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‘HOMESICK BLUES’:
CRISIS, CRITIQUE, AND COLLECTIVITY
IN MODERN JAPANESE CULTURAL PRODUCTION

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For my daughter, Sara-Lynne,
who reminds me everyday of the stakes of scholarship and critique.

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“The presence and circulation of a representation (taught by preachers, educators, and populizers as the key to socioeconomic advancement) tells us nothing about what it is for its users. We must first analyze its manipulation by users who are not its makers. Only then can we gauge the difference or similarity between the production of the image and the secondary production hidden in the process of its utilization.”

-Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984)

“Japan is all that [we] know.”

-*Enka aficionado, Fukushima Prefecture, 2010*

-*Eiji, member of the Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi fan organization Ougoukai, 2015*

“Protest”

On a stiflingly muggy July afternoon in 2015 – when the writing that would eventually become this dissertation was just getting underway – I found myself in downtown Osaka, Japan, milling about a large park that had been transformed into a staging area for a massive, ten-thousand-person march that was to proceed up the city’s main Midōsuji thoroughfare later that day. This march was one of many – large and small – that had been occurring across the country throughout the spring and early summer of that year, as the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, under the leadership of Prime Minister Shinzō Abe, continued to press toward the passage of its contentious “Peace and Security Preservation Legislation,” which was built upon a “reinterpretation” of war-renouncing Article 9 of Japan’s pacifist constitution and reviled by its many critics as a means of clearing the way for combat activities – in defense of (American) allies, under the euphemistic moniker of “collective self-defense” – for the first time since the end of the Pacific War (1931-1945). Alarm over the implications of the bill, particularly in a

context of widespread distrust of the state over its handling of the earthquake, tsunami, and ensuing nuclear crisis of March 11, 2011 – commonly referred to as 3.11 – and its introduction of the similarly-reviled “state secrets law” in 2013, had spurred many Japanese to hit the streets in protest – and the Osaka march, coming on the very eve of expected voting on the bills in the Diet, was to be a major one. As a University of Chicago researcher professedly in Japan to investigate textual and lived instances of critical engagement with the world across modern and contemporary moments in Japanese history – to say nothing of being a longtime resident of the country, with a Japanese spouse and child, myself – I decided to join the massive Osaka march, both in order to experience this mode of critical expression first-hand, and to put my voice and my body on the line in support of those struggling for a different vision of a Japanese future.

The park/staging area was filled to overflowing with a diverse array of people, many of them carrying one form of sign or symbol or another – rainbow flags; mass-produced placards upon which had been scrawled “I reject [Shinzō] Abe politics [*Abe seiji wo yurusanai*]”; an utterly hilarious “Where’s Waldo?” sign which proclaimed – in English – that “[i]t’s much harder to find a lawyer who says [that] the right of collective self-defense is constitutional than to find a WALLY from this picture.” Fabric *nobori* – vertically-oriented banners featuring various slogans considered appropriate to the occasion – were particularly conspicuous, and bore a wide range of anti-war sentiments and messages. One, however, caught my attention more than any of the others: “The flag and the anthem are the very road to war [*Hinomaru to Kimi-ga-yo wa sensō he no michi*].” The sentiment behind this declaration, of course, is entirely justifiable, particularly in light of the strong association of both of these texts with Japan’s imperialist, militarist history and the ways in which they were deployed in the indoctrination of subjects of the Japanese Empire, and in the context of contemporary suspicions over the state’s motives as it

continues its attempts to “familiarize” schoolchildren with these national symbols,¹ effectively paving the way for the state to hail them on its own terms.² And yet, there seemed something overly-simplistic about the message of this *nobori*, something that shut down the very potential for alternative possibilities for what we shall call *critique* in this dissertation. This vague unease continued to gnaw at the back of my mind as we “protestors” were lined up and unleashed (in orderly fashion, of course, and only along the narrow segment of pavement permitted by police) upon the Midōsuji – and this gnawing would grow more intense as I observed a peculiar sort of confrontation that unfolded on the street between marchers and bystanders as our protest was coming to its end.

As the snaking line of humanity proceeded south through Osaka’s bustling shopping district and prepared to make a final turn to the west at Namba, we passed a small group of not-quite-elderly men huddled on a streetcorner, perhaps four or five of them, defiantly flapping small Japanese flags at the marchers and glaring at us as we passed by. Silent and somehow deflated, these were not the sorts of noisy, professional ultra-nationalist agitators who often prowl urban streets in converted black trucks and vans – better thought of as megaphones on wheels – that are usually draped in flags and imperial slogans, and that blare militaristic music and other assorted vitriol.³ These bystanders, in other words, they did not quite seem to constitute

¹ Recently, the state has targeted children as young as age 3 in these “familiarization” campaigns, stressing the importance of seizing familiarization opportunities “through activities held in and out of nursery schools.” These 2017 guidelines issued by the Health, Labor, and Welfare Ministry were the subject of a Japan Times report on February 15, 2017. See <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2017/02/15/national/nursery-schools-encourage-familiarity-flag-anthem-guidelines/#.WROGYFK-Ku4>.

² Ideological interpellation – or the hail – is tackled by Louis Althusser in his 1970 essay, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses.”

³ See Nathaniel M. Smith, “Facing the nation: sound, fury, and public oratory among Japanese right-wing groups,” appearing in Joseph D. Hankins and Carolyn S. Stevens, Eds., *Sound, Space, and Sociality in Modern Japan* (New York: Routledge, 2013).

what could be called an organized counter-protest. Rather, they appeared to me as somehow frustrated and forlorn, as if shut out of protest narratives that have been built around precisely the sorts of oppositional, countercultural critiques that were reflected in the many *nobori* that fluttered above the march that July day, and that have decreed contentious (and, as we shall see, contested) symbols of ‘Japanese’ collectivity such as the *Hinomaru* to be inadmissible to critical discourse. I do not know if the men on the corner were there to show support for Abe and his policies: it is possible that they were. They carried no signage or other indicators (aside from the flags) that would identify them as such. I did not speak to the men, and am thus ignorant of the desires that may actually have been fueling their quiet critique, and indeed of how they actually conceived of the small flags that they flapped incessantly at the chanting passers-by. But that, it seems, is precisely the point. It is easy to dismiss such figures, to write them off as reactionary, or neo-conservative, or counter-revolutionary. In the absence of any understanding of their critique and its contexts, however, I found myself oddly unable to do so, despite their unabashed deployment of a contentious and potentially troubling text, and despite a stance on the world on my own part that is highly critical of the state, of militarism, and of fascism. The figure that those men collectively cut stayed with me long after the march had concluded, nagging at me like a puzzle that resists all attempts at a ready solution, and it seems to me now, at the end of a writing process that was just getting underway as we snaked through Osaka’s streets, that we dismiss such figures – classifying and categorizing them without ever hearing their voices – at our peril. And even as the march broke up in a Namba park and the crowds began to disperse, I couldn’t help wondering if the received norms of protest and critique splashed across so many *nobori* in the crowd had contributed to that faceoff on the corner – and what it might have taken to get the marchers and the men working in tandem, rather than in apparent opposition.

Now, this is not a dissertation about nationalism or about national symbolism, although both of these are topics that will find their ways into the pages that follow. As such, it may seem odd that we have allowed such a contentious national(ist) symbol to detain us at this very early juncture. This is, however, a dissertation about heterogeneous critical praxes in modern and contemporary Japan – and insomuch as that small group on the Osaka sidewalk was unquestionably engaged in a critique of its own, it seems worthwhile to allow them to pull us out of the crowd for a moment, and to begin pushing us toward re-examining our own understandings of what “protest” is all about. This is a matter of some political urgency. The Osaka march, of course (along with the many other street-level actions aimed at halting Abe’s omnibus of security bills), ultimately failed in its objective, as had street-level protests against the renewal of the U.S.-Japan Security treaty in 1960, the next renewal thereof in 1970, attempts to keep all nuclear reactors in Japan mothballed after the meltdowns at the Fukushima Dai’ichi Nuclear Power Station in March of 2011,⁴ and so on. The LDP’s security bills passed through Japan’s House of Representatives on July 16, and received final approval in September of that year. This should hardly come as a surprise. As author, activist, and architect of the *Occupy* movement Micah White teaches us, “protest” as we have known it over the past several decades (with its focus upon march-centered, street-level opposition) is broken.⁵ Astra Taylor, the Winnipeg-born filmmaker, activist, and musician, put this in stark terms in conversation with White in 2015: “We’ve had some of the biggest marches and protests [and] public outpourings in

⁴ Despite ongoing protests, the Satsuma-Sendai Nuclear Power Plant, in Kagoshima Prefecture, was restarted on August 11, 2015.

⁵ Revealing this fact, and arguing for a future of protest that is built upon innovation, new critical strategies, and “never protest[ing] the same way twice,” is the aim of White’s *The End of Protest: A New Playbook for Revolution* (Toronto: Knopf Canada, 2016).

history in the last fifteen years, and it doesn't just magically have a political consequence.”⁶

What this speaks to is the need to conceive of manifestations and modalities of critique and protest anew, to find them lurking in places and in ways that may hitherto have been unexpected, and taking forms that may heretofore not been seen. It is only in this way, according to White, that we can begin to attend to the possibilities of what the author calls the “future of protest.”

At its most basic, that is what this dissertation seeks to do, though it often appeals to unheard histories of the past and the present – historicity – in order to do so. We begin our journey in this Prelude by acknowledging the importance of the extended moment of 3.11 – in which the aforementioned anti-state movements of 2015 and beyond are embedded – and the critical energies that those crises have shaken up, but immediately move beyond it, tracing the lineage of those critical energies beyond their imposed isolation in 3.11’s contexts and across broader historicities of what we will call *precarity* herein. In the four Chapters that follow, we will visit disparate locations and contexts in modern and contemporary Japan (defined as around-1970 and beyond) in order to undertake close examinations of various texts of cultural production, including musical and lyrical texts by modern folk-rock icon Tsuyoshi Nababuchi⁷ and by reluctant “folk” pioneer Ryo Kagawa,⁸ literary texts by Akutagawa Prize-winning *zainichi* Korean author Yū Miri, and a selection of others. We will also interrogate of some of

⁶ Astra is quoted in Micah White, *The End of Protest: A New Playbook for Revolution* (Toronto: Knopf Canada, 2016). P. 37.

⁷ According to Japanese orthography, the artist’s name (長渕剛) would normally be rendered last name first, or ‘Nagabuchi Tsuyoshi.’ On the artist’s official website, in album and song credits, and in other promotional materials rendered in Roman script, however, the artist chooses to refer to himself as ‘Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi,’ and I shall refer to him that way for the purposes of this dissertation.

⁸ As is the case with Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, discussed above, Kagawa’s name (加川良) would also normally be rendered last name first, with a macron to extend the ‘o’ of Ryo: Kagawa Ryō. In my first communications with the artist, however, he chose to refer to himself according to the English-language standard ‘Ryo Kagawa,’ and I shall thus respect that choice and use that name for the purposes of this dissertation.

the ways in which these texts are deployed in the lives of individual social actors, intertwining with the texts of lived experience in a way that generates meaning and gives voice to desires that can be quite explicitly political. As we shall see, many of the cultural producers and social actors taken up in these pages present intriguing, often unexpected critical stances on the world, and entice us with alternative visions for living therein that are not reducible to the familiar modes of “protest” that White insists must be transcended if we are to have any hope of actually moving toward meaningful social change. In most cases, these voices do not envision being engaged in something called “protest” at all, and place their emphases instead on rattling the terms and conditions of life at the level of what we will later, following interwar Japanese scholar Tosaka Jun, call the “everyday.”⁹ But it is precisely in this aversion to lofty “protest” narratives, and in this insistence upon embeddedness in the everyday, that we can locate the potency of these voices. Our aim is always to attempt to hear them (in their historical, geographical, and economic contexts) as clearly as possible – although, in the spirit of Geertz’s “thick description,”¹⁰ the reader will often find my own interpretive voice forefronted, rather than disavowed, as these pages work to reveal the form and potential of these voices as they conjure and enunciate different visions for living in the(ir) world(s).

Although it aims to provide a key contribution to scholarship by decoupling critical praxis from isolatable events – the uprisings of the late 1960s, for example, or indeed 3.11 itself – and plotting critical voices across a much longer (and often dismissed) historical arc, this dissertation constitutes but a beginning. This plotting is necessarily sporadic, and there are many more voices, in many more contexts, to be listened to, and learned from. But if these pages serve

⁹ See Ken C. Kawashima, Fabian Schafer, and Robert Stolz, Eds., *Tosaka Jun: A Critical Reader* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2014).

¹⁰ See Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), Chapter 1.

to reveal critical tactics and stances on the parts of cultural producers and social actors that have heretofore gone undetected, and if it helps to generate discussion on the potentialities thereof in a moment in which “protest” as we have known it is irretrievably broken, then I will consider this research to have been a success.

Crisis, Critique, Collectivity

The brief sketch of my own engagement with “protest” in Osaka in 2015 with which we opened this dissertation serves (I hope) to pry open an entranceway to thinking about critical praxis in Japan, and indeed, we are already confronted with thorny questions concerning the various formats and intents of critique, the disparate desires that drive it, and so on. These are all questions that will be taken up in various forms in the pages that follow, in the contexts of specific texts and the sites and moments within which they are embedded. But at a more preliminary level, my somehow disorienting experience on the streets of Osaka in the midst of a moment of political and social upheaval – rooted, as we have seen, in the crises of 3.11, which we will see lurking throughout these pages, and to which we turn to anchor both this dissertation’s opening and its end – demands a closer look at the very concept that we are calling *critique* herein, which we might preliminarily define as an active, productive, and often re-formulative engagement with the terms and conditions of living in the world (much more will be said about critique, and especially about what this dissertation is calling ‘musical critique,’ in Chapter One) – and we might pause here to briefly consider what I understand as three of its key characteristics. Firstly, critique is multifaceted, even *contested*. There is no singular way to pursue critical praxis, and as all of the voices that this dissertation aims to hear will attest, productively critical stances on the world can manifest precisely where one might expect to hear

reactionary voices instead (Chapter Three), and can take forms that actively challenge the assumptions and expectations that are levied upon them (Chapters Two and Four). It is entirely plausible, as I have suggested, that the small group of men gathered on that Osaka street-corner were supporters of the notion of a remilitarizing Japan, for example, and were there to chide us “protestors” – in their own small way – for falling out of step with a state-led “national cause.” But there can be no doubt that theirs was a critique in its own right, one as engaged with the idea of ‘Japan’ as that pursued by the participants on that march – and without hearing their voices, we have no hope of ascertaining the nature of that critique with any degree of clarity. An overeager willingness to dismiss out of hand critical praxes on the basis of their appearance, without taking the time to actually hear the voices in question, simply reinforces dominant assumptions regarding such praxes’ permissible framework. As will become particularly clear in Chapters Two and Three, however, some actors actively and intentionally violate the boundaries of what might be called “acceptable” critique, appropriating and deploying potentially troubling text and symbolism to alternative, highly critical ends – and these are voices, I argue, that are highly deserving of our attention.

Secondly, critique is inextricably intertwined with notions of *collectivity*. As I have already suggested above, the tension that festered between the marchers and the flag-flappers on that hot July day in Osaka was rooted in differential claims upon and visions for a collectivity that was ultimately reducible to a synecdochical pronoun called ‘Japan,’ which is itself subject to critical intervention and ongoing redefinition (a fact often missed in scholarly engagements with Japan, as I shall suggest below). Indeed, we shall see throughout this dissertation, the visions for alternative collectivity that many of its architects present are often articulated in one way or another as ‘Japan,’ a fact that presents intriguing critical potential because it stakes a (re-)claim

on territory that is simultaneously claimed by the state. Such critical voices introduce a critical destabilization of ‘Japan’ as what we have seen de Certeau, in the epigraph to this Prelude, call a “representation” – one that is persistently accepted as encompassing, a priori, and static – by shunning an external sort of negation thereof in favor of a critical and corrosive re-appropriation and reformulation that works from the inside out.

And finally, and perhaps most importantly, critique is rooted in *crisis*. This was made clear in the vast numbers of critical voices who clamored to make themselves heard in a moment of constitutional and legislative (and, in the eyes of many, ethical and historical) crisis in Japan as Shinzō Abe and the LDP shoved the country toward a moment of fundamental redefinition, and we will see again and again throughout these pages the ways in which crisis serves as impetus for a critical engagement with the social, spurring the generation of alternative visions for collectivity and for living in the world that are potentiated through engagements with and deployments of such tropes as spatiality, temporality, and sonority. A sense of crisis is a common potentiating condition for many of the critical voices and visions presented herein, and as I have already begun to suggest, we are well served by moving beyond a conceptualization of crisis as isolated to individual historical moments such as 3.11, or the constitutional and legislative crisis that spurred so many to action in the spring and early summer of 2015, and toward a general condition of precarity that encompasses both of these moments and that attends contemporary capitalism – what we, following Endo, will call History itself.¹¹ Crisis thus conceived, as we shall see, is associated with an affective experience of homelessness, or *homesickness* – and this is a key engine that helps to drive generative critical engagements with the world.

¹¹ Katsuhiko Endō, “A Unique Tradition of Materialism in Japan.” In *positions*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (2012), p. 1032.

Precarity, Homelessness, Refuge

The question of precarity is one that has received considerable attention from scholars of Japan in recent years. In her *Precarious Japan* (2013), for example, Anne Allison paints a relentlessly dark picture of a nation-state that (to her) has become synonymous with broken dreams and broken promises.¹² Life in Japan in the post-bubble era (1990 ~) is precarity itself, according to Allison; a precarity that is manifested in an intermeshing web of homelessness, instances of solitary death for want of a single rice ball, family collapse, crushing poverty, and more. Allison's debt to Harry Harootunian and Tomoko Yoda is clear here, as she extends the latter's project as it unfurled in their *Japan After Japan* in demonstrating the extent to which Japan-as-system has come unraveled (for some) at the level of the everyday.¹³ To the extent that Allison's work both reveals some of the devastating conditions of lived reality beneath the regime of post-Koizumi neoliberalism in contemporary Japan and provides a connection to the work of scholars like Harootunian and Yoda, connecting the dots of precarity over a longer historical arc, *Precarious Japan* is a highly illuminating and important work. What's more, its persistent (yet ultimately indecisive) gesturing toward a radical recalibration of notions of community amidst these conditions of precarity contains the promise of genuine excitement.

In the end, however, 'precarious Japan' as envisioned by Allison seems to become something of an inescapable quagmire. The work's inability to find a viable exit belies its possession by a certain specter of Area Studies that continues to haunt critical analyses of

¹² See Anne Allison, *Precarious Japan* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), in its entirety.

¹³ See Harry Harootunian and Tomoko Yoda, eds. *Japan after Japan* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), esp. pp. 1~15.

‘Japan’, despite repeated efforts by Harootunian (and others) to exorcise it.¹⁴ Allison’s work, in other words, ultimately continues to plow the same ground laid out by many of the ‘Japan Studies’ analyses that preceded it: *Precarious Japan* turns upon the positing of a Japan that exists *a priori*. Although ‘Japan’ is defined in this case according to tragically novel terms (of precarity, and of hopelessness), its oppressive weight that ‘Japan’-as-discourse carries ultimately seems to immobilize any individual Japanese caught in its forcefield, because this particular ‘Japan’ (like others before it) is taken as a precondition of existence itself, defining the desires and aspirations of the individual actors with whom the author engages. Unavoidably, then, *Precarious Japan* is able to afford precious few exits, aside from a utopian vision of a more humanized “we” that is carefully sheltered under the wing of a state that will this time, finally, do it better.¹⁵ Despite the exciting promise presented in the work of a radical new ‘we’ that is comprised of strangers, in other words, this vision of a ‘precarious Japan’ is never quite able to shake the sense that an antidote to precarity lies in clambering over the rubble and suturing the ruptures caused by capitalism, under the mantra of “we Japanese as one.”¹⁶ Although, as we shall see in the pages that follow, this notion of a “we” can in fact be highly productive as a means to frame a sense of solidarity, there is a certain danger that attends the idea of overcoming precarity in place of facing it head-on, appropriating it as a springboard for bouncing off in new directions. It is difficult to find a future, in other words, in fine-tuning a sense of national authenticity that seems merely to put precarity on mute.

¹⁴ See H.D. Harootunian and Masao Miyoshi, “Introduction: The ‘Afterlife’ of Area Studies” in Harootunian and Miyoshi, Eds., *Learning Places: The Afterlives of Area Studies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), pp. 1~18.

¹⁵ Allison, p. 179.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 202.

While Allison points to a sort of national re-suturing as constituting the ideal future that might be hoped for from Tōhoku's – and especially Fukushima's – churned-up mud, other scholars, such as philosopher Kojin Karatani, suggest rather different possibilities – namely, that 'Japan' can and should transcend its own discourse altogether; that, indeed, "it may be only amid the ruins [that] people [can] gain the courage to stride down a new path."¹⁷ What Karatani is gesturing toward here is a complete upending, as opposed to a restoration, of 'Japan'-as-discourse, particularly in its manifestations in both capitalism and the state, a possibility to be understood as a potential consequence of a broader regime of global capitalist crisis that has unleashed its own brand of earth-shaking violence since the 1970s. Karatani, then, like Allison, has sensed something paradigm-changing in the ongoing crises of 3.11 – albeit in different terms. Indeed, it was a scant two weeks after the tremors of March 11 that Karatani declared: "It is not Japan's demise that the earthquake has produced, but rather the possibility of its rebirth."¹⁸

Karatani's exhortation helps to reveal why 3.11 serves as such a helpful starting point in a study that aims to pursue critical voices that are clamoring to define 'Japan' anew, in a praxis of what the present research, following Bruno Latour, shall insist upon calling *reassembly*.¹⁹ But we are not interested here in a fetishization of disaster, or in writing another study of 3.11 and its contexts. As I have already stated, 3.11 and the competing claims on 'Japan' that the crises have helped to reveal are deployed as a starting point here precisely to be able to move beyond them, and as we shall see, these sorts of claims have animated critical voices far beyond the contexts of

¹⁷ See Kojin Karatani, "How Catastrophe Heralds a New Japan", in the online journal *Counterpunch*, March 24, 2011. Available online at <http://www.counterpunch.org/2011/03/24/how-catastrophe-heralds-a-new-japan/>.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005). Latour's vision of an actor-network-theory that incorporates non-human actors into this ongoing, fluid practice of reassembly appears particularly vibrantly in Chapter Three, where we will see topography and astronomy put to work conjuring alternative visions of the social.

3.11, and across the historical moments with which this dissertation is concerned. What the specific insights of both Allison and Karatani help to clarify, in short, are the competing ways in which ‘Japan’ has occupied a central position in critical discourse in the wakes of the crises of 3.11 – and this is always already an engagement with notions of “home.” But to be engaged, as we shall see, is by no means necessarily equivalent to a wistful longing for a supposed a priori, national authenticity. Crisis and precarity carry with them productive potentials, in other words, as we have seen in Karatani’s hopeful 2011 declaration – and these must be situated very carefully.

One way to accomplish this is via the notion of *homesickness*, which helps to title this dissertation. The affective experience of homelessness – and of its attendant consequence in homesickness – is of no little importance to the productive potentials of the critical engagements under consideration herein, and I will explain precisely how we are deploying homesickness as a guiding concept below. But it is vital to clarify at the outset that we are not speaking here of unreflective, restorative nostalgia.²⁰ Each of the voices that we will meet in these pages can be understood as speaking, singing, or writing of “homes” that are not lost, but that are rather yet to be – we might understand these “home(s)” as being comprised of more beneficial, more productive terms of living in the world itself.²¹ This should be understood, in other words, not as

²⁰ Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001).

²¹ I must stress that this dissertation does not aim to trace desire for a mythical lost home in post-1970s Japan, a task that has been pursued at length by so-called *furusato* [hometown] scholarship, which counts among its contributions the works by Marilyn Ivy and Christine Yano cited herein. Such scholarship takes as its foundational premise the existence of a *loss* or *lack* – usually conceived of as an ‘authentic’ Japan, the ‘phantasm’ of Ivy’s title – and conceives of actor desire as striving toward a fulfillment or recovery of this loss. While I by no means intend to deny the value of this scholarship and the veracity of its findings, my intent here is to shift the terms of analysis, and unchain the desires of social actors to attend to productive potentialities that cannot be considered by fixing them to a narrow track that can lead only to a never-existent national authenticity. By appealing to Bergson’s notions of duration and becoming, I aim to reveal how the accumulations of historically and geographically specific conditions of

a drive to somehow reclaim “home,” but rather to conjure it anew: “home” here lies not in an idealized past, or in still-warm corpses of retrievable authenticity, but always just beyond the horizon, and demands a sustained critical engagement to reach. This engagement, this search (and indeed, to anticipate the insights of scholar Svetlana Boym, who will play a key role as our guide as we navigate these pages, it is the search that is of importance, not the homecoming) is what we will call the Homesick Blues – and all of our actors sing it, musically and otherwise.

This requires some clarification. Paolo Virno teaches us that, “[t]oday, all forms of life have the experience of ‘not feeling at home’... The many, in as much as they are the many, are those who share the feeling of ‘not feeling at home,’ and who, in fact, place this experience at the center of their own social and political practice.”²² This “feeling of not feeling at home” is nothing but a consequence of life under the terms of History, particularly from the late twentieth century onward (precisely the historical moment taken up in this dissertation), when one’s whole life and being is subject to market forces and the alienations and contradictions of contemporary capitalism, and the scope of the labor-power commodity has expanded to lay claim upon intellect as well as physical capacity (so-called post-Fordism), “extend[ing] the working class to all those whose labor is being exploited by capital.”²³ But we cannot ignore the fact that this “homelessness” also finds a sickeningly literal and double-edged manifestation in the context of 3.11, when tens of thousands remain displaced from their homes as a result not only of natural disaster, but also of the very narratives of economic development that underpins Virno’s critique, which find concrete form in the hulking structures of the Fukushima Dai’ichi Nuclear Power

existence can serve to orient the actor in a ‘Japan’ that is both place *and* space, generating desires that are aimed not toward a recovery of authenticity, perhaps, but rather toward survival itself and a bettering of the conditions of life on one’s own terms, within the framework of a “Japan [that] is all that [we] know.”

²² Paolo Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude: For an Analysis of Contemporary Forms of Life* (Los Angeles: Semiotexte, 2004), p. 34.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

Station. This helps us to see homelessness and homesickness in very visceral terms, even as the search for “home” that is implicated therein spills far beyond 3.11’s historical boundaries. There is, of course, a danger that lurks in this search, and it is the danger of fascism: this is a “danger [that] manifests itself for the most part as a specific form of refuge [from the ‘feeling of not feeling at home’]… [as] a horrifying strategy of salvation.”²⁴ But there is also promise. Sylvère Lotringer teaches us that “[c]apitalism itself is revolutionary because it keeps fomenting inequality and provoking unrest.”²⁵ Endo’s History thus bears the means of its own undoing by generating action against itself – and while this is clearly a potentially “horrifying” proposition, the voices that we trace herein will present other, intriguing possibilities, as well.

The line between the fascistic and the productively critical, in other words, is an agonizingly thin one.²⁶ It is a central tenet of this dissertation that the “meaning” of texts – the manner in which they are apprehended by individual social actors, and deployed in the contexts of historically, geographically, and economically-specific lives – is utterly heterogeneous, dependent upon their deployment in specific contexts, and never reducible to some perceived essence of the text at hand. There is little doubt that some actors will succumb to the allure of what they perceive to be a (horrifying) “refuge” manifested in some of these texts, a fact that we will confront briefly in Chapter Three. But as we will see and hear – and despite appearances, in some cases – through deploying a range of tactics to give voice to incisive critiques of the terms of conditions of what we have already determined to call the *everyday*, and through conjuring forward-oriented visions of other possibilities for living in the world (as opposed to retreating into foggy visions of an idealized past that never existed anyway; Virno’s “horrifying refuge” par

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 18.

²⁶ We will address the specter of fascism in more detail in the closing pages of this Prelude.

excellence), the voices engaged herein tend to present intriguingly critical stances on the world. And insofar as these voices share in the experience of what Virno calls “the many,”²⁷ it is important that we hear them, and listen for hints as to how we might engage critically with our own Historical moment, as we sing our own renditions of the Homesick Blues.

Historicizing Critique

As we shall see in more detail in the pages that follow, the sorts of critical voices traced herein are chattering in precisely a moment in which such voices are thought to have fallen silent. For scholars such as John Dower, the moment of around-1970 was the moment at which, in the wake of the turbulent decade of the 1960s, critique in (and, crucially, of) Japan began to die, its people turning increasingly inward in a stagnant sort of consumerist stupor.²⁸ For Harry Harootunian, meanwhile, the moment of around-1970 marks that at which many in Japan broke away from critical praxis and “veered... toward recovering the missed spirit of an eternal life that had remained unchanged since the beginning of time.”²⁹ The dismay with which scholars tend to regard the post-1970 moment in Japan is rooted, at least in part, in the dissolution of so-called “radical” politics and the collapse of street-level action (such as the Osaka march with which we opened these pages) that undeniably occurred around this moment. But this merely reinforces our imperative to conceive of critique – of “protest” – anew. This dissertation adopts a stance that challenges such mournful depictions of around-1970, adopting precisely this moment as its stepping-off point, and tracing voices of critique that, far from being silenced by the

²⁷ Ibid., p. 35.

²⁸ See, for example, John Dower, “Peace and Democracy in Two Systems: External Policy and Internal Conflict”, in Andrew Gordon, ed., *Postwar Japan as History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), esp. p. 26.

²⁹ Harry Harootunian, *History’s Disquiet: Modernity, Cultural Practice, and the Question of Everyday Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), p. 156.

consolidation of the discursive space of what Harootunian has identified as “Japan’s Japan,”³⁰ were in fact *invigorated* by it. And indeed, this assertion should not be surprising if we take Harootunian at his word and understand the early 1970s, and the onset of “Japan’s Japan,” to represent the moment of the fulfillment of the hegemony of global capitalism in Japan, and locate an exacerbation of the “feeling of not feeling at home” alongside it.

Following the lead of some of the cultural producers engaged herein – rocker Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, for example, and singer-songwriter Ryo Kagawa – these pages endeavor to move beyond narratives of Left and Right, and of so-called “radical” politics, in order to bring to light the desires of actors whose critical praxes lay in an engagement with ‘Japan’ so intimate that they may not, according to scholarly assumptions of the nature of ‘critique’ that privilege deterritorialization as both a means and an end, be recognized as such. I shall insist, in short, that it is only in thoroughly attending to the manner in which ‘Japan’ is desired and dismantled, problematized and reassembled – generating ‘Japan’ anew in contexts haunted by precarity – that the myriad political potentialities of crisis, and modern and contemporary visions of what Harootunian has described as “different histories”³¹ and as “living off the page,”³² can be productively addressed. As we shall see, these critical voices do not necessarily sound like we might expect them to: it is this sort of transformation of critique, as opposed to its sudden absenting, that has characterized the period of around-1970 and beyond. These voices, that is, do not necessarily exist in a binary sort of *opposition to* ‘Japan’ – this has been, in many ways, the strategy adopted by critical analyses of the turbulent sixties, and it is this strategy that has allowed the curtain to be largely closed on critical assessments of Japan in the 1970s and beyond.

³⁰ See Harry Harootunian’s essay, “America’s Japan/Japan’s Japan”, in Masao Miyoshi and H.D. Harootunian, eds., *Japan in the World* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993).

³¹ Harootunian, *History’s Disquiet*, p. 157.

³² *Ibid.*

There is something to be gained in moving beyond a vision of “protest” as oppositional, street-level praxis (as in the anti-AMPO demonstrations of 1960 and 1970, for example, or the student movement of the late 1960s, or the similarly unsuccessful bids to stop the construction of Narita Airport), and conceiving of critique instead as part of the fundamental mechanics of social (re)assembly, thereby rendering hitherto unheard heterogeneous voices of contestation audible. There is something to be said, in other words, in taking the simple assertion (placed epigraphically, above) that “Japan is all that [we] know” very seriously indeed – and then considering *how* it is known. By so doing, this dissertation aims to help build a subfield of knowledge that has been conspicuously lacking in studies of modern and contemporary Japan: that concerned with critical engagements with the everyday in Japan in the 1970s and beyond.

One tactic deployed by this dissertation in (re-) establishing the veracity of critical voices in Japan after the moment of around-1970 lies in resisting the tendency to append critique to purportedly generative events and moments, moving rather to plot such voices along a longer historical arc, which we have now begun to understand as the condition of precarity, or as historicity to a dominant History of capitalist development that tends to conceal precarity and crisis in the “ideological promise of... even development everywhere.”³³ But we cannot rescue critique from its isolation in singular historical moments if we insist upon reducing it merely to “protest” against events, and we might remain with the crises of 3.11 – and cultural responses thereto – for just a moment longer in order to gain a sense of the different sort of conceptual and temporal stance that this dissertation seeks to claim, and how it relates to other recent scholarly works that grapple with similar sorts of interrogations. Noriko Manabe, for example, in her superbly-researched 2015 work *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised: Protest Music After*

³³ Harry Harootunian, *History’s Disquiet: Modernity, Cultural Practice, and the Question of Everyday Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), pp. 114-115.

Fukushima, presents an insightful and thorough cataloguing of anti-nuclear musical commentary on the part of Japanese artists in the wake of the crisis at the Fukushima Dai'ichi Nuclear Power Station. “[M]usic,” she argues, “has emerged as an important means by which antinuclear citizens can present their views, vent their frustrations, and feel validated.”³⁴ Manabe situates the importance of music-as-text amidst a general paucity of what she calls “protest” since 1970 or so, in a context of such factors as frustration over the aforementioned failure of massive mobilizations like the AMPO demonstrations to achieve their aims;³⁵ the fear of arrest, harassment, or other adverse impacts resulting from participating in protest;³⁶ and a pervasive media reluctance to cover (and thereby help to normalize) them.³⁷ The crisis at Fukushima has helped to rejuvenate “protest,” in Manabe’s formulation, by sparking a sort of moral outrage over dangers posed to one’s own home, children, and livelihood under the regime of the so-called ‘nuclear village’ and the bumbling and corruption of the state, and so on.³⁸ In this way, Manabe understands the moment of the crises of March 11, 2011 to be exceptionally important for contemporary critical praxis in contemporary Japan, particularly in the context of cultural production, which is a stance wholeheartedly shared by the study herein.

Manabe’s understanding of “protest,” however, is linked specifically to notions of oppositional activism and street-level engagement mounted in response to a singular issue (or issues), which is itself taken as anchored to a specific moment in time. This is why the author can point to a perceived paucity of critical engagement after the upheavals of 1960 and 1970 (a stance shared, as we shall see, by other scholars), even as she traces histories of “activism” on

³⁴ See Noriko Manabe, *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised: Protest Music After Fukushima* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 66.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 61.

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 57-58.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 66.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 82.

the parts of certain musicians before the 3.11 moment, which becomes the defining criterion for revealing those histories.³⁹ All paths, it seems, constitute closed shuttlings to and from 3.11 for Manabe, and it unavoidably becomes an idealized moment potentiating the resurrection of critical engagement. But as I have already suggested herein and elsewhere,⁴⁰ revealing the import of 3.11 – and particularly of the crises at Fukushima Dai’ichi – vis-à-vis the Japanese social requires locating this ongoing crisis as a manifestation of (capitalist) precarity, a waypoint on an arc of crisis, unevenness, and the contradictions of capitalism⁴¹ that incorporates but also exceeds questions of nuclear power. Such a stance in fact enhances the critical bite that Manabe rightly finds in this moment, a bite whose potency actually lies in its ability to reveal disavowed historicities of unevenness and crisis that encompass but far exceed 3.11 and its aftermaths. To be sure, the critical voices that we will hear herein engage extensively with Japan’s dark spring, and indeed, Fukushima lurks throughout these pages, and is the site at which this dissertation will ultimately close. But these voices invariably spill across the boundaries of that moment, envisioning other possibilities for living in the world that both reference it, and transcend it. The crisis and precarity within which 3.11 is enmeshed also form the thudding bass-line for the Homesick Blues – and it is for this reason that we will hear many of the voices traced herein sing of capitalism, consumerism, geopolitics, rural unevenness, and more in practically the very same breath that they take to sing of 3.11, Fukushima, and nuclear power.

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 86-87.

⁴⁰ See Scott W. Aalgaard, “Summertime Blues: Musical Responses to Japan’s ‘Dark Spring,’” in *Fukushima and the Arts: Negotiating Nuclear Disaster* (New York: Routledge, 2017).

⁴¹ See, among other works by the scholar, Harry Harootunian, *History’s Disquiet: Modernity, Cultural Practice, and the Question of Everyday Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).

Reassembling ‘Japan’

The voices that this dissertation seeks to hear emanate from what we, following critics Karatani Kojin and Asada Akira, might call “critical space.” Though intended by its authors as a literary device, “critical space,” as a place envisioned as nestled amidst the social relations that intersect to comprise ‘Japan’ in/as the contemporary global everyday and pregnant with corrosive potentiality precisely because of its embeddedness therein, affords us a very helpful way of conceiving of the cross-contaminated literary, musical, and lived sites at which our actors unfurl their critiques.⁴² These sites of cultural production, in other words, can be understood as “critical space[s]” themselves, and become so not because they are somehow external or Other to ‘Japan’ and its variously precarious everyday, but rather because they are ruthlessly embedded within it. Indeed, Karatani and Asada teach us that “critical space” is animated by nothing other than danger (=precarity) itself, and the experience of precarity – and the attendant homesickness that we have already established as part and parcel thereof – is the common thread that binds these voices together as they enunciate different visions for living in the world, different conceptualizations of “home.”

Some of the voices that we will hear herein are anchored in geographical regions of Japan where the experience of socioeconomic precarity is amplified – Kagoshima (Chapter One), for example, or Fukushima (Chapter Four). But not all are. Urban sites such as Osaka and Yokohama, for instance, play as much of a role in this dissertation as do rural ones like

⁴² “Critical Space” [批評空間] was the name of a literary journal edited by Asada, Karatani, and others. In its inaugural issue, Asada explained the concept behind the journal’s title thus: “Critical space... means both a space for critique, and, at the same time, a space of crisis [*kiki*], or criticality. The fact of the matter is that we are truly living in an age of crisis, or of criticality, and we can say that our very thinking, the degree of its capacity to engage in critique, is being tested. ‘Critical Space’ aims to stand upon this sort of an awareness, and to become an open place from which to engage the world critically, in every sense of that term.” See *Hihyō kukan* [Critical space], No. 1 (1991), p. 258.

Fukushima, and Kagoshima. As we have already noted, the experience of precarity is one that is confronted – to one degree or another – nearly universally in Japan, and rather than relying upon less-than-helpful, compartmentalizing notions of “center” and “periphery,” it seems helpful to approach the diverse array of voices that we will confront herein – from truck drivers to award-winning authors, nurses to rock stars – as sharing the experience of abiding in this generative, generalized “critical space,” and then, paying careful attention to its geographically and historically specific inflections, to consider the diverse ways in which these actors grapple with its terms. These pages will insist that “critical space” can be found precisely where it might not hitherto have been expected – nestled amidst conceptualizations of, and even conceived of as, ‘Japan.’ If “critical space” is generative, in other words, it is ultimately generative of nothing other than ‘Japan’ itself. Interrogating the textual and cultural production borne of this “critical space,” which appears herein in the forms of music, of literature, and of individual stances on the world, will be a key aim of the chapters that follow. But doing so effectively requires us to loosen our grip on ‘Japan’ as a universal reference point,⁴³ in favor of following de Certeau in considering what this “representation” might mean for its users, and of considering its utility as a double-edged sort of critical device. This means, in short, considering the ways in which ‘Japan’ is reassembled – or not – by the critical voices and in the cultural production to be interrogated herein.

⁴³ This is a stance that has informed, in one way or another, many illuminating and pioneering works in Japan studies, including for example, Marilyn Ivy’s *Discourses of the Vanishing: Modernity, Phantasm, Japan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), Tamanoi Mariko’s *Under the Shadow of Nationalism: Politics and Poetics of Rural Japanese Women* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998), Christine Yano’s *Tears of Longing: Nostalgia and the Nation in Japanese Popular Song* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), Lee Yeounsuk’s *The Ideology of Kokugo: Nationalizing Language in Modern Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2010), and even Ian Condry’s *Hip-Hop Japan: Rap and the Paths of Cultural Globalization* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).

The endpoint of the critical praxes pursued by the actors taken up in this dissertation constitutes visions for different possibilities of living in the world that are reducible in many cases (though not all, as we shall note with author Yū Miri, who explicitly aims to occupy a realm of in-betweenness that she calls *hazama*, reducible neither to Japan nor to Korea, the “box” – her term – with which she is regularly associated) to something diversely imagined as ‘Japan.’ In Chapter One, we will see how rock star Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi manipulates spatiality in order to conjure a “provincialized” Japan, infected with its own disavowed realities that continue to haunt peripheral regions like the artist’s home prefecture of Kagoshima. We will also visit fans of the artist in this Chapter, and consider the ways in which these individuals deploy Nagabuchi’s music in their own critical engagements with the world. In Chapter Two, we will visit legendary singer-songwriter Ryo Kagawa and interrogate his vision for a “one more chance” for Japan, one built around the deployment of what I shall call “critical temporality” and a scrambling of common-sense Historical narratives such as capitalism and Japan’s geopolitical positionality as a Cold War ally of the United States. These are tactics that are particularly significant in the wake of the dropping of the curtain of what we have already seen Harry Harootunian call “Japan’s Japan” in the early 1970s, precisely the moment at which Kagawa’s career was getting underway. In Chapter Three, we will return to Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, following him out of Kagoshima to the base of Mount Fuji in order to attend – through event and textual analyses and informal fan interviews – to the ways in which the artist hijacked time itself in order to assert a “different history” and an alternative collectivity at the very foot of one of Japan’s most potent national symbols. And in Chapter Four, we will consider Akutagawa prize-winning author Yū Miri’s deployment of what I shall term “critical sonority,” a trope that helps the author to enunciate critiques of money and consumerism, and will listen as she makes use of musical noise in order

to gesture toward a “dropping out” of the dominant terms and conditions of the contemporary capitalist social altogether. In this way, all of the actors with whom we will engage herein deploy specific tropes (spatiality, temporality, sonority) that become the bases for intriguing critical tactics that are aimed at confronting and interrogating ‘Japan’ as History, offering up visions for its reclamation and reformulation according to different terms, on the basis of their own engagement with the world. This is a far cry from seeking a “horrific refuge” in a past, enclosed “national essence:” the visions and critiques enunciated by these actors – along with the visions and critiques shared by the individual membership of the Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi fan organization *Ougoukai*, which I will introduce briefly below – seem to speak to “the need to face up to, rather than simply deny, peoples’ need for attachment of some sort, whether through place or anything else... The question is how to hold on to that notion of geographical difference, of uniqueness, even of rootedness if people want that, without it being reactionary.”⁴⁴ In pursuing these visions and critiques, as I have already suggested, these actors are engaged in a perpetual sort of search for “home,” reflective in that the search never arrives at a lost utopia that was never real in the first place, never drives toward “the twilight of the past or... the island of utopia where time has happily stopped.”⁴⁵ These are, in other words, “dreams of imagined homelands... [that] have a more important impact on improving social and political conditions in the present [than] as fairytales come true.”⁴⁶ Dwelling in the dream, in the search, in the insistence upon “other histories” and possibilities for “living off the [Historical] page,” is precisely what it means to sing the Homesick Blues.

⁴⁴ Doreen Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994), pp. 151-52.

⁴⁵ Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), p. 13.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 354-355.

Critique, of course, comes in many forms – and one of those forms is fascism. It is precisely the specter of fascism that Svetlana Boym fears in sounding the alarm against unreflective forms of nostalgia that do aim to find remedies for the turbulence of the present in a static, supposedly authentic, and utterly fictional past: “[t]he danger of nostalgia,” she writes, “is that it tends to confuse the actual home and the imaginary one. In extreme cases it can create a phantom homeland, for the sake of which one is ready to die or kill. Unreflected nostalgia breeds monsters.”⁴⁷ Embedded in the context of her analysis of the ambiguities of nostalgia – which will inform a great many of the pages that follow – Boym’s indictment of fascist desire helps to remind us that fascism, at its core, is a temporal critique, one rooted in the drive to resolve a contradiction borne of multiple temporalities and values stalking a single (modern) historical moment⁴⁸ through displacing this contradiction onto an imagined past that is ultimately self-enclosed and intolerant of difference (though as we will see, with particular appeal to Ernest Bloch, this co-mingling of temporalities can be turned to our critical advantage, as well). Bloch⁴⁹ and Harootunian⁵⁰ have also done much to clarify the nature of fascism as temporal critique. But at some point, fascism began to be confused with some of the effects and symbolism that have been associated therewith – such as collectivity itself, for example,⁵¹ or the *Hinomaru* flag that

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. xvi.

⁴⁸ Harootunian, citing Aono, helps point to the way in which fascism is rooted in a “coexistence of different values and customs (that) signified different temporalities in the present within a single class and thus revealed a contradiction that had to be resolved... rooted in the inherence of the past in the present, in which the everyday was the site of the ideological struggle over value.” 137

⁴⁹ See, for example, Ernst Bloch, trans Mark Ritter “Nonsynchronism and the Obligation to Its Dialectics.” Appearing in *New German Critique*, No. 11 (Spring, 1977).

⁵⁰ See, for example, Harry Harootunian, *Overcome By Modernity: History, Culture, and Community in Interwar Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

⁵¹ Alan Tansman, for example, mourns the purported loss of a (somehow idealized) self in engagements with the music of *enka* sensation Misora Hibari, though the necessity of an atomized self in the critique of fascism is highly debatable and disavows the critical potentialities of solidarity. See Alan Tansman, “Filaments of Fascism in Postwar Times,” in Alan Tansman, Ed., *The Aesthetics of Japanese Fascism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

lurks in this Prelude and, as we shall see, in points beyond (see especially Chapter Three) – to the detriment of concise, scientific explications of how, and in what specific contexts, these are culpable in fascism as critique. Now, fascism is highly complex and notoriously difficult to define – it has been shown to relate to technology⁵² and to nature,⁵³ to the future⁵⁴ as well as the past, to multiculturalism⁵⁵ as well as to racism – and offering a thorough interrogation of fascism in the modern and contemporary moments is a task that must be set aside for another day. It bears mentioning at this introductory juncture, however, that many of the voices that we will meet – with their insistences upon modes of collectivity, upon ‘Japan’ itself, and in some cases upon contentious symbolism associated therewith – will challenge our assumptions concerning the nature of fascism, and the line that divides it from more productive modes of critique. There can be no doubt that the specter of fascism continues to haunt us in 2017, revealed in sputtering promises, for example, to “make America great again.” But by emphasizing our actors’ visions of temporality and of history, I have attempted herein to push back against oversimplified visions of the fascistic, and to consider some of the ways in which acidic critique might be enunciated by reaching right into the jaws of fascism itself. Whether I have been successful in this is a matter for the reader, and for subsequent scholarship, to judge.

⁵² See F.T. Marinetti, “The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism,” 1909.

⁵³ See, for example, Kracauer’s treatment of mountains in film in his *From Caligari to Hitler A Psychological History of German Film* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947).

⁵⁴ See Benito Mussolini, “The Doctrine of Fascism,” 1932.

⁵⁵ The Japanese Empire was in fact built upon a multicultural sort of ideal of different peoples abiding under the Emperor’s roof. See for example Naoki Sakai’s essay in Harootunian and Yoda, Eds., *Japan after Japan*, p. 179.

Summing Up: From “Protest” to “Critique”

This dissertation has relied upon a combination of textual analysis, considerations of historical and geographical specificity, and attending to lived experience (via local fieldwork) in order to attend to disparate modes of critical praxis and reveal the disparate manners in which ‘Japan’ has been, and continues to be, reassembled over an historical moment that extends from around-1970 through to 2016. Text, history, and life, however, are in no way taken as independent of each other – rather, I insist upon an intertwining of these three entities, in order to better lay hold of the potentialities of what I have already termed “critical space.” While the actual consumption of text in specific conditions is not addressed in all instances taken up in this dissertation, the texts addressed herein are approached as both contributing to and resulting from the processes of networking that Bruno Latour insists lies behind the (re)assembly of the social. In this reciprocal sort of formulation, *text matters to life, just as life matters to text.*

In advocating for a reoriented understanding of contemporary existence based on the notions of interconnectedness and networks, Bruno Latour insists that “a delicate shuttle [has been] woven together between industry, texts, souls, moral law” and so on.⁵⁶ What Latour advocates for here is the *interrelatedness* of text and experience, not a fetishization of the former as a thing-in-itself, a trap that would lead, in Latour’s formulation, to “[s]peaking subjects [being] transformed into so many fictions generated by meaning effects; as for the author, he [would] no longer [be] anything but the artifact of his own writing.”⁵⁷ De Certeau is even more insistent, and teaches us that a theory of narration is inseparable from a theory of practice. Narration, for de Certeau, can provide other discourse (including the scientific) with a model,

⁵⁶ See Bruno Latour, trans. Catherine Porter, *We Have Never Been Modern* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 5.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

opening up the theoretical potential of the written word and foreclosing any dismissal thereof as ‘merely’ a text to be dealt with. De Certeau evokes Detienne in order to press for his vision of the importance of text in a life viewed as interconnected: for Detienne, stories are not a place to go to reveal ‘meaning’, or to engage in a praxis of ‘interpretation’. Rather, such texts “are already practices. They say exactly what they do. They constitute an act which they intend to mean.”⁵⁸ Naoki Sakai, expanding upon Kristeva, also speaks to the intertextuality of text and lived experience,⁵⁹ and it is in this spirit that text – literature, criticism, music – has been approached in the present research, with an eye to revealing how these texts might be invoked by individual actors, and what sort(s) of role(s) they may play in the (re-)assembly of the ‘Japanese’ social. This is, in a sense, precisely what Bruno Latour has in mind in his evocation of actor-network theory (ANT), and in his insistence that it is only through careful attention to such networking that the actualities of “the social” can be revealed.

The historical deployment of text – its contextually-specific use, to anticipate and paraphrase the insights of scholars such as Tia DeNora and Terry Eagleton, which clarifies, but is never reducible to, something called “meaning” – has thus been an important consideration of this dissertation, and as we shall see in the pages that follow, considerable emphasis has been placed upon considerations of how disparate texts are put to use by their creators, and by those who deploy them as part and parcel of a strategy of survival in the context of their own lives. While thinkers such as De Certeau, Latour, and Sakai provide us with a general orientation toward the question of text/in as lived experience, the four chapters that follow – which have all

⁵⁸ See Michel de Certeau, trans. Steven Rendall, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. 80.

⁵⁹ Intertextuality here refers to the manner in which texts – including what we would traditionally conceive of as ‘literal’, written texts, musical and verbal texts, and intangible texts such as life experience, etc. – only take on meaning in relation to other texts. For a full explanation, see Naoki Sakai, *Voices of the Past* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992).

been engineered to flow into one another, in complementary fashion, rather than posited as isolated entities which can somehow stand alone – reply upon the insights of a wide range of scholars from ethnomusicology, area studies, literature studies, sound studies, history and philosophy, political economy, and more in order to potentiate a closer grappling with the specific questions and critical tactics taken up in each. In this way, the present dissertation aims to stake out very interdisciplinary (and, indeed, intertextual) ground, and is interested more in asking how insights from scholars in these fields can complement and inform each other than in laying claim to a singular, somehow omnipotent analytical model.

But the very emphasis on text in/as lived experience that undergirds this study has also necessitated moving beyond scholarship as archive, and engaging in extensive fieldwork in Japan in order to detail the desires that inform these deployments. The results of these engagements form the basis of much of the text that follows. I have had extensive conversations with singer-songwriter Ryo Kagawa (Chapter Two), for example, and the conclusion of this dissertation – which will take us back to Fukushima, a place that has already served as an entranceway of sorts to the questions to be taken up in these pages – is heavily informed by discussions held with author Yū Miri. But particularly integral to this aspect of the present project have been conversations and informal interviews held with the membership of the *Zenkoku Sakurajima Ougoukai* (hereinafter referred to as the *Ougoukai*), a private, “unofficial” organization for fans of Japanese rocker Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, whose art we examine in some detail in Chapters Two and Three.

The *Ougoukai* was founded by a pair of Nagabuchi fans in Kyushu in 2011, and is built around an online platform that is situated on Facebook, and on the Japanese social media system LINE. Originally comprised of just a few dozen people, the *Ougoukai*’s co-founder – whom I

met for the first time at a café at Kagoshima International Airport on December 15, 2014 – told me that the organization’s membership has now surpassed 400 nationwide. At the beginning of a year of research conducted in Japan that commenced in September, 2014 and was nearing its conclusion when I marched up Osaka’s Midōsuji with ten thousand other social actors in July of that year, I reached out to the *Ougoukai* via Facebook and connected with the group’s executive, and eventually met with its vice-chairman – although only after, I was to later learn, much internal concern over the intentions of the Chicago interloper and debate among the group’s executive over the degree to which I was to be accommodated – and later, with rank and file membership. My discussions with these individuals (to whom I have assigned pseudonyms herein, all based on the titles to Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi songs, to protect their anonymity) were highly revealing. As the following pages will attest (see especially Chapter One and Chapter Three), all shared with me intriguing and incisive critical stances on the world, making them, in a sense, as much ‘philosophers’ as the learned scholars whose work is cited herein.

The membership of the *Ougoukai* face considerable precarity in their day-to-day lives, and the intelligent and engaged critiques that they conjure – usually with reference to the ways in which Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi’s music echoes, or is made to echo, in the context of their own lives – reflect this. The principal desire that unites the group is the desire for *nakama* – camaraderie, belonging, collectivity, “home” in its own right. And in a way that brings us full circle to the opening pages of this Prelude, the talisman that the *Ougoukai* – in all its engaged criticality, as we shall see – has adopted to unite under is none other than the *Hinomaru*, the flag dismissed by *nobori*-bearing marchers at the July, 2015 protest in Osaka as constituting “the very path to war” itself. There is no doubt that this is a contentious, provocative sort of choice: “other people [at and around Nagabuchi concerts] tend to find it intimidating [*iatsukan*],” the *Ougoukai*’s vice-

chair admitted to me at our first meeting. But it should also confuse us, drive us away from taking refuge in preconceived notions of the natures of “protest” and “critique,” and spur us to query just what these are in modern and contemporary moments, what forms they might take, what their potentials might be. These are the questions that have driven this dissertation. And while it may have succeeded only in expanding the scope of the discussion – delaying a resolution in the interests of intensifying the search – it is perhaps precisely such an intentional lingering upon precarity and potential, upon voices that sing/speak of “other histories” and of possibilities for “living off the page” in a place that is still known as ‘Japan,’ that allows us to hear voices that sing the Homesick Blues.

Winds Out of the South:

Kagoshima, Crisis, and the Radical Potentialities of a “Provincialized Japan”

*“I thought that I’d tossed my home away –
So what am I doing here again?”*

-Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, “Furusato [Home],” from the album *SAMURAI* (1998)

As I step down from the Kagoshima Airport access bus at Tenmonkan, which doubles as one of Kagoshima City’s main pedestrian and shopping thoroughfares by day and as its main red-light and entertainment district by night, my attention is immediately caught by a man standing at the corner of the entrance to the covered shopping arcade. Dressed in white Japanese construction garb, and sporting a bandana and sunglasses, he ferociously attacks the strings of an amplified acoustic guitar and belts out – poorly – the strains of “*Junrenka*,”¹ debut and signature song of singer-songwriter (as well as artist and actor) Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, Kagoshima’s favorite (or at least best-known) son and a presence that seems to loom everywhere in the city, from music overheard² on the streets to signed posters and jutting monuments across Kinko Bay on Sakurajima, site of the artist’s trailblazing and massive outdoor all-night concert in 2004.³

Though I stop to listen for a moment or two, the utter disregard that greets the man and his

¹ Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, “*Junrenka* [Roundabout love].” October 5, 1978. Tokyo: Toshiba EMI. LP single.

² Christine R. Yano, *Tears of Longing: Nostalgia and the Nation in Japanese Popular Song* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), p. p. 7.

³ This musical event saw 75,000 individuals from across Japan and around the world descend upon Kagoshima for a marathon all-night performance by the artist. The performance brought considerable economic benefit to Kagoshima, and the site of the concert remains a scheduled stop on tour-bus rounds of the island of Sakurajima to this day.

warbling from Temonkan’s passersby seems to suggest that his presence – or the presence of those like him – is nothing particularly newsworthy, and I continue on my way, taking my first steps into a geographical site whose contexts would inform much of the writing compiled herein.

Later, I stop by one of Kagoshima’s well-known ramen shops for lunch, and strike up a conversation with the proprietor. Curious as to what I am doing in Kagoshima (foreign tourism to the city, tucked into what amounts to a massive cove at the extreme southern tip of mainland Japan, remain a relatively new phenomenon, at least in comparison with the situation in the massive metropoles of Tokyo and Osaka), I tell her that I am here to pursue research on Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi – and her face lights up. “We used to get delivery orders from his family all the time,” she says. “We don’t hear from him as much now that he spends most of his time in Tokyo.” Soon she wanders away to attend to other patrons, still seemingly puzzled as to why a researcher from the University of Chicago would want to travel all this way to investigate a figure who, for many in the community, is simply a given part of everyday life in Kagoshima.

Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, singer-songwriter, actor on the big and small screens, calligrapher, sometimes-author, and martial artist, was born in Ishūin, on the outskirts of Kagoshima City, in 1957, the second child and only surviving son of a police officer and a homemaker. Nagabuchi bought his first guitar (a cheap, catgut model) for 3600 yen in 1971, when he was just fifteen, and put together his first folk band when he entered high school. After entering university in Fukuoka City, he began playing professionally at the well-known folk café Shōwa, an unimposing yet legendary ‘live house’ that sits beneath the bustling back alleys of Fukuoka’s Tenjin-cho, and that has given rise to such influential Japanese acts as Tulip, Kaientai, Kai Band and Inoue Yōsui. In 1977, the artist who would become known to history as Tsuyoshi

Nagabuchi⁴ released his debut single – the aforementioned “*Junrenka* [Roundabout Love]” – and embarked upon a career that would be marked both by the heady successes of million-selling singles and albums and marred by controversy and scandal,⁵ and that would be characterized by a performativity and musical textuality would shift and evolve along with Japan’s own changing historical moments. Over the course of a career that has so far spanned thirty-nine years and that seems to produce repeated climactic, “topping” moments (the most recent being a massive outdoor concert held at the foot of Mr. Fuji in August of 2015 that drew around 100,000 individuals from across Japan, and that will be examined in detail in Chapter Three), and that as yet shows no sign of slowing down, Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi has established himself as one of post-1970 Japan’s most important musical figures, seemingly larger than life itself on the one hand, and yet owing this very fame in no small part to an acidic *musical critique* that is inextricably embedded in the everyday, on the other.

What do we mean by the term “musical critique?” We might return to Kojin Karatani, writing in the immediate aftermaths of Japan’s triple (and ongoing) disasters of March 11, 2011, as a means to begin to clarify this idea. As we noted in the Prelude to this dissertation, Karatani suggested in the journal *Counterpunch* that “[i]t is not Japan’s demise that the earthquake has produced, but rather the possibility of its rebirth. It may be that only amid the ruins can people gain the courage to stride down a new path.”⁶ It seems to me that Karatani may have sensed “amid the ruins” a way to disturb ‘Japan’ as History, manifested in that universalized narrative of

⁴ An earlier debut, under the pseudonym Nagabuchi Gō, sputtered.

⁵ Nagabuchi achieved million-seller status with his singles “*Tombo* [Dragonfly]” and “*Shabondama* [Bubbles],” in 1988 and 1991, respectively. Importantly, both works were tie-ups with serialized television dramas in which Nagabuchi also starred. These soaring successes would come crashing back to earth in 1995, when the artist was arrested for possession of a small amount of marijuana, the possession and use of which is still considered a serious criminal offence in Japan.

⁶ Karatani Kojin, trans. Seiji M. Lippitt, “How Catastrophe Heralds a New Japan”, published online in *Counterpunch*, March 24, 2011.

preordained (capitalist) belonging lamented by Harry Harootunian as “Japan’s Japan”⁷ – and as we shall see, Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi seems, decades earlier, to have sensed something very similar in the “ruins” of Kagoshima itself. What this hopeful vision seems to pivot around is the revolutionary potential of what Bergson,⁸ Deleuze and Guattari,⁹ and others have called *becoming*, that constant, situationally-specific, affect-driven process of turning-into in spaces of what Tosaka Jun has called the “everyday,” a process that both informs and that is key to any meaningful understanding of the social context(s) in which it unfolds. “Becoming,” of course, “produces nothing other than itself. [...] What is real is the becoming itself, the block of becoming, not the supposedly fixed terms through which that which becomes passes.”¹⁰ But “supposedly fixed terms” like ‘Japan’ cannot simply be ignored: they are in fact vital to the whole equation – in no small part because they frame and contextualize the “different histories”¹¹ that attention to becoming serves to reveal.

Indeed, it is exactly these “fixed terms” which, as the constituting agents of the conceptual corridors through which we pass, are always already in a position of impacting – *affecting*¹² – the one enmeshed in processes of becoming. In a sort of feedback loop, the ways in which “fixed terms” like ‘Kagoshima’ or ‘Japan’ are confronted can provide a framework by which one’s actual experiences living therein can be gauged, and the nature of that affective

⁷ See Harry Harootunian’s essay, “America’s Japan/Japan’s Japan”, in Masao Miyoshi and H.D. Harootunian, eds., *Japan in the World* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993).

⁸ See Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2011), p. 324.

⁹ See Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* (London: The Athlone Press, Ltd., 1988), p. 238.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ The revelation of such “other histories” has long been the project of philosopher and Japan historian Harry Harootunian. See for example Harootunian’s “Japan’s Long Postwar: The Trick of Memory and the Ruse of History,” in Tomiko Yoda & Harry Harootunian, eds., *Japan after Japan: Social and Cultural Life from the Recessionary 1990s to the Present* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).

¹² See Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), especially his Introduction, for an overview of affect. For affect and music, see Eric Shouse, “Feeling, Emotion, Affect” in *M/C: A Journal of Media and Culture*, Vol. 8, Issue 6 (December, 2005).

experience prompts one, in turn, to critique those terms (or not), destabilizing them, and sometimes driving a fluidity of becoming that can propel a positing of ‘Japan’ according to new and different terms. This becomes nothing less than a critique of History itself¹³ – and such a critique is, as we shall see, at the core of Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi’s artistic project. What I refer to as ‘musical critique’ herein, then, should be understood as the critical reassessment, through music, of some of the constitutive elements and assumptions – the “supposedly fixed terms” – that inform the realm called the social, a praxis whose end result can involve bouncing the one-becoming into radically new directions. ‘Japan’ as History, through such critique, can be thoroughly destabilized, and re-envisioned according to new and different terms – and this, it seems to me, is one of the great promises (yet also, as we shall see, one of the lurking dangers) of Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi’s critical stance.

One need not search very far to find Nagabuchi’s own critique: it announces its own presence in the artist’s lyrics, in the grain of his voice,¹⁴ in his stance¹⁵ on the world. It is a critique that seeks to dig around at the very roots of what it has meant to be Japanese in the post-1970 moment. Notable works such as 1990’s “*O-uchi e kaerō* [Head on Home],” for example,

¹³ I am indebted here to Dipesh Chakrabarty, who aims to differentiate between what he sees as History 1, those “histories posited by capital,” and History 2, a more diverse and encompassing history of human diversity and agency. An important differentiation between Chakrabarty’s stance and my own must nonetheless be enunciated here, however: the former strives to attend to Other modes of being that “are no less ‘modern’ than capital” but that are different and with [their] own histories,” suggesting a recuperation of an outside to capital that has been rendered invisible via a Eurocentric vocation of history. I see Nagabuchi and other critical voices visited herein not as claiming a ground of authenticity outside of capital, but rather as possessed of a critique that is potentiated precisely by their inextricable embeddedness therein, thus inviting an understanding of their critical projects as scrambling the sense-making mechanisms of History, not as claiming a ground outside of it. Critical manipulations of temporality on the part of Nagabuchi and others will be visited in much more detail in Chapter 2. For an insightful and succinct overview of Chakrabarty’s work, see David Hardiman’s Review in *Social History*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (January, 2002).

¹⁴ See Roland Barthes, trans. Stephen Heath, “Grain of the Voice,” in *Image-Music-Text* (Paris: Farrar, Straus, and Girox, 1978), pp. 179-189.

¹⁵ See Harris M. Berger, *Stance: Ideas about Emotion, Style, and Meaning for the Study of Expressive Culture* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2009).

explicitly deride a “shitty Japanese-style capitalism” and consumerism, presented in the form of a Seven-Eleven convenience store, as its chorus sings of an intent to literally “piss on” the National Diet Buildings at Nagatachō as the narrator “head[s] on home.”¹⁶ 1991’s “*Oyashirazu* [Wisdom Teeth],” meanwhile, pleads with “Japan, my homeland” to not (literally) “melt into America.” “Money? Sure, I want money!” howls Nagabuchi in this work. “But no matter how much we make, no matter how much piles up, there are some things that I just won’t give up.”¹⁷ Musically, both of these works are characterized by a tense, angst-laden sort of guitar-harmonica-voice triad, helping to lend a strong sense to these works that there is something seriously wrong with the modern “fixed terms” by which ‘Japan’ had come to be defined, particularly in the 1980s and 1990s. That something, it seems, has much to do with (global) capitalism, and the ways in which it is seen by the artist as alienating Japan(ese) not from a mythical lost moment of purity, but rather from alternative potentials for life and belonging as ‘Japan[ese]’. Remedying this, for Nagabuchi, does not lie solely in destabilizing the “fixed terms” of ‘Japan’, the strategy pursued by, for example, fellow singer-songwriter Saitō Kazuyoshi, particularly in the aftermaths of 3.11.¹⁸ As I’ve already suggested, there is a strongly *reimaginative* aspect to Nagabuchi’s musical critique – and the artist relies upon the discursive concept of ‘Japan’ itself (the dominant conceptual apparatus of Nagabuchi’s historical moment, as Harootunian teaches us) to pursue this.

¹⁶ Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, “*O-uchi he kaerō* [Head on home]”, from the album *JEEP*. August 25, 1990. Tokyo: EMI Music Japan. CD Album.

¹⁷ Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, “*Oyashirazu* [Wisdom teeth]”, from the album *JAPAN*. December 14, 1991. Tokyo: EMI Music Japan. CD Album.

¹⁸ I investigate some of the differences in strategy between Nagabuchi and fellow singer-songwriters like Saito Kazuyoshi in Scott W. Algaard, “Summertime Blues: Musical Responses to Japan’s Dark Spring,” in Barbara Geilhorn and Kristina Iwata, eds., *Fukushima and the Arts: Negotiating Nuclear Disaster* (London: Routledge, 2016).

This chapter aims to consider some of the important ways in which Kagoshima is implicated in the development of this critique – both on the part of Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, and on the part of individual social actors making use of the artist’s texts in their day-to-day lives. From one perspective, Kagoshima is a practiced space of everydayness,¹⁹ wherein conditions of the lived day-to-day help to afford a critical stance on the world. From another, it is a *text*, one that feeds back²⁰ into the lives of individual social actors who may not be geographically associated with Kagoshima at all, but that nonetheless affords²¹ a means by which critique on the part of social actors can be articulated. And importantly, it is never removed from ‘Japan’ itself, but rather becomes what I shall call *provincialized Japan*, the differences and crises abiding in which constituting a serious challenge to the sense-making mechanisms of ‘Japan’ as abstract space.²² Above all, Kagoshima – physically, conceptually – is an important node in networks of social relations²³ that make up what is sometimes too readily granted a prior uniformity as ‘Japan,’ and the implications that the former has for understanding the latter renders Kagoshima an important marginal borderland, which we might understand as a “critical space” from which ‘Japan’ is thought anew. The sort of commandeering of Kagoshima by both Nagabuchi and his listeners as a text by which the very terms of ‘Japan’ might be engaged critically and envisioned anew is a tactic that we might, in anticipation of other critical tactics to be interrogated in subsequent chapters, term *critical spatiality*.

¹⁹ Michel de Certeau, trans. Steven Rendall, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. 117.

²⁰ See David Novak, *JAPANOISE: Music at the Edge of Circulation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013).

²¹ Tia Denora develops the concept of “affordance” in relation to the deployment of music as a medium for social action at some length in her *After Adorno: Rethinking Music Sociology*.

²² See Henri Lefebvre, trans. Donald Nicholson Smith, *The Production of Space* (Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 1991), esp. p. 370.

²³ See Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

STANCE: Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi and Kagoshima

My early encounters with Nagabuchi's presence in Kagoshima felt, especially in retrospect, oddly appropriate and symbolically fitting, seeming somehow to speak to the ways in which the artist's presence is firmly anchored amidst the diverse flows that constitute life in Kagoshima – and, conversely, to the ways in which Nagabuchi and his artistry are always already molded and formed within the contexts of the flows that make up the Kagoshima social.²⁴ But if Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi is always, in a sense, in Kagoshima, the Kagoshima is always in Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, as well. Indeed, one will not get very far in an attempt to grapple with the critical potentialities of Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi's music if one does not attend to the specter of Kagoshima, which haunts, in one way or another, the vast majority of the artist's work. And yet Kagoshima never abides in solitude in this work – it is always, explicitly or implicitly, situated in a web of interconnectivity with 'Japan' writ large, disturbing the latter's claims to uniformity (which have run the gamut from "Japan's Japan" to Japan as Number One to, more recently and in the wake of economic collapse, Cool Japan) and serving as a signpost²⁵ that can help direct the articulation of a practiced space still called "Japan" by social actors, but that nonetheless helps to introduce a productive sort of critical tension between this practiced space of immediacy and the more abstract space of the state.²⁶

In a recent interview with the Japanese journal *Bungei*, Nagabuchi discussed some of the lived realities of his upbringing in Kagoshima, and how these would go on to impact his critical musical artistry:

²⁴ See Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994).

²⁵ See de Certeau, esp. the chapter "Walking in the City."

²⁶ Henri Lefebvre makes the important point that "the places of social space [such as those defined variously as 'Japan'] may be... combined, superimposed – they may even sometimes collide." See Lefebvre's *The Production of Space*, esp. p. 88.

“Being on the outside [of Tokyo] looking in... this awareness is something that will stick with me my whole life, I think. I was 25 when my mother collapsed from illness, bleeding from the abdomen. ‘It hurts, it hurts,’ she’d say, bleeding bright red blood from her belly. By the time I hit my thirties, I found myself wanting to spray her blood all over the city of Tokyo. To me, the red of her blood was the red of the *Hinomaru*, of the Rising Sun flag. I remember thinking that I wanted to stain [*someru*] everything with that red. Mine was the anger of a country bumpkin [*inakamono*], in other words...

The father and mother who gave me life gave everything they had in the service of their region, of the Prefecture, of the state itself. They didn’t have any money; my father wasn’t able to get ahead in his work because he didn’t have much of an education; there was no end to the fighting at home. Just what was this thing that was putting my parents through so much pain? When I was looking for something to direct that angry glare towards from the standpoint of my *furusato*, of course the only things that fit the bill were Tokyo, and the state. As I sang in my song *Ouchi he Kaerō*, I was filled with this feeling that I just had to go and piss all over the National Diet buildings. I came up to Tokyo driven by the desire to take revenge on those things that had caused us so much pain. And that feeling has not changed in the slightest, right up to this very moment.”²⁷

The artist’s agitation and frustration with nation-state structures here is graphically palpable. But we must be careful not to reify Kagoshima, to place it in a relationship of simplified opposition with a national ‘center.’ As Nagabuchi himself makes clear in these comments, the experience of the everyday in Kagoshima can in no way be removed from Japan itself. Indeed, in graphic imagery of the singer’s mother’s blood, which stands in here for the red of the Japanese flag in a way that further complicates a contentious symbol that we have already confronted in the Prelude to this dissertation, we can see how what appear to be two sites are in fact merged together in a relationship that is never discursively stable but that is stained by the contingencies of everydayness. Kagoshima, as site of these contingencies, becomes both a place at which, and a text through which, the nature of ‘Japan’ itself is understood – and it is this that renders Kagoshima (along with countless other peripheral frontiers) so potent as a marginal borderland. The first section of this chapter endeavors to follow Nagabuchi into Kagoshima – or, perhaps

²⁷ Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, interview recorded in *Nagabuchi Tsuyoshi: Minshū no ikari to inori no uta* [Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi: songs of the fury and prayer of the people], *Bungei Bessatsu* [Special Edition] (Tokyo: Kawade Shobo Shinsha, 2015), p. 49.

more concisely, to trace some of the ways in which specific conditions of life in Kagoshima have afforded highly critical aspects of the artist's work. But we must first attend to the manner in which the artist's critique can never be confined to Kagoshima itself.

In his *On Uneven Ground*, Hoyt Long examines the ways in which Iwate poet Miyazawa Kenji – through the construction and positing of Iihatov, a quasi-fictional realm that was more or less meant to stand in for Iwate itself – sought to establish a different framework for approaching questions of nation and locality, city and countryside, and the very logic of (capitalist) modernization and development.²⁸ According to Long, “Miyazawa was able to use the idea of Iihatov to present an alternative to prominent strains of regional discourse, dominated as they were by talk of economic and political backwardness, and to thus expand the borders of what could and could not be said about the region.”²⁹ But as a statement about a specific place that was made into a narrative field that already privileged a centrist, metropolitan discourse, this project carried with it the effect of disturbing Tokyo's claim on the right to be the sole teller of Japanese time: indeed, “critical to the message embodied in the strategy of Iihatov was that no line of sight had the right to claim absolute legitimacy over any other.”³⁰ The sort of provincializing perspective that attends Iihatov's (=Iwate's) insistence upon speaking to/from its own realities renders Tokyo nothing more than one particular site among others, susceptible to critique and robbed of its purported universality.³¹ In other words, by extracting Iihatov entirely

²⁸ See Hoyt Long, *On Uneven Ground: Miyazawa Kenji and the Making of Place in Modern Japan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012).

²⁹ Ibid., p. 101.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 129.

³¹ Such a recalibration of lines of sight and delegitimization of the primacy and universality of the abstract narrative of the nation-state is precisely the promise that Harry Harootunian sees in the productive deployment of regionalism, one that is able to resist the trap of what the author calls a “fetishistic inversion.” See Harry Harootunian, “‘Memories of Underdevelopment’ After Area Studies”, in *positions: east asian cultures critique*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Winter, 2012), p. 16.

from the sense-making mechanisms that privileged a Tokyo-centric, nationalized narrative of development and backwardness, allowing it to transcend both Tokyo and Iwate itself (enmeshed as it was – and is – in Tokyo-centric narratives of understanding) and making it a place “uniquely its own,”³² Miyazawa’s work has helped to point the way toward a “methodology that does not try to tell the local time by setting it apart and below a universal time, but which instead views it as coexisting with other times in a differentiated present.”³³

Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi seems to share with Miyazawa Kenji key elements of the latter’s regionalizing project. Importantly, he is interested in finding ways to allow Kagoshima to speak for itself, without allowing it to devolve into a site of ahistorical longing for an imagined lost purity, or to be co-opted as an alternative source of authentic ‘national culture.’ And crucially, he is insistent that Kagoshima *be allowed to tell a different time* (I shall have much more to say about Nagabuchi’s critical manipulation of time in Chapter Three). But the ways in which the artist goes about this critical project is markedly different – and begets similarly dissonant effects. If Miyazawa Kenji’s Iihatov *transcends* Tokyo-centric narrative and nationalized, common-sense time, Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi’s Kagoshima ruthlessly and brutally *embeds* itself in the same. Amidst the historical context of a Japan thought to have heralded the end of history and the end of critique around 1970, Kagoshima lurks as a discomfiting reminder of “the specific encounter of time and place, historicality and contemporaneity, [and] between between capitalism’s expansion and the conditions it generates or confronts.”³⁴ These contradictions and unevennesses are infused into the graphic spectacles of Nagabuchi’s mother’s blood staining the metropolis and of the artist’s own urine soaking the Diet buildings at Nagatacho – and the effect

³² Long, p. 85.

