

Internal Revolution:

The Postwar Okinawan Literature of Kiyota Masanobu and Medoruma Shun

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Internal Revolution:

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This thesis discusses the concept of internality in the postwar Okinawan literature of Kiyota Masanobu and Medoruma Shun. Whereas traditional approaches to Okinawan studies presuppose an external power such as sovereignty, this thesis examines the attempt to foreground an internal power within the self so as to unmoor Okinawa from the traps of sovereignty. It does this by first examining writings of the philosopher who first conceptualized the “multitude” as a form of communality that is not organized by sovereign power, that is Baruch Spinoza. With Spinoza’s concept of *conatus*, the first part of this thesis provides close readings of Kiyota Masanobu’s idea of a primordial “hunger,” affirmative recuperation of “defeat,” the dream of a “we” (*bokura*), and the repetition of “repatriation and escape” to a commune.

The second part addresses the literature of Medoruma Shun through Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri’s concept of constituent power, Walter Benjamin’s “Critique of Violence,” and most importantly, Frantz Fanon’s development of interiority amidst colonial struggle. Through this theoretical framework, it provides close readings of violence and sexuality in Medoruma’s “Hope” and *Rainbow Bird*.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Masaki Kinjo was born to Masaharu Kinjo and Setsuko Kinjo in Edmond, OK in 1973. When he was six-years-old, his family moved back to Okinawa, Japan. He attended the University of Tsukuba in 1994, where he majored in International Studies. After graduating from the University of Tsukuba in 1998, he advanced to Osaka University where he received a MA in 2001. He completed course work in the Ph.D. program at Osaka University in 2008 after which he entered the Ph.D. program in the Department of Asian Studies at Cornell University.

Dedicated to my family: Annmaria, Lucina and Luella.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

(AJLSSG) All-Japan League of Student Self-Government (*Zengakuren*)

(AOBWU) All-Okinawa Base Workers Union (*Zen Okinawa Gun Rōdō Kumiai Rengōkai*)

(JCP) Japanese Communist Party

(NVDA) Non-Violent Direct Action

(ODA) Okinawan Democratic Allian

Introduction

This thesis develops the notion of interiority in the works of two postwar Okinawan writers, Kiyota Masanobu (1937-) and Medoruma Shun (1960-). The first section addresses the critical essays and poetry of Kiyota who wrote predominantly during the reversion era from 1952 to 1972. Intensely disillusioned with party politics that divided Okinawa at the time, Kiyota reacted by attacking assumptions about the instrumentality of politics and language that serve to achieve the goal of communion and communication. Instead, he attempted to develop a new grounding for existence that is animated by dream for a commune through performative poetic expression irrespective of the “success” or “failure” to actualize it in reality. The second section addresses two short stories, “Hope” (“*Kibō*”) and *Rainbow Bird (Niji no Tori)*, written by Medoruma in the post-reversion era. In a similar vein as Kiyota, Medoruma articulates what he calls the “natural and necessary” in order to point to a philosophy that does not look to an external force to ground its reason, but instead cultivates reason for itself. In this way, he intimates not with the end of reason but with its means. A close reading of their writings reveals the

possibility of a new kind of force field generated from within that has the power to attract a multitude of people irrespective of political divisions. It furthermore underscores how alienation is not something to overcome, but a means that enable us to engage in our everyday reality. That is to say, it is the very stuff that enables us to become critical thinkers.

In order to lay the groundwork for this meditation on the literature of Kiyota and Medoruma, the below section provides a rough sketch of postwar Okinawan history in relation to the problem of exteriority in order to contextualize both authors focus on developing notions of interiority.

1. Against a (Literary) History of Externality

Okinawa's postwar literary movements are a reflection of Okinawa's vexed historical relationship with sovereignty. Although never legally designated a "colony," the Ryukyu Kingdom underwent drastic assimilation policies similar to those in Taiwan and the Korean Peninsula after it was integrated into the territorial sovereignty of the newly formed Japanese nation-state as Okinawa Prefecture in 1879. After the Pacific War, Japan lost its colonial acquisitions via the 1945 Potsdam Declaration, but

Okinawa was once again left hanging in a geopolitical vacuum. That is, while many former colonial subjects of the outer territories (*gaichi*) of Taiwan, Korea, and beyond celebrated their independence from Japanese colonial rule, and national subjects of the inner territories (*naichi*) of Honshu, Hokkaido, Kyushu, and Shikoku were vested with Japanese sovereignty, Okinawa's disposition was left undesignated.

This non-place amongst sovereign nations set the stage for the *shimagurumi tochi tōsō*, or “all-island land struggle” from 1952-1958. An all-encompassing protest exploded when the US military was compelled to provide justification for land confiscation intended for military base construction after the promulgation of the 1952 San Francisco Peace Treaty. This Treaty is most commonly known as the pivotal moment when Japan regained its sovereignty, but it simultaneously functioned to put Okinawa's ambiguous geopolitical disposition temporarily at bay with Secretary of State John Foster Dulles's assertion that Japan retained “residual sovereignty” in Okinawa.¹ Dulles's ingenious manipulation of the juridical language of sovereignty

¹ Evan N. Sarantakes, *Keystone: The American occupation of Okinawa and US-Japanese relations*, (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2000).

allowed the US to avoid charges of colonialism classically understood as a usurpation of territorial sovereignty by claiming Okinawa's sovereignty, albeit temporarily suspended until maturation, "residually" resided in Japan. However, despite Dulles's juridical acrobatics, many Okinawans still insisted that the US confiscation of land amounted to outright colonization of the island. Indeed, proposed "compensation" was only 1/10 of the real value of the land; sale of the land was forced; land was confiscated at gunpoint as symbolized by the phrase "bulldozers and bayonets."²

The "all-island" opposition to land confiscation uniformly voiced across the political spectrum became marred with factionalism as soon as the US military recast the struggle in geopolitical terms. That is, in 1956 the US military cracked down on protest through censorship and economic sanctions by asserting it spawned communist activity. As a result, a "pro-American" faction dependent on revenues from the base economy was pitted against a "pro-Japanese" faction that officially launched the reversion movement (*fukki undō*) back to the Japan as a way to escape the purported infringement of its territorial sovereignty.

² Arasaki Moriteru, *Sengo Okinawashi*, (Tokyo: Nihon Hyoronsha, 1976).

While the pro-American/pro-Japanese binary is commonly assumed to exist in a relation of opposition,³ a more critical examination reveals that they are mutually reinforcing because they both take for granted the notion of sovereignty in Okinawa. On the one hand, pro-American Okinawan business owners parroted US military rhetoric of democracy and free market capitalism—there were no complaints of sovereignty violated there. On the other hand, when Dulles formulated the notion of “residual sovereignty,” he actually set the stage for the pro-Japanese reversion movement—even as the movement was considered “anti-American” by the US itself—because he cemented the assumption that colonialism cannot be present where sovereignty resides. The reversion activists hastily took for granted the notion that if only Okinawa could enjoy full protection of Japanese sovereignty, then it would be released from the draconian colonialism of the US military. However, as the post 1972 reversion present suggests, even though Okinawa’s sovereignty was restored to the Japanese administration, Okinawa’s dream for liberation was never realized because

³ Arakawa Akira, *Izoku to Tennō No Kokka: Okinawa Minshūshi E No Kokoromi*, (Tokyo: Nigatsusha, 1973).

the proportion of US military bases in the island actually *increased* while they *decreased* in mainland Japan.⁴ Today, 70% of all US military bases in the Japanese state are concentrated in Okinawa, although it only makes up 0.6% of state territory, and the Japanese government foots nearly 70% of the bill to keep them there under the auspices of “Host Nation Support.”⁵ Okinawa still remains in a vexed position vis-à-vis territorial sovereignty and begs for a new mode of articulation for its geopolitical condition.

In this way, this thesis fundamentally challenges the assumption that a recuperation of sovereignty is equivalent to decolonization. It refuses to see Okinawa’s problematic relationship with sovereignty in terms of a lack of sovereign power that can be filled through repatriation, and instead fundamentally problematizes the definition of the political as the transfer of power from the people to an external source of sovereign authority. Under such an assumption of the political, the potential to act or to speak is reduced to its effectiveness as a means to achieve the final end of

⁴ Arasaki Moriteru, *Sengo Okinawashi*, 45.

⁵ Gavan McCormack, *Client State: Japan in the American Embrace*, (New York: Verso, 2007).

sovereign recognition. Different from writing and treatises on Okinawa's political economy, this thesis shows how the development of a thought that sought to avoid the traps of sovereignty emerged in postwar Okinawan literary movements.

The preponderance of pre-existing research on postwar Okinawan literary studies conventionally starts with a focus on activism surrounding the well-known literary journal *University of the Ryukyus Literature* (herein “*Ryūdai Bungaku*”) that sprung up amidst the all-island land struggle and dominated the cultural scene during the occupation era (1945-1972).⁶ In 1956, Ryukyu University students involved in the journal were expelled and publication of the journal was suspended under pressure from the US military because their participation in the land struggle made them suspect for engaging in “communist activities.”⁷ Because of this tumultuous history, literary scholars most commonly read the poems and short stories that flourished from this publication as “resistance literature.”⁸ Indeed, amongst the three main members,

⁶ Okamoto Keitoku, *Gendai Okinawa no Bungaku to Shisō*, (Naha: Okinawa Taimususha, 1981).

⁷ Miyazato Seigen, *Amerika no Okinawa tōchi*. (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1969).

⁸ Bhowmik Davinder, *Writing Okinawa: Narrative Acts of Identity and Resistance*, (London: Routledge, 2008), Shinjō Ikuo, *Okinawa bungaku to iu kuwadate: kattōsuru gengo,shintai, kioku*, (Tokyo: Inpakuto Shuppankai, 2003).

socialist realist poets and essayists such as Arakawa Akira and Kawamitsu Shin'ichi attempted to use literature as a tool to resist against US military colonialism.

While Arakawa and Kawamitsu are canonized in postwar Okinawan literature, an equally important third member of *Ryūdai Bungaku* named Kiyota Masanobu has been categorically ignored. During the reversion movement, Kiyota severely criticized Arakawa and Kawamitsu's reduction of literature to politics and participation in the reversion movement. He furthermore saw through the factionalism amongst New Left activists and writers during the reversion era as symptomatic of the pitfalls of party politics.

This thesis aims at turning a new leaf in both Okinawan politics and literary studies starting with the pivotal intervention made by Kiyota at the juncture of Okinawa's reversion era (1952-1972). Through his critical essays and poetry, Kiyota exposed a debilitating reliance on externality across Okinawa's philosophical landscape. Put into broad historical contextual terms, this is certainly the external power of a theological God who turns into a political sovereign power with the emergence of the nation-state system. And certainly, from the brief historical

explanation provided above, we know that Okinawa is perpetually suspended in a state of exceptionality in regards to sovereignty. But for Kiyota more locally, this is expressed as a politics that uses language as a tool or means to achieve a greater end such as liberation from colonial power. That is to say, acts or language understood in terms of their mediality towards a greater goal is predicated on a form of the subject that sets its sights on the attainment of something outside of it—an external goal to be realized in the future. Obsessed with attaining a final goal, social movements across Okinawa once again became subjugated by an external power and left severely compensated in their ability to harness a force that has always already existed within Okinawans from the beginning. Okinawans became marred with factionalism before the law or institutions from which they sought recognition and left bereft of the ability to theorize a different mode of subject formation that develops a power for itself internally.

This is a rough sketch of the provocative intervention of Kiyota, who, soon after Okinawa's reversion to the Japanese administration in 1972, quickly faded from Okinawa's literary scene. Not only Kiyota, but a number of writers and activists

around him as well fell silent. In term of postwar Okinawan history, the period between 1972 to 1995 certainly corresponds to a relative era of complacency. With the implementation of the “Okinawan promotion and development regime” or *shinkō taisei* that accompanied its integration into the Japanese administration, Okinawa briefly witnessed economic developments on the island. However, it soon became clear that these so-called “developments” aimed to subjugate Okinawa under Japanese capitalism while simultaneously secure it as the locus of mainland Japan’s unwanted US military bases. It was under these conditions that the anti-base movement re-emerged in a renewed form in 1995 with the rape of a twelve-year-old girl by three US military personnel.

Enter Medoruma Shun. Born in 1960, Medoruma was only twelve-years-old when Okinawa reverted to the Japanese administration. He grew up hearing stories of the Okinawan War and also reading writings from the reversion era. As an heir to these contexts, his literature circulates from this postwar past to the post-reversion present with a vivid philosophy of violence that does not appeal to recognition of an external power such as the state, but rather harnesses the power of violence for a

development of the internality of the subject. While Medoruma certainly won the prestigious Akutagawa Prize in 1997 for his story “Droplets,” his philosophy of violence nonetheless has been grossly misunderstood in literary criticism precisely because of the lacuna in Okinawan literary history that starts with Kiyota’s occlusion.

Today, the Japanese government is attempting to force construction of a new US military base onto Henoko, Okinawa despite constitutional protections on the autonomy of local municipalities in the Japanese state. Since 1995, it has become increasingly obvious to a majority of Okinawans that Okinawa continues to be made an exception to equal protection under Japanese law. Although Kiyota has vanished from the world of letters, Medoruma now participates in direct actions to oppose construction of US military bases in Okinawa and has endured physical confrontations with the riot police. The aim of this thesis is to recuperate a pivotal moment in postwar Okinawan literary history so as to deepen thought on the external power of sovereignty as Okinawa struggles with the recurring same today.

2. General Outline of the Thesis

This thesis is broken down into two parts: Kiyota Masanobu in Part 1 and Medoruma Shun in Part 2. Each part is framed through a theoretical argument.

In order to foreground the possibility of a performative kind of political and linguistic act that is not predicated on a teleological means-end relationship, I start Chapter 1 with the source of contemporary discussions on the “multitude”: Spinoza’s *conatus*. This frames close readings of Kiyota Masanobu’s work in Chapter 2 on the *potentia* of “hunger,” affirmative readings of the meaning of Okinawan “defeat,” the dream of a “we” (*bokura*), and repetition of “repatriation and escape.”

Both Spinoza and Kiyota’s work carry over to Part 2 that examines the literature of Medoruma Shun. However, more explicit than Kiyota, Medoruma meditates on the *potentia* of violence unfettered by the state that attempts to monopolize its power. Hence, Chapter 3 starts with a theoretical consideration of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri’s constituent power, Walter Benjamin’s “Critique of Violence,” and most importantly, Frantz Fanon’s development of interiority in colonial struggle. This frames close readings of Medoruma’s “Hope” in Chapter 4, and *Rainbow Bird* in Chapter 5.

Part I

Kiyota Masanobu and the Reversion Era

Chapter 1

Spinoza and *Conatus*

Different from Arakawa Akira's poetry that vividly depicts an unmistakably racialized landscape of US military occupation in Okinawa through poems such as "The Colored Race," Kiyota's poetry makes intensely abstract allusions to neutral phenomena in nature such as the night, sky, birds, and ocean. Certainly, this may frustrate readers who are looking to read characteristically "Okinawan" poetry because it is devoid of descriptive markers of an so-called Okinawan historical experience. In this sense, it is not surprising that Kiyota's poetry has been regarded as opaque and has not enjoyed much international acclaim.

As we shall see, however, Kiyota was indeed responding to a historical context which was both experienced in Okinawa, but yet not strictly limited to this geographical context. It was Kiyota's intense alienation from party politics during the reversion era that drove him deeper and deeper into the realm of abstraction in order to ground a new sense of being through the performative act of poetic expression. There is no immediate clarity in his poetry that allows readers to recognize a specificity

through which they are to receive instructions on a recommended plan of action. That is to say, Kiyota became increasingly critical of instrumental notions of language that purported to speak to a community that is assumed will “get” an intended message. For Kiyota, this instrumental notion of language prevalent in socialist realist trends in postwar Okinawan poetry were of the same register as instrumental notions of the party seen as a vehicle of a consolidation of political wills that seeks to triumph over an existing power. To situate Kiyota theoretically, this predicament may overlap with Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri’s development of the multitude in the sense that Kiyota was also highly skeptical of the assumption of a collective political will expressed through sovereign power of the state or party, and instead invested his energies in dreaming of a collective “we” (*bokura*) of singularities.

The purpose of this section is to return to the foundational theorist of the multitude—Spinoza—with reference to Judith Butler’s writings on the same in order to contextualize Kiyota’s poetry as a performative act of writing that attempts to dream of another form of community.

In *Senses of the Subject*, Butler turns to Spinoza's concept of self-preservation to think of a form of community that is not predicated on the notion of a pre-existing homogeneity of its members. She asks, "what conceptions of the 'self' and of 'life'" are presupposed by self-preservation?⁹ This "self" or "life" is predicated on what Spinoza calls "*conatus*" which he defines as follows:

The *conatus* with which each thing endeavors to persist in its own being is nothing but the actual essence of the thing itself.¹⁰

Here the "conatus...persists in its own being" and seems to point to a power that emerges internally from within the subject. It is, as Spinoza writes, "nothing but the actual essence of the thing itself." Its emanation from the self is rooted in a different relationship between the self and God. For Spinoza, humans are put alongside other phenomena in nature, and hence, *conatus* is an expression of the self's *potentia* as part

⁹ Judith Butler, *Senses of the Subject*, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015), 64.

¹⁰ Benedictus de Spinoza, 'Ethics' in *The Essential Spinoza Ethics and Related Writings*, Edition: Michael L. Morgan, Translation: Samuel Shirley, (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc 2006), 66.

of God or nature. He writes, man “follows the common order of Nature, and obeys it, and accommodates himself to it as far as the nature of things demands.”¹¹ In this sense, Spinoza starts with the proposition that humans live in unavoidably un-free conditions in which they are placed alongside phenomena in nature. This is radically different from an Enlightenment subject who is free to make choices in the world.

However, Spinoza’s emphasis on the un-free conditions serve to ground a different notion of *potentia*. He explicitly frees *potentia* from a means-end relationship and causality; man’s relationship to phenomena in nature is not one in which he can use something as a means to achieve an end or use something as a means to realize a final goal. This is because, for Spinoza, God is absolute in the sense that he did not create the world in order to fill it with things that he lacks. In contrast to a view of a purposive God that assumes that “God acts with an end in view” in order to seek “something that he lacks,” Spinoza asserts “God’s perfection.”¹² This is central to the

¹¹ Ibid., 107.

¹² Ibid., 26.

development of *conatus* because it points to a force that is part of nature but internal to the self, but yet does not operate according to a means-end or causal relationship.

By circumventing the means-end or causal relationship, Spinoza offers a different temporality of the subject. First, as Gilles Deleuze has pointed out in his study of Spinoza:

God does not produce things because he wills, but
because he is. He does not produce because he
conceives, conceives things as possible, but because
he understands himself, necessarily understands his
own nature.¹³

Here, Deleuze's language makes a contrast between the action of "willing" and a state of being that simply "is": "God does not produce things because he wills, but because he is." In this way, Deleuze points to Spinoza's assertion of the simultaneity of knowing and producing. God does not make something in order to fulfil a lack; he

¹³ Gilles Deleuze, *Expression in Philosophy: Spinoza*, Translation: Martin Joughin, (New York: Zone Books, 1992), 104.

does not acknowledge a lack and then aim to fulfil it through purposive action. The difference between A and B in terms of causality cannot be reduced to a measurable conception of time. Instead he points to the eternity of God as a final end. It is in this sense that knowing and producing take on a sort of performative meaning that does not presuppose an end to ground its act beforehand. As we shall see later, this is integral to Kiyota's performative poetic expression.

