also comment on the nature of art within the frame of the PhD academic degree in their *Thinking through Art: Reflections on Art as Research*, stating that “artworks should not be merely illustrative to the written text”.<sup>30</sup> Citing Christopher Frayling’s

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>29</sup> Rosenberg and Reardon-Smith, *ibid.*, p. 64.

<sup>30</sup> Katy Macleod and Lin Holdridge, “Introduction”, in *Thinking through Art: Reflections on Art as Research*, ed. Katy Macleod and Lin Holdridge. London: Routledge, 2013, p. 3.

influential concept of “research for art” from his “Research in Art and Design”, they conceptualise “research *as* art”. Frayling defines “research for art” as:

Where the end product is an artefact – where the thinking is, so to speak, *embedded in the artefact*, where the goal is not communicable knowledge in the sense of verbal communication, but in the sense of iconic or imagistic communication.<sup>31</sup>

From this perspective of “research for/as art”, the aesthetics of intimacy and opacity respects the nature of art, and this research, the end product of the studio-practice and this written text, embodies the aesthetics of intimacy and opacity *as art*.

From this point, we will look again at the relationship between the nature of art and the written text in part 3. Part 3 at the end of this introduction discusses how this thesis entwines the studio-practice and this written text within the realm of sight to conceive the terminology of this thesis at the tension of visibility–invisibility (the unknowability). In the procedural level of presentation, the visual images of the artworks of studio-practice are not provided with full captions and respect the characteristic of the non-illustrative relation between artworks and text. Therefore, each chapter also refrains from illustrating the artworks and confines the descriptions to theoretical coalescence.

## **Waiting Room**

However, this thesis offers Waiting Room, an intermediate section between chapters. In this space, I write as an artist on my own artworks, preoccupations, and processes of thinking and production. This intermediate space also offers a bilateral relation between chapters from the perspective of the evolvement of studio-practice, highlighting the process and the interrelation between my art production and society. Waiting Room appears three times and can be read on its own separately from the chapters. Waiting Room centres the artist’s lived experience of making art within this PhD research.

Tied to the act of waiting as a negative virtue in the apotheosis of speed in our culture, Waiting Room embodies an irreducible space between the chains of the productions of art the artist spends time on. The readers of this thesis are theatrically involved in this intermediate text of Waiting Room, where they are made to wait. It embodies a disruptive space in between the chapters, an opaque space in the translucency of deciphering art as a research subject, and an artist’s studio that centres the lived experience of the art production against the canon of intellect, logic, and Truth. Waiting Room presents the irreducible details of the art production as the knowledge of the unknowability. With such participation, tension, and aesthetics being embodied by Waiting Room, this PhD thesis employs and unfolds on this doubled modality of writing.

This employment of the multimodality of writing is transferred to the visual images of studio-practice accompanying this written component. This PhD research respects the

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<sup>31</sup> Christopher Frayling, “Research in Art and Design”, Royal College of Art Research Papers, Vol. 1. No. 1 pp. 1–5, 1993/4, p. 5.

aesthetics of digital video, the original format of the studio-practice, and presents these works of digital video in a form as close as possible to the aesthetics of the original medium within the constraints of the PDF format viewed on screen. Therefore, readers are required to change viewing settings if necessary. Instructions will appear before the visual sections at the start in each chapter. In this regard, the digital video is an essential format to access and watch in order to appreciate the totality of this thesis and its aesthetics.

### **Autobiography and *Jimoto***

This last section of part 1 introduces an example of the exercise of the aesthetics of intimacy and opacity in the use of terminology. The following example, *jimoto*, illustrates how the aesthetics can be exercised in the duality of positionality as a researcher in post-3.11 autobiographical production of knowledge and image.

*Jimoto* (地元) refers to hometown. This particular use is deliberately contrasted with other translations for hometown, *kokyo* or *furusato*,<sup>32</sup> which are often in use as literature and marketing terms in Japanese and in English translation. *Kokyo* or *furusato* is often discussed in academia as a subject to be investigated insofar as it might project nostalgia, a national psychology, or ideology. In representation, *kokyo* or *furusato* are brought onto the terrain of translucency which will be further examined in the representation of hometown in the context of globalisation and conservatism in chapter 2. *Jimoto*, on the other hand, in political and economic contexts, draws the boundary of self and other, reflecting positionality and the degree of involvement. For example, *jimoto* of nuclear power plants and military bases are complex groups of people constituted by differences. Highlighting differences, this complexity avoids the generalisation and reductionism that outsiders tend to apply to understand them. I do not intend to suggest that either the academics or artists I introduce, or myself, refer to their own hometown as *jimoto*. It is a politicised use of a terminology aligned to the aesthetics of intimacy and opacity and distinguishes itself from the conventional use of hometown. Hence, unless needed in specific contexts to highlight the politicised meanings, I use the word hometown.

Takahashi and Kainuma, whose works inform the theoretical framework of post-colonial sociological enquiry in this thesis, are from Fukushima. These Fukushima-born academics start their arguments with an autobiographical introduction, although their final conclusions have no overt emotive aspect. However, autobiography is never just an entry point in the works of Naoya Hatakeyama, a Rikuzen-Takada-born photographer, as he continues to observe himself from *jimoto* as a first person, I. The collapse of the familiarity he faced in his hometown is unignorablely visualised and spatialised in front of the photographer as the post-3.11 landscape of his *jimoto* and in the “rediscovered” photographs. *Jimoto* for Hatakeyama is his hometown of a non-equivalent nature in Nancy’s sense, under the damage of the 3.11 disasters that cannot be quantified.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Both *kokyo* and *furusato* are written as 故郷 in Kanji (漢字), the logographic Chinese characters.

<sup>33</sup> Nancy, *ibid.*

Hatakeyama, born in 1958, is an established photographer internationally known for his decades of conceptual works. His hometown, Rikuzen-Takada in Iwate, was swallowed up by the tsunami, which resulted in 1,800 deaths, close to 10 per cent of the city's total population.<sup>34</sup> His acknowledged conceptual practice of photography faced a fundamental change at this critical point of his photographic career upon the devastation of his hometown and the death of his mother. He comments on this significant watershed in an interview; "My practice had never come from the context of photographic practices that respond to where I was born, how I have grown up, or what my relational identities are. After 11 March, 2011, it had to be changed."<sup>35</sup>

His photographic practice, contextualised in the de-materialism and conceptualism of late-twentieth-century art history, turned into an autobiographical practice and took him back to his own hometown. His post-3.11 photographic works juxtapose images of the town photographed before and after the tsunami. These photographs of *jimoto* before the tsunami, he says, were never meant to be shown to the public as art works. Upon his rediscovery of the unintentional documentations of *jimoto*, he states that "the meanings of those photographs had changed since 11 March, 2011" and "those random photographs taken without much thought have become the evidence that proves the existence of daily living, which now has been lost, in the past".<sup>36</sup>

In parallel to Hatakeyama's fundamental shift to an autobiographical preoccupation in his professional practice, the 3.11 disasters have made many Japanese people profoundly reflect upon themselves in terms of the continuity and discontinuity of life before and after March 11, 2011, negotiating their experiences, the degrees of their involvement, and their occupational callings.<sup>37</sup>

This research does not aim to investigate the autobiographical nature of enquiry in reflecting on the 3.11 disasters. However, as *jimoto* and hometown nuance, the duality of the positionality of the researcher and artist in the post-3.11 autobiographical production of knowledge and image suggests the deliberate space between knowability and unknowability, and objectivity and subjectivity. This space also exists in this thesis: between the autobiographical voice of the first-person narratives of *I* in the vignettes and the academic voices of *I* and *the artist-researcher*, and between the chapters and Waiting Room. It is a deliberate space of irreducibility, incommensurability, and unknowability,

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<sup>34</sup> Naoya Hatakeyama, "パーソナルランドスケープ 震災の記憶の共有は可能か"["Personal Landscape: Can We Share the Memory of the Disaster?"], interviewed by Majella Munro, in Asia-Pacific, Mori Art Museum and Tate Research Centre, *トラウマとユートピア 戦後から現代におけるアジア美術の相互関* [Trauma and Utopia: Interaction in Post-War and Contemporary Art in Asia], Tokyo: Mori Art Museum, 2015. pp. 114–121, p. 120.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 115.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 115.

<sup>37</sup> Besides Hatakeyama, Takahashi, and Kainuma introduced here, see also Kazumi Saeki, *震災と言葉* [Disaster and Word], Tokyo: Iwanami-shoten, 2012, and Atsushi Sasaki, *シチュエーションズ「以後」をめぐって* [Situations: On 'Post'], Tokyo: Bungei-shunju, 2013, and Tatsuya Mori, Takeharu Watai, Yoju Matsubayashi, and Takaharu Yasuoka, *311 を撮る* [Shooting 311], Tokyo: Iwanami-shoten, 2012.



where the sense of intimacy and opacity dwells and which underlies the structure of this written component. This deliberate space, the duality of the representing and the represented, is an exercise and practice of the aesthetics of intimacy and opacity.

We have looked at the core framework of this research grounded in the politics of knowledge and representation. The critical use of duality is employed not only to expose the dominant designation of power through observation, representation, and seeing, but as a practice to decentre the dominance. In this decentring practice, the duality of the artist-researcher establishes the aesthetics of intimacy and opacity and its prominence in the different phases characterising this research. The next section discusses the centre–periphery structure in which the artist-researcher of auto-ethnography is positioned and produces digital video through the coalescence of cultural, political, economic, and post-colonial theories.

## 2

### **Context**

Part 2 discusses the structure of this thesis from the following two perspectives. The first is the context of this research, in which I am auto-ethnographically positioned as the artist-researcher. The second is the theoretical thread that runs through the three chapters of this thesis. By doing so, it delineates the three chapters of Fukushima, Niigata, and Okinawa within the theoretical structure of this research. We also briefly look at the centre–periphery structure in Japan from a post-3.11 perspective for those who are not familiar with it.

This research sets out to examine the identification of the nation with growth through the production and aesthetics of digital video from a post-3.11 perspective. The identification of the nation with growth is a cultural narrative that is imagined and performed and is also a constitutive part of the grand narrative of growth. The grand narrative of growth is a narrative that starts from the ashes of World War II, a success story of the defeated nation. Power production and national security have two important aspects for the centralist: they are indispensable for the constitution of national sovereignty and necessary prerequisites

for the attainment of growth.<sup>38</sup> Under the centralist's logic of "the division of labour", these facilities were installed in the periphery: nuclear power plants (NPPs) in Fukushima and Niigata, and the US military bases in Okinawa.<sup>39</sup>

Fukushima and Niigata share the eastern–western border and host NPPs run by the Tokyo Electric Power Corporation (TEPCO). Fukushima and Niigata are the electricity providers that distribute electric power to the greater Tokyo area through a national monopoly. TEPCO is one of the ten vertically integrated general electricity utilities in the country.<sup>40</sup> From this perspective, Fukushima and Niigata in particular remain in the same periphery position in relation to the electricity consumer of the greater Tokyo area, the centre, as the electricity providers. In the contemporary context, both Fukushima and Niigata are considered as periphery in the general sense as a result of centralisation: they are confronted by population decrease and consequent social impoverishment. The issues arising include an ageing society, decreasing agriculture, insufficient tax income, and the threat of community extinction. However, these two chapters about Fukushima and Niigata are dedicated to enquiries that evolve in different ways from each other.

In contrast to Fukushima and Niigata, Okinawa was once an independent kingdom. It was colonised by Japan in 1879, and now hosts the United States' military bases under the Japan–US Security Alliance. Okinawa has as much as 70% of the total number of US installations in Japan. Okinawa also went through a period of US military occupation from 1945 until 1972, during which it was excluded from the period of rapid growth in the Japanese post-war economy.<sup>41</sup>

Although the three chapters unfold in different political and economic contexts as the location of the production of studio-practice, *You Saw Nothing in Fukushima*, *Family Story*, and *I Told Our Story*, Fukushima, Niigata, and Okinawa are all *chiho* (地方), a peripheral status within the Tokyo-centric contemporary political and economic structure of Japan. The construction of the periphery, as we have seen, is conceptualised by the theory of the system of sacrifice by Tetsuya Takahashi.

In the years immediately following the 3.11 disasters, Fukushima and Okinawa were frequently coupled as victims of Tokyo-centric Japan. This coupling was made by Tetsuya Takahashi, the journalist Tsuyoshi Watanabe,<sup>42</sup> and photographer Ari Hatsuzawa. Takahashi,

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<sup>38</sup> The centralist is defined by the positionality determined in the system of sacrifice as theorised by Takahashi.

<sup>39</sup> The division of labour in this context of centre–periphery refers to the terminology used by historian Tadao Furumaya.

<sup>40</sup> The step-by-step liberalisation of the energy market started with the 1995 reform of opening the market to independent power producers. Since 2013, in the course of the post-3.11 system reform measures, the cross-regional transmission and distribution, the full retail competition, and the legal unbundling of transmission–distribution sectors was aimed to be fully completed by 2020 (Electricity Market Reform Office Agency for Natural Resources and Energy (ANRE), Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, 2014).

<sup>41</sup> See Cabinet Office

<[https://www.esri.cao.go.jp/jp/sna/data/data\\_list/kenmin/files/contents/main\\_68sna\\_s30.html](https://www.esri.cao.go.jp/jp/sna/data/data_list/kenmin/files/contents/main_68sna_s30.html)>.

<sup>42</sup> He is the journalist who interviewed Tatsuru Uchida, Eiji Oguma, Hiroshi Kainuma, Shinichi Sano, Shyuji Shimizu, Yoshinori Hiroi, and Yo Henmi for *Okinawa Times*, an Okinawan local newspaper, in a newspaper column titled "国策を問う" ["Questioning National Policy"], from December 2011 to July 2012. These

in particular, conceptualised it as the system of sacrifice, referring to it as the institutionalised system. Within his argument, Fukushima and Okinawa are similarly embedded on the side of the sacrificed. His argument has been criticised, however, as dismissing the differences in the historical development of the two sacrifices, as he himself admits.<sup>43</sup>

Takahashi's concept of sacrifice shares concerns with his earlier works on the Yasukuni Shinto Shrine as a system to legitimate the sacrifice of life during the war period in Japan.<sup>44</sup> He defines the system of sacrifice as follows:

in the system of sacrifice, one's benefit is produced and maintained by others' sacrifice of their life, health, everyday living, assets, dignity, and hope etc. The benefit accrued to the centre is never produced or maintained without the sacrifice imposed on the sacrificed. The sacrifice is normally either concealed or glorified as a holy sacrifice by the community, such as the nation state, nation, society, and corporations etc.<sup>45</sup>

The exploitative relationship between the sacrificing and the sacrificed lies behind the nation's electricity production, in Fukushima, and national security, in Okinawa. In the three main chapters, this research employs Takahashi's theory of the system of sacrifice to frame the centre and the periphery in relation to the attainment of growth, and rephrases his definition for this enquiry as follows: "one's benefit" as *the post-war growth*,<sup>46</sup> "the sacrificing" as *the centre*, and "the sacrificed" as *the periphery*.

In the system of sacrifice I employ, *the post-war growth* is produced and maintained by *the periphery's* sacrifice of its life, health, everyday living, assets, dignity, and hope etc. The benefit accrued to *the centre* is never produced or maintained without the sacrifice imposed on *the periphery*. The sacrifice is normally either concealed or glorified as a holy sacrifice by the community, such as the nation state, nation, society, and corporations etc.

## Chapter Structure

Grounded in the above definition of Takahashi's theory of the system of sacrifice, this research examines economic growth, in particular the post-war growth, from the sacrificed

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interviews were published as a book, *この国はどこで間違えたのか 沖縄と福島から見た日本* [Where Did This Country Go Wrong: The View of Japan from Okinawa and Fukushima], Tokyo: Tokuma-shoten in 2012.

<sup>43</sup> Tetsuya Takahashi, *犠牲のシステム 福島・沖縄* [The System of Sacrifice: Fukushima and Okinawa], Tokyo: Shueisya-shinsho, 2012. pp. 197–198.

<sup>44</sup> For this argument, see Tetsuya Takahashi, *国家と犠牲* [The Nation State and Sacrifice], Tokyo: NHK Books, 2005.

<sup>45</sup> Takahashi, *ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>46</sup> The post-war growth of Japan in general refers to the period of rapid growth from the mid 1950s to the early 1970s consisting of subordinated categories of growth and decline periods. The authors in the fields of culture and economics whom I cite discuss the post-war growth from the perspectives of their own respective fields and define it critically. This research concerns the specificities and details of the post-war growth of Japan, rather than post-war growth as a more general international and historical socioeconomic phenomenon.

periphery of Fukushima, Niigata, and Okinawa. The centralist doctrine for the post-war growth accelerated centralisation and left the periphery in a sacrificed and impoverished position. The example of the light and shadow of growth is symbolic in the electricity production and national security as both are considered indispensable for the constitution of national sovereignty. The narrative of growth and the light of the post-war growth conceals its dark shadow, the sacrifice, that it cast over the periphery, the providers of electricity and national security.

The identification of the nation that this research is led to investigate focuses on historical moments of fragility, loss, flux, and change. It is a moment when a narrative is required to identify the nation.

The 3.11 disasters, as one such example, exposed fragility, with the nation thrown into flux and change, loss and uncertainty. This fragile moment that the nation faced after the 3.11 disasters included an economic recession. As the grand narrative of growth starts from the ashes of the World War II, the post-war growth attained from the initial poverty is an identification of the nation. This identification rejects the war defeat as a disidentification of the nation. Kuan-Hsing Chen uses the term disidentification, in the psychoanalytic context of the colonial identification referred to by Frantz Fanon.<sup>47</sup> The theoretical threads of the arguments of each chapter are teased out within the processes of reidentification and disidentification, which assume the existence of a prior identification. The threads of national sovereignty and ideology that we will focus on weave a narrative of an identification, reidentification, and disidentification of the nation. In the following paragraphs, we look at the threads of enquiries that provide theoretical coherence to the chapters.

The post-war growth is equal to the affluence and prosperity that stabilised post-war Japanese society. The developmental state that allowed the high-growth period from the recovery phase of 1956 until 1974 shifted to become a neoliberal state in the tightened competition and the flux of globalisation.<sup>48</sup> Chapters 1 and 2, on Fukushima and Niigata, encompassing the shift from the growth period to the post-growth period, are formulated from this perspective of economic power. Chapter 3 views Okinawa from another perspective, one of national sovereignty as masculinity in a colonial constellation.

Chapter 1: Fukushima and Chapter 2: Niigata share the examination of the post-war growth and centralisation, remaining in the same contemporary position within the framework of this research. Firstly, we set a premise of the identification of the nation with growth and establish the semiotics of speed at the beginning of chapter 1. In the semiotics of speed, the premise of the identification with growth is examined through speed, the forward movement of digital video. In this chapter, we employ semiotics to examine the identification with growth/speed from post-growth and post-3.11 perspectives through the studio-practice work of the digital video *You Saw Nothing in Fukushima*. On the aesthetic

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<sup>47</sup> Chen, *ibid.*, pp. 99, 177–178.

<sup>48</sup> The Developmental State was first conceptualised by Chalmers Johnson. For further details, see his *MITI and the Japanese Miracle: The Growth of Industrial Policy, 1925–1975*, Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 1982.

level of this examination, the semiotics of speed elaborates an aesthetics of *slow-down* within the forward movement of digital video, an aesthetic form of the post-growth and post-3.11 examination. *Slow-down* is a term I use to convey a specific meaning regarding the semiotics of speed.

In chapter 2, we continue this aesthetic examination through the studio-practice *Family Story*, and apply it to the processes of post-war growth and centralisation in relation to Niigata as *ura-nihon* (裏日本), as behind the developed urban and industrial region of the Pacific side of Japan. *Ura-nihon*, a Japanese term referring to the centre–periphery structure, with discriminatory undertones that was banned in the 1960s, is a relevant concept to add at this point in the enquiry.

We also conduct a discourse analysis on an advertisement campaign, *東京新潟物語 (TOKYO–NIIGATA Story, 2011–2019)*. Through the discourse analysis, we examine how the post-3.11 nation reidentified with speed, a recovery of the prior identification. On the other hand, *Family Story* extends slow-down of the semiotics of speed into stillness, a further deaccelerated state, within the forward movement of digital video.

This establishment of the semiotics of speed is grounded in the premise of digital video as an aesthetic embodiment of time–space compression. Time–space compression is a concept based on Karl Marx’s idea of the annihilation of space by time. The use of the term in this thesis is based on the economic context that conceptualises the necessity of compressing space by time by means of the technology of transportation and communication for the sake of faster accumulation and turnover.<sup>49</sup> The semiotics of speed is, hence, the coalescence of the economic concept of time–space compression into the aesthetics of digital video in an examination of the apotheosis of growth. Speed signifies the drive for acceleration, accumulation, advancement, development, and growth. The linearity of speed is velocity, which is the forward movement of digital video in the aesthetic coalescence in the semiotics of speed. Chapters 1 and 2 provide detailed examinations of speed as an identification of the nation and examine each of its variations.

Digital video is itself also an embodiment of time–space compression. Online video conferencing software and applications have provided us with a normative mode of communication and have compressed space by the speed that information technology embodies. Mobile devices are an indispensable part of the embodiment, allowing us access to information, talking, and sharing of photographs and video with mobility and at a distance. This technology has compressed the space that exists within the family and business, increased speed, and shortened distance. The use of digital video in chapters 1 and 2 is grounded in this wider social context of digital video as information and communications technology (ICT) that has prevailed in our lives, and furthermore in chapter 3 is especially grounded in the currency of the smart phone.

In chapter 1, we refer to Michelangelo Antonioni’s *Zabriskie Point* (1970), a capitalist portrait of the United States at the dawn of the 1970s, and particularly discuss a scene of

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<sup>49</sup> Time–space compression is also a general concept used in transportation and communication technology. Marxist geographer David Harvey developed a geographical reading of *Capital* by Karl Marx.

travelling on the street of an automotive city, Los Angeles, by automobile. This combination of capitalism and transport as a means of time–space compression is re-configured in chapter 2 in terms of the railway. We refer to the rail stories of Ozu’s film *東京物語* (*Tokyo Story*, 1953) and *TOKYO–NIIGATA Story*. We particularly focus on the high-speed railway of *shinkansen*, a geographical economic infrastructure inaugurated in the mid 1960s. Joetsu Shinkansen, operated between Tokyo and Niigata, which is where the advertisements constituting *TOKYO–NIIGATA Story* are site-specifically circulated. *Shinkansen* is a means not only of time–space compression but also of mitigation of uneven development and centralisation.

These technologies of the automobile, high-speed railway, and nuclear energy are all offspring of the twentieth century. It is appropriate to draw an aesthetic from the offspring of the last century to the medium of digital video for the examination of growth in the capitalist economy of Japan from the perspective of the current century and from the periphery. Digital video, therefore, is a medium within the enquiry of this research that encompasses narrowly economic concepts of time–space compression and decentralisation but also more broadly the cultural contemporariness of the medium in communication as well as its sensitivity to speed and slowness. Digital video as ICT is also grounded in the thematised concept of flux and change as its tele-communicational characteristic of reconfiguration of temporal and spatial relations and its rapid currency in our lifestyle embodies flux and change in itself.

Chapter 2 continues the examination of the identification of the nation from chapter 1, evolving into an examination this time of reidentification. Reidentification is required when the identification of the nation is destabilised. In this research, reidentification is the reconfirmation of the prior identification with speed and growth that we examined in chapter 1. We examine the conservative ideologies of family and locality as a projected space of the restoration of the sense of community at moments of social fragility, loss, flux, and change. Chapter 2 introduces various sources in which these conservative ideologies can be observed: *Tokyo Story* (1953), one such moment in post-war Japan, the 2011 Word of the Year, *kizuna* (絆: bond), another such moment in the face of the 3.11 disasters, and *TOKYO–NIIGATA Story* in the wider context of globalisation and post-3.11 Japan. War, disaster, and globalisation are factors that destabilise prior identification and moments in which narrative is required to imagine and perform the identification. These examples produce family and locality, including hometown, in such a way as to represent the desire for stabilisation or the reality of destabilisation. Against this imagined and performed family as the terrain of translucency, *Family Story* practices the aesthetics of intimacy and opacity and produces a portrait of a family within these aesthetics.

Chapter 3: Okinawa undergirds the inter-chapter textuality of the previous chapters to formulate the enquiry from a different location from those in the earlier chapters, namely a former colony. This is to say, we continue the examination of the post-war growth as a factor of national identification from the following two chapters through further critical perspectives: one, an examination of post-war growth from Okinawa as a space excluded

from this growth due to the US military occupation that lasted until 1972; two, an examination of the identification of the nation within the colonial subjectivity of the masculine and the feminine between the United States, Japan, and former Japanese colonies inclusive of Okinawa. This is also a response to the theoretical incapacity that Takahashi is aware of in his own argument, which conceptualises the difference of the sacrifice between Fukushima and Okinawa. The following paragraphs offer a brief history of Okinawa for those who are not familiar with it.

In the modern history of East Asia, Okinawa, culturally rich with its own languages and rituals, was under the influence of successive empires. Prior to the completion of the Japanese annexation in 1879, the islands of the Ryukyu Kingdom unified in 1429, were a vassal state of the Qing Dynasty of the Chinese Empire in a tributary relationship from the fourteenth century until the Japanese annexation. The sovereign status was handed over from China to Japan by the establishment of the Okinawa Prefecture.<sup>50</sup> The island and its people were involved in the Battle of Okinawa during the terminal stage of World War II. Upon the collapse of Imperial Japan in 1945, Okinawa was reconfigured into the Cold War hegemony of the United States under their rule and handed over to Japan in 1972 due to the increased protests.<sup>51</sup> One major difference Takahashi notes is that the installation of the US military bases is ingrained over the colonial histories of the extended imperialisms and their enforcement, whereas the nuclear power plants were lobbied for as described in further detail in chapters 1 and 2. Since Okinawa was not returned to Japanese sovereignty until 1972, it was excluded from the benefits of the high-growth period. In comparison with the Fukushima and Niigata of chapters 1 and 2, Okinawa is also symbolically a space with no automobile manufacturers, high-speed railway, or nuclear power plants due to its demographical, geographical, and economic differences from mainland Japan.<sup>52</sup>

The traumatic defeat and the following US-led Allied occupation are political junctures between the two countries: from wartime enemies to post-war allies. US-based historian Yoshikuni Igarashi calls the cultural device employed to conceal the juncture “foundational narratives”, which often invoked a feminised Japan and the dominant male of the United States as reflecting the power balance between the two countries.<sup>53</sup> The United States was interiorised as the significant other to define the subjectivity of the defeated nation. Chen also describes the United States, due to the culture of US imperialism embedded in East Asia, as the “interiority” or “insider” of the region.<sup>54</sup> The feminisation of Japan within its narrow relation to the United States conceals the historical fact of Japan as the masculine in relation to many Asian countries that Japan colonised and invaded.<sup>55</sup> From these two perspectives referred to in my enquiry, contemporary Okinawa is not simply a contemporary periphery that provides national security by the provision, the sacrifice, of its land for the benefit of the centre and the Tokyo-centric nation, but the concealed location

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<sup>50</sup> See Okinawa Prefectural Archives <[https://www.archives.pref.okinawa.jp/news/that\\_day/4631](https://www.archives.pref.okinawa.jp/news/that_day/4631)>.

<sup>51</sup> Japan recovered its sovereignty in 1952 with the San Francisco Peace Treaty.

<sup>52</sup> See Japan Automobile Manufacturers Association <<http://www.jama.or.jp/industry/>>, The Federation of Electric Power Companies of Japan <<https://www.fepc.or.jp/theme/re-operation/>>, and Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism <[https://www.mlit.go.jp/tetudo/tetudo\\_fr1\\_000041.html](https://www.mlit.go.jp/tetudo/tetudo_fr1_000041.html)>.

<sup>53</sup> Yoshikuni Igarashi, *Bodies of Memory: Narrative of War in Postwar Japanese Culture, 1945–1970*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000. p. 20.

<sup>54</sup> Chen, *ibid.*, pp. 165–166.

<sup>55</sup> Chen, *ibid.*, pp. 31–37, 48–52. Igarashi, *ibid.*, pp. 20–21, 204–205, 210.

of the juncture, the core of the Japanese identification with post-war growth, namely the disidentification with the defeat.

Chapter 3 draws upon these cultural theories of foundational narratives by Igarashi and of interiority by Chen and ties them to an aesthetic of gendering, wherein Japan as the colonising (chapters 1 and 2) refers to the masculine and Okinawa of the colonised (chapter 3) the feminine. This inter-chapter textuality formulates the framework of the investigation into the identification of the nation, in which the embracement and enjoyment of the post-war growth are examined from the long and multi-layered shadow cast over the former colony, Okinawa. Chapter 3, therefore, examines the identification of the nation with masculinity and the disidentification of the nation with femininity within the colonial construction of subjectivity. As a location of the concealed juncture in the identification of the nation, the feminised body of defeated Japan and the re-masculinised body of the economic power of Japan coexist. Here, as in the previous chapters, automobile factories, the high-speed railway, and nuclear energy appear symbolic of the light of growth and of the nation in the narrative, whereas the female body of the artist-researcher appears symbolic of the duality of the colonial identification of Japan.

The three chapters theoretically evolve with each undergirding the arguments of the previous chapters. Chapter 1 examines the identification of the nation with growth, chapter 2 examines the reidentification with growth as well as the identification with conservative ideologies of community, family and locality, and lastly chapter 3 examines the identification with masculinity and the disidentification with the defeat. The theories drawn from politics, economics, and post-colonial studies inform the studio-practice of digital video. In part 3, we will look further at digital video as an embodiment of the realm of sight.

## 3

### **The Realm of Sight**

In this last part of the introduction, we look at the frequently used term, the realm of sight. In a general sense, sight is an inevitable constitutive element of visual art. However, as clarified when I cited the authors from sociology, photojournalism, and philosophy first and



foremost at the beginning of this introduction, the realm of sight within this research is a site of contemplation of society through a camera.

The realm of sight is a significant site where the research questions are examined. It is also a rhetorical and figurative space of production in which the vocabularies of this thesis are conceived and characterise the text of this thesis. These vocabularies are, for example, *concealment* and *exposure*, nuanced with power. Equally, the studio-practice as an aesthetic practice of decentralisation brings the periphery – *the shadow* of the growth – into sight – *the light*. This rhetorical and figurative expression on power permeates both the studio-practice and this written component. It is, therefore, where the studio-practice, the material embodiment of the research enquiry, and this written component are interwoven; it is where the examination and contemplation are conducted and situated answers are located. In the coming paragraphs we overview the realm of sight articulated and addressed by this research.

### Digital Video and Structural Film

This research deploys a camera in the manifestation of such a realm of sight. In the manifestation through digital video, approaches and techniques that are often used in structural film are deployed. Catherine Russell, for example, states that “structural film is about looking” in the context of knowing of the Other.<sup>56</sup> This conception arises from the structuralist techniques of film as an apparatus of looking rather than of creating illusion and narrative.<sup>57</sup> As we have seen in part 1, the orientation of this research is towards a practice of the aesthetics of intimacy and opacity; the realm of sight is a site where this aesthetics is manifested through structuralist techniques.

Structural film, having developed in the 1960s to 1970s, historically concerns the materiality of film. In her essay “Time-Splits: 4/61 *Mauern pos.-neg. & Weg* and 31/75 *Asyl*”, Aline Helmcke describes a conventional filmic experience as opposed to structural film as being one in which “the viewer is usually unaware of the film’s materiality and the mechanism of the apparatus behind”.<sup>58</sup> However, this research focuses on the digitalness of digital photography and video as data, which inherently differs from the structuralists’ preoccupation with the materiality of film. Russell, for example, on the contrary, takes a position to state that she “would prefer to argue that video is an extension of cinema”.<sup>59</sup> However, she recognises, in comparison to film, that:

Video is a medium that extends far beyond the art world to a wider range of cultural practices, from broadcast television to surveillance, medial, and domestic uses. Video not only has changed the cultural role of film but has become a cultural tool that has had an impact on many aspects of everyday life in many parts of the world.

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<sup>56</sup> Russell, *ibid.*, p. 157.

<sup>57</sup> Peter Gidal, *Structural Film Anthology*. London: British Film Institute, 1976.

<sup>58</sup> Aline Helmcke, “Time-Splits: 4/61 *Mauern pos.-neg. & Weg* and 31/75 *Asyl*”, in Kurt Kren: *Structural Film*. Edited by Nicky Hamlyn, Simon Payne, and A. L. Rees. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2016. p. 55.

<sup>59</sup> Russell, *ibid.*, p. xvi.

It is better described as a 'media practice' than a 'technical device' because video is always part of culture, embedded in a network of social relations.<sup>60</sup>

More than twenty years after her statement on video, today the use of video in cultural practice has spread even more divergently from film. However, it is still useful to understand the structuralist approach and look at some structuralist techniques shared with this research. Just as Helmcke describes the structuralist orientation in Kren's works, so too the use of digital video in this research is oriented towards uncovering the specific qualities of the medium, rather than creating the illusion of continuous time and space.<sup>61</sup> The forward movement is one such specific quality in common between film and digital video with which structuralists engage.

For example, Kren establishes "a tension between the still and the moving image" through his structuralist use of the film frame in *2/60 48 Köpfe aus dem Szondi-Test* (*2/60 48 Heads from the Szondi Test*, 1960) and *4/61 Mauern pos.-neg. & Weg* (*Walls Pos.-Neg. & Path*,<sup>62</sup> 1961). This research, on the other hand, establishes a tension between the stillness and the forward movement through the use of photography as a slide show in the medium of digital video. What Helmcke calls "the lapse" leaving "the viewers with nothing to hold on to" could also be found in the technique of multi-screen projection of images side by side in works such as Toshio Matsumoto's *つぶれかかった右眼のために* (*For My Crushed Right Eye*, 1968) and Malcolm Le Grice's *Berlin Horse* (1970).<sup>63</sup>

Another example of the tension between movement and stillness that this research establishes is manifested by the use of a fixed camera position and frame. Chantal Akerman, to cite a more recent example, employs a fixed camera and frame in *D'Est* (*From the East*, 1993) and *Sud* (*South*, 1999), in order to create a durational temporality, the stillness.<sup>64</sup>

Besides these practices found in British and European structural film works and expanded cinema in the 1960s to 1970s, Dana Polan analyses structuralist approaches in American film practices.<sup>65</sup> Reflecting the post-war "discontinuous fragments of image culture", in parallel with the arrivals of new technologies such as television and the eight-millimetre Kodak camera, Russell describes the use of found footage as "an allegory of history, a montage of memory traces" in Walter Benjamin's sense.<sup>66</sup> Found-footage filmmaking or archival film practice is also known as collage and montage, as well as "recycled images" in William C. Wees's *Recycled Images: The Art and Politics of Found Footage Film* (1993).<sup>67</sup> Chris Marker, for example, in response to international political upheavals in the late 1960s

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid. p. xvi.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Kren's title has, arguably less correctly, also been translated as *Walls Pos.-Neg. and Way*.

<sup>63</sup> Helmcke, *ibid.*, p. 56. See multi-screen version of *Berlin Horse* at <[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LRwm7LDdFc0&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LRwm7LDdFc0&feature=emb_logo)>.

<sup>64</sup> Russell, *ibid.*, p. 165.

<sup>65</sup> Dana Polan, *Power and Paranoia: History, Narrative, and the American Cinema, 1940–1950*, New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1986.

<sup>66</sup> Russell, *ibid.*, pp. 6, 238, 243. See also Walter Benjamin, *The Origins of German Tragic Drama*, translated by John Osborne, London: New Left Books, 1977.

<sup>67</sup> Russell, *ibid.*, p. 238. William C. Wees, *Recycled Images: The Art and Politics of Found Footage Film*, New York, NY: Anthology Film Archives, 1993.

to the 1970s, employed archival footage, photographs, collages, intertitles, newspaper cuttings, and newsreels in filmmaking from an anti-capitalism, anti-imperialism, and left perspective in his contribution to the collective film *Loin du Vietnam (Far from Vietnam, 1967)* and in the series *On vous parle de ... (Calling from ..., 1969–1973)*.<sup>68</sup> This use of found footage was presented as “‘counter-information’: the need to report on those revolutionary political events and perspectives that were ignored or misrepresented by the mainstream media”.<sup>69</sup> Chapter 3 further examines the use of found footage in the context of Okinawa, ethnography, and technology.

Furthermore, the structural film techniques that this research employs in an extended sense include the concept of automation and recursiveness in Rosalind E. Krauss’s theory of the condition of medium-specificity.<sup>70</sup>

## Nothingness

Here, we look at an example of nothingness in the context of the location of power. The “hypocritical gaze”, to use a term coined by Nigerian curator Okwui Enwezor, indicates the liminality of sight as perception in the context of historical power.<sup>71</sup> The term is conceptualised within the context of racial discrimination in the works of American artist Lorna Simpson. In her photographic artworks, Simpson often uses the images of black people, whose faces are turned backwards. Due to this positioning, the gazes between the black figures that turn their faces away and the viewers of her works never intersect. *Twenty Questions (A Sampler)* (1986), for example, is a work consisting of four identical images of a black woman, whose face is turned backwards. These images are accompanied with texts with a judgemental undertone that say: “IS SHE AS PRETTY AS A PICTURE”, “OR CLEAR AS CRYSTAL”, “OR PURE AS A LILY”, “OR BLACK AS COAL”, and “OR SHARP AS A RAZOR”.

These texts accompanying the images of the black female figure reveal sight as the location of the judgement that remains unverballed. The gaze exists between the liminality of self and other, and yet the operation of judgement is concealed.

