

‘Wolves or People?’: Lupine Loss and the Liquidation of the Nuclear Family
in Mamoru Hosoda’s *Wolf Children* (2012)

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Abstract: This essay examines an alternative eco-familial reading of Mamoru Hosoda’s manga film, *Wolf Children* (2012) through an analysis of Japanese extinction anxieties further exacerbated by 3/11. By reading the film through a minor history of the extinction of the Honshu wolf as a metaphor for 3/11, I argue that an examination of the degradation of Japanese preindustrial “stem family” and the fabulative expression of species cooperation and hybridity can more effectively be framed by the popular Japanese imaginary as a lupine apocalypse. In a reading of Deleuze and Guattari on becoming-animal, the omnipresence of lupine loss in the institutions of the home, work, and schools of contemporary Japan, interrogated in many manga, anime, and video game series like *Wolf Children*, further reveals the ambivalence of post-3/11 artists as they approach family and the State in seeking out more nonhuman depictions of Japan. In this reading of becoming-wolf, Hosoda’s resituates the family/fairy-tale film as a complex critique of the millennial revival of a nuclear Japan in the age of economic and environmental precarity and collapse. I hope to explore the nuances and contradictions of Hosoda’s recapitulation of family through a celebration of Deleuzo-Guattarian pack affects and an introduction of the possibilities of “making kin,” as Donna Haraway explains, at the ends of the Anthropocene.

Keywords: 3/11 manga, becoming-wolf, Mamoru Hosoda, *Wolf Children*, making kin

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Introduction: Lupine Loss as the Foreclosure of Renewal

In 1999, the villagers of a sleepy timber town called Higashi Yoshino, located in the mountainous prefecture of Nara, erected a monument of a wolf on the side of the road next to the Takami River where logging operations continue to this day. Below the wolf statue, howling stiffly in memorium, is a haiku by Toshio Mihashi: “I walk / With that wolf / That is no more”.¹ This statue memorializes the 1905 extinction of the Japanese Honshu wolf in Higashi Yoshino. In 2002, Brett Walker, an American environmental historian, visited the statue seeking information about the wolf’s extinction. Through local interviews conducted in the town and journalistic accounts of the event, Walker laments the loss of the last Japanese wolf, detailing the event:

the hapless wolf had strayed near a log pile while chasing deer, where hunters had promptly killed it. Initially, they had thrown the carcass away; but after hearing that [an antiquarian] had come to the village to buy dead animals, they decided to bring it to the Hōgetsurō Inn to see if it might fetch a price [...] The Japanese wolf proved to be the last of its kind.²

Walker, however, was disappointed with the statue, remarking that it was a forgotten historical site, noting that even locals seemed surprised when he arrived to see it.³ The statue, sitting on the outskirts of town, is a forgotten site, a minor historical marker, “hardly alluring enough to attract motorists and logging trucks as they speed by on the narrow roads that wind precariously around Yoshino's partially denuded mountainsides.”⁴ Walker expected a more culturally impactful memorial, because prior to the 1870s, wolves were celebrated and worshipped by Japan’s rural ancestors “as powerful Shinto messengers, as loyal Buddhist guardian kings, and as faithful Confucian protectors of grain fields.”⁵ As Walker contemplated “the cruel fate of the Japanese wolf and the landscape where it once lived,” he imagined the extinct wolves still there, hearing the wails of the pack on their twilight hunt.⁶ As the imagined howls grow louder

and closer, they are quickly replaced by the intrusive and nagging “sound of heavy machinery in the adjacent lumberyard,” supplementing the cacophony and cadence of cruising canines with “the rhythmic metallic chopping of a helicopter lifting cedar logs off a nearby steep mountainside.”⁷ Walker juxtaposes the ghostly memory of the wolf, a figure tied metaphorically to Japan’s premodern identity, with disturbing images of modernization and environmental destruction, creating, as a result, an eco-elegy to the majestic Japanese Honshu wolf and all it symbolizes.

While Walker mourns a Japan that he fears is forgetting its lupine loss, John Knight observes that the memory of the wolf lives on in the imagination of communities facing their own versions of loss and extinction. Twenty-six reported sightings of the Japanese wolf have been recorded between 1908-1978 throughout Nara, and these sightings even persisted up into the 1990s, as Knight writes: “At a 1994 conference in Nara, it was reported that no less than seventy people had recently either seen a wolf themselves or heard wolf-howls.”⁸ Knight deduces that these sightings and reports of howls are imagined, primarily because there is no material evidence that indicates the wolves’ existence. Knight is not dismissive of the claims, but he does see them as psychic, metaphorical, and expressive responses to the structural reality of cultural and environmental erasure, whereby the fear of loss looms in rural communities threatened by deforestation, depopulation, and corporate land development. For rural Japanese experiencing anxieties of their own extinction, the Honshu wolf becomes a spiritual trace, a ghostly haunting of their psycho-social imaginations.

Both anecdotes of the trauma and loss of the Honshu wolf reveal that the elusive specter of the Japanese wolf in the contemporary imaginary evokes intense anxieties of cultural, environmental, and psychic loss. More recently, in post-war and contemporary

Japanese visual culture, the wolf can be read as a cipher through which we can read, in its absence, a multiplicity of parallel existential losses that threaten the future of Japan. Throughout Japanese manga and anime, the spectral loss and reemergence of the Japanese wolf can signify many narratively different yet structurally similar fears of trauma, loss, or extinction threatening the environment, nation-state, culture, and identity of Japan. These fears of lupine loss blend with numerous anxieties, including the fear of losing clan community (*Lone Wolf and Cub*, Kazuo Koike and Goseki Kojima, 1970), historical memory (*Phoenix: Sun*, Osamu Tezuka, 1980), a military honor economy (*King of Wolves*, Buronson and Miura Kentarō, 1989), patrilineal tribalism (*Inuyasha*, Rumiko Takahashi, 1996), maternal visions of the natural world (*Princess Mononoke*, Hayao Miyazaki, 1997), the idyllic pastoral or wilderness (*Wolf's Rain*, Keiko Nobumoto, Bones Studio, 2003), religious and spiritual identity (*Ōkami*, Capcom, Clover Studio, 2006), and finally, the institution of the family (*Wolf Children*, Hosoda Mamoru, Studio Chizu, 2012). Additionally, all the examples introduced above are manga series or anime films that not only review the extinction of the Honshu wolf, but do so in an apocalyptic mode, making the spectral wolf an eschatological messenger who enunciates latent Japanese anxieties and nightmares of precarity, loss, alienation, and extinction.

