



Unsettling Dreams: Investigating Crisis in Earthquake Literature from Japan and the Pacific Northwest

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What can art and stories offer a world unsettled by change?



THEORY

1. Stories hold and define relationships in *networks* that yield meaning. (Le Guin 1986)
2. Stories are pieces of *technology that function as actors* in networks. The contents of stories are also actors in that network. (Latour 2012)
3. Stories foster connection both within and without their borders, thus becoming *places readers can go and be*. (Busselle and Bilandzic 2008; Green 2004)

EARTHQUAKE LITERATURE

- Environmental crisis without human blame
- Visceral; felt in human bodies and systems
- Fulfills *ecocriticism* by addressing environmental crisis & investigating connection between humans and non-humans

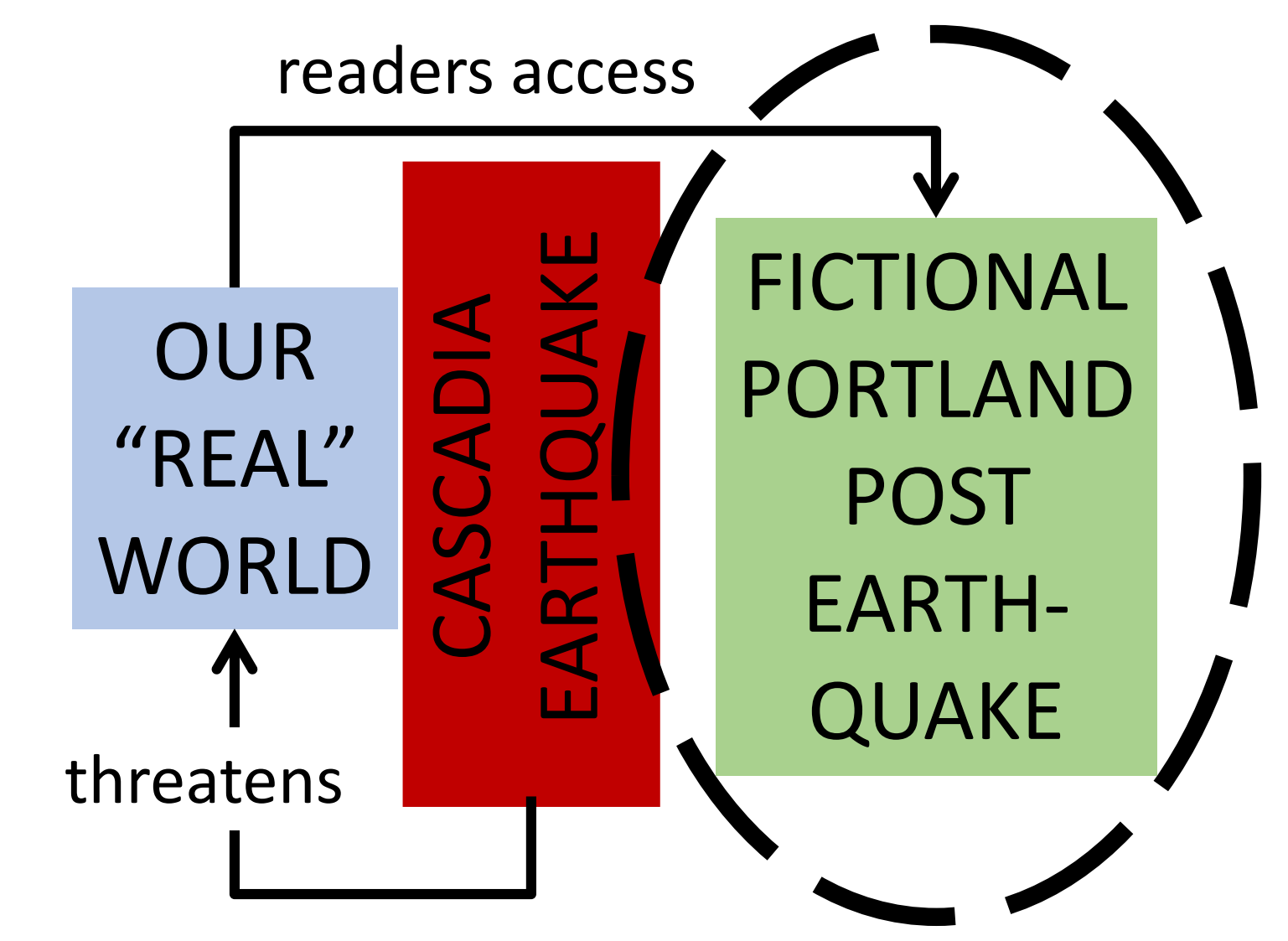
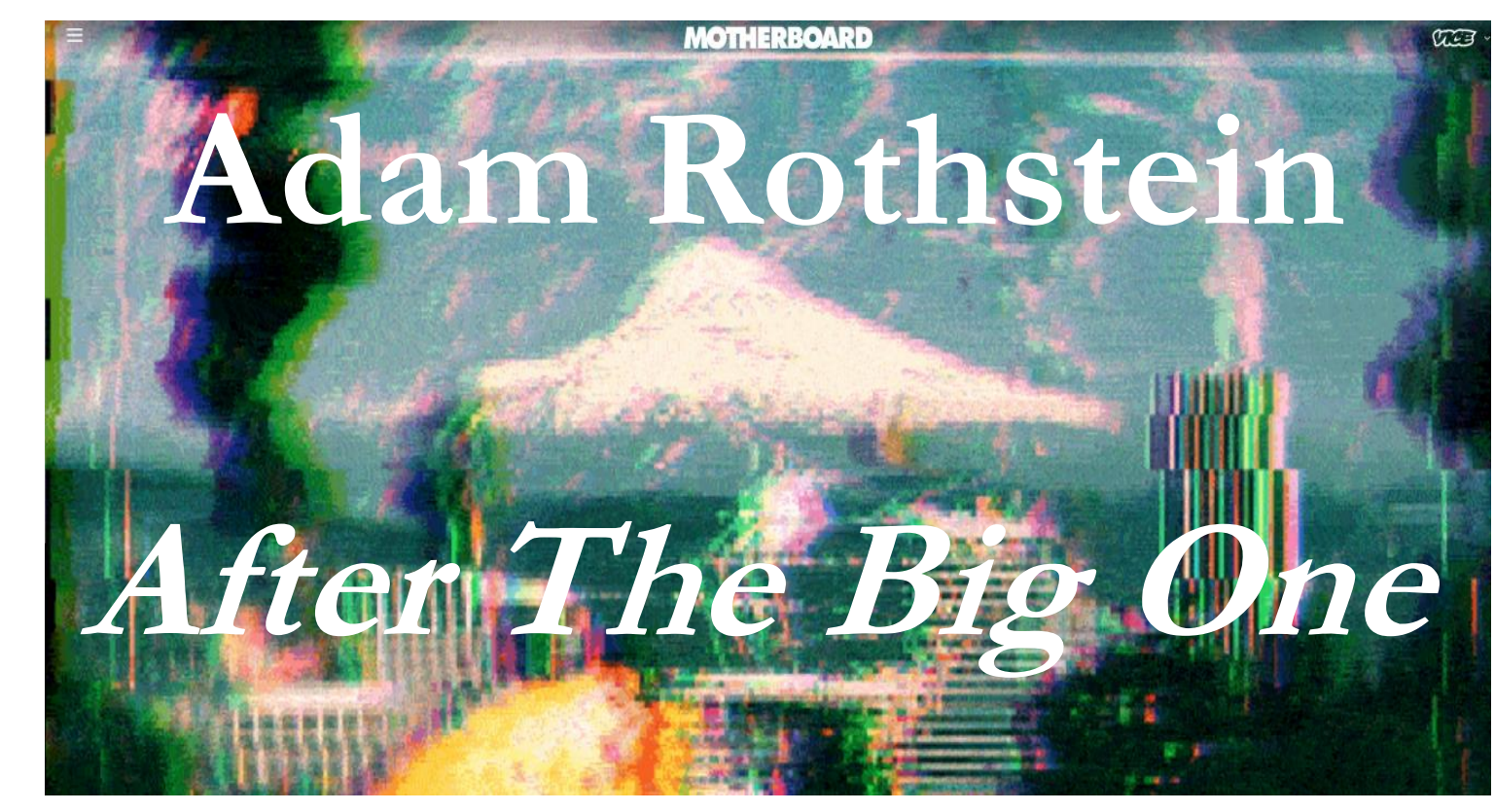
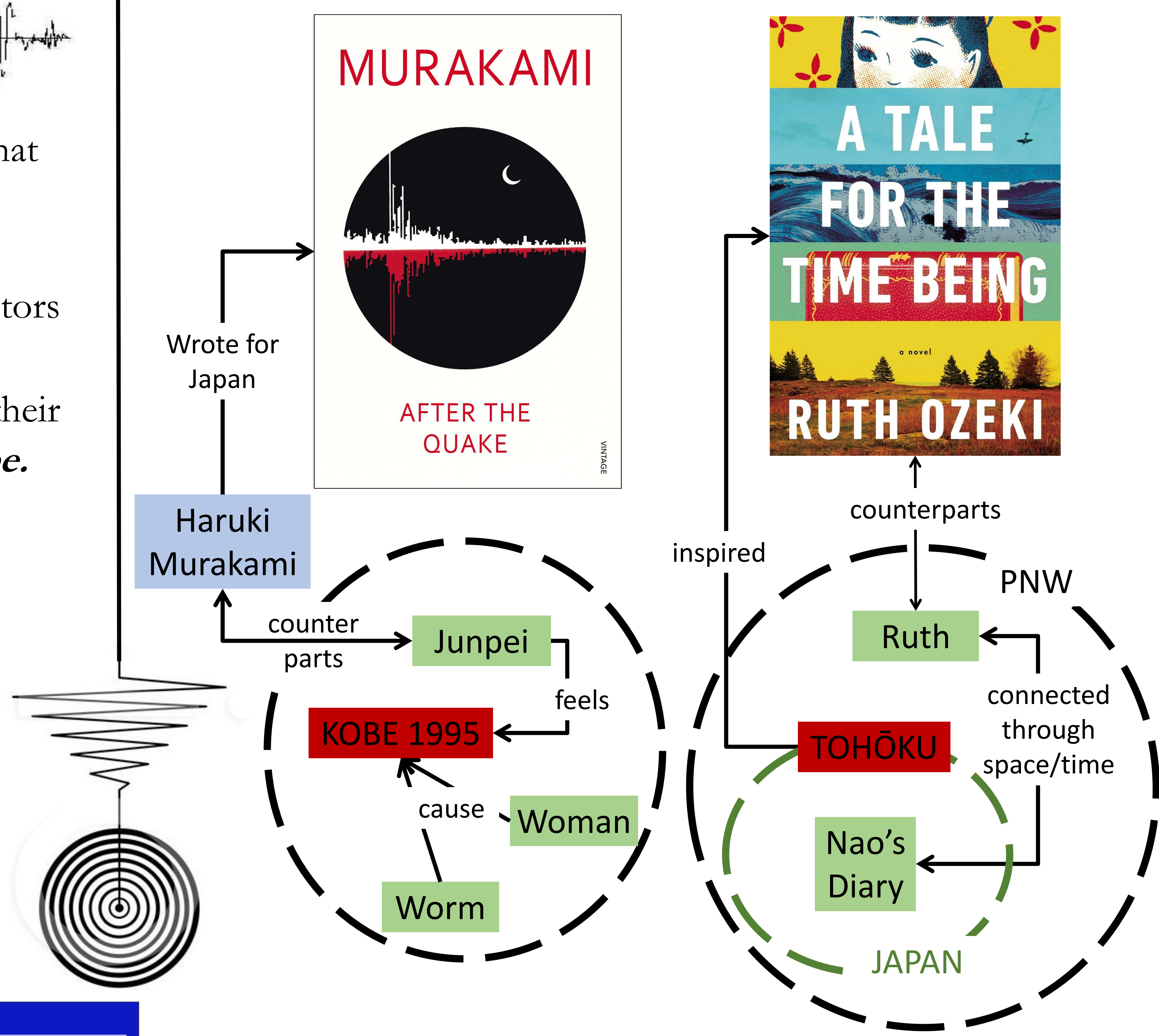
How and why do authors from Japan and the Pacific Northwest render earthquakes in fiction?

LEGEND

NONFICTION

FICTION

EARTHQUAKE



OVERALL PATTERNS

- DREAMS
- MYTHS
- BODIES
- THE PAST
- STORIES

<p style="text-align: center;">JAPAN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent earthquakes • Long cultural/geologic history of disasters 	PACIFIC OCEAN	<p style="text-align: center;">PACIFIC NORTHWEST</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High risk of earthquakes • No contemporary earthquake culture
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IMPLICATIONS

Texts question boundaries that attempt to maintain distinction, enriching:

- literary endeavors
- environmentalist endeavor of understanding modern disasters
- the humanities to participation in human survival.

By examining earthquake literature under a framework of ecocriticism, I establish the potential for literature to promote survival and resilience in crisis by forging intimate connections between earth systems, stories, and humans.

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