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My dissertation explores how postcolonial discourse offers an alternative theoretical framework for the literary works produced in contemporary Japan. I read the works of Murakami Haruki as cultural ethnographies of postwar Japan and apply postcolonial theories to his representations of the imperial nature of Japan's State System and the oppressed individuality in a highly controlled society.

Based on the idea that postwar Japan is controlled by Japan's indigenous imperialism, I reconstruct modern Japan's cultural formation in postcolonial discourse, applying theories of Michael Hechter, Edward Said, Homi Bhabha and Paul Gilroy. I recognize the source of Japan's imperialism in its pre-modern feudalism, which produced the foundation of today's Tokyo-centered core-periphery structure through internal colonialism. Indigenous imperialism also promoted the nation's modernization, creating a Japanese version of the West through self-imposed westernization (self-colonialism) as well as seeking colonial expansion in Asia. In postwar Japan, imperialism is hidden under the mask of democracy and its promotion of a Bildungsroman-like self-representation of modern history, to which Murakami offers counter narratives.

My examination of Murakami's works challenges the geographical boundary made by current postcolonial studies, and it also offers a new perspective on Japan's so-called postmodern writings.

FROM POSTMODERN TO POST BILDUNGSROMAN FROM THE ASHES:  
AN ALERNATIVE READING OF MURAKAMI HARUKI AND  
POSTWAR JAPANESE CULTURE

By

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CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION: THE POSTMODERN AND THE POST COLONIAL  
IN POSTWAR JAPAN

In his latest novel, 1Q84 that was published in May 2009, Japan's leading novelist, Murakami Haruki has his protagonist say, "To deprive history from one is to deprive a part of his/her character. It is a crime. Our memories are made up of personal memories and collective memories. History is the latter. If one is deprived of history or history is rewritten, he/she can no longer maintain a proper character" (My translation).<sup>1</sup> I believe that these words represent Murakami's position as a writer of the postwar generation who has been voicing his dissatisfaction with the State-system's manipulation of the nation's imperial history.

Although Japan's high economic growth and cultural dominance in the rest of Asia (as well as its influence on non-Asian countries) easily direct our attention not to the past but to the continuation of the present, we must realize that the present does not exist without its linkage to the past. Otherwise, the present is simply a make-believe story. In postwar Japan, the State-system has been keeping people from their modern history, and suppressing their subjectivity. Instead, the State-system provides them with ready-made identities of hardworking middle-class and westernized high standards of living. The State-system's control makes Japan's modernity unreal and grotesque as a blooming flower with no stem to link it to its roots. I believe that Murakami is one of the

intellectuals who attempt to connect the lost “stem” or Japan’s real routes of modernity to present society. Through his works, Murakami suggests that this process is necessary in order for a postwar individual to attain the strength to survive in a highly controlled society.

Colonization does not take one form. It occurs not only at the political level but also at cultural, psychological, physical and individual levels, which do not discriminate based on the place of occurrence. One can be colonized by anybody (and anything) if being colonized is giving up one’s right to make a choice. Grounding my argument on the idea that Japan’s modernization was promoted by its indigenous imperialism, which created the Japanese version of the West, I propose that postwar Japanese society is reconstructable in postcolonial discourse. This idea offers an alternative theoretical framework for what has been regarded as Japan’s postmodernity. If we see the high degree of control of today’s Japanese society as a continuation of imperial rule, its postmodernity seen in postwar cultural formation also becomes a version of (post)coloniality.

In my dissertation, I challenge the historical and geographical particularity of postcolonialism by applying postcolonial theories to the texts produced in contemporary Japan and by redefining Japan’s modernization from a new theoretical location. I see the postcolonial as a localized version of the postmodern and use postcolonial theories to localize Japan’s postmodernity. In other words, postmodernity of the western sense does not fit Japan’s cultural formation simply because Japan’s modern trajectory is not the same as that of the west. For this reason, I argue that localization of postmodernity in

non-Western society is necessary, and I consider my attempt as Japanization of the postmodern as well as the postcolonial. In short, I see Japan's postmodernity as a version of the modern that can be theorized in the context of the postcolonial. For my project of Japanizing the "modern" and "colonial," I chose works of Murakami. I believe that his works represent Japan's modernity as a peculiar version of colonization, which needs a more localized theoretical framework than that of the postmodern.

Murakami is one of the most internationally recognized literary figures in Japan. His works are translated into over forty languages. Between 1979 and 2005, he published seven long novels, five novels of medium length and ten collections of short stories. Besides these novels, he also published a number of essay collections, criticisms, picture books and translations of American novels. Ever since his debut, he has been writing at a healthy pace without any major interruption. The Japanese media praises him as an amazingly rare writer, who produces big sellers without failure. The biggest seller was his tenth book, Norwegian Wood (1987), which sold over four million copies in Japan. His popularity was called the "Murakami Phenomenon" by the Japanese media, and his influence on writers in other Asian countries produced a group of new writers called "Murakami Children," who imitate his style. Naturally, literary critiques wonder what distinguishes Murakami from other authors, especially from those who preceded Murakami such as Kawabata Yasunari, Mishima Yukio and Oe Kenzaburo, to name a few. This question actually leads to a more theoretical argument: How should we frame his works? Murakami himself states that when he started writing, he did not have any preexisting style of writing he wanted to model his own after.<sup>2</sup> Since his debut in



the 1970s, his style has been considered by Japanese critics as “new” and “non-traditional,” and his works are often discussed in the western theoretical framework of postmodernism, which was introduced to the literary criticism around the same time.

Murakami is a master story teller of our time, who has the flexibility to change his writing to find the best way to represent Japanese individuals. When he changes his writing, it is his readers’ responsibility to change their reading of him accordingly. I recognize myself as a huge admirer of Murakami. I have been reading his works ever since I was introduced to Hear the Wind Sing during my first year of college. I was first fascinated by his unconventional style and deeply attracted to the protagonist, who was indifferent to becoming a model citizen of Japan. I had never read a book like that before, and I wondered if Murakami was ahead of our time, or if he had slipped out of it. He was such a mysterious and even unrealistic writer to me. Yet, I was eager to make sense out of his short segmental writings with occasional aphorisms in the first two novels of his trilogy. After his style changed into a narrative style with a clear story line, however, “making sense out of them” became following a story line and admiring the skillful presentation of it. In this regard, I especially enjoyed Hardboiled Wonderland and the End of the World as a sophisticated urban fairy tale. As Murakami himself states, the work during his “monogatari” period still largely concerns the protagonists’ “detachment” from society and the idea of the postmodern schizophrenic can easily be applied to the world he depicted. Although I continued to look for aphorisms hidden in his talented use of postmodern techniques, I read it as a story with pure actions and failed to read it within Murakami’s intended social context.

As Murakami's style changes again to reflect his concern with what he calls "commitment" or connections among people, his writing becomes heavy with history and social issues. Thus, I found the limit in my reading of his works as postmodern fairy tales. I had to find an alternative reading to make sense out of his novels. First of all, I needed to figure out how to read his allegorical representation of the urban space. I came up with the idea of manipulating the slippage between postmodern and postcolonial to shift him into the framework of postcolonial. My original motivation to apply postcolonial theories to Murakami's novels was based on my simple inquiry: If Salman Rushdie and Murakami write a similar book, is one called postcolonial and the other postmodern? I focused on Murakami's use of magical realism in which something unreal solves problems that concern real society, and in my mind he became comparable with postcolonial writers such as Rushdie and Ngugi wa Thiong'o, if I ignored the geographical boundary current postcolonial studies make. This experimental comparison convinced me that Murakami's novels can be read as a national allegory, in which postwar Japan is depicted as a controlled space despite its post-imperial political condition.

In modern Japanese history, the postwar experience has often been depicted as a story of the war victims' endeavor to rebuild the nation from the ashes. Incidentally, its logic is grounded in public (both locally and globally) recognition of Japan as a "victim" of the nuclear weapon, the "western" technological power. Together with the essentialist ideology of "Nihonjinron" (theory of Japaneseness), which became popular in the late 1960s and 1970s, Japan's self-victimization has offered an ideal political and cultural

logic to create the Bildungsroman-like modern history in which the diligent Japanese rebuilt the country from the ashes and collectively became heroes. Rotem Kowner points out that the Japanese interest in their collective identity is “unique in its magnitude.” Although their identity search can be tracked down to the prewar period, the concept of collective identity gained strong attention after 1945.<sup>3</sup> With the world’s highest literacy level, postwar Japanese have been the main consumers of the vast publication of *Nihonjinron*, which accounts for the theoretical identification of Japanese society and its people.

In this popular discourse, Hiroshima is often considered a new beginning. It is as if the nuclear bomb had completely wiped out the period of Japan’s colonial aggression from the chronological table. All the more, it can be contended that *Nihonjinron* emerged from the need for a positive master narrative to recover from an inferiority complex towards the West and guilt consciousness towards Japan’s former colonies in Asia. Postwar Japan’s manipulation of modern history is evident in its notorious history education, which left out imperial Japan’s inhumane war crimes such as the Rape of Nanking and the comfort woman (military sex slave) system. Consequently, this attempt has created a historical black hole in the minds of postwar generations. Ironically, however, this time period overlaps with the time when Japan went through rapid political, social and cultural changes, and as a result, Japan presents itself as if it is an amnesia patient in a western dress who does not remember when and where she took off her kimono.

Based on its geographical isolation, Japan is often believed to have been one cultural unit from the beginning of its history. However, the sense of a nation (kuni) is a modern concept. During the pre-modern and early modern period, “kuni” meant autonomous regional units, and several dozens of these units, on which today’s prefectural division is based, existed throughout Japan. These regions were eventually united by the Tokugawa Shogunate, and during its regime (1603-1867), these regions existed as sub-nations that formed the feudal relationship with the central government set in Edo (Tokyo). Simultaneously, feudalism created the center-periphery distances just like the ones seen in colonial situations, and this confirms the existence of indigenous colonialism/imperialism in pre-modern Japan.

Although the Tokugawa empire was long lasting mainly because of its strict control of the economy and the self-imposed seclusion policy (sakoku), it was eventually replaced by the force that supported the emperor (Meiji Restoration). In Meiji Japan, previously dominant regional cultural identities (periphery) were merged to form one national identity under the name of the emperor, and it was strengthened by industrialization/ westernization. However, this seemingly “postcolonial” condition was actually still controlled by the same imperial energy. In other words, Modern Japan was another empire in which feudal loyalty was replaced by nationalist loyalty. Successful establishment of the nation was realized through the penetration of nationalism that coincided with the nation’s modernization /industrialization.

Modern Japan’s nation making thus took place simultaneously with its modernization process. Incidentally, the construction process of the nation-state was

largely affected by the presence of the West, and without being geopolitically colonized by the West, Japan westernized itself. I tentatively call Japan's self-westernization process self-colonialism, which is fueled by Japan's indigenous imperialism. Self-colonialism rapidly industrialized the nation, created a Japanese version of the West, and transformed the new nation into a West-like modern military power. In the early 1920s indigenous imperialism merged with western imperialism and was expanded in the form of colonialism across Asia. In short, the existence of indigenous imperialism made penetration of colonialism of the western sense natural to Japan. Although Japan's colonial expansion was stopped with its surrender, the beginning of postwar was not the ending of the modern era. Indigenous imperialism continued to seek control of society, and this time, instead of the emperor cult-based nationalism, it allocated middle class collectivism to the people. As a result, postwar Japan was rebuilt as an advanced society, in which members enjoy a high standard of living. Today's Japan is a highly controlled society, in which individuals function to maintain the system, and its controlling force is still the same imperial energy that is hidden under that mask of democracy.

Murakami's "postmodern" fictionalization of Japan's (post)war experience actually reveals the continuation of Japan's imperialistic rule after World War II, which is hidden under a high degree of economic growth and highly westernized living. His concern with Japanese imperialism agrees with my idea that the modern cultural formation of Japan is reconstructable in a theoretical location of the postcolonial. My postcolonial reading of his works allowed me to address issues of cultural formation which are more political than postmodern can allow for. In the following chapters, I

discuss Murakami's novels as cultural ethnography of today's Japan, and I regard him as a writer of post-"Bildungsroman from the ashes," who attempts to locate individuality outside of allocated narratives of modernity.

In Murakami's case, he certainly displays enough characteristics to be considered postmodern. By setting his focal points on allegorical representation of Japanese society with its forgotten linkage to the imperial experience, he explores modern Japanese life from anti-modernist perspectives. He employs postmodern techniques such as fictionalization of history, pastiche, cyberpunk, hyperreality, magical realism and so on. Moreover, he depicts power struggles between coexisting binary oppositions (East-West, tradition-modern, system-individual) that create a unique cultural space and further attempts to rewrite the modern history of Japan from a new angle, through which he challenges the idea of a master narrative as well as a fixed use of language to represent Japanese culture.

Many critiques recognize distinguishable use of language and unusual rhetoric in Murakami's works. Murakami claims that he has created a new version of the Japanese language, by which he seems to imply what can be called an English-Japanese "hybrid" language. Although his writing is entirely in Japanese, it contains numerous Katakana words (foreign loan words). His simple and short sentences along with his use of unlikely-Japanese rhetoric, also give his texts a foreign appearance. He claims that he actually wrote a draft of his first novel partially in English and translated it in Japanese, through which he discovered his signature style. This strategy even seems comparable to that of Indian writers who intentionally make their English texts look like translations

from the Indian languages.<sup>4</sup> Although Murakami's use of language as politics may not be as strong as that of Indian writers, it can be argued that he attempts to express through his writing his own "hybridity" as Japan's colonial outcome. It is especially important that we recognize the origin of his double consciousness of culture in his perception of languages, which, together with his persistent use of the first person narrator makes up his style. Although my focus is not on the writer himself but on his texts, I believe that it is necessary to review his biographical information in order to enhance profound understanding of his "language."

Murakami was born in 1949 in Kyoto.<sup>5</sup> His grandfather was the chief priest of a Buddhist temple and his father, Chiaki, also served as a priest at some point of his life. Chiaki met his wife, Miyuki while they were both teaching Japanese literature at a high school. Soon after Haruki was born, the family left Kyoto for Hyogo Prefecture and finally was settled in Ashiya-city. Murakami often claims that the generosity with which his parents provided his reading material was the source of his love for reading. As a child, he was allowed to buy books from the local bookstore on his parents' credit. Interestingly, young Murakami grew more interested in foreign literature than in Japanese, which he thinks was attributed to the family's subscription to volumes of the World Literature Series.

During his high school years at Kobe High School, he wrote for the school's newspaper. Meanwhile, he was attracted to American novels and read Raymond Chandler's hardboiled detective fiction along with works of Truman Capote, F. Scott Fitzgerald and Kurt Vonnegut Jr. in the original English while listening to the Beach

Boys and jazz (his encyclopedia-like knowledge in jazz is well presented in Portrait in Jazz (1997)). Jay Rubin notes that the demography of the international trading port city of Kobe made American paperbacks highly accessible to Murakami.<sup>6</sup> Regardless, his reading ability in English was doubtlessly way above the common high school or even college level.

Murakami entered Waseda University in Tokyo in 1968, majoring in film and theater. While he was still in college, he got married to Yoko Takahashi in 1971, and together the couple opened a Jazz café named “Peter Cat” in 1974. He did not graduate from Waseda until 1975. His thesis was on the film Easy Rider. In 1978 he started writing a novel on his kitchen table after long hours of work at the Jazz café he owned. He submitted the manuscript to the literary magazine Gunzo and won a prestigious prize for new writers. In the following year, his manuscript was published as his first book, Kaze no Uta o kike (Hear the Wind Sing) and it also became the first book of the trilogy. He continued to write short stories prolifically and did some translations on the side until 1981 when he decided to become a professional writer. Meanwhile his second book of the trilogy, 1973 nen no Pinboru (Pinball, 1973) was published in 1980. In 1982, he won another award for the last of the trilogy, Hitsuji o meguru Boken (Wild Sheep Chase).

Between 1983 and 2005, he published eight novels including Sekai no Owari to Hadoboirudo Wandarando (Hardboiled Wonderland and the End of the World) (1985), Noruei no Mori (Norwegian Wood) (1987), Dansu, Dansu, Dansu (Dance, Dance, Dance) (1988), Umibe no Kafuka (Kafka on the Shore) (2002), and Afuta Daku (After Dark) (2004). He also published ten collections of short stories. Murakami started



traveling the world and between 1991 and 1995. He stayed at Princeton University as a visiting researcher (later he became a visiting professor) and wrote Kokkyo no Minami, Taiyo no Nishi (South of the Border, West of the Sun) (1992) and Nejimakidori Kuronikuru (Wind-up Bird Chronicle) (1994-1995). He went back to Japan in 1995 and wrote his only non-fictional works Andaguraundo (Underground) (1997) and Yakusokusareta Bashode (Underground 2) (1998) based on his interviews of the Aum subway attack victims. He has also been prolific as a translator of John Irving, Raymond Carver, C.D. O'Brien, and F. Scott Fitzgerald among others. He also published translations of Truman Capote and J.D. Salinger between 2006 and 2008.

As seen above, Murakami has been devoted to American culture throughout his life, through which I believe, he has attained eyes to observe Japanese culture from a global perspective. Many scholars point out Murakami's open devotion to American culture, and often label him simply as a highly westernized writer. However, as critics such as Miyuki Yonemura note, Murakami actually presents his own version of America as a sign or metaphor.<sup>7</sup> Kazuo Kuroko notes that he does not see any evidence of an inferiority complex, submissiveness or admiration towards America in Murakami's works, and he thinks that what Murakami uses is images of America commonly accepted in Japan.<sup>8</sup> Kiyoto Imai also recognizes Murakami's America as "America that is simulated based on information through media."<sup>9</sup> I think that Murakami uses the image of the West as a mirror of Japan, and in fact, he illustrates how Japan's urban space such as Tokyo is simulated by American cultural logos, suggesting that Japan must be the West in order to be Japan. Yoichi Nagashima notes that many Japanese writers who have

journeyed to the West follow the phenomenal looping pattern of returning to Japan in search of true Japanese values and a cultural identity for the Japanese.<sup>10</sup> Murakami also searches Japan in a hybrid-like cultural condition, which produces a paradoxical relationship between the modern and the postmodern (the postmodern must be the “most” modern to be the postmodern). I believe that Murakami’s goal is not to return to the non-modern but to overcome the modern, which concerns with ending Japan’s long postwar period.

In the following chapters I investigate Japan’s modernity from a prospective of the postcolonial, and read Murakami’s trilogy, Hear the Wind Sing, Pinball, 1973, and A Wild Sheep Chase, paying close attention to his treatment of postwar individuals as suppressed beings. My investigation begins with an examination of Japan’s modernity in terms of its autonomy. Based on the uniqueness of Japan’s modernity and its continuation in the postwar (modern/imperial) period, I question the relevancy of framing postwar Japan’s cultural condition in the framework of the western postmodern. Studying wartime Japan’s dual identity (Asia/West) in the writings of Yoshimi Takeuchi, who I believe possess a similar perspective with that of Edward Said in terms of their view of a paradoxical relationship between the East and the West, I further discuss modern Japan’s dual cultural identity as self-Orientalization/Occidentalization. I regard Nihonjinron (theory of Japaneseness) as a source of postwar Japanese identity and examine the evidence of self-Orientalization/Occidentalization of Nihonjinron in relation to Hiroshi Yoshioka’s idea of “internal colonization.” I argue that postwar Japan’s cultural condition is a continuation of its imperialistic rule and define Japan’s

westernization as self-colonialism, which has produced the western (American) hegemony seen in urban culture.

I support the idea of postwar Japan's imperialism by searching for its source, and expand my discussion to postwar Japan's Tokyo centeredness as the formation of the core-periphery structure seen in colonial situations. Exploring the root of the indigenous imperialism in premodern Japan in which previously autonomous regional units were united under the feudal government (Shogunate), I regard the Tokyo-centeredness as a formation of center-periphery differences. The premodern feudal society is comparable to Michael Hechter's idea of "internal colonialism," which explains the formation of the core-periphery power structure. Further, I identify the formation of feudal Japan (the Tokugawa period) as well as Meiji Japan (the early modern period) with that of an empire in which Tokyo colonizes the rest of the nation economically, culturally and linguistically. I examine Murakami's depiction of Tokyo mainly in Hardboiled Wonderland and the End of the World and Norwegian Wood. I compare his depiction of the urban space in Hardboiled Wonderland and the End of the World in which individual identity is not allowed to emerge with Homi Bhabha's idea of the Third Space identity formation in order to challenge Bhabha's optimism in his view of cultural hybridity. I also examine Murakami's depiction of Tokyo's colonization of the rest of Japan through media and language in Norwegian Wood. Murakami sees Tokyo as a dangerous place where individuality is not allowed. It is a place that represents postwar Japan's prosperity. At the same time, it nurtures collectivism.

Collectivism has been promoted not only by Nihonjinron but also the State-system's manipulation of the nation's modern history. Behind the prosperity of Tokyo's culture that provides people with a high standard of living, a middle-class identity, and a sense of cultural sophistication, people are kept from the nation's imperial history. By concealing its imperial history the State-system also hides its continuation of imperialism in postwar society. Murakami sees history as a key for postwar individuals to locate their individuality in the controlled society. I examine his representation of historicity in comparison to that of Fredric Jameson and Karatani Kojin. I discuss Murakami's fictionalization of Japan's imperial history in The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle, comparing his use of postmodern historical metafiction with that of Toni Morrison in Beloved. Both authors encourage us to recognize the existence of history in our lives and to realize that we must be connected to our history in order to live as individuals. I also identify Murakami's approach to Japan's modern history with Paul Gilroy's prospective of slave history in terms of their concerns to rewrite modern history.

While rewriting the modern history, Murakami is also concerned with victims of the modern. I examine his Chinese characters as well as cat characters as his representation of Japan's current social reality, in which ethnic minorities do not have language to express their oppressed condition. I examine the progressive changes in Murakami's use of cats, reading it as a metaphor of voiceless pain takers in the seemingly homogenous and egalitarian society. I discuss the positions of ethnic minorities in Japan, and analyze his Chinese characters mainly in his short story, "A Slow Boat to China" as a form of Orientalism. Finally, I discuss Murakami's human-cat hybrid character, Nakata-

san in Kafka on the Shore as a connector between the voiceless victims of the modern era and the postwar Japanese individuals who are in the position of the colonial elite. I discuss Murakami's representation of what he calls "commitment" as the social awareness that helps individuals to locate their identity. He values empathetic involvement with others (as well as the Others) and suggests that this kind of attitude keeps society from falling apart.

As Japan's long postwar period continues, postwar Bildungsroman from the ashes began to lose its power to bind people together. Some people seek salvation from their disorientation in religion that provides another pre-made narrative. Murakami was highly concerned with the religious cult group, Aum, which was responsible for the Tokyo subway attack with sarin gas in 1995. He produced his only non-fictional works, Underground and Underground 2 based on his interviews with the sarin victims as well as the former cult members. I explore Murakami's idea of salvation for today's Japanese society in relation to his individualistic utopianism. I discuss the position of religion in today's Japan, and examine Murakami's representation of individualization of religion in Kafka on the Shore as a form of "commitment" which helps individuals to find their salvation. I compare his ideas of a healing utopia with that of Oe Kenzaburo's The Burning Green Tree. Simultaneously, I investigate Murakami's concern with Japan's memory of its war crimes and the postwar generations' responsibility for them, which he depicts in Kafka on the Shore as a battle between an individual and the darkness of his own mind.

My postcolonial reading of Murakami clarifies what exactly the “post-“(meaning “anti-“) in the postmodern is against. It is Japan’s long postwar. In a broad sense, Murakami is a postmodern writer. However, if the “modern” is different, the postmodern is also different from the one emerged in the West. I emphasize that my application of postcolonial theories to the texts concerning Japan is to localize Japan’s “postmodern.” It is not westernization of Japan’s culture study but Japanization of postcolonial studies. I anticipate my project will open up a new perspective in the field of Japanese literature and culture studies.

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<sup>1</sup> Haruki Murakami, 1Q84 (Tokyo Shinchosha, 2009) 460-461). My translation.

<sup>2</sup> Haruki Murakami and Toshio Kawai, Murakami Haruki Kawai Hayao ni ainiiku, (Tokyo: Shinchosha, 1996), 45.

<sup>3</sup> Rotem Kowner, “Deconstruction of the Japanese National Discourse: Laymen’s Beliefs and Ideology.” Exploring Japaneseness, ed.R. Donahue (Westport: Abex, 2002) 169.

<sup>4</sup> G. J. V. Prasad, “Writing Translation: the Strange Case of the Indian English Novel,” Postcolonial Translation: Theory and Practice, eds. Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi (New York: Routledge, 1999) 42-43. G.J.V. Prasad claims that many Indian writers create the language in which they write.

<sup>5</sup> Sources for Murakami’s biographical information are Jay Rubin’s Haruki Murkami and the Music of Words and Kiyoto Imai’s “Murakami Haruki Nenpu” in Murakami Haruki Studies 05 (ed by Kuritsubo).

<sup>6</sup> Jay Rubin, Haruki Murakami and the Music of Words, (New York: Vintage, 2003) 16-17.

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<sup>7</sup> Muyuki Yoneyama, “Poppumasuta to <Shinbei> shikou” (Pop master and Pro-Americanism). Murakami Haruki: Tema, souchi, kyarakuta (Haruki Murakami: Theme, Setting and Characters), ed. Tsuge Mitsuhiko (Tokyo: Shibundo, 2008) 145-152.

<sup>8</sup> Kazuo Kuroko, Murakami Haruki: Soshitsu no Monogatari kara Tankan no monogatari (Tokyo: Bensei, 2007) 156.

<sup>9</sup> Kiyoto Imai, “Toshi no mukougawa to boryoku (The Other side of the City and Violence,” Murakami Haruki: Tema, souchi, kyarakuta (Haruki Murakami: Theme, Setting and Characters), ed. Tsuge Mitsuhiko (Tokyo: Shibundo, 2008) 125.

<sup>10</sup> Yoichi Nagashima, Introduction, Return to Japan: From Pilgrimage to the West, ed. Nagashima (Headington: Aarhus UP, 2001) 14-15.

## CHAPTER II

### MURAKAMI'S MODERNITY: IS THE "POST-" IN POSTWAR THE "POST-" IN POSTMODERN?

#### **Introduction**

Japan's modernization largely took place in the Meiji period (1868-1912) during which Japan went through both political (the Meiji Restoration) and cultural changes (westernization/ industrialization/ internationalization). Japan also fought two major wars and, in one sense, participation in wars as an imperial power was a major outcome of Japan's modernization. Consequently, the end of the war is considered the end of one historical period. In modern Japanese history, the postwar experience has often been depicted as a story of war victims' endeavor to rebuild the nation from the ashes. "Sengo" (postwar) is considered a new history as if the nuclear bomb had completely eliminated the preceding period from the chronological table.

"Sengo" is an ambiguous period with no clear end date (if it has ended). It is actually a signifier that produces a convenient legitimacy for Japan to claim a new history and ignore the painful memories of the people who fought the war for the nation.

Although Japan's colonial expansion was stopped with its surrender, the end of the war did not stop the "modern" from seeking power to control. The imperial energy that once implemented modernization / industrialization / westernization internally, as well as external colonization over Asia, survived the war and rebuilt postwar Japan. Postwar



Japan is a highly controlled society in which those who were once committed to die for the emperor were transformed into “salary men” who would die for the nation’s economy. The highly controlled society does not allow its members to develop individuality. Instead, it provides them with a ready-made collective identity. Vast numbers of publications called “Nihonjinron” (theory of Japaneseness) were published in the 1960s and 1970s. Nihonjinron provided theoretical identification of Japanese society and people, and its popularity among the general audience indicates people’s satisfaction with the meta-narrative that defines the “Nihonjin” (Japanese) identity. Moreover, by the late 1960s, their hard work was rewarded with the proud middle class identity, the high standard of living (with television sets, refrigerators and washing machines) and an illusion of freedom based on democracy. In this regard, the “post-” in postwar simply grants a new name of democracy for the same old imperial rule.

In this context the West occupies a curious position. Although Japan’s modernization cannot be discussed without its dependency on the western cultural identity, it must be emphasized that Japan’s modernization (and westernization) was not forced by the West. Japan accepted western influence without resistance and voluntarily depended on the western cultural identity, which I regard as self-colonialism. Self-colonialism is a Japanese version of modernization that assumes a binary opposition between the advanced West and backward Asia. It westernized Japan in the name of modernization and transformed it into a West-like imperial power, leading Japan to hold a dual identity of Orient-Occident during World War II. However, upon the loss of the war, Japan needed a new “Japanese” identity. Thus, Nihonjinron was widely accepted.

In this chapter I investigate Japan's modernization process and discuss postwar Japan's cultural condition as a continuation of the modern that houses its imperial energy. I reconstruct the role of the West in modern Japan's identity formation in postcolonial discourse, and further I examine Murakami Haruki's early works for their representations of postwar Japan as a highly westernized space that does not value individuality. The condition in which people are rewarded with the "West" in return for being controlled is well described through his protagonists' lives which are full of western cultural logos. His trilogy, Kaze no Uta o Kike (Hear the Wind Sing) (1979), 1973 nen no Pinboru (Pinball 1973) (1980) and Hitsuji o meguru Boken (A Wild Sheep Chase) (1982) deals with the time between the 1960s and 1980s. His protagonist is the postwar generation youth who was born in the late 1940s and has participated in the Zenkyoto movement (the Joint Campus Struggle Movement) in the 1960s, which is presented as the last battle of people against the State-system. Murakami's textual endeavors reveal the hidden but continual rule of postwar Japan by the modern imperial energy, and his protagonists try to be individual by rejecting pre-made identities and by detaching themselves from society.

### **Autonomy of Modernization**

Today's Japan is considered a highly westernized non-western society, and in discussions of its rapid modernization, most theorists come to an agreement about its uniqueness in absorbing western culture. Since the Meiji period (1868-1912) Japan has been accepting western influence without resistance. A high degree of penetration of the West observed in modern Japan's cultural space affirms western hegemony. Although

the popular idea of the time, “Wakon Yosai” (Japanese soul, western talent) suggests the logical separation between Japan and the West, in reality modern Japan adopted not only western technology but also a western cultural identity. However, modern Japan’s cultural formation did not emerge from geopolitical invasion by the West. Its unique relationship with the West can be attributed to the fact that its modernization coincided with the time of nation-making, which provided Japan with an opportunity to develop nationalism while assimilating into the “borrowed” western cultural identity by creating a Japanese version of the West (J-West) in the name of modernization.

By the term “modernity” I broadly refer to the consciousness of progress that values science and rationality in contrast with traditional or indigenous cultural values. In one sense, modernity symbolizes the desire to define truth. A degree of modernity of any non-western society can be measured by its level of penetration of the West. If the goal of modernity for non-West is to claim western cultural identity, the modern refers to the First World identity, and modernization functions as a tool for the non-West to obtain a membership to enter the western sphere, which simultaneously means to let the West enter its space. Thus, the deeper the non-West goes into the western sphere, the more the West penetrates its home. In order to investigate how modern Japan manipulates the idea of the modern to maintain the coexistence of tradition and modernity, we must consider how Japan’s modernization is perceived from both Japanese and non-Japanese perspectives.

Masao Miyoshi and H. D. Harootunian think that Japan’s repeated exposures to the superior outside civilizations of Korea, China, India, Portugal and Spain in its pre-

modern history, resulted in its inability to develop interiority and autonomy, consequently suffusing Japan's history with "the sense of the dominant other and its own marginality." At the same time, its experience with others has enabled Japan to be successful in trading. They suggest that the source of the cultural uniqueness seen in Japan's modernization process is its "near colonial encounter" with the West, which offered Japan the privilege to know the West from a distance.<sup>11</sup>

Johann Arnason suggests that "absolutising the West" must be avoided, and the relationship between modernization and westernization should be kept open to question. He defines modernity not as a label for western supremacy but as an essential part of the self-articulation of the West, in which its encounters with the Others should not be ignored. He asserts that westernization and modernization are complementary aspects of the historical process in which the adoption of the West, whether enforced or voluntary, occurs at different levels. Recognizing the relative weight on westernization in its relationship with modernization, Arnason points out that Japan's case discredits what is called the "latecomer thesis," which asserts that in the effort to catch up with more advanced societies, less advanced societies are likely follow a common pattern. He sees the Japanese version of modernity as a prominent example of "interpenetration of tradition and modernity." At the same time, he attempts to reinterpret Japan's tradition and regards Tokugawa Japan under its sakoku (self-imposed seclusion) policy (1635-1854) as a "pseudo-traditional society" where a germ of modernization is already observed without permanent contact with the West.<sup>12</sup>

Fuminobu Murakami also asserts the possible autonomy of modernization, which suggests that modernization including westernization was a choice Japan has made. He defines the terms “modern/modernity/modernism” not as spatio-temporal concepts but as an ideology that values ideas such as power, ideals, enlightenment, the future, development, progress, advancement and evolution. Although modernist ideology was accelerated by the eighteenth century’s Enlightenment project, it existed before and it still does. Like Arnason, (Fuminobu) Murakami also thinks that in Japan’s case, the seeds of its modernization already existed during the Edo period (1603-1867) even though modernization now only appears as “nothing other than westernization.”<sup>13</sup> Modernization can occur autonomously without the West’s coercion, although westernization has become a “standard” value for Japan’s modernization upon its contact with the West.

What these theorists commonly recognize in modern Japan’s cultural formation is a slippage between westernization and modernization as well as the autonomy of its modernization. This idea allows us to see westernization as a political strategy that Japan imposed in order to catch up with the advancement of the modern. It, in fact, reflects the popular doctrine of the Meiji period: “Wakon Yosai (Japanese Soul, Western Talent).” It is the dichotomy that separates Japan from the West and assumes the separation between Japanese spiritual life and material way of life. It teaches that Japanese spirit should not be corrupted by foreign influences.<sup>14</sup> The idea of “Wakon Yosai” further suggests that modernization is an ideology to enhance elevation of the race, while westernization is a mere strategy to modernize and industrialize the nation.

Moreover, the autonomy of modernity affirms the existence of Japan's "indigenous" energy that is equivalent to western colonialism/imperialism. Miyoshi calls non-European colonialism including Japan's as "secondary colonialism." He recognizes a nativist reaction against European imperialism in Japan's imperialist aggression, and he sees it as an attempt of "a homegrown version of imperialism" to improve western imperialism.<sup>15</sup> Indigenous imperialism fueled Japan's self-westernization process in the name of modernization. I am aware that my argument suggests that modernization is inseparable from colonization. However, I stress that colonization here is not the one implanted by the West but by Japan's own imperialism. Agreeing with the assertion of Miyoshi and Harootunian that Japan has never been hesitant in depending on the Other in terms of its identity construction, I believe that indigenous imperialism also led Japan to develop the dual identity of Orient-Occident as well as colonizer-colonized during World War II.

### **Self-Colonization and Dual Identity**

The Meiji Restoration (1867) is usually discussed as the beginning of Japan as a nation. Upon opening of its ports after Commodore Perry's visit in 1853, new and advanced culture from the "West" (America, England, Russia and Holland) amazed Japan and prompted its modern industrialization based on the idea of "Fukoku Kyohei" (Enrich the country, Empower the military). Japan went through not only political but also the cultural reformation called "Bunmei Kaika" (civilization/enlightenment) during which everything from the West was credited as "better." Incidentally, the construction process of the nation-state was largely affected by the

presence of the West. I regard Japan's self-westernization process as self-colonialism. It is a Japanese version of westernization in which Japan accepted the superior Other and willingly took the inferior position. In order to catch up with the superior West Japan colonized itself by creating its own version of the West.

The significant difference between enforced colonization and self-colonialism lies in the presence (or absence) of people's resistance towards the new (colonizing) cultural value. Because of the absence of resistance, coexistence of tradition and modernity in Japan takes a rather flexible form as shown in westernization of tradition and Japanization of modernity. In its hybrid-like space, the "West" was a material goal as well as a status symbol. In fact, this is a result of the implementation of "Wakon Yosai." Self-colonialism rapidly industrialized Japan and transformed a new nation into a West-like military power. However, this process also complicated Japan's identity construction, and it is fruitful to examine writings of Yoshimi Takeuchi on "Kindai no Chokoku" (Overcoming the modern), which was the symposium held and published by Bungakukai (Literary Society) between 1941 and 1942. Takeuchi's extensive research on this famous symposium demonstrates how Japan negotiated its cultural identity upon encountering European modernity.<sup>16</sup>

In his paper titled "Kindai no Chokoku" (1959) Takeuchi analyzes the ideas shared by intellectuals of the time in terms of their recognition of Japan's modernity in the global context. In this symposium, the idea of "overcoming the modern" was discussed as a common goal of the intellectuals in order 1) to overcome "Chiteki Senritsu (intellectual trembling)" which emerged from the conflict between "Seiyo Chisei

(Europeanized intellect)” and “Nihonjin no Chi (Japanese blood),” 2) to break through people’s indifference towards “Japan’s new spiritual order,” and 3) to overcome the individualism of intellectuals in our culture’s various fields.<sup>17</sup> In his discussion of modern Japan’s identity with the West as well as the rest of Asia, Takeuchi favors one of the participants, Kamei Katsuichiro’s interpretation of “Daitoa Senso (The Great East-Asian War, which was later called “Taiheiyo Senso /Pacific War)” in relation to postwar Japan’s war responsibility.

Kamei argued that the war was “Shokuminchi Shinryaku Senso (War of Colonial invasion/ invasion against China)” for which Japan should be responsible. At the same time, Japan fought against the western imperialism without intending to take over the United States, England or Holland as its colonies. In Kamei’s logic Takeuchi recognizes the absence of the universal values that encompass both the East and the West to judge imperialism. Consequently, Takeuchi observes the double structure in the Great East-Asian War in Kamei’s logic. He notes:

This double structure involved the demand for leadership in East Asia on the one hand and a goal of world domination by driving out the West on the other. These two aspects were at once supplementary and contradictory. For while East Asian leadership was theoretically grounded upon the European principle of opposition between the advanced nations and backward nations, this was opposed in principle by Asian decolonization, which saw Japanese imperialism as equivalent to western imperialism. Japan’s “Asian leadership” had to be based on this latter Asian principle in order to gain recognition from the West, but because Japan had itself abandoned this principle, it had no real basis of solidarity with Asia. Japan advocated Asian on the one hand and the West on the other. This impossibility produced a constant tension, with the result that the war spread beyond all bounds without any resolution in sight. The fate that led the Pacific War to become an “eternal war” was determined by tradition. This represented the “glory of the state.”<sup>18</sup>



The Great East-Asia War/Pacific War appeared to be the reflection of Japan's inner conflict, and it actually gives the impression that if Japan had been more independent, war might have been avoided. Japan's dual identity is directly rooted in its tendency to depend on other cultures for its identity.

Takeuchi's argument that Japan's imperialism is not the same as western imperialism supports my claim that Japan has a homegrown imperialism. It also offers logic to the coexistence of Japan's colonial invasion and anti- (western) imperialism. Japan's anti- (western) imperialism is not a negation of its own imperialism. In order to take the leadership of Asia, Japan first must have colonized the rest of Asia, which endowed Japan with the western/colonizer identity. Then, its Asian leadership must have been granted by the West. In this way, Japan placed itself in the paradox whereby it must have become the West in order to be Asia. To be more specific, Japan had to become the West (westernized) in the Oriental sphere and (modernized) Asia in the Occidental sphere.

Takeuchi does not hold a very high opinion on Japan's dual identity. In his essay, "What is Modernity?" he suggests that Japan is "nothing":

For there is here no resistance, that is to say, there is no wish to preserve the self (the self itself does not exist). The absence of resistance means that Japan is not Oriental, but at the same time the absence of the wish for self-preservation (the absence of the self) means that Japan is not European.<sup>19</sup>

Interestingly, Takeuchi sees Japan as nothing because it does not have "self" to claim to be either the Orient or the Occident. This demonstrates his modernist view of the world in binary relationships. Takeuchi thought that modernity for the non-West was its subjugation to the West's control, and that the modern Orient was born through invasion

and exploitation by the West and the Orient's resistance to them. He was aware that Japan's will to resist was weak.<sup>20</sup> As Sakai suggests, Takeuchi's attitude toward modernity reflects his ideal vision of the Orient as the power entity to oppose western aggression. Thus, Japan's willingness to accept anything western led him to liken westernization to surrendering or giving up subjectivity, which is a state of being colonized.<sup>21</sup> Takeuchi identifies the "modern" that the symposium attempted to overcome as "modern" Japan of the Meiji and Taisho (1912-1926) periods.<sup>22</sup>

In the perspectives presented by Japanese historians, Iwao Koyama and Masaaki Kosaka in 1942, Sakai sees that they recognize the goal of Japan's modernization as "to change the world so that the Japanese would occupy the position of the center" and anything western was approved in order to achieve this goal. Japan's moral superiority over China was already assumed, and for them, World War II was to decide the moral superiority of the East or the West, which Sakai compares with the idea of Takeuchi that war was still between Chinese and Japanese moralities.<sup>23</sup> If this moral superiority is determined by the hierarchical order of universality and particularity, universality must be claimed by the colonizer who reduces the colonized into particularity. In short, I see Japan's attempt to be universality as a reflection of its colonialism/imperialism over China. However, I am skeptical about Koyama and Kosaka's view of World War II in terms of Japan's ambition to be the center of the world. Rather, I believe that Japan wanted to be recognized by the West as being number one in Asia. In other words, Japan's intention was not to be universality but to be the best particularity. This actually

echoes Takeuchi's view of Japanese culture as "Honor Student Culture" and its progress as "the slaves' progress."<sup>24</sup>

Sakai criticizes Takeuchi's argument that "Japan is nothing" because of "the absence of resistance" or "the absence of the self-maintenance wish," insisting that the nation without a strong national identity could not have fought war for fifteen years.<sup>25</sup> However, Takeuchi's claim can be read that "Japan is nothing but a West or Asia." In other words, he suggests the need to address the issue regarding the Japanese identity that Sakai calls "a strong national identity." In fact, H.D. Harootunian values Takeuchi's recognition of modern Japan's struggle between "Western knowledge" and the "blood of the Japanese." Through "the disjunction between native wisdom and western rational knowledge," Takeuchi reassesses Japan's modernization process which "slavishly aped the West while subverting Japanese intelligence" and to redefine Japan's modernization as a unique process, which cannot be simply labeled as westernization. He attempts "to find a way to conceptualize a modernity that was made in Japan."<sup>26</sup> For Takeuchi, "overcoming the modern" means releasing Japan from western control. He attempted to release Japan from the paradox in which it must become the West in order to be Asia by claiming a "Japanese" identity.

Takeuchi thinks that the "overcoming the modern" symposium raised the issue of Japan's dual identity in a timely manner but failed to generate any solutions for it, and "disappearance of these aporias [Kamei suggested] prepared the intellectual ground for Japan's colonization" in the postwar period when westernization was taken by Americanization.<sup>27</sup> Japan's self-colonization is rooted in its dependency on other

cultures and it eventually puts Japan in the paradox. However, upon loss of the war, Japan lost this dual identity as well. Thus, Imperial Japan's paradoxical double consciousness actually made postwar Japan an identity-orphan until "Nihonjinron" was provided.

### **Nihonjinron**

The following quotation from Japan: Profile of a Nation shows typical rhetoric used in writings on modern Japanese history:

The defeat of Japan in 1945 under atomic clouds brought the Allied Occupation, demilitarization, dismantling of the old industrial combines (zaibatsu), renunciation of divinity by the emperor, a new constitution, democratization, and a new educational system. After a painful period of postwar rehabilitation, the Japanese economy began to surge ahead in the 1960s and 1970s.-----The nation's continued prosperity has been based on a security treaty with the United States, a consistent stress on economic growth and business-oriented policy making, an emphasis on education, and the frugality, energy and sustained efforts of the Japanese people.<sup>28</sup>

"Sengo" (postwar) presented in this writing is a story of the war victim. Its main focus is the effort Japan made for its recovery from the painful experience of war. This kind of narrative has dominated postwar history education as well as the media's representation of modern history. Together with the essentialist ideology of Nihonjinron, Japan's self-victimization has offered the ideal logic to generate Bildungsroman-like narratives in which the diligent Japanese collectively became a hero.

Nihonjinron in general attempts to generate a positive national image and it often focuses on the uniqueness of the Japanese people. John Lie notes that the Nihonjinron writings existed already in the pre-modern period. While the early Nihonjinron writings

expressed “a prevailing sense of Japanese inferiority vis-à-vis the West,” more recent writings focus on Japan’s equality or even superiority to the West. They gained popularity after the rapid economic growth of the 1960s when they began to claim more positive elements about Japan, and Ezra Vogel’s Japan as Number One (1979) became one of the all-time best-selling nonfiction books in Japan.<sup>29</sup> In this context, public (both national and international) recognition of the Japanese as a single race became important, and thus, monoethnic and homogenous Japan was born despite its multiethnic and multicultural reality. Interestingly, the nation that was a proud “empire” during war claims to be “Tanitsu Minzoku Kokka” (mono-ethnic nation) in the postwar time.<sup>30</sup>

The main event usually discussed in Nihonjinron is the most positive event of postwar Japan, the “economic miracle” that was achieved by the hardworking Japanese. While postwar Japan’s history education presented the modern history as a Bildungsroman-like narrative of the war victims’ endeavors to rebuild the nation from the ashes, the Nihonjinron writings of the 1960s and the 1970s supplemented history by offering “positive episodes” and “character analysis.” During the postwar reconstruction, these two together generated what I call “Bildungsroman from the ashes” for Japanese to believe in. The Nihonjinron writings commonly stress one or two features of “Japanese national character or collective psychology such as curiosity, collectivism or self-uncertainty.” The only taboos of Nihonjinron are “to say that Japanese are just like other people or to question the category itself.”<sup>31</sup> Although it can be contended that the popularity of Nihonjinron in the 1960s and 1970s was agitated by the self-defense mechanism of postwar Japanese against an inferiority complex towards America and

guilt consciousness towards the former colonies, it also shows that Japanese are interested in being unique “collectively.” Thus, postwar Japan continues to be eager to be the best “particularity” in the eye of the West.

