

Critique of Japan as an East-West Literary Hybrid in Yoko Tawada's *Kafka Kaikoku*

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Yoko Tawada's drama *Kafka Kaikoku* (2013) depicts Japan's encounter with Western culture from the Meiji era on as the catalyst for a metamorphosis much like Gregor Samsa's in the work of the same name by Franz Kafka. Ironically, the victim of this East-West clash turns out to be Izumi Kyōka (1873-1939), a man who was anything but an enthusiastic adopter of European literary style. Interweaving elements also from Kafka's *Ein Landarzt* (*A Country Doctor*, 1919), Tawada's play suggests further that Izumi's fate was set, since he—and, by extension, all Japanese—could not resist roles the West had prepared for him. Ultimately, this article explains, *Kafka Kaikoku* offers a critical view of modernization as a force that made Japanese into beings with a hybrid literary consciousness who lacked both much of their own native particularity and also their very humanity.

Key Words: Yoko Tawada, Franz Kafka, Izumi Kyōka, linguistic and cultural transformation, adaptation, translation, language learning, modernity, East-West clash, cultural hybridity, *Die Verwandlung*, Metamorphosis

I. Introduction

Throughout the work of Yoko Tawada (1960-), the so-called East-West divide is a common theme, but *Kafka Kaikoku* portrays the European-Asian encounter as one with particularly dire results. Indeed, it leaves Japan scarcely recognizable, especially due to literary adaptation and linguistic assimilation.¹ This German-Japanese drama presents the writer Izumi Kyōka (1873-1939) as both a narrator and also a separate fictional character caught in a sort of narrative web comprised of elements from Franz Kafka's *Die Verwandlung* (*Metamorphosis*, 1916) and *Ein Landarzt* (*A Country Doctor*, 1919). As the victim of an East-West clash, this writer turns out to be a rather ironic choice, for,

¹ While Tawada's name in her home country of Japan is Tawada Yōko, I am writing of her primarily as a contributor to the German-language literary tradition, where her name appears in print most often at Yoko Tawada. For simplicity's sake, I maintain this form throughout this article.

as scholars have generally agreed, he was actually someone who resisted the many changes to Japanese culture taking place during the Meiji era (also known as modernization). To think that this particularly traditional Japanese writer could find himself entangled in and eventually weakened by various elements of two Western stories is thus something of a paradox. That the stories against which he struggles are by Kafka adds a somewhat meaningful fictional twist that suggests that this East-West encounter was, like so many stories by Kafka, an inescapable stroke of fate. Ultimately, *Kafka Kaikoku* offers a critical view of modernization as a process that gave rise to a blended Japanese language and literary consciousness through countless borrowings from Europe that robbed Japanese writers—and, by extension, all Japanese—of their Japaneseness, and perhaps even their very humanity.

For the sake of analysis, it is useful to pull apart the various narrative strands that comprise *Kafka Kaikoku*. Since characters and the storyline of Kafka's works are embedded in Tawada's drama, it makes sense to consider each briefly. It is important to keep in mind that, of the various borrowed elements in *Kafka Kaikoku*, *Verwandlung* stands out as the main source, and so it deserves a more detailed overview and also more specific consideration with respect to comparable works by Izumi Kyōka.²

Kafka's *Verwandlung* depicts a young traveling salesman named Gregor Samsa who wakes up and finds that he has turned into a bug. He is the provider for his family, and they depend on him. When he cannot leave the home, his manager even arrives to warn him of the consequences of missing work. His sister takes it upon herself to feed him, and he accustoms himself to his new existence, but when his family decides to remove furniture from his room to give him space, he tries to save a picture of a woman in furs on the wall. Eventually, his father takes a job. They hire a maid and take in boarders. One day his father returns from work and, mistakenly thinking that Gregor had upset the mother, throws an apple that injures Gregor. The boarders declare that they will leave, if the family does not get rid of him. The sister discusses the idea of getting rid of him, and the father agrees. Gregor hears it and dies. Thereafter, the entire family moves into a better apartment and considers finding a husband for the sister.

Kafka's *Landarzt* presents a doctor who cannot travel to a sick person's home because his only horse has just died and no one in the village will lend him their horse and wagon. A sinister man appears and offers his horse and carriage in return for time alone with the doctor's maid. The doctor has a bad feeling about what will happen to the

² While many English-language scholarly works about Izumi Kyōka refer to him as "Kyōka," he appears in Tawada's text as "Izumi." This article will use both names, but with the distinction that references to "Kyōka" are about the man and writer and references to "Izumi" about the two characters (Izumi as narrator and Izumi as a character) in Tawada's text with this name.

maid but climbs into the carriage and is whisked away. At first, the patient does not seem ill, but the doctor discovers that he has a horrible wound. Oddly, the patient's family tries anything but modern medicine to cure the boy. Nonsensically, they undress the doctor and have him lie down next to the boy. The doctor leaves right away and must face the severe cold on the way home. Worse still, he frets both over his bad decision to leave the maid alone with the sinister man and also over a medical practice that will likely go under.

Finally, in Tawada's play we encounter Izumi as a narrator who wakes up and finds that he has turned into a German-speaking European. A second Izumi is also a character in the play and speaks and acts separately from Izumi the narrator. Things have been changed on the European model in his room, and Izumi immediately wonders where his Japanese stuff is. He demands that some be brought back. Even the music in the background is that of J.S. Bach, European classical music. The pictures on the walls are still traditional Japanese *ukiyo-e*, but there is also a picture of Franz Kafka. Eventually, Franz Kafka steps out of his own picture and, speaking as Gregor Samsa, says that he woke up as a bug. As Gregor, he then interacts both with the Izumis and also with a second version of the character Gregor. An occasionally nonsensical discussion of Japanese and German culture ensues. The country doctor appears as a character when Izumi begins to speak of being ill. At one point, Kafka as Gregor says that he was given up for adoption, and the story ends with Izumi as narrator taking over within the framework of an altered, or adapted, version of the end of *Verwandlung*. Gregor's family speaks of his having died and makes plans for improvements in their own life.

Confusing though it is at times, there are clues throughout Tawada's *Kafka Kaikoku* that suggest some thematic order to the madness. Before moving into the actual analysis of Tawada's drama, however, it is worthwhile to consider first Tawada the writer, especially with regard to the recurring themes of both an East-West clash and also the sometimes resulting cultural-morphological hybridity—"morphological" in both the linguistic and also biological sense—in her work. Secondly, it is useful to acquaint ourselves also with Izumi Kyōka, especially in the way that his work might relate both to modernization in Japan and also to the work of both Franz Kafka and also Yoko Tawada herself.

