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Bringing Out the Strange:

Representations of Human-Animal Transformations in Contemporary Japanese Literature

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction

of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts

in East Asian Studies

by

Moe Sasakawa

2023

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Bringing Out the Strange:

Representations of Human-Animal Transformations in Contemporary Japanese Literature

by

Moe Sasakawa

Master of Arts in East Asian Studies

University of California, Los Angeles, 2023

Professor Michael D. Emmerich, Chair

This thesis examines the representation of human-animal connections through the motif of transformations in contemporary Japanese literature. It focuses on how the literary practices of two contemporary Japanese writers, Kawakami Hiromi, and Tawada Yōko, represent animals and animality as deconstructive and transgressive forces that decentralize the traditional human subject in the aftermath of the Shōwa era (1926-1989). By exploring the 1990s as a point of transition

from postwar literature to contemporary literature, this study aims to cultivate a deeper understanding of the evolution of Japanese literature and its broader significance within the sociopolitical, cultural, and historical contexts of Japan. This thesis uses Rosi Braidotti's theoretical framework of "posthumanism" as a tool for understanding the critical potentials of Kawakami and Tawada's complex approaches to human-animal connections. It discusses the importance of posthuman concerns in contemporary Japanese literature, and analyzes how the literary subjects of Kawakami and Tawada enhance posthumanist discussions.

The thesis of Moe Sasakawa is approved.

Seiji M. Lippit

Satoko Shimazaki

Michael D. Emmerich, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2023

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INTRODUCTION

"We refer to a *single language* but no language is single. I feel this more strongly all the time. I have no special interest in writers who do nothing more than write in multiple languages. One does not have to leave the mother language because multiple languages can be constructed within the mother language. *Within* and *outside* become gradually less meaningful" (Slaymaker 46). As observes Tawada Yōko on the notion of exophony, a term that has become inseparable from the writer's literary practices. Exophony broadly refers to the act of writing in a non-native language, or the act of writing from a vantage point outside the mother tongue. However, in the quote above, Tawada questions the axiomatic constructs of the boundaries between *within* and *outside* by pointing out that the *outside* already exists *within*. This point is relevant to various issues and topics that are not limited to language. We cannot talk about the *within* without talking about the *outside*. We cannot talk about things in a meaningful way in terms of singularity.

Humans, too, cannot be discussed as a single, fixed species. We assume that the question of what it means to be "human" is exclusively answered by subjects who identify themselves as humans, however, there is no consensus over the definition of humans. To meaningfully approach what it means to be "human," we would require a careful reexamination of how humans have been socially and culturally represented, and how the concept of human has been subverted and

challenged. The reconfiguration of the human subject would also lead to the reworking of the understanding of nonhuman animals, as a separately existing other.

Over the history of Western philosophy and metaphysics, nonhuman animals were negatively defined in terms of all that is lacking in humankind, like language, rationality, and even subjectivity (Atkinson). However, as Elizabeth Eleanor Jacqueline Atkinson argues through her critical analyses of modern and contemporary artworks that challenge traditional representations of nonhuman animals: "Rather animals, in their very *unknowability*, mark the limits of human thinking: it is the otherness of animals and their mode of being in the world from which *humans* are excluded" (Atkinson 2). My study aims to further enhance the prospects of artworks, namely literature, in drastically shifting human relationships to the nonhuman other by offering how representations of human-animal transformations in contemporary Japanese literature bring new insights, issues, and solutions to philosophical and theoretical discourses of humans and animals.

Another important dimension of animals is that they are constantly prescribed political and cultural meanings through representation. The act of representing animals substantially calls into question the stability of the dichotomies of life, namely humans and animals, suggesting that life is a cultural phenomenon, as much as a realm of natural sciences. However, precisely because of this, representations of animals are also saturated with certain aesthetic and characteristic expectations. A significant example of this is the affective faculty of animals, elevated by an overwhelming presence of anthropomorphic representations that offer testimonies of the unspeakable. For instance, the popular science magazine, *National Geographic* has globally

established polar bears as an icon for climate change by accentuating their ties to bioethical concerns through anthropomorphized depictions (Born). In Japanese fiction, the traditional archetypes of *ongaeshi* (gratitude) tales prescribed animals as affective beings in a way that erects Man above nonhuman species. However, during World War II, pejoratives that referred to animals were often used to undermine the human rights of domestic soldiers, and to justify cruelty against enemies with different racial and ethnic backgrounds (Murakami 23-24). The figures of humans and animals inconclusively reshape their position in society in relation to their political and cultural contexts.

To cultivate a more holistic, complex, and diverse understanding of various forms of human-animal connections, my thesis will examine how the literary practices of two contemporary Japanese writers, Kawakami Hiromi, and Tawada Yōko question commonplace notions of both humans and animals through a contemporary lens, in the aftermath of the Shōwa era (1926-1989). Kawakami and Tawada are writers who both rose to prominence after the postwar era, marked by the death of the Shōwa Emperor in 1989. In many of their earlier works, the relationship between humans and animals is approached through the motif of transformations, which, as I aim to illustrate, betrays the often-prescribed characteristic and aesthetic expectations of animals. The works by Kawakami and Tawada reject a symbolic reading of animals, problematize the artificial conceptualization of both humans and animals, and overall, embody a deconstructive implication for the subject by unsettling the boundaries between *within* and *outside*.

Chapter One opens with a brief discussion of the ecology of humans and nonhuman others and its political implications in the works by Kawakami. It will then present a close reading of *Atarayoki* (1996, trans. "Record of a Night Too Brief") through the matrices of time, space, and the subject, to illuminate how Kawakami's approach to the subject complicates the boundaries *within* and *outside*. By analyzing how Kawakami incorporates animals, transformations, and dreams, this chapter argues that Kawakami's literary space paradoxically projects and disregards differences by accessing the world of otherness that proximately exists *within* the world of the self, and vice versa, ultimately questioning the reliability of the self as a fixed concept.

Chapter Two focuses on the implication of human-animal transformations in Tawada's earlier texts by shedding light on the writer's portrayal of the human subject, as well as her artistic and political concerns. Zooming into two literary texts, *Kakato wo nakushite* (1998, trans. "Missing Heels") and *Inumukoiri* (1993, trans. "A Bridegroom was a Dog"), I will demonstrate how Tawada's subjects emerge from the movements of language and geographical space, which complicate conventional understandings of the human subject. By disrupting the association between animals and metaphors, Tawada expresses the material body and language as a site of polyphony, with uncontrollable, unexpected, and random outcomes that transcend the meanings and intentions, thereby, approaching the sensory and cognitive limitations of human subjectivity.

In sum, this thesis scrutinizes the representation of humans and animals in contemporary Japanese literature in the 1990s to unveil the larger discursive and philosophical issues surrounding discourses on humans and animals, representations, and literature. It argues that the works by

Kawakami and Tawada express the self as an unidentifiable and uncontrollable concept by drawing on realms that exist outside a continuous, cognitive consciousness that delineates the self from others. In so doing, both writers deconstruct the human subject, and challenge human understanding, leading to the emergence of the posthuman subject with complex implications. By exploring the 1990s as a "turning point" in Japanese literary historiography, this study also aims to cultivate a deeper understanding of the evolution of Japanese literature and its broader significance within the sociopolitical, cultural, and historical contexts of Japan.

The remainder of this chapter will be dedicated to a literature review to present a brief overview of the discourses of Japanese literature in the 1990s, the implications of posthumanist and human-animal transformation narratives, as well as some of the critical texts about the issues of literary representations, boundaries, and sociopolitical and cultural landscapes of 1990s Japanese society.

1. Literature Review

In this overview, I will briefly discuss the historical, sociopolitical, and literary contexts of the selected writers, the genealogy of posthumanist and transformation narratives in Japanese literature, as well as the theoretical framework of posthumanism. It will give a cursory look at relevant historical and cultural contexts as well as key concepts that are important in the understanding of analytical and methodological approaches used in this thesis.

1.1. The Altering Self and Space: Contextualizing the 1990s as a "turning point" in Japanese literary historiography

In this section, I aim to illuminate the larger discursive and philosophical issues surrounding Japanese literature in the 1990s, which are relevant to the understanding of my literary analyses. I contextualize the 1990s as a "turning point" in Japanese literary historiography by tracing the genealogy of how Japanese writers have been connecting space to the body. While "turning points" are prescriptive and subjective in nature, and are often used to organize and present knowledge in a certain manner, I use this term to accentuate the significance of the cultural, historical, and literary contexts in understanding the potentialities of Kawakami and Tawada's works.

Mina Qiao highlights the role of *Kojiki* in the embeddedness of the long-held belief of contiguity between self and space throughout the evolution of premodern Japanese literature. In *Kojiki*, Japan was created by the female deity's body as a result of sexual intercourse, where "the origin point of space is regarded as a literal extension of the body" (Qiao 2). However, Qiao argues that a crucial "turning point" arises in the history of Japanese literature when the introduction of the concept of modernity posed the first epistemological challenge to the previous understanding of the self and space. Modernization essentially called for a porous perception of the self and the other.

Postwar literature witnessed a shift from naturalism to science fiction, surrealism, and magical realism. Postwar writers were "deploying space as a means to delineate the modern self, while making use of fantastical elements to expand the imaginative boundaries of space and

identity" (Qiao 2). This trend also manifested in the experiences and sensations of postmodern Japanese writers, whose portrayals of fantastical landscapes collectively responded to the sociocultural trauma characterized by the enduring impact of the collapse of the bubble economy, the Aum Shinrikyo incident, the Great Hanshin earthquake, the precarity of Japan's futurity, the sharp decline in the birthrate, and political and economic anxieties (Qiao 2).

In the 1990s, a wave of alternative literary voices gained recognition on the Japanese literary stage. The term *Nihongo bungaku* (lit. "Literature written in Japanese, or Japanese language literature") stepped into the limelight in the postcolonial, globalized context of literary studies, and several notable writers like Tawada, Sakiyama Tami, Hideo Levy, and David Zoppetti, received critical attention for their engagements with plurilingual notations, as well as their firm resistance to a nation-based approach to literature (Yiu 39). While a lot of the Meiji writers like Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, Mori Ōgai, and Natsume Sōseki were adapting foreign words and ideas within their works in the formative stages of modern Japanese literature, their work was collectively referred to as *Nihon bungaku*, or National Literature, as opposed to *Nihongo bungaku* (Yiu 37). This highlights how the narrative of Japanese literary history, until the latter half of the twentieth century, was created under the ideological myth of Japan as a modern nation of single ethnicity and monolingualism (Yiu 37). Contemporary writers, as well as writers of diaspora literature in Japanese from the previous generations, actively participated in changing this literary topography by accentuating the hybrid prospects of languages and literature.

According to Fukushima Yoshiko, the 1990s marked a period where the distinction between *jun-bungaku* and *taishū-bungaku* became "radically blurred" (41). Fukushima attributes this qualitative difference between postwar literature and contemporary literature to the death of the Showa emperor, Hirohito in 1989. This was a powerful marker dividing the postwar period and the contemporary era, as "his passing meant that Japan could no longer interrogate the emperor's wartime responsibility, and it gave the Japanese people an opportunity to question the existence of the emperor system" (Fukushima 41). Writers in this period were confronted with various issues from Japan's past and present, which often prevailed in the form of literary expressions that reconfigured identity-based understandings of subjectivity.

The 1990s was when female writers like Ogawa Yōko, Matsuura Rieko, Yū Miri, Murata Sayaka, Tawada Yōko, and Kawakami Hiromi, among many others, formed a dominant part of contemporary Japanese fiction. Several scholars suggest that one of the defining characteristics of these female writers was their affinity toward the uses of the fantastic. Qiao defines the fantastical spaces as:

"...landscapes of dreams, memories, manifestations of bodily sensations and mental states, and paths into the deepest layers of self. The authors employ fantastical spaces as portals for their inner voice. Fantastic spaces may act as manifestations of characters' psychological states as well as extensions of their embodied perceptions. They may transgress the material to allow novelty in the literary discussion of the human psyche and conditions in other contexts" (7).

To explain why numerous female writers deploy the fantastic as their mode of writing, Rosemary Jackson's theorization of fantasy as a vehicle for subversion, and as a locus of resistance is useful: "No breakthrough of cultural structure seems possible until linear narrative (realism, illusionism, transparent representation) is broken or dissolved" (186). How contemporary writers each engage with the fantastic as a tool to deal with different ideological issues, and explore methods of representation testify to the critical potential of literature, which is of primary importance to this study.

