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ไขความลับจากปรากฏการณ์เหนือธรรมชาติในไลต์โนเวลเรื่องยัวร์เนม ของมาโคโตะ ชินไค

Unlocking the Mysteries of the Reenchanted World in Makoto Shinkai's Light Novel, Your Name

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บทคัดย่อ

บทความวิชาการนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่ออธิบายความสัมพันธ์ซึ่งกันและกันระหว่างมนุษย์และอมนุษย์ ระหว่างร่างกายและสิ่งแวดล้อมชีวกายภาพ ผ่านการตีความตัวบท พิธีกรรม เรื่องเล่าท้องถิ่นที่สอดแทรกในตัวบทหลัก รวมถึงเหตุการณ์เหนือธรรมชาติที่เกิดขึ้นกับตัวละครหลักในไลต์โนเวลของมาโคโตะ ชินไค ฉบับภาษาอังกฤษเรื่อง Your Name โดยใช้ทฤษฎีนิเวศวิจารณ์เชิงวัตถุวิพากษ์

ผลการวิเคราะห์ตัวบทพบว่า การสลับร่างของตัวละครหลักชาย-หญิง ภูมิปัญญาท้องถิ่นในการถักเชือกทอมือแบบญี่ปุ่น (kumihimo/musubi) เรื่องเล่าปรัมปราเกี่ยวกับเวลาสนธยา (tasokare) และพิธีกรรมการเต้นบูชาเทพเจ้า (miko kakura)

ในช่วงเทศกาลเก็บเกี่ยวนั้น หักล้างต่อการรับรู้ความเป็นจริงแบบแยกส่วน ซึ่งทำให้ผู้อ่านหลุดออกจากความลวงที่ว่า วัตถุแต่ละชิ้น สรรพสิ่งต่าง ๆ รวมถึงห้วงเวลา (อดีต ปัจจุบัน อนาคต) นั้นแยกส่วนและเป็นอิสระจากกัน ในทางกลับกัน ภูมิปัญญาท้องถิ่นและเรื่องเล่าปรัมปราของญี่ปุ่นทำหน้าที่เป็นตัวกลางหรือเอเย่นต์ในการเชื่อมโยงเครือข่ายขององค์ประกอบภายในร่างกายที่สัมพันธ์กับสิ่งแวดล้อมภายนอก รวมถึงความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างสารอินทรีย์และสารอนินทรีย์ และการเชื่อมกันของธรรมชาติและอารยธรรมเมือง ในระดับจุลภาคและมหภาคอีกด้วย ทั้งนี้ความเชื่อในลัทธิชินโตที่ว่า ไม่ได้มีวิญญาณอยู่ในเฉพาะมนุษย์ แต่มีวิญญาณสิงสู่ในสิ่งอื่นด้วย เช่น ก้อนหิน ต้นไม้ และวัตถุไร้ชีวิต หยั่งรากลึกโดยตรงต่อภูมิปัญญาพื้นบ้าน พิธีกรรมและเรื่องเล่าท้องถิ่นในญี่ปุ่น อีกทั้งยังสอดคล้องต่อแนวคิดทฤษฎีนิเวศวิจารณ์เชิงวัตถุในโลกตะวันตกและวิทยาศาสตร์ชีวภาพสมัยใหม่โดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่งเรื่องเล่าต่าง ๆ และพิธีกรรมดังกล่าวใน *Your Name* นั้น ไม่เพียงแต่ทำลายเส้นแบ่งระหว่างจินตนาการและความจริงที่จับต้องได้ในเชิงวัตถุ แต่กลับหลอมรวมโลกจินตนาการและโลกความจริงเชิงวัตถุเข้าไว้เป็นอันหนึ่งอันเดียวกัน

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Abstract

This academic article aims to describe the interdependence between humans and non-humans and between human physicality and biophysical environment, by employing material ecocriticism. This article aims to provide an ecological interpretation of the text, rituals, folklore embedded in the core narrative, and supernatural events that affect the protagonists in Makoto Shinkai's light novel Your Name (2017, English version).

