In Carl Schmitt's Dark Dimension: Matsuda Masao, the Japanese New Left, and the Fictional Landscape of the Third World.*

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1 Introduction

Adachi Masao's 1969 experimental film "Ryakushō. Rensoku shasatsuma. AKA Serial Killer" opens with a textual introduction, followed by two scenes. The first scene gives a brief glimpse into an allegedly "early modern" street parade (*matsuri*) in Hokkaido prefecture. After showing impressions of a rather desolate suburban area and semi-urban corn fields, at minute three the mounted camera is directed at a wooden shack that is being used as a garage for a compact car of some sort. In the background we see a railway track. In constantly shifting directions of approach from right to left and left to right, several trains and steam locomotives pass silently through the background. Between each subsequent pass, the film is cut, allowing the next train to follow immediately from the opposing direction. Through its montage the scene negates any linear-chronological narrative, showing the trains passing in a time-loop though a landscape of repetition. Just once, the ejection of steam plumes is accompanied by a drum roll. Apart from that the free-jazz soundtrack seems to stay disconnected from the scene. A narrator tells us that this is Abashiri, the birthplace of Nagayama Norio, the famous serial killer (Adachi: 1969).

"AKA Serial Killer" was one of several movies of the late 1960s and early 1970s that implemented the method of "landscape theory". The movie's focus on space was coincidental with a change in the weltanschauung of the Japanese New Left. One aspect of this shift was the abandonment of the concept of class-based revolution, and the New Left's turn towards "spatial liberation" – expressed in the sudden interest by movies like AKA Serial Killer into urban space. While until then dominant forms of revolutionary projections had been

*This essay has been written in 2018 as a contribution of a edited volume, unfortunately one of those that was never realized. It does not refer to research published after 2018 and is therefore to be treated as outdated. Parts of the essay have been used in other publications.

along a temporal axis of a utopian future, social changes in urbanized Japan, the failure of the student movement 1968-1969, and the entanglement into third-world anti-imperialism pushed activists into adapting the movement's theory and praxis towards spaces and peoples to be liberated. In this turn towards space, as I will argue, the Japanese New Left discovered new "landscapes" (*fūkei*) and "frontiers" (*henkyō*), that had a lasting impact on their political practice.

First, I must make clear what I mean by "spatial turn". Is this turn really the shift towards concepts of space and topography, that have been injected into social sciences and humanities since the late 1980s? There is clearly a connection to "1968". As Döring and Thielmann have shown, the "spatial turn" has appeared first in Edward W. Soya's 1989 book "Postmodern Geographies", in which Soya explicitly criticizes the dominance of "historical materialism" in academic Marxism, urging a reevaluation of the works of French sociologist Henri Lefebvre. His 1974 book "Le production de l'espace" had been translated into English only in 1991 as "The Production of Space", subsequently described by Frederic Jameson as "productive way of distinguishing postmodernism from modernism proper" (Döring and Thielmann 2009: 7-8). Central to Lefebvre's work was the notion that social hierarchies, especially those of class or ethnicity, are represented in the topography of urban space. Like the center rules the periphery in a colonial empire, the modern capitalist nation-state rules over the peripheries of the city, keeping its inhabitants away from the affluence of the center.

Lefebvre's urban sociology had a profound impact on the Japanese New Left, abandoning concepts of class politics throughout the 1960s and 1970s and rejecting the working class as "revolutionary subject" in the process. Instead the activists political practice turned towards minority movements and the urban pauper, activists now found subject to liberate like in the day labor district of Ōsaka-Kamagasaki (Knaudt 2016). Hokkaidō, in its centennial after the full annexation by Meiji-Japan became another focal point of liberation theory. In this paper I will focus mainly on the activist, actor, screen play writer and art critique Matsuda Masao (born 1933). By the analysis of Matsuda's essays of the late 1960s, this paper make the argument that the spatial turn became actualized through its tight entanglement into the political activism of the day. But, at the same time, this turn proves to be a continuity of post war spatio-political concepts in Japanese intellectual history. While the "spatial turn" of the New Left was expressed in political practice, key actors of the militant wing of the New Left actively influenced the discourse about a spatial turn of political tactics. The so called Reborutosha (Society of the Revolt), a militant think tank producing a monthly Magazine named *News of the World Revolutionary Movement* (Sekai kakumei undō jōhō), was an important hub in the construction of this discourse.

