BODY IN MOTION:

FURUKAWA HIDEO, WRITER FOR THE MULTIMEDIA AGE

By

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STATEMENT BY AUTHOR

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to my late grandmother, Anna Mikhailovna Alyoshina, who passed away in January of this year. May her memory be eternal.

And to K:

Kimi narade…

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to serve as an introduction of the work of the contemporary Japanese author, Furukawa Hideo 古川日出男 (b. 1966), to the Anglophone audience. I consider Furukawa to be a member of the 'post-Murakami' generation, not only in terms of chronology but also in terms of influence. Murakami Haruki 村上春樹 (b. 1949) left an identifiable impact on Furukawa's fiction, however it would be erroneous to consider Furukawa a Murakami imitator. In this study, I attempt to highlight the elements that make Furukawa unique as an author; specifically his careful manipulation of the theme-space matrix, and his fast-paced style influenced by Furukawa's performances of his own literary works, and collaboration with musicians, which reflects Furukawa's position in the center of the contemporary cultural trend towards multimedia integration.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Almost 130 years ago Nietzsche famously announced that God was dead, a little over 40 years ago Roland Barthes said something similar about the author, and Karatani Kōjin 柄谷 行人 (b. 1941) pronounced the death of Japanese modern literature in the 1980s.[1] Thankfully, literature itself does not seem to have met its—already reposed—maker, though perhaps it is no longer 'modern.' Theories of what comes next, post-structuralism, post-modernism, have struggled to give account of the contemporary milieu and its cultural production. Literary scholarship rushed to examine, and one gets the distinct impression, to offer an apologia for, the works of Japan's most popular authors in terms of the emergent post-modern framework. Murakami Haruki 村上春樹 (b. 1949) and Yoshimoto Banana 吉本ばなな (b. 1964), the only two current Japanese authors whose popularity and sales outside of Asia is noteworthy, have both been labeled with the post-modern designation. These authors are usually seen in contrast to literati like Ōe Kenzaburō 大江健三郎 (b. 1935),[2] and Banana's father, theorist and poet Yoshimoto Takaaki 吉本隆明 (b. 1924). The opposition is not only generational, but has to do with a perceived "seriousness" of their art and thought, grounded in an old distinction between high and low, 'pure' and 'mass,' literature. As Matthew Strecher has noted in his essay on the topic, the issue of high and low literature in the West appears to

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[1] Kōjin Karatani, *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature*, ed. Brett de Bary (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 187.

[2] To be sure, Ōe is still a "current" writer, in that he is still publishing. However, here I am thinking of specifically those writers born after WWII.

be dead,[3] to add another corpse on an already impressive heap. To my mind, then, this is no longer a conversation worth having, though the designations still seem to hold in the Japanese literary field.

Recent American scholarship on Japanese literature, in fact, is apparently moving away from the style of theory-drenched volumes that were published in the 1980s and 1990s, towards topics like historical contextualization of canon creation,[4] or the "importation" of the novel during the Meiji era,[5] to give a few examples, although there are exceptions.[6] One trend that has not caught on is critical introductions of new authors. The move towards the broad historical view is understandable, but it is a shame that for the majority of Japanese authors, the number of critical studies is disproportionate to their talents. Where are the volumes about Kaikō Takeshi 開高健 (1930-1989), a winner of every literary prize imaginable including the Akutagawa, or the three-time Akutagawa Prize nominee Hikari Agata 干刈あがた (1943-1992), one wishes to ask? Meanwhile,

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[3] Matthew Strecher, "Beyond 'Pure' Literature: Mimesis, Formula, and the Postmodern in the Fiction of Murakami Haruki," *Journal of Asian Studies* 57, no. 2 (1998): 373.
[4] Edward Mack, *Manufacturing Modern Japanese Literature: Publishing, Prizes, and the Ascription of Literary Value* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010).
[5] Jonathan Zwicker, *Practices of the Sentimental Imagination: Melodrama, the Novel, and the Social Imaginary in Nineteenth-Century Japan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006).
[6] See, for example Hosea Hirata, *Discourses of Seduction: History, Evil, Desire, and Modern Japanese Literature* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005). Though reading this volume, I get the impression that the core of this work must have been begun in the 1990s.

the body of critical studies of Murakami and Yoshimoto continues to multiply driven by

the post-modern project.[7]

Despite the above remarks, my purpose is neither to contest nor support such

classifications; it is a much more modest task. I aim to position my efforts within the

context of expanding Anglophone familiarity with contemporary Japanese literature by

introducing an author belonging to what Nakamata Akio 仲俣暁生 (b. 1964) would call

the "post-Murakami" generation.[8] This entire enterprise is geared to introduce the work

of Furukawa Hideo 古川日出男 (b. 1966), who debuted the same year Stretcher's article

hit the presses: 1998. Furukawa, then, at least chronologically is an altogether

contemporary figure, an author strictly of the Heisei Era, of the Lost Decade(s).

Furukawa poses and interesting figure of study for a number of reasons: First, he is

strongly influenced by Murakami Haruki, and is therefore easier to place in the context of

Japanese literature for a non-Japanese audience. Second, influenced as he may be by the

previous generation of artists, Furukawa has developed his own literary concerns, an

impressive body of work, and a unique personal style. Thirdly, he is very much in the

middle of the contemporary cultural trends toward multimedia. Not content to restrict his

creative output to books, Furukawa has actively performed his literature since 2006.

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[7] This is not to take anything away from these popular writers. Their being singled out for study is to their credit. What is regrettable, is the academic contentment to tread familiar ground and engage repeatedly in the same discussion. Consider the following title and try to pick out a name on whom a full-length study is yet to be completed. Fuminobu Murakami, *Postmodern, Feminist and Postcolonial Currents in Contemporary Japanese Culture: A Reading of Murakami Haruki, Yoshimoto Banana, Yoshimoto Takaaki and Karatani Kōjin* (London: Routledge, 2005).

[8] Akio Nakamata, *Bungaku: Posuto Murakami no Nihon bungaku [Japanese Literature After the Murakami Revolution]*, Shohan. (Tōkyō: Asahi Shuppansha, 2002).

These three elements of Furukawa's work constitute the focus of the chapters of this study. In Chapter 2, I provide Furukawa's biography and an overview of his fiction. Taking this broad view reveals a number of recurrent themes in his work: the central role of movies and music; the focus on the aural reception of language, often resulting in fast-paced prose; use of animals, occasionally as protagonists; performance; maps and the boundary thematic; and an overarching attempt to continually reinvent his fiction. In Chapter 3, I critically explore Murakami's influence on Furukawa's work, taking as the most conspicuous specimen Furukawa's novel, *A Slow Boat to China RMX* (2003), which takes its title from Murakami's first published short story. In this chapter I apply the theory of "conceptual blending" to analyze the manner in which meaning is created in the space between the tribute and its source. I argue that Furukawa's use of "remix" in the title, is an especially appropriate descriptor, because he "samples," as a DJ might, from a wider range of Murakami's fiction than the title might otherwise suggest. Implementation of the "conceptual blending" framework enables us not only to analyze Furukawa's reading of Murakami, but also to examine the creation of meaning resulting from the blending of Murakami's and Furukawa's work. I finally suggest that the nature of the creation of blended meaning is inevitable, and is inaccessible through an independent reading of the novel.

In Chapter 4, I analyze Furukawa's *LOVE* (2005) which won the 19th Mishima Yukio Prize for literature. As such, this is an important work in Furukawa's opus because of its critical acclaim. *LOVE* also exhibits an uncommon structure, lying somewhere between a novel and a collection of long short stories. *LOVE* is divided into four major

sections, which are not linked by traditional means of character interaction like Kuroi Senji's 黒井千次 (b. 1932) *Life in the Cul-de-Sac* (*Gunsei* 群棲), or Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio*. Rather they are linked by a cat theme centered on a Tokyo-wide cat-counting competition, the closest it comes to having recurring characters.[9] The sections are also linked chronologically, and therefore exhibit some cohesion. I focus my analysis on the first section for the sake of clarity, and because it provides the strongest example of a purposeful development of the theme-space matrix, which I take to be the principle narrative tool. Although Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of the 'chronotope' (time-space matrix) is well known, I believe that the first section of *LOVE* provides a strong case for considering the versatility of Furukawa's skillful manipulation of theme-space, in crafting his narrative cartography.[10]

Chapter 5 is devoted to Furukawa's concern with the performative aspects of literature. Literary scholarship has by and large limited its scope to the written word. However, students of literature young and old must confess the element of performance innate to the bedrock of the literary canon, buttressed by Shakespeare, Chekov, Chikamatsu, and so forth. Preceding literacy, songs and epics constituted the earliest narrative forms, were passed down through oral transmission, and were obviously performed. In more recent times, poetry, specifically the work of the Beat Generation and

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[9] Some characters are mentioned in different sections. References to Kanashī, Yūta, and the legendary cat Haian are found beyond the initial chapter/story.

[10] Bakhtin used the concept of "chronotopos" (chronotope) somewhat differently that how I am using a similar structure. For him the "time-space" in literature was defining of genre, while my idea is limited to a literary device. I have also taken the liberty of using the term "thematope," though I cannot be certain it will satisfy the reader.

subsequent Slam Poetry, demanded to be performed. Common knowledge to those living in the 21st century holds that performance-driven entertainment is king. Television ratings are measured in the millions, but the overall trend across different media platforms is moving toward integration, toward multimedia. In this chapter, I examine Furukawa's novel *Godstar* (*Goddosutā* ゴッドスター) (2007), which I understand to demonstrate his preoccupation with the performative dimension of a written text. Since 2005, Furukawa has performed a number of "reading gigs" (*rōdoku giggu* 朗読ギッグ), often pairing up with musicians like Zazen Boys front-man Mukai Shutoku (向井秀徳). These performances feature dramatic readings of Furukawa's own work, often accompanied by music.

It may be tempting to view these performances as a return to a pre-modern mode of narrative. In Japan, the performative aspect of literature has a long tradition, dating to the songs of the *Kojiki*, and one of the cultural jewels of medieval Japan, *Heike Monogatari*, is generally chanted to musical accompaniment of the *biwa*. Likewise, Japanese linked verse has its roots in a communal production and recitation of poetry. I argue against the understanding of performance in literature in terms of a return. Rather I suggest that *Godstar* showcases Furukawa's then growing involvement with performative literature, but rather than channeling the past, it reflects the contemporary trends towards an integration of various media.

As I have mentioned earlier, there is a palpable shortage of English-language critical studies of Japanese authors. Coupled with the relatively recent emergence of Furukawa on the literary scene, the body of Japanese-language critical work on him

cannot be called abundant. At the time of this study's preparation, none of his works have yet been translated into English, though his 2005 Naoki Prize nominated *Beruka Hoenai no ka?* ベルカ、吠えないのか？ (*Belka, Won't You Bark?*) has been selected for translation into English (Michael Emmerich), French, and Russian through the auspices of the Japanese Literature Publishing Project. For this reason I have included extensive plot summaries of the novels that I discuss in detail in separate chapters. I hope this can serve as a useful reference and preliminary step in introducing a very compelling and entertaining Japanese author to the English-speaking reader. Furukawa is difficult to classify as a writer, since he seems to adopt a new approach in every novel. When asked about the stylistic variety in his work, Furukawa describes himself as follows: "I am a body in motion (*undōtai* 運動体), I don't so much change as move (*idō* 移動). I don't change but the scenery (*fūkei* 風景) does."[11] Then let us follow along and—hopefully— enjoy the view.

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[11] Mayumi Uchida, "Furukawa Hideo no katarikata [Furukawa Hideo Talks]," *Yuriika* Tokushū: Furukawa Hideo, no. 8 (August 2006): 162.

CHAPTER TWO: BIOGRAPHY AND OVERVIEW OF WORKS

"They are surrounded by mountains, so their mentality is different."

Murakami Haruki[12]

Introduction

As all introductions must, the first order of business is to provide on overview of Furukawa Hideo 古川日出男 (b. 1966) and his work. Who is Furukawa? The pithy biographical details on the jackets of his books provide the highlights: Furukawa Hideo, born in 1966 in Fukushima Prefecture. Made his debut as a novelist in 1998 with *13*. He won the 55th Mystery Writers of Japan Prize and the 23rd Science Fiction and Mystery Writers of Japan Grand Prize in 2002 for *The Arabian Nightbreeds*. Winner of the 19th Mishima Yukio Prize for *LOVE* in 2006. Other works are often mentioned, among them *Beruka hoenai no ka?* (*Belka, Won't You Bark?*); *Goddosutā* (*Godstar*); *Chūgoku yuki no surou bōto RMX* (*A Slow Boat to China RMX*); and *Seikazoku* (*The Holy Family*). Some volumes provide more background, mentioning that he withdrew from the Literature Department of Waseda University without taking his degree, and worked at an editorial company until his debut. But to get a clearer idea of Furukawa and his work, the outlined details above perhaps require further elaboration.

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[12] John Wray, "Haruki Murakami, The Art of Fiction No. 181," *The Paris Review* 170, no. Summer (2004), http://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/2/the-art-of-fiction-no-182-haruki-murakami "Haruki.

Early Years: You Can Take the Boy out of the *Bonchi*

Furukawa Hideo was born on July 11, 1966 in the city of Kōriyama in Fukushima

Prefecture of northern Japan.[13] He was the second son in his family, and grew up in a

valley[14] "without exit," surrounded by mountains.[15] Furukawa's most memorable time in

elementary school involved enjoying roughly one film double-feature per week, in the

two years spanning fourth and sixth grade. The movie excursions were also memorable

because they involved driving to the theater with his older brother, accompanied by the

sounds of the car stereo, with tapes especially selected by the elder sibling. These trips

allowed the young Furukawa to experience two ways of transcending the confines of the

valley—music and movies.[16] He was exposed to movies on the big screen, which were

unlike what he saw on the television at home, and to music on his brother's tapes, which

was unlike what he heard on the radio or at record stores. However, these fraternal

outings ended with his brother's engagement and marriage, and from his first year in

middle school, Furukawa was left to venture to theaters on his own.[17]

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[13] Located roughly 45 miles as the crow flies from the Fukishima I nuclear power plant of recent infamy.

[14] The term he uses is *bonchi* 盆地, which can mean either basin or valley. I prefer the term "valley" for two reasons. First, it sounds more natural than the alternative. And second, a river does flow through the Kōriyama area, fitting the definition of valley.

[15] Hideo Furukawa, *Ekusu po books 1: Furukawa Hideo supi-kusu! [Expo Books 1: Furukawa Hideo Speaks!]* (Tōkyō: Arutesu, 2009), 57.

[16] Atsushi Sasaki, "Rūtsu naki sakka no tanjō to saisei no kiroku [The Record of the Birth and Rebirth of a Rootless Writer]," *Bungei* Tokushū: Furukawa Hideo, no. Autumn (2007): 58.

[17] Furukawa, *Furukawa Speaks*, 58.

A member of its 98th graduating class, Furukawa attended Fukushima's well-regarded Asaka High School 福島県立安積高等学校,[18] then still a boy's school. The school counts among its notable graduates Akutagawa laureates Nakayama Gishū 中山義秀, Tōnobe Kaoru 東野辺薫, and Genyū Sōkyū 玄侑宗久, Akutagawa's friend and litterateur, Kume Masao 久米正雄,[19] as well as Hara Masao 原正夫, the current mayor of Kōriyama.[20] It was here, at fifteen years of age, that Furukawa became involved with the drama club. As a budding playwright himself, he spent many hours at the public library poring through every play he could get his hands on,[21] developing a particular fondness for the works of Shimizu Kunio 清水邦夫 (b. 1936), whose plays he read until he could recite them from memory.[22] Furukawa's involvement with the stage, which continued uninterrupted for ten years, would leave a significant imprint on his later work, and will be the subject of further discussion.[23]

Furukawa describes himself as "foolish" and not particularly popular with the opposite sex as a high-school student.[24] He disliked school, authority, textbooks, and by extension, literature; it was not until his encounter with "world literature" that his mind

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[18] <http://www.asaka-h.fks.ed.jp/gakkou/tyomei.php>

[19] Kume is famous for coining the term *bikushō* 微苦笑 "faint, ironic smile."

[20] Koriyama Museum of Literature: <http://www.bunka-manabi.or.jp/bungakunomori/writer/index.html>

[21] Furukawa, *Furukawa Speaks*, 291.

[22] Sasaki, "Rūtsu naki sakka," 56.

[23] Furukawa, *Furukawa Speaks*, 159.

[24] Hideo Furukawa, "Q & A," *Bungei* Tokushū: Furukawa Hideo, no. Autumn (2007): 74. We should keep in mind that this is a fairly common disclaimer in Japanese discourse.

began to change.[25] Indeed, the impact of world literature on Furukawa has prompted at least one critic to muse that Furukawa's work is better categorized as world literature than Japanese literature.[26] Nevertheless, his time in high school in the 1980s heralded an evolution in Furukawa's taste, as he became interested in British bands like Psychic TV and, through them, in industrial music.[27] Furukawa later reflected that he had absorbed much more in terms of music than literature when growing up and, although he did not realize this until later, that music played a more formative role in his creative output.[28]

Upon graduation, the 18-year-old Furukawa departed his native Fukushima valley for the Tokyo metropolis. Retrospectively, this move can be characterized as an escape— or an attempted escape—from a place without exit, a theme that surfaces in his fiction.[29] He went so far as to reinterpret his journey to Tokyo as a "rebirth," comparing his emerging from a tunnel on a train to emerging from the birth canal,[30] and later wondered rhetorically about whether he was still located in a metaphorical "personal valley."[31] He matriculated at Waseda University, and studied in the Department of Literature, incidentally the same department that graduated Murakami Haruki, and, although

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[25] Sasaki, "Rūtsu naki sakka," 56.
[26] Fuyuki Ikegami, "Kaisetsu," in *Chinmoku/Abishinian [Silence/Abyssinian]* (Kadokawa Shoten, 2003), 597.
[27] Furukawa, *Furukawa Speaks*, 58.
[28] Uchida, "Katarikata," 163.
[29] The theme of escape is present with particular force in *A Slow Boat to China RMX*.
[30] Sasaki, "Rūtsu naki sakka," 59.
[31] Furukawa, *Furukawa Speaks*, 58.

Furukawa did not take serious notice of Murakami until he began composing his own debut novel, it is here that he first encountered Murakami's work.[32]

If Murakami's university career were generously characterized as a "seven-year plan," one would be at a loss to say what plan Furukawa had in mind.[33] He withdrew from Waseda without completing his degree and went to work, but still remained active in his thespian pursuits until shortly before his 25th birthday,[34] by which point he had written nearly 30 plays.[35] It is unclear what precisely constituted Furukawa's job at the editorial company, but he seemed to have used his literary talents as an anonymous freelance writer, and to have dabbled in video game debugging.[36] In addition, he remained involved with the theater and, as far as writing of the creative strain was concerned, his focused chiefly on scripts for the stage.[37]

Work: *Wizardry* (1994)

Furukawa would become further associated with the video-game industry through his theatrical pursuits, which took him to an event dedicated to the video-game series

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[32] Sasaki, "Rūtsu naki sakka," 57. It is unclear exactly how long he spent as an officially-enrolled student at Waseda.

[33] Jay Rubin describes Murakami's 'idea of the journey towards a B.A.' in: Jay Rubin, *Haruki Murakami and the Music of Words* (London: Vintage, 2005), 26, 28.

[34] Furukawa, *Furukawa Speaks*, 159.

[35] Sasaki, "Rūtsu naki sakka," 56.

[36] Uchida, "Katarikata," 156.

[37] To my knowledge, none of his plays have been published until the release of *Non+Fikushon* in 2010. The performance of the early plays appears to have been limited to local venues.

Wizardry. There he made the acquaintance of Benny Matsuyama ベニー松山, who specialized in video-game novelization.[38] Following this event, Furukawa decided to try his own hand at prose composition and submitted an entry to an SF contest sponsored by the Hayakawa Publishing Corporation 早川書房. His maiden work of fiction made it to the final screening stage, but was dismissed as not fitting the SF genre.[39] Nevertheless, Furukawa's newly-discovered interest in prose fiction and his connection with Matsuyama combined to secure him a contract for a novelization of the 1992 Game Boy title *Wizardry Gaiden*[40] *II: Curse of the Ancient Emperor* ウィザードリィ外伝 II 古代皇帝の呪い, originally written by Matsuyama. This work would eventually become the first volume of *Wizardry Gaiden II: King of the Sands* ウィザードリィ外伝 II 砂の王 1, published in 1994; volume two was never released.[41] Although some commentators emphasize—as does Furuyama Yūki—the amount of creative energy required to develop a novel, even one based on an existing scenario,[42] Furukawa himself could not see this novel as solely his.[43] Furthermore, he did not ultimately consider this work to be anything more than simply "work."

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[38] Matsuyama has had a fruitful career in the video-game industry writing walkthroughs and scenarios for various titles, and composing novel-length side-stories for major franchises like the *Wizardry* series and *Final Fantasy*.

[39] Uchida, "Katarikata," 156.

[40] The term *gaiden* 外伝 refers to a spin-off, a side-story, or other supplementary materials.

[41] Chiko Ishii, Matsukoi Sugie, and Yūki Furuyama, "Furukawa Hideo zenchosaku kaidai [Complete bibliography of Furukawa Hideo]," *Yuriika* Tokushū: Furukawa Hideo, no. 8 (August 2006): 234.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Uchida, "Katarikata," 156.

His initial high hopes for the novel were quickly spoiled under persistent pressure and restrictions. Editors chided him for using "difficult words" and pushed Furukawa to finish the book as quickly as possible.[44] Furukawa did finish the first volume, but by the time it hit the shelves he had already quit the company with the new goal of writing his first novel, a novel that would be solely his own creation. *King of the Sands* is, indeed, the first published novel that bears Furukawa's name, but the experience was so disheartening for the author, that he attempted unsuccessfully to have his name removed from the title, and refuses to count this book in his oeuvre.

<center>The Debut: *13* (1998)</center>

Shortly before the *King of the Sands'* scheduled publication date of March 13, 1994, Furukawa boarded a Shinjuku-bound bus from Hatagaya, and the moment he stepped foot on the bus he had the first line of what would become his debut novel, *13*. This anecdote contrasts amusingly with that of Murakami Haruki, whom Furukawa counts among his main influences. The story goes that one spring day, during a baseball game between the Yakult Swallows and the Hiroshima Carp, just as the Swallows' Dave Hilton hit a ball into left field, Murakami realized that he could write a novel. This well-known story of his eureka moment abounds with suitable serendipity; there's the left field, out of which certain elements of his fiction will emerge, there's the moment of realization

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[44] Ibid.

coinciding with the crack of a bat—*pin to kita*!—a fascinating artistic epiphany.[45] Furukawa's moment of insight is far more prosaic, more urban and gray, in contrast to the almost bucolic atmosphere of Murakami's.[46] Furthermore, presumably Furukawa had already decided that he could be a writer—in fact he was—so for him that moment revealed the first piece[47] of the first book that would be entirely his creation:

> Hashimoto Kyōichi was born in Kitatama in 1968, and at 26 successfully captured the image of God.[48]

With this ambitious beginning in mind, perhaps one may consider Furukawa's revelation to be closer to a theophany.

The plot of *13* covers a span of over a decade, and has the motif of a movie at its core. The protagonist, Kyōichi, is a very special boy. He is blessed with a natural intelligence, with an IQ approaching 150, and has a peculiar sensitivity to colors. His one defect is colorblindness in his left eye that stimulates his color awareness. When his researcher cousin, Sekiguchi, returns to Japan from Zaire, bringing back with him a local named Uraine, Kyōichi's life takes an unlikely turn. Uraine attends the same junior high as Kyōichi, and upon graduation Kyōichi decides to forego high school—he is, after all, a genius—and travels to Zaire with Uraine. In Zaire, Kyōchi encounters a young girl named Rōmi, who grows into an object of worship known as "Black Maria," which is, hardly coincidentally, the namesake of the first movie studio, built by Thomas Edison.

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[45] Rubin, *Music of Words*, 30-31.
[46] This is despite the fact that the game was played in downtown Tokyo.
[47] This line is both the first sentence and the first paragraph of *13*.
[48] Hideo Furukawa, *13* (Kadokawa Shoten, 2002), 7.

The second part of the novel skips ten years ahead, from the jungles of Zaire to Hollywood. Kyōchi has his mind set on portraying visually what he perceives as the colors of God, and attempts to set this vision on film to broadcast to the world.

At a glance, *13* is a fitting debut novel. Composed over a span of four years, which Furukawa spent in poverty after quitting his job and moving to Higashimurayama to write,[49] the story lends itself to being broadly understood as a metaphor for a nascent author's development. It features elements from Furukawa's own life that should be easily spotted: Kyōichi's birthplace (in Tama), the pivotal role of movies, the escape from one's hometown—all things Furukawa could easily incorporate into his fiction. This is not to say, however, that the writing itself came easily. On the contrary, it was a four-year struggle, during which Furukawa did nothing but write, but as Nabokov once put it, "art is difficult."[50]

<center>*Chinmoku* (1998)</center>

Furukawa's second novel, *Chinmoku* 沈黙 (*Silence*)[51] required a more modest time investment, and was published the same year as his debut. In *Silence*, Furukawa shifts his attention from movies to music, both of which played an important role in his own life, as mentioned above. With his second novel, Furukawa confirmed a

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[49] Higashimurayama is located in the western suburbs of the Tama region of the larger Tokyo metropolitan area. Uchida, "Katarikata," 157.

[50] Vladimir Nabokov, *Strong Opinions* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973), 115.

[51] I do not detect any relationship to Endō Shūsaku's eponymous novel, nor to Murakami Haruki's short story of the same title.

historiographic propensity that became apparent in his debut work. If *13* is viewed as a

personal history of Hashimoto Kyōichi, *Silence* can be read as the history of Akiyama

Kaoruko's family or, more accurately, a fictional history of *rookow*, a mysterious pidgin

music born in the 17th century from a cohabitation of indigenous tribes of the Caribbean

and of West African slaves marooned there.

While examining her late grandmother Ōtaki Shizuka's possessions, Kaoruko

discovers a letter from her great-aunt, and eventually moves into the Ōtaki residence.

There, in a soundproof basement, she discovers thousands of music records and 11

notebooks left by Shizuka's nephew, Ōtaki Shūichirō, titled "The Death of Music." These

notebooks detail the development of *rookow*, the attempts of a European musician to

transcribe it, and the journey of the score through time and around the globe.

The rather ambitious aim in writing *Silence*, Furukawa later reflected, was to

write the perfect novel.[52] After writing *13*, though it took him four years to do it, he

realized that he had finally learned how to write a novel—the next step would be

perfection. I think what we witness here is, again, not unexpected from an author in the

early stages of development. Furukawa learned to write by composing stories that unravel

on a global scale. *13* takes the reader from Japan to Zaire to South America to

Hollywood; *Silence* makes historical detours from Japan to war-torn Southeast Asia, Nazi

Germany, and the Americas. The thematic is proportionally grand: the image of God, the

death of music, evil, and so forth. Furukawa now views the work more humbly. When

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[52] Uchida, "Katarikata," 158.

asked how many points (out of a hundred) he would assign, Furukawa confers 60 or 70.

He elaborates, "Looking at it now, the structure, the style, it's all messed up."[53]

<div align="center">Abyssinian (2000)[54]</div>

In his first two novels Furukawa painted with the biggest brush he could find; in

his third he reached for a rigger. *Abishinian* アビシニアン (*Abyssinian*) limits the cast of

characters to three—the female Watashi, the male Boku,[55] and the feline Abyssinian—

and the plot to a love story. Interestingly enough, the plot of *Abyssinian* actually has its

beginning in an episode from *Silence*, in which a junior-high school girl is forced to put

her beloved cat, Abyssinian, into a care center after moving into an apartment that

prohibits pets. Kaoruko facilitates the cat's escape from the center and into a park in

Tokyo's Nakano Ward. Although altogether different in almost every way from *Silence*,

the plot of *Abyssinian* does take this episode as a starting point. Owners of a roguish

sense of humor may be tempted to observe, tongue tickling cheek, that Furukawa is

returning to his roots by writing a *gaiden*, or side-story, only this time to his own novel.

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[53] Ibid., 159.

[54] *Abyssinian* was published together in one 600-page volume with *Silence* for the 2003 paperback edition.

[55] *Watashi* 私 and *boku* 僕 are Japanese personal pronouns, and would be rendered "I" in translation. The Japanese language is rich with personal pronouns, which vary according to the formality of a situation. Accordingly, when writing in the first person, a Japanese author can choose, in order of descending formality: *watakushi, watashi, boku* (male)*, atashi* (female)*,* and *ore* (male), just to list the most common variants. The convention in Japanese literary studies is to refer to such nameless, first-person narrators by the pronoun used. I have followed this convention.

Yet this book presents a different direction in Furukawa's work in its deliberately restricted scope[56] and comparatively simple story. Upon graduating from junior high, Watashi searches out her cat in the park in Nakano, and decides to live with it. Over time her language skills diminish, and she gradually grows illiterate and increasingly animal-like. In the meantime the narrator shifts to Boku, a university student writing a screenplay, who meets Watashi in the park. The remainder of the novel develops as he tries to communicate his story to Watashi, who has lost her ability to read and write. Through this attempted interaction, the story itself begins to change, and bit-by-bit, he becomes aware of his own feelings for Watashi.

The simplicity of the plot, however, does not reflect the presentation. Moving on from the motifs of movies and music of his previous novels, Furukawa addresses (written) language in *Abyssinian*. Drafting the later parts of the novel, he paid particular attention to avoid overly literary expressions (*kakikotoba* 書き言葉) to reflect Watashi's loss of the written word. This concern resulted in an unbridled prose that was closer to poetry, in parts. Reviewing the galley proofs for the paperback edition three years later, Furukawa was struck to discover the difficulty in making sense of the third part of the novel—even he could barely decipher what he meant to write.[57]

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[56] Uchida, "Katarikata," 159.

[57] Ibid., 160. Upon further reflection, Furukawa mused that this poetic streak was largely inspired by the likewise untamed poetry of Yoshimasu Gōzō, and saw *Abyssinian* as homage to him.

Arabia no yoru no shuzoku (2001)[58]

Creative writing teachers have been known to guide their charges with the morbid phrase, "sometimes you have to kill your babies," in so much as authors value their literary creations on a par with progeny. However, some are easier to dispose of than others, and the stillborn ones are particularly problematic. Having never completed the story he began for the *Wizardry* book, Furukawa could not help but resurrect it in some form, which provided the catalyst for his prize-winning, three-volume *Arabia no yoru no shuzoku* アラビアの夜の種族 (*The Arabian Nightbreeds*).[59]

Furukawa's fourth novel employs an intriguing double frame narrative, a possibility suggested by the title. The year is 1798 (1213 according to the Arabic *hijri* calendar) in Egypt,[60] and Napoleon's fleet is drawing nearer to Alexandria. Cognizant of the impending danger, the sovereign's closest advisor, Ayyub,[61] proposes a plan to the king. He advises the ruler to present Napoleon with a French translation of the mythical *Book of Calamity* (*saiyaku no sho* 災厄の書), which is so engrossing that, once opened, compels the reader to read to the end, without regard for anything else. If they could only get Napoleon the book, he would forget all about his designs on Egypt. The scheme is flawless, excepting the book's nonexistence. Ayyub scrambles to find the greatest

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[58] Released on Christmas day.