The textual analysis reveals that the protagonists' body-swapping, Japanese traditional craftsmanship of braided cords (kumihimo/musubi), twilight folklore (tasokare), and the sacred maiden dance ritual (miko kakura) during the harvest festival challenge the fragmented human perception of reality.

Through interconnected events and folklores in *Your Name*, the readers are disenchanted with the claim that each physical thing, all entities and the time: past, present and future, are split and separately independent from each other. In reverse, the Japanese local wisdom and folklore function as a medium or an agency in materially interweaving networks of human internal physicality associated with outer environment, of the linkage between organic and inorganic compounds and of the undivided connection between nature and urban civilisation from micro to macro scales. Also, the belief in Shinto, that spiritual essence not only inhabit in humans, but also manifests in multiple forms: rocks, trees and other inanimate objects, is deeply and explicitly rooted in Japanese local wisdom, ritual and, folklores. This ancient oriental belief coincides with material ecocriticism and modern biological science originated in Western world. Specifically, the narratives and rituals in Your Name eliminate the blurred boundaries between imaginative fantasy and tangible reality; instead, these two spheres are fused into one.

Keywords: Your Name, Material Ecocriticism, Folklores, Rituals

Introduction

The notion of nature has long been discussed as the subject of ecocritical analysis and ecological theorists have revealed the perils of a modern supposition of nature that debars culture and its role in ecological crisis (Feder, 2016: 1). Also, human beings are positioned as outside ecological conditions and as superior to the other inhabitants of the world. This is often mistakenly understood as the idea of culture—an exclusive realm of human enterprise—that inherently excludes the natural domain due to binary opposition (Feder, 2016: 1). However, human beings, actually, are part of a social and natural network of life that nourishes and sustain us. We will never comprehend this web of life until we deal with it, since every man and woman we meet, every institute that we are involved with, every tree, every animal, and every object is working as part of an ecosystem to foster each other. This interrelationship introduces us to a glimpse of ecological postmodernism that "we are the world, the ecological interconnectedness of biologically diverse subjects.[...] We are the one among many in this shared world and universe, living in interwoven interspecies communities, a series of poleis themselves comprised of differing societies" (Feder, 2016: 5). Simply stated, everything in the universe is interrelated and interdependent, including our bodies, and souls, recapitulating the trope represented in *Your Name*, that "We're bound to one another, almost inseparable, like an infant cradled at its mother's breast" (Shinkai et al., 2017: 3).

In *Your Name* (2017), Makoto Shinkai points to the ecocritical relation through the story of Mitsuha, the girl who lives in the countryside

town of Itomori, and Taki, who lives in Tokyo as a high-school student. Their souls have switched into each other's bodies. Likewise, the folk tales, that are embedded and narrated along the whole storyline emphasise "the vitality of all things in all natural-cultural processes" (Serenella and Oppermann, 2014: 22), which I will discuss further. The story begins with a high school students Taki Tachibana and Mitsuha Miyamizu, who abruptly begin to swap bodies even though they have never met, triggering chaos and supernatural events on each other's lives. The novel was inspired by the natural disasters in Japan. The climax was that Mitsuha died and disappeared after a comet struck her hometown, Itomori. Then, Taki embarked on a quest to unravel the tragedy and prevent Mitsuha's death.

Your Name was the light novel, that was first published in Japanese language in 2016. After it gained successful reception in the country, *Your Name* was produced in an animation film version as well as its light novel was translated into English in 2017. The term, light novel was originated in Japan and was coined by Keita Kamikita in 1990, that is wildly classified as young adult literature. The thick of pages is still ambiguous to define precisely but it is not as long as the traditional novel. This type of novel is suitably compared to novella for the literary genre.

