Research Article

Locality in Makoto Shinkai's *Kimi no Na wa*: Negotiating Japanese Youth Identity

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Abstract

Japan becomes one of the countries that has been producing worldwide popular culture, namely through anime. Besides its popularity which attracts wider audiences, anime cultivates cultural content as it is also found in popular anime entitled "Kimi no Na wa". Aside from its popular culture, Japan has undoubtedly been known for its 'high culture' products such as haiku or Zen, to which Japanese identity is attached. Then, the content of Japanese locality performed in the anime highlights some crucial issues related to Japanese identity, including the problematic relationship between traditionality and modernity, generations, and genders. Thus, the local content in the anime is interesting to scrutinize how traditional values are depicted and negotiated concerning Japanese identity. Since this study is descriptive-qualitative research, it answers the problem by describing the phenomenon and employing the interpretative method by Hall's concept of identity. The selected data related to locality and identity obtained from the movie and poster are grouped and approached by Hall's semiotic representation to see the relation to its significations. Finally, this brings out the interpretation of the data indicating that the anime portrays the 'return' to local culture. It is referred to as 'nihonjinron', which is particularly emphasized in youth life. Through this film, the identity is negotiated. The characters (Taki and Mitsuha) perform post-modern subjects; a case in point accepts the changes as they develop their identity in the current era.

1. Introduction

In the last two decades, Japanese pop culture has been heavily produced and is increasingly accepted by the global community. As globalization occurs, national borders cannot hold back the coming of foreign products in which cultural representation is embedded. It has affected those who consume pop culture products to keep consuming them. This situation shows that there has been a significant influence of Japanese pop culture on the global community. One of the Japanese pop culture products which have spearheaded Japanese pop culture is *anime* or Japanese animation. The circulation of Japanese pop culture has not only reached out public sphere like consumption of foreign products, but it has been spreading even into the domestic area through its "ideology and image in these products" (McKevitt, 2010, pp. 894–895).

In Asia, after the post-war period, Japanese popular culture has been the

spotlight. The phenomenon of Japanese popular culture globally in Asia became 'cultural imperialism' (Allen & Sakamoto, 2007). Historians have observed it because, since the fall of Japan in World War II, it has become essential for Japan to build its own identity. Namely by presenting a "Japanese Spirit", an image of Japan that is different from any other country; or often referred to *Nihonjinron* or Japaneseness, which is a term that describes the uniqueness of Japan both of its cultural and social character (Tominaga, 2002). *Nihonjinron* means a theory about Japanese society. This word is used to refer to writings that brought issues on the uniqueness of Japanese culture, "A central premise of *nihonjinron* is that the Japanese are a homogeneous people (単一民族; tan'itsu minzoku) who constitute a racially unified nation (単一民族国家; tan'itsu minzoku kokka)" (Burgess, 2007). As a form of cultural diplomacy to other countries, especially in Asia, this *Nihonjinron* then forms a perception that "Japan is cool" or anything related to Japan is cool and interesting. This cultural phenomenon becomes increasingly popular attracts both national and international audiences. The impact of this phenomenon is the increasing number of products made by Japan for global consumption, and this consumption of Japanese products has expanded so that they are progressively produced. This popular culture ultimately makes Japan has its own uniqueness in pop culture products including *anime*.

The emergence of *anime* as a pop-culture product is still considered a debate in a scientific study of culture. Some argue that *anime* is a sociological phenomenon; others call it a form of art; but most importantly, *anime* is understood as a form to see the representation of Japanese society today (Napier, 2001). All of these opinions locate *anime* in a cultural context. Apart from being a form of cultural product, according to Napier's opinion,

anime is also a global phenomenon at the level of commercial power and cultural power (Napier, 2001). In cultural power, anime becomes a differentiator from western pop culture products that seem to be formulaic. In contrast, Japanese pop culture emphasizes resistance to this hegemonic globalism (its uniformity); therefore, *anime* presents Japanese roots or cultural values while still influencing global consumers (Napier, 2001).