[59] Uchida, "Katarikata," 160.

[60] The year 1798 surfaces again in the story/chapter "Blue/Blues" in *LOVE*. Hideo Furukawa, *LOVE* (Tōkyō: Shōdensha, 2005), 167.

[61] Ayyub, of course, is a historical figure, though from the 12th century. He was the founder of the Ayyubid dynasty and father to Saladin.

storyteller to record her tales, hoping to create the *Book of Calamity* and save Egypt. This arrangement comprises the first "frame" of the narrative structure.

The second "frame" is Furukawa's authorial pose as a translator. At the beginning of the novel, he inserts a "Note on Translation," stating that this book is not his original creation, but rather a translation of an anonymous English work.[62] Similar translator's notes are interspersed throughout the text. Furukawa's unflinching adherence to this pretense sowed some confusion in the ranks of the reading public.[63] The misapprehension extended even to some bookstores, which shelved the novel in the Foreign Books section.[64] Nevertheless, despite the convoluted structure and confusion, *The Arabian Nightbreeds* proved to be Furukawa's most critically successful work at the time, earning the 55th Mystery Writers of Japan Prize 日本推理作家協会賞 and the 23rd Science Fiction and Mystery Writers of Japan Grand Prize 日本ＳＦ大賞.

What is perhaps most laudable about this success, however, is not his winning of the prizes, but the kind of book with which he won. Although, due to the narrative variation enabled by the frame structure, the novel does exhibit elements of the mystery and SF genres, strictly speaking *The Arabian Nightbreeds* fits neatly into neither. In other words, winning two genre-specific prizes without fitting completely into either genre, underscores the literary merit of the novel. Compelling though the narrative may be, its

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[62] Hideo Furukawa, *Arabia no yoru no shuzoku [The Arabian Nightbreeds]*, vol. 1, 3 vols. (Kadokawa Shoten, 2006).
[63] See, for example, the comments of some members on the SF community. <http://www.sf-fantasy.com/magazine/bookreview/020601.shtml>   One particularly entertaining comment expresses the poster's chagrin at being duped: "Aah! To-ta-ly tricked! Ugh!" (うわ〜ん！だーまーさーれーた〜！くやし〜！).
[64] Uchida, "Katarikata," 161.

resistance to straightforward categorization had landed its author into a predicament. The members of the SF and mystery community, though they seemingly enjoyed his novel, realized that Furukawa was not really a mystery/SF writer, and even though he won their prizes, he did not begin receiving offers from SF publications.[65] At the same time, the purveyors of "pure literature" (*junbungaku* 純文学) of the Japanese literary establishment (*bundan* 文壇) were uninterested in the work of someone who was writing genre fiction. Although one is tempted to understand Furukawa's floating in the nebulous area between popular and "pure" literature as yet another reflection of the effacement of high and low culture that characterizes out post-modern time,[66] it proves more useful, rather, to note the similarity of this position to Murakami Haruki's own hovering in that hazy literary region,[67] and it is Murakami's work that provides the inspiration for Furukawa's next novel.

<div align="center">The Murakami Tribute: Chūgoku yuki no surou bōto RMX (2003)[68]</div>

In 2003, Furukawa was busy serializing what would eventually become *Soundtrack* (2003) and *gift* (2004) in the monthly *Shōsetsu Subaru* 小説すばる, when the idea for a new project drifted into his consciousness. Furukawa suddenly wanted to

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[65] Ibid., 162.

[66] Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 152.

[67] Strecher contends that Murakami's is a conscious rejection of the arbitrary division between "pure" and "mass." Strecher, "Beyond 'Pure' Lit.," 374.

[68] The title was changed to *2002 nen no surou bōto* 二〇〇二年のスロウ・ボート (*Slow Boat, 2002*) for the paperback edition in 2006.

create a "cover album" of Murakami's work.[69] Five minutes later, coasting in the wake of

his sudden inspiration, he was on the phone with Media Factory, the novel's future

publisher, selling the concept. Upon contacting Murakami himself and securing his

blessing, Furukawa sped through the novel, completing it within a few months. Media

Factory's Da Vinci Books eventually released four such "remixes": *South of the Border,*

West of the Sun RMX 国境の南、太陽の西 RMX by Inukai Kyōko 狗飼恭子, *Dance*

Dance Dance RMX ダンス・ダンス・ダンス RMX by Araki Sumishi 荒木スミシ,

and *Dead Heat on a Merry-Go-Round RMX* 回転木馬のデッド・ヒート RMX by

Motogi Fumio 素樹文生.[70] Furukawa added his own remixed "track" to this "album,"

Chūgoku yuki no surou bōto RMX 中国行きのスロウ・ボート RMX (*A Slow Boat to*

China RMX), taking for inspiration Murakami's first published short story, "A Slow Boat

to China" (*Chūgoku yuki no surou bōto* 中国行きのスロウ・ボート) (1980).

　　　Because the discussion of this novel forms the core of Chapter 3, the details of the

dynamic relationship between Murakami's work and Furukawa's remix can be found

therein. Furukawa's remix tells the story of Boku's three attempts to escape from Tokyo

and of the three girlfriends he lost in the process. The majority of the novel is told

retroactively, with successive chapters alternating between present time (Christmas Eve

of 2002 in Tokyo) and past recollections, linked by small details. Please consult Chapter

3 for a thorough summary of both Murakami's short story and Furukawa's remix.

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[69] Uchida, "Katarikata," 162.
[70] <http://www.mf-davinci.com/murakami>

The Murakami Tribute, contd. (?): *Soundtrack* (2003)

If Furukawa envisioned *A Slow Boat to China RMX* as a tribute to the author to

whom he felt a particular literary debt, it would not be surprising to discover echoes of

Murakami in Furukawa's work beyond the overt homage. It is, then, even less surprising

that such echoes—gentle tips of the hat, really—be found in *Soundtrack* サウンドトラ

ック, the novel he was writing concurrently. Though I have not been able to confirm it, I

theorize that the publication of Murakami's highly-acclaimed and best-selling, *Kafka on*

the Shore (2002), may have provided this stimulus. *Soundtrack* centers around two

protagonists, one of whom is a girl named Hitsujiko, literally "Sheep Girl," which

harkens back to Murakami's Sheep Man character in *A Wild Sheep Chase* (1982).[71]

Although her name can also be read more conventionally as Yōko 羊子, which is written

with the same characters, she is addressed as Hitsujiko ヒツジコ,[72] which is her name

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[71] I do not mean to suggest that Murakami somehow owns all literary sheep
manifestations subsequent to him, but the characters of the Sheep Man and Sheep
Professor have made their way beyond *A Wild Sheep Chase*, appearing in illustrated spin-
offs born from the collaboration of Murakami and illustrator Sasaki Maki 佐々木マキ.
See Haruki Murakami and Maki Sasaki, *Hitsujiotoko no Kurisumasu [The Sheep Man's*
Christmas] (Tōkyō: Kōdansha, 1985); Haruki Murakami and Maki Sasaki, *Fushigi na*
Toshokan [Mysterious Library] (Tōkyō: Kōdansha, 2008). Therefore, it is highly unlikely
for someone who holds Murakami's work in as high esteem as Furukawa, to name a
character "Sheep Girl" innocently.
[72] Amusingly, there is a real musician by the name of Akiyama Yōko 秋山羊子, who
lists Murakami as one of her major influences. Her website bears the allusive title Hitsuji
Labo ["Sheep Lab"] <http://www.hitsujilabo.com>. She was born on Christmas.

for the majority of the novel, and another reading of the *kanji* for her name, but she had no way of knowing that. Apparently Hitsujiko made bleating sounds as a baby, inspiring her mother to dub her "Sheep Girl."[73]

The second protagonist is a boy named Tōta 十歌 who,[74] along with Hitsujiko, gets stranded on a deserted island. Eventually they both return to Tokyo, which due to the heat island effect has become tropical.[75] Tokyo has also witnessed an influx of foreign residents, and coupled with the falling value of the yen and the perceived usurpation of employment by illegal immigrants, anti-foreign sentiment has grown. As a high-school student, Hitsujiko begins to rediscover her mysterious power that is realized through dance. At school she is ostracized and, together with a group of like misfits, wages guerilla warfare against society. Meanwhile, Tōta meets the androgynous Leni レニ, who along with a crow named Kuroi クロイ is battling an underground organization. Leni is hard at work producing an image that has the power to capture people's minds, to use against the underground group. The black and white film, compiled of striking footage

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Sometimes one gets the unsettling impression that the various elements of the universe are uncannily converging.

[73] Hideo Furukawa, *Saundotorakku: 1 [Soundtrack 1]* (Tōkyō: Shūeisha, 2006), 23.

[74] Ibid., 20. The *kanji* mean "ten songs," which is somewhat ironic given that Tōta does not have a sense for music, 50. However, his father dies in the beginning of the novel and the six-year-old is marooned on a deserted island, so the only name he knows, bears only the phonetic element, and is inscribed in katakana as トウタ.

[75] This is the Tokyo of the near future in 2009. The heat island effect refers to the disproportionate increase of heat in an urban area. Furukawa has set stories in the near future before. Some of *Abyssinian* (2000), for example, takes place in 2001.

(like consumption of maggots), is mostly silent, save the cryptic phrase "Stairs of Oddessa."[76]

Soundtrack impresses with its clever transposition of images of isolation. The two protagonists manage to escape from the deserted island only to alight on an even worse "island," the heat-island of 2009 Tokyo. And on this island, they continue their existence on their own private, isolated islands, at arm's length from mainstream society.[77] However, it is also memorable for its persistent gestures in Murakami's direction. Readers familiar with Murakami's novels will instantly recognize the elements of his fiction that have saturated the narrative. I have already mentioned Hitsujiko's name and its associations. A more careful reader will also find the image of a goat skull on the deserted island, which the kids use to decorate their shelter.[78] This skull recalls the unicorn skull, so prominent in *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* (hereafter *End of the World*).[79] In a similar vein, a scene toward the end of the novel has Tōta and Leni approaching the "end of the world," which seems to be at the western edge of Tokyo.[80] The well on the island instantly recalls the wells that abound in Murakami's fiction.[81] *Kafka on the Shore*, Murakami's latest novel at the time, serves as one of the more abundant sources of reference. The crow conjures up images of the boy named

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[76] Hideo Furukawa, *Saundotorakku: 2 [Soundtrack 2]* (Tōkyō: Shūeisha, 2006), 83-5.
[77] In other words they leapt from the proverbial frying pan into the fire. Or perhaps, more poetically, came face-to-face with "the flame beneath the pot that boils the water," to borrow Nemerov's phrase.
[78] Furukawa, *Soundtrack 1*, 24.
[79] Furukawa adds another skull scene in his repertoire in *Belka* (2005). In this case it is a dog's skull.
[80] 世界の終にトウタとレニはたどりついている. Furukawa, *Soundtrack 2*, 321.
[81] Furukawa, *Soundtrack 1*, 28.

Crow, the androgynous Leni of Oshima, and the image that steals minds of Johnnie

Walker's flute. Of course, the sheep and the underground organization allude to *A Wild

Sheep Chase* (hereafter *Sheep Chase*) and *End of the World*, respectively. However, the

motif of an uprising against Tokyo is Furukawa's own, though it traces its roots to

Murakami's image of crumbling Tokyo from "A Slow Boat to China," reinterpreted by

Furukawa in *Slow Boat RMX*.

<center>*Body and Soul* (2004)</center>

In his next published novel, Furukawa channels Kitano Takeshi more than

Murakami, naming the narrator after himself. *Body and Soul* ボディ・アンド・ソウル

is told from the first-person perspective, with Furukawa (the character) adopting the

personal pronoun *boku*, and features numerous conversations he has with friends and his

editor. These discussions span a wide-range of topics from the Nazi propaganda film

Triumph of the Will,[82] to mediations on the manga *Oba-Q*,[83] ultimately asking the

question of why people tell stories. In asking this ultimate question, Furukawa repeats the

motif of metaphors for writing, present in his earliest works. Be it capturing and

displaying the image of God in *13*, the transcribing of the mysterious *rookow* in *Silence*,

the difficulty of communicating a story through written language in *Abyssinian*, the

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[82] *Triumph des Willens* (1935) was directed by "Leni" Riefenstahl. Recalling the character of Leni from *Soundtrack*, we may suppose Furukawa was working from a similar set of notes for this novel.
[83] Popular abbreviation of *Obake no Q-tarō,* which falls somewhere between *Casper the Friendly Ghost* and *Doraimon*.

attempts at narrating the world's most enthralling tale in *The Arabian Nightbreeds*, the

image of breaking through a wall (adopted from Murakami) in *Slow Boat RMX*, or the

(often destructive) artistic expression with an antisocial tendency in *Soundtrack*, all

comment in their own way on the authorial task. *Body and Soul* simply attacks the

question discursively.

<div style="text-align:center">

gift (2004)

</div>

Furukawa continued to try his hand at new styles of storytelling in his first short-

story collection, *gift*. Originally containing 19 stories, the addition of a bonus story for

the paperback edition brought the total number of Furukawa's short stories to 20. Up to

this point, most of his works were lengthy—at times multivolume—affairs,[84] and he

aimed to experiment with a shorter form for this collection. Looking to prove to himself,

as much as to his readers, that he could operate within the medium of the short story,[85]

one might say Furukawa overreacted. The majority of the stories in *gift* register ten

paperback pages or under, but nevertheless display a creative breadth in their variety. The

narrative range includes: attempts to capture a fairy on video, a genius three-year-old, a

realistic-looking model gun, a certain Bird Man, people birthing cats, alpaca's Ark,

spontaneous dance prompted by rain, an epidemic of 16-year-olds getting married and

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[84] *The Arabian Nightbreeds* was released in three volumes adding up to just about 1000 paperback pages, *Abyssinian/Silence* was released in a 600-page paperback edition, *13* measured 540 paperback pages.

[85] Uchida, "Katarikata," 166.

having children, music on a deserted island, and seeing cats' dreams.[86] Furukawa also explores various framing devices, presenting one story as a letter, and another as a questionnaire (with the length of one page, this is the shortest story in the collection). *gift* also presents an opportunity to witness the emergence of Furukawa's minor obsessions, such as deserted islands (and isolation in general), animals, and the theme of despair.

Beruka hoenai no ka? (2005)

Animals—dogs to be precise—feature prominently in one of Furukawa's best-received novels to date, *Beruka hoenai no ka?* ベルカ、吠えないのか？(*Belka, Won't You Bark?*), hereafter *Belka*, which was nominated for the 133rd Naoki Prize, and has also been selected for translation into English, French, and Russian through the auspices of the Japanese Literature Publishing Project.[87] Narrated using two alternating, parallel storylines, *Belka* showcases Furukawa's penchant for composing historically-inspired sagas on a global scale; America, Japan, Russia/Soviet Union, Mexico, Vietnam, and Afghanistan all lend their locales to the setting.

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[86] Incidentally, the cat character that appears in the final dream of this story, "Spring Roll Divination" 生春巻き占い, is intended to be the same cat that appears in *Silence* and *Abyssinian*. Ibid., 170. We should recall that Furukawa began working on *gift* during his suddenly increased interest in Murakami, around the time of the release of *Kafka*, which prominently features the motifs of cats and dreams.

[87] *Belka* will be translated into English by Michael Emmerich. The current tentative title is the awkward, and pragmatically incorrect, *Belka, Why Don't You Bark?*. <http://www.jlpp.go.jp/jp/works/05_07.html>.

The first story line chronicles the latter half of the 20th century, focusing on a canine lineage. It all starts in 1943, when the Japanese Imperial Army occupational force at Attu was annihilated by US troops.[88] The remainder of the Japanese forces in the Aleutian Islands, stationed at Kiska, withdrew under cover of fog leaving behind four war dogs.[89] The four war dogs, in characteristic Furukawa fashion, found themselves on a deserted island. Two of the dogs mated, had a litter of puppies, and were eventually picked up by US troops and taken off the island. Furukawa follows the many offspring of these dogs through the "hot" conflicts of the 20th century through the end of the Cold War.

The second story line is set in the 1990s and revolves around the meeting of a mysterious old man, bearing the codename "Archbishop," who was formerly a KGB operator, and a yakuza boss's daughter who was taken hostage by the Russian mafia. The novel opens in Siberia in the 1990s. A young man bundled up against the cold trudges through the snow-covered landscape. He spots a hut and heads in that direction. The hut belongs Archbishop, whom the man attempts to assassinate, but the old man proves too spry. He spits vodka in the assassin's face, blinding him momentarily, then kicks the young man's legs from under him, jumps on his back, and breaks his neck. The old man opens a globe and retrieves a dog skull, and in a scene that would be just as appropriate in

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[88] Actually, 29 Japanese soldiers were taken prisoner. Nathan Miller, *War at Sea: A Naval History of World War II* (New York: Scribner, 1995), 375.

[89] Interestingly enough, Nathan Miller describes an apropos exchange between Admirals Kincaid and King and the Navy Secretary Knox. Kincaid reported that the Japanese forces had pulled out of Kiska, leaving only "some dogs and hot coffee" behind. When the befuddled Knox asked for clarification, King explained: "The Japanese are very clever, […] their dogs can brew coffee." Ibid. I am not certain if Furukawa had access to this information.

Shakespeare's Denmark, announces that he wishes to "set free every ancient power."[90]

With that, the old man springs into action, setting the tone of breakneck speed for the rest

of the book, which sees Furukawa employ a sweeping historical approach.[91]

The authorial pose that Furukawa assumes in his prefatory notes is likewise

brusque. The dedication reads: "Dedicated to Boris Yeltsin. I know your secrets." Yeltsin

is addressed with the less-than-respectful *anta*, underscoring the confrontational tenor of

the work. In the epigraph Furukawa extends a challenge—presumably—to the audience

in a somewhat affectedly aggressive style:

> You will probably call this fiction. I guess I'd agree. But let me ask you this, what
> do you think is there in the world besides fiction?
>
> これはフィクションだってあなたたちは言うだろう。おれもそれは認める
> だろう。でも、あなたたち、この世にフィクション以外のなにがあると思
> ってるんだ？

<div align="center">

LOVE (2005)

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The year 2005 arguably produced Furukawa's best work, or at least his best-

received work. *Belka* was nominated for the Naoki prize, but fell short, *LOVE*, however,

was awarded the 19th Mishima Yukio Prize the following year. Surprisingly this novel

came about by accident. Furukawa had only planned to finish *Belka* and *Rock 'n' Roll*

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[90] Hideo Furukawa, *Beruka hoenai no ka? [Belka, Won't You Bark?]* (Tōkyō: Bungeishunjū, 2005), 12.

[91] Tadashi Ishikawa, "Furukawa Hideo, Shiba Ryōtarō, C.G. Yungu: 'Yōyaku'=dōtoku no isō [Furukawa Hideo, Shiba Ryōtaro, C.G. Jung: 'Summary' = Moral Topology]," *Gunzō* 1 (2007): 284.

Septology in 2005, and when a representative from the Shōdensha publishing company

asked if he would write a novel for them, Furukawa initially declined. He quickly

changed his mind, however, suddenly wanting to give the kind of reader that enjoyed his

first short-story collection, *gift*, another book in that vein.[92] This book would become

LOVE, though the finished product was not quite a short-story collection, nor was it,

strictly speaking, a novel.

     LOVE is divided into four parts, with four interludes that take cats as their

protagonists interspersed between these major sections. The four major sections stand

independently, but are linked by time, setting, and theme. They are linked through time

because they follow each other chronologically, from autumn to summer. They are linked

by setting—the import of physical geography is discussed at length in Chapter 4—

because they take place in the same general area of Tokyo, near the bay and around the

Meguro River. Finally, the sections are linked by theme in sharing the feline thematic and

curious encounters.[93] In other words, the four sections feel like they belong together, and

are taking place in the same world, but do stand alone. Furukawa has called *LOVE* an

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[92] Uchida, "Katarikata," 166.

[93] Some reviewers have characterized *LOVE* as Furukawa's answer to *Belka*, which is
understandable given the natural antagonism between cats and dogs. I would, however,
caution against this reading, because as far as "answers" go, a far more credible one is
found in *Rock 'n' Roll*, as discussed below, rather than in *LOVE*. Ishii, Sugie, and
Furuyama, "Zenchosaku," 240.

"enormous short story" 巨大な短編.[94] As puzzling as that may sound, I believe he

means the structure outlined above. If so, his assessment seems as good as any.[95]

Rock 'n' Roll (2005)

Rokkunrōru shichibu saku ロックンロール七部作 (*Rock 'n' Roll Septology*),

hereafter *Rock 'n' Roll*, differed from Furukawa's previous two novels in that it did not

find nearly as much commercial or critical success.[96] However, this is not a novel

without purpose. It would be tempting to consider Furukawa's output in 2005 by date of

publication, and the structure of this chapter lends to this temptation, but we must

remember that originally *Belka* and *Rock 'n' Roll* were the only two works on

Furukawa's docket; *LOVE* is the outlier, a fortunate intruder. Considering the dates of

publication, we would say: if *Belka* explored the history of wars in the 20th century on the

global scale, and *LOVE* painted a picture of a year in Tokyo, *Rock 'n' Roll* returns to the

worldwide scope, taking the pop history of rock 'n' roll as its focus. However, we should

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[94] Hideo Furukawa, *LOVE* (Tōkyō: Shōdensha, 2005), 329.

[95] Upon further reflection, I must note that this is not, *pace* Furukawa, a kind of construction that the world has never seen. After all, SF and fantasy writers have often created imaginary universes, in which many unrelated stories may then be set. Thus, any number of hobbit stories may be set in Middle Earth, without explicit connection to Bilbo Baggins. Likewise, William Gibson's "Burning Chrome" and his subsequent Sprawl trilogy are linked only by the setting. Perhaps what is unique about *LOVE*, in contradistinction to the above counter-examples, is the tight chronology of the four sections.

[96] Furukawa regretfully called it a commercial flop. Uchida, "Katarikata," 169.

be mindful of the creative—rather than publication—chronology, and therefore must neither consider this novel any kind of "return," nor assume that Furukawa was simply doing exercises in scale.[97] It behooves us to consider *Rock 'n' Roll* as an extension of, and a response to, *Belka's* characterization of the 20th century. As noted above, *Belka* chronicles a century of wars; *Rock 'n' Roll* strives to reinterpret it as a century of rock 'n' roll. Emphasizing this connection, Furukawa once remarked with a laugh: "If I had only titled it *Belka, Won't You Bark? 2*, maybe it would have sold better."[98]

<div style="text-align:center">

Route 350 (2006)

</div>

According to Furukawa, *Rūto 350* ルート３５０ (*Route 350*) was his first "straight short-story collection."[99] But, it is questionable how seriously Furukawa takes his own book blurbs. Furukawa said in interview that this book does not fit in any particular way into his body of work. He further intimated that it was primarily put out for commercial purposes and, one supposes, to have previously published stories in a convenient volume.[100] The book contains eight stories, all but two of which appeared in the journal *Shōsetsu Gendai* 小説現代 between 2003 and 2006. Some of the stories feature by now recognizable Furukawa themes like animals (hamster), maps/landmarks, and a concern with history.

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[97] *Rock 'n' Roll* was actually being serialized in *Shōsetu Subaru* from as early as 2004.
[98] Uchida, "Katarikata," 170.
[99] Ishii, Sugie, and Furuyama, "Zenchosaku," 241.
[100] "[…] it went through three printings! I have a very natural ambition to sell books," Furukawa announced to Uchida in an interview, chuckling. Uchida, "Katarikata," 170.

Bokutachi wa arukanai (2006)

Bokutachi wa arukanai 僕たちは歩かない (*We Won't Walk*)[101] concludes

Furukawa's production for 2006. Following the highly productive 2005, in which he

released three hefty novels (each over 350 pages), Furukawa might be expected to take a

break; with this novella measuring just over 100 pages it appears that he did. Perhaps

appropriately, the brevity of the book resonates with its main theme of time, the lack of

time, to be precise. In *We Won't Walk,* Furukawa creates a Tokyo that is close enough to

the real metropolis, complete with place names and hectic lifestyles, and yet with just

enough metaphysical details to create a mildly surreal effect.

It is safe to say that most people associate life in metropolitan areas with mass and

speed; bustling streets and trains teeming with humanity. Time is a precious commodity

in the metropolis, its residents are preoccupied with work, chores, and so forth, and

personal time is rare. As many of us have on occasion remarked, perhaps with a sigh,

there are only 24 hours in a day. But Furukawa takes readers to a 26-hour Tokyo, where a

group of young chefs, freshly returned from studying abroad, form a collective to enjoy

the extra two hours.

Summer Vacation EP (2007)

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[101] An alternate rendering could be *We Don't Walk*.

Furukawa has acknowledged that one of the things he learned from Murakami was how to alternate between longer novels and shorter ones,[102] and he observes this pattern with the release of *Samā bakēshon EP* サマーバケーション EP (*Summer Vacation EP*), once again breaking the 300-page mark, perhaps unsurprisingly given the title. Furukawa is also seen moving away from the global scope of his earlier work, opting for a delimited setting. This novel follows the 25 km length of the Kanda River, from its origin in Inokashira Pond through its convergence with the famed Sumida River and flowing out to sea. Boku, the 20-year-old protagonist, meets the young boy Una at Inokashira Park, and they set out along the Kanda River in the blazing summer heat, meeting various characters along the way. The novel is peculiar for its quick, declarative style underscored by the use of the polite *desu/masu* form, atypical of written language.

Haru, haru, haru (2007)

Similarly to *LOVE, Haru, Haru, Haru* ハル、ハル、ハル[103] is a collection of three long stories, although unlike *LOVE* they are not necessarily intended to be read as one. The title story revolves around three Harus: the 13-year-old *Haru*omi 晴臣, the 16-year-old Mi*haru* 三葉瑠, and the 41-year-old *Ha*rada Sato*ru* 原田悟. All three characters are on the periphery of respectable society. Haruomi is a troubled kid, abandoned by his

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[102] Hideo Furukawa, "Seichō o mezashite, nashitsuzukete [Aim for growth, and keep going]," *Monki- bijinesu [Monkey Business]* 5, no. Spring (2009): 53.

[103] Without the use of *kanji* it is difficult to ascertain the exact meaning of *haru*. It could just as easily be *Spring, Spring, Spring*, for example. However, aiming to preserve the three *haru* that appear in the characters' names, I have opted for transliteration.

mother, who gets his hands on a pistol; Miharu is a teenage runaway from an unhappy home; Harada is taxi driver, who was leading a good-for-nothing existence since being laid off from a desirable white-collar job, and whose cab gets carjacked by the two teenagers.

The last two stories are "Slow Motion" スローモーション and "8 Dogs" ８ドッグズ. The former is told through fragmentary diary entries of a woman whose niece and nephew were kidnapped. As the name suggests, the latter is a story of eight dogs, that takes place on the Bōsō Peninsula in Chiba Prefecture. Precisely it is a number of intersecting stories pulled together featuring, not only dogs, but also a peacock, and a number of alternating narrators.

Godstar (2007)

Picking up the "Slow Motion" motif of missing children and unreliable female narrators of questionable sanity, Furukawa composed his next novel without using a single comma. Taking its name from a Psychic TV song, *Godstar* ゴッドスター, is a first-person narrative of a lonely woman, Atashi, who takes in a (presumably) lost, amnesiac boy, whom she names Kalio. As the novel rapidly develops, through its brisk, comma-less sentences and rapid-fire dialogue, the reader grows increasingly aware of Atashi's escalating obsession and instability. In the afterword, Furukawa comments on his expectation from the reader:

There are no commas in this book. There are no chapters in this book. No supernatural elements. It doesn't need to be understood. I want you to surrender to it. To the words. To what is happening.[104]

The words, or the way the words are thrown onto the page and at the reader, are of primary concern. *Godstar* was written shortly after Furukawa began giving "reading gigs" (朗読ギッグ), in which he, usually in company with musicians, gives an impassioned reading of his works. The influence of these "gigs" is felt throughout *Haru, Haru, Haru* and *Godstar*, manifesting in the attention paid to the sound of the words, conscious manipulation of sentence-length, and use of repetition to create a palpable rhythm when read aloud. The importance of rhythm and musicality in this, and Furukawa's other works, are discussed in Chapter 5.

Seikazoku (2008)

Furukawa's tendency to keep in mind the career of Murakami has already been mentioned. Their careers show some interesting overlap, but although some concurrences are indeed remarkable (they both began their careers in April at 29 years of age, for example),[105] others are closer to self-fulfilling prophesy. When he was 42, Murakami began serializing his first magnum opus, *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*. Being fully aware

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[104] Hideo Furukawa, *Goddosutā [Godstar]* (Tōkyō: Shinchōsha, 2007), 158.
[105] Consider also the turn in Murakami's career in 1995 punctuated by the dual tragedies of the Aum Shinrikyō terrorist attack and the Hanshin earthquake, which devastated his hometown of Kōbe. One is left to wonder if the recent Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami, followed by the nuclear hazard in Furukawa's home prefecture of Fukushima, will have a similar effect.

of the timeline of novel's creation, Furukawa decided to publish his own monumental

work, or at least one of monumental proportions, by the time he turned 42. In 2006 (at

40), he began publishing chapters of *Seikazoku* 聖家族 (*The Holy Family*) in a number of

print and online journals.[106] In 2008, when Furukawa turned 42, it was released in

hardback. This vast epic, traces a 700-year history of a family in the Tōhoku region of

northern Japan, which is now famous worldwide for unfortunate reasons. Hailing from

Tōhoku, the choice of setting for this novel serves as a kind of literary homecoming.

Though he has insisted that he does not feel nostalgia for his hometown,[107] after years of

escape, perhaps Furukawa is starting to look back.

<div align="center">After The Holy Family</div>

Since the release of his biggest work to date, Furukawa remained active,

collaborating with musicians and other artists, continuing his "gigs," releasing a CD of

such a collaboration,[108] and releasing a book of interviews. The story recorded on the CD,

titled *MUSIC*, was later incorporated into a sequel to *LOVE*, and was published in 2010.

The same year, Furukawa published a collection of 44 short stories, titled *4444*.[109] Since

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[106] It is interesting to note, that some chapters appeared in journals that primarily publish "pure literature" (like *Subaru*), while others were published in "pop literature" journals (like *Shōsetu Subaru*).

[107] Sasaki, "Rūtsu naki sakka," 59.