Second, this points to Spinoza's notion of singularity. Because Spinoza circumvents a temporality presupposed by causality, A cannot become B through time. That is to say, A and B are two incommensurable singularities incapable of substitution. As Spinoza writes, "Things could not have been produced by God in any other way or in any other order than is the case."¹⁴ In this way, *potentia* is not the potential for A to become B as a triumph over contingency through the tenacity of a human will. Rather, *potentia* is a force that does not look elsewhere for its realization; it is a force that simply "is." *Conatus*, hence, is precisely the eternal modality of

¹⁴ Benedictus de Spinoza, *The Essential Spinoza Ethics and Related Writings*, 33.

humans which seeks to fulfill this desire of God or nature. Butler articulates this sense of imagining (or what Kiyota will call “dreaming”) in relation to *potentia* as follows:

Actually, what the self does, constantly, is imagine what a body would do or does do, and this imagining becomes essential to its relation to others. These imaginary conjectures are not simple reflections, but actions of a certain kind, the expression of *potentia*, and in that sense, expression of life itself. *This means that the way that we represent others to ourselves or the means by which we are represented to ourselves by or through others constitute expressive actions by which life is augmented or diminished.* In representing others as we do, we are positing possibilities and imagining their realization. Life stands the chance of becoming enhanced through that process by which the *potentia* of life are expressed.¹⁵

¹⁵ Judith Butler, ‘Spinoza’s Ethics under Pressure’ in *The Desire to Live*, (New York: Fordham

Important in this passage is not the realization of the goal, but *potentia* as a particular expression of life itself. The imaginary does not present things as they are, but it expresses a life force that exists in and of itself.

Indeed, Spinoza's notion of *conatus* may appear to be so focused on the singularity at the cost of considering the relationship with the other. However, as Butler shows, this is a misreading of Spinoza. Self-preservation operates on one level as a *conatus* that is eternal and complete and on another level as the desire to preserve oneself, or in other words, the singularity of the body. In other words, the self is always catapulted into a relationship with other singularities as an expression of its *conatus*, but depending on how well the self is received or not received by others, the *conatus* can be "*augmented or diminished.*" As we shall see in Kiyota's poetry, this is the departure from one singularity to the repatriation to another. What is important is that the *conatus* constantly animates the dream for a commune that occurs in performative speech. However, the actuality of commune is constantly thwarted by the singularity. What Spinoza offers, therefore, is not a utopia free of struggle, but another

University Press, 2015), 66.

way of positing struggle. *Conatus* is the force that propels humans who live amidst un-free conditions to seek to overcome hardship. What is important is not whether they “win” or “lose,” or in other words, the realization of desire in concrete terms, but rather, the performative expression of this force itself.

Chapter 2

The Party and Kiyota Masanobu's Poetic Expression

1. *Hunger*

Kiyota Masanobu is a crucial yet neglected figure in postwar Okinawan literary history who saw through the constraints of party politics during the 1950s-1960s in both Okinawa and Japan. Kurihara Sachio describes the *zeitgeist* of the reversion era Okinawa as an absolute loss of faith in the “ultimate political party”—the Japanese Communist Party (JCP)—that acted as a catalyst triggering widespread “turning point” amongst activist groups such as the *Zengunrō* (*Zen Okinawa Gunrōdōsha Kumiai*, All-Okinawa Military Workers Union) and *Beheiren* (*Betonamu ni Heiwa o Shimin Rengō*, Citizen's League for Peace in Vietnam). Kurihara reflects on this era in following way:

I suspect that in the critique of Stalinism, it became clear that it was not just a problem endemic to the JCP, but rather a universal phenomena... The biggest problem was not with the particular manner of politics

per se, but with the character of the “party.” My

personal experience leads me to this conclusion.¹⁶

In this way, Kurihara starts to consider alternatives for movements that resist party-line consolidation, but can still mobilize variegated masses of people. In this way, Kiyota similarly attempted to conceive of a different kind of social formation with others. For some readers, this discussion may certainly overlap with Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri’s concept of the multitude in the sense that it is concerned with the politics of masses of people who are multiple, variegated, and whose force cannot be measured in advance.¹⁷ Kiyota’s writing suggests not only the contradictory nature of the “party” that supposedly represents the people while simultaneously oppressing them, but also the widespread disillusionment towards movements carried out under its pretenses. Instead, Kiyota throws into question what exactly is occluded and obliterated when political subjects are represented by the “party.” If a new kind of thought born out of the flight from vanguard parties of the 1960s emerged in tandem

¹⁶ Kurihara Sachio, “Tenki o Junbi shita Mono: Goku Shitekina Kaisō kara” in *Impakushon*, no. 59 (1989): 18-19.

¹⁷ Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000).

with Kurihara's account of widespread "turning point," then Kiyota is clearly its embodiment.

In 1956, the Price Report silenced the "four principles for land protection."¹⁸

Thereafter, the "all-island land struggle (*shimagurumi tochi tōsō*)"—a people's movement that protested expansion of US military bases—spread through Okinawa's main island like wildfire, and elevated anti-military sentiment. Prominent historiographers, such as Arasaki Moriteru, have positively interpreted it as "a comprehensive retaliation to ten years of US military domination."¹⁹ This interpretation holds true even as they recognize the all-island struggle was also a fight for better terms on their land leases. However, other interpretations have placed significantly greater emphasis on this will to negotiate with the US military over

¹⁸ After the US administration of Okinawa was formalized by the 1952 San Francisco Peace Treaty, the USCAR (United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands) realized it needed to establish private land leases in order to permanently secure Okinawa as a military fortress of the Pacific. It first attempted to give individual landowners a one-time lump sum payment for their land. Because of the miniscule compensation, 98% of the landowners promptly refused to sign leases. After constant encroachments on private land, Members of Parliament uniformly passed the "four principles for land protection" on April 30, 1954. These four principles stipulated: 1.) no lump sum payment; 2.) adequate compensation for land already confiscated; 3.) reparation for damages incurred; 4.) no additional land acquisition. Two years later in June 1956, the US House Armed Service Committee issued the "Price Report" that justified permanent lease of the land, lump sum payment of rent, and additional land acquisition, thereby directly violating the "four principles." It was this momentous Report that triggered the all-island struggle.

¹⁹ Arasaki Moriteru, *Sengo Okinawa-shi*, 147.

portraying Okinawans hotly engaging in a recalcitrant protest of US military domination. For example, the historian Toriyama Atsushi argues that the emergence of the land struggle came as a result of the Price Report betraying the expectations of a cooperative relationship with the US military that could be achieved through financial aid—aid necessary for the development of Okinawan autonomy.²⁰

In response to the all-island struggle, the US military decided to take “preventative measures to avoid clashes between Ryukyans and American GIs.”²¹ They issued an indefinite off-limits order in the middle region of Okinawa’s main island, causing local municipalities, whose economies were dependent on military bases, to successively declare that they would not permit any “anti-American” gatherings so they could avoid all-out confrontations. Thereafter, the all-island struggle quickly dispelled. Students of the University of the Ryukyus who participated in demonstrations—particularly members of the underground communist party formed

²⁰ Toriyama Atsushi, “Hatan Suru <Genjitsushugi>--‘Shimagurumi Tōsō’ eto Tenka Suru Hitotsu no Chōryū” [The Collapse of ‘Realism’: One Current that Transformed into the ‘All-island Struggle], in Hōsei Daigaku Okinawa Bunka Kenkyūsho Ed., *Okinawa Bunka Kenkyū*, no. 30 (Tokyo: Hōsei Daigaku Shuppankai, 2004), 138-148. Refer to this paper for more research on political trends in Okinawa at the time that attempted to form a cooperative relationship with USCAR by exerting control over the way in which Okinawa’s municipalities attempted to conceive of their future prospects.

²¹ Arasaki, Sengo Okinawa-shi, 150-160.

under the leadership of the Okinawa People's Party (*Okinawa Jinmin-tō*, OPP)—were totally suppressed. Leaders of demonstrations were expelled from school, and student activism totally collapsed.

During the all-island struggle, Kiyota was a student of the University of the Ryukyus Department of Japanese Literature. His participation in the underground communist party through a student organization informed his writing on the total collapse of student activism after the defeat of the land struggle in the essay, “A Watershed of Poetry and Experience” (“*Shi to Taiken no Ryūiki*”). He prefaces the piece with the words, “In order to make possible a vision for tomorrow, it is absolutely necessary to trace the path of a miracle” and continues to reflect on the aftermath as follows:

I must confess, during the time of the first
general uprising, I engaged in conversation with
friends from my student organization about the
future. I truly believed in the feeling of solidarity
making up the foundation of our praxis even

amidst our uncertain trials and tribulations... And
then a series of shattering events: the expulsion
of seven members of the executive branch of the
student organization from the university; the
voter league's triumph at the mayoral election;
the abrupt suppression from USCAR; the
suspension of publication for *University of the
Ryukyus Student Literary Magazine*. At that
point, students who refused to go to class and
became hermits in their lodgings, and students
who busied themselves earning credits towards
graduation were uniformly compelled to feel the
sheer force of politics.²²

²² Kiyota Masanobu, "Shi to Taiken no Ryūiki" ["A Watershed of Poetry and Experience"] *Ryūdai Bungaku* [University of the Ryukyus Student Literary Magazine] vol. 10, no. 2, (Naha: Ryukyu Daigaku Bungei-bu, 1980): 47].

Having faced defeat of the all-island struggle on the one hand, and incapable of developing a critique of Stalinism on the other, Kiyota lost hope in both the OPP that continued to cooperate with the JCP, and his fellow students who blindly followed their party politics without question. Kiyota hence defected from the party early in 1958.²³ At this same time, he joined the editorial collective for *University of the Ryukyus Literary Magazine*, and launched his career as a writer in the journal. He also published the literary coterie magazine *Origins* (Genten) in 1959 with Okamoto Sadakatsu, Irei Takashi, and Nakazato Yūgō, and *Poetry/Reality* (Shi/Genjitsu) with Okamoto Sadakatsu, Kochinda Keiten, Matsuhara Nobuhiko, and Miyahira Akira after graduating from the University of the Ryukyus. It was *Poetry/Reality* that became Kiyota's primary medium of expression after graduation. He states the following about the publication:

²³ Justification for the early 1958 date of Kiyota's defection can be found in Kiyota's assertion that, "It has been a few months since criticism of the JCP by the AJLSSG (Zengakuren) and defection took place, and a year has gone by since the Okinawan anti-Yoyogi organization split off into a different faction because of individuals who finally defected in response to instructions from mainland. Kiyota Masanobu, "Tanigawa Gan-ron" ["On Tanigawa Gan"] in *Shi/Genjitsu [Poetry/Reality]* vol. 5 (Naha: Shi/Genjitsu no Kai, 1968): 16.

Amidst the reorganization between the *Bund*²⁴ and the Revolutionary Marxist Faction (*Kakumaru*), all members of the *University of the Ryukyus Literary Magazine* defected from the party. In the meantime, the unified progressive voter's league (*minren*) were betrayed by the rightward swing of the mayor they had painstakingly campaigned for and successfully got elected, the increasingly coalescence between civil society and institutions, and the emergence of another conservative mayor in 1961. In order to continue the act of thinking under those circumstances, we decided after much debate that the only thing we could do was create a magazine. Hence, in 1962, we published the literary coterie magazine *Poetry/Reality*.²⁵

²⁴ Bund comes from the Japanese Bunto which is derivative of the German Bund. It is also referred to as Kyosanshugisha Dōmei in Japanese, or Communist League in English.

²⁵ Kiyota Masanobu, "Okinawa Sengo Shi-shi" ["A History of Postwar Okinawan Poetry"] *Okinawa Bungaku Zenshū* [Complete Works of Okinawan Literature] (Okinawa Bungaku Zenshū Henshū Iinkai, 1992), 207.

Having lost all hope in politics and organizations as a result of the pacification of student movements, party reorganization, and the betrayal of the OPP, Kiyota was left for the time being completely bankrupt theoretically. Then, as if to work out an ineffable problem, Kiyota's writings almost obsessively repeat criticism of the all-island struggle, vanguard parties, student movements of the 1950s, and reorganized student movements of the 1960s.

Amidst such a change in the times, Kuroda Kio—a poet from a Tōhoku farming village—bore enormous influence on Kiyota. Kuroda, who had befriended Kiyota, published his essay “Shi ni Itaru Kiga *Anniya Kō*” [“Hunger Which Leads to Death: Thinking about *Anniya*”] in 1964. *Anniya* is a man with ancestors who “live subservient in another's service; a man who cultivates another's land without having his own arable land.”²⁶ As a man who lives at the bottom of the social hierarchy, he is a visible man who can be seen by anyone in the sense that he bears the mark of discrimination. Wherever or however he is when he is born or dies, “he is never called

²⁶ Kuroda Kio *Shi to Hanshi Kuroda Kio Zenshishū Zenhyōronshū*, (Tokyo: Keisou Shobou, 1968), 147.

upon in the absence of such a word that was attached to this name.”²⁷ *Anniya* is characterized as a person who has been starving for his entire life, a person who is possessed by an incurable hunger sickness (*kigashō*), or in other words, a person who is permeated with lack throughout the entirety of his life.

Kuroda describes the figure of *anniya* in a discussion on agrarian land reform which took place in his village after World War II. In his account, the vanguard party regarded the reform as revolution. A certain “peasant T” and a certain “secretary K” of the agricultural land commission followed along with their support of the party. Both “peasant T” and “secretary K” were *anniya*. They were both “lifetime patients of the hunger sickness; typical ‘*anniya*’ who tried to escape being *anniya* at the risk of their lives,”; “men who continued to struggle for invisibility from others at the risk of their lives.”²⁸ In other words, *anniya* attempted to climb up out of a deep hole called hunger in order to escape their present predicament. Kuroda takes issue with this not because

²⁷ Ibid., 49.

²⁸ Ibid., 155.

he sees the attempt to climb up the social ladder as a problem. Rather, the problem lies elsewhere.

They were not only obsessed with hunger and tried to climb out of the deep hole, but they also denied the entirety of the hole itself both on the inside and out. Since they were thoroughly conscious of themselves as *anniya*, they easily became members of an organization that tried to deny the whole of which created them.²⁹

Kuroda goes on to problematize the party that denied the deep hole itself called hunger which catapulted “peasant T” and “secretary K” toward revolution. In other words, for the party, hunger is posited as an object that should be denied and eliminated.

However, Kuroda struggled to point out that it was also an important moment that enabled *anniya* to transform themselves from visible men to invisible men which is a moment that should be maintained without erasure. This is a contradictory double

²⁹ Ibid., 157.

hunger in the first sense of being afflicted with actual hunger and in the second sense of being denied the life force enabled by hunger. Kuroda continues:

They should not have been obsessed with starvation in order to climb up and succeed in life as *anniya*. They needed a sort of moment (弾機) in which they could leap to a world of values (*kachikan*) that reverses a lifelong upward mobility as *anniya*. This moment is created by absolutizing their inner ancestral sense of hunger.³⁰

Kuroda's discussion comes into focus with reference to Butler's reading of Spinoza.

She maintains that desire, which is usually treated as a mere means to obtain recognition, should rather be posited as "a desire that can find no satisfaction, and whose unsatisfiability establishes a critical point of departure for the interrogation of available norms."³¹ What is important here is the *conatus*, or the presence of desire

³⁰ Ibid., 160.

³¹ Judith Butler, *Giving and Account of Oneself*, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), 24.

itself irrespective of whether or not it realizes its goals. Kuroda likewise establishes hunger as absoluteness replete with revolutionary philosophical possibility. Hunger is not merely a process in need of elimination. It becomes a means that should absolutely be held onto when making a leap toward the revolutionary world, or in Kuroda words “a world of values (*kachikan*) that reverses a lifelong upward mobility as *anniya*.”

However, vanguard organizations regard such starvation as satisfied remnants to be thrown away in the past. This is what the vanguard party betrayed.³²

In response to Kuroda’s essay, Kiyota published “Kuroda Kio Ron I Hakyoku o Koeru Shiten” [Essay on Kuroda Kio I: A Viewpoint beyond Catastrophe] in *Ryū dai Bungaku*, Vol. 3, No. 8. In this essay, Kiyota argues that in contrast to the context from which Kuroda writes, what enabled solidarity amongst student activists of the 1950s and 1960s in Okinawa was a common “doctrine that attacks land expropriation and direct administration.”³³ Hence, he doubts if the type of peasant starvation depicted by Kuroda could serve as moment that critically deepens the students’

³² Regarding this point, refer to the following text. Tomiyama Ichiro, “Yūtopiatachi Gutai ni Sashimodosu Koto”, in *Posuto Yūtopia no Jinruigakuai*, eds. Ishizuka Michiko, Tanuma Sachiko, Tomiyama Ichiro, (Kyoto: Jinbushoin, 2008), 314-376.

³³ Kiyota Masanobu, *Jojo no Fuiki*, (Tokyo: Okisekisha, 1981), 32.

thoughts.³⁴ In other words, for Kiyota, Kuroda's writings on hunger is relevant as a critique, and not as affirmative praise of the all-island land struggle. The land struggle was reduced to and trivialized as a struggle over the private land owning rights of the peasants, thereby rendering it impossible for the peasants' starvation to emerge as catalyzing agent for revolution. The revolutionary possibilities of hunger were swapped out for a politics of monetary compensation that operate through petitioning subjects, or subjects whose effectiveness is measured through their ability to petition for a quantifiable monetary sum. Moreover, Kiyota not only criticized students who took on the leadership of the organization, but also villagers or peasants with whom students tried to forge alliances.

Regarding such peasants, Kiyota pointed to the conspicuous land struggle that took place on Ie Island in March 1955 in his essay "Shi ni Okeru Shisha to Kōi" that was published later in December 1964. Peasants, whose houses were burned down by the US military in the expropriation of their lands, had nowhere to go and sent representatives to submit a petition to the Ryukyu Government where many conducted

³⁴ Ibid., 32.

a sit-in. In the middle of such a land struggle, Kiyota writes “I’m not the only one who is puzzled” in response to the following placard:

America belongs to America

Okinawa belongs to Okinawan

Maja belongs to Maja village

Even heaven knows this principle

America should know God’s awe”³⁵

While Kiyota recognizes that “perhaps the self-assertion of peasants in dire straits can only encapsulate their outlook with such words,” he nonetheless critically discusses the “exclusionary” elements of the “peasants” in the following way:

When peasants say “America should know God’s
awe,” they lost the energy to get angry at the
Americans, avoided the object they should struggle
against, and became desperate... These desperately
organized peasants were pitifully absorbed into a

³⁵ Ibid., 223.

system of petition in which they ascended up and
away from rather than descended deep down into a
community...When the Yanbaru [region]
consolidated and petitioned, they unintentionally
divided solidarity between laborers and peasants.

By admonishing the Americans to fear God's awe, Kiyota suggests that the peasants sought protection behind a shield. This in turn deflected them from directly confronting the "object they should struggle against." Through this deflection, Kiyota emphasizes that they were deprived of a vital energy of anger, and hence, became absorbed into a politics of means and ends that goes by the name of a "system of petition." In this way, they "ascended up and away" towards an external power, which deprived them of the ability to "descend deep down into a community." Kiyota's gaze "deep down into a community" resonates here with Kuroda's attempt to locate a "world of values that reverses a lifelong upward mobility as *anniya*."

2. *"Owning Defeat" in the 1960s*

As indicated by friends surrounding Kiyota, his obsessive critique of the vanguard parties and student movements of postwar Okinawa aimed to theoretically grasp the meaning of “defeat (*haiboku*)” amongst those who yearned for decolonization. For example, the Okinawan poet Shinjō Takekazu writes:

Through the political transformations of the 1960s, it became apparent to us that the self-proclaimed vanguard party (*i.e.*, the JCP) was nothing but an errant myth. Their vanguard thinking collapsed, and they quickly lost all authority formerly attained by sporting a façade of progressiveness. No literary thinker could escape this profound historical tragedy for it was pounded into the depths of their consciousness. Slammed with heavy waves of defeat (*haiboku*) and total breakdown (*zasetu*), diligent thinkers could not help but ask themselves the

painful question, “What is real thought (*shin no shisō*
towa)?”³⁶

Directly after this quote, Shinjō indicates that it is Kiyota who is one of these
“thinkers who took on this troublesome topic.”