Writing on her works, Enwezor draws upon the definition of hypocrisy by French philosopher Georges Didi-Huberman.<sup>72</sup> Didi-Huberman’s argument unfolds on the role of photography in inventing hysteria in the nineteenth century in France with the example of the manipulated representation of the inmates at the Salpêtrière hospital, who were forced to perform their hysteria in front of the camera. In this context of knowledge and representation, photography was complicit with the invention of hysteria, a culturally constructed image of hysteria. These bodies of the inmates who theatrically performed in

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<sup>68</sup> Catherine Lupton, *Chris Marker: Memories of the Future*, London: Reaktion Books, pp. 109–147.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 120.

<sup>70</sup> Rosalind E. Krauss, *A Voyage on the North Sea: Art in the Age of the Post-Medium Condition*, London: Thames & Hudson, 2000, and *Under Blue Cup*, Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press, 2011.

<sup>71</sup> Okwui Enwezor, “Repetition and Differentiation – Lorna Simpson’s Iconography of the Racial Sublime”, *Lorna Simpson*, New York, NY: Abrams and American Foundation of Arts, 2006. pp. 102–131.

<sup>72</sup> Enwezor, *ibid.*, pp. 117–118.

front of the camera are ones that were forced to perform a social stigma. Didi-Huberman hence analyses that, because the camera is an apparatus of the designation of power, subjugation and its maintenance, so is photography. Enwezor analyses that Simpson's works unfold on the camera/photography's nature as an apparatus to invent cultural representation but she further develops photography as a site to negotiate with the cultural representation of blackness.<sup>73</sup>

Didi-Huberman writes:

Hypocrisy is an act of choice, decision, and selection, of distinguishing, separating, and resolving. It is an explanation. But it is only a little of all these things, or perhaps it lies beneath them (*hypo*), secretly. The true hypocrite (in Greek tradition, the *hypokrite*) is above all the one who knows how to discriminate, but discreetly (in law, it is he who directs an investigation).<sup>74</sup>

Drawing upon Didi-Huberman's sense of hypocrisy, sight is where the operation of discrimination is concealed but also exposed. In the case of Simpson's *Twenty Questions (A Sampler)*, it is where a judgment on whether the black woman is pure as a lily or sharp as a razor is negotiated with the racialised stereotypes of the blackness.

If sight is perception, gaze is rather an active engagement in seeing. Philosopher Yoshimichi Nakajima also conceptualises the judgement through seeing in terms of the gaze. Gaze, according to Nakajima in his *Philosophy on the Sense of Dislike* (2009), is the space of concealed judgement grounded in Jean-Paul Sartre's concept of bad faith and nothingness.<sup>75</sup> Sartre defines the falsehood of bad faith as "a lie to oneself. To be sure, the one who practices bad faith is hiding a displeasing truth or presenting as truth a pleasing untruth."<sup>76</sup> Nakajima employs this logic and operation of bad faith in his concept of gaze, where the displeasing Other is recognised as non-existence, Sartre's sense of nothingness.<sup>77</sup> Nakajima's concept of gaze as a space of bad faith and nothingness is similar to the state of being discreet and aware of how to discriminate and conceal in Didi-Huberman's sense of hypocrisy. Simpson's *Twenty Questions (A Sampler)* demonstrates the gaze as such a site of judgement, bad faith, nothingness, and hypocrisy. As in another example of her work, *You're Fine* (1988), a black woman is laid down with her face turned backward with the accompanying texts, "POSITION", "SECRETARIAL", "YOU'RE FINE", and "YOU'RE HIRED". This work further extends the operation of judgement into the concrete social context of job employment as an example of its operation. Chapter 3 unfolds on this sense of concealment and nothingness as the location of power in the geopolitical and historical context where Okinawa is embedded with Japan and the United States.

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Georges Didi-Huberman, *Invention of Hysteria: Charcot and the Photographic Iconography of the Salpêtrière*, trans. Alisa Hartz. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003. p. 8.

<sup>75</sup> Yoshimichi Nakajima, *差別感情の哲学* [*Philosophy on the Sense of Dislike*], Tokyo: Kodan-shya, 2009.

<sup>76</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay in Phenomenological Ontology*, New York, NY: Washington Square Press, 1992. p. 49.

<sup>77</sup> Nakajima, *ibid.*, pp. 183–186.

In comparison with Simpson's photographic methodology, the materiality of nails in the works of Paris-based artist Alexis Peskine manifests a materialisation of the operation of judgement in the gaze. With the black figures embodied by the nails hammered into the wooden medium, he portrays the Blackness within the gaze that operates the judgment. As Peskine states in an interview:

The nails hidden inside are essential to the creation of packing cases, furniture and even houses. So the nail itself becomes a symbol for the way Africans and the Afro-American culture (of both north and south Americas) have functioned in relation to the strongest economies and the most influential cultures in the world. So I take the rough, commonplace, inanimate and normally invisible nail and reposition it, to make it visible, vibrant and alive. By exposing the nails on the surface, they become the focus of attention and that's what I want to emphasise – that each nail is unapologetic about its own existence and experience. This parallels the Black person's experience. Black people are always expected to be invisible and to keep quiet about their presence. For me, the nail becomes metaphorically associated with the Black Experience.<sup>78</sup>

Peskine's works evoke pain and Simpson's evoke desolation through sight silently presenting the location of power. The invisibility and the interiority of the nails as a metaphor of economy and culture share significant concerns of enquiry with this research, although the materials employed are different. The invisibility can be visualised in the realm of sight to be exposed, to be reflected within it, and to be negotiated. The title *You Saw Nothing* relies on this conception of visualising, or verbalising through the accompanied texts in the cases of Simpson's work, and the titles of my studio-practice: *You Saw Nothing in Fukushima*, *I Told Our Story*, and *Hidden Tides*, the realm of sight contemplates society from its own liminality.

The invisibility of the nail is an example for the coupled conceptions that frequently appear in this research, namely light–shadow, centre–periphery, exterior–interior, and male–female, to refer to the location and relation of power. In the realm of sight, they are deciphered as visibility–invisibility, or concealment–exposure.

## Complicity

The realm of sight is a site of contemplation yet is communicative and political. This research extends it to the terrain of viewership. The literature on complicity in the gaze includes Laura Mulvey's article entitled "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (1975).<sup>79</sup>

In the structure of seeing between the seeing and the seen, as we have witnessed in the duality between the researching/representing and the researched/represented, the dominant power designation is given to the seeing. The seeing of the researching/representing or the artist/film directors seemingly consolidates their position

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<sup>78</sup> Alexis Peskine, "Power Figure", *Alexis Peskine: Power Figure*, interviewed by Gerard Houghton, London: October Gallery, 2017. p. 11.

<sup>79</sup> Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema", *Screen*, vol. 16, no. 3, 6–18, Autumn 1975.

with their viewers. The methodological application of dualism breaks this assumption, unleashing the seeing subjectivity of the viewer from that of the researching/representing as he or she is both the seeing *and* the seen.

However, we also focus on the consolidated state in which the viewers stay in complicity with the researching/representing. This political nature of complicity in viewership sets the readers of this thesis on their journey into the examinations in the following chapters. In each chapter, complicity is exposed and critiqued as a location of power.

## Referenced Artworks

This section discusses influential and referenced artworks which have contributed to shape this PhD research and characterised the use of media.

Although this research employs digital cameras to produce digital photography and video as the focal material production of this practice-based PhD research, my preoccupation with photography and video is grounded in my artistic practice in performance art, as presented in my MA dissertation, *Intimate Strangers*, for which I was awarded an MA in Fine Art in 2012 from LASALLE College of the Arts, Singapore. My preoccupation with the use of the camera still remains in the context of the practice and research presented in this thesis, in which the relation between performance artist and camera, and between body and gaze, is reconfigured into the post-performance material production of documentation in the form of photography and video. This performative aspect in the use of the camera is reflected in the range of artists whose works have served as references for me.

The particular influence of performance artists is tied geographically to the location of my education and origin. The Singaporean performance artists whose works have been influential for me include, among others, members of the acclaimed artists' collective The Artists Village, notably Lee Wen, with his *Yellow Man* series (1992–2012), and Amanda Heng, with her *Another Woman* (1996–1997), *Let's Walk* series (1999–), and *Singirl* series (2009–), some of which I experienced live.<sup>80</sup> Their live performance pieces invite the audience to participate by engaging with objects found during the performance. Culturally Chinese Urich Lau, another Singaporean artist, born in Malaysia and a member of The Artists Village, works closely between video and live performance with his own body and the bodies of invited participants in the modern nation state of Singapore encountered in a mediated digital space. His works include the *Life Circuit* series (2009–) and *VJ Conference: Exposition* (2018).<sup>81</sup> The intervention and participation of the audience and objects in the performance, whose idiosyncratic nature reflects the heterogeneity of time and location, blur the boundary between art and life as flux, in which the camera coexists. *Exergie – Butter Dance* (2000–), which I have seen only as a video work, by Melati Suryodarmo, an

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<sup>80</sup> See Lee Wen <<http://leewen.republicofdaydreams.com>> and Amanda Heng, *Speak to Me, Walk with Me*, Singapore Art Museum, Singapore, 2011.

<sup>81</sup> See Urich Lau's *Life Circuit* <<https://www.singaporeartmuseum.sg/about/our-collection/life-circuit>>.

Indonesian artist based in Germany, is a performance piece in which the artist struggles to dance on a floor rendered slippery with melted butter.<sup>82</sup>

Beyond these multi-media works grounded in live performance pieces, the notion of the body, gender, race, and the Other/other is referred to in the work of artists who predominantly work in the field of photography and video. These artists include American artist Lorna Simpson, with her *Waterbearer* (1986), *You're Fine* (1988), *Details* (1996), *Interior/Exterior, Full/Empty* (1997), *Stereo Styles* (1998), and *Corridor (Night III)* (2003), and two Okinawan artists, Mao Ishikawa, with her photography series *FENCES, OKINAWA* (2010), *日の丸を視る目 (What the Japanese Flag Means to Me, 2011)*, *熱き日々 in オキナワ (Hot Days in Okinawa, 2013)*, and *大琉球写真絵巻パート 1-7 (Great Okinawa Picture Scroll Part 1-7, 2017-)*, and Chikako Yamashiro, with her video work *アーサ女 (Seaweed Woman, 2008)*.<sup>83</sup> Relevant films by Trinh T. Minh-ha, a Vietnamese filmmaker and writer based in the United States, include *Reassemblage* (1982) and *Surname Viet Given Name Nam* (1989). These bodies in photography are performed and/or documented as a site in which equality and freedom are fought for.

The connoted presence of the body in *I might die before I get a rifle* (1993) and *Let's be honest, the weather helped* (1992) by Lebanese artist Walid Raad is embodied through the use of photographic found footage to investigate history crossing the boundary between the social and the personal. The *Lucky Tiger* series (2009) by American artist Laurel Nakadate reconfigures the gaze into the fingerprints of public participants invited to handle photographs. The use of the camera and the production of photographic works blur the boundaries between self (artist)–other (gaze) through the process of production.

These practices have shaped the characteristics of my use of the camera and the body in my photographic and videographic works. My artistic practice has been less influenced by a study of film. However, regarding the embodiment of the preoccupations discussed above through the use of the camera, several filmmakers are cited as references. Relevant works by British and European structuralist filmmakers include Peter Gidal's *Clouds* (1969), Malcolm Le Grice's *Berlin Horse* (1970), and Kurt Kren's *2/60 48 Köpfe aus dem Szondi-Test* (1960), and I cite also Japanese structuralist filmmaker Toshio Matsumoto and his work *For My Crushed Right Eye* (1968).

The structuralist doctrine of anti-narrativity and exposure of the materiality of the medium is shared in the research presented in this thesis; however, the doctrine is employed in order to apply structuralist techniques to contemplation of the act of looking. Chantal Akerman's *D'Est* (1993) and *Sud* (1999) are more recent applications of structuralist

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<sup>82</sup> See Melati Suryodarmo's *Exergie – Butter Dance*  
<[https://www.melatisuryodarmo.com/works\\_Exergie\\_Butter\\_Dance.html](https://www.melatisuryodarmo.com/works_Exergie_Butter_Dance.html)>.

<sup>83</sup> See Lorna Simpson, *Lorna Simpson*, American Foundation of Arts, New York, 2006. See Mao Ishikawa, *熱き日々 in オキナワ [Hot Days in Okinawa]*, Kyoto: Foil, 2013, and *日の丸を視る目 石川真生写真集 [What the Japanese Flag Means to Me: Mao Ishikawa Photo Collection]*, Tokyo: Mirai-sha, 2011, and also Keiko Asanuma, *循環する世界 山城知佳子の世界 [Circulating World: The Art of Chikako Yamashiro]*, Tokyo: Yumiko Chiba Associates, 2016.

techniques to the context of the representation of the Other (the Other being, for Akerman in the aforementioned films, people in Eastern Europe, in countries that had formerly been in the Eastern bloc, and black people in the United States). Here film as a structuralist embodiment of a way of observation emerges as a cultural device of looking. Akerman films the lands that belong to the Other(s) from her car windows, from which the notion of liminality emerges, with the cabin as a boundary between the self and the Other. Further filmic references for this automobile-bound liminality include Michelangelo Antonioni's *Zabriskie Point* (1975), which delineates the Marxist boundary of capital within the United States, Steven Spielberg's *Empire of the Sun* (1987), which renders an English boy in wartime Shanghai, and Tatsuya Mori, Takeharu Watai, Yoju Matsubayashi, and Takaharu Yasuoka's *311* (2011), which documents the journalists themselves as outsiders to the disaster sites. These scenes of automobile-bound liminality are short, yet, through the explosion of the liminality, they depict the subtle boundary between self and other and locate the position of the subject in society.

The automobile is also a significant motif in my use of digital video in relation to forward movement. With forward movement often leading to death narratively by car accident, murder, or suicide, the Freudian concept of the death drive is a recognised notion in film analysis. Films to which such an analysis has been applied include Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960), Michelangelo Antonioni's *The Passenger* (1975), Ridley Scott's *Thelma & Louise* (1991), Takeshi Kitano's *ソラチネ (Sonatine)* (1993), David Cronenberg's *Crash* (1996), Cameron Crowe's *Vanilla Sky* (2001), and Jonathan Glazer's *Under the Skin* (2013). These references do not directly inform my conceptualisation of death and forward movement; however, they are invoked for the sake of comparison during the course of this research. The combination of death and forward movement in this research is conceptualised, within the circular temporality of looped digital video, as stagnation reflecting the anxiety in the apotheosis of growth and speed in capitalism rather than the literal deaths in the aforementioned films.

This research has also set Alain Resnais's *Hiroshima mon amour (Hiroshima, My Love)* (1959) as a departure point and has referred to several of his other films, *Les Statues meurent aussi (Statues Also Die)* (1953), *Nuit et brouillard (Night and Fog)* (1955), *Le chant du Styrene (The Song of Styrene)* (1958), *L'Année dernière à Marienbad (Last Year at Marienbad)* (1961), and *Muriel ou le Temps d'un retour (Muriel, or the Time of Return)* (1963). Films and other media works by Resnais's close collaborator in *Les Statues meurent aussi* and *Nuit et brouillard*, Chris Marker, include *Level Five* (1996), which alludes to *Hiroshima mon amour*, *La Jetée* (1962), *Le mystère Koumiko (The Koumiko Mystery)* (1965), *Sans soleil (Sunless)* (1982), *Zapping Zone* (1990), and *Immunity* (1998). Films by Marguerite Duras, the screenplay writer of *Hiroshima mon amour*, include *India Song* (1975), and *Agatha et les lectures illimitées (Agatha and the Limitless Readings)* (1981). Contemporary works alluding to *Hiroshima mon amour* include Nobuhiro Suwa's film *H Story* (2001).

Insofar as specific social subjects of contemporary Japan thematised in this research are concerned, I have referred to and drawn comparisons with existing practices relevant to this research. Among Okinawan artists, besides the aforementioned artists Mao Ishikawa and Chikako Yamashiro, I refer to Tsutomu Makishi and his mixed-media works including the



*Turbulence* series (2013–).<sup>84</sup> Relevant artworks on contemporary memory of World War II from the perspectives of Japanese artists include painter Taeko Tomiyama’s 祝 出征 (*Sending off a Soldier*, 1995) and 天馳ける者 馬王堆による (*Those Who Fly in the Sky*, 1983), Yoshiko Shimada’s performance work 日本人「慰安婦」像になってみる (*Becoming a Statue of a Japanese Comfort Woman*, 2012–), Tetsugo Hyakutake’s video work *Hirohito and MacArthur* (2009), and Meiro Koizumi’s video and performance works 若き侍の肖像 (*Portrait of a Young Samurai*, 2009), *Where the Silence Fails (Double Projection #1)* (2013), *Oral History* (2013–2015), and *The Angels of Testimony* (2019).<sup>85</sup> On nuclear issues from a perspective of labour, I refer to Japanese photojournalist Kenji Higuchi and his 原発崩壊 (*Nuclear Disintegration*, 2011).<sup>86</sup> Immediate post-3.11 photographic practice thematising the quotidian includes work by Japanese photographer Naoya Hatakeyama, who lost his mother as a result of the tsunami, notably his photography works 陸前高田 (*Rikuzen-takada*, 2011–2014) and 気仙川 (*Kesenkawa*, 2012), and by Nobuyoshi Araki, who experienced the disasters in Tokyo, namely his photography work 道 (*Road*, 2014).<sup>87</sup> On the centre–periphery structure, I refer to Japanese photographer Ari Hatsuzawa’s *True Feelings* 爪痕の真情 (*True Feelings*, 2012) and 沖縄のことを教えてください (*Let Us Know about Okinawa*, 2015).<sup>88</sup>

We are at the end of the introduction and have become acquainted with the constitutive elements of this research. *You Saw Nothing: Sight, Digital Video, Post-3.11 Japan*, offers a political and economic thread of enquiry into Japanese society and contemplates the continuity and contemporary forms of the designation of power embedded in its modern construction. It presents an artist’s response to these complexities. The entwined written and visual articulation of the artist’s response to these complexities invites the audience into the realm of sight to contemplate their own acts of seeing, looking, and understanding.

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<sup>84</sup> See *Ambivalent TOM MAX: Tsutomu Makishi Solo Exhibition*, Okinawa Prefectural Museum, 1 November 2016–2 April 2017.

<sup>85</sup> See Taeko Tomiyama, *アジアを抱く 画家人生 記憶と夢* [*Embracing Asia: The Life of A Painter, Memory and Dreams*], Tokyo: Iwanami-shoten, 2009. See Tetsugo Hyakutake <<https://tetsugohyakutake.com>> and Meiro Koizumi <<https://www.meirokoizumi.com>>.

<sup>86</sup> See Kenji Higuchi, *原発崩壊 樋口健二写真集* [*Nuclear Disintegration: Kenji Higuchi Photo Collection*], Tokyo: Godo-shuppan, 2011.

<sup>87</sup> See Naoya Hatakeyama, *陸前高田 2011–2014* [*Rikuzen-takada 2011–2014*], Tokyo: Kawadeshobo-shinsha, 2015, *気仙川* [*Kesenkawa*], Tokyo: Kawadeshobo-shinsha, 2012, and Nobuyoshi Araki, *道* [*Road*], Tokyo: Kawadeshobo-shinsha, 2014.

<sup>88</sup> See Ari Hatsuzawa, *True Feelings* 爪痕の真情。2011.3.12–2012.3.11 [*True Feelings 2011.3.12–2012.3.11*], Tokyo: Sanei-shobo, 2012, and *沖縄のことを教えてください* [*Let Us Know about Okinawa*], Tokyo: Akaaka-sha, 2015.



# Waiting Room

The thesis title, *You Saw Nothing: Sight, Digital Video, Post-3.11 Japan*, refers to *Hiroshima mon amour* (1959) by the French filmmaker Alain Resnais and screenplay writer Marguerite Duras. It is a significant entry point for this research for a few reasons: era, sight, and distance, and the title of the thesis alludes to the most famous line, “You saw nothing in Hiroshima.”

In 1956, a few years before the production of *Hiroshima mon amour* started in Hiroshima, in their Annual Report of the Japanese Economy and Public Finance, the Japanese Government stated famously that the economy was “no longer in post-war recovery” (もはや戦後ではない: *mohaya sengo deha nai*). The film depicts the landscape and people of Hiroshima at the dawn of the post-war growth that lasted until 1974. Emmanuelle Riva, the actress who plays the heroine, personally documented Hiroshima with her own camera. The photographs she took during her visit were published in Japan as *HIROSHIMA 1958* in 2008.

Although the film is fiction, from an ethnographic perspective Hiroshima in *Hiroshima mon amour* appears as a site of the other for the French woman (Emmanuelle Riva). Visiting atomic-bombed Hiroshima of the late 1950s, overlapped by her memory of the war in her native France, creates the sense of an auto-ethnographical visit to Hiroshima and a revisitation of Nevers, the location of her war-time trauma.

The Japanese man (Eiji Okada) reiterates that “You saw nothing in Hiroshima” to her. The fissures lie doubly: between the strangers in bed, keeping the fate of adulterous love parallel and bittersweet; and between their personal memories of World War II and the collective memories of the war. Duras notes that Hiroshima is “the common ground” between the strangers, dissimilar to each other geographically, philosophically, historically, economically, and racially, yet brought together by the universal factors of eroticism, love,

and unhappiness.<sup>1</sup> With Hiroshima rendered from the perspective of the French woman, the dissimilarities are uncanny, the flavour of a trip to Hiroshima, an experience of being a stranger in a place dissimilar to where she comes from. The intimately shared memory amongst the people of Hiroshima on the continuity and discontinuity of the landscapes of their own city, in the atomic ashes and in the reconstructions, is for the French woman the opaque sentiments of the other.

*Hiroshima mon amour* also renders the psychology of the nation in the late 1950s from an outsider perspective. Resnais inserts the footage of Japanese signs which represent the opacity and the outsidership. “Café Dome” and “Hotel New Hiroshima” in particular represent post-atomic-bombed identifications of the people of Hiroshima with *peace* and *hope*. “Café Dome” and “Hotel New Hiroshima” were an actual cafe and hotel that existed in Hiroshima from the 1950s. The peace and hope that these names represent is the identification of post-atomic-bombed Hiroshima, and equally the disidentification from the condition of World War II.

The intricacy of the memory local to Hiroshima and Nagasaki was never easily embraced by others as the prejudice against *hibakusha* (atomic bomb victims) was pervasive in Japan. Since then the memory of the atomic-bombings has been nationalised and has become the origin of the Japanese narrative of growth from the ashes. The nationalised embracement of this memory distances Japan internationally from other Asian countries and the United States. These symbolic names of a cafe and a hotel welcome visitors as a post-war pacifist nation, a disidentification with the imperial and colonial old self. Symbolically, the Japanese man in the film is an architect, as if designing memories and narratives for the new identification during the country’s post-war reconstruction.

1956 is also the year when the Atoms for Peace Exhibition (原子力平和利用博覧会: *genshiryoku heiwa riyō hakurankai*) travelled to Hiroshima and was held at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum.<sup>2</sup> It was the inauguration of the civil use of

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<sup>1</sup> Marguerite Duras, *Hiroshima Mon Amour*. New York, NY: Grove Press, 1961. p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Toshiyuki Tanaka and Peter Kuznick, 原発とヒロシマ「原子力平和利用」の真相 [Nuclear Power in Post-War Hiroshima: A Truth about Atoms for Peace], Tokyo: Iwanami-shoten, 2011.

nuclear technology, the recontextualisation of the technology in the post-war society, and the active production of a new identification of the nation.

There is a scene in the film, in which the crowd at a protest against atomic and hydrogen bomb tests swallows the couple's conversation. This allegorical scene responds to the hydrogen bomb test conducted by the United States at Bikini Atoll in 1954, in which Japanese fishing boats, including No.5 Lucky Dragon (第五福竜丸: *Daigo Fukuryu-maru*) and its crew, were exposed to radiation.<sup>3</sup> This film scene responds both to the actual event and to the international political landscape of the atomic age, led by US President Dwight D. Eisenhower famously in his speech, Atoms for Peace, in 1953 during the Cold War. The thunderstorm seems allegorical to the psychology of the defeated and atomic-bombed nation of Japan in turmoil; at the watershed of international nuclear policy and under the nuclear umbrella of the former war-time enemy, the United States.

Rendering the French woman, the Japanese man, Nevers, Hiroshima, France, Japan, and the United States, *Hiroshima mon amour* draws a constellation of the personal, the regional, and the national, and the past and the present of fragility, loss, flux, and change in the 1950s. There are underlying fissures in between. Scars remain. Love that could not survive has never died. All of them are incomplete yet are moving forward to a new era.

This research also invokes another film produced in the 1950s, *Tokyo Story* (1953) by Japanese filmmaker Yasujiro Ozu. Born in 1903 before the war, Ozu saw the 1950s wistfully as a moment of fragility, loss, flux, and change. With *Tokyo Story* as a reference in chapter 2, my examination unfolds on the film's nostalgic revival at the time of globalisation, another moment of fragility, loss, flux, and change. Among many discourses produced since that period, '*Tokyo Story*' and the *Japanese People* (2015) by literature critic Shuntaro Ono encompasses the critical analysis of these revivals. Ono, however, attempts to localise his methodology against a reductionist conceptualisation of Ozu's work in Western critique. *Tokyo Story* had become widely acknowledged internationally since the 1980s before its national revival and

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<sup>3</sup> Matashichi Ooishi, *ビキニ事件の真実 いのちの岐路で* [*The Truth of the Bikini Incident: At the Crossroads of Life*], Tokyo: Misuzu-shobo, 2013.

has influenced many Japanese and international filmmakers, from Yoji Yamada to Wim Wenders. Ozu became most known for Ozu-esque aesthetics, characterised by the frequent use of a low position of the camera, the use of the same actors, and empty shots, etc. Ozu's aesthetics are often the subject of Western reductionist analysis that views his emptiness, often called the "pillow shot", "curtain shot", or "still life", as part of the sublime Japanese or Asian beauty – an oversimplified conceptualisation.<sup>4</sup> Ono's discourse takes a critical distance from this reductionism, finding that a lack of cultural knowledge and Japanese-language ability in Western scholars results in a universalised reading of Ozu's visual construction as a common method. Problematizing the politics of knowledge and representation, Ono instead offers a localised reading, with a focus on the linguistic, cultural, and historical specificity of the locality and of Ozu's audio-visual construction, highlighting the connotations respective to the historicity of Japanese culture. In the Western interpretations against which Ono argues, Ozu's filmic language is often reduced to a knowable and understandable object, dismissing opaque and microscopic details both of the continuities and of the discontinuities of Japanese culture and reproducing the desire for otherness.

Reductionists see nothing. The Japanese man's utterance in *Hiroshima mon amour*, "You saw nothing", formulates the symbolic premise in the examination of sight in the field of Visual Arts in the contemporary media environment. The examination of sight is located in the viewer's act of looking, encompassing the following related concepts: the ineluctability of sight in the Visual Arts, including digital video and photography; the gaze; the transcendent subjectivity of the seeing subject as well as of the ethnographer; the observation and representation of the other; the complicity inherent in spectatorship; and the spatiality of the viewing equipment. Each element of sight corresponds to each other, being manifested through studio-practice. First and foremost in the manifestation, the dualism of the artist-researcher intervenes at the location of power in sight.

This thesis presents a logically constructed narrative led by geographical locations through the chapters. Ideas are, however, in reality fluid, organic, relational, and topological.

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<sup>4</sup> Shuntaro Ono, 『東京物語』と日本人 [‘Tokyo Story’ and the Japanese People], Tokyo: Shohakusya, 2015. p. 12.

Waiting Room located in between chapters, instead, focuses on the relation between the studio-practices and the processes of the materialisation of ideas. The waiting room exists at airports, petrol stations, train stations, the sailing club, and hospitals, and for automobiles, aeroplanes, and *shinkansen*, which are closely tied to the auto-ethnographical locations under examination. The seats of the waiting room could offer a space of contemplation. It is a location of reflecting, embracing, and conceiving questions. Waiting Room also emerges for readers as a moment of drifting from the logical narratives of the chapters. The in-between locations of each chapter, the in-between geographical sites of auto-ethnography, fluidise the constructed narratives of the chapters and shape them more closely to the actual experiences of the artist, rather than researcher, of auto-ethnography.







# Fukushima

## CHAPTER 1

The following section, the video stills from *You Saw Nothing in Fukushima*, requires the viewing setting of "Single Page".

**Preview> View> Single Page**

Readers who wish to watch *You Saw Nothing in Fukushima* in the original format of digital video should please access

<https://vimeo.com/438116969> (2012 trip) 8' 46"

<https://vimeo.com/438052137> (2014 trip) 15' 33"

<https://vimeo.com/438052535> (2018 trip) 17' 57"

The following password is required: Ayano Hattori PhD



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〈石巻ブロック災害廃棄物処理業務 平成 24 年度 安全標語〉

「行く手を塞ぐ危険の芽 皆で摘み取り 無災害」

太平電業(株)

「思いやり 皆で防ごう 労働災害」 東洋ワークセキュリティ(株) 阿部 浩治

「出来るよ 深呼吸」 JV 事務所 齋出 真弓

「き実を結ぶ 世界が見ている 我らが復興」 遠藤興業(株) 四倉 信之

災害廃棄物処理業務  
(石巻ブロック)

平成26年4月1日(日)まで

事業主名

石巻ブロック 株式会社

所在地

〒982-0101 石巻市 〇〇-〇〇-〇〇

〒982-0101 石巻市 〇〇-〇〇-〇〇

電話 〇〇-〇〇-〇〇

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I fell asleep in the car on the way to Tokyo from the disaster sites. I must have slept for a few hours at least; when I opened my eyes the car was in heavy traffic on a highway driving between skyscrapers. It was twilight. The megalopolis, expanding its reach to the furthest and highest point in the sky, dizzying vertical lines of the dense concrete forest. An empty horizontal line of tsunami-affected areas, and loose even lines of the mountains contaminated by radioactive substances. All the other flat landscapes seemed distant already. *You saw nothing.*

The view from the car window is now a stream of endless buildings and electric lights.

Tokyo is home for many corporations. Billions of windows of buildings lit up at dusk, the people are known for working hard. It is a daily landscape of one of the world's largest economies. I arrived at a hotel in downtown Tokyo. The night was shiny. I slipped into a favourite dress with high heels on to attend a concert by Keith Jarrett, an American improvisational pianist, at a music hall. The one-off piece of improvised sound was composed exclusively for the night and for Tokyo.

Next day I flew back to Hong Kong.

## **The Highest Point**

Manifesting the Greater Tokyo Area, Tokyo, the designated location of power in the country, rests on the historical spatial order of centre and periphery as the monopolistic political, economic, and cultural centre of Japan. The monuments of growth built on the ashes of World War II are located in these discrete contemporary landscapes of the country: the vertical metropolitan cityscape of the centre and the dispersed, depopulated, and rural horizontal landscape of the periphery.

Nuclear technology (NT) is a monumental inscription of the grand narrative of growth that began from the atomic ashes of 1945. Power sufficiency was considered as the drive and foundation for the post-war growth. Within this narrative, nuclear-led power generation was accepted as a *civil* use of the technology, discrete from military use, by the post-war nation that had lived through the atomic ashes. Self-sufficient power production was also considered as a matter of sovereignty. NT developed politically and socially in a unique way in post-war Japan.<sup>1</sup>

Sociologist Hiroshi Kainuma asserts that the civil use of the technology functioned culturally as a medium that delivered modernist aspirations, which remarkably grew to be a common

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<sup>1</sup> See Hitoshi Yoshioka, *新版原子力の社会史 その日本的展開* [Social History of Atomic Energy in Japan], Tokyo: Asahishinbun-sha, 2013 for further details of the Japanese inauguration of the technology in the contexts of politics, economics, and academia.

ground that brought together the centre and the periphery for the attainment of their dreams. Those dreams were unique and different in their respective discrete landscapes of growth: the complete nuclear fuel cycle for the disarmed and resourceless nation state and the development and sustainability of rural life for the supposedly backward and underdeveloped village. Kainuma describes the inclination of both the centralists' and the peripheralists' modernist values as "the highest point of modernity",<sup>2</sup> the imperative for development and growth towards the supreme point. The nuclear power plants (NPPs) were projected by the periphery in particular as a means to attain the affluence of the city, the centre; in Raymond Williams's sense, a means to get rid of "backwardness, ignorance, limitation".<sup>3</sup> In the dichotomous city–countryside relational identification, as experienced by the periphery, the NPP was praised as the replica of the highest point of modernity built in their backyard. It was a self-portrait of their identification within a spatial relation to the centre.

The civil use of NT was politically inaugurated in the larger context of the post-war restructuring of democratisation and industrialisation of the country, which resulted in a reconstitution of the hegemonic spatial relation. This reconstitution was a continuation of the exploitative integration of the periphery; the advanced centralisation of the market that embedded the periphery in an "addictive" spiral of dependence on central capital.<sup>4</sup> The former fishing villages in abject poverty were transfigured into NPP-hosting villages. With geographically uneven development, the periphery's addictive spiral of dependence evolved into "automatic and voluntary obedience".<sup>5</sup> Kainuma asserts that the civil use of the technology functioned to advance and perpetuate centralisation.

This chapter auto-ethnographically positions the artist-researcher from two perspectives: the political and economic spatial relation of the centre–periphery structure, and the cultural construction of relational peripherality to the centre. These sociological conditions of the periphery are discussed through the studio-practice *You Saw Nothing in Fukushima* (2012–). It is a digital video work interlaced with Marxist theories, the automobile, and the forward movement of digital video. The interlacement creates the semiotics of speed, which *You Saw Nothing in Fukushima* employs to discuss the identification of the nation with growth.

This chapter consists of three parts.

In part 1, we focus on the automobile and review its cultural history, its representation in visual culture, in particular that of the moving image, and the filmic reference of Michelangelo Antonioni's *Zabriskie Point* (1970), in order to establish the semiotics of speed. Through that film, set in the United States, the cabin and car window are investigated as a site of liminality and separation between classes in capitalism.

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<sup>2</sup> Hiroshi Kainuma, 「フクシマ」論 原子カムラはなぜ生まれたのか [Theory of 'Fukushima': Why the Nuclear Power Village Was Created], Tokyo: Seidoshya, 2011. p. 52.

<sup>3</sup> Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City*, New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1973. p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Kainuma, *ibid.*, pp. 249, 323.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

In part 2, we examine how the semiotics of speed is manifested through the studio-practice *You Saw Nothing in Fukushima*. The manifestation of the semiotics is dedicated to an examination of power designation between the centre and the periphery and the identification of the Japanese nation with speed. Grounded in the political and economic concept of the compression of space, speed is an agent of such compression for the purposes of growth. Manifesting an aesthetic embodiment of such speed through the forward movement of digital video, *You Saw Nothing in Fukushima* examines the identification of the nation with the post-war growth from the post-growth and post-3.11 perspectives.

In part 3, as the textual recall of the title *You Saw Nothing* suggests, we examine the nothingness of knowing and understanding of the other through sight. Digital video as data embodies the compression of space, crosses borders, and reconfigures the here and now as part of information and communications technology (ICT). We examine the semblance of knowledge through seeing within the contemporary embodiment of ICT through *You Saw Nothing in Fukushima*.

*You Saw Nothing in Fukushima* (2012–) is a digital video work of variable dimension based on my trips to the 3.11 disaster sites in 2012, 2014, and 2018.<sup>6</sup> Despite the exclusive presentation of Fukushima in the title, *You Saw Nothing in Fukushima* is not geographically confined to Fukushima but includes other disaster sites documented during those trips. The exclusivity of this presentation is not intended to generalise or reduce the discursive area to Fukushima or to nuclear disasters. The digital footage is either digitally photographed or videographed from the automobiles I travelled in and aligned in sequence through the slide-show function of editing software. *You Saw Nothing in Fukushima* encompasses four pieces of videographed footage titled *Wind and Rain* (2012), *A Seabird* (2012), *Shore* (2012), and *Dead End* (2014).<sup>7</sup> The majority of the footage was photographed or videographed from inside the automobiles, with the exception of a few pieces of footage recorded from outside the automobiles.

The forward movement, a significant characteristic of the aesthetic language of *You Saw Nothing in Fukushima*, also ties automotive and nuclear technologies together in an affinity of culturally projected advancedness in the past century. They were, as we will see in part 1, both the projection and the materialisation of the supreme state of advancedness dreamed of by the nation, “the highest point of modernity” in Kainuma’s words. This advancedness represented a bright hopeful future, dreamed from the perspective of the last century. The phrase “the highest point of modernity” is interchangeably used with the *fastest* point of modernity in this examination, by the forward movement of digital video within the semiotics of speed.

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<sup>6</sup> The production of *You Saw Nothing in Fukushima* started in 2012 with my first trip to the post-disaster sites. It has no specified production year of closure because its concept is oriented to durational continuity. The variable dimension of installation might take the form of monitor replay or wall or screen projections of variable size. It might also be played as a file on one device or separately on multiple devices.

<sup>7</sup> The production years indicate the year of the particular trip.



