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Rethinking Nature in Post-Fukushima Japan

Facing the Crisis

edited by
Marcella Mariotti, M. Roberta Novielli,
Bonaventura Ruperti and Silvia Vesco

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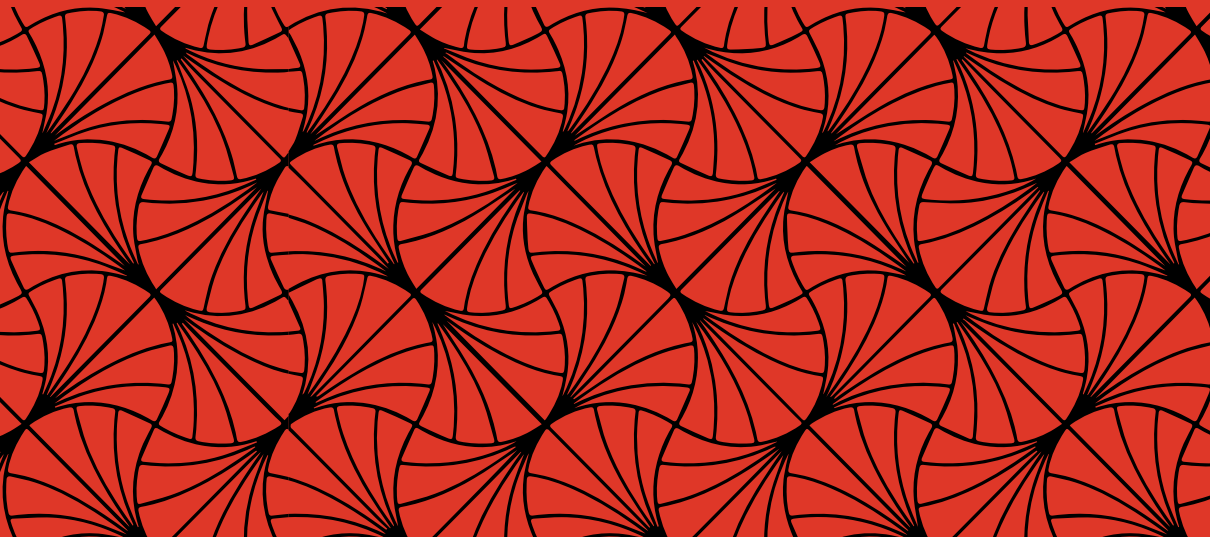

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Table of Contents

Foreword

It is a pleasure for us to present this book, with the contributions of the International Symposium *Rethinking Nature in Contemporary Japan: Facing the Crisis* held at Ca' Foscari University of Venice.

This was the Third International Symposium organised in Venice as the last of a wider three years project generously funded by Japan Foundation: in 2013 we hosted the first Symposium *Rethinking Nature in Contemporary Japan: Science, Economics, Politics*, publishing its results through Edizioni Ca' Foscari in 2014, while in the same year we organised the Second International Symposium *Rethinking Nature in Japan: from Tradition to Modernity*, published by Edizioni Ca' Foscari in 2017.

The commune aim of the three Symposia was the analysis of Japanese society and the international relationships after the tragic earthquake in Tōhoku in March 2011, including the accident at Fukushima nuclear plant.

Its wide-ranging consequences on everyday life of people living in Japan brought into the limelight issues such as the protection of the environment, the management of natural resources, and food safety, both within the country and abroad, as fundamental challenges to our globalised society.

Since the first Symposium in 2013, the participation of scholars from Europe, Japan and United States helped us to gain a multifaceted perspective, combining several disciplines under a multidisciplinary and comparative approach. We aimed at combining such perspectives under the umbrella of a common denominator, often addressed in Japanese figurative, performing and literary arts: the relation between man and Nature. While in 2014 we centred on the cultural representations of the idea of *Nature* in the transition from tradition to modernity, in Fine Arts, Religion and Thought, Literature, Theatre, in 2015' Symposium – *Rethinking Nature in Japan: Facing the Crisis* – we finally focused on contemporary Japan, with a particular eye on Fukushima accident, similarly approached through Religion and Thought, Fine Arts, Music, Cinema, Animation and Performing Arts (Theatre and Dance).

We had three panel sessions: "Nature and Environment in Japanese Music", "Nature and Environment in Cinema, Animation and Performing Arts" and "Nature and Environment in Visual Art". This edited volume brings to our readers only some of the papers presented in each panel.

Nicolas Fiévé keynote paper offers a historical critical perspective on Japanese Housing architecture as born out of a constant a high consideration of the Human-Nature Relationship.

Nature and Environment in Japanese Music are faced by the paper of Daniele Sestili, who presents insights about how to re-think Euro-American concepts application to Japanese Traditional music; by Andrea Giolai's paper on ecology of Gagaku seen as intertwined connection between Place, Nature and Sound in Japanese Court Music; and by Hosokawa Shūhei's Sketch on the Modernization of Japanese Music.

The contributes from the second panel, about Nature and Environment in Cinema, Animation and Performing Arts are by M. Roberta Novielli, who recalling a Ōshima essay title, presents the cinema of Masumura Yasuzō as "A Breakthrough in the Wall of Japanese Cinema"; by Katja Centonze who brings to the readers the Sound of Radioactivity through Yamakawa Fuyuki Performance Scene and its "Vibrations of March 11". Ewa Machotka closes the section with a paper on Satoyama at the Echigo-Tsumari Art Field as an 'elected' place of exhibition for Nature itself.

The 2015 International Symposium was closed with a presentation and practical drawing performance of the artist & designer Ōishi Akinori, who beautifully threw to the audience a somehow philosophical question: *Is Happiness Something to be Found in 'Nature'?* Since the difficulty in writing a paper about the feelings that his drawings inspired in the audience, he offers to our readers a small bite of it at the end this foreword, quoting the Symposium Pamphlet.

On behalf of Ca' Foscari University and of our colleagues, we would like to thank all students, guests and colleagues for their attendance at the Symposium, and to express gratitude also to our special guests from Japan, from the United States, from Europe and from Italy for their precious contributions.

Considering the enthusiastic response from all participants, we believe that the Symposium was very fruitful and we hope that the present volume will pose the basis for further researches to be developed in this fields, since the very date of its issue

We would like to thank for their support the representatives of our University, the Rector of Ca' Foscari University, prof. Michele Bugliesi and prof. Paolo Calvetti, at that time Director of the Department of Asian and North African Studies.

We are extremely grateful to the Director Matsunaga Fumio and to the Japan Foundation who made this three years research project possible, funding the Japanese Studies Section of our Department, and to prof. Tiziano Vescovi, at that time Director of the School of Asian Studies and Business Management for his generous financial support.

A special thank to the artist Ōishi Akinori, too, who allowed us to use his happy-little-man caring for Nature character as poster and logo of our Symposium.

Lastly a heartfelt thanks to all our speakers for their active and fruitful participation in the Symposium and especially to those who contributed to this long-waited volume. We are sure that their papers will rise in our readers a stronger awareness and puzzling questions about that very Nature we all are living with/in.

Marcella Mariotti
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A Critical History of Japanese Housing from the Perspective of the Human-Nature Relationship

Nicolas Fiévé
(EPHE-PSL Research University, Paris, France)

Abstract The history of elite housing from ancient times onwards was based on a concept of space in which man was an integral part of his natural surroundings. This conception of space derives from the symbiosis between 'architecture' and 'garden' and is inherent to the long and rich tradition of Japanese and Sino-Japanese thought fed by myths, legends and sacred beliefs, from primitive Shinto cults to the influence of Indian thought through Buddhism imported via China, not to mention the major influence of Taoist concepts of the universe from the Heian period on. These successive influences never put into question the fundamental relationship between man and nature but, on the contrary, gave it new substance, and left their mark on all forms of social expression including architecture, art, the sacred, and mythology. Japanese architecture has always reflected the fundamental relationship between man and nature, which is why the various archetypes of Japanese dwellings from ancient to pre-modern times rely on the intrinsic relationship between architecture and garden.

Keywords Nature. Natural environment. Housing. Landscape. Garden.

Although the concept of man's physical inclusion in nature as the very foundation of his existence predates the Heian period (784-1185), as shown by the role nature representations played in Yamato culture, it became, with the trivialisation of the domestic garden in the 9th century, a common reality in Kyoto as evidenced by the spatial structure of the houses, architecture and city as a whole. In this sense, the regions of Yamato and Yamashiro may be considered the cradle of a distinctive housing structure that intrinsically associated man with his natural environment. This special relation to nature constituted the source of one of the most original aspects of the local culture that was later imitated throughout the archipelago. This organic man-nature relationship led, over the centuries, to the development of singular landscape designs that

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continue to this day to reflect unique systems of interaction between man and his natural environment. The urban morphology and spatial organisation of houses, palaces and temples in Japan bear witness to the historical and cultural developments of the Japanese people's relationship with nature, and, undoubtedly, to the development of an ecosystem of universal value.

However, the blind development of science and technology over the last a hundred and fifty years or so, often at the expense of culture and life, has upset this age-old equilibrium. Extremely refined but very fragile architectural forms, perfected over more than a thousand years, have been swept away in a few decades in favor of an industrialised form of housing production that is no longer motivated by human, artistic, or spiritual considerations, but by material gain. Japanese sensibility to nature and its architectural manifestation is not an intrinsic and indestructible given!

1 From Aristocrats' Palaces to Modern Japanese Housing

Since the ancient period (593-1185), traditional forms of housing have evolved as follows: the initial development of a refined type of habitat among the highest classes of society, followed by its adoption by the ascending classes, and finally, the dissemination and generalisation of ancient aristocratic models among the middle classes in the early modern era. The aristocracy of the Heian period produced the *shinden-zukuri* 寝殿造-style palace, an architectural housing model that opened onto a garden. This design was adopted by the warrior classes in the Middle Ages (1185-1573) and in the pre-modern period (1573-1868) – in spite of the profound upheavals – before serving as a model for middle class housing from the Meiji period (1868-1912) onwards (Mori 1945). Indeed, the modern Japanese house built on piles and surrounded by verandas, *engawa* 縁側, also opens onto a landscape garden and includes a reception room, *zashiki* 座敷, comprising a *tokonoma* 床間, a type of ornamental altar used to display hanging scrolls depicting landscapes. All these elements where borrowed from the habitat structures produced by the elite classes at different times in history (Fiévé 1996). The same may be said of other art forms reflecting a profound sensitivity to nature, such as the art of flower arranging and the Tea Ceremony, initially developed by the elite, and later adopted and widely practiced by the middle classes. The imitation of the most refined forms of architecture has ensured a remarkable continuity of the Japanese residential space, and its intimate relationship with nature, from ancient times to the present day (Fig. 1).

According to the sources, the recreation of natural landscapes in palace gardens dates back to the ancient period (593-1185). The *Man'yōshū* 万葉集

Figure 1. Isui-tei 倚翠亭 pavilion at Hakusa sansō 白沙山荘, former garden of the painter Hashimoto Kansetsu 橋本関雪 (1883-1945). © N. Fiévé (Kyōto, 2008)

(Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves), the anthology of poems compiled in the mid 8th century, describes the garden of the Island Palace, *shima no miya* 嶋の宮,[1] the residence of Prince Kusakabe no miko 草壁皇子 (662-689), a son of Emperor Tenmu 天武天皇 (r. 673-686), built in 689. This garden, featuring a lake surrounded by rocks, had previously belonged to Soga no Umako 蘇我馬,[2] which earned the latter the nickname of 'Great Minister of the Lake', *shima no ōomi* 嶋大臣.[3] According to the *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 (Chronicles of Japan), the garden within the Southern Court of Empress Suiko's 推古天皇 (r. 593-628) Palace comprised a lake with an island, a Chinese-style bridge, *kurehashi* 呉橋, and a miniature representation of the mythical Mount Su-

1 *Man'yōshū*, poems 170 to 173, 178 and 179 (Nihon koten bungaku taikei 4. Tōkyō: Iwanami shoten, 1957); *Nihon shoki*, Shintei zōho kokushi taikei 1. Tōkyō: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1952, 166.

2 Soga no Umako served under four successive emperors and was already a minister (*ōomi*) under the emperor Bidatsu 敏達天皇 (r. 572-585).

3 In 612, Shikimaro 芝耆麻呂, an emigrant from the Kingdom of Kudara 百済 (Paecke), and a kind of highway engineer (*roji no takumi* 路地工), created a garden south of the Emperor's residence with an arched, Chinese-style bridge that gave access to an island at the centre of the lake evoking Mount Sumeru. *Nihon shoki*, *opus cit*. 155.

Figure 2. Shumisen 須弥山 reproduction in the garden of the Reiun-in 霊雲院 temple, Tōfuku-ji 東福寺. © N. Fiévé (Kyōto, 2012)

meru, *Shumisen* 須弥山, the symbolic centre of the universe in ancient Indian Buddhist cosmogony (Fig. 2). Later examples of gardens suggest that the upright rock set at the centre of a pond or lake symbolised the sacred mountain. Located at the centre of the Nine Mountains and Eight Oceans, *Kusen hakkai* 九山八海, the symbolic representation of Sumeru is a recurrent feature of the Japanese garden throughout its history.[4]

However, it was not before the foundation of the Heian capital, Kyoto in 794, that the art of garden design truly began to flourish, and its development at that time was to have a profound impact on the spatial structure of the house. As opposed to the Nara region, the Heian basin is well supplied in water, and the depth to the water table is shallow. This abundance of water enabled the Heian aristocracy to create gardens featuring large ponds fed by artificial reservoirs. Thus was born the aristocratic garden that be-

4 Some notable examples among the numerous examples of gardens featuring representations of Sumeru for the Muramachi period include the «garden of Nine Mountains and Eight Oceans» 九山八海の庭 of Temple of Futamata Onsen-ji 二俣本泉寺 in Kanazawa, The Golden Pavilion 金閣 in Kyoto and its mountain island at the centre of the lake. Examples for the contemporary period include the garden restored by the famous historian and landscape architect, Shigemori Mirei 重森三玲 (1896-1975), when the Temple of Reiun-in 霊雲院 of Tōfuku-ji 東福寺 in Kyoto was restored (Fig. 2).

came widespread from the 9th century onwards. While the Japanese elite imitated the Chinese model by building their dwellings at the centre of a garden, by doing so, they also perpetuated ancient local practices celebrating the natural elements. Indeed, the techniques used in gardens in the Heian period took root in ancient local forms of nature worship. Before the introduction of Buddhism, the Japanese revered various natural elements, such as rocks, waterfalls and trees, as the abodes or manifestations of *kami*.

Archaeological findings reveal that most proto-historical settlements were established at the foot of mountains, near dense forests that were inhabited by *kami*. Since the ancient period and probably even well before, rocks and boulders occupied a very special place in the lives of the Japanese. It was commonly believed that theophany was achieved through an intermediary, such as a cluster of boulders located in a forest or on a sacred mountain and known as *kannabi* 神名備山. With regard to urbanism, such beliefs also played a fundamental part in the spatial layout of the city to ensure the local deities' protection and the establishment of an auspicious site. Thus, in order to fully understand the processes involved in the conception of Kyoto's urban space, one must take into account the links between urbanism and the various sacred sites and places of worship of the Kyoto basin, such as the Three Mountains, *sanzan* 三山, or the Four Rock Thrones, *yon iwakura*, 四岩倉 (Kōzai 2008).

From this perspective, we may suppose that the creation of gardens in urban spaces throughout the ancient period resulted, in part, from the need to find a substitute for wild nature that had disappeared from the new cities built on flat lands and modeled after their Chinese counterparts. For the Japanese of the Heian period, natural elements (rocks, streams, trees) were endowed with energy whose close proximity was necessary for the wellbeing of the household. Chinese landscape garden designs, founded on ancient beliefs conveyed by Buddhism and Taoism, became associated with local forms of nature worship. Pervaded by the Buddhist concept that the entire universe is contained within a limited space, Chinese landscape designs served as the foundation for the development of the Japanese garden, with its artificial hills, *tsukiyama* 築山, vertical rocks, *tateishi* 立石, cascades, *taki* 瀧 (Fig. 3), winding streams, *yarimizu* 遣水, miniature lakes and seas amid lush vegetation whose seasonal changes highlighted the crucial moments of the yearly calendar (Fiévé 2012).

Japanese gardens feature landscapes, *sansui* 山水, real or legendary, more often a Japanese landscape, and in some cases a Chinese landscape. Influenced by Chinese Taoist practices, the rocks erected in the garden generally symbolise mythical islands. The pine trees planted on the boulders are clipped and dwarfed so as to give them the twisted and gnarled appearance of millenary trees, and like the latter, they are supposed to become imbibed with the virtues of the rocks on which they grow. The influence of Taoism is reflected in the theme of the Immortals, *shinsen* 神

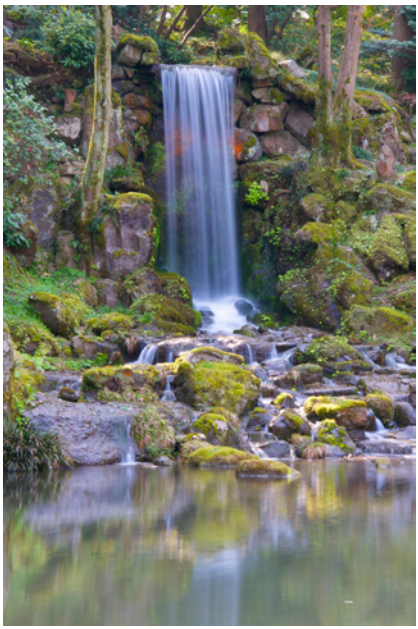

Figure 3. Midori waterfall 翠滝 behind the Kasumi pound 霞が池 (17th c.), Kenrokuen garden 兼六園庭園.
© N. Fiévé (Kanazawa, 2010)

仙, who are believed to dwell on the peaks beyond the Eastern Sea, Tōkai 東海 (Fiévé 2008c). The three mountain-islands of the Immortals: Penglai (Jap. Hōrai 蓬莱), Yingzhou (Jap. Eishū 瀛州) and Fangzhang (Jap. Hōjō 方丈), which the Japanese associate with existing mountains, Mounts Fuji 富士山, Atsuta 熱田山 and Kumano 熊野山, are frequently replicated in the gardens of Kyoto, both ancient and modern.

Landscape designs were also inspired by famous landmarks, *meisho* 名所, celebrated in literature and poetry or depicted in paintings. The choice of the theme depended on the household head's literary and artistic culture and personal predilection for a given landscape. This is clearly expressed in the opening lines of the *Sakuteiki* 作庭記 (Records of Garden Making), a text written in the 11th century and attributed to Tachibana no Toshitsuna 橘俊綱 (1028-1094):

> When setting the stones, first be aware of the [following] basic concepts.
>
> Select several places within the property according to the shape of the land and the ponds, and create a subtle atmosphere, reflecting again and again on one's memories of wild nature. [...]

Figure 4. The landscape of Ama-no-hashidate天橋立 reproduced in the garden of Katsura rikyū 桂離宮 (17th c.) of the Hachijō family. Since the Heian period, Ama-no-hashidate is classified as one of the Three famous landscape of Japan 日本三景. © N. Fiévé (Kyōto, 2010)

> Visualize the famous landscapes of our country and come to understand their most interesting points. Re-create the essence of those scenes in the garden, but do so interpretatively, not strictly.[5]

It is clear from this passage that the landscape garden is a means for the scholar cum garden designer to express his sensibility, and in this sense, the garden not only has a poetic function, but also, it must be stressed, a phatic function. In other words, it serves as a means of social interaction between its conceiver and his fellow men. Indeed, as a work of art, the landscape garden asserts a bond, and establishes a connection with others. For the Heian aristocrats, the garden was a means of self-acknowledgement and of relating to one another in a concrete, physical relationship based on the shared tradition of *meisho*. The poetic work of

5 「石を立てん事、まず大旨をこころふへき也。地形により池のすがたにしたがひて、よりくる所々に風情をめ◇◇◇◇生得の山水をおもはへて、その所々は◇こそありしかと、おもひよせ　おもひよせ　たつべき也」(original text quoted in Tamura 1964, 177-9). English translation taken from *Sakuteiki. Visions Of The Japanese Garden* (Takei, Keane 2001, 153).

the garden's creator – the lettered man living on the premises – was an intuitive quest for a means of connecting to the World and others (Fig. 4).

2 Galleries and Verandas as Links Between the Garden and the House, Between Man and Nature, Between the Outside World and the Inside World

Leisure gardens were initially designed for the daily wellbeing and pleasure of the Japanese elite. The gardens were generally planned around a lake or pond scattered with artificial mountains and islands connected by bridges. Flowers, shrubs and trees were added in order to mark the changing of the seasons. The gardens were contemplated from the galleries and verandas surrounding the buildings. One could also enjoy the scenery either by strolling around the lake or from a boat adrift on the water. During festivals, dancers and musicians performed on a stage placed on the central island or on boats, while the household members and their guests watched from the buildings' galleries. Ducks and other animals roamed freely about (Fiévé 2008a). In some cases, an aviary was erected near one of the verandas, as illustrated in a painting depicting the Eastern Pavilion of Fujiwara Toshimori's palace in the *Kasuga gongen kenki emaki* 春日権現験記絵巻 (Illustrated Tales of the Miracles of the Avatars of Kasuga, 1309, Scroll V).

The study of domestic space in the Heian period shows that the Japanese of that time did not significantly alter the central structure of their buildings inspired by the Chinese design that came into vogue during the Nara period (710-784). The Heian noblemen continued the custom of building their residences at the centre of large gardens but added wide galleries or passageways that ran around the edifices' central framework, *moya* 母屋 or 'Mother Frame'. During the day, the galleries remained open to the surrounding garden. These galleries consist of a pent roof, *hisashi* 庇 廂, supported by an extra row of posts aligned with the posts supporting the *moya*. In the case of a large edifice, an additional roof, *mago hisashi* 孫庇 or *mata hisashi* 又庇, was added around the first. Of the two Chinese characters used for transcribing the term *hisashi*, the character *bi* 庇 designates roof, whereas the character *xiang* 廂 refers to a lean-to structure. In Japan, *hisashi* (whose etymology derives from "*hi [ga] sasu*", 'where the sun shines') refers to the galleries' pent roof extending from the main roof, whereas *hisashi no ma* ('space of the *hisashi*') designates the wooden floored section of the gallery protected by the former. The galleries were encircled and further expanded by another floored section called *sunoko* 簀の子. At night, the *shinden* was sealed off with heavy shutters, *shitomi* 蔀, of wooden lattice, *kōshi* 格子, placed along the full length of the gallery. During the day, the lower half of the shutters were removed while the up-

per half were raised horizontally and suspended from hooks in the eaves above. As a result, the internal space of the house remained open to the surrounding garden.

This ingenious technique allowed the Heian aristocrats to modify and considerably expand the space of their dwellings without fundamentally changing the core structure. The central framework of a *shinden* was two bays deep and five bays wide, the interstice between each bay measuring around 3 meters at the time. With the one-bay wide galleries, the total length of the *shinden* was seven bays and its depth four bays. Thus the total surface of the galleries encircling the building was more than twice the surface of the central framework or *moya*. In other words, more than twice the floor space of the house consisted of open spaces that were neither inside nor outside but that maintained a constant connection between the surrounding garden and the house (Fig. 5).

The development of these open galleries may be explained by the increasingly important role the courtyard or garden played from the 9th century on since most official events (receptions, ceremonies and rituals), and the daily life of the estate's residents took place there. Straw mats were placed on the floors of the galleries for seating, and canopies were erected for high-ranking figures. For receptions, the seating was arranged according to hierarchy, in decreasing order from the main gallery down to the secondary galleries. Subalterns remained in the courtyard at the foot of the building. *Shinden* architecture with its characteristic open galleries allowing for constant interaction between the sheltered space of the house and the surrounding garden had a profound and enduring impact on the development of Japanese housing throughout its history: initially confined to the mansions of the elite, it was subsequently transposed on the housing structures of all levels of society. Given that the aristocracy spent most their time in the galleries of their residences, it is easy to understand how Heian culture came to be influenced so profoundly by an architectural model that placed man at the heart of the garden and surrounding nature (Ōta S. 1987).

Later, towards the late Middle Ages, the old galleries of the aristocratic mansions gave way to verandas or aisles *en* 縁 or *engawa* 縁側 that connected the rooms to one another and, at the same time, the inner spaces of the residence to the garden (Fig. 9). These architectural elements physically and intrinsically associate the garden with the house. In Japanese, the Chinese readings, *on'yomi*, of the Chinese character *en* 縁 are numerous and they generally have a double meaning: some, like *eni*, *enishi*, *yukari*, *yukuri*, *tayori*, are associated with the notion of "relation", while others, such as *heri* or *fuchi*, are related to that of "edge". Berque (2014) argues that among all these terms, *en* is the only one combining both meanings: one meaning is concrete since *engawa* refers to the physical edge of a building, while the other meaning is abstract since *en* here also refers to "relation".

Figure 5. View on the lake from the inside of Kikugetsu-tei 菊月亭, *sukiya* pavilion of the Ritsurin kōen 栗林公園 (17th c.). © N. Fiévé (Takamatsu, 2010)

Figure 6. M. Kinoshita Ryô, architect, and Mrs. Mechtild Mertz, specialist of Asian woods, on the *engawa* 縁側 at Fiévé's house (formerly built in 1937). © N. Fiévé (Kyōto, 2010)

Thus, *engawa* designates the open gallery symbolising the intermediary space connecting the house to the garden, and at the same time a place where the household members interact with people from the outside world. A familiar relation of the household may ascend to the house through the *engawa* (*engawa kara ie ni agaru* 縁側から家に上がる). An impromptu guest may also sit at the edge of the gallery while the host remains seated on a tatami within the adjacent room. This would be unthinkable, however, for a visitor "without *en*" (*muen* 無縁), in other words, a visitor unknown, and therefore without any connection, to the household (Fig. 6).

3 The Integration of Man into the Landscape

Thus, the spatial design of the Japanese house, regardless of the style employed, integrates the house into the garden and the landscape it recreates. The garden is not just a mere vista that can be admired from inside a building, as is the case in western architecture: the Japanese house and its inhabitants are conceived of as an integral part of the landscape. The recreation of a miniature world within the garden establishes a virtual world in which the intuitive and learned man is able to project himself and travel. The garden is a complex composition that permits the juxtaposition of distinct spatio-temporal dimensions within one place. Although living in an urban environment, man is able to remain in constant symbiosis with the surrounding nature thanks to the material forms provided by the pavilions' architecture and the garden (Fiévé 2014).

I must emphasise here that while the landscape garden is an artifice, it is also an expression of wild nature. The tradition of nature literature appeared in China around the 4th century with the ideal of the scholar living in seclusion from the world, as expressed by Tao Qian 陶潛 (365-427) and the landscape paintings of Gu Kaizhi 顧愷之 (v. 345-406). As evoked in Xie Lingyun's 謝靈運 (385-433) lyrical poetry on the quest for immortality, *shansui* 山水 is, from the outset, an appreciation of the intrinsic qualities of Nature and its primeval forces. Moreover, in the Chinese tradition, there is a fundamental difference between 'fields and gardens', known as *tianyuan* 田園, which are artefacts, and 'mountains and water', *shansui*, which express untamed or wild nature (Escande 2005).

Imported from China, the tradition of *sansui* was developed and combined with the local tradition of appreciation for 'famous places', *meisho*, where aristocrats gathered to enjoy the natural beauty of the site. Moreover, since the Heian era and even earlier, Japanese gardens were designed to evoke renowned landscapes; this explains why the term *sansui* came to designate the miniature landscape replicated in a garden. Though initially a man-made contrivance, the garden came to be seen as an emanation of *sansui*, and in this sense it is an expression of nature's primeval forces.

This tradition of landscape imitation is not limited to the domestic garden: other forms include 'tray landscape', *bonkei* 盆景 ou *bonsan* 盆山, dwarfed trees, *bonsai* 盆栽, and, to a certain extent 'standing flower' arrangements, *rikka* 立華. Initially developed by the cultured elite, the art of creating miniature landscapes also extended to the ornamentation of objects used in daily life, such as mountain-shaped incense holders, *hakusanro* 博山炉, and inkpots, *kensan* 硯山, ink stones, *kenbyō* 硯屏, etc. The incorporation of such motifs in daily life not only had an aesthetical, but also a magical and religious purpose. In Japan, as in China, such items, to which great value was attached, were the indispensable implements for creating the landscape paintings, *sansuiga* 山水画 that adorned reception rooms and studies.

From an architectural perspective, the tradition of landscape design was initiated in China with the spatial composition of the scholar's den, *shuzhai* 書齋. It was introduced into Japan with the landscape garden, before enjoying a revival in the Middle Ages, with the appearance of study rooms, *sai* 齋, *shosai* 書齋, built as free standing structures within the landscape garden of an estate or as part of a Zen abbot's private quarters, *hōjō* 方丈. The *Dōninsai* 同仁齋, "Study of the Same Virtue", a small pavilion constructed on the grounds of the *Higashiyama sansō* 東山山荘, Ashikaga Yoshimasa's 足利義政 (1436-1490) retirement villa, stems from this tradition. This pavilion is a literary and picturesque world of its own. Both a place for study and a tea house, it also offered the opportunity to commune with the spirit of famous past masters, such as the monk Musō Soseki 夢窓疎石 (1275-1351) whose virtue is alluded to in the edifice's name. Yoshimasa had wished to create a garden modelled on Musō's Saihōji Temple 西芳寺, and his garden contains a number of elements similar to those found in Musō's garden: the path winding through the islands and hills, the waterfall, the same number of pavilions bearing similar names, the rock arrangement imitating the famous cascade of boulders created by Musō at Saihōji. Both gardens feature a 'pavilion bridge', *hashi no abaraya* 橋亭, and a kiosk-shaped boat, *funadomari-tei* 舟泊亭. The transposition of Musō's garden to Yoshimasa's estate in the eastern hills made Yoshimasa's garden a famous place, a *meisho*, a source of life and connection (Fiévé 2008c).

The Japanese teahouse, *chashitsu* 茶室, and its garden, *roji* 露地, also derived from this singular tradition. Indeed, the architectural space of the teahouse was designed to offer a haven of nature and peace and to provide the 'tea man', *chajin* 茶人 with a refuge from the hustle of daily life. Conceived for the townspeople of Kyoto in the 16th century, it is the direct legacy of the Chinese tradition of cottages, *maoshi* 茅室, mountain hermitages, *shanzhuang* 山荘, 'peaceful pavilions', *jinshi* 静室, and other such retreats (Fig. 7, 8).

The teahouse, like most edifices and gardens, has a name, generally inspired by a literary or religious citation. It is not fortuitous that the name most often used is *sai* 齋, a term associated with the idea of reclusion and

Figure 7. Inside view of the tea house Yūgao-tei 夕顔亭 (1774). © N. Fiévé (Kanazawa, 2010)

Figure 8. Tea house Shōsei-an 松声庵 (Edo period). © N. Fiévé (Kanazawa, 2010)

Taoist purification (Stein 1987, 284), or *hōjō* 方丈, "ten feet square", referring to Vimalakīrti's ten foot square retreat. Representing an idealised image of eremitism, the teahouse, or 'thatched hut' (*sōan chashitsu* 草庵茶室), as the ancient masters Takeno Jōō 武野紹鷗 (1502-1555) and Sen no Rikyū 千利休 (1522-1591) referred to it, was a place where the tea man could transcend his urban existence by withdrawing from the world like the hermit in his remote mountain hermitage. He who seeks refuge and practices *chanoyu* 茶湯 acquires the virtues of the hermit, *inkyo* 隱, as illustrated by the following passage from *Chōandōki* (Choandō's Notes) by a disciple of Rikyū describing the poet Kamo no Chōmei 鴨長明 (1155?-1216) in his morning solitude as he rekindles the embers of the hearth in his *hōjō*:[6]

> Kamo no Nagaakira [Kamo no Chōmei] recreated Vimalakīrti's ten foot square hut and became a hermit. There he was content to live away from

6 *Hōjōki* 方丈記 (An Account of My Hut), see the translation of R.P. Candau (1968, 278).

