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Time and Space Reconsidered: The Literary Landscape of Murakami Haruki

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Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD
in Japanese Literature

2012

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Declaration for PhD thesis

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Abstract

This thesis examines the literary landscape of the Japanese writer Murakami Haruki (b. 1949), as shaped by the author's depiction of time and space and his application of language. Incorporating what can be described as post-national cosmopolitanism, the thesis highlights the transformation of notions of individual and communal identity in the context of Murakami's own cosmopolitanism by using two perspectives: 'The world of Murakami', in which a new type of literary landscape is created, and 'Murakami in the world', in which Murakami might be described as a cultural provocateur through his literature.

For 'the world of Murakami', the thesis conducts a narrative analysis, focusing on Murakami's language, construction of space and treatment of time and history in narratives of his protagonists' search for identity. For 'Murakami in the world', the thesis approaches the subject of social criticism of cultural politics firstly through the author's position as a new type of Japanese writer within the discourse of world literature and secondly via a survey of writings by three Japanese critics on Murakami's novels which analyzes their cultural politics versus Murakami's *zeitgeist* writings.

The thesis concludes that identity formation and the negotiation of the mind between "I" and Others in Murakami's literature reflects the author's cosmopolitan sense of belonging. Murakami's language renders a transnational mood and depicts his protagonists' ambivalent emotional distance from and proximity to others. Murakami's depiction of space and time, on the other hand, portrays the author's own imagined space as well as Japanese cultural and communal history. His literary landscape, thus, explores a social consciousness that is located in a new sense of self, underscoring a tension between modernity and post-modernity both in contemporary Japan and on the global stage that can be described as neo-modern.

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A Note on the Text

In this thesis, I included Japanese at only when I consider it necessary as an aid to comprehension. I attempted to adhere as closely as possible to the original Japanese texts in my quotations.

In the footnotes to each chapter, *Murakami Haruki zen-sakuhin* is abbreviated to MH ZSH.

Introduction

The contemporary Japanese writer Murakami Haruki (b. 1949) has established himself as a best-selling, transnational novelist, short story writer, translator and essayist. Murakami's novels have been translated into more than forty languages and have reached the far corners of the globe. His writings have prompted much discussion among readers on a wide range of subjects. During the course of Murakami's thirty years of prolific writing, Japanese critics have adeptly responded to Murakami. Many have criticized the lack of social consciousness in his novels. *Kaze no uta o kike* (Hear the Wind Sing, 1979), which won the Gunzō Shinjin Bungaku-shō (The Gunzō New Writer's Literary Award) in 1979, for example, prompted polarised reactions from prominent critics. Yoshimoto Takaaki (1924-2012) and Maruyama Sai'ichi (b. 1925) praised and supported Murakami's works¹, while Ōe Kenzaburō (b. 1935), after receiving the 1994 Nobel Prize in Literature, felt compelled to voice his disapproval of the materialistic and non-committal messages he found in Murakami's stories.²

Other critics, however, note an increase in the level of his protagonists' social consciousness in Murakami's novels written after 1995, describing this using the term 'from detachment to commitment'.³ This identification relates to the sense of historicity found in Murakami's later works, such as *Nejimakidori kuronikuru* (*The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*, 1995) and a collection of short stories entitled *Kami no kodomotachi wa mina*

¹ Maruya Sai'ichi, 'Atarashii shōsetsu no eikyō, 'Kaze no uta o kike' hyō,' from the 22nd Gunzō shinjinshō in *Gunzō Nihon no sakka Murakami Haruki*

² Ōe Kenzaburō, *Aimaina Nihon no watashi*; Numano Mitsuyoshi 'Murakami Haruki wa sekai no 'ima' ni tachimukau – 'Nejimakidori kuronikuru' o yomitoku' in Kuritsubo Yoshiaki and Tsuge Teruhiko (eds.), *Murakami Haruki sutadīzu 04*

³ Kuronuma Katsushi, 'Detachment to' kara 'commitment to' e' in Kuritsubo Yoshiaki and Tsuge Teruhiko (eds.), *Murakami Haruki sutadīzu 04*

odoru (After the Quake, 2002), and it has been the subject of a number of studies, many of them focusing on the theme of the romantic irony and the uncommitted or committed attitude of his protagonists and linking them to Japan's aggression in China from the 1930s, the student strife from the 1960s and 1970s, and the 1995 Sarin Gas Attack on the Tokyo subway system and the Great Hanshin Earthquake of the same year.⁴ Ōe later praised Murakami for his commitment to incorporating social issues faced by Japan in his writings.⁵

The subject of geography in Murakami's novels, urban space as well as 'other world/other side' and its connection with Buddhist concept of the other world has been interrogated as a critical background for the protagonist's self-search in his short stories and novels by many.⁶ For example, Tsuge Teruhiko finds Murakami's various 'other worlds' in the hierarchy of 'other worlds' that is described in Origuchi's '*Minzokushi-kan ni okeru takai kannen*' (The Notion of the Other World in View of Ethnological History, 1952).⁷ Katō Norihiro (b. 1948) claims that there has been a shift in Murakami's short stories and novels in which the 'other world' can no longer be characterized as a netherworld and it has become a different, weird world.⁸ Matthew Strecher's research

⁴ Kawamoto Saburō, '1980nen no nō jenerēshon – Murakami Haruki no sekai I' in Kuritsubo Yoshiki and Tsuge Teruhiko (eds.), *Murakami Haruki sutadōzu 01*; Kawamura Minato, "'Nejimakidori kuronikuru' no bunseki, Gendaishi toshite no monogatari – Nomonhan jihen o megutte, - Haruha-gawa ni kakaru hashi' in *Murakami Haruki – Yochi suru bungaku, Kokubungaku* vol.40 no.4; Stephen Snyder, 'Two Murakamis and Marcel Proust: Memory as Form in Contemporary Japanese Fiction' in Xiaobing Tang and Stephen Snyder (eds.), *In Pursuit of Contemporary East Asian Culture*; Yokoo Kazuhiro, '*Murakami Haruki x 90-nendai*' *saisei no konkyo*

⁵ 'Commitment' in the sense of 'commitment as a Japanese writer who writes in the Japanese language' is also evident in Murakami's writing style and language in his post-1995 novels.

⁶ Kasai Kiyoshi, 'Toshi kankaku to iu inpei – Murakami Haruki' in Kuritsubo Yoshiki and Tsuge Teruhiko (eds.), *Murakami Haruki sutadōzu 01*; Kawamoto Saburō, *Toshi no kanjusei*; Katō Masahiro and Oshiro Naoki (eds.), *Toshikūkan no chirigaku*; Matsumoto Ken'ichi, 'Shudai to shite no 'toshi'' in *Gunzō Nihon no sakka Murakami Haruki*

⁷ Tsuge Teruhiko, 'Enkan/takai/media – 'suputonikku no koibito' kara no tenbō' in Kuritsubo Yoshiki and Tsuge Teruhiko (eds.), *Murakami Haruki sutadōzu 05*

⁸ Katō Norihiro, *Yellow Page, Murakami Haruki (2)*

connects identity search with magical realism and argues that Murakami's magical realism operates as a mechanism that portrays the protagonist's unconscious.⁹

Philip Gabriel's examination of Murakami's travel essays finds similarities between the self-searching process and the narrative development of his protagonists' self-search in his novels.¹⁰ Murakami's translations into Japanese of works by American writers have prompted studies that examine the American authors and the effect of Murakami's own literary aesthetics found in his translations. Conversely, the influence of the American writers on Murakami's literary aesthetics, styles and narrative development has also been investigated.¹¹

Murakami's standing as a transnational writer is the subject of many studies. His novels and their international reception are interrogated in the cultural context and social background of countries such as China, Korea, America, Germany, Russia, and Poland.¹² The motif of America and Murakami is a frequently discussed topic, ranging from the

⁹ Matthew C. Strecher, 'Magical Realism and the Search for Identity in the Fiction of Murakami Haruki' in *The Journal of Japanese Studies*, vol. 25, no.2.

¹⁰ Philip Gabriel, 'Back to the Unfamiliar: The Travel Writings of Murakami Haruki' in *Japanese Language and Literature*

¹¹ Hatanaka Yoshiki, 'America bungaku to Murakami Haruki – mata wa, Haruki to American parupu no kaori – ' in *Kokubungaku* vol.30, no.3; Miura Masashi, *Murakami Haruki to Shibata Motoyuki no mō hitotsu no America*; Shima Hiroyuki, 'Sekai, ishiki, sakuhin aruiwa genbun, jisho, yakubun' in *Honyaku no sekai*

¹² Den Kenshin, 'Chūgoku no Murakami Haruki – shinsen ketsueki' in *Murakami Haruki – Yochi suru bungaku, Kokubungaku* vol.40 no.4; Margaret Hillenbrand, 'Murakami Haruki in Greater China: Creative Response and the Quest for Cosmopolitanism' in *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol 68, No. 3; Kyo Kin-zui, 'Chūgoku Murakami Haruki wa 'meido in Chaina' no Haruki-teki sakuhin o umu ka' in *Aera Mukku*, 2001, 12; Kyo Kin-zui, 'Taiwan ni okeru Nihon gendai bungaku juyō ni tsuite – dokusha no Murakami Haruki sekai' in Imai Kiyoto (ed.), *Murakami Haruki sutadizu 2000-2004*; Michale Fujimoto Keezing, 'Naze kare wa sonna ni subarashii no ka – Murakami Haruki ga America de seikō suru riyū', trans. Ōgushi Naoyo in *Eureka*, vol. 32, no.3; Kim Sokuza, 'Kankoku no Murakami Haruki' in *Murakami Haruki – Yochi suru bungaku, Kokubungaku* vol.40 no.4; Suganuma Noriko, 'Kankoku Murakami Haruki wa Nihonjin to shite hajimete besuto serā o dashita' in *Aera Mukku*, 2001, 12; Nozaki Kan, 'Yōroppa, Murakami Haruki wa Furansu de Nihon bungaku shinkyū ronsō o makiokoshita' in *Aera Mukku*, 2001, 12; Shibata Motoyuki, Numano Mitsuyoshi, Fujii Shōzō and Yomota Inuhiko (eds.), *A Wild Haruki Chase, Sekai wa Murakami Haruki o dō yomu ka*, a Kokusai Kōryū Kikin (Japan Foundation) project; Jurgen Stalpl, 'Doitsu no Murakami Haruki' in *Murakami Haruki – Yochi suru bungaku, Kokubungaku* vol.40 no.4; Tōyama Yoshitaka, 'Doitsu ni okeru gendai Nihon bungaku no juyō– Murakami Haruki no baai' in Imai Kiyoto (ed.), *Murakami Haruki sutadizu 2000-2004*

comparative readings of American novels translated by Murakami and Japanese literature to the analysis of the influence that American authors and American culture have had on Murakami's novels.¹³ Advancing the topic of Murakami and America, Rebecca Suter's close readings of Murakami's short stories demonstrate that Murakami, as a transatlantic cultural mediator, bridges American and Japanese literature and culture.¹⁴

There have also been many critical investigations on Murakami's writings with the theme of postmodernism and genre definition. While Karatani Kōjin (b. 1941) questions the definition of postmodernity through his textual analysis of Murakami's earlier novels, some Japanese literary critics find that Murakami's works are not easily integrated into the mainstream, in part because of his insistence on experimenting with form. Hasumi Shigehiko's (b. 1936) book critiques Murakami's *Hitsuji o meguru bōken* (A Wild Sheep Chase, 1982) and some other Japanese novels for their non-individualistic pattern and for falling into a format of narratives as defined by Vladimir Propp.¹⁵ Katō Norihiro interrogates Murakami's *Umibe no Kafuka* (Kafka on the Shore, 2002) to call for a post-postmodern reading and questions the validity of Barthes's postmodern 'Death of the Author' discourse.¹⁶ Ōtsuka Eiji places Murakami's writings in the sub-culture genre in his critiques of the contemporary Japanese sub-culture.¹⁷ On the other hand,

¹³ Hosea Hirata, 'Amerika de yomareru Murakami Haruki' in *Murakami Haruki – yochi suru bungaku, Kokubungaku* vol.40 no.4; Kuroko Kazuo, 'America, Chūgoku, soshite tanpen-shōsetsu – mō hitotsu no 'Murakami Haruki wārudo'' in Kuritsubo Yoshiki and Tsuge Teruhiko (eds.), *Murakami Haruki sutadīzu 01*; Ono Yoshie, 'Futatsu no Jazz futatsu no America' in *Kokubungaku*, vol.30, no.3; Sengoku Hideyo, *Airon o kakeru seinen – Murakami Haruki to Amerika*; Sengoku Hideyo, 'Murakami Haruki to Amerika – Reimondo Kavā o tōshite' in *Eureka*, vol. 21, no.8; Tatsumi Takayuki, 'Amerika Murakami Haruki wa sekai ni henzai shi, kyōshin suru chikyū sakka ni natta', in *Aera Mukku*, 2001, 12; Yoshida Haruo, *Murakami Haruki to Amerika – bōryokusei no yurai*

¹⁴ Rebecca Suter, *The Japanization of Modernity: Haruki Murakami between Japan and the United States*

¹⁵ Hasumi Shigehiko, *Shōsetsu kara tōku hanarete*

¹⁶ Katō Norihiro, *Tekusuto kara tōku hanarete*

¹⁷ Katō Norihiro and Ōtsuka Eiji, 'On to Off – sabu-karuchā bungakuron o megutte' in *Gunzō*; Ōtsuka Hideshi, *Sabu-karuchā bungaku-ron*

Giorgio Amitrano analyzes Murakami (and Yoshimoto Banana) in the context of postmodern popular culture.¹⁸

Indeed, Murakami's earlier novels that are peppered with mentions of global (but mostly American) cultural commodities, his treatment of history, and his protagonists' fragmented sense of belonging may well fit the definition of the postmodern.¹⁹ However, can we assume that postmodernism begins in Japanese literature with Murakami's *Noruei no mori* (Norwegian Wood, 1987) and Ōe's *Natsukashii toshi e no tegami* (Letters to the Nostalgic Years, 1987) as Karatani asserts? Are the juxtapositions of high and low culture and a status as anti-canonical literature – a sub-cultural genre in which Murakami's works are sometimes placed – sufficient for a work to be identified as postmodern? Furthermore, how long will *postmodern* continue to be a credible designation for a burgeoning and ever-changing variety of literary experiments, amalgamations and juxtapositions?

Much of the research mentioned above offers an insightful analysis of Murakami's writings. In particular, this thesis finds that the studies about Murakami's spatial construction of 'this world' and 'the other world' help us understand the multifaceted nature of the process that his protagonists undergo in their search for identity. The thesis also agrees with the premise that Murakami has uniquely positioned himself as a cultural mediator between America and Japan and that America has had a significant influence on his writings. Indeed, Murakami is a cultural provocateur in the

¹⁸ Giorgio Amitrano, 'Murakami Haruki or The Search for a Lost Plot' in *The New Japanese Novel, Popular Culture and Literary Tradition in the Work of Murakami Haruki and Yoshimoto Banana*

¹⁹ Ikeda Nobuhiro, 'Murakami Haruki ni miru posutokōzōshugiteki shōhisha' in Imai Kiyoto (ed.), *Murakami Haruki sutadīzu 2000-2004*, 'Māketto barometā to shite no Murakami Haruki – han-shōsetsu keizai no genkai o koete' in *Hiroshima Keizai Daigaku Kenkyūronshū*; Iwamoto Yoshio, 'A Voice of Postmodern Japan: Haruki Murakami' in *World Literature Today*, 67 (2); Kawakami Chiyoko, 'The Unfinished Cartography: Murakami Haruki and the Postmodern Cognitive Map' in *Monumenta Nipponica*

way that he prompts discussions over the definition of 'isms' such as modernism, postmodernism, globalism and nationalism through his writings that seem to defy being pigeonholed into any one category.

During Murakami's time in American in the 1990s, the American students in his Japanese literature seminar once described Murakami's novels as being 'unmistakably Japanese'.²⁰ In light of this characterization, it is worth mentioning that there also exists a group of readers, both at home and abroad, that considers Murakami's novels to be 'culturally odorless'.²¹ With his transnational outlook and cosmopolitan sense of belonging, Murakami's writings appear to sit on an ambiguous, hard-to-define axis of the global, cosmopolitan space. Moreover, Murakami is a cosmopolitan writer who cultivates and combines Japanese history and geography with the global (mostly Western) cultural references and literary aesthetics in his portrayal of his protagonists' identity search. Thus, rather than placing him in a category in a dualistic manner, this thesis considers that he is cosmopolitan and post-modern, but with a difference. The thesis looks at this nuanced difference through the prism of identity as constructed in the 'in-between' space mapped by a delicate negotiation of (psychological) distance and proximity with others and the world.

Cosmopolitanism has been a source of considerable debate in the Western context. For instance, the concept of the cosmopolitan as a citizen of the world was most famously established by Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). Kant's cosmopolitanism is based on the concept of duty whereby the unconditional single universal moral obligation ('the

²⁰ Murakami Haruki, "*Jisaku o kataru*" *Arata naru taido* in MH ZSH 1979-1989 8, viii-ix.

²¹ Yomota Inuhiko, *A Wild Haruki Chase, Sekai wa Murakami Haruki o dō yomu ka*, 197.

categorical imperative') lies with the individual, rather than in God or in nature.²² This concept that centred on moral belief has since expanded to deal with a more intricate sense of cultural, social and political belonging, both at a global and local level. We need to look at the cosmopolitanism of our time, with which I argue Murakami employs in his writings.

'Cosmopolitanism', as Steven Vertovec and Robin Cohen define it, is a tool 'to challenge conventional notions of belonging, identity and citizenship.'²³ It 'addresses certain socio-cultural processes or individual behaviours, values or dispositions manifesting a capacity to engage cultural multiplicity.'²⁴ Moreover, cosmopolitanism 'shapes new trans-national frameworks' and offers an opportunity for 'a non-communitarian, post-identity politics.'²⁵ Rebecca Walkowitz adds that cosmopolitanism is 'a philosophical tradition that promotes allegiance to a transnational or global community, emphasizing *detachment* from local cultures and the interests of the nation', but 'a more recent anthropological tradition' emphasizes 'multiple or flexible *attachment* to more than one nation or community'.²⁶ It is also, Walkowitz states, 'a vernacular or popular tradition that values the risks of social deviance and the resources of consumer

²² This idealistic political and philosophical concept co-exists with the views of many scholars who characterize the cosmopolitanism of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries as having an elusive and polysemic nature: 'middle-path alternatives between ethnocentric nationalism and particularistic multiculturalism.' Jacques Derrida's reference to cosmopolitanism in *Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, for example, is faithful to Kant's discipline. Post-structuralist Derrida's application of the concept of cosmopolitanism here is found in his attempt to answer a conflicting question concerning the power of the nation-state, refugee/asylum policy and the duty to provide hospitality. Similarly, Anthony Kwame Appiah suggests Kant's 'Universal maxim' as autonomy for humanity in conflict resolution in his philosophical persuasion. These discussions on cosmopolitanism are often preoccupied with postmodern concerns such as post-colonialism and post-imperialism, and offshoots of the globalization discourse. The cosmopolitanism discussion often remains framed within this familiar binary picture of power between the dominant and the dominated. See Anthony Kwame Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*.

²³ Steve Vertovec and Robin Cohen, 'Introduction: Conceiving Cosmopolitanism' in Steve Vertovec and Robin Cohen (eds.), *Conceiving Cosmopolitanism: Theory, Context, and Practice*, 1.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Rebecca, L Walkowitz, *Cosmopolitan Style, Modernism Beyond the Nation*, 9.

culture and urban mobility.’²⁷ The suggestion that a more fragmented sense of belonging and a sense of post-identity politics are available through cosmopolitanism fits Fredric Jameson’s specification that the postmodern condition is a ‘paradoxical combination of global decentralization and small-group institutionalization’.²⁸

On the surface, it seems that this type of cosmopolitanism and the related dialogue concerning post-colonialism and post-imperialism and the dominant versus dominated diagram among Western scholars is a rather remote discipline for an analysis of contemporary Japanese literature and of the cosmopolitanism found in the works of Murakami Haruki. In addition, while the proliferation of articles written in English on the topics of cosmopolitanism and cultural globalization continues apace, literature on cosmopolitanism in post-modern Japan is scarce. This thesis, however, argues that Murakami suggests a different, flexible identity formation by portraying his protagonists’ cosmopolitan sense of attachment and detachment from the ‘other’ in his narratives. Furthermore, Murakami’s language, narrative aesthetics and style, and character development convey the cosmopolitan characteristics of social deviance, consumer culture and urban mobility. A cosmopolitan attitude is detected within Murakami’s uncommitted and nonchalant protagonists as they grapple with their fragmented sense of belonging. The same cosmopolitanism affects his protagonists’ struggles to understand the topography of the self-ego relationship with others, as well as the balance between a sense of detachment and of attachment, between distance and proximity, and between the positioning of self and ego. This cosmopolitanism is also represented in Murakami’s language, style and thematic approach.

²⁷ Rebecca, L Walkowitz, *Cosmopolitan Style, Modernism Beyond the Nation*, 9.

²⁸ Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, 408.

Experiments with cosmopolitanism in modern Japanese literature began during the Taishō period (1912-1926). Taishō cosmopolitanism, both as a cultural movement and in its literary representation, greatly differs from the cosmopolitanism found in Murakami's writing. For Taishō intellectuals, cosmopolitanism was a literary representation of the anxiety that resulted from the gap that had arisen between their philosophical idealism of universality and of the 'limitless expanse of imagination' on the one hand and their immediate materially constricted environment on the other. Their literary representation was prompted and aided by a cultural influx from the European and Russian avant-garde.²⁹ Taishō cosmopolitanism is oxymoronic 'Eurocentric universalism' that views the West as a 'phantasmatic, constructed object'.³⁰ Moreover, Taishō intellectuals sought their literary representation of cosmopolitanism through detaching themselves from their immediate and contemporary Asian setting and attaching themselves to Japan-Eurocentricity.

The Taishō period's fragmented cultural environment led writers to inquire into their inner consciousness. Karatani regards the cosmopolitan atmosphere of the Taishō period to be the most influential factor for the development of the *watakushi shōsetsu* (I-novel) genre.³¹ During the course of their interrogation of the changing states of their psyche, in Lippi's words, 'the dismantling of literary forms' and 'the delineation of the fragmented cultural topographies' occurred and the cosmopolitan styles of the Taishō literature came to light.³² Lippi characterises Mushanokōji Saneatsu (1885-1976) of the Shirakabaha, an early promoter of the concept of universalism and cosmopolitanism, as

²⁹ See Seiji M. Lippi, *Topographies of Japanese Modernism*, 15.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 15.

³¹ See Karatani Kōjin, *Nihon Kindai bungaku no kigen*, 236-237.

³² *Ibid.*, 17.

having had a ‘narcissistic focus on the representation of self’.³³ Another prominent writer of Taishō cosmopolitanism, Akutagawa Ryūnosuke (1892-1927), had a style and literary aestheticism that drew on the literary traditions of Asia and Europe. Akutagawa’s cosmopolitanism combined excessive grotesqueness, dandyism, and irony that denied absolute truth, and ‘fin-de-siècle decadence’ with his strong intellectualism.³⁴ In *Chijin no ai* (Naomi, 1924), Tanizaki Jun’ichiro (1886-1965) displayed the decadence and frivolity of protagonists who are obsessively caught in anything that has a cosmopolitan aesthetic. *Naomi*’s Jōji (George) attempts to embody the notion of modernization (i.e. Westernisation) through his wife Naomi, who deviates from anything traditionally Japanese and displays a superficial assimilation to the Western lifestyle.

The political, social and anthropological background of late twentieth and early twenty-first century cosmopolitanism in Japan offers a different picture to that of the Taishō era. Post-modern Japan’s cosmopolitanism cannot be discussed without reference to globalization.³⁵ Having experienced defeat in World War II, national re-building and recovery through rapid economic growth from the 1950s through the 1970s, and the economic bubble of the 1980s and its bursting in the 1990s, the concept of cosmopolitanism, as understood in the early twentieth century Japan, no longer seems to hold much ideological significance amongst intellectuals in early twenty-first century

³³ Seiji M. Lippi, *Topographies of Japanese Modernism*, 13.

³⁴ Seiji M. Lippi, *Topographies of Japanese Modernism*, 33, 39. Dennis C. Washburn, *The Dilemma of the Modern in Japanese Fiction*, 226.

³⁵ Anthony D. King remarks that globalization is ‘a Japanese marketing neologism from the 1980s’ while Miyoshi Masao and H.D. Harootunian (1993) and Walter D. Mignolo (2002) and others propose that the end of the Cold War in 1991 marks the definitive beginning of globalization. According to this view, the binary political alliances and the ideological divide of the Cold War no longer block information, consumables or human migration. Anthony D King, “*Preface to the Revised Edition*”, vii:xii; Miyoshi Masao and H.D. Harootunian, “*Japan in the World*”, 1-9; Walter D. Mignolo, “*The Many Faces of Cosmopolis: Border Thinking and Critical Cosmopolitanism*”, 174-182; Bernard S. Silberman, “*The Disappearance of Modern Japan: Japan and Social Science*”, 311-320; Bruce Cumings, “*Boundary Displacement: The State, the Foundations, and Area Studies during and after the Cold War*”, 266-286.

Japan. Indeed, globalization has been the key word for Japan's contemporary development in the world. Miyoshi Masao declares that Japan is 'a fully-fledged member of the global organizational capitalist alliance'.³⁶ Its integration into a hegemonic group of countries and its establishment as a strong member of powerful nations have been prominent goals for Japan ever since 1945. From its period of rapid economic growth in the 1960s, when Japan settled on a self-image as an economically successful, pacifist country, the Japanese economy has always played a key role in achieving that goal.

When one considers the meaning of belonging in the context of nationally set borders, the experience differs from country to country. For example, the displaced and their diasporas carry multiple histories and relationships in regard to the places where they have dwelt. These individuals and groups have experiences in their new homelands that, in time, become part of their imaginative landscape; and there is a kind of symbiotic relationship with the native peoples in which they too are impacted by the cultures brought by immigrant groups. By contrast, in the case of Japan, where the flux of migration, outward and inward, does not involve the displaced, cosmopolitanism is obtained primarily through the act of consumption – through travelling, and via material and informational consumption. Thus, it might be better to consider a person's cultural globalization and cosmopolitan experience as an imagined one. Such *fabricated* cosmopolitanism allows a more fragmented sense of belonging and attachment. In this sense, detachment from conventional and traditional Japanese literary forms helps Murakami to highlight a way of trying to come to terms with, and to place one's individual identity within, an ambiguous, expansive and imagined community.

³⁶ Miyoshi Masao, "Against the Native Grain: The Japanese Novel and the "Postmodern" West" in *Postmodernism and Japan*, 158.

I argue in this thesis that Murakami's cosmopolitanism is different and marks a transition from the cosmopolitanism exhibited by the literary movement that defined an earlier phase of modern Japanese literature. I approach cosmopolitanism as a state of mind, as a form of self-identification and as a sense of belonging. An inquiry into cosmopolitanism demands that we reflect on the way we live in the context of past, historical events that have altered our world and that have impacted on our sense of identity. Spatial boundaries – in a cultural, ideological and national sense - have become increasingly blurred in the latter part of the twentieth century and are ever shifting as a result of more accessible global travel and increased access to foreign media and more seamless international communications. Studying cosmopolitanism, thus, necessarily gives rise to questions about the degree of overlap between an individual's definition of what constitutes his or her *home* and the broader society's narrative of what *home* should be.

Furthermore, in what may be called the post-national cosmopolitanism of the present and of late-capitalism, a new sense of identity and a new paradigm of identity – both communal and national – emerges in Murakami's narratives. It may be safe to surmise that any definition of community should allow for even more individual freedom. This impulse is expressed in Murakami's writings in the form of the transgression of boundaries set up by the past imaginings of community. The themes and sentiments that permeate in Murakami's narratives include transcendence, inevitability, acceptance of contradictions, violence, eroticism, cynicism, and melancholy. Senses of both individual and communal identity, even when cast as the return to the past, are interrogated in a very contemporary setting that is altogether urban, cosmopolitan, and global against the

presence of Japan. Moreover, this fabric is woven together with feelings of loss and nostalgia.

In his novels, such a notion of cosmopolitanism is presented together with or manifests itself in the form of an ambiguous space that I refer to as the ‘in-between’ space, or as the aesthetic and philosophical concept *ma*. This traditional Japanese spatial concept may be found in the writings of Yanagita Kunio (1875-1962) and Origuchi Shinobu (1887-1953), who recorded that Japanese society had long accepted the existence of simultaneous, blurred boundaries between this world, the other world and the space between them. This ‘in-between’ space/*ma* is an important literary signifier in the context of a new type of identity formation in conjunction with cosmopolitanism, the negotiation of self and other, and its distance and proximity with other.

Murakami’s in-between space is located between the regular and ordinary ‘this world’ and the other world and it is portrayed in a three dimensional metaphor. This in-between space also represents an all-inclusive notion that also shares the functions of *aida* (the in-between-ness) and *ma* as defined by Kimura Bin (b. 1931). The in-between-ness, as Kimura defines it in his psychoanalytical discourse about the construction of self and other and identity, is neither a physical space nor an emotional distance between a person and another or the world. Rather, it is simultaneously an active place and activity itself (within the self). Not only is it a place where the recognition of differences from the other constantly and continuously occurs, but also it ultimately leads to the formation of self-identity.³⁷

³⁷ Kimura Bin, *Jiko, aida, jikan; genshōgakuteki seishin-byōrigaku*, 271-272, 287.

Closely located near the ‘in-between’ space, Murakami’s ‘other world’ is a fantastical space into which his protagonists often wander in their search for identity. For example, in *Sputoniku no koibito* (Sputnik Sweetheart, 2002), Murakami uses a Ferris wheel in which Miu gets trapped as the location for her life-changing magical realist experience. In *Hādoboirudo wandārando* (Hardboiled Wonderland and the End of the World, 1985) (hereafter *Hardboiled*), Murakami portrays the dual worlds of the protagonist’s consciousness in the contrast between a quiet village full of nostalgia and an urban, fast-paced and science-fiction-like world.

Murakami’s in-between space and the other worlds described here are the devices that inevitably add a sense of Japaneseness to his novels, yet they are also part of Murakami’s cosmopolitanism. Given the fact that he is set apart from his Japanese peers for his literary exposure overseas, we can neither forget the fact that Murakami’s cosmopolitanism coexists with the cultural globalization that enables the global circulation of his writings³⁸ nor ignore the study of world literature in our discussion of Murakami’s literary landscape. Needless to say, it would be wrong to make a simplistic comparison between the international standing of Murakami and other internationally acclaimed Japanese authors such as Kawabata Yasunari (1889-1972) and Ōe Kenzaburō, who both received the Nobel Prize in Literature, based purely on their overseas sales figures or the number of languages into which their novels have been translated. Yet, it is also hard to ignore the phenomenon, for which the Japanese media coined the neologism

³⁸ It should be noted here that the concepts of cosmopolitanism and globalization are paradoxical to each other; the former calls for universal human values and un-bounded cultural identification, while the latter inevitably demands boundaries and differentiation to be defined from within.

Haruki genshō (The Haruki Phenomenon)³⁹ to describe Murakami's global popularity and the unprecedented global reception for his novels. Thus, for this thesis, I will discuss the topic of international exposure as an economic term separately from literature's cosmopolitan, universal, nationalistic or exotic qualities by adopting David Damrosch's broad definition that world literature is about globalization, 'a mode of circulation and of reading',⁴⁰ with which Pascale Casanova seems to agree. Furthermore, for the discussion of Murakami's international exposure, this thesis views Murakami's writings as a global commodity and Murakami as an active participant in such global economic activities.

Lastly, and of equal importance, is the reaction of the critics in regard to Murakami's writings. The debates over Murakami's novels by prominent Japanese critics - Karatani, Hasumi and Katō - help us see the broader picture of Murakami's own landscape and his literature's standing as a cultural provocateur. In the late 1970s and 1980s, Murakami's *Hear the Wind Sing*, *1973nen no pinbōru* (1973, Pinball, 1980), *A Wild Sheep Chase*, *Dansu, dansu, dansu* (Dance, Dance, Dance, 1988), and *Norwegian Wood* caught the attention of readers and critics such as Karatani and Hasumi, who had returned from America and France respectively, and the postmodern advocate Asada Akira (b. 1957), for instance, were set to establish postmodern thinking and discourses within the discipline of Japanese *hihyō* (criticism). During the 1980s, Karatani and Hasumi debated the state of Japanese literature at the time, the qualitative decline of novels, the rising popularity of narratives and the modernism versus postmodernism discourse. In these seminal essays, Murakami's novels are viewed as a landmark

³⁹ In this context, as the word 'phenomenon' suggests, the Japanese media's focus of observations related to the *Haruki genshō* has been on socio-economic issues and rarely on the literary quality of his novels.

⁴⁰ David Damrosch, *What is World Literature?*, 1-36.

delineating the end of modern Japanese literature and the beginning of postmodern Japanese literature.

For an examination of the critics' postmodern critiques and their readings of texts, this thesis approaches the discourse of postmodernism from three perspectives: postmodernism as (Japan's) historical stage in the development of modern (global) capitalism; as a specific literary mode; and as a form of literary criticism. First of all, postmodernism as a stage of modern capitalism, in Fredric Jameson's words, has progressed to the extent that 'aesthetic production today [has] become integrated into commodity production generally'⁴¹, of mass scale and with distribution, thereby creating the erosion of the old distinction between high and low culture, pop-culture and mass-culture as described by Yoshimoto Takaaki (1924-2012) in *Masu imēji ron* (Discourse of the Mass Image, 1984). Needless to say, Murakami's writings and their global circulation have participated fully in this postmodern condition and the notions of pluralism and multiculturalism have gained prominence along with postmodern globalization.

Secondly, the definition of postmodern in literature stands against the elite canonical works of high modern literature. The literary manifestations of postmodernism appear as reactions against the high and serious aesthetics of the classics of modernism's meta-narratives that convey the reader's universal values and the 'truth' of history. Postmodern tends to defy application and it assumes a juxtaposition of high and low culture and stands disjointed in a world absent of traditional structure. Namely, the postmodern literary techniques such as popular cultural references, pastiches, 'unreliable narrators, multiple frames of the narratives', 'mixture of magical and realistic events, and

⁴¹ Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, 4.

parodies of earlier literary and historical works'⁴² unsettle and deconstruct the traditional notion of language and identity in the writing. These postmodern literary devices are employed in the portrayal of space and history. With regards to the postmodern space, Jameson points out that it represents 'the suppression of distance (in the sense of Benjamin's aura) and the relentless saturation of any remaining voids and empty places'.⁴³ Henri Lefebvre's concept of abstract space and Edward Soja's *Thirdspace* that consider space to be 'simultaneously homogeneous and fragmented'⁴⁴ help us understand the postmodern spatial peculiarities of 'the disorientation of the saturated space' as described by Jameson.⁴⁵ History has become a commodity, a hyper-reality and the target of the spectator. In place of history that offered the reader the universal teaching of values and even 'political responsibility' in modern writings⁴⁶, Linda Hutcheon asserts that postmodern writing 'deliberately undermines such principles as value, order, meaning, control, and identity'.⁴⁷ Such an intention manifests itself in an ironical treatment of history, which views history as a 'site of fragmentation'⁴⁸ and allows history to be presented in multiple, conflicting versions. Thus, the focus of historical narrative is placed on the politics of narrative construction.⁴⁹

Lastly, the postmodern condition and its resulting cultural representations of the 'mode of production', together with the development of postmodern theories such as deconstructionism, post-structuralism, post-imperialism and post-colonialism, give rise to

⁴² Simon Malpas, *The Postmodern*, 101.

⁴³ Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, 412.

⁴⁴ See *Ibid.*, 408-413.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 413.

⁴⁶ Simon Malpas, *The Postmodern*, 97.

⁴⁷ Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction*, 5.

⁴⁸ Simon Malpas, *The Postmodern*, 98.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 98.

a new form of literary criticism. The postmodern characteristics described above tell us that postmodern writings are self-reflexive and self-absorbed. The postmodern critiques share the same tendency. According to Bryan Turner, the postmodern critique of mass culture is elitist and, despite the many 'isms' described above as available methods to deconstruct and analyze any writings, nostalgia for the past and for a humanistic reading prevails.⁵⁰ At one time, the modern Japanese critic Kobayashi Hideo (1902-1983) considered that the important role of criticism was to distinguish the virtue in the writing for the reader. Such an intellectual position can arguably be described as elitist, in the same way that making any distinction between high and low culture may perhaps also be viewed as an elitist act. Separately and more importantly, the rise of 'the paradoxical combination of global decentralization and small-group institutionalization' 'in the postmodern tendential structure'⁵¹ creates a new ground for postmodern critics' politics that are concerned with nationalism and identity.

The themes with which Murakami deals – grappling with social consciousness and history, the search for identity, and the commitment of an individual to be a member of society while keeping his or her sense of self – run through much of modern Japanese literature. Despite many global cultural references and the cosmopolitan semiotics and atmosphere of his urban space, Murakami's spaces often refer back to a specifically Japanese cultural and communal history and his own imagined space. This only emphasizes the impossibility of transcending one's primary cultural points of reference, the angle through which one views the world and others, as the sentiment found in his

⁵⁰ Bryan S Turner, *Orientalism, Postmodernism and Globalization*, 125.

⁵¹ Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, 408.

travel writing suggests. Perhaps then, it can be suggested that his is not a postmodern literature, but a different and new type of modern literature.

In the context of Murakami's cosmopolitanism in which a new type of identity formation is recognized and articulated against both the global background and the presence of Japan, this thesis addresses the above topics in five chapters and is organized into two sections. Section One, "The World of Murakami" in three chapters, deals with the aesthetic devices which help construct the new type of cosmopolitanism and postmodernism in close readings of Murakami's very short novels, short novels, novels, and travel essays. Section Two, "Murakami in the World" in two chapters, shifts focus to the literary environment on which Murakami as a cultural provocateur and a mediator exerts his influence.

Chapter One establishes the particularity of the contemporary cosmopolitan Japan that Murakami targets and grapples with through his textual forms, stylistic devices and language. The chapter also explores the possibility that Murakami applies his language in order to transmit the ambiguity of a sense of belonging and to portray his sense of literary landscape, in part as response to what he sees as cultural globalization as defined and negotiated by him in the texts in his pre and post 1995 novels and short novels.

Chapter Two explores Murakami's perception of and usage of different spaces such as the 'in-between' place and 'the other world' in which the identity search and identity formation are tested. The chapter examines Murakami's travel essays in order to reveal his way of seeing space as this thesis considers this to be intertwined with unconscious memory and with his political consciousness of both public and personal concerns. In a close reading of three contrasting fictions, the chapter also reveals the

ways in which Murakami invents and mixes arrays of space and geography – urban and cosmopolitan space with ‘in-between’ space, *ma*, and the other world - with kaleidoscopic characters in order to portray the self, as well as to give voice to social and political consciousness.

Chapter Three inquires the way that Murakami deals with time, history and memory in his novels that are at once private and communal and also the components of Murakami’s cosmopolitanism. In *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*, the thesis connects the motifs of Japan’s violent conduct in wartime China with Murakami’s personal history in the context of historical consciousness, memory, a sense of fate and his identification with Japan. A close reading of *Kafka on the Shore* examines an example of his usage of the concept of ‘time as being’. A comparative reading of the idiosyncratic and postmodern rendition of time depicted in his short novel and his post-1995 novels highlights the way in which Murakami weaves his Japaneseness into his depiction of time and the complexity and the multiplicity of his portrayal of time in magical realist settings that are juxtaposed with the real, metaphorically representing varying stages in his protagonists’ process of self-exploration.

Chapter Four analyses the context that informs Murakami’s cosmopolitan attitude, his sense of belonging and his distinctive position of being a transnational writer in a comparative reading of the texts with the world literature discourse in mind. The chapter examines Murakami’s non-fiction writings from his time at Princeton University and essays on cross-cultural experiences by Etō Jun (1932-1999), a Japanese post-war critic and Murakami’s predecessor in the literature department at Princeton, as well as essays on the novels by Kojima Nobuo (1915-2006) by Etō and by Murakami. The chapter’s

survey of the present discourse on world literature and the way that Murakami's works are strategically placed in the world literature market suggests that Murakami's literature, with its ambivalent sense of belonging, suits the practice of cultural globalization and challenges the thinking in world literature that demands a definition of origin in order to define a mode of reading.

Last chapter debates three influential Japanese critics' reactions to Murakami's fictions and their cultural politics in their *hihyō* (criticism), and highlights preoccupation with defining *hihyō* discourse and the state of Japanese literature. In the examination of Karatani's seminal essays, the chapter highlights Karatani's preoccupation with defining the discourse of modernism and postmodernism with regard to Japanese literature, and the way in which Murakami's novels are represented in his discourse. The chapter also includes a comparative reading of literary analysis of Murakami's novels - Hasumi's postmodern narratological analysis and Katō's post-postmodern critical writing - that exemplifies the position that Murakami has been assigned as a cultural provocateur.

The examination of Murakami's literary landscape reveals where a hybrid of home and abroad and of the past and the present can be found. By deconstructing the identity formation of Murakami's protagonists, and by applying the notion of 'in-between-ness' in a sense of space and time both private and communal in relation to emotional distance and proximity between self and other, this thesis reveals a new type of cosmopolitanism and postmodernism in Murakami's writings.

The World of Murakami

Chapter One Language of Distance and Proximity

話せば長い事だが、僕は21歳になる。
まだ十分に若くはあるが、以前程若くはない。もしそれが気に入らなければ、日曜の朝にエンパイア・ステート・ビルの屋上から飛び降りる意外に手はない。

大恐慌を扱った古い映画の中でこんなジョークを聞いた事がある。
「ねえ、僕はエンパイア・ステート・ビルの下を通りかかる時にはいつも傘をさすんだ。だって上から人がバラバラ落ちて来るからね。」¹

To cut a long story short, I'm going to be twenty-one.
I'm young enough, but I'm not as young as before. If I don't like that fact, there is nothing I can do about it other than throwing myself off the rooftop of the Empire State Building on a Sunday morning.

Once I heard a joke in an old movie about the Great Depression.
'Look, I always put my umbrella up when I walk by the Empire State Building. People are falling down from there like cats and dogs.'

With its crisp efficient prose and references to an iconic American object and an historic event, Murakami's language in this excerpt from his first novel, *Hear the Wind Sing*, reveals no Japanese literary identity. In Japanese, his language flows as if it were a translated work from another language. One could argue that Murakami Haruki's language defines both his literature and his literary landscape against those of his contemporaries. Both literary critics and linguists have picked up on his controversial use of language. Shigehiko Hasumi, choosing Murakami's *A Wild Sheep Chase* as an example, summarizes Murakami's style of writing as one that bears 'efficiency in short

¹ Murakami Haruki, *Kaze no uta o kike* in MH ZSH 1979-1989 1, 58.

pieces', but creates 'waste in narrative' because of Murakami's tautological redundancy.² Hasumi claims that most dialogues between the characters in *A Wild Sheep Chase* are actually monologues between two characters whose responses to each other merely function as repetitions and confirmations of the other person's words, thereby avoiding any chance of conflicts within or deviations from a storyline.³ In his role on the judging panel of the 22nd Gunzō Shinjin Award in 1979, Yoshiyuki Jun'nosuke (1923-1994) rated Murakami's *Hear the Wind Sing* highly and yet at the same time warned of the dangers of Murakami's 'talent' for stylistic language. Yoshiyuki cautioned that though such language successfully sets the tone for the story and conveys the protagonist's dry and nonchalant attitude, it runs the risk of diverting the reader's focus from the actual content of the story.⁴

Murakami's experimentation with language continues to evolve and he is vocal about his constant pursuit of crafting and developing his language, sound, style, plot and structure. A survey of his novels from his early to his recent period reveals his attempt to establish a distinctive narrative style and to carefully choose language in accordance with his themes and characters. Indeed, his first novel *Hear the Wind Sing* won mixed reviews and critics paid much attention to the language, style and attitude of the novel's characters as Murakami had adopted neither realism nor the mainstream and canonical *jun-bungaku* (pure literature) style of Japanese literary practice that attempts to answer the questions over the role of literature by pursuing the subjects such as the meaning of national identity, history, politics and self.

² Hasumi Shigehiko, *Shōsetsu kara tōku hanarete*, 255.

³ Ibid., 251-256.

⁴ Yoshiyuki Junnosuke, "Hitotsu no shūkaku" in *Gunzō Nihon no sakka, Murakami Haruki*, 288

As part of the endeavour to develop his own voice for *Hear the Wind Sing*, Murakami claims that he first wrote the novel in English and then translated it into Japanese. In the words of another judge on the same panel, veteran author and translator Maruya Sai'ichi, this attempt lends the novel the mood of 'an Americanesque novel that is painted with Japanese lyricism.'⁵ One of the most distinctive effects of Murakami's language and style, and one which many critics have commented on, is its acute reflection of his protagonists' 'cosmopolitan' attitude and consciousness. The 'non-traditional' prose style, peppered with references to global cultural products and consumables, alludes to a sense of the un-nationalistic, uncommitted self with which Murakami's protagonists grapple. Works by Murakami were therefore initially placed in a category between pop-cultural and sub-cultural. Combined with his stylized language, Murakami's apparently rootless attitude is a source of unease for canonical writers such as Ōe Kenzaburō and critics such as Hasumi and Karatani Kōjin. Their criticism indicates that they interpret the cosmopolitanism found in the attitude and language of Murakami's protagonists as disengagement from a local and 'organic' Japan, or arguably from 'national' literature. The language, rhythm and tone of Murakami's novels help to reveal the extent to which cosmopolitanism features in the consciousness and identity formation of the author's protagonists. With the multiple facets of the concept of cosmopolitanism in mind, this chapter will analyse the language, stylistic devices and themes that Murakami employs to evoke and interrogate the cosmopolitan condition.

⁵ Maruya Sai'ichi, "Atarashii shōsetsu no eikyō", in *Gunzō Nihon no sakka, Murakami Haruki*, 290.

1.1. The Singularity of Language in the Works of Murakami

Murakami's literary space depends heavily upon the singularity of his language and style. The cosmopolitan flavour in his narratives derives not only from numerous references to non-local cultural products, but also from the distinctive nature of his language, textual style and forms. An excerpt from *TV pīpuru* (TV People, 1990) below shows how Murakami selects onomatopoeic sounds and rhythm in order to create an atmosphere and attitude which defy any identification with a particular nation or community:

And I hear things. Not sounds, but thick slabs of silence being dragged through the dark. KRZSHAAATLE KKRZSHAAAAATLE KKKRMMMS. Those are the initial indications. First, the aching. Then, a sight distortion of my vision. Tides of confusion wash through, premonitions tugging at memories tugging at premonitions. A finely honed razor moon floats white in the sky, roots of doubt burrow into the earth. People walk extra loud down the hall just to get me. KRRSPUMK DUWB KRRSPUMK DUWBK KRRSPUMK KUWB.⁶

The protagonist *boku* (I) was enjoying drinking beer and reading Garcia Marquez when his quiet Sunday afternoon was disturbed by the sudden appearance of TV people. The insistent presence of oddly small TV people, noise from the TV set and the void in the empty TV set, all of which can only be recognised by the protagonist, eventually overtake his mind and awake his inner conscience. These surreal events lead him to rediscover his need to hear his voice communicating with others in a society that is increasingly dominated by media, noise, and technology. Music and rhythm in this text is worth closer

⁶ Murakami, *TV pīpuru* in MH ZSH, 1990-2000 I, Tanpen-shū 1, 15.

examination in order to reveal his innovative use of sound.⁷ This is possibly one of the places where even a very well translated work may have to succumb to ‘lost in translation’ syndrome. The onomatopoeia in the above excerpt – ‘KRZSHAAATLE KKRZSHAAAAATLE KKKRMMMS’ and ‘KRRSPUMK DUWB KRRSPUMK DUWBK KRRSPUMK KUWB’ that is faithfully translated from the original Japanese– ‘ツクルーズシヤヤヤタル・ツクルーズシヤヤヤヤタル・ツツツツクルーズムムムス’ and ‘カールスパムク・ダブ・カールスパムク・ダブク・カールスパムク・クブ’ - is not of a beat or a tone found in traditional Japanese music. Nor is it a lyrical sound that might well reverberate in the mind of a person who was relaxing, reading a book by a Columbian novelist. It creates an effect that is out of place in the Japanese text, although this effect of the language may be lost in the thirty or so foreign translations of *TV People*.

Murakami’s interest in experimenting with sound and style can be seen elsewhere in a different format in two other examples. Two very short pieces, *Kotowaza* (Old Saying, 1995) and *Moshomoshō* (Mosho Mosho, 1995), are playful, idiosyncratic and random. *Old Saying* has ironic humour and is told in the vernacular style that is close to the Osaka Semba dialect throughout. It takes the format of a narrator addressing a general audience with a story about witnessing a monkey falling out of a tree and is presented as a free flowing, unstructured and rambling stream of consciousness:

そいでやな、ちょっとわし思たんやけどな、「猿も木から落ちる」ゆうことわざがあつてな、そいでもってほんまもんの猿が木から落ちよつてやな、そやがなほんまにこて一いうて木から落ちよつてやな、その猿にやな、「おい、お前気いつけなあかんで、ほらことわざに『猿も木から落ちる』言うがな。」い

⁷ Murakami explains that a music video of Lou Reed that he was watching in his apartment in Rome near the Vatican prompted him to write this piece in the spring of 1990. See Murakami, *MH ZSH*, 1990-2000 I, Tanpen-shū1, 292-297.

うてやな、説教でけへんやないか。そやろ、ことわざ言うのはやな、あくまでたとえやないか。そやろ。ほんまに木から落ちた猿に、そんなこと言えるかいな。そんなこと言うたら、そら猿かて気い悪うしよるがな。そんなこと言えるかいな。わし、言えへんで。⁸

Then, I just thought, there is an old saying, ‘Even a monkey can fall out of a tree’, and a real monkey fell out of a tree, that’s right, really, ploooooonk, the monkey falls out of a tree, and you can’t give him a lecture, can you? ‘Hey, you watch out, you know the old saying, “Even a monkey can fall-out of a tree”’. You see, an old saying is strictly figurative. You see. I can’t say that to a monkey that really fell out of a tree. Of course, that’ll upset the monkey. I can’t say such thing, me. I can’t.

In this piece, Murakami’s use of language suggests a slow pace and soft tone by ending sentences with a nasal ‘*na*’ sound. As the above excerpt demonstrates, he also creates rhythm by finishing consecutive sentences with the same ‘*yana*’ sound and by repeating phrases such as ‘I can’t say’. In addition, Murakami controls the pace of writing and achieves the narrative’s smooth texture by interspersing phrases with a prolonged onomatopoeic sound: such as ‘こてーいうて落ちよったんや。’ (‘Ploooooonk. The monkey fell out of the tree.’)⁹ Being a very short piece, ‘Old Saying’ does not develop its theme fully, but it is a piece in which Murakami experiments with rhythm and tempo and the vernacular form in the extreme.

In the other piece, *Moshomoshō*, Murakami allows the rhythm to overtake the context of the story and the logic of one of the protagonists. The story begins as the narrator, *boku*, regrets having placed himself in a difficult situation that challenges his moral values:

⁸ Murakami, *Kotowaza*, NH ZSH, 1990-2000 I, Tanpen-shū1, 191. Emphasis is by Midori T. Atkins.

⁹ Ibid.

On Monday, I did a decent thing for Bochobocho. On Wednesday, Moshomosho came to me. “Thank you, sir. I heard that you’d taken care of Bochobocho the other day”, Moshomosho said.

“It was not a big deal. It was something that any Japanese would do,” I said. I’m rather modest.¹⁰

Conversations among Moshomosho and Bochobocho (speaking in Osaka dialect) and *boku* (in standard Japanese) involve ‘*kuryakurya*’ - a present from Moshomosho to *boku* for the kindness and favour that *boku* did for Bochobocho. *Boku*, as a man of good morals, at first refuses to accept ‘*kuryakurya*’. Murakami explains that it is something that Moshomosho has to give away as a tax-avoidance scheme; at the same time, *boku* doubts that anybody, including his wife, would believe that anyone would give it as a gift. However, both Bochobocho and Moshomosho put pressure on *boku* to accept ‘*kuryakurya*,’ repeating irrational phrases that appeal to *boku*’s existential curiosity:

“よっしゃゆうて、そこんどこ気持ちよう受け取ってもらえしまへんやろか。”

With a quick nod, Why don't you accept [our gratitude] with good grace?¹¹

“そこんどこよっしゃゆうて、好きにつこて楽しんでみはったらええでしょう。”

With a quick nod, why don't you enjoy it as you like?¹²

“そんなもんよっしゃゆうて、もろといたらええんですわ。”

With a quick nod, you should just accept it.¹³

Although ‘*kuryakurya*’ is something that must be hidden away from his wife, *boku* hesitantly accepts it. The story ends as *boku* can no longer keep his hands off

¹⁰ Murakami, *Kotowaza*, MH ZSH, 1990-2000 I, Tanpen-shū 1, 235.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.,235-236.

¹³ Ibid.,236.

'*kuryakurya*' and admits that his logic has succumbed to existential needs: '[...] now I thoroughly enjoy '*kuryakurya*' every day. Once I started using it, I realized that it is much better than I'd imagined. I don't think I can live without it.'¹⁴

This very short story is full of ambiguity. *Boku*'s pride and identity as a good Japanese citizen fade as the story develops. However, there is no explicit explanation of the favour that *boku* conducted for Bochobocho nor of the nature of the relationship among the three characters. The contrasting images and tones between the standard Japanese and Osaka dialect enhance the dilemma of a rule-abiding, decent citizen against an immoral proposition made by the corrupt and self-seeking. Their dialect serves to emphasize two pushy, uncivilized characters who lack the sophistication of the reasonable, educated *boku*. In this piece, Murakami also experiments with onomatopoeic idiosyncratic names. Such words enhance the story's ambiguity. For example, the term '*kuryakurya*' gives no hint to the reader of its meaning. These fabricated onomatopoeic names set the characters and objects free of any set identity, image or history that is associated with a word. Such meaningless sounds end up pushing against not only the boundary of language and writing style but also the imagination of the reader.

These two works, with their distinct texture, resemble a piece of music and should be read accordingly. Both are pure entertainment and are also experiments for Murakami, a writer who constantly plays with the music of language. They are also the first works that can be distinguished from pieces prior to 1995, which are often told in a slick and suave language. Just as he adopts the sound of the Kansai region in '*Old Saying*' and '*Mosho Mosho*', Murakami adds more local signposting in his more recent works by

¹⁴ Murakami, *Kotowaza*, MH ZSH, 1990-2000 I, Tanpen-shū 1, 236.

introducing, for instance, Kantō vernacular in the voices of truck drivers in *Kafka on the Shore* and Kansai dialect in the voice of a supporting character in *After Dark*. Murakami's distinctive tone, textual form and style signify his effort to differentiate his works from the canonical Japanese literature. Because of his effort to create his own voice and sound, Murakami's literature sits in an ambiguous literary space somewhere between sub-cultural and pure literature genres.

In his works published before 1995, Murakami's language is compatible with a protagonist whose attitude is characterized as slightly bewildered, nonchalant, uncommitted, and unattached to society. The protagonist listens closely to his ego's needs. The slick language, often in the form of light-hearted dialogues, and the repeated usage of phrases such as 'やれやれ' (good grief), are befitting for the protagonist of an urban novel. These early protagonists often involuntarily take off to locations in search of a dead or vanished character, and the ending of these stories is often ambiguous. A passive *boku* frequently remains elusive, thereby leaving the reader unsure of the way to interpret his adventures and his encounters with various characters.¹⁵ Indeed, the successful characterization of Murakami's early protagonists depends on a voice and a language that are delivered in the form of a distinctive, yet arguably meaningless, collection of semiotics that Murakami has carefully developed. He has described how he placed an emphasis on his writing style and how he enjoyed creating 'stylish' sentences during his earlier period.¹⁶

¹⁵ *A Wild Sheep Chase* and *Hardboiled*, for example, include metaphorical authoritative figures from the Japanese political system that lurk in a darkness or underground that attempts to swallow up and destroy the individual.

¹⁶ Murakami, "Afutādāku o megutte" in *Bungakukai*, vol.59, no. 4, 178.

Elements of contemporary cosmopolitanism are abundant in Murakami's works. In Murakami's earlier voice, 'stylish' means cosmopolitan, but more specifically, American. Many critics in Japan assume Murakami's style to be heavily influenced by American novels that are translated from English to Japanese. For example, at the time of its publication, *Hear the Wind Sing* attracted much attention as a result of its stylistic form, its light-hearted dialogues, playfulness and dandyism. Maruya likens Murakami's style to Kurt Vonnegut (1922-2007) and F. Scott Fitzgerald (1896-1940).¹⁷ Murakami explains that, as he searched for his voice to write *Hear the Wind Sing*, he felt most 'comfortable' when he wrote the story first in English and then translated it back into Japanese, thereby writing the entire piece in 'translation style'.¹⁸ Indeed, Murakami lists varying sources of influence; he expresses admiration and fondness for the works of Vonnegut, Fitzgerald and Raymond Carver (1939-1988), as well as nineteenth century Russian writers such as Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910), Anton Chekhov (1860-1904) and Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821-1881).¹⁹

As a writer, his career has spanned over thirty years during which he has produced ten long novels, as well as non-fiction works, many short novels, very short pieces, travelogues, collections of essays and interviews. In addition, Murakami's translations of short stories and essays by some canonical twentieth century as well as over twenty contemporary American writers of various backgrounds show his persistent intent to seek fresh inspiration from non-Japanese works and to polish his writing style in

¹⁷ Maruya Sai'ichi, "Atarashii shōsetsu no eikyō" in *Gunzō Nihon no sakka, Murakami Haruki*, 290.

¹⁸ Murakami, "Monogatari no tame no bōken" in *Bungakukai*, vol.39. no. 8, 49.

¹⁹ Murakami Haruki and Nakagami Kenji, interview "Shigoto no genba kara" with Nakagami Kenji in *Kokubungaku* vol.30, no.3, 18. Other references to his experience of Russian literature are found in Murakami Haruki (ed.), *Shōnen Kafka*. In a collection of essays *Murakami asahi-do haihō*, Murakami lists Scott Fitzgerald, Raymond Chandler (1888-1959) and Truman Capote(1924-1984), 123.

periods ‘between concentrating on long novels.’²⁰ Murakami is a proponent of the benefit of being exposed to various states of consciousness as a translator. He acknowledges the dynamic impact of the act of translation whereby the ‘rhythm, nature or thinking system’ of another language forces its way into its translator’s own style and colours his recognition of his own language and its system.²¹

Hear the Wind Sing is one of the more pronounced examples in which Murakami displays his cosmopolitanism and his American-influenced language and translation style. In this novel, Murakami’s cosmopolitanism manifests itself in the way that his protagonist’s disposition and values are heavily engaged in non-Japanese cultural activities and production. For example, the *boku* in the novel is a writer who recounts eighteen days during his university summer holiday in 1970 in his hometown near a port, and yet Murakami eliminates anything that reveals the locality or cultural semiotics of Japan. Although he touches upon the student riots over the Japan-US Security Treaty of the 1960’s and 1970’s in the conversation between *boku* and a girl he picks up, his language remains detached and distanced from the protagonist’s immediate political surroundings of the time. In comparison to Murakami’s portrayal of *boku* and his treatment – or rather non-treatment - of such historical moments of social unrest, we might consider the canonical writer Ōe Kenzaburō. Ōe displays a stronger, more combative sentiment and an angst concerning history that stems from the post-war and post-student movement period in *Man’en gan’nen no futtobōru* (The Silent Cry, 1967).

²⁰ They include Fitzgerald, J.D. Truman Capote, J.D. Salinger (1919-2010), and John Irving (1942-). Murakami also translated and published the complete works of Raymond Carver (1938-1988), his all-time favourite author. Murakami’s translations of Fitzgerald include *My Lost City*, *The Great Gatsby*, and two collections of short pieces. In addition, Murakami published *Za, sukotto fittsugerarudo bokku* (The Scott Fitzgerald Book, 1990) a collection of travelogues and essays from his pilgrimage from Fitzgerald’s birthplace to his gravesite, and its sequel, *Babiron ni kaeru, sukotto fittsugerarudo bukku*, <2> (Back to Babylon – Scott Fitzgerald Book 2, 2008).

²¹ Murakami, *Wakai dokusha no tame no tanpen-shōsetsu annai*. 188-189.

Ōe's political message is altogether anti-imperial and anti-establishment. In contrast, *Hear the Wind Sing* focuses on *boku's* determination to write and an ego that keeps its distance from society.

Boku's recollections involve various characters – three nameless girls with whom he has slept, his best friend Nezumi (Rat), a-girl-without-a-pinky, a French sailor, an older woman on the phone, a radio D.J., the Chinese bartender J at J's Bar, a sick girl in a hospital and her sister. Many of these characters remain nameless, and either die or simply disappear. An American iconic political figure, however, creates a sense of awakening and exerts a long-standing impact on the protagonists in this novel: 'It was the year when President Kennedy died that I slowly started observing my surroundings. It's been fifteen years since then.'²² John F. Kennedy appears again later as Nezumi recites to *boku* part of the dialogue between himself and a fictional woman in a novel that he wrote:

'Did you wish I died?'