The abundant array of fantastical narratives in the 1990s can also be attributed to the transmogrifying cityscapes, which further overcomplicated both the external and internal landscapes of contemporary Japanese society, continuing to this date. According to scholars like Torii Mayumi, contemporary Japanese society is designated by the full-scale destruction of traditional sceneries, as they are continuously being wiped off by chaotic landscapes overloaded with information (11). In addition to that, the 1990s saw a rapid increase in the penetration levels of the internet, which, together with the predominating urban landscapes, gradually undermined the sense of time and space, or the sense of *ima koko* (今ここ, lit. "Right here, right now") (Torii 11-12). The embeddedness of the virtual space in contemporary Japanese experiences, sensitivities, and lifestyles posed a threat to the previous understanding of the self and space, which cultivated new forms of literary expressions that called into question the very existence of boundaries, moving away from formal, narrative-based, and thematic approaches to literature, to a mode of writing that embodies deconstructive implications for the subject.

1.2. Japanese Literature and the Posthuman: Grappling with the tensions between recovering and deconstructing the human subject

In this section, I illustrate the significance of posthumanist concerns in Japanese literature by presenting how Japanese writers have been engaging with non-human subjects as a way to address the critical status of the human subject as the understanding of self and space altered. By contextualizing works by Kawakami and Tawada within the posthumanist discourse of Japanese literature, I aim to further underscore the 1990s as a point of cultural and literary transformation, as the dynamics of the self, space, and literary expressions continue to radically shift in the aftermath of the postwar era.

In recent years, there is an acute interest in posthumanist themes in Japanese literary scholarship. This corroborates with the globally expanding branches of posthuman thoughts as a relevant framework for reconfiguring the traditional human subject. While the term posthumanism only emerged in the late twentieth century, several scholars contend that the concept of posthumanism serves as a useful theoretical framework, in retrospect, for enhancing the understanding of human and non-human representations in modern Japanese literature. By considering the concept of posthumanism, which continues to be largely dominated by Western scholarship, Japanese literary scholars have been shedding light on new insights that arise when the objects of analysis are Japanese literature.

In *What is the "Non-human"?: The Poetics of War and Modernism* (2022), Torii Mayumi scrutinizes various literary representations of the nonhuman other between the 1920s and the 1940s, within the historical contexts of Japanese modernism, and the Japanese wartime Empire. By analyzing works by poets like Sagawa Chika, Yamanaka Tomiko, Ueda Toshio, and Hagiwara Kyōjirō through the influences of surrealism, formalism, and Dadaism, Torii identifies that modernism gave rise to a new form of poetics that enabled the representation of the subject that does not function as a subject in a traditional human sense. Examining the relationship between national identity, war, and the nonhuman other through the works of Takamura Kōtarō, Oe Mitsuo, and Kaneko Mitsuharu, Torii provides an understanding of how each writer contributed to the reshaping of the human subject in society, as they engaged with themes of nationalism, religion, proletarianism, and resistance.

In *The Literature of the Posthuman: Haniya Yutaka, Hanada Kiyoteru, Abe Kōbō, and Shibusawa Tatsuhiko* (2023), Fujii Takashi investigates how the nonhuman others were represented in the works of postwar writers. Analyzing how the titular writers' intellectual enthusiasm for deconstructing the human subject intersected between the 1940s and the 1960s, Fujii argues that their "strange" literary spaces radically decentralized the defining characteristics of the human, against many postwar writers who were concerned with recovering humanity. Their endeavors in enhancing the prospects of the posthuman subject emerged out of their approaches to mineral-centered ideologies, existentialist themes, the nexus of bodily transformations and technology, and the corporeality of a doll.

The study of how contemporary writers envisioned the posthuman subject in the aftermath of the postwar era remains largely unaddressed. Ishikawa Yoshimasa's *Political Animal* (2020) underscores the nexus of animals and politics in Japanese literature between 1979 and 2017, yet, as stated in his thesis, his framework is not directly related to posthuman concerns. Several scholars like Hibi Yoshitaka (2020)[1] and Kleeman Yuan Faye (2021)[2] have written about posthuman imaginations in post-Fukushima literature, however, apart from Beata Kubiak Ho-Chi's[3] nuanced observations of Kawakami, Shōno Yoriko, and Tawada's works through a critical posthuman approach, existing scholarship on posthuman Japanese literature does not quite address how contemporary writers engaged with the human subject in a way that differed from their previous generations. Thus, this thesis aims to bridge this gap by offering a posthuman reading of the works by Kawakami and Tawada in the 1990s.

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[1] See Hibi Yoshitaka. "Kankyō to karada wo meguru posuto-hyūman na sōzōryoku-kankyō hihyō to shite no Tawada Yōko no shinsaigo bungaku-." *Nihon Keizai Shinbun* 125 (2020): 1-19.

[2] See Kleeman Yuan Faye "Posuto 3.11 bungaku ni okeru dōbutsu e no shin kaishaku-kigō hyōsyō kara kyōseikyōei e." *Nihongo Nihonbungaku* 50 (2021): 1-22.

[3] See Kubiak Ho-Chi, Beata. "When Your Neighbor Is a Bear, your Fiancé–a Dog, and Your Lover–a Tuna. About Human-Nonhuman Encounters in the Works of Kawakami Hiromi, Shono Yoriko and Tawada Yoko. A Critical Posthuman Perspective." *Analecta Nipponica* 8 (2018): 83-96.

1.3. Transformations in Japanese Literature

In this section, I aim to delve into the nuanced implications of transformation motifs in literature, and understand their evolution throughout the history of Japanese literature concerning animal representations, thereby, justifying the significance and relevance of my study.

A transformation occurs when there is a change in appearance, shape, force, or condition, from what was "before" into what is "now," in a way that the "old manifests itself in the new such that the past and the present coexist with each other in a hybrid form" (Pirozhenko 331). A transformation is an event that defies biological laws of evolution, which is usually characterized by irreversible, unique, unpredictable, spontaneous, and miraculous aspects (Pirozhenko 331).

Sabine Coelsch-Foisner links features of metamorphosis to cultural development in the contemporary world, as a way to understand its implications:

"These parameters: uniqueness, unpredictability, spontaneity (lack of cause and effect), transgression (of norms and laws), hybridity (the old survives or shines through in the new), plurality (one soul has several shapes) constitute the crux in re-conceptualizing metamorphosis as a paradigm of cultural change in an intellectual climate on the one hand dominated by scientific concepts of man, identity, history, society, culture, art, on the other hand, marked by an erosion of these very concepts" (42).

In this study, I would like to borrow Coelsch-Foisner's notion of hybridity, "the old survives or shines through in the new," as a key feature in the series of transformations that occur in the works by Tawada and Kawakami. Hybridity is an important aspect that makes their work ambiguous,

deconstructive, transgressive, and unstable. By applying the concept of hybridity in my literary

analyses, I seek to illustrate the cultural transformation of the perception of humans and animals

in contemporary Japanese literature. The old "shines through" in their works in the sense that both

writers intertextually engage with literary traditions, myths, and other forms of media from the

past. They both reconceptualize notions like the self, the other, humans, non-human animals, space,

and the body by applying myths and canonical texts to the contemporary world. For my thesis, I

will primarily focus on how works by Tawada and Kawakami engage with mythical transformation

tales between humans and animals. I intend to limit the scope of my study to explore how their

works use transformations between human and animal bodies and consciousness to unearth

alternative expressions and understandings of self beyond human subjectivity.

Throughout the history of Japanese literature, transformation tales have transformed

themselves. Nakamura Teiri asserts that human-animal transformation tales root back in the

ancient myth of divine marriage between Animal Gods and humans (273). However, this

association between divinity and animals faded away over time, as a myriad of new animal tales

emerged; non-divine animals like clamshells and spiders began marrying humans, and previously

worshiped animals like serpents became subjugated by humans (Nakamura 273). The disintegrated

connection between divinity and animals led to the formation of archetypical narratives of

interspecies marriage, where animals often transform into beautiful women as a means to show

their gratitude to the male protagonist, succumbing to the aesthetic expectation of self-sacrifice.

Nakamura points out that these narrative patterns, known as Buddhist *ongaeshi* (gratitude) tales,

feminized the image of animals as "cute," "friendly," and "weak" to the male gaze (273). However, as will be evident in my study, the emotionalized animal is not necessarily the topos of contemporary Japanese literature. Kawakami and Tawada both create a radical counter-narrative to the rhetoric of these folktales from distant time frames and cultures, thereby, transforming the historical connection to animal representations through their literary engagements.

In the modern era, literary representations of metamorphosis have taken on new dimensions across the globe, which also provided Japanese writers with a rich and dynamic tool for exploring and reimagining diverse themes and concepts. According to Rosemary Jackson, the modern era saw some significant shifts in the use of transformations. In the pre-romantic era, metamorphoses were given a teleological function that acts as "a vehicle of meaning within the narrative, as concept, or metaphor, or symbol of redemption" (Jackson 47). However, in post-Romantic fantasies, "changes are without meaning and are progressively without the will or desire of the subject" (Jackson 47), with Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* (1912) as a prime example. In *The Metamorphosis*, the transformation from a human to a "monstrous vermin" simply happens, which deflects a metaphorical reading of the text. As also identified by Gilles Deleuze in his writing on "minor literature," *The Metamorphosis* deconstructs the linear sequence of memory and order by shattering the human-centered world by unidentifiable forces and other types of sensibilities beyond human understanding. It is difficult to overstate the influence of Kafka on Japanese writers, including Tawada and Kawakami, whose literary spaces envision a lapse from the human to the nonhuman by constantly captivating immanent contact with other forces. I will further engage with

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Deleuze in the chapter on Tawada to understand how the motif of metamorphosis manifests in the form of Tawada's political concerns with the subject.

I would like to conclude this section by discussing some of the implications of transformation narratives in contemporary Japanese literature. By underscoring the ideologically subversive nature of the female writers' uses of *irui* (異類, lit. "nonhuman other, or alien") and *ikai* (異界, lit. "the other world"), Susan Napier argues that, "to discuss the alien in Japanese is to bring up issues of identity, desire, and also, ultimately of power. The alien is the Other in its most fundamental form, the outsider who simultaneously can be the insider, and it is this polysemic potential that is so enthralling and disturbing to the reader. The alien threatens the collectivity more than any other presence" (Napier 97). Examining the relationship between gender identities and transformations among contemporary female writers, namely, Tsushima Yūko, Matsuura Rieko, Tawada, Kawakami, and Shōno Yoriko, Katrin Amann contends that the motif of metamorphoses reconceptualizes the relationship between sensitivities, corporeality, consciousness, and the mind.

In the next section, I will introduce the concept of posthumanism as a theoretical framework for my literary analyses, thereby, adding another layer to the implications of transformation motifs in contemporary Japanese literature.

2. Theoretical Framework

In this section, I will discuss the theoretical framework of Rosi Braidotti's posthumanism. Posthumanism is extremely broad in its meanings and implications. It has become an umbrella term to include various branches, but it generally refers to an idea in continental philosophy and critical theory that critiques anthropocentrism. Scholars began to actively engage in posthuman discussions after Michael Foucault's *The Order of Things* in 1966, triggered intellectuals to question the universality of human rationality in Western philosophical discourse.

For my study, I will use Braidotti's definition of the posthuman, a subject that constantly engages with different entities in positive, alternative, and non-hierarchical ways within larger assemblages. Braidotti's theorization is considered a major contribution to contemporary posthuman discussions for opening a path for thinking about differences positively, and expanding on how the Deleuzean concept of gender difference can potentially influence our perception of human and animal distinctions. Some concepts central to the corpora of Braidotti's thoughts are nomadic subjectivity, becoming, and metamorphoses. Applying Braidotti's concepts to the analysis of transformations in the works by Kawakami and Tawada will help us understand how exactly the human subject is being displaced in their narratives. It will also help us see how both writers enhance posthumanist discussions in my literary analyses.

2.1. Nomadic Subjectivity and the Issue of Western Humanism

Braidotti's work is an attempt to envision how we can decentralize the traditional humanistic unity of the subject, and how we can find new methods of knowing that can address our multiple identities. Braidotti positions herself as distinctly anti-humanist, particularly against Western humanism, where human subjectivity is "equated with consciousness, universal rationality, and self-regulating ethical behaviour, whereas Otherness is defined as its negative and specular counterpart" (Braidotti, *The Posthuman* 15). In Western humanism, the notion of difference connotes inferiority and essentialism. Citing George Orwell's quote from *Animal Farm* that animals may be equal, but some are definitely more equal than others, Braidotti contends that some humans are more "human" than others for embracing the dominant vision of the subject (e.g. male, European, heterosexual, able-bodied, a standard language speaker).