Then, what can be further scrutinized is whether *anime* is a form of culture categorized as "high culture" or "mass culture". It is challenging to subsume pop culture products in the category to come up with this point. According to Napier's opinion, *anime* can be categorized as Japanese pop culture when the cultural product represents the current state of Japan and how the product is massively produced (Napier, 2001). However, categorizing *anime* as pop culture is not merely based on how the cultural product meets the targeted market or society's demand. To some extent, pop culture becomes a link between various 'forces' and cultural influences; between local and global, domestic and foreign, inside and outside, and hybridization and indigenization (Allen & Sakamoto, 2007). *Anime* displays a contestation of these complexities. However, the cultural values performed through anime are authentic cultural forms that, according to Napier, are recategorized as 'high cultural traditions' (Napier, 2000, p. 4). This argument is asserted because *anime* raised traditional Japanese arts such as *Kabuki* and woodblock print, which influenced the global community. Even *anime* is equated with *haiku*, *Zen*, and martial arts as it was first released to other countries such as Korea, Taiwan and Southeast Asia in 1990.

One of the most likely factors to make it consumed globally is because *anime* has a wide range of genres. It is no longer defined as children's cartoons like *Doraemon,* but it takes all the film genres,

which are also the basis of the Hollywood film genre, ranging from romance to Sci-fi, from children's stories to adult stories (sex and violence). Although *anime* stands for 'animation', it refers explicitly to Japanese cartoons or animated films made in Japan. It has no definite formula and presents different complexities in its stories. In *Kimi no Na wa*, which is targeted for appropriately teenagers or adults, shows the story's complexities and identity. According to MacWilliams, traditional influence also marks the making of *anime* (MacWilliams, 2008), depicting festivals that could be associated with Japanese culture. Besides, the Japaneseness or *nihonjinron* presented in the *anime* can be identified as the identity of Japanese people (MacWilliams, 2008). The presence of the discourse on Japanese identity begins when the subject deals with 'other'. In the contextualized Japan, it was marked by the arrival of Matthew C. Perry, who opened Japan's isolation to interact with other countries on July 8, 1853 (D. Fitria, 2010). At this point, it marked a significant matter on perceiving Japanese identity.

To further scrutinize the Japanese identity, cultural content performed in the *anime* is also considered. Since the material subjects raised in the *anime* insert particularly Japanese cultural content, the locality or local values can be seen through images or narrative. As shown in the *anime* entitled *Kimi no Na wa*, it elevates traditional Japanese values such as *Kuchikamizake*. This tradition of making *sake* is produced through the depiction of the ritual held in the shrine. This traditional *sake* becomes one of the earliest forms of alcoholic beverage in Japan (Ashcraft, 2020). *Sake* uses mold saliva or human saliva (as it means 'mouth-chewed sake' which is derived from kanji「口」 meaning 'mouth',「神」meaning 'God', and「酒」meaning 'liquor) in order to break down the rice starch into sugar as a starter to fermentation. Although the movie seems to construe that the process of 'rice-chewing' can only be done by *miko* or virgins (shrine maiden), Ashcraft argues otherwise that this used to be done by men as well, not only restricted to only virgins (Ashcraft, 2020). Above all, the movie performs 'Japaneseness' from which the global audience can find a representation of Japanese culture.

That the movie depicts such cultural value seems to assert its locality content. Thus, how the traditional values are contested in the *anime* signify a relational meaning to the Japanese identity. It needs to be further investigated because locality contributes to the formation of identity in the current context where, according to Hall, "the local" and the impact of "the global" are concurrent (Hall, 1996). Previous research on *Kimi no Na wa* focused on the structure of the story, such as the understanding of the narrative that performs the urgency of 'healing' the national trauma caused by the triple disaster in 2011 (Thelen, 2019) or the understanding of the narrative in order to find out the relationship of characterization in the movie (Kusumawesti, 2017). This study is significantly central to the issue rather than its structure by observing the discourse on identity. Therefore, this study aims to configure identity (with its importance to return to local culture) performed by the interchangeable characters and how it is contextualized in the post-modern era like nowadays.