³³ Ibid., p. 33.

³⁴ Harootunian, “‘Memories of Underdevelopment’ After Area Studies,” p. 18.

is that Nagabuchi's narrative of Kagoshima does not run alongside other "line[s] of sight,"³⁵ but rather intrudes upon and violates the very common-sense narratives of capitalist development that have anchored Japan as concept since around 1970, and that continue, somehow, to supply the monotonous soundtrack to the never-ending quest to escape the very crises that they potentiate. And as Long himself teaches us, it is here, in this inmixing of different lines of sight, that politics becomes possible.³⁶

If Miyazawa Kenji provincializes Tokyo, in other words, we might take Long's analysis one step further and suggest that Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi provincializes 'Japan' itself. As we shall see, by unflinchingly placing Kagoshima and 'Japan' in direct relation to each other – in other words, in tracing the social relations that bind social space, that tie 'local' to 'national' – and allowing each site to bleed into the other, the artist is able not only to criticize Japan as system, as History, but also to reach out to unlock and lay critical claim to *another Japan*, one that is understood not in the abstract spatial terms of the state, but rather in concrete terms of lived everydayness. This is precisely the potentiality of the critical tactic that we are calling "critical spatiality" herein. Provincializing 'Japan' allows Nagabuchi to render it susceptible to critique on the basis of realities that are particularly apparent in Kagoshima, and to infect the very common-sense notions of "Japan's Japan" that bear responsibility for the "pain" and "ruins" of Kagoshima with visions of a malformed twin. But in provincializing, or localizing, the very idea of 'Japan,' Nagabuchi can also draw attention to a different 'Japan' that is a site of a *different history*, whose time is told by Kagoshima itself. Nagabuchi has essentially said that, for him, 'Japan' as system, as History, is a maleficent, bankrupt concept, evoking little more than the sadly smiling faces of long-dead special attack pilots in the photos adorning the walls of the

³⁵ Long, p. 129.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 61.

Peace Musem at Chiran, not far from Kagoshima City; young men “bamboozled” by the state into a sacrifice that they themselves justified as coming on behalf of families, of loved ones.³⁷

But as anyone who has had any exposure to Nagabuchi’s music – especially recently – can attest, the idea and symbolism of ‘Japan’ in fact runs through nearly everything the artist does: a recent, highly-symbolic musical event held at the base of Mt. Fuji (which shall be addressed in Chapter Three), for example, was utterly awash in *Hinomaru* flags and musical invocations of Japan. But this is none other than provincialized Japan – a ‘Japan’ understood as a site of immediacy and experience, as human relationships, as Kagoshima itself. And as I shall suggest herein, this provincialized Japan, laid bare in its brute unevenness and conflated with Kagoshima, and defined according to different histories and a stubborn untimeliness, provides a powerful critical framework for conceiving of alternative collectivities and attending to a “becoming” that is always historical and which, as I have suggested above, potentiates critique.

We should already be getting the sense, then, that Nagabuchi’s critique, embedded in and indebted to Kagoshima though it may be, is always already enmeshed among social relations that join Kagoshima and ‘Japan,’ two entities which can never be productively conceived of as divorced in any case. Confronting these relations and connectivities head-on – not constructing an idealized lost home in Kagoshima, for example, but rather attending to the ways in which Japanese capitalism has impacted life there; not seeking transcendent shelter in a mythical, volkish ‘Japan,’ but rather insisting that alternative collectivity be propelled, as we shall see, by a constant critical grappling with the conditions of the everyday – is absolutely fundamental to the artist’s critical praxis. And as we shall see below, it is precisely the conceptual proximity between, or the *co-presence* of, Kagoshima and ‘Japan’ that generates the exquisite tension

³⁷ Nagabuchi, *Bungei Bessatsu*, p. 46.

marking the relationship between these sites that are at once separate and integrated. And it is this tension, in turn, that generates the potential for politicality, understood here as a reimagining of the terms of belonging in Japan itself.

For all of this chapter's early emphasis on Kagoshima, in other words, we will never be successful in grappling with the music and persona of Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi if we try to isolate him there. As the constant, fluid, almost Bowie-esque changes that the artist applies to his public image help to attest to (though he debuted as a wispy, long-haired folk singer of love and heartbreak, Nagabuchi's look has since taken on the influence of gangsters, street thugs, Indian mystics, American bikers, martial artists, and more), Nagabuchi's music and artistry can never be pinned down, or categorized in a comfortably classifiable way. Over the course of his career the artist has doled out both harsh criticisms and soaring adoration for Kagoshima; has both mercilessly destroyed and insisted upon the idea of 'Japan'; has critiqued the Imperial Japanese Army's infamous Unit 731 one moment and lauded the *kamikaze* special attack corps the next. But for all of its fluidity and unpredictability, Nagabuchi's musical artistry is not without a relatively constant, unifying thread – one that seems to stitch together a critical project that can only be effectively traced by attending to the longer critical arc of the artist's own (post-1970s, but informed by his post-1950s experiences) historical moment. As I have already suggested, this project seems to lie in a thorough destabilizing and reimagining of the terms and social relations of Japan as History – what Endō has called "nothing but capitalism itself;"³⁸ and what Harootunian terms, as we have seen, "Japan's Japan." As a project targeting relations, processes, and flows, its potential for success rests, it seems, upon the artist not permitting his voice to linger anywhere too long: indeed, as we shall see briefly below, it tends to always occupy the

³⁸ Katsuhiko Endō, "A Unique Tradition of Materialism in Japan." In *positions*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (2012), p. 1032.

plasma³⁹ that exists between conceptualizations of ‘Kagoshima’ and ‘Japan’, between past and present, even between war and peace in order to constantly chip away at a cement casing concealing different modes of belonging that are potentiated, as we shall see, on the girding of different histories. And as the works to be examined below help to reveal, these different histories are posited not through a privileging of Kagoshima as a site of supposed timeless purity, as if it were somehow untouched by the very ravages of capitalism that have given form to the crises of which the artist sings, but rather through attending to the ways in which Kagoshima and Japan are always already conjoined in the social relations of capitalism itself.⁴⁰

Stuck In the Middle With You: Kagoshima, ‘Japan’

It is worthwhile lingering for a moment, I think, on the historical moments of Nagabuchi’s birth and his development as an artist, as a means by which to better frame the critical project that I have outlined above. Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi was born in the immediate aftermath of the establishment of the so-called “1955 system,” when conservative political forces placed a stranglehold on power in Japan⁴¹ that would last far beyond the artist’s formative years. He began his elementary school education during “the period of nationalist and conservative restoration [in education] (early 1950s – 1965)”,⁴² was eleven years old when Kawabata

³⁹ See Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

⁴⁰ Though Doreen Massey in her *Space, Place, and Gender* is largely interested in defusing the perceived oppositions between ‘local’ and ‘global’ and re-conceiving of these concepts as embedded in broader and interconnected social relations, the author’s insights allow us to consider ‘Japan’ as both place *and* space, co-present and enmeshed in social relations, and generative of a tension that is nothing short of political.

⁴¹ John Dower, “Peace and Democracy in Two Systems: External Policy and Internal Conflict”, in Andrew Gordon, ed., *Postwar Japan as History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), p. 16.

⁴² Yoshiko Nozaki, *War Memory, Nationalism and Education in Postwar Japan, 1945-2007* (New York: Routledge, 2008), p. 2.

Yasunari delivered his Nobel lecture entitled “Japan, the Beautiful, and Myself”⁴³ – a rambling, culturalist treatise that anticipated the advent of theories of Japanese uniqueness in the 1970s and sought to draw a linear narrative between Kawabata’s cultural production and a misty, distant and enabling past – and made his transition from high school to college and a performing career in that important period “[d]uring the 1970s and 80s... when Japan was at the peak of its economic superpower status, [and the] Japanese had their sense of national identity virtually constructed for them by Nihonjinron [theories of Japanesness] writers seeking to explain the reasons for Japan’s success.”⁴⁴ These developments orbit around what Harootunian has identified as that crucial moment in the 1970s when “America’s Japan” – so termed for the manner in which American Occupation narratives in the post-war period aimed to re-constitute Japanese history along a modernization continuum in the interests of rendering the Pacific War an instant of aberration, thereby effectively rendering it predetermined to take its place as player in the arena of global capitalism – became internalized as “Japan’s Japan,” helping to quiet much (though by no means all) of the clamor and contestation over national priorities and directionality that had come to a head during the 1960s, anchored by the AMPO struggle of 1960 on one end of the decade and the security treaty’s undebated, automatic renewal in 1970 on the other. This had the effect of casting a pall of predetermined cultural cohesion over Japan, sealing a hegemonic narrative of an unchanging Japan existing outside of history, wherein the Japanese themselves

⁴³ Kawabata’s lecture can be accessed online here:
http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1968/kawabata-lecture.html

⁴⁴ Kenneth G. Henshall, *Dimensions of Japanese Society: Gender, Margins and Mainstream* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, Inc., 1999), p. 171.

could be persuaded that they have not yet become anything other than what they have been since the beginning of time.⁴⁵

Harootunian's conceptualization of "Japan's Japan" is of some importance here, not only because its advent marks an important turning point in social history in Japan, but because the concept tends, in a way, to encapsulate scholarly thinking on the historical moment of around-1970 and beyond. This moment, as we have already noted briefly in the Prelude, is generally construed as having been taken as a domestically-endorsed conclusion of History, a wholesale adopting of a geopolitical role defined for Japan by U.S. occupiers in the context of the Cold War and coinciding with the attainment of post-war goals of capitalist modernization. Indeed, as Harootunian explains, "America's Japan became Japan's Japan once it was recognized in the 1970s that the goals of modernization had been reached, income-doubling secured, and high economic growth realized." And importantly, this is taken as the moment at which meaningful political critique in Japan began to dry up. More specifically, Japan's Japan

"managed to supplement... the image already authorized by the representation constructed both by the Occupation and its later theoretical projection and empirical verification. Modernization theory, as it was increasingly 'applied' to explain the case of Japan, prompted Japanese to incorporate American expectations to fulfill a narrative about themselves, produced by others, elsewhere, that had already demanded the appeal to fixed cultural values – consensuality – uninterrupted continuity, and an endless present derived from an exceptionalist experience."⁴⁶

What "Japan's Japan" seems to have authorized, in short, was the culturalization, or ethnicization, of capitalism. Through appeal to an ahistoricized national-culture and traditional values that supposedly both potentiated and naturalized Japan's geopolitical positionality as a bastion of capitalist democracy, the potential for politics became buried under the suffocating

⁴⁵ Harootunian, "America's Japan/Japan's Japan", in Masao Miyoshi and H.D. Harootunian, eds., *Japan in the World* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993).

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 200.

weight of culture itself – Japan in this moment (and beyond) was made to appear “conflict-free and consensual,”⁴⁷ and a certain sort of cultural fascism⁴⁸ gradually came to displace the upheavals of the late 1960s.

Though Harootunian’s critique here is of the effects of the naturalization of capitalism, however, we would be remiss to approach this critique only in terms of complacency founded in material conditions of life. More important in terms of the critique with which this dissertation is engaged is the purported erasure from the Japanese social of conflict, and its replacement with a totalizing “force of traditional values” with which Japan’s trajectory since antiquity could be explained, and moments of upheaval and conflict (the Pacific War and, presumably, the turbulence of the 1960s, conspicuous among them) could be rendered exceptional, aberrant, anomalous. Such a narrative, largely concocted by Cold War social scientists at the U.S.-based Conference on Modern Japan, aimed to show “how the nation had evolved peacefully from a feudal order, [and] whose values had survived intact to mediate this development and whose more baneful remnants would eventually be eliminated by the force of rationality.”⁴⁹ And importantly, though the economic successes that provided the girding for the emergence of “Japan’s Japan” would eventually collapse into the lost decades of the 1990s and beyond, the appeal to the “force of traditional values” (=“cultural fascism”) would persist, with its terms now altered to constitute a framework by which a new, better, more authentic way of being (*not* becoming) Japanese might be imagined. In short, “Japan’s Japan” continued – and continues – to circle back in onto itself, and Harootunian grieves the manner in which this seems to foreclose the open-ended possibilities personified in Mme. Onboro, the barmaid of Imamura Shōhei’s film

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 203.

⁴⁸ See Marilyn Ivy, “Fascism, Yet?” Preface to Alan Tansman, Ed., *The Culture of Japanese Fascism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), pp. vii – xi.

⁴⁹ Harootunian, “America’s Japan/Japan’s Japan,” p. 202.

“History of Postwar Japan as Told by a Bar Hostess.”⁵⁰ Yet as we shall see, the critique posited by Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi – superstar outlaw in every sense of the term – is precisely the sort of open-ended, irreverent, rule-breaking critique whose loss seems to have been grieved prematurely by Harootunian and others; we have but to venture into the realm of the everyday, wherein the consequences of “Japan’s Japan” were felt most acutely, to reveal it.

If ‘Japan’ was being steadily patched together according to a preordained narrative of unity under successful modernization and development (=capitalism) in this moment, though, the ways in which the story was playing out at sites like Kagoshima was rather different.⁵¹ If 1955 marked the consolidation of LDP rule and the beginning, of sorts, of the consolidation of “Japan’s Japan” in the commencement of so-called high-speed economic growth, 1955 in Kagoshima marked an end: this year was to be the high-water mark for the prefecture’s population, which would decline more or less constantly thereafter (indeed, population decline and the general gutting of rural areas can be traced to the movements of people away from the countryside and toward the cities during this period and its urbanization, or Tokyo-ization). Coming on the heels of massive destruction at and around the end of the Pacific War,⁵² and in the wake of plans drawn up in 1948 to boost prefectural income levels from half of the national average to at least 75% by 1953,⁵³ the sudden onset of what was to be a prolonged descent came as a shock, and has been continually disheartening to Prefectural policymakers attempting to affect some form of postwar economic “recovery [*fukkō*]” (indeed, population drain was

⁵⁰ See especially the conclusion to Harootunian’s “Japan’s Long Postwar: The Trick of Memory and the Ruse of History,” in Tomiko Yoda & Harry Harootunian, eds., *Japan after Japan: Social and Cultural Life from the Recessionary 1990s to the Present* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).

⁵¹ The historical information in this section is gleaned from Haraguchi Izumi, et al., *Kagoshima-ken no rekishi* [The history of Kagoshima Prefecture] (Tokyo: Yamakawa Shuppan, 2011).

⁵² At war’s end, 93% of Kagoshima City had been flattened by air raids, and the arrival of two typhoons in quick succession after the surrender wreaked even more havoc.

⁵³ Prefectural production did in fact match pre-war levels by this year.

identified in discussion with a senior Kagoshima prefectural official in 2014 as a key issue facing the Prefecture). It is interesting to note that the overcoming of so-called “lateness” in the Amami Islands and their transference to a Tokyo-centered, universal capitalist time following the chain’s repatriation from American occupation in 1953 constituted a cornerstone of Prefectural recovery policy in this period – for as we shall note throughout this research, it is precisely a foregrounding of such nonsynchronous synchronicity⁵⁴ that serves as a basis from which the sense-making mechanisms of contemporary capitalism are critiqued, by Nagabuchi and by others.

When Tokyo’s tune shifted from economic “recovery” to economic “development [*hatten*]” in 1965 – and the income-doubling plan mentioned above was a key component of this policy shift – Kagoshima gamely tried to dance along, and instituted its own plans for development. Indeed, Kanemaru Saburō, who came to power as Governor of Kagoshima in 1967 and held that post for the ensuing ten years, took “development” as the keyword of his administration, instigating an array of new projects under the rubric of the Shin-Ōsumi [New Ōsumi; Ōsumi is the name of a key geographical region in Kagoshima] Development Plan – conspicuous here was the construction of expressways, Kagoshima’s new international airport, and so on. But this plan also called for the erection of a heavy-chemicals plant in Shibusaki Bay, and in light both of supply challenges wrought by the “oil shock” of 1973 and vigorous local opposition decrying the project on environmental grounds, and it was ultimately scaled back considerably.

Regardless, however, this development plan – and its second phase, which was instigated in 1971 and remained in effect through 1975 – did have the effect of raising mean incomes

⁵⁴ Ernst Bloch, “Nonsynchronism and the Obligation to Its Dialectics,” trans. Mark Ritter, in *New German Critique* No. 11 (Spring, 1977), p. 33.

considerably during this period, ultimately to 73% of the national average. But the countering effect of accelerating depopulation, aging, and so on – increasingly serious problems in this period – meant that spiking individual incomes had little positive effect on the overall economic situation in Kagoshima Prefecture. Continuing its delicate tap-dance with ceaseless capitalist crisis, the Prefecture in 1978 enacted the rather awkwardly-named *Nukumori ni michita idai na Kagoshima seizō* [Constructing a wondrous Kagoshima steeped in warmth] plan, as a means by which to stem the outflow of people from the Prefecture by making life there more attractive. This plan, however, was concerned mostly with improvements to economic infrastructure and with flushing the countryside with cash, and led directly to the construction of the Satsuma-Sendai Nuclear Power Station in 1984 – the first nuclear power plant to be restarted on a full-time basis following the March, 2011 meltdowns at Fukushima Dai’ichi and the subsequent shuddering of all plants in Japan – as an endeavor aimed at “regional development.” In 2012, Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, in concert at Kagoshima Arena, would famously declare: “what is generated by those nuclear power plants is not energy. What is generated there is *money*.⁵⁵ Taken in the context of the plants’ original construction and the rationale for that construction, it is not difficult for us to already conceive of Nagabuchi’s voice as enunciating a sharp critique of the dangerous devil’s bargain for economic survival that has been necessitated under the logic of “Japan’s Japan” in too many rural locales (including not only Kagoshima, but Fukushima, as well) – and, by extension, a critique of capitalism itself.

⁵⁵ Yukawa, Reiko [yukawareiko]. (July 2, 2012). “*Nagabuchi Tsuyoshi san ga senjitsu okonawareta Kagoshima Shimin Bunka Hall no konsāto no sutēji de katatta kotoba desu* [This is what Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi had to say on stage during his concert held at the Kagoshima Shimin Bunka Hall the other day].” Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/yukawareiko/status/219680068333608960> (accessed December 6, 2015).

The Prefecture's well-intentioned plan to create a Kagoshima "steeped in warmth" had little real effect, however, and rural depopulation has continued unabated. Indeed, Kagoshima City, the prefecture's main urban center, constitutes to be the only jurisdiction to have seen any growth over the period under examination here – its population increased 78% between 1955, when the drain began, and 1995. And while income has continued to edge up among those who remain in the Prefecture, this rate of growth is not on par with the national average. In 2013, for example, Kagoshima's average prefectoral income was eighth lowest in the nation,⁵⁶ and in the 2013-2014 census period the rate of child poverty in Kagoshima was a staggering 21.3%, surpassing by a considerable margin the (equally alarming) national average of 15.6%.⁵⁷ And through it all, Prefectural officials have continued scurrying to play a game of economic catch-up, even as the Prefecture's very marginality makes Kagoshima an important "bread basket for the nation." Like those of many other peripheral areas of Japan, in short, Kagoshima's economic challenges remain dire to this day, and indeed afford the context within which many of those engaged by this research enunciated their individual critiques.

By offering this brief historical narrative I by no means wish to construct a discursive framework, a box into which the actors populating this study must be forced at any cost. What I do wish to stress is that Kagoshima's historicity – as the internal negation of a History centered on a Tokyo and perhaps a handful of other urban centers that is too readily taken as representative of "Japan" writ large, even as these centers' own internal crises and unevennesses are disavowed as condition of their conjuring as idealized sites of "progress" – belies the persistence of a space of harsh, conflicted everydayness wherein, for all of the Prefecture's

⁵⁶ See http://nensyu-labo.com/2nd_ken_ranking.htm. Accessed April 7, 2016.

⁵⁷ See http://www.nishinippon.co.jp/feature/tomorrow_to_children/article/205589. Accessed April 7, 2016.

efforts, the contradictions and unevennesses of capitalism (crises that in fact haunt – even define – conditions of life for many in the capital and other urban centers, as well) were *never* overcome, and wherein the sacrifices and concessions necessitated by living a history that always sought to transcend itself and play catch-up loomed large in the lives of social actors – Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, individual listeners – making their lives therein. By shifting our perspective and refusing to authorize a Tokyo-centric line of sight, we can see how the spectre of “Japan’s Japan” may not have been quite as universal and universalizing as the historiography would have us believe, and the ways in which the particular histories, or historicities, of “Japan’s Japan” – through the urbanization and geographically-specific “particulars of capital and technology accumulation”⁵⁸ that accompanied it – may actually have helped to legitimize competing histories that would constitute the springboard for critique. And as we shall see, living this different history opens wide the potentials for broader critique that scholars often insist was slammed shut around 1970: the terms of life in geographically-specific sites that are always already in negotiation with the abstract space (or dominant History) of “Japan’s Japan” – but which are understood by those making their lives therein as Japan itself – invite intriguing political critiques that are in turn afforded by an engagement with critical music that tackles head-on some of the (capitalist) social relations traversing individual lives therein, and which shuttle back and forth through the socially-generative plasma anchored at one end by Kagoshima, and at the other by ‘Japan.’ “Japan’s Japan,” in other words, privileged even to the present day as an omnipresent behemoth beneath which social actors can but clamor for a better

⁵⁸ Haraguchi, et al., p. 301.

deal at the hands of the state,⁵⁹ may have in fact had more of a role to play in the generation of its own robust critique that has previously been appreciated.

“Hey, Listen to Me:” Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi’s Musical Critique

In the preceding section, we have considered some of the historicities of Kagoshima, histories of the everyday that have tended to be concealed in the shadow of Japanese History. But what have been some of the precise ways in which Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi has grappled with Kagoshima artistically? How has ‘Kagoshima’ circulated in musical texts that are always intended for nationwide distribution, and what sorts of critiques has this tactical deployment allowed the artist to mount? Kagoshima lurks in a great many of Nagabuchi’s musical texts, and we cannot attend to all invocations thereof in the space of this singular chapter. In what follows, however, I will attempt to address three representative works that grapple with the figure of Kagoshima in different manners, and to untangle some of the threads of critique that wind their ways through these texts of cultural production.

LICENSE

Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi’s critical zenith can be pinpointed to the end of the 1980s and the early 1990s – not coincidentally, the very moment at which Japan’s consumer and bubble economies would run white hot and eventually burn themselves out. The artist’s music in this historical moment is pockmarked with critical laments targeting consumerism, capitalism, the geopolitics of the Cold War, and more; it is a moment that also constitutes the solidification of what might be called Nagabuchi’s “inward turn,” which saw him move toward grappling more extensively

⁵⁹ See Anne Allison, *Precarious Japan* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), esp. p. 179.

and critically with questions of Kagoshima and of Japan, and with the nature of the terms of belonging in each. This was the moment that would see the penning of such devastatingly critical works as the aforementioned “*O-uchi he Kaerō*,” with its memorable imagery of “piss[ing] on the National Diet buildings”; “*Naite chinpira*,”⁶⁰ a howling work which sings of a desire to drop out of mainstream society altogether and whose lyrics quote liberally from Kaneko Shōji’s critically-acclaimed, 1983 *yakuza* film *Ryūji*,⁶¹ and the artist’s signature, smash-hit “*Tombo*,” which depicted a narrator (as with all of Nagabuchi’s works, most likely based upon the artist himself) counting the “insurmountable nights” until he could flee the poverty and “inescapable darkness” of Kagoshima and head north to the “magnificent metropolis [*hana no miyako*]” of Tokyo, which he “longed to death” for.⁶² Once there, however, the narrator was confronted with the reality of conditions of life in Tokyo that were no better (and were in fact worse) than those he had left behind – but he never returned to Kagoshima on any sort of permanent basis, and was to constantly find himself in a sort of limbo, caught permanently, it would seem, between Tokyo and his *furusato*, his “home.” This ‘in-betweenness,’ however, might be more productively understood not as a double-lack, or a belonging in *neither*, but rather as an ongoing navigation of *both* – as an abiding, in other words, in a site that is defined by the *co-presence* of Kagoshima and Tokyo, a co-presence that is revealed by attending to the means in which each are embedded among and within the threads of social relations that link the two places. This positionality would characterize much of Nagabuchi’s work over the years, and is particularly

⁶⁰ Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, “*Naite chinpira* [Cry, hood]”, from the album *LICENSE*. August 5, 1987. Tokyo: EMI Music Japan. CD Album.

⁶¹ The degree to which Nagabuchi may have been influenced by this film and its portrayal of a lonely outlaw figure attempting to navigate his way through contemporary societal expectations cannot be underestimated, but a thorough investigation of this question must be saved for another day.

⁶² Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, “*Tombo* [Dragonfly],” from the album *Shōwa*. March 25, 1989. Tokyo: EMI Music Japan. CD Album.

important to note at the outset, since it constitutes precisely the “critical space” from which much of the artist’s most critical work would unfurl. By refusing to privilege either a somehow ‘pure’ *furusato* or an a priori national-cultural framework⁶³ to which restorative appeal might be made, Nagabuchi insists upon dwelling among the very crises and contradictions revealed that attend everyday conditions of life in Kagoshima – and in so doing, he is able to pursue an art in which these are stripped away from themselves, rendered textual, and unleashed to circulate among the sense-making mechanisms of “Japan’s Japan” (though its econo-specific terms would be modified in the 1990s⁶⁴), to corrosive and reimaginative effect.

The aforementioned example of “*Tombo*” notwithstanding, not all of the musical critiques cited above deal explicitly with Kagoshima. But as the artist himself makes clear in the published comments cited above, it was his experiences being embedded in Kagoshima everydayness that ignited his critical drive, and we may be afforded productive insights into Nagabuchi’s critical strategies by examining some of the ways in which the artist makes use of his own music – and of deployments of Kagoshima therein – in order to pursue his critical praxis. Let us grapple first with “*LICENSE*” (the title is in English), title-track to Nagabuchi’s chart-topping and award-winning 1987 album.⁶⁵

Lyrically, “*LICENSE*” opens with a window on Nagabuchi’s memory:

“When I was a kid, I really loved the sea.”

One might surmise from this opening line that the listener is about to be taken on a nostalgic journey through vistas of Nagabuchi’s childhood, and in fact the work does shuttle us through a

⁶³ Yoda and Harootunian, p. 113.

⁶⁴ See Harootunian’s “Japan’s Long Postwar: The Trick of Memory and the Ruse of History.”

⁶⁵ Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, “*LICENSE*”, from the album *LICENSE*. August 5, 1987. Tokyo: EMI Music Japan. CD Album.

number of vantage points on the artist's life growing up in Kagoshima. But these are not visions of a pure, lost home: the window that we see through is dirty and cracked. The work continues:

“The four of us, living in a barracks hut – we were very happy.
Unadorned propane spigots for cooking; coal-tar walls;
And half-broken shutters – my mother, her back to us in the evening light,
Always in tears in that alleyway entrance.”

The effect of this nearly instantaneous change-up is jarring. The listener's attention is quickly ripped from Kagoshima's well-known ocean vistas and thrust into the alleyways connecting the sparse living quarters provided to Kagoshima public servants (Nagabuchi's father, as we have noted, was a compassionate, and thus largely unsuccessful, police officer), as the very idea of countryside family happiness crumbles amidst visions of poverty and parental despair. Here, we can catch glimpses of the harsh conditions of life in Kagoshima that the artist himself identifies as having propelled his critical project. And as we have seen, these are conditions of everydayness under which the artist's father struggles, as well:

“When the weekend would roll around,
My dad would always take me out on his motorbike.
We'd find a deserted piece of beach, and he'd lower himself down on the sand.
Silently, he'd smoke a cigarette, and gaze far off into the distance
Filled with fury over a life lived only with the best of intentions [*kimajime*].”

The vocabulary that Nagabuchi deploys here to describe his father's approach to life – *kimajime* – carries with it strong overtones of seriousness, propriety, and earnestness (all attributable, incidentally, to the “traditional values” bolstering “Japan's Japan,” and all very much associated with the valuation of one's own labor-power under capitalism⁶⁶), and is likely meant here to describe the latter's approach to his work, belying a belief – or a hope – that if one works hard,

⁶⁶ For informative perspectives on the cultural discipline involved in ensuring the value of one's own labor power and achieving survival under the regime of capital, see Ken C. Kawashima, *The Proletarian Gamble* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), and Tomiyama Ichiro, ‘Spy’: *Mobilization and Identity in Wartime Okinawa* (Osaka: Senri Ethnological Studies 51, National Museum of Ethnology, 2000).

then one will get ahead. The angry contemplation with which the artist's father reflects on his life, however – particularly taken in conjunction with the material paucity described in the opening lyrics – seems to suggest a sense of betrayal, or hard-earned distrust of Japan's promise of middle-class-ness for all, a promise that was particularly resonant in the moment of the so-called "high-speed economic growth" of Nagabuchi's childhood. Through the artist's boyish eyes, we are beginning to get a sense of the conditions informing his skepticism of the "Japanese dream," and his anger over the conditions of life in the countryside that, in his experience, brought pain and suffering to his loved ones.

"*LICENSE*" is characterized by a gentle, flowing melody, one that commences very sparsely, with just an amplified acoustic guitar to accompany Nagabuchi's voice. But there is a distinct textual 'voice' embedded in the music that we must attend to if we are to untangle the threads of the artist's critique effectively. Off the very top of the work, carefully-deployed strikes on wooden blocks, or perhaps rim-shots (which produce a 'clacking' sound by striking a drumstick against the rim of a snare drum, rather than on the drawn skin of the drumhead itself) track an insistent rhythm on its on-beats, one that maintains strict uniformity through the gradual instrumental swelling of the work through its five verses, although it very nearly gets buried therein. This persistent clacking persists through the work's eventual fadeout, nearly seven minutes later. The effect that it presents is a sound that recalls the incessant ticking of a clock, and as "*LICENSE*" sweeps through more cracked Kagoshima vistas – rusted train tracks upon which outdated steam locomotives run, textile factories belching smoke (the latter in particular all but screaming its symbolism as a citation of the sacrifice visited upon Kagoshima and other rural regions through high-speed economic growth) – it becomes apparent that not only are we tracing through the historical time separating Nagabuchi's childhood from his compositional

present in 1987, but that we are, from the standpoint of Kagoshima, being told a different time altogether. This tactic – of relentlessly pointing toward nonsynchronous synchronicity, not for the purpose of mending such rips in time but in order to situate them a springboard that might point somewhere *different* – is one that recurs in Nagabuchi’s critique with relative frequency, and one that reached, as we shall see in Chapter Three, a sort of apex with the artist’s all-night concert at the base of Mt. Fuji in August of 2015.

As “*LICENSE*” reaches its climax, the geographic perspective of the work shifts, and we are presented with the figure of the artist gazing upon an invisible Kagoshima sea from the veranda of an apartment in a “mildly filthy metropolis,” or Tokyo. In the interim, the score has gradually billowed out with full instrumentation – piano, electric guitar, and a full drum kit have all joined the work – but buried in the mix, sometimes barely audible but relentlessly insisting upon its own persistent presence, is the tick-tock clacking of the woodblock/rim-shot, seamlessly carving out a time that seems to have followed Nagabuchi out of Kagoshima and into Tokyo. It is crucially important to note here that Nagabuchi does not seek to “go home,” the desire enunciated in so many *enka* works (for example);⁶⁷ rather, Kagoshima exists as a site through which the artist’s experiences in Tokyo continue to be filtered and understood – and this helps to give his outlook its critical edge. More than anything, Kagoshima remains a site of a “different history,” one that is, in his lyrics, neither romanticized nor targeted for ‘overcoming’, but that simply *is*, and that serves as a means by which the terms of “shitty capitalism” can both be revealed (such as in “*LICENSE*”s own somehow jarring, mismatching lyrics) and challenged with hints of what Ivy might term “something else” – alternative possibilities that are never prior to capitalism, somehow surviving its ravages unscathed by appealing to an a priori, a-historical

⁶⁷ See, for example, Christine R. Yano, *Tears of Longing: Nostalgia and the Nation in Japanese Popular Song* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002)

‘Japanese’ self, but that are rather potentiated through reference to capitalism’s very terms, and propelled through a forefronting of the crises that attend such “different histories.” This “something else” seems the object of what we are calling “homesickness” on the part of the artist herein – and it is this sort of critique that makes him a particularly gifted singer of the Homesick Blues.

“LICENSE” concludes, lyrically, with Nagabuchi’s mother and father coming to Tokyo: the artist is “going to Haneda [Tokyo’s main airport] to pick them up tomorrow,” making use of the driver’s license that he’s just obtained (the very LICENSE of the song title, and indeed of the album title itself). This seems a crucial critical move. On the one hand, we might take this simply as a happy family reunion. But we must also remember that the artist’s parents, though “loved to death” in the context of this work, are far from a symbol of purity or embodiment of an idealized home – rather, they have been explicitly invested with the pain of Kagoshima’s everyday, and have become in this work a graphic marker thereof (this is a theme that would repeat itself in other key works, notably *Itsuka no shōnen*⁶⁸). By (lyrically) bringing them to Tokyo – the national center which, as we have already seen in the artist’s own words, is the avowed object of Nagabuchi’s critique – Nagabuchi seems insistent upon troubling the sense-making mechanisms of that center, upon infecting it, so to speak, with difference, and calling for a confrontation with its presence. This tactic of intentionally troubling national structures of ‘common sense’ would appear again – notably, with the release of Nagabuchi’s Kagoshima anthem, *Kibai-yanse*.

⁶⁸ Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, “*Itsuka no shōnen* [The sometime-boy],” from the album *Shōwa*. March 25, 1989. Tokyo: EMI Music Japan. CD Album..

気張いやんせ／*Kibai Yanse*

“*Kibai Yanse* [Fight it Out]” is the only work ever composed by Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi to feature lyrics written entirely in the Kagoshima dialect. While never quite not-Japanese, the dialect that constitutes the lyrical content of this work is dense to the point of being impenetrable to many beyond Kagoshima, or, at best, beyond Kyushu; its usage is, in other words, markedly different from dialectical signifiers that are put to work in various works of literature for the purposes of throwing the reader slightly off-balance, but which never really jeopardize his or her ability to comprehend the work.⁶⁹ Nagabuchi’s “*Kibai Yanse*,”⁷⁰ by contrast, has no apparent interest in making itself understandable beyond Kagoshima, and seems specifically to challenge what has become Tokyo-centered ‘common sense:’ unlike The Boom’s “*Shimauta* [Island Song],” for example, released just a few months later in twinned Okinawa-Amami and standard-Japanese versions,⁷¹ “*Kibai Yanse*” was never re-issued in the broadly-accessible *hyōjungo* standard dialect (which is in fact nothing but the Tokyo dialect, universalized with the Meiji Restoration project of nation-building⁷²) – this meant that to follow Nagabuchi into his *furusato* demanded that the listener slip out of his cloak of (linguistic) ‘Japaneseness’ and engage with the local on Nagabuchi’s own terms.⁷³ In other words, what Nagabuchi posits in this work – both linguistically, and, as we shall see below, in terms of content – is a sort of Other to “Japan’s

⁶⁹ See, for example, the manner in which dialectical ‘markers’ meant to be suggestive of the Nagano region are employed in Shimazaki Tōson’s *Ie* [The Family].

⁷⁰ Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, “*Kibai-yanse* [Fight it out]”, from the album *JAPAN*. December 14, 1991. Tokyo: EMI Music Japan. CD Album.

⁷¹ Although the original version of The Boom’s “*Shimauta*” was composed in the Okinawan dialect and released in Okinawa in December, 2012, it was the subsequent version, reworked into standardized Japanese, that was officially labeled as the ‘Original Version’, although it was released several months later. Both versions were hits.

⁷² See Lee Yeounsuk, *The Ideology of Kokugo* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2010), esp. p. 45.

⁷³ For more on “strategies... of differentiation” aimed at achieving a level of exteriority and independence from dominant discourse, see Pascale Casanova, trans. M.B. Debevoise, *The World Republic of Letters* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), esp. Chapter 6.

Japan.” And yet, as I have already suggested above, “*Kibai Yanse*” does not quite represent a wholesale fleeing from or rejection of ‘Japan’ as concept – as is the case with so many instances of the artist’s musical critique, Nagabuchi’s Kagoshima anthem makes sense precisely because of the *co-presence* of Kagoshima and an abstract, dominant Japanese space centered on Tokyo. Like “*LICENSE*,” this work finds its place amidst the strands of social relations that connect Kagoshima to Tokyo – and like “*LICENSE*,” the truly intriguing critical potential presented by this work lies in its potential to infect taken-for-granted structures of social knowledge with alterity and doubt.

While Nagabuchi’s simultaneous recognition of and self-distancing from majority norms is rendered especially clear in his deployment of impenetrable peripheral dialect, however, dialect is not the only tool at the artist’s disposal. As I have already suggested above, from around the time of the artist’s hyper-critical moment of the late 1980s and early 1990s, Nagabuchi began adopting a rough, guttural lexicon and a harsh descriptive vocabulary. *JAPAN*, the album in which “*Kibai Yanse*” was included, was released in 1991, and is thus very much traceable to this moment. Therefore, when Nagabuchi sings

“You and I are the impure ones,⁷⁴ after all
But still, even we have those things that we can’t compromise.
... If you really can’t abide that asshole [*yatsu*],
Then just knock him down
If you lose the fight,
Just bow your head in apology.”

in his impenetrable Kagoshima dialect, he is simultaneously recognizing and distancing himself from “Japan’s Japan” in two key ways – first, linguistically; and second, through situating himself in a relation of opposition with the “values” of “Japan’s Japan” by following, after a

⁷⁴ Lit. 汚れ物, or “dirty ones”, this term can be interpreted to mean those who exist outside of society, who are not “pure”, etc.

fashion, Sakaguchi Angō, and *becoming-decadent*,⁷⁵ rejecting the pre-determined coordinates of “Japan’s Japan” and constructing a place where one can fall away from social propriety. The adoption of this second stance is a move whose presence is announced in the artist’s adoption of what might be loosely called an “outlaw persona,” that referenced Japan’s *yakuza*⁷⁶ – this change in style on the part of the artists occurred with the release of the aforementioned album *Shōwa* in 1989, and was, as I have suggested above, an integral part of his inward turn. Identifying with what Nagabuchi (and others) see as “heroic villains” standing outside of the socio-cultural norms of the evolving Japan of the artist’s historical moments⁷⁷ allows Nagabuchi to carve out for himself what appears at first glance to be a place *external to* ‘Japan,’ from which to mount his critique. But this apparent strategy of taking up of a place outside of ‘Japan’ – a strategy that has been successful to the point of critics lambasting his singing as sounding like “a foreigner bumbling his way through the Japanese language”⁷⁸ – is actually better understood as the forcible introduction of alterity into sense-making mechanisms that have grounded totalizing notions of

⁷⁵ See Sakaguchi Angō, “Discourse on Decadence”, Parts I & II, in James Dorsey and Doug Slaymaker, eds., *Literary Mischief: Sakaguchi Angō, Culture, and the War* (Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2010), pp. 175~96.

⁷⁶ It is worth noting that Nagabuchi starred in a series of *yakuza*-related movies and television programs at around this time as well, including the popular TBS drama “Tombo” and the Tōei movie *Orugōru* (Music Box).

⁷⁷ Nagabuchi’s view of the *yakuza* (as persona) is clearly highly romanticized, and almost certainly not motivated by any serious veneration for criminality. Rather, Nagabuchi is tapping into the “myth... [of *yakuza*] fighting a rearguard action against the corrupt modern age.” It should be noted that Nagabuchi’s has since discarded his *yakuza* image, replacing it with that of a hard rocker, perhaps reflecting what Kingston calls “the well-deserved pummeling [taken by the *yakuza* image] during the Heisei era” and a desire to engage in Otherness by different means, such as becoming-Rock in a musical landscape dominated by overproduced pop. See Ian Buruma, *Behind the Mask: On Sexual Demons, Sacred Mothers, Transvestites, Gangsters and Other Japanese Cultural Heroes* (New York: Meridian, 1985), p. 170 and Jeff Kingston, *Contemporary Japan: History, Politics, and Social Change Since the 1980s* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), pp. 214~15.

⁷⁸ This rather odd assessment was made by a commentator employed by one of Japan’s ubiquitous morning ‘Wide Shows’ in May, 2002, and referred specifically to Nagabuchi’s “Shizuka-naru Afghan”, or “Quiet in Afghanistan”. The implications of a member of Japan’s media establishment attempting to dismiss Nagabuchi’s critique of the war in Afghanistan on the basis of his non-‘Japaneseness’ are enormous, but must be revisited on a different occasion.

the Japanese nation-state since the Meiji Period. What this complex negotiation seems to trace and re-envision, in short, are the terms of *kokugo* – or “national language” – itself.

In his *Ideology of Kokugo*, Lee Yeonsuk delves into the historicity of so-called ‘standard Japanese,’ demonstrating just how recent the invention of *kokugo* – or “national language” – actually is, and the ways in which this invention was inextricably tied to modernity and in fact necessitated as a part of modern state-making in Meiji Japan. Appealing to intellectuals and advisors to the state such as Ueda Kazutoshi, Lee shows the way in which language was naturalized as a means of amalgamating Japanese subjects both laterally, as organic nation, and, crucially, vertically, with the state. As Lee argues, “[l]anguage thus defined was no longer to serve for communication among people; instead it became the ‘voice’ coming from somewhere to ‘be heard,’ or ‘the music’ of blessing. The source of such a ‘voice’ was not some individual person but the sacred *kokutai* [national polity]… Such a language was not felt to be forced upon the individual, but to be valued as the inner morality of the person.”⁷⁹

Kokugo thus defined would thrive in Japan’s war years (as pillar of sorts of the Japanese Empire), would readily survive the postwar and would persist, ideological implications firmly intact, into the contemporary moment: indeed, megastar singer-songwriter Nakajima Miyuki, widely regarded as a poet and wordsmith, would giddily accept an advisory position to the Japanese state in 1999, tasked with making pronouncements on how best to preserve the functionality and allure of *kokugo*. It is not difficult to mark *kokugo* for inclusion in the aforementioned catalog of efforts at consensus-building, built upon the insistence upon “traditional values” that were deployed (largely by the state, in this instance, through education) to invalidate conflict (and naturalize capitalism) in Japan in the 1970s and beyond – and if we

⁷⁹ Lee, pp. 89-90.

consider the work in terms of Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi's broader critique, it should be plain to see that "*Kibai Yanse*," in its corrosive combination of dialect and lyrical subject matter, intends to pose a challenge to precisely these sense-making mechanisms of national language, and the attendant danger (in the artist's eyes) of *heiwaboke*, or "being stupefied by peace."

But is "*Kibai Yanse*" merely a scrambling of sociolinguistic rules? As Lee argues, "the concept of *kokugo* can exist only if all those who live in this political and social space called Japan believe that they are speaking the same Japanese language. In reality, language has numerous variations in different regions, classes, and styles. It is only because there is a consistent, common measure that we discern the variations, however disjointed they are." "*Kibai Yanse*"'s project of destabilizing *kokugo* – and the nation-state mechanisms with which it is so closely associated – can only proceed, and present itself as Other, if *kokugo* and its unifying potentialities are first recognized and acknowledged. Nagabuchi's deliberate move of composing a work that fails to make sense (linguistically or semiotically) in terms of *kokugo* and including it on an album titled JAPAN seems to suggest not so much an out-and-out rejection of the functionality of *kokugo* as a reformulation of its terms. Nagabuchi's Kagoshima dialect, in other words, seems posited as a linguistic pillar around which alternative collectivity might be pursued, forefronting the immediacy of what Barthes would call a "grain of the voice... speaking [a] mother tongue" that is not standardized *kokugo* at all, but rather a Kagoshima dialect tinged with hints of the very harshness, angst, and frustration that the "traditional values" of 'Japan's Japan' try so hard to suppress. And it is, paradoxically, this very Otherness – the externality of Nagabuchi's "grain" to *kokugo* – that may render this linguistic alternative immediate to the Japanese precariat nation-wide.

"*Kibai-yanse*," then, in its apparent "hate[red of the] language of masters," seems to

represent a clear instance of what Deleuze and Guattari would term “becoming-minor.”⁸⁰ The Kagoshima dialect is never quite not-Japanese, and yet its distance from what is understood to be “standard Japanese” – *hyojungo*, Tokyo dialect – is both what allows *hyojungo* to function as such, and what allows the artist to enunciate a positionality as “a sort of stranger *within* his own language.”⁸¹ Indeed, as we have seen, *Kibai-yanse* seems to deploy language as a means through which to cite dominant norms that encompass, but are in fact in no way limited to, language itself: as is a common tactic in Nagabuchi’s work, the artist refuses to gaze in on the object(s) of his critique from a standpoint of externality, but rather embeds himself among those dominant structures, referencing them by citing himself as corrosive Other thereto, and positioning himself as an “exhilaratingly damaged,”⁸² malformed twin. Just as we must take care not to approach the Kagoshima of Nagabuchi’s library as an idealized, externalized site of escape, so we must attend carefully to the ways in which Kagoshima, through language broadly conceived, is sent eddying around the pillars of common sense, like salt water on steel. In this way, Nagabuchi’s “*Kibai Yanse*” helps us to see some of the ways in which Kagoshima dialect and decadence, as critiques levied against *hyojungo* and social knowledge, can open language and normativity “to an intensive utilization that makes [them] take flight along creative lines of escape which... now form an absolute deterritorialization.”⁸³

The narrative voice of “*Kibai Yanse*” may provide some insight into the ethical and political stakes that Nagabuchi sees in his critique. This is not a reflective piece – it is not meant to invoke, for example, Nagabuchi-as-self bemoaning the state of a fallen “Japan.” Rather, the

⁸⁰ Gilles Deleuze and Feliz Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), p. 26-27.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

⁸² See Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double-Consciousness* (London: Verso, 1993), p. 22.

⁸³ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, p. 26.

lyrical narrative of this work is clearly addressed to a “you”, and specifically, a “you” who is cast as *already*-Kagoshima, *already*-outcast, *already*-marginalized, but whose presence, in light of the very performative aspects of musico-cultural production and sales on a national stage, can never be reduced to abiding solely in Kagoshima itself. We seem to be presented here with an open call to join the Kagoshima-nation – provided, that is, the listener can disengage himself from the discursive confines of “Japan’s Japan,” confines that are identified in this work by referencing their linguistic and cultural Others. The ethico-political stance that seems to be proposed in this positing of the Kagoshima-nation, in other words, seems very much to enfold and enclose, not to exclude.

鹿児島中央STATION / *Kagoshima Chūō STATION*

As noted above, Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi’s “inward turn” – which involved explicit grappling with the nature of ‘Kagoshima’ and of ‘Japan,’ and with the terms of belonging in both – really got underway in the late 1980s, and nearly thirty years later the artist is still deeply enmeshed within it. “*Kagoshima Chūō STATION*,”⁸⁴ from the artist’s 2007 album *Come On Stand Up* (one of the last that he would record with artist-centered For Life Music Entertainment [FLME], launched and at one time headed by Nagabuchi’s own mentor Yoshida Takurō), stands as a particularly intriguing manifestation of this artistic stance, in no small part because it sees Nagabuchi intervening into a Kagoshima social that is inextricably (and explicitly) tied to Tokyo and to broader national narratives, and making pronouncements clearly intended to have an effect upon both.

⁸⁴ Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, “*Kagoshima Chūō STATION*,” from the album *Come On Stand Up*. May 16, 2007. Tokyo: For Life Music Entertainment (FLME). CD Album.

“Kagoshima Chūō STATION” is a stern, complex, multi-vocal work that can only be productively approached intertextually – that is, its voices seem to make sense only when they are placed in relation to one another. The droning refrain of the work – “my home town, my home town,” sung in English – and the harsh, almost Tom Waits-sequel vocal delivery are set atop an instrumental track that features intermittent incursions by banjo and harmonica, an apparent reference to Nagabuchi’s early days as a folk singer. Rhythmic shouting and metallic banging that punctuate the work throughout its seven-minute duration may recall local festivals (and this is a strategy that Nagabuchi, who slyly cites from Kagoshima’s Ohara Festival in his rousing “SAKURAJIMA,”⁸⁵ has used before) – or it might recall the sorts of harsh labor that the artist recalls from his youth. This jumbled confusion has the effect of invoking a time of whose specificity we cannot really be certain – indeed, in the opening stanza the artist sings of “being caught in a time slip,” and one gets the sense that it may be the old, “leaning, beat-up shopping arcades” just as much as the towering commercial buildings appended to the new bullet train station (this is the Kagoshima Chūō Station of the title, which was until 2004 Nishi-Kagoshima Station, to which Nagabuchi’s late father was dispatched as a beat-cop) that are foreign to this scene. While the work recalls elements of Nagabuchi’s youth and is clearly intended as a critique of contemporary circumstances, we are on familiar Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi ground here in that the artist does not simply call for a return to the past, a reclamation of a site of purity that, as we have already seen, never existed in the first place. In abandoning such an approach, Kagoshima herein is rendered both *specific* and *unspecific* – it is cited as place, but it is not idealized and removed from broader context and connectivity. The overall effect is to set Kagoshima among

⁸⁵ Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, “SAKURAJIMA,” from the album *Keep On Fighting*. May 14, 2003. Tokyo: For Life Music Entertainment (FLME). CD Album. The chorus from this work quotes directly from the song of Kagoshima’s Ohara Matsuri.

social relations that stretch across Japan and indeed across the world, rendering it a sort of node in a network, as opposed to an isolated and romanticized site of longing, somehow abiding outside of history.

In an echo of imagery that we have already encountered in “*LICENSE*,” above, the connections amidst which Kagoshima finds itself embedded are traced by train tracks. It is no accident that both the title and the narrative perspective of this work center on JR Kagoshima Chūō Station itself, where in 2004 the first bullet train arrived to link southern Kyushu with Tokyo. The link itself is not new – indeed, Nagabuchi uses the towering, steel-and-glass hulk of Kagoshima Chūō to frame his own departure for Tokyo from a smaller, more decrepit Kagoshima Station decades earlier, deploying rhythmic onomatopoeia (“*gatagata, chuuchuu*”) to depict a lumbering, clumsy sort of rail travel that is obviously much slower and far less sleek and stylish than contemporary *shinkansen* travel is. What seems to alarm Nagabuchi here, in other words, is not connectivity with the capital *per se*: indeed, as we have seen throughout these readings of Nagabuchi’s critical works, the artist in fact relies upon the co-presence of Kagoshima and Tokyo (as representative of “Japan’s Japan”) to make his critique legible. What seems to have caught the artist’s critical eye in “*Kagoshima Chūō STATION*” is a new, almost colonial proximity of Tokyo – the very center of “Japan’s Japan” – to Kagoshima that is potentiated by the encroachment of the bullet train, and evidenced in the oddly common-sensical way in which the landscape and cityscape are being morphed as simply a matter of course. It is this loss of specificity – which we might also view as the looming loss of Kagoshima’s ability to tell its own time – that spurs Nagabuchi’s call to action: but as with “*Kibai Yanse*,” above, the artist’s call is likely not meant to resonate in Kagoshima alone.

As is the case with “LICENSE,” the lyrics of “*Kagoshima Chūō Station*” take the listener on a retrospective sort of journey through vistas, this time focused on the area around the city’s main rail station. These are recalled by the artist as scenes from his youth: chasing evening dragonflies and tossing paper airplanes along “straight alleyways [*roji*]”;⁸⁶ getting cheap meals with friends along the streetcar tracks and hotly discussing the future and its possibilities; hanging out in shopping arcades that still exist, albeit now in “off-kilter and rusted out” format. Despite these somewhat nostalgic tints, however, the aim here is not to spatialize time,⁸⁷ rendering the past a destination that exists elsewhere, on a plane fundamentally other to history, that can somehow be accessed and restored if one but longs earnestly enough for it. Rather, Nagabuchi seems intent upon *temporalizing space*,⁸⁸ keeping the focus on the ways in which capitalist modernity attempts to flow through a site – Kagoshima – whose significance abides in its ability to reveal the contradictions and consequences of that very modernity. What seems key here is not attempting to seal Kagoshima and its potentialities off into an ahistorical past, but rather tracing how these may continue to lurk and haunt the march of common sense that reveals itself in the materiality of the new station and its environs. The lyrics of the work, for example, demand to know whether or not those *roji* [alleyways] are still there *now*, the implication being that they should be. The streetcar is boarded in an attempt to discern the extent to which the passion that fired the young lives of the narrator (Nagabuchi) and his comrades still smolders in the eyes of the city’s youth – this time, in young women [*shojo*]. And perhaps most importantly, a key recurring refrain of the work asks not where “my Kagoshima” has *gone*, but where it is

⁸⁶ We will recall that the motif of the *roji* is one that we confronted in “LICENSE,” as well. There is an intriguing sort of overlap apparent here with the *roji* deployed by author Nakagami Kenji as a literary device – a thorough comparative analysis of these tropes must be set aside for another occasion.

⁸⁷ Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), p. 49-50.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

going [*ore no Kagoshima ha doko he iku*]. Kagoshima is not lost; it is not a site to which an ahistorical time should be assigned and accessed like a remote island. But its “line of sight” does seem to be under threat, threatened with blinding by a universal time carried by super-express rail from the northeast. The project apparent in “*Kagoshima Chūō STATION*” seems, in short, to reassert Kagoshima’s claim to its own time – and to insist that this time be told vociferously.

Kagoshima is itself a product of the social relations that embed it within ‘Japan’ – the two can never be meaningfully separated – and in simultaneously foregrounding the everydayness begotten by those social relations and insisting upon Kagoshima’s connectedness to Tokyo as national center, Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi is able not only to thrust Kagoshima forward as a local challenge to nationalized sense-making mechanisms, but also to provincialize Japan itself, insisting upon other ways in which Japan-as-space is enacted on its own peripheries. This tactic rests on ensuring that the Kagoshima of Nagabuchi’s youth – in all its backwardness and difference – is allowed to come into contact with and thus to trouble the encroaching Tokyo-centered totalization that is stealthily swallowing the city whole. Kagoshima Chūō Station, in short, seems to insist upon Kagoshima’s right to announce its own coarse, grounded time, one that, while it stretches into the past, cannot be banished to that past but is rather incessantly inserted “into a present situation from which it borrows the vitality,” and wherein it serves to “narrate the relationship between past, present, and future.”⁸⁹ This sort of narrative tactic – what Svetlana Boym would call “reflective nostalgia” – places its focus “not on recovery of what is perceived to be an absolute truth but on the meditation on history and passage of time,”⁹⁰ and on an amplification of Kagoshima’s toxicity as a potential poison pill.

The chorus of “*Kagoshima Chūō STATION*” bellows:

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 50.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 49.

“Hey, wasn’t my Kagoshima a backwater [*inaka*]?!”

Inaka, like “backwater,” is a largely derogatory term, taken to imply untimeliness, backwardness, and a hopeless sort of unrhythmicity, a being-out-of-step with the times. It is important to note that *inaka* can never be an *a priori* condition – *inaka* and the backwardness and unrhythmicity that attend it can only be forged in conditions of modernity itself, through a contrast to a universalized, developmental time, or History (and indeed, as we have seen above, it has been an escape from the conditions of *inaka*-ness that has so preoccupied Kagoshima’s bureaucrats in their attempt to “catch up” to a national time). Marilyn Ivy argues that the *inaka* is the locus of “the vanishing”⁹¹ – it is, in Ivy’s formulation, a site of loss, a remainder of modernity that becomes a site at which the disaffected might try their hand at locating a ‘true’ Japan that exists outside of history itself. But by virtue of positing the *inaka* as a remainder, a sandbar amidst encroaching toxic waters that is sure to vanish eventually, this argument seems to serve, paradoxically, to validate capitalist modernity’s own claims to universality, to privilege a singular line of sight and way of telling time that emerges from the metropole and that can only be fled and overcome⁹² through universalizing and ultimately false appeals to an *a priori*, more “authentic” Japan that somehow exists out of time (and where the threat of fascism, as capitalism’s internal negation, always lurks).

Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi’s critique, as we have seen, is rather different. Rather than fleeing or aiming to overcome history, he seeks, by forefronting the crises and contradictions of Kagoshima’s everyday, to challenge capitalism’s claims to common sense. Kagoshima as *inaka* is not a place of ahistorical beauty and purity for Nagabuchi, and he has no interest in fleeing

⁹¹ See Marilyn Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing: Modernity, Phantasm, Japan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

⁹² See Harry Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity: History, Culture and Community in Interwar Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), esp. p. 305-328.

there, or in sealing it off from ‘Japan’ writ large. Indeed, as the artist’s insistence on the train motif, the idea of *jōkyō*,⁹³ and lyrical depictions of his own shuttling back and forth between Kagoshima and Tokyo demonstrate, ensuring that Kagoshima is *not* isolated from Tokyo seems pivotal to Nagabuchi’s critical project – the sense-making mechanisms of Tokyo-as-state can only be disturbed, it would seem, if they can be accessed. What we are presented with in “*Kagoshima Chūō STATION*,” then, seems to be a critique of degree – it is the ease and degree of the encroachment of Tokyo (the very antithesis of *inaka*) that troubles the artist, not the fact of connection itself. As Nagabuchi himself sings in this work, “the sad steam whistle of the trains” that once clattered into JR Nishi-Kagoshima Station seem much more suited to Kagoshima’s critical potentialities – and the artist can hear their sorrowful refrains “even now.”

Marilyn Ivy also writes of trains. She describes how, in the 1970s, the advertising giant Dentsu and JR combined forces to engineer the so-called “Discover Japan campaign,” a domestic rail travel initiative that encouraged sojourns to some of Japan’s outlying (non-Tokyo) regions, and that purportedly reflected “a generation’s desire to return to its origins.”⁹⁴ The author writes of how the desire to travel and “find Japan” took as its premise an assumption that the traveler was not in Japan – or perhaps more specifically, was not in the correct/authentic Japan. The many and varied itineraries of the Discover Japan campaign, Ivy writes, faithfully delivered sojourners to a ‘Japan’ whose singular fate was to be co-opted and reformulated as a better, more authentic national culture. In this conceptualization, even (especially) the voices of the peripheries – such as Nagabuchi’s own Kagoshima dialect, traced through *Kibai-yanse*, above – are bound to the sorry fate of “spectaculariz[ation] as the singularly-representative voice of the

⁹³ Literally “going up to the capital,” a move made usually for economic or career reasons and always from the non-Tokyo peripheries to the metropolis.

⁹⁴ See Ivy’s *Discourses of the Vanishing*, esp. Chapter Two.

nation-culture.”⁹⁵ In Ivy’s formulation, then, the *inaka* abides as a site of restorative nostalgia, as a phantasm of purity that never really existed in the first place but which, as a spatialized time-out-of-time, a transcendent repository of value, could become a “disciplinary apparatus... for producing individuated Japanese subjects.”⁹⁶ ‘Japan’ here somehow takes on the shadowy overtones of state manipulation and black trucks, and it is with dismay that Ivy notes that neither in the Discover Japan campaign of the 1970s nor in the moment of her writing were narratives of the Japanese social able to resist the “pull of gravity” of ‘Japan.’

But Ivy’s tracks only go one way. Even when her locomotives and carriages have reached their destinations and have returned, their journey is oddly circular: they have only ever reached sites of purported authentic national culture, and carry nothing more than mildly modified versions thereof in their luggage racks. What is missing in this formulation is recognition of the fact that the “cultural memory” that ‘Japan’ itself signifies is never quite so singular or easily tamed: indeed, as Boym teaches us, “everyday frameworks of collective or cultural memory offer us mere signposts for individual reminiscences that could suggest multiple narratives.”⁹⁷ If Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi could have his way, if Kagoshima-time could be shouted above the clack and din of arriving *shinkansen*, then the *inaka* that makes its way back northeast on the rails – as the artist himself did in 1978 – would no longer announce Japan’s own totalizing authenticity to itself: rather, by foregrounding the “different history” of a provincialized Japan, it would announce the very impossibility thereof, and demand that Japan be thought differently – though not discarded altogether.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 17.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 41.

⁹⁷ Boym, p. 53.

In “*Kagoshima Chūō STATION*,” Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi reveals himself to be haunted by terrifying visions of the consequences of further encroachments of Tokyo-centered capitalist modernity on Kagoshima: “That had better not,” he growls, “be cash and rotting cadavers that I see bobbing on the surface of Kinko Bay!!” But the resolution to this danger does not lie in sidestepping it and taking shelter in a romanticized local culture, or allowing such a phantasm to attach itself to ‘Japan’ and transport it out of its own history altogether: rather, the potential for resolution seems to ride on direct confrontation, on an insistence upon continuing the project that the artist started in “*LICENSE*,” on sounding out Kagoshima’s own uneven, crisis-ridden, thoroughly embedded time. “Go ride your ferris wheel, and drink your Starbucks coffee [two new features of JR Kagoshima Chūō Station],” Nagabuchi sings at the end of this song in an uncharacteristically high (for this particular work) and somehow mocking register. “And then,” – and now harsh, guttural, leather-throated Nagabuchi is back – “show them what a country bumpkin [*inaka-mono*] is made of!!”

In our very brief overview of these three key works, we can see how Kagoshima as physical site of everydayness, and the artist’s own experiences growing up therein, have afforded Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi certain critical stances on the world, which manifest themselves in his compositional praxis. Nagabuchi makes use of his own music to give voice to intriguing, multi-layered critiques that are never merely about overcoming modernity. But these critiques, taking as they do the form of mass-produced, widely distributed musical texts, are never a merely personal project on the part of the artist – it is the nature of Nagabuchi’s work that these texts, with their very specific deployments and invocations of Kagoshima, should go out into the world, and circulate among individual actors making their lives therein. What might these texts themselves, as entities circulating amidst and among specific lived texts, afford among listeners

who put them to their own, often bitingly critical, uses?⁹⁸ Put more specifically, in what ways might social actors in specific historical and geographical contexts put these texts to work in the contexts of their own lives? In what remains of this chapter, I would like to explore some of the ways in which individual social actors with a stake in Kagoshima make use of Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi and his art. So doing can help reveal the ways in which (Nagabuchi's) Kagoshima, in Latourian fashion, becomes highly implicit in the ways in which these social actors understand/imagine their own social – and the ways in which this intermeshing of texts (artistic and lived) can generate intriguing critiques.

Hearing Voices: Individual Engagements with Musical Critique

The history of Kagoshima is the (ongoing) history of precarity itself. By tapping the materiality of this history of precarity and enunciating it in song, Nagabuchi can chip away at the sense-making shroud of concrete that envelops 'Japan' as History, and insist upon its inauthenticity and gesture toward different modes of belonging. Kagoshima, in other words, provides a spatial means through which the artist can articulate his critique, even as (or precisely because) it is never isolated and is always connected to 'Japan' itself. The terms of capitalism that reveal themselves therein, it might be said, afford Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi with the means by which he can critique capitalism itself. For the artist, this often means telling, in one way or another, what we have already seen Harry Harootunian term "different histories:" while his library does include works specifically decrying the poverty of Kagoshima or the terror of

⁹⁸ This sort of lived intertextuality is an idea that can be teased out of the insistences held by Naoki Sakai, himself following Julia Kristeva, that texts – including what we would traditionally conceive of as 'literal', written texts, musical and verbal texts, and intangible texts such as life experience, etc. – only take on meaning in relation to other texts. For a full explanation, see Naoki Sakai, *Voices of the Past* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992).

nuclear power, Nagabuchi is as (if not more) likely to sing of and act the outlaw, the outcaste, of scenes of natural beauty, or other tropes that might be thought of as standing outside of or resisting the totalizing narrative of “Japan’s Japan.” But just as importantly, as we shall see in the pages that follow, individual social actors with a stake in Kagoshima – be that stake physical, or, as we shall see, conceptual – are able to lay claim to Nagabuchi’s critical artistry as a text that helps them to navigate the terms of their own lives. What’s more, the use of this music as a device by which social actors embedded in historically and geographically specific contexts can survive – literally, in some cases – the terms of their own everyday also becomes a means by which they are able to identify and enunciate their own critical stance on ‘Japan,’ giving voice to their own renditions of the Homesick Blues.

What we have been able to note in the music of Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi is a critique that does not seek to overcome modernity and unevenness, but rather one that recognizes and foregrounds the disparity and alienation of contemporary capitalist existence. As will become particularly apparent in Chapter Three, it is precisely such a foregrounding that constitutes the foundation for the imagining and fleeting generation of one form of what I am calling alternative collectivity herein – one that is explicitly conjured not in flight from, but in an embrace and prioritizing of “different histories.” But in what follows, we will see how individual grounds are laid for the pursuit of such critical potential through the elucidation and articulation of individual critique that arises out of lived historical (and in this instance, geographical) circumstance, and that is made possible through an appropriation of and grappling with the circulating music and persona of Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi.

In my very first meeting with him At Kagoshima’s international airport café in October of 2014, Yūji, one of the co-founders of the *Ougoukai*, the private, national Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi

fan organization that we first encountered in the Prelude to this dissertation, made a comment that has stayed with me throughout the course of this research. “We don’t do this [engage in fandom, attend concerts, pursue opportunities for fan camaraderie] for Tsuyoshi’s benefit, you know,” he said. “We do it for ourselves.” There was something of vital importance in this comment, an important hint revealing the ways in which Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi’s music is deployed by certain social actors not only to survive the terms of everydayness in Kagoshima and beyond, but, I think, to make sense of them, as well. As we shall see in the remainder of this chapter, engagement with Nagabuchi’s music of on the part of specific individuals embedded – physically or conceptually – in the specific contexts of capitalist and geopolitical precarities, amplified as they are in Kagoshima, affords a political stance upon the world that becomes articulable as a result of this engagement. Though each of the individuals visited below understands and deploys the persona and music of Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi differently in the context of her or his own life, a common thread can nonetheless be identified herein in that each of these individuals, in their own way, locates in Kagoshima the potential for difference – but this is a potential that is never divorced from ‘Japan’ itself. It is this engagement of individual social actors, making use of critical music in the context of their own lives, that truly helps to make Kagoshima a “marginal borderland,” helping to fulfill the promise of what we are similarly calling *critical spatiality* herein. Key to this potentiality is the fact that, for many actors, Kagoshima constitutes a “critical space” at which different terms of belonging are always already being imagined. While we must take care to follow Nagabuchi himself and ensure that Kagoshima is not being fetishized or romanticized, its positionality on the margins of “Japan’s Japan” – like that of other “critical spaces” – renders Kagoshima an intriguing physical and conceptual site of critique, one at which precarity, and perceived alternatives to precarity, afford

alternative visions of belonging that seem to seek neither to upend ‘Japan’ or revivify absent phantoms of the past, but rather to *reimagine* it.

Tia DeNora has insisted upon the importance of approaching music in terms of what she calls the *musical event*, which may itself be conceived of as a *network* of sorts, tying music and actors together in a way that can never be isolated from social events and contexts. The concept of the musical event, in other words, is helpful in bringing about an analytical paradigm “shift from what music depicts [meaning]… to what it makes possible [becoming].”⁹⁹ We will discuss ‘events’ in their more commonly-understood incarnations – concerts by individual artists, for example, or festivals featuring an array of voices – in Chapters Two and Three. But the notion of the ‘event’ should not necessarily be fetishized according to such public, performative terms: indeed, what is important here is contextually-specific circumstance, and the ways in which music is deployed and takes on significance therein and beyond. The very accomplishment of navigating and surviving the everyday can thus be taken as an ‘event,’ and it is according to DeNora’s analytical framework that we will consider the deployment of the music of Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi in the lives of individual actors in the section that follows.

Yūji

Yūji lives not far from Kagoshima City, in a modest apartment building occupying a space of land between the rocky outcroppings of coastline that look west over Kagoshima Bay to one side, and the high plateaus that are home to Kagoshima’s international airport on the other. A founding member of the *Ougoukai*, Yūji is also the first representative of the group with whom I had contact at the outset of my research, and after several informal chats, I’ve returned to

⁹⁹ See Tia De Nora, *After Adorno: Rethinking Music Sociology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 46.

Kagoshima to delve more deeply into what Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, his artistry, and the *Ougoukai* writ large mean to him. Yūji is a chef by training, and as we sit down to an incredible feast of traditional Kagoshima cuisine that he's prepared, I ask him what his favorite Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi song is, and why.

"It really depends on the situation," he says, echoing Ruth Finnegan's point that music can mean radically different things at different times to different people.¹⁰⁰ "When I was in hospital recovering from my stroke, it was [the aforementioned] '*Kibai Yanse*.' The words just hit me directly; it was as if the song was telling me to fight through [the illness]." Here we note the first instance of a refrain that would resonate through many of my conversations with Nagabuchi's fans – many consciously deploy the music as a means for propelling themselves through difficult times (and there is no shortage of songs in the artist's repertoire that seem explicitly designed for that task).¹⁰¹ Yūji's choice of a song with a radically 'local' set of lyrics as a mechanism through which to pursue his literal survival is doubtlessly highly significant – but he chose not to elaborate on this aspect of his choice here. What's more interesting, it seems, is the way in which Yūji enunciated the broader conditions of precarity that constitute a vital backdrop for his appreciation for, and indeed reliance upon, Nagabuchi's music.

Yūji's first real encounter with Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi's music was in 1995, when a friend with an extra ticket to the artist's *Itsuka no Shōnen* tour invited him to tag along. He reports being "floored" by the experience, and drawn in by the charisma of what he characterizes as "*otoko no naka no otoko* [a man among men]:" what he found so powerful were not the songs as

¹⁰⁰ See Ruth Finnegan's chapter in Ed Clayton, Ed., *The Cultural Study of Music: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2012).

¹⁰¹ Tia Denora, for example, discusses the ways in which listeners may use music, in specific contexts, to "regulate" themselves, tuning in to a specific musical signal that can help these actors achieve the emotional state that they desire. See Denora, *After Adorno: Rethinking Music Sociology*, esp. pp. 90-95.

musical texts per se, but rather the stance¹⁰² on the world that he detected *behind* those texts, a way of engaging with the world that Yūji found meaningful to his own circumstances. “What I learned [from Nagabuchi] is to be passionate about everything that I get into [*nanimo kamo atsuku iku*], to stick up for my own standpoint,” he says. “Until then, I’d thought that I should just defer to everyone else. But I don’t want to back down on what’s important to me.” In this insistence upon going his own way, we can see flashes of the critical, “decadent” stance adopted by Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi in his artistry, but also of Yūji’s own critical posture vis-à-vis questions of Japan’s own priorities, or of “Japan’s Japan.” But it is the terms of Yūji’s own life and the ways in which Nagabuchi’s music has intertwined therewith that are most telling in the development of the former’s critique, and his receptiveness to Nagabuchi’s critical positioning.

The terms of Yūji’s own life have not been easy. Divorced at twenty-seven, his former spouse disappeared with his children, only to suddenly return them again when the former discovered that she could not bear the stresses of childrearing. Though trained as a chef, lack of employment in Kagoshima and the need to provide for his small family saw him working at a confectionery assembly facility (“they didn’t provide us with so much as a fan at that place, let alone AC,” he says), and he now works as a “replacement driver [*daikō*],” shuttling cars on behalf of individuals who have had too much to drink. Indeed, it has been only recently that Yūji has been able to indulge in his love for the music and persona of Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi through attending concerts, purchasing DVDs and building relationships with fellow fans: “Until my kid was in high school, I just didn’t have the wherewithal to get into [fandom],” he says. “Prior to that, it was work first, children first. I didn’t have time for friends.”

¹⁰² See here Berger’s work on stance.

Nagabuchi's music and stance have been, for Yūji, something of an elixir deployed amidst these challenging conditions of life. Engaging with these texts has been a way for Yūji to obtain courage, to prop himself up when issues at work leave him feeling down and deflated [“*hekotaeteru*”]. Asked directly if he would say that Nagabuchi's artistry has a direct impact on how he lives his life, Yūji's answer is a resounding yes: “it gives me courage, and gives me strength when life gets me down.” Nagabuchi is not the only artist that Yūji listens to – he is also a fan of groups like the early visual-*kei* act SharanQ, and of pop-rock duo Dreams Come True. But the undergirding of his affinity for these acts is quite different from the importance that he places on Nagabuchi. “Those bands are happy, feel-good bands,” he says. “For me, Nagabuchi’s music isn’t really about getting ‘happy’; it’s more about getting courage and strength.”

In conversation, Yūji identified his current favorite Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi song as “*Karasu* [Crows],” a biting and bitter work about the (nearly, yet not necessarily) futile attempt to forestall being swept along in money-centered terms of capitalist survival, and that satirizes the choices that “we [*oretachi*]” make in an increasingly urbanized Japan, setting up our ‘nests’ in the cities just as crows (a bird widely despised in Japan as both a consumer and a strewer of trash) would.¹⁰³ In identifying with this work, and its narrator who is “utterly alone,” carving the single Chinese [*kanji*] character for “dream” into the tatami matting of a lonely apartment in the city with a rusted razor, Yūji seems to concurrently clarify in his own critical stance an important sort of bridge that links his own experiences surviving the terms of contemporary capitalism, a “we” that is subservient to “money, always money,” and the foreclosing of alternative potentials of (interconnected) life under those terms: the life of the crow in this work is a lonely one, irredeemably urbanized, fundamentally alienated both from others and from its natural habitat.

¹⁰³ Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, “*Karasu* [Crows]”, from the album *JEEP*. August 25, 1990. Tokyo: EMI Music Japan. CD Album.

Yūji, on the other hand, is deeply invested in the concept of *nakama* (camaraderie), the principle, as we have seen, upon which the *Ougoukai* is founded, and finds in Nagabuchi's music both elucidation of the terms that threaten the potential of *nakama*, and the means to facilitate it.

Conversation with Yūji reveals, in short, a certain Latourian valuation of organic interconnectivities between human actors that is revealed in the idea of *nakama*, and between individuals and their natural environment. Yūji is highly critical of the construction of concrete breakwaters around Kagoshima Bay and the outlying islands, for instance, a process that reduces Kagoshima's rightly renowned natural beauty to objects of economic "exploitation," a process identified by Karatani Kojin as part and parcel of contemporary capitalist History.¹⁰⁴ What we can note in Yūji's stance – especially in terms of his identification with searingly critical works like "*Karasu*" – is it is a critique of some of the key terms of 'Japan' as History, and the *Ougoukai* becomes a way to act upon this critique by tracing connectivities with like-minded actors across Japan in a way that suggests alternative understandings of the terms and potentials of collectivity, but that nonetheless remains understood as 'Japan' itself. Yūji's critique, in other words – along with the critiques of other actors that we will meet herein – is built upon local conditions of everydayness that are no less about 'Japan' for that geographic specificity: we seem to be presented here with the potential for the collapse of distance between so-called 'local' and 'national',¹⁰⁵ or perhaps more specifically, the potential to grasp out of the shadows a 'Japan' that has always been the real-life facsimile of Ivy's national phantasm, and that is utterly malleable for its materiality.