> the world and venerate the Buddha Amida. Though his room was only ten feet square, many people gathered there, and while he prepared tea, *chanoyu*, the place could be likened to Jōmyōkoji's [Vimalakīrti] abode.[7]

The characteristic features of these architectural spaces designed for 'spiritual isolation' or seclusion, *kakuri* 隔, [8] are their gates, doorways, hedges and other devices serving to separate them from the outside world, together with the tablets, *hengaku* 扁額, with carved inscriptions identifying the hut, pavilion or garden. The *hengaku* bears an epigraph, generally a quotation from a classic. The inscription endows the place with the properties of a renowned site (*meisho*). It becomes charged with the *meisho's* history, culture, and hence human life, and is regarded as its emanation. The epigraph elevates the garden or pavilion it names and enables he who enters it to pass into another world. The garden gates, the miniature, 'crawl-through' entrance to the hut, *nijiri-guchi* 躙口, so low it requires crouching (*nijiru* 躙る) in order to pass through, the *nakakuguri-mon* 中潜門, a middle gate separating the inner tea garden from the outer tea garden, the stone water basins, *tsukubai* 蹲踞, that punctuate Japanese space both religious and profane: all these elements serve to mark the passage from one space or world to another.[9]

The tea garden (*roji*) itself is a spatial composition designed for 'spiritual reclusion', and represents the bridge between the profane world and the closed space of the teahouse. It is a place for purification leading to the Way of the Buddha, as expressed by the following passage ascribed to Sen no Rikyū (1522-1591):[10]

> *Roji* designates the seclusion of a thatched hermitage. In the Lotus Sutra, a parable relates how the children of an affluent master flee from their house on fire—representing the Three Phenomenal Worlds – to find

7 「鴨の長あきらハ、維摩の方丈をまなひて隠居し、人にましハらさるをたのしみ、只一すしに、弥陀をねかへり、我堂ハ方丈にたらすといへと、あまたの人を入て茶湯せしなれハ、浄名居士の獅子の座にハかなへりとそおもふ」 quoted from *Chōandōki* 長闇堂記 (Choandō's Notes) (1960, 380). Kubo Chōandō 久保長闇堂 (1571-1640) studied the Tea Ceremony with the Rikyū (*Rikyū-ryū* 利休流) school before writing this treatise.

8 I have taken up the concept expressed by Masuda Tomoya 増田友也 (1914-1981), translated into English by the term seclusion in the sense of "spiritual isolation" (Masuda 1987).

9 Akisato Ritō's 秋里籬島 *Iwagumi sono.u yaegaki-den* 石組園生八重垣伝 (Garden Stones and Hedges), published in 1827, enjoyed immense success upon its publication. This work is organised according to a thematic classification of the dividing elements of the garden: hedges, *kaki* 垣 (*shikiri-gaki* 仕切垣 and *sode-gaki* 袖垣) are detailed in forty or so entries, bridges and gates, *niwa no kado* 庭門 (around fifty models) constitute the core of the work, while the last pages give a brief overview of upright rocks and rock arrangements, *iwagumi* or *ishigumi* 石組, and other stone elements of the garden: bridges, stepping stones and paving, basins, and lanterns.

10 Tachibana Jitsuzan 立花實山 (1655-1708), quotation from the *Kochūrodan* 壺中爐談, included in the 7th fascicule of apocryphal postface of *Nanpōroku* 南方録 (*Nanpōroku* 1962, 414).

themselves on 'bare ground' (*roji*), also referred to as the 'cart yoked to the white ox', or as the 'white dewy path' (*hakuroji* 白露地), where one may rid one's self of the dirt and troubles of this world. The notion of the heart's purity is strongly associated with the term *hakuroji*.[11]

The Way of Tea, *sadō* ou *chadō* 茶道, as it came to be formalised in the 17th century, is a spiritual practice based on the notion of material deprivation, *muichibutsu* 無一物, 'having nothing'. As Aldo Tollini (2014) aptly explains in his work, its conceptualisation by Tea Masters is based on notions stemming from Zen truths of which the Tea Ceremony is a physical expression. This practice, however, also incorporated aesthetical concepts and principles developed throughout the medieval period and its roots may also be traced back to the aristocracy's *waka* 和歌 poetry. This is evidenced by the Tea Masters' numerous references to such poetry. The Tea Ceremony also derived from the custom of tea gatherings, *chakai* 茶会, practiced in the 15th century by the military aristocracy, and inspired by Chinese practices and the tea tasting parties in vogue in Japan among the aristocracy. The elegance and refinement of presentation, dress, architecture and garden were of the utmost importance in these gatherings.

The paradox of the Tea Ceremony lies in the diversity, not to mention antinomy, of these influences: the spiritual dimension underlying this practice never excluded the aesthetic quest for harmony and beauty. Depending on the generation or school of style—many of which flourished throughout the Edo period – one or the other aspect, spiritual or aesthetical, dominated the art of tea preparation. Nevertheless these two aspects always remained complementary. To quote from the *Nanpōroku* 南方録, for Jōō, the following poem by Teika[12] taken from the *Shinkokinshū* (New Collection of Ancient and Modern [Japanese Poetry]), an early 13th century anthology of poems, perfectly illustrates the *wabi* of *chanoyu*:

11 「露地ハ草庵寂寞の境をすへたる名なり、法華譬喩品に長 子すでに三界の火宅を出て、露地に居ると見えたり、又露地の白牛といふ、白露地ともいへり、世間の塵勞垢染を離れ、一心性情の無一物底を、強て名づけて白露地といふ」. «The house on fire», third parable of the *Hokekyō* 法華經 (Lotus Sūtra), which the Buddha relates to Çâriputra, recounts how an affluent master rescues his children from his house on fire. In order to convince the children, who are absorbed in their play inside the house and unaware of the danger, he resorts to a subterfuge and tells them that three carts yoked to a sheep, a deer and an ox await them outside. The children rush outside to look and are thus saved, finding themselves on «bare ground» (*roji* 露地). In this parable, by running from the house on fire, which symbolises the Three Phenomenal Worlds, one is saved from the flames of rebirth, old-age, illness, death, anxiety, sorrow, distress, delusion, blindness, the Three Poisons of greed, hatred and ignorance, and the suffering caused by the Five Desires, by seeking refuge in the emptiness of the «bare ground», and by turning to the Buddha's teachings and the path to enlightenment (Robert 1997, 103).

12 Fujiwara no Sadaie 藤原定家 (1162-1241), better-known as Fujiwara no Teika was a Japanese poet, calligrapher, novelist, anthologist, and scholar of the late Heian period and early Kamakura period.

見わたせば	*Miwataseba*	Casting wide my gaze,
花も紅葉も	*hana mo momiji mo*	Neither the cherry blossoms
なかりけり	*nakarikeri*	Nor scarlet leaves:
浦のとまやの	*ura no tomaya no*	A fisherman's reed hut
秋の夕暮れ	*aki no yūgure*	In the autumn dusk.

> The spirit of this poem sings the essence of *chanoyu*. The cherry blossoms in spring, the red leaves in autumn may be represented by the beautiful architecture of the *shoin daisu*" […] "By tirelessly contemplating the cherry blossoms in spring or the fiery leaves in autumn, we reach the threshold of material detachment (*muichibutsu*). This may be likened to the austerity of a fisherman's hut. Those who know not the wealth proffered by the cherry blossom or the autumn leaves cannot live in such a hut. By contemplating this beauty again and again, one may reach the most profound level of *sabi*, that of the fisherman's hut" […] "Jōō also said that here resides the fundamental essence of Tea". (*Nanpōroku*, 398-9)

Still according to the *Nanpōroku*, Jōō goes on to explain his renouncement of material wealth with Teiki's poem quoted above, which also echoes Yoshida Kenkō's 吉田兼好 (1283?-1352?) words in his *Tsurezuregusa* 徒然草 (Essays in Idleness):

> «Are we only to look at flowers in full bloom, at the moon when it is clear?
> No, to look out on the rain and long for the moon, to draw the blinds and not to be aware of the passing of the spring – these arouse even deeper feelings […]. And must we always look upon the moon and the blossoms with the eye alone?».[13]

The *Nanpōroku* goes on to quote a poem by Fujiwara no Ietaka 藤原家隆 (1158-1237), also taken from the *Shinkokinshū*:

花をのみ	*Hana wo nomi*	Show them who wait
待らん人に	*mataran hito ni*	Only for cherry blossoms
山里の	*yamazato no*	There in the mountain village:
雪間の草の	*yukima no kusa no*	Grass peeks through the snow,
春を見せば	*haru wo miseba*	And with it, spring.

(*Nanpōroku*, 399)

13 Adapted from *The Tzuredzure gusa of Yoshida no Kaneyoshi*, translated by George Sansom (*Asiatic Society of Japan Transactions*, 39 [1911]).

The poem is followed by this commentary:

> "The mountain village is a place where one can experience a *sabi* similar to that of the fisherman's hut. After a while the cherry blossoms wane and the autumn leaves are concealed beneath the snow and the *sabi* one feels in the village's barren and empty landscape is similar to that of the fisherman's hut [in Teika's poem]". (*Nanpōroku*, 399)

To those who long to contemplate the cherry blossoms, Takeno Jōō and Sen no Rikyū show the desolate landscape of a mountain village in the winter in which a grass blade emerging from the snow expresses the essence of spring. Their message is clear: those who seek the spring in the cherry blossoms or autumn in the scarlet leaves of the maple perceive only the material world and can only experience superficial emotions. On the other hand, a single blade of grass in an otherwise forsaken and empty world can lead to the spiritual understanding of the splendor of spring. The natural landscape in spring is indeed sublime, but a tiny part of it (a blade of grass) suffices to evoke the entire spiritual landscape and true essence of spring. This applies to the practice of *chanoyu*, and explains why the teahouse is a simple, secluded place and the tea garden, a garden without flowers (Fig. 8).[14]

To resume our discussion, the domestic garden, tea garden and landscape garden appeared in varying forms throughout history; initially confined to the estates of the Japanese elite, they later became part of the habitat structures of pre-modern society as a whole. One may say without exaggeration that most houses in pre-war Japan had integrated, in one form or other, the age-old tradition of landscape garden. The architecture and gardens not only represented microcosms and legendary landscapes but also living theatres in which people could withdraw from daily life in order regenerate themselves through the proximity of the primeval forces of an ancestral landscape forged by centuries of civilisation and bearing a rich heritage of human moral, spiritual and aesthetical values.

14 This leads me to mention here the *Glass Tea House Mondrian* pavilion (2014), a contemporary creation by the photographer Sugimoto Hiroshi 杉本博司 (born in 1948), built on the Island of San Giorgio Maggiore in Venice. In spite of the beauty of its forms and its architectural quality from the point of view of contemporary architecture, this creation probably represents the antithesis of Jōō's or Rikyū's conception of Tea as expressed in the medieval and pre-modern sources as *Yamanoue sōjiki* (1586) or *Nanpōroku*. The use of synthetic materials and the transparency of the glass are the very expression of attachment to the material world that they sought to refute. I may even add that Sugimoto's work is the negation of the intuitive and sensitive quality of the man-nature relation based on Japan's ancient literary and poetic tradition.

4 Habitat, Garden and Ritual

I would now like to examine two practices, one ancient and the other contemporary, that in my view shed light on the special human-nature relationship in Japanese domestic space.

During the Heian period, life at court was punctuated by numerous celebrations, *nenjū gyōji* 年中行事. At the imperial palace, dozens of celebrations took place in the garden or in the southern courtyard of the complex. The first day of the year, for instance, was marked by the *Shihōhai* 四方拝, the 'Four-directions salute'. During which the Emperor, after a bathing to purify himself, descended from the *Seiryōden* 清涼殿 to the garden below. There he would stand facing North, and invoke the star of the year seven times to protect the realm from calamities. He would then salute the Earth, Heaven and four cardinal points (Vieillard-Baron 2000, 95). On the 3rd day of the 3rd moon, took place a special banquet known as the "party held by a meandering stream" (*gokusui no en* 曲水の宴), during which the guests, sitting on straw mats at the centre of the garden near a stream, engaged in poetic sparring matches. Sake bowls placed on floats in the shape of birds were released upstream from where the guests were seated. The participants were instructed to improvise poetic compositions according to a given theme before the sake reached the spot were they sat; if they succeeded, they could drink the bowl of sake drifting past them. Such gatherings are still held today along the sacred stream of the Kamo sanctuary in Kyoto.

These ancient celebrations remind us that while the Heian gardens served as recreational sites, they were also intended as a space where man could enter into contact with the forces of nature. In this sense, the garden is a spiritual area where man may blend into the natural environment. The influence of ancient vernacular beliefs according to which spirits manifest through the natural elements is echoed in the Chinese conception of the garden. Upon entering the garden space, man becomes once more an integral part of nature. Thus, the garden has always represented a space where, through the earth, water sky, stone and vegetation, man could make direct contact with the natural and spiritual forces of nature. The Japanese garden has preserved this spiritual dimension throughout the centuries.

In 2009-2010, during a secondment in Japan, I was fortunate enough to live with my family in a traditional house in Kyoto that was built in the 1930s (see Fig. 6). During my time there, I was able to experience first-hand living in a space modeled on ancient spatial designs, with tatami-lined floors, reception room with a *tokonoma*, sliding doors redefining the inner space of the house according to the season, a traditional bath, a tea room with a sunken hearth for the tea ceremony. The décor in each room depicted various aspects of nature and reflected the passing of the seasons. The view of Mount Daimonji 大文字 in the background provided a beautiful example of 'borrowed scenery', *shakkei* 借景. A wide gallery

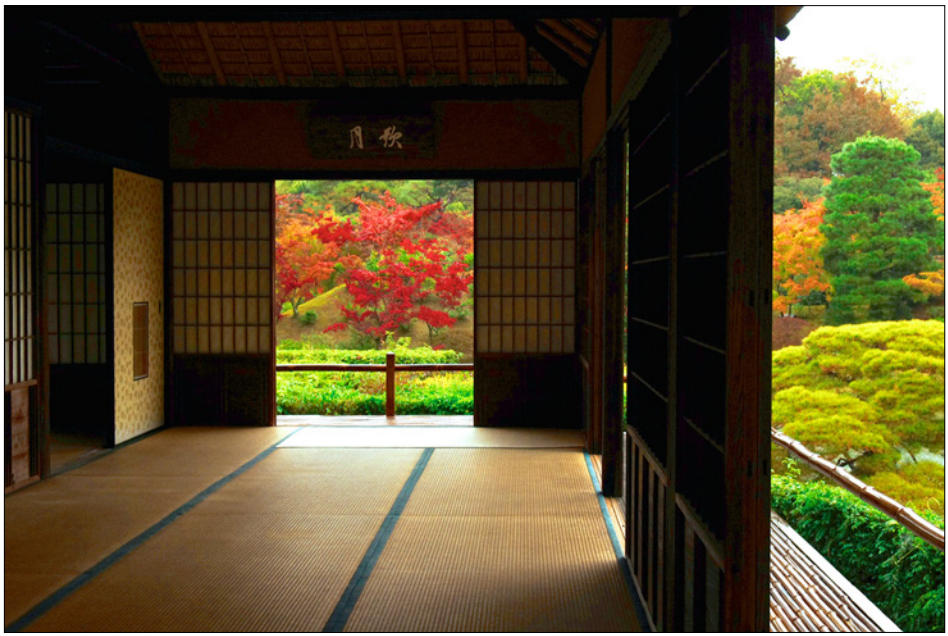

Figure 9. The view on the garden from the Gepparō 月波楼, "Moon-wave pavilion", at Katsura rikyū 桂離宮 (17th. c.). The "Moon-Wave Pavilion" was named after the last verse of the first quatrain of a poem by Bai Juyi 白居易 (772-846): "Come spring, the lake is like a painting || Amidst the maze of overhanging boughs, its tranquil waters stretch over dozens of li || A profusion of pines cover the mountain slope with a thousand hues of green || On the lake's ripples the moon shimmers like a pearl".

circumventing the house allowed to one to fully enjoy the view of the surrounding garden and mountains in the distance.

My parents-in-law were staying with me in Kyoto for the New Year, *shōgatsu* 正月, and on that morning, we celebrated the New Year according to the ritual celebrated by the family for generations. As soon as we woke up, we sat on the *engawa* facing the garden in the freezing winter cold, and one after the other, we washed our hands in a stone basin for purification, then saluted the rising sun before eating a piece of knotted algae with a pinch of salt. We then entered the *zashiki* to share a bowl of sake and eat *zōni* 雑煮. The day before, we had decorated the *tokonoma* for the occasion. This simple yet powerful ceremony reminded me of the *Shihōhai* of the ancient calendar of courtly celebrations: although more modest in form, the ritual we performed was the direct legacy of the *Shihōhai*. By performing these simple yet fundamental gestures, my daughter, then aged three, experienced a ritual and a culture whose origins go back to the dawn of time. She saluted the rising sun and thus Mother Nature, the source of life.

5 Conclusion

To conclude, I would like to stress that we were able to perform this ritual because we were living in a house with an *engawa* and a garden, in other words, in a house built according to ancestral models of habitat. My parents-in-law told me that since they lived in a modern apartment, they had given up the practice. My wife who normally lives in an apartment in France, also no longer practiced this ritual, though she had practiced it in her childhood. In this instance, it was the house and its traditional spatial layout that led us to perform this ritual of communion with nature (Fig. 9). While the house's architecture provides a material structure, the dynamics of its spatial layout implies a multitude of functions, both material and immaterial, that shape our experience of the world. In a traditional Japanese house, our physical bodies do not move in the same way as they would in a western house. For this reason, with the modernisation of the housing model and the growing disappearance of the landscape garden, a great number of practices and physical experiences have been irreversibly altered or lost. In this sense, the modernisation of the Japanese habitat in the 20th century has provoked an existential rupture in the man-nature relationship.

It is not that technological progress is necessarily a bad thing and that we should revert to the life-style of our ancestors. For instance, the beautiful house in which I lived in Kyoto was very cold in winter and would have been a lot more comfortable with a few modern fixtures. What I mean to say is that the advent of technological science and the ensuing economic exploitation have led man to deny himself and to cut himself off from his natural environment, and the excessive exploitation of nature's resources is the direct consequence of this unprecedented rupture. Of course, it would be a mistake to think that the great improvements in our living conditions were born from the negative consequences of science and technology alone. The rejection of authoritarianism and fascism, the abolition of the caste system, women's emancipation etc., were also facilitated by technological progress which liberated the working classes from social alienation. However, it is our duty to remind ourselves that the great advances made in improving our condition stem as much from Science as they do from Morality, Ethics, Philosophy and Spirituality.

The sensibility expressed in the architecture of the Japanese house and garden has both a poetic function and a phatic function: it affirms a bond and establishes a link with others. This sensibility is the aesthetical aspect referred to by Michel Maffesoli (1990): a work of art is a means of knowing oneself and of establishing a concrete, physical connection with one another wherein expressing and reinforcing this link is the most fundamental part. The designer's 'sensitive work' is an attempt to create a bond of shared experience with the others and the world.

20th century anthropology, in particular Levi-Strauss (2001), has shown that in traditional societies, man belongs to a place and his habitat is inseparable from the society in which he lives. Without knowing it, humans live their daily lives in a space that is a representation of the world, of their world. The human habitat provides man with self-knowledge and at the same time allows him to be connected and relate to his fellow men. Moreover, traditional habitat also bears the memory of a society. It establishes an indispensable connection between past and future generations and solidarity with the surrounding natural environment. Through their habitats, living cultures are united to their land, climate, vegetation, society and other men.

But the man-nature symbiosis, previously reflected in Japan's traditional habitat architecture, is not an intrinsic and indestructible given of Japanese culture. Let us not forget this!

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1 Nature and Environment in Japanese Music

Rethinking Nature in Post-Fukushima Japan
Facing the Crisis
edited by Marcella Mariotti, M. Roberta Novielli, Bonaventura Ruperti and Silvia Vesco

'Nature' in Japanese Traditional 'Music'
Reflections on *hōgaku* and Two Euro-American Concepts in Present-Day Japan

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(Independent Scholar)

Abstract In this essay, I want to address the question of whether there exists a relationship between 'nature' and today's Japanese traditional 'music', *hōgaku*. A further point is what 'nature' means within the discourses of the *hōgaku* music-making world. In relation to the issue of nature-music, I will concentrate on two questions among the many possible ones: is 'nature' a central element in the material culture of *hōgaku*, and, is 'nature' expressed somehow in *hōgaku* languages? Holding the position that interviewing traditional music-makers is the most adequate way in which to deal with such questions, as ideas are not separable from the practice of music, my intent is to provide some tentative answers.

Keywords Japanese Traditional Music. Hōgaku. Music and Nature. Ideas on music. The pratice of music.

1 音取 *Netori* – Mode Setting Prelude

It is almost 30 years since James Clifford and George E. Marcus, by publishing their famous work called *Writing Cultures* (1986), launched severe critiques to North-american ethnography.

Paraphrasing those scholars' words, I think we must admit that Japanese Studies too are still in the midst of an epistemological crisis: Western scholars can no longer portray non-Western peoples and cultures with unchallenged authority, as we are now all the more aware that the process of cultural representation is always contingent, historical, and contestable.

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Yet, I would also like to remember that an Italian anthropologist, folklorist and historian of religions, Ernesto De Martino (1908-65),[1] predated somehow all this, with his methodological approach generally referred to as "critical ethnocentrism".[2]

Indeed, De Martino's "critical ethnocentrism" made the relationship between the ethnographer and his/her subject of study clear in as early as the 1960s.

According to him, the encounter with the Other can exclusively be experienced from our specific ethnocentric perspective. It is only both accepting the partiality of our point of view and remaining aware that the tools of analysis we use are cultural-specific ones, that we can try to understand different cultures (cf. De Martino 1977).

All this said, I am very glad to take part into this international conference, that engages Japanese and European scholarships in the increasingly multi-polar, globalising field of Japanese Studies. As a critical ethnocentric observer, here I can keep confronting with Japanese and Euro-american scholars alike. As a matter of fact, the Japanese insider ethnography and 'our' outsider ethnography have interactive roles in the process of understanding.

For similar reasons, trying to apply a dialogical methodology, I have taken advantage of personal communications from two Japanese musicians and a musicologist/musician in preparing this paper. I consider the bearers of the musical traditions I study as interlocutors, rather than 'informants'.

I therefore wish to thank Suzuki Haruo 鈴木治夫 *sensei* (*gagaku* musician and *shō* mouth organ maker, Tokyo), Tanaka Denpachirō *sensei* (*Kabuki gezabayashi* musician, Tokyo) and professor Saitō Mitsuru 斎藤完 (Yamaguchi University), who is also a *shakuhachi* player. Without their contribution this paper wouldn't have been possible.

1 The founder of Italian cultural anthropology, Ernesto De Martino left a legacy of extensive fieldwork research in Southern Italy, original works, and an impressive set of suggestions regarding theory and research methodologies. In his first fieldwork experience in Lucania, De Martino could be considered the first post colonial ethnographer, especially through his questioning of the role of subaltern people in making history and culture. Cf., in English, Saunders 1993.

2 Ethnocentrism, a notion coined by William Graham Sumner in the early twentieth century, assumes that one's own ethnic *Weltanschauung* is the only one from which other customs, practices, and habits can be understood and judged. Ethnocentric attitude thus is conceived critically as involving overgeneralisations about other cultures, on the basis of limited if any evidence.

2 序 *Jo* – Introduction

2.1 Aim of This Paper

In this essay, I address the question of whether there is any relationship between 'nature' and today Japanese traditional 'music'. Indeed, my guiding concern is what nature means within the discourses of the Hōgaku music-making world.

Nowadays, 'nature' and 'music' are commonsensical terms in everyday parlance and even in scholarly discourse in Europe and the USA. Yet, words are never neutral, as they relate to the historical, aesthetic, political, and, especially, ideological fields they inhabit.

2.2 'Nature'?

The idea of 'nature' is widely employed in Western discourse. Nevertheless, this is one of the most ill-defined concepts.

Among its meanings, 'nature' is used to refer to anything that exists as part of the physical world. Sometimes related to this, is the concept of 'nature' as opposed to nurture. The notion of culture becomes here central: 'natural' is opposed to that which is the outcome of a 'cultural' process.

2.3 Is There Such a Thing as 'music'?

The last past one century and half have made Euro-american scholars aware of the great variety of the world's musics and of the diversity of conceptions of music: different societies, cultures, historical periods and individuals have differing ideas on what constitutes music. Accordingly, providing a universally acceptable definition of the concept is impossible.

Even in Western modern culture, where the word 'music' seemingly has suggested a unitary concept, Carl Dahlhaus – a German musicologist unfotunately almost unknown to English-speaking readers – pointed out the ill-definedness of the concept: the very same art music scholarship had failed to provide a clear-cut, shared definition of it in its field of study (Dahlhaus-Eggebrecht 1998, 7-39).

What music is remains open to question, if we think transculturally.

3 破 *Ha* – Breaking Apart: 'Music' (and 'Nature') in Japan?

The situation is all the more complex if we think of 'nature' (*shizen* 自然 in modern Japanese) in relation to 'music' (*ongaku* 音楽) in Japan.

Most Western observers tend to take for granted that the labels they put to different aspects of their own cultures can be easily moved onto Japanese cultural facets. But terms as 'nature', and even 'music', became meaningful concepts only in the late eighteenth century Japan, when the Japanese language was powerfully affected by the translation of Western vocabulary and ideas.

The word *ongaku* is a compound of two sinographs which appeared in Chinese documents in as early as the Qin period (221-206 b.C.). Yet, it was only in the late eighteenth century that this compound came to be used in Japanese as an umbrella term referring to all the human expressions involving sound. The Japanese state proactively re-introduced the word, largely to facilitate the implementation of standardised music education programs in the newly centralised schools and military institutions. '*Ongaku*' quickly emerged as an index of the new Japanese nation-state's progress toward a Euro-American standard of would-be civilisation.

Before that, the compound had been used in Japan as early as the eighth century to refer to music of Chinese origin (the Tang derived repertory in *gagaku*). During the Edo period, it was picked up by Kabuki musicians to refer to *gagaku*-flavored sound patterns used in Buddhist temple scenes. *Shamisen* music and other urban musics, on the other hand, were referred to as *ongyoku* 音曲.

Accordingly, to talk or write about 'Japanese music', as if the term were transparent, would be to ignore the fact that "before contact with the West, Japan had no all-embracing term referring to any humanly organized sound [i.e. music], religious or secular, vocal or instrumental, aristocratic or plebeian" (Hosokawa 2012, 2)

It goes beyond my scope to analyze the emergence of the concept of '*shizen*'. It will suffice here to remember that the word has a story very similar to that of *ongaku*, as it translates a foreign abstract concept. Before the introduction of such a term, that occurred after the beginnings of the Meiji period, there was no general expression encompassing the whole physical world.

4 急 *Kyū* – Rushing to the Finish

4.1 Two Questions (among many)

Clearly, the issue music-nature is a multi-layered one, indeed a broad range of issues, even if one limits his/her research to a single culture. Accordingly, I decided to concentrate on two questions among the many possible ones.

These selected questions are:

1. Is *shizen* a central element in the material culture of music?
2. Is *shizen* expressed somehow in *hōgaku* languages?

I hold the position that interviewing music-makers is the most adequate way in which to answer such questions, as ideas are not separable from the pratice of music. I am aware that this essay can't be an exhaustive one, but it is nevertheless my intent to provide some first, tentative answers.

First, I will shift my focus onto a sometime neglected aspect of that complex socio-cultural phenomenon we call 'music': its material culture.

4.1.1 Musical Instruments

The relationship between music and its objects is of paramount importance. Musicologies have always dealt with material culture: the study of manuscripts, print sources, instruments and other artefacts associated with the production and reception of music is central to its understanding.

We have to examine critically the materiality of music and its physical media as an explicit part of culture, rather than simply a means of music-making.

An interesting example related to contemporary Japan is offered by the construction of *gagaku*[3] mouth organs, *shō*. I will refer to email exchange I had recently with Suzuki Haruo, *gagaku* musician and *shō* maker.

A *shō* is an aerophone consisting of a wind-chest penetrated by 17 bamboo pipes, each, except two, fitted with a free reed of bronze. A reed is an elastic lamina which, under the influence of an airstream from the player's lungs, vibrate.[4]

Suzuki Haruo *sensei* is one of the very few mouth organ makers in Japan. He is also a *gagaku* wind instruments player. After starting playing the *ryūteki* flute when 17, he took up the *shō* too at 26.

3 *Gagaku* 雅楽, the court music/dance of Japan, is a performing art on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list from 2008.

4 It is worth noting that the word 'reed' refers both to: the stalk of any of various tall grasses, especially of the genera Phragmites and Arundo, growing in marshy places; and a flexible piece of cane or metal that, attached to the mouth of any of various wind instruments, is set into vibration by a stream of air.

Based in the Tokyo area, from 2005 he has been the main editor of *Gagakudayori*, – the only newsletter devoted to Japanese court music and related topics. From 1993 to 2010 he served as deputy chairperson of the Nihon gagaku kai, a society which aim is the study and the performance of *gagaku*. Suzuki taught *shō* performance at the Tokyo University of Arts and Music from 2010 to 2013, when he retired.[5]

On the topic, Suzuki says:[6]

雅楽と自然とはとても関係がありますね。
　まず楽器の材料は自然のもの竹やヨシ(葦)などを使います。
　この自然の物でもどんな竹でも、どんなヨシでも良いというものではなく雅楽にとって一番良い音色を出す種類があります。

Gagaku and nature do have a tight relationship.
　First of all, bamboo and yoshi, natural stuff, are used as material for instruments.
　Albeit natural, not every bamboo or yoshi type is suitable, as there are types producing the best sound quality for gagaku.

Suzuki *sensei*'s words give us a clear-cut answer. Without natural, specific material there is no *gagaku*.

He continues:

雅楽の音色が変わってしまうと心配されています。

There is a concern that gagaku's sound quality could change.

This statement just confirms a general trend in construction of musical instruments for traditional music. Although is not correct to maintain that methods of construction are not changed through the centuries, is it true that used material are still the same for most instruments.

Using the same construction materials has to do with the sound quality or timbre, in Japanese *neiro* 音色.

This leads us to a material-culture related theme.

4.1.2 Timbre and Sound Ideal

The word timbre refers to the tonal quality of a sound: a guitar and a saxophone sounding the same note are said to produce different timbres.

5 For more information, see an interview with maestro Suzuki, Sestili 1997.

6 Suzuki Haruo 鈴木治夫 (January-February 2015). Personal email communications.

A vast palette of timbral nuances used by a single instrument is one of the most intriguing yet complex characteristics of *hōgaku*.

A self-evident case is that of classical shakuhachi music (*honkyoku* 本曲). This repertoire has certain performing techniques and stylistic features that predispose it to resist being consider, from most of the euroamerican listeners, as 'music'. As a matter of fact, an array of playing techniques allows the music-maker to produce sounds more closely resembling 'noise' than 'musical sound' and, as a whole, the *shakuhachi* music features a huge timbral variety. These special effects includes, for example, "thrashing breath" (muraiki むら息), an explosive rush of air.

[At this point in the presentation, an excerpt from *Shika no Tōne* (taken from the CD attached to the book Daniele Sestili, 2010), was played as a musical example. Shakuhachi player: Kawasaki Kinobuhisa]

Other instruments showing 'noisy' trends are the *shamisen* and the *biwa*. In either cordophones, the lower string when plucked produces a sound called *sawari* さわり, whose buzzy timbre is of special value in their music.

[At this point in the presentation, an excerpt from the bunraku play *Yoshizune Senbonzakura* (taken from the CD attached to Tokita, Hughes, 2008) was played as a musical example. Gidayūbushi *shamisen* player: Nozawa Kin'ya]

Many Japanese musicologists have noted that *sawari* is an essential concept in Japanese musical aesthetics and plays a major role in the sound ideal, which values qualities of roughness and "dirt sounds".

So far for the sub-issue of nature-material culture of music.

4.2 Expressing Nature?

Then, in answering the second question – Is *shizen* expressed somehow in *hōgaku* languages? – a few remarks will touch upon music of a specific traditional subgenre: the *gezabayashi* one.

Gezabayashi 下座囃子 is Kabuki music played by a offstage (*geza*) group.[7] This ensemble is positioned in a room at the stage-right corner, from which its members can see, hidden, the stage. The *geza* ensemble use mainly, but not exclusively, drums, other percussions and transverse flutes. The *ōdaiko*, a large barrel drum, is a central feature of this group. It behoves us to remember that *kabuki* is one of Japan's intangible cultural properties. *Kabuki* offstage music is very like film music: give sound effects, set the mood, support stage actions or imply unspoken thoughts.

7 Kabuki was inscribed in 2008 on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (UNESCO).

The question of whether nature is expressed in music can be dealt with citing some statements by Tanaka Denpachirō 田中傳八郎 *sensei*, a *narimono* (percussion) musician.

Not born into a *kabuki* musicians' family, Denpachirō undergone long training in *narimono* performance at the Kokuritsu gekijo (National Theatre) and graduated there. He is a member of the Tanaka Denzaemon *shachū*, one of the Kabuki-related schools linking musicians by apprenticeship. Belong to the Tanaka school percussions and flute players performing in the *geza* ensemble. Denpachirō is mainly an *ōdaiko* drum player.

Tanaka says:[8]

> 歌舞伎音楽で自然を表現するには、大太鼓を使用します。
> [...]
> たとえば、川の流れ　波の音　雨　雷　等です。
> [...]
> 大太鼓は　独立していて　長唄　竹本　などが　演奏していても　違う　ノリ（速さ）　で演奏することが多いです。
> それは、大太鼓のが音楽を演奏することより自然の風景を表現することが役割だからです。
>
> In the kabuki music, the ōdaiko is used to express nature.
> For example, the flow of a river, the sound of waves, rain, thunder and the like.
> The drum is isolated, and even if nagauta or takemoto [i.e. different kinds of onstage music] are performed, often the ōdaiko plays at a different tempo. This is because the ōdaiko, rather than performing music, has the role of expressing the features of nature.
> [Here an excerpt from the kabuki play *Honchō nijūshikō* and one from *Yoshitsune senbonzakura* were shown to the audience (private videorecording by Tanaka Denpachirō; musicians: unknown)].