2. Methods

This research employs a descriptive-qualitative method. The descriptive method is employed to describe phenomena or characteristics (Nassaji, 2015). In particular, this study describes a phenomenon depicted through a story in the *anime*, *Kimi no Na wa*, namely about the return to locality or local values. It is thus described based on the narrative structure and audio-visual in the *anime*. Then, the qualitative method is employed

to elaborate on how all of these depictions of the "return to local" configure relational meanings in analyzing the construction of Japanese identity. These data related to locality and identity were obtained from the movie and poster, including the audio-visual, including the captures and quotes from the dialogues between the characters in *Kimi no Na wa*. Based on these selected data, the analysis can be drawn using Hall's concept of identity, which states that there are three stages in viewing identity. It focuses on how the subject or individual is constructed; or how it (through various forces) attached to the identity.

According to Hall, identity is associated with the capacity, awareness, and actions that form the inner *core* of the subject as they emerge from birth; this is understood as a unified individual whose *inner core* has been inherent to the self (Hall, 1996). This wholeness identity or so-called personal identity (Hall's term is *enlightenment subject*) refers directly to the self. The attributes attached to the self bring it into existence. Secondly, the subject reflects the complexity that occurs in the modern world. The interaction with society influences the presence of this complexity. What later happens is the interaction between self and the society — where culture grows and exists (Hall, 1996, pp. 597–8). Interaction with the outside world contributes to the formation of the subject's identity. Thus, Hall offers mediation between the subject and culture (which includes values, meanings, and symbols). In this stage, the "self" is formed and transformed by representation in the subject's cultural systems. The fulfilment of personal identity then becomes insufficient because it keeps shifting according to where the subject lives or is positioned (Fitria, 2019). This sociological subject is a concept to see this shifting—that the identity of the subject is unstable and keeps interacting with the cultural world.

"The fully unified, completed, secure, and coherent identity is a fantasy. Instead, as the systems of meaning and cultural representation multiply, we are confronting by a bewildering, fleeting multiplicity of possible identities, any one of which we could identify with—at least temporarily." (Hall, 1996, p. 598)

Identification of the subject towards this identity refers to cultural identity, which produces a fluid identity, open to various possibilities—"open-ended". Cultural identity is then constructed through how the self is represented in the cultural system (Hall, 1987 in Hall, 1996). This subject is referred to as a *post-modern subject*, namely, a subject with unstable or *non-fixed* identity (fluid identity). Based on this theoretical concept, the data were then interpreted to determine whether the return to a locality in bridges the formation of a post-modern subject or a so-called fluid identity (in this *anime*) performed by Mitsuha Taki).

Besides, the analysis also uses pictures in the movie poster. At this step, a semiotic approach is employed to see the forms of representation related to identity. Hall divides three approaches to signify meanings from this representation, namely reflective, intentional, and constructionist (Hall, 1997, pp. 24–25). Hall divides three approaches to signify meanings from this representation, namely reflective, intentional, and constructionist. *Reflective representation* leads to configure meanings based on "reflections of the objects" or events in the real world. *Intentional representation* brings out meaning on the emphasis by the speaker or writer through the language they use. Meanwhile, *constructionist representation* relates the meaning to the aspects of the sociological characters or symbols existing in the society—here, the subject is no longer seen as a sole-fulfilled individual or as a post-modern subject.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1 Narrative Structure

Figure 1. The movie poster of Kimi no Na wa.

Kimi no Na wa tells a relationship between two main characters, Taki and Mitsuha. These two characters are in different backgrounds. Taki is a high school student in an urban area, namely Tokyo, set in around 2016. As most urban teenagers generally do, Taki lives in an apartment, rides local trains, and works a part-time job. Meanwhile, Mitsuha is a high school student in a rural area called Itomori in around 2013. Even though rural areas are primarily associated with rivers, rice fields, mountains, trees, it does not correlate with Mitsuha's family condition since her family background is relatively well-off. His father is the administrative head of the town. Mitsuha and her sister live with her grandmother, who is in charge of the local shrine. Mitsuha and her sister are involved in rituals held at the shrine, including making *sake* to be presented to Gods.