2 Seikai kakumei undō joho

In the second half of the 1960s, the *News of the World Revolutionary Movement* introduced its readership to key texts of third-world anti-imperialism. During the Korean War and the Communist Party "Molotov Cocktail Era", its founding activists like Matsuda Masao (born 1933) or Ōta Ryū (1930-2009) had taken up the fight as young militant activists. Thus, the editors of the *News* were already in their forties and battle hardened by their experience the in the postwar Japanese old and New Left.

The model after which the "News" had been created was a monthly published by the JCP that gave insight into the state of the global communist movement, as well as translating and reprinting historical key texts. But in the case of the "News" the group intention was to promote the political views of the New Left. The first two issues contained mainly texts on Cuba, as the Cuban Revolution of 1959 was understood by the editors as a revolutionary alternative to the Soviet Union. Through their discussions on Cuba the group slowly started to approach the colonial question. Thus, the "the wind" shifted away from embracing European social revolution or western modernity, towards "the East", as Ota Masakuni remembers. Now the focus lay on Black Power, the indigenous populace on the American continents—and "Asia-Latin-America", accordingly creating a symbolic link between the war in Vietnam, opposed by the citizens movement in Japan, and the Cuban Revolution (Ōta M. 2003: 313).

From its beginning the group had a quite different unique understanding of third world anti-imperialism, as its members did not necessarily support national liberation movements *per se*. Instead they took a very post-colonial approach towards anti-imperialism by pronouncing their support exclusively for the suppressed peasants or indigenous population. This stance was a result of the group's engagement into translating the texts of post-colonial thinker Frantz Fanon, but also a result of studying the history of the American indigenous population. The activists put quite some effort into research, as most materials were only available in the National Diet Library. For example, Ōta Masakuni remembers how they found a copy of Bartolomé d las Casas 1542 report on the colonization of the West Indies (Ōta M. 2003: 203). Through this engagement into the colony and the indigenous, the "News" finally focused on Japan and its former colonial empire. This had implications for the political theory and practice of its members.

One example for this shift is aforementioned Ōta Ryū, a founding member of the "Trotskyite Union" (Torotsukisuto Renmei) and ideological leader of his own faction the "Proletarian Corps" (Puroretaria gundan), or "Armed Insurrection Preparation Committee" (Busō hōki junbi iinkai, or just A.I.P.C.), its student organization. In connection with the 1968 centennial of Hokkaidō colonization by Meiji-Japan, Ōta became interested into "Ainu liberation theories" and joined forces with film maker Adachi Masao, supporting Yūki Shōji's (1938-1983) Ainu Liberation League (Ainu kaihō dōmei). These interactions between "Wajin" and Ainu activists were had a profound impact on the construction of Ainu identity in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Siddle 1996: 175). Vice versa, putting

Hokkaidō into the framework of spatial liberation of the "frontier" made an impact on the Japanese New Left, too. Understanding the "frontier" as base of retreat along the line of the sinologist Takeuchi Yoshimi, Ōta Ryū under the slogan of the "retreat into the depth of the frontier" advocated an indigenous *urkommunismus* that was constructed along the line of the resistance of the Ainu populace against the "empires" of civilization, be it the Chinese Empire, the "Christian" Empires of the West or the Japanese central state of antiquity and modernity (Knaudt 2016: 263-70).

Ōta's concept of the base was nothing new. In "A Critical Biography of Mao Zedong" (Hyōden Mō Takutō) Takeuchi Yoshimi had developed an ideal place, namely the "base of operation" (konkyochi). Here, the weakness of Mao's peasant guerilla had been to its advantage, not disadvantage. Even more, the guerrilla did only exist because it had been weak, and the enemy had been strong. The "dialectical" trick Takeuchi superimposed on the 1920 and 1930s history of the Chinese Communist Party, made the victory of the guerrilla "inevitable." As the existence of the "enemy" was the reason for the guerilla's existence, and the goal of the guerrilla the destruction of the "enemy", the destruction of the enemy was a quasi-existential outcome. Still, Takeuchi was careful enough to retrench his concept as a philosophical category, and not a real geographical entity (Knaudt 2016: 256-7). Thus, the concept of the liberation of space, be it a philosophical category like Takeuchi's "base of operation" must be seen as continuity of post war intellectual history, as well.

