Between Gardens: Criticality and Consolation in a Furuya Seiichi Contact Sheet [1]

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> ...polysemous texts will once again function according to another mode, but still with a system of constraint – one that will no longer be the author….All discourses, whatever their status, form, value, and whatever the treatment to which they will be subjected, would then develop in the anonymity of a murmur.
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> - Michel Foucault, "What is an Author?" 1969 (1998, 222; 2015, 1258-1280)

Foucault's wish that a new kind of storytelling yield a simultaneity of stories may approach fulfillment in the photography books of Furuya Seiichi (b. 1950, Izu, Japan, living and working in East/West Germany or Austria since 1973) (Faber 2004). Specifically, Furuya draws from his growing pool of images to make multivalent sequences in photobooks. This supports multiple readings through image interactions within page sequences as well as image repetitions across photobooks. I propose that Furuya's process

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also invites viewers to trace visual narratives of solace that replenish energy for critical readings through a complementarity of personal, historical, private and public references. With this in mind, I first frame Furuya's work as a site for solace and critique through narrative interactions with his viewers by considering his own writings in selective relation to theories of photography and film. I then analyze a Furuya contact sheet (1989, 89) with a particular emphasis on elements of "nature" that modulate critical and consoling relations to "gardens."

Introduction:

This article forms part of my dissertation-related research, inspired jointly by studies of historical legacies and visual processes. One such inspiration is the scholarship of Lisa Yoneyama (1999) and Igarashi Yoshikuni (2000), who expand understandings of postwar Japanese culture in order to excavate, critique and revise narratives of the Asia-Pacific War (1931-1945). In these terms, my work is partly an answer to Igarashi's call for continuing to vary the processing of wartime legacies by including members of later postwar generations outside Japan (2016, 16-17). In addition to fitting Igarashi's generational and geographical designation, Furuya also produces work that allows a range of personal and political narratives for different viewers (or even one viewer) with respect to the same elements, which aptly engages Igarashi's methodological goals: to consider history through the individual and the personal in the collective.

Another inspiration is a personal challenge of interpretation which I find that I share with other observers of Furuya's work (Frisinghelli 1988, 1989; Faber 1989; Fenz 1989; Skreiner 1989; Kasahara 1993; Stahel 1995; Ito 1995; Kohara 2007; Loh 2012; Kobayashi 2012) as well as – as I explain in the first section of this article – with Foucault and other

thinkers on photography in his generation. Specifically, this challenge lies in having to choose between preserving the egalitarian indistinctness of the Foucauldian murmur or following its narrative hopes into specific stories. My current answer is to approach visual interpretation through stories that interact in such a way that no single story dominates the others, as well as such that all stories raise points of relevance between their makers and their viewers. Indeed, Furuya invites my approach by creating its conditions.

In terms of format, Furuya's work can function as a site of various mental activities. I have chosen to focus on critique and consolation, because – as will become clear through reception of his subject-matter – these activities seem to underlie the greatest number of analytical tools that he shares with his audience. These tools are his photobooks themselves – as records of his initial choices in subject and framing, as well as his later arrangement; the extensive biography and explanation that he publishes in texts (1985; 1989, 94; 1997; 2002; Furuya-Gössler 2006, 310); and historical references in recognizable symbols, dates, and place names. The only "tool" that Furuya and his viewers do not share is thus personal resonance while viewing his images. Furuya's open-ended presentation, however, allows viewers to clarify their own resonances by tracing visual narratives in his work. Doing so shows them how their perspectives may relate to Furuya's, which expands the issues that Furuya's work might address as well as his "contact" with his viewers.

In terms of content, Furuya's work offers a changing mixture of public aspects of "history" in negotiation with personal ones. An early example is *Staatsgrenze* (1980-1983; 2014) which combines interviews and photographs taken in the context of daily life at the borders of Austria and then-communist countries (Furuya 1985, 2014). Since then, his photobooks have offered engagements with the private, public, historical and personal

through his own home life as well as outside observations. These address primarily Catholicism, World War II, the Asia-Pacific War, and the Cold War. Works on Furuya often characterize these engagements in terms of alienation from both "Western" culture (Faber 1989, 96; Skreiner 1989, 103; Stahel 1995 150-151) and "Japanese identity," (Ito 1995, 158; Kasahara 1993; Homma 2006, 97) which highlights critical aspects of his work. It also, however, surrounds Furuya's own feelings with a sense of mystery.