# 1

## Automobile, Speed, Moving Image

The aesthetic relation between the automobile and moving images has been much discussed. Architectural historian Iain Borden, for example, draws an exuberant relationship between moving images and the act of driving, stating that “cinema, more than any other representational form, provides the most direct sense of what it actually feels like to drive, its visual qualities giving a substantive indication of how driving involves movements, bodies, thoughts, feelings, spaces, sights and sounds”.<sup>8</sup> He also argues in relation to motion and speed that:

movies help us understand the experiential thrill of modernity not only through aesthetic experiences of space – through effects of framing, signs, mobility and so forth – but in transcending the rational and disciplined qualities of driving and moving into a realm of the comparatively irrational, into matters of non-codified thought, instinct and everyday behaviours. In short, films help us understand that we often live dynamically and without the necessity of constant presence of self-reflective or rationalised thought.<sup>9</sup>

Moving-image theorist Laura Mulvey, in her argument on the materiality of film and narrative structure, notes that:

the story’s development extends into the movement of the car and the line of the road duplicates that of the narrative, both leading towards death and stasis. In this way, the car and the road link the narrative structure to thematic content, also generating an actual momentum and mobility from which these films derive their aesthetic specificity.<sup>10</sup>

As both moving images and automobiles encompass movement and are the offspring of twentieth-century technology, the coalescence of these two phenomena builds aesthetic relationships. With these examples of the aesthetic reconstruction of speed – the physical experience of being doubly in a moving car and in the forward movement of the media

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<sup>8</sup> Iain Borden, *Drive: Journeys through Film, Cities and Landscapes*, London: Reaktion Books, 2013. pp. 12–13.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>10</sup> Laura Mulvey, *Death 24x a Second: Stillness and the Moving Image*, London: Reaktion Books, 2009. p. 77.

specificity – at the basis of its aesthetics, *You Saw Nothing in Fukushima* examines the notion of speed materialised by digital video in affinity with capitalism’s figurative speed. The apotheosis of speed is a shared aspiration between automotive technology and capitalism.

David Harvey, citing Karl Marx, notes that to “Speeding up ‘the velocity of circulation of capital’ contributes to the accumulation process. Under these conditions ‘even spatial distance reduces itself to time: the important thing is not the market’s distance in space but the speed ... with which it can be reached’.”<sup>11</sup> The capitalist imperative of “the annihilation of space by time” is accomplished by the acceleration of speed. The creation of global markets requires the compression of space by time with accelerated means of transportation and communication technology. Faster transportation and communication are essential for speeding up the process of capitalist accumulation.

Automotive physical speed, on the other hand, is the offspring of the historicity of design and engineering. As car designer Kota Nezu notes, the industrial materialisation of high technology including the automobile was the subject of the projection of the bright hopeful future imagined both by society and by individuals in the mid-twentieth century. As one of the materialisations of such imaginings, the automobile was not only a means of commuting but also a product that embodied the attainment of dreams and a bright future closely tied up with the cultural admiration for speed.<sup>12</sup> Automotive engineering developed, being projected by the dreams of growth and technological advancement, until the oil crisis in 1973 and 1979, the watershed period when automotive design was turned towards fuel efficiency.<sup>13</sup> In response to the low economic growth of developed industrial countries and the environmental concerns of the 1990s when mass production and consumption as a result of industrialisation and capitalism came to be rethought, automotive design was directed towards eco-friendliness. It thereby left behind its symbolic status evoking the bright future, revealing the dark side of excessive CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and the overconsumption of limited fuel resources.<sup>14</sup> Resultingly, Nezu advocates the necessity of slowness, lightness, and softness in automotive design as representative of today’s culture.

The automobile embodies, as Nezu describes, the cultural aspirations of an era. At the advent of its industrial materialisation, the automobile embodied the advent of the bright and hopeful future projected onto high technology. In the industrial shift to Connected, Automated, Shared, Electric vehicles (CASE) today, an automobile embodies the cultural aspiration true to the present time. With its material embodiment tied up with aspirations, hopes, and dreams, transcending its function as a means of commuting, automotive technology represented the arrival of the bright and hopeful future as much as nuclear technology did in the material flux of high technology.

The automobile, in the particular context of the grand narrative of growth in Japan, in which a dream of a prosperous future emerged from the ashes and memories of World War II,

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<sup>11</sup> David Harvey, *Spaces of Capital: Towards a Critical Geography*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2001. p. 244.

<sup>12</sup> Kota Nezu, *カーデザインは未来を描く* [*Car Design Makes the Future*], Tokyo: Planets, 2017. pp. 22, 40.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

embodied national sentiments reflecting national history and a cultural projection of high technology. As a driver of trade and the economy, cars and vehicle parts are the top two exports from Japan today. Within these cultural and economic social backgrounds, the automobile tied to the forward movement of digital video symbolises the economic state of growth, progress, and development. In the grand narrative of growth, speeding-up shaped an ideology characterised by one answer: to achieve the economic state that would lead the nation to wealth and happiness. Speed, thus, is semiotically embedded in the structural specificity of forward movement in the following two ways: as a Marxist concept of compression by time for growth, and as cultural aspirations of the past century.

In this section, we have looked at the technological developments of the automobile and moving images as the offspring and aspiration of the twentieth century. The aesthetic coalescence between the automobile and the forward movement of digital video is supported by the structural affinity of the forward momentum between these two phenomena. Just as geographers and economists consider space as a subject for compression, speed is explored here as an agent materialised by transport and communication technologies, one of which is the automobile. Through these entwined affinities, conceptions, and projections, I create the semiotics of speed in the aesthetic language of digital video.

The following sections analyse Italian filmmaker Michelangelo Antonioni's *Zabriskie Point* (1970). In doing so we, firstly, continue to examine the capitalist logic of compression within the filmic reconstruction, and secondly, investigate the cabin as a boundary in the liminality of the site of travelling. The observation from the car window, a scene in *Zabriskie Point*, is a moment of the formation of the seeing subjectivity. In this formation, the nothingness of seeing, and consequently of knowing and understanding, is problematised. We will come back this issue in the last part of this chapter and examine it further in the age of information and communications technology. Antonioni creates his own filmic language from the capitalist context of the United States in 1970s.

### **Cabin and Car Windows: *Zabriskie Point***

Besides many iconic scenes that this film is known for, my argument on *Zabriskie Point* focuses on a well-crafted capitalist portrait of the United States depicted from a car window. Portraying the economic and cultural capital of the west coast, Los Angeles, from the perspective of the senior executives in a moving car, the car window emerges as a liminal site between the cabin and the site of travelling, the location of a merged filmic construction and sociological observation.

A part-time worker, Daria (Daria Halpin), works as a secretary for Lee Allen (Rod Taylor), a senior executive of a mammoth real estate developer, Sunnydune, in Los Angeles, California. A lone wolf, Mark (Mark Frechette), is a college student who is suspected of the murder of a police officer at a radical student protest. The two youngsters – one travelling by car and another by aeroplane, for different purposes and to different destinations – encounter each other at the dusty horizon of Death Valley and engage in the intimate act of

love with numerous other couples behind the dunes. This is one of the most iconic scenes of the film, being set in the lifeless, drained, and void landscape of the desert of California, which creates a sharp comparison with the urban capitalist cityscape of downtown Los Angeles and its industrialised surrounding areas. Here, downtown Los Angeles is a landscape of freeways, factories, skyscrapers, advertisements, and millions of automobiles. As much as these socioeconomic materialisations are identifiable as a location of capital, the film also exposes the political and cultural conflicts of the 1970s, the activist movements against the Vietnam War, for civil rights, and against land developments, as contributing to growing social disparity and ecological destruction.<sup>15</sup>

In a scene 20 minutes from the beginning of the film, Lee Allen and his associate (G. D. Spradlin) are in a car on the streets of Los Angeles. This scene follows the previous one of an executive meeting at one of Sunnydune's office rooms, where the two characters and other senior managers were in discussion while watching their new TV commercial. The windows behind them detail their location in the cluster of skyscrapers. Fragments of the TV commercial were shown: miniature human figures of men and women playing tennis and golf, a man watering his garden, and a woman cooking in her kitchen, all in their own suites of accommodation. Watching it, none of the executives spoke, but the cheerful narration of the TV commercial was foregrounded. While Lee is now driving, they chat about a magazine article on the number of millionaires in the United States, which represents the customers of Sunnydune. The car radio is on in the background although neither of them is attentive to it. The visual sequence starts with the reflection in the back mirror, then in the cabin, and the surrounding environment.

[Busy traffic on the back mirror]

MAN (ON RADIO): The freeway connecting central Los Angeles to the Foothill has moved 50,000 residents to other locations while the homes and businesses have been moved or destroyed according to figures received by the Housing Administration.

[Serious, Lee's eyes close up, reflected on the back mirror]

Vietnam. The Total US servicemen killed in Vietnam is reaching 50,000. Thousands of our young men returned to the hospital ...

[Lee driving and his associate reading a magazine]

[External Advertisement: *27 times a day to New York, American Airline* with an image of a watch]

[Simultaneously Lee glances at his watch]

HIS ASSOCIATE: Did you see this?

LEE: What's that?

HIS ASSOCIATE: We have seven centimillionaires now.

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<sup>15</sup> For the social background of the United States in the 1970s in relation to the film, see Murray Pomerance, "Zabriskie Point" in *Michelangelo Red Antonioni Blue: Eight Reflections on Cinema*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2011. pp. 157–198.

LEE: Who's we?

HIS ASSOCIATE: California. Texas just had four. New York still has the most. Well, so far, that is. Heh. That's right.

[External Advertisement: *NEED A JOB? SEE ME OR CALL 481 3721*]

MAN (ON RADIO): Although a disturbance near the cafeteria brought in over 200 campus policemen, highway patrolmen and sheriff's deputies. Twenty-five students were arrested along with the faculty members believed to be members of a militant organization. The governor spoke at the businessman's luncheon and said the time has come to remove the campus problem students.

[image removed for copyright reasons]

*Figure 1 Zabriskie Point*

[image removed for copyright reasons]

Figure 2 *Zabriskie Point*

[image removed for copyright reasons]

Figure 3 *Zabriskie Point*

This short, intensely constructed scene starts with the slightly abstracted image of the busy traffic reflected in the back mirror. It remains in the mirror reflection observing Lee's preoccupied gaze. [Figure 1] The next scene is filmed from the back seat, keeping the focus on the mirror positioned between Lee and his associate, as if the camera were another passenger curiously waiting for them to break a silence. This is followed by four quick cuts: the portraits of them chatting filmed from the left [Figure 2], the American Airways billboard advertisement, their portraits again but of Lee checking the time on his watch, and the taxi advertisement for job recruitments filmed through the windscreen. [Figure 3] The sequence of the scenes begins with the intense focused expression of Lee driving and preoccupied with work problems in continuity from the previous scene of the office meeting. New York appears twice, positioned visually and audibly as the richest US city and an economic power as well as the first vertical city in the world. These two cuts depict the modernist and capitalist notion of time: the endorsed frequency of flight services in the American Airways advertisement and Lee's act of checking the time on his watch. In this depiction, the notion of space implicitly appears as the subject to be compressed by time by a means of fastest mobility.

Antonioni's collage of the sequence of these cuts, of the depicted subconscious and perceptions of the passengers in the liminality of the site of travelling, allows the cabin to emerge as an encapsulated, extended space of their consciousness as well as a location of the boundary that delineates class and the socioeconomic disparity in the United States in 1970.<sup>16</sup> These on-street advertisements and the radio broadcast function to depict the

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<sup>16</sup> For other examples on the perception of the passengers at the liminality of the site of travelling, see Steven Spielberg's *Empire of the Sun* (1987) and Ingmar Bergman's *Tystnaden* (*The Silence*, 1963). Both films depict a boy looking from the windows of his means of transportation at the brink of war. The cabin in *Empire of the*

socioeconomic and sociocultural background of the Vietnam War, the land development of urbanisation and student movements, to which the passengers, who engage in their own conversation, pay no attention. The act of driving is symbolically a drive for the capitalist economy structurally tied to the filmic media-specificity of the forward movement. Against the social realism Antonioni delineates, the space of the cabin, an extended space of the passengers' capitalist consciousness, is driven by the ideology of faster turn-over and accumulation.<sup>17</sup> The cabin as a boundary segregates the passengers, the senior executives, from the working class and the weak symbolised by the job recruitments (exclusion), and connects these passengers with the time efficiency and spatial compression that the airline company advertisement endorses as the apotheosis of capitalist economy that they live in (inclusion). The cabin identifies itself with the boundary of capitalist–labour, which becomes explicit with the scene of Mark joking to a police officer that his name is Karl Marx. The car window is, thus, a location of the reformation of subjectivity, the self–other relation, and of distance.

Films by Belgian film director Chantal Akerman also utilise the cabin as a location of the reformation of subjectivity and distance in documentary filmmaking, which inevitably characterises the gaze. In *D'Est (From the East, 1993)*, Akerman films cities from the former Socialist Bloc in Poland, Russia, and former East Germany, from an automobile. The cabin which reforms the gaze in *D'Est* is that of the film director *from the West*, the capitalist country of Belgium. *Sud (South, 1999)* is a documentary film about James Byrd Jr., a black man who was killed by being dragged behind an automobile and hanged on a tree by three white supremacists in Jasper, Texas in 1998. Akerman films from an automobile on the empty road of Jasper where Byrd was dragged, placing herself inside the cabin, the position of the white supremacists. The location of Akerman designated by the cabin and the window, through which she looks, reformulates her subjectivity and positions her on a certain side, that of the capitalist and of the white supremacist, in the context of travelling. Catherine Russell also comments on Akerman's subjectivity regarding another of her films produced in the United States, *News from Home (1977)*, that "a European newly arrived in America, Akerman's gaze is a revision of the colonial gaze of discovery".<sup>18</sup>

The viewers' gaze is consolidated with hers. This is a complicity, which we shall come back to examine further in the context of the 3.11 disasters in part 3. Witnessing of the burdensome histories becomes an apparent silent negotiation transferred to the viewers. The use of long takes amplifies the silence and renders an impression of heaviness. In this heavy and silent realm of sight, the car window in Akerman's films formulates the seeing subjectivity, contextualising the seeing subject within the positionality in the histories discussed.

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*Sun* and the train in *Tystnaden* appear as the extended space of the child passengers' innocence and powerlessness. Also compare them with the cabin as the space of criminal intention in Jonathan Glazer's *Under the Skin (2013)*.

<sup>17</sup> Driving here is also the narrative drive as the story develops as the characters drive. Consider the act of driving as the narrative drive in Laura Mulvey, *Death 24x a Second (2006)* and film examples including *The Passenger* by Michelangelo Antonioni (1975), *Psycho* by Alfred Hitchcock (1960), and *Thelma & Louise* by Ridley Scott (1991).

<sup>18</sup> Russell, *ibid.*, p. 168.

## Decompression

Antonioni's filmic construction also depicts the notion of time in capitalism, sharply contrasting Los Angeles, the centre, with Death Valley and Phoenix, the periphery. The indubitable value of time in capitalism, however, is questioned by Daria's behaviour. She refuses to take a flight, the fastest way to Phoenix, to accompany Lee on his business trip. Instead, she drives for more than 10 hours. Being a fugitive, Mark manipulates an aeroplane, not with the capitalist temporal logics of compression of space, but to run away from the authority. The spacious depiction of the landscape between Los Angeles and Phoenix is supported by their lack of interest in capitalist compression of space by time. The contrasted modalities of travelling – Daria horizontally by automobile and Mark altitudinally by aeroplane – create the permissive, sedate, and playful depiction of the vast desert; the land and sky successfully escaped from compression. Antonioni, thus, stretches out the space that is meant to be compressed.

The rejection of the capitalist logic of the compression of space by time is embodied in Daria and Mark's choices on modes of transport. Antonioni's conceptual counter-logic of spatial decompression unfolds in the coalescence of Marxist geographical space and the ineluctable spatiality of the two-dimensional space of film. The merging of the conceptual and aesthetical spaces is a resistance against compression. In part 2, we further explore this resistance against compression and decentralisation within the forward movement of digital video.

In this section we have looked at Antonioni's filmic reconstruction against the capitalist logic of compression and the construction of the cabin as the social boundary of class segregation. The cabin as an encapsulated space reforms the seeing subjectivity, which activates the boundary that excludes and includes, characterises the gaze, and politicises positionalities. Antonioni, thus, has in this way constructed a capitalist portrait of the United States.

In part 2, confining itself to the medium of digital video and the context of Japan, *You Saw Nothing in Fukushima* employs the semiotics of speed as the capitalist drive, the drive for growth, progress and advancement, and as the cultural aspiration that marked the nation and the era of growth. Within this employment, the semiotics of speed examines variations of the identification of the nation in the different periods, such as the post-growth period and the post-3.11 period. Since such an examination addresses the apotheosis of growth and is conducted from the periphery of Fukushima, the semiotics of speed portrays the state of the periphery in the forward movement, namely in relation to the growth. This further examination into the variation of the identification and the apotheosis of speed elaborates the semiotics of speed. In this elaboration, *slow-down* is examined as deacceleration and the fragmentation of speed within the forward movement of digital video.



## 2

In part 2 of this chapter, through the semiotics of speed that we have established in part 1, we examine the identification of the Japanese nation with speed. Portraying the nation in the forward movement of digital video, the semiotics of speed examines the velocity – the forward movement, of the automobile and of the economy – manipulated in *You Saw Nothing in Fukushima*. We will examine the manipulation, the coalescence between the structural specificities of digital video and the political and economic theories on centre–periphery relations with reference to sociologist Hiroshi Kainuma.

According to Kainuma, the NPP-hosting villages in Fukushima were once poor, yet supported themselves by fishing and farming in limited, self-sufficient, localised economies before modernity. However, the disparity continued to develop in a stagnant spiral of poverty occasioned by the bad harvests due to natural disasters in 1902 and 1905 and the consequential increase in taxation.<sup>19</sup> Poverty remained the immediate issue for them even during the totalitarian war regime of the 1940s. This regime was a period of increasing integration of the periphery into the centralised system as a supplier of soldiers, agricultural products, tax revenues, and electricity.<sup>20</sup> This wartime centralisation reconfigured the existing decentred spatial relation for the sake of the centralists' concerns: the utility of geographical proximity to Tokyo, the obtainment of resources and land, and the maintenance of state secrets, establishing a Tokyo-centric hegemony.<sup>21</sup> Towards the final phase of the war, and with no hope for a Japanese victory, the significance of these peripheries as suppliers increased momentarily, and corresponded to the decrease in the amount of resources that could be extracted from Japan's colonies. The war ended in 1945 and the colonies were liberated, however, this process, the exploitative characteristic of integration into the centralised system, continued and was further reinforced after the war.<sup>22</sup>

The change in modality of Japan's post-war power production and consumption corresponded to the industrial shift from agriculture and light industry to post-war chemical and heavy industries. In the post-war social flux and change, villages started to suffer problems such as the decline of agriculture, domestic migration, depopulation, and an

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<sup>19</sup> According to Kainuma, the Japanese government was unable to pay these villages the subsidies for the bad harvests due to their financial inability after the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905.

<sup>20</sup> Kainuma, *ibid.*, p. 177.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 187.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 188.

ageing community. The sustainability of rural life was in peril.<sup>23</sup> The 1954 establishment of state subsidies to municipalities, as part of the cross-sectional centralisation of everything from the constabulary to education, strengthened the dependent relationship between the centre and the periphery. Those reforms and the following economic plans of the 1960s, aligned to development, further embedded local municipalities, *chiho* (地方), into a hierarchical political scheme. The epoch-making National Income Doubling Plan sought to maximise the growth rate in 1960, in the midst of the high-growth period of the mid 1950s to 1970.<sup>24</sup> During this period, the growth rate accelerated and even went beyond the targeted rate.

Industrial pollution became a social issue from this period as a shadow of growth. In the 1960s photojournalist Kenji Higuchi documented patients suffering from pulmonary and respiratory diseases induced by sulphur dioxide air pollution from the oil refinery in Yokkaichi, Mie, an industrialised city on the Pacific coast.<sup>25</sup> Shisei Kuwabara and William Eugene Smith documented Minamata disease, a neurological disease first observed in the 1950s, caused by mercury poisoning in the wastewater from a chemical factory in Minamata, Kumamoto.<sup>26</sup> The second outbreak of Minamata disease was found in Aga, Niigata in the mid 1960s.<sup>27</sup>

Growth accelerated local developments consolidating the centre–periphery structure. This included the top-down implementation of budgets that provided an “addictive” common ground that rural municipalities depended upon for their survival.<sup>28</sup> The Comprehensive National Land Development Act in 1962, for example, a regional development measure aligned to the Double Income Plan, inaugurated the New Industrial Cities Programme under which 15 areas were designated for industrial development by being allocated preferential treatment for taxes, budget expenditures, and loan terms.<sup>29</sup> One of those 15 areas was Niigata. Uneven geographical development strengthened in the form of the demographic and industrial polarisations. By 1969, the revised National Land Development Act was promoted to mitigate the uneven development by means of large-scale infrastructure projects that included highways and *shinkansen* (新幹線: high-speed railways). As this brief account shows, these developmental measures were characterised by the prioritisation of industrial development and the consequential countermeasures to compensate for uneven development, including the implementation of the new transport system. The Act aimed to connect any location in the country to the centre (Tokyo and Osaka) by a journey of within 3

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 249.

<sup>24</sup> Shinji Yoshioka and Hirofumi Kawasaki, “Japan’s High-Growth Postwar Period: The Role of Economic Plans.” Economic and Social Research Institute, Cabinet Office, Government of Japan. August 2016. pp. 14, 16.

<sup>25</sup> See Kenji Higuchi, 四日市 [Yokkaichi], Osaka: Rokugatusha-shobo, 1972.

<sup>26</sup> See Shisei Kuwabara, 水俣病 [Minamata Disease], Tokyo: Sanichi-shobo, 1965, 水俣病 1960–1970 [Minamata Disease 1960–1970], Tokyo: Asahishinbun-sha, 1970, and 水俣・韓国・ベトナム [Minamata, Korea, Vietnam], Tokyo: Bansei-sha, 1982. See also W. Eugene Smith and Aileen M. Smith, *Minamata: A Warning to the World*, London: Chatto & Windus, 1975.

<sup>27</sup> See Niigata Prefecture <<https://www.pref.niigata.lg.jp/sec/seikatueisei/1195661749709.html>>.

<sup>28</sup> Kainuma, *ibid.*, pp. 249, 323.

<sup>29</sup> Shinji Yoshioka and Hirofumi Kawasaki, *ibid.*, p. 39.

hours. This drew a map of Japan with 7,200 km of high-speed railways and 7,600 km of highways running across the country.<sup>30</sup>

Kainuma sees Fukushima as an example of such a status of periphery within the developmentalism of post-war Japan. Despite the geographical countermeasures planned, the periphery was abandoned to competition and left in an increasingly fragile position as investment in infrastructure was shifted to enhance the international connectivity of the country, away from the goal of increasing domestic connectivity to Tokyo and Osaka as described in the 1987 version of the Act.<sup>31</sup> This revision showed the aspect for the internationalisation of Tokyo though investment in international connectivity. It was also reflected in the privatisation of the National Rail and Japan Airways in 1987, as much as it showed decentralisation.<sup>32</sup>

Political scientist Osamu Watanabe describes neoliberalism in Japan as a reconstitution of developmentalism, pointing to the lack of maturation of a welfare state in his contributed essay for the Japanese translation of *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (2005) by David Harvey.<sup>33</sup> Harvey's observation of the neoliberal doctrine is as a reconstitution of class power.<sup>34</sup> Showing affinity with Harvey's observation on power, Kainuma describes the reconstitution of the dominant power between the centre and the periphery in the advancement of the centre–periphery structure as “the voluntary and strategic approach”.<sup>35</sup> As we shall see later, he also describes this state as one of “automatic and voluntary obedience” for the survival of the periphery.<sup>36</sup> The degradation of the state of the periphery in the age of globalisation and neoliberalism is, according to Kainuma, advanced and perpetuated.

## Slow-down

We have looked at the pre- and post-war constructions of power inequality between the centre and the periphery, as a result of which the peripheries are impoverished today. Fukushima, which Kainuma described as one of these impoverished peripheries, has been embedded within the post-war advancement of the centre–periphery structure. As the peripherality was reconstituted and perpetuated by the uneven development and financial dependence, the periphery has been left in the permanent shadow of centralisation.

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<sup>30</sup> Katsuhisa Tsujimoto, “空間結合をめぐる現代的要請と交通体系整備” [“The Contemporary Need for Spatial Integration and the Implementation of the Transport System”] in Eiji Ooizumi and Yoshiharu Yamada eds. *空間の社会経済学* [*Socioeconomics of Space*], Tokyo: Nihon-keizai-hyoronsya, 2003. p. 135.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 140.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 140.

<sup>33</sup> Osamu Watanabe, “日本の新自由主義 ハーヴェイ『新自由主義』に寄せて” [“Neoliberalism in Japan: A Contributed Essay for Harvey's *Neoliberalism*”], in David Harvey, *新自由主義 その歴史的展開と現在* [*Neoliberalism: Historical Development and Today*], Trans. Osamu Watanabe, Nariya Morita, Chigaya Kinoshita, Sadahatu Ooya, and Yoshitaka Nakamura, translated from *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

<sup>34</sup> David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

<sup>35</sup> Kainuma, *ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 375.

The high-growth period ended due to the oil crisis in the 1970s. This is generally understood as the end of the post-war growth. Japan slowly moved to become a neoliberal state in the 1980s, conducting privatisation in the belief that so doing would lead to a resurgence of growth.

However, rapid growth has been replaced by *slow-down*. Speed, as we have built its semiotics, is the capitalist drive, namely the drive for growth, progress, and advancement. It is also the identification that marked the post-war nation and the era that began in the ashes of World War II. The high-growth period manifested speed in the economy. On this basis, the semiotics of speed in this premise portrays post-war Japan in the forward movement, an identification of the nation with speed.

This section elaborates this semiotics of speed from the perspective of post-growth and the periphery with the aesthetic manifestation of *slow-down* in the forward movement. Slow-down, as opposed to the fastest point, which was what the centralist and peripheralist vision of the past century dreamed of achieving, is the consequence of centralisation, development, and growth. Slow-down is embodied by fragmentation of the forward movement of digital video in a slide show. Consisting of digital photographs subjected to a mechanism of automated shift, the slide show rebuilds the forward movement (speed) by presenting the fragments of digital images. *You Saw Nothing in Fukushima*, therefore, portrays the post-growth nation within the forward movement.

In the aesthetics of slow-down, an accelerating and intensifying drive for growth is stalled. The fastest point is an impossible point to achieve. The never-attainable fastest point, the highest point of modernity, thus, emerges as an impossible imaginary point, a myth. The fragmentation, from this point of view, signifies the remnants of the drive.

Unlike the digital photographs, the inserted digital video footage *Dead End* remains at the actual physical speed of the moving automobile. It recovers the unfragmented state of speed, in which the viewers are taken on a seamless road journey. It is structurally a congruent state with the forward momentum, as we see in the next section, as opposed to stillness as an incongruent state against the momentum within the forward movement of digital video. The journey is rendered structurally with the forward movement of digital video, where speed recovers acceleration and intensification, the characteristic of the modernist, or historical, drive by which the nation was accelerated towards the impossible fastest point. The sense of intoxication in the recovery of speed is an illusionary state referring to the resurgence of growth that post-growth Japan believed in, the glory of the past.

The automobile reaches a road closure, however, a dead end, due to the Disaster Countermeasures Basic Act, at a point 20 kilometres from the TEPCO Fukushima Daiichi NPP. The motion stops. The incessant slide-show images of the 3.11 disaster sites are *only* replayed. The slide-show state, identifying the nation with the economic state of slowness, leaves the viewers in the reality of the apotheosis of growth.

## Stillness, Incongruence

Towards the end of *Dead End*, the road closure due to the Act, the recovered speed, the congruent state with the forward momentum, is lost again. It is back to the fragmented state of speed, the incessant slide-show images of the economic state of slowness. This section discusses the incongruent state against the momentum, the stillness. In the last section, we looked at the two types of congruent movements rendered in the forward momentum: the fragmentation (slow-down) and the recovery of speed.

On the other hand, the three clips of inserted digital video, namely *Wind and Rain*, *A Seabird*, and *Shore*, are rendered in the forward movement *incongruently* within the semiotics of speed. With the animals, plants, wind, and waves being videographed outside the automobile with the use of a fixed camera, the camera focuses on the stillness of the environments, where the videographed subjects exist as a part of this environment. In the aftermath of the 3.11 disasters which caused widespread dissemination of radioactive pollution into the air and water, these videographed animals and nature are, just as much as humans, enduring, suffering, and exposed victims. The enduring stillness of the environments creates a state of lack of motion, which produces a sharp contrast with the photographed images from the moving automobile, an embodiment of speed. That is to say, within this contrast, the stillness as an associated aspect of the forward momentum is an incongruent state against the forward movement of digital video that is tied to the capitalist drive for growth and development. As the shadow of this drive, the sacrificed environment is rendered within the forward movement, embodying an incongruent state with the capitalist drive of the forward momentum. The incongruent state against the forward momentum is, therefore, from an environmental perspective, a resistance against compression; speed.<sup>37</sup>

Antonioni embodied decompression in *Zabriskie Point* within the narrative of the story through Daria's and Mark's disinterest in the capitalist drive for compression. Antonioni also rendered the space of Death Valley and Phoenix, a Marxist geographical space subject to compression, within the ineluctable spatiality of the two-dimensional space of film. This second strategy is structural to the medium of film. This is to say the decompression is embodied by a structural engagement with the ineluctable spatiality of the two-dimensional space of film.

In contrast, *You Saw Nothing in Fukushima*'s structural engagement is with the forward movement. The resistance or decompression that *You Saw Nothing in Fukushima* embodies is the incongruent state against the forward movement. Iain Borden, cited fully in part 1, noted regarding motion tied to modernity that "films help us understand that we often live

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<sup>37</sup> See further details of environmental issues in Japan researched by Kenichi Miyamoto, the pioneer in Environmental Economics and Finance. His award-winning publications include *戦後日本公害史* [A Critical History of Environmental Pollution in Postwar Japan], Tokyo: Iwanami-shoten, 2014; *環境経済学新版* [Environmental Economics. New Edition], Tokyo: Iwanami-shoten, 2007; and *恐るべき公害* [Fearsome Pollution], Tokyo: Iwanami-shoten, 1964.

dynamically and without the necessity of constant presence of self-reflective or rationalised thought”. If film, or any type of moving images, produced from a moving automobile, by virtue of the nature of its shared forward momentum, is a way to understand without the necessity of a constant presence of self-reflective or rationalised thought, the incongruent state that is embodied and produced by videographing outside the automobile is a rationalised reflection. The realm of sight that *Wind and Rain*, *A Seabird*, and *Shore* offer is such a space of reflection, in another word, contemplation, on modernity. Rendering the environmental pollution within the forward movement, these three inserted clips of digital video are contemplations on the economic growth of the past century in an explorative relation to ecology and the periphery. We shall explore the stillness fully in chapter 2.

### **Structural Automation, Loop**

As the fragmentation and the stillness are manifested within the structure of digital video, the forward movement, we continue to produce the aesthetics within the process. *You Saw Nothing in Fukushima* is governed by the structural automation of loop and shift, which I consider as the state of continuity. In this short section we focus on the loop and reconsider the fragmentation from the perspective of the periphery.

Automation, on an aesthetic level, is equivalent to the recursiveness in Rosalind Krauss’s theory of “the post-medium condition”.<sup>38</sup> Krauss defines the recursiveness as the structure that rules the structures themselves.<sup>39</sup> Aligned with Krauss’s recursiveness in this structuralist sense, automation in *You Saw Nothing in Fukushima* is further sociologically coalesced with the automated condition of the perpetuated political and economic structure of centre–periphery that we looked at in part 2 with reference to Kainuma. As *You Saw Nothing in Fukushima* is a variable-dimension, looped digital video work, the structural automation of the loop, thus, embodies the perpetuated position of the periphery, which is, in Kainuma’s words, *automatic* and *voluntary obedience*. Hence, slow-down is the fragmentation of speed, and this coalescence embodied by the slide show is looped. It is a perpetuated state of the permanent political and socioeconomic shadows under the advanced mode of centralisation. The loop within *You Saw Nothing in Fukushima*, entwined with Krauss’s and Kainuma’s theories, structurally perpetuates the peripherality. The fragmentation of the forward movement, hence, from the perspective of the periphery, signifies the impoverished state under the exploitative drive of centralisation.

So far, through *You Saw Nothing in Fukushima* we have examined the fragmentation of the forward movement as two discrete signifiers. The first signifier was, as slow-down, the identification of the nation of the post-growth era with speed. This identification with speed had a diverted identification as a dead end, as of the post-3.11 era. Both the identifications of the nation, signified by slow-down and dead end, reflect the fragmentation of the forward movement as the state of a weakened drive for growth. The second signifier was, as

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<sup>38</sup> Rosalind E. Krauss, *Under Blue Cup*, Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press, 2011.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4. For further reading, see Rosalind E. Krauss, *A Voyage on the North Sea: Art in the Age of the Post-Medium Condition*, London: Thames & Hudson, 2000.

stillness, portrayed as the impoverished state of the periphery under the exploitative drive of centralisation.

### Portrait in the Forward Movement

In this last section of part 2, we take a close look at the portrayed identifications of the nation in the forward movement and other structural specificities. As the identification of the nation is the grand narrative of growth, it is imagined and performed.

We have explored the semiotics of speed tied to the structural specificities of digital video and the slide show: the forward movement, fragmentation, loop, and automation. We have also discussed how the periphery has been historically embedded within the political and economic structure that enhanced growth in post-war Japan. The production of the semiotics and aesthetics has been itself an investigation but also a material outcome of the auto-ethnographic positioning of myself as the artist-researcher in relation to Fukushima. I set out this positioning in two ways: the political and economic spatial relation of the centre–periphery structure, which we have already looked at, and the cultural construction of the relational peripherality against the centre, through which we consider the grand narrative of growth in the following paragraphs.

Fukushima is one of the providers of electric power, one of the centralists' essential requirements for growth, in particular of nuclear-fuel-led production. It is where the grand narrative of growth is written by the complex psychology of the traumatised atomic nation of post-war Japan, and where it can be examined. Through examining Fukushima against the background of the post-war national acceptance of nuclear technology (NT), post-3.11 Fukushima emerges as a location of the social fissure in memories, sentiments, dreams, and beliefs between the past and the present. The 3.11 disasters exposed fragility, with the nation thrown into flux and change, loss and uncertainty. The following paragraphs examine the grand narrative of growth from a post-3.11 perspective, with a focal light cast onto the dichotomous identification between the centre and the periphery and that of the nation with the military and civil uses of NT.

After the fragility and loss of the atomic trauma of 1945, the dichotomous notion, dark–bright, was politically mobilised and the civil use of NT was normalised and rendered acceptable. The United States' nuclear policy change regarding the global inspection and control of fissionable materials during the Cold War period marked a watershed in reshaping the sentiment of the nation with the traumatic memory.<sup>40</sup> In 1954, the budget bill for nuclear-generated power production was passed in the Diet (the Japanese Parliament), corresponding to Dwight D. Eisenhower's Atoms for Peace speech in 1953. Reflecting the

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<sup>40</sup> Much research has been done on the reshaping of the national sentiment. See Hitoshi Yoshioka, *原子力の社会史 その日本的発展* [Social History of Atomic Energy in Japan], Tokyo: Asahishinbun-sha, 2013; Tetsuo Arima, *原発と原爆「日・米・英」核武装の暗闘* [Nuclear Energy and Atomic Bomb: The Dark Nuclear Armament Feud between Japan, the US and the UK], Tokyo: Bungei-shunjyu, 2012; and also Toshiyuki Tanaka and Peter Kuznick, *原発とヒロシマ「原子力平和利用」の真相* [Nuclear Power in Post-War Hiroshima: A Truth about Atoms for Peace], Tokyo: Iwanami-shoten, 2011.

Diet's decision, the Atomic Energy Basic Act came into force in 1955. In 1956, Eisenhower gave his speech on "the fearful atomic dilemma – to devote its entire heart and mind to finding the way by which the miraculous inventiveness of man shall not be dedicated to his death, but consecrated to his life".<sup>41</sup> At the same time, the Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations (one of the largest victims' associations) stated that, "If our ordeals and resurrection could play the role of a fort in protecting the life and happiness of humanity in the atomic age, we would be able to express from the bottom of our hearts, 'We are glad that we are alive.'"<sup>42</sup>

As this shows, the dichotomy of dark–bright discriminated between military and civil uses of NT. This discrimination psychologically and ideologically legitimated the contribution of nuclear fission to energy production as "the needs rather than the fears of mankind" and as a means by which "to move out of the dark chamber of horrors into the light".<sup>43</sup> This dark–bright construal of the discrete applications of NT pervaded the introductory period of the civil use of NT in the 1950s in Japan. This merged well with the dichotomous relationship between the periphery and the centre. For example, the NPP, a material embodiment of the technology, was given a positive image shaped by this dichotomy. For the periphery, to be an NPP-hosting municipality was metaphorically the arrival of the long-desired affluent and urban life. The periphery embraced these metaphorical meanings, mirroring their relational identification of peripherality, backwardness, and underdevelopedness with the centre. The NPP was the thorny replica of modernity they built on their land. The thorny replica of modernity was a disidentification of themselves with this peripherality.

The linchpin of these dichotomies of dark–bright and advancedness–backwardness lies at the core of the post-Hiroshima and -Nagasaki nation's complex entwining of peace and NT, of the post-war desire for affluence and an escape from poverty, and of the periphery's complex psychology of disidentification. The portrait of the nation, the grand narrative of growth, casts the strongest light on this linchpin.

At the centre, self-sufficient power production was seen as essential for national sovereignty and growth with the limited natural resources available. In the periphery, on the other hand, the simple dream of family life not subject to penury or the need for migrant working was cherished as an essential part of the well-being and sustainability of their communities. Overlooking the differences in their discrete dreams of the future, the civil use of the technology functioned as a common ground for the centralist and peripheralist, reforming them as collaborators, in what Kainuma describes as "nuclear villages".<sup>44</sup> Such a magnetic ground fostered the advance of centralisation. The completed nuclear fuel cycle was the centralists' long-cherished dream, their highest point of modernity, whereas sustainable city-like living was a tangible happiness for the periphery facing fragility.

