

Akira Mizuta Lippit

University of Southern California

At the Center of the Outside:

Japanese Cinema Nowhere¹

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the idea of place in contemporary Japanese cinema, focusing on the desire that appears in various contemporary films to find oneself somewhere, anywhere, rather than nowhere. “At the Center of the Outside” looks at those films that work through the idea of particular places, specific cities and regions, en route to a transformed notion of place as radical outside, a utopia. A key work under consideration is Yukisada Isao’s 2004 *Crying Out Love, at the Center of the World*, a blockbuster melodrama that opens onto a specific city, Takamatsu in Shikoku, but then slips into the mediated spaces of a haunted past. At work in this film is the vocalization of a space, a center of the world generated by the topographical force of a technological device, the Walkman. A nostalgic device in both senses of the term, the Walkman becomes the site of an atopic center of the world. This paper reflects on the concept of the world as it appears in contemporary Japanese cinema.

¹ This essay will appear as part of a collection of essays edited by Yomi Braester and James Tweedie, *Cinema at the City’s Edge: Film and Urban Networks in East Asia*, which will be published by the Hong Kong University Press in 2009. I am grateful for their permission to publish the work in *Situations*.

Among the unique features of individual cities, aside from the unique features that are proper to and define each is the speed with which any city can become at once a singular and global place: a space defined by an indeterminate quality that renders it the only possible place where it is and everywhere else at the same time. A city and the world at once, in an instant, defined by a temporality of place that constitutes the taking place of places. Somewhere, singular and always everywhere, nowhere, the world projected into the universe. Here, I am at the center where I am, wherever I am, and everywhere else: at the center of the world and at its end. Cities are uncanny places whose very familiarity, whose visual and emotional singularity can induce a sudden and profound disorientation. From the center to the end of where I am at once. Freud speaks of the disorientation one finds at home, the experience of homelessness (*unheimlichkeit*) one feels only at home; he also proposes the ancient city—its numerous palimpsests and archaeologies—as a model (the only model) for the unconscious. As much as they are geographical, material, and actual, cities are also psychical spaces. They are projections, defined by the heterogeneity of spatial and psychical elements that constitute them. Any city can become the repository of a unique set of projections—fantasies, memories, and imaginary values—that transform it into an atopia, if not a utopia. Most, perhaps all do. The transformation from a distinct place to an indistinct assemblage of affects is never complete; rather, the shift takes place, in place, as a dynamic variation between the physical and metaphysical values that form each unique place. At once: cities are in the world, but worlds also open inside cities, forcing them (cities) to exceed their geographical and historical specificity (physics) and assume the properties of a world,

and even a universe (metaphysics). They are centers and ends of the world.

The city is a fantastic border that separates this place from the rest of space; a frame that defines the singularity of this place against the universality that surrounds it. This place rather than any other. It is physical to the extent it is finite, but rendered metaphysical by the imaginary qualities its borders enforce. Jacques Derrida invokes the complex economy that binds physical and metaphysical spaces, the earth and world, the totality of the world and the solitude of islands. In his final seminar titled “The Beast and the Sovereign,” Jacques Derrida turns increasingly toward the subject of solitude, in particular the solitude of animals and sovereigns, beings marked by a primary relation to the outside.² To become animal, to become sovereign is to come into contact with the profound solitude of the outside, to sense the profound solitude of the non-human world—to experience the world as a non-human being. Outside the law, outside community, and outside humanity, beasts and sovereigns, among other outsiders inhabit the outside and come to determine a law of the outside, a community outside. Alone, animals and sovereigns live in the outside, and as figures of it. They are exposed to an outside world, a world outside, a world whose interiority is outside. They are inside-out in the world; in the world by being outside. The world thus framed by the force of exteriority and exclusion transforms the world, the very worldliness of the world, into an island.

² At the time of this writing, Derrida’s 2002-03 lectures have not been published. J. Hillis Miller has quoted one passage from the unpublished manuscript in the original French and in English translation. Its appears in J. Hillis Miller, “Derrida Enisled,” in *The Late Derrida*, ed. W. J. T. Mitchell and Arnold I. Davidson (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), 30-58.