'A little'

'Really a little?'

'.... I forgot.'

The two were quiet for a while. Nezumi felt that he had to say something.

'Look, people are born unequal.'

'Whose words?'

'John F. Kennedy'²³

As *boku* and Nezumi are depicted as cosmopolitan cultural connoisseurs, the cultural atmosphere is predominantly American throughout the novel. Murakami's cosmopolitan

²² Murakami, *Kaze no uta o kike* in MH ZSH, 1979-1989 1, 10

²³ Ibid., 22-23.

boku listens to music but not a single Japanese song, eats Dunkin' Donuts, hangs out at J's Bar and quotes John F. Kennedy. What is more, Murakami sets up a fictional American twentieth century writer, Derek Heartfield, as the single most influential figure in this novel. By introducing an American writer as *boku*'s icon and as the one from whom *boku* claims to have learned everything about becoming and being a writer, Murakami invents and presents Heartfield's life's work, personal history and his dry sense of humour as objects of emulation for *boku* in his search for identity.

Slightly obscure and sitting on the fringe of a mainstream group of writers, Heartfield is 'an unprolific writer' who could be as eloquent with powerful words 'as Hemmingway and Fitzgerald'.²⁴ He died, we are told, after a lengthy struggle as a writer. Murakami selects an iconic American building as the place for the peculiar death of *boku*'s hero.

One sunny Sunday morning in June, 1938, [Heartfield] jumped from the top of the Empire State Building with a portrait of Hitler in his right arm and an umbrella in his left hand.²⁵

The Empire State Building is naturally a part of *boku*'s vocabulary because of his identification with the American author. Murakami reintroduces Heartfield's death when *boku* turns twenty-one in order to show that *boku* has a view that transcends the culture and values that are set by a particular nation:

²⁴ Murakami, *Kaze no uta o kike* in MH ZSH, 1979-1989 1, 8-9.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.

To cut a long story short, I'm going to be twenty-one.
I'm young enough, but I'm not as young as before. If I don't like that fact,
there is nothing I can do about it other than throwing myself off the
rooftop of the Empire State Building on a Sunday morning.²⁶

Boku has digested Heartfield's novels and life, and has perhaps even simulated Heartfield's death in his imagination. Furthermore, the story that begins with *boku* narrating Heartfield's profound literary influence on him ends with an anecdote about his encounter with Heartfield:

I don't mean to say that I wouldn't have written a novel if I hadn't encountered the writer, Derek Heartfield. But, I am also sure that I would have taken a completely different path from now [if I hadn't].

When I was a high-school student, I bought a few paperbacks by Derek Heartfield at a used bookstore in Kōbe. Maybe a foreign sailor left them.

[...]

Perhaps this book travelled across the Pacific on the bed of a member of crew on a cargo ship or a destroyer, and it arrived on my desk from the long distant past.²⁷

Murakami's message is clear: a non-Japanese fictional writer helps *boku* find his self. As *boku* looks inward, he finds an answer in a foreign writer. An actual book that he imagines to have travelled from abroad expands his imagination and lets him feel a

²⁶ Murakami, *Kaze no uta o kike* in MH ZSH, 1979-1989 1, 58.

²⁷ Murakami. *Kaze no uta o kike*, 153. This excerpt is included in a section titled 'Hātōfirudo futatabi..... (atogaki ni kaete)' (Heartfield, Again.... (in place of an epilogue)) in *Kaze no uta o kike* printed in Kōdansha bunko, 2003.

connection with faraway places. Here, Murakami highlights the importance of cultural strangeness, the inspiration that derives from the mysterious provenance of cultural goods, and the overall arbitrariness of choosing one's identity. Combined with his references to many globally available products, music, films, urban scenery and foreign locations, Murakami's narratives lack a sense of locality on the surface and may, to borrow Yomota Inuhiko's words, have 'no (authentic Japanese) cultural smell'²⁸ *Boku's* own country and his immediate surroundings are unable to provide any answer to his sense of loss or the question of his identity. This lack of connection creates a kind of cosmopolitanism not dissimilar to that of the Taishō period that sought singular assimilation with culture from faraway places.

As he promotes American writers through his translation works in Japan, Murakami specifically and repeatedly claims that he did not read many Japanese novels during his youth because they did not speak to him.²⁹ In a 1985 interview, Murakami revisits the reason why he leaned towards non-Japanese literature: 'Japanese literature relies upon the characteristics of the Japanese language too much. As a result, [a writer's] self-expression gets tied too strongly to the characteristics of the Japanese language.'³⁰ However, while Murakami's method of developing his own style first helped distinguish his novels from other Japanese writers, it is not original. Translation style is not new to Japanese literature. Indeed, translation style is said to have made a significant impact on the formation of Japanese literary style during the movement of 言文一致 (*genbun itchi*, the unification of the vernacular and written forms of a language) that is

²⁸ Yomota Inuhiko, *A Wild Haruki Chase, sekai wa Murakami Haruki o dō yomu ka*, 197.

²⁹ Murakami Haruki and Nakagami Kenji, interview "Shigoto no genba kara" with Nakagami Kenji in *Kokubungaku vol.30, no.3*, 8.

³⁰ Murakami Haruki interview, "Monogatari no tame no bōken", *Bungakukai, vol.39. no. 8*. 41.

synonymous with the formation of modern Japanese literature following the Meiji Restoration (1867). Yanabu Akira details the ways in which ‘the translated works from western languages have helped create the foundation of the [modern] Japanese sentence’.³¹ For example, Futabatei Shimei (1864-1909) wrote *Ukigumo* (Floating Clouds, 1887) in Russian – in the style of Dostoevsky - before translating it into Japanese in order to find his own style.³² As one of the most prominent writers of the modern Japanese literary canon, Natsume Sōseki (1867-1916), tested the newly introduced style of 「、、、は。。。である」 (the style in which the subject of the sentence is followed by the particle ‘*wa*’ and the sentence ends in the grammatical form ‘*dearu*’) in *Wagahai wa neko dearu* (I Am a Cat, 1905). This grammatical structure was also used by Mori Ōgai (1862-1922).³³ Later in the Taishō period, Tanizaki detects a hint of translation style in Shiga Naoya (1883-1971)’s *Kinosaki nite* (At Cape Kinosaki, 1913).³⁴

The adaptation of *kare* (he) and *kanojo* (she) was also a part of these influential writers' efforts to establish a literary style at the time of rapid westernization of the country.³⁵ *Kare/kanojo* also feature as part of Murakami’s translation-style lexicon. Yanabu explains that third-person pronouns did not exist in pre-Meiji Japanese grammar and that the words *kare/kanojo* carry the distinctive feeling of an imported/translated

³¹ Yanabu Akira, *Kindai nihongo no shisō: Hon'yakubuntai seiritsu jijō*, 59-61. The Japanese adopted the western languages’ placing of a subject in each sentence, and their repetitive usage of a subject.

³² Yanabu Akira, *Kindai nihongo no shisō: Hon'yakubuntai seiritsu jijō*, 91-92.

³³ *Ibid.*, 122. 132. Yanabu explains that the ‘。。。は。。。である’ style was developed when the style of the German and English grammatical composition was adopted for the Japanese Constitution, and for legal texts and academic papers. In this newly introduced subject-normative format that became the standard in the early twentieth century, a person noun followed by ‘*wa*’ (as in ‘。。。は、’) became nominative (subject) for the predicate. Until the translation styles were introduced, any written forms of Japanese, such as the constitution, often conveyed its message without the nominative being clearly stated.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 108.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 46-51. As early as 1896, Ozaki Kōyō (1868-1903) used the translation-style word 彼 ‘*kare*’ (he) in *Tajō takon* (Passions and Grievances, 1896). Tayama Katai (1872-1930) also used ‘*kare*’ (he) in his influential novel *Futon* (Quilt, 1907). Taishō writer Arishima Takeo (1877-1923) in *Kain no matsuei* (Descendants of Cain, 1917) also set the tone of his novel with many usages of ‘*kare*’.

language. *Kare/kanojo* have evolved to function differently in Japanese from the original: Yanabu claims that the meaning of ‘*kare*’ in Japanese was originally the equivalent of ‘*kore*’ (this’), and ‘*sore/are*’(that), a proximal/mesioproximal/distal pronoun. In modern Japanese usage, *kare/kanojo* refer to the third-person, but do not function as the third-person pronoun does in English or in other languages: ‘[t]hey are not demonstrative pronouns denoting distant objects, although they refer to a specific person.’³⁶ Yanabe explains that the Japanese ‘*kare/kanojo*’ can function as pronoun and noun at the same time. A narrator would refer to a person as ‘*kare/kanojo*’ when he or she carries a heavier emotional presence of an added value in the narrative. Literary writers, however, were aware of their overzealous usage and their effect of these words on the tone of their writing. In 1934, Tanizaki, for example, recalls that ‘[in the 1920s], I considered it to be ideal to write Japanese with a western flavour as many young people still do nowadays.’³⁷

The fever for experimentation with translation style in the late nineteenth century and during the Taishō cosmopolitanism period has subsided over the years, yet the translation style is found again in Murakami’s *Hear the Wind Sing* and his other early work. This is particularly seen in his frequent use of *kare/kanojo*:

彼女は決して美人ではなかった。しかし「美人ではなかった」という言い方はフェアではないだろう。「彼女は彼女にとってふさわしいだけの美人ではなかった」というのが正確な表現だと思う。

僕は彼女の写真を一枚だけ持っている。裏に日付けがメモしてあり、それは1963年8月となっている。ケネディー大統領が頭を打ち抜かれた年だ。彼女は何処かの避暑地らしい海岸の防潮堤に座り、少し居心地悪そうに微笑んでいる。髪はジーンセバーク風に短く刈り込み（どちらかというとその髪型は僕にアウシュヴィッツを連想させたのだが）、赤いギンガムの袖の長いワンピースを着

³⁶ Yanabu, *Hon'yakugo seiritsu jijō*, 205.

³⁷ Yanabu, *Kindai nihongo no shisō: Hon'yakubuntai seiritsu jijō*, 55-56.

ている。彼女はいくらか不器用そうに見え、そして美しかった。それは見た人の心の中の最もデリケートな部分にまで突き通ってしまいそうな美しさだった。³⁸

She was definitely not a beauty. But it's not fair to describe her as 'not a beauty'. An accurate expression would be 'she wasn't as much of a beauty as she deserved to be'.

I have just one photograph of her. A scribble on its back says August, 1963. It's the year when President Kennedy got shot in the head. She sits on an embankment of a summer resort with a slightly uneasy smile. Her hair is cut short in Jean Seberg style (although her hairstyle somehow made me think of Auschwitz), and she is wearing a long-sleeved red gingham dress. She looks somewhat awkward, and beautiful. It was the kind of beauty that might penetrate into a person's most delicate inner core.

All the female characters in *Hear the Wind Sing* are in transit through *boku's* life. None is given a proper name and each are referred to as 'she'. The girl that *boku* describes in the above excerpt is 'The third girl [he] slept with'.³⁹ The detailed descriptions of the 'penetrating beauty' in the photograph when she was fourteen years old and the repeated references to the circumstance of her suicide are personal and subjective, and appear to hold a certain amount of significance to *boku*. Yet she remains '*kanojo*', the word that evokes some emotional distance, throughout the novel. Later in the story it becomes apparent why all the girls with whom he associated at various points in his life remain nameless. Upon being asked by 'a girl without a pinky finger' whether he ever liked any girl, *boku* answers:

"Yes."

³⁸ Murakami, *Kaze no uta o kike*, MH ZSH, 1979-1989 I, 78. Emphasis by Midori T. Atkins.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 77.

“Remember her face?”

I tried to remember the faces of three girls, but strangely I couldn't clearly picture them, not even one.

“No,” I said.⁴⁰

Boku later explains what he means by not remembering them: “[e]verything is transient. No one can control the way that things pass by. That’s how we live.”⁴¹ All three ‘*kanojo*’s disappear abruptly from his life. The word ‘*kanojo*’ functions as a metaphor for ‘passing’. ‘*Kanojo*’, the word that is neither proper noun nor pronoun, is also a representation of the way *boku* lives in which he keeps a certain distance from others. It is a signifier of *boku*’s detachment from the outside world.

Similarly I would also argue that Murakami’s usage of katakana for his characters’ names and his avoidance of a proper noun for protagonists and characters is a technique that portrays the protagonist’s emotional realm and its barriers against others.⁴² Watanabe Kazutami points out that Murakami’s choice of an appellative for a name implies an ambiguity about the character’s entity and essence. Watanabe proposes that such ambiguity helps create an illusory quality for the story.⁴³ Furthermore, Karatani introduces another argument for the lack of proper nouns in the works of Murakami. He criticises Murakami for denying a character a subjectivity that should be validated by personal experiences (such as “I” in *watakushi-shōsetsu*) and for insisting on the

⁴⁰ Murakami, *Kaze no uta o kike*, MH ZSH, 1979-1989 I, 110.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 117.

⁴² Katakana is a Japanese kana syllabary. Katakana is mostly used to write foreign names, foreign words, and loan words as well as many onomatopoeia, plant and animal names.

⁴³ See Watanabe Kazutami, “Kaze to yume to kokyō – Murakami Haruki o megutte” in *Gunzo, Nihon no sakka Murakami Haruki*, 52-55.

transcendental consciousness of the self.⁴⁴ In this relationship, *boku* maintains the upper hand, controlling the realignment of emotional distance from his ego with nameless characters, without committing to anyone or anything else but himself.

This method of impersonal naming continues in Murakami's second novel *Pinball 1973*. Many have idiosyncratic and undeniably logical names such as 'the Spanish instructor', 'a woman', 'a young woman', 'Man from Venus' and 'Man from Jupiter'. In this novel, the same *boku* from *Hear the Wind Sing* lives with a pair of identical twin women. Murakami refers to them as '*futago*' (twins), '*hitori*' (one[of the twins]), 'the one on the right', 'the one on the left', 'Number 208', and 'Number 209'. They reason with *boku* about the irrelevance of having a name:

'It's not worth mentioning', said the one on the right.

'Really, it's not that great a name', said the one on the left. 'D'you know?'

'Sure', I said.

...

'If we don't have names, is it inconvenient for you?' one of them said.

'Don't know.'

...

'If you really want a name, you can name me whatever you like', suggested one.⁴⁵

The twins suggest that *boku* name them 'Right and Left', 'Vertical and Horizontal', 'Top and Bottom', 'Front and Back', 'East and West'.⁴⁶ *Boku*'s naming of them as 'Entrance

⁴⁴ See Karatani Kōjin, "Murakami Haruki no "fūkei" – '1973nen no pinbōru'" in *Teibon Karatani Kōjin 5, Rekishi to hanpuku*, 99-137.

⁴⁵ Murakami, *1973nen no pinbōru* in MH ZSH, 1979-1989 1, 128-129.

and Exit'⁴⁷ is explained by the fact that the twins complete each other's existence as these two opposing words complete a semantic logic. *Boku* finally settles on naming them, out of necessity and convenience, 'Number 208' and 'Number 209', the meaningless numbers on a sweatshirt that each wears. As if to prove that names hold no power to define them and give no meaning to his relationship with either of them, the twins switch their sweatshirts and become each other in front of an unsure *boku*. The season changes to autumn and he gives them warmer clothes. 'The two are no longer 208 or 209 and have become an olive-green crew-neck sweater and a beige cardigan, but they don't complain.'⁴⁸

The metaphoric twins who simply appear one evening – *boku* finds them in his bed when he comes home from work one evening – spend uneventful days around him, doing domestic chores, sometimes comforting him by being a sounding board and listening to him read the newspaper. For some time, *boku's* days have been filled with vacuity, silence and the question of whether he has anything in him worth sharing with another person. *Boku* is reclusive and his personal space offers him sensory pleasure by means of books and music. To him, such pleasures are the last fortress against others and the outside, where he grapples with a sense of loneliness and dislocation. After an old circuit board in his apartment is replaced with a new one and left behind one day, the role of the nameless twins in this novel becomes apparent: they guide *boku* to perform a symbolic funeral of sinking the old circuit board in a reservoir. This triggers his memory of a pinball machine from the past, another metaphor for a period in his youthful past, and leads him to revisit and confront the past. Recognition of and reconciliation with the

⁴⁶ Murakami, *1973nen no pinbōru* in MH ZSH, 1979-1989 1, 129.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 220.

past eases his sense of fear for the present and future. The sense of isolation against the outside and others subsides and he finds a better balance between his ego and others. With their job of reconnecting *boku* with the past complete, as is the case with other female characters in novels by Murakami, the nameless twins leave. They lead *boku* to recognise that the past, or what *boku* terms ‘darkness’, can never be fully understood and that even ‘the very perceivable moment of now’ is transient.⁴⁹

Another element of language that assists the creation of Murakami's unique style is his use of numerical values and logic combined with metaphors in which he expresses emotional distance between a protagonist's self and others. Murakami's construction and linking of sentences are laid out simply and clearly with the use of conjunctions and conditional phrases. In the example from *Hear the Wind Sing* below, *boku* explains the position of his self against others:

Once, I attempted to write a short novel with a theme about ‘raison d’etre’. At the end, I couldn’t finish it, but I kept thinking about raison d’etre during that period. Thanks to that, I acquired a strange habit. It’s a habit that meant I couldn’t help replacing everything with a numerical value. For about eight months, that impulse didn’t leave me. When I got on a train, first I counted the number of passengers, counted every step in the staircase, and counted my pulse at any spare moment. According to my record from that time, between August fifteenth of 1969 and April third of the following year, I attended 358 lectures, had sex 54 times and smoked 6921 cigarettes.

During that period, I seriously thought that I might be able to communicate with another person by replacing everything with a numerical value like that. And that I surely existed so long as I had something to tell. But of course, no one was interested in the number of cigarettes that I smoked, the steps that I climbed up or the size of my penis. And I lost my raison d’etre and ended up alone.

⁴⁹ Murakami, *1973nen no pinbōru* in MH ZSH, 1979-1989 1, 253.

☆

So, I was smoking the 6922nd cigarette when I learned the news of her death.⁵⁰

Murakami's sentences guide the reader through the protagonist's logic. Frequent references to numbers and logic appeal to universality and timelessness. Although the reasoning behind the absurd habit remains unexplained to the reader, the protagonist here leaves nothing to the reader's imagination in terms of his train of thought. This internal dialogue betrays no questioning, emotional investment or turbulence occurring in the inner realm of the protagonist. Through the voice of *boku*, Murakami denies the significance of personal *raison d'être* and subjectivity. He detaches *boku* from others through his personal language, and places him in a state of transcendental consciousness of self.

With all these aesthetic stratagems, Murakami stands out in the way he attempts to evoke a literary space that questions a concept of cultural identity and a sense of belonging. For example, his language and writing style in *Hear the Wind Sing* are intentionally derailed from modern Japanese literature's *jun-bungaku* (pure literature) style. Murakami constructs a sentence with words that sound simple and fresh as they lack the historicity of the canonical Japanese literature, which is replete with terms that evoke classical literature and imagery. Through words, syntax, grammar and imagery lack a cultural identity and have no particular association with a nation, he creates the effect of a borrowed language that can allow a more objective stance towards his subject. Murakami's attempt to form the singularity of language by adapting western references,

⁵⁰ Murakami, *Kaze no uta o kike* in MH ZSH, 1979-1989 1, 74-75.

grammatical forms and style should be differentiated from his predecessors' attempts at the time when the modern Japanese literary style was formed in the Meiji and Taishō periods. The earlier movement related to an effort to complete the unification of the vernacular and written forms of the Japanese language. By contrast, Murakami's purpose appears to be more personal. He aims to free the language from its history by avoiding culturally loaded terms or imagery in Japanese. Employing the distancing techniques we have explored, he is able to instead forge his own literary space and use this to explore a particular phenomenon of cosmopolitanism.

1.2. Shifting Topography in Murakami's Narratives: *After the Quake*

Murakami's protagonists in his earlier works do not see all things foreign as objects of desire. However, when contrasted with nameless others in the story, Murakami's deliberate listing of cultural consumables using proper nouns – all Euro-American choices of music, food and books - highlights the frivolity and decadence of the protagonist's introvert ego. His ego forms a close attachment to cultural materials and envelops them within a closed personal cocoon-like space, while many relationships with others are viewed as purely transient. Furthermore, Murakami juxtaposes the abundant references to such cultural materials with other styles resonant of decadence.

Murakami's hyper-realistic geography that is filled with global cultural consumables, together with his language and style that defy the norms of canonical Japanese literature, convey the detached air of his protagonists. These features ensure that a feeling of displacement and dislocation from human community runs through

Murakami's works. The protagonist's ambivalence towards others and ambiguity about his sense of belonging lead his self to negotiate carefully constructed spatial relationships with society and the people that surround him. His cultural identification with the West and his style of writing also signal the possibility of a new type of identity formation that transcends the notion of borders set by and serving the purposes of a nation.

Since the Great Hanshin Earthquake and the Sarin Gas Attack on the Tokyo subway in 1995, Murakami's work has displayed a less obvious use of Western cultural references. Murakami has also started writing in the third-person narrative mode. His protagonists display a clearer recognition of the relationship between the self and others, with the result that the distance that his earlier protagonists kept from others appears less ambivalent. Recent protagonists yield to closer and steadier introspection. These changes are noticeable in his writings that were published after Murakami's two volumes of non-fictional works, *Andāguraundo* (Underground: The Tokyo Gas Attack and the Japanese Psyche, 1997) and *Yakusokusareta bashode – Underground 2* (Underground 2, 1998). These detail Murakami's lengthy interviews with the victims and cult members of the Aum Shinrikyō who were involved in the 1995 attack on the Tokyo subway. Murakami patiently listens to the interviewees' accounts, combs through their psyches and becomes the third person narrator of their stories. Later Murakami discusses the inevitable shift in his narrative style towards the polyphonous form, influenced by the many individual 'voices' that he heard during the yearlong interview process in preparation for these books.⁵¹

⁵¹ Murakami, "Kaisetsu" in MH ZSH, 1990-2000 3, Tanpen-shū II, 272.

As a sign of his departure from stories told from the point of view of *boku*'s ego, Murakami incorporates a style in which a metaphorical crow conveys the protagonist Kafuka's inner conflicts in his 2002 novel *Kafka on the Shore*. In addition, Murakami's post-1995 works depend less on stylistic devices such as semiotics and idiosyncratic metaphors, although stylized conversations between his characters and the playfulness of the language are still found in his narratives. Lastly, unlike Murakami's previous efforts to convey a sense of defiance against a national belonging or identification with anything particular, some of his post-1995 protagonists show more interest in identifying with Japan.

The five short serialized stories and one fictional work in a collection titled *After the Quake* exemplify Murakami's post-1995 voice.⁵² All of them are set in February 1995 during the brief period between the Great Hanshin Earthquake in January and the Sarin Attack in March. They describe the effect of the devastating earthquake, a historical event, on people's subconscious and consciousness. They display the language and styles that Murakami has developed over the years as well as his new methods of writing. As Murakami's focus shifted away from telling a story about a disconnected ego and its lingering sense of loss and dislocation, his language became more streamlined and the sense of frivolity receded.

One first perceives this transition in the opening piece of his serialized stories in the collection, *UFO ga Kushiro ni oriru* (UFO in Kushiro, 1999). Murakami structures the story in a familiar format with a male protagonist, Komori, and female characters who seem to perform certain literary functions. One female character disappears from his life,

⁵² They were serialized in a monthly literary magazine *Shinchō* from August, 1999 until December, 1999. *Hachimitsu Pai* was written later to be included in *Kami no kodomotachi wa mina odoru*.

others are both transient recipients of something symbolic and a sounding board for the male protagonist's shifting self. His wife is captivated by the aftermath of the earthquake which is shown on TV for five days, but she then leaves him and demands a divorce with a note indicating that his emotional void and air-like existence could never satisfy her. Sasaki Keiko and her friend Shima-san play the role of tour guides for Komori, showing him around the town of Kushiro in Hokkaido.

Murakami installs metaphorical objects, surrealistic events, and distanced and bewildered voices in the story in order to express Komori's inner thoughts and emotional vicissitudes. Keiko receives delivery of an empty box from him on behalf of his colleague and her brother Sasaki. Komori is at a loss about how to find the next step to take in his life after the divorce and is therefore taciturn in his conversation with them. Shima-san turns out to be not only the guide to the town of Kushiro, but also the guide for Komori's introspection: 'I'm told that I lack substance [by my wife], but I don't understand what on earth the meaning of substance is.'⁵³ As he starts paying attention to the reports of the damage caused by the earthquake on TV, Komori's void starts to become filled with the devastating images of the earthquake. The suggestion that this may be the beginning of 'something' is made at the end of the story with the woman's words - 'But it's just started.'⁵⁴

In this short piece, Murakami continues to express distance and fragility in relationships through his impersonal naming of female characters. For example, his wife is described with the terms 'wife' and 'she' throughout the story, while the first name of recipient of the box, Keiko, is written in katakana letters. The woman who stays behind

⁵³ Murakami, *UFO ga Kushiro ni oriru* in MH ZSH, 1990-2000 3, Tanpen-shū II, 125.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 127.

to spend the night with Komori is simply called ‘Shimao-san’, a combination of a katakana surname and an honorific term ‘san’ that conveys the formality and distance of the relationship itself. Her name signifies her function as a stranger who listens to Komori to bring out his inwardly inclined psyche and helps his self-questioning process.

Murakami’s experimentation with sound and dialect continues in other stories from the same collection. Murakami tells a story of three characters in their local vernacular speech in a short piece in *Airon no aru fūkei* (Landscape with Flatiron, 1999). In this piece, Murakami uses the sound of the vernacular, in particular the Kansai vernacular, as a prominent identifier and marker for a story in which the devastation of the earthquake in Kōbe unearths and connects the subconscious realms of the protagonists:

「三宅さん、出身は神戸の方だっていつか言ってましたよね」、啓介がふと思いだした様に明るい声で尋ねた。「先月の地震は大丈夫だったんですか？神戸には家族とかいなかったんですか？」

「さあ、ようわからん。俺な、あっちとはもう関係無いねん。昔のことや。」「昔の事やと言われても、そのわりに関西弁ぜんぜん抜けないですな」

「そうかな、抜けてへんか？自分ではようわからんけど」

「あのね三宅さん、それがもし関西弁やなかったら、わたの喋ってるのはいったいなんですかねん。むちゃくちゃゆわはったら困りますがな。」

「身持ちの悪い関西弁つかうな。イバラギの人間にけったいな関西弁つかわれたくないんや。お前らは農閑期にむしろ旗立て暴走族やとったらええんや」⁵⁵

“Mr. Miyake you told us once that you are from the Kobe area”, Keisuke said in a cheerful voice as if it had just occurred to him. “Was it okay, the earthquake, last month? Don’t you have some family or relatives in Kobe?”

“Well, I don’t know. I have no ties there anymore. It’s been a long time.”

⁵⁵ Murakami, *Airon no aru fūkei*, in MH ZSH, 1990-2000 3, Tanpen-shū II, 136.

“You say it’s been a long time, but you haven’t lost your Kansai dialect at all.”

“Is that so? Not at all? I can’t tell myself.”

“Listen, Miyake-san, if yours isn’t Kansai dialect, then what on earth do you think I’m speaking? Oh, you must be kidding!”

“Cut out that fake Kansai dialect. I don’t want to hear a stupid guy from Ibaragi speaking with a phoney Kansai dialect. You farmer boys would be better off tearing around on your motorcycles with your biker group flag during the slack season.”

Murakami’s first-person narratives from his pre-1995 period do not allow the protagonists’ inner thoughts to be communicated or shared in their verbal exchanges with others. Protagonists in *Landscape with Flatiron*, however, reveal and communicate their unconscious grappling with issues of life and death with each other. The subdued tone of the language in this piece is peppered with the light-hearted, humorous banter between Miyake-san and Keisuke, which takes advantage of Miyake-san’s Kansai vernacular and Keisuke’s mimicry as the excerpt above demonstrates.

A middle-aged man from Kōbe called Miyake-san abandons his family, settles in a town by the beach in Ibaragi and meets a young couple, Junko and Keisuke. The equally dislocated young runaway Junko lives with her boyfriend, the happy-go-lucky university student Keisuke, whose life seems to have no other aim but to live life to the full in the present moment. Their friendships are bound together by Miyake-san and Junko’s fascination with a bonfire on the beach. The separate references to Jack London and his *To Build a Fire* (1902) by each of them tell the reader of the central theme of the story about living in the shadow of death: Junko interprets *To Build a Fire* as conveying its protagonist’s conflicting emotions over life and death – his determination to survive in the severe cold conflicts with his intuitive belief that the appropriate ending of his life

would be to die then. Miyake-san weighs London's lonely death from alcohol abuse against the author's long-term conviction that he would die by drowning in the dark night sea. Miyake-san reflects on his own recurring dream in which he suffers a slow death inside a refrigerator in contrast to London's anecdote, noting that his own life is in a way a slow death itself. Their pondering over the mistakes made during the older man's youth, the young woman's acute sense of vacuity and an anxiety over her lack of direction in life are lyrically narrated in the quiet third person.

In the third piece of the series, a short piece with the same title as the collection *Kami no kodomotachi wa mina odoru* (All God's Children Can Dance, 1999), Murakami focuses on a young man Yoshiya who was raised and identified as a child of the gods by his single mother, a Madonna-like figure, and the cult religious group that she belongs to. The story is structured in a similar manner to Murakami's earlier works in that it focuses on the male protagonist who revisits his past and experiences metaphorical, fantastical events in his search for his identity. Yoshiya's conception as a result of his mother and her former partner's carnal lust, and his coming into an undesired existence underline his anxiety and fragile identification with his father. He has contradictory emotions over the 'darkness' he believes he possesses.⁵⁶ Yoshiya's darkness, however, dissolves after he follows a man he believes to be his lost father from Tokyo to the border area with Chiba. In an unknown and forgotten baseball field that Yoshiya reaches through a symbolic dark and narrow tunnel-like alley, the man vanishes and Yoshiya comes to gain his own sense of identity by abandoning his desire to define his existence in terms of his relationship with his father, and in turn acknowledging his Oedipus complex.

⁵⁶ Murakami, *Kami no kodomotachi wa mina odoru* in MH ZSH, 1990-2000 3, Tanpen-shū II, 168.

Yoshiya's day is narrated through interior monologues in the third-person mode. His memories and dialogues from the past, and many questions are expressed in crisp and simple sentences. They interject his stream of consciousness, pointing to his desire for an earnest communication with others and to bravely face his own 'beasts'. Murakami's metaphorical references in *All God's Children Can Dance* remain close to the dark images of fear, rage and the unknown; 'beasts' in 'a forest'⁵⁷ and 'ominous groans in the darkness', 'hidden currents of lust', 'wriggling slimy worms' and 'the nest of the earthquake'⁵⁸, all of which, according to Yoshiya, lie dormant beneath the ground he stands on. Murakami links atrocity, violence and the destructive force of the earthquake and what lurks underground with the Aum Shinrikyō's attack on the Tokyo underground that attempted to overturn the order of Japanese society.

Not many of Murakami's novels have a female protagonist, but there are exceptions. *Rēdāhōzen* (Lederhosen, 1985), *Nemuri*, (Sleep, 1989), *Kōri otoko*, (The Ice Man, 1991), *Midori no kemono* (Green Monster, 1991), *Hanarei Bei*, (Hanalei Bay, 2005), and *Tairando* (Thailand, 1999), the fourth of the series, have an older, mature, either married or divorced female protagonist, in notable contrast with Murakami's younger male protagonists. In *Thailand*, local Bangkok private chauffer Nimit drives Japanese divorcée doctor Satsuki in his meticulously maintained navy-coloured Mercedes Benz during her short holiday. The quiet Nimit and his car are a vessel which brings about the foreign doctor's; reconciliation and redemption. Nimit first plays music that arouses Satsuki's memory of her late father whom she adored and whose sudden death changed the course of her life. Nimit's query about the Great Hanshin Earthquake

⁵⁷ Murakami, *Kami no kodomotachi wa mina odoru* in MH ZSH, 1990-2000 3, Tanpen-shū II, 170.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 171.

arouses Satsuki's sizzling hatred for a man in Kobe who made her barren thirty years ago. Satsuki quietly wishes him and his family a harsh death in the earthquake and even ponders whether the earthquake was triggered by her hatred for him. On the last day of her holiday, Nimit drives Satsuki to a poor village to meet an old fortune-teller and healer of the mind who, without Satsuki's prompting, tells her she needs to reconcile herself with the past, let go of her hatred for the man in Kobe and live with benevolence. The fortune-teller also tells Satsuki that the man escaped the earthquake without any harm.

Thailand stands out from other pieces in the collection, most obviously because of its translation-style language, but also because the context for this quiet yet powerful short novel includes the undeniable and inexplicable trust and understanding between the Japanese doctor and the reserved Thai of a different social standing. Murakami reintroduces his translation-style Japanese here to create a different effect than in *Hear the Wind Sing*. For example, Murakami faithfully places Japanese words in the sentence order that directly reflects Nimit's speech without rephrasing it⁵⁹:

「そのとき私は主人に尋ねました。じゃあ、北極熊はいったい何のために生きているのですか、と。すると主人は我が意を得たような微笑みを顔に浮かべ、私に尋ねかえしました。『なあニミット、それでは私たちはいったい何のために生きているんだい？』と」⁶⁰

At that time, I asked my master, what on earth the point of a polar bear's life was. Then, my master asked me in reply with a smile on his face as if

⁵⁹ Nimit's speech takes the form of storytelling in a style of translated Japanese. The same speech would be constructed differently were it not so conscious of the translated style as: 「そのとき私は、じゃあ、北極熊はいったい何のために生きているのですか、と主人に尋ねました。すると主人は我が意を得たような微笑みを顔に浮かべ、『なあニミット、それでは私たちはいったい何のために生きているんだい？』と私に尋ねかえしました。」

⁶⁰ Murakami, *Tairando* in MH ZSH, 1990-2000 3 Tanpen-shū II, 194.

he had just hit the jackpot. “Well, Nimit, then what on earth is the point of our lives?”

Compared with the effects such as lightness, coolness, detachment and nonchalance that Murakami brought to his narrative using translation style in earlier work such as *Hear the Wind Sing*, the artificiality and controlled, polite tone of the language in the excerpt above and the dialogues between Nimit and Satsuki exhibit a subdued sincerity which suits the situation in which they conduct their conversation in English. Combined with the trust and empathy that the narrative develops between Nimit and Satsuki, the translation style and its cosmopolitan atmosphere explore the theme of the universality of humanity.

The scent of Western culture and the cosmopolitan atmosphere of a culturally ambiguous space also infuse the following passage:

‘アナウンスがあった。「ときはただいまきりゆのわるいところをひっこしております。どなたさまもおざせきにおつきのうえしとべるとをおしめください。」⁶¹

There was an announcement. ‘We are passing through turbulence. Please return to your seats and fasten your seatbelts.

The novel begins with the in-flight announcement by a Thai (or non-Japanese) stewardess warning of impending turbulence. It is written in phonetic hiragana without

⁶¹ Murakami, *Tairando* in MH ZSH, 1990-2000 3 Tanpen-shū II, 194.

any punctuation and in ‘somewhat dubious Japanese’⁶² for the effect of producing an unsettling tone, somewhat foreign and somewhere neither here nor there. Arriving in a foreign land, the Japanese doctor, who bonded with her late father through old American jazz music—such as “I Can’t Get Started” ‘performed by Howard McGhee on the trumpet and Lester Young on the tenor saxophone’ at ‘J[azz] A[t] T[he] P[hilharmonic]’, is driven in a car by a Thai chauffeur.⁶³ Nimit happens to play exactly the same recording of this piece, as it is one that his late Norwegian employer used to play in the car. American jazz music is more than decorative semiotics in this novel. The coincidence expressed in a piece of American music fuses and transcends both national borders and time in each listener’s mind. Significantly in terms of the theme of moving and turning away from home, Satsuki has a history of moving from place to place, such physical moves being her way of escaping from (emotional) angst: she moved from Japan to Baltimore, possibly to distance herself from the man in Kobe. She left Detroit medical hospital when she got divorced from her American stock analyst husband. Satsuki kept her Kobe ‘secret’ to herself - and moved from Detroit back to Japan. *Thailand* ends as ‘again, [Satsuki] is about to return to Japan.’⁶⁴ Unlike the other moves between places in which Satsuki had never quelled her hatred, this time she is about to return home, identifying Japan as the place to begin her long-awaited process of reconciliation and redemption.

Kaeru-kun, Tōkyō o sukuu (Super-Frog Saves Tokyo, 1999) is the last of the serialized short novels that mark the 1995 earthquake and gas attack as ‘a turning point, (or a representation of a turning point) for post-war Japanese history’⁶⁵, an epitome of the

⁶² Murakami, *Tairando* in MH ZSH, 1990-2000 3 Tanpen-shū II, 175.

⁶³ Ibid., 180.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 195.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 269.

change in the social condition of Japan. Murakami showcases his singularity of language and style in *Super-Frog Saves Tokyo*, a story that displays multiple facets of a person's anxiety. It bears Murakami's trademarks in the character naming, the many references to the literature of western intellectuals', a dry sense of humour, and an absurd and magical-realist feel to the storyline. One evening, a two-metre tall giant frog called Kaeru-kun (Mr. Frog) is waiting for Katagiri, an ordinary hardworking member of Japanese society, in his apartment with a cup of green tea ready for him. Katagiri is a collection officer at the Shinjuku branch of the 'Tōkyō-anzen-shin'yō-kinko' (the Tokyo-Safe-Trust-Bank, an ironic name given that Tokyo had already experienced the devastating Great Kantō Earthquake in 1923). The desperate frog tells Katagiri that he is the chosen one who will help save Tokyo from an imminent, very powerful earthquake attack by the underground monster worm, Mimizu-kun.

The fantastical story chronicles Katagiri's few days before and after the predicted earthquake. Kaeru-kun's insect friends inform him that the earthquake will strike at around eight thirty in the morning of February the eighteenth. Their plan is to go underground through the basement of Katagiri's office building, the predicted epicenter of the earthquake, the previous night in order to fight Mimizu-kun and stop the earthquake. However, Katagiri wakes up in hospital at nine fifteen on the morning of the eighteenth after what he believes to have been an assassination attempt by a gangster, who was most likely hired by the organized crime gang from which Katagiri had recently successfully collected a loan repayment with help from Kaeru-kun. A third-person narrator recounts that Katagiri recalls a vivid image of the assassin and the sensation of the gunshots he received to his right shoulder just before five o'clock in the afternoon of

the seventeenth of February. The nurse at the hospital, however, tells a different story. She says that Katagiri was found unconscious on a street in the Kabuki-chō district of Shinjuku, with no trace of injury to his body. Moreover, no earthquake had occurred in Tokyo that morning. The battered Kaeru-kun appears in Katagiri's hospital room that night and recounts the battle he fought against Mimizu-kun and he thanks Katagiri for having bravely supported him. Katagiri's hallucination turns violent when he sees Kaeru-kun's body become infested and eaten by wriggling worms and insects from the inside out. All kinds of insects, centipedes, maggots and worms slither over to Katagiri's bed and invade his own body until he is awoken by his screams.

This surrealist short novel, which depicts the impact of the earthquake in Kobe on an ordinary citizen's psyche, is written in a contrasting light-hearted, humorous and even tone. The more humorous and idiosyncratic the images and references, the more effective the violence in the last scene is, which acts as a metaphor for invasion and the powers of darkness, evil and hatred. The story conveys the enormity of the fear and the changes in people's worldview that the earthquake caused.

Despite these examples of a new literary approach, Murakami's old narrative tricks are still found in various veins in this novel. Firstly, Murakami uses the sudden appearance of the subconscious that sneaks into consciousness as a physical form and imposes itself on domestic life. Kaeru-kun is a fabricated creature similar to the (imaginary) TV People who enter *boku's* life in *TV People* and the (real) twin girls that *boku* finds in his bed one evening in *Pinball, 1973*. Secondly, Murakami's choice of names for Katagiri's subconscious, Kaeru-kun and Mimizu-kun, are effectively used to contradict the level of fear and the sense of immediacy of violence that people face: both

names, superhero Kaeru (frog) and supermonster Mimizu (earthworm) are written using katakana rather than the designated kanji for frog or earthworm and are combined with the diminutive suffix ‘kun’ in hiragana that is usually reserved for children’s names. Thirdly, although his name is more suited for a manga character for a young audience, Murakami’s irreverent humor portrays Kaeru-kun as a learned intellect who quotes many insightful sayings on topics such as fear, the power of one’s imagination and the virtue found in defeat by great intellectuals such as Friedrich Nietzsche, Josef Conrad and Ernest Hemingway. Kaeru-kun also happily reveals that he is an avid fan of Fyodor Dostoyevsky’s *White Nights* and Leo Tolstoy’s *Anna Karenina*. Lastly, Murakami’s cynicism and humour find a way to intensify Katagiri’s confusion and anxiety through Kaeru-kun’s explanation about his being: ‘Of course, I am a real frog, as you can see. Nothing complex such as a metaphor, a quotation, deconstruction or a sampling. A real frog. Shall I croak a little?’⁶⁶ By contrast, later on Kaeru-kun also tells Katagiri that he is ‘a pure frog,’ but that at the same time, he is ‘something that represents the world of anti-Kaeru-kun.’⁶⁷ Furthermore, he tries to warn Katagiri that ‘what you can see is not necessarily what is real.’⁶⁸ Murakami relates Kaeru-kun’s formal, articulate, logical, moralistic and occasionally existentialistic speeches in translation style, thus hinting that his existence is less than real. Kaeru-kun’s literary style of speech implies that he is possibly Katagiri’s subconscious collective being that is made of the polyphonic voices found in the translated works of the aforementioned great authors.

Murakami sets a theme that relates to the effect and meaning of the earthquake for each symbolic short story: a vacancy in one’s mind that is gradually filled again, a

⁶⁶ Murakami, *Kaeru-kun, Tōkyō o sukuu* in MH ZSH, 1990-2000 3, Tanpen-shū II, 202.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 218.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

bewildering recognition of pain that one has to deal with, an acceptance of and reconciliation with one's identity, long hatred and reconciliation, and redemption. If hatred is one of the elements that Murakami intends to link with the two epic events of 1995 as he depicted in *'Thailand'*, it is violence that Murakami focuses on in *'Super-Frog'*. In addition to the grotesque description of the way that the protagonist's body is about to succumb to the insects (a metaphor for the prevailing darkness), the theme of violence is deepened and intensified by Murakami's choice of the Kabuki-chō district of Shinjuku, described in the story as 'the labyrinth of violence', as the location where Katagiri collapses.⁶⁹ Murakami is suggesting to the reader the existence of a prevailing violence that surrounds us and is possibly found within us.

After Murakami finished the series, he wrote *Hachimitsu pai* (Honey Pie, 2000) to be included in the collection. *Honey Pie* is also narrated in the third person, but the tone and the style of the story are similar to his earlier works. The story involves a quiet, introvert writer from Kobe, Junpei, who cannot decide on an ending to a bedtime story that he started telling to the daughter of the woman he loves. This indecisiveness mirrors his conflicting feelings about his damaged relationship with his parents and the emotional distance he feels towards the city where he grew up. The earthquake that destroyed much of his city unearths the pains that he had suppressed for many years. He feels a profound loneliness and realizes that 'he has no root', yet he remains distanced from his family and hometown and takes no action.⁷⁰

The relationship among three long-term close friends, Junpei, Takatsuki and Sayoko became strained over the years, but slowly mends itself in the best interests of all

⁶⁹ Murakami, *Kaeru-kun, Tōkyō o sukuu* in MH ZSH, 1990-2000 3, Tanpen-shū II, 204.

⁷⁰ Murakami, *Hachimitsu pai* in MH ZSH, 1990-2000 3, Tanpen-shū II, 247.

involved, even through the divorce of Takatsuki and Sayoko and an eventual new marriage between Junpei and Sayoko. Although the story carries a calm tone with the help of the language that flows with gentle humour, nuanced phrases and stylized conversations, by the end of *Honey Pie*, when Junpei finally finds an ending for the bedtime story, Murakami provides the strongest conviction he has ever demonstrated in his fictive works:

I'm going to write a different novel, Junpei thinks. A story about someone longingly waiting in a dream to tightly embrace the people he loves in the light that dawn brings to the air. But, for now, I have to stay here and protect two women. Whoever my opponent is, I will not let him put them in a stupid box. Even if the sky falls, even if the earth splits open with a big roar.⁷¹

Relating to these six short stories, Murakami later told of the emotional vigour and the clear new purpose that he felt as a writer. He explains that Japanese society can no longer depend on the unspoken, assumed morality and order that held the country together. The foundation of society has been shaken metaphorically and physically. He proposed that a quiet determination was required in order to find new values that would sustain society and the strong sense of morality that an individual should embrace.⁷²

In my interrogation of Murakami's pre-1995 novels, I argued that Murakami's cosmopolitan language and style and their effects closely mirror the identity formation of his protagonists. Murakami's distinctive language and style that deviate from the

⁷¹ Murakami, *Kaeru-kun, Tōkyō o sukuu* in MH ZSH, 1990-2000 3, Tanpen-shū II, 255.

⁷² Murakami, "Kaisetsu" in MH ZSH, 1990-2000 3, Tanpen-shū II, 274.

Japanese literary norms are Murakami's conscious effort to transcend the literary 'skin' of his place of origin. The resulting effects of a borrowed language enable the reader to see human conditions with eyes less coloured by this cultural prejudice. His cosmopolitan language and style also imply the protagonist's inclination to a fragmental sense of belonging, allowing a possibility of having both emotional detachment and attachment within an ambiguous, expansive and imagined community.

The survey of Murakami's language and style in his post-1995 works shows that Murakami continues to choose Western cultural icons for effect. Decadence and cynicism are still found in his fantastical stories. However, he juxtaposes them with a different voice - the voice that is conscious of others and their stories. The somewhat exaggerated cosmopolitan feel that was expressed through references to globalization has subsided. The topography between ego, self and others in the protagonists uniformly shows their ego shifting to embrace others.

Murakami has noted the tendency among Japanese 'mainstream' novelists such as Sōseki, Tanizaki and Nagai Kafū (1879-1959) to shift their interests from the unusual and the extraordinary found in the West to the usual and the ordinary found in the indigenous Japan as they grow older.⁷³ Murakami suggests that it is important for a writer to find 'a fresh extraordinary'⁷⁴ among the ordinary routines of life. Unlike the experiences of these earlier writers, the notion of the excitement of learning from the exotic West is no longer relevant for a contemporary writer, particularly for Murakami who has chosen to live abroad several times for an extended period and who claims that he surrounded himself with American culture in his youth. Murakami's 'ordinary' and 'indigenous' entail things

⁷³ See Murakami, *Wakai dokusha no tame no tanpen-shōsetsu an'nai*, 208-209.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 211.

cosmopolitan. My argument has been that Murakami's term 'ordinary routines of life' should not be interpreted as being limited to a concept defined by the nation of a person's origin. As with his language and style, his cosmopolitanism is also a fabricated one, thereby giving him the chance to express a more fragmented sense of belonging and attachment.

While Murakami claims to be certain of his belonging and standing as a Japanese writer, he is ambiguous about a specific identification with Japanese literature and the literary world.⁷⁵ Such ambiguity was also found in Murakami's literary articulation of space. He stages most of his pre-1995 novels in an unspecified location, mostly urban or foreign. By contrast, the novels in the collection *After the Quake* were consciously devoid of such ambiguity and clearly told as local stories. Another collection of short stories, *Tōkyō kitan-shū* (Collection of Tokyo Mysteries, 2005) is also all set in Tokyo. Further investigation will help us to ascertain whether and to what extent cosmopolitanism as an attitude can be sustained in a narrative - written in a translation style, peppered with global cultural products - when set in a specific local (in this case Japanese) geography. The next chapter approaches Murakami's literature, focusing on his construction and usage of space and geography in his travel essays and fictional works. It examines how he uses space to portray his protagonists' inner journeys, draws attention to the use of the cosmopolitan and indigenous influences.

⁷⁵ Murakami, *Yagate kanashiki gaikokugo*, 123, 281-283.

Chapter Two

Murakami Haruki and his Landscape: Satellites, Voyeuristic and Subconscious

We capture the [urban] scene from the space above through the eyes of a night bird flying high in the sky. The city looks like one large living form viewed in wide angle. Or perhaps it resembles an assemblage made up of numerous living organisms intertwined with each other. Innumerable veins extend toward the very edge of an intangible body, circulating blood and constantly replacing cells. They transmit new information and retrieve old information. They send out new consumption and collect old consumption. They pass out new contradictions and take back old contradictions. The body blinks everywhere, generates heat, and keeps wriggling, following the rhythm of its pulse. It is almost midnight. Although it has passed the peak time for action, its basal metabolism continues without losing a beat in order to maintain its life. The city's grunt is there, providing a constant bass part to its music. The grunt is flat, monotonous, yet it surely possesses premonition.¹

The semiotics of Murakami's urban landscapes are widely recognized as a distinctive feature of his narrative style and techniques. Critics Kawamoto Saburō and Watanabe Kazutami, among many others, have concluded that Murakami has established certain techniques in order to create a unique style of narrative. They are Murakami's insistence on maintaining distance and a sense of disengagement from everything, his effective use of urban semiotics, his visual realisation of interior emotions using cinematic methods, and lastly his exclusion of proper nouns from narratives.² As a novelist, Murakami experiments with geography, body, and cinematic visualization. *After Dark*, which will be read closely later in this chapter, begins with the passage above. The narrator surveys the urban space as if through an aerial camera, seeing the

¹ Murakami Haruki, *Afutādāku*, 5-6.

² Watanabe Kazutomi, "Kaze to yume to kokyō – Murakami Haruki o megutte", 52-53.

city as a living organism that is constantly evolving, both literally and metaphorically. As the story unfolds, the narrated view of space zooms in on this metaphoric body and into a kind of communal subconscious defying physical and temporal boundaries. Whilst the infusion of space with the trivia of globalization and the refusal to conform to realist logic suggest a postmodernist approach, I shall argue that his use of space does not fit neatly into the category of postmodernism. This chapter demonstrates that the variety of ambiguous spaces which his characters inhabit form a landscape upon which social consciousness actively finds its way around. His literary landscapes are not just a technique to disrupt social hierarchies, values or boundaries but they also help his characters in their search for value, identity and commitment. This inquiry will contribute an answer to the question of whether the widely employed term *postmodern* is in fact appropriate in describing Murakami's work.

To find a more nuanced description for Murakami's space, it is worth considering Edward W. Soja's concept of 'Thirdspace'. This is a form of postmodern geography that provides a means of social criticism. Moving away from the social criticism discourses that view history to be its core element, Soja sees space as all inclusive and posits the possibility of 'a simultaneously historical and geographical materialism: a triple dialectic of space, time, and social being; a transformative re-theorization of the relations between history, geography, and modernity'.³ Soja's theory in large part originates from Henri Lefebvre's concept of an urban global space of the postmodern, an abstract space that is characterized as 'simultaneously homogeneous and fragmented'.⁴ Lefebvre conjured up what Soja later termed 'Thirdspace' that was characterized as functioning in three layers -

³ Edward W. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*, 12.

⁴ See Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, 408-413.

the *perceived* space of materialized Spatial Practice, the *conceived* space that Lefebvre defined as Representations of Space, and the *lived* spaces of Representational Spaces.⁵

In the passage quoted above, Murakami portrays the urban space as if it were a human body. This body is ‘made up of numerous living organisms’ whose ‘[i]nnumerable veins extend toward the very edge of an intangible body, circulating blood and constantly replacing cells’.⁶ This body is part of a network of information and consumption, a social being located in space, in a historical moment and in a geographically specific form. However, time and space are located in a kind of modernity that churns out ‘new contradictions and takes back old contradictions’.⁷ Although the cinematic and voyeuristic depiction of the constant flow of information and consumption within the space portrayed as a body that is viewed from far above by a camera eye like a Big Brother has postmodern elements, this kind of spatial and temporal configuration of modernity is not entirely akin to Fredric Jameson’s postmodern geography located in culture, ideology, and representations of late capitalism.⁸ Rather, Murakami sets up a story in a modernist space in order to subsequently disrupt and negate it and to show us the many facets and layers which lie within it.

Jameson, Soja, and Lefebvre all suggest the possibility that disorientation in time and space is a feature of the postmodern urban landscape. In many of his stories, Murakami successfully portrays a sense of loss and a yearning for connection with others within a space so overwhelmed by the local and the global as well as by the past and present and by information offered up for consumption that social connection is rendered

⁵ See Edward W. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*, 10-11.

⁶ Murakami, *Afutādāku*, 5.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ See Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, 364-376.

nearly impossible. Murakami asks his reader what becomes of the self, the locus of social consciousness, in such a postmodern, cosmopolitan urban space.

This chapter also explores the possibility that Murakami's urban space may also be located in Japanese notions of space. Umehara Takeshi (b. 1925), the historian and writer, and the religious scholar Nakazawa Shin'ichi (b. 1950), remind us that a certain aesthetic and philosophical concept of space known as *ma* (間, 'in-between') has existed in Japan since poetry, *waka*, was first composed. This in-between space was widely believed to exist in the mountains as Buddhism was spread during the Kamakura period (1185-1333).⁹ *Ma* swallows time – past and present, real and imagined – and seems to play a similar role to that of Soja's 'Thirdspace', which suggests that western ideas of postmodern geography and this Japanese ontological concept may converge.¹⁰ This chapter suggests that *ma* enables a better understanding of the role of space in Murakami's novels and the intersection between Murakami's cosmopolitanism and *ma* play a role in developing the sense of self in his works.

2.1. Murakami's Travel Essays

Since 1986, Murakami has published numerous non-fictional travel essays in various media. They range from short pieces commissioned by periodicals to the more reflective, confessional journals that Murakami kept during his stay in Europe and on his trip to the Kobe area after the Great Hanshin Earthquake.¹¹ Interestingly, for a writer

⁹ See Umehara Takeshi, Yoshimoto Takaaki, Nakazawa Shin'ichi, *Nihonjin wa shisō shita ka*, 192-194.

¹⁰ See Edward W. Soja, *Thirdspace*, 26-52.

¹¹ Murakami published a two-volume book entitled *Shidonī, Shidonī* (Sydney, Sydney, 2001) based on his twenty days spent covering the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney, Australia. The work was commissioned

whose short stories, novellas, and novels are staged in an urban environment from which a protagonist sometimes travels to far-off or nearby places, and for a seasoned traveler whose destinations have included major cities around the world, Murakami often chooses to report on difficult destinations and/or small, quiet places. Murakami considers travel writing a challenge and good training for articulating the delicate and varied emotional tones that inevitably arise as a writer encounters the unfamiliar.¹² All in all, Murakami's travel writing is a venue through which he navigates his personal and social consciousness and sentiments within the bounds of landscape and geography.

The act of describing landscapes has of course always been a crucial part of composing a piece of travel writing. For Japan's discourse concerning earlier modern interactions with landscapes, Katō Norihiro marks 1894 as a turning point, after which landscapes were used for nationalistic propaganda.¹³ This coincides with the period when many modern Japanese writers published books that dealt with what Karatani Kōjin termed their "discovery of landscape" as they grappled with the transformation that their nation was experiencing.¹⁴ More closely related to the contemporary period and relevant to this chapter, in the 1980s, after the high-growth period and the Japan Railways

by the sports periodical *Number*. Similarly, the piece entitled "Sanuki chō dōpu udon kikō", published in 1998 in *Henkyō, kinkyo*, was originally written in 1990 for the journal *High Fashion*. *Tōi taiko* is a collection of Murakami's travel essays that covers Italy, Greece, Austria, and Great Britain during three years of his self-exile from Japan.

¹² Murakami. *Henkyō, kinkyo*, 300.

¹³ For example, Shiga Shigetaka (1863-1927) introduced a way of appreciating landscapes with the eyes of a traveler in *Nihon fūkei-ron* (Japan's Discourse of Landscape, 1894). This highly nationalistic book was written around the time of the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895), and it praises the 'first class' scenery of Japan and introduces the viewing of a significant feature of the landscape such as Mount Fuji as a way to raise political consciousness. Matsuhata Tsuyoshi includes Wakimizu Tetsugoro's *Nihon fūkei-shi* (Japan's History of Landscape, 1939) and the 1943 *Nihon fūbi-ron* (Japan's Discourse of Scenic Beauty) by Uehara Keiji as influential books in the development of landscape discourse. These works prompted the nation to see Japan's changing landscapes and to read them as a sign of the need for introspection during the Second Sino-Japanese War and World War II. See Nishibe Hitoshi, 'Nihon ni okeru keikan-ron/fūkei-ron – gakujutsu-teki na giron no kōzu'

¹⁴ See Karatani Kōjin, *Nihon kindai bungaku no kigen*, 9-50.

“Discover Japan” campaign of the 1970s, the city of Tokyo drew the nation’s attention.¹⁵ This trend introduced a new approach to the observation discourse. Urbanites discovered a new way of seeing within their immediate surroundings, in which attention was drawn inward. In other words, the external landscapes that people had traveled to see were replaced by descriptions of the smaller events of daily life. Their surroundings and products of mass-market culture such as consumables and the lifestyle of urbanites became objects of observation. Furthermore, Matsuhata Tsuyoshi and Matsuoka Shin’ichirō argue that contemporary landscapes, the images of which have been mass-produced in various media, are no longer associated with their places of origin. They have become symbols of a lifestyle or idyll. As a result, Matsuhata and Matsuoka claim that we have lost any method by which to verify the meaning of landscape by way of seeing.¹⁶ Thus, Murakami, a *flâneur*, travels from urban Japan to immerse himself in the real and authentic landscapes of faraway places.

What Murakami, a *flâneur*, reveals in his travel writing is not dissimilar to what the *haikai* poet Matsuo Bashō (1644-1694) attempted in his travel literature, which is embodied in a canonical collection of poems known as *Oku no hosomichi* (Narrow Road to the Interior, 1689). Murakami’s travel writing does not engage a powerful literary semiotic tool such as *utamakura*, which evoked the communal experience of viewing a landscape and a cultural history.¹⁷ Unlike Bashō’s poems, the seasons and nature play a much lesser role in Murakami’s travel writing. And Murakami’s travel writing about the unknown abroad does not compare to Bashō’s in terms of its

¹⁵ Nishibe, ‘*Nihon ni okeru keikan-ron/fūkei-ron – gakujutsu-teki na giron no kōzu*’, 173-176.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 178.

¹⁷ See Abe Hajime *Nihon kūkan no tanjō – kosumorojī, fūkei, takai-kan*, 93-151 about the effects of the use of *utamakura* in poetry.

importance to the Japanese literary scene. However, the reader of Murakami's travel writing finds parallels with Bashō in that Murakami often uncovers cultural memories and links to his Japanese past in foreign landscapes. Also, as was the case with Bashō, various encounters during his journeys enrich Murakami's experiences and encourage him to play with narrative forms, language, and semiotics.

Shirane Haruo summarizes the ways in which Bashō juxtaposed the traditional and the modern in his *haikai* poetry in order to achieve a renewal, re-mapping, and re-visioning of cultural memories.¹⁸ Bashō reshaped and expanded cultural memory by visiting the past and by recouping the traces of the past that were to be found in nature, the seasons, and the landscape that he encountered in his journeys. He also introduced new and innovative linguistic terms and perspectives to his *haikai* poetry through the poets whom he met during his journey.¹⁹ In Murakami's case, such evocative landscapes await him in an unexpected, wider, global space that goes beyond political and cultural borders. In other words, Murakami conducts his renewal, re-mapping, and re-visioning of the cultural memory on cosmopolitan ground.

Indeed, in the same way that postmodern literature often finds its focus and its story in small events and in mundane and ordinary occurrences, Murakami delivers the story of his adventures and of his life abroad that shows the thin line that divides the extraordinary from the ordinary through the scenery of a quiet and isolated place or a one-on-one encounter with a stranger in a nonchalant and somewhat detached language.

¹⁸ See Shirane Haruo, *Traces of Dreams: Landscape, Cultural Memory, and the Poetry of Bashō*, 1-29

¹⁹ Shirane Haruo explains that Bashō moved away from the classical tradition of travel literature exemplified by *Tosa Nikki* (The Tosa Diary) and *Ise Monogatari* (The Tales of Ise), both of which were written by aristocrats who used *utamakura* as a guide to the dark Other – outside of the capital – and as devices of cultural memory and cultural linkage with their ancestors. Instead, Bashō 'explored[d] both the physical place and its historical roots in an effort to renew and recast the cultural landscape' through his new approach to *utamakura*. See Shirane *Ibid.*, 232. 1-29.

