CRITICAL LITERACY TEACHING SERIES: CHALLENGING AUTHORS AND GENRES

Haruki Murakami

Challenging Authors

Matthew C. Strecher and
Paul L. Thomas (Eds.)

SensePublishers

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CHALLENGING AUTHORS AND GENRES

Volume 7

This series explores in separate volumes major authors and genres through a critical literacy lens that seeks to offer students opportunities as readers and writers to embrace and act upon their own empowerment. Each volume will challenge authors (along with examining authors that are themselves challenging) and genres as well as challenging norms and assumptions associated with those authors' works and genres themselves. Further, each volume will confront teachers, students, and scholars by exploring all texts as politically charged mediums of communication. The work of critical educators and scholars will guide each volume, including concerns about silenced voices and texts, marginalized people and perspectives, and normalized ways of being and teaching that ultimately dehumanize students and educators.

Haruki Murakami

Challenging Authors

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The editors (Matthew C. Strecher and Paul L. Thomas) are deeply indebted to Sense Publishers for supporting this volume and the series. We are honored to offer the contributions of the chapter authors as this volume represents a wide range of scholarship grounded in our common appreciation for the art of Haruki Murakami.

Further, we want to acknowledge and thank Ellie Warner for her original artwork gracing the cover. Diligent proofreading was also provided by Kristen Marakoff, senior English major at Furman University, future high school teacher, and recent addition to the legion of Murakami.

PAUL L. THOMAS

INTRODUCTION

Challenging Murakami

"My enemy," explains Frog toward the end of "Super-Frog Saves Tokyo," "among other things, the me inside me" (Murakami, 2002, p. 111). Readers new and experienced of Haruki Murakami certainly notice the story's literary name-dropping—Nietzsche, Conrad, Hemingway—among the blurring of genre: maybe this is fantasy, maybe, magical realism? As is the main human in the tale, Katagiri, readers are likely amused, compelled, and often befuddled.

Simply stated at the beginning of this volume dedicated to challenging genres and authors, this odd Murakami story captures perfectly why the Japanese author who garners both massive popularity and solid critical acclaim fits perfectly into a collection of essays offered to readers, students, and teachers; Murakami's work is challenging, and his work deserves to be challenged.

This series and volume are grounded in and informed by critical pedagogy and critical literacy—both of which see text as opportunities to investigate negotiations of power, both of which embrace the essential nature of literacy in human agency and liberation. Just as Murakami's fiction often includes two realities, the editing of this volume comes from an educator who remains strongly connected to teaching English and writing (Thomas) and a noted Murakami scholar (Strecher)—two overlapping but different ways to engage Murakami.

CHALLENGING MURAKAMI

As the essays collected here examine, Murakami, born in 1949, represents challenges to genre conventions, literary traditions (both Japanese and Western), translation, and literary analysis. Readers of Murakami in English translation are reminded Murakami also came to his literary stature in a non-traditional way: an "epiphany" during a baseball game in 1978 (Murakami, 2015):

> I think Hiroshima's starting pitcher that day was Yoshiro Sotokoba. Yakult countered with Takeshi Yasuda. In the bottom of the first inning, Hilton slammed Sotokoba's first pitch into left field for a clean double. The satisfying crack when the bat met the ball resounded throughout Jingu Stadium. Scattered applause rose around me. In that instant, for no reason and on no grounds whatsoever, the thought suddenly struck me: *I think I can write a novel*.

And from that moment—itself reminding readers of those moments of magical realism in his fiction—the career of Murakami blossomed: the recurring wells, the many cats, the alternate realities, the awkward sex, and the relentless loneliness.

Although Murakami (2015) appears as puzzled by his path to being a professional writer as many readers and critics are of his style and use of genre, his novels, stories, and nonfiction reflect an eclectic blend of his Japanese heritage and his fascination with music, literature, and sport from the U.S. And thus, as I noted above, Murakami is both challenging and worthy of being challenged. Here, then, are the essays to follow.

Chapter 1: "The Haruki Phenomenon and Everyday Cosmopolitanism: Belonging as a 'Citizen of the World,'" Tomoki Wakatsuki

Haruki Murakami's increasing popularity on a global scale is often referred to as the Haruki Phenomenon. My study shows that this social phenomenon is closely connected to the development of everyday cosmopolitanism. Founded on the ancient Greek idea of belonging as a "citizen of the world," cosmopolitanism is flourishing in people's everyday spheres today. Murakami's lack of "Japaneseness," which was criticized at home, is embraced by readers around the world. Similarly, analysis of his transition from detachment to commitment confirms the cosmopolitan outlook of this writer who seeks to be engaged, both as a writer and individual.

Chapter 2: "Our Old Haruki Murakami and the Experience of Teaching His Works in Japan," Yuji Katō

Haruki Murakami was a very conspicuous writer when he made his debut, yet he did not change the literary scene overnight with what was called his "Americanized" fictions. Japan's tradition of literature was still strong, and he has been part of the culture as well as a counter-power that resists it. His traditional aspects tend to make him and his readers similar to each other in a closed cultural circuit. As a consequence, we need to look beyond the homogeneous sphere when we write on and teach Murakami in Japan.

Chapter 3: "Haruki Murakami and the Chamber of Secrets," Matthew C. Strecher

Murakami Haruki and J. K. Rowling have one important thing in common: both write about the soul. The function of the soul, its nature, its vulnerability, and its critical role in our humanity, lies at the heart of both Murakami's writing as a whole, and at the heart of the Harry Potter series. This essay will explore how the two writers deal with the question of the soul, and suggest this as one of the major reasons both Murakami and Rowling's works appeal to a global audience, for such questions are fundamental to the human condition.

Chapter 4: "Magical Murakami Nightmares: Investigating Genre through *The Strange Library*," Paul L. Thomas

Haruki Murakami's novels offer readers, students, and teachers a rich opportunity to investigate the nature of genre, medium, and form. This chapter discusses incorporating Murakami's *The Strange Library* into classrooms where teachers are fostering genre awareness for greater student autonomy as both readers and writers. As well, the unusual hard-copy format of the novel and the use of graphic elements—combined with characteristic features found in many of Murakami's works—are highlighted to challenge how and why genre conventions impact readers as well as the writer's purposes.

Chapter 5: "Critical Engagement Through Fantasy in *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*," Rebecca Suter

The chapter is based on a course on modern Japanese fantasy and science fiction from Meiji to the present. Building on Tzvetan Todorov's definition of the fantastic as a hesitation between realistic and supernatural modes of fiction, the course examined the uses of fantasy in Japan as a way to reflect on cultural identity and social norms. Through a close reading of Murakami Haruki's 1985 novel *Hard-boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*, the chapter explores the ambiguous position of fantasy between entertainment and critical engagement, and how it relates to Murakami's distinctive brand of social and political commitment.

Chapter 6: "What's Wrong with These People?: The Anatomy of Dependence in *Norwegian Wood*," Jonathan Dil

Norwegian Wood (1987) is the novel that propelled Murakami Haruki from cult writer to literary phenomenon and is studied in classrooms around the world. This chapter focuses on the characters in the novel and the relationship problems they face, a natural focus for any classroom discussion. It offers the Japanese noun *amae*, what Japanese psychologist Doi Takeo (1981) describes as "an affirmative attitude toward the spirit of dependence" (p. 16), as a keyword for understanding the themes of the novel, and offers J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* as an important literary predecessor for understanding the complicated nature of this coming-of-age story.

Chapter 7: "The Transcreation of Tokyo: The Universality of Murakami's Urban Landscape," Deirdre Flynn

Written mainly in the US, Murakami's *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* presents a new Tokyo that has evolved from Susan Napier's vision of a dystopian urban future to a more inclusive space for a shared postmodern mood. The Tokyo that Murakami's protagonists inhabit has been transcreated from a specifically Japanese location, subjected to a science fiction orientalism, to a more transcultural notion of space, familiar across the cultural East/West divide. Murakami negotiates this

interrelationship between the East and West in his representation of Toyko in his novels, offering us a new exchange and transcultural space in which to locate the postmodern mood.

Chapter 8: "'You're probably not that innocent either, Mr. Murakami': Translation and Identity between Texts in Murakami Haruki's 'Nausea 1979,'" Daisuke Kiriyama

It is often pointed out that *Ōto*, the Japanese title of Jean-Paul Sartre's novel *Nausea* (*La nausée*), is a mistranslation. For, *ōto* means actual vomiting, not a feeling. I examine how Murakami makes use of this mistranslation in his short story "Ōto 1979" ("Nausea 1979") to let us contemplate the process in which identity is produced nowhere but between texts. Through this reading, I explore an alternative way to grasp the relation between identity and the system that regulates it in the so-called globalized world, while reconsidering the Sartrean concept of the free, spontaneous consciousness and the postmodern identity.

Chapter 9: "Challenging the Ambiguity of the *te i (ru)* Form: Reading 'Mirror' in Japanese Language Class," Chikako Nihei

The chapter considers the possible use of Murakami's text in Japanese language classes. Focusing on his short story, "Kagami" (Mirror), Nihei examines the use of the Japanese aspectual marker *te i (ru)*. While the complicated nature of the form often prevents scholars from achieving a consensus of the meanings, she suggests a way of understanding the aspectual marker in a narrative. The discussion provides an alternative view on Murakami's Japanese that is often criticized as translationese or lacking the essence of Japanese language.

The volume ends with an Epilogue (Strecher) and a Coda (Thomas) that, we hope, pulls the volume together in a way that honors Murakami, his readers, and those teachers and students who enter his magical nightmares.

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TOMOKI WAKATSUKI

1. THE HARUKI PHENOMENON AND EVERYDAY COSMOPOLITANISM

Belonging as a "Citizen of the World"

What is the "cosmopolitan identity?" This chapter opens an enquiry into identity by investigating that question as it relates to the writer Haruki Murakami. The question of identity is essentially like asking "who are you?" and "where do you belong?" Murakami undeniably is the most popular contemporary Japanese author, but his identity as a Japanese writer has been frequently challenged at home due to his alleged "un-Japaneseness." This is something the readers can reflect on, by exploring the Haruki Phenomenon – namely, the global popularity of Haruki Murakami – and how it connects to the emergent ideal of cosmopolitanism that advocates a new way of belonging.

It is my argument that Murakami signifies a cosmopolitan identity, and his commitment as a writer is to belong to the world as an individual. The idea of cosmopolitanism originates in the ancient Greek philosophy urging us to become "a citizen of the world." Young students today may find this concept of belonging with the world familiar, since they are already inter-connected by the Internet and use of mobile devices in their everyday lives. In this respect, literary works are no exception to other cultural artefacts like music, movies and images, amongst others, that are increasingly being shared in the global cultural sphere. Students may perhaps see that they are already a part of this growing phenomenon.

So, does the ubiquitous connectivity and sharing of cultural artefacts lead us to take part in a world citizenship? Can you become a "cosmopolitan" virtually at home? What about your notion of belonging? These are the questions that may arise as potential topics of discussion. As Martha Nussbaum famously argued in "Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism" (1994), cosmopolitan education is critical for developing imagination beyond national borders. Fostering the empathy to imagine others and making efforts to understand those faraway people, is perhaps more relevant today, as the world goes global. Studying Murakami entails such contemporaneous issue for all of us.

Haruki Murakami is one of the most renowned Japanese authors in the world today. Since his debut in 1979, Murakami has been on the forefront of innovation in contemporary Japanese literature. His works are translated into over fifty languages and his increasing popularity on a global scale is often referred to as the "Haruki

M. C. Strecher & P. L. Thomas (Eds.), Haruki Murakami, 1–16.

Murakami Phenomenon" (*Murakami Haruki genshō*). It is not surprising that there is persistent enquiry into the reason for such popularity, especially in Japan, to the extent that an international symposium was convened in Tokyo in 2006 to discuss that very topic.[1] Mainstream Japanese critics contended that it was Murakami's "non-national" (*mukokuseki*) feature – westernized settings of his novels as well as his unadorned "plainstyle" – that made his works accessible for an overseas readership. But the translators from various countries that attended the symposium claimed otherwise.[2] While quite a few of them encountered Murakami's works while living in Japan or studying Japanese language, they also said they had found a new "Japaneseness" they could relate to, one that differed strikingly from that represented in traditional Japanese literature.

The Haruki Phenomenon is not just a literary phenomenon surrounding a popular writer, but mirrors a social phenomenon in progress on a global scale. It harmonizes with "the emergence of cosmopolitanism within everyday spheres" (Kendall, Woodward, & Skirbis, 2009, p. 101), which I term "everyday cosmopolitanism." The concept of cosmopolitanism is traced back to the ancient Greek philosopher Diogenes, who claimed to be a "citizen of the world," and the idea of belonging to a world without borders was one largely promoted by the ancient Greeks. Today, the ever-increasing inter-connectedness of the world effected by processes of globalization undoubtedly finds a strong connection with cosmopolitanism. Due to people's increased mobility via travel, short-term and long-term migration as well as displacement, everyday cosmopolitanism has become commonplace. This is where I see the development of the Haruki Phenomenon intimately linked to everyday cosmopolitanism. Rather than encountering an exotic Japan through Murakami's writing, readers outside of Japan enjoy engaging with the stories themselves. They describe feelings of affinity, identifying with the characters or their social surroundings. At the same time, readers embrace the new "Japaneseness" projected by Murakami that nurtures the sense of belonging beyond national or cultural borders.

It is also important to note that Murakami embodies what is described as the cosmopolitan individual "who plays a role in diffusing or sowing the seeds of cosmopolitanism" (Kendall, Woodward, & Skirbis, 2009, p. 101). Whether Murakami is aware of this or not, his widely remarked transition from detachment to commitment in the mid-1990s clearly demonstrates such a tendency. An alternative approach to Murakami and his works in this respect may serve to resolve some of the misunderstandings that seem to persist at home. In what follows, we shall explore Murakami's cosmopolitan commitment by reviewing some of his non-fictional texts, including speeches, interviews, essays and the online public forum in which he corresponded directly with over three thousand readers from around the world.

THE HARUKI PHENOMENON

The Haruki Phenomenon is an important topic for the study of Haruki Murakami and how it relates to a growing cosmopolitan sphere. The global popularity of

this writer is a social phenomenon that is implicitly connected to the globalization process during the last few decades. Studies have shown (Japan Foundation, 2006; Fujii, 2007) that there are variations of this phenomenon depending on the region, language, societal changes and the time period. For example, in Japan, where this term was first coined by newspapers in mid-1980s, it denoted the overwhelming popularity of Haruki Murakami amongst the young generation of readers that followed the urban lifestyle of the protagonists of his novels. After *Noruwei no mori* (*Norwegian Wood*, 1987) achieved a record sale of over four million copies, the writer's sensational success in Japan was established as the Haruki Phenomenon. Due to its sales in Japan, *Norwegian Wood* was soon translated and published in countries such as Taiwan, Korea and Hong Kong, developing the initial phase of the Haruki Phenomenon in East Asia from the late 1980s.

The Haruki Phenomenon in East Asia centers around *Norwegian Wood*. The story of loss or isolation is commonly cited as the primary reason for attracting young readers in the region. In Korea, it was released under the title *Sōshitsu no Sedai* [*The lost generation*] that echoed with the "386 generation" (Kim, 2008). The numbers three, eight and six indicate the age and the characteristic time-period applied to this generation—born in the 1960s, and in their thirties at the time. Since this age group experienced a shared sense of loss after the failure of the widespread student movements in Korea in the 1980s, they are known as the 386 generation, and they were the core readership that supported Murakami's esteem. The Murakami boom spread following the government lift of ban against Japanese culture that began in 1998 and eventually *Norwegian Wood* became a "must-read" for young Korean students along with J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* (p. 68). Today, the original fans, who are now in their middle age, still remain loyal, while Murakami's readership continues to expand to include younger generations who are in high school and even junior high school. Kim (2013) mentions that it is the first time that Japanese literature was accepted in Korea without any conflict over its nationality.

Fujii (2007) observes that the Haruki Phenomenon in East Asia is deeply connected with the rapid socio-economic changes in this region. He advocates the "clock-wise evolution" for describing the development of the Haruki Phenomenon in the Chinese language sphere. This widely accepted theory suggests that the popularity of Murakami's works spread from Taiwan to Hong Kong, and thence to Shanghai and Beijing, corresponding to periods when economic development was declining in those areas. Furthermore, he maintains that acceptance of Murakami's works is closely associated with the democratic movements in the region during late 1980s. In Taiwan, Murakami was first introduced by Lai Ming-chu, who translated and published his works in literary magazines in 1985. After *Norwegian Wood* became a sensational hit in Japan, it was translated and published in 1989 into Chinese, leading to a Murakami boom. Cafes and apartments named after his popular novels proliferated and the expression 非常村上 (in Mandarin Chinese, *fēicháng cūnshàng*, or "very Murakami") became the buzzword. The Chinese language translation was welcomed in Hong Kong and *Norwegian Wood* remained a bestseller well after its

publication there in 1991. Significantly, this was soon after the Tiananmen Square protests of 1989. In China, the boom that arrived in late 1990s is associated with the emergence of late-consumer society characterized by the young generation that aspired to the urban lifestyle. Reading Murakami was equivalent to going to Starbucks or listening to jazz music for the young urban professionals born in China after the 1970s and 1980s (Anti, 2013).

Murakami's popularity continues to grow in East Asia into the twenty-first century as well. A conspicuous example is the opening of the Murakami Haruki Research Center at Tamkang University in Taiwan in 2014. It is the first research center in the world that is dedicated to research studies on Murakami that aims to promote an interdisciplinary approach, including a wide range of academic fields such as sociology, psychology, economy, and linguistics, in addition to Japanese literature. Evidently, the establishment of such center reflects the increased number of graduate students that choose Murakami for their research in the Chinese linguistic sphere. While Murakami's popularity continues to grow in China, however, there is also a marked transformation in the readership. Works such as *Kami no kodomotachi wa mina odoru* (*All God's Children Can Dance*, 2000) or *Nejimaki-dori Kuronikuru* (*The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, 1994–1995) that present Murakami's social commitment are gaining popularity, and *1Q84* (2009–2010) was "read as their own literature" (Fujii as cited in Nakamura, 2011). Anti (2013) confirms this view, stating that since Murakami's speech in Jerusalem, his politically liberal comments are supported by his readership in China. The rise of so-called "Murakami children"—a younger generation of writers who claim to have been influenced by reading Murakami—in the region reaffirms the phenomenon. In Japan, award-winning writers such as Kōtaro Isaka, Shūichi Yoshida and Ira Ishida amongst others are known for their affinity with Murakami. Quite a few writers and film-makers from East Asia are also known for their devotion to Murakami's literature, including some of the leading players in China, Korea, Hong Kong and Taiwan (see Fujii, 2007).

While *Norwegian Wood* instigated the Haruki Phenomenon in East Asia from late 1980s, it was *Hitsuji o meguru bōken* (*A Wild Sheep Chase*, 1982) that established Murakami's readership in the U.S. This was the first English translation of a Murakami novel, published by Kodansha International in 1989, while Murakami's short stories came to be introduced in *The New Yorker* from 1990. The magazine's renown contributed significantly to his growing literary acclaim, for he was one of the first Japanese writers to have his work published therein. Since then, Murakami has gradually emerged as one of the most popular novelists in the United States, whose new releases were listed regularly on the New York Times bestseller list. Starting with the translation of *Umibe no Kafuka* as *Kafka On the Shore* in 2005, his works developed a nationwide readership, and by 2011, *1Q84*[3] reached the second spot on the New York Times bestseller list for hardcover fiction, followed by the English rendering of *Shikisai o motanai Tazaki Tsukuru to, kare no junrei no toshi* (*Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage*, 2013; hereafter *Tazaki Tsukuru*), which reached the top of the same list in 2014.

Murakami's global reach in Europe began during the 1990s. Whereas western European countries began to publish his novels in early 1990s, it was not until after late 1990s that his works were introduced in Eastern Europe. The Haruki Phenomenon was indivisible from Japan's economic growth in the 1980s when "[e]verything Japanese was of interest in America" (Rubin, 2003, p. 190), but it was surely helped along by Murakami's own unconventional efforts. There is what I would call a cosmopolitan approach in this endeavor. Murakami decided to find his way into the publishing industry in the U.S., where he chose not to rely on his Japanese publisher, but found a local agent himself. He also developed a personal network of translators to work with, so that he could provide English translations of his texts for the publishers' review. Such efforts were rewarded, as the publication of his short stories in magazines including *The New Yorker* clearly show.

In his latest collection of essays, *Shokugyō to shite no shōsetsuka* (The professional novelist, 2015b), Murakami observes that his books became widely popular around the world in the wake of certain major social changes. For example, the sales of his books rose rapidly in Russia and Eastern European countries after the collapse of the communist system. There was a similar trend after the fall of the Berlin Wall in Germany. Admitting that this could be a coincidence, Murakami suggests that after such a major shift in value systems that affect people's daily lives, it was only natural that they should seek a new "story," a new system of "metaphors" by which to structure their thinking. He observes that the confusion caused by a disruption of an established social system such as communism may have led to people losing faith in their own value systems. Under such circumstances, they will try to accept "the uncertainty of reality" (p. 286) by inter-adjusting the actual social system with their metaphor system. Murakami states that "the reality of the stories my novels offered may have functioned well as the cogwheel for such adjustment" (p. 286) suggesting this as one of the reasons for his global popularity.

FROM COSMOPOLITAN EXILE TO SOCIAL COMMITMENT

There are two prevailing currents in Murakami's cosmopolitanism. One is his "cosmopolitan exile," epitomized in his detachment from Japanese society. The other is what I term his "everyday" cosmopolitanism. Each may be traced historically within the context of the author's career. It is frequently noted that the protagonists of Murakami's early novels were depicted as "loners" who are isolated from society. But Murakami displayed a similar detachment through his own lifestyle early in his career by living overseas to escape his celebrity status in Japan.[4] In *Shokugyō to shite no shōsetsuka* Murakami suggests that he wanted to avoid the authoritarian collectivism that was imposed over members of Japanese society. His detachment not only led him to exile, but became a key theme that he pursued as a writer as well. In his conversation with psychologist Hayao Kawai, Murakami explains that he hoped to clarify his position by pursuing personal detachment and eliminating what was conventionally established as "novelistic value" (1996, p. 13) then. He

refers to the tradition in Japanese literature of measuring a novel's literary value in terms of its artistic literary writing style. This implies that his detachment was also a struggle against the Japanese literary establishment. Although his non-traditional approach was disparaged by literary critics, those socially detached protagonists in Murakami's first few novels were embraced by young readers in Japan. Likewise, it was his departure from traditional values that appealed to the young generation in Asia and spread the Haruki Phenomenon throughout the region.

"Everyday cosmopolitanism," on the other hand, refers to a relationship between one's view of the world and one's personal lifestyle, and this is an equally compelling reason that Murakami and his works alike have effectively engaged a global audience. His works are characteristically located in "no place" (Powers, 2008) and concern the "search for identity" (Strecher, 2002) that attracts readers across cultures. He presents a departure from conventional boundaries, allowing readers to share a common story that can be approached regardless of national, religious or cultural differences. Unlike traditional Japanese writers who were appreciated for their "exoticness" and exclusive "Japaneseness," Murakami's everyday cosmopolitanism presents a new Japaneseness that is favorably shared in the global cultural sphere. It promotes an autonomous self-identity that is uninterested in ethnocentric collectivism.

AFTER THE SPEECHES IN JERUSALEM AND BARCELONA

Murakami's social commitment as a cosmopolitan individual is confirmed by two widely publicized speeches delivered in Jerusalem and Barcelona. In what has come to be known as the "Jerusalem Speech," delivered upon receiving the Jerusalem Prize for the Freedom of the Individual in Society in 2009, Murakami speaks of his mission as a novelist and openly criticizes Israeli bombing of targets in Gaza. Using the analogy of eggs hurling themselves against a wall, Murakami suggests the vulnerability of human beings against the "walls" that create divisions and effect confrontations, and pledged always to stand on the side of the egg no matter right or wrong. The "eggs" in this metaphor refer to individuals who stand up against monolithic government systems, and represent people's shared humanity and Murakami's call for a common understanding among people regardless of their nationality or religious beliefs. The second speech was delivered in Barcelona in 2011 on the occasion of Murakami being awarded the Catalunya International Prize. This was only three months after the Great Eastern Japan earthquake and tsunami of March 11th that same year. Murakami called for solidarity in the wake of this catastrophe, and made reference to the nuclear power plant accident in Fukushima. He urged people to reflect on the tragedy of the atomic bombs that were dropped in Japan and pleaded with his audience to become "unrealistic dreamers" of a world without nuclear power.

Both the Jerusalem speech and the Barcelona speech were extensively covered by the international media and spread widely over the Internet. While many appreciated that Murakami had made rare public appearances and spoken directly to the public,

he was criticized at home on both occasions. The Jerusalem speech was subject to scrutiny due to the timing of violent political confrontations between Israelis and Palestinians. In the case of Barcelona, Murakami was harshly criticized for delivering a speech outside of Japan instead of appearing locally to support the people in the disaster zone more directly.

One critic even speculated that Murakami's speeches were meant to appeal to the international community in order to raise his hopes for the Nobel Prize for literature, rather than to share in the suffering of the Japanese people (see Kuroko, 2015, pp. 144, 159, 194–196, 202–205). In his book *Murakami Haruki hihan* (*A criticique of Murakami Haruki*), literary critic Kazuo Kuroko expresses strong dissatisfaction and skepticism toward Murakami. His criticism is two-fold: Kuroko disparages the speeches as public performances staged to gain international reputation, and he questions Murakami's quality as a writer for overlooking key literary matters. In addition, he disapproves of Murakami's works published since 2011. Kuroko is bitterly critical of the Barcelona speech, calling it a betrayal to the history of anti-nuclear movements in Japan, and denounces Murakami for ignoring the long term efforts of such civil movements after the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. Citing the phrase, "We Japanese should have continued to shout 'no' to the atom," which is often interpreted by the media as Murakami's anti-nuclear message, Kuroko accuses Murakami of undermining the legacy of the anti-nuclear movement, and especially the "A-bomb literature" that has developed as a literary expression of those tragedies. Clearly, Kuroko wants more than just a one-line slogan or catch-phrase.

Seen from Kuroko's own particular perspective as a postwar critic of "pure" literature, we may be sympathetic with his frustration at Murakami's apparent failure to follow through on his politically charged comments of 2009 and 2011. It is also true, however, that Kuroko crucially fails to note one of the key aspects of Murakami's commitment, namely, his cosmopolitan approach as a "citizen of the world." First, it is quite possible that Murakami refrained from further comment on these contentious issues in order to avoid a political conflict. Since the anti-nuclear movement is a highly political subject with a complicated history spanning several decades in Japan, Murakami could easily have been caught up in a heated dispute between conflicting parties. The speech in Jerusalem, on the other hand, propelled him to take an open political stance on a major international issue; given the countless denunciations of Murakami in the past for being "a-political," one can only find some of the negative reactions to the Jerusalem speech a little mystifying. In a 2010 interview, Murakami recalled the fierce, one-sided criticism from the domestic media toward the Jerusalem speech, and expressed his disappointment at the lack of understanding shown towards his sincerity as an individual and a writer (Murakami, 2010).

Such criticism, to reiterate, overlooks what I am calling the cosmopolitan character of Murakami's commitment to social and political issues, though in other cases we may be more sympathetic to certain aspects of these critiques. We might

be justified in asking, for instance, as Kuroko does, why, in his Barcelona speech, Murakami did not mention his involvement with some literary works that are deeply connected to the nuclear issue (2015, pp. 134–144). One possible answer is that he confronts this issue not as a novelist but as a translator of the two works mentioned; Tim O'Brien's *The Nuclear Age* (1985) and Marcel Theroux's *Far North* (2009).[5] Even Kuroko expresses his conviction that these projects have had considerable influence on Murakami with respect to the issue of nuclear power (pp. 135–136). Murakami's close involvement with *The Nuclear Age* is evident also from the extensive translator's notes that offer detailed explanation of the particular time period in the U.S. by covering political and cultural terms.

We might wonder, then, why Murakami would choose to ignore this novel in his Barcelona speech. Perhaps it is a mark of his great respect for *The Nuclear Age*, both as writer and translator, that he wished to avoid a simplified labelling of this work as an "anti-nuclear text." Interestingly, in his afterword, Murakami suggests that *The Nuclear Age* is a "very dangerous novel," owing to what he calls the "sense of void" he felt after reading the book (2011, p. 650). For Murakami, *The Nuclear Age* is a work that defies classification as A-bomb literature, an opinion shared by Hiroaki Tasaki (2005), who argues that the novel offers a new kind of "integrity" that is missing from existing A-bomb literature in Japan. He contends that after six decades since the atomic bombings, it seems futile to pursue past stories so as to sustain a heritage which will sooner or later wane. Instead, Tasaki draws on Murakami's afterword to his translation of another of O'Brien's works, *The Things They Carried* (1990), which deals with the Vietnam War: "the true story of war is not about the war […] O'Brien hates war, of course. But this is not a so called anti-war novel. It does not appeal to the tragedy and stupidity of war. The war in this book … is a metaphorical apparatus" (as cited in Tasaki, 2005, p. 165). If one may speak of war literature that is not necessarily just about war, is it not also possible to speak of a new type of A-bomb literature that is not necessarily just about the bomb?

Another work dealing with the nuclear issue translated by Murakami is Marcel Theroux's *Far North* (2009), which was published in Japan in 2012. *Far North* is a near-future novel that depicts the world after civilization is destroyed due to global warming. The story is set in Siberia where the narrator, Peacemaker's, post-apocalypse world of survival begins. Writer Kazuma Inoue (2012) contends that this novel, which was written before the Fukushima disaster, will be read in Japan with deep empathy since the Japanese people have faced the reality that the world can collapse in an instant from their experience on March 11, 2011. In the afterword, noting that this novel predated the catastrophe in the Tōhoku region, Murakami states that "for Japanese people who read this book now […] it will without doubt immediately conjure up that tragic mega-quake and tsunami, and the devastating accident at the Fukushima nuclear power plant. Needless to say, 11 March 2011 has brought about a change in our perception of the world" (2012, p. 376). Murakami also alludes to a link between Chernobyl and Fukushima, pointing out that Marcel Theroux had the idea for the book when he travelled to Ukraine in December 2000

and interviewed a woman named Galina who lives, near Chernobyl. He refers to an "element of premonition" found in good stories and contends that by projecting it into reality, new premonitions may surface. Reactions like these, for Murakami, are "probably only ever found in literature" (p. 377). This suggests Murakami's strong support for this particular work and that he finds a strong connection between the narrative and the aftermath of the disaster in Fukushima, where thousands of people were evacuated as a result of the nuclear power accident and the contamination that followed.

Two points bear noting as we reflect on the publication of *The Nuclear Age* and *Far North* in Japanese: first, that neither work is likely to have made it to Japan without Murakami's active participation; the realities of the marketplace tell us this much. Second, we must consider the sheer amount of time and effort it cost Murakami to produce these works, not to mention the commentary he offers on each. To suggest, then, as Kuroko does, that Murakami's decision not to mention these novels in his Barcelona speech is a sign of his lack of interest or commitment to the nuclear issue must strike us as less than convincing.

We might choose to reflect, instead, upon Murakami's long-standing contention that it is better to speak in one's own words than in those of another. Moreover, he has never made any secret of his belief that any lesson derived from a work of fiction is personal, and ought to be gained through direct experience, rather than through the declarations of another. Is it any wonder, then, that he would elect not to use the Barcelona speech as a forum for discussing the works of O'Brien or Theroux?

REVISITING MURAKAMI'S DETACHMENT TO COMMITMENT

I noted earlier Murakami's transition from "detachment" to "commitment." It is widely recognized that Murakami's approach to his work as a writer transformed from one of social detachment to that of commitment following the Great Hanshin earthquake and the sarin gas attacks in the Tokyo subways in 1995. It was during the time he lived in the United States (1991–1995)—or perhaps more accurately, *because* of this time abroad—that he seems to have become aware of his role as a Japanese novelist. Murakami explains that he began to think about what it means to be a Japanese novelist and pursue the identity of being one. That is why he makes public appearances abroad despite criticisms at home that he takes interest in appealing overseas for international acclaim. In a public lecture delivered at Berkeley in 1992, he adheres to this responsibility:

> [U]ntil I came to America, I had never spoken like this before an audience. […] I have come to feel more strongly that I want the people of America – the people of the world – to know what I, as one Japanese writer, am thinking. This is an enormous change for me. (Murakami qtd in Rubin, 2003, p. 203)

This speech, suggesting Murakami's willingness to "become engaged" as a writer, might be viewed as his "cosmopolitan turn," emerging from a solitary exile to

pursue instead social commitment. At the same time, he stresses that assuming the responsibility of a Japanese novelist does not necessarily mean that he is returning to the "soil" (2015b, p. 293); his resistance towards nationalistic attachment or the image of the quintessential Japanese remains, rather, as it ever was.

Murakami returned to Japan in 1995 after the two aforementioned catastrophes of that year. Over six thousand people were killed and thousands more were injured by the massive earthquake that struck the Hanshin region, including Kobe, where Murakami was born. The sarin gas attacks were indiscriminate terrorism in which multiple subway lines in Tokyo were attacked by a religious cult known as the Aum Shinrikyo. Twelve people were killed and thousands suffered from aftereffects due to the toxic sarin gas released in the commuting trains. Murakami conducted interviews with the victims and families of the incident and published them in *Andāgraundo* (*Underground*) in 1997, which consists of over sixty of these interviews, along with Murakami's own commentary. As extraordinary as this documentation of the incident is, however, Murakami (1997) calls it a collection of personal stories from which he learned a lot about ordinary Japanese people. What led him to undertake such a project was his perceived need to re-examine the sheer scale of the impact of this event on contemporary Japanese society. The incident occurred, as he himself notes, at a time when Murakami was contemplating how he could better understand Japan "as a place" and the Japanese people "in terms of their consciousness" (p. 710). He was particularly alarmed to discover that there had been a kind of secondary "social violence" against the victims. Murakami learned from a reader's letter to a magazine that sarin gas victims were facing discrimination and antipathy at their workplace or from their neighbors due to their disabilities caused by exposure to the sarin gas (p. 14). In the afterword to *Underground*, he states that one element that is common to the Great Hanshin earthquake and the sarin gas attacks is the "absolute violence" of both, although one is a natural disaster and the other a man-made crime. If one stands on the victims' side, he argues, the abruptness and the unreasonable manner of one strike compares with the other (p. 715). As the title of his afterword, "Blind Nightmares" suggests, for Murakami it was an "unforeseeable nightmare"[6] that erupts from the "underground" of our internal social system (p. 716). This is why Murakami seeks to produce a narrative that confronts the kind of narrative that besieged the Aum cult followers.

As described above, Murakami's newly found sense of commitment manifested with the publication of *Underground*. If Murakami learned a lot from interviewing the victims of the sarin attack, he may have learned even more from interviewing the Aum Shinrikyō cult members themselves, which resulted in the publication of *Yakusoku sareta basho de: Underground 2* (*At the Place that was Promised: Underground 2*, 1998). Although some saw Murakami as taking the side of the perpetrators, he explained that he felt it was necessary to hear voices from the other side. His purpose was to offer diverse perspectives on the sarin incident, instead of the single viewpoint that seemed to dominate at the time (p. 10). If publication of these two books demonstrated Murakami's social commitment, then they also

offered a glimpse of his cosmopolitan message. This is evident in his focus on the individual and his effort to "engage" not only with the victims of the incident, but the members of the cult responsible for the attack. By telling their stories from an alternative angle, Murakami departs from the conventional, and often overly simplistic, dichotomy between "good" and "evil" propounded in the media.

Murakami's cosmopolitan outlook is substantiated by his aspiration to maintain individual autonomy. As Strecher (2002) points out, this endeavor is "a matter of will" for this writer. His argument that the search for identity is central to Murakami's literature is not only persuasive but significant for approaching his works. Strecher contends, "while most Murakami characters are passive, they are not devoid of identity; rather, their passivity, […], stems from their inability to decide how to act without participating in the consumerism that surrounds them, thus maintain their sense of individuality" (Strecher, 2002, pp. 94–95). The identity discussed here is one that resists the authoritative social system in Japan. Murakami's tenacious resistance to collectivism as a source for division and discrimination is one more manifestation of such will. In a conversation with Hayao Kawai, Murakami (1996) explains his shift from detachment to commitment. He recalls that the student movement during late 1960s was a time of commitment for their generation, but the failure of the movement had, in an instant, left them disaffected, effectively detached (p. 15). Murakami claims that although he supported the movement as a college student, he was bitterly disappointed when the activities became increasingly constrained under the principle of commitment. Kawai observes that, in contrast to Western society, where commitment as an individual is the norm, in Japanese society one is expected to commit selflessly to a group even at the expense of individuality. This may well be why Murakami found living abroad so congenial to his way of thinking: there was no need to insist on individuality there because it was assumed from the start.

Murakami also argues that pursuing personal detachment served the useful function of clarifying his position as a novelist, since he had no intention of following the status quo of traditional Japanese literature. Seen in this light it is not difficult to understand Kuroko's criticism, cited above, for Murakami does, in fact, reject the collectivist commitment that is the norm for his generation of intellectual. Viewed from Murakami's individualist perspective, however, Kuroko's claim that he lacks the spirit of commitment "as engagement"[7] (2015, pp. 219–220) misses the point. And herein lies, perhaps, the true reason why traditionalist Japanese and cosmopolitan intellectuals end up forever talking at cross-purposes, for their most fundamental ideological groundings are at odds with one another.

ABOUT TŌHOKU AND FUKUSHIMA

The suggestion that Murakami's commitment is ill-conceived, since he has not made any official comments or undertaken any public initiatives after the Tōhoku disaster in 2011, is useful for contemplating Murakami's cosmopolitan quality. Since making the speech in Barcelona, Murakami has published one original

novel and a collection of short stories. Neither *Tazaki Tsukuru* nor the collection of short stories *Onna no inai otokotachi* (*Men without women,* 2014), contains direct references to the tsunami in the Tōhoku region or the nuclear disaster in Fukushima. While this has led, as we have seen, to claims that the author is simply advancing himself for personal gain, that view is by no means unanimous. Wakato Ōnishi (2013), for example, calls *Tazaki Tsukuru* "a genuine 3.11 novel," insisting that the protagonist embodies the victims and the region of the traumatic disaster. Though perhaps guilty of over-schematization, Ōnishi rather ingenuously points out that the protagonist's name, Tazaki, literally means "many capes" in Chinese characters, signifying the saw-toothed coastline of the Sanriku region in Tōhoku that was heavily struck by the tsunami. The 'colorless' designation of the protagonist's name, moreover, bespeaks the monotonous aftermath of the tsunami when everything was swept away. Finally, the introductory storyline in which the protagonist loses all his close friends at once, according to Ōnishi (2013), alludes to the loss of community through the disaster. He also maintains, however, that *Tazaki Tsukuru* symbolizes not only the catastrophic event, but also the narratives of survival that necessarily followed, pointing out that the protagonist's first name, "Tsukuru," means to "create" or "develop" in Japanese. Although the story begins with the protagonist obsessed with death due to his isolation, Tsukuru eventually finds hope in his life as an engineer building railroads. Ōnishi finds a connection to an actual movement in Fukushima, led by artists, promoting the concept that "to create is to live" (*tsukuru koto ga ikiru koto*).[8] The project is based on the idea that the act of creation naturally leads one to start thinking about the time ahead. Therefore, the victims of the disaster are encouraged to envision the future. In this respect, the protagonist Tsukuru symbolizes hope and his pilgrimage can perhaps be viewed as a process from detachment to commitment since he shakes off the nightmare and takes on the challenge of facing reality (Ōnishi).