When one thinks of Japanese apocalypticism in contemporary visual culture, it is often articulated in allegorical figures of nuclearized beasts and mutated monsters, as Yoke-Sum Wong reminds us: “Beasts run rampant in the allegories of destruction in Japanese history, [...] beasts are interpretative tools speaking to a moment, a time and a place enabling public discourse and changes – the passing of an era and the birth of another. Disorder solidifies meaning.”⁹ Even so, it is hard to imagine how the figure of a

wolf or werewolf can compare in scope to current atomic or disaster metaphors, such as Honda Ishiro's *Godzilla* (Tōho, 1954), Japan's most popular *hibakusha* ('atomic bombing') allegory. While the wolf might represent the slow destruction of ecologies and a meandering sense of nostalgic mourning, *Godzilla* enunciates the immediate post-war traumas of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, exploring fears of atomic, cataclysmic apocalypse as well as expressing anxieties concerning the growing reliance of nuclear energy in post-war Japan.

Even though the Honshu wolf and *Godzilla* are both beastly traces of Japan's fear of chaos, it is often difficult to associate the two. This is perhaps because the 1905 extinction of the Honshu wolf seems to be such a quiet, unremarkable loss when compared to Japan's long history of dramatic cataclysms. Over a three-hundred-year history, "Edo/Tokyo and the cities of Japan have repeatedly been ravaged by natural and man-made/induced disasters of fires, earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanoes, wars, mercury poisoning – and the atomic bombs."¹⁰ While the wolf represents an intense mourning, an expression of *mono no aware* ('the pain of time passing'), the catfish represents the renewal inherent in the disasters of Japan's past.¹¹ Onamazu, a god of earthquakes, is depicted as a giant catfish pinned down by the god Kashima. Wong notes that if Kashima is neglectful in his duties (often because he is distracted by the greed of men), Onamazu upends the terrestrial landscapes with his seismic flopping, which eventually rebalances the world of man and nature, bringing "renewal and retributive justice" to an ossified, corrupt world.¹²

While *Godzilla* (nuclear) and Onamazu (nature) are apocalyptically destructive, they promise a return to balance. Hence, *Godzilla* and Onamazu are parts of a historic fabric that represent the necessity for phoenix-like renewal that usher in eras of what

Jordan Sand calls “disaster utopia,” or the Shinto-Buddhist visions of world regeneration through divine destruction.¹³ The silent, naturalistic, disappearance of the Honshu wolf, however, only offers questions and whispers rather than promises of social change or spiritual/ecological realignment, transforming the wolf into a swarming, spectral, flickering image within the cultural imaginary. In the absence of the once revered and worshipped Honshu wolf – a nature-symbol of balance and a mythic messenger from the gods to mortals – the metaphorical representation of lupine loss can be viewed as an excommunication from the world of the gods and of the natural world, an existential damning of Japan. Therefore, the species extinction of the wolf follows the evaporation of its mythic counterpart, the *ōkami* (‘great spirit’, ‘wolf’). This equally biological and metaphysical loss of the material and abstraction of the wolf manifests as a rip in the fabric of Japan that signifies a psychic and historic break from the possibilities of renewal and cyclicity, or the Shinto-Buddhist “theory of cycles in nature, of destruction followed by renewal,” where the mass species extinction of lifeforms cannot be “understood as corrections of temporary imbalances in the vital force perpetually flowing through the world (known in Japanese as *ki* and in Chinese as *qi*)” like the way cataclysmic disasters including “typhoon-season floods and dry-season fires, earthquakes and tsunamis” were conceptualized in spiritual, existential, or environmental terms.¹⁴

In this context, the specter of the wolf is far more prevalent in current manga and anime series compared to the image of the catfish or its nuclear monster progeny because it articulates a more urgent, realistic, naturalistic, and ecocritical crisis of pollution, overpopulation, food shortages, the ever-present climate crisis, and nuclear meltdowns, primarily by equating the Meiji mechanized extinction narrative of the

Honshu wolf (1870 – 1905) to the current Heisei period of nuclear (economic and ecological) precarity (1989 – now). As Roman Rosenbaum confirms, Japan recently faced an “extended period of economic downturn, beginning after the end of the *babaru keiki* (bubble economy), roughly about 1991 and lasting into the new millennium.”¹⁵ During this economic freefall, more apocalyptic events, including the Tokyo sarin gas attack of 1994 and the Kobe earthquake of 1995, continually shook the confidence of politicians, industry leaders, intellectuals, and artists, who viewed themselves as members of a lost generation, as internationally renowned novelist Haruki Murakami told journalist Michael Zielenziger in an interview: “We lost our own narrative [...] Once the Cold War ended, everything changed. We couldn’t adjust to the new situation. It was a kind of chaos and we lost our sense of direction.”¹⁶ Even by 2010, even as the economy began to find some signs of life and the hope that “things were getting better and better, year by year, day by day” as Murakami states, Japan was struck violently “by the 2011 Tōhoku earthquake, tsunami, Fukushima nuclear disaster,” on 11 March 2011, which was one of the most devastating nuclear energy crises since the meltdown of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in 1986.¹⁷

The aftermath of 3/11 would produce an even more precarious economic and ecological climate that was “arguably even worse, [in] “the post-3/11 era.”¹⁸ Anne Allison recounts how the Heisei recession and the disasters of 3/11 signified a new age of a hopeless, futureless Japan, especially in an era threatened by staggering low fertility rates, as *BBC News* reports: “as of [2017], just 941,000 children were born in Japan, the lowest number since records began in 1899.”¹⁹ The social, geopolitical, economic, and environmental crises following 3/11 was not perceived as yet another set of disasters in a long history of cataclysms; 3/11 seemed to have no end in sight. The ramifications of the

nuclear meltdown, the tsunami, and earthquake are still felt today all across the country, ranging from the latent radioactive effects of mass contaminated farmland, livestock, and fresh water sources, the destruction of more than a million homes, the mass displacement of estimated 350,000 citizens across the country, and the loss of 18,000 Japanese men, women, and children.²⁰ Furthermore, most of the refugees from the disaster are still suffering, often unemployed, underemployed in flexible or temporary work, or homeless or in-between public housing. A significant number of those placed in the isolated temporary shelters offered to traumatized and lonely refugees have committed suicide.²¹ While previous disasters like the earthquakes of 1923 and 1995 produced a communal sense of suffering and cooperation, which as Sand writes “instigated a healthy social renewal” by addressing the inequities of that historically preindustrial agrarian and mercantile society, 3/11 illuminated the stark alienation and hopelessness of its victims.²² In many respects, 3/11 is one of many recent reminders that recovery seems impossible and that renewal is an illusion in a nuclear Japan.

Muddying the Waters: The Historico-Semiotic Conflations of the Nuclear in 3/11 Japan

In the wake of the mass precarity brought on by decades of unregulated capitalism, an almost nonexistent social welfare system, corrupt corporate-conservative policies, a zealous adherence to nuclear power, the cultural dependence on commodity consumption, and the numbing realities of technological alienation, 3/11 exposed the everyday suffering of Japan in very real environmental, socio-economic, and humanitarian terms. Most importantly, the event revealed to the world that Japan is no longer a steely, streamlined, industrial leviathan of technological advancement and stoic

corporatism. Rather, as Allison writes, post-3/11 Japan is now a “Liquified Japan,” a disconnected, alienated, fluidly toxic society that is characterized by two historical symbols: “Nuclear radiation and mud. A strange combination that mixes histories as well as metaphors.”²³ Thus, Allison claims that a liquified (and liquidating) Japan, lacking cohesive communitarian links that once bound society, is symbolized by images of water and mud; like the flotsam and debris that crashes against the shore or breaks through the cracks, Japan’s own citizens are lost the torrent of late capital.