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<sup>41</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Atoms for Peace*, addressed to the 470th Plenary Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly, on Tuesday, 8 December 1953. The full transcript is available at the International Atomic Energy Agency's website < <https://www.iaea.org/about/history/atoms-for-peace-speech>>.

<sup>42</sup> Nihon Hidankyo, *Message to the World*, issued on 10 August 1956. The full transcript is available at their website < <https://www.ne.jp/asahi/hidankyo/nihon/english/about/about1-02.html>>.

<sup>43</sup> Eisenhower, *ibid*.

<sup>44</sup> Kainuma, *ibid*.



In post-3.11 Japan, the reality of these dreams has been exposed; the completed nuclear fuel cycle has been a failure and the periphery remains fragile and has never been revitalised. As *You Saw Nothing in Fukushima* communicates in its aesthetic language, all the roads to these dreams and projections that the technology had drawn from the 1950s have seemed to reach *dead ends*. The war-torn landscape of ashes was transfigured by the affluent landscape of cement: the skyscrapers, highways, and coastal railway lines that *You Saw Nothing in Fukushima* witnesses through the car window. It is the landscape of a history of developmentalism, growth, and wealth, and uneven development, the spatial relation between the centre and the periphery. Through the post-3.11 car window one observes the remnant of the impossible dreams that today only evoke certain feelings of loss, detachment, and emptiness. The ignorable impossibility of the dreams looms from the fissure between the social and cultural sentiment of the past and the reality of today as the dark shadow covering the empty horizon of Fukushima. Kainuma writes:

It is a fine dream that democracy can be accomplished in cyberspace but, no matter the complexity of networks formed to the very corners of society, no radiation can be found in them. Just go north on Route 6. A road lined with *pachinko* parlours and consumer credit ATMs in abandoned land and fields born of the 'balanced development of the nation's land'. Cars enthusiastically decorated with all the disposable income squandered after housing and childcare were paid. The suburb style mass 'massive-car-park' retailers, redeemed from the shuttered streets of the old city centre bearing names of redevelopment too senseless to repeat. In the middle of it all, everyday life conducted with indifference. 'Yankii culture', 'local XX', etc., named by the centre for the centre, resonate in the emptiness. Just echoes of overwhelming meaninglessness. The landscape of a 'colony' that supported growth still remains fertile for the 'good intention' of the people of the centre.<sup>45</sup>

Kainuma pejoratively describes the emptiness in the landscape of Route 6 towards Fukushima. The empty meaning echoes in these empty names coined by the centre and labelled for the centre. It is the fertile land of consumption for the centre. The emptiness of the echo only sinks in witnessing the unendurable reality of the periphery. The fertility and the emptiness are what the passengers see on Route 6 from their car window.

*You Saw Nothing in Fukushima* encompasses the opposite states of movement, the forward movement and the stillness, in which the digital images are rendered. Eyes cannot fully grasp them as they slip away from sight. The eyes grasp nothing as the title, *You Saw Nothing*, suggests. It is the realm of sight that *You Saw Nothing in Fukushima* creates. The images slip into the distance that sight cannot fully reach.

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<sup>45</sup> Kainuma, *ibid.* pp. 383–384.

### 3

The last part of this chapter examines the nothingness of which the title, *You Saw Nothing*, constantly reminds the viewers and readers. As has already been anticipated in the last section of part 2, the textual recall of the title, *You Saw Nothing*, suggests the nothingness of knowing and understanding. In this part 3, the nothingness is discussed from the contemporary context of information and communications technology (ICT).

#### The Semblance of Photographic Knowledge

In *On Photography* (1971), Susan Sontag points to the limit of photographic knowledge and rejects the transcendence of the seeing subjectivity, stating that:

The limit of photographic knowledge of the world is that, while it can goad conscience, it can, finally, never be ethical or political knowledge. The knowledge gained through still photographs will always be some kind of sentimentalism, whether cynical or humanist. It will be a knowledge at bargain prices – a semblance of knowledge, a semblance of wisdom; as the act of taking pictures is a semblance of appropriation, a semblance of rape. The very muteness of what is, hypothetically, comprehensible in photographs is what constitutes their attraction and provocativeness. The omnipresence of photographs has an incalculable effect on our ethical sensibility.<sup>46</sup>

Sontag asserts that photographic knowledge is semblance and is never ethical or political knowledge. The omnipresence of photographs she describes in the early 1970s is still relevant in the age of ICT. For example, as described in the introduction, my knowledge of the 3.11 disasters in the first instance in Singapore was a mediated form of knowing through text messages and public TV monitors. Being temporally and spatially distanced from the tangible here and now of the 3.11 disasters, all that I could know was a reconfigured here and now through international news footage, nothing more than the photographic dominance of sight.

*You Saw Nothing in Fukushima* also reconfigures the lived experience of the specific time and space that I personally experienced in travelling in the disaster sites into the four sides of the frame as visual information. *You Saw Nothing in Fukushima* doubly delivers the 3.11

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<sup>46</sup> Susan Sontag, *On Photography*. London: Penguin Books, 1971. pp. 23–24.

disasters and my trips in the disaster sites as visual information to the viewers. That is to say, *You Saw Nothing in Fukushima* encompasses the multi-layered temporal and spatial distances that exist between the 3.11 disasters, my trips (videographing), and the viewers.

The nothingness is mutual and reciprocal. In the imagined/semblance synchronicity of here and now between the temporally and spatially distanced two elements of videographing and viewing, there is a semblance of the assumption of the “closed distance”.

### **Informatisation, Automatic Shift**

The viewers of *You Saw Nothing in Fukushima* are hardly able to know or understand the disasters as ethical or political knowledge through the digital photographs. Here, we further examine the semblance of knowledge through the slide show’s aesthetics of reduction.

A slide show is a recurrence of structurally automated shifts of images, which I have considered as a structural specificity. The slide show transmutes these digital photographs and videos of the disaster sites into the duration of a second of visual information. Hence, the slide show (the automated shift) functions to intensify the degree of informatisation which has already occurred in the process of the reconfiguration of the here and now. In this intensifying process, they are aesthetically brought to quantification in Jean-Luc Nancy’s sense. As in his *After Fukushima: The Equivalence of Catastrophes* (2014), the quantification of disasters leads to an exchangeable and comparable notion dismissing their non-equivalent nature.<sup>47</sup> The systematic reconfiguration into a second of visual information brings the irreducible difference of kinds and degrees of pain and damage of the disasters onto the terrain of commensurability. It is a terrain that operates equalisation and commensuration against these specificities of pain and damage. The automated shift demonstrates these operations aesthetically and embodies the terrain.

Prior to the slide show of informatisation, the car window of the photographic and videographic framing also perceptually homogenises the views and aesthetically equalates the pain and damage of the disasters. Sontag also states on the equalisation of meaning by photography that:

Crushed hopes, youth antics, colonial wars, and winter sports are alike – are equalised by the camera. Taking photographs has set up a chronic voyeuristic relation to the world which levels the meaning of all events.<sup>48</sup>

As Sontag describes of the establishment of a relation to the world by taking photographs, the car window, another form of frame to look through, equally establishes a relation to the world. The car window functions to reframe the experiences and landscapes lived through by the survivors and victims. The reframing imposes homogenisation and equalation on these experiences and landscapes of irreducible nature, leading to an exchangeable and

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<sup>47</sup> Jean-Luc Nancy, *After Fukushima: The Equivalence of Catastrophes*, New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2014.

<sup>48</sup> Sontag, *ibid.*, p. 11.

comparable notion in Nancy's sense. The framing from the car window is here an aesthetic quantification that casts the frame of commensurability onto the non-equivalent nature.

## Complicity

We have seen that *You Saw Nothing in Fukushima's* aesthetics of the slide show and framing from a car window doubly manifests the semblance of photographic knowledge through its aesthetic dismissal to the non-equivalent nature of specificity. In this section, we examine the semblance through the complicity in viewership. This complicity takes place between the videographing (or the photographing) and the viewers. In the premise of the viewership, they formulate the identical subjectivity of seeing. The videographer's (or photographer's) gaze is transferred to that of the viewers.

In part 1, we examined the formation of the seeing subjectivity from the car window through the example of Antonioni's film *Zabriskie Point*. Such a subjectivity was that of a detached passenger or an intact outsider. The viewers of *You Saw Nothing in Fukushima* formulate the same subjectivity in the cabin, an encapsulated extended space of passengers.

Art historian Michio Hayashi points out the complicity in the documentary film *311* (2011). *311* was co-produced by four Japanese journalists, Tatsuya Mori, Takeharu Watai, Yoju Matsubayashi, and Takaharu Yasuoka, and is about their visit to Fukushima from Tokyo by automobile two weeks after the disasters. Unlike the convention of news reports in the mass media, their reactions, such as exclamations and sighs, in response to what they saw at the sites were not eliminated from the final cut. Their deliberate violation of standard journalistic editing reveals their surprise, curiosity, excitement, fear, anxiety, and relief as unreserved reactions. This controversial editing approach discloses the discordant coexistence of their positionalities reflected in their seeing subjectivity. Their positionalities, the coexistence of intact outsiders and professional journalists, are exposed. Through their violation of the editing convention, their seeing subjectivity is exposed. Watching *311*, the seeing subjectivity of the journalists becomes that of the viewer, as Hayashi points out, "becoming conscious of our [the viewers'] complicity with the intrusive gaze of the directors".<sup>49</sup> In the identical subjectivity of the seeing in *311* between the journalists and the viewers, the journalists' desire to see, know, and understand is transferred to the viewers.

The viewers stay in complicity with the videographing of the journalists, confirming the identical subjectivity of seeing as Hayashi points out. In this complicit relation, the camera emerges as the apparatus of complicity. *You Saw Nothing in Fukushima* places the viewers in the same position as the viewers of *311*. *You Saw Nothing in Fukushima* exposes the seeing subjectivity of the artist-researcher holding the apparatus of complicity and has the viewers stay in complicity with her. What complicity remains to the viewers? It is of the nothingness of seeing:

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<sup>49</sup> Michio Hayashi, "Reframing the Tragedy: Lessons from Post-3/11 Japan." Anne Nishimura Morse and Anne E. Havinga eds. *In the Wake: Japanese Photographers Respond to 3/11*. Boston, MA: MFA Publications, 2015. 166–179. p. 169.

when I opened my eyes the car was in heavy traffic on a highway driving between skyscrapers. The megalopolis, expanding its reach to the furthest and growing towards the highest point in the sky, the dizzying vertical lines of the dense concrete forest: it was twilight. The empty horizontal line of the tsunami-affected areas, the loose even lines of the mountains contaminated by radioactive substances, and all the other flat landscapes seemed already distant. *You saw nothing*. The view from the car window is now a stream of endless buildings and electric lights.

Exposing the seeing subjectivity, the observation from a car window as an experience of liminality exposes the disparity between the two: the passenger and the site of travelling, in situated contexts. The semblance emerges doubly to the viewers as that of knowing and seeing from the car window of the moving automobile as a passenger and of photographic knowledge in the age of ICT.

### ***You Saw Nothing***

From such valid semblance, the title, *You Saw Nothing in Fukushima*, looms as if it were the voice of Eiji Okada in the reiteration of “you saw nothing in Hiroshima”, naming the realm of sight as a space of contemplation. As a space of contemplation, the realm of sight asks itself whether it is the space where the act of a semblance of knowing operates. The realm of sight that *You Saw Nothing in Fukushima* creates from the car window, in between the centre and the periphery, or on the highway or Route 6 in the process of the reformation of seeing subjectivity, questions the seeing subject, causing an oscillation of the liminality within which he or she exists.

In the reiteration of the title, *You Saw Nothing in Fukushima*, Kainuma’s observation of Route 6 quoted above emerges again as a landscape of irreducible meanings. He details the landscape, which the passenger might have overlooked from the car window, in comparison with the compressed space of cyberspace as the semblance of knowing:

It is a fine dream that democracy can be accomplished in cyberspace but, no matter the complexity of networks formed to the very corners of society, no radiation can be found in them. Just go north on Route 6. A road lined with *pachinko* parlours and consumer credit ATMs in abandoned land and fields born of the ‘balanced development of the nation’s land’. Cars enthusiastically decorated with all the disposable income squandered after housing and childcare were paid. The suburb style mass ‘massive car park’ retailers, redeemed from the shuttered streets of the old city centre bearing names of redevelopment too senseless to repeat. In the middle of it all, everyday life conducted with indifference. ‘*Yankii* culture’, ‘local XX’, etc., named by the centre for the centre, resonate in the emptiness. Just echoes of overwhelming meaninglessness. The landscape of a ‘colony’ that supported growth still remains fertile for the ‘good intention’ of the people of the centre.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Kainuma, *ibid.* pp. 383–384.

In this confrontation with the irreducible details of the landscape over Route 6 that Kainuma describes as that of a colony, the seeing subject is exposed to their semblance of knowing through seeing. Seeing is doubly questioned from the two perspectives of the mediated knowing that ICT allows and of the camera as an apparatus of equivalation and complicity. The vertical and the horizontal post-3.11 landscapes of the centre and the periphery seen through its window, an automobile is a rich arena of mobility, liminality, observation, and cultural projection. *You Saw Nothing in Fukushima*, the realm of sight produced at a car window, contemplates what you did not see.

The next chapter continues to contemplate, this time from the *shinkansen*, a high-speed railway system that runs across the centre and the periphery in Japan. From here we explore an evolution of stillness, the state incongruent with the forward movement of digital video, for a further examination of the impoverished state of the periphery. The examination proceeds, in contrast, in the motionless realm of sight.



# Waiting Room

Over 8,000 images of digital photographs and videos were created for the production of *You Saw Nothing in Fukushima* through visits in 2012, 2014, and 2018. These images are reconfigured into the structure of a slide show, an automated shift of one second per slide. The continuous shift of the images creates the forward movement of 60 images per minute.

Out of the 8,000 images, 52 images are selected and included within this thesis. The sequence attempts to embody the aesthetics of the original medium of digital video: speed, the nothingness of seeing, of knowing, and of understanding, the sense of intimacy and opacity, the outsidership, and the intactness of being in the cabin. The voyeuristic gaze from the car window is distanced and detached because, as we examined, the car window reforms the seeing subjectivity into that of a detached passenger or an intact outsider. The gaze as an outsider immediately becomes concrete when the eyes catch the sign on the road, *がんばろう福島 (Ganbarou Fukushima: Let's try our best together!)*. The togetherness that the sign connotes coexists conflictingly with the sense of detachment perceived through the gaze. The passing moment of this coexistence leaves behind the aftertaste of hypocrisy. The cabin emerges from the liminality of the disaster sites as a space of uncompressed distance from the survivors.

As reflected upon in the introduction and chapter 1 of the autobiographical texts, my experience of the 3.11 disasters is physically distanced from Japan and mediated through foreign news footage. A simple question, "What did I see?", emerged after I returned from the disaster sites to Tokyo, Singapore, and Hong Kong. The question became unignorable after my return to these vertical cityscapes of the centre while the flattened landscapes of the disaster sites and the cement debris occupied my mind for days. There was always the presence of uncompressed time and space when looking at the news footage and looking through the car window.



My mobility between these centres and Fukushima became an incubator to develop the chain of questions between what I saw or the nothing of what I saw in the realm of sight. In the very act of answering the question, my next question was born, what do we understand about the pain of the other? There was a tiny view of the harbour in the space between skyscrapers from the flat on the 30<sup>th</sup> floor of an apartment building on Hollywood Road where I lived in Hong Kong Island. Below, there was the intoxication of the people, fancy retail outlets, and restaurants. The sombre mood of Japan at the nation's critical juncture, which I thought was a part of me, did not find any space to dwell in the frenzy of Hong Kong. The binary mobility between the two opposites of the affluent city and the devastated disaster sites was not an easy adaptation, opening more and more fissures.

Hong Kong appeared as if on steroids, whereas Japan seemed like a wounded body, unable to run. There was the sense of exhaustion, weakness, and dead end. The disasters seemed like something still too close to look back upon for the nation. It unveiled for me how much emotional involvement was brought into their lives as pain. I share the pain as collective memory today, but the pain was something I could only imagine; it did not exist in my life as an actual pain with texture or something I could feel in the air. The lack of texture seemed a disidentification of myself with the nation. The delicate nation on the verge of a collapsing future and economy also made me realise that it is intimately tied to the core of their identification. Healing seemed to be needed. I wondered how they would recover and reidentify themselves. This question is central to chapter 2.

Before I started this PhD research, I interviewed Mr. Matashichi Ooishi, a survivor of the Bikini Incident, a former crew member of the Lucky Dragon No.5, who had been exposed to radiation from a hydrogen bomb test in 1954. I was interested to learn what he thought as a *hibakusha* after the 3.11 disasters. After the exposure to radiation from the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, *hibaku* (radiation exposure) dominated the nation's anxiety. I interviewed three more *hibakusha* of the Hiroshima atomic bombing. When Barack Obama visited the city in 2017 as the first serving US president to do so, I watched the historical moment on a TV monitor with one of the *hibakushas* I interviewed. I translated the transcript of his interview into English, which he used for his volunteer testimony for foreign visitors to the Peace Memorial Museum. It was proofread by a serving member of

the US military personnel. Both the *hibakusha*, who was only a one-year-old boy when the bomb hit, and the young American man were happy. There were moments wherein something was added to the incomplete projects of healing and of understanding the scars of the bombing between the two nations, particularly for the survivors. These cross-generational experiences, the perishing social memories, and the generational fissure evolves further in chapter 3.

The ashes upon which the Japanese people lived after World War II, from where the reconstruction and growth of the country emerged, received colour from the lively voices of my interlocutors. They told me many things that I didn't know about the height of the growth and their lives within its shadowed histories. In the vividness of their voices and facial expressions, I felt something that they embraced and identified themselves with.

I also interviewed a 90-year-old Singaporean man who had fled to India due to the Japanese aggression in 1941. He is the oldest sailor in Singapore. We sailed together as if we were a family. His story of what he experienced as a young boy seemed to be filled with a bit of a sense of adventure. Another Singaporean man told me about his father, who was very angry about Japan until his death.

*You saw nothing* alludes to the line in *Hiroshima mon amour*, and over the years I conducted research that binds the event of Hiroshima to that of Fukushima. Although many of these endeavours did not take final material form for this research, it has become the timestream that runs through the grand narrative of growth, the ashes to the cement, the two points of time in Japanese history that frame the post-3.11 examinations. Broken and grey, fragility was exposed. The in-between of those fragile landscapes of ashes and cement seemed to embody more than the material expression of wealth for the nation. It was a vague texture of pride and rapture, in which the emptiness became tangible. I could not fully grasp the texture of pride and rapture of living through these moments and the apotheosis of growth. Instead the tangible texture that I felt was only the emptiness of its value and the presence of a fissure.

The texture I felt was due to the contemporary political, economic flux and change that has informed this research as well as the space I live in. The Fifth Basic Environment Plan



(2018), which integrates the economy and the environment as a new avenue for growth, is a response to the international trend of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement, both adopted in 2015. These adaptations are seen as much in automobiles, which chapter 1 discussed, as in the consumer experience surrounded by terms such as eco, organic, local, natural, and ethical. The landscape of the disaster sites has changed over the last ten years under the influence of this international trend, as exemplified by the Fukushima Innovation Coast Workshop (2014), a project for sustainable circular power production.

The economy has also been further oriented towards green rather than grey, and circular rather than linear, as in chapter 1 the linear aesthetics of speed that is incorporated within the forward movement of digital video also symbolises a linear economy as a thing of the past. Integrating the disparity between the centre and the periphery, global competitiveness, environmental sustainability and conservation, and the Internet of Things (IoT), the Fifth Basic Environment Plan draws a new portrait of Japan. This portrait incorporates the attainment of growth in the periphery, to create a self-reliant and decentralised society. As we leave Waiting Room, chapter 2 will follow the shifts in the dynamics of the political and economic trends, the flux and the change. It further examines the identification with growth from these trends, as well as the subsequent nature of peripherality.

The landscape of the disaster sites in *You Saw Nothing in Fukushima* unfolds in these social fluxes and changes of the past ten years. *You Saw Nothing in Fukushima* is an open and incomplete chain of questions conjoining the realm of sight and aesthetic investigation into the field of politics and the economy. It documents the socioeconomic and material changes of the past ten years of reconstruction, revitalisation, and sustainable development in the periphery as flux and change, from which new questions emerge about what is seen and from where we are seeing.



# Niigata

## CHAPTER 2

Readers who wish to watch *Family Story* in the original format of digital video should please access

<https://vimeo.com/434238402> (*Hands*) 7' 57"

<https://vimeo.com/437519981> (*Objects*) 21' 33"

<https://vimeo.com/434237913> (*Structure*) 8' 09"

The following password is required: Ayano Hattori PhD



Floating on the water looking over the island of Singapore, a short distance away. Sounds of water caressing carbon, the material of the trimaran. It takes me to a moment, the boat felt like a living room. Gentle wind brings shallow sleep. The slowness of the weekend in the indulgence of the breeze. In the wind, ungrounded, there is always the sense of home. Protection is always there, the comfort of other sailors around me. Three of us on the boat. An intimate yet open space, with the artistry of ropes running around us. Silence and jokes, the comfort of trust shared on the trimaran. Ahead of us there is no one on the water. Singapore looks like a miniature island in the distance. On the boat, in the wind, under the sun, I always return. This is in-between, it is nowhere. The same view of Singapore, yet every sail is different. The pleasure of life. The opening of a different horizon. Every race is thrilling, chasing the fastest moments in the wind. The fastest point by wind, by ropes, and by sails and spinnaker. Ropes in the hands of weekend sailors.







A nearly square, white and flat body of carbon floating over the water. The wind gently touches me over the sailing clothes. We are all good on the water. In a moment of calm, I am led to a reverie, distorted memories of hotel rooms. Ungrounded, floating in the urbanity of Singapore. The linen on the bed equally white and nearly square. It is soft unlike the carbon. The bodies in the synthetic pure white of carbon and linen. The weightless whiteness. The feathery caress and the touch of the wind. Carbon and linen, as if the common ground of the bodies, the desire for freedom. The moment of finding home in escape.











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Both the boat in Singapore and the house in Niigata are my locations of home, evoking different physical experiences, memories, and relations to space. Intimate and opaque reflections on the sense of home in the metropolis of Singapore and rural Niigata are personal and subjective. These two places are defining as to who I am today, both being places where I grew up, regardless of the characteristics of space, of city or countryside, or of national territory. The sense of multiple displacements underlies these diasporic reflections on the revisitations to home, in which home appears as plural. Floating and drifting, the plurality and the in-betweenness in my own sense of home and *jimoto*, are distinguished from the cultural representation and imaginary of home and hometown as well as family in the wake of the 3.11 disasters. In this chapter, the duality of the artist-researcher unfolds in this in-between: the autobiographical and the cultural spaces of home, hometown, and family.

As explained in the introduction, this in-betweenness generates the deliberate space of irreducibility that *jimoto* and hometown create. The two words both mean hometown in the general context and specifically mean Niigata in the autobiographical context of this chapter. It is a politicised use of terminology in representation, however, because *jimoto* is here distinguished from other meanings of hometown often used in the terrain of translucency, to project nostalgia, a national psychology or ideology. *Jimoto* reflects the positionality of the self and other, and it aligns here with the use of intimacy and opacity as a refutation of reductionism.

This chapter continues to position myself as the artist-researcher within the two aspects of Niigata: the political and economic spatial relation of the centre–periphery structure, and the cultural construction of the peripherality against the centre. However, in continuity with the positioning in chapter 1, this chapter offers three new aspects that evolve the argument of the previous chapter: the high-speed railway, the neoliberal state, and globalism, as well as *ura-nihon*, the exterior–interior conception.

The in-betweenness is tied to mobility; this chapter focuses on the railway as a materialisation of the Marxist spatial compression by modern technology in continuity with the automobile of chapter 1. As a material embodiment of mobility and interrelation between the centre and the periphery, the railway is also a materialisation of the demographic designs of state planning and the geography of growth and power. Drawing the historicity and contemporality of interrelation on the political and economic map of Japan, it is the route that the nation took to reach its current position and is taking going forward. With its nature as mass transportation, the railway also allows a number of dispersed families to be connected and spatialised between multiple locations: the current location of living and their *jimoto* linked by railways. The dispersed families of different generations, a common family portrait in many Japanese family albums, are considered in an examination of the grand narrative of growth in an interrelation between the centre and the periphery. In the following sections, we look at the key concepts before embarking on the main argument.

## The Neoliberal State and Globalisation

Chapter 1 conceptualised the forward movement, the constitutive part of the semiotics of speed. Through the conceptualisation, we examined the identification of the nation both in the growth period and in the post-growth period, the latter of which includes the post-3.11 period. In chapter 2, we elaborate the semiotics through which we further examine the identification of the nation and its variation. Political scientist Chigaya Kinoshita gives an overview of the social changes in post-war Japanese society from a perspective of populism, body, and space in his *Populism and the Politics of the Will of the People: Post-3.11 Democracy* (2017):

The rapid economic growth stabilised Japanese society. The male full-time worker, salaried position, and seniority were established as the labour model; the complaints and demands that had mobilised populism were absorbed into corporatism. This was the establishment of “Japanese corporatism society” in political scientist Osamu Watanabe’s term. Around 1968, a season of protest returned. However, as it was initiated by the students and lacked the participation of other social strata, the protests arose in short-lived eruptions but quickly shrank. 1968 was also the year Japanese GDP ranked number 2 after the United States. In the 1970s, the performativity and the politicality that populist movements encompassed began to become estranged. The traditional communality that had supported the protests, such as the categorisations of “student” and “labour”, became insubstantial. As protest gradually departed from the social landscape, consumerism bloomed in its stead. Consumer popular culture fostered individualism and differentiation, yet these were built across the networks of apolitical social participation in society. Under the bubble economy in the 1980s, when the entertainment industry became far-reaching and speculative large-scale redevelopments advanced the servitisation of urban space, the space for protest was eliminated from the streets due to the enlargement of these consumer spaces. In this way people were subsumed under the affluent society; revolutionist populism was disbanded. In the 1990s, neoliberal reform was accelerated as the established system that had reciprocally stabilised politics and society was seen as a barrier to globalised competition in capitalism. Due to the appearance of the political power that manifested the reformation and demolition of the established system, populism reappeared in social space aligned with neoliberalism.<sup>1</sup>

Here Kinoshita observes the return of populism with neoliberalism. In his *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (2007), David Harvey writes about the rise of neoconservatism in neoliberalism with “its concern for order as an answer to the chaos of individual interests” and its requirement “for an overweening morality as the necessary social glue to keep the body politic secure in the face of external and internal dangers”.<sup>2</sup> Osamu Watanabe, in his essay in the Japanese translation of Harvey’s book, and drawing upon Harvey’s observation, defines neoconservatism in the context of Japan as “the ideology and movement that seek

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<sup>1</sup> Chigaya Kinoshita, *ポピュリズムと「民意」の政治学 3・11以後の民主主義* [*Populism and the Politics of the Will of the People: Post-3.11 Democracy*], Tokyo: Ootsuki-shoten, 2017. pp. 19–20.

<sup>2</sup> David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007. p. 82.

to restore forms of community such as family and locality that have been lost on account of development, growth, and globalisation”.<sup>3</sup> Harvey also points out the rise of nationalism as a strategy of the state, observing that, “forced to operate as a competitive agent in the world market and seeking to establish the best possible business climate, it mobilises nationalism in its effort to succeed”.<sup>4</sup>

Grounded in these observations on neoliberalism, neoconservatism, globalisation, and localism, this chapter continues to examine the identification of the nation with speed in these specified contexts. We focus on family and locality, the favoured ideology of neoconservatism, alongside the *shinkansen*, the high-speed railway system in Japan, a means of time–space compression.

### Exterior–Interior

Through the examination of the identification of the nation through the semiotics of speed in chapter 1, we looked at stillness as resilience against the forward movement. The use of a fixed camera outside the automobile, namely the lack of motion, was conceptualised as a rationalised reflection on the light and shadow of modernity. Chapter 2 develops this examination from the aspect of the exterior–interior conception that Niigata historically embodies to refer to the centre–periphery structure, Niigata being another location of nuclear power plants (NPPs).

*Ura-nihon* (裏日本) is a Japanese term that has a discriminatory undertone going beyond its use as a geographical reference to the part of Japan *behind* the Pacific region, exhibiting the presence of the disparity between the Pacific Ocean and Sea of Japan sides. During the construction of social infrastructure in the country in the process of modernisation in the late nineteenth century, the term referred to the growing disparity between the bright exterior surface of the Japan of the Pacific side and the shadowed *interior* surface of the underdeveloped Sea of Japan side.<sup>5</sup> The discriminatory undertone was embedded in the use of the term around 1900, which was grounded in this rapid modernisation that implemented infrastructure such as railways, ports, the mail network, telephone communication, and school systems unevenly, predominantly on the Pacific side.<sup>6</sup> In the

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<sup>3</sup> Osamu Watanabe, “日本の新自由主義 ハーヴェイ『新自由主義』に寄せて” [“Neoliberalism in Japan: A Contributed Essay for Harvey’s *Neoliberalism*”], in David Harvey, *自由主義 その歴史的展開と現在* [*Neoliberalism: Historical Development and Today*], trans. Osamu Watanabe, Nariya Morita, Chigaya Kinoshita, Sadahatu Ooya, and Yoshitaka Nakamura from *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2005. p. 322.

<sup>4</sup> Harvey, *ibid.* p. 85.

<sup>5</sup> Tadao Furumaya, *裏日本* [*Ura-nihon: Questioning Modern Japan*], Tokyo: Iwanami-shinsyo, 1997. Tsunehisa Abe, 「裏日本」はいかにつくられたか [*The Construction of Ura-nihon*], Tokyo: Nihon-keizai-hyoron-sya, 1997.

<sup>6</sup> The opposite side of the Pacific Ocean, *taiheiyou-gawa* (太平洋側), is geographically called *nihonkai-gawa* (日本海側), the Sea of Japan side. This term has been subjected to much criticism, since the name of the sea shows the projection of imperial power through the Japanese modernisation and militarisation during the

1960s, during the high-growth period, the term was banned, coinciding with the high-rate growth that widened the disparity and increased the unevenness of development through further prioritised investment in the industrialisation of the Pacific region. As we will see regarding the *shinkansen* in this chapter, the Japanese government initiated its construction in order to mitigate the uneven development between the exterior, *omote-nihon* (表日本), of the Pacific region and the interior, *ura-nihon*. Although use of the term *ura-nihon* was banned in the 1960s at the height of the rapid-growth era, *ura-nihon*, as historian Tadao Furumaya conceptualises in his *Ura-nihon: Questioning Modern Japan* (1997), nonetheless persists as an ideology. This chapter further examines the post-war growth through the ideology of *ura-nihon*. Furumaya describes the construction of subjectivity built within the ideology:<sup>7</sup>

when the term, *ura-nihon*, is used by outsiders to the region, it functions to conceal the construction of the disparity as the fate of the inborn geographical and climatic conditions of *ura-nihon*. Moreover, their use of the term is congruent with their conscious inclination towards the concealment of their rationalisation of the geographical division of labour according to the logic of economic efficiency.

In contrast, when used by insiders to the region, it shows their sense of inferiority with respect to their underdevelopedness and their internalisation of the sense of inferiority as their destiny due to the geographical conditions. On the other hand, it also conceives emotional amalgam to legitimate their affirmative action against the disparity and support their resistance and accusation against the inequality and injustice. Either way, it is an ideology of industrialism that measures society by economic development.<sup>8</sup>

Through this psychoanalytical account, Furumaya describes the industrialist aspect of the term, *omote-ura-nihon*, exterior–interior.<sup>9</sup> It contains the superior–inferior intricacies of consciousness, logic, rationalisation, and concealment between the centre and the periphery. This psychology of the peripheralist, as we examined in chapter 1 at the NPP-hosting periphery of Fukushima, is constituted here by the same intricate relation. The intricacies in Fukushima were expressed as “the voluntary and strategic approach”, “automatic and voluntary obedience”, and the embracing of NPPs as the replica of the wealth in their exploited land for the sake of their survival motivated by the sense of inferiority and the disparity. “The highest point of modernity” that the periphery dreamed

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Meiji era in the region. For further details see Furumaya’s comments to Kim Yong-Ho in Furumaya’s 裏日本 [*Ura-nihon: Questioning Modern Japan*].

<sup>7</sup> The discriminatory undertone of *ura-nihon* persisted after the ban; however, two major research works on the subject, namely Furumaya’s 裏日本 [*Ura-nihon: Questioning Modern Japan*] (1997) and Tsunehisa Abe’s 「裏日本」はいかにつくられたか [*The Construction of Ura-nihon*] (1997), were published in the late 1990s. My analysis of this trend pertaining to *ura-nihon* in the period reflects the economic stagnation during the so-called “Lost 20 Years” of 1990–2010, the emergence of Asian countries as economic powers, and the post-Cold War geopolitical change. Particularly due to the geoeconomics and geopolitical changes, the Sea of Japan side, the *ura-nihon* region, came to be seen as the gateway to East Asia and Europe through the Eurasian continent. See also the concept of the pan-Sea of Japan area as an economic region.

<sup>8</sup> Furumaya, *ibid.*, p. 183.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 11–15.



of was *elevation* within the hierarchy of industrialism and modernity. In other words, it was *acceleration* in order to catch up with the *fastest* point. From this ideological perspective, stillness, namely the lack of motion, and equally of speed, is equal to the dichotomous cultural construction of the peripherality in the subjectivity of the peripheralist.

From this point, Furumaya conceives the enquiry in the examination of industrialism as a part of modernity. This is to say, it is an examination of the shadowed sacrifice of the periphery under the bright attainment of the post-war growth. Furumaya's conceptualisation of *ura-nihon*, therefore, is coalesced to the semiotics of speed as the stillness in the following way: the centre–periphery structure as a hegemony of modernity, and speed as the ideology of post-war growth and industrialism.

The further relevance of Niigata as a location of examination is grounded in the contemporary context. Within this context as set out in the introduction, Niigata is positioned together with Fukushima as being in the periphery in the theoretical framework of this research. Niigata is located on the Sea of Japan side of what was once called *ura-nihon*, whereas Fukushima lies on the Pacific side, but in *tohoku*, what was once called *michinoku*.<sup>10</sup> Since the historical differences of the peripherality and the socioeconomic and sociocultural disparity between regions are today understood as being generic issues arising from the consequences of the modern and post-war history of centralisation, this research offers a contemporary enquiry into the centre–periphery structure. Here, the use of the term *ura-nihon* is confined to its ideological framing in reference to Furumaya in order to focus the analysis on the semiotics of speed. This is to say, within the framework of this research, Niigata is treated as the periphery against the centre of Tokyo, thus putting Niigata in equal position with Fukushima, in order to further examine the contemporary consequences of centralisation that we considered in chapter 1: the population decrease accelerated by the rapid economic growth and the consequential social impoverishments such as an ageing society, decrease of agriculture, insufficient tax income, and extinction of community etc.<sup>11</sup>

Further relevance of Niigata as a location for examination can be found in statistics. Niigata was the most populated prefecture until 1885, then it was displaced from its top position in 1886 by the Greater Tokyo Area (which contains within it a number of prefectures surrounding Tokyo).<sup>12</sup> At the strictly prefecture level, Niigata then lost its top spot in 1893 to Tokyo Metropolis.<sup>13</sup> Niigata today has the second-largest demographic inflow to the Area after Hokkaido.<sup>14</sup> Niigata was also the largest producer of oil, producing 70% of the total production in Japan from the late nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth

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<sup>10</sup> See *古事記* [Records of Ancient Matters] written in 712 and *日本書紀* [The Chronicles of Japan] written in 720.

<sup>11</sup> See Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism <<https://www.mlit.go.jp/policy/shingikai/content/001374933.pdf>>.

<sup>12</sup> Abe, *ibid.*, pp. 87–89.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, “2016 年社会保障・人口問題基本調査 第8回人口移動調査 結果の概要” [“2016 National Institute of Population and Social Security Research: Overview of the 8<sup>th</sup> Migration Survey”].

century.<sup>15</sup> Being the location of one of the largest harvests of rice, Niigata was the second-to fourth-largest taxpayer during that period.<sup>16</sup> As these statistics show, Niigata is an appropriate location for this examination being a hinterland of modern Japan and a contemporary provider of labour power, electricity and energy resources, goods, and money to the centre.

The remainder of this chapter consists of the following two parts.

Part 1 discusses railways as a means of spatial compression in the Marxist sense and as an inscription of the demography and geography of growth and power between the centre and the periphery. We refer to two railway family stories. One is that of Yasujiro Ozu's film *東京物語* (*Tokyo Story*, 1953), dating from the dawn of the developmentalist and post-war reformation periods, and the other is that of Yoshinogawa Sake Brewer's on-*shinkansen* advertisement campaign *東京新潟物語* (*TOKYO-NIIGATA Story*, 2011–2019) in the face of the 3.11 disasters. These cultural imaginaries of family and hometown, despite their being produced at and reflecting different points in time, namely post-war and post-3.11 Japan, are constructed within the canon of the centre–periphery structure established upon modernity. We also examine family in these two stories in relation to the neoconservative ideology of the family as stabilisation.