Critic Shin Osanai (2013) concurs with the observations above, contending that *Tazaki Tsukuru* represents an affirming message from the author in that the protagonist faces a traumatic event but moves on from loss to recovery. Osanai's reading of Tazaki's character, however, is that the protagonist is an "ordinary" person, with whom many readers can identify; hence the process from loss to recovery resonates with the status of Japanese society after the catastrophe. He maintains that *Tazaki Tsukuru* is "the most positive novel written by Murakami!"

It is noteworthy that *Tazaki Tsukuru* resembles *Norwegian Wood* in that it features a group of young people going through the life stages of love, sex, loss, isolation and death. The similarity makes it seem almost like a sequel of the story thirty years later. In my own view, however, these similarities are but superficial. Whereas *Norwegian Wood* is overshadowed with the loss and death that occupy youth, *Tazaki Tsukuru* expresses the hope and strength to live by portraying the process of recovery. While there is no direct reference to the disaster, such an approach does recall Murakami's words;

> In this great collective effort, there should be a space where those of us who specialize in words, professional writers, can be positively involved. We should weave together with words new morals and new ethical standards. We should plant vibrant new stories and make them sprout and flourish. Those stories will become our shared story. (Murakami, 2013a)

Murakami's quality as a cosmopolitan individual also manifests in the website project "Murakami-san no tokoro" [Mr. Murakami's place], an online public forum conducted in early 2015 between Murakami and his readership. The website ran for one hundred and nineteen days (from January 15th to May 13th), during which time readers could send e-mails to Murakami to which he would post a response onto the website. He pledged to read all e-mails and reply to as many as possible. According to Shinchōsha, the publisher that operated the website, there were 37,465 questions and messages in total and Murakami responded to 3,716 of them. The demographic distribution of the participants was wide-ranging, with visitors as young as seven to as old as eighty-four. There were messages from over sixty-two countries and regions and some 2,530 messages came from overseas, written in fourteen languages from English, Chinese, Spanish, and Russian to Slovak, Vietnamese and Thai, among many others. In addition to the exceedingly high number of messages, total access during the period reached 100 million page views, showing the massive impact of this project. Shinchōsha published a compilation of the correspondence in July in two formats: a print version containing 473 questions selected by Murakami, and a digital edition including all 3,716 queries.

Referring to this project in a newspaper interview, Murakami states that he had an image of the ancient Greek 'agora' in mind, where people would gather and speak out freely (Koyama, 2015). We see in this Murakami's commitment to be engaged, not to mention an implicit connection to ancient Greek philosophy as the origin of cosmopolitanism. The project also echoes his Jerusalem speech, to meet his readers and speak to them on site. During this interview, Murakami speaks also about the sarin gas attack of March 20, 1995, after which he spoke to some of the victims and realized that every one of them had a unique story to tell. That experience helped him to develop a feeling of reliance towards the general public; this time he felt much the same way through his exchange of e-mails with his readers.

"Mr. Murakami's Place" is a unique style of engagement that clearly demonstrates Murakami's openness and willingness to be connected, which is a distinctive feature of the cosmopolitan individual. Despite criticism about his inaction after the speech in Barcelona, Murakami explicitly comments on the subject of nuclear power, including the disaster in Fukushima, by responding to several inquiries regarding this issue. He clearly states his objection to nuclear power and urges the Japanese people to consider abandoning it. In response to a question about his message that Japanese should have said "no to the atom," Murakami (2015a) reaffirms that his thoughts remain unchanged. Interestingly, he encourages us to call it "atomic" power instead of "nuclear" power, since he considers the term "nuclear" to be deceitful,

intended to whitewash the link to the atomic bomb. He also declares his objection to the re-start of the nuclear power plants in Japan, for obvious reasons a controversial issue since 2011. Considering the total of 100 million views of this website, the extensive media coverage, and the subsequent publication of the website transcript, it is reasonable to state that Murakami is taking action in his own way. He takes up the subject in greater detail in *Shokugyō to shite no shōsetsuka*, where he proclaims that the nuclear power plant accident in Fukushima may have been an inevitable disaster due to the social system in Japan; reiterating his core message from the Barcelona speech, he attributes the disaster to a propensity in Japan for prioritizing economic efficiency over safeguards aimed at protecting the lives of individual Japanese (2015b, pp. 202–203).

CONCLUSION

Rubin observes that the reason for Murakami's global popularity is that he writes about solitude that is universally shared (as cited in Itagaki, 2014). As we have seen above, this solitude is no longer conveyed by the socially detached exile; it has turned into narratives by a cosmopolitan individual who seeks belonging as a "citizen of the world." For Murakami, the turn from detachment to commitment was accompanied by a phased transition in the style of his novels. Beginning from detachment as his specific theme, and a reflection of the time period during the 1960s and 1970s when he began writing novels, his writings evolved to story-telling in *A Wild Sheep Chase*, where detachment was replaced by "the story" (*monogatari*). The story-telling stage was followed by a major turn to commitment with *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle* in 1994 (Murakami & Kawai, 1996, pp. 68–70). Murakami (1996) explains that until then, his novels had adopted the style of a quest for the Holy Grail, but where the pursued object is lost at the end. However, with *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*, it became critical to "recover" what was once lost (p. 75). This suggests a new commitment to be engaged and to remain connected. As the Haruki Phenomenon continues unabated, we cannot but conclude that the phenomenon has evolved apace with Murakami himself as a writer.

NOTES

[1] The international symposium 'A Wild Haruki Chase – How the World reads Murakami literature' was organized on March 25–26, 2006 at The University of Tokyo.

[2] According to the official report of the event, twenty-three translators, writers and researchers from seventeen countries were present.

[3] The original book in Japanese *1Q84* was published in three volumes in 2009–2010.

[4] As a result of the record-breaking sales of *Noruwei no mori* [Norwegian Wood] in 1987, Murakami was sought after by media, fans, as well as the publishing industry.

[5] *The Nuclear Age* and *Far North* were translated by Murakami and published in Japan in 1989 and 2012, respectively.

[6] Murakami uses the term *mejirushi no nai akumu*, or "a nightmare without a marker," by which we understand him to mean something with no warning signals.

[7] Kuroko is using the term as the antonym of detachment, based on its French etymology.
[8] A book entitled Tsukuru koto ga ikiru koto [To Create is to Live] was published in 2012 by the Higashi Nihon Daishinsai Fukkō-shien [Eastern Japan Mega Earthquake Recovery Support] project.

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YUJI KATŌ

2. OUR OLD HARUKI MURAKAMI AND THE EXPERIENCE OF TEACHING HIS WORKS IN JAPAN

OUR OLD "MURAKAMI HARUKI" AND THE CULTURAL CONTEXTS

My generation of Japanese readers must have been very lucky that we could experience the process of the transformation, or the destruction according to some critics, of the tradition of Japanese literature caused by Haruki Murakami and others during the 1980s. As he must be part of the renewed, globalized context now, he was a very conspicuous presence among the young writers who made their debuts in the late 1970s and the early 1980s. Young readers like me at that time started our experience of contemporary literature with Ryū Murakami's *Almost Transparent Blue* (1976), or with Kenji Nakagami's *Misaki* (1976) in the case of more traditionally minded readers. Their first novels were published several years before Haruki Murakami's 1979 debut novel *Hear the Wind Sing*, and they were both awarded the prestigious Akutagawa Award for the works cited above. The authority of the literary world, known as the Bundan (literary guild) was still intact at the time, yet we felt that Yasunari Kawabata and Yukio Mishima, whose deaths marked the end of the resistance to postwar political and cultural contexts, were too far away from us. We discovered something more sympathetic to ourselves in the writings of these younger writers.

Young intellectuals at the time were for the most part supposed to be familiar with traditional Japanese literature and Western classics, as well as some modern literature such as Goethe's *Faust*, Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*, or Albert Camus' *The Stranger*. I remember friends at my high school asking me in surprise, "Do you read that kind of book?" when they found me with copies of *Almost Transparent Blue*, which I genuinely loved for its vivid pictorial descriptions, Haruki Murakami's *Hear the Wind Sing*, or J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye,* which I read as part of my training in English. The experience might be similar to that of "I" in *Norwegian Wood*, who takes *The Great Gatsby* very seriously in the face of his fellow students' indifference to it (Murakami, 2003, p. 37). I must have been quite an eccentric among other, more normal students who adored and imitated Naoya Shiga or Hideo Kobayashi in their writings, and then went on to read Paul Valery or André Gide. The new writers did not conquer the cultural scene overnight, although some of us certainly were hungry for literature and art that would be more convincing to us. Haruki Murakami's impact on general readers must have been a minor one at the beginning.

M. C. Strecher & P. L. Thomas (Eds.), Haruki Murakami, 17–30.

Ōe Kenzaburō, who mediated the gap between the generation that preceded him and Murakami's generation, was not exactly the writer of our generation since he was more like a father than a comrade in our intellectual explorations, but we had to know (or pretend to know) his works. Kōbō Abe, another big father-figure for us, was preparing controversial late works such as *The Ark Sakura* (1984). Saiichi Maruya, one of the leading figures in the Bundan, who made perspicacious and encouraging comments on Haruki Murakami's early works, was still in his 50s, and was actively teaching and writing. Mishima's and Kawabata's presence still lingered and loomed large. The writer Kaoru Shōji, who is one of the precursors of Haruki Murakami, published a popular novel in 1969 for younger readers called *Akazukin-chan ki o tsukete* (Watch Out, Little Red Riding Hood), which is similar to Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* in its style and content as some critics have claimed, yet his early stories and novellas point apparently to Mishima's strong influence. The works of writers such as Sōseki Natsume, Ryūnosuke Akutagawa, Naoya Shiga, Osamu Dazai, Jun Ishikawa, and Kawabata, as well as poets like Chūya Nakahara, Sakutarō Hagiwara and Tatsuji Miyoshi were printed in school textbooks. Literature was still understood to be a neccesary part of the general education, and students were supposed to be familiar with traditional and modern literature. Although traditional scholars and critics like Donald Keene and Masao Miyoshi found a negative shift in the direction Japanese literature took with Haruki Murakami's popularity, as Jay Rubin (2003) and others have remarked, the great tradition of Japanese literature still yielded powerful influence on younger generations of readers in the late 1970s and the early 1980s, when Haruki Murakami was launched on his literary career (pp. 6–7). Hideo Kobayashi's essays were the most exemplary introduction to literature for students in spite of his support of Japanese imperialism during the Second World War. Tatsuhiko Shibusawa, meanwhile, was a kind of guru for the cult of French decadence.

The appearance of Haruki Murakami and other new writers marked a departure from tradition, whether it was a positive change or a negative one. It, however, cannot be overstressed that they did not change the literary scene overnight, nor was the change, if indeed there was one, particularly radical. Such writers probably even reinforced the tradition to some extent, though at the same time they resisted influences from the past. Haruki Murakami pretended he had never read Japanese literature and refused to admit his continuity to traditional Japanese literature in his early career, yet he did read Japanese literature and his works, particularly after *South of the Border, West of the Sun*, are more like Japanese novels than his early writing. According to Yoshifumi Miyawaki, "Murakami had deliberately turned his back on Japanese literature in favor of the sort of hip, new, fabulist American writings by Vonnegut, Brautigan, and other postmodernists whose works were beginning to appear in Japanese translation" (Gregory, Miyawaki, & McCaffrey, 2002, p. 111).

Traditional Japanese writers and critics had grown up on the cultural diet of European and British literature, and most of them had their own fields of literary education, their *Bildung*. Murakami's adoption of American literature as his model,

therefore, would point to his affinity to other Japanese writers and critics who adopted European or Asian literatures as the origins of their works. Kobayashi, Nakahara, Shiga, Dazai, Ishikawa and Ōe had studied French literature. Sōseki, Akutagawa and Maruya graduated from the English department of Tokyo Imperial University. Writers like Yutaka Haniya took to Russian literature and wrote on Fyodor Dostoevsky. Shō Shibata, whose 1964 Akutagawa Award-winning novel *Saredo warera ga hibi* (But Our Days) anticipates Haruki Murakami's novels for younger readers, later became a professor of German literature at the University of Tokyo. General readers were therefore immersed in the influence of European and British literature. Murakami must have been one of these before he started to write. The list of writers and movements we were supposed to know included Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Marques de Sade, European Gothic of the 18th and early 19th centuries, Victor Hugo, J. W. Goethe, William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, John Keats, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, Edgar A. Poe, Charles Baudelaire, Nikolai Gogol, Honoré de Balzac, Gustave Flaubert, Guy de Maupassant, Emile Zola, Anthony Trollope, George Eliot, Friedrich Nietzsche, Anton Chekov, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Stéphane Mallarmé, Henry James, T. S. Eliot, André Gide, Paul Valerie, Albert Camus, Jean-Paul Sartre, and so forth. According to a recent newspaper report in Japan in the *Kōbe Shimbun*, Murakami borrowed copies of Joseph Kessel's works from the library of his high school when he was sixteen. If we include the names of less conspicuous writers like this, and nonfiction writers such as Viktor Frankl, Erich Fromm and so on, the list must be more than three times longer. We will also have to add to the list the names of the great classical composers and musicians of Europe, Britain and the United States along with those of painters and film directors. Jazz was very seriously taken by Murakami's generation and early Japanese audience. Names such as Louis Armstrong, Charlie Parker, Miles Davis, Bill Evans, John Coltrane and others must have been known commonly among young Japanese intellectuals and university students of Murakami's generation.

IDENTITY AND DIFFERENCE IN HARUKI MURAKAMI

Therefore, when I visit bookstores in the United States and see Haruki Murakami's works conspicuously displayed on the shelves or the counters, say, at Harvard Bookstore or at Barnes and Noble in Manhattan, or when I find my non-academic friends asking me questions about him and his works, I am struck by the changes the image of "Haruki Murakami" has undergone for the past years. I was an old-fashioned student studying in the faculty of letters at a national university in Tokyo during the 1980s. In my mind, Murakami's early works are definitely associated with the student cultures of Tokyo, represented by the not-too-clean restaurants, bleak movie theatres, old bookstores, and cheap apartments around Waseda University and its neighboring areas. Noboru Watanabe in *Norwegian Wood* might have lived in one of these apartments. Midori could have been a regular customer of one of the restaurants on Waseda Dōri Avenue, leading from Takadanobaba Station to the

university. Murakami's works did not "smell clean," so to speak, at least up until the mid-80s. They were permeated by the smell of old wood, *tatami* mats in dark secluded rooms, or the oily smoke from the kitchens of cheap restaurants.

Things changed after the success of *Norwegian Wood* during the economic boom. *South of the Border, West of the Sun* smells of high-class restaurants in Aoyama and Shibuya instead of cheap restaurants in less fashionable areas. Murakami was known and read by general readers now, and his reputation rose internationally. I used to ask students questions about Murakami's novels when I explained fictional devices in classrooms in Tokyo. If they had not read the works of any other writers, I could rely on their familiarity with Murakami's. I used him as the common ground students could share with me, but was not yet teaching his texts in my classes on literature. Maybe I felt he was not authentic enough at that point, or I simply did not need to ask students to read his works. They just read them. In the early 1990s, when I stayed in north-western New York as a PhD student, professors were curious to know my opinions of his works. The translations of his works were on the shelves of bookstores along with those of Banana Yoshimoto and Genichirō Takahashi, but the professors' questions usually had negative overtones. They evaluated Kenzaburō Ōe higher than Murakami, probably for the obvious reason that Ōe's academic approaches to the novel are easier to understand for scholars. Nobody spoke of him outside the universities yet, although he must have been living in Princeton or Boston at the time.

Things were a little different when I went back to the United States in 1996 as a visiting fellow at a university near Los Angeles. Professors did not mention Murakami, but undergraduate students—a lot of them—came to me to ask questions about him and his works while I sat in a chair at the Starbucks on campus in the morning, reading Emily Dickinson's poems. His new novel, *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, had been completed the year before. A lot of these undergraduates had already read his other works. I had to ask one of my friends in Tokyo to send a copy of the new work and copies of his essays so that I could answer their questions. Creative writing majors in California explained their images of contemporary writers to me. Writers now were not like Tennessee Williams, whose "art for art's sake" kind of attitude was no longer "cool." Writers nowadays were postmodernists like Don DeLillo and others. Murakami was one of them. They pointed out the characteristics of his writings correctly. His works were like J. D. Salinger's and F. Scott Fitzgerald's, featuring cool young characters with whom they could identify themselves.

This year, in Nebraska, I had dinner with a middle-aged couple, friends of colleague. When they understood my field of research to be literature, they started a volley of questions on Murakami over beer and the area's best hamburgers. Both of them were great Murakami fans, and they had read most of his translated works, except the ones I love the most, the ones that are about the sense of loss time and changes bring about: *South of the Border, West of the Sun* and *Sputnik Sweetheart*, in which what was here is not here any longer, like Shimamoto-san, the protagonist's

childhood sweetheart, who just disappears after their rendezvous in a cottage near the end of *South of the Border* (Murakami, 1995, p. 262). Both of my hosts had grown up in the city in Nebraska, left it for universities elsewhere, had worked in more urban areas, come back to their town, and were settling down with each other.

Murakami's generation—and my generation, too—of Japanese never have had that kind of local sense of identity. Murakami was born in the old city of Kyoto and grew up in a high-class residential area in Kobe, another city with a long tradition. Yet the transformation of cities in Japan, and Japan as a nation, is so incessant and drastic that we cannot go back to our towns and cities as they used to be. Murakami has always written on the sense of loss such transformations cause in our mind up until his most recent novel, *Colorless Tazaki Tsukuru and His Years of Pilgrimage* (2013). It is surprising to see how many references to time and passages of reminiscence on the lost past are in this book. There is a comment on a photograph of the crowd in Shinjuku Station in the central Tokyo taken in 1990 (Murakami, *Tazaki Tsukuru,* p. 350) and a scene where Tazaki ruminates on time, his late father, and the watch he left him (Murakami, *Tazaki Tsukuru,* pp. 358–361).

I told the couple to complete their knowledge of Haruki Murakami with the two unread novels when we left the restaurant. The same strange sense of alienation I always feel in such a situation came back to me, exactly as it does to Murakami's characters. It is not like before, when we used to read Murakami as *our* Japanese writer. It is not like I am a scholar of literature any longer, talking to people I had never dreamed of seeing in a city I had never dreamed of visiting. Reading Murakami in Tokyo before was such a different, limited kind of an experience, and scholars of literature in my mind were strange creatures who would never leave their studies, libraries and classrooms.

It was as late as in the early 2000s that I started teaching Murakami's texts in the classroom. Students still read his works, and some of them wanted to write on Murakami in their graduation theses. Yet we had only a limited number of professors on the faculty, and had to stick to our regular, old-fashioned curriculum; Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, Mark Twain, Henry James, T. S. Eliot, William Faulkner, Fitzgerald were regularly on the reading lists of my courses. In my experience, the curriculum in Anglo-American literature in Japan tends to be rather old-fashioned, and the tastes of our students tend to be so, too. The classrooms, in my opinion, should be a battlefield of different interpretations and experiences. Yet "literature" tends to be counted as a single category here. That means French, German, British, American, Korean, Chinese, Spanish, Mongolian, South-African, Russian, Persian "literatures" are supposed to belong to one category of "literature." My university is an old national institution with a long history of teaching languages and cultures of the world. That environment makes the uniqueness or strangeness of the situations in classrooms all the more conspicuous.

As considerate critics such as Rebecca Suter (2008) argue, Murakami is not necessarily a new "postmodernist" kind of a writer (p. 7). In my view, his novels are often repetitions of the patterns of the 19th century *Bildungsroman*

("coming-of-age" story) that requires its readers to have at least some sense of class-consciousness and educational backgrounds. His allusions to literary works and musical pieces are an indispensable part of his works, and readers must have at least some knowledge about them. One of the appeals of his work comes from this aspect that makes us believe we belong to a class of people with more than an average level of intellectual background. Leoš Janáček's "Sinfonietta," featured in *1Q84*, would be a good example. It is not as well known as the same composer's opera *The Cunning Little Vixen*, and readers have to keep up with a level of knowledge on music that is a little higher than the average. The piece also points to the work's connection to George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, which readers are supposed to have read before. I had read it because I majored in English literature. Yet I doubt Japanese readers in general had really read the long work. As well as being a modernist working on premises similar to those of T. S. Eliot's rather than a postmodernist, Murakami apparently is a product of Japanese cultural and social background where *kyōyō*, which means "high culture" in Japanese, is regarded to be an important part of an individual's values in society. Unlike American postwar and contemporary writers, he does not necessarily try to deal with the multiplicity of social visions that appear to be the globally acknowledged criteria for contemporary writers now. Nor does he care about what John Barth (1984), for example, cites as the features of new writings: "Disjunction, simultaneity, irrationalism, anti-illusionism, self-reflexiveness, medium-as-message, political olympianism, and moral pluralism approaching moral entropy" (p. 203). Therefore, teaching only Murakami as a representative contemporary writer is misleading in my view. Conformist students, who comprise the majority in classrooms in Japan, and probably also elsewhere, would gladly read his novels as the story of initiation, an example of romantic love, the protagonist's search for his true self, or the revelation of hidden aspects of history. These interpretations are not so bad, but they are not quite right, either.

Maybe Murakami is too appropriate as material for classrooms in Japan in one sense: teaching his novels in classes highlights what the students have in common with him and the agreed-upon literary qualities in Japan. We can still have moments of sympathetic identification with Murakami and his characters, and probably see ourselves in his novels. We cannot do so with the characters of Thomas Pynchon, Don Delillo, Paul Auster, Toni Morrison, or Kazuo Ishiguro. Ishiguro's characters, for example, are more functional than Murakami's. They represent the workings of human minds rather than their sentiments exactly as the sorrows of human clones do in *Never Let Me Go*, and they do not demand that readers identify with their characters. There are other aspects in Murakami's writings, of course, but we tend to read his works from a rather conservative point of view. Shigehiko Hasumi (1989), who criticized Murakami's and other contemporary Japanese writers' lack of originality in the late 80s, perceptively points out the homogeneity of reactions to his works. In his view, "the characteristics of Haruki Murakami's novels lie in the fact that the protagonist's characterization, his narratives, and the readers' attitudes toward the story are similar to an almost mysterious degree" (p. 14). This comment

would explain part of what I have said about the situation in classrooms as well as the similarity between my sentiment in Nebraska and his characters' sense of alienation. His works make us feel we still share a common ground, and thereby allow us to confirm the sense of loss or alienation in the fact that things happening to us in our daily routines are different from the shared recognitions. The workings of Murakami's fictions are certainly similar to those of Salinger's in this sense. I am not saying that his works are characterized solely by intrinsically old-fashioned qualities, nor am I arguing that he is the completely new type of a writer people sometimes believe him to be. He is probably neither. These two different aspects, or the difference between the two, constitute what Haruki Murakami is, and we believe we share both the lost common ground and the sense of alienation from it with his protagonists. Therefore, "displacement" in its literal sense becomes the most appropriate situation for Murakami, his characters like Hajime and Tsukuru Tazaki, and his readers. My personal experience of Murkami outside of Japan also confirms this view, and it might also explain his popularity outside of Japan, for Murakami has always been a displaced, exotic writer here.

THE "AMERICANIZATION" OF JAPANESE LITERATURE?

The most salient change that took place with the debuts of writers such as Ryū Murakami, Nakagami and Haruki Murakami was what is usually called the "Americanization" of Japanese literature and culture. Their "America" belongs to the tradition of Japanese assimilation of foreign culture in one logical sense as I have noted, yet the specific significance of "America" in our historical contexts is another thing. There is probably an implicit agreement that Japanese culture for the most part consists of two strands of cultural influences and sources, European and Asian, in Japan. It was symbolic of our cultural contexts of the time that one of the most popular books published in the early 1980s in Japan was an anthropological study of religion by Shin'ichi Nakazawa with the title *Mozart in Tibet* that places European and Asian images in juxtaposition within one title. Kawabata (1969) insisted in his Nobel Prize address that he, the writer of the novel with its European origin, had inherited the Asian culture of Zen Buddhism from Dōgen, and explained Japanese philosophy and beauty in terms of their contrast to those of the West (pp. 51–56). What Ryū Murakami, Kenji Nakagami and Haruki Murakami, following Kenzaburō Ōe's lead, made conspicuous in our cultural contexts was the inevitable negotiations with cultural influences from the United States that must have been much less tangible than European, British and Asian influences. The problematic negotiations between American and Japanese cultures had already had a long history. During the 1920s there were resistance movements against American English; Hideo Kobayashi and others tried to keep American influence at bay during the 1930s and the Second World War, as I have argued elsewhere (Katō, 2006, p. 13). The use of English was restricted during the war, and American literature was not taken seriously in academia until after the war. Even in the postwar, while Ōe positively affirmed

democracy and American literature, most writers and scholars were ambivalent toward them, or simply disregarded them.

Even if such ideas were not yet in the mainstream, the tradition was modified—a new color was added, so to speak—by the new generation of writers. Yet we must acknowledge that they grew up in the same cultural soil, and had never experienced direct contact with the culture of the United States, unlike younger generations of Japanese like Mari Akasaka, whose *Tokyo Prison* (2012) alternates the heroine's lives in the United States and in Japan. Again, Kenzaburō Ōe is a good example here. He tends to emphasize his affinity with American culture, often citing *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* he read as a child living before World War II as the source of his works, yet he majored in French literature at The University of Tokyo, and has been loyal to the teaching of his professor Kazuo Watanabe, who is the first Japanese translator of François Rabelais' *Gargantua*. His *persona* is Janus-faced, combining its European and American sides. Until recently, Ōe has been often misinterpreted to be a "European" intellectual like Jean-Paul Satre, but his works probably are more similar to those of American writers than to the French. Ryū Murakami wrote of lives around American bases in Japan and the "Americanized" violence and eccentricities of extreme Japanese youngsters, and thereby faced the irreversibly transformed aspects of contemporary Japanese lives quite honestly. But his controversial first novel *Almost Transparent Blue* flaunts its literary inheritance in featuring a form similar to the typical Japanese *shishōsetsu*, or "I-novel." It is written from the passive, "transparent" point of view of a lethargic young Japanese man involved in the violent lives of youngsters living under the new influence of American culture. The postscript to the novel, supposedly written by the narrator several years later, underlines the young narrator's resemblance, at least in his outer formal appearance, to the desperate narrators of *shishōsetsu* like those of Dazai (Ryū Murakami, 2009, pp. 158–159). Kenji Nakagami tried to incorporate William Faulkner's themes and styles in his writings along with the improvisational styles of jazz with considerable success. Yet he is indebted not only to Ōe but very probably also to Mishima in his style, and to other Japanese writers in different aspects. According to a biographical representation of Nakagami, his goal was to write like Jun'ichirō Tanizaki (Tsuji, 2002, p. 136). Moreover, Faulkner was not exactly an "American" writer in the sense we usually mean by the term. Faulkner was the most important writer for postwar Japanese intellectuals as well as for French intellectuals. His great status in the postwar Japanese culture is exemplified by the writer Tomoji Abe's translation of his *A Fable*, Kenzaburō Ōe's adoption of his narrative methods in his best novels, the great critical works by Kenzaburō Ōhashi, and by Haruki Murakami's repetition of his fictional form in *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*, to cite a few examples. When Faulkner visited Japan in 1955, he expressed his sympathy to Japanese people and talked about Japan and its people several times in his interviews (Gwynn & Blotner, 1959, pp. 89, 156). In many ways, reading Faulkner was tantamount to finding ourselves in the culture of the United States that worked as a catalyst for self-reflection.

Most postwar Japanese writers appear to be satisfied with more traditional Japanese cultural attitudes and practices, including Ryū Murakami and Kenji Nakagami. (Gen'ichirō Takahashi might be an exception among the writers of that generation.) What sets Haruki Murakami apart is his serious acceptance of American contemporary and classic literature such as Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and *Tender Is the Night*, Salinger's novels, and probably the works by later writers such as Richard Brautigan, Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. and Thomas Pynchon. His third novel, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, resembles Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49* and *V.* in its search for the significance of the symbol of a sheep that has been transmitted through the process of modern Japanese history. His fourth novel, *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*, is apparently based in its form on Faulkner's *The Wild Palms* in the alternation of two strands of narratives, yet its themes, such as information technology and mass society, point to other American or "postmodern" sources of influence such as Pynchon and Murakami's familiarity with the discussions on postmodernity by François Lyotard and others.

Haruki Murakami remained a mysterious figure with an aura of strangeness until the mid-1980s. The scenes in his first two novels, *Hear the Wind Sing* and *Pinball 1973* invoke the images of well-off, intellectual and stylish young men nonchalantly wasting their youth away. "Rat," who does not care in the least about his wrecked Fiat in the first scene of *Hear the Wind Sing*, is a typical Japanese bourgeois postwar hero in the style of Shuntarō Ishihara, Mishima, and Kaoru Shōji, yet his lack of specific background and his seemingly abandoned, irresponsible attitudes made him a new type of a hero, similar to Dean Moriarty in Jack Kerouac's in *On the Road*. "Rat" and "I" (Boku) might be a transplanted Japanese version of Nick Carraway and Jay Gatsby, or of Dean and Sal Paradise in *On the Road*. Unlike later heroes and heroines in American "postmodern" literature, Sal and Dean still move within the family structure, Sal living with his aunt and Dean being in the process of searching for his father. Murakami's characters are also similar to Holden Caulfield of J. D. Salinger's (1959) *The Catcher in the Rye*, another favorite work of Murakami's. Holden mentions his parents at the outset of his narration in the tart phrase "all that David Copperfield kind of crap," yet he is kept away from the warmth of family life, finding solace in the memory of his dead brother Alley and in the company of his little sister who scarcely understands his predicament (p. 5). As Faulkner said of Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* that "there was no human race" Holden could enter, Murakami's characters could not find a family or a community to which they could belong (Gwynn & Blotner, 1959, p. 244). They are certainly different from Mishima's protagonists, with their solid bourgeois family background and their obligations to it. We know nothing about "Rat" except that his family is rich, and we know even less about the narrator "I." Murakami's novels share the characteristics and the limits of American novels up to the 1950s that are the last works of genuine realism and family romance, such as Philip Roth's *Goodbye, Columbus* and Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*. He also shares their surviving forms by Brautigan, Vonnegut, Jr., John Irving, Ann Beattie and Raymond Carver.

As his works in translation, of Salinger's *Franny and Zooey* in 2014 for example, would show, he has always been sympathetic to older realistic American literature to a degree that verges almost on anachronism.

There must also have been influence from F. Scott Fitzgerald, who became immensely popular as "Murakami's writer," though Murakami often emphasizes his difference from Fitzgerald (Murakami & Shibata, 1989, p. 22). Murakami's comments on Fitzgerald in his essays totally changed his status in Japan. Everybody had read Hemingway, and specialists in literature had to be familiar with Faulkner's works. And yet, even though Fitzgerald's works had been translated with these better-known contemporaries during the 1950s, he had never been as popular as Hemingway and Faulkner until Murakami's introduction. There were reading groups of Fitzgerald's works such as *Tender Is the Night* at universities in the early 1980s in Tokyo, probably because Murakami made him known among young people. After the late 1980s, when Murakami began to be read by the general public, that is, outside the literary circles and the universities, particularly with the huge success of *Norwegian Wood*, Fitzgerald must have been much more widely read than Hemingway or Faulkner. In my experience as an instructor in the academy, Murakami has been the only Japanese writer commonly read by undergraduates, and Fitzgerald and Hemingway are the best-known American writers in Japan since the late 1980s. Murakami probably changed the definition of "literature" for young people and readers in general with his work after *Norwegian Wood*. Being "popular" could still mean "inauthentic" up to the point of Murakami's great success with general readers. After that, being "popular" could simply mean good writing. It is ironic, however, that the popularity of literature in general was eclipsed in proportion to the success of Murakami's works. Very probably, the genre of "literature" as high culture disappeared with Murakami's success. *Norwegian Wood* transformed him from the minor figure with an attractive air of unfamiliarity he used to be into a genuine celebrity. With Murakami's success, what is called "literature" in Japan became one of the genres of art or entertainment along with popular music and contemporary art that we can simply enjoy regardless of whether they are regarded to be "popular" or authentic. In this sense, at least, what Donald Keene and Masao Miyoshi said of Murakami in negative terms was correct. Murakami functioned as precisely the "vacuous manufacturer of disposable entertainment" that Miyoshi (1991) said he was in his famous denunciation of Murakami (p. 234).

One of the things about Murakami that must be mentioned here is the similarity between his works and popular music in Japan since the 1970s. Before Murakami made his debut, a wave of new styles of popular music, widely termed the "New Music," had changed Japanese popular sounds. Readers may have noted that the name of the singer Yōsui Inoue is mentioned in *1Q84* when Tengo sings one of his songs in at a karaoke place (Murakami, 2010, p. 120).

There were other superb singer-composers such as Yumi Arai (Matsutōya), Kazumasa Oda, Kazuo Zaitsu and Keisuke Kuwata in this period, and most of them are still actively performing and recording. The characteristics their works

had in common were the barely realistic, simplified depictions of scenes in life and psychology. They usually do not pretend to be serious or authentic. Rather, they find their own ground in the inauthentic, dream-like unreality of their lyrics and music that allows them much more freedom than traditional, realistic lyrics and composition. These dream-like qualities and the relative freedom from realistic restrictions are also what characterize Murakami's fiction, as Susan Napier (1996) and others have argued (p. 127). The similarity between the "New Music" and Murakami's fiction probably is not just a coincidence. Most young Japanese creative musicians after the 1960s started out under the influence of The Beatles, who had modified their lyrics and compositions into surrealistic simplifications and multiplicity in songs like "Norwegian Wood," "Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Heart's Club Band," and "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds." Murakami's novelistic variation of The Beatles' "Norwegian Wood" might be a declaration of the death of literature that resulted from the deconstruction of genre distinctions that allowed for a loose "cross-over" among cultural powers during the unprecedented economic boom in the late 1980s and the early 1990s. It was also during this period that Murakami's collaborations with popular artists and illustrators such as Mizumaru Anzai became an indispensable part of his works. Napier also points to the similarity between Murakami's readers and the readers of Ōtomo Akihiro's *manga* (p. 215).

CHANGES IN MURAKAMI AND HIS READERSHIP

It must have been at that point that the internationalization or globalization of Murakami was launched. He moved to Greece with his wife, ran marathons outside of Japan, taught at Tufts and other universities. General readers and scholars outside of Japan started to read and translate his works. The first of the English translations of his works, *Wild Sheep Chase*, had been published, and others followed.

It was not only Murakami who had changed, however. What had been going on in Japan in academia and the publishing industry during the 1980s was a slow process of change in the critical methods and the definition of literature itself. In my experience in the 1980s, university education was still rather old-fashioned. Poststructuralism and postmodernism were not yet the major aspects of our academic lives. Those new trends became popular in the United States during the 1970s through the work on deconstruction by Jacques Derrida's and others, along with Michel Foucault's critique of power, and the publications of Edward W. Said's *Orientalism*, John T. Irwin's *Doubling and Incest/Repetition and Revenge* and other studies inspired by poststructuralist thinkers, and these became part of the major critical approaches. Their arrival to Japan, on the other hand, came comparatively late, and started out only as a minor movement among a group of young scholars called the "New Academism" by the mass media in the early 1980s. Akira Asada's book *Kōzō to chikara* (Structure and Power) became a bestseller in 1983, Shin'ichi Nakazawa's book, cited above, also became popular among young people around this time. These and other new approaches in the humanities were, however, hardly

major at that time. Chizuko Ueno, the best-known Japanese feminist, might be the one exception. She published her works based on feminism and poststructuralist points of view, works such as *Sekushii gyaru no dai kenkyū* (A Great Study of Sexy Gals), in the early 1980s, and later taught at the University of Tokyo from 1993 to 2011.

Yet academia and criticism in general in Japan started to change during the 1990s, and reactions to Murakami's works also changed. It could be easily anticipated that the initial attacks would come from feminists and female writers such as Eimi Yamada and Banana Yoshimoto. Although both Rubin (2003, p. 59) and Napier (1996, p. 198) appear to find Murakami a rather pro-feminist writer, some feminists and gender critics like Atsushi Koyano in Japan have been suspicious of his protagonists' repeated patterns of love and sex. Historicist approaches to Murakami's works have become prevalent after the 1990s. Kazuo Kuroko (1993) links the historical associations in Murakami fiction from *Hear the Wind Sing* to *South of the Border, West of the Sun* to Japan's history since 1970, and discusses *Hear the Wind Sing* as a retrospective fictionalization of that year (pp. 8–12). Shōji Shibata (2011) relates the author's work to Japan's relationship with other Asian countries such as China (pp. 108–112).

After the 1990s, a huge number of books on Murakami have been published. There are many studies taking such classic approaches as textual criticism and close reading by traditional critics such as Kiyoshi Kasai, Seiji Takeda, or Norihiro Katō. Katō's extended explication of Murakami's works, called *Murakami Haruki ierōbukku* (Murakami Haruki Yellow Book), made them much more accessible to young readers. Motoyuki Shibata's collaborations with Murakami on such texts as *Hon'yaku yawa 2: Sarinjā senki* (Night Chats on Translation: The Chronicle of Our Efforts in Translating Salinger), published in 2003, made Murakami even more familiar to readers as a cultural star. Yet, the majority of books on Murakami published in Japan are written by readers who are ideologically collusive with Murakami and his characters, exactly as Hasumi predicted in 1989. In spite of the radical changes in the culture of criticism, criticism on Murakami is usually very mild or in the "literary" vein. Radical critics might just acquiesce in his still rising popularity.

Reactions in classrooms have changed accordingly. Students speak up on gender biases, and discuss his stories as male fantasies. I often have to discuss with students what the surplus of sex in Murakami could signify. Some students discover historical allusions and allegories. Yet, in my view, Japanese students tend also to be mild and "literary" in their criticism. What I often notice is the difference in reactions between Japanese and non-Japanese students. Recently, a lot of foreign students from China, Korea, Indonesia, Romania, Germany, Spain and other countries come to my university to study Murakami in the graduate program. Since most of them have studied Japanese in their home countries and take classes in Japanese, they read Japanese criticism and essays to prepare for their theses. Most of them, however, do not notice the biases latent within the critical writings published in Japan. I can see

their bewilderment in their writing, for they do not find in Japanese critical writings what they see in the texts!

One particular topic seldom discussed here is Murakami's sensitivity to the violence in Japanese modern history in *A Wild Sheep Chase*, *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* and other works. Non-Japanese critics like Rubin and Matthew Carl Strecher almost never fail to elucidate the relationship of those works to Japan and its violent past. Rubin (2003) notes, "In *Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* … what leaps out at his narrator from the depths of his individual memory is Japan's dark and violent recent past" (p. 213). Mark Mussari highlights both violence and sex as major themes in Murakami's fictions even in his introductory guidebook (pp. 59–61). A lot of foreign students include passages in their writing on this aspect of Murakami without having read secondary sources pertinent to the topic, because they tend to work within the contexts of Japanese criticism. For discussions of the role of violence in Murakami fiction, I recommend publications on Murakami written outside of Japan. There are, however, recent exceptions in criticism such as Shōji Shibata's historicist readings and Kazuo Kuroko's open criticism of Murakami published in 2015. Criticism on Murakami in Japan may change in the future.