By identifying the point where political transformations of the 1960s were
“[s]lammed with heavy waves of defeat and total breakdown,” Shinjō is not merely
depicting a hard-to-accept loathing of the situation, but rather he is pointing to Kiyota
as one of the few “diligent” thinkers who is willing to productively dwell on it. For
example, in the following 1963 roundtable discussion on the location of thought and
literature in the wake of another power regime that dominates over Okinawa, Kiyota
responds to Kawamitsu Shin’ichi’s statement, “We need to amass greater strength to
stand up against reality,” by stating, “It is okay for literature to be defeated by reality,”
“the literati are always in a losing battle against reality,” and “the strong do not write
literature.”³⁷ Kiyota means that compared to the occupation forces that boast of

³⁶ Shinjō Takekazu, *Fuka to Teni* [Burden and Transference] reprinted in Myaku Hakkōjo, 1993, 57. Quotations are taken from the reprinted version when revisions have been made to original 1970 text.

³⁷ Kiyota Masanobu, Kochinda Keiten, Shima Shigeo, Matayoshi Makoto, Kawamitsu Shin’ichi, Okamoto Sadakatsu, Tanaka Yū, “Zadankai Bungaku no Jiritsusei ni tsuite” [“Roundtable Discussion: On the Autonomy of Literature” *Ryūdai Bungaku* [University of the Ryukyus Student Literary

absolute superiority in material and human resources, “we (*bokura*)” can never compete in numbers. In face of the “reality” of such a discrepant balance of power, “we” are “always on the losing side.” In response to this “reality,” Kawamitsu retorts that Okinawans “must not lose.”³⁸ There is no doubt that Kawamitsu is indeed politically correct—his views are quite commonplace. However, the point is that he is utterly incapable of accepting the fact of defeat. For Kawamitsu, the process of defeat must be sublated and victory must be reestablished as goal. The defeated is always a minority.

If political subjects must be represented by institutions, and “victory” is posited as a struggle between institutions, then “defeat” is an unavoidable certainty. Why? Because defeat entails the failure to achieve absolute representation, alienation from the public sphere, and hence, the condition of being made into an unrepresented Other. Kiyota, however, attempted to positively recuperate the meaning of “defeat.” He was “diligent[ly]” attentive to those who were defeated by movements and who lost the

Magazine] vol. 3 no. 4 (Naha: Ryukyu Daigaku Bungei-bu, 1963): 51.

³⁸ Ibid., 51.

grounding (*konkyō*) to their existence as a result thereof. The frequent appearance of those who took their own lives, those who went insane, those who defected from social movements, and those who could not fit into civil society all vividly attest to Kiyota's concerted attempt to stay in conversation with subjects who elude representation. It was this fertile ground from which he attempted to forge the possibility of a new politics.³⁹

At the same time, this is the very ground from which the problem of poetic expression emerges. If defeat entails a failure of a subject to be represented by institutions (*i.e.*, alienation), and if lack entails the realm that eludes representation, then how is it possible for people to go on living branded with this mark of lack? Just as Kiyota attempted to add another dimension to defeat, he adds another dimension to lack. For Kiyota, it is imperative that those branded with the mark of lack create new

³⁹ To the present date, Kiyota has been regarded as a poet who separates literature from "politics." However this type of uni-dimensional understanding of "politics" risks confusion and misunderstanding when considering Kiyota's thought. "Politics" as used during Kiyota's time of writing, and "politics" as it has been re-defined within recent trends in modern thought, clearly emerge from different contexts. For this reason, it is important to separate the two. The former refers to the party-line politics that locates human desire within institutions or an a priori subject. In this conceptualization, human desire is interchangeable with institutions or subjects represented by institutions. In Kiyota's context, this kind of "politics" specifically refers to vanguard parties and Stalinism. The latter sense of "politics" refers to the realm of excess that emerges when people's desires fail to completely assimilate into institutions or subjects represented by institutions. It is important to keep in mind that the former sense of "politics" was prevalent when Kiyota quit the vanguard parties around 1960. Since he rejected the "politics" of the former, confusing the two senses of "politics" risks misconstruing Kiyota's thought.

meaning in their lives in order to keep on living. It is this very process that Kiyota attempts to ground in the act of poetic expression. In the face of defeat, Kiyota problematized the construction of political subjects who are imprisoned in a value system of victory versus defeat in order to foreground a new meaning of life: “Defeat, victory, and domination are yoked together into the same trinity and operate within a uniform dimension.”⁴⁰ Rather, the act of writing poetry for Kiyota was to “take defeat and victory above and beyond to the next dimension.”⁴¹ If the defeated (*haibokusha*) are branded with lack when compared to the victors, then Kiyota was determined to reject this schema, and actively invest himself in the position of the defeated in a way which resists an understanding of them as “simple loser[s].”

When a writer intentionally descends upon defeat, he is not a simple loser. By willing defeat, he owns his defeat. Those who own their defeat are those who are able to objectify it.⁴²

⁴⁰ Kiyota Masaki, “Ketsueki no Metafijikku” [“The Metaphysics of Blood”] *Ryūdai Bungaku* [University of the Ryukyus Student Literary Magazine] vol. 3 no. 7 (Naha: Ryukyu Daigaku Bungei-bu, 1966): 40.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁴² Kiyota Masanobu, “Obuje eno Tenshin” [“Reincarnation into Object”] *Ryūdai Bungaku* [University of

Here, “owning defeat” is not read as lack on the part of the defeated or Other. It is not so much a loathing of subjectivication or subjugation to the party (*shutaika=jūzokuka*) that Kiyota seeks to avoid, but rather a move to affirmatively become the defeated.

The individual transforms into an objectified Other on his/her own accord.

Instead of fearing being made into *objet*, one becomes *objet*

on his own accord. It is precisely in this space of excess

where the subject faces ruin that the conditions for human

existence are pursued.⁴³

Like Spinoza, Kiyota places the individual alongside other phenomena in nature and finds possibility in becoming the *objet*. Kiyota terms the rejection of subjecthood, and the pursuit of a new and unknown existence the “reincarnation into *objet*.”⁴⁴

According to the Okinawan poet Miyagi Hidesada, “In Kiyota’s poetry, existence yearns after difference (found in woman). Breathing life into existential language, he allows language to soar amidst uncertainty.”⁴⁵ Similarly, the Okinawan poet

the Ryukyus Student Literary Magazine] vol. 3 no. 1(Naha: Ryukyu Daigaku Bungei-bu, 1961b): 41.

⁴³ Ibid., 41.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 41.

⁴⁵ Miyagi Hidesada, “Ikarosu no Gōka—Moeru Erosu to Shizumeru Tanatosu” [“The Hellfire of Ikarosu: Burning Eros and Calming Thanatos ”] *Myaku* [Pulse] vol. 49 (Naha: Myaku Hakkō-jo, 1994):

Matsubara Toshio states, “Poetry and thought (*shisō*) for Kiyota was not so much about political transformation as it was about a transformation in existence.”⁴⁶ Both of these commentators point out the burning obsession with existence and the aching desire to be reborn into the existence of the Other found in Kiyota’s poetic expression. In one of Kiyota’s representational works, “Poetry of a Man Called Crawdad,” he again rejects subjecthood, and affects an air of nostalgia for existences that escape representation.

At the instance when things start to crumble
through a crack in the pipes laid bare in the ruins water secretly
spews out.

Trembling with the presentiment of reincarnation the dreaming
soil is wet.

6.
⁴⁶ Matsubara Toshio, “Haikyo no Shigami Kiyota Masanobu-ron,” in *Guntō*, no. 49, ed. Miyagi Hidekazu, (Naha: Guntō Dōjin, 1974): 19.

Even in an insentient night the journey of negation and
affirmation is bleak.

Beyond the green mob, the kitchen, and the spinning wheel
drowning out the voices of young revolutionaries,

Will the seeds sprout out from the ruins of an annihilated self?

It is clear that for Kiyota in this poem destruction is not a moment for regret, but one of possibility. Hopes channeled through the narrow confines of a pipe are offered new life through the pipe's decay as "water secretly spews out" of its cracks. This passage ends with a question, "Will the seeds sprout out from the ruins of an annihilated self?" and is careful to allow the reader to answer this question for him/herself, thereby circumventing the structure of a poem that instructs.

In his own reading of the poem, Shinjō Takekazu writes that it represents

...ambition towards reincarnation into a new life

that renders the given grounding of reality's

existence a complete façade...It dreams of a self

that is brought back to life into a world that is

anywhere “other than here.”⁴⁷

Takekazu suggests that as Kiyota dreamed of being reincarnated into the defeated, he attempted to search for meaning or a grounding for existence from the “ruins of an annihilated self.” This dream and desire for a new existence was the very basis that grounded Kiyota’s act of writing. It animated him and was the driving force that ignited his poetic expression. Kiyota’s thought that bore aspirations for new existence from the position of the defeated is also depicted in the poem, “Maturity” composed in April 1962.

As if thrown away and suspended at the far end of the sky

we must walk the realm of an unfathomable night

until we speak the words suspended within us (*bokura*).

Are the screaming voices within the far distance

⁴⁷ Shinjō Takekazu, “Zarigani to Iwareru Otoko no Shihen” [“A Collection of Poems by a Man Called Crawdad”] *Hassō* [Notions] no. 4 (Naha: Okidai Bungaku Kenkyū Kai, 1970): 64.

palatable to the bird of the future?

Beyond the unbearable anxiety

the forgotten wishes

are like treetops that have tried to sprout only to decay:

When shall its rotting be laid bare?

From a sleepless age brimming with darkness

the silhouettes of our (*bokura*) souls are laid bare

and fall into an unfathomable depth.

One woman crouches up, and from her shaking of a distant ocean

our (*bokura*) sleep is exposed by a somnambular ocean.

Even if light does not allow for a deluge of memories,

breasts would not freeze up the water vein of a rose.

To gradually help nurture the color of sadness so it can become

unclouded language

we (*bokura*) must walk the realm of an unfathomable night.

With the soft feel of the west wind,

let us wait for a language that can be spoken from our lips.

Let us lay bare our (*bokura*) own existence.⁴⁸

Kiyota does not flinch at the never-ending circle of thought concerning what grounds the act of writing at the very moment where one begins to write about a given object or condition. Rather, he imposes onto himself the question, why should one even write despite the fact? It is the desire to meet the unknown Other that drives Kiyota to write. The Other for Kiyota is the defeated, the dead, and any other existence that eludes representation by political parties or institutions. The Other is the realm of excess that results when subjects cannot be perfectly contained by institutional representation. In order to meet the Other, Kiyota, from the inner depths of his unconscious, starts the act of description: “we must walk the realm of an unfathomable night/until we speak the words suspended within us (*bokura*).”

For Kiyota, the point where one begins to write should not be locked in a fixed position, but it is the “realm of the unfathomable night” that expands limitlessly within

⁴⁸ Kiyota Masanobu, *Kiuyota Masanobu Shishū Hikari to Kaze no Taiwa* (Tokyo: Shichosha, 1970), 98-99.

“our” (*bokura*) unconscious. This chaotic “realm of night” lies beyond the “afternoon” where everything is rendered visible under the bright sun of day; it is the ground that conditions the act of writing. Here, the act of thinking with words that grounds writing is the very driving force behind the writer’s thought and description. It is this very act that continually brings the existence of the writer into life.

Kiyota embraces the “realm of the night” where he eagerly awaits “for a language that can be spoken from our lips”—this awaiting for fruition is the dream of “maturity” as the title suggests. Importantly, Kiyota overlaps the grounding (*konkyō*) of an incomplete act of writing with the existence of the writer in the “here and now.” If performatively partaking in the dream of “maturity” signifies “writing,” then writing and living for Kiyota take on the same meaning. Language is not merely a means for transmitting information, but it exhibits characteristics of a living creature that acts. In the process of delving deeply down into the grounding of a single existence expressed by the “I (*boku*),” it becomes the “we (*bokura*)” that may be encountered when “maturity” is achieved. In this sense, he continues to foresee the dream of a coming community.

It is this “we (*bokura*)” that Kiyota discusses in detail in the critical essay, “The Dead and the Act within Poetry” (“Shi ni okeru Shisha to Kōi”), which appeared in the 1964 edition of *University of the Ryukyus Student Literary Magazine*.

It is impossible to immediately render the inscription of experience into a poem. The inscription of experience has nothing to do with our (*bokura*) thought. Likewise, to the extent that experience is the material that is spoken of, people will be limited to being informed about their experience... While being informed of an event, we become accustomed to the event, and when it has been rendered *ex-post facto*, [we] will have already taken hold of the security of our livelihood.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Kiyota Masanobu, “Shi ni okeru Shisha to Kōi” [“The Dead and the Act within Poetry”] *Ryūdai Bungaku* [University of the Ryukyus Student Literary Magazine] vol. 3 no. 5 (Naha: Ryukyu Daigaku Bungei-bu, 1964).

This essay is a direct critique of the historicism that systematically organizes occurrences *a posteriori* as an “informed experience” or “informed event.” This historical critique, however, soon gives way to recondite poetic language as he describes the act of poetry below.

Any experience that is brought into the public realm is made into a one-liner catch phrase. The hidden meaning within experience is forgotten without ever being brought to light. More precisely, it is impossible to bright to light experience at the horizon of the public realm. In the depths of an [individual] self’s memory—when vision is absorbed into the pitch darkness of the eye—the pose of crouching up at the loss of words is precisely what will be uncovered as bearing a deep rhythm within the shadows of experience in which [we] are unavoidably made to call [ourselves] a “we (*bokura*).”

Expression is action that is ushered into the
difficult-to-name solid body that harbors rhythm. When
we jump onto that rhythm as we are drawn into the
rustling depths of its shadows, we strongly grab hold of
the sense (*kankaku*) of the wide expanse inside the
dazzling “present” in which we locate only ourselves as
the cause. If the zone that renders expression palatable is
stretched across the dimension where the tranquility of
the clear intellect and intense red delusion are made to
coexist, then living the fluidity brought about by
departure (*ridatsu*) as we are enticed into that zone is the
act (*kōi*) of poetry.⁵⁰

If the subject of speech, “we (*bokura*),” is posited *a priori*, then the act of living by
language will inevitably run into a dead end. Kiyota attempts to live language as an act
that exists within the uncertain undulations and sense of crisis of the writer who does

⁵⁰ Ibid., 34-35.

not know now whether or not he will ever arrive at a “we.” The point here lies entirely in the sense of suspension, or unpredictability in being able to arrive at the “we (*bokura*)” as the “matured” “I (*boku*),” while simultaneously keeping the next course of action entirely open ended. Unpredictability entails that nothing has been decided in the future, and *any possibility is open for play*; it entails “strongly grab[bing] hold of the sense (*kankaku*) of the wide expanse.” When writing possesses the duality of possibility or impossibility of the reality of “we” in the “present,” the “we” continues to live on as an allegorical expression.

By directing the “screaming voices within the far distance” to an outward direction, it does not become “palatable” for the “bird of the future.” He does not point to a direction where a sense of crisis is immediately dissolved, just as he does not allow the chaotically screaming voices to carefully choose words that narrow in on a target. Instead, “words suspended within us” or the phrase “let us wait for a language that can be spoken from our lips” becomes an indicator of an act yet to come in the future. Here, just one step before the scream, Kiyota brings to life the possibility for the expression of a “we.” However, most importantly, the unleashing of the scream

does not occur. Even if there is “anxiety” in continually watching the “rotting” that occurs when the day of “maturity” does not come, and even if there is an irritation that incites the writer to state, “When shall it...be laid bare?”, the unleashing of the scream is strictly prohibited. Rather, the nonexistent “we” is continually left in tact in the “pose of crouching up at the loss of words” while the “I” continually lives alongside irritation and a sense of crisis. “Let us lay bare our (*bokura*) own existence.” When language has been used up to allow the “screaming voices” to roar, and when the sense of crisis that has been completely absolved, the writer loses his or her grounding as a writer. At that point, language in waiting dries up and dies.

Performative expression that attempts to bring something into existence that has not yet taken on the existence of “we” is a far call from a pre-established harmony predicated on knowing in advance whether or not a possibility will consummate into a reality. Only through the persistent act of quietly securing a dream in the “here and now” can the writer find the grounding that makes the existence of the writer possible. Beginning to throw into question what grounds the subject of enunciation, *i.e.*, pursuing the unknown Other, is already a political act. In order to look forward to a

new future different from the present, Kiyota stood steadfast, crouched up, and waited eagerly for “something” to happen.

3. Repatriation and Escape

Kiyota’s “Repatriation and Escape” (“*Kikan to Dasshutsu*”) was written in September 1968, and appeared in the journal *Notions* (Hassō) published by the Okinawa University Research Group on Literature in December of the following year. In this essay, Kiyota develops his critique of the so-called problem of Okinawa’s territorial belonging (*Okinawa no kizoku mondai*). Importantly, this critique is written one year after the November 15, 1967 US-Japan Summit between Japanese Prime Minister Satō and US President Johnson where they announced “the date for reversion will be decided within the next three years,” and outlined the policy that would govern the handover of Okinawa’s administrative rights to Japan. Hence, Kiyota was writing as the curtain drew to a close on Okinawa’s reversion to Japan.

“Repatriation and Escape” describes Okinawa’s prewar experience of imperialization (*kōminka*), the massacre of Okinawan civilians by Imperial Japanese soldiers, the postwar call for Ryukyuan independence, the All-Okinawa Base Workers

Union (*Zengunrō*), and the rise of new movements in the 1960s that pined after reversion. By carefully folding each of these historical memories into the next, Kiyota conveys an overarching theme in which Okinawan's attempt to survive modern oppression. Passing through the age of the Ryūkyū Kingdom, the age of Yamato (Japan), and the age of America, Kiyota depicts a cycle of departure (*i.e.*, escape) from oppression, followed by an attempt to mobilize subjects into movements (*i.e.*, repatriation). Once this cycle comes full circle, it starts again with the repeated pacification and subsequent attempt at building a movement. Despite the exhausting repetitiveness, Kiyota continues to inscribe his dream for Okinawan liberation.

When the problem of reversion is deployed, the question becomes, to where exactly are we to return? [In posing this question, we must first establish that] it does not matter if there is an escape (*dasshutsu*) by ones own accord from a homeland, or a forced exile by powers beyond ones control. It does not matter if there is an escape from present conditions, or an escape from

the homeland or from the state. Rather, to the extent that it is oriented as an escape, it is an act that suggests, implicates, and is complicit in the creation of a future (*mirai ni katan suru*).

Reversion and escape come together like two opposing arrows wedged up against each other in the shape of a V—the logic draws force from its intersecting point of tension, transcends “ethnic pride” (“*minzoku kanjō*”) that cries out for a return to the maternal bosom, and becomes a cite for transformation. Therefore, we do not return to the motherland (*sokoku*). A motherland that welcomes us like a mother is impossible. Even if we could imagine its possibility, we would end up being inhospitably greeted as a suspicious stranger, and not as people who escaped from [or were deprived of a belonging to] their

homeland...Thought (*shisō*) transforms them into a
commune of common sensibility (*kyōkan iki*) and opens
up the possibility for an unforeseen pathos (*kyōnen*).
But what is this “motherland” anyway? There is no
“motherland” for Okinawa to return to. Didn’t we lose
a “motherland” when we were separated from Japan by
the United States in 1946?⁵¹

The escape from military occupation brings forth a new repatriation called reversion to Japan. It is from these circumstances that Kiyota positions himself to call out a “we (*bokura*)” to the reader as seen in the poem “Maturity.” He writes, “Didn’t we lose a “motherland”? He identifies with the subject, departs from it, and then one step before departure, brings forth another identification. This is precisely the point where the two “come together like two arrows wedged up against each other in the shape of a V.”

Departure from subjecthood provides the inertia for another identification. By

⁵¹ Kiyota Masanobu, “Kikan to Dasshutsu” [“Repatriation and Escape”] in *Hassō* [Notions] no. 3 (Okidai Bungaku Kenkyū Kai, 1969): 30.

recording this process, Kiyota does not let the dream of Okinawan liberation pass him by. In other words, the dream of liberation is expressed in the very act of inscribing the excess that results when departing (*ridatsu*) from subjecthood.