In the Japanese imaginary, then, the year 2011, like 1905, is an emblematic event of Anthropocenic rupture that foresees the end of Japan without renewal in its current liquified, liquidated nuclear iteration. In post-3/11 Japan, the end will not be marked by a nuclear detonation or a divine earthquake. Rather, as the painful recovery of 3/11 indicates, a Japanese extinction event will be a slow, miry, self-destructive process of a socio-economic and ecological poisoning that drags out until the very, anticlimactic end, where the carcass of Japan, like that of the last Honshu wolf, is tossed into the garbage bin of History. Furthermore, this is evidenced in the way that young people – the supposed future of Japan – face what Italian philosopher Franco ‘Bifo’ Berardi calls “the slow cancellation of the future” in widespread critiques of the nuclear family, the emblem of a prosperous, reproductive future in post-war and millennial Japanese society.²⁴ Allison claims that 3/11 was an equally metaphorical and literal reminder of what a Liquid Japan looks like after, or how a liquified (and liquidating) Japan lacks cohesive communitarian links and solidified institutions (work, school, and the family) to aid citizens adrift in the torrent of late capital, especially as traditional ties of kinship and community dissolve in the deluge. Hence, while the recovery of post-war Tokyo leaned on the collectivist values and labor of the extended family, 3/11 highlighted the

erosion of the nuclear family, a byproduct of American occupation and consumer capitalism.

As Allison illustrates, in post-3/11 Japanese culture, the nuclear family is the site for critique leveled against the metaphor of the *nuclear* family as exposed after disaster. Primarily in Japanese visual culture, Jaqueline Berndt writes that while it took politicians and industry leaders two years to address changes in nuclear policy, by April of 2011 popular artists, filmmakers, writers, and comedians confronted the post-3/11 moment in Japan by emphasizing the dangers of Japanese nuclearism in all its risky and precarious forms: first, as a literal energy source; second, as a symbol of post-war industrialism; and third, as a metaphor for the toxic, radioactive, modern Japanese nuclear family.²⁵

In her essay cataloging post-3/11 manga series, Berndt points to manga artists like Kotobuki Shiriagari, who immediately began exploring the sublime terrors and posthuman possibilities of the world-shattering event a month after the initial earthquake. Shiriagari's collection *Manga after 3/11* illustrates a posthuman tableau of a sinking, empty, ruinous Japan in 2061. In the second comic of the series "titled with the crossed-out word 'Hope,'" Shiriagari depicts "the accident of the Fukushima plant from the perspective of the cesium and iodine particles inside, some of which start to press outward once they find a 'hopeful' crack in the wall."²⁶ Ironically commenting on Tezuka Osamu's ambivalently pro-nuclear postwar manga *Astro Boy* (1952), Shiriagari undermines the hope for a human-focused, family-focused post-3/11 future. He does so by creating a personified nuclear atom's family of cesium and iodine, which simultaneously mocks the human hopes for a reconstituted family and reveals the difficulty of removing these familial desires altogether, as documented through the birth

and transformation of sentient, anthropomorphic atoms into posthuman hybrids. Berndt continues, writing that as the atoms burst through the seams of the cement birth canal, “Hope manifests itself in grandson Mirai (literally, ‘future’), a posthuman winged child,” who is later described as fleeing from his contained nuclear home. In seeking lines of flight from the nuclear bounds of family, Mirai, “[d]isobeying his parent’s ban, flies with others of his kind to the ruin of the Fukushima power plant, now overgrown with vegetation, and on closer inspection, surrounded by dozens of wind wheels.”²⁷ Mirai and his friends fly together over the nuclear ruins, the comic ends with “an impressive aerial view of the angelic children almost merging with nature,” further likening the atomic children “to lotus flowers ascending from mud to console the ghosts of the dead” in the next chapter.²⁸ As this example indicates, Shiriagari’s manga is undoubtedly a template for post-3/11 Japanese visual culture because it constructs an expansive critique of Liquid Japan by exploring the symbols of radiation and mud as ways of expressing the antipodal construction of Japanese modern history and State ideologies. Thus, in Allison’s deft metaphor, the radiated muck of a post-3/11 Japan recalls the negotiations of tense relations of the industrial/the preindustrial, the futuristic/the naturalistic, the sterile/the fertile, the synthetic/the organic, and the atomic/the chthonic to find alternative futures outside of anthropocentrism. Accordingly, post-3/11 Japanese visual culture therefore seeks to transform these binaries into hybrids, binding these opposites together in the radiated mud, further giving life to mutated, rather than purified or idealized, allegorical organisms of renewal, regeneration, and reproduction outside of the filiated project of family, or in the production of what Craig Svonkin and Steven Gould Axelrod refer to as “a

metafamily,” in between the institutional bounds of family and its reproduction in the State.²⁹

Unlike Shiriagari’s metafamilial or pseudo-filial fantasies of the potentialities of Liquid Japan, contemporary artist and avant-garde filmmaker Tomoyasu Murata showcased five post-3/11 short films in Tokyo that explored the alienation and isolation brought on by the lived trauma and loss brought on by of 3/11. Murata’s stop-motion animated film *Forest This Flower Blooms* (2015) which, as Atsushi Ohara summarizes, “centers around a human-like figure with an animal face named ‘Wolf,’ who wanders through a wasteland in search of its lost memories.”³⁰ Murata, in the animation, claims that the “white land through which Wolf goes can be interpreted as a world of fallout, a world where memories are completely whitened or a world where history is going to be made in the days ahead.” In the work, Murata tells the story as such: “A wolf tries to trace his lost past. Hunters try to obliterate the past. The distant memories when the wolf was human motivate him to travel. He goes back to the past again and again. Being the sport of the past and plagued with the past, he sees the present.” Moreover, in this assessment of a minor eco-cultural memory and an inversion of lupine loss – whereby Wolf, who was once a human, loses his humanity in the Calamity and wakes up a wolf-headed beast – Murata resituates the 3/11 crisis as the liquefying event that recapitulates the Japanese wolf extinction to articulate the rising tides of urgency of Japan’s own muddy, flooded, radioactive era of economic and ecological meltdown.

