

# Farmer–filmmakers, fieldwork, and growth

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In the first photograph, a man crouches with a camera in a thicket of rice plants. The sun shimmers across their swaying surface. It's summer in a mountainous hamlet that's snowed-in most winters. The man's been coming here, 200 miles north of Tokyo to Yamagata since 1974 with his filmmaking collective, to learn how to grow rice and make documentaries about their fieldwork.

In the second photograph, an 8mm film still, a man dances on parched earth in a t-shirt bearing the acronym of an African liberation group. He wears branches in his hat and a grin. He's been helping thirteen friends collect adobe from a termite mound to build an irrigation channel. They came home from hostels and factories in Paris in 1977, establishing a cooperative farm on the banks of a river at Mali's border with Senegal and Mauritania. They produce millet, onions, chili, tomatoes, bananas, radio, theater, photography, and film.

These images depict members of the collectives Ogawa Productions in Japan and Somankidi Coura in Mali, as they undertook long-term experiments in farming, and used cameras to chronicle their activities for cultural and agricultural regeneration. Their contemporaries questioned the move to rural, 'underdeveloped' regions. Why abandon Tokyo's subversive experimentation and leftist barricades for the woods? Why leave jobs in Paris to return to an area devastated by decades of colonial plantation agriculture, a protracted drought, and a recent military takeover?

Images such as these are clues for the political, and *ecopolitical*, answers with which the collectives would have responded. Their dream was to use soil and celluloid, agriculture and culture, food-sovereignty and self-representation, to coproduce climate justice— sharing images with each other to document viable ways of living otherwise, in the face of extractive capitalism. 'The aim,' said one Somankidi Coura member, was 'to show that

there are other possible ways of development... other things that young people can do.’<sup>1</sup> Following a tradition of film and photographic scholarship that finds registers of meaning within images as a way of reframing history to acknowledge the experiences of people and places objectified, overlooked, or erased, this essay is written with and about images of the collectives, as a method for bringing their ecopolitical visions into focus.<sup>2</sup>

These photographed and filmed images were made as Ogawa Pro and Somankidi Coura adjusted to their new back-to-the-land lives. Over the coming years, Ogawa Pro’s membership would range from a handful to fourteen, squeezed into a single wooden farmhouse where they slept, ate, and produced films, their wives raising the children and undertaking all domestic work. Somankidi Coura, initially comprising fourteen members, built themselves housing and a school near an existing village called Somankidi, whose occupants helped with construction, glad to see youth returning to the region with a commitment to stay. Even the *djinn*s, spirits who inhabited the earth, welcomed them.<sup>3</sup> Japanese farmers in Yamagata’s tiny Magino and Furuyashiki villages were initially less cordial towards their new neighbors, suspecting Ogawa Pro were communists building explosives (in fact, the test tubes in Ogawa Pro’s shed contained plant fertilizer).<sup>4</sup>

Ogawa Pro’s lengthy documentaries about rice farming, and the many short films and photographic slideshows produced at Somankidi Coura to document their crops and irrigation system, promoted self-sufficiency in the face of global agribusiness and its neocolonial patterns of extraction. Initially produced for their own members as records of activities and achievements, and for the education of farmers and workers elsewhere, the collectives’ images have spread like seeds on the wind since their making, reaching film festival audiences across the world. Ogawa Pro were integral to this dissemination, helping launch Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival in 1989. Continuing biannually to this day, the festival put Japan and East Asia on the map for documentary, and assembled filmmakers from all over the world. Though Ogawa Pro wound up in 1992 when its founder, Ogawa Shinsuke, died of ill health, the festival sustains the collective’s jovial, down-to-earth spirit. Somankidi Coura Multipurpose Agricultural Cooperative, meanwhile, continues to this day— its membership now exceeds 300.

Although Ogawa Pro and Somankidi Coura did not know of each other, their concurrent experiments in farming-filmmaking resonate. For both,

self-sufficiency and self-representation were profound means of sustaining people by producing their own food and visual narratives. Working at a time when neoliberal goals of financialization, privatization, and global ‘free trade’ were threatening local economies and the ecosystems upon which they depended, the collectives share a legacy of diversifying economic principles through ecology. By documenting the fruits of their collective agricultural and cultural labors, they visualized alternative definitions for ‘development’ and ‘growth’ to those of mainstream economics. Rather than base their goals on neoclassical models of scarcity that task society with facilitating endless growth and consumption, irrespective of nature’s limits, the collectives used organic agriculture to sustain the land that sustained them, and— particularly in the case of Somankidi Coura, whose members took turns as leader— worked communally to share labor and profits.

In that first photograph, the man crouching in the Yamagata field is Ogawa Shinsuke, who gave Ogawa Pro its name and presided over it with both charisma and coercion. A portly, gregarious figure then in his forties, Ogawa was delighted to be away from the city, up to his knees in mud, awash in farmers’ stories, and immersed in local culture.

Ogawa’s biography, as well as the autobiographical fabrications with which he embellished it, provide clues for his investment in ecology as a deeply felt political practice. Ogawa claimed to have studied ethnology at university, thus associating himself with an important center of folk studies and an emblem of national tradition. He also claimed to have dropped out, as was fashionable in 1960s counterculture. In reality, Ogawa’s academic background was rather conservative, culminating in a diploma in economics.<sup>5</sup> Ogawa also liked to declaim his poor, rural background, chatting with old farmers over pickled vegetables, everyone sitting cross-legged around a stove. Lending an air of authenticity amongst fellow filmmaker-activists and working-class subjects, Ogawa’s exaggerations helped him identify with their cause— an indication of the idealism that shaped his career. Call it a documentarian’s creative treatment of actuality, he seemed to suggest, echoing John Grierson, whose social agenda and educational approach to documentary he admired.<sup>6</sup>

Throughout the 1960s, Ogawa had witnessed roads, shopping malls and office blocks spread across the landscape, with rapid economic development after the Second World War indebting the nation to the US in an asymmetrical relation. Japan provided a base for America in East Asia during

the Cold War, as well as a supply of natural resources and labor for the global market. Though Japan's economy boomed, laborers prospered little. Glossy images of purchasing power eclipsed social and environmental exhaustion. Made independently or with a research group he led in the late-60s that served as a precursor to Ogawa Pro, Ogawa's early documentaries chronicled the overworked and under-waged, contributing to a wider leftist movement for educational and labor reform, and in opposition to nuclear armaments and the Vietnam War. These films were made for and about political issues, aiming to stir working-class audiences into activism.

Unsurprisingly perhaps, given his leftist politics, Ogawa's pitches for television were unsuccessful. The lack of uptake further motivated his experiments in grassroots production and distribution, where self-organized screenings and the raucous discussions they provoked became central elements of the politicizing process. So long as at least three people showed up, Ogawa declared, he had an audience.<sup>7</sup> In later years, audiences grew, crowding into village halls and school gymnasiums, clapping, chanting, and booing during screenings, and carefully filling out surveys afterwards. Ogawa wanted to know whether they were active in the struggle portrayed, or would support it after watching the film, whether they sympathized with the philosophy of the struggle, and whether they would organize or fundraise in the future.

In 1968, Ogawa Pro emerged from this context of participatory screening. Ogawa recruited filmmakers, activists, and students as his 'staff', funding their enterprise with audience donations and loans ('we'll pay them back with films', they promised).<sup>8</sup> The collective's purpose, Ogawa emphasized, was to produce documentaries about people forgotten by Japan's economic plans, particularly rural communities whose perspectives were also overlooked in leftist protests erupting in the cities. 'I knew I had to film farmers,' he claimed, 'because I was a farmer myself'.<sup>9</sup> Though more aspiration than fact, Ogawa's words anticipated the earthy direction his life would take.

The man in the second photograph is Bouba Touré, then in his twenties and newly returned to the Senegal River Basin region he had left as a teenager in search of work. Unlike Ogawa, Touré did not name the collective after himself and always reminded audiences that he was one of fourteen initiators. Touré is, however, the most known and international facing of Somankidi Coura, due to his role chronicling and transmitting its activities.

Filming a kind of self-portrait with a handheld camcorder in 2008, Touré reflects on the founding of the collective three decades prior, and his ongoing relationship to image-making, which he describes as ‘walking with time’. Images avert time’s headlong rush into forgetting, he explains. Images evidence struggles and solidarities. As he speaks, Touré films the walls of his cramped apartment whose address gives this half-hour film its name, *Bouba Touré, 58 rue Trousseau, Paris, France*. He lives here when not in Mali. From floor to ceiling, and even where he washes himself and brews his coffee, Touré has pasted photographs of friends in Paris and Mali, and posters of heroes (Nelson Mandela, Malcolm X, Thomas Sankara, Amílcar Cabral). Cassette tapes from around the world are piled high (‘music has no frontier’, he says). Clocks tick from every shelf and table (‘for me, time means a lot. I don’t want to die and be forgotten’). The carpet is barely visible under envelopes stuffed with photographic negatives. Grazing over these documents of his life, Touré repeats, like a prayer, ‘the struggle, the struggle, the struggle’.

