Paper Title:
Kawakami Hiromi’s *Manazuru* —
Surfaces of meaning and the keywords of female bodily experience

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Proposed Program Stream:
Literature

Abstract
This paper looks at the unique literary style of Kawakami Hiromi’s *Manazuru*. A novel dominated by women, *Manazuru* explores a number of life-episodes that influence the protagonist Kei’s understanding of her own body and that of her daughter Momo. These episodes are paralleled by a complex approach to the visuality and readings of Japanese hiragana and Chinese characters (kanji). This analysis looks at individual keywords which repeatedly occur throughout this novel - *nijimu* (to blur), *minagiru* (to overflow), *rinkaku* (outline), *katachi* (shape/form) and recurring sentence structures in order to illuminate the relationship between the surfaces of text and body in *Manazuru*. Kawakami’s sensitivity to the texture of the Japanese language has resulted in a novel that goes beyond a visual depiction of the female body, creating rather, a ‘bodyful’ text and a tactile, dynamic, woman-centred experience of the female body.