Reading Daniel Defoe's 1719 novel *Robinson Crusoe*, Derrida speaks in his unfinished lectures, of Crusoe's exile, in particular of the world that had become for the protagonist an island: "There is no world," says Derrida, "there are only islands."³ Islands form at the end of the world, beyond or outside the world's end. The vast expanse of the world, which determines an inclusive form of being and life—"a being in the world"—has been turned inside-out: alone and at a distance from humanity, from others, the outsider is sovereign on an island of one. The totality of worlds has been replaced by the multiple singularities of islands. He says:

Between my world, the "my world"; what I call "my world," and there is no other for me, every other world making up part of it, between my world and every other world, there is initially the space and the time of an infinite difference, of an interruption incommensurable with all the attempts at passage.⁴

Between the singularity of "my world" (and "there is no other for me," Derrida claims) and the universality of "every other world" is "the space and the time of an infinite difference," he says, of an interruption that cannot be bridged; between "my world" and the world, between singularity and universality, there can be no passage, no "communication" or "translation."⁵ My world is not a world at all, but an island: an absolutely singular space, incommunicable (incapable of community) and untranslatable. "There is no world, there are only islands." Derrida is drawing from a long philosophical tradition that understands the world as a specifically human topography, a

³ Cited in Miller, "Derrida Enisled," 48. "Il n'y a pas de monde, il n'y a que des îles."

⁴ Cited in Miller, "Derrida Enisled," 47.

⁵ Cited in Miller, "Derrida Enisled," 47.

uniquely human formation of space that surrounds but also forms each human being. To lose oneself in the world, to abandon oneself to it but also to be abandoned by it is to lose the very humanity of being human. If there is no world but only islands, then each individual human being on his own and her own island is rendered uniquely non-human, ex-human, which is to say no longer human, beyond the laws of space that establish the humanity of the human as such. Each island is an end of the world, my end at the end of my world.

My end in the world, at the end of the world. In another idiom but one that reverberates with Derrida's, Jean-Luc Nancy invokes the end of the world, and its effect on one's "sense" of the world; on one's perception, understanding, and experience of the world; on one's relation to and place in it. For Nancy also, "there is no longer any world." He says:

There is no longer any world: no longer a "mundus", a "cosmos", a composed and complete order (from) within which one might find a place, a dwelling, and the elements of an orientation. Or, again, there is no longer the "down here" of a world one could pass through toward a beyond or outside of this world. There is no longer any Spirit of the world, nor is there any history before whose tribunal one could stand. In other words, there is no longer any sense of the world.⁶

Nancy's sense of the world provides order and orientation in the world but also the possibility of passage from one place to another, one state to another, in both the geopolitical and spiritual senses of the word "state." The loss of this sense of the world

⁶ Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Sense of the World*, trans. Jeffrey S. Librett (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 4.

propels one into a space without orientation, spirit, or passage. A space without; a worldless space. “We know, indeed,” says Nancy, “that it is ‘the end of the world’, and there is nothing illusory ... about this knowledge.”⁷

But what comes to an end in Nancy’s declaration, the world or one’s sense of it? How can one distinguish between the two? Has the world indeed ended, as Nancy seems to suggest, or has the “sense” of the world come to an end, as he also seems to suggest? Is he referring to the end of the world as such, or the end of my world, my sense of the world? This depends on whether one understands the world as a concrete or conceptual space, finite or infinite; whether the world is conceived within the laws of physics or metaphysics. The two are inseparable ultimately. This distinction, this dilemma disappears in Nancy as well as in other philosophical discourses of the world (Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, for example) before it develops further: the world is at once a sense and all sense is “a priori” a world, the world as such. Neither exists without the other. “Thus,” says Nancy, “‘world’ is not merely the correlative of ‘sense’ it is structured as ‘sense’, and reciprocally, ‘sense’ is structured as ‘world’. Clearly, ‘the sense of the world’ is a tautological expression.”⁸ A tautology and redundancy, “the sense of the world,” in Nancy’s formulation, merges “sense” and “world” into one: all sense is sense of the world, and the world appears already only as sense. They are linked, in the end, to the end of the world, to the sense always of finitude. The affect that defines the sense of the world, is the sense of its imminent finitude, of its limit, and of its end. In the end and at the end of the world, there is no world, only islands.

⁷ Nancy, *Sense of the World*, 4 (original emphasis).

⁸ Nancy, *Sense of the World*, 8 (original emphases).

At the end of the world, I discover it to have been an island; the world revealed to be a planet scattered with islands. Each island a limit, each island an end of the world. On each island one person, alone, rendered sovereign of a worldless outside. To be outside, to be in the world in this sense is always to be at the center of one's own world, to "exhibit" a world that is no longer a world, no longer the site of plenitude, future, and others—neither "mundus" nor "cosmos"—but the discrete place of an absolute singularity outside. An absolutely singular outside and senseless world. To be outside is also to be at the center; at the center of the outside. I am alone at the center of the outside.