It is this process that Kiyota carefully unravels in an account of an incident that occurred in his home village on Kumejima Island. In “The Experiences of my Youth,” Kiyota writes of his encounter with an army deserter from mainland Japan who takes flight to his village, and an Okinawan soldier who returns to his village after a grueling battle at the end of the war. The US military has already occupied the village. Even though the deserter was from mainland Japan, he gave up his fight with the “enemy,” took cover in the Okinawan returnee’s home, and relied on the returnee’s mother and sister to nurse him back to health. When the Okinawan returnee learns that the Japanese deserter welcomed the end of the Okinawan War under these cushy conditions, he is enraged and attempts to kill him. It took his family and other villagers to convince the Okinawan returnee to quell his anger. After the US military retreated from the village, the Japanese deserter returned to Japan.

The Okinawan returnee is angry because even though he threw himself into wartime mobilization out of the need to overcome Japanese discrimination towards Okinawans, the Japanese deserter makes the privileged assumption that the business of fighting the “enemy” is simply the natural thing to do and has the luxury of deserting the battle on his own accord. For the Okinawan returnee, his anger is a protest of this “betrayal.” Furthermore, these emotions exploded after the accumulation of other “betrayals,” such as the numerous civilian massacres at the hands of Japanese soldiers all over the island, and the Japanese military’s surrender to the US military directly after the civilian group suicides (*shūdan jiketsu*) that were informed by imperial Japanese ideology. This anger ruptures out of a fault-line created by the departure from subjectivication of “becoming Japanese.” It is important to note that it was Kiyota’s home island, Kumejima, where communications soldiers of the Navy First Sergeant Kayama Masa’s infantry massacred villagers on the pretense that they were “spies of the enemy.”

The deserter became the object of the returnee’s anger and violence becomes an internal killing “between people of the same nation.” Kiyota writes that, “What the

returnee tried to murder was the state. Once we can locate a logic capable of getting down to the main culprit of this act, then we can identify a new logic capable of critiquing the state.”⁵² Here, Kiyota does not advocate a re-production of state violence, nor does he quickly dismiss the violence of the returnee. Instead, Kiyota poses the question of what lies beyond the excess that results when dreams of people who gamble with subjectivication are destroyed, and when anger and violence overflow outside of the boundaries of the subject. On the eve of Okinawa’s reversion to Japan, it is obvious that the object of Kiyota’s critical thought is concerned with the whereabouts of this excess that occurs when an individual departs from subjecthood.

The military embodies the will of the state; the military is an organization that executes the state’s will. Hence, to desert the military is literally the greatest defiance of the state. The deserter in Kiyota’s account escaped (*dasshutsu*) from the state, and arrived in his village. However, the village was at the same time represented as a place where the returnee—whose broken dreams waged on the gamble of subjectivization caused him to secede from subjecthood—went home. In this way, the village takes on

⁵² Ibid., 33.

a double meaning: it is the place that accepts those who escape from subjecthood and wander into the village, and it is the place where those who escape from subjecthood return to.

The experience of the returnee is representative of many phenomena where villages that cooperated with the Japanese military shifted to an anti-military stance as soon as they were “betrayed” by the Japanese military and found conflict inevitable. In each instance, there is a departure from subjecthood, and a return to another subjecthood. For example, in Tomiyama Ichirō’s analysis of how Okinawan civilians rose up in protest against the massacres by the Japanese military, he depicts their departure from being “Japanese” subjects. He notes that when the civilians took arms and prepared for anti-Japanese military struggle, discourse of the “Okinawan people (*Okinawa minzoku*)” suddenly emerged.⁵³ In this sense, discourse of the “Okinawan people” as individuals who were subjectivized under another rubric after they departed

⁵³ Tomiyama Ichirō, *Senjo no Kioku* [Memories of the Battlefield] (Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Hyōron-sha, 2006), 128-129.

from being “Japanese subjects,” and the village as a place of return for individuals that departed from being “Japanese subjects” of the Japanese imperial army, overlap.

Moreover, this echoes the emergence of a series of new postwar subjectivities.

For example, the JCP proclaimed to “celebrate the independence of the Okinawan people”—a people whom they deemed “are ethnic minorities.”⁵⁴ It echoes with the argument for Okinawan independence and the designation of the US military as a “liberation army” as they encroached upon Japan and Okinawa. According to Arasaki Moriteru, the argument for Okinawan independence and recognition of the US military as a “liberation army” was not limited to the purview of the JCP, but extended to the initial phase of the postwar OPP, and ODA (Okinawan Democratic Alliance).

Moreover, the newly formed OPP went so far as to proclaim, “We are grateful to the US military that defeated the Japanese warlords and liberated Okinawans,” and “request monetary reparations from the Japanese government for war damages

⁵⁴ “A Message to Celebrate the Independence of the Okinawan People” was delivered by the JCP to the Okinawan Federation Convention. This Message was originally drafted at the 5th Japanese Communist Party Convention that took place on February 24, 1946. Here, the JCP makes clear their understanding of “Okinawans as an oppressed ethnic minority group [Okinawajin wa shōsū minzoku toshite yokuatsu saretekita minzoku dearimasu].” See *Akahata*, March 6, 1946.

incurred.”⁵⁵ The departure/escape from wartime subjecthood calls forth the “Okinawan people,” “Okinawan independence,” and “US military liberation” as new political subjects of the postwar regime. Kiyota writes:

There was no catharsis for the returnee, nor was there any liberation for the village. The meaning of this particular individual experience is representative of the lived reality in the postwar era. Rendering of the US military as a “liberation army” was clearly erroneous, and progressives in both Japan and Okinawa could not contain the experience of the village farmers, even if their thinking critical of the postwar reality held true... We (*bokura*) have been obstinately insisting on the following questions: To what degree is it possible to elucidate the irreducible feeling of belonging (*kizokukan*) to a

⁵⁵ Arasaki Moriteru, “Okinawa ‘Mondai’ no nijūyonen” [“The Okinawa ‘Problem’ of over Twenty Years”] *Okinawa Mondai o Kangaeru* [Thinking about the Okinawan Issue] Ed. Nakano Yoshio. (Tokyo: Taihei Shuppan-sha 1968), 26. After erecting a platform for independence, all political parties after proclamation of the Seven Principles of the San Francisco Peace Treaty (where Okinawa was severed from Japan), switched their platform to support reversion to Japan. Arasaki points out that a “critique of the platform for independence that preceded the switch to a platform for reversion (return) to Japan was insufficient.”

community overshadowed by the reality of the US-Japan

Security Treaty? To what degree can it be organized?⁵⁶

For Kiyota, the excess of departing from subjecthood cannot be assimilated into the so-called “liberation army” or Japan. Rather, he attempts to problematize the structure of the subject itself that attempts to repatriate (*kikan*) to another locality after it escapes (*dasshutsu*) from its previous incarnation. Moreover, Kiyota theorizes the excess at the brink of subjectivication that is annihilated and forgotten. For example, the fact that the mother and sister cared for the deserter without reporting him to the US military does not entail their identification as a Japanese national subjects. This act does not signify a belonging (*kizoku*) to the nation, but rather points to the fact that their full existences elude representation as political subjects. Kiyota calls this kind of community where the village accepts the deserter and returnee at the same time a “primeval sentiment (*genjōcho*)”⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Kiyota Masanobu, *Jyōnen no Rikigaku: Okinawa no Shi Jyōkyō/ Ega* [The Dynamic of Pathos, Poetry, Landscape, and Portrait of Okinawa] (Shinsei Tosho Shuppan, 1980), 349-350.

⁵⁷ Kiyota Masanobu, *Jyōnen no Rikigaku*, 33.

Nonetheless, it is crucial to keep in mind that Kiyota is not suggesting that it is a mistake to repatriate or correct to escape from discrimination. Kiyota's thinking starts with this fundamental assumption. Escape from predicament as repatriation is not given birth to after the new system of government comes into being. It exists in the heat of the moment of struggle as a simultaneity to acquire a new social system, or in other words, in the heat of the moment that seeks repatriation. The liberation of Okinawa as escape does not come after repatriation, but it is precisely within the process of repatriation.

As Walter Benjamin writes, "To articulate the past historically does not mean to recognize it 'the way it really was.' It means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger."⁵⁸ Benjamin suggests that the dreams of the defeated can once again come to life in our memories. If the past only means to "recognize it 'the way it really was'," then it is impossible to sense the harbinger of a new community that may come to be. It would appear as if there was only a history of oppressed non-resistance.

⁵⁸ Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*. Trans. Harry Zohn. (New York: Pimlico, 1999), 255.

Cries over “Okinawa’s destruction” that lamented Okinawa’s absorption into Japan emerged as the reversion movement began to crumble. The “anti-reversion argument” and “Okinawan independence argument” took on a renewed vigor as an immediate reaction to Okinawa’s previous state of affairs. However, whether the latest trend was represented by an argument for reversion, an argument against reversion, or an argument for independence, Kiyota uniformly rejected them all. Instead, he was able to detect at an early stage the limits of this kind of reactionary thought precisely because he could locate the point where defeat resists interpretation as a literal destruction or lack. Kiyota attempted to imagine a past that brought forth the present by confusing a linear temporality, and continued to dream of the possibility of another future—that of the “we.” “To seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger” is the indefatigable sharpening of a sense that can dream. The only way to resist against a true “defeat,” is to hone this new sense, and stroll through the making of a dream.

Part II

Medoruma Shun and the Post-Reversion Era

Chapter 3

Frantz Fanon and Violence

1. To Riot

Like Kiyota, Medoruma is also critical of surrendering power to an externality such as the state, and instead seeks to develop a force internal to the subject for itself. More so than Kiyota, however, Medoruma focuses on unleashing the force of violence from the monopoly of the state and recuperating it as a life source or *conatus* for the subject. To start a theoretical meditation on such uses of violence, this section starts with a quote from Medoruma on the sociality of the riot in US military occupied Okinawa in 1970.

“The MP (military police) tried to let an American who caused an accident run away, and then he fired a pistol ten times at protesting Okinawans...Those Okinawan could have died. Okinawans are not animals. Okinawans are also human beings god damn it!”

Suddenly, behind the voice shouted by a riled-up young man, another man exclaimed “*anyabīsa nīsan* (you’re right, brother).” Judging from his voice, he was probably in his thirties or forties. Such were the sympathetic words uttered by a man who was listening attentively beside the young man trying to express his mind with words. Even though I have watched this famous scene many times, I was struck by the phrase “*anyabīsa nīsan*” when I watched it again.⁵⁹

In the middle of night on December 20, 1970, almost two years before Okinawa’s reversion to the mainland administration, a GI who was driving a car in Koza Okinawa hit an Okinawan man, causing him minor injury. Crowds of people who heard about the accident near the entertainment district gathered around the accident site and shouted, “Don’t let this turn into another Itoman!”⁶⁰ They surrounded the Military

⁵⁹ Medoruma Shun, ‘Kiroku Sareta Koe’ in *Okinawa/Kusa no Koe Ne no Ishi*, (Yokohama: Seiri Shobō, 2001), 29.

⁶⁰ In 1970, the same year of Koza riots, there was similar incident that occurred in Itoman, Okinawa. Toyo Kinjo was run over by a drunken GI when she was walking on the sidewalk. The suspect was found not guilty in a military court because no proof could be found linking him to the incident. It is said that the uproar in Koza which occurred right after the acquittal of the GI in the Itoman Incident added fuel to the already burning emotions of Okinawans who were frustrated with the US military.

Police (MP) to watch over they would handle the accident. Many Okinawans around the scene began protesting the uncountable crimes and incidents caused by GIs in the past that were committed with impunity. The GI who injured the Okinawan was transferred to Koza for the security reasons. Addressed by Okinawan police officers, the riled-up crowd had seemed to have been persuaded to calm down.

However, when a car driven by another GI crashed into a civilian's car near the scene of the first accident, the situation became more chaotic. An MP fired a gun to startle the crowd, but far from cowering into submission, some started to display threatening behavior by shaking the MP's vehicle. Then others started throwing stones at the MP, turning over American vehicles, and setting fire to them. This event is called the Koza Riot.

Civilians whistled in ecstasy and stood in joy before a legion of flaming American cars. Junior high school students handed over bottles full of gasoline to the rioters. A-sign bar workers who serviced GIs made their way to the scene. An old woman twisted her body and threw her hands in the air to dance the Okinawan *kachashi*. While it is estimated that hundreds were directly involved with the riot, it is

impossible to distinguish between people who were direct participants and people who were sideline observers. The number surrounding the scene is estimated to be in the thousands.⁶¹

Crucial to this passage is the fact that the rioters expressed their own anger without relying on the logic or language of activists or intellectuals. This means that they were free from their dependence on something external.

After the Koza Riot, political parties across the spectrum in Okinawa from progressive to conservative announced statements about the riot to assert their superiority over the others. At the same time there were people whose everyday reality failed to be captured by these political statements. They were people working in establishments dependent on the base economy who may have had negative feelings about eliminating bases, people involved in the sex industry, and even children who may have felt a sense of alienation from the anti-base movement. The unavoidable fact

⁶¹ Refer to the following texts for a fuller picture of the Koza riots. Chizuru Isa, *Enjō Okinawa Koza Jiken*, (Tokyo: Bungeishunjū, 1986); Okinawashi Heiwa Bunka Shinkōka Henshū, *Shashin ga Toraeta 1970nen Zengo Koza Machi Koto Anata ga Rekishi no Mokugekisha*, (Naha: Naha Shuppansha, 1997); Okinawashiyakusho Kikakubu Heiwabunkashinkōka Henshū, *Okinawashishi Shiryōshū 4 Rokku to Koza Kaiteiban*, (Naha: Naha Shuppan, 1998); Okinawashiyakusho Kikakubu Heiwabunkashinkōka Henshū, *Beikoku ga Mita Koza Bōdō*, (Gushikawa: Yuishō, 1999).

that we cannot dismiss is that people who were opposed to base removal were nonetheless involved with the riot in some way. No political faction and organization was able to represent the riot which goes to suggest that people expressed their rage directly by themselves without channeling it through the circuits of an external entity such as a political party. If we describe the riot as an event that is premised on vulgar notions of support or opposition to military bases, then we risk overlooking the imagination and possibility to think about people who want to oppose bases but do not feel disposed to be able to, or people who simply do not know what to do.

Ima Ikuyoshio, an activist who participated the riot, records his experience in *Shin Okinawa Bungaku* Vol. 50 published in 1981:

I guess thousands of participants of the Koza Riot did not think that the US military forces and bases would disappear despite the fact that they set fire to yellow number license plated cars⁶² and broke through the second gate⁶³. I did not

⁶² This refers to private cars owned by the GIs.

⁶³ This refers to the Kadena US Air Force Base check point.

have such expectations myself. However, I can say that if we let that chance slip away, we would have had to lock away the smoldering resentment toward the US military in our hearts forever. Such intense consciousness enabled us to directly confront the US military and slap it with our resentment.⁶⁴

In Ima's recollection, the rioters did not have any expectation that the bases would disappear. This, however, does not mean that they were resigned to the US military base presence either. When non-daily occurrences such as the riot removes itself from daily life regulated by a society occupied by the US military, the fear and terror associated with consequences of an intentional act start to dissipate. Reservations such as "What will happen to us as a consequence of the riot?" or "Won't things get worse in the future as a result of the riot?" start to lose their holding power. The future already determined by the military occupation starts to crumble and opens up the

⁶⁴ Ima Ikuyoshi, "Koza Han Bei Boudou Kichi to Amerika wo Utta Rokujikanyo", in Kawamitsu Shin'ichi Ed, *Shin Okinawa Bungaku*, No.50, (Naha: Okinawa Taimusu-sha, 1981), 130.

possibility for the multitude to seize its own undetermined future. The multitude becomes indifferent toward calculated thoughts.⁶⁵ In this moment, the multitude becomes indifferent toward the law, which means that any lawmaking violence and law-preserving violence is stripped of its effectiveness.

As mythical violence loses its effectiveness, the possibility amongst those who want to oppose bases but do not want to now, and those who do not know what to do, starts to become palpable. They take back their own future from the occupier. Such a moment points to the unpredictability of the future and an expressed rage or violence that does not project a future tethered to an externality. Various actors, from those who had previously opposed external power such as the sovereign institution or state

⁶⁵ Edward Said argues in “Identity, Negation, Violence” that the mobilization of various people beyond national borders terrorized by nation-states has the adverse effect of accentuating an adherence to national identity. This in turn makes Israel more defensive and violent toward Palestine. He writes: “[W]hat to Palestians has been revealed by the intifadah is the true political mass basis for all national liberation movements, in which neither the uninstructed gun alone nor the random (if understandable) outrage, has anything like the moral and mobilizable force of coordinated, intelligent, courageous human action. When one of the uprising’s leaders in Gaza was asked by a journalist how unarmed children, men and women defied Israeli troops so routinely, the answer testified elegantly, to how a popular movement had in fact banished terror. ‘Fear,’ he said, ‘has been forbidden.’ And that was that.” Here, “[f]ear” points to a perception that preempts what will happen in the next moment after a present action, and the kind of influence that comes in its aftermath. The Israeli military anticipates the future and terrorizes Palestine. The occupier takes away the undecidability of the colonized from the present to the future, which enables the occupier to be ready to exercise violence in the present toward future. That “[f]ear” “has been forbidden” does not mean that they are not afraid of military conflict with the Israeli army. It means resisting the undecidability of the future that is continually being taken away by the occupier. Edward W. Said “Identity, Negation and Violence” in *The Politics of Dispossession The Struggle for Palestinian Self-Determination 1969-1994*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1994), 349.

suddenly, or those who had previously negotiated with it, now hold a new power to open up the future. Such a moment give us a glimpse of an undecidedable future. For this, let us turn to the next section.

2. Constituent Power

The post 9/11 is an era when discussions on power/violence of the minority subject situated in an overwhelmingly inferior position to power is easily linked with terrorism. In this new era, how can we reestablish discussions on power/violence? Needless to say, thinking around this problem and the social world itself completely changed after the terrorist attacks of September 2011. A rash of military operations executed in Afghanistan and Iraq, and frequent terrorist attacks occurred globally thereafter. This era accentuates a certain taboo even within academia that cowers from the idea of directly addressing the problem of power/violence.

However, even though the importance of creating critical thought and theory regarding power/violence after 9/11 has become undeniable, self-censorship has largely led to its deterioration. It is also certain that the inhabitation of such thought was not only brought on by the social situation after 9/11, but also by practical ways of

thinking far removed from philosophy such as the commonplace practice of expressing the pros and cons of violence and terrorism.

It is well known that the distinction between peacetime and wartime, which has never existed from the beginning, is merely a fabrication. This has not only been argued by anti-war activists, but also openly acknowledged by military authorities and policymakers who execute military operations on the so-called “war on terrorism.” Global surveillance programs, covert military operations, psychological warfare, assassinations, abductions etc... Through new developments in the military, intelligence organizations and special forces play a pivotal role which is clearly different from conventional warfare. This all goes to suggest that our so-called peace time living space mentioned above has become increasingly subject to militarization.⁶⁶ This is another manifestation of the landscape of the world after the demise of civil society. Forms of political protest channeled through the institutions of civil society involve in some form or another the legitimation of violence. With the withering away

⁶⁶ Refer to the following work regarding new military developments within the United States. Chalmers A. Johnson *The Sorrows of Empire: Militarism, Secrecy, and the End of the Republic*, (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2004).

of civil society, however, the structures that legitimated violent political protest have equally withered away, so that now it appears that no oppositional violence can be legitimated. As Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri have argued, the possibility of protest has been reduced to a binary of nonviolent action on one side, and terrorism on the other. There seems to be nowhere left to stand between these two unacceptable positions.⁶⁷

On the one hand, we have been witness to desperate armed struggles carried out during the so-called peacetime of our everyday living space in recent years. On the other hand, we have also been witness to a valorization of political practice that thoroughly rejects the existence of violence itself from individuals such as Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. Given these conditions, where can we locate the possibility for social practice and social movements?⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Hardt and Negri *Labor of Dionysus: A Critique of State-Form* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994, 2000), 293.