In the post-3/11 catalog of anime films, Mamoru Hosoda’s animal fantasy films *Wolf Children* (2012) and *The Boy and the Beast* (2015) reflect similar social and ecocritical concerns by challenging anthropocentric thought and the institution of the Japanese nuclear family through allegorical experiments of nonhuman becomings and

familial unbecomings, once again conflating ecological and familial semiotics. *Wolf Children* depicts a nuclear Japan as an everyday experience of domestic disappointment and disaster, rather than the brutal wolf apocalypse of Nobumoto's *Wolf's Rain* or Murata's *Forest This Flower Blooms*. *Wolf Children*, more accurately, is an uncannily quotidian depiction of millennial Japan, tasked with exploring how economic and ecological devastation are not only transcendent externalities that produce spiritual or cultural rejuvenation. According to Hosoda, apocalypse is a social experience that pushes the metaphor of a nuclearized Japan to its limits, affecting the everyday life of its victims. Thus, *Wolf Children* interrogates a nuclear Japan and ideological and institutional extensions, namely the post-war Americanized, patriarchal, capitalist formulation of the nuclear family. Hosoda examines the formations and limitations of the Japanese nuclear family and considers how the nuclearized family can adapt to the current strains of economic and ecological pressures, or if the family will simply mutate into something queer, nonhuman, and revolutionary, or simply melt away entirely.

Mamoru Hosoda's Everyday Apocalypse: Precarity and the Liquidated Nuclear Family

Wolf Children opens telling the story of a college student named Hana ('flower') who falls in love with a werewolf, and subsequently has two shapeshifting children named Ame and Yuki. The film is narrated by Yuki as a young adult, and she recounts the family's struggles in three parts: first, Hana raising her young children alone in the city after the death of her werewolf mate; second, Hana moving to a rural home on an abandoned farm; and third, Ame and Yuki growing up and adjusting to their uncontrollable hybridity. In part one, we see Hana desperately try to learn how to be a

young mother without any help in the isolating and hostile environment of Tokyo. In part two, we see Hana learn to farm her own food and take care of her children with the help of a kind, rural community. She allows her children to decide which path to take in their maturation: wolf or human. Hence, in the third part of the film, the focal point moves away from Hana's struggles to the diverging lives of the two children as they settle into the country and begin attending school. Yuki, while adept at hunting and playing as a wolf pup, decides to become a regular girl and works hard to fit in. Ame, on the other hand, who was too sickly and frail to enjoy his youth as a pup, remains unhappy with school, and rather, spends his free time in the forests and fields learning how to live as a wolf with the help of many species, including an aged, sensei-like fox. Furthermore, Yuki falls in love with her human friend Sōhei, and she follows her mother's footsteps by leaving for college on a scholarship and trying to control her shapeshifting powers. Ame, on the other hand, decides to live in the wild entirely, leaving his mother and sister behind to become the guardian of the mountains. In this role, Ame also protects his family's farming community in the shadows of the woods. While Yuki seemingly seeks to hybridize the family in the body of the werewolf, interweaving her extinct wolf heritage with flows of desire in becoming-wolf, Ame abandons humanity as the lone wolf archetype (like Wolf in *Forest*, Kiba in *Wolf's Rain*) to fully immerse himself in the pastoral wild, all in order understand a naturalistic (not spiritual) process of assessing order and balance. Hosoda thereby offers two interventions into the millennial Japanese nuclear family: (1) Yuki's path of hybridizing the family, offering possibilities for change, flux, and integration (2) and Ame's refusal of the family altogether for the endangered environment.

Wolf Children responds to the anxieties of lupine loss and of a Liquid Japan by examining the structural failure of the nuclear family. *Wolf Children* initially appears as a nostalgic return to three nationalist-industrialist-capitalist roles of the family drama (Father-Mother-Child) that organized the State “around the three pillars of family, corporation, and school (which echoed the three sacred imperial regalia of mirror, sword, and jewel), a structure that was rewarded and enforced by the mass-consumer culture emerging at the same time.”³¹ For example, in the relatively new post-war Japanese nuclear family, Japanese women internalized domestic roles of child-rearing and homemaking, thus accepting their roles as a practical extension of the family-corporate model, and further striking what Heidi Gottfried refers to as the “reproductive bargain,” a socio-economic contract that exchanged the female-gendered labor of child rearing and domestic management for economic security.³² Fathers, on the other hand, absent from the domestic sphere almost entirely, committed to a labor bargain with their employers to retain healthcare and social benefits for their families.³³ While mothers and fathers found themselves locked into private and public realms of domestic-corporate labor – of the reproductive bargain – Allison contends that the child in this nuclear family functioned as the vessel that fulfilled the accelerating dreams of modernity, futurity, prosperity, and advancement: “In postwar Japan this was corporate familism operating as blueprint for the nation-state – economic productivity driving and driven by (re)productivity at home, futures made for children, and the child as familial and national investment.”³⁴ All three blended together into the production of the seemingly impervious Japanese nuclear family, which followed the same path of American nuclearism, defined by what Tomiko Yoda calls “*Mai hōmu shugi*” (‘my-homism’), which was “a Japanese-English neologism” that as Yoda remarks, “can be

translated as the ‘ideology of home ownership’ (owning a home, of course, was the ultimate status symbol for postwar urban and suburban families)”.³⁵ My-homism, an American ideological counterpart to the extended “stem family” of premodern Japan,³⁶ synchronized with the affordability of homes in reconstructed cities and newly built suburbs, helped to solidify the nuclear ideal as a social reality like in post-war America.

In the first portion of *Wolf Children*, Hosoda seems nostalgic for my-homism, especially as the precarious future of Japan looms in the distance and 3/11 haunts the everyday lives of shattered families without homes. At the beginning of the film, when Hana meets her werewolf mate in college, the couple falls in love. Yuki, as the narrator, explains that her father was the last of his line of the Honshu wolves, and struggled to find a place to call home after the destruction of his pack:

Dad’s parents died when he was just a boy, but before they did, they taught him the history of their kind, and implored him never to reveal his true nature to anyone. After that, he lived with relatives who never would have accepted him if they knew his secret. When he was old enough to get a driver’s license, he left for the city and never looked back. He found a job, and he kept to himself. Dad had kept his peace with a life spent alone until he met...her.

The opening of the film frames the endangered patrilineal line, allegorized in the extinction of the Honshu wolf as well as in the taming of the wandering, itinerant wolf. Immediately, a reproductive bargain is established so that the Honshu wolf – a signifier for not only the Japanese patriarch, but his legacy of *Nihonjinron* (‘Japanese exceptionalism’) – can continue into the future. This metaphor highlights how the transversality of the pack and the hybridity of becoming-wolf that Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari celebrate in *A Thousand Plateaus* may be too disruptive in the age of Japanese precarity, and that the domestication of the wolf is necessary in the wake of the precarization of labor and the fear of the crumbling patriarchal hold on family.

Therefore, to reestablish order in a precarious, nuclearized Japan, Hosoda tells a fairy-tale romance that originally appears nostalgic of the post-war era, marked by a speech from Yuki and Ame's father, who describes his my-homist desire for domestic, financial, and bourgeois stability: "It'd be nice to have a home. A place where I belong. I'd kick off my shoes, give my face a good washing, sit back in a comfy chair. It must be nice. I could build a bookshelf, and once I filled it with books, what's to keep me from building another? You just can't put a price on freedom like that." This scene is framed sympathetically as he expresses the anxieties and desires of young people (especially unemployed, underemployed, or homeless young men) in a precarious Japan that forecloses any cultural, financial, or reproductive future.

