IF NOT JAPAN, WHERE?

Towards a Murakami-land in the Fictions of Haruki Murakami

Thesis submitted for the award of Doctor of Philosophy by

Thomas Caffrey
BA (Hons), MA

Supervised by Dr. Michael Hinds

School of English
Dublin City University

December 2024

Declaration

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of Doctor of Philosophy is entirely my own work, and that I have exercised reasonable care to ensure that the work is original, and does not to the best of my knowledge breach any law of copyright, and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

Signed: Thomas Caffrey ID No: 16438134 Date: 16/12/2024

In memoriam Nora Mills (1930-2024)

Table of Contents

Table of Figures 6

Notes on Style 7

Abstract 8

Introduction – A Non-Japanese Writer? 10

(i) Definitions and Complications 18
(ii) Project Overview 28

Chapter I – Contexts 32

(i) Murakami-land, Contexts, and Mishima's Japan 33
(ii) The Capital Question 41
(iii) Another Japan? 44
(iv) Cultural Neutrality, Nostalgia, and Memories 50
(v) Reluctant Actors 58
(vi) Further Adventures in Film-Land: The Mishima-*Godzilla* Complex 62
(vii) Conclusion: Generative and Generated 68

Chapter II – Mythic Routes into (and out of) Murakami-land 71

(i) What's a Myth, Anyways? 72
(ii) Oedipal Destinies 74
(iii) Omphalos Syndrome(s) 82
(iv) New Mythic Structures 85
(v) Breaking Mythic Structures 94
(vi) Conclusion: What's Next? 98

Chapter III – Auto-Mythologization 100

(i) A Curation of Quirks 101
(ii) What's in a Name? 103
(iii) The Elephant (not) in the Room 117
(iv) A Cure for Wellness 123
(v) Conclusion: Wells, Holes, and Escape 127

Chapter IV – Fandom and Murakami-land 129

(i) The Haruki World 130
(ii) Soft-Boiled Fanfiction 139
(iii) Literary Tourism and Murakami-land 143
(iv) Conclusion: Murakami and Anti-Fandom 148

Chapter V – Murakami-land and the Real 153

(i) Murakami and/in/as Popular Culture 155
(ii) Musical Manifestations of Murakami 158
(iii) Cinematic Murakami-land and Coherency 165
(iv) Conclusion: Murakami-land as an Open Setting 175

Conclusion – Continuances 182

(i) A Thousand Ways to Wear a Shirt 183
(ii) Conclusion: My Murakami Day, My Murakami Year 187

Acknowledgements 189

Bibliography 190

Table of Figures

Fig. 1 Map featured at the beginning of *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*. 20

Fig. 2 Chip Kidd's book jacket design for *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage*. 22

Fig. 3 Grant Snider's "Haruki Murakami Bingo", published in *The New York Times Book Review*, June 2012. 132

Fig. 4 Stutpak's version of "Haruki Murakami Bingo", from artist's website. 132

Fig. 5 Sorted most popular post types on Haruki Murakami subreddit community. 136

Fig. 6 Murakami's *1Q84* as featured in DC's Harley Quinn animated comedy (Season 3, Episode 4). 156

Fig. 7 Harry Styles poses with a fan for a photo. Murakami's *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* is tucked under his arm. 163

Fig. 8 UNIQLO Murakami Radio t-shirt. 186

Fig. 9 UNIQLO Murakami 'Peace For All' t-shirt. 186

Notes on style

This thesis follows the guidelines of the 9th edition of the Modern Language Association (MLA) Handbook for Referencing and Style. However, on the occasion that more than one text is used by the same writer, the year of publication is included to differentiate between texts. The thesis also references several untranslated Japanese and Korean texts. In several cases, official romanisation has not been provided. At such moments, I perform the transliteration myself with reference to the Japan Foundation's learning tool *Irodori* for Japanese characters and Yoshihiko Asao's romanization tool for Korean characters.

References to Japanese and Korean names are presented in the English ordering (given name, followed by family name). This allows for greater synchronicity with secondary sources, while also retaining a sense of a remove between Haruki Murakami in Japanese and the writer as he appears in English language translation.

As Murakami frequently uses nameless protagonists, I use the name 'Boku' throughout the thesis to refer to the narrator of the Tetralogy of the Rat sequence of novels; *Hear the Wind Sing*, *Pinball, 1973*, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, and *Dance, Dance, Dance*. *Boku* is one of the Japanese personal pronouns; other pronouns referenced herein include *watashi* and *wagahai*. Each pronoun carries a slightly different register, discussed in the text of the thesis. I borrow the usage of *boku* as a name from Jay Rubin. Rubin uses the name in the same way in *Haruki Murakami and the Music of Words* (2012). When the word is used as a pronoun it is italicised; when used as a name, it is not. The majority of Japanese words throughout the thesis are likewise italicised, but particularly common words such as 'samurai' and 'origami' are presented unitalicized to allow for better coherence with secondary sources.

Abstract

Thomas Caffrey

IF NOT JAPAN, WHERE?

Towards a Murakami-land in the Fictions of Haruki Murakami

Nobel Laureate Kenzaburō Ōe once described the fiction of Haruki Murakami as "not really Japanese". If not Japan, where can Haruki Murakami's fiction be located? This project assumes the answer is Murakami-land. Murakami-land is a holophrase adopted to best map and politically contextualise the fiction of Murakami as it appears in English language translation. The thesis runs with Ōe's assertion, querying what it means to be a Japanese writer (appearing in English). The Murakami-land holophrase allows discussion of the tropes, cultural references, postmodern playfulness, and oddly insistent idiosyncrasies that define Murakami's fiction. Engagement with Murakami-land is limited to English translations as Murakami's second language is English; his first novel was originally written (but not published) in English. This constraint allows for engagement with English-language Murakami criticism to its fullest potential, while also narrowing the scope and refining overall arguments of this project. Murakami's early work is compared to other Japanese artists broadly analogous to Murakami, such as Yukio Mishima and Akira Kurosawa, augmented by writers on anglophone versions of Japan, such as Ian Buruma and Roland Kelts. The thesis further considers myth and Murakami, studying how he uses and problematises existing myths, while forging his own. This world-building exercise is examined as a portal through which Murakami-land is transformed from literary fiction to a space accommodating modern fandom. This forms the second half of the thesis, which engages with online Murakami fans across different social networks. The study finally attempts to map the unmappable and to define the borders of a non-physical country. Murakami-land both is and is not Japan: in this contradiction, the true appeal and cultural capital of Haruki Murakami may best be felt.

Introduction – A Non-Japanese Writer?

Several Ways to Understand a Murakami-land

The 1920 book-poem *Paris* by Hope Mirrlees begins with an enigmatically simple proclamation: "I want a holophrase". This serves as a statement of intent for the poem, which psycho-geographically maps (or illustrates the folly of attempting to do so) a day of strike action in the city of Paris. Oxford English Dictionary defines the word holophrase as a "single word used instead of a phrase, or to express a combination of ideas". The word Paris becomes a stand-in for the complex totality of the speaker's lived experiences. It paradoxically serves to represent both Paris and the impossibility of encapsulating the city in a single word. This dissertation similarly projects a holophrase, Murakami-land, to attempt (and to fail to attempt) at signifying the way in which Haruki Murakami's fiction operates both on the page and in the minds of the people who read it, generating tensions of space and place. The term is also used here to connote the distinctive experience of reading Murakami in English. Murakami-land therefore means multiple things at once: it is a setting, it is a mood, it is a construction of his fans, it is a series of conditions that define anglophone translations (and iterations) of Haruki Murakami's fictions, and to some (maybe even many) it is a fantasy. The term points to the problems and contradictions inherent to Murakami's fiction, while acknowledging (without dismissing) the presence of the translator's voice on Murakami's narratives, as further discussed in this introduction. The two main translators discussed in the thesis are Jay Rubin and Alfred Birnbaum, whose divergent styles are mediated with reference to David Karashima's *Who We're Reading When We're Reading Murakami*. Put most simply, Murakami-land refers to the experience of reading Haruki Murakami in English. It is at once a sensation generated by reading the fiction of Murakami in this way, as well as an approach that can be brought to other texts. The thesis identifies key elements of Murakami's style and, in the later chapters, how these elements can be formed into a sort of lens or way of reading other texts, expanding the idea of a Murakami-land.

Murakami-land is not an entirely new phrase either; I adapt it from Nathaniel Rich's 2014 review of Murakami's novel *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage* (released in the same year), in which Rich makes two references to what he terms "Murakamiland" (38). Rich writes of the novel: "we're undeniably in Murakamiland. Nobody

else could have written this novel, or dared to try. Then again, given the remarkable continuity of his fiction, nearly every Murakami novel feels like a new volume of the same meganovel, a vast saga that is now approaching 7,000 pages in length" (39). Rich argues that Murakami's repetitive narratives and style constructs a singular whole. This whole, according to Rich, seems a saga of endlessly thwarted love and banal shopping trips. Rich's reading is critical at points (the article's subheading reads: "[h]is sentences can be awful, his plots are formulaic—yet his novels mesmerize"), but his study of Murakami's circular, closed loop repetition is apt. The Murakami-land of this thesis seeks to further and complicate this idea, introducing a new angle or approach to understanding the construction of Murakami-land in each chapter. It is understood here as not one whole, but rather a series of plateaus; each representing a divergent understanding of the anglophone Murakami as filtered through separate lenses (lenses which overlap at points, resulting in either bridged plateaus or entirely new plateaus altogether). Note the dividing dash that differentiates this use of the term (Murakami-land) from Rich's version (Murakamiland). The dash can represent the gulf between Haruki Murakami in Japanese and his anglophone counterpart, while also representing the fact that the Murakami-land of this thesis is not solely generated or ruled over by Murakami himself. This is reflected in the structure of the thesis, in which the chapters build cumulatively, while the thesis itself is broadly divided in two. The first half, consisting of chapters one to three, covers a contextualised Murakami-land. This half historically situates Haruki Murakami's literary beginnings, contrasting the world of his fiction in English language translation to other contemporary images of Japan and analysing Murakami's curation of mythological traditions in his fiction. Meanwhile, the second half of the thesis moves toward a fan-driven and fan-authored Murakami-land, examining the phenomenon as generated both for and by a dedicated fanbase. So, while the term resembles Rich's, it moves the chief agency away from Murakami the storyteller, addressing Murakami, his fans, critics, and publishers as equal participants in the construction of the imagined Murakami-land.

In 1993, Murakami released his first short story collection available in English translation, entitled *The Elephant Vanishes* (later republished by Vintage Books in 2003). Reviewing the collection at release for *The New York Times*, Herbert Meitgang problematically critiques an assumed political problem that haunts Murakami's fiction: "just when you're ready for some wisdom from the Orient, the author serves up a Big Mac". Meitgang's language reveals how long-discredited notions or conceptions of East and West, Orient and Occident, persist in readings of Murakami. Haruki Murakami appears like a metronome, considered an

envoy of Japan by the English-speaking world, or a shameful convert to Western ideology in his native Japan. Both identifications categorise and police Murakami on political and representational grounds. However, such binaries somewhat obscure the fact that Murakami is incredibly popular in Japan. In her 2020 book *The Haruki Phenomenon: Haruki Murakami as Cosmopolitan Writer*, Tomoki Wakatsuki points to the term "the Haruki phenomenon" (14), a phrase coined by newspapers at the time of *Norwegian Wood*'s release (1987 in Japan), which sold over four million copies in Japan. Murakami's novel was so immediately successful in Japan (and across East Asia) that it necessitated the creation of such a term. Haruki Murakami, now a global bestseller and perennial Nobel Prize for Literature odds-on favourite, has also long served the role of Japanese literary ambassador in Anglophone literary discourse. Herbert Meitgang also calls Murakami's work "frequent-flyer fiction", suggesting both an international element and a disposability to this fiction. Meitgang is not the only writer to critique Murakami along these lines (but he is perhaps alone in the crudeness of his argument construction). Kenzaburō Ōe, Nobel Literature Prize awardee and celebrated Japanese writer, once remarked that "Murakami writes in Japanese, but his writing isn't really Japanese … it can be read very naturally in New York" (Chozick 62). This is a common criticism; in Japan, Murakami is often accused of being too Americanised (or more nebulously, too Westernised) in literary style. In American literary discourse, Murakami is often treated as above: a fanciful and exotic new perspective on anglophonic understandings of Japan as a wacky playground of neon-illuminated anime, freshly cut sushi, and quaint samurai. Should Murakami stray from a representational responsibility, he is open to commentary like Meitgang's or Rich's.