Therefore, teaching Murakami is never a simple matter here. Both students and professors are part of a society that could reify literary qualities or demystify them. Teaching Murakami now in Tokyo is like a touchstone that foregrounds the lies unconsciously told by traditional critics and good students, reminiscent of Kazuo Ishiguro's narrators in *A Pale View of Hills*, *The Artist of the Floating World* and *The Remains of the Day*, to protect themselves from the memories of the unbearably violent past. That is the reason I never teach Murakami alone in courses. Toni Morrison will be a very good companion to him. So are Ishiguro, Paul Auster, or Tom McCarthy. I particularly enjoy teaching Auster's *Oracle Night* alongside *South of the Border, West of the Sun* or *Sputnik Sweetheart*. Those writers make us aware of characters' psychological functions, their relation to the world outside, and the texts' relation to the culture function in literary texts written outside of Japan and our academic environment, and force us to look and read beyond our former vision of the Japanese "Murakami Haruki."

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MATTHEW C. STRECHER

3. HARUKI MURAKAMI AND THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS

> You can exist without your soul, you know, as long as your brain and heart are still working. But you'll have no sense of self anymore, no memory, no … anything.
>
> (*Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, p. 247)

As a professor in the humanities, a considerable part of my time and energy is consumed with helping my students, undergraduate and graduate alike, to understand not only how to see more clearly the points of view of others, but equally important, to see and understand *themselves* more clearly. We all belong to groups of varying kinds, but we are also individuals, and individuality is very much a quality of the mind. What is a human being when we remove the mind? What sets us apart from other mammals on this planet? Perhaps it is our persistent belief in and curiosity about "the mind." We have sought out the nature of the mind—in the guise of the "soul"—since we were able to think beyond the demands of our immediate wants and needs for survival. But what is the mind? What is the soul? Are these the same thing?

The quote above comes from *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, and is a description given to Harry by Professor Lupin of the dementors' "last and worst weapon," one which amounts to the removal of the victim's soul. It is interesting that J.K. Rowling, author of the *Harry Potter* series, should have singled this out as being among the worst fates that can befall a person, for it gives considerable credit to the sophistication of her readers, who are predominantly children and might well imagine that death is the worst thing that can happen to any person. Rowling exposes the folly of such thinking, offering something even more horrific. It is a message she restates and reinforces again and again throughout the seven-volume series.

This same message pervades the fiction of Haruki Murakami, and what is more, it is expressed in nearly identical terms: the removal, corruption, or destruction of the soul is held out as a fate considerably worse than actual death.[1] It is a message that is initially raised in Murakami's third novel, *Hitsuji o meguru bōken* (1982; trans. as *A Wild Sheep Chase*), in which the protagonist's best friend dies rather than give up his soul for ultimate power; the theme reappears strongly in *Nejimakidori kuronikuru* (1994–1996; trans. as *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*), which contains several rather gruesome scenes in which the physical body is opened/invaded in search of the soul; and returns again in *Umibe no Kafka* (2002; trans. as *Kafka On the Shore*). Worth

M. C. Strecher & P. L. Thomas (Eds.), Haruki Murakami, 31–46.

noting, however, is the fact that the term "soul" (*tamashii*, in Japanese) seldom if ever occurs in any of these texts. Yet Murakami's descriptions are uncannily similar at times to those of Rowling.

If this is not sufficient reason to justify bringing such diverse writers as Murakami and Rowling together, I might invite readers of this volume to consider that the study of literature, especially for younger readers perhaps less experienced with the literature of the world, is likely to be both more effective and more enjoyable when unfamiliar texts are introduced alongside familiar ones. And while I do not necessarily assume that all young people have read Rowling's *Harry Potter* series, it is safe to assume that many, if not most, have been exposed to the film versions of these works. I hope, therefore, to accomplish several goals in this chapter: to inspire readers to explore the *Harry Potter* novels themselves; to help them to make better sense of a central facet of Haruki Murakami's writing; and on a much broader scale, to demonstrate that both Murakami and Rowling concentrate quite a lot of energy on "the soul," and on the importance of "the individual," as a critical concept within the framework of their literary worlds.

As we continue through this volume of essays, whose principal purpose is to make Murakami more accessible to students and instructors alike, then, I propose to explore the struggles of Murakami's hero to protect his individuality, which rests on the protection of his "core self," in the context of a similar struggle between Harry Potter and his arch-nemesis, Lord Voldemort. At stake is more than a single life, or even several lives; rather, as this essay will demonstrate, the struggle is for the very right to exist as an individual in a world that seeks at every opportunity to control us by erasing our uniqueness. The question of who we are, what we are doing here, and what our lives might mean, is certainly one of the oldest humankind has ever posed, and one of the most fundamental reasons why we write fiction at all. But it is also one of the most driving issues in the contemporary world, particularly for those of us living in the so-called developed world, whose most recent technological breakthroughs—particularly in communications—have the peculiar, paradoxical effect of both shrinking our world (we can all communicate with one another instantly) and in the same gesture of erasing our distinctness ("borders" between nations and cultures are blurred or erased by technology, by multi-national corporations, by high-speed technology, and so on). As we look at the identity issue in Murakami and Rowling, then, we should also be considering how these lessons and arguments may be applied to other contemporary writers who discuss the same apparent paradox.

If the above statement seems to suggest something almost "universal" in Murakami and Rowling, this is almost certainly because both writers are "global," in the sense that their works cross cultural boundaries in order to touch individual readers throughout the world in a manner that is relevant to those readers, whatever their background. This is not to say that Murakami and Rowling work from the lowest common denominator for human existence, that they are hyper-generalized; rather, they touch upon themes that might be termed "mythological"

in their readers, each of whom, however, must respond to the myth or story in a culturally and individually specific way. Yet, it is also true that most myths share certain fundamental commonalities—an urge toward socially acceptable morality, for instance—that can cause even the most diverse writers to exhibit similarities. In this instance, we might say that both Murakami and Rowling present a kind of morality play throughout their works in which a hero must rise from the masses, face impossible odds to declare his or her uniqueness, and preserve that same right for others. And all of this depends entirely on the preservation of the soul.

THE SOUL AS NARRATIVE

We would be justified in asking here, is the "soul" a universal concept? This would be a difficult proposition to prove, and yet I would argue that the conception of an "inner self" that might be termed, variously, the "soul," the "unconscious," or even something less distinct, like "personality," is pervasive in cultures around the world. Most people confront the question, at some point in their lives, of "Who am I?" or "What makes me different from others?" or even, "What makes me special, sets me apart?" In Western culture, at least, this is a question for adolescence—and indeed, one of the best reasons I can think of for teaching or studying literature—but it seems to persist through much of adult life as well. In the writings of Murakami and Rowling, the question is framed in terms of the "soul," and so it is to that concept that we now turn.

It is difficult to say for which of these two authors the concept of the soul is more important. Arguments for Rowling would be based on the fact that we learn, in the sixth book of the series (*Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*) that Voldemort has attempted to make himself master of death by breaking his soul into fragments and hiding each fragment in a different magical object. The key to destroying Voldemort's evil power, then, is the destruction of these objects, thus rendering Voldemort's physical self mortal.

For Murakami, on the other hand, the individual soul, what will be explained below as a kind of unique, living, organic "narrative," is locked in perpetual struggle with doctrines and dogma—again, "narratives"—that belong to and originate with others, whether these be social, political, religious, or other sets of beliefs. These might be, for instance, the demands of a particular religion—Buddhism, Christianity, or one of the so-called "new religions" in Japan; or they might be represented in the widely disseminated idea of Japan's homogeneity, the tranquil unity of its citizens, and the Japanese State's conception of what constitutes a happy, successful life, usually grounded in social standing and economic comfort. For Murakami, the preservation of one's own individual belief system (the soul) against the encroachments of these pre-fabricated belief systems stands as the single most crucial task for every individual who would remain free. And herein lies the crossover between Rowling's Harry Potter and Murakami's "everyman" hero: that both struggle against impossible odds for the preservation of their core beliefs, their core values, their core "narrative."

Harry Potter's core values include tolerance, chivalry, humility, but also courage and self-sacrifice, and he sets these against the megalomaniacal desire of Voldemort for absolute power and eternal life.[2] In Murakami's case, the hero (who frequently has no name, and is known only as "Boku," or "I") brings with him nothing more than a firm sense of individuality—one grounded in his inner self or "doppelgänger"—which stands against the insidious efforts of the State to determine his values for him, and thus co-opt him as one more faceless entity in their homogenized mass society.[3] Ultimately, as we shall see below, for Murakami and Rowling alike the key both to preservation and destruction of the soul seems to be separating it from the physical, isolating it, and then either freeing or destroying it.

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But we still have not addressed the vexing question of what the "soul" actually is supposed to be. Naturally, there can be any number of answers to this. Aristotle's fourth century BCE treatise *De anima* (On the Soul) argues that the soul is "the first actuality of a natural body having in it the capacity of life," and goes on to argue that it is inseparable from the physical body (Aristotle, 1907, p. 51). Numerous religious traditions suggest, on the other hand, that the soul is a permanent, metaphysical thing that simply resides temporarily in the vessel that is our physical body. When that body dies, the soul may leave it for some other place; heaven or hell, reincarnation into another body, and so on. The medieval Christian church taught that the soul leaves the body at death, but will return to it on Judgment Day; in many Christian sects today, however, it is taught that the soul will be judged, then sent either to heaven for eternal reward or to hell for eternal punishment. Hinduism, and its offshoot, Buddhism, teach that the soul must be born and reborn many times before escaping the "karmic cycle" that holds it prisoner in the physical world, the essential characteristic of which is suffering.

This is, of course, a perverse oversimplification of a complex topic on which hundreds of scholarly treatises have been written for millennia, and I include the above only as an extremely rough framework against which we may use the term "soul." For purposes of this discussion, and strictly within the fictional context of Murakami's and Rowling's literary worlds, let us suggest that the soul may be defined as the truly *essential* part of the human being; it is responsible for our thoughts, feelings, memories, decisions and actions, without which we are nothing but a living organism, a simple animal, capable of neither good or evil, nor the choices that make these concepts so important. It is, after all, our decisions that determine who we are, as well as who we can and will become.

Murakami uses the term *monogatari*, or "narrative" to describe this essential aspect, suggesting that our soul is grounded in a kind of *story* that we carry deep within ourselves all our lives. Presumably the story begins at birth, but only starts to take on form when we are old enough to understand and use language, and thus add our own experiences to the narrative. And it is this last—that our narratives are constructed of *our* experiences, not the experiences of anyone else—that forms the

central point, for this "narrative" is the only thing about us that is truly unique, and the only thing about us that might be called "permanent." It stands to reason, then, that it should not be taken lightly, but understood to be worthy of respect and of preservation. Our narrative/soul is surely our most precious possession.

All of which leads us to this question: who would wish to disturb our souls? And the answer, almost laughably so, is: "everyone, and throughout history!" Does this not lie at the heart of mythologies the world over? A hero enters the forest (or wanders out into the desert, or ventures underground) to do battle with some fearsome enemy, and more often than not, that hero is tempted to give up all she or he believes in for an easy way out, a share in the power, even the object of his or her quest. Is this not the downfall of Arthur's knights until Percival comes along? Even Jesus is tempted in the desert by Satan, who offers him the whole world if Jesus will only fall down and worship him. Myths, in nearly every case, are not merely about the object of the quest, but about the hero's efforts to maintain his integrity, in a sense, his purity. Without this, what is the point of gaining the quest object at all?

At times this "interference" takes an unexpected form. Organized religion, for instance, which demands faith and obedience despite lack of empirical evidence of the existence of God or the gods, might be seen as a form of soul-appropriation—with the best of intentions, of course. Public education sets forth curricula that must be mastered, as well as guiding students toward becoming "good citizens." In other contexts, we might consider also the demands of the political party, the high school clique, even a group of friends. And lest we imagine that such tales belong only to literature, recall that nearly every film and television program made for children and young adults presents an almost identical structure, minus the journey into the forbidden forest (now replaced by the teenager's bedroom, car, school bathroom, etc. Hint: it's usually where the hero cries a lot, followed by a renewed determination to "be true to myself").

And in the end the true hero *does* remains true to his heart, maintains the integrity of her narrative. This is the real meaning of virtually any myth in which the hero ventures into a mysterious world, for this is also always a metaphorical journey into the self, the inner mind, to confront or understand the inner narrative, to weigh its merit, and decide once and for all whether it is worth protecting.

MYSTICAL JOURNEYS INTO THE SOUL

Let us now consider the forms these conflicts of the soul take in the works of our two novelists. Predictably, the struggles for Harry Potter are relatively simplistic, though far from simple: he enters the well-protected and highly forbidden "zone of magnified power," as Joseph Campbell terms it (Campbell, 1949, p. 77), to face trials and battle obstacles, culminating in a face-to-face encounter with his arch-enemy, Lord Voldemort. Harry's most dangerous journeys are into hidden vaults, as in the first two novels, into the "forbidden forest" outside the school, into the restricted section of the school library, the Ministry of Magic, and of course, an

actual maze in the fourth book, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*. In most of these journeys Harry meets Voldemort or his agents, but insofar as Voldemort is in some ways Harry's alter-ego—for a piece of Voldemort's soul has remained lodged in Harry's body since the night he was nearly killed as a baby—it is no stretch to suggest that Harry, figuratively and literally, journeys into the "zone of magnified power" to confront himself. We are reminded frequently of Harry's connection with Voldemort, their relationship as alter-egos, through the pain Harry feels in the scar on his forehead each time he comes close to Voldemort or his thoughts. As early as the second volume, *Chamber of Secrets*, Harry begins to wonder whether he might not actually be evil, since he shares certain powers with Voldemort; by the time we reach *Order of the Phoenix*, Harry is beginning to have fleeting fantasies of attacking Dumbledore, the school headmaster and his greatest ally, when the two are close together. Interestingly, his urge to attack is closely tied to his frequent visions of being Voldemort's pet snake.

> At once, Harry's scar burned white-hot, as though the old wound had burst open again—and unbidden, unwanted, but terrifyingly strong, there rose within Harry a hatred so powerful he felt, for that instant, that he would like nothing better than to strike—to bite—to sink his fangs into the man before him. (Rowling, 2003, pp. 474–475)

What is actually happening to Harry? Is he connected to Voldemort and merely experiencing his thoughts and emotions? Or is it possible that some unseen part of Harry—perhaps that fragment of Voldemort's soul—is now attempting to seize control of Harry's conscious mind, to extend its power and influence outward, into the conscious, external world?

At the heart of the Harry Potter series, then, is not merely a struggle between good and evil, but a more crucial battle for the right to *decide* one's own course of action, one's own fate. This becomes quite clear as the series matures and the themes grow darker. If the early Harry Potter novels were about a little boy trying to prove himself and keep away from his own personal (and very real) bogeyman, then the later works begin to resemble an allegory of the rise of Nazi Germany in the early 1930s, particularly in the efforts of Voldemort and his followers to "cleanse" the wizarding world of half-blood wizards and non-magical persons. This conflict, too, is ultimately about protecting the unique, individual inner "narrative," and the right to decide how that individual narrative will develop. Yet even in these terms, we see that Harry is pulled in two directions; although he detests Voldemort's plan to enslave or eliminate the non-magical, he cannot entirely escape his predatory urges—not so much to "bury his fangs," but to prove himself worthy, even superior. And even if this is to be attributed, partially, at least, to the presence of Voldemort's soul inside him, we can hardly deny that this predatory instinct lurks within all of us. The important question is not *whether* an individual is able to attack; it is, rather, *on whose terms* he or she will do so.[4]

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Although Haruki Murakami's approach to the inner world, and what lurks inside it, is somewhat different from Harry Potter—he is not, after all, writing for children—the stakes turn out to be remarkably similar. The first two Murakami works, *Kaze no uta o kike* and *1973-nen no pinbōru* (translated as *Hear the Wind Sing* and *Pinball, 1973*, respectively), effectively set up the structure by which this will occur, developing a dualistic opposition between the conscious/physical world and its unconscious/metaphysical counterpart. That opposition is neatly established through the urban cityscape of Tokyo and the more rural setting of the hero's hometown, known only as "the town" (*machi*). Later renditions of the metaphysical world will include labyrinthine hotels, forests and underground chambers, hidden rooms, and even a walled-in, medieval-style town. And at the heart of these metaphysical "other worlds" always lurks some aspect of the hero's inner self, his alter-ego. Sometimes this alter-ego is a friend, to be protected at all costs; other times, as in Harry Potter, the doppelgänger is the hero's dark, malevolent side, which attempts at various moments to seize power in the physical world.

A WOOLY PROBLEM

In the early works, the alter-ego is a friend known only as "Rat," a young man about the hero's age whose job seems to be to express the youthful passion that the protagonist appears to have lost. Unlike the quiet, largely expressionless "Boku," Rat is opinionated and freely speaks his mind. Rat leaves town at the end of *Hear the Wind Sing*, pre-empting Boku's own imminent departure for Tokyo to return to university, and Boku never sees him alive again, but we would be somewhat justified in wondering whether Rat has not always been a figment of Boku's imagination, simply part of "the town" that seems to form Boku's inner mind. In any case, the missing Rat forms one of two quest objects in Murakami's third novel, *Hitsuji o meguru bōken* (1982; translated as *A Wild Sheep Chase*), the other being a mythical Sheep believed to grant superhuman powers to those it inhabits. As the reader comes to realize, in Murakami's fictional world, both the Rat and the Sheep are equally real—or equally unreal, as the case may be.

Boku's search for the Sheep leads him to the least-inhabited parts of Hokkaido, itself the least inhabited of Japan's four main islands. But Boku does not simply catch a flight out of Tokyo and find himself facing Rat; he must, rather, make an arduous journey, first to Sapporo, next to the rapidly disintegrating township of Jūnitakichō, from there into the mountains, and finally—reaching a mountain pass even a jeep cannot cross safely—a long hike to Rat's mountain villa. There, in complete darkness, Boku meets Rat, but the first news Rat gives him is that he committed suicide a week earlier. His reason, he explains, is that the Sheep inhabited him, offering him perfect bliss in exchange for his mind—for all that makes him unique. Faced with such a loss, Rat made the only choice still available to him: to die while he was still himself. Electing to remain an independently thinking being is not a choice made lightly; indeed, in the early pages of *Hear the Wind Sing* Rat points

out to Boku that "'thinking your way through all kinds of stuff is a hell of a lot more tiring than spending 5,000 years thinking about nothing'" (Murakami, *Murakami Haruki zensakuhin 1979–1989*, 1990, p. 15) More tiring, yes, but also preferable, since to exist without thinking is very nearly the same thing as not existing at all. Asked by Boku why he rejected the easy mindlessness offered by the Sheep, Rat replies that "'I guess I felt attached to my weakness. My pain and suffering too'" (Murakami, 1990, p. 284) For an individualist like Rat this was inevitable; we are, after all, the sum total of our decisions, and this implies thought, deliberation, and above all, *consciousness*. Death, for Rat, was a small price to pay for the preservation of this prerogative.

If this is the case, then what is the purpose of Boku's journey to Hokkaido? Why is it important to meet Rat, even *post mortem*? Surely it is because, as Boku's doppelgänger, Rat fulfills the role of "soul" for him. Whether he ever had an autonomous, external life of his own, for Boku, Rat is an indispensable memory, a vital part of his unique set of experiences, and as such Rat must go on *as Rat* in his mind, or Boku will lose something essential in himself. Put another way, if the Sheep had replaced Rat, then Boku himself would have become "something else," something quite other than himself. By choosing to die rather than surrender to the Sheep, Rat actually preserves *Boku's* soul. Without Rat, what can Boku hope to become, except something like what Professor Lupin describes to Harry at the start of this essay?

THE SOUL AS MEMORY

This focused attention on the idea of the soul increases in both Murakami and Rowling as their work develops, but in the beginning neither author seems to have fully recognized the true potential of the soul as theme. Indeed, in the earliest Harry Potter novels the idea of the "soul" never fully surfaces; in the second book of the series, *Chamber of Secrets*, "Tom Riddle"—the boy who will grow up to become Lord Voldemort and murder Harry's parents—leaves behind not his "soul" per se, but "A memory … [p]reserved in a diary for fifty years" (Rowling, 1999, p. 304). But this in itself is telling; for what is our "soul," after all, but a collection of our memories, our deeds, our experiences? If the "mind" represents some form of will, of agency, then we might think of the "soul" as the unconscious part of ourselves that stores up all that we are, or were.

Murakami, too, has played on the notion of writing and words to represent the soul. Readers of the short story "Binbō na obasan no hanashi" (1979; translated as "A 'Poor Aunt' Story") will recall the protagonist describing the somewhat metaphysical image of a middle-aged woman perched on his back as "just words" (*tada no kotoba*), and the soul-stripped victim in *Nejimakidori kuronikuru* (1994–1995; translated as *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*), Kumiko, begins to trace the threads of her own lost identity through e-mails she writes to her husband. One of the best examples of word-as-soul, however, comes near the end of *Umibe no*

Kafuka (2002; translated as *Kafka On the Shore*), in which Miss Saeki, one of the three principal characters, having entered a metaphysical forest as a teenager and returned with only half of her soul, spends the rest of her life writing in a diary. When she dies, her last request is that her diary be burned, unread; this diary, readers may surmise, represents the lost portion of Miss Saeki's soul, an intensely private and personal accounting of her experiences.

Thus we may see that both Rowling and Murakami hit upon a similar concept: to cache the soul in words and store those words for some later purpose, though Voldemort's purpose is evidently the preservation of the body, whereas Murakami's heroes display no such attachment. Nonetheless, an interesting cultural parallel emerges between these two writers, for one of the most important lessons offered by the *Harry Potter* series is that sometimes it is better to die than to live, that Voldemort's perverse attachment to his own life, even at the cost of his soul, is unnatural and will lead only to despair. Murakami's texts, grounded in the cultural traditions of Buddhism, if not in the actual religious practices, also stress the impermanence and, finally, the triviality of the physical life in relation to the soul. Indeed, in their later works, both authors hint at the separation of body and soul as a form of *liberation*.

THE SOUL AS A "LUMP OF DEATH"

But the soul is not always so ephemeral in either writer's world. For Murakami, the soul takes its most solid, slippery form in *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*. It begins with May Kasahara, a teenage girl living next door to the hero, Tōru Okada. May Kasahara, not long before, was involved in a motorcycle crash that killed her boyfriend. Since this incident she has envisioned the essence or "core" human existence as something she calls the "lump of death."

> "I'm sure there must be something like that. Something round and squishy, like a softball, with a hard little core of dead nerves … and the closer you get to the center, the harder the squishy stuff gets, until you reach this tiny core. It's sooo tiny, like a tiny ball bearing, and really hard." (Murakami, 1998, pp. 20–21)

We might view this "lump of death" as a physical manifestation of the soul itself. Somewhat later in the same novel another character, Creta Kanō, a clairvoyant medium and former prostitute, describes an encounter with Tōru's brother-in-law and nemesis, Noboru Wataya, in which Noboru inserted something into her vagina, splitting her in two, and drew out something "wet and slippery" that bears considerable similarity to the "squishy stuff" noted by May Kasahara.

> "Then, after a very long time, and with me still lying facedown, he put something inside me from behind. What it was, I still have no idea…The pain was almost impossibly intense, as if my physical self were splitting in two from the inside out…Then something very weird occurred. Out from between

> the two cleanly split halves of my physical self came crawling a thing that I had never seen or touched before. How large it was I could not tell, but it was as wet and slippery as a newborn baby. I had absolutely no idea what it was. It had always been inside me, and yet it was something of which I had no knowledge. This man had drawn it out of me." (Murakami, 1998, pp. 302–303)

Other scenes, both earlier and later, hint at a similar theme. In one particularly disturbing chapter, set in the Second World War, a Japanese intelligence officer named Yamamoto is captured by Russian-led Mongolian troops, who stake him to the ground and skin him alive. What can possibly be the point of such an act, or indeed, of Murakami's highly detailed description? Superficially (pun fully intended) Yamamoto is being interrogated, but more important is that removing his outer skin is the only way to reveal Yamamoto's true, inner self—what May Kasahara calls the "lump of death" (and this certainly fits that description), and what I have been terming the soul. Much later in the novel, a mute youth named Cinnamon writes the account of his father's murder, and how the corpse was found with all its internal organs carefully removed; had the killers attempted to take possession of his soul as well? The narrative does not reveal this much, but we are left in this novel with the powerful image of the soul not necessarily as a wispy, ethereal thing, but rather as a solid, wet, sticky, slimy, occasionally bloody object, vulnerable to *physical* attack and *physical* destruction. And with the physical manifestation of the soul goes also the metaphysical; as Creta Kanō tells Tōru, "'Things both tangible and intangible turned to liquid and flowed out through my flesh like saliva or urine. I knew that I should not let this happen, that I should not allow my very self to spill out this way and be lost forever, but there was nothing I could do to stanch the flow…It seemed as if all my memories, all my consciousness, had just slipped away. Everything that had been inside me was outside now'" (Murakami, 1998, p. 304).

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Such depictions of the soul in its physical form are evident in the Harry Potter series as well, though in somewhat less "squishy" form—most of the time. As noted earlier, Voldemort's scheme for cheating death involves breaking his soul into fragments and secreting them into various magical objects. One is the diary that appears at the end of *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*. Interestingly, when the time comes to destroy this fragment of Voldemort's soul, Harry instinctively stabs the diary with the venomous fang of a basilisk, and it is quite as if he has stabbed Voldemort himself, as indeed, he has. "There was a long, dreadful, piercing scream. Ink spurted out of the diary in torrents, streaming over Harry's hands, flooding the floor" (Rowling, 1999, p. 322).

In Book Six, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, these magical, soul-containing objects are given the term "horcrux," a word whose etymology is the subject of some debate among those who frequent Internet "chat rooms" and have entirely too much time on their hands. Not wholly unlike May Kasahara's

description of the center of the "lump of death," "like a tiny ball bearing, and really hard," the horcrux is virtually impenetrable, vulnerable only to the most powerful magical objects. One takes the form of a ring, another a locket, still another a jeweled diadem; all of these, with the exception of Tom Riddle's diary, give the impression of something crystalline, sterile, beautiful yet cold. It is only at the end of the final book, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, that we finally see something a bit more organic-looking—which is only natural, for this horcrux has been lodged all along inside Harry's body, and it appears only after Harry has willingly submitted himself to Voldemort's killing curse. Finding himself in a kind of transitional point between the worlds of the living and the dead, Harry's attention is drawn to something that thumps and whimpers.

> He recoiled. He had spotted the thing that was making the noises. It had the form of a small, naked child, curled on the ground, its skin raw and rough, flayed-looking, and it lay shuddering under a seat where it had been left, unwanted, stuffed out of sight, struggling for breath. (Rowling, 2007, pp. 706–707)

This is all that remains of Voldemort's sick, forsaken, fragmented soul. It has now been separated from the protection of Harry's body, permitting Harry, upon his return to the physical world, to destroy Voldemort's physical self once and for all.

THE BODY AS VESSEL

Following a brief visit with the now deceased Professor Dumbledore in the transitional world, Harry does indeed return to the physical world, which amounts to returning to his physical body, enduring both the physical pain of his injuries and the emotional pain of lost friends. Thereupon he completes the task he was assigned before his birth, to "vanquish the Dark Lord," as the prophesy goes.

This opposition between physical and metaphysical—body and soul, in more conventional terms—is of some interest to us, for it suggests, not for the first time, the presentation of the body as mere vessel for the soul. If a fragment of Voldemort's soul can indeed lodge within Harry's body, then this raises serious questions about the identity of the individual, or at least the *physical* individual. This is why the corruption of Voldemort's soul through fragmentation—an act described by one of Harry's professors as profoundly "unnatural"—must, ironically, perhaps, be regarded as the ultimate act of self-destruction. Here Rowling's Christian background is quite clear; as Mark 8:36 notes, "what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (*KJB*). The same logic holds in reverse; against the immortal soul, the physical body is merely an expendable container, which ultimately has nothing to do with one's value or one's individual identity.

Separating body from soul is a key component in Murakami fiction from *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* onward; in that novel, Tōru Okada, in an effort to reach the metaphysical realm where his wife is held prisoner by Noboru Wataya, climbs into the bottom of a deep, dry well, where he develops his ability to "melt" into the

wall of the well, leaving his body behind. This is also a key motif in *Kafka On the Shore*, in which the title character, Kafka Tamura, a fifteen year-old boy, departs his physical body to inhabit that of an elderly man, through whom he then murders his father. Interestingly, Kafka expresses powerful loathing for his body, ostensibly because his despised father's blood runs in his veins, but one may also surmise his frustrations he feels for the shackles the physical body places upon him. Only by escaping the body can he carry out the actions that he, like Harry Potter, is required by fate to perform.

That the crucial importance of liberating the soul through its transmigration has occurred to Murakami as well is best demonstrated in his latest novel to date, *Shikisai o motanai Tazaki Tsukuru to, kare no junrei no toshi* (2013; translated as *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage*). In this deceptively complex work, the title character Tsukuru Tazaki journeys into his past to discover the reason for his having been cast out of his tightly-knit circle of friends as a young man. In the early years following this expulsion, Tazaki encounters a fellow university student named Haida, who explains to him that to leave the body behind and enter what must be understood as an ethereal state—a spirit-like state—is a kind of liberation, not merely of the soul, but of the mind. Haida equates the experience with becoming "natural."

> "To think freely about things is also to separate ourselves from the flesh we are crammed into. To escape from that limiting cage that is our flesh, to break free of our chains and take flight into pure reason. In reason lies the natural life. That's what lies at the core of freedom of thought." (Murakami, 2013, p. 66)

But what does it mean to be "natural" here? Once again we sense an agreement between Murakami and Rowling that the spirit, or soul, is the most intensely personal aspect of the individual and, when properly guarded, unassailable from the outside. To enter into the state of the soul is to be "natural" in the sense that the individual is free—liberated—to act upon individual inclinations, freed not merely from the snares of the physical form (the body), but from the countless restrictions that are and must be placed upon it in the physical realm of human society. More simply put, without our consent, no one can put chains on our minds, nor imprison our soul (though plenty of people have tried). This is our "natural" state, whereas the boundaries set up by human society, though necessary, are ultimately artificial, hence "unnatural." This contrast is the more startling when we reflect that Kafka's "natural" inclination is to follow the demands of fate, that is, to commit patricide and incest, considered by nearly all human societies to be among the most "unnatural" acts of all. Tsukuru Tazaki's "natural" desire, we are led to believe, is to enact his sexual desires on a woman for whom sexuality itself is utterly abhorrent, and then to kill her.[5]

If we seek a message written between the lines of *Kafka On the Shore* and *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki*, it might well be that sometimes "nature" must trump "society." Murakami is careful to give his readers a moral "out," however: the most shocking acts committed by his heroes tend to take place in the so-called "natural"

state of which Haida speaks, that is, in the non-physical realm of the dreamscape, the unconscious, or the "other world," where the taboos of human society—the physical world—are no longer relevant.

CONCLUSIONS

As we have seen, J. K. Rowling and Murakami conceive of the human soul in similar terms, despite the gap between their cultural traditions. Both see the soul as permanent, separable from the physical body, and the true key for any sort of meaningful existence. Because of this, the soul is also the one thing worth defending even unto physical death. For beyond physical death, as both Rowling and Murakami suggest again and again, the soul endures and continues to ground our unique individual self.

To have one's soul—and mind, and self—intact and secure means to be capable of deciding things for oneself: whom to love (or hate), when we are happy, what constitutes right from wrong, and so on. When Draco Malfoy offers to help Harry Potter distinguish the "right" sort of wizarding families from the "wrong" sort in *The Sorcerer's Stone*, Harry coolly replies, "I think I can tell who the wrong sort are for myself, thanks" (Rowling, 1997, p. 109). Harry, like Murakami's Boku, is not prepared to accept a ready-made set of values, even from an aristocratic family in the wizarding world; instead, he will reserve the right to make these judgments for himself. In this statement, though Harry cannot possibly know it yet, he has already rejected the first and most important rule of Voldemort's camp: absolute loyalty to the creed of the master. That is to say, if the master declares "mixed-blood" and "muggle-born" wizards to be inferior to "pure-bloods," then all must subscribe to this view without question. Already, one might say, their minds and souls are no longer their own. Harry and his band represent freedom of individual thought, the inviolable right of that individual to step outside the rule of authority and to determine his or her own place within the framework of that authority and the society it serves.

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And herein, I suspect, lies some part of an answer to a question that, once again, has been applied both to Murakami and Rowling: what do their readers see in them, and why is their readership so diverse? It has been noted for decades that Murakami's readers range from high school students to university professors, from critics to professionals to factory workers. One of the reasons for this is that Murakami's narrative is shown through the eyes of a thoroughly ordinary character, someone who could represent any one of us. And while the situations he gets into go far beyond what most of us would consider normal, the stakes are, I think, not dissimilar. Who among us has not experienced a moment in which we were belittled, misunderstood, or simply relegated to being "one of the crowd"? Do we not defend our individuality vigorously when it is threatened? Are we content to be just like everyone else? Can

we accept being told, "when I want your opinion, I'll give it to you"? Like the rest of us, Murakami's hero answers "no."

Harry Potter shares this quality. He grows up neglected, bullied, abused and despised. That special hostility that most of us occasionally sense from the world around us is Harry's natural habitat. But though possibly (hopefully!) of a higher degree, Harry's problems growing up are pretty much the same ones we all experience. He, too, is "one of us," though masking remarkable powers that are not immediately evident, even to him. This may go some distance in explaining why his appeal extends well beyond the children for whom Harry was originally intended; like Murakami's works, the Harry Potter novels appeal to all ages, all professions. M. Katherine Grimes calls him an "Everyman" character, a term that has been applied to Murakami's heroes as well.

> The Harry Potter novels are popular because they satisfy our psychological needs. Male or female, child or adolescent or adult, we identify with this boy. He is good but not perfect. He is trying to find out who he is.
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> Harry Potter is Everyboy and Everyman, the Everyman or Everywoman we all know is inside us, whether we are six, sixteen, or sixty, the Everyman who knows he is special, that great things lie in store for him which others do not yet recognize. (Grimes, 2002, pp. 121–122)

And yet, to be "Everyman" is not to be the same as everyone else; as the passage above suggests, Harry is unique, as are his friends. What makes them so is the same thing that makes the Murakami hero and his friends unique: the vigorous, stubborn, unyielding defense of their inner selves, their minds, their souls. It is the last line of defense against homogenization, belittlement, even erasure. Harry Potter will not permit Voldemort to regain his power and eliminate all who deviate from his "pure-blood" ideal, and Boku, Tōru, Kafka, and Tsukuru will not stand idly by while homogenizing forces strip innocent people of their individual souls, turning them into faceless nonentities in a vast, monolithic whole.

And this leads us, finally, to our own most important lesson of all, both in Murakami and Rowling: that we, their readers, young and old, while perhaps sharing certain commonalities, are not "like everybody else." Every one of us has a unique sense of self. We share similarities, but at the same time we are different. It lies for us all to learn to cultivate our similarities, while carefully—sometimes vigorously, aggressively—protecting our individual "core," our souls. If we learn anything from these two writers and the actions of their heroes, it is surely that it is possible to be a part of the world, to share in some of its values and care for the needs of others, while at the same time maintaining that which makes us, well, *us*. Surely this is why we, as readers, so often relate to the heroes Rowling and Murakami place before us, and cheer them on even as we cheer on ourselves.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PAIRED READINGS

- *A Wild Sheep Chase* with *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. Common themes would include nostalgia, loss, and the quest.
- *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* with *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*. Common themes would include betrayal, journeys to the underworld, the nature of "existence."
- *Kafka On the Shore* with *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*. Common themes would include the effort to grow up, the need to reconstruct the past, prophecy, loss and death.
- *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* with *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. Common themes would include history, redemption, physical and metaphysical selves, and an epic battle between good and evil.
- *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimmage* with *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*. Common themes would include false accusation, a quest for understanding, redemption, and reconciliation.

NOTES

[1] This must be followed by the caveat, however, that both writers treat death as a non-final mode of existence, for the dead, at the risk of sounding cliché, live on in our memories. In Harry Potter, the dead return in ethereal form at moments of great stress for Harry: when he battles Lord Voldemort at the cemetery in Godric's Hollow at the end of *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, or when he gives himself up for sacrifice at the end of *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. For Murakami, the dead may be visited in a dream state, or in journeys to the metaphysical world which, for Murakami, is synonymous with the unconscious world of our memories.

[2] Where Harry and Voldemort are most opposite, in fact, must surely be the fact that Voldemort has no hesitation in using friends or enemies to achieve something for himself, while Harry risks everything he has for his friends.

[3] Not unnaturally, Murakami's adversary is the Japanese State, but the homogenizing pressures applied by the power structures in post-industrialized societies might apply almost anywhere in the modern world.

[4] An interesting sidebar discussion suggests itself here, for the question of subjectivity lies at the heart of any serious discussion of State power: capital punishment, war and the State's ability to draft soldiers, and so on. Under what circumstances, for instance, does one person have the right to kill another, or require that person to kill?

[5] This may be less heinous than it sounds, as the narrative allows for the possibility that the woman he is supposed to have attacked actually desired this in her own ethereal form.

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PAUL L. THOMAS

4. MAGICAL MURAKAMI NIGHTMARES

Investigating Genre through The Strange Library

Many readers, teachers, and students of Haruki Murakami who know his work exclusively through English translation have likely traveled a path similar to mine—finding Murakami late, reading his works in a mostly random order, and then being able to read his first two novels just available in English in 2015, *Hear the Wind Sing* and *Pinball, 1973* (Murakami, 2015). As a writer and teacher, I must add that my Murakami journey also overlaps with Strecher (2014), who confronts the genre problem of Murakami:

> But Murakami fit none of these patterns [of genre], and it was precisely this aspect of him that first drew me to his work in 1992…My initial approach, as a result, was to explore the issues surrounding genre, to determine, if possible, whether Murakami could be categorized. (p. 4)

In ways similar to Canadian writer Margaret Atwood (Thomas, 2007), Murakami, according to Strecher (2014), "played with the formulas of mass literature…but at the last minute subverted the expectations of those formulas and left the reader wondering what had just happened" (p. 4). Instead of distinct genre conformity—such as a publisher, reviewers, and amazon designating *1Q84* as science fiction—Murakami's fiction offers "two principal elements," Strecher concludes: "a focus on some internal being or consciousness" and "the nearly constant presence of a magical 'other world'"—the second of which is emphasized by Atwood (2011) in her expanded consideration of science fiction (p. 5).

For readers, scholars, teachers, and students of Murakami, then, I consider below how his fiction provides an ideal and compelling entry into discussions of genre that seek genre awareness and not genre acquisition, as distinguished by Johns (2008). Recognizing and examining both the conventional and unconventional in Murakami, exemplified by his *The Strange Library* (Murakami, 2014), are moves that enhance students' understanding of Murakami as well as genre.

O, GENRE, WHERE ART THOU?