Phillip Gabriel puts Murakami's travel writing into the category of 'post-tourism travel writing' as Casey Blanton has defined it.²⁰ Gabriel finds that, in addition to the 'concern for a memory, a nostalgic sense of loss and limit' on which post-tourism travel writing often focuses, there is in Murakami's three travel books – *Tōi taiko* (Faraway Drum, 1990), *Uten enten: Girisha, Toruko henkyō kikō* (Rainy Days and Under the Boiling Sun: In The Holy Mountain, On The Turkish Road, 1990, hereafter *Rainy Days*), and *Henkyō, kinkyō* (Distance and Proximity, 1998) – the repeated pattern of 'a path outwards that in the final analysis spirals inwards, an ostensible attempt to confront the exotic and the unfamiliar that ends up obsessed with the familiar'.²¹

Murakami argues that the act of traveling plants the traveler in a space that includes situations 'somewhat extraordinarily ordinary' (いくぶん非日常的な日常)²² in which he or she has to observe the transformation of his or her own consciousness. For Murakami, therefore, travel writing may be understood as a product of reflections on the process of confronting one's self and observing the emotional impacts triggered by unfamiliar environs. The assumption that Murakami had made before his journeys was

²⁰ See Carey Blanton, *Travel Writing*

²¹ Philip Gabriel, *Back to the Unfamiliar: The Travel Writings of Murakami Haruki*, 152.

²² Murakami, *Henkyō, kinkyō*, 300. Those small 'extraordinary things' that Murakami discovered on his trips are retold in some of his fictional works through names, landscapes, and atmosphere. Most notably, Murakami takes his protagonists Sumire and *boku* to the island of Rhodes in Greece in *Supūtoniku no koibito* (Sputnik Sweetheart, 1999). In the short story *Hitokui neko* (Cannibal Cat, 1990), which has a similar storyline to a part of *Sputnik Sweetheart*, Murakami tells of the quiet and easy-going daily life on Spetses Island that he described in his travelogue "Supecchesu-tō ni okeru shōsetsu-ka no ichinichi" (A Writer's Day on Spetses Island). The hungry stray cats in another travel essay, "Oranda-jin kara no tegami, Shima no neko" (A Letter from a Dutchman, An Island's Cats) appear as man-eating cats in *Cannibal Cat*. In another example, the Greek island of Crete reappears as a protagonist's name in a very short piece, *Kanō Kureta* (Kanō Crete, 1990) that Murakami wrote in his apartment in Rome, and again in *Nejimakidori kuronikuru* (The Wind-up Bird Chronicle, 1995). It is safe to assume that Murakami adopted *Cannibal Cat* as part of an episode for *Sputnik Sweetheart*, in particular because of the scene in which the unnamed protagonist *boku* sees Sumire vanish into the night against the background of local music on a Greek island. An episode involving a cat that *boku* saw vanish into the night in *Cannibal Cat* also reappears as the story of Sumire's vanished cat. Murakami's *Cannibal Cat* is also one of the few examples in which he attempts to create an imaginary landscape that incorporates the features of non-Japanese landscapes, a remote island in Greece, and the "Other world in the sky" in *Tōi taiko*, 125-141.

that it is not possible to experience transformation of consciousness in an urban surrounding. We live in a time when the notion of far-off places has diminished, and Murakami identifies the modern period as a time when one needs to ‘believe that I as a person have room to create a far-off frontier within myself’.²³ By ‘a far-off frontier’, Murakami refers to an actual frontier where a clearly defined border marks the limit of a territory, rather than the ordinary, the inside, and the familiar. In *Faraway Drum*, Murakami reminds us of many of the protagonists in his novels who travel to or are drawn into a fantastical and ambiguous place that is considered to be the other side of their routine, their familiar place, or the space between *here* and *there* that subsequently forces them to confront their inner selves.²⁴ In a piece on his trip to the Mongolian desert in *Distance and Proximity* that is read below, he reveals his own fantastical experience that exposes his inner psyche. Similarly, the *Rainy Days* travelogues demonstrate Murakami’s discovery of nostalgia, a familiar sense in an unfamiliar faraway place.

2.1.1. *Faraway Drum*: A Road to Textured Memory

In the travelogue *Faraway Drum*, Murakami compares the act of writing a long novel – ‘a very unique act’ (非常に特殊な行為) – to ‘going into the deep woods all alone, without a map or compass, even without food. Trees grow densely and create a thick wall. Many layers of huge branches cover and conceal the sky. I don’t even know

²³ Murakami, *Henkyō, kinkyō*, 300-301.

²⁴ For example, *Hard-boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* is structured in a dualistic narrative format in which the protagonist travels to an adventurous underground and a dream-like nostalgic world. Murakami constructs his narrative in a dualistic spatial stages such as a hotel in Hokkaido that has a dark hole where the protagonist’s past waits to be rediscovered in *Dance Dance Dance*. Murakami’s later works introduce less dualistic and more blurred spatial stages, as seen in the woods in Shikoku in *Kafka on the Shore*. In this piece, a young urban protagonist, in search of his self and to encounter the violence that inevitably resides inside him, travels to Shikoku and enters a forest that can be interpreted as a space between the present and the afterworld.

what kind of animals inhabit there'.²⁵ Murakami's creative process is a journey with hardships and struggles that have to be navigated through a closed-in, dark space. He has often compared it to going underground, to a nether world, or into a well.²⁶ These metaphorical dark spaces appear repeatedly in his novels as places of contemplation, discomfort, or discovery, as if writing were a journey and the writer a passer-by.²⁷

Faraway Drum is different from Murakami's other travelogues in that he clearly states the effect that the journey had on his consciousness and how it helped build his imagined space. It also demonstrates how the act of being elsewhere, being an observer of landscapes and passers-by, mirrors and represents the inner psyche. In this book of post-tourism writing about his three years in Europe (1986-1989), which included trips to the Greek islands, Turkey, Italy, Austria and England, Murakami starts with the reason for his acute need to leave Japan as he approached the age of forty. Murakami sensed a new phase of his life approaching that prompted what he terms 'mental reprogramming'. Murakami states that he started out to seek potential extraordinariness outside Japan that might offer him an opportunity to rid himself of a sense of stagnation as a writer and help him to regain his sense of self: 'I wished for truly vivid, solid and real time to remember and I felt that it was not possible to achieve such time while living in Japan.'²⁸ This reflective tone continues throughout the collection of sketches, along with more light-hearted reports on local food, restaurants, and daily life. He moved to Europe to become a resident traveler (*jōchū-teki ryokō-sha*), a term that he uses for himself during other long trips, clearly indicating his choice to remain an outside observer in a foreign place,

²⁵ Murakami, *Tōi taiko*, 242. Murakami specifically refers here to the experience of writing *Norwegian Wood*.

²⁶ See Murakami Haruki, Kawai Hayao, *Murakami Haruki, Kawai Hayao ni aini yuku*, 118-119, 188.

²⁷ See Ōshiro Naoki, "Walter Benjamin – Yūhosha to toshi no genzō" in *Toshi kūkan no chirigaku*.

²⁸ Murakami, *Tōi taiko*, 17.

however long his stay might be. Although Murakami has chosen to return abroad many more times for shorter or longer periods, it should be noted that his intention is not to assimilate himself with all things non-Japanese or to lighten his sense of Japanese identity.²⁹ Rather, Murakami's earlier narratives reflect his distrust of "the system" and an unrelenting desire to remain individual and not attached to anything in particular. They display ambiguity about his sense of identity in regard to Japan as a nation.³⁰

Murakami's essays describing these trips include detailed descriptions of scenery, and his monologues are often triggered by, or associated with, the quiet and mild surroundings of remote places.³¹ Murakami confesses that the trip, on which he hoped to gain "mental reprogramming", left him with a different sense of void³²:

Thinking back, I experience a curious sense of loss. Textured blankness. A certain sense of flotation, or a sense of fluidity. The memory of those three years wanders as if floating in a gap between gravity and levitation. In one sense, those years are lost, but in another sense, they have a firm grip on me. I have clearly sensed that grip through a memory somewhere in my body. The long hand of memory stretches out from somewhere in the darkness of unreality and grabs hold of the real me. I would like to convey the meaning of that texture, but I don't have any appropriate vocabulary. It is something that can only be expressed as a metaphorical mass, like a certain emotion.³³

²⁹ On the contrary, Murakami explains that his trip abroad enhanced his desire to succeed as a Japanese writer and to write 'a Japanese story' in *Yagate kanashiki gaikoku-go* (Eventually, Sorrowful Foreign Language, 1994), which was written after his time in Princeton, NJ.

³⁰ During these three years, Murakami continued to produce short pieces, as well as novels such as *Norwegian Wood* and *Dance, Dance, Dance*, as a means to 'keep himself connected to his Japanese self.' Murakami characterises *Norwegian Wood* and *Dance, Dance, Dance*, as novels that are marked with something like 'a shadow of a foreign place'. *Tōi taiko*, 20-23.

³¹ His accounts of his time in Rome, conversely, are exceptional in that he does not hide his dislike for life in the big city and offers no description of Roman geography.

³² Murakami, *Tōi taiko*, 17.

³³ *Ibid.*, 17-18.

Murakami's nostalgic remark in the above excerpt suggests that 'textured blankness'³⁴, however vacant it might be, has become a part of what constitutes his imagined space.

Reflecting on his three-year-long journey in Europe, Murakami confesses that it is not necessarily real-life scenery, but the imagined landscape within him that he has built up over the years that matters more. After extensive traveling in faraway and exotic places, he finds himself coming back to the same, familiar landscape:

Even now, sometimes I can hear the sound of a faraway drum.

...

But I also think this: passing and tentative, I, who am here right now and my act of living are, in short, the act of traveling itself. *And I can go everywhere, and I cannot go anywhere.*³⁵

The sentiment that he expresses after this three-year-long peregrination to Europe reappears in his 1980 fictional work *Chūgoku yuki no surō bōto* (A Slow Boat to China): 'I can go everywhere and I don't go anywhere.'³⁶ *A Slow Boat to China* is arguably the most dialectical example in which Murakami depicts the sense of dislocation and anticipation of 'loss and destruction' against the background of an urban landscape.³⁷

Murakami approaches the theme in *A Slow Boat to China* through two characters, a young Chinese-Japanese girl and the protagonist *boku*. 'This was never any place I was

³⁴ Yokoo Kazuhiko labels *Tōi taiko* a predatory work prior to Murakami's verification as a writer in the 1990s. See Yokoo Kazuhiko, *Murakami Haruki x 90 nen dai*, 117.

³⁵ See Murakami, *Tōi taiko*, 563-564. Emphasis added by Midori T. Atkins.

³⁶ Murakami, *Chūgoku yuki no surō bōto*, MH ZSH 1979-1989 3, Tanpen-shū, 1, 38-39.

³⁷ Murakami has since rewritten his first short novel, *A Slow Boat to China*, and now has three different versions in print. The above passage comes from the second version, in *The Elephant Vanishes, Stories* (1993), a collection of short stories by Murakami first published by Knopf Publishing Group in the United States. Later, Murakami translated the pieces from English back into Japanese and had them published under the same title in Japan in 2005.

meant to be.’³⁸ She leaves the scene as *boku* struggles to form an awkward friendship with her. While *boku* struggles to learn about his self, she has a clear understanding of her identity; she knows that the landscape of Tokyo, or of Japan as a whole, has never been and will never be a part of her self. As *boku* attempts to regain his lost youth by building a better understanding of China, he realises that his private China is not found in the real China. As he sees Tokyo, he sees his China. He discovers his lost words and his hope for the future:

I look at Tokyo and I think China.

That’s how I’ve met my share of Chinese. I’ve read dozens of books on China, everything from *Shi jing* to *Red Star over China*. I’ve wanted to find out as much about China as I could. But that China is only my China. Not any China I can read about. It’s the China that sends messages just to me. It’s not the big yellow expanse on the globe, it’s another China. Another hypothesis, another supposition. In a sense, it’s a part of myself that’s been cut off by the word China.

I wander through China. Without ever having boarded a plane. My travel takes place here in the Tokyo subways, in the backseat of a taxi. My adventures take me to the waiting room of the nearby dentist, to the bank teller’s window. I can go everywhere and I don’t go anywhere.

Tokyo – one day, as I ride the Yamanote Loop, all of a sudden this city will start to go. In a flash, the buildings will crumble. And I’ll be holding my ticket, watching it all. Over the Tokyo streets will fall my China, like ash, leaching into everything it touches. Slowly, gradually, until nothing remains. No, this isn’t a place for me. That is how we will lose our speech, how our dreams will turn to mist. The way our adolescence, so tedious we worried it would last forever, evaporated.³⁹

³⁸ Murakami, *Chūgoku yuki no surō bōto*, MH ZSH 1979-1989 3, Tanpen-shū, 1, 27.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 38-39.

In the landscape of an urban city such as Tokyo, the protagonist feels a sense of isolation, dislocation and slight nostalgia for his past. The social system, and the infrastructure that surrounds him cannot give him any promise. There is an acute sense of ‘lacking’ in this urban landscape despite the fact that his Tokyo portrays the image of a vast volume of ‘things’ – ‘the dirty facades, the nameless crowds, the unremitting noise, the packed rush-hour trains, the gray skies, the billboards on every square centimetre of available space, the hopes and resignation, irritation and excitement’, ‘everywhere, infinite options, infinite possibilities.’⁴⁰ Instead, what he sees in this fullness in the city is nothingness – ‘An infinity, and at the same time, zero. We try to scoop it all up in our hands, and what we get is a handful of zero. That’s the city. (...) *This was never any place I was meant to be.*’⁴¹ By contrast, his imagined landscape, a juxtaposed nation of China and Tokyo from the past and the present, can assure him of a sense of existence and individuality.

In both *A Slow Boat to China* and in the collection of European travel essays in *Faraway Drum*, Murakami indicates that an imagined landscape is one’s constant companion. Murakami’s non-fiction, in describing various landscapes and geographies, reveals the ways in which he sees space as the representation of the postmodern phenomenon and as a place to mirror his imagined landscape and to reflect his inner search.⁴² Murakami tells us that the imagined landscape and worldview help release one’s consciousness.

2.1.2. Faraway Places: Imagined Landscapes and Cultural Memories Found Abroad

⁴⁰ Murakami, *Chūgoku yuki no surō bōto*, MH ZSH 1979-1989 3, Tanpen-shū, 1, 38.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Murakami is unforgiving in his criticism of the meaningless commercialism and postmodern space that he witnessed in the Sydney Olympics in his travelogue; *Sydney, Sydey*.

Murakami chose to embark on other trips, other stories for himself that turned out to be extraordinary and demanding journeys; his visit to the Greek Orthodox churches in the remote Cape Carukidiki Athos peninsula in Greece was part of a six-week trip on assignment for Shinchō-sha's new magazine. His trips to Mexico and to the Mongolian desert also made an immense impression on his inner psyche.

Rainy Days is divided into two sections, one devoted to Murakami's trip to Athos and the other to the trip to Turkey that he took during his European stay in 1988. Published in the same year as *Faraway Drum*, *Rainy Days* has a different, less confessional, more somber tone. It is as if the more remote and severe the conditions of the space he enters, the simpler and more stoic Murakami's writing becomes.

The Athos section of *Rainy Days* follows the route that Murakami and his two companions, an editor and a photographer, took over the course of four days. Because of the remote location of Athos, the very reason for its present significance as a sanctuary for Greek Orthodox Churches that have maintained their rituals since the tenth century, and because of the hard physical conditions of the island and the many monasteries that the group visited on foot, Murakami gives this travel writing the tone of an adventure story. Murakami and company had to walk steep cliffs for hours on end, without food, to catch a boat to leave, and they ate a loaf of hard moldy bread that was soaked in water in a sink before being served. Indeed, the landscapes that Murakami paints here are barren, unwelcoming, and untouched by modern conveniences. Each monastery is run with just enough resources to allow the bare minimum for visitors and resident monks, again echoing the island's somber history and the religious practice to which people come to commit themselves.

Murakami approaches the trip as an agonistic outsider, saying that he leaves the ‘real world’ in order to enter Athos, ‘God’s real world’.⁴³ However, his skepticism and the definition that he set between ‘real’ and ‘God’s’ becomes less definite as he emerges from his Athos trip with a question: ‘Which is the ‘real world’?’ – the world of Athos or the real world from which Murakami comes?⁴⁴ While in Athos, he listens to and watches a night prayer being recited in a monastery one night and comes to the view that Greek Orthodoxy sits at the crossing between Europe and Asia Minor or, rather, that Greek Orthodoxy ‘most directly inherits the Asiatic eeriness of a man called Christ, who is full of mysteries’.⁴⁵ Despite his strong initial determination to alienate himself from religion, Murakami is still attracted to Athos and recollects his time there with nostalgic fondness: ‘Strolling alone in the monastery’s simple, unkempt, and rustic garden at quiet dusk, its simple scene somewhat touches my soul.’⁴⁶ The food, people, and landscape of Athos, all described as basic and simple, remain vivid in his mind as what Murakami calls the ‘quiet and dense conviction’ (静かで濃厚な確信) of a way of life.⁴⁷

Similarly, Murakami’s 1992 travel essay “Mekishiko dai-ryokō” (Mexico Big Trip) recounts his surprise over ‘a sense of affinity’ – the sensation that he felt for the first time on a trip abroad – towards a rural Mexican landscape.⁴⁸ During his month-long travels in Mexico, Murakami embarks on ‘budget travel’ with a backpack and explores the region from Puerto Vallarta to Oaxaca on his own before reaching San Cristobal de las Casas with two companions. The long bus rides combine the constant company of

⁴³ Murakami, *Uten enten*, 10.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 88.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 51.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 87-88.

⁴⁸ Murakami, *Henkyō, kinkyō*, 118.

loud, cheerful local music and disorderly passengers with sweltering heat, a situation that Murakami eventually resigns himself to accept.

After the colourful and humourous tone that Murakami adopts to report his solo adventure, the essay takes on a different, more serious tone as he describes scenes in the Mexican countryside of Zinacantán. A nostalgic feeling, a kind of *déjà vu* – ‘*come to think of it, it was like this...*’⁴⁹ – comes to him as he feels the time trickle away very slowly as he watches a local festival with children in a church garden. On another occasion, Zinacantán landscapes touch Murakami’s inner core and speak to his primal memories of home: ‘[we] drive on a mountain road...in light drizzle, and a new landscape opens up there as we round a curve. There were moments when I inadvertently saw the Japanese countryside manifested in the dotted roofs of houses under us and in the small fields cultivated on the mountainside.’⁵⁰ Just as his emotions respond to a monastery garden in Athos, Murakami distinguishes this particular landscape from the other Mexican ‘beautiful scenery’.

His traveling companion, Alfred Birnbaum, a long-time resident of Japan and the English translator of Murakami’s early works, does not see any resemblance to the Japanese countryside.⁵¹ For Murakami, however, this landscape ‘continues on to faraway places in an unbroken line’,⁵² and the association displays his conviction concerning the inheritance of cultural memory and the history that is found in landscape. In addition, Murakami’s nostalgic emotion and his longing for communal memories are evoked by the Chiapas Indians’ cultural traditions. He observes that their traditions act as a means

⁴⁹ Murakami, *Henkyō, kinkyō*, 117. Emphasis original.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 118-119.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*

of maintaining the parallel history that runs alongside the one that is told from the viewpoint of the Spanish colonists. Murakami calls his imagined landscape ‘a kind of mutual and shared emotion that cannot be easily described in any words’.⁵³ Indeed, in this travel writing, Murakami demonstrates that sound, sights, smells and energy in underdeveloped faraway places evoke real, imagined, familiar and unfamiliar memories from the past within him, transcending any cultural and national borders. Such quietly evocative space appears repeatedly in his fictional works as his imagined landscape where the subconscious wanders. This space eschews the value of time as defined in the linear sense.

2.1.3. Nomonhan: Mysterious Encounters and The Other World in This World

Murakami’s descriptions of his trips to Athos and to Mexico reveal that what he seeks in landscape is that connection with the deep unconscious that he strives to depict in his writing. Landscape, therefore, functions as a trigger to open this unconscious, like a key to a Pandora’s box. Murakami attempts to explain this unconscious in his description of a trip to Nomonhan in Mongolia. After completing Volume Two of *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*, he was invited on a trip to Nomonhan in 1994 to visit the battle site that had played a role in the novel. The episode of his discovery of, or rather confrontation with, the unconscious is detailed in the travel essay “Nomonhan no tetsu no hakaba” (An Iron Cemetery of Nomonhan) in *Distance and Proximity*.

A detour into *The Wild-up Bird Chronicle* helps to make sense of this essay and highlights the symbiotic nature of his fiction and self-exploration. It retells the story of Japan’s ‘meaningless’ aggression of 1939 in Mongolia through Lieutenant Mamiya’s

⁵³ Murakami, *Henkyō, kinkyō*, 118-119.

narration of the gruesome episode at Nomonhan. Murakami does not usually introduce real-life historical events into his fictional work, but *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle* is an exception. A significant part of the novel is dedicated to the Battle of Khalkhyn Gol (the Nomonhan Incident) of 1939. The episode concerning Lieutenant Mamiya's imprisonment and torture in a well in the Mongolian desert constitutes one of the turning points in the structure of the narrative. This episode connects the struggle of the protagonist, Okada Tōru, to rediscover his self with the experience of Mamiya, which otherwise appears as an unrelated historical event in a faraway place. "An Iron Cemetery of Nomonhan" sets out Murakami's eerie real-life experience in the Mongolian battlefield. The event turns out to be a turning point of a similar kind for Murakami.

The three-volume novel *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle* deals with many themes through a maze of incidents and accidental meetings with mysterious characters that surround the protagonist. The novel touches upon subjects such as the fragility of love, the search for identity, and illogical violence in both the private and public realms in the context of Japan's aggression in Mongolia. In this work, a non-committal, unemployed man in his thirties named Tōru narrates loosely intertwined events from the past and present. Some characters, such as the sister of the psychic Kanō Maruta (Malta) and Kanō Kureta (Crete), could be interpreted as doubles or alter egos for Tōru's vanished wife, Kumiko. Kumiko's brother, Wataya Noboru, represents a powerful evil that blinds Japan and its politics. Among many curious characters, Tōru's search for Kumiko also leads to his encounter with Lieutenant Mamiya, who tells him the story of the gruesome torture of his fellow soldier by Russian and Mongolian enemies in Nomonhan. After being thrown into a dry well in the Mongolian desert by Russian officers, injured and

starving, Lieutenant Mamiya spends a few days near death and in complete darkness. He is convinced that he will die there. At some point, a strong ray of sun shines into the well and wraps around Lieutenant Mamiya's body. He suffers deep despair and loneliness in the well and his only hope lies in the possibility of another momentary ray of light. The next day, an even stronger light shines into the well. The light envelops him, bringing about a sublime sense of unity with the light. The feeling is so overwhelming that Lieutenant Mamiya even feels that he *should* die there. After the light is gone, however, he feels that his body is dried-up debris. He is left an empty shell. Yet, as the psychic Corporal Honda predicted, he cannot die. Honda comes to rescue Lieutenant Mamiya, whose fate is that he could not die the death he should have died at that time and place. Lieutenant Mamiya tells Tōru: 'I feel that I have burnt the core of my life in ten or fifteen seconds of the intense light in the bottom of that well.... Since then, my heart has stopped feeling anything.... *Something* inside me has died'.⁵⁴

The story of Lieutenant Mamiya, whose life has been taken away by a meaningless war, is a prelude to Tōru's long process of self-discovery and his search to gain a sense of commitment. Tōru spends considerable time at the bottom of a dry well in his neighbour's garden. The darkness and the well play the role of a gateway to varying paths for Tōru. In the well he has a near-death experience, gaining a facial mark that has mysterious healing power. He moves freely through the well's wall into another space, one that could most appropriately be described as 'an in-between space', or what Tsuge Teruhiko, a leading Murakami critic, calls an 'Underground Other World'. Tōru continues to meet curious characters, such as Natsumegu (Nutmeg) and Shinamon

⁵⁴ Murakami, *Nejimakidori kuronikuru*, MH ZSH 1990-2000 4, 255.

(Cinnamon), who bring him close to a commitment to confront his demonic brother-in-law and to save his wife within a realm that is both real and unreal. The story ends as Tōru is finally reunited with Kumiko through dream-like battles with his brother-in-law and as Kumiko too releases herself from her brother's vicious power by killing him.

In his travel essay – as in the fictional piece – Murakami likewise criticizes the battle, in which the young soldiers ‘were killed *quite inefficiently* as nameless consumables in a closed-in institution, Japan’.⁵⁵ Murakami visited Inner Mongolia to see the battle site after many years of fascination that began when he saw a photograph of the battlefield in elementary school. The vast nowhere-land of Nomonhan – Murakami considers it to be an empty and valueless space – and its battlefield had been left untouched for the fifty-five years since the battle ended. Enormous amounts of metal debris, shells, bullets and punctured tin cans lay scattered around in the barren space, and Murakami describes it as a vivid reminder of the war's ‘fantastic consumption’ (見事な消費ぶり), ‘as if [the battle] ended just a few years ago’.⁵⁶ Murakami stands speechless in the middle of the metal scraps, and such sights prompt him to criticize Japan's decision to carry out an invasion that resulted in such a great number of unnecessary deaths. According to Murakami, however, the qualities that gave rise to such a decision continue to exist in Japan. Similar to his criticism of the soulless commercialism that he observed at the Sydney Olympics, his disdain and disappointment regarding Japan's aggression in Mongolia and the distrust that Murakami holds for the Japanese government run strongly through this essay.

⁵⁵ Murakami, *Henkyō, kinkyō*, 167-168.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 218-220.

What is more important to the present discussion, however, is Murakami's account of his reaction to the landscape of the Khalkhyn Gol battleground. In the essay, Murakami describes its impact on his inner core and his discovery of what he identifies as the unconscious 'something' during the trip. The event that he details in this piece of travel writing has a similar atmosphere to his fictional work, which combines real and unreal events to create space that expands and deepens as a place of fear and violence and that leads to the eventual discovery of identity. The episode in this travel essay could be considered as either a real event or a dream. As a piece of travel writing, it is predefined as factual reportage, yet the bizarre experience has a magical realistic effect.

Murakami, struck by the vivid imprint of the war, blood, and death at the site of the battlefield, keeps one bullet and a piece of old ammunition. Back at the hotel, exhausted, he places these remnants on a desk in his room. Removed from a place where time seems to have long ago been frozen, they exert a different force. They bring the axis of time out of alignment. In spite of his pragmatic nature, Murakami is overcome by a strong sense of presence. He regrets that he has taken these items away from the battlefield, but it is too late:

When I woke up in the middle of night, *it* was shaking the world violently. The entire room was rocking up and down as if it were placed into a shaker and shaken with full force. Everything was making shaking noises in the complete darkness in which I couldn't even see my hands. Although I had no idea as to what had happened or what was happening, I jumped out of my bed and tried to turn the light on. But I couldn't even stand up because of the violent quake. I couldn't even remember where the light was in the first place. I staggered and fell down, and managed to get up by holding on to the bed frame. I was sure that a great earthquake had hit us. It seemed that it was a powerful earthquake that would shatter

the world. Whatever it is, I have to get out of here – I don't know how much time has passed. But, I managed to reach the door with all my force. I felt my way to a wall switch to turn the light on. And at that moment the quake stopped. Once the light was on and the darkness disappeared, the room became completely quiet in one second. Unbelievably, there was not a sound. Nothing was shaking. The clock hands showed exactly two thirty in the morning. What on earth was happening and how, I had no idea.

But then I suddenly realized. *It wasn't the room that was shaking. Not the world, but I, myself.* Once I realized this, I felt a complete chill to the core of my body.... it was the first time in my life that I experienced such deep irrational fear. It was also my first time to see such deep darkness. Whatever it was, I didn't want to stay in such a room.... I sat on the floor next to him [a photographer who accompanied Murakami on the trip], who was sleeping as if he had fallen unconscious, and waited for the dawn to come. It seemed that the night went on forever, but at last I saw the first gray of dawn after four o'clock. Birds started chirping. And with that morning light, my frozen fear started to melt away. As if a bad spirit fell off me. I quietly went back to my room and went to bed. I felt no fear any more. I didn't feel anything unpleasant. I was even feeling peaceful. *It has vanished somewhere with the darkness.*⁵⁷

In his narration of this inexplicable real/imagined experience, Murakami mixes present and past tenses. His simple yet rhetorical depiction of the dawn and the morning light allude to the transformation of his inner fear and the passing of time. Recollecting his experience later, Murakami claims that his body still vividly remembers the sensation of the quake and the feeling that he characterized as the great fear of looking into the world's abyss from a gaping hole on a road.⁵⁸ Later, he reasons that 'the quake, darkness, fear and a breath of presence' was something inexplicable, something unconscious that

⁵⁷ Murakami, *Henkyō, kinkyō*, 226-228.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 227.

had always existed in him. Something was waiting to be discovered and only became available to him when he finally saw the Khalkhyn Gol battleground. Were this event a part of his novel, Murakami would transplant the protagonist (himself) to an in-between space/other world, where he would face an unconscious self, a search for self-identity and commitment, a challenge to violence, a powerful evil, death and fate, in total darkness, after which he would bring himself back again, as Murakami does in imaginative variations in *Dance, Dance, Dance*, *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle* and *Kafka on the Shore*.

Total darkness often alludes to a recurring stage of transformation in Murakami's writing. In the example of *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*, Lieutenant Mamiya survives, but he loses his life in the dark well. Tōru tests himself and receives temporary power in the darkness, traveling between another darkness and the bottom of the dark well. The Mongolian landscape triggered Murakami to dig down to his own consciousness within it. Murakami's transformational experience had to involve complete darkness, and his hotel room becomes an "Other World in a Room", in which he sees something even darker and more inexplicable, as in his fictional works. The darkness-induced juxtaposition of emotional and physical experience in the Mongolian hotel room became Murakami's black hole, a part of his other world and an imagined space.

Murakami concludes the Mongolian travel essay by remarking on another function of the landscape and space: 'however far we travel, or rather, the further we travel, [the more it becomes clear that] it is just ourselves that we discover there'.⁵⁹ Space, as perceived or imagined by the human mind, cannot be free of politics and social

⁵⁹ Murakami, *Henkyō, kinkyō*, 230.

consciousness. It is alive with history and the present, and always expanding physically and metaphorically. Equally, the space that Murakami depicts is alive within himself.

Murakami's four travel books reveal that he approaches geography, landscape, and space with what Soja defines as the postmodern imagination and its way of seeing, in which the relationship between history, geography, and modernity are re-examined. As an example, we see Murakami's criticism of the consumerism and temporariness of our time in the Sydney Olympic space. In his depiction of the Mongolian battlefield, Murakami delivers his social criticism of Japan's tendency to be a 'closed-in institution'. Similarly, Murakami sees history in geography – the inheritance of both personal and political history – in Nomonhan, rural Mexico, and the remote Greek islands.

What Murakami seeks in geography through his travels is distinct from his familiar environment or the globalized, urban space that he depicts in his novels. In his travel writing, Murakami displays strong sympathy for geography that is far removed from the postmodern or the urban, such as Athos, the Mexican countryside, Nomonhan, and the Turkish countryside. He seeks a geography that has been untouched or scarcely touched by the powerful waves of globalization, and often one that tells stories demanding a moral position. Murakami emerges from such geography with a 'textured memory' that subsequently provokes and becomes part of his imagined space. The following section investigates two of Murakami's novels in order to further explore the ways in which he uses space in his depiction of fictional urban, cosmopolitan geography.

2.2. Murakami's Fictional Space

Murakami's commitment to urban settings for his narratives is strong, and most of his stories are set in cities. A few of Murakami's urbanite protagonists move away to other parts of Japan or abroad in search of self or friends, but almost all of them return to their urban homes.⁶⁰ Urban novels, a broad category to which Murakami's stories loosely belong, typically deal with issues that urban spaces impose upon the people who reside within them. In his stories, Murakami illustrates the power of the city to push a protagonist into an enclosed, emotionally disconnected and inward space. Instead of grappling with emotions and with the struggles that people from rural areas experience in seeking to maintain their identity against the overwhelming power of a city, Murakami deals with the sense of anonymity in a large urban space, a colourless condition that results from having become assimilated within a city. Identity search, therefore, becomes a prominent theme for urban novels, as in Murakami's writing. In *Shudai toshite no toshi* (Urban Space as a Theme), Matsumoto Ken'ichi argues that the depictions of a character's struggle to discover his or her identity in urban novels fall into two categories: 'integration' and 'destruction'. In both cases, the urban space represents the power, the ruler and the system. In fact, Matsumoto questions whether it is even possible for an urban novel to develop a theme in which the city embraces people.⁶¹

Through his protagonists' identity searches, Murakami constructs his narratives so as to offer the possibility that urban space may be a given character's imagined homeland. Such a homeland, however, is a subjective space, as it is often loosely

⁶⁰ In *Kafka on the Shore*, Kafka travels from Tokyo to Shikoku. All of the protagonists in *Suputnik Sweetheart* travel to Europe. *Boku* travels from Tokyo to Hokkaido, Hawaii, and settles in Hokkaido in *Dansu dansu dansu*.

⁶¹ Matsumoto Ken'ichi, "Kotoba no teikei ni hisomu "kokka" – Mishima Yukio kara Murakami Haruki, Shimada Masahiko made" in Kuritsubo Yoshiki and Tsuge Teruhiko (eds.), *Murakami Haruki Sutadizu 03* (Murakami Haruki Studies 3), 119.

imagined and not necessarily connected to any specific community within Japan, as mentioned earlier in this chapter. In Murakami's stories, urban space often includes an ambiguous *ma*, the existence of which destroys any fragile link between the real space, and literary space. For example, Murakami rarely uses a location's proper name in his stories. Locations in his novels and stories are typically treated as anonymous; this allows them to become universal to readers and eliminates clear boundaries between the real and the imagined. Examples of this technique can be found in Murakami's collection of four short stories entitled *Tōkyō kitan-shū* (Collection of Tokyo Mysteries, 2005). Each story is set in a specific part of Tokyo, such as Shinagawa, Tamagawa, Roppongi, Ebisu, or Daikanyama. Through magical realistic or sometimes outright fantastical episodes, however, the real names and places in these short pieces lose their luster, and their specific image that is projected by the media, and they become secondary semiotic devices that link the real and the unreal in Murakami's literary space.⁶² The title of the collection identifies the city as Tokyo, but the stories could be translated to any imagined city, as a result of their global and cosmopolitan anonymity.⁶³ This is not, however, always the prevailing feeling that Murakami's novels project. John Updike, for example, sees authentic Japanese spirituality in *Kafka on the Shore*. Updike's review of this work in *The New Yorker* concludes that Murakami's surrealist, metaphorical story of searching for self has deep roots in Japanese spirituality based in Buddhism, Taoism,

⁶² Each location delivers a certain image to the reader familiar with these names: Roppongi, a busy, sleazy area full of bars and restaurants; Daikanyama, a fashionable, cosmopolitan area for shopping and stylish restaurants; Tamagawa, a Tokyo suburban bedroom community, stale in comparison to Roppongi or Daikan-yama; and lastly Shinagawa, a quiet residential area with a longer history. On the other hand, Nakagami Kenji's Kumano in his novels would be an exception because of its reputation as a dwelling place of the gods from the ancient period, where fantastical events can happen at any time. See section 2.2.1. of this chapter.

⁶³ John Updike, "Subconscious Tunnels: Haruki Murakami's Dreamlike New Novel," *The New Yorker*, January 24, 2005.

Confucianism, and Shinto: ‘Existence as something half empty—a mere skin on the essential void, a transitory shore—needs, for its celebration, a Japanese spiritual tact.’⁶⁴

Murakami is not the first writer of Japanese literature to use landscapes to represent the process of transformation and of discovering consciousness. For example, in *Kōfu* (The Miners, 1908), Natsume Sōseki constructed a young man’s struggle to discover his self in his escape from Tokyo, and describes a difficult journey into the woods in the darkness to reach a mining village; in doing so, he preceded Murakami in his structural technique and use of landscapes. Sōseki introduced another, deeper darkness in the claustrophobic mining pit of the underground, where the protagonist learns to manage obstacles after a near-death experience before returning to Tokyo. Similarly, Murakami’s urbanite protagonists achieve self-discovery and re-engagement as societal individuals after they struggle to navigate a maze of space. Despite Murakami’s assertion that he is not interested in Japanese literature, he has clearly benefitted from earlier Japanese writers.

Often, Murakami depicts utter darkness as a chaotic place that holds various troubling elements of the human psyche with which a protagonist must grapple, such as evil intentions, guilt, and the memory of loss or pain. Murakami describes darkness – the darkness that he claims he experienced in a hotel room in Inner Mongolia – as an absolute part of consciousness. His protagonists are often forced to encounter such fearful darkness in a corridor, a room, the bottom of a dry well, underground, or in an elevator that leads to the other world or *ma*. Murakami also uses woods and forests to

⁶⁴ John Updike, “Subconscious Tunnels: Haruki Murakami’s Dreamlike New Novel,” *The New Yorker*, January 24, 2005.

evoke the past, the lost, and the dead in works such as *Hardboiled* and *Kafka on the Shore*.

In addition, Japanese critics typically identify this important component of Murakami's urban homeland landscape that I refer to as *ma* with another term: *takai* (他界、'the other world').⁶⁵ Murakami often constructs one or more of these other worlds in his works as a stage into which his characters can vanish. He portrays these spaces as planes that mix and blur the past and present, the real and the imagined. The term 'the other world' posits an ambiguity, and readers interpret the other world in various ways. Given the potentially postmodern nature of Murakami's narratives, which leaves the reader uncertain about magical realistic developments in the stories, it is no surprise that the various theories proposed to interpret his work have produced different names for this ambiguous space. For example, Tsuge borrows several terms from Origuchi Shinobu in order to explain the ways that Murakami overcomes and blurs the constraints of time and space.⁶⁶ Tsuge argues that Murakami is, metaphorically speaking, a successor to Origuchi, whose work represented a literary pursuit of the other world.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Abe Hajime explains the history of *takaikan* (the view of the other world) in *Nihon kūkan no tanjō, kosumorojī, fūkei, takai-kan* (The Birth of Japanese Space, Cosmology, Landscape, and Other World View). *Takai* (the other world) is a place to which the spirits of the dead travel. The concepts of *tenjō takai* (天上他界 'Other world in the sky') and *kaijō takai* (海上他界 'Other world in the sea') first appear in the Yayoi period and in the *First Kofun* period. The concept of *sanchū takai* (山中他界, 'Other world in the mountain') became widespread around the middle of the *Kofun* period. As a domain of the gods where the spirits of the dead reside, mountains were acknowledged to be places that carried an important significance in Japanese culture. See Abe Hajime, *Nihon kūkan no tanjō – kosumorojī, fūkei, takai-kan*, 152-198.

⁶⁶ Origuchi described the Japanese concept of the other world in his *Minzokushikan ni okeru takaikan 'nen* (1952).

⁶⁷ Tsuge Teruhiko lists the following examples of Murakami's works that pursue other worlds: 'Other world in the sea' in *Slow Boat to China* and *Iceman*; 'Other world underground' (*chika takai* 地下他界) in *Tsuchi no naka no kanojo no chiisana inu*, *Hardboiled Wonderland and the End of the World*, *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle* and *Green Monster*; 'Other world in the mountain' in *A Wild Sheep Chase*, *Norwegian Wood* and *Sout of Board, West of the Sun*; 'Other world in the room' (*shitsunai takai* 室内他界) in *Mytery in the Library*, *Dance, Dance, Dance*, *TV People* and *Rekishinton no yūrei*; 'Other world in the

Katō Norihiro also refers to the other world to describe Murakami's depiction of space. However, unlike the other world that Tsuge likens to an all-inclusive fantastical world of *ma*, Katō's other world is clearly separated from this world by death. It is best described in Western terms as a "nether world", as a place one enters after death. In *Yellow Page, Murakami Haruki (2)*, Katō explains that the space into which *boku* wanders in Murakami's earlier pieces such as *Pinball, 1973, A Wild Sheep Chase*, and *Dance, Dance, Dance* is the other world where the dead protagonist of the trilogy Nezumi resides. In contrast, the fantastical space in Murakami's post-1995 works, Katō argues, evolved from *takai* to *ikai* (異界), an alternative world to the other world.⁶⁸ His terminology attempts to differentiate the earlier other world from this far more ambiguous space that defies any border drawn between life and death and any border drawn along political lines.

Many more commentaries discuss the way in which Murakami engages his characters with other worlds. More importantly, however, Katō's observation of the post-1995 evolution of Murakami's spatial construction parallels the writer's thematic development and the new approaches that he uses to present his protagonist's new sense of self and social consciousness. In *Nejimakidori to kayōbi no onnatachi* (The Wind-up Bird and Tuesday's Women, 1982, hereafter *Tuesday's Women*) and in *After Dark*, Murakami displays a versatile repertoire of landscapes in which his characters move around in their process of reaching their consciousness and regaining connections with others. In *Tuesday's Women*, a short story that Murakami later reworked twice before

body' (*tainai takai* 体内他界) in *Odoru kobito and Hunting Knife*; 'Other world in the sky' in *Sputnik Sweetheart*. See Tsuge, Enkan/takai/media – "supūtonikku no koibito" kara no tenbō', 27-28.

⁶⁸ The original term in Japanese still implies "the space after death", and the appropriate English translation could be 'the other world'. Katō uses the term *ikai* to refer to 'an alternative or different world'. The term *ikai* evokes other worldly, fantastical images. Katō Norihiro, *Yellow Page, Murakami Haruki (2)*, 20-23.

incorporating it as the opening chapter of *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*⁶⁹, stories unfold in private, isolated, closed-in spaces such as a forgotten alley, a deserted garden and a room. In *After Dark*, Murakami locates the story in an urban entertainment district that never sleeps. Protagonists spend the small hours of the night in public spaces shared by unrelated individuals – at a fast-food restaurant, a convenience store, a love hotel, and a characterless office. The fantastical narrative development, of course, has to include a bedroom and an unidentifiable space that is only accessible through a TV in Tokyo’s suburbia. In both works, Murakami’s space is about now, here, the past, there, and what lies between.

2.2.1. The Void within an Urban Landscape: The Space between the Past and the Present in *The Wind-up Bird* and *Tuesday’s Women*

In his 1989 interview *Taidan* with Nakagami Kenji (1946-1992), Murakami compares his literary space to that of Nakagami. Each came from a very different background with Murakami’s origins lying in a quiet, anonymous, middle-class suburb while Nakagami grew up with a strong identification with a marginal community in Kumano. Both agree that their works originate from and remain in polar opposition to Japan’s post-war social and historical geography.⁷⁰ Murakami’s use of landscape also stands in stark contrast to the works of Nakagami and to those of Ōe Kenzaburō. Ōe, for example, portrays his own search for identity with the continual re-examination of his imagined landscape of Shikoku. Each of these authors uses the binary opposition between city and village to produce anarchic energy. For example, in *Karekinada* (The

⁶⁹ The chapter is entitled “Kayōbi no nejimakidori, roppon no yubi to yottsu no chibusa ni tsuite”, or “On Tuesday’s Wind-up Bird, Six Fingers and Four Breasts”.

⁷⁰ See *Taidan, Nakagami Kenji, Murakami Haruki: shigoto no genba kara*, Kokubungaku.

Sea of Withered Trees, 1977), Nakagami uses the *roji* (alleyways) of Shingū as a two-fold signifier to indicate both a public and a private realm. The deep forests and mountains in the Kumano region of which Shingū is part were believed to be the home of the gods, and a sacred place that emperors visited to pay tribute to the deities. It is a place of the other world that exudes a strong sense of Japan's imagined national history.

Against such background, Nakagami's alleyways are emblematic of his angst and his identity. The *roji* is part of the nation's inherited political memory that reminds us of an aspect of Japan which is the polar opposite of mainstream. Nakagami's *roji* is the space where his sister's boyfriend committed suicide because of her *burakumin* (outcast, untouchable) background. It is also the place where his older brother lost his sanity and killed himself after his mother left him alone when she married her third husband. Nakagami could not forgive himself for denying any knowledge of his brother when his high school teacher asked him whether he was related to the deceased outcast from the *roji*.

Born and raised until seven years old in the impoverished *roji* and having grown up in a relative comfort outside Shingū, Nakagami's relationship with *roji* is complex; he viewed himself somewhere between an insider (as an outcast who was born and lived there) and an outsider (as a writer who has cultivated culture, therefore a stranger to *roji*).⁷¹ This 'in-between' position led Nakagami demonstrate, in Eve Zimmerman's words, his 'multiple and simultaneous points of view' in his portrayal of *roji* in Shingū (through protagonist Akiyuki who appears in a series, *Misaki* (The Cape, 1975), *The Sea of Withered Trees*, and *Chi no hate shijō no toki* (The Sublime Time at the End of the

⁷¹ Eve Zimmerman, *Out of the Alleyway: Nakagami Kenji and the Poetics of Outcaste Fiction*, 7, 22, 52.

Earth, 1983, hereafter *The Sublime Time*)). Nakagami's *roji* in Shingū eventually disappears in *The Sublime Time* and another *roji* appears in Latin America in *Sennen no yuraku* (One Thousand Years of Pleasure, 1982). Nakagami *roji* is mythical, obsessive, violent, sexual and contradictory 'mother's realm'⁷² in which Nakagami's protagonist grapples to search his identity. It is also, as Zimmerman suggests, 'ubiquitous spaces that one finds in the poor neighborhoods of every city'⁷³.

The discomfort stemming from the rapidly changing landscape of the present and the yearning for the imagined, lost past with which one attempts to make sense of his or her identity expressed in modern Japanese writings differs from the emotion with which Murakami's protagonist grapples in *Tuesday's Women*. In this work Murakami introduces three different landscapes in order to depict the process of transcendence for the protagonist's unconscious and conscious. Murakami's *roji* is one of these landscapes. It is a space that has certain characteristics of *ma* and in-between-ness. This is not to suggest that Murakami's deadly quiet and forgotten *roji* is in any way inferior to or less real than the active, universal space created by Nakagami. Rather, Murakami's space in *Tuesday's Women* suggests a possibility that one's self-search occurs in a much more ambiguous, private manner, in a space that is cosmopolitan and transcends national history and space. Murakami's imagined space has no references to a particular real place. Through the landscapes in his work he emphasizes the independent and private nature of his protagonists' process of self-discovery while in Nakagami's fiction, this process is public and political and occurs as a voice of the community as well as a private quest.

⁷² Eve Zimmerman, *Out of the Alleyway: Nakagami Kenji and the Poetics of Outcaste Fiction*, 119.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 4.

Tuesday's Women is narrated by Okada Tōru. His Tuesday begins with a call from a female stranger who demands ten minutes with Tōru, who had been happily cooking spaghetti, to 'understand each other better'.⁷⁴ A call from his wife asking him to search for their lost cat follows. Two women – the stranger on the phone and a teenage girl from the neighbourhood – add twists to Tōru's Tuesday, which ends as his wife declares in tears to her clueless husband, 'You are that kind of person.... Always, always that way. You kill everything without doing anything yourself.'⁷⁵

Murakami effectively sets up a stage for each of the three female characters, who shake Tōru's generally uneventful, private realm with existential questions and comments. First, in his private cocoon-like apartment room, the unrecognizable female voice over the telephone line demands that Toru rake his memory and connect with her. Second, his wife sends him out to the *roji* just behind his own garden, a vacuum in the big city of Tokyo, to search for their vanished pet cat. Third, in a garden that overlooks a quiet abandoned space of a neighbour's garden, the teenager whispers words of vividly imagined death into Tōru's ear. These events set up possible beginnings for Tōru's self search.

Not unlike the protagonists in some of Murakami's other earlier works, Tōru's life is filled with cosmopolitan cultural products: he has a lunch consisting of a cheeseburger and a cup of coffee at McDonald's, listens to Rossini's *La gazza ladra* performed by Claudio Abbado and the London Symphony Orchestra, and reads a Len Deighton novel. Murakami adds layers of references to such cultural products in order to portray a cosmopolitan geography. The eclectic, controlled and self-contained space in

⁷⁴ Murakami, *Nejimakidori to kayōbi no onnatachi* in MH ZSH 1979-1989 8, Tanpen-shū III, 142.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 176.

which Tōru busies himself – cooking perfect spaghetti and ironing a shirt to calm his mind – portrays his detachment from others. In describing Tōru’s daily life, Murakami omits any specific sense of Japanese geography and depicts the protagonist’s sensory inclination towards all things non-Japanese. Murakami also emphasizes the postmodern nature of the space in relation to Tōru and the sense of an individual self that chooses its own frame of reference and does not commit to any particular grouping or any institution that holds and demands engagement with a community.

This personal landscape reminds us of the dualistic landscapes that Murakami portrays in *Hardboiled*. In the latter novel, Murakami constructs a protagonist who contentedly surrounds himself with brand name, non-Japanese international products. This protagonist’s struggle for a sense of self and his choice to remain in his own closed-in state is expressed in his metaphoric struggles in two worlds: one in the science fiction-like underground in which a battle against “the system” unfolds and the other in the quiet and nostalgic world from which his resistance against others encourages him to escape. A similar theme of non-commitment and disconnection with the other and with society also runs through *Tuesday’s Women*.

After her first call is cut short when Tōru uses overcooked spaghetti as an excuse to end the conversation, the stranger makes another call to Tōru. It becomes apparent that the caller has detailed knowledge about Tōru and his life, but Tōru cannot recognize her voice. Their comedic, flirtatious conversation takes a serious tone. The stranger hits Tōru with a poignant question: ‘*Mightn’t you have a fatal blind spot somewhere? If not, don’t you think you’d have pulled yourself together a little more by now?*’⁷⁶

⁷⁶ Murakami, *Nejimakidori to kayōbi no onnatachi* in MH ZSH 1979-1989,8, Tanpen-shū III, 153.

At this point, Tōru becomes aware that his constructed identity may have deviated from who he actually is:

A blind spot, I thought. She may be right. Somewhere, in my head, in my body, and in my existence itself lies something like a lost underground world [地底世界] that's been slightly skewing my way of life.⁷⁷

This time, again, the concept of the underground world is introduced as an ambiguous darkness into which the protagonist may hesitatingly venture to investigate his consciousness and to discover what it is that obscures his life's course.⁷⁸

Undeterred and desperate, the woman on the telephone intensifies her sexual provocation with more descriptive and explicit demands. The unfinished conversation between the woman and Tōru reaches into his private emptiness, but their words remain on the telephone line and 'deep, quiet and heavy silence'⁷⁹ takes over the room, now an ambiguous and abstract space in which only words hang heavily. Baffled by the demand to establish a connection and by the one-sided sexual advances and provocation from the stranger, Tōru, unbeknownst to himself, begins his inward search by questioning what and whom he knows in a real, existential sense. In order to explore his unconscious and conscious and to develop a clearer sense of belonging and engagement with life, however, Tōru needs to leave his bubble of postmodern space.

Murakami then introduces Tōru to an abandoned space by means of the alley at the back of the house, the symbolic *roji*. In contrast to the first space in which Tōru half

⁷⁷ Murakami, *Nejimakidori to kayōbi no onnatachi* in MH ZSH 1979-1989,8, Tanpen-shū III, 153.

⁷⁸ Murakami also explores the concept of the 'Other world in the underground' in *Hardboiled Wonderland and the End of the World* and in the short story *Mystery in the Library* (1982).

⁷⁹ Murakami, *Nejimakidori to kayōbi no onnatachi* in MH ZSH 1979-1989 8, Tanpen-shū III, 155.

connected with the stranger via the traveling sound/voice on the telephone line, the *roji* stands behind ‘a cinder block wall’⁸⁰ in his garden. Tōru never knew this space existed until his wife asked him to go and search for the cat. Murakami describes the *roji* as useless and forgotten, ‘like some abandoned canal’⁸¹ belonging to no one, having lost both entrance and exit as the post-war boom years saw more and more houses built around it. The *roji* projects historicity and continuity of time. No word can capture this space: ‘it’s not the corridor you’d expect a passage to be; that’s only what we call it for lack of a better name.... It’s not even an alleyway.’⁸²

The *roji* is described here as an in-between space, both metaphorically and in a real sense, with two functions - a bridging space between Tōru’s postmodern, cosmopolitan sanctuary of his room and the dreamlike space that Murakami creates in the deserted garden, and a space that stands sandwiched between the neighbours’ cinder block fences displaying the landscapes of the present and the past. The geography that surrounds the *roji* portrays a society in which the old and new coexist in parallel in an urban space. These two anonymous, contrasting geographies represent ‘two distinct types’⁸³ of Japanese postmodern space:

First there are the houses dating from way back, with big gardens; then there are the comparatively new ones. None of the new houses has any yard to speak of; some don’t have a single speck of yard space – scarcely enough room between the eaves and the passage to hang out two lines of laundry.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Murakami, *Nejimakidori to kayōbi no onnatachi* in MH ZSH 1979-1989 8, Tanpen-shū III, 155.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 156.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 155.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 157.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 157-158.

The newly developed middle-class side, crowded, full of life and action, blares out TV noise and smells of curry, brimming with sensory overload. Murakami goes on to introduce a contrasting quieter, older space:

The old houses, by contrast, hardly betray a breath of life. Hedges of various shrubbery and cypress are placed to guard against inquisitive eyes, although here and there you catch a glimpse of a well-manicured garden. The houses themselves are of all different architectural styles: traditional Japanese houses with long corridors, tarnished copper-roofed early Western villas, recently remodeled modern houses. Common to all is the absence of any visible occupants. Not a sound, not a hint of life. Not even laundry hanging outside.

[...]

Propped up in a corner of one garden is a lone, withered, brown Christmas tree. In another yard lies every possible toy as if all the leftovers from several childhoods were scattered.⁸⁵

The combined area represents the ‘now’, a juxtaposition of new and old, alive and deserted, a chaotic, postmodern space. The transition of rapidly changing time is expressed in the landscape that is witnessed from the *roji*. The forgotten, enclosed *roji* plays the role of a bridge that separates the new and the old landscape and societies, standing in a vacuum of history. I would argue that this space is best described as *ma*, a space that leads Tōru to taste a premonition of death. Murakami’s quiet *roji* does not evoke the anarchic energy that motivated Nakagami to tackle the persistent theme of his history and identity. Rather, the abstract nature of Murakami’s *ma* conveys a depth of

⁸⁵ Murakami, *Nejimakidori to kayōbi no onnatachi* in MH ZSH 1979-1989 8, Tanpen-shū III, 158.

time and history, and of individuals and communities that cannot be contained within the empirical boundary of the fence and cinderblock wall.

Next, Tōru happens upon a teenage girl in a garden across from the deserted house. She spends an idle Tuesday afternoon with Tōru in her garden. He looks into the deserted garden across the *roji* where his wife believes their cat's dead body has been left to rot in the overgrown grass. The geography of the deserted house's garden includes the speckles of the shadow that a stone statue of a bird with open wings casts on overgrown grass and weeds, a rusted balcony railing, a TV aerial, a tall shoot of goldenrod, plastic garden chairs and a bright red azalea bush. Once owned by a family who fled after bankruptcy, the deserted garden space quietly waits for anyone to come in. This might be seen as Murakami's imagined space that is both metaphorical and vividly sensual. The girl asks Tōru to close his eyes and then begins to whisper her obsessive, vivid thoughts on death into his ears:

'I wish I had a scalpel. I'd cut it open and look inside. Not the corpse, but the lump of death.

[...]

Something round and squishy, like a softball, with a hard little core of death nerves. I want to take it out of a dead person and cut it open and look inside.

[...]

It's squishy on the outside, and the deeper you go inside, the harder it gets.'⁸⁶

⁸⁶ Murakami, *Nejimakidori to kayōbi no onnatachi* in MH ZSH 1979-1989 8, Tanpen-shū III, 171-172.

The whisper of death brings out darkness in Tōru, who still has not identified where to begin the search for the cat or for his self. This aporia becomes more evident as he hears the stranger's voice from the telephone in his head. It also indicates the beginning of his search. The girl who is obsessed with the idea of death stirs Tōru's imagination, as 'a new kind of darkness – different in quality from the darkness [he] had been experiencing until that moment – began to burrow into [his] consciousness'.⁸⁷ This darkness intensifies his awareness of his own disconnection from others and his community.

In this short story, Tōru physically and metaphorically chooses to remain as an observer on 'this side' in the girl's garden across from the deserted garden. He does not commit himself to venture into the deserted garden, Murakami's imagined space. Tōru's cat was last seen in the deserted garden, a possible place of discovery of Tōru's true self or at least of his cat. Emphasizing its theme of lack of communication, *Tuesday's Women* ends with the sound of the unanswered telephone in the space where Tōru and his wife seem to have shut their connection down. His wife shares physical space with Tōru, yet there exists an apparent distance between them that she feels deeply. Words are only touched on their surface or lost in the space that they occupy together. She is there, but his 'fatal blind spot'⁸⁸ encompasses his wife as well as himself, as the stranger on the phone suggested. The short story also leaves open the possibility that the stranger on the telephone might be his wife.

In this short story, Murakami's three different geographies are indicative of the journey of self-discovery, demonstrating that the non-committal protagonist sits at the gate, perhaps ready to set out to start his search for self. Each space that Murakami

⁸⁷ Murakami, *Nejimakidori to kayōbi no onnatachi* in MH ZSH 1979-1989 8, Tanpen-shū III, 173.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

depicts in this story has a clear function to play at each stage. The three women in the story guide Tōru from the house, the place of ‘now’, to an ambiguous *roji*, and onwards to the garden overlooking the possible other world that smells of loss and of the past. The postmodern cosmopolitan surroundings of the apartment that safely embrace Tōru imply that his is a socially incomplete consciousness. In this piece, there is a trace of Murakami’s repeated pattern found in his travelogues where he ventures out to the unfamiliar to be obsessed with the familiar in an act of self-search. In *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*, the quiet deserted garden becomes a place of self-search for Tōru. There is also a well in this garden in which Tōru emulates Lieutenant Mamiya’s experience in the Mongolian desert to further his self-search. In *Tuesday’s Women*, by going through these changing landscapes, Tōru travels toward the darkness of death, which is also where a core of the self may be found.

2.2.2. *After Dark*: Space as Body and the City as a New Type of Communal Self

A thematic change occurred in Murakami’s works following the traumatic events of 1995. Indeed, the Sarin Gas Attack in the Tokyo subway and the Great Hanshin Earthquake marked a turning point for Murakami and his writing. His post-1995 stories unleash his protagonists’ darkness – whether it be expressed in utter loneliness, evil, social constraints, or controversies from Japan’s past. Murakami’s post-1995 protagonists commit themselves to confronting their own darkness and that of their families. They re-engage with life and with society. For example, as discussed in Chapter One of this dissertation, in *Super-Frog Saves Tokyo*, a frog, symbolizing the subconscious self of a quiet businessman, commits itself to saving Tokyo from the destruction of an earthquake.

The search for self and the struggle to find a way to communicate with others remain Murakami's main subjects. Moreover, the conflicting relationships with family members that *After Dark* portrays are not new to Murakami's work.⁸⁹ Murakami ends *After Dark* with a recognition of others and with the hope of the individual reconnecting with society and family. At the same time, he reminds the reader that the depth and persistence of an individual's disconnectedness should not be forgotten. To explore this theme, Murakami presents the reader with two types of protagonists: those who have chosen to alienate themselves from their families and their communities in one way or another, and those who are loved by their families but who go through life with a howling emptiness inside and without any real connection with their families or recognition of others at all.

The plot of *After Dark* centers around two sisters from a suburb of Tokyo who have lost their emotional connection with each other long ago. Asai Mari, a university student, has always been independent and individualistic. She takes refuge in a sleazy entertainment district in downtown Tokyo, where she spends her nights waiting for morning to come so that she does not have to sleep in the room next to that of her older sister, Eri, who has disconnected herself from the present by being in a semi-permanent state of sleep. Yet Mari desires closeness with Eri, the prettier sister, who has always dominated the affections and attentions of their parents. There is another solitary character, Takahashi Tetsuya, a university student who knows Eri and who befriends

⁸⁹ The short piece *Famirī afea* (Family Affair, 1985) tells of an uninterested and disengaged protagonist meeting his future brother-in-law, a socially awkward, stereotypical Japanese engineer and company man. *Kafka on the Shore* deals with violence and discord between a son and a father, lost love between a son and a mother, and a boy's quest for an identity that is independent of his father. *Gūzen no tabibito* (Accidental Traveler, 2005) is the story of a man who decides to reconnect with his alienated sister after his accidental meeting with a woman who is suffering from breast cancer, only to discover that his sister also suffers from breast cancer.

Mari after they meet in a Denny's family-style restaurant. Mari's anonymous presence in a busy place that never sleeps becomes colourful and alive after Takahashi connects her with the community around her. He suggests to Kaoru, the manager of a love hotel, that she seeks Mari's help as an interpreter when a Chinese prostitute is found beaten and robbed. The suspense of the night lingers: a Chinese gangster on a motorbike foreshadows the persistent darkness, danger, and evil that creep into every corner of urban space. The unnamed gangster also features as a literary device to connect the various characters.

Mari spends the night meeting a group of characters from all walks of life. Kaoru has been down on her luck since her wrestling career ended due to injuries, and she lives like a hermit in the seedy hotel. Her two sidekicks, a runaway former office girl from Osaka named Kōrogi (cricket) and similarly nocturnal Komugi (wheat) live in a marginal space in self-imposed exile from mainstream society. Mari opens up to these lonely characters and learns new ways to reflect on her past experiences, to look for hope, and even to find meaning in the void. Gradually, friendship blossoms between Mari and Takahashi, and at the end he promises to wait for Mari to come home from her language course in China.