In the story, these two characters, Taki and Mitsuha, alternately experience a so-called 'body swap' each day. Both of them initially thought that it was a vivid dream, but slowly each of these characters eventually realized that it was not a dream. They got to know it because of stories shared by people surrounding them. Later on, they communicated with each other (when the body swaps) by leaving notes on books, smartphones, or even skin. Until then, the communication was cut off. At this point, conflict in the story rises. It was when a comet destroyed Itomori on October 4, 2013.

Taki tried to find information about Mitsuha and Itomori, which were devastated by the comet based on his memories when they swapped bodies. Until then, Taki realized that there was a three-year difference between him and Mitsuha. So, Taki decided to go on a journey to find it out. He finally arrived at Mitsuha's *sake*, at an ancient shrine that sits on a mountain top. By drinking the *sake*, Taki re-entered Mitsuha's body in the past and made an effort to evacuate the villagers before the comet crashed Itomori. At the end of the story, Taki managed to save the villagers. However, his memories become blurred about Mitsuha. It was not clear then whether the two were in a relationship or not. Nonetheless, their meeting back on the stairs in one corner of Tokyo indicates a happy ending for the main characters in this movie.

The exciting thing is that the narrative structure of this movie is well represented through the movie poster (figure 1). Reflective representation presents essential elements, including the setting and the characters framed in the attractive and easily followed narrative. The presence of two young characters wearing school uniforms on the left and right side of the picture emphasizes their social background (as teenagers). On the left side, behind the male character, a picture of buildings in the city represents urban life. On the other hand, the background of the female character represents a rural sphere with trees and hills in green colours.

Another representation is called intentional representation, which can be seen from the gesture of the two characters. Their bodies are facing the opposite sides, away from their sides. Although the gazes did not meet each

other, their heads inclined backwards as if they are looking at each other. Body gestures of the two characters have an intentional representation of the conflict in the story, which is about a different way of life (despite their similar desire to unite or to meet each other again).

The enigmatic element on the poster is indicated by the light beam in the centre of the movie poster. This light seems to divide these two settings from each of the characters as if it separates their worlds. However, at this point, the light makes these two turn their heads, which, somehow, can be interpreted that this light is a constructionist representation as it gives a riddle to understand what it might signify throughout the story.

a. Juxtapositions in *Kimi no Na wa*

As shown in Figure 1, the film's cover depicts the binary opposition of these two characters. Taki is a boy from the city in the future. In contrast, Mitsuha is a girl from a small town in the past. Taki and Mitsuha represent the binary opposition such as boy-girl, future-past, city-village, modern-ancient. The binary relation expressed in the narrative indicates a fluid boundary in this juxtaposition. In the following dialogue, Mitsuha's grandmother explained further about this relationship as follows:

三葉、ヨツハ、結びって知っとるか。
結び。
土地の氏神さまとはな。古い言葉で結びって呼ぶんやさ。この言葉には深い意味がある。糸を繋げる事も結び。人を繋げる事も結び。時間が流れる事も結び。全部神様の力や。わしらの作る組紐もすすから、神様の技。時間の流れその物、あらはしとる。より集まって形を作り・・・ネジ入れて絡まって、時には戻ってといれまた繋がり。それが結び。それが時間。(Shinkai, 2016, 00:34:20)

Mitsuha, Yotsuha, Musubi tte shittoruka.
Musubi?
Tochi no ujigamisama tonna. Furui kotoba de musubitte yobunyasa. Kono kotoba niwa fukai imi ga aru. Ito o tsunageru koto mo musubi. Hito o tsunageru koto mo musubi. Jikan ga nagareru koto mo musubi. Senbu kamisama no chikara yo. Washira no tsukuru kumihimo mosusukara, kamisama no waza. Jikan no nagaresono mono, arahashitoru. Yori atsumatte katachi o tsukuri...neji irete karamatte, toki ni modotte iremata tsunagari. Sore ga musubi. Sore ga jikan. (Shinkai, 2016, 00:34:20)

Mitsuha, Yotsuha, do you know about 'musubi'?
Musubi?
The guardian Gods of this area used to be called 'Musubi'. This word has a deep meaning. The weaving of yarn is also 'musubi'. Connecting with other people is also "musubi". The flowing time is also 'musubi'. All of that is divine power. So, the threads we make are the art of Gods and represent that time keeps flowing. They are stick together, spin, entangle each other, sometimes unravel, break down, and then connect again. That is 'musubi'. That is time. (Shinkai, 2016, 00:34:20)