II. East-West Encounters and Cultural-Morphological Hybridity in Tawada's Work

To scholars of German language and literature, Yoko Tawada (1960-) is an increasingly well known writer of German- and Japanese-language fiction (occasionally,

as is the case with *Kafka Kaikoku*, with both languages in one and the same work) that in an almost essayistic fashion often offers insight into how the German language differs from Japanese. Her work contains numerous autobiographical elements, and the idea of an East-West clash, or meeting, is central to many of her fictions. Although “clash” sounds harsh, it fits the context of *Kafka Kaikoku*, as interpreted here. Often enough, however, the result of the cultural confrontations Tawada depicts ends in a hopeful amalgam of the cultures featured in the given work. In this respect, *Kafka Kaikoku* maintains a pattern, so to speak, that Tawada’s work evinces. As we will see in this section, Tawada herself has intimated in various publications that her mind has long perceived the world along these lines.

In Japan, Tawada studied Russian literature at Waseda University, and then in 1979 she travelled to East Berlin. Eventually, she studied *Germanistik* in Hamburg and Zürich, and in 1998 she received a doctorate in the field. Instead of going into academia, she developed further as a writer and has produced numerous fictional views of Germany and Japan. She is also renowned in Japan for other Japanese-language fictions, but these works fall largely outside the scope of this article. With her work in German, she has managed to cross the divide between those who simply publish in Germany and those who contribute to the German literary tradition, for one can find her name in scholarly German works that include writers of migrant literature.³ In her long list of publications to date, one will note, many communicate a common focus on distinguishing East from West. *Wo Europa anfängt* (Where Europe Begins, 1991) and *Ein Gast* (A Guest, 1993) are cases in point, both suggestive of an outsider’s perspective either on what one imagines as a sort of demarcation line between West and East or on the experiences of one person living among people in the West. Whereas the former depicts a partially fictive train ride across Russia during which a Japanese protagonist contemplates the concept of Europe in terms of cultures and peoples, the latter portrays the trials of a young Japanese woman caught up in a web of abusive sexual relationships with Europeans in Germany. Of course, Tawada also writes works that remind of more traditional Japanese themes, such as *Die Kranichmaske, die bei Nacht strahlt* (The Crane Mask that Shines at Night, 1993). Still others show a mix of European and Japanese features, such as *Orpheus oder Izanagi* (1999). Finally, some of her titles do not suggest an East-West focus, but do have one. *Talisman* (1996) and *Abenteuer der deutschen Grammatik* (2010) are prime examples, since both explore peculiarities of the German language, usually in comparison with Japanese.

³ See Peter J. Brenner, *Neue Deutsche Literaturgeschichte*, (Berlin;New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2011), 366. See also Amadeo Immacolata, Heidrun Hörner, and Christiane Kiemle (eds.), *Literatur ohne Grenzen: Interkulturelle Gegenwartsliteratur in Deutschland—Porträts und Positionen* (Sulzbach: U. Helmer, 2009).

Sprachpolizei und Spielpolyglotte (Language Police and Game-Polyglotts, 2007) is of this last variety of works by Tawada, and it grants numerous insights into the range of East-West issues she depicts, as well as their impact on Tawada's development as a writer and thinker across languages.⁴ "Ma und Mu," for instance, describes Japanese culture as a mix of European and Japanese elements. In recounting her own memories of her early consciousness, the narrator states, "Eine Unterscheidung zwischen Tradition und Moderne oder zwischen japanischer und europäischer Kultur existierte für mich nicht" (A distinction between tradition and modernity or between Japanese and European culture did not exist for me).⁵ One should perhaps not expect someone in Japan who grew up in Tawada's time to make such distinctions. After all, Tawada was born roughly 100 years after the Japanese had begun to seriously take in European technology and adopt various cultural norms and adapt them to Japan's own preferred usages. Indeed, by the time of Tawada's birth, the Japanese had seen so many translations from European languages that very little was actually new, unless it was also new to Europeans.⁶

No doubt, because the changes that took place in Japanese language and culture during the Meiji (1868-1912) and Taishō (1912-1926) eras and thereafter were long since complete, Tawada's consciousness of Japan and the world formed at a time when there were already accepted Japanese translations for much of world literature. At some point, however, she became aware that translations often did not convey what was in the original. "Metamorphosen des Heiderösleins" (Metamorphoses of the Little Heath Rose), for instance, presents differences between cultures that can disappear in translation. As a child, she heard and sang German songs translated into Classical Japanese, a language that changed the cadence (*Tonfall*) and alienated the lyrics from their original meanings so that one could not immediately tell what the original was. The result was a mix that was neither the Japanese Tawada spoke nor anything really European.⁷ Many years later, and after some time in Germany, Tawada actively began to think in German, she says in one interview. At this point, she perhaps had some sense of how much German had impacted Japanese in the past, and the German she had learned had even begun to mix with her Japanese. She claimed that "the German language was always in [her] head while [she] wrote in Japanese."⁸ A blend of stories in her head even impacted her writing: "There are always a lot of fragments of many stories from different sources.

4 Yoko Tawada, *Sprachpolizei und Spielpolyglotte*, (Konkursbuchverlag Claudia Gehrke, 2007).

5 Tawada, *Sprachpolizei*, 118.

6 For an overview of the translation period in Japanese history, see Donald Keene, "The Age of Translation," Chapter 3 in *Dawn*, 55-75.

7 Tawada, *Sprachpolizei*, 48,49.

8 Monika Totten and Yoko Tawada, "Writing in Two Languages: A Conversation with Yoko Tawada," *Harvard Review* 17, (1999): 94.

These always swim around in my head, and then, in the writing process, certain connections between different elements appear.”⁹

Given her expert-level knowledge of German literature, it is perhaps not surprising that German authors have left their mark on her writing. Indeed, whether fictional or essayistic, her work often contains loan plots and styles from German literature. Sometimes her borrowings make her style reminiscent of Franz Kafka (1883-1924). For instance, her style emphasizes the ambiguousness of language much in the way that Kafka’s does. Sometimes her texts contain pieces directly extracted from Kafka. Such is the case with *Kafka Kaikoku*, which makes it something like an adaptation. However noticeable the elements she borrows may be, they become part of her own new fictional work. Like Kafka, Tawada suggests in her work the oddity of human cultures, highlighting the incredibility and even fictitious quality of what we imagine to be reality. Unlike Kafka, however, she often specifically highlights differences between the German and Japanese languages.