Braidotti problematizes how Western humanism hierarchically externalizes the other in the process of establishing the traditional subject. By shifting her focus from a unitary to a nomadic understanding of subjectivity, Braidotti puts forward a possibility for a transition among identities. Nomadic subjectivity is a term she coined to refer to the idea that the self is constantly changing in its confrontation with multiple differences, in class, race, and sexual preference. This is important for the understanding of the complex nature of factors that form the multiplicity of the post-human subject. Through the concept of nomadic subjectivity, Braidotti criticizes a fixed and hierarchical understanding of identities. In her view, there are endless possibilities for embracing differences, making a hierarchical understanding of identities meaningless.

2.2. Becoming-animal

Braidotti's theory is significantly informed by Gilles Deleuze's idea of becoming, understood as "the pathways along which a concept may be transformed while retaining a family resemblance to its former incarnation" (Patton 78). While Braidotti appreciates Deleuze's notion of becoming in the sense that he challenges Western humanism through a fluid, ever-changing perception of the subject, she also criticizes its inadequacy in addressing how exactly the process of becoming takes place.

As a way to provide a solution to traditional anthropocentric humanism, Braidotti advocates a monistic understanding of the universe as one infinite and indivisible substance: "there is a direct connection between monism, the general unity of all matter and post-anthropocentrism as a general frame for reference for contemporary subjectivity" (*The Posthuman* 57). She then outlines how this could be achieved through the model of *zoe*, defined as the "dynamic, self-organizing structure of life itself" (*The Posthuman* 60). In other words, the individual or species does not belong to anyone but is simply a constituent of the monolithic universe of matter.

Braidotti argues that a post-anthropocentric model should be centered on the *zoe*, which can be achieved through a three-phase process, "becoming-animal, becoming-earth, and becoming-machine." Here on, I will focus on the first process, becoming-animal, which is relevant to my literary analyses. Braidotti draws on the mock taxonomy of Louis Borges, who categorized animals into three groups: those we watch television with, those we eat, and those we are scared of. Building on this, she observes that the human relationship to the nonhuman animal is defined

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by classical parameters: "an oedipalized relationship (you and me together on the same sofa); an instrumental (thou shalt be consumed eventually) and a fantastic one (exotic, extinct infotainment objects of titillation)" (*The Posthuman* 68). This accepts the erection of Man over nonhuman others.

To combat this, Braidotti points out that a "system of representation that matches the complexity of contemporary non-human animals and their proximity to humans" (*The Posthuman* 70) is necessary for understanding nonhuman animals away from the human construct of metaphors. My thesis attempts to argue that this system of representation is embraced in the works of Kawakami and Tawada, which enables a posthumanist reading of their texts.

2.3. Metamorphoses and the Issue of Metaphors

Braidotti argues that the bodies of "others" have been physically and socially exploited by the dominant subject. As conspicuous examples, she talks about the history of oppression of women and LGBT rights, colonial domination, and the depletion of the earth's resources. But precisely for their disposable status, she claims that the others have been simultaneously marginalized, and reduced as living metaphors made available for the dominant subject as "a site of preferred fantasy and imaginary projection and as such they are easily metaphorized as the objects of the dominant subject's desire, or wishes" (Braidotti, *Metamorphic Others and Nomadic Subjects*). Indeed, the sexualized animals in the *ongaeshi* narratives reflect the dominant subject's concerns and anxieties, rather than the animals'. Braidotti collectively refers to the strange and fatal attraction of others in

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fantastical landscapes as a "metaphysical cannibalism" that feeds upon its structurally excluded others in both social and symbolic, semiotic and material terms (Braidotti, *Metamorphoses*).

To eschew those cannibalistic practices, Braidotti underscores the effective role of artworks to rethink the "subject-other relationship without reference to humanistic beliefs, without dualistic oppositions, linking instead body and mind in a new set of intensive and often intransitive transitions" (Braidotti, *Metamorphic Others and Nomadic Subjects*). Especially, she accentuates the relationship between writers and animals by pointing out that both are "committed creatures who live on full alert, constantly tensed up in the effort of captivating and sustaining the signals that come from their plane of immanent contact with other forces" (Braidotti, *Metamorphoses* 126). Becoming-animal is not about signification, but about the transcendence of the linguistic signifier (Braidotti, *Metamorphoses* 119). The way Braidotti problematizes a symbolic approach to the other is useful in illuminating how Kawakami and Tawada contribute to portraying the human subject as the ever-changing assemblage of forces, without reducing the complexities of the human relationship to the other.

3. Introducing the Authors

Tawada Yōko (多和田葉子, b. 1960, Tokyo) is one of the few authors who writes and publishes in two languages. She writes in Japanese and German. Tawada visited Germany for the first time via the Trans-Siberian Railway in 1979. After studying at Waseda University (BA), the University of Hamburg (MA), and the University of Zurich (Ph.D.), she returned to Hamburg where she spent

her time writing and publishing. In 2006, she moved to Berlin, where she continues her career as a freelance writer. Some of her notable works are *Wo Europa anfängt* (1991; "Where Europe Begins"), *Inumukoiri* (1993; "The Bridegroom Was a Dog"), *Yōgisha no yakō ressha* (2002; "Suspects on the Night Train"), and *Kentōshi* (2014; "The Last Children of Tokyo"). With these works, she has won numerous major literary awards within and outside of Japan. These include the Akutagawa Prize (1993), the Adalbert von Chamisso Prize (1996), the Goethe Medal (2005), the Kleist Prize (2016), and the U.S. National Book Award (2018) among many others.

Tawada's creative engagements with language, culture, communication, and miscommunication have been garnering critical attention. She is often credited for broadening the horizons of what constitutes exophony, a term that is broadly defined as the practice of writing in a non-native language. For Tawada, translation plays a special role in enhancing her exploration of language because it constitutes a rich site of interactions between languages and writers. Her interpretation of translation defies the process of merely replicating words from one language into another as reflected in her endeavors to underscore the irreducibility of languages and cultures. By subverting the conventional uses of language as vehicles of meaning, her writing highlights the strangeness and artificiality of what we take for granted as something familiar.

Kawakami Hiromi (川上弘美**, b. 1958, Tokyo)** is a Japanese writer, poet, and literary critic, whose prolific literary output receives global recognition. Similar to Tawada, her works have also been translated into many languages. Kawakami graduated from Ochanimizu Women's College

with a bachelor's degree in biology in 1980. Following her graduation, she briefly worked at the science fiction magazine publisher, NW-SF Corporation until their magazine was on hiatus, and subsequently taught science to middle schoolers and high schoolers for four years. After getting married and having a child, Kawakami officially debuted as a novelist with *Kamisama* in 1994, which won her the Pascal Short Story Newcomers Award. She then got nominated for the Akutagawa Prize with *Baba* (lit. "Old Woman") in 1995, and won the Akutagawa Prize the very next year with *Hebi wo fumu* (1996; trans. "Tred on a Snake"). Some of her other notable works are *Oboreru* (1999; lit. "To drown"), *Sensei no kaban* (2001; trans. "The Briefcase"), *Manazuru* (2006, trans. "Manazuru"), *Suisei* (2014; lit. "Voice of Water"), *Ōkina tori ni sarawarenaiyō* (2016; lit. "To avoid being swept by a large bird"), which won her numerous Japanese literary awards such as the Murasaki Shikibu Literary Award (1999), The Tanizaki Jun'ichiro Award (2001), the Izumi Kyoka Literary Award (2016), and the Medal with Purple Ribbon (2019). From 2007 onward, Kawakami is one of the Akutagawa Prize committee's judges and is currently a member of the Tanizaki Jun'ichiro Literary Award and Mishima Yukio Award selection committee.

While varying in the degree of her use of the fantastic, the tone in Kawakami's literary space always remains calm, accepting, and even comfortable. But at the same time, her perspective is unflinching, and does not fail to maintain an intellectually challenging, and provocative manner. Her tone is affective, yet distant, simple, yet complex, futuristic, yet nostalgic, playful, yet serious, and extremely poetic. While Kawakami has been a key figure in contemporary Japanese literature

for a few decades now, there is a lack of a fixed reception or interpretation of her works. Kawakami's literary universe is shifting in the ways they are read. In contrast to Tawada who has a body of scholarship both within and outside Japan that has somewhat established a shared understanding of her works, Kawakami's works elicit a contradictory response among literary critics and scholars.

For instance, while Kawakami did end up winning the 1996 Akutagawa Prize with *Hebi wo fumu*, the Akutagawa Prize committee members showed confusion in their jarring assessment of the text. Ishihara Shintaro panned the text, expressing his disapproval and disappointment in bestowing the award to Kawakami: "I have no idea what the snake metaphorically represents…the fact that such a work has received this historic literary award is a sign of the decline of Japanese literature today" (*Jusyō Sakka no Gunzō*). In opposition to Ishihara's entirely negative evaluation, Ikezawa Natsuki praised the text's originality in its intertextual engagements: "It (*Hebi o fumu*) is a fine piece of work that traces the genealogy of transformation tales since *Konjaku Monogatari*, but is put together in a very modern and trendy, yet still somewhat old-fashioned manner" (*Jusyō Sakka no Gunzō*). The perplexing nature of her texts makes it difficult for critics and scholars to write a coherent commentary. In 2003, the Japanese textbook introduced Kawakami's *Kamisama* as an effort to construct an ostensibly consistent understanding of her work to justify her status as a symbolic figure in contemporary Japanese literature.

CHAPTER I. WHERE THE PARADOXICAL COEXIST: KAWAKAMI HIROMI'S LAYERED SPACE OF THE SELF AND THE OTHER

This chapter scrutinizes the representation of animals in a select number of stories by Kawakami Hiromi (b. 1958). The first part will briefly examine how Kawakami has been engaging with the interdependence between humans and animals in her earlier writings, and the second part will present a close reading of *Atarayoki* (1996, trans. "Record of a Night Too Brief") through the lens of animals, transformations, and dreams.

Kawakami's works are relevant to the overall research question of my thesis, in identifying the qualitative shift in the literary representations of connecting space to the body in the 1990s, and in enhancing the prospects of both human and animal representations in contemporary Japanese literature. I would like to emphasize that Kawakami's fantastical terrain carves out a unique space, in that she often approaches the Other through subjects that naturally internalize miscommunications, absence, oblivion, voids, and alienation.

Kawakami's nuanced vantage point generates the critical potential of discursively addressing and reconfiguring many essential themes and issues, however, for the purposes of this thesis, this chapter will primarily explore the implications of transformations, animal representations, and dreams in some of her earlier texts. Through analyzing matrices of time, space, and subject, I argue that Kawakami's literary space paradoxically projects and disregards differences by accessing the world of Otherness that proximately coexists with the world of the Self. In *Atarayoki*, the key text of this chapter, this is achieved through the metaphysical space of

"dreams," which allows individuals to access alternative forms of subjectivity that cannot be fully personalized.

1. The Nonhuman Other in Kawakami's Works

Kawakami frequently incorporates animals in her works. To just name a few, in *Kamisama*, a woman goes for a walk with a bear, her new neighbor, in *Hebi wo fumu* (trans. "Tred on a Snake"), a female protagonist, Hiwako accidentally steps on a snake, and that snake transforms into a female human who claims to be her mother, and in *Ryūgū* (trans. "Dragon Palace"), a collection of short stories published in 2002, Kawakami tells various stories about humans interacting with animals such as octopuses, moles, and sea lions.

Ishikawa Yoshimasa underscores the radically political nature of Kawakami's uses of animals in her work. For example, in his close reading of *Kamisama*, Ishikawa argues that the utopic vision of a human being equally conversing with an anthropomorphic bear ought to be understood as Kawakami's political critique of foreign residency and immigration. The bear as the Kamisama (lit. "God"), an entity that does not exist, reflects the marginalized and invisible status of immigrants in Japanese society. By placing *Kamisama* in the global context of writers critically engaging with the concept of citizenship in the aftermath of the Cold War, Ishikawa asserts that this peaceful relationship between the woman and the bear was only made possible because of the spatial and mental distance established and maintained by their residence in a rental apartment. In *Hebi wo fumu*, this distance is absent as the snake decides to reside in Hiwako's living space

without her permission, and, as if agreeing with Ishikawa, their relationship is increasingly hostile compared to the relationship between the woman and the bear in *Kamisama*.