The camera catches Touré in a mirror. He has filled out since those early 8mm films, but his deep, kind eyes are the same. He inspects the walls of images that fortify him. Here is a man whose parents’ generation could not use cameras, since France prohibited African subjects from filming themselves during the colonial era.<sup>10</sup> A man whose father’s generation went ‘to die’ in the WWI trenches, fighting in ‘a war he took part in without ever knowing why’, and whose ‘great-grandfather was deported as a slave to the Americas’.<sup>11</sup> A man who arrived in France ‘as an immigrant’ in the early 1960s, and found himself sharing derelict factories converted into hostels with as many as 300 men, two sinks, two toilets, and no light-switches.<sup>12</sup> Stoves leaked, police raided, tuberculosis spread, and Touré learned that—contrary to what the colonial regime had taught about European civilization—‘a human is less important than capital’ in Paris.<sup>13</sup> ‘We lived like rats’, he says.<sup>14</sup>

Between long shifts at a factory, Touré learned to read and write (this had not been on the colonial curriculum). He also learned to use a camera and film projector so that he could ‘leave traces’, lest future generations forget the ‘deplorable’ hostel conditions. Images helped Touré communicate with other migrant workers. He took their photographs, gifting them or compiling slideshows to share as a group. Sitting with a tray of 35mm slides to feed into a carousel, Touré fed his audiences encouragement (‘strike against the slumlord’, ‘end the slave-like conditions that have subjugated us for years’).<sup>15</sup>

The migrant workers came from Mali, Senegal, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, and Burkina Faso but, as Touré said, borders were colonial impositions on families and tribes that long predated French control, and national divisions were secondary to the sense of Pan-African unity in the hostels.<sup>16</sup> Scattered around Paris and particularly in the northern districts of Saint Denis and Aubervilliers, the hostels became gravitational centers for leftist activism.<sup>17</sup>

In 1971, Touré and other migrant workers in the hostels established the Cultural Association of African Workers in France (ACTAF), contributing to ongoing debates within a Third Worldist movement united around programs of socialism and economic sovereignty that emerged after Algerian independence and intensified with the Vietnam War.<sup>18</sup> At this time, rent strikes at the hostels, and liberation struggles in Angola, Guinea-Bissau, and Mozambique, stimulated conversations about neocolonial extractivism. The Association raised funds, sent clothes, and donated blood to those countries still fighting for their independence, and organized screenings and conferences around militant films from these and other regions transitioning from colonialism to socialism.<sup>19</sup> Reports arrived of a terrible drought in the Sahel region devastating land already exhausted by colonial plantation agriculture. Touré's father sent letters begging for money: 'the granaries are empty. We have nothing left to eat'.<sup>20</sup> Something had to be done.

Becoming 'more and more conscious that we have to act locally', 'so that our brothers and sisters wouldn't have to come to France to sell their labor', Touré and others at ACTAF produced workshops and theater productions in Paris about the prospect of returning to Africa to tend to the land, planting ideas for what came to fruition in 1977.<sup>21</sup> Touré's burgeoning photographic practice helped cultivate the idea. Photographs became a conduit for showing workers still in Paris how their labor might be put to better use at home.

Many newly independent regions in Africa encountered European NGOs at that time, who arrived promising aid for 'development'. The French government also tried incentivizing migrants to return home. Somankidi Coura rejected NGO partnering ('"humanitarian aid" is just colonialism in another form', Touré warned).<sup>22</sup> Somankidi Coura's emphasis on self-sufficiency and organic methods also resisted a wave of corporate-owned new technologies then encroaching on the Global South with high-yield monocultural species and chemical fertilizers, under the banner of Green Revolution and the illusion of epistemic privilege achieved by modern biotech

science.<sup>23</sup> Filming verdant mixed crops in the early 2020s, Touré chuckles to his camera and the cooperative members nearby. ‘Perfect’, he says. ‘It’s all organic’, they answer, ‘no pesticide, no fertilizer’.<sup>24</sup>

In simultaneously understanding nature’s limits, and celebrating its abundance and life-giving power, Somankidi Coura, like Ogawa Pro, belong to a long history of oppositional movements to exponential economic growth, variously led by agrarian radicals, romantic poets, revolutionary socialists, and more recently, ecofeminists and proponents of ecological Marxism.<sup>25</sup> In the contemporary context of climate breakdown, and amidst debates about de-growth and post-growth strategies to curb Global North carbon emissions, the collectives’ images gathered here offer clues for how ideas of worth and progress might be re-evaluated for post-extractive futures.

Such a re-evaluation is important because it challenges the prevailing logic of extractive capitalism, which relies on the metric of GDP (gross domestic product). Despite its bluntness, GDP has been used in mainstream economics since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century to measure a nation’s wealth. GDP counts economic activity regardless of its social or ecological value (or damage). Crises such as oil spills, earthquakes and wars raise GDP because of the expensive rescue and reparation projects they entail. Meanwhile, the unpaid labor of growing one’s own food, raising children, or caring for sick and elderly people, as Marilyn Waring puts it, counts for nothing.<sup>26</sup> Likewise, keeping oil and trees in the ground, rivers clean, and the air unpolluted ensure planetary wellbeing yet value zero according to GDP. Kate Raworth and J. K. Gibson-Graham are amongst many economists who criticize so-called developed nations’ continued fixation on GDP growth for foreclosing concerns for social and environmental welfare, while the physicist and environmentalist Vandana Shiva has gone as far as describing economic growth as ‘anti-life’.<sup>27</sup> De-growth strategies have been proposed for curbing consumption and waste, but although reducing current fossil fuel dependency is important (so long as it resists the carbon colonial outsourcing of polluting production to the Global South), de-growth maintains a binary logic that centers the idea of financialized activity and its reduction, leaving little room for *different* forms of growth.<sup>28</sup> Amidst climate breakdown and mass extinction, reevaluating what values is paramount.

Reconsidering growth can foster a different and more diverse set of values. As Anna Tsing writes, alternative economic forms operating around and against mainstream ones (she calls them ‘pericapitalist’) propose ‘sites for

rethinking the unquestioned authority of capitalism’, their diversity offering ‘a chance for multiple ways forward’.<sup>29</sup> Different forms of growth cultivated in Ogawa Pro and Somankidi Coura’s farming-filmmaking experiments include a proliferation of cultural engagement, a flourishing of communal greenspace, increased ecological and political literacy, and a resurgence in wildlife and biodiversity. With a ‘different growth’ framework, their experiences of struggle and solidarity in post-war Japan and post-colonial West Africa appear both distinct and linked, offering timely insight into what life beyond extractivism could be like, if growth meant many things and economics stemmed from ethics and ecology.

Training their lenses on rice seedlings and tomato plants during their long-term fieldwork projects, Ogawa and Touré realized that, without diversifying growth metrics, a cold logic of financialization would prevail that assessed anything and everything for its potential for extracting profit. In the words of the geographer Kathryn Yusoff, extractivism is motivated by a desire for inhuman properties, with slavery, indigenous genocide, and settler colonialism evidencing ‘total submission to the principle of extraction’ and providing the bedrock for continued resource dependencies and the situated, racialized labor exploitations they entail.<sup>30</sup> Put another way, as Touré had it, extraction makes humans ‘less important than capital’.

The extractive damages that Ogawa Pro and Somankidi Coura experienced and resisted belong to the global history of capitalism Yusoff describes. Western aid packages to Japan during and after post-war occupation, along with subsidized American wheat imports that threatened indigenous rice production in the 1970s, exemplify some of many ways that age-old systems of Western imperialism perpetuated relations of dependency in Ogawa’s day.<sup>31</sup> At that same time, although a wave of independence movements around 1960 might suggest a waning of European power in Africa, with countries like France opening their borders to newly independent nations, exploitation continued, as Touré experienced firsthand. Meanwhile, European companies continued to extract minerals and cash crops from West Africa. If post-war Europe and Japan seemed cleaner and shinier in the 1960s and 70s, such renovation came, to borrow from Marx (whose writings both collectives knew), ‘dripping from head to foot, from every pore, with [the] blood and dirt’ of extractive capitalism accumulated over decades and centuries.<sup>32</sup>



In her 2018 book *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None*, Yusoff criticizes the geo-logics of geology and climate science for forgetting these prior centuries when dating the Anthropocene age to changes in geological data caused by 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century industrialism. Climate change, Yusoff argues, is coeval with early capitalism's 'organization of human property as extractable energy properties', in the colonization of the Americas and the forced transportation of African people to the 'New World' as a workforce in the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>33</sup> While some have proposed the term Capitalocene to better account for the specifically capitalist logic and protagonists driving that colonial project and its climate effects, others including Tsing use Plantationocene to acknowledge the centrality of enslaved labor, land enclosure, and intensive agricultural practices in capitalist-driven climate change.<sup>34</sup> Though Ogawa and Touré precede such terminologies, they would surely applaud the critical tracing of climate breakdown to colonial conversions of land into territory.

Tsing's 2015 book on capitalist destruction and multispecies survival, *The Mushroom at the End of the World*, studies ecologies and economies including small-scale farming in rural Japan and global agri-businesses, emphasizing the damage to regions and landscapes wrought by plantation principles. Alongside Yusoff's work, Tsing's tracing of the imperial origins of climate damage elucidates the ecopolitical and anti-colonial significance of Ogawa Pro and Somankidi Coura's back-to-the-land projects. These projects' experiments with organicism and self-sufficiency, meanwhile, resonate with Tsing's careful attention to 'unruly' possibilities when multiple species form symbiotic alliances around and against capitalist systems. They also speak to Yusoff's consideration (via Sylvia Wynter) of accounts of enslaved and maroon communities establishing different 'intimacies' with the earth, growing their own food and cultures, beside the plantation's stronghold.<sup>35</sup> Although the plantation creates hierarchies of species life in which ownership over other people, animals and the earth itself is prized, Yusoff and Tsing remind us that it is also a field where 'the politically-and-biologically diverse potentials of the seams of global capitalism' can be realized.<sup>36</sup> It is in these seams, these unruly edges, that Ogawa Pro and Somankidi Coura sowed their seeds over decades of fieldwork. What follows is a seed catalogue, an album of images, for what they grew and invite us to imagine.

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In the next photograph, a group of men marches toward the camera in a formation that seems military though these ploughed furrows are not trenches. The men have cameras, t-shirts, and jeans from the city. Leading them, centered in the foreground and larger than the others, is Ogawa Shinsuke.