Thus, the concept of "space" and "land" to be liberated was expressed prominently in the political framework of the Japanese New Left, especially at the conjuncture of the student movement's "defeat" on university campus. While Ōta's frontier-theories unmistakably influenced the anti-Japanese wing of the militant New Left between 1970 and 1975, Matsuda Masao spatial turn at first glance seems to have been restricted to the aesthetics of cinema.

3 Matsuda Masao

Like the case of Ōta Ryū, barely mentioned in Oguma Eiji's 2000-page history of "1968", Matsuda Masao's political influence on the New Left has so far largely been ignored, although Matsuda seems to be right in the center of the New Lefts spatial turn. Today, Matsuda is widely known for his participation in the new genre of landscape movies that appeared at the same time. Together with director and activist Adachi Masao he had acted in the lead role in Oshima Nagisa's "Death by Hanging" (Kōshikei, 1968), as well as a role in Wakamatsu Kōji's 1971 propaganda Movie "PFLP-Red Army: World War Declaration" (PFLP-Sekigun: Sekai sensō sengen). Also, he was involved in the production of several movies. One of the most well-known is probably the afore-mentioned 1969 "Ryakushō. Rensoku shasatsuma. AKA Serial Killer" which Matsuda produced together with Adachi and others.

Being central to film making history of the 1960s, Matsuda's "landscape theory" has been analyzed from the perspective of film and art history, although

Furuhata Yuriko has rightly argued that Matsuda's and other's "interests in the concept and the image of landscape point to their collective awareness of a particular historical conjuncture of political, cultural and economic transformations" of the late 1960s (Furuhata 2007: 347). Still, Matsuda's film criticism, film making, and production theory has to be centered around his political activism in the 1960s and 1970s.

Matsuda Masao was born in 1933 and had been a Member of the Japanese Communist Party until the early 1950s. After the outbreak of the Korean War he seems to have participated as activist in one of the many "Mountain Hamlet Construction Brigades" (*sanson kosakutai*), a group of young party members that were supposed to engage in guerrilla warfare in Japans country side while the JCP had gone underground. When the JCP abandoned the "armed struggle" in 1954, Matsuda was ousted from rank and file. After the 1960 Anpo protests, Matsuda, together with activist Yamaguchi Kenji (1925–1999) and Yoshimoto Takaaki, organized the so-called "Independent School" (Jiritsu Gakkō). Matsuda continued to be politically active throughout the 1960s.

Finally, in 1967, Matsuda was one of the founding fathers of the Reborutosha and participated in publishing the "New of the World Revolutionary Movement". Without doubt Matsuda was heavily influenced by Guevara's Guerilla theories and Fanons post-colonial thinking since those days. In 1969 Matsuda published an edited volume called "The [Electric] Circuit of Terror" (Teroru no kairo) containing several of his essays on militancy and politics. One continuing theme of this volume was the concept of the "base of operation" (*konkyochi*).

The idea of a base of operation –originally formulated by Takeuchi– was taken up by New Left militant activists in the late 1960s, especially after the barricades occupying universities around Japan had been dismantled and the students driven off campus into the streets by university administration and riot police. Loosing access to campus facilities and therefore the refuge from the thread of being arrested by plainclothes, student and New Left activists were in search for new "base of operation" that could replace university campus. In 1969 "Fukoro no naka no *konkyochi*", or "The Base of Operation in a Bag", Matsuda employed Takeuchi's concept of *konkyochi*. While Fidel Castro had called the backpack of the guerrillero an "base of support", Matsuda's backpack did not contain gear necessary for jungle warfare, but pamphlets, books, notebook, newspapers, and such. At the same time, while Takeuchi had been right about the of the base's fundamental character of not being defined as a fixed place, Matsuda rejected to notion of the base being just a philosophical concept, as –"with all due respect [for Takeuchi]"– a "moralistic" (Matsuda 1969a: 139) attitude. This notwithstanding, Matsuda himself developed no practical concept of the base of operations at this point. Rather ambiguously he sees the base of operation as a set of revolutionary tools one must put into action according to the given situation.