However, the critical potential lies in how Kawakami invents the "human" subjects by deconstructing the qualities of human traits. As already pointed out by several scholars, while Kawakami's human subjects might resemble normal human beings on a surface level, there is always something "unhuman" (人間離れしている) about her subjects. For example, Kawamura Jirō asserts that none of the "human" characters in Kawakami's world have a "proper human face" (68). They would naturally interact with animals as equals, readily become animals themselves, and overall, seem to project different habits and behaviors than the human beings we are familiar with. Likewise, Shimizu Yoshinori describes Kawakami's "human" characters as *hito* (ヒト, trans. "hominidae") who are decentralized from normal human beings, or *hito* who are different species than human beings (76). Shimizu observes that in Kawakami's novels, any form of interaction that occurs between characters, regardless of their species, ought to be understood as a "chemical combination" between entities. He denies understanding Kawakami's characters in terms of modern selfhood or humanism, and instead, interprets them as anonymous individuals who are merely given a name. Examining Kawakami's interconnected world of humans and nonhumans, Shimizu concludes that Kawakami's subjects speak to the desire of being liberated from various responsibilities, values, and roles attributed to humans, and return to the state of a living being before being ideologically prescribed as human (79).

Yoshikawa Yasuhisa partially attributes this "unhuman" quality of Kawakami's "human" characters to their way of communicating. Yoshikawa observes that Kawakami's characters speak in a way that is similar to basic example sentences in a dictionary or textbook, like "This is a pen," or "What is your name?" Similarly, in her earlier writings, many of the characters are denoted by *katakana*, making her characters appear abstract, and de-personified, in the sense that they are reminiscent of how species are written in Japanese *zukan* (図鑑, lit. "illustrated encyclopedia").

For instance, while *The Briefcase* does not incorporate a non-human being in a corporeal sense, a number of scholars point out that Sensei (センセイ; it is notable that this character is denoted in katakana, rather than in kanji or hiragana, as this also has the effect of presenting him as a non-humanly existence), the counterpart of the story's female protagonist, Tsukiko (ツキコ), belongs to the world of Otherness. As an example to illustrate his point, Yoshikawa presents a conversation between Tsukiko and Sensei:

「デート、楽しかったです」

「ワタシも、楽しかったです」

「また、誘ってください」

「誘います」

「センセイ」

「はい」

「センセイ」

「はい」

「センセイ、どこにも行かないでくださいね」

「どこにも行きませんよ」

"I enjoyed the date."

"I enjoyed the date, too."

"Please ask me out again."

"I will ask you out."

"Sensei."

"Yes."

"Sensei."

"Yes."

"Sensei, please do not go anywhere."

"I will not go anywhere."

Yoshikawa asserts that while his point may sound paradoxical, this "example-sentence-like" (例文的) approach fully exposes Kawakami's literature to the world of Otherness, because "a world that is palpable without the use of example-sentences (in this context, something that is familiar and has already been written) can only result in the reproduction of an already known world" (113). In Yoshikawa's reading, Kawakami's mechanisms of storytelling lie in the process of generating

an "example-sentence-like" worldview, which ultimately enables her to ignore the boundaries

between literature and the non-literary, through the processes of detaching and attaching meaning.

In other words, Yoshikawa uses the term "example-sentence-like" to simultaneously refer to the

way Kawakami's characters converse with each other, and the way Kawakami frequently draws

on different texts and mediums that are not limited to literature, as her literary input, to create a

"rehash." As if agreeing with Yoshikawa, Kawakami has mentioned in her essays and interviews

that she is an avid reader of manga, an enthusiastic video game player, and occasionally, a haiku

poet, all of which enhance her literary ingenuity.[4]

Employing Yoshikawa's reading of Kawakami's literature as "example-sentence-like," I

would like to also point out that Kawakami's human subjects are decentralized from a traditional

understanding of a human subject because they are created in the continuous process of a "rehash."

Her human subjects appear amorphous, artificial, and blurry because they are formed from a large

number of references that are extracted in a way that decentralizes their context, meaning, and

intention. Thus, Kawakami generates a "human" subject that seems to lack the "human touch,"

and ultimately constructs a whole new ecology of an alternative *hito* in her literary universe.

But more importantly, the lack of the "human touch" in Kawakami's "human" subjects

only appears to be striking in relation to our ideologically constructed concept of the "human."

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[4] Kawakami uses "Mokusei" (木星, lit. "Jupiter") as her pen name of a haiku poet. She has once stated that she chose this pen name as a reference to "Dosei-san" (どせいさん, trans. "Mr.Saturn"), a key character from the RPG video game franchise, *EarthBound*.

The fact that Kawakami's "human" subjects are frequently perceived as "nonhuman" reflects how much our perception of the "human" is fixed and normalized, because strangeness is realized in terms of relativity. In theory, a *hito*, or *hominidae* is never born into a "human," because a "human" can only be formed as a social subject in the process of absorbing various ideologies, beliefs, and references, thereby, participating in human society. In this sense, the way Kawakami's "human" subjects are created through an "example-sentence-like" process is no different than how we came to become "humans." The "human" subjects in Kawakami's literary universe can be read as an alternative ecology of *hito*, whose subjectivity was formed outside our standardized understandings of a "human" subject. To sum up, Kawakami's "human" subjects ultimately challenge the systematic approach to our understanding of what it means to be "human" by paradoxically projecting and disregarding "differences" as "differences."

2. Embodying Darkness and the "Alternative Dream" through a Vantage Point of the Other: *Atarayoki* ("惜夜記" 1996)

Atarayoki (1996, trans. "Record of a Night Too Brief") is a collection of short stories that was published the same year as *Hebi wo Fumu*. Although Kawakami's worldview is often described as fantastical, dream-like, and fluid, *Atarayoki* is an interesting case study in the sense that it is one of the very few works where she precisely situates her narrative within the framework of "dreams." A lot that she has written goes the other way around, where "dream-like" things constantly happen in a quotidian landscape that resembles our "reality," which ultimately

transforms the fantastic into the ordinary. The fantastic and the strange are normalized to the level that, in the end, it appears as if "nothing happened" in her narratives.

Shimizu Yoshinori maintains that in contrast to Kawakami's conspicuous works like *Hebi wo fumu* and *Kamisama* which can somewhat be superficially approached through a narrative-based understanding of literature, and therefore, could be deemed as a mainstream variant of an interspecies genre novel, *Atarayoki* seems to encapsulate a more complicated worldview that firmly defies the logic of literary analyses (Shimizu 2003). This is in part due to its multilayered worldview that substantially draws on the philosophy of *Ryokai Mandala*, as well as elements of quantum physics and chaotic theory, which will later be discussed in depth.

To unpack the literary prospects of "dreams" and her subjects contained within those "dreams," this section presents a reading of how Kawakami's narrative techniques, subjects, and literary structure in *Atarayoki* invite us to re-think and question the concepts of memory, the other, and the subconscious, all of which are central to our understanding of what we are led to believe what constitutes human subjectivities, and how we grapple with the omnipresent tensions between the human and the nonhuman.

2.1. Unveiling the Nexus of Science, Literature, and Philosophy

Atarayoki translates to a record of the night that is so wonderful that it is regrettable that it would come to an end. The text comprises nineteen short stories, organized into an unconventional

structure, resembling a sequence of vignettes. There is no first-person narrator, except for in the very last chapter, and the only indication of temporality is that it is set between twilight and dawn.

The odd-numbered chapters are given a title that refers to animals: 1. Horse (馬), 3. Gentlemen (紳士たち), 5. Japanese Macaque (ニホンザル), 7. Mudfish (泥鰌), 9. Megapode (ツカツクリ), 13. Elephant (象), 15. Kiwi (キウイ), 17. Lion (獅子), and 19. Newt (イモリ). In contrast, the even-numbered chapters are named after scientific terminologies, namely from the fields of biology and physics: 2. Chaos (カオス), 4. Big Crunch (ビッグ・クランチ), 6. Decimation (悲運多数死), 8. Schrodinger's Cat (シュレジンガーの猫), 10. Cloning (クローニング), 12. Black Hole (ブラックホール), 14. Allergies (アレルギー), 16. Fractal (フラクタル), and 18. Apodosis (アポトーシス).

The stories in the odd-numbered chapters are seemingly unrelated, whereas the even-numbered chapters seem to tell a connected story that constellates around metaphysical interactions between "the girl" (少女) and "myself" (自分). Nevertheless, as will be demonstrated, considering these two strands of chapters together unveils many important philosophical questions about language, existence, (mis)communication, (in)visibility, corporeality, dream, and darkness, which portrays the mindscape of a neoliberal Japanese society, characterized by an overarching crisis of the human subjectivity in the aftermath of the postwar era.

The presence of the premodern and the modern in the contemporary is a striking aspect that permeates the story's worldview. Similar to Tawada, whom Kawakami cites as one of the influential figures that motivated her to become a writer, Kawakami frequently draws on Japanese

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ancient myths and fables of changelings and interspecies relationships, and influences of writers like Natsume Soseki and Uchida Hyakken as a source that amplifies her imagination and creativity. In *Atarayoki* too, Kawakami's technique of intertextual layering creates a disorienting effect on temporality and space. Several scholars like Sato Izumi and Ninomiya Tomoyuki have pointed out the influence of Natsume's canonical *Yume Juya* (1908, trans. "Ten Nights of Dreams") in *Atarayoki*. *Yume Juya* constitutes ten chapters, and each of them is about a dream set in vastly different eras, ranging from the Meiji period, the Kamakura period, and all the way back to ancient times, before the creation of mankind. *Atarayoki* could potentially be interpreted as Kawakami's rewriting of *Yume Juya* through the lens of a contemporary experience.

What distinguishes Kawakami from other writers from the same generation is that these intertextual aspects are combined with her insights into scientific theory and natural sciences, which is not surprising given her educational background in biology. Kawakami's literature entails both scientific and literary perspectives that call into question the boundaries of beings, human existence, and the relevance of both in how they relate to other beings. Especially, this prospect is explicitly enhanced in *Atarayoki*, because Kawakami takes a philosophical approach both from a scientific perspective, which attempts to understand beings as a given by situating them within a space of various possibilities, and a literary perspective, which attempts to understand beings by rhetorically challenging the socially constructed concept of the human. By philosophically engaging with those scientific and literary perspectives, Kawakami critically offers different but complementary ways of understanding what it means to be human.

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As hinted at in the thirteenth chapter, *Zō*, the structure of *Atarayoki* alludes to the Ryokai Mandala which consists of the Vajrayana Mandala (the Diamond Realm), and the Garbhadhatu Mandala (the Womb Realm). According to Shimizu, "The Vajrayana Mandala divides the incarnation of Dainichi Nyorai into nine areas and is said to represent the stages of improvement through repeated practice. The Vajrayana represents the path of transition of consciousness leading to unchanging great wisdom, and the Garbhadhatu represents the various aspects of the great sorrows that surround our daily life in the world" (75). Shimizu asserts that Kawakami creates a world that indeterminately fuses the state of being and non-being by merging the Ryokai Mandala-like world structure with the world of chaotic theory.

2.2. Literature as the "Alternative Dream": Toward a world that exists within the realm of uncertainties

In this section, I present a reading of *Atarayoki* through the implications of dreams within a fictional world. I aim to explore how Kawakami's use of dreams as a literary framework critically approaches the paradoxical nature of embracing a nonhuman subjectivity by portraying the multiplicity of consciousness. I hypothesize that the framework of dreams within fiction could potentially address the subjectivity of the nonhuman Other by omitting the alternative possibilities of how humans understand the socially constructed concepts of humans and reality.

In his essay on reality and dreams, Nagai Hitoshi, a prolific Japanese philosopher whom Kawakami also mentions as one of her favorite writers, presents a hypothesis on why dreams are

so "realistic" ("迫真的", *hakushin-teki*). Nagai muses that the "reality" we are familiar with is constructed through various references and resources that are informed by fictional products, making "reality" a product of multifaceted, meta-level fictionalities. In other words, the boundaries between "reality" and "fiction" are always fuzzy and porous, and fictions are so "realistic" because "reality" is inevitably created by those "fictions." In this sense, the reality of a human is an ideologically constructed phenomenon, because fictions are never innocent of ideology and politics.

Of course, we are aware of the difference between reality and dreams. We know when we are not dreaming. We can refer to dreams in reality (but can never refer to reality in dreams). We can wake up from dreams but cannot wake up from reality. Reality is continuous but dreams are fragmentary. However, Nagai contends that dreams entail a form of "realness" that transcends reality, and realities are based on a certain degree of that "realness" felt while dreaming. Dreams embody a much higher level of "realness" than reality, and adjectives like "dream-like" and "*muchū*" (夢中, 夢 "dream" 中 "inside," trans. "Deeply absorbed, be beside oneself") are only applicable when describing intense, unfamiliar sensitivities that are unlike "reality." There is nothing "dream-like" about dreams because we can never realize that we are dreaming when we are dreaming, as this would fundamentally go against the definition of dreams. When we are dreaming, we cannot discursively interpret the facts presented, because facts and interpretations are always unified as the "truth" in dreams. Dreams are extremely "realistic" because there can only be "truths."