Sakai points out the recent theoretical shift the modernization theorists have made by defining modernization not as Europeanization but as Americanization. This version of modernization, he adds, has generated “a new kind of historical narrative,” whose universalism avoids overreliance on European national history. Instead, it offers a potential frame in which any society can rationalize itself. However, as a result of rationalization, the society appears similar to America. Although he sees a double structure of universalism and particularism in the American-centered world perspective, he also recognizes their mutual reliance, for “universalism is a particularism thinking itself as universalism” and in the end they are both intertwined with nationalism. At the same time, he asserts that economic and political superiority of the most advanced particularity (or universality) does not stabilize or legitimate the society’s domination over others.<sup>32</sup>

Sakai seems to suggest that adoption of universality does not always reflect the geopolitical power struggles between more advanced and less advanced particularities. Rather, it is identity politics of society with less advanced particularity. Regarding Japan’s dependency in terms of its identity construction, he notes that Japan becomes aware of its “self” only when it is recognized by the West. He sees Japan’s historical relation with high cultures (mainly China and America) as parasitic despite its particularism that is evident in “Nihonjinron.” Japan’s particularity must be recognized

by the West. To be more exact, Japan must represent its particularities that are recognizable by the West. Ironically, the idea of particularism itself is of western origin. Rebecca Suter notes that it was first presented as the founding characteristic of Japanese society in the publications of Ruth Benedict and Edwin Reischauer in late 1949.<sup>33</sup>

I apply Edward Said's idea of Orientalism to figure Japan's Nihonjinron's stance in a postcolonial cultural frame. I am fully aware that Said's idea of Orientalism is historically and geographically specific, and Japan is absent in his scope as neither the "Oriental" nor the imperialist. However, I am convinced that Orientalism does not discriminate based on the place of occurrence. In fact, I think that Imperial Japan held a view of the Orientalist, and it Orientalized Asians including themselves. Said claims Orientalism as a collection of dreams, images and vocabularies. He writes, "The Orient that appears in Orientalism, then is a system of representations framed by a whole set of forces that brought the Orient into Western learning, Western consciousness, and later, Western empire."<sup>34</sup> Modern Japan accepts universalism of the West in order to be particular, and Nihonjinron Orientalizes the Japanese collectively to differentiate them from westerners.

Yoshioka Hiroshi thinks that "Japan was so quick to Westernize itself that it avoided political colonization" and became a part of the West as far as its adoption of the imperialist mind is concerned. Westernization was not forced on Japan, and therefore, Japanese people lack the consciousness of cultural contradiction between the West and themselves. Yoshioka calls this modernization process, "internalized colonization," in which every Japanese is a colonizer of his own mind. This type of colonization is

possible only through the absence of a conscious subject and in Japan's case, rapid modernization was realized for this very reason. He also asserts that Japan can make up its own self only through the eyes of the other and they define themselves through their internalized eye of the West, which echoes the generally accepted idea that Nihonjinron's representation of the Japanese is based on Japanese acceptance of western stereotypes of themselves.<sup>35</sup>

Yoshioka names the "samurai" as an example of a stereotype, yet, thinks the image of samurai is not a mere acceptance of stereotype but Japan's desire for cultural essentialism. He also points out that Japanese "enjoy representing themselves as samurai just as much as the West enjoys accepting Japanese in that way" although the samurai is now as exotic to Japanese.<sup>36</sup> This type of self-essentialization has become possible only because Japanese adopted the Orientalist's view to see themselves. It is, in fact, to realize "Wakon Yosai" by learning Japanese soul through the western point of view. In the Orientalist's view, the Orient cannot represent itself. In this way, Orientalism and imperialism mutually justify each other in Japan's case as well.

Japan's well-controlled postwar has been successful both internally and internationally: Internationally, it has achieved high economic growth and internally, it has provided people with western convenience, capital based entertainment and an illusion of freedom of choice. This is still a continuation of "Wakon Yosai" modernization. In addition, the J-West dwellers are not aware of their lack of subjectivity. Fuminobu Murakami thinks that "a happy society of contented people will emerge if we



discard evolution.”<sup>37</sup> In this sense, postwar people are happy hardworkers, who are content with being generalized and represented by the meta-narrative, Nihonjinron.

### **What is the “Post-” in postwar?**

Jean-Francois Lyotard defines the postmodern as incredulity toward meta-narratives. He sees narratives as determiners of criteria of competence and therefore, they are legitimated in the culture where they are part of and points out that the nation (people) and /or political institution of people formulate prescriptions that have the status of norms. He further names two major versions of the narrative of legitimation as follows: “humanity as the hero of liberty” that is attained through primary education and direct control over the training of the people and “spiritual and moral training of the nation.”<sup>38</sup> Most interestingly, he asserts that transmission of knowledge (education) is “to supply the system with players capable of acceptably fulfilling their roles at the pragmatic posts required by its institution.”<sup>39</sup> Yet, meta-narrative has lost its credibility for legitimation of knowledge in postindustrial society and/or postmodern culture since World War II.

Although Lyotard’s description of the modern system can be applied to modern Japan especially because, as I discussed earlier, Nihonjinron is Bildungsroman, that is, a narrative of education for the “System” to educate people (the nation). However, the fact that Nihonjinron gained its popularity in the 1960s and 1970s discredits Lyotard’s prescription of the postmodern condition, if he suggests that World War II is a turning point between modern and postmodern. In fact, Nihonjinron only proves that there is continuity of modern before and after 1945 as well as Japan’s willful acceptance of the

meta-narrative. I emphasize that in postwar Japan, prewar ideology of modernity still continues to dominate its cultural formation.

However, “Bildungsroman from the ashes” requires no previous history. Harootyan asserts that postwar Americanism destroyed Japan’s memory of modernity, although Japan’s Americanization originated before war. He is also concerned with contemporary Japan’s obsession to return to its origin by resurrecting lost traditions against modernism and imposing an essentialist idea of cultural homogeneity. In this context, modernism is taken as a “cultural mistake” which is now conquered by postmodernism. He is against the view that the modern has ended at some point in Japan’s history. He sees a long continuing process of modernity in postwar Japan and grants that “postwar” is a cultural trope, from which Japan’s “cultural amnesia” conveniently emerged.<sup>40</sup>

Let us turn our attention to the mischievous role of the “post-”in postwar Japan. The “post-”in postwar is a magic word in Japan’s modern history. It is as if the “post-“is a switch board to change junctions of history and it gives an illusion that the end of the war is a new beginning. In fact, Arnason considers 1945 as both an end and a beginning. He rather emphasizes the importance of discontinuity of modernity although he does not deny the continuity of the bureaucratic core of the state as well as the Tenno ideology.<sup>41</sup> In modern Japan’s case, the same ideology of modernization still motivates postwar Americanization. That is, modernization as ideology never ended with Hiroshima. Simultaneously, however, the very idea that has produced the Bildungsroman aspect of Nihonjinron is based on the Arnason-like view that a completely new identity emerges

from the dramatic end of war (in a broader sense, it can also include Americanization following the surrender).

Postmodernism can be broadly defined as a reaction against modernism and totalization of culture. However, if the “post-” in postwar is a reaction to the modern, continuity of the modern should not occur. In Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism, Frederick Jameson sees the concept of the postmodern as “an attempt to think about the present historically in an age that has forgotten how to think historically.”<sup>42</sup> In Japan’s case, its historical amnesia seen in *Nihonjinron* discredits the postmodern’s concern of historicity. It does not seem that postwar Japan fits his prescription. Most of all, how can we locate *Bildungsroman* from the ashes in the postmodern that is famously anti-metanarrative?

In “Is the ‘Post-’ in Postcolonial, the ‘Post-’ in Postmodern?” Anthony Appiah sees postmodernism as “retheorization of the proliferation of distinctions that reflects the underlying dynamic of cultural modernity, the need to clear oneself a space.” Postmodernism allows the same proliferation of distinction as modernism had begun, rejecting the modernist claim of the triumph of the reason.<sup>43</sup> Appiah’s idea explains continuity of the modern after space clearing. If the “post-” in postwar is the post of the space clearing, its effect was more powerful than the one in postmodern. It actually cleared out the space in Japan’s modern history. This framing is similar to Harootunian’s idea of postwar as a cultural trope to fetishize the war experience of the defeated nation. He asserts that from the moment the war ended, Japan was destined to live not in time but in the space of a defeated nation, and there the trope allows the present to write its own

history.<sup>44</sup> This is exactly how “Bildungsroman from the ashes” manipulates the nation’s war experience. The “post-” works as a space clearing trope in “postwar.” However, despite continuity of the modern, postwar Japan also shows anti-modern attitudes as we shall see in texts of Murakami Haruki. Does this mean that Japan’s “postwar” is simply a part of its postmodernism?

### **Postmodernism and Murakami Haruki**

Toshiko Elis remarks that “the current debate on postmodernism in the West reflects the willingness of theorists to view critically the state of their own culture and position in society in relation to the social and cultural heritage of their society” and points out a strong connection between postmodernism and poststructuralism.<sup>45</sup> Actually, Hakutani Yoshinobu notes that Roland Barthes and Jacques Derrida have viewed Japanese culture as decentered, and based on this decenteredness, Hakutani regards Japanese culture as essentially postmodern.<sup>46</sup> Arnason also explores John Clammer’s idea that Japan has been a postmodern society in which the metanarratives have never been important. This perspective is based on the idea that postmodern characteristics are rooted in Japan’s indigenous tradition and Japan’s premodern/non-modern cultural stance is now identified with that of anti-West. In this sense, the postmodern can be seen as a mask for continuation of tenno ideology (anarchism).<sup>47</sup> On the contrary, Miyoshi and Harootunian’s claim that we should not confuse Japan’s non-modernity with the West’s postmodernity. In fact, many theorists recognize the gap between western postmodernism and what is labeled as “postmodernism” in Japan.

Elis asserts that postmodernism is an imported concept for Japan and it is misleading to regard postmodernism as culturally dominant, although Japan shows numerous characteristics that can be classified as a society of late capitalism. She disagrees with the position of examining non-western society using the West as the point of reference for comparison, and asserts that Japan's economic stance and the willing acceptance of postmodernism by Japanese media and academia do not indicate that Japan has overcome the modern.<sup>48</sup> She argues that there is a necessity of localizing the postmodern, and her position is similar to that of Takeuchi's concern regarding the absence of universality to judge both Europe and Asia. In Japan's case, if it has its own modernity, its postmodern should also be a Japanese version.

In the introduction to Japanese Encounters with Postmodernity, Yoshio Sugimoto and Johann Arnason classify approaches to Japan's postmodern debate into three patterns: 1) clear separation of modern and postmodern, 2) postmodern as part of modern, and 3) postmodern as reorientation of modernity. They note that the third pattern is an accommodating position between the first and the second and in this pattern, the "post-" has a double-edged meaning to refer to "the break with a preceding constellation as well as the re-appearance of interrupted and forgotten themes of modern culture."<sup>49</sup> It seems as if the definition of postmodern arises from the way we perceive the modern. My stance that the modern has not ended will be classified into the second pattern, which I do not deny. By disagreeing with the first and the third, I counter the idea of the discontinuity of the modern in the postmodern.

Yoda Tomiko thinks that Japan's postmodernism is a peculiar brand of modernity and it is made into an industry by the media "that swallowed up and spouted out the metacritique of postmodern consumer society itself as a commodity."<sup>50</sup> Although her research focuses on Japan after the 1990s, the significant role the media play in Japan's cultural formation that she points out here is also applicable to postwar culture in general, especially because of Japan's high literacy level. Her idea that Japan's postmodern is a variation of modernity is shared by Karatani Kojin. Karatani observes the postmodern thoughts in Japan's early modernity, which makes Japan's modernity partially anti-modern. He sees a paradox in this idea that the modern must be the postmodern to be the modern.<sup>51</sup> What these discussions commonly suggest is the uniqueness of Japan's postmodernity as well as modernity, which raises a question whether it can be fully discussed in the framework of western cultural theories, and how the so-called postmodern characteristics of Haruki Murakami should be discussed.

Many theorists from both Japan and overseas find postmodern characteristics in Murakami's works. However, that does not always mean that Murakami is defined as a postmodernist by them. Elis names Murakami as a representative figure of a new trend of Japanese literature, recognizing Jamesonian characteristics in Murakami's texts such as the transformation of reality into images, and pastiche as well as nostalgic themes through fragmented images of the past. Most of all, she observes a fundamental suspicion towards words. She sees Murakami's non-modernist features in his perception of history as well as absence of his sense of place. Yet, she avoids labeling him as a post-modernist.<sup>52</sup> Fuminobu Murakami also sees (Haruki) Murakami's detachment from

rationalization, emotionality, totalization and individualization as what Jameson calls one of the features of postmodernism. He thinks that through adopting western theories we are able to see Japanese culture from a different perspective, and at the same time it opens up a new dimension of postmodernism, feminism and postcolonialism. For him, Murakami deconstructs two modern ideologies: “strong is good,” and “love is beautiful.”<sup>53</sup>

Suter points out that Murakami has been criticized for his lack of political and social commitment, but he is defined as a postmodernist by many critics based on the fact that he is not a modernist. She recognizes both modernist literary strategies in his use of language and postmodern characteristics in his use of metafiction. She defines him as “para-modernist who relates to modernity and modernism not as past but as foreign things.” She thinks that Murakami’s relation to the modernist and postmodernist literature is akin to Homi Bhabha’s idea of the colonial mimicry, through which he makes not a passive imitation but “a parodic incorporation that transforms the original and destabilize it.”<sup>54</sup> Matthew Strecher differentiates Murakami’s postmodernism from that of Jameson in terms of his treatment of liberation of the human spirit. Strecher thinks that Murakami sees “the potential for liberation of expressions, new modes of looking at the world” in postmodernism. In other words, Murakami uses postmodernism, especially magical realism, as a technique to deliver his political messages although Strecher does not necessarily see him as a postmodern writer.<sup>55</sup> These critics above commonly recognize Murakami’s postmodern features. Yet, they are reluctant to call him postmodernist.

Murakami's works can be read as a reaction to the "modern" that seeks totalization. In this sense, he may be labeled as a "postmodern" writer. However, the "modern" he is against is very specific. Considering his early works are set in the 1960s and 1970s and throughout his works, many of his protagonists are deeply concerned with the failure of the Zenkyoto movement in the 1960s, the "modern" he deals with can be specified as "postwar." The time frame he deals with also coincides with the time when the Nihonjinron began defining who the Japanese were. In this regard, he is a post-"postwar" writer as well as a post-Bildungsroman from the ashes writer who reveals the continuation of the modern imperial rule in the postwar and who refuses the ready-made identity. I see Murakami as a cultural ethnographer who uses postmodern techniques to end Japan's long "postwar" period. I place his works in the postcolonial discourse to analyze them in the framework of area studies, which allow us to localize what is broadly called as postmodern.

### **Murakami as a Post-"postwar" writer**

Murakami usually makes a hero (or anti-hero) out of an ordinary Japanese man of the postwar generation whose life is designed by postwar education, democracy, capitalist values and American cultural icons such as music, films and events, while his mind produces indifference and suspicion and some disorientation towards all the elements of his life mentioned above. Certainly, he is not a type of hero who stars in "Bildungsroman from the ashes." In the first place, his protagonist is not a team player who fits in the System. In his trilogy, Hear the Wind Sing (1979), Pinball 1973 (1980) and A Wild Sheep Chase (1982) as well as its sequel, Dance, Dance, Dance (1988),



Murakami uses the same first person narrator, “Boku” (In Japanese it means “I” used by male speakers) through whom he creates an urban life full of western cultural logos.<sup>56</sup> Each work is set at different points of the protagonist’s life. The first of the trilogy, Hear the Wind Sing depicts the slow but nostalgic summer time during his student years. In Pinball, 1973 he is a young professional, and his free single life shows cool urban sophistication.<sup>57</sup>

In his early works, none of his characters were given real names. Contrastingly, Murakami uses many concrete nouns that represent American culture to describe their lives. In Hear the Wind Sing, “Boku” and his friend, “Nezumi” (Rat) often go to a bar owned by a Chinese man called “J.” They drink beer and eat sandwiches and fried potatoes. Nezumi’s favorite snack is pancakes with Coca-Cola poured over them. Boku listens to the Beach Boys and reads Derek Hartfield.<sup>58</sup> Miyuki Yonemura among others sees Murakami’s open devotion to American culture in his references to American literature, films and music. However, she also points out that Murakami presents his own version of America as metaphor.<sup>59</sup> This Japanization of the West manufactures the West as a simulacrum, and it is this invented “West” that Japan lets colonize itself. In other words, Japan is a colonizer and the colonized at the same time. As Yonemura suggests, the imagery of “richness” of modern America is observed in following description of the refrigerator ad Boku sees:

Next to the old YMCA building, there was a new but cheap-looking building with a huge billboard of the latest model of a refrigerator. A woman around thirty years old with an apron, who looked anemic, was happily holding the door. Thanks to her, I was able to see the inside.

There are ice, 1 liter vanilla ice cream, and a bag of shrimp in the freezer. In the refrigerator, there are eggs, butter, Camembert cheese, boneless ham, fish, chicken legs, tomatoes, cucumbers, asparagus, lettuce and grapefruits. On the door, I see three bottles of Coca Cola and beer as well as a carton of milk. (my translation)<sup>60</sup>

The novel is set in 1970. It was during the time Japan's postwar economic miracle brought prosperity to all middle class families who could now afford a television set, a laundry machine, and a refrigerator. In this sense, this billboard symbolizes Japan's postwar achievement, and interestingly, the food displayed there is mostly of western origin that was foreign to premodern Japan. In fact, this modern westernized life style distributed by the media is the reward the State-system endows people with in return for their subjugation. Murakami's persistent concern with the transition between the 1960s and 1970s makes careful readers wonder about the significance of it. The 1960s is generally recognized as "Kodo Seichoki" (the period of economic high growth) and Japan's successful recovery from World War II, and its new membership in the world is symbolized by the Tokyo Olympic Games held in 1964. The continuing growth of the Japanese economy during the 1960s allowed people to be proud of their middle class identity with their newly purchased television sets, refrigerators and washing machines.

However, there were also political struggles and protest rallies organized to protest the United States-Japan Security Treaties as well as anti-Vietnam War movement. "Zenkyoto" (the Joint Campus Struggle movement), which was deeply involved with these revolutionary activities, peaked in 1969. Although Zenkyoto is usually symbolized by the large riots at Tokyo University and Nihon University, it was originally organized by many universities individually to protest against various campus struggles. It

eventually became a joint campus organization with its main goal to protest against the government's Imperialistic Establishment. However, once the movement went beyond campus struggles, the organization no longer remained spontaneous. It became highly hierarchical and transformed itself into extremists. As a result, many participants left the organization, while its leftish political justification was suppressed by the government. Thus, Zenkyoto gradually collapsed, and many students went back to class. It can be contended, however, that Zenkyoto (especially at the beginning stage) was the last battle the postwar Japanese fought against the System.<sup>61</sup>

As Strecher notes, some critics such as Norihito Kato and Saburo Kawamoto see Murakami as "a potential spokesman for the younger members of the defunct Zenkyoto movement of the late 1960s."<sup>62</sup> Kuroko Kazuo sees a shadow of the Zenkyoto movement throughout Murakami's trilogy and thinks that the death of the "Sheep" symbolizes Murakami's emancipation of himself from the spell of Zenkyoto.<sup>63</sup> There is an obvious indication in Hear the Wind Sing that Boku was active in the student movements in 1969. He tells his girlfriend about the campus strikes and riots and shows her his front tooth that was once broken by a riot policeman. She asks:

"Do you want to take your revenge on the police guy?"

"Never," said I.

"Why not? If I were you, I would find the guy and break his teeth with a hammer."

"I am not you. And it is over now. In the first place, all the riot policemen look alike. I don't think I can find him anyway."

"Then, it is meaningless"

"What is?"

"Your broken tooth."

"Yes, it is," said I. (my translation)<sup>64</sup>

In this short conversation over dinner, Boku clearly presents his recognition that his battle was over. In short, the Zenkyoto generation's attempt to fight against "sengo shihonshugi" (postwar capitalism) and its imperialistic establishment failed. Thus, the System continues to conceal the dark side of the nation's imperial history behind postwar Bildungsroman from the ashes.

What matters here is that Boku calls the event of 1969 "meaningless." The meaninglessness Boku feels towards the event is perhaps shared by the Zenkyoto generation because of the way it was dismissed. In fact, Murakami takes a cynical view towards the decline of Zenkyoto through Nezumi. When Boku asks Nezumi why he quit college, Nezumi implied that he was active in the Zenkyoto movement. He says:

"I got sick of it, maybe. But I did my best in my own way. I can't even believe how well I did. I even cared about other people and got beaten by the police because of that. But when the time came, all went back to their places. In the end, I did not have a place to go back to. It was like playing musical chairs." (my translation)<sup>65</sup>

Murakami's metaphor of musical chairs suggests that the Zenkyoto movement itself might have been an illusion of freedom given to the postwar generation by the State-system. People in the game believed that they were fighting against the State-system, thinking the music was their spirits. But when the music stopped, their spirits died out and each one got back to the chair he/she had had before. Therefore, there was no reason for them to play the game in the first place.

Kuroko regards the Zenkyoto movement as an experiment of emancipation of the people. Although the novel's rhetoric emphasizes Nezumi's (Boku's as well)

indifference over the matter and makes it sound as if he has lost his place in society without knowing it, Kuroko thinks that it was Nezumi that made a choice.<sup>66</sup> Nezumi chooses not to give up the spirit and did not take a chair although there would have been one for him. In this way, his fight is not over yet and he actually puts himself in the situation where he needs to seek his own words to represent himself. In response to Boku's question about his plan, he says:

“I am thinking about writing a novel. What do you think?”

“Go ahead and write one.”

Nezumi nodded.

“What kind of novel are you thinking about writing?”

“A good kind. For me, I mean. I do not think I have a talent. But at least, it has to be a kind of novel that enlightens me. Otherwise, it will be meaningless, I think. Right?”

“Right”

“Whether I write it for myself or for cicadas.”

“Cicadas?”

“Right.” (My translation)<sup>67</sup>

Nezumi says that he wants to write for little insects, frogs, grass, or winds whose existence he “experienced” when he visited an ancient tumulus. I see Nezumi's decision as Murakami's desire to make 1970 a new beginning. What Nezumi wishes to write is a post-Bildungsroman novel that represents little “individuals.” Yet, Nezumi also adds that he has not written anything and even feels that he cannot write. Murakami reminds us again that people of the Zenkyoto generation are placed into the State-system as parts, and they do not possess language to represent themselves.

The State-system's control is also depicted through Boku's childhood experience with a psychologist he was taken to by his parents who were concerned with his autism-like taciturnity. The psychologist says to him:

Civilization means communication. If you cannot express it, it does not exist. That means zero, you see? If you are hungry, all you need to do is to say, "I am hungry." Then I will give you cookies. Go ahead. Eat. (I picked up one cookie.) If you don't speak, no cookies for you. (The doctor, with a mean look, hid the plate of cookies under the table). Zero, you see? You don't want to talk but you are hungry. You want to express your hunger without words. It's a gesture game. Go ahead. Try.

I made a face while holding my stomach. The doctor laughed. That's indigestion.

Indigestion..... (My translation)<sup>68</sup>

For about a year, he visited the psychologist every Sunday afternoon and received treatment which came with coffee rolls, apple pies, pan cakes, sugar coated croissants and so on. He even had to go to the dentist because of all the sweet snacks he was given. His condition continued until the age of fourteen:

It sounds unbelievable but in the spring of my fourteenth year, I started talking all of a sudden. I do not remember what I talked about. But I kept talking and talking for three months as if I tried to fill fourteen years of blanks. Then, when I finished talking in mid-July, I ran a high fever and missed school for three days. When I recovered, I found myself being an ordinary boy who is not either talkative or taciturn. (My translation)<sup>69</sup>

Kasai Kiyoshi thinks that what is symbolized by "jozetsu" (unusual talkativeness) set in between "mukuchi" (taciturnity) and "heibon" (ordinary) is the mysterious center of Murakami's world. He sees taciturnity as Boku's rejection of language, and moreover, it is rejection of ideological community (based on religion, law and system) symbolized by

the language. It needs to be clarified that what Boku is rejecting is not the West but the system that uses the “West” as a reward to control people. Boku’s “jozetsu” stage, then, is the symbolic stage when he attempts to counter the System by using the language. However, in the end, he is assimilated into the System as an ordinary person.<sup>70</sup> In fact, if we regard the psychologist as the System’s elite (colonizer) who manipulates the language, this whole episode can be examined through a postcolonial perspective. The young Boku is given sweet snacks (they are all western sweets) in return for learning the colonizer’s language and symbolically, his teeth were ruined.

Homi Bhabha asserts that “colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite” and defines it as “the sign of a double articulation: a complex strategy of reform, regulation and discipline, which appropriates the Other as it visualizes power.”<sup>71</sup> Young Boku was not able to represent himself because he did not have a language of his own. He is taught to desire to reform himself through mimicry, and at the age fourteen, his mimicry became good enough to give him quasi-subjectivity to talk. Bhabha writes:

Mimicry marks those moments of civil disobedience within the discipline of civility: signs of spectacular resistance. Then the words of the master become the site of hybridity- the warlike, subaltern sign of the native- then we may not only read between the lines but even seek to change the often coercive reality that they so lucidly contain.<sup>72</sup>

In Boku’s case, the aftermath of his warlike talking is his missing school for three days, which may be the most rebellious action a fourteen-year-old can take against the State-system. However, after three days of high fever, a sign of “sly civility” disappears, and

he becomes somebody, “ordinary” in a controlled society where people are provided with a ready-made identity and language to represent them. Upon reception of it, they lose an individual identity of their own. In 1963, after three months of aggressive talking, he subjected himself to the System as an ordinary person. And he lost his battle again in 1969.

After the year 1969, Boku continues to challenge language in a rather innovative way, using numbers. Boku describes his obsession with numbers as follows:

The third girl I slept with called my penis “your *raison d’etre*.”



I once attempted to write a short novel about the “*raison d’etre*.” Although I never finished the novel, I kept thinking about *raison d’etre* and ended up with a strange habit of transforming everything into numbers. For about eight months, I was obsessed with it. When I got on a train, I first counted the numbers of passengers. I counted every single step of stairs. I took my pulse whenever I could. According to my records, between August 15<sup>th</sup>, 1969 and April 3<sup>rd</sup> in the following year, I attended 358 lectures, had sex 54 times and smoked 6921 cigarettes.

During that time, I seriously thought I was able to deliver some kind of message to others through numbers. Moreover, I thought as long as I had something to tell others, I could prove my existence. Needless to say, however, nobody was interested in the numbers of cigarette I smoked, steps I climbed or the size of my penis. I lost my *raison d’etre* and became alone.



It was for this reason that I say I was smoking the cigarette number 6922 when I learned that she had died. (My translation)<sup>73</sup>

It is hard to ignore the “*raison d’etre*” of numbers here. Many critics agree that Murakami’s use of dates and numbers is one of his unique characteristics. Maeda Ai sees Murakami’s uses of numbers as his challenge against language and thinks that he depicts a person in the shape of language.<sup>74</sup> Michael Seats thinks that Maeda’s argument is a fundamental inquiry to postmodern foregrounding of language. He regards Murakami’s



sign system as “indicative of the operation of a simulacral process in the representation of the Japanese self (jiga) in contemporary fiction.” He also asserts that Murakami’s writing challenges the essentialist notion of Japaneseness which dominates the “shishosetsu” (I-novel, confession style novels).<sup>75</sup> Yet, Maeda and Seats would agree that this seemingly overuse of numbers is to create some type of an outline of a person. Murakami uses numbers as a new set of vocabulary to depict a Japanese individual, and his overuse of numbers articulates his political strategy. It is the way, he battles with “language.” Further, I argue that through numbers he reveals the essentialization (generalization as well as Orientalization) of people by the State-system. He shows how people’s lives in the controlled space can be enumerated. Most symbolically, in Pinball 1973 Boku lives with a set of twin girls wearing sweat shirts with the numbers 208 and 209, which is the only tool for him to tell one from the other.

In Pinball 1973, Boku works as a translator in the little company he and his friend started. He is twenty four years old now and ironically, manipulation with language has become his occupation. In fact, the catch phrase on their business brochure reads, “There is nothing one cannot understand if it is written by someone.” He works as a mediator between two languages, which implies his in-betweenness. In this novel, he listens to “Rubber Soul” and reads Immanuel Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason. Boku says that this is a novel about a certain pinball machine that was too sophisticated to be appreciated by many before its disappearance. He makes interesting remarks:

The progress of the pinball machine and of Hitler exhibit certain similarities. Both have dubious beginnings, coming on the scene as mere bubbles on the froth of the times; it is through their evolutionary speed rather than any physical stature

per se that they acquire their mythic aura. And of course, that evolution came riding in on three wheels; to wit, technology, capital investment, and last but not least, people's basic desires.<sup>76</sup>

Boku looks for a pinball machine and after a brief reunion with "her" (the machine), he moves on. That is, evolution/modernization continues. Both the pinball machine and Hitler were treated as errors modernity produced. In fact, the imaginary American writer, Derek Heartfield kills himself by jumping off of the Empire State Building with the portrait of Hitler in his hand. The concept of modernity's error is taken over by the sheep in his next novel.

Unlike the first two novels of the trilogy that consist of film-like segments, A Wild Sheep Chase carries a clear story line, and the protagonist's life becomes more realistic in one sense and more magical in the other. Murakami attempts to reveal the unnaturalness of Japan's system-controlled modernity through Boku's adventure to chase the sheep. The novel is set in 1978. Boku is now twenty eight years old. He was once married to the girl who worked in his office as an assistant. Yet, she left him for another man who was his friend. Boku still works at the same office as a translator as well as a copywriter, which is symbolic. He is involved in a strange sheep-searching adventure because of the photographs of sheep he used for his job. It was, in fact, Nezumi (Rat) who sent him the photo and asked him to publicize it somehow. The photo has caught the attention of the personal secretary of a powerful (but physically dying) right-wing politician, Sensei (the Boss), for one of the sheep has a star-shaped mark. Boku is told that the Sheep possessed the Boss since 1936 and kept him in his political power for over forty years. However, it has left the Boss. As the owner of the photo, Boku is forced by

the secretary to find the Sheep with the star mark. Thus, he and his new girl friend leave Tokyo for Hokkaido, where they meet the Sheep professor who was once possessed by the Sheep while he was engaged in governmental agricultural research in Manchuria. Boku learns that the Sheep was originally from the Asian continent (it probably possessed Genghis Khan once) and used the Sheep professor as a vehicle to come to Japan with an evil ambition. After he left the Boss, the Sheep attempted to possess Nezumi, who is the son of an influential capitalist (although his father never appears in the story, I regard him as a representative of the comprador class). However, Nezumi killed himself with the Sheep inside him.

In this novel, Murakami presents sheep as something brought by modernization and abandoned as the modern moved on (just as we see in the constant model changing of game machines). The following quotation illustrates the situation of the sheep in Japan:

Even today, Japanese know precious little about sheep. Which is to say that sheep as an animal have no historical connection with the daily life of the Japanese. Sheep were imported at the state level from America, raised briefly, then promptly ignored. That's your sheep. After the war, when importation of wool and mutton from Australia and New Zealand was liberalized, the merits of sheep raising in Japan plummeted to zero. A tragic animal, do you not think? Here then, is the very image of modern Japan.<sup>77</sup>

This is a tragic situation produced by Japan's eager modernization, which can be discussed in a postcolonial perspective. It is easy to read the sheep as the Diaspora. In fact, the sheep may represent ethnic minorities in Japan, especially the Korean populace who were brought to Japan as forced laborers. The Sheep with the star mark symbolizes the dark side of modernization (colonization). I believe that the "darkness" Murakami is

concerned with is comparable to that of Joseph Conrad. In fact, the connection is implied by Murakami by the book of Conrad that Nezumi has left in his bedroom. Kato Hironori points out similarities between the film, Apocalypse Now and A Wild Sheep Chase and thinks that the novel is inspired by the film based on Murakami's remark on the film elsewhere.<sup>78</sup> Edward Said thinks that Kurtz and Marlow in Heart of Darkness are "ahead of their time in understanding that what they call 'the darkness' has an autonomy of its own, and can invade and reclaim what imperialism had taken for its own." He further claims that Conrad's limitation is that he could not see the end of imperialism and emancipation of natives as a conclusion, despite his recognition that imperialism was "pure dominance and land-grabbing."<sup>79</sup> However, Said also fails to realize that autonomy of the darkness will not stop when natives invade and reclaim their lands. It is this immortality of darkness that Murakami is concerned with. Although Murakami sees the same darkness as Conrad and Said, his observation is much more acute, which makes him truly ahead of our time. I further discuss the darkness of the modern in later chapters in relation to Japan's imperial history and the ethnic minority issues.

Murakami's anti-modern/anti-System view is clearly shown in these works. He presents Japan's modernity as something unnatural and grotesque. In the following description of the Boss's "Meiji-era Western style manor", he depicts the mismatched appearance of Japan's modernity:

It was ---How shall I put it? --- a painful solitary building. Let me explain. Say we have a concept. It goes without saying that there will be slight exceptions to that norm. Now, over time these exceptions spread like stains until finally they form a separate concept. To which other exceptions crop up. It was that kind of

building, some ancient life-form that had evolved blindly, toward who knows what end.<sup>80</sup>

The Boss symbolizes the unity of political power and the capitalist money, and his mansion represents Japan's modernity including its darkness. As we see in his description, Murakami treats modernity as if it is a living organism that never stops evolving without knowing its purpose. Any system or ideology is man-made. However, once it is established, it becomes a living organism and starts controlling people in order to maintain its life. In Japan's case, the process of modernization itself has become an organism that colonizes people's minds, giving them a ready-made identity. Here again, I emphasize that Murakami explores ways to define Japan's modernity from a non-modernist perspective, moving away from Bildungsroman from the ashes and offering an alternative view of postwar Japanese culture. In the next chapter, I examine Murakami's construction of Tokyo as a center of the organic System of the modern.

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<sup>11</sup> Masao Miyoshi and H.D. Harootunian, Introduction, Postmodernism and Japan, by Miyoshi and Harootunian (Durham: Duke UP, 1989) x-xi

<sup>12</sup> Johann P. Arnason, "Modernity, Postmodernity and the Japanese Experience." Japanese Encounters with Postmodernity, ed. Yoshio Sugimoto and Johann P. Arnason (New York: Kegan Paul, 2005)12-19.

<sup>13</sup> Fuminobu Murakami, Introduction, Postmodern, Feminist and Postcolonial Currents in Contemporary Japanese Culture: A reading of Murakami Haruki, Yoshimoto Banana, Yoshimoto Takaaki and Karatani Kojin, by Murakami (New York: Routledge) 8-9.

<sup>14</sup> Sugimoto, 183.

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<sup>15</sup> Masao Miyoshi, Off Center: Power and Culture Relations Between Japan and the United States, (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1991) 40-41.

<sup>16</sup> In July 1942 a group of intellectuals gathered in Kyoto to discuss the theme “Kindai no Chokoku”(Overcoming the modern). Participants were Hideo Kobayashi, Keiji Nishitani, Katsuichiro Kamei, Fusao Hayashi, Tatsuji Miyoshi, Tetsuraro Kawakami and Mitsuo Nakamura. Takeuchi notes that the phrase “Kindai no Chokoku” gained popularity among intellectuals during the war.

<sup>17</sup> Yoshimi Takeuchi, “”Overcoming Modernity,” trans. Richard Calichman, What is Modernity?: Writings of Takeuchi Yoshimi (New York: Columbia UP, 2005) 114.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, 125.

<sup>19</sup> Yoshimi Takeuchi, “What is Modernity?” trans. Richard Calichmna, What is Modernity?: Writings of Takeuchi Yoshimi (New York: Columbia UP, 2005) 64.

<sup>20</sup> Takeuchi’s idea appears similar to that of Edward Said’s Orientalism. However, it should be noted that Takeuchi died in 1977 before a Japanese translation of Edward Said’s Orientalism became available in 1986.

<sup>21</sup> Although Takeuchi thinks that westernized Japan gives its subjectivity to the West, in my self-colonization model, people give up their subjectivity to the State-system and receive a high status western identity in return.

<sup>22</sup> Takeuchi, 132.

<sup>23</sup> Sakai, 113-114.

<sup>24</sup> Takeuchi, 66-67.

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<sup>25</sup> Naoki Sakai, "Modernity and Its Critique: The Problem of Universalism and Particularism," Postmodernism and Japan (Durham: Duke UP, 1989), 114-119.

Sakai refers to Takeuchi's article, "Kindai towa nanika (What is Modern?)."

<sup>26</sup> H. D. Harootunian, "Visible Discourses/Invisible Ideologies" Postmodernism and Japan, ed. Masao Miyoshi and Harootunian (Durham: Duke UP, 1989) 72-75.

<sup>27</sup> Takeuchi, 146.

<sup>28</sup> Kodansha International, Japan: Profile of a Nation (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1994) 37.

<sup>29</sup> John Lie, Multiethnic Japan (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2001) 150-151.

<sup>30</sup> In 1986 Prime Minister, Yasuhiro Nakasone blamed the presence of African Americans and Hispanics for the decline of American intelligence levels and proudly called Japan "Tanitus Minzoku Kokka." This extremely ethnocentric remark upset not only minorities in the United States but also the non-Japanese populace in Japan. However, the image of Japan as a homogenous society has been widely shared by many Japanese. In "Critical Texts, Mass Artifact: The Consumption of Knowledge in Postmodern Japan," Marilyn Ivy writes that Nakasone created "a narrative of legitimation in which Japanese superiority depended on density of information and capacity to read."

<sup>31</sup> Lie, 151.

<sup>32</sup> Naoki Sakai, "Modernity and Its Critique: The Problem of Universalism and Particularism," Postmodernism and Japan, ed. Masao Miyoshi and H.D. Harootunian (Durham: Duke UP, 1989) 97-98.

<sup>33</sup> Rebecca Suter, The Japanization of Modernity: Murakami Haruki between Japan and the United States (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2008) 32.

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Suter refers to The Chrysanthemum and the Sword by Benedict and Japan Past and Present by Reischauer.

<sup>34</sup> Edward Said, Orientalism (New York: Vintage, 1979) 202-203.

<sup>35</sup> Hiroshi Yoshioka, "Samurai and Self-Colonization in Japan," The Decolonization of Imagination: Cultures, Knowledge and Power, eds. Jan Pieterse and Bhikhu Parekh (New Jersey: Zed Books, 1995) 102-107.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 102.

<sup>37</sup> Murakami, 3.

<sup>38</sup> Jean-Francois Lyotard, The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1979) 23-32.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, 48.

<sup>40</sup> H.D. Harootunian, "Japan's Long Postwar: The Trick of Memory and the Ruse of History," Japan After Japan: Social and Cultural Life from the Recessionary 1990s to the Present, eds. Tomiko Yoda and Harootunian (Durham: Duke UP, 2006) 99.

<sup>41</sup> Johann Arnason, "Modernity, Postmodernity and the Japanese Experience," Japanese Encounters with Postmodernity, eds. Yoshio Sugimoto and Arnason (New York: Kegan Paul, 1995) 16.

<sup>42</sup> Fredric Jameson, Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism (Durham: Duke UP, 2001) i.

<sup>43</sup> Kwame Anthony Appiah, "Is the Post- in Postmodern Post- in Postcolonial?"

Contemporary Postcolonial Theory: A Reader, ed. Padmini Mongia (New York: St. Martin's, 1996) 61.



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<sup>44</sup> Harootunian, 101.

<sup>45</sup> Toshiko Ellis, "Questioning Modernism and Postmodernism," Japanese Encounters with Postmodernity, eds. Yoshio Sugimoto and Johann Arnason (New York: Kegan Paul, 1995) 138.

<sup>46</sup> Yoshinobu Hakutani, Postmodernity and Cross Culturalism (Cranbury: Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 2002) 26-27.

<sup>47</sup> Arnason, 26-27.

<sup>48</sup> Ellis, 133-139.

<sup>49</sup> Yoshio Sugimoto and Johann Arnason, introduction, Japanese Encounters with Postmodernity, eds. Sugimoto and Arnason (New York: Kegan Paul, 1995) 4.

<sup>50</sup> Tomiko Yoda, "A Roadmap to Millennial Japan," Japan After Japan, ed. Yoda and H.D. Harootunian, (Durham: Duke UP, 2006) 34.

<sup>51</sup> Kojin Karatani, "Hiho to Postmodern" (Criticism and Postmodern) in Sai toshiteno Basho (A Space as a Difference), (Tokyo: Kodansha, 2007) 136-138.

<sup>52</sup> Ellis, 144-145.

<sup>53</sup> Fuminobu Murakami, Postmodern, Feminist and Postcolonial Currents in Contemporary Japanese Culture: A Reading of Murakami Haruki, Yoshimoto Banana, Yoshimoto Takaaki and Karatani Kojin (New York: Routledge, 2005) 6-8.

<sup>54</sup> Suter, 5-7.

<sup>55</sup> Matthew Strecher, Dance With Sheep: The Quest of Identity in the Fiction of Murakami Haruki (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies U of Michigan, 2002) 20.

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<sup>56</sup> In the afterwords of the original Japanese version of Dance, Dance, Dance, Murakami himself declares that the first person narrator, “Boku” is the same person who appears in Hear the Wind Sing, Pinball, 1973, and Wild Sheep Chase.

<sup>57</sup> Most of Murakami’s works are set in Tokyo or partially in Tokyo. Exceptions are Hear the Wind Sing (set in Kobe) and several other short stories. The following are set partially in Tokyo: Wild Sheep Chase (set in Tokyo and Hokkaido), Dance, Dance, Dance (set in Tokyo, Hokkaido and Hawaii), Kafka on the Shore (set in Tokyo and Shikoku), and Sputnik Sweetheart (set in Tokyo and Greece).

<sup>58</sup> Derek Heartfield is supposed to be an American writer who killed himself by jumping off the Empire State Building. Hatanaka Yoshiki thinks that this imaginary writer is modeled after Robert E. Howard. His name is spelled originally with Japanese scripts as デレク・ハートフィールド(dereku hatofirudo). Alfred Birnbaum and Jay Rubin spell it as Derek Heartfield while Michel Seats writes it as Derek Hartfield. I have adopted Birnbaum and Rubin’s spelling.

<sup>59</sup> Yonemura Miyuki, “Poppumasuta to <Shinbei> shikou” (Pop master and Pro-Americanism) Murakami Haruki: Tema, souchi, kyarakuta (Haruki Murakami: Theme, Setting and Characters), ed. Tsuge Mitsuhiro (Tokyo: Shibundo, 2008) 145-152.

<sup>60</sup> Haruki Murakami, Kaze no Uta o kike (Hear the Wind Sing) (Tokyo: Kodansha, 2007) 122.

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- <sup>61</sup> Kazuo Kuroko, Murakami Haruki: “Soshitsu” no Monogatari kara “Tenkan” no Morogatari e (Murakami Haruki: From the Narrative of “Loss” to the Narrative of “Transition”) (Tokyo: Bensei, 2007) 14-19.
- <sup>62</sup> Strecher, 3.
- <sup>63</sup> Kuroko, 81.
- <sup>64</sup> Murakami, 90-91.
- <sup>65</sup> Ibid, 117.
- <sup>66</sup> Kuroko, 17-25.
- <sup>67</sup> Murakami, 117-118.
- <sup>68</sup> Ibid, 30.
- <sup>69</sup> Ibid, 32.
- <sup>70</sup> Kiyoshi Kasai, “Toshikankaku toiu Inpei” (Urban Sense as Hideaway) Murakami Haruki Studies 01, eds, Kuritsubo Yoshiki and Tsuge Teruhiko (Tokyo: Wakakusa, 1999) 213-214.
- <sup>71</sup> Homi Bhabha, Location of Culture (New York: Routledge, 1994) 122.
- <sup>72</sup> Ibid, 172.
- <sup>73</sup> Murakami, 95-96.
- <sup>74</sup> Ai Maeda, “Boku to Nezumi no Kigoron” (Semiotics of Boku and Rat), Murakami Haruki Studies 01, eds. eds, Kuritsubo Yoshiki and Tsuge Teruhiko (Tokyo: Wakakusa, 1999) 29.
- <sup>75</sup> Michael Seats, Murakami Haruki: The Simulacrum in Contemporary Japanese Culture (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006) 137.

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<sup>76</sup> Haruki Murakami, Pinball 1973, trans. Alfred Birnbaum (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1985) 26-27.

<sup>77</sup> Haruki Murakami, A Wild Sheep Chase, trans. Alfred Birnbaum (New York: Vintage, 1989) 130.

<sup>78</sup> Norihiro Kato, Murakami Haruki ronshu (Tokyo: Wakakusa Shobo, 2006) 9-13.

<sup>79</sup> Edward Said, Culture and Imperialism (New York: Vintage, 1994) 30.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid*, 81.