Ogawa had worked hard for this position of authority. He had cut his teeth at Iwanami Productions, a public relations firm that opened a film department in 1950 to make industry and government-contracted documentaries. Despite potential limits imposed by industrial contracts, some of Japan's most innovative filmmakers began at Iwanami, including Tsuchimoto Noriaki and Susumu Hani. Ogawa joined a group of younger employees at Iwanami who were interested in political film, and when forming Ogawa Pro in 1968, he drew inspiration from the many film meetings he had attended there, which included discussions of works-in-progress by Tsuchimoto and others. Collective discussion of how to shoot a scene or edit in post-production would become vital for Ogawa Pro's methodology.

Ogawa Pro's first long-term filmmaking project hurled its fresh-faced members into challenging fieldwork. *Fieldwork*, noun. 1: practical work conducted in the natural environment, rather than in a library, laboratory, or office. 2: a temporary fortification.

Ogawa Pro spent six years filming at temporary fortresses and lookout towers built in an area to the north-east of Tokyo called Sanrizuka, centered around several hamlets and the town of Narita. They filmed as protesters and farmers chained themselves to trees and lay before bulldozers, as helmeted police arrived in wire-windowed vans, and as Japan's economic 'miracle' became nightmarish.

Back in 1966, the government had announced plans for an international airport at Narita—plans many viewed as evidence of the American-allied Japanese capitalist machine, fearing US military planes would re-fuel there on route to Vietnam. Anti-American sentiment was already high, due to contentious plans to renew Japan's Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security with America (ANPO). The planned airport seemed to serve American imperial expansion and Cold War politics more than ordinary Japanese people. Its construction would level farmland and hamlets, with displaced farmers paid off and forcibly evicted. Narita was an ideological battleground between rural land rights and urban, global authorities. Farming tools became symbols of protest, partly because of farmers like Ōki Yone,

who refused to leave her home at the center of the proposed runway. Ōki was foisted onto a police riot shield and carried from her house as it was bulldozed. She lost three teeth in the struggle and was dumped on the ground nearby.<sup>37</sup>

The seven films Ogawa Pro shot amidst such violence— the Sanrizuka Series— testify to the fervor, and failure, of the uprising. Supportive filmmakers and activists, including members of the Black Panther Party and the Newsreel collective from the US, came to Sanrizuka to see the farmers’ and filmmakers’ fieldwork. Sanrizuka resonated with liberation projects across the world, the rough urgency of the black-and-white films chiming with those made on student and worker barricades in France, in post-revolutionary Cuba, and across Latin America in resistance to US-influenced right-wing dictatorships. Each in its own way, these films informed an emergent genre that scholars have variously called militant, committed, or political filmmaking, and Third World or liberation cinema.<sup>38</sup>

In the photograph, Ogawa Pro members walk right through the field. Having filmed from the edge of rice fields at Narita airport, Ogawa realized he should get closer to the action in Yamagata. ‘We needed to start using our own bodies to realize our ideals,’ he announced— though, more accurately, it was his ‘staff’ who got their hands dirty. Ogawa preferred reading, and editing footage, back at the collective’s living-working headquarters.<sup>39</sup> In the photograph, the men imprint their political alliance into the soil.

They came to this particular soil after a chance meeting during one of Ogawa’s trips to show the Sanrizuka films to farmer’s associations across Japan. After a screening in Yamagata, Ogawa Pro’s method was challenged: if they really wanted to film farmers’ struggles, shouldn’t they learn how to farm themselves? Ogawa loved this kind of challenge and its anecdotal power, later recalling that he packed his bags to leave Tokyo at once.<sup>40</sup> Thus began Ogawa Pro’s experiment for collective living, rice farming, and filmmaking.

Quite how much time and manual labor this experiment demanded, not a single member predicted. Eighteen years, several tons of rice, and a suite of films later, Ogawa Pro’s peculiar cultural and agricultural output testified to their commitment to champion rural land and communities. The films were made about farmers, for farmers— and by farmers, if one believed Ogawa’s interpretation— as a means of solidarity. At the time, sustained and respectful portrayals of rural life were rarely seen on the large or small screen. Studios churned out samurai and yakuza thrillers, melodramas, and pornography.

Documentaries were largely state or corporate-sponsored. Even avant-garde filmmaking tended to remain urban in audience and subject-matter.

Ogawa Pro, along with Ogawa's long-time contemporary from Iwanami, Tsuchimoto, were exceptional. Often compared to Ogawa Pro's films, Tsuchimoto's extended documentaries championed the plight of rural fishing communities devastated and silenced by industrial mercury pollution. While Ogawa Pro looked to the soil, Tsuchimoto looked to the sea, for evidence of Japan's painfully industrialized present. Immersive fieldwork was important to both, as they headed north and south, to live and film alongside farmers and fishermen. Ogawa described himself and his collective as

outsiders, or even worse, people from the city, surrounded by artificiality, who had completely lost the feeling for the diversity of other life forms and our relation to nature. Only close cohabitation with the peasants and the learning of work in the fields could show us the way to their essence.<sup>41</sup>

Ogawa's words recall the photograph of the men walking (in fields which he called 'our school').<sup>42</sup> While his focus on 'other life forms' presents an ecologically attuned epistemic openness, his essentializing lyricism also reproduces a dichotomy of metropole/ peasant that emphasizes Ogawa Pro's heroic immersion as a moral conversion.<sup>43</sup>

Another troubling aspect of the photograph of Ogawa Pro marching into the field in search of 'essence', is the lack of women. Ogawa Pro's membership largely confined women to domestic and assistant roles— even Ogawa's spouse, who members secretly likened to Mao Zedong's powerful wife, could not compete with him.<sup>44</sup> Most photographs of the collective betray its gendered imbalance. Men march the fields. Men operate the cameras. Men review the day's film rushes, and drink into the night. If women are present, they hover in the background, pouring beer, frying meat (Ogawa's favorite), and hushing children. As inclusive as Ogawa Pro's films are when considering more-than-human occupants of landscape, and women farmers' contributions to industries such as sericulture, the collective's own divisions of labor remained patriarchal and centered upon Ogawa's leadership.<sup>45</sup> In hindsight, several members regretted this unfair politics, and some lost marriages to it. Member Toshio Iizuka recalls the appeal of moving to Yamagata as a collective, where family life could continue alongside farming and filmmaking.<sup>46</sup> Reality turned out differently. In a 2000 documentary made by Barbara Hammer about Ogawa Pro, Iizuka's former wife Hiroko

summarizes the six years she spent with the collective: ‘every day, cooking, cooking.’<sup>47</sup>

Women involved in Somankidi Coura eventually protested their subordinate position as wives of the cooperative’s members, going on strike during a chili harvest and forming a women’s association to cultivate their own fields.<sup>48</sup> Later in life, Touré remarked that Somankidi Coura would have been impossible but for the labor and peaceful influence of women. ‘Without them,’ he said, ‘we were zero’.<sup>49</sup> Applauding themselves for ‘sharing everything’, men in Somankidi Coura and Ogawa Pro revealed blind spots within their visionary decolonial and ecological strategies.<sup>50</sup>

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In the next photograph, a young man watches as another turns soil with a fork. The photograph is in portrait orientation, though its subject is a French landscape, layered with stripes of furrows in the foreground, receding towards a hedgerow and lane, another field, and woodland. In the mid-distance, a third man guides a tiller attached to a tractor which a fourth man drives. The men in the foreground are young, black, and dressed in sneakers, flared jeans, and patterned shirts typical of the mid-1970s. The others are older, white, and wearing work clothes and caps. This is a field in France’s Haute-Marne region, where future members of Somankidi Coura (including Moussa Coulibaly and Ousmane Sinaré in this photograph) came to train in agriculture for six months before returning to Mali. Although some members, including Touré, grew up farming corn and millet before emigrating as teenagers, they wanted to learn more about irrigation from farmers whose low-intensity, organic methods enabled self-sufficiency— when they weren’t threatened by agri-business takeovers and the marketing of chemical pesticides.

Touré, Coulibaly, Sinaré and others came to Haute-Marne in 1976 because they, like Ogawa Pro, identified a connection between soil health and political freedom. In a post-independence context, reclaiming food-sovereignty through sustainable agriculture helped repair decades of colonial plantation damage, and offered an alternative to rural exodus. Touré and others had already spent some time in the French countryside in 1973 when they attended Larzac’s Harvest Festival where farmers gathered in opposition to state plans to extend a military base, and in solidarity with the Third World, whose experiences of land expropriation they related to their own.

Touré described a farmer's pickaxe or *daba* as his preferred 'weapon' for struggle, intending his photographs as tools for the education and politicization of fellow West Africans.<sup>51</sup> More recently, in collaboration with the artist Raphaël Grisey, who has become Somankidi Coura's collaborator, biographer, and champion, Touré has made work for French and international audiences. Touré and Grisey's collaborative film *Xaraasi Xanne – Crossing Voices* (2022), for example, recounts the founding of Somankidi Coura for viewers unfamiliar with West Africa. *Crossing Voices* also sheds light on migrant districts in Paris that audiences might not know beyond generic newsflashes about *les sans-papiers* (undocumented people, or illegal immigrants). *Crossing Voices*' title encapsulates Touré's sustained intention of using film and photography to vocalize experiences of alienation, and repair an estranged relation between Europe and Africa.

The photograph of the men turning earth in Haute-Marne is one of many thousands that Touré took in France and Mali over the next forty years, many of which feature as archival material in *Crossing Voices*. Touré's images form an expanded visual archive that also includes 8mm amateur films taken on visits to Somankidi Coura by the French farmers with whom its founding members trained, and a feature film directed by Sidney Sokhona in which Touré plays a version of himself.<sup>52</sup>

In Sokhona's film, *Safrana or Freedom of Speech*, four West African men, led by Touré, who previously worked 'to build cars and carry garbage bins' in Paris, travel to the French countryside to train with farmers critical of new production methods and proud of rural, ancestral practices such as water divination.<sup>53</sup> The film opens with a quote from Mao, emphasizing the importance of assimilating knowledge gleaned through hands-on experience abroad into nation-building at home. As we see in the film's staging of animated conversations across plowed furrows and kitchen tables during the internship, the concerns of traditional farmers in France resonated with their trainees' hopes of developing organic subsistence agriculture in West Africa.