Popular films from *The Fly* (1958) to *Alien* (1979) show that genres often work in tandem or as hybrids—science fiction blending with horror, for example (Thomas, 2013). In Murakami's novels and short fiction, Strecher (2014) catalogues that

M. C. Strecher & P. L. Thomas (Eds.), Haruki Murakami, 47–57.

"Murakami has expanded his fictional landscape considerably, writing novels that combine the basic tropes of magical realism with science fiction…, with romance…, with the psychological thriller…, and even the quasi-spiritual" (p. 14). As noted above, readers of English translations of Murakami have only recently had access to his first two novels, *Wind/Pinball* (Murakami, 2015), works that retain the seeds of who Murakami has become as a fully formed novelist but lack many of the genre bending and genre blending qualities that stand as distinctly Murakami (Horne, 2015).

The more fully formed Murakami beyond his first two novels, particularly in the classroom, can serve as vibrant experiences for investigating genre. "What is genre in the first place?" asks novelist Kazuo Ishiguro during a conversation with writer Neil Gaiman (Gaiman & Ishiguro, 2015), who reviewed Ishiguro's novel (Gaiman, 2015), *The Buried Giant* (Ishiguro, 2015). Ishiguro continues: "Who invented it? Why am I perceived to have crossed a kind of boundary?" Ishiguro then makes an interesting speculation about focusing on genre:

> Is it possible that what we think of as genre boundaries are things that have been invented fairly recently by the publishing industry? I can see there's a case for saying there are certain patterns, and you can divide up stories according to these patterns, perhaps usefully. But I get worried when readers and writers take these boundaries too seriously, and think that something strange happens when you cross them, and that you should think very carefully before doing so. (Gaiman & Ishiguro)

As I have grown older as both a teacher and a writer, I have become both more interested in genre (as well as medium and form—the distinctions and intersections) and less certain, like Ishiguro, about the utility of the labels; for example, my own examination of comic books and graphic novels found more problems with clear lines between genre and medium than solving that debate (Thomas, 2010). Over the past several years, in fact, I stumbled over publishers and readers labeling Haruki Murakami's *1Q84* and Neil Gaiman's *American Gods* as "science fiction." And as I explain to my students, even though I am an experienced reader and writer, genre continues to cause me problems in the context of what constitutes any identified genre such as science fiction.

While I love both novels and authors, I am hard-pressed to define either novel as science fiction; in fact, I am like Gaiman (2015) confronting Ishiguro's *Giant*:

> Fantasy and historical fiction and myth here run together with the Matter of Britain, in a novel that's easy to admire, to respect and to enjoy, but difficult to love. Still, "The Buried Giant" does what important books do: It remains in the mind long after it has been read, refusing to leave, forcing one to turn it over and over. On a second reading, and on a third, its characters and events and motives are easier to understand, but even so, it guards its secrets and its world close.

> Ishiguro is not afraid to tackle huge, personal themes, nor to use myths, history and the fantastic as the tools to do it.

Just as many enduring writers do, Ishiguro, Murakami, Gaiman, Margaret Atwood (Thomas, 2007), and Kurt Vonnegut (Thomas, 2006)—just to name a few—weave genre conventions together, working within, against, and beyond the so-called boundaries of genre, medium, and form.

Unfortunately, formal education (and thus students and teachers) tends to remain trapped in the rote, the narrow, and the prescribed—or genre acquisition:

> …GENRE ACQUISITION [is] a goal that focuses upon the students' ability to reproduce a text type, often from a template, that is organized, or 'staged' in a predictable way. The Five Paragraph Essay pedagogies, so common in North America, present a highly structured version of this genre acquisition approach. A much more sophisticated version, introduced in Australia but now popular elsewhere, has been devised by the proponents of Systemic Functional Linguistics (Christie, 1991; Martin, 1993; Eggins, 2004). Using well-established pedagogies, practitioners follow a teaching/learning cycle as students are encouraged to acquire and reproduce a limited number of text types ('genres') that are thought to be basic to the culture. (Macken-Horarik, 2002; Johns, 2008, p. 238)

However, for the skilled writer, genre awareness is part of the craft of writing, but not templates that dictate:

> A quite different goal is GENRE AWARENESS, which is realized in a course designed to assist students in developing the rhetorical flexibility necessary for adapting their socio-cognitive genre knowledge to ever-evolving contexts. Though there are few genre awareness curricula, for a number of reasons (see Freedman, 1993), I will argue here that a carefully designed and scaffolded genre awareness program is the ideal for novice students – and for other students, as well. (Johns, p. 238)

Here, then, the goal for students as both readers and writers is to set aside genre acquisition, which depends on templates and prescription, and move them toward genre awareness by encouraging text investigations instead of text analysis.

INVESTIGATING TEXT AS A WRITER

For my first-year college students, we start the writing experience by cataloguing everything they have been taught about writing essays in school (concepts about introductions, bodies, conclusions, thesis sentences, and paragraphing, for example), and then we investigate the Prologue to Louise DeSalvo's memoir *Vertigo*. That investigation asks students to consider how this piece of nonfiction compares to what they have been taught about writing in school, but we also examine what the

term "memoir" means against other terms such as "autobiography," "biography," and the fiction/nonfiction dichotomy.

I am introducing my students to text investigation—with a focus on genre, form, and medium—instead of their high school experiences, mostly in English courses, in which they are mining text for literary and rhetorical devices. That technique hunt, I believe, disengages students from the text in meaningful ways. Identifying parallelism or imagery in a passage becomes the goal instead of considering how the writer is purposefully using a strategy to make meaning. Investigating text—what I also call *reading like a writer*—requires students to acknowledge both the technique and how that technique achieves the writer's purpose(s).

When I ask students to investigate text as a prelude to their own personal narrative writing (for example, investigating DeSalvo's memoir), I share with them rule one for writing memoir: "Don't try to 'fit' the genre" (Cain, 2015). In other words, we focus on developing their genre awareness about memoir, personal narrative, and autobiography (subtle distinctions) so that they can begin to make purposeful decisions about how to craft their own writing both within and against that awareness (as opposed to template writing that follows a script imposed on them as students).

As an another example, when students are starting to draft those original personal narratives, I ask students to read "Water Is Life" by Barbara Kingsolver, and then, to discuss and answer the following questions:

- What appears to be Kingsolver's target/primary audience? What is the evidence from the essay to support that?
- How does Kingsolver create an effective opening? What techniques (literary, rhetorical), strategies does she employ? Give specific examples.
- What are Kingsolver's major claims? How does she elaborate on those claims? What evidence does she use to support her claims? Give specific examples.
- Identify one or two of the best sentences in this essay. What makes them effective?
- Does Kingsolver break the "rules" of grammar (Landrum, 2007) or that you were taught in school? Examples? What is her purpose in these situations?
- What is the guiding tone of this essay? How does Kingsolver create that tone? Give specific examples. Does she ever break that tone? Example(s)?
- What does Kingsolver want her audience to know or do? Give specific examples.
- How does Kingsolver frame this essay in her closing paragraph(s)? Give specific examples.

These questions are also common in the writing conferences I hold with students about their own writing so this activity helps further reinforce the need for writers to be aware of and purposeful about these elements of essay writing—again in the context of their developing genre awareness.

Learning to write becomes a continual tension between *what we think we know about text* as that is confirmed and contradicted by *what we read*—as preparation for what we write. Being a writer is inseparable from being a reader, but both are *ways*

of being that are always evolving, never fixed just as no genre, medium, or form is ever truly fixed—as demonstrated in Murakami's fiction.

As Gaiman and Ishiguro (2015) discuss genre, and Gaiman explains, "I think that there's a huge difference between, for example, a novel with spies in it and a spy novel; or a novel with cowboys in it and a cowboy novel," Ishiguro adds: "So we have to distinguish between something that's part of the essence of the genre and things that are merely characteristic of it. Gunfights are characteristic of a western, but may not be essential to making the story arresting." This is where I am guiding my students as emerging writers and developing readers—to have the sense of purpose and awareness to recognize "essence" versus "characteristic," to attain a level of sophistication that *informs* them in their writing and reading *but doesn't artificially restrain them*. For both the reader and the writer, then, genre is a question, one to ask continually and not a definition or a prescription.

And then, we must admit, the ultimate question remains: Was the text satisfying? That, too, becomes the source of even more debate, which, I would add, is the real essence of writing and reading because as long as there are readers the text always lives. That, of course, if what every writer wants, to live forever:

> *NG* I know that when I create a story, I never know what's going to work. Sometimes I will do something that I think was just a bit of fun, and people will love it and it catches fire, and sometimes I will work very hard on something that I think people will love, and it just fades: it never quite finds its people.
>
> *KI* Even if something doesn't catch fire at the time, you may find it catches fire further down the line, in 20 years' time, or 30 years' time. That has happened, often. (Gaiman & Ishiguro, 2015)

And so we turn to Murakami: "Murakami's easy style and quirky characters and situations wash over the first-time reader," explains Horne (2015), "and you barely notice you have been hooked – you are simply in there. It is at once a naïve but also an accomplished and original style." Just as the transition from Murakami's first two novels to his more clearly developed works starting with *A Wild Sheep Chase* offers insight into genre and writer purpose, *The Strange Library* can serve as a very accessible but powerful investigation of both Murakami and genre.

INVESTIGATING GENRE THROUGH *THE STRANGE LIBRARY*

The foundations of my own quest to be a poet and fiction writer were laid while reading and hoping to be e.e. cummings and J. D. Salinger (hence, P. L. Thomas). Both share an idealizing of childhood and innocence against a skeptical, if not jaded and cynical view of adulthood. Salinger's short fiction also spoke to my early faith in craft; his stories are like diamonds so perfectly and carefully cut that one is both unable to look *at* or *away* from them. Also—and quite logically in hindsight—I became fascinated with Franz Kafka, who posed a problem for my obsession with

writer's craft since his work was in translation and there was something *unnamable* in his stories and diaries/letters that moved me unlike cummings or Salinger.

More or less thirty years later, I am a much different writer as well as a much different reader. Part of my more recent journey has been the work of Haruki Murakami, who now bookends my Kafka phase with his magical nightmares that seem to defy much that I know about writing and reading (notably any clear concepts of genre). The more recent Murakami bounty is magnificent: "Samsa in Love," "Scheherazade," *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage*, and Matthew Carl Strecher's critical work, *The Forbidden Worlds of Haruki Murakami*. But the work that has lingered for me is his *The Strange Library* because it captures nearly everything both marvelous and difficult about Murakami—especially questions about genre and medium (notably in the context of the fate of the hard-copy book).

Many years ago I read *The Nightmare of Reason: A Life of Franz Kafka* by Ernst Pawel (1992) and have always thought the title was perfect. It is the Kafkan in Murakami—and notably in *The Strange Library*—that pushes me to *magical nightmare* for Murakami, a characterization that illuminates and clouds how to identify the work's genre.

As a book lover and library advocate, I first noticed *The Strange Library* is a physical argument for the power of hard-copy books (not e-books). The clever flap opening, the stunning illustrations (Kelts, 2014), the heft of the cover and paper, the neoclassic typewriter font, the occasional blue type, the ink smell, the odd and final tiny-print paragraph—all of these publishing craft elements shout out for the enduring beauty of buying and holding a real-life, printed book (Figure 1).

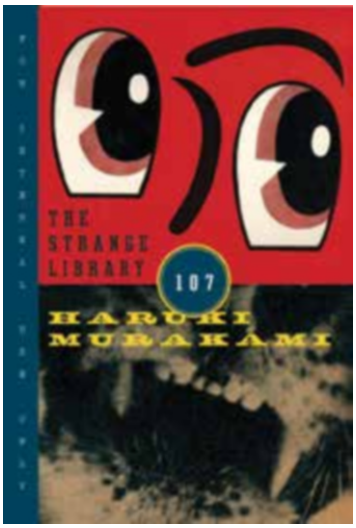

Figure 1. The Strange Library, Haruki Murakami. Book design and illustrations by Chip Kidd

Kelts (2014) describes that the cover "look[s] like a Christmas card from a bipolar ex," and then explains:

> The result of [Chip] Kidd's obsessions is the retro psychedelia of "The Strange Library." Every other page contains an illustration, often so arresting that you can't stop staring (and there are many eyes staring right back at you). Some graphics sprawl across two-page spreads. The typeface is called Typewriter; the pages of text look like they've been scrolled through an Olivetti and bound to images from a shared past. In the young narrator's opening description, his new leather shoes "clacked against the gray linoleum" as he enters the library; it is followed by a primitive, two-toned advertisement for patent-leather shoes—a luxury for many in postwar Japan.

Two important aspects of the cover help guide students investigating the work: (1) How does the physical construction of the book impact the aesthetic and intellectual reading experience, and (2) how are reader assumptions about genre influenced by the use of artwork, color, and typeface?

The Strange Library triggers genre and medium conventions associated with children's picture books and comic books/graphic novels. Is Murakami's work for children then? Or is that primary audience expectation (children) for picture books and comic books/graphic novels itself misleading? And since some of the main characters are young, do the physical attributes of the hard-copy book help the reader identify the primary audience or do these features serve as contrasts? Again, for students, investigating a text for technique and purpose must include the recognition that some techniques reinforce meaning, motif, or tone while some techniques serve to contrast meaning, motif, or tone.

Further, that *The Strange Library* incorporates significantly artwork as well as distinct font (type and font coloring [blue for the girl]) choices as part of the aesthetic and messages of the work, this book by Murakami offers ideal opportunities to discuss how those features impact our perception of genre and medium. Students especially can begin to investigate the role of artwork and images as part of the text expression (such as the use of artwork connected to images associated with libraries, Figure 2), while unpacking their own assumptions about the use of artwork/images (again, their background with picture books, comic books, graphic novels). As Kelts (2014) highlights, the artwork and book design by Kidd presents the reader with considering collaboration and how the reader begins to assign and interpret meaning—in much the same way as comic books and graphic novels that have separate writers and artists collaborating on a single work.

One investigation of *The Strange Library*, then, can focus on how the physical book triggers associations with genres/media students know—picture books (children's literature) and comic books/graphic novels. Next, investigating this odd and brief novel should consider the more conventional aspects of how we determine genre, such as characters, plot, themes, and motifs.

Part of the reason I was initially eager to read Murakami's story included his use of libraries (see also Murakami's *Kafka on the Shore* and *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*). While DeSalvo's memoir, *Vertigo*, opens with the library as sanctuary, *The Strange Library* is immediately ominous: "The library was even more hushed than usual"; it begins with the main character's shoes making a "hard, dry sound…unlike my normal footsteps" (note that traditional page citations are impossible since the book does not use traditional page numbers, also a convention of books worth examining by students).

Figure 2. Kidd's artwork carries a library motif throughout the book

Although the nameless boy frequents this library, the librarian is unfamiliar (and unusual: "She looked as if she were reading the right-hand page with her right eye, and the left-hand page with her left"), and this experience reveals the library to be a labyrinth, a maze, and a dungeon (analogous to Murakami's fascination with wells)—a magical nightmare leading to the boy's imprisonment and horrifying fate:

> The sheep man cocked his head to one side. "Wow, that's a tough one."
>
> "Please, tell me. My mother is waiting for me back home."
>
> "Okay, kid. Then I'll give it to you straight. The top of your head'll be sawed off and all your brain'll get slurped right up."
>
> I was too shocked for words.
>
> "You mean," I said, when I had recovered, "you mean that old man's going to eat my brains?"

> "Yes, I'm really sorry, but that's the way it has to be," the sheep man said, reluctantly.

For some readers, the allegory comes to mind, especially with unnamed characters, but this narrative also has more than hints of evil and even the magical. Is *The Strange Library*, then, fantasy? Or magical realism?

Common in Murakami are those exact problems of genre, notably connected to his use of alternate universes existing simultaneously and even overlapping—which the mysterious girl explains in her blue font to the imprisoned boy:

> The sheep man has his world. I have mine. And you have yours, too. Am I right?
>
> "That you are."
>
> So just because I don't exist in the sheep man's world, it doesn't mean that I don't exist at all.
>
> "I get it," I said. "Our worlds are all jumbled together—your world, my world, the sheep man's world. Sometimes they overlap and sometimes they don't. That's what you mean, right?"
>
> She gave two small nods.

As an investigation of genre, the use of alternate and "overlapping" universes appears to frame the story within a fantasy or magical realism tradition—although, as Strecher (2014) explains, readers familiar with Murakami can anticipate that these qualities will never fully conform to conventional genre characteristics in Murakami's universe(s).

And that brings us to the sheep man, who also appears in other Murakami novels: *A Wild Sheep Chase* and *Dance Dance Dance*. The story of *The Strange Library* is brief, but layered in the way that makes Murakami, Murakami: places and people are not simple dualities, but simultaneously opposing forces, to the point of being irreconcilable.

The sheep man, for example, here is a mentor and guide for the boy, but the sheep man is also one of the reasons the boy feels compelled to comply—his fear that his actions bring pain and suffering on the sheep man. Throughout the story, the reader is mostly in the dark about who or what the sheep man is as well—an actual sheep man (mythic) seems unlikely since he appears to be wearing an odd sheep outfit, despite the mystical and quasi-mystical elements in the story (the librarian description, the girl, the vicious dog, and the expanding starling).

This third investigation of the book involves the Murakami element, best represented by the sheep man. Murakami's works often work at the edge of conventional understandings of genre—specifically science fiction, fantasy, allegory, and magical realism. But Murakami is best suited for complicating, not codifying genre.

As a result, *The Strange Library*—paired with a Murakami novel or another genre fiction novel by a different author—is a brief but powerful investigation of genre that can and will expand a student's genre awareness, equipping that student as a writer and reader in ways that conventional works may not.

A SATISFYING NIGHTMARE

The Strange Library leaves a great deal unsaid in the wake of nearly too many aesthetic messages, a magical nightmare of childhood that almost reminds me of Neil Gaiman (almost), a writer who defies simple genre classifications as well (and may serve as excellent companion works to investigating Murakami).

The melancholy loneliness that clings to everything Murakami—"After that, I never visited the city library again"—remains once you carefully interlock the flip opening, much as those giant cartoon eyes seem to demand. However, my heart is warmed because this book demands to be read and re-read, held solidly in your hands that remain somewhat unsure what to do with this odd little book.

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REBECCA SUTER

5. CRITICAL ENGAGEMENT THROUGH FANTASY IN *HARD-BOILED WONDERLAND AND THE END OF THE WORLD*

As others have pointed out in this collection, the works of Murakami Haruki are notoriously difficult to categorize, as the author deliberately plays with different literary and cultural conventions, both Japanese and foreign, both from "high art" (or what is known as *junbungaku*, "pure literature," in Japanese) and from popular fiction. On one hand, this has led many critics to see Murakami as an outsider of mainstream Japanese literature. On the other hand, it has enabled Murakami's works to reach out to a vast and varied audience, and has been a major contributing factor to this author's popularity on the national and international scene.

Murakami's in-between position, straddling highbrow and lowbrow, Japanese and foreign, is what makes his literature entertaining as well as thought provoking. The inclusion of multiple perspectives in his work encourages readers to look at their own culture and society from an estranged, outsider perspective, and arguably induces them to engage in critical reflection on that society's norms and presuppositions. In this perspective, despite its supposed uniqueness, Murakami's fiction offers a lens through which we can better understand Japanese and world literature more broadly. In this chapter, I offer one example of how a close reading of one of Murakami's early novels can be used to develop an analytical framework that can be applied to other literary works, within and beyond the Japanese context.

One of the most significant ways in which Murakami plays with different cultural and literary conventions is by combining realistic and fantastical modes of storytelling. Matthew Strecher (1999) pointed out already in the late 1990s that a recurrent feature of Murakami's fiction is the way in which "a realistic narrative setting is created, then disrupted, sometimes mildly, sometimes violently, by the bizarre or the magical" (p. 267). This has remained true of the vast majority of Murakami's works published in the new millennium, from the sudden rain of fish in an otherwise everyday scene in *Umibe no Kafuka* (*Kafka on the Shore*, 2002) to the "air chrysalis" and green moon that pop up in an accurately and realistically portrayed 1980s Tokyo in *1Q84* (2009–2010). Strecher (2014) more recently argued that engagement with the supernatural, or what he defines as the "metaphysical realm," lies at the core of Murakami's complex political stance.

For this reason, Murakami's fiction has often been compared to Latin American magic realist literature, which shares a similar combination of realistic settings and

M. C. Strecher & P. L. Thomas (Eds.), Haruki Murakami, 59–71.

supernatural events. Strecher (1999) points out that Murakami's use of a magical realist narrative is different from that of Latin American authors because the latter are typically more directly political, and use local, traditional fantasies and myths as a way of challenging the rationalist, universalist attitude that is implicit in (and complicit with) colonialism and globalization. By contrast, Murakami uses fantasy "as a tool to seek a highly individualized, personal sense of identity in each person, rather than as a rejection of the thinking of one-time colonial powers or the assertion of a national (cultural) identity based on indigenous beliefs and ideologies" (Strecher 1999, p. 269).

While Murakami is often described as an anomaly in the Japanese literary panorama, in this respect at least his work is arguably representative of a broader trend. In her comparison of Japanese modern fantastic literature and magic realism, Susan Napier (1996) notes that both are motivated by "a decision to choose an alternative, consciously non-Western way of representing the world," but Japanese fantasy combines this revisiting of indigenous myth with the creation of completely imaginary worlds, and, importantly, these worlds are "totally 'modern' at the same time as they are 'Japanese'" (pp. 11–12). Murakami's fantasy similarly leans towards the science-fictional as much as it relies on the mythical, and this peculiar combination further enhances the works' entertaining and subversive value. For this reason, an analysis of Murakami's use of the fantastic genre can provide us with a useful instrument for understanding modern Japanese literature more broadly.

While the analogy with Latin American magic realism enables us to highlight by contrast some of the distinctive features of Murakami's use of fantasy (and by extension the specificities of modern Japanese fantastic literature) another very useful conceptual tool to investigate his combination of realistic and imaginative styles is what Tzvetan Todorov describes as the "fantastic hesitation." In this chapter, I will examine one early novel by Murakami, *Sekai no owari to hādo boirudo wandārando* (*Hard-boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*, 1985), as a paramount example of the use of fantastic hesitation as a form of critical engagement. Before delving into the close reading of the text, a summary of the main theories of the fantastic genre I rely on, and a brief summary of the evolution of fantasy in modern Japanese fiction will help us put this novel into its broader theoretical, historical, and literary context, as well as helping us understand how these theories can be used to analyze other texts in a similar way.

FANTASTIC HESITATION, UTOPIA, AND DYSTOPIA

Todorov (1970) describes fantastic literature as lying somewhere in-between realism and the supernatural, and categorizes as genuinely fantastic texts those that present us with an inexplicable event that ultimately leaves the possibility open for both a rational and a magical interpretation. In his own words:

> In a world which is indeed our world, the one we know, a world without devils, sylphides, or vampires, there occurs an event which cannot be explained by the laws of this same familiar world. The person who experiences the event must opt for one of two possible solutions: either he [sic] is the victim of an illusion of the senses, of a product of the imagination—and laws of the world then remain what they are; or else the event has indeed taken place, it is an integral part of reality—but then this reality is controlled by laws unknown to us … The fantastic occupies the duration of this uncertainty. (p. 25)

Todorov (1970) distinguishes the fantastic from two other "neighboring" literary modes, which he calls the uncanny and the marvelous. These modes share some of the ambiguity of the fantastic. However, in the uncanny mode the text ultimately provides a logical justification for the events, which are re-inscribed in the realm of the rational. At the other end of the spectrum, in the marvelous mode, the text in the end settles for a supernatural explanation, imposing on the reader a greater degree of suspension of disbelief and presenting its imaginary world as completely separated from "our" reality. In the fantastic genre, this contradiction between rational and supernatural explanation, and the corresponding tension between real and unreal interpretations of the fictional world, are never resolved.

Another useful theory of fantasy and its role in society comes from Rosemary Jackson (1981), who connects the rise of the fantastic genre to the secularization of culture in modern Europe. While in premodern literatures the mysterious aspects of human experience are explained by resorting to the idea of sacred and divine, Jackson argues, when a culture becomes secularized the inexplicable shifts into the sphere of the fantastic. If fantastical interpretations of the things we don't understand are, in a way, the new face of religious justifications, there is a significant difference between the two: a religious explanation provides a form of reassurance, and offers certainties grounded in faith, whereas fantastic literature, by leaving the inexplicable unexplained and hesitating between rational and supernatural explanations of events, has an ultimately unsettling effect.

This unsettling effect has the potential to make the fantastic a subversive genre, fostering a spirit of critical enquiry, a questioning mindset. At the same time, fantasies can also serve to re-confirm institutional order by supplying a vicarious fulfillment of desire, which ends up neutralizing any urge towards transgression by satisfying it through fictional means. In other words, fantastical fiction satisfies (partially, at least) our desire to do things that society would not allow, so that we don't end up doing them in the real world. In this sense, too, the fantastic is an inherently ambivalent genre, which can lend itself to a subversive reading or contribute to reinforcing the prevailing values of a society by providing an outlet for criticism and dissent that ultimately neutralizes them.

An important dimension of fantastic literature is the fact that, by staging alternative worlds that have a purely literary existence, it problematizes the relationship between

reality and fiction, and highlights the constructed character of both text and reality. In this sense, the fantastic is one of the most metaliterary genres of modern literature; in other words, it is a type of narrative that constantly points out the fact that what we are reading is a story written by someone. As Jackson (1981) notes, "a reluctance, or inability, to present definitive versions of 'truth' or 'reality' makes of the modern fantastic a literature which draws attention to its own practice as a linguistic system" (p. 37). This tendency to explore the relationship between fiction and reality results in a questioning of the notion of reality itself, and of its culturally constructed nature, so that fantasy often provides "a clue to the limits of a culture, by foregrounding problems of categorizing the 'real' and of the situation of the individual subject in relation to that dominant notion of 'reality'" (Jackson, p. 52). While Jackson bases her analysis on European literature, her insights are relevant to the case of modern Japan, where the fantastic genre has functioned both as a very effective and as a very creative means to come to terms with cultural difference. Murakami, as we will see, is a case in point; his works are also representative of a broader current in modern Japanese fiction that encompasses many different authors.

Finally, a prolific tradition of fantastic literature that is of relevance to Murakami's use of fantasy as a basis for social and cultural critique is that of utopian and dystopian narratives. The term "utopia" comes from the Greek words *ou*, meaning "not," and *topos*, or "place," and thus the expression literally means "non-place." While supposedly neutral in connotation, simply indicating a fully fictional reality, the word was typically used in a positive sense, to describe an idealized yet unattainable social, political, and/or cultural order. The early modern usage of the word utopia later led to the coinage of the term "dystopia," referring to an imagined world which foregrounds the dark, bleak, and oppressive side of what might initially appear to be a "perfect" utopian system.

The most renowned European literary expression of this narrative trope is arguably Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516), a treatise on an ideal society written in narrative form through the description of travel to an imaginary world that is in many respects the opposite of the one the author lived in. A paradigmatic example of the use of fantasy as a way of reflecting on social and cultural issues in a displaced format, More's *Utopia* was a source of inspiration for many similar works, such as Tommaso Campanella's *La città del sole* (*City of the Sun*, 1623), Francis Bacon's *The New Atlantis* (1627), James Harrington's *The Commonwealth of Oceana* (1656), and Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726). Interestingly, in many of these early appearances the utopia was located in a city or on an island, typically isolated from the outside world by geographical or architectonic features: surrounded by a wall, a forest, an ocean, and so forth.

Some literary utopias have also been the basis for concrete social experiments in alternative political models. The most renowned example of this usage is provided by French philosopher Etienne Cabet. His utopian novel, *Voyage et aventures de lord William Carisdall en Icarie* (Travel and Adventures of Lord William Carisdall in Icaria, 1840) depicted an ideal society in which an elected government controlled

all economic activity and supervised social affairs. The novel was the basis of the Icarian movement, a group of Europeans who in the late nineteenth century purchased land in the United States and organized self-regulated communities based on the principles outlined in Cabet's story (Roberts, 1991). While Icarian communities were eventually declared illegal and disbanded, they constitute an intriguing example of how literary utopias can sometimes have a concrete impact on social and political reality. Fantastic literature that uses the framework of utopia and dystopia tends to be critical of the status quo; the stories' projection of an imaginary Other as a distorting mirror of the Self becomes a way to reflect critically on everyday reality.

THE JAPANESE FANTASTIC AS CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT THROUGH FICTION

Let us now turn to the specific forms and functions that the fantastic genre takes in modern Japanese literature. As is well known, in 1853, Japan, after two centuries of relative isolation, was forced to resume diplomatic and commercial relations with Europe and the United States; this "opening of the ports" triggered a series of institutional, social, and educational reforms that are commonly described as the "modernization/Westernization" of the country. In the field of literature, the period saw a flood of translations of Euro-American texts that revolutionized the very concept of Japanese prose fiction. One of the most significant results was the widespread adoption of realistic modes of representation, and the birth of a European-style novelistic tradition. At the same time, this period also saw a flourishing of fantastic literature, often written by the very same authors who helped create the new realist novel, such as Sōseki Natsume or Fumiko Enchi. Fantasy had always been a relevant component of the Japanese literary tradition, from folktales and collections of myths such as *Kojiki* and *Nihonshoki* all the way to early modern literary masterpieces such as Ueda Akinari's *Ugetsu monogatari* (*Tales of rain and moon*, 1776), but in the modern era the genre took on new significance.

As Susan Napier (1996) notes, a major theme in modern Japanese fantastic literature was the introduction of new technologies and scientific discoveries, which were identified with Western culture and presented as simultaneously fascinating and threatening. Portraying technology as a foreign import, Japanese literature of the Meiji and Taishō period often emphasized its dehumanizing effect, prompting reflections on the nature of individual identity (Napier, pp. 185–186). In this context, the fantastic genre proved to be a powerful means of coming to terms with the anxieties triggered by the acquisition of new technologies, new institutional and social structures, and new notions of selfhood. The fantastic genre in Meiji and Taishō Japan thus had a function analogous to that described by Jackson: it provided a means to explore ideas of the Self and the Other, cultural identity and cultural difference, through a fictional medium.

The use of fantasy as a means to reflect on social and cultural issues continued for several decades, but the specific forms of the genre changed over time. In the early twentieth century, a predominant trope was that of the ghost, a symbol of the

Japanese tradition which had been killed by advancing modernity but kept coming back to haunt the present. In this period we also see the emergence of political novels that are set in a utopian space, which, interestingly, coincides with an idealized imaginary North America. Examples include Kindō Tōda's *Minken jōkai haran* (*Civil rights: the tempestuous sea of human feeling*, 1880), and Nansui Sudō's *Ryokusadan* (*Story of a green raincoat*, 1886–1888). Arguably the most famous is *Kajin no Kigū* (*Chance Encounters with Beautiful Women*, 1885–1887), by Shirō Shiba. Set in Philadelphia's Independence Hall, it takes the form of a long dialogue between the narrator, Kanshi Tōkai, "the Traveler of the Eastern Seas," an Irish woman, a Spanish woman and an old Chinese man, all of whom have fled their own countries and have found refuge in America, which each describes as an ideal society, in contrast to their homeland.

In the Taishō and Shōwa periods ghosts become less central to fantasy literature, and we see a new interest in monsters. These are initially portrayed as outsiders to human society, although often they turn out to have become monstrous as a side effect of human technology, as best exemplified by the nuclear-enhanced raging dinosaur Godzilla in the eponymous 1953 film. In fantastic literature of the 1960s and 1970s, the monster gradually moves inside the self. Rather than being an outsider, an Other to the narrating Self, the monster is either an alter ego of the protagonist, or even the protagonist him- or herself, as seen for instance in Abe Kōbō's novel *Tanin no kao* (*The Face of Another*, 1964).

If Meiji literature featured several examples of utopian fantasy, in later periods we find more occurrences of dystopian fiction. Fantastic texts of the Taishō and Shōwa years often portray societies that at first glance might seem ideal because of their perfect order and harmony, but are then revealed to be totalitarian ones that oppress and exploit individuals, depriving them of their freedom. Notable examples include Ryūnosuke Akutagawa's *Kappa* (1927), the fictional account by a psychiatric hospital's patient of his life in the world of the mythical creature *kappa*, and Kōbō Abe's *Suna no onna* (*Woman in the Dunes*, 1962), in which the protagonist becomes captive in a village where people spend their lives endlessly digging sand, both to sell it and to keep their homes from getting buried by it. With their emphasis on alienation and oppression, both of these fictional dystopian worlds can be read as relatively transparent critiques of the dark side of progress in modern, capitalist Japanese society.

As we progress towards the new millennium, we see the emergence of another thought-provoking phenomenon in Japanese fantasy, namely its reappropriation of North American science fiction's "techno-orientalism." While early to mid-twentieth century Japanese fantastical literature presented technology as foreign, and specifically Euro-American, in the 1980s it was Japan's turn to become the symbol of a futuristic, hyper-technological society within English-language cyberpunk fiction. Works such as William Gibson's novel *Neuromancer* (1984), set in a fictional, dystopian Chiba city, or Ridley Scott's film *Blade Runner* (1982), based on Philip K. Dick's 1968 novel, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* and

set in a future Los Angeles that is replete with Japanesque imagery, all the way to Michael Crichton's *Rising Sun* (1992), also made into a fairly popular film (1993) and set in a similarly highly "Japanized" Los Angeles, all contributed to creating a connection in the global imagination between Japan and a bleak and alienating hyper-technologized future (Morley & Robins, 1992). Interestingly, in the 1990s and 2000s elements of cyberpunk Japanesque make their way back into Japanese fantastic literature, film, and popular media, as best exemplified by Mamoru Oshii's anime *Kōkaku kidōtai* (Armoured riot police, translated into English as *Ghost in the Shell*, 1995).

This appropriation of Euro-American stereotypes about Japan is consistent with a new approach to the fantastic genre that first emerges in Japanese fiction of the 1980s. For the baby boomer generation of Japan, the cultural Other is no longer a source of anxiety, but rather an element that can be purposefully used to distance Japanese culture in order to explore different levels of reality and multiple selves. Murakami Haruki's fiction is a prime example of this current, as we will see: it relies on fantastic hesitation to portray the Other as neither ghost nor monster, neither external nor internalized, but as something more ambiguous, and presents a vision of the Self that shares remarkable similarities with the works of William Gibson, Philip K. Dick, and Ridley Scott. For this reason, analyzing Murakami's novels in light of Todorov's idea of fantastic hesitation can offer a useful tool to examine the most recent developments of both Japanese and global fantasy and science fiction.

Furthermore, Murakami Haruki relies on several other tropes developed over the past century and a half in Japanese fantastic literature. Among these, he introduces utopian and dystopian settings in his works, alongside other fantastical features, as a way of reflecting on the problematic aspects of contemporary Japanese and global society in an indirect way. This is combined with a clever use of Todorovian hesitation, which allows him to balance deftly between escapism and commitment, serious reflection and entertainment, as seen for example in *Hitsuji o meguru bōken* (*A Wild Sheep Chase*, 1982), *Kafka on the Shore* (2002)*, 1Q84* (2010–2011), and in numerous short stories. With this in mind, let us now turn to *Hard-boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* and its representation of the manifold layers of reality and individual identity.

FANTASTIC HESITATION: HARD-BOILED WONDERLAND AND THE END OF THE WORLD

Published between *A Wild Sheep's Chase*, for which the author won the Noma Literary Newcomer Prize, and the astounding success of *Noruwei no mori* (*Norwegian Wood*, 1987), which brought world recognition to his literature, *Hard-boiled Wonderland And the End of the World* is one of Murakami's most complex and well-crafted works. It won the prestigious Tanizaki Literary Prize, and even earned the praise of an established author like Ōe Kenzaburō, who in the 1990s became one of Murakami's harshest critics, but spoke of this novel in very enthusiastic terms (Rubin, 2002, p. 114).

The text builds on an earlier short story, "Machi to sono futashika na kabe" (The town and its uncertain walls, 1980), and expands its concept into a full-length novel. This technique later became a common feature in Murakami's writing process, as best exemplified by the short story "Nejimakidori to kayōbi no onnatachi" (The Wind-Up Bird and Tuesday's Women, 1986), which was expanded into the three-volume *Nejimakidori kuronikuru* (The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle, 1994–1995).

Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World is told as two separate narratives that progress in parallel, alternating chapters and are told by two nameless narrators, differentiated by the first-person pronouns they use, "watashi" and "boku." The latter feature has caused major headaches for translators, who had to render the difference between the chapters in languages that typically do not have different words for "I." While some simply gave up, the American translator, Alfred Birnbaum, elected to render the "boku" narrative in the present tense and the "watashi" narrative in the past tense, a choice that proved so effective that it was replicated by others, for instance the Danish translator, Mette Holm, when she finally decided to translate the novel from the Japanese in 2014 (Holm, 2015). As a result, the English translation conveys a sense that boku's world is some sort of eternal present, which is particularly apt in light of what we later discover to be the connection between the two narratives.

As soon as we start reading the first chapter, we quickly realize that watashi's story is the "Hard-Boiled Wonderland" of the title. Set in a futuristic Tokyo, it combines conventional elements of hard-boiled detective fiction such as a tough, blasé protagonist tasked by a young and beautiful woman (and her scientist grandfather) with a top-secret mission, thugs wrecking his apartment, a second young and beautiful woman helping the flawed hero in his quest, and a lot of whisky-drinking, with elements of dystopian science fiction, including an information war between two opposed organizations, "the Factory" and "the System," and a variety of futuristic, imagined technologies that manipulate reality and perception. In this bleak hi-tech world, watashi is an employee of the System, and works as a *keisanshi* (an invented word meaning someone who calculates, translated by Birnbaum as "calcutec"), a person whose brain has been surgically enhanced to encrypt information and thus prevent it from being stolen by the Factory's *kigōshi* (literally "decoders," translated by Birnbaum as "semiotecs"). Stephen Snyder (1996) has noted the similarity between the plot of watashi's narrative and William Gibson's short story "Johnny Mnemonic" (1981), where the villains are the Japanese yakuza; although Murakami does not cite Gibson as a direct inspiration, the observation is intriguing, as this would make *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* one of the earliest examples of Japanese re-appropriation of cyberpunk techno-Orientalism of the kind seen in the 1990s with authors like Mamoru Oshii.

If Hard-Boiled Wonderland is a combination of conventional hard-boiled and sci-fi features, the "End of the World" parallel narrative is constructed according to the generic conventions of fantasy: set in a utopian walled town, complete with unicorns and a drawing of a map with conventional literary fantasy names such as "the Gate," "the Watchtower," and "The Eastern Woods," it features a protagonist from another

world (possibly our own) who becomes a member of the Town's community and loses every memory of his life outside it. Upon arrival, boku is separated from his shadow (although he continues visiting him regularly and secretly plots to be reunited with him), and begins to work as the town's Dreamreader, a task that involves releasing mental energy from the skulls of unicorns, visually manifested in a throbbing glow. The two settings thus initially seem to correspond quite straightforwardly to a dystopia, a fast-paced and shadowy world of violence and oppression, and a utopia, a timeless realm of perfect contentment. Both can be read as critiques of contemporary Japanese society, its conformism, its capitalist competition, or the encroachment of technology onto human life. But reading the novel as a straightforward parody of 1980s Japan would be missing the most interesting point about it, as we will see.