The investigation on Makoto Shinkai's collection of light novels (novellas) has rarely found in literary academia—rather, his audio-visual presentation through animated films has been examined. Nevertheless, the narrative details in both Shinkai's animation of *Your Name* (2016) and its light novel version (2017) translated in English are synonymous. I, therefore, opt to explore the previous studies on Makoto Shinkai's animated films

instead. Criticisms of Makoto Shinkai's animated films from ecocritical and cultural aspects are still regarded as an uncharted area, compared to other literary themes. Yoneyama (2020: 3) argues that modernity, scientific knowledge and Anthropocene in Shinkai's *Weathering with You* (2019), become sore spots for human proximity to nature. He also offers that 'postmodern animism' potentially eliminate the deep-seated boundaries between the life-world and spiritual-world (Yoneyama, 2020: 4-5). Critical opinion towards the same film is suggested by Mulyadi (2022: 3-4) that, through empirical data from scientific research, human activities inevitably engender the threat of floods, droughts, climate changes and economic losses. Additionally, Li (2024: 338-341), echoes the eco-degradation caused by Anthropocene including natural hazard and earthquakes in *Your name* (2016) and *Weathering with You* (2019), that is intrinsically interlocked with the real-world catastrophes in Japan's recent decade. Li (2024: 340-342) explores further on the prevailing heterosexual hegemony in Japanese society, that mostly influences the plots of these two films. In terms of psychological scrutiny, Chen (2024: 2-4) chooses to view Shinkai's animation as the aesthetic interrelationship between emotions: regret, love, and isolation and modern computer technology, encouraging hope and motivation for human life.

The previous studies revolve around the environmental urgency and Japanese socio-cultural aspects. Alternatively, this article will employ the material ecocriticism to explore the role of narratives, significant events and characters in the configuration of human and non-human

interconnectedness. Then, I will dig deeper on the interdependence between organic and inorganic matters from micro to macro scales.

Analysis on the Interlaced Threads of Folklores, Ritual and Materiality

To place *Your Name* in the context of ecocriticism, Shinkai inserts the various Japanese folklores to interweave the series of key incidents and to unveil the motives behind the complication of these inexplicably miraculous events in this light novel. Firstly, he begins with the folklore of 'musubi', which is the local wisdom of Itomori town in making braided cords (See Figure 1) and in the old Japanese language also means "a creator of spirits of everything in nature. It's a word with several very profound meanings" (Shinkai et al., 2017: 59).

Figure 1 Hitoha, Mitsuha's grandmother is teaching her granddaughters a specific technique for making Japanese braided cords (kumihimo) : (CoMix Wave Films, 2016: Online)

This folklore is further narrated by Hitoha, Mitsuha's grandmother, who says that: 'Joining threads is called *musubi*. Joining people is also

musubi. The passage of time is *musubi*, too. [...] It describes the braided cords we make, divine acts, and the flow of time itself (Shinkai et al., 2017: 59).' Here, the grandma's storytelling can function as 'narrative agency that are self-representational, interlocked with human social practices, and compounded of each other, like "the partners in infoldings of the flesh" (Serenella and Oppermann, 2014: 28).' The role of this narrative agency is to demonstrate 'nature's literacy' in dismantling binary distinctions—such as male and female, culture and nature, and reason and passion.

To highlight the process of deconstructing binary perception and the grandmother's narrative agency of musubi (joining people), this concept is illustrated through the moment when Taki and Mitsuha realise they have switched bodies. Such act of bodily switching mirrors trans-corporeal interchanges. This, in other words, is a 'reenchanted world', where every entity, living or non-living, macro or micro, enacts causal structures, which Karen Barad calls 'differential responsiveness' and "differential articulations" (Serenella and Oppermann, 2014: 26). Biologically speaking, in terms of 'differential responsiveness,' Mitsuha first learns to embrace male physical qualities through Taki's male body: she thinks "my boobs are gone/his neck looks stiff/ there is something asserting in the middle of my freakishly visible lower body." (Shinkai et al., 2017: 34). Then in terms of 'differential articulations', through living in the city of Tokyo, Mitsuha in Taki's body starts to abstractly acquire civilization, technology, rules and orders, which are considered to be part of masculinity, according to dualistic concept, as she says: "I used my smartphone's GPS to get here (school)", I'm late for part-time work! But I've never worked a part-time job before [...]