Other than Kafka, there is a noticeable number of German authors who appear in Tawada’s work, often in relation to Japanese writers or to one of their alternate incarnations as German literature in Japanese translation. We meet Heinrich von Kleist (1777-1811), for example, in “Kleist auf Japanisch” (Kleist in Japanese), which points out that the “translator in Japan is more than a mediator, he could sometimes be seen almost as co-author.”¹⁰ Through translations, many Japanese since the Meiji era have gained insight into European culture(s) but what exactly European culture was often remained unclear. Still, even misunderstandings could be a source of knowledge, for when the target language has no close-approximation to the source language much is to be gained. According to Tawada, untranslatability (*Unübersetzbarkeit*) brings a “profit at precisely the point where it seems to lose something,” which means that the very fact that something is untranslatable allows one to experience the cultural specificity of various words and ideas.¹¹ One potentially untranslatable author who appears in Tawada’s works is the German-speaking, Romanian-Jewish writer and translator Paul Celan. Interestingly, in his work, Tawada has seen parallels to literature from Northeast Asia. In “Die Krone aus Gras (Paul Celans Niemandrose)” (The crown of grass (Paul Celan’s Niemandrose)), the narrator reads German words much like Chinese characters. Her reading of Celan’s work in German mimics the type of reading she might do in Japanese. The reading styles, or the way that she interacts with the text itself, blend. She

9 Totten and Tawada, “Writing in Two Languages,” 97.

10 Tawada, *Sprachpolizei*, 85.

11 Tawada, *Sprachpolizei*, 90.

says that “she is simply certain that Paul Celan sometimes looked at the alphabetical symbols (*alphabetische Schriftzeichen*) as graphic forms.”¹²

With a head aswim with such a rich blend of words from her various languages, it is perhaps also not difficult to understand how Tawada could become interested in finding depictions of hybrid beings with multiple identities. She included her own variations of these beings in her work. When she learned about the modern European concepts of identity, however, they did not fit into her view of the world. For instance, she “noticed that there was an unrelenting search for one single identity. I, however, could not live with that idea. I started searching, unconsciously, for realms in which different types of identity are represented.”¹³

In many old tales and myths from around the world she found hybrid creatures, the sort of peculiar beings that sometimes show up in her own fictions. In her story “Kakato wo nakushite” (*Fersenlos/Missing Heels*, 1994), for example, which is much akin to Kafka's *Verwandlung* (*Metamorphosis*, 1915), animal-human metaphors express the manner in which some people can be excluded from human society. Whereas Kafka's Gregor Samsa in *Verwandlung* is a bug, a mail-order bride in *Kakato* has a host-husband who turns out to be an octopus.¹⁴ *Kafka Kaikoku* contains similar hybrid beings (discussed further below) but of two human cultural types, mixed beings created by German and Japanese literature and language. The suggested cultural metamorphosis results in a morphologically hybrid being, one whose form changes along with his language and culture.

One might wonder whether Tawada's fictions are merely descriptions of her own experiences and perceptions. Whatever the case, she is not seeking a position as an authority on Japanese cultural affairs. Indeed, she resists being taken for a representative of Japan. In “Metamorphosen des Heiderösleins - ein Versuch über Goethe” (*Metamorphoses of a Heath Rose - An Essay on Goethe*) she suggests that, as a representative of migrant literature in Germany, the potential to be taken as a voice from her native land makes her uncomfortable:

Die Stimme des Autors, der in der Migration lebt, wird oft zu schnell auf
sein Herkunftsland zurückgeführt. Dadurch wird sie akzeptiert und

12 Tawada, *Sprachpolizei*, 67.

13 Bettina Brandt and Yoko Tawada, “Ein Wort, ein Ort, or How Words Create Places: Interview with Yoko Tawada,” *Women in German Yearbook* 21, (2005): 11.

14 For a more detailed version of what I mean here, see Lee M. Roberts, “Woman as an East-West Constant: Patriarchal Continuities in Works by Mori Ōgai and Yōko Tawada,” in *Gendered Encounters between Germany and Asia*, ed. By Joanne Miyang Cho and Douglas T. McGetchin, Palgrave Series in Asian German Studies (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 231-252.

gleichzeitig ignoriert. Der Autor braucht stets neue Orte, die nicht seine Herkunft sein können und wo er keineswegs integriert werden muss.”
 (The voice of the migrant writer is often all too quickly seen in relation to his country of origin. In this way, the author is accepted and simultaneously ignored. The author constantly needs new places that don't have to be his country of origin and where he in no way has to be integrated.)¹⁵

For this reason, Tawada's narrator enjoys the novelty of otherness and even contrasts German culture with her own native Japanese culture while also distancing herself from the idea that she can truly represent Japan. Indeed, the very thought that one represents one's native country strikes her as a confining category from which she must escape.

“Auch ich suche stets nach neuen Orten. Wenn die Leser anfangen zu glauben, in meinen Texten den japanischen Blick auf Europa finden zu können, fühle ich mich wie zurückgestoßen und eingesperrt in einer Zelle namens Herkunft. In einem solchen Moment wünsche ich mir, dass ich mit Vornamen ‘Gogol’ heiße. Um mich aus der Gewalt der Dichotomie Ost/West zu befreien, suche ich nach einem anderen Schauplatz in Russland, in Sibirien...”

I, too, constantly seek new places. When readers begin to believe they can find the Japanese view of Europe in my texts, I feel pushed back and locked up in a cell called country of origin. In such a moment I wish that I had the first name ‘Gogol.’ To free myself from the power of the East-West dichotomy, I search for another site/scene in Russia, in Siberia.”¹⁶

Yoko Tawada's work presents a mix of East-West narratives as part of an ongoing modern consciousness that is sometimes complementary sometimes conflicting. This consciousness began to take shape around the year 1868 (Meiji Reformation), but within Tawada's work it continues to change even in the twenty-first century, even if only as part of her fictions. In the next section, we will introduce that part of *Kafka Kaikoku* that is linked to Meiji Japan, the writer Izumi Kyōka.

¹⁵ Tawada, *Sprachpolizei*, 101.

¹⁶ Tawada, *Sprachpolizei*, 101-102.