Upon an initial reading, the two stories also appear to fall roughly into the categories of "uncanny" and "supernatural" proposed by Todorov. The Hard-Boiled Wonderland sequences introduce elements of mystery in an otherwise realistic setting, but promptly explain them through rational, if science-fictional, means. In the End of the World narrative, by contrast, mysterious elements are typically left unexplained, or are explained in a circular fashion; as the Gatekeeper tells the narrator, "We do it that way… and that is how it is. The same as the sun rising in the east and setting in the west" (Murakami, 1985, Vol. 1, p. 38; Murakami, 1991, p. 15). As a result, the reader, like boku, is unable to question the supernatural reality of the Town, and can only suspend disbelief and accept it on its own terms.

Things are, however, more complex than they initially seem. Through the intersection between the two stories, a fantastical hesitation emerges, questioning our understanding of identity and reality, and blurring the distinction between Self and Other. While the two narratives proceed independently, a correlation between them begins to emerge, first in the form of small details that recur in both settings, including ubiquitous paperclips, librarians, and even the name "End of the World" itself, which turns out to be the code word watashi uses to switch on and off his technologically-enhanced brain when doing data laundering. Since the Hard-Boiled Wonderland narrative is the more realistic of the two, and the one that provides rational explanations, the reader is likely to infer that End of the World is the "more fictional" world, and that it is a creation of watashi's mind. This is, as we later discover, both true, and yet not the whole truth.

Initially, the text seems to favor the interpretation that the End of the World narrative reorganizes elements from the "reality" of the Hard-Boiled Wonderland one, much in the same way as dreams often recombine recent and old memories according to a different logic from that of the wakeful mind. This is reminiscent of Jackson's (1981) observation that fantastic literature, like dreams, doesn't really invent anything, but rather reassembles creatively elements drawn from real-life experience: "Fantasy re-combines and inverts the real but it does not escape it: it exists in a parasitical or symbiotic relation to the real. The fantastic cannot exist independently of that 'real' world which it seems to find so frustratingly finite" (p. 20). This element is, in fact, common to many modern Japanese fantastic novels,

such as the aforementioned *Kappa* by Akutagawa, or Sōseki Natsume's *Yume jūya* (Ten Nights of Dreams, 1910).

The relationship between the realm of the Hard-Boiled Wonderland narrative and that of the End of the World one, however, is not simply one of reality to fiction; this becomes evident as the novel progresses and the "leaks" between the two narratives begin to work in both directions. The unicorns, which had immediately positioned the End of the World sequences in the fantasy genre, are at the center of this blending of different levels of reality and perception. It all begins when the professor that has employed watashi to launder data gives him a unicorn skull as a gift; while watashi's reaction is of utter perplexity, the reader, familiar with both narratives, cannot help sensing a connection with the golden-furred mythical animals that stroll through the Town in the End of the World narrative. This first intrusion of the supernatural creatures of the End of the World narrative into the world of the Hard-Boiled Wonderland is later explained through rational means: the professor informs watashi that the skull is a fake, a faithful reproduction of the imaginary ones with which watashi's mind has populated his imaginary world. Thanks to a technological gadget of his own devising, the professor has been able to visualize the content of watashi's imagination, and has created a replica of the unicorn skull in the hope of triggering a reaction in his data-laundering brain (Murakami, 1985, Vol. 2 pp. 81–93, Murakami, 1991, pp. 250–262). However, while up to this point the fantastical inventions of the Professor were primarily a means of reinscribing an apparently supernatural occurrence into the rational realm by giving it a pseudo-scientific explanation, the unicorn skull problematizes the relationship between reality and imagination on a deeper level.

Most of the technologies invented by the professor are aimed at the manipulation of perception, such as the sound-removal device that allows him to "mute" his daughter. By showing how perception can be altered, these technologies produce in the reader what can be described as epistemological doubt: observing that sound, sight, or memory can be manipulated leads us to question our ability to know reality. Brian McHale (1987) noted that epistemological doubt is a recurrent feature of the genre of detective fiction, and also of the literary current of Modernism, which centers on a similar questioning of our ability to trust our senses and/or our reason. By contrast, McHale argues, the genre of science fiction and the literary current of postmodernism rely on ontological doubt, a questioning of reality itself. These kinds of literary strategies make us wonder not if we can know reality, but whether what we think of reality is not a product of the imagination, and whether there is only one "reality" (McHale, p. 16). In the Hard-Boiled Wonderland narrative, which oscillates between the conventions of detective fiction and those of sci-fi, we see a hesitation between epistemological and ontological doubt. As the two stories progress and begin to blend, ontological doubt becomes more prominent, producing a more radical hesitation between the uncanny and supernatural modes that makes the whole novel truly fantastical in Todorov's sense.

Towards the end of the novel, watashi is informed that he is the only survivor of a clinical trial meant to enhance calcutecs' data laundering skills through a process called "shuffling." Watashi has survived thanks to his unique imaginative ability, which enabled him to create a somewhat coherent narrative out of dreamlike images appearing in his unconscious mind while doing the laundering. Intrigued by this phenomenon, the Professor further organized watashi's imagination into a fully formed world, and reinserted this story as a parallel circuit inside his mind: this, we realize, is what we have come to know as the End of the World. However, the experiment didn't go as he had hoped, and as a result watashi's brain is now about to shut down its normal consciousness and retreat entirely into his "edited" imagination. The process is irreversible, and watashi only has a few hours to live as himself before the inevitable happens (Murakami, 1985, Vol. 2, pp. 120–130; Murakami, 1991, pp. 269–274). While watashi sees the shutting down of his consciousness as annihilation, the Professor suggests that this is the beginning of a new life in a different reality: "Your existence isn't over. You'll enter another world" (Murakami, 1985, Vol. 2, p. 128; Murakami, 1991, p. 273). The novel ends in the End of the World narrative, as boku decides to renounce his plan to escape with his shadow, and to remain behind and help the librarian retrieve her mind.

Meanwhile, in typical Murakami fashion, the protagonist of Hard-Boiled Wonderland spends his final hours eating at a nice restaurant, drinking beer in a park, and hanging out with the beautiful young librarian he met while researching animal skulls to make sense of the Professor's gift. While he lies in bed with the woman during his final night as himself, the replica skull suddenly begins to emanate light, just like the ones in the library of the Town when boku "dreamread" them. We have by now been given a rational, pseudo-scientific explanation of the connection between boku and watashi and that between the End of the World and the Hard-Boiled Wonderland narratives, and yet it is not easy for us to make sense of this glowing unicorn skull. Is boku's consciousness beginning to take over that of watashi, affecting his perception to the point that he sees things that are not there? This possibility is undermined by the fact that the librarian is the first to see the skull glow. Unless it is a collective hallucination, then, the scene can only be read as an intrusion of the reality of the End of the World into that of the Hard-Boiled Wonderland, a bridge between these two realms that belongs to the ontological, not epistemological, level. As the narrator describes it: "The object was emitting light into my hands. It seemed somehow purposeful, to bear meaning. An attempt to convey a signal, to offer a touchstone between the world I would enter and the world I was leaving" (Murakami, 1985, Vol. 2, p. 347; Murakami, 1991, p. 372).

This kind of narrative strategy is known as metalepsis, a confusion between different levels of reality within a fiction, and it is often used to problematize the supposedly clear-cut separation between the fictional reality of the text and "our" reality outside the page. It is a classic trope of fantasy, particularly effective in the sub-category of horror: most of us will be familiar with the unsettling effect

of monsters or ghosts jumping out of television screens into the "reality" that we, in turn, are watching on a screen, making our living room suddenly feel a lot less secure. Examples of this abound both in Japanese and in world cinema, from Stephen Spielberg's *Poltergeist* (1982) to Hideo Nakata's *Ringu* (The Ring, 1998). The glowing skull scene in *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* has a less frightening, but similarly troubling effect. Could the reality of the novel infiltrate our own? Or have we read this all wrong, and is watashi a creation of boku's mind, rather than the other way around? If so, what does that say about us? Are we, too, characters in someone's story? Situated at the very point when the two narratives are brought together, as watashi literally becomes boku, the glowing unicorn skull episode raises more riddles than it solves, and creates yet more fantastic hesitations.

CONCLUSION: CRITICAL ENGAGEMENT THROUGH FANTASY

The ending of *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* could be interpreted as a sign of Murakami's use of fantasy as an escapist device. Watashi's retreat into his world of fantasy, and boku's letting go of his shadow, and with it all his memories of "real life," have often been read as emblematic of this author's lack of political and social commitment, a sign of his denial of harsh historical realities in favor of a rosy world of fiction. However, I propose to read the finale of this novel instead as an example of Murakmi's distinctive use of the critical potential of fantasy. In the novel, boku's choice to help his shadow escape, while himself remaining behind in the Town, is ostensibly motivated by a sense of responsibility towards the End of the World despite the fact that, or precisely because, it is a creation of his mind. As he tells his shadow in their parting moments: "I cannot forsake the people and places and things I have created. I know I do you a terrible wrong. And yes, perhaps I wrong myself, too. But I must see out the consequences of my own doings" (Murakami, 1985, Vol. 2, p. 408; Murakami, 1991, p. 399). In this way, the text gives fictional reality an ontological status that is not secondary or inferior to that of "real" reality. Thus rather than simply using fictional worlds, be they utopian or dystopian, as metaphors for contemporary reality in order to critique specific social or political phenomena directly, this novel uses the confusion between levels of fictional narratives to question more broadly the relationship between reality and imagination. I propose to interpret this as a paramount example of how literature can be used to reflect on social, cultural, and existential matters in an effective way, that does not entail either escaping reality or addressing it through conventional forms of political commitment, but rather engaging it critically by relying on the subversive value of fantastic hesitation.

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JONATHAN DIL

6. WHAT'S WRONG WITH THESE PEOPLE?

The Anatomy of Dependence in Norwegian Wood

INTRODUCTION

The simple question many students face after finishing Murakami Haruki's bestselling novel *Norwegian Wood* (1987) is what is wrong with these people? First there are the suicides, most prominently Naoko's, but also her older sister's, her boyfriend Kizuki's, and Nagasawa's girlfriend, Hatsumi's. Then there are the sexual issues: Naoko's frigidity, Midori's insatiable curiosity, Watanabe and Nagasawa's promiscuity, and Reiko's trauma and attempt at healing with Watanabe. Often described as Murakami's most realistic novel (in contrast to the more magic realist narratives that dominate his oeuvre), *Norwegian Wood* was initially marketed as a "100% love novel" (Murakami, 1991, p. 8). Yet whether love is actually involved in any of these complicated relationships is itself a complicated question. At its heart, what the novel deals with is the difficulty of meeting another person on common ground—the seeming impossibility of a relationship of perfect give and take. Instead, each character in the novel needs others either too much or too little, and it is their position along this spectrum from dependence to independence that determines the particular problems they face.

This theme is universal enough, and the novel is written in such a way that millions of people from a variety of cultural backgrounds have been able to respond to it, as is attested by the novel's global success. At the same time, the ways people think and feel about concepts like dependence and independence are clearly shaped by culture, so the particular cultural setting of the novel—postwar Japan—remains important. In 1971, the Japanese psychologist Doi Takeo wrote a book outlining what he saw as a common Japanese attitude toward dependence entitled *Amae no Kōzō* (*The Anatomy of Dependence*). While not without its critics, Doi's theory has remained influential, and argues for the prominent place that issues of dependence occupy in Japanese interpersonal relationships. His study is primarily a linguistic one with the noun *amae* at its center, a word, he writes, that denotes "an affirmative attitude toward the spirit of dependence (Doi, 1981, p. 16). Doi's argument is not that such an attitude is unique to Japan; indeed, he acknowledges that it is a human universal biologically grounded in the parent-child relationship (Doi, p. 74). Rather, he claims that many Japanese have a heightened awareness of issues related to dependence, evident linguistically in the many words the Japanese language has to account for

M. C. Strecher & P. L. Thomas (Eds.), Haruki Murakami, 73–86.

it and its related concepts, and a propensity for carrying positive associations with dependence into adulthood.

Norwegian Wood presents us with characters struggling with both dependence and independence, and each in turn can be considered in light of Doi's theory. The approach this chapter takes is straightforward, looking first at the two main female characters in the novel, Midori and Naoko, and then at the two main male ones, Nagasawa and Watanabe (though other minor characters will be mentioned along the way). In trying to understand these characters, I will argue that it is only when we view their individual struggles in light of their relationships with others and their competing needs for dependence and independence that a comprehensive picture emerges. A final section concludes the chapter by looking at *Norwegian Wood* as a coming-of-age novel, comparing it briefly to J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*, and considering its place in the classroom.

MIDORI

Of all the characters in *Norwegian Wood*, Midori is most open to her need for dependence (*amae*). From the moment she invites herself into Watanabe's life, it is evident that what she seeks from him is unquestioning acceptance, something she feels has been missing from her life to that point. Midori lost her mother to a brain tumor two years before meeting Watanabe, and her father is dying from the same illness (though she doesn't reveal these facts to Watanabe at first). This alone might seem to explain her deep need for *amae*, but she makes it clear that her dissatisfaction with her parents reaches back far before their illnesses. She confesses to Watanabe, for example, that she found it difficult to feel sadness when her mother died, an emotional coldness she attributes to the lack of love she received as a child:

> It's true I have a cold streak. I recognize that. But if they—my father and mother—had loved me a little more, I would have been able to feel more—to feel real sadness for example … I was always hungry for love. Just once, I wanted to know what it was like to get my fill of it—to be fed so much love I couldn't take any more. Just once. But they never gave that to me. Never, not once. If I tried to cuddle up and beg for something, they'd just shove me the other way and yell at me. (Murakami, 2000, p. 99)

The expression in the final sentence here, "to cuddle up and beg for something," comes from the Japanese verb *amaeru* (which comes from the same root as the noun *amae*) and is translated in one dictionary as "to behave like a spoilt child; to fawn on" (Breen). Midori's attempts to *amaeru* her parents, to depend on them completely and to have them respond to her emotional needs, were rejected, and she believes this has left her emotionally stunted.

Midori goes on to explain to Watanabe that what she is looking for in a relationship is "selfishness. Perfect selfishness" (Murakami, 2000, p. 103). She playfully narrates a scenario for Watanabe to clarify her meaning. Imagine, she begins, that I ask you

(or some other guy) to go and buy me strawberry shortbread. You leave immediately and buy it for me, but when you return I say I don't want it anymore and throw it out the window. This, Midori explains, is what she is looking for. Watanabe is confused, responding, "I'm not sure that has anything to do with love" (p. 103). Perhaps he is right, but for Midori at least, such a provocation is at least a possible precursor to love. She goes on to explain that what she wants from the man in her scenario is an apology: "Now I see, Midori. What a fool I've been …To make it up to you, I'll go out and buy you something else. What would you like? Chocolate mousse? Cheesecake?" (p. 103). Still confused, Watanabe asks Midori what would come next: "So then I'd give him all the love he deserves for what he's done … to me, that's what love is" (p. 103).

Amae, as this passage suggests, is the experience of receiving unquestioning acceptance from another human being, even in the face of bad behavior, that in turn opens up the recipient to the possibility of love and ultimately to the ability to love in return. The act of throwing the shortbread out of the window in Midori's scenario is a test—a way of seeing whether she can be loved in spite of acting like a spoilt child. Simply telling her to grow up in such a scenario is not going to work. The prerequisite for maturity here is a stage of emotional dependence that Midori has yet to experience. It is only when one has passed through this stage that a more mature relationship based on reciprocity can develop. It is this belief in *amae* as a necessary developmental stage that distinguishes Midori's more positive feelings towards dependence from Naoko's more negative ones (as will be explained in the next section).

This deep need for *amae* can also help explain another facet of Midori's personality: her insatiable curiosity about sex and more particularly her lack of a social filter when discussing such matters with Watanabe. Examples in the text are not difficult to find. Midori, for example, asks Watanabe to try fantasizing about her when he masturbates and to report back on the results, asks probing questions about the masturbation practices of other boys in the dormitory where Watanabe lives, and asks to be taken to a porno flick: "a real S and M one, with whips" (Murakami, 2000, p. 244). Midori recognizes that she is pushing boundaries with Watanabe, but she puts it down to simple curiosity: "I don't want you to get the wrong impression—that I'm a nymphomaniac or frustrated or a tease or anything. I'm just interested in that stuff. I want to know about it" (p. 232). Yet her constant provocations go beyond normal bounds; in short, she appears to be testing the limits of *amae* in her relationship with Watanabe. How much will he let her get away with? This deep need for *amae* also explains her ability to hold a grudge when Watanabe forgets her (usually because he is lost in his thoughts for Naoko) or when he fails to notice something like a change in her hairstyle. As Midori's sister explains over the phone on one occasion when Watanabe calls and tries to apologize, "[O]nce she gets mad, she stays that way. Like an animal" (p. 321). This is the flipside to Midori's need for *amae*—reject her appeals and she may never forgive you.

This is not to say that Midori's need for *amae* marks her as a weak character in the novel. Rather, it is her willingness to *amaeru*, to indulge Watanabe's kindness at the risk of rejection, which ultimately gives her character vitality. She is hoping to move from dependence to interdependence, to first be loved and then to love in return, and this, it should be said, is not unconnected to her sexual curiosity. Sex is many things in *Norwegian Wood*: at times a form of exploitation, at other times an attempt at growing up, and at other times still an attempt at healing (examples can be found below). In Midori's case, her embrace of sexuality can be read as an embrace of life itself, an idea that will be explored more fully in the section below on Watanabe. It is here again that she offers one of her strongest contrasts to Naoko, a character who retreats not only from sexuality, but from life itself.

NAOKO

Watanabe's first flashback in the novel is to an autumn day in 1969 (the entire narrative, of course, is told from the perspective of the 37 year-old Watanabe). He is in a meadow with Naoko, and he remembers her talking about a fenceless well that was "deep beyond measuring, and crammed full of darkness" (Murakami, 2000, p. 7). Watanabe is unsure whether the well is real: "It might have been an image or a sign that existed only inside Naoko" (p. 6). For Naoko though, it is clearly a threat; she fears falling in, though she is positive that as long as she stays with Watanabe, this will never happen. Watanabe tries reassuring her by saying that the solution then is for her to always stay with him, an offer which Naoko rejects: "It would just be wrong—wrong for you, wrong for me … Don't you see? It's just not possible for one person to watch over another person for ever and ever … What kind of equality would there be in that" (p. 9). At the heart of the issue for Naoko is fairness (p. 114). She doesn't believe it is right for one person to do all the giving and another to do all the taking. As she later explains, "The one thing I want is not to be a burden to anyone" (p. 119).

The well, of course, is naturally interpreted as a symbol of Naoko's psychological state. In its mysterious depth and darkness it might easily be taken as a symbol for death, and indeed Naoko takes her own life near the end of the novel, suggesting that she has finally stumbled in. The Japanese word for well, *ido*, is also a homophone in Japanese for the Freudian id, and so the well might be taken as a symbol of Naoko's fear of Eros; indeed, her inability to perform sexually is deeply connected to her psychological decline in the novel. The only time Naoko is able to experience coitus is on her twentieth birthday with Watanabe, the traditional coming-of-age birthday in Japan, but rather than using this as an occasion to pass over the threshold from adolescence into adulthood, she retreats again back into adolescent ambivalence. The approach of her twentieth birthday, she explains, felt unnatural, "Like somebody's pushing me from behind" (Murakami, 2000, p. 50). This unease is shared by Watanabe, who confesses:

> There was something strange about Naoko's becoming twenty. I felt as if the only thing that made sense, whether for Naoko or for me, was to keep going back and forth between eighteen and nineteen. After eighteen would come nineteen, and after nineteen, eighteen. Of course. But she turned twenty. (p. 50)

This idea of sex as a rite of passage on the pathway to adulthood runs throughout *Norwegian Wood* and relates to an earlier relationship between Naoko and Kizuki, Watanabe's best friend growing up. As teenagers, Naoko, Watanabe, and Kizuki had spent much of their free time together, though only Naoko and Kizuki had been romantically involved, an arrangement that had lasted until Kizuki took his own life at seventeen. While Watanabe had always assumed that Naoko and Kizuki were sexually active, on the night he and Naoko have sex, he learns this was not the case, that although they had experimented sexually and felt very open and natural together, Naoko's inability to achieve genital stimulation had meant that they had failed to experience coitus.

Looking back, Naoko sees the problem as one of failing to pay their debts to society—in short, of failing to grow up. As she speculates to Watanabe, had Kizuki lived, they most likely would have stayed together, growing increasingly unhappy. Watanabe wonders if this really had to be the case, but Naoko is convinced, her reasoning as follows:

> Because we would have had to pay the world back what we owed it … The pain of growing up. We didn't pay when we should have, so now the bills are due … We were like kids who grew up naked on a desert island. If we got hungry, we'd just pick a banana; if we got lonely, we'd go to sleep in each other's arms. But that kind of thing doesn't last forever. (Murakami, 2000, p. 172)

Naoko's description of her relationship with Kizuki here is interesting in light of our discussion on *amae*. In one sense, they seemed to have had perfect *amae*, an ability to ask anything of the other and to get it, but this was only possible because they had cut themselves off from society. In this way, their deep sense of interdependence and connection could not survive the transition into adulthood, symbolized in the story by their inability to experience coitus, the one thing they couldn't offer each other. Kizuki's solution was to take his own life, and while Naoko struggles on for a while longer, she eventually follows Kizuki into death. What their journey suggests is that while the experience of *amae* is an important landmark on the path to adulthood, it cannot be its endpoint; there must be a more painful experience beyond this where one differentiates oneself from others and engages with the broader society.

Naoko's sexual closure in the novel is mirrored by her linguistic closure. The one night she opens up sexually to Watanabe is also the one night she most fully opens up to him verbally—"Naoko was unusually talkative that night" (Murakami, 2000, p. 52)—but she soon closes up again. The first stage of her verbal closure began with her sister's suicide. Naoko had discovered her sister's dead body, and

for a time following this had found it difficult to communicate with others. Beyond this early loss of language through shock, however, there seems to be a deeper, ongoing struggle with language that plagues her throughout the novel. “I can never say what I want to say,” she complains at one point, “It’s like I’m split in two” (p. 28). Following her sexual encounter with Watanabe, she retreats from Tokyo into the relative peace of Ami Hostel, a sanatorium in the hills of Kyoto where people work the land, embrace each other’s weaknesses, and try hard to practice a policy of complete honesty. Watanabe visits Naoko there, and they also communicate frequently through letters, but even here Naoko’s problems with language continue. “Writing is a painful process for me,” she explains in one of these letters (p. 58). With hindsight, her roommate at Ami Hostel, Reiko, comes to see Naoko’s inability to write as the first sign of her final mental and emotional breakdown (p. 324).

Naoko has a deep sense of her own flaws and is reluctant to remain in a relationship where she will remain forever dependent. She asks to be remembered by Watanabe (which is part of why he is writing his narrative), but she is reluctant to ask for much more than this. She is struggling to grow up and become an adult, but an extended adolescence is not sustainable in the long run, and so she ultimately chooses a premature death. This might seem to suggest that a more tough-minded independence is the only way forward, yet the example of her sister contradicts this. On the surface, this sister had appeared confident and competent, and while not without her dark moments, had seemed self-sufficient in the way she dealt with things: “She was the kind of person who took care of things by herself. She’d never ask anybody for advice or help” (Murakami, 2000, p. 192). In the end, this sister’s suicide comes to personify the pain of trying to go it alone—the way that disconnecting from others is not ultimately a solution to the pain that human relationships can bring. Another character in the novel that personifies this downside of independence is Nagasawa.

NAGASAWA

Watanabe and Nagasawa’s friendship starts from a literary connection. When Nagasawa first meets him, Watanabe is reading F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby* (Murakami’s all-time favorite novel), and when questioned about it, explains that he is on his third time through. This is enough for Nagasawa, who declares, “Well, any friend of Gatsby is a friend of mine’” (Murakami, 2000, p. 41). This scene is reminiscent of the meeting of Amory and Thomas D’Invilliers in Fitzgerald’s earlier novel *This Side of Paradise* (1920). As with *Norwegian Wood*, Amory and Thomas are both university students (at Fitzgerald’s Princeton), and one is more socially ambitious than the other (Amory more so than Tom). Fitzgerald’s novel describes Tom as “without much conception of social competition and such phenomena of absorbing interest. Still he liked books, and it seemed forever since Amory had met any one who did” (Fitzgerald, 1920, p. 48). As with Tom and Amory’s relationship, other people in the dormitory find it difficult to understand what could have brought

two people as different as Nagasawa and Watanabe together, but what they fail to see is the value Nagasawa places on a person's ability to think for themselves, an idea that he again connects to literary tastes: "If you only read the books that everyone else is reading, you can only think what everyone else is thinking" (Murakami, 2000, p. 42). Whatever failings he sees in Watanabe, Nagasawa is at least reassured by his independent tastes in books.

In Murakami's novel, Nagasawa is the ambitious social climber and Watanabe the more introverted bookworm. Nagasawa studies law at the prestigious Tokyo University and is destined for the Foreign Ministry. He is also, despite his loyal girlfriend, a womanizer, and though Watanabe questions his lifestyle, he also soon starts accompanying him on his sexual exploits. Nagasawa claims that his motivation in life is less power and money than simply a desire to test himself in the biggest field possible: the nation. "Sounds like a game," Watanabe suggests, to which Nagasawa promptly agrees (Murakami, 2000, p. 74). Nagasawa believes in working hard, but he also holds in contempt those whose hard work amounts to little: "That's not hard work. It's just manual labor … The 'hard work' I'm talking about is more self-directed and purposeful" (p. 269). In his conception of himself as a self-made man, there are clearly parallels with some of Fitzgerald's charismatic but famously flawed characters, including Amory and Gatsby mentioned above. As with these literary predecessors, there is also a sense that behind Nagasawa's polished exterior is a deeply troubled soul.

We never find out what happens to Nagasawa beyond joining the Foreign Ministry and moving to Germany.[1] We do know what happens to his girlfriend, however, the long-suffering Hatsumi: two years after he leaves for Germany, she marries someone else, and two years after that she kills herself. While Nagasawa tries to act as if his lifestyle choices have no consequences for others, the fate of Hatsumi suggests otherwise. Their relationship feels doomed from the start, with his need for independence and hers for dependence in clear competition.

At the dinner where Nagasawa, Hatsumi, and Watanabe celebrate Nagasawa's passing of the exam for the Foreign Ministry (incidentally, one of the most emotionally charged scenes in Tran Ang Hung's film adaptation of the novel), Hatsumi starts to challenge the two boys on their promiscuous ways and one incident in particular where they swapped sexual partners. Defending his actions, Nagasawa retorts, "You can't even call what I do fooling around. It's just a game. Nobody gets hurt" (Murakami, 2000, p. 276). Hatsumi is outraged and uncharacteristically lets her frustrations show. She admits that she is hurt, but Nagasawa is deaf to her complaint, justifying his actions with the simple assertion, "[t]hat's the kind of man I am" (p. 276). Nagasawa is an extreme individualist who rejects any type of *amae*. His final words of advice to Watanabe are "Don't feel sorry for yourself … Only assholes do that" (p. 318).

While dependence clearly causes problems for many characters in the novel, Nagasawa's hardheaded independence is far from being its antidote. Early on, for

example, Watanabe describes Nagasawa as a man who "lived in his own special hell" (Murakami, 2000, p. 43). This hell comes from deep paradoxes that leave him outwardly successful but inwardly suffering:

> There were sides to Nagasawa's personality that conflicted in the extreme. Even I would be moved by his kindness at times, but he could, just as easily, be malicious and cruel. He was both a spirit of amazing loftiness and an irredeemable man of the gutter. He could charge forward, the optimistic leader, even as his heart writhed in a swamp of loneliness. (pp. 42–43)

If characters like Naoko and Hatsumi need others too much, Nagasawa needs them too little, and so the novel presents us with a situation where neither dependence nor independence is the final answer. This leaves us with Watanabe, a character who, like Nagasawa, risks isolating himself from others and trying to go it alone, but who in his relationships with Naoko and Midori at least is struggling for something more. While ultimately unsuccessful, his journey at least shows glimpses of what is the hidden ideal behind the many failed relationships of *Norwegian Wood*: a mature interdependency.

WATANABE

Nagasawa believes that he and Watanabe are "a lot alike," that "[n]either of us is interested, essentially, in anything but ourselves … neither of us is able to feel any interest in anything other than what we ourselves think or feel or do" (Murakami, 2000, p. 276). As he puts it to Hatsumi, "[Watanabe] may be a nice guy, but deep down in his heart he's incapable of loving anybody. There's always some part of him somewhere that's wide awake and detached" (p. 279). He observes, "Where Watanabe and I are alike is, we don't give a damn if nobody understands us" (p. 277). Watanabe objects to this last claim, arguing that he does care if people understand him—at least some people (assumedly Naoko and Midori) (p. 277). And yet even he has to admit that there is something awry in his relationships with others. As he explains to Naoko, "[S]ometimes I think I've got this hard kernel in my heart, and nothing much can get inside it. I doubt if I can really love anybody" (p. 37). Later he confesses to Reiko, "Like Naoko, I'm not really sure what it means to love another person" (p. 154).

Despite these reservations, Watanabe demonstrates deep commitment to Naoko, and though he falters along the way, he does stick with her to the end. The language he uses to justify this commitment is unrelated to love, however; rather, he employs a language of responsibility. As he puts it to Midori, "All I know is, I have a kind of responsibility in all this as a human being, and I can't just turn my back on it" (Murakami, 2000, p. 347). In a recent essay, one of my female students (who was not at all impressed with Watanabe's actions in the novel) labeled him as codependent, an interesting proposition to consider. From the beginning of his narrative, Watanabe confesses that "Naoko never loved me" (p. 13), and we've already established that

he doubts his ability to love another person. So what's in this relationship for him? Talking with Reiko, Watanabe explains that what he is looking for is nothing less than a form of salvation: "Naoko and I have to save each other. It's the only way for either of us to be saved" (p. 154). This kind of language would seem to support the codependency label; Watanabe is identifying himself as a savior figure who will stick by Naoko regardless of personal cost. Is this what keeps him going?

This theme of female victims and male healers runs throughout Murakami's fiction (*The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* [1994–1995] is another prominent example). And yet I would argue that there is more to Watanabe's motivations than codependency alone can explain. An important point in all this is that Watanabe is seeking salvation not only for Naoko, but also for himself. A truly codependent relationship would not seek this kind of development, the dark reward being the validation that comes through maintaining the martyr's role. If we take Watanabe's desire for mutual salvation at face value then, we have to acknowledge that he is seeking to move beyond this impasse. While he clearly never achieves salvation for Naoko, he does make the difficult decision to grow up and to go on living after Kizuki and Naoko are gone. The question is how he achieves this and how close this takes him to the salvation he seeks for himself?

The major discovery Watanabe claims to make in the novel is formulated in this way: "Death is not the opposite of life but an innate part of life" (Murakami, 2000, p. 360). This can be understood in several ways, not least of which is an acknowledgement on Watanabe's part of the important role Kizuki and Naoko continue to play in his life, even after death. More than this, however, what Watanabe seems to be seeking through this philosophy is a mythical solution to the dichotomy of life and death, archetypal forces that tear him in different directions. Indeed, the whole way his potential love interests develop between the opposing poles of Naoko and Midori seems designed to make just this point, and gives the narrative (amongst other possible psychoanalytic readings of the text) a strong Freudian flavor.

For Sigmund Freud, the drive for sex is included in the life instincts, part of what he called Eros, a general catchphrase for the human drives to survive and reproduce. In Freud's early writings, these life-sustaining drives were given the primary focus, together with an examination of the way their clashes with socially derived moralities cause psychological problems for individuals. Yet Freud eventually had to acknowledge the human potential to subvert Eros, indeed, our ability to choose death over life, and it was this that caused him late in his career to propose the notion of a competing death drive (one of his followers would later propose calling this Thanatos, in contrast to Eros). *Norwegian Wood* provides examples of both poles, with Midori most clearly a symbol of Eros and Naoko a symbol of Thanatos. The question for Watanabe is which path he will ultimately follow.

This life/death dichotomy extends to the settings of the novel itself, with the life and energy of Tokyo most clearly associated with Midori and her sexual energy, and the quiet hills of Kyoto associated with, if not quite death itself, a liminal space approaching it. Ami Hostel is constantly described as a place cut off from the

world: the journey there is long and arduous, and on one of his visits Watanabe even encounters Naoko in a perfect, perhaps even ghostly form that is not quite of this world (demonstrating that even in Murakami's most realistic novel, the fantastic is still never far away). Midori reinforces this sense, commenting to Watanabe on his return to Tokyo that "[y]ou look like you've seen a ghost." Her solution is to "go drinking with me and get a little life into you" (Murakami, 2000, p. 223).

This mythical undercurrent to the novel can help make sense of what to many students is likely to be the most disturbing or at least perplexing part of the novel: Reiko's backstory and Watanabe's decision to sleep with her near the end of the novel. Reiko's story is revealed in long conversations with Watanabe, her psychological difficulties starting when the pressure of her dream to become a concert pianist became too much. A man she eventually marries saves her from this first mental breakdown. Sticking with the theme of dependence in the novel, Reiko comments that, "I figured that as long as I was with him, I would be all right" (Murakami, 2000, p. 160). For a time this proves true, but things fall apart when she is later sexually seduced by one of her piano students, a pathological, lesbian thirteen year-old.

Reiko is surprised by the sexual desire this girl arouses in her, but eventually she comes to her senses and pushes her away. The girl is hurt by this rejection and takes her revenge by spreading rumors about Reiko in the local community. Socially ostracized, Reiko's emotional problems resurface and it is here that her husband makes a crucial mistake; when things are at their worst and Reiko is pleading with him to get them away to make a fresh start somewhere, he asks her for one more month to get his business affairs in order. As Reiko later confesses, this was the moment everything ended (Murakami, 2000, p. 213). She had felt she could depend on this man completely, and so his delayed response, while reasonable in the context of his own life and career, to her was a fatal blow.

Following Naoko's death, Reiko makes a decision to leave Ami Hostel in an attempt to rehabilitate herself to the world. On her way to Asahikawa in Hokkaido, she stops off to visit Watanabe in Tokyo, their reunion turning into an impromptu memorial of sorts for Naoko (primarily a sing-along with Naoko's favorite song, *Norwegian Wood*, playing a prominent role). Following this makeshift funeral, they then make love four times, a number Rubin (2002) suggests is significant because of its cultural weight in Japan as a homophone for death (p. 158). She then offers Watanabe some parting advice about growing up and becoming an adult, suggesting that he made his final decision to be with Midori long ago (Murakami, 2000, pp. 378–379).

We are clearly far from the traditional formulas of the romance genre here, despite the way *Norwegian Wood* is sometimes marketed. It is one thing to have Watanabe sleep with Naoko in the novel, but what can we make of his decision to sleep with Reiko, Naoko's older roommate, when it is clear he has already committed himself to Midori? One response is that Reiko is clearly standing in for Naoko here, right

down to wearing her clothes when she shows up at Watanabe's apartment. In some sense, their sexual acts are presented as a ritual, a way of coming to terms with Naoko's death and preparing for a return to the world of the living. Reiko, of course, has her own motivation; her original trauma was sexual in nature, so she's seeking sex as a form of healing. What Watanabe seeks, on the other hand, is nothing less than a way to bridge the gap between life and death.

When Naoko first retreats into Ami Hostel, the only means she and Watanabe have of communicating initially is letters, a slow, ponderous form of communication suited to her position in a liminal space approaching death. The novel ends with a telephone call to Midori, a much more immediate form of communication that is suited to Midori's position in the land of the living. Watanabe is finally ready to express his commitment to her, but Midori responds by asking him where he is, a question he cannot answer. Watanabe's confusion here suggests that he is still lost between two worlds, though his reaching out to Midori through the telephone call at least indicates the direction he is heading.

Of course, it is worth remembering here that it is the 37 year-old Watanabe who is telling us this tale and finishing his story here. While we still have many questions, he is deliberately choosing not to fill us in. Watanabe has clearly survived, but has he grown up? Did he eventually get together with Midori, and if so, are they still together now? It is impossible to know, but the opening of the novel and the way the story is told make it hard to believe he has found everything he was looking for. Watanabe's story may finish here, incomplete, but the themes that are dealt with in *Norwegian Wood* have continued to resurface in Murakami's fiction. Perhaps the stories that most directly take up these themes again in new form are the short story *Honey Pie* in the collection *After the Quake* (2000), and the recent novel *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and his Years of Pilgrimage* (2013).

NORWEGIAN WOOD AS A COMING-OF AGE NOVEL

Norwegian Wood was Japan's bestselling novel until at least 2001.[2] In that year, however, Katayama Kyōichi published *Sekai no chūshin de ai o sakebu* (Shouting Love from the Center of the World), a novel that would eventually take its place. In broad outline, there is much is common between Murakami's novel and Katayama's later work. Both include older male narrators who years later are still struggling to come to terms with the loss of a significant female other. Beyond these broad strokes though, the works are very different, particularly in their portrayal of their female heroines (if such a title is applicable to Murakami's novel). Katayama's heroine Aki is completely opposite to Naoko: confident, capable, and life affirming (though much more innocent and pure than the equally confident, capable, and life affirming Midori). It is only illness that steals her promise away. *Sekachū*, as it later came to be affectionately known in Japan, had a small print run initially, but slowly grew by word of mouth and over the long run was fueled by a commercially successful

film adaptation and other spin-offs. That Japan's two most commercially successful novels should share a similar storyline may simply speak to the universal power of their shared themes: young love and death.

In trying to understand *Norwegian Wood's* place in world literature, however, and particularly in thinking about its place in the classroom, a more useful comparison is J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* (a novel Murakami has since translated into Japanese). These comparisons start at the superficial level. At one point, for example, Reiko accuses Watanabe of deliberately speaking like Salinger's Holden: "Don't tell me you're trying to imitate that boy in *Catcher in the Rye*?" (Murakami, 2000, p. 134). Midori's criticism of the political radicals around her as "a bunch of phonies" (p. 238) also clearly has echoes of Holden.

Both novels also take their titles from cultural references that are used less for their original meanings than for what they reveal about a character's state of mind. In Holden's case, he famously misremembers the words of a Robert Burn poem, turning a reference about "meeting" in the rye that hints at the theme of sexual promiscuity into one that deals with his desire to "catch" or protect children so that they will never have to face the pains of the adult world. The title of *Norwegian Wood* obviously comes from the famous Beatles' song of the same title which is mentioned numerous times in the text, but the imagery and feelings Naoko derives from it relate just as much to the way its title was translated into Japanese as something like *The Woods of Norway*. The original reference in the Beatles' song is not to woods as such, but to the material used to decorate a woman's home ("She showed me her room, isn't it good, Norwegian wood") and so it could be said that the title and theme of Murakami's novel were found in mistranslation. Murakami, of course, is a translator himself and a music connoisseur, so it is unlikely he is unaware of this original meaning of the reference, though this is hardly the point. Rather, like Holden, Naoko is using the song to tell us not something about the original cultural reference, but about herself. As she explains, "That song can make me feel so sad … I don't know, I guess I imagine myself wandering in a deep wood. I'm all alone and it's cold and dark, and nobody comes to save me" (Murakami, 2000, p. 146).

The more substantial comparison between the two novels, however, is with Naoko and Holden, and the way ambiguity about sex prevents them from growing up. As readers of Salinger's novel will know, there are strong parallels here with Holden who, while deeply interested in sexual matters, ultimately remains ambivalent about and sabotages opportunities for sex. Like Naoko, Holden ends up in some kind of institution, and while there are clearly differences between them, it is fair to say that they both struggle with issues of psychosexual development.