Musubi means "knot" (Matsuura, 1994, p. 678). In Shinto teachings, *musubi* always means 'connection' or 'relation' (Hardacre, 2017); in other words, musubi is associated with an associated idea of a harmonious connection between divine spirits within humanity. It is further explained that *musubi* can also mean "the action of causing things to be born and grow, the creation of life and power, the formation of value, causing mature and develop" (Hardacre, 2017, p. 43). In this film, *musubi* is represented by the woven thread that Mitsuha wore as a hairband; and as it happened to Taki, in a different dimension of time, also wore it as a bracelet. This bracelet connects both of

them through body swaps, which, in this sense, is beyond the boundaries of male-female, future-past, city-village, modern-ancient urban-rural, modern-ancient, and so on. For non-Japanese viewers or those who do not know the concept of *musubi*, it will be difficult to grasp this idea's connectedness with the logic of the storyline. The concept of *musubi* is deliberately emphasized in the movie because it somehow explains the relationship between Taki and Mitsuha in different times and spaces. Therefore, this concept of *musubi* draws a plausible connection between these individuals beyond their differences; this is how the story then makes sense.

The relationship between these two characters is also essential to observe as a representation. The male body or Taki's and the female body or Mitsuha's are a place for different souls, yet this does not limit their interaction with the people surrounding them. In the beginning, they were confused by an inexplicable occurrence they experienced, which amazed the change of behaviour and attitude. Over time, they can adapt and be accepted by the surrounding people. At this point, gender and gender boundaries attempt to be reconstructed as fluid or without boundaries.

Likewise, with time, between the future and the past are blurred; the body swap of Taki and Mitsuha denotes a not-fixed boundary between times. At the beginning of the story, "the past" where Mitsuha lived simultaneously took place with "the future" where Taki lived his life. The exchange of their souls every day is repeated continuously. However, this does not influence each other. Otherwise, the 'knot' signifies the connectedness of these two characters beyond the boundaries. This connectedness leads to the understanding of traditional spirituality that God or kami exists. The grandmother character explains this as *musubi*. It is quite relational to see the significance of grandmother's character.

Such subtle matter that 'grandmother' here considerably depicts a character who owns mastery of tradition and spirituality to grasp this very meaning. Most importantly, this is the key to answering the enigma to which the two characters are connected; namely the weaving of threads that connect each other and the spirituality that makes the meeting between the two happen are represented in '*musubi*'.

Other binaries such as urban-rural, modern-ancient are portrayed as they are in the film, which is inherently adhered in the lives of each character. In this sense, the binary opposition relation is still formed hierarchically. The story depicts the city, which is hierarchically positioned higher than the village-based upon demarcating modernity and traditionality. It is shown by the reaction of Mitsuha's admiration when Taki's body is enjoying cakes and coffee at one of the cafes in Tokyo. The reaction of Mitsuha's admiration is none other than borrowing the stereotype of 'villagers' who are commonly represented with the image of 'backward people' constructed in popular media. This stereotype can also be seen from the act of Mitsuha's friend who saw the ritual of making *kuchikamizake* with disgust and humiliation, as seen in figure 2.

世界最古の酒なんやて。
米を噛んで吐出して放置しとくだけで・・・
自然発酵してアルコールになるんやさ。
口噛み酒。
神様嬉しいんかなぁ、あんな酒もらって。
そら、嬉しいやろ。
ほれ見てみ。宮水や。
うわっ、私絶対無理！
よく人前でやりよるよな。
信じられんわ。
お姉ちゃん元気だしないよ
いいにん、学校の人に見られたくらい。

思春期前のお子様は気楽でええよね。
そうや！いっそ口噛み酒をたくさん
作ってさ、
東京行きの資金にしたら？
あんたって、凄い発想するな
(Shinkai, 2016, 00:15:33)