## CHAPTER III

### MURAKAMI'S TOKYO: LOST IN THE THIRD SPACE WONDERLAND

#### **Introduction**

In an interview that was published in 1989, Murakami discussed his interest in “jokyo” (situation) in response to a question about whether he has any messages he wanted to deliver to his readers through his works. He answered as follows:

I do not seem to have one. In the first place, I want to write about jokyo (situation). Jokyo itself. I want to write about how people react to a certain jokyo. I do not have a thought or a message. I am only interested in jokyo itself, for, as I said earlier, I believe that jokyo is prescribed by duality of time and spaces.”(my translation)<sup>81</sup>

Here, I interpret what Murakami calls “jokyo” as Japan’s social and cultural situation, which is prescribed by both “time” (postwar) and “space” (Tokyo). In fact, Murakami sets most of his novels in Tokyo and his concern with the city is quite persistent throughout his works. Consequently, I read his works as a kind of ethnography of Japan in which Tokyo is presented as a sign of modernity. Murakami is often labeled as an Americanized writer because of his open devotion to American culture shown in the amount of American cultural icons cited (mostly by their proper names) in his novels. By using American cultural icons to depict Japan’s urban space, Murakami demonstrates not only the level of penetration of American culture in Japan but also the level of Japanization (or to be more specific, Tokyoization) of America. Rebecca Suter thinks that

Murakami's approach to modernity (also postmodernity) in his texts is related to the parodic "mimicry of the colonized."<sup>82</sup> In this sense Murakami is a post-Bildungsroman writer who redistributes his version of America via his Tokyo novels. Considering his popularity in Japan and Asia, he is the medium of Tokyo culture himself.

I regard present day Tokyo as the ideal cultural contact zone between Japan and the West created by the State-system. It has become Japan's proud symbol of postwar high economic growth, advanced technology and an Americanized life style while it promotes nationalism as the capital of the nation. Tokyo is the space for the State-system to realize its modern ideology of "Wakon Yosai" (Japanese Soul, Western Talent), and in this sense, it can be contended that Tokyo plays the roles of both Japan and the West. Simultaneously, this means that Japan's imperial energy is still "modernizing" the space by importing the West, Japanizing it and then, distributing the Japanized-West (J-West) to the rest of the nation (and now even to the world including the West) via Tokyo.

In this chapter, I discuss modern and pre-modern formation of the core-periphery structure in Japan's construction of the metropolitan city, Tokyo. Based on the premise that Tokyo centeredness has been created by the State-system's modern ideology, I argue that Tokyo is a simulated cultural "situation" in which materialistic wealth is identified as freedom of choice and American cultural icons and English loan words were confused with cultural sophistication. In reality Tokyo represents cultural and linguistic chaos, and this simulated urban space keeps people from realizing their lack of individuality. In order to explore the struggles of the individuals caught in the middle of Tokyo's chaos, I examine Murakami's representation of Tokyo in Hardboiled Wonderland and the End of

the World (1985) and Norwegian Wood (1989) in the framework of the postcolonial. In this process I compare Murakami's Tokyo with Homi Bhabha's idea of the third space in terms of identity formation. While Bhabha presents his third space as a site of new identity formation, Murakami thinks that Tokyo is the place where individuality is denied. Moreover, Murakami suggests that Tokyo centeredness itself is a simulacrum which one must overcome in order to locate his/her individuality. In these works Murakami continues to assert postwar Japan is still controlled by its imperialistic State-system.

Since the Meiji period (1868-1912), Japan has been accepting the West and has created a hybrid-like cultural space. In this regard, modern Japan is symbolized by Tokyo. Simultaneously, the construction of Tokyo has produced center-periphery differences. However, this centralism is not spontaneous. It is a result of the pre-modern feudal society, which I consider a version of an empire. Its formation is comparable to Michel Hechter's model of "internal colonialism" in which peripheries become internal colonies and are exploited by the center.<sup>83</sup> If we see the Tokugawa period (1603-1867) as an internal empire, this analysis further suggests the existence of an imperial energy that is indigenous to Japan, and it reinforces the idea that Japan's imperial energy already existed before it was exposed to western imperialism. In this regard, Japan was already modern before its interaction with the West.

### **Internal Colonization in Pre-modern Japan**

Yoshio Sugimoto notes that despite the general belief that Japan is an internally homogeneous island nation "it has never been a stable territorial unit with consistent cultural uniformity."<sup>84</sup> However, the concept of a nation did not exist until the modern

period. During the Medieval period (1185-1568) numerous regional units called kuni that existed throughout Japan were ruled by the “Bakufu” (the military governments, shogunate) based on feudal loyalty. As its Japanese term, “kuni” (国, a country, a nation) suggests, these regional units were autonomous sub-nations.<sup>85</sup> When the Muromachi Shogunate (1333-1568) lost its ruling power, the country went into its long sporadic civil war called “Sengoku Jidai” (戦国時代, 1467-1568, the period of the country at war<sup>86</sup>). After the short reigns of Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi, Japan was finally unified by Tokugawa Ieyasu who won the Battle of Sekigahara over the Toyotomi clan in 1600. Upon his victory, Ieyasu assumed the title of “shogun” and established the “Bakufu” in Edo (present day Tokyo) in 1603. During the following 260 years that are referred to as the Edo period (the Tokugawa period), Japan was ruled by the Tokugawa Shogunate.

The Tokugawa Shogunate united over 250 regional units (kuni) of various sizes under its power. The central government in Edo strategically divided its fiefs, except those of its direct rule, into two main parts of inner and outer zones. In this system, inner zones were given to those who supported the Tokugawa family at Sekigahara. These individuals were also assigned to the influential posts, although their income was relatively small. Meanwhile, outer zones were given to those who came under the Tokugawa’s rule after 1600. The outer zone lords received a sizable income. Yet, these individuals were excluded from the important positions in the government. The Bakufu also enforced the self-imposed seclusion policy (Sakaku) to limit foreign contacts until 1854.



Michel Hechter presents the idea of internal colonialism to illustrate the exploitive relationship between the center and peripheral regions, which contrasts with the widely held “diffusion model of national development.” This model consists of three stages of nation development. During the first stage, which is often identified as a pre-industrial stage, the core and the peripheries are mutually isolated and there are significant differences in their economics, cultural and political institutions. The second stage occurs after more intensive contact between the core and peripheral regions. The contact is often initiated by industrialization and as the interactions between the two groups increase, these interactions bring an awareness of cultural differences to the periphery. Gradually, the traditional behavior in the periphery declines as the new industrial life becomes more beneficial and prestigious. In the last stage, regional wealth should equilibrate, and the political processes will occur in which national parties represent all significant groups in a democratic setting.<sup>87</sup>

Unlike this idealistic model, internal colonialism or “the political integration of culturally distinct groups by the core” concerns existing inequality between the center (the core) and peripheral regions. The core-periphery power dynamics allow the colonial situation to occur. High status occupations are reserved for those of metropolitan culture. The colony serves as an instrument for the development of the metropolis, and its economy is often specialized in specific commodities or raw materials for export.<sup>88</sup> In the Tokugawa period, each fief was called “han” (clan) and remained autonomous by having its own administrative unit modeled after the structure of the Shogunate in Edo. However, autonomy of a fief was strictly controlled by the central regime.<sup>89</sup>

Communication between fiefs (including traveling, trading, inter-han marriage) was restricted, which contributed to the development of a stronger “han” identity (the present day prefectural system is largely based on the “han” divisions). The han economy specialized in rice cultivation (tax was paid by rice). The Tokugawa maintained a strong centralized feudal structure and also enforced class distinctions between samurai, peasants, merchants and artisans.

The political structure was dominated by the samurai. However, they were turned into consumers in the metropolis, which kept their financial power from growing. They were forced to rely on their domains’ rice production. Urban culture (consumer culture) flourished in Edo, while its economy relied heavily on the tax yield of the peasants in the peripheries.<sup>90</sup> Although the peasant class was considered the second from the top on the class hierarchy and recognized as the foundation of the Bakufu’s economy, the peasants were actually treated in inhumane ways based on the idea of “Ikasazu, Korosazu (Do not let them live but do not kill them). I consider this feudalistic centralism as a version of an empire, and I argue that its obvious exploitation of the peasant class in peripheral regions was “internal colonialism.” The Tokugawa created a highly controlled society in which han-regions served as the colonies of Edo. And this controlling energy is the seed of indigenous imperialism. Edward Said defines imperialism as “the practice, the theory and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory” and colonialism as “the implanting of settlements on distant territory,” which is a consequence of imperialism.<sup>91</sup> If we regard Edo as one nation, it can be contended that

Tokugawa's feudalistic centralism is the formation of an empire. Its internal colonization was operated by its indigenous imperialism.

### **Birth of the Nation, Birth of Tokyo**

Roland Barthes presents an interesting observation of Tokyo in comparison to the West and illustrates its physical formation as follows:

The city I am talking about (Tokyo) offers this precious paradox: it does possess a center, but this center is empty. The entire city turns around a site both forbidden and indifferent, a residence concealed beneath foliage, protected by moats, inhabited by an emperor who is never seen, which is to say, literally, but no one knows who. Daily, in their rapid, energetic, bullet-like trajectories, the taxis avoid this circle, whose low crest, the visible form of invisibility, hides the sacred "nothing." One of the two most powerful cities of modernity is thereby built around an opaque ring of walls, streams, roofs, and trees whose own center is no more than an evaporated notion, subsisting here, not in order to irradiate power, but to give to the entire urban movement the support of its detour. In this manner, we are told, the system of the imaginary is spread circularly, by detours and returns the length of an empty subject.<sup>92</sup>

Barthes's deconstructionist approach to Tokyo actually reveals the doughnut-like structure of the capital city of Japan. It is also a spiral town that confuses people.<sup>93</sup> The center can be an empty hole but the stone walls surrounding it create an illusion of a center. Therefore, people are contented with the view of the stone walls and they do not even notice there is a "hole." I emphasize that this contented condition is provided by the State-system.

Although the Tokugawa Shogunate gave the country peace for over two centuries, its ruling system was oppressive. In this system, the Samurai class was only rewarded with its rank, and their economic power was kept low. The Shogunate had lost its

legitimacy by the time of Commodore Perry's visit and the concession of unequal treaties. The southern regions of Satsuma, Choshu and Tosa used the imperial courts to challenge the Shogunate and overthrew it in 1868 (The Meiji Restoration). Considering the imperialistic rule of Tokugawa in the previous centuries, the series of events that overthrew the Shogunate may appear to be acts of liberation or decolonization. However, Meiji Japan actually was another empire in which the feudal loyalty to the Tokugawa was replaced by nationalist loyalty to the divine emperor. Michael Montgomery notes that the dissolution of the Shogunate "bore little or no resemblance to the class revolution of received Marxist terminology in which a lower order rises up against a higher order of oppressors." He also asserts that the Tokugawa was exchanged for new leaders of the time and it was only a change in name.<sup>94</sup> Tokyo's power as the metropolitan center was increased by officially naming it as the nation's capital. The emperor actually moved his residence from Kyoto to Tokyo. Successful dissemination of the nation and penetration of nationalism were realized at the same time as the national promotion of Tokyo.

As the Tokugawa Bakufu closed Japan to the rest of the world (the sakoku policy), this 260 years of self-imposed seclusion was often considered the main contributor to the uniqueness of the Japanese culture. However, this foreign policy itself did not develop a nation and/or nationalism among the people. Nationwide cultural and linguistic unification did not occur while people had strong ties to regional divisions. They only developed "han (clan) nationalism" and "did not identify themselves beyond their village or domain. Their village mentality was not only a form of groupism but their primary identity. Their village or han-identity remained dominant in the early Meiji period. One

of the Meiji leaders, Fukuzawa Yukichi, once described the Meiji state as follows:

“There is a government in Japan, but not a nation.”<sup>95</sup> However, at the time of the Meiji Restoration, the arrival of Western culture led people to realize the national differences. In addition, the establishment of nationwide education, communication and transportation systems mobilized people and promoted national identity.

Benedict Anderson lists three factors that aided the success of this literacy project:

1) the relatively high degree of Japanese ethnocultural homogeneity due to the “sakoku” policy which contributed tremendously to linguistic unification of written Japanese, 2) single dynasty of imperial monarchy allowed the exploitation of the Emperor for official-nationalist purposes, and 3) the confrontation with the West which created needs for self-defense in the new national terms.<sup>96</sup> Japan’s internationalization took place simultaneously with the spread of its nationalism. Although Anderson lists “the high degree of Japan’s ethnocultural homogeneity resulting from two and half centuries of isolation and internal pacification by the Bakufu” as one of the factors that aided the Meiji government’s successful nation making, it was not until the Meiji period that the people began to share a sense of common nationality. As Anderson points out, Japan’s political unification under the rule of the Bakufu in Edo was solidly established.

However, in its feudal system people (whether farmers or samurai) usually lived their entire lives without leaving their birthplaces and thus, naturally developed strong emotional attachment to their regions. Therefore, at the time of the Meiji Restoration, the government leaders not only moved the Emperor to Tokyo but also transformed these regional identifications into the one official and “national” nationalism with the Emperor

as its central figure. In other words, they had to brainwash people to die not for the regional lords but for the Emperor.

Ian Buruma thinks that the modern emperor cult that produced the idea of the Kamikaze mission was based on Imperial Japan's misunderstanding of Christianity as the source of European military power. In order to recreate the same power, the descendant of the sun goddess Amateratsu was brought as "a combination of Kaiser, generalissimo, Shinto pope and the highest living deity."<sup>97</sup> It is obvious that the idea of the emperor as the divine was a (con)fusion of politics and personal beliefs, and to be more exact, it was Imperial Japan's manipulation of nationalism. Watsuji Tetsuro views it as "Fusion resulted in a moral and political system that recognized no transcendental standpoint from which the individual could analyze or criticize society." It contributed tremendously to Meiji Japan's formation of "kazoku kokka (family-state)" in which individuals subordinated themselves to groups and groups to the state.<sup>98</sup> This family-state was a new version of the feudal empire. In modern Japan's history, what is usually seen as national development after the collapse of feudalism (this includes its "sakoku" policy) is actually continuing colonization of the periphery (feudal regions) by the core control site (Tokyo). It took an organized nationwide educational system to achieve this ethnocultural unification. Their achievement is clearly seen later in the concept of the Kamikaze mission during World War II. The most significant element that contributed to the spread of nationalism, however, was perhaps the presence of the West.

Japanese often use the metaphor of "a frog in a well" that lives happily because he knows no other places. During the sakoku period, Japan's foreign contact was limited

only to a few Dutch and Portuguese merchants, and the Japanese lived like frogs in a well. Upon the arrival of Commodore Perry, for the first time (except the Mongolian invasion during the Kamakura period), the Japanese people confronted the “foreign others.” As Lie puts it, their encounter with the modern West may have transformed the abstract awareness of foreign others into the concrete “appreciation” of national differences. However, this sense of appreciation soon became a competition. Anderson adopts Masao Maruyama’s explanation of Japan’s aggressive imperialist character as a result of its self-imposed isolation during which “equality in international affairs was totally absent,” and therefore, Japan’s awareness of foreign others was reduced to the matter of either conquering or being conquered.<sup>99</sup> Japan has indigenous imperialism that is the desire to build an empire. As the Japanese began competing with the West as one people, nationalism was mingled with its indigenous imperialism. It was expanded into the desire to colonize other countries, and became identical to western imperialism. This led Japan to build the empire (of a usual colonial sense), whose “official nationalism” was as Anderson puts it, “a means for stretching the short, tight, skin of the nation over the gigantic body of the empire.”<sup>100</sup> Thus, the diffusion of Japanese national identity occurred simultaneously with the promotion of colonialism, and it is ironic that when people became fully aware of their national identity, Japan was a multi-ethnic empire.

Japan’s official nationalism was implemented through the Meiji government’s literacy education for its people. “Kyoiku Chokugo” (the Imperial Rescript) was issued in 1890 to order the promotion of universal literacy among adult males. It is understood that the Rescript issued in the name of the Emperor Meiji had a tremendous effect as a

political indoctrination. Lie regards this process as colonization of the Japanese archipelago by the Meiji government.<sup>101</sup> If Japan's nationalism education was reinforced by its literacy education, it is easy to see the nation's linguistic unification as a result of the effect of what Anderson calls the "print capitalism through which certain dialects have become "languages-of -power."<sup>102</sup>

The image of Tokyo-centeredness is created all the more through the linguistic unification with the Tokyo accent as the standard Japanese. Although they share relative similarities in syntax and morphology, there have been a large number of local dialects in the Japanese language. Yet, it is natural for the language of the capital to become "universal" over the rest. As Edo-Tokyo gained its political and commercial power, its language attained this prestigious position. After the Meiji Restoration, the normative language, "hyojungo" (standard Japanese) was formulated based on the language spoken in the upper class district of Tokyo and it has been taught in schools and used in media. It is also called "kokugo" (a unitary national language) and it contributed "to create a sense of national identity and unity that also entailed the creation of concepts such as national polity (kokutai) and national subject (kokumin).<sup>103</sup> Ueno Chizuko asserts that ever since the centralization of political power was established by the Meiji government, the Tokyo- centered mass media has invaded the whole nation and the standard Japanese has colonized Japan.<sup>104</sup> However, we must take it into consideration that "print language" is not the same as spoken language.<sup>105</sup> Standard spoken language was spread through mass media, namely television. Ueno thinks that the young TV generation has been transformed into bilingual speakers of the standard Japanese and their local



dialects.<sup>106</sup> Basically, “hyojungo” is the one without any regional accents through which what Anderson calls “homogenous empty time” is shared by people through the media. It does not reflect Tokyo natives’ speech in reality. I believe that the only perfect speakers of hyojungo are textbooks and TV. The equation between the standard language and the Tokyo speech was also implemented through the media. We should regard Tokyo speech as a linguistic version of an invented particularity that thinks itself universality. This illusion of its possession of the standard language all the more contributes to the idea of Tokyo as the center of Japan.

After World War II the traditional “ie (house/family)” system was replaced by the nuclear family and “my homeism.” People no longer feel obligation to their birthplaces. For their education and economic advancement, many of the “dankai no sedai” (dankai generation/ postwar baby boomers) immigrated to Tokyo during the peak of Japan’s high economic growth in 1960s and incidentally made Tokyo a city of immigrants.<sup>107</sup> At the same time, nationwide industrialization promoted development of industrial districts of local areas, which has made it possible for Tokyo-like city spaces to emerge outside Tokyo. It seems now as if marginal areas are becoming miniature versions of Tokyo, and exist in the J-West space as variations. Although there is obvious hegemonic control by Tokyo, the indigenous postmodern-like decenteredness of Japanese culture allows coexistence of variations without producing tension between Tokyo and locals. In fact, what I describe here is a reproduction of the penetration of the West through modern Japan’s self-colonization. Sakai Naoki asserts that the relationship between the West and non-West can be reproduced between the nation as a whole and its heterogeneous

elements.”<sup>108</sup> I see Tokyo-centeredness as cultural decenteredness and it appears to be similar to a postmodern schizoid condition. It should be also noted that more and more loan words from English have entered the Japanese vocabulary and made communication in the language more complex.<sup>109</sup> Regardless, imagined cultural unity is distributed through the Tokyo-controlled mass media, which provides people on the archipelago with an illusion of communication. I believe that Murakami regards this cultural condition as sterile for individuality, which is depicted through his characters’ struggles to find a communicative language to represent themselves.

### **Tokyo as the Third Space Wonderland**

From the beginning of his writing career, Murakami shows persistent interest in depiction of Tokyo. He presents Tokyo not as a place but as situations in which his characters struggle to find the exit from. In his early works his protagonists leave Tokyo and exile themselves to attain their subjectivity. This is the solution Murakami suggests for our survival in the schizophrenic condition. It is obvious that he does not think that the postmodern-like schizophrenic condition provides a productive site for individuals’ identity formation.

Although the novel itself is set in his unnamed hometown during summer, in Hear the Wind Sing, Boku attends a university in Tokyo, and the novel ends when he leaves his home physically as well as mentally. In Pinball, 1973, Boku lives a sophisticated urban life in Tokyo but thinks his everyday life is simply a repetition. In A Wild Sheep Chase Murakami has Boku travel from Tokyo to a local town in Hokkaido in search of a mysterious sheep. In the setting in these novels Murakami presents Tokyo as an “in-

between” place. Boku in Hear the Wind Sing is about to enter Tokyo, thinking that “everywhere is the same.” Boku in Pinball 1973 is aware of a systematic routine of his life there and thinks that “Everything needs an entrance and an exit.” After his “wild sheep chase,” he returns to Tokyo. Yet, in Dance, Dance, Dance (1988) which is a sequel to the trilogy, Boku feels as if he is left alone in a room with an entrance and an exit and “decides” to go back to Hokkaido. In Hardboiled Wonderland and the End of the World (1985), the protagonist must crawl out of the maze like hidden underground of Tokyo and in Norwegian Wood (1987), Boku walks around the city routinely with his girlfriend who suffers from disorientation from society.

In Hear the Wind Sing, the narrator, Boku does not reveal the name of his hometown although many readers assume that it is the author’s hometown, Kobe. Instead, he refers to it as “machi” (town) and describes it as “the town where I was born, grew up and slept with a girl for the first time” (my translation).<sup>110</sup> In contrast, Murakami simply uses the proper name for “Tokyo,” through which he emphasizes its singularity and turns it into a sign that symbolizes its central/universal position, while his “description of the town makes it local/marginal. However, a center cannot exist without its surrounding margins. Although in today’s social conditions Tokyo represents the nation, it is actually defining itself through its relation to local areas. This is an internal version of what Sakai describes as the opposition of universalism and particularism between the United States and Japan, and it recreates a power paradigm between universalism and particularism, through which Tokyo becomes “particularism thinking itself as universalism.”<sup>111</sup> However, in reality Tokyo has now become a brand name.

The Construction of Tokyo reflects Japan's acceptance of both Orientalism and Occidentalism. Kan Sanjun points out that the Japanese have produced a Japanese version of refractive Orientalism because of their negation of being Oriental, which was reflected in Japan's perspective on China and Korea.<sup>112</sup> In the process of its modern nation making, Japan accepted western Orientalism unconditionally and has been trying to "improve" itself by Occidentalizing itself. Since Japan's first world identity relies on its relationship with and resemblance to the West (especially America), it is necessary for Japan to demonstrate its westernized self. Tokyo is, therefore, a "new and improved" space that is willing to accept cultural hybridity. In this regard, it is comparable to Homi Bhabha's third space.

Bhabha defines the "third space of enunciation" as a positive place in which the colonized is able to construct an empowering new identity. He thinks that culture is never unitary, and it is not cultural diversity but cultural differences that "rearticulate(s) the sum of knowledge from the perspective of the signifying position of the minority that resists totalization."<sup>113</sup> He defines cultural diversity as an epistemological object and in this sense culture is an object of empirical knowledge, a category of comparative ethics, aesthetics or ethnology. It is also the recognition of pre-given cultural contents and customs, and it gives rise to liberal notions of multiculturalism, cultural exchange or the culture of humanity. On the other hand, he sees cultural differences as the process of the enunciation of culture as knowledgeable, authoritative and adequate to the construction of systems of cultural identification, a process of signification (differentiation, discrimination, authorization).<sup>114</sup> For Bhabha, incommensurable differences produce a

tension, and the third space emerges in the slippage between two cultures. Yet, what he calls tension is not produced between the invented West (Tokyo/modern) and tradition in the same way it would in his third space. Tokyo is not a productive site for identity construction. In Japan's case, identity construction is manipulated by the State-system through internal colonization and self-colonialism. Therefore, Occidentalization and Orientalization occur simultaneously without producing conflicting tension. People are given western-made convenience in return for giving up their individuality. The J-West hybridity is not the same as Bhabha's ideal hybridity. Moreover, this leads us to suspect the relevancy of Bhabha's model as a productive identity construction site.

In Culture and Imperialism, Said discusses what he calls "the overlapping region of experience and culture that is colonialism's legacy where the politics of secular interpretation carried on for very high stakes," which appears similar to Bhabha's third space. Said writes:

Moreover, the various struggles for dominance among states, nationalisms, ethnic groups, regions, and cultural entities have conducted and amplified a manipulation of opinion and discourse, a production and consumption of ideological media representations, a simplification and reduction of vast complexities into easy currency, the easier to deploy and exploit them in the interest of state policies.<sup>115</sup>

For Said, what Bhabha calls tension is already manipulated by politics and transformed into a strategy or a commodity. As a result, the space has become another colony. Kan argues that the idea of unification of the world negates the hybrid nature of cultures and prevents emergence of possible unification between post-imperialists and natives. He thinks that Said's remark means that bourgeois nationalism has been transformed into a

patterned narrative of the metropolitan, which mimics the imperial rules through ignoring differences.<sup>116</sup> Bhabha's optimistic idea of hybridity actually fits into this category. For Bhabha hybridity is a strategy to counter cultural essentialism. However, his decenteredness is fixed and "hybridity" itself is already essentialized. In reality, the border space is more likely a cultural and linguistic chaos where it is difficult for positive cultural identity to emerge.<sup>117</sup>

Bhabha's idea of the third space is quite optimistic. His third space seems to be a utopian borderland. Although the idea of hybridity offers logic to new identity construction for border figures, (post)colonial discourses do not have the absolute authority to assure the positiveness of hybridity. Bhabha fails to consider political, social and cultural values (such as class, nationalism, gender, religions and so on) which complicate the border identity. He writes, "--- the question of identification is never the affirmation of a pre-given identity, never a self-fulfilling prophecy ---- it is always the production of an image of identity and the transformation of the subject in assuming that image."<sup>118</sup> However, it seems to me that he confused cultural compromise or modification with identity formation. In the J-West the urban identity is given to people as a collective identity by the State-system, and upon reception of it, they lose an individual identity of their own. Actually, this is where I see the significant difference between Bhabha's third space and Murakami's urban space. While Bhabha sees his third space as a positive place for identity construction, Murakami sees his urban space as a place where individual identity does not exist. Murakami's Tokyo represents the sites of mass-produced individuals who enjoy conformity. In fact, Murakami warns us of the

danger of the space and implies its isolation and the dystopian aspect of it in Hardboiled Wonderland and the End of the World (1985).

Hardboiled Wonderland and the End of the World is a futuristic novel about the lifetime decision making of a thirty seven- year-old man of the postwar generation who confronts a fatal moment by accident. According to Yoshinori Shimizu's calculation, the protagonist of The Hardboiled Wonderland and the End of the World was born in 1948 and his birth year indicates that he was in college during the Zenkyoto movement in the 1960s, which can be viewed as "the last battle of people against the State-system."<sup>119</sup> Like "Boku" in Murakami's previous novels, this protagonist's profile overlaps with Murakami's own. However, this time, he uses multiple narrators to process this alternate chapter novel. He uses "Boku" as narrator for "the End of the World" chapters and "Watashi" (another Japanese "I" pronoun) for "Hardboiled Wonderland" chapters. Shimizu observes the "split" of the familiar character, "Boku," and reads the novel as a story of Boku's identity search. Interestingly, in this novel "Boku" no longer resides in Tokyo. Instead, it is "Watashi" who is involved in the curious adventure in Tokyo. The novel is set in the present day Tokyo. It should be especially noted that the story takes place in the most fashionable area of Tokyo, which implies the class status of "Watashi" and in fact, he lives a quite comfortable life in a nice apartment full of American imports. His life style is so Americanized that readers of its English translation version may not realize that he is Japanese until they read about his skillful cooking of Japanese food. In this sense, he is a child of shallow cultural hybridity that is well controlled by the State-system.

“Watashi” is called a “keisanshi” (Calcutec) who is trained to store data in his subconscious. The novel begins with his observation of the unusually large elevator which takes him to his new client, an old professor who is later revealed as the inventor of the whole calcutec operation. In the high information society, this method of using human subconscious as a storage is used by “sisutemu” (the System), in order to prevent important information from being stolen by the competitor, “fakutori” (the Factory) that attempts to decode the data. Although both the System and the Factory are private research institutions, a high degree of the government involvement in them is implied as well as the capitalist control over the whole information war. Twenty six selected men are transformed into Calcutecs through brain surgery that inputs one extra junction into one’s brain. The new junction is connected to a person’s core conscious called a black box. It is a fixed cognitive circuit while the other circuit constantly changes, reflecting one’s experiences. Calcutecs use a password to call up their core conscious and process data. The password is created based on each Calcutec’s “drama” in his core conscious and Watashi’s password is “Sekai no owari” (The end of the world). However, later in the novel Watashi learns that all Calcutecs except him died mysteriously within twenty months after their surgery. Moreover, being curious about the only survivor of his operation, the Professor input another circuit through the data processing he had Watashi do. As a result, Watashi now has three circuits, and the newest one is the visualized subconscious of his, which is predicted to overpower the others eventually. Unfortunately, the Professor’s office is vandalized by the Factory, and therefore, he is not able to remove the third circuit from Watashi as he originally intended to. Because of the



affect from the third circuit, Watashi's mind unconsciously begins to live in the End of the World as "Boku." While Watashi is struggling not to get stuck in the third circuit, Boku also attempts to escape from the place. However, in the end, Boku decides to remain in the End of the World while Watashi loses his consciousness and dies in the Hardboiled Wonderland.

If the Hardboiled Wonderland is Tokyo, what, then, does the End of the World represent? Although it is easy to imagine the binary distinction between modern culture and tradition, there is no indication of Japanese premodern culture in the description of the place. It is a walled town where people live a simple life. However, nobody wears a kimono. The meals Boku eats are served not with chopsticks but with silverware. It is a deserted place where people live "urban" pastoral lives. Jay Rubin thinks that presence of "abandoned factories, electric lights, obsolete army officers and empty barracks suggest something more like a post-nuclear (or perhaps simply post-war) world."<sup>120</sup> The whole town looks abandoned by the modern. It is located outside the prosperity of modernity and progress. In fact, we are told that the place is timeless or eternal. It seems that the town represents Tokyo without its western make-up. However, what confuses the town's identity is the existence of the unicorns.

In Pinball 1973, Boku compares Hitler to a pinball machine in terms of their status as abandoned evolutionary errors. In A Wild Sheep Chase, he sees the Boss's mansion as an unnaturally evolved ancient living form. And in Hardboiled Wonderland and the End of the World, he brings in another evolutionary misfit, the unicorn. In Hardboiled Wonderland, Watashi is given a replica of a unicorn skull as a gift from the

Professor. Confused about the possible message of the gift, he obtains information on the unicorn through a female librarian. Here, Murakami uses the Librarian to give precise and seemingly very scientific as well as historical information about the imaginary creature. She points out that there is a significant difference between eastern and western imaginations of the unicorn. In the East, it symbolizes peace and tranquility, while in the West, it implies aggression and lust. She also explains the disadvantage of possessing a single horn, which makes the unicorn weak in defense. The only thing that could have saved the unicorn from extinction was for them to have lived in a crater-like place where no natural predators inhabited. She reads the description of the place where a real unicorn skull was supposed to have been found:

A plateau out of a crater might tax the imagination, but that is precisely what occurred. The walls of the crater were perilously steep, but over millions of years the walls crumbled due to an intractable geological shift, convexing the base into an ordinary hill. The unicorn, an evolutionary misfit, continued to live on this outcropping isolated from all predation. Natural springs, abounded, the soil was fertile, conditions were idyllic.<sup>121</sup>

It is not hard to link this walled crater to the walled town of the End of the World.

Moreover, it implies Japan's 260 year long sakoku (self-imposed seclusion) period.

Wakamori Yoshiki reads the walled town as Japan where people have lived for generations in isolation and thinks that a horn of the unicorn can be regarded as Tenno (Emperor), whose existence symbolizes the uniqueness of Japan. He emphasizes that this novel affirms "bunretsu" (split) in relation to "sinka" (evolution), which he believes is well depicted in Watashi's painful experience which occurs in underground Tokyo.<sup>122</sup>

During his escape from the primitive creatures called Yamikuro (INKlings), Watashi hits his head on the ground hard. Murakami describes his pain as follows:

What I felt was absolute pain in the side of my head. Then, I felt as if the darkness popped out in front of me and time stopped. And I was thrown into the twisted distortion of time and space. The pain was that bad. I thought I had fractured my skull or my brain is blown off. I thought I was dead and only my mind was crawling in agony like a cut-off tail of a lizard. But the next moment, I was able to feel I was alive.<sup>123</sup>

Wakamori asserts that Watashi's body-breaking pain is the novel's turning point where Watashi's split occurs, and after this experience, he becomes a unicorn without a horn, implying he has evolved. I compare Wakamori's reading with Fuminobu Murakami's idea that the need for evolution prevents the realization of freedom, equity and emancipation and therefore, "a happy society of contented people" would emerge when we discard evolution.<sup>124</sup> If we apply (Fuminobu) Murakami's idea to the scene, it makes the Hardboiled Wonderland a place without human freedom and the walled town a utopia for contented people without identity. They both represent Tokyo and in a broader sense, Japan. While people are given an illusion of living, making their choices, they are actually "mind-less."<sup>125</sup>

The walled town's perfection as the world represents the perfection of the State-system's control of Japan. It is depicted by the Shadow's words to Boku. He says, "Just now, you spoke of the Town's perfection. Sure, the people here---the Gatekeeper aside---don't hurt anyone. No one hurts each other, no one has wants. All are contented and at peace. Why is that? It's because they have no mind."<sup>126</sup> However, Murakami does not let Boku live as a contented person in the walled town. In fact, it is suggested that he is

going to live in the woods with other exile-like people who still have their minds. I read this novel as Murakami's attempt to alter the J-West from a place of ready-made identity to the border space. In this regard, Tokyo becomes the Third Space Wonderland, in which one is able to construct a new identity of his/her own if one has strength to refuse the ready-made identity. Thus, the novel ends with a slight hope although Watashi dies in the Hardboiled Wonderland.

### **Lost in Norwegian Wood**

In Hardboiled Wonderland and the End of the World Murakami uses a futuristic plot and magical realism to depict the maze-like aspect of Tokyo. Meanwhile, he also wrote a realist novel, Norwegian Wood (1989), in which he continued to depict Tokyo as a maze. His protagonist experiences "disorientation" and struggles to find the exit. In Norwegian Wood, the first person narrator, Watanabe Toru grew up in Kobe. When he was in high school, his best friend, Kizuki committed suicide. After his death, Watanabe was willing to leave Kobe for college in Tokyo. One day on the train, he is accidentally reunited with Kizuki's girlfriend, Naoko, and he starts accompanying her on walks every Sunday. Naoko enjoys listening to Watanabe's story about his dorm mates and wonders what "communal" life would be for her. She lives a very reserved life by herself. She tries very hard to express her problem with language to him as follows:

I try to say something, but all I get are the wrong words--- the wrong words, or the exact opposite words from what I mean. I try to correct myself, and that only makes it worse. I lose track of what I was trying to say to begin with. It's like I'm split in two and playing tag with myself. One half is chasing the other half around this big, fat post. The other me has the right words, but this me can't catch her.<sup>127</sup>

Her “chasing the other half” is also implied in her walking around Tokyo without any specific destination. Her walking is described by Watanabe as “no mere stroll.” “She turned right at Iidabashi, came out at the moat, crossed the intersection at Jinbocho, climbed the hill at Ochanomizu, and came out at Hongo. From there she followed the trolley tracks to Komagome. It was a challenging route.”<sup>128</sup> These proper nouns he uses precisely tell where they are inside Tokyo, emphasizing the complicated maze-like design of the city.

No matter how long she walks, Naoko is not able to find the exit of the maze. In fact, she even expresses her total disorientation by asking Watanabe where they are after a half day of walking in which she led him. After an episode of a nervous breakdown, Naoko retreats from Tokyo into the special treatment facility, the Ami Hostel, which is located in the suburbs of Kyoto. Unlike Tokyo’s spiral structure, the ancient capital city Kyoto is simply designed like a chess board.<sup>129</sup> The Ami Hostel exists like a utopia for those who cannot adjust to society and there people seek healing by verbalizing their honest feelings. Naoko finds temporal peace there. It is also suggestive that the Kanji (Chinese character) used in the name, Naoko (直子) indicates straightness and honesty.

Naoko says that she and Kizuki did not go through emotional pains most people experience in their puberty. In return, they are not able to fit into society. Kizuki killed himself because of that, and now Naoko suffers from severe disorientation. Naoko thinks that Watanabe was the only connection they had with the world. At the same time, Watanabe recalls that he and Naoko were not able to hold a decent conversation without Kizuki. Endo Nobuharu thinks that for Naoko, Kizuki was the medium between what she

wanted to say and the language that expresses it, and therefore, Naoko's desire to recover her language is to regain Kizuki and to find the agreement between her thoughts and their representation.<sup>130</sup> I reframe Endo's interpretation into the State-system verses-individual power paradigm. What Naoko means is that she and Kizuki did not grow up to be part of the "system," knowing that the ready-made identity and language do not represent them.

Sengoku Hideyo presents an interesting observation of "Katakana" (foreign loan) words in the following speech of Naoko regarding her sexual experience with Kizuki:

We started kissing at twelve and petting at thirteen---that's how Kizuki and I grew up together, hand in hand, an inseparable pair. We had almost no sense of the oppressiveness of sex or the anguish that comes with the sudden swelling of the ego that ordinary kids experience when they reach puberty. We were totally open about sex---. (Underlines are mine)<sup>131</sup>

Sengoku thinks that the underlined words written in Katakana in the original text make it possible for anyone to verbalize what is hard to talk about (in this case, sex) with a poker face and also thinks that this is "Americanism" producing pronouns that fix the unbalance between the matter/idea/feeling and its representation.<sup>132</sup> Suter also observes Murakami's tendency to employ Katakana words for vocabulary related to sex although he also uses rather old-fashioned Japanese counter parts. She thinks that Murakami uses Katakana words to convey "a feeling of modernity, stylishness, and cosmopolitanism" as well as for their "estrangement effect" often seen in advertisements in the 1980s.<sup>133</sup> Now more English loan words have attained prestigious positions in place of their Japanese

counterparts (if any) and what Sengoku discusses here, I believe, is the side effect of the media controlled self-colonization of the Japanese language.<sup>134</sup>

What Sengoku calls “Americanism” complicates communication and contributes to people’s disorientation or postwar cultural amnesia, which may also be called the postmodern schizophrenic condition. Symbolically, Naoko seeks healing at the Ami Hostel which has no TV or radio. Sengoku also thinks that Watanabe’s Americanism is his only tool to communicate with others and further relates it to his sexual relations with female characters. The fact that he is not able to communicate with others with his own language echoes his physical communication with those he loves. Actually, he is not able to have sexual intercourse with either Naoko or Midori. Sengoku implies that Watanabe’s speech with Americanism is not communication but his masturbation, for which he receives help from both women. If he chooses to have real communication, he must lose his Americanism, and it is for this reason that at the end of the novel, Watanabe loses “words” to tell Midori where he is.<sup>135</sup> What is significant here is the actual words and/or a place Watanabe has lost. He is not able to say the word, “Tokyo” or any proper names to indicate places in Tokyo. If what Sengoku calls “Americanism” and what Murakami (Fuminobu) calls “modern” are both represented by the word “Tokyo,” what Watanabe has lost is Tokyo as a symbol of Japan’s modern ideology. What, then, does Midori mean to Watanabe?

Although Midori was born in Tokyo, she is not controlled by the city, which is shown through the episode of her mastering Kansai (Western Japanese) style cooking on her own. She also writes little articles for Tokyo guide maps for extra money. If the

disappearance of Watanabe's roommate, the Storm Trooper, whose little dream is to make maps, may imply the difficulty of surveying the nation, it can be said that Midori is handling the city quite well. I think that her strength comes from the fact that she knows that Tokyo is no different from other places in Japan. She recalls that she attempted to run away from home when she was a child. Although she made it to her aunt's place in Fukushima prefecture, her father came to take her back. On the train back to Tokyo he told her about his memories of Tokyo (such as the war and the Great Kanto earthquake) and he concluded that no matter where you go, it is the same. Apparently, from her father Midori learned not to accept Tokyo's universality, and she refuses to be mere part of the system. This is the same idea Boku in Hear the Wind Sing possesses, and I believe that this idea eventually gives him the strength to get out of Tokyo in Dance, Dance, Dance.

Midori is a strong character in every way. She sees the unnaturalness of society instead of thinking of herself as a misfit. She is able to locate her gaze outside the Tokyo maze to see people looking for an exit like mice. With the tremendous ability to make her own judgment, she maintains herself under the pressure of postwar education as well as tension between tradition (family values and gender expectations) and social radicalism. Moreover, she can judge "language" with her own criteria and expresses skepticism toward radical languages used by senior students who tell freshmen to read Marx. She says:

And their so-called discussions were terrible, too. Everybody would use big words, and pretend they knew what was going on. But I would ask questions whenever I didn't understand something. 'What is this imperialist exploitation



stuff you're talking about? Is it connected somehow to the East India Company?' 'Does smashing the educational-industrial complex mean we're not supposed to work for a company after we graduate from college?' And stuff like that. But nobody was willing to explain anything to me. Far from it -- they got mad at me-- -- These guys are a bunch of phonies. All they've got on their minds is impressing the new girls with the big words they're so proud of and sticking their hands up their skirts. And when they're seniors, they cut their hair short and go trooping to work for Mitsubishi or IBM or Fuji Bank. They marry pretty wives who've never read Marx and have kids they give fancy new names to that are enough to make you puke---.<sup>136</sup>

Midori is aware that big words as well as book titles are used to assure conformity among those who are "scared to death somebody's gonna find out they don't know something."<sup>137</sup> What she calls "big words" above are originally western imports, and she refuses to yield herself to them without knowing their meanings. She also ridicules those who name their children fancy "new" (read as modern and even English-sounding) names. These attitudes imply her rejection of blindly worshipping language spread by the media in order to be part of society like everybody else. In other words, she refuses to be colonized by language. To be more specific, it is the language that represents the modern ideology.

In his letter to Naoko's roommate, Reiko, Watanabe explains his love for Midori and Naoko in relation to his honesty as follows:

What I feel for Naoko is a tremendously quiet and gentle and transparent love, but what I feel for Midori is a wholly different emotion. It stands and walks on its own, living and breathing and throbbing and shaking me to the roots of my being-- I do believe that I have lived as sincerely as I knew how. I have never lied to anyone, and I have taken care over the years not to hurt other people. And yet I find myself having been tossed into this labyrinth.<sup>138</sup>

Murakami Fuminobu reads the novel as Watanabe's transformation from a modernist to a postmodernist, influenced by Naoko who represents a postmodern schizoid. Although he still cannot give up the modern ideal of "the empathic and romantic love" for Midori, he loses his place in modern society in the last scene because of his postmodern characteristics.<sup>139</sup> I do not agree with Murakami (Fuminobu) that Watanabe's love for Midori represents his remaining memory as a modernist. It actually represents his inclination for the anti-modern position. In fact, his loss of Tokyo begins at the moment he admits his love for Midori. On the way back from her place, he realizes that he is not able to comprehend happenings around Tokyo listed in the newspaper. In this sense, Midori represents an "exit" from Tokyo.

I believe that both Naoko and Midori show postmodern characteristics. Naoko represents the postmodern schizophrenic condition, while Midori voices her anti-totalization. Watanabe demonstrates his sympathetic love towards Naoko and his empathic love towards Midori. The shift he has made from sympathy to empathy suggests that sympathy is no longer enough to maintain the human bonds in which we should locate ourselves. Showing shallow sympathy only helps us to save our position in society. Midori criticizes her relatives who show shallow sympathy towards her father's illness and says, "They just have to stop by and show a little sympathy. I'm the one who wipes the shit and takes the phlegm and dries the bodies off. If sympathy was all it took to clean up shit, I'd have fifty times as much sympathy as anybody else."<sup>140</sup> Unlike her relatives, Watanabe acts out of his empathy and takes care of the patient. At the beginning of his college life, he was determined "not to take everything so seriously" by

keeping proper distance between himself and everything. Considering that he was even described by Naoko as the person who has a way of closing himself up in his own shell and letting things pass, this is quite a change. He also demonstrates his concern with justice in a chaotic society, in which “each one is pursuing his or her own brand of justice or happiness and as a result nobody can do anything” by telling Midori’s father about the unrealistic convenience of a *deus ex machina* in Euripides.<sup>141</sup>

The novel is largely concerned with honesty, justice and fairness. Honesty and fairness are not the same. One is not a substitute for the other. Watanabe recalls Kizuki as a “*kohei*” (fair/fair-minded) person despite his sarcastic side. Yet, Naoko reveals that he tried very hard to show only the good side of himself, hiding his weakness. In this sense, Kizuki was not honest. Meanwhile, Watanabe describes Nagasawa, his dorm mate as an honest man despite his indifference and occasional coldness towards others. Nagasawa is an elite class man who is a senior at the Tokyo University, and he is going to be a foreign diplomat upon graduation. That is, he is the system’s elite who will represent it soon. Their dormitory is like a miniature-State, whose patriotic ritual of raising the national flag at six in the morning indicates its devotion to the nation. Nagasawa is a privileged person there. Symbolically, he is depicted as a master of languages who is fluent in several foreign languages. He is also a manipulator of everyday language, who uses his excellent speech skills to sleep around with many women. For him, languages are the same as a game and so is his life in Tokyo. He thinks that “the world is an inherently unfair place” but “an unfair society is a society that

makes it possible for you to exploit your abilities to the limit.”<sup>142</sup> He is eager to test his abilities in the biggest field, the nation.

Nagasawa’s life style curiously matches what Jean-Francois Lyotard describes as the roles of higher education: It is “to supply the system with players capable of acceptably fulfilling their roles at the pragmatic posts required by its institutions.”<sup>143</sup> As Nagasawa states that his “standard of action” is to be a gentleman “who does not do what he wants to do but what he should do,” he makes efforts to become the best “part” of the State-system.<sup>144</sup> This gentleman attempts to even out social unfairness by swapping girls with Watanabe. Nagasawa is honest enough to admit the unfairness of the world but he accepts the unfairness, which makes him the best in the system. He does not long for social change. Instead, he is willing to maintain his comprador class privilege.