One of the complications behind Murakami-land lies in understanding Murakami as a 'Japanese writer'. Ōe, after all, is somewhat correct. Murakami is easily read in New York. His work is readily available and widely consumed all across the anglophone world. Ōe also is not alone in his position; many Japanese writers have voiced similar concerns. Masao Miyoshi's *Off Center: Power and Culture Relations Between Japan and the United States* compares Murakami to another Japanese writer, Yukio Mishima, stating that "they both custom-tailor their goods to their clients abroad: Mishima displayed an exotic Japan, its nationalist side … [Murakami instead presents] an exotic Japan, its international side … pre-occupied with Japan, or, to put it more precisely, with what [Murakami] imagine[s] the foreign buyers like to see in it" (234). The positioning of Murakami as "exotic" seems curious now: much of Murakami's anglophone success seems predicated on innate common experiences between readers in these zones and the worlds of Murakami's fiction (this is further discussed in Chapter I). From this,

one understanding of a Murakami-land emerges: a shadow-state that responds to literary representations of Japan, but necessarily differs. It is situated sequentially here. Moving beyond Miyoshi's assertion, Murakami-land can be understood as a sort of setting, one that approximates Japan, but is conscious of the artifice of its own approximation. Through this lens, it may be understood as akin to Roland Kelts' idea of the Japanamerica phenomenon: an emergent twenty-first century Japanophilia predicated on the two-way street of American-influenced Japanese popular culture's "eccentricities, … zaniness, and libertarian fearlessness" (6). Kelts identifies Japanamerica as a social phenomenon, identifying its artistic output as native to both Japan and America. He mainly cites cinema here: Sofia Coppola's 2003 *Lost in Translation*, the Wachowski Sisters' 1999 *The Matrix*, and Shinji Aramaki's 2004 *Appleseed* are key texts in Kelts' Japanamerica. Coppola's film is an American film set in Japan, while Aramaki's is a Japanese film set in America. The Wachowskis' film is revealed to occur in an unspecified corner of a postapocalyptic earth but is entirely informed by anime visual language and style[1]. This state of being-both is at the heart of Murakami-land, which can be approached (if not fully understood) through contextual readings against contemporary literary representations of Japan.

Haruki Murakami is a difficult writer to categorise; for a writer who primarily writes literary fiction, Haruki Murakami sells remarkably well. His success has been compared to that of popular genre writers JK Rowling and Stephen King's. Although this comparison is usually made for the devotional fan behaviour his fiction engenders rather than for his financial success[2], Murakami has sold millions of books (McCurry). Murakami has also been translated into more than fifty languages (Wakatsuki 8), ranging from major languages such as Mandarin and English to minor languages such as Galician and Catalan. His famous novel *Norwegian Wood* was an immediate hit that propelled Murakami into celebrity status in Japan (and eventually the US). By any mark, Haruki Murakami is an incredibly successful writer. He has won multiple literary prizes and awards – among them the Jerusalem Award and the Franz Kafka Prize – and has been translated into over 60 languages. His fiction has been adapted for the screen, the stage, and tops bestseller lists as well as best of the year lists (memorably, Barack Obama tweeted that *Men Without Women* was one of the best books of 2019 and listed the film

[1] The film inspired an anime anthology spinoff, *The Animatrix* (2003), that continues the Japanamerica conversation: a Japan-inspired American film spawns a Japanese adaptation/sequel in what appears as a multi-step cultural filtration.

[2] By Hilary A. White in her review "Killing Commendatore: A blizzard of the bizarre from an Eastern giant", in which the writer compares Murakami's midnight book launches to the fervour surrounding later instalments in the *Harry Potter* franchise.

adaptation *Drive My Car* among his favourite films of 2021). Murakami's presence in Anglophone literary culture and fandom is utterly unique in the scale of its reach. Murakami makes frequent use of various English-language terms in his fictions. This is best illustrated in the short story, "The Elephant Vanishes" in which a company uses the English word 'kitchen' as an advertising gimmick to sell kitchen appliances; "We say 'kit-chin' … No big deal, but the company wants us to use the English" (230). The imperfection of the rendered translation is key here: it speaks to a linguistic divide that cannot be replicated in translation, pointing to an artifice inherent to anglophone Murakami. This is symptomatic of the unique experience of reading Murakami in English, where some meanings are lost (the Japanese pronouns of Murakami's writing has no English-language equivalent) and others are estranged or multiplied (the phoneticisation of the word 'kitchen'). The pronoun matter is discussed later in the thesis.

Simultaneously, the "kit-chin" episode positions English as a bridging language, a function of commerce in the story, an impression compounded by other Murakami stories, such as "Barn Burning" (2003). This story references English language brands and artists, including Miles Davis, Marlboro, and Pepsi. Other languages are mentioned via Johann Strauss and Ravi Shankar, but English is the dominant and recurrent non-Japanese language in Murakami's fiction. As a commercial language in Murakami's fictions, it introduces another element to the Murakami-land concept, a sort of itemizing effect. Frederic Jameson's idea of itemization, coined by him to refer to the experience of reading Karl Ove Knausgaard, can also apply well to navigating the fictions of Haruki Murakami. Jameson describes itemization as a writing style that considers everything a commodity; "it is not only the objects Karl Ove buys and uses that are itemized here: it is the people, the emotions and feelings, the thoughts, that are itemized as well" (203). Jameson illustrates this with mention of Knausgaard's fondness for the supermarket sequence, the mundane recording of purchasing food and daily necessities. However, Jameson could just as easily be writing about Murakami, whose work is punctuated by visits to supermarkets. These visits read nearly like shopping lists; the protagonist rattles off brand names and items bought. The brand names mentioned are usually American or from another English-speaking zone. Murakami situates his characters in relation to what they eat, see, or listen to. So, they are anchored to reality by dining in a Denny's chain restaurant (in the 2007 novel *After Dark*), Jodie Foster films and fictionalised Japanese cinema (1994's *Dance, Dance, Dance*), or listen to Beatles songs (*Norwegian Wood*, "Yesterday", "With the Beatles"). Murakami-land is where consumption and curation are among the most recognizable modes of behaviour.

Murakami's début novel, *Hear the Wind Sing*, was originally written in English (Murakami 2020), after which Murakami translated his own work back into Japanese to affect a distant and alienated tone (29-31). Murakami wrote in emulation of Raymond Carver's early style, with elements of detective fiction, and affected a cool and distant tone in his fiction. The resultant cadence of the novel is unusual and stilted, owing in part to Murakami's own imperfect English at the time alongside his choice of an unusual Japanese personal pronoun, *boku*. As such, the original English-language draft of the novel has not been publicly released, thus there is an intermediary translator present (Alfred Birnbaum and later Ted Goossen) for the Kodansha-published English language release in 1985 and the later Vintage translation in 2015. This serves as a synoptical illustration of the concerns of this project: to examine the unique relationship between Haruki Murakami and the anglophone world. Ōe's criticism is useful here in understanding Murakami's utility of Anglophonic references; his characters wear trendy American brands such as Levi's Jeans and remain largely indifferent to any notions of Japanese 'tradition'. In Murakami's 2015 introduction to the *Penguin Book of Japanese Short Stories*,[3] Murakami explains this ambivalence; "I was never able to warm to such supposedly representative Japanese literary giants as … Mishima Yukio (1925-70) … I learned practically nothing about novelistic technique from my Japanese predecessors" (xii). Murakami instead cites Raymond Chandler, Raymond Carver, or F. Scott Fitzgerald as literary influences than Japanese counterparts like Ryuunosuke Akutagawa, Yoko Ogawa, or indeed Ōe himself. Carver is an interesting choice of comparison for Murakami here; Carver's style is now understood as primarily the handiwork of his editor, Gordon Lish (Armitrage 2007). Murakami-land is a creation of the intervention of many; Carver's now decentred literary reception may prove a useful lens through which to consider the Murakami-land phenomenon.

This thesis is not an exercise in Translation Studies, however. Instead, the thesis examines Murakami-land as it is manifest in anglophone translations. In each case, I use the most readily available English-language source for Murakami. These translations are provided in all cases by Jay Rubin, Philip Gabriel, Ted Goossen, or Alfred Birnbaum. Where possible, I favour the Rubin translations as his translations are the most widely available and thus the most likely point of reference for the average anglophone reader. He is also Murakami's preferred translator and personal friend, as attested to in *Haruki Murakami and the Music of Words*.

[3] Itself an interesting thing to consider: Murakami is so considered 'The Japanese Writer' in the anglosphere, that he is invited to introduce books and collections about which he has little apparent interest. See also his introduction to *Rashomon and Seventeen Other Stories*. This implies that his name, attached to a book, lends it either an auratic quality or boosts its commercial viability.

Alfred Birnbaum's early, controversial translations of Murakami are also used without prejudice throughout the thesis. Birnbaum's incomplete or inaccurate translations helped Murakami to gain a foothold in the American literary scene, while his translations remain the only available for novels such as *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*, originally written in 1985 and translated by Birnbaum in 1991 for Kodansha. This translation was retained for the subsequent publication by Vintage Books in 2003. Where relevant, the difficulties of translating Murakami are summarised with reference to David Karashima's *Who We're Reading When We're Reading Murakami* – in which Murakami is quoted as describing Birnbaum as "more of an introducer than a meticulous translator" (118) – or Jay Rubin's *Haruki Murakami and the Music of Words*, alongside selections from other thinkers such as Tomoki Wakatsuki and Motoko Akashi. Karashima critiques Birnbaum's translation methods, noting the phrase "fancy shmancy Kinokuniya" (190) that Birnbaum uses in his translation of *Dance, Dance, Dance*. Murakami's original text uses simply "Kinokuniya" at the same point; the American neologism is an insert or invention on the part of Birnbaum. This adds to the fact that anglophone readers are unlikely to recognise Kinokuniya, which is a Japanese bookstore chain. Kinokuniya also operates a series of smaller newsagent style convenience stores, which is where the Murakami character purchases their food. At present, few Kinokuniya stores are operated in English-speaking territories. The few that are, operate as bookstores rather than convenience stores. There are several similar occurrences that appear throughout Birnbaum's translations. Some of these are analysed with reference to Karashima later in the thesis. Karashima is used to contextualise Murakami's careful adherence to his current English-language translators. This is a topic the thesis acknowledges and discusses, but the specifics of translation are not the chief concern in considering a Murakami-land; this is after all, something somewhat beyond Murakami. The literal act of translation is simply another disruption in a longer chain that comes together to signify Murakami-land. Put another way, Murakami-land is what happens to Murakami's writing in anglophone territories.

This necessarily means that much of my work functions at a remove from many of the great works of Murakami criticism and commentary, such as Rebecca Suter's *The Japanization of Modernity: Murakami Haruki Between Japan and the United States* and Tomoki Wakatsuki's *The Haruki Phenomenon: Haruki Murakami as Cosmopolitan Writer*. Although mention is made of both works, their overarching arguments primarily situate Murakami in a Japanese context against considerations of the Japanese I-novel and Japanese cosmopolitan identity respectively, while I am concerned with Murakami's reception in anglophone territories.

Matthew Carl Strecher's *The Forbidden Worlds of Haruki Murakami* (2014) is more immediately useful here; I draw on Strecher's ideas of world-building and his deft sketching of Murakami's mythic influences. Strecher's co-edited collection, *Haruki Murakami: Challenging Authors* (2016), with Paul L. Thomas, is also useful in guiding my exploration of Murakami as constructing a unique literary experience, both purposefully and inadvertently in the English language format.

The foundations of Murakami's fame are found in his native Japan, where Murakami's books regularly sell out print runs and he is a household name[4]. In Japan, Murakami is a celebrity translator; when his translation of *The Great Gatsby* was published in Japan in 2015 by Shinchosa, Murakami's name dwarfed Fitzgerald's. While Murakami in the anglophone world might not yet be a household name, his work (and name) appear in English-language culture with increasing frequency. In early 2024, Murakami was the premise of an advertisement for *Saturday Night Live*. Murakami manages the precarious high-wire act of retaining both popular appeal (the release of the translated *1Q84* inspired midnight launches in San Francisco, London, and New York in 2011 that were reminiscent of *Star Wars* midnight release screenings, complete with costumes) and literary appeal (he was awarded the America Award in Literature 2018 for the same year's *Killing Commendatore*. Meanwhile, the film adaptation of his short story "Drive My Car" was awarded the Academy Award for Best Foreign Film in 2022, further pushing Murakami to the forefront of not only literary, but also popular discourse. All of this represents a movement away from the central figure of Murakami the writer, while signifying the cultural capital that Murakami's name conveys.

The cultural value that Murakami's name has accrued is navigated in later chapters with reference to Pierre Bourdieu's *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, in which Bourdieu asserts that there exists a "socially recognized hierarchy of the arts, and within each of them, of genres, schools or periods, corresponds a social hierarchy of the consumers" (1). Bourdieu's further writing on allusions and taste-making come into focus in Chapters IV and V. The writer is merely one of many figures in a non-sequential chain of cultural production (writer-readers-adapters-cosplayers-cinemagoers-and so on). To this end, Murakami is studied through the lens of modern fandom, which affords a way of making sense of where Murakami stands in modern popular anglophone culture. This approach draws heavily from Holly

[4] For a fuller account of Murakami's celebrity in Japan, Motoko Akashi's excellent "Translator celebrity: investigating Haruki Murakami's visibility as a translator" offers an insight to his fame and success in this field. In this essay, Akashi notes that while translated texts in Japan include their translator's name on the front cover, Murakami's name often eclipses the name of the original writer.