In chapter 1, we examined growth as the post-war identification of the nation and its signification in the semiotics of speed. The aesthetics of slow-down, an elaboration of the semiotics, portrayed the nation in the deaccelerated drive of growth. In response to this, the discourse analysis on *TOKYO-NIIGATA Story* unfolds as a reidentification of the nation with speed. As the world's oldest high-speed railway system, the *shinkansen*, marking the prominence of Japanese engineering and technology, is located in the light of the grand narrative. The *shinkansen*, in particular the Tokaido Shinkansen, the first of its kind which has been in operation since 1964, the same year as the Tokyo Olympic Games, was inaugurated in the midst of the high-growth period. Circulating site-specifically on the high-speed railway, the *TOKYO-NIIGATA Story* advertisements reidentify the nation with speed undergirding the grand narrative of growth.

Part 2 discusses the studio-practice *Family Story* (2019), in order to contemplate the identification of the nation and the representation of the family from the periphery. These contemplations are aesthetically manifested in *Family Story* by the in-betweenness and the stillness that the fixed camera and frame create. That is to say, *Family Story*, consisting of the three digital video pieces *Hands*, *Objects*, and *Structure*, embodies the realm of sight, in which the periphery of Niigata is made to emerge as a space of contemplation through the use of the fixed camera and frame. We further explore the aesthetics of intimacy and opacity in the auto-ethnographic representation of the artist-researcher's own family.

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<sup>15</sup> Furumaya, *ibid.*, p. 50.

<sup>16</sup> Abe, *ibid.*, pp. 241–244.

*Structure*, in particular, raises Niigata as the liminality of the exterior and the interior as a space of contemplation on modernity and the modern construction of the national subjectivity.

# 1

Part 1 looks at the railway stories of Yasujiro Ozu's film *Tokyo Story* (1953) and Yoshinogawa Sake Brewer's advertisement campaign *TOKYO–NIIGATA Story* (2011–2019). Both of these stories thematise a dispersed Japanese family. In the first case, this is in the post-war period between Tokyo, the western city of Onomichi, and the intermediate point of Osaka. In the second case, it is in the post-3.11 period between Tokyo and the northwestern city of Niigata on the Sea of Japan coast.

Raymond Williams writes on his dispersed family in *The Country and the City* (1973) as follows:

one uncle lived in London; another in Birmingham; we moved, as a family, on visits and holidays, between country and city, in our own direct relationships. We were a dispersed family, along the road, the railway, and now letters and print. These were the altering communications, the altering connections, between country and city, and between all the intermediate places and communities, the intermediate or temporary jobs and settlements.<sup>17</sup>

Just as the railway creates flux and interrelations between those geographical points, so the historicity of the railway is in each case a unique geographical embodiment of time and space, a human relationship, and imagination.

As an embodiment of modern technology, railway services, operated according to a timetable, embody the modernist concept of time. The railway has also been a means of spatial compression for faster accumulation and turnover, equal to the automobile and aeroplane examined in chapter 1. The automobile in particular has been constituted in the semiotics of speed as having an affinity with the forward movement of digital video. Within the semiotics, the forward movement signified the drive for growth, advancement, and development. In contrast, this chapter has introduced the motorless mobility of the trimaran. Its speed being determined by the wind, and being unable to accelerate and

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<sup>17</sup> Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City*, New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1973. p. 4.

intensify, the boat is symbolically a rejection of the drive and is a decompressed space. Drifting away from Singapore, the trimaran was floating in-between. The wind power also rhetorically acts as a counterpoise to nuclear power.

The railway, on the other hand, unlike the freedom of destination attributed to the automobile or sailing boat, always has set destinations connecting multiple geographical points in a line. The argument of part 1 focuses on the sociocultural relation of set destinations: the interrelation between terminal stations, city and countryside, and the centre and the periphery. Through discourse analysis on the on-*shinkansen* advertisement campaign *TOKYO–NIIGATA Story*, the core of my argument unfolds on the in-betweenness of a train in a geographical location, which is metaphorically tied to the moment of social transition: the state of destabilisation caused by fragility, loss, flux, change, and uncertainty of the post-3.11 society. The in-betweenness here becomes a location of the rise of perpetuating forces, such as “cementing” and “bonding”, which seek stability and certainty. We observe the emergence of the politics of the reidentification of the nation at the moment of destabilisation in this rise of perpetuating forces. In the reidentification, the nation reflects and negotiates its prior identification and equally the grand narrative of growth.

The following argument uses some discrete terminologies with specific meanings.

*Shinkansen* (新幹線) refers to the technological and socioeconomic context of the high-speed railway and its socioeconomic measure. The Joetsu Shinkansen (上越新幹線) refers to the train line between Tokyo and Niigata, along which the *TOKYO–NIIGATA Story* was site-specifically circulated. SHINKANSEN refers to the abstract concept of the in-betweenness as well as a theatrical space of performing identity, both of which are metaphorically tied to the moment of the post-3.11 social transition in the discourse analysis. Tokyo and Niigata refer to the geographical locations of the Japanese cities of Tokyo and Niigata, whereas TOKYO and NIIGATA denote the abstract concepts representing the centre and the periphery, the city and the countryside, and the current location of living and the hometown. The terminology used to describe the hometown is further distinguished by its use. *Jimoto* is used in the context of representation grounded in the irreducible sense of intimacy and opacity. HOMETOWN is particularly used in the discourse analysis of *TOKYO–NIIGATA Story*, referring to the unaltering nature of the hometown as a perpetuated location. The more general term “hometown” is also used, without the particular meaning applied to the discourse analysis.

### **Historicity, Flux and Change**

The historicity of the railway testifies to the social conditions and contexts of specific points in time and space. This is true both for *Tokyo Story* and for *TOKYO–NIIGATA Story*. Both feature trains centrally as means of mobility, by which means they delineate the specificity of their societies and the interrelations between Tokyo and the peripheries.

In Ozu’s *Tokyo Story*, the family of the early 1950s is rendered in the context of the rapid demographic mobility within the accomplishment of new relations between capital and

labour during the period of post-war industrialisation. Literary critic Shuntaro Ono analyses Onomichi as a periphery depicted as a supplier of human resources for the centres, Tokyo and Osaka, the country's second capital and west Japan's capital.<sup>18</sup> The opening scene of the film, set on the morning of the day the parents, Shokichi (Chishu Ryu) and Tomi (Chieko Higashiyama), depart for Tokyo on the 13:31 train, introduces the modal and structural shifts in transportation and energy source at the dawn of motorisation, showing naval and rail transportations.<sup>19</sup> The historicity of the 1950s, the film's identifications of Tokyo, are forged in the continuity and discontinuity of the cultures between the pre- and post-war periods as well as between Edo and Tokyo. The Tokyo that Ozu describes is changing between the old and new practices of culture.

As one such form of flux and change of culture that *Tokyo Story* depicts, Ono observes the sense of uncertainty specific to the moment of post-war social destabilisation. He points out that the sense of uncertainty is expressed as the sense of homelessness or rooflessness.<sup>20</sup> 1953, the year *Tokyo Story* was released, was politically and economically still a fragile moment for the defeated nation of Japan. The Korean War, an inducer of the post-war recovery for the Japanese economy, ended in July. It was the dawn of the high-growth period that lasted until 1970; of the acceleration towards the fastest point in the narrative of growth. Japan was not yet a member of the United Nations, and its international position as a defeated nation remained unsettled even after the recovery of sovereignty in 1952. This fragile national psychology of homelessness or rooflessness is rendered in the episodes of the war orphans in Tokyo, the loss of a place to stay in Tokyo for the forlorn Shokichi and Tomi, and the war widow Noriko (Setsuko Hara) and her unsettling remarriage.<sup>21</sup> These details of the historicity of the 1950s fall today into an unbridgeable fissure between the old and young generations of Japanese such that they cannot be shared as common cultural experiences. This fading social memory remains unexcavated in the silence and stillness Ozu audio-visually constructs.

Ozu's films are also known for the universality of their family stories. Mundane family stories often unfold in Tokyo throughout the two halves of his career separated by World War II. Literature and film critic Masumi Tanaka observes that the family features as the main preoccupation in his post-war career, particularly after *晩春* (*Late Spring*, 1949).

Tanaka also analyses Ozu's family "subject to disintegration". This disintegration is expressed through the mundanity of family life such as a daughter's marriage, the absence of a parent, and the death of family members.<sup>22</sup> Born in 1903 and living until 1963, Ozu was once a forgotten film director until his national and international recognition in the 1980s, bringing new interpretations of his films, as we shall see shortly. In accord with what has been shown in the previous paragraphs on the historicity of Tokyo through Ono's analysis, Tanaka also notes that "it is unignorable that Ozu's origin of Tokyo is rooted to its pre-war

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<sup>18</sup> Shuntaro Ono, 『東京物語』と日本人 [*Tokyo Story' and the Japanese People*], Tokyo: Shohakushya, 2015. pp. 76, 80.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 47–57.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 247.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., pp. 79, 80, 247.

<sup>22</sup> Masumi Tanaka, 小津ありき 知られざる小津安二郎 [*There Once Was Ozu: The Unknown Yasujiro Ozu*], Tokyo: Seiryu-shuppan, 2013. pp. 13–14.

cityscape, so that his morality is shaped by that of the pre-war and Meiji-era Japanese”.<sup>23</sup> Tanaka goes on to say that “the post-war liberation is, for Ozu, the disintegration of the pre-war morality. The post-war culture was something Ozu could only sit uneasily with.”<sup>24</sup> Tanaka further describes Ozu’s belief and sensibility in the post-war era as a sense of “that which leads to timelessness is always something new. It is to be sought in the ancient.” He further comments that “Ozu overcame the sense of loss and uncertainty by discovering Japanese traditions and the old capitals of Nara, Kyoto, and Kamakura.”<sup>25</sup>

Ozu’s conservative inclination reflected in his filmic theme seems to synchronise with the socioeconomic landscape of the 1980s when Ozu was nationally and internationally rediscovered and reevaluated. Ono observes the change in his reputation from “old-fashioned” and “diffuse and boring” from the time of initial release of his films to the wider acceptance in the late 1980s. That is to say, Ozu’s main theme of the family and the universal value of the family was interpreted as a lack of ideological orientation towards social issues such as poverty, conflict, and inequality, but later accepted as comforting by the Japanese people of the 1980s.<sup>26</sup> This shift in cultural taste of the Japanese people coincides with the rise of neoliberalism in politics and economics. Seen in the context of Watanabe and Harvey’s observations regarding the doctrine of neoconservatism, the cultural taste that is present in the recognition of Ozu due to the flux and change of the 1980s seeks to restore forms of community and morality such as the family, tradition, and locality that have been lost as a consequence of development, growth, and globalisation.

Unlike the family of *Tokyo Story* that lives in this post-war uncertainty, the family of *TOKYO–NIIGATA Story* as representation encompasses these political and economic paradigm changes due to globalisation and neoliberalism that have led to another uncertainty. The family is rendered in the flux of globalisation that requires us to redefine locality. It is also rendered in both the contemporality and the historical continuity of the polarised demographic mobility from the periphery to the centre. *TOKYO–NIIGATA Story* is also a narrative of the era with high-speed railways, *shinkansen*. The railway stories of *Tokyo Story* and *TOKYO–NIIGATA Story* depict the different historicities particular to these two eras. In the next section, we look briefly at the political and economic history of Japan between these two railway stories, from the mid 1950s to the 2010s, for those who are not familiar with it. We look at the history in terms of the spatial compression and integration that the *shinkansen* is employed to manifest.

### ***Shinkansen***

Under the accelerated growth of nearly two decades from the mid 1950s to 1970, the high-growth period, industrialisation and demographic mobility developed even more unevenly in geographical space. The Comprehensive National Land Development Act was enacted in

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 12. The Meiji era is equivalent to the years from 1868 to 1912 in the Gregorian calendar.

<sup>24</sup> Tanaka, *ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>26</sup> Ono, *ibid.*, p. 8.

1950.<sup>27</sup> This 1950 version of the Act instigated a situation that prioritised investments and regional development biased towards the development of electric power. To mitigate that situation by setting “balanced development” as the basic principle, the Comprehensive National Land Development Plan was formulated in 1962.<sup>28</sup> Under this Plan, the New Industrial Cities Programme proposed 15 areas as poles of growth, including Niigata, which was designated for industrial development.<sup>29</sup> In 1969, the revised Plan put in place further initiatives to mitigate the demographic and industrial polarisations which had been caused by large-scale infrastructure investments that included highways and *shinkansen*. In this Plan, regarding the transport system such as highways and *shinkansen*, emphasis was placed on implementation throughout the country, which drew a map of Japan with 7,200 km of high-speed railways and 7,600 km of highways running across the country.<sup>30</sup> The Tokaido Shinkansen (the line between Tokyo and Osaka), the first of its kind in the world, operated from 1964 onwards. In 1974, the GDP growth rate became negative for the first time in the post-war era, which delayed the construction of the Joetsu Shinkansen.<sup>31</sup> It finally started operation in 1982. The family in *TOKYO–NIIGATA Story* is, therefore, a common portrait of a family in Niigata from this period.

The political and economic impacts of *shinkansen* were intended to achieve many forms of decentralisation that had been sought under the uneven development since the late 1960s. The initial measures were expected to achieve faster transportation of humans and goods amidst the rapidity of demographic increase, economic growth, and urbanisation for the sake of the promotion of efficient economic activities through the dynamic connection between the national capital, Tokyo, and the regional industrial cities.<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, in the 1980s, despite the efforts towards decentralisation which had been made, centralisation was advanced not only in terms of demographics but also in capital, information, and goods.<sup>33</sup> In 1985, the rapid appreciation of the yen caused by the Plaza Accord also accelerated the expansion of Japanese business overseas.<sup>34</sup> The Japanese corporations headquartered in Tokyo began to weigh the benefits of overseas manufacturing against the

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<sup>27</sup> 国土総合開発法 (Comprehensive National Land Development Act) was renamed in 2005 as 国土形成計画法 (National Spatial Planning Act).

<sup>28</sup> The Comprehensive National Land Development Plan, first formulated in 1962, was revised four times, in 1969, 1977, 1987, and 1998.

<sup>29</sup> Shinji Yoshioka and Hirofumi Kawasaki. “Japan’s High-Growth Postwar Period: The Role of Economic Plans” (August 2016). Economic and Social Research Institute, Cabinet Office, Government of Japan. <[http://www.esri.go.jp/jp/archive/e\\_rnote/e\\_rnote030/e\\_rnote027.pdf](http://www.esri.go.jp/jp/archive/e_rnote/e_rnote030/e_rnote027.pdf)>. p. 39. Accessed on 31 January 2020.

<sup>30</sup> See also Kakuei Tanaka, *日本列島改造論 [A Theory on the Rebuilding of the Japanese Archipelago]*, Tokyo: Nikkan-kougyo-shinbun-sya, 1972.

<sup>31</sup> Katsuhisa Tsujimoto, “空間結合をめぐる現代的要請と交通体系整備” [“The Contemporary Need for Spatial Integration and the Development of the Transport System”], in *空間の社会経済学 [The Socioeconomics of Space]*, Eiji Ooizumi and Ryoji Yamada, eds., Tokyo: Nihon-keizai-hyoron-sya, 2003.

<sup>32</sup> Yoshiki Nezu and Satoshi Fujii, “東西経済の不均衡解消を企図した新幹線国土軸整備による経済不均衡改善に関する分析” [“An Analysis of Economic Imbalance Improvement by Constructing Shinkansen to Rebalance the East–West Economy”] (n.d. March 2020). <<http://trans.kuciv.kyoto-u.ac.jp/tba/wp-content/uploads/paper/planning/51/shinkansen.pdf>>. Accessed on 7 February 2019.

<sup>33</sup> Tsujimoto, *ibid.*, p. 138.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 138.

periphery of Japan as the location of production.<sup>35</sup> As this shows, the spatial integration in the 1980s began to orient itself towards international mobility, reflecting globalisation and neoliberalism. *Shinkansen* as infrastructure continues to manifest diversified economic and geographical measures reflecting these needs in relation to the geographical issues of the era between the centre and the periphery. The 3.11 disasters, for example, laid bare that the monopolistic overarching centralisation in Tokyo imposes the selfsame convergence of all risks across society.<sup>36</sup> *Shinkansen* thus bears a means for hedging the risk resulting from catastrophic natural disasters.<sup>37</sup>

The advertisement campaign of the *TOKYO–NIIGATA Story* unfolds in this space of geographical economic measures, as we have seen with the Plans, a symbolic space of the Japanese economy. Hastening decentralisation in the age of the high-speed railway and globalisation, the advertisement transforms *shinkansen*, the space of transportation and socioeconomics, into SHINKANSEN, a theatre of performing an identification. The following sections thematise the in-betweenness of the *shinkansen's* geographical locations, through which we can examine the process of reidentification of the nation with speed.

### The Capitalist Space In-between

We have seen a brief history of the Japanese economy from the perspective of *shinkansen*. *Shinkansen* has changed its characteristics, reflecting the geographical issues between the centre and the periphery. The railway, including *shinkansen*, connects members of dispersed families, as we have seen from Raymond Williams and Yasujiro Ozu in reference to different periods and different cultures, and we can see it as a common family portrait after modernisation. The family as a conservative ideology was mobilised in the moments of social destabilisation, as we have seen from the example of Ozu's *Tokyo Story* (1953). We examined two moments of destabilisation in Japan. One is that of the post-war era, which Ozu as a pre-war Japanese lived through and expressed through his films. Another is that of neoliberalism, which the new audience for Ozu lived through in the 1980s and 1990s. Family and locality, as David Harvey and Osamu Watanabe point out, are sought in order to restore the sense of community, order, and morality that had been lost as a result of development, growth, and globalisation.

In the coming paragraphs, through the discourse analysis on *TOKYO–NIIGATA Story*, we examine the restoration in response to the destabilisation caused by the 3.11 disasters. Through an examination of family and locality in *TOKYO–NIIGATA Story*, we particularly focus on the identification of the nation as one such example of a reflection of the destabilisation. In chapter 1, we looked at how the post-war growth became the ideological identification of the post-war nation and examined it through the semiotics of speed. At the intimate and opaque core of the identification, there was the nuance of the recovery of national pride, the accomplishment of economic and industrial power, and the stabilisation of the country, with the stability of electric power generation seen as an essential element

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., pp. 138–139.

<sup>36</sup> See Cabinet Office Japan, Disaster Management in Japan  
<[http://www.bousai.go.jp/kohou/kouhoubousai/h25/74/special\\_01.html](http://www.bousai.go.jp/kohou/kouhoubousai/h25/74/special_01.html)>.

<sup>37</sup> Nezu and Fujii, *ibid.*, p. 2.



for growth and national sovereignty. The nuclear power production was particularly tied to advancedness and, therefore, was projected for the realisation of the bright hopeful future. In contrast, we also examined the identifications of the nation with post-growth and the 3.11 disasters in slow-down, the lack of speed, through *You Saw Nothing in Fukushima* (2012–). As *TOKYO–NIIGATA Story* unfolds on the high-speed railway of *shinkansen*, speed emerges again as the identification of the nation.

Interestingly, the *TOKYO–NIIGATA Story* advertisements were circulated site-specifically only within the Joetsu Shinkansen. About two hours and 334 km of commuting between the centre and the periphery, the physical space of the Shinkansen is transformed into a capitalist stage for the narrative that endorses the company's products and "NIIGATA". In the marketing construction of the advertisement, the actual geographical places of Tokyo and Niigata are distinguished as capitalised "TOKYO" and "NIIGATA". Capturing climatic differences between the Pacific and Sea of Japan sides in the copywriting as "A Sunny Day in Tokyo, A Snowy Day in Niigata", the strategic branding frames these places in binary opposition. The marketing construction of "NIIGATA" is, as we will examine shortly, not necessarily a reduction but rather a manipulation of the binary imaginaries of city and countryside. As a result, the narrative binarism of "TOKYO" and "NIIGATA" is employed to raise the maximum sense of place that distinguishes Niigata as branding.<sup>38</sup> The theatrical alteration of the commuting space mobilises passengers' nostalgia, their experiences and emotions associated with their *jimoto*, towards a hometown projected within their branding of "NIIGATA". This actively involves the passengers as the participants in their advertisement of the endorsing narrative.

This marketing narrative generates a sense of place that is decentralised and subversive within the dominant power balance of the centre–periphery structure. The sense of place is the raising of the periphery by means of the theatrical transformation of the spatial and physical characteristics of the Shinkansen from a means of commuting and economic measure, *shinkansen*, to that of performing in-between places, SHINKANSEN. The audience of the advertisement, the customers, experience the places performed as "TOKYO" and "NIIGATA" reimagined substantially as their own interrelation between their current location of living and their own *jimoto*. Communicating with the customers successfully at the level of their own irreducible life stories, the advertisement embodies the feelings and emotions commonly experienced by many Japanese people who live in the in-between, displacement, dispersion, and flux. It resonates with and locates old feelings of *jimoto* in their family albums. Awakening the sense of intimacy and opacity that the customers

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<sup>38</sup> The sense of place in this context refers to the technical term in marketing, in particular of place branding. Another example of this place branding can be found in the Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale (大地の芸術祭 越後妻有アートトリエンナーレ). This is an outdoor art triennale in the depopulated area of Tokamachi region that was first held in 2000. The Triennale is a public enterprise, part of a revitalisation project proposed by Niigata Prefecture in 1994, and employs art director Fram Kitagawa as Director. For further details see Akira Sawamura, Masaki Nakahigashi, Yukiko Hasegawa, Eiji Sumi, and Hitoshi Terao, *アートは地域を変えたか 越後妻有大地の芸術祭の13年：2000–2012* [*Has Art Changed Society?: The Thirteen Years of the Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale 2000–2012*], ed. Akira Sawamura, Tokyo: Keio University Press, 2014.

embrace with their own *jimoto*, the advisement opens up their family album, travelling between “TOKYO” and “NIIGATA”.

### Backward Momentum

The advertisement campaign started shortly after the 3.11 disasters in May 2011 and continued until spring 2019. During these eight years, four series were made, all of which feature a Niigata-born young woman who lives in Tokyo and leads the narrative of the series. My argument does not aim to conduct discourse analysis on all of the series but is confined to its branding strategy, the sense of place in the centre–periphery structure, disclosed for the first time in the company’s announcement of the discontinuation of the advertisement. Within this focus, this section examines a post-3.11 reidentification of the nation with speed represented through *shinkansen*. SHINKANSEN embodying the in-betweenness, the stories of *TOKYO–NIIGATA Story* unfold in-between: “NIIGATA” and “TOKYO”, past and present, the flux of time, dispersion, the identity and identification that interrelationally shape the Niigata-born woman. The in-betweenness is rendered through her reflection on her hometown of “NIIGATA” and the mundane day-to-day living in her current location of “TOKYO”. The company announced the discontinuation of the advertisement on their website in the form of a letter as follows:<sup>39</sup>

Dear Loyal Customers,

With the current edition, our on-Joetsu Shinkansen advertisement, *TOKYO–NIIGATA Story*, will call a closure to its eight years of history in March.

*TOKYO–NIIGATA Story* started in May 2011, when the country was in turmoil after the Great East Japan Disasters. The story was originally intended to depict a feeling of forward momentum in TOKYO, a new place for challenge, in a comparison with NIIGATA, a hometown, a place of nurture. Amidst the rebuilding phase of our society from the disasters, however, the story has been reoriented to a recognition of hometown. Since *TOKYO–NIIGATA Story* has been distributed exclusively on Joetsu Shinkansen, and the different geographical conditions given much focus, TOKYO and NIIGATA have come to symbolise two qualities that each of us have: “the spirit for new challenges” and “the formation of such a spirit”.

Hometown can be recognised as the place for this formation, and in the case of the advertisement, hometown was NIIGATA. Our customers would have projected their hometown onto the place called NIIGATA. Extending beyond its geographical place,

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<sup>39</sup> Although the announcement takes the form of a letter written by the CEO issued on their website, the translation adheres to the style of writing in the Japanese language and the English translation avoids using the first-person form of speech, I, thereby respecting the style of the original language. This also reflects that the initiation of this advertisement campaign had not been directed by the current CEO as he took up this role after the inception of the advertisement campaign in 2011. It also reflects the company’s strategy to create the feeling of personal communication through the form of a letter.

NIIGATA has been redrawn as an anchor of friendship and affinity such as *bukatsu* [部活 sports or cultural school activities after classes]. On the other hand, TOKYO was symbolised as the place where “the spirit of challenge” exists. Regardless of age, people who challenge are radiant. Many people would have connected themselves with such earnestness. This is the essence of *TOKYO–NIIGATA Story*.

Hometown changes. Eight years after the disasters, many cities and towns are moving forward with hope. The Joetsu Shinkansen Line will soon operate the new E7 train. If *TOKYO–NIIGATA Story* has cast its own anchor, it is now time to move forward. Its last copywriting says, “The Day I Return to Tokyo from My Hometown, The Day I Return to My Initial Resolve.” [Figure 1] On each return to hometown, one would notice its changes. Growth as a person would change perspective. One might realise the narrowness of streets that once appeared so wide. One might not be able to recall what used to be there before a new building was built. The true nature of hometown, however, never changes. If our story of hometown has been co-written with you, it is the greatest honour for us. The embracing of hometown allows one to embrace the challenge of new things. Cementing *TOKYO–NIIGATA Story* as hometown for our customers and the Yoshinogawa staff, I am drawing the advertisement series to a close.

We would like to thank all of our customers for their patronage of *TOKYO–NIIGATA Story*.

Yuki Minemasa  
Yoshinogawa Sake Brewery  
CEO

18 March 2019

[image removed for copyright reasons]

*Figure 1 The Day I Return to Tokyo from My Hometown, The Day I Return to My Initial Resolve, TOKYO–NIIGATA Story, 2019*

The letter discloses the components of the sense of place. “NIIGATA” is a symbol of hometown, an anchor, something to cement, a place of nurture, and a place that formed the spirit for new challenges. The binary counterpart of “TOKYO” is a new place of challenge. Initiated in May 2011 during the early recovery phase of post-3.11 society, the climax of the narrative that unfolds in the binary opposition is modified towards a recognition of hometown from a self-determination for evolution: the *backward* momentum of reflection from the *forward* momentum for evolution. This shift in momentum responds to the 3.11 disasters as a moment of destabilisation.

We can find that the conservative doctrine that we have discussed with reference to Harvey and Watanabe is applied to the backward momentum in the country–city binarism that “NIIGATA” and “TOKYO” embody. Raymond Williams argues that the country (countryside) is reduced to a symbol and archetype provided with a primarily psychological or

metaphysical status in periods of great change.<sup>40</sup> *TOKYO–NIIGATA Story*, representing family, community, and locality, embodies the psychological and metaphysical status at a time of great change in Williams’s sense, and morality subject to restoration in Harvey’s sense. The post-3.11 imaginary of the countryside, hometown, and “NIIGATA”, the projection of the desire to “anchor” and “cement”, reflects the fragile moment of the era that the 3.11 nation faced; “in the face of external and internal dangers” in Harvey’s words. The strategic sophistication of the advertisement, however, takes advantage of these symbols of security as consumer insights to create appeal and endorse the company’s products. It is also a way of building a corporate identity within the flux of the globalised market. This process successfully transforms the concept of time–space compression and embodiment of commuting associated with the *shinkansen* into the rise of the periphery, the sense of place, which confirms the corporate identification with locality within globalisation.

## Cement

Both meaning stabilisation, in counterposition to flux, uncertainty, and change, “anchor” symbolises temporariness, as “cement” does perpetuation. Yoshinogawa concludes the advertisement with the cemented position of hometown for their customers and employees indicating a strong corporate determination in the face of the flux and change they face as a corporation in the competitive market. Sake breweries tend to have their corporate management and vision dedicated to their local communities and cultures as their corporate histories and products are rooted in and produced from local natural resources.<sup>41</sup> Yoshinogawa is one of these corporations, being the oldest sake brewer in Niigata, with a 470-year history. Their location, Niigata, where high-quality rice and water are sourced for their products, is an unaltering source that defines the company.

In the letter, the state of uncertainty and change primarily refers to the immediate event of the 3.11 disasters and its social impacts in the short and long term. It is synchronised with the period of their advertisement. Later in the letter, it is disclosed that at the narrative level it also refers to the material changes that occur in hometown as well as the change of perception due to personal growth. Williams’s sense of social and personal alternation between the country and the city can be found here. The company observes the unaltering source of their product rooted in the geographical condition of Niigata as well as the altering nature of the material changes in Niigata as hometown.

The unaltering nature of hometown, however, becomes paramount: “The true nature of hometown, however, never changes.” As we have seen that “anchor” symbolises temporariness, and “cement” perpetuation, Yoshinogawa frames the advertisement with the cemented position of hometown for their customers and employees: “Cementing *TOKYO–NIIGATA Story* as hometown for our customers and the Yoshinogawa staff”.

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<sup>40</sup> Williams, *ibid.*, p. 289.

<sup>41</sup> Masanobu Nagao, Mitsue Tokuyama, and Hiroyasu Wakabayashi. *プレイス・ブランディング 地域から“場所”のブランディングへ* [Place Branding: Region > Place], Tokyo: Yuhikaku, 2018. p. 273.

Yoshinogawa's rhetoric, therefore, defines hometown as the perpetuated unaltered space, which I have distinguished as HOMETOWN. HOMETOWN is equal to "NIIGATA", the location of their 470 years of history, and corresponds to the unaltering identity of the company. It is a reidentification of their corporate identification with the locality, namely the upholding of the concept of a tradition that has never been lost, in the flux of globalisation. In this upholding, as "the true nature" is cemented as unalterable, it is, therefore, a reclamation of the corporate identity that has been destabilised by the flux and change of globalisation. However, this argument concerning the reidentification is confined to the terrain of locality and not that of nationality. This is also to say that this research, while thematising the concept of tradition in the flux of globalisation, is not intended to represent sake as a symbol of the Japanese nation, since doing so would be an instance of reductionism. As official statistics show, the consumption of sake amounted to only 5.9% of the total consumption of alcoholic beverages in Japan in 2018.<sup>42</sup> The consumption of sake per person in Niigata, however, was the highest in Japan in the same year.<sup>43</sup> The number of sake breweries in Niigata was also ranked the highest in Japan in 2017.<sup>44</sup>

The passing landscape towards HOMETOWN from the window of the train bound for "NIIGATA" only becomes closer and closer to that which one used to exist in as a child. Yoshinogawa states that "the embracing of hometown allows one to embrace the challenge of new things." The backward momentum, the reflective journey of the self, delineates the passing landscape of the unalterability, the landscape of HOMETOWN, which is more defining than the landscape of the material alterability. The railway story of *TOKYO–NIIGATA Story* performs a corporate identification from the in-betweenness of *shinkansen*.

### **The Unfixed Space In-Between**

In the previous sections we examined SHINKANSEN, the abstract concept of the in-betweenness, where identification is performed upon destabilisation for its confirmation, in terms of corporate identification, which we called a capitalist space in-between.

This section, The Unfixed Space In-Between, in contrast, examines SHINKANSEN as a space of national identification in the face of the 3.11 disasters. In chapter 1, we examined the semiotics of speed to discuss the identification of the nation with growth from a post-3.11 perspective and found slow-down as a post-3.11 identification of the nation. So far in this chapter, we have looked at the high-speed railway of *shinkansen* as a means for time–space compression and geographical economic measures between the centre and the periphery throughout the developmental and neoliberal periods since the inauguration of this means of transport. In this section, we examine speed associated with SHINKANSEN within the grand narrative of growth, in particular from the aspect of a neoconservative imagination of the family and hometown. From this perspective, we continue the discourse analysis on the railway story of *TOKYO–NIIGATA Story* as a variation of national identity. Running between

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<sup>42</sup> See National Tax Agency < <https://www.nta.go.jp/taxes/sake/shiori-gaikyo/shiori/2020/pdf/041.pdf> >.

<sup>43</sup> For the latest data on the consumption of sake per person in 2018 see <<https://www.nta.go.jp/taxes/sake/shiori-gaikyo/shiori/2020/pdf/042.pdf>>.

<sup>44</sup> For the latest data on the number of sake breweries in the various prefectures in 2017 see < <https://www.nta.go.jp/taxes/sake/shiori-gaikyo/seishu/2018/pdf/15.pdf> >.

the two pending contradictory national identifications with growth, SHINKANSEN is the unfixed space of the identification in-between.

As we have seen in the corporate announcement, the post-3.11 reorientation of the advertisement is redirected to “a recognition of hometown”, the backward momentum of the reflective and internal nature attributed to “NIIGATA”. Yoshinogawa stated that “The story was originally intended to depict a feeling of forward momentum in TOKYO, a new place for challenge, in a comparison with NIIGATA, a hometown, a place of nurture.” In this rhetoric, we can observe that there is a notion of forward momentum that is in affinity with the semiotics of speed, namely the forward movement of digital video that we discussed in chapter 1. This is to say, the forwardness of the feeling attributed to “TOKYO” and the forwardness of the forward movement of digital video synchronise and allow a further examination on the identification of the nation signifying the drive for growth and advancement. With this affinity of forward momentum, where one is personal and another is national, we continue the discourse analysis on *TOKYO–NIIGATA Story* with the use of the semiotics of speed that we built up in chapter 1.

We also saw a slow-down of speed, the drive, in chapter 1. It was the state of the deacceleration in growth and also of the impoverishment of the periphery in the power relation to the centre. In the former, it is the state in which the nation is identified not with speed but with slow-down. The semiotics of speed embodied by *You Saw Nothing in Fukushima* in particular spoke of the remnant of the drive and the resurgence of growth from this state of slow-down. From this state of slow-down, we continue to examine the identification of the nation with growth through discourse analysis on *TOKYO–NIIGATA Story*, focusing on the reidentification with speed.

As many corporations are headquartered in Tokyo and many dispersed families reside there, *shinkansen* is an actual conveyance to their *jimoto* for many Japanese people. On the basis of this actual demographic and geographical background, Yoshinogawa attempted to shape *TOKYO–NIIGATA Story* as a popular narrative of family similar to those commonly found in many Japanese family albums. It is also a universal family narrative that is consumed in *Tokyo Story*. Tanaka states that “*Tokyo Story* has won international acclaim and been known for its universality. However, universality is a conception inseparable from popularity as popularity is an inevitable condition for an appreciation of universality. Popularity often relies on narrativity.”<sup>45</sup> He goes on to say that narrativity bloomed in cinema in the twentieth century as popular culture.<sup>46</sup> The family stories of *Tokyo Story* and *TOKYO–NIIGATA Story* appeal to their audience by virtue of the popularity and universality of their narratives in Tanaka’s definition.

With this nature of the universality of popular narrative that Tanaka points out, *TOKYO–NIIGATA Story*, as we have seen regarding the inauguration of *shinkansen* in post-war Japan, is aligned to the narrative of growth as an episode of a post-3.11 popular narrative of family.

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<sup>45</sup> Tanaka, *ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 17–18.

The grand narrative of growth is, just as much as the narrative of the family, a popular narrative that the nation favoured and identified themselves with. The popularity of the grand narrative of growth is, in other words, true to what Watanabe observes, that advancement and growth was the labour ideology that functioned for populist social unity.<sup>47</sup> From this perspective, the forward movement of digital video within the semiotics of speed can be seen as the labour ideology that functions for populist social unity.

*TOKYO–NIIGATA Story* provides an example of how the 3.11 disasters were inserted into the grand narrative of growth. It started in 2011, a moment of destabilisation, with a narrative driven by a reflective and internal perspective on hometown in the search for stabilisation. This is what we have called the backward momentum. The advertisement closes in 2019 with its last copywriting, “The Day I Return to Tokyo from My Hometown, The Day I Return to My Initial Resolve.” Hometown “NIIGATA”, a terminal of the conveyance, is also a departure from the space of “nurturing”. It is a departure with “the spirit for new challenges” for the other terminal, “TOKYO”. On “The Day I Return to Tokyo from My Hometown”, the passenger is on SHINKANSEN bound for “TOKYO”, operated by the forward momentum. It is no longer operated by the backward momentum of reflection, the quality attributed to “NIIGATA”, hometown. The passengers are carried on the forward momentum, towards “TOKYO”, *re-operated* by speed. Such a successful boarding on SHINKANSEN bound for “TOKYO” re-associates the nation with speed, the prior identification, and is a reidentification of the nation.

Operated by the two contradictory instantiations of momentum, SHINKANSEN is the unfixed space in-between. SHINKANSEN is a theatrical transformation of the geographical in-between space of *shinkansen*, from which a reidentification is performed. As we have seen, in the particular case of *TOKYO–NIIGATA Story*, it is a reorientation with speed. In the process of reidentification, an anchor, the temporal agent for stabilisation, becomes cement, the perpetuation. Upon this stabilisation, the state of in-betweenness dissolves. The theatrically transformed space of SHINKANSEN resolves into a means of commuting, compression, and decentralisation upon the closure of the advertisement, as Yoshinogawa says, after cementing the advertisement as hometown. The eight years of the advertisement is a transitory rise of SHINKANSEN, the conveyance between identification and reidentification, from the state of destabilisation. It dissolves when the project of reidentification is completed. It is the dissolution of the un-fixed space in-between.

### **Restoration of Speed**

In this part 1, the examination of the narrative of growth unfolded on the neoconservative doctrines of family and locality through the railway family stories of *Tokyo Story* and *TOKYO–NIIGATA Story* set at destabilised moments of Japanese society. In particular through *TOKYO–NIIGATA Story*, we have seen the emergence of the in-betweenness twice. This is to say, SHINKANSEN represented the two discrete forms of the in-betweenness. It

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<sup>47</sup> Watanabe, *ibid.*, p. 324.



emerged once as the destabilised identification and for a second time as the conflicting ideologies at the moment of flux and change due to globalisation.