As in many of Murakami's novels, a fantastical story is told alongside a more realistic story. While Mari stays up late meeting these lonely characters in the urban space, Eri remains asleep in her bedroom in suburbia. The narrator, in the form of the eye of a tireless camera, keeps watch over the fantastical events that unfold around her. At midnight, an unplugged television in her room starts showing an image of a room in which a masked businessman, Shirakawa, sits. Next, Eri is transported to the room that

the television has been depicting, still asleep in her own bed, or so it seems. The only recognizable other here is Shirakawa who watches over Eri. Yet the next moment the reader is told that he has gone. When Eri awakens from her sleep and realizes that she is trapped in an unfamiliar room that resembles a fishbowl, she becomes aware that she is being watched by the camera's eye from this side. This time, she tries to reach out and cries out for help, as if she knows that she is in a room that is indeed inside the television. She succeeds in escaping from the room – or at least that is what is implied - and the next moment Eri is asleep like a sleeping beauty in her own bedroom just as before.

In the morning, Mari sets out for home and tries to recreate the closeness and the sense of oneness that she once felt with Eri by lying next to the sleeping beauty. This fails, however, to restore their lost time together, and Eri remains asleep and unmoved. Nonetheless, there is a modest sign of hope when her lips quiver slightly as the dawn breaks. While Mari's search is done in a large, busy space, Eri's 'dreamlike' transcendence that is a part of her unconscious identity search, unfolds in a small, office-like space. Both spaces are urban, whether they are utterly disconnected from any person or connected with disconnected members of society. Such space contributes to both Eri and Mari's search for her their identity and conveys the importance of connectivity with others.

Many urban novels display urban space as an enormous metropolis that swallows up individuals in their search for identity. For example, in *Nantonaku kurisutaru* (Somewhat Crystal, 1980), Tanaka Yasuo (b. 1956) portrays his protagonists in an urban city as endlessly and solely identifying themselves with the brand-name goods that abundantly fill their surroundings. In *After Dark's* urban space, there exists a 'deep

abyss' that opens up and swallows people, but the novel shows that the urban space as a whole is not an obstacle in one's search for one's consciousness. *After Dark* begins by portraying the city as a body that withholds or embraces millions of anonymous individuals as its dualistic nature embraces an individual's humanity.⁹⁰

This depiction of the city at night as a life form implies a symbiotic between the superstructure of society or civilization, and the human individual. Just as the creativity and reproduction of human life sustain it, the city sustains them. Inside the urban space, individuals are vital to the whole, yet individually they are insignificant. This environment-as-body absorbs history and society, breathes, and expands. At the same time, the image reveals to the reader a modern landscape in which a computer or a machine has omniscience. Thus, Murakami emphasizes the interdependency between components of the space and their composite body rather than a one-sided relationship that is controlled by the power of a governing system.⁹¹

One of the characters, Takahashi, however, tells it differently. He explains his observations about the judicial system, 'the nation', and 'the law' to Mari: '[T]he system of judicial trial itself is one special weird creature' under which 'human beings lose their names, and their faces vanish. All of us turn into simple codes. Mere numbers'.⁹² He describes the powerlessness of the individual, who is inevitably 'strangled and sucked into darkness' by 'an animal like a huge octopus – the judicial system'.⁹³ Despite his 'deep fear' and his 'despair that one cannot get away from [the nation, the law] no matter

⁹⁰ See excerpt on the first page of this chapter.

⁹¹ Murakami, *Afutādāku*, 5

⁹² *Ibid.*, 142-143.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 145.

how far one runs',⁹⁴ Takahashi decides to study for the bar exam and to become proactively engaged as a member of the system that embodies both the urban space and the community. Murakami's depiction of the urban space as seen from the sky is fitting for a story that is full of individualistic and alienated characters who somehow connect with and help each other one way or another.

By employing a camera's eye that lurks above the city and moves through various spaces in the story, Murakami makes the search for identity a communal experience in which the reader participates. Notably, it is here for the first time in his writing that Murakami uses the term *watashitachi* (we) and allows the eyes of the narrator, in the form of the lens of the camera, to invite us to observe and participate in the unfolding of events and spaces. He engages us throughout the story as a collaborator and an active witness. The same eye that portrays the city as a living organism travels to a small confined space – the protagonists' bedroom and office – and to an unknown space inside a TV to and from which these protagonists travel. Thus, the narrator's eyes are crucial in Murakami's construction of the urban landscape.

At the beginning, the reader is a mere observer. The camera's eye is set above the city, in the sky, and this setup hints at the postmodern perception of space and time in which technology sits high in the social hierarchy, controlling us in our contemporary lives. In Chapter Ten, the camera's eye (and the reader along with it) abandons the role of voyeur and transports itself to 'the other side':

[We] get tired of being a passive viewer of the TV screen from this side.
We want to check the interior of the room with our own eyes. We want to

⁹⁴ Murakami, *Afutādāku*, 143.

have a closer look at any small movements, maybe the first move of the consciousness that Eri is now showing. We want to make a more tangible guess at these meanings. Therefore, we decide to move across to the other side of the screen.⁹⁵

The cold observer, the mechanical eye, together with the reader, transforms itself to become more humane and engaged with individuals. Murakami tests postmodern thinking with this new kind of voyeurism of the reader's relationship with the characters, in a way that is similar to what a reality TV show projects for its viewer and which goes beyond the postmodern. Toward dawn, once the midnight dramas settle down to their own endings, the same camera's eye transports itself into the air again and maps the geographies of the urban space:

We have now become a pure lens and sit midair above the city. We see the scenery of a gigantic metropolis that is just waking up. Commuter trains of various colours move towards their destinations and transport many people from one place to another. Each passenger is a human being with a different face and a different mind. At the same time, each one is an anonymous *part* of a collective entity. Each is a complete entity and, at the same time, a mere part. They efficiently and appropriately handle such dualism and perform their morning rituals with precision and deftness. They brush their teeth, shave, select a tie, and apply lipstick.⁹⁶

The mechanical geography of the city during the night sees a change of gear in the morning. The depiction of commuters being transported on trains reminds the reader of robotic workers in a large factory. However, the portrayal of the morning space resolutely conveys the humanity of each individual. Have the observations and

⁹⁵ Murakami, *Afutādāku*, 158.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 290.

experiences of the camera's eye influenced the contrasting depiction of the space between the night and the morning? Through transitioning the camera's eye that became a proactive participant in the dramas during the night, *After Dark* explores the contrast between the night and day, darkness and light, unconsciousness and consciousness, using an urban landscape as a body that portrays these binary oppositions by means of a large busy, public space and a small, closed prison cell-like space. The novel informs the reader that each story found in the unconscious is connected with each of the other stories, and that they are all linked to a communal experience. This urban city that is portrayed as a large mechanical unit, made of many segments of smaller communities and many individuals inside each of those segments, forms a communal being. It is also of a new kind of communal self. In this way, the novella also illustrates a type of cosmopolitan sensitivity, the fragmented sense of belonging through its spatial depiction and its individualistic characters.

2.2.3. *Ma* as Communal Space in New Urban Geography

In *After Dark*, Murakami challenges conventional thinking concerning the relationship between time and space. Each chapter begins with a picture of a clock showing the time at which the events in the chapter take place, and the stories are presented chronologically, as if they were being told in real time. This is not dissimilar to the method that Murakami uses in *Hardboiled*, in which the events in two separate worlds – the underground and the village – are told in alternating chapters. By placing Shirakawa simultaneously in his office and in a closed-in, otherworldly space with Eri, Murakami challenges the credibility of a here and now conception of time and space; he

disrupts the traditional notion of ‘being in one place at one time’ and creates a dualistic sense of space.

Murakami uses various spaces to structure the story – urban public spaces in which people congregate and connect with each other, the quiet and confined spaces in which Shirakawa works, Eri’s bedroom in her house in the suburbs, and the unidentifiable space that Shirakawa and Eri share. Once the cosmopolitan hyper-realistic geography of the identity-less urban space is placed next to its opposite, a surrealistic and fantastic individual space, the juxtaposition makes the details of these geographies irrelevant. What is left instead is a space that is a reflection of emotion, a metaphorical concept, and a state of consciousness and of the unconscious.

Murakami keeps his locations ambiguous yet coloured with the specific markers of globalized culture. He lets the reader know that Shirakawa works for a high-tech company called Veritech near a busy entertainment district in Tokyo, within proximity of a Seven-Eleven convenience store, a Denny’s restaurant, and a Skylark chain restaurant. The love hotel is called Alphaville, possibly named after Jean-Luc Godard's 1965 film of the same name. Within this urban landscape exists a solitary, confined space in which Shirakawa enjoys working alone deep into the night, listening to ‘Bach piano music at just the right volume – *Englische Suiten* performed by Ivo Pogorelichi.’⁹⁷ Here, again, as in *Tuesday’s Women*, Murakami has his protagonist carefully select a foreign product to flesh out his sanctuary. Furthermore, Murakami obscures any semiotics of Japan for this space by inserting an American iconic image of solitary realism into his narrative: ‘This is a scene that [the American realist painter] Edward Hopper would paint under the title

⁹⁷ Murakami, *Afutādāku*, 119-120.

‘Solitude’’.⁹⁸ Such images effectively depict an urban space that seems to be everywhere, anywhere, familiar, and immediate to most readers.

In addition, early in the story Murakami peppers his narrative with a hyper-realistic welter of brand names, such as Mari’s navy Boston Red Sox baseball cap, which sits next to an ashtray on a table in Denny’s. The conversation between Mari and Takahashi in Denny’s includes more references to popular international products, yet it leaves no trace of local geographical specificity. The characters move contentedly around in an urban environment that is readily available in many countries of the world. Later, Murakami structures narrative transitions by mixing the hyper-realistic cosmopolitan Tokyo with a characterless bedroom in the suburbs and the barren otherworldly space that the television screen in the bedroom displays. First, Murakami depicts the bedroom where Eri slumbers for months on end in detail, with the help of the camera’s eye:

It cannot be said that it is a decorated room. It is not a room that suggests the tastes or individuality of its occupant. Without detailed observation, one could not tell that it is the room of a young girl. Nothing like dolls, stuffed toys, or accessories is anywhere to be seen. There are no posters, not even a calendar. One old wooden desk by the window and a swivel chair. The roller blind is pulled down. A simple black desk lamp, and a brand-new black laptop computer – its top closed – on the desk. Also, a few ballpoint pens and pencils in a mug.

Asai Eri is asleep in a simple wooden single bed by the window. A pure white plain bedcover. On the shelves attached to the opposite wall, a small compact stereo and a small pile of CD cases. Next to it is a telephone and an eighteen-inch TV. A dresser with a mirror. Only a lip balm and a small hairbrush lie in front of the mirror. A walk-in closet in the wall. The room’s sole decorative touch is five framed photographs on

⁹⁸ Murakami, *Afutādāku*, 119.

the shelf. All of them show Asai Eri herself. All of them show her alone. There is no photograph of her with family or friends.⁹⁹

In comparison to the geography of urban space, there is a deliberate emphasis here on the *absence* of brand names and the *lack* of detailed information about consumables. Such stark emptiness in this scene that follows immediately after the hyper-realism of urban geography succeeds in erasing the sense of the present time and creates the impression that Eri sleeps in a place in which the ordinary notion of time and space is irrelevant.

Next, Murakami introduces a space that is even more barren, soulless and eerie. The small, unplugged television in Eri's bedroom subsequently comes on and helps to propel the fantastical plot that is told simultaneously with Mari sipping coffee at Denny's with Takahashi. Murakami also sets up this fantastical plot as an event that occurs in real time and in parallel with Shirakawa deep in his work at his computer in his anonymous office and then in a taxi on his way home. That the unplugged television comes "alive" to stir something that waits to be awakened, as if it had its own will or consciousness, denies the logical and physical principles that hold the world together – as does the geography of the room shown on the screen:

The [TV] screen displays the inside of a room somewhere. Quite a large room. It looks like a room in an office building. It also looks like some kind of a classroom. A large open glass window and banks of fluorescent lights line the ceiling. There is no sign of furniture, however. No, on a closer look, there is one chair in the centre of the room. An old wooden

⁹⁹ Murakami, *Afutādāku*, 42-43.

chair with a back, but no arms. A practical and simple chair.... The room has the chilling air of a place that has been long abandoned.¹⁰⁰

Murakami signals that the bare room is possibly a double of Shirakawa's office, which Shirakawa's unconscious occupies. He says that it 'resembles Shirakawa's office' and Eri finds a pencil with Veritech stamped on it lying on the floor.¹⁰¹ These two proper names in the emptiness prompt the reader's curiosity to try to grasp the meaning of this ambiguous space. On the wooden chair sits a masked 'faceless'¹⁰² man in a brown suit, covered in dust. He has been watching Eri from the other side of the TV screen for two and a half hours. '[S]ome mechanism or some intention'¹⁰³ transports Eri into this space while she is asleep. When Eri awakes from her sleep and realizes that she is trapped behind transparent glass, the man is gone. Soon tension rises high as the narrator witnesses the TV screen begin to blink and shut itself off and Eri desperately attempts to escape from the room behind the screen. Eri struggles to communicate her inner thoughts in words to the camera's eye on the other side: 'One half of these words is directed to us and the other half is uttered to herself.... As if she were speaking a foreign language, every sentence is short and has irregular gaps between words. A blank stretches and dilutes the meaning that should be there'.¹⁰⁴ Sometime between four twenty-five and four thirty-one in the morning, this space vanishes. At nine minutes past five, Eri is back in her own bedroom, still asleep as if nothing had happened, and Shirakawa turns on the TV in his kitchen.

¹⁰⁰ Murakami, *Afutādāku*, 45.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 165.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 132.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 223-224.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 222-223.

In *After Dark*, Murakami introduces the time-sensitive space. Only the darkness of the night can conjure the ‘other side’, ‘an unreachable place’ like ‘a deep fissure’.¹⁰⁵ Murakami hints that all things, conscious and unconscious, hide behind the façade ‘[d]uring the time between midnight and the time the sky grows light’ and ‘such a place discreetly opens its dark mouth somewhere.’¹⁰⁶ This space has postmodern characteristics such as unpredictability and abnormality as Murakami explains that it ignores ‘the principles’ which unite ‘the cause and effect’ and maintain the balance between ‘synthesis and division’.¹⁰⁷ In Murakami’s earlier works, a place to discover dormant consciousness is found in locations that are more organic in character, such as the woods in *Kafka on the Shore*, an old forgotten village in *Hardboiled*, and a dried-up well in *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*. These spaces often resemble death. In *After Dark*, the space no longer resembles these earlier settings; rather, it is connected to the characterless bedroom through a TV screen. Murakami’s depiction of this *ma* also tells the reader that it is a forgotten space: ‘It’s chilly and smells slightly of mildew. The silence is so deep that it hurts our ears.... Even if there had been anything lurking, it is long gone.’¹⁰⁸

Murakami’s post-1995 other world is a space into which a living character may freely move back and forth. Murakami, through the voice of the mechanical lens, explains the instantaneous way in which a person or a non-human object can travel back and forth between this side and the other side. He details the physical sensation that one would experience:

¹⁰⁵ Murakami, *Afutādāku*, 223.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 222.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 159.

Once you are determined, it is not such a difficult task. All one has to do is to remove oneself from a body, leave all substances behind, and become a conceptual *point of view* devoid of mass. With all of that done, we can pass through any wall and jump over any abyss. And, actually, we become one pure point and pass through the TV screen that divides two worlds. We move from this side to the other side. When we pass through the wall and leap over the abyss, we see the world distort, split and crumble and then disappear. Everything becomes fine pure dust that scatters everywhere. Then the world is reconstructed. The new entity surrounds us. Everything takes just a split second.¹⁰⁹

Murakami's description helps us understand that this space resembles *ma*, and that it is indeed epistemological and metaphorical in nature. Often Murakami describes *ma* as a place for a protagonist to venture in alone, but in *After Dark*, the ambiguous postmodern space behind the TV screen is a communal space for anyone to enter. Specifically, it is where two unrelated characters, Shirakawa and Eri, grapple with their unconscious and learn to connect with others. A man who appears to be emotionally disconnected from others and from society and a disengaged woman who has escaped into sleep share the space. Entry demands the right wavelength of unconsciousness from any interested party, and this resonates with the metaphor of television and the virtual community that it creates.

The act of communal grappling is not, however, what this space is intended to provide. Although there is a sense that Shirakawa chooses to move between this *ma* and "this side", he does not interact with others. There is no recognition of another's presence on Eri's part either until after the man leaves the room. In this space, their commonality is found first in existentialistic minimal physical reactions: 'Like mimicking animals, the two curtail their breathing, maintaining total silence, calming their muscles

¹⁰⁹ Murakami, *Afutādāku*, 158-159.

and blacking out their gateways of consciousness'.¹¹⁰ Contrary to the preceding portrayal of his fierce, cold intensity and notwithstanding his violent outburst against a stranger or his furious late-night work as a software engineer, the faceless unidentifiable man (Shirakawa's unconscious) sits in the space, 'motionless', 'like a hostage', 'deep in thought', 'smell[ing] of somewhat prolonged resignation' in the room.¹¹¹ The barren and soulless state of *ma* mirrors Shirakawa's mind.

In short, I have suggested that Murakami uses three characteristically different types of space in *After Dark*. The first type of space is shown as one that is occupied by a group of nocturnal characters who gather in the busy downtown area of a cosmopolitan, big city that is strewn with "things". One of the characters has a resigned attitude towards life, but she is not bitter. Another is still hopeful, even in her dire state of life as a runaway. Yet another has set a goal for his future as a committed member of a community. All of them give Eri a sense of hope of reconnection with her sister. The second kind of space is lonely, closed-in and characterless. Both protagonists have chosen to remain disconnected from people: Eri remains sleeping in her characterless bedroom and Shirakawa works alone in his cold office. The last type of space, *ma*, does not belong to any preconceived, structured real space. It occupies as a metaphorical concept a space between the first two types of space described above. Its geography belongs to nothing tangible, either. Shirakawa's mind occupies the same space as Eri's unconscious. While Shirakawa remains detached, Eri's unconscious appears to attempt to communicate with the other. In the place in which an occupant can potentially start a

¹¹⁰ Murakami, *Afutādāku*, 132.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 74.

process of self-discovery and recognition of the other, Shirakawa and Eri, however, remain disconnected and Shirakawa's closed-in self appears unchanged.

The geography of *ma* in *After Dark* contains a few aspects of 'now' and postmodernity that, through the camera's eye, question the idea of technology and mechanical materials as markers of progress. Murakami, however, completes the depiction of *ma* with what we consider to be his imagined space in which time and space exist without boundary. In *After Dark*, the fantastical *ma* displays some contradictions. As a space that exists somewhere within a city in a place beyond the abyss that darkness creates, *ma* represents the unrelenting nature of the city that features in many urban novels. *Ma* is illogical; it evades and defies any principles that a city relies upon in order to govern its occupants. It randomly sucks in and spits out any and all individuals. At the same time, the *ma* in *After Dark* is a critical space for the unconscious and consciousness of individuals to gather as a communal place for contemplation. Perhaps it is a place that allows us to question the logic of the conscious, everyday 'real world', and its hierarchies and values.

2.2.4. This World, The Other World and Postmodernism

By depicting the bird's-eye view of an urban space and an imagined geography, Murakami displays his grasp of the functions that space possesses within postmodern discourse. He creates a 'Thirdspace', the postmodern urban space as defined by Soja and Lefebvre that includes the possibility of the disorientation of time and space and characteristics which are 'simultaneously homogeneous and fragmented'.¹¹² It is also both

¹¹² Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, 408-413.

real and imagined, a space that is all inclusive of history, social issues. He also efficiently uses another type of space, *ma*, that bridges the gap between *here* and *there*, between *now* and *then*, between the real and the imagined.

Regardless of the theme or ending in his works, geography and space play critical roles in the magical realistic development of Murakami's stories, as we have seen in both *Tuesday's Women* and *After Dark*. Murakami's methods of presenting space send a message to the reader that what appears to be the other world is, in fact, this world. In Tsuge's words, 'Apparently the other world is the world in the literature of Murakami Haruki'.¹¹³ The other world may be regarded as a nether world, but this is probably not an accurate reading of Murakami's works. By blurring the border between *here* and *the other world* and by creating a geography – albeit a room or a body – that becomes *ma*, by sending the protagonist from here to the other side, and by employing his imagined space, Murakami denies a dualistic separation of this world and the other world. Both can co-exist, simultaneously reinforcing and influencing one another.

Murakami's fictional space is based on the premise that the Japanese sense of space that tends to focus on immediate surroundings is felt in a self-contained contemporary space full of consumables, but that any search for identity or any process of the recognition of consciousness cannot take place in such a space. Darkness, the other world, or *ma*, an imagined geography, is needed for characters to take up this collective challenge. In blurring the distinction between spaces, transcending boundaries and in using *ma*, Murakami is moving beyond the rigid spatial construction that is seen in *pure literature*. By creating spaces that are inclusive of history, society, and geography

¹¹³ Tsuge Teruhiko, "Enkai/Takai/Media – Supūtoniku no koibito kara no tenbō", 27.

in order to investigate the themes – one’s grappling with social consciousness and history, the search of identity and the commitment to be a member of society while keeping one’s sense of self -, he is also creating a new kind of literature, refusing to be pigeonholed into the confine of modern-or-postmodern categorization.

Chapter Three Time and Memory

The role of literature – insofar as man is obviously a historical being – is to create a model of a contemporary age which envelops past and future and a human model that lives in that age.¹

In the above quote, Ōe Kenzaburō outlines what he considers to be a writer's duty: to portray human existence in a manner that is at once time-specific but also conscious of its relation to what has gone before and what will come after. By declaring that he is determined to tell a Japanese story², Murakami also asserts his sense of social responsibility as an author who explores the theme of connectedness between the past, present and future through his protagonists' self-search in his novels. Although the call by Ōe's western contemporary, Jean Baudrillard, for the end of history and the end of reference cannot be assumed to be supported by all postmodern thinkers, Murakami has been criticized for trivializing history as part of his adoption of a postmodernist standpoint in which he allegedly attempts to 'free' his writing from the baggage of the past. Clearly, however, elements of Japanese history are consciously employed as part of the narrative framework of many of his writings. In this chapter I will explore some of the ways in which Murakami plays with historical events, time and memory in his novels and argue that what has been perhaps unfairly criticized as the author's disregard for historicity is rather part of his quest to reveal something fundamental about the human experience, violence and the meaning of fate.

¹ Ōe Kenzaburō, 'Japan's Dual Identity' in *Postmodernism and Japan*, 193.

² Murakami Haruki, "Kaidai" in *Nejimakidori kuronikuru*, MH ZSH 1990-2000 4, *Nejimakidori kuronikuru* I, 555-563 and in MH ZSH 1990-2000 5, *Nejimakidori kuronikuru* 2, 433-435.

Violence is portrayed aplenty, whether psychological, physical, in private or in the public realm, in Murakami's novels and stories. Murakami continually interjects intimations of his distrust of the Japanese political system by portraying violent events past and present, thereby reminding us of the sort of crimes that individuals and nations are capable of committing. In Murakami's earlier works, the protagonists' sense of loss and nostalgia reveal an acute awareness of history, yet this consciousness is expressed ironically in that the narration typically flouts historicity, and the protagonist is typically flippant and existentialistic.

One such figure is the twenty-nine-year-old, married protagonist of *Hear the Wind Sing*, who is also the novel's retrospective narrator. This apparently distant young man starts the story off with an account of some of his family's tribulations and of his own adolescent agonies. Although these events might be expected to provoke emotional commentary or reflection, the tone is strikingly matter-of-fact. Moreover, the events that this figure relates appear to be linked in the story only through their association with the narrator and, chronologically, with the beginning of his exposure to the work of a fictional American writer named 'Heartfield':

I read an out-of-print novel by Heartfield for the first time in the summer of my last year in the junior high school when I was suffering from some kind of skin problem in my crotch. The uncle who gave me the book got colon cancer three years later. His body was cut and torn in many places and he died suffering, with plastic tubes and pipes inserted in his mouth and anus.

*

I had three uncles in all, but one of them died in a suburb of Shanghai. He stepped on a landmine that he had buried two days after the war ended.

The sole survivor, the third uncle, became a magician and has been traveling hot spring touristy spots all over the country.³

Although nostalgia is inherent in the ‘remembrance’ mode through which the novel considers the narrator’s past, little emotion can be detected in the dry tone of his discourse. Indeed, even the magician uncle – a character one might expect to evoke a little more interest or excitement – is described dryly as remote, ‘almost lost’ and wandering.⁴ Thus, the voice of the narrator creates the impression that he is rather uncaring and flippant about his own life and about the history in which it is embedded.

This perspective on the events that mark an end to an era, such as his uncles’ deaths and his own long-gone adolescent agony, set the tone for the novel, in which the protagonist recounts the summer of his twenty-first year, when he was still single, a college student, and living in his hometown. Ironically, this turns out to be the summer of 1970, a time when the imminent renewal of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty provoked the culmination of a surge of anti-government sentiment in Japan that was not unlike and not unrelated to the anti-Vietnam War movement in the United States and the global peace movement at large. At this time, like his protagonist, Murakami was a college student (at Waseda University in Tokyo). Whether or not one should see here a comment on the author’s own level of engagement with the events of the time is unclear. The narrator reveals their level of import only incidentally. He recalls the night when he met a girl with whom he has a brief affair: ‘It was the night when the authority crushed the most

³ Murakami, *Kaze no uta o kike*, MH ZSH 1979-1989 1, 9.

⁴ *ibid.*

violent demonstrations in Shinjuku and train and bus services and everything stood still.⁵

The narrator adds a few more trite sentences about the intensity and violence of the demonstrations that were a daily phenomenon at the time, but he is far more concerned with telling the reader about his strong identification with the American writer ‘Heartfield’ – a name that ironically suggests a much deeper level of emotional connection than the narrator himself appears to possess – than with providing individual perspective on this eventful period in Japanese history.

Indeed, the novel appears on the surface to be a narcissistic memoir of a writer, wantonly neglecting the weight of the historical events that surrounds him. Yet the irony of this gesture may carry the work’s essential message, which may be to cast aspersions on the fascination of others with *individual* perspective as such, or to highlight their value by means of their conspicuous absence. In any case, the disaffected tone and introverted, inconclusive storyline of *Hear the Wind Sing* constitute an ironic antithesis to the intensity and historical consciousness of the social movement at the time. Indeed, so vacuous and ungrounded is the plot of the novel that the protagonist does not even bother to make reference to his home or family in his chronicle of a summer spent back home from university. Instead, his summer revolves around a tavern called ‘J’s Bar’, its eponymous owner ‘J’, a friend named Nezumi, and the protagonist’s fleeting encounters with female characters. The summer’s events amount to nothing concrete or productive, and the narrator simply ends his account with his recollection of taking the bus back to Tokyo in the autumn.

⁵ Murakami, *Kaze no uta o kike*, MH ZSH 1979-1989 1, 59.

In later works beginning with *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*, Murakami takes a different approach, one that displays his historical consciousness more directly, often through the portrayal of violent events. The title of his much later novel *1Q84* (2010) is an allusion to George Orwell's *1984* (1948). Murakami's *1Q84* is a love story, also set in 1984, which, at the end, unites a female assassin and her elementary school classmate, now an editor and aspiring writer, after twenty years of separation. A fictional religious cult called the Kotoeri-kyō draws the two protagonists together, as the female assassin is charged with the task of killing its leader, and the aspiring writer winds up in the role of protector to the leader's run-away daughter. Murakami embellishes the narrative with detailed descriptions of the cult's origins, structure, doctrine and activities and of the violence that its leader instills and instigates. As in his other novels since *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*, magical characters and ambiguous distinctions between real and unreal and between 'this side' and 'the other side' infuse an otherwise realistic story set in the real world, in this case in order to reveal how the narrative imagination of the religious leader attracts large numbers of dedicated and deluded followers.

1Q84 questions whether any form of violence, whether domestic violence, violence rationalized by religious beliefs, or violence committed as retribution for other violence, can be justified. This, indeed, is very much a historically-embedded question. The specific connection of the plot of the novel to Japanese history, however, comes in the form of the resemblance of the Kotoeri-kyō organization in the book to the real-life cult known as Yamagishi-kai. Although there is no direct reference to these events in *1Q84*, Murakami followed the court cases associated with the 1995 sarin attack on the Tokyo subway system and interviewed some of its victims as well as cult members for

his books *Undāguraundo* (Underground, 1997) and *Yakusokusareta basho de, Undāguraundo 2* (In the Promised Place, Underground 2, 1998). The author was thus familiar not only with the well-publicized 1995 incident, but also with other acts of violence in the cult's history. Murakami also depicts a different kind of violence that a religious group can impose on an individual. The female protagonist, Aomame, in *IQ84* is portrayed as having left her family. Her family, fervent followers of Shōnin-kai (an apparent parody of the Jehovah's Witnesses), forced Aomame when she was young to join them in their activities, such as their weekly door-to-door visits to recruit potential new members to their religious group. They cut their ties with Aomame once she refuses to join them as a group member. Murakami depicts the enclosing force of the system in a form of a religious group that attempts to suppress an individual's free will.

Having noted the themes of self-exploration in *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*, giving closure to a period or an episode in *Hear the Wind Sing* and questioning the connections between religious belief and violence in *IQ84*, let us return to the question of Murakami's alleged lack of commitment to demonstrating a historical consciousness in his writing. In *Hear the Wind Sing*, Murakami identifies the temporal setting not just as the summer of 1970 but as the specific dates between August 8th and August 26th of that year. He dedicates the entirety of Chapter Two to just one sentence: 'This story begins on August 8th, 1970 and ends eighteen days later, in other words, on August 26th of the same year.'⁶ Such hyper-specificity in time may be seen as a way of flouting the commercialism of novels that try to be all things to all readers. The critic Karatani Kōjin, referencing similar examples in Murakami's *Pinball, 1973*, states that 'Many writers

⁶ Murakami, *Kaze no uta o kike*, MH ZSH 1979-1989 1, 12.

attempt to widen the popular appeal of their writings by omitting dates. On the contrary, Murakami always sets his writing in a specific date and time.’ Karatani goes on, however, to assert that this anti-commercial date-specificity ‘is not a representation of [Murakami’s] historical consciousness, but an attempt to nullify it.’⁷

The purpose of the present chapter is neither to attempt to prove nor to disprove this statement, either of which could be problematical. Rather than trying to guess what the author might have intended by such devices, or to impugn to the author a consciousness distinct from whatever historical connections are manifested in his novels, my present purpose is to examine these connections themselves and the function that the devices associated with time and historicity play in Murakami’s various works. In this regard, the chapter will demonstrate that Murakami imbues time with subjectivity by portraying it both in a linear sense and in a metaphysical sense and by giving time intricate textures.

The examination of Murakami’s novels provided in this chapter will reveal how different concepts of time can exist simultaneously within the same work as well as the manner in which Murakami sets up distinct spaces to depict different characteristics of time. For example, urban, cosmopolitan space – ‘this side’, which is replete with characters and commodities – stands in linear time and in contrast with the protagonists’ nostalgic retrospection. The narration of events on ‘this side’ is framed with references to specific dates and times. Often, however, in their efforts to find themselves and to fill the void of their existence, Murakami’s protagonists move into alternate spaces – ambiguous,

⁷ Karatani Kōjin, “Murakami Haruki no “fūkei” – ‘1973nen no pinbōru’” in *Teibon, Karatani Kōjin-shū* 5, 155-157. In the case of *1Q84*, for example, Karatani’s point is persuasive in that Murakami’s setting of the novel in 1984 does not speak of a particular *historical* consciousness but rather alludes to the theme of totalitarian society in Orwell’s 1984, in which ‘Big Brother’ terrorizes everyone and stratifies all aspects of society.

sparse, dark spaces that are sometimes specified as underground and that are referred to as the ‘other side’. Murakami portrays time in such spaces as non-existent, expansive or infinite, reflecting the characters’ states of being. This conceptual mapping, which is central to Murakami’s treatment of space-time, is also vital to his exploration of violence and of the evil found in human nature and specifically in the Japanese socio-political system.

3.1. History in Murakami’s Postmodern Approach: An Examination of the Novella *Rōma teikoku no hōkai, 1881-nen no Indian-hōki, Hittorā no Pōrando shinnyū, soshite kyōfū-sekai* (The Collapse of the Roman Empire, The Indian Revolt of 1881, Hitler’s Invasion of Poland, and The World of Strong Wind)

As noted at the outset of this chapter, a number of writers and critics who seek political values in writings have characterized the flippant attitude toward history and the perceived lack of historical consciousness in Murakami’s pre-1995 writings as a ‘postmodern’ feature of his work.⁸ In his 1986 critical essay *Murakami Haruki no ‘fūkei’ – 1973nen no pinbōru* (Murakami Haruki’s ‘Landscape’ – Pinball, 1973), Karatani, for example, interprets Murakami’s light-hearted representation of time, on the one hand, as a romantic escape from reality and, on the other, as a way of giving voice to the call for or proclamation of the end of history that was made prominent by such postmodernists as Fredric Jameson and Jean Baudrillard.⁹ Karatani considers Murakami’s treatment of history and historicity to be self-indulgent and to demonstrate his lack of responsibility as

⁸ For example, Ōe, Karatani, Hasumi, Ōtsuka, Tsuge, Miyoshi and Yomota.

⁹ Karatani Kōjin, “Murakami Haruki no ‘fūkei’ – ‘1973nen no pinbōru’” in *Teibon Karatani Kōjin-shū 5 Rekishi to hanpuku*, 188.

a writer, arguing that Murakami's novels deny history and that the hyper-specificity in dating of the events in some of these novels 'is not a representation of [Murakami's] historical consciousness, but an attempt to nullify it.'¹⁰ I would argue, however, that the responsibility of a writer, can also be expressed in irony and is not necessarily restricted to straightforward and simplified means such as, in Karatani's words, 'a generational empathy' directed at a specific group of readers.¹¹

Karatani's concern about what he characterizes as Murakami's irony and irreverent treatment of time includes Murakami's repeated references to the campus strife of 1969 and 1970 and the frequent mention of random dates and numbers in his 1980 novel *Pinball, 1973*. For example, '1969. Our year [...] Many people lost their lives, drove themselves to madness, buried themselves in the faltering time, got frustrated with aimlessness and damaged each other.'¹² Karatani argues that this quote denies readers 'a generational empathy' with 1960s and 1970 Japan, and trivializes the significance of a social movement in which people lost their lives.¹³ This criticism, which Karatani levels at such works as *Hear the Wind Sing* and *Pinball, 1973*, in which an obsessive search in 1973 for an old pinball machine is intertwined with the protagonist's recollections of 1968 and 1969, is based upon the critic's theory that each occurrence of an event, its date and time, or numerical values associated with it should be regarded as unique and meaningful and should not be cheapened by an author's postmodern romantic irony.¹⁴

¹⁰ Karatani Kōjin, "Murakami Haruki no 'fūkei' – '1973nen no pinbōru'" in *Teibon Karatani Kōjin-shū 5 Rekishi to hanpuku* 156.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 155.

¹² *Ibid.*, 104. 59.

¹³ See *Ibid.*, 156-157.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 155.

Murakami presents another take on historical events in his experimental, postmodern novella *The Collapse of the Roman Empire, The Indian Revolt of 1881, Hitler's Invasion of Poland, and The World of Strong Wind* (1986, hereafter *Collapse*). In this novella, Murakami commodifies history, combines insignificant everyday trivia of an ordinary character with grand historical events, and exhibits the effect of postmodern 'end of history' perception about time and history. Murakami's references to epic-scale real events in history are employed as similes to describe a protagonist's experience of a storm on a Sunday afternoon.

In *Collapse* we witness a similar tactic, in which Murakami contrasts major world events with his protagonist's mundanity. *Collapse* exemplifies Murakami's postmodern treatment of history – a commodification of history and depiction of time and history as a singular 'sign' that is stripped of any contextual value. Indeed, with its mixture of real, significant, yet unrelated events in world history and the made-up, non-time-specific, romantic term 'The World of Strong Wind', the title suggests a fragmented and arbitrary approach to history that is postmodern in the sense defined by Jean Baudrillard.¹⁵ Murakami's mixture of historical events from different periods in the title is also postmodern according to the criteria listed by Frederic Jameson in that it represents the weakening sense of history and historical perspective and fosters a new way of viewing time that is not of a sequential order.¹⁶

This combination of random events in the novella's title also exemplifies the way Murakami distinguishes the usage of time as a narrative device in two ways. One type of

¹⁵ See Simon Malpas, *The Postmodern*, 89-96.

¹⁶ See *Ibid.*, 25 and 80.

time is characteristically insignificant and ordinary such as ‘When I was cooking pasta’¹⁷, or ‘It was just before three in the morning’.¹⁸ While this type of time is unspecific in terms of a historical timeline, its effect is that its ordinariness enables the reader to relate it to his own time as his own life is punctuated by these types of ordinary events. Murakami’s other type of time is absolute; in other words, it is made up of real and definitive historical events, such as Hitler’s invasion of Poland, with which the reader is bound to be familiar and which therefore allow much room for imagination.

The elaborate title of Murakami’s novella provokes the reader to consider from the outset what it means to be suddenly confronted with such events and how they stand in relation to the reader and his or her own place in the history of societies and events. In the story, the protagonist and narrator, a young man who refers to himself as *boku*, chronicles his movements and thoughts meticulously and precisely while demonstrating behaviour that reveals an idiosyncratic, excessive attention to precision in many aspects of his life. *Boku* sets his Sundays aside in order to record the events of the past week in a journal that is comprised ‘eighty percent of facts and twenty percent of reflection’.¹⁹ From this source we learn, for example, that on a certain Thursday, *boku* had sex with his blindfolded girlfriend and that Friday was the day when he met an old friend in a book store. So precise is he in recording the details of his life that *boku* at one point estimates that the ‘light sigh’ he breathes measures ‘about thirty percent’ of a full sigh.²⁰ *Boku* is also proud of his ‘perfect memory’ regarding the time of each telephone call that he receives, as it is his habit to check the time on an alarm clock that sits next to the

¹⁷Murakami, *Nejimakidori kuronikuru*, MH ZSH 1990-2000 4, *Nejimakidori kuronikuru 1*, 13.

¹⁸ Murakami, *Nemuri* in MHZS 1979-1989 8, Tanpen-shū, 3, 218.

¹⁹ Murakami, *Rōma teikoku no hōkai, 1881-nen no Indian-hōki, Hittorā no Pōrando shinnyū, soshite kyōfū-sekai* in MHZS 1979-1989 8, Tanpen-shū, 3, 130.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 132.

telephone.²¹ In this way Murakami diligently paints his protagonist's obsessive inclination toward achieving precision in many things small.

The protagonist's surroundings enhance the tone of ordinariness and smallness that characterizes his life. Images of the kitchen in which *boku's* girlfriend prepares an oyster pot for dinner and of a crow on an electrical pole also evoke a specifically Japanese atmosphere, as do Murakami's detailed depictions of clothes hung out to dry on the balconies of surrounding apartments flapping in the wind. In the story, which unfolds on an extremely windy Sunday afternoon, *boku* spontaneously recalls three historical events: the collapse of the Roman Empire in the fifth century, the Indian Revolt of 1881 and Hitler's 1939 invasion of Poland.

Into such ordinariness, routine and calm come world events, and these diverse historical events intrude suddenly upon the protagonist's mundane, albeit eccentrically perceived, universe, revealing his obsession with order and precision. According to *boku*, his Sunday could have been 'as peaceful a Sunday as the Romans would have had during the peak of their empire'.²² Yet the sunny Sunday turns unexpectedly stormy, and even the telephone line is interrupted by 'the sound of the wind...blustering like the Indian revolt of 1881.' This takes place at precisely two thirty-six in the afternoon.²³ *Boku* cannot hear anything but the sound of violent wind on the telephone. He imagines that '(the Indians) were burning pioneer cabins, destroying communication lines, and raping Candice Bergen, right there.'²⁴ *Boku's* cries of 'Hello!' into the telephone receiver are

²¹ Murakami, *Rōma teikoku no hōkai, 1881-nen no Indian-hōki, Hittorā no Pōrando shinnyū, soshite kyōfū-sekai* in MHZS 1979-1989 8, Tanpen-shū, 3, 132.

²² *Ibid.*, 131.

²³ *Ibid.*, 133.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

‘sucked into the overwhelming raging billow of history’.²⁵ Perplexed by this occurrence, *boku* gives up trying to hear the caller and imagines that ‘the Indians lost too many buffalos.’²⁶ *Boku*, who treasures regularity and precision in his life, is unable to comprehend the sudden, inexplicable irregularity of the events unfolding in his apartment and idiosyncratically resorts to connect them with random cultural references.

Faced with the juxtaposition of *boku*’s obsession with the precise recording and measurement of his surroundings against such unscientific reasoning, random imaginings and scattered cultural references, the reader begins to lose faith in *boku*’s ability to gauge the importance of any of these events. The protagonist’s lack of a sense of history, as displayed in such a fragmented recollection of events, becomes, therefore, a demonstration of Murakami’s playfulness that disregards the modern sense of order and the belief in the cohesion of history.

Murakami’s ironic approach to historical consciousness is further evident in *boku*’s next journal entry: ‘On [last] Saturday, the German panzer division invaded Poland’.²⁷ *Boku* quickly corrects himself: ‘No. That’s not it. Hitler’s invasion of Poland was September 1st, 1939. Not yesterday.... Hitler’s invasion of Poland happened in the movie (*Sophie’s Choice* that I went to see yesterday).’²⁸ A major event in history that affected many lives is all but lost in the shuffle of *boku*’s self-centered and whimsical narration, as he proceeds to record a synopsis of the movie and to recollect the roles played by Meryl Streep, Dustin Hoffman and Robert de Niro, Murakami’s treatment here of historical events as a form of cultural product reflects Guy Debord’s theory that any

²⁵ Murakami, *Rōma teikoku no hōkai, 1881-nen no Indian-hōki, Hittorā no Pōrando shinnyū, soshite kyōfū-sekai* in MHZS 1979-1989 8, Tanpen-shū, 3,133.

²⁶ Ibid., 134.

²⁷ Ibid., 135.

²⁸ Ibid.

authentic event and time eventually becomes replaced with its mere representation by way of commodities.²⁹

At five minutes to four in the afternoon, the storm stops, and *boku* notes that ‘the appearance of the world and its order showed no change at all from before the storm.’³⁰ The story ends as *boku* makes a note of the day’s events for his next journal entry. He writes: ‘1. Collapse of the Roman Empire. 2. The Indian Revolt, 1881. 3. Hitler’s Invasion of Poland.’³¹ He claims that his system of keeping such short notes has ensured that he has not missed a single day in his journal entries for the past twenty-two years because ‘every meaningful act has its own system.’³² The serious tone in which the narrator congratulates himself for his cleverness and consistency raises his journal-keeping, in his universe, to the level of a more meaningful achievement than the historical events of vast consequence that he so casually recalls. By means of this device, Murakami conveys the irony that these earth-shattering events of the past have become mere cultural references that can be commodified in order to justify banalities such as *boku*’s (fictional) existence.

The violence done to humanity in the three events implicated in the novella must in the end be judged to be of a different scale to the four-hour wind storm that *boku* witnesses from his apartment, despite the fact that this phenomenon shares equal ‘billing’ with the others in the work’s title. After all, *boku*’s Sunday ends comfortably with a delicious oyster pot. Murakami’s juxtaposition of grandiose events that were distant both in time and space with the ferocious yet ultimately harmless wind storm is playful, but

²⁹ See Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, Chapter I and VIII.

³⁰ Murakami, *Rōma teikoku no hōkai, 1881-nen no Indian-hōki, Hittorā no Pōrando shinnyū, soshite kyōfū-sekai* in MHZS 1979-1989 8, Tanpen-shū, 3, 136.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 137

³² *Ibid.*, 138.

the further juxtaposition of both types of event with the domestic trappings of a small Japanese apartment strikes a distinctly discordant note. The jarring difference in scale raises questions about our consciousness of time and history, and the juxtaposition itself epitomizes such so-called postmodern narrative traits as disconnection, fragmentation and our subjective relationship to time and history.

3.2. The Past According to Murakami: *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*

As discussed above, *Collapse* showcases Murakami's postmodern playfulness and his ironic commodification of history. By contrast, an examination of Murakami's 1995 novel *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle* reveals a modernist conception of time in the author's approach to historicity. The bulk of the narrative in *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*, a work in which the main theme is self-exploration, can be seen as Murakami's attempt to reveal the violence that permeates Japan. The descriptions of the heinous torture and execution of a Japanese spy by a Russian officer and a Mongolian skinner, and the killing of Chinese by Japanese soldiers at a zoo in Nanjing are detailed and long. Both of these violent events are carried out in the name of the nation. Murakami sets up protagonist Tōru's brother-in-law and future politician Wataya Noboru as a symbol of the evil and violence that may be deeply instilled in any individual's psyche. Murakami also places Wataya, an elitist academic and promising politician that the Japanese media and people adore, in polar opposition to Tōru, an unemployed, disconnected member of society. Tōru discovers that Wataya is the cause of the disappearance of his wife, Kumiko, and of the suicide of her sister, and he is compelled to physically destroy Wataya in a violent battle

which takes place in his imagination. Their lengthy stories disrupt the rhythm of the protagonist's identity search. However, these descriptions of meaningless violence at both a national and an individual level, from the past and from the present, emphasize an unbreakable, circular continuity of time, linking identity to blood, past to present and nation to the individual.

Emphasizing his own imaginings of national memories of the war in Manchuria, Mongolia and Siberia, in *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle* Murakami employs familiar narrative tools such as a three-dimensional depiction of time, the juxtaposition of magical realistic events in a private sphere and public historical memories with a sub-narrative of historical fiction. Murakami's historical consciousness condenses the nation's collective memory down to an individual level, revealing smaller pieces that fit together in a more intimate way to explore the novel's theme of self-search.

3.2.1. Murakami's Imagining of Father through China

Murakami sets up China as one of the locations for *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle* where much of the violence in the novel takes place in terms of Japan's historical involvement in the Soviet-Japan War (1938-1939), Japan's occupation of Manchuria and the Japanese army's actions in China (1931-1945). First, let us recall Murakami's fascination with China in his fictional works in which he portrays Chinese characters who see themselves as outsiders in Japan. Murakami introduces characters with close links with China in short stories and novels published in the period 1979-1995. 'J' the Chinese owner of a bar that protagonist *boku* frequents, and *boku*'s uncle who died in Shanghai are mentioned in *Hear the Wind Sing*; half-Chinese, half-Australian Charlie appears as

the detective protagonist's girlfriend in *Shidonī no gurīn sutorīto* (Green Street in Sydney, 1982); and jazz trombonist Takitani Shōzaburō moves to Shanghai before World War II and travels back to Japan in 1946 after a stint in a Chinese prison in *Tonī Takitani* (Tony Takitani, 1990).

In Murakami's short novel *A Slow Boat to China* from 1980, discussed earlier in Chapter Two, three Chinese individuals appear in the story's account of the protagonist *boku*'s youth. These are a teacher at a Chinese school who preaches to Japanese students the importance of respectful behavior, a naturalized Chinese female on whom young *boku* has an unsuccessful crush, and a Chinese encyclopedia salesman whom *boku* has not seen since graduating from high-school. These three characters' strong self-identification as Chinese prompts *boku* to question his own sense of belonging and identity.

Murakami's fascination with China and with wartime history is also evident in the speech he delivered in Jerusalem upon receiving the Jerusalem Prize for literature in 2009. Murakami included a rare reference to his father and his father's death in the speech:

My father passed away last year at the age of ninety. He was a retired teacher and a part-time Buddhist priest. When he was in graduate school in Kyoto, he was drafted into the army and was sent to fight in China. As a child born after the war, I used to see him every morning before breakfast offering up long, deeply-felt prayers at the small Buddhist altar in our house. One time I asked my father why he did this, and he told me he was praying for the people who had died on the battlefield. He was praying for all the people who died, he said, ally and enemy alike. Staring at my father's back as he knelt at the altar, I seemed to feel the shadow of death hovering around him.

My father died, and with him he took his memories, memories that I can never know. But the presence of death that lurked about him remains in my own memory. It is one of the few things I carry on from him, and one of the most important.³³

In this 2009 speech published in the Japan Press Network, Murakami mentions war memories and China in the context of his father's words about them – or more precisely, in the absence of his father's words and the narrative that Murakami never fully heard. The picture of young Murakami staring at his father's back during the morning ritual of prayer provokes one to speculate on the emotional distance and hesitation that Murakami may have felt toward his father's wartime memories of China, and his awareness that he himself lacked the firsthand experience to share them.

Indeed, Murakami has said little about his relationship with his father except to comment on their remoteness from one another. What Murakami does not mention in the speech quoted above is his fear which he confided to Ian Buruma during an interview that, 'My father's experience [in China] has penetrated into my blood. [...] I possibly inherited such a gene.'³⁴ It might be that such anxiety led to Murakami's childhood interest in the war in Mongolia and meant that in 1996, when Murakami was working on *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*, the story that includes the atrocities committed at the battle there, he felt compelled to visit the very same battlefield.³⁵

While Murakami extensively pursues memories of war and the theme of China and the wartime violence committed by the Japanese army in *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*, Murakami does not portray a paternal figure as a developed or central

³³ Murakami Haruki's speech at the Jerusalem Award, Kyōdo New in Japan Press Network, 2.15. 2009, <http://www.47news.jp/47topics/e/93880.php?page=all> Viewed on April 1, 2010.

³⁴ Ian Buruma, *Ian Buruma no nihon tanbō – Murakami Haruki kara Hiroshima made*, 93.

³⁵ See Chapter Two, 2.1.3.

character. Because of scarceness of writings with a paternal figure and Murakami's silence over his relationship with his father, however, I would hesitate to consider that the violent father figures and strained father-son relationships portrayed in his works, such as Kafuka's disdain for his father or the psychological distance felt by Tengo toward his father in *IQ84*, necessarily reflect Murakami's own experience as related in his comments above. In *After Dark*, the protagonist Eri's father is remote, inconspicuous and barely communicates with his daughter. In *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*, Cinnamon's deceased father remains in the background as he is recalled in the gruesome, magical realist dream that appears to have driven Cinnamon to lose the faculty of speech. In this dream, Cinnamon is a quiet witness to some shadowy figures burying a sack that contains his father's organs in the garden. Tōru, the protagonist and narrator of this work, has also lost touch with his biological father, and it is rather with his individualist uncle that he has a close relationship.

More importantly in the present context, the above excerpt from Murakami's 2009 speech implies that Murakami's imagination that is alive in his portrayals of historical consciousness is closely linked with his desire to reveal violence – the violence of war, domestic violence, the violence with which a society can oppress an individual and the violence of a religion that engulfs one's mind. Using violence as a theme for *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*, which is set in Tokyo in 1984, Murakami also depicts the connectedness of the past to the present, from the national to the individual level and vice versa in historical narrative, whether factual or imagined. We see Murakami's historical consciousness expressed in epic events interjected with more mundane details that constitute metaphorical and magical realistic elements. This arrangement and the process

of self-exploration result in an existential discovery about memories and a sense of fate by his protagonist.

3.2.2. Personal History: The Nation to Individuals, Individuals to the Nation

Murakami makes references about the violence that occurred during the student movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s and its affect on protagonists in other novels. For example, *Hear the Wind Sing* evokes the vacuity left in the protagonist's mind in his recollection of the student movement. In the novel, a simple reference is made to a female student's confrontation with the Japan Self Defense Force in Shinjuku. In *Kafka on the Shore*, violence from the 1968 and 1969's student strife reappears as the cause of the death of Saeki-san who chooses to live in the memories prior to that period. Murakami delivers a political message through these historical events, declaring that the system continues to prevail with its 'narrow minds with no imagination, intolerance, theories that are removed from reality, empty terminology, usurped ideals, and rigid system.'³⁶ These memories, however violent and long lasting their effect on the characters' psyche, are never documented in detail.

On the other hand, in *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*, memories of wartime, however disconnected they may appear, play a significant role in the plot and they differ from the references to history in Murakami's previous work. Murakami introduces different kinds of violence and cruelty conducted during the war. First is the visceral physical violence as portrayed through the torture of two officers - Yamamoto, a high-ranking intelligence officer, and Lieutenant Mamiya - at the hands of their Russian and

³⁶ Murakami, *Umibe no Kafuka* Book1, 314.

Mongolian captors, who kill Yamamoto by skinning him alive and who throw Mamiya into a dry well, where they leave him to die. The second is psychological cruelty aimed at destroying not the body but a person's sense of self-worth. Years later, Lieutenant Mamiya encounters his Russian torturer, Boris, as a prisoner of war in a war camp in Siberia. Boris takes control of the institution, slowly maneuvering himself from political prisoner to powerful, tyrannical and corrupt leader. Ironically, Lieutenant Mamiya's ability to speak Russian makes him party to Boris's rise and enables Boris to manipulate him and to persuade him that he has nothing to live for. Boris asks Lieutenant Mamiya to work for him and persuades him to convince the leader of the imprisoned Japanese soldiers to agree to cooperate with his plan to suppress rebellious individuals in return for improving prison conditions. After witnessing Boris renege on his side of the bargain, the dismayed Mamiya continues to work for Boris and seeks to build trust between them with the intention of eventually creating an opportunity to kill his employer. However, when Lieutenant Mamiya's chance to kill Boris arrives, he cannot do it. Shortly thereafter he returns to his homeland, convinced that he will live out the rest of his life as an empty shell of a man.

Murakami introduces another episode of physical violence conducted during the war that involves Cinnamon, the son and capable assistant of Tōru's business partner, Nutmeg. While Murakami sets up Lieutenant Mamiya's recollection as real for this novel, by situating the episode within a story that was retold many times by Nutmeg, and by placing this story in turn within a story that Cinnamon writes, Murakami shows that it is how Cinnamon imagines/reconstructs his grandfather's latter days. Cinnamon grows up listening to Nutmeg recount the visit of a Japanese army corps to her father, who

worked as a veterinary surgeon at the zoo in Changchun, China. Knowing that their defeat was imminent, the Japanese army sent soldiers to kill the large animals in the zoo as it had become a heavy burden to keep these animals alive as their defeat nears. This wartime story becomes a part of the wartime episode in a chapter within Cinnamon's imaginary narrative 'Nejimakidori kuronikuru' (The Wind-up Bird Chronicle). The story is also integral to the imagined identity of his grandfather, whose fate is unknown because he remained in Changchun to look after the remaining animals in the zoo when his wife and daughter left for Japan in August 1945.

In this episode, Murakami continues to describe the waste of human life and the soldiers' disdain for the atrocities that war forces people to commit in the name of their nation. When Nutmeg's father receives the corpses of Japanese soldiers a second time, the first lieutenant – who appears to be more reasonable and intelligent than many of the soldiers that the vet has seen previously – requests the vet to be present at the execution and burial of certain Chinese military school students who had killed their Japanese instructors and escaped from the school. The account of the execution focuses on the emotions of those involved - a young soldier who is ordered to kill one of the Chinese students with a baseball bat as an act of revenge for his killing of the instructors in the same fashion; the vet, whom the dying Chinese student grabs hold of before falling into the hole where the other dead bodies lie; and the first lieutenant, who has to shoot the student who grabbed the vet and for whom this is the first time he has killed a human being.

Keeping his focus on the detailed portrayal of Japan's aggression in China, Murakami pens thirty-seven pages on the Japanese PoW's experience in Siberia in

Lieutenant Mamiya's voice, yet *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle* is not a historical novel in the traditional sense. In this work, Murakami connects stories from fifty years ago with a narrative set in 1984 in a novel written between 1994 and 1995. It is unprecedented for this author to construct a narrative that faithfully incorporates documented historical accounts. The bibliography of books that Murakami referenced for this novel about the Battles of Khalkyn Gol, Manchukuo and a Russian lieutenant suggests that the detailed mapping of places and events conjured up in the wartime episodes in *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle* takes account of historical narratives and facts recorded by others as Murakami includes a scholarly bibliography. However, some episodes, such as the visit of the Japanese soldiers to the zoo and the killing of large animals, sit 'in a dim labyrinth between the phantom and the real' in the mind of Nutmeg who tells Cinnamon about her father's time working at the zoo,³⁷ thereby defying categorization as any particular form of writing, whether historical writing, historical fiction, or pure fiction.

By mixing facts and imagined memories into his narratives, Murakami constructs his characters' search for identity. The mixture of events from different times and places, told variously through recollection and imagination, raises questions about Murakami's historical consciousness. How does he view the differentiation between 'real' and 'imaginary' in historical accounts? The comment below from the novel's narrator, Tōru, gives us some clues. He reads Cinnamon's story entitled 'The Wind-up Bird Chronicle' and reflects on the truthfulness and meaning of the account:

I had no way to judge what was real in this story. I don't know whether everything in Cinnamon's story is pure literary creation or whether some

³⁷ Murakami, *Nejimakidori kuronikuru* MH ZSH 1990-2000 5, *Nejimakidori kuronikuru* 2, 157.

parts actually happened. His mother, Nutmeg, told me that the veterinary surgeon's whereabouts are 'completely unknown'. So, it's almost certain that there is no chance that every part of the story is real. But it's possible that some details are historical facts. It is possible that during the chaotic period (toward the end of the war) some students from the Manchurian military school were executed in the Changchun zoo, had their bodies buried there, and the Japanese officer who commanded the killing was later executed. The Manchurian National Army soldiers' rebellion and escape were not rare occurrences then [...]. It is very plausible that Cinnamon learned of such an incident and created *his* story by placing the [imagined] figure of his grandfather there.³⁸

This curious double commentary hints at how the author wishes the various historical episodes within *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle* to be read. While some parts of the novel refer to verifiable historical events, Murakami makes clear that the work is not an academic account of actual events but a product of his imagination. The excerpt above conveys Murakami's message that the connectivity through time of individuals and our view of history informs our identity and actions in the present. In this message, Murakami does not discount the gravity of a nation's collective memory. By placing the story in the frame of the private and public memories of the war, Murakami narrates the story with historical consciousness where his protagonist maintains unbreakable identification with his nation and its experience.

The Wind-up Bird Chronicle examines both the theme of connectedness in relationships – which is expressed, for example, through the efforts of the passive and detached narrator and protagonist, Tōru, to reestablish the human bond in his relationship with his self-sufficient wife, Kumiko – and the theme of fate (also known as

³⁸ Murakami, *Nejimakidori kuronikuru* MH ZSH 1990-2000 5, *Nejimakidori kuronikuru* 2, 283.

‘coincidence’ *i.e.* connectedness *as such*), which can connect *unrelated* characters across time and space. These connections can be purely symbolic as in coincidences at the level of narrative signification, or they can be causal, as when Lieutenant Mamiya’s experience in the well in Mongolia in 1935 *leads to* Tōru’s similar experience in the well in his neighbour’s deserted garden in 1984. The symbolic – and hence *meaningful* – connection between the two is established through the repetition of the central object of the well; the coincidental element lies in the fate that allows the younger man to learn of (and from) the experience of the older man, which he seeks consciously to emulate, leading to his own similar, life-altering, existential experience at the bottom of a pit. This, in turn, leads to his effort to restore connectedness in his relationship with his wife, reminding us, perhaps, of why the well is the central object after all.

In order to portray the connectedness of events and people over a wide expanse of time from 1935 until 1984, that, in a sense, constitutes what we perceive as fate and/or coincidence, Murakami makes use of an additional symbolic motif, the sound of the invisible and imaginary wind-up bird (*nejimakidori*) of the work’s title. Only certain characters can hear the sound of the bird, though it is heard in various locations: in Tōru’s neighbourhood, in the garden where young Cinnamon grew up, and in a zoo in Changchun toward the end of World War II. The use of this motif thus links these disparate settings, which figure variously but seemingly unrelatedly in the narrative, as it also links an otherwise disparate and in some cases unconnected set of characters: Tōru, Kumiko, Cinnamon, the young soldier who kills the tiger and the Chinese student at Changchun Zoo – all of whom hear the voice of the wind-up bird.

By placing the bird's singing, which sounds like the key of a clock being wound up, at crucial points in his protagonists' life, Murakami interjects a sense that something bigger is at work to control the protagonists' fate and the world of the novel. For example, Murakami first introduces the wind-up bird's singing in the novel when Tōru and Kumiko are listening to the wind-up bird sing. The couple names the bird 'the wind-up bird' for its singing sound. Only later in the novel does it become apparent that the bird's singing is foretelling that the couple's lives have started drifting apart - Tōru has lost his perspective as a member of society and is disconnected from his wife and, unbeknown to Tōru, Kumiko has started distancing herself from him by having an extramarital affair. Murakami marks the beginning of Tōru's journey of self-exploration by the bird's singing. Tōru hears the bird singing after he receives a telephone call from a mysterious woman who seeks to communicate with him. In the case of Cinnamon, Murakami places the bird's singing after Cinnamon witnesses the nightmarish activities of two men burying a sack in his garden. As a result of that event, Cinnamon changes from a bright and articulate boy to a mute who is homeschooled to excel in many academic and artistic pursuits. Cinnamon's interest in finding his identity by way of the narrative imagination of his grandfather's fate in China can be traced back to that very night of the nightmare. As all these examples demonstrate, Murakami uses the bird's singing as a cadence that ignites a new turn of events for the novel's universe.