This stable, conservative, my-homist position, however, is thrown into stark contrast as Hosoda strings together an ironic montage that reflexively undermines any passive ideological recuperation of the nuclear family in uncertain times. After Hana and her mate become a romantic couple, Hosoda begins to explore the subtle psychic ramifications of this reproductive bargain, especially when the bargain does not entirely work out, as we see when it is nullified by the death of the husband, another metaphor for the regular experience of paternal absence. In the montage, Hosoda depicts Hana and her nameless mate living their newly domestic lives together: cooking, cleaning, working, reading, and spending time building a home together. The couple share the domestic space, promoting a version of millennial my-homism, a seemingly more progressive bourgeois assemblage that reflects the state of young couples today: the labor and accumulated capital is egalitarian because both partners divide labor in non-gendered ways, and both financially contribute to a shared home. Deep within the montage, Hana vomits in bed, signaling an unexpected pregnancy. Hana gives birth to

Yuki in the couple's small urban apartment at the end of the montage, which is then followed up with a quick cut to the birth of Ame a year later.

The revived nuclear family, endangered by a precarious Japan, barely has enough time to enjoy itself though; recently after Ame's birth, Hana's husband disappears, drowning in a city canal after trying to hunt down water fowl. To her horror, she must raise both her children alone, without any guidance on how to raise human children from family or community members. Nor does she know how to train wolf pups. Additionally, while many manga and anime series often explore the Japanese salaryman as either a joke or a bygone ideal, *Wolf Children* directly addresses it, blending the metaphor of paternal absence with the trauma of lupine loss and the corrosion of institutional ideals in a nuclear Japan. As the narrator explains, it was a mystery why Ame and Yuki's father went out one day and never came back. Yuki speculates it was because her father felt the instinctual call of the wild, to provide for his mate and pups as a wolf, rather than as a part-time, flexible manual laborer. In the scene, Hana sits with her two children in a living room. The shot is framed in a window covered in rain drops, the symbolic threat of Liquid Japan throughout the film. In the monsoon, Hana worries nervously, checking outside to look for her partner. The camera pans left from the window to an image of grocery bags at the step of the door. In this era of rampant divorce rates and absentee fathers,³⁷ the scene elicits tension and terror, drawing the viewer to the conclusion that yet another father has abandoned his precarious family. However, viewers learn that in his attempt to escape the cage of the domestic home, the loop of labor, and the instinctually need to provide for his family, the wolf-father is lost to the precarity of breadwinning, represented by the hostility of the liquified, fluid urban territory of Tokyo. This scene effectively exposes two figurative readings of Japanese

extinction: the disposability of Japan's patrilineal past and the liquidation of familial stability. Note that in the scene where Hana runs to the canal to see her dead partner's body, she witnesses her mate's drenched carcass thrown unceremoniously into a garbage truck, semiotically and historically paralleling the extinction tale of the last male Honshu wolf in 1905, whereby hunters tossed the body in the garbage before a buyer sought the body out to sell to a museum.³⁸ Additionally, the wolf's death-by-water is prophetic and apocalyptic, cloaking the filmic semiotic structure in 3/11 imagery that signals the literal and metaphorical threats of the liquidation of Japan. In this way, Hosoda describes the Honshu wolf as an eschatological interlocutor for the watery apocalypse to come, enunciating the mournful end of the Japanese nuclear family through economic and ecological dissolution.

Escaping the Nuclear: Hosoda's Eco-Filial Pastoral and the Rise of the Wolfing

While initially mournful of the symbolic liquidation of Japan's patriarchal, wolfish past, Hosoda redirects the camera's focus on those who suffer the most from the failure of the reproductive bargain: women and children. Throughout the rest of the first act, the nuclear family's survival is increasingly threatened in the hostile urban environment of Tokyo, where Hana begins to formulate a plan to depart from the city, civilization, and capitalism altogether. As a montage of Hana's struggling single mothering ends, the camera cuts to a scene of Yuki vomiting on the kitchen floor in her wolf form, seemingly poisoned by a cleaning product. Running wildly through the rainy, flooding Tokyo streets, Hana arrives at the local pediatrician practice which is wonderfully shot symmetrically in opposition to an animal clinic. In the middle of the wide shot stands a

payphone where Hana calls for help. While Yuki survives unscathed, the stakes of motherhood are established in this bifurcated shot: if Hana were to take Yuki to the pediatrician or the animal clinic, her daughter would clearly appear as an anomaly either as a wolf pup or a human child. We see this choice appear in every single conflict that arises throughout the film: wolf or human?

This binary of wolf/human, nature/culture, is once again echoed after this traumatic event, as Hana's wolf family is attacked by urban threats from all sides, including the invasive introduction of social service officials, a furious neighbor, and a landlord seeking an eviction. As Hana witnesses Ame and Yuki, the last Honshu wolves in captivity, she decides to ask one profound question to her children at a park one gloomy winter day: "If you could choose to live as a human or a wolf, which one would you choose?" After posing this question to her children, Hana decides to move to the country, claiming emphatically that she would want her children to choose to mature as a wolf or a human, to grow into both and live as they wish outside of the nuclear family, outside of the urban centers, and outside of the postmodern wasteland of Tokyo. Hosoda importantly ties the failure of the reproductive bargain to the nuclear family, a vehicle for consumption, urbanization, and industrialization, and contrasts that with the Japanese countryside, where remnants of the preindustrial stem family remain, complicating the Japanese shift in familial structures as an escape from the nuclear family. In leaving the city behind, Hana rejects the post-war reproductive bargain and the capitalist, nuclear family behind.

As the family moves into the country in the second act, the nuclear family transforms into a schematic for the roving wolf pack – what Deleuze and Guattari call the "wolfing" – which is structurally and ideologically radicalized by the absence of a

patriarchal alpha, as well as Ame and Yuki's inability to solidify their representative identities through a becoming-wolf, as Deleuze and Guattari affirm: "Lines of flight or of deterritorialization, becoming-wolf, becoming-inhuman, deterritorialized intensities; that is what multiplicity is. To become wolf [...] is to deterritorialize oneself following distinct but entangled lines."³⁹ Feeling as though they must decide either wolf or human, Yuki reminds the viewers at the end of the first act that growing up as a hybrid in Tokyo was hard enough because subjectivities were blurred and imperceptible: "Wolves or people: we didn't know how to be either yet and us switching back and forth didn't make it any easier for us or for mom." As the second act continues, Hosoda explores becoming-wolf as not a binary choice, but a fluid form of liberatory, naturalistic, bestial, and transformative expression against the protocols of a nuclear Japan. Ame and Yuki learn how becoming-wolf is essential in their understanding of their environment, which keeps the urges of the nuclear family at bay as the roving wolfing is mobilized in the pastoral return.