This is a total nightmare!" (Shinkai et al., 2017: 37, 42). Before the act of body-swapping, Mitsuha spends her everyday life in a rural 'dinky town', which 'doesn't have a bookstore, a dentist, or a McDonald's'. If the commerce of these shops can be interpreted as civilization and culture, then it is the characteristics of masculinity that Mitsuha lacks. However, she can learn it through living in the body of Taki. Also, the oneness between humans and inanimate objects in 'eco-cosmopolitanism' is clearly depicted as well as is linked through 'a cybernetic system' (GPS and internet) of interrelated processes (Schliephake, 2015: xii).

In contrast, Taki, in Mitsuha's body, learns to become familiar with the female body – "I reach for her breasts, this is my body today" (Shinkai et al., 2017: 57). Then, he spiritually and gradually absorbs the values of sublime nature and sensual passion, which are regarded as feminine, as he says "everything I eat when I'm in Mitsuha's body tastes really good", and "the boondocks are all kinds of awesome" (Shinkai et al., 2017: 117, 61). More importantly, the act of swapping bodies between these two male-female characters symbolically illustrates 'the broader onto-epistemology, a wider framework of 'co-constitution of matter' that interconnects and deconstructs the hierarchy of two polarised terms of dichotomous thinking (Serenella and Oppermann, 2014: 27), such as natural and feminine factors represented through Mitsuha's body versus cultural and masculine factors manifested through Taki's body. This physical-spiritual interrelation of both Taki and Mitsuha does not only reveal the transgression of the fixed binary value of male body over female's, but also shows the postmodern ecocritical thought that cherishes the equality in both two opposing genders

and in nature and civilization. This preternatural phenomenon of their bodies switching accentuates porous and fluid systems between the rural sphere and cosmopolitan one (Schliephake, 2015: 12). This is because Mitsuha, representing rural life and nature, and Taki, representing civilization and technology, both must adapt, absorb, and learn to inhabit a newly altered sphere, demonstrating that uniting the nature-culture spheres in harmony is not an insurmountable obstacle.

In addition, Shinkai depicts another folklore, Tasokare (Twilight), to validate the interconnectedness of the past, present, and future through the switching of these two characters and to profoundly reinforce the narrative of musubi— the passage, the flow of time, and the joining of people. After realizing that their timelines have been separated by three years all along, Mitsuha and Taki both wander to the summit of the mountain in Itomori one evening to connect and meet each other. However, due to the timeline discrepancy, they can feel each other's presence but are unable to see one another. Despite living in each other's present, Mitsuha exists in Taki's past, whereas Taki exists in Mitsuha's future. In this case, Taki, while thinking of Mitsuha, is reminded of the folklore of 'Tasokare' (Twilight): "That's right. There were names for this time of the day [...] when the outlines blur, when you might encounter something (spirits) not of this world. *Half-light*" (Shinkai et al., 2017: 135). Taki employs twilight—the time marked by its in-betweenness and blurred boundaries—as a medium to link his own physical body, inhabiting the present, with Mitsuha's physical body in his past. Meanwhile, Mitsuha, who also lives in her own time, tries to seize a moment of twilight to connect with Taki, who

exists in her future (see Figure 2). Similar to the story of *musubi*, the folklore of *Tasokare* (Twilight) functions as a narrative agency that conceptually challenges readers' perception by blurring the line between reality and imagination, as well as between humans and non-humans, including invisible souls and spectral entities (James and Morel, 2018: 360-362).

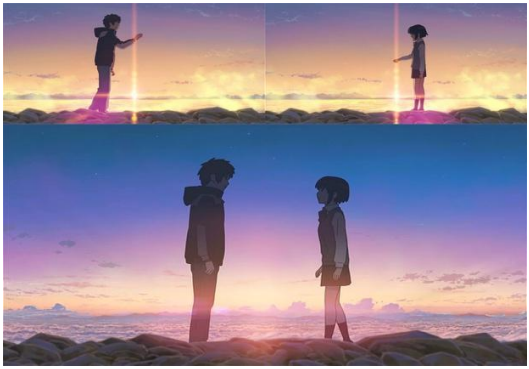

Figure 2 Twilight creates a temporal time-space rupture that connects Taki and Mitsuha, allowing them to finally meet : (CoMix Wave Films, 2016: Online)