Murakami also structures the novel with an interconnected cycle of links among the characters. Tōru is introduced to Lieutenant Mamiya by the family psychic, Mr. Honda, who worked on a spying mission in Manchuria with the lieutenant. Before his death, Mr. Honda sets up a meeting between Tōru and Lieutenant Mamiya by requesting

that Lieutenant Mamiya deliver a gift to Tōru (an empty box, a metaphoric gesture that indicates Tōru's life needs to be filled) that triggers the process of Tōru's introspection. Mamiya's experience in the well in Manchuria leads Tōru to the well in the garden, whence he returns mysteriously from the other side with a large birthmark on his cheek. Cinnamon's grandfather, the veterinary surgeon, is born with a large birthmark on the same side of his cheek as Tōru's. His daughter, Nutmeg, takes a chance on starting a 'healing' business with Tōru after she spots him with the same birthmark in a crowded Tokyo street. Tōru, Nutmeg and Cinnamon build and share a house on the neighbour's land where the well is situated. The land was once owned by an officer in Japan's expeditionary force in China. There are, moreover, hints that Lieutenant Mamiya may have been in Changchun, putting him in the same space (though not necessarily at the same time) as the vet, the first lieutenant and the young soldier. In *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*, Tōru advances through his adventure to find his lost wife, Kumiko, and reestablish his relationship with her in the preprogrammed world that is full of coincidental connectedness with others and where the wind-up bird knowingly sits on high. In this novel, Murakami questions the extent to which fate and coincidence hold their grip on one's life, while demonstrating values that are found in his protagonist's earnest attempts to establish connectedness in relationship with his wife.

3.2.3. Fate and Destiny in *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*

In *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*, Murakami makes use of certain specialized or specially applied vocabulary to express or communicate the notion of connectivity among characters and events. Key terminology in this regard includes words such as 宿命的諦

観 (*shukumeiteki teikan*, fatalism) and 運命 (*unmei*, destiny).³⁹ Murakami's texts do not attach any Buddhist connotations to these words, but Tōru uses them in his attempts to make sense of the chain of coincidences and unexplained encounters that structure the plot of the work:

Everything is linked like a circle, with pre-war Manchuria and mainland China and the Nomonhan Incident of 1939 situated at its centre. I don't understand why Kumiko and I have been sucked into such an historical fate (歴史の因縁、*rekishi no innen*). The events all took place long before Kumiko and I were born.⁴⁰

For Tōru, these relations and the characters' connections to the past are preprogrammed, and their connectivity to Japan's wartime atrocities is part of their larger connection to the history of Japan. Nutmeg, whose father died in China toward the end of the war, shares his view:

The inexplicable events in my life were somewhat skillfully and scrupulously preprogrammed in order for me to get here.... I feel as if I have been firmly controlled by a very long hand that stretched from somewhere far away. And my life might have been just a convenient passage for these events.⁴¹

Nutmeg's 'inexplicable events' include a mysterious healing power that she suddenly discovers after her husband is found brutally murdered in a hotel room and an

³⁹ Murakami, *Nejimakidori kuronikuru* MH ZSH 1990-2000 5, *Nejimakidori kuronikuru* 2, 263.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 236.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 247.

unexplained sudden attack of drowsiness that comes upon her in her youth just as the boat on which she is escaping from China to Japan is stopped by the U.S. Navy. This is an event that leads to a long sleep that resembles hibernation and leaves only beautiful images of the sea in her memory. Nutmeg's belief in the coincidences and inexplicable events that are described in the above quote prompts her to pick up Tōru – with the birthmark on his cheek that is identical to her father's - from a busy street in Shinjuku after Tōru starts spending days watching the crowds of people go by. Even after the careful and costly preparation and lucrative operation of Tōru and Nutmeg's business that lasts more than a year, Nutmeg's sense of destiny is firm. Her words in the quote above also explains her quick decision to terminate her business arrangement with Tōru and disappear very promptly from his life after she learns that their secretive healing business has caught the unwanted attention of the media (due to Tōru's link with his brother-in-law and as Tōru draws near to Kumiko). Nutmeg's willingness to accept fate also coexists with a sense of transience about her life. As she terms 'a convenient passage', she positions her life as a small part in a larger frame of scheme and time.

Tōru's comment on the circuitous occurrence of events and Nutmeg's belief about her life being firmly controlled suggest that these characters believe in some form of reason behind coincidental events, even when the causality is unknown. The word *innen*, as Tōru uses it, is simply translated as 'fate' in English, but the word *innen* consists of two kanji in Japanese: 因 (*in*) for the power that directly affects and causes an event to occur and 縁 (*en*) for an indirect condition that influences the occurrence of a certain event. Thus the compound kanji 因縁 (*innen*) refers to the direct causes and indirect conditions that underlie all actions. With the premise of these words, Murakami sets up

the story in which the urban dweller, Tōru, needs to find and assert his identity. Here, individualism is tested against the modern sense of being such as ‘predisposition’ (as in the short story *Sleep* in which a function of sleep is set to refresh one’s predisposition daily), ‘fate’ and ‘destiny’ (as in *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*), and ‘blood’ (as in Kafuka’s struggle to come to term with his blood connection with his brutal father in *Kafka on the Shore*). These vocabularies represent, in a broad sense, ultimately the connectedness of the past with the present, and also the connectedness of an individual to his or her nation, his or her nation’s history and its traits. The focus of the story of self-exploration becomes clear when Tōru’s desire to exercise and influence freewill is played out against Japan’s history and his connectedness with strangers over an extended period that is full of the heavy burden of Japan’s past.

3.3. Time According to Murakami: *Kafka on the Shore* and *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*

This section discusses Murakami’s portrayal of time in *Kafka on the Shore* and *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*. Although the evolution of form and style in Murakami’s writing began with a conscious effort to go against the grain of the tradition of Japanese writing style, the idiosyncratically Japanese concept of *ima koko* (now and here) appears to best encapsulate the portrayal of time in Murakami’s novels where he emphasizes his reader’s subjectivity in experiencing time. Such subjectivity is integral to his protagonist’s transformative experience. Murakami sets up time and space as interdependent entities for his protagonist’s process of self-exploration. In his construction of space and geography, Murakami’s depiction of time becomes associated

with a tangible image that is located in a specific magical realist space. In *Kafka on the Shore* and *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*, time takes a different shape in three types of location - time as we see it in our daily life on ‘this side’, immeasurable time on the ‘other side’, and ambiguous time in a space between this side and the other side.

In *Kafka on the Shore*, Kafuka’s story unfolds on ‘this side’. Seeking for a chance of a transformative experience, the protagonist ventures into the woods – the other side - where the dead live and there is no time to speak of. With its magical realist characteristics and this splitting of time frames set within intricate texture of space, *Kafka on the Shore* results in a rich and deep conceptualization of time. In *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*, Tōru starts his self-exploration at the bottom of the well where he can find an entrance to the ‘other side’. There, as he lets go of time, Tōru experiences a meditative state of mind. In the space between this side and the other side in the well-and the ‘other side’ in the woods, the space that I referred to as *ma* in the previous chapter, Murakami depicts time as ‘being’.

3.3.1. Time on ‘This Side’ in the World of *Kafka on the Shore*

Murakami structures his 2002 novel *Kafka on the Shore* by alternating between chapters devoted to two protagonists, Tamura Kafuka and Nakata-san. On ‘this side’ a stoic and independent fifteen-year-old runaway, Kafuka, grows up in Tokyo with his sculptor father Tamura Kōichi. Kafuka is determined to venture out into the world, moving away from his father. He shares his thoughts with his internal voice that he names Karasu (crow), which encourages and assures Kafuka of his chosen course of action. Women, as in many of Murakami’s other long stories, play integral supporting

roles in this novel. During his journey to Shikoku, the coincidental destination that he chooses for no particular reason, Kafuka meets women whom we are led to believe could be his lost older sister and his lost mother, Saeki-san. He happens to meet Saeki-san, the manager of a private library, in an old house where her late lover used to live. He died at the end of the 1960s and she has not been living her life to the full since then. After a few days in a business hotel and a strange incident where he recovers consciousness to find fresh blood splashed on his clothes in a park one night, Kafuka moves into the library and sees the living ghost of Saeki-san in the form of her fifteen-year-old self and engages in an Oedipus relationship with her. Meanwhile the police trace Kafuka's movements to Tokushima in order to question him about the death of his father Kōichi. Prompted by a kind librarian, Ōshima, Kafuka visits a house on the edge of the woods. He makes an exploration into the ambiguous, surreal environs of the woods, the 'other side', where he meets the ghost of two dead soldiers and stays in a cabin where young Saeki-san makes a daily visit to look after him. When Saeki-san dies on 'this side', the adult Saeki-san visits Kafuka in the woods and assures him of a special bond that they share. Kafuka tears himself away from the woods to return to 'this side'. In the end, he goes back to Tokyo alone, with a better sense of who he is and with a commitment to beginning a new life.

The role of the other protagonist, Nakata-san, a man in his sixties, in this novel is that of a vessel of goodwill, a bridge between this side and the other side, a saviour who sacrifices himself in order to relieve the emotional pain of others. Nakata-san carries a deep physical scar from a mysterious episode during the war in which his schoolteacher hypnotizes a group of children during their excursion. As a result of the hypnosis en

masse, Nakata-san has mysteriously lost all of his memories and cognitive functions, rendering him barely functional as a member of society.

An innocent and gentle soul, Nakata-san is guided by intuition and the inexplicable. He leads a simple daily life, relying on government welfare and making a living by catching lost cats. His story is nonetheless filled with unexplained elements. For example, he is able to communicate with animals, and he can cause mackerel, sardines and leeches to fall from the sky. In his magical world, ‘a metaphysical, conceptual object’ appears as a guide for Nakata-san in the shape of the fast-food icon Colonel Sanders, the symbol of the fast-food chain Kentucky Fried Chicken.⁴²

Although Nakata-san and Kafuka never physically meet, and despite their age gap and difference in cognitive ability, Nakata-san is an important and integral part of Kafuka’s present being. Kafuka and Nakata-san are intimately connected by Tamura Kōichi (or by Johnnie Walker as Nakata-san sees him) and by Saeki-san. His adventure to Takamatsu in Shikoku begins after he has a surreal and gory encounter with Johnnie Walker, who appears to be Kafuka’s father Kōichi, and kills him. Nakata-san then meets a long-distance truck driver, Hoshino, who becomes Nakata-san’s traveling companion. They make an adventurous trip guided by Nakata-san’s intuition to Saeki-san’s private library in Takamatsu. Their trip has the significant purpose in the novel of opening a passage for Saeki-san to move to the ‘other side’ and of closing the passage after her death. Having succeeded in their task of finding the passage, guiding Saeki-san to the

⁴² Murakami, *Umibe no Kafuka* Book 2, 98.

‘other side’ and burning her memoirs, Nakata-san dies, leaving Hoshino to close the passage.⁴³

The alternating structure in *Kafka on the Shore*, unique among Murakami’s longer novels but also used in *Hardboiled* and *1Q84*, is accompanied by precise and consistent reporting of time associated with events in the ‘this side’ narration, allowing the reader to follow the precise timeline of two protagonists’ movements. In the story that follows Kafuka and Nakata-san for nearly four weeks, narrating separately their travels from Nakano-ward in Tokyo, where both reside, to Takamatsu in Shikoku, Murakami inserts specific references to the time and day of events in which they are involved in each of the forty-nine chapters, with the exception of Chapter Six and Chapter Ten.

Precise and frequent recording of the time and occasional mention of the day in each chapter allows the reader to follow the narrative like a detective and to correlate the events of the two stories that take place before they converge. For example, Chapter One begins with Kafuka leaving his house at three in the afternoon to take an eight o’clock bus to Shikoku. In Chapter Seven, when Kafuka leaves the hotel at 7:15 a.m. in Takamatsu, arrives at the library at 11:30 a.m. and leaves the library at 5 p.m., the reader knows that it is Wednesday at that point and that Kafuka left his house on Monday in Chapter One. Similarly in Chapter Twenty-Four, Murakami records precise times related to Nakata-san and Hoshino’s movements: ‘When Hoshino woke up at eight next morning, Nakata-san was still deep in sleep in the same position as last night’⁴⁴, ‘But when [Hoshino] woke up at seven the next day, Nakata-san was already up and staring

⁴³ When Saeki-san and Nakata-san meet in the story, Saeki-san becomes a part of Nakata-san’s story, away from Kafuka’s world and ready to move to the ‘other side’ (to die). After she dies, she then appears in the woods (the ‘other side’) where Kafuka wanders in to start his adventure of self-exploration.

⁴⁴ Murakami, *Umibe no Kafuka* Book 2. 3.

out of the window.¹⁴⁵ Tracing the timeline of each story, the reader learns that Nakata-san's story lags behind Kafuka's by three days until Chapter Twenty-Five. These entries ensure that the reader understands that the two alternating stories, despite the differences in tense and style, take place almost simultaneously. In addition, Murakami's technique of obsessively inserting an orderly, linear timeline into the story helps to create the impression that both stories – despite the fact that Nakata-san's world is much more fantastical than Kafuka's – are likely to be happening in the same realm of 'this side', as opposed to the 'other side' where time does not exist.

Murakami uses the precise recording of events to create an effect that blurs the real and the unreal and the distinction between Kafuka's psyche and Nakata-san's reality, particularly in the episode of Nakata-san's killing of the sadistic cat-killer Johnnie Walker (whom Nakata-san sees as Kafuka's father) in Tokyo. This episode gets intertwined with the incident in which Kafuka wakes up in a blood-soaked T-shirt in a park in Shikoku, and also with the newspaper article about the murder of Kafuka's father. Nakata-san's simplistic world is depicted as existentialistic, and the precise chronicling and timeline of events that surround the killing of Johnnie Walker and Kafuka's blood-soaked T-shirt suggest that it is not possible that both Kafuka and Nakata-san could be responsible for the killing. Yet Kafuka (as the narrator of his side of the story) does not and cannot substantiate any concrete evidence as to whether or not he committed the crime. Instead, the story hints at the existence of another dimension, whether psychological, imagined or physical, in which Kafuka fears that he killed his father in Tokyo. Murakami uses the timeline effectively where his construction of this episode

¹⁴⁵ Murakami, *Umibe no Kafuka* Book 2, 8-9.

creates a sense of blurred division between the conscious and the unconscious of the protagonist Kafuka and the unlikely yet intimately linked psyche of Kakfa and Nakata-san.

The difference between Kafuka and Nakata-san in character and role is also marked by Murakami's choice of narrative tenses to tell the story independently for each of them. Tamura Kafuka narrates his own story in the present, including his conversations with his inner self, Karasu. Nakata-san has no memories, so his story is told in the past tense in the third person. The use of first-person, present tense narration draws the reader into Kafuka's internal thoughts and consciousness. Furthermore, Murakami emphasizes the protagonists' respective roles by his choice of language for Nakata-san. Murakami creates a type of a discourse for Nakata-san that resembles the old-fashioned honorific language of a soldier addressing his superior or of a child from an elite upper-middle class family speaking to an elder. His idiosyncratic speech echoes the long-gone society of wartime Japan, situating Nakata-san in the time zone in which he lost his memory. Juxtaposed with this outdated politeness and formality, Nakata-san's intuitive nature helps emphasize the contrasting characterization of pragmatic Kafuka. The effects of such contrast in their language result in the creation of two separate worlds - Kafuka's world of the real and the reasonable versus Nakata-san's world of the unreal and the inexplicable.

Making a clear distinction between the two parallel stories by assigning a different narrative tense to each story and telling them in alternating chapters, Murakami effectively defies an ordinary sense of sequential time. This narrative structure, combined with two contrasting protagonists, who represent psyche that Jacques Lacan terms as

symbolic, imaginary and real, helps create indistinguishable states of real and unreal, conscious and unconscious, here and there. While Kafuka seeks for his reason-being and his imagined mother figure throughout the novel, Nakata-san can only see and live in the present. He instinctively knows that the reason for his being in the world is to restore the present moment, what is here to the way it should be.⁴⁶ With such characterization of the protagonists, Murakami adds deeper and textured dimension to the story of Kafuka's self-introspection and the transformative experience of his conscious.

3.3.2. Time in the World of *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*

Of the three categories of time that are introduced at the beginning of this section (3.3), Murakami eloquently gives a shape and physicality to the abstract time in a space between this side and other side such as that which unfolds in the dry well in Tōru's neighbour's garden in *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*. Tōru's quest to understand his purpose and to find clues to the sudden disappearance of Kumiko begins in the well, through the walls of which he eventually begins to move into another space - the 'other side'. Hence, the deep dark well serves as a type of waiting room or transitional passage on the way to Tōru's further and deeper psychological exploration. The well also embodies his meditative state of mind:

I was crouching at the bottom of this perfect darkness. All I could see was *nothingness*. I had become part of this *nothingness*. I closed my eyes and listened to the sound of my heartbeat, to the sound of my blood circulating through my body, to my lungs contracting like a bellows, and to the sound of slippery organs wriggling and demanding food. In the deep darkness,

⁴⁶ See Murakami, *Umibe no Kafuka* Book 2. 288.

every move and every oscillation was awkwardly exaggerated. This is my flesh. But in this darkness, it was too raw and too physical.

Then, again, my consciousness slipped away from my physical body.⁴⁷

As this part of the novel proceeds, Murakami chronicles Tōru's sojourn in a space of *nothingness*, detailing the transition of his state of consciousness from an exaggerated, acute awareness of his physicality to a state of mind that becomes free of any physical constraints.

After spending time at the bottom of the well on several occasions, Tōru is able to transport himself to the other side, where he finds himself in an unknown hotel room and meets a mysterious woman. Upon his return to the well, he discovers that his neighbor, Kasahara Mei, an idle seventeen-year-old high school dropout who has become friends with Tōru, has removed the ladder that Tōru positioned for himself and has placed a lid over the opening of the well. Stuck in the pitch-black darkness, he finds himself incessantly checking his watch: 'I guessed that I had checked my watch about two thousand times since I came down here.'⁴⁸ Once he decides to put his watch away, he succumbs to a state (or space) in which there is no measurable time:

So then, time, the one without the movement of the watch hands, kept passing in the darkness. Time became indivisible and immeasurable. Once it lost its demarcation, time ceased to be one continuous line any longer. Rather, it became some shapeless fluid that expanded and shrank at its own will. I slept and woke, and slept and woke again. And little by little, I started getting used to the state in which I did *not look at the watch*. I

⁴⁷ Murakami, *Nejimakidori kuronikuru* MH ZSH 1990-2000 4, *Nejimakidori kuronikuru* 1, 380.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 391.

trained my body to realize that I no longer needed time, but I began to feel unbearably anxious. True, I was relieved of the nervous habit of checking my watch every five minutes, but once I completely lost time as a coordinating axis and frame of reference, I felt as if I had been thrown into the night ocean from the deck of a moving ship. No one notices my loud shouts, the ship keeps moving forward, further and further away, without me and is about to disappear from view.⁴⁹

The texture of ‘nothingness’ and ‘no time’ described here is dense and disorienting. Time as we know it, as it connects one’s being with society in a way of chronicling events, is now unbound and disappears into space. Murakami replaces the physicality and texture of time with the space that is a representation of Tōru’s state of mind. Later in the story, when Tōru ventures into the well, determined to transport himself to the unknown hotel room and reach Kumiko, he exercises the familiar meditative warm-up. After visiting the well every day for half a year, he now finds solace in its earthy smell, warmth and softness and he sinks into a state of ‘definite separation from ‘people’’, *i.e.* from the rest of the world.⁵⁰ In this dark isolation, Tōru knows that ‘there are no seasons, not even time.’⁵¹

In this sequence Murakami comments first on the disorientating quality of existence outside of time. But he also postulates that even in the utter darkness Tōru’s consciousness is able to drive time in ways that transform the space in which he finds himself.

3.3.3. Time as ‘Being’ in the Woods in *Kafka on the Shore*

⁴⁹ Murakami, *Nejimakidori kuronikuru* MH ZSH 1990-2000 4, *Nejimakidori kuronikuru* 1, 392-393.

⁵⁰ Murakami, *Nejimakidori kuronikuru* MH ZSH 1990-2000 5, *Nejimakidori kuronikuru* 2, 87.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

The example above suggests that Tōru senses time differently during his adventure of self-exploration. The time that surrounds Kafuka in the woods in *Kafka on the Shore* is also experienced differently from that which exists on ‘this side’. In fact, similarly to Tōru’s act of letting go of time in the well, Kafuka voluntarily takes off his watch before going to the woods. Thus, Murakami constructs a magical realist setting in which he depicts time that transforms itself into something that creates a sense of transient yet eternal time for Kafuka.

In Murakami’s magical space on the ‘other side’, where the protagonist searches for his self and his relationship with others, the dead in the woods repeatedly tell Kafuka that there exist no time or memories on the ‘other side’. For what purpose does Murakami set up the ‘other side’ for his protagonist’s process of discovering his identity? The following reading of *Kafka on the Shore* reveals that Murakami creates a sense of transient yet eternal time for Kafuka’s existential discovery in the magical realist space, separately from the space on ‘this side’.

After he has run away from home, traveled to Shikoku and settled down in the library, Kafuka embarks on his adventure of self-exploration in the woods. This episode begins when Kafuka learns that the police have been searching for him in connection with the murder of his father in Tokyo. As the police close in on him, Kafuka, at the suggestion of a librarian who befriends him, moves into an isolated cottage in the woods. At this point, he has already become entangled in an Oedipal relationship with Saeki-san, whom he suspects and hopes to be his mother. Unaware of Saeki-san and Nakata-san’s meeting or of Saeki-san’s resulting death, Kafuka sets out to rid himself of his constant fear that he has become the person that his father predicted he would be when his father

long ago declared that Kafuka would kill him, commit incest with his mother and rape his sister. (On a bus to Takamatsu, Kafuka meets a kind young woman, Sakura, whom he wishes to be his sister; later, he has a dream in which he rapes her.) Caught in this predicament and aware of his need for something that he can call his own, Kafuka declares himself a ‘void that devours everything that is substantial.’⁵²

In a part of the woods that served as a training ground for the Japanese Imperial Army before World War II, Kafuka meets two wandering ghost soldiers. They explain to Kafuka that they decided to hide in the woods ‘so as not to become part of the violent national will’,⁵³ a frenzied attitude that created a world in which soldiers were expected to disembowel anyone designated as an enemy, whether Chinese, Russian or American. The wandering soldiers thus represent not the mesmerized commitment of the nation to the war effort but the rebellion of individual souls against the collective force of the system. These figures appear in response to Kafuka’s need for help as an individual who is ready to step into the realm of the ‘other side’. Walking deeper into the woods, guided by these soldiers, Kafuka acknowledges that he is in a place of infinite time:

Standing there, halfway down the slope, staring down at this place with the two soldiers, I feel ripples of air shifting inside me. These signs reconfigure themselves, the metaphors transform, and I’m drifting away, far away from myself. I’m a butterfly, flitting along the edges of the world. On the edge there exists a space where emptiness and substance neatly overlap. There, past and future form a continuous, endless loop. There hover signs that no one has ever read and chords that no one has ever heard.⁵⁴

⁵² Murakami, *Umibe no Kafuka* Book 2, 284.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 334.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 336.

Here, having been warned by his friend about the dead wandering soldiers who take him to the cabin in the woods, Kafuka has a sense of what he sees ahead. Murakami characterizes the world of the dead as emptiness and the world of the living as full of substance, but both are in the space that is inclusive of various times in a ‘continuous, endless loop’. Or for Kafuka, ‘emptiness’ is the metaphoric state of his present mind and ‘substance’ the metaphoric state of his future after his self-exploration. In either way, Murakami depicts the woods as a place where time cannot be divided into a neat category of past, present, or future.

The fantastical nature of the woods where the past with no memories and no time, and emptiness and substance coexist with the future in a continuous loop can be elucidated when it is compared to the postmodern representation of time in Jorge Luis Borges’s 1949 short story *The Aleph*. Writing about this work, Edward Soja describes how ‘in eternity, all time – past, present, and future – coexists simultaneously’, and ‘the sum total of the spatial universe is to be found in a tiny shining sphere (called the Aleph) barely over an inch across.’⁵⁵ The short fictional story revolves around the narrator’s encounter with Carlos Argentino Daneri, the first cousin of the narrator’s dead, beloved Beatriz. Carlos, whom the narrator suspects has lost his sanity, shows the narrator a secret space in his basement. The narrator is astonished to see the small yet infinite space, ‘the metropolis’ that contains day and night and every facet of his inner world such as his room, India, London, a horse on a beach in the Caspian Sea, tiles that he saw twenty years before, a deceased purple-haired woman in Inverness whom he shall never forget

⁵⁵ Edward W. Soja, *Thirdspace, Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*, 54.

and a letter that Beatriz wrote, to list but a few.⁵⁶ His viewing of the Aleph culminates in his fear that he would ‘never again be without a sense of *déjà vu*.’⁵⁷ What we find in the Aleph represents Borges’s memories that are so strongly attached to Beatriz. His obsession with her is no different from Carlos’s madness. The imagined vision of the ‘horrendous remains of Beatriz’⁵⁸ in the Aleph suggests that there exists an imagined future in that space, too. The simultaneity of fragmented events from the past, present and future in the Aleph appear as if they are flashing images on a video screen. In this space, the limitations of linear time are no longer relevant. This exemplifies the postmodern way of seeing time and historicity.

In contrast to the postmodern fragmentation of time in the Aleph, the infinite circuitry of time in the woods in Kafuka’s world cannot be irreducible. In this ‘other side’, for example, characters such as fifteen-year-old Saeki-san and the wandering dead soldiers tell Kafuka that ‘time isn’t an important matter’⁵⁹ and ‘memories are not an important issue.’⁶⁰ Unlike the Aleph, the woods cannot be fragmented into pieces, but like the Aleph, space and time in the woods represent the state of the person’s mind. Before Kafuka enters the woods, the librarian cautions him about the danger that he may get lost and never return from the depths of the woods, citing the act of walking into a labyrinth as a metaphor for the process of self-exploration: ‘the principal of a labyrinth is inside of a person and it responds to and reflects the complexity that surrounds that person.’⁶¹ What Saeki-san tells Kafuka in the woods similarly suggests that ‘walking

⁵⁶ Borges, Jorge Luis, *The Aleph*, 283.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 284.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 283.

⁵⁹ Murakami, *Umibe no Kafuka* Book 2, 344.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 375.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 219.

into the woods' demands that the person should allow the surroundings and geography of the space to overtake his mind:

When you are in the woods, you become a seamless part of them. When you are in the rain, you become a part of the rain. When you are in the morning, you become a seamless part of the morning. When you are with me, you become a part of me.⁶²

In this quote, Murakami constructs the blurred boundary between the substances, whether the space, time or minds of individuals in the woods, suggesting that his being in the woods itself represents the meditative state of mind for Kafuka. The woods as space represent the depth and the sense of infinity of time that allows *omniscient* understanding of being. The time in the woods that is the metaphorical labyrinth of Kafuka's conscious, therefore, is his 'being', his conscious and unconscious.

Kafuka receives the fifteen-year-old Saeki-san in the cabin where he stays in the woods, but once she dies on 'this side', she moves from the world of 'this side' to the 'other side'. Kafuka then receives the dead (adult) Saeki-san's visit in the cabin. Kafuka, who longs to be connected with his lost mother, asks Saeki-san whether she is his mother or not. She only gives him an ambivalent answer, but pierces her arm with a hairpin and lets Kafuka lick her blood. This ceremonial gesture signifies the sealing of their bond and relieves Kafuka's long-standing thirst for and anxiety about his belonging, thus completing the self-exploration that the woods can offer him this time.

⁶² Murakami, *Umibe no Kafuka* Book 2., 374.

Once Kafuka leaves the woods (*i.e.* his adventure of self-exploration) to go back to ‘this side’, his unconscious, in the form of Karasu, speaks to him to assure him that he has attained a new sense of being. At this point, the nature of time transforms itself from ambiguous and infinite to concrete:

Time weighs down on you like an old, ambiguous dream. You keep on moving, slipping through time. You can’t escape from time even at the end of the world. But, even so, you have to go there because there is something you can do only when you get there.⁶³

When Kafuka returns to ‘this side’, Murakami portrays time in a modernist sense that moves forward towards the end. Transient and eternal time that cannot be reduced or fragmented in the ‘other side’ takes a different shape where the past and the future is clearly defined. In the quote above, ‘time’ that weighs down on Kafuka means the unshakable past. Yet, having achieved the sense of his self, thanks to the symbolic connection Saeki-san endorses, Kafuka’s unconscious Karasu determinedly encourages him to move ahead towards the future even if the future presents him with uncertainty.

3.3.4. Searching through the Well: Transient Being in *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*

Kafuka’s experience deep in the woods in *Kafka on the Shore* is similar to that of Tōru in the well in that both settings mirror the protagonist’s state of mind – a state of nothingness that precedes the gaining of awareness of the self – and both experiences are linked closely to a transformation in the protagonist’s psyche. In *The Wind-up Bird*

⁶³ Murakami, *Umibe no Kafuka* Book 2, 428.

Chronicle, when he meets Lieutenant Mamiya, Tōru stands at a precarious crossroads in that his wife, Kumiko, is about to disappear from his life. He has begun to notice her remoteness and the emotional distance between them. He also realizes that he has neither found a purpose in his life nor experienced much interaction with society. Indeed, his life has been slowly veering off the rails.

In fact, all the young characters in *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle* are in the process of or about to start a search for self-identity. Kumiko later asks, ‘Which one is the real me?’⁶⁴ after confessing to her husband what she calls the inherent darkness within her and a series of secret activities relating to her relentless bodily desire for other men. Tōru’s seventeen-year-old neighbour, Kasahara Mei, tells Tōru that she intends to remain in a wig factory in order to ‘think what I really want to do and where I really want to be’.⁶⁵ Cinnamon wrote the story ‘The Wind-up Bird Chronicle’ because ‘he is seriously searching for a reason for his own existence’,⁶⁶ and ‘he must search for it by tracing back to the time before he was even born.’⁶⁷ In this regard, the writer of the story within the story mirrors the exploration carried out by the novel’s author, which, despite – or by means of – the work’s numerous historical detours, he carries out through the voice of his narrative proxy, Tōru.

Tōru’s self-exploration begins with his encounter with Lieutenant Mamiya, a retired teacher and a responsible member of society who tells Tōru about his twelve years in a Siberian prisoner of war camp and explains that his life has been an empty shell since his war-time experience. Among other occurrences, he relates to Tōru the events of a

⁶⁴ Murakami, *Nejimakidori kuronikuru* MH ZSH 1990-2000 5, *Nejimakidori kuronikuru* 2, 410.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 414.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 283.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

secret mission that he conducted together with three other soldiers in 1937, prior to the 1939 Battle of Khalkhyn Gol. Officer Yamamoto, the mission leader, was to lead the group into Soviet Outer Manchuria in order to gather information from an anti-Soviet organization. The group enters a border area between Soviet Outer Manchuria and Japanese-occupied Manchuria in the guise of a team of geographical researchers, but Mongolian soldiers capture them in an ambush. One of the Japanese soldiers, a man named Honda, escapes, another has his throat slit, and Mamiya is forced to watch as Yamamoto is gruesomely tortured to death. At the end of the fifteen-page long torture and execution scene, Mamiya is thrown into a dried-up well and left to die, but he is later miraculously rescued by Honda. In between these two events occurs his journey of self-exploration, his account of which is instrumental in bringing about the central thematic event of the novel - Tōru's similar experience at the bottom of the well in his neighbour's garden.

The disproportion between the length and detail of the two episodes and their relative importance to the story is striking, as Mamiya devotes far less narrative attention to his metaphysical journey than to the torture and execution. This imbalance may be the author's way of hinting at a fascination with the macabre on the part of the lieutenant, or on the part of Murakami's own contemporary audience. In any case, it is clear that the enemy's punishment of Mamiya involves significantly less physical violence than that of Yamamoto, and the contrast emphasizes the depth and intensity of the prolonged *psychological* trauma that the lieutenant suffers for the rest of his life.

In a letter, Lieutenant Mamiya tells Tōru that the time that he spent in the well had taught him the importance of finding ‘something’.⁶⁸ The indescribable frustration and sadness expressed in this letter prompts Tōru to go down into the dried-up well in his neighbour’s deserted garden and attempt to replicate the experience to see the light or the ‘something’ that Mamiya had seen forty-seven years before:

I happened to lose my life at one point of my life and I have lived the next forty years of my life lost.... The light shines on our life only for a very brief moment.... Once it is gone, if one fails to grasp what the light offers, there is no second chance. And one may have to continue living in a helplessly profound state of loneliness and regret.⁶⁹

Lieutenant Mamiya speaks in a voice of sincere but indifferent resignation and sadness about his lost years. It is similar to Saeki-san’s voice in *Kafka on the Shore*, who is resigned to living many years of empty life that has lost the meaning after the death of her love in the violence during the student strife. Tōru’s subsequent acknowledgement that he has ‘missed something substantial’ after it becomes obvious that Kumiko has left, establishes a further link between his and Mamiya’s stories.

By recalling the sunlight that briefly shone on Mamiya through the opening of the well in the Mongolian desert, his intense desire to see the light, and his great disappointment of not being able to regain that sensation, Murakami emphasizes the short-lived and transient nature of enlightenment that one may be able to grasp in a given lifetime. According to Lieutenant Mamiya, the nature of the enlightenment also carries a

⁶⁸ Murakami, *Nejimakidori kuronikuru* MH ZSH 1990-2000 4, *Nejimakidori kuronikuru* 1, 255.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 311.

sense of urgency and prompts a need to be discovered. Lieutenant Mamiya's experience and knowledge urge Tōru to the well.

Tōru makes a daily visit to the well and sits at the bottom of the well over a period of six months, hoping to find a clue of how to get reconnected to Kumiko and to reach the other side of the wall to the hotel room. One day, however, Tōru meets a danger when Kasahara Mei purposely blocks his escape route out of the well. Having watched Tōru place a ladder into the well and climb down, Mei comes to the well and talks to Tōru. His life is in her hands. Obsessed with the idea of death and taken aback by Tōru's unperturbed response to her questions about his fear of death, Mei suggests that Tōru make 'a desperate attempt to think about the existence of death at this moment'⁷⁰ because he has limited time left for life. Mei then proceeds to test Tōru by removing the ladder and placing a lid over the well, leaving him in the same position as Lieutenant Mamiya at the bottom of a well with no means of escape.

Tōru falls deep into thought at the bottom of the well and comes to realize the transient nature of one's being. He recalls and compares the sky that he had seen during a camping trip with his elementary school with the one he now sees through the small opening of the well from its bottom:

Looking up at the dawn stars from the bottom of a well was a special experience, different from looking at the full, starry sky on a mountaintop. I felt as if my mind – my existence of my conscious self – was firmly bonded to those stars in the sky and through my narrow window I felt a deep sense of intimacy with them. They could be visible to

⁷⁰ Murakami, *Nejimakidori kuronikuru* MH ZSH 1990-2000 4, *Nejimakidori kuronikuru* 1, 384.

no one but me, down in the dark well. I embraced them as my very own, and they in turn showered me with strength and warmth.⁷¹

Tōru embraces the intimacy that he feels towards the stars here. The quote suggests that Tōru's introspection focuses on emotional attachment with the stars in a very private sense. His time at the bottom of the well further helps Tōru's understanding of his place in a vast expansive time and a sense of circuitry comes to Tōru's mind:

After all, this person, I, was merely made somewhere else. Everything had come from somewhere else, and everything would go somewhere else. I am nothing but a pathway for the person known as me.⁷²

This sense of smallness and transience about his being is not dissimilar to the one that Lieutenant Mamiya felt some forty years before. However, while it was Japan which drove Lieutenant Mamiya's circumstances in the Mongolian desert, there is no obvious invisible force that has led Tōru to his loss and disconnection with his wife and society.

While in the bottom of the well, Tōru has a fantastical experience in which he walks through the wall of the well and emerges in an unknown hotel room. In the dark hotel room, Tōru encounters a variety of mysterious, phantom-like characters. These include an invisible violent force that Tōru intuitively believes to represent the dark side of his brother-in-law, Wataya Noboru. Tōru also comes to realize, after his second visit to the hotel room, that a woman in bed in the room, whose face is hidden from him, is the

⁷¹ Murakami, *Nejimakidori kuronikuru* MH ZSH 1990-2000 4, *Nejimakidori kuronikuru* 1, 369.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 389.

metaphorical embodiment of the ‘other’ Kumiko that she may have been struggling not to become.

By depicting Tōru’s experience on the ‘other side’ as a reflection of his inner thoughts, Murakami conjures up the contemporary motif of disconnection and a sense of loss. Tōru’s glimpse of the sky, therefore, needs to be told in conjunction with his magical experience and the adventure of his self-exploration. Without these wartime historical events, the empirical connection that Tōru feels with the stars is much more private than Lieutenant Mamiya’s.

Kafka on the Shore and *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle* showcase Murakami’s take on time and its complexity and multiplicity. When Murakami chooses a simple linear timeline for his novel, it is used as a device to emphasize the possibility of another kind of time in an undisclosed place. When Murakami does not depict time on a linear timeline for his novels, he portrays time as an immeasurable substance and gives physicality to an abstract concept. Murakami’s metaphysical time represents more than a succession of recordable events. Adopting a notion of time as ‘being’, Murakami’s sense of time and historicity is flexible and expandable to many different shapes, but the underlying purpose of his time remains to understand one’s self.

Although his postmodern short story *Collapse* deconstructs historical events and reveals the protagonist’s idiosyncratic inward-looking nature and disregard for anything of global significance, in *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle* Murakami portrays that his characters honor history and are not self-indulgent, or seeking a romantic escape in the

past. Murakami's imagination focuses on individual, personal history, but he also shows the fatalistic connection between strangers. While maintaining its private nature, Murakami's time is expressed to show individuals' connectivity with each other and with the nation. With such a versatile and exploratory approach to the representation of time in his works, and with his theme of self discovery, Murakami can be said to be a versatile writer whose works sit in the categories of both modern and postmodern.

Reading these novels also reveals that Murakami relates memories from the past, in particular the 1960s students' strife and Japan's wartime atrocities, to the meaning of writing and literature. In *Kafka on the Shore*, Saeki-san, who has entered limbo after her death, visits Kafuka in his cabin in the woods one afternoon. When Kafuka asks the question 'Memory isn't that important here?', Saeki-san, whose living spirit has appeared as her fifteen-year-old self in front of Kafuka in the library where her dead lover used to live, replies, 'No, memory isn't very important here. Memory is something that a library deals with.'⁷³ Through the symbolism of the library, in which emotion and memory can take form in a collection of books, Murakami makes a statement about the role of literature in giving life to perishable memories.

When the author diverges into topics such as blood, connectedness, the nation's past, and the war and violence – mainly through the bodies of male characters in *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle* - it is curious to note the absence of a father figure for the protagonist in this novel. As one revisits Murakami's Jerusalem Prize speech, it is not farfetched to imagine that Murakami's quest to know his late father's memories that were never retold in full and left for Murakami to imagine is a process to understand himself

⁷³ Murakami, *Umibe no Kafuka* Book 2, 375.

and what he inherited from his father. This is a similar process to that which Cinnamon takes up in his attempt to understand himself by imagining about his grandfather in China. Through exploring the subject of real and imagined memories from the Soviet-Japan War and the China conflict in *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*, Murakami may be attempting to decipher both his father and himself. Murakami's insistence on depicting violence graphically in various forms in this novel can also be seen as an investigation of the fear of brutality that he believes is deeply instilled in our unconscious psyche and that can be unleashed by some unknown force.

This concludes the first three chapters of this thesis that have examined language, space and time in the literary construction of 'the world of Murakami'. The next two chapters discuss 'Murakami in the world', examining Murakami's sense of belonging as a transnational writer and the social criticism that surrounds Murakami's literature, demonstrating a fuller picture of the literary landscape of Murakami.

Murakami in the World

Chapter Four

World Literature and Murakami: A Writer Who Sits Outside

Herbert Mitgang has pointed out that Murakami's style and themes are closer to those of Kurt Vonnegut, Raymond Carver and John Irving than to the fiction of Abe, Mishima and Kawabata, and that his language translated by Alfred Birnbaum easily makes the transition from Japan to a readership amongst the American middle classes.¹ Mitgang described Murakami's *A Wild Sheep Chase* (translation by Alfred Birnbaum) as an example of 'the trans-Pacific novel'.² This chapter examines the delicate balance that Murakami maintains between his 'Japaneseness' and the international outlook in his literature within the framework of world literary discourse.

Preceding chapters have already touched on Murakami's international outlook through a range of literary aesthetics that possess characteristics such as 'universality', 'cultural scentlessness' and 'cosmopolitan feel'. These characteristics defy readers' expectations - such as the imagined exoticism of Japanese authenticity - that are met by his canonical predecessors. But this chapter aims to show that Murakami became increasingly interested in attaining something that he considers to be fundamentally Japanese through his writing, thereby possibly creating his own Japaneseness for his narrative. This was influenced by his experience of being an expatriate and his desire to transcend orientalist and sentimental portrayals of Japanese society.

¹ See Herbert Mitgang, 'Books of The Times; Young and Slangy Mix of the U.S. and Japan' in *The New York Times*, October 21, 1989.

² *Ibid.*

Murakami's literary outlook also differs from his predecessors and many of his contemporaries in its engagement with the world outside Japan, particularly with America, due to his cultural exposure to America in various ways. America was Murakami's idealized, cultural haven when he was growing up. Murakami immersed himself in American pop culture and modern American novels during his youth and these clearly informed his sense of plot development, language and style. However, his journey to becoming a trans-Pacific writer began when he accepted an invitation to stay at Princeton University in 1991.³ The chapter looks at the different ways in which Murakami and Etō Jun (1932-1999) saw America as their 'other' through a comparative reading of their essays about their time in Princeton and about the novels written by Kojima Nobuo (1915-2006), a member of 'the Dai-san no shinjin' (Third Wave of New Writers), for whom America is a persistent and haunting motif. The reading reveals that Murakami's experience in Princeton allowed him a new perspective as a Japanese writer, who sits on the fence between the contemporary cultures of both Japan and America, in contrast with Etō's idealization of an unadulterated Japanese past. Murakami's time in America gave him the conviction that 'Although it might not be as powerful as Latin American literature, Japanese literature has the possibility of making a breakthrough [in the world of literature]', but only 'through revisiting the Japanese language and Japaneseness'.⁴ Murakami is careful not to characterize his new awareness as a nationalistic 'regression to Japan', and he aims to establish his own, new type of Japaneseness.

³ Just as the critic Etō Jun (1932-1999) chose Princeton and eventually decided to study F. Scott Fitzgerald as his research subject thirty years before, Murakami accepted a position as a visiting fellow at Princeton's Oriental Studies Department because it was the alma mater of Fitzgerald.

⁴ Murakami Haruki, *Yagate kanashiki gaikokugo*, 123.

Whether or not his literary Japaneseness helped his popularity, given Murakami's global economic success, his novels fit within the framework of world literature as broadly defined by David Damrosch in that they are representative of 'literature produced, translated and circulated in the world'.⁵ Indeed, Murakami's global reception has fostered a re-emergence of the study of world literature for scholars of Japan and of Japanese literature.⁶ For some time the Japanese media has circulated rumours of the possibility of Murakami receiving the Nobel Prize in Literature, often using the term 'world literature' to describe his recent works. However, considering the term 'Haruki phenomena' that the Japanese media uses to address the author's global and economic success, it can be argued that Murakami's novels are viewed as a global commodity by the Japanese cultural establishment. Bearing in mind some skepticism among the domestic critics concerning the literary value of his fiction and the worthiness of the global reception for his literature, this chapter considers Murakami and argues that he fashions himself as a new type of Japanese transnational writer, not only through his narrative form and language, but also by staging himself on the international literary scene with exposure to an international readership as an active participant in the capitalist marketing strategies of the publishing industry.

4.1. Japanese Literature Seen through the Perspective of World Literature

⁵ David Damrosch, *What is World Literature?*, 1-36.

⁶ The prevailing interest in *Haruki genshō* (Haruki phenomena) can be seen in the many newspaper articles on Murakami. For example, *The Nikkei Shinbun* reported the popular Japanese cultural export, the works by Murakami Haruki, as a global phenomenon in a series of articles in early 2006. Publications of books on this subject include *A Wild Haruki Chase, sekai wa Murakami Haruki o dō yomu ka*.

Ōe Kenzaburō's Nobel Lecture in 1994 explains that to readers in the West, Kawabata Yasunari and Ōe represent two polarized visions of Japan in their writing.⁷ Kawabata, the 1968 recipient of the Nobel Prize in Literature, represents a traditionalist vision, rooted firmly in old Japan, despite his continued interest in and experimentation with new modernist literary styles. Ōe belongs to the tail end of the Third Wave of New Writers who started their literary career between 1953 and 1955 and represents 'new' Japan.⁸ He portrays man's struggle to internalize what it means for an individual to belong to a nation and the world. Other Japanese writers show a diverse variety of styles that are beyond the 'exotic' tradition of Kawabata, Mishima Yukio (1925-1970) and Tanizaki.⁹ For example, the post-war avant-garde writer Abe Kōbō's (1924-1993) 'Kafkaesque' surrealist works intrigue many foreigners. Post baby-boomer writers, the vast majority of whom are female, have also built up a steady readership abroad - Yoshimoto Banana (b.1964) enjoys much popularity in Italy, Tawada Yōko (b.1960) writes in German and Japanese from her domiciled Germany, and Ogawa Yōko (b.1962) has a strong following in France.

Johann Wolfgang Goethe (1749-1822) foresaw the shift from local nationalism to universalism. More than a century before Japanese writers gained global recognition, the globalization of the early nineteenth century West prompted Goethe to remark that 'poetry is the universal possession of mankind, revealing itself everywhere and at all

⁷ See Ōe Kenzaburō, '*Aimaina Nihon no watashi (Japan, the Ambiguous, and Myself: the Nobel Prize Speech and Other Lectures)*'

⁸ Japanese literary critics categorized post-World War II writers by the year they appeared on the literary scene. 'Dai-ichi-ji sengo-ha sakka' (the First Post-War Writers) such as Ōoka Shōhei (1909-1988), Noma Hiroshi (1915-1991) and Haniya Yutaka (1909-1997) first published in 1946 and 1947. 'Dai-ni-ji sengo-ha sakka' (the Second Post-War Writers) from the following 1948 and 1949 include Mishima, Abe Kōbō (1924-1993), Shimao Toshio (1917-1986), Hotta Yoshie (1918-1998) and Inoue Mitsuharu (1926-1992).

⁹ Their literary aesthetics such as vocabulary and imagined landscapes helped portray things distinctively Japanese and therefore seem 'exotic' from the perspective of Western readers.

times in hundreds and hundreds of men... National literature is now a rather unmeaning term; the epoch of world literature is at hand, [...]'¹⁰ He points out universal messages of mankind that transcend nations. He believes that Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880), for example, is world literature that deals with a range of themes covering atheism, religion, philosophy, passion and lust, and free will. It confronts readers with existential questions of morality. Such existential issues are continuously revisited and questioned, but a contemporary reading demands more diversity in theme, style and literary aesthetics in order to convey universal messages. In 1969, Kurt Vonnegut expressed the need for constant reinvention of the universal imagination through the words of his character, Eliot Rosewater:

Rosewater said an interesting thing to Billy one time about a book that wasn't science fiction. He said that everything there was to know about life was in *The Brothers Karamazov*, by Feodor Dostoevsky. "But that isn't *enough* anymore," said Rosewater.¹¹

The quote above speaks of the continuing need for diversity in style, form and language to convey universal messages in a novel. A connoisseur of science fiction, Vonnegut's Rosewater shares a room in a mental hospital with Billy Pilgrim. Together, they create a science fiction, a fantasy world to help them comprehend and cope with the horrifying events of World War II. Here, Vonnegut says, universal values conveyed in an epic novel such as *The Brothers Karamazov* do not convince the reader who, having experienced a traumatic war, tries to find salvation in escapism and a fantasy world that

¹⁰ David Damrosch, *What Is World Literature?*, 1.

¹¹ Kurt Vonnegut, *Slaughterhouse-Five*, 129.

denies the present and immediate surroundings. Fifty years on since Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five*, technology and the global economy have made vast amounts of information and commodities available at a speed that people have never before experienced. This has helped the process of deconstructing traditional norms and expectations, and has made the way for experimentation with new creative forms, enabling their dissemination to a global audience.

When Murakami is asked about the relevance of his story being Japanese given the number of cosmopolitan pop culture references, e.g. 'If you changed a couple of Japanese names the story could take place in New York or in San Francisco,' he admits that 'there probably is a no-nationality about it'. However, he explains his intention to reveal something more fundamental about ethnic identity hidden beneath the cosmopolitan façade:

[...] what I wanted was first to depict Japanese society through that aspect of it that could just as well take place in New York or San Francisco. You might call it the Japanese nature that remains only after you have thrown out, one after another, all those parts that are altogether too "Japanese." That is what I really want to express. I think my novels will tend more and more in that direction from now on. In that sense, but in a very different sense from Mishima, I am after something Japanese.

[...]

I think I will be living in America for some time to come, but while living in America, I would like to write about Japanese society from the outside. I think that is what will increasingly define my identity as a writer.¹²

¹² Interview with Murakami Haruki and Jay McInerney, 'Roll Over Basho: Who Japan is Reading, and Why', *The New York Times*, September 27, 1992.

In his 1992 discussion with American author Jay McInerney, Murakami is introduced as a new type of writer who can bridge the gap and the ‘cultural trade imbalance’ between American and Japanese fiction.¹³ Murakami portrays himself as one of a new generation of Japanese writers who try to rebel against their predecessors’ convictions ‘about Japan’s uniqueness, its nature, its structure, its functions’.¹⁴ Murakami clearly defines himself as a Japanese writer in the above statement, yet distinguishes himself from his immediate predecessors such as Mishima Yukio. He seems to be saying that what he considers the core and definitive nature of ‘Japaneseness’ is drenched by Mishima’s aesthetics, which Donald Keene characterizes as obsessive, Western, baroque and strongly influenced by classical Greek.¹⁵ Keene also observes that works by Mishima do not display ‘the feminine aspects of Japanese culture’ that Kawabata sought, but rather ‘the masculine traditions of the warrior (that Mishima found in the West) and destruction’.¹⁶ Murakami is trying to break away from the ‘Japanese’ that the West adores and finds exotic in Mishima’s ‘too Japanese’ exterior. Instead, he attempts to capture Japanese society against an ordinary urban backdrop with protagonists who appear to be living an ordinary life using simpler vocabulary and style.

Let us take a look at some examples of Mishima’s writing in order to understand the differences in theme, motif and literary aesthetics of Murakami and Mishima. In almost all of Mishima’s texts, the reader is spared no surface details. His meticulous

¹³ Interview with Murakami Haruki and Jay McInerney, ‘Roll Over Basho: Who Japan is Reading, and Why’, *The New York Times*, September 27, 1992.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ See Donald Keene, *Down to the West*, 1182-1183.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 1183

descriptions of an image are so vivid, sensuous and fragrant, they can overwhelm the reader with emotion. In *Haru no yuki* (Spring Snow, 1965), the first volume of *Hōjō no umi* (The Sea of Fertility), Mishima begins a story of unfruitful and forbidden love with a recollection of protagonist Kiyooki Matsugae as narrated by his friend, Honda. It leads to a scene in which Kiyooki performs an important role as a page at the New Year's festivities at the Imperial Palace. Mishima lavishes his sentences with detailed descriptions of Western court dresses, accessories and the scent that the Empress and Princess Kasuga wear. Against this background of extreme Western formality and customs, Mishima sets up Kiyooki's awakening consciousness of women.

[Princess Kasuga] held herself erect, and walked straight ahead with a firm step, betraying no tremor to her trainbearers, but in Kiyoshi's eyes that great fan of white fur seemed to glow and fade to the sound of music, like a snow-covered peak first hidden, then exposed by a fluid pattern of clouds. At that moment, for the first time in his life, he was struck by the full force of womanly beauty – a dazzling burst of elegance that made his senses reel.¹⁷

In describing the beauty that surrounds his protagonist, his textural exterior becomes his protagonist's interior. Kiyooki is breathtakingly handsome but such beauty is portrayed as inauspicious:

His pale cheeks flushed crimson when he was excited, his brows were sharply defined and his wide eyes, still childishly earnest, were framed by long lashes. They were dark and had a seductive glint in them. And so the Marquis was roused by the flood of compliments to take note of the

¹⁷ Mishima Yukio, Michael Gallagher (Trans.), *Spring Snow*, 9.

beauty of his son and heir, and he sensed something disquieting in it. He was touched by an uneasy premonition. But Marquis Matsugae was an extremely optimistic man, and he shook off his discomfiture as soon as the ceremony was over.¹⁸

Here, beauty is met with heavy black clouds indicative of Kiyooki's future. A celebration of beauty is contrasted against possibilities of its destruction. Mishima's descriptions are ornate, but these words are concise and set the tone for a doomed love affair ending melodramatically with Kiyooki dying young of pneumonia and his lover choosing to become a Buddhist nun. Reading Mishima is a different experience from reading Murakami. As Hosea Hirata describes it, Mishima's texts seduce the reader.¹⁹

In contrast, Murakami aims at much more subdued language. His narrative reveals its links with the Japanese literary tradition by means of its structure, the way that time is constructed and its depiction of space in a simple style that often reminds the reader of somewhere unspecific, familiar and nostalgic.

Richard Powers (b.1959) describes Murakami's approach to identity thus:

His stories find remarkable comfort in inhabiting a distributed self, a new cosmopolitanism, even as old states vanish. Where can we hope to live, in the age of the universal refugee? No place but everywhere. In homelessness is our freedom to inhabit any place in the world, for all places everywhere arise from the mirroring negotiation of mind. (...) If his work could be said to have one overriding theme, one irresistible

¹⁸ Mishima Yukio, Michael Gallagher (Trans.), *Spring Snow*, 10.

¹⁹ See Hosea Hirata, *Discourses of Seduction, History, Evil, Desire, and Modern Japanese Literature*, 126-129.

attraction, it must be this deep and playful knowledge: No one can tell where "I" "leaves off and others begin."²⁰

Powers here articulates the tension that the Murakami narrative brings out in foreign readers. Murakami's texts demonstrate the negotiation of mind between "I" and others, and the tension between modernity and postmodernity in contemporary Japan and on the global stage. His essays about America reveal much about the ways in which he differs from writers who cannot help seeing non-Japan as a definite other to "I". Murakami's others – those characters in his novels against which the protagonists define themselves and against which he defines himself - are found in a fluid, new type of cosmopolitan space. Taking these themes forwards, the following section addresses Murakami's personal relationship with America. His cultural engagement with America is fundamental to his literary development and his actual experience of America helps us to understand him as 'a writer who sits outside'.

4.2. Etō Jun and Murakami's America: A Departure from America as Other

The ways in which American modern and contemporary literature have impacted on Murakami's literary development are often discussed. By his own admission, the language, style, plotlines and pop culture references found in his works are predominantly American. This section will go beyond a comparative literary analysis

²⁰ Richard Powers, "The Global Distributed Self-Mirroring Subterranean Neurological Soul-Sharing Picture Show" as a keynote speaker at "A Wild Murakami Chase: How the World is Reading and Translating Murakami Haruki" symposium. *Japanese Book News, Summer 2006, no.48*. 14.

between Murakami and American authors. Rather, it will focus on Murakami's relationship with America through the essays that he wrote during his first long stay in America. These will be compared with the essays written by Etō Jun.

Each writer stayed about two and a half years in the US and taught Japanese literature at Princeton University's Oriental Studies Department. Their essays reveal views of the historical progress that Japan as a nation has made in both in its relationship with America and globally, and the psychological development of each writer in his personal relationship with America. We will see that whereas Etō's time at Princeton confirmed his identity as a Japanese with strong conflicting emotions about America, Japan and modernity, yearning for pre-modern Japan as a nation and *Nihon-kaiki* (日本回帰、a return to old Japan), Murakami established a foot in both worlds and did not view America as his or Japan's 'other'.

4.2.1. Living in America, Overcoming Modernity? : Etō's *America and Myself* and Murakami's *Eventually, Sorrowful Foreign Language*

After his 1985 novel *Hardboiled* won the Tanizaki Jun'ichirō-shō (the Tanizaki Jun'ichirō Literary Award) and *Norwegian Wood* sold more than ten million copies²¹, Murakami left Japan for Europe in search of a quieter environment. After three years of being a 'transient traveler' in Europe, Murakami returned to Japan for one year and accepted a position as visiting scholar at Princeton University in 1991.²² He was forty-two years old and had established himself as a writer in Japan with two literary awards

²¹ Mainichi shinbun dejitaru (Daily Maichini Digital)
<http://mantanweb.jp/2011/01/20/20110119dog00m200037000c.html> Viewed on January 25, 2011.

²² Murakami, *Yagate kanashiki gaikokugo*, 275. Murakami then became affiliated with Tufts University until 1995.

behind him. Two of his novels, *Pinball, 1973* and *A Wild Sheep Chase* had been published in English translation and *The New York Times Review of Books* had published a review of *A Wild Sheep Chase* by Mitgang. Murakami explains his motivation for the move with the following light touch - ‘Simply I wanted to see more different places and experience various things. I wanted to meet many people and try out a variety of new potentials.’²³

Reflecting on this period in *Eventually, Sorrowful Foreign Language*, Murakami describes it as the time he experienced America not as a cultural fantasy of films, books and music, but as a real place. America was until then an imaginary place, a ‘virtual reality’ and ‘a foreign country that [he] had created in [his] mind’, in order to escape from the ‘conformity and uniformity’ of Japan that he detested so much.²⁴ Once Murakami started living in America, however, his virtual, idealized country of America took on real shape. Murakami writes that he was convinced that he would miss nuances and connotations and that something would be lost in his conversations in English, even though one would assume that his command of English was at an advanced level, given his numerous translations of American literary works from English to Japanese. Murakami felt unable to overcome his fundamental psychological distance with America. It is not possible to measure the impact that this hesitation had made on his approach to his life in America. Although a collection of essays from this period reveals a shift towards greater social consciousness in his writing, including criticism of social injustice, however, Murakami’s approach appears similar to some Japanese academics whom Etō observed critically and labeled as young and rash Japanese academics who considered

²³ Murakami, *Yagate kanashiki gaikokugo*, 277.

²⁴ Ian Buruma, *Ian Buruma no Nihon tanbō: Murakami Haruki kara Hiroshima made*, 72-73.

their time in Princeton as merely a long vacation that gave them the chance to own a car and socialize with exotic ‘foreigners’.²⁵ Indeed, some of Murakami’s essays, such as one about his quest to find a suitable barber, are very light-hearted in tone.

By contrast, when the twenty-nine-year-old Etō accepted the Rockefeller Foundation’s invitation to take up a position at Princeton as a visiting scholar, he was at an early stage in his career as a literary critic. He recalls that his ‘psychological self-defense intuition’²⁶ had prevented him from having much contact with Americans and American culture – American films, music, English broadcasting - because of his deeply rooted sense of humiliation over Japan’s defeat in the war and his experience of living under American occupation. Etō’s essays in *Amerika to watashi* (America and Myself, 1965) exhibit his determination to establish and prove himself as an independent individual in America. Through a medical emergency that he had to deal with for his wife upon his arrival, he quickly recognizes that America is a country that demands the ‘survival of the fittest’.²⁷ Faced with the ‘chilly, lonesome’ feeling of being an individual in a country which does not present him with landscapes that evoke a traveler’s sentiment or delight his heart, Etō sets out to leave his mark on his new environment as a literary critic and by ‘maintaining [his] identity in this different culture’.²⁸ In order to achieve this goal, he discontinues his ties with the Japanese media, such as newspapers and publishing companies that had provided his income.²⁹

To understand the two men’s different approaches to America, we need to first consider the balance of power, politics and culture between the two nations when

²⁵ Etō, *Amerika to watashi*, 13.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 55.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 27.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 12.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 18.

Murakami and Etō wrote these essays. During his stay from 1962 until 1964, Japan's defeat in World War II dominated Etō's imagination, prompting his search to understand America and to come to terms with the meaning of being Japanese. He was conscious of the canonical modern writers such as Sōseki, Ōgai and Kafū who were sent abroad by the nation. Etō differentiates the cultural conditions of his time and his experience abroad from these pioneering writers whose mission was to learn about Western literature and who never returned abroad after their first stay.³⁰ While these canonical writers had a significant influence on the process of developing Japan's understanding of Western literature, Etō points out that Western literature in Japan is, in a way, an imaginary construct developed by modern Japanese writers - both by those writers who never left Japan and by those writers who were struck by the difference between their nation and their hosting country during their limited time on what was often a single trip abroad. Indeed, at the core of Etō's thoughts was the problem of modernity that America had come to represent that overtook the old 'authentic' Japan and that Japan was forced to adopt as a result of 'the relationship of the winner (America) and the loser (Japan) that was determined during the American occupation period.'³¹

In order to come to terms with his identity as Japanese in America, he sees America 'not as a model of "democracy" or an incarnation of "capitalism"'.³² Civil War history informed his understanding of America. Etō thought that a simple principle - 'the strongest is always the winner' - has guided America's dynamic power balance between

³⁰ Sōseki was sent to England from 1900 until 1902, Ōgai to Germany from 1884 until 1888, and Kafū to America and France from 1903 until 1908. During his time abroad, Kafū was financially supported by his father who worked for the government, therefore I would argue that his family's identity was closely linked to Japan at the time. Etō, *Amerika to watashi*, 313.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 55.