While training in rural France, and acting in Sokhona's film, Touré set about contacting local governments in Senegal, Mali, and Mauritania about land availability in the Senegal River Basin region. Mali responded first, offering 60 riverside hectares in the Kayes area, which had the highest level of migration to Europe at that time.<sup>54</sup> Touré and his collaborators immediately agreed.

Few people believed that revitalizing an area so damaged by colonial occupation and its aftermath was possible. The place was overgrown with baobab trees, its soil parched by drought and depleted from a French sisal plantation and factory that operated there before independence. After 1960, Mali's new government subsidized back-to-the-land projects and ran cooperative farms, but corruption and a lack of infrastructure troubled such ambitions.<sup>55</sup> A botched UN aid program had tried to develop the factory and its surroundings, and left ruins.<sup>56</sup> Electricity cables hung like raggedy branches. Snakes nested on the ground and in the trees. The water tower sat empty, and cows wandered in and out of the cinema building. The area seemed to epitomize Marx's diagnosis for the combined social and ecological ills of industrialism. Intensive extractivism had simultaneously exhausted 'the soil and the worker,' tearing a rift between humans and the rest of nature.<sup>57</sup>

Sokhona's speculative film, and Somankidi Coura's realized farm, refused this situation. 'I rejected miserablism, humanism and pity,' Sokhona said, his defiance anticipating critiques of socially oriented filmmaking's paternalistic gaze by Trinh T. Minh-ha and Pooja Rangan. 'In *Safrana*,' Sokhona explained, 'I thought it was more important to show that immigrants were taking control of their own fate.'<sup>58</sup> Resonating with concurrent films *Med Hondo* and the collective *Cinélutte* made about sociopolitical struggles, Sokhona's determination to celebrate organized resistance chimes with Somankidi Coura's fieldwork activities. In permaculture collaboration with the natural environment, Somankidi Coura's mutual economy shared political and ecological education, and fresh fruit and vegetables, as fortifications against extractivism's enforced dependency. Nurturing land and culture together, as different forms of growth, they worked, as Touré put it, in their 'Ho Chi Minh sandals' (made from discarded tires) and knitted 'Amílcar Cabral hats', in 'pursuit of happiness' rather than money.<sup>59</sup>

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In the next photograph, a rice paddy is dotted with stooped figures transplanting seedlings into soil beneath the water. A man with a hoe pulls soil towards a levee where a second man holds a pole the same length as the hoe, with a camera attached to it. The camera and hoe dance above the water.

The two major feature films Ogawa Pro made in Yamagata abound with such sequences, where filmmaking and farming are choreographed into

cultural and agricultural, celluloid- and soil-based acts. *Nippon-koku: Furuyashiki-mura* (*Nippon Country: Furuyashiki Village*) (1982) runs to three and a half hours, and *Sennen Kizami no Hidoki: Magino-mura Monogatari* (*The Sundial Carved with a Thousand Years of Notches: Magino Village Story*) (1986), runs to three hours and forty minutes.<sup>60</sup> In these massive, sprawling films (which Ogawa was loathe to cut any shorter), substantial screen time is devoted to tracking Ogawa Pro members as they plot precipitation levels on graphs and build cardboard models of irrigation systems. Often such sequences cut to pastoral scenes in which the camera pans across lush landscapes and thatched roofs, contextualizing the collective's fieldwork within a larger landscape, climate, and culture. Scripted sequences are also inserted, with actors playing alongside villagers to dramatize local legends. The experience of watching this peculiar assortment of genres, meandering from television documentary, community theater, and scientific study to costume drama and visual ethnography, perturbed audiences loyal to Ogawa Pro's earlier, more militant films of the barricades.

Embodying the perspective of a farmer, or even his hoe or the soil he is preparing, the films blur boundaries of vegetable, human, and technological subject in a project of immersive learning. Whether such a confusion would appeal to a farmer is of course debatable; to Ogawa, such confusions celebrated a direct, unalienated relation to land.<sup>61</sup>

Amidst such celebration enters humorous self-reflexivity. In *The Sundial*, a farmer sits in the woods recounting local tales. Suddenly a professor of folk studies stumbles into the background, out of place in his city coat and shoes. He interrupts the farmer to impart information on local legends from his own, bookish perspective. The farmer looks on in bemusement. This staged juxtaposition nods to Ogawa Pro's own awkwardness in Yamagata and, more profoundly, to their commitment to bridging diverse perspectives while emphasizing the rift between rural and urban cultures and epistemes.

In the photographed rice paddy, the men would have seen their own reflections as they bent to hoe and film, the surface of the water mirroring them at work before the bright sky, projecting an ecopolitical vision for (agri)cultural and climatic harmony. The camera and hoe focus our gaze on the soil that signifies progress and development through its yields of rice, and by extension, films. Such an earthed definition of development was at odds with ideas of upward progress in Japan's high-growth economy. The



collective's move back to the land constructed a form of environmentalism that sees rice farming as a model of socially and environmentally balanced living, and filmmaking as an important addition that enables reflection, like the sky, and dissemination, like the seedlings, of possibilities for flourishing in the seams of global capitalism.

Ogawa Pro's choice of rice farming as practice and subject matter speaks to their ecological and social interest in low-impact, cooperative agriculture. Unlike wheat, rice requires organized schedules of irrigation between neighboring farmers, and therefore a degree of coordination both between farmers, and between farmers and their physical surroundings. Ogawa liked this contrast with wheat— associated with Western farming and global food imports. Rice (*oryza sativa Japonica*) symbolized nationhood and tradition.<sup>62</sup>

In addition to this focus on rice, Ogawa Pro were drawn to Japan's celebrated Edo period (1603–1867)— or rather, to aspects of it. This was partly since Edo is characterized as being a distinctively Japanese era in its isolation from foreign influences. It was also because rice farming was a hot topic in Edo life. Rice farmers were placed near the top of the social structure, but this was a smoke screen: rice was currency accumulated by landlords, and farmers were not rewarded. Numerous agrarian riots protested this injustice. Known as *yonaoshi* ('world reformation'), these uprisings attempted to renegotiate power along lines of mutuality.<sup>63</sup> Re-enactments of *yonaoshi* appear in *The Sundial*. Though peasant–landlord conflict was eliminated by post-war land reforms that saw 91 percent of farmland tilled by its owners by 1951, conflict over land development continued, and the term *yonaoshi* was resurrected to describe uprisings in the 1960s. *Yonaoshi* became reinscribed as a protest movement against both American influence and Japanese corporate and state interventions in rural life.<sup>64</sup> Ogawa Pro's films of farmer protests at Narita airport and reenacted peasant revolts in Yamagata resurrected *yonaoshi* for the screen as evidence of overlooked struggle.

The films also celebrate other eras. Mid-way through *The Sundial*, an archaeological dig unearths some Jōmon pottery. The emphasis on this type of pottery is deliberate. The Jōmon Period (14,000–1000 BC) takes its name from the distinctive marks on pottery made in that era: ropes were pressed into the clay to create striped patterns. Like the film's eponymous sundial, the shard of Jōmon pottery constitutes an index of time. We cut to a shot of an airplane's vapor trail, from the prehistoric to the contemporary. Jōmon pottery

dates from the dawn of low-intensity farming; airplanes, an age of globalization. By rooting Yamagata villagers with their Jōmon ancestors, the film implies that the majority of Japan's post-war population (a majority based in its urban areas) is out of sync with nature. Modernity is expelled from Ogawa Pro's idyll by being placed on a transnational or intercontinental vehicle whose vapor trail traces across the sky, across the film screen. The plane began and ended its journey elsewhere (perhaps at Narita), while Yamagata remained grounded in native, prehistoric tradition.

*Nippon* works towards this same conclusion. The characters 'Nippon-Koku', appended before 'Furuyashiki Village' in the film's title literally read 'Japan-Country' or 'Japan-Nation'. *Koku* ('nation') is written using the conventional Chinese character, 国. *Nippon* ('Japan') is written in *katakana*, the domestic syllabary for foreign loan words (ニッポン). This denaturalization of 'Japan' invites viewers to reconsider their own understanding and locate an alternative vision of nation in what is before them: the traditional rural community of Furuyashiki, Yamagata.<sup>65</sup>

One way to describe Furuyashiki as it is presented in the film is as a *urusato*. The word *urusato* means 'native place', comprising characters for 'old' or 'former' and 'village'. *urusato* is a term used both by the Japanese state, for whom it functions similarly to American 'family values' (indeed, one expression is *urusato famirii*), and by environmentalists who oppose the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, and the development of roads, golf courses and malls.<sup>66</sup> *urusato* incorporates, reinterprets, and controls nature.<sup>67</sup> As Tokyo became the concentrated locus of information capitalism in the 1970s, the *urusato* industry grew. *urusato* tourism continues today, often involving the transportation of city people to rural areas to partake in traditional activities such as transplanting rice seedlings and picking fruit or matsutake, without having to depend on agriculture for a living. Since tourism is more lucrative than small-scale farming, villagers no longer depend on agriculture either. Japan National Railways (JNR, privatized as JR in 1987) has played an important part in *urusato*. 'Discover Japan,' a PR campaign it ran in the 1970s, was followed by a mail order service for regional foods and souvenirs, and a magazine, which combined domestic tourism with rural real estate sales and information about farming and environmental lifestyles.<sup>68</sup>

The member of the Yamagata audience who first invited Ogawa Pro to the area hoped the collective would help revitalize the region into a youthful cultural center. In turn, Ogawa Pro hoped Yamagata's old-style culture could

lend their films a certain ‘essence’ of nostalgia. Even Furuyashiki village’s name was perfect, containing the same character (*furu*, ‘old’) as that of *furusato*. The irony is hard to miss. In connecting the country and the city by rail and film, JNR and Ogawa Pro’s *furusato* initiatives helped reinforce the romanticized ‘difference’ of rural areas in forms of marketable pastoral pastiche, despite how economically useful these initiatives may also have been.