The loneliness of this view is compounded by Furuya's 1989 addition to his method: incorporating images of his late wife, Christine Furuya-Gössler, who committed suicide in 1985. Specifically, he continues to recombine images of Christine with those from "other" projects in her lifetime – when Furuya seems to have exhibited only one group of her images under their own theme (Furuya 1997, (unpaginated): 1) – as well as with his photographs since her death. In what follows, I begin to "open" Furuya's work to the activities that I myself prioritize in it, which might be perceived as correlating to some of his own. These are: revisiting personal and historical pasts critically; seeking moments of solace in remembering positive aspects of these pasts; imagining regeneration in the future; and taking analytical "breaks" that are able to eschew escapism, because the consolations are contained in the same image sequences as the critiques.

I start by deriving a framework for my approach through a chronology of Furuya's own texts. Furuya consistently conceptualizes modes of perception and photography in a form that might be called "multi-narrative." I shall refer to "multi-narrativity" as the ability of materials to support various narratives that influence each other. Although I do not like to invent terms, I introduce this one in particular as an umbrella for the capabilities of such

concepts as "intertextuality" and "interpictoriality." Both rely on the principle – concisely stated by Cynthia Hahn – that "readers respond to textual [or visual] references and cues by bringing previously read texts [or viewed images] to bear on acts of reading." Thus, Hahn reads medieval saint's reliquaries through hagiographies as well as visual narratives that period viewers might have seen (1999, 109-124). In the context of the present discussion, this approach may be seen as resembling how Furuya's viewers might remember multiple uses of his images in relation to his life story and other histories across different photobooks. Moreover, from the point of view of power in authorship, Furuya's work also is open to the sort of multi-narrative interpretation that William Johnstone brought to Old Testament images in the Sistine Chapel: showing various levels of divergence both from and within the Roman Catholic narratives expected of Michelangelo and his patron (2002, 416-455).

At the same time, Furuya's explanations of his multi-narrativity are more straightforward and bound to his life. He begins by asserting specific interests as well as an open approach to their possible messages. After Christine's passing, he seeks the solace of reconnecting with her through her images while experiencing the self-reproach of remembering and investigating her depression and death. This practice ultimately keeps her "alive" in the making and viewing of his work. Furuya is thus himself a "viewer" whose visual choices shape visual narratives for further shaping, similar to notions of viewer agency discused by photographic historians such as Kaja Silverman (2009; 2015) and Stefanie Loh (2012, 9, 91-111).

Finally, the "deep viewing" that I bring to Furuya's work was anticipated by early thinkers on criticality and consolation in relation to photographic and cinematic viewing. I explore this by relating Furuya's method to the needs expressed by Marxist philosophers Tosaka Jun (2001, 34-48; 2013, 103-134) and Walter Benjamin (1969, 217-251; 1977, 136-169;) as well as semiotician Roland Barthes (1980; 1981). Specifically, Furuya's work fulfills Tosaka's hopes (similar to Benjamin's) of joining the critical exposure of harm with the consoling witnessing of humanity through multiple readings of the same films. Furuya's statements and style also soften exclusivities expressed by Barthes – particularly the divide that he posited between photographer and viewer as well as the certainty that he demanded of love.

Furuya's Statements: Confessional, Investigative, Open-ended

Among Furuya's first statements on his work in Europe – he left Japan after a short career documenting anti-establishment protests and reportedly destroyed the resulting images (Faber 2004, 163-164) – is his 1983 text for the aforementioned "National Border" (1980-1983; 2014). The project appears in a catalogue for a group show as a short sequence of images and texts showing photographs of the then-communist borders of Austria alongside excerpts of corresponding interviews at the sites. Furuya's statement expresses curiosity about history and memory as elements of an open question about borders: "to find places where there have been tragic incidences, and to find out *personal stories* to give myself a chance to think about the [historical] 'border' *phenomenon*" (1985, (unpaginated): 17).

Visually, as Furuya's statement implies, the catalogue sequence embodies tension and complementarity between memories as "personal stories" and history as a

"phenomenon." Some interview excerpts evoke German war memories and Cold War issues while others do not. Images do not directly illustrate their texts (Takata 2017). Instead, Furuya's materials appear as if taken from intertwined, visual and textual narratives in the world, which interact across the catalogue pages.

Notable here is Furuya's early espousal of a presentation that retains the issues of his discussion but reaches beyond a specific message. His work thus can perform *his* functions of intermixing certain visual spaces even when arranged by other curators (Furuya 1985, (unpaginated): 19-23; Ollmann 1999, 184-197). This quality justifies my own analysis of a contact sheet (Furuya 1989, 89). as the "first" sequence of images that Furuya will re-select and recombine in other sequences which are all equally valid. For example, Furuya lists his publication of this contact sheet as the first "publication" of an enlargement from it (Furuya 1997, (unpaginated): caption for image B-1985/13). Doing so implies a wish that viewers look as closely at his tiny images as they would at any others.