Luetkenhaus and Zoe Weinstein's *Austentatious: The Evolving World of Jane Austen Fans* for its astute mapping of modern fandom and literary tourism. This popular discourse surrounding Murakami is embodied not only through fan events (such as the *1Q84* cosplay launch parties), but also via social media. Engaged research with Murakami-based Reddit groups (entitled 'subreddits'), Discord channels, and TikToks help to illustrate the reach of Murakami's literature, while demonstrating how readers engage with the texts and experience of Murakami-land. The sheer volume of disparate opinions (and emergent monolithic, hegemonic online opinions) constitute a series of plateaus that interact and occasionally clash. Possible lines of flight, escape, and crosspollination emerge here; if there are a thousand Murakami fans, there are too a thousand versions of Murakami. Each one may be somewhat unique, whilst retaining an innate sameness. The fandom chapter is built around Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's series of questions in the introduction of *A Thousand Plateaus*; "Do not even lines of flight, due to their eventual divergence, reproduce the very formations their function it was to dismantle or outflank? But the opposite is also true. It is a question of method: the tracing should always be put back on the map" (13). The sustained conversations hosted through these social media channels represents a vast spreading of Murakami-land, a pollinating breeze. It necessitates an interrogation as to how and why Murakami's literature proves so popular and entrancing to anglophonic readers, while tracing the different manifestations (or plateaus) of fan appreciation. How each one is distinct and unique becomes the operative task of the chapter. Necessarily, the chapter is restrained; there may be a thousand Murakamis, but the discussion here is limited to categorisation and analysis of how social media form shapes the discussions hosted. For this reason, the easily mapped and categorised Murakami subreddit (where posts are voted upon and easily sorted) is contrasted with the more transient Discord channel (non-stop group-driven chatroom) and the utterly vast world of TikTok (nigh unsortable). Murakami-land thus emerges in this thesis as a series of interlinked lenses or approaches (imagological imagined space, fantasy setting). Murakami-land is that which is brought to it.

(i) Definitions and Complications

Mapping Murakami-land is an impossible task. The holophrase is instead adopted as a way of speaking about reading, seeing, and experiencing Murakami through English; it is a particular reading experience with particular pleasures, problems, and complications that render it distinct from Murakami in Japanese. Rubin and Karashima both note the challenges inherent in

translating Murakami to English – his interplay of formal and informal Japanese personal pronouns has no English equivalent, for example – but there is a more central problem. Early Murakami stories were written in English, rewritten by Murakami into Japanese, and then handed off to Birnbaum (and later Rubin, Gabriel, and Goossen). As such, English-language Murakami is an approximation of an approximation: there is a hazy impression of a 'truer', more tangible version of these early stories that lies beyond the reader's grasp. English-language Murakami also carries a certain degree of capital: Rubin writes that for some time the German translations of Murakami were not based on the original Japanese texts, but rather translated from the English translations (389). Here, an approximation of an approximation of an approximation emerges. Still uncertainty permeates anglophone Murakami-land still, which emerges as a more of an alienating and unclear space rather than a confidently mappable place. Understandings of these terms stem from Yi-Fi Tuan's *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*, in which 'space' is established as a setting of potential and non-specificity. It is large, encompassing, "marked off and defended against intruders" (7). Meanwhile, 'place' defines that which is specific and functional; "centres of felt value where biological needs … are satisfied" (7). Tuan argues that space carries the potential of place within it: once one knows or becomes accustomed to a space, it can be rendered a place. It may be mapped, whether geographically or experientially.

Further to this, Murakami-land emerges as a sort of non-place, borrowing from Marc Augé's *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Super-Modernity*. Augé's 1997 book begins with an illustration of the non-place in which a fictional businessman, Pierre Dupont, travels through Charles De Gaulle airport. He parks his car, presents his passport, and pays for goods with his credit card. He passes through areas where "thousands of individual itineraries converged for a moment" (3), before settling into business-class on an intercontinental flight. Meitgang's classification of Murakami as "frequent flyer fiction" seems particularly apt through this lens then. The non-place is defined by the transience and fleeting intangibility of the airport setting. Augé's non-place is where "solitude is experienced as an overburdening or emptying of individuality, in which only the movement of the fleeting images enables the observer to hypothesize the existence of a past and glimpse the possibility of a future" (87). Murakami-land is somewhat composed of this hazy imagining; the past is never concrete and the future is always muddied, while an unseen web of connections maintains a functioning facade. Deirdre Flynn asserts in "The Uncanny City: Delving into Sewers and Subconscious of Tokyo in Haruki Murakami's *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*" (2019)

that the protagonist's descent beneath Tokyo in Murakami's novel (venturing into tunnels and the metaphorical innards of the city) is a simultaneously gothic and post-modern experience (210). This is true of Murakami-land at large: it is a haunted space and holophrase that is comprised of suggestion as much as it is of concrete image.

As such, any attempt to map a Murakami-land must not take the form of a strictly cartographical means and such mapping cannot be achieved through standard visual means. Mapping a Murakami-land is an imaginary undertaking. Instead, the thesis is more interested in how Murakami-land is constructed experientially, rather than geographically. Within his novels, Murakami toys with space, place, and the shortcomings of mapmaking attempts. At the beginning of *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*, a map (Fig. 1) is provided, representing the dreamscape the protagonist encounters. The map inadequately captures the physicality of the space and approximates the diegetic reality sketched by the protagonist as a guide. The map also positions the novel within a genre space, recalling the maps in science fiction such as Herbert's *Dune* or Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*. Tellingly, the map provided represents the transition of a space into a place: only by living in this land, by experiencing its distinct culture, can Boku render it a place (actualised by the drawing of the map).

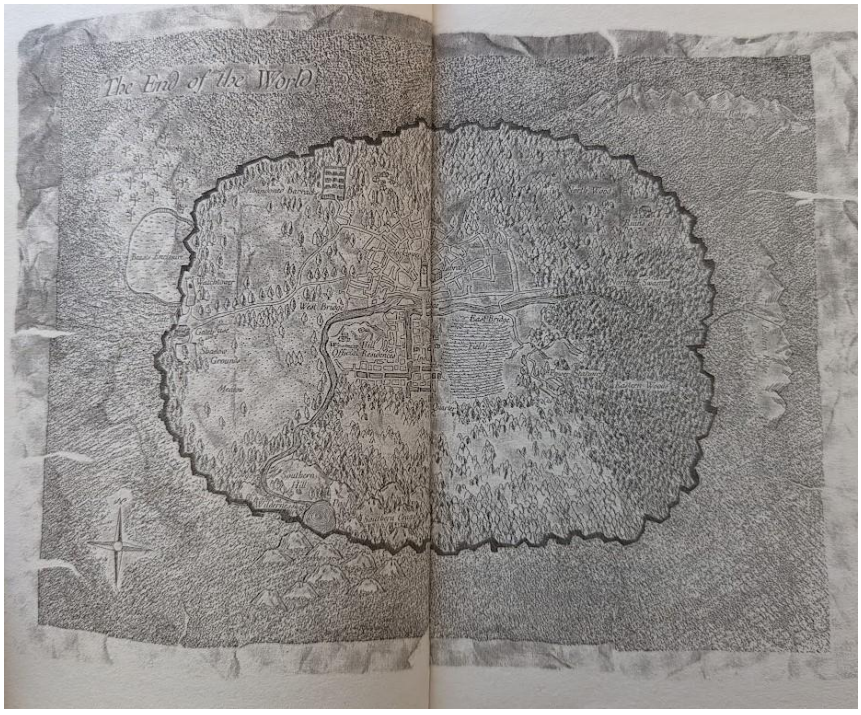

Fig. 1: The map featured at the beginning of *Hard-Boiled Wonderland*. Note its resemblance to the human brain and how these sides are divided by the book's binding. Although the brain appears in landscape, the binding halves it, alluding to an imperfect depiction of the right/left cortex divides.

A later novel, *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and his Years of Pilgrimage*, was published by Harvill Secker with graphic design by famous visual artist and designer Chip Kidd in 2014. Chip Kidd's cover design is similarly evocative of the directly cartographical (Fig. 2). In this case, a map of Tokyo is obscured beneath the book jacket. Even with the jacket removed, the map is impossible to read functionally. Lines run over the map, and four colour block lines (corresponding to railway lines) overlay Tokyo. These four colour lines correspond to four characters, while the titular colourless Tsukuru blends into the landscape (unless the book jacket is used, in which case Tsukuru resembles the thumb of a very colourful hand). Both maps share an element of obscurity and secrecy; neither are particularly useful to the reader as functional maps. They serve another, more immersive purpose. They force the reader to consider the implication of the map in the context of Murakami's work. Where does Murakami's fiction occur? Before the release of *1Q84* in translation, translator Jay Rubin gave a hint to Murakami's success in an interview with BBC; "You don't go to Murakami for views on society, but of the human brain" (Hegarty). To this end, these maps' obscurities and barely recognisable elements render them fitting starting points[5]. They illustrate the transition of space into place, whereby Tuan's experiential sense of place is physically represented as encroaching upon the map in a literal sense. The personal colours are stamped over Tokyo. These characters have marked the city (which is hospitable and navigable to them), while Tsukuru Tazaki's transparent line represents his placelessness and alienation. This illustrates the limitations of attempting to represent the geographical and the experiential at once, which is subject to change in Murakami-land. The clearest map (Fig. 1) is even included in a book about the end of the world that is depicted.

[5] Chip Kidd's cover for *Killing Commendatore* is similar: an image of the moon is overlaid with the pupil and iris of an eye. The center of the moon is shrouded by the image of the eye, which reads as the subjective outlook of the protagonist superseding the mappable known world. As with Fig. 2, the moon/eyeball gimmick is only revealed when the book jacket is removed.

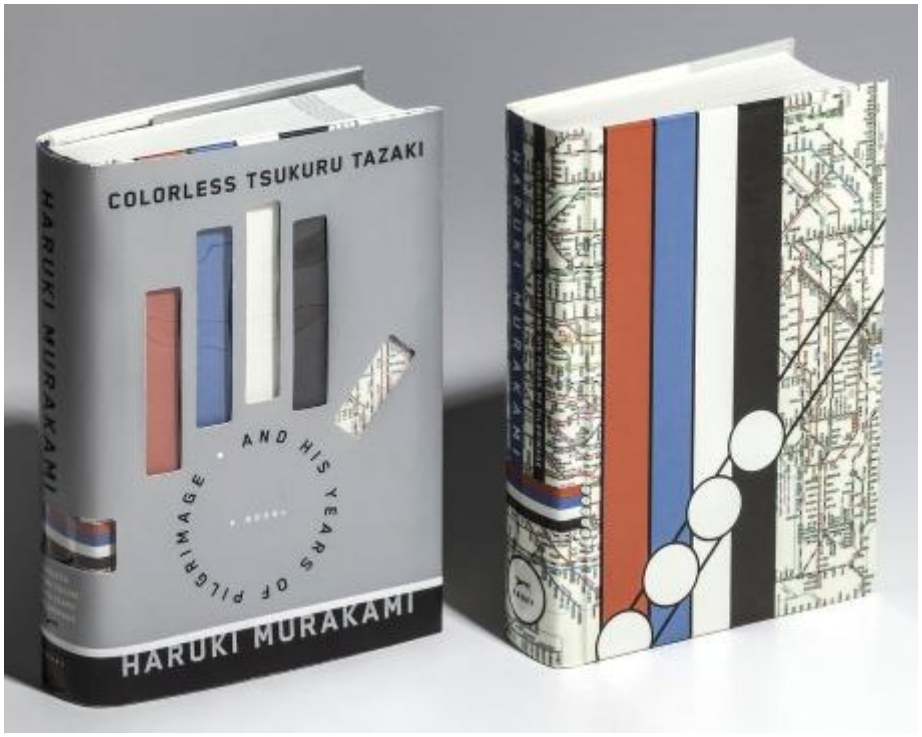

Fig. 2: Promotional photograph showcasing Chip Kidd's visual design for *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage*.