Furthermore, the semiotics of becoming-wolf is expressed in an impressionistic scene of Yuki, Ame, and Hana running through the idyllic snowy landscape of the mountains, resembling the foothills of Mount Fuji. Hosoda utilizes a flurry of first person perspective shots to simulate Yuki's vision that captures her darting, winding, and jolting through the forest trees and boulders, which encapsulates the intense effects of the pack, as Deleuze and Guattari write: "The wolf, as the instantaneous apprehension of a multiplicity in a given region, is not a representative, a substitute, but an *I feel*. I feel myself becoming a wolf, one wolf among others, on the edge of the pack."⁴⁰ As the orchestral soundtrack rises and the action-images bound and leap across the screen, it would be difficult for any viewer to hold back enthusiastic tears. The

intense energies and animal effects of the pack's freedom from the city and the conventions of modern, nuclear life is celebrated in a naturalistic tableau. Even if viewers may interpret the scene as a romanticized ideal, we see that to run with the wolves is a difficult venture for Hana, which is expressed in her desperate attempt to keep up with her pups. Figuratively expressing the messy, difficult act of staying with the trouble of a precarious Japan and a dying planet, Hana, in her own charming way, bumbles, trips, and crashes into the wild terrain as Yuki and Ame blend into the crisp, white frames and painterly illustrations of the wild highlands. As the music rises and crashes with each image, snow explodes on the screen like fireworks, and the family transforms rapidly into a pack, fulfilling the Deleuzo-Guattarian manifesto of becoming-animal: "You are longitude and latitude, a set of speeds and slownesses between unformed particles, a set of nonsubjectified affects. You have the individuality of a day, a season, a year, a life (regardless of its duration) – a climate, a wind, a fog, a swarm, a pack (regardless of its regularity) [...] a werewolf at full moon."⁴¹

In Mamoru's pastoral return, the nomadic wolf pack does not remain a deterritorialized assemblage as this scene of wolfish *jouissance* indicates. As the children learn the process of becoming-wolf, the nomadic wolf pack returns to the pastoral ideal in a colonial mode of *reterritorialization*, in which the children reinscribe lupine loss with the recuperation of the ancient territories of the Honshu wolves from the rural mountain peoples living in the Nara uplands. Just as Hosoda establishes a nostalgic framework in the first act for a post-war Japan, so too does he establish a nostalgic desire for a preindustrial Japan in the country. Hosoda's alternative to the failure of a Liquid Japan is a fantastic, utopian, liberatory, preindustrial way of life that celebrates the pastoral, romantic, and harmonious, maternal past. By moving out of the

nuclear family and modern city to reterritorialize the ancient territories of the Honshu wolves, Hosoda resettles the wolf pack into a new abode: an abandoned farm. In a montage, Hana learns how to plant her own food on abandoned land, as well as clean up and fix the broken-down home, establishing a new my-homism in the country.

Throughout the second act, Hana and her children find a place in this rural community. Her neighbors are distrustful of her at first, remaining distant and skeptical of her bourgeois relocation into the uplands. This sentiment changes when the community faces a boar invasion, yet Hana does not. The villagers are impressed, thinking that Hana has excelled quickly in her agrarian acumen, earning her spot in the community. However, only the viewers of the film are privy to Hana's secret weapon: Yuki. Like her wolf ancestors, Yuki protects the fields from the boars, badgers, and bunnies, yielding an untouched potato harvest. With the sedentary establishment of pastoral living, we see the roving pack melt away, situating the necessity of becoming-wolf more urgent for Ame and Yuki.

In this way, Hosoda seems ambivalent about Hana's pastoral return primarily because it too is ideologically and historical fraught with the patriarchal, Confucian trace of Japan's past that abstracted maternal labor into a symbol for preindustrial, communal, naturalistic, nativist desires, as Yoda writes about the maternal myth in Japanese culture:

The story can be summarized as follows: At the beginning, in premodern Japan, there was a society equipped with both the maternal principle of earth (rooted in a native agrarian community) and the paternal principle of heaven (derived from the nomadic culture of Eurasia that entered Japan through the importation of continental culture.⁴²

In abandoning the traditional nuclear family, however, this nomadic pack flees the city in the shadows of the sedentary Confucian stem family, rather conservatively replacing

the roving wolfing with guard dogs and good kids, complicating Hosoda's original salvo against the problems of the Japanese nuclear family in the first act. In this way, the replacement of the postwar nuclear family with an idyllic Confucian stem family is, perhaps, too idealistic, too impossible to maintain as the children grow and must make their choices beyond the recovery of the family in the timeless, pastoral milieu.

Lessons in Unbecoming: *Wolf Children* and the Limitation of Filiation

Hosoda, however, again avoids committing to a binary choice between both formulations: nuclear family or feral pack. Hosoda undercuts this pastoral nostalgia as the second act ends, illustrating how the family is doomed to be obliterated by a Liquid Japan, making even the mountainous pastoral a hostile environment. The dialectic conflict of the film between wolf and human, pack and family, city and country, modernity (post-nuclear) and premodernity (pre-nuclear), sister and brother, strikes at the heart of the end of the nuclear family as the second act fades, marked by a stunning lateral tracking shot of the children in school, indicating the imminent divergence. This tracking shot is a painful reminder of the fluidity of a wolfing, of a quasi-familial swarm that incorporates different beings into the pack, and moves on from others, which in this case, are the two siblings.

As the lateral tracking shot begins, an image of Ame sitting in first grade appears. The shot tracks to the left to see Yuki in second grade, raising her hand enthusiastically, and tracks further to the right with Ame being bullied a year later. Luckily, his guardian Yuki runs in to scare off the boys, but instead of the two children hugging or celebrating the victory, Ame and Yuki go their separate ways. Tracking further left, Ame is seen in third grade, this time in the back of a dark classroom alone staring outside of the

window, and in the next movement left, we see Yuki in fourth grade reciting a passage from a book in front of class, seemingly integrating well into structured, institutional school life. Moving right, the camera captures an image of Ame's third grade classroom, but this time, without Ame in his seat, insinuating that he is off skipping class to run wild through the woods. This figurative shot diegetically indicates the growth and divergence of both children; figuratively, however, the shot signals the breaking point of both the Japanese nuclear family and the recapitulated stem family.