The Catcher in the Rye consequently offers a useful precursor for considering the place of *Norwegian Wood* in the classroom. Both works are coming-of-age novels that deal in complex ways with examples of those who can't grow up, of characters who get stuck somewhere along the way, and while the sexual content of Murakami's 1980s novel is more explicit than Salinger's 1950s one, there are similarities in the

way they push boundaries in terms of content and model adolescent ambiguity and anxiety about sex.

The themes of *Norwegian Wood* are probably most appropriate for those who are at the same age as the characters described (i.e. university students and others of a similar age), though it is clear that many younger readers attempt the novel before this (I know because they tell me when they get to university, though they often confess to having found the themes difficult to understand their first time through). The suitability of the text to different classroom audiences is something only individual teachers can decide, but it is clear that, like *The Catcher in the Rye*, *Norwegian Wood*'s reputation is one of its most powerful motivating tools. Students want to know for themselves what all of the fuss is about. Both works empathize with the ambiguities of adolescent relationship and identity issues, while also pointing out their dangers, and both novels speak to issues of psychosexual development that are often central to students' lives but which they don't always get a chance to explore openly. Both works demonstrate that growing up is not always a foregone conclusion, and show how sex can be both fascinating and frightening.

While *Norwegian Wood*'s reputation (related, of course, to its sexual content) may be what pulls students in, however, it is the novel's deeper theme of the complexity of human relationships—what has been examined here in terms of dependence (*amae*) and independence—that in the end makes them to want to stay. My experience is that students enjoy arguing about Midori and Naoko, Nagasawa and Watanabe, and the things that make them tick. These are characters that some will love and others will hate, and it is these strong reactions that have the potential to provoke the liveliest classroom discussions. Of course, in the end, we may only be arguing about ourselves by proxy, talking about our own needs for connection and separation, but then surely that is an important part of what literature is for.

NOTES

[1] The novel opens with Watanabe on a trip to Germany. It would seem unlikely that Nagasawa is still stationed there, unless perhaps he was reassigned there some years later. Could it be that Watanabe is planning to visit him there? There is no way of knowing, though Nagasawa does reassure Watanabe in the text that they will probably run across each other some years in the future (p. 317).

[2] Sales figures for the novel vary by report and are complicated by the fact that the novel is sold in Japan in two parts. Seats (2006) reports that "*Noruei no mori* (Norwegian Wood) stayed in the top ten bestseller list for three years running (1987–1989), and had sold 4.3 million copies as of early 1996. By November 2004, this figure had nearly doubled to 8.26 million" (p. 26). The surpassing of Murakami's novel by Katayama's was reported on by numerous news outlets, including The Japan Times on May 8, 2004. This article, however, reports much lower figures (even allowing for the counting of the two book set as a single sale), indicating that Katayama's sales figure of 2.51 million copies had beaten Murakami's figure of 2.38 million copies.

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DEIRDRE FLYNN

7. THE TRANSCREATION OF TOKYO

The Universality of Murakami's Urban Landscape

As Tōru Okada traverses the streets of Murakami's transcreated Tokyo the reader is introduced to a new eclectic city that merges elements of East and West; it becomes a multinational location for the postmodern experience. His anti-hero's journey through a cityscape is Lyotardian where "Eclecticism is the degree zero of contemporary general culture: you listen to reggae; you watch a Western; you eat McDonald's at midday and local cuisine at night; you wear Paris perfume in Tokyo and dress retro in Hong Kong; knowledge is the stuff of TV game shows" (Lyotard, 2003, p. 8). Murakami's postmodern cities diverge from traditional ideas of Japan and Tokyo as a Western styled futuristic dystopian environment, an Orientalist space, to one that has been transcreated into a ubiquitous postmodern location. Murakami's choice of cultural references challenge traditional theories of postmodernity being a "primarily Western" condition, as per Linda Hutcheon (1988). His work mirrors many of the ideas of the postmodern condition, and the disenfranchising of his work due to its location or translation seems unfair. There are many ways in which Murakami achieves this East-West conversation, and his popularity across the globe and translation into 42 languages is testament to his appeal. However the setting of his novels in a foreign Eastern city becomes strangely familiar. It is an uncanny city, one that challenges the preconceived notions of Japan, and postmoderity through the use of his flaneur observing this amalgamation of oppositions.

Flaneur is a French term for an idler, or a saunterer, a character often seen wandering the streets of Paris in 19th century French literature. Through Walter Benjamin's research on the poetry of Charles Baudelaire, the flaneur has become an essential element in literature of the city. Murakami's transcreation of the city presents the teacher with texts that can negotiate how postmodernism breaks down modernist metanarratives of occidental/oriental and utopian/dystopian. Transcreation refers to the process of translating a message from one language to another while successfully maintaining the message and meaning. And Murakami's cities transcreate ideas of postmodernity through the merging of Eastern and Western cultural references. Through the use of the Western trope of the flaneur in an Eastern postmodern city Murakami's Tokyo breaks down the traditional East/West binary opposition: a traditional marker, a modernist meta-narrative, through this merging

M. C. Strecher & P. L. Thomas (Eds.), Haruki Murakami, 87–100.

of cultures. This creates an ideal space to discuss the theories of Jameson, Lyotard and Baudrillard:

> It is obvious that there are certain elements in Murakami's works which are generally noted to be expressive of a postmodern cultural trend. The transformation of reality into images, the 'used-up-ness' of image linked with the notion of the pastiche, the dominance of nostalgia themes and of historical amnesia all of which we find in Jameson's description of the postmodern. (Ellis, 1995, p. 146)

POSTMODERNISM AND JAPAN

While postmodern debate in the second half of the twentieth century recognized the postmodern currents in Japan, there endured a notion that Japan remained as the oriental Other rather than a first world equal in theory and thought. This Othering of Japan seemed to be a residual consequence of the war, and of the underlying fear generated by the early victories of this other, and the result was the classic binary opposition of Western self versus oriental Other, a thought-process with echoes of Said's notion of Orientalism.

The use of this binary opposition returns that postmodern debate to a modernist setting, while the political influence of post-war America and post-war Japan cannot be ignored either. The Japanese postmodern debate in the center of the twentieth century was overshadowed by the remains of World War II, and the political Othering of the nation. Najita (1989) argues that cultural representation of post-war Japan depended on the "presumption that the Japanese are "unknowable" except to the Japanese," and that social science sees them as accessible in the world of Others (p. 14).

Najita (1989) also argues that there was a "perception of the globe as being a cultural map with "fixed" places for easily identifiable and describable national cultures" in the early 20th century, adding that:

> there is a sense that while all of the many distinctive cultures added something of significance to the world cultural order of things, so that the ideal of global civilisation was entirely appropriate, still not all of the places were of equivalent status, some being relatively more appreciated and respected than others. (p. 10)

In this order Japan's cultural identity was as a "nation outside the ordering cultural framework shaped by Western nations" (Najita, p. 10).

However, as postmodernity evolved and grew stronger in the 1980s, combined with the events in Japan during that time, the similarities between the first world West and the first world East grew, and could no longer be denied. Yet modernist "grand narratives" still threatened the idea that a shared or common postmodern experience could exist in both the West and East, as issues of nationhood regularly emerge in

the debate. For Japan, the idea that postmodernity is a Western event, as Miyoshi and Harootunian (1989) have suggested, is present in postmodern debate from the late 1980s. In their introduction to *Postmodernism in Japan*, they suggest that "as postmodernism seeks to remedy the modernist error of Western, male, bourgeois domination, it simultaneously vacates the ground on which alone the contours of modernism can be clearly seen" (p. vii).

This vacating of the modernist Western metanarratives means that both Japan and the West are concerned about losing their distinct versions of nationalism. However, within the fleeting, fluid nature of postmodernity, and the new eclecticism that has been born as a result of this, fighting the tide of postmodernity is becoming more and more impossible from the traditional standpoint. From an American perspective, in the opinion of Miyoshi and Harootunian (1989), "Japan [is] a third world copycat, the all-time economic wonderchild, that now threatens to become the hegemon of the twenty first century" (p. ix).

CROSS CULTURAL POLLINATION

This cross-cultural pollination in postmodern society leaves nations with a crisis of representation, one that is equally discussed and felt in Japan and in the West, and which is also perceived in all first world nations experiencing postmodernism. As Marilyn Ivy (1989) has said in her article on knowledge in postmodern Japan, there is a crisis of representation in the postmodern age, due to what she calls the "contemporary moment." "In this contemporary postmodern moment, the virulence of capital has turned everything into pure commodified signs. National borders give way as information circulates at blinding speeds" (Ivy, p. 24). Ivy claims that knowledge is a major stakeholder in the "global struggle for power," and this being the case, excluding Japan from the contemporary postmodern condition, and refusing to see the postmodernism of Japan as being equal to that of the West is a further development of the ethnocentric attitudes which came under critique in Said's *Orientalism* (Ivy, p. 24). Said described the Orient as the 'most recurring images of the Other' and this binary opposition of Oriental/occidental or self/other is now outdated within a postmodern context (Said, 2009, p. 24).

THE WIND-UP BIRD CHRONICLE

This shared postmodern experience can be seen in Murakami's writing through the amalgamation of cultural references that permeate his work. In particular it is his treatment of the cityscape that offers a true representation of a postmodern city, a transcreated space that is neither Eastern or Western. Employing a flaneur to negotiate his space, Murakami's *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* is an ideal starting point to approach the postmodern city in literature. It shows that postmodernism is a paradigm that evolves in, and impacts all first-world societies. *The Wind-Up*

Bird Chonicle also offers the student an insight into ideas of Orientalism, and how Murakami challenges these pre-conceived notions of Otherness.

While Rebecca Suter locates Murakami between America and Japan, Matthew Chozick, in his article "De-exoticizing Haruki Murakami's Reception," argues that locating him in America or Japan is impossible.

> To suggest that Murakami could even be Japanese or could even be American is to conceptualize identity based on a nationalistic paradigm that may no longer hold much value. After all, in Murakami's world, Colonel Sanders is a pimp and a Chunichi Dragon fan. (Chozick, 2008, pp. 72–73)

Chozick (2008) calls Murakami's work, and in particular *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* "almost universally 'foreign,'" while at the same time "universally accessible" (p. 64). With his representation of the urban landscape that is distinctly plural, hyperreal, and obviously postmodern, Murakami manages, as Chozick says, to represent a new cultural plurality that cannot easily "fit into common historical conceptions of national identity or literary canons" (p. 65). Celeste Loughman (1997) describes Murakami's protagonists as "universal stock figures of contemporary literature," and Murakami's anti-heroes, like his cities, have become distinctly postmodern (p. 88). It was Yomota (2008) who said Murakami's writing can not be attributed to a single place because of his eclectic cultural references that transcreate his worlds into universal spaces:

> While it is true that Murakami is a Japanese writer who writes in Japanese, the cultural sensibility that he draws on, the music, and the films that appear in his works, and the urban way of life that he depicts are all of a nature that cannot be attributed to any single place or people, drifting and circulating as they do in this globalised world. (pp. 34–35)

THE UNCANNY CITY

Murakami's uncanny cities are both familiar and strange, filled with liminal spaces, and a spectral overtone that allows his flaneur to pass through the many realities in a location that is no longer distinctly oriental or occidental, but postmodern. Looking at what constitutes a postmodern city, we move away from modernist tropes of dystopian and utopian locations, towards a much more hyperreal city, filled with simulacra, shifting perspectives and mutable representations. It is an eclectic space that is strangely familiar. And to borrow Maria Beville's (2013) turn of phrase, the city is "a simulacra of signs" that can transport the individual through the crowds and the buildings into other worlds through these known and unknown locations:

> Representations of the metropolis in postmodern literature distinctively move away from the dystopian and utopian Modernist envisionings of the city and neglect romantic ideals in embracing the metropolitan experience and its complexity. Focusing on the city as a plural space, a complex of hidden

> and liminal sites, the city in postmodernist literature is effectively presented as a ghostly locus of the uncanny: decentred, fragmented and defined by the otherness encountered in the crowd and in the simulacra of signs that swarm our field of perception. (p. 14)

This decentering cityscape incorporates the postmodern plurality, becoming what Nick Bentley calls a metropolis that "represents a labyrinthine enigma that metaphorically stands in for the dizzying plurality of contemporary urban living" (Bentley, 2014, p. 175). The signs that swarm around the city are Eastern and Western, familiar and strange, not just for the reader, but also for Murakami's protagonist who has to negotiate this plurality. When Julian Wolfreys (2013) describes the idea of the uncanny city, he talks of how urban and uncanny are related, especially when we think of the urban location in terms such as dwelling, building, home. He remarks that the direct translation of Freud's uncanny is "unhomely," that place that is strangely familiar. The postmodern city has become this liminal space, containing a habitual topography of buildings, people and streets, that remains unknown. Wolfreys uses the film *Don't Look Now* to explain the idea of the uncanny city:

> Every alley leading on to another just like it, opens the city not as knowledgeable place but as abyss in which the iterability of the self-same only serves as a reminder that nothing is the same, and that each and every street is wholly other, in which one comes to find oneself adrift, without bearings, lost … nothing is to be found, nothing known, and anxiety twinned with obsession is exponentially generated in the face of the uncanny persistence of resistance to any epistemological mode that will comfort or make familiar. (p. 170)

TOKYO AS POSTMODERN CITYSCAPE

There are many representations of Tokyo on screen and in literature, and a number of them focus on futuristic, technologically heavy visions of the city, often playing into orientalist notions of computer influenced exotic societies, such as those envisioned in films like *Akira, Lost in Translation, Babel*, and of course *Blade Runner*. Susan Napier (1993), when discussing the fantastic in relation to Japan, discusses how these stereotypical images play into this Utopian/Dystopian rhetoric:

> On the nightmare side we might consider Ridley Scott's 1982 dystopian film, *Blade Runner*, whose dark opening scene is dominated by clearly Japanese images […] In *Blade Runner* the "Orient," especially Japan is seen in a dual role, as both "explosive" and "seductive." In William Gibson's (1984) classic cyberpunk novel, Neuromancer, in contrast, the seductive side is lost […] In Gibson's vision this mazelike international city becomes a metaphor for the bleak postmodern culture his protagonist inhabits. (p. 3)

Tokyo is often subjected to modernist metanarratives of dystopia/utopia, through an Orientalist Western gaze, not allowing the city to be seen as a postmodern

cityscape that is truly familiar and uncanny. It is often disenfranchised from a shared postmodern experience as a result of this othering through the use of modernist binary oppositions. In Benita Johanna Brown's (2008) discussion of Tokyo she says that

> We are able to observe Tokyo as a space that articulates an economy of embodiment, of spatial orientation of self to other, and provides sites of tangibility, by which cinema and architecture open mobile paths that create the conditions of possibility for encounter and exploration. (p. 7)

It is this recreation or transcreation of Tokyo that Murakami has achieved in his depiction of the topography of the city. Merging real and unreal locations, Murakami has created a hyperreal location that is both familiar and strange, distinctly lacking in traditional images of the East as seen in Western cinema. As Brown (2008) says in relation to Murakami:

> Murakami's seemingly literary emphasis on the esoteric, ephemeral particularities of the human condition engenders a specific dialectic of aesthetic sensibilities. Though he frames his stories within cultural, hegemonic contexts, the semiotics of his telling narrates a generic urban appropriation of aesthetic space and sensibilities. (p. 15)

This generic urban space is uncanny, a new imagining of Tokyo, a location that is familiar, but its representation makes it strange, and identifiable. This merging of East and West within a multi-layered non-linear cityscape in Murakami's writing, and particularly in *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, creates a city that is strangely familiar, that is postmodern and uncanny. The urban fabric of his city is made up of a Lyotardian eclecticism, mixed with Harvey's fragmented city created from a palimpsest of images that cannot be pinpointed to precise geographical location, images and references that have been reused and altered but still retain traces of their original selves (p. 66). This palimpsest, or layered re-representation of past and present, calls to mind notions of Baudrillardian simulacrum offering the teacher other postmodern points of reference from which to approach the text. Murakami also employs another familiar device, the flaneur, to explore this city, often seen as a Western aphorism. This amalgamation of East and West again becomes strangely familiar for the reader, playing with Walter Benjamin's notion of the flaneur. Benjamin, in discussing Baudelaire, suggests that the flaneur is the exemplification of this decentering city, explaining that the image of the "labyrinthine character of the city […] has become part of the flaneur's flesh and blood" (Benjamin, 2006, p. 166). Murakami has created a hybridity within his depiction of Tokyo that allows Western and Eastern tropes to merge within the postmodern hyperreality. This hybridity is uncanny for the reader recognizing references that are familiar and strange. And as a result Murakami's city offers an ideal location from which to explore what is a postmodern cityscape for the teacher. Tōru Okada in *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* is the ultimate flaneur, an idle

man moving through his city. Murakami had set out to write "a mystery without a solution" with this novel, but after complaints from readers, he decided to add a third section to the novel, making the protagonist much more engaged as the novel ends, something that mirrored a change in his own life. This "new sense of 'activism' accounts for his desire to write a third volume" (Strecher, 2002b, p. 73). Like his protagonists, Murakami creates a more engaged character as a result of a dialectic with the reader, or as Strecher suggests, with Japan, as Tōru becomes a more engaged individual through a dialectic with the Other as a result of his movement through all of the elements of the cityscape of Tokyo (2014, p. 13). Tōru's engagement with the city, his "new attitude that sustains him to the completion of his quest […] decidedly a first in Murakami fiction," mirrors Murakami's own "sense of commitment to the Japanese people" (Strecher, 2014, p. 13).

Tōru is also one of Murakami's first protagonists to be named. The Boku of his previous detective style fiction has disappeared in favor of a person who can be identified, and while the name may locate him as Japanese, the elements that surround him, and the inertia he experiences, are fully understandable to a postmodern audience. The cultural postmodern divide between East and West has become somewhat transparent, and allows Tōru to pass back and forth into the first world postmodern space, despite the addition of traditional cultural markers, such as names. For Murakami, the naming of Tōru does not inhibit his identifiable first world postmodern struggle anymore. Murakami had personally questioned his own culture in the wake of the sarin gas attack in the Toyko underground and the Kōbe earthquake in 1995. This meant that his own protagonists could begin to feel somewhat secure in their own narratives that shaped their world. The inclusion of a name allows the protagonist a more effective connection to a possible individuality.

The choice of the name Tōru is very apt. This suggestion of "passivity" and passing through, as discussed by Rubin (2005), is something that Tōru also applies to his employment and his flaneur nature (p. 208). Murakami's decision to name his central protagonist with a word that translates as "to pass through" is a very important choice, as Tōru is just passing through his life without attachment or engagement. As a flaneur, Tōru passes through the multi-layered city. His name seems to allow him to traverse its postmodern plurality. Tōru, like the blocked lane at the back of his house, is trapped, but is happy to spend his time in an ever-declining space. He is forced to venture into himself actually to find a way out of his malaise, using this motif of passing through.

He uses his wanderings through the city to observe people going about their business, as a form of therapy after the disappearance of his wife. As a flaneur he can break through this isolation, as Benjamin (2006) explains in his analysis of the flaneur in the writing of Charles Baudelaire, "by filling in the hollow space created in him by such isolation with the borrowed – and fictitious – isolations of strangers" (p. 88). In order to understand his ennui, Tōru employs the Western flaneur tradition

in Tokyo, in the manner of Baudelaire, merging East and West. Tōru's uncle tells him not to make any sudden decisions but to go into the city and people watch:

> You know what I think? I think that what you ought to do is start by thinking about the simplest things and go from there. For example, you could stand on a street corner somewhere day after day and look at the people who come by. You're not in any hurry to decide anything. It may be tough, but sometimes you've got to just stop and take time. You ought to train yourself to look at things with your own eyes until something becomes clear. (Murakami, 2003, p. 328)

Tōru makes his way into Tokyo to sit and observe the people and the rhythm of the city. He makes this a daily routine, sitting and just "watching people's faces" without a thought in his head (Murakami, p. 329). The city allows him to exist in a constant present where his mind flits between past, present, and future, allowing his repressed emotions to re-emerge. His uncle is correct: Tōru's stillness in the multiplicity allows memories to become clear. His observation of the plurality aids his understanding of his postmodern predicament through the postmodern cityscape. As Tōru explores and interprets, so, too, does the reader, making this an ideal text to study the postmodern transcreation of the city.

A COLLAGE OF CULTURAL REFERENCES

Nick Bentley (2014), in his work on the postmodern city in literature, explains that one of the devices postmodern writers employ, and in particular Murakami, "emphasizes the city as a palimpsest of histories and narratives evoked in the psyche of the observer – the postmodern flaneur or flanese who attempts to disentangle its multiplicity of texts" (p. 176). Tōru encounters this layered multiple city as he walks through Tokyo. This uncanny city blends familiar and strange memories, locations, and cultural references that decenter Tōru, allowing him to recognize the plurality. As he sits in Tokyo, watching the movements of the city, images from a past repressed moment relating to his wife's abortion come back to him. Within the simulacra something becomes clear to Tōru when a musician he heard that day two years ago walks past him. It is through Tōru's immobility, his stillness that he can perceive the multiplicity of his surroundings, the shifting of historical realities. He immediately follows the musician, walking through the increasingly uncanny streets of Tokyo:

> The man went on walking at the same steady pace. He crossed the Odakyu Line tracks, passed through a block of shops, through a shrine, through a labyrinth of alleys. […] There was definitely something about this man that made him different from ordinary people. Not only did he never look back; he never once looked to either side. He was so utterly concentrated: what could he be thinking about? Or was he, rather, thinking about absolutely nothing? (Murakami, 2003, p. 239)

Here is a man with a singular purpose amid the noise and bustle of central Tokyo. The musician's steady pace and distinctiveness places him at odds with Tōru, encouraging him to follow what becomes one of the many layers of meaning in his journey. It is through this encounter that Tōru is once again decentered by the changing city. Time seems to lose meaning as old and new Tokyo merge. The city is layered with interlocked contradictions, and Tōru moves from the shops and labyrinthine alleys to the deserted twisted streets making for a very uncanny transition:

> Before long, the man entered a hushed area of deserted streets lined with two-story wood frame houses. The road was narrow and twisted, and the run-down houses were jammed up against each other on either side. The lack of people here was almost weird. More than half the houses were vacant. Boards were nailed across the front doors of the vacant houses, and notices of planned construction were posted outside. Here and there, like missing teeth, were vacant lots filled with summer weeds and surrounded by chain-link fences…
>
> Pots of morning glories and other flowers crammed the little space outside one of the few houses that were occupied. A tricycle lay on its side, and a towel and a child's bathing suit were being dried in the second story window. Cats lay everywhere-beneath the windows, in the doorway-watching me with weary eyes. Despite the bright early-evening hour, there was no sign of people. The geography of this place was lost on me. I couldn't tell north from south. I guessed that I was in the triangular area between Yoyogi and Sendagaya and Harajuku, but I could not be sure. (Murakami, 2003, p. 333)

Tōru describes the area as a forgotten part of the city, a location seeping with spectrality—abandoned homes, populated with ghost-like figures, and eyes watching from unknown locations. Just minutes from the bustling square where Tōru has been seated for 11 days, this strange space has emerged. He has literally become de-centered by the city.

BLURRED NOTIONS OF TIME AND REALITY

As Stephen Hantke (2007) has said, "The urban landscape in Murakami's novels is riddled with such holes, neglected or unexplored pockets and enclosures, which function in radical opposition to the social and economic bustle around them (p. 13). The urban fabric of the city that Tōru encounters is, akin to the David Harvey (1992) description of the postmodern city, a "fragmented" space that is "a 'palimpsest' of past forms superimposed upon each other and a 'collage' of current uses, many of which may be ephemeral" (p. 66). For Tōru, the collision of locations, topography, and architecture makes this "palimpsest" ephemeral, and "impossible to command except in bits and pieces" (Harvey, p. 66). The city contains images and locations that are overlapping with cultural and historical

markers that mean the original image of the city is no longer clear. The city has been transcreated through these images from a distinctly Eastern location to a postmodern city with blurred notions of time and reality. Layer upon layer of historical references only become clear to Tōru when he becomes immobile and begins to observe his postmodern cityscape.

The city is full of these strange pockets, these uncanny spaces, a spectral topography that does not seem quite right, yet merges such pockets with real locations within Tokyo. The novel's attention to "dematerializing" its characters and places is more than a thematic preoccupation or even a plot device; it is a symptom of how the novel unconsciously registers Tokyo. "The real Tokyo bulks in the novel as a faceless, generic urban space. The invented Tokyo, on the other hand, seems real enough, crystallizing the uncanniness of the changes in Okada's life and intensifying the alienating effects of the city" (Chilton, 2009, p. 399).

One such liminal space within Tokyo is the sealed alleyway at the rear of Tōru's house. This strange space is no longer a passageway or laneway as it was originally intended. Through its closure it has become a forgotten area within the city, resembling the district of the city Tōru stumbles into when he follows the musician. It is now a palimpsest:

> It was not an "alley" in the proper sense of the word, but then, there was probably no word for what it was. It wasn't a "road" or a "path" or even a "way." Properly speaking, a "way" should be a pathway or channel with an entrance and an exit, which takes you somewhere if you follow it. But our "alley" had neither entrance nor exit… The alley had not one dead end but two…the story was…that it used to have both an entrance and an exit… But with the rapid economic growth of the mid-fifties, rows of new houses came to fill the empty lots on either side of the road… People didn't like strangers passing so close to their houses and yards, so before long one end of the path was blocked off… Then one local citizen decided to enlarge his yard and completely sealed off his end of the alley with a breeze-block wall. (Murakami, 2003, p. 12)

These anomalous spaces become important locations for Tōru, aiding him on his journey, helping him pass through the multi-layered realities of his world. As the literal translation of his name suggests, Tōru can pass through, he can, as a postmodern flaneur, negotiate through these alternative realities, these uncanny surroundings. The alleyway is not an alleyway, it is the equivalent of an unhomely home, an uncanny space that adds to the postmodern feel of Murakami's city. Stephen Hankte (2007) is correct in saying that this novel is "riddled with such holes, neglected or unexplored pockets and enclosures…In *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, a dry well in a neighbour's back yard, abandoned and half-forgotten, becomes both a trap and a sanctuary to the protagonist. A dead alley behind his house has the same connotations" (Hantke, p. 13).

ACCESSING THE WATERLESS WELL

The waterless well is also accessible from this alleyway and offers Tōru another location from which to explore his city. By entering the dry well, Tōru can tunnel into the city and access another element of the city, its shared unconscious space, but also a locus for the uncanny, situated in such a liminal location:

> Making my way down the soft rope ladder into the well was much harder work than I had imagined it would be…When I had counted twenty rungs, a wave of terror overtook me. It came suddenly, like an electric shock, and froze me in place. My muscles turned to stone. Every pore of my body gushed sweat, and my legs began to tremble. There was no way this well could be so deep. This was the middle of Tokyo. It was right behind the house I lived in. I held my breath and listened, but I couldn't hear a thing. The pounding of my own heart reverberated in my ears with such force I couldn't even hear the cicadas screaming up above. I took a deep breath. (Murakami, 2003, p. 220)

The well brings Tōru in contact with another dimension of the city, another location where Tōru finds himself adrift in the plurality of the postmodern Tokyo. The well is only accessible through the defunct alleyway adding to the fragmented nature of the space. The well plays with traditional ideas of space and time, changing day to night, and providing access to unconscious locations within the city. It is neither an enclosed space, nor filled with water, but a plural locus for exploration. In the dark and the stillness of the well, Tōru can access other layers of the city. His stillness allows him to move through the plurality of the postmodern cityscape into an unconscious space:

> The air in the well was chilling and smelled of the earth. It was a separate world down here, one cut off from the surface, where the sun shone so unstintingly. I looked up to the mouth of the well above me, tiny now. The well's circular opening was cut exactly in half by the half of the wooden cover I had left in place. From below, it looked like a half-moon floating in the night sky. "A half-moon will last for several days," Malta Kano had said. She had predicted it on the telephone. (Murakami, 2003, p. 220)

The waterless well is located in the back garden of a vacant house along this blocked laneway. This contradictory location is connected to the journey that Tōru must take through his city. It becomes an increasingly strange and uncanny location, one that hints at spectrality as a self-sufficient vacant house that hides its history. The well, as Strecher (2014) explains, becomes a "passageway" to another realm of Tokyo, the means by which Tōru can pass through from "this side" to "over there." The well brings him to the metaphysical cityscape, and allows him to explore the hotel, another urban labyrinth. The well also uncannily reminds us of Lieutenant Mamiya's story, playing with ideas of time and space. Tōru is introduced

to Lieutenant Mamiya's story of the "forgotten" war through conversations and correspondence with Mr Honda. Lieutenant Mamiya was put in a deep well by a Soviet intelligence officer where he had a partial epiphany. The repetition of this experience provides "a historical pattern, a narrative ancestor" (Strecher, 2002b, p. 34). These layers attached to the well and the vacant house make it the ideal location for Tōru to explore the plurality of his transcreated Tokyo:

> Like most everything else connected with this house, the well looked as though it had been abandoned long before. Something about it felt as if it should be called "overwhelming numbness." Maybe when people take their eyes off them, inanimate objects become even more inanimate. (Murakami, 2003, p. 65)

When we examine Murakami's descriptions of the city, the merging of East and West becomes more apparent. There is a noticeable absence of traditional Western markers of the oriental city of film, as seen in *Lost in Translation*, *Blade Runner*, and *Cloud Atlas*; instead this postmodern space blurs out the boundaries between East and West, making it difficult to grasp the location from the place names alone. Murakami combines the East and the West into the topography, making it both familiar and strange. There is a plurality to the locations within the city that Tōru feels at one with as he navigates through the hyperreal urban landscape. When he returns to the city to "wander aimlessly" there are references to both Eastern and Western cultures, fusing easily:

> The impulse to go downtown came to me… When had I last been to the streets of the city? …I was all but unaware of the passage of time. Perhaps fifteen minutes had gone by, perhaps twenty, when I realized that my eyes had been following each polished Mercedes-Benz, Jaguar, and Porsche that crept along the jam-packed avenue. In the fresh morning sunlight after a night of rain, these cars sparkled with almost painful intensity, like symbols of something. (Murakami, 2003, p. 352)

In Tōru's description of the city there are very few cultural markers that suggest the location to the reader. Tōru could be in any first world city, making his way around in the style of a Benjamin flaneur, at odds with the crowd, hoping to satisfy a loss within him vis-a-vis these rambling excursions:

> I had no particular goal other than to walk through the city I had not seen for so long. I walked from one street to another, my only thought being to avoid bumping into the people coming toward me. I turned right or left or went straight ahead, depending on the changing of the traffic signals or the whim of the moment. Hands in pockets, I concentrated on the physical act of walking—from the avenues with their rows of department stores and display windows, to the back alleys with their garishly decorated porno shops, to the lively streets with cinemas, through the hushed precincts of a Shinto shrine, and back to the avenues. (Murakami, 2003, pp. 352–353)

The city is filled with Eastern and Western references, and a plurality that suggests a postmodern city that cannot be pinpointed to either a specific spatial or temporal location. This unreliability of the postmodern space disorients Tōru. The plurality of the cityscape is constantly changing from the lively streets to the shrine, forcing him to do as Mr. Honda told Kumiko, namely, "abandon the self and there you are" (2003, p. 51). So he focuses only on walking on making his way through the city in order to re-orient himself:

> Before I realized it, I found myself standing in familiar surroundings. I looked at the tiles beneath my feet, at the little sculpture that stood there, and at the tall glass building that towered over me. I was standing in the middle of the small plaza outside the high-rise, the very one where I had gone last summer to watch the people passing by…Aimless walking around Shinjuku had brought me to the very same place. As before, I bought myself coffee and a doughnut at Dunkin' Donuts and took them with me to the plaza bench. I sat and watched the faces of the people passing by, which put me in an increasingly calm and peaceful mood. (Murakami, 2003, p. 353)

The images that Murakami chooses are an assortment of Western and Eastern elements, Dunkin' Donuts, a Shinto shrine, Jaguars and Porsches, and these add to the plurality of the location. These subtle references to both East and West transcreate the traditional idea of Tokyo into a much more postmodern space that fulfils Lyotard's ideas of eclecticism. It is here, amid the postmodern noise, that Tōru becomes "increasingly calm and peaceful." He comes to recognize the plurality of the city and his journey through it allows him not only to pass through its layers but also to observe the uncanny nature of his surroundings. Through his experience as a flaneur, he learns to sit and observe the city from numerous locations, allowing him to "abandon the self" and find calm.

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DAISUKE KIRIYAMA

8. "YOU'RE PROBABLY NOT THAT INNOCENT EITHER, MR. MURAKAMI"

Translation and Identity between Texts in Murakami Haruki's "Nausea 1979"

"ŌTO 1979" AND THE MISTRANSLATION OF *LA NAUSÉE*

The title of Murakami Haruki's short story "Ōto 1979" (Nausea 1979, published in 1984) suggests that it is a rewriting of Jean-Paul Sartre's novel, *La nausée* (*Nausea*, 1938). Japanese translators have conventionally given Sartre's novel the Japanese title *Ōto*, but it is often pointed out that this is a mistranslation, for *ōto* means "vomiting," while *la nausée* or nausea, which is the feeling that you are going to vomit, is closer to *hakike* in Japanese. In Sartre's novel, the protagonist Antoine Roquentin is attacked by nausea, but never vomits. In "Ōto 1979," on the other hand, the main character, a nameless illustrator, recalls a series of fits of vomiting he once experienced. There is a certain gap between the Japanese title of Sartre's novel and its content (vomiting and non-vomiting), but Murakami bridges the gap by having the illustrator vomit. At the same time, however, there arises another gap, this time between "Ōto 1979" (vomiting both in its story and title) and *La nausée* (non-vomiting both in its story and title), the novel to which Murakami's short story alludes. Murakami's play on (mis)translation proves his keen awareness of the indelible gap which, as we shall see, engenders not only in mistranslation but in translation in general.

This chapter's aim is to explore how "Ōto 1979" takes advantage of the gap in translation. The differentiation and interrelation between "Ōto 1979" and *La nausée* of which the former urges us to take notice will show merits of reading and teaching Murakami's works especially when we interrogate the concept of the so-called globalized world in which literary works and many other cultural items enjoy international circulation in translation. This will permit us more deeply to investigate not only a mode of translation in the age of globalization, but also a mode of reading in relation to histories which arise between texts as in the process of translation. This reconsideration of translation and historical contexts becomes an acute issue particularly when we consider that Murakami's works are translated into various languages and read all over the world. When we teach and read Murakami's works,

M. C. Strecher & P. L. Thomas (Eds.), Haruki Murakami, 101–116.

whether in Japan or in another place, for example, what, if anything, do we need to know beforehand to appreciate them? And what would be a teacher's role vis-à-vis students?

Of course, the reader does not need to know all of the contexts surrounding a work in advance, which would be impossible at any case. As to "Ōto 1979," the least we need to know, in my opinion, is the historical connotations included in the title, which signal the reader to think of the peculiar relationship between the original and the translation. "Ōto 1979" is an exemplary text by which to investigate the matters of translation, history, and identity, not only because it richly makes use of them but also because, in doing so, it also becomes a story about them.

Certainly, however, we can enjoy them without any regionally, nationally, or linguistically specific contexts. "Ōto 1979," for example, does not contain any culturally specific behaviors or items which require a long explanation in a footnote. The reader does not have to know what the Yamanote Line is as long as she or he can guess that a "carlord of commuters on the Yanamote Line" (Murakami, 2007, p. 158) refers to a fair number of ordinary people on a train. In fact, the setting can be any cosmopolitan city. The story mentions various foods, mostly Western and Japanese, and there are references to the names of jazz musicians and records. Again, exactly what or who they are is not important, insofar as the reader can feel that we are in a cosmopolitan city in which various commodities are juxtaposed and available to anyone. Seen in this light, it is a typical postmodern urban landscape.

Fredric Jameson (1991) calls postmodernism the "cultural logic of late capitalism." According to him, the postmodern historical perspective is characterized by "incorporating the 'raw material' of history and leaving its function out, a kind of flattening and appropriation" (p. 325). In this perspective, there is no longer an objective history which presupposes the fundamental connection between events or items and meanings, and instead "fashion and the market," or the "dynamics of late capitalism," reigns (p. 325). One has the freedom of choice and appropriation, since there are no inherent meanings in commodities that stem from their historical origins. The only causality that envelops even this freedom is that this condition is rooted in the system called late capitalism.

In "Ōto 1979," an illustrator who likes sleeping with his friends' wives and girlfriends tells the narrator, a novelist called Murakami (presumably the author himself) of his experience of daily vomiting and receiving mysterious telephone calls which may or may not be related to vomiting. They guess that the illustrator's hidden sense of guilt causes the incidents, the telephone calls being a product of his own imagination, but this is not convincing enough because the vomiting started and ended suddenly and the guilt hypothesis fails to explain it, as any other theory does. Thus the story does not offer any definitive reason why the vomiting and telephone calls happened. Together with the urban landscape which abounds in international commodities, the lack of causality in vomiting fortifies the perspective that this short story depicts a peculiar effect of globalization in which everything lacks

inherent meanings, and in order to grasp this point, we do not need any knowledge of Sartre's novel.

The use of the diary in the story also stresses this sense of postmodernism. The illustrator, in order to reconstitute his vomiting experience, refers to the diary he keeps and boasts the accuracy of the data and its convenience—he can check such things as what he ate and vomited, where and when, what music he was listening to, and even cite the exact vicissitude of his weight and the weather of the day. However, the enumeration of various foods, the names of musicians and the titles of the LPs does not reveal any truth about the experience, though it at least contributes to the formation of the illustrator's identity based on his personal taste for and choice of commodities. But finally, the accumulation of those data cannot explain the causes of his vomiting, or the telephone calls he receives.

Still, this use of the diary can also be a signal to send our attention to *La nausée*, for the novel is comprised of fragments of the diary of the protagonist, Roquentin. The diary in *La nausée* is almost antithetical to that in "Ōto 1979." It traces the developmental process of Roquentin's philosophical thoughts over his experience of nausea, while he confesses the inaccuracy and unreliability of his own writing at the very beginning. Despite that inaccuracy, however, Roquentin succeeds in finding the cause and solution of nausea. As it turns out, his nausea is also related to the world's lack of inherent meanings, but he retains the hope to overcome it and give himself meaning by exercising his own creative power, and his diary functions as partial demonstration of that power. Murakami then parodies this device of the diary by turning it into an illustration of the postmodern situation where there is neither cause nor solution.

This parody may, however, paradoxically suggest that Murakami is not postmodern enough. Jameson (1991) claims that "pastiche" qua "blank parody" characterizes postmodern literary production (p. 17). Pastiche is a superficial mimicry of a style without the "satiric impulse," while the urge to displace a norm supports parody (p. 17). Murakami's almost joking parody of Sartre's novel demonstrates his desire to defy Sartrean philosophy more directly than would postmodern pastiche, which, being "an elaborated symptom of the waning of our historicity" (Jameson, 1991, p. 21), randomly quotes the stereotypical images of the past.