The type of close-viewing suggested by Furuya's work also recalls Marxist philosopher Tosaka Jun's attempt to envision historical forces alongside personal experience. Specifically, although Tosaka would have agreed with his contemporary, Walter Benjamin, that the "camera that presents the performance of the film actor to the public need not respect the performance as an integral whole" (1969, 230; 1977; 150). Tosaka also held that film could make the moral failure of the state visually obvious beyond the intent of deceivers. This was by capturing – in Tosaka's terms – the "custom" of 1930s Japan: its outward behaviors and fashions as "the most general material sensuous expression" of its morality (2013, 109; 2001, 42).

Tosaka thus predicted (in 1936) that audience criticality through close-viewing would topple the deceptions of custom: "Bourgeois film itself is fated to be unable to challenge the self-criticism of custom in the present" (2013, 112; 2001, 46). Alongside this criticality, however, Tosaka also believed that viewers could register a visual "joy" in the humanity that remained beyond the corruption of custom – "the goodness of the materiality of the world":

> …it is the screen that teaches humans the goodness of the materiality of the world, the joy of the movement of matter. By and large, we observe these things everyday, but this element of goodness, this joy, actually occurs to us first when it appears on the screen. There was already the endearing nature of the photograph…but the screen is above all a photograph in motion and thus draws all the more attention to actual reality itself. Movement is the language in which matter speaks through the body" (2013, 108-109; 2001, 41-42).

Although Tosaka also writes more conventionally on film as a sequence taken from reality (2013, 106; 2001, 35), his words above more fruitfully suggest that Furuya's photobooks could have fulfilled his ideals. For example, Furuya's framing of single images creates quotidian mixtures of personal and historical elements, in which Tosaka might have seen "custom" and "the materiality of the world" in dialogue. Furthermore, Furuya's process of making photobooks also applies "movement" to these dialogues in new sequences. Although Tosaka could not have meant exactly this, Furuya's process ultimately resembles his notion of new interpretations coming to an audience with each frame of an image sequence, whether in the stilted continuity of a film that reveals both "custom" and "joy" or in the modulations of a photobook sequence between critiques and consolations.

In other words, perhaps both Tosaka and Furuya look beyond what Roland Barthes once called the *studium*: the conventional message of the photographer's intent. Barthes himself proposed that the *studium* be contrasted with the *punctum* – the viewer's

"wounding" by an incidental trace of reality that resonates through individual recognition (1981, 20-60; 1980, 40-96). Furuya's statement for "National Border," however, softens Barthes' division between photographer and viewer by disclaiming intent and expressing curiosity as a viewer of his own work.

The next text that I consider softens Barthes' rigid foundation of love in certainty, although it could be that my comparison of the cases of losing a spouse versus a parent are not entirely parallel. At the same time, these relations of love also vary among individuals, and I am more concerned with the intense level of love and relation to it through photographs. Specifically, Barthes wrote that his relationship with his late mother bore the precision of not only his decisive "wound" – when he recognized her qualities in a particular image (1981, 69; 1980, 107) – but also that image's "justice and accuracy" (1981, 70; 1980, 109). Barthes famously refused to publish this image, because he did not want to expose it to viewers whom he assumed could not be moved as he was (1981, 73; 1980, 115). Conversely, a mutual space of beholding seems to direct Furuya's 1979 (or 1980) description of his relationship with Christine during her life, which frames his practice of posthumously sharing her images as a belated public exposure of his pre-existing process of love. While this text is slightly earlier than "National Border," I address it second in order to read it in the context of its later publications by Furuya (1989 and 1997):

> In her I've seen a woman passing by me, sometimes a model, sometimes the woman I love, sometimes the woman who belongs to me. I feel bound by duty to photograph constantly the woman who has different meanings for me….Thus, as I see her, photograph her, look at her in a picture, I find myself (1989, 94; 1997 (unpaginated): 1).

Ultimately, this idea of finding oneself through one's impressions of a partner suggests that Furuya and Christine's relationship welcomed multiple readings rather than forms of

certainty. Their openness, in turn, allows viewers potentially to proliferate meanings around Christine that multiply Furuya's love in ways that he may not expect.

At the same time, Furuya's early statement on Christine also awakens elements of its own critique. In 1989, for example, he published it beneath an image of flowers covering a black-and-white photograph of Christine. This evokes the European funeral custom of filling coffins with flowers and the Japanese custom of funeral portraits, but also – in terms of visual sensation – it joins the photo's windy landscape to the liveliness of the flowers' shadows. Christine's photo comes "alive" in contrast to the stillness of the flowers.