Another striking feature of a dream is its unspecified perspective. To dream, in Japanese, is *yume wo miru* (夢をみる), which translates to "observe a dream." But who is "observing" that dream? How do we know if that dream ever happened to "you"? We can determine that the events that occurred in reality happened because reality is continuous, and is in agreement with other people's reality; reality is a concept that emerges from a tacit agreement that stipulates that a similar world is unfolding in other beings. However, we can never prove that the dreams (we think we had) happened, or determine where the dreams came from, because we can never agree on the consistency of dreams.

Perhaps, dreams do not belong to anyone, until someone wakes up from that dream, retrospectively remembers that dream, and decides to claim that dream. The self does not need a language to be aware of the fact that the self exists in a way that is different from others, and so, dreams can be claimed by any form of existence. When we are dreaming, there is no sense of self-awareness, and therefore, we are embodying an alternative subject that is different from the self in reality. However, when we wake up from those dreams, we think of them in terms of our continued sense of subjectivity, and forget the fact that we were someone else, in the process of personalizing that dream.

This begs the question, how do we understand "dreams" within a fictional product, like literature? Nagai states that literature is constructed in a way that rhetorically disrupts alternative possibilities of reality, thereby, approaching the "realness" that is felt during a dream. In this sense, literature embodies an "alternative dream," that is qualitatively different from dreams and reality,

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but entails the "realness" of a dream, and socially constructs the reality of humans. While it may not be entirely accurate to insist that all writers are exclusively dreaming in those fictional worlds, Nagai contends that writers require a "literary" approach or perspective that can effectively communicate those "alternative dreams."

The experiences of reading and dreaming are similar as they both conflate the boundaries between the self and the other. Both are acts that disrupt the sense of self-awareness. In dreams, the sense of self-awareness is absent from the beginning. However, reading is a process that gradually diminishes the sense of self-awareness as the world of fiction begins resembling the "realness" felt during a dream. In *Atarayoki*, Kawakami further complicates the boundaries of the self and the other by maintaining a critical attitude toward the "dream" that informs our perception of "reality" by accessing the "alternative dreams" in the form of "dreams." Unlike Soseki who famously starts several stories from *Yume Juya* with the same sentence, "This is the dream *I* dreamed," the absence of a first-person narrative in *Atarayoki* could be interpreted as Kawakami's critical attitude toward the impossibility of personalizing a dream.

Kawakami seems to also adopt this mechanism of dreams, where the "truth" only exists within the realm of uncertainties, in her other stories that are not necessarily situated within a dream, like *The Briefcase*. Shimizu interprets that in the ending of *The Briefcase*, Tsukiko cries not when Sensei dies, but when Sensei's true name is revealed, because she realizes that their relationship was reduced to an "empty briefcase" when evaluated from the perspectives and values of a "human" (79). The disclosure of the name made Sensei, an entity from the world of Otherness

that exists on a different dimension than reality, into a "human." I suggest that the relationship between Tsukiko and Sensei resembles the mechanism of dreams, in that the dream collapses when something becomes certain, in an ordinary sense, as this would fundamentally go against the definition and rule of dreams. The uncertainties enabled Tsukiko to access the world of Otherness because the "truth," in this context, her feelings toward Sensei, were made up from those uncertainties. Similar to the defining feature of dreams, where the interpretations and facts are unified as "truth" only within the realm of uncertainties, the certainty brought by the reveal of Sensei's true name destroyed the "truth" because her interpretations and facts about Sensei became separated.

While Kawakami herself has described her narratives as *usobanashi* (lit. "false stories"), *Atarayoki* seems to embrace a space that is entirely manifested by a series of "truths" that are made possible in the realm of uncertainties, for being situated within the framework of dreams. In this sense, her literary universe is similar to the famous thought experiment of Schrodinger's Cat which illustrates a paradox of quantum superposition, and, strange though it seems, the eighth chapter is precisely titled Schrodinger's Cat. In simplified terms, Schrodinger's Cat states that if you seal a cat in a box with something that would eventually kill the cat (like poison gas), you would not know if the cat is dead or alive until you open the box. Hence, the cat is both dead and alive until the box is opened. Applying Schrodinger's Cat to *The Briefcase,* we could understand that the box was opened when Sensei's name is revealed, as this signaled the death of Sensei to Tsukiko. In

Atarayoki, the cat is replaced by the girl, who is sealed in a large, shaking box. "Myself" attempts to open that box, as "myself" muses:

"今この箱の中にある少女とはいったい何であろうか。いるようでいない。いないようでいる。いるといないが半分ずつ混じったような、そんなものなのであろうか。" (Kawakami 127).

"What exactly is the girl that is currently inside this box? It seems like she exists, but she does not exist. It seems like she does not exist, but she exists. Perhaps, it is like a mixture of half existing and half not existing."

When "myself" finally succeeds in violently opening the box, the girl is shattered into pieces. "Myself" regrets this action, and shows deep resentment toward quantum physics, but also admits that "myself" could not resist opening that box, which is an obvious reference to the idiom, curiosity killed the cat. "Myself" justifies these actions by expressing, "How can one possibly bear the preposterous state of not existing, but existing, and existing, but not existing?" (127).

Although "myself" opens the box, and determines the state of the girl, it appears that "myself" is still dreaming. To be precise, there is no depiction of "myself" waking up from the dream. In fact, after "myself" reproduces the girl in the tenth chapter, Cloning, there is a passage where "myself" holds hands with the girl, and sleeps while expressing the desire not to wake up

for a while. Perhaps, this is suggestive of the uncertain nature of "myself," who is dreaming. Since there is no sense of self-awareness in a dream, the dreams in each chapter may not belong to "myself," as a consistent, single entity, and could only be claimed as someone's dream when that someone wakes up from that dream. In this sense, a dream is similar to the box before it is opened, because it could potentially belong to anyone. The tenth chapter's dream may have belonged to a different dreamer than the one in the eighth chapter. In reality, "myself" exists differently from Others, and cannot access their consciousness, and therefore, can only realize one consciousness. However, in each dream, a new and fragmentary consciousness is produced, reflecting the multiple consciousnesses that exist beyond the fixed, consistent consciousness in reality.

In chapter nineteen, the very last chapter, *Imori*, a first-person narrator, *Watashi*, appears for the first time, and declares, "We slept very deeply, so we can have many dreams like a foam, throughout the night" (166). Ninomiya Tomoyuki interprets that the "many dreams like a foam" refer to the previous eighteen chapters, each of which tells a different dream. The dreams that the readers have already experienced are now transformed into dreams that Watashi-tachi (lit. "us") will dream, which reverses the structure of the text at the end.

I would like to emphasize that those dreams will be dreamed by multiple entities, *Watashi-tachi*, who are newts, which implies the formation of multiple consciousnesses in each dream. Those consciousnesses are produced within the dreamscape, where alternative subjects arise in a state of uncertainty and ambiguity. In the next section, I will analyze the strand of animal chapters

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in *Atarayoki*, and will conclude this chapter by connecting the two strands of chapters through a posthumanist lens.

2.3. The Otherness Existing Within: Animals, communication, and darkness

The first chapter, *Uma*, opens with the porous implication of the body. The series of transformations in the stories are made possible through the transgressive force of the darkness. The night sinks into the body, which triggers the subject's bodily transformation into a horse:

"背中がかゆいと思ったら、夜が少しばかり食い込んでいるのだった。

まだ黄昏時なのだが、背中のあたりに暗がりが集まってしまったらしく、密度が濃くなったその暗がりの塊が、背中に接着し、接着面の一部が食い込んでいるのだった。

降ったり揺らしたりしたが、夜は離れない。手で剥がそうとしても、実態を持たないふらふらしたものなので、掴みどころがなくて困る。いちばん濃い暗がりの部分を捕らえた、と思っても、見る間に暗がりは拡散していき、違う部分がこんどは濃くなってしまったりする。

そのうちに痒くてたまらなくなってきた。ばりばりと背中を掻いた。掻けば掻くほど、暗がりは背中に食い込み、食い込めば食い込むほど、痒くなる。堪らなくなって駆け出した。

駆けてみると、馬のような速さである。夜が食い込むと、なるほどこのように速くなるのかと感心しながら駆けた。道や歩く人や看板が、電車の窓から見る風景のように遠ざかる。" (101-102)

"The back was itching. The night was eating a portion of the back.

It was still twilight, but the darkness seems to have gathered around the back. The concentrated mass of darkness had glued itself on the back, firmly biting into the attached surface.

Despite trying to shake and shiver it away, the night won't go away. Attempts were made to peel it away with bare hands, but its form was elusive and intangible, defying any firm grip. How inconvenient! Even if the darkest part of the darkness was seemingly captured, the darkness dispersed, and another part grew darker.

The back got so itchy that it was unbearable. This compelled scratching the back very, very hard. With each scrape, the darkness burrowed deeper, and the more it itched. Desperately wanting to escape, rapid strides were taken.

Once in motion, the speed was as fast as a galloping horse. The speed enabled by the night clinging to the body was quite amazing. Streets, passersby, and billboards retreated like distant scenery glimpsed through a train window."

The intangible darkness transforms the property of materials through the process of engulfment. For instance, the darkness becomes a mass after it gathers around the subject's back, and the subject's transformation into the "nightly horse" is caused by the metaphor referring to the pace of a horse's gallop. The subject is supposedly shaped like a human in the beginning, as it can reach its back for the scratch. The subject also draws on its memory of glimpsing the distant scenery through a train window, which suggests that the subject was a human before transforming into a horse.

The subject's physical distinction between its body, and the darkness is collapsed from the beginning. The body does not function as an entrenched container of the self, as it invites the darkness, and manifests that darkness in the form of bodily transformation. Braidotti problematizes how metaphors that refer to the other rather strengthen the categorical distinction between the dominant subject and the otherness. In *Atarayoki*, the use of metaphors transforms the subject, and the absence of a first-person pronoun reflects the uncertain and unidentifiable boundary between the self and the other. By portraying how the subject already entails the possibility of becoming the other, *Atarayoki* presents the qualitatively expansive, fluid, and complicated nature of the self. Embodying the speed of the horse, the subject enjoys the pleasurable side-effect of the nonhuman experience, and leaves behind the discomfort, frustration, and desperation of the itching sensation.

In the later passage, it is revealed that the subject fully embraces a horse, after multiple attempts to exhibit the human behavior of conveying one's thoughts through language. When the observers compliment the subject's magnificent run, the subject is annoyed, and attempts to shout

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back at them. However, the subject is unable to recreate the sounds of the human language, and could only neigh at them. Before knowing, the body fully becomes a black horse. As the subject neighs, the darkness becomes increasingly concentrated. The subject's effort to pronounce its human traits paradoxically makes the subject more animalistic, which draws a significant parallel with how the subject's scratching of the back worsens the itchiness.

As Ninomiya astutely points out, the chapters on animals depict a series of failed communication. In *Uma*, the horse cannot express its irritation to the observers, and in another chapter, *Gentlemen*, the subject cannot reject the dishes that the gentlemen serve, despite being full. This is an important aspect, as language is often used as a tool to firmly construct the self as an entity separately existing from others. To borrow an insight from Donna Haraway: "Language is not innocent in our primate order. Indeed, it is said that language is the tool of human self-construction, that which cuts us off from the garden of mute and dumb animals and leads us to name things, to force meanings, to create oppositions, and so craft human culture" (Haraway 81). While Ninomiya interprets that the failed communication in the animal chapters metaphorically represents the otherness, I suggest that rather, the futility of the power of language is suggestive of the subjects' vulnerability to transgressive forces, as they are unable to construct the binary of the self and the other.

In the fifth chapter, *Nihonzaru*, the subject realizes that the cup never gets full because the coffee is readily converted into the night, which reverses the transformative relationship depicted in the first chapter. The subject looks into the cup, and becomes intimidated by the unidentifiable

entity laughing at the bottom of the cup. When the subject throws the cup against a wall, a Japanese macaque appears from the fluffy night spreading out of the broken pieces of the cup. The subject is surprised by how the macaque laughs like a human, and is startled when the macaque repeatedly insists that the subject owes an apology to the macaque. The subject runs away from the macaque, and in the end, a flood of various sounds enters the subject's ear. Among those sounds, the macaque's laughter echoes the loudest. The transformation is caused by the conversion of material properties, like the fluff of the night becoming the macaque, and the macaque embracing the sound of laughter itself. Perhaps, the macaque's anger is aimed at the fact that the subject would not be drinking that coffee. The macaque could have potentially been taken in by the subject's body had the subject not destroyed the cup. Nevertheless, the macaque ultimately succeeds in invading the subject's body by becoming an intangible sound.