Unfortunately, a person like Naoko who regards herself as a social misfit cannot manipulate the idea of fairness in an unfair society. Instead, she thinks that the way she is concerned with the word “kohei” (fairness) is unusual. She writes:

Girls my age never use the word fair. Ordinary girls as young as I am are basically indifferent to whether things are fair or not. The central question for them is not whether something is fair but whether or not it’s beautiful or will make them happy. Fair is a man’s word, finally, but I can’t help feeling that it is also exactly the right word for me now. And because questions of beauty and happiness have become such difficult and convoluted propositions for me now, I suspect, I find myself clinging instead to other standards---like, whether or not something is fair or honest or universally true.<sup>145</sup>

Murakami (Fuminobu) thinks that the shift of Naoko’s concern from beauty and happiness towards fairness represents her postmodernist position, for fairness and justice are to prevent postmodern society from falling apart although they do not unite people

emotionally or rationally.<sup>146</sup> Yet, Naoko is not able to handle this transition and terminates herself from society just as Kizuki did. As for Watanabe, he also begins feeling uneasy about his dormitory life, which implies his anti-system voice. Also, the fact that Watanabe leaves the dorm when Nagasawa graduates from the University may suggest that Watanabe unconsciously fears taking over Nagasawa's position in the miniature-system. By leaving the dormitory, he rejects the temptation that the unfair society offers him. At the same time, the honesty and sympathy he shares with Naoko are no longer enough for him to maintain himself, and he seeks an empathetic relationship with Midori who openly seeks fairness.

Midori negates the fixity of meaning produced by language. Earlier in the novel, she says that despite her name ("midori" means green), green does not look good on her, and she thinks that the fact that her sister who is named "Momoko" (peach/pink girl) looks well in pink is "unfair."<sup>147</sup> What she regards as unfairness is our assumption that there is fixity between a matter and its name. She is against the idea of giving an individual a fixed identity. On the contrary, Naoko is dominated by the fixity between language and what it represents. She loves the Beatles's song, "Norwegian Wood" and claims that the song makes her feel sad as if she is wandering in a deep wood helplessly.<sup>148</sup> However, it is obvious that the connection she makes between the song and a wood is only imagined based on its Japanese title "Noruwei no Mori," in which "mori" actually means woods regardless of the song's original meaning. That is, a pine wood. The Beatles's song, "Norwegian Wood" is about a young man who visits his girlfriend's cheap pine wood apartment. This obvious mistranslation of the Japanese title creates an

illusion of meaning that does not exist in the original. In fact, there is no connection between the title (name) and an actual matter. Regardless, Naoko's emotion is controlled by the power of language that produces this simulacrum. She only thinks of the woods and ends up hanging herself in the woods. In this sense, she is a victim of linguistic colonization by the media. It is also ironic that the situation of the young man in the song maybe resembles that of Watanabe's after Naoko's death,

Suter notes that Murakami's style has been criticized by numbers of Japanese scholars as "anglicized" because of its heavy reliance on English vocabulary (written with Katakana) and English rhetoric, which makes his writing look like a translation from English.<sup>149</sup> Generally speaking, Murakami's narrators are masterful storytellers who express their thoughts with sophisticated language and often with unexpected metaphors although they are never talkative. As for Watanabe in Norwegian Wood, his speech style is described by other characters as "Humphrey Bogart-like, tough and cool," "like spreading plaster nice and smooth," and "trying to imitate that boy in *Catcher in the Rye*."<sup>150</sup> His speech seems to reflect Murakami's signature style that is often referred to as "honyaku buntai" (translation style). That means that Watanabe speaks like a translation (or dubbed version) of Humphrey Bogart or he speaks in the way Bogart would if he spoke Japanese. If we rethink his situation in postcolonial discourse, it can be contended that Watanabe's linguistic habit is colonial mimicry that parodies the colonizer (this includes both English and modern ideology itself). In other words, from the System's point of view, he is becoming a threatening subject, and his independence is actually depicted through his reaction to the campus student activism.<sup>151</sup> Most

importantly, I see the last scene of the novel as his detachment from the State-system including its symbol (Tokyo) and its language. This also means he discards the cultural hybridity of Tokyo produced through the media, which implies that Murakami does not see hybridity as positive identity construction.

Norwegian Wood is the first novel in which Murakami gives real names to his characters. Although Watanabe's name should be written with Kanji (Chinese characters), it is written with Katakana throughout the novel. If his Katakana name also implies his Americanized self, the fact that he is attracted to Midori is all the more symbolic. For whenever he refers to her, her name is written with Kanji. The only times it is written with Katakana is when she introduces herself to him and when she is called on by somebody else. I believe that this implies that Boku recognizes Midori's Japaneseness. Considering that Naoko's name is written with Kanji throughout the novel, it can be contended that Boku seeks "home" in the women he loves. Boku's repeating Midori's name at the end of the novel implies his search for home/Japaneseness. He is calling her from "the dead center of this place that was no place."<sup>152</sup> In fact, he has just dived into Japan's empty hole, and therefore, I read this ending as a hopeful one. It is just as hopeful as Hardboiled Wonderland and the End of the World.

I see postwar Japan as a doughnut-like circle just as I picture any colonized society as a double circle in which the colonizing circle includes the colonized. The outer border of the inner circle becomes the contact zone of two cultures, which produces tension. As for Japan, however, the surface of the inner circle is covered with a Bildungsroman identity (ready-made identity that is not anti-modern). Moreover, the

cover also keeps tension from arising and therefore, people go around the hidden doughnut hole without realizing its existence. Instead, people are exposed to new ideas, entertainment and even language imported from the West (mainly the United States). Although their individuality is controlled by the State-system, they are given the “West” as a reward. The solution Murakami suggests is for one to explore his/her individuality in the hole. Murakami develops this idea in his later works, which I discuss in the next chapter in relation to postwar Japan’s historical amnesia.

As my conclusion of this chapter, I discuss the phenomenal popularity of Noruei no Mori. The novel was first published in September of 1987 and sold over four million copies in Japan. It was also advertised with Murakami’s own words that it was a “100% no Renai Shosetsu (100% Love Story).”<sup>153</sup> Murakami also designed the book cover in Christmas colors (the volume 1 in red and the volume 2 in deep green) himself and when his publisher added a gold outer cover to the book before Christmas, they sold more copies for Christmas presents<sup>154</sup>. Besides Murakami’s already established reputation and the timely marketing strategies, we should not ignore the effect of the book’s title as a key element of the novel’s success. I believe that the title “Noruei no Mori” creates the same illusion as it does to Naoko among its readers who have no knowledge of the Beatles’s “Norwegian Wood.” “Because it’s Murakami’s book,” “Because he says it’s a love story,” “Because it’s in Christmas colors<sup>155</sup>,” and “Because it says ‘mori’ in Norway,” readers expect a romantic love story with the Beatles in its background, and they probably believe that that is what they have read. Unconsciously, consumers of this commodity are trapped in the fixity of language, and they are also lost in translation in



the “Third Space Wonderland.” I cannot help thinking that this novel as a whole is an example of media colonization and Tokyo hybridity.

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<sup>81</sup> Haruki Murakami, Interview with Motoyuki Shibata. “Yagi-san yubin mitaini meirokashita sekai no nokade: Shosetsu no kanouse” (In the World of Maze that is like Goat Mail: Possibility of Novels) Eureka. 8. 1989: 29-30

<sup>82</sup> Rebecca Suter, The Japanization of Modernity: Murakami Haruki between Japan and the United States, (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2008) 7.

<sup>83</sup> Michael Hechter, Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development (New Jersey: Transaction, 1999) 32-33.

<sup>84</sup> Yoshio Sugimoto, An Introduction to Japanese Society (New York: Cambridge UP, 2003), 62.

<sup>85</sup> Even today people often refer to their hometown as “kuni.”

<sup>86</sup> 戦国 means “battle of countries. (戦 =to battle, 国= country). This also implies that feudal Japan was a nation made up of sub-nations.

<sup>87</sup> Hechter, 7-8.

<sup>88</sup> Hechter, 30-33.

<sup>89</sup> Joseph Kitagawa, Religion in Japanese History (New York: Columbia UP, 1990), 135-136.

<sup>90</sup> Japan: Profile of a Nation (New York: Kodansha International, 1995) 35-36.

<sup>91</sup> Edward Said, Culture and Imperialism (New York: Vintage, 1993), 9.

<sup>92</sup> Roland Barthes, Empire of Signs, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill & Wang,, 1982) 31-32.

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<sup>93</sup> Tokugawa Ieyasu intentionally designed Edo as a spiral town with his castle in the center. The major roads surrounding Edo were constructed not to reach his castle (now it is the palace of Emperor) directly. The only exception is the one Ieyasu was intended to use as a route of his emergency retreat from the castle. Thus, the city itself was made to function to defend the castle.

<sup>94</sup> Michael Montgomery, Imperialist Japan: The Yen to Dominate, (London: Christopher Helm, 1987) 83.

<sup>95</sup> John Lie, Multiethnic Japan (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2001) 119.

<sup>96</sup> Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities (New York: Verso, 1983) 95-96.

<sup>97</sup> Ian Bruma, Occidentalism, (New York: Penguin, 2004), 60-63.

<sup>98</sup> Winston Davis, "Religion and national identity in modern and post modern Japan," Religion, Modernity and Postmodernity. ed Paul Heelas (Malden: Blackwell, 1998) 175-176.

<sup>99</sup> Anderson, 97.

<sup>100</sup> Anderson, 86.

<sup>101</sup> Lie, 119.

<sup>102</sup> Anderson, 45.

<sup>103</sup> Suter, 63.

<sup>104</sup> Chizuko Ueno, Watashi sagashi Gemu. (Searching-myself Game) (Tokyo :Tsukuma, 2007) 53.

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<sup>105</sup> There was a literary movement called “genbun icchi” (unification of colloquial speech and literary Japanese) and its examples began to appear in late 1880s. As Suter points out, it related strongly to the need to create a national language(63).

<sup>106</sup> Ueno, 54.

<sup>107</sup> 団塊の世代 (dankai no sedai) are the ones who were born between 1947 and 1949. Their fathers are “fukuin sedai” (demobilized returners from the continent) and their children who were born between 1971 and 1974 are referred to as “dankai junior.

<sup>108</sup> Naoki Sakai, “Modernity and Its Critique” Postmodernism and Japan, eds. Masao Miyoshi and H. D. Harootunian (Durham: Duke UP, 1989) 118.

<sup>109</sup> They are generally called “Katakana words.”

<sup>110</sup> Haruki Murakami, Kaze no Uta o kike (Hear the Wind Sing) (Tokyo: Kodansha, 2007) 106.

<sup>111</sup> Sakai, 97-98.

<sup>112</sup> Sanjun Kan, Orientalizumu no kanatae (Beyond Orientalism) (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1996) 47.

<sup>113</sup> Homi Bhabha, Location of Culture (New York: Routledge, 1994) 232.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid, 49-52.

<sup>115</sup> Edward Said, Culture and Imperialism (New York: Vintage, 1994) 36.

<sup>116</sup> Kan, 230-231.

<sup>117</sup> In postcolonial literatures many hybrid characters suffer from the identity crisis. As examples, I name John Okada’s No-No-Boy, Chang,-Rae Lee’s A Gesture Life, Tsutsu

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Dangarembga's Nervous Conditions and Derek Walcott's poem, "A Far Cry from Africa."

<sup>118</sup> Bhabha, 63.

<sup>119</sup> Yoshinori Shimizu, Murakami Haruki wa kuseninaru (Murakami Haruki is addictive) (Tokyo: Asahi Shobo, 2006) 123-125.

<sup>120</sup> Jan Rubin, Haruaki Murakami and the Music of Words (New York: Vintage, 2005) 122.

<sup>121</sup> Haruki Murakami, Hardboiled Wonderland and the End of the World (New York: Vintage, 1993) 103.

<sup>122</sup> Yoshiki Wakamori and Mitsuhiko Tsuge, "Taidan: Shinkasuru Tekusuto" (Interview: Evolving Texts), Kokubungaku March(1995): 16-17. I translated and partially summarized his ideas from the Japanese text.

<sup>123</sup> Haruki Murakami, Sekai no Owari to Hadoboirudo Wandarando (Tokyo: Shinchosha, 1985) 349.

This part is partially cut out from Alfred Birnbaum's translation. Therefore, I translated from the original Japanese text.

<sup>124</sup> Fuminobu Murakami, Postmodern, Feminist and Postcolonial Currents in Contemporary Japanese Culture (New York: Routledge, 2007) 3.

<sup>125</sup> I see another example of this condition in the film, The Matrix, in which humans are transformed into batteries by machines and only their minds live with an illusion of freedom. In fact, the film is highly comparable to Hardboiled Wonderland and the End of the World.

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<sup>126</sup> Murakami, 334.

<sup>127</sup> Haruki Murakami, Norwegian Wood (New York: Vintage, 2000) 21.

<sup>128</sup> Murakami, 20.

<sup>129</sup> It should be noted that major cities in Hokkaido where Naoko's roommate, Reiko, as well as Boku in A Wild Sheep Chase and Dance, Dance, Dance go are also designed similarly.

<sup>130</sup> Nobuharu Endo, Murakami Haruki: Noruwei no Mori ron (Murakami Haruki: On Norwegian Woods, Murakami Haruki Studies 03, eds. Yoshiki Kuritsubo and Akihiko Tsuge (Tokyo: Wakakusa Shobo, 1999) 165.

<sup>131</sup> Hideyo Sengoku, "Airon o kakeru Seinen" (An Ironing Young Man), Murakami Haruki Studies 03, eds. Yoshiki Kuritsubo and Akihiko Tsuge (Tokyo: Wakakusa Shobo, 1999) 127-128.

<sup>132</sup> Sengoku, 77.

<sup>133</sup> Suter, 70.

<sup>134</sup> Suter notes that the biggest wave of this phenomenon occurred in 1980s (65).

<sup>135</sup> Sengoku, 71-73.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid, 178

<sup>137</sup> Ibid, 179.

<sup>138</sup> Murakami, 268.

<sup>139</sup> Murakami, 43.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid, 186.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid, 190.

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<sup>142</sup> Ibid, 202.

<sup>143</sup> Jean-Francois Lyotard, The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge trans. Geoff Bennigton and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1984) 48.

<sup>144</sup> Murakami, 55.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid, 85.

<sup>146</sup> (Fuminobu) Murakami, 36-37.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid, 52.

<sup>148</sup> The following is the song:

“Norwegian Wood (This Bird has Flown)”

I once had a girl, or should I say, she once had me.

She showed me her room, isn't it good, Norwegian wood?

She asked me to stay and she told me to sit anywhere,

So I looked around and I noticed there wasn't a chair.

I sat on a rug, biding my time, drinking her wine.

We talked until two and then she said, “It's time for bed.”

She told me she worked in the morning and started to laugh.

I told her I didn't and crawled off to sleep in the bath.

And when I awoke, I was alone, this bird had flown.

So I lit a fire, isn't it good, Norwegian wood.

<sup>149</sup> Suter, 67-70.

<sup>150</sup> Murakami, 51, 52 and 100.

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<sup>151</sup> For example, Watanabe decides to refuse to answer when his name is called for the class roll, which isolates him from other students. Norwegian Woods, 47-48.

<sup>152</sup> Murakami, 293.

<sup>153</sup> Kiyoto Imai, “Norwei no Mori,” Murakami Haruki Studies 03, eds. Yoshiki Kuritsubo and Akihiko Tsuge (Tokyo: Wakakusa Shobo, 1999) 86.

<sup>154</sup> Tetsuo Sakurai “Tozasareta karakara sugata o arawashite:(Coming out of the shell)” Murakami Haruki Studies 03, eds. Yoshiki Kuritsubo and Akihiko Tsuge (Tokyo: Wakakusa Shobo, 1999) 138.

<sup>155</sup> Japanese tend to think that Christmas is a romantic occasion.

## CHAPTER IV

### MURAKAMI'S HISTORY: UNSPEAKABLE THOUGHT SPOKEN

#### **Introduction**

Until recently, postwar Japan's history education kept Imperial Japan's brutality towards the rest of Asia unspoken. Instead, the nation's modern history was presented as the history of the war victims. Its main focus was on the terror of Hiroshima and the hardship the war generation went through before and after Japan's surrender. Michael Seats describes postwar Japan's history education curricula as "the edifice of a neatly packaged referentiality based on the equivalence of 'dates' and 'events,' specific contents of which are strictly monitored and approved for publication and use only under the imprimatur of the Ministry of Education."<sup>156</sup> This means that the postwar Japanese are not endowed with much accessibility to the nation's imperial past. Needless to say, history itself is controlled by the State-system.

The State-system is eager to conceal its imperial history, providing the postwar generations with the narrative that I call "Bildungsroman from the ashes." Consequently, the State's manipulation of historiography has created a black hole in Japan's modern history. Thus, the painful memories of those who were forced to fight were buried in the black hole. This historical amnesia has contributed to the schizophrenic cultural condition in which disoriented people wander around the empty hole. As I discussed in the previous chapter, I picture postwar Japanese society as a doughnut-like place with a



hole in the middle. This historical black hole and what I call Japan's doughnut hole actually overlap. This suggests that going into the "hole" is exploring concealed history and missing individuality.

In this chapter I explore Murakami's representation of history in the frameworks of the postmodern as well as the postcolonial. His textual endeavors reveal Japan's unspoken history and make it sharable between generations through empathy, and the postwar generation protagonist is able to locate his individuality in his personal linkage to history. In The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle, Murakami rewrites the modern history of Japan from a new perspective in the form of personal memories, which I see as a whole produces a counter-"Bildungsroman from the ashes" narrative. Consequently, he reveals a dark side of modernity and its continuity in the present, which supports my argument that postwar Japan is still controlled by its own imperialism. He reduces the fixed collective history to a narrative of an individual and locates lost (or neglected) individuality in the matrix of Japan's modernity.

Murakami sees war as the experience that should be passed on to postwar individuals and presents our empathic involvement with history as a solution to keep a schizophrenic society from falling apart. I regard The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle (1995) as historical metafiction and compare his fictional recreation of history with Toni Morrison's Beloved (1988). Both writers use a technique of magical realism to recreate history and utilize a slippage between the postmodern and the postcolonial to write a new narrative of modernity. I also apply Paul Gilroy's idea of counter-essentialist reconstruction of modernity to Murakami's text. In The Black Atlantic Paul Gilroy

rejects European centered modernity and considers slavery as a crucial element to modernity, while Murakami sees World War II as a necessary element to Japan's narrative of modernity as he creates a counter narrative to postwar history textbooks. By applying postcolonial theory to works of postmodern metafiction, I explore the overlaps of the postmodern and the postcolonial that open up a useful space to produce a counter narrative against modernity. This process proves that postmodern theories can be used to localize the non-western postmodern.

### **Living in a Strange Place**

As I discussed in the previous chapter, I consider that the ending of Norwegian Wood is a hopeful departure of Watanabe Toru from the system's control. It is actually the end of the "postwar Bildungsroman from the ashes" and a beginning of a "new" or, to be more specific, "post-" postwar narrative. His calling out for Midori (which means green) also suggests his returning to nature/origin and his disorientation means that he is already in the middle of the trajectory to the place where he finds his individual identity. That is, he is inside the hole of the "doughnut." His journey of self-search begins in the middle of some place he is not able to recognize. I ground my reading of this ending on Murakami's persistent referral to wells, holes and underground locations where his protagonists experience a supernatural force that enlightens them in his other works. Norwegian Wood ends in this way because he must stay away from the magical realism formula seen in his previous works, which would enable Watanabe to have a supernatural experience of enlightenment.

In the interview which took place in 1989, Murakami said that he would not write a sequel or any short stories to supplement Norwegian Wood.<sup>157</sup> Yet, The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle can be read as a sequel-like expansion of Norwegian Wood. In fact, Murakami names both protagonists “Toru” (to-o-ru). The one in Norwegian Wood is Watanabe Toru and the one in The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle is Okada Toru. Jay Rubin identifies them as the same person in different stages of his life based on Murakami’s naming of them.<sup>158</sup> Besides names, I also recognize their sharing of certain life habits. Watanabe Toru learns how to cook spaghetti when he works at an Italian restaurant, while Okada Toru often cooks spaghetti for lunch. Also, they both iron their clothes regularly<sup>159</sup>. Their name “to-o-ru” can be read as a verb that means “to pass through,” “to pierce” or “to penetrate” and it is a hint that they pass through the system-controlled space to find their individuality. While Watanabe Toru is written with Katakana throughout the novel, Murakami shows Okada Toru’s Kanji (Chinese character) spelling as 岡田 亨<sup>160</sup>. The Kanji character 亨 (to-o-ru) means “to offer,” “to dedicate,” “to prevail” and I regard that this Kanji spelling reflects Okada Toru’s transformation into a healer as well as his victory as an individual over the State-system.

Just as in Norwegian Wood, in The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle Murakami continues to reveal strangeness and distortion of the urban space that we believe is normal. In the opening paragraph, Murakami creates a “strange” environment by using Katakana words to deconstruct everyday scenery that is made of familiar signs. It reads:

When the phone rang I was in the kitchen, boiling a potful of spaghetti and whistling along with an FM broadcast of the overture of Rossini's *The Thieving Magpie*, which has to be the perfect music for cooking pasta.

I wanted to ignore the phone, not only because the spaghetti was nearly done, but because Claudio Abbado was bringing the London Symphony to its musical climax. Finally, though, I had to give in. It could have been somebody with news of a job opening. I lowered the flame, went to the living room, and picked up the receiver.<sup>161</sup>

In this opening scene of the novel, the common nouns such as “phone,” “kitchen,” and “spaghetti,” which represent the everydayness of Okada's life are mingled with proper nouns. which are not very common to be used as metaphor. I even doubt if Murakami expects his readers to know “The Thieving Magpie.” Jay Rubin suggests the possible foreshadowing effect based on the plot of this opera. Although he points out its overture's familiarity among readers through TV commercials and from Stanley Kubrick's film “A Clockwork Orange,” he also suspects that “The Thieving Magpie” symbolizes something “familiar, and yet its meaning eludes” Okada as well as Murakami himself.<sup>162</sup> It is one of the pieces of foreign music many Japanese have heard. However, knowing the melody does not always mean understanding the lyrics or the plot of the opera. Many Japanese people listen to foreign music not for their lyrics but for their melodies. They can be transformed into completely different signifiers from the original. In fact, the narrator, Okada Toru associates “The Thieving Magpie,” with the process of cooking spaghetti without offering any explanation. In his kitchen Murakami actually recreates cultural chaos where the individual life is unconsciously dominated by (un)familiar western signs. In this way Murakami illustrates the culturally sophisticated urban life that does not make much sense.

Despite its “everydayness” Murakami transforms Okada’s kitchen into a strange place. Moreover, through Okada’s recognition of the strangeness in his life, Murakami gradually leads us to the inquiry about how much sense our westernized and capitalistic life really makes. Anyhow, Boku’s “cultural” involvement with spaghetti is interrupted by the phone call made by an unidentified woman who seems to know him and who asks for phone-sex which accelerates the strangeness. After this schizophrenic incoherency between the opera, spaghetti at 10:30 in the morning, reality of a job search and phone-sex, readers are also introduced to a place called the “alley.” Okada climbs over the cinder-block wall and goes to the “alley,” searching for his wife’s missing cat. As far as he knows, the alley used to have an entrance and an exit and served as the purpose of providing a shortcut between two streets.

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, squeezing it down until it was little more than a narrow path. People did not like the strangers passing so close to their houses and yards, so before long, one end of the path was blocked off---or, rather screened off ---with an unassertive fence. Then, one local citizen decided to enlarge his yard and completely sealed off his end of the alley with a cinder-block preventing even dogs from getting through. ----As a result, the alley remained like some kind of abandoned canal, unused, serving a little more than a buffer zone between two rows of houses.<sup>163</sup>

Murakami’s description of the alley gives readers the impression that this whole middle class residential area is like a jigsaw puzzle, and he presents the alley as an absurdity produced by the capitalist economy. It makes no sense to leave unoccupied land in the middle of the upper-middle class residential area in Tokyo where the price of land is unbelievably high. The place just exists for no purpose, leading nowhere and it is easy to

compare it with a hole of a doughnut. I take this whole episode of the alley as Murakami's metaphor of postwar Japanese society, in which the middle class people live their schizophrenic lives, going around the empty hole as if they were circle dancing just as Naoko in Norwegian Wood walks around in Tokyo.

It is all the more symbolic that Okada Toru goes through (as his name suggests) the alley and begins noticing the "strangeness" of his life. He has just quit his job at the law office and keeps house while his wife, Kumiko, works at a small publishing company. Kumiko is very concerned with her missing cat which is named Wataya Noboru after her brother. To ease her worries, Okada searches for the cat and even meets with a psychic, Kano Maruta (Malta) and her sister Kureta (Creta) upon Kumiko's request. When he is looking for the cat in the ally, he meets a teen-age girl Kasahara Mei (May). She is taking a year leave from high school after a motorcycle accident and talks about death in a fascinated way. He realizes that ever since he quit his job, he keeps meeting unusual people. This must include the woman phoning him. He describes his life as follows:

And in all that time, I had hardly seen anyone. Aside from Kumiko, the only people I could be said to have "seen" in two months were Malta and Creta Kano and May Kasahara. It was a narrow world, a world that was standing still. But the narrower it became, and the more it betook of stillness, the more this world that enveloped me seemed to overflow with things and people that could only be called strange. They had been there all the while, it seemed, waiting in the shadows for me to stop moving. And every time the wind-up bird came to my yard to wind its spring, the world descended more deeply into chaos.<sup>164</sup>

Although Okada is concerned with the "strangeness" of the world, he associates "strangeness" with the "stillness" of the world. He is aware that since he became jobless (which means that he is not a fully functional / productive part of the system), his life

slowed down and now he feels as if something is waiting for him to stop “moving.” In other words, he now sees something he did not see when he was busy moving as part of the system-controlled society.

If the State-system’s completeness is maintained by movement, fluidity, or constant renewal of the everyday lives of people, it is like playing musical chairs with endless music (this reminds us of Nezumi’s remark regarding the Zenkyoto). As long as people are circling with music, it creates an illusion that there is an actual “circle” that connects all the elements of their lives as if they are meaningful. They even see their quasi-subjectivity and identity inside the circle. If the music stops, people will find themselves disoriented because they are no longer able to see the illusion of meaningful lives. The strangeness Okada feels about his life is actually a reflection of his disorientation from society. Symbolically, when he goes to the alley for the first time, he discovers an old well. Through the well he is later empathetically connected to personal memories of the Nomonhan incident during World War II, which has never been discussed in Japanese history textbooks. Murakami presents history as an element that cures the postwar generation’s loss of cultural orientation (and Orient-ation).

It is no exaggeration to say that most postwar Japanese had not even known of the existence of the Nomonhan incident until Murakami introduced it in this novel. It is one of the imperial experiences that are concealed in the black hole of modern Japanese history. In fact, it is as foreign to postwar Japanese as “The Thieving Magpie” or “Claudio Abbado.” “Nomonhan” symbolizes something that sounds a little familiar but its meaning eludes postwar Japanese. In reality, the existence of this battle was hidden

from the chronological table of modern history, and the truth about this wretched battle was never openly discussed. As Kawamura Minato reports, even during the time of the battle, Japanese war propaganda exaggerated the enemy's loss and gave people the impression that Japan had won the battle, despite the numbers of the Japanese casualties and Japan's withdrawal from the border.<sup>165</sup> Murakami presents it as the survivors' personal memoirs and also establishes a personal connection between the incident and his protagonist.

Okada Toru becomes acquainted with a survivor of the battle (who is also the practitioner of divination), Mr. Honda who shares his experience of the battle with him and Kumiko. And it is Mr. Honda who advises Okada to find the deepest well and go down to the bottom when the time comes. The following is a brief description of the incident through Okada's perspective:

Until I heard about it from Mr. Honda, I knew almost nothing about the battle of Nomonhan. And yet it had been a magnificent battle. Almost bare-handed, they had defied the superior Soviet mechanized forces, and they had been crushed. One unit after another had been smashed, annihilated. Some officers had, on their own initiative, ordered their troops to retreat to avoid annihilation; their superiors forced them to commit suicide. Most of the troops captured by the Soviets refused to participate in the postwar exchange of prisoners, because they were afraid of being tried for desertion in the face of the enemy. These men ended up contributing their bones to the Mongolian earth.<sup>166</sup>

Okada Toru recalls that Mr. Honda's stories were bloody but sounded like "fairy tales," which clearly reflects the distance the postwar generation has with Japan's Imperial experience including its brutality toward other Asian people as well as towards its own soldiers.



Rubin points out that Japan has finally begun the process of confronting its own dark past after decades of official silence during which Japan's war crimes were hidden from school children, and he recognizes Murakami's work as a contributor to this process.<sup>167</sup> Seats also thinks that Murakami's project to "destabilize the writing of history by radically recasting the writing of fiction" is all the more significant if we consider the environment in which Japanese history education is situated.<sup>168</sup> Aside from his contribution to history education, by avoiding the subtle roundabout way and by presenting the information directly in the form of personal memories, Murakami actually proves the existence of history in our lives and opens up the possibility for us to comprehend it empathetically.

### **Historical Black Hole and Doughnut Hole**

Ten years prior to The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle, Murakami published his first picture book titled Hitsujiotoko no Kurisumasu (The Sheep Man's Christmas)(1985) in which the familiar character, the Sheep Man from A Wild Sheep Chase gets involved in a curious adventure. Kawamura Minato points out similarities in the setting between the well on Mars, the Sheep Man's hole and Okada Toru's well, in which each character goes down in the well (hole) and then finds a tunnel that leads him to another world.<sup>169</sup> The story of The Sheep Man's Christmas is highly allegorical and I observe some suggestive elements that clearly reflect Murakami's view of Japanese society. As I discussed in chapter 1, Murakami presents sheep as what is brought into Japan in the process of its modernization and abandoned later as an error of modernity. The mysterious character in A Wild Sheep Chase called "Hitsujiotoko" (the Sheep Man) is a little man who wears a

suit and a head dress made of sheep skin and lives alone in a forest in Hokkaido. He tells Boku that he is living as a sheep in order not to be drafted into the military, which implies that the Sheep Man believes that the war has not ended. Murakami presents this character as a person whom history as well as modernity has left behind. In his picture book Murakami actually emphasizes the Sheep Man's disassociation with history through his conversation with the Sheep Professor, in which the Sheep Man reveals his ignorance regarding the historical significance of "Holy Sheep Holiday."

I believe that the Sheep Man in the picture book represents the postwar generation Japanese, and Murakami depicts their disorientation through the Sheep Man's association with "doughnuts." Murakami uses doughnuts as a metaphor for the absence of individuality, which I associate with my imagery of the historical black hole in modern Japan's cultural formation. The Sheep Man works at a doughnut shop and eats doughnuts everyday for meals. He is under a curse of the Holy Sheep Man because he ate doughnuts on last year's Holy Sheep Day without knowing that one may not eat food with holes on that day. Later in the story, he must jump into the hole, and he takes twisted doughnuts without holes. He shares twisted doughnuts with those whom he meets in the other world. In this way, he gradually fills the historical black hole, and when he meets the Holy Sheep Man, he is finally connected to the history of his people. His encounter with history actually enables him to write music, which implies his attainment of subjectivity to represent himself.

In The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle, the same motif is repeated, and Okada Toru ends up going down into the well. Okada finds it in the backyard of the vacant house (known

as “Hanging House) in his neighborhood. At the same time of his discovery of the well, he meets Lieutenant Mamiya who shares his life-death experience with a well at the Mongolian border during World War II. Inspired by Mamiya’s story somehow, Okada decides to go down into the well. Although the storyline of the novel is much more complicated than the picture book, they basically follow the same pattern. First, the protagonist loses something important to him (music / wife) and then, he is advised to go underground to find what is lost. Finally, he experiences the other world and finds what is lost. In addition, in the novel Okada eats Dunkin Donuts daily when he is in confusion, and symbolically, the food he eats at the end of the novel is a pizza (with no hole). In this sense, both stories share happy endings. Although Murakami does not use the Sheep Man as a character in The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle, similarities between A Wild Sheep Chase and The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle are pointed out by Jay Rubin among others.<sup>170</sup>

As I discussed earlier, I read The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle as a sequel to Norwegian Wood as well as a more complicated version of The Sheep Man’s Christmas. In The Sheep Man’s Christmas, the bottom of the hole is connected to the tunnel that leads the Sheep Man to the woods. There, he meets twins wearing T-shirts with numbers 208 and 209. Needless to say, they are familiar characters from Pinball, 1973. The Sheep Man shares twist doughnuts with them and in return, they advise him to see Mrs. Umigarasu (sea crow). Mrs. Umigarasu demands that he clean her house in exchange for taking him to the place where he can release himself from the spell. After Mrs. Umigarasu leaves him in the middle of the field, he finds a spring. Tired, he falls asleep and when he wakes up, it is already dark. Then, he is spoken to by Nandemonashi

(Nobody), who tells him to jump into the spring in order to break the spell. Once he jumps in, all the water disappears and he hits his head on the bottom of the spring, where the Holy Sheep Man awaits him. The bottom of the spring is connected to the room where everybody the Sheep Man has met is ready to give him a surprise party.

In The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle, Okada Toru follows the path of the Sheep Man. I also observe other similarities in characterization between The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle and The Sheep Man's Christmas. The fortune teller, Mr. Honda takes the role of the Holy Sheep Man. Although it is not a spell, Mr. Honda's advice that he should go down into the deepest well when the time comes haunts Okada Toru. The "strange" people Okada Toru meets ever since he quit his job echoes the strange characters the Sheep Man meets in the other world. The use of the unfamiliar/imaginary bird characters (wind-up bird/sea crow) is also a shared characteristic.<sup>171</sup> As the Sheep Man meets the twins 208 and 209, Okada Toru finds the bottom of the well is connected to the hotel room 208 where he finds Kumiko. The twins tell the Sheep Man that they are not allowed to go beyond the woods, which is similar to Kumiko's situation in which she (as well as her older sister who committed suicide, although they are not twins) is mentally imprisoned by her brother Wataya Noboru. In addition, Kumiko's twinness with Kano Creta is suggested through Okada Toru's dream in which he has sexual intercourse in the room 208 with Kano Creta in Kumiko's dress. Nandemonashi (Nobody) who appears in the dark, and, therefore, whose face the Sheep Man is not able to see is the Faceless Man who saves Okada Toru in the hotel. The Sheep Man gets a new piano with which he plays music and makes people happy, while Okada Toru attains a birthmark on his face

with which he heals people. Finally, as the Sheep Man survives when he jumps into the spring, Okada Toru also survives when the well is filled with water all of a sudden, although these are painful experiences for both of them.

The supernatural aspects in the picture book are actually transferred to The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle in the form of magical realism, and Murakami uses it to transform history into a sharable experience and to suggest a hopeful solution to people's disorientation. In The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle, Okada Toru goes down to the bottom of the well that is abandoned in the middle of Tokyo and experiences a super natural condition that enlightens him. The metaphors of wells, holes and underground are persistently used in Murakami's works, and the idea that these places are the entrance to the other world is not new to this novel. From the beginning of Murakami's writing career, wells have been the familiar metaphor of the abstract depth of a human mind.

In Hear the Wind Sing, Murakami includes a short story (supposedly written by Derek Heartfield) of a young man who goes into one of the bottomless and waterless wells on Mars. He was looking for a place to die. As he goes further down in the well, he finds a tunnel and walks along it until he sees light coming in. The tunnel is connected to another well. He climbs out of the well and the "Wind" whispers to him that it took him fifteen billion years to get back. Wells are dug along a distortion of time and therefore, there is no life or death there. As the Wind leaves with a subtle smile, the young man shoots himself. In Pinball 1973, Naoko tells Boku about the well digger in her hometown. Boku also says, "I like wells, though. Every time I see a well, I can't resist tossing a rock in. There's nothing as soothing as the sound of a pebble hitting the

water in a deep well.”<sup>172</sup> In Norwegian Wood, Naoko tells Boku about the bottomless well she believes exists somewhere.

Tsuge Teruhiko suggests that the Japanese word for a well, “ido” echoes the Freudian term, “id” and sees the persistent theme of “going down into one’s unconsciousness” in Murakami’s well metaphor although Tsuge does not recognize the same theme in the story of the well on Mars.<sup>173</sup> In fact, this young man on Mars is the only one who takes his own life after his “well” experience, while other well-goers are rewarded with the strength to live as individuals after they endure an ordeal. Certainly, at the time of Hear the Wind Sing, Murakami had not yet developed the well as a solution for his character to “exit” from the maze-like society. In this sense, the young man on Mars plays the same role as Naoko in Norwegian Wood, who expresses her ambivalent feeling towards the abyss. Although both characters kill themselves, they do not (or can not) die in the well. However, out of Okada Toru, Murakami finally creates a character who goes down into the well and survives the ordeal by fighting back against the oppressing power.

Aside from these numerous similarities between The Sheep Man’s Christmas and The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle, what I think is the most significant is Murakami’s development of the character, Lieutenant Mamiya who can be identified with the Sheep Professor. The original Sheep Professor is the character in A Wild Sheep Chase, who was once possessed by the Sheep with a star mark in Manchuria. After the Sheep left him in 1936, he has been living in the condition called, “Hitsujimuke” which is described as being left with a solitary thought in a maze of a subterranean hell.<sup>174</sup> The Sheep

Professor has been in this condition for forty two years now, and he has spent these years doing nothing but trying to track down the Sheep. Knowing its evil nature, the Sheep Professor cannot help being attracted to the Sheep. As I discussed in Chapter 1, Murakami presents sheep as tragic animals that were imported to Japan from America during the Meiji period and then abandoned. And the Sheep with a star mark represents the darkness of modernity. According to Nezumi, the Sheep takes everything including the body, memory, weaknesses and even contradictions from the person it possesses and in return it offers something “like a blast furnace that smelts down everything it touches. A thing of such beauty, it drives you out of your mind. But it’s hair-raising evil.”<sup>175</sup> Nezumi’s description of the blast furnace as a “beautiful evil” certainly implies that the possessed person has an ambivalent relationship with the Sheep, which is comparable to that of the colonized with the colonizer. And in Japan’s case, urban spaces are possessed by the beautiful evil of modernity

The meaning of the Sheep (and sheep) in this novel has been discussed by many researchers. Kawamoto Saburo thinks that the sheep stands for “kakumei shiso” (idea of revolution) and “jikohitei” (self-denial). Kato Norihito agrees with Kawamoto and also sees the implication of “rengo sekigun” (United Red Army) in the idea of the sheep. Iguchi Tokio sees “tashasei” (otherness) in the Sheep. Sekii Mitsuo defines it as the power of western culture and Japan’s will for westernization. Karatani Kojin thinks that the idea of the Sheep is derived from the western notion of individualism and therefore, represents uniqueness of people. Fukami Haruka thinks that the Sheep symbolizes the modernist who aggressively colonized the Ainu and part of Asia. Imai Kiyoto asserts

that the Sheep symbolizes Japan's modernity whose basic structure is made of the original Asian root with imported western logic grafted onto it and in this structure it expands simultaneously denying individuality.<sup>176</sup>

Although it is easy to see the Sheep as the colonizer/ the dark side of modernity, the Sheep Professor's position is rather complicated. He was the elite of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry who was sent to Manchuria to conduct research for the Imperial army's self-sufficiency project with sheep. In this context, he is the colonial elite. Simultaneously, he is entered by the Sheep that touched the darkness of his mind. Once the Sheep entered his body, the Sheep Professor experienced the ultimate darkness of modernity, which Nezumi describes as beautiful evil and even after the Sheep left, the Sheep Professor continues to long for it. Thus, the Sheep Professor represents the modern Japanese whose minds are colonized by modern ideology.

The Sheep Professor in A Wild Sheep Chase is a person who lives with a hole inside himself. He is the victim of modernity, and his forty two years of lost time actually matches the black hole of Japan's modern history.<sup>177</sup> I compare the blast furnace with the State-system that is run by modern ideology and that maintains its "organism" by feeding on people's minds. Just as the Sheep offers those whom it possesses a reward (perhaps capitalistic wealth and/or social fame) in return for complete submission (and adoption of an identity the Sheep wants), the State-system offers westernization (its cultural sophistication and materialistic satisfaction) to people as a reward for giving up their individuality. I read Nezumi's self-destruction as the individual's resistance to being part of the system as well as his denial of the "ambivalent relationship" with the



colonizer. Unfortunately, the Sheep Professor does not have the strength to resist the system that runs the doughnut-like society.

Interestingly, the Sheep Professor in The Sheep Man's Christmas loves doughnuts. Murakami gives him a role to lead the Sheep Man (as the modern individual) into the black hole. Then, in A Wind-Up Bird Chronicle, he is transformed into Lieutenant Mamiya whose war memory inspires Okada Toru to go down into the well. In addition, just like the Sheep Professor, Lieutenant Mamiya has somehow an “ambivalent relationship” with the well (as well as the Russian officer, Boris). After he witnessed the Japanese spy skinned alive by Boris at the Mongolian border, Lieutenant Mamiya was thrown into a dry well. He spent two days there in hunger and pain until he was rescued by Mr. Honda. In this special circumstance he was able to descend directly into the core of his consciousness. He saw the overflowing light in which something was trying to take shape. However, he was not able to attain a clear view of it. He missed a chance to grab his individuality. He feels that his life was lost, and he has lived over forty years in a hopeless depth of loneliness and remorse.<sup>178</sup> If the Sheep Professor is the individual who was not strong enough to refuse the temptation of the darkness, Lieutenant Mamiya is the one who failed to grasp the chance to be strong. In The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle, Murakami connects Okada Toru with the well and makes a victorious hero out of him. Okada Toru finally overcomes the darkness of the modern by beating a dark figure with a baseball bat in room 208 and attains the strength to live as an individual.

Although bloody violence in The Wind-up Bird Chronicle is the most eye-catching depiction of the darkness of modernity, the theme of “darkness” is persistently

dealt with in Murakami's works. Using magical realism, he creates eerie creatures to represent this concept, and in The Wind-up Bird Chronicle, Murakami presents Wataya Noboru as a dark creature in a human shape. Wataya is Kumiko's older brother, and he is like a natural enemy to Okada Toru. Based on his parents' belief, Norobu was raised to be No.1. He is now an elite scholar/TV commentator of economics, who is treated as one of the most brilliant intellectuals, a "hero for a new age," by the mass media. He is also preparing to enter the political world. That is, he is following the trajectory of the "Boss" in A Wild Sheep Chase and it is also easy to see the resemblance between Wataya Noboru and Nagasawa in Norwegian Wood, especially because they are both skilled manipulators of language.

Noboru is a good debater. However, Okada realizes that he does not have any consistency in his logic. He also lacks a worldview. Okada remarks:

Consistency and an established worldview were excess baggage in the intellectual mobile warfare that flared up in the mass media's time segments, and it was his great advantage to be free of such things.

He has nothing to protect, which meant that he could concentrate all his attention on pure acts of combat. He needed only to attack, to knock his enemy down. Noboru Wataya was an intellectual chameleon, changing his color in accordance with his opponent's ad-libbing his logic for maximum effectiveness, mobilizing all the rhetoric at his command.<sup>179</sup>

The fact that Okada recognizes Wataya as an intellectual chameleon needs close attention.

This metaphor emphasizes his emptiness inside. However, being a chameleon, he changes his colors according to the situation, which makes up a "representation" of what does not exist. In this sense, he is the simulacrum of the system's elite. His association

with the media suggests that his existence relies on consumable language. He is an example of an identity-less human part of the State-system.

Murakami makes a connection between Wataya's darkness and Japan's imperial past. Wataya Noboru's uncle was an elite technocrat who was sent to Manchuria to implement a self-supply system of wool (from "sheep" and rabbits) to prepare the Imperial Army for the battle against Russia. He survived the war and the MacArthur era, and came to hold a seat in the Diet, which is now taken over by his nephew. It is obvious that Murakami uses this minor character as a mixture of the Sheep Professor and the Boss in A Wild Sheep Chase. Moreover, Wataya Noboru actually plays the role of what Nezumi would have become if he had not resisted the Sheep. Yet, Murakami presents Wataya not as a victim but as the darkness in human flesh produced by tenacious imperial energy hidden under democracy. In fact, I believe that Wataya Noboru represents the same darkness that drove Japanese soldiers to brutal murder and rape on the Asian continent. Symbolically, he has violated Creta Kano (perhaps Kumiko's older sister and Kumiko herself as well) in an unusual way. Thus, Murakami illustrates continuation of modern imperialism in present day Japan.

In his travel essay on Nomonhan, Murakami expresses his concern with Japanese society, thinking that people are still consumed peacefully as nameless articles of consumption just as soldiers were killed in the battle of Nomonhan in a very "inefficient" way. Postwar Japanese believe that their basic human rights are guaranteed by peace and democracy in Japan. However, he believes that there still is a concealed energy or ideology beneath their peaceful life and fears that this energy may spurt out one day

again.<sup>180</sup> Kuroko Kazuo regards Murakami's fear toward this energy expressed in The Wind-up Bird Chronicle as the source of sympathy and empathy among his readers, and simultaneously, it reveals the other side of their minds that may accept Neo-nationalism.<sup>181</sup> All the more the postwar individuals need access to the truth about the nation's imperial history and transform it as the energy to confront the hidden imperialism.