THERE IS NO WORLD, THERE ARE ONLY WORLDS

Among the recurring themes of the new Japanese cinema, a cinema whose resurgence in the 1990s brought many new directors to prominence, has been an acute focus on the specificity of places—cities, states, worlds, and spaces—and on the relation between particular places and the larger world that surrounds it, to a "sense of the world." From Okinawa in Kitano Takeshi's *Sonatine* (1993) to Otaru in Iwai Shunji's *Love Letter* (1995); from Gunma in Oguri Kôhei's *Sleeping Man* (*Nemuru otoko*, 1996) to Hiroshima in Suwa Nobuhiro's remake of *Hiroshima mon amour*, *H Story* (2001); from the lost capital Nara in Kawase Naomi's *Sarasoju* (2003) to the "metropole" of loss, Tokyo in Sofia Coppola's neo-Japanese *Lost In Translation* (2003); from an unrecognizable Japan everywhere in Sai Yôichi's *All Under the Moon* (*Tsuki wa dotchi ni dete iru*, 1993) to an unremarkable Japan everywhere in Aoyama Shinji's *Eureka* (2000); from Oku Noto in

Kore-eda Hirokazu's *Maborosi* (*Maboroshi no hikari*, 1995) to a small apartment in Tokyo in Kore-eda's *Nobody Knows* (*Dare mo shiranai*, 2004); Japan in the world (Los Angeles) in Kitano's *Brother* (2000) to the world in Japan in Miike Takashi's *The City of Lost Souls* (*Hyôryû-gai*, 2000), among many other examples, specific places ground numerous contemporary Japanese films, producing as it were a collective atlas of Japan projected in these films. Evident in this specificity is a tension unique to specificity at such: specificity defines a fragile condition and such places are at risk of losing their specificity into the abyss of universality or atopicity. Recognizable places risk disappearing into the world, unrecognizable. They are vulnerable to the terms of their own specificity. In many of these films, specific places become islands, ends of the world, in the spatial and temporal idiom of that term. Beyond by the uncanny economies of singularity, places become islands, marked by isolation and solitude. Specific places become ends of the world but also centers of an outside that open up beyond the limits and finitude even of worlds. And the center of the world is also the end of the world—the center establishes its finitude, “the moment of its end”. There is no world, only worlds; there is no city, only “specificities”.

One film among many possible examples, neither exemplary nor exceptional in this regard seeks to forge the “incommensurable” communication Derrida describes between “my world,” the singularity of the world I inhabit, and the world populated and constituted by others, another's world (another world). Yukisada Isao's 2004 *Crying Out Love, In the Center of the World* (*Sekai no chûshin de, ai o sakebu*) navigates a complex geography of disparate elements in space, time, history, and memory,

developing a mode of transit that takes characters to and from specific times and places in a phantom passage between this world and that other world.⁹ It is a film suspended in the interruption of a world, in the paralysis this interruption creates. As the title suggests, the film invokes a sense of the world, a center of the world, in the form of a sense or affect (love and loss) and a mode of expression, crying or more accurately shouting (sakebu).¹⁰ *Crying Out Love* takes place in and invokes specific sites--Takamatsu in Shikoku, where much of the film is set, and Uluru (Ayers Rock) in the Northern Territory of central Australia, where the film concludes. Each location forcefully establishes the sense of the film's place, its colors, affects, and fantasies. But the space of the film, the center of the world it conjures, takes place at a distance from any specific site, establishing a mediated and technological space that is irreducibly distant from the present and near only to the disappearance of space as such, to a radical form of "atopia". An auratic space: At the center, nowhere, the specificity of place is constituted as and by distance.

The melodrama, a blockbuster hit throughout Asia, portrays two periods in the life of Matsumoto Sakutaro; as an adult in the present (Ôsawa Takao) and as a high school student in 1986 (Moriyama Mirai). In the present, Sakutaro is on the eve of marrying Fujimura Ritsuko (Shibasaki Kou), through whom he is thrown back into his past and

⁹ Yukisada Isao served as assistant director for Iwai Shunji's *Love Letter* (1995), *Swallowtail* (1996), and *April Story* (*Shigatsu monogatari*, 1998)—three films acutely attuned to the fluctuation of worlds—and previously directed *Go* (2001), about a young Korean-Japanese torn between two selves, two communities, and two worlds.