One year later, in 1969, in the text "The space of revolution and the time of ideas" Matsuda's attention became focused on the student movement in France which he understood as being connected to the Japanese movement. Thus, Paris' "Quartier Latin" became a "revolutionary space" in which the "indige-

nous" (*dōchaku*) revolutionary tradition of 1848 and 1871 was expressed through the barricades being built in the streets. The demonstrations in Tokyo-Kanda, organized mainly by students of nearby Tokyo University, had not shown an "indigenous" quality. The barricades, "or what you would call barricades" in Kanda were made of tables that had been taken from university lecture halls dragged to the site by the activists. "In a manner of speaking, those were the barricades of 'modernity'" Matsuda states — the same "katakana imports" of modernity like "the strike", "the picket line", and "demonstration." For Matsuda, by clinging to modernity the students could not connect to Japanese practices of revolt, like the rice riots of 1918, and thus not engage in an "indigenous street fight" (Matsuda 1969b: 204-4). f Japanese students understood that not their engagement into theoretical debate, but only the acceptance of the agency of third world revolution and it's spatial expansion into the "metropoles of imperialism" would change the movements character from "modernity" into the "indigenous", revolution could become a possibility even in Japan. Actually, this spatial actuality, expressed through the expansion of the third world's "space of revolution", can be understood as a continuity to prewar attempts by Marxists like Miki Kiyoshi to conceptualize a non-temporal modernity (Harootunian 2000: 375). In the case of Matsuda, the indigenous can be read as timeless anti-modernity, although in the end the concept's meaning seems to be nothing more than the claim of the "indigenous" to be "true, or "real", and the "modern" to be "false" and "fake". Anyhow, 1971 Fūkei no shinmetsu, "The Annihilation of Landscape", another edited volume of previously published materials, is perhaps the more original of Matsuda's contributions to New Left political theory. Matsuda's concept of "landscape" was that of a pitiless urban space, oppressing its inhabitants, especially the urban pauper. The people had to be liberated through a prolonged guerrilla war against the whole landscape and the illusive forces controlling it, taking the same form as wars of national liberation in the so called third world.

While filming "AKA Serial Killer" in 1969, Matsuda and the film crew made a journey from Hokkaidō to Tōkyō, filming Japans late 1960s urban landscape in the process. The stations that Matsuda filmed where the actual places that 19-year-old Nagayama Norio had visited until he had come to Tōkyō and shot to death two security guards and two taxi drivers. When Nagayama received the death penalty in 1969, his case sparked quite an interest in the New Left, as he had come from an urban poor background and now was repenting his crimes publicly.

Visiting Nagayama's home town, the city of Abashiri in the north of Hokkaidō, Matsuda witnessed the orchestration of a matsuri that was supposed to be a "daimyō procession", a scene that was shown in Adachi's "AKA Serial Killer" at the very beginning. Colonized after the Meiji Restauration Abashiri had never seen any feudal lords in its history, a point that struck Matsuda (Matsuda 1971a: 7-8). As such a procession could be seen in any of Japans cities, Matsuda became convinced that Abashiri was not a place one could claim to be Nagayama's hometown or heimat (*furusato*), but just a miniature copy of the urban super-center of Tōkyō:

> "The individuality of [Japan's] regions is remarkably thinned out. One cannot call them anything else than copies of the center. What we saw was a homogenized landscape. A colonial city, like Abashiri, or an indigenous city like Itayanagi, and even Tōkyō's urban center became reflected in our eyes in a very equal fashion" (Matsuda 1971a: 10-1).

Hence, for Matsuda, the serial murder committed by Nagayama had been an attack to "rip apart" this homogenized landscape.

In contrast to the ever-repeating *matsuri* in Tōkyō or elsewhere in Japan, Matsuda reasoned that what he understood as "real enthusiasm" of a people's festival could only be comprehended along Henry Lefebvre's concept of the Paris Commune, or in the Japanese case, the student protests at Nihon University in 1968. As sons and daughters of "small- and middle scale workshops in small- and middle scale cities", the students protest had been a protest of the "youth against the urban metropole of Tōkyō". Quoting Regis Debray's 1967 "Revolution in the Revolution?" (Révolution dans la révolution?), Matsuda called out to the young activists to leave the bourgeois conveniences of urban live behind and engage in guerrilla struggle, falling back to a virtual "mountain base".