In 1997, however, Furuya associates the text with an explanation rather than an image. He suggests that Christine must have helped him write the text, because he realizes that he did not know German well enough at the time, but he also confesses that he cannot remember. He further wonders if he senses this realization (or suspicion?) with a "restless" feeling that literally means "itchy" (*muzumuzu* in Japanese). Could this "itch" possibly be considered a counterpart to the Barthesian "wound" for a love that welcomes a consuming but confusing multivalence (1997, (unpaginated) 1-2)?

From 1997 onwards, Furuya's texts have been more confessional and investigative than his early statements. In a 1997 interview, for example, he describes his process as one of apologetic but comforting contact with Christine in order to show her publicly as she deserved to be shown during her lifetime: "I can never really work this out, but I like that now. She is still with me….I ask her in my mind… 'I will try to show you everywhere. I will do my best….She said OK" (Ollmann 1999, 182). The previously-quoted 1997 text also articulates a process of multi-narrativity in making his photobooks. Specifically, Furuya

alludes to acts of multiple reading ("re-reading") that form multiple paths ("my own footsteps") between the present and his marriage in 1978:

> The [first] two photobooks [to incorporate images of Christine], while re-reading the photographs taken up to their times of publication, were structured as though [I were] following my own footsteps. I made work that retraced records of memories from "now" to the past, re-weaving the various photographs together again. The "now" of 1989 and the "now" of 1995 were the beginnings, but both works end in 1978" ((unpaginated): 9).

It is possibly this process of continuing to "re-read" and "weave together" that led Furuya later to question his photographic approach to Christine in her lifetime. A text that he published in 2002, for example, asks "[whether] the photographer who emerged from this [photography] was a man who kept photographing his wife to death" ((unpaginated insert): 2). In 2006, Furuya publishes Christine's 1983 diaries (often harsh towards him) and notes that he had not been able to bring himself to read them until that year. He also critiques his previous work for using too much "voyeurism" in the service of presenting Christine as a "tragic figure" (311).

Finally, Furuya does not appear to have written anything about Christine for a photobook since 2006 but still re-uses her images (2014; 2016). I would argue, however, that his last "texts" about her appear in a 2010 photobook. Specifically, he did not write his own text but rather featured elegiac writings on Christine by the late dramatist Einar Schleef (2010, 326-333). His image sequences also include multilingual transcriptions of a 1985 letter from Christine to a psychiatrist in which she asks to be taken off medications that were giving her suicidal impulses. A small caption explains that the letter "was signed and enveloped, but was never posted and remained in Furuya's possession since it was the weekend before East Germany's Republic Day" (2010, 163).

This statement that Furuya has kept the letter – as well as that it never was sent – leaves a never-to-be-finished "sending" in the past, even as it provides a sense of closure in the present. At the same time, Furuya's continued use of Christine's images extends the need for engagement with the dead through that of self-critique in the service of the solace of repeated interaction. In this way, Furuya's multi-narrativity softens the exclusivities of Barthes in both critique and solace by sharing viewing spaces between photographer and viewer as well as between bereft and deceased. This shared space, in turn, also is divisible into visual narratives of solace and critique in a manner akin to Tosaka's hope that film would prompt audiences both to critique "custom" as well as find joy in "the materiality of the world."

Part II: Between Gardens: Visual Narratives of Criticality and Consolation

Figure 1: "Potsdam, 06. 10.1985-Falkenberger Chaussee 13/502, 1092 Berlin-Ost, 07.10.1985," *Mémoires 1978-1988* (published 1989) p. 89.
The contact sheet above appears as initially published in Furuya's 1989 photobook

Mémoires:1978-1988, four years after the period that it records (two days surrounding

Christine's death). Its caption names these days and their locations: "Potsdam, 06.10.1985-Falkenberger Chaussee 13/502, 1092 Berlin-Ost, 07.10.1985." The first day, October 6th, shows Furuya's family trip to Potsdam with Christine and their son, Komyo. On the following day, Christine leapt to her death from the balcony of their East Berlin apartment while Furuya and Komyo were watching a televised parade marking East Germany's state anniversary (Furuya 1997, (unpaginated): 6-7). While this contact sheet might be seen as reflecting Furuya's initial processing of this event as it happened, it also can be understood to provide a site which can be revisited repeatedly and supplemented with new information and associations.