Kawakami's representation of the nonhuman other entails complicated implications for the subject, which enables a posthumanist reading of the text. *Atarayoki* provides a radical space for deconstructing power by depicting language as a futile tool, and resisting the metaphorization of others through the act of transformations, thereby, reworking the power relations between humans and nonhuman animals. By displacing the teleological function of metaphors, *Atarayoki* proposes a new figuration of the subject, where the otherness becomes materially embedded within the subject's body through transformations. Kawakami decentralizes the frequent deployment of animals as an aesthetic and literary concept, and rejects a conceptual understanding of animals by setting her narrative within the framework of dreams, where there can only be "truths." In dreams,

the moral and rational control agency, which is often understood as one of the defining characteristics of the human, the "rational animal," is destabilized, as the power of consciousness cannot exist when dreaming. Kawakami's resistance toward metaphorizing animals is also reflected in *Hebi wo fumu*, which, in his Akutagawa Prize comment, Ishihara Shintaro criticized for the ambiguity of what the snake signifies.

Likewise, the absence of the "I" throughout the text (except for chapter nineteen) destabilizes the sovereignty of the self, and expresses the body as a site of multiple becomings. The distinction between the bodily unit and the night becomes meaningless, cultivating the body as a space for transversality and mutations. The otherness is already internalized by the subject before knowing, but this is not necessarily without positive side effects. By shifting the materiality of the subject through the intangible quality of the darkness, *Atarayoki* presents a continuous space of energetic flows, which expresses the vision of the post-human subject, characterized by the constant encounter with external, different others. Within the framework of dreams, where the self cannot be fully personalized, and the subject position is transformed, a range of new subjectivities emerges. The mechanism of uncertainties in *Atarayoki* draws a parallel with the state of the box in Schrodinger's Cat, which is suggestive of the endless possibilities of embracing difference.

CHAPTER II. THE RECONFIGURATION OF CORPOREAL LOGIC IN THE WORKS

BY TAWADA YŌKO: PERFORMING LANGUAGE AND THE BODY

In this chapter, I will present a reading of animals, transformation, and language in the earlier

works by Tawada. It will focus on how languages contain the body, the geographical space, and

the narrative, overall, giving shape to the conceptualization of a new form of subjectivity in

Tawada's texts. Tawada's approaches to challenging the human subject coincide with Kawakami's,

to the extent that both writers actively participate in subverting the assumption of a fixed human

subjectivity. However, as opposed to Kawakami's texts that access the world of otherness by

inventing an alternative "human" subject, Tawada emphasizes the potential of languages as the

conduit for knowledge and agency, outside human subjectivity. To further illustrate this point, I

will first discuss how animal representations have been interpreted by literary scholars, and

incorporate a close reading of two selected texts.

1. **Tawada's Approach to the Complex Human-Animal Interrelations**

Similar to Kawakami, Tawada frequently refers to animals in her works. Especially, Tawada's

incorporation of animals began to receive scholarly attention in the last decade concerning the

sociopolitical changes following the Fukushima triple disaster. The writer adopts classical

anthropomorphism in her recent texts like *Dōbutsu tachi no Baberu* (2014, lit. "Babel of Animals")

and *Yūhi no noboru toki ~STILL FUKUSHIMA~* (2014, lit. "When the Evening Sun Rises ~*STILL*

FUKUSHIMA~"). In addition, she has written a novel largely from the perspective of polar bears

that regularly converse with humans as equals in *Yuki no renshūsei* (2011, trans. "Memoirs of a Polar Bear"). With Kawakami's *Kamisama 2011* setting a strong pattern, recent scholarly writings on animals in Tawada literature also tend to focus on the anthropomorphic aspects through an ecocritical lens, categorizing her as part of the "animal turn" in Japanese literature.

For instance, Christine Marran points out that the animals in *Dōbutsu* "speak for the world before the destroying hand of humanity, and these lines highlight animal interests" (Marran 134). Haga Koichi illustrates how *Dōbutsu* raises issues of the Anthropocene by connecting human and non-human ecologies (Haga 94-96). Examining *Yuki*, Frederike Middelhoff argues that Tawada not only reflects on the "cultural imagination and (inevitably) inadequate representation of nonhuman beings and their minds," but also critically engages with "ontological anthropocentrism and environmental issues" (Middelhoff 351).

Indeed, at first glance, it appears as if Tawada's adoption of animals in her work were an attempt to give voice to the voiceless, and to participate in ecocritical discussions. However, despite the copious volume of research on Tawada, the implications of the transformative aspects between humans and animals remain largely unaddressed. This is surprising, given the abundant array of human-animal metamorphosis that takes place in her literature from the very beginning of her career. To give examples, in *Henshin no tame no opiumu* (2001, lit. "Opium for Metamorphosis" and *Das Bad* (1989, lit. "The Bath"), she presents direct, one-way human-animal transitions. The animalistic features are only partially reflected upon the human body, such as the wings and gills that grow out of the human body.

Since previous studies have focused on the bioethical implications, this chapter offers an understanding of Tawada's "animal writing" as a way to embrace the polyphonic property of language and the body. By analyzing Tawada's incorporation of human-animal transformations in the selected texts, *Kakato wo nakushite*, and *Inumukoiri*, I reveal that her literature draws connections between animality and language, thereby highlighting her animistic perception of language as a force that carries an agentic potential outside human subjectivity and experience. Doing so, I argue that the ever-changing, fluctuating, and grotesque material bodies of her subjects emerge as a result of multiple encounters and frictions between various agents and factors in the process of her textual production, where the body is rendered into language, and vice versa. Tawada's subjects never "complete" their transformation into an animal, thus, preoccupying an in-between space of a human and an animal. This discursively embraces a perplexing state of alienating the self on multiple levels, i.e., the mother tongue, human boundaries, and normative configuration of gender.

Tawada's engagements with human-animal transitions, whether tangible or intangible, have been carving out a literary space for disrupting a coherent understanding of subjectivity and identity. The writer has explicitly expressed that her mode of writing entails a deconstructive implication:

"The act of taking things apart and putting them back together is important for my poetics and my fictional writings. When I was introduced to European culture and its modern concepts of identity, I noticed that there is an unrelenting search for one single identity. I,

however, could not work with that idea. I started searching, unconsciously, for realms in

which different types of identity are represented. I looked in all kinds of different areas: in

classical mythology, in fairy tales, in old Asian pre-literary myths, in African legends, in

all kinds of places where elements were reshuffled again and again. In tales from these

various sources, images, bodies, and actions are taken apart and come back together again.

There are also many hybrid creatures in these tales; there are, for example, some that are

part animal and part plant, and they constantly change, they fall apart and take on a different

shape" (Brandt 11).

Aine McMurtry contends that Tawada's poetological concern with metamorphosis draws critical

parallels with Deleuze and Guattari's anti-representational reading of Kafka:

"Kafka deliberately kills all metaphors, all symbolism, all signification, no less than all

designation. Metamorphosis is the contrary of metaphor. There is no longer any proper

sense or figurative sense, but only a distribution of states that is part of the range of the

word…There is no longer man or animal, since each deterritorializes the other, in a

conjunction of flux, in a continuum of reversible intensities. Instead, it is now a question

of a becoming that includes the maximum of difference as a difference of intensity, the

crossing of a barrier, a rising or a falling, a bending or an erecting, an accent on the

word…Furthermore, there is no longer a subject of the enunciation, nor a subject of the

statement…Rather there is a circuit of states that forms a mutual becoming, in the heart of a necessarily multiple or collective assemblage" (Deleuze and Guattari 22).

Tawada's literary universe playfully deconstructs the identifying characteristics of the human, which are often defined through their rational mode of thought, material body, and language skills, thereby, depicting their subjects' process of "becoming-animal." Her works overlap in themes such as the resistance to anthropocentrism, the rejection of humanist politics of normativity, as well as the power dynamics and ramifications of language. However, they also diverge in their narrative strategies, literary experimentations, and objectives emerging out of how she destabilizes the human subject. In addition, the characters in their novels tend to be vulnerable to unexpected, transgressive, and transformative forces, which serve to signal a break from the homogenizing codes of behavior and thinking.

Similar to Kawakami, Tawada's texts also reject a symbolic reading of animals as the representation of otherness. However, Tawada presents a deconstructive implication for the subject through her literary practices and intertextual engagements, which diverges from how Kawakami dislocates the power of reason and language in *Atarayoki*. Through a close reading of two selected texts, I will demonstrate how Tawada displaces the human subject through diverging literary experimentations, and discuss their relevance to posthuman concerns.

2. *Kakato wo nakushite* ("かかとを失くして", 1998)

Kakato wo nakushite tells a story of a female protagonist, Watashi, whose heels are missing. The story opens with her arrival to a foreign country in Europe, upon getting married to an unknown man, with whom she has never met or interacted. Since the marriage only took place on paper, she has no idea what he even looks like. As she attempts to navigate the cityscape, she is met by an unpleasant encounter with children who mock her for missing her heels. Even though Watashi lives with her husband, and her husband leaves traces of his existence by preparing breakfast and leaving some cash on the table, she never sees him, and the husband remains to be a mysterious entity to her. Watashi only sees her husband in her dreams, in which he gives specific advice to her, like encouraging her to go to school. Following this dream, Watashi enrolls in classes and is taught various things, like how to bathe, and is surprised by the cultural difference from her home country. When Watashi goes out for a walk, she is told by a native that there is something wrong with her heels. The story ends on Watashi's sixth night, when she requests the locksmith to forcefully open her husband's room. This is because her husband stole her eggs and notebook, where she had been writing about her marriage story, and she wants them returned. After gaining access to his room, she finds a corpse of a squid lying in the center of the room, revealing that her husband was a squid.

Kakato is a text of uncertainties. One of the characteristics of this prose is Tawada's minimal use of new line paragraphs, as well as periods. Line paragraphs and punctuation marks both serve to signal separate thoughts or items, and are often used to facilitate the understanding of ideas in readings by making them readable. However, her choice to remove those enhances the

confusion and excessive tension of being subjected to unfamiliar forces. This forces readers to

carefully peruse the text, and become absorbed in the confusing status of Watashi. Likewise,

Watashi frequently repeats phrases like "perhaps" （かもしれない）, "supposedly" (らしい),

and "unsure" (わからない) throughout the text. Not knowing where the sentence ends, or where

the narrative is headed, *Kakato* unsettles the rhythm of how the text is read, and resists the

valorization of readable sentences.

The worldview of this text is comparable to Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* and *The Castle*

(1926). Especially, it resembles the plot structure of *The Castle* in the sense that in both narratives,

the protagonist attempts to locate the mysterious entity escaping from them; in *Kakato*, the husband,

and in *The Castle*, the mysterious authorities. As will be realized by most Japanese readers, if not

all, squid in Japanese is *ika*, which could also be denoted by alternative combinations of Sino-

Japanese characters, 異化, which means dissimilation. Perhaps, the narrative emerged and

expanded from the nexus of squid and dissimilation, which came to resemble the plotline of *The*

Castle, as squids are known for their escape mechanisms through their ink. In addition, this story

can be read as Tawada's version of an interspecies marriage narrative projected on a foreign

landscape. The plot subverts the gender roles of archetypical stories of interspecies marriage, and

complicates Watashi's relationship with her husband through the friction brought by her dreams

as well as her husband stealing her eggs and notebook. As opposed to Kawakami's texts like

Kamisama and *Hebi wo fumu* where the peacefulness or hostility of the human-animal relationship

is mediated through their physical distance based on their residency (Ishikawa 2023), *Kakato*

provides a disorienting space where the human-animal relationship becomes increasingly intense due to their indeterminable distance.

The human-animal transformation of the husband takes place between Watashi's perception of reality and dreams. In her dreams, her husband appears as a human, however, in each dream, he embraces a different human identity, making him amorphous. For instance, in some dreams, he is very young, and in other dreams, he is much older. But in reality, the husband is revealed to be a squid. Tawada leaves a subtle trace of this disclosure in Watashi's dream on her fourth night. In that dream, the husband is described as a male of "a marriageable age, in his prime, and his alcoholically shimmering cheek was spiteful" (59). He offers more money than Watashi thinks she deserves, which makes her uncomfortable. Watashi muses that she would not be able to file for a divorce as she is naturally a spendthrift. The husband then inquires whether Watashi is thinking about obscene matters, to which she declines to answer. In a rage, the husband plunges a fountain pen and injects black ink into her ear without her consent.