[108] Furukawa Hideo Plus and Hideo Furukawa, *MUSIC: Mubō no Kisetsu [Season of the Impossible]*, CD (HEADZ, 2009).

[109] The volume was actually released on his birthday, July 11. Had he waited a year, he may have published *7/11/11*.

then he also released a collection of travelogues, short stories, and plays, titled

Non+Fiction ノン＋フィクション. Furukawa's latest book, *TYO Gothic* TYO ゴシッ

ク, published in January 2011, collects nine short stories that appeared between 2008 and

2010 and take a fantastical Tokyo as their stage.

CHAPTER THREE: THE MURAKAMI REMIX

"We never read a poet as poet, but only read one poet in another poet, or even into another poet."

Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence*[110]

"There's certainly influence, but I don't fear its anxiety."

Furukawa Hideo[111]

Introduction

In the world of Japanese literature, Murakami Haruki is considered an international sensation. If his status as one of Japan's most translated authors is not enough, his acceptance of the 2006 Franz Kafka Prize, and more recently, the 2009 Jerusalem Prize attests to the breadth of his readership. Although he is without a doubt the most internationally well-known living Japanese author, his success is not limited to an international audience.[112] *Norwegian Wood* (1987) earned him superstar status in his own country, while his latest multivolume novel, *1Q84* (2009), has enjoyed tremendous

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[110] Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 94. I am using Bloom's work advisedly. The implication of "influence" in Bloom's book, is that it reflects a power relationship between an authoritative prior master and an *anxious*, passive inheritor. The process of remixing, however, does not partake of this power structure, as the later author appropriates elements from an earlier work autonomously. In fact, one of the advantages I see in adopting the framework and vocabulary provided by recent theories of cognition discussed below, is that they are free of value-laded terminology.
[111] Motoyuki Shibata, *Daihyō shitsumon: 16 no intabyū [Representative Questions: 16 Interviews]* (Tōkyō: Shinshokan, 2009), 214.
[112] Michael Seats, *Murakami Haruki: The Simulacrum in Contemporary Japanese Culture* (Lexington Books, 2006), 26-9.

popularity, with its first and second volumes occupying the top two spots on the Japanese

bestseller lists the year of their release. It is, therefore, not surprising that many writers of

the following generation count him among their influences, with Furukawa being the

most consequential for our present purposes. Furukawa readily acknowledges influences

that have shaped his creative process, and believes that one's artistic arsenal is informed

by movies, books, music, strolls through the city, and any number of other outside

influences.[113] The work of Murakami has made a prominent impact on Furukawa as a

writer, and in this chapter, I present an especially suitable and transparent example of

Murakami's presence in Furukawa's fiction.

　　Murakami's "A Slow Boat to China" (1980), hereafter "Slow Boat," was his first

published short story and inspired Furukawa to compose a novel two decades later. Yet,

Furukawa's *A Slow Boat to China RMX* (hereafter *RMX*) does more than simply update

the original. Its reach is not limited to that particular Murakami story, but rather

encompasses Murakami's major works through 2002. In *RMX* Furukawa "remixes"—to

use his musical terminology—Murakami's oeuvre by first borrowing the structure of its

approximate namesake and then "sampling"[114] elements of Murakami's fiction to create

a new narrative, resulting in a multi-layered work with flexible ranges of meaning.

Furukawa himself likens the process to "tilling the soil of Murakami farm with a

Murakami hoe and a Murakami tractor, to bring you a special Murakami harvest,

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[113] Uchida, "Katarikata," 162.

[114] Hideo Furukawa, "Jibun no chosaku o kaisetsu suru to iu koto, jibun tachi no jidai o kaisetsu suru to iu koto (Explaining My Writing, Explaining Our Times)," in *2002 nen no surou bōto (Slow Boat, 2002)* (Tōkyō: Bungei Shunjū, 2006), 153.

produced by Furukawa."[115] The manner in which this kaleidoscope of meanings is negotiated depends in large part on how this novel is read. Theoretically, it may be read in two ways: First, independently of Murakami's work, and second, through the imposition of Murakami's work on Furukawa's. In practice, however, readers familiar with Murakami's story are compelled to adopt the second reading, and I do likewise. In addition to the second reading I adopt Mark Turner and Gilles Fauconnier's concept of "double-scope blending" to investigate of meanings resulting from the blending of Furukawa's and Murakami's work.

I begin by briefly describing Turner's ideas that conceptually inform the methodological framework, and implicitly underpin the structure, of this chapter. I continue by providing summaries of the two "slow boat" stories. In summarizing Furukawa's *RMX,* I adopt the first approach outlined above, and indicate the sources of Murakami's "input." In the following section, I explore the structural relationship of the two stories. The second approach frames the remainder of the chapter.[116] The section on the evolution of Murakami's writing, with special attention to the transformative year 1995, establishes a thematic "Murakami domain," the source of the elements that will be projected onto Furukawa's novel, which is examined in the subsequent section. The final section applies the theory discussed below in illustration of the creation of blended meaning, which I suggest is available only through the blend, and not through an independent reading of the novel.

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[115] Uchida, "Katarikata," 162-3.

[116] This approach analyzes the blended meaning emerging from the domains of Murakami's opus and Furuakawa's *RMX*.

A Cognitive Approach

This chapter aims chiefly to investigate the meanings found at the intersection of Furukawa's and Murakami's work. Although the manner in which these meanings are decoded is grounded in textual analysis, the framework owes much to recent theories of cognition, specifically those of conceptual blending.[117] In *The Way We Think,* Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner attempt to give account of what they understand to be the salient feature of cognitively modern humans. Conceptual integration emerges as the most likely candidate, its intuitiveness belying its massive impact on the development of language, art, technology, and seemingly every creative action. Conceptual integration refers to the process of combining elements held in two (or more) mental spaces, and creating a third, blended space in which elements from the two input spaces merge in a meaningful way.[118] In fact, Turner and Fauconnier believe the entire enterprise of establishing mental spaces, connecting them, and creating blended spaces, is carried out for the purpose of arriving at "global insight, human-scale understanding, and new meaning [making us] efficient and creative."[119] Since the wholesale combination of one space with another does not happen (save if the two spaces are identical, in which case there is no need for a blend), mental spaces are combined by "projection" of certain elements from the two input spaces.

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[117] Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner, *The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind's Hidden Complexities* (New York: Basic Books, 2002).
[118] Ibid., 40.
[119] Ibid., 92.

The projection across two mental spaces is generally limited, and selective. In other words the integration of two mental spaces is accomplished through "selective projection" of elements from both,[120] and is governed by a number of principles.[121] Elements are projected based on their "vital relations;" these include change, identity, time, space, cause-effect, part-whole, representation, role, analogy, disanalogy, property, similarity, category, intentionality, and uniqueness.[122] These projections satisfy the principle of compression, which is crucial for achieving efficiency. Compression happens when elements are borrowed from different spaces and brought together in one space with the overarching goal of achieving human scale.[123] Interestingly enough, one of the sub-goals embedded in the move towards human scale, is the move from "many to one,"[124] in other words, the tendency to unification and simplification of two separate and complex networks into a single conceptually-manageable one. This is the basic framework of the theory, albeit simplified, as it applies to our current considerations.

To illustrate this process, consider some simple appositions, for example, "cash cow." Cash belongs to the financial realm, while cows belong to husbandry. Yet we are able to intuitively and efficiently project the necessary elements from these different domains into a blended space to create a new meaning, in this case, "a source of steady profit." Because cash (profit) is the desired product in the financial realm, and milk is the desired product from cows, cash corresponds to milk though the vital relation of "role."

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[120] Ibid., 47-8, 71-3.
[121] Ibid., 345-6.
[122] Ibid., 93-101.
[123] Ibid., 322-4.
[124] Ibid., 323.

Cows produce milk steadily and with seemingly little effort. Cash, on the other hand, is

acquired with difficulty. Thus, the two can be projected again, this time through the vital

relation of "disanalogy." These projections into the blended space are motivated and

restricted by the above relations. We do not project derivatives, gold, currency

devaluation, exchange rates, stock prices, and so forth, into the blend. We also do not

project the cow's diet, health, breed, age, or whether the ranch is organic. But by

projecting selectively we compress two domains to create an emergent meaning that

partakes of both domains, but is strictly speaking neither.[125]

The more than decade-old phrase, "If Clinton were the *Titanic*, the iceberg would

sink," provides an example of a more complex blend.[126] This counterfactual formulation

stressed President Clinton's perceived political invincibility around the time of the

Lewinsky scandal. This is a double-scope blend that is accomplished by running two

stories simultaneously; the *Titanic*'s unlucky voyage (motivated by the contemporaneous

success of the eponymous film), and Clinton's overcoming of political disaster. In the

blended space, Clinton is the *Titanic* overcoming the iceberg of the scandal. This is a

striking counterfactual on many levels. Not only is it obvious that the 42nd President of

the USA cannot be a turn-of-the-century liner, one that *did* sink, but we also know that

icebergs cannot sink in reality. Nevertheless, the blend is meaningful because of its

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[125] A cash cow is neither cash nor a cow. Contrast this with "cash crop," an apposition
that does not partake of higher-order blending like "cash cow"—a cash crop is a crop.
These are my examples, Turner and Fauconnier provide: "land yacht" (a large, luxurious
automobile) and "jail bait" (a sexually-attractive minor). Ibid., 356-7.
[126] Ibid., 221-2.

ability to comment on a real political situation through an effective integration of

disparate and counterfactual elements.[127]

We have observed how human ability to simultaneously process counterfactuals

emerges from the above framework. Elaborating on the applications of this ability, Mark

Turner developed the concept of "double-scope stories." This refers to the two-fold

human ability to first "activate simultaneously, without confusion, two or more different

stories that conflict resolutely" and to blend "two conflicting stories into a third story

with emergent structure and meaning."[128] This type of creative blending is characterized

by three features: the mapping of elements between stories; a selective projection of these

elements; and the structure that emerges from the composition, completion, and

elaboration of the blended elements.[129]

Applying this framework to analyze Furukawa's *RMX*, allows us to approach this

novel from two slightly different directions. The first sees *RMX* as the simplified network,

the elaborated emergent structure, and attempts to retrace the "inputs" (various elements

of Murakami's work). This is the approach I take in the summary portion of *RMX*. The

second views *RMX* as one of the inputs, with Murakami's oeuvre providing the other

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[127] It appears to me that in these blends, there is a general pattern of the blend appropriating the organizing structure from one input, but the emergent meaning from another. In the "cash cow" example, to put it crudely, the blend is organized by the frame of the cow, and cash is brought from the financial domain into the livestock one. But the meaning of the phrase has more to do with money than cows. In the *Titanic* example, the film provides the frame, but the semantic import points toward Clinton's political savvy.
[128] Mark Turner, "Double-scope Stories," in *Narrative Theory and the Cognitive Sciences*, ed. David Herman (Stanford: CSLI Publications, 2003), 139-40. "Conflicting" here does not mean a protracted disagreement, but indicated rather a variance between the two stories. This is simply because if there were no variance, the stories would be one and the same.
[129] Ibid., 127.

input, and the reader's hermeneutic results as the emergent structure. In other words, the first approach considers Furukawa's *RMX* as the resultant creation, whereas the second considers the story created in the reader's mind, given the Furukawa and Murakami "inputs." As a subset of the second approach, theoretically, the reader can read Furukawa's *RMX* and Murakami's "A Slow Boat to China" in two ways. In the first, both works may be read independently; in the second, elements from the Murakami "domain" are mapped onto the Furukawa "domain", that is, Furukawa is read *through* Murakami. What emerges via the second reading is a third "blended" semantic layer. In many ways, this dynamic is unavoidable for a reader of a tribute work who is also familiar with the source to which tribute is paid.[130] Thus, it becomes next to impossible to read Furukawa's *RMX* independently of Murakami's oeuvre.

<div align="center">Murakami's Slow Boat</div>

Murakami's "A Slow Boat to China" (hereafter "Slow Boat") is a short story divided into five sections. Perhaps owing to Murakami's inexperience with the short-story form, "Slow Boat" reads more like a three-part essay than a short story.[131] Sections one and five relate the "present time" (we may consider these the introduction and conclusion sections, respectively), and sections two, three, and four, deal with the stories

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[130] I am using the term "tribute" to designate a work that explicitly shows respect and admiration for a given author or work. I do not intend to place Furukawa's work in a relationship of dependence vis-à-vis Murakami, only to indicate that *RMX* is, self-admittedly, a novel intended to show appreciation for Murakami's fiction.

[131] Senko K. Maynard, *Principles of Japanese Discourse: a Handbook* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 24-7.

of "three Chinese," who are linked temporally to the narrator's (Boku) childhood, late adolescence, and adulthood, respectively, spanning the period of 1960 to 1980. It is a quiet meditation on urban alienation, unpleasant memories, and feelings of being an outsider.

Boku begins by posing the question of when he met his "first Chinese,"[132] and spends the next section describing this meeting. He seems convinced that it was the year Johansson fought Floyd Patterson for the world title and goes of to the library to track down the date.[133] His memory again diverts his attention to an episode when he was knocked unconscious by running after a fly ball and into a post. When he came to, his first words were: "That's okay, brush off the dirt (*hokori* 埃) and you can still eat it."[134] By a strange process of association, this phrase leads Boku to think of death, which in turn reminds him of the Chinese, bringing the narrative back to the original topic. Segueing into the second section, the he recounts his experiences at a school for Chinese children, where he once had to take an aptitude test. The school was quite far, and seemed to the young Boku to be at the "edge of the world" (*sekai no hate* 世界の果

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[132] Haruki Murakami, "A Slow Boat to China," in *The Elephant Vanishes*, trans. Alfred Birnbaum (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 218.

[133] Birnbaum erroneously translates this reference as a fight between "Johnson and Patterson." However, Patterson never fought anyone named Johnson for the title, he did however fight three legendary matches against Ingemar Johansson. Murakami is showing a little humor here, because the two boxers fought in 1959, 1960, and 1961, so confirming the date of their fight, would not really help him pin down the year he met his first Chinese. Alan Howard Levy, *Floyd Patterson: a Boxer and a Gentleman* (North Carolina: McFarland, 2008), 81-124.

[134] Murakami, "Slow Boat," 220; Haruki Murakami, *Chūgoku yuki no surou bōto [A Slow Boat to China]* (Tokyo: Chūōkōronshinsha, 1983), 13.

て).[135] At the school everything was spotless and orderly, with the children walking

quietly "like a demonstration of indeterminate perpetual motion."[136] The first Chinese

was the test proctor, a middle-aged man with a limp. He gave the students a brief lecture

on mutual respect and encouraged them to stick their "chests out […] And be proud."

(*hokori o mochinasai* 誇りを持ちなさい).[137] Six or seven years later, Boku ends up on

a date with girl he liked, who also happened to have taken the test at the same Chinese

school. When he recounts his memories of the Chinese school, with its clean and orderly

desks, the girl remarks that she does not remember, since it was "such a long time ago"

(そんなの昔のことだから).[138]

After graduating from high school (in a "port town"[139] presumably modeled on

Murakami's own childhood in Kobe), Boku moved to Tokyo for college and met his

second Chinese. She was a coworker of his, and although not very talkative, impressed

him with her relentless work pace.[140] Her father, an importer of Chinese goods in

Yokohama, was himself Chinese, but the girl was born and raised in Japan. On their

first—and last—date, Boku put her on the wrong train (going the wrong way on the

Yamanote Line), and realizing his mistake rushed over to her station (Kamagome).[141]

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[135] Murakami, *Surou Bōto*, 15.

[136] Murakami, "Slow Boat," 221.

[137] Ibid., 224; Murakami, *Surou Bōto*, 22. Note that *hokori* is a homonym meaning "dirt" or "pride," so the connection is not as tenuous as the English translation may lead readers to believe. The connection to this important phrase is discussed in the next section.

[138] Murakami, *Surou Bōto*, 22-24. This episode does not appear in the Complete Works (*zenshū*) version of this story, nor in the English translation based on that version.

[139] Murakami, "Slow Boat," 225.

[140] Ibid., 226.

[141] Ibid., 230.

She interprets his actions as those of a bully and tells him that, although this is not the first time she was mistreated (and that it will not be the last), she never wanted to be in a position like that again, that she "did not want to dream" (夢なんてみたくない).[142] Boku reassures her, and she gives him her number, which he accidentally throws away. That was the last time he saw her.

The third Chinese was Boku's classmate from high school. They meet by chance a decade after graduation, in a café in the "fathomlessly huge city Tokyo."[143] The man, whom Boku can hardly recall, now works as an encyclopedia salesman, targeting the Chinese demographic. Unlike Boku's spotty memory, the salesman's is impeccable.[144] He shows surprise that Boku got into business (*shōbai* 商売)[145] as a profession, and they chat briefly about how time passes. The salesman suddenly quotes a saying from their high-school English textbook, "A lot of water has gone under the bridge," but Boku still can recall neither him nor the passage. Boku does, however, ask for an encyclopedia pamphlet and gives the salesman his address, then they part ways. The salesman gives off the impression of being worn down, a shadow of a man. The final section traces Boku's musings as he rides the Yamanote Line.[146] He doubts his sense of belonging, and his

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[142] This seems to mean that she was through fooling herself, and entertaining the notions that Boku really cared for her. Murakami, *Surou Bōto*, 35. I mention this detail because dreams occupy an important place in Murakami's fiction and a significant portion of the plot of Furukawa's *RMX*.

[143] Murakami, "Slow Boat," 232.

[144] Murakami aficionados may be tempted to add: He was the proverbial elephant that never forgets (or vanishes), or the barn that does not burn.

[145] Murakami, *Surou Bōto*, 44.

[146] The Yamanote area is generally considered to be home to people higher up on the socio-economic ladder, in contrast to the lowland *shitamachi* of old Edo. Henry Smith

image of Tokyo merges with that of China. He imagines Tokyo crumbling to the ground, reality slipping away. Recalling the words of his "second Chinese" (whom he had sent the wrong way on the same train line), he repeats them: "This was never any place I was meant to be."[147] Unfortunately there is also no means for escape, there are "no exits" (どこにも出口などない),[148] and the slow boat to China never comes.

<div align="center">Furukawa's Slow Boat</div>

Furukawa's *RMX* incorporates many of Murakami's themes and images that are not limited to the short story that inspired the title. Furukawa's narrative is ostensibly a record of Boku's attempted escape (*dasshutsu* 脱出) from Tokyo.[149] It is a story of three failures at escape and the loss of three girlfriends in the process. The first girlfriend is taken away, the second runs away, and the third Boku sends away. The reader may notice the apparent parallel between Murakami's three Chinese and Furukawa's three girlfriends, but the connection exists only to bring attention to structural echoes of Murakami. Unlike the five-section division used by Murakami, Furukawa divides his book into 12 sections: eight chapters (the last of which is a letter), three "chronicles," and a dream-sequence

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states that "as a cultural *idea*, the word 'Yamanote' itself developed the […] connotations of a 'dull, clean, and respectable' residential district for the social elite." Henry D. Smith II, "Tokyo and London: Comparative Conceptions of the City," in *Japan, a Comparative View*, ed. Albert M Craig (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1979), 91-92.

[147] Murakami, "Slow Boat," 238.

[148] Murakami, *Surou Bōto*, 51.

[149] Hideo Furukawa, *2002 nen no surou bōto [Slow Boat, 2002]* (Tōkyō: Bungei Shunjū, 2006), 8.

epilogue. The odd-numbered chapters are "present time" (December 24, 2002) and

include dream sequences. The even-numbered chapters contain the stories of the three

girlfriends and cover the years 1985, 1994, and 2000, respectively. The chronicles follow

chapters three, five, and seven, and cover the same years.

In contrast to Murakami's story, which begins by springing the odd question of

when Boku met his first Chinese, Furukawa takes advantage of the longer form of the

novel to contextualize his triadic theme. On the morning of Christmas Eve at 09:20,

Furukawa's narrator (also the first-person Boku) strolls through Hamarikyū Gardens

(*Hama rikyū onshi teien* 浜離宮恩賜庭園). It is 2002, the year in which the K-1

kickboxing champion, Ernesto Hoost, won the belt for the third time.[150] Hoost

proclaimed, "I'm three times champion [*sic*]!" (アイム・スリー・タイムズ・チャン

ピオン！),[151] but all Boku could think of is his own three-time failure to escape from

Tokyo. Walking though the park, Boku reads the park brochure, which describes the

various birds at the park, but the ones it fails to mention are the ones that are found in the

greatest number: crows—shameless scavengers, who cavort around the park, roosting in

the tall trees, attacking weaker birds.[152] He finds some caged crows in a restricted area of

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[150] The connection to the three Johansson-Patterson fights should be self-evident.
[151] Furukawa, *RMX*, 9.
[152] I am not able to confirm whether Furukawa read *Kafka on the Shore* (in which the protagonist's alter ego is a boy named Crow) prior to writing *RMX*, but this crow scene serves as some indication that he did. As I have noted in Chapter 1, the publication of *Kafka* (2002), is likely to have provided the sudden desire to compose this tribute. Furthermore, in *Soundtrack*, the novel he was writing concurrently, Furukawa likewise features a crow character and makes other nods to Murakami's work. I believe that the publication of *Kafka* may shed light on the sudden upsurge of Murakami-isms in Furukawa's work of the period. Consider also, for example, that once upon opening his

the park. Seized with the desire to destroy the cages and set the birds free, he gives himself up to reverie. Boku himself knows the feeling of being caged, musing that he still cannot escape from Tokyo, a place with no visible boundary line.[153] Boku's first escape attempt was around age 10; the last attempt was almost two years ago. Musing on how his attempting to escape, he lost three girlfriends in the process, Boku's train of thought shifts from failure to mortality and, finally, to death. He finally concludes that he cannot set the crows free, as it would be pointless. He thinks back to his more impulsive youthful self, who lashed out and failed thrice. Finally, he poses the question at the end, in complement to the structure of Murakami's story: When exactly was the first time?

The second chapter answers the above question. As a fifth-grader, Boku suddenly stopped going to school at the end of the May Golden Week Holidays. At the close of the previous academic year, Boku had an epiphany: "I, too, will die sometime."[154] With this realization his urge to escape took root. He became terrified of sleep because it seemed to be mimicry of death, but he was also fascinated by it—by dreams. Boku concedes that, although it would be "a tremendous mistake to consider death as the polar opposite of life," nevertheless dreams seemed to bridge the two states.[155] He used Sigmund Freud's

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café, *Heitoka*, later in the narrative, Boku names the chocolate dessert ostensibly after and E.A. Poe poem, "The Raven," the connection to *Kafka* is difficult to ignore. Ibid., 114.

[153] Ibid., 8. The boundary is a recurrent motif in Furukawa's fictions and is explored in greater detail in Chapter 3.

[154] Ibid., 16.

[155] This could be called a "sample" of the recognizable phrase from *Norwegian Wood*: "Death exists, not as the opposite but as a part of life." Ibid.; Haruki Murakami, *Norwegian Wood*, trans. Jay Rubin (Vintage, 2000), 25. It should be noted that those who are not familiar with Murakami's novels, may just as likely link this rather clichéd phrase to Shiga Naoya. However, the Murakami connection is more immediate given the current

Interpretation of Dreams as a model for his dream diary, and read *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*. Boku began to record his dreams, wanting to discover the perfect interpretation of dreams, the challenge of getting access to that other world and knowing Death.[156] To do this he needed to continue to sleep, so he stayed in bed and refused to go to school.[157]

At the end of June he was sent off to a boarding school on the suggestion of the school counselor, the kind of school where truants were dispatched. It was located in Suginami Ward, on the western edge of the Tokyo metro area. Boku had forgotten the name of the school, but because it truly appeared to be at the edge of the world (*sekai no hate* 世界の果て), he refers to it as "End of the World" (*sekai no owari* 世界の終).[158] The head of the boarding house was a 30-something female clinical psychologist, whose expertise had intimidated the Freud right out of Boku. Soon he abandoned his sleeping spells, and began attending the "End of the World" school with everyone else. His housemates were a motley of truants and delinquents, and the house appeared to Boku to be a veritable zoo, a "human zoo" with "one person per cage."[159]

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context. Furthermore, the link between dreams and the "other side" is quite prominent in Murakami's *Kafka*.

[156] Furukawa, *RMX*, 18.

[157] Attentive readers of Murakami will note that this is an inversion of the narrator from his short story "Sleep" (1989).

[158] Furukawa, *RMX*, 21. This is another pair of "samples." The "edge of the world" mirrors the Chinese school from the short story. The "end of the world" comes from the eponymous Town from Murakami's *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* (*Sekai no owari to hādo-boirudo wandārando* 世界の終りとハードボイルド・ワンダーランド).

[159] Ibid., 23. Zoos also feature prominently in Murakami's short stories. "A Perfect Day for Kangaroos" (*Kangarū biyori* カンガルー日和), "The Kangaroo Communiqué"

At the "End of the World" school, Boku made his first girlfriend. She was a good-looking

girl, a year older than him, and with a chest that caught Boku's attention. Other students

kept her at arm's length, but Boku was strangely drawn to her. In this way she can be said

to resemble the "second Chinese" from Murakami's story. However, in contrast to the

reticent girl from Murakami's world, this one was afflicted with irreparable, and often

incomprehensible, logorrhea. Her speech was often nonsensical, but Boku imagined that

what lay behind her non sequiturs was the ability to smoothly transition between a

multitude of worlds.[160] He supposed that what she was talking about were dreams, and

this was something he could well comprehend. So the girl became his "new dream

diary"—he would interpret *her*.[161]

He soon came to the conclusion that movies, rather than dreams proper, were at

the bottom of her condition; she was reproducing scenes without retelling the story. Her

knowledge of 1984 popular cinema proved to be vast, and she naturally alluded to

Ghostbusters, *The NeverEnding Story*, *Splash*, *Footloose*, *Dune*, *Once Upon a Time in

America, Gremlins,* and *The Terminator*. The reason she knew so many movies was

because her mother would send her to the theater on free shareholder tickets to get the

daughter out of the house, so the girl watched movies over and over.[162] Boku experienced

his first kiss that summer, but shortly thereafter her mother took the girl home. He ran

(*Kangarū tsūshin* カンガルー通信), "The Elephant Vanishes" (*Zō no shōmetsu* 象の消
滅), as well as in a particularly gruesome scene from *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*
(*Nejimaki-dori kuronikuru* ねじまき鳥クロニクル).
[160] Ibid., 33.
[161] Ibid.
[162] For the prominent place of movies in Furukawa's childhood, see Chapter 1.

after her, stopped a station wagon and told the couple in it that his sister had been kidnapped. They followed in pursuit down the highway, but a bus from the school caught up with them and got in the way. By this point they were out of the Tokyo metro limits. Boku tried to jump out of the car, but was held back, and so his first escape attempt had been thwarted, and he lost his first girlfriend.[163]

"Pebbles drop into the well of consciousness (意識の井戸に小石は投げこまれる),"[164] so opens the third chapter, referencing Murakami's notable well motif.[165] We return to Christmas Eve, 2002, with Boku riding the New Transit Yurikamome to Odaiba.[166] On the way he contemplates the bend of the bay, or "curve" (カーブ) as he calls it,[167] which resonates with the "ominous curve" (fukitsu na kābu 不吉なカーブ)[168] characters in Murakami's *A Wild Sheep Chase* must cross to get to the pivotal point of the plot.[169] He wanders through Symbol Promenade Park,[170] and sitting on a cold stone

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[163] Furukawa, *RMX*, 43.

[164] Ibid., 44.

[165] The most well-known instances of the well motif in Murakami's work appear in *Norwegian Wood* and *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*. In the latter instance, the well becomes the symbolic gateway between the real and the dream/psychological world.

[166] Odaiba (お台場) literally means, "the fort" or "the battery," was originally constructed at the end of the Edo period as a defense against the intrusion of Western maritime forces. It has since evolved into an offshore leisure spot famous as the headquarters of Fuji TV. Fodor's: Tokyo's "offshore" leisure and commercial-development complex rises on more than 1000 acres of landfill, connected to the city by the Yurikamome monorail [.]" Alexis C. Kelly and Deborah Kaufman, eds., *Fodor's Tokyo* (Random House, 2007), 82.

[167] Furukawa, *RMX*, 47.

[168] Alfred Birnbaum translates this as "unlucky bend." Haruki Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, trans. Alfred Birnbaum (New York N.Y. U.S.A.: Penguin Books, 1990), 227.

[169] Located in Hokkaidō, this curve is found on the road to the Rat's ranch. Critics have seen this curve as the boundary between this world and the "other world," so common in Murakami's fiction. Norihiro Katō, ed., *Murakami Haruki: Ierōpēji sakuhinbetsu (1979-*

pillar, falls asleep. What follows is a dream sequence. Boku finds himself in a small hotel

room[171] with a dusty writing desk, and wipes off the inch-thick pile of dust (*hokori*

埃).[172] Under the dust, lies a Sonny Rollins CD, with 13 tracks, including "On a Slow

Boat to China."[173] Seeing this track title Boku wakes up, the sense of swaying he felt in

the hotel room merges into his shivering in the cold, on the stone pillar in Symbol

Promenade Park he used for a seat.

Chapter four is designed to look like a magazine excerpt from a fictional "Tokyo

Chronicle" Series. The editors asked writers to share short stories on Tokyo in 1985, on

the theme of "My Tokyo." Following a brief list of newsworthy events from 1985 (AIDS

epidemic, Gorbachev coming into office, Hanshin Tigers winning the championship, etc.),

is a short story by Nohara Kaku 野原核, titled "Pepsi Cola Wars." It is a story of a

commando-like raid by 10-year olds on an underground Pepsi factory.

1996) [Murakami Haruki: Yellow Pages Selections (1979-1996)], Shohan. (Tōkyō: Arechi Shuppansha, 1996).

[170] This is the name of an actual park in Odaiba (シンボルプロムナード公園).

[171] Boku dreaming himself into a hotel room famously occurs in *Wind-Up*. At a climax of Murakami's novel Boku arrives for the last time at this room by passing through a well. This is particularly relevant given the beginning of Furukawa's chapter.

[172] Furukawa, *RMX*, 49. This recalls the childhood words of Murakami's Boku: "brush off the dirt (*hokori* 埃) and you can still eat it," as he regains consciousness. Birnbaum's rendering of *hokori* as "dirt" indicates that in his mind he had a different sense of the word than Furukawa. In the sense that Birnbaum uses it, *hokori* refers to the kind of metaphoric "dirt" one would uncover when digging into the past. For the purposes of *RMX,* Furukawa takes *hokori* to mean "dust" prosaically, and employs this commonplace meaning in the construction of Boku's dream. However, in both cases—and this is where a translation's inherent weakness is on full display—*hokori* is a homonym for "pride" (*hokori* 誇り), which plays a central role in *RMX* and well as in Murakami's short story.