¹⁰⁴ See Kojin Karatani, trans. Michael K. Bourdaghs, *The Structure of World History: From Modes of Production to Modes of Exchange* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), p. 206.

¹⁰⁵ Indeed, in her *Space, Place, and Gender*, Doreen Massey insists repeatedly upon the counterproductive nature of these concepts, and stresses that, in any case, the "characteristics of a local area... must be conceptualized in terms of the evolution of the wider structures of the capitalist economy." See esp. p. 89

Yūji's modest apartment is filled with pictures, flags, concert towels, and other mementos of associations established with like-minded Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi fans from across the region and around Japan: "if this group [the *Ougoukai*] disappeared," he says, "I'd be really lonesome. All this stuff – it provides a connection with other members across the country. If I lost that, I'd lose the feeling of being plugged in [*tsunagari*]." Alan Tansman, among others, has warned of the dangers of deemphasizing the individual in the interest of collective understandings of belonging.¹⁰⁶ But in his much-treasured lateral connectivity with other actors who identify with Nagabuchi's sharp critiques of what amounts to capitalist alienation in "*Karasu*" (indeed, this work would be raised as a favorite by other fans with whom this study engaged), many of whom¹⁰⁷ share, as we will see, in both a love of Kagoshima and a critique of the economic relations that he sees as threatening it, what Yūji seems to announce is the potential for a sort of *critical collectivity* that is traceable through fan community,¹⁰⁸ one that is grounded in local conditions of everydayness yet traceable through associations with like-minded actors embedded in similar contexts across the archipelago, and called 'Japan.' It is this that makes the *Ougoukai* such an intriguing community, and our discussion with Yūji, as a key node in and architect of this network, makes for a helpful entranceway into engaging with the group.

¹⁰⁶ See Alan Tansman, *The Aesthetics of Japanese Fascism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), esp. Chapter 7, pp. 254-267.

¹⁰⁷ I must stress that my discussions with the membership of the *Ougoukai* were limited in scope, and I make no claims here that the desires of all members are somehow uniform, or even uniformly critical in a productive sense. A more thorough engagement with the hundreds of members nationwide would surely reveal vestiges of fascist desire – as I shall note briefly in Chapter Three, such desires were in evidence in certain online reactions to Nagabuchi's all-night concert at the foot of Mt. Fuji in August of 2015. Those with whom I was able to converse, however, did share – in disparate ways – intriguingly critical stances on the world, informed directly by engagements with the artistry and persona of Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi.

¹⁰⁸ Kelly teaches us that "fans emerge out of mass culture audiences in search of intensified meanings and pleasures." What these fans produce is nothing less than "social communities." William W. Kelly, Ed., *Fanning the Flames: Fans and Consumer Culture in Contemporary Japan* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2004), pp. 1-2.

It is the various texts of lived experience that Yūji brings to bear on his engagement with the music of Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi that makes this engagement *political*.¹⁰⁹ Yūji attaches considerable significance to the fact that Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, like he himself, hails from Kagoshima – “if he didn’t,” says Yūji, “I likely wouldn’t have gotten this passionate about the music.” He detects in the artist the same love for Kagoshima that he himself shares, and cites Nagabuchi’s attempts to bring some economic benefit to the region via his 2004 all-night concert on Sakurajima as proof of this. But this does not translate into a fetishization of locality articulated in opposition to ‘Japan:’ while Yūji wishes that Nagabuchi could be “our (=Kagoshima’s) hero,” he nonetheless recognizes the artist as a *national* figure who is attempting to bring change *to Japan itself*. The ways in which Kagoshima and Japan meld and overlap in both Nagabuchi’s work and Yūji’s intensely personal, localized understanding of what Japan is (“it’s just where I was born; it’s the soil [*tochi*] that I love very much”) seem to serve to accentuate the contours of a broader ‘Japan’ that must be changed. Interestingly, Yūji does not approve of the notion of Nagabuchi ‘changing’ Japan through song (“if that was the case,” he says, “we wouldn’t need politicians”), but the perceived need for change has nonetheless revealed itself to him in the context of the music, and through the localized experiences of everydayness in a Kagoshima – or, in the terms adopted by this research, of a “provincialized Japan” – whose potentials are stifled through the crises of capitalism that seem to emanate from “out there.” “If Shinzō Abe would just listen to the music of Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi,” he says, “then things would be different.”

¹⁰⁹ Long, p. 28, p. 61.

Junko

I met Junko one sleepy Friday morning at the lone Starbucks in Kagoshima's Tenmomkan shopping district. Female, reserved, and in her early twenties, Junko defies the stereotypical image of the average Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi fan, usually understood as male, somewhere around forty, and vaguely "frightening" (due to the prevalence of dyed hair, piercings, sunglasses, or other accessories of fandom, often regarded in Japan with some degree of distaste, at least away from the urban mega-centers). Given her relative youth, Junko's history as a "Nagabuchi fan" is somewhat short – she first began to "get into" the music at around the time of the artist's all-night concert on Sakurajima in 2004. But she brings to her engagement with the music a family history of passion for Kagoshima that mixes with the citations of 'Japan' that are so prominent in Nagabuchi's work, in a way that helps to reveal how these texts can intertwine to render Kagoshima a marginal borderland from which 'Japan' is thought differently.

Junko recalls her parents announcing that they were "going out for the night" when Junko herself was in junior high school – she learned later that they had in fact traveled to Sakurajima to take in the all-night concert there. But for Junko, this was no surprise. Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi's music had always been *there* in her household growing up, a soundtrack to life itself in the manner of Yano's "music overheard."¹¹⁰ While her parents were clearly fans of the artist and his music, Junko understands now that the draw ran much deeper than appreciation for the songs in isolation: her family are fiercely proud Kagoshimans, and the fact that Nagabuchi is Kagoshima's best-known son was a matter of great importance for them. Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, in short, became part of the identity that the family formulated for itself, just like the dozens of

¹¹⁰ Yano, *Tears of Longing: Nostalgia and the Nation in Japanese Popular Song*, p. 7.

*shochu*¹¹¹ bottles that adorned the walls of the family home. And as we will see, the conceptual link that the artist embodies and performs between Kagoshima and ‘Japan’ became a pathway by which Junko could posit her own understanding of what ‘Japan’ should/can be, as well as a way of framing her disdainful disregard for what she sees it having become.

At the time of our conversation, Junko worked in a nursing care facility for the elderly, and her tribulations at work echo many of the challenges that we have already noted in Yūji’s circumstances (though with the added critical twist of being in a position to place much blame squarely on Abe Shinzō for overcrowded and understaffed facilities). But Junko’s occupation also carries with it very specific brands of difficulty and heartbreak, including dealing with individuals afflicted by dementia, various forms of abuse at the hands of patients themselves, and the unavoidable deaths of patients – and the specter of self-doubt and criticism when older and more experienced colleagues seem to navigate these challenges more effectively than she can. Like Yūji, she turns to the music of Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi as an elixir for the workplace stresses that she faces: Junko also identifies “*Karasu*” – written years before she was born – as a key go-to work for her, speaking, like Yūji, to the song’s powerful ability to work its way like an ointment among the lacerations left by the drive to ‘keep up’ in contemporary capitalist Japan. And like Yūji, Junko reports that, for her, the music became literally medicinal when she was struck with illness: repeated listenings of the song “*Myself*” – a song that urges the listener to press on with her or his life on her own terms (“*massugu, massugu, motto massugu ikite*”) and that assures him that he is “never alone in weeping over loneliness [*sabishisa ni namida suru no*

¹¹¹ *Shochu* is a liquor distilled from rice, barley, or sweet potatoes, with the latter being most common in Kagoshima. The Prefecture proudly claims hundreds of varieties of *shochu*, and it is consumed in Kagoshima in copious amounts.

*ha omae dake ja nee],*¹¹² and that was the most requested song on the occasion of Nagabuchi’s all-night concert at the foot of Mt. Fuji, discussed separately herein – provided Junko with the “solace and strength” that helped her overcome her affliction. Further explanations of the ways in which she would play more hard-driving songs like “*SAKURAJIMA*” and “*Fuji-no-Kuni* [The Fuji Nation]” to “get my motor running and make me feel like I can move forward with things” helped to clarify the degree to which the deployment of Nagabuchi’s music informed the directionality of Junko’s own life and activities.¹¹³

And as we saw in Yūji’s case, the intimate embeddedness of Nagabuchi’s music in Junko’s lived experience seems to open a channel by which she can approach and articulate the issues of home and belonging with which the artist is also engaged. Nagabuchi’s Kagoshima-dialect anthem “*Kibai Yanse*”, for example, holds special significance for Junko, as it did for Yūji. Even while recognizing that “*Kibai Yanse*” takes its place among the numerous other ‘fight on’ songs that have become a thematic trademark of Nagabuchi’s artistry, she says that this work is “special”: “It’s a rare thing for an artist to sing in his own dialect like that,” she says. “This song really strikes home for me because I’m from Kagoshima, too; it hits me straight on [*massugu haitte kuru*].” Here our attention should be directed back to the manner in which ‘Kagoshima’ served as such an important text orienting both Junko’s and her family’s lives: it exists as a site of immediacy and experience, and becomes, in Junko’s words, “Japan itself,” even as it is sheared away from and stands in opposition to what she sees as a de-personalized, dehumanized, “internet society” that has become, for her, ‘another (dominant) Japan’ that is

¹¹² Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, “*Myself*,” from the album *JEEP*. August 25, 1990. Tokyo: EMI Music Japan. CD Album.

¹¹³ Music sociologist Tia DeNora discusses other situations in which the deployment of music helps to orient the body and its energies in her *Music in Everyday Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

demanding of reorientation and critique. And importantly, this reorientation does not involve reaching into the past to dredge up some imaginary completed history,¹¹⁴ but rather prioritizing a mode of life – a “different history” – that she sees all around her in Kagoshima, which, after all, is always already ‘Japan’ itself.

As important as Junko’s engagement with the artistry of Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi has been for the navigation and survival of the terms of her own life, however, what is of even greater interest here is the manner in which she extends the threads of Kagoshima, music, and ‘Japan’ itself to develop what she sees as an ethics of collectivity in contemporary Japanese society. “My *jikka* [family home] is way out in the country [of Kagoshima],” Junko says. “There, people still keep an eye on each other, watch out for each others’ kids, talk to each other. Without that sort of interpersonal connection, you end up with murders, violence, the other problems that are affecting us today.” Junko terms this sort of ethics *tsunagari* [interconnectivity], and while history has certainly presented darker shades of this sort of mutual communal surveillance,¹¹⁵ Junko herself sees such an ethics as an essential component of any community of belonging that can realize a potential of “taking care of people [*hito wo taisetsu ni suru*]” and generating a constructive sort of mutual support (here we can hear clear echoes of Junko’s occupation, and of the struggles that she faces within it). In her view, Nagabuchi’s artistic project writ large is about bringing people together, about potentiating the type of *tsunagari* that she sees as prerequisite for survival on better terms. Asked if she viewed Nagabuchi as a ‘Kagoshima singer’ or a ‘Japan singer’, she refused either potential classification and insisted instead that Nagabuchi is a singer who serves to “connect Kagoshima to Japan.” And in bringing Kagoshima forth in ways that can

¹¹⁴ See Harry Harootunian, *History’s Disquiet: Modernity, Cultural Practice, and the Question of Everyday Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).

¹¹⁵ See, for example, Sheldon Garon, *Molding Japanese Minds* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

displace competing (to Junko, toxic) understandings of what ‘Japan’ is, she sees in Nagabuchi’s music the power to bring change to Japan itself through an ascending dispersal of *tsunagari*: “first the music reaches the individual, then the individuals come together at concerts and so on [in a type of affective alliance¹¹⁶], and finally this experienced is carried out into society at large.” This power ultimately abides, she insists, in the power that Nagabuchi’s music has to make people *think*.

Before leaving Junko for the moment, it is vital, I think, to work a little harder to grasp the nuance of her critique, since the way in which she views the potentials of *tsunagari* serves to reveal why it is Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, and not some other artist or genre that may be more readily associated with an collectivized, romanticized interiority,¹¹⁷ that speaks so clearly to her. While Junko’s ethics of a Kagoshima-based *tsunagari* will surely set off alarm bells among critics of an idealized, timeless *furusato*,¹¹⁸ we must strive to hear what she is actually saying in the articulation of her critique. While there is, in Junko’s formulation, an authentic mode of Kagoshima-life based upon the ethics of *tsunagari* that presents valuable alternatives to present models of communalism (or the lack thereof), what this *tsunagari* ultimately *does*, through the act of connecting individual social actors,¹¹⁹ is to potentiate and fuel debate over the directionality of ‘Japan’ itself. In a delicious sort of contradiction, then, we are presented with a ‘Kagoshima way’

¹¹⁶ For a brief overview of the concept of “affective alliances,” see Deanna Campbell Robinson, Elizabeth R. Buck, Marlene Cuthbert and The International Communication and Youth Consortium. *Music at the Margins: Popular Music and Global Cultural Diversity*. (London: Sage Publications, 1991), p. 258.

¹¹⁷ Christine Yano suggests that *enka*, for example, are one means by which (some) Japanese seek connection with the “heart/soul of Japan.” See the entirety of Yano’s *Tears of Longing* for more on the author’s argumentation.

¹¹⁸ This sort of critique underpins much of Marilyn Ivy’s *Discourses of the Vanishing*, as well as Stephen Dodd’s *Writing Home: Representations of the Native Place in Modern Japanese Literature* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2004).

¹¹⁹ See Latour’s, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory*, especially the work’s Introduction.

which is in fact always about the breakdown of universalizing narrative and the constant re-positioning of the terms of mutual existence. “It seems to me that what Nagabuchi is looking for is for everyone to have his own opinion... The point is not to simply agree with what the old guard [*o-erai-san*] agrees with – in some ways this is one of Japan’s strengths, but it’s also one of its weaknesses. When decision-making is happening, it is vital for people to talk and debate about it, in order to try and come up with a better idea. Nothing will ever get better by simply sticking to the old ways [*mukashi no yarikata dake ja yoku narimasen yo*].” This is an ethics that Junko braves headwinds at her workplace to attempt to enact – and as we shall see in Chapter Three, it was an ethics that thrummed very close to the surface of the artist’s event at Mt. Fuji in August of 2015.

Iwashi and Masako

Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi fandom has a tendency to run in families, and it is common to find parents with children in tow in attendance at live events. Iwashi and Masako are precisely one such parent-child unit – though Masako, 18, lives on her own in Kagoshima City, away from her father’s (Iwashi’s) home in Satsuma-Sendai, they maintain a close bond through their shared love of the music, attending local concerts and traveling together to shows held as far away as Fumotoppara, in Shizuoka Prefecture, site of the all-night concert at the foot of Mt. Fuji in August of 2015. After meeting and chatting with both Iwashi and Masako informally several times in both Kagoshima and at Fumotoppara, I had the chance to sit down with them at a coffee shop in Tenmonkan to delve more deeply into the ways in which Nagabuchi’s music is deployed as a means to understand and navigate their own lives and circumstances.

Iwashi works in livestock, raising some of Japan’s most prized cattle for consumption as extravagantly-priced beef nationwide. As such, he is particularly concerned with issues of the natural environment, and especially with the looming presence of the Satsumon-Sendai Nuclear Power Station, as of this writing (2017) the only nuclear power station operating in Japan, and the first to come back online on a full-time basis following the sputtered restart and subsequent shutdown of the Ōi Nuclear Power Plant in Fukui in 2012. As a lifelong fan of Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi who bears a striking physical similar resemblance to the artist to boot, however, he also moonlights as a *monomane*¹²⁰ artist, mounting live performances that are engineered to resemble Nagabuchi’s own as much as possible. Iwashi is his stage name, shortened from Nagabuchi Iwashi, which in turn developed out of “*Nagabuchi to iwashitai*,” or “I want [to be so good that I’m able] to make people call me ‘Nagabuchi.’” The artistry and persona of Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi thus take on a level of embeddedness in Iwashi’s life that is probably unparalleled among the other individuals with whom this research engages – as Iwashi says, Nagabuchi and his music are, on both a personal and professional level, nothing short of “*mokuhyo* [purpose, objective].”

With her father so committed to this music, it is perhaps unsurprising that Masako grew up steeped in Nagabuchi’s artistry, and today simply calls it “*nakute ha naranai mono* [something that I couldn’t do without].” She recalls growing up with Nagabuchi’s music constantly on the stereo at home, in the car, and so on – “I went to my first concert when I was in grade six, and I think I’ve been six or seven times since then,” she says. “I can remember how his music would always be playing in the car when my dad would come and pick me up from nursery school [*hoikuen*]; for a long time I thought that ‘music’ was just ‘Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi.’”

¹²⁰ *Monomane* refers to imitation artistry, where individuals attempt to replicate the look and sound of well-known singers, actors, and other public figures.

Asked to identify her favorite Nagabuchi songs, she responds with what may be expected of a more youthful outlook: ““*Natsumatsuri*”¹²¹ and [the aforementioned] ‘*Junrenka*’ [two works that forefront the artist’s acoustic guitar prowess]. The guitar work is just so *cool!*” But it doesn’t take her long to pick up a thread that we have already seen running through other fans’ engagement with the music – that of its deployment as an elixir amidst the stresses of everyday life. “I turn the music on when I’m just mentally exhausted,” she says, “and it picks me up.” Specifically, she identifies “*Nishi-Shinjuku no oyaji no uta* [Song for the old man from West Shinjuku],” a fan favorite, as her go-to work – its refrain of “*yaru nara ima shika nee* [if you’re gonna do it, you’ve gotta do it now],” she says, is the phrase that helps to pull her through.¹²²

Similarly, Iwashi also identified the ways in which he deploys Nagabuchi’s music in order to put himself into a specific, energized mental and emotional state – particularly prior to performances – and the ways in which grappling with certain lyrical phrases (such as the arena anthem “*Yūji*”’s refrain “*mada mada misuteta monja nai ze* [I’m not worthless yet!]”) helps to restore a feeling of confidence in himself.¹²³ This deployment of Nagabuchi’s music as an elixir in individual circumstances is by now a familiar refrain. What was perhaps more remarkable was the speed and ease with which both Iwashi and Masako shifted registers from the personal to the political. Other songs identified by these two individuals as go-to favorites were works that are particularly biting in their critique – “*JAPAN*,” which demands to know “where we’re going to drift toward from here on out... [whether] culture will be trampled underfoot, the lessons of

¹²¹ Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, “*Natsu-matsuri* [Summer festival]”, from the album *BEST COLLECTION – Itsuka no shōnen*. December 1, 1994. Tokyo: EMI Music Japan. CD Album.

¹²² Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, “*Nishi-Shinjuku no oyaji no uta* [Song for the old man from West Shinjuku]”, from the album *JEEP*. August 25, 1990. Tokyo: EMI Music Japan. CD Album.

¹²³ We can again hear echoes of Tia DeNora’s work in her *Music in Everyday Life* in Iwashi’s assertion.

history ignored – are we doomed to be drenched in the rains of the end of time?”¹²⁴ and which we will revisit in more detail in the next chapter; “*Asu wo kudasee* [Gimme a tomorrow],” the lyrics of which demand kindness and happiness, fair remuneration for work, sleep, and other “luxuries” understood in the song as lacking in contemporary life, and which grieve being exposed to the “black rain that falls under the American umbrella”;¹²⁵ and the newly-crucial “*Fuji-no-Kuni*,” which we will discuss in much greater detail below,¹²⁶ were all singled out for special mention. Both voiced distress over the Abe administration’s (at that point not-yet-ratified) “reinterpretation” of Japan’s security relationship with the United States, widely expected to lead to combat roles for Self-Defense Force personnel – this was understood by the pair as an erosion of, as opposed to the official state line claiming an enhancement for, Japan’s peace and security (“Whatever happens, I don’t want to see Japan go to war [*sensō dake ha shite hoshikunai*]”). In other words, both father and daughter enunciated political stances that we can already understand as deeply intertwined in and informed by the music that they both love.

“There are things wrong with this country,” Iwashi said quietly, early on in our discussion. “Japan as a political entity needs to be criticized.” And importantly, both Iwashi and Masako relied upon citations of individual Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi songs and snippets of lyrics in order to enunciate their own critical stance: in addition to the general angst identified through the works cited above, they turned to works like “*Shizuka-naru Afugan* [Quiet in Afghanistan]” and “*Oyashirazu* [Wisdom Teeth]”, which exhort “Japan, my homeland” to not “melt into America” and become a lackey for U.S. priorities, to frame and express their dismay over the potential for

¹²⁴ Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, “*JAPAN*,” from the album *JAPAN*. December 14, 1991. Tokyo: EMI Music Japan. CD Album.

¹²⁵ Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, “*Asu wo kudasee* [Gimme a tomorrow],” from the album *Stay Alive*. May 16, 2012. Tokyo: Nayuta Wave Records. CD Album.

¹²⁶ Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, “*Fuji-no-Kuni* [The Fuji Nation],” live recording from Yamanashi Colany Bunka Hall. June 22, 2015. Tokyo: Universal Music LLC. CD Maxi-Single.

war and their desire for enduring peace. It is thus clear that for both Iwashi and Masako, the nature of their own critique is clarified in and revealed through the music of Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi: in other words, when deployed in the context of their own affective engagement with the world, Nagabuchi's explicit critical stance became a means by which already-existing critical sentiment on the part of both father and daughter could be disentangled and crystallized. And a crucial key to enunciating that critique seems to lie, at least in part, in the ways in which Nagabuchi and his artistry bridge Kagoshima and 'Japan'.

Asked if Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi was a Kagoshima singer or a 'Japan' singer, both Iwashi and Masako answered instantaneously that he was the latter. At the same time, however, both declared that the fact that the artist hailed from Kagoshima held special significance for them: Iwashi, for example, hails the artist as "the pride of Kagoshima," while Masako, poignantly, described how she once hated the fact that she was from a "backward, countryside" locale like Kagoshima and longed to be a "city girl," but eventually came to possess a deep pride in her home precisely because "it could give rise to someone like Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi." Kagoshima, then, is of great importance to both. But importantly, it is the qualitative nature of that shared home and history, not the mere fact thereof, that seems to open key pathways for critiquing "Japan as a political entity." As I have already mentioned above, Iwashi and Masako hail from Satsuma-Sendai, home to the Kyushu Electric Power Company's Satsuma Nuclear Power Plant. Iwashi, working as he does in livestock farming in the very shadow of this facility, is highly leery of its presence, particularly in the wake of the meltdowns at the Fukushima Dai'ichi Nuclear Power Station in the aftermaths of the earthquake and tsunami of March 11, 2011. Nagabuchi, for his part, is very vocally opposed to nuclear power, in no small part due to its prominence as a dangerous means of economic 'survival' in his own home of Kagoshima

Prefecture. As I have argued elsewhere,¹²⁷ Nagabuchi's specific critique of nuclear power is very much part and parcel of a longer critique of the “fixed terms” of a ‘Japan’ in which capitalism trumps human relations, profit-seeking trumps concern for the natural environment, and so on – this is precisely the critique that winds its way through the works that we examined above, and it is based in a harsh understanding of the ways in which places like Kagoshima both reveal and continue to occupy different histories. Though Iwashi reports his own circumstances to be relatively lucrative – indeed, Kagoshima and Miyazaki beef are in high demand as a luxury item across much of Japan – the fact remains that he remains surrounded by poverty in Satsuma Sendai, and describes his home region as *sabireteru* (literally “rusted out,” indicating decayed, decrepit, falling apart and behind). It thus seems clear that Iwashi’s ability to access and adopt Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi’s critique is potentiated by the conditions of his own life in Kagoshima – his “fandom” (if it can be thus called) is, it seems, not so much about the pursuit of pleasure and excessive consumption as it is about finding a way to package and express latent critical sentiment, though in this Nagabuchi’s music is, to be sure, a “vortex of self-fashioning.”¹²⁸

Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi as Kagoshima compatriot, then, becomes a critical conduit that connects Kagoshima (and the qualitative experiences of life therein) to ‘Japan’, both critiquing, and providing templates for reimagining it. Iwashi insists that for Nagabuchi, ‘Japan’ is *ningen dōshi*, or human interrelations – it is thus irrevocably local (there is nothing here, for example, of Benedict Anderson’s imagined community of abstract others abiding beyond the horizon of

¹²⁷ See Scott W. Aalgaard, “Summertime Blues: Musical Responses to Japan’s Dark Spring,” in Barbara Geilhorn and Kristina Iwata, eds., *Fukushima and the Arts: Negotiating Nuclear Disaster* (London: Routledge, 2016).

¹²⁸ See William W. Kelly, ed., *Fanning the Flames: Fans and Consumer Culture in Contemporary Japan* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2004), p. 7.

immediate experience¹²⁹) and conceptually national, a proposed extension of the perils and promises of Kagoshima itself onto a broader, shared stage. And for Masako, the promise of Nagabuchi's artistry is that, as song, it “endures” – and this means not only sharing the perils of war with a populace perceived as increasingly missing out on important lessons as the number of those who actually experienced Japan’s war continues to dwindle (something seen by Masako – at just 18 – as vitally important), but also taking the grounded critique of Kagoshima (though clearly not just Kagoshima) to ‘Japan’ itself, and patching it in to broader notions of collectivity. There is something here of Christine Yano’s insistence that music – *enka*, in the author’s specific case – can have the effect of creating “nation” by bringing the margins to the center,¹³⁰ but the effect here is the inverse of what Yano has imagined: what we are presented with is not the reanimation of Ivy’s national phantasm, but rather the emergence of a spirit of a different, more productive sort, one that seeks to undermine the narrative of “Japan’s Japan,” replacing it with something new. As we have seen thus far, the possibility of such a rewiring is very much dependent upon the comingling of – and *not* oppositional relations between – Kagoshima and ‘Japan.’ But can the traces of such a rewiring – perhaps effectively termed a proselytization of Kagoshima/Kyushu – be revealed at sites beyond the geographical bounds of Kagoshima itself? And if so, where?

Eiji

After repeated trips southwest to Kyushu, and to Kagoshima specifically, to meet and converse with fans of Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi there, it was something of a novelty to find myself

¹²⁹ See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

¹³⁰ Yano, p. 17.

one early October day literally on the other side of the tracks, on a Tokyo-bound *shinkansen* train, barreling eastward rather than west. I was traveling from my home in Kyoto to Kakegawa, in Shizuoka Prefecture (near Mt. Fuji), to meet with Eiji, an executive member of the *Ougoukai* with whom I had cultivated an online relationship, and chatted with in person at live events and so on, over a period of several months. And it was, in fact, precisely because this key member of the *Ougoukai* resided far from Kyushu that I hoped to hear his thoughts on Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi and his artistry.

Eiji's life, like the lives of most of the individuals engaged by this research, has not been easy. He had been employed by a motorcycle parts factory in Shizuoka (the region is well-known as home to many of the small-to-medium parts manufacturers that make up the backbone of Japan's automotive industry), but now works for a delivery service, literally running his way through each working day to provide for himself and his new family. If things are difficult for Eiji now, they've been much worse. Previously abandoned by a former spouse, Eiji was left to raise his young son alone, and experienced great depths of despair: with connections in Japan's criminal underworld, he came very close to joining a *yakuza*¹³¹ crew, and also seriously contemplated suicide. What kept his head above water, Eiji insists, was his son and his engagement with the music of Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi. Eiji describes the peculiar way in which the music hits him "directly", without artifice (a sentiment echoed by nearly all of those with whom this research engaged), and attributes this to what he calls a "non-fiction life" on the part of the artist – Eiji insists that, like himself, Nagabuchi has seen the lowest of lows, and also the highest of highs. From his past existential struggles to more contemporary frustrations over having to suppress emotions and wear false smiles for demanding clients at the workplace, Eiji describes

¹³¹ The *yakuza* are an underground criminal community in Japan that roughly equates to the American mafia.

deploying the music of Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi as a literal elixir: the music helps him not only to persevere, but also, in his words, to “find balance.” “When we grow up and enter the adult world, there are far fewer opportunities for us to be scolded, taken to task for the choices we make,” he says. “Tuning in to songs like “*Myself*” [also highlighted in our conversation with Junko, above] help me to think about whether or not I’m making the right choice in a given situation or not.”

Conversation with Eiji revealed him to be far less geographically “rooted” than the other Kagoshima-based individuals introduced above – but it is precisely in this fluidity and unrootedness that we can reveal something of the power of Kagoshima, channeled through lived experiences of everydayness and the music of Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, as a productive, constitutive marginal borderland. Eiji considers ‘Japan’ to be nothing less than *nakama* itself – a community of like-minded (or, more specifically, like-hearted) social actors that is closer to Anderson’s “imagined community” than the ‘Japan’ envisioned by Iwashi, above, but that still lacks its abstractness and homogeneity, being anchored in real interpersonal relations (indeed, Kelly’s “community of mutual concern”¹³² likely comes closer to capturing Eiji’s imagination of ‘Japan’ than does Anderson’s idea of the “imagined community”). Eiji is, in fact, highly proactive in tracing the linkages that, for him, make up ‘Japan’ – he enjoys traveling the archipelago creating and maintaining interpersonal bonds, and, in the aftermaths of March 11, 2011, drove hundreds of kilometers from Shizuoka to Fukushima in order to carve out actually-existing interpersonal relations with compatriots there. This literal tracing of the boundaries of ‘Japan’ echoes tactics deployed by “folk” legend Ryo Kagawa and discussed in Chapter Two, and we will revisit Eiji’s travels in the conclusion to this dissertation. But what we must acknowledge here is that it is this

¹³² See Kelly, *Fanning the Flames*, p. 7.

literal, physical connectivity – as opposed to ideology – that frames the way in which Eiji understands ‘Japan.’

But perhaps precisely due to the way in which Eiji envisions it, ‘Japan’ is never complete, never unifiable simply through appeals to ‘ethnicity [*minzoku*]’ or ‘culture.’ The reach and extent of ‘Japan’-as-*nakama* relies entirely upon the degree of engagement and mutual concern expressed by its constituent membership – and on this point, he finds much of the country lacking. “As a fellow Japanese [*onaji Nihonjin to shite*], I just couldn’t forgive those people in Tokyo and Shizuoka who were calling for everyone to close their windows after the meltdowns at Fukushima, without so much as a thought for the people who were actually there,” he said. “What about them?” What Eiji was beginning to voice was a distaste for (what he saw as) a detached sort of coolness – a reluctance to engage in the “community of mutual concern” – that served to exacerbate the isolation of individuals in times of crisis, and that was incompatible with his vision of ‘Japan.’ In his formulation, this aloofness was/is at least partially geographic in nature – and led to Eiji reaching beyond his geographical home for an antidote.

“I don’t belong in Shizuoka,” Eiji confided in me. “People roll their eyes at me all the time [*shiroi me de mirareru*]; they judge me on how I look and they think I look scary. My friends always ask me, ‘What are you getting so worked up about [*nani atsuku narundayo*]?’ when I get involved with different things. I really feel drawn to the passion [*atsusa*] in Kyushu – culturally, I feel a lot closer to Kyushu than I do to Shizuoka.” Whether or not such cultural attributes are empirically demonstrable in Kyushu is, of course, open to debate – but the question is also rather beside the point. What seems key here is the fact that Eiji detects and attributes such difference in and to the region – and his vehicle for doing so is the persona and music of Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi. This persona and music become a pathway via which Eiji can access his

own idealized ‘Japan,’ one that is built upon human interconnectivity and *nakama*, and whose roads all, it seems, lead through Kagoshima.

‘Japan,’ then, is no less a realm of immediacy and experience for Eiji than it has been for the others engaged with this research, but with a fascinating twist: there seems to be a cultural gap between Eiji’s own self and his immediate surroundings – one that can be filled only by appealing further afield, to (an idealized) Kagoshima itself. And in a very literal sense, Kagoshima-as-concept becomes a “critical space” for Eiji, a site from which he can re-imagine ‘Japan’ itself: “With ‘LICENSE’ and with ‘*Itsuka no shōnen*’ [both works that deal specifically with conditions of life in Kagoshima, and that are characterized especially by both soaring lyrical depictions of seaside vistas and gritty portrayals of decrepit neighborhoods and poverty], Nagabuchi sings about specific ways of life in Kagoshima – and I get these vast visual scenes that I can base myself in when thinking about Japan, how it is, how it should be.” Though conceptual rather than physical, then, Kagoshima becomes a generative marginal borderland for Eiji, a site at which ‘Japan’ can be pondered, and re-posed according to new terms – terms that have much to do with the forthrightness, engagement, and passion that Eiji so highly values.

We do not have to work particularly hard to see that the *nakama* so valued by Eiji have grown not out of some desire for ethnic oneness or cultural purity¹³³ – indeed, this Canadian researcher was as valued and respected in Eiji’s community of the concerned as any Japanese individual was – but rather out of the conditions of his own life, and the hardship and personal and socioeconomic alienation that he continues to endure as he hammers out a livelihood for himself and his new family. The key to overcoming the sorts of human harshness that he has

¹³³ This is the sort of desire that Carolyn Stevens, for example, sees underpinning many engagements with Japanese popular music. See the author’s *Japanese Popular Music: Culture, Authenticity, and Power* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

experienced lies in the harnessing of human passion – and he turns to Kagoshima as a site at which his ideal ‘Japan’ can be accessed, and from which a tarnished ‘Japan’ can be critiqued. This appeal to Kagoshima is hardly coincidental, but is rather a direct result of Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi’s association therewith – Eiji’s esteem for Nagabuchi, in other words, leads him to Kagoshima, where the artist’s works and the physical site are literally conflated and Eiji is reenergized to trace ‘Japan’ anew. And it is his penchant for movement that makes Eiji such a fascinating figure in the proselytization of Kagoshima as alternative ‘Japan’ – for as he travels the archipelago, Eiji is (conceptually) grounded by (an idealized, to be sure) Kagoshima, which always informs his engagement and passion as he literally carves out the contours of a ‘Japan’ as an engaged, compassionate community of concern.

Masao

Satsuma-Hayato is a small, sleepy town situated 45 minutes or so by rail from Kagoshima City. Surrounded by lush green hills and dotted with volcanic hot springs, this area was once populated by the Hayato, or “falcon men,” a culturally-distinct people who lived in southern Kyushu until around the 8th century. The Hayato people had a history of resisting centralized rule, and on subsequent reflection the town would seem a uniquely fitting site at which to discuss the music of Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi and the ways in which it is deployed by Masao, whom I met for the first time at a Nagabuchi concert at Kagoshima Arena some months earlier, and who met me at Hayato Station, a bottle of local specialty *shochu* in hand as a gift, one early October day for a chat.

“I’ve always liked this place,” he says, stirring his coffee at a small café just outside the station. “It’s quiet and I love the nature, but it’s not inconvenient.” Originally from Tanegashima,

a tiny island to the south of Kyushu known for housing launch facilities for Japan's space program (JAXA) but with few opportunities for residents to make a living aside from farming, Masao works at a hotel in nearby Kirishima, and until recently had lived there, as well. "One day a Nagabuchi fan-club newsletter showed up in the mail that mentioned Hayato and how much Tsuyoshi-san himself liked it," says Masao. "So I decided to move here myself." This casual comment, made in passing at the outset of our conversation, would serve to frame the degree to which the music and persona of Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi are deployed by Masao in order to navigate, understand, and indeed survive the terms of his own existence, and to frame his critical stance on the world.

Like the vast majority of those with whom this research engaged, Masao, now in his thirties, has faced massive challenges in his life. Socially withdrawn as a youth and reluctant to go to school (now a readily-recognizable malady widely known in Japan as *hikikomori*), Masao recalls being tormented by thoughts of suicide as early as fourth grade, and spending his elementary school years in isolation and torment, while passing his nights in tears. But this was also the time at which he began to be exposed to Nagabuchi's music and persona. Masao recalls catching glimpses of the serialized television drama *Tombo*, which starred Nagabuchi as a warm-hearted gangster, on his parents' television set – but being banned from actually watching it due to the violence that the program portrayed. Masao's parents, however, would watch the program regularly, and Masao would listen to it from his own room – and specifically, to its theme-song, the smash-hit "*Tombo*." The late 1980s marked the heyday of Nagabuchi's commercial success, and other songs by the artist – "*Rokunamonjanee* [Ain't no good]," which sings of being a social

outsider,¹³⁴ and “STAY DREAM,”¹³⁵ which sings of pressing on through adversity to spite a desire for death (and a work whose explosive, unadorned opening lyric – “*shinjimaitai* [I just want to die]” – held special significance for the suicidal Masao) – would find their way to Masao from the television speakers, as well. Lacking both the disposable family income to buy records and the means to physically get to the nearest record store, Masao relied upon the kindnesses of his older sister, who managed to get him a bootlegged tape of the artist’s massively popular *LIVE '89* album (which Masao would listen to repeatedly in order to correctly transcribe the lyrics in the absence of liner notes), and later, on his teachers, who noted his passion for the music and would drive him to the nearest town and purchase recordings for him. Later, Masao’s own parents would dangle the prospect of a new recording in front of their son in order to goad him into studying – a strategy that, in Masao’s retrospective formulation, was successful and helped him to obtain the English skills that he now uses in his hospitality industry profession. “Music saved me,” Masao says. “There’s no doubt that the fact that I’m alive today is thanks to those songs [*machigainaku ikiteita no ha sono uta no okage da*]. I’d been locked up inside myself, but through the music I found others to share it with.” He speaks of going to the beach on Tanegashima and howling the biting lyrics of Nagabuchi works – so many of which speak of isolation and loneliness, even as they sing of a desire to face down society and persevere on one’s own terms – in huge voices, “externalizing,” in his words, much of the pain that had entrapped him. “It was through externalizing my own seclusion in voice,” he says, “that I was able to become strong [*tojikomotteta no wo kuchi ni dashite tsuyoku nareta*].”

¹³⁴ Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, “Rokunamonjanee [Ain’t no good],” from the album *LICENSE*. August 5, 1987. Tokyo: EMI Music Japan. CD Album.

¹³⁵ Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, “STAY DREAM” from the album *STAY DREAM*. October 22, 1986. Tokyo: Toshiba EMI / Express. CD Album.

I linger on the specificities of Masao's youth and initial engagements with the music and persona of Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi in order to emphasize the truly central role that the music would come to play in this individual's everyday. Indeed, an engagement with Nagabuchi's artistry afforded not only a means of literal survival for Masao in the context of a tormented childhood, but also a way of understanding his surroundings and coming to terms with his own critical stance on that everyday. According to Misao, there is a "truth [*honmono*]" in the grain of Nagabuchi's voice,¹³⁶ which he compares unfavorably to other musics, which he finds to be "*usoppachi*" – false, insincere. It is this perceived "truth" gleaned through music that affords Masao an orientation on the world, and where such truths intersect with preexisting experiences or outlooks, they can be all the more powerful. This seems particularly true of Misao's stance on Kagoshima. "At first, I didn't know that Tsuyoshi-san was from Kagoshima," he says. "It was my teachers that told me. After that, I respected him all the more." A love that Masao had already harbored for Kagoshima is reinforced through his engagements with Nagabuchi's artistry, and at the same time, that artistry validates his esteem for Kagoshima via a shared sense of *kyōdoai*, or love for home. And as we have already seen, this has been so affectively powerful in the contexts of Masao's life that it has directly influenced where he chooses to live that life.

Asked if Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi was a Kagoshima singer or a 'Japan' singer, Masao was somewhat taken aback. "I've never really thought about it," he says. "I guess that he's a Kagoshima singer, singing at the Japan level." In this sense we can see how, for Masao, Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi occupies two spaces at once – or, perhaps more precisely, the in-between space of *co-presence* that is ultimately neither and both. And this is ultimately the space that Masao occupies, as well – one in which Kagoshima is 'Japan,' where Japan is "all we know."

¹³⁶ See Roland Barthes, trans. Stephen Heath, "Grain of the Voice," in *Image-Music-Text* (Paris: Farrar, Straus, and Girox, 1978), pp. 179-189.

Indeed, it is the artist's ability to engage extensively with 'Japan' from the perspective of Kagoshima that is the source of much pride and reverence on Masao's part – in his view, Nagabuchi never falls into insularity, nor does he permit himself to be drawn into what Masao sees as hurtful, poisonous state mechanisms and prerogatives simply by virtue of a concern with the same national pronoun. Indeed, for Masao, it is precisely in bringing a Kagoshima perspective on to 'Japan' that allows for a critique of abstract, dominant imaginings¹³⁷ of the latter – that allows, in short, for Kagoshima to become a "critical space," a marginal borderland.

It was, according to Masao, precisely the insistence that he sensed in Nagabuchi's artistry upon seeing oneself "as Japanese," upon maintaining a sense of self-respect [*jison-shin*] as a constituent component of 'Japan' itself, that demanded he engage critically with issues facing the people of the community – a community that is envisioned here both locally, and in broader, national terms. He discusses having come to grapple critically with the presence of nuclear power in Japan through listening to songs that tackle the issue head-on, and through observing relief efforts pursued by Nagabuchi – which included inviting children from Fukushima to summer 'camps' held in and around Hayato – in the aftermaths of the meltdowns at Fukushima Dai'ichi. "If it wasn't Tsuyoshi-san talking, I may not have been able to accept the dangers of the nuclear power plants," he says. The revision of Japan's security treaties with the United States (AMPO), the American military presence on Okinawa, conditions in Fukushima, the LDP – all are the target of Masao's not inconsiderable anger – and nurturing such critique, he insists, is something that he learned from Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi. *Kyōkan*, or empathy, is for Misao what music is all about. A sense of empathetic camaraderie with Nagabuchi, it seems, rendered Misao susceptible to the artist's critical voice – and grappling with it allowed him to find his own. "We

¹³⁷ See Henri Lefebvre, trans. Donald Nicholson Smith, *The Production of Space* (Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 1991), esp. p. 39.

can't let these things just become someone else's problem [*hitogoto*]," he insists. "The point is for us not to keep that anger to ourselves, but to share it around." And this empathy, in Misao's extended and intelligent analysis, can become a basis from which to reimagine 'Japan' itself, as love of the immediacy of soil (*kyōdoai*) and love of 'Japan' become intermixed in an interesting critical stance: "We *are* Japanese. It's precisely because we love Japan that we want to figure out issues relating to the future, to the kids, ourselves, and not just get carried along by whatever the politicians decide to do. We *are* Japanese! Let's take control for ourselves [*uchira de yarō ze*]!"

But it is important to stress before leaving Misao that Nagabuchi's music is affording the former with the ability to articulate a critical stance on the world in the context of Kagoshima itself – a fierce love for which has proven, in circulatory fashion, a potentiating condition for the former's esteem for Nagabuchi in the first place. Asked if the political awareness that he insisted had been awakened in him by Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi could prod him to action, Misao quietly told me the story of Magejima, a tiny island not far from his home of Tanegashima where runway facilities are under construction, and which has been rumored for some years to be a candidate site for American military aircraft training. "People on that island don't need the money," he says. "It's subsistence farming there, and there's nothing that anyone wants for; the culture is really welcoming, and if somebody asked to use their land for military purposes they'd probably say sure, come on in. This is exactly when we need to remember that their problem, like Okinawa's, is everybody's problem, and get out there in protest and stick up for them. I'd have to go. I wouldn't have a choice [*ikanaito ikenai desho ne*]."

"There's lots of shitty grown-ups [*kitanai otona*, echoing one of Nagabuchi's favorite phrases] around these parts," he says, referring to policymakers at the Prefectural and city levels that would be responsible for such American incursions (and who have also been responsible, as

we have seen, for the construction of the nuclear power station at Sendai and other bids for survival under the terms of “Japan’s Japan”). “Wave a bit of money at them and no one knows what they’ll do.”

Politics, Place, Memory

In his *Sayonara Amerika, Sayonara Nippon: A Geopolitical Pre-History of J-Pop*, Michael Bourdaghs explains the manner in which many of the pioneers of so-called “new music” – which, emerging almost as an aftereffect of the folk boom of the late 1960s, saw a comingling of folk and rock styles and which would constitute the arena for the emergence of Japan’s new singer-songwriter figure, chief among them Nagabuchi himself – adopted many of the stylistic elements of folk, but “sidestepped the politics.”¹³⁸ This is certainly true in terms of the capital-P Politics of formalism and organized movements. Not only, as Dorsey, Dower, and others have pointed out, did economic factors associated with the emergence of ‘Japan’s Japan’ – not to mention the double-failures of anti-AMPO protests in 1960 and 1970 – help to fan a mood of complacency that was not conducive to widespread oppositional politics, but increased violence associated with (New) Leftist organized critique in the early 1970s surely helped to leave many (fairly or unfairly) wary of the ambiguous potentials of organized political criticism, as well. It was into this historical moment that the singer-songwriters emerged – and with them they brought a *change in perspective*, one that heralded a shift from explicitly communal concerns to a more atomized, individual line of sight. Indeed, as Bourdaghs, quoting Maeda and Hirahara, makes clear, the 1970s constituted “a time of change, from an age in which social and political

¹³⁸ See Michael K. Bourdaghs, *Sayonara Amerika, Sayonara Nippon: A Geopolitical Prehistory of J-Pop* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), esp. Chapter 5.

problems took the form of clear ideological oppositions fought out on the streets to one in which they were manifested as contradictions or distortions embedded in daily life.”¹³⁹

But as Bourdaghhs suggests, and as I hope that this chapter has served to further clarify, an individuated line of sight steeped in everydayness can be intensely political, as well – albeit in different ways. Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi’s musical meditations on the state of Kagoshima and Japan are never meant for the artist, or even for Kagoshima, alone. As was the case with Miyazawa Kenji, this particular artist’s statements also are made into a field of already-existing statements about region and nation, where they contribute to the never-ending process of defining the nature of these places. And as we have seen, musical statements such as Nagabuchi’s are not made into a vacuum – it is the very nature of the artist’s profession as artist that these statements should themselves become texts that circulate among the many and varied texts that make up the lives of individual social actors, and while the effects of this are certainly ambiguous and unpredictable, they can also be, as we have seen above, critically potentiating.

For Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, now a permanent resident of Tokyo, Kagoshima has become a site of *memory*. But as Bergson teaches us, memory is never merely a faculty of “putting away,” of consigning the past to a somehow separate and fundamentally decoupled storehouse – rather, the past survives and preserves itself, always looming over the present. “[A]ll that we have felt, thought, and willed from our earliest infancy is there,” Bergson writes, “leaning over the present which is about to join it, pressing against the portals of consciousness that would fain leave it outside.”¹⁴⁰ Nagabuchi’s own past – his experiences of lived everydayness growing up in Kagoshima – continue to loom over his present and infect his art with critique. Memory here thus serves a purpose that is quite distantly removed from the sorts of reclamatory, restorative

¹³⁹ Ibid., p. 162.

¹⁴⁰ Bergson, p. 7.

reanimations of national-cultural phantasms often insisted upon by scholars of the ‘lost home.’ Indeed, the focus of such memory is in fact not the past at all, but rather the present, and the portals that it opens up lead not to a spatialized time-as-destination that exists outside of History, but rather to pathways through which understandings of the present might be critically rewired. These are the potentials of what Boym has called “reflective nostalgia:” such nostalgia opens possibilities, as opposed to closing them, by “linger[ing] on ruins, the patina of time and history, in the dreams of another place and another time.”¹⁴¹ And this is truly what it means, in the context of this dissertation, to sing the Homesick Blues.

The persona and art of Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi serve to translate Kagoshima (with all of its crises and ambiguities) into a *text*, ripping it away from itself and transforming it into something that can be both cited and consumed, and unleashing it to circulate among the many texts constituting the lives of individual social actors with a stake therein. The feedback that occurs when Kagoshima-as-text cycles back into the lives of actors actually embedded in their own everyday in that geographically-specific site is, as we have seen, significant in that it helps to afford a critical stance on the part of those actors – and ‘Japan,’ from which Kagoshima-as-site can never be disengaged in any event (and indeed, whose crises and contradictions only make sense *in relation to* ‘Japan’), is always implicated therein. This is the significance of what we have termed herein a “provincialized Japan.” It is because Kagoshima constitutes both an affective sort of text that serves (much like music itself) to orient bodies in (temporalized) space *and* the very spatial site of that orientation that is, in the end, *Japan itself* both to Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi and to the local actors engaging with his art that these actors can move beyond placing an isolated Kagoshima in a relationship of opposition with ‘Japan’, and move toward

¹⁴¹ Boym, p. 41.

reimagining the terms of ‘Japan’ itself. And it is this that truly makes Kagoshima, as “critical space,” a generative sort of marginal borderland.

For all of their critical venom, the songs of Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi do not, for the most part, prescribe concrete directives for social change. In the introduction to his translation of *A Life Adrift*, the autobiography of similarly critical (at least for a time) 19th and early-20th century *enkashi* and social critic Soeda Azembō – whose texts we will take up in Chapter Two, in the context of their untimely redeployment by “folk” artist Ryo Kagawa – Michael Lewis notes the way in which Soeda similarly omitted specific prescriptions for change, and infers that this could point to an underlying ‘message’ on the part of the artist that his songs are just entertainment, and everything’s actually just fine just as it is – or, conversely, that the only way forward is through total revolution.¹⁴² Such an argument and critique could also be extended to the work of Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi without a great deal of difficulty. I, however, would like to suggest a different alternative: namely, that the works are their own answers, that their very existence and circulation, as textual testimonies to a critical, practiced space, can serve to disturb the uniformity of abstract space – of the state, of capitalism, of History itself. This is accomplished through the insistent and incessant forefronting of “different histories” – and as we shall see in the next two Chapters, the forefronting of “different histories” is crucial to the story of how alternative collectives – alternative Japans – are posited, through which a different time can be told.

¹⁴² See Soeda Azembo, Trans. Michael Lewis, *A Life Adrift: Soeda Azembo, Popular Song, and Modern Mass Culture in Japan* (Oxon: Routledge, 2009).

Chapter Two

Japan's 'One More Time': Ryo Kagawa and the Potentials of Critical Temporality

“What I try to attend to is the surroundings that we’re part of... Being in those surroundings, the act of singing them – that’s what it really means to critique war. Just raising your fist and yelling ‘no war!’ – that’s wishy-washy; it’s not enough. Singing the everyday – portraying the everyday [in song], interrogating it, and asking, okay, exactly what is this thing called ‘the everyday’? That’s what’s needed.”

~Singer-songwriter and Ryo Kagawa mentor Takada Wataru, in conversation with reporter Chikushi Tetsuya on the televised news program *NEWS23*, June 19, 1998

Sankusu Hall is nestled inconspicuously into a corner of Osaka's Higashinari Ward, between a grocery store to one side, and a busy urban thoroughfare to the other. A brief, three-minute walk from JR Tamatsukuri Station on the Osaka Loop Line, and far away from the bustle and lights of nightlife districts like Namba, Dotonbori and Umeda, Sankusu Hall looks at first glance more like a medical clinic or small office building than it does an event venue. In point of fact, the building that houses Sankusu Hall is a private residence, albeit a large one: in 2003, proprietor Hiroshi Ono and his wife converted the first floor of their home into a venue for live music, in order to have a community space in which music – specifically, for the most part, that music which finds its roots in Japan's “folk” movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s – could be performed (personal preference of the proprietor has much/everything to do with what is played here: “Ono only ever invites acts that he likes,” a fellow patron chuckled to me in 2015). Though not exclusively used for concerts – in 2016, for example, the venue hosted monthly *rakugo yose*, or traditional comedic storytelling event, featuring established comics from the Hayashiya and

Shōfukutei clans, among others¹ – it is as a live music venue that Sankusu Hall is best known, at least by those who frequent it. This is hardly a venue that is linked into Japan’s mainstream music scene – but that, in a sense, is precisely the point. What makes Sankusu Hall special, it seems, is the way in which it continues to be animated by musical voices often assumed to be long faded from the scene, including folk-era figures such as Masaji Ōtsuka, Kōsuke Kanamori, Itō Takao – and legendary singer-songwriter Ryo Kagawa, whose art and critique will animate the pages that follow.

On November 15, 2014, it was a performance by Ryo Kagawa that drew me from Kyoto to Sankusu Hall for the very first time. With a makeshift bar shoehorned into a rear corner, where concertgoers can purchase a can of beer or a plastic cup of *shōchū* for five hundred yen, and a cramped seating area comprised of sixty or so folding chairs that fan out from the foot of the small rise serving as a stage, Sankusu Hall is nothing if not intimate. Like other venues of its type – and indeed, this hall constitutes something of a node in a network of similar performance places around Japan,² sites at which proclamations of the “demise”³ of past masters are refuted and their voices are made audible – Sanukusu Hall reduces the distance between performer and audience member to next to nothing. This ‘closeness’ is of great importance to performers like

¹ Sankusu Hall was the subject of a special Asahi Newspaper (Osaka) report on October 5, 2016, titled まち寄席巡り [Machi yose meguri; Visiting neighborhood vaudeville cafes]. In addition to introducing the venue, this report discussed the *rakugo* comic entertainment that is often held there.

² The alterity of venues like Sankusu Hall and its function as part of a patchwork of performance spaces helping to sustain what might be understood as an alternate history of music in Japan is echoed by David Novak, in the context of noise music and ‘underground’ record shops catering to its aficionados: “To map the underground... is to reveal a hidden layer of experience beneath ‘ordinary’ consumer space. Its obscure networks motivate the reader to imagine – and then explore – the depths of a unique and separate place, even within an urban territory covered over by ubiquitous markers of transnational capitalism.” See David Novak, *JAPANOISE: Music at the Edge of Circulation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), esp. p. 78.

³ Carolyn Stevens, *Japanese Popular Music: Culture, Authenticity, and Power* (New York: Routledge, 2008), p.44.

Ryo Kagawa: “These shows are not something that I create on my own, and just hand to people,” the artist would say to me nearly two years later in a busy, noisy café in Tokyo’s Shinagawa district. “We make them together.”⁴ The very physical attributes of performance places like Sankusu Hall, in other words, seem to help facilitate what Kagawa has called “liveness”⁵ – a sort of collaborative co-creativity that has nothing to do with the sorts of “intimacy” of music fandom described by Christine Yano, wherein such fandom becomes a way of consuming purportedly static religious, moral, and aesthetic “national values,”⁶ but that rather speaks to a shared generation of meaning and world-production that is the purvey of artist and fan alike, some of whom, I would discover in October of 2016, think nothing of traveling thousands of miles to share and take part therein.⁷ The question, of course, is *what sort* of world is being produced – or disassembled – in these performance spaces, and what tactical tools are deployed in order to accomplish this. This is, of course, a question of what we are herein calling critique, and addressing this complex question will be the aim of the present chapter.

⁴ I had the opportunity to engage Ryo Kagawa in conversation on June 22, 2016, in Tokyo, and on July 4, 2016, in Kyoto. The reflections and comments by Kagawa appearing in this chapter were shared with me on these occasions. Our original conversations were in Japanese; I have translated the artist’s comments for an English-language readership.

⁵ Here we can sense a close affinity between performance places like Sankusu Hall and those sites that Ian Condry, in a hip-hop context, calls the genba. Like Condry’s genba, Kagawa’s venues become sites at which generative interactions between actors in the artist’s musical events become possible, and afford ways to approach manipulations of language, subjectivity, and History itself in situated, performative contexts. See Ian Condry, *Hip-Hop Japan: Rap and the Paths of Cultural Globalization* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), esp. p. 137.

⁶ See Yano’s chapter titled “Letters from the Heart: Negotiating Fan-Star Relationships in Japanese Popular Music,” in William W. Kelly, Ed., *Fanning the Flames: Fans and Consumer Culture in Contemporary Japan* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2004), esp pp. 42-43.

⁷ In a brief interview with fans who had traveled from Japan to Chicago to take part in Kagawa’s first-ever North American concert at the University of Chicago in October, 2016, I learned that, for these individuals, being on-site for such an historic event was a way to help ensure that they would be able to continue playing roles in generating “liveness” in future music events in Japan, which were sure, they said, to reference the Chicago performance.

In Kagawa's attentiveness to fluid, co-productive "liveness," we seem to hear echoes of the "folk" aesthetic discussed by scholar James Dorsey in his article "Breaking Records: Media, Censorship, and the Folk Song Movement of Japan's 1960s."⁸ what lurks here is a suspicion of the authority of the record, a rejection of the singular authorial voice in favor of a communal compositional praxis. But a great deal of caution is warranted here, because the degree to which Ryo Kagawa fits the mold of what has been called "folk" in the academy is limited. Despite his very clear associations with and debt to the genre – and especially its Kansai manifestation, which was facilitated through alternative labels such as the Underground Record Club (URC) and known for its emphases on originality and personal expressions of sentiment – Kagawa is often at pains to resist classification as a "folk singer," often voicing harsh criticisms of the genre, and of the specific tactics that it deploys in enunciating the critiques with which it is regularly associated. Ryo Kagawa, in short, is an intriguing and complex figure: heir to Japan's "protest folk" tradition but enfant terrible to the same, he seems intent upon ensuring the continuation of this music's critical potential precisely by disregarding its formulas and narrative demarcations. As I shall argue in the pages that follow, this tactic pivots on the rejection of an overtly oppositional, countercultural stance⁹ in favor of scrambling and reoccupying dominant Historical narratives associated with 'Japan' (and, for that matter, with "folk" itself) in order to find, along with the other participants in his musical events, in the artist's lyrical expression,

⁸ Dorsey's chapter appears in John A. Lent and Lorna Fitzsimmons, Eds., *Asian Popular Culture: New, Popular, and Hybrid Media* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2013).

⁹ Writing in a different context, scholar Michael Welch cuts very close to the suspicion that Ryo Kagawa seems to harbor vis-à-vis oppositional protest and "counterculture." In an analysis of what he (historically) delineates as "the Age of Protest" in the United States, Welch draws a distinction between specific critical tactics – such as those deployed by Kagawa, and that we shall elucidate herein – and an aimless, relatively unreflective counterculture that dominated the moment of the 1960s and 1970s: the latter, he writes, tended to amount to "various forms of collective behavior that appeared to drift without any particular goal other than rejecting a culture reproduced by the establishment." See Welch's *Flag Burning: Moral Panic and the Criminalization of Protest* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 2000), p. 48.

“Japan’s one more time.”¹⁰ Such a scrambling amounts to a disruptive temporal intervention – and this is a tactic that rests upon the conjuring and deployment, in Ryo Kagawa’s artistry and in moments of performance, of what this chapter will term *critical temporality*.

In Chapter One, we visited Kagoshima and noted some of the ways in which that geographical site is invoked and deployed by singer-songwriter Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi in a manner that complicates – infects – common-sense notions of ‘Japan’ with its own disavowed historicities. Therein, we traced the contours of a sort of counter-regionalism, or *critical spatiality* that refused to isolate Kagoshima from “Japan” or to conceive of it as a site transcendent of History, but that owes its critical potential to a ruthless, unblinking sort of embeddedness in each. In this chapter and in Chapter Three, I aim to shift the focus away from the spatial, and expand our critical engagement with notions of the temporal. While acknowledging the spatial contours of Kagawa’s performances and their specific affordances (the radical intimacy of sites such as Sankusu Hall, for example, and the ramifications of performance spaces such as Osaka’s Ryokuchi Outdoor Music Hall, to be visited below), in other

¹⁰ As Stone, De Nora, and Jackson – all scholars of the music(al) event – note, music events are made up of myriad actors and texts, which intersect in an often contingent fashion in specific geographical, historical, and other contexts in the production of ‘meaning.’ These events, in other words, far exceed the bounds of performative intent on the part of any single artist or group, and it is not my intent to fetishize Ryo Kagawa’s voice here. I am nonetheless interested, however, in bringing light to the tactics deployed by Kagawa in the execution of his musical artistry, in no small part because these tactics, and particularly the ways in which they blend, mix, and manipulate time(s), potentiate the ongoing enunciation of a critique that is too readily sealed up and confined to an idealized moment in the late 1960s and early 1970s that is deemed to have passed (away). The authentic, idealized, and ultimately static way of “oppositional” being – not becoming – that this moment memorializes is precisely that which is marked by the “folk” that Kagawa holds in such disdain, and playing with time amounts to a critical praxis by which the artist can rescue the energetic thrust of this moment, insisting upon its contemporary relevance without confining it to narrative. While we will hear the voices of some of Kagawa’s listeners in brief in what follows, then, I will keep the emphasis on the works that Ryo Kagawa chooses to perform and how these are framed, and will turn to other texts and participants in the musical event in later sections.

words, we will aim to reveal the temporalities conjured therein – what Svetlana Boym terms the temporalization of space¹¹ – and the critical potentialities that this presents.

Writing in 2012, Harry Harootunian insisted that it is “[b]y uncovering heterological temporalities and histories – recognizing uneven flows and the never-ending prospect of untimeliness – [that] ‘progress’ is released from its unilinear mooring and rethought as a relative term that considers missed opportunities and defeated possibilities.”¹² With Harootunian’s insights in mind, I aim here to think about how social actors can insist upon different histories and different possibilities in their art and in performance, citing the past and critically manipulating the present in an attempt to rattle Historically-embedded bodies and animate sites of performance¹³ through the conjuring of what we are calling *critical temporality*, to be understood here as a direct challenge to the “normative temporality”¹⁴ (=History) of the contemporary capitalist present. Critical temporality, like critical spatiality, owes its corrosive and destabilizing potentialities not to transcendence or ahistoricity – a staking out of a ground, in other words, that is outside of History – but rather to its unblinking embeddedness in and citations of History itself. By scrambling its sense-making mechanisms from the inside out, and insisting on other histories and other possibilities, critical temporality becomes, in a sense, something of a Trojan horse. It is my hope, in other words, that by tending to a very small number of the ways in which the sense-making mechanisms of History can be challenged by evocations of Other histories and Other possibilities, we may reveal Ryo Kagawa’s historically-

¹¹ See Boym, esp. pp. 49-50.

¹² Harry Harootunian, ““Memories of Underdevelopment” After Area Studies”, in *positions: east asian cultures critique*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Winter, 2012), p. 8.

¹³ Naoki Sakai, *Voices of the Past* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992). p. 134.

¹⁴ Harootunian, “Memories of Underdevelopment,” p. 20.

embedded artistry and performance as sites “[w]here these heterogeneous and discordant temporalities collide, [as] both the moment of politics and the vocation of history.”¹⁵

The concept of the “musical event,” introduced briefly in Chapter One as a productive means by which to consider the potentialities of the deployment of music in lived contexts, will help also to orient our discussions in this Chapter and the next. While temporality has received due attention in studies of the musical event, its specific deployment therein as a form of critique has not. Scholar Ruth Stone, for example – among the first to advocate for a cohesive methodology for moving the study of music from analyses of “just a series of objects frozen in time and space” to processes that are always in motion, an analytical stance that requires “choosing the musical event, rather than the song or music system, as the focal study object”¹⁶ – emphasizes the importance of time in musical events. “The temporal conceptualization of music events centers on expandable moments,” Stone teaches us. “[In such events] the linear aspect of time is obscured, though not totally lost. Rather, within such moments, ideas, events, and people of many locales and times are incorporated into the music event.”¹⁷ Stone and other scholars have done much to point to the importance of the temporal – and the existence of multiple temporalities – in musical events, but existing analyses tend to be limited by a stance that takes the temporal as a framing device or conceptual vessel to be construed differently: Stone invokes a Schutzian difference between “inner” and “outer” time, for example, emphasizing the experienced, embodied time of Bergson’s *duree*,¹⁸ while DeNora, in a similar manner, points to the manner in which music unfolds over and moves through time as a means of grasping its links

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ruth Stone, *Let the Inside be Sweet: the Interpretation of Music Event Among the Kpelle of Liberia* (Bloomington: Trickster Press, 1982), p. 129.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., esp. p. 9.

to becoming, emotionality, and the ways in which music “provides a device with which subject-bodies orient to and configure themselves within the environments within which music plays.”¹⁹

I want to suggest that we can build upon these insights, developing an understanding of time not only as a scaffolding for the unfurling of music events, or as an embodied experience brought to bear upon them, but also as an important text that can be *played with* in order to generate music events that are bitingly critical – even when they may appear, as we will see in our examination of rocker Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi’s all-night musical event at the foot of Mt. Fuji in the summer of 2015 that animates Chapter Three, to be precisely the opposite.

Time is an ideological construct. Adorno, for example, recognized this: indeed, his (in)famous critiques of music are built around the conviction that “music has a duty to resist an ideological role which naturalizes the dominant features of the existing social order,” and most culpable in this regard (to him) was meter, and its association with “the highly measured temporality of the contemporary world.”²⁰ Emptied of its associations with planetary rhythms, change, and so on, time became a key cornerstone of the existing social order – capitalism – becoming on the one hand what Anderson has called “homogenous, empty time”²¹ and a commodity itself on the other, something to be spent. Mark Abel, discussing modes of temporality in music, teaches us that “[a]t its deepest level, abstract time is to be understood as structured into capitalism, as the temporality of capitalism... It is as though... capital has a built-in clock that is constantly ticking away.”²² It is the tyranny of a History that unfurls, unimpeded, according to capital’s logic – its penchant for laying claim to a singular, teleological, foreclosed

¹⁹ DeNora, *After Adorno*, p. 132.

²⁰ Adorno’s philosophy is summarized in Mark Abel, *Groove: An Aesthetic of Measured Time* (Leiden: Brill, 2014). See p. 175 for the text quoted here.

²¹ See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1983).

²² Abel, p. 195.

present; for concealing unevenness and other histories in placeholders like the nation-state – that disturbs Harry Harootunian so, and that spurs him to define such tyranny as “normative temporality” and to urge a critical interrogation of the notions of “progress” that underpin it. And yet, it is precisely the supposed unavoidability of such a History that has been made to answer for the purported demise of organized critique around-1970, with the dropping of the aforementioned curtain of “Japan’s Japan” and the ideological, retroactive sealing of History in such a way as to demonstrate that the Japanese “have not become anything other than what they have been since the beginning of time.”²³ This impasse demands that social actors – in the academy and beyond – conceive of critique differently, and find it lurking in places and in ways that we may not expect. As we have already noted, scholars mourn the hegemony of History, as we should, but in mourning we also inadvertently validate History’s logic, missing some of the ways in which critical voices upset its sense-making mechanisms (of “progress,” of a steady and measured march into a predetermined future) not through externalized, oppositional protest, but through an internalized scrambling of – or playing with, to anticipate the terminology deployed in this chapter – its very own terms. To reiterate, it is precisely such a scrambling that this chapter aims to address.

And indeed, it is in their potential as the site of the manifestation of such scrambling that the importance of such embedded sites as Sankusu Hall can begin to be understood and appreciated. Following Doreen Massey, we can see how sites like Sankusu Hall and others constitute individual moments – “places” – in the spatial, nodes in networks of social relations through which texts of lived experience intertwine, and within which such texts, including heterogeneous temporalities, comingle and collide. Space and time, as Massey teaches us, are

²³ See Harry Harootunian’s essay, “America’s Japan/Japan’s Japan”, in Masao Miyoshi and H.D. Harootunian, eds., *Japan in the World* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993).

inseparable: “the spatial is integral to the production of history, and thus to the possibility of politics.”²⁴ The question, once again, thus becomes *what sorts* of histories are being produced, and what politics imagined, in these sites. The pages that follow will frame such places – and the individual works that animate them – as sites at which historical and temporal threads can be grasped, rendered, and re-hewn as a means to imagine something different – as sites at which, in short, critical temporality is conjured. Later in this chapter, we will visit the Haruichiban, an annual outdoor concert held in Osaka that continues to showcase “folk” and its critiques despite persistent reports of the genre’s demise. And in our next chapter, we will journey to the foot of Japan’s iconic Mt. Fuji for an all-night concert by Ryo Kagawa protégé Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, whom we visited in some detail in Chapter One. For the time being, however, I would like to stay in the cramped confines of Sankusu Hall, and consider some of the musical and lyrical tactics deployed by Ryo Kagawa as he plays with time, and conjures, in collaboration with the audience whom the artist insists constitutes an integral part of his musical events, what we shall call *critical temporality* herein.

Ryo Kagawa and “Japan’s One More Time”

Ryo Kagawa was born Yoshihiro Kosai in Hikone City, Shiga Prefecture in November, 1947. As a student at Kyoto Sangyō University, Kagawa was active in amateur music circles, performing as a vocalist in bands that covered English-language works by the Rolling Stones and the Beatles – but he did not begin composing his own work until some years later. Upon graduation, Kagawa joined the staff of Art Music Publishing (now a subsidiary of Shinko Music Entertainment Co., Ltd.), a copyrights management and promotions firm closely linked to the

²⁴ Massey, *Place, Space, and Gender*, p. 269.

Underground Record Club (URC) label (which was, as Dorsey and others²⁵ teach us, an important node in the distribution networks of Japan's critical folk music around-1970), and was charged with carving out thirty-second clips of affiliated artists' albums in order to promote these on the radio. Though never a fan of "folk" ("All music for me is 'rock,'" Kagawa told me in conversation in Tokyo in June, 2016. "It doesn't matter if it's *enka*, or jazz, or nursery rhymes [*dōyō*] – if the music hits my heart, like a drum, then it's rock"), Kagawa was exposed to the music of URC artist Takada Wataru, and recalls being floored by it. "Especially *Asahirō*," Kagawa said, speaking enthusiastically of Takada's laid-back, $\frac{3}{4}$ -time interpretation of The Animals' "House of the Rising Sun," from the latter's 1969 solo album *Kisha ga inaka wo tōru sono toki* [At that moment when the train passes through the countryside]. "I was amazed that someone could do that with the Japanese language. It moved me, made me cry [*naketekuru*]." Kagawa insisted that, for him, *Asahirō* "had a much greater impact than the Eric Burdon [and The Animals'] original. It's not overbearing [*atsukurushii*]; it comes across happy and cool. It's not just the lyrics, it's the voice, the guitar-picking – it's the whole package." Influenced in no small part by Takada's artistry, Ryo Kagawa began writing music of his own, and was pulled onstage by the former for an impromptu performance at the 2nd Nakatsugawa Folk Jamboree in 1970, one of the major folk music festivals in Japan during this period, where he debuted his "Kyokun I [Lesson I]",²⁶ which would go on to become both Kagawa's own signature song, and one of Japan's most-beloved and enduring anti-war critiques.

²⁵ See, for example, Tōru Mitsui's chapter "Music and protest in Japan: the rise of the underground folk song," in Beate Kutsche and Barley Norton, Eds., *Music and Protest in 1968* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

²⁶ Ryo Kagawa, "Kyokun I [Lesson I]," from the album *Kyokun* [Lessons]. 1971. Osaka: URC Records, LP.

Over the ensuing four-and-a-half decades, Kagawa would go on to release sixteen solo and collaborative studio and live recording albums, which incorporate a remarkable diversity of musical styles ranging from folk to country to rock and even gospel. He would also collaborate with the late playwright Yutaka Azuma in theatre troupe Tokyo Kid Brothers' 1975 production of *The October Country*, and would play concerts in China and, much later, North America.²⁷ Though he has never been a million-selling artist and is far from a household name, Kagawa has been an inspirational figure and teacher in his own right to some of the biggest-selling figures of Japan's New Music/singer-songwriter era, including such megastars as the aforementioned Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, and Hokkaido singer-songwriter Matsuyama Chiharu. This is the era of Japanese music which would commence immediately following "folk"'s relative decline in popularity, and which owed much in terms of artist independence and the rise of individual production offices to the sea-change that occurred with "folk"²⁸ – and as such, Ryo Kagawa's importance on and contributions to the modern and contemporary Japanese music scenes cannot be overstated.

Although the artist frequently – and loudly – protests his association with the genre, the musical tradition that Ryo Kagawa and other frequent performers of Sankusu Hall are heir to is unquestionably Japan's "folk" music of the late 1960s and early 1970s (for clarity, we will call this music "critical folk" in the pages that follow). Scholars such as Carolyn Stevens,²⁹ Michael

²⁷ Kagawa's first live performance in North America was held at the University of Chicago in October of 2016, and was arranged by the author of this dissertation.

²⁸ Bourdaghs, in his *Sayonara Amerika, Sayonara Nippon*, and Dorsey, in his "Breaking Records," each gesture toward the ways in which the figure of the singer-songwriter emerged out of the "folk" movement in a way that challenged the control traditionally exerted by large recording companies over individual artists and groups. See pages 163 and 97, respectively.

²⁹ See Carolyn Stevens, *Japanese Popular Music: Culture, Authenticity, and Power* (New York: Routledge, 2008), esp. Chapter 3.

Bourdagh, ³⁰ and the aforementioned James Dorsey have contributed greatly to our understanding of this genre: initially appearing in the mid-1960s as introductions of works by American artists such as Bob Dylan in Japanese translation, Japanese musicians like Takada Wataru, Takaishi Tomoya, and Nakagawa Goro – who would become known to history as pioneers of Japanese “critical folk” – quickly began carving out a folk music of Japan’s own. In the context of the Vietnam War (which directly involved Japan as vital staging area, if not combatant), the global upheavals of 1968, and the accelerating student movements of 1969 that saw the iconic, student-led siege of Yoshida Campus at the University of Tokyo,³¹ this music took off quickly, particularly in the Kansai area of Western Japan. Being a “critical folk” practitioner – whether artist or aficionado – involved partaking in musical practices that were given meaning and significance precisely because they were considered to be outside of the mainstream: amateur reproductions of lyrics taken by Japan’s authorities to be threatening (such songs were often, for all intents and purposes, banned, including Ryo Kagawa’s own “*Sensō shimashō* [Let Us Go to War]”³²), “folk camps” involving the collaborative efforts of musical and religious figures,³³ and large-scale, Woodstock-style “folk” festivals such as the All-Japan Folk Jamboree held at Nakatsugawa in Gifu Prefecture and the aforementioned Haruichiban festival in Osaka were all a part of the “critical folk” culture of around-1970. In sum, “critical folk” – both in Japan and elsewhere – has been associated with critical musical praxis – but this praxis tends to be associated very strongly with notions of authenticity, and with a negating,

³⁰ Bourdaghs attends to critical folk in Chapter 5 of his *Sayonara Amerika, Sayonara Nippon: A Geopolitical Prehistory of J-Pop*, cited frequently throughout this dissertation.

³¹ The siege was eventually put down, but not before lasting three days against a riot-police force against whom the students were not expected to have a chance.

³² Ryo Kagawa, “*Sensō shimashō* [Let Us Go to War],” from the album *Kyokun* [Lessons]. 1971. Osaka: URC Records, LP.

³³ These “folk camps” remain legendary among critical folk aficionados in Japan today, and are taken up briefly by Dorsey in his “Breaking Records.” See esp. p. 98.

diametrical sort of oppositional politics. “Above all,” Michael Bourdaghs teaches us, “[this music] aimed to negate the existing social, political, and cultural framework of Japan,” relying upon a populist nationalist framework to do so, especially in light of Japan’s geopolitical security relationship with the United States. “Oppositional folk music called on indigenous culture as a source of [such] resistance,” and “relied on a powerful ideology of authenticity” to do so.³⁴

In this way, emphases on alternative authenticity and on oppositional critique have been privileged in existing studies on “folk” music in Japan around-1970, and to be sure, this emphasis tells an integral part of the story of musical critique from this turbulent moment. But there are other parts of the story to be told, other voices to be heard – and if we listen carefully, we might here these voices speaking/singing back to these questions of authenticity and of “protest,” and thus to the sorts of critique that practitioners of “critical folk” found themselves able – or unable, or indeed unwilling – to enunciate via their parameters. As existing scholarship teaches us, there was no question that many practitioners of “critical folk” sought an alternative, indigenous authenticity in the moment of around-1970s in Japan – and yet, this quest was always already mired in paradox: in seeking this authenticity, such practitioners were mobilizing what was in fact a globally interconnected musical form, one that was endlessly embedded in transnational cultural and political flows even as attempts were being made to “indigenize” it in local contexts. “Folk,” in other words, was never particularly well suited to the attainment of authenticity that many of its practitioners had in mind – and such notions of authenticity would further prove a trap as the genre began to enjoy precisely the commercial success that so many of its adherents had expressed such disdain for,³⁵ spurring its fall from public favor. Meanwhile, “critical folk’s” dogged dedication to an oppositional critique – what we will call an “internal

³⁴ See Bourdaghs, p. 161.