However, physical geography cannot be entirely dismissed here. Although Murakami's fictions sometimes nod to Japanese cultural norms and behaviour, they remain inherently adaptable and malleable. Murakami's fictions are mutable; they are, for the most part, transposable narratives. Indeed, they frequently are transposed: film adaptations have moved Murakami's stories from Japan to South Korea in Chang-Dong Lee's *Burning*, and to New Jersey in Carlos Cuarón's little-seen short *The Second Bakery Attack*. Murakami's literature is however somewhat temporally anchored; it is a fiction of *longue-durée* post-imperial (differentiated from the immediacy of the post-imperial in Yukio Mishima's work) thought. His novels rely upon the place-ified supermarket, the train station, and the cinema. This creates a sort of amenable 'placelessness' predicated on global capital, but also renders the fiction epochally specific. His fiction thus cannot function in a pre-twentieth century context, so such an adaptation is impossible[6]. In this context 'mapping' Murakami-land is the process of identifying and analysing these totemic landmarks, repetitive tropes in his fiction that speak so enduringly to English-language Murakami readers via his texts in translation, as well as their reception by

[6] Unlike, for example Shakespeare, who lent himself quite well to temporal and spatial reorientation, illustrated by Kurosawa across several films.

critics and fans. If a geography emerges in Murakami's fiction, it is a psychogeography, made up of consumable material things as well as symbolic or functional places (places for which there is always an applicable international stand-in). Murakami-land is a non-fixed state of being, it is amorphous and enveloping. It is not something that is easy to make sense of. It is not really some 'thing' at all. It instead, rather serves as a term to refer to experience (to borrow from the subtitle of Yi-Fu Tuan's book, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*), and not geography.

Borders are necessarily complex when conjuring an imagined map of interconnected consciousness. Borders in Murakami's fiction already exist in spectral forms and serve as a series of obstacles or taboos that characters must cross or transgress. The past and present, real and unreal, dream worlds and the waking worlds (with key reference to *1Q84*'s parallel worlds.): all of these converge in Murakami. These are not pocket dimensions that exist in tidy and separate spaces; they instead overlap and intersect, resulting in a collagistic impression of textual reality (realities?) in Murakami's fictions. In doing so, Murakami often uses the same tropic images or scenarios in his narratives. As Rich noted in his review of *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage*, Murakami's fiction is cohesively structured around these tropes (such as the presence of the well or familial malaise and discomfort) This makes mapping a Murakami-land more achievable; although his work is so nebulous and frequently absurd, the landmarks of Murakami-land are more easily identifiable as they stand out against the haziness that surrounds them. One possible approach to Murakami-land then is an imagological approach, which is sketched over the opening three chapters of the thesis. Beller and Leerssen's 2007 edited collection *Imagology: The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters*, defines imagology as "the typology of characterizations and attributes with their currency and with their rhetorical deployment … singles out a nation from the rest of humanity as being somehow different or 'typical'" (xiv). It is the conscious creation and cultivation of an imagined nationhood that binds together national stereotypes and characteristics to create an approximated literary self-portrait. The result of this binding of temporality, self-reflective lampoon, and imaginative construction is what Beller and Leerssen dub an 'imaginated' country. 'Imaginate' is distinct from 'imagine' for its proposed national connotations (alongside the implication of a determined structure). The difference is summarised by Leerssen in the essay "Imagology: History and Method"; "The statement 'France is a republic' is by and of itself not imaginated; the statement 'The French are freedom-loving individualists' is" (27-28). As such, the term is used throughout the thesis

(primarily the first half of the thesis) with connotations of nation-construction and the sense of an in-group.

In the immediate post-war era (and subsequent occupation), Japan was imaginated multiple times over. Divergent images or versions of Japan were formed; Mishima's dark and foreboding nation of depressed malcontent amongst them. However, arguably the most successful and enduring imaginated Japan was to be found in Akira Kurosawa's samurai films. Kurosawa's films include *Rashomon* and *Throne of Blood*, adapted from Akutagawa and Shakespeare respectively. Kurosawa's imaginated Japan is marked by class distinction and an observed honour system. It referred back to a feudal Japan, whilst adapting the plots of several of William Shakespeare's plays. Akira Kurosawa's resultant imaginated Japan was then a fusion country; borrowing Western motifs to reinstate a 'Japanese' land and cultural identity. The changes necessitated between Shakespeare in England and Shakespeare in Japan become a checklist of cultural signifiers. King Duncan is rendered a sort of *daimyo* in Kurosawa's film, asserting and situating the adaptation as spatially specific and distinct. In the first chapter, these imaginated Japans are compared to the section of Beller and Leerssen's *Imagology* that deals with Japan, written by Ian Littlewood (200-202). Cultural stereotypes are established by Littlewood that both coincide and diverge from the versions of Japan discussed in the opening chapter.

This is a pleasure familiar to Murakami-land through the eyes of the English-speaker. The familiar and the unfamiliar do not so much collide as coexist in Murakami-land. Mark Fisher's theories of the 'Weird'[7], and the 'Eerie' from his 2016 book, *The Weird and the Eerie* are valuable in examining this particular subject. In this book, Fisher provides definitions for the above terms. His 'Weird' is "that which does not belong … [bringing] to the familiar something which ordinarily lies beyond it" (10). His 'Eerie' is the inverse of this; it instead questions "existence and non-existence: Why is there something here when there should be nothing? Why is there nothing here when there should be something?" (12). Haruki Murakami clearly works between these poles; his fiction is simultaneously 'Weird' and 'Eerie'. The 'Weird' is employed in a nearly relieving manner; it offers a tangible form and explainable quality to the 'Eerie' atmosphere that suffuses Murakami's fictions. The 'Eerie', haunted villages and twisted forests of *Kafka on the Shore* (2005) are more psychologically tenable

[7] From here on, both concepts will be capitalised as 'Weird' and 'Eerie' respectively. This distinguishes them from their everyday usage, as both appear at points in the thesis, divorced from Fisher's theoretical framework. I have capitalised and presented both in quotation marks to denote their usage according to Fisher's understanding.

when a single 'Weird', wriggling, pale, slimy creature is to blame for their malevolent atmospheres. These ideas also underpin adaptations of Murakami-land, both fan-generated and officially sourced. Fisher's work is supplemented by his own 2014 volume *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?*. The idea of interpassivity that Fisher uses in his analysis of the Pixar film *Wall-E* (2009) is useful in considerations of Murakami-land as any sort of a positive space. Murakami-land can be understood as a capitalist vector, sucking in fans, supporting itself vampirically on their over-enthusiastic fan-generated content.

The involvement of fans is part of what makes Murakami an interesting writer to examine in Anglophone readership. Part of the uncanniness of reading Murakami for English-speaking readers and fans is found in Murakami's invocation of Anglophonic (and European) culture; his characters eat fast food from McDonalds and Dunkin' Donuts, they drink Italian wine and French coffee, and discuss the Spanish Armada's unsuccessful advance on Ireland; all the while sitting in gleaming Tokyo skyscrapers or rural Japanese homesteads in the foothills of Hokkaido. This is not to say that Murakami's characters are excluded from Japanese life – they still eat sushi, their lives are not exclusively driven by Euro-American culture – but everything collides in Murakami. No factor takes precedence, everything collides. These characters are citizens of capitalist realism. Fisher's *Capitalist Realism* opens with a chapter entitled 'It's easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism', a turn of phrase apocryphally accredited to both Slavoj Žižek and Fredric Jameson. Here, it ties to the Murakami title *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*. Murakami's novel, told over two twinned perspectives, contrasts a world of fantasy (Wonderland) with a world of consumerist modernity in Tokyo. As the relationship between these two worlds develops, it becomes clear that the Tokyo character will die. Tellingly, their final chapter is littered with reference to consumerist goods; "Bob Dylan on auto-repeat … taxi[s] … freighters, riding high in water, their cargo unloaded" (395). The character retreats to the docks, a non-place of continual exchange and transience, to die in peace. As he passes away, he enters into the world of capitalist realism, which Fisher defines as "a shield protecting us from the perils posed by belief itself" (5). It is the depressive state of knowing that illusions of a better world remain just that. In this way, the protagonist can both pass into the body of capitalism and escape capitalist realism at the same time; after all, he continues to exist in the alternate dimension: itself a dreamlike illusion of a simpler way of life.

The out-of-place 'Weird' in Murakami's fiction is different for an Anglophone reader than to a Japanese reader. A good example of this is found in Murakami's short story, "The

Second Bakery Attack" featured in the 2003 collection *The Elephant Vanishes*, in which a bored young couple decide to rob a bakery in the early hours. The only bakery (if it even counts as one) still open is McDonald's. Discussing this story in a 1994 interview for *Bomb Magazine* with singer-songwriter John Wesley Harding, Murakami remarks that the story's narrative is "very extraordinary [in Japan]. Nobody carries a shotgun. And nobody attacks McDonald's. It's a very strange story in Japan, but it's not a strange story in this country [the United States]". The 'Weird'-ness of "Barn Burning" too is found at different points, depending on the reader. Casual marijuana use is less alien to an American reader than to a Japanese reader, as Japanese society is highly anti-drug use. The 'Weird' pivots and reorients itself according to readers' norms and contexts within Murakami's fiction. This multiplicity is important to this project's attempts in identifying the construction of a Murakami-land, which operates on different levels for readers of different origins.

Fisher's definition of the 'Eerie' situates helps to further situate Murakami-land as a capitalist concern; Fisher positions capitalism as an 'Eerie' presence that underpins and informs all that happens within its bounds (the Anthropocene as we know it, including Murakami-land). These engagements with capitalism are augmented and enhanced through engagement with the work of Slavoj Žižek in this project. Žižek's *The Year of Dreaming Dangerously* (2012), *On Belief* (2003), and his Lacan guide piece, *How to Read Lacan* (2011), are all used extensively here. In *The Year of Dreaming Dangerously*, the theorist asserts that "one of the main dangers of capitalism … [is that it] is global, encompassing the whole world, it sustains a stricto sensu "worldless" ideological constellation, depriving the vast majority of people of any meaningful cognitive orientation. Capitalism is the first socio-economic order which de-totalizes meaning: it is not global at the level of meaning" (55). His earlier work, *On Belief* is also used for its perspectives on Zen Buddhism and Western thought. The word 'Western' is mostly absent from the thesis, apart from where it appears in quotations from writers such as Žižek. I instead make reference to the anglosphere or anglophone zones; this is to avoid using out of date terminology of East/West and allows for a greater precision in argumentation. After all, English translations of Murakami carry a different cultural capital to Galician or German translations. Žižek and Fisher's theories are used to establish the grounds upon which a Murakami-land may appeal to an anglophone readership that might otherwise be ignorant or indifferent to literary representations of Japan.

Several further terms require definition within the bounds of the thesis. The understanding of post-imperialism that informs the first half of the thesis is taken from Richard

L. Sklar's "Postimperialism: Concepts and Implications": "The theory of postimperialism is based on two bodies of antecedent thought: first, theories of the modern business corporation (global); second, class-analytical theories of political power (local)" (11). This definition allows for a discussion of the relationship between Murakami as a writer of capitalist realism and as a writer navigating the post-imperial melancholy that defined post-war Japan for the second half of the twentieth century. This helps to further situate Murakami as a 'glocal' writer, again drawing from Sklar. Murakami's fictions operate on simultaneous global and local levels through which the familiar and the unfamiliar are intertwined (both for Japanese and anglophone readers). His stories of student *ennui* and spousal exhaustion is palatable and relevant to a global audience whilst retaining a uniquely Japanese melancholy, illustrated in his novels by ritualistic suicides and Buddhist burials. Murakami's infrequent invocations of these Japanese traditions recalls the post-war moment from which he writes. Ian Buruma's *Inventing Japan* offers a good overview of this era in Japanese history, analysing the immediate post-war and (semi)post-imperial moment. These understandings are augmented by Immanuel Wallerstein's *World-Systems Analysis: An Introduction*, in which Wallerstein argues that "a declining hegemonic power begins to find its preferred language out of date and no longer readily acceptable … The capitalist world-economy needs the states, needs the interstate system and needs the periodic appearance of hegemonic powers. But the priority of capitalists is never the maintenance, much less the glorification of any of these structures" (58-59). In the absence of such, a vacuum forms and cultural production is seen to flail. New hegemonic powers are invoked or constructed to form a new point of reference, and in Murakami-land, we bear witness to the selection, cultivation, and curation of these points of reference. This process is studied with reference to Walter Benjamin's *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* and "Unpacking my Library", both of which study assemblage and artifice in a manner well-suited to analysing Murakami-land.

To this end, Murakami-land is not only examined as being generated by this capitalist world-economy, but also as generating cultures of its own. This spinout culture is examined through a series of fanfictions, songs, and films. The generated imaginary is discussed with reference to a wide variety of Murakami's fictions, while his non-fiction work is mostly ignored. The fiction discussed here is widely available in the English language; all of these stories and novels are available from Vintage or Harvill Secker. Although Murakami has in recent years had excellent short stories translated in smaller publications (such as "Creta Kano" in *Monkey,* Volume 3), these are ignored as they do not factor into the construction of

Murakami-land as a 'major' overarching structure around Murakami's fictions. Niche, boutique annual collections such as *Monkey* do not carry the same cultural capital as the major Vintage and Harvill Secker publications. These ideas of the major and the minor are further developed in Chapter III with reference to Deleuze and Guattari's "Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature", wherein the limits and extremes of the imaginary structure are tested. It is evident from Ōe and Meitgang that Murakami is not only to be understood as a Japanese writer. Murakami must instead be examined as a sort of transcultural phenomenon. However, this is a different sort of phenomenon to 'the Haruki phenomenon' that Wakatsuki ably analyses. Murakami-land instead encompasses the anglophone Haruki Murakami, tracing the innumerable plateaus of understanding and emergent lines of flight found in this understanding of the writer. Murakami fandom places limiters and borders on what Murakami-land may be; transforming the holophrase into a sort of theme park experience. This is accomplished though aesthetically light-hearted means (Murakami bingo games) that serve to actually diminish and defang the harsh edges of Murakami's fiction (particularly with regards to misogyny and sexual violence, which are discussed primarily in Chapters II and IV). This is where Murakami-land as an approach is most useful: beyond the facile phrase, it allows for close-reading and specific textual engagement.