[173] This probably refers to Sonny Rollins's *Sonny Rollins with the Modern Jazz Quartet*, released in 1953. It sports the yellow cover described in the text. Rovi Data Solutions, "Sonny Rollins with the Modern Jazz Quartet - Sonny Rollins," *allmusic*, n.d., http://www.allmusic.com/album/r146594.

The fifth chapter continues where the second left off at Boku's adolescence. His last year at the boarding school Boku got into fistfights with everyone; classmates, staff, men and women, young and old.[174] He attended an all-boys high school, where a spate of deaths shaped his jaded worldview. There were five incidents total; three boys from his school committed suicide, one perpetrated a family murder-suicide, and another killed his parents by setting fire to the house. The mass media ran with the story, singling out the school as the cause. The students loved this and decided to feed the rumor mill. The headlines were sensational: "Wild kids […] Does Japan have a future?" and others in that vein.[175]

The students never told the interviewers anything but utter nonsense. They got their stories straight, manufactured a menacing image for their high-school, and everyone from other schools left them alone. They were the "the genuine turn-of-the century 17-year-olds" (ほんものの世紀末の１７歳).[176] The students formed a tight bond and even came up with a common language, but that all fell apart once they graduated. Boku matriculated at a private university's literature program and forged a new circle of friends. In college Boku met his second girlfriend, who lived in an apartment in Komagome, near the station.[177] The girl was from Hokkaido, and her left areola was shaped like her home island.[178] They thought that if the left one indicated whence she came, the right one

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[174] Furukawa, *RMX*, 54.
[175] Ibid., 56.
[176] Ibid.
[177] Same area that the "second Chinese" from Murakami's story lived.
[178] Furukawa, *RMX*, 61. As noted above, Hokkaidō was where the ranch from *Sheep Chase* was located, beyond the "ominous bend."

showed where she was going, and the girl firmly believed that she had to reach this place, otherwise there would be no escape for her—there would be no such things as exits after all.[179] In July they realized that the mystery shape resembled Miyako-jima in Okinawa, so they began saving up for a long trip there.

One day Boku gets a call from his girlfriend. She is at the airport, with two tickets to Okinawa on hand. She informs him that she will give the second ticket to whomever drops everything and comes to the airport first, either to him or the man with whom she was cheating on Boku. Boku runs to the train, the same Yamanote Loop Line that features in Murakami's story. Unfortunately, the track is disabled in one direction and Boku is forced to ride around the other way. To add to his misfortune, the train experiences a power failure and breaks down, with the air conditioning following it.[180] Boku's violent streak flares up and he tries to force his way to the doors to pry them open, but is held back. He begins throwing punches and starts a brawl, and is knocked unconscious. As his wits begin to slip away he can only observe that there are no exits after all.[181]

In chapter six, Boku is again riding the Yurikamome when he falls asleep. He finds himself back in the hotel room, the CD still remains, but now there is a round table by the chair. He pulls on a door that does not open, in reference to *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*'s (hereafter *Wind-Up*) Boku's trip in the mysterious hotel. While sleeping,

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[179] Ibid., 63. Recall the Boku's final musings in Murakami's story.
[180] This dual layering of misfortune follows the pattern of Murakami's story. Boku first mistakenly sends his date the wrong way on the Yamanote Line, then throws away her number.
[181] Furukawa, *RMX*, 78.

Boku wants to pass though the thick wall separating reality from dreams,[182] explicitly referencing the memorable scene from *Wind-Up*. He lays down on the bed, feeling it sway as if in perpetual motion,[183] at which point he awakes.

The chronicle of 1994 comprises chapter seven. Following a list of memorable events (Nelson Mandela elected as South Africa's president, Loch Ness monster photo proved to be a hoax, the Aum Shinrikyō Matsumoto incident, etc.), Nohara Kaku contributes a story titled "Tropic of Capricorn: The Eve of the Loop's Demise " (*Minami kaiki sen rūpu shōmetsu zenya* 南回帰線　ループ消滅・前夜). This story is about five friends who commute to work, and meet everyday on the Marunouchi Line to have breakfast. They throw their garbage into the garbage bins at the station. In the future the garbage bins would be sealed, but he had no way of knowing that, since this was 1994.[184]

Chapter eight continues Boku's story from 1994. He awoke in the hospital, severely beaten, and six ribs broken. He had a brief moment of infamy, racked up an immense debt for damages from the transit authority and from the 'victims' on the train whom he punched. His mother disowned him, kicked him out of the house, and had him work to pay off the debt. From this time Boku worked non-stop, living in a squalid apartment with no bath and communal toilets, and barely catching about four hours worth of sleep per night. He spent his early twenties in this manner. At the eve of the

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[182] "While sleeping, I want to try to pass through the wall. That thick wall dividing 'dreams' from reality." 眠ったまま壁を通りぬけてみたいだ。現実と＜夢＞とを隔てて区分しているぶ厚い壁を。 Ibid., 83.

[183] Here Furukawa "samples" Murakami's short story directly, in other words, borrowing a phrase verbatim. Ibid., 86; Murakami, *Surou Bōto*, 15.

[184] I imagine the wastebaskets were "sealed" in response to the 1995 Aum Shinrikyō sarin gas attacks, as one of the fatalities occurred on this line.

millennium, with the ensuing Y2K panic Boku went to withdraw his money from the

ATM just in case of a bank collapse. To his surprise, he discovered all his debts were

paid, in fact had been paid for a while now, and he had accrued almost ￥8,000,000 in

savings.

Having abandoned his attempts at a physical escape from Tokyo, Boku decided to

establish an "Anti-Tokyo" inside the city. He felt that all five senses needed to be

employed to create an Anti-Tokyo atmosphere: he needed a music of opposition, a smell

to expel Tokyo, words of resistance, and finally a taste. With this in mind he opened a

café in Asagaya (in Suginami Ward), and called it *Heitoka* (ヘイトカ).[185] Boku's third

girlfriend was the chef's younger sister. The virtuoso chef he had hired for the café got a

hernia and sent his sister as a replacement. Luckily, she was an amazing cook.[186] *Heitoka*

grew relatively popular as people misunderstood his concept for a trendy eatery. Boku

did not mind; he had finished constructing his 'Trojan horse.' "Crumble, you filthy

Tokyo," he thought while laughing at his customers.[187] One day, an old classmate from

his high school days, one Nohara Kaku, visited *Heitoka*. Nohara was a writer and was

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[185] Furukawa, *RMX*, 102. *Heitoka* was supposed to be *Heitoryoku* ヘイト力 ("power of hate"), referring to his hate of the world, but the clerk misread the *kanji* for *ryoku* 力 for the phonetic sign for *ka* カ at the time of registration.

[186] Amazing chefs occur with some frequency in Furukawa's fiction. The second chapter/story of *LOVE*, "Blue/Blues" (*blrū/brūzu*) features a chef, Tange Kenjirō 丹下健次朗. The novel *Bokutachi wa arukanai* focuses on a group of chefs.

[187] This sentiment is redolent of the thoughts of Murakami's Boku at the end of the short story: "In a flash the buildings will crumble." Furukawa, *RMX*, 107; Murakami, "Slow Boat," 239.

putting together an article on the café.[188] Everything seemed to be going fine, but then

disaster struck; a gargantuan block of ice destroyed *Heitoka*. An investigation concluded

that the ice probably fell off a wing of USAF plane and made a direct hit on the café.[189]

"The universe is brimming with random malice," Boku observes as his fortress is taken

and his Trojan horse destroyed.[190]

The ninth chapter opens with Boku's recollection of seeing off his chef girlfriend

at the airport. Her cooking skills were appreciated by an American ambassador who

offered her a job as his chef. Boku though it best for her to go, and sent her off. So he lost

his third girlfriend a year and a half ago in April 2001. The scene shifts to the present,

Christmas Eve, with a confused Boku riding the Yurikamome. "Where am I?" he

wonders,[191] channeling similar scenes from Murakami's *Norwegian Wood* and *Sputnik*

Sweetheart. Boku eventually arrives at *Yume no Shima* 夢の島 ("Dream Island"),[192] an

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[188] Furukawa, *RMX*, 123. Nohara's visit recalls not only the "third Chinese" from the short story, but also the visit of a high-school friend to Hajime's bar in Murakami's *South of the Border, West of the Sun.*

[189] Ibid., 129.

[190] Ibid., 127-8. The theme of random violence pervades Murakami's post-1995 works, and is especially pronounced in *Wind-Up* (scenes in wartime Nomonhan; killing of people and animals, in the zoo scene mentioned earlier, in Manchuria; the gruesome murder of a fashion designer; Boku's sudden beating of two characters with a baseball bat) and *Kafka* (murder of Kafka Tamura's father, the killing of cats by Johnnie Walker, the showdown with the amorphous blob that represents precisely such malice (*akui* 悪意) that Furukawa's Boku mentions.

[191] Ibid., 131.

[192] Whoever was supervising the naming committee must have possessed a keen sense of irony. Equating dreams with garbage would appear to be incongruous to the optimistic 1960s, when the area was being repurposed for park grounds. Furukawa's choice of this setting is obvious, as it highlights the dream thematic. But this certainly gives a new meaning to "the stuff that dreams are made of." Interestingly enough, in 1985 Hino Keizō

artificial island that was originally used as an off-shore waste disposal area. He takes a

seat and wills himself to delve into the unconscious, passing through the "wall separating

'dreams' from reality."[193]

Finding himself back in the "hotel room," Boku discovers the truth behind the

"perpetual motion" he felt earlier: he is not in a hotel room, but in a cabin of a boat.

Frantically, he runs over to the desk and begins wiping away the pile of dust.[194] He is

unsure about where the boat is taking him. Eventually, however, Boku comes to the

conclusion that he is sailing of his "own free will" (*jibun no ishiki de* 自分の意識で),

sailing towards the "edge of the world."[195] He stares at the clouded bathroom mirror and

begins wiping it with his palm, recalling the mysterious mirror at the Rat's ranch in *Sheep

Chase*. He stares at his reflection, confronting himself on the psychological level, and

makes a resolution not to run anymore. And at that point he passes through that "wall,"

and through the mirror, into the "'dream' of reality" (*shinjitsu no yume* 真実の＜夢＞),

and he does not wake up.[196] This is a fascinating scene because it successfully blends two

of Murakami's images (the mirror from *Sheep Chase* and the wall from *Wind-Up*)

symbolic of the boundary between the real and psychological realms, into a single entity.

The chronicle of the year 2000 follows (Milošević's reelection defeat, the sinking

of a Russian nuclear submarine, the turn of the new millennium, etc.), with a short story

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(日野啓三) published a novel of the same name (translated into English as *Isle of
Dreams*, by Charles De Wolf). I thank Dr. Gabriel for bringing this to my attention.
[193] Furukawa, *RMX*, 134.
[194] See Note 156, above, for the significance of "dust."
[195] Furukawa, *RMX*, 136.
[196] Ibid., 137.

by Nohara, titled "Starbucks Overkill" (スターバックス・オーバーキル).[197] In it two friends are discussing recent homicide cases. They have noticed what the media and the police have missed—a Starbucks cup at the scene of every crime. They meet the New Year's, sipping sparkling wine out of two Starbucks cups.

The eleventh chapter takes the epistolary form.[198] It is addressed to Boku, from the younger sister of his first girlfriend, who had recently passed away from a terminal illness. The younger sister ran across Boku's name in a magazine (Nohara's restaurant feature), and decided to write to him to express her gratitude for changing her sister's life for the better. Boku is said to have pulled her into the real world from her world of dreams (movies).[199] Also, she wanted to convey her sister's last words to him: "Stick out your chest—and be proud" (*mune o hatte—hokori o mochinasai* 胸をはって一誇りを持ちなさい).[200] Finally, she sent her sister's favorite CD, with the "A Slow Boat to China" track. It turns out that Boku's first girlfriend ended up marrying a Chinese man, who ran an import business in Yokohama,[201] so she saw this song as a kind of symbol for her life.[202]

The final chapter finds Boku in a slightly surreal environment west of the Amami Islands. After days on wandering he spots a China-bound cargo ship, and is asked if he

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[197] Ibid., 138.
[198] Murakami has been known to use letters throughout his novels. They can be found in, but are not limited to, *Sheep Chase, Norwegian Wood, Wind-up, Sputnik Sweetheart.* Some short stories, such as "The Window," are entirely in letter form.
[199] Furukawa, *RMX,* 147.
[200] As noted above (see Note #156), this phrase is "sampled" directly from Murakami.
[201] Redolent of the "second Chinese" girl's father in Murakami's story.
[202] Furukawa, *RMX,* 149.

wanted to board. Boku decides to board of "his own free will."[203] This conclusion, I think,

provides a glimpse into Furukawa's reading of Murakami's fiction. If Murakami

lamented a lack of "exits" (understood to be a feeling of aimlessness and loss) in "Slow

Boat," then Furukawa sees a confrontation with one's own psyche (as presented in *Wind-*

Up, Sputnik, and *Kafka*) as the resolution. Confronting oneself is the only way to forge

that exit.[204] This discovery of Furukawa's personal interpretation of Murakami's oeuvre

illustrates the results of the first approach (outlined above in the "Cognitive Approach"

section), which analyses Furukawa's *RMX* as the resultant creation of various Murakami

"inputs."

<div align="center">Structural Relationship</div>

Perhaps the most apt analysis of the structural relationship between Furukawa's

novel and Murakami's short story comes from Furukawa himself. In a brief essay at the

end of *RMX* Furukawa explains this connection in musical terms. Some phrases, he states,

are "sampled from a certain work."[205] He reveals later that this work is indeed

Murakami's "Slow Boat", a connection that needs little explanation given the original

title of the novel, which designates is as a "remix," another musical term. "Remix" is a

significant label because it sets the novel's method apart from other types of tribute

works, like cover versions. To be sure, Furukawa's novel is hardly a cover version of

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[203] Ibid., 152.

[204] This is exactly what Kafka Tamura accomplishes in *Kafka*.

[205] Furukawa, "Kaidai," 153.

Murakami's work—cover versions do not stray far from the original, like jazz standards they offer only slight variations. However, one is struck by the suitability of the term "remix" to describe Furukawa's homage to Murakami. A remix goes a step beyond the cover version, often incorporating only a few recognizable, musical or lyrical, phrases, in other words, samples. A cover version is an interpretive rendition of the original; a remix is a wholesale re-construction. Furthermore, a cover version's source is necessarily limited to a single composition, whereas *RMX* pulls its sources from a variety of Murakami's fiction, as I have argued in the previous section. Luckily for us, Furukawa's novel falls into the latter category, providing a richer tapestry of meaningful linkage, because a remix is, at the core, precisely the kind of "blended" system discussed earlier. Phrases are appropriated and re-contextualized within a new structure, and the act of interpretive reading necessitates the selective projection of related elements from one work onto the other.[206]

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[206] This intertextual dynamic has been observed in Japanese literature before, most notably by Haruo Shirane in his essay on the poet Shunzei. Of course, there is no orthodox interpretation of "poetic essence" (*hon'i* 本意) for elements of Murakami's work, so this comparison does not quite work. We may then note the similarity to the practice of *honkadori* 本歌取り (allusive variation) in classical Japanese poetry. However, in *honkadori* the poet also borrows the tone, diction, and subject matter from an earlier poem. Furukawa's reinterpretation departs more radically from the source matter. Perhaps the Edo-period practice of *mitate* 見立て (seeing by comparison), characterized by "startling, dramatic, and often witty changes that it made in the target text," is more apt. Although, *mitate* partakes too much of parody to accurately describe Furukawa's reorganization of elements from Murakami's fiction and mixing it with his own material. Haruo Shirane, "Lyricism and Intertextuality: An Approach to Shunzei's Poetics," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 50, no. 1 (June 1, 1990): 71-85; Haruo Shirane, *Early Modern Japanese Literature: An Anthology, 1600-1900* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 180.

What Furukawa refers to primarily as being "sampled" in his essay are the chapter titles (labeled "vessels"[207]), which are lifted directly from "Slow Boat." Chapter one, "Starting from archeological inquiries" (考古学的疑問から出発する), can be found in the second sentence of Murakami's original.[208] Chapter two, "Place both hands firmly on your knees" (両手はきちんと膝の上に置いておきなさい), is originally uttered by the Chinese proctor in Murakami's story.[209] Chapter three, "Some characters I could read and some I couldn't" (僕に読める字もあり、読めぬ字もあった), refers to the inability of Murakami's narrator to make out some of the tree names at the Chinese school.[210] The title of chapter four, "There's no way out" (どこにも出口などないのだ), appears in the final monologue in the short story, as Boku waits for his "slow boat."[211] Chapter five, "Like some kind of indeterminate perpetual motion" (何かしら不均一な永久運動のような), refers to the impression the hundreds of orderly Chinese students make on the narrator.[212] Chapter six, "You, a businessman?" (君が商売をやってるなんてね), is first uttered by the "third Chinese" encyclopedia salesman.[213] Chapter seven, "This isn't the first time, and it won't be the last" (こんなのこれが最初じゃないし、きっと最後でもない), is uttered by the "second Chinese" girl at Komagome Station

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[207] "Vessels" (*sō* 艘) is a counter for (small) boats.
[208] Murakami, *Surou Bōto*, 9.
[209] Ibid., 18.
[210] Ibid., 16.
[211] Ibid., 51.
[212] Ibid., 15.
[213] Ibid., 44.

after Boku put her on the wrong train home.[214] Chapter eight, "And be proud" (そして誇りを持ちなさい), is the final part of the Chinese proctor's instructions.[215]

Furukawa's ordering of these chapters demonstrates that he is not concerned with simply updating Murakami's story. The titles are out of order when compared with the plot of Murakami's original. The first two bear superficial similarities: the title of Furukawa's first chapter likewise originates in the nameless Boku's self-searching (and eventual self-confrontation), and a female head of the boarding school utters the title of the second. However, the third chapter is a dream sequence, and the characters that Boku cannot read are English rather than Chinese. These characters are on a yellow-jacketed cover of a Sonny Rollins CD containing "On a Slow Boat to China".[216] The title of the fourth, or its permutation, comes from Boku's second girlfriend,[217] in contrast to Murakami's original. The fifth refers to a dream sequence, but in a brief harmonization with Murakami's plot, the sixth title is uttered by Boku's high-school classmate. The seventh is again found in a dream sequence, while the eighth is found in a letter from the sister of Boku's first girlfriend. It is apparent that structurally, Furukawa's "remix" is not fashioned as a slavish update.

Despite the transparent use of material from Murakami's short story, the structure of *RMX* also indicates that material is drawn from a broader Murakami oeuvre. The presence of three "Chronicles" situated between chapters three and four, five and six, and

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[214] Ibid., 34. This phrase is not found in Alfred Birnbaum's rendition.
[215] Ibid., 22.
[216] Furukawa, *RMX*, 50.
[217] Ibid., 63.

seven and eight, respectively, indicates a direct link to *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*.

These sections are ostensibly magazine excerpts from the fictional "Tokyo Chronicle"

series, and are visually set apart from the other sections by design and type, reminiscent

of the magazine exposé on the "Hanging House" from the third book of *Wind-Up*. These

chronicles consist of a brief listing of events for the years 1985, 1994, and 2000, and the

choice of these years is not arbitrary, as they mirror the dates of the even-numbered

chapters that precede them. They relate to the rest of the narrative only tangentially,

without much significant overlap between the two. However, the importance of time and

history is another crucial element shared by Furukawa and Murakami.

Murakami Domain: Time and History

Murakami's earliest major work, *A Wild Sheep Chase* (1982) (hereafter *Sheep

Chase*) deals with time, specifically, the past, as its central concern. Many of the other

constituents of the thematic web of this novel are either subsumed in, or directly related

to, the problem of the past. The past is understood as a place where time stands still - a

frozen moment of time that can be accessed through the cottage in Hokkaido's frozen

landscape. Here time grinds to a halt, here Boku learns the dangers of letting himself be

consumed by the past—by living in the past one fails to live presently.[218]

Murakami takes up this idea again in his blockbuster *Norwegian Wood*. Faced

with the reality of life after his best friend's suicide, the young Toru observes: "Only the

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[218] Murakami, *Sheep Chase*, 238-9.

dead stay seventeen forever."[219] Five years later in *South of the Border, West of the Sun*

(hereafter *South of the Border*), readers are shown, rather than told, the dangers of

backward-looking inertia. The women from the narrator Hajime's past—Izumi and

Shimamoto—both represent death.[220] Hajime understands his sexual encounter with

Shimamoto to have brought him "face-to-face with death" in a literal sense.[221] On a

grander scale, Murakami continues to explore history in *Wind-Up*. This vast novel is

riddled with intersecting histories: the history of the protagonist Toru and his wife

Kumiko's relationship, the history of the Wataya family extending to the villainous

brother-in-law Noboru's technocrat uncle, the history of the alley near Toru's home, the

history of the "Hanging House" and its well, the history of Nomonhan and the

Manchurian front, the history of the mystery sisters Nutmeg and Cinnamon, the history of

20th century Japan, and above all the history of violence. Japan, her core "fatally smeared

with violence and blood, and […] directly connected to the darkest depths of history," is

the mystery at the heart of the novel.[222]

     I believe the axis of time in Murakami's fiction is best plotted vertically, so that

the past is that which exists below the x-axis, underground.[223] There, below the x-axis of

the present, we may find Kizuki, Shimamoto, and the history of violence in Japan. These

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[219] Murakami, *Norwegian Wood*, 37.

[220] Chiaki Ishihara, "Chizu no ue no jiga [Self on the Map]," *Kokubungaku: kaishaku to kyōzai no kenkyū*, 1998, 162.

[221] Haruki Murakami, *South of the Border, West of the Sun*, trans. Philip Gabriel (Vintage, 2000), 183.

[222] Haruki Murakami, *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, trans. Jay Rubin, 1st ed. (Vintage, 1998), 579.

[223] The notion of the time-space matrix in literary studies is well known by Bakhtin's term "chronotope." I have often thought that we must also be mindful of the theme-space matrix as well, and I expand this idea in Chapter 4.

elements are suppressed, kept below ground, and forgotten, but they do not cease to exist—they merely lie dormant. The notion of "deceptive repose" appears as early as *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* (hereafter *End of the World*) in the appropriate image of the pool, which the librarian describes, as if offering a word of caution to the reader, thus: "The surface may seem calm, but below is a whirlpool."[224] Therefore, the logical reader will stipulate that such darkness ought to be confronted.

<center>Murakami Domain: After 1995</center>

Though violence, evil, and their latent forms have occupied Murakami's thoughts from the early days of his writing career, common scholarly consensus considers the Kobe Earthquake and the Aum Shinrikyō bio-terrorism of 1995 to signal Murakami's new determined effort to explore "the potential for violence that is hidden below the surface of everyday life in Japan".[225] Murakami himself argues, in an essay on the effect of the Aum attacks, that the main constituents of personal identity are "memories of experiences […] rendered into something like a narrative form."[226] Asahara's doctrine and its aftermath represent precisely the danger Murakami sees in surrendering one's personal narrative and taking on another's. Consequently, as a writer, this powerful

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[224] Haruki Murakami, *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*, trans. Alfred Birnbaum, 1st ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 122-3. Moreover, the subterranean INKlings embody this image of danger lurking beneath the surface.

[225] Philip Gabriel, *Spirit Matters: The Transcendent in Modern Japanese Literature* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), 125. See also Marc Yamada's article.

[226] Haruki Murakami, "Blind Nightmare," in *Underground: The Tokyo Gas Attack and the Japanese Psyche*, trans. Alfred Birnbaum (London: Harvill, 2000), 234.

notion of narrative is something Murakami vows to take "much more seriously from here on."[227] As an architect of narrative, he senses the danger inherent in his own work.

What are the practical implications of this pledge on his post-Aum fiction? *Kafka on the Shore* (hereafter *Kafka*) has been read as offering a view onto the opportunities for emotional healing found on the "other side" and a way back.[228] I contend that the way back entails a necessary personal transformation that results in a metaphorical rebirth into a "brand-new world."[229] In other words, the opening of the passage to the other side, the traveling there and coming back results in a new synthesis between the two worlds. I believe these two worlds represent the physical, external reality and one's psychological, internal space. If so, the synthesis of the two worlds entails a self-discovery, and a confrontation with the darkness dwelling in one's psyche.[230] Not accidentally, this is the same kind of synthesis that Furukawa's protagonist attempts to achieve.

Nakamata Akio has written that Murakami's literature features not so much narrators (*katarite* 語り手) as listeners (*kikite* 聞き手), meaning that readers are often left with a vague sense of the narrator, but a relatively clear picture of the characters in contact with him.[231] Although Nakamata treats Murakami's fiction broadly, without specifying if he is referring to the early or the later work, Marc Yamada suggests that

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[227] Ibid., 233.

[228] Gabriel, *Spirit Matters*, 130.

[229] Haruki Murakami, *Kafka on the Shore*, trans. Philip Gabriel, 1st ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 467.

[230] Murakami has called this darkness a "toxin," which also serves as the source of "creative activity" in an author. Haruki Murakami, *What I Talk About When I Talk About Running*, trans. Philip Gabriel (New York: Vintage, 2009), 96.

[231] Nakamata, *Bungaku*, 31.

Murakami's post-Aum awareness is expressed in the "story-teller" characters like K from

Sputnik Sweetheart (hereafter *Sputnik*) and Kafka. He reads Kafka as a unification of

character and narrator in such meta-narratives.[232] Kafka at once makes characters of

other people (Sakura and Ms. Saeki, for example) by manipulating them in his narrative

(dream sequences), and a character himself in the narrative established by his father's

curse (as well as a character in Murakami's book on the meta level).[233] Where does this

leave Murakami, the 'master storyteller' himself? Yamada contends that by making room

for others' narratives and by listening to people's stories, Murakami functions as a

"moderator of narrative expression."[234] The plurality of viewpoints, then, ameliorates the

danger of a single narrative, and is consistent with Nakamata's observation. Of course,

this is nothing new; minor meta-fictions have been a part of Murakami's work long

before the events of 1995. The history of Junitaki Township and the Sheep Professor in

Sheep Chase, the historical origins of the unicorn skull in *End of the World*, the letters

from Naoko in *Norwegian Wood*, and the multitude of stories in *Wind-Up* spring to mind.

If pushed, we must admit that having a multiplicity of voices in a novel need not be a

purposeful act of Murakami as moderator, but is rather a typological characteristic of the

genre, as theorized by Bakhtin.[235]

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[232] Marc Yamada, "Exposing the Private Origins of Public Stories: Narrative Perspective and the Appropriation of Selfhood in Murakami Haruki's Post-AUM Metafiction," *Japanese Language and Literature.* 43, no. 1 (2009): 130.

[233] It is worth noting that in *Kafka*, Kafka Tamura is the only first-person narrator. The sections featuring Nakata as the protagonist are told in third-person. In other words, Nakata—his other half gone to the other side—is unable to construct a narrative himself.

[234] Yamada, "Exposing the Private Origins of Public Stories," 22.

[235] Mikhail Bakhtin, "From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse," in *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader*, ed. David Lodge, 2nd ed. (New York: Longman, 2000), 105-136.

Murakami admits that the creation of "multiple viewpoints" is a conscious goal in his literary endeavor,[236] yet we must also admit that this multiplicity of viewpoints does not come about innocently on its own. Viewpoints are chosen, constructed, and shaped by the author. So how have the tragic events of 1995 affected Murakami's selection or construction of viewpoints? The telltale words may be found in Murakami's preface to "A Place that was Promised" in *Underground*, in which he expresses his concern that two years after Aum's terrorism, Japan has failed to deal meaningfully with "the fundamental issues arising from the gas attack. Specifically, for people who are outside the main system of Japanese society (the young in particular), there remains no effective alternative or safety net."[237] Murakami suggests that people on the margins will now play a main role in his fiction. We can, therefore, understand the figures of the college dropout (Sumire from *Sputnik*), the Korean-Japanese (Miu from *Sputnik*), the teenage runaway (Kafka), and female wrestlers, Chinese mobsters, and fugitives in *After Dark*,[238] as fulfilling that expectation.

Murakami Domain: The Seeds

We would be mistaken to believe that Murakami had never dealt with the periphery of Japanese society prior to 1995. Yamane Yumie reads Murakami's "Slow

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[236] Haruki Murakami, *Underground: The Tokyo Gas Attack and the Japanese Psyche*, trans. Alfred Birnbaum and Philip Gabriel (London: Harvill, 2000), 248.
[237] Ibid.
[238] Yamada, "Exposing the Private Origins of Public Stories," 18.

Boat" as the "germination of Murakami's counter-social consciousness."[239] Dissatisfied

with the interpretative relegation of the three Chinese characters to the conceptual realm,

in which they are seen as reflective only of Boku's consciousness, she posits "Slow Boat"

as essentially a "narrativization of trauma […] a tale of internalized prejudice."[240] The

crippled Chinese proctor, the Chinese girl on the wrong train, and the forgettable

encyclopedia salesman all point to the unfavorable treatment of Chinese within the story

and out. In other words, Yamane reads this early story as pointing to political realities

outside the narrative. Abe Koichi's structural analysis points to the three Chinese

characters as symbols of the human experience in the transition of images from warped,

to collapsing, to fallen: the confident proctor, the co-ed conscious of the gap in reality

and resigned to it, and the salesman who slipped away from reality entirely and leads a

shadow of a life.[241] Visions of the crumbling Tokyo at the end may likewise be

interpreted as indicative of life generally.