⁶⁸ At the same time, I would like to reserve critical space between my own rendering of non-violence and the rather rigid stereotyping of non-violence by Negri and Hardt. In particular, what needs to be reconsidered is their assertion that non-violence is indicative of the fact that people are powerless. In other words, they are too quick to equate non-violence with a negation of power. By contrast, Sakai Takashi has argued that in certain moments the restraint of violence does not immediately entail the negation of antagonism. Sakai discusses this point through the example of Martin Luther King Jr.'s non-violent direct action (NVDA). Ever since the Montgomery bus boycott in which King's NVDA worked toward the struggle for anti-discrimination of blacks in the South, "refraining from violence intensified antagonism." King considered NVDA a means to reveal a residually hidden antagonism or constitute antagonism. In this way, King's tactics that made fire where there is no smoke is not a passive and

Negri and Hardt both distance themselves from terrorism and non-violence in their discussion on the possibility of political practice today. On the one hand, they recognize terrorism as having a “suicidal and counterproductive character.”⁶⁹ On the other hand, they point out that “[t]he rejection of violence on which it is based is too easily confused with a rejection of power tout court.”⁷⁰ In particular, the discourse of non-violence emphasizes and appeals to “the unjust plight of the powerless,”⁷¹ which is widely seen in the current anti-war movement. Negri and Hardt point out that such discourse leads to denying power and behaving thoroughly “powerless”⁷² through the mass media, or in other words, it forces them into having to play the role of the victim.

powerless mode of action, but rather combative to the extent that they smoked out the reality of the antagonistic relation without neutralizing it. Conversely, non-violent discourse which blocks or neutralizes effects that bring antagonism to light, falls into naïve moralistic theory. Hence, it is necessary to discuss NVDA based on concrete situations. It is rash to conclude that NVDA simply entails the negation of power.

Nonetheless, even if we allow for this affirmative reading of NVDA, there remains a matter to be considered. While NVDA may succeed in smoking out antagonism, to the extent that NVDA is premised on beliefs or notions of justice, there is always the danger of evoking factions categorized according to the political will of individuals who support or oppose the beliefs or justice called into play. When the mechanism of the expression of a political will or factionalism is brought to politics, can social practice constituted here really be called the multitude? If this practice does not allow for a part that does not become a whole, then it merely entails a part of the whole which forecloses specific groups of people from the beginning. Such are the all-to-easy-to-understand political maps that divide people along conservative and liberal lines. Such factionalism establishes intent behind human acts as the purported cause of action, simplifies power relations, and then takes on the function of dividing social power. This chapter considers emotions such as rage that does not depend on any externality and functions in a different register from belief or justice implicit in organized activism.

Takashi Sakai, *Bōryoku no Tetsugaku*, (Tokyo: Kawadeshōshisha, 2004), 41, 44.

⁶⁹ Hardt and Negri *Labor of Dionysus*, 291.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 291.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 291.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 291.

They insist that such behavior soon becomes necessary to maintain an “attitude of purity from violence.”⁷³ Since it denies all possible violence, it falls into a discussion centered on morality or asceticism “by posing oneself as completely outside of it.”⁷⁴

As a result, such moral discourse obfuscates how violence is intricately inscribed into everyday life and detracts from the ability to think critically about it.

Although it is true that violence implies the physical injury or death of the individual, this definition is insufficient. Could it be, as we will soon see, what the law fears the most is the carnivalesque taking up of violence by the people themselves whereas it is usually only privy to the state? When the people come to take up violence in this way, what they suggest is that to the degree that violence is a part of everyday life, it is not appropriate to deny its actual existence.

Hence, Negri and Hardt neither avoid praising or negating violence, but rather attempt to reestablish a political practice, that is to say, what they call “constituent power” in a place that is “barren between the two poles.”⁷⁵

⁷³ Ibid., 291.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 292.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 293.

Of course, it is Walter Benjamin's "Critique of Violence" that Negri and Hardt depart from when considering the possibility of this political practice. When Benjamin critiques the relation between the law and violence, he stipulates two kinds of state violence: law-preserving violence and lawmaking violence.⁷⁶ The state attempts to maintain an established a legal order through legally recognized means and deploys physical violence when it fails to maintain the legal order. What is important here is the fact that the state tries to enforce the law and recover the legal order after the state suppresses something like a riot where the people exercise violence for themselves. Hence, there is a trace of violence which is unavoidably inscribed in the origin of the law that restores the new order of peace.

At the same time, if the violence that antagonizes state violence is pulled back into the newly recognized legal order after the confrontation, it becomes violence that possess a lawmaking character as well. In this way, Benjamin terms both lawmaking

⁷⁶ Walter Benjamin, "Critique of Violence," in *Benjamin Reflection*, Trans. Edmund Jephcott, (New York: Schocken Books, 1978),

violence and law-preserving violence “mythic violence.” “Divine violence,” by contrast, is violence which is incapable of being recuperated by the legal order.

As Negri and Hardt argue, if the former form of violence “involves constructing an external relation between an action (violence) and its representation (the law),”⁷⁷ then the “second form of violence, revolutionary violence, is “unalloyed” or “immediate” in the sense that it does not look to anything external to itself, to any representation, for its effects.”⁷⁸ What begs emphasis here is how mythic violence attempts to establish an externalized legal order or norms and then explain itself in terms of this externality. On the other hand, divine violence does not seek any externality through which to explain itself, and therefore “expresses life in itself in a nonmediate way, outside of law, in the form of the living.”⁷⁹ The second practice is exactly another name for what they call “constituent power.”

3. Internality in the Work of Frantz Fanon

⁷⁷ Hardt and Negri *Labor of Dionysus*, 294.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 294.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 294.

Frantz Fanon is useful here in order to consider a radical form of life that expresses itself without externality. Fanon, who was critical about the cultural politics of negritude, located the possibility of opening up a new sociality through negritude as force that is the end in itself. For instance, Jean-Paul Sartre argues in “Black Orpheus” that “it is the dialectical law of successive transformations which leads the Negro to coincidence with himself in negritude. It is not a matter of his *knowing*, or of his ecstatically tearing himself away from himself, but rather of both discovering and becoming what he is.”⁸⁰ He continues that this is the “Negritude-object.”⁸¹ The problem is that Sartre has already determined the fate of an internal force that is engaged in “becoming what he is,” or in other words, negritude is already embedded in a history that unfolds dialectically. Sartre writes:

In fact, negritude appears like the upbeat {unaccented beat} of a dialectical progression; the theoretical and practical affirmation of white supremacy is the thesis; the position of

⁸⁰ Jean-Paul Sartre “Black Orpheus,” in *What is Literature? and Other Essays* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1988), 307.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 313.

negritude as an antithetical value is the moment of negativity.

But this negative moment is not sufficient in itself, and these black men who use it know this perfectly well; they know that it aims at preparing the synthesis or realization of the human being in a raceless society. Thus, negritude is *for* destroying itself; it is a “crossing to” and not an “arrival at,” a means and not an end.⁸²

For Sartre, negritude as “the moment of negativity” in opposition to white supremacy has to be sublated by revolution in the end. In other words, Sartre says negritude has to disappear when a “raceless society” arrives in the future. In this way, negritude becomes a temporal “crossing to” revolution, or a “means” through which revolution is achieved.

In response to this, Fanon cannot hide his frustration toward Sartre’s reference to dialectical history saying that “Jean-Paul Satre, in this work, has destroyed black

⁸² Ibid., 327

zeal.”⁸³ He continues, “In opposition to historical becoming, there had always been the unforeseeable. I needed to lose myself completely in negritude.”⁸⁴ In other words, Sartre preempts an internally moving force, (*i.e.*, “becoming what he is”) and then contains the antagonism or un-foreseeability that force creates by introducing a post-revolutionary historical stage which he describes as the “realization of the human being in a raceless society.” What frustrates Fanon is that Sartre robs the movement of its internality which is the very thing that enables Fanon to identify himself with the object and “lose” himself in it. Fanon writes:

The dialectic that brings necessity into the foundation of my freedom drives me out of myself. It shatters my unreflected position. Still in terms of consciousness, black consciousness is immanent in its own eyes. I am not a potentiality of something, I am wholly what I am. I do not have to look for the universal. No

⁸³ Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Mask*, Trans. Charles Lam Markmann (New York: Grove Press, 1967), 135.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 135.

probability has any place inside me. My Negro

consciousness does not hold itself out as a lack. It *is*. It is

its own follower.⁸⁵

Here Fanon very explicitly describes internality as something that is “immanent in its own eyes” and does not look toward any externality for recognition. As Negri and Hardt state, “this negative moment, this violent reciprocity, does not lead to any dialectical synthesis; it is not the upbeat that will be resolved in a future harmony.”⁸⁶

Fanon, who contends that “[i]n opposition to historical becoming, there had always been the unforeseeable,” insists that antagonistic Negro consciousness is not fated for sublation at the stage of revolution nor is it fated to disappear. He emphasizes that “[i]t *is*.” For Fanon, this mode of life as “[it] is” is not a temporal lack or negativity, but exactly something that takes place with “a positive logic.”⁸⁷

Fanon continues to develop the necessity of a force without externality in “Algeria Unveiled” published in *A Dying Colonialism*. Since the 1930s, the French

⁸⁵ Ibid., 135.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 132.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 132.

colonial government launched anti-veil campaigns in the name of liberating Algerian women from this traditional “evil practice” in Algeria. The colonizer attempted to rescue Algerian women who were “humiliated, sequestered, cloistered”⁸⁸ by Algerian men, and then urged them to take veil off and revolt against native traditional values. Such colonial policy is rooted in the European desire to possess something hiding behind the veil: as Fanon writes, “a romantic exoticism, strongly tinged with sensuality.”⁸⁹ From the eyes of the European, the veil appears to conceal the beauty behind it, and as such, evokes an unrequited desire. Hence, the veil emerges as an object of conquest. Each unveiling of an Algerian woman purportedly points to the Europe success of colonial domination. However, for Algerian women, the veil was a part of traditional form of dress that had they never been conscious of as such in their daily lives; it becomes fetishized during the colonial war. In this context, wearing the veil emerged as a symbol of resistance against colonialism. The veil, hence, was fraught with multiple meanings.

⁸⁸ Frantz Fanon, “Algeria Unveiled” in *A Dying Colonialism*, Trans. Haakon Chevalier (New York: Grove Press, 1965), 38.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 43.

Fanon focuses in on the way in which Algerian women carrying out missions for the *Front de Libération Nationale* (FLN) flexibly react toward the interpretational politics of the veil and the particular form of struggle in which they transform their bodies during battle. Each time Algerian women take off the veil, the colonizer rejoices in the assumption that Algerian women have disposed of their traditional values. However, the Algerian women of FLN took advantage of this European assumption and used it against them.

Algerian women performed an identification with Europeans by taking off the veil, applying makeup, changing up their hairstyle, wearing skirts, and carrying handbags.⁹⁰ At a checkpoint located between Arab residential areas and the European city, French military police set up checkpoints on strict alert whereupon they thoroughly inspected Arab belongings. However, when an Algerian woman donning European attire shows up, the military police let their guard down and let her through. Although she smiles at the military police officer, who is foppish and teases her, she

⁹⁰ There must have been many Algerian women who abandoned Algerian traditional values, and identified themselves with European by wearing European clothes. However, as Diana Fuss states, “[f]or Fanon, it is politically imperative to insist upon an instrumental difference between imitation and identification, because it is precisely politics that emerges in the dislocated space between them.” Diana Fuss, *Identification Papers*, (New York and London: Routledge, 1995), 153.

passes through the checkpoint without a trace of awkwardness. It never occurs to the military police that there may in fact be concealed pistols, bombs, or documents in her handbag.⁹¹

Reading this act, Fanon argues that Algerian women had to struggle against not only the colonizer, but also their own bodies. The veil, which shuts their bodies off from the outside world, allows for a solitary peaceful space. More than just traditional clothing for Algerian women, it allows for this kind of corporal dimension in relation to space. He suggests that the veil is an extension of their bodies that mediates the movement or comportment of the body vis-à-vis the outside world. Stripping of the veil is tantamount to the loss of comportment. The women momentarily become disoriented and are at a loss about how to maintain a sense of balance with the outside world. He writes, “Without the veil she has an impression of her body being cut up into bits, put adrift; the limbs seem to lengthen indefinitely.”⁹² “She has an impression of being improperly dressed even of being naked.”⁹³ “She experiences a sense of

⁹¹ Musi, Antonio, Gillo Pontecorvo, Franco Solinas, Brahim Haggiag, Yacef Saadi, and Jean Martin. *The Battle of Algiers*. (Rome: Igor Film, 1967).

⁹² Fanon *A Dying Colonialism*, 59.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 59.

incompleteness with great intensity.”⁹⁴ “She has the anxious feeling that something is unfinished, and along with this a frightful sensation of disintegrating.”⁹⁵ Fanon is attentive to the transformation of their sense of comportment through the process that they assume their revolutionary mission. He continues:

The absence of the veil distorts the Algerian woman’s corporal pattern. She quickly has to invent new dimension for her body, new means of muscular control. She has to create for herself an attitude of unveiled-woman-outside. She must overcome all timidity, all awkwardness (for she must pass for a European), and at the same time be careful not to overdo it, not to attract notice to herself. The Algerian woman who walks stark naked into the European city relearns her body, re-establish it in a totally revolutionary fashion. This new dialectic of the body and of the world is primary in the case of one revolutionary woman.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Ibid., 59

⁹⁵ Ibid., 59.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 59.

The most important point here is that Fanon elucidates their execution of the mission not through special training, but through the ability to “create for herself” as a woman who “learns both her role as ‘a woman alone in the street’ and her revolutionary mission instinctively.”⁹⁷ He continues:

In the face of the extraordinary success of this new form of popular combat, observers have compared the action of the Algerian women to that of certain women resistance fighters or even secret agents of the specialized services. It must be constantly borne in mind that the committed Algerian woman learns both her role as “a woman alone in the street” and her revolutionary mission instinctively. The Algerian woman is not a secret agent. It is without apprenticeship, without briefing, without fuss, that she goes out into the street with three grenades in her handbag or the activity report of an area in her

⁹⁷ Ibid., 50.

bodice. She does not have the sensation of playing a role she has read about ever so many times in novels, seen in motion pictures. There is not that coefficient of play, of imitation, almost always present in this form of action when we are dealing with a Western woman.⁹⁸

Fanon here writes of Algerian women who pretend to be Algerian women who identify with European women: mimicry. Yet, their behavior is not imitation in the sense that it is not a “coefficient of play.” A performer is usually given time to physically imitate the motion of an original model (*i.e.*, rehearsal) before a performance in order to repeat what they learned. But since Algerian women engaged in revolutionary practice do not have a script, or what Fanon refers to “[t]he doctrine of the Revolution,” “the strategy of combat,” or “forms of behavior,” they lack an external model they can refer to before acting. Hence, they are not “secret agents of the specialized services” who are trained beforehand. Like Spinoza who wrote of the simultaneity of conceiving and producing, what is important is that they must

⁹⁸ Ibid., 50.

immediately imitate without a script at an un-repeatable time and place. There is no repetition or redoing. Their every corporeal motion is predicated on an unpredictable force. Therefore, “[w]hat we have here is not the bringing to light of a character known and frequented a thousand times in imagination or in stories. It is an authentic birth in a pure state without preliminary instruction.”⁹⁹ Fanon called such new social power, which emerges during the struggle, “new attitudes, new mode of action, new ways.”¹⁰⁰ This new mode of being, akin to *conatus*, is exactly the same as a mode of life he calls “[i]t is.”

With Fanon’s assertion of a mode of action that does not will for an end, but simply “is,” let us turn to two works from Medoruma’s repertoire that focus explicitly on violence: “Hope” and *Rainbow Bird* in the next two chapters.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 50.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 64.

Chapter 4

Medoruma's "Hope"

First published in the *Asahi Shimbun* in 1999, Medoruma Shun's short essay "Hope" evoked a mixed response from its readers due to a series of violent scenes depicted in the story. For example, the non-violent activist Mukai Kō points out that although "Hope" brings to light the irresponsibility of the Japanese people who have been nothing but mere "onlookers" to the issue of US military bases in Okinawa, he nevertheless does not hesitate to voice his distaste for the story because "terrorism" is committed against a child. He remarks, "I don't want to be forgiving of the author's imagination that crosses that line."¹⁰¹

"Hope" is about an Okinawan who abducts and kills the child of a US soldier. As such, many have interpreted this as an act of terrorism. In the background of this story is the well-known, real rape of a schoolgirl by three US soldiers in 1995. Thereafter, all eyes became fixed on Okinawa, wherein normative representations of

¹⁰¹ Mukai Kō, "Jyōkyō no naka no Hibōryoku Chokusetsu Kōdō." *A.W.I.S hansen intānetto jōhō*. No. 6, http://www.asahi-net.or.jp/~ew5m-asi/awiis/6/6.htm#kiji_1. Accessed January 1, 2017.

Okinawans and anti-war movements circulated throughout the media both nationally and internationally. The cruel image of the Okinawan protagonist in the story, however, is incompatible with these established representations and instead subverts the norms attached to them. Medoruma writes:

A meek ethnic group that at best ducks issues by holding rallies and polite demonstrations as they talk about anti-war or anti-base or anti-whatever... There are the leftists or extremists, but the best they can do is ineffectual guerrilla activities... Neither would they conduct an act of terror or kidnap someone important, nor would they ever take up arms... A comforting island that loves peace.¹⁰²

Here the protagonist outright mocks the stereotype of the peace-loving Okinawan anti-military activist.

¹⁰² Medoruma Shun, "Hope" in *Okinawa Kusa no Koe, Ne no Ishi*, (Yokohama: Seiri Shobōhobo Sho Seiri

Representations and their accompanying norms created under the colonial condition cannot be reduced to any facile discussion on images. Instead of ending with a description of how the images appear, Fanon locates rifts in the colonizer's smooth representations that challenge the colonial order. As he asserts, representations created in the colony such as "(t)he Algerians, the veiled women, the palm trees and the camels," "make up the landscape, the natural background to the human presence of the French."¹⁰³ In short, objectifying and representing the colony or the colonized as if they were part of the natural landscape is tantamount to facilitating the constitution of the French as a colonizing subject, who panoramically views the landscape. Through this process, the colonial world is constructed. But as Frantz Fanon clarified, representations of the colonial world are always fraught with a hostility that resists representation. Fanon does not attribute the "natural background" merely to nature, but also to a "(h)ostile nature" or an "obstinate and fundamentally rebellious [nature]."

¹⁰³ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2004), 182.

Hostile nature, obstinate and fundamentally rebellious, is in fact represented in the colonies by the bush, mosquitoes, natives, and fever; colonization is a success when all this wild nature has finally been tamed.¹⁰⁴ The colonizer calls the force, which rebels against him/her, and which he/she regards as uncontrollable, “hostile nature.” This is why the hostilities must be hidden, neutralized, and dissolved into a pacified and unresisting natural landscape such as “(t)he Algerians,” “the veiled women,” “the palm trees,” or “the camels.” Fanon detects a threatening force labeled as hostility in this objectified natural landscape that could potentially dismantle the colonial order.