To elaborate, the act of body-swapping can be explained as the ‘interpenetration of various beings.’ Similarly, this improbable miracle illustrates the ‘interpenetration of discourses and meaning’ between the folklores of *musubi* and *Tasokare* (Twilight), which are mutually intertwined and enacted into reality through the link between the past—embodied in Mitsuha’s physical form—and the future—embodied in Taki’s physical

body. The interconnectedness of Taki and Mitsuha's divided timelines elucidates the 'relational ontologies' and the idea of an unbroken wholeness within an undivided universe in quantum physics, including the relational flow of time" (Serenella and Oppermann, 2014: 26). This directly highlights the important role of the two Japanese narratives, *Tasokare* and *musubi*, in revealing "the dynamic topology where there is no before and after, but an ongoing process of intra-inter acting agencies generating the world's 'exuberant creativeness'" (Serenella and Oppermann, 2014: 27). Conversely, based on the material ecocritical context in *Your Name*, both the interdependence of these two physical bodies and the interlinking of past, present, and future represent 'exuberant creativeness.' Meanwhile, the folklore narratives serve as 'an ongoing process of intra-interacting agencies,' entailing the interconnection of these different physical bodies and timelines.

The concept of 'unbroken wholeness' can be observed when Grandma Hitoha tells Taki, who is drinking barley tea, "Putting anything in your body, whether it's water, rice, or sake, is also called *musubi.* [...] What you put in your body binds to your soul" (Shinkai et al., 2017: 60). Also, when Mitsuha is performing a ceremonial shrine maiden dance during the harvest festival, the Great Mayugorou Fire, she has to make a sake by "chewing rice into the box [...] The mixture of grain and saliva dribbles from her mouth. Then just let it sit, it ferments and turns into alcohol. Then it's offered to the gods for them to bring prosperity to the village" (Shinkai et al., 2017: 26). The processes of Taki drinking tea and Mitsuha making a sake to offer the god at the shrine, it echoes the relation ontology, which is

recognized as ‘ the vitality of all things in all natural-cultural processes and it cultivates the ideas of restoring “health and aliveness through an empowered new vision” (Serenella and Oppermann, 2014: 22). The ‘barley tea’, ‘the grain’, ‘the rice’, ‘Taki’ and ‘Mitsuha’s saliva’ are parts of nature; while the harvest festival and grandma’s narrative are parts of culture. In essence, the cultural beliefs of gods and nature are inextricably entwined to operate together as an interdependence and influence the way of life, which explicitly results in the health of Taki’s body when drinking tea and the prosperity, the ‘aliveness’ of the village after harvesting rice and fermenting it into alcohol for local villagers to drink and sell.

Moreover, a ritual dance for the harvest festival held at the Miyamizu Shrine, where Mitsuha has to “wear crisp shrine maiden outfit, paint on bright-red lip rouge [...] go out in front of standing audience at the hall, to chant and dance [...] and make a sake” (Shinkai et al., 2017: 25), denotes the Shinto belief embedded in Japanese culture. This Japanese ritual is generally “a vivid demonstration of the symbolic powers of the narrative text, and indeed of any Buddhist text, able to transform bad to good, to eradicate evil and to purify all things” (Reader, 2001: 35). Likewise, this ritual also inspires a sense of awe, which is expressed through its natural special quality and sense of vitality. Thus, rocks, trees, rivers and mountains, for example, might be regarded as locations or manifestations of power of *kami* (natural deities) (Reader, 2001: 25), mirroring the belief of ‘a creator of spirits of everything in nature’ in the folklore of *musubi*. However, “they are not just expressions of natural force; but it reflects the continuity between humans and *kami* (natural deities), meaning that human beings too can

become *kami*, who retain an influence in this world (Reader 2001: 25)." Consequently, the entire harvest festival, the sake- making process, Grandma's story of binding with food and drinks, and the concept of Shinto are directly related to what Gregory Bateson (1979: 13) posits in *Mind and Nature*: "we are parts of a living world". [...] and thinking in terms of stories does not isolate human beings as something separate from the starfish and the sea anemones, the coconut palms and the primroses".