³² *Ibid.*, 77.

the federal government's unifying force and the state governments' centrifugal forces.³³ Etō's America is run by patriarchal principles and values. Etō concluded that being a lone, independent individual in a power-focused society was an American-specific sense of being. By comparison, he saw Japan as an incubating ground for an individual to remain close to what Etō calls his 'mother' and he explains a mother's strong influence on her household and her close relationship with her son in Japanese society in the following way. 'A son has to make sure that he passes down his inherited land to his son. Unlike [his American counterpart] the lone cowboy, a Japanese son must remain close to his family, as he is to his mother. He must care about his land with deep emotion, as he does for his mother.'³⁴ As this excerpt explains, for Etō, an individual in Japan may possibly never separate himself from his mother or his home and may miss out altogether on the process of forming his own identity. This may lead to a condition in which the invasive foreign being is identified as an obvious 'other', forcing individuals to reassess their own identity. This concept, which was to become a foundation for his critical works, is discussed later in this section. When Etō was grappling with the meaning of being Japanese and seeing America as the 'other' to Japan, the post-war child Murakami was only thirteen years old and was collecting American jazz records.³⁵

Murakami accepted modernity and America through cultural consumption. In *Hear the Wind Sing*, Murakami makes three references to John F. Kennedy (1917-1963): in Nezumi's small talk with his girlfriend; the photograph of *boku's* girlfriend dated 1963, the same year as Kennedy's death; and the Kennedy coin pendant that Nezumi wears. They hold no ideological or political significance for his story, and seem to function as

³³ Etō, *Amerika to watashi*, 77.

³⁴ Etō, *Seijuku to sōshitsu – haha no hōkai*, 11.

³⁵ Murakami, *Yagate kanashiki gaikokugo*, 102.

mere random decoration as if they were part of the general cultural environment. Kennedy's significance for Murakami, however, becomes apparent in *Eventually, Sorrowful Foreign Language*, a collection of serialized essays about his time in Princeton. To Murakami, Kennedy's image from the 1960s was that of the iconic American.³⁶ Murakami grew up admiring American men's fashion in the sense of 'Brooks Brothers suits', the clothes that he saw on jazz musicians such as Miles Davis on their record album jackets', and Paul Newman's very American look.³⁷ Kennedy in suits sends out 'a powerful enough vibration through the air that directly transports their smell and feel.' He interprets this look as strong 'self-assurance and conviction that the American establishment naturally wore on their sleeves in that era.'³⁸

Murakami's view of Kennedy is formed from afar and Kennedy's early sensational death crystallized him as an American political icon, as well as a cultural and consumable one. In contrast, Etō portrays Kennedy in an altogether more negative light. During Etō's stay, three politically important events occur – the Cuban missile crisis, rioting at the University of Mississippi campus in Oxford over a desegregation issue, and Kennedy's assassination. In his detailed recollection of the days that followed the Kennedy assassination, Etō reports on the extensive public analysis of the event with cool objectivity. He sees this in contrast to 'people in Japan who view Kennedy's image with wishful thinking and through tinted glasses'.³⁹ In conclusion he observes Kennedy as 'an ambitious man who is busy with self-promotion' behind 'the pose of an idealist'.⁴⁰ Etō decides that Kennedy's ambition comes from the bitter grudge of being a descendant of

³⁶ Murakami, *Yagate kanashiki gaikokugo*, 233.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., 235.

³⁹ Etō, *Amerika to watashi*, 153

⁴⁰ Ibid.

an Irish immigrant from Boston'.⁴¹ To Etō, Kennedy appeared to ruthlessly advance American ambition in the world through his foreign policy. In Etō's view, American democracy – which he conflates with the 'American way of life' - contains a primeval undercurrent that is strictly controlled within society. The genius of American democracy, Etō continues, is found in the same 'wild nature' that is unleashed to perform a task with limitless ambition to expand, filling daily lives with 'relentless strife'.⁴² Their democracy was 'not developed in a finishing school, but was rooted in a view that human nature is fundamentally depraved.'⁴³ Etō even equates their system of presidential elections every four years with 'a ritualized revolution – a sacrificial ritual that demands murder of their king for the sake of the continuation of their country.'⁴⁴ Etō concludes that American democracy symbolizes its imagined nation and cannot be imposed on 'the Japanese way of life that shares no resemblances with America'⁴⁵, pointing out that his nation lacks understanding of the values and history behind the idealized ideology of democracy in the U.S. Here, again, we observe Etō positioning America as the 'other' to both Japan and himself by continuously imagining it overpowering Japan and imposing its alien culture.

The historical events in the 1960s played a significant influence in forming Etō's relationship with and understanding of America. America in the early 1990s had its turbulence too, albeit of a different kind. The Persian Gulf War started as Murakami was beginning his year in Princeton. Following its outbreak, Murakami noted his discomfort at anti-Japan sentiment around the time of the fiftieth anniversary of the attack on Pearl

⁴¹ Etō, *Amerika to watashi*, 155-156.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 156.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 155-156.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 100.

Harbor. He also noted the Japan bashing prompted by American's frustration at the long economic downturn, and the racially charged 1992 Los Angeles Riots.⁴⁶ He later recalls 'a sense of deep exhaustion' descending on the nation.⁴⁷ Murakami observes that 'the nation that kept winning' with the zeal of what Etō characterized as its 'wild nature' and the clear ideology of democracy as its backbone, had reached a point of stagnation.⁴⁸ Murakami also senses that contemporary Japan is suffering from a feeling of 'restlessness' and is ill at ease with itself. However, he sees the U.S.'s mood shift as different in nature to that of Japan's. Murakami reasons that America's national ideology enables its citizens to articulate their discomfort politically. On the other hand, he sees Japan's mood resulting from its lack of a clear ideology, echoing Etō's view that the imported idea of democracy has not yet developed fully in Japan.⁴⁹

Etō returned to Japan with an unforgettable sensation of being utterly alone whilst in America - 'a certain sorrow that runs deep'.⁵⁰ Etō believes that America has instilled this feeling in him, and that it does not and will not exist in Japan. Murakami writes that his American experience, too, has given him a feeling of being socially irrelevant and an advanced taste of 'social death'.⁵¹ This loneliness comes partly from the milieu in which both Etō and Murakami found themselves. Murakami observes and accepts the conservative, elitist snobbishness of the intellectual class he encounters in Princeton. He finds that this offers him a comfortable space and a 'pace of life that allows him to delve

⁴⁶ The Los Angeles Civil Unrest (April 28 – May 4, 1992) was triggered by an acquittal verdict by a jury for four police officers who beat African-American motorist Rodney King. Smaller riots and anti-police sentiment spread to other locations in the U.S.

⁴⁷ Murakami, *Yagate kanashiki gaikokugo*, 21.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ See Murakami Haruki, *Henkyō, Kinkyō*, 168-169.

⁵⁰ Etō, *Seijuku to sōshitsu*, 254

⁵¹ Murakami, *Yagate kanashiki gaikokugo*, 278. Etō, *Amerika to watashi*, 69.

into [his] creative system' so long as he observes their unspoken rules.⁵² The same atmosphere was observed and welcomed by Etō. While Etō views Japan as a forced follower and imitator of America, Murakami says that the time has come 'after two generations when Japan reveals the full consequence of the demolition of the class system initiated by General McArthur in post-war Japan.'⁵³ Murakami challenges America's dominant influence over Japan. Comparing Japan and America's popularization of sub-culture and social equality, he claims that Japan now precedes America socially.⁵⁴

Many things American, including landscapes, reminded Etō of his preoccupation with Japan's modernization, westernization and reconciliation with defeat and occupation. After seeing Los Angeles' unattractive urban landscape and New York's skyscrapers, the beautiful landscape around Princeton offered him a peaceful haven, but not the anonymity of a large urban space.⁵⁵ On a short visit to Tokyo, he sees a product of modernization - an 'ugly, dry, gigantic urban city' that was busily building infrastructure for the 1964 Tokyo Olympics and whose inhabitants wore hopeful expressions on their face.⁵⁶ Etō's mind, however, promptly wanders to scenery in an imagined old Japan, an ideal picture of *furusato* (one's birthplace) in pre-westernized time. His imagination finds a line of drying diapers in the garden of a thatched house in the countryside more beautiful than a line of washing on balconies of multi-unit apartments, and he turns his

⁵² Etō, *Amerika to watashi.*, 34.

⁵³ Murakami, *Yagate kanashiki gaikokugo.*, 50.

⁵⁴ Yoshimoto Takaaki introduced Japan's popularization of sub-culture in his *Masu-imēji-ron* (Discourse of Mass-Image, 1984). See Murakami, *Yagate kanashiki gaikokugo*, 49-50.

⁵⁵ See Etō, *Amerika to watashi*, 24, 29-32.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 115.

eyes from the rapid and voluminous urban development and scenery that Maeda Ai terms ‘the expression of the System (central authorities)’

With rapid economic growth in the following years, urban landscapes, either in America or Japan, cease to be a novelty. They become synonymous with anonymity - the scale, mass and volume of globalization that swallows up the individuals within. As a result, Murakami turns his attention to the landscape of suburbia. In the mid 1970s, Japan embarked on a large-scale process of suburbanization to cater for the overspill from cities and the growing commuter workforce. The Americanization of the living environment in Japan triggered a new paradigm of literature in Japan, just as the same geographical phenomenon in America of the 1950s had. In the case of America, this impact was made manifest in a wide range of themes such as the dysfunctional family lives and the nightmare of suburbia that are portrayed by writers such as Ross Macdonald (1915-1983) and Stephen King (b.1947).⁵⁷ Murakami is intrigued by the eeriness, anonymity and non-existence of originality in the endless series of suburban middle-class American towns and the sameness of the flat and monotonous landscape that he sees from his car window. He cannot help but feel a sense of helplessness. Murakami views this landscape of middle-class America as directly related to the stagnation of America, in particular, the dwindling of confidence and optimism among Americans.⁵⁸ He ponders the meaning of human life in this setting and is startled at the countless undifferentiated facades of suburban houses that create an illusion that nullifies the individuals’ worlds

⁵⁷ See Nakamata Akio, *Literature: Japanese Literature after the Murakami Revolution*, 56-59.

⁵⁸ Murakami, *Yagate kanashiki gaikokugo*, 99.

inside them⁵⁹. He imagines that what appears as ‘a peaceful, solid and ordinary place is founded on fear’.⁶⁰

As a writer of stories set in urban landscapes and imaginations, Murakami often deals with themes of vacuity, a gaping hole of a loss within a protagonist, who is often looking backward in search of clues for his current state of mind. Before the publication of *After Dark* in 2004, all his novels (*A Wild Sheep Chase*, *Pinball, 1973*, *Dance, Dance, Dance*, *Kokkyō no minami, taiyō no nishi* (South of the Border, West of the Sun, 1992), and *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*) follow the theme of what individuals lack and their anonymity within an urban life and space. In *After Dark*, Murakami deals with the private dramas hidden in Japanese middle-class suburbia. Although both the violence committed and the quiet drama of lonesome people connecting with one other happens in the middle of the night in a busy entertainment district of central Tokyo, the protagonists live in the suburbs. In one story, Shirakawa, a cold-blooded and violent man who attacks a woman while wearing the mask of a helpful husband and good father, goes home to an unsuspecting family in suburbia and sinks into numbness at the kitchen table to the noise from the television. In another suburban setting, Eri, who appears to have everything - beauty, charm and the undivided attention of her family - falls into a long bout of unconsciousness. The house looks exactly the same as those around it, but inside there is deep unhappiness. This average middle-class family has for a long time alienated Eri’s sister Mari, in favor of Eri. Mari seeks solace in a characterless family restaurant in the urban space. Murakami has transposed what he imagines in the endless picture of the sameness in the American suburban landscapes to Japan. Here, he depicts the collapse of

⁵⁹ Murakami, *Yagate kanashiki gaikokugo*, 201

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 100.

suburban family life, contrasted against the care that strangers offer each other in an urban landscape.

Unlike Etō, Murakami notes that his personal experiences over the years have weakened his dualistic view of Japan versus America. He has felt intellectual snubs and alienation in both places. In Japan, he often finds himself caught in annoying social dilemmas, and also sees examples of excess and ostentation in his surroundings. In America, being a stranger, an outsider and a person who does not possess fluency in English, means a different kind of social alienation and separation. It forces him to look hard at who he really is, stripped of social markers and familiar linguistic references.⁶¹ It seems that Murakami is never completely at ease with either Japan or America and prefers to remain an outsider in both places.

As Japan's exposure to the West and its modernity and seeing the West as its 'other' led to Japan's self-discovery and introspection, Etō remained focused on understanding America as his 'other', seeing himself as a member of the nation that lost the war. He sought his identity as a Japanese in the way he would like to be without the constraints that Japanese society placed on him.⁶²

Murakami's America is not his definitive 'other'. While in America, he regards himself as an outsider and 'a mere bystander'.⁶³ This is not to say that Murakami pretends to be *blasé* about his time at Princeton. It is fair to say that Murakami does not record his internal conflicts with the same degree of tension and seriousness as Etō does. In his essays in *Eventually, Sorrowful Foreign Language*, Murakami does not connect modernity, the source of anxiety for Etō, to America and he makes no reference to

⁶¹ See Murakami, *Yagate kanashiki gaikokugo*, 278-279.

⁶² See Etō, *Amerika to watashi*, 100-101.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 51.

Japan's defeat in World War II. America was too familiar to be intimidating to Murakami. He consumed and digested American pop culture and had assimilated it as part of his imaginary landscape through literature, films and music since his youth. He appears to have welcomed the American concept of being an individual in a society long before he came to America. For instance, his observations at a few marathon events in Boston, New York and Japan give him an opportunity to criticize the system in Japan. Comparing the management style of marathon events in America and Japan, Murakami criticizes Japan for expecting an individual to belong to an organization, and notes that Japan's bureaucrats place excessive focus on appearance and their rigid format.⁶⁴ His criticism of Japan's formal social system that allows little room for individual expression is a recurring theme in his novels.⁶⁵ The contrast with informality and elevation of the individual in the US heightened this perception.

In contrast to Etō's 'othering' process in America that eventually directs him to take refuge in the Japan of long ago, America gave Murakami a chance to engage with the fact that Japan used to be his 'other'. Although he does not go as far as to claim that Japan has entirely ceased to be an entity against which he defines himself, he is willing to clarify his identity as a Japanese writer for whom the Japanese language forms his core and foundation by emphasizing his fascination with Japanese, the language, as a tool to deliver his universal message:

⁶⁴ See Murakami, *Yagate kanashiki gaikokugo*, 78-82.

⁶⁵ Chapter One, Two and Three of this thesis pointed out the ways in which Murakami portrayed his distrust of Japan and its system in the examples of *Hear the Wind Sing*, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, and *Distance and Proximity*. See Chapter One for *Hear the Wind Sing*, Chapter Three for *A Wild Sheep Chase*, and Chapter Two for *Distance and Proximity*.

But one thing that I can earnestly say is that I have come to confront a country called Japan, or a language called Japanese, very seriously since I came to America. To be honest, when I was young and would start writing a novel, I used to want to escape as far away from the situation, Japan, as possible. In other words, I wanted to get away from the spell of Japan. I believed that [getting away from Japan's spell] would help me write about something 'closer' to me, my core. This sounds like a non-patriotic thought, but I can't help it as this is how I actually thought. And I tried my best to do that. In order to find compromises between the Japanese [language] and myself, I struggled hard, applying every possible method and way of seeing things differently. [...]

But as I got older and acquired the writing style that I can call my own, little by little and after much struggle, and as I spent more and more time outside Japan, I gradually came to like the act of writing a novel in Japanese. The Japanese language has become precious, indispensable to me. This does not mean 'Returning to Japan'. [...] Because I am not saying that Japanese is linguistically superior. There are many people who claim how beautiful Japanese is compared to other foreign languages, or how Japanese is a language of great quality, but I don't think that is right. Japanese appears a wonderful language because it is the language that is squeezed out of our life and is clearly part of us, not because its characteristics are superior to others. It is my consistent, unalterable belief that all languages are basically equal. And without acknowledging that all languages are basically equal, fair cultural exchange is impossible.⁶⁶

Murakami acknowledges that being in America made him engage with Japan and the Japanese language in a more personal way. Teaching modern Japanese literature to graduate students at Princeton and giving lectures and speeches in California, Texas, Michigan, New York, New Hampshire and Washington, Murakami notices the audience's shift in interest in Japanese literature from the classical and early modern period to the contemporary period. While Murakami is defining himself as a Japanese

⁶⁶ See Murakami, *Yagate kanashiki gaikokugo*, 281-283.

writer against the ‘other’ after being exposed to things foreign, he considers that this recognition does not mirror any kind of cultural relativism.⁶⁷

Murakami has translated many works by American authors into Japanese.⁶⁸ He established a pace for his writing production by undertaking translation work between long novels. There is no doubt that he will continue to search for inspiration for his own literary development in the style, rhythm and structure of American authors’ works.⁶⁹ Yet while the American cultural imagination holds significant influence over Murakami, America as a nation does not. Having lived in America for a few years, his sentiment remains that of an outsider and he observes his surroundings with a sense of curiosity and bewilderment. As mentioned earlier, Murakami’s identity as a Japanese writer firmly co-exists with his emotional attachment to the Japanese language. The Japanese language gives him an identity - an inherent sense of self and what Murakami terms the ‘self-evident’ - in a foreign environment.⁷⁰

The title for Murakami’s collection of essays *Yagate (before long) kanashiki* (sorrowful) *gaikokugo* (foreign language) originates from this revelation. He lists the places in which the title popped into his head as ‘looking at myself in the mirror at the barbers, buying a cup of coffee and a donut at Dunkin’ Donuts near the university, sipping a glass of wine at someone’s party, absent-mindedly waiting for the changing of the traffic lights with my hands on the steering wheel’.⁷¹ At these moments he suddenly becomes aware that he is surrounded by the (English) language with which he does not

⁶⁷ See Murakami, *Yagate kanashiki gaikokugo*, 122-123.

⁶⁸ The list of American authors whose works Murakami translated is in Chapter One. Section 1.1.

⁶⁹ Murakami Haruki, interview ‘Boku ni totte no <sekai bungaku> soshite <sekai> ‘ (12.05.2008) in Mainichi JP, <http://mainichi.jp/select/wadai/news/20081020mog00m040026000c2.html> Viewed on October 14, 2010.

⁷⁰ Murakami, *Yagate kanashiki gaikokugo*, 285.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 284.

identify.⁷² Here, the word *kanashiki* (哀しき) conveys a sense of resignation, accepting, lamenting and doubting in addition to sadness. It is not a sadness that results from frustration at the lack of a strong command of English, but rather the helplessness of not being able to connect emotionally with the words.⁷³ Once back in his home country and surrounded by his mother tongue, he is faced with the same question: ‘To what extent can anything be said to be truly inherent about *all these things* that we believe to be self-evident?’⁷⁴ Although this doubt fades away as he spends more time in Japan, Murakami summarizes something that he discovered in his relationship with America: ‘It is a sense of mist-like chilling skepticism held somewhere in our mind that tells us that we are a stranger [wherever we choose to be] and we cannot postulate anything as axiomatic.’⁷⁵ Again, he questions the validity of belonging, attachment and the meaning of what is on the surface and what we think we naturally and instinctively know. He has no definite answer to these existential questions. In this ambivalent realm, Murakami leaves the balance and the distance between ‘I’ and others unresolved.

4.2.2. Two Readings – Etō and Murakami’s Interpretation of America, Japan and Modernity through the Works of Kojima Nobuo

While in the US, both Etō and Murakami taught Japanese literature; their choices of material and different readings shed light on the way that their experience in the States was affecting their relationship with their homeland and their approaches as writers. Their literary criticism of post-war writer Kojima Nobuo highlights their preoccupation

⁷² Murakami, *Yagate kanashiki gaikokugo*, 284.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid. Italic in the original text.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 285.

with modernity, America, individuality, family, self and ego. Etō taught courses to Princeton's undergraduate and graduate students on classical Japanese literature and modern Japanese writers such as Ōgai, Kafū and Masamune Hakuchō (1879-1962). As a visiting lecturer, Murakami held a weekly seminar for graduate students at Princeton, discussing short stories by the 'Third Wave of New Writers' who appeared on the Japanese literary scene between 1953 and 1955. These included Yoshiyuki Junnosuke, Shōno Junzō (1921-2009), Kojima Nobuo, and Yasuoka Shōtarō (b.1920). Murakami chose Etō's *Seijuku to sōshitsu – 'haha' no hōkai* (Maturity and Loss – The Collapse of the 'Mother', 1967), a critical work on novels by the Third Wave of New Writers to supplement the short stories for his seminar.⁷⁶

One could say it is a mere coincidence that both Etō and Murakami chose the Third Wave of New Writers as their subject, or one could posit that Murakami consciously chose them because of the historical connection with Etō's Princeton experience. However, it is likely that the Third Wave of New Writers resonated with both men due to their fresh literary style and their common interest in grappling with the question of modernity and America. Indeed, Etō found the theme for his book in *Kaihen no kōkei* (A View by the Sea, 1959) by Yasuoka and *Hōyō kazoku* (An Embracing Family, 1965) by Kojima. In an appendix to *Maturity and Loss* Etō explains how he came to choose the novels for inclusion in his book. He says that after reading *A View by the Sea* for the second time after returning from Princeton, he identified the theme of 'the collapse of 'the mother' and the absence of 'the father'' as common to other novels by

⁷⁶ Some of the 'Third Wave of New Writers' had spent time in the US around the same period - Kojima (1957-1958), Yasuoka (1960-1961) and Shōno (1957-1958) were all invited to America by the Rockefeller Foundation.

the Third Wave of New Writers.⁷⁷ He explains that this was possible because of ‘a certain sense that can only be known by one who has lived in America’, and because of his identification of himself as a Japanese who has returned from America with this new awareness.

The Third Wave of New Writers characteristically tell stories close to the style of the *watakushi-shōsetsu* (I-novel), many in short story form where the intimate details of domestic life are related against the background of everyday life. This stands in contrast to their immediate predecessors, the ‘Dai-ichi-ji sengo-ha sakka’ (the First Post-War Writers) and the ‘Dai-ni-ji sengo-ha sakka’ (the Second Post-War Writers) who often reflect their own extreme experiences during the war in politically charged and existentialistic narratives. This is typically displayed in Ōoka Shōhei (1909-1988)’s *Nobi* (Fires on the Plain, 1951) which tells the story of a Japanese soldier in the Philippines who goes mad in his struggle for survival after realizing that God has abandoned the world to its dismal state. The Second Post-War Writers were familiar with and adopted Western literary techniques, actively dealt with social issues, and produced many long novels.

In a collection of essays from his literary seminar, *Wakai dokusha no tame no tanpen shōsetsu annai* (A Guide to Short Stories for Young Readers, 1996), Murakami characterizes novels by the Third Wave of New Writers as void of ‘the oppressive structure and conscious delivery’⁷⁸ that is commonplace in the First Post-War Writers’ work. The characters portrayed by the ‘First Post-War Writers’ tend to be defined by

⁷⁷ See Etō, *Seijuku to sōshitsu*, 252-255.

⁷⁸ Instead, Murakami is attracted to the more sophisticated, non-political content of the Third Wave of New Writers’ literature. Murakami, *Wakai dokusha no tame no tanpen annai*, 126.

their father, whilst those of the Third Wave of New Writers hesitate to move away from the shadow of a motherly figure and into an independent adult world. The different readings of Kojima Nobuo's novels by Etō and Murakami clearly demonstrate their contrasting emotional stances towards Japan and its defeat in World War II, America and themselves. This section focuses on their reading of two novels by Kojima - *Uma* (Horse, 1954) and *An Embracing Family*. Both novels have as their central characters a married couple, and a house and America as a disruptive force. In both stories, Kojima portrays a man who struggles with modernity in the form of his marriage, his identity and individualism. In both, a male protagonist – *boku* and Miwa Shunsuke – is passive, awkward in communicating with others and bewildered by his powerful and pragmatic wife, who is named Tokiko in both novels. He not only lacks patriarchal character, but also confidence as an equal partner to his wife in their relationship. Kojima's *boku* and Shunsuke are often overpowered by the forceful Tokiko. Each feels trapped in his relationship because of their one-time confession of love a long time ago, and each chooses to disengage from others. Most male characters in novels by Murakami share similar characteristics with the ones in Kojima's. *Horse* and *An Embracing Family* contain some farcical scenes in which the pathetic protagonist transcends the boundaries of normal behaviour. Murakami comments that Kojima employs such humour to portray the protagonist's desperate attempts to paper over the cracks appearing on his psychological wall under pressure from society and people around him.

4.2.2.1 *Horse*: The Prelude to *An Embracing Family*

Horse is intimate and fantastical. It draws the reader close to *boku*'s psyche. It frequently takes the reader from realism to a world of delusion without drawing a clear line between them. The short story involves a husband and wife – *boku* and Tokiko. In his relationship with Tokiko, *boku* cannot express himself well and has long since resigned himself to the belief that 'Tokiko is the husband'.⁷⁹ One evening, after a long day of work to supplement his income to pay off the loan for his first house, he discovers that Tokiko has arranged, without consulting him, for a new house to be built in a part of the lot that became vacant after a house owned by a commanding officer in the Korean War burnt down in an air-raid. The process of building the house reveals the extent of *boku*'s suppressed ego, indicating that he holds no authority over anyone and lacks male sexual potency. In a society that is experiencing a difficult transition from 'old modern' to the new modern that American democracy and foreign cultural infusion have brought to Japan, he tries hard to hold onto a mother-and-child-like relationship with Tokiko. A persimmon tree behind the house that cannot bear any fruit is a metaphor for his emasculated status. The lot on which the persimmon tree and the new house stand is another metaphor for the destruction of the commanding, powerful, patriarchal authority of pre-war Japan. The short story ends when *boku* chooses not to surrender to Tokiko's scheme, but to suppress his self-consciousness and to admit himself to a sanatorium. Tokiko runs after *boku* and confesses her love for him for the first time. The ending, however, shows no indication that he will be able to attain an equal standing or adult independence in his marriage.

⁷⁹ Kojima Nobuo, *Uma*, 299.

The couple displays no emotional connection with each other as husband and wife. Tokiko's focus is on the concept of the house itself and later shifts to what will go inside the house, once it is built. *Boku's* story revolves around his 'others' (characters such as the contractor and the horse) who appear during and after the construction. For her, the house and its contents are an extension of her self, while he cannot fully accept either 'other' as a part of his self. During the process of having a house built under the command and supervision of his wife, whom the builders call *danna* (master), he becomes more and more uncertain about his identity. In his delusion he identifies parts of his masculine and patriarchal self only in others. One evening, when he sneaks around to check the new house, Tokiko mistakes him for a dog. Hearing Tokiko shoo 'the dog' away, he starts wondering whether indeed he will end up becoming a dog. *Boku* confuses himself with the contractor who *boku* thought had visited his wife during the night until he is corrected by Tokiko. It was in fact *boku* who escaped from the sanatorium to visit Tokiko during the night and he saw only his own shadow. Later, *boku* in his paranoia believes that their new horse, Gorō, is whispering to his wife, 'Missus, Missus, please open the door'⁸⁰, but he comes to conclude that he has mistaken Gorō for himself because 'it once happened that [he] mistook [his] own shadow for someone else's'.

Tokiko, on the other hand, calms, consoles and controls her husband like a mother does her child and systematically proceeds with her plan to finish the house that signifies a solid marriage for her. *Boku* cannot agree with the idea of building a new house since he has a child-like passive belief that a house is something that 'God drops from the sky to snugly place above us like an umbrella'.⁸¹ After all, it is he who has to financially

⁸⁰ Kojima, *Uma*, 331-332.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 291.

provide for such a project. Therefore, not only is he surprised and dismayed to find out that Tokiko has designed an elaborate two-story house, but also gets confused about the person – either his wife or the masculine contractor – who decided to build a stable in the house. He has passively accepted the role of an outsider and bystander in the dynamics between the female (Tokiko) and the powerful, authoritative male (contractor) in the process of building the house. In addition, Kojima introduces the idea of a male horse living in the house in order to complete what is lacking in *boku* as a husband – sexual potency. Indeed, when a horse comes into *boku*'s view, he feels threatened and acts in a pathetic and farcical way:

The flashing image of a horse came back to me. I jumped out from behind the persimmon tree where I was hiding and immediately tried to punch the contractor.

[...]

Perhaps the contractor thought of something that needed to be done on the roof. He had begun to climb up the ladder with ease, shouting. This made me bump into the ladder, but it was in vain.⁸²

Boku cannot direct his anger at the actual source of his anxiety (Tokiko). Instead, he pathetically fails to attack his rival, the contractor, who is also a threat to his identity, and instead hurts himself, ending up in a sanatorium. *Boku* keeps his eyes on the progress of the house's construction from his sanatorium room.

⁸² Kojima, *Uma*, 307.

Once the house is completed, *boku* is released from the sanatorium. However, his delusion continues in the new house where the focus of the story moves to the horse, Gorō. *Boku* imagines that Gorō, ‘this glossy creature that is bigger than me, young and noble and wild at the same time, looks down on me as on a manservant.’⁸³ By focusing on the quasi mother-son relationship between the couple and their ‘imperfect (marital) contract,’⁸⁴ and by referring to the horse as an ‘external sexual device’⁸⁵, Murakami interprets Tokiko’s excessive care and indulgence of Gorō as an unconscious demonstration of her yearning for the maleness and sexuality that she finds so lacking in her husband⁸⁶; she spends much of her time in Gorō’s room which is lined with books and furnished with substantial pieces of furniture, reads books, dines in the room, and talks to Gorō as ‘a mother talks to a baby, or a newlywed wife talks to her husband.’⁸⁷ Murakami also shows the couple’s complex expectations for each other in their relationship. Tokiko wants to commit to *boku*, but she believes that their relationship is tangible only when Gorō – the phantom of male sexuality - is shared by both of them as an integral part of their unit. This reveals that she only partially accepts *boku* as he is. Driven by the desire to conquer his rival metaphor for male sexuality, *boku* takes Gorō out on a ride. On his way home after many struggles, *boku* sees the contractor coming out of his house again. This time, *boku* watches, defeated, as the sexual Gorō chases after the figure of pragmatism and authority. Again *boku* admits himself to the sanatorium, at which point he is conscious of his schizophrenic ‘others’, but chooses to retreat from his daily reality and abandons his self-consciousness altogether.

⁸³ Kojima, *Uma*, 325.

⁸⁴ Murakami, *Wakai dokusha no tame no tanpen shōsetsu annai*, 86.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 89.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 87-88.

⁸⁷ Kojima, *Uma*, 332. 335.

The ending is left open for the future of their relationship:

You love me, don't you? You just do as I tell you. You will gradually get better. Is there any two-story house like that in our neighbourhood? If you don't like it, I will leave.... In truth, I love you. You can't be normal without a woman like me looking after you. Don't you understand?⁸⁸

Tokiko's dialogue is forceful and almost pathetic, containing words that are half-threat and half-petition. Apart from her confession of love, she attempts to convince *boku* that resuming their mother-son-like relationship is for the best. Murakami, however, reads it differently, calling the short novel 'a story of healing and forgiveness'.⁸⁹ He considers that the ending and, in particular, Tokiko's confession of love for her husband displays some maturity in the couple's relationship, and that this theme of maturing and development becomes the basis of Kojima's longer novel *An Embracing Family*. Murakami's reading is based upon his assumption that many couples continue with their daily life without ever confronting existential issues, devoting themselves instead to external material acquisitions such as the horse and the house.⁹⁰

In another short story, *Amerikan sukūru* (American School, 1954), Murakami points out that Kojima creates very similar characters – a man Isa, an English teacher who cannot speak the language, is forced to speak English on an official group visit to an American school. A domineering, proud and proactive teacher, Yamada, plays a role similar to the contractor's in *Horse* and the American principal, Williams, represents

⁸⁸ See Kojima, *Uma*, 343-344.

⁸⁹ Murakami, *Wakai dokusha no tame no tanpen shōsetsu annai*, 93.

⁹⁰ See *Ibid.*, 90-92.

manly sexuality like Gorō. A female teacher, Michiko, efficient and commanding like Tokiko, showers Isa with motherly attention. His fear of speaking English to Americans reaches a point where he decides to abandon speaking in any language altogether. Etō attributes Isa's drastic and pathetic action to his lack of inner strength that would otherwise sustain his 'loneliness' in the pressured environment. Etō reasons that Isa's self constantly senses pressure from outside as if his umbilical cord were still connected to and relying upon something outside his inner self.⁹¹

Etō argues that both novels portray the destruction of the father figure and the father's authority in Japanese society as the result of defeat in the war and the modernization brought about by America. At the time of *Horse's* publication, such a reading would be entirely relevant. A contemporary, postmodern reading, however, may not find this explanation convincing. Although Murakami's critical reading of *Horse* mentions a quasi mother-son relationship several times, he warns that it would be too simplistic to rely too heavily upon Japan's historical mother-son relationship and the fear of becoming an individual with an independent mind. Since Murakami used Etō's *Maturity and Loss* as a supplementary text in his modern Japanese literature class, his comment is possibly directed at Etō. Murakami sees Tokiko's intention to build the house as 'her way of expressing her love for him, attempting to transfer the concept of love's contract (for a married couple) to the process of creating something substantial.'⁹² His analysis of *boku* and Tokiko are familiar to readers of his novels: the detached *boku* and the committed Tokiko.⁹³ Murakami agrees with Etō on the state of the couple's relationship being close to that of mother and child, but he makes no mention of the

⁹¹ See Kojima Nobuo, *Amerikan sukūru*, 378-379.

⁹² Murakami, *Wakai dokusha no tame no tanpen annai*, 83.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

source of it in modernity or in Japan's cultural tradition as Etō does.⁹⁴ This is because their senses of attachment and detachment towards America and Japan upon their return home differ. Etō used a phrase 'to sleep with America'⁹⁵ to express his determination to commit himself to America. During his time at Princeton, he devoted himself to studying the American history of democracy and to developing his own theory about the 'American way of life'. He came home, however, a convert to an idealized unadulterated Japanese past, as expressed in the phrase *nihon-kaiki*. He viewed the Occupation as something which had 'wrenched the Japanese from their own history in the interest of democratizing and Americanizing Japan,' and believed that Japan's 'organic whole of culture' could only be restored by 'an integrated totality secured by imperial sovereignty' that had been seen in the 1930s.⁹⁶ Murakami's attachment to America, on the other hand, appears much lighter. His attachment is based on cultural consumption and his stance is that of an emotionally detached, cultural observer. Unlike Etō's critical essays that cannot shake off the looming shadow of America, Murakami's own contemporary writings scarcely mention the problem of modernity in Japan, and 'America as Japan's Other' is not a primary concern for Murakami's critique or his creative process.

4.2.2.2. *An Embracing Family*

Kojima's long novel, *An Embracing Family*, deals with a similar subject to that of *Uma*. It portrays the process that a husband (Miwa Shunsuke) and wife (Tokiko) go through as their pseudo mother-child relationship matures. Kojima repeats the motif of America and the loss of and reconstruction of the patriarchal family unit. America, and

⁹⁴ Etō, *Amerika to watashi*. 84.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁹⁶ H.D. Harootunian, "America's Japan / Japan's Japan" in *Japan in the World*, 217.

all things American, are portrayed as modernity and as the ‘other’ that Shunsuke feels inferior to but must grapple with in order to become whole. In *An Embracing Family*, Kojima further expands the metaphor of a house as the bond between a husband and wife and the structure through which their relationship matures. It tells of a man’s hesitancy to become an independent and decisive individual, who is at least an equal partner of his wife against the background of the pressure that America exerts on a rapidly changing Japanese society. Etō praises the ingenuity of *An Embracing Family* in its portrayal of the hidden alliance between the ethical (modern) and the natural (old) Japan through the relationship of a married couple.⁹⁷ He analyses the work of the Third Wave of New Writers through the psychological prism of the Japanese mother-son relationship as opposed to the American mother-son relationship. He believes the former remains intimate and sensual whereas the latter is severed at a boy’s early age and he quotes developmental psychologist Eric Erikson who says that most American male youth carry an emotional wound from being rejected by their mothers.⁹⁸ Etō’s ‘othering’ of America also manifests itself in his imagination. He sees the country as an independent ‘lonesome cowboy crossing a prairie’ whose mother rejected him to prepare him for a life on the frontier.⁹⁹ He introduces the theory that Japan has inevitably developed a different kind of nature from America because a man would remain in his ancestral land surrounded by his extended family with strong ties of blood in Japan’s traditional farming society. Etō goes on to declare, ‘(Japanese) literature cannot escape from being influenced by such a background.’¹⁰⁰ Etō’s conviction that Japanese society has such innate nature is obvious

⁹⁷ Etō, *Seijuku to sōshitsu*, 48.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 8, 11.

in *Maturity and Loss*. He analyses *An Embracing Family* extensively in *Maturity and Loss*, mostly dwelling on the themes of America and modernity, Japan's defeat in the war, the nation's loss of paternity, and lastly the process of maturity for a man that is only made possible by detachment from his mother.

As in *Horse*, Shunsuke, a university lecturer in foreign literature, never fully sees himself as a complete person. Etō writes that the ideal form of a married couple for Shunsuke would be a naturalistic one that transcends ethics, responsibility and self-interest and in which the wife plays the role of mother to both children and husband. He imagines that it exists in a paradise at the heart of which is a mother surrounded by children.¹⁰¹ However, Shunsuke attempts to realize his ideal only after events cause his family life to crumble and force him to take the centre stage in the family. The irony in this novel is found in the deep divide between the exotic (American) ideal and real life for Shunsuke and Tokiko. Tokiko wants to emulate a modern American family in which she believes that the husband-wife relationship is bound by a contract; the wife is in charge of domestic affairs and the husband, in return, pours affection upon her.

However, a young American soldier (George) is Shunsuke's frequent guest, and Tokiko's yearning for American modernity in womanhood as well as in her marriage creates conflicts. When the couple are at the American military airport's waiting room, Tokiko brushes away Shunsuke's hand when he tries to help her with her coat. When he counters, 'This is their etiquette, isn't it?', she snaps at him, 'Embarrassing!'¹⁰² She feels ashamed of any 'husbandly' American manners that Shunsuke tries to adopt in front of Americans. Tokiko's behaviour indicates that she knows that her husband's attempt to

¹⁰¹ Etō, *Seijuku to sōshitsu*, 36.

¹⁰² Kojima, *Hōyō kazoku*, 17.

simulate American ways can never be successfully authentic. Shunsuke spent a year at an American university on his own and is now a busy expert speaker on the topic of ‘Domestic Life in a Foreign Country’.¹⁰³ To Tokiko’s dismay, however, Shunsuke did not become more modern in his behaviour after returning from America.¹⁰⁴ Things American jeopardize the couple’s fragile, disconnected relationship further. Tokiko brings America into their home by having an affair with George.¹⁰⁵ The husband-wife relationship takes another turn when Tokiko becomes ill. Upon her death, Shunsuke cuts the metaphorical umbilical cord between him and his wife, but struggles to take up the role of a father figure who is able to sit at the centre of his ideal paradise. Instead, he surrounds himself with strangers who perform a quasi-wife role for the family. At the end, when he learns that his son has left the house to live on his own, he finally realizes that he needs to build his ideal family by himself.

But what caused Shunsuke to suppress his ego in the first place? If an independent being is an essential element of modernity, Shunsuke cannot be modern. He cannot consider himself as separated from his wife. He is a part of her self and she is not his ‘other’. Like *boku* in *Horse*, Shunsuke’s identification with his wife in their mother-son-like relationship means that he does not see her as his ‘other’. He has long numbed his ego in order to avoid thinking about his ‘other’, Tokiko: ‘thinking about the other means having to think about myself’, therefore, ‘while I don’t offer any fun activities to Tokiko, I don’t give myself any fun.’¹⁰⁶ Although Shunsuke used to ‘feel furious for

¹⁰³ Kojima, *Hōyō kazoku*, 49.

¹⁰⁴ See *Ibid.*, 78-79.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 42.

¹⁰⁶ See *Ibid.*, 78-79.

being ignored'¹⁰⁷ by his wife, he chose to live in a relationship where there is just one ego – the mother's. We can call him detached and uncommitted - the same terms that are used to describe many of Murakami's male protagonists – but these characteristics are manifested in a different way. Murakami's female characters in works such as *Hear the Wind Sing*, *Pinball, 1973*, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, *Dance, Dance, Dance*, *Hardboiled*, *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*, and *Sputnik Sweetheart*, however, often fade away and are not maternal, dominant driving forces of romantic relationships. Murakami's male protagonists also often struggle to find a balance for their ego vis-à-vis the outside world. Neither Murakami's or Kojima's male protagonists, however, seems to be able to relate with 'others' without obscuring the balance between their self and their ego. Kojima's male characters are detached and uncommitted to their wives, whereas Murakami's male protagonists are detached and uncommitted to society. In both cases, their stories are about the healing of their tendency towards detachment and non-commitment. But it is a question for both sexes - what does it take for a man or for a woman to become an independent self? In *An Embracing Family*, it is an invasive America that changes Tokiko from a mother to a woman figure and leads to her death.

Tokiko's adultery with an American could simply be interpreted as a woman's departure from her oppressed, domestic role in old Japan. Because of Shunsuke's attachment to Tokiko and her maternal role in his life, however, Etō sees her transgression as a negation of her mother role leading to the eventual absence of a mother figure in their household. Etō makes a comparison with what he describes as the naturalist writer Tanizaki's representation of modernity and anxiety through the

¹⁰⁷ Kojima, *Hōyō kazoku*, 73.

objectification of the woman's body as a sexual self, an act of prostitution to the West and a move from the natural to the artificial. Etō explains that Tokiko's body represents 'a mother's flesh that is broken down by penetration of the 'artificial''.¹⁰⁸ According to Etō, Kojima's novel reflects 'an unprecedented period' of change in Japan in the 1960s where society exhibits an 'urge that cannot be regulated by any logic' and 'the urge of industrialization and self-destruction'.¹⁰⁹

From Shunsuke's point of view, his wife's adultery and his unsuccessful sex with his wife soon after she confesses to her affair with George weakens his bond with her maternal role in their relationship. In Etō's interpretation, this leads to the collapse of the mother figure in his life.¹¹⁰ The loss also frees him from the domination that Tokiko has exerted in their marriage. Kojima demonstrates the way Shunsuke senses being released from Tokiko's maternal embrace through a detailed description of sudden observations and new sensations. When Shunsuke observes his wife's body parts, he reconstructs her in his imagination as his 'other' and a sexual being. Hence, a process from loss to maturity begins to take place. However, his deeply rooted fear of becoming a fully independent individual cannot be overcome overnight. His true entry into modernity remains stalled.

Etō believes that Shunsuke seeing his wife as a woman also means the beginning of his introspection. But his next action is adverse to an acceptance of others as equals. More conscious of his long-lost self and family, he suggests building high walls around the house 'to lock up Tokiko to make her think only about [him] and their family'.¹¹¹ As

¹⁰⁸ Etō, *Seijuku to sōshitsu*, 108.

¹⁰⁹ See *Ibid.*, 108-117.

¹¹⁰ See *Ibid.*, 56-57.

¹¹¹ Kojima, *Hōyō kazoku*, 92.

with Tokiko's project in *Horse*, constructing a new house becomes a way of managing a fragile family unit. Not surprisingly, this process reveals the couple's differences in their perceptions of the ideal family, each other and modernity. At Tokiko's request, Shunsuke builds a modern and 'foreign-looking'¹¹² house – 'a house like a Californian villa'¹¹³ - with a glass wall, equipped with a heating and air-conditioning system that is a new concept in Japan. Shunsuke's friends later criticize the construct as being like a hotel with disconnected rooms.¹¹⁴ However modern, striking and impressive with modern machinery the house is, it simply means an uncomfortable box to Shunsuke. What he yearns for is his home and family, not an artificially and mechanically induced modernity. He recalls the balanced coexistence of 'nature' and 'man-made' that he witnessed in urban and rural America.¹¹⁵ Through Shunsuke's dissatisfaction about his new house, Kojima tells us that Japan's modernity has not yet fully matured to understand such coexistence. Here again, Etō connects the collapse of a mother figure in Shunsuke's psyche to his bewilderment about the 1960s rapid industrialization and its psychological impact that provoked anxiety amongst the Japanese 'not to be left behind'. Shortly after they start working on the house, they discover that Tokiko has breast cancer. The new house had initially been planned as an extension of the wife's self, a symbol of an encasement to keep the family united, and of a more committed Shunsuke and a more modern woman Tokiko. However, it turns out to be 'a cheaply constructed', 'poor sample of Japanese culture' in which old Japan and new modernity negotiate an unstable union.¹¹⁶ It quickly becomes apparent that the house offers no comfort to its residents, with leaks and noises

¹¹² Kojima, *Hōyō kazoku*, 93, 117.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 124.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 201.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 115.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 117.

emanating from various machines. The house is also a symbol of the couple's abject inferiority complex about America. They cannot help inviting George to show off and they unconsciously seek his approval of their modern house with American conveniences.

In another example, shortly after he discovers the affair, Shunsuke is astonished at George's response: 'Responsibility? To whom do I owe responsibility? I am only responsible to my parents and my country.'¹¹⁷ Unable to fathom that both parties are equally responsible for the adultery they committed, and still being attached to Tokiko like a child, Shunsuke can only retaliate by shouting at George in English, 'Yankee, go home. Yankee, go home.'¹¹⁸ The complex emotion - his attachment to her and detachment from her - simultaneously tempts him to 'embarrass an unfaithful wife in public'¹¹⁹ by publicizing her adultery, while at the same time 'willingly protecting her from any accusers'.¹²⁰ Such bewilderment and worry cause him to suffer a comical, physical reaction in which contact with anything foreign, such as 'seeing a foreign actor in the movies,'¹²¹ continues to trigger a sharp pain in his groin.

With Tokiko's impending death, the couple, for the first time, reach out to each other and enjoy conversations typical of a married couple. Watching Tokiko dying and seeing her dark dried skin, Shunsuke feels attached to his own dilapidated house: 'My disgraceful-looking new house with many steel beams is grieving. I could feel it as if it were my own skin.'¹²² Shunsuke's consciousness forces him to become a governing figure in the household, but he finds the task of running a household overwhelming. He

¹¹⁷ Kojima, *Hōyō kazoku*, 60.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 73.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 75.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 76.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 180.

invites strangers to live in the house. In a similar way to the time when Shunsuke invited George into their lives, he finds the company of a not-so-Japanese stranger called Yamagishi - a young Japanese man who lived in America for ten years - helpful in keeping his family together. Yamagishi appears to be an exemplary lodger who Shunsuke thinks can 'manage the domestic work like an American housewife.' He is individualistic, independent, and accustomed to focus on his own duty with a good sense of personal space and the privacy of others.¹²³ Shunsuke's son, on the other hand, disagrees, arguing that Yamagishi's 'Americanness' juxtaposed with Japanese characteristics makes him self-serving, and that his mannerism is a shallow show, lacking in sincerity.

Shunsuke tries to fill the roles of both mother and father, but he is aware of his own shortcomings and embarks on a search for a new wife for the sake of the family. When he meets a young sales clerk who attracts his interest, his mind drifts to the picture of the crumbling house that he needs to tend:

I need to do the gardening soon. The trees are still in the spot where they were moved when the house was built. Their branches may overlap, grow poorly or die. Then the water in the pond will begin to freeze. The ice will thicken by as much as twenty centimeters within a few days. That will kill the goldfish and cause cracks on the concrete around the pond. Then water will seep into the foundations and the house may collapse. Unless we fix the soil on the slope, the crumbled frozen soil degrades during the winter. The house on the slope could slide down and crush the house below.¹²⁴

¹²³ Kojima, *Hōyō kazoku*, 217.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 213.

The new unit of his family that is comprised of him, the children, Yamagishi and the housekeeper gives him a sense of a complete self and he begins to think that he will lose himself when and if his children and Yamagishi leave the house. He decides that it is more important to keep holding onto the framework that keeps the family together (the house) than a relationship with another woman. The ending of the story, where he loses his son and decides to let Yamagishi and the housekeeper go, suggests that the house - a hodge-podge example of Japanese and American, old and modern - is what he can most readily identify with and that it is the house that will become his replacement maternal construction.

Although Etō focuses on the symbolism of maternity and paternity and their absence, he warns us that Kojima wrote *An Embracing Family* and other novels with vivid memories of the psychological wreckage caused by Japan's defeat in World War II. Therefore, his America cannot be the same America that Murakami and himself would imagine. According to Etō, Kojima's America is an un-consolable, brutal, oppressive power that had caused Japan devastating defeat in the war. It is a raw America, devoid of modernity or any 'isms', and can be compared to the landscape that Ōe portrays in *Memushiri kouchi* (Nip the Buds, Shoot the Kids, 1958). Etō says that '[it] is not the 'America' that is perceived by a Japanese who has experienced modernity in some way or who is aware of an independent inner self.'¹²⁵

Etō never fails to link the word 'modernity' with the West and America in his literary criticism. In Etō's view circa 1960, the West as a symbol of modernity and progress is still fresh and relevant to post-war literary analysis. Speaking of naturalism as

¹²⁵ See Etō in Kojima, *Amerikan sukūru*, 380-381.

a failed concept, he refers to the time when Sōseki's ethical, responsible and intelligent protagonists in *Meian* (Light and Darkness, 1916) lived. Since then, Etō believes that the ideal patriarchic Japan, full of people with an unwavering value system, has been gradually rotting through so-called 'progress'. Etō claims that the naturalistic and unruly atmosphere of a sensual mother-child relationship spread and killed the old Japan. However, a contemporary reading would simply regard this analysis as too binary and Etō's argument may not withstand a postmodern interrogation. It is notable that Murakami's critical reading of *Horse* does not make any reference to modernity and does not discern female empowerment in Tokiko's construction of the house. His reading remains focused on dissecting the protagonists' ego and self in their relationships with others and their delusions about the world around them.

Comparing the analyses of Kojima's novels by Murakami and Etō clearly reveals the different stance each man took towards America. Etō views America as 'other' and as modernity and materialism against Japan's traditional, naturalistic society. Murakami points out the outdated practice of writers at first being attracted to 'the unusual' of the West then shifting back to 'the usual and the local' as in the case of his predecessors Sōseki, Tanizaki and Kafū.¹²⁶ Etō belongs to this group too, as a result of his shift of focus after returning from Princeton. In his critical reading, Murakami is sympathetic with Hasegawa Shirō (1909-1987) who had many 'unusual' experiences in Manchuria involving a foreign country and a foreign language, as well as his experiences there of war and forced labour as a POW. Murakami's sympathy is not for Hasegawa's hardship abroad, but for the difficulty that Murakami imagines Hasegawa would have faced as a

¹²⁶ Murakami, *Wakai dokusha no tame no tanpen annai*, 208-211.

writer in seeking anomaly within normalcy in his life in Japan for his novels.¹²⁷ As a transnational writer, Murakami feels himself to be in the same situation as Hasegawa when he is no longer able to find exotic and unusual ‘others’ in the West.¹²⁸

4.3. World Literature and Murakami

The previous sections demonstrate the ways in which Etō’s critical reading reflects the postwar critic’s concerns and his grappling with America. In comparison, Murakami’s readings of the novels by the Third Wave of New Writers reveal his contrasting position in which he narrowly focuses on self and the ‘other’ construction and omits analysis of the historical and social background for each piece. It is as though he is saying that Etō’s grappling with America does not concern him.

Having discussed the influence that Murakami’s cosmopolitan outlook and attitude have had on the self-other construction in his fictional works, we now shift our focus to Murakami’s place in world literature and his willingness to participate in that space. Murakami is a writer whose popularity and commercial success in the global publishing market can arguably be considered as living proof of postmodern Japan’s cultural globalization. Because of his unprecedented commercial success on a global scale as a Japanese writer, Murakami is considered a new social and cultural phenomenon.

¹²⁹ The sheer volume of copies sold and the number of translations globally available for

¹²⁷ Murakami, *Wakai dokusha no tame no tanpen annai*, 206.

¹²⁸ Tsubouchi Yūzō, *Amerika, Murakami Haruki to Etō Jun no kikan*, 53.

¹²⁹ For example, *Norwegian Wood* sold over a million copies in China and *Kafka on the Shore* was chosen as one of the ten best books of 2005 by The New York Times Book Review, December 11, 2005. Murakami is a recipient of the Czech Republic’s Franz Kafka Award (2006) and the Jerusalem Literary Award (2009).

Murakami's works easily exceed those of other Japanese world literature authors such as Kawabata, Ōe, Tanizaki, Mishima and Abe.

The definition of world literature has gone through several transitions since Goethe's identification of transnational narratives in the West as a publishing phenomenon that allowed greater circulation and 'internationalization of reading publics, a new cosmopolitanism of reading'.¹³⁰ Pascale Casanova reports on three types of world literature from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century. Firstly, she identifies the kind of literature that uses universal values to transcend national borders. Goethe is an example of such an author who insisted on literature holding a universal legacy for humanity that transcends nation and race. Next would be the works of literature that benefit from their authors being in the literary centre (and away from their homelands), thus having their works translated into the language of the literary hegemony.¹³¹ Thirdly, there is colonial literature, such as that of Gabriel García Márquez (b.1927), which colonizing countries found compelling enough to introduce as exotic cultural imports to their home market. In the late twentieth century, we also see the emergence of another prominent world literature category: the literature by a cosmopolitan writer such as Salman Rushdie (b.1947) who writes from a new homeland in England and renders the imagined landscape of his 'homeland' India.

In contemporary world literature, Casanova identifies an affiliation with 'little narratives' with strong guiding motifs, and with awareness of their provisional nature and of their locality rather than their universal validity. A survey of writings on contemporary

¹³⁰ Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, 40. See Stefan Hoesel-Uhlig, 26-53, Jean-Francois Lyotard, 7.

¹³¹ For example, William Faulkner (1897-1962) and Vladimir Nabokov (1899-1977) who moved to Paris, the centre of the literary scene and production in their time, would fit into this category.

world literature also reveals a picture that geography, identity, nationalism, and post-colonialism have become more prominent subjects for world literature scholars from the West and former colonizing countries. Timothy Reiss, for example, argues that ‘simplified binarisms’ are challenged by these narratives in a changing global sphere where cultural integration and categories have become easily mixed and mingled.¹³² Reiss points out that, in particular, a certain binary Western approach to the subjects of dualistic ‘self’ and ‘other’, mainstream centre and marginal ‘others’, nationalism and colonialism/post-colonialism cannot be sustained. As discussed in Chapters Two and Three, Murakami’s longer novels often mix the material world with the treatment of time and space that I consider to be characteristically Japanese, thereby creating a similar quality to that of the magical realism for which Latin American novels are renowned. In addition, even though colonialism *per se* may be, on the surface, a remote concept for the novels of Murakami, we find that Murakami pursues the subject of self and ‘other’ in a way that is beyond the viewpoint that Reiss terms as Western ‘simplified binarism’.

Although Japan does not fit into the category of a colonized country, there is no doubt, in the eyes of Eurocentric world literature, that there is a certain Japanese exoticism and otherness that intrigues readers. When world literature is viewed as canonical writings of global significance, Murakami’s predecessors such as Tanizaki, Mishima, Kawabata and Ōe possess greater literary stature and are considered to be representatives of world literature in Japan, whose writings many consider to portray their ‘imagined’ Japan. Their modernist themes, style and rhetoric display an abundance of individuality within the framework of Japanese literature, but one could argue that

¹³² See Timothy J Reiss, ‘Mapping Identities: Literature, Nationalism, Colonialism’ in Christopher Prendergast (ed.), *Debating World Literature*

their literary forms share a place-bound nature of 'Japaneseness' and an imagined national literary aesthetics. Their style and aesthetic reveal a clear, conscious divide between their self and the Western 'other'. On the other hand, Murakami remains focused on defining 'Japaneseness' beyond the kitsch of nationalism in his literature.

Murakami can be viewed as fitting into the categories of world literature described above. Indeed, his novels contain universal messages about the human condition - as proven by his popularity amongst readers from many countries. We, however, also need to consider another view on the discourse; in *What is World Literature?* Damrosch suggests world literature as being 'a mode of circulation and of reading'¹³³ and he approaches the concept from the three perspectives of 'the world, the text, the reader'¹³⁴ within the paradigm of the practice of literary circulation, translation and production. His view is critical for the discussion here as highlighted in the following section which discusses Murakami's exposure to the global publishing market. Furthermore, there are two related elements of world literature that concern Murakami, namely the cultural and economic globalization of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries that surround him and the fact that the late twentieth and the twenty-first centuries' literary centres are England and the U.S.¹³⁵ Given Murakami's cultural inclination, this thesis suggests that his exposure to global readers and his commercial success in the West was largely made possible by his closeness to an American publishing conglomerate and by his physical exposure to America, having chosen to live in America for an extended period of time. Casanova's journalistic account of world

¹³³ David Damrosch, *What is World Literature?*, 5.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 281.

¹³⁵ Despite this, Murakami's success in China, Korea and the numerous translators who work with smaller publishing companies abroad cannot be ignored.

literature of the late twentieth century makes a critical contribution for world literature discourse and reveals that the cultural conditions of the literary world are now controlled by commercial strategies that are set by the marketing professionals of global (i.e. British and American) conglomerates. Lyotard notes how capital dictates the contemporary state and development of cultural taste: 'one listens to reggae, watches a Western, eats McDonald's for lunch and local cuisine for dinner, wears Paris perfume in Tokyo and 'retro' clothes in Hong Kong'.¹³⁶ So, to what extent is corporate control exercised over the quality of literature, thereby possibly jeopardizing the relationship between the process of pure literary creation and the manufacture of a publisher's commercial product? Is it easier for Knopf to sell their Murakami 'product' if the text has a cosmopolitan and global flavour? World literature indeed raises questions concerning the correlation between commercial success and the value of the act of writing, as well as the definition of literary genre and imagined national identity.

4.3.1. Murakami and the New Paradigm of World Literature

When Paris was flourishing as the world's literary centre in the early twentieth century, it was also an exciting period for the printing business in Japan, which became fully aware of and responded to the rise of world literature in Europe. At the time of westernization after the Meiji Restoration, translated literature tended to be for practical purposes such as law or engineering, and was primarily of British, French, Dutch or American origin.¹³⁷ After Shinchōsha published roughly forty works of literature in 1914 that included works by Tolstoy and Darwin, popular literature became available in

¹³⁶ Jean-Francois Lyotard, 'Answering the Question: What is Postmodernism?' in *The Postmodern Condition*, R Durand tr., (1986) in Philip Rice and Patricia Waugh (eds.), *Modern Literary Theory*, 332

¹³⁷ Maruyama Masao and Katō Shūichi, *Hon'yaku to nihon no kindai*, 14-15.

the Japanese market with the arrival of the ‘*enpon*’ (One Yen Book) boom during the Taishō period (1912-1925). Japan’s first collection of world literature, *Sekaibungaku zenshū* (A Collection of World Literature, 1927) published by Shinchōsha, is Eurocentric with a heavy inclination towards French and Russian literature. (See Appendix A.) In comparison, a recent publication of world literature, *Shūeisha sekaibungaku jiten* (The Shūeisha Dictionary of World Literature, 2002), reflects the global trend with its coverage of literature from seventy different countries.

Since the early twentieth century and the subsequent trend towards globalization, the capitalist mapping of the world has changed, and accordingly the intellectually charged cultural centre has moved from Paris to America and Britain,¹³⁸ emulating more contemporary world-system theory mapping of the core-peripheral picture.¹³⁹ Casanova explains the ways in which world literature is currently run by the publishing powerhouses’ synergy between marketing and operating strategies and how the large U.S. and British multinational conglomerates lead the international publishing industry. Their profit margins, which had averaged 4% since the 1920s, have risen to between 12% and 15% in recent years, helped by their wide distribution networks and the shorter shelf life of books.¹⁴⁰ It is now economic factors that have become paramount as the driving force in the cultural transcendence paradigm. The synergy that aims for immediate profitability also results in a wide range of literary products, including novels with tried

¹³⁸ Early twentieth century Paris attracted many transnational writers, such as Franz Kafka, James Joyce and William Faulkner, who moved from peripheral countries and who wrote in French or had their works translated into French in order to receive international recognition.

¹³⁹ The modern world-system theory of Wallerstein, a theory with adherence to no particular single academic discipline such as sociology, political science and anthropology, but is inclusive of many disciplines, is more reflective of the modern capitalist world. According to Casanova’s world literature theory, as with a collective opinion of many Western scholars, Immanuel Wallerstein’s (b.1930) ethnocentric world-system theory uses a nationally defined core-peripheral, semi-peripheral and tri-modal system based upon each nation’s economic production.