III. Izumi Kyōka—Kafka-esque Japanese Writer Before Kafka

Renowned author of romantic-style novels, short stories, and Kabuki plays in the pre-WWII period, Izumi Kyōka (1873-1939) wrote surrealistic, fictional critiques of his own society. His work often contained supernatural elements from the Edo period (1603-1868), such as from traditional kabuki and Nō theater, and, with at least three hundred works about paranormal occurrences, he is considered a writer of Gothic fiction.¹⁷ Well known, representative works by Izumi include his earliest serial fiction *Yazaemon Kanmuri* (, 1893), stories like “Iki Ningyō” (The Living Doll, 1893) and “Giketsu, Kyōketsu” (Noble Blood, Heroic Blood, 1894), which was one of his many fictions adapted for the Shimpa Theater, the novel *Kuro Yuri* (The Black Lily, 1899), the novella *Uta Andon* (A Story by Lantern Light, 1910), and various later works like *Yasha ga Ike* (Demon Pond, 1913) and *Tenshu Monogatari* (The Castle Tower, 1917).

Whereas many other Japanese writers of his day sought to change Japanese writing styles on a European model, Kyōka showed little enthusiasm for the new model from Europe and thus looked to past traditional fictions for material from which to create new works.¹⁸ On this point, Donald Keene writes of Kyōka, “surely no other author of modern Japan is less likely to be affected by the changing tastes of the times.”¹⁹ Another scholar has commented that Kyōka was considered something of a “throw-back to the dark and dirty days of Edo fiction. The modern era did not sit well with Kyōka.”²⁰ This anti modern stance found its way into his fictions, such as in the instances where humans and beasts mix and mingle in mysterious ways. With respect to such depictions of man-beasts in Kyōka's work, scholars have identified metamorphosis as one of the motifs central to his literary project.²¹ For Kyōka, human beings were “always about to return to barbarity” and even human reason amounted to little more than “murderous craftiness.”²²

While he has been fleetingly compared to various European writers, such as Novalis and Count Maurice Maeterlink,²³ Kyōka may remind at times also of Franz Kafka.

17 Donald Keene, *Dawn to the West. Japanese Literature of the Modern Era - Fiction*, A History of Japanese Literature vol. 3 (NY: Columbia University Press, 1998), 217.

18 Charles Shirō Inouye, “Izumi Kyōka and Language,” *Harvard Review of Asiatic Studies* 56.1 (1996), 7-9.

19 Keene, *Dawn*, 217.

20 Mark Cody Poulton, “Metamorphosis: Fantasy and Animism in Izumi Kyōka,” *Japan Review* 6 (1995): 72. See also Chiyoko Kawakami, “Izumi Kyōka's *Uta Andon*: Between Anachronism and Avant-Garde,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 54.2 (1999), 196.

21 Poulton, “Metamorphosis,” 80. See also Charles Shirō Inouye, “Water Imagery in the Work of Izumi Kyōka,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 46.1 (1991): 48.

22 Poulton, “Metamorphosis,” 71, 74.

23 Keene makes a reference to similarities between these three authors. See Keene, *Dawn*, 202.

Interestingly, however, Kyōka could have known very little about Kafka, if anything at all. Moreover, even though Kyōka preceded Kafka for the most part, completing much of his work was done before Kafka started to write, Kafka could not have known of him. Japanese translations of Kafka's work were not widely available until after Kyōka's death, and thus it is unlikely that there could have been much influence. To this day, Kyōka remains a little known author in Germany. Still, like many Japanese of his day, Kyōka was aware of German literature. Together with the Japanese journalist and scholar of German Tobari Chikufu, Kyōka, who could not read German, even co-translated Gerhard Hauptmann's play *Die versunkene Glocke* (*The Sunken Bell*, 1896).²⁴

Even if purely coincidental, Kyōka's work shares some noteworthy stylistic features with that of Kafka. Like Kafka, Kyōka's language allows for multiple interpretation. In the words of one scholar, "Kyōka's fictional technique exploits ambiguity to a superb degree."²⁵ Keene has noted Kyōka's unusual use of language, too, explaining that "mastery of style and description, rather than plot" in his stories, was his literary achievement.²⁶ One need not look too hard to find similar views of Kafka's writing style. One history of the German literary tradition compares the earlier author Heinrich von Kleist with Kafka, stating that Kleist "distinguishe[d] himself through a style of language that in its short, dramatic form and in its feigned objectivity that anticipates narrative strategies that later became famous as the distinctive feature of Kafka's prose."²⁷ Another similar literary history describes Kafka as a "stylist of high rank" (*Stilist von hohem Rang*), and his particular writing language lacked "elements of mood or temper" (*Stimmungselemente*) but gained its "strong effect ... through the situations to which the given protagonist is subjected."²⁸ Marcel Reich-Ranicki wrote of Kafka as one of several writers in the German tradition who possessed a particularly "cultivated [(*gepflegt*)] and exquisite [(*exquisit*)] style."²⁹

24 The Japanese translation by Kyōka and Chikufu was entitled *Chinshō* and appeared in partial print as a serial in *Yamato shimbun* in 1907 and then as a full translation in a book in 1908. It was never staged. Cody Poulton, "How Do Goblins Talk? Izumi Kyōka's Translation of Gerhard Hauptmann's Märchendrama, *Die versunkene Glocke*," in *Translation East and West: a Cross-cultural Approach*, eds. Cornelia N. Moore and Lucy Lower (Hawaii: Hawaii University Press, 1992), 15, 18.

25 Charles Shirō Inouye, "The Gothic Novel: Izumi Kyōka and Tanizaki Jun'ichirō" Chapter 4 in *The Alien Within: Representations of the Exotic in Twentieth-Century Japanese Literature*, ed. Leith Morton (Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 2009), 105.

26 Keene, *Dawn*, 204.

27 Wolfgang Beutin, et. al., *Deutsche Literaturgeschichte: Von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*, 6th. ed. (Stuttgart/Weimar: J.B. Metzler, 2001), 219.

28 Willy Grabert, Arno Mulot, and Helmut Nürnberger, *Geschichte der deutschen Literatur* (Munich: Bayerischer Schulbuch-Verlag, 1990), 208.

29 Marcel Reich-Ranicki, *Deutsche Literatur in West und Ost* (München: R. Piper, 1963), 399.

It is worth noting here that much the same can be said of Tawada's style. As mentioned above, Tawada's style compares with that of both Kafka and also Kyōka. Tawada and Kyōka share, for instance, an interest in possible links between writing and pictures. To some extent, Kyōka's style developed out of his interest in *etoki* (picture-explaining), a format in the *kusazōshi* (19th-century picture books) that he read and collected. According to one scholar, Kyōka's novels were "the linguistic re-presentation of visual images already existing in the mind."³⁰ In addition to the graphic quality Tawada detected in Celan's poetry, which suggests that she thinks of text in pictures, one of her fictions in the book *Nur da wo du bist, da ist nichts* (Only where you are there is nothing, 1987) is entitled *Etoki* ("Bilderrätsel"). Doubtless, Tawada and Kyōka envision texts similarly.