I approximate these two types of immediate and later processing through the orientation of my reading, particularly by incorporating later textual references as possible indications of emotional atmospheres during shooting (Furuya 1997; Furuya-Gössler 2006). Accordingly, I first trace narratives along the horizontally chronological sequence of the contact sheet. Then – for reasons of space – I analyze only two of its vertical sequences. First, however, the most basic visual reading might be derived from the shape made by the negatives themselves, in which the long strip of film across the bottom resembles the base of a grave stele or an East Asian ancestor tablet. In this sense, the images can be seen as resembling East Asian scripts in commemorative lines. Such scripts also are flexible in their ordering: they generally have been read historically top to bottom, but then left to right or right to left. In the interests of clarity, I shall refer to images by the numbers on their respective negatives.

Figure 2: (detail of Figure 1; numbers 1-12)

My chronological readings begin with the effects of image orientation. For example, when viewed in its proper orientation, image 1 seems to show part of the Berlin Wall. Just above its edge is a bright spot resembling the sun. A shadow in the sky, which might be clouds or mountains, curves behind the "sun," however. If the shadow is mountains, then the "sun" may be an electric lamp. The sideways orientation also makes this bright spot resemble a light-pointer guiding the eye from the bright side of the scene to the dark edge of the adjoining shot. Finally, the idea of the Berlin Wall as seen from the east – which Furuya would photograph for his project *Limes* (1984-1987) (Frisinghelli 1988, 44-55) –

also could make the "pointer" resemble a sniper beam. The image thus can be seen as shifting from a "natural" landscape to an "urban" map depending on the nature of the "sun."

Figure 3: (Enlargement of Image 2)
Potsdam, 6 October 1985,
Mémoires 1978-1985 (published 1997)

At the same time, the darkness at the adjoining edges of images 1 and 2 can be seen as joining their spaces into a dark and "disoriented" space of nature. In image 2 (clarified in the above enlargement) (Furuya 1997, (unpaginated): image B-1985/13), a black backdrop of a forest with bell flowers takes "sunlight" from image 1 and lends its green to the dark city. The warm colors of Christine and Komyo push their figures towards the viewer until they stop at the next image (3), a "right-side-up" sculpture of a handless, female musician whose arm may be sweeping away from plucking a lyre.

Furuya's framing highlights the sculpture's combination of joy and pain: the joyous ease of the sculpture's posture and the viewer's pain at its lost hand. The metal rod of the

musician's missing hand also points to a certain location between Komyo and Christine's hands and towards Christine's camera. This could be seen as beginning a visual narrative of critique.

Specifically, unlike the musician's lyre, Christine's camera is unused. While the musician is headless but buoyant, Christine's head is visible, yet her body and face seem tense and tired. The color of Komyo's sweater and Christine's shirt also resembles that of the stone from which the musician statue was sculpted. This color overlap can act as a visual prompt to consider the stiffness of their body language in contrast to the musician's relaxation, but also the wholeness of their bodies compared to hers. Those who have read Christine's diaries might read these two images as representing women's blocked opportunities (2006, 53): Christine's exhaustion as a mother, or the sculpture's injury as an artist.

At the same time, a reading suggesting solace also is possible. Christine holds and wears elements of greenery that settle her into a space of both nature and play, and her floral skirt incorporates her into the greenery that – in light of this association – tenderly surrounds Komyo. One of her hands holds a stalk of grass, while the other touches Komyo's shoulder. Komyo also could be read as hiding an object in the fist that he points at his father, as in a child's game of showing that he is holding something but not what it is. These gestures of nurturing and play may make the flowery forest into more of a "garden": a place of cultivation and growth and a metaphor for a family. The fact that Furuya photographs his family only in gardens on this contact sheet may suggest his sympathy with this idea, even if it also may be argued that it is not his intent to express it.

When I extend these readings to include image 4, my eye travels from the sideways city/forest/garden (1-2) to a "properly" oriented park with a fountain in the front and forest in the back (4). This, in turn, leads me to a reading that suggests that the danger of the wilderness as a locus of vulnerability – whether as a stranger at the Berlin wall or with one's child in a dark forest – recedes in both literal and figurative terms. Specifically, my eye runs from the fatigued Christine (2) to the sculpture's missing hand, and across its animated body to its lyre (3). The lyre, in turn, "opens" onto a squiggle of forest against the sky (4) in a manner that somewhat resembles a graphic visualization of striking a harp. In this alternate reading, the previous narrative of Christine's fatigue remains but also forms a new narrative of rejuvenation: where the sculpture regains its dynamism as a link between the "disordered garden" (1-2) and the "restored" one (4). Komyo's upward-pointing hand thus is now "matched" by the fanlike spray of the fountain (4) rather than countered by the drooping bell flowers (3).