This representation of nature – the flow of a river and the sound of sea waves, respectively, in the examples –, is more symbolic than realistic.

4.3 Music in Nature-The Naturalness in Music: a Conclusion?

A connectedness between music and nature is present in most cultures. At one extreme of a continuum we might conceive is the idea that music exists in nature, and that one culture simply bounds natural phenomena by naming them. At the other extreme music strives to emulate nature.

8 Tanaka Denpachirō 田中傳八郎 (January-February 2015). Personal email communications.

American ethnomusicologist Philip Bohlmann characterises these two extremes as "music in nature" and "naturalness in music" (Bohlmann 1999). In the former there is no real boundary between nature and its musical representation.

The Ainu people[9] vocalists sing patterns that represent cranes or other birds. Music 'sounds like' nature in this representation of nature.

[At this point in the presentation, an excerpt from "Crane Dance" (taken from the CD 2 attached to the book by Chiba 2012), was played as a musical example]

When music strives toward nature, by contrast, there is an implicit admission of a boundary between music and nature.

Whereas some Japanese traditions, as *geza ongaku* quite clearly shows, belong to the latter trend, that is music strives to emulate nature, peculiar features of *shakuhachi* classical music we have just listen to, seem to tend towards the opposite extreme, i.e. music 'sounds like' nature.

Yet, in this case, confrontation with professor Saitō Mitsuru (Yamaguchi University) helped me to go further into the problem in relation to *hōgaku*. Differently from other interlocutors, Saitō brings both 'insider' perspectives, as a traditional musician, and a somehow 'outsider' methods for studying his native *hōgaku*, being an (ethno)musicologist. As a scholar, he is apt to make abstract reflections more than 'normal' music-makers do.

Asked of whether he has ever thought his performances have anything to do with nature, Saitō replied:[10]

> 尺八奏者としても音楽学者としても、自然のことは意識して考えたことはありません。
>
> Neither as a shakuhachi player nor as a musicologist, I have ever thought consciously about nature [while playing]

As we have just seen, it not easy to give all-embracing answer in relation to *hōgaku*. Yet, we do have a first meaningful result, positively suggested by professor Saitō's statement: even if some Japanese musics sounds 'like' nature to us, they are not necessarily conceived as nature by their performers.

Closing this section, a *caveat* is necessary.

Maintaining that some Japanese musical languages seek naturalness in its performance, is not holding that *hōgaku* is nature, as professor Saitō posited.

9 The Ainu are an aboriginal people who inhabit Hokkaidō. Their music and culture link them to other Siberian peoples rather than to the ethnic Japanese.

10 Saitō Mitsuru 斉藤完 (February 2015). Personal email communications.

Indeed, I am aware that researching about nature in Japanese music may, in any moment, slip down an ethnocentric slope, that of *Naturvolk as opposed to Kulturvolk*.

This opposition between *Kulturvölker* ('cultural' or civilised peoples) and *Naturvölker* ('natural' or primitive peoples), ubiquitous in German scholarly writing during the second half of the nineteenth century (cf. Vierkandt 1896), has been coming to the surface again from time to time, even in scholarly discourse.

5 止手 *Tomete* – Coda: Who Stands up for Environment in Japan?

In closing my presentation, I would like to inform briefly about a notable environment-concerned movement involving some Japanese musicians.

Hichiriki is the oboe-like wind instrument used in *gagaku*. Reeds – that is a thin blade of cane – for *hichiriki* have been made of stems of *yoshi*, the common reed (*Phragmites australis*) that are harvested from only a limited reed bed at Udono, on the banks of the Yodo River in Takatsuki, Osaka Prefecture. According to the Imperial Household Agency, reeds from Udono have been used for the *hichiriki* played at official ceremonies of the imperial court since the Heian Period, as they provide the best music performance.

Unfortunately a new expressway was set to be built in Udono some years ago, threatening fields of yoshi there. In 2003, authorities had decided to suspend the start of construction of a section of the Shin-Meishin Expressway planned to run through the district, due to questions of economic viability, but the construction got the go-ahead once again in 2012.

In response to the threat to the precious reed bed, a series of petitions have been seeking to force the government to reconsider the construction.

As we know, petitions have no legal effect, but signatures of Japanese and foreigners alike represent a moral force that may help the now international movement "Save the Udono yoshihara".

This movement has as its spokesmen virtually all the Imperial Household Agency *gagaku* musicians, who have denounces the huge danger for the Japanese culture if the expressway would be constructed on the Udono area.

Besides imperial palace court musicians, many other bearers of the *gagaku* tradition, as Maestro Kasagi Kan'ichi, head of the Nanto gakuso, the *gagaku* group based in Nara with a history of more than 1,000 years, and maestro Suzuki are promoting actions in order to raise consciousness in Japan and abroad.

A change in the reed would cause a change in the sound quality, i.e. the timbre of *gagaku*.

Those interested in supporting this movement, can sign the petition at the end of this session. The signature forms will be sent to the "Save the Udono yoshihara" committee. Thank you.[11]

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11 For a short Japanese comment to the present Conference, with a special focus on the musicological panel, cf. Gagaku Kyōgikai 2015

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Steps to an Ecology of *Gagaku*
Nature, Place and Sound in Japanese 'Court Music'

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Abstract This paper is an attempt to develop a theoretically-concerned basis for what could become an 'ecology of Japanese court music'. It starts by reviewing recent developments in kindred disciplines such as music studies and ethnomusicology, stressing their tendency to employ an 'ecological paradigm', linking music and the environment, without reflecting on what exactly it means to perceive the world. To overcome similar weaknesses, the work of anthropologist Tim Ingold and philosopher Augustin Berque is examined, showing that there is much to gain in widening the field of music research to include more critical reflections on the notion of 'the environment'. Finally, this paper suggests a few ways in which the theoretical debate could be transported in the realm of Japanese court music and argues that taking these tentative steps may lead to a new path in its exploration, enjoyment and understanding.

Keywords Ecomusicology. Gagaku. Perception. Environment. Emplacement.

"All knowledge rests on sensitivity"
James Gibson (quoted in Clarke 2005, 31)

1 Sound and Music Through the Lenses of the 'Ecological Paradigm'

Since the 1990s, disciplines such as ethnomusicology and the sociology of music have been characterised by a shift in the conceptualisation of their elusive object of study. Gradually, a number of scholars started to reject views of music *as an object* (materially embodied in the score, the supreme 'it' of Euro-American musicology), and embraced instead the idea of music *as a process*. A "sustained critique of the idea of the reified musical work" (Cook 2012, 184) brought into view the interrelation of musical sounds

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with their music-makers, a term which came to include not only performers and listeners, but also non-human entities such as the instruments and circumstances of a performance (see Hennion 2015).[1] Working within this broad theoretical shift, researchers have increasingly emphasised the fact that music always takes place *somewhere*, and that the relationship between spatial and sonic components of *music-making* must be taken seriously. A mere list of the formulas used to describe recently emerged research fields, from 'soundscape ecology' and 'acoustic ecology', to 'music ecology' and 'ecomusicology', all the way to 'acoustemology' and 'echo-muse-ecology', reveals the underlying intention to bind place and sound together tightly.[2] After all, as Andrew J. Eisenberg has recently pointed out, "Sound and space – however one defines these terms – are phenomenologically and ontologically intertwined" (2015, 193). In all these cases, it is possible to detect the theoretical and methodological influence of an *ecological paradigm*, in which the interrelation between the sound and entities variously defined as 'the environment', 'space', or 'place' is considered crucial to the study. As noticed by sound artist and theorist Brandon LaBelle, in fact, "sound, as physical energy reflecting and absorbing into the materiality around us, and even one's self, provides a rich platform for understanding place and emplacement. Sound is always already a trace of location" (2012, 1). But the application of the ecological paradigm rests on the definition of characteristically elusive and often overlapping terms such as 'nature', 'space', and 'place': when these are left unspecified, the possibility to generalise the results obtained is severely limited. At any rate, the centrality of the sonic remains an inescapable prerogative. Nonetheless, the sheer proliferation of similar approaches points to an ongoing blurring of disciplinary boundaries and suggests a mutual interchange of methods and ideas worth taking seriously.[3]

In this essay, I will maintain that it is possible to rethink the study of an ancient Japanese performing art by emphasising how its practice is grounded in specific sites that contribute to its creation. I will focus on *gagaku* 雅楽 (literally 'elegant music'), a term referring to a bundle of repertoires comprising musics and dances brought to Japan around the 6th century from a variety of ancient Asian kingdoms corresponding to

1 In this new conception of music, "experience [...] belongs not just to musical work, composer, or accredited 'expert' but also, crucially, to the variegated practitioners and audiences" (Finnegan 2012, 355).

2 This is not to say that there is a unity of approaches. As Christoph Maeder pointed out, "research on the audio-sphere, the acoustic environment, the soundscape and even sound culture as we know it today remains an often confusing composition of different disciplines and perspectives" (2014, 425).

3 For an overview of three different "bundles" of research trends on sound, with special reference to Sound Studies, see Maeder 2014.

today's China, Korea, Vietnam, and even India. Gagaku's complex history has resulted in a strong centre-periphery dynamic that either stresses or denies the distinction between separate geographical traditions of music transmission (see Nelson 1990; Terauchi 2013, 2016). Although focused on *gagaku*, the approach presented here may be extended to any performing art which stresses the interconnection and of sound and place. I will start by analysing the little-known genealogy of a strand of research that stresses the importance of the 'environment' on the basis of an analogy between visual and acoustic perception, and traces this line of reasoning back to the concept of 'soundscape', put forth by Murray Shafer in the 1970s (1994). Next, I will present three recent examples of research on Japanese music that demonstrate the influence of the ecological paradigm, showing how they progressively rearticulate the approach in ways that shift the epistemological terms of the debate, essentially denying the validity of a clear-cut separation between nature and culture. I will then present a 'localised' example of the connection between place and *gagaku*, drawing from fieldwork conducted with a group of *gagaku* amateur practitioners in Nara between 2013 and 2016. Using the work of anthropologist Tim Ingold, I maintain that the ecological paradigm is merely the first step in a full-fledged phenomenological exploration of the "emplacement" of *gagaku* (Pink 2011; Giolai 2016), and conclude that the study of Japanese music as a whole could benefit from going beyond the dissection of human experience into discrete channels of sensory perception.

In 1977, Murray Schafer published his influential book *The Tuning of the World*, later republished as *The Soundscape* (1994). In it, the Canadian composer borrowed the term 'soundscape' from Michael Southworn and redefined it as "the acoustical characteristics of an area that reflect natural processes" (Schafer 1994, 9). The concept was clearly related to that of landscape, but Schafer left the connection largely untheorised: "like 'landscape', to which it alludes, a 'soundscape' seems to offer a way of describing the relationship between sound and place. It evokes the sonic counterpart of a landscape in which one sees trees or buildings, but hears wind, birds, or traffic. But what is a soundscape? Where is it? How is it bound or defined?" (Kelman 2010, 215). Although bitterly criticised as value-laden and nostalgic,[4] since its popularisation the concept of soundscape "has informed the work of almost everyone who has written on the phenomena of sound", and its semantic field has expanded well beyond the original intentions of its promoters (Kelman 2010, 214; see also Maeder 2014, 425-7; Eisenberg 2015, 197-9). Already in the 1980s and 1990s, Schafer's legacy was taken up by two loosely distinct lines of

4 In a review of some of the (mis)uses of the term, Kelman (2010, 228) concludes that "Schafer's vast and slippery explanation of the soundscape offers little or no workable model for studying the social life of sound".

research: *acoustic ecology* and *soundscape ecology*. While the former was characterised by the stress it put on sounds as mediators between listeners and the environment (Wrightson 2000, 12), the latter was more directly linked to ecology proper (Pijanowski et al. 2011, 204). In fact, soundscape ecology explicitly emphasised the study of "the ecological characteristics of sounds and their spatial-temporal patterns as they emerge from landscapes" and thus heavily relied on the supposed structural homology between the two concepts of sound- and landscape, introducing hybrid notions like "acoustic horizon" and "aural space" (203-4; see also Truax 1978). While using spectrograms and spectrographic maps to obtain sophisticated measurements of human and nonhuman sounds were clear attempts to provide scientific validation for an arrey of concepts left largely undefined by Schafer (see Wrightson 2000, 11; Pijanowski et al. 2011, 205), other contributions to the debate on 'sound-in-space' preferred to eviscerate a "particular understanding of the relationship between humans and the natural world" (Keogh 2013, 4). A case in point is Maria Harley's article *Notes on Music Ecology* (1996). Moving from a critique of the "postmodern paradigm" which often misses both "the vital connection of music to its sound material" and "the sonorous presence of music in the world", Harley introduces a new research paradigm: "music ecology" or "eco-musicology" (1996, 1). Her inclusive approach comprises: the relation between musical sound and other sonic realities, both natural and technological; tactile textures; spatial dimension; and timbral niches, all of which, "due to their diversity and abundance, evade unifying tendencies of theory-making" (Harley 1996, 2). Ecomusicology is (or rather should be) "the study of music in its environments – including cultural environments, since nature is not opposed to culture – with a particular emphasis on the aural experiences acquired in natural-and-cultural sonic habitats, rural and urban soundscapes" (Harley 1996, 2-4). In this ambitious program, Harley explicitly relies on the "ecophilosophy" of Arne Næss (1912-2009), (see Næss, Drengson 2005), but "does not argue why one should accept Naess's articulation of eco-philosophy as the correct understanding [of the relationship between humans and nature]" (Keogh 2013, 4) – a failure to substantiate her claims that severely limits the purview of music ecology "as a new research paradigm".

None withstanding its shortcomings, by subordinating the exploration of sound-in-space to a refusal of the nature-culture dichotomy, Harley has had the important merit of undermining the naïf assumption that the ecological model can be automatically applied to the study of music. Moreover, her contribution opened up a dialogue between the intellectual traditions that build on Schafer's concept and parallel developments in the field of ethnomusicology. Indeed, Harley herself made direct reference to the work of Steven Feld (1996, 6). Famous for his work among the Kaluli people

of Papua New Guinea,[5] Feld has in turn demonstrated an interest in the concept of soundscape. In an article first appeared in the 1994 edition of *The Soundscape Newsletter*,[6] Feld advocated a shift from ethnomusicology to what he called "acoustemology" or "echo-muse-ecology": "acoustic studies of how senses make place and places make sense" (Feld 1994, 11). Rearticulating the study of soundscape in highly original terms, Feld noticed that "a way of hearing the world comes from interacting with it", and wished for "an acoustemology of embodied place resounding", essentially reaffirming the central role of the phenomenological subject in the process of coming in contact with sound (Feld 1994, 11, 14). Although somewhat provocative, Feld's contribution should be understood in the larger context of that "aural reflexive turn in anthropology" (Samuels et al. 2010, 330) inaugurated by the prophetical question posed by Clifford and Marcus at the outset of *Writing Culture*: "we notice how much has been said, in criticism and praise, of the ethnographic gaze. But what of the ethnographic ear?" (1986, 12). By asking this, the authors intended to show that it was possible to rethink the study of culture on the basis of different conceptual metaphors: after all, "studying sound offers a way into understanding social processes and relationships differently than, say, vision or textuality alone" (Kelman 2010, 215) and, as noticed by Forsey (2010, 561), "ethnography is arguably more aural than ocular, the ethnographer more participant listener than observer". Another important consequence of Clifford and Marcus' observation was the exposure of what came to be known as "the presumption of Western ocularcentrism" (Samuels et al. 2010, 333): the predominance accorded to vision over the other senses as yielding "a knowledge of the outside world that is rational, detached, analytical and atomistic" (Ingold 2000, 245). Anthropologists' emphasis on acoustic experience, on the contrary, may "bring aural sensibilities to the worlds inhabited by the people with whom they work and consider those sounded worlds as more than performance genres to be extracted from their contexts" (Samuels et al. 2010, 339). Still, any serious application of a "politics of aurality" must necessarily be aware that "listening is space- and place-specific (Samuels et al. 2010, 336), and should thus include a parallel 'politics of place'.

Looking back at the ecological paradigm, then, anthropological reflections problematise the confusion between space, place and environment so often found in those streams of research dealing with the soundscape, bringing their attention to specific, grounded conceptualisations of these and other emic terms. As observed by Krims (2012, 141), in fact, notions

5 In which he analysed the importance of the complex relationship between birds and men in the sonic dimension of life in the rainforest (see Feld 1990).

6 See http://www.acousticecology.org/writings/echomuseecology.html (2015-11-15).

like "'landscape' and 'place' are not entirely separable objects […] and in the theoretically strongest studies, both emerge as interactions among locality, cultural interpretations of that locality, and the music being discussed". For this reason, anthropological attempts to study the sonic dimension of music in its relation with place ('sound-in-place') ultimately challenge the positivistic stance implied in the idea that the environment is nothing but a stable reality lying outside the experiencing subject. Schafer nearly touched on this issue when he said: "I do not wish to forget that the ear is but one sense receptor among many. The time has come to move out of the laboratory into the field of the living environment. Soundscape studies do this. But even they must be integrated into that wider study of the total environment" (Schafer 1994, 12). With Feld's contribution, it became finally possible to counter the epistemological and ontological implications of the 'ecological paradigm', and above all its widespread tendency to make an arbitrary distinction between manmade and unspoiled or 'natural' elements of reality. This nature-culture dichotomy reproduces a sort of "environmental orientalism": even if "the cultural configurations submitted to this type of analysis [differ] widely from one another, the actual content of the concepts of nature and culture used as classificatory indexes always [refers] implicitly to the ontological domains covered by these notions in western culture" (Descola, Pálsson 1996, 3). In this way, not only orientalist ethnographers but also ethnomusicologists and sociologists of music run the risk of "coloniz[ing] the reality they are studying in terms of a universalist discourse" that performs "an othering of nature" (Descola, Pálsson 1996, 65, 68). Feld's work, partly based on the phenomenology of place put forth by Edward Casey (1996), has the power to break free from the strictures of the nature-culture divide, opening up new ground for thinking about sound, place, and perception.

2 Place, Sound and Listening in Japanese Music Studies

Scholars of Japanese performing arts too have recently emphasised the many ways in which music is shaped differently depending on the localised contexts in and through which it is mediated. Acutely, Hugh de Ferranti and Alison Tokita have pointed out that "concepts of locality have their own history and significance in studies of Japanese music cultures", lamenting the fact that research, particularly when dealing with issues of 'modernity', has been overwhelmingly concerned with Tokyo as the symbolic and socio-political "centre" of the nation (2013, 9). Introducing the case of early 20th-century Hanshin (a region "comprising Osaka, Kobe and the coastal districts between them"), however, the authors observe that "the changes in Japanese musical life were played out in *locally inflected ways*" (De Ferranti, Tokita 2013, 3; emphasis added). Attention to issues of place as encountered in 'peripheral' areas of Japanese music, they seem to sug-

gest, may run counter to conventional or even hegemonic discourses. In the same edited volume, Jeffrey Hanes tackles directly "the soundscape of interwar Osaka", attempting "to recapture the aural ethos of interwar Japan's largest and loudest modern metropolis" (2013, 27). In his "attempt to listen to interwar Osaka and thus to enhance our sensory appreciation of its urban modernity" (2013, 27), Hanes builds on a conception of the soundscape that owes much to Murray Schafer and Alain Corbin, though mediated by historian of technology Emily Thompson:

> Like a landscape, a soundscape is simultaneously a physical environment and a way of perceiving that environment; it is both a world and a culture constructed to make sense of that world. The physical aspects of a soundscape consist not only of the sounds themselves, the waves of acoustical energy permeating the atmosphere in which people live, but also the material objects that create, and sometimes destroy, those sounds. [...] A soundscape, like a landscape, ultimately has more to do with civilization than with nature, and as such, it is constantly under construction and always undergoing change. (Thompson 2002, 1-2 quoted in Hanes 2013, 27)

Thus, even though he is greatly successful in portraying "the aural fabric of interwar urban life" (Hanes 2013, 28), Hanes still relies on conceptual tools that differentiate between nature and culture, as evidenced for instance by his choice of categorising the aural stimuli encountered in the city as "noises", "sounds", and "music". Still, his analysis provides evidence of the ways in which "musical culture influenced the city's cultural geography", concurring to the creation of a number of "spatial niches" (Hanes 2013, 40-1). In so doing, and rephrasing Steven Feld, Hanes manages to show how music makes place, and place makes music.[7]

Reflecting on the relationship between *onkyō* 音響, "a minimal form of electronic music that demands a heightened sense of listening" (Plourde 2014, 76) and its short-lived performance venue in Tokyo, called Off Site, Lorraine Plourde has taken the discussion of sound-in-place one step further. By describing he interplay of external sounds or "noises" (both welcomed and unwanted) and the ways in which "the act of concentration (*shōchū suru*) in listening became the perceptual focus desired by the performers" (Plourde 2014, 81), she successfully portrayed a "habitus of listening" (see also Becker 2011) characterised by one of Plourde's informants as "how to listen at Off Site" (2014, 80). This listening mode is understood as more complex and dynamic than the one alluded to by Murray Schafer:

7 Feld's famous passage reads: "place is sensed, senses are placed; as places make sense, senses make place" (2005, 179).

in fact, Schafer's notion of soundscapes "contained a strongly pedagogical dimension of listening to the world in a very peculiar way, a mode that was also highly prescriptive" (Plourde 2014, 81). Thus, even though she makes reference to "Tokyo's dense, cacophonous soundscape" (84) and briefly discusses other famous notions introduced by the Canadian thinker in light of their relation to *onkyō*, Plourde's analysis also reveals "the tenuous margins of the category of the urban soundscape" (85) and is ultimately more concerned with the shifts in sensory perception instantiated by a special listening practice. Interestingly, Plourde's informants seem to attribute a sort of agency to the place in which their "acts of listening" took place: "public talk events and dialogues were often centered on themes seemingly spurred on by Off Site's experimental aesthetic such as notions of listening, sound, and space that *were believed to be fostered by the performance venue*" (75; emphasis added). In these ways, despite numerous collaborations with international artists in Europe and North America, "*onkyō*'s localization at Off Site helped to inflect its transnational circulation with a very particular sense of place" (Novak 2010, 38).

A "discourse of embodied listening" (Novak 2013, 57) also characterises David Novak's compelling ethnography of "Japanoise", a genre that resists any simple categorisation as 'music' and indeed pushes the boundaries of this category as it shapes and reshapes itself through exchanges of alterative media (most notably cassette tapes) between Japan and the United States. Within Novak's discussion, what strikes as especially significant is the use of the layered metaphor of "feedback", itself as much an indispensable technological constituent of Noise as an image of theoretical and methodological strategies (Novak 2013, 139-68). Resisting the temptation of simply resorting to the idea of a 'transnational' circulation of musical style, Novak successfully demonstrates that Noise "has no clear point of geographic origin but can exist only in circulation" (Atkins 2015, 143). Still, the historicity of Noise's listening practices is also thoroughly explored through an analysis of the precedent set by *jazu kissa*, Japanese jazz coffeehouses, a space "for listening only" where "silence [was] often mandatory" (Novak 2008, 18). Thus the issue of place and its interrelation with listening practices and the circulation of sonic media is all the more present in Novak's work even if Noise seems to contradict the presupposition of genre as something that can only happen 'somewhere'. Indeed, Novak and Plourde's findings are especially resonant in the way they articulate listening as a fundamentally creative endeavour: as noticed by Novak (2008, 15), in fact, "social spaces for listening can refigure musical meaning in ways that fundamentally alter the spatial and temporal trajectories of recordings – modern music's primary vehicle", and listening can itself become "a distinctly virtuosic and creative practice of circulation". The reason perhaps lies in an observation by some of Plourde's informants: namely, that through listening their "ears changed" (*mimi ga kawatta*) (Plourde 2014, 73).

Beyond each work's specific focus on widely different social and historical processes, these recent examples of research on Japanese music attest to an ongoing, conscious rethinking of what I have called the ecological paradigm. Even when references to the concept of soundscape are not direct, in fact, these examples participate in the overarching tendency to explore sound-in-place as a phenomenon that fundamentally surpasses the aesthetic and ontological boundaries imposed by restrictive definitions of what 'music' is. To show how these discussions feed back into an alternative approach to Japanese traditional performing arts, and *gagaku* in particular, I now move to an account of the importance of place and space in the localised practice of *gagaku* within a specific amateur group in the city of Nara, in western Japan. I begin with a short sketch of a live performance witnessed in October 2015. Though necessarily personal, "the view from a body rather than the view from above" (Strathern 2004, 32), I hope that this account will resonate with the strands of research introduced above, and that it will serve as a narrative introduction to the 'next steps' of a theoretical path that may finally overcome the ontological limits of the ecological paradigm.

3 Escaping the -scapes: Emplacing *Gagaku* Beyond the Ecological Paradigm

Once a year, usually in October, the Music Department of the Board of Ceremonies of the Imperial Household of Japan offers a public concert of *gagaku*, an ancient performing art commonly known as "Japanese court music" (Nelson 2000, 2008a, 2008b; Endō 2013). On this occasion, the audience is allowed to enter the precinct of the Imperial Palace in Tokyo and wander around the practice rooms of the twenty-odd musicians-cum-state employees who, in 2009, were appointed by UNESCO Holders of this Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Flocking in with some advance, the audience has time to peek inside the rooms and even take a few selfies in front of the stage. This is framed by two large drums and surrounded by grey pebble, in what looks like a simple inner garden. Numerous chairs are arranged directly on the pebbles, increasing the capacity of the room (in recent years, these autumn concerts are have often been overcrowded). There are no curtains to draw; instead, a flat, metallic announcement signals the beginning of the concert, reminding everyone that recordings and pictures are strictly prohibited. As the performance progresses, the powerful, almost violently shaking sound of the sparingly struck *dadaiko* drum presses against the listeners' chest: sound hits the listener with remarkable physicality. Meanwhile, some of the architectural features of the building reinforce the feeling of being in the open air, rather than sitting inside a concert hall: the pebbles, of course, not dissimilar to the

ones resting at the bottom of Nō theatres' stages; but also the fact that a few small windows on the ceiling are open, allowing the sound of the wind to filter in and blend with the music. More elusively, and certainly subjective, is the awareness, that the music 'welcomes' in external 'noises', incorporating and recombining them: the feeling of a special interaction at play between the music and its environment.

The grounding in the lived experience of sound that this brief ethnographic vignette is meant to convey immediately reframes the anthropological study of *gagaku* in a context that resonates both with the attention to soundscape that characterised the ecological paradigm, and with the creative agency of listening explored by scholars like Novak and Plourde. Today, such a context is widely dissimilar from widespread academic descriptions of *gagaku*. In the vast and multifaceted panorama of Japanese- and English-language studies of '*Japanese court music*', in fact, the "ancient features" of the repertoire have received "relatively more importance" than the characteristics of their contemporary musical practice (Terauchi 2008, 94). A historical, almost philological methodology is still largely dominant.[8] Perhaps because they are not stakeholders in complex international dynamics concerning the issue of how to safeguard *gagaku* as Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Humanity,[9] and thus need not act as spokespersons for a centralised orthodoxy and orthopraxis, Japanese scholars interested in local and alternative traditions of *gagaku* practice have been more likely to employ qualitative methods close to those of anthropology (see e.g. Minamitani 2008; Takuwa 2007, 2015).

But the only example of research on 'Japanese court music' that demonstrates a direct affinity to the theoretical trends outlined above is Terauchi Naoko's aptly titled *Listening to Gagaku* (*Gagaku o kiku*) (2011). This agile and elegantly written book introduces the reader to "the places where *gagaku* resounds", identified as "gardens" (*niwa*) (Terauchi 2011, v), and presents "the energy of the topos" (*topos no chikara*), the "totality of a place where *gagaku* resounds" (Terauchi 2011, vi). Throughout her exploration of the most important "gardens" of Japanese *gagaku*, including Kyoto, Nara, Osaka, the Imperial Palace and the National Theatre, Terauchi is especially keen to covey "the experiential awareness of hearing and seeing" (2011, 95) that characterises participation in a performance of *gagaku*, providing maps and pictures of each site as well as diagrams of sound sources in relation to the listener (e.g. 2011, 93, 118). From the

8 This situation is in part justified by the immense value of this ancient performing art as cultural heritage. For excellent historical overviews, see Nelson 2000, 2008a, 2008b. For an important ethnomusicological exception, which nonetheless is only minimally experiential in tone (and knowingly so), see Garfias (1975).

9 *Gagaku* was enlisted by UNESCO in 2009. Its Holders are the performers of the Music Department of the Board of Ceremonies of the Imperial Household of Japan (see UNESCO 2009).

stimulating indeterminacy of rituals that take place in the open air (characterised by the presence of ambient "noises") to the somewhat "shut off" and purified atmosphere of the modern theatre, Terauchi also indirectly introduces the theme of the body of the researcher and his or her immersion in the surrounding, paying attention to *gagaku* not only aurally and visually, but with the whole sensorium. Despite the fact that her approach is not, strictly speaking, ethnographic, Terauchi thus comes closer to what could be described as a 'socio-anthropology of *gagaku*'. Furthermore, by noticing that "the actual performance of *gagaku* envelops the entire body of the listener" (Terauchi 2011, v), Terauchi also hints at the shortcomings of a naïf ecological approach to sound-in-place.

In fact, as also noticed by Plourde, "we never interact with or confront our surroundings via only one sense", and indeed the senses themselves "are not bounded discrete entities" (2014, 75). Despite quoting David Howes, a famed proponent of the so-called "sensory anthropology",[10] Plourde's words resonate more distinctly with Tim Ingold's line of thought. In *Stop, look and listen! Vision, hearing and human movement*, in fact, the British anthropologist maintained that "both looking and listening are aspects of a movement that, being generative of both space and time, is ontologically prior to any opposition we might draw between them" (2000, 274). If this is the case, continues Ingold, the ocularcentrism denounced by proponents of the ecological approach is not something we should impute to vision itself, but rather to what Johannes Fabian has called a "cognitive style" which, "incorporated into Western techniques of depiction, […] leads us to equate vision with visualisation – that is, with the formation, in the mind, of images or representations of the world" (Ingold 2000, 282). If this is the case, "it is not vision that objectifies the world, but rather the harnessing of vision to a project of objectification that has reduced it to an instrument of disinterested observation" (Ingold 2000, 284). The same also applies to sound: a theory of knowledge that sees cultures as systems of collective representations (that is, a representational theory of knowledge) will conceive of hearing as just another mode of perceiving the world – one among five, in the Euro-American account of 'the senses'. Building on these premises, Ingold maintains that Murray Schafer's famous concept of 'soundscape' should be altogether abandoned. First and foremost, because the slicing of the environment into 'scapes' is profoundly contrary to the experience we have of it: "the environment that we experience, know and move around in is not sliced up along the lines of the sensory pathways by which we enter into it. The world we perceive is the same

10 For an interesting discussion on the distinction between "sensory anthropology" and "the anthropology of the senses", see the debate between Sarah Pink and David Howes in *Social Anthropology* (Pink, Howes 2010). For an alternative view and a response by Tim Ingold, see Ingold 2011b.

world, whatever path we take, and in perceiving it, each of us acts as an undivided centre of movement and awareness. For this reason, I deplore the fashion for multiplying scapes of every possible kind" (Ingold 2011, 136). The reduction of vision to visualisation should not be replicated in the field of aural experience: "when we look around on a fine day, we see a landscape bathed in sunlight, not a lightscape. Likewise, listening to our surroundings, we do not hear a soundscape. For sound, I would argue, is not the object but the medium of our perception. It is what we hear *in*. Similarly, we do not see light but see *in* it" (Ingold 2011, 138; emphasis in the original). Ultimately, Ingold's position is nondualistic, and therefore alternative to the one put forth by most proponents of the ecological paradigm: "sound, in [his] view, is neither mental nor material, but a phenomenon of experience – that is, of our immersion in, and commingling with, the world in which we find ourselves" (Ingold 2011a, 137). In a similar vein, Novak and Sakakeeney (2015, 1) have recently suggested "to engage sound as the interrelation of materiality and metaphor", emphasising the fact that sound is "a substance of the world as well as a basic part of how people frame their knowledge about their world" (2). My own fieldwork experience with a group of *gagaku* amateurs-practitioners based in Nara supports this phenomenologically-oriented, experiential view of perception. Two examples will illustrate the interrelation of sound, place and movement in the practice of *gagaku* in contemporary Japan.