However useful this analysis may be, as Yamane points out, it inevitably falls

short in its disregard of the larger context of the work. The labors of historian Ishida

Takeshi help to frame Murakami's production within the social context of the late 1970s

and 1980s. He tells us that this period was characterized by concern, especially in

academic writing, with the war and Japan's wartime responsibility. Two imperial visits

abroad in the 1970s, along with the attempts at official denial of Japanese aggression

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[239] Yumie Yamane, "Murakami Haruki 'Chugoku Yuki no surou bōto' ron: tai shakai ishiki no mezame," in *Murakami Haruki sutadīzu 2000-2004 [Murakami Haruki Studies 2000-2004]*, ed. Kiyoto Imai (Tōkyō: Wakakusa Shobō, 2005), 10.
[240] Ibid., 24.
[241] Ibid., 10.

during the early 1980s, sparked a renewed interest in the subject of war responsibility.[242]

To Yamane it is inconceivable that Murakami would be unaffected by the winds of

history, so to speak, and she interprets Murakami's short story as addressing the problems

of minorities in Japan and the Japanese contempt for other Asians. To be precise, she sees

the story as the germination of this concern, and groups it with later novels, like *Sheep*

Chase and *Wind-Up*, that are said to inherit this early "counter-social consciousness".[243]

Yamane's contentions are well-taken. The three Chinese characters in "Slow Boat"

do, indeed, refer to something more than Boku lets on. If "death, for some reason,

reminds [Boku] of the Chinese," what would that reason be if not the grim historical

realities?[244] The horrors of war and of peacetime discrimination rarely become just

"water under the bridge," as Boku's high-school English textbook would have it.[245] The

three Chinese characters must first be read as Chinese. The symbolism they carry is

primarily that of the Chinese experience in Japan not, *pace* Abe, symbols of us. For this

purpose it is useful to consider the entire school rather than only the proctor as the "first

Chinese" in Boku's life. Doing so brings the minority experience in Japan into sharper

temporal focus. They start life as kids with clean desks, grow into jaded but hopeful

youths (represented by the "second Chinese" girl for whom cruelty from Japanese boys

was nothing new), and proceed into middle age drained and limited by their Chinese

registration. The proctor teaches at a Chinese school, the Chinese girl's father runs a

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[242] Ibid., 9.
[243] Ibid., 25.
[244] Murakami, "Slow Boat," 220; Murakami, *Surou Bōto*, 13.
[245] Murakami, *Surou Bōto*, 43.

small import business,[246] and the encyclopedia salesman's potential is limited not by his

product but by his clientele: "Next time I'll be selling life insurance. As long as it's for

Chinese."[247]

The character of J, the Chinese bartender, from the "Rat Trilogy"[248] lends further

evidence to Yamane's theory. He is a rather minor character until the final portion of

Sheep Chase (written two years after "Slow Boat"), in which Boku gives him the check

he received as payment for tracking down the mysterious sheep. Jay Rubin reads the

event of Boku's handing the check from Boss's secretary to J in terms of "paying war

reparations."[249] Two years earlier, in "Slow Boat," Boku asks the encyclopedia salesman

for a pamphlet almost as an afterthought, providing his address.[250] This attempt at

opening lines of communication (a persistent theme in Murakami's work) is all Boku can

do at this point. Two years later "reparations" may be attempted, and over a decade later

a catalogue of Japanese cruelty during WWII emerges in *Wind-Up*, but at that point, in

1980, only that simple act seems possible.

The above discussion shows a discrete extra-textual referential nature of the

Chinese characters in "Slow Boat." However, the terminology Yamane chooses carries a

rather strong impression. "Counter-social consciousness" evokes a highly politicized

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[246] Ibid., 28.
[247] Ibid., 48. Birnbaum's translation, based on the later, reworked *zenshū* edition, provides a wealth of further support in his translation, "I mean there's only so many Chinese families to visit. Maybe I'll have moved on to insurance for Chinese. Or funeral plots. What's it really matter?" Murakami, "Slow Boat," 237.
[248] The "Rat Trilogy" (*boku no nezumi mono* 僕と鼠もの) consists of Murakami's first three novels: *Hear the Wind Sing; Pinball, 1973;* and *Sheep Chase*.
[249] Rubin, *Music of Words*, 94.
[250] Murakami, *Surou Bōto*, 47-8.

language à la Paulo Freire,[251] that would have readily rolled off the lips of the more revolutionarily-inclined members of Murakami's generation. Yet given Murakami's opinion of the 1960s student movement that defined his generation, which may be gleaned from its scornful treatment in *Norwegian Wood*, the criticism of the violence it begot in *Kafka*, and the soulless products of this generation who, as Hajime observes in *South of the Border*, readily traded the tirades against late-stage capitalism for its opulent embrace,[252] we must conclude that any kind of consciousness-raising is not on Murakami's radar. If any notions of social responsibility are to be found, they are not readily visible prior to *Wind-Up*. Yamane's reading is, at heart, a retroactive one.

Though I will not deny Murakami's occasional role as a social critic, I am likewise skeptical of Whiggish interpretations; social criticism was never Murakami's main purpose, nor did he propose any 'theory of action.' He wrote about things he saw and things he knew. My impression is that Boku's connection to the Chinese and to China is explained by his feeling of situational kinship. This interpretation is based on the reading of "Slow Boat" as essentially a story of a boy from Kobe who goes to Tokyo for college and settles down in the vast metropolis. Over the years the urban sprawl continues outward and upward, and Boku is never capable of developing a sense of belonging. Murakami describes not so much social injustice as urban despair:

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[251] I am referring to "conscientization," *conscientização*, or critical consciousness, which must be acted upon. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum, 1993), 17.
[252] Murakami, *South of the Border*, 72.

> The dirty facades, the nameless crowds, the unremitting noise, the packed rush-hour trains, the gray skies, the billboards on every square centimeter of available space, the hopes and resignation, irritation and excitement…That's the city.[253]

That may be the city, and this city is not a place for him, just like it was never a place the Chinese girl was meant to be, by her own estimation. The situational kinship mentioned above is born of the feeling of being an outsider, just the kind of feeling a young man coming from Kobe to Tokyo might have. Moreover, it is the feeling of being an outsider in one's own country, a perpetual sense of alienation. Feeling like a foreigner in a strange land he calls home, Boku is naturally drawn to the Chinese as they share this similar experience. It would be too much to say with Tamotsu Aoki that this story "has nothing to do with Chinese people per se,"[254] Yamane shows that cannot be the case, but it would likewise be too much to say that is has *everything* to do with Chinese people. The Chinese were probably chosen due to Murakami's personal background. His father served in China during WWII, and Murakami reveals that as a young boy he sensed "the shadow of death hovering around" his father.[255] Otherwise, Murakami may have just as well used the Korean minority as he does in *Sputnik*.

We have seen then an interest, however subtle, in the periphery of Japanese society in Murakami's early work. We must, however, concede that it does not develop substantially until *Wind-Up*, at the earliest, and the earliest evidence that indicates Murakami's conscious efforts to speak to the fringes is found in "The Place that was

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[253] Murakami, "Slow Boat," 238.
[254] Rubin, *Music of Words*, 66.
[255] Haruki Murakami, "Boku wa naze erusaremu ni itta no ka [Why I Went to Jerusalem]," *Bungei Shunjū* April 2009, no. 4 (March 10, 2009): 169.

Promised" section of *Underground* quoted earlier. I have attempted to establish the thematic Murakami "domain," the core necessary for comparison to Furukawa's novel. Although concern with the periphery, and the importance of history do not constitute an exhaustive list, it serves as a springboard for the forthcoming discussion of Furukawa's re-interpretation.

Furukawa Domain: Chronicler of the Misfit Generation

Furukawa dedicates *RMX* "to the Tokyo of 2002 and the preceding decade," according to his essay, appropriately titled "Explaining My Writing, Explaining Our Times," thereby setting himself up as a writer of a specific time and place.[256] Murakami has also been read as a writer of a specific generation, a baby-boomer generation that came of age during the student uprisings of the late 1960s, and then helped to build 1980s Japan's bubble economy. Significantly, Murakami's was also the first generation to be raised under the overwhelming influence of American literature.[257] As I write in the previous chapter, Furukawa was born in 1966, was in junior high school when "Slow Boat" was published, and in Waseda—Murakami's alma mater—

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[256] Furukawa, "Kaidai," 155.
[257] Nakamata, *Bungaku*, 22.

when *Norwegian Wood* hit the shelves. Not surprisingly the scope of Furukawa's "remix" covers 1985 - 2002. If Murakami was the writer of the tumultuous 1960s generation, Furukawa can be seen as the writer of the Lost Decade.[258]

The difficulty in analyzing Furukawa's *RMX* in relationship to Murakami's original can be largely blamed on the generational difference. As shown in the preceding discussion, and as can be expected, Murakami's writing has changed since the publication of "Slow Boat," with the major shift occurring in 1995. Furukawa's version, however, is composed almost a decade later, and it incorporates the post-1995 influences, particularly apparent in the importance of crossing into the other world and in the focus on the fringe elements of Japanese society.

Furukawa's narrator presents an obvious example. In childhood he is sent to a reform school, pursues his first girlfriend in a wild car chase, lashes out violently at those around him, gets into fist fights with just about anyone, is surrounded by death in high school, mobbed and beaten on a crowded train, and disowned by his mother. This picture of Boku is much closer to Toru from *Wind-Up,* or to Kafka, for that matter, than to Boku from "Slow Boat." Furukawa's Boku, like Kafka, does not shy away from violence,

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[258] The Lost Decade, often synonymous with the general malaise of the Heisei era (1989-) Japan, refers to the decade (and counting) following the bursting of Japan's "bubble" economy. I follow Jeff Kingston in his characterization of the Lost Decade as the loss of faith in post-war political, bureaucratic, and business institutions (collectively known as Japan, Inc.), as well as in the prevalent perceptions of social solidarity, which had the majority of the Japanese populace self-categorize as middle class, evinced by the growing public awareness of the "society of disparities" (*kakusa shakai*). Jeff Kingston, *Contemporary Japan: History, Politics, and Social Change since the 1980s* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 37. I place Furukawa's writing squarely in this environment, characterized by a deep mistrust of social norms and institutions, and colored by an apprehensiveness about an uncertain future.

unlike early Murakami characters that may be slashed across the belly with a knife without putting up much of a fight.[259] Yet even in Murakami's later works much of the violence related to the protagonists is otherworldly and metaphorical. Furukawa's violence is blunt and obvious, pulled from the headlines.[260]

Furukawa's focus on the societal fringe also motivates the concern with borders, walls, and lines of demarcation.[261] Broadly put, *RMX* is a novel about escape, about three attempts, three failures, and a qualified success. The very notion of escape necessarily requires boundaries; one must escape *from* or *out of* somewhere. In Boku's case it is Tokyo, but turns out also to include a psychological dimension. Much of the dramatic tension lies in Boku's position at the edges of society, and the inability to escape entirely; the lines are toed but not crossed. As detailed above, in the first escape attempt the boundary is geographical, in the second the boundary is physical (he is unable to leave the crowded subway car), in the third escape attempt rather than crossing boundaries Boku focuses on creating borders to keep Tokyo out. This space is represented by the café *Heitoka*, his "Anti-Tokyo Fortress." If any escape is accomplished at the end, it involves a journey into a dream world, and a confrontation with oneself.

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[259] Murakami, *End of the World*, 156-7.
[260] See the Chapter 4 on *LOVE* for characters who kill people professionally, and regular guys who crack skulls with their beloved guitars. Characters like this are rarely found in Murakami's pre-1995 work.
[261] For a deeper exploration of the borderline thematic, please consult Chapter 4.

Furukawa Domain: The Dreamer

Dream sequences are the driving thematic force of Furukawa's narrative. If the book were a song, the dream sequences would fulfill the chorus function. Boku's preoccupation with dreams begins at the tender age of ten, and he slips not only into the dream world but also into truancy, which precipitates his relegation to the boarding school, where he meets his first girlfriend. The forceful separation from her precipitates his first turn to violence, and the string of events that follow. Almost twenty years later, this girl's younger sister sends Boku a letter after her sister's death, thanking him for waking her from the dream world.[262] Significantly, this awakening carries a positive connotation, suggesting the "real world" is preferable to a sustained existence in the "dream world," which thematically echoes *Kafka* more readily than *End of the World.* This letter also contained a CD with "On A Slow Boat to China" that appears repeatedly in Boku's 'present day' dream sequences, which are set in what a hotel room (ship cabin) harkening back to the mysterious Room 208 of *Wind-Up*.

Furukawa weaves these recurring dreams into the narrative of Boku exploring the area around Tokyo Bay from the Hamarikyu Gardens, through Shiodome, to Odaiba, terminating at Dream Island. The majority of the "present day" narrative, then, is set in an entirely artificial space, traversed on an automated train Yurikamome, in a city bisected by train and subway lines, highways, and bridges with no human element in sight. Ironically, with all the mass transit available to the Tokyo dweller, Boku cannot find a

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[262] Furukawa, *RMX*, 147.

way out. This is because the boundaries he cannot cross are not physical, but

psychological; he cannot run away from himself. And this limitation is precisely why he

must confront himself in the mirror of the dream world:

> A mirror. I look in. It's clouded. And dirty. I wipe it with my palm and see my reflection. Is that really me? *Yes*, I answer, as if at the Last Judgment.
> *Yes*, this is how I've lived my life.
> I won't run away.
> I won't run away from my failed chronicle.
> At that moment, I pass through the wall—through the mirror.
> Into the "dream" of reality.
> And I don't wake up.[263]

Falling into the "dream of reality" is contrasted with passing through the "wall separating

dream from reality."[264] The dichotomous worlds of dream and reality thus resolve into a

synergistic relationship through the cathartic confrontation of the self. The joining of

these two realms opens the door for the final dream-like scene in which Boku is able to

board a freighter to China. In other words, within this new symbiotic world, Boku is able

to realize his dream (in which he is on a "slow boat"[265]) by 'actually' purchasing a ticket

for the China-bound freighter.

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[263] Ibid., 136-7.
[264] Ibid., 134.
[265] Ibid., 135.

The Blended Story

Even casual readers of Murakami may find themselves involuntarily projecting

his trademark two-world thematic onto Furukawa's "remix." As I highlight in the

summary section above, the dirty mirror that reflects another reality is originally found in

Sheep Chase, while passing through a wall into another world is recognizably *Wind-Up*.

Experienced readers of Murakami may in fact —and in the case of this reader do so

reflexly—begin to compose the blend of Murakami's and Furukawa's dream worlds. The

mirror scene is a particularly good example because it borrows elements from at least two

of Murakami's novels. But before readers' minds begin constructing the blend, the

appropriate elements must be selected for projection. They are more likely to project

dreams found in *Wind-Up*, *Sputnik*, and *Kafka* on Furukawa's work, than dreams from

Sheep Chase, which, while symbolic, are not interactively immersive. This is due, in part,

to more "identity connectors" between the former novels that facilitate projection.[266] In

other words, the dream worlds of *RMX* and Murakami's post-1995 fiction share more

vital relations. For example, in Furukawa's novel, Boku believes he is in a hotel room in

his dream. In *Wind-Up*, the pivotal part of the narrative is set in a dream hotel room, in

which Toru confronts his nemesis, and 'rescues' his wife. Thus the reader's mind is more

likely to link Room 208 with Furukawa's dream space. We are pleasantly surprised to

later discover that this space is actually a boat cabin. Furukawa, fully aware of this

expectation, exploits it for maximum effect. Of course, those unfamiliar with *Wind-Up*

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[266] Mark Turner, *The Literary Mind* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 133.

will miss the full impact of this legerdemain. In fact, it may seem perfectly natural for Boku to literally find himself on a (slow) boat, given the novel's title. Furukawa plays a game specifically with readers of Murakami, inviting them to project analogs from Murakami's universe onto his work.

However, according to the theory of double-scope stories that introduced the present chapter, we should be able to elaborate the blended stories to create meaning in the blend. The new blended structure is completed when readers fill in the patterns created by earlier projections. The dream world in *Wind-Up* is a subconscious place in which one can confront problems that manifest themselves in the real world. This is possible because dreams hold a form of psychosomatic power, in other words they exercise a potent effect on real-world phenomena. Thus, readers can likewise project the understanding of dreams, per *Kafka*, as gateways to a world of "reconciliation and restoration."[267] Such projections, of course, are necessarily selective. One can theoretically project the dream world from *Sheep Chase*, for example, but due to the lack of vital relations correspondence,[268] this would make for an inefficient blend. Selective projection enables the composition and completion of this blend, which is why the mirror from *Sheep Chase* is more easily projected than the dreams found in that novel. The semiotic significance of the mirror from *Sheep Chase*, in other words, is more closely related to the dream world of Murakami's later fiction than the dreams in *Sheep Chase*. At least this appears to be the operation of Furukawa's own blend.

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[267] Gabriel, *Spirit Matters*, 130.
[268] See the section "A Cognitive Approach" above for a description of "vital relations."

The final step in the conceptual blending process is the elaboration of the blended story, that is, the development of meaning accessible only through the blending process. I have thus far framed Boku's (from *RMX*) entrance into the "dream of reality" as a synthesis of the external and internal worlds. But this interpretation is unmistakably shaped by my reading of *Kafka*, *Sputnik*, *Wind-Up*, and even contrasted with the reading of *End of the World*, in which the 'real' world is not especially privileged over the mental one. Therefore, although there are plenty of references to "end of the world," the school and so forth, as "samples," the semiotics of the real/other world dynamic of *End of the World* lack the strength of vital relations to facilitate an efficient blend. On the contrary, the triad of *Kafka*, *Sputnik*, *Wind-Up* exhibit the dream world/real world interaction that is closest to the one in *RMX*. *Kafka* features the intrusions of the 'other world' into the 'real world' with particular force.

There is nothing that says the final scene of *RMX* is a positive ending; he may board the ship bound for China, but what about the part where Boku says "I don't wake up,"[269] does this not seem like he remains in the dream world? It is exactly the blending of the domains consisting of *Kafka*, *Sputnik*, and *Wind-Up* in one mental space and *RMX* in another, that results in the synergetic-world interpretation.[270] When added to the clues in the text—privileging of reality, the phrasing of "dream *of* reality" rather than "reality *of* a dream"—this blend becomes invested with meaning. In light of this meaningful blend, we say that "I don't wake up" underscores the unification of dreams with reality,

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[269] Furukawa, *RMX*, 137.
[270] This reading recognizes the necessary interaction between "this world" and "other world."

rendering 'waking up' moot, since both waking and dreaming for Boku now take place in the same 'real' world. Elaboration allows us to interpret the final dream sequences in Furukawa and its relationship to "reality" in a manner similar to the way Kafka's entering into a "brand-new world" has been interpreted earlier. This kind of interpretation is not readily accessible for readers who engage Furukawa's work independently of Murakami, and is at once impossible to escape for readers familiar with Murakami's work.

Conclusion

Furukawa is never bashful about admitting his artistic influences. However, as much as he mentions Murakami's role in his own artistic development,[271] Furukawa has thus far only provided a handful of concrete examples. Furukawa has said repeatedly that he learned to alternate the length of his books as Murakami is known to do,[272] to devote his entire body to his writing,[273] and to value extra-literary media as valid sources of influence.[274] We also know that he understands Toru's passing through a wall in *Wind-Up* to be a metaphor for writing.[275] However, it is clear that Murakami's influence on Furukawa surpasses those details. Cognitive blending theory provides a useful tool of analysis for the kind of remix literature at the heart of the present discussion. It is also impressive for its breadth of possible application, and the new semantic domains born of

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[271] Furukawa, "Q & A," 74.
[272] Furukawa, "Monkey Business," 53.
[273] Ibid., 5.
[274] Uchida, "Katarikata," 162.
[275] Shibata, *Daihyō shitsumon*, 220.

creative blending outlined above, may be discussed in the appropriate sophisticated vocabulary. I have attempted to apply it here on both the macro and micro levels.

On the micro level, I explored the "sampling" of Murakami as applied to literary inspiration, which is the product of the same kind of creative blend, but one which considers the second work to be the emergent blended story. Thus, the dozens of connections between Murakami's work and Furukawa's that weave a complex semantic web shed light on Furukawa's own reading of Murakami's work, and reveal the creative blending that occurred in his mind. The macro-level analysis reveals a meaningful blend that emerges from the conceptual integration of *RMX* and Murakami's oeuvre. In applying elements of Murakami's fiction (the themes of time, the "other world," and dreams) to Furukawa's *RMX*, this approach illuminates Furukawa's suggestion that the cure to psychological damage can be found in the harmonizing of the real world and the world on the periphery of physical experience.

Although in this chapter I have examined the many sources of Murakami's oeuvre that inform a novel of Furukawa's that lends itself with special eagerness to such analysis, considering Furukawa to be a Murakami clone would be to misrepresent Furukawa's diverse output. Furukawa once stated: "if I hadn't said anything [about being influenced by Murakami] you wouldn't even think that we were similar. I think that's probably the proper relationship of influence."[276] Although a tribute work like *RMX* makes the relationship apparent, I do think had it not been for this book, Murakami's impact on Furukawa would more difficult to discern. In the previous chapter I have provided a

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[276] Uchida, "Katarikata," 163.

broad overview of Furukawa's fiction, which I trust has displayed the breadth of his

repertoire. In the following chapters, I examine two works that exhibit unique aspects of

Furukawa's personal style.

CHAPTER FOUR: *LOVE*, NARRATIVE CARTOGRAPHY,

AND THE THEME-SPACE MATRIX

Q: Mr. Furukawa, where would I walk in Tokyo if I wanted to meet you?
A: On the borderline. The boundaries between wards, for example.[277]

Introduction

LOVE (2005) may well have been Furukawa's most fortunate accident. Occupied

by his dual projects of *Belka* and *Rock 'n' Roll*, Furukawa had initially declined a request

for a novel from the Shōdensha publishing company. He changed his mind on a whim,

however, suddenly wanting to write another book in the vein of his first short-story

collection, *gift*.[278] This book would become *LOVE*, though the finished product was not

quite a short-story collection, nor was it, strictly speaking, a novel. Furukawa has called

LOVE an "enormous short story" (*kyodai na tanpen* 巨大な短編).[279]

LOVE is divided into four parts, with four interludes that take cats as their

protagonists interspersed between these major sections. The four major sections stand

independently, but are linked by time, setting, and theme. They are linked through time

because they follow each other chronologically, from autumn to summer. They are linked

by setting, because they take place in the same general area of Tokyo, near the bay and

around the Meguro River. Finally, the sections are linked by theme in sharing the feline

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[277] A: ボーダーライン。たとえば区境ですね。 Ibid., 76.
[278] Ibid., 166.
[279] Furukawa, *LOVE*, 329.

theme and curious encounters.[280] The four sections feel like they belong together, and are

taking place in the same world, but do stand alone. Perhaps its place on the border

between long- and short-form fiction contributed to its honoring by committee of the

Mishima Yukio Prize, which tends to seek out works that are off the beaten track.[281]

The recipient of the 19th Mishima Yukio Prize in 2006, *LOVE* stands as

Furukawa's most critically-esteemed work.[282] As such, no discussion of Furukawa's

work can neglect to examine it, nor should it, because *LOVE* reveals much about his

narrative craft. In this chapter, I shall discuss those particular features that come to the

surface during the examination of *LOVE*. I shall keep the scope narrowed to the first story

(or chapter) of *LOVE*, titled "Heart/Hearts" ハート／ハーツ, for two reasons: First,

because this will enable a more nuanced discussion. Second, because this chapter

provides the tightest weaving together of the theme-space matrix I believe to be at the

core of the novel's narrative function. My aim, then, is to secure this story firmly beneath

the stage clips, squint through the ocular, and fiddle with the knobs until the narrative

mechanism comes into sharp focus, all the while hoping that I picked the right objectives.

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[280] Some reviewers have characterized *LOVE* as Furukawa's answer to *Belka*, which is understandable given the natural antagonism between cats and dogs. Ishii, Sugie, and Furuyama, "Zenchosaku," 240. I would, however, caution against this reading, because as far as "answers" go, a far more credible one is found in *Rock 'n' Roll*, as discussed in the overview in Chapter 1, rather than in *LOVE*.
[281] The first prize, for example, was awarded in 1988 to Takahashi Gen'ichirō 高橋源一郎 for his *Yūga de kanshōtekina nippon yakyū* 優雅で感傷的な日本野球 [*Elegant, Sentimental Japanese Baseball*].
[282] Although *The Arabian Nightbreeds* won two literary prizes, the Mishima prize is considered to be a more significant laurel.

Characters

The events of the "Heart/Hearts" section transpire over the course of an October

day, beginning at noon and concluding in the early morning hours of the following day.

Furukawa introduces six characters, episodically interweaving their lives within a Tokyo

cityscape.[283] It might be tempting to suggest that the city becomes a character in itself,

but we shall avoid the blunder of clichéd pronouncement. Tokyo does, undoubtedly,

feature as a formative element in the novel, on the concrete and symbolic levels.

Concretely, it provides a setting for the action; symbolically, Furukawa maneuvers the

elements of its municipal divisions to resonate with thematic and narrative elements,

most notably the coincidence of boundary zones and critical plot points. My present aim

is to describe what makes this story work, to trace the resonances that characterize

Furukawa's approach in its composition. To accomplish this, I will mount an attack from

two sides. I will apply the above idea of narrative cartography to *LOVE,* as the final

analytical tool, to highlight the significance of place in this story. But the first advance

will be launched at thematic considerations, those heart and hearts, after which the story

takes its name. Furukawa employs a semi-omniscient first-person narrator (using the

pronoun *ore*), who is revealed to be one of the six characters introduced in this section,

addressing another character by the second-person (*kimi*). The first character is

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[283] The astute reader will instantly be reminded of James Joyce's *Ulysses*, the action of which transpires over the course of a June day (June 16, 1904 to be exact), with the lives (and paths) of various characters intersecting. The concepts of maps and the city are discussed below.

introduced with the lines: "I know you" おれはきみのことを知っている,[284] and this

sets the precedent for revealing the narrator's relationship to the characters by the degrees

to which he knows them.

The first character thus introduced is Kanashī カナシー, 27 years old, an

accountant at a foreign-owned software development firm. Although her full name is

Shīna Kana 椎名可奈, she began being called Kanashī after moving to Tokyo. Since that

time, she had only returned to her hometown on two occasions (visiting a friend at a

hospital and attending a classmate's funeral), over five years ago. The narrative finds

Kanashī two days after her boyfriend of two years moved out of their apartment, a

development that further underscores the homophonic meaning of "sad" that her

nickname carries. She is the *kimi* that is addressed by the first-person narrator.

The next section introduces Yoshimura Kishi 吉村キシ, a 27-year-old freelance

fitness instructor. As befitting his profession, Kishi has a particular passion for sports,

which borders on obsession.

The following section introduces Dona-dona, a character the narrator claims not

to know おれはドナドナのことを知らない.[285] There are only two such major

characters found in this chapter. She is 29 years old, works as a hotel cleaning lady, and

carries the peculiar name of Tatsumi Yō 巽葉. Dona-dona is her "codename," which

bears little semantic relationship to the namesake Yiddish song popularized by Joan Baez.

The codename does, however, signify her connection to the criminal underworld in the

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[284] Furukawa, *LOVE*, 6.
[285] Ibid., 26.

capacity of a freelance operator, or—as Furukawa amusingly couples her two professions—a "cleaner."

The 24-year-old Ehara Yuka 江原由佳 is the other character unknown to the narrator. She is married, with an 11-month-old baby. Unbeknownst to her husband, he is not the child's biological father. The real father is privy to this information, and Ehara sends him the baby's photo by email every night. On the day of the narrative, she takes her baby in a stroller to a park near her house and runs away, abandoning it.[286]

The 10-year-old Tabuchi Yūta 田渕佑多 is introduced in the next section. Referred to as Yūta ユウタ for the majority of the novel, this elementary-school boy is a regular participant, and a seeded record-holder, in a Tokyo-wide cat-counting contest. The city is divided into zones, with participants responsible for a given zone, and cats are counted and their distinguishing features recorded to ensure reliability of the data, so that no specimen is counted twice. The result is a cat census of the various areas of Tokyo. Yūta's area of responsibility resembles an inverted triangle, and is bounded by Meguro River in the west, Route 2 (Meguro Route) of the Metropolitan Expressway on the east, and Meguro Dōri to the north. This boundary also happens to delimit the setting of this story.

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[286] It is interesting to note, that, perhaps coincidentally, her character may be inspired by the mother in the 2004 movie *Dare mo shiranai* (*Nobody Knows*), about abandoned children in Tokyo. The mother's character was played by the famous singer/actress, You, whose real name is Ehara Yukiko 江原由希子.

The final character introduced is Akiyama Norihito 秋山徳人. He is 26 years old, a "freeter,"[287] a singer/songwriter, and in the final lines of the chapter he is revealed to be the first-person narrator.

Furukawa structures this story using short sections with alternating protagonists. The first six sections introduce the characters, as outlined above, and the following sections create an intersecting map of character interactions, which grow in intensity as the narrative progresses. The chapter begins with a section devoted to Kanashī and ends with a similar section (and at the same place), endowing the narrative structure with discernible arc. However, bookended by the Kanashī sections, is a gradual drafting of a network of character and thematic interactions.

Sujet

The discussion that follows approaches *LOVE* from two angles, the thematic and the spatial. In other words, I examine the eponymous motif of the heart and the space in which the story presents this motif. When taken together, these analytical points of departure combine to reveal a ricochet-like narrative effect that Furukawa's style engenders, a repeated intersection of the plot, theme, and location, and which I take to be the main narrative characteristic of this story. However, first a comprehensive introduction to the plot of this chapter is in order.

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[287] A "freeter" refers to type of worker who bounces from one part-time job to another without securing stable emplyment.

Section 1.[288] Time: 12:00. Kanashī takes a stroll on her lunch break along the banks of Meguro River (southeast), which flows behind her workplace near Gyōninzaka 行人坂. She spots something in the river, and upon closer inspection, notices it is a cormorant. She is approached by a boy in a heart-print shirt (Yūta), and they have a brief conversation in which he praises Kanashī's powers of perception. He addresses her as *anēgo*, which he seemed to pick up from a yakuza movie.[289] Before disappearing, the boy also mentions that the previous day he witnessed a murder on that very spot. What's more, the victim's physical appearance resembled Kanashī's. After the boy evanesces, Kanashī continues her stroll along the riverbank. She spots a woman (who we later realize is Ehara) taking photos of her baby in the stroller. As she crosses over into a new municipal area, Kanashī also spots window cleaners on a platform working on the windows of a high-rise (one of the men is Akiyama, as we discover later on).[290] Kanashī continues her trek until she reaches the intersection of Meguro River and the Tōkyū Meguro Line, at which point she circles back to her workplace.

Section 2. Time: 13:00. Yoshimura Kishi is at the gym, where he works as a personal trainer, and which is located in the same plaza as Kanashī's workplace. He has a discussion about a TV report about a recent spate of convenience store robberies with a female client, and heads out. His itinerary is described in detail; Kishi heads past a temple (Daien-ji 大円寺), stopping for a moment to gaze at the monument of 500 stone Buddhas,

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[288] Although the various sections of this story are not numbered in the text, I have taken the liberty of doing so for ease of reference.
[289] This is a corruption of *anego* 姉御, which can mean "older sister," but is also a slang term used for a female boss, or, in the parlance of Japanese gangsters, a boss' wife.
[290] Furukawa, *LOVE*, 20.

walks by Meguro Station, and through the JR Mini-park. In the park, he notices a bulletin board that lists prohibited behaviors: loitering, bicycles, making fires, and so forth. But the final prohibition in particular sends Kishi into momentary bewilderment—the prohibition against sports. He calls a client on his mobile phone and informs him that he will be available for a training session, after all.

Section 3. Time: 14:07. Dona-dona is cleaning a hotel room, on the same plaza near Gyōninzaka, when she discovers an empty bullet casing on the floor by the bed. She guesses it came from a Soviet-made Makarov.[291] Disdainfully, she mumbles, "Amateurs."[292]

Section 4. Time: 15:00. Ehara Yuka is at a small park near her apartment complex, just west of the Metropolitan Expressway No. 2. Earlier that day (a little after noon) she took a stroll with her baby along the Meguro River, similarly to Kanashī only in the opposite direction (northwest). Around 13:00, she heads to the park, stopping at a convenience store near her apartment on the way. At little after 15:00, she is at the park, with the baby asleep in its stroller. Ehara snaps a few photos of the toddler, planning to send them to the biological father, fixes her make-up, and runs off, abandoning the child. She scales a steep, concrete wall, and lands in a patch of greenery on the other side. The baby wakes up, bawling, 23 minutes later.