Figure 3: (Enlargement of Image 5)

Image 5, however, (enlarged above and oriented correctly to show details), disorients the viewer again. Like image 3, it offers passages through urban and rural

elements, but not in the form of industrial wall and flowery forest. Instead, the urban is a cultural institution: the neoclassical building. It combines the gritty dangers of the Berlin Wall (1) with the damaged refinement of the broken sculpture (3). Nature is similarly mixed: "tamed" in the form of a manicured lawn and a small animal – possibly a dog or cat. A reading critical of urban culture might perceive the squiggly garden of image 4 as squeezed into the institution's rectangular space, because matching monochrome colors in the two images create a visual of the same material being reshaped. This, in turn, might be seen as protesting ideas of conformism, such as the guard at the Berlin Wall, or sculptures in a museum instead of their original contexts.

On the other hand, the addition of image 6 can change this critique. It shows a female sculpture cradling an illegible object. The shortness of the sculpture's tunic suggests a huntress such as Artemis, the protectress of young animals. Although the object that she holds is probably not an animal, the presence of the animal in image 5 allows a cross-frame narrative to suggest that the sculpture has become its caretaker. A nurturing association with the forest thus survives in the museum.

In images 7 to 8, however, elements of isolation and distance from the bright landscape undercut the "correctness" of their orientation. Furuya reframes a shot of a male bust to include a curtain pulled aside to reveal greenery – perhaps where Christine and Komyo played. This offers a visual narrative which suggests that the bodiless head "ignores" the beckoning space of both Furuya's family and their "garden" – now *outside* the institution – twice.

"Anatomically," this treatment of the bust also reverses Furuya's framing of the sculpture of the handless female musician to truncate her head (3). At the same time, both

figures cannot reach what awaits them: the feel of the artistic instrument or the sight of the familial garden. A more specifically critical reading could draw on Furuya's 1997 promise to show Christine "everywhere" (Ollman 1999, 181). Perhaps, like the bust, he once turned away from the "garden" of family towards his career, just as the bust turns towards its exhibition space.

The remaining four shots of October 6th also support alternate narratives of criticality and solace through textual anxiety and visual rest. Image 9 may resign the day to conflict in a "right-side-up" scene of an apparent fight between un-winged and winged boys. This childishness is then "overturned" (10), however, which sets positive possibilities within the "disordered" orientation.

A naked woman (11) – identified as Psyche by her lamp (12) – reaches for the winged boy (who is thus Eros) by a softly luxurious bed. The other boy is gone. In image 12, the last shot of this day, Psyche pulls away the blanket to identify her lover. In the myth, this will cause him to abandon her for breaking her promise not to look at him. In the image, the lamp-oil that burns him awake has not yet dripped.

A reading based on texts alone might be critical. The curiosity of Psyche casts doubt on the joys of a relationship that does not pursue certainty – as in the "different meanings" in Furuya's 1979(80) statement (1989, 94; 1997 (unpaginated): 1). Visually, however, image 12 offers the solace of a lover regarding her partner – possibly after surmounting a conflict with a third party (9-10). Finally, the "disordered" orientation also alters the viewer's sense of gravity in a way that preserves the fragile "order" of this moment. Psyche's lamp stays "upright" and keeps the oil from spilling.

Figure 4: (Enlargement of Images 13-[37])

If we extend the contact sheet's chronology into the next day (enlarged above), images 13-22 can be seen as flowing through the alternately crisp, blurred or bleached frames of a televised military parade in honor of the founding of the German Democratic Republic, which Furuya was watching with Komyo. Image 23 is the room where Christine leapt from the window, as can be inferred from her shoes on the floor which, coincidentally, are a Japanese symbol of suicide by jumping. Image 24 shows Christine's body, pillowed on soft-looking grass, surrounded by passersby. As will be seen, Furuya chooses – or accidentally captures – more and more elements of "nature" in the wake of this event.

First, however, there is a narrative of pain that can be explored in relation to the images of the previous day. Specifically, Christine no longer can be said to answer Furuya's camera with her pose and look. Instead, her death exercises tragic "control" over his vision by leaving her body as evidence of an act that he did not see and therefore could not prevent. At the same time, his responsibility to face both the shoes and her body also involves imagery suggesting the solace of nature and family: the flowered wallpaper by the shoes and the grass that catches her. Nature, death and life recur in the images that Furuya shoots for the remainder of that day.