The group Nanto gakuso (a name that could be translated as "the office of *gagaku* of the southern capital") was officially established in 1968, but can lay claim to a history of musical transmission that dates back to the 8th century, when Nara was the capital of the political entity that later became 'Japan'. Thus, it is no exaggeration to say that Nanto gakuso's alleged origins are almost as old as Japanese *gagaku* itself. In its present state, however, the group is the product of the concerted efforts undertook at the turn of the 20th century by a local shrine, Kasuga Taisha, and a few local families with no prior connections to *gagaku*'s transmission to keep this performing art alive in Nara (see Kasagi 2006, 2008). With the creation of a centralised Office of *Gagaku* in Tokyo in 1870, in fact, local performers were forced to move to the new capital, and their disparate lines of transmission were suddenly put in danger. Local groups of performers responded differently to the challenge, trying to resist the new centripetal force. In the case of Nara, the deeply rooted association of *gagaku* with local rituals and festivals (*matsuri*) became the core argument in the movement that developed to preserve music and dances of the territory. Today, thanks to the success of this movement, Nanto gakuso performs *gagaku* as part of numerous rituals held at Kasuga Taisha (with which it also continues to maintain a privileged relation of cooperation),

Kōfukuji, Tōdaiji, and other temples and shrines of the province.[11] Ordinary rehearsals represent the most important activity for the group's members. Practitioners attend collective beginners' classes from 7 to 8 pm every Saturday night, and/or more advanced classes (also called "regulars' classes") from 8 to 10 pm. In all cases, the performers are grouped according to the wind instrument they play.[12] Classes are called *okeiko*, and take place in a quiet Japanese-style building slightly tucked away from a shopping street running from Nara's Kintetsu train station to the older merchant district known as Naramachi. Inside, the rooms are all deceptively simple: tatami floors, *fusuma* sliding doors, thick *zabuton* cushions to sit on. Each room is equipped with a window, below which a low table is prepared for the teacher who leads the class. A kettle and a few teacups sit on the right side of the entrance. Before and after the class, when the cushions are piled up next to the teacher's desk and nothing else punctuates the space, the appearance of the practice room (*okeikoba*) is minimal, almost frugal. However, as I have shown elsewhere, a special use of the space marks Nanto gakuso's practice of *gagaku* as a strongly "emplaced" activity (Giolai 2016).[13] The possibility to 'fuse' two or more rooms together in order to perform orchestral rehearsals; the precise way in which interpersonal relationships are 'mapped' onto the floor and marked by the distribution of practitioners sitting in certain rows of cushions; the distinctly different sociability observable among old-timers sitting in the back row, chatting and even smoking, and among newcomers sitting in the front, nervous and composed; the insistence on paying attention to the sound coming from adjacent rooms and the 'game' played among regular members of picking up a sonic clue, guessing which piece another group of practitioners is performing, and joining them on the spot, playing from memory: all these examples attest to the peculiar 'educational topology' co-produced by *gagaku* practitioners and by the practice room itself. In time, observing and participating in the classes made it clear that this "social construction of the space" (Keister 2008, 256) is inseparable from specific 'techniques of the body' (Marcel Mauss), also transmitted in a process that Ingold has called "enskilment", or "the embodiment of capacities of awareness and response by environmentally situated agents" (2000, 6). Whenever a young practitioner would perform the initial solo of a suite of pieces to accom-

11 The most significant of these rituals is the Kasuga Taisha Wakamiya Onmatsuri, held every year in December (in English, see Ishii 1987; in Japanese, see Nakashima et al. 1991; Terauchi 2011, 61-95; in Italian see Giolai 2016a).

12 The instruments of *gagaku* vary according to the repertoire played. They can be subdivided into aerophones (three transverse flutes, a small double reed oboe-like pipe, and a mouth organ); cordophones (two zithers and a pear-shaped lute); membranophones (three different drums) and ideophones (a suspended gong).

13 On the concept of emplacement, see especially Pink 2011.

pany dance (*bugaku*), for instance, an older teacher would either make 'floating' movements in the air with his hands, providing a gestural but wordless representation of the correct 'flow' or contour of the melody, or close his eyes and move his head up and down rhythmically in conjunction with the progression of the melody. It was always left to the sensibility of the performer to gain a valuable lesson from these soundless indications, and verbal remarks were always kept to a minimum. Indeed, the insistence on the part of old-timers that "If you don't feel it with your body, you can't play it right" was universally accepted, and getting to *feel* what those words meant through continuous dedication to practice (what I called 'passion attendance') was a crucial aspect of my own apprenticeship with Nanto gakuso.[14] In these ways, I have come to conceive of *gagaku* practice in terms of an emplaced activity shaped by one's use of his or her body-in-space.[15] In turn, these processes are inseparable from the need to pay attention to the aural features of *gagaku*, because sound and movement are intertwined in the way *gagaku* is *done*.

That practitioners themselves are aware of this connection, if not theoretically at least on a symbolic level, is evidenced by the way in which the leader of Nanto gakuso, Kasagi Kan'ichi (b. 1927), has recently represented *gagaku*. In fact, his most recent book, *Walking through the Nara of gagaku* (*Gagaku no Nara o aruku*) (2014), is a conscious attempt to establish a relationship between sound and place, and to present *gagaku* indirectly as a 'place-making entity' with considerable agency. As a guidebook to the heritage sites of the city of Nara which simultaneously introduces the reader to the history and main features of *gagaku*, the text uniquely presents a local, decentred view of what this performing art is. In the preface, Kasagi takes his readers on a walk along the route leading from Nara's Kintetsu station to the main hall of Kasuga Taisha (2014, 4-5). Noticing that "today *gagaku* is something that can be experienced in person", Kasagi concludes with a snapshot from the Wakamiya Onmatsuri festival: "listening from the feet to the *dadaiko* drum thudding '*zushin*, *zushin*', one can join the gods in enjoying the ice-cold wind. This is *gagaku*" (2014, 5). As these words demonstrate, practitioners in Nanto gakuso are fully aware of the connection between perception, place and sound that characterises their local 'version' of *gagaku* – to the point of equating this performing art with the immersive experience of listening with the body to the mutual resonances of co-constitutive features of the world.

14 On apprenticeship-based ethnography as method, see Downey, Dalidowicz, Mason 2015.

15 Importantly, the mutual "affordances" (Gibson) of bodily techniques and particular spaces like the *gagaku* practice room are gendered: women and men do exhibit a very different posture and bearing, and gender norms are transmitted through practice: within Nanto gakuso, for instance, women serve tea to all the practitioners at the beginning of each class; they also collect and wash the tea cups at the end.

4 Conclusion. Three Steps to an Ecology of *Gagaku*

This exploratory essay has reviewed some tendencies of what I have called an 'ecological paradigm' to the study of music. I have argued that studies that belong to this category are often based on excessively ambiguous definitions of critical terms such as 'place' and 'the environment', and that this imprecision reinforces a dichotomy between nature and culture. Subsequently, I have shown that recent research on Japanese music has been inspired by the ecological paradigm, but has consistently moved beyond its philosophical and epistemological fallacies. I have reviewed examples that span from the study of the soundscape of interwar Osaka (Hanes 2013), to the listening practices developed within a specific site in Tokyo (Plourde 2014; Novak 2010), and the media circulation that continuously redefined 'Noise' music (Novak 2008, 2013). Finally, I have introduced some examples taken from my fieldwork with the *gagaku* group Nanto gakuso in Nara, applying ideas elaborated by Tim Ingold to highlight the ways in which today's practitioners tie together sound and place to the point of equating the 'essence' of *gagaku* with the embodied experience of being affected by its sound. The thud of the huge drum called *dadaiko* served as an aural cue to the loop between my own immersion in a live performance and a practitioner's account of a similar sensory rapture. Below, I will offer a simple recapitulation of three hypothetical 'steps' towards this phenomenological and phenomenal plunge into *gagaku*.

Step one. By taking into consideration the concept of soundscape, it is possible to begin to do justice to some features of *gagaku* that are often confined to technical musicological jargon, thus leaving unexplored the lively account of participation in performance. For instance, the extensive use of heterophony[16] that is so characteristic of *gagaku* highlights each instrument's timbre and ornamentation, effectively emphasising rather than levelling out the diversity of their sonic qualities. Thus, in the case of the flute for example, a suppression of indeterminate elements such as the amount of air dispersed when blowing into the mouthpiece is not regarded as the essential procedure to obtain the tone quality considered aesthetically satisfying. In this sense, and despite their limitations, approaches such as the ones set in motion by Murray Schafer's notion of soundscape can help relating apparently non-musical elements of *gagaku* to a broader semantic context than the one provided by Euro-American conceptions of 'music'. Indeed, the inadequacy of analysing 'Japanese court music' through a so-called 'Western' paradigm separating 'musical sounds' from 'noise' on a historically constructed basis should be a

16 Defined as "the musical texture characterized by the simultaneous performance of variations of the same melody" (Koskoff 2008, 749).

strong indication that we may need a different way of thinking about the relationship between sound and 'the environment' in *gagaku*. Of course, ethnomusicological research has repeatedly questioned the efficacy of applying foreign categorizations indiscriminately, but *gagaku*'s features seem especially suitable to be analysed in terms of "sound experience" rather than as 'musical attributes' (see Clayton 2008).

Step two. Despite the insight provided by the application of the concept of soundscape to the study of *gagaku*, the ecological paradigm remains inescapably anchored to such philosophical dichotomies as nature vs culture, material vs immaterial, subject vs object. As evidenced by the work of Tim Ingold, however, such dichotomies distort our representations of the way we come in contact with the world. For instance, in most Euro-American philosophical traditions vision is associated with knowledge of an indirect kind, mediated by the mind and thus superior to that acquired by all other senses, while hearing is characterised as a more unmediated mode of knowing because of the supposed inward 'flow' of information entering the ever-open human ears (Ingold 2000, 243-9). But these arbitrary separations are rooted in a deeper issue, "a certain way of imagining the human subject – namely, as a seat of awareness, bounded by the skin, and set over against the world – that is deeply sedimented in the Western tradition of thought" (Ingold 2000, 243). In the study of *gagaku*, overcoming such a deep-seated perspective implies bringing to the fore the collective dimension of participating to its performance occasions, highlighting circumstances that may be peculiar to different local enactments of *gagaku*. In this sense, Terauchi's emphasis on the listener's sensory participation in the sonic life of *gagaku*, coupled by her attention to the historical details of each "garden of sound" considered, represents a promising starting point.

Step three. Taking part in the making of *gagaku* implies a rich sensorial involvement: during a ritual, for example, playing while walking in the cold, in a forest, with no light but that of a torch or of stars and moon, makes it impossible to ignore that one is there with a sensing body (see Kasagi 2014, 163-83). But even under ordinary conditions, as I have shown, *gagaku* practitioners always experience sounds in and through their body, learning how to use it correctly in order to physically *make gagaku*. Listening and performing *gagaku*, then, are immersive experiences first and foremost because of the materiality of sound. Indeed, this immersive character is due in part to the sheer volume of *gagaku*: a general preference for dynamics ranging from mezzoforte to fortissimo, the high-pitch range of the flutes and oboes, and the clusters of sounds played by the mouth organ tend to produce a strong 'enveloping' effect. Research on the role of the body in *gagaku* could apply Ingold's insights on the indivisibility of sensory perception reconnecting individual bodily involvement with the concurrent communitarian construction of territorial bonds within a community of practice such as a *gagaku* group.

In the 1970s, Gregory Bateson wondered: "'what sort of thing is this which we call 'organism plus environment'?" and proposed that we try to answer this question by postulating two ecologies: an ecology of material and energy exchanges, and an ecology of mind (as quoted in Ingold 2000, 18). But for Tim Ingold (2011, 19) "a properly ecological approach […] is one that would take as its point of departure the whole-organism-in-its-environment. In other words, 'organism plus environment' should denote not a compound of two things, but one indivisible totality". I would add that if, as he observes, "hearing is a mode of participatory engagement with the environment" (Ingold 2000, 277), then the primary scope of the steps envisioned here should be to help researchers theorise new ways to engage people's complex relationships with the world of *gagaku*. This would perhaps mean translating Alfred Schutz's idea of making music as a process of "mutual tuning-in" (1951, 92) into a theoretical and methodological perspective more attentive to the resonance between researchers, research participants, and the "sense of place" they can share (see Feld, Basso 1996). If, by "listening from our feet", to use Kasagi's expression, we follow these steps and figure out which ones lie ahead, maybe we can help opening a new route to that special world of sense we call *gagaku*. Step by step.

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Rethinking Nature in Post-Fukushima Japan
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The Music Culture after the Great Kantō Earthquake (1923)

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Abstract This essay intends to overview the destruction and reconstruction of music life, discussing the topical songs and musicals, the special concerts, the widely-acclaimed notion of Heavenly Punishment (*tenken* 天譴), and the official ceremony of reconstruction organised by the Tokyo City and the State in 1930. The paper will be concerned with questions such as how the street singers reacted to the metropolitan misfortune, what kind of concerts were offered and what kind of music was played, how the people interpreted natural and human-made disaster and sang it, how the reconstruction was musically celebrated and what kind of political message was implied.

Keywords Japanese Music. Enka. Street singers. Tokyo. Great Kantō Earthquake (1923).

1 Introduction

The Great Kantō Earthquake hit the capital of Japan on September 1, 1923, and changed the shapes of such areas as art, design, literature, film, and theatre as have been widely studied. Music was no exception, although it has been still understudied. This essay intends to overview the destruction and reconstruction of music life, discussing the topical songs and musicals, the special concerts, the widely-acclaimed notion of Heavenly Punishment (*tenken* 天譴), and the official ceremony of reconstruction organised by the Tokyo City and the State in 1930. The paper will be concerned with questions such as how the street singers reacted to the metropolitan misfortune, what kind of concerts were offered and what kind of music was played, how the people interpreted natural and human-made disaster and sang it, how the reconstruction was musically celebrated and what kind of political message was implied.

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The Earthquake took place precisely in the middle of 1920s, the decade of threshold line in the world music culture as noticed in the inventions of the electric recording, the radio broadcast, the talkie system and jazz music and dancing. All of them reached Japan in the period of "reconstruction" with the label of "post-earthquake". The Jazz Age in other countries can be the Post-quake Age since the new era seemed to be born out of the dust. The reconstruction work was realised in part with the overwhelming state budget, which boosted the centralisation of power and bureaucracy. Japan and its capital became nearly synonymous as were sung in a few songs. This article will argue an outline for the further discussions.

2 The Active *Enka* Singers

Several autobiographies of composers and musicians report on the confusions caused by the disaster. The classic composer Yamada Kōsaku 山田耕筰 (1886-1965) tried to return from Manchuria with difficulty, while the popular composer Hattori Ryōichi 服部良一 (1907-93) felt the trembling of floor in Ōsaka on the day of opening ceremony of restaurant band he had participated in. Some singers and composers were interrupted their return tour to Tokyo. However, none of them were serious. The most damaged was undoubtedly the street singer-songwriter (*enkashi*) Soeda Azenbō 添田唖蟬坊 (1872-1944). His house in downtown area of Shitaya ward was destructed completely as he himself described in *Minshū goraku* 民衆娯楽 (People's recreation, 1924), pamphlet-like magazine he was editing with his son, Satsuki 添田さつき(1902-80), two months later:

> The rumbling and the quake, the falling tiles, and the things falling from the shelves. The shelves were destroyed totally. The things were falling on the head, the shoulders, the rice bowl, and the dishes [the Earthquake occurred at 11:58, lunch time], making harsh noises. Soon a half of the house was destroyed. I was watching this happening astonishingly without moving. My legs were buckling and I was frozen (though I didn't jump out of my skin). Shortly, I stood up and looked up from the inclined window of the back of house. I found that the neighboring guest house fell down on my house. My house was destroyed by it. Making a stepstool by piling up the magazines, I stepped out from my house and climbed up from the fallen roof of guest house to the roof of my house.
>
> Then came the second quake.[1]

1 Soeda Azenbō 添田唖蟬坊 (1923). "Yakedasare Nikki" 焼け出され日記 (Diary of Evacuation). *Minshū goraku* 民衆娯楽 (People's Recreation), November, 1-2.

From the broken rooftop, he witnessed the flames everywhere. Then, he prepared for peril, eat the last watermelon he believed in his life, and went rushing into the massive confusions with his son and the other street singers, and their families.

The street singers singing political, comical and sentimental songs with Meiji melodies, appearing around 1888, were called *enka* 演歌. Singing with a violin accompanist since around 1910, they made their living by vending pamphlet music (or only lyrics in the first decades) like broadside balladeers in the UK and the US. Azenbō, while starting singing around 1890 and he became sympathising with the socialism movement blooming after the Japan-Russian War (1904-05). He was quick to adapt a popular *shamisen* piece to street-singing, setting laughable or ironical lyrics. He was also keen in publishing not only pamphlets as his competitors but also a magazine (1919-23?) as a medium for communicating his opinions on the politics and singing performance, and cultivating as well as enjoying the underclass readership.

Half a year after the Earthquake he retired from songwriting, moving to a small city north-east of Tokyo. One of his few writings after 1923 mentioned that:

> On September 1 | Ear-th-qua-ke…The most horrible calamity in human history | Destructed totally the falseness of human life. | [It was] The deathbed of modern civilization. | On September 2 | Oh, the day breaks, | Look at the color of sun rising up from the raging flames! | They show the way mankind has to go. | They are the way of life. | We have to take a more serious way immediately. | Wake up brothers! | Do you yourselves rely on the mistaken boat of culture? Ah! (Soeda Azenbō 1923)

Instead of singing national and political issues and funny stories directly to street passengers, he now wrote words on modern civilisation literarily to silent readers. His grief echoed with the idea of "Heavenly Punishment" discussed later.

His son took over the work of his father as a songwriter and editor. Satsuki published an essay in their magazine *Minshū goraku* dated September 1 (that is to say, printed in late August) that proposed the establishment of recreation of the poor, by the poor and for the poor. Accidentally the calamity turned to a trial for his words. Shortly after the Earthquake, Satsuki and his paired musician started timidly singing for the evacuated people in the devastated area, while fearing that they could be refused:

> We were immediately surrounded by the people gathering from here and there. No criticism. They listened to us silently. When we finished a news song on the reality damaged, they came close to us, requiring the broadside sheet eagerly. The song was sold very well. We felt

> relieved. Then, we sang "The Reconstruction Song." This had a light feeling. Then, refreshing laughter broke out. We felt totally relaxed. We learned how people wanted songs even in the most desperate time. (Soeda Tomomichi 1967)

"The Reconstruction Song" (*Fukkōbushi* 復興節) he mentioned was the most known song on the Earthquake written by the *enka* balladeers. Satsuki and his collaborator Shibuya Hakurui 渋谷白涙 adapted a Chinese melody titled *Sasō* 沙窓 (*Sha chuang* in Chinese) which had been performed in the community of amateur orchestra of Chinese instruments (*Minshin gaku* 明清楽, or music of Ming and Qing). It sounded rather exotic for the common people and the lyrics Satsuki put implied the positive message to people's hard life with humour:

> The houses were burned out/ Look at the spirit of our Edo people
> Yeah, astonishing ("*Arama, Oyama*")
> From the barracks standing in rows/ We look at the moon lying down in the nights
> Oh, good, good ("*Eezo eezo*"), the reconstruction of imperial capital, oh, good, good
>
> A wife told her husband, "Be strong!"
> Yeah, astonishing
> *Imagawayaki* sweet is now renamed *Fukkōyaki* (reconstruction bake)
> Oh, good, good, the reconstruction of imperial capital, oh, good, good

There were but two verses among numerous parodies. The moonlight seen through the broken roof was often a symbol for the barrack life. Instead of condemning the situation, the song communicates a hope for the future to the listeners. The second verse, in turn, illustrates how the word of *fukkō* (reconstruction) was abused just after the quake (*imagawayaki* is a baked sweet with stuffed red bean paste) in a similar way that another verse laughs at the naming of new born children after *jishin* 地震 (earthquake) like Shintarō, Shinsaku and Shinko (here the ideogram for "shin" means "quake"). Such humorous words must be great fun for the street audiences. In other verses the authors narrate the fall of upper-class woman and girl to low-class life, the obsession for sushi among the Edo people and other daily topics. As a costume of street ballad, new countless verses were set and sung by the non-authors according to the situations. Any funny or miserable verse was followed positively by the informal refrain of "*Eezo eezo*" (here I translated "Oh, good, good"). Then the song was sometimes called "Eezobushi" (Eezo Song). The song became so modish that an educated author disdained it, writing that "There is no such stupid, meaningless and unpleasant fad" (*Tōkyō Nichinichi Shinbun*, November 15, 1923).

The Reconstruction Song was recorded by Tottori Shun'yō 鳥取春陽 (1900-32), who moved to Ōsaka around 1924. He, collaborating with Satsuki as a singer-songwriter before it, was the only street musician who could arrange music. Different from the previous recordings by the *enka* singers (accompanied only with the violin), Tottori applied small band of piano, trumpet, clarinet and car horn (toy horn?) to the accompaniment to create cheerful feeling, fitting for the cheerful contents of lyrics. Especially the clarinetist seemed to play semi-improvisation. Tottori and his musicians (recruited from movie theatre?) might digest (and localise) their first impressions of latest American dance music for updating the sound of popular song. He was a leading popular musician in the post-quake Ōsaka who mixed jazz band, jazzy melodies into his recordings.[2] A year after the Earthquake, he composed a great hit song titled *Kago no tori* 籠の鳥 (Bird in the Cabin), theme from film produced by a Kansai studio, and two years later (1926) he concluded the first contract as a songwriter with Ōsaka record label, which was the first case in Japan. His post-quake work anticipated the coming of popular songs produced by record company and accompanied by small band. Though dying young (1900-32), he was an indispensable link between the Taishō (1912-26) street *enka* songs and the Shōwa (1926-89) *ryūkōka* 流行歌 (popular songs) which were much more industrialised.

In other *enka* ballads, Satsuki and other songwriters narrated well-known tragedies caused by the earthquake in a traditional epic style in 7-5 syllabic format (of *biwa* ballad, for example). He called them "news songs" 報道歌 (*hōdōka*) to emphasise that the stories sung were real (ex. the family suicide, the disaster). This type of songs clearly came from the historical roots of *enka*, street vendors (while reading loudly the text) of news pamphlet since the 18-19th century in urban setting (*yomiuri* 読売, or read-and-sell). They were, so to speak, street newspapers and *enka* originated from the aftermath of civil right movement.

One early example of news song on the Earthquake was Soeda Satsuki-Shibuya Hakurui's *Urami no hifukushō* 恨みの被服廠 (Resented Clothing Depot), which was published in pamphlet dated October 21, 1923, possibly the first publication by the *enka* group after the Earthquake. Hifukushō (clothing depot) was the military clothing depot recently demolished in the industrial area of Tokyo. Upon the earthquake, the working and resident people in the neighborhood refuged into the buildings but the location was flamed from all sides. The crowd had nowhere to run out and was killed in panic. The death were almost forty thousand people. It was considered as the most heartbreaking tragedy and reported meticulously in the newspapers and magazines. The tragedy was representative for Tokyo's

2 On the Ōsaka jazz scene after the Earthquake, see my essay, "Shōchiku Girls' Opera and 1920s Dōtonbori Jazz" (translated by Philip Flavin) (Shūhei Hosokawa 2013).

vulnerable downtown. Many noticed that the man-made errors (by the police and fire station, especially) might worsen the massacre, though not openly criticising. Shibuya's song deals with a father who lost his life in order to save an old woman in the flames from the viewpoint of his wife and daughter. The lyrics bemoaned them:

> If our father-husband had been alive, | The barrack life looking the moonlight through the unrepaired roof | Could be enjoyable, how miserable we are

3 Singing the "Heavenly Punishment"

The unprecedented catastrophe was often interpreted as *tenken* 天譴, or the heavenly punishment for Japanese decadence and laxity. This special term came from Confucian morality and had been rarely used colloquially. Hence it had a strong and heavy sense. The word was often mentioned by the politicians and the moralistic writers. Historians today criticise that it led the people's concern from the social contradiction to the individual inner life, regarding the disaster as the heavenly punishment, the people tended to neglect how the human-made errors had caused part of the tragedy as well as how the politics of resurrection in progress alienated the underclass and the marginal areas of Tokyo City.[3] When one thought of the total damage on the mass level, the equality under the Heaven and the pettiness of human beings were summoned up for the spiritual consolation. The disaster became an excuse for criticising the frenzy life had enjoyed earlier. The discourse of spiritual reconstruction, however, was ironically welcomed by those who were marginalised by the national and metropolitan project of reconstruction.

The notion of heavenly punishment was sung in several post-quake songs. One of the most articulated was the non-academic scholar of Japanese classical literature Masuda Otsushirō 増田乙四郎's *Taishō gekishin mōka no shintaishi* 大正激震猛火の新体詩 (New-Styled Poetry of Taishō Great Quake and Roaring Flames), published in October 1923 in a nearly self-made pamphlet (quoted from Nishizawa Sō 1990, 3642-3). The melody was composed by Yamamoto Masao 山本正夫, music educator and editor-in-chief

3 Ishizuka Hiromichi, Narita Ryūichi 1987, 166. On *tenken*, see Bates 2015, ch. 7. Bates argues the contemporary critique of *tenken* idea by Miyatake Gaikotsu and Kikuchi Kan (2015, 135-40) but I still have found no songs criticising the notion of *tenken* (it often conceals the faults of government and bureaucracy). Bates opens the chapter with the comment on divine punishment by the Tokyo Governor Ishihara Shintarō upon the great earthquake on March 11, 2011. The populism and militarisation after the catastrophe (and the coming of Tokyo Olympic Games in 1940 and 2020) reminds me of the repetition of history in the twenty-first century.

of *Gekkan gakufu* 月刊楽譜 (Monthly Music Notes/Scores), in an easy-to-sing style invented in the early twentieth century for school songs (obsolete in the 1920s. "Shintaishi," 新体詩 or New-styled Poetry, was invented in the 1870s by the first generation of Meiji literates to separate their new literature from pre-restauration one. Hence obsolete in the 1920s, too). The lyrics, written in the traditional 7-5 syllabic structure, have sixty stanzas and might be aimed not at singing throughout (for over one hour?) but at reading. After the forty stanzas on the broken houses and raging flames, the author, known for his ultra-nationalistic philosophy, goes into the section of punishment:

> The world has been changed totally within one day. | I am thinking of | The frivolous mood until yesterday, without preparing for the emergency. | Was only a dreaming road of laxity, one was wondering around. || How much the human knowledge has made progress and the technique is improved, | In front of the Great Nature | The primate [human beings] are but foolish babies. | They were all upset by the shake of only ten centimeters, What shall we do? || …This Earthquake and flames are the Heavenly Punishment | For burning out the spoiled cultural evils for the purification, | For warning the boasted, the arrogant, the frivolous, and the greedy. || We understand it as the Heavenly Punishment, | Reflecting it over seriously. | Following the correct way, | If we live healthy and sound life, | Training ourselves steadily, | No earthquake and fire would be fearful.

Masuda's lesson on Confucian moralism is obvious. On behalf of the Heaven, he warned against the decadence and the frivolity. This position was easily tied with the divine nation of Japan. In the next stanzas, he identifies the Tokyo citizens with Japanese nation, encouraging the idea of unification of Tokyo and Japanese people under the common goal of reconstruction:

> Wake up, the citizens of imperial capital! | Stir up! The victims in the cities and towns! | Go ahead! *Kunitami* [nation] of Japan!…The future of our Japan | Must be full of hopes | Shines and guarantee.

He calls the nation not *kokumin* 国民 as is commonly translated but *kunitami*, literally country-people, to emphasise the inseparable link between these two concepts. In the very last stanza, he paid homage to the divine people of Japan, respecting the very basic of Meiji Nation-State:

> Since her Foundation three thousand years before | The Imperial Divine Japan has been prosperous, | Though suffering from the heavenly trials earthquake and fires. | Japan took it as a fortune | To renew the line-up. | Achieve the great heavenly mission.

Thus the theory of Heavenly Punishment ends in that of Heavenly Mission. His ultimate lesson is not Confucian moralism but shintō nationalism. He jumps over a great gap between the human pettiness and the greatness of Japanese by medium of *kami*, the divine and the aweful. The similar transcendentalism grew up visibly and dominated gradually the mind of people while going into the war situation in the 1930s. The earthquake-reconstruction-war seems to me an intimate triplet in Japanese modern history.

4 The Post-Quake Concerts

"Musicking" (Christopher Small) is among the easiest comforts possible even in the hard circumstances. For the poet-lyricist Saijō Yaso 西條八十 (1892-1970), listening to the harmonica performed by a little boy in the evacuation place at Ueno was definitive for his eagerness to write for the people (not only for the elite) (Saijō Yaso [1956] 1997, 25). He eye- and ear-witnessed the crowd deeply touched by the simple harmonica sound. Above-mentioned enthusiasm for street singers by the downtown audiences must be of the similar kind, which, however, did not last long. On September 29, the Consultation of the Musical Reconstruction of Imperial Capital (Teito Ongaku Fukkō Kyōgikai 帝都音楽復興協議会) was launched by the Section of Social Education of Tokyo City together with the known music educators, critics and artists. They organised free concerts of Western music and instruments for several months. On October 7, the first official concert was presented by the Association of Traffic Moral, which had been working for refugees at the Koishikawa Botanical Garden. It was a free concert of small orchestra and Japan-made children's songs, whereas five days later the Military Band organised a concert in the Open-air Music Hall at Hibiya Park, where they had usually bi-weekly concerts since 1906 (alternate with the Navy Band). The Hibiya Open-air Music Hall, located near the Imperial Palace, became a central venue for post-quake free concerts. Built in 1905, it presented the Sunday concerts by the military and navy bands since 1906 which had played an important role for popularising Western music among the young middle-class for two decades. Now it opened to other types of concerts such as that by mandolin and violin players authorised by the Metropolitan Police Department, that for the leaving American ambassador by one hundred and twenty members of Military and Navy bands.

In October and November several newspapers set up the music activities to present free concerts at schools and other public places. The musicians visiting barrack areas included the harmonica society and the mandolin one of Waseda University, as well as the graduates from the Tokyo Music School, the most authoritative institute for Western music education. When this last group, named themselves the Modern Music Study Group (Mōdan Ongaku Kenkyūkai モーダン音楽研究会), presented on October 13

a concert at the Hibiya Open-air Music Hall with candle lights (since electric equipment had not been recovered yet), eight hundred audiences gathered. Three days later they, in turn, presented a similar comfort concert at Yasukuni Shrine for three hundred people, performing the vocal solos, the harmonica solos, and the orchestra pieces (*Tōkyō Nichinichi Shinbun*, October 17, 1923). The titles included *La Paloma*, *Santa Lucia*, *Oriental Dance*, and *Over There*, which had been known by the middle-class public by sheet music, mandolin, harmonica and other easy forms (in addition, unidentifiable pieces titled in Japanese). It is presumed that the well-trained musicians played harmonica in public for the first time. The climax of post-quake concert was that held by the young Yasha Heifetz, at the Imperial Hotel (Teikoku Hotel), the most luxurious in Tokyo, on November 9 to 11. In September he had to cancel his Japan tour, changing the direction to Shanghai, and now returned to Japan.

The free concerts and the charity concerts diminished so quickly that one finds nearly no references to them in the next year (probably they continued on the grass-roots level, unnoticed by the journalism). The theatres, the cinema, and the vaudeville halls mostly restarted their ordinary business around November.

5 The Destruction and Reconstruction of Music Industry

A newspaper article reported that seventy shops of music instruments and four hundred ones of phonograph were destroyed by the earthquake and the resulting loss was estimated as one million and five hundred yen and three million yen respectively (*Yomiuri Shinbun*, October 11, 1923). The Nitchiku Label (Nihon Chikuonki Co.) transferred business to the Ōsaka headquarter for emergency while building the transitory barrack office at Kanda ward. Two principal music shops, Jūjiya and Yamano Gakki, moved their offices to other parts of Tokyo but returned to the original places at Ginza, Tokyo's most fashionable street, around November. As early as in December, the organ, the mandolin, the violin and the harmonica were sold well while the phonographs could be sold out (*Tōkyō Asahi Shinbun*, December 27, 1923). One client, the article says, asked the shop any type of ten records of Japanese music. He might have little time to choose the discs. One can imagine that he only wanted to recover his record collection from zero. Any Japanese music could console him like any music was welcomed in the post-quake days.

The earthquake divided the destiny of music journals. *Ongakukai* 音楽界 (The Music World), one of the chief magazines in music (especially Western music) society, closed its fifteen-year's life (1908-23) with the December issue. The editor Hirato Dai 平戸大 testified his unforgettable experience at Shibuya office as follows:

> Suddenly the earth began trembling. Immediately the papers on the shelves fell on the floor. From the roof I saw the tiles falling and crashing with clouds of dust. The walls twisted and rolled, then a big crack came out. As I was cautiously standing in a corner, I felt that this was the end of my life.[4]

At night he could only see the star lights that made him imagine the bombing (which he might experience some twenty years later). He feared the attack of "lawless bunch", too. Here he implicitly referred to the Korean workers. Under the total panic, a rumor was prevailed that the Korean workers transferred by force would attack Japanese. The armed vigilantes, grouped quickly on the neighborhood level, killed mercilessly the Koreans. Hirato was horrified by the fearful rumors.