Among various works by Izumi Kyōka that are comparable to Kafka's *Landarzt* and *Verwandlung*, two fictions evince at least some topical similarities, "Gekashitsu" ("The Surgery Room," 1895) and *Kōya Hijiri* ("The Holy Man of Mount of Kōya," 1900). Both depict medicine and illness in Japan, but the latter also specifically deals with the threat of transformation into something the protagonist would not choose to become. The title "Gekashitsu" promises a tale about a Western-style operation performed in Meiji Japan, but what unfolds is the story of a woman willing to bear the pain of a surgery without anesthetic as a demonstration of the pain she had to endure due to a secret love she had shared with the surgeon. In the end, she plunges the doctor's scalpel into her own breast and takes her life. Like Kafka's doctor in *Landarzt*, Kyōka's surgeon here fails to help his patient. He even turns out to be nearly the cause of her grim fate, much like Kafka's doctor is partially at fault for handing his maid over to the sinister man who desires her.

While "Gekashitsu" has only very basic similarities with *Landarzt*, there is greater reason to compare *Kōya Hijiri* (henceforth *Kōya*) with *Verwandlung*. *Kōya* contains more direct parallels to *Verwandlung*, especially with regard to shape-shifting, and thus deserves slightly more in-depth consideration here. In *Kōya* we meet a traveling monk who hears an anecdote from another older monk who once followed a medicine man into a forest where he had a series of mysterious, frightening encounters. Along the way, the monk ran into a section of the forest with trees crawling with huge leeches that rained down on him. Later, he had to step over a series of snakes in order to continue on the path. Eventually, he ended up at the home of a sort of forest sorceress who could bewitch men with her beauty and then turn them into animals when she bored of them. He did not know about her powers, but later learned of them from one of two men with whom she lives, an old man who served as her helper. The other man living with her was known to

30 Chiyo Kō Kawakami, "Between Anachronism and Avant-Garde," *Monumenta Nipponica* 54.2 (1999): 195.

be mentally deficient and thus in need of her care. Interestingly, he was also her husband. In fact, the three have a twisted story of their own. In the past, the sorceress' father, who was a doctor but not a real healer, accidentally hurt the young man (husband), and the sorceress had taken care of him since then. The entire region had become something of a graveyard in the past when a flood wiped out all of the local population, except for these remaining three. With little other choice in the wilderness, the monk decided to stay the night at the woman's home. Before sleeping, the two went to a nearby stream, where she ended up bathing him. Increasingly, he found himself attracted to her, but in the end he avoided the fate of so many animals that approach her during the night, men she had transformed into beasts in the past. In the end, the old assistant of the sorceress sells the medicine peddler, whom the sorceress had had transformed into a horse, and then meets up with the monk just after he had left the woman's hut. In fact, the monk had just decided to return to her, but the assistant warns him of her heartless nature and the fate he had only narrowly escaped.

Like Kafka's *Verwandlung*, Kyōka's *Kōya* deals with the idea of human beings' turning into animals. Such metamorphoses have roots in both European and also Japanese legend. In Europe, werewolves and other were-creatures were thought to be human beings afflicted with the illness of lycanthropy, but Kafka's Gregor Samsa is not really a creature of this sort, for he cannot turn back into a human being. Thus, we might consider him a new sort of being that merely reminds of traditional monsters. In the case of the animals in *Kōya*, however, the link to Japan's many shape-shifters is more direct. The sorceress in the forest reminds very much of the *kitsune* (a fox; sometimes also called "goblin-fox," in English), a being that has been part of Japanese traditional belief since at least in the eleventh century.³¹ The *kitsune* were said to beguile men, for "[a]lmost all of them [*kitsune*] transmogrify themselves into beautiful women who, through their charm, attract and fascinate their lord and master, ...often causing his own downfall because of excesses and neglect of duty."³² While the *kitsune* takes many different forms, some are "exceedingly dangerous and greedy ... [but] priests and sorcerers have the power to vanquish him [or her]."³³ In *Kōya*, the man who escapes the sorceress is a monk, which is something like a priest.

Other parallels between legends of the goblin-fox and the encounter with the sorceress in *Kōya* are similarly hard to overlook. In order to shape-shift, the fox needs the skull of a human or an animal and to shift into the form of an attractive girl must

31 U.A. Casal, "The Goblin Fox and Badger and Other Witch Animals of Japan" *Folklore Studies* 18 (1959): 1.

32 Casal, "Goblin Fox," 28.

33 Casal, "Goblin Fox", 1.

“constantly live near a grave-yard.”³⁴ The sorceress of *Kōya* was surrounded by a type of graveyard. Like the fox, which is said to be capable of granting human beings the ability to understand animals,³⁵ the sorceress interacts with animals that approach her, speaking directly to them.³⁶ As tricky as the *kitsune* may be, it can be detected, for legend has it that, when a *kitsune*'s shadow “falls across water, ...it will always be a shadowy outline of a fox.”³⁷ It is difficult for the monk in *Kōya* to discern whether she is a *kitsune*, because when the two go to bathe, they stay in an area that is dark and surrounded by huge rocks, in contrast to the stretch of water downstream that was flooded with moonlight and gleamed like silver armor (*gekkō ni abita gin no yoroi*).³⁸ The old man who assists her gives the deepest insight into her nature, perhaps, when he says of the horse he plans to sell (who once was the medicine peddler) that “if one is not a fox” (*kitsune de nakereba*) one can hardly ride it.³⁹

Despite such clues that the sorceress may be a *kitsune*, other references point to the possibility that she another traditional Japanese shape-shifter, the snake. In fact, the *kitsune* is just one of many similar creatures, called *bakemono*, a word that means something like “goblin” or apparition but is comprised of components that mean “transformation” and “disguise” (*bake-*) and being or thing (*mono*). The word *bake*, found in the intransitive verb *bakeru*, means “to transform,” and in its transitive form *bakasu* “to bewitch” or “to deceive.”⁴⁰ The sorceress in *Kōya* definitely has characteristics of the snake. Before the monk catches sight of her, for instance, he hears her voice coming from behind her home but imagines that she will have a tail and scales and come slithering into view.⁴¹ There is a suggested connection to snakes, since the route to her home was lined with snakes. At the very least, they are prevalent in her area. According to one scholar, both fear and also worship of snakes “goes back to the days of the gods,” and snakes were thought to be “vengeful, malicious and cruel and also ... concupiscent. Most dangerous were those snakes which ... [could] transform themselves into men: they would change into somebody's husband, and then during his absence go

34 Casal, “Goblin Fox,” 6.

35 Casal, “Goblin Fox,” 18.

36 Izumi Kyōka, *Kōya hijiri* in *Izumi Kyōkashū, Nihon gendai bungaku zenshū*, vol. 12 (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1980), 117.