Image 25, for example, is a closer view of Christine's body. It is wrapped in a blue blanket that looks empty and which matches the grass: industrial with natural inflections. Images 26 and 27 crop the head of the policeman who guards the body, although the man's frontal stare and sideways glance are evident in the first shot, and possibly are truncated more deliberately in the second. Furuya himself writes of initial distress causing him to tell the police and Komyo that he had "killed" Christine (Furuya 1997, (unpaginated): 7). If Furuya's cropping of the head of the musician sculpture highlighted the special features of

the body (3), his treatment of the policeman precludes the officer's individuality. This denies a face to both a witness to Furuya's personal pain as well as a representative of the state so militantly displayed on television.

As we come indoors, Furuya's images return from the public realm of Christine's death in the city to her life in the apartment: her recently-occupied space and source of images as "afterlife." Image 28, a close-up of a print of Millet's *Angelus*, partially blocked by the glare of the flash, shares a "horizon line" with the image of the headless policeman (27). Specifically, the two images' space is joined through a matching color separation between green grass and peachy-blue sky or beige-gray concrete.

It is through this unification of space that the policeman and Christine's corpse can be seen as a pair that mirrors the *Angelus* couple, as well as (possibly) Furuya and Christine – but beyond the frame. To the right of each man, a woman engages with another world: Christine is dead; the woman in the *Angelus* is absorbed in prayer. A reading that suggests that the *Angelus* woman is praying for Christine could add consolation to the images. As Furuya wrote in 1993, "She never stopped believing in the next world[,] and Berlin marked the beginning of a new journey for her as much as it did for me and our son who were left behind" (Kasahara 1993, 28).

Indeed, each man's presence and place is uncertain in these two images (27-28). The policeman is headless. The *Angelus* man seems to fade away in Furuya's flash. The possible symbolism of both visual effects evokes ideas of responsibility for harm. Did Furuya stand opposite Christine yet fill only a partial presence in her life? Was she in another world from him? Does the policeman bind religion to the State in his "gaze" towards the *Angelus* – possibly thinking of the sin of suicide? Christine's diaries record an

intense spirituality in a Catholic frame in which she considered having Furuya and Komyo baptized (2006, 104) as well as engaged in many forms of prayer (86, 92, 2, 60, 136, 250, 257). An issue that I cannot explore fully here is Furuya's negotiation of Christine's spirituality in relation to critiques that he expressed towards Christianity as an institution (Stahel 1995, 150-151). At the same time, this background frames his turn to the *Angelus* in both alienation and intimacy.

This intimacy also lies in the landscape as much as in prayer. Image 30, for example, is another photograph shot apparently in haste. It cuts out the bottom edge of another decorative print which shows a child in a forested field. The turn to this particular print might be read as taking the piety and labor of the *Angelus* back to the freshness of youth as well as the relatively unworked countryside. Alternately, it could be seen as the solace of an "Eden" both outside and in the home, a kind of childhood and innocence. This, in turn, may allow the rumpled bedsheet (31), which mirrors the blanket around the dead Christine, symbolically to relocate her to both her home and a "garden": evoked by the print (30), flowered wallpaper and houseplants (31-32).

Finally, the "base" of this stele-shaped stack of negatives begins by assembling "basic" elements of sustenance and daily upkeep: sliced meat in a bowl (33), an onion by a tray of detergents (34) (identified from a larger image taken by Christine in Furuya 2010, 138), and a knife on a cutting board (35). Then, a return to the *Angelus* print as a fleeting rectangle (36) forgoes the ability to inhabit its space up close, yet this honors the print with a second glimpse. The final frame of a checked surface (a "bonus" at number 37) could suggest that the print – and perhaps its world of family, piety, labor and the cultivation of both soil and soul – might be lost among the checks. Alternatively, the checks, like the

contact sheet, might be seen as providing at least a visual sense of structure in the chaos of that day.

In the above readings of "lived" space, I associate biographical details that Furuya offers to his viewers with the visual elements that he arranges, which I do in the hope that any merits of my readings may repay his sharing. The same applies to my readings up and down the contact sheet's vertical columns. For reasons of space, I limit these to the first two columns, where I consider visual narratives of death and regeneration. Much more always can be seen and said, which ultimately honors the ability of Furuya's work to engage stories beyond his "authorship."

In my reading down the left column, the sideways-oriented "sun" (1) "grows" like a seed into the similarly-colored, round shape of the sky through an arch (5). This, in turn, conceptually changes the sun's "material" into the emptiness of air. From this imagined state of inflated appearance and depleted substance, the transformed sun then flattens out into the stone-sculpted fighting boys (9). Their infancy, in turn, coincides with the hard materials and social strife of city life. Images 13 and 17 then "hide" – or "grow out of" these problems in the mature East Germany.