Ongakukai lost all the manuscripts prepared for the September issue but managed to publish it by mimeography (hand-written letters). As early as in October, the Ongakusha, their publisher, reopened the barrack office at Kanda ward, selling the music sheets and books and even the new publications. The December issue was back to typography and named happily the resurrection issue. However, It was the end.

Their rival, *Gekkan Gakufu* (Monthly Music Notes), restarted with the December issue, while three issues from September till November could not be published, and continued its life until 1941 when the military government reformed the music journalism. The opening remark of December issue, "The Great Earthquake and Music", declared clearly the definitive role of largest music magazine to redirect and reconstruct the "all-Japan music world." Being self-confident enough, it also noted five principles of newborn magazine: the publication of music by purely artistic composers from the West and Japan; the promotion of new musicians; the presentation of refreshing didactic materials; the introduction of new critics and theorists; and the recommendation and presentation of composition.[5] This new policy was symptomatic not only for the new policy of *Gekkan Gakufu* but also for the new trend in music journalism in general after the Earthquake. Roughly the post-quake issues cared less about the education and more about the art music, compared to the pre-quake ones. The change of editor-in-chief a few months before the disaster was responsible for the editorial shift yet it also anticipated the rising consumerism of art music in the second half of the twenties with the coming of electric recordings, the expanding publishing society, the increasing number of public concerts by

4 Hirato Dai (1923). "Shinsai no hi no tsuioku" (Reminiscence of the Day of Earthquake). *Ongakukai* 音楽界 (The Music World), October, 2-6.

5 "Shinsai to Ongaku" (The Great Earthquake and Music). *Gekkan Gakufu* (Monthly Music Notes), December 1923, 1.

Japanese and visiting musicians and other inter-related factors. Following the track of *Gekkan Gakufu*, the newly-launched music journals after 1925 were specialised nearly exclusively in Western classical music, whose major readership was the urban Western-oriented, educated youth. The new journals were generally more consumer-oriented than educator-oriented.

6 Sassa Kōka's Operetta, *The Reconstruction*

Until September 1, Asakusa, the entertainment quarter of downtown Tokyo since the nineteenth century, was thriving with mushrooming troupes and novelties. In the music history, it is known for the "Asakusa Opera", which inaugurated in 1917 with the performance of *Kafe no yoru* カフェーの夜 (A Night in Café), and *Jogun shussei* 女軍出征 (The Departure of Female Soldiers to the Front) by the Tōkyō Kageki Dan 東京歌劇団 (Tokyo Opera Troupe), led by the composer Sassa Kōka 佐々紅華 (1886-1961). Despite the name of "opera", the stage looked more like musical, or the popular drama with songs. In the later years they also presented shows and vaudevilles. Therefore the name of "opera" is mischievous (though they performed the digests of, say, *Aida* and *Carmen*). The success of Tōkyō Kageki Dan encouraged the boom of similar Western-like music dramas and their repertoire included the digests of European operetta/opera and the originals. The singers included trained and untrained and the dancing scenes (mainly with female dancers) were attractive points. In other words, the level of professional education at music school could be reached by self-trained singers.

The Earthquake entirely destroyed Asakusa area, which was symbolised by the break of landmark Jūnikai, Tokyo's tallest building before the Earthquake. Many members of Sassa Kōka's Negishi Kageki Dan 根岸歌劇団 (Negishi Opera Troupe) had to leave Tokyo for a while but from December 20 on the troupe restarted the activities out of Asakusa and managed to present almost regularly the adaptations of Western classical works they had played earlier.

The only new work the surviving troupe presented was Sassa's *Fukkō* 復興 (The Reconstruction), premiered on June 28, 1924, at the Opera Kan, rebuilt on their home place in Asakusa. Only its scenario survives while the score has been lost (Kiyoshima Toshisuke 1982, 243-81).

The Overture in quick tempo suggesting the earthquake is followed by the first song by the Princess of Capital of East (alluding Tokyo, literally East-capital) who evacuated from the Capital of East singing from backstage: "It must be a dream. | If it is a dream, wake up! | Is the trembling Earth | the anger of earthly ghost? | Are the red blazing flames | The sign of heavenly devil?..." She is alone, losing the whole family. Then appear three country men who sing that in the Capital of East there are novel things like electric stove, electric communication, automobile, and airplane. They

know that the project of subway became infeasible. The refrain of the song is: "So the most terrible is | The earthquake".

The stage set of Second Act focuses on a large clock in the centre which indicates 11:58, the time of Earthquake. The female chorus opens the act, singing that "We wonder why the clock stopped | Just two minutes before the canon signal at noon." The women confess with humor that they behave themselves unconsciously bizarre every day at 11:58, while the Minister of Justice sings that we have to invent clocks without 11:58. Then the Princess of Capital replies, singing about the Buddhist transiency of life, raging against the devil who massacred the whole family. When she sues the Catfish of Kurobei, who is supposed to cause the quake (in Japanese folk belief, the catfish is considered as a cause for earthquake), the Minister of Justice summons him up. When the accused fish confesses his crime, Jūnikai and Hifukushō testify what they experienced after the earthquake. The former is astonished by the absence of head when the quake blew his hat off, whereas the latter mourns her thirty thousand children who were surrounded by a sea of flames like the baked chestnuts. In the final scene the Prince of Reconstruction appear (like *deus ex machina*?) accompanying Barrack, Vigilantes and Brown Rice (*Genmai* 玄米), singing in chorus that:

> Under the sky of the Capital of East, here comes the day of reconstruction. | The city dust is clouding everywhere. | The morale for progress is high. | The new houses are built closely. | The scent of recovery is full.

The Prince sentences the Catfish the commutation because the earthquake recollected the people the moral importance of modest life represented by the Brown Rice (reflecting the idea of Heavenly Punishment). He also scolds the Vigilantes not to own the arms any more in order not to repeat "the irrevocable mistakes". The chorus in the finale scene celebrates the bright reconstruction to come.

Disguised in fairytale-like setting, Sassa's musical narrates the postquake traumas mixed up with the humour. It had repeats in the same year at Jurakuza 聚楽座 (Shibuya) in July and at Nihonbashi Theatre and Chitoseza 千歳座 (Nihonbashi) in November (*Miyako Shinbun*, July 2, November 2 and November 10). Because of its familiar topic (not the romance of European princess), *Fukkō* could appeal to the local public. Like Satsuki's *The Reconstruction Song* mentioned above, the humorous devices must be a key for the popularity. As the collective memories of the Earthquake were fading off, such a fad product as *Fukkō* lost the public (as same as the topical *enka* songs). However, I want to stress Sassa's willingness to create a special musical for the victims. A few years later, contracted by Japan Victor, he started releasing a number of hit songs. To see his carrier in retrospect, *Fukkō* was his farewell to the period of Asakusa Opera. It also marked the last chord for Asakusa Opera.

7 Celebrating the Reconstruction

The work of reconstruction was officially completed by the Celebration for Reconstruction of Imperial Capital on March 24-26, 1930. When the Shōwa Emperor patrolled the areas once devastated, a thousand collectives, and their five hundred thousand members were mobilised and general public of over two hundred thousand people lined the route, yelling "Banzai!" A newspaper reported the Emperor's public appearance that "Here comes the day of glory! Be fascinated! The joy of reconstruction!" (*Yomiuri Shinbun*, March 24). The government and Tokyo City proposed a plan to make the date of ceremony a national holiday in order to remember the unprecedented achievement forever. The words of "forever" and "eternity" were often used in the official statements since the powers needed people's fantasy of ever-lasting improvement to cover the "vague anxiety" (Akutagawa Ryūnosuke 芥川龍之介, in his testament in 1927) prevailing under the military reinforcement.

Various concerts were held in the ceremonies. The Hibiya Public Hall, newly constructed inside the Hibiya Park (1929), hosted the harmonica orchestra of several universities playing *The Reconstruction March*, an event for the children with piano, xylophone, fairytale-like musicals and others. Other public halls presented the amateur orchestras, brass bands, among others. The culmination of the music events was without doubt the pageant of approximately twenty bands on the last day including the Military and Navy ones from the Hibiya Park, marching to Ginza, the Place of Imperial Palace and back to the starting point. There was another march of hundred players of *chindonya* チンドン屋 street commercial band usually mixing the Western brass instruments with Japanese *taiko* percussions and *shamisen* string instrument as well as a costume jazz party at Imperial Hotel with four hundred elite participants. The public presence of Emperor impressed the crowd as if the reconstruction had been his work. Retrospectively the celebration ceremony was a rehearsal for the imperial pageant, the national mobilisation, the political and economic centralisation on the capital, and the unilateral control of public discourses.

On March 26, the last day of ceremony, the radio dedicated the whole day to the celebration (Japan had only one station by the state-run Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai 日本放送協会, today's NHK). The program included the speech, the new songs, the new *shamisen* pieces and the drama, all of which praised the completion of great work. Among the new songs commissioned by the authorities were *Fukkō kōshinkyoku* 復興行進曲 (The Reconstruction March, lyrics by Kitahara Hakushū 北原白秋 (1885-1942), music by Yamada Kōsaku) and *Teito Fukkō Kōshinkyoku* 帝都復興行進曲 (The March of Reconstruction of Imperial Capital, lyrics by Saijō Yaso, music by Nakayama Shinpei 中山晋平 [1887-1952]). The word of "march" (*kōshinkyoku*) became fad since 1928-29 with such hit songs as *Ginza March* (*Ginza kōshinkyoku*

銀座行進曲) and *Tōkyō March* (*Tōkyō kōshinkyoku* 東京行進曲), both of which sketched the romance of fashionable urbanites in Tokyo under reconstruction. The word of march then implied not only the military but also the progress and the modernity.

The former, *The Reconstruction March*, simply delights the modern life in progress after the earthquake, singing about the radio tower, tall building, clock tower, electric news board, new iron bridges, asphalt road, newly-made sidewalk, crane, and breakwater. These words could be implicitly associated with the new landmarks and the symbols of reconstruction such as the Marunouchi Building ("Marubiru" as was nicknamed), the nine-story business building (the tallest in Japan) inaugurated in 1923, the commercial spot of Ginza street widened after the earthquake, the Gaien Park of Meiji Shrine, new iron-framed Kiyosu Bridge and Eitai Bridge over Sumida River. Hakushū refers even to "rush hour" which symbolised the metropolitan life of "salarymen" living in the suburbs and working in the heart of Tokyo. Commuting became common to the middle class office workers, moving out from the centre, settled down in the newly-developed residential area. In the refrain, the poet openly praises that "The quick tempo is our speciality". How the urban life was accelerated in the mind of people was expressed by the fad word of "the age of speed". The word of "speed" and that of "modern" (*modan*) were nearly synonyms. If Soeda Satsuki's *The Reconstruction Song* admired the strong spirit of Edokko (Edo-Tōkyō local people) facing the calamity and expecting the future, Hakushū's "The Reconstruction March" applauded the achievement of reconstruction work (especially the civil engineering work and the building) led under the State and metropolitan bureaucracy. Hakushū and his collaborator Yamada Kōsaku were the most established pair who was commissioned the official hymns (of school, company, for example) throughout the 1920s-30s. This song was nothing but a routine for them and was not replayed afterword.

The latter song, *The March of Reconstruction of Imperial Capital*, illustrates the beauty of new Tokyo, comparing with that of old Edo, in a more playful way. The lyricist Saijō Yaso mentions the Diet Building, the iron bridge, the motor boat, the widened principal roads, the sycamore walks, and other items most of which are common with Hakushū's song mentioned above. Knowledgeable of Edo poetics, he was good at applying the classic vocabulary to the modern settings as had been experimented in his groundbreaking success, *Tōkyō March*, released in 1929, composed by Nakayama Shinpei. The pair of Yaso and Shinpei was the most successful hit factory around that time but the march commissioned by Tokyo City was forgotten immediately.

8 Conclusion

The seven years between the Great Kantō Earthquake (1923) and the ceremony of reconstruction (1930) were crucial for the music history of Japan. Seven new points can be mentioned: the installation of electric loudspeakers in the public space (around 1924); the arrival of electric recording system (1927), the start of major foreign labels (1928), the radio broadcast (1926), the talkie system (1929), jazz boom (around 1928 on) and revue theatre (1927). They changed the basic conditions of production, reception and consumption of sound and music. The electric loudspeakers set in the stations, the parks, the shops, the rooms and other public and private spaces (radio, phonograph, talkie, announcement…) naturally changed the urban soundscape as well as the audio perception on the mass level. The similar could be noted in other countries since the electric technology had no borders.

Not all of them were in reality caused or brought about by the natural phenomenon. They were common characteristics of the music and sound culture in the 1920s around the world. Not all of them were caused or brought about by the natural phenomenon. Without the Earthquake they could have been imported or invented because Japan had been already part of world system on various levels. From technological inventions to fad songs, the peninsula was tightly linked with what was going on in Europe and North America.

What is specific to Japan is that such a revolutionary decade coincided with the catastrophe and that those novelties were often associated with the "post-quake" and interpreted as the icons of *modan*. In this borrowed word from *modern*, the users condensed the feeling of new age after the Earthquake. *Modan* meant the latest and continued to mean it until the "post-modern" (post-*modan*) became current. Therefore the word of *modan* (modern) and its common translation *kindai* have distinct meanings in colloquial Japanese, different from the definitions of historians. This condition was specific to Japan in a similar way that in Europe jazz (Americanism), radio and the electric recording (singing stars of new generation) were often related to the icons of "post-war" (the war was indeed called the "*Great* War" like "Great Earthquake"). In both cases, these novelties suddenly appeared in the devastated land and spread while the work of reconstruction was in progress.

On the opposite side of *modan*, the Earthquake farewelled to the street singers and Asakusa Opera. The former was replaced by the recording singers contracted with major labels, while the latter by more spectacular revue stage (with jazzy music and dancing). In the 1930s Tokyo could see the full versions of opera by Puccini and Bizet, for example, as the audience of Asakusa Opera might have dreamt of. In a word, music life was much more industrialised and formed by media after the quake. There were no

more spaces for street singers of semi-private management. Discussing a variety of music activities and genres in a specific period, this paper has estimated the enormous influence of Earthquake on modern/*modan* music culture in Japan.

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2 Nature and Environment in Cinema, Animation and Performing Arts

Rethinking Nature in Post-Fukushima Japan
Facing the Crisis
edited by Marcella Mariotti, M. Roberta Novielli, Bonaventura Ruperti and Silvia Vesco

Masumura Yasuzō
A Breakthrough in the Wall of Japanese Cinema

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Abstract A few fundamental events contributed to create a revolution in the world of Japanese cinema during the 1950s, drastically cutting its links with the past and stimulating a completely different way to make movies. One of the main authors to stress the need for a complete change was MasumuraYasuzo. He had been studying for two years (1952-54) in Rome, an experience which enabled him to introduce a new kind of approach to human beings into Japan. Masumura's refusal for the classical atmosphere of Japanese cinema, often referring to nature as a metaphor of the existence, together with what he had learnt in Italy, gave birth to some of his masterpieces, where the fictional universe works as a frame for depicting a dialectic mixing of freedom and individuality.

Keywords Masumura Yasuzō. Japanese Cinema. Nature. Japanese New Wave. Film production. 1960s.

1 Introduction

During the 1950s, Japanese cinema reached its peak not only on an artistic and narrative level, but also from a business point of view. As a consequence of the huge number of foreign movies imported to Japan, the number of movie theatres quickly increased and the business soon became very profitable. Just as in the previous decades, all the production companies controlled theatre networks where they could distribute the movies they produced, a rigidly composed structure also intended to exclude the works made by independents without their distribution control. However, the number of the major studios that shared the market was doomed to increase, and after a few years the oligopoly was formed by six big companies: Tōhō, Shintōhō, Shōchiku, Daiei, Tōei, and Nikkatsu.

The film market expansion met the audience's growing love for the Seventh Art. To satisfy its appetite, the distributors organised frequent

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screening programs, quickly replacing the films in the playbill with new ones and resorting to the ploy of the double bill program. Thus the budget to make a movie was usually very limited, and the production system was generally meticulous to avoid any waste of funds: the staff had to plan every detail before the shooting, working at an unrelenting pace with ungenerous wages. But in spite of the rigidness of this system, an unheard-of freedom of expression was guaranteed to the Japanese filmmakers. This strategy was amply repaid by the audience: in 1958 the maximum number of spectators attending the screenings was registered, although the national broadcasting organisation NHK had started the television broadcast from 1953 and was becoming a dangerous adversary for the film industry.

It was mainly due to Italy that Japanese cinema was officially recognised abroad, thanks to the Golden Lion awarded to Kurosawa Akira's *Rashōmon* at the Venice Film Festival in 1951. Giuliana Stramigioli, who was responsible for the Italia Film branch in Japan, proposed the selection of the movie: she had watched the Japanese screening and strongly believed that it had good chances to win. The award to this film elicited conflicting feelings: from one point of view it represented the victory of the whole country, as a boost in confidence for a destroyed population still under the control of the US Occupation Forces. At the same time, it had raised the issue of offering an exotic image of Japan, winking to the Western audience – which was one of the main criticism to the director when it was first screened in Japan, in particular for its analytic style of narration. The same kind of criticism was advanced in the Western context where, together with those who considered the movie as a masterpiece, many film critics judged it as an exotic film and tried to compare it with other Western works, even explaining the "*Rashōmon* phenomenon" as the result of the Occupation.[1]

Once the way was opened towards the West, international successes were almost a common occurrence. Japan had triumphantly entered the film festival scene, mainly following *Rashōmon*'s winning formula by setting the narration in the past. The internationalisation of Japanese cinema induced filmmakers to improve the quality of their works, stimulating the creation of new narratives and new styles that could better compete with the film industry abroad. Thanks to these interactions with other countries' cinematic styles, Japan was now able to value its own capabilities and reach its much praised achievements, often through the assimilation of film codes and syntaxes from different cultures.

The Treaty of Peace of San Francisco, which began in 1952, served to allocate Japan among the key players in the international economic and

1 In the article "Rashomon et le cinéma japonais" published in 1952 in *Cahiers du Cinéma*, Curtis Harrington explained how American film critics considered the movie: "For them, *Rashomon* is a Japanese post-war film, thus its excellence must be due to the supervision and assistance supplied by the American occupiers" (quoted in Richie 1996, 141).

political arena. It also put an end to the American Occupation and – most importantly – sowed the seeds of a new national awareness: no longer plunged into a "melodramatic" reality (i.e., overall destitution, a government ruled by a foreign power, a strong and coercive pressure to adopt democracy), Japanese people could finally turn to the most suitable cultural course in line with their future perspectives. Moreover, they could now also establish additional elements unheard of in the feudal past: the opportunity of acting in total freedom, individualism and personal responsibility.

2 Masumura Yasuzō's Years of Learning and the Italian Experience

Born in 1924 in Kōfu, Masumura Yasuzō 増村 保造 expressed his love for cinema when very young, showing an open preference for European films – his favourite director being Jean Renoir – which he could often watch thanks to his friendship with the son of the owner of a movie theatre. He was not interested in Japanese cinema, apart from a few works he had appreciated and watched many times during the War, especially *Muhōmatsu no issho* (Rickshaw Man) (Inagaki Hiroshi, 1943) and *Sugata Sanshirō* (Kurosawa Akira, 1943) (*Nihon eiga jinmei jiten* 1997, 746). During World War II he entered the Faculty of Law at the prestigious Tokyo University, where he had the opportunity to meet, among the others, the future writer Mishima Yukio.[2] In 1948 he got a part-time job at Daiei, working for four years as an assistant for the director Koishi Eiichi. Thanks to the money he had earned, he was able to enrol once again at the university and enter the Faculty of Philosophy.

Meanwhile, he also devoted himself to writing: among his many works, an essay on Kurosawa Akira won a prize at the Kinema Jumpō contest (Masumura 1999, 19). When Masumura graduated, he was awarded a scholarship to study filmmaking at the Experimental Centre of Cinematography in Rome, even if cinema was not among his favourite interests. Here he was able to count on extraordinary teachers, including Michelangelo Antonioni, Federico Fellini and Luchino Visconti, three filmmakers who had started their careers in Neo-realism that had soon shaped their own personal styles which had little to do with the artistic movement. Thanks to them, Masumura experienced the leftover atmosphere of the recent Neo-realistic influence. However, although many scholars believe that Masumura's period of stay in Rome pushed him towards the Neo-realistic

2 Years later, Mishima starred as an actor in *Karakkaze yarō* (Afraid to Die, 1960) by Masumura.

atmosphere,[3] he would soon demonstrate to have followed a more personal style in the aftermath on Neo-realism, as in the case of filmmakers such as Visconti, who had distanced themselves from this movement.

During the period spent in Italy, Masumura actively participated in Rome's dense cultural life, also meeting young people who, like himself, believed that cinema was crossing a crucial moment of change. They were sort of living in the middle of the crossroads of European cultural trends, which would create new forms of style. According to Masumura, European cinema presented the human being as a central figure in the 'reality' of life; it was therefore indispensable to grasp all the historical and aesthetic nuances linking men to everyday life experiences.

Thanks to his active role in the many Italian cultural activities, Masumura also had the opportunity to contribute with some essays to some of the most important film magazines of the time. Among his contributions, the most important was the first history of Japanese cinema ever published in Italy, *Profilo storico del cinema giapponese* (Historical Profile of Japanese Cinema), which he wrote for *Bianco&Nero* in 1954.[4] This long article is fundamental to understand how the filmmaker was going to create his style, starting from what he wrote on contemporary Japanese cinema and on the "neo-romantic" tendency that influenced auteurs like Kurosawa Akira:

> Their clear aim was to break once and for from the international schemes Japanese cinema had been restrained to, namely the minute and realistic description of family events which were often described with a strong and nostalgic sentimentalism. Indeed, this had produced examples of a very high level, but the time had come to break free and to open up to new themes and new style achievements. According to these young filmmakers' opinion, Japanese cinema needed profusion of fantasy and invention instead of the usual and traditional narrative modes, strength of hyperboles and a firm narrative structure instead of a pale and melodramatic intimistic realism, fruitfulness and a hopeful overabundance of entertainment elements instead of the exhausted observation of the mere aesthetical form, the vivid representation of what is ugly instead of the sentimental painting of beauty. (Masumura 1984a, 232)

3 David Desser, for example, wrote that the influence of Neo-realism is evident in "his preference for location shooting and his focus on the lower classes. On the other hand, like many of the neo-realist directors, he shifted his focus slightly, concentrating on how human desires can change one's environment seen through a juxtaposition of the freedom of the individual against the constraints of the social system" (Desser 1988, 42).

4 It was published in January, in the number 11-12 of the film magazine. I refer to the reprinted version in Masumura 1984a. All translations from the original (Italian) are mine.

However, in his essay Masumura also underlined that between 1949 and 1951, especially as a consequence of the transformation of the Korean political structure and the rearmament of Japan under the control of US Occupation Forces, home dramas had increased, representing:

> the realistic-intimistic works in which common people could identify their own faces, their own life, their own problems; in other words, portrayed in an honest and reliable way, where social investigations were carried out on a large scale and where polemical stances and in-depth analyses of the reality were outlined rather lazily but efficiently. Japanese people were once again inclined to retreat into their small familiar shelter, and through these movies they perceived a kind of psychological and moral empathy. (235)

Masumura was specifically referring to Ozu Yasujirō's *Banshun* (Late Spring, 1949) and *Bakushū* (Early Summer, 1951). Of the first one he denounced "a feeling of narrowness and oppression, like something too rigidly separated from reality" (Masumura 1984a, 235), and of the second movie the fact that "the director fails to analyse some actual situations which were the cause of slight disagreements, which could not be solved with the traditional familiar love" (236). According to Masumura a similar problem was also traceable in Ozu's masterpiece *Tōkyō monogatari* (Tokyo Story, 1953), where "a new attitude of the author towards reality and life emerges, a new pessimistic and gloomy idea, completely aimed at bringing back the nostalgic memory of the past and to refuse the new human relationships established by the post-war generation" (Masumura 1984a, 246).

In his "Conclusion" to the historical profile he had outlined, Masumura definitively declares what he dislikes of Japanese cinema, in other words what he thinks of the difference with Europe. In particular, he affirms:

> For long periods of its history, Japanese cinema has been the result of a deformed society, where an absolutist political power dominated people to the extent of depriving them of all the freedom of a civil life, and made every ideal, every hope, every genuine impulse impossible. […] On a social and political level, Japanese cinema was compelled to remain on a level of neutrality, or even agnosticism and indifference. Critics, especially foreigners, had frequently put emphasis on some peculiar and constant aspects of Japanese cinema: fatalism, love for nature, cruelty, refinement of taste, mysticism, and, on an expressive level, the 'large' time of narration. […] After all these peculiarities, fundamental in Japanese movies, are nothing but the exact correspondence to the traits of narrative, and still more, of visual arts, which are so different from those of the visual arts typical of Italian Renaissance. At the time, art was the open and direct expression of the passion of the people who had created a new ideal of

> beauty, in total harmony with the real spiritual and environmental conditions; the result was a masculine art, realistic in the noblest meaning of the word. […] Japanese people have always lacked the sense of sociality, meant as the entirety of responsibility and cooperation among the members of the community useful to reach common purposes. (249-50)

In the same lines, Masumura also underlined how the lack of a "vivid and eloquent" mimicry of Japanese actors was the result of a general self-control which had always lead them to hide the most genuine feeling, and at the end he concludes his essay noticing how Japanese cinema lacks genuine comedies, in particular with honest and possibly critical connections to society.

We can thus assert that the two most important teachings which Masumura learnt in Italy included how to treat the actors, and understanding the dialectic power offered by comedy and more generally by the irony suffused in everyday life situations. As for the actors, the great Italian filmmakers had influenced him greatly, especially Visconti's idea that an actor possesses the necessary human qualities useful to create a character, which became one of Masumura's main goals to achieve. To underline the weight of the character's interior self, he assumed that it was necessary to confer a particular rhythm to both the editing and the dialogue, and just like the Italian filmmakers Masumura himself later privileged modern characters mainly chosen among poor people and portrayed in frequent close-ups: this guaranteed the prevailing role of human beings over locations and gave them a political centrality and a certain consciousness of reality.

On the other hand, the comedy genre had reached very high stylistic levels in Italy, for example thanks to some movies by Renato Castellani like the easy-going *Sotto il sole di Roma* (Under the Sun of Rome, 1948) which in many ways anticipated Pasolini's poetry; or the perfect synthesis of irony and drama in Visconti's *Bellissima* (1951); and finally, the general ability of Fellini to symbolise human monstrosity in grotesque forms, like he did for *Lo sceicco bianco* (The White Sheik, 1952) and *I Vitelloni* (1953), greatly influenced by his previous experience as a cartoonist.

3 Back to Japan and the Debut as a Filmmaker

When Masumura returned to Japan, he finally decided to devote himself to filmmaking. He went back to work at Daiei, where he initially was employed as an assistant for Mizoguchi Kenji and, after the director's death, for Ichikawa Kon. At the same time, he continued his activity as a film critic, writing for specialised magazines such as *Eiga Hyōron*.

This was a time in Japan when the number of movies portraying young people (a film genre known as *seishun eiga*, "films on youth") increased

on the big screen. This genre was representative of the people's desire for innovation, a need that had taken shape in post-war Japan. In particular, a new film genre produced by Nikkatsu and known as "Sun Tribe Films" (*taiyōzoku eiga*) achieved a resounding success in 1956. These movies were adapted from Ishihara Shintarō's novels,[5] including the Akutagawa Prize winner *Taiyō no kisetsu* (Season of the Sun, 1955). His works shook the literary scene by introducing a new social model, according to which the post-war generation could do nothing but refuse every ethical and moral aspect shaped by their parents. In place of the traditional virtues, the "new" tormented youth were absorbed by extreme sensations, such as sex (not love, just the physical act) and violence. Among the definitions given to the prize-winning writer, many critics labelled him as a "right-wing anarchist", which later proved to be true when he got a political position in the Liberal Democratic Party.

His way to address the young people's energy was so popular to become a huge trend and his novels were all bestsellers. Many of his works were adapted to movies until the 1970s, and Ishihara himself directed one – although not favourably received – in 1958, *Wakai kemono* (The Young Beast). One of the most successful adaptations is *Kurutta kajitsu* (Crazed Fruit, 1956[6]), scripted and directed by Nakahira Kō. It tells the story of two brothers, both attracted to the same woman, a very simple plot that offers the chance to tangibly approach the disillusioned and violent point of view of these "rebels without a cause". Starting with the Sun Tribe films, Japanese cinema would later give more and more visibility, although from different political fronts and analytical evaluations, to the subversive impulse of young people, which would reach its peak in the 1960s and emerge in the new genre known as "Shōchiku Nouvelle Vague".[7]

In this cultural atmosphere Masumura's debut movie, *Kuchizuke* (Kisses, 1957), was produced at Daiei. With the Sun Tribe works he shared only the disillusion of young people towards the world of adults' and its social responsibilities, and their quest for strong and immediate emotions; everything else was strongly influenced by all that Masumura had learnt in Italy. In this movie, the young couple (the male character Kin'ichi and

5 Ishihara began his career as a writer, but later produced also as a scriptwriter and filmmaker. In recent years he chose the political career and was the Governor of Tokyo from 1999 to 2012.

6 This film was also distributed in Italy with the title of the first novel by Ishihara, *La stagione del sole* (Season of the Sun).

7 This Japanese "New Wave" cinema took the name of the production company (Shōchiku) which first launched the genre by the works of the young filmmakers Ōshima Nagisa, Shinoda Masahiro and Yoshida Kijū, and aimed to propose a kind of Japanese version of the French Nouvelle Vague movement. However, these authors refused the label and soon all became independent, upsetting the film scene with completely new styles and themes.

the charming Akiko) belong to the lower class of a developing country, compelled to a hard life because of their parents' faults. Both their fathers are imprisoned: Kin'ichi's as a repeat offender, Akiko's as a cheater, who had turned to crime due to the hardness of life. Both their mothers are somehow "missing": the boy's had left her family years before because of her husband's behaviour and Akiko's mother is always ill and hospitalised. The young couple not only has to struggle to survive, but needs to find the money to have their fathers released, even if this means selling their bodies or partially giving up their personal freedom – ancient violations which they manage to overcome thanks to their pure innocence.

Right from the opening titles, we sense the lightness of their existence. A tracking shot among the leafy branches of a long line of trees stimulates three different effects: it reveals in advance the "motion" their lives are compelled to; it offers the quick rhythm of the editing and dialogues to come; it also evokes the natural setting (traditionally present in Japanese cinema) the movie is soon going to detach itself from. The first scene after the titles symbolises the tragedy of the boy's life: walking alone along a desolate street, he stares at the hermetic prison building he is soon going to enter. A lorry overtakes him lifting up a cloud of dust, which the boy breathes and immediately spits out, an evident metaphor of his miserable life. It is clearly evident that the director does not intend to be melodramatic: the first dialogue between father and son is extremely rapid and a-sentimental, which immediately displays the sense of urgency of the characters, while their bodies fill the screen by means of close-ups and extreme angles.

It is during this dialogue that Kin'ichi meets Akiko, and is attracted by the girl's uncontrollable crying caused by her worry for her father's health. The young couple borrows a motorbike – also their joy in riding is illusory, since they do not own the motorbike. Another metaphor of their desperation for not having anything to lose and for not being able to completely count on themselves, they bet the little money they have on a bike race. Thanks to the little sum they win, they manage to spend together a lighthearted day before going back to the harsh reality.

The couple represents the plague in the economically growing society that Japan is trying to create, a cross-section of the suburban marginalisation. At a symbolic level, the institutions presented in the movie (the prison and the hospital where Akiko's mother is in care) do not guarantee tutelage unless the fees and the extras are paid out, which of course affects the fate of the poor people. It is a pessimistic view of the services offered by society, but all the same Masumura reserves a happy epilogue for the couple: the boy will join his mother, now a well-off woman, and the girl will be able to pay for her father's bail. Despite the happy ending, the narrated events *de facto* prove that the idea of traditional family had irreversibly changed, although it was still frequently presented in many movies contemporary to *Kisses*.

Like in Fellini's *I Vitelloni*, throughout the whole film we perceive a sense of freshness, without running the risk of falling into complicated events, but at the same time letting apparently unimportant moments go by, which are however the tangible vibration of their lives. Masumura's refusal for the classical atmosphere of Japanese cinema, together with what he had learned in Italy, led him to select emblematic places where the human existence unfolds – the jail, the streets, the narrow rooms where the couple lives. Just like Michelangelo Antonioni did in his *Cronaca di un amore* (Story of a Love Affair, 1950), Masumura explores the places as if they were frames where his camera can flow in a kind of dance around the bodies, thanks to a continuous variation of angles, close-ups and medium shots, since he believed that people are the true leading characters of the images, but reality as well.