37 Casal, “Goblin Fox,” 28.

38 Izumi Kyōka, *Kōya*, 118.

39 Izumi Kyōka, *Kōya*, 116.

40 For examples, of this word in these forms, see Koh Masuda (ed.), *Kenkyusha's New Japanese-English Dictionary* 4th. ed. (Tokyo: Kenkyusha, 1974), 70.

41 Izumi Kyōka, *Kōya*, 114.

and sleep with the wife.”⁴² Some could also turn into women to become a man’s lover and then “turn into a vampire.”⁴³

It is clear that the characters in *Kōya* think in older traditional metaphors, which would mean that they would know of various shape-shifters, too. The medicine peddler, for instance, thinks of his wares as a something related to the gods (*shinbōmankintan*).⁴⁴ Although perhaps half in jest, he also warns the monk not to let tree spirits (*kodama*) get him.⁴⁵ The monk too understands the world in terms of legend, reasoning at one point that it was not the time year that one might expect to meet up with spirits of mountains and rivers (*chिमimōryō*).⁴⁶ Later, he thinks that the leeches falling from the trees had been there since around the time of the age of the gods (*kamiyo no inishie kara*), and the repeated sighting of snakes along the path makes him conclude that nature spirits (*kono yama no rei*) may be at work.⁴⁷

Although steeped in legend, *Kōya* also contains references to modernizing Japan. Traditional beliefs mix freely with competing scientific metaphors. One scholar has pointed out that *Kōya* also draws on a mixed language of science and legend. Japan was hit by severe cholera epidemics between the years 1877 and 1895, and the Japanese feared animals, because they were thought to spread disease. Indeed, before the concept of a virus was understood in Japan, such illnesses were described as animals (*dōbutsu*).⁴⁸ Eventually, the idea of sexually transmitted disease entered the discourses, and women were charged with the responsibility of not allowing disease to enter their home. Notions about women and sexuality and beasts merged, and many came to fear beautiful women, especially prostitutes, who might seem healthy but might also be “poison women” (*dokufu*).⁴⁹ Even though the Japanese were adopting Western science to combat illness, the discourse on illness tapped into ideas from “Edo Japan and folkloric beliefs, using old motifs and iconography to transmit . . . scientific knowledge.”⁵⁰

Although *Kyōka* was by no means an exact replica of Kafka, his work shares stylistic and thematic features with that of both Kafka and also Tawada. Thus, even if *Kyōka* the writer may have rejected modernity, he makes sense within a Tawada text with elements

42 Casal, “Goblin Fox,” 87.

43 Casal, “Goblin Fox,” 87.

44 Izumi *Kyōka*, *Kōya*, 108.

45 Izumi *Kyōka*, *Kōya*, 109.

46 Izumi *Kyōka*, *Kōya*, 110.

47 Izumi *Kyōka*, *Kōya*, 113, 112.

48 Miri Nakamura, “Monstrous Language: The Translation of Hygienic Discourse in Izumi Kyōka’s *The Holy Man of Mount Kōya*,” *Review of Japanese Culture and Society* 20 (2008): 162.

49 Nakamura, “Monstrous Language,” 163.

50 Nakamura, “Monstrous Language,” 164.

from Kafka. In the next section, we will see, the Kyōka—or “Izumi,” as he is called in Tawada's drama—appears to be the Japanese man suddenly changed into a hybrid East-West being.

IV. Tawada's Izumi and East-West Hybrid Japanese

Turning our attention finally to Tawada's *Kafka Kaikoku*, we find that the very title evidence that the problem covered is of an East-West nature.⁵¹ Usually, the Japanese would write a word like *kaikoku* with Chinese characters (*kanji*), but in this story it appears in transliterated form, perhaps because it is for a German-reading audience. As such, the Japanese word it is supposed to be could be any one of a number of character combinations pronounced as *kaikoku*. While the following list of words with this pronunciation may not be exhaustive, it gives some insight into the range of possibilities: 1.) Traveling about the country, making a pilgrimage (回国); 2.) A warning (戒告); 3.) Maritime [sea] power (海国); 4.) Founding a country (開国) or also with the same set of characters 5.) Opening a country to foreign intercourse (to trade with the West, to the world).⁵²

With this last possible definition of *kaikoku* we gain insight into the tension running throughout the drama that is rooted in differences between East and West. As is well known, Japan was forced by a Western power (USA) to open up to trade with the world in 1868, and among the many things from the West that the Japanese absorbed into their own culture was literature and writing practices. At some point, the influx of world literature into Japan included works by the writer Franz Kafka. Thus, we have here an expression of, above all, the literary and linguistic changes that came into Japan after it was forced to open (*kaikoku*) to writers like Kafka.

The entire structure of the story to *Kafka Kaikoku* is a dramatic variation on Kafka's *Verwandlung*, with the very first spoken line of text nearly a quote out of Kafka's novella. Instead of a bug or vermin (*Ungeziefer*), however, Izumi the narrator is a German-speaking person, and the world he writes into existence, or narrates, is a blended Japanese-Western one.⁵³ Since Gregor is repulsed by his metamorphosis, we can expect that Izumi's change is also unwanted. The character-version of Izumi does not like the change, especially upon finding that his native Japanese things have been replaced by

⁵¹ Yoko Tawada, *Kafka Kaikoku*, in *Mein kleiner Zeh war ein Wort* (Tübingen: Konkursbuch Verlag Claudia Gehrke, 2013), 271-284.

⁵² Koh Masuda, *Kenkyusha's New Japanese English Dictionary* (Tokyo: Kenkyusha, 1974), 667.

⁵³ Tawada, *Kafka Kaikoku*, 272.