¹⁰ The film's title in Japanese and in the English translation contains a poetic comma that serves no true grammatical or syntactical purpose; it creates a slight break, an interstice or afterthought that allows the phrase "in the center of the world (*sekai no chûshin de*)" to stand alone. In the English title, the order of the two clauses has been reversed.

forced to recall and relive his ill-fated love affair with Hirose Aki (Nagasawa Masami). The film alternates between 1986 and the present, between two moments in the life of Sakutaro, between two worlds that have been severed from one another. What sutures the past to the present, and each of the characters to one another is a technological device and audio trope, the Sony Walkman.

Crying Out Love establishes the voice as a central motif, recorded audio as a dominant trope, and the Sony Walkman as a central signifier for the passage between peoples, spaces, times, and worlds. While preparing for her move and new life with Sakutaro, Ritsuko discovers in an old sweater, an audio cassette tape; she has to go to an electronics store to buy a device to play the cassette tape. All the machines have disappeared, evoking the trope of archaeology (a search for lost memories, lost voices, and lost machines) that continues throughout the film. The tape, recorded by Aki on the night of her death, is the last of a series of exchanged audio tapes between the young Sakutaro and Aki, which began after they competed to win a Sony Walkman through a radio contest. The competition between Sakutaro and Aki is to see who can be the first to have a postcard read on a late-night radio program. Sakutaro wins the competition by making up a story about a young girl who resembles Aki and has been stricken with leukemia. This upsets Aki, who initiates a series of recorded exchanges with Sakutaro as a means of reconciling. The technique of recorded missives allows Aki and Sakutaro to speak candidly to one another; in this way, their courtship is mediated, canned, and assumes much later a form of indelible uncanniness. Aki eventually falls ill with the leukemia. As a result of their courtship and sustained communication with recorded audio, a virtual

archive of their romance remains intact, as a record of their love affair. They leave behind a trace of their brief romance in 1986. Seventeen years later, Ritsuko leads Sakutaro back to Takamatsu, where he rediscovers the taped archive, and the world that is both preserved and lost.

The Walkman operates as a historical signifier (1986), an emblem of the era, its representative technology, perhaps, but also as a trope, a mode of communication and a way of rendering the world through private audio.¹¹ It is a way to bring privacy, intimacy (honesty), and interiority into a public space. It renders the inside out and the outside in, transforming the world of audio into an island. Although they are together, each speaks alone, and each listens alone, a solitary conversation with the other. The Walkman shuts the world out for individuals, replacing it with a private and interior world. It also repositions the listening subject at the center of the world.

A climactic scene takes place in the high school gymnasium, where Sakutaro replays the tape of Aki playing the piano. The tape was recorded in the hospital where Aki is already sick; Sakutaro listens to the tape again, for the second time in the space where, presumably, he listened to it for the first time seventeen years earlier. The audio represents a doubled and deferred reproduction, recorded once, heard earlier and then again later. Aki tells Sakutaro to walk through the gymnasium and onto the stage, and where she instructs him to stand before the piano and close his eyes. She insists that he keep his eyes closed, and when he opens his eyes, she immediately scolds him. As if

¹¹ According to the Sony website, the first Walkman, originally called Soundabout, was launched on 22 June 1979. The first model went on sale on July 1 of that year.

she were there not at the moment she recorded the tape, but seventeen years later. Sakutaro responds by closing his eyes, but immediately says her name, "Aki." As if, in the instant that he opened his eyes, he saw her there. Aki continues to speak, and her voice becomes increasingly embodied, an effect throughout of the uncanny liveness of the Walkman sound quality. The camera begins to track backwards, still focusing on Sakutaro, whose eyes remain closed. The moving camera establishes throughout this scene the presence of some other subjectivity, neither here nor there but everywhere. A point of view not located in any one person, in anybody, but dispersed throughout the gymnasium and the frame, at once diegetic and non-diegetic. Gradually the piano enters the frame and Aki comes into view there at the piano. With his headset still on and his eyes closed, Sakutaro listens to Aki play the piano. Feeling her proximity, Sakutaro removes the headset, eyes still closed: without any break, the sound of Aki's piano continues. And the sound of rain, of the outside enters the audio diegesis, breaking the interiority of Aki's performance. The sound levels are complex and uneven throughout this scene, including Aki's voice, which appears to move from recorded audio to embodied voice, from distant to close. The sound of the rain cuts in then out, establishing an economy of sound not unlike the moving camera that shifts or rather disperses the locus of subjectivity throughout the frame. She is there before him, embodied, transposed from the phantom audio to an impossible presence, a representation.