4 The Need to Break with the Past

In a time span of a few months from his first movie *Kisses* in 1957, Masumura directed three more films: *Aozora musume* (The Blue Sky Maiden), *Danryū* (Warm Curren), and *Hyoheki* (The Precipice). *The Blue Sky Maiden* belongs to the genre known as "films about mothers" (*haha mono*), undoubtedly one of Daiei's strong points, traditionally melodramatic. However, thanks to Masumura's gaze, drama becomes a-sentimental and nervously narrated, to such an extent that it almost ridicules melodrama itself. It tells the story of Yuko, the young illegitimate daughter born after her father's extramarital affair. Although constantly oppressed by her brothers, the girl is optimistic and hopes in a better future, here represented by the blue sky.

Warm Current is the remake of the eponymous 1939 Yoshimura Kōzaburō's movie, an adaptation from a novel by Kishida Kunio, now scripted by Shirasaka Yoshio with a more lively rhythm of dialogue and a subtle ironical *verve*. It tells about the complicated sentimental relationship between the members of the staff and the managers of a hospital in Tokyo. Whereas in the 1939 version grace, dignity, the fear of loosing one's own reputation had prevailed over the feelings, in Masumura's version passion and desire are the core of the characters' impulses, to such an extent that in one scene which takes place in a crowded station of Tokyo, the female character (starred by Hidari Sachiko) screams to the man: "Being your lover or your mistress is fine by me! I'll be waiting!".

The Precipice can be classified as belonging to a genre between the romantic and the thriller, shot in both the metropolitan dimension of the capital city and in a mountain-climbing adventure set in the snowy Japanese Alps. Two friends are climbing a mountain, when suddenly one of the two falls and dies. The survivor is suspected to have killed his companion

as they were both in love of the same woman, the beautiful and married Minako. Her portrait is among the first strong femme fatale characters in Masumura's cinema, for whom desire and passion are inseparable feelings.[8]

These three movies, just like the first one, had been produced as entertainment films, but between the lines they displayed some elements that attracted the audience and film critics. They had also caught the attention of many of Masumura's detractors, who had always detected a lack of feeling in the style he used. As well, they had accused him of characterising people too emphatically, thus creating a detachment from reality, and of failing to describe the environment and the atmosphere. In February 1958, before making his most successful movie *Kyojin to gangu* (Giants and Toys, 1958), in response to the critics who had accused him of neglecting human feelings by describing the characters with eccentric exaggeration, showing no more than aridity and detachment, Masumura wrote an essay for the magazine *Eiga Hyōron*, "Aru benmei – Jōcho to shirijitsu to furi iki ni se o mukete (A Justification: Turning My back on Emotion, Truth, and Atmosphere), where he stated:

> They say my work is arid and deprived of feelings. Moreover, it has been accused of emphasizing the funniness of the characters, of my being frivolous and displaying a poor sense of reality. The tempo is excessively fast, the description of the environment and the atmosphere is lacking: this is why my work may seem arid and detached. In one way, these critics are correct. However, if I am allowed to justify myself, I would just like to say that I intentionally reject sentiment, adulterate reality, and deny the atmosphere. (Masumura 1984b, 111)

In substance, starting from this incipit he was not only demonstrating his strong desire to give a serious jolt to the mainstream Japanese cinema, but above all he was introducing what he had learnt in Italy, especially in his use of the comic sense to describe the dramatic situations of everyday life.

In his essay, Masumura also explained to what extent the Japanese cinema of the past had represented feelings strongly influenced by the social environment, how his compatriots were no longer able to give voice to their own true emotions and desires, and how the *truth/atmosphere* pair had always been aimed to describing the environment rather than the people living in it. This meant refusing the lyricism of the great filmmakers, discarding a series of rhetorical conventions which had gradually

8 Years later, during an interview Masumura declared: "Unlike the man, who is nothing but a shadow, the woman is a being really existing, an extremely free being – that's how I consider eroticism". From "Entretien avec Masumura Yasuzo", in *Cahiers du Cinéma*, 224 October 1970 (quoted in Le Pape 1970, 67).

multiplied in Japanese cinema, and putting an end to that sense of "resignation" which up to that moment had led to an existence lived only half of its potential: "I hate sentiment, and this is because in Japanese cinema it has always been represented as a controlled, harmonious, resigned, sad, looser, and elusive manner" (Masumura 1984b, 111).

Writing about his works where "I only aim at describing passion and the will of those who really live" (114), he also explained: "This choice has strongly been influenced by the two-year stay in Italy. When in Europe, for the very first time I had the feeling that I could finally understand man. […] In Europe, you can experience the beauty and the strength of the human being. […] In Europe, the "human being" is something real" (114-15). He ended his essay firmly refusing to belong to any of the two main successful film trends in Japan: the naturalistic one, describing "poor people with no hopes", and the one based on realistic and ideological values which "describe the faults of society in an ideal way" (116). These approaches induced people to fail their social responsibilities, seeking refuge in a comfortable resignation.

5 The Reactions of the New Cinema and the Challenge of *Giants and Toys*

A few months after the publication of Masumura's essay, the future director Ōshima Nagisa, who was already active as a film critic, wrote an article in the film magazine *Eiga Hihyō* with the title "Sore wa toppakō ka? – Nihon eiga no kindaishugishatachi" (Is It a Breakthrough? - The Modernists of Japanese Film) where he put together all the recent changes which had occurred in Japanese cinema and foresaw the dynamics that would soon develop. Besides, in his movies Ōshima would later launch the era of the New Cinema of the 1960s, and for a long time he would be the true leading figure of a general revolution of themes and styles, which inevitably affected the industry which was soon 'invaded' by independent filmmakers.

In his essay, Ōshima made it clear that he considered the directors Masumura and Nakahira Kō as well as the scriptwriter Shirasaka Yoshio as the pioneers of modernism. About Masumura, and especially referring to the movie *Kisses*, he wrote:

> [When] used a freely moving camera to depict a pair of young motorcycle riding lovers [in *Kisses*], this new generation had assumed a place in Japanese cinema as an intense, unstoppable force that could no longer be ignored. […] His characters are anxious, the environment and the stories are contemporary. The descriptions are tangible, made by means of guidelines of a modern thinking. […] It is today more than ever necessary to analyse this current, to study it, to convey and support it, because

> it is from here that it will be possible to open a breakthrough in the wall of Japanese cinema. (Ōshima 2009, 25-6[9])

Just when Ōshima was writing this article, Masumura was shooting *Giants and Toys*, a movie Ōshima had high hopes for:

> The duo Masumura-Shirasaka is going to shoot *Kyojin to gangu*, adapted from the original novel by Kaikō Takeshi. In this film they will bravely face the theme of human dignity, jeopardized by the monstrous processes of the capitalistic society. From a formal point of view, *Kyojin to gangu* seems in line with the movies made until now, but the new thematic element, i.e., the accurate description of the social mechanisms, will inevitably influence and condition the narrative form. How can this problem be solved? Masumura will probably describe the process through which an energy destroys itself and then endlessly is revived, giving the characters a powerful and unusual dynamism. With no doubt, he will try to testify his faith to the individual. (Ōshima 2009, 33)

Giants and Toys was first distributed in June 1958. The plot is mainly centred on the fierce competition among rival confectionery manufacturers, which alienate the staff involved in their promotional campaigns. The young and new employee, Nishi, somehow enters into the good grace of the aspiring director Goda, and does his utmost to satisfy all his requests. Their firm is one of the three that is competing on the market and is in the middle of its promotion. Goda chooses a girl, Kiyoko, among the common people and manages to transform her into a star, who will serve to launch the campaign. However, all the characters, including Nishi, Goda and the ambitious star, are bound to lose their personal and sentimental freedom and in two particular cases health is also put at stake to pursue the business objective. Masumura portrays this situation through a sharp look, somehow anticipating the Japanese New Wave cinema style.

Just as in *Kisses*, the "manifesto" of this film is immediately made evident from the images presented in the opening titles: a picture of Kiyoko, which is multiplied in many images and fragmented – a kind of "one, no one and one hundred thousand", the alienation of individuality, like in Luigi Pirandello's famous novel. A similar image opens the first scene: the leading character Nishi is walking in a crowd of men looking just like him, all walking in the same direction, all heading to their firm. The camera shifts vertically to the highest floor of the building. The president is observing the men below and says: "It's a human river, the more sweets they eat the more we will earn. They are like candies to me". To further underline

9 All translations from the original (Japanese) are mine.

this image with a new analogy, in one of the following scenes the candy production line is shown. Besides, the girl who has been chosen as the firm testimonial appears for the first time behind a glass display for candies, thus becoming a "product" herself.

The competition among the companies is the kick off for these insect-like existence. This competition can also been interpreted as the one existing among film studios and between cinema and television. Even if referring to a different field (the advertising world), Masumura's *Giant and Toys* shares many elements with the ephemeral location of Visconti's *Bellissima*.[10] As a matter of fact, both movies tell of the expectations and hopes of the ordinary people in living in the post-war society. They live in a sort of dream in which they try to play an active role, a behaviour largely based on the American model. In *Giant and Toys* the characters often refer to the American example, which also represents the real giant they have to uselessly fight. Advertising, as well as the cinema industry in *Bellissima*, are both worlds with no moral codes and based on false myths. Both directors analyse these settings with an dispassionate attitude, aware that dreams are doomed to smash into reality and illusions are destined to fail. Their approach is direct and disillusioned, as well as sincere.

Another resemblance with *Bellissima* is the way this film builds fictitious "heroes", specifically the little girl in the Italian masterpiece and the young woman chosen as a star in the Japanese movie. Both are "produced" by the system, and both become icons that the common people are ready to take up. To underline this nuance, both the characterisations swing between the comic and the dramatic, with a touching overtone. On the whole, the two movies offer a slice of life of two countries that are trying to emerge through careerism, slapdash attitudes, empty promises and celluloid illusions. Masumura strengthens the use of allegory:

> The final destination of such symbolic mise-en-scène is the allegory. In the first dialogue scene of the film, a lighter that fails to catch becomes the overemphatic focus of all the characters' gazes, leading to a montage of fast dissolves illustrating the caramel business, all overlaid by the glinting reflection of the lighter. […] It takes only a small interpretive step from this coupling of production and reproduction to see the regular clicking of the lighter flint as a metaphor for the motion of the film through camera and projector that is the condition of our seeing it. (Raine 2007, 160)

Screened at Venice Film Festival in 1958, film critics did not get the allegorical structure of *Giants and Toys*, but they rather appreciated its style,

10 Masumura knew and appreciated their work, and in fact he was the author of a special issues on Visconti for Kinema Jumpō in the series *Sekai no eigasakka* (Movie Writers of the World) (no. 4, 1970).

the fast rhythm of dialogues, and its visual richness. In Japan it was successful beyond any expectation, to such an extent that it was included in the prestigious "top ten" compilation annually presented by the film magazine Kinema Junpō. However, there were also negative reviews, among the others the one from Ōshima who accused Masumura of having failed in keeping the necessary distance from the subject and of not having provided a political instrument appropriated for that age. This film also represented a showcase for the author himself, who became a symbol of the renewal of Japanese cinema. However, when the New Wave movies were screened, the balance of interest related to innovation shifted towards more politically and socially involved directors, who soon overshadowed Masumura, even if he had paved the way to the disarray of the pre-existing codes.

In his following works, Masumura's interest for characters with a strong self and unrestrained desires mainly started to focus on the women's world, since he believed that a woman could more freely state her own individuality, especially when social and moral limits prevail, and could better adapt to the idea of living harmoniously in group. For example, female characters are the keystone of some of his movies, all produced by Daiei and many starring the actress Wakao Ayako, a kind of alter ego of the filmmaker. The young woman in the love triangle of *Manji* (1964), the nurse Sakura in *Akai tenshi* (Red Angel, 1966), the tattooed femme fatale in *Irezumi* (Spider Tattoo, 1982) are only few examples of his portraits of strong and sensual women, dominant over men who not only are weak, but whose only desire is to give pleasure to their partners.[11]

Many film critics later said that Masumura had not kept faith with his initial intentions, they accused him of having gradually shifted to a more commercial and successful cinema, and that instead of trying to open a breakthrough in the majors' system, he preferred to comply with Daiei's directives. However, his cinema should be reconsidered in the light of a personal interpretation of individuality, with high aesthetic peaks, but with no exaggerated study of appearance.

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11 His movies are often provided with a strong narrative structure which is partly due to the novels they adapt. Almost all these works are written by contemporary authors, including Ōe Kenzaburō (*Nise daigakusei*, A False Student, 1960), Tanizaki Jun'ichirō (*Manji*, Spider Tattoo; *Chijin no ai*, A Fool's Love, 1967), Kawabata Yasunari (*Senbazuru*, Thousan Cranes, 1969), Edogawa Ranpo (*Blind Beast*).

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Rethinking Nature in Post-Fukushima Japan
Facing the Crisis

edited by Marcella Mariotti, M. Roberta Novielli, Bonaventura Ruperti and Silvia Vesco

Vibrations of 11 March 2011 in Japan's Performance Scene
Yamakawa Fuyuki and the Sound of Radioactivity

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Abstract This article discusses the strong resonance provoked by the 2011 triple disaster in the Japanese performance and visual arts by focusing on multimedia artist Yamakawa Fuyuki and the antinuclear activist network's intersection with the underground music scene. Directly plugging into the disaster, Yamakawa re-elaborated his artistic practice in relation to the nuclear crisis by addressing internal and external exposure to radiation. Illustrated are connections between polluted environment, corporeality, politics and performance art, and how his performative experimentations offer novel insights into the interaction between art and disaster enhancing alternative modes of interpretation in technoscience and aesthetic theory.

Keywords Performance art and disaster. Acoustic corporeality. Seismic ambient noise. Japanese underground music. Antinuclear protest.

1 Forceful Reconfiguration of Visual and Performing Arts

Following 11 March 2011, the ineffable grief and mourning for the victims, accompanied by the paradox of a strange calm mixed with terror, shock and the uncertainty of what will come next invaded mute bodies. Speechlessness and impossibility to configure the state of things in combination with the self-imposed censorship regarding nuclear power issues diffused in Japanese society structurally affected the performance art scene. Theatre, the place where the complex rapport between fiction and reality is staged, has been seriously undermined by the multiple overwhelming disasters, and was forcefully compelled to re-configure itself and to manifest a structural change. Miyazawa Akio, for instance, declared his loss

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of words immediately after the earthquake. At TPAMiY Summer Session 2011 (5-7 August) he stated that he is taking notes of his thoughts, and will reflect afterwards about the theatrical technique through which he may put his considerations on stage, underlining that the disaster offers to many theatre-makers a new chance.[1]

Having manifested a marked involution regarding critical issues on society and establishment since the 1980s by reversing into escapism, the visual and performing arts could no longer ignore their responsibility to become the platform for immediate reaction against the status quo, while contributing to the construction of a new identity and to the reconstruction of the afflicted community.[2] Nevertheless, great part of the dormant performance scene inserted into the entertainment industry of Japan remained as such.

Important festivals started to question art itself addressing the ontological and etiological horizon, a quite rare agenda in the past decades, even for the most alternative scenes. *Dansu ga mitai! 13* ダンスがみたい! 13 (I Want to See Dance! 13, 19 July-30 August 2011), dance festival directed by Makabe Shigeo,[3] focused on the provocative question "Ima, anata no dansu wa hitsuyō ka…" 今、あなたのダンスは必要か… (In this moment, is your dance necessary…?), and investigated the meaning of dance experienced by both, the performer and the audience.[4] The performances were followed by discussions with the artists, who had to make sense of their work in connection to the actual situation. The aftertalk is a common practice in dance events, but what emerged was that performers, who usually do not explicitly formulate socio-political issues in relation to their dance, despite they deal with politics in their private discussions, were directly confronted with the specific contingency.[5]

In 2011 a group of dancers, performers and critics, who were already engaged in the defence of Article 9, formed the Maiboku no kai 舞木の会

1 The panel "'Hyōgen' toshite no demo" 〈表現〉としてのデモ (Demonstration as Expression, 6 August) held by Miyazaki, Mita Itaru and Sakurai Keisuke discussed in a transnational perspective the performative nature of the new-born protests characterised by the importance of sound-making and their relation to social networks. According to Sakurai, the only way of artistic expression left after 11 March 2011 is to engage in the mobile street protests. For the strict link between demonstrations, performativity and aesthetics see Eckersall 2013.

2 In the wake of the 2011 Tōhoku earthquake many performances have been cancelled. A previous crucial moment in Japan's past three decades was the crisis following the 1995 Hanshin-Awaji earthquake, which prompted the development and institutionalisation of civil society, and the Tokyo sarin gas attack.

3 Makabe founded in 1987 the theatre company OM-2 experimenting with dramaturgies and physical theatre oriented towards cross-cultural collaborations and critical socio-political issues.

4 The festival has been held at Kagurazaka die pratze and d-Sōko (Nippori).

5 It should be noted, that many artists regard their productions as intrinsically political.

Figure 1. “The future can be changed”. Waiting at Hibiya Park before marching towards the Diet Building. Metropolitan Coalition Against Nukes demonstration, 11 March 2012. © Katja Centonze

(Meeting of Maiboku) and took actions launching the project *Tatakau dansu* たたかうダンス (Dance Fighting) in 2012.[6] Opposing the pro-nuclear policies and the Article 9 revision they held talk sessions, video screenings and performances, such as Ishii Kahoru’s “guerrilla dance”, and raised critical issues about dance, activism and politics underpinned by movement analysis, while privileging a woman-centred perspective.[7]

Festival/Tokyo’s symposium *Watashitachi wa nani o kataru koto ga dekiru no ka?* 私たちは何を語ることができるのか? (What can We Tell?, 9-10 November 2011) principally faced the agency of communication and possibility of representation by means of theatrical illusion. Its panel “3.11 ikō no geijutsukatsudō to sono kōkyōsei o megutte” 3.11 以降の芸術活動とその公共性を巡って (Post-3.11 Performing Arts and Their Publicness), moderated by Ōtori Hidenaga, debated the responsibility of artistic expression, public arts policies and the grand narrative in disaster affected Japan. Focusing his discourse on theatre and politics, and on how theatre may help to find out new ways of communication, guest speaker Hans-Thies Lehmann envisaged ancient tragedy as a device to warn human beings not to fall too deep into hubris, while running after technology. He believes that art can safe society. Nevertheless, as happens with Cassandra’s prophecies in Greek mythology, the admonishments given by artists often fall on deaf ears. In Lehmann’s vision, although art does not give answers, it poses radical questions, and the political in theatre nowadays should be read in its mode of representation.

Long term project *Fukushima Odyussei* 福島オデュッセイ (Fukushima Odysseia) led by Akuta Masahiko and Ōtori Hidenaga has been conduct-

6 For details on the group composed by Nishida Rumiko, Kikuchi Biyo, Sakaguchi Katsuhiko, Nakanishi Remon and others see `http://dance9.seesaa.net/` (2015-02-15).

7 It should be underlined, that in Japan’s antinuclear movement previous to 2011 a fundamental role was played by women (see Yamaguchi, Mutō 2012).

ed throughout the three years following the 2011 disasters and is programmed to be continued.[8] They widely faced the problem of freedom and speech thanks to the constant participation of ex NHK producer Sakurai Hitoshi, who interrogates the media censorship in relation to radioactive contamination.[9] This compound counterculture enterprise articulated a variety of tasks proposing an active and itinerant mobilisation, a set sail named "Fukushima Odysseia", where Fukushima functions as a symbol. Under question is put the possibility of a new economic system and value exchange (*kachi kōkan* 価値交換), investigating in detail political, cultural and scientific aspects of the nuclear issue from its discovery to its use in history, including Dwight Eisenhower's speech "Atoms for Peace" (1953). Discussed were also Guy Debord's concept of "Society of the Spectacle" in relation to the nuclear, and the destruction of the *kokutai* 国体 (emperor-centred state) in respect to three historical moments: the arrival of Commodore Perry, the atomic bombs of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant accident. Analysed were also the ongoing street protests and demonstrations envisaged as the collective voice *khoros*, which characterises ancient Greek theatre tradition, and "Fukushima!" as scream (*himei* 悲鳴) taken in its acceptation as proclaimed by Antonin Artaud. Experimenting with a theatre articulated as trial, they advocate a navigating trial theatre (*saiban engeki* 裁判演劇).[10]

Kaleidoscopic dynamics and cross-practices between genres and disciplines underscore the rallies germinated in the aftermath of the 2011 disasters, organised by osmotic, non-politically aligned groups of voluntary activists mainly representing the precariat.[11] These mass demonstrations showed that citizens (re)discovered the right to protest, raising their voice and expressing publicly their dissent against state policies and the global "nuclear village". This human tapestry and the antinuclear movements

8 Among the involved guest speakers were Tanikawa Michiko, Suzuki Sōshi, Hayashi Tatsuki and Takayama Akira. The sessions have been held at livehouse Coredo (Nogizaka) and at Akane (Waseda).

9 Sakurai's (2011) article questioning media has been first published on *Asahi Shinbun* webpage on 10 May 2011, but is not accessible any more.

10 Ōtori Hidenaga is probably the most transversal presence at activist debates. The theatre critic is a former student of control engineering at Tokyo Institute of Technology, and therefore able to investigate technical problems related to the nuclear plant disaster, the false information given by TEPCO, by official media and the governmental agencies. He appeared as Jacques Derrida in the complex human and marionette opera of denouncement directed by Akuta Masahiko and Yūki Isshi, *Arutō 24 ji* アルト一24時 (Artaud 24 Hours, 2011) and *Arutō 24 ji futatabi* アルト一24時＋＋再び (Artaud 24 Hours, Once Again, 2013), where also Yamakawa Fuyuki and Itō Atsushi (Atomic Optron) were involved in.

11 As explained by Antonio Negri during the symposium *Multitude and Power: The World after 3.11* (2013), multitude is a concept concerning the precariatised, exploited social class in the post-industrial era.

Figure 2. Ika (Dameren) standing in front of the police barricade keeping the stream of protesters from surrounding the Diet Building, 11 March 2012. © Katja Centonze

Figure 3. Marching from Hibiya Park to Ginza. Metropolitan Coalition Against Nukes demonstration, 11 March 2012.
© Francesca Usicco

Figure 4. Mass demonstration in front of the Diet Building, 29 July 2012.
© Katja Centonze

Figure 5. Itō Atsuhiro playing his neon instrument, Optron, at the Shirōto no ran demonstration in front of Studio Alta (Shinjuku), 11 September 2011.
© Katja Centonze

have been envisaged as "multitude" and new political agencies during the symposium *Maruchichūdo to kenryoku: 3.11 ikō no sekai* マルチチュードと権力: 3.11 以降の世界 (Multitude and Power: The World after 3.11).[12]

2 Yamakawa Fuyuki's Radioactive Performativity

Directly plugging into the disaster, multimedia artist and sound creator Yamakawa Fuyuki, who obliterates the dialectic between nature and technology, is paradigmatic of the antinuclear activist network and its intersection with the underground music scene. In an integration of sustainable forms of art, music, and lecture performance he amplifies his peculiar corporeal techniques with the help of analog devices and digital technology, and deploys his body as a musical instrument. Blurred are not only boundaries between artistic disciplines, transmission of knowledge and performance, but above all, between the outside and the inside of the body.

As a matter of fact, since 2011 his artistic practice is re-elaborated in relation to the environmental change and catastrophe addressing internal and external exposure to radiation.

His performative experimentations illustrate connections between polluted/toxic ambient, corporeality, politics and performance art, and offer novel insights into the interaction between art and disaster enhancing alternative modes of interpretation in technoscience and aesthetic theory. The concern for contamination is not only manifested in the content of his creation, but radionuclides are the material and matter he works with and sculptures around. Yamakawa's art has been intrinsically affected and paradoxically supported by radiation.

The first attempt to respond to the nuclear crisis manifesting his rapport to electricity and atomic power is *Atomic Guitar Mark I & II (Left Handed)*, a radioactive sound installation of prepared instruments. This series stars two canary yellow Stratocasters stationed specularly onto stands, and features two analog Geiger counters and Geiger Müller tubes, crow black amplifiers, a mixer, wires and cables to connect the circuit, a sample of contaminated soil put on a standing tray positioned in front of the guitars. The sample of soil is usually taken from the Toride Campus of Tokyo University of the Arts (Ibaraki), where Yamakawa works as a part-

12 The symposium coordinated by Itō Mamoru has been held by Antonio Negri, Ichida Yoshihiko, Mōri Yoshitaka and Ueno Chizuko at Science Council of Japan (Tokyo, 6 April 2013). Negri's political thought has widely influenced groups of social mobilisation in Japan, such as Dameren, the anti-capitalistic movement addressing the precariat founded in 1992 by Kaminaga Kōichi and Pepe Hasegawa.

time lecturer.[13] On the back of the electric guitars, plugged into amplifiers, are applied tactile transducers[14] wired into the radiation monitors, which sense the decaying atoms emanated from the soil on the tray. As soon as the Geiger counters start to react and tick generating mechanical tremors, the movement is transmitted onto the guitar-bodies and their strings, which start to vibrate and swing producing aural signals. These irradiated soundwaves are picked up, maximised and then diffused by the loudspeaker system. What happens here is that the ionising radionuclides, instable and transforming particles, activate and play the Stratocasters. Yamakawa, who defines this electrophonic installation a *jidō ensō sōchi* 自動演奏装置 (equipment of automatic execution), does not touch the primary sound emission source (Yamakawa 2015).[15] The Geiger counter's oscillation is amplified in the feedback process and transmuted into an autonomous artistic execution, as no human being commands the emission of sound. The stochastic process of radiation decay determines the random aural vibration and this mechanism reorients microsieverts into beats per minute (bpm). The diffused 'melodic noise' appears sometimes slightly irregular, but surprisingly cadenced, and progresses nearly in repetitive harmonic sets of pitches through modules of rhythmic recurrence. In brief, it articulates into phonic distortions without being disturbing. The acoustic signals, or drones, engendered by the resounding string vibrations drop and precipitate from the guitars and propagate through the air reaching and touching the visitors'/audience's bodies and ears affecting hearing and sight. These vibrating stimuli can be physically perceived, involving, therefore, also the somatosensation.

Yamakawa confers an acoustic dimension to the inaudible and soundless nuclear fallout and the re-suspension of radionuclides, and makes visible the sound of the imperceptible danger represented by radioactive pollutants.[16]

His concern for the impalpable, intangible nature of radioactivity, which our body does not sense – and therefore does not become aware of its threat, since it does not stimulate our nociceptors – informs his creations

13 Addressed here is the precarious working condition and the economic stagnation characterising post-industrial Japan.

14 Tactile transducers permit to transform low bass frequencies into perceivable vibrations conferring tactility to sound.

15 Confront the study on primary emission of radiation to the atmosphere, aerosol categories, and aerosol dynamic processes, including nucleation, condensation/volatilisation and coagulation in Igarashi et al. 2015.

16 A parallel attempt of visualising radioactivity is achieved in Yugi Misato's graphic series *Akai tsubutsubu no e* 赤いつぶつぶの絵 (Red Dot Paintings) centred on warnings for protecting children, the most exposed to nuclear danger, from possible contamination. Her works have been chosen as frontpage for weekly magazine *Kin'yōbi* (Friday).

following 11 March 2011.

Broadly speaking, the term 'Mark' combined with a number indicates the version and level of development of a product or machine. It is also used in relation to musical instruments or in military jargon for designating atomic bombs. Mark I and II in the installation title also point at the containment designs of reactor one and two of Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Plant signalling their outdated technology, as Mark I is the oldest model of boiling water reactor, which resembles a capsised lightbulb. They may also refer to the units in the popular series *Neon Genesis Evangelion* (Centonze 2015c).

In my opinion, this canary yellow installation of prepared instruments may be envisaged as an inorganic re-enactment in the contemporary nuclear age of Paul Klee's *Zwitschermaschine* (1922), which playfully fuses denouncement, cruelty and tender aesthetics. A further reading may be that the Stratocasters are staged as songbirds, recalling the use of canaries in coal mining as a warning system for toxic gases release.

Sure is, that the Stratocasters re-echo the black and yellow of the radiation hazard symbol.

For *Art Fair Tokyo 2012*, where Yamakawa, as a member of collective Snow Contemporary, staged his *Atomic Guitar No. 7 Warlock-type+No. 8 Warlock-type Left Handed*, the soil was taken from the area of the Imperial Palace in Tokyo (see Yamakoshi 2012). Here two couples of fixed Stratocasters have been exhibited, and the second pair's design reminds me of the colour and contours of electric Pikachū and his tail.[17]

Actually exhibited at the Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo *Atomic Guitars Mark I & II (Left Handed)* has been first conceived in July 2011 for the performative exhibition *Atomic Site* (first edition 11-20 August 2011), curated by activist artist Illcommonz (Oda Masanori) at Contemporary Art Factory.[18] Under the banner "DIY" (Detect it yourself) this provocative project, including video-making, installations, performance, research laboratory, lounge, advertisement design, and led by independent artists,[19]

17 Pikachū has been also reinterpreted by Chim↑Pom in their challenging critique and urban guerrilla-like intervention *Super Rat* (2006), when the collective haunted rats in the streets of Shibuya, stuffed and painted them yellow transforming them into mutant Pokemon figures, or in *Pika* (2009), their art-action enacted in reference to the *pika pika* flash of the Hiroshima hydrogen blast.

18 As outlined in Manabe's study (2015), Oda is a key person in artistic activism since the initial phase of sound demos in Japan participating in the protests in 2003 against the War in Iraq. Since then Yamakawa and Itō Atsuhiro started to collaborate in Oda's sound rallies "Korosuna" (Don't Kill). Since 2011 Yamakawa and Itō join as noisemakers and demonstrators Drums of Fury (Ikari no doramu 怒りのドラム), transdisciplinary activist collective coordinated by Oda, which carried out a series of rumbling rallies and marching to the beat of drums.

19 Involved are also Ishikawa Raita, Itō Atsuhiro, Shirōto no ran activist and documentarist Nakamura Yūki, Julia Leser, Clarissa Seidel, Yoshida Ami, MijA, =3=3=3 (Pupupu) and Chim↑Pom.

fleshes out the near future world of radiation level 8 with no place to hide.[20] Raising their voice against indifference the collective's response to the overwhelming disasters is their engagement in an art form, a new movement of thought called "*Genpatsu dada*" 原発ダダ (Nuclear Dadaism), as well as "*Fukushima dada*" フクシマ・ダダ (Fukushima Dadaism), or "*Atomikku dada*" アトミック・ダダ (Atomic Dadaism).[21] They oppose to the pro-nuclear policy and propagandistic slogan "*anzen*, *eko*, *kurīn*, *kōritsuteki*" 安全・エコ・クリーン・効率的 (safe, ecologic, clean, efficient) the catchphrase "*fūan*, *ero*, *fukenkō*, *fukōritsu*" 不安・エロ・不健康・非効率 (unsafe, obscene, unhealthy, inefficient) expressing radical scepticism towards technology and the corporate media allied with the state.

Figure 6. Yamakawa Fuyuki, *Atomic Guitar Mark I & II (Left-Handed)*, 2011
(Courtesy Yamakawa Fuyuki) (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RWbnoongh84)

20 The principles announced on their webpage are among others: free entrance, no fund raising, no use of air conditioner, no energy-saving because of the distrust towards the government's strategies, no press release because of the distrust in media, no sneak preview and no opening party for the media, free photographing, videorecording and USTREAM are allowed (https://atomiksite.wordpress.com/about/, 2015-02-02).

21 "Dada" refers also to the expression "*dada more*" ダダ漏れ (uncontained leak).

Figures 7-8. Yamakawa Fuyuki, *Atomic Guitar Mark I & II (Left Handed)*. EARTH Gallery (Tokyo), 27 June 2015. © Katja Centonze

3 Cardiac Electrification

In Yamakawa's performative cross-practices, underpinned by the *onkyōshintairon* 音響身体論 (Yamakawa 2015), his theory conceived on acoustic corporeality (or corporeal acoustics), the manipulation of media technologies and their processing starts from within his body. Therefore, in an open challenge to physical limits, his organic built articulates as a multimedia performance or sound system in itself.

Thanks to his breathing technique and pneumatic activity, Yamakawa is capable to create an interface between the automatic nervous system, which governs involuntary actions, such as internal organ activity, and the somatic nervous system, responsible for voluntary control of body movement. This biofeedback practice enables him to have a sharp control over the cardiac muscle, and thus, over the pulsations and sound it generates. His principal aim is to re-orient the rhythm of his heart, the power station of vitality, inducing it to squeeze, contract and react under his command, performing and transforming his heartbeat into a sonic action and the cardiac muscle into a musical instrument. Yamakawa provokes arrhythmias or tries to stop his heart for a while fluctuating between fibrillation and defibrillation. After hyperventilating, he holds his breath and the heart starts to beat quickly. Conversely, under anaerobic condition the heart starts to economise oxygen and to beat slowly (Yamakawa 2008a). In this cardiophonic execution the artist renders the heart an aerophone, without touching it with his mouth, and a percussion instrument without hitting it with his hands.

If observed in medical terms, the heart muscle is an electrical conduction system, which is endowed with an intrinsic electrical activity and displays auto-rhythmicity with its travelling impulses, its signals, intranodal tracks and firing rate (Pinnell et al. 2007, 86).