The pastoral romance of Ogawa Pro’s films also relies on celebrating embodied experience. Compiling footage of members immersed, muddy and grinning, in their fieldwork, Ogawa Pro drew inspiration from Mao’s emphasis on physical experience (*taiken*, or *tiyan*, as it is rendered in Chinese). In speeches in the early 1920s, Mao claimed that unless people investigated a problem by ‘learning from the experience of real life’ (*tiyan shenghuo*), they had no right to speak about it.<sup>69</sup> Ogawa replicated such rhetoric: ‘If you don’t live in the region, you can’t film it,’ he announced. ‘You can’t simply think about rice. You have to do it [...] Living communally, these values displace profit and personal gain.’<sup>70</sup>

Ogawa Pro’s emphasis on empirical, embodied learning recalls a common phrase in Japanese for ‘learning a skill’, *mi ni tsukeru*. The collective aspired to learn farming skills so well that they became affixed (*tsukeru*) to the body (*mi*). According to Ogawa Pro’s ideal, farming skills, and physical land and climatic conditions, would imbue filmmaker, film, and audience as a form of political and environmentalist immersion. Several years into their project in Yamagata, Ogawa declared that ‘the feeling of the sun was documented (was filmed, was imprinted) into our bodies.’<sup>71</sup> They were learning about the environment by becoming, in a sense, human sundials, while their films (including *The Sundial*) developed photochemical images alongside them. Ogawa’s words liken filmmaker to filmstrip, with the skin of the (plant-based celluloid) film and the skin of the filmmaker both reacting to sunlight.

Filtering definitions of profit and gain through the sunlight, air, watery paddies, seedlings, and politics of their fieldwork, Ogawa Pro aimed for an ecologically expansive economy of shared learning and sustenance. As part of this expansive approach, they centralized botanical perspectives, wanting to learn the ‘language’ and ‘voices of the rice plants’.<sup>72</sup> This desire for interpretation translates into formal choices in filmmaking— the use of time-lapse to capture a plant’s blossoming, for example, or close-ups and

magnification to view its physical structure. Through their lenses, Ogawa Pro learned how to judge good or poor rice from the color and texture of its leaves. They kept a daily weather record to measure changes in temperature and humidity, wind direction, and precipitation, inspected the soil, measuring its proportions of clay and nutrients, and filmed slides under a microscope to track miniscule processes of rice bloom, pollination, and fertilization.<sup>73</sup> As when the Orkney filmmaker Margaret Tait marveled at the imperceptible movement of a flower opening, made visible through time-lapse photography, Ogawa Pro used modern camera and microscope technologies to understand another form of life modulated through lenses and their own perception.

Whereas *Nippon* comprises entirely sync sound recorded with one microphone on a boom, *The Sundial* uses Foley to simulate the rustle of rice ears, the squelch of wet soil and the chirruping of birds. Ogawa claimed that such creativity was only possible because

we had documented the rice field for such a long time. That's why the re-enactment is flawless. [...] It was a process of nearly thirteen years to know what reality really is [...] in the depth of the physiological body. [...] That is what I call document [...] it's the memory that resides in the human body.<sup>74</sup>

The demands on an audience to immerse themselves in films as long and peculiar as Ogawa Pro's replicate this emphasis on committed labor. The sheer length of Ogawa Pro's sojourn in Yamagata also plays into it, tending towards tropes of authenticity Trinh criticizes as territorializing strategies in documentary filmmaking.<sup>75</sup>

On the other hand, Ogawa Pro's legacy in creating a cinema of multispecies encounters demonstrates a radical commitment to expanding perspectives across species, anticipating Tsing's description of permaculture practices where 'mutual worlds' form through 'livable collaborations' 'amidst the trouble' of capitalist extraction and climate change.<sup>76</sup> Shinto traditions influenced Ogawa Pro's multi-species practices, inspiring members with stories of local deities (*kami*) who represent natural powers such as water and harvest, and encourage an environmental ethics of maintenance and repair.<sup>77</sup> Ogawa Pro's cinematography embodies this continuity between climatic and human activities, the camera plant-like as it shuttles through muddy dykes or lingers with a sapling, tiny and fragile as it blows in the air. The word for landscape in Japanese, *fūkei*, anticipates this atmospheric attunement, comprising characters for wind (*fū* 風) and scene (*kei* 景).

Watching the man in the photograph pull soil into the levee, opening space for the seedlings, we might think of Somankidi Coura building irrigation channels with soil from a termite mound, ‘without harming the queen’ who was still inside and could regenerate it.<sup>78</sup> As Grisey has written, such activities signify the collective’s understanding of ecosystems. Whereas colonial plantation agriculture and its continued separations of humans from nature would associate such care with primitive animism, Somankidi Coura cultivated a post-extractive project for ecological (and geopolitical) respect, in which animals, soils, and humans coproduce abundance and diversity.<sup>79</sup> On one of Somankidi Coura’s broadcasts from the regional radio station it established in 1988, a whole program is dedicated to farmers’ more-than-human friends (‘since forever, our elders have collaborated with the termites’, the host explains, and ‘permacultures of the Sahel’ include ‘the collective intelligence of soil, plants and animals’).<sup>80</sup>

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In the next photograph, light is fading on a day harvesting bananas. A young man presents a bushel of them to the camera, perfect in their green-yellow skins. They’ll sell these bananas at the cooperative market tomorrow to buy fuel for the river pump, along with anything else needed beyond what they grow for themselves.

*Banana republic.* Noun. Derogatory. A politically unstable state dominated by a single export economy controlled by foreign capital. The photograph does not represent a banana republic. The bananas are not like the sisal produced here for ropemaking a century earlier as part of what the historian Romain Tiquet calls a colonial coercion economy.<sup>81</sup> They will not be sold to Dole, Chiquita or Del Monte. These bananas will not feed the story of how Europe underdeveloped Africa through extraction, export, and debt.<sup>82</sup> Instead, these bananas symbolize ripening communities and food-sovereignty, having grown in 25 riverside hectares of polyculture gardens fed by a common irrigation system, alongside adjacent land used alternatively for pasture in the dry season and permaculture farming during the three-month monsoon.

The photograph recalls the words of one of the cooperative’s revered teachers, the Bissau-Guinean and Cape Verdean revolutionary and agricultural engineer, Amílcar Cabral (whose poster decorated Touré’s wall in

2008). Cabral described culture as the ‘fruit’ of history as well as its determinant in resisting the ‘implantation’ of ‘foreign domination’.<sup>83</sup> Culture was key to Cabral’s project leading liberation movements in Lusophone Africa. Though Touré did not know Cabral’s writings on agronomy in the 1970s, he admired his speeches on the importance of culture in driving political resistance and liberation.<sup>84</sup> The broad idea of imperialism Cabral developed encompassed both formal colonialism and socioeconomic neocolonialism akin to that which Ogawa Pro resented in post-war Japan’s ties with America.<sup>85</sup> Cabral said ‘national liberation’ was ‘an act of culture’, and emphasized the role of cinema in forming ‘a strong indigenous cultural life’.<sup>86</sup> He understood literacy, including visual literacy, as central to politicization, supporting several filmmakers from Guinea-Bissau in trips to Cuba’s revolutionary film school to learn how to document struggles for land and freedom.<sup>87</sup>

Before turning to political activism, Cabral had worked for the Portuguese colonial government as a soil scientist conducting experiments in pedology on a farm. He came to understand plantation logic from the inside, recognizing the toll that over-intensive farming took on soil vitality as inextricably linked to the toll colonial capitalism took on its subjects (he too read Marx’s work on the ‘rift’ driven between man and nature, which derived, in turn, from soil science).<sup>88</sup>

As if reclaiming colony’s etymological connections with farming, which it shares with the word culture, Cabral developed an anti-colonial argument for the importance of simultaneously helping lands and labor forces exhausted under imperialism, through cultural drives for politicization. ‘Every land has its own natural wealth,’ he declared.<sup>89</sup> ‘Progress’ (a word Cabral used multiple times in his speeches) was a combined ecological and social movement towards liberation.<sup>90</sup>

This democratic and environmental understanding of progress contrasts that of the French colonial administration in West Africa, whose project for ‘*mise en valeur*’, or ‘creating value’, attempted to develop supposedly ‘vacant’ lands and ‘lazy’ Africans (lumped together within a category of ‘indigenous people’), using forced migration from ‘labor reservoirs’ in other colonial regions.<sup>91</sup> *Mise en valeur* kept France stocked with raw materials such as cotton, peanuts, cacao, minerals, and sisal. Extractive practices continued in the post-war period, packaged within verbiage that replaced *mise en valeur* with a persuasion vocabulary of

development and modernization—steeped in all the prejudice these terms imply.<sup>92</sup> Touré's photograph of the man with bananas refuses such prejudice, presenting instead the fruit of collective cultural and agricultural labor.

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In the next photograph, a van parks outside a thatch-roofed farmhouse. A banner on the van announces an Ogawa Pro screening. This is grassroots distribution, the dissemination of images and ideas to help marginalized farmers and a burgeoning environmental movement.

As Tsing writes in *The Mushroom at the End of the World*, by the 1970s, Japan's common forestlands of red pines and matsutake had given way to monoculture cedar and cypress plantations for the timber trade. Villagers increasingly used kerosene and electricity, and farmed with tractors, less often venturing into the forest for firewood, fodder, or thatch.<sup>93</sup> Amidst such decline, and against a tide of industrial construction, several environmentalists looked towards ancient methods of low-intensity land cultivation to develop more sustainable forms of agriculture. Ogawa Pro followed their work with interest, and contributed to it with film.