European things. “Wo ist mein Futon?” (Where is my futon?) he wants to know.⁵⁴ The narrator even says that he squirms like a bug across his bed, much like Gregor Samsa does as a bug. Izumi has white dots on his back that itch, because his body rejects his transformation into a person with white skin, part of his transition into a European, or white person.⁵⁵

Of course, it is far more than Izumi’s skin color that has changed. He has become part of modernity. Japan during Izumi’s day was changing on a European model at a rapid pace, and he does not like it, he experiences it as an irritation of the skin. “Die Moderne juckte.” (Modernity made me itch).⁵⁶ Modernity, often used synonymously with Europeanization, is an itchy patch or spot caused by Japan’s borrowing of European culture, which fundamentally changed its people. As we see, not just the *futon* has changed but most of the things around him (the props on the stage) are Western items. Seeing a European table, Izumi requests that he be brought his *chabudai*, a low Japanese-style table.⁵⁷ After eating at this *chabudai*, he turns into a rat, but we are told in the stage directions that the rat he becomes is not disgusting in the way Europeans think it to be but “smart, modest, and diligent,” or more like the rat in the Chinese zodiac.⁵⁸ Unlike Gregor, who gradually gets used to being a bug, Izumi fights to keep his Japanese tradition. He also tries to warn the character Kafka as Gregor, who joins him in the drama, that he may be deceived by his own modern culture, for a woman with a fur boa they see, he says, may have a fox around her neck. With this potentially confusing remark, Izumi steps associatively into Gregor Samsa’s world in which there is a picture of a woman with a fur on the bedroom wall, but Izumi interprets it from a traditional Japanese perspective. The fox, Izumi points out, is the deity of transformation/metamorphosis (*Verwandlung*), and just the sort of twist one might expect in a story by Izumi. Even with this knowledge, Gregor cannot escape what is to come. After all, *Kafka kaikoku* is more or less the world of Kafka, where the protagonist’s fate is determined from the outset. Moreover, Izumi’s Japanese cultural knowledge is of a nearly bygone era. It is passé. Through this Japanese myth of the goblin-fox, Izumi does assert some power over the main plot that comes from Kafka’s story, but ultimately resistance proves futile.⁵⁹

Izumi’s struggle to hang onto traditional Japanese culture continues throughout the play. One thing that modernity lacks, according to Izumi, is the floating world of the Edo

54 Tawada, *Kafka Kaikoku*, 272.

55 Tawada, *Kafka Kaikoku*, 272.

56 Tawada, *Kafka Kaikoku*, 272.

57 Tawada, *Kafka Kaikoku*, 272.

58 Tawada, *Kafka Kaikoku*, 272.

59 Tawada, *Kafka Kaikoku*, 274.

era (1603-1867). As he says plainly, "Die moderne Welt schwebt nicht mehr" (the modern world no longer floats). While *schweben*, one might argue, really is a verb that denotes hovering in the air, here Izumi is referring to the collection of *ukiyo-e*, works of art that are veritable emblems of the floating world. In this scene, pictures painted by artists like Utamaro (1753-1806) hang next to a picture of Kafka. It is clear that Kafka does not belong in this collection, but his image has begun to vie for the attention of the Japanese observer. A German audience, conversely, must witness what Western culture did to traditional Japan. Modernity is forcing the Edo culture out, and with it Japanese native identity. Ironically, Utamaro was part of a group of artists who were admired in Europe, but stereotyped associations with Japan (*japonisme*) also arose in Europe in connection with this art form, reducing Japan and Japanese to caricatures. As if to make this very point, Izumi writes the character for *hito* (human being) onto the *ukiyo-e* pictures and throws them out of the home. With this gesture, he throws out both his tradition and also the human side of his culture, his own humanity.⁶⁰

If the Japanese have exchanged their cultural particularity for European modernity, then they have become something new in *Kafka Kaikoku*, hybrid cultural beings. Interestingly, not only their sense of style and artistic world have begun to change, but nature itself has become mechanistic, like in the West. The sound of waves crashing and gulls' cries come from a radio that can be turned off.⁶¹ When it is turned on again, the audience then gets to hear the sound of rain against the window pane.⁶² Western technology, the audience must see, has completely replaced nature.

Similarly, the clock is a machine that controls how life in Japan is lived on a daily basis. Izumi does not want to get up just because the alarm rings.⁶³ In this drama, however, he has no choice. Later, we see the ultimate effect of this clock, for Gregor's parents use it to determine which train to take to continue with their mechanistic, modern life after Gregor has died. Just as the *hito*, or human being, mentioned above was thrown out the window in Japan, there is no real human feeling in these German-speaking Europeans in *Kafka Kaikoku*. Indeed, Gregor's parents in Tawada's *Kafka kaikoku* have no more feeling for their son than in Kafka's *Verwandlung*. In this drama, then, Izumi is what has become of Japan, and by extension the Japanese have undergone a transformation and can no longer be expected to have any more feeling for their fellow human beings than Gregor's parents do for their stricken son.⁶⁴

60 Tawada, *Kafka Kaikoku*, 275.

61 Tawada, *Kafka Kaikoku*, 273.

62 Tawada, *Kafka Kaikoku*, 274.

63 Tawada, *Kafka Kaikoku*, 275.

64 Tawada, *Kafka Kaikoku*, 284.

Quite uncharacteristic of Izumi as discussed in the previous section above, the Izumi in Tawada's drama changes into a *bunraku* puppet and then exclaims in surprise, "Ich dachte, ich habe es endlich geschafft, in der neuen Zeit anzukommen. Muss ich mich jetzt in eine Puppe aus der alten Zeit verwandeln?" (I thought I managed at last to arrive in a new time. Must I now turn into a puppet from the old time?).⁶⁵ In fact, Izumi outside of this drama was not really looking to arrive in the new era, but here he has become a traditional Japanese puppet looking for its proper role in a modern, European-style play.

Kafka Kaikoku communicates that modernization of Japan impacted not merely change of style and form but also sound and meaning in ways that play out negatively for the Japanese. One prime example is in the German word *Schein* (appearances), which appears as a character in the play.⁶⁶ Although initially Izumi says that he has become a German-speaking European, he is somehow still aware of his Japaneseness and can think about how German words like *Schein* compare to similar words in Japanese. We learn, for instance, that *Schein* sounds much like the Japanese word *shain* (bureaucrat), and since they are in one and the same person in this play, one can assume that they have begun to experience some overlap in meaning. *Schein*, the character in the play, says that it is "punctual, diligent, polite, frugal/thrifty and modest," all of which are features one might associate with modern Japanese bureaucrats (*shain*), but *Schein* is also merely appearances. Izumi as narrator says without specifying whether he is describing himself or *Schein*, "Diese Kreatur der Moderne, ohne Rückgrat und Verstand" (this creature of modernity, without backbone and intellect).⁶⁷ In fact, it does not matter whether we imagine that he is speaking to the one or the other, since they are one and the same. His critique is of European culture that has created the modern human being that, in Japan, is the bureaucrat.