Nevertheless, as heartbeats are low in pitch, the electric system of his heart and the resonating respiration, in order to be properly perceived in a venue by the beholders, require a reinforcement system for maximisation, amplification and reverbation.

He, therefore, applies an electronic stethoscope for auscultation to his naked breast facilitating the spread of sound throughout the space and the involvement of the audience's senses and bodies. This music is further processed into an electric and digital symphony defined by the artist as *shinzō no pafōmansu* 心臓のパフォーマンス (cardioperformance). In this feedback circuit of organic/biological, analog and digital devices his heartbeat impulses are digitalised, converted into electric signals, which activate a swarm of bare lightbulbs hanging upside down and usually installed in proximity of the performer. These flicker in synchronisation with the audio impulses of his heart (see Centonze 2006; 2014, 355). In synthesis, the cardiac electric signals producing heartbeat sound pulsation trigger

the twinkling of the lightbulbs, and therefore are reconverted, while being translated into visual art and visible lightflux, which illuminates the darkness of the scene. Here, decibels are converted into lumens.[22]

Yamakawa intends this interweaving of technology and corporeality as practices of bodily self-extension and amplification. For him it is as if the audience entered his body. He broadens and expands the activity of his cardiac organ, its signals and intranodal tracks, while distributing and spatialising the functions of the biological operating system from the inside to the outside space generating an immersive and galvanising experience lived by the audience.

In light of the nuclear crisis, we may say that, the heart stands out as a primary sound emission source and the circuit provokes a multilayered and multisensorial re-suspension of acoustics. There may be traced a posteriori also a parallelism between the lightbulbs and the shape of outdated boiling water container Mark I of the burnt-out nuclear power plant.

As Yamakawa, who traces connections between his heart and the exploded nuclear plant, states: "My life is nuclear-powered" (Richardson 2012).

In combination, this sonic loop is integrated with the overtone chant, khoomei (*khöömei* or *khomii*), traditionally practiced in Tuva. In this technique, based on the use of double vocalisation, a single performer emits two tones simultaneously. Khoomei is already a practice of corporeal extension by distributing anthropogenic sound into space.[23] As this discipline influences the heartbeat's pace, Yamakawa intends it as a conjunct artistic mechanism for cadencing and orienting his cardiac activity, which through this vocalisation is controlled in speed and velocity.

In addition, he makes his skull resonate even more by hitting it with his hands provoking intracranial sounds and teeth clapping. These effects are amplified by the skull microphone (or bone-conduction) which captures bone vibrations.[24]

While displaying and playing his heart, Yamakawa creates noisy chords and drones with his guitar by shaking and rocking it firmly, or by rubbing its body staging at the same time his own seismic corporeality and letting act his vibrating voice on its strings. He occasionally also jumps and kicks from behind with his dorsum pedis the cymbal positioned behind him.

It appears evident, that the effort ensued during these integrated bodily works further affect the rhythmical outcome of the cardiac muscle, since

22 More details concerning the circuit are described in earlier studies focusing on the collaboration between Yamakawa and Kawaguchi Takao, *D.D.D.* (2004) (see Centonze 2006, 2014).

23 Khoomei is also a technique inherent to Tuvan shamanic practices (Yamakawa 2015).

24 A variety of microphones are employed in his cardiac performances. Whereas the air microphone picks up air vibration, a contact microphone, often employed in noise music experimentations, is directly attached to the body of a solid object sensing and transducing its physical vibration.

oxygen consumption of the beating heart increases during exercise (Pinnell et al. 2007, 87). His performances imply risks, as for instance, when he fainted during *D.D.D.* performed with Kawaguchi Takao at Biennale Danza Venezia 2006. The lightbulbs exploded and caught fire.

4 Energy Consumption as Protest and Resistance

As often explained by the artist (Yamakawa 2008a, 2015), during his cardioperformance he undergoes an "electrification of the body" (*shintai o denkikasaseru* 身体を電気化させる).

It appears evident, that Yamakawa's biological/artificial concert, or, as I would call it, abiogenetic circuit, implies a high expenditure of power supply, considering that for transforming heartbeats into the visual phenomenon that illuminates the darkness of the venue, 150 watt are converted into an energy consumption of 750 watt.

Needless to say, that he was compelled to reassess his composite art in consequence of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant explosions, the energy conservation policy and mandatory power cuts implemented in the aftermath of the disasters. In the months following 11 March he stopped performing not only for technical, but, above all, for ethical reasons and due to the dilemma of electricity consumption, while engaging in street protests and antinuclear activism.

Without denying his performance-making put forth until the detonation of the nuclear crisis he started to reset his art of intervention under a slightly different protocol. While manifesting explicitly his political stance and antinuclear activism powered and fuelled by open criticism and dissent, his artistic endeavour, already focused on making perceivable the unperceivable, has been extended to showing (physical) infrastructures by bringing to the surface, and thus denouncing, the framework and network hidden by the system of the "nuclear nation-state".[25] Under this register he explored the hidden underlying structure in his performative photo collection *Shibuya Water Watching* (2013), a survey based on the soundscape of Sentagai and its sewerage network in link to the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, the repent urbanisation and environmental pollution.

In 2011, revealing mechanisms of *power*, he developed alternative ways for self-produced electricity joining the project *Tokyo Art-Power Plant* at Tokyo University of the Arts (8-16 October). Yamakawa contributed with his experiment "Human Power Generation" generating energy by pedalling a bicycle with an alternator installed on the rear wheel, and enacted

25 I refer here to the definition "*genshiryoku kokka*" 原子力国家, which has been frequently addressed during the discussion of the symposium *Multitude and Power: The World after 3.11* (2013).

in collaboration with Itō Atsuhiro *Electric Generation Live Performance*, while coadiuvated by voluntary students, who mounted on the power-generating bicycle.

Nevertheless, the incandescence of life expressed in the *shinzō no pafōmansu*, standing in opposition to efficient energy use, structurally necessitates standard lightbulbs disposed with heated wire filaments producing the glowing luminosity. As Yamakawa (2015) states, his own life is burning, therefore, it is impossible for him to employ energy saving LED lamps, which are cold in respect to the incandescent bulbs based on the mechanism of combustion.

Since 2011 Yamakawa's practice stems from the dilemma he formulates in the following way: "In order to make my music I need electricity, therefore, I depend on TEPCO" (Centonze 2015c).

He overturned this situation of uneasiness into a starting point for a new project. As a consequence, his voltaic cardioperformance and the *Atomic Guitars* installation turned into being strictly site-specific and possible only in the districts of the Kantō area supplied by TEPCO. His goal is to give shape to the energy dilemma, and to make evident dysfunctional mechanisms TEPCO and the nuclear village are trying to conceal. In brief, TEPCO's electricity is used by the artist in order to reverberate their responsibility through the radioactive sound. In this sense, Yamakawa enacts a revolt from within the establishment itself. He would never execute this energy-consuming performance in Fukushima, for example, where the Tōhoku Denryoku (Tōhoku Electric Power Company) operates, he says (Centonze 2015c).

5 Khoomei and Sustainabilty: Re-Sonorising the Environment

Yamakawa, who views his production in terms of inputs and outputs transversing his body (*shintai*), explores the corporeal system and its possible aesthetic effects, while orchestrating his somatic apparatus. It might be said that his body inhales, elaborates and then exhales things, which cannot be heard and seen. As a result, he engages in sound creation and its performative execution (*ensō*), instead of "producing music" (Centonze 2015c).

It is important to consider, though, that his approach to art may be defined as ecomusicology, englobing ecocriticism, pedagogy and sustainable music (cf. Aaron et al. 2014).

As exposed in his lecture at EARTH Gallery (Yamakawa 2015), he trained khoomei, which he re-maps under an avangardist register, in relation to invisible, inaudible and undetectable phenomena. He describes khoomei as a portrait of nature in respect to the extended, uninhabitated ecoregion of the Tuvan steppe, non-polluted by anthropogenic soundings and dominated by a vast gamma of natural sonancies (also known as infra-

Figure 9. Yamakawa Fuyuki explaining his project *Shibuya Water Watching*. Lecture performance, EARTH Gallery (Tokyo), 27 June 2015.
© Katja Centonze

sounds), which are not receivable by the human ear, such as the sound of the wind, for instance. In order to be able to achieve outputs in this discipline of sound mimesis, inputs (listening, seeing, smelling) from nature are required. While getting acquainted with the peculiar tone intervals and frequencies of the surrounding soundscape the practitioner sharpens the faculty of perception.

As highlighted by Levin and Edgerton (1999), throat-singing and its vocally reinforced harmonics is just one means used by herder-hunters to interact with their natural acoustic environment and vocalists achieve this tuning through biofeedback.

It is further added that, harmonics resonating in the vocal tract of the performer, since these often "sound disembodied", appear difficult to be distinguished from sounds produced/existing in the surrounding physical space or in the mind of the listener:

> The sculpting of sounds does not end once it escapes from the mouth. As the wave wafts outward, it loses as it spreads over a larger area and sets the freestanding air in motion. This external filtering, known as the radiation characteristic, dampens lower frequencies to a greater extent than it does higher frequencies. When combined, the source, filter

> and radiation characteristic produce sound whose harmonics decrease in power at the rate of six decibel (dB) per octave – except for peaks around certain frequencies, the formants. (Levin, Edgerton 1999, 84)

Yamakawa (2015), considered as the "Jimi Hendrix of khoomei", sustained, that khoomei artists have an electric identity and connected it to contemporary electricity, human identity and the origin of life.

He suggested that the Tuvan dyplophonic vocalisation is paralleled in Japanese tradition by the oral performing arts of *naniwabushi* 浪花節 fluctuating between narration and chanting performed in *damigoe* ダミ声 (pressed voice, thick voice or hoarse voice).[26] This technique has been at the centre of his multimedia installation *The Voice-Over* (Tokyo Photographic Art Museum, 1997-2008) based on the tape-recorded voice of his father, Yamakawa Chiaki, anchorman of Fuji TV, who passed away in 1988 affected by throat cancer, which determines hoarseness (see Yamakawa 2008b).

As highlighted by Igarashi et al., "[t]he atmosphere is the major medium into which radioactive materials were directly injected by nuclear tests and accidents" since the 1950s (2015, 1). Radioactive material emitted and dispersed into the air leads to external and internal exposure. Ionising radiations enter the body by ingestion or inhalation, increasing the risk of thyroid cancer. With evidence, in Yamakawa's aesthetics the chain and interdependence between radioactive contamination (including detrimental effects of long term exposure to low doses), throat-singing and thyroid affection is addressed.[27] I would say that, along with his art-making, which unfolds as a political praxis and as provocation, the nuclear crisis pervades intrinsically and structurally the body of the artist himself.

Since 2011 Yamakawa is using his body not only as an energy source, but also as a radiation source.

> When we sing, too, we have no choice but to sing with breaths that have radiation mixed in. Even so, the song might contain some kind of heart. What was contained in those nuclear power plants scattered

26 Considered as a lower-class form of entertainment, this practice of storytelling traditionally accompanied by shamisen, is expressed through peculiar voice modulations (cf. Ruperti 2015, 45-51), and has been a vehicle for war-propaganda until around 1945 (Bold 2012). For a study on frequency fluctuation of *damigoe* see Fujisawa et al. 2000.

27 In their scientific survey published in 2013 on the possible risks of thyroid cancer, principally based on officialised knowledge regarding cases emerged in the years following the Chernobyl nuclear power plant accident affecting a large number of children, Yamashita and Suzuki (2013, 131) emphasise that "[t]he risk of radiation-associated thyroid cancer in Fukushima is quite different from that of Chernobyl at the standpoint of the level of thyroid dose exposed by the accident". They further assure that "the doses to a vast majority of the population in Fukushima were not high enough to expect to see any increase in incidence of cancer and health effects in the future" (128).

> and reached us from Fukushima. I feel so strongly, as an internal skin sensation throughout my body, a sense that I have become one with radiation. And it tries to get out by breaking out of my body as vibration. (Yamakawa 2011)

To put it in other words: for his radioactive khoomei and heartbeating nuclear electrification Yamakawa uses the poison produced by TEPCO as fuel for his biological machine (the Yamawaka machine), i.e. his somatic built. His body recycles the radionuclides and spits them back into the area power-controlled by TEPCO, propagating through vibration – compareable to the phenomena of "advection, diffusion and convective transport" as analysed in Igarashi et al. (2015, 10) – his artistic denouncement. He literally voices radioactivity and embodies the nuclear crisis in a feedback loop of corporeal paradox and dystopia. Yamakawa (2015) further maintains, that when he goes to Fukushima, he tunes his body, while testing to which extend he is able to be exposed to radiations.

The "convective wind" (Igarashi et al. 2015, 13) scattering radiation since the fallout becomes pivotal in the transnational and long term project *Don't Follow the Wind*, initiated by Chim↑Pom and curated by Kubota Kenji, Eva and Franco Mattes, and Jason Waite.[28] This invisible exhibition, opened on 11 March 2015, is taking place within the Fukushima mandatory evacuation zone, "the difficult-to-return zone", and its abandoned dwellings. At the present the irradiated exhibition site, where time seemes to be obliterated, is inaccessible to visitors, and the project is made possible thanks to the collaboration offered by the disrupted residents.[29] The artists, cladded in protective suits, operate in loco with direct interventions, and create "spaces for resisting falsification of knowledge", as Antonio Negri (symposium *Multitude and Power*, 2013) would say. They manifest preoccupation for social discrimination and our relation to environment, with the hope that, although in an uncalculable time, one day the evacuees and the future generation may enter the rehabilitated exclusion zone. Yamakawa joins this arduous art challenge as a member of the group Grand Guignol

28 The title derives from an account by a collaborator and Fukushima resident, who, despite the reassuring information given by the official media, evacuated immediately his residence with his family by car, thanks to the warnings of a friend working inside the nuclear plant. At a certain point, drawing on his knowledge as hobby fisherman, he checked the direction of the wind, and understood that he was driving in direction of the wind blowing. He immediately changed his route driving in opposition to the government's instructions. The other contributing artists are Ai Weiwei, Miyanaga Aiko, Nikolaus Hirsch, Jorge Otero-Pailos, Takeuchi Kōta, Koizumi Meirō, Takegawa Nobuaki, Ahmet Ögüt, Trevor Paglen, and Taryn Simon. The satellite project *Don't Follow The Wind: Non-Visitor Center* (2015) at the Watari Museum of Contemporary Art was joined by further artists such as Sion Sono.

29 For this project see the imageless official webpage displaying only vocal information: `http://dontfollowthewind.info/` (2015-11-15).

Mirai composed by Ameya Norimizu, art critic Sawaragi Noi, and photographer Akagi Shūji. Their continuously revived installation and performative project, *Demio Fukushima 501*,[30] re-elaborates in light of the nuclear accident in Fukushima Ameya's past research-performance drawing on the Japan Airlines Flight 123 accident.[31] By investigating associations between the complex socio-political and economical situation regarding Okinawa, Fukushima and Hiroshima, the unit dedicates this work to media artist late Minami Seiko, implanting remains from her installation *Information Weapon 1: Super Clean Room* (1989-90) into the highly polluted area. In Sawaragi's words, they "transition" Minami's artwork concerning contamination "to actual radioactive waste" (Sawaragi 2016).

As many artists and scholars, Yamakawa moves his sharp critique against the rhetorics framed by corporate media around *kizuna* 絆 (bond), pivotal in the propagandistic campaign and revitalisation policies promoted by governmental agencies invoking collaboration, alliance and social bond in "disaster affected Japan".[32]

Conversely, the artist conceives *kizuna* as physical (*butsuriteki*) junctions: the channel of transmission connecting a breastfeeding mother to her child after the nuclear explosion; the voice, which connects Yamakawa genetically to his father's and his future child's voice. The energy supply network stretching from Fukushima throughout the Kantō area, which wires its everyday electric life into the nuclear facility, articulates as *kizuna*, since "all sockets in Tokyo lead to Fukushima" (Centonze 2015c). With this expression, Yamakawa gives a clearer vision of the historical hierarchy established between the two regions.[33]

30 They use the remains of a crippled Demio, car fabricated in Hiroshima by Mazda.

31 The aircraft crashed near Mount Osutaka on 12 August 1985.

32 In her analysis of economical and political interconnections between the state, corporations and aid associations in response to 11 March, Robertson (2012), who denies the definition of "post-disaster" emphasising, instead, the perspective of "inter-disaster", highlights how the *kizuna* propaganda has been endorsed in the strategies of tourism promotion by national touristic agencies. Richter (2015), in her critical investigation on techno-nationalism and the trope of "strong *kizuna*" in opposition to "weak *kizuna*", underlines the emergence of an 'alternative' *kizuna* which interconnects the participants of antinuclear demonstration and movements opposing the technocratic state machinery.

33 For an historical analysis on Tōhoku as a source for food, water, cheap labour force and electricity for Tokyo, Japan's largest consumer market, see Oguma 2011.

6 Art as *Pharmakon*

A further attempt to intervene with his art into social texture, while stimulating participatory actions and inviting people to react,[34] is *Gen "pa" tsu Counseling Room* (*Atomic Site*, 2011).[35] Definitely inverting the role of listener and performer, this interactive installation was meant to receive in a hut those, who suffer the taboo imposed by society regarding the free expression of their fears caused by the nuclear crisis. Many visitors confided him the actual problem they have with their family, partner or colleagues, and the impossibility to break the general stonewalling and obstructive attitude which prevents from speaking out nuclear issues.[36] Yamakawa conceived these encounters as a sort of noise performance produced by the vibration of the visitors' vocal chords. While giving voice to their repressed distress,[37] the sound of anxiety propagates through the air as a form of social resistance in association and syncronicity with the vibrations of the earth(quake), the city and the environment (Centonze 2015c).

This installation focuses on the socio-political dynamics of consent and self-restraint based on anticipated obedience (*fukujū*) interweaved with the surmise (*sontaku*) of the other's intentions typical in Japan's "mura shakai" (village society), as Yamakawa defines it.[38] As discussed also by Ichida Yoshihiko during the symposium *Multitude and Power* (2013), consensus flows as air (*kūki toshite nagarete iru*). The *kūki* policy is addressed in detail also by Manabe (2015, 111-15), seen in its interconnections with

34 For a detailed discussion on "participatory style", which obliterates the role between performer and protester, and "presentational style" in sound demos see Manabe 2015.

35 This project is connected to the ongoing series and voice performance *"PA" nisshi ment* which began at midnight on 1 January 2011, when the artist sold his right to pronounce the syllable "pa" for the duration of one year. In consequence of the 11 March disasters, the project has been protracted for a still undefinable period (`http://pa-nisshi.net/`).

36 Yamakawa was also involved in the exhibition *Artists and the Disaster-Documentation in Progress* (Art Tower Mitō, 2012), which was oriented towards small-scale situations of "bewilderment and indecision", and created "opportunities and spaces for people to have free and uninhibited conversations", while helping each person "to generate individual memories" about the disasters opening perspectives for the future (`http://www.arttower-mito.or.jp/gallery_en/gallery02.html?id=331`).

37 In their survey on the post-disaster distress impact on suicidality in the tsunami-stricken areas of Miyagi Prefecture, Ōrui et al. (2015) show the delayed increase of male suicide rates, which differs from the female trend. It is underlined that the data are difficult to be collected, and that the continuous improvement in mental healthcare system is necessary for assisting people still forced to live in temporary housings, while trying to rebuild their lives. Suicidal rates on a national scale notably increased after 1998 in connection to economic instability and employment policies in late capitalism.

38 The actual situation in his country based on the construction of the myth of safety induces him to take the distance from his national identity (Centonze 2015c).

mainstream media strategies and cyberspace. Here I would like to suggest, that the *kūki* policy resembles radioactivity: it is an omnipervasive, invisible, soundless and powerful mechanism of control and a tacit form of self-policing in Japanese society.

It should be underlined that the purpose in Yamakawa's sound-creation, which oscillates between cacophony and euphony, is not that of healing the audience. Instead, his radioactive sonic art is connected to the contradicting function of *pharmakon*, halfway between poison and medicine.[39]

> I believe art has the power to reincarnate that "ultimate end point" to a "starting point". […] Radiation creates beautiful sounds. It is a very cruel sound, but it is an expression of the current reality of our lives. The idea of going forward with our lives while changing such poison as radiation into medicine we call music – I believe the piece contains such hopeless hope, the idea of pharmakon-like ambiguity. (Yamakawa 2011)

This atrocious beauty of noise definitely addresses the aesthetics of catastrophe combined with Yamakawa's perspective that art can be a very effective tool and that everything should continue to vibrate. Disaster is converted into an aesthetic event and the re-elaboration of catastrophe explores the (positive) potentialities of the adverse and unfavourable circumstances.

Yamakawa's ecocritical stance, electrically charged art, wiring music, pedagogical and social engagement retrace aesthetical principles configured since ancient Greek tragedy.

As Lehmann argued during his lectures at Waseda University (24, 31 October 2011) concerning the concept of *chatarsis* in Aristotle's *Poetics*, tragedy operates like a *pharmakon*, taken in its etymological meaning of venom and cure. *Pharmakon* provokes illness and is its remedy. Aristotle considers tragedy a fundamental moment of cognition and recognition (*anagnorisis*), a transition from a state of non-knowledge to knowledge in a process of *logos*, i.e. tragedy is a "lecture" and implies a change from a negative situation into a positive one. Therefore, a further important process, besides the highly affective effect of *chatarsis*, is *peripeteia*, when the plot suddenly changes or has a break at a certain point (cf. also Lehmann 2013, 211-12). As Lehmann further observed, *peripeteia* may lead to catastrophe. More than in theatre, the scholar considers the efficacy of performance art and post-dramatic theatre, as these involve a criticism of subjectivity and the awareness, that our own will is conditioned by the social structure.

39 Cesium-137, for instance, may cause damages, but is also used in medical therapy.

7 Atomic Performance at Dance Truck Project

In 2012 Yamakawa enacted an untitled performance during the *Dance Truck Project* (7-9 September), which took place within a special site in front of the Shinkō Pier entrance in Yokohama.[40]

This outdoor festival was conceived in 2011 by Okazaki Matsue founder of the NPO Off Site Project.[41] Using the back of a rental truck as a stage this site-specific and mobile festival is originally meant to promote innovating contemporary arts, dance and music establishing a network with the hosting city and its inhabitants (Centonze 2015b). Thanks to co-curator Higashino Yōko and lightening designer Fujimoto Takayuki (Kinsei R&D), its first edition in 2012, based on environmental criteria, has been integrated with technologies designed to improve energy efficiency and sustainability, and with activist art.[42] Higashino and Fujimoto shaped the event series as a platform for denouncement and protest, whereas Okazaki's purpose is neither of contestation nor antinuclearistic.

This demonstrates the complex reality of the art scene and its response to the disasters, and that even in alternative projects there is not a collective aim to react against an historical situation that involves Japan since the postwar era, when, to put it in Tsurumi Shunsuke's (1986, 111) words, after the New Mutual Security Treaty in 1960 the country has been "firmly placed under the nuclear umbrella of the United States".

As explained by Fujimoto (Centonze 2015a), in 2014 the truck has been solar-powered and the Yokohama edition was coupled with the project *Smart Illumination*, which experiments with latest energy-saving technology and art within the townscape.[43]

Yamakawa's performance, which re-enacted his installation *Atomic Guitars*, was in my eyes a twenty minutes synthesis of the earthquake, tsunami and meltdown.

On the back of the truck was installed the body of a Stratocaster connected to a Geiger counter, which already started to react to the atmosphere of Yokohama. The audience was sitting on the ground on blue plastic sheets. At the beginning Yamakawa climbs the high fence, and gets outside the zoned area confining with a ground, where previously a wireless microphone has been placed, which gradually caught the sound of Yamakawa's footsteps. His figure was fading out of our sight, and the audience's expe-

40 Participating artists on that day (9 September) were Higashino Yōko, off-Nibroll, Haino Keiji, Shirai Tsuyoshi/Dill and Tetsuwari Albatrossket (`http://dance-truck.jp/2012/`).

41 Okazaki draws on a concept by light technician Malina Rodriguez.

42 In 2013 the truck travelled to Fukushima and Miyagi involving local artists and staff.

43 *Smart Illumination*, started in 2011, shows that one of the most diffused strategies undertaken in reaction to the disaster has been the energy saving agency.

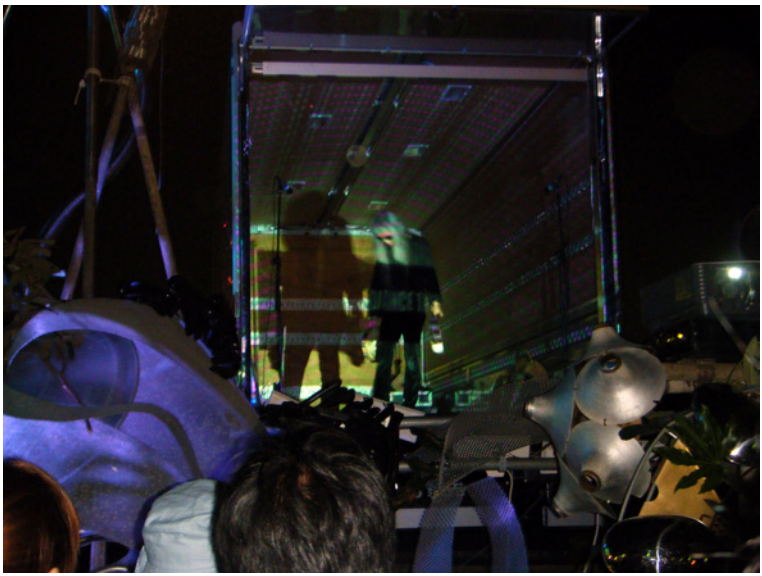

Figure 10. Haino Keiji on the truck at *Dance Truck Project 2012* (Yokohama). © Katja Centonze

rience shifted exclusively towards the aural happening. He picked up the microphone and the sound became clearer shifting from footsteps on the soft field to those on the hard asphalt, as soon as he got onto the street, while greeting eventual passersby. He approached the sea and left the microphone on the water's edge, which transmitted a peaceful and light, but horrifying waving sonancy, arousing feelings inevitably emotionally charged with an inexpressible sense of tragedy.

Yamakawa re-enters the common performance space reclimbing the fence, gets onto the truck and starts to vocalise his khoomei, while the sea and the reacting Geiger counter were resonating in the background. At a certain point he stops the chanting, puts on a white mouth mask and slides his hands into plastic gloves as in a medical operation. He then pours from a plastic bag a sample of soil into a tray and explains that it comes from the ground of the Toride Campus of Tokyo University of the Arts in Ibaraki prefecture, where he works as a lecturer. As soon as he put the tray next to the Geiger counter the guitar started to emit strong noise vibrations, provoked by the movements transmitted to it through the tactile transducers applied on its back, which captured the nervous ticking of the counter. At this point the musician took a second Stratocaster opening a dialogical noise session with the installed instrument, played by the radiations. While convulsing his body, he firmly shaked the electric guitar

without touching its strings, and violently shivered in 'dissonant unison' with the trembling body of the instrument, while engaging in a corporeal 'talking' to and 'answering' to the set up guitar excited by radiation.

As on that occasion low-pitched acoustics could not be amplified he could not execute his *shinzō no pafōmansu* and had to re-arrange his plans. In this aesthetical display the soundless radiation definitely gained a sensitive and perceivable texture. By conveying the cruel beauty of noise, the shrill contrast between the actual historical situation and the unavoidable necessity to express through art the sense of beauty was emphasised.

It is though difficult to understand, whether Yamakawa is obsessed with or simply possessed by beauty, a preponderant factor interweaved into his high-tech/organic circuit, which oscillates between automatic sound, impersonal drones and self-centred dynamics.

In consequence of the environmental change, Yamakawa claims his sonic art as a new form in respect to "ambient music" as has been conceived by Brian Eno, a category the Japanese artist re-evaluates in contemporary terms considering the severe and harsh atmospheric condition following the meltdown (Centonze 2015c).

I would like to suggest here the possible definition of "ambient seismic noise" in connection to the recent approach in seismological studies by retrieving the random wavefields of seismic noise, which is defined as "a permanent vibration of the Earth due to natural or industrial sources" (Campillo, Roux, Shapiro 2011, 1231).

The image given by trembling Yamakawa shaking the electric guitar is applicable to the earth, which shakes our body, and its seismic activity.[44] The sensation of the ground moving, shaking under the feet, involving our entire built and the electricity transmitted throughout the whole body, may persist for weeks (or even more).

Studies demonstrated that earthquakes cause PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) in those who experienced and survived (cf. Ōrui et al. 2015), emphasising the "emotional" trauma. I wonder, if there are studies, which explore the coseismic phenomenon of corporeal perturbation for which *seismic bodies* continue to shake for a long time, even after the geological disturbance, when the earth 'stands still'. Our body is a portable biological seismometer and in some cases may have the potential for physically sensing and signalling with physiological symptoms an impending geological disturbance reacting to foreshocks. Being wired into an artificial electrical power supply system, as Yamakawa does, is a personal choice, but the fact of being wired into our ecosystem and environment through our body is a reality one simply chooses to be aware of or not. It goes without saying, that my respect goes

44 The shivering of the body (*keiren*), or as I call it "seismic body", is a distinctive aspect in *butō* dance and noise music.

to those bodies which are characterised by the impossibility to exchange perceptions with the outside, and to the *tōjisha* (in this context, the person involved in the disasters). As Osawa Masachi suggested, the real *tōjisha* are the deceased victims of the multiple disaster, who are not able to tell.[45]

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3 Nature and Environment in Visual Art

Rethinking Nature in Post-Fukushima Japan
Facing the Crisis

edited by Marcella Mariotti, M. Roberta Novielli, Bonaventura Ruperti and Silvia Vesco

Exhibiting the Return to *terroir*
Art and the Politics of Nature in Post-Bubble Japan

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Abstract In his seminal work on landscape David Cosgrove observed that 'nature' as a socio-cultural construct has always functioned as one of the favorite focuses of cultures when humanity is in crisis. Taking this thesis as a theoretical point of departure, this study explores a contemporary art exhibition *Sensing Nature: Yoshioka Tokujin, Shinoda Tarō, Kuribayashi Takashi. Rethinking the Japanese Perception of Nature*, staged in 2010 at the Mori Art Museum in Tokyo. The study investigates the strategies used in contemporary exhibiting practices to establish alternative sources of collective identification, and the role of the notion of 'nature' in these processes. It explores the recent shift from the perception of the world as the globe into the national *terroir* as discussed by Bruno Latour and exposed in the conceptual design of *Sensing Nature*, which returns to the nation-specific notion of "the Japanese perception of nature". This maneuver demonstrates both the role of art in building social and ecological resilience; and the ambivalent potential of culture in the politics of nature.

Keywords Art. Exhibition. Nature. Resilience. Post-bubble. Japan.

"A landscape is a cultural image"
(Cosgrove, Daniels 1989, 1)

1 Introduction

In 2010 the Mori Art Museum in Tokyo displayed *Waterfall* (2005-06), a sculptural installation designed by Yoshioka Tokujin[1] (b. 1967) (Fig. 1).

1 The transcription of Japanese names follows the format selected by the curators of the exhibition *Sensing Nature: Yoshioka Tokujin, Shinoda Tarō, Kuribayashi Takashi. Rethinking the Japanese Perception of Nature*, which this paper interrogates: surname is followed by the given name.

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Figure 1. Yoshioka Tokujin (b. 1967), *Waterfall*, 2010, optical glass, metal, 75 × 480 × 70 cm. Courtesy of the Tokujin Yoshioka Design (`http://www.tokujin.com/en/`)

A 4.5-meter bench, the world's largest optical glass, brings to mind water crashing into the surface of a flat pool. The light-penetrating structure of the glass creates an effect of rippling water. Although facilitated by the use of advanced space technologies, *Waterfall* refers to a motif that belongs to an ages-old repertoire of Japanese visual culture pervaded by religious associations. The purificatory symbolism of water based on the belief that waterfalls are dwelling-places of *kami* spirits, combined with the notion of sacred mountains, transform waterfalls into one of the most spiritually poignant symbols in Japanese religious history, often featured in its visual culture (Reader 1991, 122-3). However, Yoshioka does not seem to be interested in representing water, but rather offers the viewer the opportunity to reflect upon the materiality and her or his own emotional responses to the natural phenomenon. The high tech artificiality of *Waterfall* forces the viewer to abandon the position of viewing subject and actively engage with the object, which invites reconsideration of the relationships between subject and object, visuality and materiality, humans and nature.