> "This "mountain" to which we must return does not exist for us, yet. However, if, by occupying our cities, though liberation, and an extended war that revolutionizes our shared space [*kyōdō no kūkan*], the life of a lonely guerrillero becomes our passion and the "mountain" will rise above our golden cage. Living in our counter revolutionary homeland of Japan, which is burdened by the original sin of pillaging and murdering the third world, for us this space must become literally a purgatory, cleansing our souls" (Matsuda 1971a: 20).

Here, for Matsuda revolution became a moral obligation towards the peoples of the so called third world, or in the Japanese context, the underclasses of Japan's cities.

In the essay "What is space of the guerrilla?" (Gerira kūkan to wa nani ka), that was printed in "Annihilation of the Landscape" as well, Matsuda further develops his concept of the city as landscape of guerrilla warfare, finding an unlikely ally. In this essay Matsuda used extensive quotations from Carl Schmitt's 1963 "Partisan Theory" (Theorie der Partisanen). Schmitt had joined the German Nazi-Party right after Hitler had come to power in 1933 and been one of the most visible advocates of "national-socialist law" in NS-Germany — especially of the anti-Semite "Nuremberg laws" – and subsequently ousted from state service after 1945. In Schmitt's view the guerrilla fighter was connected by some sort of "tellurian power" to his "soil". Matsuda followed his argument, claiming that especially the Latin-American guerrilla practice had been the practice of peasants bound in a special relation to their soil. Therefore, wearing a uniform or not, the peasant was automatically a soldier, in Schmitt's view a "dark dimension" of irregular (or asymmetric) warfare:

> "Through the struggle of partisan warfare, a new and intricately structured space of action is developing. This is because the partisan does neither fight on the open battlefield nor on the front line. He is rather forcing his enemy into another space [*raum*]. Therefore, in addition to the regular and conventional arena of the theater of operations (*kriegsschauplatz*) he is adding another dimension, a dark one. In this dimension of depth, a displayed uniform becomes deadly [for the soldier wearing it]" (Schmidt 1963: 72-3; Matsuda 1971b: 37).

Matsuda did take Schmitt the wrong way. Schmitt was not painting a positive image of guerrilla. Schmitt saw guerrilla as a huge threat because of its entanglement with "communism", continuing his prewar anti-communist views, at the same time trying to put a super-elevated sense into Nazi-Germany's defeat. After all, for Schmitt the "tellurian" character of the occupied eastern peasant-nations had made victory of the German army virtually impossible.

Still, Matsuda, first, constructed the city as a dying landscape, and, second, declared it to be the theater of operation for urban guerrilla warfare, using spatial-dimensional concepts of Schmitt. Now I will come to the third step: Matsuda's appropriation of Frantz Fanon's post-colonial theory. Another text in Matsuda's "Annihilation of the Landscape", namely the essay "Shien no kūkan", the "Space of Self-Hate" sheds some light on this aspect. We must remember at this point, that the pathopsychological situation of people of color, living in a colonial or post-colonial situation, is central to Fanon's critique of French colonialism, expressed in "Black Skin, White Mask" and "Wretched of the Earth". In a third essay, Shien no kūkan, Matsuda employed film critique as a thematic anchor to develop the "space of self-hate", a pathopsychological state. A prime example for Matsuda was the French film "Eye for an Eye" (Oeil pour Oeil) by André Cayatte, made in 1957. In this movie the protagonist, played by German actor Kurt Jürgens, lives as a doctor in one larger city of Lebanon, although it becomes clear, that the hidden setting is not the Lebanon but colonial Algeria. After sending a mortally ill Arab women into a hospital, where she subsequently dies, the doctor is followed by an Arab man called Bortak. Later, the film script sends both protagonists into the desert on an unsuccessful journey to find the city of Damascus. While suspecting Bortak to have the wish to murder him, the doctor witnesses acts of self-mutilation by Bortak. In the end, both die in the desert.