A calming blue visual of Erich Honecker against the yellow background of an anchorwoman (13) seems to elicit orderly crowds (17). Then, however, a frenetically blurred tank (21) "transforms" into Christine's body in the blanket, which is similar in color and shape (25). A critical reading could suggest that the imbalance of state militarism kills individuals – or *individuality* (as symbolized by the covering of the body).

The next image, however, allows a consoling reading. The child in the landscape print (29) replaces Christine's corpse, just as Komyo will survive her. Visually speaking,

this makes Christine's wrapped body resemble an opened cocoon with the implication that the city grass grew into the forest in the print. Finally, the bowl of meat (33) could be seen as symbolizing mortality as well as nourishment for the child and troops in their relation to State and home. A critique of militarism could narrate the child and the troops as becoming food for the state, while a moment of solace might craft a story of the troops returning to childhood and being fed.

My readings down the left column of the contact sheet above open political concerns into a private space where the personal story of Furuya and Christine engages the politics that affected their lives. Their texts reflect this engagement too: from Furuya's aforementioned interest in national borders (Furuya 1985; 2014) to Christine's worries for Komyo when a neo-Nazi rally breaks out on the subway (Furuya-Gössler 2006, 260). The manner in which such mixtures of public and private, historical and personal references to life in Germany relate to Furya's approach to Japan, however, remain to be seen. Such connections are possible because Furuya provides a space for his readers to join him in visualizing associations among historical legacies, social conditions and family life.

In my final reading, Furuya's attention to natural elements prompts me once again to begin a visual narrative of plantlike growth. Reading upwards, the onion in the kitchen (34) "grows" into the rumpled bedsheet (30). This produces another kind of cocoon in a wallpaper garden. Christine's wrapped corpse (26) then appears as a further stage in its growth, which brings it into the city. Continuing up the column, the "butterflies" that emerge from this "cocoon" are the heroes on television (22, 18, 14). They then grow into bright faces in military formation (14). These soldiers then become disordered – "sideways" – in the form of the fighting boys (10). At this point in the sequence, an insect-

like growth from nature and home to state and militarism turns childish just as it appeared to be at its most heroic.

Finally, however, the "huntress" sculpture (6) provides its warm space of privacy and care despite its sideways orientation. This, in turn, changes my chronological reading of tension in the sideways garden (2) to suggest that Christine now is mirrored by the whole huntress rather than the damaged musician (3). This reading allows Christine and the huntress to complete a nurturing space across their "imperfect gardens": Christine's dark forest, and the huntress' invisible implication of her forest against the velvet curtains. Taken together, both can make a joint "garden" visible.

Conclusion:

I have framed Furuya's combination of multi-narrativity, criticality and consolation in accordance with the needs of an earlier generation of thinkers on narrativity, photography and film. Specifically, I have suggested that the ability of Furuya's images and sequences to support readings of criticality and solace satisfies needs from that generation. I return to these thinkers to reiterate Furuya's accommodating of these needs, which remain relevant.

First, Furuya's work provides a site for expanding Foucault's murmur into stories that allow variety in complementarity rather than dominance in competition. Second, Furuya's work is much like Tosaka Jun's idealization of film. As mentioned above, Tosaka held that film could capture both the moral failures of state control, as manifested visually in "custom" (2013, 106; 2001, 35) as well as a transcendent humanity, in "the goodness of the materiality of the world" (2013, 108; 2001, 41). My vertical readings of Furuya's

contact sheet reveal a similar modulation of meaning between critiques of state institutions and hopes for regeneration.

Third, both Furuya's statements and his style soften Barthes' divisions between photographer and viewer, loved ones in a family, and living and dead. Furuya states his relation to his photographs as inquisitive rather than knowing as well as explains his love for Christine as proliferating in "different meanings" (1989, 94; 1997 (unpaginated): 1). Conversely, Barthes retained convictions of a division between the photographer as conventional and the viewer as personalized (1981, 20-60; 1980, 40-96). He also idealized the love relationship – and its ideal photograph – through a "justice and accuracy" (1981, 70; 1980, 109) that "wounds" the bereft viewer (1981, 73; 1980, 115) rather than remaining open to a range of possibilities.

In conclusion, it seems apparent that much work remains to be done on Furuya. Focusing on – and using – the multi-narrativity of his work may add to a growing "field" of focus on generating stories that possess specific – but not exclusive – meanings (Hahn 1999; Igarashi 2000, 2016; Johnstone 2002; Silverman 2009, 2015; Yoneyama 1999; Parry 2018). As an individual example, Furuya also can be seen to show that sharing an inquiry with viewers and inviting multiple readings may make loss and responsibility less lonely, more critically contemplative, and more hopeful.

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