After this expressive shot, Hosoda constructs a dialectical showdown between Ame and Yuki. By the end of sixth grade, a reversal of roles takes place. Yuki gives up her wolfish guardianship of the farm and chooses to become more human, so she can fit in at school. Ame, who was afraid of becoming-wolf due to his sickly nature, now seeks to leave society entirely to become a guardian of the mountains, filling the absence of Yuki, his father, and his extinct species. After a brief argument between the two, the children quickly descend into a maddened, bloody fight in the house. The shot of the fight is long and drawn out, significantly devoid of the ever-present sentimental string orchestra. Hosoda directs the scene starkly, juxtaposing the warmth of the family's farmhouse with the feral fury of the two (now adult) wolves. The camera shakes and quivers as it attempts to track the inhuman intensities of Ame and Yuki as they upend and destroy the farmhouse that Hana rectified as her new home through my-homist ideals. The horror of the scene is not simply marked in the filial fight; a familiar tension soars as viewers anticipate the destruction of the nuclear home just as they may have felt in the first act when Hosoda reveals the death of the wolf-father. This same terror is signaled by the final shot of the scene, in which the wolves recklessly knock over the shrine of their father on a bookstand, upending the home physically and spiritually. The

scene ends with Yuki escaping Ame's jaws, fleeing into the bathroom, naked, scarred, and dripping in blood. What started out as teething canines chewing on chairs and late-night howling manifested into a wholly wild experience of pack intensities, ravaging the family's home from the inside out. After this scene, Ame runs away into the mountains and returns briefly in the next scene while Yuki is at school. From this point forward, this nuclear family is surely shattered and stained with estrangement. There is no attempt at healing the sibling rivalry, nor do the two ever speak with each other on good terms for the rest of the film. Instead, Yuki spends the rest of the time in the school, and Ame escapes into the wilderness to protect the forest that is under attack by an extreme monsoon and mudslides that threatens to wipe out all life on the mountain.

Hosoda's Animetic 'Death by Water' as Disaster Utopia: Making Kin After 3/11

Wolf Children ends, just as it began, with an ecological and filial crisis, harboring 3/11 imagery that offers differing responses to the end of Japan: first in the monsoon that liquidates the pastoral setting and kills his animal friends that Ame seeks to protect, or at least, learn from (including his fox-sensei), and second, in the way it frames a natural disaster panic of displacement, where the flooding hits the local town, leaving the children at school stranded in the school gym, separating the nuclear family, and producing temporary refugees like Yuki and her friend/love interest Sōhei.

These two experiences of 3/11 are separately experienced by Ame and Yuki. While Yuki is stranded at school during the flood, she accepts the post-familial possibility of being separated from her family (by both the monsoon and the fight with Ame) in celebrating becoming-wolf, as is represented by the scene in which Yuki is shown

revealing her werewolf form to Sōhei. While we know very little about Yuki's future with Sōhei after this event, the possibility of her following her mother's footsteps in producing more wolf children is an allegorical solution to the failure of Japanese fertility rates and the sense of cultural and ecological disconnection. As Yuki makes her decision to continue her "transfigurative alternation between wolf and human," as Toshiya Ueno writes, where she feels that with Sōhei, she "can keep a stable relationship and peaceful communication with the human world," Ame seeks to protect the entire ecosystem that is under assault by the modern, nuclear Japanese State and its institutional extensions: family, school, and work.⁴³

Unlike Yuki, Ame rejects his call to extend his patrilineal line by channeling an ascetic, asexual, sterile force into the wild, exuding a monkish, stoic messianism that forecloses the memory of his father's mythic past. Intercutting between Yuki and Ame's experiences of the flood, Hosoda explores Ame's environmentalist project "to stay with the trouble of living and dying in response-ability on a damaged earth," as Donna Haraway writes.⁴⁴ Before the 3/11-like disaster that strikes the town, Ame departs the farmhouse to find answers to the problems he anticipates in the forest's fragile ecosystem. He learns that his sensei, an old *kitsune* ('fox') has died, and with the guardian of the mountain gone, many other species remain at risk. Once again, in the absence of the lupine and now, the vulpine, Ame fears the worst, finding many other species dead, including a nest of once lively baby birds. Ironically, in facing the extinction of an entire ecology and the city below, Ame's retreat from the pastoral home and into the wild signals a retreat from a reproductive future, cutting off his patrilineal line for the sake of protecting the environment. Furthermore, as a protector of the forest, Ame reinscribes the pastoral nostalgic return as a futuristic negotiation of a post-

family, posthuman concept of *making kin* as Haraway calls it, a species-queered future that relies on the strange, messy, communitarian relations made with a multiplicity of other critters and lifeforms, not just the hybridizing of human and animal affects: “Making kin is something other/more than entities tied by ancestry or genealogy. The gently defamiliarizing move might seem for a while to be just a mistake, but then (with luck) appear as correct all along. Kin making is making persons, not necessarily as individuals or as humans.”⁴⁵ Ame’s revival of the Honshu wolf is a reminder of the necessity of making kin, an anti-humanist, non-anthropocentric position that is taught to Ame by his fox guru in a montage before the monsoon strikes. In this previous montage, Ame is encouraged by the fox to learn from all the different species in the forest, including those Yuki would guard against, including bears, boars, birds, and badgers. Hosoda’s montage of making kin is an inversion of an early montage of becoming-wolf, echoing Hana’s warning that wolves should “not be so bossy to other animals,” which Yuki struggles to understand as we see in her new role as the Confucian guard dog of the farm. In this way, Ame’s attempt at multispecies cooperation and disregard of filiated relations produces an expansive discourse of hybridity that simulates the experience of bodies in intensely affective flux, bodies that are overdetermined by their relationships with “a pack, a band, a population, a peopling, in short, a multiplicity” and “modes of expansion, propagation, occupation, contagion, peopling.”⁴⁶ In a Deleuzo-Guattarian sense, Ame resembles Murata’s symbol of the lone wolf at the edges of a sunken Japan, destined to wander without family, bound by his natural duties of becoming-wolf, and making kin in roving ways as each countless disaster strikes.

It is fitting then that the film ends with Hana searching for her son throughout the muddy, dangerous mountain, attempting to reclaim a family that is long lost to a Liquid Japan. In the final minutes of the film, Hana searches for Ame for hours in the monsoon, finally falling over the side of a cliff, fainting in the rain, seemingly on the verge of death. After briefly reuniting with her husband in a dream, Hana is rescued by Ame who found her in the mud, leaving her in a parking lot at the base of the mountain. Hana pleads with him to stay, and without the tense possibility of the reunion of the family, Ame leaps into the brush, only to be heard by one commanding howl. Hana smiles, and the film ends with the howls of the guardian of the mountain, the wayward Honshu son, Ame. Hosoda ends the film by revealing the possibility of renewal after the end of the nuclear family, marked by Ame's return, which in quintessential premodern fashion, restores order and balance to the highlands of Japan after 3/11, which is finally resignified as a utopia-bringing disaster.

Conclusion: Staying With the Troubles of a Nuclear Japan

The ending appears, on the outset, as a tragic end of the nuclear family: Ame leaves the home for good, abandoning his mother and sister; Yuki seems to grow up and go off to college, and Hana seems to be left without the family she attempted to recreate as a roving pack. However, if reading through the rooted and complex semiotics of extinction and environmental loss, the ending of the film is naturalistic and ultimately hopeful, like the 3/11 manga Berndt describes earlier in the essay. Unlike other examples of Japanese animated films that often end with familial cohesiveness and reunion, marked by the consummation of a romance and the reproductive bargain, and unlike other apocalyptic films that as Haraway writes, oscillate between “between awful or edenic pasts and

apocalyptic or salvific futures,” *Wolf Children* creates a world for and about the many “mortal critters entwined in myriad unfinished configurations of places, times, matters, meanings.”⁴⁷ From the film’s first act of filial nostalgia, to the film’s second act of pastoral rejection, to the final act of staying with the trouble of environmental collapse and filial driftings, Hosoda complicates the disaster utopia framework as a non-dialectical response to the here-and-now trials and tribulations of loss and extinction.