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[291] On a related note, according to a Japanese detective quoted by Adelstein, it was the Tokarev, another Soviet gun, that was a hot commodity for the Japanese gangster. Perhaps times have changed. See Jake Adelstein, *Tokyo Vice: An American Reporter on the Police Beat in Japan* (New York: Vintage, 2010), 283.
[292] Furukawa, *LOVE*, 28.

Section 5. Time: 16:13-16:37. This section details Tabuchi Yūta's cat-counting excursion in Nishi Gotanda. He counts 25 cats.

Section 6. Time: 19:00. Akiyama Norihito, a freeter by profession, but a musician at heart, worked as a high-rise window washer that day. After work he headed home (near Gotanda Station), picked up his guitars (acoustic and electric), and at 19:00, walked along the Yamanote Line back in the direction of Meguro Station. He arrives at the intersection of the Yamanote Line, Metropolitan Expressway No. 2, and the 148 (this spot will feature later in the narrative). Here he climbs into a spot between the elevated No. 2, and the ground-level 148, with the intent of playing his music and singing to his heart's content. Due to the noise of the traffic, no one will hear him.

Section 7. Time: 18:00. Kanashī finishes work and heads to the (Meguro) Station building for a spirited round of clothes shopping. She pays with her card and changes into her new outfit, shedding her work clothes with an almost symbolic import. She stuffs the rest of her purchases and her work clothes into (three!) coin lockers at the station and heads south, aimlessly. She finally reaches the same intersection that Akiyama set out for at 19:00. She spots a café and finds a seat on the veranda with a view of the expressway. As she watches the line of cars flow by like a river her mind wanders to the past,[293] to a time when she was not Kanashī. When she was around five or six, she had developed a slight case of kleptomania and habitual lying. This led to rumors being spread about her in school, and had made for a very sad existence, indeed. But she was different now, symbolically arrayed in her new outfit like armor. Her mind snaps back to reality and she

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[293] Ibid., 45.

hears snatches of music through the highway noise. Kanashī leaves the café and goes to the source, where she climbs into the spot between the roadways, and comes face to face with Akiyama. This is the spot that the narrator designates "ground zero" (*zero chiten* ゼロ地点), the "center of the world" (*sekai no chūshin* 世界の中心).[294] Although she catches him in the middle of his song, Akiyama does not stop, but continues for six minutes to the end. He introduces himself as a "rock 'n' roller."[295]

Section 8 is a brief interlude from the first-person narrator, mentioning that Akiyama took some song requests from Kanashī.

Section 9. Time: (Before) 22:00. Kishi is 500 meters away from "ground zero," giving a private martial arts lesson to his client in a parking lot south of the Meguro River. The client has some urgent work-related business to take care of, and they cut their lesson short. Kishi wanders in the direction of "ground zero," while pondering the benefits of sports. Along the way he spots a ski mask near the fence of a construction site, and dons it.

Section 10. Time: (At least) 23 minutes before Kishi arrives at the construction zone. Only 20 meters away from "ground zero," Dona-dona is disposing of the body of the convenience-store serial robber[296] at the construction zone. She decides to leave the mask as is, and makes her escape.

Section 11. Time: After 22:00. Ehara's abandoned baby was discovered six hours earlier in the park, exactly 100 meters from "ground zero." Currently there is only one

[294] Ibid., 48.
[295] Ibid., 52.
[296] Mentioned in Section 2.

delivery scooter parked there, and a man with a helmet and a gun waiting. The narrator does not know this man.

Section 12. Time: As above. Akiyama and Kanashī have been having a long conversation. They have grown very familiar in their speech, and have achieved some level of mutual understanding. The narrator interjects to note that everything started here, at "ground zero," at the "center of the world."[297] They laugh, Akiyama sings, and they talk some more. He reveals that the reason for having two guitars (one electric and one acoustic) is because he can compose songs better on the acoustic, but that it lacks the feeling of struggle that the electric provides.

Section 13. Time: Around 23:00. 70 meters from "ground zero," just west of Highway 418, Kishi smells blood on the mask. Meanwhile, a black Mercedes pull around and three thugs, wearing sunglasses and double-breasted suits step out. They spot him, standing in the dark wearing a ski mask, and looking for all the world like a suspicious individual. He is surrounded, but his sports training takes over, and he puts his kickboxing prowess on display. Realizing that some of them have called their gangster buddies, Kishi runs off, tossing the mask along the way.

Section 14. Time: As above. 100 meters from "ground zero" Dona-dona confronts the gunman, calling him a "professional," but nevertheless disposing of him. Thereafter, she hears a commotion and sees a runner sprint past (Kishi), pursued by the thugs.

Section 15. Time: 23 minutes later. At "ground zero," it is time for Kanashī to head home, and Akiyama offers to walk her to the station. They head in the direction of

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[297] Furukawa, *LOVE*, 60.

Meguro Station, but hear a number of gunshots. Roughly 90 meters from "ground zero," they see the bodies of six or seven gangsters sprawled on the pavement near the park, and a silhouette of a woman. The woman, Dona-dona, assumes that they have seen her and point the gun in their direction. At that moment, Ehara jumps off the wall she had scaled seven hours earlier and knocks down Dona-dona. Akiyama rushed over to her, instinctively, and smashes her head with his electric guitar. Ehara sprints off toward the park. Akiyama embraces Kanashī, kisses her, they separate and flee.

Section 16. Time: Around 00:00. Kanashī hides in the dark, in a thicket about 200 meters from her workplace (she has passed this spot on her lunch break earlier), though she is unaware of this.

Section 17. Time: 04:44. Kanashī is awakened by a cat's meowing, and is greeted by the familiar, "*Anēgo!*" She looks up to see the boy with the heart-print shirt. He apprises her of his recent witnessing of a legendary white, feral cat, Haian,[298] and informs Kanashī that he is compiling a map of cats.[299] Kanashī walks along the Meguro River, and spots something glimmering in the water. Realizing that it is a cell phone (showing 05:00 on its display), she retrieves it and, transferring Akiyama's number from her old phone to the found one, discards her own phone. She heads back to the coin lockers at Meguro Station, and changes into the clothes she had left there the day before. Kanashī receives two phone calls with some cryptic instructions to "move some luggage," which she follows to the letter. The third call has her meet a contact in an area outside the

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[298] This is given as *haian* ハイアン in Japanese. I think this is inspired by the Portuguese pronunciation of the name Ryan, but I cannot be certain.
[299] Furukawa, *LOVE*, 73.

geographical domain of the story thus far. She meets a 50-something woman, as instructed, and is thanked for her efforts. The woman gets suspicious and asks Kanashī if she had changed her face, to which Kanashī answers in the affirmative, realizing that she had put on a new self.[300]

Section 18. Time: Unknown. The first-person narrator reveals himself as Akiyama, and—in a moment of gross banality uncharacteristic for Furukawa—pledges to protect Kanashī (*kimi wo mamoru* きみを守る).

At the end of the novel, Furukawa appends a postscript containing the characters' respective fates. Kanashī became second-in-command of the "organization," and is said to frequent Akiyama's live performances. Kishi was arrested in Fukuoka after a series of masked attacks. Dona-dona, deceased. Ehara, divorced. Yūta, fully prepared for the summer showdown. Akiyama recorded a new album, with release planned for September.

<div align="center">Heart(s)</div>

The title of the story promises that hearts will feature prominently in the narrative, and, indeed, they do. However, leaning a little heavier on the heart motif, I would argue (without much fear of it giving way) that it is an organizing principle of this story. The 18 sections that constitute the plot, and the characters therein, are linked ultimately by two things: the delimited space of the setting (which is discussed in the next section), and the recurrent heart theme. I have previously mentioned Furukawa's semi-omniscient narrator,

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[300] 新しい自分がはじまったと、わかる。 Ibid., 76.

and the simple taxonomy of his relationship to other characters rendered in degrees to which he "knows" them. In total, there are three characters whom the narrator does not know; Ehara, Dona-dona, and the helmeted gunman from section 11. Why should he not "know" these three characters in particular? The most apparent shared characteristic is that they are criminals, Ehara for child abandonment/attempted infanticide; the other two are professional killers. So perhaps criminality is a feature. However, what about the yakuza thugs, who are not singled out for anonymity?

"I do not know that nameless man,"[301] says the narrator about the helmeted gunman, but we know the names of the other two "unknowns." What is interfering with the narrator's knowing, is not the criminality, per se, but the coldness of purpose—their heartlessness.[302] Even the yakuza thugs may be forgiven their, unquestionably, violent acts. They are brutes in a doggish sort of way, the kind of men that you may not wish to run into in a dark alley, but with whom you may want to have a drink. In other words, they do exhibit some humanity that makes them, understandable, "knowable."[303] This knowledge, then, has a moral dimension; here are the three villains of the story, if there be villains at all. But this moral judgment is articulated in terms of the heart motif. This

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[301] Ibid., 59.

[302] Alternatively, this could be read as mild homage to Murakami. In *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*, the characters that come to the mysterious Town are said to give up their minds. These minds are *kokoro* 心 in the original. For a more detailed discussion of Murakami's influence on Furukawa's work, consult Chapter 2.

[303] It bears mentioning that the Japanese verb used here, *shiru* 知る, carries a variety of nuances. One of these is an emotional investment in the object of knowing. I am thinking here particularly of the gruff usage of the negative *shiran(ai)*, to indicate less a lack of knowledge of X, than the complete indifference to such knowledge. Perhaps, the narrator is infusing his lack of "knowledge" with a dose of contempt: "I don't know these people, and I don't care to."

can be seen in the narrator's full phrase "I do not know that nameless man. He has no heart."[304] Thus, the heart motif is implemented even in moral expressions. However, the primary function is as the narrative's gravitational force, which pulls the disparate elements together, towards the center, towards the heart.

The narrative begins with the introduction of Kanashī and a brief outline of her life. The main action finds her on her lunch-break around noon, and traces her stroll along the Meguro River. As she stands gazing at the water, a young boy (who as we later realize is Yūta) engages her in conversation. Yūta compliments Kanashī, telling her that she has a particular gift of sight, and he should know, since the ability to notice things the average person would not, is his major talent as a cat-counter.[305]

This encounter is significant not only because it is the first interaction between two characters, but because it also introduces the titular theme. The original nuances of the various permeations of what in English bears the "heart" designation, get lost in translation. "Heart" in English refers to the organ, the shape of Valentine's Day candy boxes, and, metaphorically, to feeling of compassion in a person, as well as a center, spiritual or material. In Japanese, the metaphoric meanings are associated with the word *kokoro* 心, which refers to something along the heart-mind continuum, encompassing the mental, spiritual, and emotional domains. Lafcadio Hearn once famously rendered it as

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[304] おれはその無名の男を知らない。そいつにはハートがない。Furukawa, *LOVE*, 59.

[305] This is redolent not only of the "cat catcher" from *Kafka*, but also Mr. Nakata's special ability to converse with cats.

"the heart of things."[306] Edwin McClellan seemed fond of this translation, but nevertheless chose to leave the title of Natsume Sōseki's famous novel, *Kokoro,* simply transliterated. The Japanese *shinzō* 心臓 refers exclusively to the organ, with the character bearing the literal meaning of "heart organ." The Japanized, *hāto* ハート, from the English "heart," is generally associated with the iconographic heart and its mildly cute and romantic associations. However, when functioning as an English word in Japanese, it can also encompass all that the English original does. This latter usage is rare, but it is in this deliberately vague sense that Furukawa titles this story, which allows him to create reverberations between the different meanings of the term. To this end he also takes advantage of the diversity of writing systems used in the Japanese language.

Consider the example below. Kanashi has the following dialogue with Yūta, who is introduced earlier as a boy in jeans and a sweatshirt emblazoned with a "heart emblem" (*hāto no zukei* ハートの図形).[307] The variety of expression in Japanese, appears nonsensical when rendered directly into English:

"That's a pretty cute print."
"This is?" Asked the boy, shifting his gaze to his chest.
"Yeah, that."
"You like splatter flicks, huh?"
"Huh?"
"I mean, look, its blood red."
That's because it's a heart (ハート), Kanashī thought to herself. Her inward (*naishin* 内心) rebuttal must have been written all over her face, because the boy quickly added, "This is not a heart (*kokoro* ココロ). Look, the red stuff is blood."

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[306] Natsume Soseki, *Kokoro*, trans. Edwin McClellan (Washington, DC: Regnery, 2000), vi.
[307] Furukawa, *LOVE*, 12.

"Blood?"
"It's a heart (*shinzō* シンゾー)."[308]

Furukawa's use of the variety afforded him by the Japanese writing systems creates an effect of rich layering that is not accessible in English. Particularly noticeable is the use of the term *naishin*, somewhat analogous to the English expression "in his heart (of hearts)," but endowed with less poetic drama. Furukawa deliberately chooses this word, because it resonates with the thematic of "heart," resulting in a kind of conceptual ricochet. None of this is accidental, and Furukawa's use of katakana emphasizes the heart thematic of the conversation by throwing it into higher relief. Katakana is most commonly used for emphasis, or foreign loanwords, akin to italics. A plausible argument can be made, that parts of Yūta's speech set down in katakana enhance the character's youth by suggesting he does not yet know the appropriate kanji. This is unmistakably true in the case of *shinzō*, and in other instances of Yūta's speech found throughout the text, since the character for *zō* 臓 is a sixth-grade kanji, and Yūta is a fifth-grader.[309] However, the kanji for *kokoro* 心 is taught in the second grade, and the boy is surely familiar with it. Why, then, if not to alert the reader to the game of thematic ping-pong would this be written in katakana?

In section 2, the connection to the heart is naturally made during Kishi's conversation with a client, in which he mentions the intricacies of an elevated heart rate

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[308] Ibid., 13-14.
[309] Ibid., 12.

(*shinpakusū* 心拍数).[310] This elevated beating of the heart, appears again in section 13, during Kishi's confrontation with the thugs.[311] In this section, Furukawa displays once more the versatility of "heart." Unable to offer the gangsters a verbal response when pressed, Kishi feels the answer "echo in his heart" (*kokoro ni hibiita* 心に響いた),[312] in the middle of the fight his the beating of his heart (*shinzō no kodō* 心臓の鼓動) increases, leading to his awareness of his exact (200 bpm) heart rate (*shinpakusū* again). When noticing imminent danger, he does not perceive through the commonplace expression, *kizuku* 気づく, but with the more theme-appropriate *kokorozuku* 心づく. In other words, he perceives with his "heart."

Reference to "beating of the heart" can be found again is section 4, when Ehara inclines her ear to her baby's chest shortly before abandoning him. There is nothing about her own heart, which is appropriate, since she is one of the heartless "unknowns." We do, however, find in section 15 a quiet accusation in her description as, "Ehara Yuka, who tried to erase the beating of her baby's heart. Ehara Yuka, who tried to kill her baby."[313] If my reasoning about the moral implications of "heart" is solid, then Dona-dona must also be a heartless individual, since she is not known by the narrator. This supposition is confirmed in section three, where we learn her motto: "To shoot the heart, to kill emotion"

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[310] Ibid., 22.
[311] Ibid., 65.
[312] Ibid., 64.
[313] 乳児（ベビー）の心臓の鼓動を消えそうとしていた江原由佳。あるいは乳児（ベビー）を殺そうとしていた江原由佳。Ibid., 69.

(*shinzō o utsu koto, kanjō o korosu koto* 心臓を撃つこと、感情を殺すこと).[314] Her

use of the organ-specific "heart," acquires a particularly morbid flavor—especially

coupled with the kanji for "to shoot" which is associated with firing projectile weapons—

once we realize that she is a "cleaner" in more sense than one.

Akiyama's participation in the heart motif is central to the core story, which, at its

heart, is a love story, after all. His comprising one half of the boy-meets-girl narrative, to

which the metaphoric meeting of the hearts is key, goes without saying, especially taken

with his second role as the narrator. In section 6, Akiyama the natural musician arrives at

"ground zero" to sing his songs on the "heart theme" (*shinzō no tēma* 心臓のテーマ).[315]

Songs that he sings, by the way, with "his whole heart" (*kokoro o komete* 心をこめ

て).[316] Furukawa elaborates:

> Akiyama Norihito is thinking about hearts (*hāto*). Of his own/of other people's, of
> ours/of theirs. I want to sing of hearts (*hāto*) in plural.[317]

This serves as the description of Akiyama's aim, *qua* musician, as well as of his labors

qua narrator, of bringing together disparate hearts in his narrative. Indeed, we would not

be amiss if we considered the two roles conflated, the narrative as a form of song, with its

own melody and (heart) beat.

Kanashī's own connection to hearts, is only made in relation to other characters,

through Yūta (his heart-print shirt)[318] and Akiyama (listening to his heart-themed songs).

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[314] Ibid., 29.
[315] Ibid., 38.
[316] Ibid., 60.
[317] Ibid., 38.

Although, it would be safe to read her as partaking of Akiyama's "heart" through the communion of love at "ground zero," also called, "the center (heart) of the world" (*sekai no chūshin* 世界の中心).[319] This intersection between the heart thematic and narrative space presents the central device by which Furukawa orders this story. Akiyama narrates:

> This day, this place, is the center (heart) of the world. The distance to all places is measured from this ground zero.[320]
>
> この日、この場所が、世界の中心だ。あらゆる場所の距離が、このゼロの地点から測られる。

"What happens depends on where it happens," to quote Franco Moretti,[321] and it is difficult to disagree. But as tempting as it is to consider the above formulation as representative of the kind of time-space continuum that Mikhail Bakhtin has called "chronotope," in the case of LOVE we need to include another variable into the formulation: the theme. Although there is little need for me to beget another Greek mutant to describe a literary process—thematope? chronothematope? themachronotope?—the need is there to highlight the pivotal role the heart thematic plays in the development of the story under examination. I hope that I have achieved this, so

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[318] In the beginning in section 1, and again at the end, in section 17. Ibid., 13-14, 72.

[319] Perhaps coincidentally, one of Japan's most successful dramas was released in 2004. Titled, *Sekai no chūshin de, ai o sakebu* 世界の中心で、愛をさけぶ (literally *Crying Out Love, in the Center of the World*, though it has been translated into English as *Socrates in Love*). Based on the 2001 novel of the same name by Katayama Kyoichi 片山恭一, it enjoyed enormous success. By the time the movie opened, the original novel had outsold Murakami's *Norwegian Wood*.

[320] It is important to note, that sections subsequent to this pronouncement, begin with their relative distance from this zero point. Furukawa, *LOVE*, 48.

[321] Franco Moretti, *Atlas of the European Novel, 1800-1900* (London: Verso, 1998), 70.

that due attention can be paid to the space in the narrative. The *topos* is as significant as

the *thema*, when this narrative is considered as a whole.

The General Theory of Narrative Cartography

A map-mediated form of orientation is just another way to try and make novels
something more than fiction.

Eric Bulson.[322]

You will probably call this fiction. I guess I'd agree. But let me ask you this, what
do you think is there in the world besides fiction?

Preface to *Belka*[323]

One of the most recognizable storytelling characteristics that mark Furukawa's

work is extensive description of Tokyo locales that serve as the setting for his novels. I

do not think I am overstating this, as Furukawa's participation in a photo-walk through

the locales featured in *LOVE* reveals a real-world inspiration.[324] This focus on specific

locations is not limited to a description of setting as a method of achieving higher

verisimilitude; specificity of place also functions as a crucial element in the topology of

Furukawa's novels. In other words, the emphasis on location is a central component of

the manner in which the various constitutive parts of the novel interrelate. In this sense,

we could describe Furukawa's writing style as narrative cartography, in which characters,

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[322] Eric Bulson, *Novels, Maps, Modernity: The Spatial Imagination, 1850-2000* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 39.

[323] Furukawa, *Belka*.

[324] See: Hideo Furukawa, "Tōkyō, afutā rabu: sono ato no fūkeitachi [Tokyo After Love: the sights]," *Yuriika* Tokushū: Furukawa Hideo, no. 8 (August 2006): 119-126.

action, (I am using the term advisedly, so as not to jump too readily into the *sujet-fabula*

distinction), and themes are plotted on the narrative canvas, as if on a map.[325]

There are, of course, a number of problems with this approach, not least of which

is the question of what is it that I am plotting? These events never *really* happened, and

what did happen, occurred in a mental space that is not necessarily a faithful

representation of the original place in the world. Besides, some of the places have been

bulldozed and are no longer "on the map." The JR company housing in Nishi-gotanda

that features prominently in the story,[326] for example, was demolished in 2006. In

addition, assuming that stories reflect some reality in the world, comparing them to maps,

which also diagram (and therefore necessarily abstract) the real world, is a little like

comparing two carbon copies against each other. These complications notwithstanding,

the topological emphasis in *LOVE* is difficult to ignore, and we do so at a peril greater

than that of failure—of ignoring an aspect of a story that would otherwise increase its

appreciation.

I am far from the first to emphasize the importance of space and literature. One of

the major studies dedicated to this topic is Franco Moretti's *Atlas of the European Novel*

(1998). Studies concerning space and literature fall into two categories, according to

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[325] In my conception of the term, the difference between "narrative cartography" and other motivated uses of space in literature lies in the arbitrary nature of the former. Everyone understands that graveyards and dark alleys is where people get killed, and satin sheets is where people make love, whereas both the action and the thematic motivations of "Heart/Hearts" rest in the arbitrariness of a map—in the intersection of lines on a map, to be precise. Hence, I describe this process as "cartography," in contrast to an understandable association of object/place with meaning.
[326] Furukawa, *LOVE*, 30-1, 63, 69-71.

Moretti: "space in literature," or, "literature in space".[327] It appears that the majority of

previous studies have favored the second category, seeming to fall somewhere along the

Post-colonial/Marxist axis. These studies are generally concerned with "sociological

analysis of space," using maps as tools to "visualize [the novel's] social organization."[328]

One notable example is Pierre Bourdieu's *Rules of Art*, which features a section on

Flaubert's *Sentimental Education* where he redrafted a map of Paris to highlight a

"*structured* […] *hierarchized space*."[329]

Thus, the place of action carries not only a narrative, but also a social import. The

prominent place of the Latin Quarter[330] in the French *bildungsroman* is not an accident or

convenience, but a necessity. It is precisely the Latin Quarter that molds the characters;

without it there is no Rastignac.[331] The argument goes that, as far as Balzac is concerned,

familiarity with the location of Mme. Vauquer's *pension* was accessible only from

particular rungs on the social ladder.[332]

The most recent study I have come across is Eric Bulson's *Novels, Maps,

Modernity* (2007), in which he examines the relationship of maps to literature,

specifically the modernist and realist novels. As with previous analyses, his interest drifts

in the direction of the contextual; *Ulysses* as Joyce's reclaiming of Ireland, via the use of

the map of Dublin, from the homogenizing effect of the British Ordnance Survey, and so

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[327] Moretti, *Atlas of the European Novel, 1800-1900*, 3.
[328] Bulson, *Novels, Maps, Modernity*, 10.
[329] Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 43. Italics in the original.
[330] This was an academic area of Paris. Bourdieu characterizes it as a "site of the *fête galante*, of artists and *grisettes* of the 'bohemian life,'" Ibid., 40-1.
[331] Bulson, *Novels, Maps, Modernity*, 11.
[332] Ibid., 25.

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on. "Ways of representing the city are decisively influenced by material conditions, political, historical, and social contexts, and literary traditions," he writes.[333] Bulson has reason to say so, of course; other theorists have come to similar conclusions about novelistic production of geographic orientation. Fredric Jameson and Edward Said, for example, both have noted what they perceive as an ideological bent in spatial representations.[334]

Bulson's own analysis of the use of maps in drafting Melville's *Moby-Dick*, Joyce's *Ulysses*, and Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow*, assumes that we must contextualize these maps in the historical, social, and political conditions to understand the import of space, and how its representation changed in the shift from realist to modernist novels.[335] However, along with the searching for context, Bulson asks important questions about the function of maps vis-à-vis literature. He concludes that maps are used as supplements to the text to strengthen the "reality effect," because "locating fictional spaces on a map allows readers to transform fiction into practical knowledge."[336] Bulson's analysis here is chiefly historical, referencing the space represented by the maps of the realist novel, which is said to foster "the illusion that novels corresponded with a physical reality," and that "readers could engage with that reality by making it representational."[337] But if

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[333] Ibid., 12.
[334] Jameson discusses this in dealing with the concept of "cognitive mapping," and Said introduces the concept of "imaginary geography." Others like Moretti have also written on this topic "literary geography," Bourdieu's contributions have already been mentioned. See: Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, 51; Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, 1st ed. (Vintage, 1979), 49.
[335] Bulson, *Novels, Maps, Modernity*, 15.
[336] Ibid., 4.
[337] Ibid., 15.

realist novels could make readers believe that the places described in their pages had real-world counterparts, through detailed descriptions, modernist urban novels[338] preferred to name the city rather than describe it. In other words, to know the city, one needed to know the streets.[339]

However, Bulson displays an aversion to the entire mapping enterprise. The very act of locating novelistic space on a map is seen as over-rationalizing the space of the novel. Because in this move from non-visual to visual representation of space, the names of locations transform into points on a map, and therefore become overly-demanding by wanting exact locations, distances, etc.[340] Bulson argues that such over-rationalization is contrary to the author's own use of named locations, which is presumed to purposefully disorient the reader. In other words, by pinning down the exact location of Mme. Vauquer's pension, maps have frustrated a motivated attempt on Balzac's part to keep a particular reader in the dark.[341] Otherwise, in the case of Dickens, attempts of literary cartographers at plotting his London on an actual map create a false image of the city—because such a London is not to be found in the novel anyway—thus "hijacking the description."[342]

Interestingly enough, Tokyo, like many older cities, exhibits distaste for rational urban planning. Streets are not laid out on a grid, and, more importantly only major streets are named. The central Tokyo area consists of 23 special wards (*ku* 区), with each

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[338] James Joyce's *Ulysses*, and Andrei Bely *Petersburg* are cited as classic examples, in Ibid., 12.
[339] Ibid., 31.
[340] Ibid., 24.
[341] Ibid., 25.
[342] Ibid., 37.

ward divided into neighborhoods, which in turn are divided into blocks (*chō* 丁), which

are further subdivided into numbered lots (*chiban* 地番). This arrangement makes giving

an exact location in the novelistic context highly cumbersome. Furukawa, for one, stops

at the *chō* level when providing a set location. In fact, for most streets, he could not give

their names if he wanted to. This means that Furukawa rarely 'obscures' locations with

the purpose of a Balzac, and when exact locations are provided they are accessible to any

Tokyo resident. But in addition to urban planning, the above comparison is strained by

technological advancement and dissemination. Had Balzac written *Père Goriot* in 2005,

even the aristocrats would have been able to find the exact spot of Mme. Vauquer's

boarding house on Google Maps, a clear satellite image, perhaps even a street-level view

to boot.[343]

Bulson's objection to literary maps is twofold. The first is purely geographical

and lies in the discrepancy between the place in the novel and the place on a map. At the

core of this objection is the simple matter of chronological fissure and urban change.

Once the novel is written, the locations that are described therein are fixed while the

actual city continues to change, the locations detailed in the text undergoing renovation,

relocation, or demolition. The map, on the other hand, reflects this changed image of the

city, which no longer reflects the physical referents of the locations in novel.[344] The

second accusation Bulson levels against literary cartography is reduction of a novel's

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[343] Photographic orbiting satellites notwithstanding, the majority of Furukawa's locations are not as exact, due to Tokyo's urban organization mentioned above.

[344] For example, the JR company housing mentioned earlier. Furukawa might agree to some extent here. He mentioned in an interview, that having gone back to some of these locations, he found them greatly changed. See: Uchida, "Katarikata," 168.

complexity. Again, this charge is based on the assumption that writers' representation of physical space is at once a representation of the social space.[345] The map is understood to flatten geographical social differences, by presenting a unified image of disparate socio-economic domains—by depicting at once East and West London, or the Left and Right banks of the Seine.

Bulson's point is well taken, and it likely held true for the 19th century literary tourist. In my mind, however, he overestimates the impact a visual diagram of a city has on the reading of a text. If readers cannot appreciate the social tints Dickens combines on his palette of London, no map will hinder their grasping this complexity, nor will it hinder the comprehension of those who can. Furthermore, this criticism is largely inapplicable to modern readers, because they are so far removed from the time of a given text. Being ignorant of Mexican history, a map of Mexico City could not simplify my reading of Carlos Fuentes' *La región más transparente*; my reading is simple as is. In fact, had I a map of Mexico City handy, it may rather aid in my orientation in an unknown environment, since I lack the basic familiarity with the city that Fuentes expects from his target audience. The "sociality of space"[346] may, indeed, be lost on a map, but that is why there is still the text, perhaps even commentary. Maps are supplements—to criticize them for oversimplification is like accusing a verb chart of impeding fluency. Yet, Bulson goes on to offer words of warning:

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[345] Bulson, *Novels, Maps, Modernity*, 37.
[346] Ibid., 38.

> It will not be long, I suspect, before the world's classics reappear as hypertext editions with maps that can be called up instantaneously. Before that happens, though, we need to think more seriously about how maps conceal as much as they reveal in the space of novels and the worlds they represent.[347]

Although I hesitate to classify *LOVE* as a world classic, Bulson appears to have anticipated my attempts. His admonition is duly noted. But I submit that we need to think more seriously before berating supplementary materials for lacking the complexity of the text they supplement, much less the social reality in which the text was produced, and their collateral "ideological consequences."[348] To be clear, I do not mean to belittle the contextual approach; in the case of *LOVE*, however, I sincerely doubt that such contextualization would lead us far in understanding the representation of Tokyo. What's more, Furukawa may well have never consulted a map of Tokyo in drafting his novel, relying rather on multiple walks around the city.[349]

As mentioned above, there are generally two tacks to take when dealing with literary space: space in literature, or literature in space. Previous research has tended towards the first, dealing with depictions of urban space of London and Paris as socio-geographical. This is certainly not my purpose here. At any rate, the socio-economic gaps are less evident in 21st century Tokyo than in 19th century Paris, and Furukawa shows less concern with social analysis than did the French masters. Although to claim that there is no intersection between socio-economic stratification and geography in Tokyo

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[347] Ibid., 39-41.

[348] Ibid., 38.

[349] We know, in fact, that he did rely heavily on personal information gathered through repeated strolls around the city. Whether he used a map is unconfirmed. Uchida, "Katarikata," 168-9.

would be to misrepresent reality, this gap is markedly smaller compared with

contemporary American metropolitan areas.[350] Furukawa's characters in *LOVE*, scarcely

throw down the glove to society and challenge the city with grandiloquent phrases like,

"Henceforth there is war between us!"[351] Moreover, the acquaintance with this or that

location in *LOVE* does not readily define one's status.