³⁵ Stevens, p. 44.

negation” below – of an historically specific status quo in this moment would prove something of an Achilles heel in its own right, especially as perceived economic growth and other developments (including the “repatriation” of Okinawa in 1972) erased much of the impetus for oppositional critique as the aforementioned curtain of “Japan’s Japan” descended across the archipelago. “Critical folk’s” quest for an oppositional, alternative authenticity, it might be said, was doomed from the start – and it is the failure (or, perhaps more generously, the loss of relevance) of “critical folk” as a mode of authentic, oppositional, and “countercultural” critique that tends to bring discussions of this music to a premature end, and invites premature declarations of the genre’s “demise.”

I must stress at this early juncture that I by no means wish to detract from the value of studies of oppositional critique, or from analyses of countercultural stance: these studies have allowed us to hear voices long silent in scholarly work. But it is my insistence that there are other voices to attend to – voices that are in danger of being silenced by an analytical posturing that privileges certain (oppositional) forms of protest, and are thus fundamentally unable to hear those speaking and singing in other ways. To be sure, attending to “critical folk” in countercultural terms, as musical embodiment of diametric protest, is revealing – but in our quest to open different angles for attending to critical voices, we might also appeal to Marilyn Ivy’s insights into the relationship between capitalism and fascism, and point to the way in which counterculture can in fact be the internal negation of the so-called “status-quo,” validating, paradoxically, the latter’s ubiquity precisely by virtue of the former’s objection. “Fascism is the internal negation of capitalism,” Ivy argues in her introduction to *The Culture of Japanese*

Fascism. “We are ever naïve if we think of democracy... as the obverse of fascism.”³⁶ Ivy is clearly arguing in a different context than that taken up in this chapter, and her insights have much to do with the liberalism that is part of both capitalism and fascism. But if we pay close attention here, we can see that Ivy’s critique, like that pursued herein, is based upon an interrogation of the purported singularity of History’s “normative temporality;” fascism is seen here as a *reaction to* capitalism that is embedded in the same, sense-making temporal text (=“progress”), rather than a “something else” that scrambles it, engendering something new – hence the scholar’s argument that, “[i]n its seeming external negation of liberal, capitalist democracy, fascism in fact completes, as its ‘internal negation,’ the truth of capitalist democracy.”³⁷ What seem worthy of consideration here, then, are precisely those sorts of voices that might lay the groundwork for “something else” by scrambling the confines of “normative temporality;” voices that might attend to other paths, to what Harootunian has called “lost opportunities.” And in order to pursue these opportunities (and indeed the potentials of “critical folk” itself) beyond the mid-1970s or so, we need to attend to the concept of “authenticity” in ways that are not predetermined, and do not affix it to the flip side of History’s coin – a trap that Harootunian has identified as the “fetishistic inversion,”³⁸ offering a different perspective, perhaps, but not really troubling the structure of which it is a part – but that rather may make a point of shrugging it off altogether, or finding it lurking in places and times that are utterly “off the page,” challenging the hegemony of History itself.

³⁶ Ivy’s comments can be found in Alan Tansman, Ed., *The Culture of Japanese Fascism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), p. x.

³⁷ Ibid., emphasis in original.

³⁸ See Harry Harootunian, ““Memories of Underdevelopment” After Area Studies”, in *positions: east asian cultures critique*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Winter, 2012).

Ryo Kagawa's is precisely such a voice. In an intriguing prelude to what Bourdaghhs would call, in the context of analysis of the band Yellow Magic Orchestra (YMO) in the 1980s, a “[n]egating [of] the negation,”³⁹ voices such as Kagawa's shied away from the dominant “folk” narrative of posing an oppositional, alternative authenticity – a stance which, crucially, did not entail “abandoning politics but rather a creative rethinking of the relationship between popular music and politics.”⁴⁰ We will see this creativity, this ethics of play and of motion, again and again in the pages that follow, and in many cases, it manifests in the conjuring of critical temporality, the rejection of the authority, whether situated in the mainstream or in its countercultural critiques, of History, and the positing of a scrambled Now that challenges Progress. Rethinking the straightforward negation usually attributed to “folk” by scholars, in other words, and resituating the notion of “authenticity” and how it relates to the critical musical praxes pursued by certain artists with roots in this period, is an important step that will help us follow voices like Ryo Kagawa's out of the moment of around-1970.

Kagawa's method of negating of the negation seems rooted in an awareness of the fact that “authenticity” always already implies a stasis.⁴¹ Stasis, importantly, not only relies upon a temporal immobilization for its legibility (and thus a disavowal of other histories and the destabilizing sorts of critique that their invocation potentiates), but denies a diversity and plurality of voice,⁴² as well – factors which run counter to the artist's musical and performance ethics. Ryo Kagawa's critical praxis, I suggest, is based not a “negat[ion of] the existing social,

³⁹ Bourdaghhs, p. 192

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Penny Eckert, “Sociolinguistics and Authenticity: An Elephant in the Room.” *The Journal of Sociolinguistics*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (2003), p. 393.

⁴² Simon Frith, “The Discourse of World Music.” In *Western Music and Its Others: Difference, Representation and Appropriation in Music*, edited by Georgina Born and David Hesmondhalgh (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

political, and cultural framework of Japan” and its attendant, closed-circuited quest for an alternative authenticity, but rather on an open-ended, fluid, and playful approach that is necessarily hostile to History *and* its internal negation. As will become particularly clear in our analysis of “*Kyokun I* [Lesson I],” for example, this approach sees Kagawa play with subjectivity and with language – and indeed, the artist places great importance on the Japanese language, not as a Sakai-esque medium of shared (critical) interiority but rather as a vessel that lends itself to play and manipulation, potentiating challenging and thought-provoking critiques that are not necessarily conveyed in words – in a manner that issues challenges to the sense-making mechanisms of History. The artist’s critique is based, in other words, not in staking out a still ground of authenticity, but in a constant movement, in play, and in an incessant (and sometimes discomfiting) scrambling of moments and of voices. Make no mistake: Ryo Kagawa is critical, he is just critical *differently* – and his voice constitutes a challenge to scholars to reassess what we have understood “critique” to be, particularly in the loaded moment of around-1970 and beyond.

Part of what makes Ryo Kagawa such a fascinating musical figure is the fact that, despite his deep association with and extensive contributions to the genre, and despite deploying a musical style that is clearly indebted to a “folk” format (usually involving a single voice over an amplified acoustic guitar, although as I have noted above, Kagawa has experimented with and made very effective use of a wide range of musical styles and sounds), the artist strains vigorously against “folk” and the discursive formulae that are associated with it. “I don’t want to be painted with the same brush as those guys [*issho ni sareta kunai*],” the artist told me in conversation in Tokyo, referencing the key gatekeepers of Japan’s “critical folk” tradition without doing so by name. Although there is a musical component to the artist’s disdain, it seems

to be mostly lyrical. In conversation with me, Ryo Kagawa lambasted very specific turns of phrase which are associated with folk's heyday: “*te wo toriatte* [let us join hands],” “*yoake wa chikai* [the dawn is near],” “*sensō hantai* [no war],” and so on. Phrases like this are very closely associated with the New Left and with the student movements of around-1970 in Japan, which are themselves closely associated with “folk.”⁴³ But this means that these are *also locked to a specific historical moment* – and this sort of static temporal confinement seems precisely what Kagawa is at pains to avoid. Kagawa Ryo's aversion to “folk,” in other words, amounts to a blistering criticism of the ways in which folk has allowed itself to be memorialized (and neutralized) through a blissful submersion in an idealized, romanticized moment that is now past – and this is a critique to which scholars of around-1970 “subculture” must pay close attention indeed. As we shall see, Kagawa's own critical praxis involves a challenging and destabilizing of the very narratives of linear History that potentiate the anchoring of “critical folk” to past, completed moments in the first place, and a concomitant critique of the genre's attendant memorialization – a memorialization which implies the music's passing, and its contemporary irrelevance.

Here, in the artist's understanding of “folk” around-1970, we can already begin to get a sense of the immensely complicated ways in which Ryo Kagawa understands “music” and “critique.” The artist has a deep aversion to the pre-packaged and the predictable – that which Naoki Sakai might term “discourse.” Discourse forecloses spaces of play – and as we have already seen, play is of central importance to Ryo Kagawa's critical praxis. As Sakai teaches us, “to assimilate and integrate the heterogeneous, thereby concealing the site where textuality

⁴³ Scholar Oguma Eiji (trans. Nick Kapur) provides a detailed overview of this moment in Japan in his article “Japan's 1968: A Collective Reaction to Rapid Economic Growth in an Age of Turmoil.” See *The Asia Pacific Journal: Japan Focus*, Vol. 13, Issue 12, No. 1 (March, 2015).

disrupts discourse, is obviously absolutely necessary for a given discursive formation to reproduce itself.”⁴⁴ It is precisely such a confinement – even an entrapment – in “given discursive formations” that alarms Ryo Kagawa, and leads him to rail against them. This is true of “folk”-as-category, but it is also true of *music itself*. In an intriguing twist to our June, 2016 discussion, Kagawa pressed back against the idea that he even “does music” at all, preferring to describe himself as engaged – in collaboration, as we have seen, with others in the spaces within which he performs – in something called *ongaku-teki na mono*, or “something akin to music.” Asked to describe his ideal sort of music, the artist immediately described a sonic experience that is capable of presenting the surprising, the unexpected. “Music is something that drifts to me out of a crowd, out of an open window on a street, overcoming all of the background noise out there,” he said, waving his hand in a gesture that encompassed the busy open café that we were seated in, as well as the busy Shinagawa station concourse below us. “It might be a song that reaches out and grabs me, coming out of a *pachinko* parlor or something. Or it might be in the sounds of voices, or the sounds of the streets. If it excites me, if it makes me stop and say ‘what the hell is that [*nan nano, kore*]?’?, then it’s music.” Though his artistry is far from the formless avante garde music described by Mark Abel that, as Abel discusses, seeks to trouble the sense-making mechanisms of time in its own right,⁴⁵ it is clear that what Ryo Kagawa is looking for in music is something that is puzzling and unpredictable, unusual and strange, something that requires active engagement. As the artist himself explained through a clearly intentional allusion to joking and to play, when the punch-line is already apparent with the opening notes, then “music,” at least as understood by Ryo Kagawa, lacks value.

⁴⁴ Sakai, *Voices of the Past*, p.52.

⁴⁵ See Abel, *Groove*, esp. p. 102.

The conjuring of critical temporality is an intriguing tactic deployed by Ryo Kagawa that allows him to sidestep the “internal negation” of the status quo that informed much critical folk around-1970, and develop a much more nuanced critique which in turn allows him to interrogate the terms of “normative temporality” across a longer historical arc. We shall see concrete examples of this in the analyses that follow. But pursuing this tactic as an artist who, like it or not, is inextricably associated with “critical folk” as genre also becomes a way to save folk itself, to ensure its relevance in 2016 and beyond and to allow it to do the very critical work that Kagawa envisions. To rescue the critical potentialities of folk music, in other words, means to break the various bonds locking it to the discursive moment of around-1970: the aversion to the narrative confines of History is at least part, it seems, of what lies behind Ryo Kagawa’s refusal, for example, to take part in broadcaster NHK’s periodic broadcasts on “folk songs: the music of our youth [*za fōku songu: seishun no uta*⁴⁶]” and his distaste for what he calls *dōsōkai* – class reunions – of aging folk icons. “Those things are boring,” Kagawa says. “They make me want to change the channel. Why would I participate in something that makes me want to change the channel? ...It’s the new generation’s turn now.” In this way, the artist pulls us away from an idealized past, and turns our attention to the ways in which folk’s critical threads are being picked up by new acts like Humbert-Humbert at events like Haruichiban, to be discussed below. This is important because the very possibility of such an inheritance hinges, in a sort of feedback loop, on the salvaging of folk’s critical potentiality from its submerged – if periodically exhumed – resting place in the idealized “counter-culture” of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Kagawa pursues this project in an impressive array of ways. In “*Akirame-bushi* [The Give-Up Diddy],” Kagawa proactively infects his art and its performative present(s) with Other histories and

⁴⁶ Information on this program may be accessed on NHK’s official homepage, at <https://hh.pid.nhk.or.jp/pidh07/ProgramIntro>Show.do?pkey=001-20161016-10-03272>.

critical impulses too readily confined to the past, both in the moment of its composition and in contemporary moments of performance. In “*Sensō shimashō* [Let Us Go to War],” he pursues a playful deployment of lyrics that outright reject the critical linguistic code of around-1970 and its platitudes of “peace,” opting instead to deploy a jarring call to arms. And in “*Kyokun I* [Lesson I],” Kagawa rejects the anti-war platitudes often associated with “folk” in order to scramble the gendered ways in which the state is made to make sense in the first place, both in 1971, and, as we shall see in our examination of the artist’s performance at the *Haruichiban*, in 2016, as well. In his continual deployment of these texts in specific contexts that reach from around-1970 right up to 2016, Kagawa troubles “folk’s” historically-isolated claim to critical vocabulary and its supposed authority by speaking/singing in unauthorized terms,⁴⁷ and by constantly redeploying his own texts in a way that is never nostalgic for the moment of around-1970, but that mixes constantly into evolving contemporary contexts. In these ways, Ryo Kagawa is able to release the musical tradition that, via Wataru Takada, he has been heir to, and conjure a free-floating critical temporality that is released to corrode the sense-making mechanisms of History itself.

A Note on Nostalgia

Given the fact that the foundations of both Ryo Kagawa’s lengthy performance career and Osaka’s *Haruichiban* music festival can be traced to the historical moment of around-1970, a juncture that carries with it specific associations and connotations, we cannot grapple to any degree with the artistry to be taken up herein without attending to the ever-lurking specter of nostalgia. Brief mention of its complexities and ambiguities must thus be made before venturing any further. In the Prelude and the first Chapter of this dissertation, we grappled briefly with

⁴⁷ Kagawa shared with me that this is an audacity for which he has been subjected to the discipline of “folk’s” machinery, and told to “get with the program.”

philosopher Svetlana Boym and her conceptualizations of nostalgia – and it may be helpful to revisit Boym’s insights in more detail here. In *The Future of Nostalgia*, Boym makes the crucial point that, despite its associations with homesickness and alienation, nostalgia at its base is not about a longing for a different *place*, but rather for a different *time*.⁴⁸ It is the manner in which this longing plays out that is of crucial importance: indeed, Boym concentrates on explicating what might be called the *ambiguities* of nostalgia, splitting the concept into what she terms “restorative nostalgia,” taken to be about the “total reconstructions of monuments of the past,”⁴⁹ and “reflective nostalgia,” whose focus “is not on recovery of what is perceived to be an absolute truth but [rather] on the mediation of history and passage of time.”⁵⁰ Rather than seeking the stillness of shelter in the recreation of “authentic” moments now past, a strategy that can only be static and deathly because it involves occupying moments understood to be gone and consigned to History, Boym’s reflective nostalgia has the past “insert[ing] itself into a present situation from which it borrows the vitality.” This sort of referencing of the past is about temporal flows: rather than providing a vessel by which actors (Kagawa, his audiences, co-performers at events like the *Haruichiban*) can retreat into self-enclosed and static authenticity, the aim of such praxis is to “narrate the relationship between past, present, and future.”⁵¹ Rather than providing a solution, the past here serves to open up a multitude of possibilities:⁵² its interjections are playful, humorous, destabilizing – and we can see repeated instances of precisely this sort of interjection in Ryo Kagawa’s artistry and the “liveness” that he pursues in performance places large and small.

⁴⁸ Boym, p. xv.

⁴⁹ Boym, p. 41.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 49.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid., p. 50.

Reflective nostalgia, in short, makes possible the enunciation of a differential temporality – what we are calling *critical temporality* herein. If restorative nostalgia spatializes time, creating doorless and windowless capsules of authenticity that can tolerate no motion, then reflective nostalgia, Boym teaches us, *temporalizes space*, infecting realms of lived experience with heterogeneous temporal flows that must be reckoned with in ongoing processes of Becoming. This critical temporality, which rejects unilateral Progress, is embedded in the present, but this makes that present an infected time, a reconfigured time, a time of play and of different possibilities – and the conjuring and evoking of this sort of lurching, unstable, and open-ended time is a tactic that is highly corrosive to the terms of “normative temporality,” which is itself a sort of spatialized time, if understood in Boymian terms. The productive possibilities of this corrosion is precisely that which we want to trace herein – and as such, our attention will be very much directed toward the reflective nostalgia that is associated with Ryo Kagawa’s artistic praxis, and that informs and potentiates his critique.

As we shall see in this chapter and the next, one way in which “critical temporality” is made manifest is through the deployment of texts; through ruthlessly embedding texts – the artist’s own; those borrowed from others – that reference other moments and speak of other possibilities in contexts in which they seem to have no rightful business at all. This, of course, is what makes “critical temporality” a challenge to the supposed “normative temporality” of a singular capitalist present. But this *embedding* is also an *unleashing*, and unleashing untimely texts to circulate and feed back through the Now and through social actors’ actual experiences of the world helps to clarify the shadowy outlines of different histories and other possibilities, as well – ones that are often disavowed. This sort of cyclical appropriation and redeployment of untimely, critical texts can be highly corrosive and destabilizing to dominant historical

narratives: as David Novak teaches us, “[c]irculation is a nexus of cultural production that defines the things, places, and practices within its loops... [it’s] an experimental force, which is compelled to go out of control.”⁵³ “[P]ositive feedback,” meanwhile, “represents the vicious circle that shifts a system away from historical stability and toward a saturation point of change that overloads the original content.”⁵⁴ The deployment, circulation and feedback of untimely, critical texts like Ryo Kagawa’s in specific moments and contexts, in short, can be corrosive to the ways in which dominant historical narratives are made to make sense in the first place. This is both the means and the ends of a meaningful critical practice that escapes the snare of the internal negation, and that we are calling “critical temporality” herein.

In the lyrics of his “*D no tsuki* [Waxing moon],” featured on the artist’s latest (2016) album *Mirai* [The Future] (“when the moon looks like a ‘D’ it means that it’s gaining its luminescence for that cycle, you know,” the artist told me when I bumped into him outside of the similarly intimate live house Chakra in Tenma, Osaka, ahead of a show in March, 2015), Ryo Kagawa implores his listener to “look for me; for me, and for Japan’s one more time.” In typical Kagawa fashion, he offers no straight answers as to where either may be found, but does drop a hint in the work’s chorus: “Where? Well, you can start with far away [*toriaezu kanata he*].” It seems that the distance that Kagawa is seeking to open up lies between ‘Japan’ as discourse, as History – and as we have seen, this includes “folk” as concept, as a stepping-stone in a “progress” consigned thereto – and the (not yet) “defeated possibilities” of thinking and living ‘Japan’ differently. In this, the artist comes very close to his protégé Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, and though the former has no particular love for the latter or for what his music has become, he concedes that they “are probably after the same thing, just in different ways.” We will return to

⁵³ See David Novak’s *JAPANOISE: Music at Edge of Circulation*, pp. 17-18.

⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 152-53.

Nagabuchi and his own attempts to conjure alternative communalities through critical manipulation of temporality in the following Chapter. For now, let us remain with Ryo Kagawa, and explore some of the ways in which he infects his ever-unfurling present with different times, conjuring a critical temporality that can shift his musical events somewhere “far away.” We must begin by following him more than a century back in time, to revered *enkashi* and social critic Soeda Azembō.

When Are We? Ryo Kagawa and the “Give-Up Diddy”

Voices from the past, as we shall see in the analyses that follow, play a key role in the conjuring of critical temporality – not as monuments to be recouped from an idealized yesteryear, but as figures to be deployed in the scrambling and questioning of History and “progress,” as malleable terrorizers of the Now. Soeda Azembo, musician, poet, and social critic of the Meiji and Taisho eras, represents precisely such a figure. Until the recent publication of Michael Lewis’ *A Life Adrift: Soeda Azembo, Popular Song and Modern Mass Culture in Japan*, however, relatively little⁵⁵ had been known about this artist and critic of Japan’s various modern transformations. Born in 1872, Azembō emerged as a cultural figure from the labor camps of the 1880s – part and parcel of Japan’s capitalist transformation – and initially became known as an *enkashi*, or *enka* artist, wandering minstrels of sorts who had key roles to play in the enunciation of critique at this time. And though long dead by the time of its emergence, Soeda, as James Dorsey teaches us, would be a figure of massive importance to Japan’s “folk” movement of around-1970 and its efforts to discover the sort of alternative, indigenous authenticity discussed

⁵⁵ Musicologist Toru Mitsui briefly visits Soeda and what he calls a “revitalization of *enka*” in the moment of the late 1960s, but does not expand on the specific tactics and potentials presented by citing this particular figure in the moment(s) of “folk”’s production.

above.⁵⁶ As we shall see below, Soeda and his compositions would go on to have an important “second life” in the musical critique unleashed by Ryo Kagawa (and others) nearly a century later – but these citations were not about the (re)animation of a lost authenticity, but rather about unleashing a jarring sort of *untimeliness* that would play a significant role in the temporal critique conjured in Kagawa’s artistry, and in the disparate moments of his performances of Soeda’s work.

Enka today are recognized most commonly as a form of postwar Japanese popular music that tends to be viewed as a bastion of conservatism, and as “the heart/soul of Japan.”⁵⁷ Around the 1880s, however, *enka* packed an explicitly critical punch. Growing out of the Freedom and Political Rights Movement of that period, *enka* were initially songs of the street, or protest songs – and this is the sort of *enka* that Soeda Azembō would take up as a composer and lyricist. Performed by wandering critics, *enka* provided a means by which those “were not allowed to speak their opinions... [could] sing them,”⁵⁸ and although these *enka* predated the possibility of mass distribution via modern recording technologies, advances in print technology and modernizing transportation networks saw leaflets of the *enkashi* performers’ lyrics – whose sale provided an income to the performers – reach far beyond the streetcorners. As scholar John Treat teaches us, some works of this period, such as the “Dynamite Dong Ditty,” advocated outright violence in order to wrest political rights and freedoms from the state,⁵⁹ and it was in the shadow

⁵⁶ See Dorsey’s “Breaking Records,” p. 99.

⁵⁷ Scholar Christine Yano mounts an extensive investigation into modern *enka* and their relation to notions of ‘Japaneseness’ in her *Tears of Longing: Nostalgia and the Nation in Japanese Popular Song* (Cambridge Harvard University Press, 2002). See p. 4 for the citation here.

⁵⁸ Jean Wilson, “*Enka*: The Music People Love or Hate,” in *Japan Quarterly*, Vol. 40, No. 2 (July-September, 1993) p. 287.

⁵⁹ The *Dynamite Dong Ditty* of 1885, for example, even appears to advocate violence in its call for social reform: “If we can have liberty in this country/ I’ll strive for the good and welfare of the people / If not,

of such restless murmurings that political parties were founded and a national Diet formed in 1890, defusing some of the critical spark of the period – a development that very much foreshadowed the political and social developments of around-1970 that saw much discontent appeased through state initiatives such as income-doubling and the repatriation of Okinawa, along with the passing of legislation aimed at curbing pollution, and so on. Although such appeasements nudged political *enka* into a gradual decline after 1890 and new sorts of *enka* began to emerge to take their place – a shift that was propelled by students in the cities singing different sorts of *enka* that spoke of urban loneliness and longing for the countryside; by importations of Western musical forms and advances in recording technologies that helped to spur a greater interest in the music than its message; and, much more ominously, by the Great Treason Incident of 1910 (which saw anarchist writer Kōtoku Shūsui hung) and the passing of the repressive Peace Preservation Law in 1923 – Soeda Azembō would continue composing and performing critical *enka* throughout this period. Among his compositions was “*Akirame-bushi* [The Give-Up Diddy],” which the artist recalls in his memoirs as having composed in 1906.⁶⁰

Before addressing this work itself, it is worthwhile to briefly consider the context of its composition – and given the nature of the song’s lyrics, this demands attention to the entrenchment of capitalism in this moment. Scholars such as Harry Harootunian, Miriam Silverberg, and others tend to emphasize the 1920s as a definitive moment of Japan’s modernizing upheaval, a moment when modern life was “figure[d] and fantasize[d] (as opposed

there will be the roar of dynamite.” See John Whittier Treat, ed., *Contemporary Japan and Popular Culture* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996), p. 112.

⁶⁰ See Soeda Azembō, trans. Michael Lewis, *A Life Adrift: Soeda Azembō, Popular Song, and Modern Mass Culture in Japan* (Oxon: Routledge, 2009), p. 119.

to actually lived) by increasing numbers in Japan,”⁶¹ and indeed, with its “modern girls” and “Marx boys,” and the “erotic grotesque nonsense”⁶² that served as their backdrop, this moment is absolutely crucial. Lewis teaches us that Soeda Azembo himself, after fading from the *enka* scene as the genre gradually declined and reinvented itself, re-emerged in this moment as an ethnographer and analyst of modernizing Asakusa, in Tokyo, providing both inspiration and data for Kawabata Yasunari in the writing of his Scarlet Gang of Asakusa.⁶³ Indeed, it is at this late point in his career that Miriam Silverberg excavates Soeda in the context of her own work. But this is not the moment of the “Give-Up Diddy,” and it behooves us to consider what was happening in Japan at the work’s much earlier juncture.

As Harootunian points out, capitalist economic development in Japan did not occur at a uniform pace in the decades leading to the 1920s – it was erratic and relatively slow, moving in fits and starts in accordance with geopolitical contingencies such as the first Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895, and the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905.⁶⁴ Until the outbreak of World War I – which “removed most of Japan’s advanced, industrial competitors from both domestic and world markets,”⁶⁵ particularly in heavy industries, and resulted in “an unprecedented stimulus in all sectors of the economy”⁶⁶ – the traditional sector remained predominant in Japan. This does not mean, however, that significant changes were not underway, many of them viscerally experienced by Soeda himself, who, as we shall recall, emerged from labor camps in this period. In the three decades between 1883 and 1913, for example, Japan’s workforce increased in

⁶¹ See Harry Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity: History, Culture, and Community in Interwar Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), p. xxxi.

⁶² Miriam Silverberg addresses Japanese modernity in this period in her *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense: The Mass Culture of Japanese Modern Times* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

⁶³ Silverberg, p. 184.

⁶⁴ Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity*, p. 3.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

number from 22 million to 26 million;⁶⁷ while the bulk of this increase remained in the traditional sector, the burgeoning modern sector also quadrupled during this relatively short period of time. Meanwhile, landowners were consolidating their economic and political grip on the land: consolidated farmland was increasingly leased to tenants, which led to an “accelerated tenancy increase[ing] to about 45% of the farming population by the time of World War I. By 1900 landowners were collecting rents equivalent to almost a quarter of Japan’s rice crop,”⁶⁸ allowing for the investment of capital in local enterprise and the maneuvering of wealth into political power. What we can note here, in the context of an expanding tenancy and commodification of labor power of the years around 1906, are conditions that are ripe for the emergence of a multifaceted sense of alienation, and it is frustration over this and the conditions of Japan’s capitalist transformation writ large that Soeda Azembo puts to music in his “Give-Up Diddy.”

Soeda’s “Give-Up Diddy” presents a drily witty skewering of some of the lived conditions of 1906, the historical moment in which the work was penned (as well as the moment in which, as Harootunian teaches us,⁶⁹ thinkers such as Tsubouchi Shoyo were beginning to meditate on the potentials of an overcoming of this sort of “modernity” that would feed into the fascism of Japan’s pre-war and war years). It speaks to the frustrations felt by Soeda and others amidst a capitalist modernization in which determinations of conditions of life and terms of survival were increasingly removed from the hands of social actors themselves, and to what at first glance seems a certain resignation and deference to the new order. The lyrics read, in part:

“Landlords, the rich – they’re all selfish people
And officials, they’re there to put on airs

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 5.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity*, p. 20.

Such is this floating world that I was born into
But I give up on resisting, and chalk it up to my own bad luck...

Third-rate rice from the continent, and dried seaweed for snacks;
What am I, a horse? A cow?
Put mercilessly to work from dawn til dusk
But I give up on resisting, thinking that it beats keeling over dead.

The sweat is wrung out of me, and all my livelihood drained
Every drop of blood sucked out, and then, on top of that,
They toss me to the curb, and step on me
But I give up on resisting, chalking that up to my own bad luck, too.

No matter how painful, how suffocating it may be,
The job needs to be done, the duties fulfilled.
Wanting rights and such –
That's just impossible, I think, and give up on that too...

No use meddling with our betters;
No one can win against a crying kid or a capitalist.
Poverty is just bad luck, and illness a sad burden
And I give up on worrying about them, knowing it can't be helped."

Here we are presented with precisely the increased tenancy, burgeoning power of the landlord class, expanding wage labor and commodification of labor power that we noted in our historical overview of the period, above. Until the very end of the work, this composition appears more a lament than a critique, a way to give voice to conditions of life that are growing stifling – “suffocating,” in the critic’s words – under a solidifying capitalist regime. But in its very last moments, the work takes its repetitive refrain of “giv[ing] up” and deploys it to turn the tables:

“Give up, now; go on and just give up
It’ll be better in the long run if you just give up
But I’m an animal that was born free, so
I give up on the idea of giving up [*akirame kirenu to akirameru*].”

By suggesting “giv[ing] up on the idea of giving up,” Soeda’s “Give-Up Diddy” here wrests open a portal for critique of and resistance against the apparently already-hegemonic terms of life for many in Japan in 1906 – and it does so by wryly deploying the very resignation required for

its continuous revival. The idea of “giving up” feeds back onto itself here, becoming a double-negative that threatens to eat away at the very normalization of capitalism and “progress” that gave rise to it. Though Soeda would himself later appear to succumb to the lure of survival secured in the bosom of the state, particularly with his poetic and highly over-blown celebration of Kishi Nobusuke’s 1940 New Order (though the argument might be made that this apparent betrayal of his critical roots was in fact a highly complex, tongue-in-cheek dressing-down of his beloved⁷⁰ Japan’s drift toward fascism), we have in the “Give-Up Diddy” Soeda Azembo at his critical best – and it was this Soeda who would be channeled by the aforementioned Takada Wataru – and later Ryo Kagawa – in their own critical projects.

Takada Wataru would go on to resurrect Soeda Azembo’s “Give-Up Diddy” in 1969, including it in the album that he released that year through the important URC label, in collaboration with folk group *Itsutsu no Akai Fūsen* [The Five Red Balloons].⁷¹ The work is incorporated into this album in live-recording format, from a performance that, as Takada’s framing comments reveal, occurred somewhere around October of 1968. “There are only around two months left in the year Meiji 100,” the artist says before launching into the work, “so I’m going to sing through this one carefully [*jikkuri utawasete itadakimasu*.]” He goes on to apparently lambaste his compatriots willingness, at least in his view, to “just give up.” “This song is the best one that there is for expressing the disposition of the Japanese people [*Nihonjin no seishitsu*],” he deadpans in the recording, although we might also view this comment as

⁷⁰ In his translation and annotation of Soeda’s memoirs, Lewis is careful to teach us that Soeda’s artistic praxis is fueled by a love for ‘Japan’ – as is Ryo Kagawa’s and Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi’s. The onus is on the scholar to attend carefully and critically to what this ‘love’ may mean, and to resist the temptation to dismiss it under the rubric of exclusionary, often state-driven nationalism. What we are presented with here, in other words, is something quite different from the *jiko-hitei* – self-denial – discussed by Oguma Eiji in his article cited herein – and yet, the potentials of this stance on the world are no less critical.

⁷¹ Takada Wataru, “*Akirame-bushi* [The Give-Up Diddy],” from the album *Takada Wataru/Itsutsu no Akai Fūsen*. February, 1969. Lyrics by Soeda Azembō, 1906. Osaka: URC Records, LP.

speaking to Takada's highest hope in the collective critical faculties of the same, given the work's concluding twist, whose impact is evident in the chuckling gasps of understanding caught by the recording at its very end.

In a move that seems intended to forefront the lyrical content of the work over the musical, Takada reproduces Soeda's lyrics over the repetitive, chorus-less melody line of the "Black Mountain Rag" – an American traditional tune with roots in the Ozark Mountains. There is doubtless much to be learned from an investigation of the factors that went in to Takada's choice of an American tune as the melodic basis for this most "Japanese" (in his view) of works. But what is perhaps more important than *what* is being sung about here is *when* it is being sung. We have already noted that Takada Wataru, in his appropriation of the "Give-Up Diddy," pointedly suggested that the year of his performance was Meiji 100 – in other words, the one hundredth year of the Meiji Era, which commenced in 1868, enveloped the capitalist upheavals detailed above and Soeda Azembo's 1906 response thereto, and in fact ended in 1912 with the death of the Meiji emperor and the ascendance of the Taisho regent, for whom the ensuing era was named – which is of course, at least according to the dictates of History, entirely untrue. The Taisho (1912-1926) and Shōwa (1926-1989) eras, each associated in their own ways with "progress," are erased from the historical annals here,⁷² and the suggestion seems to be made that no real departure was managed from the turbulence and crises of Japan's early forays into capitalism. And indeed, the very fact that this temporal critique is being mounted in the late 1960s – in the very midst of Japan's period of high-speed economic growth, which lasted from 1955 to 1973 – makes it a powerful challenge, along with other highly-critical works like

⁷² This trick also, however, serves to eradicate fascism, the Pacific War, and Soeda's apparent collusion therewith, which may be viewed as something of a troubling omission.

Okabayashi Nobuyasu's 1969 "San'ya Blues,"⁷³ to the normative terms of Takada's Historical present, with its emphasis on income doubling, middle-classism, and the purported overcoming of the contradictions and consequences of capitalism in the achievement of a "miraculous" economic regime whose particulars were somehow hard-wired into Japanese DNA.⁷⁴ And unlike the New Left, who took "the ravages of the growth-oriented state"⁷⁵ for granted as precondition to mounting an oppositional critique thereof, Takada's temporal critique resets History in order to challenge (indeed reject) the idea of "progress" in the first place.⁷⁶

Ryo Kagawa took over the "Give-Up Diddy" from Takada in 1971, releasing it as part of his LP *Kyokun* (or "Lessons," named for the artist's signature song "*Kyokun I* [Lesson I]"). Kagawa's interpretation of this work reproduces Soeda's and Takada's lyrics nearly verbatim, but employs a playful, almost Venetian accordion to bounce along the Black Mountain Rag melody line in a manner that warps expectations for a Takada Wataru-style "folk" sound from the work, and helps – sonically – to release it from the discursive norms of its own moment of production. Of crucial importance here, however, is the fact that Ryo Kagawa has continued to make this work a part of his repertoire, performing it again and again in the dark, intimate spaces like Sankusu Hall, in a collaborative sort of effort with those who come to see him, and to participate in the music event. It was, in fact, the "Give-Up Diddy" that Kagawa deployed to

⁷³ Okabayashi's work sings of the harsh realities facing day laborers in Tokyo's San'ya District in the midst of Japan's period of high-speed economic growth.

⁷⁴ Harootunian, "America's Japan/Japan's Japan."

⁷⁵ See John W. Dower, "Peace and Democracy in Two Systems: External Policy and Internal Conflict," in Andrew Gordon, Ed., *Postwar Japan as History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), p. 22.

⁷⁶ This temporal critique does carry with it faint echoes in some of the tactics deployed by University of Tokyo student radicals, who called for the "dismantl[ing of] the Tokyo Imperialistic University." As Dower (pp. 21-22) points out, by "neatly meshing the notion of a revival of prewar autocracy (when the elite University of Tokyo had been named Tokyo Imperial University) with the argument that higher education in Japan once again was serving primarily the purposes of an expansionist state," students also attempted a critical mixing of the past with the present.

open his show at Sankusu in November of 2014, a performative choice that plotted yet another point along an arc of historicity, in a decades-long challenge to the legitimacy of contemporary capitalist modernity. Indeed, over a forty-six year career, this song has been made to trace through conditions of capitalist turbulence and upheaval, what Ito has identified as unstable cycles of crisis and recovery:⁷⁷ from the “oil shocks” of the early 1970s to the overheated and largely urban “bubble economy,” to the recessionary 1990s, neoliberalism, and Abenomics, the relay-like succession (*hikitsugi*) of the “Give-Up Diddy” from artist to artist and from moment to moment insists upon a constant, an indictment of the conditions of capitalism that refute the claim of its overcoming and draws a temporal arc that flatlines the idea of progress, inviting Other interpretations of the notion of “history.” And in so doing, Kagawa continues the work started by Takada Wataru in challenging what Osborne has termed the “perpetual present” emerging out of an overcome past, the “ever-new in the ever-same,”⁷⁸ and what we might also conceive of as the aforementioned “homogenous, empty time”⁷⁹ of the nation-state and capital, infusing this with a critical temporality that continually infects Now with its own past, and demands that we face it head-on.

Careful attention to Soeda Azembō and the various incarnations of his “Give-Up Diddy” allows us to begin to break out of the somehow romanticized, idealized moment of around-1970 within which “critical folk,” as we have already seen, is so deeply embedded. Importantly, this work traces the longer arc of an ongoing historicity that transcends around-1970, and taking it up allows Ryo Kagawa to discomfit the present with a past that was never overcome, scrambling

⁷⁷ Makoto Ito, *The Japanese Economy Reconsidered* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000), p. 8.

⁷⁸ Peter Osborne, *The Politics of Time: Modernity and the Avante Garde* (London: Verso Books, 1995), p. 20.

⁷⁹ See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1983).

notions of “progress” and demanding that the Now be understood in a new light. What is conjured in this artistic praxis is critical temporality par excellence. In other words, by composing a musical thread that references the initial moment of Japan’s capitalist modernization (and the intensely critical reactions thereto) and ties together that moment, the moment of high-speed economic growth in the late 1960s, and his neoliberal now – the artist was still performing this song in concert as of 2015, thus making it an important component of the co-generative “liveness” that he seeks to create at his musical events – Ryo Kagawa seems to throw the entire idea of capitalist “progress” into question. By melding the contemporary with a past that was purportedly overcome four decades ago,⁸⁰ in other words, Kagawa manages, following Wataru Takada, to conjure a critical temporality – a sort of non-progress – within which the validity of the very idea of capitalist modernity might be reconsidered. This is the sort of temporal manipulation that is crucial to Ryo Kagawa’s critical praxis, and we will see it again, in different form, in his intriguing and paradoxical pacifist call to arms.

Ryo Kagawa as Warring Peacemaker: “*Sensō Shimashō* [Let Us Go to War]”

As we have already noted, the period of the 1960s and early 1970s is something of an idealized, romanticized moment in the History of Japan. In a Japanese-language interview with the Asahi Shinbun on August 4, 2015, for example, historian John Dower spoke in glowing terms of this moment, and in a way that served to effectively sum up the ways in which many scholars and commentators approach the sixties and early 1970s: “The Japanese took democracy

⁸⁰ This is the discursive legacy of “Japan’s Japan.”

into their own hands in the 60s,” he recalled. “This is when they really raised their voices.”⁸¹ It is important to note that Dower was speaking in the context of a moment that was about to see the passage of Shinzō Abe’s much-reviled omnibus legislation that “reinterpreted” Japan’s security relationship with the United States – a reinterpretation that would grant Japanese military forces the ability to engage in military operations that are not solely defensive of the home islands – and as such his words have a particular gravitas and significance about them. Nonetheless, however, the idealization of blunt and direct oppositional critique – to say nothing of the highly Americanized idealization of something called “democracy” – that underlies this nostalgia for a better critique in a better moment serves to accent the way in which Japan’s critical folk music has been understood and valued by scholars of the period. Notions of critical counterculture and of direct and oppositional political (“democratic”) action are of course key to understanding the critical thrust of this period, but by tying critical musical praxis – such as the “folk” tradition to which Ryo Kagawa is heir – too tightly to these transient Historical moments, we are left with no option but to mourn its supposed demise when moments shift, and critical tactics change: indeed, this appears to be precisely the mourning that undergirds James Dorsey’s aforementioned conclusion that “the politically motivated folk music of Japan’s 1960s was... shortlived.”⁸²

Dorsey, of course, is not wrong. As we saw in Chapter One, the solidification of what Harootunian has termed “Japan’s Japan” in the moment of around-1970 saw the concomitant withering of what has been commonly understood as political critique – but what the brute reality of this fact may demand, rather than mourning, is a re-evaluation of what we understand

⁸¹ This interview appeared on page 15 of the Asahi Newspaper on August 4, 2015. While no longer available on the Asahi’s website, a cache of the interview may be viewed online at <http://ameblo.jp/tousekitetsu/entry-12057994071.html>.

⁸² See Dorsey, *Breaking Records*, p. 104.

the political to be,⁸³ and a direct grappling with the unpredictable and unexpected ways in which social actors aim to live “off the page.” Our understanding of the political, in short, suffers if we situate politics solely in terms of a countercultural, oppositional stance: while street-level opposition to the renewal of Japan’s security treaty with the United States (known as “AMPO” in popular discourse) in 1960 and 1970, for example, along with heated opposition to the Vietnam War – led by the large grassroots organization *Beheiren* – were key moments in the history of modern Japan, nostalgic pining for their reanimation tends to spawn notions of artistic authenticity that critical voices must adhere to if they are to be understood as effective, or accepted.⁸⁴ In Japan, this was precisely the “politically motivated” folk music of around-1970, exemplified in such formulaically anti-war songs as the well-known “*Shinda otoko no nokoshita mono wa* [What the dead man left behind].”⁸⁵ Caught in the powerful pull of the idealization of

⁸³ Politics in this period – indeed, throughout much of modern history – tend to be understood in terms of (L)eft versus (R)ight, of democracy, and so on. Such a stance tends to understand the “political” as relative positionalities taken amidst predetermined discursive categories, and has difficulty attending to ambiguities and complexities that do not adapt themselves to binary positions of “opposition” versus acquiescence, or indeed of left versus right. Thinkers such as Bruno Latour insist that such a subsumption of politics into predetermined categories renders their vitality invisible, and neutralizes political potentiality – rather, a Latourian approach to the political would be interested in tracing new associations across actors, narratives, and moments, attending to the ways in which the political bubbles up out of these associations, rather than compelling actors and moments to fit a rubric called “the political.” Keith Negus, speaking specifically to music, insists that political potential cannot be assessed “based on the idea that a song has a straightforward ‘message’ that us then transmitted, received, and understood.” Indeed, we must be aware of “how songs and music accumulate and connect with new meanings and beliefs as they pass through time and travel to distant places.” The sorts of reassemblies and contingent possibilities that these thinkers gesture toward provide a scaffolding for understanding Ryo Kagawa’s critiques, and his desire to upset the sense-making mechanisms of the social through the conjuring and deployment of what we are calling “critical temporality.” See Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) and Keith Negus, *Popular Music in Theory: An Introduction* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1996), pp. 193-95.

⁸⁴ In conversation with Ryo Kagawa in June, 2015, the artist shared some of the ways in which he had been subjected to the rebukes of “folk”’s mainstream, essentially being told to “pick a side [*hakkiri shinásai*].”

⁸⁵ This mainstay of the “folk” moment was written in 1965 by lyricist Tanikawa Shuntarō and composer Takemitsu Tōru, and has been performed by a wide range of “folk” figures, from Moriyama Ryōko to Komuro Hitoshi to Takaishi Tomoya.

the sixties (and the early 70s), we are left with a very clear image of what engaged, critical “folk” music *should be*,⁸⁶ and when the context and circumstance affording⁸⁷ the development of such music passes – like heat and humidity fuelling thunderstorms on a summer evening – we are left with little choice but to memorialize these voices as collateral damage of History, wondering wistfully of lost opportunities, or periodically exhume them as relics of a time now past,⁸⁸ in what Ryo Kagawa has scornfully called “class reunions,” and dismissed as “those let’s-all-join-hands sort of things.” It is precisely the constricting attributes of an idealized “folk” and the self-imposed confinement that attends a valorization of that music that Ryo Kagawa aims to overcome – and as we shall see in this section, the artist’s satirical call to arms in his 1971 “*Sensō shimashō* [Let Us Go to War]” constitutes a particularly provocative volley in this battle.

If Harootunian and Endo are correct in their assertions that “progress” and “History” constitute manners of disciplinary narrative apparatuses capable of suppressing other histories and alternative collectivities, then “folk,” as internal negation thereto, might be seen, in a way, as complicit in the same. Kagawa’s “*Sensō shimashō*” seems to resist this – at minimum, the work very explicitly does not fit the mold of the protest-folk standard. It has no apparent interest in mounting a clichéd pacifist, countercultural, oppositional stance, and instead weaves a tragicomical story that manipulates time, blending Japan’s wartime (1931-1945) with the postwar in order to interrogate what it means to be Japanese in 1971 – and to think about the social relations and interconnectivities that give meaning to the idea of ‘Japan’ in different ways.

⁸⁶ Japanese musicologist Toru Mitsui notes the way in which “these songs... were intimately connected to New Leftist student activism and protest... [and were] a medium for student protest as part of campaigns that opposed the Vietnam War.” See Mitsui, p. 81.

⁸⁷ Bonnie C. Wade discusses the concept of affordance in the context of musical development in modern Japan in her *Composing Japanese Musical Modernity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014).

⁸⁸ This is precisely the point of NHK programming like the aforementioned *za fōku songu: seishun no uta*, which tends to wistfully celebrate the music of this period as belonging to the annals of history – to be celebrated from time to time, perhaps, but never really relevant to the historical Now.

In this sense, “*Sensō shimashō*” seems, at first glance, to meld well with the aforementioned scholarly explications of “folk” as being concerned with the attainment of a new sort of authenticity. As I hope will become clear in the brief analysis to follow, however, the critique that attends “*Sensō shimashō*” has little to do with replacing one authenticity with another: rather, by confronting the present (in the moment of the work’s production in 1971, but also in performance in 2015) with the past moment of around-1945, Kagawa demolishes the normalcy of the dominant discursive narrative of these presents – Japan’s Cold War relationship with the United States – and leaves a door open for reconfigured alliances and antagonisms. At the same time, however, this work also constitutes an important volley in Kagawa’s ongoing battle to liberate his own musical critique from its confinement in the 1960s and early 1970s, and to allow it to flow along a longer historical arc – and this amounts to nothing less than a battle *with* a Historically-confined practice called “folk.” I want to suggest, in short, that we can approach “*Sensō shimashō*” as a means through which critical temporality is being conjured in three key ways. First, the intriguing musical and lyrical praxes that structure the work aim to rattle (at a bodily level) the common-sensical History of Japan’s (Cold War) relationship to the United States. Second, the very structure and subject matter of the work issues a challenge to the authority of “folk” as architect of the contours of critical (musical) praxis in this moment. And third, the work is made to live dynamically in the present moment (as opposed to merely being exhumed in the wistful sort of “class reunions” that Kagawa so disdains) as a means of tying critique in the present to the past, thereby rescuing the music from confinement in a mourned and idealized moment now gone. In his disparate deployments of this work, Kagawa is reconfiguring ‘Japan’ from a position that is marginal not only to the “status quo,” but to a key form of artistic expression – “folk” – that has become, in this moment, a discourse all its own. Searching out a

new form of critique for artists like Ryo Kagawa, in short, entails an almost violent extraction from the ideological, “normative temporality” that encloses both – and as I shall suggest below, this means jarring listeners out of the sense-making narratives of History by delivering shocks that resonate at the level of the very body that is the site of experiencing these narratives⁸⁹ and rendering visible the follies of war and of Japan’s Cold War relationship with the United States.

“*Sensō Shimashō*,” from Ryo Kagawa’s 1971 album *Kyokun* [Lessons],⁹⁰ is not as widely recognized as is, for example, the artist’s signature “*Kyokun I* [Lesson I],” owing in no small part to the fact that the work was effectively banned from Japan’s airwaves immediately upon its release. But this helps to lend it a certain mystique as one of the artist’s most intriguing – and, at first glance, puzzling – works. Lyrically, “*Sensō shimashō*” consists of a first person narrative, and, looking back at the closing days of the Japan’s war, tells the story of an individual Japanese man who set out to save his beloved nation-state:

“It’s already been quite some time since this story unfolded;
Way back in the days of the Great East Asia War
The bombing of Japan was at its glorious peak [*hana-zakari*]
And the Great Japanese Empire was in the midst of a most difficult battle.

One man, who had long held his peace,
Suddenly rose up, crying “I can stand no more!”
And, mounting a horse, set out to visit locales across the land
In order to save the Yamato Nation, the Land of the Gods.”

Unlike other works from this period that entail critiques involving the complete detachment from the sense-making mechanisms of ‘Japan’ around 1970 and the quest for something new and “far away” – such as supergroup *Itsutsu no Akai Fūsen*’s “*Tōi sekai ni* [To a Distant World],” a song whose transportative potentials pivot on the deployment of a dreamy and otherworldly autoharp

⁸⁹ Abel, p. 145.

⁹⁰ Ryo Kagawa, “*Sensō shimashō* [Let Us Go to War],” from the album *Kyokun* [Lessons]. 1971. Osaka: URC Records, LP.

phrase⁹¹ – there is nothing fanciful or transportative about these opening lyrics, or about the instrumentation that gives them their musical foundation. Indeed, the single acoustic guitar meandering through a repetitive minor melody constructed around low and mournful notes gives, if anything, a stark sense of a dark reality that contrasts sharply with the dreamlike qualities of *Itsutsu no Akai Fūsen*'s amplified autoharp. As De Nora has argued, music, when deployed in specific contexts, can serve as an “organizing device for bodily activity,”⁹² and while De Nora is thinking specifically here of the ways in which music can become part of a strategy aimed at facilitating aerobic exercise and the like, there is an *affective* aspect to this argument that speaks to the ways in which music's tonality and sound might be deployed to help draw a listener into a posited world (“look for me,” we will recall Kagawa urging), an artistic sort of enveloping that may be understood as *physical*.⁹³ The low and mournful tones that establish and maintain the weighty mood of “*Sensō shimashō*,” in other words, might be conceived of as devices that are meant to apprehend the listener and lead him or her to a ‘serious’ sort of identification with the work’s narrative that is rooted at the level of the body. As we shall see, however, it is precisely this ‘seriousness’ that Kagawa ultimately *destroys* in the work, even as it is being musically maintained, in order to deliver a shock to the listener and achieve his critical aim(s).

And indeed, Kagawa wastes little time in delivering his shocks. Immediately upon establishing the subject of his “story,” a great patriot who is intent upon saving the “Land of the Gods,” Kagawa’s musical narrative veers wildly into the realm of parody, satire, and dark humor.

⁹¹ *Itsutsu no Akai Fūsen*, “*Tōi sekai ni* [To a Distant World],” from the album *Takada Wataru/Itsutsu no Akai Fūsen*. February, 1969. Lyrics by Soeda Azembō, 1906. Osaka: URC Records, LP.

⁹² See Tia Denora’s 2004 chapter entitled “Musical Practice and Structure: A Toolkit”, appearing in Eric Clarke and Nicholas Cook, eds., *Empirical Methodology: Aims, Methods, Prospects* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 35~56.

⁹³ In her discussion of materiality and iconicity of music, DeNora insists that sound and music “should be thought of in terms of its internal impact (and potential impact) on the body... One may ‘recognize’ in music parallels to emotional and embodied processes.” See De Nora, *After Adorno*, pp. 100-103.

While we lack the space here to dissect this dense and complex work and its various narrative strategies in full, we can nonetheless mount an initial assessment of some of the ways in which the artist yokes it into the service of questioning Historical narratives of ‘Japan’ – and, particularly, of the nature of its relationship with ‘America’ – in the historical moment of his writing. Of the impetus behind his great patriot’s sojourn throughout Japan, Kagawa sings:

“He visited those toy shops that had escaped the bombing,
And bought up all of their fireworks –
And then, extracting the gunpowder from those fireworks,
He made two great bombs.⁹⁴

This is the only way left to save the Great Japanese Empire, he said,
And slinging the two bombs over his shoulders,
Set out to swim across the Pacific.”

The ridiculousness of this is palpable. But we would do a great disservice to Kagawa by dismissing this work as some sort of simplistic musical slapstick – indeed, as Glenda R. Carpio has argued, “critique [often hides] in sheep’s clothing [such as humor].”⁹⁵ And while we can clearly sense here a critique of the new nationalism that was beginning to develop and emerge in Japan in the 1970s,⁹⁶ it seems even more important to sense herein a critique of Japan’s Cold War relationship with the United States – an alliance that may be considered an embodiment of

⁹⁴ We must offer at least a passing acknowledgement of the way in which these “two great bombs” seem to reference the atomic weapons deployed against Hiroshima and Nagasaki in the closing days of the Pacific War. On the one hand, the specific mention of these weapons – and their composition – seems simultaneously to suggest the folly of stubborn resistance against a superior American military machine, and to place the attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki within the tragicomedy of war that the artist works to unfurl in this work. By placing these “great bombs” at the disposal of his fanatical, loincloth-clad patriot, however, Kagawa seems also to remind compatriots of their complicity in U.S.-led geopolitical military policy at the height of the Cold War, speaking back to well-worn narratives of Japanese victimhood in the world’s first nuclear attack. As is the case with most of Kagawa’s diverse critiques, these “two great bombs” can be read in multiple ways.

⁹⁵ Glenda R. Carpio, *Laughing Fit to Kill: Black Humor in the Fictions of Slavery* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 31.

⁹⁶ This critique is rendered clearer when one considers the album on which Sensō Shimashō as an intertextual whole – this work appears shortly after Kagawa’s representative work “Kyokun I”, which constitutes a harsh rejection of nationalism and its (in his eyes) dangers, and which also cites Japan’s experiences in the Second World War.

the “normative temporality” of capitalist History in its own right. Kagawa seems to cast doubt on the validity of this “alliance” by spinning up – in the high Cold War moment of 1971 – a narrative of resistance against the United States whose unlikelihood is literally laughable, and a darkly comic portrayal of the slavish and inferior positionality of Japan[ese] vis-à-vis America. And in an intriguing move, Kagawa locates this slavishness and inferiority in the very body of his “great patriot” himself, appropriating⁹⁷ racist stereotypes of the Japanese held by America during the war years – stereotypes that speak to a fundamental backwardness, of a fanatic race walking about “in a single loincloth with a sword dangling at his side” – challenging his listeners to see themselves in the manner in which he seems to suggest that America still sees them in 1971, and to destabilize their conceptualizations of themselves as full and equal participants in an American-led Cold War capitalist modernity as a means by which to facilitate a critique of their political positionality. What we are presented with in this work, in short, is an intriguing instance of the conditions associated with the ossification of “Japan’s Japan” serving to *invigorate* critique, rather than stifling it, as dominant narratives tend to suggest.

This sort of deployment of dark humor and satire to destabilizing and critical ends is not without precedent. Carpio, for example, describes the manner in which African American cultural producers such as William Brown and Charles Chestnutt “purposely used... outlandish forms of satire while also appropriating racist portrayals of black Americans to critique slavery and racism.” While the historical specificities of Ryo Kagawa in 1971 and the experiences of

⁹⁷ Kagawa’s ‘appropriation’ here constitutes an intriguing twist on the generally-accepted understanding of the concept as pointing to “the ways in which post-colonial societies take over those aspects of the imperial culture... that may be of use to them in articulating their own social and cultural identities.” Appropriation is not used here as a means, for example, to posit a cohesive identity as a means to “resist... political or cultural control”, but rather to destabilize the very cohesive identity that had been posited – with American assistance – by 1970 and open it up to question. For more on appropriation, see Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts* (New York: Routledge, 2009), pp. 15~17.

African Americans under the terrors of slavery clearly do not equate, and while it is not my intent to trivialize the sufferings of the latter by invoking those sufferings in the present context, such a contrasting is nonetheless illuminating in any attempt to reveal Kagawa's critical praxis. And while there is certainly a danger that attends the citation and affirmation – however satirically – of racist stereotypes, Kagawa seems here to place his wager on the notion that “the laughter that [such a citing] produce[s] could be turned to *social change*.⁹⁸

To follow Carpio, then, laughter – at least in our context – becomes a way to jar a listening audience out of an uncritical stupor and to voice a critique of a dominant Historical narrative which was (and continues to be) built around notions of U.S.-Japan partnership and the inevitable unfolding of a “progress” that saw ‘Japan’ (at last) take its rightful and predetermined place in an American-led economic and geopolitical order. The very audience that had been drawn into a deep, even physical, engagement with Kagawa’s work on the basis of its serious and mournful tones and opening lines is *rattled*, and the dark humor that is the agent in this rattling serves to “posit a disorderly, infinitely Protean universe”⁹⁹ that is rendered all the more destabilizing for its deployment within such a mournful and decidedly *un-fanciful* work.

And it is Kagawa’s “patriot” that continues to serve as the nucleus around which this universe orbits, and the wedge by which the sense-making mechanisms of History circa 1971 are split. The work leaves no doubt as to the manner in which the America-Japan relationship (the dominant Historical narrative of the moment) leads to the ultimate downfall of his “great patriot.” Upon reaching America with his crude, homemade weapons “after many months and days” only

⁹⁸ Carpio, p. 35.

⁹⁹ Max F. Schulz, “Toward a Definition of Black Humor”, chapter in Alan R. Pratt, Ed., *Black Humor: Critical Essays* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1993), p. 168.

to find the war over and the two countries “getting along famously,” the furious patriot returns to Japan to

“...stand in front of the Diet, glowering at it and
Shouting at Bulging-Eyes [*gyorome*] to come out and face him;
But he was standing in a hellish whirlwind of vehicles, you see,
And he was struck and killed by a car, or so they say.”

It is crucial to note here that the patriot’s homecoming is not occurring in 1945 or 1946 – rather, he stands before the Diet in Tokyo in or around 1970, as evidenced by Kagawa’s specific reference to “Bulging-Eyes,” or *gyorome*, the nickname given to Prime Minister Eisaku Sato, who governed Japan from 1964 to 1972. We can thus see temporality being bent and refashioned in this work in two related ways – first, in the collapsing of time between war and ‘peace’ confronting Sato with the voices of the dead; but also in the throwing of the idea of ‘progress’ into question by infecting it with ghostly voices from a past that has evidently not been overcome by “progress.” The symbolic allusions to an American-led “democracy” and of Japan’s own deepening commodity culture in these closing lines are too clear to miss – the patriot is, after all, struck and killed by one car among (presumably) hundreds in front of the Diet buildings – and indeed, Kagawa appears to reject both ‘America’ and ‘Japan’ in this work, in favor of the positing of a new critical and highly temporalized space in which to rethink and reengineer the social. To follow Dodd, the story *becomes* the space – and the space is critical, the site of a rhetorical battle (“let us emerge victorious”) aimed at claiming what Kagawa would much later call “Japan’s one more time;” a spectacular example of what Lefebvre has called “counter-space”.¹⁰⁰ And through the positing of a critical temporality that serves to simultaneously enfold

¹⁰⁰ See Henri Lefebvre, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith, *The Production of Space* (Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 1991).

and upend his audience, Kagawa seems intent upon jolting his listener into joining him in this space, as well.¹⁰¹

In his utterly satirical call for a new war against America, then, Ryo Kagawa uses tactics of very dark humor to de-familiarize the terms of his contemporary social and prod his listeners into a new way of conceptualizing their own positionality in 1971, and to question the logic by which many in Japan increasingly had their identities defined for them in this moment.¹⁰² The critique that Ryo Kagawa unfurls in “*Sensō shimashō*” is, as we have seen, highly *temporal* in nature: through clever musical and lyrical strategies that aim to rattle bodies embroiled in an ideological History, the artist here disturbs that History’s claim to authority. In so doing, he seems almost to channel Theodor Adorno, who wielded a viscous critique of what might be called, following Mark Abel, becoming-time, an embodiment of abstract time made vessel for Harootunian’s “progress.” But Kagawa does not only cast doubt upon History’s master narrative here: notably, by collapsing the temporal distance between the closing days of the Pacific War and the heady days of high-speed economic growth and postwar “peace and democracy,” the artist seems to borrow a note or two from the “Give-Up Diddy” (discussed above) and question the notion of postwar “progress” itself. This seems not so much a rewinding of History as a scrambling of its sense-making terms – and by virtue of questioning History’s narrative, an invitation is extended by the artist to imagine it differently. And in this imagining – which seems

¹⁰¹ As I have already stressed, individual interpretations of text are highly dependent upon context and intertextuality, and my aim here is not to posit or define reaction or interpretation on the part of a rhetorical listener. Rather, the focus here remains on the apparent desires and aims of the artist himself – whether or not these aims are realized among his listeners is a different matter altogether.

¹⁰² Kenneth G. Henshall, *Dimensions of Japanese Society: Gender, Margins and Mainstream* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, Inc., 1999), p. 171. Harry Harootunian’s essay, “America’s Japan/Japan’s Japan”, in Masao Miyoshi and H.D. Harootunian, eds., *Japan in the World* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), is also useful in gauging the discursive narrative of ‘Japan’ that Kagawa seemed intent upon questioning.

to reject the terms of ‘Japan’ and ‘America’ in 1971 – we can detect Kagawa’s quest for “Japan’s one more time.”

The object of Ryo Kagawa’s temporal critique, however, is not solely Japan’s Historical entanglement with the United States in the Cold War moment. In an intriguing move, the artist also seems to attack the integrity of “folk” as the internal negation of the status-quo in Japan around-1970. As we have seen, this work is far removed from the discursively pacifist, anti-war nature of “folk” music in this moment – but this does not mean that the work does not stake a similarly critical stance. “I hated all that ‘lo, the dawn is near [*yoake wa chikai*] stuff,’” Kagawa told me over coffee in Tokyo – and here, in these invocations of lyrical snippets, he seemed to be mounting a direct attack on the student-movement anthem “*Tomo-yo* [O Friend],”¹⁰³ sung regularly at folk-guerilla gatherings under the West Entrance to JR Shinjuku Station in the 1960s, as well as by such folk giants as Okabayashi Nobuyasu. “If you’re going to sing an anti-war song anyway, it’s much more effective to play around with the way that you communicate it [*hyogen hōhō*]. There’s not much to be gained by just yelling *sensō hantai* [no war].” This stance amounts to something akin to heresy in “folk” music culture, and as we noted above, Kagawa reports having endured the chastisements and criticisms of the “critical folk” establishment for his efforts. But there seems to be something much more significant at play here than simple rebellion against a (musical) institution. We have discussed at some length above the ways in which “critical folk” around-1970 in Japan became conceptually inseparable from certain notions of “politics,” idealizations of oppositional protest and historically-specific declarations of pacifism, and so on – and the ways in which this hyper-association with a specific historical moment threatens not only to complete “critical folk’s” very object of critique as the internal

¹⁰³ Okabayashi Nobuyasu, “*Tomo-yo* [O Friend],” B-side to the single *San’ya Blues*. September 5, 1968. Tokyo: Victor Records. LP single.

negation thereof, but to render this critique irrelevant once the moment has passed. Through an intentional heresy against “folk,” voiced in a (satirical) call for war, not for “peace,” “*Sensō shimashō*” presents itself as an attempt to situate the composer’s critique not as an internal negation of war – and here we should recall the artist’s disdain for formulaic and empty phrases like “*sensō hantai*” – but rather as an interrogation of notions of history and progress, and of the givenness of the Japan-US relationship itself. In so doing, Ryo Kagawa seems intent upon rejecting “folk’s” own Historical authority and freeing it from its own trap, and upon ensuring that its critique remains relevant across much broader historical moments.

History will define Ryo Kagawa – whether the artist likes it or not – as a founding and key personage of Japan’s “folk” music movement of around-1970. As such, he is already associated with a countercultural position, already participant in a turbulent and contested¹⁰⁴ effort to posit a new sort of “authenticity” amidst anxieties over consumerism, capitalism, and Japan’s Cold War relationship with the United States.¹⁰⁵ But as we have already seen, authenticity is associated with stasis: this association seems to lock “folk’s” attempts at rethinking collectivity into a memorialized time-now-past, and to sterilize its critique as irrelevant to the present. Ryo Kagawa seems to have recognized these perils of a posited authenticity early in his career, and in an intriguing echo of what we have already described as a “negat[ing of] the negation” – whereby US/Japan binaries, for example, or stark demarcations between the authentic and the inauthentic, were jettisoned, in dialectical fashion, in the interest of positing something new – rejects “folk’s” own formulaic (internal) negation of the status quo, crafting a

¹⁰⁴ In his “Japan in 1968,” for example, Oguma Eiji notes the manner in which thinkers of much different political persuasions, such as Mishima Yukio, were also embroiled in the effort to conceive of and posit a new – or old – form of ‘authenticity.’

¹⁰⁵ Bourdaghs, *Sayonara Amerika, Sayonara Nippon*, pp. 160-62.

critique that becomes doubly-minor, hating the language of *two* masters¹⁰⁶ as it appropriates and deploys the language of militarism to rattle bodies enmeshed within powerful narratives of “progress.” In order to upset History, it seems, Kagawa must also upset the internal negation which, paradoxically, threatens to validate it. And this involves the positing of what Marilyn Ivy terms “something else,” and what Boym calls “dreams of another place and another time”¹⁰⁷ – in brief, a critical, anti-normative temporality.

“*Sensō shimashō*” is very rarely performed live. But in the days leading up to what was already regarded as the inevitable passage of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzō Abe’s lethal cocktail of security bills “re-interpreting” Japan’s security relationship with the United States – better known as the *sensō hōan*, or “war legislation,” whose tabling triggered protests to a degree not seen since the anti-AMPO demonstrations of 1960 and 1970, including the massive Osaka march that opened this dissertation, and which fueled “the perception that the security legislation would change Japan into a country that would fight wars”¹⁰⁸ – the work made a characteristically subtle and understated appearance during a Ryo Kagawa performance at a small Kansai live house nearly identical to Sankusu Hall in scope, scale, and intent. Before launching into his “*Kyokun I* [Lesson I]” – Kagawa’s signature anti-war anthem, which we will visit in much more detail below – the artist softly plucked out the mournful guitar notes that open “*Sensō shimashō*.” “Oops,” he muttered. “Wrong song.” But of course, the “mistake” was an utterly intentional one. The entire episode lasted perhaps five or six seconds at most, but the intent was clear: the

¹⁰⁶ See Gilles Deleuze ad Felix Guattari (trans. Dana Polan), *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986). Here, in deploying standard Japanese in the enunciation of his intriguing critiques, Kagawa is truly using a major language in a very “minor” way.

¹⁰⁷ Boym, p. 41.

¹⁰⁸ See Muto Ichiyo, trans. John Junkerman, “Retaking Japan: The Abe Administration’s Campaign to Overturn the Postwar Constitution,” in *The Asia Pacific Journal: Japan Focus*, Vol. 14, Issue 13, No. 3 (July 1, 2016).

audience knew and instantly recognized the work, and the intertextual context within which it was invoked – vis-à-vis the immanent passage of the “war legislation” – served to both catapult that summer, 2015 evening into a hypercritical past, and to bring that past into the present in a manner that disturbed and muddied it. The brief incursion of “*Sensō shimashō*” into Ryo Kagawa’s performance space, in other words, helped to temporalize that space in a manner that was playful and pregnant with possibilities, and that simultaneously cited 1945, 1971, and 2015 in a sly critique/warning that seemed intended to skew the singularity of that present. The tactical deployment of this humorous, disjointed¹⁰⁹ work seemed part of an ongoing attempt to “narrate the relationship between past, present, and future,” favoring a temporal ethics of fluidity within which History itself could be thought differently over a nostalgic “reconstruction of [musical] monuments of the past.” By becoming doubly-minor and avoiding confinement in a discursive form that in 1970 already appeared threatened by the stasis of authenticity, in other words, Kagawa ensured that his was a critique that could flow over and corrode a longer arc of History – and it is surely for this reason that a regular audience member insisted to me in 2015 that “the time for listening to Ryo Kagawa’s music is *now*.”

In the preceding examples, we have seen some of the ways in which Ryo Kagawa plays with temporality in the intimate, enclosed performance spaces that are his forte, conjuring a temporal critique that seems engineered to inch toward what he has called – and regularly calls in those performances – “Japan’s one more time.” To conclude this chapter, however, we must leave Sankusu Hall and head out of doors, to where critical temporality is conjured annually in a musical event of a much larger scale.

¹⁰⁹ As Boym notes, such playfulness and senselessness are key components of what she calls “reflective nostalgia.”

Haruichiban and “*Kyokun I* [Lesson I]”

The Ryokuchi Kōen Outdoor Music Hall lies at the end of a meandering walk commencing, for all intents and purposes, from the underground exit of Ryokuchi Kōen Station on the North Osaka Express rail line, not far from the hustle and bustle of the center of metropolitan Osaka. On this May 6, 2015, dozens of music lovers walked that path together, boxed lunches and coolers full of Sapporo and Asahi in hand, in anticipation of the thirtieth installment of Haruichiban, a legendary annual outdoor concert that spotlights many voices from Japan’s “folk” moment alongside punk acts, performances of traditional music, emerging singer-songwriters, and more. I joined the flow of people making its way under the canopy of newly-leafy trees, above which presided a sky of sharp blue that had broken cool but that would be sweltering by mid-day. After ten minutes or so I found myself in front of a relatively unimposing concrete clamshell, nestled amidst rolling green hills and among marshes and groves of trees, and spotted my friend K and his family, with whom I’d be spending the day. K had (much by accident) emerged as one of my great teachers of music and critique since meeting him at a Ryo Kagawa concert soon after my arrival in Japan, and today would be full of lessons of its own. After saying hello to a few other regular faces on the Kansai music scene – including Y, Ryo Kagawa’s Kansai area “manager” – the doors swung open at a few minutes to eleven, and the now snaking line of revelers and music aficionadi made its way into the venue.

Ryo Kagawa, the day’s opening (and closing) act, was already on stage as the doors opened, and he serenaded concertgoers with his up-tempo “*Mune ni afureru kono omoi* [This Feeling That Floods My Heart]”¹¹⁰ as they made their way through the short entranceway

¹¹⁰ Ryo Kagawa, “*Mune ni afureru kono omoi* [This Feeling That Floods My Heart],” from the album *2/tu*. 1993. Tokyo: Japan Records, CD.

corridor and into the venue. This seemed at the time to be a curious performative choice, running counter to common contemporary concert practice of commencing performance once attendees had entered the performance space and were settled. On reflection later, however, it would seem to be very much a consciously deployed tactic, one meant to facilitate a transition from one realm into another. To me, in other words, Kagawa's performance enhanced a sense of liminality¹¹¹ that was already conspicuous in the physical movement of bodies from the world outside the venue's walls to that which was about to be created within. While this shift clearly occurred in space, however, it would also come to appear intensely temporal in nature, with Kagawa's art and persona citing a past to be channeled and drawn into that outdoor hall, not for the purpose of recreating it, but in the interests of infecting the present and creating something entirely new.

Outdoor music festivals have grown in popularity in Japan in recent years, but the Haruichiban proves to us that they are far from new. Haruichiban – named for the seasonal spring winds that first make their presence known in Japan around March, and which are associated with vernal notions of rebirth – was first held in 1971, and was the fruit of interactions that had been taking place among actors in the Western Japan music scene since at least 1969 (this creative network would later extend to key figures in Tokyo, as well). Modeled after Woodstock, the creation of the Haruichiban is usually attributed to Masaoka Fūta, then a music lover and reluctant student activist (Masaoka recalls fleeing home in terror when thrust to the front lines of student confrontations with police in 1968) who took English lessons in order to be

¹¹¹ Victor Turner discusses the concept of liminality, and the manner in which it might be conceived of as an ambiguous, free-floating sort of in-between-ness, a realm that dodges the clutches of structure (such as History) and stands as a realm of transition from one mode (or space, or time) to another. See, for example, Turner's "Liminality and Communitas," in *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing, 1969).

able to sing with Peter Paul and Mary cover bands as a student in Kansai University's night school.¹¹² By Masaoka's own recollection, though, Haruichiban's story is much more complicated than one of singular genius. He recalls spending a great deal of time in an Osaka café named Dylan, which was managed by folk-group Dylan II's frontman Masaji Ōtsuka, and remembers how this shop became a node in a network of "folk" musicians in the region: "All these people would gather at Dylan, and the place became a spot for keeping people connected. People didn't so much as have land-lines in their homes in those days, let alone cell phones... I had my regular stool there, and there was this pink phone... and people would call in to check on the musicians' schedules... The players would come back [from shows] and ask if anyone had left any messages for them. 'Isn't that the job of a desk manager?' I thought. But I guess that's how they saw me right from the beginning."

The musical frequenters of Dylan would go on to collaborate on a number of projects, including 1970's Be-in Love Rock, intended as a fundraiser for anti-Vietnam War crusaders *Beheiren* – though this event actually lost money, and was kept afloat only by charging acts to play and by Masaoka chipping in some of the money that he earned in his day-gig as an English-language interpreter for Expo Osaka in 1970. But the foundations for Haruichiban were truly laid when Masaoka was asked by *Ro-On*'s¹¹³ Tagawa Ritsu and others to organize an opening

¹¹² The historical overview of the Haruichiban and its actors that appears in this section is taken from the extensive reference material that accompanied Japan Victor's commemorative CD release of the live recording of Haruichiban 1972 (released May 2, 2006). Much of this reference material consisted of reflections penned by Masaoka himself.

¹¹³ *Ro-On* is the National Workers' Music Association. As Malm teaches us, *Ro-On* was established with both aesthetic ("further[ing] the progressive musical movement tradition of the Japanese people") and political aims in mind: its mission statement calls for "the construction of a musical culture beneficial to Japan's own maturity and social progress. By doing so, the movement will heighten the humanity of the working man and strengthen labor solidarity." While not explicitly "political" in the way that *Ro-On* is, the interconnections between Haruichiban's architects and major players in *Ro-On* is informative in considering the socially-engaged stature envisioned for both. See William P. Malm, "A century of

musical act for the Black Tent traveling theatrical troupe for a tour planned for late 1970 and 1971.¹¹⁴ This brought together a range of voices that included Okabayashi Nobuyasu, Takada Wataru, Tomobe Masato, Endō Kenji, Ryo Kagawa, and others, and the cast of characters that would work together to establish the first Haruichiban in 1971 (in its initial years, the event was held at Tennōji's iconic Outdoor Music Hall, or *Yaon*) was thus assembled. The multi-day concert would go on to be held annually until 1979, when it went on hiatus – but it would be resurrected in 1995, the year of the Great Hanshin-Awaji (Kobe) Earthquake, in a manner that foreshadows the way in which the massive earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear crisis would prove an important factor behind Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi's mounting of his massive event at the foot of Mt. Fuji, to be discussed in the next Chapter, later in 2015. According to Masaoka, the Hanshin-Awaji disaster served to “make the resuscitation of Haruichiban an inevitability for many [musicians],” and the event continues annually to this day.