Rather, Hosoda ends the film with a very abrupt reminder of the price of nuclearity in all of its forms in Japan and across the world: (1) as a traumatic historical memory, (2) as an energy source that produces endless environmental risks, and (3) as a problematized social institution in the corrosive, radioactive, nuclear family, and yet leaves the possibilities for a future-to-come in the hands of both wolf children: Yuki and Ame. Hosoda ends the film offering two false choices: wolves or people? And yet, in the complexity of staying with the trouble, of making kin, as Haraway reminds us, Hosoda also reveals a paradoxical position that offers a nonhuman reading of precarity and the end of the nuclear family, one that is entirely hybridic, expressive, and at times, alienating to a human audience. Perhaps what makes Hosoda’s eco-filial animetic meditations so compelling is that in its most simplistic reading, *Wolf Children* leaves the viewers wondering if the binaries established (nature/culture, human/animal, family/pack) are feeble, brittle, and flimsy representations that reflect the State ideologies and institutions that are integral in maintaining a diffuse aura of order in a decentralized nuclear Japan. Hence, instead of choosing wolf or person (i.e., the Honshu wolf of yore or the hybrid of the future), Hosoda empathizes with precarious figures like Hana who are victims of austerity, displacement, and extinction, and yet, inevitably continue to find a vitalistic resistance against precarity by living through the furor of

nonhuman becomings to offer new lines of flight beyond of the rotting, sinking nuclear structures of a post-3/11 Japan. From family to pack, from apocalypse to utopia, Hosoda's animated film effectively reveals the necessity of staying with the troubles of making kin in the disappearing ecologies of the overdeveloped world.

¹ The translation of the poem is courtesy of an English version of an article from *The Asahi Shimbun* newspaper published in June 20, 2004 titled (in translation): "Extinct Wolf a Symbol of What Japan Has Lost." See the digital version here: <http://www.asahi.com/english/vox/TKY200406300120.html>. This translation can also be found in "Wolves of the World: Asia-Japan." *Wolf Print: The Magazine of The UK Conservation Trust*, ed. Denise Taylor, Special Portugal Volume, Issue 20, 2004, p. 19. For more on the Higashi Yoshino wolf memorial, Brett Walker further translates the remainder of the sign on p. 235, n2.

² Brett Walker, *Lost Wolves of Japan*. (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2009). p. 2.

³ Walker, p. 3.

⁴ Walker, p. 6.

⁵ Walker, p. 82.

⁶ Walker, p. 6.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ John Knight, "On the Extinction of the Japanese Wolf," *Asian Folklore Studies*, vol. 56, no. 1 (1997). p. 144.

⁹ Yoke-Sum Wong, 'A Presence of a Constant End: Contemporary Art and Popular Culture in Japan', *The Ends of History: Questioning the Stakes of Historical Reason*, ed. by Amy Swiffen and Joshua Nichols (New York: Routledge, 2013). p. 97.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Jordan Sand, "Diary: In Tokyo." *London Review of Books*, (28 April 2011). p. 31.

¹² Wong, p. 98.

¹³ Sand, p. 35.

¹⁴ Sand, p. 34.

¹⁵ Roman Rosenbaum, "Towards an Introduction: Japan's Literature of Precarity." *Visions of Precarity in Japanese Popular Culture and Literature*, edited by Roman Rosenbaum and Kristina Iwata-Weickgenannt. (New York: Routledge, 2017). pp 2-3.

¹⁶ Michael Zielenziger, *Shutting out the Sun: How Japan Created Its Own Lost Generation*. (New York: Doubleday, 2007). p. 120.

¹⁷ Rosenbaum, p. 3.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ "Japan's Single Women a Burden on the State, MP Says." *BBC News* (11 May 2018):

www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-44083106

²⁰ Anne Allison, *Precairious Japan*. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013). p. 8.

²¹ Allison, p. 18.

²² Sand, p. 34.

²³ Allison, p. 7.

²⁴ Franco Berardi, *After the Future*, ed. by Gary Genosko and Nicholas Thoburn. (Oakland: AK Press, 2011). p. 18.

²⁵ Jaqueline Berndt. "The Intercultural Challenge of the 'Mangaesque': Reorienting Manga Studies after 3/11."

Manga's Cultural Crossroads, edited by Jaqueline Berndt and Bettina Kulmmerling-Meibauer. (New York: Routledge, 2016). p. 72.

²⁶ Berndt, p. 73.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Berndt, p. 73.

²⁹ Craig Svonkin and Steven Gould Axelrod, 'Introduction: The Metafamily', *Pacific Coast Philology*, 53.2, (2018), pp. 145-154.

³⁰ Atsushi Ohara, "Showcase of Artist's Puppet Anime Focuses on 2011 Disaster." *The Asahi Shimbun* (15 March 2018): www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/AJ201803150008.html

³¹ Allison, p. 22.

³² Heidi Gottfried, *Reproductive Bargain: Deciphering the Enigma of Japanese Capitalism*. (Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2016). p. 2.

³³ Rogit Dasgupta, "Salaryman Anxieties in Tokyo Sonata Shifting Discourses of State, Family and Masculinity in Post-Bubble." *Gender, Nation and State in Modern Japan*, ed. by Andrea Germer et al. (New York: Routledge, 2017). p. 258.

³⁴ Allison, p. 24.

³⁵ Tomiko Yoda, "The Rise and Fall of Maternal Society: Gender, Labor, and Capital in Contemporary Japan." *Japan after Japan: Social and Cultural Life from the Recessionary 1990s to the Present*, ed. by Tomiko Yoda and Harry D. Harootunian. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006). p. 246.

³⁶ Susan B. Hanley, *Everyday Things in Premodern Japan: The Hidden Legacy of Material Culture* (ACLS History E-Book Project, 2005). Hanley explains that the Confucian stem system "differs from the nuclear in that it can extend backward and forward in the direct line of descent, and therefore contain three, and even sometimes four, generations," p. 140.

³⁷ Chizuko Ueno, "Collapse of 'Japanese Mothers,'" *U.S.-Japan Women's Journal*, English Supplement, No. 10 (1996). p. 11.

³⁸ Walker, p. 2.

³⁹ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. by Brian Massumi. (London: Continuum, 2008). p. 36.

⁴⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, p. 35.

⁴¹ Deleuze and Guattari, p. 289.

⁴² Yoda, p. 242.

⁴³ Toshiya Ueno, "Wolf Head in *Phoenix*." *Mechademia*, vol. 8, no. 1 (2013). p. 326.

⁴⁴ Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016). p. 4.

⁴⁵ Haraway, p. 103.

⁴⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, p. 264.

⁴⁷ Haraway, p. 1.

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