¹⁴⁰ Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, 170.

and tested aesthetic formulas that are aimed to appeal to the widest possible international readership. These include novels of academic life, travel books, and neoclassical sagas ‘that adopt all the familiar devices of exoticism, updated versions of mythological fables and ancient classics’, to name but a few.¹⁴¹

Murakami felt compelled to take unprecedented action as a Japanese writer in order ‘to test [his] ability overseas, not being satisfied with being a famous novelist in Japan.’¹⁴² After a few years in Europe and finding himself out of place with ‘the frivolous atmosphere’¹⁴³ during the economic bubble in Japan, he felt ready to devote himself to a long novel. He took the initiative and put himself on the global stage by moving to the U.S. in 1991. He then decided to engage an ICM literary agent, Amanda Urban, to handle his English publications. At the time, Urban’s client list included Raymond Carver and prominent writers such as Nobel Laureate Toni Morrison. Murakami successfully established himself as one of a group of contemporary writers at the New York publishing house Alfred A. Knopf, which had been acquired by the powerful American publishing conglomerate Random House for English, German and Spanish publications, after ending his contract with Kōdansha International and a Japanese copyright company.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, 171.

¹⁴² Murakami in an interview by Norimitsu Ōnishi, ‘A Rebel in Japan Eyes Status in America’ in *The New York Times*, June 14, 2005.

¹⁴³ Murakami, ‘*Kaidai*’ in *MH ZSH 1990-2000*, 3, Tanpen-shū II, 265.

¹⁴⁴ Murakami, *Zō no shōmetsu, Murakami Haruki Tanpen-shū, 1980-1991*, 16-23. It should be noted, however, that Murakami is not the first Japanese writer whose works have been published by Random House. Its subsidiaries Knopf and Vintage have published novels by Kawabata, Tanizaki and Mishima. In addition, Random House and Kōdansha formed Random House Kōdansha in 2003 to further their market share in the Japanese market and to publish Japanese books overseas. ‘RH, Kōdansha Form Random House Kōdansha’, *Publishers Weekly*, January 27, 2007.

Knopf's editor Gary Fisketjon describes Murakami as 'THE breakthrough Japanese writer in the West'.¹⁴⁵ All of his newly published books have been promptly reviewed in the major media such as *The New York Times Book Review*, *The Washington Post Book Review* and *The New Yorker* to list just a few since the early 1990s, proving that there is not only an efficient marketing machine at work for Murakami, but global exposure has given him an established position in the English publishing market that is unprecedented for a Japanese writer. By pursuing a conscious strategy to be accepted as a serious writer in the international English publishing arena, Murakami appears to have become a part of the smooth operation of a global publishing conglomerate's business.

The logic of global capitalism means that marketing now takes the front seat in the publishing business. Casanova complains that the editorial decision is no longer based upon 'the intellectual purpose', but is led by marketing staff who pursue the international best-seller lists that conform to international readers' taste and aesthetics for maximum commercial success.¹⁴⁶ Casanova also points out that the recent practice of virtually simultaneous translation contributes to the success of world literature. Although this thesis does not further explore the question of language and translation, even a cursory consideration reveals that the dependency on translators' skills as well as their increased authority in interpreting narratives for their native readers is a key area of inquiry in the study of world literature. As one element of such an inquiry, a discussion among Murakami's two American translators and an editor at Knopf offers an interesting perspective on the issue of the nationality of the translated novel. Prior to the publication of *Sputnik Sweetheart*, Murakami's American editor Gary Fisketjon participated in an e-

¹⁴⁵ <http://www.randomhouse.com/knopf/authors/murakami/complete.html> Viewed on February 10, 2008.

¹⁴⁶ See Christopher Prendergast, *Debating World Literature*, 170-171.

mail roundtable correspondence with two American translators of Murakami's works, Philip Gabriel and Jay Rubin, over a one-month period in 1999 and 2000. The correspondence was initiated by Gabriel and concerned 'translating Murakami'. Fisketjon's responses relate to questions on the issue of editing and translation, how he came to become the editor for Murakami, and how he chose the short pieces to be compiled in the collection, *The Elephant Vanishes* (1994).¹⁴⁷ The correspondence confirms the decisive role and increased influence of editors and translators in reworking texts to suit their target markets. Gabriel describes the process of 'naturalizing' foreign texts required by editors. He raises the example of a *New Yorker* editor who requested him to add the phrase 'here in Tokyo' to the original Murakami text in order to 'give (the readers) a clue (that the stories were Japanese) up front.'¹⁴⁸

The difference in the tradition of the editor's role in practice between Japan, where virtually no editing of the text takes place, and the U.S., where editing plays an important role, also comes into play here. U.S. style editing nationalizes – puts a label of origin on - the narrative. It appears that such practice is aimed at exoticizing the text for the audience. Although the above example does not confirm the frequency or prevalence of the practice, this is the area in which the discourses of world literature and nationalism in literature draw diverse reactions. One belief is that nation-based cultural exoticism is not a significant practice because 'we are never 'closer'' to any particular culture.¹⁴⁹ Victor Segalen, for example, suggests 'difference' is entirely dependent on the contingencies of a particular location at a particular time'.¹⁵⁰ On the other hand, fearing

¹⁴⁷ <http://www.randomhouse.com/knopf/authors/murakami/> Viewed on February 10, 2008.

¹⁴⁸ <http://www.randomhouse.com/knopf/authors/murakami/> Viewed on February 10, 2008.

¹⁴⁹ Prendergast, *Debating World Literature*, xi

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, xi-xii.

that commercial expansion undermines literary independence and, therefore, lamenting that ‘a genuine literary internationalism is no longer possible’, Casanova is critical of the new world literature whose ‘denationalized content can be absorbed without any risk of misunderstanding.’¹⁵¹ This sentiment echoes the Japanese literary establishment’s concerns and hesitations to embrace Murakami due to the lack of nationalistic colour and flavour in his novels.

Before further examining what literary identity of Murakami’s novels qualifies them to be considered as world literature, let me introduce a more flexible, nuanced cultural identity discourse that relates to Murakami’s international outlook for his novels. The world in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries presents the complexity of the crossing of cultural products and heritage, and a theory of globalization that conforms to world-system theory. It disregards the broader culture that exists across a set boundary with, one could say, cosmopolitan flair.¹⁵² As an example of changes in the cultural globalization paradigm from binary oppositions to more nuanced exchanges, an article by Stuart Hall portrays the UK as a once colonizing centre which co-exists and shares its homogenized national identity with its former colonized ‘others’. Referring to post-colonialism and post-imperialism and its local-global confluence, Hall concludes that the ‘old’ globalization process has modified the nation into a mixture of class, region, gender and ethnicity within the UK. Hall’s analysis of this new form of the homogenization

¹⁵¹ Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, 172.

¹⁵² World-system theory became influential as the Eurocentric bimodal thinking lost its explanatory power and post-colonialist and post-imperialist discourses began their ascendancy. Articles on cultural globalization demonstrate that many scholars urge a rethinking of the appropriate cultural units of our time. Also, Ulf Hannerz’s attention to the spatial ordering of culture prompts important questions about the inherent social and spatial units through which culture is organized: ethnicity, race, gender and class on the one side, and the neighbourhood, city, region, nation and the world on the other. Ulf Hannerz, “Scenarios for Peripheral Cultures” in Anthony D. King (ed.), *Culture, Globalization and World-System, Contemporary Conditions for the Representation of Identity*.

process presupposes that one's identity is politically defined by a nation as it is 'the guarantee of authenticity'.¹⁵³ Hall introduces two forms of globalization: 'an older, corporate, enclosed, increasingly defensive one which has to go back to nationalism and national cultural identity in a highly defensive way, and to try to build barriers around it before it is eroded. And another form of the global postmodern which is trying to live with, and at the same moment, overcome, sublimate, get hold of, and incorporate difference.'¹⁵⁴ This latter form wants to recognize and absorb those differences within the larger, overarching framework of what is essentially an American conception of the world. In this picture, the universal characteristics of cosmopolitanism seem no longer to prevail and each manifestation of globalization has to be confined in a smaller landscape.

Murakami's international outlook may fit within Hall's definition of postmodern homogenization, but we should not forget to consider the post-colonial nature of Japan's post-World War II experience under the American Occupation from 1945 until 1952. The sense of imagined nation and the nationalism that was born under such circumstances are different from the rise of modern nationalism that took place during the time of spatial expansion of culture in the Meiji period, which took the form of traditionalism's resistance against Westernizing modernism. Nevertheless, the post-war response to a cultural crisis caused confusion and doubt concerning the old value system and its belief in imperialism.¹⁵⁵ Japanese post-war novels, such as those by Kojima, offer the reader a picture of the nation's new juxtaposed version of modernism and post-colonialism.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵³ Stuart Hall, "The Local and the Global: Globalization and Ethnicity" in King, Anthony D. (ed.), *Culture, Globalization and the World-System, Contemporary Conditions for the Representation of Identity*, 15.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹⁵⁵ See Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined Communities*, 94-111.

¹⁵⁶ Jameson, Fredric, 'Preface' in Fredric Jameson and Miyoshi Masao [eds.], *The Cultures of Globalization*, xiv. Jameson also describes a new version of modernism which is a product that emerged as

Etō's literary critiques of Kojima display such conflicting 'old versus new' emotions towards his nation. As a Japanese writer who offers the reader a flexible notion of 'I' and 'other' through his protagonists, Murakami's essays demonstrate his global and transcending gaze towards the outside.

Lastly, given this more nuanced cultural globalization thinking, I suggest another way of looking at world literature that concerns Murakami. When a group of twenty-three translators from seventeen countries attended a symposium¹⁵⁷ to share their experience of translating novels by Murakami, including the challenge of conveying his vocabulary and nuanced phrases for their local audience, their translation technique, and their local readers' reaction and interpretation of his novels, it became apparent that, once out of their native language, Murakami's novels leave their author's intended meaning, context and authenticity behind and induce in the reader another kind of authentic reaction. In this practice of cosmopolitan reading, world literature is 'a mode of reading' and it means something other than a product of high culture or of literary values that conveys a universal message to the global audience.¹⁵⁸ With powerful marketing strategies led by a global conglomerate, with which Murakami himself is complicit, and with hardly any traditional 'Japaneseness' in its language, a novel by Murakami transcends national borders and prompts a new wave of reading as world literature.

a result of a threat to tradition and the resistance against globalization, namely the "liberation' brought by Americanization and American mass culture and consumption'.

¹⁵⁷ Japan Foundation symposium, *Haruki o meguru bōken – sekai wa Murakami-bungaku o dō yomu ka* (March 25 – 29, 2006).

¹⁵⁸ David Damrosch, *What Is World Literature?*, 5.

Chapter Five

Cultural Politics and Murakami Haruki: The Critics' Murakami

Having examined in the preceding chapters certain key aspects of Murakami's literary landscape, such as the way in which he delivers and portrays his voice in language, space, and time and through the self/other construction, it would be wrong to ignore the territory that has been explored or staked out around his work in terms of what the Japanese call *hihyō* (criticism) or, as Kobayashi Hideo (1902-1983) described it, *bungei hyōron* (literary criticism). Murakami's voice, his global commercial success, and his minimum engagement in the Japanese literary scene have all attracted interest from the Japanese media. His essays, non-fiction writing, and translation work, as well as his commercial success, draw attention from critics with varied interests and agendas.

Works of criticism are significant not just for the points that critics make with respect to any particular writer or artist or to any given feature of his or her work, but also because these critical works are often deeply embedded in the *zeitgeist* of the era in which they are produced and in the cultural politics that surround their production. In the case of critical works about Murakami's writings, for example, *Pinball, 1973* (1980), *A Wild Sheep Chase* (1982), and *Kafka on the Shore* (2002) have all been discussed by critics such as Karatani Kōjin (b. 1941), Hasumi Shigehiko (b. 1936), and Katō Norihiro (b. 1948). Karatani and Hasumi were ardent promoters of postmodern discourses in the early 1980s, while Katō has published many articles and books on Murakami's works over the past few decades. Katō's critical writings on Murakami appear to stand at the opposite end of the axis from Karatani and Hasumi's work. According to another

postmodern advocate, Asada Akira, Katō belongs to a group of critics that calls for ‘a return to [the discourse of] ‘humanism’’ and ‘engages in the 1960s and the nineteenth century’s practice of criticism that centers around the paradigm of ‘self and world’ and ‘notion and reality.’¹

While Karatani, Hasumi and Katō published critical essays on and make references to the works of Murakami, their predecessor Etō Jun, whom they consider to be influential in the field of Japanese literary criticism, did not write anything on Murakami’s literature. How do we interpret Etō’s silence in this regard, especially in the light of his highly vocal praise for Murakami’s contemporary Tanaka Yasuo’s *Somewhat, Crystal* (1981), and his critical writing on Murakami Ryū’s *Kagirinaku Almost Clear Blue* (1976). Both of these novels portray the contemporary era and introduce a new type of writing with their timely themes: *Somewhat, Crystal* illustrates a life that is imbued with conspicuous consumption and a skewed value system that is based on the branding of goods. *Almost Clear Blue* depicts the aimless lives of youths full of drugs, sex and violence and their friendship with some U.S. soldiers near a U.S. army base.

If Etō was drawn to writing about these two novels, was it the critic’s yearning for modernism in the rapidly changing Japan that distanced him from the works of Murakami Haruki? Or did Etō see Murakami’s work as failing to offer an accurate portrayal of a changing Japan, despite their facade of being urban, postmodern stories? Or perhaps he objected to Murakami’s uncompromising Americanization of his Japanese prose? Whatever the reason, Etō’s disregard might be viewed as a determined denouncement, although we may never know the reason behind his apparent aversion to Murakami’s

¹ The excerpt is from Asada’s discussion with Karatani, Hasumi, and Miura Masashi in Karatani Kōjin (ed.), *Kindai Nihon no hihyō II*, 227.

work. In contrast to Etō's silence, Karatani, Hasumi and Katō chose Murakami novels as their subject of critical investigation, and in his conversation with Karatani in 1989, Hasumi observes that 'it is Haruki's era. It is no longer time for Nakagami [Kenji] or Ōe [Kenzaburō].'²

Over and above the issue of which notable critics have or have not paid attention to Murakami, it is a fact that Murakami's writing has spawned a kind of cottage industry of critical responses, with the publication of each new novel setting off a new wave of contributions. A mere survey of the titles of critical works concerning Murakami is sufficient to demonstrate the breadth of topics and themes that his work has inspired critics to explore.

For example, thirty-three Japanese works of criticism came onto the market within eighteen months of the publication of Murakami's best-selling novel *IQ84* vols. 1 and 2 in May 2009, and vol. 3 in April 2010. Critical themes in this regard were diverse. Thirteen of them were 'how-to-read' guides to Murakami as an author and to the riddles and games contained in Murakami's novels (Kawaide shobōsha (ed.), 2009; Kūki-sanagi Research Committee, 2009; Murakami Haruki Study Group, 2009; Yosensha, 2009 and 2010; Amusement Publishing Department (ed.), 2010; Doi, 2009; Hirai, 2010; Kazamaru, 2010; Koyama, 2010; Miyawaki, 2010; Tsuge, 2010; Uchida, 2010), six examined various themes in *IQ84* (Suzumura, 2009; Wakakusa shobō, 2009 and 2010; Murakami Haruki Study Group and Hirai, 2010; Tsuji and Ōsawa, 2010), one focused on the theme of Murakami and the year 1968 in Japan (Toyoda, 2009), one analysed the reading of Murakami East Asia (Fujii (ed.), 2009), and another examined the issue of

² Karatani Kōjin and Hasumi Shigehiko, *Tōsō no echika*, 113.

gender (Watanabe, 2009). One book viewed Murakami as an author who psychoanalyzes (Yoshikawa, 2010), one examined the theme of eros (Doi, 2010), and another chose the theme of music (Kurihata, et al, 2010). Two books focused on the theme of sub-culture (Ōtsuka, 2009; Nishimura and Sugihara, 2009), one compared the translation made by Murakami with that of another translator of the same work (Matsubara, 2010), two books focused on Murakami in the Japanese literary scene (Kuroko, 2010; Ichikawa, 2010), and three books discussed the theme of before and after *IQ84* (Seidosha, 2010; Suzuki, 2009; Matsumoto, 2010). Although it is not included in the chart, a collection of photographs relating to director Tran Anh Hung's 2010 film *Norwegian Wood* was also part of the numerous publications that came out after *IQ84*. (See Appendix B)

A glance at their publication dates creates the impression that many of these works were quick turn-around publications churned out promptly after the first two volumes of *IQ84* were published in order to capitalize on the revitalization of public interest in Murakami that occurred at the time. The attention paid by the Japanese media to *IQ84*'s record-breaking sales fueled this hype, and many more publications followed the completion of the series. Not surprisingly, the quality of these critical works is uneven. Some were authored by established critics who had already been publishing books and articles in literary magazines on Murakami for several decades, while others were written by self-proclaimed Murakami 'fans'. Many of the books provide little more than a synoptical introduction to Murakami's novels. Similarly, many of the publications in the 'how to read *IQ84*' mode merely touch upon surface aspects of the novel rather than attempting to present in-depth analyses of its plot or characters.

From the above brief sketch, it should already be clear that Murakami criticism is a curious hybrid of gaps and excesses. In my view, the tremendous outpouring of material on the one hand is testimony to the quality of Murakami's stories and to the fact that a great variety of readers are drawn to and intrigued by many aspects of his work. At the same time, Murakami's work has been dismissed or ignored by many – though by no means all – prominent literary professionals, a fact that may reflect Murakami's ambiguous standing with respect to the literary genre. Some critics consider Murakami's work to be a pop-cultural phenomenon that is not worthy of serious attention, while others have debated the genre(s) of his works, wondering, for example, whether they were serious, pure literature, or sub-cultural.

These questions, which seek to identify literature's 'worth' within the confines of a genre definition, stand on the premise that the role of literary criticism is to determine the extent to which literature is serious and pure, and therefore worthy or not. This role stems from the early beginnings of Japanese literary criticism. When Kobayashi established Japan's literary criticism as a genre of its own, literary criticism aimed to distinguish the right from the wrong in literature. This tradition of defining and categorizing literary works is still evident in Japan's literary scene. Two prominent literary awards that were set up in 1935 exemplify such divisions; arguably the Akutagawa Award holds the highest prominence in the *junbungaku* (pure literature) category while the Naoki Award is dedicated to *taishū-bungaku* (popular literature) (It is interesting to note that Murakami has received neither of these awards).

The setting up of these exclusionary categories is a value-driven activity. This chapter will ignore the value-driven method of literary criticism and will not attempt to

define genre distinctions for Murakami's works. Instead, this chapter recognizes that critical writings by Karatani, Hasumi and Katō offer a different approach to the practice of criticism from the one that their predecessors took, and will focus on the critical essays which they wrote on Murakami's novels from the end of the 1980s to early 2000. By examining Murakami's writings and the ways in which these three critics conduct their critical investigation of his work, this chapter aims to reveal these critics' discourse and their cultural politics. The preceding chapters argue that the literature of Murakami defies categorization as either modern or postmodern. The discourse concerning the Japanese postmodern and post-postmodern in these critics' cultural debate over Murakami sheds light on the way that his novels offer the reader a flexible reading experience.

5.1. Karatani Kōjin: History, Repetition and the End of Modernity

Karatani Kōjin is an example of a Japanese critic who has operated with an agenda that clearly colours his work on Murakami. In his writings, he uses Murakami's early works to support his argument that the forty-five year history of the Meiji era (1868-1912) repeated itself in the Shōwa era (1926-1989), and that Shōwa era literature represents the end of literary modernity in Japan. In order to claim that the literature published after 1970 (in his words, 'Taishōesque' literature) closely resembles the literature of the Taishō period (1912-1926), Karatani identifies similar historical events during these two eras and places the last eighteen years of the Shōwa era (i.e. 1970 to

January of 1989) in a separate frame.³ In keeping with – or perhaps because of – this schema, Karatani declares Murakami’s work from the period 1980 to 1985 to be not postmodern, but modern. Karatani supports this claim through his argument that Murakami’s works from this period are marked by a ‘modern’ sensibility toward history. However, given that many other critics identify Murakami’s work as sub-cultural and/or postmodern – in the latter regard often with reference to his playful use of language and to his meta-referential concern with the consumerism of his own era of production, namely, the early 1980s – Karatani’s position raises some interesting points regarding the diverse opinions among Japanese critics about Japan and its ‘other’ and the politics of modernism versus postmodernism in Japanese literature. This section examines the way in which Karatani develops his own discourse related to history, repetition, and the end of Japanese modern literature through reference to Murakami’s novels.

5.1.1. Postwar *Hihyō* as a Precursor to the Postmodern Condition

Although glossed in the introduction to this chapter simply as ‘criticism’, it is important in this context to consider more closely the Japanese notion of *hihyō* and the embeddedness of Japanese critical practices since the mid-twentieth century within a worldview that has been shaped by specific forces of history, geography, and political power. Tracing the history of *hihyō* also helps us understand the modern and postmodern paradigm in which Karatani, Hasumi and Katō engage in their critique of novels by Murakami. First, the following commentary from Katō Norihiro helps to capture the

³ See Karatani (ed.), *Kindai Nihon no hihyō II, Shōwa-hen, [ge]*, 190-191.

particular nature of this attitude or habit of mind, here translated as ‘Japanese postwar thinking’:

Recently I noticed that Japanese postwar thinking is hardly ever heard of in the Western world. Postwar thought, of course, does not refer to enlightenment thinking, postwar democracy, or sub-postmodernism as an imported Western way of thinking. I refer instead to the pedigree of thinking that was formed as a resistance against [imported Western thinking] by Yoshimoto Takaaki, Tsurumi Shunsuke, Takeuchi Yoshio and Etō Jun. [Japanese postwar thinking] is beyond the comprehension of the Western scholars who study Japan, and it is considered a bizarre, illogical obsession, and an abnormal symptom. However, in the Western world, [Japanese postwar thinking] is perceived as mysterious, curious and incomprehensible, such as in the fascinating creations of Miyazaki Hayao and Murakami Haruki. The essence of Japanese postwar thinking is not found in the overly cheerful, “random” postwar cuteness of [the artist] Murakami Takashi, but in the weirdness of Murakami [Haruki] and Miyazaki.

Such an essential core of the postwar period is deeply rooted in scenes that concern the “death” of the father, although the mother has not (yet) appeared.⁴

In his comments at the end of this passage about ‘the death of the father’ in postwar Japan, Katō is alluding to *IQ84*, in which the deaths of the fathers of the seemingly motherless protagonists Tengu and Fukaeri bring to an end their domineering, complex, violent and damaging relationships with their children. This concern echoes a pre-postmodern preoccupation also shown by Etō in his *Maturity and Loss*.⁵ More importantly, for the present context, however, the main thrust of Katō’s commentary can be taken as indicative of a common thread in thinking about the practice of *hihyō* among

⁴ See Katō, “Ketachigai no shōsetsu” in *Bungakukai*, vol. 63 No. 8., 2009, 216-219.

⁵ See Chapter Four of this thesis.

such influential critics as Karatani, Hasumi, and Asada. For these critics, it is axiomatic that post-World War II thinking remains a crucial element in contemporary cultural, political, and literary discourses and that Japanese *hihyō* needs to operate in a discursive and conceptual space that lies at the confluence of postwar thinking and Japanese postmodernism, irrespective of the extent to which critics may be influenced by Western discourses.

It is also useful here to consider the identity of some of the ‘players’ invoked by and/or implicated in discourses such as the above, as well as the differences between the ‘sides’ to which they belong. For Japanese proponents of postmodern thinking such as Karatani, Hasumi and Asada, the two critics mentioned above by Katō – Etō and Yoshimoto – and their postwar critical writing was an advancement over both the pre-Shōwa subjective critical school and Kobayashi’s brand of *hihyō*. Etō and Yoshimoto represented the ‘old guard’ Shōwa school that dominated Japanese criticism for much of the postwar twentieth century.

Etō and Yoshimoto, as exponents of the mid-Shōwa practice of *hihyō*, made important contributions to Japanese criticism in terms of their construction of critical thinking in three main areas. First, the earlier Shōwa intellectuals’ struggle was to find a way to establish their standing within the worldview of Marxism, which constituted the axis of their critical thinking and which was bound up with the discourse of humanism.⁶ Kobayashi, too, adapted Marxism to his own critical practices. And although Kobayashi had an in-depth understanding of Marxism, Etō refers to Kobayashi’s non-theoretical and non-historical-theory approach to his criticism in his autobiographical examination of

⁶ See Karatani (ed.), *Kindai Nihon no hihyō II, Shōwa-hen [ge]*, 36-40.

Kobayashi Hideo.⁷ Karatani and his fellow postmodernism advocates also consider Kobayashi's practice of *hihyō* to be less theoretically rigorous and more reflective of his own beliefs regarding literature than that of Etō and Yoshimoto. Etō and Karatani separately point to Kobayashi's reliance on abstract and subjective notions such as spirit, natural gifts and genius.⁸

Secondly, Etō and Yoshimoto sought to depart from modernity's preoccupation with individual identity and develop their discourse to centre around Japan's search for identity as a collective body.⁹ For Etō, Yoshimoto, and others of their era, it remained a firm premise underlying critical discourses that the loss of World War II and these subsequent events had an overwhelming effect on the Japanese worldview and intellectual beliefs. Etō applied Western theories to much of his literary criticism, but never articulated links with Asia to evaluate Japan's national identity or his own identity. His critical contribution to the mid-Shōwa period is also found in *Maturity and Loss* that identifies the society that seeks for communal identity instead of individual identity and for the return of the 'father', which represents the nation.¹⁰ Etō's contemporary Yoshimoto applied his deep and adept understanding of Marxism to the imagined nation of Japan in his influential book *Kyōdō genshōron* (A Theory of Communal Illusion, 1968).

Thirdly, Yoshimoto's discourse also served as the precursor to Japan's postmodern identity. As a creator of the term *poppu bungaku* (pop literature), Yoshimoto displays a knack for sensing and theorizing about the transformation that Japan was experiencing in the popularization of its culture. In his *Gengo ni totte bi to wa nani ka*

⁷ Etō examined Kobayashi Hideo in his autobiographical account *Kobayashi Hideo* (1965). See Karatani, "Buntai ni tsuite" (On Literary Style, 1979) in *Hihyō to posutomodan*.

⁸ See Etō, *Kobayashi Hideo* and Karatani's "Buntai ni tsuite" in *Hihyō to posutomodan*, 187-194.

⁹ Karatani (ed.), *Kindai Nihon no hihyō II, Shōwa-hen [ge]*, 152.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 138.

(What is the Aesthetic in Language?, 1965), Yoshimoto observes the emergence of a different value system where high culture and traditional values encounter the rise of an alternative set of values. In other words, possibly without being fully aware of it himself, Yoshimoto demonstrates the characteristics of the deconstruction of modernity, ‘the post-industrial society, information society and consumer society’, and postmodernity as the politics of difference.¹¹

The above has sketched the background of the general postwar environment, but an important shift took place after 1975 when a new group of critics emerged who had close exposure to the prevalent postmodern philosophers and thinkers predominantly in the U.S. and France. Karatani calls himself ‘a theorist’ and this term accurately reflects the critical approach of this group of academics – Hasumi, Asada and Karatani – who introduced the discourses of postmodernity to Japanese academia at this time.¹² In the 1980s, when Japan shifted from a production to a consumption-based economy and society, the postmodern discourses that Karatani and Hasumi had already begun to explore became part of the wider academic and, to some extent, the public consciousness. A milestone in the spread of awareness of these discourses and of what might be called the postmodern condition in Japan was the 1983 publication of Asada’s popular book *Kōzō to chikara: kigōron o koete* (Structure and Power: Beyond Semiotics). This book contributed directly to the boom in what has come to be known as ‘New Academism’.¹³ *Structure and Power* analyzes the dynamics of the consumer society and contemporary

¹¹ Karatani, *Hihyō to posutomodan*, 74-75.

¹² In 1975, Karatani felt frustrated with the inwardness of Japanese society and left Japan for Yale University where he encountered the Yale School academics. During his time in France between 1962 and 1965 and in the late 1970s, Hasumi was exposed to French discourses in the areas of structuralism and post-structuralism.

¹³ See Karatani (ed.), *Kindai Nihon no hihyō II, Shōwa-hen [ge]*, 158.

capitalism from structuralist and other postmodern perspectives, demonstrating that in the ‘postmodern’ world even ‘intellect’ and ‘higher knowledge’ have become commodities.¹⁴

This is a significant change for the *hihyō* paradigm. At its inception, the aim of *hihyō* had been to distinguish right from wrong in literature through reliance upon the critic’s subjective eyes. In the next phase and progression of Japan’s practice of criticism influenced by the pre-postmodern approach to *hihyō* that Etō and Yoshimoto had begun to construct, it developed further to employ a broader range of academic disciplines and a more nuanced approach. In their postmodernist manifesto entitled *Kindai Nihon no hihyō II* (Modern Japanese Criticism II, 1997), Karatani and his fellow postmodern advocates declare that after the post-1975 shift, the practice of *hihyō* came to include not only the discipline of literature ‘but also those of philosophy, social science, economics, psychology and anthropology, because literary criticism has moved on to encompass a wide range of areas’.¹⁵

With these developments and against such a societal background, in works over an extended period of time ranging from *Nihon kindai bungaku no kigen* (The Origins of Modern Japanese Literature, 1980) to *Kindai bungaku no owari: Karatani Kōjin no genzai* (The End of Modern Japanese Literature: Karatani Kōjin, Now, 2005), Karatani includes a wide range of theories from Marx, Kant, Keynesian economics, Freudian psychology, Nietzsche’s paradox, Baudrillard’s consumption theory and many more in his discourse.¹⁶ He has articulated his conception that, although Japanese modernity

¹⁴ Karatani (ed.), *Kindai Nihon no hihyō II, Shōwa-hen [ge]*, 158. See Asada Akira, *Kōzō to chikara: kigōron o koete*

¹⁵ Karatani (ed.), *Kindai Nihon no hihyō II, Shōwa-hen [ge]*, 239.

¹⁶ The list includes Plato, Hegel, the American sociologists D. Boorstin, D. Riesman, and H. Marshall McLuhan, Kobayashi, Yoshimoto, Motoori Norinaga, Nishida Kitarō, Miki Kiyoshi, Maruyama Masao and

cannot be implicitly non-Western (for there is an undeniable influence on Japan's modernity from its Western origins), it is intrinsically imbued with Japan's insular pre-modern condition which fundamentally differs from Western society's structuralist construction.¹⁷ Most notably in his 1985 book *Hihyō to posutomodan* (Criticism and Postmodernism), Karatani went further in the way he sought to promulgate a view of Japanese postmodernism not as a period that follows modernity, but as a condition. Thus Karatani elucidates his stance on Japanese postmodernity: 'Postmodernity is only existent as a paradox of modernity itself.'¹⁸

5.1.2. Karatani's Deconstruction of Shōwa History

In "Murakami Haruki no "fūkei" – '1973nen no pinbōru'" (Murakami Haruki's Landscape – *Pinball*, 1973), Karatani argues that Murakami's earlier works mark the end of Japanese modern literature. This claim is embedded in a series of Karatani's discourses, including his 'history and repetition' and his deconstruction of the Shōwa period discourses. Before proceeding to examine Karatani's reading of Murakami's earlier novels, this section first explains the implications of Karatani's discourse on 'history and repetition' and 'the end of modern Japanese literature.' His *Rekishi to hanpuku* (History and Repetition, 2004) is a collection of critical essays that were originally published in the journal *Tsubame* between 1989 (the last year of the Shōwa era) and 1998. Before proceeding with the deconstruction of history, namely the deconstruction of the Shōwa period in his essay entitled "Kindai Nihon no gensetsu

Masamune Hakuchō as well as the novelists Tolstoy, Mori Ōgai and the playwright Chikamatsu Monzaemon.

¹⁷ See Karatani, *Hihyō to posutomodan*, 144.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 39.

kūkan – 1970 nen = Shōwa 45 nen” (The Discursive Space of Modern Japan - 1970 = Shōwa 45), Karatani sets out to introduce the significance of image – and the disparities of values created when a set image is taken out of context – that he finds in any Japanese historical period. Karatani begins as follows:

For example, we use terms such as “Meiji literature” or “Shōwa literature”. Then, a certain coherent image [of the characteristics of each era] pops up in our mind. It is the same with [terms such as] “the Edo period” and with the manner in which we feel we know what is being invoked when we mention the Genroku [era, 1688-1704] or the Bunka taisei [Bunka-Bunsei period, ca. 1804-1830]. The [mere numbers associated with the] Gregorian calendar years do not evoke the same reaction within us.¹⁹

Here, Karatani draws attention to the fact that the distinct discursive territories that we associate with traditionally demarcated historical periods are largely an artefact of this same demarcation. The ‘image’ of each era that is the definitive representation of an era as Karatani calls it,²⁰ appears independent and definitive to one habituated to any given set of labels, while the historical terms used from the perspective of the Western Other – terms like ‘the nineteenth century’ and ‘*fin de siècle*’ –, though objectively just as useful, sound alien.

Karatani expresses his intent to find significance in the result.²¹ In “Kindai Nihon no gensetsu kūkan” (The Discourse Space of Modern Japan), Karatani constructs his argument, claiming that the Shōwa forty-fifth year marks a crucial point as an ending of

¹⁹ Karatani, *Teibon, Karatani Kōjin shū Vol. 5, Rekishi to hanpuku*, 59-60.

²⁰ At the time of the Meiji Restoration (1868), a new bill was installed to name each era after its reigning emperor.

²¹ Karatani, *Teibon, Karatani Kōjin shū Vol. 5, Rekishi to hanpuku*, 60-63.

modernity in the same way as the Meiji era ended in its forty-fifth year. By comparing the nature of significant events and their year of occurrence between the Meiji and Shōwa periods, Karatani undeniably draws attention to the way that there is an almost eerie resemblance in the order and nature of certain key economic, political, and social milestones in the Meiji and Shōwa periods, with even the dates corresponding almost precisely: The Seinan War (Meiji 10) is compared with the 2.26 Incident (Shōwa 11), and Meiji's Proclamation of the Constitution (Meiji 22) is contrasted with the Announcement of a New Constitution in Shōwa 21. Karatani points to Meiji 27's Japan-China War and Shōwa 26's Peace Conference and U.S.-Japan Security Treaty. The Russo-Japanese War of Meiji 37 is contrasted with a series of events of Shōwa 38 and 39 that put Japan on the world stage, politically and economically (U.S.-Japan Security Treaty Strife, The New Security Treaty and The Tokyo Olympics). Karatani also connects the return of Okinawa from America to Japan in Shōwa 44 with the Treaty Amendment of Meiji 44.

In Karatani's view, the similarity is not limited to isolated incidents in these two eras. Drawing parallels between such seemingly diverse events as the Tokyo Olympics in Shōwa 39 (1964) and the end of the Russo-Japanese War in Meiji 37, Karatani finds concurrency between these eras 'in the process of Japan establishing the system of a modern nation, achieving economic growth, amending unequal treaties, and becoming a nation that rivals the Western powers.'²²

Moreover, Karatani finds significance in the parallels between General Nogi's suicide (Meiji 45) and Mishima Yukio's suicide (Shōwa 45). Karatani's simple

²² Karatani, *Teibon, Karatani Kōjin shū Vol. 5, Rekishi to hanpuku*, 67 and 77-78.

declarations that ‘Mishima had to die in Shōwa 45’ and that Mishima’s death ended ‘the spirit of Shōwa’ in Shōwa 45 (1970)²³ echo sentiments about the death of General Nogi which are expressed in Natsume Sōseki’s *Kokoro* (Kokoro, 1914). Sōseki implies, through the voice of the protagonist’s father in *Kokoro*, that General Nogi’s suicide marks a symbolic end to the Meiji era as the General’s act was intended to demonstrate his unwavering loyalty to the recently-deceased Meiji emperor. Although Karatani’s essay does not articulate further beyond the phrases above, it would not be farfetched to conclude that Karatani considers the significance of Mishima’s death in Shōwa 45 to equal to that of General Nogi’s. Furthermore, continuing with the theme of the end of the ‘Shōwa period’, Karatani adds that the designation ‘Shōwa period’ loses its literal significance after 1970 (Shōwa 45),²⁴ although the period in fact did not end until 1989.

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Karatani’s examination does not include close investigation of each event’s societal significance and both his method and conclusion seem simplistic and non-scientific. Statisticians would argue that these are self-selected data to prove a correlation and are mere coincidences. His comparison stops at the end of the Meiji era and, indeed, the events of the ensuing Taishō fifteen-year period do not map neatly against those of the later Shōwa period (1970-1989). However, Karatani maintains that the nation’s internalization and introspection during the Taishō period (1912-1926), which led to the publication of many *watakushi-shōsetsu* (‘I novels’), finds a parallel in the later Shōwa period:

²³ Karatani (ed.), *Kindai Nihon no hihyō II, Shōwa-hen [ge]*, 166.

²⁴ Karatani, *Teibon, Karatani Kōjin shū Vol. 5, Rekishi to hanpuku*, 65.

²⁵ Similarly, although the Japanese use the terms *Shōwa 30 nendai* (the Shōwa 30s) and ‘1960s’ almost interchangeably, the 1970s and 1980s are commonly termed *70 nendai* and *80 nendai*, a shift away from the habit of designating eras using Japanese proper nouns.

After the collapse of the “New Left” movement and the foreign exchange market and energy crises [of the 1970’s], the postwar world system began to rattle. Japan depended on and economically benefited from the U.S.-USSR dual structure before emerging as an [economically] powerful nation in the 1980s. But Japan’s awareness [of itself as a nation in the world] remained closed-in and was not conscious of “the outside”.²⁶

Thus, for Karatani, Japan entered a bourgeois, ‘Taishōesque’ period for fifteen years after 1970.²⁷ Karatani, therefore, examines the three earlier novels of Murakami that were published between 1979 and 1985 and characterizes them as ‘Taishōesque’ because of their closed-in, introspective themes and motifs. Karatani’s theoretical approach to deconstructing a historical period and to correlating historical events seems naïve. Nevertheless, his characterization of the newly segmented Shōwa period as ‘a paradox of modernity itself’ is worthy of serious consideration.

5.1.3. From 1970 to the 1990s: Karatani and the End of Modern Literature

With his version of a newly segmented timeframe within the Shōwa era, Karatani takes on the literary analysis of Murakami’s early works *Hear the Wind Sing*, *Pinball, 1973*, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, *Hardboiled* and Ōe Kenzaburō’s *The Silent Cry* (1967). Despite differences such as Murakami’s ironic romanticism in *Pinball, 1973* and Ōe’s modern realism in *The Silent Cry*, Karatani finds all these novels to be marked by

²⁶ Karatani, *Teibon, Karatani Kōjin shū Vol. 5, Rekishi to hanpuku*, 101.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 67 and 79.

inwardness and introspection, which he considers to be Taishō literary qualities. In Karatani's discourse, these novels represent a prologue to the end of modern Japanese literature.

For his analysis of Murakami in the early and late 1980s in "Murakami Haruki's 'Landscape' – *Pinball, 1973*", Karatani holds Murakami up as representative of the new type of author that emerged after Ōe's generation. The break is not absolute, and Karatani contemplates the possibility that Murakami's title, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, is a parodical reference to *The Silent Cry*, the Japanese title of which translates literally as 'Football in the First Year of [the] Man'en [Era]'. Nonetheless, Karatani analyzes these two novels that both look back to the void felt by their protagonists in the 1960s, and identifies distinctively different styles between them in terms of their treatment of history, in Murakami's symbolic style versus Ōe's allegorical style, in romantic irony versus realism, and in the transcendental self versus the immanent self, and in the recognition of the end of history versus capturing historical moments in the present.

In the same essay Karatani asserts that Murakami's novels from the early 1980s still epitomize the same period that he characterizes as the time before Japan was released from the aporias of the modern. (Indeed, according to Karatani, the release from the aporias of the modern began during the mid-1980s.²⁸) In this essay, Karatani identifies the denial of history, romantic irony, the transcendental self, the 'symbolic' use of proper names, and historical years and points in time (or rather, the lack of them) as literary devices employed by the author in order to make his novels a new type of modern

²⁸ See Karatani, *Teibon, Karatani Kōjin shū Vol. 5, Rekishi to hanpuku*, 189.

literature capable of portraying the ‘internal aspects’ of Japan’s political and intellectual consciousness of the time.²⁹

As an example of the denial of history, Karatani draws attention to the following passage in *Pinball, 1973*:

Naoko came to this place when she was twelve. 1961 according to the Western calendar. The year Ricky Nelson sang “Hello, Mary Lou”.

1960, it’s the year when Bobby Vee sang “Rubber Ball”.³⁰

In light of the significance placed on the year 1960 in *The Silent Cry*, Murakami’s nonchalant attitude in the above excerpt signifies for Karatani a reversal of values. In *Pinball, 1973*, other dates from the era of student unrest are invoked, such as 1969 and 1970. However, as Karatani points out, ‘the moment when “1969” or “1970” is about to assume the weight of an historical event’, Murakami escapes the burden of its weight by nonchalantly focusing on 1960 and 1961 popular songs from a faraway place – America.³¹ In Murakami’s cavalier disregard for the social and political significance of such landmark years as 1960 and 1961 in the above excerpt, Karatani sees a denial of the singularity of any temporal unit and therefore an invalidation of history – or, put differently, an affirmation of the end of history.

²⁹ Karatani, *Teibon, Karatani Kōjin shū Vol. 5, Rekishi to hanpuku*, 162.

³⁰ Murakami, *1973nen no pinbōru*, MH ZSH 1979-1989 1, 131, 132.

³¹ Karatani, *Teibon, Karatani Kōjin shū Vol. 5, Rekishi to hanpuku*, 157.

Karatani points to a similar strain of nonchalant romantic irony in the protagonist's disinterest in the television report concerning Mishima Yukio's death in Murakami's 1982 novel *A Wild Sheep Chase*:

We walked through the woods to the ICU campus and had a hotdog in the lounge as usual. It was two in the afternoon and the TV in the lounge repeatedly showed the figure of Mishima Yukio, over and over. We could barely hear the TV because the volume control was broken, but in any case, we couldn't have cared less about it.³²

Set in Japan in 1978, *A Wild Sheep Chase* is a narrative of a treasure hunt in which the protagonist is requested by a rightwing, powerful political fixer to search for a particular sheep that has left the man's mind. The sheep here embodies the metaphorical notion of Japanese modernity and possibly also the conformity that shapes and takes control of a person's whole being. 'Sheep', according to Karatani's interpretation, is a notion that epitomizes the antithesis of 'Western humanism, with its recognition of individualism and continuing evolution'.³³ The excerpt above is the protagonist's recollection of a day in 1970 and tells of his lack of interest in Mishima's dramatic suicide after his failed coup with his band of young comrades at the Tokyo headquarters of the Eastern Command of Japan's Self-Defence Force in Ichigaya.

In his critique of *A Wild Sheep Chase*, Karatani views Mishima's suicide as the execution of the transcendental self of someone who attempted to be the last person to

³² Murakami, *Hitsuji o meguru bōken*, MH ZSH 1979-1989 2, 21.

³³ Karatani, *Teibon*, *Karatani Kōjin shū Vol. 5, Rekishi to hanpuku*, 175.

demonstrate the notion of ‘sheep’ to the Japanese public. Karatani connects Mishima’s political conviction that promoted the idea of defending the imperial regime against the student movement in the late 1960s with Murakami’s powerful right-wing political fixer.³⁴ Thus, according to the logic of Karatani’s discourse that deconstructs the end of the Shōwa era with Mishima’s suicide and that views Murakami as the last writer who depicts the definitive ending of ‘1970 = Shōwa 45’ in his stories, the casual remark above concerning the day on which Mishima died can certainly be regarded as romantic irony.³⁵

“Murakami Haruki’s “Landscape” – *Pinball, 1973*” also discusses the way that romantic irony, the inversion of values, and the escape from reality are manifested in the naming of the characters in Murakami’s early novels – *Hear the Wind Sing, Pinball, 1973, Hardboiled, and A Wild Sheep Chase*. As discussed in Chapter One of this thesis, Murakami avoids endowing his protagonists with full names and sometimes assigns characters designations that are not even proper nouns. Thus, for example, the twin characters with whom the protagonist of *Pinball, 1973* shares his small apartment are nonchalantly designated ‘208’ and ‘209’. Similarly, a girl in *Hear the Wind Sing* is referred to by the protagonist simply as ‘the third girl with whom I slept’, despite the fact that the protagonist tells of the deep impression that she made on him and that he can recall their intimate conversation even after many years.

Karatani points out that this kind of naming can be seen as an ironic commentary on signification itself and he quotes Ferdinand de Saussure (whose *Cours de linguistique générale* inspired structuralist and post-structuralist thinkers in a variety of fields). By

³⁴ Murakami sets up the political fixer character to have been jailed for his involvement with the assassination plan in the same year as the real-life nationalist military officers’ attempted coup d’état and assassination of cabinet ministers in the 2.26 Incident (1936).

³⁵ See Karatani, *Teibon, Karatani Kōjin shū Vol. 5, Rekishi to hanpuku*, 178.

introducing Saussure's core principle that the essence of signification is *difference*, Karatani attempts to justify Murakami's ironical naming where names, from this perspective, need only be recognizably different from other names to fulfill their function; they need no particular form or content, and, given the right context, they need not even belong to the grammatical category normally associated with naming.³⁶

Lastly, Karatani's essay highlights romantic irony and the inversion of value expressed in a similar excess of signification in his earlier novels. Their protagonists and narrators often appear to lavish an inordinate degree of emphasis on the details of mundane activities, as in the following excerpt from *A Wild Sheep Chase*:

After hearing the sound of the compressor behind my back as the elevator doors shut, I slowly closed my eyes. Gathering up pieces of my senses, I made sixteen steps forward toward the door onto my apartment's corridor. Precisely sixteen steps, with my eyes shut. No more and no less than sixteen steps.³⁷

The speaker here has clearly inverted commonplace values in terms of the seriousness with which he treats a triviality (the number of steps) as compared to unexplored considerations that might strike the reader as being of more profound significance, such as what it is that makes the speaker feel so uneasy. For Karatani, such inversions endow Murakami's early narratives with 'a dreamlike sense of unreality'.³⁸ By way of comparison, Karatani invokes Dostoevsky, pointing out that these Russian novels simply

³⁶ See Karatani, *Teibon, Karatani Kōjin shū Vol. 5, Rekishi to hanpuku*, 144-148. See also Ferdinand de Saussure, 'Cours de linguistique générale' in Rice and Waugh (eds.), *Modern Literary Theory*, 40.

³⁷ Murakami, *Hitsuji o meguru bōken*, MH ZSH 1979-1989 2, 27.

³⁸ Karatani, *Teibon, Karatani Kōjin shū Vol. 5, Rekishi to hanpuku*, 154.

set out statements in exact detail such as ‘it was precisely three steps,’ thus producing an effect of unshakable reality.³⁹ Contrary to some critics who consider Murakami’s earlier novels postmodern, Karatani sees them as modern, a new version of the modern literature created by Murakami’s value inversions. Karatani identifies them as belonging to the same category as the modernist romantic irony manifested in such works as Kunikida Doppo’s *Musashino* (Musashino, 1901) and *Wasureenu hitobito* (Unforgettable People, 1901).⁴⁰

Karatani points out that the novels written in the late 1980s - both *Norwegian Wood* (1987) by Murakami and *Letters to the Nostalgic Years* (1987) by Ōe - adopt a different tone from their authors’ earlier works.⁴¹ In a swift declaration at the end of the essay “Murakami Haruki’s “Landscape” – *Pinball, 1973*”, Karatani states that both novels’ coincidental yearning for the year 1969 means the end of the era of modern literature and describes how *Norwegian Wood* looks back to the ‘1969’ that *Pinball, 1973* treats with romantic irony. Karatani ends his essay “Murakami Haruki’s “Landscape” – *Pinball, 1973*” with reference to the name of the heroine of *Norwegian Wood*, Naoko, as an indication of Murakami’s shift to non-modern literature. Common names appear and the indiscriminate naming disappears in this novel. Karatani suggests that Murakami no

³⁹ Karatani, *Teibon, Karatani Kōjin shū Vol. 5, Rekishi to hanpuku*, 154.

⁴⁰ Ibid. Karatani asserts that Kunikida’s *Musashino* and *Wasureenu hitobito* (Unforgettable People) were the first modern writings to express that landscape can only be found by the ‘inner man’, who is disinterested or disengaged with the ‘other’ in front of him. Karatani Kōjin, *Teibon, Karatani Kōjin shū Vol. 1, Nihon Kindai bungaku no kigen*, 24. In *Unforgettable People*, the writer protagonist tells a painter the stories of ordinary people whom he has met. When the writer nostalgically laments his loneliness and the changing times, he realizes that the people who come to his thoughts are the ones who were in the background or in the surrounding landscape rather than the ones he is trying to recall. In other words, these unforgettable people are the writer’s landscape of the inner self itself. This inversion of value placement is in keeping with Karatani’s definition of irony, according to which ‘all must be jest and all must be serious at the same time: all must be genuine confession and all must be deeply hidden.’ Karatani, *Teibon, Karatani Kōjin shū Vol. 5, Rekishi to hanpuku*, 160-162. Murakami’s writing, Karatani implies, contains a repetition of Kunikida’s transcendental self, and a modified, postmodern romantic irony.

⁴¹ Karatani describes Ōe’s *A Letter to the Nostalgic Year* as another novel that demonstrates the literary shift as it reminisces about the time and the world depicted in *The Silent Cry*.

longer depends on modernist romantic irony - the literary device that diffuses anxieties over Japan's past – in this 1987 novel, reflecting ‘the lapse of the aporias (the core of modern Japanese literature)’.

In a similar way to Ōe's *A Letter to the Nostalgic Year*, *Norwegian Wood* looks back at what people have lost. It is a romantic realist novel with a façade of nonchalance but with no trace of romantic irony. For his argument, Karatani remarks on the new phase in both novels in which he detects a Hegelian discourse of ‘old age’ in which a singular name is abandoned and replaced by a common name. As an example, Karatani points out that there is sincerity in the name Naoko in *Norwegian Wood*; Naoko's being, her relationship with the protagonist Watanabe Tōru and her eventual suicide deeply affect and define Tōru's experience of the 1970s. Similarly, in another essay, “Kindai bungaku no owari” (The End of Modern Literature), Karatani uses his analysis of *A Letter to the Nostalgic Year* to suggest that modern Japanese literature had entered its ‘old age’ at the end of the Shōwa period.

Without conducting a detailed analysis of these two novels, Karatani's conclusion seems to be a rushed and allusive act. Karatani's essays focus on Japanese modern and postmodern literature, but in principle the source of this shift in *zeitgeist*, Karatani claims, was the economic and cultural conditions in Japan in the 1980s when the nation's capitalist economy appeared to surpass that of the United States and Japan became one of the world's economic superpowers.⁴² In addition, Karatani connects the end of modern literature, the rise of a new type of literature, and the end of Shōwa period in 1989 to historical events that took place on the global level in that year such as the end of the

⁴² See Karatani, *Teibon*, *Karatani Kōjin shū Vol. 5, Rekishi to hanpuku*, 188-189.

Cold War, the breakdown of the Soviet Union and new freedoms in the Eastern European region. In “One Spirit, Two Nineteenth Centuries”, Karatani states that Japan’s newly acquired economic global position and the widespread and popularized term ‘postmodern’ released Japan from its grappling and anxiety over modernity.⁴³ It is also possible that Asada’s aforementioned timely and popular book *Structure and Power* helped Japan’s postmodern condition be accepted as a self-claimed, de facto reality around the same time.

According to Karatani’s discourse of the Shōwa era, after 1970, his ‘end of Shōwa’, Japanese literature went through the ‘Taishōesque’ fifteen years of internalization and consequently Karatani considers that Murakami’s novels fit in the category of ‘modern’. As Japanese society embraced the ‘ism of ‘postmodernity’ and the postmodern condition around the same time, the aforementioned aporia of the modern, the concern of the wartime ideology of ‘overcoming the modern’ conference (1942), was finally prevailed in the late 80s.⁴⁴ However, even after Karatani’s somewhat sketchy reading of Murakami’s *Norwegian Wood* and Ōe’s *A Letter to the Nostalgic Year* and his declaration that these novels reflect the shift away from ‘modern’, he stops short of calling them two of the first Japanese ‘postmodern’ works of literature.

5.2. Structuralism, Formalism, and New Readings of Murakami: Hasumi Shigehiko and Katō Norihiro

⁴³ See Karatani, “One Spirit, Two Nineteenth Centuries” in *Postmodernism and Japan*.

⁴⁴ ‘*Kindai no chōkoku*’ (Overcoming the Modern) is a resulting discourse from the 1942 symposium that literary journal *Bungakukai* organized with 13 intellectuals. Karatani, “One Spirit, Two Nineteenth Centuries” in *Postmodernism and Japan*, 271. Also in *Teibon, Karatani Kōjin shū Vol. 5, Rekishi to hanpuku*, 189.

Karatani's critical approach to Murakami is at once semiotic, cultural, and historicist. He is conscious of the author as someone who portrays historical events of the 1960s and 1970s, and he fits his analysis into a broader schema – with its focus on cyclical history and on the end of modern Japanese literature – that addresses a wide range of economic, social, and political issues. By contrast, Hasumi Shigehiko and Katō Norihiro both approach the task of Murakami criticism within more strictly literary paradigms. Nevertheless, as the comparative examination presented in this section will make clear, their approaches to reading Murakami's *A Wild Sheep Chase* and *Kafka on the Shore* are different from those of both Karatani and myself. This addresses the postmodern nature of an act of reading and criticism, as well as the multitude of possibilities of reading that the novels by Murakami offer to their domestic and overseas readers.

In fact, an examination of Hasumi and Katō's criticism of Murakami's novels can reveal a great deal about the changing fashions in literary-critical discourse over the last few decades. Hasumi's 1989 collection of essays entitled *Moving Away from the Novel* is indebted largely to Russian Formalism and to thinkers who bridged the gap between structuralism and post-structuralism, such as Saussure and Roland Barthes. The essays in the volume examine structural similarities in the works of eight writers: Murakami Haruki, Inoue Hisashi (b. 1934), Maruya Saiichi (b. 1925), Ishikawa Jun (1899-1987), Murakami Ryū (b. 1952), Takahashi Gen'ichirō (b. 1951), Ōe Kenzaburō, and Nakagami Kenji. Hasumi's essays dissect the plot structures of three of the most popular Japanese novels of the early 1980s: Murakami's *A Wild Sheep Chase*, Inoue's *Kirikiri-jin* (The

Kirikiri Tribe, 1981), and Maruya's *Uragoe de utae kimigayo* (*Sing Kimigayo* in Falsetto, 1982). This critic, who identifies 'sameness' not just in common motifs and structures but also in the protagonists' narrative functions,⁴⁵ demonstrates that these three works are built on a common, folktale-like narrative framework that centres on the motif of the quest or treasure hunt. The 'common' plot can be summarized as follows: the story begins when a man is dispatched by another person to travel somewhere in order to find a valuable and hidden object (the treasure). His effort is obstructed by a figure of authority and power, but the obstructions are ceremonial and therefore expected. However, a helper figure appears who encourages the hero and who is symbolically the hero's other half (in one case, his sister). The two overcome obstacles together on the path to discovering their treasure, along the way interjecting into the story line an incestuous or perverse love that can never be fully materialized.

In form, at least, Hasumi's analysis of these novels follows in the tradition of Vladimir Propp's groundbreaking 1928 study *The Morphology of the Folktale*, a work that has had a profound influence on subsequent structuralist approaches to narrative. In his work from this period, moreover, Hasumi also flirts with the idea of an unfettered semiotic engagement with texts of the sort announced in Barthes' 1967 essay 'The Death of the Author.' Hasumi adopts a postmodern critical reading approach for his analysis of the works and discovers a monotonous structure, plot, and character function in them with a limited variation of individualistic ideas – for example, the idea of singing the national anthem in falsetto in Maruya's *Sing Kimigayo in Falsetto*, the birth of a small independent country off the coast of Japan in Inoue's *The Kirikiri Tribe*, and the notion of

⁴⁵ Hasumi Shigehiko, *Shōsetsukara tōku hanarete*, 10.

an old, confined system of Japan that is expressed in the shape of sheep in Murakami's *A Wild Sheep Chase*. As Karatani demonstrates in his critical writings, Hasumi makes it clear that the postmodern approach is as much part of the *zeitgeist* as it is part of these popular narratives.

Katō, by contrast, takes recourse in certain more 'traditional' literary values and techniques and deliberately reasserts the importance of the author as the focus of critical analysis. It is not surprising, then, that the title of his 2004 book *Moving Away from the Text* openly signifies his awareness of the work that Hasumi was engaged in two decades earlier. The book, which focuses mainly on the novels that Ōe, Takahashi, Abe Kazushige (b. 1968) and Murakami published after 2000, includes a reading of *Kafka on the Shore* based on Katō's version of linguistic theory, which is a mixture of Saussurian concepts and elements derived from Yoshimoto Takaaki's discourses on language. Overall, Katō seeks to demonstrate the limits of the structuralist, post-structuralist and 'Death of the Author' approaches that gained hegemony in the late twentieth century, including the paradigm of authorless criticism. Katō's 2004 discourse introduces a post-postmodern critical reading that incorporates old-school linguistic discourses and seeks for the 'conscious absence' of the author in the text – a sense of absence and silence of the author in the text that he or she posits. However, at the same time, Katō's reading of *Kafka on the Shore* resonates with old-school, heretical paraphrasing and a humanistic reading of the modern.

The same mixture of postmodern techniques and modern thinking, the same desire for individualism of the modern in literary imagination and the desire for the revival of fiction can be detected in Hasumi's writings. His concerns about the common

morphology in the creative literary space and the ‘decline of imagination in novels’ pervade his nuanced commentaries on postmodern Japanese narratives.⁴⁶ In the epilogue of the same book, Hasumi confesses the difficulty of his task to articulate his ‘[complex] desire to advocate novels while [inevitably] ‘moving away from fictions’’

Indeed, for a nominally post-authorial critic engaged in the seemingly structuralist enterprise of comparing plot structures and motifs, Hasumi’s work on Murakami and his contemporaries is surprisingly judgmental. Hasumi’s response to narrative similarities between *A Wild Sheep Chase* and Inoue’s *The Kirikiri Tribe* in the following passage, for example, shows that, unlike Propp, he is not interested in identifying universal patterns in human cultural productions but in exposing a ‘trick’ that he apparently sees as exploiting the naivety of the Japanese text-consuming public:

What we find in [the two works] is not an intellectual relationship such as literary influence or a theoretical issue such as intertextuality, but something almost unconscious, more barbaric, a narrative pattern’s dominance.... [In it] we find rather simple repetitions of a legend, folklore, tradition, myth, and the resemblances of details [...].

Simple repetition of the narrative motif of the treasure hunt connects *Hitsuji o meguru bōken* and *Kirikiri-jin*. If a reader compares these two long narratives by Murakami Haruki and Inoue Hisashi, it would become undoubtedly obvious to him that the authors repeat the [same] narrative in which something valuable is hidden somewhere and the protagonist discovers and delivers it after some struggles.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ See Hasumi, *Shōsetsukara tōku hanarete*, 60-63, 264-267.

⁴⁷ Hasumi, *Shōsetsukara tōku hanarete*, 19.

This response is indicative both of Hasumi's sense that there is a crisis impending in the sameness that he finds in Japanese literature of the 1980s, and of his belief that value judgments are an essential part of criticism even in the post-authorial era.

It might be useful to look more deeply into Hasumi's voice about the state of readership and the literary scene in order to get a better sense of his critical tone. Demonstrating the deep-rooted scornful attitude among Japanese authors and critics against the commercialization of literary works and economic success that certain popular novels achieve, Hasumi denounces the literary calibre of Murakami by labeling him as an author with 'a value of 2.4 yen per page' in his 1990 article, "'90 Bungei jihyō, yūgi no kyōkun" ('90 Literary Comment, Lessons from Amusements). The same article also suggests that the literary values that the Akutagawa Award judges seek to reward in novels are far removed from the general population's tastes, thus demonstrating a disconnection between the judges' literary ideals and what is well received by the reading public.

Hasumi calculates, in a way that might be characterized as a provocative and meaningless postmodern exercise in commodifying literary works, that an Akutagawa Award author is valued at 7 yen per page and the middle-market Ōe Kenzaburō at 4.5 yen.⁴⁸ In this playful yet incisive critical essay which reviews the literary arena of Japan in the year 1990, Hasumi repeatedly questions the accountability of such economic data in ranking the value of novels. The numerical values, however, lead to the indisputable conclusion that the works of the *junbungaku* (pure literature) genre are economically not successful (and more expensive per page) and remain somewhat niche-oriented.