It is precisely Fanon’s treatment of hostility as a force denied by the colonizer that emerges in the provocative speech of “Hope”’s protagonist who resists stereotypes and the norms that go along with them. In this way, it was scandalous and

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 182. Edward Said makes similar observations about representation and antagonism in *Orientalism*. “The point is that what remained current about Islam was some necessarily diminished version of those great dangerous forces that it symbolized for Europe. Like Walter Scott’s Saracens, the European representation of the Muslim, Ottoman, or Arab was always a way of controlling the redoubtable Orient, and to a certain extent the same is true of the methods of contemporary learned Orientalists, whose subject is not so much the East itself as the East made known, and therefore less fearsome, to the Western reading public.” In other words, the “redoubtable Orient” has to be represented as the form in which its antagonism is neutralized. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), 60.

outrageous that an Okinawan, who was supposed to only know how to “love peace” and participate in “polite demonstrations,” betrayed the norms and rebelled with the cruelty of killing a small child.¹⁰⁵ People were taken aback by the incident, thrown into a panic, and utterly bewildered. Here, they attempted to make some sense out of the incident: “Yeah, I can’t even turn a decent profit these days....” “What will happen if we lose even more tourists?” “Hurry up and catch [the criminal] already. On with the death penalty.”¹⁰⁶

These characters deal with the incident by attempting to contain its antagonism. However, the protagonist sneers at the people’s shock, and declares:

What is necessary for Okinawa now is not a demonstration of a few thousands or a rally of a few tens of thousands, but the death of one American small child...Only the worst means possible are effective.¹⁰⁷

In the end, the terrorist burns himself to death after it murmurs the following.

¹⁰⁵ Medoruma, *Okinawa Kusa no Koe, Ne no Ishi*, 288.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 288.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 289.

I didn't have any regret or deep emotion. Just like the
fluids of small organisms caught in the grip of anxious
fear suddenly turns into poison, I thought what I had
done was natural and necessary for this island. ¹⁰⁸

The protagonist's last statement has incited much discomfort among its readers because it seems to publicly justify terrorism as "natural and necessary." For example, Mukai mentioned earlier simply concludes that "Hope" justifies "terrorism" in the name of resistance. He defines terrorism as a suicidal act committed by "those under extreme conditions" who, "out of despair," are incapable of "turning to any other measure." His reading suggests that the protagonist murdered the young child as a last-resort act passively committed by an individual who was completely cornered. In addition, he argues that terrorism differs from a riot in that the former is carried out by the resolution of a single individual and aims to "provoke and reveal the violent nature of the state." In other words, he suggests that the protagonist both recognized and invoked state power which is bereft of any sort of sociality, thereby leaving violence

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 290.

to be taken up as an individual issue. It is with this definition of terrorism that he reads Medoruma's "Hope." He interprets the words "natural and necessary" with the assumption that the protagonist has already accepted the antagonistic relationship between the ruler and ruled as set in stone. That is to say, he regards the "natural and necessary" as a cliché that glorifies the hostility of those die-hard revolutionists who are ready to engage in a dialectic struggle with the ruler at the risk of their lives. In perpetuating such an antagonistic relationship, the teleological outcome of struggle is of utmost importance: will we celebrate victory or lament defeat?

However, Mukai's rendering of the protagonist's conduct, which he calls "terrorism," in the passive sense of something turned to out of "despair" in the absence of any other possible means, is highly problematical. In place of such approach, this chapter seeks a different reading of the "natural and necessary" as a force that takes itself as an aim. Hence, it is necessary to develop a line of thought that differs from the discourse of counterviolence. In other words, the "natural and necessary" actions described in the story do not entail a justification for counterviolence. As this chapter will soon show, the "natural and necessary" rather indicate a positive force that takes

itself as an aim; it is not an act where one calculates an effect or reaction the act will have on the oppressor beforehand within a master/slave dialectic. Although it may certainly implicate exteriority to the extent that the action produces effects or reactions, it nonetheless it produces a surplus that is not predicated on this exteriority. That is, it produces a mode of life that takes itself as an aim. What “Hope” makes clear is the denial of a life regulated by an economy of power between the oppressor and the oppressed, and the denial of the dichotomy itself.

Furthermore, in his juxtaposition of nonviolent direct action among those engaged in “the ordinary way of life, or a way of living that already exists as our everyday lives” with the activism or terrorism of organized experts, Mukai places more importance on the former. However, he completely fails to understand that this “ordinary way of life, or way of living” is almost synonymous with Medoruma’s “natural and necessary” which he associates with “terrorism.”¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ Such ordinary life has a relationship to Kiyota Masanobu’s description of his father, who frantically moved around to look for food for his family on the Okinawan battlefield in order to survive. Kiyota describes the scene as follows: “When all the villagers were taking shelter in a mountain, my father was digging up yams beside the marching US military. He went back and forth between our house and the mountain to carry food saying that ‘I don’t understand what this refuge is for if my children starve to death before they die of gunshots.’ Although he was not acting according to any special philosophy, he still had the original philosophy of an ordinary person invested in the survival of his family. He was imbued with confidence in a sense of the everyday that does not dissolve into custom (fūbutsu).” While

This is why the protagonist's act does not reverse the power relation between the master and slave, nor is it concerned about the outcome of the confrontation. In fact, the telos of struggle as victory or defeat bears no meaning on the suicidal death that ends the story. Moreover, there is a point that Mukai intentionally avoid referring to. What the story narrates is not despair but rather "hope" as indicated by the title. Doubtlessly, the counterviolence this story describes is literally cruel and frightening. However, as described above, there is something that goes beyond this counterviolence.

And finally, the most important point of this story: the relationship between the protagonist's sexuality and violence. Although the story unfolds through the protagonist's actions and words in mostly first person narration, it does not reveal "its" gender. Nevertheless, since most readers regard the protagonist as male, nobody has paid enough attention to "its" sexuality. Regardless of whether readers are critical or

many civilians were cornered by the Japanese or American military and committed group suicide (*shūdan jiketsu*) in many areas throughout Okinawa, Kiyota's father actions make a clear contrast to the everydayness that was regulated by Japanese imperialism. In other words, Kiyota's father tried to protect the sense of the everyday that stems from his own life and not from the temporality of imperial Japanese history. For him, the imperative for everyday life is what drove him to save his family to survive from starvation, and is hence precisely what is "natural and necessary." Kiyota Masanobu, 'Seikatsu Ishiki to Jōshō' in *Jōnen no Rikigaku Okinawa no Shi Jōkyō Kaiga*, (Naha: Shinseiboshi Shuppan, 1980), 340.

not of the Oedipus complex, there is a tacit understanding that the subject who exerts violence is always a male. Since there is no pronoun or grammatical indication of the protagonist's gender, it is impossible to simply assume "Hope" is a story that recovers the masculinity of the colonized male who negates castration.¹¹⁰ Conversely, such norms regarding violence have been a target of criticism. At the same time, it disrupts naturalizing norms associated with victimhood, which appears in categories such as the "innocent child." It is *The Rainbow Bird* that more clearly and critically problematizes the politics of these norms that are circulated and naturalized in society. For this we will turn to the next chapter.

¹¹⁰ Jeong Yujin makes a similar point. Jeong Yujin, "'Anpo no Mondai wo Onna no Mondai toshite Waishōa Suruna' toiu Shuchō wo Meguru Aru Seiji: Kanjō Mondai wo Meguru Seiji no Kattō, Aruiwa Kattō toiu Seiji," in *Gendai Okinawa no Rekishi Keiken Kibō, Aruiwa Miketsusei ni tsuite*, Ed. Tomiyama Ichirō and Mori Yoshio, (Tokyo: Seikyū Sha, 2010) 392-393.

Chapter 5

Medoruma's *Rainbow Bird*

1. *The Force of Attraction*

Although many assume that the protagonist of “Hope” who murders and American child is male, an examination of other stories by Medoruma such as the *Rainbow Bird* reveals Medoruma's is no stranger to complicating gendered norms about violence. Gender functions to deliver a scathing critique of norms that govern social movements in Okinawa and open up a different possibility for violence as a life force that can animate subjects excluded by social norms.

This chapter engaged with Judith Butler's work on norms and unfolds as a critical plot summary that shows Medoruma's development of violence as a sheer force of life, the harnessing of a life force to overcome hardship, critique of norms implicit within social movements, and discovering the possibility of a life that cannot be chosen.

The *Rainbow Bird* is told through the eyes of twenty-one-year-old male protagonist named Katsuya. After repeated beatings and bullying by a group of

delinquent upperclassmen led by a youth named Higa, Katsuya came to submit himself to Higa. By doing so, Katsuya reasoned that he can avoid exposing his life to danger, and even reveled in the illusion that he was being protected by him. Higa was such that if anyone even showed a hint of insubordination in his presence, he would beat them with abandon to show off his brutality and plant the seeds of terror within their hearts. He sought to make it perfectly clear that there was no other tyrant besides himself and that it was he who possessed a monopoly on violence.

This is why Katsuya was frightened of Higa as a monopolist of violence, “felt something different in him from other upperclassmen, and came to be drawn to him.”¹¹¹ Katsuya was drawn to his awesome power that kept anything at a bay and ruled anyone at will. “He even felt a surge of loneliness and anxiety when he was abandoned and left behind by Higa.”¹¹² In this way, Katsuya was mired with conflicting emotions: the utter fear and complete adoration for a tyrant who ruled with an awesome power. The masochistic desire to entrust one’s fate to a tyrant and to be

¹¹¹ Medoruma Shun, *Niji no Tori*, (Tokyo: Kage Shobō, 2006), 60.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 60.

recognized and protected by him. The hasty attempt to suppress any harm that may come one's way by seeking the recognition and love of the Other and by becoming at one with the Other instead of confronting it head on. Although these emotions seem discordant, they coexisted as one in Katsuya. The total fear Higa ingrained in Katsuya controlled his every move. Higa's gaze would never fade from Katsuya's mind. In other words, Katsuya's actions were imbued with an acute consciousness of the dangerous Other called Higa at all times. The more Katsuya sensed the dangerous Other, the more he compelled himself to shed or conceal his internal hostility toward it, and the more he sought to become a part of the Other. In this way, the story is centered on a structure of ambivalent desire toward violence, recognition from the Other, and the longing for love. What is important is not criticizing Higa as a tyrant who oppressed Katsuya but in establishing a force of attraction to an awesome power that can transform into a life force to overcome hardship (to be discussed in the next section).

The female protagonist Mayu came from a single-mother home. She was an active junior high schoolgirl who became a member of the student body by her second

year and was popular among the students due to her attractive looks and good grades.

However, as soon as the upperclassmen who protected her graduated before she entered her third year, the situation abruptly changed. She was summoned by a group of delinquent students who frequently squeezed her for money and forced her to shoplift. Finally, they brutally gang raped her and stuffed pebbles wrapped up in a handkerchief into her vagina. Thereafter, Mayu locked herself up in her room and graduated from junior high without ever going back to school again. After some time elapsed, she was gradually able to go out and started working part-time work near her home. Then, one of the female students who had once brutally abused her started to frequent the store she was working. “Although Mayu was on guard at first, she gradually came to open her heart and talk with the female student as she kindly approached her as if nothing had happened before.”¹¹³ For Mayu, this female student became “the only person Mayu could talk to,” because at that time she did not get along with her mother.¹¹⁴ Katsuya was able to understand “Mayu’s behavior of

¹¹³ Ibid., 76.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 76.

dependency on the one who hurt her, which looked odd at first glance” because it was exactly the same type of relationship Katsuya had with Higa.¹¹⁵ Mayu tried to get back into the swing of things and return to the outside world that she had once rejected through the recognition and love of a female student who had once abused her.

However, her attempt to return to society was once again shattered. The female student approached Mayu only to lure her back to the group of delinquent students. Mayu was blackmailed by the group with photos of her gang rape that were finally sold to Higa who was leading the lower branch of the gang after he graduated from junior high school. Then, Mayu was sent to Katsuya, who just as before was still caught in Higa’s grip. Katsuya’s task given by Higa was to lure men through a two-shot dial service, take photos of them prostituting women Higa sent Katsuya’s way, and then hand the photos to Higa. Higa used the incriminating photos to blackmail and extort large sums of cash from the men. The women who Higa sent to Katsuya never tried to escape because they were enfeebled by an addiction to drugs. However, Mayu was already weaker than any of the other women when she was sent to Katsuya. No

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 76.

matter what he said to her, her expression never changed, and she appeared as if she lost any interest in the outside world.

Although both Katsuya and Mayu sought the recognition and love of the Other who overwhelmed them with incredible violence in the beginning of the story, both of them stopped seeking recognition as the story develops. Rather, they came to destroy the existing relation with the Other. As a result, the story also focuses on force, which harbors the possibility of changing the relationship with the Other.

2. A Life Force that Struggles with Hardship

Other characters who appear in the story are Katsuya's parents, older sister, and two older brothers. These characters are all portrayed in terms of how they struggle with hardship.

Katsuya's mother, Hisayo, fastidiously manages her own café and bar. Since she could not find a good job after she graduated from high school in Naha, she started working at bar in Koza when the "special procurement" boom was sweeping Okinawa at the height of the Vietnam War. This is where she met Katsuya's father, Munenobu. At first, she regarded him with contempt since she thought Munenobu, who is the

older brother of a military land lessor (*gunyōchi jinushi*), was playing with his parents' money. Her perception of Munenobu changed, however, when she found out that as a twenty-year-old, he managed a real estate business and worked hard for his money by himself. Hisayo started to respond to Munenobu invitation and courtship because of this newfound respect for him. Overcome with Munenobu's enthusiasm, it was not long before she became his wife.

Although Hisayo quit her job after the marriage and became consumed with housework and child care, Munenobu did not quit chasing after women. When he had a child out of wedlock, their disagreement did not stop at a heated exchange of words. While they did not directly harm each other physically, they destroyed furniture and ruined their house. As an extremely independent woman, Hisayo could not bear handing over the military land rents to Munenobu's lover after the divorce. At the same time, she was frustrated with her current situation in which she was reliant on and fed by Munenobu. Since Hisayo had long-held ambitions of opening her own bar, she had Munenobu fund her venture in exchange for silence with his affair. She

worked diligently to launch her business and intended to return the start-up money to Munenobu when she could.

It was during this time that Katsuya was beaten up by Higa's group in junior high school and was made to join the group. Out of consideration for his mother, Katsuya could not tell her about his torment because he was aware of her dreams of opening her own bar for some time. Although Katsuya wished she took notice of what happened to him below the surface of everyday life, her desperation to escape a troublesome family life and devotion to her business ultimately prevented her from doing so. After Hisayo's bar set afoot, she opened a twenty-four-hour game café at a different location. She watched over the café at noon and the bar at night. "Everybody was at a loss for words because everybody didn't know when she slept."¹¹⁶

Hisayo is portrayed as a strong-minded female who struggles with the difficulties of life but yet manages to go beyond it in the attempt of opening up her own future. What Medoruma is concerned with here is establishing a motif for the entire story that captures the force of a human who confronts the conditions of an

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 92.

unfree life. It is about a difficult life that she does not choose, but is thrust upon her beyond her control. It is about a force that struggles with hardship under overwhelmingly disadvantageous conditions of power.

This also pertains to Katsuya's older sister Hitomi. She is presented as a contrast to Katsuya's older brothers, Munetada and Muneaki. The brothers failed to work after graduating from high school. Even though they manage their father's apartment building, they remain mostly idle. The money that they receive for managing the apartment is quickly squandered on slot machines from opening to closing hour everyday.

Like Hisayo, Hitomi is also portrayed as a strong-minded female who stubbornly refuses to receive money from her grandparents and becomes irritated with her spoiled brothers. Hitomi went to college in Kyushu after she graduated from high school. Aside from the matriculation fee, she paid for her own education with financial aid and a part-time job. Even if Hisayo and Munenobu sent her money, she was so resolute in her independence that she promptly sent it back. Even after she earned her teaching credentials and returned to Okinawa, she continued to live independently.

She did not hold an extravagant wedding ceremony when she got married with her husband. Instead, she made do with a simple reception with her immediate family.

Medoruma writes, “Since Katsuya was a child, he had harbored feelings of envy and inferiority toward the strong-minded Hitomi who saw through what she once decided until to the very end.”¹¹⁷ Hitomi, who took care of Katsuya since he was young, repeatedly urged him to not take after his brothers. Katsuya listened to her and refused money from his grandparents and parents. Unsurprisingly, she was easily frustrated with Munenobu every time he gave money to his two sons. Such an environment will ruin you and your brothers. Hitomi told Katsuya he must never take after your bothers no matter what happens. These are the words that Hitomi repeated to Katsuya since he was a high school student.

Even though he asked his mother to lend him money because he did not have the funds to pay Higa’s subordinates, Hitomi’s face came to mind. Although he sees his father and brothers in a negative light, he is overcome with guilt when he realizes

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 175.

that he is almost the same as them. As such, he reflects that “[w]hen I remembered what Hitomi said, guilty feelings and self-hatred surged through my heart.”¹¹⁸

He tried to imitate his sister who paid her own way through college and started living alone after graduating from high school by supporting himself with a part-time job. However, in the end, it did not work. He could on only rely on his mother’s money. Although he had survived by currying Higa’s favor since junior high, he was not free from Higa’s terrifying grasp even though he loathed his way of life. He sighs, “Mayu and I are hammered by a thick nail. I don’t have the power to pull it out.”¹¹⁹ The only thing he could do was subordinate himself to Higa and look for ways to get by.

When Katsuya went to Hisayo’s café after he realized he did not have enough money to pay Higa, he unexpectedly ran into Hitomi. Given that all roads were congested due to the rally to protest the rape of a twelve-year-old Okinawa girl, Katsuya was in the midst of rushing to make it to Higa’s place on time. He almost

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 98.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 170.

forcibly asked Hisayo to lend him two-hundred-thousand yen. Even though he was conscious of Hitomi's gaze, he ignored it.

When Hitomi saw Katsuya asking Hisayo for money like their two brothers, her face sank with a sad expression. She said: "Katsuya, you are the same as your bothers in the end. How disgraceful." "Do you know how difficult it is for an ordinary person to earn two-hundred-thousand yen?" "You're not really working a part-time job, are you? How are you gonna return two-hundred-thousand yen?"¹²⁰ Katsuya averted his eyes from Hitomi. He could only say "It's none of your business!" "Don't lecture me. I need it for an emergency...I'll give it back within a month." "You don't know anything about me. Just shut up!"¹²¹

When Katsuya and Hisayo were about to go to the bank, Hitomi made a desperate appeal to Katsuya. "Katsuya, the world (*yononaka*) will change, you must live by yourself, I'm sure you can do it." The word "change (*kawaru*)" repeatedly echoed through Katsuya's mind. This word becomes central to the story. Whenever

¹²⁰ Ibid., 177.

¹²¹ Ibid., 177.

dealt a blow that is like being hammered in by a thick nail, there nonetheless still exists another version of his life that confronts, challenges, and struggles with difficulties in order to overcome them. In this way, Hitomi could wish for nothing more than an effort in which Katsuya struggled no matter what. Since Katsuya understood her feelings, he felt out of place and gave in to self-hatred.

“Hammered in by a thick nail.” This encapsulates the figure of Katsuya depicted by the story. He fears struggling with such a thick nail. In other words, he fears changing the relationship he has been forced to establish with Higa and Higa’s group since junior high school. This thick nail is another way of expressing the violent border between Katsuya and Higa’s gang. As long as the nail is driven into Katsuya, that is to say, so long as the border is maintained, the situation remains stable. The future is predictable and safe in the present. Even though Katsuya is afraid that the relationship between the self and others will change, at the same time, he is filled with self-hatred and wants to change his situation. In other words, he has a strong desire for a uncertainty of the future in his heart.

This ambivalence is reflected early on when Katsuya was a high school student. His social studies teacher talked about the US Special Forces anti-guerilla training that took place in northern Okinawa during Vietnam War as a lesson in peace education. Katusya's desire for the uncertainty of the future is expressed in the following memory of the teacher's lesson:

Once each of soldiers spread over the mountains,
they live without any equipment except for an army
knife for over a month. They learn techniques such as
hiding in nature, slashing the enemy's carotid artery,
and breaking the enemy's windpipe with their fingers.
They catch *habu* snakes or small birds and eat them
raw. They swallow frogs alive, and identify edible and
medicinal plants. They endure starvation, perceive the
enemy with nothing but their own five senses, hide
themselves in the shade of trees, bushes, and mud, and
become at one with the forests. They sneak around on

dried leaves without making a noise, creep up to the
opponent from behind, pinion him, and quickly slash
his carotid artery...For Katsuya, the image of the US
Special Forces described by his teacher left him with
the awesome image of those who live to the fullest in
Okinawa.