(ii) Project Overview

Chapter I begins by contextualising and situating Haruki Murakami's literature in a specifically post-war cultural context. This involves an analysis of other imaginated Japans of the era. Three other primary versions of Japan are considered: the one cultivated by Yukio Mishima's fiction, the one found in Akira Kurosawa's films, and the one established by the monster film *Godzilla*. These contending versions of the country are examined through their anglophone reception primarily: this allows for a productive tension between these disparate Japans and Murakami-land, which although necessarily distinct still retains elements of a trace Japan. All of these worlds are studied through an imagological lens; this lens informs the first half of the thesis and presents one method of approaching Murakami-land. This work uses writers such as Carol Gluck and Ian Buruma to sketch a historical context for these texts, while also presenting direct quotations and interviews with the relevant writers. These various invented Japans are used as a canvas upon (and against) which the anglophone Murakami-land can begin to emerge. The critical texts used here are selected for their precision and different

temporal narrative approaches toward illustrating 'modern' Japan; Ian Littlewood's imagological sketch of Japan is used as a framework through which the texts are interrogated, while Buruma effectively summarises Japan's wartime struggles and attempts to paradoxically harken back toward and dispel Japanese imperialism. The discussion reveals the points of crossover, collisions, and divergence between the worlds of these texts, effectively engaging with Ōe's assertion that Murakami is not a Japanese writer.

Chapter II traces the key myths and influences found in Murakami's fictions. The chapter examines how Japanese, European, and American traditions inform and shape conceptions of a Murakami-land (and how capitalism functions as a connective tissue between all these disparate traditions). I identify specific examples of each and examine how Murakami-land's supposed internationalism and universality is (in part) a falsity. William Marx's *The Tomb of Oedipus* is helpful in considering this, as it provides useful insight into global manifestations of the Greek myths that Murakami specifically invokes. The chapter is split into several sections; I first clarify what is meant by myth in the bounds of this chapter, before examining how specific myths influence Murakami's writing, such as the Greek myth of Oedipus and the myth's Japanese counterpart, Semimaru. I also consider the Omphalos as both political and mythic image. Later in the chapter, how Murakami utilises myth in the tradition of Roland Barthes' *Mythologies* is discussed. Barthes' (1989) more playful and modern interpretation of the accrued mythos of the everyday allows me to examine how Murakami's invocation of the mundane, alongside modern works of fiction (*The Great Gatsby*, Yukio Mishima's fictions, etc.) corresponds to his utility of myth from a range of traditions. Part of this involves an examination of the mythic turn: at what point is a work of contemporary fiction allowed to assume (or ascend to) the role of mythic structure or pathway? The final part of the chapter analyses Murakami's transformative readings of these myths in his fiction; this is mostly achieved by comparatively analysing *Killing Commendatore* against *The Great Gatsby*. The chapter moves from an understanding of myth derived from William Bascom and Joseph Campbell toward a more linguistic approach informed by Barthes. This chapter presents Murakami-land as visible through a web of mythic allusions.

Chapter III builds off the previous chapter; instead of examining how Murakami-land is generated by myth, the chapter considers the mythic tropes that Murakami-land generates. The understanding of myth here is consistent with the previous chapter's conclusion, moving away from a historical and into a linguistic function. The chapter engages with the criticism invoked up to this point but makes more developed use of Deleuze and Guattari in order to

establish these myths as serving a rhizomatic function that embellishes the space and place theories that are woven through these first three chapters. Extended engagement with Murakami's own identification of mythic images in an anglophone setting (the Edinburgh International Book Festival) shapes the chapter, which also broadly uses Derrrida to explore the naming conventions of Murakami-land. This is done through a number of close readings of Murakami's tropes of nameless narrators and repeated stock characters. These conventions are paradoxically simple and complex, explained and mysterious.

Chapter IV marks a turn in the project away from Murakami himself. It instead turns toward his fans, exploring the world of modern Murakami fandom through engagement with online fan communities. The chapter begins by analysing the mobility of anglophonic Murakami fandom; what forms the fandom takes, how it relates to its Japanese counterpart (or does not), its tonal cadence, and its willingness to critique its subject. I use fan communities such as r/Murakami (the Murakami Reddit page), the Haruki Murakami Discord channel, and TikTok to this end. How all of these allow fans to interact approximates another understanding of how a Murakami-land can be constructed: by millions of readers, in millions of different ways. Readers studied are both examined as both members of fandoms and anti-fandoms, while fan-generated Murakami content (in the form of fanfiction and fanart) is also explored here. Fanfiction writers occasionally set their work in the world of Murakami's fiction, hinting at another dimension to Murakami-land; that it may be rendered a fantastical setting á la Tolkien's Middle Earth. All of this is handled through engagement with Weinstein and Luetkenhaus, whose work facilitates a discussion of literary tourism and the world of Haruki Murakami. Particular attention is paid to the Waseda International House of Literature, otherwise known as the Haruki Murakami Library.

Chapter V moves toward discussing Murakami through the lens of Lacan's Real. The Real allows for a problematising of Murakami-land's increasingly frequent appearances in anglophone popular culture. The chapter begins by situating the Real as a problem that Murakami-land must contend with, before examining how this is manifest in a series of high-profile contemporary Murakami cameos across popular culture (mostly pop music, film, and television). The chapter then moves toward the championing of Murakami by young male pop stars who are successful in the anglophone world[8]. My attention is centred on Murakami's association with the 'soft boy' aesthetic championed by young male pop stars such as Harry

[8] Some of this content is adapted from a piece I published through RTE in mid-2022, "What do Harry Styles and BTS have in common?".

Styles and members of the Korean pop group BTS. All of these have mentioned Murakami as an influence in interviews. BTS' Murakami fandom is afforded the most attention here, in part due to the group's own Anglophonic fanbase. I finish the chapter by analysing their songs "Butterfly" and "Sea", both of which exist at an intersection between adaptations and fan content. Based on *Kafka on the Shore* and *1Q84* respectively, these songs are Murakami fan-songs, articulated by one of the most successful contemporary pop acts. Thus, I close read both lyrics and fan reception to these songs. This serves to bridge this chapter and the previous, as the fandom chapter incorporated crossover fanfiction that serves a fan purpose for both BTS and Murakami. The chapter analyses Murakami beyond the page, through close reading several key film adaptations of Murakami: 2018's *Burning*, 2021's *Drive My Car*, 2004's *Tony Takitani*, 2012's *Norwegian Wood*, and 2023's *Blind Willow, Sleeping Woman*. The visual and musical language of these films is compared with an eye to an emergent consistent cinematic Murakami-land. The chapter concludes by looking toward the potential future of Murakami's usage in these genres, building toward Murakami's transformation into a signifier.

The **conclusion** of the thesis is an acknowledgement of the proliferation of Murakami-inspired 'stuff' (film, music, television, fiction, fashion). The rapidly changing and evolving field of Murakami-land necessitates a discussion of possible pathways forward. The conclusion as such presents several potential ways of navigating the flood of Murakami items, which seems to grow at an exponential rate. The chapter begins by referencing and briefly discussing several recent Murakami news items, before culminating with an analysis of what the anglophone Murakami has come to 'mean' and how this may shift, change, and evolve.

Chapter I – Contexts

How to situate Haruki Murakami

Murakami-land is not Japan and Japan is not Murakami-land. One may be found in the other (and vice versa), but the word Japan in the anglosphere has come to connote certain meanings and to signify particular experiences that Murakami-land does not necessarily share. This is illustrated in this chapter by comparing Murakami-land to three interlinked representations of Japan. All three of these – the fiction of Yukio Mishima, the films of Akira Kurosawa, and Ishirō Honda's *Godzilla* – have been readily accepted and widely consumed by anglophone audiences. These three texts intersect and acknowledge one another at key junctions, triangulating to create (in some senses) a coherent imaginated Japan. At the same time, these three artists have accrued sufficient cultural capital as to be considered individual holophrases (especially Mishima, who is briefly discussed through this lens). Nonetheless, they adhere to (and help to construct) dominant images of Japan as Other in anglophone zones.

In order to distinguish the world of Murakami's fiction from imaginated Japans, I use Beller and Leerssen's theory of imaginating. Leerssen defines imaginating as the active process of imagology (28). It is the establishment of a nation's difference rendered in art, film, and literature. To this end, three key popular versions of Japan are discussed with reference to Murakami here. However, mapping Murakami-land along similar strands of thought is fraught and difficult. Murakami-land stretches the possibilities of, exposes the limitations of, and tests imagology as a framework here, establishing itself as something less locatable along the binaries that help to establish Mishima, Kurosawa, and Honda's Japan(s). Murakami-land instead emerges in the chapter as a representation of capitalist realism rather than Japan. Each version of Japan discussed here is popular in the anglophone imagination, adhering to certain fantasies and preconceptions surrounding Japan as the big Other.

This relationship between Japanese art and anglophone spectator is at the heart of the chapter. Beller and Leerssen identify one of the key relationships in the study of imagology as that which exists between the nation depicted (the 'spected') and the viewer (the 'spectant') (396). This is where the relationship between the dominant anglophone nation (the United States) informs and shades the reception of literary representations of Japan in the post-war era. As such, the first part of this chapter is dedicated to contextualising this evolving and uncertain relationship. Furthermore, any understanding of a traditional and neatly divided

spected/spectant is problematised by global capital, which serves to ostensibly bring nations together while maintaining innate differences. A comment from Korean film-maker Joon-Ho Bong, following the international success of his 2019 film *Parasite*, is useful to consider here; "we are all living in the one country of Capitalism" (Romain). Bong's assertion is based on his experiences making international films involving large multi-national casts and crew. These films sometimes move between languages with ease, incorporating multiple spoken languages within the same scene. This is most clear in his film *Okja*, a globetrotting animal rights fantasy with a revolving cast of multilingual characters, united in their pursuit of a unique, new fast-food item (the titular creature). Commonalities are traced here with reference to multinational corporations invoked by Murakami in his texts (and their conspicuous absence in the imaginated Japans of this chapter), while Murakami-land is briefly considered as not a representation of Japan at all, but rather one of a world defined by capitalism.

In considering the idea of physical settings here (via imagology), it is also productive to examine time in conjunction with location. The post-war era from which the major works discussed here emerge shades and informs both their political outlook and their critical reception in anglophone circles. In his essay "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel" (84-259), Mikhail Bakhtin (1981) sketches the idea of the chronotope: "the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature" (120). Theoretical chronotopes bind together spatiality and temporality to approximate a literary sense of 'place'. Mishima does this overtly; both "Patriotism" and *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion* are explicitly, exclusively Japanese. Their events, characters, and language are draped in Japanese tradition and cultural norms. They reference the specificity of the post-war moment. The chronotope provides a useful lens though which these texts may be more fully compared to one another, producing a tension that further distinguishes Murakami-land from these more straightforward literary representations of Japan.

(i) Murakami-land, Contexts, and Mishima's Japan

In Oscar Wilde's play *The Decay of Lying* (1908), a character famously remarks that "the whole of Japan is a pure invention. There is no such country and no such people" (53-54). The name of the country in anglophone parlance is a key illustration of the artifice that Wilde refers to: Japanese citizens refer to their own homeland as 日本, pronounced 'Nihon' or 'Nippon' (Irodori) while the term 'Japan' is used by foreign visitors. Japan may thus be understood as a

holophrastic expression, a series of diametrically opposed imagological constructs lie behind the holophrase here. 'Japan' refers to what spectator from the outside make of the country. Beller and Leerssen's ideas of imagology can augment this approach, which acknowledges that the texts invoked in this chapter do not necessarily depict a real or tangible place. Instead, all are received in the anglophone world filtered through the lenses of established clichés and preconceptions of Japan. In Beller and Leerssen's collection, Littlewood (200-202) notes that:

> In 1640, after a century of intercourse with traders and missionaries from the west, Japan abruptly closed its doors, isolating itself from the rest of the world. But by this time the basic stereotypes were already well established. Four aspects had impressed themselves above all others on western visitors: the martial culture of the samurai warriors; the grace and delicacy of Japanese women (to which their fabled immorality leant special piquancy); the high priority given to aesthetic concerns; and, colouring all the rest, the overwhelming otherness of the country and its people. These are the building blocks out of which the West has constructed its image of Japan, realigning them as historical circumstances dictate (200).