This does not necessarily mean that Murakami is trying to recuperate a more classical sense of historicity that assumes an objective history with an immutable order of past facts that is universally available to everyone. "Ōto 1979," which presents the past (including the past author himself) as fiction, does not display a naïve belief in this sense of historicity. Importantly, while 1979 is the year when Murakami's first novel, *Kaze no uta o kike* (*Hear the Wind Sing*) was published, "Ōto 1979" fictionalizes this year of the origin of his career as a professional writer and relates it to the translational history of a novel written by another writer. What, then, is the form of history this story suggests, particularly through its parody of Sartre's novel?

If we take account of Sartre's novel and particularly its Japanese (mis)translation, it adds another perspective to our reading of "Ōto 1979": everything may lack inherent meanings, but there are still historical connotations attached to it that are available and to a degree mandatory, and moreover, translation multiplies or displaces those connotations in a unique way—in this case, unique to the context of translation in Japan.

From this perspective, the reason why the illustrator vomits lies, if any, in the fact that, even as it is a translation of *La nausée*, the non-vomiting novel, the word *ōto* also signifies vomiting. It is a joke, a play on its translational history which is, precisely speaking, neither inside nor outside the text; it is only between the texts. This gives us a slightly different view of history from the postmodern one which grants us the freedom of choice within the system of late capitalism. Certainly it is not that the immutable, objective history exists, but it does not necessarily mean that one is entirely free from historical meanings so as to enjoy commodities to satisfy one's capitalist desires without any imposed constraint except for the very logic of late capitalism. After all, a translation needs the original precedent to the translation, and this historicity cannot dwindle to nothing; but then the original is not the sole source of historical meanings in question here, for they arise in the relation between the original and the translation.

The very first sentence of "Ōto 1979" shows Murakami's (1988) own awareness of the peculiar context *La nausée/Ōto* has acquired through the Japanese (mis) translation, for he uses the word "hakike" (nausea) there (p. 192). Throughout the story, both *hakike* and *ōto* are used almost interchangeably, which paradoxically evokes the unbridgeable gap engendered between *ōto* and *la nausée* through mistranslation. Or, perhaps we should say that the gap engendered in-between now resides in the word *ōto*, which wavers between vomiting (as a Japanese common noun) and non-vomiting (as a translation of Sartre's novel). The relation of *Ōto/ōto* to *La nausée/la nausée*, then, is at once to what it is and to what it is not. Moreover, since no other word, foreign or Japanese, can express this particular historical connotation of *ōto*, the Japanese title *Ōto* as well as the common noun *ōto* becomes untranslatable. It acquires a unique, split and untranslatable identity through translation.

Thus, the story forces us to consider not only the form of history but also the question of translatability and of identity in relation to it. Murakami's play in "Ōto 1979" points to the process in which translation at once produces a unique identity and introduces a kind of non-identity within identity, which arises not from within a word, a language, or a text, but is engendered between words, languages, and texts. The untranslatable element engendered through translation does not produce a stable identity rooted either in objective history or in subjective choice. On the contrary, it points to a non-identity which is unique but not immutable, for it can be added or altered through translation. That the story is a rewriting of Sartre is important in this respect, for, as we will see, Sartre, while also disapproving of the fixity of identity, finds the agency of change in the spontaneity of oneself. In the following, then, let us first examine the structure of translation, and then compare Sartre with Murakami to

explore how the latter reconsiders Sartrean spontaneity by utilizing translation and offers a new understanding of the structure of language, history and identity.

TRANSLATABILITY'S DEPENDENCE ON THE UNTRANSLATABLE

The above questions of translatability and identity resonate with what Walter Benjamin (2007) explores in "The Task of the Translator." Benjamin first asserts that the original and a translated version of it are not identical, with which most people would readily agree. However, Benjamin is peculiar in that he, contrary to the common view of "good" translation, disparages translations that aim at the reproduction of meaning and the minimization of the gap between original and target language, and instead recommends literal translation and the preservation of the original's syntax, thus emphasizing the discrepancy between languages. For Benjamin, translation is precious precisely because the gap involved therein illuminates each language's unique, unrepresentable aspect, what he calls its "mode of intention"—a part of the language's identity which becomes recognizable only when seen from the interspace between languages. Translation brings into light the original's mode of intention as an "element that does not lend itself to translation" (p. 75). If we posit, as Benjamin does, that only this exposition of the untranslatable element justifies translation, then the translatability of the original paradoxically depends on the untranslatable in it.

What is notable about this process is that it can alter the language used in translation by tying it up with the source language through the very differentiation that designates the untranslatable in the original. Thus Benjamin quotes Rudolph Pannwitz: "The basic error of the translator is that he preserves the state in which his own language happens to be instead of allowing his language to be powerfully affected by the foreign tongue" (p. 81). And if a language transforms itself through translation, it means the untranslatable in the language does not remain the same, either. The resulting "new" language, on the contrary, acquires its own new mode of intention, a new untranslatable element, and a new identity through translation, for translation's differentiating process produces a gap not only between the original and the translation but also within the language of translation. Thus, translation at once proves the identities of the languages involved in it while altering the identity of the language used in translation. The identity and history of a language cannot but be displaced at the moment it is discovered, and translation is the agency of that discovery and displacement.

This is best proved by Murakami's translation-like style and its effect on the Japanese language, to which we will turn shortly. For now, let us return to the word *ōto*. Though Benjamin puts forward verbatim translation as a means of highlighting the gap in translation as well as the untranslatable, in my view, the mistranslated and untranslatable word *ōto* also serves as an exemplary case of translation in general. For, it presumably derives from and points to a difference that does not appear on the level of superficial meaning between the Japanese word *hakike* and the French word

la nausée: the Japanese word sounds much more prosaic than the French word, and does not properly serve as the novel's title as the original does. In this regard, the word *ōto* is closer to *la nausée* despite the difference of their meanings. Benjamin points out:

> Fidelity in the translation of individual words can almost never fully reproduce the meaning they have in the original. For sense in its poetic significance is not limited to meaning, but derives from the connotations conveyed by the word chosen to express it. We say of words that they have emotional connotations. (p. 78)

In this sense, the word *ōto* actually has more in common with *la nausée* than *hakike* does, but then the difference in meaning from the French word nonetheless reveals the unavoidable gap in translation and the untranslatable in *la nausée*. *Hakike* and *la nausée* supposedly signify the same thing, but the translational relation between *Ōto* and *La nausée* reveals that *hakike* and *la nausée* each carry their own untranslatable element.

Through this relation, moreover, *Ōto* obtains something Sartre's novel did not have before, namely, additional connotations concerning the untranslatable elements of *ōto*, *hakike*, and *la nausée*. It is only on this premise that Murakami's story, "Ōto 1979," can serve as a joke—the illustrator vomits, as per the literal meaning of *ōto*, at the same time that the word is closely associated with the Sartrean non-vomiting *nausée*. That joke, then, directs our attention to the differentiating process of translation at work between *Ōto* and *La nausée*, the displacement of identity and the multiplication of connotations attached to a language through translation. Murakami's play on (mis)translation suggests that languages are neither autonomous, static entities nor interchangeable, simply convenient tools of communication, but, on the contrary, alter their own identities in relation to other languages.

MURAKAMI HARUKI THE NON-JAPANESE JAPANESE WRITER

This alteration occurs all the more rapidly in the globalized world, in which the speed of translation accelerates. This perspective is also important for thinking about Murakami's style and its reception. As Matthew Carl Strecher (2002) argues, whereas critics often regard Murakami's works as "non-Japanese Japanese literature," it suggests that "something strongly ethnic and regional remains in our reading of world cultures" (p. 2). Indeed, when we say "non-Japanese," we presuppose what is "Japanese." Strecher goes on to say that "this clouds our reading experience with expectations that may be out of place, or at least out of date," and yet such "stereotyping also has its value: it forces us to confront and to interrogate what we might term the 'cultural simultaneity' of the contemporary world" (p. 2). I would like to focus particularly on this interrogation that the presupposed "Japaneseness" forces us to do. For, it seems to me that Murakami's works, as "non-Japanese

Japanese literature," allow us to have the very experience of being "out of place" and "out of date" as an experience of the globalized world par excellence, which an emphasis on "cultural simultaneity" may obscure. In fact, as Strecher points out, the language in Murakami's writing, reminiscent of styles found in the Japanese translation of foreign literary works, most notably American literature, "disturbs Japanese native speakers, who find something vaguely off-center, almost foreign in it" (p. 1). Through Murakami's writing, a gap arises within the Japanese language, as it were, as a result of translation, exactly in the way Benjamin suggests.

Certainly, this displacement of language through translation is not an exclusively Japanese phenomenon; rather, it is a part of the "cultural simultaneity" of the contemporary globalized world. Yet it does not nullify—quite the reverse, in fact, it presupposes—regional, national, and linguistic specificities. Miura Reiichi (2014), in comparing Murakami with Tim O'Brien, finds a feature of postmodern literature in the sense of being out of place or uncomfortable within the home, which is a hallmark of the "globalized world in which the distinction between inside and outside has dissolved," the world in which the expansion of capitalism drives away the indigenous (p. 26).[1] However, this is not an absolute negation of home, for in Murakami and O'Brien, there is a sense of home, albeit negatively shown, and it is still conceived as "Japanese" or "American." We can say that the sense of dislocation, displacement, or disjuncture characterizes the literature of globalization, and it is dependent on the spectral sense of home. Thus, as long as Murakami writes in Japanese and his works are first published in Japan and become available to Japanese readers, it is difficult to ignore its regional, national, and linguistic specificities, even though those specificities are constituted as a result of translation in the textual interspace of "Japanese" and "non-Japanese."

These specificities thus belong to the untranslatable. Indeed, Murakami's translation-like style is extremely difficult to reproduce in translation. Though Strecher (2014) asserts that its "atmosphere of translation is undoubtedly one major reason Murakami's works read well in other languages" (p. 12), Jay Rubin, a prominent translator of Murakami's works including "Ōto 1979," says:

> Murakami Haruki's style is influenced by English, and could be described as *batakusai* [obtrusively Westernized; literally, "butter-stinking"]. I said that translating it into English was easy, but that peculiar *batakusasa* [the noun form of *batakusai*] completely disappears in English. The freshness, the most central and important part of his style is lost. But it cannot be helped. (Shibata, Numano, Fujita, & Yomota, 2006, p. 95, my translation)

Indeed, the natural, fluent flow of English in Rubin's translation does not reproduce "something vaguely off-center" in Murakami's style.

Still, translations of Murakami's works can express his "non-Japanese Japaneseness," even though it does not appear in the same way as in the originals. Then, in order to grasp it in other ways, we need at least to take into consideration the fact that they are translated works. When we read Murakami's works in English, for

example, our attention should be drawn to the fact that those works, despite having come out of Japan and having been written in Japanese, can be read smoothly in English. It indicates Murakami's non-Japaneseness, especially considering that he is still an anomaly among Japanese writers and nearly the only contemporary Japanese writer read all over the world. Still for a while longer, then, the smoothness of the English translation, instead of an awkward verbatim translation in the style favored by Benjamin, will continue functioning in its own way as an indication of Murakami's non-Japanese Japaneseness, which represents translation's differentiating process and the untranslatable gap it produces.

Untranslatable elements produced in translation attest to the fact that globalization is not necessarily the unification of cultures into one entity, while those elements are not totally lost in further translations, either. Translations, on the contrary, produce the untranslatable not only within the original but also within themselves, which can be rendered into further translatability. To take another example, consider the connotations of the word *ōto* in "Ōto 1979" and its English translation by Rubin. He makes use of the English title of *La nausée* and gives the story the English title "Nausea 1979," directing the reader's attention to the story's allusion to Sartre's novel.[2] In doing so, however, he cannot but sacrifice the vomiting/non-vomiting gap involved in the Japanese translation of *La nausée*. Still, this "mistranslation" does not necessarily lead to the impoverishment of the work. For, the English title "Nausea 1979" succeeds in creating still another gap within Murakami's short story, a gap between its title (non-vomiting) and its content (vomiting). In a sense, and almost inevitably, Rubin conversely repeats the Japanese mistranslation of the title *La nausée*, and thereby attaches an additional connotation to the word "nausea." The translation of *hakike* in the first sentence shows that Rubin is as conscious of the gap as Murakami is—he translates it as "vomiting" (p. 151).[3] He clearly does so to bring to the reader's attention this strange wavering of the story between vomiting and non-vomiting, and the gap between "Nausea 1979" and *Nausea*/*La nausée*. They are a reenactment of the wavering and untranslatable gap between "Ōto 1979" and *Ōto/La nausée* in its own context with its own untranslatability.

SARTRE'S POSTMODERN IDEAL

Translatability and the untranslatable, as well as the form of identity and history they produce, help us to discern the illusory nature of the postmodern ideal of the free, creative identity that is often considered to be possible in the globalized world. Miura (2014) argues that the postmodern situation is that in which there can no longer be an objective history, wherein subject, history, and reason are replaced by identity, memory, and trauma respectively (p. 58). This means that even when Murakami refers to historical events more directly (he does so especially in his works in and beyond *Nejimakidori kuronikuru* [*The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, published in 1994–1995]), they are not presented as an objective history, universally open to

everyone, but are rendered into the form of personal, traumatic memories. Constituting an identity based on personal memory, people in the postmodern situation cannot but be extremely individualistic; the supreme order for the postmodern subject is to establish one's own identity for survival, and the self-innovation or "realization of creativity inherent in us" is directly linked with the production of value through recognition from others (p. 99).

It should, however, be noted, following Miura, that the postmodern situation is not a true picture of the contemporary world in which we are situated. The postmodern situation, indeed, must conceal its founding paradox—a paradox concerning the dissolution of the boundaries between inside and outside.[4] For, while this dissolution makes objectivity untenable and foregrounds the importance of identity and memory, whether personal or collective, in the final analysis it invalidates any claim on one's own identity, which must issue from inside oneself. In other words, identity is always exposed to the differentiating process which forces identity to produce a gap within it and causes a kind of non-identity to reside *within* identity, as the contradictory phrase "non-Japanese Japanese" already demonstrates. Non-identity within identity in this sense is not the foundation of the postmodern autonomous self-innovation as free realization of one's inherent creativity. It is an interrelation with that which is seemingly exterior to and different from oneself and yet has some aspects of oneself, just as we see in the relation of languages in translation. In this sense, we can say that translation elucidates the contemporary structure of identity in general hidden behind the postmodern illusion of the free identity.

"Ōto 1979" again becomes particularly important in this regard not only because it reveals the exemplary differentiating process of translation that frustrates the postmodern project to establish an identity based on personal memory, but also because it is a rethinking of Sartre's concept of freedom. In the final analysis, what Sartre calls "consciousness" aims at the postmodern freedom. Murakami's displacement of the Sartrean freedom is, then, simultaneous with that of the postmodern situation.

This leads us now to a brief examination of Sartre's novel and philosophy. *La nausée* seems to exhibit the concept of freedom rather negatively, at least at first glance. Roquentin repeatedly feels nausea, and eventually he notices that it symptomatizes his gradual recognition of the meaninglessness of every existence in the world, including himself—everything lacks inherent meanings and is "gratuit" (Sartre, 1996, p. 187), groundless and free. This recognition gives him a vertiginous shock, and he wishes for his being to have some value and meaning.

Roquentin finds the possibility for that meaningful being in the creation of a work of art. He notices that while he is listening to a jazz record of a song entitled "Some of These Days," his nausea disappears. It occurs to him that this is because the record contains certain elements that lie beyond meaningless existence. He believes, in fact, that in the very act of creating this song, the composer and the singer were saved ("sauvés"), that their sin of existing ("péché d'exister") has been washed away (Sartre, 1996, p. 249). Roquentin imagines the lives of its creators as though they are

emanating from the record, and the created song renders them beings with value and meaning beyond the freedom of existence. In the end, Roquentin hits upon the plan of becoming a creator by writing a novel.

Importantly, according to Sartre's philosophy, this creation of art and meaning is possible precisely because of the meaninglessness of existence, for it establishes the possibility of a "free, conscious determination" (Sartre, 1984, p. 732). One is free to give meaning to any existence of the world precisely because it has no inherent meanings, and the creative power to produce meaning resides within oneself, or one's consciousness, fundamentally free from outside constraint. Accordingly, freedom is the source not only of nauseating anxiety but also of the possibilities of creating value and meaning.

Sartre, however, does not necessarily share Roquentin's optimism. After all, we never know whether Roquentin actually wrote his novel. In fact, looking back at *La nausée*, Sartre (1978) says that when Roquentin "thinks that he is going to be saved in the end by the work of art, he screws up," and that "he won't be saved" (p. 43). This does not oblige us to believe the author's retrospective evaluation, but perhaps the suddenness of Roquentin's coming up with this optimistic idea at the end of the novel does tempt us to read it ironically.

When he decides to write his novel, what excites Roquentin is his expectation that people, by reading the novel, will think about his life in the same manner as he thinks about the life of the singer of "Some of These Days." In this vision, the creator's meaning and value that the created object qua self-realization embodies is identical with others' recognition, and the creator attains a sense of autonomy through it. Yet, as Sartre emphasizes over and again in his later philosophical works, the full recovery of the consciousness's freedom is an ever-unachievable ideal, for one is always in conflict with others who have their own consciousness or faculties of valuation. Or, to put it more precisely, one is always engaged in and regulated by conditions set by others, and in this sense it seems that there is no interiority of one's own free from the influences of others; in fact, one's interiority is to some extent dependent on others.

This is not to suggest, however, that Sartre abandons his belief in the consciousness's fundamental freedom. Notably, Sartre rejects the usual understanding of consciousness as a function of the mind that restrains the self; on the contrary, the Sartrean consciousness is unconditionally free and spontaneous, and lies even beyond one's own control, an "*individuated* and *impersonal* spontaneity," a "spontaneity producing itself" (Sartre, 1972, p. 98). This consciousness never loses its creative power, even when in conflict with others and the external conditions they set. By formulating consciousness in this way, Sartre reinstates the boundaries between inside and outside, or one's interiority and the exteriority of others. And even if we accept that Sartre does not endorse Roquentin's optimistic aesthetic solution in the novel, we can say that, throughout his career, he retains the concept of spontaneous consciousness as the source of the possibility of resistance to the imposition of values and meanings by others.

The Sartrean consciousness is a self-innovative force in which unrestricted possibilities inhere, and the work of art that should give Roquentin his sense of autonomy and harmonious relation with others, without hindering him from originating possibilities of value and meaning, embodies the full realization of the freedom of consciousness even though it remains an unattainable ideal. The Sartrean consciousness in its ideal form is equivalent to the postmodern free identity we examined earlier in its assertion of inner creativity without friction with others. In this regard, the postmodern situation is Sartre's utopia.

THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF INNOCENCE

There can be little question but that for those of Murakami's generation, Sartre was one of the most prominent philosophers, and it is quite possible that Murakami himself views him in this way. In an interview, for example, Murakami (2010) says that his novel *1Q84* (published in 2009–2010) is an "antithesis against 20th-century 'contemporary literature,' something Sartrean [*sarutoruteki na mono*] for instance" (p. 51). Here Murakami declares his belief in the power of love and its fundamental simplicity. He says that the primitive and mythical world of *1Q84* foregrounds the importance of this fundamental simplicity of love, and counterposes it with a more neurotic kind of love found in 20th-century literature and films. His mention of Sartre comes up in this context, for the human relationship in Sartre is more conflictive. Sartre's conception of literature changed over time, from the manifestation of his philosophy in narrative form to a means of social improvement, but he was always more an advocate of the individual's autonomous freedom than of love.

However, as Miura points out, connection through love in *1Q84* is impossible. The two main characters, Tengo and Aomame, have the freedom and capability for self-realization, and their salvation derives from the love between them, but the novel repeatedly emphasizes the fictionality and impossibility of that love (Miura, 2014, p. 106). For, with one's personal traumatic memory, one's self-realization remains individual—the assertion of inner creativity is incompatible with harmonious connection with others as exteriority. The situation is therefore typically postmodern, and the mythical world wherein people can connect with each other by means of love is, as is Roquentin's creation of the work of art, at best an impossible ideal that gives people a sense of hope—not through being realized, but by allowing them to cherish the expectation of its postponed achievement, which, however, will never come true. Miura finds the novel's value in its precise depiction of the structure and limitations of the postmodern situation as well as of the difficulty of imagining anything outside that situation. If *1Q84* can serve as an antithesis to "something Sartrean," it is by showing that the world after the end of conflict is not as good as Sartre believed because of its founding paradox concerning inside and outside.

Returning to "Ōto 1979," whose title is taken from Sartre's novel, we might argue that the work is an earlier and alternative attempt by Murakami to overcome Sartre. My conclusion is that it undermines Sartre's reliance on the spontaneity of

consciousness through its play on translation, and in doing so, reimagines one's relation to the world differently from Sartre's conflict between spontaneity and the exterior limitations placed thereon, and also from its ultimate goal after the end of conflict—the postmodern situation—in which history becomes personal memory upon which to found one's identity.

The narrator "Murakami" near the end of the story proposes a morality of personal choice. He says that since there could be hundreds of theories about the illustrator's vomiting and unexplained telephone calls, but no single truth, the "problem is which theory you're willing to accept. And what you learn from it" (Murakami, 2007, p. 162). This gives the impression that one could freely choose any theory one likes. However, unlike Roquentin's mental anguish, whose cause and solution lies within him, Murakami and the illustrator describe the involuntary, reasonless bodily action of vomiting as if it were coming from the outside. Thus they use the verbs "yattekuru" and "kuru," "to come over" or "to visit." The incident is not just a problem of the inside; it goes beyond voluntary choice, and even the spontaneity of the Sartrean consciousness. The theory and moral the illustrator chooses out of his experience is that "it might happen to somebody else." He goes on to say: "To you, for example, Mr. Murakami. You're probably not all that innocent either, I suspect" (Murakami, 2007, p. 162).[5] Being "not innocent" here cannot simply mean the unconvincing hypothesis that the hidden sense of guilt of committing adultery made him vomit and imagine the telephone calls. Still, the illustrator's remark suggests that being "not innocent" nevertheless may be the cause of the incident.

Of what, then, are they "not innocent"? The final paragraph, occurring immediately following the remark quoted above, gives us no clue. It says only that thereafter they maintained the same friendship and the same lifestyles, including the exchange of "far-from-avant-garde records" and drinking together (Murakami, 2007, p. 162). The final sentence then suggests "Murakami's" implicit expectation of the imminent arrival of vomiting and phone calls: "Fortunately, neither he nor I have been visited by nausea or phone calls so far" (Murakami, 2007, p. 162). It is as if the postmodern situation in late capitalism emblematized by their lifestyles were itself the cause of the causeless incident. It may or may not happen to anyone; the risk is universal because it is causeless, and such is the structure of the postmodern world. Seen in this light, one becomes "not innocent" not because of certain deeds one did in the past but because of living in such a situation, which lies beyond the realm of personal choice.

However, here is one more twist that undermines this view which presupposes the overall postmodern structure as the only causal determinant. The word "nausea" in the last sentence is "ōto" in the original (Murakami, 1988, p. 120), and that word brings us back again for the last time to the Sartrean self-founded *nausée*. In so doing, the word *ōto* reminds us of the point made in the first section of this essay: precisely speaking, the fits of vomiting do not come from the outside; they arise between the texts through translation's differentiating process. The bodily act of vomiting comes neither from the outside nor from the inside. It derives not from the

world's lack of inherent meanings and causality, but from a history and meaning that is produced nowhere else but between texts.

If innocence exempts one from vomiting, it indicates a state in which one is autonomous and free from this burden, just as the solution of Roquentin's *nausée* is autonomy and freedom. "Ōto 1979" implies, however, that there is no way to prevent the onset of *ōto* because the languages are always exposed to the differentiating process illustrated by translation, as we are always exposed to the histories and meanings engendered between texts even in the seemingly postmodern situation of the globalized world. Thus, we cannot imagine our relation to the world as conflict between spontaneity and exterior limitations, for our identity, meaning, history, and so on are not determined by our spontaneous creative power or personal memory. In this condition, our identity cannot but be haunted by non-identity just as the word *ōto* is, because identity also emerges from the in-between space where there can be no clear distinction between inside and outside, even though it is not totally lost. The involuntary vomiting is a symptom, then, an indication of its existence.

IDENTITY AND THE SYSTEM

In his introduction to *Kaiten mokuba no deddo hiito* (*Dead heat on a merry-go-round*), the collection which contains "Ōto 1979," Murakami (1988) confesses his sense of helplessness: "*That we cannot go anywhere* is the essence of this helplessness. We own an operational system, which is our life, into which we can fit us, but this system at the same time regulates ourselves. It is very similar to a merry-go-round. We just go around a certain place at a certain pace. We cannot reach anywhere, nor can we get off or transfer" (p. 14). The introduction's pessimistic tone, together with the ominous images of vomiting and the mysterious phone calls, may make the reader to want to read the impossibility of innocence in "Ōto 1979" in this vein.

The impossibility of innocence, however, is an inevitable gap within identity, and therefore the short story seems to refute the introduction's assertion of the impossibility of deviating from the regulating system. The aspect of non-identity within identity becomes particularly evident when we examine the telephone calls attendant to the illustrator's vomiting. In each telephone call, an unfamiliar male voice with "a nasty ring to it" (Murakami, 2007, p. 164) merely pronounces the illustrator's name—a name that remains unrevealed to the reader. The name designates the illustrator, certainly, but then, we cannot exclude the possibility that the man on the telephone is uttering his own name, which may be identical with the illustrator's. The name is one of the most conspicuous aspects of this system called "our life" that regulates us, but now, through the very performance of naming "me" in these telephone calls, the name also becomes something that possibly designates at once what "I" am and what "I" am not. Thus in the last call, the voice adds, "Do you know who I am?" (p. 161), calling into question the certainty of the "I." The telephone calls, then, symbolize the non-identical relationship with our own identity, which, despite what Murakami says in his introduction, transforms the course set by

the regulating system, even though the altered course may not necessarily take us to a place we want to go.

If so, there is no causal relation between the vomiting incidents and the telephone calls, for the latter simply indicates what happens in the former when we consider that vomiting results from Murakami's play on the translation of *La nausée* to *Ōto*, which plants non-identity within the word *ōto*. Yet, importantly, the telephone calls suggest that this is not just a matter of language, which is a part of the system, but also related to the displacement of ourselves, of we who use language. Within this logic, no system can regulate us if we are attentive enough to what happens between texts, which alters the regulating system itself, as translation exemplifies by its displacement of languages. We are not innocent, not autonomous and free, but admitting that fact shows us the possibility of displacing the system itself.

Murakami's concern with the system is consistent, as his acceptance speech for the Jerusalem Prize in 2009 shows. In this speech, Murakami (2009) employs a metaphor of an egg fighting against a stone wall to express the conflict between an individual and what he calls "the System," and declares: "Between a high, solid wall and an egg that breaks against it, I will always stand on the side of the egg." The System here is not some transcendental power that unilaterally oppresses people, for each of us must take some responsibility for establishing it; "The System did not make us: We made the System." In this sense, this System is similar to the regulating system called "our life," in which we cannot but be engaged to form an "I."

And yet, while the odds are still against individuals, Murakami (2009) does express a sense of hope that resides in the connections between individuals, something similar to the "impossible love" in *1Q84*:

> To all appearances, we have no hope of winning. The wall is too high, too strong—and too cold. If we have any hope of victory at all, it will have to come from our believing in the utter uniqueness and irreplaceability of our own and others' souls and from the warmth we gain by joining souls together.

This metaphor of an egg and a wall symptomatically shows the postmodern paradox of inside and outside, reproducing the Sartrean conflict between the individual, who should be and is at bottom autonomous and free, and exterior constraint. The System is not an oppressive power wholly outside the individual; rather, there is mutual dependence between individuals and the System. Yet the metaphor reinstates the boundaries between inside and outside by emphasizing the existence of the "soul" encompassed in a "shell" and independent of "the wall." As a result, hope for salvation lies solely in the expectation of warmth of love that, in principle, will never be achieved. We might consider, as Miura does concerning *1Q84*, that, whether Murakami intends it or not, this practically functions as criticism against that postmodern structure insofar as it faithfully reflects and thereby sheds light on that structure, including its limitations, while also suggesting the contemporary reality that we have not yet overcome the postmodern, nor the Sartrean sensibility

that dreamed of realizing an autonomous identity capable of creating value and meaning, and of harmonious coexistence with others.

Nevertheless, "Ōto 1979" teaches us an alternative way to see the structure of the production of value and meaning—the differentiating process working between texts which translation best illustrates. In so doing, it also teaches us where to look for possibilities of alteration—of identity, language, history, the system, and so on. It is not inside or outside, but in-between. Though an investigation into Murakami's other works is far beyond the scope of this chapter, it seems to me that this alternative view tends to be obscured especially when Murakami exhibits his more direct commitment to social and historical aspects of Japan even as it critically foregrounds the postmodern treatment of history. Still, Murakami also directs our attention to the interspace between texts through his "non-Japanese Japanese" style as well as his frequent literal use of (mis)translation—another instance of which is found, incidentally, in the image of the forest in *Noruwei no mori* (*Norwegian Wood*), whose title refers to yet *another* mistranslation, this time of the Beatles' song (*mori* means forest or woods rather than wood as building material as in the song's lyrics). In order to imagine an alternative, we need to be attentive to these moments which reveal the interspace of texts, keeping in mind the illustrator's warning that "you're not that innocent," because this is the foundation of the possibility to resist the system.

NOTES

1 All translations are by the author unless otherwise noted.

2 In his book *Haruki Murakami and the Music of Words*, Rubin (2005) uses the original French title of Sartre's novel in italics, namely, as a foreign word, in a supposedly English translation of the title of Murakami's story—"*La Nausée* 1979" (p. 111)—as if to emphasize something untranslatable into any other language that arises between the Japanese word *ōto* and the French word *la nausée*.

3 In fact, throughout the story, Rubin often translates *hakike* as "vomiting," and *ōto* as "nausea" when possible.

4 Miura (2014) takes up the problem of labour, but I focus on the differentiating process which at once produces and displaces an identity, for, in my view, the problem of labour ultimately has the same paradoxical structure concerning inside and outside.

5 The original term used for "innocent" is *keppaku*. See Murakami, 1988, p. 120.

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CHIKAKO NIHEI

9. CHALLENGING THE AMBIGUITY OF THE *TE I (RU)* FORM

Reading "Mirror" in a Japanese Language Class

INTRODUCTION

Language teachers' opinions regarding the use of literature as teaching material are often polarized. Some think that literature's complexity impedes language teaching or that it is simply demotivating (Edmondson, 1997). Others think literature can be a useful means to increase vocabulary (Shimojō & Sakai, 2014) and to encourage student discussion (Dollase, 2008). In other cases, literature is seen as providing an opportunity for students to question their myth-making and stereotyping in the process of encountering different cultures (Aoyama, 1997, p. 18). Tai argues that this is especially important in Japanese language classes, in which teachers tend to provide homogeneous views on Japanese culture as the remaining impact of "the colonial legacy of assimilationism or the sanctification of Japanese language and culture" (Tai, 2003, p. 1; see also Kubota, 2003).

With the increasing recognition of the diversity of culture in the era of globalization, popular culture has started to be employed in Japanese classes (Dollase, 2008, p. 145; Shamoon, 2010). It has been a while since Haruki Murakami's texts became regularly used in Japanese classes. The frequent debates earlier in his career about whether his work should be classified as so-called "pure literature" or popular culture have been left behind (see Strecher, 1998; Ōe, 1989); classification is no longer the issue that destabilizes the popularity of his work.

While the use of popular culture in Japanese classes has been common, Murakami's stories are not always easy to teach in class because of the recurrent mysterious metaphors and ambiguous boundaries between fantasy and reality. Nevertheless, Pugh (2010) suggests Murakami's short stories as approachable texts to be used in class. Besides their practical brevity, many of his short stories do not require detailed prior knowledge of Japanese history and social events, and therefore are manageable for students at intermediate to advanced levels if English translation is provided with the original (Pugh, pp. 2–3). Compared to the wealth of studies regarding the textual analysis of Murakami's work, few have considered how to use Murakami's texts in a language classroom context. In this chapter, I will demonstrate a way of reading Murakami's texts in Japanese language classes, possibly in grammar

M. C. Strecher & P. L. Thomas (Eds.), Haruki Murakami, 117–129.

courses, by placing a special focus on the aspect marker *te i (ru)* form. The *te i (ru)* form constitutes an important part of making meanings in Japanese, yet the meaning varies depending on the verb with which it is combined, and on the context in which it appears.

Te i (ru) can be compared with the English imperfective aspect marker *-ing*. As *te i (ru)* denotes the state in which the result of the change continues, it is also called a durative or continuative aspect marker (Ishida, 2004, p. 313). Relying on the categorization of Ishida (2004) and Shirai (2000), the meanings can be classified into four terms: *the progressive, the resultative, the habitual,* and *the perfect.* These can be distinguished according to Vendler's semiotic categorization of verbs – activity, accomplishment, achievement, and state – which are distinguished in terms of the properties of *dynamicity, telicity,* and *punctuality.* Dynamicity means a process of change, telicity implies an action that has an end, and punctuality denotes an instantaneous action. Activity verbs are dynamic, but not telic or punctual; accomplishment verbs are dynamic and telic, but not punctual; achievement verbs have all the characteristics of dynamicity, telicity, and punctuality; and state verbs have none of these (Ishida, p. 314).

Compared to perfect and habitual meanings, which can be implied with the *te i (ru)* forms of any lexical classes of verbs, a progressive meaning attains with activity verbs or accomplishment verbs, and a resultative state is denoted by achievement verbs. A crucial difference between the Japanese *te i (ru)* and the English *-ing* is that achievement verbs in the *te i (ru)* form mean either a resultative state or an iterative action, whereas achievement verbs attached to *-ing* denote "the durative process leading up to the point of achieving the end state" (Ishida, 2004, p. 315). According to Ishida's comparison of the achievement verb "die" in English and *shinu* in Japanese, the English sentence "John is dying" means that John is in the process of reaching the state of death, while the Japanese sentence *John wa shinde iru* (*te i* becomes *de i* when the last letter of the verb to be combined is either *nu*, *mu*, or *bu*) implies that John has already passed away and the result of his death continues. In Japanese *te i (ru)*, the stress is placed on the duration of the resultant state, which makes *te i (ru)* what Shirai (2000) terms as "durative imperfective" (p. 333).

Iori points out that while in Japanese classes the *te i (ru)* form is introduced at a beginner level, the explanation tends to be limited to the meanings of the progressive, the resultative, and the repetitive, and it is not always the case that the other meanings of *the te i (ru)* form are taught systematically at intermediate- to advanced-level classes (Iori, 2001, p. 93). The varied meanings of the *te i (ru)* form seem to be a part of the reason for the less active teaching of the aspectual marker in the classroom. While increasing attention has been paid to the use of the *te i (ru)* form, a consensus has not been achieved because of its complexity (Shirai, 2000, p. 328). In this chapter, I do not intend to establish a clear definition of the *te i (ru)* form. Rather, I aim to demonstrate the significant role of literature in teaching language by discussing how context-based learning helps students to understand complex grammatical expressions.

This analysis will focus on Murakami's short story "Kagami" [Mirror] (1983, 1991). By paying close attention to the *te i (ru)* verbs used in the story, we will discuss how the grasp of aspectual meanings is important to an understanding of the whole story. For this purpose, we will compare Murakami's original Japanese with the English translation issued in the collection of short stories, *Blind Willow, Sleeping Woman* (2006), translated and edited by Phillip Gabriel and Jay Rubin. This comparison is not intended to stress the primacy of the original version or lament the gap between the original version and its translations. Rather, it is intended to demonstrate the effectiveness of learning a second foreign language through translation.

With the increasing number of the translations of Murakami's work into different languages, today we have more opportunities to hear the voices of his translators commenting on the difficulty of translating his Japanese in terms of his meaningful choice of Japanese pronouns and recurrent references to foreign products (see Rubin, 2005; Zielinska-Elliot & Holm, 2013). On the grammatical level, Murakami's nuanced use of Japanese modalities and juxtaposition of different tenses in a single sentence are often found to be difficult to translate into other languages. In more recent years, scholars have started to pay attention to the use of the translations of Murakami's works to discuss the characteristics of Japanese aspect and tense which appear more clearly in a comparison with other languages (see Makino, 2014; Koyama, 2004). This implies further potential for Murakami's texts to be employed in Japanese language classes. As is argued by Cutter (2005), translation is a means to "hear a double voice" (p. 16) of two languages. The use of translated texts is thus a way of multiplying the perspectives on observing a language for a deeper understanding, and this also stresses the significance of the use of literature in language class contexts.

GHOST STORY PARTY

In "Kagami," a male narrator in his thirties hosts a ghost story party in his house, in which each participant tells a story about a frightening experience they have had. The narrator's relationship with them is not stated clearly, although his reserved manner suggests that this night is the first time they have met. The story of "Kagami" starts when other members at the party have finished their storytelling and the narrator takes the last turn. He says he is going to talk about his past experience while working part-time as a night watchman at a junior high school. To summarize the story of his past briefly, while doing his rounds he found a large mirror which he had never seen on the site. When he looked into the mirror and saw his reflection, he realized that the figure was not his own but something else, something threatening to him. He ended up breaking the mirror with his wooden sword to allay his fear. The short story ends when the current narrator discloses to his audience that he has removed all the mirrors in his house, implying that the impact of the past continues to trouble him even more than ten years after the event.

"Kagami" was first issued in the short story collection *Kangarū biyori* [The Perfect Day for Kangaroos] (1983). As was his wont, Murakami revised the short story when he issued it in his complete works, *Murakami Haruki zensakuhin 1979–1989*. He made the revision by adding the detailed descriptions of the mirror and the narrator's inner reaction to the mirror. For example, Murakami stresses the large size of the mirror (Murakami, 1991, p. 77) and his difficulty in explaining the shock he had when he saw the figure in it (p. 78). Also, descriptions are added of the narrator's cigarette left lighted on the floor of the entrance hall, the fear that prevents him from going back there to extinguish it (p. 78), and the explanation of how he discovered the next day that the mirror had never been there from the beginning (p. 79). Additionally, in the revised version, the narrator seeks the audience's sympathy with him by stressing the horror of his story (p. 79). From the way the author revised the story, it is clear that he sought to emphasize the narrator's fear of the past. I use the revised version, therefore, as the main text in this chapter and focus my discussion on the theme of fear and past trauma.

Mirrors and mirror images recur throughout Murakami's stories. In *A Wild Sheep Chase* the protagonist goes to Hokkaido to look for his missing friend Nezumi ("Rat") and in his friend's mountain villa he finds a large mirror. The amount of dust that covers the mirror implies that it has been left untouched for a long time. This is ultimately linked to the fact that Nezumi passed away a while ago; living people have need of mirrors, but ghosts do not. Perhaps the most striking feature of the mirror comes when the protagonist looks into the mirror, but cannot see a reflection of the "Sheepman" character who is standing right behind him. In *Afterdark*, similar to "Kagami," we find scenes in which the reflections of the persons looking at a mirror act and move independently of those persons. Besides a literal mirror, Murakami frequently describes mirror images in the forms of twins, shadow images, parallel worlds, alter egos, and doppelgänger. While those images play various roles in his stories, in "Kagami" the mirror image appears as a threat to the narrator.