At that moment the camera cuts to Ritsuko who has entered the gymnasium. She sees Sakutaro alone on the stage, staring at the empty piano. But the sound of Aki's piano remains suspended along the line of the diegesis: it is unclear whether Ritsuko can hear

the piano; the diegesis offers no indication. Sakutaro hears Aki's piano without the headset; and he sees her there with his eyes closed. His sense of the world confirmed by her embodied entry through his senses. At this moment the stability of *this* place, its thereness, dissolves. Somewhere is no longer here nor there, but everywhere. The singularity and incommensurability of these disparate moments have been merged into an impossible topography. The audiotape has established a place, a specific site and set of senses, a world from an island. It is a phantom world; the collapse and convergence of worlds and of islands—Sakutaro then and now, Aki then, and Ritsuko now meet in this extra-sensory world where sounds and views are merged without a unified perspective or point of reference. Aki then, preserved as a schoolgirl, takes the hand of Sakutaro now, seventeen years later. Her otherworldly hand reaches through time, from one lost moment to another. She leans against him in a deferred embrace, one they never managed seventeen years ago. She says, "I love you."

Ritsuko witnesses the rematerialization of Aki; she stares intently in the direction of Sakutaro and Ritsuko's phantom embrace, although the film does not provide a reaction shot to confirm what she sees. Instead, the scene appears to dissolve into a sepia-toned shot of the young Sakutaro and Aki embracing on the same stage, which turns into an extended flashback in which Aki reveals to Sakutaro that she is sick. When the scene ends, the camera returns to a visibly shaken Ritsuko, who appears to have witnessed this flashback. It is unclear what exactly Ritsuko has seen: Sakutaro's hallucination, Sakutaro's memory, or the return of Aki into this world. The spectacle that Ritsuko witnesses remains ambiguous, unverified. Moved to tears by this scene of resurrection,

Ritsuko rushes out of the gymnasium. In this scene, all of the systems have collapsed into one: past and present, technological audio and embodied sound, phantom and flesh. Each island assembled, reassembled for a moment into a world. The scene represents the center of the world, an impossible center that converges into a world for one instant before vanishing.

The ghostly economy that brings Sakutaro, Aki, and Ritsuko together constitutes a world because the here and now of this impossible moment—a palimpsest of multiple solitudes and multiple islands—yields a point of contact between the past and present, the here and there, the here and beyond: a passage, a spirit, a “cosmos”. The scene ends when Sakutaro opens his eyes and immediately looks in the direction of Ritsuko. Disoriented by his encounter with Aki, Sakutaro begins to flee the stage when he receives a call from his friend, Ryu (one technology displaced by the next, Walkman to mobile phone, both modes of disembodied vocal communication, one live, the other recorded). The sound of his phone penetrates this space from the outside, infusing it with another phantom, another world, elsewhere. “I just saw Aki,” says Sakutaro. “She’s not a memory,” he insists. “Aki died alone seventeen years ago,” he says. “At the end, she didn’t try to see me, so when I’m here, I feel as if she’s still here.” History and memory, physics and metaphysics, the world and a sense of the world appear in the figure of Aki, whose very name, as she once explains to Sakutaro, refers to prehistory. The world she forms and performs at the moment falls outside history, prehistoric but also ahistorical and technological.

Crying Out Love constitutes a virtual archive of lost others: photographs, audio recordings, souvenirs, memories, and bones and ashes. It is a technological archive that forms a world of solitary figures suspended in time. Lost others and lost worlds (worlds lost in others) are remembered in the technological artifacts that litter the landscape of this film, like relics, tombs, and ruins. Small indices that nonetheless make contact between people lost in time and in space possible, between the many solitary islands that form the world of this film. Audio devices including the audiotape, radio, and mobile phone dictate this film's narrative, establishing a mode of passage between people, places, and times; between one world and another. Sound makes possible a passage through the world, to invoke Nancy. The audio tape, but more specifically the Sony Walkman, becomes itself a place; it takes and gives place, taking the place of place and establishing a locus for the unresolved affair that did not in fact end with Aki's death. Her undelivered missive, the voice that travels across seventeen years, finally returns through the hands of Ritsuko, who limps to deliver the tape.¹² Or, one could say, Aki's farewell—her uttered, recorded, but unheard goodbye—has remained in transit during this time until it enters the ears of first Ritsuko, then Sakutarō, before it is released into and out of the diegesis. The place opened up by the audiotape, by the Walkman, and the phantom and restless voice of Aki, allows the relationship to finally rest, to take its place at the “center of the world,” here the vast and distant and prehistoric Uluru, Australia. Sakutarō and Ritsuko take Aki's ashes and her voice, traces of her life and body—to Uluru, a place that Aki saw only in photographs she found left in another's camera. It is