Organicism and a no-till method of farming received increasing attention due to the popularity the farmer and environmentalist Fukuoka Masanobu, and his bestselling 1975 book, *One-Straw Revolution*. The writer Ariyoshi Sawako's study of the impact of chemical fertilizers and other pollutants also impressed Ogawa Pro members when it was serialized in Japan's major newspaper, *Asahi Shimbun* and published as a book, *Complex Pollution*.<sup>94</sup> Much like Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962) Ariyoshi's book contributed to raising environmental awareness. This was a moment of budding green politics, when many activist groups formed, including Japan's recycling movement and the Association to Protect the Earth. It was also a moment when many artists and filmmakers went 'back to the land' to challenge notions of center and periphery. Being *zaiya* ('in the wilderness') gained a positive connotation of not participating in institutional systems.<sup>95</sup>

The thatched farmhouse in the photograph anticipates a temporary mud and straw theater that Ogawa Pro would build near Kyoto to screen *The Sundial* on tour. Gathering people under one roof, before a screen and surrounded by objects from the films, local food stalls, and dance troops, the collective facilitated convivial, celebratory screenings. Unlike some cinemas

in Tokyo that hushed audiences into black-box auditorium presentations, Ogawa Pro's screenings were raucous affairs. The van in the photograph is a metaphor for film as an interlocutor, in transit between locations and audiences.

Ogawa thrived on audience interactions, and loved hosting filmmakers from across Japan and beyond, who paid visits to the collective's farmhouse. Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival continued this hospitality, hosting filmmakers including Safi Faye, Haile Gerima, and Kidlat Tahimik who shared films made from, with, and about situated rural perspectives. Made in 1976 and '77, Faye's *Letter from My Village*, Gerima's *Harvest: 3000 Years*, and Tahimik's *Perfumed Nightmare* present portraits of land, communities and ecosystems suffering foreign impositions of DDT, peanut monoculture, and American consumerism. Made at a time when television was fast spreading, these films, along with the festival, and Ogawa Pro's thatched theater and projectionist's van, constitute an anti-TV model of documentary. In Paris, meanwhile, Touré was developing a similarly discursive approach to screening, projecting images on the walls of hostels to envision change.

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In the next photograph, eleven men occupy a hostel room. One man helps another read from a book, following the words with his pen. Some men wear prayer caps, some talk, others listen. Two single beds are visible, with more stored mattresses pushed beneath them. Makeshift curtains are strung with clothes. Luggage piles above a cupboard, and plastic bags hang on hooks. Images line the walls, several taken in the fields at Somankidi Coura, and brought back here with Touré on one of his many trips between Mali and France ('smuggling ideas, seeds, photographs, modes of resistance, and farming methods from one continent to the other').<sup>96</sup>

Touré describes all of his images as photos 'of our actual life' (never 'my life' or 'their life'). His collective pronoun refuses divisions of homeland and exile, constructing a poetics of relation, to borrow Edouard Glissant's term.<sup>97</sup> Touré's images are not always celebratory, or comfortable. Although this photograph speaks of solidarity, literacy efforts, and connections with families back home, it also reveals the financial and legal precarity of migrant workers. Some of these men are sleeping on mattresses their fathers used



before them, experiencing reruns of dispossession, exodus, and racism as a past that is not past. Yet Touré's photographs are not what Trinh scathingly calls "'feed the poor' images of Africa' and its migrants. They do not serve a missionary appetite and 'ease the consciences of the rich,' while hiding ties between world hunger and imperialism.<sup>98</sup> Touré's images hide nothing. Here are tired workers, solidarity meetings, and images of plowed, irrigated, seeded, and sprouting fields. Hunger doesn't need a hand-out, Touré suggests, but healthy soil in which to grow sustenance, sustain independence, and render emigration a choice not a necessity. Somankidi Coura's establishment was less a return home, back to the land, than a reconfiguration of colonial centers and margins, its growing archive of images circulating across borders as an ongoing project for spatial justice.

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In the final photograph, men, women, and children gather around a cluster of images pinned to the gable of a farm building. Goats and chickens flock through the center of the photograph and along the dusty village path. In the background stands a cluster of dark green trees. This is an installation shot of an exhibition of Touré's photographs, hung in Somankidi Coura to celebrate its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2017.

The displayed photographs depict Somankidi Coura's development, including its construction and harvests, the production of a play Touré wrote in 1977 to explore issues of migration, its radio station, a regional farmer's network, educational programs held in Bambara, Soninke and Fula languages, and the growth of the community across three generations. Cultivating democracy, film, vegetables, and goats in this multifunctional way, Somankidi Coura re-paired estranged species and regions, nurturing a future around and against the Plantationocene.<sup>99</sup> Fieldwork fortified the struggle against emigration, with soil and political literacy growing through practice to produce yields not of GDP but of agronomic health, sustainable food sources, cooperative employment, community education and, not least, a panoply of cultural productions made by the workers, for the workers, and for sharing internationally.<sup>100</sup>

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The images Somankidi Coura and Ogawa Pro produced are both historical documents and future-oriented ideologies. Rather than feed nostalgia for bygone times, they speak to current issues of extractivism and climate justice. Although the rice paddies Ogawa Pro once cultivated have overgrown into jungle, and wild monkeys occupy the thatched farmhouses, their films continue to draw audiences with their unusual forms and contexts of political commitment. Seen today, as people try to organize in the face of climate breakdown, Ogawa Pro and Somankidi Coura's ecological experiments present compelling alternatives to financialized definitions of growth and progress.

Both projects transformed the idea of subsistence farming from a minimal support for survival to the word's original sense of continuing to exist, of standing firm. To set, to settle, to sit, to subsist. To subsist and to sustain share a root word, meaning 'from below'. Re-routing (and re-rooting) themselves in the soil, Somankidi Coura and Ogawa Pro stood firm, staying with the social and ecological trouble of extractivism, to borrow Donna Haraway's phrase.<sup>101</sup> From below, they cultivated new, different forms of growth. Subsistence re-centered them through slow processes of farming and solidarity, absorbed like nutrients into the body, like light on the skin of the film.

In *Poetics of Relation*, when Glissant visits the plantation as the 'opaque source' from 'which our common future takes its chances', he goes in search of past survivors whose ingenuity might inform the present in multiple, related regions of a planetary commons.<sup>102</sup> Glissant's commons flourishes in Somankidi Coura and Ogawa Pro's abundant creations on the unruly edges of plantation capitalism and its neocolonial extensions. The collectives leave images as seeds of hope and stories of progress.

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<sup>1</sup> Ladji Niangané interviewed in Raphaël Grisey, *Sowing Somankidi Coura: A Generative Archive* (Berlin: Archive Books, 2019), 109.

<sup>2</sup> For example, Fatimah Tobing Rony, *How Do We Look?: Resisting Visual Biopolitics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021); Tina M. Campt, *Listening to Images* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017); Christina Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness And Being* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016).

<sup>3</sup> Touré recalls a benevolent meeting with djinns in *Xaraasi Xanne – Crossing Voices*, 2022.

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- <sup>4</sup> Michio Kimura, *Yamagata no mura ni akai tori ga tonde kita: ogawa shinsuke purodakushon tono nijūgonen* (Tokyo: Nanatsumori shokan, 2010).
- <sup>5</sup> Abe Mark Nornes, *Forest of Pressure: Ogawa Shinsuke and Postwar Japanese Documentary* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), xviii.
- <sup>6</sup> Toshio Iizuka, 'E-mail to Becca Voelcker', 25 October 2019.
- <sup>7</sup> Nornes, *Forest of Pressure*, 44.
- <sup>8</sup> The thorny issue of loans is explored in Barbara Hammer's *Devotion: A Film About Ogawa Productions*, video, 2000.
- <sup>9</sup> 'Cinema giapponese degli anni '60', *Quaderno informativo* 41 (1972): 29.
- <sup>10</sup> Manthia Diawara, *African Cinema: Politics and Culture* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1992), 23.
- <sup>11</sup> Touré speaks these words in the voiceover of *Xaraasi Xanne – Crossing Voices*.
- <sup>12</sup> *Xaraasi Xanne – Crossing Voices*.
- <sup>13</sup> Voiceover in *Bouba Touré, 58 rue Trousseau, Paris, France* (2008, video, 29 minutes)
- <sup>14</sup> *Xaraasi Xanne – Crossing Voices*.
- <sup>15</sup> *Xaraasi Xanne – Crossing Voices*.
- <sup>16</sup> Grisey, *Sowing Somankidi Coura: A Generative Archive*, 22, 197.
- <sup>17</sup> Raphaël Grisey and Bouba Touré, 'Happiness Against the Grain', *Camera Austria* 156 (2021): 26.
- <sup>18</sup> R. Joseph Parrott and Mark Atwood Lawrence, *The Tricontinental Revolution* (Cambridge University Press, 2022).
- <sup>19</sup> Somankidi Coura member Bakhoré Bathily interviewed in Grisey, *Sowing Somankidi Coura: A Generative Archive*, 139–40, 151.; Somankidi Coura member Ladji Niangané in Grisey, 103.
- <sup>20</sup> *Xaraasi Xanne – Crossing Voices*.
- <sup>21</sup> *Xaraasi Xanne – Crossing Voices*.
- <sup>22</sup> *Xaraasi Xanne – Crossing Voices*.
- <sup>23</sup> For a critique of the Green Revolution and its damages to both biodiversity and social systems, see Vandana Shiva, *The Violence of the Green Revolution: Third World Agriculture, Ecology and Politics* (London: Zed Books, 1991).
- <sup>24</sup> *Xaraasi Xanne – Crossing Voices*, 2022.
- <sup>25</sup> For more on this historical and pervasive economic ideology, and its oppositional movements, see Fredrik Albritton Jonsson and Carl Wennerlind, *Scarcity: A History from the Origins of Capitalism to the Climate Crisis* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2023).
- <sup>26</sup> Marilyn Waring, *Counting for Nothing: What Men Value and What Women Are Worth* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988).
- <sup>27</sup> J. K. Gibson-Graham, *The End of Capitalism (as We Knew It): A Feminist Critique of Political Economy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006); Kate Raworth, *Doughnut Economics: Seven Ways to Think Like a 21st-Century Economist* (London: Penguin, 2017); Vandana Shiva, 'How Economic Growth Has Become Anti-Life', *Common Dreams*, 1 November 2013, <https://www.commondreams.org/views/2013/11/01/how-economic-growth-has-become-anti-life>.
- <sup>28</sup> Jason Hickel, *Less Is More: How Degrowth Will Save the World* (London: Penguin, 2020).
- <sup>29</sup> Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins* (Princeton University Press, 2015), 65.
- <sup>30</sup> Kathryn Yusoff, *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2018), 16.
- <sup>31</sup> Allied occupation of Japan ended in 1952, except for Okinawa and its archipelago, which gained independence in 1972. The occupation was overseen by the US military and supported by the British Commonwealth.