The imaginated Japan is constructed through identifying it along these parameters, alongside others; Littlewood also mentions how later images of Japan are filtered through considerations of the post-war era, the technological boom, and subsequent recession. Littlewood further writes that notions of Japanese exceptionalism (both as constructed by spectator and spected) are gradually "eroded by the cultural interminglings of modern life" (201). Littlewood's parameters orient (to risk using a problematic, but still useful term) the anglophone spectators of many of these texts, of which Yukio Mishima, Ishirō Honda, and Akira Kurosawa are all examined here. These texts function on two levels in the anglophone world: they are simultaneously holophrastic and plugged into a dominant, imaginated anglo-Japan. The worlds of these fictions coalesce to present an illustration of a society totally Other to anglophone cultures. Murakami's project is somewhat different in scope, aim, and direction; his work generates a kind of distinct space (one that resembles Japan and yet is not Japan) oriented by a different set of parameters[9]. Murakami-land shares several qualities and aspects with these representations and is informed and influenced by the Japans of the writers mentioned here. Murakami even responds to them quite explicitly at critical points in his fiction, each examined in turn. However, the world of Murakami's fiction does not represent an easily defined spected

[9] These are mapped across Chapter II (the parameters that generate Murakami-land) and Chapter III (the parameters generated by Murakami-land).

place; the difficulties of representation along these lines emerge in comparison to the Japans discussed here.

Murakami was born in 1949. His first novel, *Hear the Wind Sing*, was released in 1979, and he has appeared in mass-market English language translation in the anglosphere since 1989, with the publication of Alfred Birnbaum's translation of *A Wild Sheep Chase*. Birnbaum also published translations of *Hear the Wind Sing* and *Pinball, 1973* prior to this; however, these were only released in Japan as English language aids for students of the language (Karashima 23). The two novels were later released in mass market paperback, retranslated by Ted Goossen in 2015. Murakami's youth was spent in a post-war Japan. The nation was utterly devastated: the emperor had renounced his divinity, the military force was disarmed, and American soldiers occupied the country. The army had suffered a crushing defeat in the Pacific theatre of war, and Hiroshima and Nagasaki bore the scars of nuclear holocaust. This was a transitory period in Japanese history, whereby the dominant occupying military power (particularly in the 1930s) in Asia found itself suddenly defeated and occupied. Hegemonies of imperial superiority were dissolved and the national mood became one of defeated pessimism (Buruma). The defeated Japan encapsulates the post-imperial, within Sklar's definition that "the theory of post-imperialism is based on two bodies of antecedent thought: first, theories of the modern business corporation (global); second, class-analytical theories of political power (local)" (11). Sklar furthermore states that post-imperialism not so much an 'after' as an 'other'. Post-imperialism is positioned as a new order of power that succeeds familiar imperial structures; it maintains the same grammar of power, whilst discarding several established, traditional hegemonies[10]. The old underpins the new in a spectral manner. Murakami's fiction may be positioned as a fiction emerging from the shadow of this historical tumult, while Kurosawa, Mishima, and Honda all create art in the immediate post-imperial moment; these four artists would come to create powerful images of divergent Japans that were not only hugely popular in Japan itself, but also captured anglophone (and European) imaginations for the long century to follow.

A sort of post-imperial anxiety was therefore rife amongst the population of Japan, which had been reduced from powerful empire to mere nation following their wartime defeat. This failure stripped the country of its perceived military superiority and collapsed the

[10] Part of what makes the US military victory so remarkable was that it was without precedent. Active nuclear weaponry represented an entirely new grammar (to return to the post-imperial turn of phrase) of war here. This is part of what makes post-war Japanese art so singular: such weaponry had not been used in war before (or since).

militaristic ideologies that informed and defined Japan at that time. Buruma illustrates the totality of this defeat by focussing on January 1946, in which Emperor Hirohito renounced his divinity at the behest of his American handlers and occupied Japan quickly ushered in a new national constitution (142). The centrality and unquestioned spirituality to the emperor was now stripped away, leaving the country at a hegemonic break. Post-imperialism is a new formulation of imperialism, whereby it operates in a shrouded sense. It operates now as an underpinning force that informs Sklar's two antecedent bodies: global business and local political operations (and vice versa). The same tenets dictate both genres of power. Tensions between the global and the local are best felt therefore in the post-imperial setting; the juxtaposition between fast-food chains as featured in Murakami's fiction (global, corporate) and a Buddhist Temple as featured in Mishima's fiction (local, political) that happen to occupy the same street, for example, provide a difficulty of reconciliation, alongside a sense of equitability. Both spaces are meeting points that serve to homogenise and direct the (post-)imperial subject; they are unifying and common, shared experiences for visitors. Sklar outlines the effect generated here as resultant of corporate post-imperialism: "corporations outgrow the nation-state of their origin and acquire new multinational and multicultural identities … enabling them to circumvent boycotts and international hostilities" (13). In Japan's case, post-imperial global business attempted to plug the hegemonic gap left in the post-war era.

Any notion of Japanese imperial protagonism was immediately delegitimised with the defeat of the Japanese empire. Certainties and hegemonies of superiority were disintegrated, with nothing solid left in their place. This cast cultural production, particularly viewed through imagological lenses, into a state of deep uncertainty. Previously 'safe' literary forms and functions such as the historical drama, mythical allusion, and imperial narrative were now shaded by the abject failure and defeat of the Japanese empire in World War II. Cultural production was heavily affected by these defeats and the subsequent occupation of Japan; the art of the time constituted reactions to and against the nation's defeat and the intrusion of new belief structures and ways of thinking (via the occupation). The hallmarks of Japanese life up to this point were obliterated: Emperor Hirohito was forced to relinquish his divinity, the Japanese army were stripped of air and marine troops, and Japan was occupied by American troops. So, when Japan's most central hegemonic power, the Emperor, was disempowered and recanted his divinity, the country was thrust into uncertainty. Japan's swift transition to nationhood created a hegemonic void for the Japanese people, binding them together in an anxiety that can be encapsulated in the question, 'where do we go from here?' Under

imperialism, group identity is predicated on the supposed importance and supremacy of one group (the 'us') over another (the 'them'). This is asserted militaristically and politically. Upon the hegemonic acceptance of this 'fact', it is articulated and replicated both consciously and unconsciously through art, film, literature, and popular culture at large. In the wake of defeat, art and literature attempt to plug the gap, so to speak.

The impact of wartime defeat rippled throughout Japanese society, well beyond the production of art. In the "Past in the Present", Carol Gluck notes that "the Great Empire of Japan vanished from utterance, even in negative mention … Japanese public discourse admitted no attachment or loss, no ruefulness or remorse" (68) within the setting of public-school lessons in post-war Japan. Gluck outlines the consignment of the war effort's abject failure to oblivion; schools did not discuss it, so it was rendered, in a sense, non-canonical. Gluck also asserts that Japan's wartime defeat was perceived "as a judgment on a longer history" (64) by many. This perspective seems to presume that it was Japan's rich history of samurai, *shogun*s, warring island nations, abjection to Euro-American trade and culture, and unification that led to such a painful and raw defeat. This position seems to cast history as zero-sum equation, resulting in a despairing question: what was all of the aforementioned culture worth if it led to such destruction? National identity became a question in the long post-imperial moment, no longer a certainty. As a result, an image emerges of Japan as a land at a temporal crossroads. Cultural production flailed against itself for these reasons; national iconography and preconceptions needed interrogation, definition, and redefinition in this political moment. Writers such as Mishima refer backward: espousing the imperial rhetoric of Japanese tradition whilst acknowledging the difficulties of implementing these values in such a troubled time. This is illustrated by Mishima's final words before his suicide, following a failed attempt to reinstate the emperor as the seat of military power in Japan: a defiant cry of "Long live the emperor!" (Flanagan 9). In contrast to this, film directors such as Ishirō Honda and Akira Kurosawa appeared to bridge cultural divides between Japan and the anglophone world partially through their artistic re-imaginings of Western popular culture and literary staples.

Haruki Murakami then appears poised at an intersection between these. Although, like Kurosawa, he has faced accusations of being un-Japanese or too Western, several writers have likened him to Mishima. Masao Miyoshi argues that Murakami is an example of a writer "acutely aware of the boredom and sterility of managed society, which they carefully nurture so that they may plausibly postulate style and snobbery as a cure. These descendants of Mishima Yukio are now represented by Murakami Haruki" (233-234). Leaving aside the

question of Miyoshi's apparent snobbery, there is something interesting about establishing Murakami as a successor to Mishima. Certainly, the two operate on separate political levels[11] but are nonetheless the chief literary representatives of Japan in their respective time periods. In terms of financial success and cultural ubiquity, the two are comparable. These are the grounds upon which Damian Flanagan compares the two – "Mishima was gradually displaced by Haruki Murakami as the one Japanese writer of whom everyone was cognisant in the West" (242) – along these terms. This comparison, which is a market-based one, makes more sense than Miyoshi's, which attempts to make too neat a connection between the two. To truly understand Murakami-land as something other/more than yet another representation of Japan, it is worth looking at how Mishima presents the nation to an anglophone audience.

Mishima presented an attractive and defining image of Japan to anglophone readers of his day. Mishima, considered the most prominent Japanese writer of his time[12], was described in anglophone media on the event of his suicide in 1970 as "an impassioned romantic whose real despair at his country's course commingled like sacrificial blood with his own deep need to return to an earlier and, in his view, much nobler Japan" (*Time Magazine*). Mishima's fictions echo these convictions: his literature performed an often violent and volatile version of Japan that adhered to Littlewood's tenets. His male characters are often bound by warrior codes or systems of honour (the protagonist of "Patriotism" and the young Noboru from *The Sailor Who Fell from Grace with the Sea*, while his female characters are often underhanded and duplicitous (Mizoguchi's mother in *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion* is incestuously adulterous, while Etsuko in *Thirst for Love* has an affair that she concludes with the puzzling murder of her partner). Mishima's style is highly aesthetic[13] and frequently asserts the division between occupying forces and Japanese citizens. Miyoshi further identifies Mishima as a writer who defined his times, arguing that Mishima is less interesting as a writer and more interesting "as a presence or event" (149). Although Miyoshi does not outright state it, this is an acknowledgement of the holophrastic qualities of Mishima, whose name suggests a wide series of contradictions: for example, the super-humanly monstrous and the supremely fragile. Miyoshi quotes Mishima as having told Ōe that he was the embodiment of the European

[11] Mishima was so political that he disemboweled himself as a political statement. In a conversation I shared with a Japanese filmmaker, Murakami was described as so politically unmotivated that he was "a man without principle" (Kida).

[12] Both domestically and internationally; Mishima was a rare crossover success. This is thanks in part to Mishima's unique aesthetic qualities (see Kishin Shinoyama's photobook *Yukio Mishima: Death of a Man*) and celebrity status.

[13] Best represented outside of his literary pursuits: his photobook *Yukio Mishima: Death of A Man* and Mishima's own short film "Patriotism" readily reflect this.

idea of/ideal Japan (151): a foreign other, a masculine aesthete, and a dangerous samurai. In such a way, it is safe to argue that Mishima does not so much follow Littlewood's tenets as help to create them. These tenets then serve as markers of place, to borrow from Tuan. They anchor this representation of Japan, serving as reference points around which the reader may orient themselves.

Mishima's powerful image has been kept alive in the popular anglophone imaginary thanks in no small part to Paul Schrader's 1985 film, *Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters*. In an essay accompanying the Criterion Collection's 2018 Blu-ray edition of Schrader's film, Kevin Jackson identifies Mishima as an "ultranationalist who sought to restore the prestige of the Japanese military and emperor" (23). This is true, but also somewhat facile; Mishima's supposed anti-West posturing was much-admired and widely read in anglophone territories. Furthermore, he drew heavy inspiration from European philosophers (in particular, Nietzsche). However, what is not said here is perhaps more significant. The fact of Mishima's homoeroticism, seen in his novel *Confessions of a Mask*, is elided (but not eliminated) in the film. In an interview included in the Criterion edition of the film, Schrader mentions that this novel was originally featured in the film as a frame story (akin to the film's use of *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion*). However, upon objections from Mishima's widow, filming of that particular story was disallowed. The same novel features extended quotations from Dostoevsky, further undermining an understanding of Mishima as anti-European. That this story was replaced by *Kyoko no Ie* (literally translating to 'Kyoko's House') is significant: this novel has never been translated into English. As such, its inclusion ahead of Mishima's more popular novels (such as *Confessions of a Mask*), puts the film at a remove from the anglophone viewer (even the committed anglophone Mishima fan, who cannot read the source text for the *Kyoko's House* sequences). The film is a stylized biopic, with the biographical action punctuated by abstract adaptations of three Mishima novels. The inclusion of *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion* serves to illustrate the young Mishima's aesthetic sensitivity, while the use of *Runaway Horses* refracts and foreshadows Mishima's own attempted political uprising. *Kyoko's House*, as it is unavailable in English, remains an unmoored touchstone or reference point; the dimension it adds to the film is somewhat intangible and difficult to process on a first viewing. This restores a volatility toward the non-Japanese to the film; it forces the anglophone viewer into a state of alienation while creating an image of Japan that is unconcerned with its anglophone consumer.