The Specific Narrative Cartography

"There are some parts of London that are necessary and others that are contingent."

Jake Donaghue in *Under the Net.*[352]

As I am not concerned with the socio-cultural forces that shaped *LOVE*, it appears

that my analysis falls into the first set, the study of fictional, or fictional*ized*, space.

Rather than examining the simultaneous links between geography and society, as does

Bourdieu,[353] I am more interested in the point at which place, plot, and theme intersect.

Moretti notes that maps help to highlight "the *internal* logic of narrative: the semiotic

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[350] Fujita and Hill contend, for example, that Tokyo's place stratification is smaller by "several levels of magnitude" compared to New York. Furthermore, in comparison with New York, Tokyo has "a diversified economy, a broadly middle class social structure and a spatially integrated mix of occupational groups." Kuniko Fujita and Richard Child Hill, "Place Stratification in Tokyo and New York" (presented at the ISA World Congress of Sociology, Durban, South Africa, 2006), 20.

[351] Honoré de Balzac, *Father Goriot*, trans. Ellen Marriage (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1914), 285. Furukawa's is not, as shown in the previous chapter, afraid of writing antisocial characters.

[352] Iris Murdoch, *Under the Net* (New York: Viking Press, 1954), 22.

[353] Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, 42.

domain around which a plot coalesces and self-organizes."[354] I concur that visual

representations of fictional space do provide a look at the internal logic of the story,

especially in a story that assigns symbolic significance to topographic forms, such as

"Heart/Hearts." The plot does coalesce around a space, though I do not think it self-

organizes, rather the author purposefully organizes it precisely because he discerns some

meaning, or the possibility of discerning some meaning, in whatever features the space

offers. Thus, elements of urban space such as intersecting roadways, municipal

boundaries, borders, walls, tunnels, and so forth, present blank—but suggestive—slates,

which an author may imbue with meaning through their skillful positioning in the

narrative. This is nothing new, of course. Consider Murakami Haruki's well-worn image

of the well as an analogue to the subconscious, for example, or the natural boundary

between social classes that the Seine supplies in Balzac's Paris. Perhaps, this is metaphor

writ large, on a civic scale. As Edward Said said:

> The objective space of a house—its corners, corridors, cellar, rooms—is far less
> important than what poetically it is endowed with, which is usually a quality with
> an imaginative or figurative value we can name and feel; thus a house may be
> haunted or homelike, or prisonlike or magical. So space acquires emotional and
> even rational sense by a kind of poetic process, whereby the vacant or anonymous
> reaches of distance are converted into meaning for us here.[355]

What, then, are these objective spaces in "Heart/Hearts"? Broadly speaking, they are

located on the horizontal axis. This story is quite down-to-earth, and there are neither

subterranean nor aerial adventures. It is rather map-like. Furukawa emphasizes linear

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[354] Moretti, *Atlas of the European Novel, 1800-1900,* 5. Emphasis in the original.
[355] Said, *Orientalism*, 55.

expressions, like roadways, rail lines, characters' movement along an itinerary, intersections, rivers, and boundaries. The motif of the boundary is particularly effective in highlighting Furukawa's cartographic approach, as it calls attention to boundaries on a map of Tokyo as markers of significance to narrative progression. Like the "X" that marks the spot on a treasure map, they are 'hot spots,' designating crucial points of the action. The main area of action in "Heart/Hearts" is an inverted triangle, pointing southeast, and is bounded by Meguro River in the west, Metropolitan Expressway No. 2 (Meguro Route) on the east, and Meguro Dōri to the north.

The very process of demarcation partakes of exactly this poetic process, conferring meaning, or necessity, on the space included within the boundary, while rendering the space outside contingent. We are fully aware that there is more of Tokyo than this inverted triangle, but it is not necessary in the internal logic of the narrative. This dynamic quite resembles the photographic process, which has been popularly dubbed, "the art of exclusion." The photographic image reveals a portion of the real world—abstracted at that—but only the subject matter that fits within the viewfinder is meaningful.[356] This is contrasted to painting, for example, which creates its world from scratch; there is not—and cannot be—anything outside the edges of the canvas. In short, painting is a constructive process, while photography is exclusionary. Where the novel falls along this spectrum is difficult to tell. I am inclined to believe that it is largely

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[356] Most photographers, in fact, will further edit their work, cropping out extraneous elements, that do not "make sense" in the logic of the photograph.

constructive, with the author building up the narrative space.[357] For example, Tolkien's

Middle Earth is created entirely by him, without even false-friend analogues in the real

world, though I am sure readers hailing from the British countryside cannot help but read

their own Arcadian upbringing into his world. Nevertheless, it is not the case that there is

nothing necessary to the narrative outside the boundaries of Tolkien's world; rather there

is nothing there in the real world. Furukawa's reliance (and Joyce's and Balzac's, etc.) on

an established frame of reference, the objective space in the real world—no matter how

fictionalized, abstracted, or processed by the author's mind—begins to partake of the

photographic, exclusionary dynamic. And at the same time, it participates in the poetic

process that imbues these objective spaces with meaning; this is the most basic use of the

boundary trope to create the kind of thematic space I recommended earlier with my

clumsy Greek.

We must keep in mind that boundaries come in two types, natural and artificial.

The geographical limits of the setting feature both. Meguro River functions also as

natural municipal boundary between Shimo-meguro 1-*chōme* and 2-*chōme*. Two pages of

text is devoted to Kanashī's musings on the river; how opaque it is, how it acts as a

boundary, how amazing is its long flow into Tokyo Bay.[358] This river plays an important

role in the novel, not only as a geographic delimiter, but also as a crucial plot element. It

is on the bank of this river that Yūta observes the murder of Kanashī's lookalike, and it is

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[357] I am, of course, ignoring the editorial process, or rather considering it part of the
construction.
[358] Furukawa, *LOVE*, 8-10.

here, in the final scene of the chapter, that Kanashī finds the cell phone that allows her to take on a new identity, presumably of the unfortunate doppelganger.

Not far from that spot is another important boundary, however this one is of a different type. The boundary between the two wards (*ku*), specifically between Meguro and Shinagawa (Kami-ōsaki 4-*chōme*) Wards, is an arbitrary one, lacking any natural physical barrier and therefore being visible only on a map.[359] Furukawa frequently exploits the arbitrariness of such cartographic features, having his characters remark that Meguro Station is actually in Shinagawa, while Shinagawa Station is actually in Minato Ward.[360] The abovementioned spot of the murder is located near this artificial boundary mark. This point on the map is also where Kanashī hides out in sections 16 and 17, it is this boundary that functions as the setting for Kanashī second meeting with Yūta, thereby also permitting Furukawa to insert another appearance of the "heart" motif (the print on Yūta's shirt). This is one instance of a symbolically-motivated narrative space, the borderline, facilitating thematic reaffirmation.

The border also functions as a separation from the center, on a metaphoric level, meaning it is the space of the marginal elements. To be sure, Furukawa utilizes this space appropriately, populating it with characters that are odder-than life. A girl suffering from mild kleptomania and habitual fibbing, who becomes a yakuza boss, a sport-obsessed personal trainer who runs around at night in a ski mask attacking people, a woman who abandons her child, an assassin, a musician with no stable job, along with the various

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[359] Ibid., 15.
[360] Ibid., 90.

thugs, hardly represent the mainstream of Japanese society.[361] Furukawa populates his

fiction with such marginal characters, but this is not motivated by the 19th century

European enterprise of social commentary as detailed above, but by a desire to tell an

entertaining story. His device of the marginal is not sociological, but purely narrative in

origin. Furukawa does, however, place these characters appropriately, near the borderline.

The second major application of the poetic process to objective space is the

intersection. The image of the crossroads is easily recognized as almost intrinsically

possessive of some spiritual significance. The intersection of paths, prosaic and

metaphorical, signifies a communion between two disparate entities. Historically, it is

along these paths that guardian deities of the road (*dōsojin* 道祖神) were enshrined, and

it is here that Robert Johnson, that Faustus of the Mississippi Delta, said to have made his

deal with the devil. The intersection, the urban manifestation of the crossroads, is not

only open to ascription of meanings, but begs for semantic generation.

For Kanashī, the intersection provides a sense of freedom:

> The elevated portion of the highway appears before you. You can start to see a
> large street. At this intersection, you can go right, you can go left. You can cross it,
> and head forward.[362]

The intersection, then, can stand for open possibilities. However, the primary function of

this particular intersection is as the "ground zero" mentioned earlier. Created by the

Yamanote Line (running northwest-southeast) and Metropolitan Expressway No. 2 and

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[361] These types of characters may, however, be readily found in certain genre fiction; e.g.,
crime novels.
[362] Furukawa, *LOVE*, 42.

the No. 148 (running northeast-southwest at different elevations), seen on a map this

intersection forms a large "X," not unlike the "X" formed by characters' movements in

Ulysses.[363] Furukawa, then, installs this intersection as the place of beginning, not the

beginning of the plot, but the beginning of the love between Kanashī and Akiyama. We

could go further, and say this spot is also the beginning of *LOVE*, since it is Akiyama's

meeting Kanashī that inspires the story in the first place.

     Importantly this intersection is not only an intersection of two

paths/characters/hearts, it is also a super-boundary dividing four civic entities. To the

northeast is Higashi-gotanda 5-*chōme*, to the northwest lies Kami-ōsaki 3-*chōme,* Nishi-

gotanda 2-*chōme* to the southeast, and Nishi-gotanda 3-*chōme* to the southwest. Fully

aware of this division, the narrator calls it the "border line between four regions."[364] Thus,

obeying the logic of the thematic space detailed above, this intersection presents the ideal

location for the most crucial action of the story, since the border is a major part of the

narrative semiotic domain. Simply put, key actions must occur at a border; the more

impressive the border, and here we have a fourfold one, the more appropriate it is for the

major action of the story. Gangsters and assassins notwithstanding, "Heart/Hearts" is

essentially a boy-meets-girl narrative, and as such, the most consequential plot point is

the meeting. And, because one half of the organizational principle of the story is the

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[363] Leo Knuth first mapped the itinerary of Father Conmee and the viceregal procession
to discover the "X" over Dublin, which is seen as referencing the tenth episode of the
novel and the Christian Cross. Cited in: Bulson, *Novels, Maps, Modernity*, 73.
[364] Furukawa, *LOVE*, 37.

border/boundary (the term *kyōkai* 境界 appears at least as often as the permutations of "heart" discussed earlier), the internal logic of the narrative compels the action here.

To reiterate, the central narrative device by which Furukawa orders this story is the manipulation of the thematico-spatial matrix. It follows that we would expect to find the most conspicuous articulation of the heart theme in this most conspicuous border region, at this "ground zero." We find this to be the case, even in multiple expressions of the heart thematic, not least of which is reference to this place as "the center (heart) of the world" (*sekai no chūshin* 世界の中心). Moreover it is here that Akiyama sings his songs on the "heart theme," and most importantly, it is here that the proverbial meeting of the hearts occurs, as the beginning of Akiyama and Kanashī's love story.

Conclusion

It goes without saying, that there is any number of ways to analyze a work of literature, and I do not suppose my analysis of "Heart/Hearts" even approaches exhaustion (though by now the reader may protest). However, I have addressed what I take to be the structural components of this story, the intersection between the thematic and spatial elements in the world of the narrative. The relationship of time and space in novelistic discourse has been a subject of many studies over the years, from Bakhtin's theories of the "chronotope" to more experimental research in the cognitive sciences that

examines construction of mental models of space.[365] The experiments in cognition are

particularly promising, and I have attempted to apply some concepts from the cognitive

research field in the previous chapter. However, I have been less successful in finding

studies that examined the narrative world not along the time-space matrix, but along the

one of theme-space. This is the central concept that must be applied to analyze

Furukawa's cartographic tendency. It is never location alone that matters, but the manner

in which a given space motivates the theme, and the way in which the theme endues the

location with semantic content. If we approach *LOVE* without the simultaneous

consideration of theme and location, we risk missing some of the most stimulating

narrative tricks that happen where these two elements intersect, like an "X" that marks

the spot.

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[365] See, for instance: Marie-Laure Ryan, "Cognitive Maps and the Construction of Narrative Space," in *Narrative Theory and the Cognitive Sciences*, by David Herman (Stanford: CSLI Publications, 2003), 214-242.

CHAPTER FIVE: *GODSTAR*, ORALITY, AND THE MULTIMEDIA AGE

I am not the type of writer who chooses this path after 'studying' nothing but novels.

Furukawa[366]

Introduction

Furukawa's propensity for variety is well known. His novels skirt the fuzzy

boundaries between genre fiction, like science fiction, and so-called "pure literature,"

often slipping indiscriminately into either domain. A wide selection of writers, ranging

from Murakami Haruki to Henry Miller to Dostoevsky, has left its mark on Furukawa's

fiction. The work under consideration in this chapter exhibits an especially palpable

emphasis on orality, indicating an influence of poetry, music, and Furukawa's own wont

to give public readings. *Godstar* was originally published in the April 2007 issue of

Shinchō 新潮 (*The Shincho Monthly*) and released later that year in hardback by

Shinchōsha. This novel presents an interesting case-study for two reasons, stylistic and

theoretical. Composed without a single comma, *Godstar* is a work that draws attention to

itself, and in the first portion of this chapter, I will devote my attention to it on its own

terms. This novel also presents a useful point of departure from which to explore what I

characterize as a multimedia orientation in Furukawa's role as author.

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[366] Furukawa, "Kaidai," 153.

Stylistically, the text presents a number of problems besides punctuation. For example, the problem of the narrator, which colors any reading of this text, is prominent. Because the unreliability of the narrator is reflective of the theme of piecemeal manufacture of reality, I shall address this process following the plot outline. The analysis of *Godstar* would not be complete without the central structural dynamic of the novel—the internal dialectic, which at once motivates the unreliability of the narrator and expresses it, while also serving as the foundation for the theme of reality construction discussed in the previous section. *Godstar*'s chief stylistic elements of orality and textuality, which are used to establish rhythm as the novel's central aesthetic component, also permits us to ask questions about the relationship between written and spoken language, and how this relationship features in Furukawa's work.

Sujet

Godstar's narrator, known only as Atashi,[367] is an unremarkable office worker in her early thirties. In a twist of bitter irony, her elder sister, who used to work at a well-known spirits manufacturer, was killed by a drunk driver in her eighth month of pregnancy, leaving Atashi in a state of despair. One day, while in a café, Atashi notices a boy on the street who stands in the same place for hours. She approaches him, and although at first he does not even recognize her presence, it soon becomes clear that the boy is amnesiac (the only thing he seems to remember is that pressing a button near the

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[367] As noted earlier, *atashi* is a feminine first-person pronoun, not a name.

crosswalk causes the light to change). Although he has some trouble communicating Atashi takes him to her apartment and cares for him. She is on stable footing financially, owning her own 2LDK condominium and a sports sedan, so the boy does not present a pecuniary burden. She cooks for him, teaches him how to use tableware, how to use the bathroom, buys him clothes, a cell phone with GPS, and begins to think of herself as the boy's mother. She is thus able to become a mother, like her sister was supposed to but never did. She searches the Internet for any news of a missing boy that fits his description but finds nothing, and decides to keep him for now.

Atashi steadily acquires delusions of motherhood. After taking the boy shopping, they bathe together, she dries him off and she makes him sleep in her bed. At night he clings to her, and she strokes his face and draws him to her, to her breast. Her nipples harden, but she insists this is neither erotic nor a result of mere friction, but a biological feature of motherhood. So begins her transformation into a mother. Atashi gives the boy a name, Kalio カリヲ, by picking out three random *kana* from the newspaper. They eventually settle into a daily routine: in the morning she leaves for work, and Kalio either stays at home or wanders around Tokyo, and at night he recounts his "adventures" at the dinner table. He takes to calling her "mama," and Atashi begins teaching him to read and write, first the kana then kanji. At the same time, she begins to construct a counterfactual reality on the blank slate of the boy's mind; she has their picture taken and decorates her living room with these images, as if they were a real family all along. One day, while in an elevator, her neighbor inquires if Atashi lives alone. She instantly produces a story about how she married young, had a child (Kalio) and had gotten divorced, that she did

not have custody, but due to some circumstances now took her son to live with her. Atashi slowly eases into the life that her sister never had the chance to lead, and begins to believe her own elaborate fiction.

One day Atashi has to search for Kalio, because he phoned to say he had met someone and did not return home. Atashi meets this man, who calls himself the Meiji Emperor and keeps a large dog by the name of Itō Hirobumi.[368] He apparently lives on the streets in a homeless community in an abandoned warehouse district by Tokyo Bay. Homeless people and fishermen in long rubber boots, who all address Meiji as "Your Majesty", populate this odd warehouse community. Atashi and Kalio eventually strike up an awkward friendship with Meiji, which mostly consists of Kalio spending his days with Meiji and Hirobumi the dog.[369]

Atashi's mental stability grows increasingly confused, and the narrative soon diverges into a choppy style that approaches near incomprehensibility. She becomes increasingly preoccupied with the idea of liquefaction, since so much of eastern Tokyo is built on reclaimed land. Motivated by this obsession, one night, she and the boy decide to dig at an empty lot of a construction site by the bay. Since this area is reclaimed land, Atashi thinks that if they just dig down they should be able to reach water. Instead, they

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[368] Itō Hirobumi 伊藤 博文 was Japan's first prime minister, during the Meiji reign.
[369] The homeless Meiji, who wears an open collared shirt, with Ray-Bans in the front pocket, and sports a cowboy hat, reflects Furukawa's characteristic inclusion of marginal social elements. At the same time, this figure of the eccentric, who inexplicably wields some power, is reminiscent of the Colonel Sanders and Johnny Walker characters from Murakami's *Kafka on the Shore*.

uncover a female cadaver partially encased in concrete.[370] Atashi decides not to contact

the police, because she fears this would compromise her relationship to Kalio. The boy,

in the meantime, screams uncontrollably, and implies—this again is filtered though

Atashi's jumbled psyche—that his mother was likewise disposed of. As a way of dealing

with these stressors, Atashi instructs the boy to forget the bad memories, and they resume

their routine.

During his excursions around the city, Kalio manages to get into some trouble. He

follows a team of burglars who disguise themselves as deliverymen, and they realize that

he is now a potential witness. When they try to kidnap Kalio, he stabs one of the men

with a knife Meiji gave him and gets away. Eventually they trace him to Atashi's

apartment. The book ends with the deliverymen at the door, and Atashi on the other side

grasping a gun (that was also procured from Meiji).[371]

The Narrator Problem

Furukawa seems to enjoy creating enigmatic storytellers. Prior to the book's

publication he listed *Godstar*'s Atashi as the favorite of his narrators,[372] and she is not

only enigmatic, but also endlessly equivocal, and therefore presents one of the central

problems for the narrative. Readers readily realize that her inability (or reluctance) to

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[370] Dumping a body cement is apparently a popular method of disposal in Japan as well.
See: Adelstein, *Tokyo Vice*, 192.
[371] I hesitate to speculate on the possible significance that the treatment of the founders of
Japan's modern nation state as an armory may hold.
[372] Furukawa, "Q & A," 71.

divulge certain information, inconsistencies with previously stated points, and a general

sense of confusion engendered by her storytelling, undermine her reliability. The classic

predicament of the unreliable narrator cuts like a double-edged sword. On the one hand

she leaves readers disoriented for the lack of certainty. Conversely, such a narrator

compels readers to select their own "facts" from the narrative, thereby shattering any

"monologic"—to borrow Bakhtin's term—authorial content.[373] In other words, neither

Furukawa, nor Atashi, nor any character in the novel for that matter, presents a clear

picture of what exactly is going on. Some readers may approach such delivery with

understandable ambivalence.

> Where do I live? That I can't say (それはいえない). My sister was 35. I am not.
> How old am I? That I can't say. …
> Who am I?
> That I can't say.[374]

Atashi is unable to say many basic things, and why exactly she cannot do so is left

unclear. Appropriately, the story ends with a similar formulation: "Will I tell what

happened after all this? That I can't say (あたしはこのつづきについて語るか？それ

はいえない)."[375] On occasion, she cannot recall information that appears earlier in the

story. "I've got a feeling that someone I know called Japan an empire recently. Who was

that?" she wonders, concluding, "I can't remember (おもいだせない)."[376] The reader

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[373] Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, trans. Caryl Emerson (University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 7-8.
[374] Furukawa, *Godstar*, 5.
[375] Ibid., 156.
[376] Ibid., 140.

has no such trouble; indeed, even the reader of the above summary only could surmise

that it was Meiji. Perhaps this is to be expected from a narrator who cannot even say what

she is thinking.[377]

To be clear, this characteristic is not a mere byproduct of a fickle character.

Furukawa employs the unreliable narrator as a deliberate literary device, in the Formalist

sense. Atashi tells fiction after fiction until she begins to accept her own fabrications as

fact, which is one of the elements that render her statements suspect to alert readers.

However, even these suspicious readers must eventually take Atashi at her word, or else

put away the book. As a result, the novelistic "reality" is constructed on noticeably shaky

foundations. It is important to note here, that the idea of unstable ground presents a

superb example of Furukawa's use of the geo-trope (the injection of meaning into a

physical space, and the extrapolation of meaning from the geographic associations with

the space) as discussed in Chapter 4 in regards to LOVE. In the case of *Godstar*, the

interaction of theme and space occurs in the image of reclaimed land, on which Atashi's

apartment complex is situated.

> That is the ground where our building stands.
> The ground that would surely "liquefy" (*ekijōka* 「液状化」) in the case of an
> earthquake.
> Kalio's town.
> Here by the bay. Our town.[378]

Thus, the setting of the narrative—the "area" エリア that Atashi designates[379]—is as

unstable as the narrative itself. They are, semiotically speaking, one and the same, each

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[377] Ibid., 20.
[378] Ibid., 75.

drawing on the other for its significance. Atashi's story, then, is open to doubt on the very basic level, yet it is—must be—accepted. In this manner, in calling attention to itself, the narrative technique highlights the process by which created narratives manufacture conceptions of reality.

From Fiction to Reality

The most striking progression in the narrative is the development of Atashi's self-delusion about her relationship to the boy Kalio. From her perspective, hers was a noble act. She took in an amnesiac boy, sheltered him, gave him food and bought him clothes. Gradually, Atashi begins to see herself not simply as a temporary guardian, but as a mother. This does not mean she was channeling some abstract maternal instinct, but that she literally began to see herself as Kalio's biological mother.[380] However, this process is not a simple matter of retelling a lie long enough for it to be believed. She does not innocently buy him clothes at the mall and thus act out motherly behavior; she also has their picture taken, and decorates her apartment with those pictures.[381] In this manner, not only does Atashi inscribe a new life story on the blank slate of Kalio's mind, but also proactively shapes the reality around her to fit the invented narrative.

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[379] Ibid., 74.

[380] Ibid., 39.

[381] The word "photograph" (*shashin* 写真) is often repeated for emphasis to draw attention to the word. When taken individually, the characters mean "copy" of "reality." See, for instance: Ibid., 23-4.

We could feel ourselves progressing from zero. I'm saying we're advancing.
From absolute zero.
> We are beginning.
> I'm stowing memories in Kalio. Right. Memories. What Kalio remembers.
What I remember. I'm "mama." Kalio's name is Kalio.[382]
> Of course, she is neither Kalio's, nor anyone else's, mother. The name, Kalio,

itself was a random selection of three *kana* from a newspaper, and not the boy's legal

name. Yet both of these fictions become the reality of this novel, a reality shared by both

Kalio and Atashi, as well as the characters they subsequently meet. At one point in

particular, Atashi appears to be acutely aware of this dynamic.

> My memories are changing. Mine are changing too. From zero. The lies or
> fictions I told *non-stop* become my memories. Get it? I mean that's where the real
> originates. I got married once. I got pregnant. Then had a kid. I was around
> nineteen or something. Now I remember. In the final trimester my feet would
> cramp up. The doctor explained that my swelling womb was tugging on the
> ligaments. And then I. Bore a boy. But my premature marriage was a disaster.
> What they call a marital breakdown. So I started fresh. I was still young. The ex
> took the kid. I was left without custody. I became sort of single then. No. I was
> utterly single. […] This is my reality. These are absolutely real memories.
> My memories are advancing from zero too.
> Yes.
> We are growing.[383]

In a dazzling display of creativity, Atashi conjures up an alternative life story, which she

adopts as her own. She divorced her husband and kept it a secret for the sake of her

career. Then, due to some circumstances, she was able to get her child back from her ex-

husband. Atashi initially invented this story to placate the inquisitiveness of a neighbor,

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[382] Ibid., 50.
[383] Ibid., 64-6.

but soon appropriated this entirely plausible narrative in place of her actual life experiences.[384]

To accomplish this transference from fictive to real Atashi uses the boy as a kind of renal system. The quotation above describes the first of the two-part process. Atashi begins by inputting manufactured memories into Kalio, where these memories are stored. Later his memories are "absorbed" (*kyūshū* 吸収) and "digested" (*shōka* 消化) over evening conversation, and retold by Atashi.[385] As receptacles into which items are deposited and later withdrawn, mailboxes and coin lockers that Kalio encounters during his first "adventure"[386] also resonate visually with this process. In the course of this operation, all inconvenient or unpleasant memories (*kioku* 記憶), that is, memories that do not fit into the framework originally inputted by Atashi, are eliminated by Kalio at her direction:

> "Forget it" I said.
> "Forget it" I say. […]
> "Forget it Kalio" I said. […]
> "What don't you need Kalio" I say.
> "Different stuff" Kalio says.
> "Like different names" Kalio says.
> "Mama I'll kill whatever *gets in the way* (じゃまなものはころしますからママ)" Kalio says.
> "Memories" I say.
>
> Kalio says that he will kill them.[387]

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[384] Ibid., 62-4.
[385] Ibid., 137.
[386] Ibid., 66-8.
[387] Ibid., 152-3.

In other words, this process operates in a self-correcting loop. Atashi deposits a narrative in Kalio, who in turn assimilates this input with his conception of reality, elements that do not fit the narrative are excluded, and finally through nightly conversations Kalio's memories of the day's events are gathered by Atashi and internalized. Thus the reality of the novel, told from Atashi's perspective, is perpetually constructed on an invented foundation.[388]

This routine stimulates a particular response in readers. We find ourselves reading *around* the narrative told by Atashi, thereby generating a counter-narrative. Did Atashi really help the boy by taking him in? Aren't her actions better described as kidnapping? She takes no steps to gain legal guardian status, does not send him to school, but rather hides the boy. Isn't she simply attempting to compensate in some way for the death of her pregnant sister? One begins to notice more ominous feelings when Atashi fails to report a dead body they uncover to the police in order to not raise suspicion about Kalio.[389] When hints surface indicating that Kalio possibly lost his memory due to the trauma of witnessing his biological mother's murder, Atashi appears even less the appropriate guardian, telling Kalio to forget "scary" memories.[390]

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[388] The resemblance to the totalizing narratives of ideologies and cult leaders is astounding. Marc Yamada dedicates a significant portion of his essay, mentioned in Chapter 3, to the concern with such cult-like phenomena in Murakami's fiction after the Aum terrorist attacks of 1995. But the postmodern dynamic of "incredulity toward metanarratives" has been noted far earlier. See: Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (University of Minnesota Press, 1984), xxiv; Yamada, "Exposing the Private Origins of Public Stories."
[389] Furukawa, *Godstar*, 133-4.
[390] Ibid., 136-7.

Jimonjitō – The Internal Dialectic

If the narrator's reliability is to be questioned until the final sentence, the narrator's complicit partner, the audience, could likewise be questioned. Readers get the distinct impression that Atashi is communicating her narrative directly to an audience. Indeed, the entire story reads like an extended aside. But to whom is this aside addressed? Perhaps this is not a pressing question for readers of a written text, but if they attempt to visualize the events on the page the problem of the audience becomes as urgent as the problem of the narrator. Kumai Kei 熊井啓 (1930-2007) faced a similar question as director of the screen adaptation of Endō Shūsaku's 遠藤周作 *The Sea and Poison* (*Umi to dokuyaku* 海と毒薬). Kumai created a context for the second section of the novel, "Those to be Judged," based on a personal reading, providing one possible visualization. In the novel, this section is comprised of personal accounts from the characters who participated in vivisections of captured American servicemen. Reading this section, it is difficult to ascertain to whom this account is related. It falls somewhere between a personal history and a deposition, but Endō stops short of clarifying a context. Kumai, realizing that characters' isolated reminiscences presented a visual problem, chose to stage these accounts in the context of an interrogation by the Allied forces, thus providing a convincing audience. But who is listening to Atashi when she asks, "Get it (わかる)?"[391] In regards to the position of the reader in the modern novel Walter Ong mused:

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[391] Ibid., 65.

"Who is talking to whom in *Pride and Prejudice* or in *Le Rouge et le noir,* or in *Adam Bede*?"[392] To rephrase the question, we should ask who is talking to whom in *Godstar*.

Perhaps the intention is for readers to image themselves as listeners to a retelling of a story, as around a campfire, or over a cup of coffee. Without a doubt the aural reception of the narrative is an important element not only in *Godstar* specifically, but in Furukawa's post-2006 work generally, and will be discussed in greater detail in the next section. Accordingly, when we read a passage such as: "Kalio said Kalio and mommy are still in the *area* right. Understand? Remember the *area*?" we could plausibly assume those questions are directed towards us readers.[393] Since the "area" was described earlier in the narrative, the effect of reiteration and confirmation-seeking mimics a conversation, a negotiation between speaker and listener.[394]

However, some evidence supports an understanding of the reader's role as slightly different from the interlocutor's. I suggest that the reader is best understood as a kind of eavesdropper, not necessarily an active participant toward whom the narrative is deliberately directed. Then to whom are phrases like the above directed? The most satisfying explanation is that they are directed at the narrator herself. Although that is not to say that at the same time there is no awareness of the reader as a fly on the wall. In other words, the unraveling of the narrative is best viewed as propelled by the dynamics of an internal dialogue, to which readers become privy through the act of reading. In Atashi's own words:

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[392] Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London: Methuen, 1982), 103.
[393] Furukawa, *Godstar*, 92.
[394] Ibid., 74-5.

I want to tell it *simply* again. […] My pace is a little frenzied. Listen to me knowing that. Lend me an ear.
Ears and mouth. Listen. Voice and voice. Listen. Conversation.
"So this is reclaimed land" I say.
"So this is reclaimed land" I said.[395]

The exchange above illustrates the dual nature of Atashi's internal conversation, exemplified by the (almost schizophrenic) progression from subject to object. The present tense lends immediacy to the utterance, with the narrator as the subject—the experiencing entity. The restatement of the same utterance in the past tense demonstrates the shift of perspective to the narrator as object. In the second utterance Atashi establishes a distance from the first, which also reflects on the first as an object of contemplation. First she says it, then she notices herself having said it; first she speaks, then she reevaluates what she has just said. This movement from the experiencer to the experienced plays a central role in the functioning of the internal dialectic, through which the narrative develops.