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- <sup>32</sup> Karl Marx, *Capital Vol. I* (Moscow: Progress, 1961), 760.
- <sup>33</sup> Yusoff, *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None*, 40.
- <sup>34</sup> Jason W. Moore, *Anthropocene or Capitalocene? Nature, History, and the Crisis of Capitalism* (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2016); Janae Davis et al., ‘Anthropocene, Capitalocene, ... Plantationocene?: A Manifesto for Ecological Justice in an Age of Global Crises’, *Geography Compass* 13, no. 5 (2019); Donna Haraway and Anna Tsing, ‘Reflections on the Plantationocene: A Conversation with Donna Haraway and Anna Tsing’, <https://edgeeffects.net/haraway-tsing-plantationocene/>.
- <sup>35</sup> Anna Tsing, ‘Unruly Edges: Mushrooms as Companion Species: For Donna Haraway’, *Environmental Humanities* 1, no. 1 (1 May 2012): 141–54; Yusoff, *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None*, 36–37; Katherine McKittrick, ed., *Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human as Praxis* (Durham: Duke University Press Books, 2014). See also the final chapter of Jill H. Casid, *Sowing Empire: Landscape and Colonization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004).
- <sup>36</sup> Tsing, ‘Unruly Edges’, 141.
- <sup>37</sup> David E. Apter and Nagayo Sawa, *Against the State: Politics and Social Protest in Japan* (London: Harvard University Press, 1986), 181–85.
- <sup>38</sup> Kodwo Eshun and Ros Gray, ‘The Militant Image: A Ciné-Geography’, *Third Text* 25, no. 1 (1 January 2011): 1–12; Paul Douglas Grant, *Cinéma Militant: Political Filmmaking and May 1968* (Wallflower Press, 2016); Teshome H. Gabriel, *Third Cinema in the Third World: The Aesthetics of Liberation* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1982); Morgan Adamson, *Enduring Images: A Future History of New Left Cinema* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2018).
- <sup>39</sup> *A Visit to Ogawa Productions* (Jun’ichiro Ōshige/Ōshima Nagisa, Japan, 1981/1999) (translation added).
- <sup>40</sup> Michio Kimura, *Yamagata no mura ni akai tori ga tonde kita: ogawa shinsuke purodakushon tono nijūgonen* (Tokyo: Nanatsumori shokan, 2010), 15–20.
- <sup>41</sup> Regula König, ‘Interview with Ogawa Shinsuke, Tokyo’, *Informationsblatt*, 9 January 1987.
- <sup>42</sup> Toshio Iizuka, ‘E-mail to Becca Voelcker’, 25 October 2019.
- <sup>43</sup> Stoffel Debuysere, Elias Grootaers, and Ricardo Matos Cabo, *Of Sea and Soil: The Cinema of Tsuchimoto Noriaki and Ogawa Shinsuke* (Ghent: Sabzian, Courtisane and Cinematek, 2019), 63.
- <sup>44</sup> For more on the group’s patriarchal organization, see Barbara Hammer’s 2000 documentary, *Devotion: A Film about Ogawa Productions*.
- <sup>45</sup> For more on the collective’s uneven attribution of credit – not least in its naming after Ogawa Shinsuke – see *The Legendary Filmmaking Collective NDU and Nunokawa Tetsuro*, ed. by Yoshio Yasui and Noriko Tanaka (Kobe: Cinematrix & Kobe Documentary Film Festival Committee, 2012).
- <sup>46</sup> Iizuka, ‘E-mail to Becca Voelcker’, 25 October 2019.
- <sup>47</sup> *Devotion: A Film About Ogawa Productions*, video, 2000.
- <sup>48</sup> One morning in 1982, the cooperative experienced a pepper strike. Goundo Kamissokho, Ndiaye Diaby, Souaré Samassa Diaby, Dado Niangané, Fune Niakhaté and the women of Somankidi Coura refused to harvest peppers as long as they were not given their own plots to cultivate. Raphaël Grisey, *Sowing Somankidi Coura: A Generative Archive* (Berlin: Archive Books, 2019), 261–63, 292.
- <sup>49</sup> Voiceover in *Bouba Touré, 58 rue Trousseau, Paris, France* (2008, video, 29 minutes)
- <sup>50</sup> For example, Somankidi Coura member Ladji Niangané recalled ‘We share everything [...] Work, social life, food... In terms of farming, nothing is individual.’ Quoted in Grisey, *Sowing Somankidi Coura: A Generative Archive*, 107.
- <sup>51</sup> *Xaraasi Xanne – Crossing Voices*.

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<sup>52</sup> The 8mm films were shot by farmers of the agricultural association ACCIR (Association Champegnnoise de Coopération Inter-Régionale), who financed Touré's training and supported him for many years, visiting Somankidi Coura in 1977 and 1979 with an 8mm camera. Embodying the true sense of amateur film, these farmers admirably filmed Somankidi Coura's irrigation system, crops, and community. In a similar gesture of admiration, though perhaps with less credit, Sokhona's film is more or less a reinterpretation of Touré's own story. Touré was not credited as a co-writer, however, and did not see a copy of the film upon its release in 1978.

<sup>53</sup> These scenes also feature as archival material in *Xaraasi Xanne – Crossing Voices*.

<sup>54</sup> Somankidi Coura member Ousmane Sinaré in Grisey, *Sowing Somankidi Coura: A Generative Archive*, 47.

<sup>55</sup> In late 1968, a military coup replaced the nation's socialist agenda with a more liberal governmentality favoring international trade, and withdrawing state-supported agricultural policies while maintaining the concept of food self-sufficiency as a mantra. In the 1990s, the process of delegating power to transnational institutions saw the state further disengage with land, as NGOs began to assume elements of sovereignty. Romain Tiquet in Grisey, 61–64. See also Gregory Mann, *From Empires to NGOs in the West African Sahel: The Road to Nongovernmentality* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

<sup>56</sup> Ousmane Sinaré interviewed in Grisey, *Sowing Somankidi Coura: A Generative Archive*, 47–51.

<sup>57</sup> Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Vol. I*, trans. Ben Fowkes (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), 637–38; Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Vol. III*, trans. David Fernbach (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981), 949. See also Justus von Liebig, 'Letters on Modern Agriculture (1859)' in John Bellamy Foster, *Marx's Ecology: Materialism and Nature* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000), 153.

<sup>58</sup> By focusing on the migrant workers' growing political awareness, *Safrana* acts as a sequel to Sokhona's 1975 film, *Nationalité: Immigré*, which Touré showed in hostels and youth clubs as part of ACTAF events. The film was shot during a rent strike at the hostel in which Sokhona lived, and which Touré often visited. Like Med Hondo's films, Sokhona's provided a searing criticism of French bureaucracy and its structural racism. *Safrana* focuses on the positive exchanges between its West African protagonists and their farmer teachers, staging conversations about organic and manual techniques despite the fact that some farmers Touré met also used chemicals and tractors (as did those Ogawa Pro learned from in Yamagata). The tractor in the background of Touré's photograph gestures at a debate within Somankidi Coura's membership over whether to introduce mechanical aids or learn manual methods for farming—they tended towards the latter so that their work could be replicated in other regions with little or no mechanical aids. Sidney Sokhona interviewed by Catherine Ruelle and Guy Henebelle in CinémAction No. 8, 1979 quoted in Grisey, *Sowing Somankidi Coura: A Generative Archive*, 160–61.

<sup>59</sup> *Xaraasi Xanne – Crossing Voices*; Raphaël Grisey and Bouba Touré, 'Happiness Against the Grain', *Camera Austria* 156 (2021): 27.

<sup>60</sup> Besides Nippon and The Sundial, other films made during the Yamagata period include The Magino Village Story: Raising Silkworms (1977), and Red Persimmons (completed posthumously by Peng Xiaolian in 2001). These films are shorter in length, and more conventional as documentaries, in part because of their tighter focus on single subjects, be that sericulture or the process of drying persimmons.

<sup>61</sup> For contemporary comparison, a similar immersive approach guides several films produced at Harvard's Sensory Ethnography Lab (SEL) such as *Leviathan* a film shot on- and overboard a North Sea fishing trawler (Castaing-Taylor and Paravel 2012). A similar desire for duration, meanwhile, guides an eight-hour film about Japanese farming, *The Works and Days (of Tayoko Shiojiri in the Shiotani Basin)* (Winter and Edstrom 2020).