In "Kagami," the narrator at the beginning of the story says he first planned not to tell a story at the gathering but only listen to the others. He states that he changed his mind because he feels that it would be wrong for him, as the host of the event, not to contribute to the gathering. Yet there seems to be another reason for him changing his mind. The narrator first comments that the others' stories can be categorized into two types: stories about ghosts and stories about supernatural phenomena. Then he says that his story is neither of these. He decides to tell his story after finding out that none of the stories told at the event is similar to his. When he learns that no one has had a similar experience to his, he seems to gain the courage to share with others the story that he has kept within himself for many years. His secret desire to share his experience with others is stressed in the way he concludes his story by asking his audience whether they would agree that "the most frightening thing in the world is our own self" (Murakami, 2007, p. 73). This further leads to the question, for what

purpose did he organize the ghost story party in the first place? One possible answer is that he wanted to listen to other people's experiences in order to compare them with his own, as a way to deal with his trauma. And this is where focusing attention on the function of the aspect marker *te i (ru)* form can play a significant role in describing and clarifying the fear of the narrator. In the pages that follow we shall follow the storyline by focusing on the parts in which the *te i (ru)* form is used. The English translation follows the Japanese original version and a romanized Japanese version for those who do not read Japanese. I will underline the *te i (ru)* forms in all three versions that correspond to their equivalents.

MIRROR

In "Kagami," the narrator first says he is the type of person who never sees ghosts or has a supernatural sense. The narrator says that he once had an experience in which he was in an elevator with two other friends, who saw a ghost standing next to him:

> 二人の友だちと一緒にエレベーターに乗っていて、彼らが幽霊を見ていながら、僕はまったく気づかなかったということもある。二人ともグレーのスーツを着た女が僕のわきに立っていたっていうんだけど、女なんて絶対に乗ってなかったんだ。(Murakami, 1991, p. 73)
>
> Futari no tomodachi to issho ni erebētā ni notte ite, karera ga yūrei o mite inagara, boku wa mattaku kizukanakatta to iu koto mo aru. Futari to mo gurē no sūtsu o kita onna ga boku no waki ni tatte ita tte iu n dakedo, onna nante zettai ni notte nakatta n da.
>
> There was one time I was in a lift with a couple of friends and they swore they saw a ghost riding with us, but I didn't see a thing. They claimed there was a woman in a grey suit standing right next to me, but there wasn't any woman with us, at least not as far as I could make out. (Murakami, 2007, pp. 67–68)

The parts underlined are the verbs in the *te i (ru)* form, respectively *notte ite* (ride + *te i* + *te* form), *mite inagara* (see + *te i* + while), *tatte ita* (stand + *te i* + PAST), *notte (i)nakatta* (ride + *te i* + NEG + PAST) (*i* of *te i* form is often removed in a colloquial speech). The achievement verbs, *no(ru)* (ride) and *tat(su)* (stand), when they take the *te i (ru)* form, both mean a resultative state, which stresses the length of time the narrator was in the lift and not aware of the ghost standing next to him. The narrator continues to say:

> まあそれはそれですごく気味の悪い体験だったけど、それにしても僕が幽霊を見てないということに変わりはない。(Murakami, 1991, p. 74)
>
> Mā sore wa sore de sugoku kimi no warui taiken datta kedo, sore ni shitemo boku ga yūrei o mite nai to iu koto ni kawari wa nai.

> The whole thing was really weird, but the fact remains that I've still never seen a ghost. (Murakami, 2007, p. 68)

Here, the *te i* form, attached to the activity verb "see" (*mite (i)nai*), is used to indicate the perfective sense, not the progressive sense that will be rendered if one makes a literal translation of "see + *ing*." As the perfective sense cannot be denoted by English -*ing*, the past perfect form is used in English.

After stating that he is not the type of person who sees ghosts or has a supernatural sense, the narrator says "there was one time – just the one time – when I had an experience that scared me out of my wits" (Murakami, 2007, p. 68). At the same time, he expresses a long-term difficulty to verbalize the experience because he is afraid of what would happen if he were to speak about it:

> 口に出しちゃうと同じようなことがまた起こるんじゃないかって気がしてね、だからずっと黙ってた。(Murakami, 1991, p. 74)
>
> Kuchi ni dashi chau to onaji yōna koto ga mata okoru n ja naika tte ki ga shite ne, dakara zutto damatte ta.
>
> I felt that if I did, it might happen all over again, so I've never brought it up. (Murakami, 2007, p. 68)

Damatte (i)ta (hold one's tongue + *te (i)* + PAST), the *te i* form of the Achievement verb *dama(ru)*, denotes the durative time in which he kept silent about his past since the time of the event. Use of the past form, *te i ta*, implies that he is now ready to end his long-term silence. Compared to the English counterpart "[ha]ve never brought it up," which highlights the act of avoiding bringing up the issue, the Japanese *damatte (i)ta* emphasizes his silence and his imminent intention to break that silence.

Reflecting on the 1960s, he states that he was one of the young people who were involved in the atmosphere of the 1960s counter-culture movement and refused to enter university. Instead, he says:

> 何年間か肉体労働をしながら日本中をさまよってたんだ。 (Murakami, 1991, p. 74)
>
> Nannenkan ka nikutai rōdō o shinagara nihonjū o samayotte ta n da.
>
> I wandered all over Japan working at various manual laboring jobs. (Murakami, 2007, p. 68)

The verb *samayo(u)* (wander) of *samayotte (i)ta* (wander + *te (i)* + Past) is an activity verb, yet its *te i* form denotes the habitual action of wandering around Japan rather than a progressive sense. He continues:

> それが正しかったとか間違っていたとかじゃなくて、もう一度人生をやりなおすとしても、たぶん同じことをやっているだろうね。(Murakami, 1991, p. 74)

Sore ga tadashikatta toka machigatte ita toka ja nakute, mōichido jinsei o yarinaosu to shitemo, tabun onaji koto o yatte iru darō ne.

Whether that was the right choice or not, if I had it to do over again, I'm pretty sure I would. (Murakami, 2007, p. 68)

Here, the *te i (ru)* form of the verb *yatte iru* (do + *te i ru*) indicates a (future) perfect sense, which can be expressed by the English conditional perfect, while the literal translation of the Japanese word into English will be "[I am] doing [the same thing]."

Then the narrator explains that as one of the part-time jobs he did he worked as a night watchman at a junior high school. He explains the job duties, in which he slept in a spare room during the daytime and patrolled all the school buildings twice during the night. Otherwise, he was allowed to use the school facilities and,

音楽室でレコード聴いたり、図書館で本を読んだり、体育館で一人でバスケット・ボールをしたりしてたよ。 (Murakami, 1991, p. 75)

Ongakushitsu de rekōdo o kiitari, toshokan de hon o yon dari, taiikukan de hitori de basukettobōru o shi tari shite ta yo.

I listened to records in the music room, read books in the library, played basketball by myself in the gym. (Murakami, 2007, p. 69)

Here, the past *te i (ru)* form*, te i ta* modifies all three actions of listening, reading, and playing, which are all connected with *tari*, which is used to list multiple actions in a row. When verbs are combined with *tari*, only the last verb of the sentence takes the *te i (ru)* form. This *te i (ru)* form refers to an habitual sense, meaning that these actions are repeated regularly. The habitual use of the *te i (ru)* form of the verb also appears when he explains his activity in the kendo club in high school:

僕は高校時代剣道をやっていた。(Murakami, 1991, p. 75)

Boku wa kendō o yatte ita. (*yatte ita:* do + *te i* + Past)

I'd practiced kendo in school. (Murakami, 2007, p. 69)

Adding the information of the time schedule for the patrol, he says:

そういう風に決められている。 (Murakami, 1991, p. 75)

Sō iu fū ni kime rarete iru.

That's the schedule. (Murakami, 2007, p. 69)

Kime rarete iru (decide + PASSIVE + *te i ru*) is a passive, *te i (ru)* form of an accomplishment, *kime(ru)* (decide). With the use of the *te i (ru)* form, it takes on a durative sense and denotes that the rule was made a while before he started the job and stays unchanged. On the other hand, the English translation could mean both that the schedule is a fixed one and that it was arranged for the narrator.

The narrator goes into the details of the night he finds a strange mirror. He explains that it was a windy night in October. The weather was unusually hot and humid for October, and he was annoyed by the many mosquitoes. He says:

> 蚊取り線香を二つ点けてたのを覚えてるよ。 (Murakami, 1991, p. 75)
>
> Katori senkō o futatsu tsukete ta no o oboete ru yo.
>
> I remember burning a couple of mosquito-repellent coils. (Murakami, 2007, p. 70)

The two verbs both take the *te i (ru)* form. *Tsukete (i)ta* (light [the coils] + *te (i)* + PAST) is an achievement verb with *te i (ta)*, which implies that the mosquito-repellent coils had been set a while ago and that they had kept burning for hours, whereas the literal English translation will be "[I remember] I was lightening [the coils]" which may take on the implication that he spent a while lightening the coils, which perhaps have a complicated design requiring additional time to set up.

Oboete (i)ru (remember + *te (i) ru*) is a common word to mean "[I] remember." Regarding the verbs that can be classified as state verbs such as *oboe(ru)*, which is more commonly used in the form of *te i (ru)*, it will be worthwhile to note Hata's discussion, which shows that Japanese verbs cannot express a current action without relying on the *te i (ru)* form. He divides Japanese verbs into two types: state verbs, for which Hata limits his choice to state verbs that cannot take *te i (ru)* such as *iru/aru* (there is) and words with *sugiru* (that refers to the exceeding degree of the action or state); and the rest, which he terms "change verbs" (*henka dōshi*), which can take *te i (ru)*. Hata explains that, considering that many change verbs require the *te i (ru)* form to indicate a present action and the current state, only the future tense and past tense, not the present tense, exist in Japanese. This can be exemplified by *oboete (i)ru,* whose present form, *oboeru*, denotes the future action of memorizing and learning. For example, the verb is used in a volitional sentence such as "I (will) memorize ten kanji characters today." Pointing out that the verbs need to take *te i (ru)* to mean present actions, Hata argues that the *te i (ru)* form has larger significance as a tense marker than as an aspectual marker (Hata, 2002, p. 53). Although the importance of *te i (ru)* as an aspectual marker is unquestionable, Hata's analysis provides a vital perspective on understanding the function of *te i (ru)* verbs.

In "Kagami," the narrator explains the windy weather of the night:

> ずうっと風が音を立てていた。ちょうどプールの仕切り戸が壊れていてね、これが風にあおられてばたんばたんとうるさかった。(Murakami, 1991, pp. 75–76)
>
> Zūtto kaze ga oto o tatete ita. Chōdo pūru no shikirido ga kowarete ite ne, kore ga kaze ni ao rarete batan batan to urusakatta.

> The wind was noisy. The gate to the swimming pool was broken and the wind made the gate slap open and shut. (Murakami, 2007, p. 70)

The first verb *tatete ita* (roar, howl + *te i* + PAST) is an achievement verb in the *te i (ta)* form. In this case, the *te i (ta)* is used to imply an iterative sense, which denotes that the wind kept howling. The second verb *kowarete ite* (intransitive 'break' + *te i* + *te* form) is also an achievement verb and it takes on the resultative state in the *te i (ru)* form.

After the first patrol at 9:00 p.m., the narrator took a nap as usual and woke up at 3:00 a.m. for the second patrol. That particular night, he felt unusual, as if "something was suppressing my will to get out of bed" (Murakami, 2007, p. 70). The foreboding he felt was enhanced by the weather growing more severe:

> 風はますます強くなって、空気はますます湿っぽくなっていた。(Murakami, 1991, p. 76)
>
> Kaze wa masumasu tsuyoku natte, kūki wa masumasu shimeppoku natte ita.
>
> The wind grew stronger as the night went on, the air more humid. (Murakami, 2007, p. 70)

In this sentence, *te i (ta)* modifies the two actions of the wind's growing stronger and the air's growing humid, which are connected with the *te* form. The English "grew" is closer to the Japanese word *natta*, the past form of *naru* (become), while *natte ita* (become + *te i* + PAST) implies that the change of "becoming" happened a while ago and that the result continues. The change happened while he was asleep. Here, the *te i (ta)* implies that he was brought into the strange space without noticing it. The use of the aspectual marker emphasizes the narrator's fear and anxiety about the situation he is forced to confront.

He went for his patrol but did not find anything unusual. When he came to the entrance of the main building, he saw a figure in the darkness, which turned out to be a reflection of himself in the mirror. He could not remember if a mirror was ever put there, but he was relieved to know that it was just his reflection:

> そこには僕がいた。つまり—鏡さ。なんてことはない、そこに僕の姿が映っていただけなんだ。昨日の夜まではそんなところに鏡なんてなかったのに、いつの間にか新しくとりつけられていたんだな。(Murakami, 1991, p. 77)
>
> Soko ni wa boku ga ita. Tsumari—kagami sa. Nante koto wa nai, soko ni boku no sugata ga utsutte ita dake na n da. Kinō no yoru made wa sonna tokoro ni kagami nante nakatta noni, itsu no ma ni ka atarashiku toritsuke rarete ita n da na.
>
> And there I was. A mirror, in other words. It was just my reflection in a mirror. There wasn't a mirror there the night before, so they must have put one in between then and now. (Murakami, 2007, p. 71)

The first *te i (ta)* verb, *utsutte ita* (reflect + *te i* + PAST), denotes the duration time of his figure reflected in the mirror. The second verb *toritsuke rarete ita* (put + PASSIVE + *te i* + PAST) explains his understanding that the mirror was attached before he knew it.

In his study of Japanese aspectual markers, Iori (2001) explains that *te i ta* verbs can deliver three different points of time in a sentence: the time of when a change happens, the time of when the speaker notices the change, and the time of the speaker making a statement about the change. According to Iori's example, the sentence "[彼は]一週間前に亡くなっていたそうよ/ [kare wa] isshūkan mae ni nakunatte ita sō yo (I heard that [he] had passed away a week ago)," explains three different time settings: the man passed away, the speaker found out about the fact a week after his death, and the speaker is telling the news to somebody else (Iori, 2001, p. 77). What is implied by *te i ta* is that there is a certain time duration before the speaker notices something that s/he is supposed to know. The narrator of "Kagami," similarly, finds out that his figure was caught in the mirror a while after the change first happened. The time in which he was not aware enhances his anxiety, which is stirred further by the following event.

Feeling relief, he lights a cigarette while standing in front of the mirror. Then he realizes that the image in the mirror is not his own: "After a couple of puffs, I suddenly noticed something odd. My reflection in the mirror wasn't me. It looked exactly like me on the outside, but it definitely was not me" (Murakami, 2007, p. 72). He continues:

> その時ただひとつ僕に理解できたことは、相手が心の底から僕を憎んでいるってことだった。まるでまっ暗な海に浮かんだ固い氷山のような憎しみだった。(Murakami, 1991, p. 78)
>
> Sono toki tada hitotsu boku ni rikai dekita koto wa, aite ga kokoro no soko kara boku o nikunde iru tte koto datta. Maru de makkura na umi ni ukanda katai hyōzan no yō na nikushimi datta.
>
> The one thing I did understand was that this other figure loathed me. Inside it was a hatred like an iceberg floating in a dark sea. (Murakami, 2007, p. 72)

Similar to *oboeru* (remember), *nikumu* (loathe) needs *te i* as it is written here as *nikunde iru* to mean the present state of loathing while the present/future form is used in a volitional sentence such as "I (will) hate him." In the story, what scares the narrator more is that the figure in the mirror starts to move.

> やがて奴の方の手が動き出した。右手の指先がゆっくりと顎に触れ、それから少しずつ、まるで虫みたいに顔を這いあがっていた。気がつくと僕も同じことをしていた。まるで僕の方が鏡の中の像であるみたいにさ。つまり奴の方が僕を支配しようとしていたんだね。(Murakami, 1991, p. 78)

> Yagate yatsu no hō no te ga ugoki dashita. Migite no yubisaki ga yukkuri to ago ni fure, sorekara sukoshi zutsu, maru de mushi mitai ni kao o hai agatte ita. Ki ga tsuku to boku mo onaji koto o shite ita. Maru de boku no hō ga kagami no naka no zō de aru mitai ni sa. Tsumari yatsu no hō ga boku o shihai shiyō to shite ita n da ne.
>
> Finally his hand moved, the fingertips of his right hand touching his chin, and then slowly, like an insect, crept up his face. I suddenly realized that I was doing the same thing. As though I were the reflection of what was in the mirror and he was trying to take control of me. (Murakami, 2007, p. 72)

The narrator is observing the figure in the mirror taking its own action. Here again, the *te i (ta)* verb, *haiagatte ita* (creep up + *te i* + PAST), implies that there is a certain time before the narrator notices the change that he is supposed to know about. His belated awareness of his reflection's independent action stresses his loss of control of this "it" that used to be part of him. The next *te i (ta)* verb, *onajikoto o shite ita* (the same thing + ACC + do + *te i* + PAST), also refers to his belated awareness. This time, the shock is enhanced because he is late to notice that the change happened to his own body, which had been made to move. This leads to his understanding that "it" was trying to take control of him, *shihai shiyō to shite ita* (control + try + do + *te i* + PAST). Here again, the use of *te i (ta)* implies that some time passed before he realized that he was at risk of losing control of himself.

When his fear peaked, he smashed his wooden sword against the mirror, rushed back into the spare room, and crawled under his futon. When the story comes to this point, the current narrator gives the punch line: "I'm sure you've already guessed the ending to my story. There never was any mirror" (Murakami, 2007, p. 73). He continues:

> 太陽が昇る頃には台風はもう去っていた。風もやんで、太陽が暖かいくっきりとした光を投げかけていた。僕は玄関に行ってみた。そこには煙草の吸殻が落ちていた。木刀も落ちていた。でも鏡はなかった。そんなのもともとなかったんだよ。玄関の下駄箱のわきに鏡がついたことなんて一度もなかったんだ。(Murakami, 1991, p. 79)
>
> Taiyō ga noboru koro ni wa taifū wa mō satte ita. Kaze mo yande, taiyō ga atatakai kukkiri to shita hikari o nagekakete ita. Boku wa genkan ni itte mita. Soko ni wa tabako no suigara ga ochite ita. Bokutō mo ochite ita. Demo kagami wa nakatta. Sonna no motomoto nakatta n da yo. Genkan no getabako no waki ni kagami ga tsuita koto nante ichido mo nakatta n da.
>
> When the sun came up, the typhoon had already passed. The wind had died down and it was a sunny day. I went over to the entrance. The cigarette butt I'd tossed away was there, as was my wooden sword. But no mirror. There never had been any mirror there. (Murakami, 2007, p. 73)

A more literal translation of the third verb *nagekakete ita* (cast + *te i* + PAST) would be "the sun was casting a warm, clear light line," and therefore the verb "cast" takes *te i ta*, while the equivalent in the English translation does not portray the movement of the sun light. The *te i (ta)* of the second verb *yande* (die down + *te* form) is omitted because the two verbs are linked by the *te* form. The first three *te i (ta)* verbs indicate that the weather improved during the night; in other words, the terrifying night ended a while ago. The cigarette butt and the wooden sword on the floor, which are modified by the verb *ochite ita* (drop + *te i* + PAST), imply the time that passed since he dropped them the night before. He continues:

> 僕が見たのは—ただの僕自身さ。でも僕はあの夜味わった恐怖だけはいまだに忘れることができないでいるんだ。(Murakami, 1991, p. 79)

> Boku ga mita no wa—tada no boku jishin sa. Demo boku wa ano yoru ajiwatta kyōfu dake wa imada ni wasureru koto ga dekinaide iru n da.

> What I saw wasn't a ghost. It was simply – myself. I can never forget how terrified I was that night. (Murakami, 2007, p. 73)

In the English version, the impact of the narrator's past experience is expressed through his difficulty in forgetting it. The stress is placed on his future, in which he will continue to suffer from this memory. In the original Japanese, on the other hand, with the use of *te i (ru), wasureru koto ga dekinaide iru* (forget + to do + PARTICLE + can + NEG + *te i ru*) denotes that his state of being unable to forget remains unchanged since the time of the event. The stress is placed rather on the past from which he has not been able to run away.

To conclude his story, the narrator puts the question to his audience mentioned previously; that is, whether they consider the most frightening thing in the world to be one's own self. Without waiting for the audience's response, he makes the final statement that there is no mirror in his house, implying his own answer to this question, and the fact that his trauma continues.

CONCLUSION

While the meanings of the *te i (ru)* form have been discussed by many scholars, the complicated nature of the form often prevents us from achieving a consensus. However, this difficulty can be alleviated by looking at the aspectual marker in a narrative, in which the understanding of the storyline helps the reader to assume the meanings of the verbs. By comparing the original text with the English translation, we have also seen how the unique characteristics of each language may be discerned by observing them from cross-linguistic perspectives. "Kagami" has proved particularly revealing for this discussion owing to its style of recollection and its theme of fear. The style of storytelling grounded in recollections of a past experience includes many cases that exemplify the complex tense structures that can be expressed through the *te i (ru)* form. Concerning the horror theme, the narrator's frightening

experience is effectively emphasized by the durative sense of the aspectual marker. Such an examination of Murakami's work thus not only contributes a new way of enjoying his work; it also demonstrates one of many ways in which it can enhance understanding of Japanese in a classroom context.

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MATTHEW C. STRECHER

EPILOGUE

Haruki Murakami as Global Writer

We have seen quite a number of approaches to Haruki Murakami's writing in the course of this volume, from broad-perspective explorations of his "cosmopolitanism" or his "postmodernism," to examinations of specific texts. Some of us—myself included—have looked at Murakami comparatively, while others have explicated his linguistic features vis-à-vis translation, sentence structure, stylistics. It is my hope that there is a little something for everyone in this volume, though I do not imagine every chapter will appeal to every reader. We have been deliberately varied in our selection of texts and authors, and this is why. If one message comes through the preceding pages, it must surely be that Murakami cannot be defined or "pigeon-holed" in any simple way; indeed, we have discovered that, quite the contrary, the works of Murakami lend themselves both to relatively simple analyses and to extremely complex ones. This, incidentally, nicely reflects something about his readership as well, as has been noted more than once in this book.

As we close the volume, it falls to me to sum things up a bit, and I have decided to use this forum to pitch an idea that has been lurking in my unconscious for some time, and is only now beginning to poke its head out into the light: that Murakami represents a peculiar breed of artist, quite suitable to the contemporary era, that I shall term the "global writer."

This term "global" is, of course, all the rage these days. We live in a "global era," with "global economies," "global politics," "global communications," and in the universities we have departments of "global studies." But what does "global" mean here, and how does it relate to Murakami's work as a writer? More importantly, how does it relate to the book you have just read?

In the first place, consider first of all *why* you have been reading this book. Presumably, you were interested in Haruki Murakami's writing beforehand, and came to this book for a bit of additional help, some fresh insight. But what drew you to Murakami in the first place, and why are you still reading him? This is where the "global" part comes in.

It may be helpful for us at this moment to look back at the first chapter in this book, and recall Tomoki Wakatsuki's contention that Murakami is essentially a cosmopolitan writer; that is, one who, along with his works, is comfortable in any cultural setting, who is a citizen of the world. In fact, the "cosmopolitan" writer or

M. C. Strecher & P. L. Thomas (Eds.), Haruki Murakami, 131–134.

artist is often set up argumentatively in opposition to the more localized "cultural spokesperson" who represents and speaks *to* and *for* his or her *own* culture alone. When writers speak for their cultures in relation to the rest of the world they become part of "world literature." In Japan such oppositions have been particularly charged, as the Japanese Bundan—the "literary guild" Yūji Katō writes about in his chapter—has kept a fairly tight rein on what constitutes "literature" in Japan, to say nothing of what it means to be a "Japanese" writer, and one of the de facto requirements is that such writers and their works ought either to express an intellectual "model" for those who read them, or else express an aesthetic vision of Japanese culture and/or the Japanese subject.

Murakami, of course, doesn't do that, but it probably doesn't bother him much since he has never shown much interest in producing "literature" in the first place, "Japanese" or otherwise. From all appearances, he is not particularly concerned with expressing cultural or intellectual "models," and he obviously isn't a "spokesman" for Japanese culture in the sense that, say, Kawabata Yasunari was in the 1950s, or Ōe Kenzaburō has come to be in more recent years. He is neither an intellectual nor a cultural icon. He is a storyteller, and his story is very nearly a "universal" one.

This may be one reason both his setting and subject strike so many readers as confusing. Both Deirdre Flynn and Daisuke Kiriyama have argued for a strongly "postmodern" impulse in Murakami's work, from the "transcreated cityscape" to the individual subject—the contemporary, cosmopolitan "citizen of the world," perhaps?—who lives "in between meanings," and yet can never quite be tied to any one grounding social structure or system. In a sense, Wakatsuki and Kiriyama (and, to some extent, Flynn as well) express the extreme perspectives of this volume: where Kiriyama gave us a microcosmic view of the Murakami subject, the meaning in his life lurking, always just out of reach, in the liminal, metalinguistic spaces—the gaps—between language "modes" (à la Walter Benjamin), Wakatsuki presented the macrocosmic Murakami as "human subject," part of the entire human race.

In this spirit of the "inner" and "outer," let me offer a final gesture that may do both at once: to define the "global" writer as one who is at once "cosmopolitan" while at the same time offering a story whose meaning occupies that rarefied, liminal space between languages and cultures, who appeals to the reader through and within the mystical, metaphysical space from which *all* human culture springs. As one such global writer, Murakami presents stories that are grounded in universal themes—mythological themes, in fact—and yet are capable of endless transformation, depending upon the reader. Put another way, Murakami's stories invite the reader to internalize the narrative in a manner that is culturally relevant for that reader, that makes sense, and then mentally to reproduce it in a more localized form. Let us think, for example, of Tōru Okada's journeys into the Underworld in *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*: should we read him as a "modern-day Theseus," as Rubin (2002, p. 210) has done, or does his three-day period of suffering at the bottom of a well mark him more as a Christ figure? Depending on the cultural, social, or religious background of the reader, Tōru can actually be read in the cultural context of either

of these, or of any other mythical hero who goes underground to seek salvation, for himself or on behalf of another.

The "global" writer, then, might be defined this way: one who is able to present a story whose "core" can speak to readers across cultural boundaries, yet in a culturally intimate way. As I noted in my own chapter, this is *not* meant to suggest that such stories indulge in any sort of hyper-relativity; the global writer does not write for the lowest common denominator. She or he is not appealing to the generalist in the reader, stories so simple that they are "the same" wherever they go. In fact, the case is quite the opposite: these stories are grounded in the specificity of the writer—cultural, experiential, linguistic—but they are also "translatable," by which I mean less their language (though this does matter) than their core essence. The stories are translated into other languages from Japanese, to be sure, but they are then further translated by readers, in their minds, perhaps even in their souls, "naturalized" to the point that they speak directly to the reader, wherever and whoever he or she happens to be. The global writer's specificity is thus interpretable—endlessly so, in fact—by the specificity of the reader, and "makes sense." This may be why, as Yūji Katō notes in his essay, readers so often have this uncanny, even bizarre sense that Murakami is writing "just for them." (I have heard exactly the same thing said by my own students over the past two decades; it is interesting, yet disconcerting, to hear a student born in 1995 tell me that *A Wild Sheep Chase*, written in 1982, was written about *her personally*. But this is a peculiar, and undeniable, characteristic of global literature.)

In closing this volume, then, let me offer this final bit of advice to students, instructors, and the general reader in approaching Haruki Murakami: bear in mind always that Murakami writes as a global writer, that his message, which appears postmodern and cosmopolitan and "nationality-less" (an extremely awkward way of expressing the more normal-sounding Japanese word *mukokuseki* that is commonly applied to his work), seems like this exactly because he *is* global. Yes, Murakami is Japanese, and he writes in Japanese. His cultural specificities are Japanese. They could hardly be otherwise. But the core story, or *monogatari*, as he likes to put it, in his soul is one that makes sense to us all. It begins as the story of one Japanese individual attempting to find his unique place in an increasingly globalized world. At the same time, like all the rest of us, Murakami is the product of several millennia of "stories" that ground the entire human race, what Carl Jung called the "archetypes" of the collective unconscious (Jung, 1959; see esp. pp. 3–53). His "story" is connected to *our* stories, and that is why, whatever specificities he brings to it, that story still resonates in the souls of his readers. It simply "makes sense" to us.

And that, in my own opinion, is why we all—young and not-so-young, businessperson and academic, poet and bricklayer—seem to find something we can relate to there. It is also why the essays in this volume are so varied; we none of us read Murakami quite the same way, nor can we hope to do so, *nor should we*. Above all, it is why you and I *enjoy* reading Murakami, and perhaps one of the reasons you have read this book to the end.

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PAUL L. THOMAS

CODA: ART IN CONVERSATION WITH ART

Another One of "Murakami's Children" I

The moment some 35 years later is quite vivid, and that moment was the day I sat in my second-floor dorm room—the same dorm where my father had attended college—and wrote what would be my first *real* poem. And that moment of realization—that I am a *writer*, that I am a *poet*—came directly from a speech course with Steve Brannon, where we had (inexplicably) read e.e. cummings's "in Just-."

Since that day, I have continued to live the life of a poet, and a tremendous amount of my creative work is a conversation with the art I love—poetry, popular music, novels, visual art, film. As a result, I am a habitual synthesizer, what I have deemed "quilting"[1]—part of which is the urge to offer snippets of that art that informs my poetry through opening quotes. I suppose my scholarly self seeks always to cite, to confess the shoulders of the giants upon which I humbly stand.

When I suggested to the co-editor of this volume, Matthew, the possibility of sharing my poet's life connected to the writing of Haruki Murakami, he was gracious enough to defer and suggested it represented what Tomoki Wakatsuki poses in his chapter about the legion of "Murakami's children." And I agree.

Below, then, I offer a few poems that reflect my poet's conversation with Murakami—one that represents both how I had been investigating similar images and themes to Murakami before I began reading him, and then how our common artistic explorations of the human condition began to merge in my poems—I, for example, do not believe I would have come to the image of the well without Murakami.

Further as a teaching volume, I share the poetry as ways to enter the work of Murakami as well as a possible avenue for inviting students to begin their own conversations with Murakami through the artistic medium or media of their liking.

And thus, my poetry:

dark chocolate

> "Alienation and loneliness became a cable that stretched hundreds of miles long,
> pulled to the breaking point by a gigantic winch"
> *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and his Years of Pilgrimage*, Haruki Murakami

i am standing at the counter
of a Starbucks
in a Barnes & Noble

M. C. Strecher & P. L. Thomas (Eds.), Haruki Murakami, 135–143.

i came here to buy
the new colorless Murakami
my small acts of happiness

there i see no dark chocolate bars
i used to buy for you at another Starbucks
that absence like the hole

resting in my chest
where you used to be
like a new book or square of dark chocolate

diligence (skeleton key)

Perhaps an even more distressing prospect for Habara than the
cessation of sexual activity,
however, was the loss of the moments of shared intimacy.
"Scheherazade," Haruki Murakami

I'm having trouble inside my skin
I tried to keep my skeletons in
"Slipped," The National

gradually and with reluctance
i have whittled away at my own resolve
to fulfill your wishes when you left

and then as i am walking to my morning class
a student in front of me tells another goodbye
saying *your name* rattling in my chest like a can

these hauntings erode my diligence to your requests
to live as if we never were and never will be again
i stand on the precipice of this my toes curled at the edge

***

i am reading a new Murkami short story
and it is toward the end when i realize
he is writing about the thing eroding me

and fueling my constant melancholy
because i cannot share this story with you
the thing that matters most about all that matters

everything is reduced in magnitude without you
dimmed dulled and nearly erased except what could be
and there is the limit of my diligence hidden in bone

***

when they dismember me
the skeleton key will be
the thing they come to see

the thing that can set me free
opening the door with a skeleton key
that allows me to be and to see

***

i hear your name and i recall your hands
making me the happiest and saddest i can be

meet me at the bottom of the well (our seasons out of kilter)

I'm Nobody! Who are you?
Emily Dickinson

Forgive me/they were delicious
"This Is Just To Say," William Carlos Williams

So now I had a well if I needed one.
The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle, Haruki Murakami

meet me at the bottom of the well
there i will kiss your fingertips

tiny brief and fading gestures of my bones
telling you in the darkness hiding us

if this is what you want
if this is truly what you can bear

i am offering all i have to share
small and inadequate as kissing fingertips

as i invite you here to the bottom of this well
my sincerity will engulf you like a tidal wave

because this *all* that is small and *less than*
lies here as my *only remaining thing* for just you

time has driven us underground our seasons out of kilter
forever shrouded and muted if we dare embrace

if this is what you want and truly can bear
if this *my inadequate* can ever be enough

***

meet me at the bottom of the well
not of time *or* place *but* always *like a sigh*

there i will kiss your fingertips
spooning i will press my feet against your soles

i ask this without asking and the promise of small gestures
waiting in the emptiness of the dark well i dug

then&now (rocket ship)

"Many dreams, many sorrows, many promise.
Yet in the end nothing remains."
Pinball, 1973, Haruki Murakami

"If dreams are like movies then memories are films about ghosts"
"Mrs. Potter's Lullaby," Counting Crows

[then]

i did not ask for this
but what i asked for
fell on deaf ears

he told her these words
so carefully and coolly
that he seemed entirely rational

although he was anything except
rational cool or even careful
beyond his skill at shaping such words

one time the moon appeared
so large and orange in the sky
i lost my balance looking up

she had laughed when he told her
his favorite Beatles's song
"I Want to Hold Your Hand"

and that was the first time of many
his heart felt suddenly hollow and cold
like two blue moons in a Murakami novel

my greatest fear is the last time for this
which keeps me from noticing anything
except that i am always always afraid

he did not tell her any of this of course

because it was only after the last time
that he was able to put all his fear into words

he noticed gray hairs across the back of his hand
and his wrist along with wrinkles around his eyes
all that she would never ever see or tell him about

when i woke i had to look at my hand
to be sure i wasn't still holding yours
but i knew without a mirror that i was smiling

he pretended that they had somehow saved things
living together and growing older hand in hand
so he sometimes quoted aloud something special

"Staring at the chair where no one sat,
I felt like a tiny child in a De Chirico painting,
left behind all alone in a foreign country."

***

[now]

torrential rain thunder and lightning
filled his dreams night after night

but he woke to relentless drought
plastic black balls covering reservoirs

his night fantasies and days science fiction
he longed instead for the confines of a theater

where they could sit side by side in darkness
holding hands as if the room were a rocket ship

this other world will be our world he whispered
as he slipped his hand to the curve of her knee

the proximity of entrances and exits (the only teenager i ever knew how to be)

"If you think of someone enough, you're sure to meet them again,"
she said in parting.
"Samsa in Love," Haruki Murakami

"I won't need any help to be lonely when you leave me/It'll be easy to cover"
"Slipped," The National

it is the day after Halloween as i leave for work
the black lab is sitting up anxiously in the dark garage
the chocolate lab lies just outside blocking the door and gate

he has always been drawn to the proximity of entrances and exits

the morning is unseasonably warm and wind chimes sing
in the breeze that is up well before the sun has risen
but there is enough light to see the blanket of clouds
covering the dawn as the promise of rain approaches

i am carrying a bag of comic books i bought the day before
a middle-aged man visiting a comic book store
like the only teenager i ever knew how to be
i pause before stepping into my car to listen to the chimes

i am six minutes later than usual for leaving
and my broken smallest toe throbs in the boots i wear
the interstate i know will be packed like a swarm of beetles
so i resign myself to a creeping trip alone in the car

i will turn on The National to sing along as i drive
i will change my mind from beetles to an infinite centipede
with thousands of red glowing dots on the segments
and then my mind will turn to you as it always does

***

foolishly as a teenager i thought i was as lonely as a human could be
gathering comic books to surround myself with the Marvel Universe
i could collect into neat plastic-bag rows and count on each month

and then each night alone in bed i would imagine you there
thinking of you over two decades before i would meet you
trapped then in the only teenager i ever knew how to be

what did i know of you what could i know of you i realize now
what did i know of being lonely what could i know of being lonely
it is a foolish and brave thing to imagine the one you love

***

it is Halloween when i feel compelled to buy comic books again
there is always long pauses of this adolescent compulsion
but *The Sandman Overture* series is published and my bones just know

i start reading a new Murakami short story before visiting the store
it is a story of Gregor Samsa falling in love in the wake of being a bug
his being human again for the first time and listening to the surge of his heart

i finish the story at home after buying several comic books and browsing
and it is there in the story that my mind turns to you as it always does
i am thinking of you as the woman Samsa loves talks of thinking of someone

she is assuring Samsa and then me who she does not know and cannot know
that people can and will meet again if the *thinking of* is true and warm
as i begin to imagine seeing you again for the first time as if that is possible

i will introduce the me who is not me but of course is the only me i can be
and i will hear wind chimes and think about my anxious black lab in darkness
while a warm day after Halloween blankets us with clouds and offers dreams

the moon is nothing

"There must be something in him, something fundamental,
that disenchanted people.
'Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki,' he said aloud. I basically have nothing
to offer to others.
If you think about it, I don't even have anything to offer myself."
Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage, Haruki Murakami

there is something about the moon and all its phases
the moon is nothing like the sun except in the reflecting
the sun is fixed and necessary larger than our minds can imagine

***

but the moon the moon it waxes and wanes
although sun and moon share one flame of light

and loom above us marking the inevitable passing of time
the moon nonetheless remains a tambourine soundless when shaken

like a lover abandoning you without word nod or hand waved
the moon the moon the moon is nothing like the glorious sun

full or blue or crescent or new the moon is just a lifeless rock
trapped in the purgatory of orbit earth-bound and the magnificent sun

and thus:

alone deserted while i lie beneath cold moon or warm sun
that becomes another story and all the same in the end

midnight (these rituals of recreation)

i. midnight

i walk into the bedroom just before midnight
watching the digital clock shift from 11:59 to 12:00

after a hard bicycle ride into fading daylight
followed by dinner and beer among those friends

and then i notice the familiar shape of you in my bed
although we haven't seen each other in over a year

although you belong now completely to someone else
you stir awake and smile at me through a stretch-yawn

don't shower you purr still yawning *slide in with me*
it's been so long since we've held each other you know

ii. dreaming

[as i dream i begin to wonder if i am dreaming]

i lie on the couch alone
watching my DVD of David Lynch's *Lost Highways*

i am also re-reading Haruki Murakami's *A Wild Sheep Chase*
this time it is the hardback first edition i bought for you

between the film and the novel
coursing through dreaming and contemplating if this is a dream

i think about the possibility of worm holes
and children sliding through giant tubes at the playground

iii. morning

i wake to the smell of coffee brewing
but no one has started the coffee maker

and then i am standing outside in cool spring sunshine
the dew-covered grass almost too green to bear

you were no longer in the bed beside me (of course)
i cannot be sure if we were really intertwined last night

although your voice rests in the hollow of my ears
and then i suddenly drop into an imagined scene

> *i return to the bedroom for your clothes in the hamper*
> *i wash and then dry them before separating each piece*
>
> *i smooth your t-shirts carefully straightening the hems*
> *before stacking them over the back of the recliner*
>
> *thinking of your cat bringing mice to your doormat*
> *gestures of love and devotion offered on padded feet*

creature of habit in these rituals of recreation
i start the coffee and inhale the you of entered rooms

NOTE

[1] See "quilting," *English Journal, 100*(4), 65, and my blog "DISCOURSE as quilting" (https://discourseasquilting.wordpress.com/)

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