Sekai saiko no sakenan yate.
kome o kande toshutsu shite houchi shi
toku dake de..
shizen hakkou shite arukouru ni narun
ya sa. Kuchikamisake.
Kamisama ureshiin ka naa, anna sake
moratte.
Sora, ureshiiyaro.
Hore mite mi. Miyamizu ya.
Uwaa', watashi zettai muri! Yoku
hitomae de yari yoru yo na. Shinji raren
wa.
O neechan genkida shinai yo
ii nin, gakkou no hito ni mi rareta kurai.
Shishunki mae no okosama wa kirakude
ee yo ne.
(Shinkai, 2016, 00:15:33)

Katsuhiko: It is the oldest sake in the world. By chewing the rice and brought them out of the mouth again, then just let it be ... with natural fermentation, it then becomes alcohol. *Kuchikamizake*.
Sayaka: Would Gods be pleased to be served *sake* in such a way?
Katsuhiko: seems delighted.
Schoolmate: Hey, look, it is Miyamizu, right?
Schoolmate: I definitely wouldn't do that. Especially in front of many people. I can't believe it.
Hitoha: It seems like you're sick, right?
Mitsuha: I'm fine. I saw my school friends also there. How nice it would be if I could be as relaxed as a kid like you.
(Shinkai, 2016, 00:15:33)

Figure 2 and the dialogue depict that the people surrounding Mitsuha, even her schoolmates, lack respect for the *kuchikamizake* tradition. Its further emphasizes a sort of humiliation regardless of their background that they came from the same village and held relatively the same traditional values. Mitsuha responded

to this humiliation as she left the shrine with a shameful face after the ritual was carried out.

This scene indicates a reflective representation of the adolescents that they are no longer familiar with traditions or anything related to traditionality. This ignorance leads to their action in giving less respect or even humiliation (seen from the captures and the dialogue), such as the sneer of Mitsuha's schoolmate when they saw Mitsuha as the "miko" presenting ritual in the shrine to make *kuchikamizake*. The act of humiliation exemplified in this scene is drawn by ignorance towards the symbolization of this ritual. In the narrative, it appears that there is an attempt to reverse the hierarchy (of binary oppositions) by reinforcing local values through *kuchikamizake*. Taki has an opportunity to turn back the time and save the villagers. These local values represented by *kuchikamizake* signify crucial meaning in bringing the youth life back into their roots in modernization and globalization.

3.3 *Nihonjinron* and Japanese identity

Unlike, the fluidity of male-female relations and the blurred future-past, which seem to counter common stereotypes, the urban-rural and modern-ancient oppositions remain to be performed as it is. The reversals of hierarchy, such as the 'village' associated with its traditionality and the 'city' associated with its modernity, are interpreted in the second layer. It can be traced by asking questions related to the existing conflicts in the narrative. The conflict in the story developed when Taki and Mitsuha's communication was cut off due to the comet disaster, and later on, it could be resolved with Mitsuha's *kuchikamizake*. Taki, who drank the *sake,* was then able to return to Mitsuha's body to arrange a plan to save the villagers. In this movie, a plot was created to answer this conflict. However, clues to the answer have appeared at the beginning of the story.

The consistency of the narrative in the form of fluidity, blurring, and reversing the binary opposition hierarchy indicates that the signification of meaning becomes an attempt to negotiate the discourse on Japanese identity or *nihonjinron* 「日本人論」. *Nihonjinron* can be categorized as a sociological subject where the subject interacts with the existing culture. First, it is depicted by the character named Taki as an individual who interacts with the culture surrounding him and existing in the modern world. This can be traced from the stereotypes of Japanese people most likely portrayed in urban youth with homogenous images of being busy studying while working part-time jobs. Secondly, the character by Mitsuha performs a stereotypical rural youth who is probably distant from tradition, but somehow, they are still connected to their roots and traditionality.

The identity's negotiations are indicated by Taki's effort to return to the shrine at the top of the mountain to repeat the past and change the written history. In this context, Japanese modernity seems to be pulled back to the youth's life to revive Japanese teenagers' traditions. It can also be interpreted that today's Japanese teenagers have forgotten a lot about their traditions. In this sense, it also can be understood as the nowadays-Japanese teenagers. They are in the stage of 'post-modern subject' where their sociological identity keeps shifting (based on the cultural interaction they are exposed to).