The ink is a conspicuous reference to a squid, and scholars like Yamazaki Makiko read this scene as sexual imagery. Cephalopod inks are sticky, resembling the texture of human semen, and the acts of penetrating and injecting are associated with sexual intercourse. Likewise, cephalopod inks often function as an escape mechanism, which reflects the status of the husband escaping from Watashi's pursuit of his identity. Yamazaki construes that the husband inserting his ink into Watashi's body signals a violent act of taking away her ability to write her own story. She attributes Watashi's decision to violate his private space at the end to the husband stealing her narrative. Her

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story will inevitably become "his story" because she is forced to use his ink, thus, she must confront her husband to retrieve her own story. Yamazaki interprets that the husband dies in the end because he does not have his own story, which means that he must die when Watashi steals back her story.

If we follow Yamazaki's interpretation, it seems that the husband's actions in Watashi's dreams impact Watashi, in reality, both physically and cognitively. I suggest that this scene could be read as the husband's capability of transcending the boundaries between Watashi's dream and reality through his transformations. This is enabled by the translucid, boneless, and "heel-less" characteristics of the squid, allowing the husband to freely move through multiple dimensions and embrace different entities. Similar to Kawakami's worldview which is structured through a series of uncertainties, the death of the husband could also be read to be caused by the reveal of his identity, as he would no longer be able to transform into a human to access Watashi's dream, and control her actions. In this sense, the narrative is centered around the conflict that arises from the husband violating Watashi's agency, and Watashi fighting back, signaling a closure to their unequal marriage. Yamazaki's feminist reading of *Kakato* as a critical commentary on the asymmetrical power balance in marriage makes sense.

However, the narrative is realized to be more inconclusive when we focus on how Tawada pushes her reader's imagination through the motif of a squid, which is linked with Watashi's corporeality. When Watashi first arrives in Europe, the owner of a small diner offers her food after realizing that she does not have the cash to afford food. To show gratitude, she helps the owner's

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task to pull out ears from each squid. She describes this task as demanding and difficult, despite its ostensible simplicity: "If I dawdle over this task, the meat will warm up, and becomes translucent, and melt" (18-19). Each time she rips out the ears of the squid, she hears an unpleasant noise that sounds as if the squids are screaming. She then questions why the owner did not purchase a bunch of squids that do not have ears in the first place to circumvent this troublesome process, in which she reveals that a variety of squids with ears do not exist:

"耳のない品種のイカを仕入れれば簡単なのに、と思うがひょっとして男はこの町の人間ではないので不利なイカを掴まされてしまうのだろうか、それとも教育がないからイカには耳があると言われれば信じてしまい、そういういないはずのイカを買わされてしまうのだろうか。" (19)

"I thought that it would be easier if he'd stocked a variety of squid without ears, but perhaps, the man is not from this town, and is forced to get unfavorable squids, or maybe he is not educated well and believes it when he is told that squids have ears, and is pushed into buying squids that are supposedly non-existent."

This upsets the perception of reality that is informed by memory. While Watashi goes through the tedious task of pulling out ears from squids, she also inscribes the non-existent status of those squids that she precisely encountered. But more importantly, this scene seems to be problematizing

the layered structure of marginalization. In the next passage, Watashi contemplates how the owner could have named this new variety of squid if he were a zoologist. However, she realizes that most people who live with animals that never get discovered by scholars, are the ones who never have access to labs. Scholars overlook important discoveries for marginalizing those people. The "supposedly non-existent" squids can be understood as a critique of the privileged position of scholars in establishing the hierarchy of the visible and the invisible.

In addition, Watashi's observation that the owner's disadvantageous position stems from his alien status highlights the power dynamics of the center and the periphery, which negatively impact foreigners. To determine whether the owner is from this town, Watashi glances at the owner's heels, the very act she found disturbing and rude. Her experience of being discriminated against manifests in the form of reproducing that method of distinction. Likewise, the task makes Watashi nauseous because it is an act of smoothing out differences by processing those "abnormal squids" into "normal squids." In this fashion, the grotesqueness lies in the fact that Watashi, who is a foreigner and possesses an "abnormal" body in the native gaze, contributes to the normalizing force. This offers oblique reminders that confronting power dynamics entails complex consideration of how to avoid the reproduction of those power dynamics.

To further understand the implications and effects of the motif of the squid, I suggest that we focus on Watashi's body. As Yamazaki cites Karatani Kōjin, the state of missing heels is a literal representation of the Japanese idioms, 浮き足立つ (trans. Restless, agitated, disturbed, ready to run away), translating to floating on one's feet, and 地に足をつけない (trans. Agitated,

disturbed, unrealistic), meaning to not have one's feet on the ground. Yamazaki also points out that the heel serves as an indicator of reality, as it helps stabilize one's whereabouts. The opposite of 地に足をつけない is 地に足をつける, or to have one's feet on the ground, which means to be realistic. Indeed, those idioms simultaneously reflect the states of Watashi feeling lost and confused, and the husband's desire to elude Watashi.

Tawada draws connections between Watashi and the squid by focusing on how seemingly unrelated species overlap through the altered human body, emerging out of idioms. This embraces a polyphonic vision of language and the body because the Sino-Japanese characters and the idioms came to shape the narrative as well as the corporeality of the characters. Watashi describes squids as: "A mollusk that swims with its legs fluttering in front of it in search of food, and swims with its head in front of it in need to escape, freely kick the water, up and down, left and right, with its ten tentacles without heels" (19-20). This is followed by Watashi ruminating on how favorable and convenient it would be if she "actually" did not have heels like squids, as she would be able to walk backward. However, while Watashi deems the squid's trait of not having heels in a positive light, this does not seem to apply to herself. The natives discriminate against her for possessing a body they perceive as abnormal, and she does not want them to think that she does not "actually" have heels.

Before working on her squid task, Watashi is laughed at by children who have wrinkles in the middle of their eyebrows. These children show a great deal of interest in Watashi's heels. Feeling mocked, Watashi scolds one of them for observing her heels in an insinuating manner. In

response to this, the children cheerfully sing, to which she ponders: "I think the lyrics I heard were, traveler squid, let me see your heels, you can't go up to bed if you don't have heels, but to be honest, I did not understand" (13). Although Watashi shows uncertainties in her understanding, in retrospect, the narrative is driven through those uncertainties rendering her reality. The "traveler squid" refers to Watashi wandering in a foreign landscape with her heels missing, and her husband's identity as a squid. "Let me see your heels" is about Watashi being examined at a hospital for her missing heels. "You can't go up to bed if you don't have heels" foreshadows her inability to see her husband. This shows that Watashi, as a conscious entity, whose assumed role is to narrate her own story through her agency, does not have full control over the story. However, Watashi, as a bodily entity, whose heel is missing, and therefore, resembling the corporeality of a squid, determines the narrative without being disrupted by Watashi's cognitive awareness. Yet, the boundaries between her cognitive and bodily experiences are also dissolved and made ambivalent through the transgressive aspect of dreams, realized through her husband's transformations. The bodily trait of Watashi characterized by the Sino-Japanese characters and the Japanese idioms generates a space of friction brought between two entities who are not necessarily human or animal in a normative sense.

In *Kakato*, the post-human subjects emerge as a result of multiple encounters between the disorienting space and the subject's corporeality. The perplexing relationship between reality and dreams, and Watashi's uncertainties in her narration reflect Watashi's disengagement from the linear sequence of memory. As the narrative itself is defined by the children's song, Watashi's

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experiences are independent of her will, demands, and expectations. Watashi's material body, however, carries a force of in-built contradictions, that defies rationality and a sense of reality, for embodying a non-human trait. Rather than understanding that the conscious self is shaped by the body, Watashi's internal complexities explode in the form of a strange body, that differs from the shape of a traditional human body. In this sense, *Kakato* could be read as a reworking of the traditional corporeal logic, that assumes the role of bodily traits in "naturally" defining one's identity. Through Watashi's body that is becoming-animal, *Kakato* challenges the structural functionalism and neo-determinism embedded in the linear understanding of the relationship between the body and the mind.

It is also worth noting that the squid is not about signification, nor is it the metaphysical other to humans. Tawada firmly refuses to romanticize the intersection between human and nonhuman animals by enhancing the contradictions and discontinuities of the concept of the human subject. As Braidotti contends, the exploration of non-linear, non-fixed, and non-unitary subjects, which are situated in close proximity to animals, is crucial in representing the complexities of the post-human subject. Braidotti perceives the body as both multi-functional and multilingual in the sense that it speaks through temperature, motion, speed, emotions, and excitement that affect the cardiac, and such. Tawada takes a more literal approach to this multilingual aspect of the body, by intertwining the relationship between the body and language, and articulating shifts in sensory and spatio-temporal coordinates through transformation caused by orally circulated information, which will be discussed in the next section.

3. *Inumukoiri* ("犬婿入り" 1993)

In *Inumukoiri*, Tawada introduces a fluid male character, Tarō, who constantly sways between the state of being a human and a dog. While he does not physically embrace a dog, he begins to act like one after being bitten by dogs, as reflected by his insatiable sexual appetite and his urge to be active at night. Gradually, the entity's animality distorts the female protagonist, Mitsuko's rationality and common sense. Surrounding their amorphous relationship is Mitsuko's students at her cram school, and their mothers, as they circulate rumors among each other. The students orally transmit Mitsuko's fun, fishy stories to their mothers, who in turn, attempt to push Mitsuko and Tarō into a rigid, respectable relationship. However, in the end, Tarō disappears with the father of Mitsuko's student, Fukiko, and Mitsuko elopes with Fukiko.

The writing style of *Inumukoiri* is characterized by elongated sentences. Those sentences appear as if they are challenging readers to read them in one breath, without stumbling over the commas that compartmentalize each aspect of a scene. Similar to *Kakato*, each passage only contains one or two extraordinarily dense sentences. In addition to the long sentences, the colloquial tone of the text establishes a fishy and silly atmosphere, that is reminiscent of how Japanese folktales are told. The narrative employs intertextual techniques to deconstruct and recreate works of the literary canon, such as *Nansō Satomi Hakkenden* and *Tsuru no Ongaeshi* which portray human-animal marriage through similar plot points. Tawada blends the non-canonical folklore, *Inumukoiri*, from which she conceived the novel with the same title, against

these canonical tales. There are several versions of the folklore, *Inumukoiri* across different literary traditions, and Tawada's reworking of the tale is significantly informed by a comparative folkloristic perspective. By breaking the taboo of interweaving species, Tawada creates a radical counter-narrative to the rhetoric of canonical texts and folktales from distant time frames and cultures, thereby, passing down the eternally transforming textual body into the present. In doing so, she explores multiple variations of traditional narratives that entail the representation of human-animal intersections. This dissolves both species and linguistic dualisms, and results in the emergence of strange creatures.

In *Kakato*, Watashi's confusion stems from her status as a foreigner, however, in *Inumukoiri*, the multiplicity of the landscapes already exists within the region. The story articulates the intersection between the strange and ambivalent Mitsuko, who just moved to the Southern ward, and the members of the *danchi* (trans. housing estate)[5] community in the Northern ward attempting to make sense of Mitsuko and her stories. The cram school functions as a medium for the children to cross the boundaries between the Southern and the Northern wards; the Southern ward as a different world is accentuated by how the children access Mitsuko's cram school through a hole. Following the disappearance of Mitsuko in the end, most children "did not enter the Southern ward anymore" (92), which is suggestive of the role of fascination in the act of boundary-

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[5] Danchi (団地, lit. "group land") refers to a large cluster of apartment buildings or houses, usually built as public housing by the government. It was enabled by the Public Housing Law of 1955, and the Japan Housing Corporation built many danchi in the suburban areas to accommodate the increasing housing demand during the postwar economic boom.

crossing. The Southern ward has a very long history, and consists of traditional architecture and rice-growing landscapes, whereas the Northern ward developed around the railroad station and contains a newly-developed residential area. This is similar to the transforming landscapes in the 1990s, characterized by the gradual destruction of traditional and natural sceneries.

Robin Leah Tierney points out that *danchi* is characterized by "rational sensibilities of efficiency and productivity and are centrally planned to accommodate the newly nuclear families of a high-growth industrializing society," and that the "socio-economic shifts in family structure that led to the development of *danchi* also led to the re-deployment of the word *shufu* for housewife" (Tierney 71). Tierney explains that *shufu* had earlier meant the head, and often oldest woman of an extended family compound who typically performed no childcare, however, in the postwar period, it was used to denote the adult female in a nuclear family responsible for all the household work (71). The overarching presence of the adult female characters during the daylight hour reflects the emergence of a new type of *shufu* in a neoliberal Japanese society. The Northern ward reflects a space of dominant socio-economic values that is controlled and mediated by human technology as well as the organized structure of the residential area. The interaction between the modern and artificial Northern ward, and the old and natural Southern ward, becomes a key aspect in transmogrifying the fixed reality of the *danchi* members. However, as denoted in Mitsuko's family name, Kitamura (lit. "Northern village"), the two realms are not necessarily opposed to each other, but rather, influence each other through the circulation of information.