In the former case, through the railway story of *TOKYO–NIIGATA Story*, we have examined the corporate and national identifications with speed. We also have examined the popularity and universality of the narratives of family represented in *TOKYO–NIIGATA Story* as well as *Tokyo Story*. In the case of *TOKYO–NIIGATA Story*, the destabilised identification was symbolised by SHINKANSEN. This is the first in-betweenness. This in-betweenness of the identification, what we called SHINKANSEN, dissolved when the reidentification was completed. *TOKYO–NIIGATA Story* reidentified the nation itself with speed, the forward momentum, with the dissolution of the backward momentum.

In the latter case, the forward and backward instantiations of momentum represented the conflicting ideologies: one of neoliberalism, further growth; and the other of neoconservatism, restoration. This coexistence was the second in-betweenness. In this in-betweenness, the desire for restoration that we observed was directed against globalisation. As Watanabe points out, however, there is a coincidental rise of nationalism in this form of neoconservatism in Japan.<sup>48</sup> He points out that mainstream nationalism does not position itself in anti-neoliberalism, anti-globalism, and anti-chauvinism. It is rather supported by the upper social strata, reflecting their anxiety about the decline of the Japanese economy due to the delayed accomplishment of neoliberalism and their alertness to the increasing competition arising from the presence of China in the global market. Watanabe describes this nationalism as nationalism for the winner of globalisation.<sup>49</sup> From this perspective, one aspect of the reidentification of the nation with speed is precisely a nationalist identification with the drive for growth, advancement, and accumulation within the age of globalisation.

These two forms of the in-betweenness symbolised by SHINKANSEN reconfirm speed as an element of the identification of the nation in the different chapters and pages of the narrative of growth. The grandness of speed constitutes the narrative and identifies and characterises the protagonist of the narrative as a nation.

From this point, the studio-practice *Family Story* manifests the stillness as an embodiment of the backward momentum within the forward movement of digital video in the coming part 2. The manifestation further examines the constitutive element of speed in the narrative of grand growth from the periphery, from an aspect of *ura-nihon*. As the reidentification with speed has opened up the ideological aspect of the identification of the nation with speed, *ura-nihon* emerges as an ideology to reconsider the post-war growth accomplished at the expense of the periphery.

In this part 1, the in-betweenness of both *shinkansen* and SHINKANSEN in the geographical location and destabilised identification was also a location of the production of imagination and projection, from which the periphery was imagined, experienced, and consumed in

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<sup>48</sup> Watanabe, *ibid.*, pp. 326–327.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 326–327.

interrelation with the centre. “NIIGATA” was such an example, being represented as a post-3.11 hometown, a periphery, an un-altered and perpetuated space of certainty and stability. In part 2, being produced in Niigata, the artist-researcher’s own *jimoto*, *Family Story* intervenes at the dominant location of the production and consumption of hometown and family, and of the periphery. As we observed with the disintegration in Ozu’s family stories, *Family Story* also observes a family at the moment of disintegration, maintaining their intimacy and opacity.

## 2

### Translucent Family

So far we have examined the moments of national destabilisation through the popular narratives that represent the conservative doctrine of family, hometown, and locality that creates the sense of a restoration of community and morality. As we have seen in *Tokyo Story* and *TOKYO–NIIGATA Story*, popularity sits easily with these conservative ideologies. The family, as we continue to see in this part 2, is easily mobilised for stabilisation, and for morality in the sense in which Harvey describes it as the social glue. One such example at the moment of destabilisation caused by the 3.11 disasters is found in *kizuna* (絆: bond). *Kizuna* was voted the Word of the Year, as well as the Kanji of the Year, in 2011. In this section we examine the term.

The political scientist Chigaya Kinoshita describes the rise of the sense of community at a moment of destabilisation:

Our daily experience – the accumulation of the repeated practice in the stable time-space – does not go beyond private bonds upon becoming collective, such as in a family, agricultural commune, or corporation. Within the community, an axis of time is established through rituals, with habit and experience becoming a cultural device that stabilises the bond.

In contrast, as seen in history, large-scale social change such as war, panic, revolution, and disaster discontinues the repeated practice and creates a cross-societal sense of solidarity beyond those private bonds. That is to say, when an intense external shock shakes or destroys existing systems, a universal sense of

community is born beyond the difference of class and origin, through which the cross-societal axis of time emerges.<sup>50</sup>

*Kizuna* is one such example of the universal sense of community born at the moment of destabilisation. Beyond the terrain of the private, it creates an image of a bonded state of solidarity, fraternity, and warmth on the terrain of the cross-social against the moment of destabilisation. *Kizuna*, in Harvey's sense of social glue, emerges as an ideology to restore the sense of community and morality. The notion of the nation emerges on the boundary of this cross-social terrain sharing Benedict Anderson's sense of nationalism as creating the sense of community beyond private bonds. In *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983), Anderson says of the nation:

it is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.<sup>51</sup>

Just as Anderson observes the nation as imaged, *kizuna* portrays the people in a bonded state of solidarity, fraternity, and warmth as the image of their communion. The bonded members are imagined to be who they are in the way *kizuna* is imagined. *Kizuna*, linguistically a native Japanese word written with a *kanji*, an adapted logographic Chinese character, phonetically imagines the boundary on the terrain of the Japanese-language speakers which is tantamount to the nation.<sup>52</sup> The Japan Kanji Aptitude Testing Foundation, the organiser of the Kanji of the Year award, delineates the lives of the bonded members in the midst and wake of the disasters upon the awards:

the experience of the loss of beloved ones of your family and friends, or the anxiety of not being able to reach them, led us to acknowledge the bond between family, friends, couples, as well as neighbours and to recognise the poorness of our communication and proximity in the modern forms of those relationships. The increases in marriage consultation and sales of engagement rings reflected that unmarried individuals sought a bond with their partners in the aftermath.<sup>53</sup>

The Foundation delineates *kizuna* in a way that is biased towards family as the form of bond and reveals the Foundation's underlying heteronormative stance. This imagined bonded state expressed by the term *kizuna*, while it suggests inclusiveness and cross-societal bonds, is in fact exclusive and reductive due to its particular imaginaries. *Kizuna* is also imaged to emerge from the shared "experience" of "loss" and "anxiety". The focus on the anxious experience induced by the 3.11 disasters imagines and totalises the 3.11 experience onto the terrain of victimhood.

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<sup>50</sup> Kinoshita, *ibid.*, p. 213.

<sup>51</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London and New York, NY: Verso, 2006. p. 6.

<sup>52</sup> *Kizuna* is written as きずな in the Japanese syllabic script of Hiragana.

<sup>53</sup> The Japan Kanji Aptitude Testing Foundation. 今年の漢字 [The Kanji of the Year] (2011). <[https://www.kanken.or.jp/project/edification/years\\_kanji/2011.html](https://www.kanken.or.jp/project/edification/years_kanji/2011.html)>. Accessed in March 2020.

For another example, American photographer Bruce Osborn exclusively produces portraits of *oyako* (親子), a Japanese word that refers to the relation of parents and children.<sup>54</sup> *Oyako* is a constitutive notion in the concept of the family. Ozu also thematises *oyako* in his films, although, as Tanaka observes, the *oyako* and family Ozu depicts are often disintegrated. Ozu expresses them as a transient and infinite form. Secure or delicate, the bond or the disintegration, the family in both cases emerges from the moment of destabilisation representing more than a social unit. On the representation of the family in the face of the 3.11 disasters, philosopher Yoshimichi Nakajima argues that:

the current mass media is a flood of heart-warming family stories. Those stories are, solely, of self-sacrificing nuclear labourers and their wives, of husbands who lost their beloved wives, or of orphans who survived with grandmothers. Stories of a legally recognised family. Men and women who lost their lovers or mistresses, or their homosexual partners, or who are alone or loathe their family members are excluded. It is only stories of sound families.<sup>55</sup>

Sociologist Saeko Kimura also argues that the state of emergency triggers the reinforcement of heteronormativity and gender roles.<sup>56</sup> Heteronormativity rejects multiplicity. The family represented at the moment of stabilisation subscribes to the view of victimhood in a homogenised and singularised form. This process flattens the specificity of individuals and dismisses the unique pain of loss and unique bonds experienced by each person. The generalising and totalising force of the cross-societal sense of a bond that inheres contradictorily in the term *kizuna*, overall, images the nation as a victim who palpably experienced the disasters, is heterosexual, and has a family. As the family of post-3.11 Japan is represented in a reductive space projected by this victimhood of the nation, Édouard Glissant's concept of diversity and totality is relevant in this context.<sup>57</sup> That is to say in his words, the totality of the 3.11 disaster experiences is not the finality of its parts but total diversity.<sup>58</sup> If this victimhood that *kizuna* manifests is seen as a matter of inclusiveness, the victimhood is the wholeness of each individual's unique details and the actualities of their lived experiences of the 3.11 disasters. These experiences are incommensurable and irreducible as Jean-Luc Nancy argues.<sup>59</sup>

At a moment of destabilisation, the family is portrayed in a reductive space, in which social inclusiveness regresses into exclusiveness. In this reductive space, equivalation in Nancy's sense is carried out by the transmutation that namelessness can be named, unknowability can be known, and specificity can be generalised about for the sake of stabilisation and restoration. The family in the face of the 3.11 disasters was a symbolic form of *kizuna*.

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<sup>54</sup> See Osborn's exhibition, *Oyako: Present to the Future*, Embassy of Japan in Singapore, Japan Creative Centre, 19 February–12 March 2016.

<sup>55</sup> Yoshimichi Nakajima, "「震災への『なぜ』今こそ 美談が覆う真実もある」" [New Awareness of the Disaster: Revealing Hidden Truths behind Beautiful Tales], *The Tokyo Shinbun*, 17 May 2011.

<sup>56</sup> Saeko Kimura, *その後の震災文学論 [Post-3.11 Disaster Literature Theory: New Edition]*, Tokyo: Seidoahya, 2018. p. 43.

<sup>57</sup> Édouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1997.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 192.

<sup>59</sup> Jean-Luc Nancy, *After Fukushima: The Equivalence of Catastrophes*, New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2014.

*Kizuna*, hence, not only functioned as a social glue to restore the sense of community and morality but also excluded, homogenised, and singularised the way members of the community are imagined under the blanket of the universal sense of community.

The family, establishing its position as a paramount representation of destabilisation and stabilisation, is a favourite narrative sign and symbol. We have seen such a case through *kizuna*, namely that the mobilisation of the family as a sign and symbol for the generation in the narrative of victimhood dismisses the intimate and opaque details of actual families and experiences of humanity.

### ***Family Story* (2019)**

Yasujiro Ozu depicted post-war Japanese families facing fragile family moments in the mundanity of a daughter's marriage, a parent's death, and other forms of separation. Masumi Tanaka called such moments the situation of a family in disintegration. The families in disintegration that Ozu depicted, according to Tanaka and Ono, represented the moment of post-war destabilisation Ozu lived through as a Japanese person with pre-war morality and sensibility. The post-war destabilisation meant, for Ozu, the disintegration of the pre-war morality and community.

*Family Story* is another story of a family in disintegration. The family of *Family Story* faces a moment of fragility: the dying grandmother and the dismantling of the house in which she lived with her husband. *Family Story* comprises three videos: the dying body in *Hands*, the remnant of the past in *Objects*, and the demolition of the house in *Structure*. The family is, unlike the favourite sign and symbol rendered in the reductive space, delineated through the aesthetics of intimacy and opacity. Their disintegration is rendered through the forward movement of digital video employing structuralist film techniques. In the coming sections, we look at how the disintegration (fragility) is rendered within the forward movement of digital video and the application of structuralist film techniques to manifest the aesthetics of intimacy and opacity in the realm of sight.

### **The Fixed Camera and Frame**

These fragile family moments are rendered through the stillness that the fixed frame and fixed camera create. The fixed frame and camera provide an intimate observation of the finite materiality of the grandmother's body and the house. The finiteness of the materiality is structurally tied to the forward movement of digital video by the affinity of their respective forms of forward momentum. This is to say, the materiality of her body moving towards death and of her house moving towards demolition is tied to the forward momentum of the time-based media directed towards the end of the video work. The death and the demolition, the material finiteness, are rendered within the forward movement of digital video, which only magnifies the material finiteness.

### **The Economy of Inside and Outside**

Within such finiteness, the fixedness of the frame and camera emerges as stillness. The stillness allows the viewers to watch and observe details due to the absence of camera movement. The family is, therefore, rendered in the stillness, with their intimate and subtle details magnified by the fixed observation. The magnification of details makes them excessively intimate. The excessiveness invalidates the transmutation of opacity into translucency, generalisation, and reduction. Politicising the duality of the artist-researcher as the representing and the represented, *Family Story* delineates her family and hometown within the tension that the conflicting two forces of translucency and opacity generate through the use of the fixed camera and frame. Catherine Russell comments on the fixed frame as follows:

the fixed frame is perhaps most distinctive of this filmmaking practice because it registers the imposition of a form onto reality. A frame that has its own autonomy acquires the integrity of a picture frame limiting the view to a strict economy of inside and outside. Inside, there is composition and detail; outside there is an unknown space that is never filled in. The fixed frame represents the intentionality of phenomenological consciousness, but it equally determines the limits of the visible and the knowable. The fixed frame points to the subject of perception, and also to the four sides of the frame, beyond which is the continuity of the real as defined by the discontinuity of the frame.<sup>60</sup>

The fixed frame employed in *Family Story* manipulates these limits of the visible and the knowable stipulated by the four sides of the frame. That is to say, the tension between the conflicting two forces of translucency and opacity, where the sense of intimacy and opacity is aestheticised, is the product of the strict economy of inside and outside the frame of view, of the knowable and the unknowable. This strict economy is an aesthetic that operates on the terrain of irreducibility and incommensurability. Within this logic of the economy, in the very act of looking, the nothingness of knowing is magnified through the valid sense of an outside.

We have seen *Family Story*'s representation of the family within the stillness and in the intimacy and opacity that the fixed frame and camera aestheticise. *Family Story* manipulates the strict economy of inside and outside through the employment of the fixed camera and frame, with the stillness turning to the device of magnification of the intimate and opaque details of the family. The sense of intimacy and opacity being magnified, on the contrary, rejects the translucency of reductionism, in which the irreducibility and the incommensurability are substantiated.

### **The Four Sides of the Frame**

The stillness in which *Family Story* unfolds is also an aggregate of human life in contemporary Niigata: the historical and contemporary geographical interrelations of the

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<sup>60</sup> Catherine Russell, *Experimental Ethnography: The Work of Film in the Age of Video*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999. p. 158.

centre and the periphery, which were once referred to as *omote*- and *ura-nihon*, and the intimate private bond of a family relationship that is opaque to outsiders. The aggregate made of these subtleties composes the melody of family life that fills out between the four sides of the frame: the agricultural rhythms of Niigata, the capitalist tempo of speeding-up, and the frayed note of the periphery. There is a tonal incoherence of the gap between the old and the young generations. That is to say, the axis of time, in Kinoshita's sense, which identifies the private bond of the family, encompasses the dichotomous oppositions that underlie the subtleties of the family living in contemporary Niigata. These subtleties are rendered within the four sides of the frame: life–death, centre–periphery, strong–weak, remembering–forgetting, stability–instability, and translucence–opacity.

The in-between space of the four sides of the frame is filled out with the subtleties within the dichotomies. Russell describes the affinity between Akerman's use of the four sides of the frame in *D'Est* as borders and Akerman herself crossing the border to the former Communist spaces from her capitalist space; "the sign of the border refers to geographical and political borders, the borders of the frame, and the border between indexical and symbolic orders of signification. All these edges become margins in these films, filled out as rich areas of the in-between."<sup>61</sup>

The private bond of the family, namely their repeated practice in the stable time–space, in Kinoshita's words, unfolds within the four sides of the frame, the border of the dichotomies, the in-between of indexical and symbolic orders of signification in Russell's sense. The mundanity of the family life floats in this in-between of indexical and symbolic orders of signification. In the coming sections, we continue to look at this space in-between the four sides of the frame, examining this rich arena of the in-between.

### **The Space of Nothingness**

In *Hands*, the fixed camera is set in a voyeuristic position between the bodies of members of the family. The camera is focused on the space in between their hands, the moments and space of nothingness that the four sides of the frame create, namely the fissure between the generations. The repeated movements of these hands in the air, like that of the grab basket of the excavator with which they are juxtaposed, come and go in between the bodies of the young and the old. As Akerman's affinity of the frame as borders creates a rich area of in-betweenness, the space between the four sides of the frame embodies the immeasurable space between the young and old generations of the family. The vacant rhythms of these hands swinging in this immeasurable space fill out the in-between. These hands leave the viewers with the sense of grasping nothingness as the camera focuses on the in-between. Russell describes the fixed frame in *D'Est* as "the framing itself as an event" as Akerman's camera focuses on "the banal, the mundane, and the ordinary".<sup>62</sup> The fixed camera observes the hands swinging in between the bodies, the sense of visually grasping nothingness as an event.

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 168.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 165.

*Objects* records the objecthood of the grandparents as the speechless remnants of the old, the socially perishing generation. It also records the voices of the young and the noises that they make in the house. This tonal incoherence between the generations, the silence of objects and the careless voices and noise, creates a tonal void of nothingness just as much as *Hands* creates a visual nothingness through the frame. The noise of moving around, carrying, chatting, and laughing ignores the objecthood of the grandparents. The sorting of the objecthood of the grandparents sets a new axis of time for the younger generation to accept the fragility and the disintegration; the death and the demolition. Yet the juxtaposition between the noise, mobility, and corporeality of the young generation and the silence and stillness of the objecthood of the old generation renders them as parallel. The parallel, the tonal void, emerging as another space of nothingness audibly, of the in-between, is a detail of the private bond.

These two contrasts, one between these hands swinging between the young and the old, equal to the strong and the weak, and another between the breaking noise of the grab basket demolishing the old person's house and the silent testimony, embody the vacant note of the family in disintegration. The viewers are set in the in-between by looking at these juxtaposed dichotomies that magnify the family's disintegration.

Framing the nothingness as an event, the fixed frame magnifies the space in between the four sides of the frame. In the case of *Family Story*, the stillness permitted to the viewers is sensate and inhabitable in the in-between of the four sides of the frame. It positions the viewers in the strict economy of inside and outside, visible and knowable, that is on the terrain of the aesthetics of intimacy and opacity, irreducibility and unknowability.





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## The Space of Interior–Exterior

We have seen how the fixed camera and frame position the viewers. In *Hands* and *Objects*, they position the viewers in the in-between space of the four sides of the frame, the economy of knowable and unknowable, where they are able to hear the silent rift in the subtleties of the family and their private bond.

*Structure*, on the other hand, creates the space of the in-between, observing both from the interior and from the exterior of the house being demolished. Unlike the uses of the frame as the economy and the nothingness in *Hands* and *Objects*, *Structure* employs the frame as a device to create the in-between space of interior–exterior as a location of seeing. For example, unlike in early structuralist filmmaker Kurt Kren's *5/62 Fenstergucker, Abfall, etc. (People Looking out of the Window, Trash etc., 1962)* in which the in-between space arises as the boundary between the interior and the exterior of the buildings, through filming the people looking out from the windows from the streets, *Structure* offers dual views from the interior and the exterior of the house. The liminality between the interior and the exterior is sensate and inhabitable for the viewers. The fixed camera is aimed at the finite space of the liminality, the in-between, between the interior and the exterior of the ramshackle house. An axis of time that has identified the family is subject to dissolution upon the demolition of the finite space, a process documented by *Hands*.

By virtue of its inherent nature of forward movement, digital video itself structurally manifests the sense of finiteness, fragility, and disintegration that the family faces with its forward movement. There is, in other words, an affinity between the temporality of the forward movement and the axis of time that the family faces. That is to say, the family life was rendered within the forward movement of digital video by the structuralist technique of a fixed camera position that magnifies details, the intentionality of phenomenological consciousness in Russell's words. The mundanity of the family life is brought into the realm of sight by the intentionality of phenomenological consciousness.

## Semi-peripherality

We have discussed the realm of sight in relation to the four sides of the frame through *Hands* and *Objects*. In contrast, in this section we discuss the realm of sight in terms of the coalescence with the sociological state of the periphery. *Structure* is a manifestation of the stillness and positions the viewers in the liminality of the exterior and the interior of the house. In this section, we contemplate speed from this realm of sight of the stillness and the liminality.

The stillness, a state incongruent with the forward movement of digital video, aesthetically emerges against speed, the forward movement of digital video, as the location of an examination of the growth that was accomplished through the impoverishment of the periphery. Tadao Furumaya analyses the embedded modernist and industrialist ideology in the concept of exterior–interior that the term *ura-nihon* manifests. He conceptualises the *omote–ura-nihon* relation as an ideology of industrialism that measures society by economic development. The realm of sight that *Structure* offers is a site of contemplation on the

ideology of industrialism, from which we reconsider the identification of the nation within modernity. Furumaya further comments on a similarity between *ura-nihon* and the subjectivity of Japan constructed within modernity:

The semi-peripherality of *ura-nihon* is similar to the position of Japan within the structure of modernity: the in-between of the developed countries in the West and the underdeveloped countries in Asia.<sup>63</sup>

This research has positioned the artist-researcher in the political and economic spatial relation of the centre–periphery structure, and the cultural construction of the periphery against the centre within Japan. Furumaya’s point opens up a new dimension in the discussion of peripherality, namely Japan’s modernist construction of its subjectivity as semi-peripherality.<sup>64</sup>

The ideology of modernity and industrialism is the logic of elevation towards “the highest point of modernity” and hence acceleration in order to catch up with the fastest point. The stillness that *Family Story* manifests within this logic is counterposed against speed as the ideology of modernity and industrialism. Within speed as the ideology of modernity and industrialism, the stillness, a state incongruent with the forward movement of digital video, examines the apotheosis of growth from the position of the periphery. Furumaya goes on to say:

*Omote-nihon* within the structure of modernity is an industrialist European ideology. Within the structure, an aggregate of difference that had once existed in premodernity is reconfigured in the hierarchical order that the structure of modernity stipulates. *Ura-nihon* as an antithesis within the structure encompasses anti-rationalism, anti-Euro-Americanism, the philosophy of anti-efficiency, anti-industrialism, and peasantism.<sup>65</sup>

From this ideological perspective, *Omote-nihon* and *ura-nihon* can be rephrased by invoking *speed* and *stillness* as follows. *Speed* within the structure of modernity is an industrialist European ideology. Within the structure, an aggregate of difference that had once existed in premodernity is reconfigured in the hierarchical order that the structure of modernity stipulates. *Stillness* as an antithesis within the structure encompasses anti-rationalism, anti-Euro-Americanism, the philosophy of anti-efficiency, anti-industrialism, and peasantism.

Within these significations of speed and stillness, the semiotics of speed that *Family Story* manifests aesthetically manipulates the forward movement and its incongruent state of stillness. *Family Story* also positions the viewers in the in-between: between the exterior and the interior, speed and stillness, the forward movement and its incongruent state, in the realm of sight for contemplation. We have examined the stillness in *Wind and Rain*, *A Seabird*, and *Shore*, as presented in chapter 1, in which the viewers were positioned *outside*

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<sup>63</sup> Furumaya, *ibid.*, p. 185.

<sup>64</sup> For further details on the concept of the semi-periphery, see also Immanuel Wallerstein’s world-system theory.

<sup>65</sup> Furumaya, *ibid.*, p. 185.

*the automobile*, a state of lack of motion, absence of speed, as a space of rationalised reflection. In contrast, *Structure* positions the viewers in the liminality of the exterior and the interior, in the in-between, and in the semi-peripherality of subjectivity, the space of reflection on the location of power, the ideology of modernity and industrialism.

We have invoked Furumaya's conceptualisation of *omote-ura-nihon* as an ideology in order to examine the identification of the nation with speed. The stillness, as a state incongruent with the forward movement, grounded in this conceptualisation, offers resistance against the forward movement, equal to speed, the ideology of industrialism and modernity.

We continue to look at this modernist construction of subjectivity as the colonial construction of subjectivity in Frantz Fanon's sense in the next chapter, concerning the masculine and the feminine. That is to say, we continue the examination of the post-war growth as an identification of the nation from the following two further critical perspectives in the next chapter centred on Okinawa. The first is an examination of post-war growth from the perspective of Okinawa as a space excluded from the growth due to the US military occupation that lasted until 1972. The second is an examination of the identification of the nation within the colonial subjectivity of the masculine and the feminine between the United States, Japan, and former Japanese colonies inclusive of Okinawa.

We have seen the variations of the identification of the nation. One of those examined was the reidentification with speed in part 1 of this chapter, through which we gave an overview of the grand narrative of growth. The family episodes of the bright narratives of growth, *Tokyo Story* and *TOKYO-NIIGATA Story*, narrated the narrative of growth in terms of the geographical embodiment of development and the transport system. In the next chapter, in contrast, disidentification is examined. The post-war history of Okinawa counterpoints these railway stories and allows us to examine the core and origin of the grand narrative of growth that began from the ashes of World War II. The studio-practice *I Told Our Story* (2018), which is presented as another story to be told, examines disidentification and semi-peripherality as well as the shadow of growth from the perspective of a former colony.



# Waiting Room

The on-site videographing process of *Family Story* spanned the first half of 2018. The footage of my grandmother in hospital was videographed in winter. That of the house demolition was in early summer. In between these points in time where the audio-visual record starts and ends, my family sorted things out at the house. This was documented as *Objects* within *Family Story*.

It was full of dust, a weightless past blown easily away. Time seemed to pass much quicker after my grandparents moved to their last home. The afternoon sun from the kitchen cast strong light and shadow on the metals and ceramics on the counter top. Looking through the camera's lens is a way to feel the passage of time. I videographed each object for four minutes.

*The light changes. My eyes start to recognise the passage of time through the constantly changing light. The stillness is saturated. It is full of changes.*

We lost the house. The loss did not happen overnight. It was slow and gradual. Within the camera's frame, and within the stillness of the fixed camera position, the moments of time passing become sensate. The imminent disappearance becomes sensate, so does the sense of the end; the forward movement of digital video incorporates and aesthetically embodies the imminence of disappearance. Physically being in the house with the camera was a way to experience this imminence, the last material moments. It was equally the beginning of the ontological relationship between the records and the disappearing materials. The production of *Family Story* relied on the physical process of videographing. Embodying a characteristic of digital video as record, *Family Story* addresses the ontological preservation of passing time and space. The notion of tangibility emerges from the imminent disappearance as the camera documents the flux of time, space, and the materials that existed there. The hourglass visually supplements the finite quality of existence and stretches the passage of time as sensate and inhabitable.



Waiting Room has delineated *Family Story* as a micro location of time and space, flux and change, as opposed to the macro location that the written component of chapter 2 has examined: from the developmental to the neoliberal state, the modernity in *ura-nihon* ideology, and localism within globalisation. This micro scale aestheticises the sense of intimacy and opacity through the proximate observation of the flux, the finite quality of time and space that the family exists in. *Family Story* within the context of the chapter creates an aesthetic force of unknowability and irreducibility against the translucency of family and hometown in representation. The artist in front and behind the camera as a researcher is on the wavering and oscillating boundary; there are moments to be a granddaughter, a daughter, or a sister. Having an artist daughter or sister, my family is used to having cameras within the home. After the house was demolished, the new house designed by myself was built as my studio. Home emerged as the location of production through the course of the research in Niigata.

The microness in home, family, and *jimoto* that the studio-practice has contextualised is interconnected to and stipulated by the macro narrative of community, such as locality, family, and hometown, in the social flux and changes of the era.

*Family Story* and the 2018 version of *You Saw Nothing in Fukushima* were produced in the same year. It was also the year in politics, as in Waiting Room, that the Fifth Basic Environment Plan was approved by the Cabinet. This was the advanced and integrated political recognition of *chiho* for social, economic, and environmental sustainabilities, marked by the Japanese adaptation of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement. The Hometown Tax (*fususato-nouzei*: ふるさと納税) of 2018 also marked the largest sum of money redistributed, a donation of residential tax to municipalities that taxpayers wanted to support or considered to be their hometowns, in order to mitigate the tax income imbalance between the populated urban municipalities and the depopulated and aged ones. The Japanese economy kept on a moderate recovery path after the dead end of the 3.11 disasters. The mood of the country's people was much more relaxed, with the belief that the 2020 Olympic Games were awaiting them in two years' time.

The discourse analysis of the *TOKYO-NIIGATA Story* (2011–2019) led to a situated answer to the question of how the nation reidentified themselves at the moment of



destabilisation of identification and how they healed themselves in the 2010s. As the economy continued to develop during this recovery phase, smiles gradually returned to people's wounded faces.

The 2010s for the Japanese people are a periodisation that starts from the 3.11 disasters in 2011 and was supposedly to end with the Tokyo Olympic Games in 2020.<sup>1</sup> Niigata in the 2010s as a *jimoto* being revisited and resided in is different from the Niigata that I knew in the 1990s as a child. *TOKYO-NIIGATA Story* articulates a macro span of flux responding to the political and economic changes, whereas *Family Story* deals with delicately tangible, micro passing moments. The contemporariness of the past ten years streaming into this research is synchronised with the periodisation of the 2010s which is largely accepted in Japanese society. Yet periodising the post-3.11 era in the same way as the 2010s would be too reductive. Indeed, my research is not oriented towards defining the post-3.11 era. However, one possible aspect this research has offered regarding the periodisation of the post-3.11 era is a consideration of the 3.11 disasters as an entry to the centre-periphery construction in the structure of modernity or the modern nation state.

The beginning of the 2010s also coincides with the election of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), which ruled from 2009 to 2012. The DPJ won a landslide victory against the Liberal Democratic Party of Japan (LDP) at the general election in August of 2009. The DPJ cast a national light on the localised issues of the US military installation in Okinawa. Yukio Hatoyama became a prime minister with a high popularity, reflecting the nation's expectations of the historical *seiken-koutai* (政権交代: regime change). His manifesto slogan, "*Saitei-demo kengai*" (最低でも県外: at least outside the [Okinawa] prefecture), promised the substitutional installation of the Marine Corps Air Station Futenma (MCAS Futenma) outside Okinawa Prefecture. This was much welcomed by the Okinawans, awakening a political dream that they had all but given up on, as well as bringing the longstanding issues of *kichi-mondai* (基地問題: the issues arising from the US military installation in Okinawa) under a fresh national spotlight. The negotiation with the US

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<sup>1</sup> Ichishi Iida, "序論はじめに" ["Introduction"], in Genkaiken eds., 東日本大震災後文学論 [The Theory of Literature after the Great East Japan Earthquake], Tokyo: Nanundo, 2017. p. 10.

president, Barack Obama, however, achieved nothing. In the end Hatoyama returned to the plan agreed between the LDP and the US government, namely the building of a substitutional new installation in Henoko, Okinawa, renegeing on his manifesto of May 2010.<sup>2</sup>

When I relocated to Okinawa in 2015, Okinawa was still experiencing the consequences of the political dramas surrounding the new installation. The seventh governor of Okinawa Prefecture, Takeshi Onaga, started to lead an anti-Henoko replacement administration in December 2014 with his slogan “*All Okinawa*” (オール沖縄) against the substitution of the MCAS Futenma. Tetsuya Takahashi’s publication *The US Military Base in Okinawa: Thoughts on the Relocation to the Outside* (2015) responded to the post-3.11 post-colonial movements between the centre and the former colony, Okinawa.<sup>3</sup> These developments have informed the theoretical frameworks appearing in chapter 3.

The 2010s, marked at their beginning by the 3.11 disasters, was also the period when all of Japan’s nuclear power plants (NPPs) were shut down. Later on, under new safety regulations, a few were controversially reopened.<sup>4</sup> My interest in Fukushima and Niigata as an NPP-hosting periphery brought me to Sendai Nuclear Power Plant in Kagoshima in 2016, the first of the power plants to reopen in post-3.11 Japan. This visit was materialised as a digital video work, *Sendai Nuclear Power Plant* (2019).<sup>5</sup>

*Sendai Nuclear Power Plant* employs the same fixed camera position as *Family Story* and the inserted video footage of A

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<sup>2</sup> Yo Henmi, Yoshinori Hori, Hiroshi Kainuma, Eiji Oguma, Shinichi Sano, Eisaku Sato, Shuji Shimizu, and Tatsuru Uchida, *この国はどこで間違えたのか 沖縄と福島から見た日本* [*Where Did This Country Go Wrong: The View of Japan from Okinawa and Fukushima*], Tokyo: Tokuma-shoten, 2012. Hiroaki Yamashiro, *抗う島のシュプレヒコール：OKINAWAのフェンスから* [*Cries of a Resistant Island: From the Protest Lines in Okinawa*], Tokyo: Iwanami-shoten, 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Tetsuya Takahashi, *沖縄の米軍基地「県外移設」を考える* [*The US Military Base in Okinawa: Thoughts on the Relocation to the Outside*], Tokyo: Shuei-sya, 2015.

<sup>4</sup> The federation of Electric Power Companies of Japan, *国内の原子力発電所の再稼働に向けた対応状況* [*The Current Licensing Status of the Japanese Nuclear Facilities*], <<https://www.fepec.or.jp/theme/re-operation/>>. Accessed on 3 December 2020.

<sup>5</sup> Not included in this research.

*Seabird, Shore, and Winds and Rains in You Saw Nothing in Fukushima.* The fixed camera observes the power plant from a distance over the beach, the people swimming in the sea, and the surrounding environment. These elements of the peripherality unique to Sendai NPP, the details and specificity of its peripherality, are a situated answer that the fixed camera finds through its observation, a stillness. The serenity of the water is rendered within this stillness, a state congruent with the fixed camera position, but incongruent with the forward momentum. In this way, the fixed camera frames the personal and political intricacies of living in the NPP-hosting peripheries as sensate and inhabitable.

My family and my studio are located 30 km away from Kashiwazaki-Kariwa NPP, TEPCO's installation in Niigata. The NPP has existed since I was a child. *Family Story* is an unofficial, apolitical, ethnographic document of a family that live near to a power plant in post-3.11 Japan in the macro perspective. In accord with the aesthetics of intimacy and opacity exercised throughout chapter 2, *Family Story* rendered the family in the intimate and opaque observation from a micro distance, within the overarching macro perspective. The representation of peripheral people in a manner based on biased stereotypes of the periphery confines them, as I noted in the introduction, where I observed that representation is first and foremost a site where the operation and concealment of power is reproduced.

Reductionists see nothing. The personal and political intricacies of living in the NPP-hosting peripheries of Fukushima, Niigata, and Kagoshima as well as in Okinawa, the prefecture hosting the US bases, bear the irreducible and incommensurable details of those locations. Reductionists see nothing of their living culture and ideologies ingrained over the construction of modernity.



# Okinawa

## CHAPTER 3

Readers who wish to watch *I Told Our Story* in the original format of digital video should please access

<https://vimeo.com/434578960> 13' 16"

The following password is required: Ayano Hattori PhD

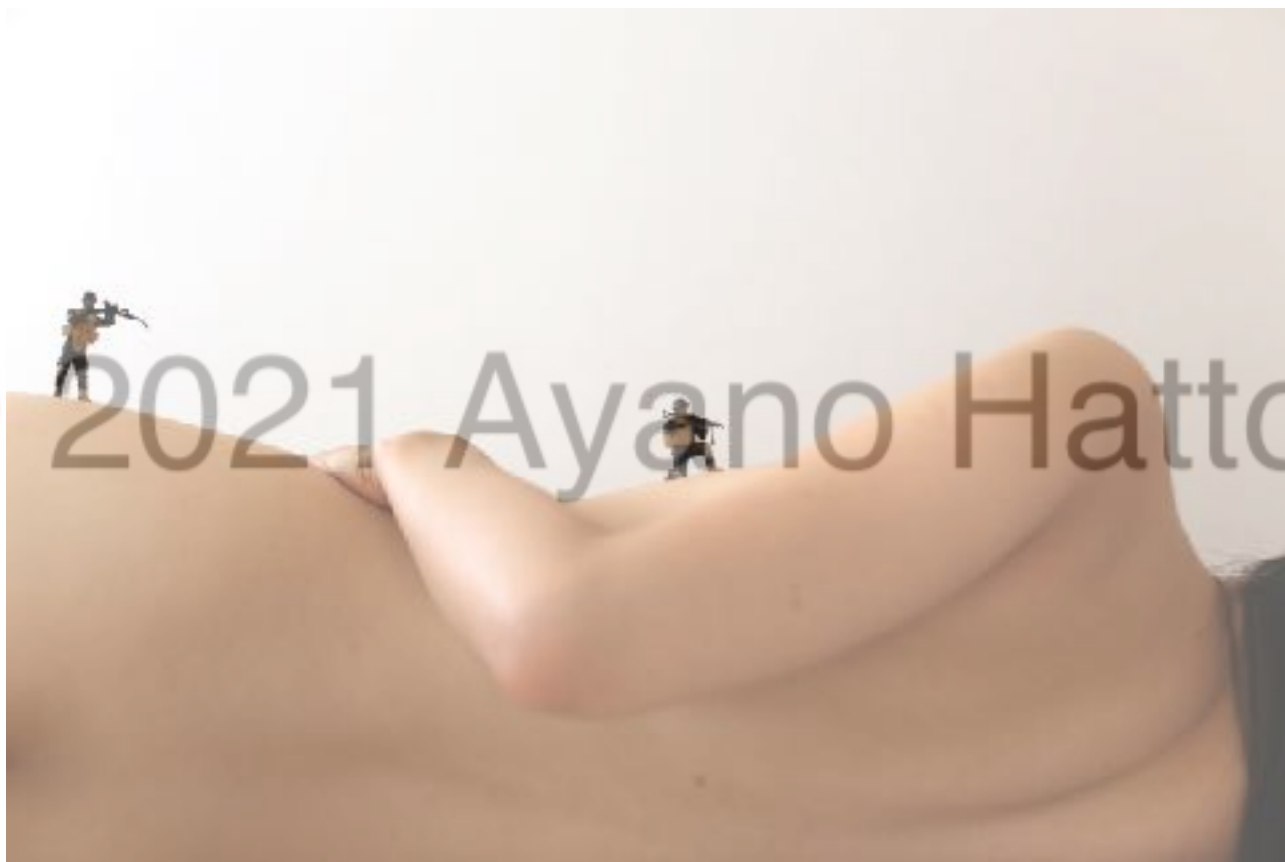
The viewing environment of personalised audio-visual equipment is recommended.