While a detailed analysis of the Haruichiban in all of its historical manifestations is beyond the scope of this dissertation, a brief examination of 2015’s iteration of the event may be helpful in conceiving of the precise manner in which musical critique seemed to unfold within the Ryokuchi Kōen Outdoor Music Hall that May 6th, and the ways in which these critiques seemed to depend upon manipulations of temporality for their legibility and acidity. Indeed, the day would feature no shortage of critical commentary – particularly memorable would be a performance by Endō Michirō, the well-known Fukushima-born frontman for the band STALINS but also former bass player for folk legend and Haruichiban pioneer Tomobe Masato,

proletarian music in Japan,” in *The Journal of Musicological Research* (Vol. 6, No. 3, 1986). Tagawa Ritsu continues to sing; the author observed him performing a Kansai dialect version of The Internationale in Osaka in 2014.

¹¹⁴ The interconnectivity between music and theater in this period is intriguing, and will be the topic of a future study.

who delivered (alongside his current band THE END) a howlingly critical performance that spoke of “how miserable I feel at seeing what a shitty place Japan has become” and that featured 2X4’s which backed the singer and that had been painted in lush blues and greens being slowly turned to reveal a crimson, apocalyptic scene clearly meant to reference Fukushima: in this way, Endo forced his audience to confront their co-temporality with a crisis that had been declared overcome by the state¹¹⁵ and relegated to a tragic (but overcome) past, and did so in a way that denied the sterilizing 350-mile distance separating Fukushima from Osaka. Tomobe Masato, the aforementioned key player in Japan’s “folk” movement whose career is bookended by critical interventions into portrayals of the battle between Red Army members and police at Asama Sansō¹¹⁶ on one end and fascinatingly sardonic critiques of the American military presence in Japan near the other,¹¹⁷ made an unscheduled appearance on this day of the event with his son, singer-songwriter Ono Kazuho, a co-presence that seemed to simultaneously point to and suture the different temporal moments that were present on the stage throughout the day. And in an intriguing lineup choice, an Osaka *kawachi ondo* troupe took the stage midway through the day, reducing – or, better, elevating – the venue to a space of play, of dance and of generative energy: it was perhaps at this moment that the Bakhtinian carnivalesque potential¹¹⁸ of the Haruichiban was at its most apparent, as voices associated with a geographically-specific cultural past

¹¹⁵ Prime Minister Shinzo Abe declared repeatedly in 2013, for example, that “[t]he situation [in Fukushima] has been under control as whole,” trivializing not only the ongoing radioactive effusions from the crippled Fukushima Dai’ichi Nuclear Power Station, but the humanitarian upheavals ongoing throughout the Prefecture, as well. See, for example, the Japan Times’ reporting on Abe’s insistences, available online at http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2013/10/16/national/politics-diplomacy/abe-claims-fukushima-radioactive-water-woes-are-under-control/#.WJC_9bG-L_Q.

¹¹⁶ Tomobe Masato, “*Kampai*,” B-side to the single “*Mou haru dane* [It’s Already Spring].” July, 1972. Osaka: URC Records. LP single.

¹¹⁷ Tomobe Masato, “*Speak Japanese, American*,” from the album *Speak Japanese, American*. November 9, 2005. CD album.

¹¹⁸ See Graham St. John’s chapter “Protestival: Global days of action and carnivalized politics at the turn of the millennium,” in George McKay, Ed., *The Pop Festival: History, Music, Media, Culture* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2015), p. 138.

invaded the Now “as political action, as festive celebration, as cathartic release, as wild abandonment of the status quo, as networking tool, as a way to create a new world.”¹¹⁹ Author Nakagami Kenji – a passionate music fan himself¹²⁰ – finds in the *kawachi ondo* a very specific sort of *seimei* (life force) that does not meld well with contemporary History, and the form seems to have an important role to play in affording the conjuring of alternative collectivities, both in Nakagami’s formulation and within the performative space of the Haruichiban.

But perhaps the most telling performance of that hot day in terms of the conjuring of critical temporality came courtesy of Sakuma Junpei, former collaborator to the late folk god Takada Wataru. The way in which Sakuma framed his performance is particularly crucial for understanding the ways in which the past was made to speak to and critique the present at this event. “I am angry,” he said. “Being able to sing our minds freely is so important. Takada Wataru taught us that. But it seems that we’re now in danger of losing that freedom. And whose fault is that? It’s ours.” This was met by calls of “That’s damned right!” from the audience, which were themselves met by roars of approval. In this way, the uncompleted, Bergsonian¹²¹ presence of the event’s own past loomed over the site – concretized, in a way, in the late Takada Wataru’s bicycle, which hung over the artists’ entryway to the stage like a talisman – constituting a unifying sort of text that could be cited in an ongoing and amplified critique of the present. It is crucial to recall here that the moment of Haruichiban 2015 occurred amidst not only the still-expanding ripples from Japan’s triple crises of March 11, 2011, as Endō Michirō helped to so viscerally remind those in attendance, but also squarely within the moment of a widely-perceived shift toward amplified state power in the form of the ruling LDP’s “reinterpretation” of

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 131.

¹²⁰ I will investigate some of the ways in which music intersects with Nakagami’s art on a separate occasion.

¹²¹ See Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution* (London: The Macmillan Company, 1911).

Japan's constitution and security relationship with the United States,¹²² as well as the recent introduction of the State Secrets Law (officially, the "Act on the Protection of Specially Designated Secrets"), which was introduced in 2013 and came into force in December of 2014. By resurrecting the gods of a different time, unleashing them to circulate through the Ryokuchi Outdoor Music Hall in May of 2015, Sakuma Junpei and many other performers of that year's Haruichiban clearly sought to *intervene* in that moment, with the aim of critically interrogating and troubling it – and this is a far cry from any desire to *transcend* it out of a wistful, restorative nostalgia for critical potentialities said to be long past. By interrogating the terms of the 2015 everyday, in other words, and reaching for different possibilities, all of these artists – from punk rockers to folk legends – sang their own renditions of the Homesick Blues.

While we cannot attend to each of the performances mounted over the festival's four-day duration in the limited space available here, we might assert, in brief, that the disparate spectacles of Haruichiban shared in common a tendency to cite the past in order to give form to a critique that was situated solidly in the present, and oriented toward the generation of a more desirable (to these particular actors) future. As we have already seen, Ruth Stone pointed to the importance of the temporal in her early and groundbreaking analysis of the musical event – but her insights require some modification in order to conceive of the generation of critical temporality at events like Haruichiban and, as we will see in subsequent pages, other major musical events like Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi's record-setting all-night concert at the foot of Mt. Fuji in August of that year. For Stone, and for the social actors with whom she engages (the Kpelle people of central Liberia), the musical event is a "bounded sphere of interaction." It is "set off and made distinct from the world of everyday life by the participants... [out of] the need to

¹²² The LDP's omnibus security bills were the topic of nationwide discussion and frequent protest in May of 2015, and would go on to be ratified into law on September 19 of the same year.

separate everyday life and social problems from the performance interaction, particularly when such conflict might disrupt the performance.”¹²³ George McKay echoes Stone’s position in his introduction to *The Pop Festival*: most festivals, to Gibson, “create... a time and space of celebration, a site of convergence *separate from everyday routines*, experiences and meanings – ephemeral communities in place and time.”¹²⁴ The “special place-time”¹²⁵ of the music event, then, while being a site of interaction and connection “between the musical event and other aspects of culture”¹²⁶ that might otherwise appear disconnected, seems for Stone and Gibson (in a way that again echoes Bakhtin’s notions of the carnivalesque) to be nonetheless one step removed from the broader and mundane social, appearing as a transcendent sort of site where the “world-producing”¹²⁷ potentialities of participant interaction can unfurl. A key possibility presented by this interaction is the generation of a new temporality that results from the incorporation of diverse times embodied and experienced by event participants: “[t]he social relationship among event participants is based upon the simultaneous experiencing of the performance in multiple dimensions of time.”¹²⁸ But this again seems to speak to the generation of a common performative temporality within a bounded space that *supersedes* the everyday, rather than being transformatively embedded therein.

Stone, however, also provides us with the means to begin to move beyond the limitations of this analytical stance. “Relevances for a music event participant come from sources beyond the event or the music system alone,” she writes. “Therefore, research can only begin at the event

¹²³ Ruth Stone, *Let the Inside Be Sweet*, p. 98.

¹²⁴ See McKay, Ed., *The Pop Festival*, p. 3. Emphasis added.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ Stone, p. 98.

¹²⁷ Berger and Luckmann’s 1966 insights on the productive potentialities of the music event are operationalized by Ruth Stone in her *Let the Inside Be Sweet*.

¹²⁸ Stone, p. 9.

moving beyond it to the other individuals and interactions that influence and relate to the music performance. [We] must look also... at other cultural events. Only then can the performance event be understood in its wider context.”¹²⁹ Travis Jackson, in his investigation of the New York jazz scene, also helps to nudge Stone’s insights away from notions of social transcendence and toward a revolutionary sort of embeddedness. For Jackson, the blues scene is “inherently spatial and historical. It is a product not only of the interactions of its participants with one another *in* space and time but also of their interactions *through* space and time... [Actors] create the scene and conceive of it as both a physical manifestation of space and a cognitive construct.”¹³⁰ Though still retaining its own specificities, the jazz scene for Jackson is inextricably intertwined with – embedded in – the everyday, and it is this that gives the form “socially expressive and transformative potential,”¹³¹ a potential arising not from within the form itself, but from the fact that the music and its scenes are always connected to the outside. In certain circumstances, participants may be drawn into the “flows” of performances: “[o]nce inside those flows, it becomes possible for them to see new ways of understanding, manipulating, and mastering the materials, situations, and constraints presented to them in performance and daily life.” And given that, for Jackson, a key “material” comprising the musical event constitutes “events that have occurred in the past,”¹³² we can begin to see the way in which Haruichiban – and the other musical events taken up herein – become embedded sites within which History itself is interrogated and manipulated *on the basis of an ongoing, reflexive engagement with the world*. This engagement was reflected in 2015’s Haruichiban in diverse

¹²⁹ Ibid., pp. 18-19.

¹³⁰ Travis A. Jackson, *Blowin’ the Blues Away: Performance and Meaning on the New York Jazz Scene* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012). See esp. Chapter 3.

¹³¹ Ibid., p. 143.

¹³² Ibid., p. 7.

invocations of the crises in Fukushima, of burgeoning state power, of the looming modifications to Japan's security laws, and so on, and had the aim not of staking claim to a time and place outside of History, but rather of conjuring a critical temporality that could propose alternative priorities through staking claim to an untimeliness that emphasizes an undead Bergsonian past still capable of haunting and transforming the present.

We have already noted the way in which Haruichiban carries with it something of the carnivalesque, and it is important to revisit that aspect of the event here in order to better understand the ways in which the incorporation of diverse temporal threads therein help its actors to conjure a critical temporality as a basis from which to issue a challenge to History. McKay, quoting Chris Gibson, teaches us that the “temporar[ily] heightened space-time” of events such as the Haruichiban “has the fundamental purpose of envisioning and crafting another, better world... Festival... at its most utopian is a pragmatic and fantastic space in which to dream and try another world into being.”¹³³ As such, these events “should not be entirely reduced to being understood as nostalgic or gestural, or simply a safety valve; it has a continuing irruptive energetic potential.”¹³⁴ Scholars such as Jordan rightly warn us of the dangers that attend the tapping of a past for the purposes of forging a future: untimeliness and excavations of the past have, after all, been closely associated with fascism, and Jordan dismisses such temporal diversification as being “reactionary.”¹³⁵ But by remixing Boym’s assertions with the study of the carnivalesque, we can attend to the manner in which the past, approached reflectively, serves to “open up a multitude of possibilities”¹³⁶ by de-authenticating the authoritative singularity of the present (and, for that matter, of the past) and by infecting/informing it with temporal texts

¹³³ George McKay, Ed., *The Pop Festival*, p. 3.

¹³⁴ Ibid., p. 4.

¹³⁵ Jordan is quoted by Graham St. John in McKay, Ed., *The Pop Festival*, p. 133.

¹³⁶ Boym, p. 50.

that can have an “important impact on improving social and political conditions in the present as *ideals*, not as fairy tales come true.”¹³⁷ In this way, we can see that the “[other] world that comes to life during [a] carnival”¹³⁸ like Haruichiban is as temporal in nature as it is spatial, and this critical temporality owes its potentials not to a teleological path to and shelter in the past, but rather to an insistence upon a productive *comingling* of times. It is precisely its foundation in such temporal comingling – and its attendant potential for new direction and challenges to normative temporality – that helps critical temporality to become a vehicle for facilitating an “abandonment of the status quo... [and] a way to create a new world.”¹³⁹ As we have seen, such world-producing challenges to normative temporality are Ryo Kagawa’s forte – and it was precisely such a challenge that the artist would bring to the Ryokuchi Outdoor Music Hall stage in May of 2015.

It was, in fact, Kagawa who was given the honor¹⁴⁰ of closing the Haruichiban on May 5, and he did so joined, importantly, by the youthful folk-revival duo Humbert-Humbert. Their set – and the day – ended with Kagawa’s debut and signature song “*Kyokun I* [Lesson I],” which he sang in collaboration with the latter: this combination of weighty experience with youthful newness seemed designed to pull Kagawa and his work into the contemporary moment, ensuring that it was understood as freshly vibrant and relevant, not an object of wistful nostalgia. “*Kyokun I*” is regarded as one of Japan’s most enduring anti-war masterpieces, but it holds this distinction without actually being anti-war – like so many of Kagawa’s works, it is a message song that is not a message song, at least according to the standards of the “folk” music of the late 1960s in

¹³⁷ Ibid., pp. 354-55, emphasis added.

¹³⁸ McKay, Ed., *The Pop Festival*, pp. 141-42.

¹³⁹ Ibid., p. 131.

¹⁴⁰ In Japanese performance tradition, the closing slot – *tori*, or *ōtori* – is normally afforded to the senior or most revered artist on site.

Japan. As we have already seen, Ryo Kagawa has little patience for the formulaically oppositional critical stances that defined “folk” music in this moment – viewing such stances as uninteresting and confining, Kagawa prefers an ethics of play, motion, and temporal fluidity in his compositional praxis. He holds particular disdain for works that urge listeners to “fight for a better tomorrow” and that speak/sing in platitudes of, for example, “the coming dawn”: in these critiques we can detect not-so-carefully veiled attacks on beloved “folk” standards like the “Internationale,” a favorite of student activists around 1968,¹⁴¹ and the aforememtioned *Tomo yo* [O Friend]. Both of these works call for struggle and for battle, in the hopes of winning a better day, but the opening stanza of Okabayashi’s lyrics (which were a collaborative effort with lyricist Suzuki Takao) are particularly revealing:

“O friend, mired in the darkness that precedes the dawn
O friend, light the flame of struggle
The dawn is nigh, the dawn is nigh
O friend, beyond this darkness
O friend, tomorrow, brightly shining, awaits.”

The contrast with Ryo Kagawa’s *Kyokun I* is striking:

“We have one life; we live but once
So don’t go and toss your life away
It’s so easy to get caught up in things, to falter in your stride
When they tell you that “it’s for the sake of the Nation.”

Turn pale, take cover;
Run away, and hide.”

In direct opposition to the ethics of battle and struggle pursued by Okabayashi and others, then, Ryo Kagawa presents an ethics of *flight*, a rejection of struggle in favor of a sort of dropping out, a choice that Harry Harootunian might call “living off the page.” Rather than a valorization of idleness or cowardice, though, this seems very much like a refusal to validate the status quo by

¹⁴¹ Ogumi Eiji discusses the important role played by “The Internationale” in the late-1960s protest movement in Japan in his essay, “Japan’s 1968.”

becoming part of its internal negation. As Kagawa said to me in conversation in June of 2016, “straight-up anti-war songs don’t resonate [and thus don’t have the desired effect]. If you’re gonna sing an anti-war song anyway, you’ve got to do it differently, more effectively.”¹⁴²

But “*Kyokun I*” does more than insist upon a rejection of struggle and the adoption of a playful ethics of flight. We have noted in our examinations of “The Give-Up Diddy” and “*Sensō shimashō*,” above, the ways in which Ryo Kagawa prefers a sly sort of play and scrambling (of “progress” and its historical moments in the case of the former, and of narratives of war and Japan’s security relationship with the United States in the case of the latter) over direct lyrical admonishments, and the tactics that he deploys to this end are, as we have seen, diverse. “*Kyokun I*” is no different. Although much of the effect is lost in English translation, the critical bite of this work pivots on Kagawa’s playing with subjectivity and with gender, adopting a feminized mode of speech (though not a falsetto or other clichéd marks of femininity) in order to critique, as a man, the ways in which the state manipulates notions of masculinity in its valorizations of war and sacrifice. The work continues:

¹⁴² Kagawa’s rejection of an ethics of confrontation and struggle seems also to amount to a rejection – or at least a critical interrogation – of street-level protests at around the time that this work was being penned. As Eiji Oguma reminds us, 1968 was a moment of literal, physical street-level struggle: students fought with police at Tokyo’s Haneda Airport in 1967 to try to prevent then-Prime Minister Eisaku Sato (whom Kagawa lampoons in his *Sensō shimashō*, doubtlessly helping to bring about its blacklisting and effective ban from Japan’s media airwaves) from travelling to Vietnam; Tokyo University was occupied by students in June of 1968, giving rise to the Zenkyoto students’ front and similar physical interventions on other campuses across Japan; Shinjuku Station was ransacked by students in October of that same year. The New Left attempted to harness these movements into a nationwide political campaign following what Oguma calls widespread “political apathy” in the wake of the failure of the anti-AMPO campaign of 1960, but by 1968, Oguma teaches us, the student movements had largely devolved into slogans (“socialist revolution,” for example, or “dismantle the university structure”) void of concrete demands or strategy. And importantly, the sorts of “struggle” sung about in *Tomo-yo* and *The Internationale* had become as much (or more) forms of entertainment for disaffected youth as they were sincere efforts at social change. With patience for increasingly violent and aimless student activism waning on the part of many, it is likely that Ryo Kagawa sought a differently-critical path – and one that would not be inexorably mapped onto the topography of the nature of critique around 1970. And indeed, this difference is what allows Kagawa’s critique to retain its efficacy and relevance beyond the moment of its production.

“Offer up your life – be a man!” they say
And when they do, then it’s really time to start trembling
That’s right, I’m perfectly happy as woman –
Being a “rotten woman” suits me just fine!”

Shallow readings of this work have in the past led to Kagawa facing harsh condemnations for misogyny – casual listeners zero in on the phrase “*kusatta onna* [rotten woman]” and assume (wrongly) that the artist is validating a denigration of women as unfit for citizenship and the sacrifice that state narratives claim that citizenship entails.¹⁴³ But closer attention to the work reveals that Kagawa, as a man, is in fact appropriating this denigration, performing the impossibility of applying it to himself, and thereby rendering nonsensical the Japanese state’s insistence that males – and females, though according to different terms – be prepared to sacrifice themselves to its varied imperatives. Kagawa’s critique here is generalized and abstract: unlike much of the “folk” of this period, he is interested not in addressing specific moments, situations, or individuals, but rather the general machinery of what the work calls “the Nation,” and what we should understand as the contemporary nation-state. Scholars such as Dorsey have been highly critical of such abstract musical critique, suggesting that it lacks efficacy and bite. But it is precisely, I want to suggest, this generality and abstractness that has helped Ryo Kagawa’s musical critique avoid historical confinement and museumization, and that has helped it to survive to haunt the contemporary moment. And indeed, the wide net cast by “*Kyokun I*” helped Humbert-Humbert and other participants in the musical event that was Haruichiban take ownership of the work in 2015 – especially as that moment was defined, as we have noted, by

¹⁴³ Kagawa has been sufficiently traumatized by such indictments that he has chosen, on occasion, to replace *onna* [woman] with *otoko* [man] in performance, so as to avoid the discomfort of having to mount lengthy explanations to shallow listeners as to the actual intent behind the work. Fear of misunderstanding prompted him to change this lyric on the occasion of his October, 2016 performance at the University of Chicago, as well. It has been my experience, however, that this intent is understood among careful Kagawa listeners, both male and female, regardless of whether or not the lyrics are changed.

unease over the threat of bloated state power and a perceived shift toward militarism and fascism led by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

In “*Kyokun I*,” then, we can note the deployment of a critique that aims for a direct and highly original confrontation with the terms of “normative temporality.” The work aims to interrogate the terms of the modern nation-state – the timeless placeholder of capitalist accumulation itself, according to Harootunian – but it does so in a novel way. It presents not a different vision for belonging in an a priori nation-state, but rather a scrambling of the ways in which the nation-state is made to make sense in the first place. By questioning the gendered ways in which the nation-state dominates in the modern moment, and suggesting that the best practice may simply be to “run away, and hide,” Kagawa invites a rethinking of how we live in the world, and urges a consideration of different possibilities, and other histories – thus making his decision to close the 2015 iteration of the Haruichiban with this song a meaningful one indeed. The critical stance that animates “*Kyokun I*” involves Kagawa putting pressure on the nation-state in such a manner as to cast doubt upon the authority and “common sense” of this key trope of “normative temporality” – and this is the true vocation of what we are calling “critical temporality” herein. It is precisely this sort of pressuring that we have seen at work in the “Give-Up Diddy” and in “*Sensō shimashō*,” as well, and as we can now see, it is this sort of critical tactic that Ryo Kagawa prioritizes over the much more familiar diametric oppositions and internal negations of an around-1970 status quo that have been privileged in previous analyses of Japan’s “critical folk.”

In his clear desire to ensure that “*Kyokun I*” remain audible in a contemporary moment haunted by the encroachment of an increasingly belligerent state, we might now also see Kagawa’s resistance to “folk”’s master narrative in a clearer light, and note the way in which this

resistance seems rooted in an aversion to the trap of static, past “authenticity” and a desire to ensure that the artist’s musical critique is not neutralized in the confines of a supposedly completed History. Indeed, as we have seen, many of Kagawa’s works seem from the moment of their production to have been specifically engineered to escape the clutch of History, and “*Kyokun I*”, which the artist has vowed to sing “until I die,” is no exception. Kagawa explicitly refuses to allow works such as “*Kyokun I*” to become “monuments of the past”¹⁴⁴ – intriguingly, he refers to this work’s composition today as nothing more than an instance of “playing around [*share*],” and insists that the work’s critical meaning only came to be attributed to it after the fact, gradually. In other words, in the artist’s explanations of his work, “*Kyokun I*” is purposefully deprived of an originary moment of genesis – or, indeed, of any “authentic” authorship at all¹⁴⁵ – that can be resurrected and fled to in moments of performance across the diverse Nows in which it has lived. And one of those Nows, importantly, has been the moment of Shinzo Abe’s war legislation in 2015. In deploying this intentionally abstract and authorially untethered work at the Haruichiban that May evening, “*Kyokun I*” could be as much Humbert-Humbert’s and the audience’s work in the context of 2015 as it was Ryo Kagawa’s in the context of 1970 – and as multiple members of Kagawa’s audience and fan base would tell me in 2015 and 2016, being able to sing and take ownership of this song *now*, allowing it to trouble a present

¹⁴⁴ Boym, p. 41.

¹⁴⁵ In an intriguing sort of move, Ryo Kagawa forfeits all “authentic” authorship of “*Kyokun I*.” In discussion in Chicago in October, 2016, he discusses how he “just happened to come across a *kawaraban* mimeograph somewhere underground with those kinds of words written on it” one day, and decided to put those words/lyrics to the sort of “folk”-ish, guitar-centered melody that was popular at the time. But even the melody is not claimed as his own: “Iwai Hiroshi [another key figure in Japan’s “folk” music boom of around-1970] was my real teacher, and he and Takada Wataru gave me pointers on the melody – try it this way, they’d say; try it that way.” It is of course reasonable to attribute these comments to modesty on Kagawa’s part, and to deference to his musical upperclassmen. But given a broader artistic praxis that seems to shun notions of the authentic in favor of flows, movement, and trans-temporal relevance and applicability, it seems rather more likely that his interests lie in uncoupling this important work from any fixed moment or individual, allowing it to trickle between disparate historical moments and corrode the “fixed terms” of both critique and the shifting conditions of the Japanese social.

in which sitting Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and others attempt to modify Japan's postwar pacifist stance and reclaim a (completely fictional) moment of glory for "the Nation," has been a matter of vital contemporary importance, and about as far from misty, restorative nostalgia as one can get.

Coda

By his own estimation, Ryo Kagawa plays in the neighborhood of one hundred shows per year. A great many of these are in small, out-of-the-way towns and villages: in conversation in Chicago in 2016, Kagawa shared with me the way in which he specifically targets places at which a performance by him would be a rare enough event that it might attract individuals who might not otherwise emerge from their own immediate surroundings, drawing them into a playful engagement of sorts with him and with each other via the medium of the music. There is something of Eiji – whom we will recall from Chapter One – in this literal tracing of 'Japan' through touring, and something intriguing in the stitching that this performs via musical critique. Kagawa calls this *tabi* – or "travels" – and when we combine this spatial praxis with the critical temporality that we have seen the artist unleash into his musical events via the performance of works that challenge the givenness of History itself, such as the "Give-Up Diddy" and "*Sensō shimashō*," we get the sense that *tabi* itself is a highly political praxis, aimed at connecting the dots and tracing the outlines of a 'Japan' that can be understood according to different terms. By its very nature, *tabi* requires small, intimate engagements, not large ones: indeed, while he does make the rare television appearance and play the occasional outdoor concert or festival, the vast majority of these engagements are in smoky, often literally underground venues like Sankusu

Hall, where we opened this chapter, and other similar venues that forefront the artist and his well-traveled amplified acoustic guitar.

Haruichiban, though, is a different story. This, it seems, is precisely Kagawa's kind of gig, just amplified: there is a certain madness, a certain energy and co-collaboration that runs through the event that is pregnant with potential, and that has kept it vibrant and relevant for fifty-six years. In a fascinating echo of Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi fan Junko (see Chapter One), Kagawa places great emphasis on what he also terms “*tsunagari* [interconnectedness],” which is potentiated by precisely the sort of intimacy that we have already identified as a key physical characteristic of small and out-of-the-way venues like Sankusu Hall, but that, with its cheek-to-jowl jostling of happy, drunk, utterly off-the-page bodies, seems to arc through the much larger Ryokuchi Outdoor Music Hall, as well (“Haruichiban scares the shit out of me!” singer-songwriter Tokuda Yūzō would cackle from the stage that day). The artist characterizes his shows not even as performances of music per se, but rather as what we identified above as *ongaku-teki-na-mono* – “something akin to music” – which, as we have already seen, are produced collaboratively, constituting an “exchange of energies [*enerugii no watashi-ai*],” a co-verification of proof-of-life, a mutual confirmation on the parts of Kagawa and his listeners/co-producers that they are all still here [*kakunin wo shi-atteru*]. Kagawa has described his career itself as a *tabi*, as a literal, physical journey, and approaches his shows as a continuous paying of respects to those who “choose to come and see me, when they could be doing other things instead.” But most importantly, Ryo Kagawa approaches his live performances as a form of play, an opportunity, for this artist who places great value on unpredictability and surprise, “to get together and play, to make something together, if only for that limited amount of time [of the show].”

Some weeks after the curtain dropped on the Haruichiban for another year, I had the opportunity to chat with Mitsuyo, a middle-school teacher in Osaka who discovered and fell in love with the music of Ryo Kagawa as a teenager in 1970, and who has been a long-time volunteer at Haruichiban, staffing the chow tent and ensuring that the artists are fed. We had the chance to talk about the potentials of the Haruichiban in 2015, and she described the ways in which Kagawa's artistry – and the artistry of other performers at the event – intersected with questions of temporality and critique in ways that cannot be consigned to nostalgia or banished to History. “There’s a real criticism of the mainstream [that underpins the event],” she said. “It’s like anything goes – people forget the rules.” Here, we can hear strong echoes of the aforementioned concept of Bakhtin’s carnivalesque – and as a middle-school educator with deep concerns over current political trends in Japan, Mitsuyo places great value on the irruptive potentials that she sees erupting in spaces such as the Ryokuchi Kōen Outdoor Music Hall.

But Mitsuyo is as attentive to the temporal as she is to the spatial. “The songs [that the Haruichiban artists play] aren’t fossils,” she says. “Sure, the songs themselves are the same [as they were around-1970], but they are also alive, and changing with the times. Actually, they might be more important now than they were when they were released.” And here, Mitsuyo seems to speak to the importance of what we have been calling *critical temporality* – an anti-normative time that is conjured through the haunting of the present with critiques that are rooted in the past – and the way in which this factors in to the carnivalesque generation of potential that she notes in the Haruichiban.

“These songs are always evolving [*shinka shitsuzuketeiru*],” says Mitsuyo. “Being able to be a part of that forward motion with others is just so cool – that’s what Haruichiban is all

about...¹⁴⁶ Like [Masaoka] Fūta says, there's no concert like this anywhere in Japan – it's this forward-motion [*shinka*] that differentiates what's happening at Haruichiban from nostalgia." For Mitsuyo, in other words, the songs of Ryo Kagawa and others are being impacted by the present at the same time as that present is being infected by such voices from the past: what her comments reveal to us is an intertextual intermixing of temporalities that is not about channeling the past, but rather about liquefying the supposedly stable ground of "normative" History, not in order to sink into the muck of reflection, but rather to pursue these contingent and "evolving" musical texts in a world-making praxis that is always oriented toward the future.

Notions of 'Japan,' and of Ryo Kagawa's stances thereupon, have lurked throughout this chapter. But before leaving the artist and getting on the bus that will take us east to Shizuoka, it seems important to work just a little harder to try to make that stance more explicit. Given the dominant perception within the academy that Japan's "folk" movement was about negating the cultural and political framework of Japan, it is easy to construe Kagawa's call for flight and condemnation of "the Nation" as a rejection of 'Japan' itself – but in fact, it seems, precisely the opposite is true. As we noted at the outset of this chapter, Kagawa calls in his most recent album *Mirai* [The Future] for a quest of sorts: "Look for me, and for Japan's one more time." The artist seems to see in 'Japan' alternative possibilities that cannot be accessed simply through occupying an idealized internal negation of History: rather, his aim is to speak/sing from the sidelines, from a position of marginality not only to the "status quo" but to critique itself, pursuing a praxis of play and of motion that seeks to scramble the sense-making mechanisms of both in the interests of fomenting something new. As we have seen in our analysis of *Kyokun I*,

¹⁴⁶ Here we might detect echoes of Shantz's observation that what is important to the world-producing potentials of such events is "the being together of participants, itself constituting an effort 'to form the structure of the new world in the shell of the old. See McKay, Ed., *The Pop Festival*, p. 133.

above, the artist relies extensively upon the ambiguities and complexities presented by the Japanese language to do so – in an answer of sorts to Naoki Sakai and the insights that he presents in his important *Voices of the Past*, Ryo Kagawa turns interiority inside out, making it poetic nonsense, rendering it, precisely in order to facilitate the possibility of putting it back together again. But perhaps most crucially, he rejects the authority of History and of progress – what we have been calling “normative temporality,” in which language itself is of course complicit – weaving musical critiques that are intensely temporal in that they constantly infect the present with a past that is never anchored, but rather carefully engineered to flow un-tethered amidst History’s unfurling, challenging it, and insisting on an intentionally undefined “one more time” for Japan. The potential for “*Kyokun I*” and the critical history that it represents to infect various Nows and facilitate a critical temporality seems of considerable importance to the artist, and undergirds his determination to continue singing the work “until I die.”

In an interview with the Tokyo Shinbun in 2007¹⁴⁷ – when Shinzo Abe was Prime Minister, but years before the second Abe Cabinet, when alarm over the Prime Minister’s intentions truly began to spread – Kagawa explained what he saw as the contemporary relevance of “*Kyokun I*” in these terms:

“I’m a human being who doesn’t know a goddamned thing about politics. I have no idea what they mean by ‘Beautiful Country,’ and I probably couldn’t even spell the words ‘Shinzo Abe’s Cabinet’ properly. But I do think that Japan has become quite the ballsy country over these past few years. Words like “state policy” and “patriotism” – words like that get thrown around these days as if they were nothing. Before we even knew what was happening. So it seems to me that singing an ‘unpatriotic’ song like that is important these days.”

In these remarks, we can detect Ryo Kagawa’s determination to infect common-sense narratives – narratives that were, in this moment, beginning to orbit around terms like “state policy” and

¹⁴⁷ The article, titled *Hikokumin no seishin* [The spirit of an antipatriot], consisted of an extensive interview with Kagawa and appeared in the Tokyo Newspaper on January 10, 2007.

“patriotism” – with past critical voices, establishing a new and unstable temporal base from which to question the “normative” Now – and this is precisely what we have been calling “critical temporality” herein. And in the closing lines of this interview, Kagawa draws uncharacteristically close to actually defining the desired endpoint of this temporal scrambling: “Accepting each other; loving each other. That might be the sort of thing that ‘Beautiful Country’ means to me.”

Ryo Kagawa does not dictate – rather, he invites listeners and participants in his musical events to follow him into the worlds that he traces and weaves, and to think for themselves when they get there. As we have noted with the geographical specificities of his constant touring (*tabi*) and the sorts of “liveness” that he seeks to conjure in the intimate spaces within which he plays, Kagawa’s critical project is clearly national in scope, and aims to stitch together a geographically diverse community of listeners that is nonetheless unified in its Otherness to the status quo. And indeed, this Otherness is a philosophy that Ryo Kagawa puts into practice: listeners wishing a copy of his newest album, for example, must provide their name, address, and contact details by fax and then submit a postal money order to have one sent to them – the album cannot be purchased in stores. In his art and his business, then, Ryo Kagawa’s aim lies not in a rejection of ‘Japan,’ but in a reconfiguration of its terms. Singer-songwriter and Ryo Kagawa protégé Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, with whom we grappled in some detail in the preceding chapter, deploys a similar sort of praxis of reconfiguration – and in the next Chapter, we will examine the biting temporal critique that was deployed to this end at the artist’s record-breaking concert at the foot of Mt. Fuji in August of 2015, just months after the Haruichiban.

Playing Off the Beat:

Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi and the Radical Potentials of a Sunrise

“It smells [like fascism] something awful... I can feel the danger. These days, everyone is running in the same direction. Individuality, difference – they’re being murdered. What we’ve got is a society that’s become accomplice to a kangaroo court. If we don’t get a signal out from a different direction, we’re just going to run right into it.”

-Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, fan club interview, April, 2017

On August 22, 2015 – some three months after the Haruichiban, with which we closed the preceding Chapter – I found myself on a bus, weaving my way through Japan’s inland mountains along the network of expressways that links Kyoto, where I was wrapping up a year of field research, with other urban centers to the east and the north. But on that sweltering summer day I was headed away from the cities, and into the mountains: my bus – along with more than two thousand other buses from various places around Japan, including thirty-six from Tokyo’s Ueno Station alone – was bound for Fumotoppara, a rugged camping area in Shizuoka Prefecture that sits at the foot of Japan’s iconic Mt. Fuji, where legendary rocker (and Ryo Kagawa protégé) Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi was set to mount a massive all-night, outdoor concert for an audience of one hundred thousand. Though dissimilar in scope and in demographic composition from events such as the Haruichiban – the vastly larger audience at Fumotoppara was much younger, for example, and seemed to be comprised heavily of the sorts of members of the precariat that we

met in Chapter One¹ – this musical event would, by the time that the dawn broke the next day, prove to have been driven by the same sorts of critical impulses as those conducted by Ryo Kagawa. Indeed, given the singular obsession with *one moment in time* that would animate Nagabuchi’s event, it seems worthwhile to pursue our discussion of critical temporality² one step further, and consider that tactic’s deployment and effects in this much different context.

Mt. Fuji’s iconicity in narratives of ‘Japan’ made the choice of Fumotoppa as the site of this musical event a very heavily loaded one; one that triggers thought about nation and about collectivity, and about the nature of ‘Japan’ itself. There is a tendency in scholarship to associate invocations of the towering figure of Fuji with transcendence and stasis, and with an ahistorical, compulsory sort of collectivity, especially in the context of modernization and the upheavals of capitalism – indeed, as Dennis Washburn points out in his examination of Natsume Sōseki’s 1908 novel *Sanshirō*, the site lurks in cultural production as a point of reference for an authentic being-Japanese in the face of such turbulence: “Mount Fuji, by virtue of its sheer natural presence, is authentic and does not symbolize false, transient, or parochial values... values of character, the basis of national identity, [are equated] with Mount Fuji, a symbol of order, beauty, and permanence.”³ Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, with his regular deployments of state-sponsored symbols such as the *Hinomaru* (Rising Sun) flag, participation in large film projects that have been criticized by some scholars as promoting a “selfless patriotism” at the expense of

¹ We will revisit some of these individuals in the latter half of this chapter, in order to gauge their reflections on participating in the Fuji event and some of the ways in which it continues to resonate in the context of their own lives.

² The theoretical makeup and implications of what I am terming “critical temporality” herein have been addressed at length in Chapter Two of this dissertation.

³ Dennis C. Washburn, *Translating Mt. Fuji: Modern Japanese Fiction and the Ethics of Identity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), pp. 75-76.

meaningful postwar critique,⁴ and occasional questionable decisions such as his December, 2011 acceptance of official commendation from Japan's Ministry of Defense for his efforts to "encourage" Self-Defense Forces (SDF) personnel in the wake of the earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear meltdowns of March that year,⁵ seems at first glance to meld well with such darker imaginings concerning the role held by Fuji on the Japanese social, and this threatens to color his endeavor at Fumotoppa with certain (fascistic) hues before an analysis is even begun. To be sure, the artist invites his share of criticism for his penchant of seeming to walk right up to the edge of fascism in order to pursue his critique. Yet, as he is wont to do with his frequent invocations of the idea of 'Japan' writ large, Nagabuchi in fact turns the threat of fascism against itself, appropriating Fuji and its assigned positionality at the conceptual center of Japan and *twisting* it, making it serve a critical project that is about *Becoming*, not *being*. Revealing the nature and potentialities of this project in the context of the artist's event at Mt. Fuji shall be the task taken up the present chapter.

From the very moment of its conceptualization, Nagabuchi had expressed a hope that his undertaking at Fumotoppars would help to jumpstart *change*. At a June 21 mini-concert held on the grounds of Fuji's Asama-Taisha, for example, which was meant to pay respects to the spirits of the mountain in advance of the event two months hence, the artist said:

"It was eleven years ago that we did the show at Sakurajima [referring to his then-career topping, and similarly all-night, concert on the volcanic island that looms over Kagoshima's Kinko Bay]. A lot has happened since then, to me, to you. It might just be that the hard things have outnumbered the happy ones. So to keep moving, to keep heading forward, we've always done this – we've always gotten together and sung. I don't know what's going to change on August 22nd, what's going to happen – but let's

⁴ Aaron Gerow, "War and Nationalism in *Yamato*: Trauma and Forgetting the Postwar." *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, Volume 9, Issue 24, No. 1, June 13, 2011.

⁵ I briefly discuss this episode in my chapter "Summertime Blues: Musical Responses to Japan's 'Dark Spring,'" in *Fukushima and the Arts: Negotiating Nuclear Disaster* (New York: Routledge, 2017).

change it with music. Let's transform this into a peaceful world, a world with no fighting.”⁶

What we can note in these comments is an explicit declaration of an intent that usually appears much more implicitly in Ryo Kagawa’s art – an intent to change the world, to manipulate the social itself. As was the case with Ryo Kagawa, however, Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi’s critical methodology is not necessarily self-evident, because it does not rely upon a narrative of countercultural protest of the type celebrated by the New Left around-1970, and which tends to reduce the spectrum of critique to rather simplistic, (L)eft-vs.- (R)ight terms.⁷ As such, it does not quite fit common parameters of critique and protest as understood in the academy, and in the community at large. Indeed, as we noted in Chapter One, Nagabuchi’s art has long been about *reimagining* the terms of ‘Japan,’ which is not quite the same as *resisting* or *opposing* such terms – but as we have already alluded to, this can, and indeed has,⁸ lead to his dismissal as promulgator of unreflective, unproductive nationalism. The task facing us, then, is to theorize how Nagabuchi goes about this critical practice and to reveal the tactics that he deploys, disentangling his critique from the troubling (though ultimately misleadingly so) imagery and symbolism that sometimes attends it.

⁶ Nagabuchi’s commentary from this mini-concert has been archived on the fan website Nagabuchi Tsuyoshi PREMIUM. See <http://ameblo.jp/japan2009tn/entry-12041718798.html>.

⁷ This sort of simplicity is revealed effectively in works such as the Folk Guerilla’s adaptation of Takada Wataru’s “Let’s Join the SDF,” which tends to villainize and reduce anything not conforming to formulaic protest and demonstrations to police repression. In their parody “Let’s Join the Riot Police,” the group sings: “Do you dislike demonstrations? / You’re welcome to join the riot police. / With truncheons, tear bombs, and a water truck, / Let’s obstruct the demos.” See Tōru Mitsui’s chapter in Beate Kutschke, Ed., *Music and Protest in 1968* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

⁸ In a recent example of this, Japan’s controversial chat forum 2ch hosted a long and largely dismissive thread reacting to news of the release of Nagabuchi’s “*Fuji-no-Kuni*,” or “The Fuji Nation,” to be discussed below. The thread was titled “*Fuji-no-Kuni*, a new work sure to thrill the alt-right, is debuted by Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi in concert.”

The actual genesis for Nagabuchi's all-night concert at Fuji can be traced to Japan's triple crises of March 11, 2011, or 3.11, and the unevenness and contradiction that these crises helped to reveal.⁹ 3.11 was construed by the artist as a crisis of national unity, and as I have discussed elsewhere,¹⁰ his initial musical response to the disasters sought a togetherness, a “[O]neness,”¹¹ in their wake. This is rather different from a nostalgic reclaiming of a phantasmal unity that had existed and is now past, however, and speaks more to a conjuring of an alternative Japanese collectivity,¹² which, as we have seen, has been a longstanding critical project of Nagabuchi's, and is about an ongoing critical confrontation with what we have already seen Deleuze and Guattari call the “fixed terms” of the Japanese social, and the tapping of alternate potentials for life as ‘a Japanese.’ The contours of this alternative collectivity are fuzzy and, as we noted with Ryo Kagawa, never explicitly spelled out, but we might characterize it as motion-oriented (forwards, not back), unflinchingly critical, and reimaginative – and with its harsh critiques of consumerism and capitalism, geopolitics, and the state itself, it seems well-suited to both the 3.11 moment, and indeed to some of the developments that have succeeded it, including Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's ongoing cozying to U.S. military priorities and undermining of Japan's own pacifist constitution.

But as the artist's own comments make clear, and as I have asserted in the Prelude to this dissertation, 3.11 and its aftermaths do not amount to moments of exception – isolated, atypical, and ahistorical events that can somehow be thrust aside in the interests of reasserting a re-

⁹ Harry Harootunian, “‘Memories of Underdevelopment’ After Area Studies,” p. 12.

¹⁰ See Scott W. Aalgaard, “Summertime Blues: Musical Responses to Japan’s ‘Dark Spring,’” in *Fukushima and the Arts: Negotiating Nuclear Disaster* (New York: Routledge, 2017).

¹¹ Nagabuchi, Tsuyoshi. “*Hitotsu* [One]”. February 1, 2012. Tokyo: Universal Music. Maxi-single.

¹² It is important to note, for example, that “*Hitotsu*,” the work referenced here, can be understood to be as much a call for ‘Japan’ to become-one with Fukushima and the Northeast, in all its unevenness, as it can be construed as a call for Fukushima and the Northeast to unite with ‘Japan.’

normalized, authentic temporal trajectory that cannot be dislodged by crisis – but rather constitute *waypoints* along an arc of fundamental historicity that stretches as far back (in Nagabuchi's evaluation) as the Pacific War, and that is characterized by unevenness, contradiction, and indeed crisis itself.¹³ In an interview with the online music magazine *natalie* in 2014,¹⁴ Nagabuchi described his (then upcoming) event at Mt. Fuji in the following terms:

“My putting on this concert at Mt. Fuji is something that’s been very strongly influenced by what we all [ware-ware] experienced at the time of the earthquake in 2011. People who wanted to go on living but were swallowed up by the tsunami; people who lost their livelihoods amidst the nuclear crisis and went on to take their own lives even as they raised their own voices in protest and resistance; those who continue to press on and live their lives despite being exposed to these crises... As a Japanese, I want to live my life in such a way that I will allow me to hold my head high in the eyes of individuals like that.

Mt. Fuji has a western slope and an eastern slope. The face of the western slope is like a “mother’s face,” and that’s the side that we’re going to put this concert on at... But the eastern slope, the back side, it’s been used as a training ground for the Self-Defense Forces since back in the Meiji Period – shells get fired into it; “Boom!” Boom!” Like that. ... These two faces that Fuji has – this is precisely what makes it a symbol for Japan. Wartime Japan, post-war Japan, post-3.11 Japan – all of these moments have been defined by this sort of contradiction. In my home of Kagoshima, they’re trying to restart the nuclear reactors, despite such massive meltdowns [at Fukushima]. Fuji has kept watch over all of these contradictions, and it’s got contradictions of its own. If 100,000 people stand at Fuji’s base, and scream at it, in a single voice – “Is this really what we signed up for!?” I wonder, how would Fuji answer? And this is not just about me – it’s about combining the strengths of us people into a unified shout.”

The ways in which ‘Japan’ and Mt. Fuji – as its symbol – are made to bleed into each other here are too clear to miss. But unlike the Fuji of Sōseki’s *Sanshirō*, Nagabuchi’s Fuji is not

¹³ Some facets of the postwar historicity of the artist’s home prefecture of Kagoshima have been discussed above, in Chapter 1. For more on rural-urban unevenness and the realities of capitalist crisis in postwar Japan – what Nagabuchi calls “contradictions” – see, for example, James Babb, 1993 *Making Farmers Conservative: Japanese Farmers, Land Reform and Socialism* (in *Social Science Japan Journal*, Vol. 8, No. 2, 2005), Yūjiro Hayami, 1972 *Rice Policy in Japan’s Economic Development* (*American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, February, 1972), and Makoto Ito, *The Japanese Economy Reconsidered* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000). An more extensive analysis of conditions pertaining to Fukushima Prefecture – which appears to have weighed heavily on the artist’s mind in the formulation of his all-night event at Fuji – see cott W. Aalgaard, MA Thesis, “Gimme Shelter: Enka, Self and Society in Contemporary Japan”, completed 2011 at the University of Victoria.

¹⁴ Nagabuchi’s interview with *natalie* can be reviewed online at <http://natalie.mu/music/pp/nagabuchitsuyoshi/page/2>

transcendent and ahistorical, or free of contradiction – rather, as a geographically-specific and highly symbolic physical site, the mountain can also be apprehended and occupied, made to represent the contradictions of History, not transcend them, and to bear the grievances and different imaginings of those gathered at its foot. And in an intriguing twist, Fuji is thus made to reflect “us people” and their experiences in the modern Japanese everyday – which is quite the opposite of a normative sort of compelling of those “people” to bear the reflection of Fuji, as purported wellspring of “values of [national] character,”¹⁵ as ‘Japanese.’ Fuji, in short, becomes a site at which “us people” – those who abide amidst the consequences and contradictions of capitalist modernity and its place-holder, the state, contradictions which dangle the “ideological promise... of even development everywhere”¹⁶ and yet build that development on a basis of unevenness in places like Kagoshima and Fukushima, and on the basis of military domination and sacrifice to the state – speak (or sing) back to a ‘Japan’ that is symbolized in Fuji, an operation that is potentially corrosive not because it takes up an oppositional stance *outside* of narratives of ‘Japan,’ but because it is purposefully embedded squarely and unblinkingly *within* it. Unlike Ryo Kagawa’s critique, there is no flight from “the Nation” here – Nagabuchi aims to confront and interrogate ‘Japan’ head-on.

If, as Lisa Wedeen has argued in the case of Yemen, nationalism and the national self can be (and, in fact, is) performed through everyday practice, then what we seem to be faced with in the intentional occupation of Fuji is a sort of *schizophrenic split*, a critical project that veers away from a totalizing idea of ‘Japan’ even as it retains its terminology and re-imagines its terms, and that insists upon exposing Japan’s contradictions and unevennesses, even as it

¹⁵ Washburn, p. 75.

¹⁶ Harry Harootunian, *History’s Disquiet: Modernity, Cultural Practice, and the Question of Everyday Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), pp. 114-115.

proposes an alternative collectivity that does not proclaim to be any less ‘Japanese’ for the effort.¹⁷ This is a split that is rooted in a narration of the experience of everydayness – what Wedeen calls “everyday practice” – as the defining experience of ‘Japan,’ the forefronting of “different histories” at the expense of what we defined in the precious chapter as “normative temporality.” While there is clearly a nationalist element to the critique that we can see developing here, we might borrow again from (and remix) the insights of Svetlana Boym and propose this to be a *reflective* nationalism, not a *restorative* one;¹⁸ one that troubles the ways in which the nation has been “imagined as a community... regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in [it].”¹⁹ As we shall see, the other ‘Japan’ – the alternative collectivity – that was imagined at Fumotoppa seemed to turn much accepted knowledge of nations and nationalisms on its head: rather than being comprised of “finite... boundaries”²⁰ it was porous and open; rather than being “conceived as a deep horizontal comradeship”²¹ under the rubric of ‘Japan’ it seemed to present itself as a splinter, pitting an “us” against a “you” in an attempt to ascribe different meaning and different potentialities thereto; and rather than abiding a static suspension in “homogenous, empty time” it insisted upon forward motion – on *becoming* ‘Japanese’ – and upon the ceaseless pursuit of a solidarity that could only ever be attained fleetingly, and that seemed to demand constant renewal due to its inextricable association with a

¹⁷ As Lisa Wedeen has pointed out, national sentiment does not simply ‘exist’ – it is always *performed*, and the nature of this performance and the imagining that informs it is of great interest here. Through this musical event, in other words, other conceptualizations of the nation are performed and made to intrude upon what Nagabuchi critiques as a contradiction-laden ‘Japan’ symbolized in/at Fuji. See Lisa Wedeen, *Peripheral Visions: Publics, Power, and Performance in Yemen* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008).

¹⁸ The important differences between restorative and reflective as formulated by Boym have been outlined in previous pages.

¹⁹ See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991). P. 7.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

specific – but renewable – moment in time. Indeed, like Ryo Kagawa, Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi seems to sense that *temporality* is the vehicle that will drive this critique, and in the pages that follow we will consider the ways in which Nagabuchi conjured and deployed critical temporality in the context of his all-night musical event at the foot of Mt. Fuji, along with some of the ways in which this has reverberated in the lives of attendees.

In Chapter One of this dissertation, we noted the way in which many of Nagabuchi's most biting works challenge 'Japan' as History (which, we will allow Endo to remind us, is nothing but the ideological linear trajectory of capitalism itself²²) by insisting upon telling the stories of differently-temporalized space, and ruthlessly embedding those stories within discourses of 'Japan' itself. Indeed, a key desire underpinning much of Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi's critical praxis over the past decades has been the desire to tell a different time – what we have termed *Kagoshima-time*.²³ His library is peppered with musical accounts of what Tosaka Jun would call "everydayness," of life embedded amidst the consequences of capitalism, and references to the grinding rural poverty that he experienced as a child and the quashed potentials for becoming-Other that he sees lying crumpled in the path of an ever-encroaching, Tokyo-based capitalist homogenization. As we saw, this sort of critique is particularly conspicuous in his howling "*Kagoshima Chūō STATION*," and in the ballad "*LICENSE*." But to reiterate, this is not what it might seem at first glance: as we have seen, Nagabuchi has had no interest in positing Kagoshima as a site of purity, a spatialized time-outside-of-time to which he and others can flee

²² Katsuhiko Endō, "A Unique Tradition of Materialism in Japan." In *positions*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (2012), p. 1032.

²³ Mark Abel gestures toward the intensely critical potential of the citation of disparate times in text in his *Groove: An Aesthetic of Measured Time*: "The revolutionary project of a classless society... is also the withering away of social measurement of time in favor of an individuated and collective measurement of time which is playful in character and which encompasses, simultaneously present within it, a variety of autonomous yet effectively federated times." See Mark Abel, *Groove: An Aesthetic of Measured Time* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), p. 254.

and recover a “vanishing,”²⁴ pre-capital past that never existed anyway. Rather, through a process that I have called “provincializing Japan” above, Nagabuchi has insisted upon embedding Kagoshima firmly within the social relations that comprise ‘Japan,’ and upon confronting a dominant ‘Japan’ as abstract space²⁵ – what Harootunian has termed “Japan’s Japan”²⁶ – with ‘Japan’ as lived, practiced space,²⁷ and claiming for the latter not a place *outside* of history, but rather one radically *within* it. This is a praxis that serves to challenge and destabilize the former’s claim to the right to tell a singular, universalized Japanese time – what we have been calling “normative temporality” in this dissertation. The massive musical event at Mt. Fuji, for Nagabuchi, seems to have offered a way to further loosen the chains of this “normative temporality,” to insist upon the communal claiming of a fleeting moment of collectivity that could be understood differently. As we shall see in the pages that follow, this hijacking of temporality, this insistence upon a conjuring of a “different history,” relied upon the occupation of the very moment that defines a new day (and that is inextricably associated with ideological notions of ‘Japan’ itself) – the rising of the sun.

In Chapter Two, we built on this discussion in order to attend to some of the ways in which temporality and the carnivalesque combined in musical events such as the Haruichiban to reveal critical, reimaginative potentials – and this is a combination that served to propel Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi’s critical project at Fumotoppara, as well. Robert Stam insists that the “carnival is simultaneously ecstatic collectivity and the joyful affirmation of social change, a dress rehearsal

²⁴ See Marilyn Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing: Modernity Phantasm Japan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

²⁵ See Henri Lefebvre, trans. Donald Nicholson Smith, *The Production of Space* (Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 1991), esp. p. 370.

²⁶ See Harry Harootunian, “America’s Japan/Japan’s Japan,” in Masao Miyoshi and H.D. Harootunian, eds., *Japan in the World* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993).

²⁷ See Michel de Certeau, trans. Steven F. Rendall, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), esp. the chapter “Walking in the City.”

for utopia.”²⁸ As we can see in the artist’s own comments above, the idea of collectivity – alternative collectivity – was a key consideration driving his musical event, and he located the potential for attaining this alternative collectivity in the communal occupation of a temporal moment that signaled the coming of a new day – the sunrise. But in classic Nagabuchi fashion, the “utopian” potential of this temporal occupation did not reside in a supposed transcendence, a removal from the everyday and an “overcoming [of] modernity,”²⁹ but rather in its (fleeting) capture and redefinition of that moment in a symbolically and ideologically loaded place – Fuji – that is forced out of its own assigned position of transcendence and made to stand as a node in the network of social relations that connect ‘Japan,’ a place where threads of experience intersect and collide. In the moment of the sunrise at Fumotoppara, a new nation – the Fuji Nation³⁰ – was crystallized, though briefly,³¹ and the critiques and experiences of the (precarious) everyday that

²⁸ Robert Stam is quoted by Graham St. John in his chapter “Protestival: Global days of action and carnivalized politics at the turn of the millennium,” in George McKay, Ed., *The Pop Festival: History, Music, Media, Culture*. See p. 131.

²⁹ Harry Harootunian eloquently warns of the fascistic consequences of displacing the crises of capitalism into a unified “folk” in his manuscript of the same name. See Harootunian’s *Overcome by Modernity: History, Culture, and Community in Interwar Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

³⁰ *Fuji-no-Kuni*, The Fuji Nation, is the name of the work written by Nagabuchi to be played as the event careened toward its climax and the sun breached the horizon.

³¹ It may be helpful to consider Nagabuchi’s hours-long musical event and its climax in the moment of the sunrise in terms of Bergson’s duration. “Real duration,” according to Bergson, is that in which each form flows out of its precious form, while adding to them something new... [it is that] in which a radical recasting of the real is always going on.” He insists that we consider duration first, and not its moments – the moment of the sunrise might thus be considered a snapshot of an unfolding duree, of a becoming, a transformative coming-together that was built upon shared critique and the communal experiencing of the shared social time of music. Individual reflections on this experience are relayed below. Though it is unlikely that Nagabuchi would ever have read Bergson, we might nonetheless theorize that the heavy emphasis placed upon the sunrise – in all its brevity and fleetingness – helped to galvanize an un-static, forward-moving, critical sort of becoming that could challenge what Bergson decries as time as “an invention... [as] an abstraction of arbitrarily-taken points” – or, “normative temporality.” What begins to emerge here is a notion of a collectivity based upon motion and becoming: in Bergson’s formulation, “there is no form, since form is immobile and the reality is movement. What is real is the continual change of form: form is only a snapshot view of a transition.” See Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution* (1911).

constituted the composite threads of that Nation were rendered all the more corrosive for their proximity to narratives of ‘Japan’ as History, and their symbolization in the iconicity of Mt. Fuji.

Indeed, though the event got underway in the pitch-dark of a Shizuoka field – so isolated that it required a mile-long hike into the site from the makeshift parking area at which buses like mine disgorged attendees who had traveled as long as a day to get there, and necessitated the arrival of Nagabuchi and his mixed-nationality band³² by helicopter – it was always already oriented toward the coming sunrise of the next day, and the hope that was vested in that moment for change (“If we can all pull that sun up together, then maybe – just maybe – something will change,” the artist remarked before launching into “*CLOSE YOUR EYES*,”³³ one of his musical ruminations on the Pacific War). It is significant that the first work to erupt out of the darkness was Nagabuchi’s 1991 single “*JAPAN*,” which splits the national pronoun in two – one claimed by a “you,” and the other by an “us” – and depicts the “us” as seabirds drowning in crude oil in the Persian Gulf, and laments Japan’s inability to face history head-on, asking “where we’re going to drift toward from here on out... [whether] culture will be trampled underfoot, the lessons of history ignored – are we doomed to be drenched in the rains of the end of time?” The event would go on to careen through critical musical works that were deployed very purposefully, in the context of a musical event populated by actors in whose lives the texts had already been circulating,³⁴ providing solace and giving voice to critique: as we noted in Ryo

³² The artist’s backing band for this event – and for the “warm-up” hall tour that preceded it – was an ad-hoc mixture of Japanese, American, and Canadian musicians. Though Nagabuchi has recorded overseas and made use of non-Japanese studio musicians in the past – notably on the album *JAPAN*, which was recorded in the United States – the Fuji event and its setups, for all of their focus on notions of ‘Japan,’ marked the first time that non-Japanese musicians were used on the road.

³³ Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, “*CLOSE YOUR EYES*,” from the album *YAMATO*. October 19, 2005. Tokyo: FOR LIFE Music Entertainment. CD Album.

³⁴ David Novak discusses the disruptive potentials of embeddedness “in the historical loops of musical circulation” in terms of the ways in which this circulation may feed back into the lives of social actors

Kagawa's critical praxis, the unleashing of critical statements from disparate moments to circulate through the highly iconic space of "hallowed Fuji's" realm seemed aimed squarely at upending a closed and transcendent Historical (=temporal) regime, "overload[ing] the original content"³⁵ and scrambling the way in which 'Japan' is made to make sense. The four-segment concert spun up, for example, harsh musical denunciations of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, which were exemplified in a blisteringly critical collaborative performance of Nagabuchi's "*Kazoku* [Family],"³⁶ which saw him share the stage with *zainichi* Korean rapper Han'ya, Okinawan singer Maico, and hip-hop artist Yunyudo, and which caused something of an uproar among some less critically-minded attendees.³⁷ It went on to feature laments aimed at life under the U.S. nuclear umbrella,³⁸ harsh critiques of nuclear power,³⁹ and confrontations with the fact of the sacrifice of Japanese lives by the state during the Pacific War.⁴⁰ It was also punctuated by periodic invocations of Kagoshima-time, in works dealing with that specific site.⁴¹ The entire

already tending toward a critique of holistic notions like 'Japan.' "[F]eedback," he argues, often spins out of control precisely because senders and receivers are not invested in continuing a holistic social field of transmission or in emulating past performances. Instead, they change direction." See Novak's *JAPANOISE*, pp. 140-152.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 153.

³⁶ Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, "*Kazoku* [Family]," from the album *Kazoku*. January 1, 1996. Tokyo: Toshiba EMI. CD Album.

³⁷ After the event, a thread discussing this particular performance appeared on the fan site TOP OF HUNGRY – the largest 'unofficial' Nagabuchi fan site on the internet and the only one paid attention to by the artist's management team – and garnered hundreds of responses. A great many of these were highly critical of the guest performers, condemning them for their "disloyalty" to Japan and to its leadership – despite this critique being led by Nagabuchi himself. This helped to demonstrate that the "message" taken from the event by attendees was far from uniform, and that there were clearly uncritical, even fascist, desires in play that night.

³⁸ Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, "*Asu wo kudasee* [Gimme a Tomorrow]," from the album *STAY ALIVE*. May 16, 2012. Tokyo: Nayuta Wave Records. CD Album. Also see the aforementioned *Oyashirazu* [Wisdom Teeth] for antinuclear critique, appearing in the form of a "black umbrella."

³⁹ Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, "*Kamome* [Seagulls]," from the album *STAY ALIVE*. May 16, 2012. Tokyo: Nayuta Wave Records. CD Album.

⁴⁰ Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, "CLOSE YOUR EYES," from the album *YAMATO*. October 19, 2005. Tokyo: FOR LIFE Music Entertainment. CD Album.

⁴¹ The aforementioned "LICENSE" also made an appearance as the event was drawing to a climax.

event, in short, was characterized by critique after critique after critique – it afforded no space for either artist or attendee to sink into an ahistorical, fascist sort of reverie or escape, but rather seemed designed to do precisely the opposite, closing off all avenues of flight and redirecting attendees along new paths, like bumpers on a pinball machine. The event’s howling musical indictments demanded engagement with the “fixed terms” of Japan in the Now, propelling those in attendance toward a fleeting but powerful confrontation with “normative temporality” by relentlessly forefronting historicity and the crises of capital and the nation-state, positing these crises as *real* history – as a shared experience of “everydayness” which can serve as the starting point for alternative collectivity – in the shadow of Mt. Fuji, and in the context of the dawning of a new and different day.

If 2004’s all-night event at Sakurajima was about telling Kagoshima-time on the margins, within Kagoshima, then we might understand the Fumotoppa event eleven years later as bringing Kagoshima-time – historicity – to the very (conceptual) center of ‘Japan’ itself, in an attempt to dislodge and replace its “normative temporality” with what we have been calling *critical* temporality herein. And yet, we cannot sidestep the fact that the fundamentally critical impulse behind this musical event seemed at odds with the overbearing presence of the single most ubiquitous actor on the site that night and early morning – tens of thousands of *Hinomaru* (Rising Sun) flags. The dangers of nationalism have, of course, been well-documented, and Japan’s flag, in particular, carries with it contentious connotations both of past imperialism and fascism, and contemporary racism and hate. Indeed, we have considered some of the ways in which the *Hinomaru* is understood in the Prelude to this dissertation. But as I also suggested therein, simplistic dismissals of such textual deployment in favor of taking refuge in reified assumptions concerning the nature of permissible critique can deafen us to intriguing critical

possibilities, and such possibilities were in evidence that summer night – indeed, in Latourian fashion,⁴² these flags (not unlike Takada Wataru’s bicycle) became actors in a network that seemed, in the context of this musical event, to produce something quite different from exclusionary nationalism, or fascism. Akutagawa Prize-winning *zainichi* Korean author Yu Miri, whom we will visit in Chapter Four of this dissertation, said: “I was blown away by the way in which those flags were being waved... They were being waved in fury, in condemnation of the fact that Japan is treating its own people, its own land, like trash. Fascists don’t wave flags like that, back to front, as if they’re trying to punch through something... [that] was expressing straight anger, coming right from the heart.”⁴³ What Yū insists upon in this comment, in short, is the need to pay careful attention to the specific deployment of this text in the context of what we have been calling the “musical event,” wherein meaning is never a priori, but is produced, through the deployment and use of specific texts in specific geographic, historical, and economic contexts, on-site.

Intriguingly, close examination of this initially troubling spectacle also reveals that many of the *Hinomaru* on the site that day – including, pointedly, the huge flag that blew in the wind high above Nagabuchi’s stage, and indeed over the entire site – were marked and tainted, made to bear the name of the artist in what appeared to be a highly symbolic act of twisting their ideological intent and forcing this supposedly timeless, transcendent symbol of the Nation (and here we are reminded of Ryo Kagawa’s “Nation”) to accommodate the specificities of

⁴² See Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

⁴³ Yū Miri’s comments are recorded in an interview with the online literary magazine Litera. See http://lite-ra.com/2016/03/post-2059_4.html.

Nagabuchi and his critique, and to stand for something different.⁴⁴ What this iconic performativity, both expressed in and afforded by the context of an intensely critical musical event that brought its claims to the symbolic center of Japan itself – a center which, we will recall, is devoid of human inhabitants, yet populated by those who have come from across Japan and indeed around the world to participate – seems to gesture toward is the affective generation of an alternative collectivity, one that insists upon telling its own time and staking its own claim to history. And indeed, it was this impulse toward alternative collectivity – one that still hijacked the symbolism and terminology of ‘Japan’ – that propelled the event toward its conclusion.

As the sun began to rise over Fumotoppa, Nagabuchi and his band set up the climax to the event by opening their final set with the acidic *Ashita wo kudasee* [Gimme a Tomorrow], which rips into the “flat and empty words” of Japan’s leadership [*erai hito*] and furiously criticizes the “American umbrella” (under which Japan finds shelter, at least geopolitically) and the “black rain” that falls beneath it, soaking “us.” And then, later in the set, as if in response to his own howling plea, Nagabuchi tore into the marathon-length “*Fuji-no-Kuni*” [The Fuji

⁴⁴ In his *Flag Burning: Moral Panic and the Criminalization of Protest*, Michael Welch discusses the way in which, through desecrating the American flag, “desecrators invert an established state symbol, producing a contrary political message.” (p. 50) Such desecration, according to Welch, targets not only the state itself, but also the authoritarian aesthetic of the state that reveals itself in the disciplinary function that the flag is made to embody. Although burning the flag is the act most commonly associated with its desecration, Welch notes that disparate tactics were in fact deployed in order to undermine the state’s authority and counter the authoritarian aesthetic with which the flag was imbued – including superimposing symbols, such as Nagabuchi’s distinctive signature graphic, upon it. One student activist in Seattle during the Vietnam War, for example, was arrested for superimposing a peace sign onto the American flag with black tape – an act that he defended as an “inten[t] to associate the flag with peace instead of war and violence.” Though initially convicted, his conviction was overturned by the United States Supreme Court in 1974. In this way, we can note the manner in which often unquestioned symbols of nation and state can in fact be put to highly critical use – and strong echoes of Nagabuchi’s critical tactic can be heard here. See Michael Welch, *Flag Burning: Moral Panic and the Criminalization of Protest* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 2000), esp. Chapter 4.

Nation]⁴⁵ – a critical and rousing number with a thumping shuffle beat that was written specifically for this occasion, and only ever released in live recording format (in a way that seems to reference a Kagawa-esque sort of co-productivity or co-ownership of the work) – precisely as “tomorrow” was beginning to dawn. “*Fuji-no-Kuni*” opens in a “today” in which young bodies continue to be rendered, sacrificed to warring states which are never specified, but which remind us both of contemporary global conflicts and of Japan’s own wartime past:

“Today, too – the eye of a sturdy young girl, shot through with a bullet from a gun
And a nameless soldier fell on a beachhead somewhere, they say,
crying his mother’s name as he died.
And oh, now too in this thoroughly shriveled island country,
thrust off to the edge of Asia...
But the spirit will not be torn; we must never give in to despair.”

To be sure, there is something troubling in the invocation of a “thoroughly shriveled island country, thrust off to the edges of Asia;” something that reminds us of earlier historical attempts in other locations and contexts to regain a national glory that quickly spiraled into fascism. Subsequent lyrical enunciations that speak of a desire to collapse into sentimentality and portrayals of Fuji as a sort of holy site, for example, similarly put us in mind of fascism’s siren song,⁴⁶ and we are correct to be concerned here. Indeed, for all of his condemnation of contradiction, Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi’s artistry might be fairly criticized as cutting much too close to dangerous contradictions of its own – between clearing a path for forward-moving critique and alternative collectivity on the one hand, and seeming to flirt with revivified notions of authenticity (precisely the “authenticity” spurned by Ryo Kagawa) as their potentiating condition, on the other.

⁴⁵ Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, “*Fuji-no-Kuni* [The Fuji Nation],” from the mini-album *Fuji-no-Kuni*. June 22, 2015. Tokyo: Universal Music. CD maxi-single.

⁴⁶ Siegfried Kracauer, for example, cites the fetishization of the landscape – and mountains specifically – as a potential stepping-stone along the path to fascism. See Kracauer’s *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004 [1947]).

And yet, careful attention will still reveal in this work an acidic critical stance – one that simultaneously potentiates and relies upon the conjuring of a “critical temporality” for its legibility. Indeed, History – the varied terms of “normative temporality” – is subjected to direct confrontation here. “*Fuji-no-Kuni*”’s citation of ongoing histories of generalized global warfare – in a moment when no wars are actually being fought in Japan – seems to speak, along with *Ashita wo kudasee*, specifically and critically to Japan’s security relationship with the United States and the way in which war is already in Japan “now, too.”⁴⁷ Japan’s positionality within a persistent, U.S.-led Cold War geopolitical regime, meanwhile – something that has met the artist’s ire previously and repeatedly – seems to resonate in the work’s derision of a Japan that is “thrust off to the edge of Asia.” Additionally, Nagabuchi’s choice of terminology for “give in” – *kuppuku* – seems to sarcastically echo the terminology repeatedly deployed by Abe during Japan’s hostage crisis of January and February, 2015, when the Prime Minister vowed never to “give in” to terror. The overall thrust of the lengthy work, in sum – the lyrics cannot be reproduced in full here – is intolerant of violence and war (“there is no nation that can stand on a foundation of violence,” the work declares in its third verse) and highly *critical*, and while we have noted with unease the fact that the hungry ghosts of fascism clearly lurk around the work’s edges, hoping for scraps, what we seem to be faced with here is the figure of Nagabuchi reaching right into the jaws of fascism in order to mount an uncomfortably close critique thereof. Indeed, Nagabuchi seems to insist (implicitly) in his critical stance that an important key to undoing fascism may be found within (the threat of) fascism itself – and in a moment in which “protest” as it has been known has repeatedly revealed itself to be broken, as we have seen, such voices and alternative possibilities are surely deserving of our attention.

⁴⁷ This is a critique that takes on particular weight in the context of Shinzo Abe’s efforts at this moment to authorize warzone support for American endeavors on the part of Japanese SDF personnel.

Perhaps most significantly, even as it tackles “today” head on, “*Fuji-no-Kuni*” reaches beyond “today” toward the potential of a tomorrow that is never quite realized in the work – but whose realization is both the promise of its critical grappling with the History of the “now,” and the literal manifestation of “critical temporality” that this grappling pledges to afford in the context of the work’s performance in the dawning of a new day. The chorus of “*Fuji-no-Kuni*” – like the flags, and like the varied instances of seemingly fascist desire discussed above – seems highly rather troubling at first encounter, and repeats (sometimes instrumentally, sometimes in voice) as the sun comes up:

“O sun, rise on the peak of Japan, rise where the flag was born
We’ve been born at the peak of hallowed Fuji’s nation
O sun, rise on the peak of Japan, rise where the flags now wave
We’ve been born at the peak of hallowed Fuji’s nation”

What we are immediately struck with here is the lurking figure of the *volk*, another well-recognized fascist harbinger. But again, a closer look is warranted. Through the intertextuality of the Fumotoppa musical event, it becomes apparent that this “we” who are “born” – amidst flags that have been altered in their own (re-)birth, and made to stand for different things – are not an a priori community of the Same,⁴⁸ to be somehow magically returned to or re-accessed outside of History. Rather, the Fuji Nation seems to have emerged – briefly – in the very moment of the dawn at Fumotoppa, as the gradually building claim to a “different history,” to the right to tell a different time, became materialized in the literal breaking of a new today. In a powerful moment during the performance of “*Fuji-no-Kuni*,” after the sun had risen, Nagabuchi silenced his multinational band and spoke, uncharacteristically quietly, to his audience from the stage: “The wind is blowing; the flags are fluttering. If we work hard, if we put our hearts and all of our

⁴⁸ William Haver, *The Body of This Death: Historicity and Sociality in the Time of AIDS* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), p.19.

energies together, then we might just be able to make a decent country for our kids.” Then, in a way that seemed to confirm the sense that the Fuji Nation had “been born” just moments earlier, and was in fact comprised of those in attendance at Fumotoppa, he called out, ecstatically: “The sun has risen on the Fuji Nation!”

The sort of impulse towards open-ended creativity – *becoming*, not *being* – that informed this statement ran beneath the surface of the entire event, as well; but it was particularly conspicuous in the performance of “*Fuji-no-Kuni*” and its thumping drive toward the (fleeting) attainment of a tomorrow that was dangled but denied in the lyrics of the work itself – though this crystallization was fragile and brief, and seemed to demand re-soldering in a new moment once the sun was risen (it is worth pointing out that the chorus of “*Fuji-no-Kuni*” is characterized by an unresolved chord progression, which itself seems to urge an endless forward motion, away from stasis). And indeed, as the testimonies from the event’s attendees that we will examine briefly below help to indicate, what ultimately seemed to be created there was a new solidarity, a foundation for action that demanded constant pursuit and reassembly (and thus sidestepped the snare of stasis and the spatialization of time) *precisely because* it was linked so closely to the fleeting moment of the sunrise. This solidarity was forged of an hours-long confrontation with and critique of “normative temporality,” the terms and conditions of life in contemporary capitalist Japan, and drew interconnectivities among the occupants of that Now that enmeshed the ‘Japan’ that was embodied in Fuji, forcing its redefinition, and compelling it to accommodate “different histories” and critical possibilities. As such, the Fuji Nation – borne of an utterly empty, pastoral site in Shizuoka and populated with individual actors from across Japan and around the world – seems a fleeting example of alternative collectivity par excellence. And this was a collectivity that rested not upon ‘Japan’s’ “internal negation,” but rather upon a continuous

reimagination and reassembly of its terms, and that announced itself by shattering the “normative temporality” of modern Japan as History. Rather than *being*-Japanese, in other words, this event seemed oriented to questions of *becoming*-Japanese, according to terms that were critical, fluid, and intolerant not only of the “normative temporality” of capitalist modernity, but of the static, ahistorical transcendence thereof that can serve as its internal negation – in other words, fascism.

As Tia DeNora points out, music, unlike literature (for example), unfolds over *socially shared time*,⁴⁹ and as we shall see below, the affective sense of collectivity that the experience of Nagabuchi’s all-night event helped to afford among concertgoers reached a powerful climax in the moment of the sunrise, when so many reported an intensely emotional realization that something *new* had been achieved, or was immanently possible. This “something new,” it seems, is made thinkable through the dislodging of “normative temporality” and its replacement with different histories and different possibilities – and this replacement is what Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi’s all-night concert at Mt. Fuji, in all its intricate choreography, seemed designed to facilitate. Insomuch as it announced the crystallization of a critical stance on the world and the possibility of Other histories, the moment of the sunrise on August 23, 2015, at Fumotoppa, in other words, seemed a very tangible manifestation of what we have been calling “critical temporality” herein. At the same time, however, and reflexively, it should also be understood as the condition that potentiated a confrontation with the terms of “normative temporality” on the part of artist and audience *in anticipation of* the sunrise, thereby setting the stage for it to take on that critical significance in the first place.

Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi seems to share with Walter Benjamin an intense aversion to historicism, which we might understand as an uninterrogated historical progression toward a pre-

⁴⁹ DeNora, *After Adorno*, p. 83.

determined (capitalist) destination. For Benjamin – and, it seems, for Nagabuchi – “any political project for social transformation, for the inauguration of the genuinely new, must be based on a critique of the notion of a historical progress and of the concept of a homogenous, empty time on which it is based. Rather than a notion of the present which is a transition, a historical materialist needs one ‘in which time stands still and comes to a full stop.’”⁵⁰ The fleeting moment at “which time stands still,” for our purposes, is of course the moment of the sunrise – its arrest and re-occupation allows for the fulfillment of a challenge to History and a reformulation of the terms of life, a forging of a history that forefronts everydayness and insisting on its ongoing critique. But perhaps most pointedly, Benjamin insists that this forging of history involves “making the continuum of history *explode*.⁵¹ His aim – like, apparently, Nagabuchi’s – is for moments of presentness that are “blasted out of the continuum of history,”⁵² and made malleable. But at risk of repetition, we must be careful to clarify what we mean here – this explosive imagery speaks not to a destruction of history itself and its transcendence, or overcoming, in a somehow more authentic (=ahistorical) experience of the world, but rather a pulverizing of the ideological apparatus of “normative temporality,” and its infection – however brief and fleeting – with other histories and different possibilities. This making of history might be understood as the deployment of history/time in order to undermine history/time: Nagabuchi’s playful, complex, and utterly intentional playing with time(s) here seems to constitute “[a] measurement of time which is playful in character and which encompasses, simultaneously present within it, a variety of autonomous yet effectively federated times.”⁵³ As Abel teaches us, Debord’s notion of “federated” times here seems to endorse both the idea of a multiplicity of times and the

⁵⁰ Benjamin is quoted by Mark Abel in his *Groove*, p. 237.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 238.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 254.

possibility of their “collective integration”⁵⁴ – and it is precisely in such a collective integration, the sort of troubling of “normative temporality” with Kagoshima-time that we saw Nagabuchi attempt in his “LICENSE” (see Chapter One), that fills the hijacking and reimagination of the moment of Fuji’s sunrise with such critically corrosive potentiality.

Mediations on a Sunrise: Individual Reflections on Fumotoppa

A theorizing of the critical tactics deployed by Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi tells part of the story of Fumotoppa, but certainly not all of it. Tia DeNora insists that the musical event must be thought of as a network, with social actors constituting one node therein. In her formulation, “we need to follow actors in and across situations as they draw music into social practice,”⁵⁵ and we might briefly return to the *Ougoukai* – the unofficial Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi fan organization, whose members we visited in the first chapter of this dissertation – in order to get a sense of the ways in which Nagabuchi’s complex critical intervention into “normative temporality” and the Japanese social impacted and informed the lives of individual music aficionadi who were present at Fumotoppa that night and early morning, both during the concert and afterwards. In October of 2015, some two months after the curtain fell on Fuji, I had the chance to speak again with several of my acquaintances in the organization, and their experiences and insights were revealing. All four with whom I met – Yūji, Iwashi, Eiji, and Junko – spoke at length of the immense emotion that they experienced at the moment of the sunrise. Yūji, for example – the co-founder of the *Ougoukai* and sometimes-chef, sometimes-driver who lives just outside of Kagoshima City – spoke of the charged current of connectivity that arced through the crowd: “There was this big, tough *yakuza* guy beside me, all covered with tattoos,” he recalls. “He was

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 255.

⁵⁵ Tia De Nora, *After Adorno*, p. 40.

crying his eyes out at the moment of the sunrise. We all were. There was something that everyone felt – like passing an exam, or coming through some sort of hard trial. Everyone sang their hearts out, and that's what brought the sun out – even though I know that that's not really true.” What the experience of the socially shared time of hours of critical music culminating in the appropriation of a literal new day afforded for Yūji was what he termed a new “feeling of Japan” – a sense of connection with other attendees from across the country. Here we are presented with a concrete instance of the intriguing sort of inverse to Ryo Kagawa’s *tabi*, discussed briefly above – whereas Kagawa traces pathways through out-of-the-way villages and towns across the archipelago in an attempt to stitch together a ‘Japan’ that is understood according to different terms, at Fuji we are presented with a coming-together of social actors from the margins (such as Yūji, as we have seen, but also his new underworld friend) to its conceptual center. And this sort of sense of collectivity – this *nakama* – seems to be precisely what Yūji was looking for: “I wasn’t thinking of Fuji in difficult terms,” he said. “For me, it was more the process of going, of experiencing the event, of clarifying my relationship with the people around me.” Yūji knows that Nagabuchi mounted the event because his aim was “to change something” [*nanika ga kawaru*], but for him personally, he insists, “nothing has changed *that* much.” Rather than an absence of meaning, however, what this seems to indicate is a reinforcement of the sort of interconnectivity – *nakama* – already desired by Yūji and lived through the auspices of the *Ougoukai* in the context of precarious conditions of life in Kagoshima, and that was amplified in the moment of the sunrise.

Iwashi, whom we will recall as our professional Nagabuchi impersonator from Satsuma-Sendai, in Kagoshima, similarly found great significance in the breaking of the dawn at Fumotoppara: “It was more meaningful to me than *hatsuhinode*,” he said, pointedly referring to

the first sunrise of the new year, a symbol in Japan of fresh starts and new possibilities. “Seeing that sun emerge from behind Japan’s biggest mountain moved me incredibly... there was something *miraculous* about it.” As we saw with Yūji, though, the breaking of the dawn at Fumotoppara is understood by Iwashi as *active*, not passive, something that was achieved through communal effort, rather than something that simply occurred – even while, as Yūji made clear, it is understood that the rising of the sun is in fact merely an effect of astronomy, something that Iwashi conceded as well, noting that this climactic moment of the show was really put on by nature [“*daishizen ga enshitsu site kureta*”]. What is different here is the significance that is attached to that particular sunrise – and Iwashi’s association of daybreak on August 23 with that of January 1 is instructive in this regard. The dawning of that day, in short, was understood as pregnant with both achievement and new possibility, and intertwined with a certain power of solidarity borne of “making music together”⁵⁶ from a position of a shared stance on the world.⁵⁷ This communal conjuring and occupation of the moment of a new day was attributed by Iwashi to what he terms *minna no chikara*, or the power of [us] all, and for him, it was precisely this “power” and its effects that were “miraculous.” In Iwashi’s view, it is precisely this *minna no chikara* that Nagabuchi aims to conjure and to manipulate in order to derail a Japanese trajectory that he sees as hurtling toward renewed militarism and toxic capitalism, the latter revealed in the figure of nuclear power plants in Fukushima and in Satsuma-Sendai, where Iwashi himself lives. Iwashi is fervently pacifist – “Japan must remain peaceful; whatever else happens, I absolutely do not want this country to wage war [*senso dake ha zettai shite hoshikunai*]” – and seemed to find great promise and potential in the “power” that

⁵⁶ Abel, p. 129.

⁵⁷ See Harris M. Berger, *Stance: Ideas About Emotion, Style, and Meaning for the Study of Expressive Culture* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2009).

crystallized at dawn, and that promised to disturb that trajectory. It is worth noting, however, that as a resident of Satsuma-Sendai, he was less enthusiastic at the prospect of shuttering the plants there, insisting that the town is falling apart [“*sabireteru*”] and more or less captive to the cash flow that the plants provide for its survival.

Eiji, whom we will remember as our sometimes-troubled *Ougoukai* representative from Shizuoka Prefecture, shared with me an intriguing take on the Fuji event: “The geographical center of Japan actually isn’t Fuji, you know [this location is in fact contested, and claimed by sites in Gunma, Tochigi, Ishikawa, and Nagano Prefectures]. Nagabuchi decided to go to Fuji because it’s the conceptual center of Japan, the place that the world looks at when it thinks about what ‘Japan’ is. Personally, I wanted to see him go up to Tohoku [northeastern Japan, site of the triple crises of March 11, 2011] for this show.” In this comment, we can sense a desire to make the northeast – widely recognized in 2015 as the very epitome of unevenness and site of what Naoki Sakai has called the “repressed spatial premises of the concept of modernity”⁵⁸ – a more explicit component of the ‘Japan’ that was conjured through communal critical practice at the foot of Mt. Fuji. And as we have seen, for Eiji this ‘Japan’ is conjured – literally, “drawn [*egaku*]” – through an interconnecting of social actors across the country – and particularly, in his formulation, those from marginal, non-urban areas. Like Ryo Kagawa, in other words, Eiji attributes a certain political potentiality to the praxis of *tabi*, of travelling the archipelago and literally connecting the dots of its lesser-known locales, and forging bonds of interconnectivity along the way. “The big cities are so satisfied with themselves,” he laments. “Tokyo and Osaka, they don’t try to go and visit each other. It’s the folks from the smaller places, like Shizuoka, or Fukushima, that get out to visit the large centers, and each other. For me, ‘Japan’ is *nakama* –

⁵⁸ Sakai is quoted in Osborne, *The Politics of Time*. See p. 16.

what I want to do is travel around Japan, and share my feelings, my passions, with the friends and acquaintances that I make. Participating in the Fuji concert really enhanced that desire for me – travelling to lesser-known places is like listening to lesser-known tunes by Nagabuchi; the fun lies in drawing them together into a broader whole.”

At this point, readers may find themselves deafened once again by the clangor of fascism’s warning bells – and given the sort of organic collectivity gestured toward by Eiji and others in these pages, particularly in light of Naoki Sakai’s caution against “the generalized organicity that is more often than not superimposed upon the putative spatio-temporal unity of [the] nation-state,”⁵⁹ the reader is correct to be alarmed. But Sakai’s caution feeds off of an aversion to an exclusive sort of collectivity that reduces it to the modern nation-state form, without attending to the ways in which collectivity may be reimagined by social actors, to destabilizing and critical ends. What is required here, in other words, is careful attention to the contours of the sort of collectivity that is being imagined by Eiji. Although, as is the case with Ryo Kagawa and Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, the precise parameters of the “alternative collectivity” that he seeks to trace are never explicitly spelled out, Eiji nonetheless provides us with important hints as to the form (or, perhaps more concisely, lack of form) that he sees this “whole” taking. While his concern for those in stricken Tohoku is driven by a sense of compatriotism [*onaji Nihonjin to shite*], it is also important to note that his ‘Japan’ is in no way exclusive – the “social actors” comprising it, that is, are not limited to ‘Japanese’ individuals. Indeed, Eiji expressed anger at the criticism levied from some corners against Nagabuchi for including non-Japanese individuals in his band: “Who cares? Even if the words don’t get across, if they share the same stance on the world [*kankaku*], then *they can still change something together.*” Additionally, he

⁵⁹ Naoki Sakai, “Two Negations: Fear of Being Excluded and the Logic of Self-Esteem,” in *Novel: A Forum on Fiction*, 2004 Summer; 37 (3): 229-57.

has stated that a key motivation driving his work with the *Ougoukai* lies in drawing people “out of their shells,” and encouraging people to reassess their own assumptions about the world around them, who does and does not belong, and so on. Describing the Shizuoka *Ougoukai* chapter’s so-called “off-*kai*” – quasi-structured sorts of group social engagements for organization members – Eiji related the manner in which he will intentionally show up and engage with attendees in his rather threatening-looking *yakuza* chic: “Hey, that scary-looking man with the *regent* [a sort of duck’s-tail hairdo popular with semi-underworld figures] is in the pool, playing with the kids!” he chuckles, recalling reactions that he overheard at a recent summer family event. “Getting people to draw those sorts of unexpected connections – that helps to create ‘family’ in wider terms, and that’s *nakama* at its best,” he insisted, sounding (coincidentally) very much like Bruno Latour. Eiji’s stance on notions of collectivity and communalism have been informed by his own precarious experiences on the fringes of what is understood as the Japanese social, and it is this rather novel approach to notions of community and collectivity that animates him, and that informed the way in which he understood Nagabuchi’s Fuji event, and its potentials.

Eiji echoes the assessments of other attendees at Fumotoppara that August 22nd and 23rd in finding an intense sense of *tassei* – achievement – in the moment of the sunrise. This sense of “achievement” seems to reference the communal occupation of the sunrise, and the powerful sense of solidarity that electrified the grassy pastures as dawn broke over Fuji’s slope. And significantly, Eiji spoke in hopeful terms of the possibility of the sort of collectivity conjured at Fumotoppara resonating more broadly: “It would be great,” he said, “if that sort of *tassei* could carry forward into society itself.” This references a hope that ‘Japan’ itself might be reformulated, reimagined according to terms of lateral interconnectivity that (as we have seen) are not

ethnically or nationalistically exclusive, but oriented toward mutual care and support, and toward motion and change. Asked what sort of ‘Japan’ he wanted to see, Eiji paused, then answered: “Taking care of your *nakama*, taking care of your family – working to improve those bonds of interconnectivity [*tsunagari wo yoku shite iku*]. That’s what’s important.” As a former near-convert to Japan’s underworld who has put in his own time mentoring young bikers and street thugs, his words carry a unique sort of weight – and indeed, it is nothing less than his history of Otherness to “normative” society that fires his desire for interconnectivity, for *tsunagari*, according to different terms. “I love Japan,” he says. “Japan is all that I know. But I hate the state [*kokka*].” This is a contradistinction that will be revisited in the conclusion to this dissertation, but it should here put us in mind of Ryo Kagawa’s reflections, which we visited briefly above: “Accepting each other, loving each other. That might be the sort of thing that Beautiful Country means to me.”

Eiji’s philosophy helps to bring us back, finally, to the ethics of *tsunagari*, or interconnectivity, that was enunciated by Junko, our overworked healthcare professional in Kagoshima City, in the first chapter of this dissertation. It is thus perhaps fitting that we circle back to close our discussion of Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi’s all-night musical event at Fumotoppara with her assessment of the experience. Junko presents us with an intriguing interpretation of what Fuji – and the musical event that unfolded there – was all about, and the potentialities that the event afforded, particularly in terms of the sunrise that Nagabuchi used to cap his concert. Asked what “living in Japan” meant to her, and whether that understanding had changed with her participation in the event at Fuji, she answered, slowly at first: “Upholding and respecting Japanese tradition is very important. These days, Japan has become very international

[*kokusaiteki*], with lots of exchanges and so on, but this also raises the question – what's really Japanese? And for me, the symbol of 'Japan' is Fuji itself."

Were we to stop listening to Junko's voice here, we would be left with a rather tired, neoconservative image of a connection of (ethnic) blood with national iconic symbolism, and little more. As she continued to speak, however, Junko gradually elucidated a revolutionary sort of philosophy that pivoted on the meaning that Fuji – itself a central actor in Nagabuchi's event – was attributed through the musical event, and on the way in which this symbol was made to feed back into discourses of the "nation" for which it is made to stand. "Fuji itself is diversity," she insisted, and here she referenced the way in which this 'symbol of Japan' was made to preside over a howlingly critical event that set out to demolish precisely the sorts of discourses of 'Japanese' singularity in whose service the symbol is often evoked. In Latourain fashion, in other words, connections were drawn between site, artists, and actors in order to reassemble a 'Japanese' social that was suddenly understood according to vastly different terms, and which was forced to accommodate the diverse critiques and experiences of the everyday brought to bear on it by Junko and others. Indeed, for Junko, the connection between critique and 'Japan' that participating in the Fuji event helped to reveal took on explicitly political potentials and overtones. Recalling her experiences at Fumotoppa some two months after the event, she said:

"At first, I didn't quite know how to take it. But the activism that the artists [Nagabuchi, but also the aforementioned guest performers such as hip-hop artists Han'ya and Yunyūdō, and Okinawan singer Maico] showed at Fuji – the anti-nuclear commentary, the alarm over Shinzo Abe and the AMPO security treaty – became an important trigger for me to think more carefully about decision-making at the national level. We can't just leave these things to the politicians – Japan's people [*kokumin*] have to grapple with these issues too, and Nagabuchi's performance on that stage provided an important impetus for that. His spending so much time making his case [*are dake no jikan wo kakete uttaeru*] on the stage makes me want to be more involved in politics, too, and make sure that I get to elections and so on. Young people often feel like their voice wouldn't count [*muda*] in elections – but Nagabuchi's political commentary made me rethink that."

What we can note in Junko's analysis is an awareness of an infusion of acidic critique into what Eiji called the “conceptual center” of Japan, and a hopefulness that this will spark change. “Rethinking things [*kangaenaosu*] is so important,” she says. “My own family home [*jikka*] is within the evacuation radius that’s been set in the event that anything should ever happen at the Satsuma-Sendai nuclear power station. When I was young, I was educated that the existence of those plants was a good thing. But now I doubt it – I’m against them now. There is a strength that comes from being doubtful, being critical [*gimon wo motsu koto ni tsuyosa ga aru*]. Nagabuchi writes songs that symbolize the moment in which they are produced [*jidai wo shouchou suru uta*] – and his music, like “*Hitotsu*” [which, as we have noted, speaks of a oneness in the aftermaths of 3.11, but that was actually framed at Fumotoppa by simultaneous video images of ongoing despair that seemed to introduce a tension suggesting, in her analysis, that there is yet a long way to go], is a really important trigger for rethinking things.” Junko had an almost algebraic formula for how change emanating from Fumotoppa might unfold, one that reflected her philosophy of *tsunagari* and how it intersects with music: “It ripples out,” she says. “First from the stage, then to the hundred thousand in attendance, and then to the people that they are connected to across Japan.” And here we can note the political potentialities of Junko’s ethics of *tsunagari*, potentialities that are set in motion through an engagement with Nagabuchi’s music, and specifically via participation in events such as the al-night live at Fumotoppa: “It’s all about taking care of people [*hito wo taisetsu ni suru*],” she says. “This music causes people to *think*. You start with yourself, and then reach out to connect with your family, and then the circles expand out until they reach all of Japan.” And while Nagabuchi’s music had long been the key soundtrack to her life, it is clear that there was something in this particular musical event that, in her mind, could help set this chain reaction in motion.

As with the others, the moment of the sunrise was the most meaningful moment of the event to Junko. This moment, in short, was that at which the reassembled ‘Japanese’ social crystallized, and at which alternative potentialities were most acutely sensed. As we have seen with other actors, the sunrise was for Junko animated by an intense sense of collectivity – a feeling that conjuring a new day was “something that we all did together.” Junko recalls being taken aback by the intensity of that moment: “I didn’t think that it was going to be a big deal,” she said. “But it really was.” Like Eiji, Junko recalls the tears that flowed all around her – everyone was crying, she said; “even big guys. The emotion of that moment was *shared*.” For her personally, this moment also brought her back in touch with her own emotions, which she reports being compelled to suppress and ignore in her workplace, particularly when she loses a patient. “But at Fuji,” she says, “I was able to get back in touch with those emotions, to be free with them. It was a massive relief [*sukkiri shita*].”

But the moment of the sunrise had wider, political implications for Junko, as well. “Maybe Japan isn’t all washed up after all [*Nihon mo mada suteta mon ja nai nai*],” she recalls thinking as the sun rose over the sea of people and the flags that dotted the landscape. Junko sensed in that moment a sort of elixir for the experience of living and surviving the everyday, a possible way to move forward, and couched this epiphany in the terms of her now-familiar ethics of *tsunagari*: “Today, Japan has turned into an ‘internet’ [read: artificial] society – people just communicate through text messaging and so on. But when the sun came up over those flags, I got the sense that we could still have *tsunagari*, face-to-face interaction in this country. This is so important in making sure that Japan goes down a more positive path.”

Harootunian and others have discussed at length the fascistic dangers that attend the “overcoming of modernity,” the displacing of the contradictions and alienation of capitalism into

an organic community of the “us.” But as these voices that were present at Fumotoppara for the sunrise of August 23rd, 2015, help us to realize, the actual form that this perceived organic solidarity may take is highly unpredictable, and can be as laden with critical potential as it is with fascistic danger. By dislodging ‘Japan’ as “normative temporality,” as closed-circuited History, and replacing it, however fleetingly, with a literal new day that was “exhilaratingly damaged,”⁶⁰ run through with fissures and doubts and critical exclamations, Nagabuchi’s massive musical event at the foot of Mt. Fuji seems to have afforded attendees a sense of possibility, of difference – but one that must constantly be pursued precisely because the moment of the rising of the sun is so fleeting. This possibility is the chance to insist upon other histories, to define ‘Japan’ according to different terms – something that all of these voices, to varying degrees, indicated as important in their discussions with this researcher. But it was perhaps Junko who put this most clearly, and in the most visual terms: “The *Hinomaru* is there as a [political] symbol of Japan... but it can be highly personal, too. As a Japanese citizen, I feel that I myself represent ‘Japan’, too, and that’s important. For me, real ‘Japan’ is Kagoshima.” And with this, Junko, like Nagabuchi himself, insists upon embedding herself and her own experiences of “everydayness” in Kagoshima into narratives of ‘Japan,’ and pins her hopes on a critical, transformative sort of interconnectedness – *tsunagari* – that revealed itself (to her and to others) in the moment of the sunrise, and that presented an enhanced possibility to challenge and to “rethink,” in her words, the “normative temporality” of contemporary capitalist Japan.

Though similar in critical intent, the tactics deployed by Ryo Kagawa and Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi in pursuit of their critical aims are, to be sure, radically different. In a sort of inverse to the praxis of *tabi* pursued by Ryo Kagawa, for example – who, as we have seen, has made a

⁶⁰ Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double-Consciousness* (London: Verso, 1993), p. 101.

decades-old habit of tracing out-of-the-way places across the archipelago in an apparent effort to stitch together a ‘Japan’ that is understood according to different terms – Nagabuchi’s musical event at Fumotoppara might be characterized, as mentioned above, as involving an *incursion* of sorts, as individual social actors living through the conditions of the everyday in locales around Japan (and we have already noted the key role that precariousness plays in the lives of fans in Kagoshima) plod their ways by bus along overland paths to descend upon its symbolic center. Where Kagawa calls for actors to “run away, and hide” in the face of what he calls “the Nation,” preferring to turn his back on its discourses and singular claim to History altogether, Nagabuchi places ‘Japan’ and some of its most contentious symbols – the *Hinomaru* rising sun flag, for example⁶¹ – squarely in the center of his artistic praxis, not in order to stubbornly reclaim some past militaristic glory, but rather to interrogate what it means to be[come] Japanese, and to posit a collectivity that might be understood according to different and more productive terms.⁶² As we have seen in this brief extension of the notion of “critical temporality,” the critical tactic that served to define Nagabuchi’s event and render the multitude’s incursion into Japan’s iconic center meaningful was its collective claiming of a new day, of its own “different history.” And this involved Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi conjuring a “critical temporality” of his own.

⁶¹ In an added twist to the intertwining of the national and the local that is apparent in Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi’s art and in his regular deployment of Japan’s flag, the *Hinomaru* is in fact a Kagoshima concoction, having been created by Nariakira Shimazu – latter-day lord of the legendary Kagoshima clan – toward the end of the Tokugawa Period. The actual extent to which the role that this Kagoshima connection may play in Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi’s re-claiming of this national symbol is at present unclear.

⁶² Doreen Massey wisely points out that there “is the need to face up to – rather than simply deny – peoples’ need for attachment of some sort, whether through place or anything else... The question is how to hold on to that notion of geographical difference, of uniqueness, even of rootedness if people want that, without it being reactionary.” This seems precisely the question that artists such as Ryo Kagawa and Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi begin to answer for us in their quests for alternate collectivity. See Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994), pp. 151-52.

Postscript: A Brief Trip Back in Time

In March of 2011, as the crisis at Fukushima Dai'ichi was unfolding and tens of thousands of Fukushima residents sat in dark evacuation centers, with no electricity and no television, many sat around battery-powered radios and cellular telephones with dwindling charges, attempting to keep abreast of a dangerous situation that was changing by the minute. At that moment, I sat a desk in British Columbia, Canada, pretending to tap out the final pages of an MA thesis while actually engrossed in a UStream broadcast from Radio Fukushima, the local AM radio station in the Prefecture that is the favorite of corner bars, and taxi drivers, and everyday farmers and workers – and to which many in those dark gymnasiums were tuned. Radio Fukushima is perhaps the best example in the Prefecture of what Christine Yano has called “music overheard”⁶³ – a part of a soundscape that is such an integral part of life in a geographically-specific region that it seems to be everywhere at once. But on this day (night, in fact; the broadcast was reaching my speakers live at three o’clock in the morning JST), it wasn’t music that Radio Fukushima was broadcasting. The station had thrown open its phone lines and was taking calls from individual listeners, dozens of whom were evidently eager to vent their spleens in the aftermaths of disaster.

And it was apparent that the lines were jammed. Caller after caller – at three in the morning, we will recall – waited patiently for their turn to speak their mind, to dispel some of the horrors of the events of March 11 by giving voice to them. Many of these voices spoke eloquently of their anger at the economic and historical processes that had ultimately led to their being driven from their homes (those, at least, lucky enough to still have one) to take up residence in school gymnasias as radioactive fallout rained down around them. Among

⁶³ See Yano, *Tears of Longing*, p. 7.

the many voices on the airwaves that night, though, one caller stood out for the stark flatness of her tone and the manner in which she was able to set the tone of the early morning. “It is time,” she declared, “for Fukushima Prefecture to declare independence.” This declaration was extreme, but it can hardly be dismissed as hyperbole. It was a performative act years in the making, the result of layers of frustration and of a skulking, peripheral awareness of Fukushima’s second-tier status in the national community of Japan that was suddenly thrown into high relief by a hydrogen explosion that was broadcast live for all the world to see. It was a declaration, in short, that emanated from historically-specific context, and spoke – however harshly or improbably – to different possibilities. It was its own rendition of the Homesick Blues.

While the degree of tragedy and angst can hardly be compared, we might sense a certain connection here between our late-night caller and frustrated, intelligent, and engaged Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi fans like Eiji and Junko. Brubaker has argued for an analysis of nation-ness *as an event*, and suggests that nationalism and the emergence of the nation can be underwritten by contingency. He points, in other words, to the possibility for a people to be “overcome by nationhood.”⁶⁴ Building upon Brubaker’s analysis in the case of Yemen, Wedeen argues that “nationness need not develop… it can also happen[.]. . . [C]ommunities of argument, prompted by identifiable events, help generate conditions of possibility, idioms of affective connection, and practices of reproduction through which purportedly common experiences of belonging to a territory [such as a shattered Fukushima, or a run-down Kagoshima, or indeed other “critical spaces” variously situated in/as ‘Japan’] might be institutionalized or just made available as an organizing principle for making some demands and registering grievances.”⁶⁵ We must face the

⁶⁴ See Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 20.

⁶⁵ Wedeen, p. 42.

possibility that just such a contingency may be threatening the cohesiveness of the officially-sanctioned Japanese nation-state in the post-3.11 historical moment through the “common... experience”⁶⁶ of (what is perceived as) precarity doled out by its very hands. We have already noted that the context of 3.11 was of considerable importance to Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi in the mounting of his all-night musical event at Fumotoppa. But in light of these insights from Brubaker and Wedeen – and the extraordinarily powerful experience of alternative collectivity testified to by social actors with their own critiques to mount of “normative temporality” in contemporary capitalist Japan – the “Fuji Nation” may be a more potentially formidable concept than even the artist himself thinks.

Wedeen argues that “people are not born with feelings of national attachment; national citizens have to be made and remade.”⁶⁷ Inherent in this statement is the possibility that the process of reproduction of national citizens can also be short-circuited, interrupted – *ruptured* – and that the affective connections that underlie the generation of the ‘national citizen’ can be redirected elsewhere. For Wedeen, radio in Yemen “cultivated in people living in disparate geographical spaces the sense that others were listening to the same broadcasts, acquiring the same information, and experiencing similar *affective connections*.”⁶⁸ In Wedeen’s Yemen, these affective connections led to the generation of a Yemeni national self. In Fukushima, in the dark hours immediately following the crises of March 11, similar participation in radio gestured toward the *dismantling* of the (state-sponsored) façade of Japanese unity, and the development of a new social directionality. And as we have seen in the preceding pages, affective connections forged through common participation in musical events – especially among

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 91.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 92.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 42, emphasis added.

a precariat well-positioned to “tune in” to the critique that undergirds it, “listening to the same broadcasts [and] acquiring the same information” – can be just as powerful. Recent political history in the United States of America and the phenomenon of Trumpism shows us how this can become terrifying, go haywire. But Nagabuchi’s event at the foot of Mt. Fuji suggests other possibilities. The gamble and the ambiguity of this rests, of course, on the unknowability of individual interpretations of events such as that which unfolded at Fumotoppara, and of works like “*Fuji-no-Kuni*.” As Ian Condry points out in his analysis of hip-hop in Japan, cultural production carries with it great critical potentiality – and revealing this demands attention to the context in which it circulates, and the meaning that is ascribed to it.⁶⁹ As we have seen above, the actors addressed in this dissertation tend to find critical, productive potentialities in Nagabuchi’s art and musical events. But as we have also noted briefly, this is never guaranteed – and insomuch as something called “meaning” will always depend on the use that such texts are put to by actors with their own “meaningful orientation[s] to the things that they understand as ‘society,’ ‘law,’ ‘government,’ the ‘economy,’ ‘family life,’ and many others,”⁷⁰ ongoing attention to the ambiguous potentials afforded by diverse engagements with texts will continue to demand the attention of the critically-engaged scholar.

Michel De Certeau teaches us that those lacking their own space – such as those with alternative visions for ‘Japan’ – have no choice but to “play” in the (dominant) space created by others, to “make do with what they have.” This “making do” involves what de Certeau has termed *tactics*, a critical praxis that “erodes and displaces” elements of prescribed space precisely because it makes contingent, unpredictable use of those given elements. “[B]ecause it does not have a place,” de Certeau argues, such “a tactic depends on time – it is always on the

⁶⁹ Condry, *Hip-Hop Japan*, p. 3.

⁷⁰ De Nora, *After Adorno*, p. 38.

watch for opportunities that must be seized on the wing.”⁷¹ By appropriating and making critical use of the very symbolic space and imagery claimed by a ‘Japan’ that, to Nagabuchi, has become toxic, and by engineering (or at least attempting to engineer) an affective alliance among largely like-minded individual actors, the artist seems intent upon troubling the “normative” History of Japan through a wrenching for the Fuji Nation its own, competing *moment in time* – one that, while fleeting, may feed back among the other texts of the individual actor’s lives long after the Fuji Nation has fragmented and dispersed.

⁷¹ de Certeau, p. xx.

Noisy Writing / Writing Noise:

Yū Miri, Critical Sonority, and the Crises of the Everyday

“Human beings who live by money will die by it. This is the utter fickleness of gold.”

Yū Miri, *Gold Rush* (1998)

Yū Miri’s *JR Ueno Station: Park Exit* – the author’s quasi-biographical account of a father from Fukushima Prefecture who attempts to overcome the grinding rural poverty stalking his family in the moment of Japanese high-speed economic growth by becoming an itinerant seller of labor-power (*dekasegi*) in the metropolis – opens with a clatter. “I can hear that noise [*oto*] again – that noise,” reads the opening sentence of the work. “I’m listening to it now.”¹ “That noise” reveals itself as all-pervasive, oppressive, encompassing, and beyond both control and context: while the reader is shown that it is being viscerally experienced by the work’s narrator through his memory, “that noise” is evidently not something that the narrator has command over – indeed, it is the noise that is central in the opening pages of Yū’s work, not the subject of its narration. “That noise,” in fact, even appears to animate and give life to the narrator himself, coursing as it does through his body “like the flow of blood.”² It is only at a point several pages into the work that the waves of overwhelming noise recede far enough to reveal their source: the trains lurching into Ueno Station, Tokyo’s gateway to the north and northeast, and end of the line for many – including our narrator – who made their way to the capital in this period seeking an

¹ Yū, Miri, *JR Ueno Eki Kōen-guchi* [JR Ueno Station, Park Exit] (Tokyo: Kawade Shobo Shinsha, 2014), p. 3.

² Ibid., p. 6.

escape from, or at least a remedy to, the unevenness that we have already identified in this dissertation as comprising a key condition of life in places like Kagoshima, and Fukushima.

Yū lingers over this “noise” once its historical fountainhead is revealed, emphasizing its ongoing materiality in the life(-story) of a narrator who is now chronologically far-removed from its reverberations, but in whose experience of the world it continues to echo. The author spells out this noise, in all its nonsense, in onomatopoeic fashion:

“Puooon, gooh, gotogoto, gotogotogoto, goto, goto, gotton, gotton, go, ton, go.....ton, buuun, luuu, busshyuukiki, kiki, kii, ki..... ki..... ki..... goto.....shuu, lululu, koto.....”³

The typographical manifestation of these sounds on Yū Miri’s page is remarkable: set apart from the flow of the text and thus inscribed onto an erstwhile space of white silence, this tactic is clearly oriented toward making this key sonic experience of the work’s narrator *audible* to the reader. Sam Halliday, in his analysis of Faulkner’s *As I Lay Dying*, suggests that “typography [can] perform the ‘phonographic’ work of capturing... sounds,” helping to make a literary work sonorous as well as visual.⁴ The question then becomes one of intent: why deploy such a tactic? What is at stake for Yū Miri in insisting on the forefronting of sound here? Scholars of modernist literature such as Halliday teach us that a key aim of this sort of jarring, discomfiting deployment of sound in text can carry with it an element of *shock*, one aimed at dislodging the world from its frame(s) of reference and making it seem new. In other words, the auditory is appealed to, in a delicious sort of paradox, in order to make one see.⁵ What is required of us, then, is to consider what it is of the world that Yū Miri wants to reveal and grapple with through sound, and why.

³ Ibid., p. 7.

⁴ Sam Halliday, *Sonic Modernity: Representing Sound in Literature, Culture, and the Arts* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), p. 97.

⁵ Ibid., p. 30.

Noise is conspicuous in Yū Miri's work. It announces itself suddenly, jarringly, shrieking like a klaxon at key moments in her texts and framing pivotal developments, welding them to what we have already seen Halliday identify as the "shock" of the sonic. *The Tidal Hour*,⁶ Yū's disturbing and partially autobiographical⁷ rumination on bullying and murder among schoolgirls at an elementary school in Tokyo, offers an initial sense of this deployment. As Mayumi, grade six student and chief instigator of the violence that ultimately befalls the newly-arrived transfer student Rina, spirals away from indecision over how to approach the latter ("During the next break she would try to make conversation with Rina. That would take her mind off things, and if she found out what kind of a girl Rina was she'd be able to tell everybody"⁸) and into the stance of hardened cruelty that would ultimately seal Rina's fate, the reader is made aware of an intensely "loud... ringing in [Mayumi's] ears," which is augmented by the school chimes ringing for recess in the very next paragraph.⁹ As the narrative transitions to the playground and the children's games that animate it – "running bases," "cops and robbers"¹⁰ – noise announces itself again to mark the shift to (horrifying) games of another sort: as Rina is suddenly surrounded and terrorized with the threat of being forced to strip in front of her classmates, "[s]he thought she heard a scream coming from far off. She kept her head down and strained to hear what it was.

⁶ Yū Miri's *Shio-ai* was translated by Kyoko Selden as *The Tidal Hour* and included in the anthology *More Stories by Japanese Women Writers*. See Kyoko Selden and Noriko Mizuta, Eds., *More Stories by Japanese Women Writers* (New York: Routledge, 2015), Chapter 12.

⁷ A key scene in this short story portrays a forced stripping on the part of Rina, a transfer student who finds herself the target of group harassment led by Mayumi, the work's troubled and torn antagonist. Though the forced stripping is aborted at the last minute in *The Tidal Hour* in favor of another form of punishment, it seems clear that Yū is recalling here an instance of bullying in which she was forced to strip naked on the grounds of her own school. The author recalls this incident in conversation (*taidan*) with Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, discussed elsewhere in this dissertation, in a special edition of the journal *Bungei*.

⁸ Yū, trans. Selden, *The Tidal Hour*, p. 142.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

Pop! Something burst inside her head.”¹¹ In this way, Yū Miri makes noise itself burst, unruly and unexpected, from what had hitherto been a largely silent textual landscape (save the chatter between characters), confronting the reader at key junctures in the narrative and forcing her to “see” with more clarity, more intimacy the disturbing world that she weaves. Indeed, as I shall argue in the pages that follow, Yū Miri’s tactic of emphasizing the sonic in key moments in her texts seems to bespeak a desire to make present lived conditions of the everyday in a manner that is not isolated to the text, but which involves an irruption of those conditions into the mundane world, even as the noise facilitating this ‘presenting’ rattles the assumptions and narratives (for the purposes of what follows, these will be consolidated under the rubric of what we have been calling History) of which they are a part. This is a tactic that I will call *critical sonority* – and as we shall see, this deployment of the sonic helps Yū to expand her critical praxis beyond the rubrics of ethnicity and national identity with which it is regularly associated.

As a Japan-born resident of Japan who is descended from Korean immigrants and who holds South Korean nationality – individuals who are usually referred to as *zainichi* in Japan – Yū Miri occupies a position of considerable precarity both in the Japanese social and in Japan’s literary establishment: neither outside nor inside, or, perhaps more precisely, both at the same time.¹² Born in Yokohama in 1968 to parents who came to Japan from the Korean Peninsula at around the time of the Korean War, her turbulent and pained childhood as the target of parental abuse and schoolyard bullying has been well-documented, and regularly creeps into her writing, as we have already noted in our brief examination of *The Tidal Hour*. Bearing the psychological scars of this upbringing, Yū spiraled into suicidal thoughts, and was expelled from the elite

¹¹ Ibid., p. 147.

¹² This is a positionality that the author herself terms *hazama*, or in-betweenness; we shall re-visit this in more detail below.

school that she was attending, finally finding relief in the arts and cultural production. In a 2015 conversation with singer-songwriter Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, Yū recalled the solace that writing brought from her tormented everyday, framing this torment, intriguingly, in terms of the “feel and *sound* of the bones of [a] canary [that I’d murdered in frustration and rage] snapping as its body struck my face” after her infuriated grandmother had exhumed it and flung it at her – a traumatic experience that haunts her to this day.

“There were times when the anger and the sadness and the pain just overflow and become a torrent, threatening to sweep me away. At times like that, I’d hammer in the stake of words, and just hold on for dear life. As a teenager, I wrote in order to be able to live.”¹³

Here, we can already see an interrelation between writing and survival, between cultural expression and its deployment in order to affect change in the conditions of one’s own life – an important interplay to keep in mind as we consider the ways in which the author’s critical sonority announces and makes present the terms of the everyday, and gestures toward different possibilities for abiding in the world.

Having established a means for navigating the terrors of her own everyday, Yū Miri would go on to find more relief in her life-changing encounter – at the age of 16 – with the aforementioned Higashi Yutaka, founder of the theatre troupe Tokyo Kid Brothers, who urged her to channel “those things about your family, about your past, all those things that you don’t want others to know about” into cultural expression, thereby transforming them from a negative force into a positive. “You’d do well,” he told her, “to take all of the suffering and sadness and pain of your sixteen years up to this point, and wear it as a badge of pride.”¹⁴ Yū would go on to perform with Tokyo Kid Brothers – indeed, it was via the node of this troupe and her romantic

¹³ Yū’s comments can be found in a special edition of the journal *Bungei*, titled *Nagabuchi Tsuyoshi: Minshū no ikari to inori no uta* [Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi: songs of the fury and prayer of the people], *Bungei Bessatsu* [Special Edition] (Tokyo: Kawade Shobo Shinsha, 2015). See p. 109.

¹⁴ Ibid.

involvement with Higashi Yutaka that her path would connect with that of singer-songwriter Ryo Kagawa, who wrote and performed the music for a Tokyo Kid Brothers performance of *The October Country* in 1975 – and would go on to establish her own theatrical troupe two years later, at the age of just eighteen. In the ensuing decades, Yū Miri would go on to become a prolific essayist, an Akutagawa Prize-winning¹⁵ novelist, an actress, a television personality, and, more recently, a radio host. But despite her apparent admission into the Japanese literary canon (via the Akutagawa Prize), this is a career that has never rested on stable ground.¹⁶ Indeed, her success and her visibility in Japanese cultural production have been undergirded precisely by her Otherness¹⁷ as a *zainichi* Korean resident of Japan. Paradoxically, however, the very Otherness that has helped to afford her visibility and her voice has been a “box” that the author herself struggles to escape in order to enunciate a critique from a position of what Yū calls *hazama*, in-betweenness, one that privileges the experience of the everyday over abstract notions of state and ethnicity.

The question of *zainichi*-ness – the experience of being a Korean resident of Japan, and the varied and disparate critiques that this experience is understood as underpinning – has, in one

¹⁵ The author received the award for her *Family Cinema*, released in 1997.

¹⁶ Though her legal status as ‘outsider’ seems to introduce an element of paradox into her inclusion into Japan’s literary canon (an entirely subjective construct, but still one whose borders are patrolled in part by the Akutagawa Prize), we would do well to recall James Fujii’s caution that while “the collective that canons narrate is the nation,” that nation (as we have noted elsewhere in this dissertation) is always in flux. Yū Miri, in other words, might be considered an important addition to a literary canon working to sketch the outlines of the nation precisely because of her (ethnic) difference: as Mack teaches us, in including diverse authors – including not only Yū Miri, but also Ainu author Tsuruta Tomoya for his *Koshamain-ki* in 1936 and Korean writer Kim Saryang for his *Into the Light* in 1940, both of whom, notably, were writing and lauded in the context of Empire – in its canon via the mechanism of the Akutagawa Prize, “literature is instrumentalized to change the social functioning of the state; rather than representative of what Japan is, it is representative of what Japan is not, but could be.” See Edward Mack, *Manufacturing Modern Japanese Literature: Publishing, Prizes, and the Ascription of Literary Value* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), p. 228.

¹⁷ This point is stressed by Tracey Gannon in her “Yū Miri and the Critics,” appearing in the *U.S.-Japan Women’s Journal*, No. 34 (2008), pp. 90-119.

form or another, become the primary rubric by which Yū Miri's work has been approached and discussed. *Zainichi* literature is generally understood as writing produced by Korean residents of Japan, and is substantive enough as a category of writing to have become the conceptual foundation for volumes of translated works, including as the anthology *Into the Light: An Anthology of Literature by Koreans in Japan*, which includes Yū's novella *Full House*, and which we will revisit below. But it is also a contested, fluid, and slippery category – and a “box,” in Yū's words, that seems to be subjected to a continual shoring up as soon as it begins to break down; an interiorized conceptual space from which Yū has repeatedly expressed a desire to escape. Kristina Weickgennant, for example, while cautioning that the fluid concept of *zainichi* literature is itself “limited as an analytical term,” defines several general traits that *zainichi* writers are said to have in common, including being influenced by colonial history, by the geopolitical contexts encompassing Japan and the Korean Peninsula, and by a general confrontation with questions of language, culture, and (ethnic) discrimination.¹⁸ Tracy Gannon is more specific, offering three conditions by which *zainichi* literature can be defined: first, by the Korean ethnicity of its authors; second, by the language – Japanese, as opposed to Korean – that these Korean authors write in; and third, the themes of such literature, which are said to include geopolitical questions of Japan and the divided Korean peninsula, struggles over the question of identity, and engagement with concepts of family, nation, and homeland.¹⁹ These are, of course, important questions, and I have no desire to dismiss these established approaches to *zainichi* literature and to advocate for a new, somehow more authoritative/authentic mode of reading. Still, the “box” of *zainichi*-ness is understood by the author herself to be unproductive and

¹⁸ Kristina Weickgennant, “The Deemphasis of Ethnicity: Images of Koreanness in the Works of the Japanese-Korean Author Yū Miri,” *electronic journal of contemporary Japanese studies* (August, 2001), pp. 2-3.

¹⁹ See Gannon, *Yu Miri and the Critics*.

constricting, and as we shall see below, she has voiced an ongoing frustration at being continually placed therein. What I do wish to do, then, is to take Yū Miri and her frustrations at their word, and to expand the analytical rubric by which we approach and comprehend her work. As I hope will become clear in the pages that follow, attention to embedded tropes and devices such as the sonic presents one means by which we might pursue such an expansion, and hear the author and her engagement with the world differently.

Scholars in Japan have been grappling with Yū Miri's writing – and with questions of its embeddedness among questions of ethnicity and *zainichi*-ness – for some time. As early as 1995, for example – in an essay aptly titled *Minzoku wo seou koto naku: Yū Miri 'Ishi ni oyogu sakana' no atarashisa* [Without shouldering ethnicity: the newness of Yū Miri's 'Fish Swimming in Stone'] – author Hayashi Kōji compared Yū Miri with earlier *zainichi* writers such as Tenma author Kim Sa'ryang, noted their occupation of vastly different historical moments, and argued for a literary stance on Yū's part that did not involve ethnic representations or a quest (at least at that time) for a geographical homeland: "Were Yū Miri to set out to seek a homeland," he writes, "it would not be 'South Korea,' or 'Japan,' or 'North Korea,' but rather the singular homeland that is shared via the spirituality of humankind."²⁰ Ten years later, in a brief essay on research trends pertaining to Yū Miri,²¹ Umezawa Ayumi cited Hayashi's work, along with Japanese essays by Kiridōshi Risaku, Kawamura Minato, and Tracey Gannon, to suggest that an analytical split had deepened between those advocating for a de-emphasis of ethnic identity in Yū's writing, and other scholars for whom this issue had not yet been overcome. It is clear, in other

²⁰ Hayashi Kōji, "Minzoku wo seou koto naku: Yū Miri 'Ishi ni oyogu sakana' no atarashisa [Without shouldering ethnicity: the newness of Yū Miri's 'Fish Swimming in Stone],' in the journal *Shin Nihon Bungaku*, Vol. 50, No. 2 (1995), pp. 84-89. For the quotation reproduced here, see p. 88.

²¹ See Umezawa Ayumi, "Kenkyū dōkō Yū Miri [Research trends pertaining to Yū Miri]," in the journal *Shōwa bungaku kenkyū*, Vol. 52 (2006), pp. 112-115.

words, that scholarly interrogations of the *zainichi* “box” within which Yū Miri often finds herself trapped are in themselves nothing new. And yet, the discussion surrounding Yū has continued to swirl around questions of *identity* – whether identity is apparent in her writing or not, whether it is ‘Korean’ or not, and so on. What we are lacking, in short, is what we have already noted in earlier pages as a *something else* – a different set of analytical devices or an alternative literary rubric with which to attempt to lay hold of the author and her writing, and to consider, according to different terms, the sort of “home” that might inform her own productions of the Homesick Blues. It is this deficiency that the present chapter seeks to address, and it aims to do so by proposing the sonic as a different sort of entryway into Yū’s work.

I must re-state here that I by no means intend to advocate for an abandonment of *zainichi* experience as an analytical lens through which to approach Yū Miri and her work: the author’s library is extensive, and features ruminations on many topics, including, in a work appearing after the appearance of Hayashi’s aforementioned essay, the search for homeland. Scholar Toshio Takemoto, for example, takes up this aspect of Yū’s work in his analysis of *Watashi ga mita Kita-chōsen: Pyonyan no natsuyasumi* [Summer Vacation in Pyongyang], Yū’s North Korean travelogue.²² Yet, we do the author a great disservice in hearing in her work only a so-called “*zainichi*” critique (as if such a critique could ever be singular) – as Nathaniel Mackey, writing in a different context, insists, what we “already know” has a habit of interfering with our ability to hear the complexity of cultural producers’ critical praxes.²³ Indeed, as early as 1997, Yū Miri had explicitly stated a desire to sidestep discursive categories of ‘Japaneseness’ and

²² See Toshio Takemoto, “Constructing the self in Megumu Sagisawa’s and Miri Yu’s travelogues: a case study of two Japan-based female writers of Korean origin,” in *Contemporary Japan*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (2015), pp. 169-188.

²³ See Nathaniel Mackey, *Discrepant Engagement: Dissonance, Cross-Culturality, and Experimental Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 18.

‘Koreanness’ altogether. In interviews that year, she insisted that “‘I want to write from a position neither Korean nor Japanese... If I write about *zainichi* Koreans, I get pushed into the *zainichi* Korean literature box. I hate that.’”²⁴ She echoed these remarks in 2015, indicating, in bookend manner, the way in which this desire has informed her career throughout: “Japan, South Korea, the DPRK – I don’t affiliate myself with any of them [*dono kuni ni mo zoku shiteimasen*]. I see myself as standing atop a bridge, in the gap [*hazama*] between countries. I always maintain a standpoint of striking a balance for myself atop the borderlines, living my life that way precisely so I don’t end up belonging to the nation-state [*kokka*].”²⁵ There is, it seems, a certain notion of *interiority*²⁶ inherent to the concept of *zainichi* literature that does not meld well with Yū Miri’s declared realm of the *hazama*, and limits the sorts of critical intervention that she might make, and this fuels her flight from synecdochical pronouns like ‘Japan,’ or ‘Korea.’ But what we must note at this juncture is that we can already see Yū Miri singing the Homesick Blues in a slightly different key from that to which these pages have become accustomed.

To their credit, scholars working in the West have followed the path laid out by Hayashi and others, taking Yū Miri at her word and attempting to grapple with the author on the complex sorts of terms that she sets out. A key tactic pursued by scholars in resisting the notion of a singular *zainichi* experience reflected in literature – one that we have already seen deployed by Kōji Hayashi in his essay cited above – has been to attend to the changing historical specificities of the experience of being *zainichi* in Japan in the first place. Takemoto, for example, citing Isogai, points out that “there [was] a shift [among *zainichi* writers] in the 1980s from ethnic

²⁴ Gannon, pp. 92-93.

²⁵ See the special edition of *Bungei*, p. 113.

²⁶ “Interiority” here refers to the sort of pre-established, smoothly enclosed narrative alluded to by scholar Naoki Sakai in his *Voices of the Past*.

conflict to a search for the self.”²⁷ Sonia Ryang, meanwhile, identifies the shifting gender politics of the genre, pointing us to the fact that *zainichi* literature was gendered as a male domain until the 1970s: the very fact of the de-centering of the male authorial voice and the incorporation of female voices such as Yū Miri’s in this moment allowed for a more atomized critique that targeted not only ‘Japan’ according to (patriarchal) terms of the nation-state, but that commented upon “the patriarchal social relations dominant in the Korean community [itself].”²⁸ Lisa Yoneyama helps us to shift the discussion toward Yū Miri herself by showing how the author de-centers questions of nation-state and of ethnicity in works such as “Family Cinema” and the Noma and Izumi Kyoka Award-winning *Full House* (to be discussed below) in favor of a more generalized interrogation of “the contradictions and incommensurable differences that constitute... modern bourgeois families at large.”²⁹ And the aforementioned Kristina Weickennant – who has authored a manuscript-length study of Yū Miri in her native German – insists upon the fluidity of *zainichi*-ness as evolving historical construct, placing Yū Miri squarely in the “new school” that Takemoto identifies: for Weickennant, Yū’s breaks with the norms of *zainichi* literature’s own past “actually represents a new radicalism.”³⁰ Citing in-person interviews with the author, Weickennant reveals the way in which Yū aims to expand the scope of her critique: “I am sure there are not only Japanese Koreans (*zainichi*), but also Japanese, Taiwanese, and people in general in other countries who can identify with my writings,” Yū told

²⁷ Takemoto, p. 170.

²⁸ Sonia Ryang, Ed., *Koreans in Japan: Critical Voices from the Margin* (New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 7.

²⁹ See Yoneyama’s chapter titled “Reading against the bourgeois and national bodies: Transcultural body-politics in Yū Miri’s textual representations,” in Ryang, Ed., *Koreans in Japan: Critical Voices from the Margin*. See p. 117 for the quote cited here.

³⁰ Kristina Weickennant, “The Deemphasis of Ethnicity: Images of Koreanness in the Works of the Japanese-Korean Author Yū Miri,” *electronic journal of contemporary Japanese studies* (August, 2001), p. 2.

Weickgennant in conversation in 2001. “I want to write about *real life*, and would hate to confine myself to artificial limitations.” This emphasis on real life – on the experience of the everyday – is a theme that we will pursue further in the pages that follow.

But for all of the important work that has been done establishing the complexity of *zainichi* literature and the intricacies of Yū Miri’s critical stance, notions of ethnicity and Otherness seem to exert a centripetal force on the work of scholars grappling with the author, relentlessly drawing it back into familiar terms of engagement, toward the sort of simple answer that we’ve already seen Mackey critique. The very fact that Weickgennant feels compelled to rescue Yū from charges of apoliticality levied on the basis of her deemphasis of ethnicity and nationality, for example,³¹ reveals the degree to which the political potentiality of writing such as Yū’s is taken to be yoked to explicit engagements with ethnicity and nationality therein – and indeed, Weickgennant’s paper, despite its title, reverts quickly to examinations of Korean-ness as revealed in Yū’s *Ishi ni Oyogu Sakana* [Fish Swimming in Stone], concluding that her occupation of the realm of *hazama* amounts to a “minus identity” that only appears liberated at first glance. Takemoto, in his comparative analysis of travelogues penned by Yū and by fellow *zainichi* author Megumu Sagisawa, argues for a “fixed”³² (North) Korean identity on the part of the former that reveals itself in her writing: in *Pyongyang no natsuyasumi* [Summer vacation in Pyongyang], he states, “[Yu] valorizes her sense of belonging to the Korean peninsula... Despite being part of a younger *zainichi* generation that is known to identify only loosely with their country of origin, the travel to North Korea turns out to become a sort of homecoming for her.”³³ And Gannon distills the question of Yū’s ethnic identity even further, abstracting it out of what

³¹ Weickgennant, pp. 10-11.

³² Takemoto, p. 186.

³³ Ibid., p. 181.

she calls the “strictly literary arena”³⁴ in an essay that aims to consider “the unpredictability of the market forces commoditizing Yū’s ethnicity in the literary marketplace.”³⁵ Gannon’s aim here, to be sure, is to stress a point already raised above: namely, that Yū’s writing and visibility can never be entirely isolated from questions of her Korean heritage. And yet, this constant, lateral sort of shuttling back and forth between questions of *zainichi*/Korean identity and its implied reference point, ‘Japaneseness,’ does little to help us hear the voice of an author who – perhaps naively – has always clamored to be heard beyond such terms. Yū’s writing, in short, seems to find itself constantly ascribed with the burden of a certain ethno-national signification, with English-language scholarship on the author circling around questions of how the experience of *zainichi*-ness may be revealed therein.

None of this is to suggest that questions of ethnicity – in general terms, or in the specific contexts of Yū Miri’s writing – are irrelevant, or that these questions have been unduly magnified by the scholars critiqued herein. Indeed, Korean characters and contexts do regularly lurk in Yū’s writing: in its closing lines, for example, the aforementioned *The Tidal Hour* reveals that Rina, target of violent harassment in the form of schoolyard “bullying,” is of Korean descent, and that her teachers are eager to eradicate the incident from the smoothly interiorized spaces of the school and the classroom. Indeed, Lisa Yoneyama is correct to insist upon an ongoing engagement with the lurking specter of racism, especially in an historical moment marked by the rise of hate groups like the *Zaitokukai* (as we shall see in the closing pages of this chapter, Yū herself points to such groups as a dark stain marring Tokyo’s self-congratulatory proclamations of itself as an “international city,” especially ahead of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics) and while her unease over what might be seen as Yū’s “adopt[ion] of an unmarked [read: trans-

³⁴ Gannon, p. 90

³⁵ Ibid., p. 100.

racial, trans-ethnic], universal subject[ivity] under the liberal constitution”³⁶ is certainly apt, the rightly urgent chattering of the analytical categories of racism and ethnic discrimination seems to make our own ears ring, to deafen us to *other* political and critical possibilities that may reverberate in the work.

This chapter, then, aims to propel scholarship on Yū Miri and her art beyond considerations of *zainichi*-ness, ethnicity, and identity by adjusting the equalizer that frames how we hear her work – by dialing back overarching questions of identity and ethnicity that leave us with little recourse but to consider how such discursive frames of meaning may be revealed in Yū’s writing, and boosting the levels of other tactical threads that thrum through her work. To paraphrase literature scholar Terry Eagleton, this is a question not so much of what writing may *mean*, but rather of how it is *used*. By focusing in upon the sonorous in Yū Miri’s writing, I will suggest that Yū deploys noise as a trope by which she can foreground the experience of the everyday – the “real life” upon which we have already seen her place so much emphasis – without having this everyday reduced to one that is somehow ethnically foreclosed. Building upon Lisa Yoneyama’s aforementioned attention to the author’s critiques of bourgeois family values, these pages will argue that, far from being constrainable as a “*zainichi*” writer, Yū Miri announces critiques that are more generalizable to the conditions of life under contemporary capitalism, or what we have been calling History throughout the course of this dissertation. By appealing to the sonic, Yū is able both to make present these conditions in and through her writing, and, via what we shall understand as the “shock”ing irruption of sound, disturb the sense-making mechanisms of History of which they are a part and clear the ground for a critical re-imagining of the social. As shall become clear in the latter pages of this chapter, this

³⁶ Yoneyama, pp. 116-117.

reimagining attends a shift in the timbre and tone of the sound that courses through Yū’s work: it attends, in short, a shift from *noise* to *music* – fitting, perhaps, given the fact that we are terming such re-imagining the Homesick Blues herein. Yū Miri’s deployment of the sonic, in short, is double-edged, and combined, I shall call this tactic *critical sonority* herein.

As we have seen, each of the actors with whom this dissertation has grappled has been invested in critical re-imaginings of ‘Japan,’ and of the world, and revealing the nature of these critical engagements has been the aim of these many pages. In this respect, Yū Miri – the last actor with whom this dissertation engages – is no different. As we shall see in the closing pages of this chapter, however, Yū’s fiercely-guarded standpoint of in-betweenness, of *hazama*, allows her to envision a collectivity that does not reduce either to ‘Korea’ or to ‘Japan,’ but that occupies a sort of third, unmoored “critical space,” haunting narratives of History like a dark shadow. In this, we might understand her work as both complementing and counterbalance to the philosophies of Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, Ryo Kagawa, and the array of individual social actors with whom this dissertation has engaged, announcing yet another way of conceiving of and be(com)ing in the world.

Noisy Thinking

Some conceptual wrangling is required in order to situate noise effectively for the purposes of this chapter, and the insights of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari provide some helpful initial framing for the way in which I would like to conceive of “critical sonority” in Yū Miri’s context. Writing of Kafka and the ways in which sound circulates through his writing, the philosophers note:

“What interests Kafka is a pure and intense sonorous material that is always connected to its own abolition... a sonority that ruptures in order to break away from a chain that is still all too signifying. In sound, intensity alone matters, and such sound is generally monotone and always non-signifying...”³⁷

We have noted this sort of noise at work already in the works briefly touched upon above: it manifests itself as the nonsensical trains sounds in *JR Ueno Station: Park Exit*, and in the clanging bells, silent shrieks, and thudding, meaty pops that haunt Yū’s short story *The Tidal Hour*, as well. We shall confront such sonority again in the works to be examined below – *Full House* (1996) and *Gold Rush* (1998) – where it appears as the droning of machinery, the screech of trains on rails, the dull thud of beaten flesh, and so on. What is important to note in Deleuze and Guattari’s insights is the deterritorializing work performed by such noise – it resists classification and being saddled with signification under discursive regimes of *zainichi*-ness, Korean-ness, and the like, thus becoming a suitable trope in the arsenal of a writer who aims to sidestep precisely such enclosures. Indeed, if we take Yū Miri’s stated desire to avoid being “pushed into the *zainichi* Korean literature box” seriously, we might note in her artistry the Deleuzian sort of ethics of writing discussed by Dana Polan in his introduction to *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*: for Deleuze and Guattari, in Polan’s formulation, “writing stands against... interiority, by giving an author a possibility of becoming more than his or her nominal self.”³⁸ The tactical deployment of non-signifying sound in her writing, it seems, helps Yū to break the perpetual cycle of signification and meaning that traps her in the *zainichi* “box,” allowing for ethnicity and interiority to fade into the background (even as these do not fade out entirely) in the interest of foregrounding an experience of the everyday that encompasses, but is not anterior to, questions of ethnicity and interiority. “In short,” as is the case with Deleuze and Guattari’s

³⁷ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, trans. Dana Polan, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), p. 6.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. xxiii.

Kafka, “sound doesn’t show up here as a form of expression, but rather as an unformed material of expression, that will act on the other terms [of the writing].”³⁹ And as a critical tactic, sound “act[s] on the other terms” of Yū’s writing such as its emphasis on the experience of the everyday through a sort of making-present of those terms, imbuing them with a sort of *liveness* and rendering them vulnerable to critique in the mundane world, even as the disorienting experience of noise troubles and disturbs the Historical narrative of which they are a part. Noise, in other words, seems to perform a sort of double-duty in Yū Miri’s writing: on the one hand, it circulates as “an unformed material of expression,” allowing the author to inch away from the sort of signification and (ethnic) meaning that she tries so hard to resist – while on the other, it helps her to simultaneously make-present and point towards an everydayness that destabilizes sense-making mechanisms of History.

Terry Eagleton has argued that “[t]here is a politics of *form* as well as a politics of content. Form is not a distraction from history but a mode of access to it.”⁴⁰ What we can begin to sense in Yū Miri’s double-edged deployment of noise is precisely such a politics of form. Halliday, whom we have already visited briefly above, explains that the deployment of the sonic in written text can be a tactic oriented towards generating a sense of immediacy vis-à-vis that with which the text grapples – an immediacy which might otherwise be lost to the alienating signifier of language (and here we are reminded again of the import with which Kafka regards the sonic and its intensities). The sudden irruption of the sonic into the written, in Halliday’s formulation, is aimed at passing perception directly from author to reader,⁴¹ in an attempt to

³⁹ Ibid., p. 6.

⁴⁰ Terry Eagleton, *How to Read a Poem* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), p. 8.

⁴¹ Halliday, *Sonic Modernity: Representing Sound in Literature, Culture, and the Arts*, p. 30.

move *beyond* language⁴² and to present the everyday experience (=the world) to which sound is wedded directly to the reader. Or, perhaps more specifically, the *Appending* of the sonic to language helps to ground/return the latter more concretely in/to the world itself: “Sound is language's flesh,” insists Bernstein. “[I]ts opacity as meaning marks its material embeddedness in the world of things. Sound brings writing back from its metaphysical and symbolic functions to where it is at home, in performance.”⁴³

Having been made present, however, this world is now also open to critical interrogation – and the sort of noise being discussed herein (as opposed to, say, music, which, as we shall note briefly in the closing pages of this chapter, plays a rather different role) seems especially well-suited to this task. We have already noted the way in which, for Deleuze and Guattari, sound (as deployed by Kafka) resists territorialization and consignment to signification, helping to trace what the authors call “a rupturing and heterogeneous line[.]”⁴⁴ But if “sound articulates the social, in all its myriad forms,” as Halliday suggests, “facilitating and expressing concrete forms of social interaction” through a sort of *mediation* – mediating between the text and the world with which it engages – then we are presented with the potential for noisy text to bypass language and signification and irrupt into the world itself.⁴⁵ Like the stuttering, swinging, syncopated refusal of the jazz music discussed by Mackey and its refusal to heed the dictates of articulacy and time, this sort of noise helps to corrode “permissible ways of making sense.”⁴⁶ In a related rumination (one that is somewhat over-cited, though nonetheless apt), Jaques Attali teaches us that

⁴² Ibid., p. 38.

⁴³ Charles Bernstein, Ed., *Close Listening: Poetry and the Performed Word* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 21.

⁴⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, p. 7.

⁴⁵ Halliday, p. 53.

⁴⁶ Mackey, pp. 252-253.

“noise is violence: it disturbs. To make noise is to interrupt a transmission, to disconnect, to kill... [A] noise is a resonance that interferes with the audition of a message in the process of emission. [It] does not exist in itself, but only in relation to the system within which it is inscribed[.]”⁴⁷

Attali is conceiving of noise here as a literal weapon – one that can be deployed to cause pain and to bring about death, and we might be put in mind here of the so-called sound cannons deployed by contemporary militarized police forces. But there is also an important subtext to his insights, one that allows us to conceive of the violence wrought by noise as violence against what Naoki Sakai might term *discourse*,⁴⁸ and what Attali himself calls “order.”⁴⁹ Noise understood in this way is “subversive... because it betokens demands for cultural autonomy, support for differences or marginality[.]”⁵⁰ What is beginning to take shape here are the outlines of a critical tactic that sees Yū Miri deploy noise as a method of putting text into engagement with the world in a way designed to disturb discourse and invite considerations of other histories and other possibilities – and while the medium of her critical intervention is different, this places her in direct conversation with the other actors taken up in this dissertation.

We might stay with Attali just a moment longer in order to expand upon the critical potentialities of the deployment of noise. As Attali teaches us, noise is not merely a disruptive text that “interferes with the audition of a message” – rather, noise can serve to “attack and transform” a given discursive network:

⁴⁷ Jacques Attali, trans. Brian Massumi, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music* (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1985), p. 26.

⁴⁸ See Sakai’s *Voices of the Past* for more on the notion of discourse.

⁴⁹ Attali, p. 30. It must be pointed out at this juncture that contemporary music, for Attali, represents the very manifestation of “order,” as tamed/neutralized noise: music as “an instrument of political pressure,” for example, “must be tranquil, reassuring, and calm.” (p.7) As we shall see in the pages that follow, however, Yū Miri conceives of and deploys music somewhat differently, seeing it as a means by which to announce different possibilities, different ways of abiding in the world.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

“[Noise] does in fact create a meaning: first, because the interruption of a message signifies the interdiction of the transmitted meaning... and second, because the very absence of meaning in pure noise or in the meaningless repetition of a message, by unchanelling auditory sensations, frees the listener’s imagination... The presence of noise makes sense, makes meaning. It makes possible the creation of a new order on another level of organization, of a new code in another network.”⁵¹

David Novak, whom we visited briefly in Chapter Two, further riffs off of Attali’s interrogation of the potentialities of noise in his *JapaNOISE*, placing it firmly within the sorts of networks envisioned by Attali above, and conceiving of its fundamental sociality in terms of the ways in which it circulates through those networks, and the lives of the actors populating them. Discussing the overwhelming sensory experience of live performances of (N)oise as musical genre, Novak relays the ways in which noise “confuses you, separates you from your acquired knowledge, and makes you wonder what’s going on.”⁵² In this way, noise disturbs accepted ways of being-in-the-world and received modes of belonging, shaking everything out. In a way reminiscent of Latour’s actor-network-theory, those confronting (N)oise “slowly connect their own sensory knowledge to [its] broader discourses... and feel these sounds and emplace them in their own lives in ways that create new worlds of experience.”⁵³ And in a way that suggests the broader political implications of contextually-embedded grappling with texts (such as noise, but also music and literature), we can hear herein echoes of the unruly, unpredictable ways in which text, experience, and world (=‘Japan’) became productively intertwined in the lives of other actors visited herein, especially members of the unofficial Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi fan organization *Ougoukai* (See Chapters One and Three of this dissertation).

Novak, of course, is writing of the bodily experience of noise/music as physical sound waves, and the reader may raise an understandable objection here regarding the *materiality* of

⁵¹ Attali, p. 33.

⁵² David Novak, *JapaNOISE: Music at the Edge of Circulation*, p. 44.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

noise – or, more precisely, the lack thereof – in literature. Indeed, Halliday himself poses the question rhetorically: “what has literature got to do with sound itself, given that in most contexts... it is generally read in silence, on the page?”⁵⁴ Via interrogations of writing by authors such as Virginia Woolf and James Joyce, however, Halliday shows us how the sonic is in fact deeply integrated with the words on the page. In the case of Woolf, he argues, sounds such as the crunching of gravel, the chattering of voices, and the sounding of bells are deployed to “conceive a total or inclusive ‘sound-world’ where the sonic and the non-sonic, and the musical and the non-musical, occupy a common space... that is as much social as it is geophysical, as much conceptual as it is sensory, and as much imaginary, or subjective, as it is ‘real.’”⁵⁵ In Woolf’s case, this is accomplished with such effect that “it becomes very hard to see where [the inaudible] ends and the [audible] begins.”⁵⁶ In his treatment of Joyce’s *Ulysses*, Halliday finds a certain Bakhtinian carnivalesque in the sonic exchanges between actors who “not only listen to one another, but also make various critical, satirical, assenting, dissenting, or at any rate responsive sounds in turn... everything is up for criticism, and nothing is beyond the range of laughter.”⁵⁷ In each case, and throughout much of his work, Halliday is interested in revealing the sociality of the sonic – the way(s) in which sound and noise can be deployed to mediate between actors and animate literary worlds, particularly under modernism. In these pages, however, we are interested in pushing this one step further, and considering the ways in which the tactical deployment of noise may help the literary world irrupt into the mundane, making conditions of everydayness present and rendering them susceptible to critique and re-imagination. This is nothing less than the effect of what we are calling “critical sonority” herein.

⁵⁴ Halliday, p. 12.

⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 12-13.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid., pp. 52-53.

We are further aided in our quest to reconcile the sonic with the literary by scholars who warn against an idealization or isolation of originary sound in the first place. James Lastra, for example, in his “Reading, Writing, and Representing Sound,” suggests that “the assumption that there exists a sound which is pure and present, which exists unviolated or wholly prior to the ‘transformation,’ a firm ground which is more real than its recording, may itself require some critical analysis.” His critique is of an analytical stance that involves “necessarily assuming some ‘real’ which was, itself, unmediated.”⁵⁸ For Lastra,

“all practices of audition are equally constructed, [and thus] there [is] no valid reason for suggesting that one socially constructed practice grounds the discussion and evaluation of all others... What is at stake... is the importance granted the original sound in any theory of sound representation.”⁵⁹

Although Lastra is concerned in this essay chiefly with the role played by technology in debates over the in/authenticity of ‘reproduced’ sound, it is not difficult to extend his insights to questions of the sonic in purportedly “silent” arts such as literature: in showing the way in which “sound ‘fidelity’ is an effect of [intertitle] inscription [and typography]”⁶⁰ in the silent film, for example, Lastra shows that sound (as speech) is ‘audible’ even when it is silent – and can thus be made legible in text. In this sense, it is not so much sound as physical manifestation (of vibrating air) that is important as it is sound’s embeddedness within a system of legibility: “[o]nly their inscription within a system allowing or requiring them to become perceptible gives [sounds] a semiotic import within the system.”⁶¹

In her “Letter on Sound,” Susan Stewart takes this one step further. When reading texts, Stewart teaches us, “we are always recalling sound with only some regard to an originating

⁵⁸ See Lastra’s essay “Reading, Writing, and Representing Sound,” appearing in Rick Altman, Ed., *Sound Theory Sound Practice* (New York: Routledge, 1992). The quote cited here appears on p. 69.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 70-71.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

auditory experience.”⁶² There is thus an element of imagination inherent to our grappling with noisy texts, a way of conjuring in the mind’s ear sonic experiences that may not have an originary moment at all, but which are nonetheless ‘familiar’ to us – while many of us have never heard a silent shriek or a meaty pop within our own skulls, in other words, it is not difficult to appeal to our experiences in the world to imagine what such sonic experiences may ‘sound’ like, thus drawing us into closer negotiation with the experience as depicted. Though writing specifically of poetry, Stewart’s insights can be extended to text writ large: “[t]he sounds of a [text] are not heard within the room of the [text], but they are heard within a memory of hearing that is the total auditory experience of the listener in response to what knowledge of the [text] is extant at a given moment.”⁶³ Sound, in other words, is there even when it is not – and as Nora Lambrecht has demonstrated in a recent essay titled “But If You Listen You Can Hear: War Experience, Modernist Noise, and the Soundscape of the Forbidden Zone,”⁶⁴ the tactical deployment of the sonic (in this case, the terrifying clanking of war) can even become a tactic through which experiences of war considered foreclosed and incomprehensible to noncombatants can be *made-present* to the reader – erupting into her world – in a way that also helps to reveal the borderline between the literary world and the mundane, between text and history, as muddled and confused (or, perhaps more precisely, as porous and permeable). It is precisely this sort of a productive intrusion upon the “fixed terms” of History, I shall argue, that animates Yū Miri’s deployment of the sonic in some of her noisier texts.

⁶² Stewart’s “Letter on Sound” appears as Chapter One in Bernstein’s *Close Listening*. See p. 29 for the quote cited here.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

⁶⁴ See Nora Lambrecht, “But If You Listen You Can Hear: War Experience, Modernist Noise, and the Soundscape of the Forbidden Zone,” appearing in the journal *Modernism/modernity*, Vol. 2, Issue 1 (March 8, 2017).

Yū Miri's Critique

With dozens of books and essays to her name penned over a career that has thus far spanned more than three decades, it is impossible to isolate Yū Miri to any singular critical agenda. As we noted in the case of *The Tidal Hour*, her works and the characters that populate them are often at least nominally autobiographical in nature, which seems to situate her amidst the contemporary, female-led resurgence of the I-novel (*shishosetsu*) genre discussed by Kendall Heitzman⁶⁵ – although, as a recent critical essay by Hara Hitoshi of Tokyo's Asia University serves to attest,⁶⁶ the degree to which Yū might be understood and accepted as a so-called “I-novelist” remains very much up for debate. Autobiographical or not, however (and as we can note from the example of her recent *JR Ueno Station: Park Exit*, with which we opened this chapter, her oeuvre is not exclusively so), Yū Miri’s works often grapple with the terms and conditions of life at the level of the everyday. While her library is far too extensive to survey with any degree of thoroughness here, we can note this engagement at work in two of the author’s key works that have thus far been translated for an English-speaking audience: *Full House* and *Gold Rush*. It is these works, and the ways in which they are animated by what we are calling critical sonority, that we shall visit in the pages that follow.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ See Heitzman’s essay “The rise of women writers, the Heisei I-novel, and the contemporary *bundan*” in Rachael Hutchison and Leith Morton, Eds., *Routledge Handbook of Modern Japanese Literature* (New York: Routledge, 2016).

⁶⁶ Hara argues that what appears to be “I-novel” writing on Yū’s part actually careens into “cheap” self expression that fails in attaining a true knowledge of the self and concurrent discovery of the other. “What makes her [Yū] appear as an I-novelist,” Hara argues, “is precisely that which Kawamura Minato identifies – her penchant for always developing works out of clashing engagements with the real world, with actually-existing incidents and phenomena.” For our purposes, though, it is precisely Yū’s engagement with – and critique of – the “real world,” and the manner in which she makes this present through the trope of sound, that is of interest. See Hara Hitoshi, “Yū Miri shōron – shishosetsu ni motomeru mono [An essay on Yū Miri – what is sought in the I-novel]”, appearing in the journal *Kokubungaku Kaishaku to Kanso*, Vol. 76, No. 6 (2011), pp. 171-177.