### **History and Individuals**

In his interview with the psychologist Kawai Hideo, Murakami says that history is inside him, and he wanted to write about Nomonhan in The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle to show that even though Japan has been rebuilt since the end of war, the core of Japanese society has never changed. He also asserts that one must rethink society and its history when he thinks of who he is.<sup>182</sup> In The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle the dark side of imperialism that had long been unspoken is depicted through graphic descriptions of violence. As he brings in a brutal torture (skinning alive) of a Japanese officer on a secret mission by a Russian officer as well as a Japanese massacre of Chinese civilians in Manchuria into the novel as personal memories, he actually uses what Kawai calls "rekishi toiu tate no ito" (the warp of history) to reveal the darkness of minds woken by imperialism. Kawai says:

What I felt upon reading what Murakami had written, was that the Nomonhan incident ---indeed everything---was happening right now. If there is an individual perceiving things in this way, I think it is very different to the individual of Western individualism.<sup>183</sup>

In response to Kawai's remark, Murakami states:

What I thought was that if we pursue the individual in Japan, we must look into history. I feel this way although I cannot explain it well. Even if we try to write about the individual, the definition of the individual itself is very ambiguous in Japan, as you said. However, if we see the individual in the frame of history, we would have better understanding of the Japanese individual.(My translation)<sup>184</sup>

As Kawai separates the Japanese sense of the individual from the individual of a western sense, Seats thinks that Murakami's use of the transcendental narrative subject that allows readers "to enter history as if it were now" manipulates the false subjectivity of the individual seen in naturalism, realism and Japanese "I" novels<sup>185</sup>. Seats also thinks this technique, which relies on the subversion of the modernist construction of time, is unfamiliar to "the putative forms of Japanese subjectivity."<sup>186</sup>

The concept of the individual was imported from the West. Rebecca Suter points out that the constitution of a modern Japanese subject (a free individual subject) in the early twentieth century was largely modeled after the western individual.<sup>187</sup> Both Kawai and Seats see some newness in Murakami's construction of subjectivity, which is neither Japanese tradition nor a mere copy of the West. Kawai concludes that Murakami offers a new view of the concept of an individual in Japan by using "rekishi toiu tate no ito" (the warp of history), considering that the Japanese usually accept history as something vague and unindividualized. Modern Japanese literature is not conscious of (or not concerned with) the gap between history and fiction. In other words, both writers and readers are used to seeing little connection between the reality of life and its representation. For the same reason, the Japanese see history as referent.

In his early works, Murakami shows a certain denial of history. Karatani Kojin points out that while many writers try to generalize their works by omitting dates, Murakami intentionally identifies his works with historically specific dates and at the same time, converts their significance into something of less significance. From Pinball, 1973 he cites the following conversation between Boku and the receptionist of his office:

“What were you up to when you were twenty years old?”  
“I was crazy about a girl.” 1969. Our year.  
“What happen to her?”  
“We broke up.”<sup>188</sup>

Karatani considers the the way Murakami refers to the year 1969 is provocative enough to remind the readers constantly of the fact that it is the peak year of the Zenkyoto movement, although he devalues its significance by not referring to it directly. Karatani calls this technique “tento” (inversion). He reads Murakami’s texts comparatively with the works of Kunikida Doppo who, he thinks practiced “tento” (inversion) in the Meiji period and argues that Murakami uses “fukei” (landscape) in an axiomatic way, through which he inverts meaningful words into meaningless signs<sup>189</sup> Karatani claims that what he calls, “fukei” (landscape) or an epistemological inversion of consciousness was discovered in Japanese literature during the third decade of the Meiji period. He thinks that reality is nothing more than an internal landscape that represents self-consciousness and it concerns representation of self as reality. Further he states:

Once a landscape has been established, its origins are repressed from memory. It takes on the appearance of an “object,” however, can only be constituted within a landscape. The same may be said of the “subject” or self. The philosophical standpoint which distinguishes between subject and object came into existence

within what I refer to as “landscape.” Rather than existing prior to landscape, subject and object emerge from within it.<sup>190</sup>

Let us read what he calls “reality” as history and “landscape” as narrative. History and “self” coexist in the same narrative and depending on our focus, narrative can be written differently. It is the difference between writing history objectively and writing it subjectively.

Karatani recognizes Murakami’s rejection of proper names of historical events as a reflection of his profound concern with history. At the same time, it is Murakami’s declaration of the end of history and therefore it is his way to escape from reality (read as history) or a Romanticist rejection of it.<sup>191</sup> In Murakami’s texts, Michael Seats also observes a Jamesonian parody of history and creation of a continuous present with hyper-real characteristics, which he sees as a certain denial of history.<sup>192</sup> However, I rather see that this early tendency of Murakami is an embryo of his attempt to rewrite history by demonstrating the link between history and the individual. History and present life not only carry equal significance but also co-exist in the same site of meaning production (landscape).

Fredric Jameson does not see historicity as either a representation of the past or a representation of the future. He defines historicity as “a perception of the present as history.” He sees historicity as a relationship between the past and the present, which somehow defamiliarizes the present and allows us that distance from immediacy.<sup>193</sup> It seems that what appears as “inversion” of the meaning to Karatani is what Jameson calls “defamiliarization” of the familiar. Both ideas use history as a strategy to locate

subjectivity to write the reality of the present. It is relevant to say that Murakami uses the past as “referent” and his use of dates is his strategy to defamiliarize the present. And this may seem to be what Jameson calls “the incompatibility of a postmodernist ‘nostalgia’ art languages with genuine historicity.”<sup>194</sup> Jameson is aware of the gap between “a postmodernist nostalgia” and genuine historicity, the former of which uses the past as referent.<sup>195</sup> Leah Wain thinks that for Jameson the postmodern text does not seek the existential experience of history but the conditions of possibilities of the near future.<sup>196</sup> Jameson’s focus is the present, and he regards Karatani’s idea of inversion as “a synchronic drama” which can be observed in the condition where no diachronic reference is concerned.<sup>197</sup>

Despite his criticism against Murakami, Karatani’s idea of landscape itself is similar to Murakami’s approach to history. In fact, they both practice Frederic Jameson’s postmodern concept of attempting to think of the present historically in an age that has forgotten how to think historically. Strecher considers Karatani’s idea of landscape as revisiting history from a subjective point of view. When the background is pushed to the foreground to overcome the history contained within proper names, this process is an inversion of the subject-object dichotomy. Matthew Strecher suggests that Murakami’s approach itself is postmodern in terms of its rejection of the objective nature of existing history.<sup>198</sup> I am reluctant to put Murakami in the frame of the western notion of the postmodern, and I also take Karatani’s claim that the so-called “Japanese postmodern” is not the same as the one occurring in the West into consideration.<sup>199</sup> However, we must agree that Murakami offers a new interpretation of history, and in The Wind-Up Bird



Chronicle he writes a more personalized history and defamiliarizes what we think is familiar. That is reality.

Although in his trilogy Murakami approached history as referent, he made a significant change in his approach in The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle. In The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle, Murakami actually uses the proper name “Nomonhan,” and eagerly discusses the details of this historical incident that is not known by many postwar Japanese. His use of the proper name here demonstrates his strong determination to reveal Japan’s hidden imperial past. The past is no longer a mere referent in The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle but an opportunity for an individual to be involved empathetically and to locate his individuality. It is for this reason that I think his works are comparable to Paul Gilroy’s theory of the black Atlantic.

### **Chain of History and Uncanny Reality**

Paul Gilroy points out the fact that the ideas about nationality, ethnicity, authenticity and cultural integrity are largely ignored by recent debate over modernity although they are modern phenomena, which have impact on cultural studies. He is concerned that the power of these modern subjectivities is somehow lost in the shift towards the postmodern.<sup>200</sup> He views slavery as a shared experience of black people and it is a crucial event which cannot be ignored in the discourse of modernity. His goal is to reconstruct modernity from the slave’s point of view based on their shared experience of terror. He writes:

Marked by its European origins, modern black political culture has always been more interested in the relationship of identity to roots and rootedness than in seeing identity as a process of movement and mediation that is more appropriately approached by the homonym routes.<sup>201</sup>

Just as Homi Bhabha uses the third space to counter essentialization of culture, Gilroy challenges the history of modernity in which a fixed notion of race has been produced. His idea of the black Atlantic is trans-/inter- cultural formation and it counters fixed notions of essentialism and nationalism. Gilroy claims a separation between culture and politics (race as politics) in his examination of black identity formation, asserting that black transnational identity is formed out of the shared experience of terror rather than scientific racial similarities. I believe that this is a significant idea that is applicable to rethink the identity construction of the postwar Japanese. It is history (or routes) that forms Japanese identity. Postwar individuals are not able to know who the Japanese are, if they are kept from knowing what their previous generation has experienced.

Gilroy reads Toni Morrison's recreation of the slave experience in Beloved as a counter narrative against romanticized southern history and names her as one of the writers whose works have the shared memory of slavery inscribed into their structure.<sup>202</sup> Beloved is set in rural Ohio several years after the Civil War. The heroine, Sethe is a former slave. Morrison roughly based the novel on the actual murder of the child committed by her fugitive slave mother. Sethe is now freed and lives in the house with her daughter, Denver, and the baby's ghost. She lives with a clear memory of slavery which is symbolized by the tree shaped scars on her back, although Denver has no memory of it. In this context, Denver's position is actually closer to the contemporary

reader than to Sethe. Sethe and Denver “share” Beloved. However, Beloved means different things to each of them. For Sethe, Beloved is an unspoken guilt and sorrow from the past, while for Denver, she is a new experience. This is exactly the way the contemporary readers experience the slave experience as history.

Gilroy thinks that what is important to black identity formation is not roots but routes. If we apply his idea to Sethe, we can see the routes of her identity (her mother’s African past --- her slave past ---present day), which now becomes a part of Denver’s routes. Through constructing the slave experience, the novel builds a chain of history. Morrison challenges the European centered history of modernity, and her investigation of the inner conflicts of former slaves, at the same time, leads us to inquire into the subjectivism in sharing experience. Is it really possible for one to understand other people’s experience? Henry Gates says that the reader may gain understanding that history can be apprehended through empathy and imagination.<sup>203</sup> Empathy is a vehicle to pass on the experience of terror. In Okada Toru’s case, he shares the “well” experience with those who survived the Nomonhan incident, which becomes his empathetic involvement with history.

What Gilroy calls “routes” is a chain of history and the postmodern technique of historical metafiction becomes useful to reconstruct this chain. Homi Bhabha asserts that Morrison’s concept of the recreation of popular memory transforms the present of narrative enunciation into the haunting memorial of what has been excluded and simultaneously changes the space into “unheimlich” for the negotiation of identity and history. He regards her uses of number in the very first line of Beloved, “124 was

spiteful,” as “a form of memory that survives in the sign.” It also represents “the world of truth deprived of subjectivity.”<sup>204</sup> “124” takes on new meaning in what Bhabha calls, “time-lag,” which is “the temporal break in-between the sign. With this first sentence Morrison creates the uncanny space, which is familiar and at the same time foreign for the readers. What is significant in Bhabha’s time-lag is that he sees it as “the process of agency both as a historical development and as the narrative agency of historical discourse.” According to him, new and hybrid agencies are attainable through time-lag when “the sign ceases the synchronous flow of the symbol.”<sup>205</sup> He regards “124,” as an example of creating of an historical agency. It is through Morrison’s “individuation” of the sign that he thinks the reader is snatched and thrown into a foreign environment. It is the communal, “intersubjective” (the condition where the sign is deprived of the subject and it is before agency is attained) experience of the slave world.<sup>206</sup>

I compare Morrison’s use of 124 with that of Murakami’s use of the proper noun, “Nomonhan.” Bhabha’s idea of “time-lag” seems similar to Jameson’s defamiliarization of the familiar as well as Karatani’s inversion. The familiar signs are “individuated” (in Bhabha’s notion), and they become “uncanny.” While Morrison recreates the foreign environment slaves were thrown into, Murakami also makes the (supposedly) familiar history unfamiliar to postwar readers. Like Morrison, Murakami creates the historical chain for postwar generation readers to experience Japan’s imperial past by mingling postmodern cultural space with World War II. Most importantly, both writers rewrite history in a way that needs to be passed on and that calls for the empathetic involvement of readers.

Strecher affirms postmodern historiographic metafiction as one of the valid strategies to write history, which highlights the subjective as well as political aspect of the project. It denies the objectivity of “neutral history” although there is a recognizable gap between fiction and history. He recognizes these elements in the works of Oe Kenzaburo, Oda Makoto, Murakami Ryu, Kaiko Takeshi as well as Murakami Haruki. However, he points out that the Japanese examples are “not necessarily a response to the issue of truth value,” and the writers are not “self-consciously aware of their conflation of the two genres of history and fiction.”<sup>207</sup> Strecher calls their texts “relief historiography,” in which the historical past is presented for readers “to envision an image of the interior narrative.”<sup>208</sup> Moreover, he thinks that “Murakami denies history and declares histories,” confronting the attempts “to whitewash history.”<sup>209</sup> I agree with Strecher that writing of history is a political act which reflects the writer’s subjectivity, and all the more I recognize Murakami as a “post-Bildungsroman from the ashes” writer, who not only rewrites modern history from subjective point of view but also reconstructs the postwar Japanese individual in non-essentialist discourse.

Murakami uses graphic imagery of violence to visualize “unspeakable things” and have them speak for themselves. He also uses history to reveal suppressed individuality by the State-system. In his trilogy, he depicts absence of subjectivity from an individual who is detached from true history, and in The Wind-up Bird Chronicle, he locates history inside the individual. He presents history as a power source for one to attain subjectivity. Murakami’s goal is to transform subjectivity into an agency for the individual to reject the ready-made narrative. More importantly, in this way, we are able

to “pass on” true history. One must explore his/her individuality through empathetic involvement with history. This further leads us to the question of subjectivism. Can we really understand other people’s experiences? In the next chapter I examine Murakami’s treatment of social subordination in relation to minority issues and explore his ideas of human relations and subjectivism in postwar society.

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<sup>156</sup>Michael Seats, Murakami Haruki: The Simulacrum in contemporary Japanese Culture, (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2006) 331.

<sup>157</sup> Haruki Murakami, “Murakami Haruki Long Interview,” Eureka: June, special edition 1989, 18-19.

<sup>158</sup> Jay Rubin, Haruki Murakami and the Music of Words (New York: Vintage, 2005) 208.

<sup>159</sup> Sengoku Hideyo thinks that ironing was not something enjoyed by Japanese men in the 1960s when the novel is set. Sengoku sees a hint of Americanism in Watanabe Toru’s habit of ironing. See “Ironing Young Man: In Norwegian Wood,” 66-67.

<sup>160</sup> Although in Haruki Murakami and the Music of Words, (2008), Jay Rubin says that Toru’s Chinese character means “to receive” and it suggests his passivity, I believe Rubin confuses the character 享 with 亨. They are both read as “to-o-ru.” However, the former means “to receive” and the latter means “to offer.” Okada Toru’s character is the latter.

<sup>161</sup> Haruki Murakami, The Wind-up Bird Chronicle (New York: Vintage, 1998) 6.

<sup>162</sup> Rubin, 218.

<sup>163</sup> Murakami, 12.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid, 125.

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<sup>165</sup> Minato, Kawamura, “Haruhagawa no kakaru hashi” (The Bridge of Harha River), Murakami Haruki Studies 04, eds. Yoshiki Kuritsubo and Teruhiko Tsuge (Tokyo: Wakakusa Shobo, 1999) 29.

<sup>166</sup> Murakami, 53

<sup>167</sup> Rubin, 214.

<sup>168</sup> Seats, 331.

<sup>169</sup> “Murakami Haruki ga takai to deautoki” (When Murakami Haruki meets the Other World), 78.

<sup>170</sup> In Haruki Murakami and the Music of Words, Rubin thinks that The Wind-up Bird Chronicle is the retelling of A Wild Sheep Chase (205). Michael Seats also acknowledges the similarities between the two works although he points out that the representation of history in The Wind-up Bird Chronicle is “messy,” while history in A Wild Sheep Chase is presented in a more unified way. See Murakami Haruki” The Simulacrum in Contemporary Japanese Culture, 235.

<sup>171</sup> Umigarasu is the endangered sea bird living only in Hokkaido.

<sup>172</sup> Murakami, 18.

<sup>173</sup> “Mediumu to shitenno Murakami Haruki” (Murakami Haruki as medium), 91.

<sup>174</sup> Murakami, *Pinball* 219.

<sup>175</sup> Murakami, *Wild Sheep* 335.

<sup>176</sup> Kiyoto Kato, “Hitsuji o meguru Boken: Mimeshisu saresu monogatari” (A Wild Sheep Chase; A Story of Mimesis), Murakami Haruki Studies 01, eds. Yoshiki Kuritsubo and Teruhito Tsuge (Tokyo: Wakakusa Shobo, 1999) 179.

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<sup>177</sup> I mean between 1930s and 1970s. The novel is set in 1978.

<sup>178</sup> Haruki Murakami, *Wind-Up*, 208-209.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid*, 76.

<sup>180</sup> Haruki Murakami, Kinkyō, Henkyō (Near End, Far End) (Tokyo: Shincho, 1998) 168-169.

<sup>181</sup> Kazuo Kuroko, Murakami Haruki (Tokyo: Bensei Shuppan, 2007) 198.

<sup>182</sup> Haruki Murakami and Hayao Kawai, Murakami Haruki Kawai Hideo ni aini iju (Murakami Haruki goes to see Kawai Hideo) (Tokyo: Shincho, 1996) 72.

<sup>183</sup> *Seats*, 328.

<sup>184</sup> Murakami and Kawai, 56-57.

<sup>185</sup> The Confession style novels with the subject Watakushi.” Karatani Kojin regards Tayama Katai as well as Shiga Naoya as prototypical writers of I novels. See Origins of Modern Japanese Literature, 76-96. Mishima Yukio’s Confession of Mask is often named as an example.

<sup>186</sup> *Seats*, 328-329.

<sup>187</sup> Rebecca Suter, The Japanization of Modernity (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2008) 148-149.

<sup>188</sup> Haruki Murakami, 1973 nen no Pinboru (Pinball, 1973) (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1983) 104.

<sup>189</sup> Kojin Karatani, “Murakami Haruki no Fukei” (Murakami Haruki’s landscape), Murakami Haruki Studies 01 eds. Yoshiki Kuritsubo and Teruhiko Tsuge (Tokyo: Wakakusa Shobo, 1999) 106-111.



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<sup>190</sup> Kojin Karatani, Origins of Modern Japanese Literature, trans. Brett De Bary (Durham: Duke UP, 1993) 34.

<sup>191</sup> Karatani, 135.

<sup>192</sup> Seats, 122.

<sup>193</sup> Fredrick Jameson, Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism (Durham: Duke UP, 2001) 284.

<sup>194</sup> Jameson, 19.

<sup>195</sup> Jameson, 19.

<sup>196</sup> Leah Wain, “Postmodernism? Not Representing Postmodernism.”

Literary Theories: A Reader and Guide. Ed. Julian Wolfreys (New York: New York U.P., 1999) 369.

<sup>197</sup> Frederic Jameson, Foreword, Origins of Modern Japanese Literature, by Kojin Karatani, trans. Brett De Bary (Durham: Duke UP, 1993) xi.

<sup>198</sup> Strecher, 163.

<sup>199</sup> Karatani discuss the idea of Japan’s indigenous postmodernity in “Hiho to Posutomodan” (Criticism and Postmodern), 135-145. In “Murakami Haruki no Fukei” (The Landscape of Murakami Haruki) he says that an inversion he observes in Murakami’s “landscape” is already seen in modern Japanese literature. Therefore, he does not recognize Murakami’s inversion as a postmodern characteristic (106).

<sup>200</sup> Paul Gilroy, The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1993) 2.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid, 19.

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<sup>202</sup> Ibid, 218.

<sup>203</sup> Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Nellie McKay eds. The Norton Anthology of African American Literature (New York: Norton, 2004) 2210-2211.

<sup>204</sup> Homi Bhabha, Location of Culture (New York: Routledge, 1994) 284.

<sup>205</sup> Bhabha, 273-275.

<sup>206</sup> Bhabha, 284-285.

<sup>207</sup> Matthew Strecher, Dances with Sheep (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan, 2002)166-167.

<sup>208</sup> Strecher adapted this from the idea of “relief sculpture” to suggest that “the outline of the historical past, the outer limits of the historical moment under discussion are displayed in such a way as to invite the reader to envision an image of the interior narrative.” It requires active participation of the reader’s imagination. As novels of “relief historiography” Strecher lists A Wild Sheep Chase, Hardboiled Wonderland and the End of the World, The Wind-up Bird Chronicle, Dance, Dance, Dance (168-169).

<sup>209</sup> Strecher, 201-202.

## CHAPTER V

### MURAKAMI'S COMMITMENT: CATS, CHINESE AND COMMUNICATION

#### Introduction

In his interview with the psychologist Kawai Hayao, Murakami explained the change he made between the first two novels of the trilogy and A Wild Sheep Chase: he transformed the sense of detachment and the aphoristic style of the first two novels into “monogatari” (story /narrative). For Murakami, “monogatari” must be very spontaneous and lead to a conclusion with a catharsis. Consequently, the novel becomes long. In this “monogatari” mode, he wrote his next long novel, Hardboiled Wonderland and the End of the World in which he uses a magical realism technique and then, he also wrote a medium length novel, Norwegian Wood, in the style of realism. Although he continues to write monogatari, Murakami also recognizes his next work, The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle as his turning point when he began to be concerned with “commitment.” He defines what he calls “commitment” as “connection among people.” However, “commitment” is not as simple as mutual understanding or holding hands together but as complex as “going down into a well and going through a wall to find a connection.”<sup>210</sup> This is exactly the image of commitment he creates in The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle and the picture book, The Sheep Man's Christmas.

Murakami's concern with “commitment” actually brings our attention to subjectivism or the inquiry into whether one can understand other people's experience. If

one can be involved empathetically with history (or other people's memories), he/she is able to understand experiences of other people as well. This can be rephrased as one must know both history and the people of the society he/she lives in, which further suggests that not only the warp of history but also the woof of social awareness should help one to find his/her self identity. At the same time, the warp and woof keep society from falling apart. In addition to the historical black hole, Murakami reminds us of modern Japan's multi-ethnic social reality in which ethnic minorities are disadvantaged in education, employment, housing and marriage. I use the term "ethnic minorities" to refer to non-Japanese populous including Ainu, Koreans and Chinese who have been discriminated against in many areas. They are descendants of those whom Imperial Japan brutally violated. These minorities are victims of the modern. Because of their physical appearances, they have been quietly assimilated into Japanese society without disturbing the State-system's attempt to create the image of a successful mono-ethnic nation. Not only their voice but also their existence itself was concealed in postwar Japan's self-representation of an egalitarian classless society.

In this chapter I explore modern Japan's social consciousness regarding ethnic Others, examining Murakami's texts that involve the Chinese and cats as the oppressed group. He tends to use both cats and Chinese as the subjects of violence who do not possess language to express their pain. I read his trilogy and his short story "A Slow Boat to China," which I think reveal the Orientalist view of the Japanese (including his own) towards ethnic Others. Regardless, he attempts to transform true understanding of the Others (including their pain) into an empowering source for individuals to know

themselves. I also examine The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle in terms of the significant role the cat plays to empower the protagonist in his confrontation with the darkness of imperialism. Finally, I analyze the human-cat hybrid character, Nakata-san in Kafka on the Shore, in terms of his position in a quasi-egalitarian society.

### **Cat Novels: Unhappiness Unspoken**

Murakami is a writer with a strong anti-System voice. I call him tentatively a “post-Bildungsroman from the ashes” writer whose attempt to rewrite Japan’s modern history opens a new theoretical frame that emerges in an overlap between the postmodern and the postcolonial. Using postmodern techniques, he actually reveals the State-system’s imperialist hegemony over individuals. His stories revolve around the battle between the imperialistic promotion of modernity and the individual who reveals its darkness, and his protagonists are fully aware of the System’s control over the economy, education and the media in postwar Japan. Postwar Japan created the image of an egalitarian society in which more than 90 percent of Japanese regard themselves as the middle class, although many see the large size of this class and even inequality within. Murakami’s protagonists never belong to the low end of the middle class. They are rather privileged. They have college degrees and well-paying jobs. Moreover, they are entitled to language to express their dissatisfaction with society. While presenting the heroic voices of the privileged protagonists, however, Murakami inserts signs of the oppressed group using cats.

Koizumi Koichiro suggests that we should nickname The Wind-up Bird Chronicle “Spaghetti novel” based on Okada Toru’s frequent diet of spaghetti.<sup>211</sup> Certainly,

Murakami's protagonists eat spaghetti quite often, and his food description is one of the narrative strategies he uses in order to create certain cultural landscapes.<sup>212</sup> However, cats appear more consistently than spaghetti in his texts, and in this respect, the body of Murakami's works should be called "cat novels." Murakami is known as a cat lover, and he apparently enjoys having cats in his novels. It is no exaggeration to say that one can expect the presence of at least one cat in each of Murakami's novel, and cats often play significant roles in his recreation of modern Japan's social landscapes.

Boku in the trilogy does not become a cat owner until A Wild Sheep Chase although cats are referred to more than once in the earlier two texts. Unfortunately for cats, on many occasions they are drawn from their peaceful nap and turned into the subject of pain. In fact, in his first novel, Murakami already shows this tendency to present cats as nameless victims of unreasonable violence and voiceless pain takers although their existence remains in the background. In Hear the Wind Sing Boku tells his girlfriend about experiments with cats in his biology class, although he skips the part that the experiments took the lives of thirty six cats and kittens. When he tells her that he majors in biology because he likes animals, she says that she likes animals also. In reply, he tells her a story of a leopard that killed 350 Indians for three years. He continues:

"Well, they brought in an Englishman, A Colonel Jim Corbett -- the famed 'Leopard Killer' -- who in eight years bagged one hundred twenty-five leopards and tigers, that leopard included. Still like animals? "

She put out her cigarette, took a sip of wine, then studies my face a while.

"You really are an oddball."<sup>213</sup>

The heroic Englishman who rescued the natives killed 124 innocent cats. Boku's killing is justified in the name of modern science while the Englishman's "mass-murder" is supported by what Fuminobu Murakami calls the modern ideologies of "strong-is-good" and "love-is-beautiful," which justifies violence towards dangerous others. This also implies that acts of genocide including Auschwitz are a product of the modern.<sup>214</sup>

Max Weber's idea that rationalization makes the world orderly and reliable but cannot make it meaningful may explain the irony of Boku's love for animals.<sup>215</sup> The irony is that Boku's love for animals actually leads him to kill 36 innocent cats. In the process of modernization "love" and "strong" justify irrational violence and victimize innocents. Killing innocent cats can also be comparable to Imperial Japan's brutal murder and rape of the Chinese during World War II. Violence was justified by love for the country and racial superiority (being strong). The modern allows the "strong" to kill innocents out of "love," yet, the rational action of the modernist is actually irrational. This leopard episode can be read as Murakami's illustration of the irrationality of the modern that exists as part of our lives.

In postwar Japan, the dark energy of imperialism still promotes the modern ideology and keeps the "ordinary" Japanese mindless and ethnic minorities voiceless. Murakami criticizes this social structure in which the small group of capitalists exploit the large middle class consumers and the lower class labor. Murakami's criticism on the capitalist exploitation of the war is shown through the character, Nezumi (meaning "rat") in the trilogy.

Nezumi is the son of a very wealthy man who has made a fortune out of the war.

According to Boku:

Rumor had it that the Rat [Nezumi]'s father had at one time been miserably poor. That was before the war. Then just as the war was about to breakout, he managed to buy into a chemical plant and began to sell insect-repelling plasters. And while there were doubts whether the stuff actually worked, by a convenient turn of events the fighting spread south and sales shot up. When the war ended, he shoved the plasters away in a warehouse and this time began to market a highly suspect "nutrition supplement." Around the end of the Korean War, he suddenly switched to household detergents. The word was that all these products had exactly the same ingredients. Quite possible. Twenty-five years ago, the jungles of New Guinea were heaped with dead Japanese soldiers all covered with insect plasters, while now toilets in every home in Japan are overflowing with cleaners bearing the same trademark.<sup>216</sup>

In this brief biography of Nezumi's father, we are able to see what Karatani Kojin would call "tento" (inversion), through which Murakami equates the value of the dead soldiers with toilet cleaners. Simultaneously, Murakami demonstrates the existence of the comprador class which was benefitted from the meaningless death of soldiers. The authors of Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts define the term "comprador" as "a relatively privileged, wealthy and educated elite who maintain a more highly developed capacity to engage in the international communicative practices introduced by colonial domination."<sup>217</sup> Although Nezumi's father may not exactly be "educated," he certainly has pushed himself to the position where he is able to produce educated elite descendants. Ironically, his son has a strong anti-capitalist view. Nezumi's rejection to the comprador class is implied, in the first place, through his calling himself "Nezumi." Suggestively, he attempts to negate his privileged status by transforming himself into one of the least adored animals in human society. Just being rats is enough reason for them to be killed.



His father made a fortune out of irrational killings, while Nezumi identifies himself as an animal that is irrationally killed.

Nezumi actually shows sympathy towards victims of irrational violence.

Suzumura Kazunari, who did extensive reading on Murakami's use of cats, thinks that the character Nezumi suggests the existence of cats, for they form an inseparable pair (cats and mice). Therefore, he asserts that it is natural for Nezumi to be sympathetic towards the Chinese bar owner, J's cat.<sup>218</sup> In Pinball, 1973, J tells Nezumi about his three legged cat. J recalls that one day the cat came home covered in blood. Nezumi asks:

“What on earth happened to it?”

“Don't know. I guess it got hit by a car. But y'know, it was somehow worse than that. Getting run over by a tire wouldn't do that. I mean, it looked as if it'd been mangled in a vise. Flat as a pancake. I'd almost bet it was someone's idea of a practical joke.

“Come on,” the Rat said shaking his head in disbelief. “Who'd want to do that to a cat's paw?”

J tamped one of his filterless cigarettes over and over again on the counter, then put it to his lips and it up.

“You said it. Not a reason in the world to crush a cat's paw. It's a real well-behaved cat, never done anything wrong. Nothing anyone would have to gain by crushing its paw. It's just senseless and mindless ill will. I'll never understand it, you might even say it's got us hemmed in.”

The Rat [Nezumi] nodded once more, his eyes fixed on his beer glass. “I just can't understand why...”

“That's all right. If you can let it go at not understanding, that's the best anyone could expect.”<sup>219</sup>

In this episode Murakami depicts the cat as a muted victim of irrational violence, which actually overlaps with the victims of Imperial Japanese soldiers' inhumane rape and murder. In fact, what J calls “senseless and mindless ill will” symbolizes the darkness of

the modern, which coexists with the modern ideology. The cat does not possess language to express its pain, and it is symbolic that he is owned by an ethnic minority who does not speak the language of his county. In this way, Murakami relates the ill will of imperialism with Japan's multi-ethnic reality, using cats (and the Rat) as a medium.

### **Monoethnic Ideology and Multiethnic Reality**

The diverse origins of the Japanese people were recognized in many prewar writings. During the war the multiethnic ideology was realized through the ethnic diversity in imperial Japan. The diffusion of Japanese national identity occurred simultaneously with the promotion of imperialism. Colonization of Taiwan, Korea and Manchuria was highly promoted by the ideology of a multiethnic nation.<sup>220</sup> When people became fully aware of their national identity, Japan was a multiethnic empire. Multiethnic consciousness co-existed with a sense of ethnic superiority in people's mind. Non-Japanese minorities were considered ethnically and culturally inferior. However, upon loss of the war, postwar Japan experienced major changes in population diversity by decolonization of its colonies. In the process of normalizing the relations with former colonies such as China, Taiwan, and Korea, its imperial aggression became a "debt" Japan owed to them. Thus, the former "sense of superiority" was replaced by guilty consciousness in the postwar period.

Traumatic culture shock from the Allied occupation, an inferiority complex towards the West (especially the United States) and a guilty conscience were enough reasons for people to develop a national identity crisis. There was a need for a positive

national image. Their focus was turned to what they regarded as the most positive at the time, the “economic miracle” achieved by hard working “Japanese”. Here, the notion of the Japanese as a single race became important in the reconstruction of a positive national identity. Thus, monoethnic Japan was born. The monoethnic ideology is postwar Japan’s self defense mechanism to conquer an inferiority complex and a guilty conscience. John Lie also suggests that the Japanese familiarity with American racial diversities is another reason for the monoethnic ideology. The idea that the big melting pot of America has racial problems, while small monoethnic Japan does not have race related issues became quite common. Postwar Tokyo became the perfect image of a monoethnic nation with no presence of minorities.<sup>221</sup> It is also a proud symbol of the hardworking people’s achievement, which has elevated their self-claimed class status to the proud middle. The monoethnic ideology and middle class identity share the same root.

Postwar Japan’s multi-ethnicity had been neglected in the public discussion until recently. Japan had been believed to be a homogenous nation by many Japanese when international labor migration in the 1980’s brought a large number of foreign workers to Japan and their presence became a problematic issue. Along with Prime Minister, Yasuhiro Nakasone’s public remark of Japan as “tanitsu minzoku kokka (single ethnicity nation),” the public reaction to immigrant workers reveals the commonly believed myth of Japan’s homogeneity despite the presence of foreigners such as Koreans and Chinese, who have been under privileged residents of Japan for generations. However, it is also true that physical resemblance between Japanese and non-Japanese populace easily made

minorities invisible and promoted the strong image of a monoethnic nation. Lie classifies the principal ethnic groups in contemporary Japan as follows: Ainu, Okinawans, Burakumin, Koreans, Chinese, and, of course Japanese. The estimated numbers of each in the 1990s were: “Ainu (25,000 – 300,000), Burakumin (2-3 million), Okinawans (1.6 million), Koreans (700,000 – 1 million), Chinese (200, 000), children of mixed ancestry (10,000 – 25,000).” Lie notes that these estimated numbers do not include naturalized Koreans and those who hide their ethnic background for fear of discrimination. Because of the silence of invisible minorities, it is easy for Japanese to encounter *gaikokujin* without knowing their ethnic heritage and believe that they live in a monoethnic nation. He also asserts that Japan’s multiethnic nation was achieved by 1) colonization of Hokkaido, Okinawa, Korea and Taiwan through which Ainu, Okinawans, Koreans and Chinese have become ethnic minorities, 2) migration of low-waged immigrant labor brought by major wars and industrialization and 3) state-making through which the non-dominant (ethnically Japanese) group of “Burakumin” also become the “others.”<sup>222</sup>

Geographical isolation from the Euro-Asian continent perhaps plays the biggest role in the construction of foreign otherness in the minds of Japanese people. Separated from the rest of the world by the sea, the coastlines serve as imagined but somehow visible boundaries which separate the people inside from those who exist outside. The human relations in Japan are largely based on this consciousness of the boundary between the in-group (内 *uchi*) and the out-group (外 *soto*). One regards the space he belongs to as “uchi” and the distinction he finds between *uchi* and *soto* is the foundation of his national identity. The Japanese call foreign countries “*gaikoku*” (外国) and foreign

people “gaijin” (外人 / mainly white Westerners) or “gaikokujin” (外国人 / non-Westerners). It should be noted that the Chinese character for “gai” is the same as “soto.” Therefore, those terms clearly imply the psychological boundary the Japanese build towards the rest of the world. That is, the distinction between Japan and the West as well as Japan and the non-West.

The Uchi-Soto boundary, in the first place, presents the idea that is similar to Edward Said’s theory of Orientalism. Said broadly defines Orientalism as “a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between ‘the Orient’ and (most of the time) ‘the Occident.’”<sup>223</sup> In fact, the modern Japanese construction of “otherness” is highly influenced by the discourse of race in which non-Westerners are considered inferior. When the Japanese discovered the East-West distinction, they produced Occidentalism towards white Westerners and Orientalism towards the rest. Stephen Tanaka’s research shows that geocultural entities such as “seiyo”(West) and “toyo” (East) are ideas that evolved in the twentieth century. The terms in their earliest form, probably meant the division made by the body of water around Java. As the Japanese awareness of Europe grew, the terms were used to divide the Euro-Asian continent in the eighteenth century. In the nineteenth century, the terms referred to the division between “Eastern ethics and Western techniques.” Eventually, after the Meiji Restoration (1868), “toyo” became what was not the Occident.<sup>224</sup>

John Russell suggests that the Western racial paradigms were brought into Japan with Dutch learning.<sup>225</sup> However, the academic knowledge of the advanced West and the visitation of Commodore Perry did not automatically give the Japanese an inferiority

complex to the “better Western looks.” In fact, white Westerners were at first called “keto,” which literally meant hairy Chinese (“to” means Tang dynasty and also broadly implies foreign barbarians. Therefore, “keto” can be also translated as “hairy barbarians”). Perry’s portrait drawn by a Japanese artist exaggerates the sizes of his eyes and nose and it resembles an image of an imaginary evil spirit called “oni.” According to Millie Creighton, this group of people regarded as “keto” somehow raised their status to be considered “a standard of beauty.” “From the beginning of Japan’s modern history,” Creighton also states, “the white Western world became the model to emulate; it represented a standard by which to gauge Japan’s progress and modernization. As a result of these processes, the modern Japanese occidentalism of the gaijin is directed at white Westerners, not just any alien groups.” Creighton also suggests that the shift from kimono to “Western-style clothing” played a major role in changing the “keto” into a beauty model called “gaijin.”<sup>226</sup>

The Japanese conceptualize “foreigners” differently based on geopolitical division. Foreigners from South America, Asia and Africa are called “gaikokujin” or referred to by the country / region / continent of their origin such as Afurika-jin (African), Chugokujin (Chinese) and Indo-jin (Indian).<sup>227</sup> The Japanese also use terms which reflect skin colors. The term “gaijin” usually implies white Europeans and Americans and Japanese use the term “hakujin” (白人 / white person) only when they need to specify the person’s racial origin. On the other hand, they call African Americans and black Europeans “kokujin” (黒人 / black person) in general. Recently, the Katakana word, “afurukan amerikan” (アフリカンアメリカン / African American) began to appear in both academic and popular

journalisms. There also is a discriminatory term “kuronbo” (黒ん坊 / nigger, Negro). Each term represents racial stereotypes by itself and a racial hierarchy as a whole. For example, it is not uncommon for the older generations to refer to white people as “gaijin-san” (the suffix “san” is equivalent to Mr., Mrs., Miss and Ms and is used to show respect). However, there are no such terms as “gaikokujin-san” or “chugokujin-san.” The lack of the polite terms for non-whites/non-westerners implies the racial hierarchy in which other Orientals, and people with darker skin are less respected.

It is commonly understood that the establishment of the Japanese culture highly depended on Chinese imports. Food, the writing system, religion, law and the political system among others were imported from China to Japan via the Korean Peninsula in its early history. In its modern history, skills and technologies brought by Chinese immigrants largely contributed to its modernization. Western-style cloth making, Western style hair-cutting, black tea processing, kerosene lanterns, and gaslights were all brought by Chinese immigrants during the Meiji period. Chinese immigration to Japan was initiated by merchants who built trading communities in major port cities. Even during the “sakoku”(self-imposed seclusion) period, Tokugawa Bakufu had official trade relations with the Ming dynasty. Silk and sugar, as well as books and Chinese-invented skills, were also brought to Japan via the only trade port of the time, Nagasaki. In 1618, 2,000 Chinese residents were recorded. In 1689, 4,888 Chinese resided in the residential compounds called “Tojin yashiki.”

Even though China was regarded as the primary source of high culture by Tokugawa elites in the nineteenth century, the imported Sinocentric view of the world

was later replaced by Western imperialism. Thus, despite the history and scale of the trade relations, the Chinese were officially viewed as “barbarians” and ranked lower than the Dutch. However, they were highly regarded by the Japanese population in Nagasaki as wealthy and generous merchants. During the Meiji period, Chinese from Fujian settled in Nagasaki, those from Shanghai, Jiangsu and North China built a Chinese community in Osaka, and those from Guangdong built a community in Yokohama. By 1875 the number of Chinese accounted for more than half of the total foreign population in Japan. Most immigrants were male laborers who worked for lower wages. Gradually they built shops, restaurants, hotels and gambling houses in their residential areas. However, they were not considered socially equal to Westerners. Both Westerners and Japanese avoided entering Chinese areas. They were believed to spread opium and viewed as an economic threat.

After the Sino-Japanese War (1894-5), the Chinese population fell from 5,343 to 1,576. However, the cession of Taiwan to Japan in 1895 brought more immigrants as students, laborers and military laborers. Even though the overthrow of the Ching dynasty in 1911 temporarily reduced the number of students and merchants, Japan’s economic boom again brought thousands of Chinese laborers and there were 7,000 Chinese laborers by 1922. The Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923 destroyed the Chinatown in Yokohama and killed one third of the Chinese population in the area. Many of them were murdered because of being mistaken for Koreans who were rumored to have poisoned water during and after the earthquake. After the Manchurian Incident of 1923, most mainland Chinese



students returned home. The estimated 30,836 Chinese dropped to 17,043 by 1938.

Most of those who remained were already well-established merchants.

During World War II, the Chinese were treated as enemy nationals. Even though numbers were much smaller than those from Korea, 42,000 Chinese were transported to Japan by 1943 as coolie labor. Most of them were housed in camps, and poor nutrition in addition to inhumane treatment by the Japanese raised their death rate to over 50%. After Japan's surrender in 1945, both Taiwanese and Chinese laborers were repatriated, even though ninety nine mainland Chinese and 28,000 Taiwanese chose to remain. In the 1990s the estimated ethnic Chinese population in Japan was 70,000. However, as Lie notes, this figure does not include those who were naturalized Japanese citizens and their descendants. Development of the communities with strong support of Chinese associations allowed them to pursue economic success and to maintain their Chinese identity in a foreign land.”<sup>228</sup>

### **Murakami's Orientals**

Already in his first novel, Murakami has a Chinese character. His name is “J” and he is the owner of Boku's favorite bar. Considering Japan's racial hierarchy, it is easy to imagine what J's life has been. However, Murakami does not give further detail of J's personal history. What Boku knows about J, which is not much, is the only information the readers are given. According to Boku, Jay is Chinese, and he speaks better Japanese than Boku. He has not left Kobe since 1964. Regardless, what I think is most significant here is the fact that Murakami clarifies J's ethnic identity to the readers. Although J's non-Japaneseness emphasizes the exoticness of the port city in which the novel is set (it

is believed to be Kobe), Murakami uses of the proper noun “Chinese.” Murakami’s direct referral to J’s nationality affirms that there is no way to distinguish Chinese from Japanese unless you label them as such. Without a Chinese label, J is assumed to be Japanese. There is no implication of J’s Chineseness in his language or mannerisms in the novel and the readers know his nationality only from Boku’s words. This makes Japan’s racism all the more irrational.

Through J’s identity, Murakami attempts to remind us of the fact that modern Japanese are orphaned in Asia, and he is also eager to reconnect Japan to China, which is openly presented in the following conversation between Boku and J at the end of the novel:

“You like this town?”

“You said it yourself. Everywhere’s the same.”

“Yeah.”

“But in a few more years, I’d like to go back to China just once. Never actually been there, you know --- Always mean to, whenever I’m down at the harbor and see all the ships.”

“My uncle died in China,”

“Oh? --- A lot of people died in China. Still, we’re all brothers.”<sup>229</sup>

This remark of J’s that Chinese and Japanese are “brothers” sounds unusually direct and also sentimental for Murakami, and the use of the family term stands out all the more because in this novel, no one has a perfect family. Boku’s older brother has left for the U.S., and Nezumi distances himself from his father. The family of Boku’s girlfriend has completely fallen apart, and she has not seen her twin sister or mother. J lives alone. In fact, “China” is imagined by Boku and J as a utopian place where people can be reunited as family. J has never been to China. Yet, he wants to “go back” there. Symbolically, at

the end of the novel when Boku leaves the town for Tokyo by the highway bus, he is seated in the seat number “21 China.”<sup>230</sup> Aside from their imagination, China remains the close relative living at an unreachable distance. This simultaneously implies that postwar Japan remains as a cultural orphan (with historical amnesia).

Murakami continues to depict the distancing relationship between Japan and China in his short story “Chugoku yuki no surou boto” (A Slow Boat to China) published in 1984. In this short story, the first person narrator, Boku, discusses his encounters with Chinese people living in Japan at three different stages of his life. In fact, all three episodes are about the “distance” Boku experiences between himself and Chinese people. The first episode is about the distance between Boku and a Chinese child who share the same desk. The second story is about the distance between Boku and a Chinese college girl with whom he lost contact because he accidentally lost her number. The third is about the distance between Boku and his Chinese high school classmate whose name he cannot recall.

Boku recalls that the first encounter occurred when he was in an elementary school. There was an elementary school for Chinese children in his hometown, and Boku was sent there to take a standard aptitude test. This arrangement has nothing to do with his nationality. Simply, the Chinese school happened to be serving as one of the test locations. The proctor of the test was a male Chinese teacher who has become Boku’s first Chinese person. Boku first thought that the teacher did not look Chinese and realized that he did not know what a Chinese was supposed to look like. Before the test, the Chinese teacher gently directed the “Japanese” children to think in the “Chinese”

children's shoes and told them not to mark up the desks or stick chewing gum under the chairs. He said:

Now, as, you all know, China and Japan are neighboring countries. In order for everyone to enjoy happy lives, neighbors must make friends. Isn't that right? --- Of course, some things about our two countries are very similar and some things are very different. Some things we understand about each other and some things we do not. But isn't that the same with you and your friends? Even if they are your friends, some things they cannot understand. But if you make an effort, you can still become close. That is what I believe. But in order to do that, we must begin with respect for each other.<sup>231</sup>

The Chinese teacher's remark above actually reflects his assumption that Japanese children's marking on Chinese children's desks is not simply an ill manner but a racially motivated discriminatory action. Ironically, by teaching them how to respect ethnic "brothers" he actually implants the idea of ethnic differences into the Japanese children's minds, which creates a distance between them. The teacher's effort to demonstrate equality between Chinese and Japanese is based on the idea of Japanese as a particularity claiming to be universal. Therefore, it emphasizes the fact that they are two different particularities.