The following section, *Hidden Tides*, requires the viewing setting of “Two Pages”.

**Preview> View> Two Pages**

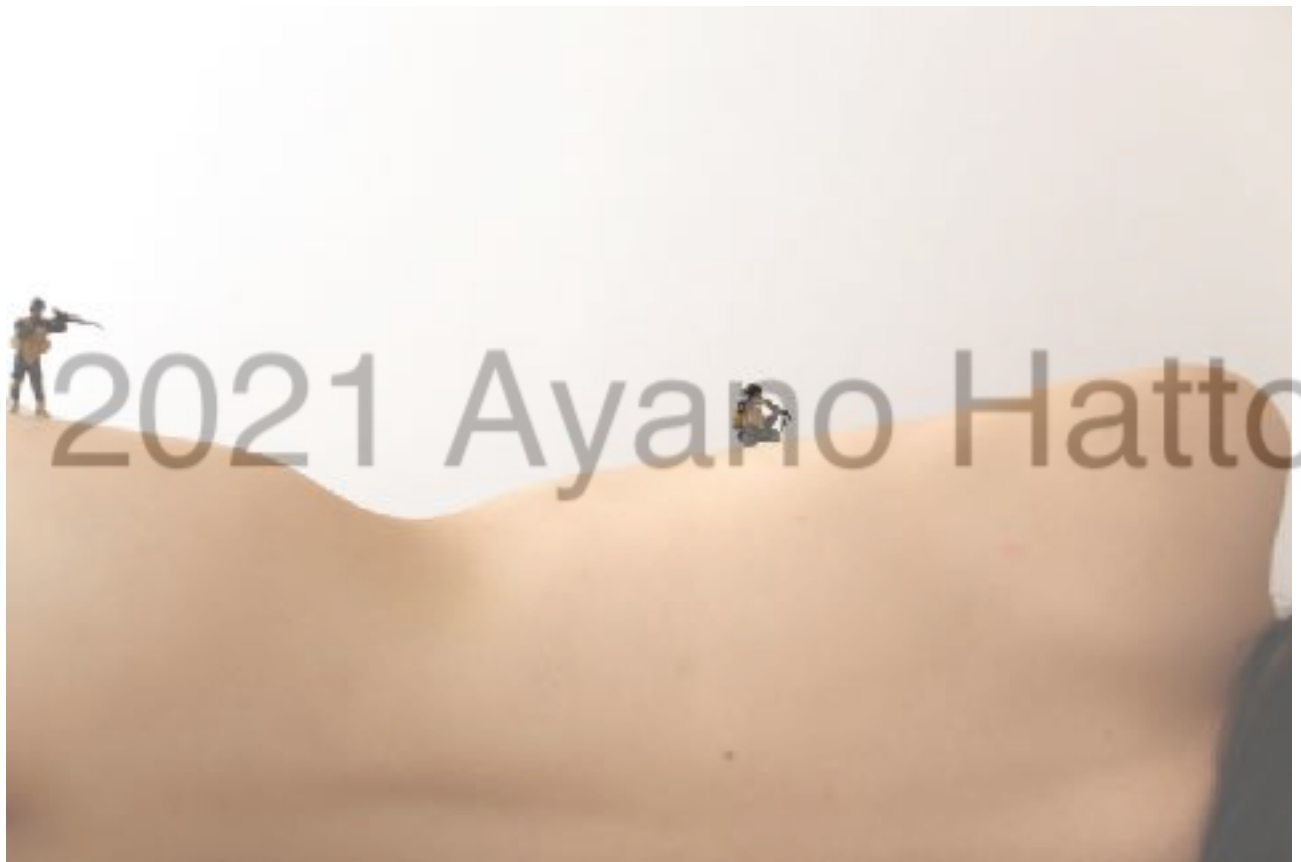






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Her bared surface of the land, untouched.  
Is she the motherland to be protected or a desirable land to seize?

*Thousands perished from granite*

The eyrie to be nurtured or the paradise with exotic scents?

*Into the water, into the land of the Gods.*

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She turns her back and remains silent and opaque to those questions.<sup>1</sup> She does not reveal her identification in the duality that the text associates her body with: the homeland to protect or a new land to conquer. Within the duality, the domain of the masculinity of imperial and colonial subject matters, her body is performed as the oppositional femininity. The text positions the viewers within the imperial and colonial construction of masculinity–femininity, in which the question of whether she is the homeland to protect or a new land to seize is posed to the viewers irrespective of whether she is the self or the other.

The tactility of the gaze is aligned with the haptic textual recall, “untouched”. The alignment converts the tactility of the gaze into the masculinity of the imperial and colonial power and embodies it as the dominant power assigned to the seeing of the viewer in the realm of sight. The seeing subjectivity of the viewer is also reformed into the gaze of the heterosexual male towards the photographic object of the female body.<sup>2</sup>

The woman rejecting the gaze, who is also endowed not with speech but with the expected exotic eyes and fuller lips, is what Trinh T. Minh-ha describes as:

the other of man and the other of the West – the exotic and erotic feminine ethnic minority. It unsettles the male apparatus of the gaze, in which men own, articulate, and create the look while woman is either being looked-at (displayed for the gaze of male protagonists as well as of male spectators), or she only holds the look to signify the master’s desire. In objectifying the other and subjecting her to a controlling, all-knowing male gaze (the director’s), the ideology of representation of mainstream cinema works at rendering invisible the two other looks: the camera’s look whose discretion is indispensable to creating a convincing world of verisimilitude and the audience’s look whose denial is reflected in the skillful strategies that prevent them from questioning the believability of the image and to see through its construct.<sup>3</sup>

Unsettling, as Trinh observes of the object of desire, this work, *Hidden Tides* (2020),<sup>4</sup> reforms and politicises the seeing subjectivity through the haptic textual recall as explained above. *Hidden Tides*, reforming the seeing subjectivity into the heterosexual male, manipulates the pleasure of looking in order to construct the realm of sight as a negotiation between subjectivities embodying the colonial construction of subjectivity.

This chapter unfolds on the self–Other/other dichotomy evoked by the body of the artist-researcher on two levels. One concerns the colonial construction of subjectivity, the masculine–feminine, in Frantz Fanon’s sense applied to the geopolitics of Japan, the United

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<sup>1</sup> This work as in the following paragraphs can be compared with Lorna Simpson’s *Twenty Questions (A Sampler)* (1986) and *You’re Fine* (1988), discussed in the introduction.

<sup>2</sup> For further reference to the assignation of power to seeing in gender politics, see John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, London: BBC and Penguin, 1972; and, in particular regarding film spectatorship, Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” *Screen* 16:3-3, 1975, and Mary Ann Doane, “Film and the Masquerade: Theorising the Female Spectator,” *Screen* 23:3-4, 1982.

<sup>3</sup> Trinh T. Minh-ha, *When the Moon Waxes Red: Representation, Gender and Cultural Politics*, London and New York, NY: Routledge, 1991. p. 115.

<sup>4</sup> Digital photography, 8 diptychs accompanied by a text. All images were produced in Okinawa in 2017.

States, and Okinawa. Another concerns the representation of the Other/other, through which the representing could reproduce their hegemony against the Other/other.

The space of contemplation that the realm of sight embodies in this chapter is the sacrilegious space of juxtaposition. We as the seeing subject have contemplated in the passing moments of the fragmented speed of a slide show in chapter 1. We also have engaged in contemplation from a location in the in-between space of the four sides of the frame in chapter 2. In this chapter, we contemplate from the space of the juxtaposition. *Hidden Tides*, for example, sacrilegiously juxtaposes the female body, the space of the pleasure of looking, with the cliff of an actual World War II battle site in Okinawa, a space of pain of the other.

“Sacrilegious” is the word that Marguerite Duras, the scriptwriter of *Hiroshima mon amour*, uses to describe the story of the film. Being a major reference point for this chapter, the film appears again later in part 3. The term “sacrilegious” in the film refers to the love affair between the protagonists, the Japanese man and the French woman, in the early 1950s in Hiroshima, when the memory of the atomic-bombing was still pervasive. It precisely refers to the comparison between the pain of the collective memory of the atomic-bombing in Hiroshima and that of the French woman’s personal wartime memory of the traumatic loss of her lover recalled by the adultery of the love affair she had with the Japanese man in Hiroshima.<sup>5</sup> This comparison, in Jean Luc-Nancy’s sense of quantification, brings the two different kinds of pain onto the terrain of commensurability.<sup>6</sup> The sacrilegious space of the juxtaposition, therefore, is the space of commensurability and equivalence.

*Hidden Tides* juxtaposes the granite cliff with the female body. The cliff is located at the southern edge of the island of Okinawa. It was the bloody war field of the Battle of Okinawa, where children, men, and women of the island jumped into the water, facing the dilemma of being killed or killing themselves, brainwashed by Imperial Japanese military propaganda. According to the Okinawan religious belief, there is *niraikanai* (ニライカナイ) the land of the Gods, on the infinite blue horizon. Under the imperial practice of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, Okinawa was mobilised as a fortress during the terminal stage of the war in the Pacific Theatre. The Battle of Okinawa was fought by the Japanese Imperial Army against the US Marine Corps and Army from 1 April to 22 June 1945, and caused the death of 122,228 Okinawans.<sup>7</sup> The cliff testifies to one of the moments of this battle.

The aesthetics of juxtaposition in *Hidden Tides* juxtaposes the pain of the other and the pleasure of looking. The viewers are left in the conflicting, and sacrilegious, juxtaposition in the realm of sight, for contemplation and negotiation. The artworks leave the contemplation and negotiation entirely to the viewers, and to their gaze. The gaze of the viewers is the space of liminality in relation to the object of their looking. This aesthetic sacrilege that this chapter examines is coalesced with the sociocultural location of power,

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<sup>5</sup> Marguerite Duras, *Hiroshima Mon Amour*, trans. Richard Seaver. New York, NY: Grove Press, 1961. p. 9.

<sup>6</sup> Jean Luc-Nancy, *After Fukushima: The Equivalence of Catastrophes*, New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2014.

<sup>7</sup> Okinawa Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum, <<http://www.peace-museum.pref.okinawa.jp/heiwagakusyu/kyozai/qa/q2.html>>. Accessed on 19 March 2019.

the hegemony. This is to say the realm of sight that this chapter embodies is a reproduction of hegemony which encompasses Georges Didi-Huberman's sense of hypocrisy. He defines hypocrisy as:

an act of choice, decision, and selection, of distinguishing, separating, and resolving. It is an explanation. But it is only a little of all these things, or perhaps it lies beneath them (*hypo*), secretly. The true hypocrite (in Greek tradition, the *hypokriter*) is above all the one who knows how to discriminate, but discreetly (in law, it is he who directs an investigation).<sup>8</sup>

The realm of sight, being a liminal space with the seen subject, is also a space where the discreet judgement of an act of choice, decision, and selection, of distinguishing, separating, and resolving; hypocrisy, is concealed to the seen subject in Didi-Huberman's sense. Linked to Jean-Paul Sartre's sense of bad faith, the act of hypocrisy is also dismissed by the judging subject itself.<sup>9</sup> This establishes a premise that beneath the judgement secretly and discreetly made (hypocrisy), the judging subject (the seeing subject) is concealed. Problematising the supposedly concealed act of hypocrisy through the unsettling visual pleasure, *Hidden Tides* is an example that demonstrates the realm of sight as one such space of the discreet operation of sacrilege and hypocrisy, concealed yet exposed, and presents the body of the Other/other as a site of contention against hegemony.

Subsuming the previous chapters, *I Told Our Story* (2018) responds to the grand narrative of growth, and the "foundational narrative", as we shall see in part 1 below, of Japan and the United States. This chapter unfolds through an inter-chapter textuality subsuming the previous chapters' examinations of the identification of the nation in order to present another perspective on it, namely a perspective from Okinawa. For example, we have seen *Tokyo Story* and *TOKYO-NIIGATA Story* as episodes of the grand narrative of growth in the mainland of Japan in chapter 2. The banality, mundanity, and ordinariness of family life in the affluence attained through growth was framed as an event to be told by the fixed camera. *I Told Our Story* is here presented as *another* story to be told. As we have seen in *Hidden Tides*, the examination of the identification of the nation is gendered: the masculine and the feminine. With the semiotics of speed in the previous two chapters referred to as the masculinity of Japan, this chapter proposes the aesthetics of the female body to examine femininity.

The semi-peripherality, an identification of Japan within the modern construction of subjectivity, lies at the centre of the enquiry concerning the identification of the nation in this chapter. The semi-peripherality of Japan was invoked by Tadao Furumaya's conceptualisation of *ura-nihon* in chapter 2. In the invocation, speed was understood as the ideology of modernity and industrialism and the stillness was understood as the antithesis. *Structure* manifested the liminality of the semi-peripherality embodying the exterior—

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<sup>8</sup> Georges Didi-Huberman, *Invention of Hysteria: Charcot and the Photographic Iconography of the Salpêtrière*. trans. Alisa Hartz. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003. p. 8.

<sup>9</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay in Phenomenological Ontology*, trans. Hazel E. Barnes. New York, NY: Washington Square Press, 1992.

interior as the location of the seeing subject in the realm of sight. This chapter examines another form of the incongruence with speed, with the semiotics of speed superseded by the semiotics of the female body. This converts the examination of the identification of the nation with speed into the colonial construction of subjectivity between the masculine and the feminine.

Within this scope, we have consolidated the arguments of previous chapters and set up the gendered strategies for further examinations in this chapter. The remainder of this chapter consists of three parts.

Part 1 establishes the semiotics of the female body within the context of the colonial construction of subjectivity between Japan, the United States, and Okinawa. Through the establishment of the semiotics, we examine the identification of the nation. As political scientist Kuan-Hsing Chen observes, disidentification assumes the existence of a prior identification.<sup>10</sup> From this viewpoint, the identification of the nation with growth, and particularly with the post-war growth (1956–1974), is a disidentification with the defeat. As we shall see, the narrative of growth begins from the ashes of defeat in World War II. Okinawa, which had been excluded from the post-war growth due to the US military occupation that lasted until 1972, is one such location of the examination of the disidentification with the defeat.

Part 2 discusses the ensemble of methodologies acquired from ethnography that are applied to the historical and contemporary sociocultural background of Okinawa in the production of *I Told Our Story*. It discusses the critical use of ethnography, and particularly of the camera, including the use of invited footage. As an instrument to designate power, the camera produces the representing and the represented, the objectifying and the objectified, and the seeing and the seen in the ethnographic context of self–the Other/other. These dominant power designations, hegemony, are grounded in the artist-researcher from the mainland of Japan, auto-ethnographically positioned in Okinawa, as an ex-coloniser and a beneficiary of national security. As Russell states “the oxymoronic label ‘autoethnography’ announces a total breakdown of the colonialist precepts of ethnography”,<sup>11</sup> the subject of ethnography is examined through the use of the first-person pronoun.

Part 3, conjoining these two earlier parts, examines *I Told Our Story*. *I Told Our Story* alludes to and returns to Alain Resnais’s *Hiroshima mon amour* (1959), which we discussed previously in the introduction and chapter 1. *I Told Our Story* also draws upon Chris Marker’s *Level Five* (1997), which itself references Resnais’s *Hiroshima mon amour*. Imitating the two heroines of these films who lost their lovers, *I Told Our Story* casts the heroine as a Japanese woman enacted by the artist-researcher. *I Told Our Story* demonstrates the sacrilegious structure subsuming these two films as the metanarrative.

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<sup>10</sup> Kuan-Hsing Chen, *Asia as Method: Toward Deimperialization*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000. p. 178.

<sup>11</sup> Catherine Russell, *Experimental Ethnography: The Work of Film in the Age of Video*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999. p. 277.

Operating under the sign of the aesthetics of intimacy and opacity and of juxtaposition, this chapter demonstrates the realm of sight as a site of contemplation and of judgement and intentionally eschews closure, leaving the reader space for reflection.

# 1

## Body, Growth, Narrative

In part 1, we refer to two cultural theories. One is *Bodies of Memory: Narrative of War in Postwar Japanese Culture, 1945–1970* (2000) by Yoshikuni Igarashi, which provides us with the concept that the representation of the body is a site of memory.<sup>12</sup> Another is *Asia as Method: Toward Deimperialization* (2000) by Kuan-Hsing Chen, which discusses the continuity of imperialism and colonialism in East Asia after the Cold War. Both these texts were published in 2000, during the same period as Tadao Furumaya's *Ura-nihon: Questioning Modern Japan* (published in 1997), which we invoked with regard to the semi-peripherality of Japan, reflecting the geopolitical changes due to the end of World War II and observing the cultural unfolding in the East Asia and Pacific regions. In both of the theories to which we refer here, the United States appears as the significant other in shaping subjectivity in power relations in East Asia since the end of World War II.

With respect to World War II, historian Yoshikuni Igarashi analyses the Japanese body in the domain of everyday culture as a site of war memory. His observation of the body in the domain of everyday culture is closely tied to cultural narrative. He comments on the cultural production as follows:

the tension between the nation's contradictory desires – its desire to forget and its desire to remember the past – still persists fifty years after defeat. The tension between these desires has shaped the cultural production of postwar Japanese society and constitutes the focus of this study.<sup>13</sup>

As he observes, the intricacies of the nation's desires to remember and to forget the war motivate the weaving of the cultural narrative. The grand narrative of growth as one such

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<sup>12</sup> The Japanese version of the book was published in 2007 by the publishing house Chuokoron-shinsya, Tokyo as 敗戦の記憶 身体・文化・物語 1945–1970.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 11–12.

form of the cultural narrative provided the nation with a form of “closure” with the attainment of material prosperity through the post-war growth. As Igarashi states:

The material conditions of the prosperity provided closure to the popular narrative of the war that claimed Japan’s defeat and loss were necessary for its peace and prosperity.<sup>14</sup>

We can observe two things in the logic of this narrative. The first is that “the material conditions of the prosperity” as the “closure” to “the popular narrative of the war that claimed Japan’s defeat and loss” amount to the identification of the nation with the newly attained affluence of growth. This is the deidentification with the defeat. Igarashi describes the post-war Japanese body of the period of rapid growth as “recuperating”, “rehabilitated”, “cleansed”, and “ahistorical” as a site of memory.<sup>15</sup> As the grand narrative that identifies the nation with growth began with the defeat and loss, it sets the origin in the defeat, absorbing the defeat and loss as the necessary prerequisites for the ensuing peace and prosperity. This is the logic of utilitarianism.

The second particularity concerns “peace”. In the logic of the cultural narrative, the popular narrative in Igarashi’s words, the defeat and loss enabled the attainment of post-war peace and prosperity. My contention is that this logic, however, overlooks Okinawa. For the light of the attainment of prosperity brought by the growth, it legitimates the shadow of the loss suffered by Okinawa during World War II, especially through the Battle of Okinawa. It excludes Okinawa from the prosperity by virtue of being under the US military occupation that lasted until 1972, and from the peace by hosting the US military bases under the US–Japan Security Alliance. Furthermore, the presence of the US military bases has been in long-lasting contradiction of the pacifism that the post-war Constitution of Japan stipulates in Article 9:<sup>16</sup>

## CHAPTER II

### RENUNCIATION OF WAR

Article 9. Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes.

In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>15</sup> Yoshikuni Igarashi, *Bodies of Memory: Narrative of War in Postwar Japanese Culture, 1945–1970*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000. pp. 12–13, 200–210.

<sup>16</sup> See Article 9 Association. <<http://www.9-jo.jp/index.html>>. See also the exhibition *Into the Atomic Sunshine: Post-War Art under Japanese Peace Constitution Article 9*, Ruffin Room, New York, 12 January–24 February 2008.

<sup>17</sup> Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, *The Constitution of Japan*.

<[https://japan.kantei.go.jp/constitution\\_and\\_government\\_of\\_japan/constitution\\_e.html](https://japan.kantei.go.jp/constitution_and_government_of_japan/constitution_e.html)>. Accessed on 28 December 2020.

Okinawa is a contradictory location hosting the military bases despite the abandonment of war potential.

### **The Significant Other**

Beneath the logic of these cultural narratives, as Igarashi observes, there is an underlying tension between the desires of remembering and forgetting. The dominant cultural narrative in this context, whose weaving was motivated by the tension that Igarashi analyses, is “the foundational narrative” that exists in Japan and the United States. He defines it as the following:

In the ideological remapping of the immediate post-war period, any history between the United States and Japan that was incongruous with the political necessity of the Cold War was soon repressed in the United States as well as in Japan. For both countries, yesterday’s foe becomes today’s friend, the demonstration of the unprecedented power of the nuclear weapons detonated in Hiroshima and Nagasaki provided the impetus for the United States and Japan to reconfigure their collective memories. At the end of the war, the United States and Japan cast themselves in a melodrama, so to speak, that culminated in the demonstration of the atomic bomb’s unprecedented power. Through the bomb, the United States, gendered as male, rescued and converted Japan, figured as a desperate woman. Hirohito’s so-called divine decision to end the war participated in this drama by accepting the superior power of the United States. Despite its hyperbole, this popular narrative was effective in defining the two countries’ perception of the war and how it ended.<sup>18</sup>

The foundational narrative weakened its hold on Japanese society towards the end of the Cold War in the late 1980s as the post-war realignment between the two countries had been embedded in the ideological structure of the Cold War.<sup>19</sup> Igarashi argues that Japanese bodies of the 1990s were already “long rehabilitated from wartime memories and offered little clue to remembering the past”.<sup>20</sup> Instead, the bodies of the Asian victims of Cold War conflicts and of “the comfort women”, wartime sex slaves for Japan from the former colonies and occupied countries, emerged as the site of memory.<sup>21</sup> The experience of the Vietnamese in the 1970s was the first of this kind:

the Vietnam War, the ultimate expression of the Cold War’s bipolar tension, ironically reminded many Japanese of the existence of the third term outside the capitalist–Communist conflict. The images of Vietnamese peasants enduring American bombings invoked Japan’s own memories of bombing near the end of the Asia Pacific War. The recognition of suffering Asian bodies reverberated with the postwar sentiment that posited the Japanese as war victims in the conflict against

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<sup>18</sup> Igarashi, *ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 204.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 204. See also artworks by Taeko Tomiyama and Yoshiko Shimada.



the United States. Nonetheless, the awareness of Japan's close ties to U.S. interests pointed to Japan's role as an accomplice to the U.S. involvement in its Asian war. The reversion of Okinawa to Japan in 1972 merely illuminated Japan's complicity in the war, for it to fail to liberate Okinawa from its prescribed role as a Pacific outpost of the U.S. military.<sup>22</sup>

As a site of memories of the war aggression of Imperial Japan, the emergence of Asian bodies testified to and identified Japan as the old colonial power rather than a victim. However, as Igarashi observes, there was the "sentiment that seeks once again to confine memories of the war to Japan's relation with the United States".<sup>23</sup> Even after the hold of the melodramatic foundational narrative had weakened, the United States was still being positioned as the significant other for Japan under the desire for the resurgence of the foundational narrative.

Chen's observation of "the cultural imaginary" provides further analysis of Igarashi's concept of the body as a site of memory and narrative of the defeat. Chen describes East Asia as "a region where the old colonial power, Japan, and the postcolonial power, the United States, remain a visible part of daily life".<sup>24</sup> These two old and post-colonial masculine powers, Japan and the United States, formulate the feminine subjectivity of the colonised East Asia. Chen defines the cultural imaginary as:

a result of the encounter between colonialism and local historical and cultural resources. Through the discursive articulation, the cultural imaginary is disseminated to different social fields, shaping the imagination of both colonising and colonised subjects. Operating on the terrain of the popular, the cultural imaginary structures the system of ideology, links to the concrete experience of daily life, and forms the direction and boundary of the psychological space. Its discursivity saturates popular subjects, official discourses, and anticolonial discourse.<sup>25</sup>

Chen further notes:

the cultural imaginary refers to an operating space within a social formation, in which the imaginary perception of the Other and self-understanding are articulated. In this domain, the structure of sentiment is the link and mediator between the coloniser and the colonised.<sup>26</sup>

We have seen an example in chapter 1 from this perspective of the cultural imaginary; the nuclear power plant (NPP) in Japan as, in Chen's sense, an operating space and an articulation of subjectivity embodying the modern subjectivity constructed between the centre and the periphery. As the mediator between the centre and the periphery, the NPP functioned as the cultural imaginary that articulated the peripheralist subjectivity in relation to the centre and operated as an elevation within the hierarchy of modernity towards the

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<sup>22</sup> Igarashi, *ibid.*, p. 203.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> Chen, *ibid.*, pp. 110–111.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 111.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 111.

virtue of advancedness. The NPP is referred to as the thorny replica; the cultural imaginary is an embodiment of the structure of the sentiment constructed within modernity.

Within such an articulation of the structure of the sentiment of colonialism in East Asia, namely the cultural imaginary, according to Chen, the United States is the “interiority” or an “insider” of the region.<sup>27</sup> With the United States positioned as interiority or an insider, or the dominant power, a gendered dichotomy of the masculine–the feminine underlies the colonial subjectivity between the United States and Japan, and between Japan and Okinawa.

The employment of a female Japanese body in the semiotics of the female body in *I Told Our Story*, therefore, creates a site of the cultural imaginary that reflects the power relations and colonial subjectivity in post-war East Asia. These power relations and subjectivity encompass the United States as an insider. As a site of the cultural imaginary, the female Japanese body is employed to construct the semiotics through which the post-war Japanese identification and disidentification between the masculine and the feminine is examined.

Japan’s experience of victimhood in the war is represented by the feminised subjectivity in the power relation with the United States, as Igarashi analyses in the melodramatic foundational narrative. This feminisation, or the victimisation, of Japan tends to conceal the masculine aspect of Japan, the ultimate expression of imperialism and colonialism in the Asia Pacific War, behind the binary powerlessness of femininity against the United States. The femininity of Japan is, therefore, a subjectivity that is valid only within the foundational narrative that reflects the power relation with the United States. The female body, which this chapter probes through the artist’s body in representation, can therefore be deconstructed into the following two elements: femininity and Japan. They remain incongruent in Japan’s relation to Asia and Okinawa because from their perspective Japan is always the masculine aggressor in the history of colonialism and modernity. The incongruent signification characterises the semiotics of the female body signifying Japan.

In comparison, the use of the Okinawan female body is devoid of this incongruence. For example, in Okinawan artist Chikako Yamashiro’s works, such as *アーサ女 (Seaweed Woman, 2008)* and *Okinawa TOURIST: I Like Okinawa Sweet (2004)*, her performing female body appears as the feminine, the colonial subjectivity of the colonised, owning the subversive power against Japan and the United States as the masculine, responding to the imposition of the U.S. military bases on Okinawa as a contemporary form of power.<sup>28</sup> Okinawan photographer Mao Ishikawa creates portraits of Okinawans holding the Japanese flag in *日の丸を視る目 (What the Japanese Flag Means to Me, 2011)*, exposing Japan as the location of power.<sup>29</sup> In the context of the Asian victims of the masculinity of Japan

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., pp. 165–166.

<sup>28</sup> Keiko Asanuma, *循環する世界 山城知佳子の世界 [Circulating World: The Art of Chikako Yamashiro]*, Tokyo: Yumiko Chiba Associates, 2016.

<sup>29</sup> Mao Ishikawa, *日の丸を視る目 石川真生写真集 [What the Japanese Flag Means to Me: Mao Ishikawa Photo Collection]*, Tokyo: Mirai-sya, 2011. See also her photography work, *Great Okinawa Picture Scroll Part 1–7, 2017–*.

expressed as wartime aggression, Yoshiko Shimada seeks a way of communication and compensation from a feminist perspective in *Past/Imperfect* (1992–1993), *Black Box* (1995), and 日本人「慰安婦」像になってみる (*Becoming a Statue of a Japanese Comfort Woman*, 2012–).<sup>30</sup> For an example of the use of the male body, the male body of Singaporean artist Lee Wen in the series *Yellow Man* (1992–2012), as first performed in London in 1992, appears as the emasculated subjectivity against the old colonial power of the United Kingdom. The female body in *Hidden Tides* discussed earlier in this chapter embodies the feminine against the masculine that the toy soldiers embody in an imaginary framework of imperial and colonial relations.

The semiotics of the female body in *I Told Our Story* subsumes the melodrama of the foundational narrative between the United States and Japan in establishing the masculine and the feminine. Alluding to *Hiroshima mon amour*, another melodrama, *I Told Our Story* examines the identification of the nation within the masculine–feminine through the incongruence of the signification of the masculinity through the female body. We leave the question of *whose* story is told in *I Told Our Story*, apparently yet another melodrama, to be answered in part 3.

In part 1 we have produced the semiotics of the female body, coalescing with the post-colonial psychoanalytic theories of Igarashi and Chen as well as embedding the cultural narratives of the grand narrative of growth that began from the ashes of World War II and the foundational narrative of Japan and the United States. In part 2, we look at the contemporary relation between Japan and Okinawa that informs the methodologies employed in the production of *I Told Our Story*.

## 2

### Ethnography

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<sup>30</sup> Yuichiro Takahashi, “争われる戦争の記憶 「エノラ・ゲイ」、「昭和館」と嶋田美子” [“Conflicting Memory of the War: Enola Gay, *Showa-kan* and Yoshiko Shimada”], in *身体化される知 パフォーマンス研究 [Embodied Wisdom: Performance Study]*, Tokyo: Serika-shobo, 2005. pp. 71–106. Bijutsute-cho, “「表現の不自由展」が台湾で開幕。6組の作家が参加” [“A Long Trail for Liberation Opens at MOCA Taipei”]. <<https://bijutsutecho.com/magazine/news/headline/21731>>. Accessed on 18 April 2020.

In part 2, we discuss the methodology applied in the production of *I Told Our Story*, which reflects the positionality of the artist-researcher conducting auto-ethnography in the modern and contemporary context of Okinawa. Producing the knowledge and representation of Okinawa through *I Told Our Story*, we invoke ethnographic concepts.

The artist-researcher of auto-ethnography from the mainland of Japan is embedded within the dominant power in colonial history, national security, and representation, as we shall shortly see from the position of Okinawa within the system of sacrifice that Tetsuya Takahashi defines. Here we explore the critical use of ethnography as a methodology, through which the positionality in representation as well as in society is doubly problematised.

The location of power is transferred to the material production of auto-ethnography, namely *I Told Our Story*. In the case of *I Told Our Story*, the material production is the production of images through the use of the camera, rather than writing, which is the more common mode of representation in ethnography. Whether through image or writing, however, these modes are both concerned with representation. For example, in his discussion of writing, ethnographer Mario L. Small argues as follows:

All ethnographies provide at once two representations, one of the observed and one of the observer. And though the ethnographer controls the writing both have an interest in the product. The observed have an interest in being depicted fairly, revealing not too much, and coming across as reasonable; the ethnographer, in representing herself as an acute observer, a thoughtful writer, and a reliable reporter.<sup>31</sup>

Ethnography creates the two representations of the ethnographer and his or her research subject. Encompassing the researcher (the ethnographer) within the research subject, auto-ethnography in particular creates the representation of him or her not solely as the observer but also as the observed. Advocating a “doubly engaged ethnography”, Raul Pacheco-Vega and Kate Parizeau also point out another form of the politics of representation in ethnography. They argue that a doubly engaged ethnography requires:

attention to the relationship between the researcher and their research community, and an acknowledgment of the power dynamics inherent in ethnographic research and writing. Such a methodological approach to ethnographic research allows the researcher to be engaged with the academic concerns of their discipline and the broader structural and cultural factors that perpetuate systems of inequality.<sup>32</sup>

Pacheco-Vega and Parizeau argue that an engagement with the broader structural and cultural factors is necessary in order to avoid the perpetuation of the system of inequality. We have seen the example of the cultural narrative that legitimates and conceals the

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<sup>31</sup> Mario L. Small, “De-exoticizing Ghetto Poverty: On the Ethics of Representation in Urban Ethnography,” *City & Community* 14:4 December 2015. pp. 352–358, p. 352.

<sup>32</sup> Raul Pacheco-Vega and Kate Parizeau, “Doubly Engaged Ethnography: Opportunities and Challenges When Working with Vulnerable Communities,” *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 17: 1–13, 2018. pp. 1–13, p. 2.

shadow cast over Okinawa earlier in part 1. Okinawa hosts about 70% of the US military facilities in Japan under the US–Japan Security Alliance, which has also been explained within Takahashi’s definition of the system of sacrifice. Okinawa’s relation to peace can therefore be defined in Takahashi’s terms as the following:

In the system of sacrifice, the peace is produced and maintained by Okinawa’s sacrifice of life, health, everyday living, assets, dignity, and hope etc. The benefit accrued to the nation is never produced or maintained without the sacrifice imposed on Okinawa. The sacrifice is normally either concealed or glorified as a holy sacrifice by the community, such as the nation state, nation, society, and corporations etc.

As in the definition of the system of sacrifice, the artist-researcher is reflective of her historical and contemporary positionality as an ex-coloniser and beneficiary of national security, including of the peace recognised in Article 9 of the Constitution of Japan, in relation to the site of her examination, Okinawa. The production of *I Told Our Story*, a form of knowledge and representation of Okinawa, engages with this inequality transferred in the positionality of the artist-researcher. In other words, what the system of sacrifice stipulates of Okinawa is the context in which the artist-researcher is positioned auto-ethnographically. The realm of sight, a space of contemplation that *I Told Our Story* embodies, is an aesthetic manifestation of inequality, through which to contemplate.

### **Relinquishment**

We have discussed the politics of knowledge and representation in ethnography. These ethnographers’ critical approaches to representation through writing share concerns with the use of a camera as a mode of representation employed by the artist-researcher. The power of the camera has been long associated with an abusive characteristic of the power of objectification over the objectified. We have seen Didi-Huberman’s argument on the role of the camera in creating a representation of hysteria as such an example. In this auto-ethnographic examination, however, the artist-researcher relinquishes her position behind the camera and places herself in front of the lens, undermining the unequal power relationship. The auto-ethnographer changes position, and this reversal is reflected in a change in the language of representation from *artist-researcher* to *I* and *me*. I relinquish being behind the camera and place myself in front of the lens in order to undermine the unequal power relationship.

This relinquishment of the position behind the camera is aligned with her positionality as a mainland Japanese person in the auto-ethnographic site of Okinawa: an ex-coloniser and a beneficiary of national security. The subversiveness of the relinquishment functions as a strategy against the dominant designations of power in the production of knowledge and representation *and* the social inequality. It is the artist-researcher’s own way of mounting an aesthetic response to “the broader structural and cultural factors that perpetuate systems of inequality” that Pacheco-Vega and Parizeau refer to in their doubly engaged ethnography.

On the politics of otherness in ethnographic representation, Catherine Russell states that “criticism needs to turn to ethnography as a discourse of othering”.<sup>33</sup> She goes on to say that “The uncanniness of the Other in representation is the knowledge of its unknowability, the knowledge that to see is not, after all, to know”,<sup>34</sup> which we draw upon in the aesthetics of intimacy and opacity in the introduction. The production of *I Told Our Story*, therefore, employs these aesthetics for the Okinawan and American participants of the work.

The designation of power to mainland Japan is deeply inscribed in the modern history of imperialism and colonialism. In relation to this research context of the identification of the nation, it is important to note that Okinawa was appropriated for the ethnocentric identification of Japaneseness by mainland Japanese artists and intellectuals.<sup>35</sup> Being aware of the historical controversies concerning the representation of Okinawa by mainland Japanese, *I Told Our Story* allocates the camera to the Okinawans and the Americans who live on the island in order for each of them to hold their own camera and document their own life in Okinawa.

### Invited Footage

We look at the employment of the methodologies and aesthetics in various processes involved in the production of *I Told Our Story*, ranging from the narrative structure, via the image production, to the viewership and the adoption of a subverted positionality as artist-researcher in front of the camera, as well as the use of found footage. The type of found footage employed here is *invited* footage.

The invited footage is digital photographs and videos that were produced by the Okinawans and the Americans who live on the island with their mobile phone cameras. The use of invited footage avoids the usual processes of objectification in the designation of power through the camera, thereby establishing a new relation of subjectivity.

The invited footage consists of apolitical, ahistorical digital photographs and videos of the unauthoritative, unofficial records of Okinawa. It is also un-archival, in contrast and allusion to the use of archival footage in *Hiroshima mon amour* and *Level Five*. These images are private, and were solely selected and sent to the artist-researcher by the Okinawans and Americans referred to as participants or contributors to *I Told Our Story*, in order to keep her intervention to a minimum. This process allows the formation of a space of intimacy and

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<sup>33</sup> Russell, *ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> See the following works and events for further reference about the representation of Okinawa by mainland Japanese artists in the post-war era: Taro Okamoto (1911–1996) and his *忘れられた日本 沖縄文化論* [*Forgotten Japan: Okinawa Cultural Theory*], Tokyo: Chuokoron-shya, 1961 and the Guso Incident, in which Okamoto violated the Okinawan culture in 1969; and Shomei Tomatsu (1930–2012) and his photobooks *OKINAWA 沖縄 OKINAWA [OKINAWA, Okinawa, OKINAWA]*, Tokyo: Shaken, 1969 and *太陽の鉛筆* [*Pencils of the Sun*], Tokyo: Shaken, 1975. See Takumi Oyashiki, “東松照明の<オキナワ>と沖縄—<東松神話>を解体する—” [“Shomei Tomatsu’s OKINAWA: Dismantling the Tomatsu Myth”], *N27*, no. 7, 19–37, August 2016 for an critical argument against the Shomatsu’s works. See also ethnographer Kunio Yanagida (1875–1962), and his *海上の道* [*The Road on the Sea*], Tokyo: Chikuma-shyobo, 1961.

opacity private to the participants of *I Told Our Story*, namely the irreducibility and the unknowability of the dairies of their lives. Collected from 2016 to 2018, the items of invited footage are private documents of contemporary Okinawa created by individuals in their twenties to forties.<sup>36</sup> In contributing to *I Told Our Story*, there was no requirement to submit details concerning when and where the images were produced. The aesthetics of intimacy and opacity in the process of contribution functioned to respect the ethical dimensions of this research.