This is somewhat at odds with Mishima himself. Mishima combined a loathing of American occupation with a desire to please foreign visitors, illustrated comically in Schrader's film when an anxious Mishima invites US journalists to a press conference, at which he displays the new uniform of his private army, the Shield Society. This twinned hatred and eagerness to please casts Mishima as a strange figure. He was desperate for praise and respect from Western influences, but was keen to assert his own Japanese identity. Despite the failure of Mishima's coup (or perhaps because of the resultant mythos attached), Mishima looms large in Japanese literary history. Jackson notes that he was "canonised" (23) following his death and that Schrader's film was opposed by the Japanese right-wing out of "a reverence for the man" (23). For an American to attempt to tell the story of Yukio Mishima was sacrilege; a sentiment fully expressed when Schrader's film was pulled last moment from the Tokyo International Film Festival 1980. The film has never officially been released in Japan. Mishima's texts yearn for faded glory, expressing a communal sense of national loss; a sentiment that the Japanese right-wing endorsed Mishima for. Japanese philosopher Hide Ishiguro offers a counterpoint to Jackson's neatly defined narrative, providing a brief summary of the national controversy the Mishima incident caused (in the *New York Review*). Ishiguro also notes how Mishima's suicide is hallmarked by specifically Japanese traditions[14]. All of this points to a representational quandary; Mishima becomes a sort of vector, subsuming and embodying different ideas about an imaginated Japan to both home and away-audiences.

Mishima's novels, plays, and short fictions project a Japanese national identity as simultaneously monstrously super-human and supremely fragile, represented both physically and mentally. In the elegiac short story "Patriotism", Mishima illustrates the limits of culturally ratified traditions. The story, released in the hegemonic temporal break of the post-war era, follows a young soldier and his beautiful wife as they commit *seppuku*. The act of ritual suicide is an act of atonement for the soldier's disobedience of military orders, facilitating a political uprising. Their death is portrayed as an ultimate sacrifice; it is an uncritical and glorifying portrait of harsh adherence to strict tradition. Mishima sketches a gruesome scene of 'death before dishonour' bravado. The soldier is allowed to disobey a superior's orders only if he observes traditional *seppuku*. The violent act subtextually reinforces a status quo (the youth cannot challenge the old guard: if they do so, they must obliterate themselves in the same

[14] The act of *seppuku* (honourable samurai suicide by disembowelment) is unique to Japan in its physical language, if not underlying conceit. More interestingly, Ishiguro notes that Mishima's friend (and potential lover) committed *seppuku* by Mishima's side, echoing the tradition of *shinju* ('lover's suicide': the double suicide of doomed lovers in Japanese folk tales).

breath) represents a yearning for yesteryear, whilst ensuring that agency and rebellion are monitored by obedience to imperial tradition. Mishima's imaginated Japan is one that resists change and opposes rapid modernization. It rejects the global (aligned with radical change), embracing the local (aligned with cultural stasis) to a suicidal degree. Mishima conceives of post-war Japan as tainted by the touch of international modernity – Mishima criticised this intensely throughout his life – culminating in his eventual suicide by *seppuku*. Such a version of Japan is attractive to anglophone readers, whose biases and preconceptions (á la Littlewood) are reconfirmed by both Mishima's life and literature.

(ii) The Capital Question

By the end of 1970, Yukio Mishima was dead, having committed suicide at Ichigaya Barracks, Tokyo. He slit his belly, was decapitated, and photographs of his severed head were published all over the world. In 1971, the first Japanese McDonald's opened in Ginza, Tokyo (McDonald's Holdings Japan). Although Mishima never experienced the questionable virtues of this fast-food experience, Haruki Murakami has, incorporating the chain, amongst other, similar American fast-food restaurants into several of his fictions (most obviously in 'The Second Bakery Attack'). If Mishima's Japan can be defined by its angst and its deep-seated sense of place, Murakami's imaginated locale often feels like the opposite. It is, if anything, a fiction of the non-place. The past and the future are glimpsed, imagined, never fully envisioned in Murakami-land. Where Mishima's fictions are set in places such as glorious temples and ruined cityscapes, Murakami is more fond of the non-place: the hotel, the supermarket, the chain restaurant, "where the habitué of supermarkets, slot machines and credit cards communicates wordlessly, through gestures, with an abstract, unmediated commerce" (Augé 78). Murakami-land is decentred and seemingly autonomous. It functions on invisible currents of commercial energy that lurk below the surface, surfacing momentarily to assert their presence.

One such historical moment of surfacing that Murakami uses is that of Mishima's suicide. *A Wild Sheep Chase* opens in a student bar, 1970: "It was two in the afternoon, and Yukio Mishima's picture kept flashing on the lounge TV. The volume control was broken so we could hardly make out what was being said, but it didn't matter to us one way or the other" (8). Murakami's unnamed protagonist is engaged in deep conversation with a fellow student at this point; their priorities are elsewhere. In this sequence, Murakami's characters are more

concerned with sleeping with one another or buying another round of drinks than they are with the ritualistic suicide of a famous writer like Mishima. And yet, Murakami-land is rife with contradictions: Mishima apparently does not matter to the students at the bar, but they notice him. Furthermore, this sequence is told in flashback. Mishima's suicide, although uninteresting to Murakami's protagonist, nonetheless becomes a sort of memory anchor that grounds their recollections of the past. It is significant that *A Wild Sheep Chase* was Murakami's first novel widely available in English-language translation; Karashima recounts the hype around the English-language publication of *A Wild Sheep Chase*: "a best-selling novelist makes his American debut with a quest story" (65), ran the byline to a *New York Times* Arts section article on Murakami in the lead-up to the stateside release of Birnbaum's translation of *A Wild Sheep Chase*. The invocation of Mishima is then rendered doubly significant, occurring in the opening pages at the opening stages of Murakami's career in English translation. The sequence can be read several ways as a result: Miyoshi has used the sequence to position Murakami as a successor to Mishima, although Miyoshi expected Murakami to fail at this (234), while pointing to the fact that Murakami parodies Ōe and Mishima in his early novels: *A Wild Sheep Chase* can be read as a parody of Mishima's *Natsuko no Bouken* (literally 'Natsuko's Adventure', 1960) while *Pinball, 1973* can be seen as a parody of Ōe's *The Silent Cry*, the original Japanese title of which also contains reference to sport and a year. The original title of Ōe's novel, *Man'en Gannen no Futtobōru*, translates to 'football in the year of the Mannen era'. Although the events of the two novels could scarcely be more different – Murakami's novel is a pleasantly ambling read, while Ōe's is disturbingly violent and incestuous – it is clear to see that Murakami borrows the same naming convention of sport and year. The sequence can also be read more literally as a holophrastic rebuttal of Mishima and the values for which he stood (or was presumed to have stood for); an assertion that his faith in the emperor and militarism was now outdated or irrelevant.

Such concrete points of reference (parody) threaten to upend Murakami-land as a non-place. They root the action of these texts in Japan through allusion. However, in effect they are prevented from actually doing so due to translational issues. Akin to the use of *Kyoko's House* in Schrader's film, the availability, or in this case unavailability of key translated texts in this conversation changes the relationship at play. *Pinball, 1973*, an early Murakami novel, was translated to English much later in 2015. Meanwhile, Mishima's *Natsuko's Adventure* has never

received an English language translation.[15] As such, references and allusions that apply to the Japanese texts are rendered invisible in English. This is part of what defines the Murakami-land experience; it is how Murakami is read through English, with the additions of editorial oversight, and occasional conspicuous referential absences. It is difficult to apply Littlewood's model to Murakami; the pieces do not quite fit. Certainly, the women of Murakami's fictions often appear deceitful or treacherous (a topic further discussed in Chapter IV), but elements such as the martial prowess of the samurai or the strange otherness of the Japanese people and Japan itself are difficult to identify in his work. Flynn (2016) notes this in her analysis of the cityscapes of Murakami's fictions – "both familiar and strange, filled with liminal spaces" (90) – pointing to the presence of the 'flâneur' archetype in Murakami's Tokyo. The archetype, a mainstay of European literature, recurs throughout Murakami, appearing in *1Q84*, *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* (2003), and *South of the Border, West of the Sun* (1999). Murakami-land then becomes a place for anglophone readers, who may seize fast to the 'Weird' presence of European modes, while the notable absence of identifiable Japanese modes renders the fiction paradoxically, simultaneously 'Eerie'. The cumulative effect of this double-bind oddity is that Murakami-land emerges not only as a representation of Japan, but a version of a capitalist realist Japan.

Murakami does acknowledge the samurai question, however. In his introduction to *The Penguin Book of Japanese Short Stories*, Murakami notes that the act of *seppuku* has not disappeared in modern Japan. *Seppuku* is instead now predominantly invoked in conversationally symbolic manners in "the world of the contemporary salaryman and bureaucrat" (xviii). To "slit one's belly" (xviii) now means to take responsibility for one's business mistakes and to accept punishment in a capitalist Japan, instead of Mishima-style self-mutilation. The grammar of imperialism still moves under the surface, dictating interactions. It appears as archaic muscles that pulse beneath a modern skin, flexing to articulate traditions of honour and dishonour. This positions Mishima at odds with Murakami's Japan; his ideal nation was one in thrall to its past, unchangingly bound to tradition in a stultifying manner. The expressions of shame and dishonour were achingly visible and literal. Murakami acknowledges the presence of the post-imperial that lurks beneath the surface, but it operates in a symbolic fashion instead.

[15] Between this and *Kyoko's House*, it appears that the version of Mishima encountered in anglophone translation may be significantly different to his original Japanese form. There is a curation of his image at work here; does the fairytale-esque *Natsuko's Adventure* disrupt his fierce reputation?

Mishima's violent and harrowing stories invoke Japan's militaristic past effectively, admonitory in their treatment of Japan as a defeated nation. Murakami is critical of Mishima, but returns to him (and his concerns) often. In the Penguin introduction, Murakami notes he "was never able to warm to such supposedly representative Japanese literary giants as … Mishima Yukio (1925-70) … I learned practically nothing about novelistic technique from my Japanese predecessors" (xii). Mishima imaginates Japan as (ideally) a land of group identity and movement, while Murakami-land is more fractured. Its sites and locations are non-places where Mishima's are often clearly demarcated. Murakami acknowledges Mishima's canonical literary dominance, while disputing his reductionist politics and perceived over-reliance on tradition. Part of these differences are generational: Mishima was born in 1925, while Murakami was born in 1949. Mishima experienced the loss of empire while Murakami has only ever known post-defeat Japan. Mishima's fiction is intrinsically bound to a particular time and space, and consciously attempts to rationalise and work through the material conditions of Japan in that time. He constructs a post-war version of Japan in part because it did not yet fully exist. Murakami lacks this first-hand context of national loss (and hegemonic flailing) that embodies Mishima's Japan.

(iii) Another Japan?

Another useful post-war imaginated Japan is that found in the films of Akira Kurosawa. Kurosawa is a useful counterpart to Murakami and Mishima, having enjoyed similar worldwide acclaim, particularly in English speaking territories. In fact, author Matt Alt, argues that "Akira Kurosawa was regarded as a hack in Japan until he was recognised in Europe and the United States" (Kelts 209). While Alt does not specify the moment at which Kurosawa is "recognised" as a major artist in these territories, it is likely that he is referring to the moment when *Rashomon* was awarded the coveted Golden Lion film prize at the Venice Film Festival in 1951, alongside an honorary Academy Award for Outstanding Foreign Language Film (the category now known as Best International Picture)[16]. As a result of this, Kurosawa's version of the country was, like Mishima's, subject to intense scrutiny, both internationally and at home in Japan. Peter Wild recounts a common criticism levelled at Kurosawa, that he "was too much in thrall to the influence of Western cinema and too willing to pander to the tastes of foreign

[16] Alt is perhaps a little dramatic in claiming that Kurosawa was seen as a hack in his home country: *Sanshiro Sugata* and *Drunken Angel* were both awarded film prizes upon release in Japan. Nonetheless, Kurosawa's international success greatly bolstered his standing at home.

audiences … giving them what he thought they wanted, reflecting their own films back at them in a Japanese way, or presenting a view of Japan that emphasized the elements of the country he thought Westerners would most appreciate or most easily understand" (79). This reads akin to Miyoshi's criticism of Mishima and Murakami (two writers projecting exotic Japans – one a national, one an international version). Kurosawa was famously influenced by the West; several of his films are based on Shakespearean tragedies, and his samurai classic *Yojimbo* is essentially a version of Dashiell Hammett's novel *Red Harvest* (1929). In such a way, Kurosawa is effectively a translator: he transplants primarily anglophone[17] narratives into a 'Japanese' context.