Accordingly, as mentioned earlier, the subject includes Taki and Mitsuha that, in this sense, it indicates a fluid identity; or based on Hall's identity categorization, it is a *post-modern subject*. In this state of instability, the identity is formed and transformed by the changes surrounding both characters, culture, and worldview. The body-swap that exchanges souls allows the alternation between the boy and girl, and through these experiences, the sociological identity of Mitsuha and Taki starts to shift. When the sociological identity of Taki as an urban youth interacts with traditionality in Mitsuha's world, it begins to expose to the force of Taki's post-modern identity; and it keeps changing when he then returns to his real world. So do Mitsuha's identity when she begins to interact with the outside world hers. It, later on, allows her to learn and adapt to the urban society.

Furthermore, this is also reinforced by the blurred boundary between the future and the past. Most importantly, the future, which has changed since Taki returned to the past and evacuated the villagers, emphasizes a deferral meaning about the names that disappear from each other's memories. Based on this context, 'names' become a symbolic order or a representation of the subject's identity by the presence of others. In the story, the connectedness of the subject deferred again; instability of the subject conveyed through the return of the subject to present time in one synchronized body and soul. However, this return brings emptiness to their present life. As seen in the quote, that fact signifies Taki's flow of consciousness, and his dialogue with Mitsuha at the end of the film, as follows:

> 今はもうない町の風景に、何故これほど、心を絞めつけられるのだろう。ずっと、誰かを。-誰かを、探していた。
> あの？
> 俺、君をどこかで・・・
> 私も。
> *君の名前は？*
> (Shinkai, 2016, 01:40:28)

> *Ima wa mou nai machi no fuukei ni, naze korehodo, kokoro o shimetsukeraruno darou. Zutto, dareka o. –dareka o, sagashiteita.*
> *Ano?*
> *Ore, boku wa dokoka de...*
> *Atashi mo.*
> *Kimi no namae wa?*
> (Shinkai, 2016, 01:40:28)

It's no longer in the corner of the city,
it's been so far, this heart is choked.
Who is she, who is she that I always
keep looking for.
Excuse me?
Me, I don't know where you are .....
Yes me too.
What is your name?
(Shinkai, 2016, 01:40:28)

At this point, the name is essential because it becomes a representation of identity, which indicates people being saved from death but then being forgotten; even so, there is always an attempt to find 'the

name'. Interestingly, from this signifier, the movie does not provide an answer to that name. In this sense, the emptiness of Taki's feelings and his search for names can be interpreted as openness to possibilities which Japanese teenagers answer by themselves. In the current era nowadays, with technological entertainment, this movie emphasizes the importance of traditional beliefs. The Japanese teenagers have to find their own 'names'.

Figure 2. The ritual of making Kuchikamizake by Mitsuha and her sister. (Kimi no na wa: 00:15:31-00:16:24; ©CoMix Wave Films)

4. Conclusion

The film *Kimi no Na wa* directed by Makoto Shinkai negotiates youth's identity, especially Japanese teenagers, leads the audience to search for its 'name' with depictions of the complexities of a body swap. After all, through the opposition, including reversal of the binary oppositions, it asserts the identity of primarily Japanese teenagers. The identity of youth constructed in the film is through

the post-modern subject. Unlike sociological subjects who accept identity as something taken for granted, post-modern subjects are fluid, accept technological advances, and are familiar with traditional values, such as *kuchikamizake* and *musubi*, by accepting and respecting these values. Therefore, the notion of identity is negotiated through the portrayal of Japanese teenagers in facing alternation between modernity and

locality. This identity is represented by youth characters who can follow the current era's changes but remain to hold their cultural roots.

Additionally, this issue is also contextualized in Japan and the global society in globalization. The fascination towards the 'local' and the impact of the 'global' coexist; the emergence of *anime* as pop culture products and the global impacts through its content is a case in point. With these findings, this study is expected to trigger more research on Japanese studies and contribute to shaping perceptions and interpretations of cultural phenomena globally or locally, which can also be applied to see cultural phenomena in the surrounding society.

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