In this short story Murakami emphasizes that Boku has no discriminatory feelings towards Chinese people. In fact, they are not "foreign" to him. Boku recalls:

The town where I went to high school was a port town, so there were quite a few Chinese around. Not that they seemed any different from the rest of us. Nor did they have any special traits. They were as different from each other as could be, and in that way they were the same as us. When I think about it, the curious thing about individuals is that their singularity always goes beyond any category or generalization in the book---Though I never did get especially close to any of them. I wasn't your let's-make-friends sort of guy. Japanese or Chinese or anything else, made no difference.<sup>232</sup>

Kazuo Kuroko reads the passage above as a reflection of Murakami's absolute individualism which belittles the effects of race and ethnicity on human relations. He sees the effect of postwar democracy (education) in this attitude of anti-discrimination and asserts that Murakami equates democracy with individualism.<sup>233</sup> Kuroko's reading may suggest that Murakami simply attempts to depict individualism in postwar Japan through the distancing relationship between Japanese and Chinese. However, Kwai-Cheung Lo thinks that despite Murakami's careful attempt not to present the Chinese people in Japan as a cultural other, he actually stresses the difference between Chinese and Japanese by singling out the Chinese and finding it difficult to be close to them.<sup>234</sup> In fact, Murakami's depiction of the Chinese college girl actually suggests that her Chineseness blocks her communication with her peers. At the place of their part time work, Boku observes that her seriousness makes her isolated from other student workers. She even falls into a panic when she makes a mistake. He gives her assistance, and she tells him that she is Chinese as if she attributes the situation, which can be read as a symptom of postmodern schizophrenia, to her ethnicity.

In the third episode, Boku is spoken to by a man whom he is not able to recognize at once. While Boku has a chat with him in confusion, the man tells him that he is an encyclopedia salesman who sells only to Chinese clients. When Boku recalls his name, he recognizes the man as his high school classmate who is Chinese. As he expresses his regret for interrupting Boku, Boku asks for the brochures for his encyclopedia. Here, Murakami treats ethnicity as a label of identification of the person which works more effectively than his/her name. Actually, in all three episodes it is the Chinese people who

reveal their ethnic identity to Boku. Moreover, by identifying themselves in this way, they draw a line between Japanese Boku and themselves. The school teacher would have believed any markings on the desks were embryos of hate crimes. The college girl must have assumed that Boku never called because of her ethnicity. And the classmate did not count Boku as a potential buyer of his encyclopedias even though he promised Boku to mail the brochure. These three episodes depict the ethnic minority's anger towards discrimination, fear of humiliation, and need for brotherly alliance for economic survival. Simultaneously, this reveals postwar Japan's insensitivity towards ethnic minorities.

Lo analyzes Murakami's representation of China in relation to racial otherness and masculinity, and sees Murakami's China as a sheer symbol that is "a stand-in for a mood, for a faded memory or for something long gone" without any historical depth. He asserts that "Chineseness is the otherness in the Japanese self" and relates the otherness to the lost masculinity of the modern Japanese. He sees the school teacher's authoritativeness as masculinity and the protectiveness Boku shows towards the college girl as proof of his masculinity. He also sees the high school classmate as a memory of Boku's masculinity that is lost in the modern "emasculating" life.<sup>235</sup> Although I also observe the Chinese existence in the Japanese self, I do not quite agree with the idea of Chinese as a symbol of masculinity. On the contrary, I actually observe feminization of Chinese people in Murakami's depiction of them.

The male Chinese teacher uses very formal language when he says to the Japanese children, "I am going to proctor the test, "using the pronoun "watakushi" for "I," for which Boku expresses his surprise by stating, "He said 'watakushi'."<sup>236</sup>

“Watakushi” is to be used by grown-ups on the formal occasions especially when the speaker speaks to the listener who is socially higher. It is also commonly used by upper-class female speakers. For these reasons, Boku’s reaction is quite natural. It is an unusual and unexpected word to be heard in elementary classrooms. In the situation where he, as an adult, is talking to children, this type of formality is unnecessary, and it may suggest that this unnecessary politeness produces the wider distance between him and children. It also makes him exotic. Although “watakushi” can be used both male and female speakers on formal occasions, women use it more frequently than men. In other words, “watakushi” is not a good choice if Murakami’s intention is to imply the teacher’s masculinity. For male speakers, the most formal “I” is “watakushi” and the second is “watashi.” The third is “boku” and the most casual form is “ore,” which is used by high school classmate and is suitable for the situation. Interestingly, in Kafka on the Shore the female Siamese cat (another example of exoticism), Mimi, refers to herself as “watakushi” and intelligently states that cats are powerless, weak and fragile creatures. She also expresses her concerns with the unreasonable violence they suffer.

Murakami uses the variety of the first person pronoun to differentiate his characters from each other. Moreover, these “I” pronouns not only clarify his characters’ genders but also imply their personality, social status and identity (occupational as well as sexual).<sup>237</sup> Interestingly, Murakami has J use “atashi” which is a colloquial form of “I” that is mostly used by female speakers on casual occasions. It can be contended that Murakami feminizes the school teacher and J through the language. In addition, if “atashi” is used by a male speaker, it implies that he is middle aged or older and his

occupation does not require formality. It is obvious that the speaker does not intend to demonstrate his masculinity through the used of “atashi.” It is also hard for the person to be imagined as a highly educated and/or intelligent white collar (elite) worker.<sup>238</sup>

Murakami presents J as a feminized man who takes pain as his cat does. He associates the Chinese with physical pain or weakness. The school teacher is limping, the college girl has a panic attack, and the classmate tells Boku about his stomach problems, which restricts his caffeine and alcohol intake. In this regard, Murakami Orientalizes his Chinese characters as those who are exotic, feminine and weak. His Orientalization of the Others is also observed in his presentation of cats.

In his trilogy Murakami associates cats with exoticism. In Pinball 1973 Boku often plays with Abyssinians in a display case at the pet store.<sup>239</sup> He also translates an article, “Why Cats Wash Their Faces” in the book called “*Scientific Puzzle Box: Animals*” for his client. The cats are caged and displayed as “exotic” animals. At the same time, they are beings that are “knowledgeable” in modern science. Therefore, they can be regarded as the “Orientals.” In Orientalism Edward Said says that the Oriental is viewed by the European, who regards himself as rational, as irrational, deprived, childlike and different. The West makes the Orientals knowledgeable in order to identify them. As a result, the Orient/Oriental becomes “something one studies and depicts, something one disciplines, and something one illustrates.”<sup>240</sup> I believe that Said’s idea is applicable to the Japanese context to describe Orientalism of its own, which simultaneously reveals the existence of racism. In Hear the Wind Sing, Boku also reveals the State-system’s intention to train him as an Orientalist.



In Hear the Wind Sing Boku recalls that when he was young, he was sent to a psychologist for his autism-like taciturnity. On the wall of the psychologist's office, there is a portrait of Mozart who stared at Boku reproachfully like a timid cat. In fact, this is a symbolic scene to clarify Boku's position as oppressed by the System. The psychologist tells young Boku to talk about cats as part of their "free talking" therapy: Their conversation takes place as follows:

"Tell me something about cats, anything at all."  
I rolled by neck around while pretending to think.  
"Whatever comes to mind is fine."  
"They're four-legged animals."  
"And what else?"  
"People keep them in their homes, and if the mood strikes them, they catch mice."  
"And what do they eat?"  
"Fish."  
"How about sausages?"  
"Sausages too."<sup>241</sup>

The psychologist's choice of cats as a topic demonstrates the social hierarchical order in his office. That is, there are the psychologist as the power figure with dominant language, Boku, who is learning the language, and cats as knowledgeable objects with no language. In this scene, cats are the Orientals who have no voice and Boku, who is in the middle must use the language of dominance to "depict" the Oriental. By using cats, Murakami not only illustrates the State-system's control of language as well as education but also reminds us of the existence of invisible figures who can only "stare at you reproachfully like a timid cat." Illustrating them should not be confused with "knowing" them.

Gayatri Spivak discusses two senses of representation of the oppressed group: representation and re-representation. “Representation” is “speaking for” which is used in politics and “re-representation” is discussed by theoreticians in philosophy and art. She thinks it problematic to confuse these two forms, for the former is a proxy and the latter is a portrait.<sup>242</sup> If we apply these senses of representation to Boku’s depiction of cats, it can be contended that Boku “re-presents” those who cannot represent themselves. Boku’s portrait of cats is largely drawn from the psychologist’s leading questions. That is, while Boku “re-presents” cats, he is “represented” by the psychologist, which also emphasizes his “middle” position. Although Boku is “speaking,” he does not possess agency to speak for himself. In modern Japanese society, “speaking” is controlled by the system. The middle class individuals can speak but he cannot speak for himself. Boku concludes his experience with the psychologist as follows: “But the doctor was right about what he said. Civilization is transmission. When it comes to pass that things that should be expressed and transmitted get lost, civilization itself come to an end. Click...Off..”<sup>243</sup> Murakami seems to suggest that modernization (civilization) is based on the passing down of narratives (in both political and economic contexts) provided by the State-system.

As a biology major student, Boku “studies” the Oriental (cats) while the English man “disciplines” the Oriental (leopards). Although he is actually aware of the irrationality of the Orientalist, the fact that he “studies” animals may suggest that he unconsciously inclines to the Orientalist practice that is taught by the State-system. He does not show any heroism to rescue the Oriental. Instead, he shows somewhat

sympathetic (not empathetic) feeling by playing with caged cats. His involvement with the cat article as a translator suggests that he stays in a middle (and therefore neutral) position. Boku in “A Slow Boat to China” takes the same neutral position towards the Chinese people. Perhaps, their attitude suggests that Murakami himself does not possess a strong sense of what he calls “commitment” in the early stage of his career. Therefore, his protagonists remain as the Orientalist who does not like Orientalists without taking any action to change the situation.

### **Lost Communication and the Missing Cat**

In “A Slow Boat to China,” there is only one line that mentions cats. Boku begins telling about his third encounter with a Chinese as follows:

This happened when I'd just turned twenty-eight. Six years after I got married. Six years during which time I'd laid three cats to rest. Burned how many aspirations, bundled up how much suffering in thick sweaters, and buried them in the ground. All in this fathomlessly huge city Tokyo.<sup>244</sup>

Curiously, the number of dead cats matches the number of memorable Chinese people, and together, I believe that they represent failed reunification between a postwar Japanese individual and his Other self. I actually regard China as metaphor of Japan's lost shadow. The death of cats means the loss of the Chinese, which also means loss of the other self. In one sense, postwar Japan's cultural disorientation can be attributed to its loss of China (brother/sister, twin, better half or shadow).

The notion of inseparable “Other” is strongly observed in Murakami's frequent use of twins (or twin-like relationships) in his works. These individuals function as one.

Or it would be more accurate to say that they are functional only when they are together, and once they are separated, they can no longer function in society. Therefore, the loss is painful. In Hear the Wind Sing, Boku's girlfriend with a missing pinky has an identical twin sister. She tells Boku that people could not tell her from her sister until she lost her pinky at the age of eight. Curiously, her physical incompleteness echoes J's cat's condition. While the cat suffered from unreasonable violence in modern society, she is disturbed by the schizophrenic condition. This may imply the side effect of the modern, which separated Japan from China. Boku is a (postwar) individualist, and he has nothing against ethnic minorities, which all the more emphasizes the fact that simply being liberal and/or being sympathetic towards the other is not enough to build a bridge between them. It is empathetic involvement with the oppressed other that opens up possibilities for one to find his lost half. Murakami presents cats as a tangible and symbolic figure of missing halves, and this explains why he is so concerned with the relationship his protagonists have with their cats.

Murakami's first person narrator in each novel never becomes a cat owner by his own choice. It is usually his (ex-) wife who brings a stray cat to their home and when his wife leaves him the cat is often left behind, which emphasizes the idea of cats as a "connector" between the couple. In the later chapter of Hardboiled Wonderland and the End of the World it is revealed that the protagonist was left by both his wife and cat. Symbolically, his mind is heading to the isolated place where people do not have minds and do not connect with each other. Murakami repeats the same "abandoned by wife and

cat” situation with the protagonist of The Wind-up Bird Chronicle. However, this time, the cat returns, which foreshadows the later reunion of him and his wife.

The Wind-up Bird Chronicle focuses on the conflict between the ordinary postwar baby boomer, Okada Toru and the celebrity intellectual, Wataya Noboru. In this respect, the novel is about the battle between the State-system and post-Bildungsroman (post-Nihonjinron) individual. At the same time, it is a story about a married couple through which Murakami explores subjectivism to understand the experiences of other people (including better-halves). Toru’s battle against the State-System is introduced as the personality conflict between him and his brother-in-law, and Murakami is concerned with subjectivism/empathy beginning with the couple’s fight over toilet paper and the dinner menu. Although these issues are discussed in a daily life setting, they are highly political and psychological issues. While Boku has a strong aversion to the State-system, his better-half, Kumiko is attracted to its darkness that is represented by her brother. The novel depicts the ambivalence one feels towards imperial power and this psychological complication is represented by the missing cat.

The cat is beloved by Kumiko. Regardless, she has named it after her evil brother who violated (not exactly sexually but mentally) her and drove her sister to death. In her paradoxical treatment of the cat, I see the presence of complex emotion that resembles colonial ambivalence. Her hidden attraction to darkness is released in the form of her uncontrollable sexual desire, and the cat’s absence matches the time of her giving in to the darkness. In this novel, characters who overcome the colonial complications are rewarded with self-discovery. The cat exists in the novel as an indicator of the

psychological battle inside people. In fact, the return of the cat represents Okada Toru's triumph over the darkness, and then the cat formerly named Wataya Noboru is renamed as Sawara (Spanish mackerel). Amy Ty Lai thinks that the former name of the cat, "Wataya Noboru" implies the existence of a destructive other inside Okada Toru, and by naming the powerless animal after the person who symbolizes imperial power he attempts to rule the weak.<sup>245</sup> She assumes that this is why Toru gives the cat such an ambiguous name as "Sawara." Consequently, the cat's disappearance indicates the weak's resistance, and its return means the failure of the attempt.<sup>246</sup> However, I rather read that Okada Toru named the cat after his "enemy" to overpower him and, therefore, its disappearance is the enemy's struggle and its return is the enemy's surrender.

Sawara is muddy, starving and exhausted. As soon as he finishes his meal, he goes to sleep and Boku describes his sleep as follows:

The cat slept with his forelegs tucked under his body, his face buried in his tail. He purred loudly at first, but that grew quieter, until he entered a state of complete and silent sleep, all defenses down. I sat in a sunny spot on the veranda, petting him gently so as not to wake him, I had not thought about the cat's special soft, warm touch for a very long time. So much had been happening to me that I had all but forgotten that the cat had disappeared. Holding the soft, small living creature in my lap this way, though, and seeing how it slept with complete trust in me, I felt a warm rush in my chest. I put my hand on the cat's chest and felt his heart beating. The pulse was faint and fast, but his heart, like mine was ticking off the time allotted to his small body with all the restless earnestness of my own.

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I sat on the veranda next to Mackerel the cat, reading a book until the sun began to set. The cat slept as soundly as if he had been knocked unconscious, his quiet breathing like a distant bellows, his body rising and falling with the sound. I would reach out now and then to feel his warmth and make sure the cat was really there. It was wonderful to be able to do that: to reach out and touch something, to feel something warm. I had been missing that kind of experience.<sup>247</sup>

The cat's return coincides with Toru's transformation into a healer. The strong individual who is able to provide the place for cats to "sleep" peacefully is able to lead other people to their peace of minds. Murakami creates the framework of a healing novel through his treatment of cats, those who cannot speak (and who cannot sleep because of ill-willed violence). Okada Toru defeats evil and finds his identity both in history and social linkage to the Other. He successfully recovers from his losses of history and the missing self. He has attained the strength to release himself from the controlling State-system. After picking up where Watanabe Toru in Norwegian Wood stopped, Okada Toru finally becomes the first "hero" in Murakami's texts.

### **Human-Cat Hybrid: Can the Subaltern Sleep?**

Okada Toru is a middle-class individual who is entitled to the power of language in order to claim self-agency. In other words, he is able to make choices if he chooses to. However, those who are represented by animals have no voice and, therefore, they have no choice. When the cat returns home, Boku has no way to know why it left, where it went and why it returned. The cat's experience remains unknown, which leads us again to the question of subjectivism, especially in terms of our relation to those who do not belong to the same class and do not have "language" to represent themselves. In this regard, I argue that the cat has taken over the roles of a "switchboard" in Pinball 1973 and the unicorns in Hardboiled Wonderland and the End of the World.<sup>248</sup> What they commonly do is to absorb people's egos and expire without expressing their pain. Takahashi Tatsuo points out that because of the absence of the language system, animals are excluded from the modern nation-state system. And therefore, they are caged in the

zoo, destroyed as harmful or useless animals, kept as livestock or sacrificed for science. He asserts that the significance of Murakami's texts lies in his conscious efforts to make the borderline between human and animal ambiguous.<sup>249</sup>

Murakami often uses ambiguous creatures such as talking animals and human-animal hybrid characters such as the Sheep Man. Lai sees Murakami's human-animal hybrid characters as metaphors for the postmodern identity or the postmodern self, which I interpret as schizophrenic.<sup>250</sup> However, unlike human postmodern schizophrenics, the human-animal hybrid characters help the protagonists find their individuality. In Dance, Dance, Dance, the Sheep Man tells Boku to keep dancing in order to be connected. He claims that he exists in the world created just for Boku and his job is to "connect" what Boku desires with what he gains like a "switchboard." He also says that he was with Boku all the time as his shadow.<sup>251</sup> That is, Murakami actually presents the Sheep Man, the human-animal hybrid who is hiding in fear of war (imperialism), as Boku's Other half. Yamazaki Makiko thinks that the mission of the Sheep Man is to draw language from Boku and help Boku to "speak."<sup>252</sup> This concept of "a talking animal helps a man," is also implied in The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle when Kano Malta appears in Okada Toru's dream with a cat-tail.<sup>253</sup>

In Kafka on the Shore the role of human-animal hybrid is taken over by the mildly retarded old man Nakata Satoru, who is able to communicate with cats.<sup>254</sup> Nakata-san is not a narrator of the novel but an action figure who rescues cats from the cat killer, and also releases his other half, Tamura Kafka from his father's Oedipus-like curse. During World War II, Nakata-san was moved to a rural village in Yamanashi



Prefecture as a child evacuee from his home in Tokyo. He had been an intelligent child with sophisticated manners until he and his classmates were involved in a supernatural experience during which he also suffered unreasonable and unfortunate physical violence from a female teacher. Because of his experience, he lost all his memories and literacy. Instead, he attained the ability to communicate with cats. However, his weakness becomes a target of bullying at school, and he was kept home by his grandparents. Although he was employed at a furniture manufacturer and worked there for a long period of time, he was deceived by his cousin and lost his life long savings. He is now supported by the government as a person with a disability.

The lack of literacy skills actually disables Nakata-san all the more in the fast moving urban space and even limits his mobility. He is not able to use public transportation, and, therefore, his life is kept within a walking distance of his apartment in Nakano-Ward, Tokyo. In fact, he is kept by the Ward as if he is a well-behaved pet cat that never runs off. Certainly, he is a cat in human shape; a human-cat hybrid. Nakata-san's language is very unique. He addresses himself as "Nakata" and speaks like a soldier, which sounds polite and at the same time comical but very outdated. He sounds as if he still lives in war-time. Simultaneously, it implies that he does not possess a "self" to be referred to with "I" pronouns. A human language does not provide animals and the "subaltern" they represent with a self-referential pronoun. Lai also thinks that his addressing himself in the third person suggests that "he is coming out of his human self and becoming even closer to the cats."<sup>255</sup> The use of "I" pronouns is equated with a potential to attain agency in Murakami's texts and therefore, despite his "speaking"

ability, Nakata-san still occupies the position of the subaltern who cannot “speak.”

Finally, in this novel, cats are given voice. However, their voice is heard only by Nakata-san. Therefore, cats are still not given agency to speak.

In his neighborhood, Nakata-san is known as a cat detective who is able to find missing cats although his ability to understand cat language is not public knowledge. While he is looking for a missing cat for his “client,” he talks to several cats and is informed of the cat-catcher who wears a tall hat and long boots. The cat catcher somehow leads Nakata-san to his house in Nakano-Ward and introduces himself as “Johnnie Walker” who is an infamous cat-killer. Needless to say, his name symbolizes the West, global capitalism and alcohol that controls people’s minds. He shows Nakata-san the heads of cats whose souls he has collected. He explains his purpose of mass feline murder as follows:

I am killing them to collect their souls, which I use to create a special kind of flute. And when I blow that flute it’ll let me collect even larger souls. Then I collect larger souls and make an even bigger flute. Perhaps in the end I’ll be able to make a flute so large it’ll rival the universe. But first come the cats. Gathering their souls is the starting point of the whole project. There’s an essential order you have to follow in everything. It’s a way of showing respect, following everything in the correct order. It’s what you need to do when you’re dealing with other souls.<sup>256</sup>

I interpret Jonnie Walker’s project base on his ambiguous logic as Murakami’s illustration of the process of exploitation by the imperialists/capitalists. Walker (imperialist/capitalist) collects cats’ souls (lower class labor) to attract the larger souls (the middle class consumers) and attempts to build an imperialist/capitalist universe.

While preaching the logic of his colonial economy, Walker also attempts to colonize Nakata-san's mind by requesting Nakata-san to kill him. Walker manipulates Nakata-san's mind by killing cats in front of him and consumes their hearts. In this way, Walker forces Nakata-san to choose violence to stop violence. Through Nakata-san's murder of Walker, Murakami recreated the psychological challenge Imperial Japan's soldiers must have confronted before their engagement in cruelty. Jay Rubin thinks that Nakata-san joined with the endless cycle of murder occurring in human history.<sup>257</sup>

Does Nakata-san become a human by killing another human? After his murder of Walker, Nakata-san actually loses his ability to communicate with cats. It seems that the situation forced him to adopt the oppressor's power temporarily. Therefore, he lost his subaltern status. Instead, he is entitled to a human language (or form of communication). He is able to befriend a young truck driver, Hoshino, and is able to travel beyond Nakano-Ward to go to Shikoku. He even expresses his desire "to be normal" again and says that he must get the other half of his shadow back. Interestingly, as his intelligence level rises, he sleeps longer. His "power" is only temporary and once he saves the fifteen-year-old boy, Kafka, he falls into an eternal sleep. Perhaps, he would die as a cat rather than live as a murderous human.

Instead, Murakami makes a hero out of Hoshino. After Nakata-san's death, Hoshino attains the ability to communicate with cats and he actually takes over Nakata-san's role as a human-cat hybrid /savior. This transformation is similar to that of Okada Toru, who becomes a healer after he provides his cat with peaceful sleep. Following the cat's advice, Hoshino defeats the evil creature that comes out of Nakata-san's dead body.

Hoshino's transformation is attributed to his "empathetic" and self-sacrificing involvement with Nakata-san. Hoshino feels that Nakata-san will remain with him. It can be read as though he gains his shadow, which makes him a strong individual who is able to survive. The ending of the novel gives the impression that Nakata-san finally went to the place where he can "speak" and "sleep" as what he calls "normal Nakata," which concerns ideas of salvation. In the next chapter, I examine religious elements of this novel and further discuss dark energy and modern ideology in relation to the position of religion in postwar Japan.

In this chapter, I discussed Murakami's depiction of the oppressed group and his protagonists' involvement with the oppressed. The oppressed are represented by muted animals and people who do not speak their language (Chinese) in his texts, and he attempts to provide a way for postwar individuals to know themselves through knowing the Others' pain. He recreates the situations in which "empathetic involvement with the Others" or what he calls "commitment" makes the postmodern world a better place for individuals. He values "connections" among people as a way for individuals to know themselves and become independent from the State-system controlled collectivism. In this sense, he is an individualist who encourages self-reliance. However, it is unfortunate that Murakami does not let the Oriental (Nakata-san) attain real strength. In Kafka on the Shore, he gives temporary agency to the Oriental, from which only "humans" can benefit. However, I believe that Murakami's intention is not to discriminate against the Orientals but to claim their existence in modern Japan's social landscape. In this regards, it may be

contended that Murakami Orientalizes the Others with a good intention of helping Japanese individuals.

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<sup>210</sup>Haruki Murakami and Hayao Kawai, Murakami Haruki Kawai Hayao no ainiiku (Murakami Haruki goes to see Kawai Hayao) (Tokyo: Shincho, 1996) 81-84.

<sup>211</sup> Koizumi Koichiro, “Murakami Haruki no Sutairu” (The Style of Murakami Haruki) Kokubungaku March 40-4 (1995): 28.

<sup>212</sup> Kazuna Okamoto published a cook book called Murakami Recipe based on 35 food dishes that appear in Murakami’s books. The recipe book includes a whole chapter on spaghetti.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid, 68.

<sup>214</sup> Fuminobu Murakami, Postmodern, Feminist and Postcolonial Currents in Contemporary Japanese Culture: A Reading of Murakami Haruki, Yoshimoto Banana, Yoshimoto Takaaki and Karatani Kojin, (New York: Routledge, 2005) 6.

<sup>215</sup> Bill Ashcroft, Graeth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts (New York: Routledge, 2000), 147.

<sup>216</sup> Murakami, *Wind*, 86.

<sup>217</sup> Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 55.

<sup>218</sup> Kazunari Suzumura, Murakami Haruki to neko no hanashi (Haruki Murakami and stories of cats) (Tokyo:Sairyusha, 2004) 51

<sup>219</sup> Murakami, *Pinball*, 94-95.

<sup>220</sup> John Lie, Multiethnic Japan (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2001) 121-122.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid, 136.

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<sup>222</sup>Ibid, 83.

<sup>223</sup> Said, 2.

<sup>224</sup> Stephen Tanaka, Japan's Orient: Rendering Pasts into History (Berkeley: U of California P, 1993) 4.

<sup>225</sup> John Russell, "Race and Reflexivity: The Black Other in Contemporary Japanese Mass Culture," Contemporary Japan and Popular Culture, ed. John Whittier Treat, (Honolulu: U of Hawaii P, 1996) 19.

<sup>226</sup> Creighton, 142.

<sup>227</sup> Miller Creighton, "Soto Others and Uchi Others: Imaging Racial Diversity, Imaging Homogenous Japan," Japan's Minorities: The Illusion of Homogeneity, ed. Michael Weiner (New York: Routledge, 1997) 212.

<sup>228</sup> Andrew Vasishth, "A model minority: the Chinese community in Japan," Japan's Minorities: The Illusion of Homogeneity, ed. Michael Weiner (New York: Routledge, 1997) 116-136.

<sup>229</sup> Murakami, *Wind*, 122.

<sup>230</sup> The Bus driver calls seats as follows: America for A, Brazil for B, China for C and Denmark for D (123).

<sup>231</sup> Haruki Murakami, "A Slow Boat to China," The Elephant Vanishes, trans. Alfred Birnbaum and Jay Rubin (New York: Vintage, 1993). 223-224.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid, 225.

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<sup>233</sup> Kuroko Kazuo, “Amerika, Chugoku, soshite Tanpenshosetsu: Mohitotsuno Murakami Haruki Warudo” (America, China and Short Stories: Another World of Murakami Haruki), Murakami Haruki Studies 01, eds. Yoshiki Kuritsubo and Akihiko Tsuge (Tokyo: Wakakusa Shobo, 1999) 240-241.

<sup>234</sup> Kwai-Cheung Lo, “Return to What One Imagines to Be There: Masculinity and Racial Otherness in Haruki Murakami’s Writings about China” Novel: A Forum on Fiction, summer, 37. 3 (2004): 261.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid, 261-264.

<sup>236</sup> Alfred Birnbaum’s translation does not emphasize the significance of the pronoun used here. This part is translated as follows:

“I shall be acting as your test proctor, “the man finally spoke. *Shall*”(223).

<sup>237</sup> In Kafka on the Shore, the young woman who claims herself to be a homosexual man refers to herself as “boku.” By no means do I suggest that J or the school teacher is homosexual.

<sup>238</sup> The other character who uses “atashi” is a telephone company worker who visits Boku to change a switchboard.

<sup>239</sup> It is generally believed that modern Abyssinians are descendants of the cat brought to Britain in 1868 by a soldier returning from the British war with Abyssinia. The cat was known as “Zula.” I believe that exotic beauties were viewed by Europeans in the same way as exotic animals were. I cannot help comparing “Zula” with an Egyptian courtesan whom Said refers to in Orientalism (6).

<sup>240</sup> Edward Said, Orientalism, (New York: Vintage, 1979) 40.

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<sup>241</sup> Murakami, *Wind*, 26.

<sup>242</sup> Gayatri Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture, eds. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Chicago: U of Illinois P, 1998) 275-276.

<sup>243</sup> Haruki Murakami, Hear the Wind Sing, trans. Alfred Birnbaum (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1987) 26.

<sup>244</sup> Murakami, *SlowBoat*, 232.

<sup>245</sup> Lai notes that Matthew Strecher regards the elite intellectual Wataya Noboru as Okada Toru’s Other self.

<sup>246</sup> Amy Ty Lai, “Memory, Hybridity, and Creative Alliance in Haruki Murakami’s Fiction,” Mosaic Mar. 40.1: 172.

<sup>247</sup> Haruki Murakami, The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle, trans. Jay Rubin (New York: Vintage, 1998) 378-379.

<sup>248</sup> The telephone company employee who replaces an old switchboard with a new one tells the twins that his job is to replace a dying mother dog with a new one to feed puppies. The twins recognize the cause of death of the switchboard as “over-absorbing everything.” They hold a funeral service for the board and upon the twin’s request, Boku quotes from Kant in place of grace.

<sup>249</sup> Tetsuo Takahashi, “Dobutsutachi (Animals),” Murakami Haruki: Tema, Sochi, Kyarakuta (Murakami Haruki: Themes, Apparatus and Characters, ed. Akihiko Tsuge (Tokyo: Shibundo, 2008), 166.



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<sup>250</sup> Lai, 169-172.

<sup>251</sup> Haruki Murakami, Dance, Dance, Dance, trans. Alfred Birnbaum (New York: Vintage, 1995), 170-171.

<sup>252</sup> Makiko Yamazaki, “Hitsujitoko-ron” (Theory of the Sheep Man), Murakami Haruki: Tema, Sochi, Kyarakuta (Murakami Haruki: Themes, Apparatus and Characters, ed. Akihiko Tsuge (Tokyo: Shibundo, 2008) 174.

<sup>253</sup> The concept of talking animals had not been totally foreign to the Japanese audience. In fact, animals are regular characters in folk tales and they often interact with humans in comical and heart warming ways. Soseki Natsume published his ground breaking satire novel, Wagahai wa neko dearu (I am a Cat) in 1906. It is one of the most famous “cat literatures” in Japan and perhaps, its celebrity in the world is equal to that of Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Black Cat.” The first person narrator of the novel is a nameless cat who decided to live in the household of a school teacher. The life of this Meiji intellectual (at least he presents himself as such) is observed and told through a cat’s point of view. The novel presents itself as a comedy and comical elements are drawn from differences in cultural values between humans and cats. Soseki’s satire was well received and he had some imitators who wrote novels with other animal narrators.

<sup>254</sup> “Satoru” means enlightenment. Throughout the novel, he is referred to as “Nakata-san.”

<sup>255</sup> Lai, 173-174.

<sup>256</sup> Haruki Murakami, Kafka on the Shore, trans. Philip Gabriel (New York: Vintage, 2006) 140.

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<sup>257</sup> Jay Rubin, Haruki Murakami and the Music of Words (New York: Vintage, 2003) 282.

## CHAPTER VI

### MURAKAMI'S SALVATION: RAINING FISH AND LEECHES

#### **Introduction**

Today's Japanese society is deeply wounded despite its economic success. Chronically overworked adults seek relief in alcohol, teenage prostitution and maniac hobbies. Also, increasing numbers of divorces and a large unmarried population loosen traditional family bonds. This kind of social environment nurtures the dark side of one's mind and produces the ideal condition for the darkness to take control over the individual. In fact, Japanese society is filled with violence. There are incidents of random shootings, bomb threats and numerous cases of domestic violence that involve women and children. To make matters worse, an extremely test-centered education system has been driving youths to schoolphobia, suicide, bullying and murder. These stressed people are isolated from each other, and they no longer seem to find value in human relations.

Recent nationwide surveys indicate that large proportions of respondents list inequity and selfishness as the attributes that best characterize today's Japanese society.<sup>258</sup> This also implies that the postwar generation is openly skeptical about the premade imagery of the class-less egalitarian society. In other words, "Bildungsroman from the ashes" has lost its effect as the meta-narrative to hold society together. This chaotic situation makes people feel disoriented. Some people look for salvation in a religious cult and find it comfortable to place themselves in a peculiar community that

accepts them. During the 1990s, the religious cult group called Aum became a social issue, and its Tokyo subway attack with sarin gas shocked the nation. Murakami actually wrote his first non-fictional works, Underground and Underground 2 based on his interviews with the survivors as well as the former Aum followers. In these works, he explores the psychological conditions of those who seek salvation in a religious cult and how easily their minds are controlled by someone who gives them a ready-made narrative to believe in. Five years later, he wrote Kafka on the Shore.

In this chapter, I examine Murakami's view of salvation in relation to his idea of "commitment" to explore the position of religion and the meaning of salvation in today's Japan. Murakami does not present his idea of commitment as the building of a healing community and does not suggest that salvation is found in a certain community. Although he encourages mutual support among people in the name of love, he thinks that each individual must save him/herself. His utopia is depicted as a private library, in which each individual reads alone, showing mutual respect to each other. Murakami lets his protagonist find salvation not in a community but in himself. He actually uses a library as if it is a switchboard to realize "commitment." His fifteen-year-old protagonist, Kafka finds a connection between himself and the world (and its history) through the library. At the same time, he associates with two librarians and receives guidance from one, while being sexually involved with the other. Murakami treats sexuality as one of the ways to "commit" with others. Apparently, morality is not his biggest concern, and in fact this young protagonist experiences an incestuous relationship, rape, and prostitution in the process of his growing up.

I compare Murakami's healing utopia with that of Oe Kenzaburo's. Oe wrote a novel about a spiritual healer and his cult-like religious community, which I believe is influenced by the Aum activities during the 1990s. While Murakami shows his individualist stance in Kafka on the Shore, Oe sees salvation in community building. The difference between these writers is shown in their treatment of hermaphroditic characters, and it can be read as their views of family values in today's schizophrenic society. While Murakami relates his hermaphrodite to the Buddhist ideal of nothingness and treats him as a guide to a Nirvana-like utopia, Oe sees him as an ideal element to form a trinity-like community.

Finally, I explore Murakami's presentation of a sense of responsibility as a necessary element to keep society from falling apart. Unlike his previous works which deal with the Zenkyoto generation (they are also considered postwar baby boomers or the Dankai Sedai), Kafka on the Shore is a story of a fifteen-year-old Dankai Junior youth who is afraid of the dark energy hidden in his "blood." Murakami illustrates today's social issues of violence as a dangerous situation caused by activation of one's "tamashii no yami" (darkness of one's soul), and identifies it with the possible recreation of the war situation in which imperialism drove ordinary people to kill. The fifteen-year-old, Kafka, is afraid of his blood and seeks salvation from who he is. Murakami relates "tamashii no yami" with the idea of original sin and moral responsibility, and further suggests that salvation and a sense of responsibility are inseparable. Through his spiritual journey, Kafka learns to be responsible for the darkness he is born with. This novel most represents Murakami as a post-"Bildungsroman from the ashes" writer. Like his other

works, it challenges the imagery of postwar Japan in which negative characteristics of the nation are absent. In addition, the fifteen-year-old boy finds a new narrative of his own through “commitment” or connection among people.

### **Religion, Nihonjinron and Salvation: There is Room for the Cult**

Since their loss of the divine emperor, the people who were (supposed to be) committed to die for him and his nation have been overworked to death for their companies. In return, they are rewarded with the middle class identity in an advanced society that is prescribed in Nihonjinron. During the 1960s and 1970s it was Nihonjinron that served as a textbook. Winston Davis notes that religion contributes to the identity formation of the Japanese not directly but in a round-about way. Instead, he thinks that Nihonjinron has played a more significant role that would normally be played by priests and theologians in religious society.<sup>259</sup> The effect of the positive national image Nihonjinron created is undeniable and in one sense it was needed in order for people to build the nation of hardworking people during the 1960s and 1970s. However, by the 1980s, the nation was completely re-built as a mass consumer society, and since then, individuals have been searching for a new representation of their identity other than Nihonjinron.

Today’s Japan is no longer in the postwar period. It is now a post-postwar society, and post-Nihonjinron is needed to direct individuals whose individuality has been suppressed by Nihonjinron. I believe that it is safe to say that some people find religion as a window through which they can locate their identity. In fact, Kojima Yosuke notes that since the late 1970s, there has been a tendency towards religion among people of all

ages and recognizes their growing interests in religion that includes native beliefs, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and New religions (including the religious cult) in Japan as well as other spiritual matters. The popularity of religion was promoted by globalization, and globalization also promoted the idea that (any) religion is information that can be individualized.<sup>260</sup>

Joseph Kitagawa asserts that historically the Japanese sense of security was not derived from any particular religious doctrine, but their cosmological orientation enabled the Japanese to assimilate various alien religious and cultural elements and forms without becoming schizophrenic until the end of World War II. He argues that what Japan lost at the time of surrender is not the “divine prerogatives of the throne” but “the source of the Japanese sense of destiny and security based on a cosmological world view.” As a result of the Allied Powers’ order to terminate the governmental sponsorship and dissemination of State Shinto, religions in Japan are given opportunities to grow in an atmosphere of religious liberty that are guaranteed by the new Constitution. However, this religious freedom does not automatically fill the loss of their traditional sense of value (or something for them to die for). The Japanese people today “find themselves off balance and they are not certain in which direction they should take the next step.” Kitagawa further suggests that this unstable condition produced room for new religions that claimed to offer “some kind of certainty, hope, and faith.”<sup>261</sup>

Kitagawa shows skepticism toward the so-called new religions and notes that they are all derived from Shinto, Confucianism, Buddhism or Christianity. They use group psychology, and although they do not present anything new, “their simple, direct, and

practical beliefs and practices appeal to those who do not feel at home with the complex doctrines of established religions.”<sup>262</sup> It seems that these new religions rewrite the teachings of established religions into a simpler “narrative” and it is their “narrative” that attracts those who search for a post-Nihonjinron narrative. The religious communities also offer a home to those who feel disoriented in society. In this context, finding a home as well as a narrative is equated with salvation. However, some new religions take extreme forms which can be called the religious cult, and they attract those who wait for a pre-made narrative to be allocated.

Murakami actually explores the psychological conditions of those who seek salvation in the religious cult through his research on the Aum incident in 1995. Upon finishing The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle, which was written in the United States, Murakami left the United States for Japan in 1995. It was the year when the Kobe Earthquake destroyed his hometown on January 17, and the religious cult group the Aum attacked the Tokyo subway with sarin gas on March 20. These two events had tremendous effects on his view of Japan, and he calls them “the gravest tragedies in Japan’s postwar history” that changed the Japanese consciousness. The sudden attack of “overwhelming violence” proved that postwar Japan is not a worry-free place.<sup>263</sup> Murakami was emotionally involved with these incidents, and they actually provided him with life size opportunities to have a “commitment” to a society that he wanted to know better. He held book reading events for fund raising for the destroyed library in Kobe. He also conducted face-to-face interviews with the Aum victims and published them under the titles, Underground (1997) and Underground 2 (1998).



Murakami's first non-fiction work was an eye opening experience for him, and as he learned more about Aum and its leader Asahara Shoko as well as their victims, the whole "Aum phenomenon" became overlapped with his own vision of "darkness." In the afterwords titled "Blind Nightmare: Where are we Japanese Going?" Murakami recalls when Aum's leader Asahara Shoko stood for election in 1990 during which he witnessed his campaign.

Day after day strange music played from big trucks with sound systems, while white-robed young men and women in oversized Asahara masks and elephant heads lined the sidewalk outside my local train station, waving and dancing some incomprehensible jig.

When I saw this election campaign, my first reaction was to look away. It was one of the last things I wanted to see. Others around me showed the same response: they simply walked by pretending not to understand.<sup>264</sup>

Describing people's attitude, including his own as "walk by pretending not to see; don't give it a second thought; forget it," he inquires as to why the sight of Aum disturbed them and hypothetically argues that they felt a strong physical disgust on the projections of negative imagery of their own. It is a darker mirror image of their subconscious shadows, which he calls "underground" (of one's mind).<sup>265</sup> He compares "Yamikuro (INKlings)" in Hardboiled Wonderland and the End of the World with Aum as symbols of "danger" that are hidden in darkness. He thinks that it is possible for anyone to be attracted to darkness and venture to cross that border to the dangerous zone.<sup>266</sup>

Most importantly, Murakami regards what Asahara Shoko offered to his followers as "ataerareta monogatari (the allocated narrative)." Murakami understands that Asahara's followers (many of them felt difficulties in blending into society) gave him

their “jiga”(self), and in return they received his narrative. What the faithful followers did was “instead of launching an assault on society as individuals, they handed over the entire strategic responsibility to Asahara.”<sup>267</sup> His followers are those who are not able to create their own narratives and, therefore, they can easily assimilate into someone else’s bigger dream. The concept of dream and responsibility actually became Murakami’s narrative in Kafka on the Shore, in which he suggests that it is not religion or god(s) but you that save yourself.

In his interviews with the former followers of Aum, Murakami explores the social condition in which disoriented people accept the pre-made imagery of a utopia. He also compares the way those who belonged to the elite group saw Aum as utopia with the way Manchuria attracted young technocrats and scholars with ambitious visions.<sup>268</sup> What these two situations have in common is that believers of each have skepticism towards the society they live in and desire to improve their (also other people’s) lives. Murakami asserts that people joined Aum with good intentions. Their sincere attempts to find answers regarding their lives should not be criticized. He describes them as people who live average lives and who have a little difficulty in making their feelings known to others. He concludes that our lives are within reach of the temptation of religious cults.<sup>269</sup>

Murakami tells us that people’s minds can be easily controlled by someone else’s narrative that comes with a utopian imagery. In Japan’s modern history, worship of the emperor as well as imperialism itself can be seen as a mind- controlling narrative. In order to overcome the control one must find his/her own narrative through “commitment”

or connections with history, society and other people. In Kafka on the Shore, Murakami recreates the mind-controlling power of the narrative and the struggles of the individual who rejects it. Fifteen-year-old Tamura Kafka is afraid of the Oedipal curse-like words given by his father and runs away from home. He attempts to live alone in order to conceal the dark imperial energy that was implanted in his blood.

### **World Market of Religion: A Very Postmodern Kind of Thing**

Kafka on the Shore is a complex novel in which two parallel stories are told in alternating chapters until they are united at the end. One story is about the fifteen year old boy who claims his name to be Tamura Kafka. Although Kafka is the first person narrator of his chapters, he is often spoken to by his alter ego, “the boy named Crow.” However, besides Kafka and the boy named Crow, there is another voice that gives supplemental information to the readers. Shimizu Yoshinori sees this whole novel as a stage play and regards the voice as a set of “koros” which stands at the back of the stage and conveniently explains the situation and feelings of characters in Greek plays.<sup>270</sup> The other story is about a mildly retarded old man, Nakata-san, who lost his memories and literacy skills after a mass hypnosis experience called the “Rice Bowl Hill Incident” that occurred when he was in elementary school. His story is told in the third person without the koros.

Kafka has been living with his father in Nakano-Ward, Tokyo since his mother left him. He runs away from home on his fifteenth birthday and heads for Shikoku. He spends the first week of his life as “the world’s toughest fifteen-year-old” mostly exercising at the gym and reading at the private library, where he becomes acquainted

with a young librarian named Oshima-san. One night Kafka finds himself lying in the woods behind a Shinto shrine. His shirt is stained with blood that is not his. Meanwhile, in Tokyo Nakata-san encounters the cat killer, Johnny Walker, and he forces Nakata-san to kill him. When Nakata-san finds himself lying on the grass, he has a clear memory of his murder of Walker. Yet, his clothes have no blood stains. After this incident, somehow he is convinced that he must head for the west. With the help of a simple-minded young truck driver, Hoshino, Nakata-san goes to Shikoku and searches for “iriguchi no ishi” (the entrance stone).

Oshima-san knows that Kafka is a run-away and offers him shelter in a small room in the library as well as in his cabin after he learns that Kafka’s father was brutally murdered in Tokyo. Kafka tells Oshima-san that he ran away from home in fear of the “yogen” (omnipresent or curse) given by his father when he was in elementary school. What his father has said to Kafka is identical to the prophecy that was made about Oedipus except the part that Kafka will sleep with not only his mother but also his older sister. Ironically, as soon as he runs away from the yogen, Kafka gets acquainted with Sakura who is his sister’s age, and he is also attracted to the head librarian, Saeki-san who is the age his mother would be. The library belongs to the family of Saeki-san’s long lost lover who used to live in the room in which Kafka stays. At night Kafka starts seeing a ghost like girl whom he recognizes as young Saeki-san. He falls in love with the ghost, and at the same time he is sexually involved with Saeki-san.

In this novel, Murakami integrates Buddhism, Shinto, Greek mythology, Christianity and native folk culture with a life of the pop-listening Tokyo boy. I regard

this novel as a cultural and religious ethnography of today's Japan, in which mass media sends a "postmodern" invitation to anything. Murakami actually practices what Winston Davis describes as "the bug of postmodernism." That is, "indifference to logic, the ahistoric orientation of Buddhism and Shinto, fascination with futurology, and technopunk in science fiction and TV commercials."<sup>271</sup> Murakami depicts today's Japan not only as a de-centered capitalist empire but also a "world market of religion." Ironically, this religiously and culturally chaotic situation reflects people's groping toward a salvation for their chaotic lives.