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<sup>62</sup> In fact, rice was only introduced to Japan from Korea around 1000 BC. Although rice is a very old crop in Japan, the growing of other grains and hunting and gathering are older. Ogawa Pro's association of rice with an image of cooperation is a political celebration of social and national conformity, and a form of ethnic environmentalism. The collective's connection of rice with national identity is not unlike the association that the philosopher Watsuji Tetsurō made between Japanese people and the monsoon. Historically, rice is a staple of the Japanese diet; symbolically, rice relates to Shintoism and the Emperor (the god of rice harvests is believed to be a direct ancestor of the emperor). There is even a term that refers to Japan as 'the land of abundant rice.' Ogawa Pro's films prioritize the subject of rice and selected excerpts of Japan's feudal history retold through anecdotes and re-enactments, to train our thoughts on aspects of the nation's agrarian and imperial past at the expense of other realities— not least, the rise of industrialized agriculture and imported wheat in the post-war period. For more on rice and nationalism, see Jennifer Ellen Robertson, *Native and Newcomer: Making and Remaking a Japanese City* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 89; Conrad Totman, *Japan: An Environmental History* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2014), 55, 207; Midori Kagawa-Fox, 'The Crucial Role of Culture in Japanese Environmental Philosophy', in *Japanese Environmental Philosophy*, ed. J Baird Callicot and James McRae (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

<sup>63</sup> Irwin Scheiner, 'The Japanese Village: Imagined, Real, Contested', in *Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan*, ed. Stephen Vlastos (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998), 67–79.

<sup>64</sup> William Andrews, *Dissenting Japan: A History of Japanese Radicalism and Counterculture, from 1945 to Fukushima* (London: Hurst, 2015), 4, 164, 260.

<sup>65</sup> I retain the word *Nippon* for the film's English title, and do not translate it as *Japan*, to convey to English readers the sense of otherness in the original title. Markus Nornes attempts the same effect by rendering the title in quotation marks ('*Japan*') in his 2007 monograph, *Forest of Pressure*.

<sup>66</sup> Jennifer Robertson, 'It Takes a Village: Internationalization and Nostalgia in Postwar Japan', in *Mirror of Modernity*, ed. Stephen Vlastos (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998).

<sup>67</sup> Marilyn Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing: Modernity, Phantasm, Japan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

<sup>68</sup> Robertson, 'It Takes a Village: Internationalization and Nostalgia in Postwar Japan', 116.

<sup>69</sup> Mao sent thousands of Chinese people to the countryside or to factories to undergo 'reeducation through manual labor' during the 1960s and 1970s. Despite parallels, Ogawa Pro's methods were very different to Mao's in the way they carved out a space for artisanal labor and tradition and recognized in film the potential for conservation and community engagement. For Ogawa, revolution was not an overturning of the old so much as a slow return to selections of it.

<sup>70</sup> Shinsuke Ogawa and Serge Daney, When Serge Daney met Ogawa Shinsuke at Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival, 1989, Yamagata International Documentary Film Archive, <https://www.sabzian.be/publication/of-sea-and-soil-the-cinema-of-tsuchimoto-noriaki-and-ogawa-shinsuke>; Abe Mark Nornes, *Forest of Pressure: Ogawa Shinsuke and Postwar Japanese Documentary* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 158–59.

<sup>71</sup> Debuysere, Grootaers, and Matos Cabo, *Of Sea and Soil*, 61.

<sup>72</sup> Along with rice plants, Ogawa Pro treated the sun as a sensate being that operated its own schedule from its own perspective. The Sundial's time-lapse sequences of the sun were made in collaboration with the experimental filmmaker Yamazaki Hiroshi, who filmed from what he called a heliocentric perspective (demonstrating that the earth revolves around the sun) as opposed to conventional cinematic geo-centrism (in which the earth and camera appear to be

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static, and the sun appears to move in the sky). Yamazaki considered the sun to be a living being, not an object, using a Japanese verb form usually reserved for animate beings to describe the sun's existence. This ontological shift is not very apparent in the films, although repeated shots of the sun, and pulsing music, do help center the sun's presence as a life-giving source of energy. See Debuysere, Grootaers, and Matos Cabo, *Of Sea and Soil*; Konig, 'Interview with Ogawa Shinsuke, Tokyo'.

<sup>73</sup> Iizuka, 'E-mail to Becca Voelcker', 25 October 2019.

<sup>74</sup> Shinsuke Ogawa, 'Documentary's Sense of Reality', *Gekkan Image Form*, June 1987.

<sup>75</sup> T. Minh-Ha Trinh, *When the Moon Waxes Red: Representation, Gender, and Cultural Politics* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 32. In recent years, it has become common that speakers introducing Ogawa Pro films at festival and cinema screenings begin by challenging or encouraging audiences to commit to watching the films in their entirety. The length of the films deters some viewers and creates a buzz amongst others proud have watched them to the end. This heroism pervades the study of Japanese documentary, with Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival functioning at its center as a place of pilgrimage. Discussions of the festival often mention the importance of its informal, late-night, drinking culture, continuing Ogawa Shinsuke's lifestyle preferences.

<sup>76</sup> Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World*, 27–29, 263.

<sup>77</sup> Ogawa collected local legends and was an avid reader of Yanagita Kunio and Origuchi Shinobu's folklore studies. With Shintoism's emphasis on the power of nature through deities, and the influence of early twentieth century philosophies of climate including Watsuji Tetsurō's, Ogawa Pro came to understand ethical subjectivity and national belonging as deriving from climate and landscape. Watsuji's now dated characterization of ethnicity based on climate appealed to many readers in the 1930s because it naturalized (and hence hid) ideological forces of assimilation and colonialism. Similar ethnic tendencies re-emerge in Ogawa Pro's fixation on Japanese agrarian tradition, during another wave of modernization that threatened Japan with global (Western) influence. Ogawa Pro, like Watsuji, used landscape to reinforce nationhood at the expense of cultural variation and an acknowledgment of Japan's indigenous and immigrant communities. But Ogawa Pro's focus on climate, low-impact farming, and folklore that teaches about nature does present an important critique of individualistic concepts of the self that separate culture from nature, and human enterprise from inert land.

<sup>78</sup> From the voiceover of *Xaraasi Xanne – Crossing Voices*.

<sup>79</sup> Grisey, *Sowing Somankidi Coura: A Generative Archive*, 291–92, 299; Elizabeth A. Povinelli, *Geontologies: A Requiem to Late Liberalism* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2016), 5.

<sup>80</sup> In *Xaraasi Xanne – Crossing Voices*.

<sup>81</sup> Grisey, *Sowing Somankidi Coura: A Generative Archive*, 49.

<sup>82</sup> Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (London: Verso, 2018).

<sup>83</sup> 'National Liberation and Culture' (1970) in Amílcar Cabral, *Return to the Source: Selected Speeches*, ed. Africa Information Service, Second Edition (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1973), 39. See also Cabral in PAIGC, Proclamation, November 1960, in Ronald H. Chilcote, ed., *Emerging Nationalism in Portuguese Africa: Documents* (Palo Alto, CA: Hoover Documents, 1972), 361.

<sup>84</sup> Grisey, *Sowing Somankidi Coura: A Generative Archive*, 204.

<sup>85</sup> R. Joseph Parrott, 'Brother and a Comrade: Amílcar Cabral as Global Revolutionary', in *The Tricontinental Revolution*, ed. R. Joseph Parrott and Mark Atwood Lawrence, 1st ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2022), 254, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009004824.011>.

<sup>86</sup> 'National Liberation and Culture' (1970) in Cabral, *Return to the Source*, 43.

<sup>87</sup> Cabral did not live to see the films of Flora Gomes, *Sana na N'Hada* and others before his assassination in 1973, but his impact upon their work, as well as that of Somankidi Coura,

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was lasting. See Frank Ukadike, 'In Guinea-Bissau, Cinema Trickles down: An Interview with Flora Gomes', *Research in African Literatures* 26, no. 3 (Autumn 1995): 179–85.

<sup>88</sup> In particular, Marx drew from Justus von Liebig. See John Bellamy Foster, 'Marxism in the Anthropocene: Dialectical Rifts on the Left', *International Critical Thought* 6, no. 3 (July 2016): 393–421; John Bellamy Foster, 'Marx's Theory of Metabolic Rift: Classical Foundations for Environmental Sociology', *American Journal of Sociology* 105, no. 2 (1999): 366–405.

<sup>89</sup> Cabral in a 1969 speech entitled 'Análise de alguns tipos de resistência' (Analysis of some kinds of resistance) in José Neves, 'Ideology, Science, and People in Amílcar Cabral.', *História, Ciências, Saúde-Manguinhos* 24, no. 2 (23 March 2017): 1–14, <https://doi.org/10.1590/s0104-59702017005000001>.

<sup>90</sup> Davis et al., 'Anthropocene, Capitalocene, ... Plantationocene?'

<sup>91</sup> For example, present-day Burkina Faso.

<sup>92</sup> Tiquet in Grisey, *Sowing Somankidi Coura: A Generative Archive*, 49–68.

<sup>93</sup> Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World*, 6, 162, 260.

<sup>94</sup> Iizuka, 'E-mail to Becca Voelcker', 25 October 2019.

<sup>95</sup> Reiko Tomii, *Radicalism in the Wilderness* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2018).

<sup>96</sup> Grisey and Touré, 'Happiness Against the Grain', 30.

<sup>97</sup> Édouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990).

<sup>98</sup> Trinh, *When the Moon Waxes Red*, 97.

<sup>99</sup> Haraway and Tsing, 'Reflections on the Plantationocene: A Conversation with Donna Haraway and Anna Tsing'; Anna Tsing, 'Earth Stalked by Man', *Cambridge Anthropology* 34, no. 1 (March 2016): 2–16, <https://doi.org/10.3167/ca.2016.340102>; Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016).

<sup>100</sup> Somankidi Coura also formed a regional union of agricultural cooperatives in West Africa, which fourteen projects from France also joined. Bakhoré Bathily interviewed in Grisey, *Sowing Somankidi Coura: A Generative Archive*, 129, 152.

<sup>101</sup> Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*.

<sup>102</sup> Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, 73.