This particular approach to the natural phenomenon emphasising spiritual and sensory perception rather than intellectual cognition of the world reverberates with the frame of the exhibition where *Waterfall* was dis-

played in 2010.[2] *Sensing Nature: Yoshioka Tokujin, Shinoda Tarō, Kuribayashi Takashi. Rethinking the Japanese Perception of Nature* fits well within the environmentalist discourses trending globally in the recent years. The rising profile of eco-art initiatives across the world noted by Linda Weintraub (2012) are a good example of this phenomenon related to the burgeoning debate on the Anthropocene, the Era of Man, and its catastrophic ecological consequences. These conceptual links are clearly exposed in the exhibition's press release, which opens with the following environmentalist caution: "Faced with the crisis of global warming and environmental degradation, we have reached an age when we must think about ecology and sustainability on a global scale".[3]

However, what singles out the *Sensing Nature* exhibition is the association between the global environmentalist discourse and local politics of national identification argued by Nanjo Fumio (2010), the Mori Art Museum's director in his foreword to the exhibit catalogue: "Nature has always been a major pillar of Japanese culture […] In Japan, nature has always been seen as coexisting rather than at odds with mankind […] This sense of nature can be called unique, something related to an ancient religious sensibility". This approach is not new, and neither is it limited to Japan; what is particularly interesting is its entanglement with the recent environmentalist debates. On the one hand, in the last few decades sustainability has started to be addressed on a planetary level, for example during UN conferences such as the groundbreaking Earth Summit in Rio in 1992, which led to the Kyoto Protocol in 1997. And since the 1980s, scholars of different disciplinary provenance, among others Denis Cosgrove, W.J.T. Mitchell, Henry Lefebvre and Bruno Latour, have begun to reveal the constructed character of the notion of 'nature' and its implication with power. But the *Sensing Nature* exhibition seems to take an opposite direction as it returns to the nation-specific notion of "the Japanese perception of nature".

This return becomes clear when the show is compared to earlier exhibitions revolving around the issue of nature and its role in the processess of national identification. *Against Nature: Japanese Art in the Eighties*, developed two decades earlier, serves as an excellent comparison, as it rejected nature as a source of Japanese unique national identity. Developed by a team of American and Japanese curators including Kathy Halbreich, Kobata Kazue, Kohmoto Shinji, Nanjo Fumio and Thomas Sokolowski, *Against Nature* premiered at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art in 1989 and toured the US for three years.[4] The curators explained the

2 The first version of the *Waterfall* was executed in 2005-06.

3 https://www.mori.co.jp/en/img/article/091028.pdf (2015-12-04)

4 The exhibition travelled to Akron Art Museum, Akron, Ohio; MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge, Massachusetts; Bank of Boston Art Gallery, Boston, Massachusetts; Seattle Art

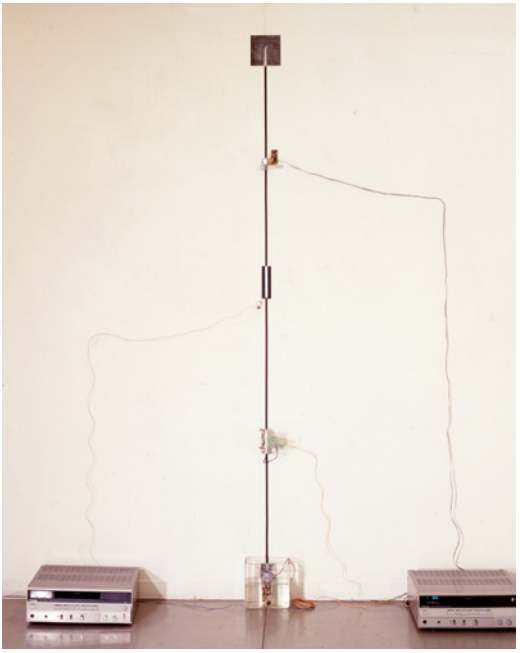

Figure 2. Miyajima Tatsuo (b. 1957), *Nachi Falls*, 1987, mixed media, 280 × 20 × 25 cm. Installation view at Lunami Gallery, Tokyo. Photo by Tadashi Hirose. Courtesy of Tatsuo Miyajima Studio

concept of the exhibition through a reference to a confession by one of represented artists, Tsubaki Noboru (b. 1953): "'This idea of Japanese people being at one with nature, with the purity and wholeness of nature, is nothing I understand. I am very much against that.' Hence the exhibition title 'Against Nature'" (Osaka, Kline 1989, 15). The show featured works by nine individual artists and one collaborative group[5] who "gnaw at dated colonialist views, both foreign and domestic, of a Japan and an indigenous Japanese art form that is rooted to a traditional agrarian view of the land and man's responsibility to it" (8). A good example of this approach is a work by Miyajima Tatsuo's (b. 1957) that presents a strikingly different take on the theme of waterfall than Yoshioka, whose work was discussed earlier. The installation created in 1987 was titled *Nachi Falls* (Fig. 2).

Museum, Seattle, Washington; The Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, Ohio; Grey Art Gallery, New York University and Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, Texas.

5 The artists represented at the exhibition included: Dumb Type, Funakoshi Katsura, Hirabayashi Kaoru, Memoto Shoko, Miyajima Tatsuo, Morimura Yasumasa, Ogino Yusei, Ohtake Shinro, Tsubaki Noboru and Yamamoto Tomioki.

The title refers to one of the most sacred waterfalls in Japan, celebrated in a medieval painting kept at the Nezu Institute of Fine Arts in Tokyo. *Nachi Waterfall*, officially recognised as a National Treasure, belongs to the genre of *suijaku-ga*, or images representing 'traces' (*suijaku*), the Shinto manifestation of a Buddhist deity that represents natural phenomena such as mountains and forests.[6] Miyajima, one of Japan's foremost sculpture and installation artists, reconstructed the famous view using a small monitor and a long blue neon strip leading to a water tank on the floor beneath it. The video showed the actual Nachi Waterfall and the neon represented the cascade. The wires powering the machine framed the view. Miyajima's interpretation of the old-time icon is deviously heretic. His take on the theme seems to be indifferent (if not hostile) to the 'sacred' or the 'beautiful' culturally encoded in the motif.

A quick comparison of Yoshioka's and Miyajima's works reveals that although both artists share interests in high tech media, the subject and a particular approach that translates the natural thorough the artificial, their perceptions of the motif are inherently different. Yoshioka's non-specific *Waterfall* focuses on exploring human responses to nature and is guided by a clearly discernible aesthetic concern. In contrast, Miyajima's industrialised take on a natural and cultural treasure brings to mind the artificiality of the concept of nature as a cultural text that contributes to the iconisation and beautification of certain natural locations (e.g. Nachi Falls). Although not all of the works presented at the exhibition address the issue as straightforwardly as Miyajima's, *Against Nature* evokes a vision of Japanese society effectively divorced from nature on both a practical and an ideological level. When seen in the context of the discussion of the identity of Japanese contemporary art transcribed and published in the bilingual exhibition catalogue, *Against Nature* creates an intriguing backdrop for the *Sensing Nature* show installed two decades later. The return to 'native' nature is poignant and invites consideration of the role of the notion of nature in contemporary art and exhibiting practices as well as in today's Japanese environmentalism.

A useful perspective to consider these issues is provided by Bruno Latour's post-environmentalist concept of the 'politics of nature', which entails that political ecology is paralysed by established categories of thought and the old dichotomy between nature and society (Latour 2004). In its place Latour proposes a collective, a community incorporating humans and non-humans. Building on the ideas developed by James Lovelock, he proposes the notion of Gaia that offers a venue to reconsider different models of relationships between the human and non-human actors. The Gaia, a complex system of interactions between organic and inorganic elements that maintains life

6 *Nachi Waterfall*: hanging scroll; ink and colour on silk, 160.7 × 58.8 cm, http://www.nezu-muse.or.jp/en/collection/detail.php?id=10001 (2015-12-04)

on the planet erases earlier divisions between humans and non-humans (nature). Importantly, the Gaia theory also exposes the entanglement of notions of nature with global and national politics. So far two concepts: the *terroir* and the globe, have played major roles in structuring relationships between humans and their surroundings either though promoting particularism/national identities or universalism/globalism. The Gaia theory offers a possibility to create a 'New Climatic Regime' that avoids the traps of particularism and globalism. These insights can shed light on the transformation of perceptions of nature nature and environmental consciousness in contemporary Japan exposed by the *Sensing Nature* exhibition.

2 Approaches to Nature: Yoshioka, Shinoda and Kuribayashi

Sensing Nature featured several large-scale installations by three conceptual artists: Yoshioka Tokujin, Shinoda Tarō and Kuribayashi Takashi. The exhibition's website states that "[The artists'] ideas of nature suggest that it is not something that is to be contrasted with the human world, but that it is something that incorporates all life-forms, including human-beings. Their works hint that we have inherited this all-encompassing cosmology deep in our memories and in our DNA".[7] In order to understand whether and how these ideas have been implemented, this paper focuses on several key works designed or reworked especially for the exhibition. As this study is primarily interested in ideologies that utilise notions of nature for different agendas, be they political, economic, environmental, or others, the material aspects of the show are not the main concern. The aim is rather to interrogate selected works from the perspective of the conceptual design of the show, sketched in the exhibition catalogue and related publicity materials; and locate this perspective within the current discourse on sustainability.

The artist chosen to open the show was Yoshioka Tokujin, an industrial designer recognised for his explorations of "the potential of design to incorporate natural principles and effects and to integrate natural science technologies", as stated on the exhibition's website.[8] At the Mori Art Museum Yoshioka presented several works, including the above-mentioned *Waterfall* and *Snow* (Fig. 3). This installation, a smaller version of which was designed for Issey Miyake in 1997, was a fourteen-meter-long tank filled with hundreds of kilograms of light feathers that were occasionally blown about by a large fan, mimicking snowfall. Yoshioka's work

7 http://www.mori.art.museum/english/contents/sensing_nature/exhibition/index.html (2015-12-04).

8 http://www.mori.art.museum/english/contents/sensing_nature/exhibition/index.html (2015-12-04).

Figure 3. Yoshioka Tokujin, *Snow*, 2010, glass tank, feathers, fan, 600 × 1400 × 500 cm. Courtesy of the Tokujin Yoshioka Design (http://www.tokujin.com/en/)

did not represent nature but rather activated the viewer's memories and emotional responses triggered by the material characteristics of falling snow – first of all, its extraordinary lightness. The interest in human emotions triggered by the materiality of things can be considered a leitmotif of Yoshioka's artistic practices. In an interview recorded by the Mori Art Museum he laments the current digital culture that diminishes the range of our material interactions with objects. In his works Yoshioka tries to recover these sensory experiences.

In the interview published in 2011 on the website of the Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation Yoshioka explains:

> Nature never gives us the same face twice and the beauty of nature comes from that aspect. Many of my works adopt this principle of nature. […] When I design installations I don't just use nature as a motif but I investigate the spiritual uplifting and the mechanism of it. […] I'm not trying to recreate those elements but I am trying to recreate the feelings that people experience when they perceive nature and therefore am trying to adopt those elements into my design.[9]

9 http://sherman-scaf.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/TokujinYoshioka_Waterfall.pdf (2015-12-04).

Figure 4. Shinoda Tarō (b. 1964), *GINGA (Milky Way)*, 2010, mixed media, dimensions variable. Photo by Takayama Kozo.
Courtesy of Mori Art Museum

Figure 5. Kuribayashi Takashi (b. 1968), *Wald aus Wald (Forest from Forest)*, 2011, mixed media, dimensions variable. Installation view at the Beyond Museum, Seoul. Courtesy of Kuribayashi Takashi

Clearly, Yoshioka is not interested in representation of nature but through emphasising the tangibility of objects he tries to recreate the invisible, the human emotions triggered by natural phenomena: water, snow, storm, light, and so on. This approach questions the established relationships between viewer and work, subject and object, nature and humans, and opens a path to consider nature as an individual experience within human beings rather than the world external to us.

The interest in questioning established notions of nature is shared by Shinoda Tarō (b. 1964). He is interested in the "process by which our lives, society, and culture tend to turn nature into an entirely abstract concept", as stated in the artist's biographical note published on the exhibition's website.[10] His sculptural installation *GINGA (Milky Way)* (2010) and video trilogy *Reverberation* (2009-10) serve as good examples of this observation. *GINGA* is an installation consisting of a pool of a white liquid with approximately fifty PET bottles suspended above it (Fig. 4).

The bottles discharge drops of the same liquid that hit the pool and create temporary patterns on its surface. These patterns recreate the autumn constellations of the Big Dipper and Orion. They last only momentarily before dissolving into ripples. The work challenges the common perception of constellations as a permanent element of the solar system and envisions them as short-lived performances enacted by humans, in this context an artificial installation made of disposable plastic bottles. Shinoda's work points to the transient and staged character of human perception of natural phenomena. In this context nature is hardly more than an artifice.

Similar issues are also observable in *Reverberation*, three simultaneously screened video installations showing three distinctive areas of contemporary Tokyo. The first film explores the artist's neighbourhood in the capital's Western suburbs and juxtaposes a parking lot and a garbage disposal plant with images of a tapir in a zoo.[11] Shinoda's tapir brings into focus the artificiality of contemporary concepts of nature, which is likened to a wild animal kept in cage. The second film was shot from a boat cruising the underground waterways in central Tokyo. Following Japan's economic success and the capital's growth, these canals were covered over to create space for the city's transportation arteries. Today they are hardly visible but they still define people's movements. The third movie shows the lakes near Tokyo that provide drinking water for the capital. Although important for the survival of humans, they also

10 http://www.mori.art.museum/english/contents/sensing_nature/exhibition/index.html (2015-12-04).

11 "Reverberation": video, each ca.10 min. http://www.takaishiigallery.com/en/archives/5993/ (2015-12-04).

are largely ignored. Shinoda's works presented at the Mori show offer an interesting commentary on the artificiality of the concepts of nature and the near total invisibility and virtual irrelevance of 'real nature' in today's human urban experience.

The third and last participant in the exhibition, Kuribayashi Takashi (b. 1968) is mainly interested in the divisions separating humans and nature. One of his works exhibited at the Mori Art Museum is the large-scale installation *Wald aus Wald (Forest from Forest)* (2010) (Fig. 5).[12] Real larch trees from Yamagata were used to create the moulds to construct an artificial floating forest made of *Awa washi* (handmade paper). The paper trees and the ground were suspended from the ceiling above the gallery floor. The visitors entered from below and viewed the 'natural' world by putting their heads up through holes and experienced the borderline between the visible and the invisible worlds.

At the Mori Art Museum Kuribayashi also presented *Inseln (Islands)* (2001-10), a large mountain range made of black soil and pumice stone.[13] A round transparent plastic platform symbolising the surface of water divides the peaks from the large mass beneath. This manipulation brings into focus the boundary between two different worlds. It also reveals the artificiality of the division itself, as the borderline transforms in accordance to changing life of the planet, geological circumstances, tides, and so on. The notion of borderlines is a frequent theme in Kuribayashi's artistic practice. As stated in the interview given in 2010 for the Mori Art Museum, his preoccupation with liminality enables him to reflect on the borderline defining human identities, relationships between people, and divisions between humans and nature. Shimizu Minoru (2010, 187) comments on his works in his essay in the exhibition catalogue: "Kuribayashi's installations shatter the illusion of 'natural versus artificial' – human nature – and expose its fictionality".

The installations at the *Sensing Nature* exhibition generally did not 'represent' nature as such. Instead they addressed a wide range of questions related to the issue of relationships between nature and humans, from exploring the emotions triggered by natural phenomena (Yoshioka) to reconsidering the artificiality of the concepts of nature itself (Shinoda) and examining the boundaries between the human and the non-human realms (Kuribayashi). But how are these works positioned within the conceptual design of the exhibition and its goals? In the Foreword to the bilingual catalogue accompanying the show, Nanjo Fumio (2010, 9), the

12 Due to copyright restrictions it was not possible to reproduce the photo of the work taken at the Mori Art Museum.

13 *Inseln*, 2001-10, mixed media, ca. 400 × 750 × 1000 cm. https://www.takashikuribayashi.com/works (2015-12-04).

Mori Art Museum's director, writes: "'Sensing Nature' considers the relationships between the traditional sense of nature and the sensibilities and cultural memory of Japanese living today". But what exactly did this "traditional sense of nature" mean for the creators of the exhibition? And how was it considered relevant for 'sensibilities and cultural memory' of today's Japanese?

3 Conceptual Design of *Sensing Nature*

In her catalogue essay *Sensing Nature: Nature as Presence*, exhibition curator Kataoka Mami (Kataoka et al. 2010, 196) suggests that the Japanese perception of nature is characterised by the notion of unity between humans and nature: "Underlying the Japanese view of nature is a kind of presence, or a set of vibrations that spatially link objects, and within the culture that senses this presence, people and nature are linked irrevocably". She grounds the particular notion of unity of nature and humans in Japanese spirituality: "The Japanese view of nature is one in which various religious outlooks, from nature worship to shamanism, ritualism, the I Ching, folk religion, Shinto and Buddhism have merged over the ages while being influenced by the unique climate and topography of Japan" (196). Kataoka draws a clear distinction between the two meanings of the world 'nature': one is *shizen*, which "refers to the objectified natural world" (207), and the second is *shinrabanshō* (the whole of creation) or *tenchibanbutsu* (all things in the universe), which describe a unified world of nature and humans. This division is supposedly attributable to religious and climatic differences between the modern concept of *shizen*, which was imported from the West and the pre-modern notions of *shinrabanshō* and *tenchibanbutsu* considered native to Japan. The native concepts are thought to be the most relevant for Japan's approaches to nature in general.

However, even a glimpse at the variety of pre-modern art terms related to natural phenomena demonstrates the conceptual and functional diversity of notions of nature that are not necessarily exclusively guided by the idea of the holistic unity of humans and nature. This vocabulary included a large number of terms such as *sansui-ga* (images of 'mountain and water'); poetry-based *meisho-e* (pictures of famous places); *keibutsuga* (pictures of seasonal imagery) with its sub-genre of pictures of the four seasons (*shiki-e*) and pictures of annual observances of the twelve months (*tsukinami-e*); religiously motivated *sankei madara* (symbolic pictures of pilgrimage sites) and *shaji engi-e* (illustrations of legends of shrines and temples); and more practically used *ezu* (maps). Investigation of these concepts is beyond the scope of this study, but it is necessary to note that rendering natural phenomena had different functions depending on changing context of production and consumption of pre-modern visual culture. Essentially, they should not be

perceived as landscapes, a modern Western concept related to representation of places and guided by the principles of picturesque. The topography or even locality of particular views was not necessarily relevant in the most important concepts such as *meisho-e*, today generally perceived as landscape. For example, the concept of *meisho* derives from *utamakura* (lit. 'poem pillow'), rhetorical figures that tie seasonal images with particular places. Initially, the places described in the poems were anonymous: there were no explicit references to actual locations, and often place-names were mere wordplays. However, certain sites and locations gradually came to be linked to particular poetic imagery represented in the visual format of *meisho-e* (images of famous places). This resulted, for example, in a conceptual connection between cherry blossoms, the Yoshino area, and spring or red maple leaves, or the Tatsuta River and autumn (Chino 2003, 41). The relationship between *utamakura* and *meisho* is a well-known phenomenon of Japan's pre-modern textual and visual culture (Kamens 1997), and points to the culturality of pre-modern notions of nature and the redundancy of realistic rendering of the world.

Only the pressures of the modern Western 'scientific' vision of the world changed the perception of nature as well as the meaning and function of landscape as its representation. The modern concept of nature as *shizen* emerged in literature and arts around the 1880s. This marked a break with nature perceived as "synonymous with the anti-modern, the past, the oppressive, or the Orient" (Thomas 2001, 25) and linked by Maruyama Masao (1974) to the birth of modernity. This event also marked the birth of landscape or *fūkei*. Although the word *fūkei* had already appeared in the *Man'yōshū* (Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves) poetry anthology in the eighth century, it was not extensively used in pre-modern art (Matsumoto 1994). This changed drastically in the modern era. Karatani Kōjin (1993) defined this phenomenon as the modern 'discovery of landscape' (*fūkei no hakken*). He identified the discovery of landscape as the apex of the cultural appropriation of Western modernity, as *fūkei* transformed the way of viewing and understanding the world. Modern artistic conventions applied to 'represent' *fūkei* such as linear perspective and realism located the subjective viewer of landscape outside the picture. At the same time they gave the observer the power to control the landscape via an omnipotent central position and scientific objectivity. While pre-modern *sansui-ga* was not concerned with the relationship between viewer and object, but presented a transcendental metaphysical model of place, *fūkei* was mainly concerned with actuality. The concept of 'the gazing eye' encoded in *fūkei* introduced unequal power relationships between humans and the non-human realms now defined as *shizen*. It also facilitated interpretation of space in national terms, as it was controlled by the modern viewing subject. It is no surprise that *Nihon fūkeiron* (Japanese Landscape), published in 1894 by Shiga Shigetaka (1863-1927), which used landscape in the production

of national identification, was a best seller. Japanese imperial expansion was supported by another highly popular book, the controversial *Fudō* (Climate and Culture) by Watsuji Tetsurō (1889-1960), issued in 1931. Watsuji argued for an essential relationship between climate and other environmental factors and cultures that merges the narration of uniqueness of Japanese nature with environmental determinism (Mayeda 2006).

These modern perceptions of relationships between humans and non-human actors that merged with the Orientalist interpretation of Japanese culture as a primordial paradise unspoiled by modern Western civilisation contributed to the myth of 'Japanese love of nature'. In his discussion of the concepts of nature, Toshio Watanabe (2010, 185) quotes Josiah Conder (1852-1920), a founding father of Japanese modern architecture, who said that the Japanese "are unrivalled in their genuine love of nature" (2002, 2). Edwin Reischauer and Marius Jansen's perception that "The Japanese love of nature and sense of closeness to it also derive strongly from Shinto concepts" rooted in the notion of unity between human and non-human elements has been particularly influential (1995, 212). Only recently have scholars begun to deconstruct the myth of Japan's 'inherent affinity with nature'. In 1996, Arne Kalland and Pamela Asquith (1996, 4) observed that while cultural products such as poems, paintings, sculptures gardens and so on were taken as a proof of alleged love of nature, the validity of the claim itself was never tested. They conclude that the Japanese have a rather ambivalent approach to nature. Veneration is only one aspect and aestheticisation has little to do with general behaviours toward nature as a whole (Kalland, Asquith 1996, 29-31). The analysis of pre-modern poetry and modern historiography conducted respectively by Haruo Shirane (2013) and Julia Adeney Thomas (2001) confirms these observations. In her recent study of East Asian textual cultures, Karen Thornber (2012) argues that the relationships between the human and the natural world are best described as characterised by ambiguity, ambivalence, paradox, tension, and uncertainty. But since the Meiji Restoration in 1868, the myth of 'Japanese love of nature' has played a vital role in the narration of the concept of national identity in Japan. Although it has been questioned in the last two decades it has never disappeared completely, as can be seen in the conceptual framework of the *Sensing Nature* exhibition, which reaches to the environmental determinism proposed in 1931 in Watsuji's *Fūdō*. The show rejects the modern notion of *shizen* and returns to the rhetorics of holistic perception of nature identified with pre-modern tradition as the source of Japanese national identification. Although this 'tradition' was invented in the modern period (Vlastos 1998) it is nonetheless interesting to explore its recent revival. It is helpful in this endeavor to locate *Sensing Nature* within the Mori Art Museum's yearly exhibition program and consider it from the perspective of Bruno Latour's recent post-environmentalist thoughts on 'politics of nature'.

4 The Paradigm Shift: from the Globe to the *terroir*

Sensing Nature was part of the Mori Art Museum's yearly exhibition program that extended throughout the whole 2010 and aimed at "Redefining Japan".

> As the world undergoes massive changes on both political and economic fronts, the Mori Art Museum is engaged in a reexamination of the culture that forms the foundation of Japanese society. (Nanjo 2010, 9)

The Museum press release links these concerns to socio-political crisis on the global and domestic levels: "In many ways, 2010 will be a watershed year for Japan. The financial crisis that has enveloped the world since late 2008 has demonstrated how closely interconnected the country's economy is with those of other nations. Meanwhile, it goes without saying that after Japan's change of national government in 2009, the coming year will see significant changes at home".[14]

To rectify the critical situation, *Sensing Nature* proposes a return to a pre-modern holistic view of the world based on the idea of the coexistence of humans and nature.

Kataoka Mami (Kataoka et al. 2010, 196) concludes her catalogue entry: "This essay does little more than scratch the surface of this topic, but in a country where political leadership lacks stability, I believe that this view of nature will play an important role in helping people recall their own cultural DNA and seek out Japan's cultural identity". It is axiomatic that political crisis prompts the search for alternative avenues of security and stability. As I have argued elsewhere, visual references to domestic territory were essential for the development of collective identities in the critical 1830s, which were marked by political turmoil and natural catastrophe (Machotka 2009).[15] Usually, communal identities are formed around the person of a leader, religious institutions, the nation-state, and so on, but crisis causes diversification of these sources. Thus, the 'return to nature' can be interpreted as a search for an alternative source of security at the time of crisis, be it economic, political or environmental. The *Sensing Nature* press release states: "Faced with the crisis of global warming and environmental degradation, we have reached an age when we must think about ecology and sustainability on a global scale […]. Most recently, the concept of *satoyama*, the Edo Period [1600-1868] idea

14 https://www.mori.co.jp/en/img/article/091028.pdf (2015-12-04).

15 My earlier research, published e.g. in the book *Visual Genesis of Japanese National Identity: Hokusai's Hyakunin isshu*, explored the intersemiotic and intercultural translation of medieval court poetry into the popular culture of 19th woodblock prints. It argued that the images of nature created in this process were used as a means to remedy current socio-political crisis.

of a zone existing between the natural and urban environments, is again attracting interest".[16]

This statement refers to the recent domestic and international recognition of the concept of *satoyama* (lit. 'village-mountain') or 'liveable mountain', a type of socio-ecological production landscape (SEPLS[17]) that in the last decade provided inspiration for different domestic projects, including art events like the Echigo Tsumari Art Field.[18] *Satoyama* as SELPS is not unique to Japan, but recently the term has been adopted by the mainstream environmental studies. A series of Global Workshops on the Satoyama Initiative held in 2009 resulted in the establishment of the International Partnership for the Satoyama Initiative in 2010, an international forum that promotes collaboration in the conservation and restoration of sustainable human-influenced natural environments.[19] Interestingly, the project was initiated by the Ministry of the Environment of Japan in collaboration with the United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS). It is also difficult to ignore the official promotion of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics as a sustainable event, the "Green Games" and the role of arts (architecture, urban planning, design etc.) in relation to this claim.[20] These developments are understandable when considered from the perspective of the transformation of the role of Japan within the international community. For the last several decades the Japanese government has pursued environmental diplomacy in order to assume environmental leadership in the region (Graham 2004). These efforts intensified from the 1990s, when the bursting of the financial bubble shook the belief in Japan's post-war economic miracle. Although some scholars who examine both domestic and foreign environmental policy (Takao 2012) suggest that Japan's actual environmental leadership has declined in the past decade, this does not necessarily mean that public rhetoric has changed, despite the controversies related to the Fukushima ecological disaster of 2011. On the contrary, recent environmental marketing suggests that Japan has not given up its aspirations to environmental leadership, and *Sensing Nature* could be seen as the reflection of this general agenda. As exhibitions are themselves fora (mediums and settings) for re-presentation as much as they serve as a vehicle for the display of objects, they also function as

16 http://mori.art.museum/contents/press/2010_20091028_e.pdf (2015-12-04).

17 As defined by the International Partnership for the Satoyama Initiative (IPSI); see http://satoyama-initiative.org/en/about/ (2015-12-04).

18 I have discussed this issue in the article Machotka 2018.

19 For more information on this project please refer to http://satoyama-initiative.org (2015-12-04).

20 For more information please refer to https://tokyo2020.jp/en/games/sustainability/ (2017-14-07).

elements of discourse implicated with power. As pointed out by Ivan Karp (1991, 14): "If [an exhibition] can aid or impede our understanding of what artists intend and how art means, then its subtle messages can serve masters other than the aesthetic and cultural interests of the producers and appreciators of art". The power of the displayed objects reaches out beyond their formal boundaries to a larger world that produced them (Greenblatt 1991). This is especially true in the case of exhibitions re-presenting objects produced by more than one artist. They facilitate generalisations used in the construction of larger narratives.

This connection between economic, political and environmental crisis felt in Japan in the late 2000s fused with the search for national redefinition becomes better understandable when viewed from the perspective of post-environmentalist theory proposed recently by Bruno Latour. Latour argues for the development of 'political ecology' defined as the progressive constitution of the collective of humans and non-humans in a 'good common world' that "has nothing at all to do with 'nature' – that blend of Greek politics, French Cartesianism, and American parks" (Latour 2004, 5). He argues that given its ideological function it is imperative to do away with the concept of nature altogether. Only then it will be possible to truly embrace egalitarian environmentalism. And it is necessary to look for new ways of conceptualising the life of the planet. One of them is the concept of Gaia.[21]

The Gaia, a complex system through which living phenomena modify the Earth, offers a new way to disentangle the ethical, political, theological, and scientific aspects of the now obsolete notion of nature.[22] The Gaia Theory also exposes the entanglement of the notion of nature with global and national politics as it offers an alternative to two already discredited concepts: the *terroir* and the globe. These concepts have been playing major role in structuring relationships between humans and their surroundings respectively promoting particularism/national identities or universalism/globalism. The recent disappointment with globalisation felt across the world brought to the fore the notions of national identification encoded in the multidisciplinary concept of *terroir* originally used to regulate and narrate wine-place relationships (van Leeuwen, Seguin 2006). The notion of *terroir* as a form of environmental determinism draws causal relationships between soils, climate and their product (e.g. wine) and its distinctive sensory qualities. This notion also entered the social sciences

21 These ideas were presented at the Gifford Lectures given by Bruno Latour in Edinburgh February 2013 (Latour 2017).

22 The Gaia Theory, developed by James Lovelock and Lynn Margulis in the 1970s, proposes that organisms and surroundings form a synergistic and self regulating system that helps to maintain and perpetuate the conditions for life on the planet. Although criticised, the theory has served as a useful metaphor reinterpreted by scholars in different disciplines including, most recently, Bruno Latour.

and humanities, where it came to be entangled with the ideas of origin and specificity. Although the idea of *terroir* is as utopian as the concept of the globe, and the community structured around it is as imaginary as the global village, the recent decade saw the sudden rise of *terroir* rhetorics caused by economic and political crisis. Latour warns that if these narratives are not balanced by the 'New Climatic Regime' based on the Gaia Theory, humanity will soon be confronted by a war of national identities. When looked from this perspective, the recent transformation of perceptions of nature in contemporary Japan is conspicuous.

At first, it seems that the creators of *Sensing Nature* embraced a holistic vision of the Earth and rejected the modern concept of nature as separate for humans which also underlines Latour's thoughts on Gaia. However, its entanglement with the notions of national identification remains precarious. In the context of global economic, political and environmental crises pervading late 2000s, which exposed failure of the modernisation project and the dangers of global connectivity, it is not surprising that *Sensing Nature* returned to pre-modern notions of nature perceived as native. This return facilitated the imagining of the national *terroir*. It is also hardly a coincidence that this exhibition narrated a strikingly different vision of Japanese perception of nature from the *Against Nature* show, which presented art produced in the 1980s. Developed two decades earlier, at the time of Japanese unprecedented economic growth and global economic expansion, *Against Nature* rejected the concept of nature as the source of Japanese national identity. As argued by Hayashi Michio (2018) this period in Japanese history, marked by high economic growth and the maturation of the consumer society, resulted in 'the death of landscape'. This phenomenon, understood as the 'Tokyo-isation' of space, wiped out local cultural traditions in favour of a flat network of characterless landscapes. In this sense, it is not surprising that nature as homogenised simulacrum (simulated reality) was rejected as the source of national identification in favour of universalism related to globalisation. And it is only 'natural' that in the changed economic climate of the global financial crisis of 2007-08 *Sensing Nature* returned to environmental determinism and concepts of nature – but not landscape, which was still considered dead – seen as national *terroir*. However, as mentioned above, Latour warns that the exclusive *terroir*-focused thinking is not capable to resolve global ecological crisis that needs to be addressed on a planetary level in a fully democratic and egalitarian way, incorporating both human and non-human actors. Nonetheless, the artistic return to 'nature' advocated by the *Sensing Nature* exhibition could be seen as the buffer against recent social and environmental disturbance.

5 Conclusions

In his seminal work on landscape Cosgrove (1988, 222) observes that 'nature' as a socio-cultural construct has always functioned as one of the favorite focuses of cultures when humanity is in crisis. It is therefore not surprising that the *Sensing Nature* exhibition that was organised in the midst of the turbulent late 2000s framed works by Yoshioka, Shinoda and Kuribayashi in relation to the idea of 'return to nature' understood as national *terroir*, which perceives a holistic vision of relationships between human and non-human actors as a part of a unique Japanese 'cultural tradition'. This paradigm shift can be explained in the context of the general disappointment with globalisation felt after the bursting of the financial bubble in the 1990s, further boosted by the global financial crisis of 2008-09 that put a heavy pressure on the society and environment. To absorb the disturbances and adapt to changes the discredited notion of nature as the globe was substituted by the attractive (but also precarious) idea of the *terroir*, embedded in the 'cultural DNA' of the Japanese. This maneuver demonstrates both the role of art in building social and ecological resilience; and the ambivalent potential of culture in the politics of nature.

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