

What you are waiting for on the top of the volcano, or towards a new ‘Scienza Nuova’ of  
humanity and nature

### English résumé

This volume contains essays—book reviews and texts which at least related books— that I have written over the past twenty years. Certainly, this is merely a collection, but I’ve gathered these materials in order to present a new view for the environmental humanities for the next generation. With this constellation of articles, I would like to narrate a story— a story about history, memory, environment, and nature.

The book opens with an essay entitled “Uexküll, Agamben and Anthropocene.” Those three proper nouns, which are not usually connected with each other in this way, will show why I am writing this book and why I have continued to write the kind of essays gathered in this book for years. It will also speak to why this volume should be included as one of the titles of the RIHN environmental book series, and what the articles have in common. These are not easy questions to answer, but as I had the occasion to participate in the “Anthropocene Campus” held in Berlin in November 2014, I believe I was able to find some answers, especially by re-encountering Giorgio Agamben’s “The Open.” G. Agamben is an Italian philosopher and this book deals with the ontological problem between animals and humanity, and thus provokes the problem of an open relationship between the two and their surroundings, namely “Umwelt” in German, or the world itself. This is the very point that I would like to argue for in this book. In addition, Agamben discusses the arrival of exceptional conditions. For example he regards the problem of Auschwitz as one of those conditions. I feel that significant natural disasters must also be included in this discussion. Since I have intimate experience with the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake of 1995, the power of nature, or vastness of nature, is a focus of my interest. Under the Anthropocene concept, which requires a new approach understanding nature and humanity, I think the problems discussed by Agamben may be an appropriate starting point and my interest overlaps with them.

The first part of the book, ‘Documents after the Earthquake,’ is a trace of straggle of myself and effort of society for the recovery after the big earthquake which hit Kobe twenty years ago. As I said, significant natural disasters are exceptional situations, and they provide us with deep insight on the existence of nature, the power of nature, and humanity as being subject to the conditions of nature. A chapter in this part reviews

Haruki Murakami's essay on his devastated homeland. Other chapter picks up Natsuki Ikezawa's novel in which the protagonist is a volcanologist. Both examples from literature show how people and society reacted to exceptional disaster situations.

The second, more theoretical part of the book, is titled 'Homo Narrans, or man narrates.' This part contains essays on *Kataribe*, a special tribe whose work is to narrate histories in ancient era in Japan, on memorial and museum after disaster and terror, and on narratives of disaster as tragedy.

'Memorizing in the woods, in the city, and even in dreams', reflects on various aspects of memory in various places on our planet. The areas described in texts in this part cover South and North America, East and West Europe, Northeast and Southeast Asia, and Japan. Memory is connected to its milieu—or its environment—and, hence, memory is a phenomenon which emerges by the mutual activity between humans and their surroundings. This part will illustrate this kind of reciprocity.

The title of the fourth, and last part, 'Towards a new "Scienza Nuova" of humanity and nature' comes from the work of 18<sup>th</sup> century Italian philosopher Giambattista Vico, who imagined a new science based on poetics. As Vico thought, today's era of scientific dualism— subjectivity-objectivity, mind-body, humanity-nature— should be reviewed and a new approach to the world and environment, a new type of science, is needed. This part contains chapters that deal with ontological space, named the "track of non-time" by Hanna Arendt, through which human thinking lives generation to generation. To go further about that concept, I connect a discussion of ecological anthropology which thinks about chimpanzee's consciousness of the past with that of historiography which argues the possibility of non-human histories. As Jacques Derrida and Bin Kimura say, the past comes from a subtle double difference inside the self, and if so, the hypothesis by Kazuyoshi Sugawara that chimpanzees have a past must mean that they have self. According to Hegel, history is a process in which human will is realizing itself. Do chimpanzees have history? And how does 'our' history relate with the history of chimpanzees? These questions present a problem which relates to the above-mentioned topics on history, humanity, and environment, and are likely questions of Anthropocenic significance.

Whether you agree the concept or not, it can be said that we are already in the 'Anthropocene' and it requires a new way of understanding humanity and nature.

Establishing a new science will take a long time, and in doing so a lot of effort must be needed. Yes, it will not be easy, but we have imagination and vision. I hope this small book will be a step in that direction.

Masahiro Terada  
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## Table of Contents

### Preface

Uexküll, Agamben, and Anthropocene: Uexküll, *Streifzüge durch die Umwelten von Tieren und Menschen*, Agamben, *L'aperto: L'uomo e l'animale*, Agamben, *Quel che resta di Auschwitz : L'archivio e il testimone*

### I Documents after the Earthquake

In order to have a city in our mind: Hiroshi Osada, *Komichi no shushu (Collecting Traces)*

Two years as a history of mentality: Takehiko Noguchi, *Ansei edo jishin (Earthquake in Edo)*, Haruki Murakami, *Underground*.

From Kobe, a report after seven years: Haruki Murakami, *Kobe made aruku (A Walk to Kobe)*, Toshio Shimao, *Shi no toge (The Thorn of Death)*, Osamu Tezuka, *Adoruhu ni tugu (Announcing to Adolf)*.

What you are waiting for on top of the volcano: Natsuki Ikezawa, *Mahiru no Purinius (Prinius at Midday)*.

### II Homo narrans, or man narrates

Tragedy and disaster: Mari Nagai, *Naisei no kouzou (Structure of the Inner Reflection)*.

Structure of the reality: Bin Kimura, *Guuzensei no seishinbyori (Pathology of the Contingency)*, Claude Lanzmann, *Shoah*.

Trauma, past, and history: Tetsuya Takahashi, *Shougen no poritikusu (Politics of Testimony)*, Hisao Nakai, *Tyoko, kioku, gaisho (Symptom, Memory, and External Wound)*.

Treaty of anti-narrative: Shinobu Orikuchi, *Kokubungaku no hassei (Birth of National Literature)*, Sadakazu Fujii, *Monogatari no kigen (The Origin of Storytelling)*.

Narrative extinct: Sebald, *Austerlitz*.

### III Memorizing in the woods, in the city, and even in the dream

People and memory: Daniel Hernández-Salazar, *Guatemala, aru tenshi no kioku (Guatemala, or memory of an Angel)*.

How do poets walk on the planet? : Mikiro Sasaki, *Yawarakaku, kowareru (Break down, softly)*.

Whereabouts of dropped memory: Shun Medoruma, *Mabuigumi (Ceremony for Reloading the Soul)*

Phnom Penh, or city of a shadow theater: Rithy Panh et Christophe Bataille,  
*L'élimination*.

Eye, camera, and reality: Wong Bin, *Tie Xi Qu (West of the Tracks)*.

11. September as a physiology: Riibi Hideo, *Chiji ni kudakete (Broken into thousands)*.

Present situation in the U.S.A, or Museum exhibition after the terror: American  
Association of Museum, *Museum News*

Memory and endogenous development: Kazuko Tsurumi, *Naihatsuteki hattenron (A  
Theory of Endogenous Development)*.

#### **IV Towards a new 'Scienza Nuova' of humanity and nature**

About non-time of memory and thinking: Kazuyuki Hosomi, *Kotoba to Kioku (Words and  
Memory)*.

Milieu, past, and humanity: Kazuyoshi Sugawara, *Kanjou no enjin (Engine of emotion  
between Man and Primate)*.

Individuality and eternity: *The collected Works of Jun'ichiro Itani*.

#### **Afterwords**

Community by reading: Atsuko Suga, *Korushiashoten no nakamatachi (Companions I  
had in Libreria Corsia dei Servi)*