Matsuda read the acts of self-mutilation as a rebellion through self-hate in the sense of Frantz Fanon. Seeing Bortak hacking off parts of his own body with a sword, Matsuda claimed to have witnessed a symbolic cut from French colonialism. At the same time, he uses Carl Schmitt to show how Bortak had forced the doctor to enter a different dimension, that of the desert (Matsuda 1971c: 165-7):

> "For the French doctor the barren desert, without doubt the "land" (*daichi*) in itself, has turned into an invincible and invisible army. He is hopelessly surrounded, breaking down on the apex

of terror and despair" (Matsuda 1971c: 167).

Here, for Matsuda it was "the land", or space, that it formative for rebellions against colonialism. But was this concept applicable to the urban space of Japan? Was Japan a semi-colonial "Third World" in which the same rules of guerilla warfare apply as in Vietnam or Algeria? Interestingly, Matsuda answered these questions with "no but yes". After discussing "Eye for an Eye" and another movie by Cayatte, Matsuda at length criticized contemporary third world-discourses in Japan, developing concepts like "Japan as Third World-country" or "the Inner Third World" of Japan. Without being able to go into depth here, we must understand that the concept of the "inner colony" or "inner third world" was very influential in New Left activism around 1970, especially in the day labor districts of Ōsaka-Kamagasaki and Tōkyō-San'ya. But Matsuda was pessimistic that Third World experiences could be actualized in Japan, but had to be constructed as "fictional space":

> What we call Third World is probably a notion that rejects its essentialization [*jittaika*]. If we condense what has been said before, and if we understand the "land" [*daichi*] before our eyes as something cloaked in the thick fog of "wretchedness", we have the Third World. She is neither a topographic Africa, nor Latin-America or Asia. She is neither linked to the political division between east and west nor to the economic one between north and south. She is neither something we can put into words as internal or external. Neither is she the "colony in rebellion", as Hiraoka [Masa'aki; 1941–2009] has impressively claimed. In short, what we call Third World is a fictional space. [...] That means, in other words, "the place which does not exist". Its real protagonists: the wretched of the earth. This is the land which reconquest has been promised. [...] What we call Third World is a fiction with the purpose to unite the soldiers of the armed rebellion [*busō hanran*] in spatial simultaneity [*bashoteki dōjisei*]" (Matsuda 1971c: 180-1)

By appropriating Fanon's post-colonial theory and applying it to film critique, Matsuda constructed the urban space as a utopia of rebellion. Regardless of any social, historical, political, or cultural conditions, the annihilation of the "landscape" of urban Japan became an enterprise of the armed urban guerrilla.

4 Conclusion

While some of continuities where purely intellectual, as we have seen with Takeuchi's "base of operation", Matsuda "dark" and "fictional space", as well as Ōta's counter-civilizational concepts became actualized in violent practice. The "East Asian Anti-Japanese Armed Front" (Higashi Ajia Hannichi busō sensen) took up on Ōta's concept of an ur-communist liberated space and put it into

practice by vanishing into the anonymity of the Japanese urban landscape. Between Autumn 1974 and Spring 1975 the group planted several bombs at major Japanese companies, like the Mitsubishi-Headquarter in Tokyo-Marunouchi, killing 8 employees and wounding close to 400. The Anti-Japanese Front's political theory was influence heavily but the "News", Ōta's Frontier-theories, and Matsuda's "fictional space" of an "dark" rebellion of the "wretched of the earth".

One must note that the Anti-Japanese Front's attack (and two copycat-attacks) as terrorist practice remained a singularity inside the New Left movement. "Terrorism" –the practice to provoke a revolutionary situation through the means of deadly attacks on representatives of capitalism or "the state"– on was not a logical trajectory the New Left was destined to take, and mostly it did not. Landscape theory (*fūkeion*) rather became an influential topic in Japanese art and cinema along the 1970s. Still, the "spatial turn" with its continuities both to the past and the present future had become very real. The 1970 turn towards the city as spatial expression of social hierarchies, entangled in global anti-imperialist and post-colonial discourses, had changed Japanese New Left activists' theory and practice profoundly.

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