Furthermore, not only is the interconnectedness between humans, as well as between nature and culture, portrayed in this novel, but the interdependence between organic and inorganic matter is also emphasized. As time passes, Taki's memory of Mitsuha and Itomori begins to fade. He then uses the sketch of Itomori that he drew as a navigational tool to search for it. Finally, a man from Itomori recognises it; 'the ramen shop owner [...] considers the sketch. "Itomori! Yeah.. It's near here. Why couldn't I remember that?" (Shinkai et al., 2017: 82-83), and volunteers to take Taki to this place. In terms of cultural memory, the evocation of Taki's memory and the shop owner's ability to remember are associated with the human brain and a remembering process that "depends on invention as much as retrieval" (Rigby and Goodbody, 2011: 58). Through this, "it is generally held that memories are not stores of complete sets of sense data but they have to be reactivated in processes linking them up into patterns of information" (Rigby and Goodbody, 2011: 58). Accordingly, the sketch of Itomori serves as an invention that supports retrieval, and this sketch relies on the process of restoring memories, carried out by Taki and the ramen shop owner. It discloses the role of materials such as texts, images, and the body (the

brain) in tracing the memory of a place, which constitutes physical links mediating between the present and the past, making the place of memory an auratic perception of an instant encounter with a forgotten past. In this case, a place—Itomori town—symbolizes events and associated values, as it possesses an indexical relationship with their meaning. Not only does it bridge the gap between mental elements and reality with a unique degree of physical validity and longevity, but it is also an ordinary site where people and collective memories reinforce each other.

Correspondingly, the interlocking of organic and inorganic matter is also represented. Beginning at the micro scale, Taki finds a way to re-enter Mitsuha's body in order to trace all her memories, and eventually, he can evoke them as he thinks:

> Mitsuha or at least some fragment of her heart, is still here[..] her cells, her fingers remember the shape of her uniform. When Mitsuha's eyes see her friends, I feel relieved. Without even asking, I can tell who Mitsuha likes and who she's not comfortable around (Shinkai et al., 2017: 128).

The exposition of Taki's invocation of 'the fingers' and 'the cells' for memory restoration attests to the concept of 'internal relations', in which "the cells of one's body are constantly furnishing their little experiences or feelings which, being pooled in our comprehensive experience, constitute what we call our sensations" (Serenella and Oppermann, 2014: 24). To illustrate, Taki's desire to sustain memory is a form of 'sensation,' wherein the cells internally collaborate to achieve this goal. His desire is also connected to the mind, which is conceptualized as a physical place. In

Spirits that matter: Pathways toward a rematerialization of religion and spirituality, Rigby states:

> 'The mind is composed of tissue and blood, of cells and atoms, and possesses all the knowledge of the cell, all the balance of the atom. In this case, we are connected not only by the fact of our reliance on this biosphere and our involvement in one field of matter and energy, where there is no boundary exists between my skin and the air and you, but also by what we know and what we feel.' (Rigby, 2014: 299).

These procedures, therefore, highlight the interrelationship between Taki's memory, which operates closely with the brain and cells, and the object (the sketch), which belongs to the non-human sphere, as well as the ramen shop owner, who represents the human domain. Together, they work to ultimately discover the place.

Apart from the micro scale of bodily or internal relations, the interdependence of the young adults in evacuating the villagers from the comet's destruction in Itomori town similarly represents the macro scale—the universal level of an integral relationship between humanity and the more-than-human world. The collaboration of the people is illustrated through identity and the role of each person, such as Tesshi, whose family owns a construction company and has to explode a high voltage substation in order to get the attention of villagers; "I'm the explosive guy" (Shinkai et al., 2017: 118). Saya has been widely known as 'the one in charge of the broadcast' to disseminate the warning information to people. Also, Mitsuha, the mayor's daughter, can tell her father to prepare security for the

town. Based on the concept of identity, this alliance reveals that "human beings are socially embedded, members of different ethnic, religious, cultural group, and are mutually related to the others in countless formal and informal ways" (Parekh, 2008: 9). Thus, they know that "they belong, to a distinct species and decide how they should live and conduct themselves as human beings in societies" (Parekh, 2008: 9). The notion of identity resonates the relation ontologies of postmodern thought that basic units of nature, such as atoms and molecules and nature's individual units have to mutually interact and interchange in the ecosystem (Serenella and Oppermann, 2014: 22). Here, the comet functions as a catalyst to embellish this concept of human, cultural and social relation.