Although modern Japanese are not necessarily conscious of their religious beliefs, they do share a certain moral and behavioral code that reflects Buddhist and Shinto teachings. They also show generous acceptance towards Christianity. Considering their religious flexibility, I do not hesitate to call modern Japan the (post) modern space where the native spirits and all kinds of gods can coexist and departmentally administer society's well-being upon people's requests. In fact, Tom Gill compares the role of "Ultraman" with that of Shinto gods as well as a *deus ex machina*, a divine wind, and a kamikaze. "Ultraman" is a popular super hero created as a TV series in the 1960s, in which Tokyo is regularly attacked by monsters. In each episode, one of the members of the Earth Science Patrol transforms himself into "Ultraman" and defeats a different monster within an allocated time of 3 minutes. Gill thinks that both Ultraman and Shinto gods only get called in to save Japan without being internalized like Superman.<sup>272</sup> These "saviors" are conveniently set aside when they are not needed. In other words, the idea of a *deus ex machina* is a familiar solution to Japanese problems. Interestingly,

Murakami uses the concept of a deus ex machina in Kafka on the Shore, through the mysterious character, Colonel Sanders.

Colonel Sanders appears out of nowhere to guide Hoshino when he is in a desperate need of help with the entrance stone search. Considering this whole novel is presented as a stage play even with the koros, we should not be surprised if the deus ex machina comes down from the ceiling. In Norwegian Wood, Murakami actually expresses his view of this device through the theatre major student, Watanabe Toru, who thinks the deus ex machina is a fixer who directs traffic in chaotic human world. The idea is so unrealistic for Watanabe that he even implies that it is meaningless to learn about it at the university. Although a realist novel like Norwegian Wood has no room for this convenient fixer, Kafka on the Shore highly depends on magical realism. Moreover, as Jay Rubin points out, in this novel Murakami comfortably and heavily relies on contrivance and coincidence based on his claim that “a story can express things at a level that transcends explanation, things that cannot be explained in an ordinary context.”<sup>273</sup> Therefore, there is room for a Japanese-speaking American fast food icon to play the role of a deus ex machina. This seemingly religious character pimps at the Shinto Shrine in Shikoku, the Mecca of Buddhist pilgrimage.

Besides Johnnie Walker, Sanders is another character whom Rubin thinks is “Murakami’s boldest challenges to the forces of high seriousness in the evaluation of literary art.”<sup>274</sup> And what makes it more interesting is the way Murakami associates the capitalist icon with a religious power. Sanders offers Hoshino information on the

entrance stone. As Hoshino thinks that Sanders is some kind of religious figure, Sanders tells this good-natured young man what “kamisama” (god) means in Japan as follows:

Especially in Japan, God's always been kind of a flexible concept. Look at what happened after the war. Douglas MacArthur ordered the divine emperor to quit being God, and he did, making a speech saying he was just an ordinary person. So after 1946 he wasn't God anymore. That's what Japanese gods are like---they can be tweaked and adjusted. Some American chomping on a cheap pipe gives the order and presto change-o ---God's no longer God. A very postmodern kind of thing. If you think God's there, He is.<sup>275</sup>

This passage actually illustrates Japan's cultural condition in which people have never been centralized by religion except in the Imperial period during which nationalism was manipulated in the name of the divine emperor. All the more, it is symbolic that the postwar generation youth, the former Self Defense Force army soldier, Hoshino, gets a lecture on gods from the commercial icon of the world famous fast food corporation. However, it needs to be clarified that Murakami's intention in using these “western” characters is not to illustrate western hegemony but to depict the Japanization of the West. Sanders is not a super hero from the West who saves Japan. For the same reason, Walker is not the western evil that invades Japan. They are both products of Japan. In fact, Murakami hints at the idea that the West is not to be blamed for today's social problems through the “Rice Bowl Hill Incident” in which the U.S Army's involvement in the children's mass hypnosis was denied. His use of Colonel Sanders also reflects the way today's Japanese people see religion. It is a “service” and/or a commodity that is demanded and consumed according to the need of individuals.<sup>276</sup>

Colonel Sanders identifies himself as a “metaphysical, conceptual object.” He took the shape of the familiar icon although he could be in the shape of Mickey Mouse if only Disney were not too particular about the copyright of their characters. Sanders says that he is neither god nor Buddha. Instead, he regards himself as an overseer, whose job is to check the correlation between different worlds and make sure things are in the right order. Nagashima Kiyoshi thinks that both Walker and Sanders are Nakata-san’s shadows. They play the roles of tricksters in the novel, representing two aspects of Nakata-san’s unconscious: violence and sex.<sup>277</sup> The idea that Sanders is Nakata-san’s shadow explains the purpose of Sanders’ effort. What he claims as his job: “to make sure things are in the right order without judging” overlaps with Nakata-san’s claim that his role is “to restore what’s here now to the way it should be.”<sup>278</sup> He also treats Hoshino’s back with his shiatsu (finger pressure) therapy, which prepares Hoshino for his role of opening the stone.

Amy Ty Lai thinks that Nakata-san’s ability to rain fish presents him as the Christian Savior since fish symbolizes Jesus Christ.<sup>279</sup> In one sense, it makes his entry into Kafka’s story dramatic and notifies the audience of the arrival of a self-sacrificing savior. However, Murakami does not necessarily present Nakata-san as a Christ figure. He actually shows a “Japanese-like” flexible mixture in his depiction of Nakata-san’s savior character. Hoshino suspects Buddha’s followers and Jesus’ apostles felt the same way he feels with Nakata-san. Murakami describes Nakata-san as an “empty” being, which suggests he represents the Buddhist ideal of a desireless condition. To sum up, he



is a self-sacrificing-Christ-Buddha-Kami mixture who saves a postwar youth. He is a “very postmodern kind of thing.”

Colonel Sanders knows about the entrance stone, and as part of his job, he assists Hoshino. However, instead of taking Hoshino straight to the stone, Sanders offers Hoshino a prostitute, saying “It’s a formality you have to go through. Then we’ll talk about the stone.”<sup>280</sup> Although he claims that he is not a Shinto god, there is an obvious association between Sanders and Shinto. In the first place, he takes Hoshino to the Shinto Shrine (probably the same one near which Kafka finds himself lying with blood on his shirt) to meet with the girl and then, what he calls a formality involving sex can be read as a recreation of a “matsuri” (festival) which originates in the idea that gods are overseers of human sexuality.

The historian Higuchi Kiyoyuki writes that the ancient Japanese regarded sexuality as a source of prosperity for both humans and nature. They saw spiritual power in sexuality, and it was eventually developed into a form of worship. They performed sexual acts in front of gods believing that gods would make the world more prosperous by following human sexual acts (imitative magic). Later on this was organized as matsuri, and some festivals today still clearly show sexual connotation in their objects of worship and/or the dancing they involve. People thought that they were able to communicate with gods through “matsuri,” and they actually had sexual intercourse with a Shaman. In return worshippers made money donation to gods. This religious rite is actually one of the origins of prostitution.<sup>281</sup> Therefore, Hoshino’s sex with the prostitute can be read as a Shinto ritual.

Rubin also notes the purification effects of the Shinto ritual in addition to its awe-inspiring forces of nature.<sup>282</sup> In Hoshino's case, he is somehow chosen to open the entrance stone and eventually to fight against the evil creature. Therefore, he needs to be purified and be blessed with divine power. In addition, there was a superstitious belief among Imperial Japan's soldiers (Hoshino is a former SDF army soldier) that having sex before the battle would protect them from injury. Based on this belief, visitation to comfort women (military sex slaves) was semi-ritualized and soldiers even made amulets out of comfort women's pubic hair.<sup>283</sup> Hoshino pays for the sex ritual, and this transaction emphasizes the idea that in Japan religious protection is (and has been) a service one pays for. This may be regarded as one of the forms of individualization of religion(s). In this regard, Kafka's sexual involvement with a fifty-year-old woman can be seen as a ritualistic initiation of his growth, although Murakami risks the morality.

Murakami does not hesitate to use any kind of power to prepare Hoshino for the battle against the evil creature. He sends postmodern invitations to all available power sources to make Hoshino strong. In this way, he individualizes religions to fit the individual's need. Instead of becoming a part of the system of religion, the person's involvement with religion becomes a part of his strength, which I see as a reflection of what he calls "commitment." Murakami's *deus ex machina* is not the omnipotent god. He is only a helper to connect one with what he needs, and each individual must save him/herself. What really empowers Hoshino is his empathetic involvement with Nakata-san, through which Hoshino learns to be a reliable and responsible person. However, in this novel of magical realism, Murakami generously offers "help" from any spiritual

beings. In the next section, I further examine his representation of spirituality in relation to his ideas of love and sexual desire.

### **Wandering for Love: Spirits and Sexual Desire**

Japanese people (regardless of their generation) share certain ideas regarding “reikon (spirits)” outside of their religious beliefs. Through folktales, cultural and religious events, they are introduced to the idea of spirits and accept them as part of the natural surrounding of their lives. It can also be argued that Japan’s indigenous beliefs are postmodern in nature, and therefore, these elements can be blended without disturbing the logic of the plot. Philip Gabriel notes that Japanese literature has a long history of associating reality with the spiritual. In fact, the creation of Japan that is described in the earliest writings is mythical and spiritual, and this mythology was even revived during the Imperial period as part of a “spiritual mobilization” in support of Japan’s colonialist aggression. During the Heian period, the ideas of “mononoke” (spirit possession) and “ikiryo” (spirit of the living) was a common belief, and the existence of traveling spirits was also introduced in The Tale of Genji. However, since the medieval period the spirits of the dead took over the traveling privilege, and in fact, many Noh plays developed during that period deal with the ghosts that struggle with their worldly attachment. Ueda Akinari’s Ugetsu Monogatari is a collection of ghost tales during the Edo period. It includes the story of a man who becomes a ghostly spirit to keep his promise, which is actually referred to in Kafka on the Shore. Besides the obvious influence of Zen Buddhism, Gabriel also mentions the early modern/modern writers’ interest in the spirituality of Christianity.<sup>284</sup> In Kafka on the Shore we are able to observe Murakami’s

interest in spirituality in relation to Buddhism, Shintoism, Christianity and Greek mythology in addition to native moral beliefs. Murakami integrates a postmodern technique of magical realism with Japan's indigenous beliefs. This section focuses on his use of the native Japanese beliefs of "ikiryo" (living ghost, spirits of the living) to give the novels' characters mobility between reality and dreams

Special attention is needed to the fact that Murakami sets the novel in Shikoku. Sunami Toshiko points out that Shikoku (四国) can be read as shi (死= death) -koku (国 = country). She associates the "place" with the idea of "limbo" based on folk legends that souls of dead wander around in Shikoku, and Buddhist pilgrimages of eighty eight temples attempt to send them to the destinations of the next level of the afterlife. She also notes that one of the ghost tales in Ugetsu Monogatari is set in Takamatsu-city where the Saeki-san's library is.<sup>285</sup> Murakami also has Hoshino study the history of Shikoku including the legends of 弘法大師 /Kobodaishi (also known as 空海/Kukai, the founder of the Shingon Sect) and has him find the priest's miraculous works, some of which involve stones. Sunami also suspects Murakami's intentional use of the name "Saeki" which is the family name of Kobodaishi. Although I am skeptical about Sunami's view of Saeki-san as a guardian deity of Kafka, I certainly see that she possesses a special ability to open "the entrance stone" just as Kobodaishi had caused abundant water to gush out by moving a stone in a barren field.

Besides "reikon" Murakami uses indigenous beliefs, expressions and folk healing methods commonly shared by Japanese such as "kitsune" (fox), "tatari" (curse), "shiatsu" (finger pressure therapy) and "kage ga usui" (shadow being faded/the persons with a

faded shadow are those who do not live long). I believe that in addition to Shikoku legends these series of spiritual elements make the magical realism technique localized and more effective. Moreover, they make penetration of indigenous beliefs into the mind of a fifteen year old Tokyo boy who listens to pop-music natural and believable since the integration of modern and tradition all makes sense to Japanese readers who are familiar with supernatural elements in their culture. Kafka also accepts the supernatural events quite naturally as if they are extension of his everyday life. In fact, when he sees young Saeki-san in his room in the library, he never feels fear or suspects the sight is unusual. He falls in love with the ghostly spirit and even becomes jealous of her dead lover. In fact, in this novel, love is treated as a source of energy. Kafka, who is in puberty, is just awaking to it.

Oshima-san makes a point to Kafka that it is hard for people to live alone by introducing him to the idea of the Platonic creation through the story of Aristophanes. There were three original types of people: male/male, female/female and male/female until they were each sliced in half by God and this is why people try to locate their missing halves by falling in love. Yet, Oshima-san's simplified version actually leaves out the significant part of the story regarding the human desire for power. Aristophanes further explains human nature as follows:

They were spherical beings, with two sets of genitalia (male for the males, female for the females, and one of each for the androgynes), two faces, four arms, four legs, and so on, a piece. They were such powerful beings that they tried to displace the gods; therefore, in order to weaken them, Zeus cut them all in two. . . Eros thus undertakes "to make one from two, and to heal human nature."<sup>286</sup>

Although Aristophanes clearly explains the reason for Zeus's anger, when Kafka asks Oshima-san about the reason of the God's anger, Oshima-san says that he does not know. Instead, he suggests God's irrationality as the reason and Kafka relates the story to the Fall and original sin. Moreover, throughout the novel, Murakami associates Saeki-san's life with original sin.

In the story of Aristophanes, desire for power is equated with love. It is as if sexual satisfaction substitutes for a desire for power (it can be also read as imperial tendencies or darkness of a human mind). As I discussed in the previous section, I believe that Murakami sees both sexual desire and a desire for power as dangerous elements that "colonize" human minds and activate their darkness. I suspect that he is skeptical about the idea of Eros being a healer because the idea suggests that fulfillment of sexual desire will again drive humans into eternal war over power. In fact, when Kafka's sexual desire for Saeki-san is fulfilled, he overcomes the yogen. However, soon he loses physical unity with her. In order to overcome his darkness (imperial desire for power), he must lose his dark (incestuous) sexual desire as well. In other words, there are two kinds of sexual desire, one is a positive energy derived from love, and the other is a negative energy that coexists with one's darkness. And what actually saves one is love.

The idea that loss of power calls for sexual desire actually echoes what happened to Adam's sexuality with the Fall. Based on his reading of St. Augustine, Michel Foucault notes that before the Fall every part of Adam's body was perfectly obedient to the soul and the will, and sex was "a kind of hand gently sowing the seed." However, as

a result of his attempt to acquire a will of his own, he lost control of himself and the sexual part of his body started disobeying him.

The famous gesture of Adam covering his genitals with a fig leaf is, according to Augustine, due not to the simple fact that Adam was ashamed of their presence but to the fact that his sexual organs were moving by themselves without his consent. An erection is the image of man revolted against God. The arrogance of sex is the punishment and consequence of the arrogance of man. His uncontrolled sex is exactly the same as what he himself has been towards God---- a rebel.<sup>287</sup>

Foucault equates sexual desire with desire for power, which supports Kafka's idea of relating Platonic creation to the Fall of Adam. In both cases humans are punished for desiring god-like power. Moreover, Saeki-san's loss of her lover can also be read as a consequence of having a will of her own by opening the entrance stone (Iriguchi no ishi/ "ishi" means "stone"/石 as well as "will"/意志), and we can easily recognize her sexuality behind her action.

As Oshima-san learns from his mother, who was a close friend to young Saeki-san, she and her lover had a sexual relationship regularly since they were around fourteen. Oshima-san thinks that:

They were rather precocious, and like many precocious young people they found it hard to grow up. It was as if they were eternally fourteen or fifteen. They clung to each other and could again feel the intensity of their love. Neither one of them had ever been attracted to anyone else. Even while they were apart, no one else could ever come between them.<sup>288</sup>

In order to protect their paradise of love and sexual pleasure, young Saeki-san attempted to protect the perfect circle in which she and her lover lived. She opened the entrance stone. However, her rebellious action of refusing to grow up eventually made her lose

her paradise. Her action was also a renunciation of responsibility, for which she was punished with her lover's death. Upon her Fall, her lover along with her will to live was taken away. In this world, she must face her "responsibility" through writing her memories of love. When she finishes "writing" her memories, the completion of the painful task is followed by Nakata-san's visitation, and right before she dies, she asks him to burn her "memoires." For, she is ready to re-enter the place where no memories can exist.

Sunami compares Saeki-san with Naoko in Norwegian Wood and defines her as non-suicidal version of Naoko. Both women lost their lovers and exiled themselves from their paradise.<sup>289</sup> While Naoko stopped her time by hanging herself, Saeki-san continued to live. The only thing she still has is her sexual desire for her lost lover, which Murakami depicts through her ghost-like appearance in the shape of a fifteen-year-old girl. Murakami does not seem to be concerned with the morality of her sexual relationship with the fifteen-year-old boy who can possibly be her son. Her action is treated as if she is trying to prove something to herself. Foucault notes that sex is not the problem of a relationship with other people but the problem of the relationship of oneself with oneself, by which he means "the relationship between one's will and involuntary assertions." Libido (what Augustine defines as autonomous movements of sexual organs) cannot be dissociated from will. Foucault further asserts that sexuality, subjectivity and truth are linked together.<sup>290</sup> In Saeki-san's case, sexuality is the only vehicle for her to search for her lost love (and truth). She travels between her two selves, her fifteen-year-old self and her physical age self, as a living spirit (ikiryo).



Murakami introduces the concept of *ikiryo* through Oshima-san. What is called “*ikiryo*” does not necessarily reflect the believer’s religious belief. In literature and films, it is often depicted as a spirit that leaves the body while the person is asleep (or unconscious). The transformation of a person into *ikiryo* often happens when the person is in desperate need to see someone out of love (or hatred). The idea is indigenous to Japan and it exists in people’s perception of nature, intertwined with Buddhist teachings. In response to Kafka’s inquiry about the possibility of the living turning into a ghost, Oshima-san draws an example of “*ikiryo*” from The Tale of Genji, in which one of Prince Genji’s mistresses becomes a living spirit out of jealousy and attacks his pregnant wife nightly until she dies. The mistress is unaware of her transformation at all. Oshima-san explains the subconscious in relation to the “darkness”. He says:

The world of the grotesque is the darkness within us. Well before Freud and Jung shined a light on the workings of the subconscious, this correlation between darkness and our subconscious, these two forms of darkness, was obvious to people. It wasn’t a metaphor, even. If you trace it back further, it wasn’t even correlation. Until Edison invented the electric light, most of the world was totally covered in darkness. The physical darkness outside and the inner darkness of the soul were mixed together, with no boundary separating the two.<sup>291</sup>

He concludes that during the time of Genji, becoming *ikiryo* was “a natural condition of the human heart” as people did not see it separately from physical darkness. As for the cause of this condition, he assumes that most of the time it is triggered by extreme feelings that are negative. Kafka does not fail to mention the physical darkness he experienced in the forest, which foreshadows his spiritual journey into his subconscious. Yet, he is eager to see a positive cause, namely love, for living spirits. Oshima-san does

not deny the possibility and says, “Love can rebuild the world, they say, so everything’s possible when it comes to love.”<sup>292</sup> In fact, young Saeki-san is presented as an example of a love-driven ikiryō.

I suspect that Saeki-san had been visiting the library’s room as “ikiryō” for a long time even before the room was offered to Kafka. The fact that she keeps the painting in the room instead of her residence implies her practical attempt to forget her dead lover. Despite her intention, her love for the boy in the picture turned her into ikiryō to travel from her physical body to the library room at night. Her ikiryō was her love itself which was harmless. However, when her ikiryō realizes Kafka’s presence, her sexual desire wakes up and begins controlling her physical body as well. This is why the real Saeki-san is involved in the sexual act with Kafka, first in her sleep and then consciously. In short, Kafka wakes up Saeki-san’s sexual desire, which drives her into a relationship with him, and consequently, it fulfills the yōgen. Thus, the condition of ikiryō is collated with darkness again.

Young Saeki-san visits Kafka’s room at night to adore the painting “Kafka on the Shore,” which symbolizes her memory of love as well as the sexual pleasure she shared with the boy. However, it is the real Saeki-san who has sexual relations with Kafka. The first few times when he sees young Saeki-san, she acts as if Kafka does not exist. One night, he calls her name and for the first time she looks at him. It is as if she realized the existence of his warm body in the place where she and her lover used to make love. The first sexual intercourse with Kafka is initiated by her while she is in a somnambulant state although Kafka is fully awake. When she appears in his room, Kafka first thinks that it is

young Saeki-san. However, the sight of the real Saeki-san there makes him realize that something happened to time that makes reality and dreams mixed up. He describes Saeki-san's action as follows:

She's in no hurry, but she doesn't hesitate, either. In smooth, natural motions she unbuttons her blouse, slips out of her skirt, and steps out of her panties. Piece by piece her clothing falls to the floor, the soft fabric hardly making a sound. She's asleep, I realize. Her eyes are open but it's like she's sleepwalking.

Once she's naked she crawls into the narrow bed and wraps her pale arms around me. Her warm breath grazes my neck, her pubic hair pushing up against my thigh. She must think I'm her dead boyfriend from long ago, and that she's doing what they used to do here in this very room. Fast asleep, dreaming, she goes through the motions from long ago.

I figure I'd better wake her up. She's making a big mistake, and I have to let her know. This isn't a dream—it's real life. But everything's happening so fast, and I don't have the strength to resist. Thrown totally off balance, I feel like I'm being sucked into a time warp.<sup>293</sup>

From this description we can tell that their sex is not a mutual or communicative action but Saeki-san's single play. As the koros explains, Kafka is swallowed by her dream as if he is in amniotic fluid, and he is not able to move. She is the only agent of "dreaming her dream." He even feels he is "paralyzed," (in ghost tales, ghosts or spirits cause sleep paralysis) which reinforces the idea that sex is performed by Saeki-san as a problem of her to herself. It is the event that happens while Kafka is paralyzed and Saeki-san is in her dream. Moreover, the involvement of physical bodies in their sexual act occurs without consent of their minds. In fact, what Kafka calls "the big mistake" she is making is the realization of the yogen, and in this regard, his sexual experience is also a problem of his relationship to himself.

Although Kafka is not able to move, his penis erects against his will. If we apply Foucault's interpretation of the Fall to Kafka's experience, it can be read as the symbolic awaking of his desire for power. In fact, after this event, Kafka becomes more aggressive. While hiding in the cabin, he decides not to masturbate in order to hold his memory of sex with Saeki-san untouched. However, just as the boy named Crow predicted, he dreams of Sakura and rapes her in his dream of his own will in order to "challenge" the yogen. Moreover, he has a clear memory of the choice he made in his dream. Murakami equates sexual desire with desire for power, and Kafka's sexual desire generates negative energy. Regardless of his fear, confusion, and love for Saeki-san Kafka has an erection and a wet dream, which not only reinforces the idea that one possesses desire for power by nature, but also suggests that one's suppressed desire is released in his dreams.

As another example, Murakami has the former teacher of Nakata-san confess her experience of a sexual dream. The teacher, Okamochi-sensei, had a sexual dream the night before the field trip. It was a dream of her having sex with her husband who had been drafted. It was strikingly vivid and when she woke up, she could not help masturbating. Now she recalls that while she was leading children to the mountain, she was still partially in the dream, and perhaps because of that her menstruation began unexpectedly. When she saw young Nakata-san coming towards her with the towel she used to treat her menstruation, she felt as if her sexual dream was perceived by him and thus, she expressed her anger in the form of violence. She slapped him repeatedly until he went into a coma. Okamochi-sensei's sexual desire also generated negative energy which was directly linked to violence, and it actually ruined young Nakata-san. In her

case, I suspect that she was visited by her husband's ikiryo, and her sexual desire was awakened by him. It is often said that a dying person becomes ikiryo to deliver a message to someone. She writes that she knew that he was going to die when she had the dream and soon he was killed.

As for Nakata-san, he lost his memories, literacy and sexual desire because of this incident. He has lived his life as an empty person with no fear or desire. As pointed out by one of the cats he speaks with, Nakata-san's shadow is faded, which implies that he is dying. However, Walker aggravates Nakata-san's unconsciousness by forcing a bloody killing. Once Nakata-san's embryo of violence is activated, his hidden sexual desire is also awakened. Thus, his shadow, Sanders, acts as a pimp who takes care of the sexual part of Nakata-san's mission. In fact, Sanders can be read as Nakata-san's Ikiryo. This explains why Sanders appears only when Nakata-san is asleep.

It needs to be reminded that Saeki-san's shadow is also said to be faded. That is, she is in the natural condition of becoming ikiryo. When she appears as "ikiryo," Saeki-san (young or real) is barefooted. Perhaps, this implies that she does not belong to the earth (Japanese ghosts are believed to float above the ground). When they make love again, Saeki-san is fully wake and she wears a pair of deck shoes. However, as they talk on the shore where the picture was painted a long time ago, Kafka is somehow transformed into her dead lover. As Shimizu notes, Kafka's sudden transformation is depicted through the following conversation:

I put my arm around her.  
You put your arm around her.  
She leans against you. And a long spell of time passes.

“Did you know that I did this exact same thing a long time ago? Right in this same spot?”

“I know,” you tell her.

“How do you know that?” Miss Saeki asks, and looks you in the eyes.

“I was there then.”

“Blowing up bridges?”

“Metaphorically,”

“Of course.”

You hold her in your arms, draw her close, kiss her. You can feel the strength deserting her body.

“We’re all dreaming, aren’t we?” she says.

All of us are dreaming.

“Why did you have to die?”

“I couldn’t help it,” you reply.<sup>294</sup>

This part is narrated by the boy named Crow and the person whom he addresses as “you (kimi)” is not Kafka but the boy who is in the picture. Saeki-san also realizes his transformation and the person whom she addresses as “you (anata)” in her last question is obviously her dead lover. After her clear recognition of the boy’s existence in (or possession of) Kafka, she desires to convince herself that they are dreaming. Right after this conversation, they go back to the library room and make love again. This time, however, she cries, and I see her tears as the proof that she is in the real world. She realizes the gap between her dream and reality. Dreams do not exist without reality or it may be more accurate to say that there is no unconsciousness without consciousness. For the same reason, one must be living to be a living spirit.

The next day, Saeki-san says that she feels that things are changing around her and what happened between her and Kafka is part of it. She has decided not to be concerned with judging her actions according to morality and has become part of the flow of change, which Kafka suspects as her attempt to “make up for lost time.” When they

make love again, he actually hears “the blank within her is filled.” For her, it means going back to the time when she was fifteen eternally. To be more exact, she must die to be fifteen, whereas one must be living to be a living spirit. In fact, Oshima-san suspects that death is coming to her as if it is a train for her to catch.

Saeki-san’s death actually echoes Genji’s mistress, Lady Rokujo’s renunciation of the world. After she learns what she has done to Genji’s wife, Rokujo regrets her sin and cuts her hair (which means she becomes a nun). As for Saeki-san, she expresses her regret to Nakata-san. She says:

“Living longer than I should have has only ruined many people and many things,” she went on. “Just recently I had a sexual relationship with that fifteen-year-old-boy you mentioned. In that room I became a fifteen-year-old girl again, and made love to him. I don’t know if that was the right thing to do or not, but I couldn’t help it. But those actions must surely have caused something else to be ruined. That’s my only regret.”<sup>295</sup>

Nakata-san (who has an ikiryō-like shadow to take care of his sexual desire) says that he is not able to tell the right sexual desire from the wrong one and suggests that she should accept what happened as it is. In this way, Murakami actually keeps her sexual act unjudged and lets her and her two selves exude from the real world as a person of “good influence” on Kafka. Thus, the sexual relationship between Saeki-san and Kafka never becomes “their” problem. As Saeki-san deals with it by herself, Kafka must confront it by himself. When she meets Kafka in the “place”, she offers him the painting named “Kafka on the Shore.” She tells him to look at the painting to find what it means to live. The painting symbolizes her memory as well as her love, and therefore, her words can be read that love is the meaning of life. I think that this is the best possible way for Saeki-

san to bless Kafka, who continues to live and love. In this sense, her sexual desire eventually generates positive energy for Kafka to live on.

### **Queer Eye for Post-Nihonjinron: Healing Family Value**

When Kafka asks Oshima-san if he has ever been in love with someone, Oshima-san simply replies with typical Murakami-like rhetoric, “I’m not a starfish or a pepper tree. I’m a living, breathing human being. Of course I’ve been in love.”<sup>296</sup> His words actually support the idea that humans live to love or love to live. The Japanese expression he uses for “I’m living,” “血の通った人間 (chi no kayotta ningen)” literally means “human with blood circulation” (although it figuratively means “lively” and “humane”), and clearly “blood” is associated with love. Perhaps his words can be rephrased as “humans love as long as their blood circulates.” Ironically, however, Oshima-san is born with a DNA disorder that causes hemophilia, and he must be extra cautious when it comes to dealing with his “blood.” Moreover, his identity is as complicated as his blood condition.

In Kafka’s spiritual journey, the person who plays the significant role of a counselor in terms of love is Oshima-san. He is intelligent and well read in both Japanese and Western literature. Moreover, he is a logical thinker who is, at the same time, flexible enough to accept contradictions in human lives. He is the one who introduces Kafka to the forest and tells him about the unnaturalness of nature. He thinks that it takes experience and preparation to really live in nature with those contradictions. His analogy of nature overlaps with his physical conditions since besides hemophilia, he has a hermaphroditic condition, which can be read as examples of unnatural nature.



Despite his own contradictions, he guides Kafka in terms of love, and in this sense, he is like Eros, who has contradictions in himself.<sup>297</sup>

In this section, I compare Murakami's representation of the hermaphroditic character with that of Oe Kenzaburo seen in Moeagaru Midori no Ki (The Burning Green Tree) and examine gender roles in postmodern/post-Nihonjinron healing novels. Between 1993 and 1995, Japan's second Nobel prize winner in literature, Kenzaburo Oe published the trilogy, Moeagaru Midori no Ki (The Burning Green Tree), whose story is built around a spiritual savior and his church. The Burning Green Tree and Kafka on the Shore share not only spiritual themes but also setting. Although Oe regularly sets his works in his home, Shikoku, Kafka on the Shore is Murakami's first novel with protagonists who travel to Shikoku from Tokyo. In addition, both authors created hermaphroditic characters as key figures in each protagonist's healing family. Considering that Oe's character, Sacchan, is a narrator of the story and Murakami's Oshima-san is highly verbal and explanatory, it is relevant to expect that examining their roles in the framework of a healing novel will lead us to explore both writers' perspectives on the role of family.

Oe's Sacchan was born with a penis and a vagina and grew up as a male until the age of eighteen. Although at the beginning of the novel Sacchan decides to live the rest of his life as a woman with a penis, s/he naturally accepts both sexualities she possesses. S/he supports and later becomes the lover of the new spiritual leader (sukimushi /savior) in the village, Brother Gii, who becomes the founder of the Church of the Burning Green Tree. In contrast, Murakami's Oshima-san is biologically a female. However, she has

never had a period, and her chest is flat. S/he lives as a man with no penis and denies the existence of her vagina, identifying her/himself as a gay man who uses his anus for sex. Although both writers allow their hermaphroditic characters to cross the gender dichotomy and give them a special function as a “supporter,” Sacchan and Oshima-san stand for absolute opposites: Sacchan has “both” while Oshima-san has “none.” However, despite their binary oppositions, including acceptance and denial, two-ness and nothingness and fertile and sterile, the identities they choose are both equally powerful and distinctively influential over those who seek their guidance. The most significant difference between them lies in their choice of gender and I believe that it reflects both writers’ perspectives of gender roles in one’s healing.

The story of Oe’s trilogy revolves around the spiritual struggle of Brother Gii as the savior (sukuimushi). The first book of The Burning Green Tree, Sukuimushi ga nagurareru made (Until the Savior Gets Beaten) begins with the death of Oba (Granny), who possesses a folkloric healing power, and with the birth of the savior, Brother Gii, who inherits Oba’s power. Gii is ambitious to pursue what he calls “tamashii no koto (spiritual matter/thing about the soul) in a small village in Shikoku.”<sup>298</sup> The whole novel is narrated in the first person, and it is Sacchan’s written account of the savior and their relationship. Although Sacchan identifies herself as an acceptor of Gii, s/he decides to convert him/her “self” into a woman before s/he accepts Gii as his nurse and mother.

Naturally Sacchan gets involved with Gii, and during their sexual acts, Sacchan is admired by him as the perfect part to form a trinity. Gii sees this sexual trinity as the perfect utopian space. Yet, there is no implication that Gii’s sexual desire is from his

love for Sacchan. In fact, in this novel “love” is absent from sexual relations. Sex is equated with formation of a unity. For Gii, Sacchan is the place he wants to belong. At the end of Until the Savior Gets Beaten, Brother Gii is attacked by the villagers who were enraged by Gii’s secret burial of Oba in the forest.<sup>299</sup> Wounded, Gii finds peace being with Sacchan. However, Gii does not have actual intercourse. Instead, he quietly ejaculates, with his penis pressed onto Sacchan’s genitalia. After this, he says the following in tears with a child like articulation: “I was always dreaming of this kind of sex. Always, through my life. A wonderful man and a wonderful woman have sex and they invite me in as a person who completes the sexual trinity. I knew it was impossible to have that kind of sex. But I was always dreaming of it.”<sup>300</sup> For Gii, the trinity symbolizes the perfect kinship where a father, a mother and a child live joyously. He sees a home in Sacchan and returns there as a child.

While Gii finds utopia in Sacchan’s hermaphrodite body, Sacchan discovers self-value in accepting Gii, feeling that her conversion has made her into someone special. In other words, she recognizes her female-self as valuable not only to Gii but also to herself. Moreover, in their sexual trinity, Sacchan does not hesitate to gain sexual pleasure from both organs. However, it seems that “she” makes judgment based on the heterosexual paradigm that claims that the woman’s role is to provide a man with comfort. It seems fair to say that Sacchan’s self-value is attributed to the fixed gender roles which define a woman as a nurse, a homemaker and a mother. The trilogy ends with Gii’s death with the implication of his resurrection through Sacchan’s pregnancy with his child. In other words, Sacchan’s female body is promised to reproduce Gii’s male body. Thus, she

becomes a mother to Gii, and her nurse role continues as she nurses Gii's child. The status Oe gives Sacchan echoes Luce Irigaray's definition of woman's existence as a "matrix/womb." Irigaray also says that a woman "comes into play in the sexual relation only as a mother."<sup>301</sup> In fact, this is also comparable to Saeki-san's involvement with Kafka, which becomes his initiation into his new life.

In contrast to Sacchan, Oshima-san explicitly expresses his/her desire to be a male. Like Sacchan, Oshima's full name is never pronounced in the novel. The readers only know the last name, which keeps his/her gender identity from being revealed at a glance.<sup>302</sup> In fact, Kafka does not know the fact that Oshima-san is a female until he reveals his identity during the heated argument with women from some feminist organization who visit the library for investigation. During the debate over the library's unisex restroom, Oshima-san is called by one of the women "a totally pathetic, historical example of the phallogentric" and he responds to the comment as follows:

My body is physically female, but my mind's completely male,...Emotionally I live as a man. So I suppose your notion of being a *historical example* may be correct. And maybe I am sexist--who knows. But I'm not a lesbian, even though I dress this way. My sexual preference is for men. In other words, I'm a female but I'm gay. I do anal sex, and have never used my vagina for sex. My clitoris is sensitive but my breasts aren't. I do not have a period. So, what am I discriminating against? Could somebody tell me?<sup>303</sup>

In this statement Oshima-san strongly expresses his/her refusal of any anatomical classifications as an owner of a female body, and at the same time, accepts the gender/sex dichotomy as an owner of a male mind. That is, he/she prioritizes men over women through prioritizing his mind over body, unlike Sacchan who is bound to his/her body.

Although his female-self may still claim her existence through her sexual desire (preference) for men, Oshima-san denies it by refusing her vagina even though he is still an acceptor of a penis. His female body, which cannot serve as a womb, is abandoned. In order to create a male-self out of his “mind,” he seems to have undergone the process of mental conversion, and he becomes a being who is free from the body.

Oshima-san confesses his condition to Kafka as he says, “In terms of sex I’m most definitely female, though my breasts haven’t developed much and I’ve never had a period. But I don’t have a penis or testicles or facial hair. In short, I have *nothing*. A nice no-extra-baggage kind of feeling, if you want to put a positive spin on it.”<sup>304</sup> Moreover, he is hemophilic and he has no possibility of reproduction and kinship. As a result, he lives his life with Zen monk-like self-discipline, which matches his pastoral role in Kafka’s search for self. Throughout the novel, he guides Kafka. It is he who introduces Kafka to both Japanese and Western understandings of the concept of spiritual matters and guides him to locate his identity. And this is particularly true when Kafka is struggling with contradictions in himself. Since Murakami treats both mother and father as powers for Kafka to overcome, Kafka needs someone as a guide who cannot possibly be either parent to receive guidance from.<sup>305</sup>

Murakami says that he finds a strong sense of purity in hermaphroditism and describes Oshima-san as a clean-cut youth who is “by nature innocent, lacking any kind of sense of impurity.”<sup>306</sup> In fact, he is a powerful and authoritative person. I believe that he is entitled to what Michelle Foucault would call “pastoral power,” by which he directs Kafka’s soul toward salvation. The person with “pastoral power” “has sure knowledge of

the person to whom he ministers, and that application of this knowledge to the person is the means by which he is administered and controlled.”<sup>307</sup> Although Foucault adopts his definition of pastor from Christian institutions, Oshima-san’s knowledge of Western thinking would allow him to take this position as a Zen monk-like pastor. More importantly, there is absolute trust between Kafka and him. In Oshima-san’s case, unlike Kafka’s father, his physical condition does not allow him to pass down his (good/pure) blood. Therefore, he must find another way to pass down the knowledge he has to the next generation. Murakami defines Oshima-san’s erudition not as showing off his knowledge but as conveying something to the fifteen-year-old boy.<sup>308</sup>

While Sacchan becomes a mother to Gii, Oshima-san remains a pastor who makes up for the absence of a good father figure in Kafka’s life. Both writers seem to think that their hermaphroditic bodies are ideal. For Oe, Sacchan is the main “part(s)” of the healing family. In Aristophanes’s notion, the condition such as Sacchan’s is a perfect one, and in fact, this explains why Sacchan does not search for love. However, Oe makes the condition more (or the most) perfect by creating a family-like trinity in which Gii finds peace. In contrast, Murakami presents family as the condition one must grow out of. Murakami does not devalue the connection between people in the process of healing, and he actually lets Kafka form a kind of “healing family” with Saeki-san as his mother, Sakura as his sister and Oshima-san as father/brother. However, in the end Kafka must stand up for himself. He says that he is not after “a wall that’ll repel power coming from outside.”<sup>309</sup>

These two writers' different perspectives on the roles of family and gender also reflect their view of salvation. Neither Oe nor Murakami asserts the existence of God. When one of the followers asks Gii if there is a God, he says that he has not reached the position to wonder about God's existence, and he implies that as long as we pray to God it does not matter if he really exists. This suggests that we must find salvation in ourselves. Oe thinks that family-like human bonds save wounded souls, and Gii's church actually forms a commune. In this commune, those who share the same prayers become family. On the other hand, Murakami does not present the "place" Kafka enters as a commune. Moreover, he sends Kafka back to the real world with "strength" inside him. Through Kafka's (dis)association with people, Murakami denies the idea of nation as a family. In addition, "God" or a meta-narrative is not a solution for him. His view of God is fully expressed in a comical conversation between Hoshino and Colonel Sanders. While Hoshino thinks God is like a soccer referee, watching what we do to judge, Sanders professes that God is a flexible concept that exists only in people's minds in Japan and defines God as an adjustable super-postmodern being. Murakami clearly suggests that what we believe as God is a reflection of our minds, and it is not God or any religious doctrine that saves us. We save ourselves. And in order to save ourselves, we must be strong and responsible individuals. In the next section I discuss Murakami's idea of the responsibility of individuals in post-postwar Japan.

### **Blood, Water and Yogen: Responsibility**

During World War II, modern Japan's imperialism transformed ordinary people into soldiers. They were forced to kill other people and to participate in inhumane crimes

not only to protect themselves but also to prove their loyalty to the blood of the Japanese. “Nihonjin no chi” (the blood of Japanese) certainly served as a magic word in the process of the imperialist promotion of nationalism, and the idea of sharing the same blood also promoted collectivism, stimulating their sense of ethnic superiority. In the name of the blood of Japanese, Japan’s imperialism activated the dark side of human nature and enabled ordinary people to participate in inhumane actions towards other human beings. An aggressive war does not occur unless the dark side of human nature is stimulated. However, this also suggests that killing is one side of human nature that needs to be controlled.

The so-called generation gap is often blamed for the lack of communication between generations in postwar Japan, and it is true that the popularity of Western culture and the power of the English language have been disturbing the nation’s cultural and linguistic unity. It must be recognized, however, that the gap between the war-generation (now called the Fukuin sedai) and the postwar generation (the Dankai sedai or Baby Boomers born between 1947 and 1949) is created by the State-system’s concealment of the imperial experience. The nation has been rebuilt, and the Fukuin Sedai who were to die for the nation were transformed into “salary men” who now die for their companies. They were given the “middle class identity” and modern conveniences (TV, refrigerator and washing machine) for their hard work, with which they were expected to be satisfied. Their pain and sadness have been neglected.

Not only as public history but also as personal history memories of the Fukuin sedai people are getting lost without being passed on, as more and more elderly suffer



from dementia and Alzheimer's disease. It can easily be expected that the State-system will be able to complete the concealment of its imperial history when the last Fukuin Sedai dies. The Fukuin Sedai people are those who were "entered" by the dark energy of imperialism. It is like a parasite that eventually takes over the host unless the host has enough strength to control the disease. They have lived their postwar years without being healed and unconsciously passed down their infected blood to the next generation like a hereditary virus in their blood. It may activate people's darkness and interfere with the healthy and fair human relations among postwar generation youths. In fact, violence (crimes, school violence and domestic violence) is a serious issue in today's Japanese society.

Through his works, Murakami warns us that the imperial virus may break out (if it has not yet) anytime in the form of violence (or desire to control). Although Boku in A Wild Sheep Chase, Watanabe Toru in Norwegian Wood and Okada Toru in A Wind-Up Bird Chronicle are Dankai Sedai heroes who win the battle over the disease, there are weaker Dankai Sedai people who are fully infected. Although not all of them are as politically motivated as Wataya Noboru in A Wind-Up Bird Chronicle, they certainly are capable of passing down the dark energy to the next generation. I regard Johnnie Walker (or Tamura Koichi) in Kafka on the Shore as an infected Dankai Sedai, and his son, Tamura Kafka is an unfortunate Dankai Junior who struggles with the curse in his blood. The novel is about the spiritual journey of this Dankai Junior who reaches to a place where he learns to accept his responsibility and forgive himself.<sup>310</sup>

Although Kafka does not remember much about his older sister, he knows that she was adopted before he was born, and, curiously, his mother took only her adopted daughter when she left her husband. Kafka's father, Tamura Koichi, is a well known sculptor. While Oshima-san, who is familiar with his works, praises his talent, Kafka expresses his disgust at how his father damages those who are around him in return for his powerful and original creation of art. Kafka says:

But the dregs left over from creating these he spread everywhere, like a poison you can't escape. My father polluted everything he touched, damaged everyone around him. I don't know if he did it because he wanted to. Maybe he had to. Maybe it's just part of his makeup. Anyhow, I get the feeling he was connected to something very unusual.<sup>311</sup>

Oshima-san suspects that Tamura Koichi is connected to some kind of power source that is beyond good and evil. Kafka believes that his mother left him because he has inherited his father's dark power and also knows that his father sees him as his creation just like his artworks. Kafka's father has even proved his paternity of Kafka through a DNA test. It is as if he wanted to make sure his blood was passed down, which may imply that Kafka's birth was planned by him. I even suspect that his plan was realized through forcing himself on his wife who wanted to avoid pregnancy for fear of passing down Tamura's blood to their children.

I read Kafka's father's "yogen" as Murakami's warning of the existence of the imperial blood in postwar Japan, and I argue that the "yogen" predicts the reoccurrence of Imperial Japan's crimes. During World War II, Japanese soldiers murdered and raped Chinese people. In Japan's premodern history, China was like family to Japan. Japanese

soldiers' violence towards the Chinese can be seen as murdering and raping their own family. Iris Chang notes that during the (pre) war period, Japanese schools operated like miniature military units and prepared school boys psychologically for the future invasion of the Chinese mainland by implanting hatred and contempt for the Chinese people in their minds.<sup>312</sup> Brutal acts towards the racially inferior colonial subjects were encouraged in the name of the divine emperor.

Imperial Japan's manipulation of nationalism asserted that sharing of "Japanese blood" is the same as being a nation. Japanese soldiers were afraid that they would be called "hikokumin" (hi= a negative prefix, meaning "wrong" or "abnormal," kokumin = nation/people) if they did not engage in inhumane acts towards non-Japanese colonial subjects. These actions were even considered to be the proof of their loyalty to the nation. For soldiers to be "hikokumin" would have been to deny their Japanese blood. George Hicks notes that "military training was designed to secure instant obedience and it was a brutal, highly disciplined system," which suggests that nationalism and discipline were forced also through violence.<sup>313</sup> Their participation in incidents such as the operation of the comfort stations (military sex slaves) and mass murder of the colonial subjects in Nanking are based on "nationalism" that used the "blood" as fetters. Nationalism was transformed into mass psychology, and this is the same psychology Kafka's father attempted to implant into his son in the name of the yogen. It seems that his attempt has already been partially realized in Kafka's behavior.