The modern Japanese bureaucrat, we learn during the scene in which Kafka's *Landarzt* appears, cannot even allow himself to get sick. Izumi says: "Wie nun, wenn ich mich krank meldete? Das wäre aber äußerst peinlich und verdächtig, denn seit 150 Jahren ist nie ein japanischer Büroangestellter je krank gewesen" (What if I called in sick? That would be extremely embarrassing and suspicious, since for the last 150 years no Japanese office worker has ever been sick).⁶⁸ It is important to understand that the "last 150 years" corresponds roughly to the period since the Meiji Restoration (1868), the period during which Japan reformed its culture at breakneck speed on the European model. Thus, this comment refers to changes in Japanese culture that had made it

⁶⁵ Tawada, *Kafka Kaikoku*, 278.

⁶⁶ Tawada, *Kafka Kaikoku*, 275.

⁶⁷ Tawada, *Kafka Kaikoku*, 276.

⁶⁸ Tawada, *Kafka Kaikoku*, 277.

impossible for people to admit any weakness on the job. Exactly how much is *Schein* and how much *shain* is, of course, difficult to ascertain, but, like Gregor Samsa, their entire social value is in the ability to work or at least to seem capable of doing so.

Tawada's country doctor is, much like his role in his own original German-language story by Kafka, supposed to diagnose illness, even if the patient is not really sick. Almost comically, when he says that the Japanese did not know that they were sick, because they had never met a doctor like him.⁶⁹ Such a statement reminds of the suggested superiority of Western medicine and methods for doing almost anything, for that matter, that the Japanese had to endure, especially before it was accepted into the group of great powers following the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905). Even if Western medicine could cure illnesses that had not been recognized as such earlier, the European and American superior attitude that accompanied modernization was not easy to bear, one might imagine. In the end, Tawada's doctor decides in another comical gesture that Izumi has "eine sprachliche Krankheit. Die Glieder, ja diese Satzglieder gesellen sich nicht zu ihren Gliedern. Ich habe ein Heilmittel für Sie." (A language/linguistic sickness. The elements, the parts of speech, do not join up with your elements. I have a cure for you).⁷⁰ With this diagnosis, the audience gains a view of a negative Western opinion of the Japanese language before it had taken in countless European writing conventions and much of world literature. Punctuation came hand in hand with European writing styles and stories into the Japanese purview, in no small part via translation into Japanese, as well as the knowledge communicated in essays, articles, books that constitute the various academic disciplines of the modern university.

To add insult to injury, Gregor tries to train Izumi to become more European. Of course, this idea is ludicrous. After all, one must wonder what a character who cannot survive his own story and is despised by his own family has to teach Izumi about being European. Gregor says that he is proud of the sounds he can produce and wonders whether Izumi can do the same?⁷¹ Gregor then makes sibilant sounds (*Zischlaute*). The Japanese phoneme *tsu* slowly is replaced by German *z*. That is, the audience witnesses the manner in which Japanese words, like *tsumaranai* (boring) and *tsuma* (one's own wife), are forced to become the completely unrelated German words *zweisprachig* (bilingual) and *zweckfrei* (futile/purposeless/useless), suggesting that Japanese language was pushed to match European patterns.⁷²

69 Tawada, *Kafka Kaikoku*, 277.

70 Tawada, *Kafka Kaikoku*, 278.

71 Tawada, *Kafka Kaikoku*, 279.

72 Tawada, *Kafka Kaikoku*, 279.

Izumi willingly takes two capsules and is transformed into a female *bunraku* puppet.⁷³ At this point, Izumi comments that he thought that he had finally arrived the new era (modernity) and wonders why he must be transformed into a puppet from the old days.⁷⁴ His comment is rather ironic, given that we know that the actual writer was not so interested in conforming to the new modern ways of writing that were en vogue in Japan back then. These words also signal, however, that he is becoming a European stereotype of the Japanese as something quaint and feminine, much in keeping with the Western discourse of *japonisme*. The country doctor in Tawada's play confirms this point, saying, "Als eine Puppe lässt sich die Moderne viel leichter ertragen. Versuchen Sie es! Es wird Ihnen viel besser gehen als den anderen." (It is much easier to cope with modernity as a puppet. Try it! You will do much better than others).⁷⁵ In essence, European culture controls this most Japanese of writers here much like a puppeteer controls a puppet. In literary terms, Kafka's stories shape Izumi's own fiction by serving as a model for "modern" storytelling.

Izumi finds himself caught up in Kafka's story, and his humanity and Japanese peculiarity continue to be replaced by European sensibilities as the play goes on. Toward the end, we hear Gregor's sister, who in Kafka's novella first helped her brother but then gave up on him, playing a famous melody from *Madam Butterfly*, which depicted the Japanese as subservient to Western types. One must wonder whether she is taunting Izumi or merely demonstrating how the Europeans are changing the world they encounter. As a female puppet, one will not fail to note, Izumi is comparable to the servile Japanese woman of *Madam Butterfly*.

Like most protagonists in a Kafka story, Izumi cannot change his destiny. However, the end of this drama offers some hope. When he begins to narrate Gregor's end, he is no longer in his own story but is actively shaping Kafka's fiction. His voice has become part of Kafka's literary world.

V. Conclusion

For all of her professed discomfort at imagining human identity as a single entity, Tawada's *Kafka Kaikoku* also expresses at least some discomfort at the thought of having multiple cultural consciousnesses. As a work of fiction, *Kafka Kaikoku* represents a dark fantasy of the modernization of Japan, but in Izumi Kyōka's day the Japanese language and tastes did indeed become deeply entangled—doubtless, also enriched—by European

⁷³ Tawada, *Kafka Kaikoku*, 278.

⁷⁴ Tawada, *Kafka Kaikoku*, 278.

⁷⁵ Tawada, *Kafka Kaikoku*, 278.

languages and literature. This play portrays the Japanese encounter with European modernity not only as one that lingered into the twentieth century but also one that can still be treated meaningfully in the twenty-first century. In Kafka-esque fashion, it critiques Japanese acceptance of modernity as something that allowed German-speaking Europe, for example, to dominate them technologically, linguistically, and literarily. Izumi disappears at the end of the play, but his struggle to keep his own Japanese identity throughout the play indicates that the resulting modern, or Europeanized, consciousness in Japan is like the East-West blend depicted in various other texts by Tawada. Since there is no real solution to Izumi's problem in *Kafka Kaikoku*, one might assume that the play merely describes a state of affairs that can no longer be changed. Modern Japan in *Kafka Kaikoku* is an East-West hybrid entity.

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