⁶⁷ In the interest of ensuring that my analyses remain accessible and verifiable in an English-language scholarly context, I have chosen to build those analyses around the English-language translations of these

To better understand what is meant by the “everyday” here, we might turn again to Tosaka Jun, whom we visited briefly in preceding pages. Tosaka deploys a materialist analysis to approach everydayness in the terms of a rubric examined elsewhere in this dissertation – that of *space*. For Tosaka, space is defined by a fundamental there-ness – a *Da* character – that dooms phenomenological analytical attempts to isolate it or divorce it from itself to failure. As a field that encompasses, space can never be gazed upon from the outside: the only way to grasp it is to consider its *Da*-character in according to the terms that animate it – and this leads to the concept of everyday space as a direct abstraction of space-itself. Everyday space, for Tosaka, “is none other than the field of practice”⁶⁸ – it is the concept of space that social actors make use of in their daily lives, the “shared foundation underpinning [other] concepts of... space,”⁶⁹ including literary space. Everyday space, while not the whole of space, is nonetheless a phenomenal, perceptible form of space itself, and as encompassing “field of practice,” it is animated, as we have noted in our examination of lived conditions in sites such as Kagoshima and Shizuoka, by the conditions and contradictions of capitalism, amidst which “practice” is informed by the drive to survive on terms that are beneficial to one’s own self.⁷⁰ In the modern and contemporary period, then, everydayness is nothing but the terms of life under capitalist modernity itself,⁷¹ and the ways in which social actors may understand or seek to modify those terms. This is, as we have noted in our opening example her recent *JR Ueno Station: Park Exit*, the everyday that

works. Citations are also provided to the Japanese-language originals, however, and in cases in which nuances or specificities of the Japanese language add to the discussion at hand, mention is made in the footnotes.

⁶⁸ See Ken C. Kawashima, Fabian Schafer, and Robert Stolz, Eds., *Tosaka Jun: A Critical Reader* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2014), p. 33.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 31-32.

⁷⁰ Spinoza would call this *conatus*. See Stuart Hampshire, *Spinoza* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1987), p.67.

⁷¹ These terms, of course, include the various trappings of capitalist modernity, such as the nation-state form, which incorporates ‘Japan’ and ‘Korea.’

animates much of Yū Miri's, and that is both made-present and subjected to critique through the author's tactical deployment of noise in her work.

In his *Structure of World History*, Karatani Kojin reminds us that a key condition of life under contemporary capitalism is self-alienation – the alienation of individual social actors from their own capabilities via the medium of money, regardless of their intentions. It is for this reason, Karatani (citing Hess) argues, that people must overcome capital in order to produce organic communities, or what Proudhon has called *associations*.⁷² Associations thus conceived – themselves a form of the alternative collectivity that has lurked in the pages of this dissertation – must be arrived at through a critique of the capitalist economy and its foundations in money as the universally-exchangeable commodity, and as we shall see in the pages that follow, Yū's critique circles around a critique of money and of commodification even as she gestures toward different ways of being in the world that are not facilitated through the medium of money. This critique of the capitalist economy and (fuzzy, ill-defined) visions for alternative collectivity places her in close proximity to rocker Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, and like Nagabuchi, she zeroes in on the catastrophes at the Fukushima Dai'ichi Nuclear Power Station – a stone's throw from her adopted home of Minami-Soma, Fukushima Prefecture, where the author has lived since April of 2015 – as the very embodiment of the consequences of capitalism. Indeed, in a conversation with Nagabuchi in late 2015 that reflected on the different sort of economy that she sensed in Fukushima (in comparison, assumedly, with her erstwhile home near Yokohama), Yū stated:

“It’s been about six months since I moved out here to Minami-Soma, and there are really a lot of people around here who are truly living well. For example, when you go the fishmongers, there aren’t any pre-packaged, saran-wrapped packs sold there. People bring their plates and line up for service, and if you ask for three slices, then three slices is what you get. If you go to get your shoe repaired, they don’t do a slap-job with glue –

⁷² See Kojin Karatani, trans. Michael K. Bourdaghs, *The Structure of World History: From Modes of Production to Modes of Exchange* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), p. 16.

they'll sew the tear closed for you with thread. And for a reasonable price, too. From the end of the war through the period of high-speed economic growth [Yū likely means to include the bubble economy in this historical sweep], we chased after happiness and wealth for the majority, but the result of that has been that we've fallen into a sort of economy-above-all mentality that has broken and soiled the livelihoods [*kurashi*] of those who have worked hard and lived modest, discreet [*tsutsumashii*] lives – that's what the accident at the [Fukushima Dai'ichi] nuclear power plant has been about.”⁷³

We can detect something of the romanticist critique of modern society that Karatani warns us of in Yū's ruminations,⁷⁴ and to be sure, there are echoes here of the sorts of restorative nostalgia – the rehabilitation of a phantasmal past – that Harootunian cautions were thrumming through the 1990s, the period during which Yū's career truly began to develop, and also a period marked, in the former's formulation, by “signs of a troubled present and darkly uncertain future that could only be avoided by rectifying the past through true memory and history.”⁷⁵ Indeed, Yū's artistic moment – from the 1990s through the present – has been marked by an unrelenting sort of anxiety,⁷⁶ one that was particularly palpable in the 1990s following the burst of (urban) Japan's asset bubble,⁷⁷ when flailing attempts to “explain the present by resorting to memory and history as a way of alerting Japanese to the repressed possibilities that must now be resuscitated if the future is to look different from the present” grew conspicuous.⁷⁸ Moreover, the author's Fukushima-based critique as presented above is rather oversimplified, and deaf to the

⁷³ See Yū's comments in the special issue of the journal *Bungei*, p. 98.

⁷⁴ Karatani, trans. Bourdaghs, p. 206.

⁷⁵ See Harootunian's essay “Japan's Long Postwar: The Trick of Memory and the Ruse of History,” in Tomiko Yoda and Harry Harootunian, Eds., *Japan After Japan: Social and Cultural Life from the Recessionary 1990s to the Present* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), p. 103.

⁷⁶ See Yoshitaka Mouri, “J-pop: from the ideology of creativity to DiY music culture,” in *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (2009).

⁷⁷ It is important to note the bursting of the bubble saw no fundamental change to the “economy-above-all mentality” critiqued by Yū Miri – just its reformulation under neoliberalism and an attendant exacerbation of the terms of everyday life. Yoda makes this point in her contribution to the edited volume *Japan after Japan*. Therein, the author seeks to question the ‘split’ between bubble and after-bubble, and the separation of ‘Japan’ from ‘the world’, and place Japan in the wider context of global capitalism by tracing roots of the malaise of the 1990s back to at least the 1970s.

⁷⁸ See Harootunian, “Japan's Long Postwar,” p. 107.

ambiguities and competing desires that actually animate Fukushima in the post-3.11 moment: it seems to reproduce an idealistic and largely unhelpful dichotomy between ‘center’ and ‘periphery’ that invites precisely the sorts of criticisms levied by Harootunian by virtue of seeming to attribute such “repressed [national] possibilities” to a somehow more authentic margin. But as we shall see, Yū Miri’s deployment of critical sonority is not oriented toward the reclamation of the past, but rather toward a making-present of the terms of the everyday in the now, in order to potentiate a critical grappling therewith. And as her focus on Fukushima’s nuclear power plants – potent symbol of the unevenness that has defined economic development in Japan – makes clear, Yū’s critique is one that zooms in on the social relations of capitalism, not on its symptoms in the form of something called “modern society,” and as Karatani teaches us, it is precisely such a stance that makes for a productive critique of capital as author of the terms of the everyday, as opposed to a mere romanticist reaction against it.⁷⁹

The House that Sound Built/Broke: (Sonic) Foundations of Yū Miri’s *Full House*

Yū Miri’s artistic roots, as we have already noted above, are in the theater: having founded her own theatrical troupe at the age of just eighteen, she was active as a playwright, and saw her own works come to life on stage at age twenty. Given Yū’s history in this medium, it is perhaps not surprising that much of her prose writing – to which she would turn in the 1990s – carries with it a strong sense of *performativity*,⁸⁰ echoes of the rhetoric that Terry Eagleton insists

⁷⁹ Karatani, trans. Bourdaghs, p. 206.

⁸⁰ Over the course of an intriguing discussion that I had with Tomoharu Murakami (Yū’s partner and representative) in Fukushima in April of 2017, Murakami mused that it may well be Yū’s roots in the theater that makes her writing – unintentionally and unconsciously – multi-sensory and performative, relying heavily upon sound/noise to make itself present in the mundane world. The figure of Ryo Kagawa and his previous engagement with the Tokyo Kid Brothers – itself headed by Higashi Yutaka, Yū’s late partner – seems to further call for an investigation of the interrelationship between theatre, music, and

was an integral component of early expressive life. Rhetoric, for Eagleton, was defined by a “public, political function”⁸¹ – a contextually-embedded, social practice, it was a way of commenting upon the world, and a highly political one in that its aim was to convince others of the nature of and necessary amendments to the world itself. Eagleton mourns the ways in which rhetoric gradually became divorced from practice and recast as an isolated, abstracted addition “to a sterile inventory of literary devices,” becoming by the Middle Ages “a scholastic rather than a civic pursuit, one which belonged to the study rather than to the public sphere.”⁸² Eagleton’s call is for an overcoming of the cults of both the author *and* the text, a repositioning of these within the flows of social relations as means by which the embedded, social practice of rhetoric – perhaps now more productively re-coined as *critique* – can mount a challenge against the prevailing sense that we have reached the end of history; that currently dominant political and social systems have won it all. To re-emphasize Eagleton’s primary insistence that the key question facing engagements with literature is not so much what writing may *mean*, but rather how it is *used*, a useful analytical stance vis-à-vis literature involves not a de-coding of the text, searching for a true meaning or literariness in isolation, but rather how social actors, the text, and the world itself may interrelate. The performative nature of Yū’s writing – the way in which her text and her tropes (such as sound) embed themselves in and resonate through a world that is both literary and mundane, the latter made possible through Halliday’s “shock”ing intrusion upon the reader – invites considerations thereof on the basis of the terms that Eagleton lays out, and in what follows, we will consider Yū Miri’s writing in two key works as critical practice, enunciated through what we are calling “critical sonority.”

literature that can be rooted in the art and critique of intertwined individual actors such as those taken up in this dissertation, but such an examination must be saved for another day.

⁸¹ Eagleton, p. 11.

⁸² *Ibid.*

It is important to stress once again that Yū Miri's library is vast, and any attempt to classify her deployment of literary devices/tropes such as sound according to a singular critical rubric is not only foolhardy, but in fact reproduces the very sort of analytical "box" for which Yū Miri herself has shown such frustration and disdain, and which has lurked throughout the pre-existing scholarship that I critique above. My aim, in other words, is not to offer an alternatively authoritative "decoding" of Yū Miri and her oeuvre, but rather to expand upon and push beyond readings that, as we have seen, tend to circulate endlessly back to questions of ethnicity. As we have seen above, Yū Miri has been explicit and unambiguous in laying out a critique of post-war Japanese History (as capitalism itself), and of the terms and conditions of the everyday as informed by this History. The following pages aim to reveal this critique in key works in English translation, and to consider how these texts intervene in the everyday via critical sonority, and the ways in which, as we have already noted above, the sonic both makes present the terms of the everyday under consideration, and perturbs the discursive mechanisms of which they are a part. And as we shall see, this critique revolves not around ethnicity (though questions of Koreanness do play roles in both works, and especially in *Gold Rush*), but rather around questions of money and commodification – both key facets of contemporary Japanese History.

Full House, the first of the two works to be examined herein, was penned by Yū Miri in 1996, and translated for an English audience in 2010 as part of the aforementioned anthology *Into the Light: An Anthology of Literature by Koreans in Japan*.⁸³ An odd and extremely disorienting story, *Full House* tells the tale of the broken Hayashi family, whose patriarch Shōji, manager of a chain of *pachinko* parlors in Yokohama, has taken on fifty million yen in debt to

⁸³ *Full House* is the capping contribution to this volume. See Melissa Wender, Ed., *Into the Light: An Anthology of Literature by Koreans in Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2010). For the original Japanese version of the work, see Yū Miri, *Furu hausu* (Tokyo: Bungei Shunju, 1996).

build and stock an extravagant home in a planned, bubble-economy-era residential community in Yokohama called Minato-kita New Town. It soon becomes apparent that Hayashi has embarked upon this project, which he had carefully kept secret from his two daughters, Sumi and Yōko, until they are more or less hoodwinked into accompanying their father to the new residence when the latter promises his children a ride to the station after completing change-of-address procedures at the local ward office, in a desperate attempt to reunite the estranged members of his family, which began to disintegrate sixteen years before the time of the story, when the family's matriarch, Kiyoko, left. Though Kiyoko herself never appears in the work, we learn through the reflections of Hayashi's daughter, Sumi – the story's first-person narrator – that her departure was related to frustrations over money and commodities: Kiyoko was irked by Shōji's penchant for bringing home second-hand goods, for example, and was compelled to find employment at a hostess club after being furnished with only paltry sums from Shōji's pay-packets. Shōji's clumsy attempt to establish a lavish environment that might satisfy the desires of all in his estranged family, luring them home again – and indeed, the crowning jewel of the new home is the entranceway nameplate bearing the names of all four members of the family – thus initially seems sweet in its own way, if more than a little creepy.

But the assumptions upon which Shōji's plan rest soon reveal themselves to be skewed, as the house and its contents, and the community of which it is a part, reveal themselves to be out of sync with the lives and desires of those who would occupy them. Neither Sumi nor her sister, Yōko, want any part of the house, and “money” is eventually revealed as the only consideration that might ever prompt their mother to live with Shōji again. Shōji himself seems to spend relatively little time at the house, with the reader frequently finding him at work, or shuttling to his former house in Yokohama's Nishi-ku district, currently occupied only by the patriarch's

dog, Pepe. There is nothing about the well-stocked house or the engineered residential community that binds, unites, or comforts: indeed, Minato-kita New Town is presented as something of a dystopia, a place of emptiness and death – the empty lots awaiting construction give the feeling that the whole engineered area is “just a plan on someone’s desk... it was going to go bankrupt, and the area would end up a ghost town,”⁸⁴ while signage advising of “grave sites for sale”⁸⁵ establish this as a place to which people quite literally come to die. It is also a place of madness and danger: Sumi runs afoul there of an apparently mad individual there who has lost his tie and his shoes, clad in a parka despite the summer heat; and later, a would-be sexual predator. The place is utterly devoid of nature – there are no birds there, for example; no summer cicadas, despite it being July, “not even a single mayfly or butterfly or grasshopper”⁸⁶ – and while it is run through with sound, these are mostly monotonous, intimidating noises (the grinding of constriction machinery, for example, but also the monosyllabic shriek of the wind through the tall grass) as opposed to melodic, reassuring ones.⁸⁷ The house itself also seems perpetually off-kilter, and we are presented with repeated images of Sumi grasping at futons and at furniture in attempts to maintain her balance and orientation. Eventually, a homeless family is welcomed into the house as a sort of ‘surrogate family,’ in an apparent effort to force the structure into its proper function as a home – though this is a move that, intriguingly, prioritizes the house-as-structure over the Hayashi family, who remain the structure’s rightful owners. But this has no beneficial effect either, and despite fulfilling all of the material prerequisites of a bourgeois, nuclear-family oriented “my-home-ism,” no familial interconnectivity is ever found:

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 179. For the original Japanese, see Yū, *Furu hausu*, p. 16.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 182. For the original Japanese, see Yū, *Furu hausu*, p. 22.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 185. For the original Japanese, see Yū, *Furu hausu*, p. 27.

⁸⁷ This is an important contradistinction in sonic deployment that we will revisit in our examination of *Gold Rush*, below.

indeed, the extravagant house, the dizzying array of commodities that fill it, and the engineered community that hosts it are never the solution, but rather seem to perpetuate the problem. The only distance covered in a tale that begins with family members alienated from one another via concerns over money and commodities is a widening of the gap: the Hayashis, in the end, remain as alienated from one another and as atomized as ever.

As I shall explain in more detail below, what *Full House* seems to present is a critique of the privileged position that money and the commodity have held in modern and contemporary Japanese History – and here we can hear strong echoes of the author’s critique of capitalism, referenced above. This work can be read as a scathing critique of the “my-home-ism” of around-1970, a phenomenon that involved “heightened emphasis on the privacy of nuclear family life; keener interest in the newest product and styles than it what did in, for, or against society,”⁸⁸ and which was a key marker of the “inward turn” lamented by Dower and others and discussed in earlier pages of this dissertation. “My-home-ism” was a key component of the enduring consumer culture that would persist through Yū’s moment of writing, and in targeting it directly, Yū seems, much like Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, to be intervening into the “fixed terms” of a contemporary consumerist Japanese social, and delivers a shock aimed at rattling their sense-making legitimacy. We are put in mind here of Halliday, discussed above, but also of the critical tactics deployed by Ryo Kagawa, especially in his “*Sensō Shimashō*,” examined in Chapter Two. And like Kagawa, this is a critique that Yū accomplishes sonically – specifically, as we shall see, through the deployment of “critical sonority.”

⁸⁸ See Lawrence W. Beer, “Japan, 1969: ‘My Homeism’ and Political Struggle,” appearing in *Asian Survey*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (1970).

As Tomiko Yoda and Marilyn Ivy, among others, have argued,⁸⁹ the critique of consumerism can be a contentious undertaking, threatening to devolve into a paternalistic, nationalistic sort of quest for “capitalism without excess,” which Ivy views as “the desire of fascism.”⁹⁰ Leaving aside for the moment the question of whether or not this is in fact a productive portrayal of the nature of fascism, we must recognize the potential pitfalls inherent in a critique of consumerism when pursued in nationalistic terms, and consider the way(s) in which Yū Miri navigates this tricky ground. As we have already established above, Yū endeavors to occupy a space that she calls the *hazama* – an in-between-ness that is neither ‘Korea’ nor ‘Japan’ – and as such, appealing to an ahistorical, idealized nation form as antidote for hedonistic consumerism is a strategic route that is neither appealing nor available to her. By framing her critique sonically, Yū is able to bypass the (abstracted) “box[es]” of the nation form and announce it directly, viscerally, via a making-present that similarly denies the reader recourse to the “refuge” that can be located in notions of ‘Japan’ and ‘Korea.’ Indeed, nowhere in her critical enunciations does Yū advocate for a return to a more authentic national past – and by denying this possibility to her readership, as well, and by sonically “shock”ing the reader into “see[ing]” the world differently,⁹¹ she seems intent upon drawing readers into a critical confrontation with the everyday that is itself located in the potential third site of the *hazama*.

Full House is a work that is thoroughly contaminated by noise. As is the case in *JR Ueno Station: Park Exit*, addressed briefly above, the reader of *Full House* is confronted by the sonic

⁸⁹ See Yoda’s “The Rise and Fall of Maternal Society: Gender, Labor, and Capital in Contemporary Japan,” and Ivy’s “Revenge and Recapitation in Recessionary Japan,” both appearing in the volume *Japan After Japan*.

⁹⁰ Marilyn Ivy, “Revenge and Recapitation in Recessionary Japan,” p. 196.

⁹¹ Halliday, p. 30.

before the visual, in a way that serves to establish the house – itself a key character in the work – as unwelcoming and eerie:

“The door opened with a groan [*nageku yo na oto*].”⁹²

Despite the Hayashi patriarch’s attempts to infuse the place with life, sound is deployed here to make the house seem as deathly as the engineered, commodified community in which it sits. This is a ghost house in a ghost town: Shoji cannot plant so much as a tree in his yard, for example, and vows to put in a (lifeless) rock garden instead. The entire neighborhood is dug up, sterile, empty: buses do not run during commuting hours, a fact which “doesn’t make sense”⁹³ to Sumi, and the sparse landscape is dotted with little more than big box stores, a trash incineration facility (which boasts a pool heated by the combustion of refuse), a convenience store, and the aforementioned grave plots for sale. “On both sides of the street empty land being readied for construction stretched as far as the eye could see. It exuded a loneliness that made it feel less like lots waiting for new houses to be built on them than open space where buildings had been demolished long before.”⁹⁴ And the unmoored, transient noises that course through the work help to forefront this general sense of malaise and deathliness: nonsensical noise like the moaning of fans, the buzzing of washing-machine timers, and the periodic shrieking of telephones clatter through the work like the mindless yammering of ghosts, adding to the sense that something is very wrong here. If noise interferes with the audition of a message, as we have seen Attali and others suggest, then all of this interference embedded into what is fundamentally a narrative of

⁹² Yū, *Full House*, p. 174. The Japanese term used in the original – *nageku* – is a highly evocative one, carrying with it connotations of mourning, weeping, and lament.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 182. For the original Japanese, see Yū, *Furu hausu*, p. 22, where this is given as *fu ni ochinai*, a term that carries with it a sense of its object being uncomfortable and disorienting.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 181. For the original Japanese, see Yū, *Furu hausu*, p. 21.

“my-home-ism” seems to present a critical intervention into the narratives of consumerism and capitalism that underpin it.

We must attend, however, not only to the mere presence of the sonic in *Full House*, but also to the precise manner in which it is animated, brought to life – the rhythm that it is endowed with. Noise, in point of fact, *pulsates* through the work: it cycles into crescendos and is then dialed down again in a manner that seems intended to subject specific moments, specific ideas to critical interrogation. Now, as I have already noted, the sonic is a constant presence in *Full House*, and we cannot hope to attend to all of the noisy moments in the text in the brief space available to us in this chapter. It may be helpful, however, to amplify three specific moments in the text, and to consider the critical sonority deployed by Yū Miri in each, and the rhythmic cycling-up of volume that points toward the critical climax in each.

In a complex scene early in the work, for example, we find Sumi and Shōji in the kitchen of the new house, discussing the breakup of the family. Through conversation between father and daughter and Sumi’s narration, we learn that array of factors were at play in this disintegration, including violence directed by Shōji against Kiyoko (“I hit her once, and her tooth broke”), infidelity (“[O]ne day, in June, I noticed that she was wearing a sweater. I watched really carefully as she changed, and I saw that she had red markes on her neck... Hickeys.”), and even hints of parental sexual abuse (“ ‘I never sexually abused you, either. You remember anything like that?’ / Putting my spoon down after three bites, I quietly put the lid on my memories and shook my head”).⁹⁵ But the unifying thread in the breakup of the family seems to be the mediation of the relations between its members – and particularly between Shōji and Kiyoko – by *money*. Shōji’s violence against Kiyoko is translated into monetary terms, for example –

⁹⁵ All of these quotations can be found on p. 188 of the translated text. For the original quotations, see p. 33 of Yū’s *Furu hausu*.

“That crown cost me 400,000 yen. I wouldn’t let her have a cheap tooth.” – while Kiyoko’s affair and the ultimate breakup were precipitated by the commodification of her sexualized labor power, a development which itself only came to pass after being deprived of money from Shōji himself.

As the scene continues, we learn that Shōji’s ex-wife and mother in law continue to visit Shōji periodically to obtain money (“Your mother and grandmother still come to the store to get money out of me, you know... Usually it’s 100 thou, but sometimes as much as 200”⁹⁶). Familial relations have fallen away here, in other words, to reveal an ongoing interconnection between Shōji and his erstwhile spouse and mother-in-law that is mediated by money. And in an intriguing twist, Shōji himself is presented as a sort-of commodity here, something to be selected from a shelf: asked by Sumi why he continues to furnish Kiyoko and her mother with money, Shōji acknowledges a certain debt to her as mother of his children, but also points out that “she’s the one who picked me out of a pile of matchmaker’s photographs.”⁹⁷ It seems that the only relationship that Shōji is able to envision with Kiyoko is *transactional*, based on exchange: though the marriage may have dissolved, the underlying transactional nature of this relationship (“I wouldn’t let her have a cheap tooth”) remains intact. That the relationship should persist in some sort of transactional form, it seems, is far from surprising.

Having laid bare the manner in which Shōji and Kiyoko’s relationship is mediated by monetary transaction and exchange, Yū chooses this moment to unleash a barrage of noise in her text:

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 189. For the original Japanese, see Yū, *Furu hausu*, p. 35.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

“There was the sound of ice cracking. My father and I both looked toward the kitchen in shock. It was the automatic icemaker in the refrigerator. The kitchen had fought off all light and was shrouded in a deep shadow.”⁹⁸

This sudden irruption of noise comes as the transactional nature of the relations that had constituted Sumi’s family are clarified, and the jolting sound of ice cracking here – which serves no purpose other than to call attention to itself, and to its attendance to this particular moment in the text – seems engineered precisely to call attention to, to *make present*, this reality. The noise is presented as a “shock” even in terms of the work’s own narration, and if we recall Halliday’s insistence that the sudden emergence of the sonic in writing is a tactic deployed to dislodge the “givenness” of Historical narratives such transaction and exchange under conditions of contemporary capitalism from their frames of reference and cast new light upon them, passing perceptions from writer to reader and making the latter *see*, we might conceive of this sort of critical sonority as a tactic deployed to present the sort of critique of the everyday that we have established Yū as harboring above, without having that critique devolve into a nationalistic sort of revivification of a phantasmal yesteryear.

But the scene continues. Noise ebbs away for a moment – in a manner true to the sort of pulsation suggested above – but we are left with the afterimage of the kitchen and indeed of the house as a whole as having “fought off all light and [being] shrouded in a deep shadow.” The noise of the cracking ice has helped us to “see” the house in a manner that Shōji, apparently, cannot: the patriarch remains convinced that it is a place of possibility, a site through which he can restore the family relationships that have fallen away, and particularly his own relationship with Kiyoko, his former spouse (“[W]hen I decided to build this house, I saw her so that I could

⁹⁸ Ibid.

ask her, one last time, if she would try living with us again”⁹⁹). But the house, as a commodity, is revealed as far from an antidote for the alienation that stalks the Hayashis – rather, it acts within the same system of alienation, exacerbating the darkness that Shōji does not know how to escape. This is revealed in the way in which Kiyoko relates herself to the house and to Shōji’s plea: she urges Shōji to make the first floor into a shop, or to “build at least a four-storey building so we can rent out ten of the rooms.”¹⁰⁰ Kiyoko has no interest in reestablishing connection through familial cohabitation, in other words – “[s]he ended up suggesting that each of us live in separate rooms” – and views the house and Shōji’s proposal solely as a vehicle for material gain. Indeed, Sumi recognizes her mother’s material motivations: “It’s got to be money. She seems to be having some trouble.”¹⁰¹ The house, in short, is not a beacon of light and hope, despite Shōji’s convictions: as both object and site, it is implicated in precisely the same economic relations that helped splinter the family in the first place.

This point is hammered continually as the scene continues to unfold. We are told that the house has not even passed into Shōji’s full ownership yet because “I promised to pay [for it] when the house was finished, but I haven’t paid yet.” Shōji’s very life is rendered a commodity, exchangeable for payment of the debt taken out to build the house: “I won’t cause you guys any problems, I promise. If worse comes to worst, I can cash in my life insurance policy to take care of my debts.”¹⁰² And throughout, Shōji persists in his blind faith that the procurement and furnishing of the house will somehow restore his fractured family, despite the continuous and ominous growling from within it that clearly wishes to insist otherwise. Indeed, there is a deathly role (recall here the “dark shadows,” the absence of light) played by the house and its furnishings

⁹⁹ Ibid. For the original Japanese, see Yū, *Furu hausu*, p. 36.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 190. For the original Japanese, see Yū, *Furu hausu*, p. 38.

as commodities that Shōji does not recognize; one that not only fails to facilitate familial relations among the Hayashis, but in fact perpetuates their isolation by becoming a site at which those relations continue to be mediated transactionally, as economic concerns. Shōji, however, seems to know of no other way to mend his family than through the medium of commodities, and of money.

As the scene approaches its climax, we see Shōji presenting Sumi with a dizzying array of varyingly needless commodities that the former has purchased to stock the house with, even as he himself declares his intent to stay away from the home at the family's former house, in order to walk his dog. These include the odd combination of "sashimi, meat, and garlic chives," "a green-and-yellow swim cap, a red-and-light-blue bathing suit, and a pair of dark blue swim trunks," and, most superfluous of all, "a wooden implement of some kind – with matchstick-like prongs sticking out of what looked like the sole of a *geta*. Dad explained that you could get the results of shiatsu just by squeezizng it with your hands."¹⁰³ This sort of rattling off of purchased commodities – which manifests in the text with its own machine-gun sort of rhythmic noise – is a tactic that appears in multiple locations in *Full House*, but this specific instance thereof finds Yū's noise machine cycling back up to a critical crescendo. Triggered by a particularly banal remark on the part of Shōji regarding his purchase – "It tingles. It feels great if you use it to press on sore muscles."¹⁰⁴ – a flood of random noise flows forth that seems to interfere with the taken-for-granted consumerism that informs the entirety of the scene outlined herein:

"I could hear a dog barking out back. Soon the bark was strained and high, like it was warning of danger. Then I heard it hitting up against chains or something. I heard a woman, trying to comfort the dog, saying, 'It's nothing, it's all right, it's all right,' but the dog still wouldn't stop barking. Then the woman's voice became confrontational. 'Enough. Get in your dog house. Dog house.' I went around from the back door to the

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

front, turned on the porch light, and saw my father off. The dog's yapping had grown wilder. The sound of the car engine drove it to yowl. The yowls reached every corner of the neighborhood.”¹⁰⁵

It is worth noting here that, like the cracking of the ice above, neither the yowling of the dog nor the sound of the car engine serve any narrative purpose in Yū's text, aside from placing a rather noisy point on the author's extended discussion of the nature of the Hayashi family relations, and the prominent role played by the commodity in the attempt to resuscitate those relations. As we saw above, Yū's deployment of critical sonority here seems designed to throw the mediation – and ultimate corrosion – of those relations via money and the commodity into high relief, and to sound the alarm against what Karatani calls the “reorganiz[ation] of the community” according to the logic of the commodity itself. There is, in short, a harsh critique of “my-home-ism” and consumerism to be heard here, and by presenting this critique sonically, Yū Miri is able to both make radically present the terms of the everyday that fall under her critical gaze, and do so in a way that sidesteps the pitfall of the nationalist critique. And as I shall suggest briefly below, this is a vital strategic prerequisite that allows the author to root a critical stance on the world in a sort of third space – not unlike the *hazama* – wherein she can envision social relations differently.

As the work continues to unfold, we are presented with its key plot development: the aforementioned occupation of the house by four members of a homeless family. Apparently giving up on the prospect of animating the home and its contents with his own family, Shōji has invited the Aida family – whom he stumbled across at Yokohama Station after the latter had set

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. For this passage in the original Japanese, see Yū, *Furu hausu*, p. 39. It is important to note here that the woman's shrill commands to the yapping dog – “Get in your dog house. Dog house” – are actually given in a Romanized lexicon – “*hausu, hausu*” – in Yū's original, further tying this noisy scene back to the title of the work at hand. Considerations of the dog itself as a trapped, leashed commodity confined to a *hausu* and of possible parallels to Sumi herself must be saved for another occasion.

up encampment there – to live in it, a fact discovered by Sumi upon her return from a brief absence from the house. The Aida's predicament is very much a product of the 1990s moment in which Yū Miri is writing: the family had owned an electronics shop on the outskirts of Yokohama, but it ran into difficulties with the end of the bubble economy and the start of Japan's long recession; the shop's fate was sealed with the opening of a huge box store (promising lower prices) nearby, and the Aidas found themselves on the street, turned away even by family members similarly lacking the wherewithal to take them in. At first glance, the Aidas seem to constitute an idealized sort of Other to the generalized malaise of consumerism critiqued by Yū Miri in *Full House*. Barred from such participation in the capitalist economy,¹⁰⁶ the Aida family seems to present an antidote of sorts to the universalizing narrative of the bourgeois family, the critique of which Yoneyama sees as animating Yū's work: their unlikely occupation of a fifty million yen home, in other words, might be seen as “a most unsettling critique of the ways in which society's stability is maintained by ordering various differences, racial or otherwise.”¹⁰⁷

It soon becomes apparent, however, that the role of the Aidas in the work is hardly to serve as an ideal, “authentic” surrogate family. Their presence in the home is itself “bought,” mediated by money in a sort of bribery perpetuated by Shoji that carries with it echoes of the inducements aimed at cajoling Sumi, Yoko, and Kiyoko into living in the house, as well. This is gradually revealed in a late scene in the work: “the woman” (the Aida matriarch – the narrator never addresses her by name), despite ostensibly being penniless, makes an appointment at a salon in a fashionable section of Yokohama “for a perm and a color,” and asks Sumi for a loan to

¹⁰⁶ This barring, however, is perhaps more productively understood as merely a “fetishistic inversion” of the very fact of their precarious positionality therein

¹⁰⁷ Yoneyama, p. 114.

cover the cost.¹⁰⁸ Bewildered, Sumi complies, but then Shōji returns with a much better deal. As a fan “moans” in the hallway – and here we can detect the initial cycling-up of another pulsating moment of critical sonority – Shoji takes an envelope full of cash out of his suit pocket:

“My father gulped down his cooled coffee, took a bank envelope out of the inside pocket of his suit jacket, and put it on the table. The woman got up awkwardly, cleared by father’s and my coffee cups, and glanced at the envelope.

‘Take it,’ he said, staring at the blank television screen so as to avoid meeting eyes with the woman. His mouth was closed, but not firmly. ‘It’s not much,’ he said, sliding the envelope over to the woman. I was itching to grab the envelope, but I kept my fidgeting hands on my knees.

‘Sumi, I’ll return the money you lent to me,’ the woman said, taking a 10,000-yen note out of the envelope and holding it out to me.

In my head I heard a sound like a badminton birdie being hit back and forth.”¹⁰⁹

The sensibility of this transaction – and there is clearly a hint here of the “special” commodification of labor power,¹¹⁰ which defines contemporary capitalism, in the figure of “the woman” clearing away the cups – is done violence, in an Attalian sense, by the intrusion of a nonsensical noise which also serves to make-present Sumi’s confusion and agitation. Indeed, we are here reminded of the “pop” in Rina’s head in *The Tidal Hour*, examined above. But Yū’s noise machine is just powering up here, and the scene continues the following morning.

As the Aidas and Sumi share breakfast, we learn that not only is “the woman” to have her salon appointment today, but the family plans to eat out together at a restaurant afterward, presumably using the money supplied by Shoji the previous day. Sumi wants no part of this odd arrangement – “I’m going to stay home” – and earns a “look” from the Aida daughter Kaoru (with whom Sumi shares not only a certain sexual attraction, but also an uncanny resemblance – we will visit Kaoru in more detail below) for her decision to stay behind. Here, amplified by the family’s apparent inability to process Sumi’s reluctance to partake in a day of consumption –

¹⁰⁸ Yū, *Full House*, p. 208. For the original Japanese, see Yū, *Furu hausu*, p. 73.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. For the original Japanese, see Yū, *Furu hausu*, p. 74-75.

¹¹⁰ Karatani, trans. Bourdaghs, p. 188.

revealed in the “forced smile”¹¹¹ with which the woman acknowledges Sumi’s decision – noise hits its crescendo again, this time in the form of birdsong: “The canary began chirping softly but soon it grew louder, and finally it filled the whole house.”¹¹² Here again, noise has become overwhelming at a critical moment in the text, at which Sumi and Kaoru unite to splinter away from the money and consumerism that run through it. This, however, is a *new sort* of noise, and one that requires some reflection, particularly in light of the fact that Kaoru also elects to abstain from her family’s spending spree – “When everyone else started getting ready to go out, the girl locked herself in her room” – and remain with Sumi for the day.

The deafening (at least to Sumi) birdsong that caps this scene, revealing the manner in which the homeless family’s presence in the home and relations with its owner are mediated by money, plays a role that is by now familiar in our discussion of “critical sonority:” it interferes with the sensibility of such economic relations, and propels into prominence a critical stance upon them, “shock”ing the reader into a visceral “seeing” of this in the mundane world. But the timbre of this noise is different. Where until now we have been assailed with monotonous, ominous, and even ghostly noises like ice cracking, fans moaning, dogs yowling, alarm clocks and washing-machine timers buzzing, and engines humming, a subtle shift has taken place here toward a noise that is more melodious, musical, and strikingly *different* in tone. This, it seems, has much to do with this noise’s association with Kaoru, and with the different possibilities that she represents.

¹¹¹ Yū, *Full House*, p. 210. For the original Japanese, see Yū, *Furu hausu*, p. 76. The term deployed in the original and rendered as “forced” – *shiraketa* – might also suggest disdain or condescension, further suggesting the distance between Sumi’s decision to abstain from the outing and the consumerist desires animating most of the members of the Aida family. The cold isolation that is visited upon Sumi (and Kaoru) via the deployment of this term also helps to establish her as a sort of *dropout* – a concept that will be visited in more detail in the latter pages of this chapter.

¹¹² Ibid. For the original Japanese, see Yū, *Furu hausu*, pp. 76-77.

Kaoru, we learn, has been mute since the first grade. While Attali would see silence as deathly, devoid of meaning, and in fact one of the final objectives of the state – the banishment of unruly noise via the “mass-produc[tion of] a deafening, syncretic kind of music censoring all other human noises”¹¹³ – for Aristotle, silence presents its own form of potentiality, “always [constituting], to some extent, the ground against which sound... must appear.”¹¹⁴ Kaoru’s silence, taken in context, suggests that she absences herself from the very social relations – ubiquitously money- and commodity-driven; ubiquitously economic – that are critiqued in *Full House* largely through the frustrations and sonic experiences of Sumi-as-narrator, making Kaoru a sounding board against which noise can work differently: not merely constituting interference or critical intervention, but announcing different possibilities. As we shall see in more detail in our examination of *Gold Rush*, below, there seems to be a hierarchy of noise at play in Yū Miri’s work, with birdsong, the chirping of insects, and music announcing different possibilities for living in the world, especially when those associated therewith, like Kaoru, are absented for one reason or another from dominant social relations mediated by money and commodities. Sumi and Kaoru, for example, find themselves out amongst the vacant lots of Minato-kita New Town during the Aidas’ sojourn to town, and while they are enveloped by the “groaning” wind and the “scream” of grasses that we have come to expect from this eerie moonscape, Kaoru is nonetheless able to enjoy the “silence” of not speaking, and the musical chirping of crickets,¹¹⁵ suddenly made manifest where, we will remember, no life had been previously.¹¹⁶ There is a complex layering and heirarchy of noise here, in other words, that signals a different way of

¹¹³ Attali, *Noise*, p. 19.

¹¹⁴ Aristotle’s insights are taken up by Sam Halliday in his *Sonic Modernity*. See p. 34 of that text for details.

¹¹⁵ Yū, *Full House*, pp. 212-213. For this section in the original Japanese, see Yū, *Furu hausu*, pp. 78-80.

¹¹⁶ The figure of the crickets, as we shall see, provides an important bridge to another key character in *Gold Rush*, the developmentally-challenged Kōki

living in the world, and even the possibility of violent extraction from the social relations under critique. In this way, to echo Deleuze & Guattari's appraisal of Kafka, the deployment of critical sonority truly potentiates “a rupturing and heterogeneous line.”¹¹⁷

There is, of course, no outside to contemporary capitalism, and Yū Miri is neither idealistic nor naïve enough to inscribe an ahistorical exit into her work. What we have instead is an augmentation – a making-present – of terms of the everyday, one that deploys critical sonority to indict consumerism and the mediation of social relations through the means of money. These are made deafening and inescapable, “shock”ing the reader into a critical negotiation therewith that throws “my-home-ism” into a much different light – or, perhaps, sonic register. But as this scene helps to demonstrate, different timbres reveal different *possibilities*, different ways in which Yū’s characters relate themselves to their (=our) world. In the closing pages of *Full House*, however, Yū Miri’s pulsating noise machine peels away again from the melodic and the musical, and ramps up one more time. Surveying the occupants of the house – seemingly so different, yet enmeshed in the very same social relations for which the house has stood since the outset – Shoji finally utters the words that constitute the title of the work: “Full house.”¹¹⁸ This sets Sumi’s ears ringing: “There was a strange noise, a hum, in my ears. Anxiety.”¹¹⁹ Moments later, the transient, ominous silence¹²⁰ of the outdoor garden – where the Aidas had been setting off fireworks just a moment before – is fractured as an elderly neighbor mutters a nonsensical but

¹¹⁷ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, p. 7.

¹¹⁸ Yū, *Full House*, p. 216. For the original Japanese, see Yū, *Furu hausu*, p. 87.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ In contradistinction to the silence enjoyed by Sumi and Kaoru in the scene examined above, here it is ominous, as in the quiet before the storm: “It seemed that silence had shrouded not only the garden, but the entire town.” See Yū, *Full House*, p. 216. For the original Japanese, see Yū, *Furu hausu*, p. 88.

highly-loaded (in the context of the present argument) phrase: “The shops are still open.”¹²¹ This opens the sonic floodgates, and we are presented with “a noise riding on the wind from far in the distance,”¹²² one that gradually draws nearer until it stops immediately outside the house: fire engines. Yoshiharu, the Aida son, has called in a false alarm to the fire station, and the sonic layering of the scene soon deepens as the reader is subjected to the “howl’s and “yelp’s of the boy being beaten at the hands of his father for his prank.¹²³

But at the climax of the scene and indeed of the work itself, Kaoru – who is furthest removed from the social relations under interrogation in the text, and also something of a doppelganger for Sumi herself – takes matches and actually attempts to set fire to the house, apparently convinced that only its destruction can provide resolution, which must be understood, in terms of Yū Miri’s overarching critique, as conceiving of different ways of being in the world.¹²⁴ In any event, however, not even the home’s destruction will provide escape from the mediation and primacy of money: “Insurance,” Shoji chuckles, as the flames try to take. Before tearing off into the night to be pursued by Sumi, the mute Kaoru finally speaks, emitting the ultimate noise:

“ ‘Do you see now? It’s all a lie!’
The girl’s scream shattered my eardrums. It had a familiar, almost nostalgic, ring.”¹²⁵

This final turn of phrase is intriguing, given the privileged position afforded sound throughout the work. That which is to be “seen” – the “lie” of “my-home-ism” and consumerism, and the

¹²¹ Ibid. In an intriguing choice, the author in the original Japanese portrays this utterance entirely in the *katakana* orthography, lending it a simultaneous air of emptiness and meaninglessness, but also the feel of a chant, or a sutra.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Yū, *Full House*, p. 217.

¹²⁴ Importantly, Yū Miri, like Ryo Kagawa and Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, never clearly stipulates what this mode of being may look like, preferring instead to destabilize the status quo and hint toward other possibilities

¹²⁵ Yū, *Full House*, p. 218. For the original Japanese, see Yū, *Furu hausu*, p. 91.

artifice of social relations mediated by money; the odd muttering of the elderly neighbor (“the shops are still open”), which served to set up this climactic moment in the text, should be echoing through our minds here – has been revealed throughout *Full House* via *sound*, in a near-perfect echo of the insights of scholars such as Halliday and Weheliye,¹²⁶ who argue for the auditory as a means of construing the world differently. And having revealed this ultimate truth, our narrator, through whom this noise text has been accessible throughout, is struck deaf, her eardrums shattered: there is, it seems, simply no more to say.

Money Talks: The Sonic Worlds of *Gold Rush*

Yū Miri wrote the novel *Gold Rush* in 1998; in 1999, it was awarded the 3rd Kiyama Shōhei Bungakusho Prize, a relatively minor (and, as of 2005, now defunct) “pure literature” (*junbungaku*) award sponsored by Kasaoka City, Okayama Prefecture, in memoriam of the Okayama native and author of the same name. *Gold Rush* was translated for an English-speaking audience by Stephen Snyder in 2002,¹²⁷ but the work fell out of circulation after a single printing, and has largely failed to catch the attention of scholars of Japanese literature – indeed, as far as I am aware, the present dissertation marks the first and only extended critical engagement with this work. *Gold Rush* is remarkable as an eloquent critical intervention into key conditions of the everyday in 1990s Japan, however¹²⁸ – indeed, Ryū Murakami, fellow author and critic of the everyday, declares Yū to be “attempting an ambitious leap to whatever lies beyond the modern”

¹²⁶ See Alexander C. Weheliye, *Phonographies: Grooves in Sonic Afro-Modernity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), esp. p. 44.

¹²⁷ Yū Miri, trans. Stephen Snyder, *Gold Rush* (New York, Welcome Rain Publishers, 2002).

¹²⁸ As Tomiko Yoda teaches us, and as I have been stressing throughout these pages, the 1990s are of course never isolatable to themselves, but are embedded along a longer historical arc that stretches as far back as the 1970s, making Yū’s critique herein relevant across much longer historical moments. See Yoda’s essay in Harootunian and Yoda, Eds., *Japan After Japan*.

in this work.¹²⁹ As such, it is worth our while to grapple carefully with *Gold Rush*, and to consider the ways in which the author builds upon and deploys the tactic of “critical sonority” that we examined in *Full House*, above.

By 1998, the anxiety consuming much of Japan in the wake of the collapse of the bubble economy had taken on a newer and more feverish pitch, building even on that which was prevalent in *Full House*’s moment of 1996, a moment already informed by the back-to-back 1995 horrors of the Great Hanshin-Awaji (Kobe) Earthquake and the sarin gas attack on the Tokyo subway system at the hands of the doomsday cult Aum Shinrikyo. In March of 1997, the anxiety ante was upped by the grusome murders of Kobe schoolchildren Ayaka Yamashita, aged 10, and Jun Hase, aged 11, by a fourteen-year-old juvenile known only as *Shonen A* (Boy A) – and indeed, *Gold Rush*, with its graphic referencing of youth crime, indirectly references these chilling events. The recession sparked by the deflation of the asset bubble also continued unabated: looking back on the decade in 2006, Marilyn Ivy argued that in the 1990s we can “detect the limits of capital... Layoffs and downsizing expose[d] the extent to which corporate familialism [was] not prepared to go, as defamilialization writ large accompanie[d] the much-mourned fragmentation of the Japanese family writ small.”¹³⁰ But amidst all this, and despite the bursting of the bubble, what Tomiko Yoda characterizes (citing perceptions at the time) as “narcissistic and hedonistic consumer culture”¹³¹ continued to rule the day, and this mismatch between the persistence of bubble-era consumerism and money-centrism and a social order no longer viewed as compensating for its alienating effects – in Ivy’s formulation, “[t]he fantasia of ever-proliferating consumer signifiers could be accommodated, could be enjoyed, [only] as long

¹²⁹ Murakami’s praise is included on the back flap of Snyder’s translation of *Gold Rush*.

¹³⁰ See Marilyn Ivy’s contribution to *Japan After Japan*, p. 196.

¹³¹ See Tomiko Yoda’s contribution to *Japan After Japan*, p. 240.

as it still signified success¹³² – led neo-nationalist blowhards such as former Tokyo Governor Shintarō Ishihara to publish handwringing treatises like *Chichi nakushite kuni tatazu* [No Father, No Nation], calling for a resurgent paternalism that could reconnect Japan with its lost (but presumably still accessible) authentic self. This is the moment into which Yū Miri wrote *Gold Rush*, and indeed, many of the themes outlined above – juvenile crime, paternal roles and relations with the family, and above all the prevalence of a “narcissistic and hedonistic consumer culture” on the basis of the primacy of money (=gold) – find expression therein. We need to pay careful heed, however, to Ryū Murakami’s insistence that Yū Miri aims to move *beyond* the modern – for our purposes, the terms of the everyday in 1990s Japan – for there is a significant difference between moving *beyond*, on the one hand, and following Ishihara and others of the neo-nationalist school in moving *back* toward a misty and glorious past, on the other. As we shall see, Yū Miri in *Gold Rush* furthers the project that she set out in *Full House*, written two years earlier, deploying noise in order to forefront an unease with the terms and conditions of the everyday, and interfere with their sense-making mechanisms. But in an echo of the literary context surrounding Yū’s character Kaoru Aida, whom we visited briefly in our examination of *Full House*, above, she also deploys (musical) sound as a means by which to hear something different of the world, and to announce potentials for other possibilities for living therein.

Gold Rush tells the story of Kazuki Yuminaga, the teenage son of a Yokohama *pachinko* mogul, as he attempts to navigate the transitional moment between childhood and adulthood. But this is no simple coming-of-age story: exceedingly violent, disturbing, and disorienting, *Gold Rush* confronts the social relations of 1990s Japan and the conflicting, conflicted desires that cut through this moment via the character of Kazuki, and the ways in which he finds himself

¹³² See Marilyn Ivy’s contribution to *Japan After Japan*, p. 195-96.

compelled to move through this world. Affluent and wanting for nothing materially, privileged and enrolled at an elite Yokohama high school (as with so many of the author’s works, there is something of Yū Miri herself in this experience, as well as in the experience of growing up in a *pachinko* family – her father was a pin-adjuster), Kazuki is nonetheless alone and adrift – his “friends,” for example, extort him for taking the rap in a horrifying rape of a high school girl in which Kazuki did not in fact take part, forcing him to furnish them with drugs and cash – and, not unlike Shōji Hayashi, seeking some form of organic connectivity. He is drawn to Kogane-cho, a downtrodden neighborhood populated with gangsters, prostitutes, foreigners, and more: this is where Kazuki’s father, Hidetomo, has his flagship *pachinko* parlor *Vegas*. But there seems more to it than that: this alley-centered neighborhood, simultaneously enmeshed in and divorced from the world in a way that renders it highly reminiscent of author Nakagami Kenji’s aforementioned *roji*,¹³³ has “a particular heat concealed within,”¹³⁴ an energy that wells out of its positionality on the wrong side of the tracks (literally: an underpass over which the Toyoko commuter line roars serves as a sort of liminal space connecting Kogane-cho to the outside). Many of Kogane-cho’s occupants seem to eschew the Historical rules of money and commodification in favor of different sorts of connectivities, even as the hulking presence of Vegas makes clear that they can never escape those rules entirely, and it is this “outlaw-ness” that draws Kazuki to Kogane-cho’s grimy streets and shops, even has he himself proves unable – in extravagantly violent fashion – to transcend the sense-making tyranny of gold.

¹³³ Indeed, Yū deploys the term *roji* [路地] throughout the work to refer to the winding alleyways of Kogane-cho – though whether any citation of Nakagami’s *roji* is actually intended here is unclear.

¹³⁴ Yū, *Gold Rush*, p. 9. In Yū’s original, this “heat” is portrayed in a particularly intense fashion as shakunetsu – a baking, or blazing, sort of heat. For the original Japanese, see Yū Miri, *Gōrudo rasshu* (Tokyo: Shinchosha, 1998), p. 3.

This, then, is the fundamental conundrum that propels *Gold Rush*: the quest for an organic sort of connectivity amidst conditions in which the alienating mediation of money seems insurmountable. The clash between the desire to transcend gold and ignorance of how to do so – the impossibility facing many in 1990s Japan, as we have noted in the tendency for such attempts to spiral into paternalistic neo-nationalism – slowly robs fourteen-year-old Kazuki of his sanity as he murders and takes the place of his father, attempts to run his *pachinko* empire, and takes on his adult mistress, even as he is disgusted by the economic relations that all three are enmeshed in. In many ways, Kazuki appears simultaneously as both the embodiment and the rejection of the ‘adult world’ in 1990s Japan, and there is no easy resolution for his predicament: ultimately crushed by the contradiction that he attempts to live, the work ends in a feverish vision of a disintegrating (human) world that plays out in a zoo as he prepares to hand himself over to the authorities. Yet despite the apparent hopelessness and despair of its conclusion, at least for Kazuki, careful attention to the work will reveal that Yū Miri still deploys critical sonority – in the form of melodious noise – to announce different possibilities for being in the world, which, in a startling echo of Ryo Kagawa, do not involve acquiescence or resistance, but rather a *dropping out* altogether; the occupation of a space that she might call *hazama*.

It must be said that, unlike *Full House*, there are clear and strong *zainichi* overtones to *Gold Rush*, and failure to acknowledge this in the interests of privileging another analytic rubric (that of the sonic) would be disingenuous and unproductive. The Yuminaga family itself, we learn, is Korean: this is not merely something to be inferred from Hidetomo’s profession, but is clarified by Miki, Kazuki’s estranged mother, in narratives of blood: “No matter how much she herself sought the faith,” Miki reflects partway through the work, “there was no wiping out the sins of the Yuminagas. For all eternity, their blood would never know the kind of peace that had

been granted even this beggar sleeping here beside them.”¹³⁵ Hidetomo travels regularly to Korea, and it is there that his staff assumes that he has gone when he has in fact been murdered by Kazuki, his body stashed under the floor of his own house. And it is a Korean tiger – assumedly representing Hidetomo himself – that sinks its fangs into Kazuki’s shoulder in the work’s hallucinatory final scene, in a manner that recalls the sword strike that fell Hidetomo himself. But Yū offers strong indication in her work that Koreanness, while a narrative presence, should not be a privileged framework for ‘reading’ Kazuki and his story. Early in the work, we find Kazuki leaving school for good, departing the “enemy territory”¹³⁶ of his elite academy of Hōsei – populated by “classmates in uniforms identical to his own marching into the building like a column of ants”¹³⁷ – and coming “home”¹³⁸ to the alleys of Kogane-cho. As he makes his way through the neighborhood, however, he is confronted by “[a]n old woman he did not recognize [who] was standing in the middle of the alley”:

“‘You’re Chang Yong-ch’ang’s son, aren’t you? How you’ve grown!’ Her voice seemed to come from somewhere deep inside rather than from her lips.
‘Sorry, you’ve got the wrong person,’ [Kazuki] said, shaking his head.”¹³⁹

It is possible, of course, that Chang Yong-ch’ang is the legal Korean name for Kazuki’s father, Hidetomo, and that Kazuki is simply unaware of this. What is more important from an analytical point of view, however, seems the fact that we are presented here with a very clear example of an Althusserian hail,¹⁴⁰ and Kazuki, pointedly, does not respond.

¹³⁵ Ibid., p. 231. For the original Japanese, see Yū, *Gōrudo rasshu*, pp. 257-58.

¹³⁶ Ibid., p. 77. For the original Japanese, see Yū, *Gōrudo rasshu*, p. 83.

¹³⁷ Ibid., p. 76. For the original Japanese, see Yū, *Gōrudo rasshu*, p. 82.

¹³⁸ In the original Japanese, Yū in fact depicts Kazuki’s return from this “enemy territory” as *kikan* – a repatriation – underscoring the degree to which Kazuki desires to see the grimy, cluttered, unorganized alleyways of Kogane-chō as a special, perhaps spiritual, sort of ‘home.’ See p. 83 in the original.

¹³⁹ Ibid., pp. 77-78. For the original Japanese, see Yū, *Gōrudo rasshu*, p. 83.

¹⁴⁰ Ideological interpellation – or the hail – is tackled by Louis Althusser in his 1970 essay, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses.”

“Crazy old bat, thought Kazuki. Look just like him, she said, but she had obviously mistaken him for someone else. He’d never even heard of Chang-Yong Chang. Looking back over his shoulder, he saw that she was still standing in the middle of the road, staring at him. Scary, he thought, but just then the rhythm of a taiko drum came vibrating from under his feet. He took off down the street again...”¹⁴¹

In an intriguing move, Yū goes so far as to have Kazuki mis-render¹⁴² Chang’s name in the inscription of his thoughts on her page, reinforcing his rejection of the Korean hail. But as we can see, it is not only a Korean hail that he is fleeing, but a Japanese one, as well: the rumbling rhythm of the *taiko* drum in this scene is ominous, and something from which Kazuki desires to flee. In short, Kazuki seems to be made to occupy his own sort of *hazama* here, denying easy readings that would center on ethnicity or nationality. As was the case in *Full House*, Yū Miri seems interested here not in relaying some enclosed *zainichi* experience, but rather in interrogating an everyday that encompasses both *zainichi* and ‘Japanese’ experience, but that is reducible to neither.

As was the case in *Full House*, the sonic is everywhere in *Gold Rush*. Indeed, the importance of the trope is set up in the work’s very opening pages: the violence and corruption of Kogane-cho, we learn, are “*almost audible*;”¹⁴³ in light of the anti-heroic sort of status that we’ve already seen assigned to the neighborhood, we can sense herein something of Attali’s understanding of noise, an unruly, ungoverned text that disturbs the status quo. The noise of Kogane-cho helps set it apart from mainstream urban Yokohama sites such as Motomachi, which

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p. 78. For the original Japanese, see Yū, *Gōrudo rasshu*, pp. 83-84.

¹⁴² In the English translation, this mis-rendering is achieved through an intentional mis-spelling. In the Japanese original, it appears as a defamiliarized deployment of Chang’s name in the Japanese script depicting foreignness – katakana – without the proper Chinese characters with which the old woman’s narrative was relayed moments prior.

¹⁴³ Yū, *Gold Rush*, p. 9; emphasis added. In point of fact, Yū in the original depicts this “violence and corruption” as *noise itself* – using the Romanized, *katakana* word *noizu* – suggesting that this noise assaults the ears of those who make their lives on the outside, keeping them at bay, not allowing them to draw close to Kogane-chō’s particularities. See p. 3 of the Japanese original for this intriguing and important depiction.

is described as “a neighborhood of people who had forgotten what they were waiting for, people who hated the sun. A place like that had to be harboring even worse villains than Kogane-cho itself.”¹⁴⁴ But noise also serves the sort of double-duty that we noted in *Full House*, as well, making dreadfully present the everyday conditions under critical consideration, even while intervening to throw off-kilter the underlying narrative(s) that make them legible. While the critical emphasis in *Full House* tended to be dispersed between “my-home-ism,” the primacy of commodities, and money, in *Gold Rush*, the narratives infected by critical sonority deal almost exclusively with the latter – the modern mediation of social relations by money.

Where there is the jarring presence of noise in *Gold Rush*, in other words, the mediation of money is not far away. Kazuki himself – the fulcrum through which the contradictions of the work flow – seems absolutely smothered by sound. In a key scene early in the work that helps to establish the nature of Kazuki’s relationship with his friends, for instance – one that is based on extortion, and on the purchase and provision of things like drugs – we find Kazuki awash in a “wave of sound”¹⁴⁵ as he shares lines of cocaine with his friends/extorters, and mis-hears the roar of a nearby train for torrents of rain (we will revisit this auditory trope of the train below). As his sister Miho is beaten at the hands of Hidetomo for having sex for money – “Why should Yuminaga’s daughter be fucking for cash? You have all the money you need!”¹⁴⁶ – Kazuki, in an echo of the sort of silent screams and intra-cranial pops that we have noted in Yū’s writing above, finds his ears “ringing with sounds that seemed to well up from deep inside his own body,

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 122. For the original Japanese, see Yū, *Gōrudo rasshu*, p. 135.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 32. For the original Japanese, see Yū, *Gōrudo rasshu*, p. 31.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 62. For the original Japanese, see Yū, *Gōrudo rasshu*, p. 66. In the original, the question is posed in a manner somewhat more reflective of anxieties that were dominant in the 1990s: “Why should Yuminaga’s daughter be engaged in *enjo kōsai* [compensated dating]? Huh? Haven’t you got all the money you need...”

sounds that could be screams or curses.”¹⁴⁷ In the wake of the beating, the emptiness of Hidetomo’s affluence is revealed in an onomatopoeic grinding of teeth: *kari-kari-kari*, a noise in which Kazuki hears proof that, despite his immense wealth, Hidetomo is “really a man who had lost his reason for living, who was tormented by self-doubt.”¹⁴⁸ He is stalked by the sounds of the city – by the droning sounds of machinery and construction, and by the buzzing of helicopters, which causes Kazuki no little anxiety. And intriguingly, the pivotal murder of Hidetomo, with his enormous stockpile of gold stashed under the basement floorboards, is presented and justified in terms of sound, as well: reflecting on the act in its wake, Kazuki tells himself that “everyone in this house, with the exception of that man, was making joyful music; he’d had no choice but to eliminate the discordant note, the one that threatened to disturb the harmony.”¹⁴⁹ Of course, as we have already established, the elimination of Hidetomo did not prove to be any sort of emancipation from the tyranny of gold, as Kazuki would go on to reproduce and remain enmeshed in the very social relations that were personified by his father. But this question of “harmony” – of music – is an intriguing one, and one that we shall return to below.

While its tyranny may be inescapable, however, Kazuki is nonetheless haunted by the weight of gold, and by the impossibility – at least for him – of transcending its clutches. Later in the work, gold becomes almost personalized, a sort of ghoul or goblin, with which Kazuki attempts to wage battle. This is revealed in an important and extended dream sequence, which itself is presented sonically:

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 64. For the original Japanese, see Yū, *Gōrudo rasshu*, p. 68.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 73. For the original Japanese, see Yū, *Gōrudo rasshu*, p. 78.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 149. For the original Japanese, see Yū, *Gōrudo rasshu*, p. 165. Though music – *ongaku* – is not explicitly referred to in this passage (indeed, the word *oto* – sound – continues to be used), the context of harmony and discordance makes it clear that we are shifting the conversation to a *different sort* of sound here, justifying the translator’s use of the term “music.”

“Hello! Hello! Hello! Hello! The quiet sound of gold could be heard coming from the phone’s tiny speaker. It was a dissonant sound, born of greed and beauty, the unbearable noise of silence. Fear awakened [Kazuki] once again and his heart began to race. He had to gather all the gold in the world and sink it to the bottom of the ocean. A sound wormed its way into his ears, the sound, it seemed, of his mind snapping. A gurgling sound, as when the pipes backed up, the sound of gold as it sinks down through the water, passing among the sea creatures on its way to the bottom, settling at last in a cloud of murky sand. And there it would sleep forever, in the deepest sea where no light on earth could reach it.”¹⁵⁰

In this passage gold literally speaks to Kazuki, and reveals its voice to be a “dissonant sound, born of greed and beauty.” Via a simplistic sort of noise (the gold never says more than a repetitive “hello”), the true, “dissonant” work performed by gold is clarified – and as critical sonority, this noise helps to interrupt the narrative of the primacy and legitimacy of gold (=money) as fulcrum around which the social is structured in 1990s Japan, in no small part by “shock”ing the reader into ‘seeing’ it differently by rendering it audible. This dislodging of gold from its frame of reference presents precisely the potential of written noise that Sam Halliday had in mind, and insofar as it makes present and renders susceptible to critique this important “fixed terms” of the modern Japanese social, it represents an instance of Yū Miri’s critical sonority par excellence.

As we have already seen, there is no shortage of noise coursing through *Gold Rush*, and any attempt to account for it all would prove inadequate. Rather than attempting to such a task, then, it may be worthwhile to focus our discussion, and return to author Ryū Murakami’s insistence that *Gold Rush* represents an attempt on the part of Yū Miri to make “an ambitious leap to whatever lies beyond the modern.” If we take this statement at face value, we might zero in upon a single trope that is inextricably intertwined with Japan’s experience of modernity – one that we have visited elsewhere in this dissertation (and which we noted at the beginning of this

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 221-222. For the original Japanese, see Yū, *Gōrudo rasshu*, pp. 246-47.

chapter, in another literary context), and that Yū regularly turns to in conjunction with sound precisely in order to reveal and critique the social relations defining the moment of which it is a part. That trope is the *train*. Miriam Silverberg, citing Maruyama Masao, teaches us that Japan's modern moment was heralded by “the rapid growth of... suburban railways [and] the beginning of the subway system,”¹⁵¹ and careful attention to *Gold Rush* will reveal both winding through the text to an inordinate degree, mostly in the form of the aforementioned Toyoko commuter rail line that connects Yokohama with the consumerist paradise that is Shibuya. The clatter and roar of the Toyoko line, in short, is made to attend key moments in the text which themselves cite the sort of mediation of money and commodified social relations defining the moment of which the train has been an integral part. We have already noted, for example, the train roaring through the background of Kazuki's cocaine-fueled interaction with his friends/extorters. Elsewhere, the “roar of an express train” attends Hidetomo's declaration of his intent to “buy” the sexual services of the daughter of Hayashi, a *Vegas* staff member, who is himself in Hidetomo's debt (“I want to buy your daughter, of course! About how much do you think you owe me, anyway?”¹⁵²). Disgusted by this display, Kazuki reaches for a one-million-yen (the extravagant price is explicitly noted) golf club and attacks two prized Dobermans belonging to Sugimoto, Hidetomo's financial secretary – themselves living commodities, costing two million yen apiece – killing one and grievously wounding another. As he attempts to walk the entire horrifying experience off – he has urinated himself, and feels in danger of vomiting – he is surrounded by construction noise which is itself “swallow[ed] up”¹⁵³ by the noise of a red Toyoko line train as it pulls into the overhead station. In this disturbing scene, Kazuki in fact gets closer to the trains

¹⁵¹ Miriam Silverberg, *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense: The Mass Culture of Japan's Modern Times* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), p. 29.

¹⁵² Yū, *Gold Rush*, pp. 40-41. For the original Japanese, see Yū, *Gōrudo rasshu*, p. 41.

¹⁵³ Ibid., p. 44. For the original Japanese, see Yū, *Gōrudo rasshu*, p. 46.

than he often does, actually being carried away by it – but the experience is terrifying: “from the time he was little, every time he rode the Toyoko Express he was petrified it would fall off the track.”¹⁵⁴ And later, disgusted at the only sort of fatherly gesture that Hidetomo can seem to manage – the substitution of money and commodities for organic connection, and in this specific case, the offer of a prostitute for his fourteen-year-old son (“How did this kid get so fucking stuck up?... And after all the trouble I went to getting the manager at the massage parlor to send over someone I thought he’d like”¹⁵⁵) – Kazuki turns his back on the exchange, and the scene is capped with a final gouge at Sugimoto and her prized Dobermans:

“I’m going home.”
‘Suit yourself, Oh, but there’s still the matter of the golf club’
‘It’s at home,’ Kazuki said, turning around impatiently. ‘How’s the dog?’ he asked Sugimoto.
She took a deep breath and held it for a moment before answering almost inaudible. ‘We had it put to sleep.’ *The sound of the express train swept over the room like a roar of laughter and then faded away.*¹⁵⁶

In this way, we can see how Yū Miri deploys the clatter of the very figure of modernity in order to simultaneously accentuate and slice through moments defined, in one way or the other, by the social relations of contemporary capitalism. “[L]eap[ing] to whatever lies beyond the modern,” it seems, requires first laying bear and rattling its terms, and as we have seen throughout these pages, this is an aim that Yū Miri pursues through the strategic deployment of noise – in other words, “critical sonority” itself.

But what hints abide in Yū’s writing of the sorts of “moving beyond” that she might envision? As we have already noted, Yū Miri – like the other actors taken up in this dissertation – does not provide formulaic, straightforward directives: it is up to the reader to distill what

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 45. For the original Japanese, see Yū, *Gōrudo rasshu*, p. 46.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 119. For the original Japanese, see Yū, *Gōrudo rasshu*, p. 131.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 120. For the original Japanese, see Yū, *Gōrudo rasshu*, pp. 132-33.

answers she can from the author's complex and multi-layered texts. And as I have tried to suggest above, there are indeed many ways to approach Yū's work – the attention to sound proposed herein constituting just one, and certainly not a/the authoritative one. But if we linger with the sonic just a moment longer, we might be able to hear hints of what these new possibilities may look like. As was the case in *Full House*, examined above, subtle shifts in the timbre and quality of the sound deployed by Yū Miri in her writing point us toward different characters, who may engage differently with the world. Kyoko, Kazuki's sometimes-housekeeper, sometimes-lover, and confidant, as well as his developmentally-challenged elder brother Kōki, constitute literary devices through which the world is thought differently, and melodious, musical sounds – as opposed to the jarring, monotonous noise that has dominated our discussion thus far – play a key role in rendering these possibilities audible.

We are first introduced to Kyoko early in the work, after Kazuki has returned home from attacking Sugimoto's Dobermans. Initially hired by a besotted Kazuki without his father's knowledge as part-time housekeeper and caregiver/companion for Kazuki's brother, the aforementioned Kōki, Kyoko is as torn and as damaged as Kazuki is – a survivor of sexual assault, her father, Yasuda, committed suicide while under the employ of Hidetomo at *Vegas*, and while her affection for Kazuki is genuine, she views her affiliation with the Yuminagas, at least in part, as a means by which to survive in the world. While ostensibly under the employ of the family, however, Kazuki's relationship with Kyoko – as well as that with his brother, Kōki – are the *least mediated* by money of any in the work. When we first meet Kyoko, we learn that Kazuki – who, as we have seen, only understands interpersonal relations as mediated by money, even as he resists this – initially tried to commemorate their initial meeting with a gift, a strategy that is incomprehensible to Kyoko:

“He had wanted to buy her a present but couldn’t figure out a way to ask what she’d like; so as they were saying good-bye, he tried to hand her thirty thousand yen. ‘You want me to sleep with you?’ she asked, apparently offended, and he had abandoned the idea of a gift. He knew he had no idea how to express affection, but her words had hurt him all the same.”¹⁵⁷

Kyoko, in short, pursues a way of being in the world that eschews the very mediation of money and of commodification that Kazuki tries – and fails – to escape; it is precisely the opportunity for unmediated connection that seems to draw Kazuki to her. This is not to say that Kyoko is not searching for *value*, but that the value that she seeks is not in gold or commodities, making her – like Sumi in *Full House*, who, we will remember, was rewarded with a forced, bewildered, cold smile for abstaining from the Aida’s shopping/dining trip – a stranger in her own historical moment:

“She knew she wasn’t likely to find that one indisputable value, but there must be something out there that would have meaning for her own life. She wanted to have this meaning explained to her, and not by some god but by a human voice. If religions came into being because they were absolutely essential for the human mind, it seemed strange to Kyoko that there were no new words of comfort for people like herself who were born long after almost everyone had lost the religious spirit. What they had instead were games: computer games, money games, almost any kind of game at all. But these games weren’t about entertainment or even competition: they were commodities, machines for the consumption of human thought and will.”¹⁵⁸

This quest for alternative value is a lonely one; we can sense above that little desire is attributed to Kyoko to keep up with the “fixed terms” of the everyday – rather, she places her faith in “[an]other self” (“I’ve always tried to believe in my other self,” she says¹⁵⁹),” one contented to turn her back on those terms and “wander alone through the wilderness.”¹⁶⁰ Care is warranted here, for this does not represent some idealistic abandonment of the world – indeed, Kyoko’s

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 49. For the original Japanese, see Yū, *Gōrudo rasshu*, p. 51. Here again, in a direct citation of the anxieties of the 1990s, Yū deploys the term *enjo kōsai* – compensated, or commodified, dating.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 187. For the original Japanese, see Yū, *Gōrudo rasshu*, p. 207-08.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 271. For the original Japanese, see Yū, *Gōrudo rasshu*, p. 307.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 272. For the original Japanese, see Yū, *Gōrudo rasshu*, p. 307.

plan to ensure the family's survival is to marry Kōki and manage the Yuminaga business while Kazuki is serving a reform-school sentence for the murder of his father – but the establishment of herself and Kōki at the head of the family is significant because *it entails infecting that/the world with different terms*. Resetting the world, it seems, involves a pushing beyond the (modern) everyday in fore-fronting a different kind of value – and though the connection is coincidental, there is something in Kyoko's desire of the ideal role attributed to “universal religions [as] aim[ing] at the creation of mutual-aid communities in the form of associations among individuals (though, as Karatani teaches us, this ideal is always betrayed).”¹⁶¹

If Kyoko voluntarily absents herself from the mediation of money in social relations, Kōki, Kazuki's brother, is compelled by circumstance to do so. Kōki, we learn, suffers from a developmental disability known as Williams Syndrome (which, perhaps not coincidentally, presents highly sensitive hearing as one of its main symptoms), and because of this, is excluded from company inheritance and management despite his status as the eldest son. The children's mother, Miki – who fled the money-centered lifestyle of the Yuminagas in favor of an austere, religious existence – is convinced that Kōki's condition amounts to retribution for a past ancestral sin concerning money, and that “[i]f she could live an exemplary life of poverty, then the boy would be cured.” Kazuki is charged with caring for his brother, which his mother calls the former's “one virtuous deed”¹⁶² – indeed, a transcendental, almost religious air is attributed to Kōki throughout,¹⁶³ in a manner not dissimilar to that deployed by author Ishimure Michiko in

¹⁶¹ Karatani, trans. Bourdaghs, p. 143.

¹⁶² Yū, *Gold Rush*, p. 233. For the original Japanese, see Yū, *Gōrudo rasshu*, p. 260.

¹⁶³ Intriguingly, Kōki is presented to us as the only inhabitant of *Gold Rush*'s world who can understand and interpret the wails of the mad, lending him an almost savior-like aura. An abrupt encounter between Kōki and Kazuki, on the one hand, and a wailing woman who appears sporadically in the work, on the other, for example, leaves Kōki able to make out her shouts, but Kazuki unable to do so. Whether Kazuki's inability to understand the woman is due to volume and distance or illegible content is not made

her treatment of disease-stricken Minamata resident Moku in her *Paradise in the Sea of Sorrow* (which itself constitutes a harsh critique of modern capitalism).¹⁶⁴ Kōki, in short, is simple, childlike, and very much removed from the world – while Kazuki understands this as a “vague suffering,” as a “pain [that] began when he first realized there was a world outside,”¹⁶⁵ Kōki himself is able to maintain relations with others, including sexual relations with Chihiro, his similarly differently-abled companion, with the key difference that these relations are not mediated by money. The commodified world is one from which Kōki is always already excluded, and from which he is careful to absent himself: “[w]henever there’s something important to discuss [such as business and the management of *Vegas*, in the context of this citation], he goes to his room to listen to music.”¹⁶⁶

We are left, then, to interrogate precisely how the sonic is made to intertwine with the characters of Kyoko and Kōki, and what the implications of this deployment of “critical sonority” might be. Kōki, for example, is extremely sensitive to and discomfited by noise – the sorts of abrasive, monotonous noise that we have traced throughout these pages,¹⁶⁷ invoked to call attention to the terms and conditions of the everyday and to jar the narratives of which they are apart – but he is a musical prodigy (“if he liked a particular piece of music he would listen to the CD a few times, then sit at the piano practicing until he could play it. Kazuki had no idea

entirely clear in the original work, but since the woman is depicted as “screaming” – *zekkyo* – volume would not appear to be the main barrier at play, suggesting an ability on Kōki’s part to “translate” the cries of such individuals. To examine this scene, see especially p. 233 of Snyder’s translation, or pp. 260-61 of the Japanese original.

¹⁶⁴ See Ishimure, Michiko, *Paradise in the Sea of Sorrow: Our Minamata Disease* (Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 2003), esp. p. 200.

¹⁶⁵ Yū, *Gold Rush*, p. 54. For the original Japanese, see Yū, *Gōrudo rasshu*, p. 57.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 225. For the original Japanese, see Yū, *Gōrudo rasshu*, p. 251.

¹⁶⁷ Yū Miri makes the hierarchy of sound abundantly clear here: “Kōki was unusually afraid of loud noises such as drills or thunder, but... was [fond] of quieter sounds, like the chirping of crickets or grasshoppers.” The crickets here also serve to tie Kōki and *Gold Rush* back to Kaoru and *Full House*. See p. 89 of Snyder’s translation, or p. 96 of the Japanese original.

why people who suffered from Williams Syndrome should have perfect pitch”¹⁶⁸), and can imitate the melodious sounds of small creatures of the natural world – insects, birds – with near-perfection.¹⁶⁹ Kōki’s abilities to commune sonically with the natural world allows Kazuki to “see” a dimension that the latter thought no longer existed: “Kazuki had thought that the city had banished the sounds of nature, replacing them with man-made noise, but he was wrong. The city was filled with the *sounds of an astounding number of creatures living their lives*. For city bugs, this vacant lot was a forest...”¹⁷⁰ Kōki, in short, seems to offer the struggling Kazuki a vision of a different sort of living in the world, one that does seem to reach (naively, perhaps) “beyond the modern” and toward different social relations that replace the exploitation of the natural world – a key facet of modernity, as we have already seen Karatani teach us in Chapter One¹⁷¹ – with a revaluation thereof, and an attendant recalibration of relations between the “creatures living their lives” in urban spaces assumed to be Other thereto. Intriguingly, Kōki’s challenge to the modern continues in the very way in which he approaches his music: in refusing Kazuki’s offer to purchase a device on which to record his playing to a music box (“[I]t sounds funny... don’t think I really want one”¹⁷²), we seem to be confronted not merely with Kōki’s rejection of an individual commodity, but, particularly in light of insights by Biers,¹⁷³ Lastra, Weheliye, and others concerning the centrality of phonographic recording to (Western) modernity, with a sly dig against discourses of modernity writ large, as well.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 50. For the original Japanese, see Yū, *Gōrudo rasshu*, p. 52.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 90. For the original Japanese, see Yū, *Gōrudo rasshu*, p. 97. Here (among other locations in the work), in an echo of the textual depiction of sound that we noted in *JR Ueno Station: Park Exit*, Yū makes present the sound of the insects – *jīyo, jīyo, jīyo* – via the medium of typography.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 89. For the original Japanese, see Yū, *Gōrudo rasshu*, p. 96.