Atashi characterizes her own thought process as "my *jimonjitō* 自問自答."[396] Although this is a commonplace Japanese expression that can be translated as "thinking aloud" (literally "self-ask, self-answer"), it stands as a fitting descriptor for the kind of internal dialectic impelling the narrative progression. In other words, Atashi's commonplace "thinking aloud" functions as a key narrative device in the story. After asking a string of questions Atashi muses:

Why do I keep asking. I ask of my own self. Well I answer. I ask (自問) . I ask. I answer (自答). I answer. …

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[395] Ibid., 128.
[396] Ibid., 124.

> That's right isn't it?
> That's right I answer.[397]

This force establishes the narrative flow of *Godstar*, a perpetual re-evaluation of one's previous thoughts and statements, executed through an alternating subject-object dialectic.[398] Doubtless, it also bears responsibility for the questionable reliability of the narrator, as well as the piecemeal construction of reality discussed in the previous section. It is therefore most convincing to find Atashi herself as the direction of all her utterances. "To my own self. I answer. I answer. A *logical* answer (自答。自答。ロジカルな自答)," she pronounces in the echo chamber of her own interiority.[399] What the reader is "hearing" is those echoes. But what does the *listener* hear?

Orality and Performance

In *Charles Dickens as a Reader*, Charles Kent asserts, "a celebrated writer is hardly ever capable as a Reader of doing justice to his own imaginings."[400] Since one of Furukawa's distinct activities as an author is his spirited public readings, he would

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[397] Ibid., 134.

[398] The prose is also liberally sprinkled with the affirmation-seeking particle *ne* ね, which is often used to soften a declarative expression, and removes a given statement further from the realm of fact.

[399] Furukawa, *Godstar*, 135.

[400] Charles Kent, *Charles Dickens as a Reader* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1872), 1.

probably disagree.[401] Indeed, Furukawa understands his public readings as an integral

part of his role as a novelist. He has delivered on a promise made in 2006 to throw

himself into these readings.[402] Indeed, 2006 was a turning point in Furukawa's career,

and he has since teamed up with artists like Mukai Shūtoku 向井秀徳 (b. 1973),[403] to

stage performances combining literature readings and music. These performances have

been dubbed "reading gigs (*rōdoku giggu* 朗読ギッグ)," reflecting their concert-like

quality.[404]

Finding Furukawa at the intersection of literature and performance is not

altogether surprising. First of all, in light of his long-time connection to theater,

performance does not push him too far outside his element. If anything, these readings

can be viewed as Furukawa's rediscovering the stage. Neither are his collaborations with

musicians particularly startling, given his personal love of music, as detailed in Chapter

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[401] Kent, for one, was actually quite impressed with Dickens' public reading, and of course, Dickens was famous for them. There were, however, critics. Mark Twain once opined:

> I was a good deal disappointed in Mr. Dickens' reading—I will go further and say, a great deal disappointed. The Herald and Tribune critics must have been carried away by their imaginations when they wrote their extravagant praises of it. Mr. Dickens' reading is rather monotonous, as a general thing; his voice is husky; his pathos is only the beautiful pathos of his language—there is no heart, no feeling in it.

Mark Twain, "The Great Dickens-An Honest Criticism-Political Gossip-Caning the President-Winter Festivities-Jump in Washington," *Daily Alta California*, February 5, 1868, Vol. 20 No. 6535 edition, sec. Mark Twain in Washington. Conversely, it would be difficult to criticize Furukawa's readings for monotony.

[402] Uchida, "Katarikata," 172.

[403] Mukai is the man behind indie rock bands Number Girl and Zazen Boys.

[404] Hideo Jinno, "Rōdoku ROCK YOU! [Recitation ROCK YOU!]," *Bungei* Tokushū: Furukawa Hideo, no. Autumn (2007): 96.

1.[405] Furukawa's fondness for music is another trait he and Murakami have in common. However, if Murakami exerted a major influence on Furukawa as an author, it was the poet Yoshimasu Gōzō 吉増剛造 (b. 1939) who was the crucial inspiration for these reading gigs. Furukawa expressed his debt to him in no uncertain terms, stating, "If there were no Mr. Yoshimasu, I don't think I would be doing gigs."[406] Yoshimasu is well known for branching out well beyond the written text of the poem, holding readings that incorporate video, sound, and props, and putting himself in a trance-like state. Yoshimasu takes for inspiration various oral epic traditions of various peoples, and shows a preference for the mystical. This "latter-day shaman," as Donald Richie fulsomely describes him,[407] places a particular importance on the performative aspect of poetry, and had put out a number of CD recordings as early as 1995. It is one of these recordings, *Ishikari shītsu* 石狩シーツ (The Ishikari Sheet), that first planted the idea in Furukawa of one day performing his writing publically.[408] It took over a decade to realize this aspiration, but eventually with help from Shibata Motoyuki 柴田元幸 (b. 1954),[409] Furukawa's long-time goal had come into fruition.[410]

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[405] He is said to have spent most of his earnings on CDs, when he first moved to Tokyo. After he married, but before he debuted, he could not longer afford the CDs, and had to settle for FM radio. See: Furukawa, *Furukawa Speaks*, 58.

[406] Ibid., 292.

[407] Donald Richie, *Japanese Literature Reviewed* (New York: ICG Muse, 2003), 474.

[408] Furukawa, *Furukawa Speaks*, 248.

[409] Shibata, a professor of literature, friend of Murakami Haruki, and fellow translator of American fiction, was also responsible for arranging Furukawa's interview with Murakami. It was published in *Monkey Business*, a journal edited by Shibata.

[410] Eventually, Furukawa was even able to perform together with Yoshimasu on occasion.

In the relationship to their aural aspects, Furukawa considers novels and music to be one and the same;[411] accordingly, he usually stresses the preeminence of sound over visuals in his work, in other words the pronunciation over the semantic use of *kanji*, which results in ruby-filled manuscripts.[412] In giving advice to aspiring writers, he instructs them to listen to the "rhythm of words," and is perfectly happy if readers enjoy his works on that level alone.[413] However, it would be imprecise to construct an image of Furukawa from the above statements. Although he appears to be enjoying his role as "creator and elocutionist,"[414] he is also a writer, a man who deals with the written word—he is not exactly a griot. Even so, the emphasis Furukawa places on the oral, aural, and performative elements of literature, is fertile ground for examination. One possible avenue of inquiry is to consider this performative concern as a manifestation of Ong's influential postulation of "secondary orality."

If primary orality operates in cultures that have not developed the technology of writing and, therefore, have no other communicative option, secondary orality is "a more deliberate and self-conscious orality, based permanently on the use of writing and print."[415] This secondary orality simulates features of primary oral cultures—such as group-mindedness, spontaneity, and outward orientation—in high-technology cultures like our own. However, this group-mindedness of secondary orality is self-conscious and programmatic. It is a reactionist social awareness. We turn outwards, not because we

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[411] Hideo Furukawa and Gōzō Yoshimasu, "Kisen naki uchū no sumoguri [The Equal Space Freedive]," *Yuriika* Tokushū: Furukawa Hideo, no. 8 (August 2006): 84.

[412] Uchida, "Katarikata," 166.

[413] Furukawa, "Q & A," 74.

[414] Kent, *Charles Dickens*, 28.

[415] Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 136.

have no other alternative as in the case of primary oral cultures, but because we have

turned inward and through introspective analysis concluded that one ought to be socially

aware. The same holds true for qualities like spontaneity.[416]

Nevertheless, the idea that reading "turns individuals in on themselves," whereas

(secondary) orality generates group-mindedness, "for listening to spoken words forms

hearers into a group, a true audience,"[417] is remarkably consonant with Furukawa's own

reasons for performing his literature. Professedly, one of the motivations behind these

"gigs" is to pull away from the printed text and for the many individual readers and

readings to be brought together, synthesized into one reading. That is, to read not in

isolation but together in a more communal setting.[418] As other theorists have indicated,

this group dynamic is common to literary readings, as they constitute "a collective

activity of which the singular encounter with a printed text […] is only a small part of a

complex network."[419] This shared "reading" experience epitomizes the idea of a

necessarily text-based secondary orality even in the simple fact that these performances

are given from a script.[420]

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[416] Ibid., 136-7.
[417] Ibid., 136.
[418] Furukawa, "Q & A," 73.
[419] Peter Middleton, "How to Read a Reading of a Written Poem," *Oral Tradition* 20, no. 1 (2005): 8.
[420] After comparing some videos of these reading with the published versions, I have not been able to find any significant improvisational flourishes. In the reading of *Godstar*, Furukawa actually lets out a scream when the text has "Kalio screamed," but otherwise reads it as is.

To Ong, however, the script is implicitly subordinate to locution, because "writing is always a kind of imitation talking."[421] But what kind of imitation is it? To my mind, writing and talking are very different beasts—I would never naturally utter a sentence like this in spontaneous speech, for one; I would have to write it down first. Certainly in the minds of Japanese litterateurs they were quite different as well until the advent of the *genbun itchi* 言文一致 movement (literally, "correspondence of written and spoken languages") in the 19th century. Until the 1890s, written works used a specific "literary" style, or *bungo* 文語, while the spoken language, or *gengo* 言語, was restricted to verbal utterances. The gap between the two did not appear to be a problem until this time, but in the latter half of the 19th century, with Japan's doors pried open from self-imposed isolation precipitating an influx of European ideas, spoken language came to be privileged over the written mode,[422] and attempts were made to unify the two.[423] However, as Karatani Kōjin has observed, this phonocentric campaign did not result in a truly faithful rendition of contemporaneous speech, but rather created another written style.[424] What's more, the new style, a "new literary language," was far from intuitive and presented a challenge to early readers.[425] Case in point, Iwaya Sazanami 巌谷小波

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[421] Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 102.
[422] To my knowledge this movement only went one way; systematic attempts to bring spoken language closer to the written style were not undertaken.
[423] Karatani, *Origins*, 45.
[424] Ibid., 70.
[425] Ibid., 117.

(1870-1933), a noted children's book author and affiliate of *Ken'yūsha* 硯友社—"the nucleus of the Meiji *bundan*" 文壇, or Japan's literary establishment:[426]

> [*Genbun itchi*] is one type of writing style, and therefore it is not sufficient to merely string together colloquial words. […] Although an abundant use of new and colloquial words may make it appear easier to understand than other written styles, depending on how it is written, *genbun itchi* may be far more difficult to understand than a style in which literary and colloquial language are mixed.[427]

Japanese to this day retains lexical and grammatical strata reserved for written expression (*kakikotoba* 書き言葉), making it difficult to imagine the speech that it was to imitate. Perhaps the ancients spoke in that manner, but then again, perhaps they only wrote in that manner. The complex, hybrid nature of the Japanese orthography (employing up to four writing systems), further complicates the relationship. Because *kanji* are primarily read for meaning rather than sound,[428] their use in writing results in written "utterances" that would never—could never—actually be uttered in natural speech. Ong would disagree. He comes from the phonocentric school that avers, "Written texts all have to be related somehow, directly or indirectly, to the world of sound, the natural habitat of language, to yield their meanings."[429] But I think, especially given enough qualifications, that is neither here nor there. At any rate, I can hardly sound out half the *kanji* whose semantic import is not lost on me. Questions could, naturally, be

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[426] *Ken'yūsha* was a literary society formed in 1885 by Ozaki Kōyō 尾崎紅葉 (1867-1903), and constituted the core of the Meiji *bundan*. Irena Powell, *Writers and Society in Modern Japan* (London: Macmillan Press, 1983), 8.

[427] Quoted in: Karatani, *Origins*, 117.

[428] Names present a notable exception. It appears, however, that the current opinion in linguistics would not agree with the claim that *kanji* are read for meaning.

[429] Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 8.

raised about my Japanese-language ability, at which point I shall direct the skeptic to an educated native speaker, like Kijima Hajime:

> [C]ontemporary poets use [*kanji*] very frequently to make their images precise and rich. And these ideograms are understood at once when seen like hieroglyphics, but sometimes misunderstood when pronounced. So it can be said that many contemporary poems are much more understandable when they are seen that when they are read aloud.[430]

If writing was an imitation of talking, we should also suppose that it would have few problems providing a faithful representation of speech. Yet, as shown above, this supposition is unfounded in regards to 19th century Japan, and it is likewise problematic today. To praise an author for "realistic dialogue" is to confirm the basic incongruity between written and spoken language. This is not because the written word is a poor imitation of speech, but because writing is a fundamentally different process, and I would argue a largely independent one, from locution. However, Ong's notion of secondary orality does deserve attention, as we must concede that in secondary orality cultures like ours, talking—at least of the public variety—has become a kind of imitation writing. And if writing, in fact, forms the foundation of our public discourse, then we should be able to perceive a concern with the oral component in the written text.

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[430] Hajime Kijima, *The Poetry of Postwar Japan* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1975), xxv.

Aural and Visual Rhythm in *Godstar*

Rhythm in Furukawa's work can be interpreted to represent this preoccupation with orality. Yoshimasu Gōzō describes reading Furukawa's texts with attention to the rhythm as a "state of seeing unseen music."[431] Likewise the poet and music critic, Konuma Jun'ichi 小沼純一 (b. 1959) claims that the pleasure of reading Furukawa comes from the appreciation of the rhythm established by alternating short and long groupings of sound units and graphemes.[432] Konuma's remarks are particularly insightful in calling attention to the visual element of Furukawa's writing. Though the audio rhythm may be approximated in translation, due to the vastly different writing systems of English and Japanese, it proves near impossible to convey the visual structure. Consider the following passage:

> There's *speed* inside me. There's *speed* outside me too.
> So. That's right. Speed. Spread. Query. That's it. I've got to ask questions. Got to continue.

> スピードはあたしの内側にあるの。スピードはあたしの外側にもあるの。ねえ。だから。速度。展開。質問。それだ。あたしは質問しないと、つづけないと。 [433]

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[431] Furukawa and Yoshimasu, "Kisen naki," 73.

[432] Jun'ichi Konuma, "Yubi/koe no hoketousu [The Finger/Voice Hocket]," *Yuriika* Tokushū: Furukawa Hideo, no. 8 (August 2006): 195.

[433] Furukawa, *Godstar*, 88. Although *kaiten* 開展 can mean "expansion" or "development," I have rendered it as "spread" in an attempt to approximate the rhythm of the passage.

The syntactic structure of abrupt utterances is manipulated to reflect the semantic import of the word "speed," rendered as both *sokudo* 速度 and *supīdo* スピード in the original. Here, in other words, the form mirrors the content, and emphasizes a distinct aural rhythm. A noticeable burst of *speed* is inserted in the above passage: ねえ／だから／速度／展開／質問／それだ. The corresponding morea are: ne-e/da-ka-ra/so-ku-do/te-n-ka-i/shi-tsu-mo-n/so-re-da, which can be graphically represented as: **/***/***/****/****/*** (note that the four-morae sections may be shortened to three, because the moraic nasal, *n*, can sometimes elide with the preceding vowel to create a syllable). In addition to the audio effects, skillful orthographic manipulation creates a visual impact that operates in tandem with the rhythm of the sounds. Consider again the use of extremely short sentences that establishes the 2/3/2/2/2/3 grapheme group above (ねえ／だから／速度／展開／質問／それだ). Furukawa uses *sokudo* instead of *supīdo*, in this grouping to maintain the repetition of two-grapheme pattern. From the audio perspective it would not have made much difference had he used the four-morae *supīdo*, because it would have easily fit into a pattern with the four-morae *tenkai* and *shitsumon* that follow it. But had he used the clunky-looking *supīdo* スピード here, as he had in the previous paragraph, it would have upset the *visual* balance of the phrase. Likewise consider:

食欲。(*shokuyoku* "appetite")
速度。(*sokudo* "speed")
空腹。(*kūfuku* "hunger")
保護。(*hogo* "protection")

判断。(*handan* "judgement")[434]

The above five sentences are bookended by longer lines, and are thus visually set off from the rest of the text on the page. Although they consist of two graphemes each, thereby creating the visual rhythm through repetition, phonetically they represent a different number of morae; four, three, four, two, and four, respectively (****/***/****/**/****). The visual rhythm is anchored by the repetition of the two-grapheme structure, while the audio rhythm is anchored by the three four-morae phrases, and taken together with the alternating shorter phrases these rhythms suggest a feeling of expansion and contraction. This is the kind of audio-visual rhythm that Konuma discovers.

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Regression, Reflection, or Accomodation?

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It should be clear then, that the visual elements of the written text have an important place even in a work that emphasizes the aural experience. The availability of the ideographic *kanji* to the Japanese author enriches the available space to manipulate semantic, visual, and aural elements. In the words of Kijima, *kanji* "have not yet lost some essential charm to the poets as ideas or as things visualized."[435] This much holds true for Furukawa, as well. So what, then, should we do with the peculiar potpourri of literature, music, performance, etc., that characterizes Furukawa's career as an author? Do the performative elements and focus on orality indicate some kind of atavistic urge

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[434] Ibid., 91.

[435] Kijima, *Poetry of Postwar Japan*, xxiii.

towards the pre-modern mental state? The dearth of punctuation in *Godstar*, at least,

would appear to the roguish among us to channel the simpler, comma-free times of the

Heian court; or else, to Joycean, stream-of-consciousness modernist experimentation. But

we do not need to look backward for analogues. I think that the concept of secondary (i.e.,

purposeful) orality, can point us in the right direction—forward. That is to say, that a

concern with performance and orality partakes more directly of the highly technologized

multimedia-culture of the contemporary age.[436]

Attempting to contextualize Furukawa's performances in the present, we cannot

ignore certain obvious motivations. He is not shy about admitting that he likes to sell

books, for example, and is very pleased that his books sell so well at his live events (and

is disappointed that publishers are not more proactive in staging them).[437] He also has

some personal reasons that are essentially of the artistic, expressive kind. Peter Middleton

has theorized that one of the key features of literary performances is the opportunity for

the author to "perform authorship by reading her or his" works.[438] Accordingly,

Furukawa has said that one of the motivations for conducting these gigs is to give the

reader (audience) a look at the spot where novels are made, in other words, at authorship.

Musicians may be seen live on stage, but no one would be excited to see him tapping

away at his computer, Furukawa concedes as much. But what he wants to do is bring to

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[436] Karatani Kōjin would agree, I think. He conceives of the 1990s onward as the age
dominated my multimedia as a means of artistic expression. 1930-1990 being the age of
TV, 1870-1930 the age of film, 1810-1870 the age of the novel (*shōsetsu* 小説). Kōjin
Karatani, *Kindai bungaku no owari: Karatani Kōjin no genzai [The End of Modern
Literature: Karatani Kōjin's Contemporaneity]* (Tōkyō: Insukuriputo, 2005), 62.
[437] Furukawa, *Furukawa Speaks*, 22.
[438] Middleton, "How to Read," 22.

the stage some of the "fever and exhaustion and the feeling of being possessed," that he experience while writing a novel, which he contends is identical to the musician's feelings during performance.[439]

Furukawa's final motivation, which is not unrelated to the commercial concerns, is to make literature accessible to people who are not avid readers. This is a very contemporary concern, as the proliferation of various media platforms drives down the number of readers.[440] Nakamata Akio, expressed a similar wish for young people who are not particularly into literature to read current Japanese novels, and implied that this wish supplied the foundation for his book.[441] But how can this be done? How can a gateway to literature be created? Nakamata writes:

> Currently, novels are not read for their dogmatic content or for self-realization, but as means of sharing life's joys and pleasures with others; in this way they are identical to great film, music, and other elements of pop culture.[442]

I believe Nakamata hit on two important points in the above analysis; connecting with others and popular culture. Technological innovations have spurred an exponential broadening of the pop-cultural boundaries, and, by stimulating the integration of diverse media platforms, have created more competition to the written word. Therefore, in order to connect with potential readers in a generation raised in a multimedia environment, they need to be approached on the terms of their pop-cultural experience.

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[439] Furukawa, *Furukawa Speaks*, 248.
[440] Although this is certainly a contemporary concern, it was already part of common discourse in the post-WWII period.
[441] Nakamata, *Bungaku*, 13.
[442] Ibid.

Today, the smart phone is a window to the world. Websites that fail to make use of graphic-rich content stand out as particularly flat and unappealing. Likewise, facing decreasing advertisement revenue in print and bemoaning the death of print journalism in recent years, media outlets are moving toward a multimedia integration of text, sound, still photo, and video, to appeal to the news consumer. Educators are also encouraged to utilize not only PowerPoint presentations (this is especially true of large classes), but the latest in cloud computing, while shrinking university budgets compel rapid development of online courses. Karatani observed how emergent technologies of cinema and photography exposed redundancies in realist art.[443] I interpret Furukawa's focus on extra-literary elements against Karatani's analysis, and see Furukawa's preoccupation with music, movies, performance, and so forth, as an attempt to overcome the redundancy of the novel. Needless to say, Furukawa is not the first to have this response. Ōkuma Nobuyuki 大熊信行 (1893–1977) is known to have displayed a concern with orality. In the 1930s, Ōkuma advocated radio as a medium for literature because it could revive the lost sensual element of the word to its "original natural condition;" in other words, Ōkuma saw the move to orality as a restoration or return.[444] But I do not view it as a return to early- or pre-modern modes of communal recitation, but as a response to the multimedia-orientation in contemporary society. It is here that we may find the significance of Furukawa's gigs. In his analysis of poetry readings, Peter Middleton remarked that a literary reading "is a public airing of a written text for approval,

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[443] Karatani, *Kindai bungaku no owari*, 52-3.
[444] William O. Gardner, "Literature as Life-Form: Media and Modernism in the Literary Theory of Ōkuma Nobuyuki," *Monumenta Nipponica* 63, no. 2 (2008): 343.

communication, and above all oral publication […] it is both text and performance at once."[445] I submit that, if we view Furukawa's gigs in this light, we may come to understand them as multimedia creations, grounded in the popular culture experience of the target "others," with which its "joys and pleasures" are to be shared.[446]

Understandably, Furukawa wants to make his works accessible to the wider audience, and he is acutely aware of the advantage other media have in the contemporary environment dominated by multimedia:

> The nice thing about hit charts is that once a song gets on it, you'll hear it on the street and you'll see it on TV. There is a gateway to it everywhere. But for people who don't read books, maybe have never read a novel, they don't go to the libraries, so there is no gateway for them. When I decided to move past genres in my novels, I wanted to get those people's attention. My way of doing that is to first try to deliver my words through their ears.[447]

Japanese authors that enjoy great popularity, with Murakami and Yoshimoto in particular, have successfully tapped into the pop culture vein. Furukawa also has similar goals in mind, whether they are altruistic or commercial is probably beside the point; for him, performance presents such an avenue, and when he sits down to write, the concern with words as they would be heard by the ears of the uninitiated is never far from his mind, as can be witnessed in *Godstar*.

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[445] Middleton, "How to Read," 10.
[446] Furukawa hints at his awareness of the multimedia trend in his work, when he refers to it as "hybrid." However, he does not expand much further. Quoted in: Shibata, *Daihyō shitsumon*, 215.
[447] Furukawa, *Furukawa Speaks*, 19.

Conclusion

I have singled out *Godstar* in this chapter for a number of reasons. Firstly, for

strictly formal reasons, as it is stylistically distinct in Furukawa's oeuvre; secondly, for

the extra-literary elements that it reflects in Furukawa's artistic goals, which helps us get

a clearer perspective of his vision. Stylistically, *Godstar* is characterized by two

noticeable features: lack of commas and repetition, especially the formulaic dialogue

endings.[448] In the afterword Furukawa called attention to the lack of commas and

chapters in the novel. He further went on to outline his expectations for the readers:

"There are no commas in this book. There are no chapters in this book. No supernatural

elements. It doesn't need to be interpreted. I want you to surrender to it. To the words. To

what is happening." Furukawa displayed a similar sentiment a year prior to the

composition of *Godstar* in his conversation with the *manzai* duo Bakushō Mondai,

exhibiting a distrust of an interpretive approach divorced from a visceral appreciation.

> You may not understand the meaning, but if you can just appreciate something
> cool in the rhythm, your body should be able to comprehend. Reading is not a
> language class, you don't have to answer what purpose this and that serves. I hate
> that.[449]

Hopefully the present author may be pardoned for thrusting his tentative toe in the

interpretive waters, but presumably Furukawa does not damn a close, interpretive reading

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[448] Most utterances end in " [subject] said/thought." 〜とあたしはいう。〜とカリヲ
はいう。〜と明治はいう。This is not an unusual ending as such, but the sheer volume
suggests a motivated usage.
[449] Hideo Furukawa and Bakushō Mondai, "Bungaku wa tero da [Literature is
Terrorism]," *Bungei* Tokushū: Furukawa Hideo, no. Autumn (2007): 34.

provided that it is grounded first in an instinctual response. What this means for the

critical analyst is the following. Because Furukawa feels strongly that formal elements of

his work, especially the rhythms he creates, are central to its comprehension, any

hermeneutics taking Furukawa's fiction as its object ought to address those elements

specifically, and perhaps those elements that elicit a visceral reaction, broadly.[450]

The primacy of the innate response to literature lies at the heart of the aesthetic

problem. However, I prefer to extend problems of aesthetics beyond the question of what

is beautiful to the question of what makes a given work effective and how it operates. In

Godstar a distinct rhythmic pattern is established through the use of repetition and

strategic alternation of long and short utterances, punctuated by staccato phrases resulting

from deliberate exclusion of commas from the text. Overlapping with repetition, a

rhythmic pulse is also achieved as a consequence of a continual reevaluation of previous

statements, which is itself an outcome of Atashi's internal dialectic—the principal

narrative device. The unreliability of the narrator and the thematic of manufacturing

reality are manifestations of the operation of this device. Even the importance of aural

reception in congress with its textual/visual counterpart may be read as representative of

the dialectical operation, and indeed, the dialectical relationship of the creator and

elocutionist itself.

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[450] I do not mean to suggest that *Godstar* is Furukawa's sole novel that displays his sensitivity to its aural appreciation. However, *Godstar* is one of the better examples, because of the sustained nature of the attention to sound and rhythm. *Godstar* is also one of the earliest cases. Another good example is the recently released novel *MUSIC* (2010), parts of which were first released as an audio recording, but this was long after Furukawa began his "gigs," whereas *Godstar* was composed during the early period of his increasing involvement in performance reading.

Godstar also lends itself readily as a springboard for a broader discussion of Furukawa's interests as an author. It is clear that he is not content with a role as author of novels, in the traditional sense; he wants to lead a life in which "he is not locked within the confines of novels only."[451] But what does that tell us about his literary motivations and the context in which they are nurtured? Ultimately, isn't this restlessness a reflection of contemporary life as much as an accommodation of the new breed of reader? To be sure, Furukawa's literary production is steeped in his artistic and pop-cultural heritage of novels, music, theater, movies, and poetry, but it is the integration of these media that is particularly reflective of contemporary urban realities of advanced nations like Japan. It goes without saying, that the economic considerations play an important role in Furukawa's decision-making process—he was once a starving artist, and he does not seem eager to resume that existence. However, I would caution that too heavy a reliance on economic theory runs the risk of descent into facileness. Besides, an author is rarely faced between choosing strictly guns or strictly butter, anyway.

Furukawa does want to be a bestselling novelist—that much is no secret—but that does not preclude his work from displaying sincerity. I hope to have been able to highlight in the analysis of *Godstar*, some of Furukawa's sub-textual digging towards the heart of fiction. So what exactly lies at the heart? In the final analysis, one fears that, much like his protagonist, the author "cannot say." But, perhaps if we incline our ear, just like his target reader, some of the words may seep slowly in.

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[451] Furukawa, *Furukawa Speaks*, 26.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Regardless of how long a study such as this one may get, no matter how comprehensive the aims, and irrespective of the purity of the author's intentions, the uneasy feeling abides that I have over-simplified, skewed, or otherwise distorted the life and work of my hapless subject, Furukawa Hideo. I have, in a sense, attempted to compact the past decade of a man's life into a little over 100 pages, and doubtless there are mistakes. But one has to start somewhere, and as of today very few people in English-speaking countries know anything about Furukawa. At least that much I hope to have addressed. I began this study by lamenting the lack of critical examinations of new authors, and since this thesis developed in response to my own criticism, Furukawa's work needed to be dealt with on a critical level. I do not know what Furukawa himself would have to say about my theoretical attempts, but my every use of the contents in the theoretical toolkit has been with the utmost respect to a given novel's integrity, and with the sincere intent of understanding how a literary work functioned.

What are the fruits of this investigation? Firstly, there now exists a brief summary of Furukawa's fiction and an outline of his biography available in English, as found in Chapter 2. Hopefully it can be of some use as a reference for future investigators. In Chapter 3, I placed Furukawa into a literary lineage that extends to Murakami Haruki, a major influence on Furukawa. The relationship between Murakami's and Furukawa's work should make the latter's more accessible. However, the relationship between their literatures can also be examined minutely with fruitful results. To do so, I have suggested

an approach from the cognitive sciences that accounts for human creativity in terms of 'cognitive integration,' or the process of creating new meaning from two existing domains. I have shown that this is precisely the process that underpins our interpretive exercise of reading one work against another (or a number of others), and also makes other readings difficult to achieve (due to the efficiency principle). Although situating Furukawa within a broader context of Japanese literature is important, I also highlighted the elements of his literature that make his work uniquely interesting. In Chapter 4, I posit the notion of the theme-space matrix along which Furukawa's prize-winning *LOVE* may be read, with particular focus on the "Heart/Hearts" section, which best exemplifies the structure of the narrative cartography.

Furukawa is known as a writer who is not afraid to step out from the comfortable light of the computer screen. He has read his works live, in collaboration with well-known musicians, orchestrating reading 'gigs' that can be classified somewhere between music and literature. Outside the stage, I have also emphasized the element of performance that shapes Furukawa's literary production, examining *Godstar* as a representative work. I argued against the tempting, but erroneous, consideration of such performances as a return to a pre-modern mode of narrative. On the contrary, Furukawa's performances are, if anything, hyper-modern as they reflex the general multimedia trend in contemporary post-industrialized society. They are motivated by commercial interests, by the need for artistic expression, and as a form of public service—by opening the gateways to literary enjoyment to an audience that may not regularly read novels.

Furukawa, then, is a manifold kind of author, no longer content with expression that is bound to words on a page. The words that are on the page—this is still his primary mode of creation as far as I can tell—must be constantly updated, the style altered, the scenery changed. Familiar haunts will not keep him satisfied. This restlessness itself, I think, reflects the age of the short attention span and the fashionably-busy lifestyle. There is a folk expression in Russian that roughly translates to: "Movement is life!" Perhaps it is not so bad to keep moving, and maybe, Furukawa the author, that body in motion, will someday prove his longevity.

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