This subversive mode of the production of representation, inviting the multiple voices of “I” of the Okinawans and the Americans, creates “a commentary on the world that makes no grand scientific or totalizing claims but is uncertain, tentative and speculative”.<sup>37</sup> The subversive yet collective mode of the production invites those participants, through their personal and day-to-day use of mobile phone cameras, to become visual narrators of “I” *Told Our Story*. As we have seen, the action of relinquishment of the position behind the camera was reflected in the change in the language of representation from *artist-researcher* to *I* and *me*. In this collective mode of production, the notion of authorship traditionally ascribed to the artist-researcher becomes less credible and she blends into this ensemble of many different participants, each of whom enacts the role “I”.

### The Plurality of “I”

The invited “I”s pluralise not only the narrative voice, but also reality, self–other, and interrelation through their participation in the production. This idiosyncratic notion of “I”s manifested by their participation in the image production dismisses the dichotomous recognition of Okinawa and the United States that could reductively be represented through the nationalities of the Okinawan and American participants as signifiers of geopolitics. That is to say that the idiosyncratic mode of documentation of their lives denotes the Okinawan and the Americans with their identities articulated outside the terrain of the geopolitical subjectivity. Kazuo Hara’s documentary film *極私的エロス 恋歌 1974* (*Extreme Private Eros: Love Song 1974*, 1974) and Mao Ishikawa’s publication of 1975 photographs, *熱き日々 in オキナワ* (*Hot Days in Okinawa*, 2013), for example, document the lives of the Okinawans, the Americans, and the Japanese in the 1970s, framing them outside the political stipulation of their subjectivities and identities. These autobiographical documentations embody the self in a way that Michael Renov describes as “conditional, contingent on its location within an explicit social matrix”.<sup>38</sup> These autobiographical practices observe the conditional and contingent nature of the boundary between self and

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<sup>36</sup> The age range of twenties to forties corresponds to that of the majority of the American participants, who are serving military personnel and contractors, or their dependent family members. The age range of the Okinawan participants was chosen to match that range, and is that of the generation born after the handover of Okinawa to Japan in 1972. The definition of the Okinawan, the American, and the Japanese in this context is defined by the power structure which is the subject of the argument of this chapter and does not refer to the participants’ national or ethnic identity. One such example of the distinction enacted by the imposition of authoritarian power is the demarcation of areas of jurisdiction. The fences that surround the US military installations visualise the boundary of the jurisdiction on the ground, whereas there are invisible boundaries in the sky and water. See also Japan–U.S. Status of Forces Agreement.

<sup>37</sup> Russell, *ibid.*, p. 277.

<sup>38</sup> Michael Renov, *The Subject of Documentary*, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2004. p. 179.

other in these private and intimate details of the authors' lives from a perspective that implicates the "I" outside the geopolitical stipulation of subjectivity.

## First Person

Alisa Lebow defines "first person films" as follows:

[they] can be poetic, political, prophetic or absurd. They can be autobiographical in full, or only implicitly and in part. They may take the form of self-portrait, or indeed, a portrait of another. They are, very often, not a cinema of 'me', but about someone close, dear, beloved or intriguing, who nonetheless informs the filmmaker's sense of him or herself. They may not be about a person, self or other, at all, but about a neighborhood, a community, a phenomenon or event. The designation 'first person film' is foremost about a mode of address: these films 'speak' from the articulated point of view of the filmmaker who readily acknowledges her subjective position.<sup>39</sup>

*Extreme Private Eros: Love Song 1974* and *Hot Days in Okinawa* can be considered as this sort of first-person practice, as Lebow defines; they speak from the articulated points of view of the filmmaker and the photographer who readily acknowledge their subjective positions.

In contrast, Chris Marker's *Sans Soleil* (*Sunless*, 1982) does not openly speak from his subjective position, although it establishes an "I" in the epistolary narration. Russell states that "as an autoethnographic text, it [*Sans Soleil*] is distinctly silent about the identity of its maker [Chris Marker], who hides himself within an intricate pattern of first-person pronouns".<sup>40</sup> The film's narration consists entirely of letters ostensibly written, using the first-person pronoun "I", by the fictional filmmaker Sandor Krasna, evidently an avatar of Chris Marker, presumably to the unnamed female narrator, whose voice embodies them.<sup>41</sup>

Although Russell analyses *Sans Soleil* as an auto-ethnographic film, *Sans Soleil* is also much known and praised as an essay film.<sup>42</sup> Timothy Corrigan in his *The Essay Film: From Montaigne, after Marker* (2011) defines essay film by its essayistic nature as "a kind of encounter between the self and the public domain, an encounter that measures the limits and possibilities of each as a conceptual activity".<sup>43</sup> He further distinguishes the travel essay film as one that "discovers another self in the process of thinking through new or old environments and thinking of self as a different environment".<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Alisa Lebow, "Introduction", in *Cinema of Me: The Self and Subjectivity in First Person Documentary*, edited by Alisa Lebow, London, New York, NY: Wallflower Press, 2012. p. 1.

<sup>40</sup> Russell, *ibid.*, p. 301.

<sup>41</sup> Chris Marker is a pseudonym. Besides Krasna, his other known avatars include Chris Villeneuve, Fritz Markassin, and Jacopo Berenzi. The cat and the owl are also his alter egos.

<sup>42</sup> Catherine Lupton, *Chris Marker: Memories of the Future*, London: Reaktion Books, 2005, p. 7; Timothy Corrigan, *The Essay Film: From Montaigne, after Marker*, New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011. p. 8. See also Marker's film *Lettre de Sibérie* (*Letter from Siberia*, 1958).

<sup>43</sup> Corrigan, *ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105.



Despite the manipulation of the first-person textual and audio narrative, which Russell calls a “heroic effort of decentering himself”, Marker’s decentering of himself is not successfully executed in the production of images in *Sans Soleil* as she observes that “his preoccupation with gender and the Other is not masked but foregrounded as a fascination with images”.<sup>45</sup> In the blurred boundary between documentary/nonfiction and fiction, *Sans Soleil* allows the eloquent gaze of Marker himself to pass unmarked within the framework of the correspondence between the fictional filmmaker Sandor Krasna and the female narrator. *Sans Soleil*’s establishment of an “I”, another self in Corrigan’s sense, which would supposedly be discovered in the process of thinking through new or old environments and thinking of self as a different environment, as Russell analyses, sets out that “The identity of the filmmaker is unambiguously a Western male.”<sup>46</sup> This monolithic inhabitation of the identity Russell observes is what Trinh T. Minh-ha calls “a unified subject”, which is even “more powerful for being invisible”. Trinh, coming from the former French colony of Vietnam and migrating to the United States, hence finding herself among those “labelled ‘Others’: women, people of color, inhabitants of the Third World”, in an interview states:

What is at stake is not only the hegemony of Western cultures, but also their identities as unified cultures; in other words, the realization that there is a Third World in every First World, and vice versa. The master is made to recognize that His Culture is not as homogeneous, not as monolithic as He once believed it to be. He discovers, often with much reluctance, that he is just an other among others. In this ‘horizontal vertigo,’ identity is this multiple layer whose process never leads to the True Self, or to Woman, but only to other layers, other selves, other women. ‘Otherness,’ though, is not a fixed notion. To paraphrase Simone de Beauvoir, one is not born an ‘Other,’ one becomes one. Especially in the documentary process, the filmmaker – no matter what is his/her race, class, or gender – takes the position of a unified subject (all the more powerful for being invisible). The object of the cinematic gaze is the Other.<sup>47</sup>

As Trinh describes of hegemony, Marker’s gaze of Othering as a Western man centres monolithically behind the ostensible fictional figure of Krasna, who is denoted as “I”, the first-person pronoun. The establishment of an “I” in the ambiguous space of documentary and fiction allows Marker’s problematic Western male gaze towards gender and the Other to remain unchallenged, from which there arises a reproduction of the Other as an auto-ethnographic film. Russell considers *Sans Soleil* a demonstration of “the impossibility of an absolutely postmodern, decentred ethnographic film”.<sup>48</sup> The postmodern subject, as well as the decentred subject of “I” with which Marker attempts to denote himself, is semblance and nevertheless, as Russell asserts, “Marker’s invisibility, omniscience, ubiquity, and mobility situate him yet as another belated traveller.”<sup>49</sup>

*Sans Soleil* is also a reproduction of self–the Other in the sense that, as Russell states, “Japan in *Sans Soleil* designates the uneven development of modernity. The implied

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<sup>45</sup> Russell, *ibid.*, p. 301.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 301.

<sup>47</sup> Trinh T. Minh-ha. *Cinema Interval*, London and New York, NY: Routledge, 1999. p.51.

<sup>48</sup> Russell, *ibid.*, p. 305.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 301.

comparison with 'Africa' is between hyperdevelopment and underdevelopment, both of which refer back to a notion of the 'regular development' of the First (Euro-America) World."<sup>50</sup> The auto-ethnographic positioning of the artist-researcher of this PhD research has investigated the shadow under the post-war development of Japan that growth brought and observed the irreducible and unknowable details of the lives of the people in the periphery. Marker's reductionist view of Japanese politics and economy, and of the Other, merely unveils him as the representative type of a reductionist and "modern(ist) man".<sup>51</sup>

As we have seen, *I Told Our Story* manifests subversive methodologies and aesthetics, including the use of invited footage, drawn from the ethnographic engagement concerning power and representation, in different phases of its production. Through this manifestation, the artist-researcher engages with her dual positionality of the representing and the represented with respect to Okinawa. In *I Told Our Story*, oscillating between *artist-researcher* and *I or me* in the use of a first-person narrative, the dominant powers are laid bare doubly in the production of representation and in the sociological context: an ex-coloniser, a beneficiary of national security as well as a mainland researcher. Revealing the dominance, *I Told Our Story* constantly negotiates with itself as a location of the reproduction of such power. Subsuming *Hiroshima mon amour* and *Level Five* with the enactment of the heroines and inviting the contribution of first-person documentary photographs by the participants, *I Told Our Story* establishes an "I" in the ambiguity of documentary/nonfiction and fiction. Part 3 examines the concealed reproduction of the dominance in the establishment of an "I" in the ambiguity.

### 3

#### ***I Told Our Story* (2018)**

In the last two parts, we have examined the semiotics of the female body and the ethnographic conception of power in the production of representation in the post-colonial

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 308.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 306.

context of both Japan and Okinawa. Part 3 discusses *I Told Our Story*, in which these two endeavours are applied.

In the coming paragraphs we look at the framework of the narrative in *I Told Our Story*, which subsumes Alain Resnais's *Hiroshima mon amour* (1959) and Chris Marker's *Level Five* (1997). These two films incorporate archival footage and thematise their respective heroines' memory of their lovers. *I Told Our Story* unfolds in these contexts, subsuming them as its metanarrative.

The French woman (Emmanuelle Riva) of *Hiroshima mon amour*, at the basin in front of the mirror, utters "I told our story" with "us" referring to her and her lost German lover [Figure 1]. The Japanese woman (the artist-researcher) imitates this scene by placing herself in front of the built-in camera of her desktop computer. The use of the computer refers to Laura (Catherine Belkhdja) of *Level Five*, who attempts to complete the production of a video game based on the Battle of Okinawa that her lover was working on before he died [Figures 2 and 3 to 5].<sup>52</sup> The women of *Hiroshima mon amour* and *Level Five* have lost their lovers; so has the woman of *I Told Our Story*.

The aforementioned scene, "I told our story", is what Cathy Caruth calls "betrayal" in her essay on *Hiroshima mon amour*, entitled "Literature and the Enactment of Memory (Duras, Resnais, *Hiroshima mon amour*)".<sup>53</sup> According to Caruth, it is not simply an erotic betrayal, "but a betrayal precisely in the act of telling, in the very transmission of an objective understanding that erases the subjective specificity of a death".<sup>54</sup> This betrayal is basically the economics between remembering and forgetting or rejection and acceptance of the traumatic memory and event at exchange.

Alluding to this scene, *I Told Our Story* unfolds on this economics of forgetting as a form of disidentification. Just as much as these lost loves haunt the women in the aforementioned films, the lost love is at the core and origin of the story that the Japanese woman tells, and is the linchpin of the identification of the nation that the semiotics of the female body signifies through the artist-researcher's own female body.

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<sup>52</sup> Lupton, *Chris Marker*, *ibid.*, p. 178.

<sup>53</sup> Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History*, Baltimore, MA and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996. p. 27. See also Stef Craps, *Postcolonial Witnessing: Trauma Out of Bounds*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. pp. 14–19 and Kalí Tal, "Remembering Difference: Working against Eurocentric Bias in Contemporary Scholarship on Trauma and Memory" in *Worlds of Hurt: Reading the Literature of Trauma*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, republished online <<http://worldsofhurt.com/chapter-three/>>, unpaginated, for post-colonial anti-Eurocentric criticisms of Caruth's aforementioned book.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

[image removed for copyright reasons]

*Figure 1 The French woman at the basin, Hiroshima mon amour (1959)*

[image removed for copyright reasons]

*Figure 2 Laura and her uncomfortable closeness , Level Five (1997)*



Figure 3 The Japanese woman, I Told Our Story (2018)



Figure 4 The Japanese woman, I Told Our Story (2018)



Figure 5 The Japanese woman, *I Told Our Story* (2018)

Interlacing these identical moments of an intimate disclosure of the traumatic loss of love, *I Told Our Story* consists of two parts. It begins with the scenes of the Japanese woman in front of the built-in camera of her desktop computer telling about her lost love in an inaudible voice. [Figures 3 to 5] In this first half, the location of the body is subverted by the artist-researcher being in front of the camera, observed, seen, objectified, and represented. She is looking through the invited footage of the digital photographs and videos produced by the Okinawans and the Americans. This scene was videographed in the artist-researcher's own studio in Okinawa in allusion to *Level Five*, in which Marker filmed Belkhodja as Laura in his own studio in Paris. The second half displays the invited footage, revealing that these images are what the Japanese woman was looking at and speaking of in the search for her lost lover in the first half of the video. Selected images from the invited footage follow at the end of this chapter.

We do not know the nationality of her lost lover. She speaks in a faint voice about him, he who is the centre and origin of *I Told Our Story*, the reference point of her identification. There is no sense of conflict in the act of telling as betrayal, but an undertone of celebration of forgetting as ineluctable, pervaded with intimacy and opacity. There is the lurking desire to remember and to forget him and themselves, whom she refers to as "you" and "us". Just as much as her voice is faint, her memory of him is fading. The memories are corporeal, already being in oblivion, or never staying and only momentarily in her body. Some are vivid. Some are dull.

She speaks:

*Text 1*

Fragments of your warmth  
Slip away from my hands.

I can't recall all that now,  
All the softness and warmth  
On our lips.

You protected me;  
My shoulders remember you.

No pictures.  
Memories of you I have are in me,  
Each fragment of my body parts.

Nothing. Nothing testifies that we were here,  
That you were alive  
And you had that warmth.

I would tell our story  
If I could.

If my body reacts  
It would recreate all those memories of you  
To be remembered,  
To be photographed and  
Videographed.

I told our story we didn't name.

*Text 2*

I'm searching for the moments I can go back  
The moments that I can identify myself  
The moments we were together

I'm searching for the moments that trigger other memories  
That no longer stay in my body  
What my body no longer remembers

*Text 3*

I wish I could forget  
Forget all his memories

I wish I could delete all the memories  
All his memories  
From my body

To go back where I was  
The moments before my body remembers him

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## Technology, Memory

*I Told Our Story* requires the viewing environment of a personalised monitor. This could be either a desktop or a mobile screen. The requirement of a personalised monitor provides an intimate viewing environment as it is aligned with the intimacy achieved in the metanarrative. It casts the artist-researcher, the successor of Laura, in close proximity to the viewer. The discomfort of proximity (Laura's closeness to the camera in *Level Five*) [Figure 2] is recreated in *I Told Our Story* by the material embodiment of the contemporary technology: the built-in camera that the artist-researcher videographs herself with and the viewing requirement of a personalised monitor. This requirement of a personalised monitor also, at a social level, corresponds to the private and often domestic viewing environment afforded by the prevalence of personalised audio and visual equipment in the contemporary world.

This use of contemporary technology is further tied to that of the smart phone as camera and means of data storage.<sup>55</sup> *I Told Our Story* collects the digital photography and video (the invited footage) produced by mobile phone cameras from the Okinawan and American participants. This is to say, it is a covert allusion to the now obsolete technology of the 1990s that Marker explores in *Level Five*.<sup>56</sup> Although the smart phone as memory medium appears only covertly in *I Told Our Story*, the usage of invited footage to embody *I Told Our Story's* preoccupation with memory creates a sharp contrast with the employment of archival footage in the films by Resnais and Marker.

## Archival Footage

Forgetting, namely losing the specificity and actuality of experience in *Hiroshima mon amour*, was seen as an immediate issue for the generation who lived through the war, including the director and script writer of the film, Resnais and Duras. *Level Five* further complicates the issue of forgetting and extends the issue onto the social level by employing the technological environments of the 1990s in order to investigate "the gap in time and knowledge between the survivors of Okinawa and those who learn about it afterwards".<sup>57</sup> Marker thus thematises the growing social fissure between generations in remembering memories of historical events.

Both *Hiroshima mon amour* and *Level Five* depict social memories and growing social fissures.<sup>58</sup> The fissures between the generation that experienced the war and the generations that did not experience it are aesthetically indicated through the insertion of

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<sup>55</sup> For the use of the mobile phone in the image production, see Sarah Atkinson "Mobile Cinema", and the text which influenced it, Alexandra Schneider, "The iPhone as an Object of Knowledge", both in *The Screen Media Reader: Culture, Theory, Practice*, London: Bloomsbury, 2017, edited by Stephen Monteiro.

<sup>56</sup> Marker used various media of his era, from VHS to the CD-ROM, in his examination of memory. In *Level Five* in particular, he thematised the computer.

<sup>57</sup> Catherine Lupton, "Terminal Replay: Resnais Revised in Chris Marker's *Level Five*," *Screen* 44.1 (Spring 2003): 58–70. p. 59.

<sup>58</sup> See also Resnais's film *Muriel ou le Temps d'un retour* (*Muriel, or the Time of Return*, 1963) for memory of the Algerian War and the use of found footage.



the found footage as information. That is to say, the passages of the archival footage of the *hibakusha* in *Hiroshima mon amour* and of the Battle of Okinawa in *Level Five* are used to refer to the collective memory or historical events of the generation that experienced the war running in parallel with the absence of such experiences among those who did not experience it.

John Berger's distinction between two forms of photograph, namely private photographs and public photographs, in his "Uses of Photography: For Susan Sontag" in *About Looking* (1980) is useful here. The invited footage in *I Told Our Story* belongs to the former category and the archival footage of *Hiroshima* and *Level Five* to the latter. Berger states that the public photograph:

presents an event, a seized set of appearances, which has nothing to do with us, its readers, or with the original meaning of the event. It offers information, but information severed from all lived experience. If the public photograph contributes to a memory, it is to the memory of an unknowable and total stranger.<sup>59</sup>

Berger points out that the public photograph's contribution is to the memory of the other, an unknowable and total stranger in his words. One such example of the public photograph is provided by the photographs of *hibakusha* at the Peace Memorial Park, which the French woman, a stranger to the event, looks at and adds to her memory in *Hiroshima mon amour*. Upon observing this, the Japanese man says, "You saw nothing." The invited footage in *I Told Our Story*, on the other hand, is employed within an ethnographic conception. The invited footage in *I Told Our Story* does not refer to collective memory or to major historical events but consists of private records of the participants' own lives in Okinawa.

## Juxtaposition

We have discussed the difference in orientation of the use of found footage between *I Told Our Story* and the films *Hiroshima mon amour* and *Level Five*. In this section, we examine the "sacrilegious" structure inherent in *I Told Our Story* originating from *Hiroshima mon amour*.

The French woman's wartime trauma of losing her German lover, an official enemy of her country, and witnessing his execution in the town of Nevers, is recalled during her visit to Hiroshima. With Hiroshima emerging as the first location in which she disclosed this trauma, *Hiroshima mon amour* juxtaposes her personal trauma and the collective trauma of the atomic-bombing in Hiroshima. Marguerite Duras, the film's scriptwriter, calls this narrative structure "sacrilegious",<sup>60</sup> as the narrative unfolds and renders atomic-bombed Hiroshima as a space juxtaposed with the banality of a love affair, "a banal tale, one that happens a thousand times every day".<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> John Berger, *About Looking*, New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1980. p. 52.

<sup>60</sup> Marguerite Duras, *Hiroshima Mon Amour*, trans. Richard Seaver, New York, NY: Grove Press, 1961. p. 9.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

Resnais, who travelled to Japan on 28 July 1958 for the production of *Hiroshima mon amour*, wrote to Duras in Paris regularly during the period of the production.<sup>62</sup> On a postcard with a picture of the Atomic Bomb Dome dated 7 August 1958, Resnais wrote to Duras that “I feel that the Hiroshima cue overdoes the ‘well-meaning sentiments’ and doesn’t sufficiently render ‘Basically we couldn’t care less. After all, they were yellow people.’”<sup>63</sup> This comment by Resnais on Duras’s script indicates the devaluation of the trauma of Hiroshima in the juxtaposition of Nevers and Hiroshima with an undertone of racism.

The juxtaposition of these pains, the sacrilege as Duras describes it, functions as quantification and equivalence in Jean-Luc Nancy’s sense. This is to say, the juxtaposition is an aesthetic quantification and equivalence, in which pain is led to an exchangeable and comparable notion dismissing the non-equivalent and incommensurable nature of pain. *Hiroshima mon amour* reduces the historical trauma of the actual bombing to one of a thousand banal affairs and brings it onto the terrain of commensurability with the French woman’s personal trauma of the filmic fiction. This is also reflected in the first-person pronoun “I” employed in narrating the French woman’s trauma, as opposed to the trauma of Hiroshima being narrated as that of a geographical location, which does not embody subjectivity. The un-designation of “I” does not endow Hiroshima to speak of its own story of trauma.<sup>64</sup>

Stef Craps in his *Postcolonial Witnessing: Trauma Out of Bounds* (2012) states that:

After all, we only ever get to hear the French woman’s story; the traumatic history of Hiroshima in general or of the Japanese man in particular remains largely untold. Hiroshima is reduced to a stage on which the drama of a European woman’s struggle to come to terms with her personal trauma can be played out; the Japanese man is of interest primarily as a catalyst and facilitator of this process.<sup>65</sup>

As Craps points out, the trauma of Hiroshima remains untold and is juxtaposed to facilitate the telling of the French woman’s story. Kalí Tal describes this as “the history of European sentiment at the expense of Japanese perspective, an appropriation of Japanese pain in the service of European ‘truth,’ quite literally projected upon the screen of the tortured and mutilated exotic Japanese body”.<sup>66</sup>

In *Level Five*, on the other hand, as Catherine Lupton describes in a comparison with *Hiroshima mon amour*, the female protagonist Laura’s sacrilege can be seen as “her

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<sup>62</sup> Alain Resnais, “マルグリット・デュラスへの手紙” [“Letters to Marguerite Duras”], in *HIROSHIMA 1958* [*HIROSHIMA 1958*], ed. Chihiro Minato and Marie-Christine de Navavelle, Tokyo: Inscript, 2008. p. 62.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>64</sup> *Hiroshima mon amour* was released in Japan in 1959 with a Japanese title, 二十四時間の情事, which means *An Affair Lasting for 24 Hours* in English. This title emphasises the *amour* rather than Hiroshima. However, *Hiroshima mon amour* is nowadays widely recognised under its original French title, which is transliterated into the Japanese script, ヒロシマモナムール.

<sup>65</sup> Craps, *ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>66</sup> Tal, *ibid.*, unpaginated.

willingness to compare her suffering to that of the Okinawan people”.<sup>67</sup> The use of the first-person pronoun “I” in her speech is carried over in her attitude towards the camera.

*I Told Our Story* reproduces such sacrileges, in particular Laura’s willingness to compare her suffering to that of the victims of the Battle of Okinawa, through the narcissistic, actively gazed upon position of the Japanese woman which is tantamount to the employment of the first-person aesthetic of the selfie in the first half of the work. [Figures 3 to 5]

The narcissistic, actively gazed upon position of the Japanese woman, the successor of Laura, in *I Told Our Story* reproduces the sacrilegious structure present in *Hiroshima mon amour* and *Level Five*. The resulting juxtaposition brings both her individual pain and the contemporary political situation of Okinawa onto a terrain of commensurability that is sacrilegious. This amounts to a contradiction with the plurality of “I”, in which the invited “I”s are inherently irreducible and unexchangeable. As we have seen, *Hidden Tides* employs the aesthetics of juxtaposition, in which the images of the body of the artist-researcher and the cliff of the war site are juxtaposed. Without the establishment of an “I” in the images and the accompanying text, unlike in the aforementioned films, *Hidden Tides* embodies sacrilege. The tactility of the gaze and the pleasure of looking that *Hidden Tides* manifests create the realm of sight, where the juxtaposition discounts the history and undermines the pain that Okinawa endured.<sup>68</sup>

## Ambiguity

This aesthetics of juxtaposition, reproducing the sacrilegious comparisons of pain, contradicts the conception of Pacheco-Vega and Parizeau’s doubly engaged ethnography that is directed against the perpetuation of social inequality. This ethics manifests itself in the relinquishment by the artist-researcher of her position in front of the camera and the use of the invited footage. This is to say, *I Told Our Story* conflicts with the ethics by bringing both her individual pain and the contemporary political situation of Okinawa onto the terrain of commensurability through the aesthetics of juxtaposition – that is, the first-person aesthetic of the selfie. Furthermore, in enacting the French woman and Laura, the pervasive sense of intimacy and opacity looking real, from which the specificity and actuality of the pain of the Japanese woman equivocally emerge, veils whether her pain juxtaposed with Okinawa is actual or fictional. *I Told Our Story* unfolds within this ambiguity of the first-person narrative in a style crossing the boundary between documentary and fiction. In the following sections, we reconsider the establishment of “I” in *I Told Our Story* and examine it as a location of power. For this examination, we employ the semiotics of the female body set up in part 1 and revisit the alluded scene of “I told our story” in *Hiroshima mon amour*.

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<sup>67</sup> Lupton, “Terminal Replay”, *ibid.*, p. 60.

<sup>68</sup> The discounting can be compared with Lorna Simpson’s *Waterbearer* (1986) accompanied with the text “SHE SAW HIM DISAPPEAR BY THE RIVER, THEY ASKED HER TO TELL WHAT HAPPENED, ONLY TO DISCOUNT HER MEMORY”.

## Disidentification

We have discussed that the alluded scene is what Cathy Caruth calls “betrayal” and is the economics of remembering–forgetting or rejection–acceptance. With forgetting seen as being equal to losing the referential specificity of her wartime love in *Hiroshima mon amour*, I examine this loss of referential specificity as the loss of her identification. The specificity of her wartime love is at risk of being unable to maintain itself as the reference point of her identification. When she tells her story, it inevitably causes her to lose the specificity of him. As stated previously, the specificity of him had been the core and origin that she had identified herself with for the last fourteen years until her disclosure to the Japanese man. Paralysed in front of the mirror, however, her body as a site of memory, and in the economics of remembering and forgetting, is an oscillating liminal space of identification and disidentification that has determined and will continue to determine her. The immediate fresh corporeal specificity of the adulterous Japanese amour to whom she has told the story of her lost lover, the doubly complicit betrayer, is now a destabiliser of her identification with the wartime love. This disclosure as a pivotal point allows the rise of a new identification, which assumes the specificity of him as her prior identification.

*I Told Our Story* applies the semiotics of the female body in this context. With the artist-researcher performing the body of the Japanese woman, *I Told Our Story* embeds the semiotics of the female body into her body as the signifier in the following context of the identification of the nation: the masculinity of Japan to the victim countries of Japanese aggression, and the feminised subjectivity of Japan to the United States in the post-war relation. This is grounded in the melodramatic foundational narrative analysed by Igarashi, and the colonial construction of subjectivity in East Asia analysed by Chen.

Within the semiotics of the female body, the corporeal self of the Japanese woman losing the specificity of her lost lover symbolises the oscillation between the national identification with masculinity and the disidentification with femininity.

## Whose Story?

This corporeal self of the Japanese woman that signifies the two incongruent identifications of the nation creates an incongruency with the textual self of “I” which is tantamount to the voice-over narration by herself. We have already looked at how *I Told Our Story* embodied the plurality and irreducibility of “I”s through the use of invited footage in the production of the image in order not to perpetuate social inequality through representation, which has been regressively contracted by the artist-researcher’s use of the first-person aesthetics of the selfie, resulting in commensurability. We also discussed the frailty of the postmodernist and decentred “I” in Chris Marker’s *Sans Soleil*. The plural existence of “I”s has not yet identified who is the textual/narrative “I” of *I Told Our Story*. However, the semiotics of the female body provides an answer to this question, here signifying her body as a site of the national identification. That is to say, the text of *I Told Our Story* can be interpreted as the feminisation of the nation. There is a melodramatic mention of the lost lover in her disclosure, connoting the masculinity:

You protected me;  
My shoulders remember you.

Reeking of melodrama, it now becomes obvious that the masculinity refers to the United States and the nationality of her lost lover is American as the semiotics of the female body embeds the foundational narrative within. She says:

I told our story we didn't name.

Whose story? With *I* referring to Japan, *our* story that has been told refers to Japan and the United States. In this sense, *our story* is a reproduction of the foundational narratives. In the contemporary geopolitics, *our story* could refer to the allied partnership, a story of the centralist, a story of the beneficiary of national security. *I Told Our Story* manipulates the notion of an "I" of first-person narrative in auto-ethnographical, auto-biographical documentary and fiction, and presents *I Told Our Story* itself as a production of a hegemonic narrative that maintains the dominant power. The use of "I" in *I Told Our Story* manipulates the established notion of first-person practices as an idiosyncratic mode to narrate personal, marginalised, or unofficial histories and reverses the practice as a perpetuation of social inequality in Pacheco-Vega and Parizeau's sense, a reassurance of hegemony as power in Gramsci's sense, an operation of hypocrisy in Didi-Huberman's sense, or a reproduction of, as Laura describes her act, "Okinawa mon amour", a sacrilege. It is, borrowing Caruth's words, a betrayal of the premise of another story to be told by telling another story from the grand narrative.

Russell states that "the testimonial, confessional character of autoethnography often assumes a site of authenticity and veracity, originating in the filmmaker's experience". From this perspective, the establishment of an "I" in *I Told Our Story* reflects such a testimonial, confessional character of autoethnography and denotes *I Told Our Story* as an authentic site of the reflection of the artist-researcher, that is the oxymoronic location of power, as the representing, an ex-coloniser and a beneficiary of national security.

This chapter ends with this unsettled feeling and questions, with a sense of intimacy and opacity, and of ambiguity. The readers of this thesis, as if they were the viewers of *I Told Our Story*, will be left to look at the mobile phone digital photographs of the invited footage after this last paragraph.

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## AFTERIMAGE

A few weeks after the 3.11 disasters, I was on an aeroplane floating in the air of Singapore. This propeller-driven small plane that a friend manipulated took us to the boundaryless space of blue.

Towards the in-between, the whole, or the split, the notion of crossing borders has drawn a larger map for the journey of this research. Exposed into flux and change, the uncertain space outside the borders favours fresh new winds. Navigated by the winds, we have seen numerous landscapes of water: sailing in Singapore, the tsunami-affected coastal line of Fukushima and the other disaster sites, snow in Niigata, and cliffs and beaches in Okinawa. Being presented beyond geographical scenery, the landscape of water has been the in-between space of the national identification, the escape from the modern concept of time, and the liminal state of remembering and forgetting.

The shape of the aeroplane on the ground became smaller and smaller. With the swelling excitement of rising towards the highest point in the sky, the miniature city of Singapore galvanised my inner child.



*I'm a boy* (2011)  
Photography with sound



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311, Tatsuya Mori, Takeharu Watai, Yoju Matsubayashi, and Takaharu Yasuoka (2011)  
*4/61 Mauern pos.-neg. & Weg [Walls Pos.–Neg. & Path]*, Kurt Kren (1961)  
*5/62 Fenstergucker, Abfall, etc. [5/62 People Looking Out of the Window, Trash etc.]* Kurt Kren (1962)  
*Agatha et les lectures illimitées [Agatha and the Limitless Readings]*, Marguerite Duras (1981)  
*Al di là delle nuvole [Beyond the Clouds]*, Michelangelo Antonioni (1995)  
*Berlin Horse*, Malcolm Le Grice (1970)  
*Clouds*, Peter Gidal (1969)  
*Crash*, David Cronenberg (1996)  
*D'Est [From the East]*, Chantal Akerman (1993)  
*Dogora: Ouvrons les yeux*, Patrice Leconte (2004)  
*Drancy Avenir*, Arnaud des Pallières (1997)  
*Empire of the Sun*, Steven Spielberg (1987)  
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*Geschichtsunterricht [History Lessons]*, Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet (1972)  
*H Story*, Nobuhiro Suwa (2001)  
*Hirohito and MacArthur*, Tetsugo Hyakutake (2009)  
*Hiroshima mon amour [Hiroshima, My Love]*, Alain Resnais (1959)  
*Immemory*, Chris Marker (1998)  
*India Song*, Marguerite Duras (1975)  
*Interior/Exterior, Full/Empty*, Lorna Simpson (1997)  
*La Jetée*, Chris Marker (1962)  
*L'année dernière à Marienbad [Last Year at Marienbad]*, Alain Resnais (1961)  
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*Level Five*, Chris Marker (1997)  
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*On vous parle de ... [Calling from ...]*, Chris Marker (1969–1973)  
*Oral History*, Meiro Koizumi (2013–2015)  
*Psycho*, Alfred Hitchcock (1960)  
*Reassemblage*, Trinh T. Minh-ha (1982)  
*Sans soleil [Sunless]*, Chris Marker (1982)  
*Shoah*, Claude Lanzmann (1985)  
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*The Emperor's Naked Army Marches On*, Kazuo Hara (1987)  
*Thelma & Louise*, Ridley Scott (1991)  
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*Tystnaden [The Silence]*, Ingmar Bergman (1963)  
*Under the Skin*, Jonathan Glazer (2013)

*Vanilla Sky*, Cameron Crowe (2001)  
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*Zabriskie Point*, Michelangelo Antonioni (1970)  
*Zapping Zone*, Chris Marker (1990)  
アーサ女 [*Seaweed Woman*], Chikako Yamashiro (2008)  
神々の深き欲望 [*The Profound Desire of the Gods*], Shohei Imamura (1968)  
極私的エロス 恋歌 1974 [*Extreme Private Eros: Love Song 1974*], Kazuo Hara (1974)  
ソラチネ [*Sonatine*], Takeshi Kitano (1993)  
つぶれかかった右眼のために [*For My Crushed Right Eye*], Toshio Matsumoto (1968)  
東京物語 [*Tokyo Story*], Yasujiro Ozu (1953)  
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若き侍の肖像 [*Portrait of a Young Samurai*], Meiro Koizumi (2009)

## Exhibitions and Catalogues

*Amanda Heng: Speak to Me, Walk with Me*, Singapore Art Museum, Singapore, 2011.  
*Ambivalent TOM MAX: Tsutomu Makishi Solo Exhibition*, Okinawa Prefectural Museum, 1 November 2016–2 April 2017  
*Autophoto: Cars & Photography, 1900 to Now*, Fondation Cartier pour l'Art Contemporain, April 20–September 24 2017  
*Bruce Osborn, Oyako: Present to The Future*, the Embassy of Japan in Singapore, Japan Creative Centre, 19 February–12 March 2016  
*Hiroaki Ooshiro and Hiroaki Yamashiro, Photojournalists: Okinawa through Their Lens, the Unending Post-War*, Okinawa Prefectural Museum, 28 March–19 April 2015  
*In the Wake: Japanese Photographers Respond to 3/11*, Museum of Fine Arts Boston, 5 April–12 July 2015  
*Into the Atomic Sunshine: Post-War Art under Japanese Peace Constitution Article 9*, Ruffin Room, New York, 12 January–24 February 2008.  
*Japanese Expanded Cinema Revisited*, Tokyo Photographic Art Museum, 15 August–15 October 2017  
*Lorna Simpson*, American Foundation of Arts, New York, 2006.  
*Mao Ishikawa: Okinawa Photographic Part 1–4, Naha Civil Gallery 5–10 September 2017*  
*Skin + Bones: Parallel Practices in Fashion and Architecture*, The National Art Centre Tokyo, 6 June–13 August 2007  
*The Sea of Being: Yamashiro Chikako Solo Exhibition*, RENEMIA, 27 May–11 June 2017  
*Waiting for Video: Works from the 1960s to Today*, The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, 31 March–7 June 2009