⁴⁸ Hasumi used Murakami's *Dance, Dance, Dance* for the calculation. See his "'90 Bungei jihyō, yūgi no kyōkun", *Bungei*, vol. 29 (1), 375-383

However, Hasumi successfully points a spotlight on the commodification of literature, and he raises a question about whether the Akutagawa Award is a viable gauge for the seriousness, purity and canonical nature of *junbungaku*. It may be that he is suggesting that the literary establishment (such as the judges of the Akutagawa Award) is still operating on a traditional and outdated value system that seeks for the modern in literature. Hasumi takes an objective stance in regard to the quantitative results with just a hint of cynical tone of voice, but his analysis does not indicate conclusively whether or not he is in favour of Murakami's popular novels. However, in a debate in 1990 with Karatani over the state of the Japanese postmodern, Hasumi reveals a decisively critical view of Murakami. Hasumi criticized Murakami's 'overly meticulous' narratives, claiming that they have 'a perfectly predictable [structural] pattern' and that they are, 'complaisant and gentle' and 'comforting to their reader'.⁴⁹ He denounces Murakami's narratives for their lack of literary values, but cynically acknowledges their appeal to the readers: 'Murakami's novels do not need to exist, but they do exist because the author [has many readers who] share a certain absence [of intellectual rigour with him]'.⁵⁰

5.2.1. Hasumi and the End of Textuality: *A Wild Sheep Chase*

Nominally, at least, Hasumi found in the structuralist and linguistic approaches to textuality that were spreading outward from Paris, Yale, and other centres of critical *avant garde* thinking in the early 1980s a way to move beyond the then-hegemonic critical practice of 'rephrasing the author's imagination in vivid images, translating it into easier words, and clarifying the meaning of the writing that even the author may not have

⁴⁹ Karatani and Hasumi, *Tōsō no echika*, 128, 113.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 122.

realized.’⁵¹ In his 1985 work *Monogatari hihan josetsu* (Introduction to Narrative Criticism), the title of which recalls Barthes’s “Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives” (1966), Hasumi discusses the relationships among such elements as author, text, reader, and critic in light of Barthes’s announcement of ‘The Death of the Author’. In this regard, Hasumi asserts that an author cannot be completely dissociated from his or her texts, although he admits that contemporary linguistically-focused critical discourses, which had contributed valuable analytical methods, had gone some way toward promulgating such a view. Indeed, Hasumi retorts that ‘an author’s individualistic aspects, such as “character, experiences, personal interest, and passion”, cannot disappear into the “neutral” domain of *l’écriture*’.⁵² The author, in Hasumi’s modification of Barthes’ position, exists only *indirectly* in his or her relationship with the text and should be distinguished as a *cultural* being, while ‘*l’écriture* can only be (*naturally*) sensed and understood unmediated within the text’.⁵³

The lukewarm quality of Hasumi’s commitment to the structuralist method and to author-free textual criticism is particularly clear in the following passage:

Recent developments in linguistics, anthropology, Marxism, and psychoanalysis that are roughly grouped under the general term ‘structuralist’ thought stress too heavily a categorical order paradigm and [they] are nervous about the linearity, the physical order of a language, [...], but such differentiation is a trivial provision for the act of reading. There is no use in fictionalizing time in order to question the supremacy of the ‘author’ over ‘his work of writing’ [...]. The reader should simply accept the piece of writing as it is.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Hasumi, *Shōsetsu kara tōku hanarete*, 245-246.

⁵² Hasumi, *Monogatari hihan josetsu*, 265.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 266-267. Emphasis original.

⁵⁴ Hasumi, *Monogatari hihan josetsu*, 301.

Thus, in the 1980s Hasumi was outspoken about what he saw as the pitfalls and limitations of post-authorial and structuralist approaches to reading literature, and he advocated instead the ideal of flexible, contextual reading. Hasumi was equally unenthusiastic about the *objects* of at least some of the structural analyses that he carried out during the same period.⁵⁵ In fact, he eschewed the term *hihyō* with respect to his analysis of common motifs and structures in *A Wild Sheep Chase* and the other popular contemporary works that he discussed in his essay. These works, he claimed, were merely ‘boring’ tales that relied mundanely on a universal narrative formula and hence could neither be called ‘novels’ nor serve as matter for serious *hihyō*.⁵⁶

Whether or not one sees such terms as pejorative, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, the third of four novels of the Nezumi (rat) series,⁵⁷ is fundamentally a literary archetype revolving around the quest for a mysterious object that constitutes a rite of passage for the hero. The protagonist and first person narrator, *boku*, begins the story with the news of the death of a girl (the girl who sleeps with anyone) and with his recollection of 1969-1970, when he felt that ‘the world kept moving and only I was stationary at one and the same spot’.⁵⁸ This, for *boku*, is not a pleasant feeling: ‘in the fall [of 1970] everything looked dreary and everything seemed to be rapidly fading in its color. The sunlight, the smell of grass, and even the faint sound of rain irritated me.’⁵⁹ This is the same era on which the protagonist has looked back with nostalgia in the previous two Nezumi series works, and the sense that he is seeking to understand his place in his present time sets the tone for the

⁵⁵ Hasumi, *Shōsetsu kara tōku hanarete*, 174-175.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 174-175, 236, 238.

⁵⁷ The others are *Hear the Wind Sing*, *Pinball, 1973* and *Dance, Dance, Dance*.

⁵⁸ Murakami, *Hitsuji o meguru bōken*, MH ZSH 1979-1989 2, 19.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

story. Now, in 1978, having divorced his wife and still feeling half lost, *boku*, who writes copy for an advertising company that he co-owns, meets a girl with a mysterious power in her perfectly shaped ears who predicts that an adventure concerning a sheep is about to begin and that it will help him to recover the other half of his self.

In an episode that appears to initiate the fulfillment of this prediction, a meticulously dressed man in a black suit comes to the protagonist's office to deliver a message from 'The Boss', an influential rightwing political fixer whose character, background, and rise to power suggest similarities to the late ultranationalist political fixer Kodama Yoshio (1911-1984).⁶⁰ This messenger demonstrates The Boss's political and financial power by cancelling the protagonist's important business contract and demanding that *boku* find a certain sheep with a star mark on its back. This is because *boku* used a photograph of the sheep in his client's business brochure. We later learn that the photograph was on a postcard which was sent by Nezumi from an unknown location in Hokkaido. This episode, as Hasumi points out, can be mapped against other narratives that include the motif of a third party 'commissioning [the protagonist] while acting as an agent' for a mysterious client. This indicates a stage in the tale that is typically followed by the hero's departure on a journey of discovery, which constitutes the main storyline.⁶¹

Just as the quest is archetypally followed by the hero's return, the end of *A Wild Sheep Chase* brings *boku* back to J's Bar, the narrative hub of *Hear the Wind Sing* (see Chapter Three above), where he laments his lost link with Nezumi, whom he had met there some ten years before. Hasumi is not the only notable Japanese critic to see in the structure and sentiments of *A Wild Sheep Chase* not only affinities with acknowledged

⁶⁰ Although, as noted above, Karatani sees an allusion to Mishima in the novel and its notion of sheep.

⁶¹ See Hasumi, *Shōsetsu kara tōku hanarete*, 53.

literary classics (such as *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, *The Odyssey*, and *Ulysses*) but also the degradation of bourgeois art:

The moment when the protagonist reaches the peak of the mountain, he feels nothing but a sense of loss. Here, we do not find a tale of a rite of passage that ends with the fulfilling reward of a reification of identity after overcoming obstacles. [As such,] *Sheep* is a burnt down remnant of the steel frame of the system of the *Bildungsroman*...a decadent leftover of the quest tale best known from the legends of the Holy Grail.⁶²

Ultimately, Yomota Inuhiko appears to be less disappointed over the work's anti-climactic ending than he is offended by the manner in which *A Wild Sheep Chase* defies the traditional norm of the *Bildungsroman* – the 'steel frame' of bourgeois realism. Instead of a lesson in morality and maturity leading to a reinstatement in society, we find the initial prophecy fulfilled in a most unfulfilling manner: as his girlfriend had predicted, *boku* discovers the other half of his self (Nezumi), but he realizes that Nezumi and his past that is associated with Nezumi are gone. Thus, what is left at the end is indeed a profound sense of loss, and despite the scope and complexity of the central quest narrative the tale ends in a very private mode, with the protagonist crying on a beach.

The relationship between *boku* and Nezumi is also a lynchpin in Hasumi's analysis of the novel. Hasumi describes the protagonist's relationship with Nezumi as 'incestuous in that they are each other's self and thus exude the image of a comforting

⁶² Yomota Inuhiko, 'Decadence in the legends of the Holy Grail', in *Shinchō*, 1985, 1, Katō Norihiro (ed.), *Murakami Haruki Yellow Page*, 55.

homosexual relationship that excludes [*boku's*] opposite sex'.⁶³ Hasumi further argues that the treasure hunt has an alternative purpose for *boku*, which is to allow him to search for Nezumi, who had long ago disappeared from his life. Indeed, Hasumi claims that the world of the protagonist exhibits duality throughout, with both unity and separation characterizing the beginning and the end of the narrative.⁶⁴ *Boku* and Nezumi, in fact, fulfill for each other the folktale role of the helper-donor figure, and thus function like a dyadic pair or mythical twins. In this light, Hasumi points out that their relationship invites a 'psychoanalytical interpretation' in which 'the twins form a unity with love for each other in their defiance against their father.'⁶⁵

Just as Hasumi trivializes the common 'morphology' of the postmodern Japanese novel, however, his project as a critic here is not to psychoanalyze the text or its author but to declare his observation and articulation of a certain episteme, an era of exploration that he feels has devolved into empty repetition. Many Japanese novels of the 1980s, Hasumi points out, tell tales of the adventures of twins.⁶⁶ Moreover, as the twin pair – the protagonist and his or her other self – thrive on similarity and on empathy for each other (or, for one's self) instead of on their ability to grapple uniquely with differences upon encountering the unknown (i.e. modernist individualism), the twin tale is emblematic for Hasumi of the degradation of literature in its postmodern phase. The sign of this degradation, in his view, is the construction of storylines across the once rich literary landscape based on the architecture of similarities and resemblances rather than on

⁶³ Hasumi, *Shōsetsu kara tōku hanarete*, 163. Hasumi also points out that Murakami never develops the love story between the protagonist and his girlfriend in this narrative, and that the girlfriend's role is neither that of client, saboteur nor object of the treasure hunt. *Ibid.*, 39, 86-87.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 79-80.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 163.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 81-83.

differences.⁶⁷ According to Hasumi, the embedding of ‘individualistic or unique protagonists’ struggles within the comforting and familiar paradigm of universal narrative structures belies these very differences as mere pretense,⁶⁸ a pretense by which commercial entertainments manage to masquerade as literature. Thus, like Karatani, Hasumi sees ‘the end of the era of texts’ approaching in the late twentieth century,⁶⁹ and he places the blame for the demise squarely on the shoulders of modernism’s iterative ‘other’: ‘Postmodernism [in literature] is nothing other than mediocre, anti-individualistic, generalized expression by individuals who have become fed up with the study of “differences” and have decided that [repetition] is a suitable format for the end of the century.’⁷⁰

Hasumi further argues that when the modernist notion of history is supplanted by postmodern discourse, it is no surprise that an ancient or medieval narrative framework usurps contemporary texts. *A Wild Sheep Chase*, Hasumi asserts, fits nicely into such a framework, but it never develops its theme to the point that it can be considered a novel. Hasumi concludes that Murakami’s *A Wild Sheep Chase* is an appropriate response to the demands of the era,⁷¹ that its popularity is therefore understandable and that authors can be expected to continue reiterating and supplementing the narrative structures and motif systems of each other’s texts.⁷² Thus, from Hasumi’s perspective, the future of extended narratives in Japanese in the 1980s appeared to lie not in works of literary imagination

⁶⁷ Hasumi, *Shōsetsu kara tōku hanarete*, 183.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 264.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 58-59.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 266-267.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 62.

constructed by individual authors for their unique merits but in concocting new variations on already re-told tales.

5.2.2. Katō Norihiro's Post-Textualism and New Reading: *Kafka on the Shore*

Whether it be post-structuralism or [Barthes'] Epicureanism, I am fed up with the *hihyō* of the present time.... For what do we care about intertextuality or narratology? Rather, I long for Sakaguchi Ango's words: "for an author, [literary] writing is not only about the act of writing, it also delineates living".⁷³

The above comment, made by Karatani around 1985, expresses his sense of exhaustion in the face of the then-persistent onslaught of literary-critical theories that relied heavily on '-isms' and on discourses of difference. In response, Karatani invokes Sakaguchi Ango's words from the seemingly simpler days before postmodernism to communicate his desire – perhaps a longing for the criticism he learned and practiced in his youth – to relate a given piece of writing to its author, his psyche, interests, experiences, and passions. In short, Karatani expresses his remorse over the death of the author and his longing for the days when a critic could – to paraphrase Barthes – declare 'victory' over a text simply by constructing a narrative account of the mystical persona that had breathed life into its pages.

In his *Moving Away from the Text* written almost two decades later, Katō Norihiro argues for a literary-critical approach that contrasts sharply with the half-hearted post-structuralism of Hasumi and Karatani. Katō eagerly acknowledges the positive

⁷³ Karatani, *Hihyō to posutomodan*, 83.

contribution of postmodern approaches to literature in shifting the focus of criticism from author to text, and he praises postmodern critical discourses for their ability to support a myriad of readings, a development that moved criticism beyond the traditional practices of valuing given pieces of writing over others and of positing competing notions of a mythical universal literary aesthetic.⁷⁴ Such reading is most effectively demonstrated in an example of Murakami's *Kafka on the Shore*.

Katō points out that the postmodern literary criticism practiced since the 1980s had repeatedly questioned the meaning of 'reality' as encountered in texts. The modernist notion of 'reality' leaned heavily on the subjective voice of the writer and on an ideology of individualism. With the rise of structuralism and other mechanized models of critical analysis, along with the rise of mechanical technologies that have come to dominate society, the older, nominally 'humanist' model had given way to binary discourse and to contextualized systems of understanding.

However, Katō remarks on the author's 'defiance against [postmodernist] structuralism/poststructuralism/deconstructionism theories' in a few works that were published in the new millennium, and comments that he does not find the stagnation in works of literature or the lack of individualism in the narratives that Hasumi lamented in his *Moving Away from the Novel* twenty-five years previously.⁷⁵ More specifically, Katō finds a pattern of blurred separation between autobiographical and fictional, between writing and reality, and a new type of author's involvement with his text. Accordingly, in order to respond to the emergence of these changes in literature, Katō's book aims to demonstrate a new practice of reading texts. Critical of Jacques Derrida's linguistic

⁷⁴ Katō Norihiro, *Tekusuto kara tōku hanarete*, 19.

⁷⁵ Katō, *Tekusuto kara tōku hanarete*, 33.

theory, Katō's discourse articulates a new notion, the 'language of fiction,' meaning the language expressed by the image of the author and including the presence of the unwritten. Such a viewpoint incorporates Takeda Seiji's linguistic concepts of 'general linguistic representation' and 'actual language'.⁷⁶

The key themes of the novels that were published in the new millennium range from the narrator's recollection of and reconciliation with his past (Ōe Kenzaburō's *Torikaeko* (The Changeling, 2000)), to a fictional satire of a canonical Japanese modern writer's fixation with and struggle to find their literary niche and voice (Takahashi Gen'ichirō's *Nihonbungaku seisuishī* (A History of the Rise and Fall of Japanese Literature, 2001)), and an isolated young man's attack on a crested ibis (Abe Kazushige's *Nipponia Nippon* (Nipponia Nippon, 2001)). In addition to conducting an extensive analysis of Murakami's 2002 novel *Kafka on the Shore*, Katō also refers to Mizumura Sanae's *Zoku Meian* (Sequel, Light and Darkness, 1990), a story that is told in the fabricated voice of Natsume Sōseki as a sequel to Sōseki's unfinished novel *Meian* (Light and Darkness, 1917). They all share the common characteristics of the author's ambiguous presence in the text, which raises the question of the authenticity of the texts and the discourse of the 'Death of the Author'. However, in this section I will focus on the ways in which Ōe's 2000 novel represents his fictional reality before discussing Katō's close reading of *Kafka on the Shore*.

In Ōe's *The Changeling*, and as an echo of events in Oe's life after the suicide of his brother-in-law, one of the protagonists, Kogito, revisits and attempts to grasp the tragedy and the past that he and his brother-in-law Gorō shared by listening to Gorō's

⁷⁶ See Katō, *Tekusuto kara tōku hanarete*, 88-103.

recorded monologues on tape and by recording his response to the deceased man's soliloquy. The novel sets up Kogito as an internationally renowned Nobel Laureate whose son plays the piano despite having been born with a severe learning disability. Gorō, married to an actress, is a film director whose credits include the film *Tanpopo* (Dandelion, 1985) and who was once attacked by a group of gangsters due to a film he was directing. Thus far, these detailed descriptions fit the author Ōe Kenzaburō and his late brother-in-law Itami Jūzō's actual profile. Katō points to the author's new technique that he has never used before: the well-known photograph of the nineteen-year-old Ōe that was taken by his brother-in-law Itami in March 1954 is included in the text purportedly as a photograph of Kogito—taken by Gorō on April 28th, 1952. This photograph and its caption, which are both real and not real in the textual context of the novel, challenge the distinction between the real and fiction, the prevalent postmodern reading experience, and the author's new type of ownership over the text.⁷⁷ Coincidentally, in *A History of the Rise and Fall of Japanese Literature*, a fictive chronicle of modern Japanese literary canon's creative endeavours, Takahashi similarly includes in the text a real photograph of his stomach taken by endoscope (after he took medical leave from the serialized novel). Thus, he merges and denies the definitive separation between the actual and the fictional. In both examples, the intrusive presence of the author in the text challenges Barthes' discourse regarding the 'Death of the Author'.

With these new types of writings, *Moving Away from the Text* presents Katō's argument that the reader's singular interpretation and reading experience is strongly influenced by 'the image of the author' in the textual space and that there are limits to

⁷⁷ Katō reveals that the same photograph which appeared in the literary magazine *Gunzō* was said to have been taken in March 1954. See Katō, *Tekusuto kara tōku hanarete*, 24.

Barthes' 'Death of the Author' discourse. Like his contemporary postmodern advocates, Katō's discourse in *Moving Away from the Text* rejects the old-school concept of placing the author in the primary position of authority over the text. However, he goes further by arguing that a text holds foremost importance over other things, including its author. His emphasis is placed on the reader's interpretation of the polysemy and ambiguity in the text and the language that are planted there by the author.

Katō's essay "'Sakusha no shi' to 'Torikaeko'" (The Death of the Author and the Changeling) examines the activity of language in Oe's *The Changeling*, and starts from the same linguistic foundation of Saussure's postmodern semiotics as was used by Karatani for his critical investigation of Murakami's early novels. However, Katō's approach is less purist and breaks away from the strict regime of postmodern critical approaches. He revisits Yoshimoto Takaaki's discourse on language from the 1970s that argues how linguistic representation – both in terms of the meaning and the act of expression – cannot be disassociated from the author. In this essay, Katō defies Barthes' construction of a discourse between the reader, the text and the writer, and the disconnection between the writer and the author. Instead, Katō explains that 'the image of the implied author' emerges along with the reader's act of reading and comprehension of the text.⁷⁸

Continuing with his theme of the image of the author in the section entitled "Umibe no Kafuka to 'kan'yu-teki na sekai'" (Kafka on the Shore and the Metonymical World), Katō refers to Derrida's textual discourse and the 'Death of the Author' in order to further clarify the process of the emergence of 'the image of the author' in the reader's

⁷⁸ See Katō, *Tekusuto kara tōku hanarete*, 49-56.

relationship with the text and its writer. Katō explains that in the literary text (*écriture*), where the reader is assumed to be ‘an unspecified other’, the speaker (the writer) becomes ‘an unspecified other’ to the reader. As a result, in the relationship between the writer and the text, the text gains relative importance over the writer. This also changes their relationship to become one that is between ‘a fictional writer’ (or ‘a loss of the actual writer’) and ‘substantiated text’.⁷⁹ In short, Katō’s theory rejects his interpretation of Derrida’s premise – that the full emergence of the text is only possible with the removal of the author from the construction of speech⁸⁰ - and develops his own version of the ‘Death of the Author’ discourse in which the absence of ‘the author’ signifies ‘the existence of the author’.⁸¹

In the structure of Katō’s ‘Death of the Author’ theory, once the actual author is removed from the text, the author’s ‘language of fiction’ can create the ‘conscious absence’ of the author in the text:⁸²

The author weaves his text by not allowing his protagonist or narrator to tell certain things [in the story]. In other words, the actual author can be omnipresent in the text as an external being by not allowing the image of himself (who only exists in the space where the words are linked with each other) to write, or by not allowing the narrator to tell certain things, and furthermore, by not allowing a character to speak what he or she knows in the story. The author is connected to the text even by not being explicit. The narrator conducts the process of storytelling by not narrating. He or she gets engaged in talking by not telling what he or she knows to the reader or by telling the reader his or her intention of not telling something to another character. Textual space allows these things to happen, and the author does not disappear with his death. Instead, the

⁷⁹ Katō, *Tekusuto kara tōku hanarete*, 101.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 102.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 104.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 105.

author starts living as an external being after his death. In this way, the 'Death of the Author' can [continue to] survive in the words.⁸³

Katō tests this theory in Agatha Christie's 1926 detective novel *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*, in which a narrator withholds the fact that he is the murderer of the homicide case until one of the protagonists, a detective, solves the mystery.⁸⁴ In this narrative construction, the actual author's presence in the text – as the author who has made such arrangement – is denoted as a 'conscious absence'.

This conscious absence of the author in the text is also found in the reading of the aforementioned writings by Ōe, Takahashi and Abe. Katō assumes that the reader eagerly seeks a way to solve the puzzling identity of the true narrator's voice and to make sense of the author's intention in the fictional texts. The strongly suggested presence of the author and the revival of the author's value to the text in these novels defies the postmodern discourse of the 'Death of the Author', but the interpretation and judgment is still in the reader's hand as these texts never confirm the puzzle as to the real voice or the intention of the author.

Murakami's novels that were published prior to 2000 are also full of puzzling events, but the nature of their mystery does not fit in the same category as those of the three novels mentioned above. For example, in Murakami's *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*, the novel provides no clue to the meaning of the mysterious empty box of the Cutty Sark that *boku* receives from Mr. Honda as a keepsake. The box functions neither as a linking

⁸³ See Katō, *Tekusuto kara tōku hanarete*, 105-106.

⁸⁴ See *Ibid.*, 105.

tool to another episode nor as a metaphor in the novel. As the sender of the box is dead, its significance remains unexplained and no reference is made to it in the novel again. Although the fantastical world of *Kafka on the Shore* does not include this type of allegorical postmodern setup, the novel is structured with multiple layers of the world in which the story of different personalities unfolds. There may be a narrator for each layer of the world or there may be one voice for the world, but it is never revealed.

Murakami makes his presence known in the texts as the analysis in the next section indicates, but the interpretation of ‘reality’ in this particular novel is left to the reader’s individual, humanistic sensitivity. In his examination of *Kafka on the Shore*, Katō demonstrates his phenomenological theory by exploring Jacques Lacan’s observation of language and metonymy.⁸⁵ According to Katō, the premise of Lacan’s discourse of language is that the meaning of any word – and even the lack thereof – can be determined whichever way it suits the relationship between the speaker and the receiver of the word.⁸⁶ Lacan’s linguistic view here clearly contradicts the bias of postmodern thinking that supports the notion of the text’s complete independence from its author. Instead, Lacan’s view reinforces Katō’s argument that a text and its author’s image are co-dependent in relation to the reader.

Katō’s reading of these new types of novels can thus far be characterized as a reading that relies on his “sense” and his interpretation of signifiers in the text. For the reading of *Kafka on the Shore*, which requires the unraveling of strings of multiple signifiers,⁸⁷ Katō selects Lacan’s metonymical psychoanalytical approach. In “Kafka on the Shore and the Metonymical World”, Katō explains how metonymic psychoanalysis

⁸⁵ Katō, *Tekusuto kara tōku hanarete*, 55.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 131.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 132.

can be used in the critical reading of *Kafka on the Shore* by means of the following metaphorical example. Treatment starts with a psychoanalyst collecting his or her patient's 'signifiers' of his or her condition/symptoms in their conversations. The narrative that is created as a result of their collected conversations helps the patient experience healing as the narrative functions as a bridge between his or her troubled inner psyche and the outside world. It eventually leads the patient to recovery. In this method, the source of the illness is deduced after the recovery has been acknowledged.⁸⁸ Katō decides that a phenomenological reading is the answer to the new type of novels for the following reasons: characteristically in these novels the presence of the author is ambiguous, their structure is allusive about their narrator(s), and their world is layered with multiple 'reality' and signifiers. With the support of Lacan's linguistic discourse that values the reader's relationship with a text and its author, Katō's humanistic criticism takes the shape of a metonymical construction that allows individualistic interpretation of a narrative full of signifiers.

5.2.3. Katō's Metonymical Reading in *Kafka on the Shore*

In *Moving Away from the Text*, Katō demonstrates his post-postmodern reading in his discussion of the self-other construction in *Kafka on the Shore*, a novel that is full of mysterious characters and occurrences. First, Katō begins his critique of the novel with many questions:

In this novel, "mysteries" appear in abundance. For example, Mr. Nakata kills the cat-killer Johnnie Walker in Nakano Ward, Tokyo, but when he

⁸⁸ See, Katō, *Tekusuto kara tōku hanarete*, 135-137.

becomes conscious (after being unconscious) after the killing, he finds himself in his usual spot in an empty lot and there is no trace of blood [from the killing] on him. And as if to say ‘instead of that’, Kafuka wakes up to find himself in the grounds of a shrine in Takamatsu, Shikoku with his shirt soaked in blood. What does this teleportation-like strange event tell us? Or to begin with, who or what in the world is this Johnnie Walker? A ‘character’ that decorates the label of a whisky bottle prowls in this world like “a wandering signifier”. How could that happen? Furthermore, is it actually possible that a person [such as Mr. Nakata] understands the cat language?⁸⁹

Katō’s questions above are justifiable because these fantastical setups and the plotline are never explained in the novel. (They also represent what Katō calls ‘the language of fiction in the literary texts’.)⁹⁰ Despite these types of unexplained events and conditions, based on his phenomenological theory Katō argues that the reader gains a sense of completeness in his or her reading experience of this novel.⁹¹

The central element of his interrogation in “Kafka on the Shore and the Metonymical World” is the metonymical world of the protagonist Tamura Kafuka. Katō’s essay draws our attention to Kafuka’s loathing for his father, which he views as fundamental to an understanding of the metonymy in the novel. Katō, more importantly, questions why Kafuka’s emotion towards his father never gets resolved in this novel that covers a period of ten days in the life of Kafuka and Nakata-san:

⁸⁹ Katō, *Tekusuto kara tōku hanarete*, 168-169.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 152.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 168-169.

The novel indicates that the protagonist, Tamura Kafuka, vehemently hates his father. But he never mentions the reason for this hatred. Not only that, the author keeps his mouth tightly shut about it. Why does the protagonist hate his father so much? Furthermore, why does the author not let his protagonist or the text tell the reason either explicitly or inexplicitly? Why does the author appear as if he is trying to hide it?⁹²

Kafuka's strong hatred for his father is the principle that underlies all the events in the novel from his leaving home, his father's violent death, his relationship with Saeki-san whom he believes is his lost mother, and his time in the woods in Shikoku to the inexplicable coincidence of the bloodied T-shirt. Indeed, many events (especially Kafuka's oedipal encounters with Saeki-san) that connect the characters are so mysterious and fantastical that they overshadow the fundamental and central issue of the novel – the source of Kafuka's hatred for his father and his emotional shift towards his father. Katō describes the author's silence over this important motif in the narrative construction as 'that vacuum'.⁹³ He suggests that this vacuum in the text is intentionally crafted by Murakami and that this sense of absence should be considered as 'the image of the author'.⁹⁴

In order to answer the underlying question as to why he felt that this novel is complete despite the vacuum (and the omnipresence of the author) in the text and to draw an analogy with the contemporary condition of Japanese society in his analysis, Katō explains his interpretation of the novel by means of Lacan's poststructuralist

⁹² Katō, *Tekusuto kara tōku hanarete*, 169.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 191

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

psychoanalysis and his concept of the metonymical world.⁹⁵ Explaining the appropriateness of poststructuralist psychoanalysis for the novel's motif of 'the collapse of balance between mind and body', Katō searches Murakami's earlier novels for examples that were written around Japan's rapid-growth, postmodern era in which Murakami depicts a world where the balance between his protagonist's mind and body crumbles. For example, in the realistic novel *Norwegian Wood*, Murakami portrays the fragile psyche of protagonist Naoko who, after her boyfriend's suicide, leaves college, moves to a sanatorium and eventually commits suicide. In *Dance, Dance, Dance*, Murakami illustrates the disconnection of body and mind in the character Gotanda-kun by introducing the concept of an 'other world' in the sense of the spiritual and alien as opposed to the world after death or the netherworld. Murakami includes a fantastical space, referred to as the 'other world' or the 'other side' in describing the protagonist's interior psyche in *Kafka on the Shore*. However, the novel presents us with a new construction of the protagonists and their worlds that seems to be both singular and multiple at the same time, thus offering the reader a wide range of interpretations and readings. As one example, Katō's *Moving Away from the Text* asserts that Kafuka represents the schizophrenic separation of the mind and his multi-layered metonymical world.⁹⁶

Indeed, Kafuka's internal conversation with his alter ego which he names 'a boy called Crow' (referred to as Crow Boy below) is found in many of the chapters that describe the events unfolding around the protagonist. Crow Boy appears in a variety of forms - as a voice inside Kafuka, an invisible presence that Kafuka senses behind his

⁹⁵ Katō, *Tekusuto kara tōku hanarete*, 192.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 194.

shoulder, and in the shape of a bird. The novel begins with Kafuka's first-person narration of his monologue with Crow Boy in an episode called "A Boy Called Crow". They sit next to each other on a sofa 'as they always do' in Kafuka's father's library, pondering and plotting Kafuka's plan to run away from home.⁹⁷ In another episode with the same title later in the narrative (after Nakata-san's death and during Kafuka's stay in a cabin in the woods), Kafuka's alter ego metamorphoses into a crow and attacks a man with his beak.⁹⁸ The attack is narrated in the third person and details the violent attack on the man wearing a top hat by Crow Boy in the woods. The man's physical description and the sadistic and provocative monologue remind the reader of Nakata-san's encounter with Johnnie Walker whom Nakata-san kills in Chapter Sixteen, further signifying the multiplicity of the Kafuka/Crow Boy/Nakata-san character construction.

Throughout the novel, the voice of Crow Boy interrogates, explains and reassures Kafuka as he delves into deep internal thoughts. The voice of Crow Boy is also often distinguished from Kafuka's own voice by bold typeface in the texts. In the excerpt below, Kafuka is wandering in the woods alone, contemplating his relationship with his lost mother and reimagining his four-year-old self:

I turn into a theorizing black crow.

'It doesn't mean that your mother didn't love you.' A boy called Crow talks to me from behind. 'To be more precise, she loved you deeply. First you must believe that. That is the starting point.'

⁹⁷ Murakami, *Umibe no Kafuka* Book 1, 6.

⁹⁸ Murakami, *Umibe no Kafuka* Book 2, 362-368.

‘But she abandoned me. She disappeared after leaving me alone in the wrong place. It really hurt me and I was damaged by that. Now I know. If she really loved me, how could she do that to me?’⁹⁹

[...]

I wait for his response. For a long time, I keep my mouth shut. But there is no response.

I turn back. But the boy called Crow is no longer there. Above my head, I hear the sound of dry flutterings.

You are totally lost.¹⁰⁰

In this text told in the first-person, Kafuka is conscious of his transformation into a crow. The conversation between the two characters, combined with their alternating physical shapes, creates a complex character setup for Kafuka. This excerpt also indicates that Kafuka has no control over Crow Boy as he disappears out of Kafuka’s sight without warning. As the example above demonstrates, Crow Boy vanishes, leaving an insightful remark marked in bold typeface lingering in Kafuka’s thoughts.

The usage of different typefaces here is an obvious and physical signifier that is used to distinguish the speakers; it is not a new tool. However, Murakami does not always differentiate the words of Crow Boy from Kafuka’s by bold typeface in the text. This unpredictable pattern of their speech can be seen in the following example.

He is sitting next to me on the sofa. Like when we were in my father’s study.

“She is very different from you,” he says.

She is very different from you. Saeki-san has gone through many different situations – not ordinary situations. [...] but now you have

⁹⁹ Murakami, *Umibe no Kafuka* Book 2, 304.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 307-308. (bold in original)

found yourself in a new situation in this new world and, of course, you have lost yourself. That's because everything is new to you.

You are at a loss. One of the things you don't comprehend well is whether women have sexual desire. [...]

You imagine what she is doing now. Today is Monday and the library is closed. What is Saeki-san doing on her day off?

[...] you hold your breath and stare into the darkness. You listen intently to the sound of the wind, trying to find some meaning in it. But there are only a few [different] stages of darkness. Eventually you give up, close your eyes and fall asleep.¹⁰¹

In the above example, Crow Boy's observation - "She is very different from you" - is repeated in bold typeface after Kafuka's first-person narrative makes the same comment. The transition from the speaker Kafuka to another is clearly marked by the bold typeface. However, the interior monologue of Crow Boy in the first person in the subsequent paragraphs until the end of the chapter is no longer in bold typeface. In another place (in Chapter Seven), none of the exchanges between Kafuka and Crow Boy are distinguished by the typeface. Katō's examination of the novel remains focused on the linguistic and psychological discourses and he does not include this physical signifier in his analysis. However, it seems clear that this technique also qualifies as a signifier of the unspoken voice of the (invisible) author, as indicated by Katō in his work.

The physical exhibition of multiple voices by different typefaces notwithstanding, in Katō's interpretation the Crow Boy episodes suggest the voice of 'a separate personality within [Kafuka]' because he suffers from "dissociative identity disorder (multiple personality disorder)"; one personality is a boy whose last name is Tamura, but

¹⁰¹ Murakami, *Umibe no Kafuka* Book 2, 220-223. (bold in original)

the novel never reveals his full real name (referred to below as Boy-Tamura), another one is Crow Boy that he has created as his guardian deity, and the third personality is Tamura Kafuka that exists under the protection of the guardian deity.¹⁰² The police inquiry at the hotel where Kafuka was staying and at the private library where Kafuka is hiding hints at the existence of Boy-Tamura and his real name, but no further reference is made to him and he remains unknown in the novel.¹⁰³ Katō also quotes a passage in which the librarian, Ōshima-san, and Kafuka discuss comments made by the police about Boy-Tamura being ‘a problem child’. The following is part of that conversation:

‘There are some occasions when I can’t help being that way.’

‘You cannot control it yourself,’ says Ōshima-san.

I nod.

‘And you hurt a person, do you?’

‘I don’t mean to do it. But sometimes I feel as if I have another person inside me. Then when I come to myself, I’ve already hurt the person.’¹⁰⁴

Kafuka’s words here suggest that on occasions he does not have any recollection of his (or, in this case, of Boy-Tamura’s) actions. Based on Boy-Tamura’s complete silence in the text, Katō conjectures that Boy-Tamura may feel the same i.e. that there is another person inside him.

Moreover, Katō explains that in the metonymical world where reality exists in three separate worlds (Kafuka’s world in the chapters narrated by him, Nakata-san’s world in the chapters narrated in third person, and lastly Boy-Tamura’s world that exists but is never narrated), three separate killings at three separate times are possible. For

¹⁰² Katō, *Tekusuto kara tōku hanarete*, 173.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 174.

¹⁰⁴ Murakami, *Umibe no Kafuka*, Book 2, 64.

example, Katō points out that the shrine nearby which Kafuka regains consciousness may be the same one to which Hoshino is led by Colonel Sanders to find the rock to the entrance to the ‘other world’ as Kafuka’s description of ‘a rather spacious’ and ‘tall’ shrine with a ‘large mercury lamp’ matches the description of the shrine that Hoshino visited.¹⁰⁵

With more signifiers and the arbitrariness of the course of events in Kafuka’s world, Katō calls attention to the possibility that the killing of Johnnie Walker by Nakata-san (Johnnie Walker provokes and demands that Nakata-san should kill him in Chapter Sixteen) may in fact represent the killing of the alter ego of Tamura Kafuka by the alter ego of Tamura Kafuka.¹⁰⁶ Firstly, the location of the wound inflicted on Johnnie Walker by Nakata-san is the same as the place where Kafuka finds the heavy bloodstain on his T-shirt.¹⁰⁷ Secondly, the blood on Kafuka’s T-shirt is not someone else’s but his own (although there is no obvious injury on his body) because the shirt that Kafuka wears over the soiled T-shirt has just a few speckles of blood on it.¹⁰⁸ In another example, Katō proposes that the killing of cats by Johnnie Walker, including the one particularly long gruesome killing of a cat that Nakata-san has to witness before attacking him, is not done by Kafuka’s father Tamura Kōichi, but by Boy-Tamura himself.¹⁰⁹ Moreover, Katō suggests that Johnnie Walker is a ‘*signifiant*’ of Tamura Kōichi at the same time as a figure created by Kafuka’s hatred for his father.¹¹⁰ Indeed, the text does not give any clue

¹⁰⁵ Murakami, *Umibe no Kafuka* Book 1, 119. Book 2, 74.

¹⁰⁶ Katō, *Tekusuto kara tōku hanarete*, 187.

¹⁰⁷ Murakami, *Umibe no Kafuka* Book 1. 257, Book 1, 119.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 119.

¹⁰⁹ Katō, *Tekusuto kara tōku hanarete*, 187.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

for the reader to determine who the real Tamura Kōichi is apart from the newspaper article that describes him as a world-renowned sculptor.¹¹¹

In the novel that is set in no singular reality and in the world where there is no obvious truth, what appears to be reality is multi-layered, and each reality is referred to from another level of fictional reality within the dynamics of what Katō describes as the metonymic world. But Katō's insistence on making a distinction between reality and the boy's delusion is not his key point. He concludes that Murakami's purpose in *Kafka on the Shore* is to depict the process of recovery for a person who is utterly damaged,¹¹² and to demonstrate the gap between the image of the world as viewed by the boy's internal psyche and the image of the boy in the world.¹¹³

Katō's metonymical and psychoanalytical reading of the world of *Kafka on the Shore* can illustrate no one definitive truth or 'right answer', and the critic acknowledges that his theory for this particular metonymical reading is in some respects just one of many different hypotheses. Therefore, he notes that the novel can be read simply as 'a peculiar, fantasy novel'.¹¹⁴ Furthermore, Katō ends his critique of *Kafka on the Shore* in *Moving Away from the Text* with his admission that 'the essence of the literary work lies in the fact that there is no [one, fixed] truth'.¹¹⁵ In this way, Katō concludes that the universality of reading is only found in the hands of the readers who articulate and exchange their opinions on the value of a literary work.¹¹⁶ This phenomenological sensibility resonates with the concern and the goal of *hihyō* of pre-postmodern time.

¹¹¹ See Murakami, *Umibe no Kafuka* Book 1, 337-339.

¹¹² Katō, *Tekusuto kara tōku hanarete*, 178.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 189.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 195.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 195.

¹¹⁶ See *Ibid.*, 194-195.

5.2.4. *Hihyō*, Postmodernism, Post-postmodernism and Murakami

An examination of the history of the Japanese postmodern condition, the changing nature of *hihyō*, and the various theories and discourses in the critical works of Karatani, Hasumi and Katō on the novels by Murakami over a period of twenty-five years reveal their yearning to value and retain the subjective, humanistic sensitivity of the reader. As advocates of postmodern thinking in the 1980s, Karatani and Hasumi remained close to postmodern theories. Karatani's focus was clearly to address an array of issues concerning economics, as well as social and political affairs. His argument regarding the end of Japanese modern literature, despite his geographical focus on Japan, is conscious of a wider, global audience to which Marx's discourse on history and its repetition can readily be applied.

Hasumi and Katō remained in the confines of a more strictly literary paradigm. Hasumi's 1989 *Moving Away from the Novel* attempted to demonstrate the decline of imagination in contemporary Japanese novels by applying narratology to his analysis. While his analysis revealed the repetitive themes and motifs in the narratives that dominated Japan's literary space in the mid to late 1980s, it also showed Hasumi's complex standing on the politics of criticism and his yearning for the revival of novels and their individualism.

The hesitation about Barthes's concept of the 'Death of the Author' that was felt and expressed in Hasumi's book also remained a focal point in Katō's work from 2004. His book, written to demonstrate his resistance to postmodernism's dominant '-isms' and theories, repositions an author in his relationship with language and texts. Hasumi and

Katō's critical hegemony has to some extent reinstated the author, and they have particularly criticized structuralism as being too mechanistic. However, the death of the author also implies the death of the critic and the consequent re-emergence of the individual, human-reader. Katō's new reading that appeared fifteen years after Hasumi's critical work demonstrates the characteristics of the post-postmodern approach that, simply put, argues for a combination of modern and postmodern discourses. Such a formation would be no surprise to Karatani who characterized postmodernity as a paradox of modernity itself.

The transition in the critical methods found in Kato's and Hasumi's books from a structural analysis of the narrative to a textual reading suggests the way in which critical discourses have shifted over two decades. Their critical examinations, including their methods and their nuanced attitude towards the examination of the common characteristics of their objects (the novels), confirm that the production of writing (both creative writing and criticism) is embedded within the *zeitgeist* of the time and in contemporary cultural politics. Perhaps these three critics chose Murakami's works for their critical investigation because of the timeliness of his novels for the era and for their masterful ambiguity in their representation of time, space, 'other worlds', metaphorical characters, self and the 'other'. With such works, the old-school *hihyō* method and postmodernism's discourses are too limiting to fully discover and appreciate the unspoken images in the text which are likely to provide fertile ground for the continued exploration of Murakami's novels.

Conclusion

I have argued that Murakami's fictional works, particularly those published after 1995, present a new type of writing that does not fit within the narrow, binary paradigm of 'modernism' or 'postmodernism'. This distinction is evident in Murakami's language and his organization of space and time, in what may be described as 'in-between' places that are simultaneously cosmopolitan and Japanese, and which serve as the locus of his protagonists' search for identity.

In his earlier works, Murakami articulated an individualism and disengagement from society through his self-absorbed protagonists.¹ Such individualism persistently appears in *Hear the Wind Sing* (1979); *1973, Pinball* (1980); *A Wild Sheep Chase* (1982); *Hardboiled Wonderland and the End of the World* (1985); and *Dance, Dance, Dance* (1988). In these novels, written about ten years after the student movement of the late 1960s, Murakami's recollection of the counterculture of the period revealed his resigned view and the feeling that all was in the past.² Murakami's resistance against and distrust of Japan and its political establishment can also be seen as a deep undercurrent in these novels. Over the years and particularly after 1995, however, his language has evolved to adopt a more socially conscious tone in the novels that depict protagonists who, while in search of their identity, become proactively engaged with a broader community and in dialogue with Japan's history. At the same time, Murakami continues to pursue the universal theme of the notion of fate, blood-bond, and violence, with his language also

¹ His language that expresses dissociation from the tradition of modern Japanese literature, history and from Japan itself has been reputedly adopted by the group of writers for whom the Japanese critics have coined the name 'Murakami's Children'. The group includes Kaneshiro Kazuki (b. 1968), Isaka Kōtarō (b. 1971), and Honda Takayoshi (b. 1971).

² Murakami, *Murakami Asahi-dō, haihō*, 49-50.

remaining an important component of the cosmopolitanism he conveys in these later novels.

I characterize Murakami as an author who sits on the fence between Japan and the outside. He fashions a new sense of Japaneseness through his mediation between Japan and the West, most visibly in his 'chronotopes'. I have shown that Murakami enfolds his protagonists in contemporary surroundings, within which are embedded a juxtaposition of the traditional notion of time and space with non-traditional aesthetics and magical realist settings. Such an edifice becomes Murakami's protagonist's place for contemplation and self-discovery. It also depicts the unique complexity and multiplicity of time and space (that is partly represented in 'in-between-ness' and *ma*) and suggests the underlying likelihood of another type of time and space of an immeasurable physicality. Narratives constructed with such components allow the reader to have many different interpretations and a range of reading experiences.

I have also shown that Murakami's cosmopolitan impulse overlaps with his indigenous drive, which cannot escape the 'national', and that Murakami's novels open out to a debate about the definition of world literature. As Casanova and others in their examination of the present shape of world literature have pointed out, the nationalization of literature is a topical issue. Damrosch's definition of world literature, however, articulates a literary space similar to that Murakami's novels occupy: world literature is 'an elliptical refraction of national literature' that 'gains in translation', and the reader experiences it as 'a form of detached engagement with worlds beyond our own place and time'.³ The word 'translation' here means more than the process of conversion from

³ David Damrosch, *What is World Literature?*, 283.

Japanese to another language. Indeed, Murakami's literary 'Japaneseness' is a product of his cultural and social 'translation' of the Japan of the past and present, that is also part of what I argued to be his cosmopolitanism.

Speaking of Murakami as a world literature author, British author Kazuo Ishiguro, who is renowned for his literary aesthetic in the lyricism and the haunting, nostalgic geography of England he creates in his novels, supports this view and considers Murakami to be 'an author who not only writes in a style that transcends a national border, but also in a mode outside of realism' for 'global appeal'.⁴ From Murakami's past statements, we see that he makes an effort to move away from his immediate surroundings of Japan when he creates his narrative space in his novels. However, it is in his travel essays that we see that his imagined place, such as the scenery in Mexico that beckoned him, is what Ishiguro says he seeks in his own creative process:

The kind of England that I create in *The Remains of the Day* is not an England that I believe ever existed. I've not attempted to reproduce, in any historically accurate way, some past period. What I'm trying to do there ... is to actually rework a particular myth about a certain kind of mythical England.... And usually the further I get from Britain the happier I am with the readings, because people are less obsessed with the idea of it just being about Britain.... I feel like I'm *closing in on some strange, strange, weird territory* that for some reason obsesses me and I'm not sure what the nature of that territory is but with every book I'm kind of closing in on this strange territory.⁵

Ishiguro confirms that his method of creating his 'authentic' Englishness for his fictional works involves undoing 'myths' and creating 'a variation on P.G. Wodehouse's 'mythic

⁴ Kazuo Ishiguro, "'*Watashi o hanasanaide*' soshite Murakami Haruki no koto", Ono Kazuki (interview) in *Bungakukai*, vol. 60. No.8, 140-141.

⁵ Vorda and Herzinger, "An Interview," 139-40, 149-50 in Damrosch, *What is World Literature?*, 230

world of Englishness”.⁶ As his Englishness is Ishiguro’s own imagined one, perhaps the readers of Murakami’s novels abroad find the imagined place that is embedded in his fictions to be essentially Japanese. Through the analysis of the attitude and aesthetics in his text, we saw that Murakami’s adept engagement with the contemporary cultures of both Japan and the West forms part of his cosmopolitanism (in contrast with Etō Jun’s idealization of an unadulterated Japanese past). Moreover, the language used and time and space constructed in Murakami’s narratives of his protagonists’ nuanced negotiation between their self and others in the process of their search for identity, for example, demonstrate that the concept of pure cosmopolitanism is as oxymoronic as is the notion of cultural purity. Thus, it is apt to say that there exists no Murakami, the author, without translation. (Needless to say, neither would the Murakami who enjoys unprecedented global exposure exist without the global publishing conglomerate’s marketing, circulation of his books and conversion of his Japanese texts into forty some languages.)

As much as Murakami’s novels offer opportunities for a debate on world literature, we saw that Murakami’s works contributed to the emergence of new critical discourses on Japanese literary history. My reading of prominent critics demonstrates that Murakami’s *zeitgeist* novels offer them an opportunity to display their hesitation to embrace the Western import of postmodern thinking. In *History and Repetition*, for example, we read Karatani’s rather simplistic deconstruction of the Japanese historical periods of Meiji, Taishō and Shōwa in an attempt to theorize Japanese modernism and postmodernism. It seems as if their concern is for the state of Japanese literature, and that what we see at work here is the nationalization of the Western discourse.

⁶ Vorda and Herzinger, “An Interview,” 139-40, 149-50 in Damrosch, *What is World Literature?*, 230

Murakami's novels also concern another subject that figures prominently in Karatani's work and that I questioned: Karatani claims that 'modern' Japanese literature ended and that the 'postmodern' period began in the late 1980s when novels such as *Norwegian Wood* and *Letters to the Nostalgic Years* demonstrated a definitive yearning for the past without any romantic ironies. As demonstrated by Katō's 2004 critical reading of *Kafka on the Shore*, which introduced Katō's post postmodern analytical approach, postmodernism no longer prevails. Once his ever-evolving literary experiments and his juxtaposition of the new with the old, the local with the global, are stripped away, Murakami's novels convey the essence of modern literature. Hence, I suggest that modern Japanese literature did not come to an end as Karatani proposed, and that Murakami's fictional works are not postmodern. Rather, they represent a different kind of postmodern, and can perhaps best be described as *neomodern*. This is also because, central to applying the definition of or categorizing any texts as postmodern, is the issue raised by Simon Malpas, that 'the postmodern exists in a problematic entanglement with a continuing modernity.'⁷

In the epilogue of his seminal collection of critical essays, *Teibon Karatani Kōjin shū 1, Karatani Kōjin, The Origins of Japanese Modern Literature*, Karatani states that the idea for the book came to him while he was at Yale University in 1975 giving lectures on modern Japanese literature. He describes the place where he was at that time in the following way:

⁷ Simon Malpas, *The Postmodern*, 131.

First of all, ‘that place’ forced and enabled me to see modern Japanese literature from the ‘outside’; in other words, it made me stand back from the meaning of ‘modern’, ‘literature’ and ‘Japan’ and the ways in which they were presented and understood in Japan. Secondly, ‘that place’ made me resist American discourses that viewed Japan as a symbol of the exotic. What I had to fight against in the America of 1975 was [these] two symbols - in other words, Japanese self-representation and the representation of Japan by Westerners. And I had to deal with them at the same time. That is because, together, they complete each other. I can say that the place where I thought about this book was, after all, neither America nor Japan, but ‘an in-between place’.⁸

In his recollections, Karatani introduces ‘an in-between place’, a metaphorical in-between space that is neither Japan nor the West. Karatani’s realization is similar to what Edward Said articulates in his discourse on Orientalism about the practice of exoticizing ‘the Orient’ by the West. Being distanced from both Japan and America, this space enabled Karatani to discern a third image of Japan and gave him a new perspective for reading modern Japanese literature. Here, Karatani’s own imagined Japan is different both from Japan as the West sees it and Japan as the Japanese people see it from within. In other words, Karatani has developed his literary criticism within the confines of his own imagined Japan and much of his critical work seems to involve the conceptualization of Japan as a nation in the world. While Karatani’s focus following his discovery of ‘the in-between place’ was on the relationship between Japan and America and the hegemony of the two nations, Murakami’s focus was directed towards the ‘I’ and ‘other’ dichotomy. Their different focuses are arguably a manifestation of their professions, but it is

⁸ Karatani Kōjin, *Teibon Karatani Kōjin shū 1, Nihon kindai bungaku no kigen*, 279-280.

noteworthy that Murakami's 'I' and 'other' dichotomy is not necessarily confined within the background of Japan, either.

In recent years, Murakami's literary exposure overseas has resulted in numerous literary awards: the World Fantasy Award for *Kafka on the Shore* in 2006, the Franz Kafka Prize (2006), the Berkeley Japan Prize (2008), the Jerusalem Prize for the Freedom of the Individual in Society (2009), the Catalunya International Prize (2011) and the Man Asian Literary Prize for *IQ84* in 2011. Considering his ever growing stature as a transnational writer, one can further examine the debates prompted by his fictional works, including those regarding the violence and the sense of fatalism in his novels. Gender issues and the theme of the patriarchal blood-bond also provide opportunities for more detailed study. Murakami's writings encourage the reconsideration of the ways in which we see our past and present, here and there, of the depth and texture of space where we, and our psyche, find ourselves, and of our sense of belonging in the world.

Appendix

Appendix A: Chart Showing The Country and Authors that Japan's First Collection of World Literature, Sekaibungaku zenshū (A Collection of World Literature, 1927) Included:

Country	Authors
France	Pierre Corneille(1606-1684), Molière (1622-1673), Jean Baptise Racine (1639-1699), Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), Stendhal (1783-1843), Honore de Balzac (1799-1850), Victor Hugo (1802-1885), Alexandre Dumas (1802-1870), Prosper Mérimée (1803-1870), Louis-Charles-Alfred de Musset (1810-1857), Gustave Flaubert (1821-1880), Alexandre Dumas (1824-1895), Henry François Becque (1837-1899), Villiers de L'Isle-Adam (1838-1889), Alphonse Daudet (1840-1897), Émile Zola(1840-1902), François Coppée (1844-1908), Anatole France (1844-1924), Pierre Loti (1850-1923), Guy de Maupassant (1850-1893), H.R.A Guy de Maupassant (1850-1893), François de Curel (1854-1928), Jules Renard (1864-1910), Henri de Régier (1864-1936), Romain Rolland (1866-1944), Edmond Eugène Alexis Rostand (1868-1918), André Paul Guillaume Gide (1869-1951), Henri Barbusse (1873-1935) Charles-Jouis Philippe (1874-1909), Wilhelm Apollionaris de Kostrowitzky (1880-1918), Paul Géraudy(1885-1983), Francis Carco (1886-1958)
Germany/Austria	Johann Wolfgang Goethe (1749-1832), J.C. von Schiller (1759-1805), Heinrich von Kleist (1777-1811), Franz Grillparzer (1791-1872), Christian Friedrich Hebbel (1813-1863), Hermann Sudermann (1857-1928), Gerhart Hauptmann (1862-1946), Authur Schnitzler (1862-1931), Maurice Maeterlinck (1862-1949), Frank Wedekind (1864-1918), Georg Kaiser (1878-1945)
Italy	Alighieri Dante (1265-1321), Giovanni Boccaccio (1313-1375), Bariele D'Annunzio (1863-1938), Luigi Pirandello (1867-1936)
Britain	William Shakespeare (1564-1616), John Milton (1608-1674), Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832), Charles Dickens (1812-1870), Thomas Hardy (1840-1928), John Galsworthy (1847-1933), Robert L. Stevenson (1850-1894), George Gissing (1857-1903), Joseph Conrad (1857-1924), H.G. Wells (1866-1946), John Millington Synge (1871-1909) Katherine Mansfield (1888-1923), Aldous Leonard Huxley (1894-1963)
Ireland	Lady Gregory (1852-1932), Oscar Wilde (1854-1900), George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950), Lord Dunsany (1878-1957)
Netherlands	Herman Heijermans (1864-1924)
Spain	Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra (1547-1616) Jacinto Benavante (1866-1954)
Russia	Fyodor Tyutchev (1803-1873), Nicholai Gogol (1809-1852), Ivan Sergaevich Turgenev (1818-1883), Fyodor Dostoyevsky (1821-1881), Leo Graf Tolstoy (1828-1910), Anton Chekhov (1860-1904),Maxim Gorky (1868-1930), Leonid Andreyev (1871-1919), Mikhail Prishvin (1873-1954),Ilya Ehrenburg (1891-1967), G. Alekseev
Norway	Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906), Bjornstjerne Bjornson (1832-1910), Knut Hamsun (1859-1952)
Czechoslovakia	Karel and Joseph Capek (1890-1938, 1887-1945)
U.S.A	Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864), Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849)
Poland	Henryk Sienkiewicz (1846-1916)
Sweden	August Strinberg (1849-1912), Selma Lagerlof (1858-1940)

Source: Sekai-bungaku zenshū, Term 1, vol.1-38, Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1927-1930.

Appendix B: Chart Showing Authors, Titles, Publishers, and Dates of All Japanese Works of Criticism Published after the Publication of *IQ84* Known to the Author of This Dissertation, July 2009 to January 2011

Theme	Author	Title	Publisher	Pub. Date Yr/Mth
How-To Guidebook	Kawaide Shobōsha Editorial Department	<i>How to Read Murakami Haruki's "IQ84"</i>	Tokyo: Kawaide Shobōsha	2009/7
	Murakami Haruki Study Group	<i>Deciphering Murakami Haruki's "IQ84"</i>	Tokyo: Data House	2009/7
		<i>The "IQ84" World of Murakami Haruki</i>	Tokyo: Yōsensha	2009/8
	Kūki-sanagi Research Committee	<i>The Book that Digs Deep into the World of "IQ84" by Murakami Haruki</i>	Tokyo: Bunkasha	2009/8
	Doi Yutaka	<i>Hints for Reading Murakami Haruki</i>	Tokyo: Long Sellers	2009/11
	Tsuge Teruhiko	<i>Secrets of Murakami Haruki – his Life and Works</i>	Tokyo: Ascii Media Works	2010/4
	Hirai Ken	<i>A Guide to Murakami Haruki Novels – How to Enjoy his Long Novels</i>	Tokyo: Sōbunsha Shuppan	2010/5
	Kazamaru Yoshihiko	<i>An Intensive Course in "IQ84"</i>	Tokyo: Wakakusa Shobō	2010/6
	Miyawaki Toshifumi	<i>Reading Murakami Haruki</i>	Tokyo: East Press	2010/9
	Koyama Tetsuo	<i>Maxing Out on Reading Murakami Haruki</i>	Tokyo: Kōdansha	2010/10
		<i>Guidebook to Murakami Haruki Novels</i>	Tokyo: Yōsensha	2010/11
	Uchida Tatsuru	<i>Once Again, Watch Out for Murakami Haruki</i>	Murashino: Arutesu Publishing	2010/11
	Amusement Publishing Department (ed.)	<i>Official Guidebook to Norwegian Wood</i>	Tokyo: Kōdansha	2010/12
<i>IQ84</i>	Suzumura Kazunari	<i>Murakami Haruki's Battle – "IQ84"'s Genesis</i>	Tokyo: Keiryūsha	2009/8
		<i>IQ84 Studies Book <1> (Murakami Haruki Study Books)</i>	Tokyo: Wakakusa Shobō	2009/11
	Komori Yōichi (ed.)	<i>IQ84 Studies Book <2> (Murakami Haruki Study Books)</i>	Tokyo: Wakakusa Shobō	2010/5
	Murakami Haruki Study Group and Hirai Ken	<i>Murakami Haruki's "IQ84 Book 3" Studies</i>	Tokyo: Data House	2010/5
	Tsujii Takashi, Ōsawa Masayuki	<i>Special Feature: "Another "IQ84" in "O" Thoughts, Vol. 4</i>	Tokyo: Sayūsha	2010/6
1968	Toyoda Tomoyuki	<i>Murakami Haruki and Kosaka Shūhei's 1968</i>	Tokyo: Shinsensha	2009/7

Theme	Author	Title	Publisher	Pub. Date Yr/Mth
Asia	Fujii Shōzō (ed.) – Chinese Literature Section, International Collaborating Research, Tokyo Univ. Dept. of Literature	<i>East Asia's Reading of Murakami Haruki (Murakami Haruki Studies Books)</i>	Tokyo: Wakakusa Shobō	2009/6
Gender Issues	Watanabe Mieko	<i>Unable to Talk: Murakami Haruki's Representation of Women (Lesbian)</i>	Tokyo: Ochanomizu Shobō	2009/7
Psycho-analysis	Yoshikawa Yasuhisa	<i>Murakami Haruki and "Murakami Haruki" – A Writer Who Psychoanalyzes</i>	Kyoto: Minerva Shobō	2010/5
Eros	Doi Yutaka	<i>Murakami Haruki's Eros</i>	Tokyo: Long Sellers	2010/6
Music	Kurihara Yuichiro, Otani Takeo, Suzuki Atsufumi, Owada Toshiyuki, Fujii Tsutomu	<i>Deciphering Murakami with his Music</i>	Tokyo: Nihon Bungeisha	2010/9
Sub-Culture	Ōtsuka Eijii	<i>Applying Narrative Discourse to Murakami Haruki and Miyazaki Haruo – Structured Japan</i>	Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten	2009/7
	Nishimura Yukihiro, Sugihara Yukihiro	<i>When Did Ichirō and Murakami Haruki Listen to The Beatles? – Post-War Japan seen from its Sub-Culture</i>	Tokyo: PHP Research Center	2009/10
Translation Work	Matsubara Motonobu	<i>Reading Three "Long Goodbyes" – Raymond Chandler, Shimizu Shunji, Murakami Haruki,</i>	Tokyo: Dai-ichi Hanhan	2010/10
Post-1945 Japanese Literature	Kuroko Kazuo	<i>The Collective Essays of Kuroko Kazuo: War, Frontiers, Literature, and Humanity From Ōe Kenzaburo to Murakami Haruki</i>	Tokyo: Bensei Shuppan	2010/3
	Ichikawa Masato	<i>Why was the Akutagawa Award not Given to Murakami Haruki? – Mimesis of Japanese Novels</i>	Tokyo: Gentōsha	2010/7
	Suzuki Tomoyuki	<i>Murakami Haruki and his Terms for Stories – from "Norwegian Wood" to "The Wind-up Bird Chronicle"</i>	Tokyo: Seikyūsha	2009/8
	Matsumoto Ken'ichi	<i>Murakami Haruki – from Urban Novels to World Literature</i>	Tokyo: Daisan Bunmeisha	2010/2
Pre and Post IQ84:		<i>Special Edition – Murakami Haruki up to "IQ84" and beyond ...</i>	Tokyo: Seidosha	2010/12

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