

“Scrap-Economy” and Regional Transformation in 1950’Okinawa;
A Case Study of Baten Port

by

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Okinawa, which was placed under U.S. administration after the Second World War, experienced a phenomenon known as the “Scrap-Economy” during the 1950s. With the rising demand for steel in Mainland Japan, scrap metal and non-ferrous metal scrap came into the spotlight. To make a living, people began to collect vast amounts of scrap (ferrous and non-ferrous) that had been left behind on land and at sea. Focusing on the case of Baten, which “developed a postwar-like character” due to the Scrap-Economy, this paper explores the transformation of the realities, landscape, and spatial dynamics of a region caught up in this economic boom. An examination of the transformation of the region’s landscape in the prewar/postwar period reveals that the urban space that was seemingly formed by this temporary boom was in fact unconsciously structured upon the memories of the land.

Sirens' Song, Sung When It Was, Sank:
On Its Allure and Failure to Seduce in Homer's *Odyssey*, Book 12

by
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Book 12 of Homer's *Odyssey* contains one of the most apparently ridiculous scenes in this heroic epic: the captain of the ship being tied up by his own men. However, this apparent absurdity reveals a kind of meta-reason that reflects the fragility of human rationality. Indeed, through this act—making his men “bodies without ears” by sealing their ears with wax—Odysseus transformed himself into an “ear without a body.” Compared to this stratagem, the deception of the Trojan Horse, an artifice of Odysseus himself recounted later in Virgil's *Aeneid*, was nothing more than child's play. And in any event, the Sirens' song, sung when it was, failed to seduce Odysseus. (Redundantly speaking—yet deliberately so—the phrase “failed to ...” has been altered in the above-listed English title to “sank” for poetic resonance.)

That being said, if we call that a ‘failure,’ don't we make another interpretive one?—i.e., isn't it we modern readers, except for professional classicists, who often fail to recognize that this crisis-escape strategy is actually devised by Kirke? And even when we do acknowledge this, don't we tend to overlook the significance of this “textual reality”? In my opinion, the main factor contributing to this misunderstanding is the interpretation of the Sirens episode in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* by Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, which today exerts an even stronger influence. Yet we should clearly recognize that what they describe as “enlightened reason (aufklärerische Vernunft)” in the context of this episode is actually a kind of “bureaucratic obedience.”

Nevertheless, their book has the merit of suggesting that Odysseus had a deep impulse toward beauty, not only because his journey required him to cross waters haunted by the Sirens' song, but because he was captivated by the allure of a song he had yet to hear. Examining the kind of allure that could capture the hearts of ancient audiences in an instant, however, is no easy task. But, as for me, I find myself drawn into Kierkegaard's discussion of Mozart's music with an almost strange certainty, and ultimately arrive at concepts such as the Buddhist notion of “*kūchū-shōjō*,” or ‘heavenly voice,’ a phenomenon where voices are suddenly heard from the sky. Such an approach, however circuitous it may seem, is essential for addressing literary questions such as “What was the Sirens' song like?” (This very question is, in the end, modified into: “How was the Sirens' song performed by bards like Homer himself?”)

Thus, while the approach taken in this paper is necessarily speculative, it is worth noting that the first half of the discussion deliberately employs: (1) a form of ontological trick of disguisedly attributing that stratagem to Odysseus himself; and (2) a kind of groundwork based on seemingly cumbersome yet fundamental logical analysis, such as syllogisms, about the functional proposition: “Odysseus travels through the waters where the Sirens' song can be heard.” In short, it's not the conclusion that's important, but the process, because this paper is *my odyssey* through the *Odyssey*.