¹² Ritsuko's limp, visible throughout the film, is never explained until the end. On the way to her last delivery of the tape that will remain suspended in transit, Ritsuko is struck by a car. The accident leaves her with a limp and prevents her from completing her task. Aki dies and the undelivered tape remains sealed in Ritsuko's sweater (itself a relic of her past, of this moment, of her trauma) until she uncovers it seventeen years later. Ritsuko bears her limp like Oedipus, always behind herself, always late to the place where she is destined.

a postponed voyage, one that Sakutaro and Aki never completed together.

The pursuit of a center, first Yumejima (Yume island, dream island) then Uluru, Australia, becomes for Aki and Sakutaro the center of their world together. During a clandestine trip to the depopulated Yumejima, arranged by Sakutaro's friend who conspires to facilitate the consummation of Sakutaro and Aki's love, the two discover among the abandoned relics of previous visitors, a camera loaded with a roll of undeveloped film. They contain images of Uluru; retrieved from another's memories, from another's past, the photographs point Sakutaro and Aki toward the future and the end of the world—the end of the world at its center.

On Yumejima Sakutaro's only attempt at physical (quasi-sexual) contact is rebuffed; he is scolded by Aki who postpones their first kiss until the right moment. This moment remains deferred indefinitely in life and takes place only in the metaphysics of the gymnasium scene where Aki reaches out from the past to embrace Sakutaro, from the other world into this one. (Later, as Aki nears death from a sanitized hospital room sealed in plastic, Sakutaro and Aki attempt to kiss each other through the plastic barrier; a prophylactic consummation made tragic and comic by the poignancy of the missed occasion earlier.) Yumejima is also where the first symptoms of Aki's fatal illness appear, a nose bleed followed by her collapse. It marks the beginning and end of Sakutaro and Aki; a beginning already in the end, and an end discovered in the beginning, from Yumejima to Uluru.

The central site of their mourning; a quasi-imaginary place where their eternity is preserved, far away in a vast exteriority. In Uluru, a sacred place for the dead, Sakutaro puts on his headset and listens to Aki's final communication. She recalls their time together and thanks him for having been so close. Invoking an uncanny temporality, she declares "I will never forget the precious time we spent together." Her memory will survive her. On the eve of her death, at the moment of her death, she invokes a future memory: "I will never forget." The sonic force of her presence as a recorded audio renders her claim true: she can speak now, seventeen years after her death, of a past she has not forgotten. Her memory has survived and survived her. Aki asks Sakutaro to "scatter her ashes on the winds of Uluru," then to live his life, to go on with his life which has been suspended, literally to live "his now (*ima wo ikite*)." The past and present, the living and dead, Takamatsu and Uluru are brought together in one world--the center of the world but also its end. The world kept alive by Aki's voice—a world preserved in the Walkman, itself a finite historical apparatus—comes to an end. At the end of the world and at the end of time, this time particular to this world, Aki returns from and returns to the phantom site of technology, to the space of a haunted audiocassette. To prehistory. She has become non-human, no longer human, but phantom and sovereign; she releases Sakutaro from the solitude of his island.

Sakutaro returns from the end of the world, from the paradoxical plenitude of his island, of the multiple islands he inhabits, into the outside and into the world, as an exile in the outside. Sakutaro rediscovers the world at its end, in its end, recognizing the essence of the world, its center, as the end of the world. For Sakutaro the world begins essentially

at its end, as its end, as it ends. No longer defined in contrast to an island, no longer defined dialectically against solitude, the very possibility of the world, of being in it, requires the redemption of the island as its center: the possibility of the world in the island and as an island. In the end, in this end there are no longer any places, only worlds, only ends, only centers.

WORKS CITED

- Miller, J. Hillis. "Derrida Enisled," in *The Late Derrida*. Ed. W. J. T. Mitchell and Arnold I. Davidson. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007. 30-58.
- Nancy, Jean-Luc. *The Sense of the World*. Trans. Jeffrey S. Librett. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.