Although the teacher intended to emphasize the cruelty of the military or
war and allow for an anti-military bases or anti-war sentiment amongst the
students, Katsuya imagined a soldier who holds his breath, struggles, and
survives in the deep forest of Yanbaru, and is attracted to the Special
Forces as “those who live to the fullest in Okinawa.”

Kurosawa Ariko reads the *Rainbow Bird* as “a story of ‘children who kill each
other,’” and states that “the story that focuses on ‘violence and gender’ is a
challenging piece that depicts the decay of boys and girls in ‘dangerously circuitous
community.’” She writes “what dominates the world of ‘the youth/children’ to which
Katsuya belongs is the clear and simple principle of ‘violence.’” She additionally

reads the ‘homosocial bond’ amongst the boys in the same register of an over-valorization of the ‘soldier,’ or in other words, an incitement of the fantasy of the ‘military unit’ that fosters their close ties.”¹²² In other words, she reduces the story to a simple principle of violence in which the characters are dominated by relation of killing each other. It is this reductive principle of violence that attracts individuals such as Katsuya to the Special Forces in the jungle.

However, Kurosawa’s views on violence too hastily pass over a litany of issues. The story clearly shows the agony of Katsuya’s contradictions symbolized by the “thick nail” and the power of life held by Katsuya’s mother and older sister as they struggle against hardship. Kurosawa ends with the simple explanation that Katsuya is a miserable person who is unfortunately entangled in a circle of violence. She writes:

It was Higa who was at the top of the ‘food chain’ in Katsuya’s sphere of everyday life.

Inside of that closed circle, children were

¹²² Kurosawa Ariko “Medoruma Shun ‘Niji no Tori’ Ron: Nichijo no Saibu wo Shunjuūsuru,” in *Okikokudai ga Amerika ni Senryōsareta Hi*, Ed., Kurosawa Ariko, (Tokyo: Seidosha, 2005), 249.

interdependent on each other and clashed into
each other mercilessly. In the end, they were
incapable of seeing the enormous violence
which makes them kill each other. Resistance
of the children who lost sight of the enemy led
to an endless cannibalism. Nobody was
capable of escaping this closed circle.¹²³

Kurosawa's problem is that she ignores Katsuya, Hitomi, and Hisayo's tenacity in surviving hardship, thereby denying it its power. In particular, Katsuya is a passive victim of violence and is never seen as a positive agent. According to Kurosawa, Katsuya is only allotted the role as a victim who is seized by an enormous violence or who is a impotent person resigned to becoming a passive offender.

However, to what extent is it possible to read the Yanbaru jungle as an enormous cycle of violence as suggested by Kurosawa? Certainly, it points to a difficult life which people do not choose for themselves. And certainly, it points to a

¹²³ Ibid., 249.

dog-eat-dog world among diverse individuals. However, the problem is that she stops short of considering the force or will to power of a person who nonetheless attempts to survive amidst an overwhelmingly inferior position to power.

There is no tool more useful than a knife in the jungle. Hiding in the bushes, staving off hunger by eating small animals or wild plants, and dealing with unexpected situations by using things provided by nature. It is precisely as Fanon discovered in the women in *Algeria Unveiled*: there is no manual to guide one through an urgent situation. Each thought and each use of a tool functions as a sort of bricolage that pieces things together in each new circumstance in order to overcome the trials inflicted to life by using one's own body. The individual does not know what will happen; the body takes on a defensive posture and is tense from beginning to end. The future is radically suspended and undermined. What Katsuya lacked in and wanted was this tense body.

3. Norms

Medoruma had heard of experiences of the Battle of Okinawa from his family since he was young.¹²⁴ Hence, he is an author who presents the problem of how to carry on the memory of war as a person who is a descendent of survivors of war while also questioning the US military presence in Okinawa. *The Rainbow Bird*, in this way, poses a central problematic: Who can take on the primary role of questioning the memory of the Okinawa War and the US military bases? In other words, must the experience of the Okinawan War be told and retold through certain normative categories? This is what Medoruma problematizes as he focuses on a force or being that is elided by the norms of political correctness implicit in the formation of contemporary social movements in Okinawa.

In *Undoing Gender*, Judith Butler delineates how what is external to a norm is regulated by what is internal to it in the following way:

The norm governs intelligibility, allows for certain kinds of practices and action to become recognizable as such, imposing a grid of legibility on the social and defining the parameters of what

¹²⁴ Medoruma Shun, *Okinawa Sengo Zeronen*, (Tokyo: Nihon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai, 2005).

will and will not appear within the domain of the social. The question of what is to be outside the norm is in some sense being defined still in relation to it. To be not quite masculine or not quite feminine is still to be understood exclusively in terms of one's relationship to the "quite masculine" and the "quite feminine."¹²⁵

Here, evil is paradoxically defined by justice, which is foreclosed by the norm of a recognizable social community. When social movements are defined in terms of the norms of justice, what kind of relationship can exist between that which is external to a norm and anger against military bases? Furthermore, exactly what kind of force does anger assume? What unfolds in the *Rainbow Bird* is a stark contrast between the emergence of such a force or being and various social norms within Okinawa.

For instance, the man who prostitutes Mayu shockingly turns out to be a junior high school teacher. This is revealed in the scene where Katsuya disdainfully spits out the question, "Are you a junior high school teacher?"¹²⁶ In that scene, Mayu,

¹²⁵ Judith Butler *Undoing Gender* (New Yorks and London: Routledge, 2004), 42.

¹²⁶ Medoruma, *Niji no Tori*, 18.

who had ordinarily “looked so bleak as if she lost words themselves,” was suddenly animated to brutally beat the naked man with a belt.¹²⁷ Furthermore, she took him to the shower room and poured hot water over him as he begged for mercy. Her violent torture did not end there as she cruelly inserted a matchstick up his urethra and lit it. Although Katsuya has seen this kind of torture being carried out and has done it himself as he was instructed by Higa, “he has never seen a woman doing it.”¹²⁸

One was a teacher, who was socially expected to embody knowledge and virtue; it was undoubtedly socially unacceptable that he prostituted a girl whose age was almost the same as his own students. The other was a junior high school girl, whose grades were as good as her looks, and was such a serious student that she even served as a member of the student body. However, in the scene where the male teacher prostituted Mayu and Mayu cruelly brutalized him, the norms of “teacher-like” and “girl-like” which they are expected to perform by society entirely collapse.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 68.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 27.

On the one hand, the male teacher's scandalous acts eclipse the image of a teacher who is supposed to instruct his student as the embodiment of morality. On the other hand, Mayu's brutal behavior clearly deviates from the integrity of her own image as an exemplary student. Both of them caused a blistering backlash from society.

In the story, force begins to raise its head and gushes out as a sort of pleasure and ecstasy. The only reason why this sort of force is called "violence" is that it clearly deviates from the norms expected of an established society and rebels against it. Norms, which embrace prescribed models at each level of the social stratum require social recognition of "how one should act," transform the appropriate structure of bodily acts into something predictable in advance, and collapse them into harmonized categories. Hence, norms constantly attempt to eliminate from society any unpredictable force, or in other words, violence as a disorderly power or desire that is antagonistic to society. Norms try to gain their absolute justification and protect themselves through the elimination of antagonistic violence. What norms regard as enemies is its incapability that it cannot predict the future.

Norms such as “teacher-like” and “girlish” have greatly supported the ground of anti-base movements in Okinawa. In “Hope,” Medoruma evokes social norms associated with an “innocent child” as the protagonist violently strangles him to death. This incites an “outrage and hatred toward the crime committed against an innocent child.”¹²⁹ Although this remark was made when characters in “Hope” denounced the criminal who killed the small child of a US soldier, the adjective “innocent” was also repeatedly used to condemn the US military during the demonstrations against the real-life 1995 rape incident when three US soldiers raped a twelve-year-old girl. The *Rainbow Bird* reenacts the demonstration protesting the 1995 incident, suspends, and then subverts these stereotypical norms. For example, in the scene where Katsuya runs into a demonstration of schoolteachers protesting the rape incident, it suddenly occurs to him that the teacher who prostituted Mayu might be there.

As soon as he saw the participants holding placards or red flags bearing their group name, he noticed that it was

¹²⁹ Medoruma, *Okinawa Kusa no Koe, Ne no Ishi*, 288.

a demonstration held by teachers from some elementary, junior, and high school. As he watched demonstrators marching in a straight row under a pedestrian overpass, the face of the man whom Mayu had once brought to the room came to mind. He started to look closely at the faces of the demonstrators who were filing out of the school gate because he thought the man might be there. However, he began to feel the absurdity of it all and stopped looking.¹³⁰

This scene, in which it suddenly came to Katsuya's mind that the teacher who prostituted Mayu might be there, cannot help but give readers a hypocritical impression of the teachers' demonstration that is enabled by the elimination of all traces of antagonistic violence implicit in the norms associated with "teacher." At the same time, this scene also tries to show that norms are always accompanied by recognition from the state and law, which aims to eliminate antagonistic violence. For

¹³⁰ *Medoruma, Niji no Tori*, 101.

example, although demonstrators march forward under strict surveillance by plainclothes police officers and the riot police, “some demonstrators were chatting away playfully” as if in a nonchalant acceptance of their presence. Medoruma continues, “the line, which they never try to cross even when they express their anger, is stretched around their mind like the fence around a base.”¹³¹

The norms associated with the image of the “pure and innocent girl” that is mobilized by the anti-base movement also becomes more chaotic. In the scene where Katsuya’s eyes are glued to the live TV broadcast of the prefectural resident rally protesting the rape incident, a schoolgirl bravely makes a speech in public expressing the hope for peace in Okinawa:

A girl with long hair was blown up on the TV screen. Her white jacket and short reddish-purple necktie made for an impressionable uniform; the girl came off as upright and pure, as if she were a member of the student body or something. As he started to see Mayu’s face whom he saw in the room that

¹³¹ Ibid., 103-104

afternoon fold over onto the face of the girl speaking her cause to the tens of thousands of people in front of a microphone, he was dumbstruck. If something, somewhere had been different by even a fraction of a moment, the positions of the girl on TV and Mayu lying face down on her stomach could have been switched. It wasn't true for just Mayu, but for Katsuya, Higa, or Matsuda as well. If only things had been a just a hair different, not only Mayu, but even Katsuya, Higa or Matsuda might be in a completely different world from now.¹³²

“While living in this moment in the same Okinawa, the girl on TV and Mayu live in completely opposite worlds. I couldn't bear this fact.”¹³³

The figure of the girl who “came off as upright and pure, as if she were a member of the student body or something,” is depicted exactly as Mayu used to be.

The image of the girl as “upright” and “pure,” which exaggerates political correctness

¹³² Ibid., 184.

¹³³ Ibid., 190.

in the movement, is described in a way that contradicts and contrasts Mayu's life of moral decay in which she is forced to prostitute herself and then inflict a most brutal torture on her client. When the girl who was raped by US soldiers is associated with the "pure" girl who makes the speech and is symbolized as a "victim," the male-centered discourse in the movement reinforces the assertion that the powerless, innocent, and "pure" girl must be protected by a patriarchal society.

The problem here is why must it always be males who execute violence and why must it always be females who are subject to it? Yet, this question cannot be adequately answered with the simple argument that neither gender should be allowed to execute violence. Such a proposition erases the actual problem of how norms always foreclose possibilities far before the emergence of a will. As argued at the beginning of Section II, irrespective of positionality as the colonizer or colonized, there exists an assumption that the person who executes violence is always male and the person who is subject to violence is always female. *Rainbow Bird* collapses such a tacit understanding itself as the problem is not to simply replace a gendered position of male with female in respect to violence.

For example, Ōshiro Tatsuhiro's Akutagawa prize-winning novella *Cocktail Party* (1967) depicts the typical roles of a sexually violated girl who is victimized and forced to keep silent alongside a colonized male who tries to save her from a colonizing male by posturing rage toward the rapist.¹³⁴ In this case, it is impossible to narrate another possibility in which the raped girl kills the rapist because it goes against the normative grain of “upright” and “pure.” The *Rainbow Bird* depicts such violence forbidden by society. Mayu's act of setting Higa, the man who forced her to prostitute herself, on fire and subsequently killing him in the end, will confuse any reader familiar with discourses on violence only from a patriarchal viewpoint. In other words, it reveals a power relation in which various possibilities have not been narrated in the discourse of rage expressed in a male-centered society and the anti-military movement.

Mayu's scene of cruel violence does not end here. At the end of the story, she abducts the young daughter of an American soldier and kills her with a knife. Because Katsuya was afraid that it would come to light that Mayu killed Higa,

¹³⁴ Ōshiro Tatsuhiro, *Kakuteru Pātī*, (Tokyo: Rironsha, 1990).

Katsuya decided to escape with Mayu. This problem surfaces when Katsuya stops by for fast food on the way to northern Okinawa. When he enters the restaurant, he notices a US military family on the terrace outside. An American boy and girl joyfully play together on a ride. It clearly shows that their young parents also spend time peacefully as a happy family. Seeing the peaceful family, Katsuya remembers he also played on with similar ride with his sister and had happy days with his own family. The American girl was about to flash Katsuya a smile when “Katsuya averted his eyes because of her beautifully flushed face and entered the restaurant.”¹³⁵ However, when he came back to his car, he noticed there was something wrong. While Katsuya was in the restaurant, Mayu abducted and killed the America girl.

This scene may be perplexing for most readers since she killed not only a gangster like Higa, but also a small child who is assumed to have nothing to do with any social relation entangled with violence. Although the scandalous development of a “pure girl” killing not only a “cruel adult” such as Higa, but also an “innocent child” incites repugnance in the reader, it simultaneously undermines the norm associated

¹³⁵ Medoruma, *Niji no Tori*, 217.

with a “cruel adult.” This is because shock and rage tends to be more easily elicited at a rape or murder of an “innocent small child” rather than that of an adult. Even when an adult female is raped or murdered, the case is often attributed to the victim’s lack of self-responsibility. For example, some may question, “Why did she go to such a dangerous place?” or “Why did she hang around such a man?”¹³⁶ These notions of a “cruel adult” or adults who must take responsibility for themselves function to conceal the fact that most victims of rape or murder related to US military personnel in Okinawa are adult females who by far outnumber children. It is important to keep in mind that the signifiers “child” and “adult” do not exist in isolation, but discharge a complementary function in everyday life. What Mayu’s brutal murder of a small child unintentionally reveals is the gesture of self-protection among those in a so-called adult society who try to conceal one adult’s cruel violence inflicted against another.

¹³⁶ For example, see (Ishii and Kuniyoshi). Ishii and Kuniyoshi problematize the Japanese Foreign Minister Makiko Tanaka’s remark on the sexual assault of an Okinawan adult female that took place in June 2001. She suggested blame for the victim because she was out drinking alcohol at two in the morning when she was assaulted. Ishii, Kyoko and Kuniyoshi, Michiyo “Watashi tachi wa jiken wo dō hōdō shita no ka” in *Tsukuru =: The tsukuru*. December: 60-67. (Tōkyō: Tsukuru Shuppan, 2001).

The story criticizes a lack of imagination toward the victims, who suffer from the violence resulting from military bases on a daily basis.

4. The Possibility of a Life that Cannot Be Chosen

The above sections showed how it is crucial to problematize norms and the possibilities for being or existence in Medoruma's work. Nonetheless, it still remains that norms are a necessary condition for the production and maintenance of subject. The subject is socially recognized and given self-accountability through norms which exist beforehand. By way of Michael Foucault's writings on the formation of a moral subject, Judith Butler writes in *Giving an Account of Oneself* that "[t]he regime of truth offers a framework for the scene of recognition, delineating who will qualify as a subject of recognition and offering available norms for the act of recognition."¹³⁷ What Butler emphasizes is that even though norms are the condition for the formation of the subject, they at the same time cannot totally determine its being. In other words, what Butler emphasizes here is the unfree being who cannot escape from the order of norms.

¹³⁷ Judith Butler *Giving an Account of Oneself* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), 22.

The norm does not produce the subject as its necessary effect, nor is the subject fully free to disregard the norm that inaugurates its reflexivity; one invariably struggles with conditions of one's own life that one could not have chosen.

If there is operation of agency or, indeed, freedom in this struggle, it takes place in the context of an enabling and limiting field of constraint. This ethical agency is neither fully determined nor radically free. Its struggle or primary dilemma is to be produced by a world, even as one must produce oneself in some way. This struggle with the unchosen conditions of one's life, a struggle—and agency— is also made possible, paradoxically, by the persistence of this primary condition of unfreedom.¹³⁸

One struggles with “conditions of one's own life that one could not have chosen,” that is to say, unfree reality. Butler finds radical freedom in the capacity of an act in which

¹³⁸ Ibid., 19.

one struggles with unfreedom. Therefore, freedom does not exist outside of unfreedom. In other words, freedom does not exist outside of norms which enforce a governmentality of the self and it does not exist after the fact of unfreedom. It exists within the reality that one struggles with norms that inflict various restraints on oneself. Freedom is possible “by the persistence of this primary condition of unfreedom.” Hence, what Medoruma tries to describe in the *Rainbow Bird* through Katsuya and Mayu is that *hope* literally exists in the act of resisting against social norms that restrain oneself.

It is important to point out that norms are not only temporarily effective, but also continuously effective. Therefore, struggling with norms entails striving against the continuous proposition that the fate of a certain subject is predetermined and striving for a future which is not deprived by norms. It entails maintaining a future of openness.

At the same time, what the *Rainbow Bird* emphasizes is that one’s life is largely regulated by norms but not determined as fate. It is created by a “slight difference.” Two different norms are the result of this “slight difference.” Conversely,

both are contiguous. Both positions are presented in terms of a replaceable relationship. “Just like the fluids of small organisms caught in the grip of anxious fear suddenly turns into poison,” the girl, who was thought to be powerless, can unexpectedly fight back against a rapist. What the rapist and established society are afraid of is the uncontrollability of various actions which people take when they realize something considered to be fate is revealed to in fact not be fate. That is to say, it is revealed to be the victim’s counterattack which is an antagonism. In other words, one is afraid of the fact that one cannot control the future as the result of a current action. The *Rainbow Bird* questions norms implicit in the subject of activism and brings to light to the antagonism and violence which are never narrated, thought, or regarded as illegal within an established society or activist group. The story fulfills the undecided present with animated life and opens up the field of future. The story does not limit such antagonism/violence to Katsuya, Mayu, or Higa, but describes that antagonism/violence as prevailing in everyone in our society.

The fragility of the politics of norms also appears in the scene in which Matsuda, Higa's right-hand man, mocks the prefectural resident rally that protests rape of an "innocent child" by US military soldiers.

Even if many people come out, they can't do anything. That's why Okinawan people are pathetic. If so many people are able to come out, why don't they break through the base fences and beat the American soldiers to death? All their bitching and complaining doesn't bother the Americans in the slightest."

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Katsuya had never heard Matsuda's speaking in such a manner about US military bases before, and was surprised that "even Matsuda was interested in the incident."¹⁴⁰

Following Matsuda, Higa opened up his mouth to speak. "Hang 'em. They should

¹³⁹ Medoruma, *Niji no Tori*, 190

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 190.

kidnap a GI kid, strip it naked, and hang it up with wire from a palm tree along Route 58....That's if they seriously want to kick the US military out.”¹⁴¹ Katsuya made a mental note, “he’s right,” and agrees with him.¹⁴²

On the one hand, there are social movements that advocate justice and peace with the backing of various social norms. On the other hand, there is an evil world in which people who are cut off from society like Mayu, Katsuya, and Higa, live. However, the question here is not whether we agree or disagree with violence. It is rather identifying the kind of force the established movement has excluded so that its participants can sanitize themselves in effort to conform with the norms of “upright,” “pure,” “peace loving,” or “teacher-like.” The novel critically depicts the anti-base movement that is predominantly led by teachers, political leaders, and specialized activists. Simply put, the story attempts to find possibilities in the movement from a wider range of sociality, including those who are categorized as “evil” such as Katsuya, Mayu, Higa, or Matsuda, and not limited to a certain group of specialists

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 190-191.