¹⁷¹ Karatani, trans. Bourdaghs, p. 206.

¹⁷² Yū, *Gold Rush*, p. 86. For the original Japanese, see Yū, *Gōrudo rasshu*, p. 93.

¹⁷³ See Katherine Biers, “Syncop Fever: James Weldon Johnson and the Black Phonographic Voice,” in *Representations*, Vol. 96, No. 1 (Fall, 2006).

Kyoko – and specifically Kazuki’s interaction with her – is similarly steeped in melody and music. An early scene of intimacy between Kazuki and Kyoko, for instance, is in fact sound-tracked by Kōki’s piano playing, and in a way reminiscent of Kōki’s ability to sonically commune with nature, music is spliced into Kyoko’s very physicality:

“The piano melody mingled with the murmuring waves deep within Kyoko’s chest... [S]he gently rubbed [Kazuki’s] shoulders and neck in time with the music until she was cradling his face in her hands. As she pulled him to her, the music rose, filling the room, and Kazuki prayed that gravity might be suspended and he could remain forever floating in her arms. He strained his ears, listening for the beating of her heart and the sound of the piano.”¹⁷⁴

This sort of polyphonic, melodious sound – the “cacophony of rain, laughter, the creaking of the bed all mixed together”¹⁷⁵ – appears again at the climax of the book, during a sexual encounter that takes place above Hidetomo’s body and the gold that his rotting carcass continues to guard: the sound, borne of his physical connection with Kyoko, “drill[s] into every corner of his head [and] wash[es] away the darkness.”¹⁷⁶ Indeed, at the close of the book, inching closer to madness, Kazuki is possessed by the shrieks and groans of the rotting dead and its treasure – “he could hear a sound... [a]t first it resembled the crackle of fish grilling or the bubbling of simmering stew. From time to time there was a sound like steam rising from boiling water... A clamor went up all at once from every particle of the house... This is the sound a ship makes as it runs aground on the rocks, thought Kazuki. The house is sinking”¹⁷⁷ – and direct, unmediated physical contact with Kyoko is the only thing that makes this go away. Through this contact, alarming, monotonous noise is transposed into a different sort of sound: “[i]t was only when he was touching her that the buzzing was still and the beating of their hearts set up a pleasant

¹⁷⁴ Yū, *Gold Rush*, p. 51. For the original Japanese, see Yū, *Gōrudo rasshu*, p. 52.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 249. For the original Japanese, see Yū, *Gōrudo rasshu*, p. 279.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., pp. 249-250. For the original Japanese, see Yū, *Gōrudo rasshu*, pp. 279-280.

rhythm.”¹⁷⁸ Musical sound, then, associated with Kyoko and her rejection of the value of gold and commodities, announces a “a rupturing and heterogeneous line” of flight for Kazuki from the deafening (even in death) regime of Hidetomo and his gold – and it is surely no coincidence that Kyoko’s name, in the original Japanese, is written with the relatively rare nominal orthography 韶子: child of resonance, child of sonority.

Now, we must take care not to over-simplify the appearance of the musical in Yū Miri’s writing, or to assign it a status that is somehow uniformly resistive or utopian. Indeed, music flows through disturbing moments in the text, as well: a *karaoke* singing session precedes the aforementioned rape of the high school student that opens the book, for example, while classical music (Debussy, to be precise) is playing in the background when Hidetomo shows Kazuki the massive gold stash in the Yuminaga basement for the first time.¹⁷⁹ And yet, despite Jaques Attali’s suspicions, musical, melodious noise as it is deployed by Yū Miri both in *Full House* and in *Gold Rush* – its association with different literary actors who may navigate and/or understand the world differently – announces different possibilities for conceiving of the world, other ways of inhabiting the everyday. In his *Discrepant Engagement*, Nathaniel Mackey traces the deployment of black music in literature as a free-floating “critique of social reality, a critique of social arrangements in which, because of racism, one finds oneself deprived of community and kinship, cut off.”¹⁸⁰ We might remix Mackey’s insights with Yū’s critical sonority here, and replace racism with capitalism in order to lay better hold of the critical project at play in *Gold Rush* (and, to a lesser extent, *Full House*). Music, in its jarring otherness to what we have already established as the largely silent art of literature, amounts to a *phantom limb* in Mackey’s

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., pp. 45-46. For the original Japanese, see Yū, *Gōrudo rasshu*, p. 47.

¹⁸⁰ Mackey, p. 234.

formulation – and “[t]he phantom limb reveals the illusory role of the world it haunts.”¹⁸¹ As I have emphasized repeatedly in the preceding pages, it is not only music but noise itself that is deployed to forefront the reality of the social relations of the everyday, denying both their common-sense normalization under the abiding consumerism and money-centrism of 1990s Japan, and attempts to overcome them via shelter in an idealized nation-state form. It is these “illusions,” we might assert, that Yū Miri’s critical sonority sets out to stalk.

Writing that deploys music, Mackey continues, “do[es] so as a way of reaching toward an alternate reality... music is the would-be limb whereby that reaching is done or alerts us to the need for its being done.”¹⁸² As I will show on another occasion, this deployment of music as a literary means by which to imagine a new world is a tactic that has been pursued by other authors, as well, prominent among them *buraku* writer Nakagami Kenji, who approaches *enka* and jazz (for Nakagami, one and the same, when *enka* are done properly) as corrosives – *doku*, or poison, is his words – for stripping and reimagining the social. For our present purposes, however, we might note that the literary actors announced by music in *Full House* and *Gold Rush* – Kaoru, Kyoko, and Kōki – are each (not unlike Yū Miri herself) *dropouts* in their own ways, compelled by circumstance or electing to inhabit the world *differently*. None take refuge in the cobwebby shelter of an imagined national past or in notions of ‘authentic’ ethnicity or identity: rather, they seem to inhabit a liminal sort of space, a “wilderness” between the everyday and “whatever lies beyond the modern.” There seems presented a strategy here of abstaining – by choice or through unalterable circumstance – from some of the key modes of exchange that Kojin Karatani insists define the structure of world History as capitalism, and staking out a place that is beyond (at least relatively) their flows. Here again we can hear echoes of Yū Miri’s own

¹⁸¹ Ibid., p. 236.

¹⁸² Ibid.

declared home of the *hazama* – the in-between. And in a praxis of critical sonority that we can now see not only “shock”s readers into a confrontation with the terms of the contemporary capitalist everyday and interferes with the scaffolding upon which such narratives rest, but also announces different possibilities for inhabiting the world by altering the timbre and tone of the noise that she deploys (conducting, as it were, an auditory “vision” of the social), we can, perhaps, sense a critical stance upon the world and its everyday that cannot be confined to Yū’s much-despised *zainichi* “box,” and that relies upon this very in-betweenness – as a third, non-nationalized place for “dropouts” – for its potential.

The Power of a Shadow: Yū Miri’s Fukushima

In the spring of 2011, as people were leaving Fukushima Prefecture in droves, Yū Miri was going the other direction. Driven by a desire to relay the experience of “those who have no voices,” the author began visiting the Hamadōri area of Fukushima – near the Fukushima Dai’ichi Nuclear Power Station, along the Pacific coast – as soon as she learned that government-enforced exclusion zones would bar people from getting near. She would return to the area again and again – more than forty times, she says – and in March of 2012 she began working as a radio personality at Minami Soma Hibari FM, a local FM station housed in Minami Soma City Hall that was established initially to provide information to local residents in the aftermaths of the earthquake and tsunami of March 11, 2011, and which continues today as an information station. As host of the program *Futari Hitori* [Two People, One Person], Yū Miri converses with and relays the stories of local social actors (more than 480 of them over 240 installments of the

program thus far, by her count¹⁸³) on air: “If you’re going to interact with people, you’ve got to keep it up,” she says.¹⁸⁴ And keep it up she has: on April 7, 2015, the author moved with her son from Kanagawa Prefecture to Minami Soma, in order to keep her finger on the pulse of the everyday with which she grapples. Today, Yū understands herself as a “receiver,” not a “transmitter.”¹⁸⁵ “The joys and challenges of the people who live in a given place [*tochi*] are to be found within the realities of their lives,” she said in 2015. “If we take this to be true, then we can only really understand them if we take up residence in that place.” What she “receives” is no less than the conditions of Tosaka’s everyday, and as we have seen in our examinations of *Full House* and *Gold Rush*, above, accentuating and critiquing these conditions is nothing new in Yū Miri’s authorial praxis. Indeed, tracing Yū Miri’s work along a longer historical arc that connects us back to the 1990s (and beyond) has helped us better conceive of the critical praxis that she pursues today.

As we noted at the outset of this chapter, Yū Miri sketches the outlines of her critique in terms of realities faced by social actors in Fukushima in the wake of the natural and man-made disasters of March 11, 2011, and we might now come full circle, and follow the author out of the ghostly, vacant lots of Minato-kita New Town and the moldy alleys of Kogane-cho to her adopted home of Minami Soma in order to tie the thoughts offered in this chapter together, and to briefly consider some of the political and ethical implications of the project attended by the critical sonority that we have traced throughout these pages. As we have seen, Yū Miri senses a different history in Fukushima, one that is by no means external to capitalism, but in which

¹⁸³ Yū’s reflections appear in the newsletter *MIN-ON Quarterly*, Vol. 46. *MIN-ON Quarterly* is the newsletter of the Min-On Concert Association, a private, not-for-profit performing arts association based in Japan and founded in 1963.

¹⁸⁴ *Bungei*, special edition, p. 101.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

capitalism's contradictions – the “ideological promise of even development everywhere”¹⁸⁶ – are revealed. The unevenness that stalks Fukushima begets a certain *untimeliness*, which is revealed at the shoe cobbler's, at the fish-monger's, and so on. But rather than becoming an alternative authenticity, a “true memory and history”¹⁸⁷ that can be recovered by reclaiming a lost (yet phantasmal) ‘Japaneseness,’ this untimeliness seems to render Fukushima a “dark shadow,” one that hounds and haunts ‘Japan’ like a ghost. In a December, 2016 essay titled “The Darkness Behind Tokyo,” Yū harshly criticizes the prevalence of *Zaitokukai*-centered hate speech in a Tokyo that prides itself on being a “bright,” “internationalized” metropolis, and the contradiction that abides in the fact that *Zaitokukai* candidate Makoto Sakurai garnered more than 110,000 votes in the Tokyo gubernatorial elections held in July of that year. But this neo-fascist hate group is not the only “contradiction” marring the image that Tokyo has fashioned for itself. In the conclusion to her essay, Yū writes:

“Surely it is now time to turn our ears to the pain of Korean residents exposed to the dangers of hate speech in ‘internationalized’ Tokyo, and to gaze directly at the darkness of the ‘difficult-to-return zones’ of Hamadōri, in Fukushima Prefecture, which lies behind the ‘brightness’ of Tokyo.”¹⁸⁸

Although, as I suggested at the outset of this chapter, Yū Miri does leave herself open to charges of a certain fetishization of Fukushima, of its idealization as a sort of utopia, such does not seem to be the case here. Rather, the “different history” sensed by the author in Fukushima – itself a symptom/manifestation of unevenness – is made potent precisely because it disturbs Tokyo's unitary claim to History, its claim to the right to tell “Japanese time.” Yū Miri's critique of commodification and consumerism, of the mediation of social relations by money – of capitalism

¹⁸⁶ Harry Harootunian, *History's Disquiet: Modernity, Cultural Practice, and the Question of Everyday Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), pp. 114-115.

¹⁸⁷ Harootunian, “Japan's Long Postwar,” p. 103.

¹⁸⁸ Yū's essay, the 18th in a series written after the author came to Minami Soma and titled “*Tokyo no ura ni aru kurayami* [The darkness behind Tokyo],” appeared in *Shinbun Akahata* on November 28, 2016.

(=History) itself – is made potent precisely because it haunts that History from within, erupting into the mundane world, as we have seen, through the deployment of critical sonority. It is a task consigned to dropouts – like Kaoru, and Kyoko, and Kōki, but also, as we can now see, to social actors in Fukushima itself – who haunt History’s narrative like “dark shadows” in their own right. And the precarious positions assigned to these dropouts – variously neither within nor without, bypassing the syrupy allure of the idealized nation-state, echoing Yū Miri’s own realm of the *hazama* – seems to suggest the potential for a “critical space” from which new possibilities and social relations might be imagined differently. And this, to return to Harry Harootunian, is nothing less than an ethics of “living off the page.”

The status assigned Fukushima by Yū Miri as a site of in-betweenness and possibility was made particularly clear in a July, 2015 essay by the author, titled “In Order to Reclaim Days of Happiness,” which discusses the confusion and trepidation experienced by individuals under arbitrary decisions by central authorities to remove evacuation stipulations from the Odaka area of Minami Soma. Therein, she queries:

“How are the ‘ecology’ and ‘days of happiness’ that belonged to a collective splintered through the distribution of energy to the metropolis to be reclaimed? This is something that I truly hope that those living in the metropolis will meditate on, as well.”¹⁸⁹

What is remarkable here is the manner in which Fukushima – or, at least, Hamadōri (the two are not necessarily the same, as I will note in the concluding pages to this dissertation) – is posited as “a collective” [*kyōdōtai*] that is both embedded within the social relations overseen by the metropolis (via the “delivery of energy”), and, by virtue of the very fact of being a (presumably enclosed) collective posited alongside the metropolis, stands with one foot outside of them. Here

¹⁸⁹ Yū’s essay, the 14th in a series written after the author came to Minami Soma and titled “*Kōfuku na hibi torimodosu tame ni* [In order to reclaim days of happiness],” appeared in *Shinbun Akahata* on July 25, 2016.

again we can hear echoes of the “alternative collectivity” that has periodically appeared throughout this dissertation. What sorts of potentials, then, might Yū Miri (and others) attribute to Fukushima in the post-3.11 moment? How might we continue to trace the implications of historically, geographically, and economically specific experiences of everydayness as what Yū herself terms a “dark shadow” that haunts ‘Japan,’ and, reflexively, promises the potential of its re-imagination according to different terms? How can we conceive of a future from Fukushima? In the concluding section of this dissertation, we will remain in Minami-Soma with Yū Miri and with Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, and indeed with the other voices that we have visited herein, and consider one final text that was produced through a collaborative effort between these artists: a school song written for the Fukushima Prefectural Odaka *Sangyo Gijutsu* Secondary School on the occasion of its reopening in April, 2017.

In Lieu of a Conclusion

Here We Rise:

Rumblings from a Contested Landscape

“The best methods of protest are unrecognized because they defy our expectations of what a protest should look like.”

-Micah White, The End of Protest: A New Playbook for Revolution (2016)

On April 10, 2017, I found myself perched on a low-rising concrete road barrier in the middle of a vast floodplain in the Haramachi District of Minami Soma, Fukushima Prefecture, the strengthening spring sun at my back, watching a sparrow flit in and out of view as it chirped and darted among low grassy knolls and dwindling piles of debris. Having already walked several kilometers from the main rail station in town – Hara-no-Machi – I’d vowed to keep going until I’d reached the sea, but the steady rumbling of dump-trucks and heavy construction equipment shuttling north and south between my coordinates and the coastline a few more kilometers to my east sliced my path in two. So I paused, taking my mind’s eye off of what I expected to find just beyond the horizon and taking in what lay around me, at my feet. And in the muddy earth and neatly separated piles of rubble – splintered lumber here, twisted iron and perhaps a boot there – I saw renewed testimony to the fact that this is still highly fluid and unstable ground, where uncertainty and debate over the meaning of contested notions like “rebuilding” and “recovery” continue to rule the day.

This dissertation has endeavored to hear the voices of artists, authors, and individual social actors as they engage critically with the world around them, and I have come back to

Fukushima – where I lived and worked in the years preceding the triple disasters of March 11, 2011 (comprised of the massive, magnitude 9.0 undersea earthquake that struck not far off of Japan’s Northeast’s Pacific coast at 2:46 that afternoon, the ensuing 40-metre tsunami waves that crashed into it, and the resultant nuclear meltdowns that emptied many of its communities; a lethal cocktail of events that is usually referred to in shorthand as ‘3.11’), and where I conducted research as a graduate student for both my MA and my PhD – for the specific purpose of hearing and grappling with just one more text, produced, as we shall see, by two of the cultural producers with whom these pages have engaged. Like all of the texts and voices taken up herein, this one erupts out of specific historical and geographic contexts, and we will consider both the text and the contexts of its production below. But paradoxically, the ways in which Fukushima has, since 3.11, been revealed as testimony of sorts to the broader realities of what we saw Anne Allison in the Prelude to this dissertation call “precarious Japan,” and to the crises of uneven capitalist development that have informed conditions of the everyday for so many throughout Japan’s modern and contemporary moments, makes Fukushima-as-context decidedly *un*-specific, a waypoint through which a myriad of critical voices and engagements may – and do – pass. And indeed, we have seen Fukushima and the crises of 3.11 lurk stealthily throughout many of the pages of this dissertation, as the voices that we have sought to hear respond to them. These voices speak (and sing) of Fukushima, to be sure, and the competing desires and visions for the world that these voices enunciate serve to both reference and reinforce its fluidity, its instability. But to speak/sing of Fukushima is also to speak/sing of the broader, intertwining network of social relations that this site reveals, and in which it is inextricably embedded. As such, any study purporting to consider the diversity of critical voices in contemporary Japan can hardly sidestep this contested – and fertile – ground.

As an extended interrogation of different critical voices and tactics in modern and contemporary Japan – and as an engagement with the different visions for living in the world that these voices present – it thus now seems like something of a foregone conclusion that this dissertation should find its concluding pages unfurling here in Fukushima, which has been both the site of and a key informing factor behind some of the most vociferous critical expression to rock Japan since 1970. As we have seen throughout these pages, the actors with whom this dissertation has engaged – from Kagoshima nurses to internationally-renowned authors – have been committed to an ongoing re-conceiving of ways of living in the world, working to disrupt and derail some of the very common-sense Historical narratives that Fukushima finds itself entangled in today. We have pursued some of these critical engagements across disparate moments and through diverse locales, from the inception of Japan’s modern moment through the present – from Ryo Kagawa’s critiques of Cold War geopolitics and citations of 19th-century author and social critic Soeda Azembo as indictment of post-war economic development, to Yū Miri’s engagements with capitalism and consumerism in Yokohama in the recessionary and anxiety-laden 1990s, and Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi’s forefronting of Kagoshima-time in a “provincialized Japan” and his visions of alternative collectivity in the contemporary period. We have noted the ways in which these actors have deployed temporality, sonority, and spatiality in order to enunciate their critiques, and we have already seen some of the ways in which these critiques intersect with Fukushima and the crises of 3.11, encompassing and exceeding these events at the same time. And yet, more work is required. The moment of 3.11 has been powerful to the point of being overbearing, and as I suggested in the Prelude, the temptation is strong to remove it from the flow of History, to approach it as an event that can somehow be isolated and enclosed and analyzed on its own terms, rather than as a waypoint on a Bergsonian sort of *duree*,

an historical arc that is continually in the process of unfolding. Such an artificially-isolated orb left to drift in an epistemological ether draws voices engaged therewith to it like a tractor beam, leaving us to conceive of critical engagements with 3.11 as *reactions to* an artificially isolated moment, rather than as creative, productive critical *engagements with* the Historical narratives that both envelop and transcend it. ‘Fukushima’ is thus suddenly complicated as an analytical rubric: how do we ensure that its deployment does not contribute to an artificial isolation and foreclosure of 3.11 as crisis, and of the critical voices that engage therewith? If these are critiques that are always already situated along a longer historical arc, in other words, how can we resist the temptation to declare them comprehended and closed, and ensure that they are always left to topple (and be pursued) into the future? How can we leave these pages, in other words, with at least one eye fixed on the future?

It seemed to me on that warm April day, beneath a hazy blue sky framed by cherry blossoms marking yet another cycle of rebirth, that an answer lay there at my feet, in the churned-up mud and rumbling trucks and the stubborn, resilient life of the floodplain. It seemed, in short, that an answer might lie in refusing to declare our discussion closed at all, and intentionally leaving these voices there on the unstable, contested ground of Fukushima itself. Fukushima’s story is far from finished – it is in flux, as a myriad of actors scramble to lay claim to the right to tell it. It is local, and it is national. And in a moment in which not even the definition of the term “recovery” is established with any degree of certainty, it is ripe with the potential to be a story of the future, of where we go from here. In an unexpected development, it has been the Fukushima Prefectural Government that has captured this thoughtful, unruly, diverse, and ambiguous critical energy most effectively, in a post-3.11 administrative motto that would be utterly banal were it not so understatedly genius: “Future From Fukushima;”

*Fukushima kara hajimeyou.*¹ One way to get at the questions at hand, then, may be to take the possibility of a “[f]uture from Fukushima” deathly seriously, and to consider some of the possible [f]utures that are conjured in – and in reference to – Fukushima by individual voices engaged therewith, thereby asserting an ongoing sense of becoming in Fukushima’s own story, and in the critical engagements that both reference it and tell it. The purpose of these final pages, then, will be to briefly pass the mic one more time to some of the social actors with whom this dissertation has engaged, and to let them speak to the sort(s) of “Future[s] from Fukushima” that they envision.

This itself, of course, is a contentious, fraught endeavor. Laying claim to Fukushima, defining it, apprehending it in the interests of justifying or furthering one critical (or fascist) project or another has been a quest pursued at the hands of many, and with uncommon fervor and urgency; one that might usefully be traced to former Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda’s utterly premature declaration in December, 2011 that the nuclear crisis in the Prefecture, at least, was over.² In the interim, a barrage of commentators have run the gamut between the sorts of searing anti-nuclear critique pursued by some scholars and activists (which can sometimes veer into panicked portrayals of something called ‘Fukushima’ – in fact a vast, vibrant Prefecture boasting incredible diversity north to south, as well as across its three distinct east-to-west regions – as a scorched, radioactive wasteland), on the one hand, and the bizarre critique of the hate group *Zaitokukai* – which usually busies itself with calling for the expulsion, and even extermination, of resident foreigners, mostly *zainichi* Koreans like Yū Miri – on the other, who insist in their noisy street orations that the remaining reactors at the Fukushima Dai’ichi Nuclear Power Station

¹ This motto can be seen featured prominently on the Prefecture’s official website, at <https://www.pref.fukushima.lg.jp>.

² <http://science.time.com/2011/12/16/japanese-prime-minister-yoshihiko-noda-declares-an-end-to-the-fukushima-nuclear-crisis/>. Accessed April 25, 2017.

must be restarted in order to ensure Fukushima's (and Japan's) survival by reasserting the former's rightful place as purveyor of energy to the national cause. But as I shall show in more detail on another occasion, there is a wide expanse of ambiguous individual desire and far more subtle critique that lies between these two poles, as social actors and cultural producers struggle to engage meaningfully with what the crises of 3.11 have meant for life in Japan, for the (re-) claiming of something called 'home' in Fukushima, and for something called "reconstruction [*fukkō*]." The brief pages that follow will anticipate that discussion by briefly visiting some of the disparate and nuanced ways in which Ryo Kagawa, Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, and Yū Miri have grappled with these issues. But perhaps more importantly, through uniting these actors in a fluid, contested landscape, we can sidestep the snare of inadvertently assigning to their critiques a sense of (static) completion – the attendant hazard, perhaps, of a completed dissertation, hence my reluctance to classify these pages as a 'conclusion' – and face head-on the imperative to continue hearing their voices, as the historical arc along which they are situated continues to unfurl.

Happy-Looking People: Ryo Kagawa's "Future from Fukushima"

Ryo Kagawa's most recent album, as we have already noted in Chapter Two of this dissertation, is itself titled *Mirai* [The Future],³ making it a helpful stepping-off point for this discussion. The album's very name reveals it as both referencing and complementing a productive, future-oriented critical stance on the (post-3.11) world by orienting itself toward what may come – or, perhaps more concisely, what may be hoped for – as 3.11's wake continues to ripple outward. In conversation with Kagawa in 2015, the artist revealed to me just how

³ Ryo Kagawa, *Mirai* [The Future]. 2016. Tokyo: TWINS Records. CD Album. All works noted in this section are from this album.

deeply this new offering was rooted in the events of 3.11. The album consists mostly of a collection of covers – “other people’s tunes,” he snorts self-deprecatingly – by artists like punk-rock pioneers The Blue Hearts, eternally foul-tempered folk-rock icon Izumiya Shigeru, and the late ‘Monsieur’ Kamayatsu Hiroshi; “songs that I’d never listened to before, never had any interest in before.” But the events of 3.11 *rattled* Kagawa, and instigated a sea-shift in the songs that he wanted to sing in a moment in which, as he would relate in performance at the University of Chicago in October of 2016, no one really knew what to sing – or, more concisely, in which singing didn’t seem to be appropriate at all.⁴ He recalls riding back toward Tokyo with folk artist Minami Kōsetsu following an evening show in Sōma (a municipality in Fukushima not far from Haramachi) not long after 3.11, and being struck by the utter blackness outside his window as his mini-bus rolled through the deserted Fukushima countryside. “That was the first time I’d ever really experienced the dark,” he told me. “The bus driver was explaining it [the situation in Fukushima] to me, and that’s when it just popped into my head, those opening lyrics by the Blue Hearts: ‘Hey driver, won’t you let me on that bus, too? I don’t care where you’re going, if that’s what worries you...’ It’s odd; old songs like that ended up saving me [*sukwareta*].” In interviews,⁵ Kagawa would similarly describe suddenly catching himself humming the other tunes that comprise this short album, and *Mirai* was born just as soon as Kagawa and his band could lay down the sparse tracks in studio – a task that he recalls having approached with a sense of urgency, underscoring the historically-specific nature of the critique conveyed therein.

With the exception of the relatively recent “*D no Tsuki* [Waxing Moon],” Kagawa’s sole original contribution to *Mirai* and a work that we have noted in previous pages for its refrain if

⁴ Kagawa’s comments can be accessed via the video record of his Chicago performance, available online at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t_oAqeCa5Ow.

⁵ Kagawa discussed the genesis of *Mirai* in his interview with the FM Fukuoka program “Re-Folk,” which aired December 10, 2015. This program is no longer accessible online.

“look for me, and for Japan’s one more time,” the songs comprising the album are all rooted in the past. Their original composition dates range between 1970, in the case of ‘Monsieur’ Kamayatsu Hiroshi’s *Dōnika narusa* [It’ll All Work Out], and 1999, in the case of little-known Hokkaido composer Yasuhiro Inudzuka’s *Shiawasesō na hitotachi* [Happy-Looking People]. But this is hardly a matter of curmudgeonry or nostalgia: Kagawa has little patience, for instance, for those who belittle contemporary groups such as the omnipresent girl group AKB48, hearing in such criticisms echoes of the criticisms that were directed against him in his own youth. “If young people think that it’s cool, then there’s something there that adults need to pay attention to – they need to learn about the new music. Just dismissing it isn’t enough.” There are thus different desires at play in Kagawa’s tactic of citing the past in an album whose intent is to ruminate on the future. The question at hand, of course, is what those desires might be.

As we noted in Chapter Two, Ryo Kagawa clearly has a penchant for *rattling* people – indeed, in conversation with me he recalled a desire to challenge and destabilize as a key motivating factor behind his getting into singing in the first place. Stitching together a temporally-diverse narrative bookended by The Blue Hearts’ furious invocation of despair and haplessness in the face the judgment of history in “*Aozora* [The Blue Sky]” on one end (and we can almost hear the artist’s anti-folk frustration in its plea to “[t]ell me, just what is it that you think you can know about me / From the place that I was born, or the color of my skin and eyes?”) and Inudzuka’s “Happy-Looking People” on the other (“From the very moment of our birth, we / Are on a road that leads to ruin... we engulf ourselves in plague and cover it with rouge”) on the other, and placing it atop a unifying, minimalist instrumental track that features

nearly-concealed percussion pops and other oddities seems intended to do just that.⁶ Indeed, after *Mirai* was released, Kagawa would gleefully urge people to listen to it at high volume or with high-quality headphones in order to get the full rhythm-track effect – and here we can hear echoes of his valuation of music as something that disorients, incites a double-take, makes the listener ask “what the hell is that?”⁷ The sheer *untimeliness* of the album – comprised as it is of tracks from disparate moments sutured together in a single critical narrative – seems to perform a task reminiscent of that assigned to Soeda Azembo’s “Give-Up Diddy” in 1971: in a continuation of what we have called critical temporality in the pages above, in other words, Ryo Kagawa reaches into and remixes the past in order to conjure the [F]uture.

Though the artist insists that the works comprising *Mirai* “just came to” him, without rhyme or reason,⁸ we need to be careful here not to be led astray by Ryo Kagawa’s deceptive deadpan, his self-deprecating and modesty-driven insistence that his work carries no critique worthy of the name. *Mirai* was hurriedly interjected into an Historical moment rocked not only by the ongoing crises of 3.11, but also, as we have seen, by burgeoning state power and the introduction of the so-called “state secrets law,” by the veer to the hard-right seen by many as becoming increasingly entrenched under Shinzō Abe and the Nippon Kaigi,⁹ by the resilience of the nuclear village, and so on. Asked in June of 2016 for his thoughts on the moment of which *Mirai* was now a part, Ryo Kagawa was unequivocal: “People need to open their eyes

⁶ The role played by sound here seems in fact similar to that which we noted in Chapter Four – a deployed device intended to jar, to rattle, to “shock,” and to present the world anew.

⁷ See p. 130 of this dissertation.

⁸ This has been a familiar refrain of Kagawa’s post-*Mirai* commentary, and was re-stated during his December, 2016 radio interview with FM Fukuoka.

⁹ Nippon Kaigi is Japan’s largest, most influential right-wing organization, boasting numerous intellectuals and lawmakers among its ranks, including the current (as of June, 2017) Prime Minister Shinzō Abe. For an overview of the organization, see Sachie Mizohata, “Nippon Kaigi: Empire, Contradiction, and Japan’s Future,” appearing in the *Asia Pacific Journal: Japan Focus*, Vol. 14, No. 21 (November 1, 2016).

[*mikiwamenaakan*]... They don't have a clue about the danger facing them." And intriguingly – and with the slyness and playfulness that we have now come to expect from Kagawa – the artist cited the track that closes his new album in framing these thoughts: "*Minna shiawasesō ya mon* [Everybody just looks so goddamned happy]!" His aim in *Mirai* - as a critical intervention into the Now that relies upon Fukushima both as the condition of the album's own possibility and as the potentiating condition for kickstarting a [F]uture from Fukushima – seems to be to rattle listeners, make them *think*, to compel them to blurt out Kagawa's own mantra: "[w]hat the hell was that?" This is, it seems, a key step on the path to finding the new possibilities inherent in the "one more time" called for in "*D no Tsuki* [Waxing Moon]" – and during our conversation in a moment in which elections were once again underway in Japan, and in which preparations were being made to bring the Satsuma Sendai Nuclear Power Station back online, it became very clear that this was a matter of some urgency for Ryo Kagawa. And as we have seen, this urgency is something taken up by Kagawa's listeners, as well, in their insistence that "the time for listening to [the artist] is *now*." The manner in which Ryo Kagawa's music and critique will continue to morph and live on in the lives of his many listeners – in this extended 3.11 moment and beyond – is a matter which demands our continued attention.

Tracing Associations: The *Ougoukai*, 'Japan,' and a "Future from Fukushima"

It was, of course, another listener community with which this dissertation engaged most extensively – the unofficial Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi fan organization *Ougoukai*. Now, our aim in these pages has been to consider the disparate ways in which individual *Ougoukai* members deploy Nagabuchi's music in their own lives, and some of the ways in which this relates to critical stances on the world in the contexts of Kagoshima (for the most part) and 'Japan,' and as

such situating these voices in, or in terms of, Fukushima seems something of a counterintuitive task. And yet, careful attention to the voices of some of these actors will reveal the ways in which a “Future from Fukushima” may manifest itself in their own critical praxes and stances on the world, as well. In the intersections between actors’ own interpretations of Nagabuchi and his music vis-à-vis Fukushima and their own stance on the world, in other words, there is a “Future from Fukushima” to be traced – and if we listen carefully, we can detect a desire for a sort of alternative collectivity that is based in precisely the sort of shared precarity that became so apparent in the aftermaths of 3.11.

Eiji, for example, whom we will remember as our *Ougoukai* executive in Shizuoka, felt drawn to Fukushima after the meltdowns at the Dai’ichi Nuclear Power Station precisely because he saw it being excised from the “community of mutual concern”¹⁰ that informs his conceptualization of ‘Japan.’ We will recall that Eiji actually got into in his car and drove hundreds of kilometers to Fukushima after 3.11, crisscrossing the Prefecture and developing relationships with others as he went. The experience left him with a desire to de-legitimize ‘Japan’s center, one that recalls Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi’s tactic in “LICENSE” of infecting Tokyo with a different ‘Japan’ construed out of Kagoshima everydayness, but that is based more in what Eiji sees as a certain arrogance on the part of major metropolises like Tokyo and Osaka. “These days, Tohoku [Japan’s Northeast, hardest-hit by the crises of 3.11] is really important to me,” he told me in a discussion detailed herein in Chapter One. “The big cities like Tokyo and Osaka, they don’t go to visit each other, to learn from each other. That’s something that people from the smaller towns, like Shizuoka or Fukushima, do.” The official motto of the *Ougoukai* –

¹⁰ See Kelly, *Fanning the Flames*, p. 7.

culled from the Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi tune “*Kamashitare!*”¹¹ and featured prominently on members’ jackets and shirts – is “*hontō no nakama wa koko ni iru* [your/my/our real comrades are right here],” and we can detect something of this in Eiji’s penchant for tracing connections, in Junko’s ethics of *tsunagari*,¹² and so on. What is particularly intriguing to note here is the way in which Eiji’s tracing of connections across a “community of mutual concern” that he understands as ‘Japan’ and yet refuses to rely upon narratives of ethnicity or state for its legibility echoes Ryo Kagawa’s praxis of *tabi*,¹³ as an active tracing of the contours of a re-appropriated sort of Japanese “counter-space”¹⁴ – and the way in which this ongoing, fluid reimagining of ‘Japan’ is itself a sort of “Future from Fukushima,” having roots in the events of March 11, 2011.

We must revisit here a particularly weighty remark that Eiji made in conversation with me in 2015, the sentiment of which has lurked in one form or another throughout many of the pages of this dissertation: “I love Japan,” he said. “Japan is all that I know. But I hate the state [*kokka*].”¹⁵ This remark offers us the opportunity to further clarify the (political) potentials of the visions of alternative collectivity that have animated these pages – visions that, after all, are termed ‘Japan’ by their architects. This requires a closer look at the nature of the complex and ambiguous relationship between “nation” and “state,” which Kojin Karatani, through his *Structure of World History: From Modes of Production to Modes of Exchange*, can help us parse.

¹¹ Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, “*Kamashitare* [Get ‘Em],” from the album *FRIENDS*. August 12, 2009. Tokyo: Nayuta Wave Records. CD Album.

¹² See Chapters One and Three of this dissertation.

¹³ See Chapter Two of this dissertation.

¹⁴ Henri Lefebvre teaches us that counter-space can be realized only if Other, local, non-state interests/powers assert claim to (geographic) space, in the interests of use. Tracing the contours of a ‘Japan’ that is connected through critical actors comprising a community of mutual concern – while specifically claiming that space as (an alternative) ‘Japan’ – seems to cut very close to Lefebvre’s vision.

¹⁵ See page 216 of this dissertation.

For Karatani, both the state and the nation are concrete, rooted entities built upon their own specific modes of exchange, a formulation that allows the author to push back against received Marxian understandings of ‘state’ and ‘nation’ as ideological superstructures – a manifestation of false consciousness – built atop an economic base. Modern states emerged through gradual historical processes, the outcomes of conflicts between smaller, city-states – and it was only after their amalgamating effects had become entrenched that notions of “community” emerged at all.¹⁶ As conqueror/vanquisher, the state was compelled to enter into a relationship of exchange with the vanquished: this is none other than Hobbe’s social contract, which involves the vanquished voluntarily submitting to the rule of the state, in order to protect the vanquished’s own lives. In this way, “[t]he state is established through the transformation of... violent compulsion into a mode of exchange.”¹⁷ It is important to note that these consensual exchanges took place not at the level of the individual, but at the level of the community, whose framework emerged from the governing state itself.¹⁸ In this way, a sense of “permanence was achieved not by the agrarian community” – which might be understood as the precursor of the nation itself – “but rather by the organs of the state that governed the community from above.”¹⁹ This constitutes, of course, a drastic oversimplification of Karatani’s complex explication of the emergence of the state, but what we must take from this is at any rate rather minimal: first, that the state is built around vertical relationships of exchange,²⁰ and second, that the communal/collectivity often assumed to be a potentiating condition of the state has actually been a byproduct of its rise.

¹⁶ See Kojin Karatani, trans. Michael K. Bourdaghs, *The Structure of World History: From Modes of Production to Modes of Exchange* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), p. 73.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 68.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 76.

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 77-78.

²⁰ Karatani identifies these as Mode [of exchange] B, a relationship based ultimately on plunder.

When the state cemented its interests to those of capital (key actor in what Karatani classifies as Mode [of exchange] C, or commodity exchange), the result was a coupling that is straightforwardly termed “capital-state” by Karatani. The evolution of capitalism into industrial capitalism and the development of the labor-power commodity that occurred in the mid-19th centuries decimated the agrarian communities that had found their framework in the very state structures that would later undermine them, as a certain anonymizing/alienation attended the fostering of workers who would now be compelled to sell their labor-power in order to be able to survive. As Anderson and others have demonstrated, the emergence of the nation as “imagined community”²¹ served as a shared frame of reference in the context of the changes wrought under conditions of burgeoning modernity, and as Karatani teaches us, “nationalism emerged in tandem with the formation of the labor power commodity under industrial capital” as modes of being in the world changed, and shared language/culture became imperative in order to facilitate the working together of strangers.²² But the nation also became a site of imagined camaraderie, a place to displace the antagonisms and contradictions of capitalism itself, and a sort of “substitute community” that could compensate for the decimation of actual community at the hands of nation-state – and in this it became an accomplice of capital-state, which was, reflexively, the single most culpable actor in the grooming of modern nationalism.²³ The rise of the nation, for Karatani, represents nothing less than the abortive return of what he terms Mode [of exchange] A – reciprocity – and the attempt to transcend the “class conflict and contradictions caused by the capitalist system.”²⁴ In this, of course, nation ultimately fails – and in fact fuses the new,

²¹ See Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*.

²² See Karatani, trans. Bourdaghj, *The Structure of World History: From Modes of Production to Modes of Exchange*, p. 212.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 27.

contemporary tripartite capital-nation-state by providing a site for the disavowal of the very contradictions that might otherwise undermine it.

But nation (broadly conceived) is something of a Trojan horse. Karatani himself is careful to point out that ‘nation’ is by no means a simple creation of state or of capital – while clearly implicated in the effects of the modes of exchange that capital-state presents, it is also rooted in its own form of exchange: sentiment.²⁵ What attends this are notions of fraternity, of solidarity – and although these are misappropriated by capital-nation-state as “the real disparities produced by the capitalist economy and [its] lack of freedom and equality are compensated for and resolved in imagined form,” such sentiment can never – as Eiji and his weighty declaration help to demonstrate – be co-opted completely. “The nation is thus ambiguous in nature.”²⁶ In other words, even as it serves as the fusing entity for capital-nation-state, ‘nation’ is at the very same time a form of resistance, aimed at re-capturing the reciprocity and community that is disintegrating under its reign. The sentiment that serves as the subject of exchange grounding the nation is not the same sort of monetary/commodity exchange that anchors state and capital, and Karatani insists that we need to pay close attention to the potentials of this sort of non-standard exchange relationship.²⁷ Indeed, if we trace this sort of exchange – which we have seen in these pages in many forms, notably in Eiji’s emphasis on “communities of mutual concern,” in Ryo Kagawa’s praxis of *tabi*,²⁸ and in the sense of one-ness conjured and deployed in Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi’s literal claiming of a new day at the foot of Mt. Fuji²⁹ – as it is deployed in the etching of the outlines of an alternative collectivity that we can also understand as a re-

²⁵ Ibid., p. 213.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 220.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 213.

²⁸ See Chapter Two of this dissertation.

²⁹ See Chapter Three of this dissertation.

apprehended ‘Japan,’ one that is explicitly critical of capital, of state, and of History itself, then we can see how the ambiguity of ‘Japan’-as-nation, formulated in terms that challenge History, might work itself into the cracks and crevasses of capital-nation-state, threatening/promising to corrode it from the inside out.

Karatani is unambiguous in the cautions that he sounds over the dangerous effects of nationalism. “Nationalism,” he insists, “is nostalgic, a proactive attempt to restore past ways of life.”³⁰ The danger that he senses is none other than the danger of fascism. Fascism, for Karatani, makes use of the nation by usurping it to declare a return to the past – to reciprocity, to Mode [of exchange] A – in a context in which neither state nor capital have been overcome. “The powerful attraction held by fascism in many countries,” he teaches us, “arose from the vision it offered of a dream world – really, a nightmare world – in which all contradictions were overcome in the here and now.”³¹ This is precisely why we were careful to define fascism as a temporal critique in the opening pages of this dissertation.

But as we have seen repeatedly throughout these pages, neither ‘nationalism’ (if we can define, cautiously, the sorts of alternative collectivity envisioned herein as alternative forms of ‘nationalism’) nor nostalgia are entirely cut and dry. Indeed, the visions of alternative collectivity and the reflective sorts of nostalgia that we have seen wielded by the actors of this dissertation might be understood as small, preparatory steps toward what Karatani, following Proudhon, calls *associationism*, a system of direct reciprocal exchanges based in communities of mutual aid,³² a socialism that rejects the state and that can only be realized by superseding the current world-

³⁰ See Karatani, trans. Bourdaghs, *The Structure of World History: From Modes of Production to Modes of Exchange*, p. 259.

³¹ Ibid., p. 258.

³² Ibid., p. 143.

historical system of capital-nation-state.³³ And if we take seriously Karatani's explication of the nation as an ambiguous construct rooted in the unique exchange of *sentiment*, we can begin to see a certain impulse toward associationism in Eiji's expressed hatred for the state, but concomitant love for 'Japan,' as well. Now, neither Eiji nor any of the actors of this dissertation are revolutionary theorists, and none explicitly advocate for the overthrowing of the capitalist economy and the establishment of a new world-historical order. But that, in a sense, is precisely the point. It is incumbent upon us to (continue to) listen carefully to the historically-embedded voices of these actors, to distill from Eiji's – and others' – weighty remarks and provocative, world-producing praxes the sorts of critical stances that may help point us toward new possibilities for living in the world. Karatani teaches us that, "even as associationism seeks to restore the past form of mode of exchange A, it is not about restoring the past. Associationism is about creating the future anew."³⁴ As such, this is a possibility that resonates – explicitly or not – with many of the critical tactics examined herein. And as a "Future from Fukushima" continues to ripple out from the Prefecture's shattered coastline, it is a possibility whose traces should be sought in the desires and tactics of social actors engaged therewith.

"Here We Rise": Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, Yū Miri, and a "Future [Made in] Fukushima"

Of all of the social actors engaged in the present dissertation, Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi and Yū Miri are perhaps most intimately engaged with Fukushima and the crises of 3.11 in their artistic praxes, and, in the case of Yū, in her private life, as well. We have already noted, for example, the manner in which Nagabuchi's all-night concert at the foot of Mt. Fuji in August, 2015 – discussed at length in Chapter Three – was rooted directly in the artist's understandings

³³ Ibid., p. 234.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 259.

of the events of March 11, 2011, and as I have discussed elsewhere, his first musical endeavor in the wake of the crises grappled explicitly with the possibilities of revitalized collectivity in that moment.³⁵ Nagabuchi's aforementioned “*Kamome* [Seagulls],” from the 2012 album *Stay Alive*, sings of the crippling loss visited upon the Fukushima town of Namie – just a few kilometers from the Fukushima Dai’ichi Nuclear Power Station – in the aftermaths of the meltdowns there, and faces the collective responsibility for the History that spawned the crises head-on: “Has this path that we’ve walked along really been the correct one[?]” And in the chorus of the same work, Nagabuchi enunciates an unambiguous vision for a Japanese future without nuclear power – “*tomete kure, genpatsu wo* [shut ‘em down, those nuclear plants]” – a vision that is driven as much by concern for his own home prefecture of Kagoshima, home to the Satsuma Sendai Nuclear Power Station and ravaged by the same sort of precarity that has haunted Fukushima, as it is by grief over the meltdowns at Fukushima Dai’ichi. In this way, we can see how Nagabuchi’s insistent artistic engagements with a fluid, future-oriented alternative collectivity has been heavily informed by the events of March 11, 2011 over the six years since the onset of those crises.

Yū Miri has been even more intimately engaged with Fukushima in the post-3.11 moment. As we noted in Chapter Four, the author first started visiting Fukushima at the very moment at which so many were fleeing it (April, 2011), and began to relay the stories of those that she met in her travels starting in March of 2012, via the community radio station Minami-Soma Hibari FM. In April of 2015, she moved herself and her son to Minami-Soma, where she

³⁵ See Aalgaard, “‘Summertime Blues’: Musical Responses to Japan’s Dark Spring” for an in-depth discussion of Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi’s “*Hitotsu*,” which marks the artist’s first musical engagement with 3.11. While his “*Hitotsu*” may be understood as a call for connecting the shattered Northeast to ‘Japan,’ as I suggest therein, it may also, in the manner of the artist’s grappling with Kagoshima considered in the preceding pages of this dissertation, be understood as a call to connect ‘Japan’ to the Northeast.

began lecturing on “expression” and teaching writing to students at Odaka Kōgyō Secondary School. Minami-Soma, in short, has become “home” for Yū Miri – and as we saw in the preceding Chapter, the author notes untimely ways of being in the world in Fukushima that meld well with the critiques of consumerism that we noted in her *Full House* and *Gold Rush*, and that disturb the legibility of common-sense Historical narratives like “my-home-ism” and high-speed economic growth.³⁶ Yū’s intimate engagement with Fukushima seems to reference a hope for different ways of living in the world – for Yū (and for Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi), in other words, the idea of a “Future from Fukushima” is entirely literal. And in an impossibly enticing development from the standpoint of the research pursued herein, Yū and Nagabuchi have joined forces on a project that pertains directly and literally to such a “Future from Fukushima,” and which is coming to fruition precisely as massive changes are being visited – again – upon vast sections of Minami Soma.

Minami Soma was hit very hard by the triple crises of 3.11. Here, in Haramachi – where the nearby chirping of the sparrow and the distant rumbling of the heavy equipment are currently jostling for auditory supremacy – the waves clawed their way far inland, inundating nearly fifteen square kilometers of earth (including the soggy soil that stretches across the now-empty floodplain at my feet), wiping out hundreds of homes, and taking hundreds more lives. The Odaka District of the city³⁷ – just ten kilometers to the south – was even harder hit: the proximity of that small town to the Fukushima Dai’ichi Nuclear Power Station meant that Odaka found itself placed under evacuation orders until July 12, 2016, displacing families, shuttering services,

³⁶ While this carries with it something of a risk of a fetishization of Fukushima, as I have already noted, I must stress here that this is not the same as simplistically reaching for a more ‘authentic’ past that has somehow escaped the ravages of capitalism.

³⁷ Until they were amalgamated under the Minami-Soma moniker on January 1, 2006, Odaka, Haramachi, and neighboring Kashima were all independent municipalities, but are now referred to as ‘districts’ of Minami-Soma.

and closing schools. Odaka's two secondary schools – *Odaka Kōgyō* and *Odaka Shōgyō* – were relocated to flimsy, temporary structures in Haramachi immediately after the meltdowns (mere steps from my concrete perch, in fact), and would remain housed there for six full years.

This year, however – for better or for worse³⁸ – the schools are coming home, amalgamated into a single institution that has taken the new name *Odaka Sangyō Gijutsu* Secondary School, to be housed in the former *Odaka Kōgyō* buildings, fifteen minutes or so on foot from JR Odaka Station in the newly-reopened JR Jōban Line (*Odaka Shōgyō* has since been shuttered permanently). Yū Miri – who, we will recall, had been teaching composition and expression to *Odaka Kōgyō*'s students since 2015 – was asked to write the lyrics for the “new” school's *kōka*, or school song, and the author agreed. But a school song is nothing without music, and Yū, thinking it a very long shot at best (“*dame-moto de*”), reached out by letter to Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi – with whom, we will recall, she had shared a *taidan*, or transcribed discussion, as part of the production of the special edition of the journal *Bungei* cited herein – to see if he would be willing to take on composition duties. Much to Yū's own surprise, Nagabuchi agreed, and an artistic dream-team of sorts was born. *Odaka Sangyō Gijutsu* Secondary School's song – which is as yet untitled, save its description as *kōka* – was unveiled at the school's entrance ceremony on April 11, 2017, with Yū in attendance and Nagabuchi giving a brief concert that

³⁸ The decision to lift the evacuation orders from Odaka and other areas of Fukushima have themselves been fraught and very highly contested: many mistrust the government's judgment and intentions on this issue, and remain convinced that the areas in question are unsafe. Indeed, some reports suggest that only around 20% of Odaka's residents intend to actually return. The question of the ethicality and scientific legitimacy of the authorities' decision to lift the orders, however, is one that cannot be taken up with any degree of thoroughness by this dissertation, and while armchair theorizing over the ongoing radioactive dangers of Fukushima has become something of a global pastime in the wake of 3.11, I have neither the knowledge nor the expertise to comment authoritatively upon the ethics or the soundness of this decision. Safe or not, the fact is that some social actors are making the decision (or having the decision thrust upon them) to return to the former exclusion zones, and what concerns me here is the manner in which Yū Miri and Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, through their respective arts, grapple with the reality of this return, re-directing it toward world-producing ends.

featured the school song and other, more well-known works³⁹ in what was until the very last moment a “secret” performance held in the school’s gymnasium. This is the musical event that I – at the invitation of Yū Miri’s management team – have come to observe, and it is precisely the notions of new direction, new possibilities, and rebirth (even as the cherries struggled to bloom in the cold rain that fell outside) that attended it, all in the context of a literal “Future from Fukushima,” that allow us to tap this event a means by which to bring these pages to a close, while keeping one eye fixed squarely on the future. Indeed, there may be no more effective way to stake out a ground for understanding the disparate voices engaged herein as oriented toward an ongoing and open-ended critical grappling with the world than to consider the intentional embedding of a slyly critical musical/literary text squarely among Odaka’s (and Fukushima’s, and Japan’s) next generation of social actors.

Yū Miri’s lyrical composition is not long, and I reproduce it here – in English translation – in full, with the permission of the author:

“The familiar sigh of the sea fills
This house of learning
And there, beyond the windows –

There rolls the sea
There’s always been the sea
The Murakami Seashore

Time flows ever forth
As I press ever forth
And commend this day to prayer, in body and in soul

Here we rise, here upon the hills of Yoshina
Here I rise, here upon the hills of Yoshina

The familiar scent of the flowers fills

³⁹ Included in the setlist, much to the delight of the assembled students and their parents, was Nagabuchi’s mega-hit *Kampai*.

This house of learning
And there, beyond the windows –

There the flowers bloom
Long have the flowers bloomed
The red plum blossoms of Ukifune

Time flows ever forth
As I press ever forth
And commend this day to learning, in body and in soul

Here we rise, here upon the hills of Yoshina
Here I rise, here upon the hills of Yoshina

A familiar sparkle fills
This house of learning
And there, beyond the windows –

There the river runs
Long has the river run
The Odaka River

Time flows ever forth
As I press ever forth
And make this day the first of a journey of my own

Here we rise, here upon the hills of Yoshina
Here I rise, here upon the hills of Yoshina”

In an article that appeared in the April, 2017 edition of the newsletter *Min-On Quarterly*, Yū clarified what she wanted to put into her lyrics. “The last thing I saw [when I turned my back on my own school’s gates at the age of sixteen] was the school emblem situated right there in the middle of those swinging iron gates: the letters KJC, standing for ‘Kind,’ ‘Good,’ and ‘Just,’ arranged together in a diamond shape... What I did [with these lyrics] was to write a declaration that transcends moral notions of ‘Kind,’ ‘Just,’ and ‘Good’ and insists that, even in the wake of the Great East Japan Earthquake and the accidents at the nuclear power station, I’m going to gaze squarely upon this beautiful land, this historical moment [*kono toki*], as an irreplaceable

living entity possessed of a finite lifespan, and pray here, and learn here, and start a journey of my own from here.” It is important to clarify that the “declaration” being posited here is not for the benefit Yū, as author – rather, it is posited on behalf of the students of Odaka *Sangyō Gijutsu*, who will sing the song at regular intervals throughout their high school career.

We can sense in Yū’s statement a certain disdain for theoretical ruminations on something called “morality,” and the desire to jettison these from her work in the interests of emphasizing instead a direct confrontation/engagement with lived historical conditions, or what we have repeatedly called the “everyday” herein. In conversation with me in April, 2017, the author stressed that her lyrics were by no means designed to facilitate a drift into nostalgic reverie for a lost, transcendent “beautiful,” but rather contained subtle and completely intentional reminders of the ongoing crises that actually gave birth to the newly-amalgamated Odaka *Sangyō Gijutsu* Secondary School, even as the beauty of the vistas described in the work is given top billing. The Murakami Seashore, for example, is invoked precisely because it is no longer there: in addition to being the name of an oceanfront recreational area, Murakami Seashore also denotes a community that was utterly obliterated when the waves of 3.11 ripped ashore. Sideways swipes at the meltdowns at Fukushima Dai’ichi are taken in intentional invocations of scenes of beauty that are both testimonial to Odaka’s resilience in the face of disaster, and fulcrums for mourning and anger in that they were rendered out-of-bounds by the meltdowns for so long in their wake. And if we require explicit textual indication that Yū Miri’s complex and subtle critical machinery is at work herein, we need look no further than the invocation of the “sigh of the sea,” appearing in the very first line – for, as we learned in Chapter Four, *sound* is one of the most reliable indicators and facilitators of critique on the part of the author.

What Yū Miri presents in her lyrics, in short, is a certain bending of the very idea of the “school song” – an apprehension and re-appropriation of the form, and its redefinition and re-positioning among young social actors according to different terms. Masafumi Ogawa teaches us that “[t]he main goal [of music education in Japan] has been to cultivate morality” – indeed, recent (2008) Ministry of Education proclamations on the matter state that, “based on the objectives of moral education, and considering the relationship to ethics, teachers should teach the topic of moral subjects appropriately, according to the characteristics of music.”⁴⁰ It is intriguing that we see Yū, in her desire to “transcend” the sort of moral dictates that she turned her own back on when she left school at the age of sixteen, speaking almost diametrically back to their very terms – specifically citing the notion of “morality” in order to reject it. Indeed, the author insisted in conversation with me that she had no interest in emphasizing “the educational sorts of things that school songs usually focus on,” opting instead to highlight scenes of local beauty and particularity in a way that never allows the crises of 3.11 to be forgotten, even as explicit citation of these is spurned in the interest of an evocation of the absence that has been their consequence, and an insistence upon the resilience of possibilities that persist in their very midst. In this way, Yū’s school song becomes in its own way something like the Trojan horse suggested above in the context of our discussion on the ambiguous possibilities of ‘nation:’ in the guise of an ideological apparatus, the song takes up position in a state-sanctioned educational system, only to foster what its author(s) hope will be a critical, engaged stance on the world.

The critical impulse behind this project is further clarified in Yū’s choice for composer: Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi. “I’d been convinced from the outset that he was really the only one who could handle the music for this,” Yū said in an April 11 television interview that I had the

⁴⁰ See Masafumi Ogawa, “Japan: Music as a tool for moral education?” in Gordon Cox and Robin Stevens, Eds., *The Origins and Foundations of Music Education* (New York: Continuum, 2010), p. 217.

opportunity to observe from the sidelines. “He has this unique ability to distill and bring out fury [*ikari*] in his music, along with an incredible beauty.” And indeed, Nagabuchi’s musical track for the work sounds much more like a love song than a “school song:” a faint, persistent snare drum tapping out a militaristic sort of beat is the only instrumental hint in the work that might suggest its intended utility – but it is so muted as to be almost undetectable, and one gets the sense, in fact, that the snare is present only for the purposes of calling attention to its near-absence. His compositional strategy in the song work places great emphasis on what might be understood as its chorus, and specifically on the phrase that I have taken to title both this subsection, and this final chapter as a whole: “Here we rise.” In this emphasis, this attribution of a sense of motion to the work that declares not a mere standing, but a *rising*,⁴¹ and the strained grain of voice that accompanies it, we can hear the “fury” that Yū values so highly in Nagabuchi’s work: the music completes the text, just as the text completes the music, and the result is a challenge issued to the Odaka students – one that the artists hope that will continue to circulate among them as the official “school song” – to engage critically with the world, and to build a better “Future from Fukushima.” Nagabuchi made this clear in the remarks that he delivered from the gymnasium stage – where he in fact invited some of Odaka’s students to come up and join him in singing – as part of his powerful performance that morning:

“I want you to get mad – a lot. I want you to get frustrated with the world [*kuyashigatte*] – a lot. Make your teachers sweat!... I don’t really know what they mean by the word ‘recovery’ [*fukkō tte kotoba ha yoku wakaran kedo*], but you kids are the youth – you are the ones who will build this area up, and create the new age [*jidai*].”

Yū Miri and Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi’s creation is not exactly a ‘protest song,’ in the same way that Ryo Kagawa’s “*Kyokun I* [Lesson I]” and “*Sensō shimashō* [Let Us Go to War],”

⁴¹ The original Japanese term, *tatsu*, can be rendered in English as either stand or rise, but the musical thrust attributed to Yū’s lyric leaves no doubt about which is more appropriate.

examined in Chapter Two, are not exactly ‘protest songs,’ either. Nor is it intended to be. None of these works rely upon narratives of something called “resistance,” or on tired, overworked slogans like “no war,” or, more pertinent to our current context, “no nuclear power.” But by this very token, Odaka *Sangyō Gijutsu* Secondary School’s new school song – like the Ryo Kagawa compositions mentioned above – offer us something more: a different way to think about subtleties and complexities of critique, its possibilities, and the ways in which it is enunciated, which has been a common thread working its way throughout this dissertation, and throughout the examinations of disparate social actors’ and cultural producers’ engagements with the world that we have traced herein. As I hope the final routing of some of the critical voices attended to herein through the unstable, contested ground of Fukushima has helped to clarify, this is a story that will continue to unfold – but one that we can trace only if we are able to think outside of the “boxes” that so often inform how we approach these matters.

Of course, these “boxes” present a mesmerizingly attractive mechanism for epistemologically ordering the world – and for all of the thoughts that have spilled across these pages, I discovered in Fukushima just how susceptible I remain to their guile, and the ongoing effort that is required on my part to hear the voices of social actors critically engaged with the world on their own terms. In conversation with Yū Miri in Haramachi, I asked, with the best of intentions, what I would look back upon later as an utterly mortifying question: “Is there something that you are hoping for from Fukushima?” The author answered me far more graciously and patiently than I perhaps deserved. “I don’t really want to emphasize a ‘Fukushima experience,’” she said. “There is no such thing. This place is vastly different from region to region, and people have completely different interpretations and understandings of what is going on. What I want to do is to emphasize the local particularities of places like Minami Soma, and

remind people that they are in a place of beauty, even amidst the crises... Fukushima can become a ‘box,’ just like ‘Japan’ is, and I want to avoid that. The possibilities and the potential [*kanōsei*] lie precisely in the particularities [*ko-ko*] of local areas like Minami Soma, and in their inhabitants.” In this gentle rebuke, I could sense precisely the stance on the world that we identified in Chapter Four, above – a stance that we have called, after Yū herself, *hazama* – that is rooted in a desire to steer clear of enclosed narratives and set boundaries, allowing the possibilities that abide in the plasma⁴² of in-betweenness to simmer and ferment. And it is precisely in such an emphasis on historical and geographical particularities, of course – as we have seen in our examinations of works such as Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi’s “*LICENSE*” – that the possibility of undermining and re-defining universalizing, Historical narratives can be found.

Into what might seem at first glance like a rather bland lyrical rumination on locality, then, Yū Miri and Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi have embedded a critical impulse that is revealed in the specific historical and geographic contexts of a post-3.11 “Future from Fukushima.” The ceremony at which the work was unveiled became a musical event par excellence, with the artists’ texts both electrifying and being electrified by the context of its initial performance. It was an event at which this text was unleashed to circulate through the lives of young social actors/architects whose homecoming, as I shall suggest briefly below, can never be complete. The search for new possibilities – for an evasive “home” – that is propelled by the tension between the encompassing crises of 3.11 and the stubborn, resilient forms of beauty and life that challenge their claims to totality seems precisely the “journey” evoked in the work. And in an insightful, definitive move, Yū Miri – as well as Nagabuchi Tusyoshi, in his musical insistences on motion and on the act(ion) of rising – turn their backs on the temptation to resurrect and find

⁴² See Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social*.

“home” in an idealized, pre-3.11 past, thereby shielding the events from critique and scrutiny; instead, they insist upon a path that moves “ever forth,” advancing into 3.11’s still-unfolding historical moment in order to grapple with what ‘Fukushima’ and ‘Japan,’ collectivity and the everyday, can become. And this sort of proactive engagement with the terms of living in the world is, after all, precisely what we have taken ‘critique’ to be all about.

Fade-Out

This dissertation has sought to investigate ways of engaging with the social and disparate, critical visions for living in the world that often fly under the radar because they do not take the form that we might expect of something called “critique,” or “protest.” Each of the cultural producers with whom we have engaged grapples with the world in novel, sometimes unexpected ways, from Ryo Kagawa’s disdain for “anti-war” folk and ‘protest,’ to Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi’s appropriation and re-deployment of nationalist imagery and symbolism in an inclusive, continually-unfolding vision of alternative collectivity, to Yū Miri’s outright refusal to be confined to a *zainichi* (minority) “box” and insistence upon a broader critique of the terms of the capitalist/consumerist everyday. And the individual membership of the *Ougoukai*, as we have seen, present intriguing and diverse critical stances of their own. These actors have been the true architects of this dissertation, and in a sense, we might say that they share the condition of being always already “homesick.” In conjuring visions of alternative collectivity and grappling with the question of how to assert a different history and alter the terms and conditions of life at the level of the everyday, that is, these actors are always looking for a home that lies, as we have seen, not in the past, but somewhere just beyond the horizon.

For social actors in Fukushima, where we have determined to leave these voices, the question of homesickness is a particularly poignant one – for many, “home” is gone forever, shaken to the ground by seismic tremors, washed out to sea, or simply made unlivable by the consequences of human greed. Wish though they might (and not all do), there are many who can simply never go home again. This impossibility explicitly haunts Yū and Nagabuchi’s text, as well – the community along Murakami Seashore, as we have seen, is simply gone, obliterated by the towering tsunami of March 11, 2011. But its evocation serves as a stubborn reminder of other possibilities for life, even amidst conditions of crisis. Indeed, as Svetlana Boym has taught us, it’s the search that is meaningful and potentially productive in homesickness – not the homecoming itself. Delaying the homecoming, throwing the very notion of absolute truth into doubt and grappling productively with the world from a position that lingers upon the pain of the longing itself,⁴³ and upon Virno’s feeling of “not feeling at home” – this is what we have seen Boym term “reflective nostalgia”⁴⁴ repeatedly throughout these pages, and indeed, insomuch as the actors engaged herein have shown themselves to be nostalgic, their nostalgia is for a world yet to be, not for a world that somehow was. This is the very thin (temporal) line that helps to separate the critical from the fascistic, and it must be eyed carefully in studies that would engage with critique in cultural production and with critical practice at the level of the everyday. For fascism itself is a form of critique, and the moment an idealized, static past is tapped as a means by which to transcend the contradictions of the present, the moment at which we seek to make something “great again” or take terrifying shelter⁴⁵ in a somehow more-authentic past that never existed anyway, then the hounds of fascism are truly at our heels.

⁴³ See Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, esp. p. xvii.

⁴⁴ See Boym, Chapter 5.

⁴⁵ See Paolo Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude*.

But we must also take care not to allow unease over the thinness of this line to send us scurrying for the safety of what we understand to be “safer” modes of critique. The line traced herein is far thinner than received notions of progressive protest and critique – with their emphases on negation over redefinition, oppositional (street) action over reoccupation, insistences on the politics of identity over the politics of the everyday, and so on – have tended to cut, and the mismatch between some of our actors and these received notions of ‘protest’ have led to their voices being misinterpreted, or worse (Ryo Kagawa, as we have seen, was accused by his own musical community of being unprincipled for his resistance to overt forms of oppositional critique, while Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi is regularly accused of a simplistic sort of rightism in online forums and the like). As Micah White – to whom we turned to help open these pages – teaches us, however, “the assumptions underlying contemporary protest are false. Change won’t happen through the old modes of activism... [D]emocracies will not be swayed by public spectacles and mass-media frenzy. Protests have become an accepted, and therefore ignored, by-product of politics-as-usual.” What this means, in short, is that ‘protest’ as it has been known over the past several decades is fundamentally broken. But to reiterate, this is not something to be mourned or feared: rather, “[t]he end of protest heralds the birth of protest in new forms[.]”⁴⁶ White devotes his book to outlining what he terms a “new unified theory of revolution,” which we lack the space to engage in any detail here, but prerequisite thereto is constant innovation, what White calls “break[ing] the script,”⁴⁷ never protesting the same way twice. The onus is thus upon us to hear precisely those complex, diverse, even potentially dangerous critical voices that have tended to fall through the cracks, and attend to the visions for

⁴⁶ See Micah White, *The End of Protest: A New Playbook for Revolution* (Toronto: Knopf Canada, 2016), p. 43.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 186.

the world and for collectivity that they present. As was the case in our brief examination of Karatani Kojin's revolutionary theory above, of course, none of the voices examined herein are working explicitly toward White's "unified theory of revolution" – but again, that is not really the point. Rather, what White teaches us is the need to be constantly attentive and attuned to new critical voices and modes of "protest," and to take seriously their visions for living in the world – for they may, under the right historical conditions, become part of a roadmap toward revolution itself. Hearing these uncommon, overlooked voices, and expanding our understanding of the forms and modalities that critique and 'protest' can take – particularly amid conditions of crisis and precarity – is precisely what this dissertation has endeavored to do.

The final question that I posed to Yū Miri at the end of our meeting in Fukushima was, thankfully, somewhat more productive than that which I recounted earlier: "What do you want the students to *do* with this song?" After a long pause, the author answered: "Remember the beauty of themselves." The vagueness of this reply, of course, raises far more questions than it answers: how will the students understand and make use of this text going forward? How will it intersect with the historical, geographical, economic, and other specificities of their lives in spooling up (or not) a critical stance on the world? What sort of productive praxes – what sorts of "Future[s] from Fukushima" – might it be deployed in the service of? We have a sense now of what this text *means*, at least to its architects. But how can we get at the more important question of how it will be *used*, particularly in the context of the churned up, contested, uneven, and utterly precarious ground of Fukushima?

If it sounds like we've heard this all before, we have – and that is, in a sense, precisely the point. There are many more questions to be asked, and it might be said that we have succeeded in these pages only in returning to their beginning, to a stepping-off point that is in

fact always in danger of being swamped by the sheer number of voices engaging critically with ‘Japan’ in cultural production, and at the level of the everyday. But for all of their geographic and historical specificity, we would do well, I think, to hear in these voices echoes of *our own* everyday. In this historical moment, in which so much of the world finds itself dystopically united in crisis and in precarity, and entangled in the common crises and contradictions of global capitalism, a “Future from Fukushima” is always already a possible future from ‘Japan,’ and a future from ‘Japan’ is always already a possible future for the world. We have pursued these voices across shifting ground and through emerging moments, and it is my hope that this dissertation has laid the groundwork for continuing this pursuit – and that we may, eventually, hear well enough to find their echoes in our own praxes of world-building, to allow them to pursue *us*, as well. By leaving the voices of this dissertation on the muddy, unstable floodplain of Minami Soma, in Fukushima Prefecture, in other words – a place that is both specific and not; a place animated by particularities of voice and vista even as it is inextricably embedded amidst the shifting and fluid social relations that bind ‘Japan’ and the world itself; and a place at which the “[f]uture” is still fraught, contested, and open to definition – we are in fact, I hope, freeing them to haunt us, wherever we go.

Postscript

On May 4, 2017, as I sat at a desk in Chicago tapping out the final pages of this dissertation, the 2017 installment of the Haruichiban – the recurring outdoor music festival that we visited in some detail in Chapter Two of this dissertation – was getting underway in the spring sunshine at the Ryokuchi Outdoor Music Hall, on the outskirts of Osaka. Since its inception in 1971, Ryo Kagawa had been a key figure at the Haruichiban and a huge draw, relied

upon, as we saw in previous pages, to both open and close the show on the day he was scheduled to appear. This year, as well, Kagawa's well-loved amplifiable acoustic guitar was there on stage as attendees to the event navigated the liminal sort of process of finding their way in to the venue's concrete confines from the world outside. The artist himself, however, was not. In a turn of events that shocked and dismayed Kagawa's fans on both sides of the Pacific, Ryo Kagawa was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia not long after his return to Japan from his October, 2016 performance at the University of Chicago, and would ultimately lose his battle with that devastating disease, slipping away peacefully in a Tokyo hospital on the morning of April 5, 2017, at the age of just sixty-nine. Kagawa's son, Genki Kosai – a musician himself and instrumental contributor to the aforementioned album *Mirai* – stepped up to take his father's place on stage as the Haruichiban got underway on that warm May morning, ushering in attendees in to the strains of Kagawa's much-beloved "Love Song," in much the way that his father had in 2015. In a poignant tribute, the elder Kosai's guitar had been given a prominent position stage left during the performance, where it could stand watch – much as we saw his late mentor Takada Wataru's bicycle do in Chapter Two – over the day's proceedings. And according to reports from friends and interlocutors who attended the event, the day would feature musical tribute after musical tribute to the departed master – including a singalong of his signature "Kyokun I [Lesson I]," which, we will remember, continued to hold great meaning and significance for Ryo Kagawa and his listeners right into the present historical moment, animated as it is by legislative changes in Japan that are construed by many as belying a slip toward militarism, and even fascism.

By all accounts, this was a bittersweet day for many, marked by the joy of the annual reunions of music aficionados that the Haruichiban facilitates, but also by painful confrontations

with the fact of the eternal absence of one of its architects. It was a day of mourning, but also of tribute and celebration. And what this tribute and celebration helps to teach us is that, although Ryo Kagawa is gone, his voice is not. As we noted in earlier pages in the combined performance of Kagawa and the young folk duo Humbert-Humbert, events like the Haruichiban, embedded as they are in historical contexts that continue to be defined by various forms of crisis and precarity, provide venues for the continued relaying of untimely critical voices from generation to generation, even as the authors of the texts and the architects of the events themselves – Takada Wataru, for example, and now Ryo Kagawa – may leave us. Understood in this manner, such events deny us the analytical luxury of placing borders around critical “moments” – the sixties, for example, or the seventies, or 3.11, for that matter – and demand that we conceive of the voices that have animated these moments as speaking/singing along a much longer historical arc, engaging with History and with the terms of the everyday in a manner that denies them universality and insists upon different histories, different visions for living in the world. Ryo Kagawa and Takada Wataru, Soeda Azembo and Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, the many voices of the Haruichiban, even Yū Miri and the membership of the *Ougoukai* – all of them sing the Homesick Blues. And as long as crisis and precarity – and the desire to assert different possibilities, different visions for living in the world – persist, the tune will keep getting handed down. It is up to us to keep hearing it, to consider its potentials in specific historical, geographic, and economic contexts, and, if we can work up the courage, perhaps even hum a bar or two of it ourselves.

The title that I have chosen for this dissertation, Homesick Blues, was selected because it serves something of a double duty. It speaks, I hope, to the productive, creative quests and visions for alternative possibilities for living in the world that Paolo Virno’s feeling of “not feeling at home” can incite and foster. At the same time, though, “Homesick Blues” is also the

title of a 1976 song by Ryo Kagawa, from the album *Minami-yuki haiuei* [Southbound Highway],⁴⁸ recorded in Memphis, which sings of the travails of being a long-haired social actor in Japan in the 1970s. The narrator (Kagawa himself, we assume) sings of a series of confrontations with different individuals over a long day in the city – a middle-aged man on a train, a drunk, a cop (“call me constable!” he barks in the song), a sandwich salesman with “a beard like Castro” – and the ways in which each alternatively attempts to classify and categorize him, and convince him of the desirability of different ways of being in the world, from “democracy” to “Marxism/Leninism” to something called “Americanization.” The final actor that confronts him insists that “first of all, you’ve got to decide if you’re on the Left or on the Right,” to which Kagawa replies, “well, I’m pretty good at pretending to be a folk singer.” “Oh, yeah? Show me something that I’ll like, then,” the man insists – to which he mumbles in reply, “That’s why I used to sing that song *Kyokun*.” The entire experience leaves Kagawa exhausted, bewildered, and homesick – a state that we should understand as a consequence of physical distance from his actual “home,” but also, and more importantly, as the consequence of the desire to find different possibilities for living in the world itself, and more meaningful ways of engaging with it – possibilities that were denied him over the many encounters that he endured that trying day. It becomes clear at the end of the work that there has been a geographical, (H)istorical component to his predicament. As he staggers back to the station where the song began, the narrator hears the stationmaster call out the names of stops down the different lines: “Koenji, Kichijoji.” “Must be temples or something,” he mutters, referencing the *-ji* suffixes in these pronouns, which do in fact reference temple names. But these are of course stations in the capital – the Shiga-born Kagawa has been in Tokyo the whole time, bumping into caricature

⁴⁸ Ryo Kagawa, *Minami-yuki Haiuei* [Southbound Highway]. 1976. Tokyo: Teichiku/Black Records. LP album.

after caricature as the metropolis (the very center of ‘Japan’ as History, especially in the 1970s moment of “Japan’s Japan”) attempts to envelop him into its encompassing, universalizing, and utterly exhausting narrative and proclaim, according to a limited number of rubrics, permissible ways of engaging critically with the world. Kagawa’s harried return to the unnamed Tokyo rail station that opened the work seems to convey a desire to not only to flee the metropolis, but also to escape History’s homogenizing advance and pursue different possibilities for living in and engaging with the world. This is the pursuit, of course, to which Ryo Kagawa would devote his entire career.

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of Ryo Kagawa, and to all of those voices – musical and otherwise – who insist upon singing the Homesick Blues just a little off key.

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