The delineation of a comet crashing into the world displays the material vitality of non-human forces and a clearly ecological and cosmological process. This can be metaphorically discerned from the natural surroundings as 'Charlene Spretnak regarding life processes: "Animate or inanimate, our relatives are all around us, lighting the sky, rushing through a riverbed, thrusting upward through Earth's crust" (Serenalla and Oppermann, 2014: 25). However, this phenomenon goes beyond the supposition of natural disaster, but it implies us an infinite cycle of death and birth as well. This can be justified as it is narrated that:

> The meteorite strikes a village in the mountains. Many people die. A lake forms and the village is destroyed. Time passes, and another village grows up around the lake. The lake provides fish, and the heavenly iron provides wealth. The village prospers. Age pass, and the comet arrives again. Once again, the star falls and people die (Shinkai et al., 2017: 103).

This eternal pattern of natural regeneration mirrors mirrors “the ancient Buddhist notion of impermanence (*anicca*) [...], echoing conceptual formations of the new materialisms and material ecocriticism” (Serenella and Oppermann, 2014: 291). Elaborately put, the death of people and the rebirth of the village exhibits the clear picture of impermanence, which is enacted by the supremacy of time, as well as to illustrate “the replenishing sources of renewal in natural cycles (Serenella and Oppermann, 2014: 287)”, that is originated from the meteorites striking. Thus, the death of the village is attributed to the birth of the lake and the living things. In addition, this natural cycle, stemming from the comet crashing into the earth, draws a parallel with the smaller scale of the death and birth of human beings, that are portrayed through the birth of Mitsuha’s sister. After hallucinating that “the comet strikes (his) body” (Shinkai et al., 2017: 99), Taki gets fainted and sees in his dream the process of giving birth of Mitsuha’s sister, Yotsuha, “the umbilical cord is cut [...] As if in exchange for that joy, her mother falls ill, then die” (Shinkai et al., 2017: 104). From this context, Yotsuha can be interpreted as a comet, the destruction occurring to her mother and Yotsuha can symbolizes the lake, which is regarded as a rebirth; whereas, her mother can symbolically be compared with the village. Again, both life and death cycle illustrated through the comet striking and the birth of Yoitsuha strengthens the key concept of interconnectedness manifested in folktale of *musubi* that “(everything) coming together to form a shape, twistin’ and tanglin’, sometimes comin’ undone, breakin’off, then reuniting” (Shinkai et al., 2017: 59).

Conclusion

The global crises of today, including racism, sexism, and climate change, are ascribed to the modern concept of the disenchantment of nature or the fragmentary perception of reality—an effort to divide and separate what is inherently indivisible in nature. Instead, nothing in nature exists in isolation; rather, it is part of a complex interrelationship between entities in the ecosystem. In *Your Name*, the author attempts to deconstruct the dualism between masculinity and femininity, as well as between humans and non-humans, by metaphorically depicting the impossible phenomenon of body-swapping between Mitsuha and Taki. More importantly, the reinterpretation of the text and the Japanese folklore embedded throughout the story, such as *musubi*, not only provides us with a sense of cultural and religious belief but also conveys profound meanings, including the sense of unbroken wholeness of all things in the universe. Being aware of their importance and understanding how the world's narratives convey meaning can lead readers to an awakening—the power to change the world. This is emphasized by James and Morel (2018: 357–358), who argue that narratives about nature, the environment, and societies serve as the most effective tools for equipping humans to address environmental urgencies.

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