Yoshinori Shimizu points out that Kafka shows symptoms of multiple personalities. Kafka himself confesses to Oshima-san that he was involved in two violent

incidents with his classmates at his junior high school for which he was suspended. He describes the experience as follows: “it’s like there’s somebody else living inside me. And when I come to, I find out I’ve hurt somebody.”<sup>314</sup> Shimizu thinks that this “somebody else” is not the boy named Crow but the negative energy of hatred and fear that links Kafka to Johnnie Walker.<sup>315</sup> Through the metaphors of blood and DNA, Murakami warns us that the dark energy that drove ordinary people to brutal acts 60 years ago has survived. However, I do not think that this blood alone is the cause of violence. In fact, I think that the “somebody else” is not the blood from his father but Kafka’s own “dark” other which is activated by his father’s blood. Therefore, I argue that the imperial blood is only a trigger to awake the darkness of one’s soul. In short, every individual has the “water” inside his/her body that houses the embryo of violence. No one is free from it, and in this sense, the idea of “water” echoes the Christian notion of original sin.<sup>316</sup>

Throughout the novel, Murakami persistently refers to “water” in contrast to “blood.” The “koros” explains the “water” inside of Kafka in the following way:

A dark, omnipresent pool of water.

It was probably always there, hidden away somewhere. But when the time comes it silently rushes out, chilling every cell in your body. You drown in that cruel flood, gasping for breath. You cling to a vent near the ceiling struggling, but the air you manage to breathe is dry and burns your throat. Water and thirst, cold and heat ---these supposedly opposite elements combine to assault you.<sup>317</sup>

I believe that this stagnant water represents the darkness of the human soul, and that the external forces to wake this darkness are desire for power and desire for sex. In fact, Sunami Toshiko thinks that the yogen is Tamura Koichi’s attempt to pull his son into an

eternal war driven by one's desire for power and sexual desire, which she regards as a principal of all the wars and competitions in the world.<sup>318</sup> In Kafka's case, the implanted desire for power (the imperial) and his own sexual desire (he is going through puberty) are together activating his darkness, and, therefore, he is afraid. Moreover, the words of the koros actually imply that the experience of Okada Toru in The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle, who survived the sudden rushing out of the well water, will occur to Kafka although Kafka's experience is not physical but metaphorical.

I read what is called "supposedly opposite elements" as blood and water. It seems to suggest that one must have the water flow. Otherwise, water will be taken over by blood and they will both work against him. In this sense, Kafka's story is about the struggle with one's own darkness. Water exists inside one's mind, and its flow and stagnation represent the ambivalence the individual must overcome. Once the water is polluted with evil blood, it will eventually become impure due to the increasing amount of blood unless one attains strength to make the water flow. Although one is not able to free himself/herself from the embryo of violence, he/she is able to control the water that houses the embryo. Through the metaphor of the water, Murakami actually offers hope that goes beyond one's fate based on determinism. All the more, Kafka's attempt to wash off the blood with "water" becomes significant.

Although Murakami often uses "water" (and rain, stream, shower, urination) as a metaphor for mobility, fluidity and transition in his works, in Kafka on the Shore, he is especially descriptive about water.<sup>319</sup> In fact, Kafka is eager to connect himself to the flow of water and repeatedly washes himself with enthusiasm under running water. Right

before he leaves his home, Kafka washes his hands very carefully. It even starts raining when he is in the bus heading to Shikoku. At the hotel, the way he washes his genitals in the shower also implies his effort to escape his growing sexual desire. It seems as if he wishes to wash off his own darkness. However, neither washing nor the heavy rain purifies him. Soon he finds himself lying on the grass in a bloody shirt. First he washes his hands and face, and then tries to wash the blood stain from his shirt in vain. On that night, he asks Sakura, whom he met on the bus to Shikoku, for help. She offers him a temporary shelter, and in order to ease his tension she helps him to ejaculate. In her apartment, he uses her shower. Yet, his purification with running water is destroyed by her black underwear drying in the bathroom. That is, his attempt at purification/baptism is complicated by his growing sexual desire for the woman of his sister's age, which is predicted by the yogen. Confused and ashamed, he leaves her apartment. Luckily, he is able to overcome guilt and confusion when he exposes himself to the heavy rain at Oshima-san's cabin. Kafka feels some change in his relationship with water. He describes the experience as follows:

I strip naked and run outside, washing my face with soap and scrubbing myself all over. It feels wonderful. In my joy I shut my eyes and shout out meaningless words as the large raindrops strike me on the cheeks, the eyelids, chest, side, penis, legs, and butt--- the stinging pain like a religious initiation or something. Along with the pain there's a feeling of closeness like for once in my life the world's treating me fairly. I feel elated, as if all of a sudden I've been set free. I face the sky, hands held wide apart, open my mouth wide, and gulp down the falling rain.<sup>320</sup>

At this moment, he believes that he has washed off what is implanted in his blood, and symbolically he is able to control his desire for masturbation that night.

However, the koros cynically criticizes Kafka's optimism by whispering:

But that calm won't last long, you know. It's like beasts that never tire, tracking you everywhere you go. They come out at you deep in the forest. They're tough, relentless, merciless, untiring, and they never give up. You might control yourself now, and not masturbate, but they'll get you in the end, as a wet dream. You might dream about raping your sister, your mother. It's not something you can control. It's a power beyond you--- and all you can do is accept it.

You're afraid of imagination. And even more afraid of dreams. Afraid of the responsibility that begins in dreams. But you have to sleep, and dreams are a part of sleep. When you're awake you can suppress imagination. But you can't suppress dreams.<sup>321</sup>

As predicted by the koros, Kafka eventually has a wet dream of raping Sakura. Kafka is aware of the activation of his violent embryo. In fact, he himself recognizes his semen from the wet dream as "some illegitimate child born of the darkness," and the koros explains that the thing inside Kafka has come out of the shell and been completely revealed.<sup>322</sup> The novel revolves around his debating his responsibility for his blood. Whether we call it the blood, DNA, or original sin, we do not have control over its implantation just as we do not have control over our dreams. From time to time through different characters Murakami keeps asking the same question. Is one responsible for what he/she is born with?

Kafka is introduced to this rather unfamiliar logic between dreams and responsibilities through reading one of Oshima-san's books while he is staying in his cabin. The book is about the trial of Adolf Eichmann who was tried for designing the extermination of Jews to which he was assigned by the Nazis. Kafka learns that

Eichmann engaged himself in the research of how to dispose of the Jews most effectively without being disturbed by the morality of his research. Inside the book, Kafka finds Oshima-san's handwriting that says:

It's all a question of imagination. Our responsibility begins with the power to imagine. It's just like Yeats said: In dreams begins responsibility. Flip this around and you could say that where there's no power to imagine, no responsibility can arise. Just like we see with Eichmann.<sup>323</sup>

Kafka relates Eichmann's trial to his own situation and "imagines" that he is at the court being accused of the murder of which he has no memory. At first, he denies his responsibility. Yet, he imagines hearing the voice that says, "It doesn't matter whose dream it started out as, you have the same dream. That dream crept inside you, right down the dark corridor of your soul."<sup>324</sup> The idea of "the dark corridor of your soul" is also read as the notion of original sin because of which humans have a tendency to sin. Murakami questions whether one is responsible for human nature that is harmed by original sin, and further he intertwines the idea of responsibility with the condition and psychology of soldiers. "Dreams" and "sleep" can be read as metaphors of the state in which people are mesmerized by evil. In fact, I regard imperial Japan's manipulation of nationalism as mass mesmerism and suspect that soldiers were in someone else's "dreams" when they engaged in killing and raping. Who, then, is responsible for their actions? Through his metaphor of dreams, Murakami explores a human condition in which moral responsibility is questioned in relation to determinism.

Later in the novel, Kafka thinks of the war Japanese soldiers had to fight and even starts feeling the heft of the hatchet in his hands as he wanders around the forest. He



questions, “Why do hundreds of thousands, even millions of people group together and try to annihilate each other?” and wonders if anger and fear (which may be two aspects of the same spirit) cause wars. And then, he feels that he is in the realm of dreams and starts thinking about his rape of Sakura that occurred in his dream. The flow of his mind unconsciously links war and his own responsibility. Kafka’s rape of Sakura occurred when he was in the dream. Although Kafka attempts to convince himself that his act was to end the yogen, the boy named Crow points out that the yogen is now branded on Kafka’s soul more deeply than before. He also reminds Kafka that he tried to stop the rape, which Kafka ignored. He further tells Kafka that there is no war that will end all wars. The boy named Crow tells Kafka to overcome the fear and anger inside him and let the coldness in his heart melt with the bright light, suggesting that the key to salvation is in Kafka’s own mind. However, Kafka is pessimistic enough to say to himself that “if I stopped breathing, my consciousness would silently be buried in the darkness, every last drop of my dark violent blood dripping out, my DNA rotting among the weeds.”<sup>325</sup> He fears that he would keep murdering his father and violating his mother and sister. Despite the boy named Crow’s advice that Kafka should look into his own darkness, Kafka begins to think about ways to pour the impure blood out of his body. In short, he wishes to run away from his fate determined by the blood.

Symbolically, Kafka meets two run-away soldiers. Prior to this, he was told by Oshima-san that the mountain his family owns had been used by the Imperial army for mock battles with the Soviet army in the Siberian forests, during which two young soldiers disappeared. When Kafka meets them, they are still in the battle fatigues of the

Imperial army. They say that they were lucky enough to find “the place” during maneuvers and decided to stay there. It was the only way to hide from the war in which they would have been forced to kill or be killed. They claim that they ran away not because they were cowards but because they could not stand to be part of “boryokutekina ishi” (violent will).

This “boryokutekina ishi” or to be more exact, will of the imperial, promoted “religiously” powerful nationalism that trained people to die for the emperor. However, in reality, to die for the emperor meant to commit illogical murder or to die meaninglessly. It was like being a part of the imperial machine. Chang notes that in military training, “obedience was touted as a supreme virtue, and a sense of individual self-worth was replaced by a sense of value as a small god in the larger scheme of things.” Young soldiers were physically and mentally prepared for the Nanking massacre.<sup>326</sup> One of the Nanking massacre participants writes that atrocities became routine and “good sons, good daddies, good elder brothers at home were brought to the front to kill each other. Everyone became a demon within three months.”<sup>327</sup>

Ironically, the morality of this violence was not an issue. One of the soldiers Kafka meets describes the situation as follows:

Well, first you stab your bayonet deep into his belly, then you twist it sideways. That rips the guts to ribbons. Then the guy dies a horrible, slow, painful death. But if you just stab without twisting, then your enemy can jump up and rip your guts to shreds. That’s the kind of world we were in.<sup>328</sup>

The logic of killing he describes above actually echoes Johnnie Walker's way of convincing Nakata-san to kill him. Walker attempts to penetrate his "narrative" into Nakata-san just as Imperial Japan did to its soldiers. By cutting the bellies of cats rhythmically and effectively (which Jay Rubin compares with Eichmann's project), he puts Nakata-san into the situation in which he must kill to stop killing.<sup>329</sup> Walker actually clarifies the situation by himself by stating:

"When a war starts people are forced to become soldiers. They carry guns and go to the front lines and have to kill soldiers on the other side. As many as they possibly can. Nobody cares whether you like killing other people or not. It's just something you have to do. Otherwise you're the one who gets killed. Johnnie Walker pointed his index finger at Nakata's chest. "Bang!" he said. "Human history in a nutshell."

"Is the Governor going to make Nakata a soldier and order me to kill people?"

"Yes, that's what the Governor will do. Tell you to kill somebody."

Nakata thought about his but couldn't quite figure it out. Why in the world would the Governor do that?

"You've got to look at it this way: this is war. You're a soldier, and you have to make a decision. Either I kill the cats or you kill me. One or the other. You need to make a choice right here and now. This might seem an outrageous choice, but consider this: most choices we make in life are equally outrageous."<sup>330</sup>

Rubin notes that Nakata-san's bloody killing of Walker represents a haunted memory of "the blood-soaked twentieth century" and its continuous plaguing of mankind in the twenty-first century. Yet, based on his observation of Nakata-san after the murder, he claims that the novel fails to answer the questions raised in this scene regarding how participating in the ugliest core of human history by killing another person affects one's life. Rubin thinks that the changes Murakami makes in Nakata-san simply add exceptional and unexplainable abilities to him without offering beneficial comments on the human condition.<sup>331</sup> As Rubin points out, the effect of bloody killing is mysteriously

transformed into a positive energy that gives Nakata-san super natural power, with which he engages himself in supernatural events that occur one after another without clear explanation. However, there is one thing Murakami makes explicit about Nakata-san's character. He goes after bad blood even before the bloody killing of Walker.

Nakata-san lost his literacy skills and memories after the "Rice Bowl Hill incident," which happened because he found the towel with his teacher's menstruation blood on it. The teacher believed that she had hidden the towel where children could not see. But apparently young Nakata-san had a kind of special ability to locate blood. It seems that his ability represents a sense of justice. Despite his claim that he is not concerned with judging someone, his young self shows a strong attraction to justice, and therefore, young Nakata-san found the teacher's menstruation blood that symbolizes sexual desire. Although his strong sense of justice was concealed because of the teacher's violence, and his mind has been in the "place" where no need for judgment exists, yet, in this world, he has been a protector of other potential victims of violence: cats. However, once this "sense" is activated by Walker, he goes after justice. After his confession of the murder of Walker is ignored by a police officer (representing the system's authority), Nakata-san rains fish. Fish (sardines) represent the numbers of nameless victims of imperial "blood" who are dying for "water." On his way to Shikoku, he also reacts against the bloody fight in the parking lot by raining leeches. Leeches are collectors of blood, and it is obvious that they are helpers of Nakata-san. Nakata-san participates in completing Kafka's yogen by killing Johnnie Walker (actually Kafka's father), and thus, Nakata-san becomes a cleaner of bad blood. Thus, he plays the role of his guardian deity

(shugoshin) for Kafka. In his conversation with Saeki-san, Nakata-san actually recognizes that he murdered someone for the fifteen year old boy.<sup>332</sup>

Nakata-san kills Walker (actually Tamura Koichi) as a soldier. By learning from soldiers how to kill effectively, Kafka is finally but “indirectly” linked to war as well as the murder of Walker. He also takes the place of Saeki-san’s lover who was killed in the meaningless “battle” of Zenkyoto. This maze-like linking is Murakami’s attempt to claim that postwar generations are not free from imperial history, and I read the blood on Kafka’s hands as a metaphor for the postwar generation’s involvement in imperial history, of which they have no memory. Murakami insists, however, that postwar generations are responsible for the invisible blood on their hands.

While Kafka is in the place in the forest, Saeki-san dies from a sudden heart attack in the real world. She meets Kafka in the place before she loses her memories. Saeki-san tells Kafka to go back to the world to which he belongs. She gives only an ambiguous response to Kafka’s question about the possibility of her being his mother. Instead, she offers him the painting titled “Kafka on the Shore” as well as her blood. The painting represents the “memories” and “love” she is losing. Yet, it is needed by Kafka who continues to live. By giving him her blood she actually becomes his mother, which completes the yogen, and Kafka is able to move on. Thus, the Dankai Junior who was afraid of his blood learns to accept who he is and be responsible for himself. Empowered by Saeki-san, he decides to go back to Tokyo to take up his responsibilities that involve facing the police investigation over his father’s murder as well as finishing his mandatory education. Murakami reinforces the idea that a strong sense of responsibility is required

for the individuals to live with their embryo of violence. Symbolically, Kafka sees the rain falling when his train is heading back to Tokyo. The rain can also be read as a sign of the victory of water over blood. Moral responsibility requires free will, and a responsible attitude towards life is rewarded with healing. And what empowers the individual is empathetic love that connects one with others.

### **Conclusion: Murakami's Postmodern Healing Sanctuary**

In this novel, dreams represent one's unconsciousness, and Murakami relates them with responsibility, using a line from W.E. Yeats: "In dreams begin the responsibilities." Murakami presents this "place" as an ambiguous and mysterious "other world" in between reality and dream, and in between life and death. It seems that one can be connected to the place from deep inside his/her consciousness. Kafka decides to go into the "heart of the forest" right after he feels "something rearranging itself under his skin." His readiness to terminate himself leads him to the realm of the dead. As he walks, he even imagines that he is traveling inside himself just like "blood travels down veins" and realizes that "what seems threatening is just the echo of the fear in my (his) own heart."<sup>333</sup> The soldiers tell him that the place is located in "the deepest part of the forest." It exists in the deepest part of Kafka's veins, and it is actually the core of his consciousness. In short, Murakami suggests that each individual has a "place" inside his/her consciousness which functions as a shelter.

This "place" is a "very postmodern kind of thing." Kafka is able to have whomever he wants there as young Saeki-san says, "If you need me, I'll be here." She also tells Kafka that "the most important thing about life here is that people let

themselves be absorbed into things” and “when you’re with me, you become a part of me.”<sup>334</sup> It is as if each individual produces a “dream” inside his/her consciousness with his/her favorite characters using the place as a stage set. When she appears in Kafka’s dream, she becomes a part of it. However, this does not mean they dream together. What Murakami illustrates through her words is the totally personalized mind shelter. It represents postmodern decenteredness, which he thinks is a dangerous condition.

The soldiers claim that they made a choice not to be swallowed by “boryokutekina ishi” (violent will) and thus entered the “place.” They also recognize their action as “hiding.” By hiding, they keep violence from disturbing their own darkness. It is a passive way of not sharing someone else’s dream that comes with moral responsibility. Hiding is their acceptance of determinism and their seeking a shelter keeps the incriminating circumstances from happening. In short, they ran away from reality and chose not to make a choice by hiding. Consequently, their time stopped at the time of the maneuver. As they say, “Not that time’s a major factor here. There’s almost no difference at all between now and a long, long time ago.”<sup>335</sup> They also tell Kafka that one must tell right from wrong in the outside world, which apparently is not a necessary concept in the “place.” It is not a place for judgment. In addition, there exists no emotion, including love. Murakami Fuminobu claims the change from abstract ideals to practical etiquette and from deep love to shallow kindness is the significant paradigm shift from modernism to postmodernism. He notes that the arrangement made for Kafka, such as young Saeki-san being in charge of cooking, reflects not as “deep love” but as “shallow kindness.” Moreover, fairness and justice are critical values in a postmodern

society, for they keep society from falling apart.<sup>336</sup> As Kafka's place lacks these values, we may be able to draw a conclusion that the place reflects a postmodern condition in which no emotional or rational unity among people is valued. If this condition were intended as a utopia, Murakami could have allowed Kafka to remain there.

The "place" has "a small stream running alongside a road, with a stone wall as an embankment. The beautiful clear water gurgles pleasantly."<sup>337</sup> This running "water" suggests that the place carries positive aspects, and the fact that people there do not eat meat or fish also reinforces the idea that there is no killing or "blood" in the place. The Buddhist connotation and the serenity contribute to make it appear as if it is "Nehan" (Nirvana). However, the "place" is not completely safe. It is located in the same forest where Walker is traveling through. In the episode titled "The Boy Named Crow," Walker tells the boy named Crow that he is now heading to a location where he can engage in his creation of a larger and more powerful flute to collect more souls. He says:

Do you know what limbo is? It's the neutral point between life and death. A kind of sad, gloomy place. Where I am now, in other words---this forest. I died, at my own bidding, but haven't gone on to the next world. I'm a soul in transition, and a soul in transition is formless. I've merely adopted this form for the time being. That's why you can't hurt me. You follow me? Even if I were to bleed all over the place, it's not real blood. Even if I were to suffer horribly, it's not real suffering. The only one who could wipe me out right now is someone who's qualified to do so. And -sad to say- you don't fit the bill. You're nothing more than an immature, mediocre illusion. No matter how determined you may be, eliminating me's impossible for the likes of you.<sup>338</sup>

What is significant here is Murakami's use of the term "limbo." He integrates the Buddhist notion of wandering souls with the Catholic idea of "limbo" and uses it to mean the space where evil intention grows its ambition to possess someone. I observe the



similarity between Murakami's setting of the forest and Dante's "Inferno" in which the Catholic notion of "limbo" is introduced through the forest. In the "place," one is able to live without being harmed. The way Murakami represents an emotionless eternal life in the place is actually closer to Dante's idea of limbo, in which non-baptized souls spend eternity without hope. Murakami seems to share the idea that being in the place is neither punishment nor a reward.

In this in-between space, people live without memories (the warp of history) and it is not a commune (the woof of human connection, social awareness). It resembles today's Japan. It is not the final destination of souls but a drift of lost souls. If you become a part of it, you may feel secure, and you do not have to be responsible for anything because you become part of a highly controlled society. Therefore, Murakami sends Kafka back to the real world to find his own salvation. Murakami makes it clear that seeking salvation is not the same as hiding in a shelter. One must be strong to confront all the negative energies, just as Kafka says that the strength he wants is not a wall to isolate himself from the rest of the world. He wants "the kind of strength to be able to absorb that outside power, to stand up to it. The strength to quietly endure things—unfairness, misfortune, sadness, mistakes, misunderstandings."<sup>339</sup> The psychologist, Kawai Toshio claims that Murakami's characters in general live between the pre-modern world of ritual and souls and the postmodern world of pure action. Therefore, features of modern consciousness such as conflicts, feelings, meanings are difficult to find there. He thinks that this illustrates Murakami's view that the lack of religious ceremony reflects the absence of moral consciousness.<sup>340</sup> All the more, I believe

that religious implications throughout the novel are Murakami's attempt to remind us of the importance of morality in the postmodern world of pure action. He stimulates our moral consciousness through his "postmodern" use of religion, and it is a sense of morality and responsibility that transforms Kafka into a strong individual.

In the last scene, when Kafka says to the boy named Crow that he does not know anything about life, the boy named Crow tells him to look at the painting and to listen to the wind. The painting represents memory and love and the wind is the metaphor of one's ego that blows like wind in the forest deep inside his unconscious or the voice of himself. Through the words of the boy named Crow, Murakami again reinforces the idea that in Japan individuality must be found in its connection with history and the human connection with others. Through Kafka's spiritual journey, Murakami suggests that each individual must find his/her own salvation. It requires the sense of responsibility and it also keeps society from falling apart. The returners from the places, both Saeki-san and Nakata-san, faced their responsibilities. Therefore, their lives in the real world served as purgatory. Now that they have completed their tasks, they are entitled to move on to their next place. As a returner of the place, the life awaiting Kafka now is his purgatory. The last conversation between Kafka and Oshima-san suggests that in the near future Kafka will be back to the library, where he feels at home. Unlike the "place," Kafka's library is where he is connected to people, through which he finds his own salvation.

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<sup>258</sup> Yoshio Sugimoto, An Introduction to Japanese Society (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003) 36.

<sup>259</sup> Davis, 182.

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- <sup>260</sup> Yosuke, Kojima, “Murakami Haruki to Sukui” (Murakami Haruki and Salvation), Murakami Haruki: Tema, souchi, kyarakuta (Haruki Murakami: Theme, Setting and Characters), ed. Tsuge Mitsuhiko (Tokyo: Shibundo, 2008) 54-55.
- <sup>261</sup> Joseph Kitagawa, Religion in Japanese History, (New York: Columbia UP, 1990) 332-333.
- <sup>262</sup> Ibid, 333.
- <sup>263</sup> Haruki Murakami, Underground (New York: Vintage, 2000), 237.
- <sup>264</sup> Ibid, 227-228.
- <sup>265</sup> Ibid, 228.
- <sup>266</sup> Ibid, 240-241.
- <sup>267</sup> Ibid, 231.
- <sup>268</sup> Ibid, 361.
- <sup>269</sup> Ibid, 364.
- <sup>270</sup> Yoshinori Shimizu, Murakami Haruki wa kuseninaru (Murakami Haruki is Addictive) (Tokyo: Asahi Shinsho, 2006) 74--77.
- <sup>271</sup> Winston Davis, “Religion and national identity in modern and postmodern Japan,” Religion, Modernity and Postmodernity, ed. Paul Heelas (Malden: Blackwell, 1998) 181.
- <sup>272</sup> Tom Gill, “Transformational Magic: Some Japanese Super-heroes and Monsters,” The Worlds of Japanese Popular Culture: Gender, Shifting Boundaries and Global Cultures ed. D. P. Martinez (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998) 36.
- <sup>273</sup> Jay Rubin, Haruki Murakami and the Music of Words (New York: Vintage, 2005) 288.
- <sup>274</sup> Ibid, 283.

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- <sup>275</sup> Haruki Murakami, Kafka on the Shore, trans. Philip Gabriel (New York: vintage, 2005) 286-287.
- <sup>276</sup> Kojima, 54-55.
- <sup>277</sup> Takayoshi Nagashima, “Nakata-san ron” (On Nakata-san), “Nakata-san ron” (Theory of Nakata: the Mediator). Murakami Haruki: Tema, souchi, kyarakuta (Haruki Murakami: Theme, Setting and Characters), ed. Tsuge Mitsuhiko (Tokyo: Shibundo, 2008) 231-233.
- <sup>278</sup> Nakata-san says to Hoshino, “When I see something out of line I like to set it right. I made furniture for a long time and whenever I saw something crooked I just had to straighten it out. That’s just how Nakata is” (238).
- <sup>279</sup> Amy Ty Lai, “Memory, Hybridity, and Creative Alliance in Haruki Murakami’s Fiction,” Mosaic 40.1 (2007): 173.
- <sup>280</sup> Murakami, *Kafka*, 272.
- <sup>281</sup> Hiroyuki Higuchi, Sei to Nihonjin (Sex and the Japanese) (Tokyo: Kodansah, 1985) 10-47.
- <sup>282</sup> Rubin, 275-276.
- <sup>283</sup> George Hicks, The Comfort Women: Japan’s Brutal Regime of Enforced Prostitution in the Second World War, (New York: Norton, 1994) 32-33.
- <sup>284</sup> Philip Gabriel, *Spirit Matters: The Transcendent in Modern Japanese Literature* (Honolulu: U of Hawaii P, 2006) 3.

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- <sup>285</sup> Toshiko Sunami, “Umibe no Kafuka no Saeki-san” (Saeki-san in Kafka on the Shore), Murakami Haruki: Tema, souchi, kyarakuta (Haruki Murakami: Theme, Setting and Characters), ed. Tsuge Mitsuhiko (Tokyo: Shibundo, 2008), 221-223.
- <sup>286</sup> Robert Struges, Dialogue and Deviance: Male-Male Desire in the Dialogue Genre (Plato Aelred, Plato to Sade, Plato to the Postmodern) (New York: Palgrave, 2005) 82.
- <sup>287</sup> Michel Foucault, Religion and Culture, ed. Jeremy Carrette (New York: Routledge, 1999) 186.
- <sup>288</sup> Murakami, *Kafka*, 157.
- <sup>289</sup> Sunami, 226.
- <sup>290</sup> Foucault, 186-187.
- <sup>291</sup> Murakami, *Kafka*, 225.
- <sup>292</sup> Ibid, 227.
- <sup>293</sup> Ibid, 280.
- <sup>294</sup> Ibid, 299.
- <sup>295</sup> Ibid, 391.
- <sup>296</sup> Ibid, 227.
- <sup>297</sup> Luce Irigaray thinks that love is an intermediary between opposites. She interprets Eros as a middle being who has contradictions in himself. For, if he possesses all that he desired, he would desire no more and he must lack in order to desire.
- Luce Irigaray, “Sorcerer Love: A Reading of Plato, Symposium,” Feminism and History of Philosophy, ed. Lloyd, Genevieve (New York: Oxford UP, 2002) 70.

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<sup>298</sup> It should be noted that Oe never uses the term “religion” to refer to Gii’s activity. He is consistent in using the phrase “spiritual matter” throughout the trilogy.

<sup>299</sup> Following the village tale that after leaving the body, the soul circles in the valley up to the top of the forest and sinks itself at the foot of a tree, Gii secretly buries Oba in the forest, letting villagers believe that her body was cremated, during which he was believed to inherit Oba’s healing power.

<sup>300</sup> Kenzaburo Oe, Moeagaru Midori no Ki (The Burning Green Tree) (Tokyo: Shincho, 1993) 326-327.

<sup>301</sup> This Sex Which is not One, 101-102.

<sup>302</sup> Sacchan is a nickname for those whose name begins with the syllable “sa.” It can be a nickname for both male and female. It is even possible that “sa” is from his/her family name.

<sup>303</sup> Murakami, *Kafka*, 179.

<sup>304</sup> *Ibid*, 180.

<sup>305</sup> Sunami, 222.

Sunami sees Saeki-san as a Junglian archetypal image of “Great Mother.” She also thinks that Shikoku is a maternal place

<sup>306</sup> Rubin, 293.

<sup>307</sup> Judith Butler, Undoing Gender (New York: Routledge, 2004) 161-162.

<sup>308</sup> Rubin, 291.

<sup>309</sup> Murakami, *Kafka*, 317.

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<sup>310</sup> Tamura Koichi was born sometime between 1945 and 1954, which makes him Dankai Sedai (those who are born in 1947 and 1949). Although “Dankai Junior” usually means those who were born between 1971 and 1974 and Kafka was probably born in 1987, I still regard him as Dankai Junior based on the premise that his father belongs to Dankai Sedai.

<sup>311</sup> Murakami, *Kafka*, 203.

<sup>312</sup> Iris Chang, *The Rape of Nanking*, (New York: Penguin, 1997) 29-33.

<sup>313</sup> George Hicks, *The Comfort Woman*, (New York: Norton, 1994) 42-43.

<sup>314</sup> Murakami, *Kafka*, 266.

<sup>315</sup> Yoshinori Shimizu, *Murakami Haruki wa kuseninaru* (Murakami Haruki is Addictive), (Tokyo: Ashahi Shobo, 2006) 79.

<sup>316</sup> Murakami actually refers to original sin through conversation between Kafka and Oshima-san, who introduces Kafka the story of Aristophanes in Plato’s Symposium. Kafka relates the story of combined people (male/male, female/female, male/female) and their separation by God with original sin (39-40).

<sup>317</sup> Murakami, *Kafka*, 10.

<sup>318</sup> Sunami, 221.

<sup>319</sup> For example, in *Pinball 1973* Boku and the twins throw the dead switchboard in a reservoir, which they regard as the funeral for the switchboard that absorbed too many things. The funeral takes place in the rain. In *A Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, Okada Toru survives the water suddenly filling in the well. In *Norwegian Wood*, the silence of

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Midori at the last scene is described as “the silence of all the misty rain in the world falling on all the new-mown lawns of the world” (293).

<sup>320</sup> Murakami, *Kafka*, 137.

<sup>321</sup> Ibid, 138.

<sup>322</sup> Ibid, 371.

<sup>323</sup> Ibid, 132.

<sup>324</sup> Ibid.

<sup>325</sup> Ibid, 388.

<sup>326</sup> Chang, 31.

<sup>327</sup> Chang, 58.

<sup>328</sup> Murakami, *Kafka*, 415.

<sup>329</sup> Rubin, 281.

<sup>330</sup> Ibid, 142-143.

<sup>331</sup> Rubin, 282-285.

<sup>332</sup> In Haruki Murakami and the Music of Words, Jay Rubin points out that this novel heavily relies on contrivance and coincidence (288).

<sup>333</sup> Murakami, *Kafka*, 397.

<sup>334</sup> Ibid, 437.

<sup>335</sup> Ibid, 402.

<sup>336</sup> Fuminobu Murakami, “Murakami Haruki’s Postmodern World.” Postmodern,

Feminist and Postcolonial Currents in Contemporary Japanese Culture: A Reading of



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Murakami Haruki, Yoshimoto Banana, Yoshimoto Takaaki and Karatani Kojin (New York: Routledge, 2005) 39.

<sup>337</sup> Murakami, *Kafka*, 417.

<sup>338</sup> Ibid, 433.

<sup>339</sup> Ibid, 317.

<sup>340</sup> Hayao Kawai, "The Experience of the Numinous Today: From the Novels of Haruki Murakami," The Idea of the Numinous: Contemporary Jungian and Psychoanalytic Perspectives, ed. Ann Casement and David Tracey (New York: Routledge, 2006)197-198.

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSION: THE JAPANIZATION OF POSTCOLONIALITY

I discussed Murakami Haruki as a post-postwar writer in an unconventional location of postcolonial theory, examining his representation of the continuous control of Japan's imperialism in the postwar society. As has been pointed out by theorists such as Karatani, Yoda, Harootunian, Miyoshi, and Elis, Japan's postmodern is a unique cultural space that is different from western postmodernity. It is actually a variation of the modern. In this context, some commentators on Murakami (Strecher, Suter, Elis) are reluctant to classify him as a postmodern writer. This does not mean, however, that Murakami's position represents a paradoxical self-denial of the modernist. I see his use of postmodern techniques as his strategy to recreate a culturally disoriented society that the State-system narrowly keeps from falling apart through a ready-made collective identity. What Murakami is against is the pre-made identity that represents postwar Japan. In his early writing career, he expresses his dissatisfaction with society (as discussed in chapter 1 and 2), and as his career progresses he begins to suggest solutions for social issues such as Japan's imperial history (chapter 3), ethnic minorities (chapter 4) and salvation (chapter 5). As a whole I see his textual endeavors as his attempt to decolonize postwar Japan from its own imperialism and to end Japan's long "sengo (postwar)."

In chapter 1, I focused on scholarly discourses on the uniqueness of Japan's modernization (Miyoshi, Harootunian, F. Murakami, Arnason) and the identity formation process (Takeuchi, Sakai, Said, Yoshioka). I term modern Japan's westernization (as well as postwar Americanization) as self-colonialism, which was implanted by the modern ideology. In modern Japan's case, modernization and westernization are two different entities in a Chinese box. As the popular idea of the Meiji period, "Wakon Yosai" (Japanese Soul, Western Talent) implies, westernization was a tool to strengthen the nation. During the war, Japan used its Western identity to colonize other Asian nations, and in postwar Japan, a westernized living became a reward to be given to people for being controlled. Therefore, modernization itself can be regarded as Japanization of the West. I believe that this concept is represented through Murakami's depiction of the Americanized urban living of his protagonists. Without blaming the West for Japan's disorientation, he reveals the unnaturalness of Japan's modernity and its grotesque unity with capitalism as seen in his depiction of the Boss's mansion in A Wild Sheep Chase.

In modern Japan's rapid transformation into an imperial power, its source of imperialism is seldom questioned. Modern Japan did not borrow imperialism from the West. I regard the feudal government in the premodern period as an empire and, therefore, recognize the existence of indigenous imperialism prior to its encounter with the West. In chapter 2, I sought the origin of Japan's imperialism in its feudal society and discussed the formation of the core-periphery power structure in the Tokugawa period as the formation of an empire, to which I apply Michael Hechter's idea of internal

colonialism. This internal empire with Tokyo as its center continued to exist after the Meiji Restoration, and Tokyo was officially promoted to be the nation's capital. The Meiji government promoted nationalism through its literacy education, and I discussed the process in relation to Benedict Anderson's analysis of Japan's nation making and its penetration of nationalism through "print capitalism." Tokyo-centeredness was accelerated, and the equation between the standard language and the Tokyo accent was implemented through the mass media.

I compare Murakami's construction of the present day Tokyo in Hardboiled Wonderland and the End of the World with Homi Bhabha's idea of the "third space of enunciation" in terms of their relevancy as sites for individuality. Murakami's Tokyo is not a productive site for identity construction, and his protagonist is terminated from Tokyo, where he enjoys the westernized high standard of living, when he wakes up to individuality. In Japan's case, the "newness" (the West) entering its cultural space does not open up the new space for identity formation. Japan keeps Japanizing the newness, and the West remains a reward for giving up individuality. In this way, he presents Tokyo as a cultural chaos with no exit, and this concept is represented in the realist novel, Norwegian Wood. Agreeing with Ueno Chizuko's assertion of the linguistic colonization of Japan by Tokyo, I read this novel as Murakami's recreation of the communication deficiency among postwar Japanese who are thrown into Tokyo's cultural as well as linguistic chaos created by the modern ideology.

In chapter 3, I discussed Murakami's challenge to postwar Japan's concealment of Japan's imperial history. In The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle, he continues to deal with the

chaotic situation of today's Japan and attributes people's disorientation to the historical black hole created by the State-system. I discussed Murakami's representation of history in the postmodern discourses (Jameson, Karatani, Lyotard) in terms of his creation of postmodern historiographic metafiction, which he uses in order to personalize history. At this point in his career, the sense of detachment from society seen in his previous writings began to carry a clearer political voice. Simultaneously, he starts using magical realism to suggest a solution to heal the communication deficiency and the feeling of disorientation among postwar youths. His textual presentation is comparable to that of Toni Morrison since both writers recreate history in a slippage between postmodern and postcolonial in the form of a historiographic metafiction.

Agreeing with Kawai Hayao that Murakami uses the warp of history to connect postwar generations to the imperial history, I further regard that Murakami uses social consciousness as a weft to show what he calls commitment or connection among people. In chapter 4, I examine Murakami's Chinese characters who represent people of the oppressed groups who do not possess a language to express their pain. I discuss the existence of ethnic minorities in relation to modern Japan's monoethnic ideology. Murakami's presentation of the distances between China and Japan emphasizes Japan's position as a cultural orphan in Asia. Simultaneously, however, I recognize his construction of Orientalism toward ethnic others in his representation of the minority status of the Chinese population. I observe the same exoticism in his presentation of cats in his early works. In Kafka on the Shore, Murakami continues to use magical realism and creates the cat-human hybrid character to give a voice to the oppressed Orientals.

This character, Nakata-san, is forced to engage in the murder of a cat killer who represents a colonizer. After the murder, Nakata-san somehow adopts the colonizer's power and becomes a self-sacrificing savior of postwar youth.

Murakami sees absences of history and lack of social awareness in the minds of postwar Japanese as causing postwar Japan's cultural/social disorientation. He suggests that postwar individuals must find their self-identity in their linkage to the past (through history) as well as the present (through empathetic involvement with other people). The warp of history and the woof of social awareness (including class issues as well as minority issues) weave one cloth, and it is logical for one to locate his/her self identity in it. However, during the process of modernization, the cloth was once stretched out to cover the imperial body and was stained with blood. Although it has been washed and reshaped, the stain and stretch are still there not only as the scars of those who are victimized by Imperial Japan but also as a painful reminder to the "Fukuin Sedai" men (former soldiers/demobilized returners from the continent) who were forced to participated in brutal crimes. In Kafka on the Shore Murakami suggests that the postwar generation must also be responsible for the crimes they did not commit, which can be read as his assertion that Japan is responsible for its imperial past. He presents acceptance of responsibility as a key to decolonize Japan's postwar experience.

In Kafka on the Shore, Murakami does not discriminate against any one religion or another. In fact, he shows the flexibility to use any ideas and religions as long as they help one to be a strong individual. In chapter 5, I explored the position of religion in post-war Japan and discussed Murakami's view of salvation depicted in Kafka on the

Shore in relation to his idea of “commitment.” I believe that Murakami’s view of a healing utopia is represented by his use of the private library. It is a place for people to connect with others, yet, each individual must engage in the activity (reading as well as searching for identity) alone. I consider this a reflection of Murakami’s individualism. Comparing his view of healing with that of Oe Kenzaburo through their representation of home, I also think that Murakami’s view of salvation reflects his negation of the idea of the nation as one family. In this novel, Murakami depicts Japan’s cultural chaos in the form of its chaotic religious flexibility, through which he suggests that one must find salvation in himself instead of placing himself in a healing narrative someone else offers. Murakami presents a sense of responsibility as a necessary element to keep society from falling apart. It should replace the allocated narrative of the nation (Bildungsroman from the ashes), and let responsible individuals connect with each other through commitment.

As discussed in my chapters Murakami is a very experimental writer who constantly adopts new writing styles. Murakami possesses a so-called postmodern flexibility in a good sense, which allows him to be experimental in his textual representation. Shimizu Yoshinori points out that the experimental changes Murakami constantly makes in his styles and methods is a fruitful result of Murakami’s freedom as a lone wolf writer who does not work closely with the “bundan” (文壇, literary circles) that would restrict his creativity.<sup>341</sup> Murakami thinks bundan is a miniature copy of Japanese society. Despite his original anticipation, being a novelist does not free him from being part of society.<sup>342</sup> In this regard, changing styles are his positive attempts to cultivate

opportunities for his professional as well as personal growth and remain detached from the State-system.

Murakami achieved enormous commercial success, and by the late 1980s, his popularity was called the “Murakami Phenomenon.”<sup>343</sup> I name Murakami Ryu, Yamada Eimi and Yoshimoto Banana as his other popular contemporaries, who appeared in the Japanese literary market in sensational ways during the same time Murakami did. Murakami Ryu expressed his anti-society view in aggressive language and graphic imageries of violence, drugs, and sex. Yamada introduced African American men as characters along with certain Katakana vocabulary words such as “buraza (brother)” and “kuru (cool). Yoshimoto produced books with easy language that can be read like comic books. They all have distinctive styles, and for each of them, their newness was welcomed first by popular journalism, and then by the literary critics. However, none of them other than Murakami Haruki became a cultural phenomenon. What made him stand out, I believe is the experimental changes in styles he constantly makes without disturbing the core of his fairy tale-like narratives and a certain degree of didacticism in them. In this sense, he is a “hybrid” writer who always remains “new” and “exotic” not only to Japanese readers but also to other Asian as well as Western readers. Murakami’s vitality makes his works organic, and his readers enjoy the sophisticated vehicles he uses to deliver his solid world view. All the more, choosing reading strategies for his works is a crucial matter. I believe that rethinking his works in the framework of cultural discourse is an effective way to read his political messages.



I interpreted Murakami's persistent referral to the failure of the Zenkyoto movement during the 1960s as his political message, which distinguishes him from those who preceded him. Matthew Strecher notes that the lack of political opposition after the Zenkyoto resulted in a controlled society in which consumerism has replaced opposing political ideologies and mass desire has been controlled through education, mass media and industrial production.<sup>344</sup> Consequently, people in this controlled society are trained to feel satisfied with a high standard of living, which is regarded as a proud achievement of postwar reconstruction, and their satisfaction is evident in the popularity of the Nihonjinron writings. In this society the collective identity that I call "Bildungsroman from the ashes" was promoted and it was allocated to people to manipulate their lack of individuality. From the beginning of his writing career, Murakami has maintained his position as a writer of the Zenkyoto generation, and he presents the Zenkyoto movement in the 1960s as the last battle of the people against the State-system. Throughout his major works, he inserts his concern with (or lament for) the Zenkyoto through the personal history of his characters. Many of his first person narrators are not the confessor of their personal matters but the spokesman of our time. While "I" characters in works of Mishima Yukio or Kawabata Yasunari represent modern individuals at the personal level, Murakami's "Boku" is a collective "I" who is more politically represented. In fact, he creates an ironic situation through battling against collectivism with collectivism. This is the significant difference I recognize between Murakami's works and Japan's self-confession style novels called "I-novels."

Murakami's avoidance of personalization is also observed in his no-name characters, which appeared "new" to Japan's literary criticisms.

My dissertation was to explore a new reading strategy that localizes Murakami's so-called postmodern writings, focusing on their ethnographical aspects, and my attempt actually relocated literary works in a framework of area/cultural studies. In each chapter, I discussed key elements that are necessary to consider postwar Japan's social condition in Murakami's texts. James Fujii points out Japan's growing interest in Western culture studies, which he observes in the availabilities of translations of cultural theories including works of Stuart Hall, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Ray Chow and Sakai Naoki to name a few. He is concerned with the possibility of Japanese studies being colonized by the Western cultural theories. He writes:

At the most "local" of concerns is the transformation of what was once a model that was virtually a universal: the West sought to understand the non-West, and the former brought to bear its superior technologies of understanding ("methods") upon other societies made accessible by native informants.<sup>345</sup>

However, I believe that the "Western methods" are useful to examine a social function of Japanese literature, and Japanization of the "method" makes them more effective. My application of postcolonial theories to Murakami's works offers a new reading strategy for his representation of Japanese society, including its modernity and postmodernity. I believe that this Japanization of postcoloniality cultivates a new perspective on Japanese culture studies.

I positioned Murakami's "newness" in an ambiguous space in between postmodern and postcolonial. This reflects the stance of today's Japanese culture, which

is unique and does not fit into any particular cultural framework. Just as Homi Bhabha grounds his idea of the third space on Frederick Jameson's postmodern condition of schizoid and split, Paul Gilroy's black Atlantic is also located in the shared space between postmodern and postcolonial. What we are concerned with as the postmodern decenteredness can be read as the postcolonial issue of hybridity. The overlaps of postmodern and postcolonial open up a useful space to produce a counter narrative against modernity, which, in Japan's case, still continues in the name of postwar. All the more, the application of postcolonial theories places Murakami's attempt to decolonize the postwar period in a new theoretical location.

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<sup>341</sup> "Murakami Haruki wa kusenari naru" (Murakami Haruki is addictive), 11-13.

<sup>342</sup> Murakami Haruki, Kawai Hayao ni aini iku (Murakami Haruki meets Kawai Hayao,  
46.

<sup>343</sup> Toshiko Elis, "Questioning Modernism and Postmodernism in Japanese Literature,"  
Japanese Encounter with Postmodernity. eds. Johann Arnason and Yoshio Sugimoto  
(New York: Columbia UP, 1995) 144.

<sup>344</sup> Matthew Strecher, Dances with Sheep: The Quest for Identity in the Fiction of  
Murakami Haruki (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan, 2002) 77.

<sup>345</sup> James Fujii, "From Politics to Culture: Modern Japanese Literary Studies in the Age of  
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