¹⁴² Ibid., 191

who are categorized as “good.” Hence, the story is also about the essence of rage that surges instantly among ordinary people against social injustice or discrimination against problems such as the military bases in Okinawa. Medoruma attempts to locate hope in this rage belonging to ordinary Okinawans such as Katsuya, Mayu, or even Katsuya’s older brother who has fallen to the decadent life of playing pachinko every day. Medoruma invests the hope for change in these individuals in Okinawan society. Hence, rage does not belong to only those who have mastered the art of being politically correct.

The problem is also the ability to question norms. This entails questioning the relation currently one has with the Other and one’s reason for existence in a society to which one belongs. Critically questioning the conditions of life one has not chosen for him/herself, in other words, is, “[to] call into question a regime of truth, where that regime of truth governs subjectivation, is to call into question the truth of myself and, indeed, to question my ability to tell the truth about myself, to give an account of myself.”¹⁴³ Butler continues:

¹⁴³ Judith Butler *Giving an Account of Oneself*, 22-23.

Self-questioning becomes an ethical consequence of critique for Foucault, as he makes clear in “What Is Critique?” It also turns out that self-questioning of this sort involves putting oneself at risk, imperiling the very possibility of being recognized by others, since to question the norm of recognition that govern what I might be, to ask what they leave out, what they might be compelled to accommodate, is, in relation to the present regime, to risk unrecognizability as a subject or at least to become an occasion for posing the questions of who one is (or can be) and whether or not one is recognizable.¹⁴⁴

Therefore, struggling with the condition of an unfree life means, in other words, questioning norms that recognizes one as a subject and forecloses others as unrecognizable beings. It is to take on the risk of shaking society to the core. To

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 23.

critically call into question society and activism that draws its legitimacy from norms of justice, as seen in the images of “teachers,” “girls,” and “children,” is to think of a violence and irreducible antagonism possessed by the unrecognized other. That is to say, it is the thinking of divine violence.

However, today’s established social movements criticized in the literature tend to term the inevitable and contradictory force against social norms “violence,” and then subsequently alienate and sanitize itself from that “violence.” Therefore, the violent world of Mayu, Katsuya, and Higa that society excludes is originally nothing but society itself. In the story, Katsuya longs for this society absent of the norms that filter out individuals such as himself. When Katsuya mumbles to himself, “if only things had been a just a hair different, not only Mayu, but even Katsuya, Higa or Matsuda might be in a completely different world from now,” he did not wish to return to the established society of the present, nor wish to take flight towards a “pacifist island.” He recognized a way of life which was not a predetermined fate. He sailed against time, reached the past before people lives were divided by norms, and recalled the memory of a village.

I recalled an old village story I heard from my grandparents when I was small. Cape lilac trees lined the village market and its shade bustled about with villagers who traded goods or idled away in chatter. It was also that market where my grandparents met. Near the market was an *uganju*¹⁴⁵ where the villagers worshiped, and a huge banyan tree with its branches spread out wide. Stone walls made with coral taken from either springs welling up with sweet water or from the ocean. *Fukugi* trees surrounding the residences. The woods of the *utaki*¹⁴⁶ where *kaminchu*¹⁴⁷ sang *kamiuta*¹⁴⁸ and prayed all through the night. These all dissolved into the military base and transmogrified into a space for runways, warehouses, residences, and lawn.

¹⁴⁵ Okinawan term for a place of prayer.

¹⁴⁶ Okinawan term for a sacred natural spring.

¹⁴⁷ Term for Okinawan shamaness.

¹⁴⁸ Religious song of the kaminchu.

“If only there had been no war, and no forced confiscation of the land for US military bases, then the Katsuyas of the village would have been born and raised on the other side of those fences. If that were the case, they would have completely different lives from the ones they live now.... Not only Katsuya’s life, but also that of his parents and grandparents, and the villagers who lived postwar Okinawa—all of their lives would have been different.”¹⁴⁹

This village landscape that Katsuya recalls as a utopia is precisely “the ordinary way of life, or way of living that already exists as our everyday lives” that Mukai speaks of. Then, such everyday lives were destroyed by war and bases. However, Katsuya thinks such everyday lives should not be taken as fate but as something which should be taken back. He believes that his life today is not unchangeable, but it is changeable

¹⁴⁹ Medoruma, *Niji no Tori*, 184.

with a “slight difference.” His belief overlaps with, of course, his sister’s word “I know you can do it.”

When Katsuya recalled the past saying that “[i]f only there had been no war, and no forced confiscation of the land for US military bases,” he found a different present than the one in his here and now. In other words, he located an indeterminate form of the future from the recalled past that had been negated by military violence and left unrealized. He discovered in this new future a moment that changes the relationship with others in the present, including “his parents and grandparents, and the villagers who lived postwar Okinawa,” and “not only Mayu, but even Katsuya, Higa or Matsuda.” At this moment, memory ceased to simply be a utopia remembered, but produced the force to change society and the existing relationships with others. Therefore, the evocation of memory as a driving force for upheaval begins to wax over with a tinge of violence, which threatens both the established society and subject.

The memory becomes threatening not only because it creates an antagonism that denies the established subject, but it also refuses recognition from an external state or law. In other words, the evocation of memory, (*i.e.*, the recuperation of an everyday

life that has otherwise been denied) does not inevitably lead to a state or law's rescue. Certainly, it is undeniable that getting back one's own everyday life aims for the satisfaction of one's own desire, but nonetheless, such desire is not destined to be satisfied by the state or law. Memory does not assume any externality, but rather it conjurs up an internal world which exists for its own reason. Katsuya's father, an idle benefactor of military land rents, cast ridicule upon the anti-base movement in front of Katsuya in the past saying that "if the anti-base movement is not escalated, then military land rents and government subsidies won't go up."¹⁵⁰ Katsuya's father knows intuitively that even if the anti-base movement is an expression of antagonism and desire, it is an expression before the state or law that merely seeks its own recognition. As a result, it is founded on an assumption of the law. Seeing through this, he laughed at the tacit cooperation between Okinawa's anti-base movement and the law.

By contrast, the archetypal scene of the village Katsuya heard about from his grandparents is imagined as everyday life which does not correspond with any external law or state. The everyday life of the past, which is imagined in memory, was

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 185.

supposed to bring a sort of social relationship to the present. However, one notices that everyday life of the past is different from the existing social relationship of the present. The relationship that was supposed to be brought up to the present is unrecognizable. Therefore, for those of us living in society today, thinking about and narrating a social relationship of the past emerges as danger that shakes the order of an established society.

5. Mean as Ends, Singularity as Universality

The *Rainbow Bird* undermines the grounding of a social activist subject by calling into question various social norms. Nonetheless, the story does not adopt a plot development in which new norms re-emerge from the old, thereby giving birth to the recognition of a new subject. Butler writes, “[i]t is also true that certain practices of recognition or, indeed, certain breakdowns in the practice of recognition mark a site of rupture within the horizon of normativity and implicitly call for the institution of new norms, putting into question the givenness of the prevailing normative horizon.”¹⁵¹ In other words, she admits that if established

¹⁵¹ Judith Butler, *Giving an Account of Oneself*, 24.

norms do not function, there is always a possibility that the established norms can be replaced with new one. At the same time, she states that normative horizon is exposed to “a critical opening.” She continues:

Sometimes the very unrecongnizability of the other brings about a crisis in the norms that govern recognition. If and when, in an effort to confer or to receive a recognition that fails again and again, I call into question the normative horizon within which recognition takes place, this questioning is part of the desire for recognition, a desire that can find no satisfaction, and whose unsatisfiability establishes a critical point of departure for the interrogation of available norms.¹⁵²

Antagonism is expressed precisely when the desire for recognition is not satisfied. In this case, the established norms are destroyed, and a movement to create new norms that satisfy the desire is summoned. Of course, when such desire is not satisfied, it becomes the object of repression. The unrequited desire is posited as an object to be

¹⁵² Ibid., 24.

overcome or dissolved. Then, beyond unrequited desire finally comes the satisfaction of desire, that is to say, a world of recognition or freedom.

However, there is the situation in which satisfaction cannot be achieved even when one pines after it. In other words, there is the situation in which desire may actually be the desire for a remainder of unrequited desire. “Unsatisfiability” tells the story of the lack of freedom amongst subjects of unrequited desire who are not recognized. However, from a different viewpoint, such form of life is another way of expression the position of a minority subject. One who assumes “unsatisfiability” or the lack of freedom is precisely a minority subject who seeks a new norm when he/she call into question the established norms. At the same time, as Butler repeatedly states, the form of life as “unsatisfiable” is the necessary condition for the minority subject to critically think about established norms, express antagonism against them, and move towards acquiring recognition. In such a moment, desire is not a lack in the established order, but a surplus which overflows outside of its bounds.

Traditionally, critical thought on norms and acts of antagonism have simply pointed to a process toward a final goal for recognition. Here, means are used to

achieve an end. The means are subjugated to a final goal which concludes the process. Conversely, the minority subject does not merely struggle with conditions of its own difficult life, but this struggle proceeds toward the expression of antagonism and subsequent achievement of recognition that nullifies the grounds upon which it struggles with such difficulties in the first place. In this sense, it almost seems as if all critical and antagonistic acts are merely steps in the overall process that is realized by finally arriving to the land of recognition. Here, the process ends and disappears when the means are realized in a final goal. One who struggles with hardship ironically erases the traces of its life that had once created as if s/he proceeds to erasing the footprint that s/he made after s/he walks.

However, what we have to call into question is whether “I” who lives through this process, “I” who struggles with norms, “I” who displays the capacity to act, “I” who lives as minority, will really disappear. Similar to Fanon, Butler tries to rescue a modality of desire that does not exist as a simple means or medium that is fated to disappear, but as a means that is also an end. In other words, she tried to philosophically rescue a modality of desire traditionally understood as the means

toward a final goal of recognition, as “a critical point of departure for the interrogation of available norms.” Desire that is a means in this sense simultaneously becomes an end.

One whose desire is not satisfied is exposed to uncertainty. This indeed signifies the arrival of “unsatisfiability,” but it also locates the possibility for a variety of ends scattered into the future that is viewed from an uncertain present. Here, the future is not fate, but it is undecided, unlimited, and universal. Time is open to the future. This is exactly where Butler finds “a critical opening” in a form of being that forges a critical relationship with norms. A subject who is entangled by the conditions of an unfree life of unrequited desire can then place him/herself in a position of uncertainty which opens up the future by displaying the capacity to struggle with a lack of freedom. In this sense, the subject confirms the necessity of his/her own existence and becomes free. What is important here is not whether one wins or loses, whether one achieves their final goal or not. What is important is that the subject is grasped in the midst of struggle where he/she thinks, acts, and struggles for freedom.

The *Rainbow Bird* depicts the process in which characters confront difficulties, try to change their predisposed reality, and struggle with received hardship. However, Medoruma chooses not to narrate the story through politicians, intellectuals, specialists, or activists who have special knowledge, experience, or training. Moreover, he explicitly avoids channeling these struggles through a political party or group. The story focuses on an ordinary Okinawan like Katsuya who is generally thought to be someone who has nothing to do with the US military base problem. In the story Katsuya, does not stop at the critique of social norms. The story also depicts the process through which he agonizes over a difficult reality, reflects on himself, and changes his thoughts and reforms his own consciousness. The story places an emphasis on a character who was formerly indifferent to the problem of bases and subsequently cultivates his own critical thinking. Changing oneself means to force one to change various relationships with the other upon which one has come to depend on. At the same time, since Katsuya's fluctuating relationship with others and the social order causes various criticism and conflicts. Nonetheless, he cannot help but encounter anxiety, resistance, and opposition from both within and without.

6. *The Delighted Rioters*

Katsuya's father often told this story of the Koza riot to Katsuya:

I heard of the story that took place before the reversion to Japan in which demonstrators wrapped wire rope around the base fences, dragged them down, and threw in Molotov cocktails. At that time, he [father] apparently went on a rampage without any principles.

On the one hand, while he ridiculed philosophy or ideology because it's incapable of turning a profit, he nonetheless got the young guys from the A-sign establishments together, and then attacked a group of Zengunrō¹⁵³ picketers. He also blended into the demonstrators and threw rocks at the riot police. It was from such a father that I heard the story of the Koza Riot many times.

As soon as my father, who was drinking at a bar in the town of Koza on that day, got word that US military vehicles were being

¹⁵³ Zengunrō is short for “Zen Okinawa Gunrōdōsha Kumiai” or in English, the “All-Okinawa Military Workers Union” which was a US military base workers union of Okinawans that fought for increased wages while simultaneously participated in the anti-base movement.

burned, he went out of the bar and joined in the riot. In his
everyday life, he was on the benefitting end of the US military
bases, but yet he boasted of the fact that he blended into the mob,
flipped over GI cars, and set fire on them. The mob circled the
yellow license plates¹⁵⁴ flaming with black smoke, applauded, and
whistled with their fingers. Some of them even danced *kachāshi*¹⁵⁵
as if they were incited by the heat of the flame. While he talked
about how formidable the mob was that advanced toward the
Kadena Air Base gate, he was intoxicated with his own story and
always murmured at the end, “I wonder if it will happen again?”¹⁵⁶

This is a fictional account of the real life Koza Riot that took place unplanned and
unanticipated in the middle of the night on December 20, 1970. The enraged multitude
whistled with their fingers and was overjoyed to see burning military vehicles.

Children handed over glass bottles filled with gasoline to the mob. A-sign bar

¹⁵⁴ A metonym for US military vehicles that were identified by their yellow-colored license plates bearing the phrase “Keystone of the Pacific.”

¹⁵⁵ “Kachāshi” is a celebratory Okinawan dance that is performed with the dead

¹⁵⁶ Medoruma, *Niji no Tori*, 102-102.

employees started hitting US servicemen who were their customers. Old women started dancing the celebratory *kachashi* with joy. We have to acknowledge that the singing and angry voices of the rampaging rioters, who intensify the body's power of activity, did not demand recognition from the state or law in the first place; the riot was not a function that sends a message to the state or law. It was a force that did not have any purpose vis-à-vis the outside and generated its power for itself.

Additionally, since Katsuya's father, who scornfully stated that, "philosophy or ideology...is incapable of turning a profit," was not tagged as a member of the "anti-base faction," the norms of justice versus evil did not carry any importance. At that time in Koza, bloody clashes between students who were on the picket line in front of the base gate, and A-sign businessmen who collected income from the military routinely divided the people. Okinawans who were supposed to be positioned against each other politically suddenly began gathering in the main street of the city. All factions unintentionally collapsed. People sang songs, raged about, and occupied the main street as if they were engaging in a carnival. Here, the method of historical

interpretation which seeks to establish an intention before human action as the cause of an act completely lost its validity.

Sato Izumi describes Katsuya's father as "a person who lost coherence," and tries to position him within a factional structure.¹⁵⁷ However, as described above, the importance of the riot is the fact that the riot was not solely enacted by anti-base activists, but also by people who depend on the base economy and support the maintenance of such economy. All factions collapsed in the middle of the riot, and the rioters raised their voices without depending any exteriority.

The reason why the riot appeared as madness is that the mingled effect of joy and rage among the people did not have any corresponding relationship with norms of political correctness in real politics and movements. It existed as unrepresentable. This is why what we have to problematize is this rupture between the norm of political correctness and the rioters' joy. This is precisely what the *Rainbow Bird* accomplishes.

What Medoruma attempts to do by describing violence is open up in the present a

¹⁵⁷ Satō Izumi, "1995-2004 no Chisō Medoruma Shun 'Niji no Tori' Ron" in *Kakuran suru Shima: Jendā teki Shiten*, ed., Shinjo Ikuo (Tokyo: Shakai Hyoronsha, 2008), 176.

force that has the power to change the relationship with a pre-existing Other. We need to keep questioning what it is about language that holds the possibility of involving the affects of people into the movement, who ordinarily express themselves with statements such as “if the opposition movement doesn’t heat up, the military land rent won’t rise, and the government subsidies won’t increase.” What we need to do is constitute a broader communality, which is no longer based on norms such as justice or injustice. What is important is the need to intervene within the realm of affect, which exists one step before an unrecognizable and immanent force becomes power. It is a magnetic field where joy infects the air as people become link together. Such an unpredictable and exciting communality rages through the so-called “pacified island.”

The rainbow bird, which is also the title for this story, has been talked about as an illusory bird among American soldiers undergoing anti-guerilla combat training in the jungle of Yambaru. As the story goes, they believe in the miracle that if they see it in the jungle, they can survive the battlefield. However, if one tells others that he caught a glimpse of the bird, the effect of this miracle completely disappears. Even if he keeps it secrete and survives, other soldiers of his unit will be annihilated. That is

why it is “an unprovable bird in that double sense,” and a socially unrecognizable bird.¹⁵⁸ Driven by this dream, Katsuya and Mayu are drawn into the darkness of Yambaru’s deep forest in order to seek out the unrecognizable rainbow bird.

¹⁵⁸ Medoruma, *Ibid.*, 146.

Conclusion

As a liminal space that perpetually exists in a precarious relationship to sovereign power, the historically-entrenched tendency in Okinawan studies has been to posit its liberation either in terms of some form of a recuperation of Okinawa's sovereignty or as a total denial of sovereign power itself. In either case, this thesis is different in that it is not fixated on either the affirmation or negation of an external power such as sovereignty, but rather developed a consideration for an internal power to put into practice a different kind of liberation for Okinawa. In this sense, each chapter examined how Kiyota and Medoruma have opened up the possibility of a new sense of communality that emerges outside of external sovereign power.

Chapter 1, appealed to Spinoza in order to foreground an engagement with the literature of Kiyota and Medoruma. For human beings who cannot avoid alienation and what Butler after Spinoza calls "un-freedom," *conatus* is the desire to preserve oneself; it is the singularity of the body which is incommensurable with other singularities. This incommensurable being is a means in and of itself which must not be eliminated for the sake of realizing an end.

After reading Kuroda Kio's essay on *anniya*, Chapter 2 provided a close reading of Kiyota's notion of the same in order to criticize the all-island struggle which was rooted in the assumption of the private ownership of land. For Kiyota, alienation is key. Different from Kawamitsu Shin'ichi, who insisted literature must be written in order to defeat a present reality, Kiyota dwelled on defeat as alienation. He wrote the poem *Maturity*, which tried to find meaning in defeat itself and not by contrasting it with win victory.

Chapter 3 introduced Antonio Negri and Hardt's discussion on violence. Their concept of constituent power is irreducible to the dichotomy of nonviolence and counter-violence, and it does not gesture toward an exteriority such as the law or state. I then turned to Frantz Fanon in order to deepen the concept of interiority. For Fanon, negritude does not posit "a raceless society" as its final goal as suggested by Sartre, but locates within itself the same kind of interior movement as described by Hardt and Negri. Negritude is not a negative means for a final positive goal. For Fanon, negritude is a positive means which suspends the final goal as unforeseeable. Such means does not accompany any external model which Fanon powerfully describes in

his essay “Algeria Unveiled.” In this essay, Fanon argues that Algerian women take their role and mission as revolutionaries “instinctively” without relying on any external strategy or doctrine.

Chapter 4 introduced Medoruma Shun’s short story “Hope” and focused on the key phrase “natural and necessary” in order to show how these words are related to Fanon’s articulations of revolutionaries who “instinctively” take up their roles.

Chapter 5 focused on the *Rainbow Bird* as a story about the hardships of a life that one does not choose. Through the characters in this story such as Katsuya, Mayu, Hisayo, and Hitomi, Medoruma depicts individuals who attempt to overcome hardship by themselves. A difficult life demands that each character harness an incommensurable force that encounters hardship. Also, such life without exteriority overlaps with the Koza Riot precisely because it did not function as a message to the external state or law.

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