In contrast to *Kakato* which employs a bodily transformation, *Inumukoiri* depicts a series of cognitive and sensual transformations against the orally transmitted information that gradually changes how the mothers interpret the events in their community. Mitsuko's cram school is popularized by her students circulating rumors about the school, and this attracts other children to join. Though the mothers have doubts about Mitsuko's credibility as they hear "strange rumors" about her, they reluctantly decide to let their children enter her cram school, thinking that they should not take those rumors seriously. The otherness of Mitsuko in the community is accentuated by her jarring image and appearance. The rumors characterize Mitsuko as an unsanitary and obscene figure, despite her physically attractive looks. Mitsuko would nonchalantly expose her large breasts in class, which amuses her female students but shocks her male students. In another instance, the children inform their mothers what Mitsuko taught them: "If you wipe your nose again with the nose paper you once used, it will become soft, warm, and moist, and if you use that nose paper you used twice the third time by wiping your bottom in the bathroom, it will feel even better" (55). Since the concept of human dignity is often tied to health, hygiene regulations, and privacy, Mitsuko's behavior is initially an object of disgust to the mothers.

However, the mothers eventually justify that her use of tissue is frugal, to convince themselves that Mitsuko is a trustworthy adult with common sense. They also irrationally conclude that Mitsuko cannot be as unsanitary because she is physically attractive, backed up by the fact that the strict vice president once expressed that "it is rare to encounter a beautiful woman with such a happy face (like Mitsuko). I used to think that a beautiful woman had a somewhat lonely

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face" (56). As opposed to the children who quickly forget Mitsuko's words as shown in their inaccurate accounts, the mothers repeatedly reflect upon Mitsuko's words to the level that "every time they went to the toilet, and they found themselves wondering if there wasn't a softer, moister type of bathroom paper instead of this machine-made stuff which felt awfully dry and scratchy sometimes" (56). In this fashion, the mothers attempt to process Mitsuko's stories into an acceptable form, to ostensibly smooth out Mitsuko's strangeness and preserve the values in their community. However, their sensual perceptions are inevitably transformed through the heightened relationship between language and sensitivities, amplified by their fantasies, and their impulse to imagine morally questionable things.

The mothers' efforts to assimilate Mitsuko into their community fail as they become increasingly hooked by the erotic and thrilling stories that their children bring to the table. When Mitsuko tells the folktale of *Inumukoiri* in her class, the younger students could not keep up with the long story, and the older students shy away from retelling the story to their mothers as it involves obscene aspects. According to Mitsuko, *Inumukoiri* is about a princess who does not want to wipe her bottom. Her female servants also decline this task, which results in them telling a dog that he could marry the princess if he licks her bottom. Contrary to *Tsuru no ongaeshi*, where the woman's true identity as a crane obstructs her pursuit of happiness, the princess accepts the dog as her romantic interest, and agrees to marry the dog. Based on the children's accounts, there are at least two versions of the tale. In the first one, the princess and the dog get married in a forest, but a huntsman shoots the dog and gets married to the princess. After finding out that the huntsman

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was responsible for her husband's death, the princess takes revenge by shooting the huntsman. In the second one, the princess' parents find out about the sexual relationship between the princess and the dog. The parents punish them by sending them off to a no man's land, where they give birth to an interspecies son. After her husband dies, the princess bears a child with her son, maintaining an interspecies family. In both versions, the princess has more agency than the female characters in archetypical interspecies marriage tales.

The ambivalence of the tale results in the mothers reconstructing the folktale through the fragmentary information they hear from their children, which notably draws a parallel with the creative and transformative process of Tawada's textual production, involving "the act of taking things apart and putting them back together" (Brandt 11). Tawada's *Inumukoiri*, which is a retelling of the existing folktale, *Inumukoiri* through a contemporary lens, incorporates the very act of narrative production within the text, thereby, depicting transformations as a multilayered, ongoing process. In this sense, *Inumukoiri* is a complex text of meta-fictionalities. The mothers express discomfort in the graphic details of *Inumukoiri*. However, after one of the mothers, who is taking courses on folktales at a cultural center, states that *Inumukoiri* is an extant folktale, the mothers collectively accept that Mitsuko simply has a "unique" character. In other words, the mothers' experiences are shaped by the continuous process of stabilization and destabilization of their understanding of Mitsuko's world. It is noteworthy that the mothers occupy a central role in disseminating information, as they are in charge of constructing a shared sense of reality in the

community. This highlights the power of language and representation in shifting the social discourse on a micro-level.

If the first half of the story is about the rumors of Mitsuko transforming the mothers' discourse, the second half of the story is about Mitsuko's perceptions, behaviors, and relationships being transformed by Tarō as well as the mothers' filtered discourse. Similar to *Kakato*, where the female protagonist's fate is determined by how she interpreted the children's lyrics, in *Inumukoiri*, Mitsuko's storytelling invites the "dog" into her life. The act of storytelling produces cracks in the linear understanding of the narrative, and generates alternative versions of the self. By becoming the female protagonist of the folktale on a contemporary landscape, Mitsuko challenges the stereotypical expectation that "a beautiful woman had a somewhat lonely face" as she embraces a "beautiful woman with such a happy face." This seems to be subverting the virtues of self-sacrifice and the unhappiness of beautiful women in many traditional tales. Similarly, Mitsuko is a childless, unmarried, thirty-nine-year-old woman, who is removed from the socio-economic values shared by the mothers at the *danchi*. This is also suggestive of Tawada's rejection of the socially constructed model of women's happiness, characterized by marriage and reproduction.

The association between humanness and artificiality is echoed in the usage of space in the text. Before being bitten by dogs, Tarō used to work at a medicine company. The humanness of Tarō then is emphasized and sharply juxtaposed with the animalistic Tarō after being bitten by dogs. For instance, before coming to Mitsuko's place, Tarō was fastidious about cleanliness. When he stepped on dog feces, he lied that he stepped on worms, and wiped his shoes off with a

handkerchief. Tarō also brought his own stationeries to his workplace and insisted that he would only use his Hello Kitty pencil, because his female colleague had a habit of biting pencils, and he never wanted to accidentally use her pencil. Even the image of saliva disgusted him. Tarō was neurotically establishing a clear boundary that firmly separated him from others to meet his high standards of hygiene. After transforming into a dog, however, Tarō is attracted to the Southern ward, which is contrasting with the artificial environment at his former workplace. His boundaries between the self and others also become blurry.

Tarō is portrayed as an ambivalent entity. Mitsuko's male students describe him as "someone who's like a Superman" as he is "big and intimidating," and state that he looks "twenty years old, or around thirty." At Mitsuko's place, Tarō exhibits dog-like behaviors of disliking cats, being sexually promiscuous and having an insatiable appetite, and being especially sensitive toward artificial smells. This also makes Mitsuko sensitive to the artificial smells that surround her space, which begins bothering her. She describes that the elegant mothers are like "odor monsters," and the blending smells of sweat, perfume, rice-bran paste, blood, toothpaste, coffee, fish, medicine, plasters, and nylons make her feel uncertain and insecure about her own feelings. She also realizes that she can no longer smell the sweat on her skin because of the odors mixing together in her mind. Tarō's contagious animality pushes Mitsuko to explore nonhuman ways of locating herself in the world, and forces her to confront incomprehensibility and radical difference. Mitsuko collides with the limits of how humans understand the world, and this allows her to gain alternative ways of relating to otherness.

By depicting the process of the human subjects becoming-animal through the cognitive transformations of Tarō and Mitsuko, *Inumukoiri* presents the role of language in inviting otherness. As opposed to *Atarayoki*, where the subjects' boundaries become porous as a result of the nullified power of language, in *Inumukoiri*, the sensory perception is altered through the oral circulation of information, marking new topologies of bodies metamorphosed into a new regime of sensual experiences. The transformations of Tarō and Mitsuko highlight the perspective that remains absent from the everyday life of humans, and convey the multi-dimensional facets of how animals differently understand the world from humans. Moreover, the ways in which the *danchi* members interpret and repeatedly reflect upon Mitsuko's storytelling produce an alternative meta-level fiction that conflates the boundaries between fiction and reality. This questions the assumption that human perceptions encompass the world in its absolute reality.

CONCLUSION

This thesis aimed to shed light on the literary representations of animals and animality as deconstructive and transgressive forces that decentralize the traditional human subject, in the transition from the postwar era to the contemporary era. By focusing on the critical potentials of those representations as the post-human subject, this study discussed the importance of posthuman concerns in contemporary Japanese literature, and analyzed how the literary practices of Kawakami and Tawada enhance posthumanist discussions. The ways in which both Kawakami and Tawada resist the romanticization of human-animal relationships, reject a metaphorical approach to animals as the otherness, and subvert characteristic and aesthetic expectations of animal representations provide significant case studies for what Braidotti calls the "system of representation that matches the complexity of contemporary non-human animals and their proximity to humans." By way of conclusion, I would like to bring together the works by Kawakami and Tawada, for the final discussion of how their narrative techniques, literary experimentations, and objectives diverge, and offer different possibilities for challenging human knowability.

Over the history of philosophy and metaphysics, language has been one of the most identifiable and violent tools humans use to establish the oppositional binary relationship between humans and animals. However, the unconventional uses of language by Kawakami and Tawada do not necessarily reflect the performative aspect of language as a tool to determine the hierarchical human distinction from the animal world. For instance, Kawakami rather deprives the human touch

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of her human subjects by generating dialogues that are reminiscent of example sentences in a dictionary, highlighting the fine line between humans and nonhumans. In *Atarayoki*, Kawakami makes her subjects vulnerable to shape-shifting transformations by depicting a series of failed communication between the subject and the animals, which removes the establishment of boundaries between the self and the other. By contrast, Tawada deconstructs and reconstructs interspecies dynamics, and challenges the rational status of the human by engaging with language at a micro-level. In *Kakato wo nakushite*, the animalistic bodily trait of Watashi emerges from Tawada's literal approach to Japanese idioms, and combinations of Sino-Japanese characters. In *Inumukoiri*, Tawada underscores the role of storytelling in transforming the discourse in the community, which, together with the discursive nature of the geographical space, alters the perception of human reality and human sensitivities.

Another important dimension of their work is their incorporation of tension between reality, fiction, and dreams. Both Kawakami and Tawada use the technique of intertextual layering, which illuminates the role of literature in producing different meanings and discourse, depending on the social, cultural, and political contexts. By capturing the intertwined relationship between reality and fiction, Kawakami and Tawada create an opportunity for readers to experience incomprehensibility and radical difference, and to reconsider the centrality of humans within meaning-making. In *Atarayoki*, Kawakami draws on the mechanism of dreams to create a world where the "truth" is supported by the realm of uncertainties. By rewriting Natsume's canonical *Yume Jūya* through her deliberate avoidance of using first-person pronouns, Kawakami generates

a subject that both belongs and does not belong to anyone. In *Kakato*, the transformation of Watashi's husband between a human and a squid gains him access to Watashi's dreams, and Watashi's bodily trait of missing heels destabilizes her sense of reality and rationality. Watashi's uncertainties explode in the form of her altered body, which carries an agentic force outside Watashi's consciousness in determining the narrative. In *Inumukoiri*, the act of storytelling produces different versions of reality, which leads to the cognitive exploration of understanding the world in nonhuman terms.

Crucially, these posthuman subjects emerged in the aftermath of the postwar era, within the contexts of globalization, the destruction of traditional landscapes, and the radically blurred boundaries between *jun-bungaku* and t*aishū bungaku*. The axiomatic constructs of boundaries between within and outside were proven meaningless and inadequate in addressing the cultural and literary turning point brought by a wave of alternative voices gaining critical attention on the Japanese literary stage. The Japanese literary stage was once a symbol of cultural authority, preoccupied with male judges in the postwar period for a long time. However, the surfacing of female writers cultivating their own literary space, and the appointment of female judges in the Akutagawa Prize Committee (the first being Kōno Taeko and Ōba Minako in 1987, just two years before the death of the Showa Emperor), called into question the phallocentric power dynamics of the Japanese literary stage. This coincided with the global trend of deconstructing the traditional human subject (e.g. male, European, heterosexual, able-bodied, a standard language speaker). The friction brought by those contexts contributed to the complex and multifaceted implications for

the posthuman subject that emerged in the aftermath of the postwar period. The fact that the new

trends in the literary world reflected changes in the discourse of humans and animals, and vice

versa, testify to the inconclusive possibility of literature in dissolving boundaries, linearities, and

dichotomous thinking.

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