This means that Kurosawa's engagement with Littlewood's model of Japanese imaginating is rendered complex or uneasy: yes, his films display extreme aesthetic qualities (it is not controversial to consider *Ran* the most beautiful film ever made). Tracing the presence of austere male samurai characters or duplicitous female characters is certainly possible in the texts of Kurosawa. However, these characters are often not Kurosawa's own creations, rather they are adaptations. As noted above, the nameless drifter played by Toshiro Mifune in *Yojimbo* is an adaptation or version of Hammett's recurrent Continental Op character, a similarly nameless and just man of action and intrigue. Kurosawa's greatest femme fatale is found in *Throne of Blood*, in the character Lady Asaji, played by Isuzu Yamada. Asaji is likewise a rendition of Lady Macbeth, while the ambitious political manoeuvring of Toshiro Mifune's Lord Washizu is not uniquely Japanese or samurai at all. It is a straight adaptation of Macbeth's own arrogance and ambition. The key here is that these references are visible; in Murakami's parodies above, key texts are missing in the anglophone world (even still, in the case of *Natsuko's Adventure*).

However, these transpositional adaptations do require reimagination (as all relocated adaptations do). Thanes and kings become *daimyo* and *shogun*. The effect is occasionally somewhat different or unique, however. Erin Suzuki (2006) reads *Throne of Blood* with particular reference to its close adherence to Noh tradition. She precisely reads the sequence in which Lady Asaji thrusts the pike toward Washizu:

> Kurosawa focuses attention to this alienating power of dread by emphasizing the way that Washizu's desires, whatever they may be, are in this scene subordinated to the

[17] But not exclusively; Kurosawa adapts Russian texts too. *Ikiru* is inspired by Tolstoy, while *The Idiot* is an adaptation of Dostoevsky's novel of the same name.

> overwhelming demands of the film and the script: he cannot hold this moment in tension forever, but is compelled into completing the frame, symbolically represented by his return of the pike to the horizontal at the conclusion of his decision. Washizu's fall into his pre-scripted role is further emphasized when, following his return from the off-screen murder of Tsuzuki, he returns to the room where his wife is waiting and sinks down onto the floor. Asaji wrests the pike from Washizu's hands and exits, but the camera remains centered on Washizu sitting absolutely still, his face frozen into the grimacing expression of the warrior-mask, Heida. From this moment, Washizu has become "possessed"—though not yet completely—by the spirit of his role. (*Literature/Film Quarterly*)

In such a sequence, Kurosawa's Japan is felt all the more strongly by anglophone viewers. Familiarity with Macbeth's story of betrayal and murder collides with the unfamiliarity of the reference to Noh traditions. Within the familiar narrative bounds, a 'Weird'-ness can manifest itself, doubly powerful[18]. Such cultural specificity does not necessarily disrupt the Shakespearean qualities of the film, but restore a strange Otherness that may comfortably be measured along Littlewood's classification.

Shakespeare is thus used as a canvas upon which Kurosawa can paint a samurai epic, achieving a sort of cultural synthesis while textually upholding a sense of a unique Japanese national identity. There is a strange version of the spected/spectator relationship at play here: Kurosawa reads the British drama, distending elements and discarding others, while introducing Japanese tradition into these texts, more clearly situating and identifying a spected Japan. Mishima also neatly utilises Japanese literary forms in his works. For example, he published *Five Modern Noh Plays* in 1956 and commonly invoked uniquely Japanese traditions such as *seppuku* and *shinju*. Mishima also writes in the mode of Japanese folk stories (as in *Natsuko's Adventure*), and his texts are exclusively set in Japan. Mishima does not textually leave Japan at any point. The effect this exerts on his readership is a conception of Japanese exceptionalism: Japan is singularly interesting, singularly deserving of Mishima's literary talent. This reinstates an imperial superiority, while rebuking Kurosawa's alleged attempts at transnational appeal. Furthermore, the narrative adherence to traditional Japanese values reifies said values; instilling the reader with the sense that not only is Mishima's Japan the *real* Japan,

[18] These ideas are returned to in Chapter II with reference to Murakami's use of *The Great Gatsby*.

but it is also the *ideal* Japan. There is an urgency to this argument that is cultivated and strengthened by Mishima's own lifestyle (and subsequent suicide).

By contrast, Haruki Murakami rarely refers to signifiers of national identity, writing in a sense *out of* Japan. This means there is no *seppuku* nor ruminations on the state of the post-war, post-imperial Japan. So, *seppuku* is still present, but it now takes the form of a salaryman's self-effacement instead of grisly self-disembowelment. Furthermore, Murakami (like Kurosawa) borrows extensively from anglophone and European fields. Murakami's fictions offer a more extreme convergence of global culture than Kurosawa's: contemporary American literature, British pop, and Czech classical music collide with Japan in Murakami-land. Where Kurosawa adopts these narratives only to surround them by the paraphernalia of Japanese culture, Murakami appears to do something else. The paraphernalia is international, it is global capital. Shakespeare himself is rendered a part of this paraphernalia in *1Q84: Book Three* when Tengo envisions three nurses as the witches from *Macbeth*. Tengo thinks to himself that the witches corrupted the Scottish lord, stoking his "evil ambitions. But Tengo wasn't seeing the three nurses as evil beings. They were kind and straightforward women" (91). Instead, Tengo makes the connection on a purely visual basis: Shakespeare has become akin to the masks glimpsed in *Throne of Blood*. By Murakami's own admission, Japanese literature and tradition have never much influenced his work. His introduction to the Penguin collection is then an excellent essay of alienation: "I know hardly anything about Japanese fiction … in this introduction, I am not standing a step above you as your guide to Japanese literature but taking a position on the same level as you … I'm reading most of the stories included here for the first time in my life" (xii-xiii). Murakami's close historical readings, coupled with his absolute indifference to the subject matter, recalls the vignette of Mishima's suicide in *A Wild Sheep Chase*: Japanese literature is present in its absence and apathy requires effort to perform. Although it is present, it is ignored.

This performative apathy is compounded by the conspicuous inclusion of the character Derek Hartfield. In Murakami's first novel, *Hear the Wind Sing* (which anticipates the events of *A Wild Sheep Chase*), Murakami recounts the fictionalized suicide of fascistic writer named Derek Hartfield. The novel is bookended by the narrator's ruminations on this fictional philosopher and writer, whose work has confounded and confused the speaker. Hartfield is described as having written in protest against twentieth-century politics, art, and general life without any discernible direction; "he did not know what he was fighting against" (5). He embodied protest without a cause. His futile struggle ended when Hartfield committed suicide,

jumping "off the Empire State Building clutching a portrait of Adolf Hitler in his right hand and an open umbrella in his left" (5). The specificity of these details is bizarre, while Hartfield's fictive nature imbues his invocation with a sense of bizarre discomfort: why not simply use Yukio Mishima here? Mishima was, after all, similarly fascistic, suicidal, and an ultimately futile figure. Mishima even wrote a short play entitled *My Friend Hitler*. Neither Hartfield nor Mishima achieve material change by their suicides; their actions are symbolic, nothing more. The use of Hartfield in lieu of Mishima creates a post-modern effect: the lines between diegetic reality and actual reality[19] are blurred intensely. Hartfield is comparable then to the Noh mask in *Throne of Blood*, he is a signifier of an Other at play. However, whereas the Noh mask stabilises and situates the action of Kurosawa's film, Hartfield destabilises and disrupts Murakami's narrative.

The invention of Hartfield is also fully convincing. Murakami's early fiction has a realist style which amounts to the feeling that Hartfield is (or could be) a historical figure; his diegetic 'realism' is unquestioned and inspired this writer to search for Hartfield in actual reality[20]. In pursuit of Hartfield, I sifted through library databases, literary journals, and dusty bookshelves in pursuit of Hartfield. This was, of course, an exercise in futility, as the writer Derek Hartfield never actually existed. However, an unsuccessful search seems to imply (at first) that Hartfield has simply been forgotten by history. It is as though his literary impact was so minimal that it was not worth recording and that his work has vanished from utterance. His obscenely symbolic suicide and brutal politics are absolved through indifference, like Mishima in the student bar. This is another example of how Murakami-land differs from the imaginated Japans discussed here: Mishima's textual Japan is indebted to the past. He observes tradition, *seppuku*, fascism (not to say that fascism is a relic of the past; rather that its overt[21] domination of Japanese politics was abandoned post-war). The fruitless search for Hartfield may also be contrasted with my comparatively straightforward search for Mishima: in the same libraries and databases that held nothing for Hartfield, endless articles on and fiction written by Mishima were easily accessed. Hartfield then is an even more futile Euro-American avatar of Mishima, a less well-preserved or remembered artefact of times past.

---

[19] This specifically refers to the 'real world' of imaginated worlds: Mishima's Japan is a lens through which one can interpret Japan, Murakami-land is a lens through which one can interpret a wider, less bordered version of reality. The question of diegetic reality and the Real is explored further in Chapter V.

[20] As above. However, here we can see how an imaginated Murakami-land can be mapped over neutral spaces in the 'real world'. I viewed libraries, archives, and the internet through the spectrum of Murakami-land.

[21] With Japan's borderline one-party-system, Japan can be seen as post-fascist in the same sense that it is post-imperial.

Murakami acknowledges the existence of these beliefs. Imperial horror is elided in Murakami's early fictions. As Gluck asserted, the horror and failure of the Japanese empire is vanquished from mention, illustrated neatly in the image of Mishima's suicide as reported to uncaring students through a muted television. Even should the television be unmuted, and even should Boku and the students hear; they do not care. Mishima does not speak for them. They are no longer inhabitants of Japan, but rather Murakami-land: a disengaged and abjected unreal space.

Any attempt at a transpositional retelling of these stories must reorient their thematic concerns: for example, *seppuku* and the Golden Temple are not global. American and Western influence is absent, except to serve as a barrier that must be overcome, or a force to struggle against. This is best seen in the American soldiers depicted in *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion*. The Americans in this text are barbaric and dedicated to the denigration of Japan; they abuse sex workers, and they disrespect the Temple. Worse still, their actions are reflected in the Temple Superior. In this way, Western influence is conceived of as a negative, destructive, and wasting power. As the Americans denigrate Japanese tradition, their influence pushes some characters to denigrate their selves, seeking to become more American in their manner. Paradoxically, the threat of Western attack heightens the national pride of Mishima's protagonist. Mizoguchi notes that the Temple grows more beautiful under threat of destruction but is rendered banal in a time of perceived peace. He remarks that "the Golden Temple seemed to use the bad war news that reached us day after day as a sort of foil against which it shone more vividly than ever" (33). Threat to national identity (from 'outsiders') serves as a rallying cry for Mizoguchi, inspiring and stirring his patriotism to new heights. Mishima's imaginated Japan is therefore a land defined by opposition and strife; without the threat of destruction, it is plain and boring.

Mishima's stories hinge upon the observance (and readers' knowledge) of Japanese traditions and adherence to institutions such as *seppuku* and the Golden Temple. *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion* only successfully functions as a novel when the reader aligns oneself with the traditions of Japan that are featured. Through alignment, we understand the abuse that they face, and subsequently understand the outrage of Mizoguchi. John Berger's *Ways of Seeing* is useful here. Berger argues that in viewing art, film, or reading literature "we never look at just one thing; we are always looking at the relation between things and ourselves" (9). The non-Japanese reader must situate themself against a literary landscape that was not constructed with their reading in mind. This makes Mishima a difficult subject for translation as his work relies

on these tacit, insider understandings. This necessitates the inclusion of footnotes (as in the Vintage edition of *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion*) or explanatory essays at the beginning or ending of the volume. These frame and colour the perception and understanding of the Western reader: further alienating the translated text from the original. This serves to undermine the affect of several narrative twists[22]. They would not require the explanatory notes that the reader of the English language Vintage edition does. This problematises Berger's theories of self-location, which occur along different lines for in-groups (Mishima's imaginated Japanese people) and out-groups (everyone else). Murakami-land is more accommodating and less stringently chronotopic; if Murakami invokes any esoteric tradition or unusual historical circumstance[23], he is sure to explain it (at length), thus making his fiction amenable to a wide-ranging reader base. Murakami, in a sense, footnotes himself.

(iv) Cultural Neutrality, Nostalgia, and Memories

Like Mishima, Murakami observes the ubiquity of anglophone influence on Japan in the mid to late 20th Century. Unlike Mishima, Murakami does not assert that such influence is necessarily malign. McDonald's, Dunkin Donuts, and other such mainstays of Western consumerist culture populate Murakami's streets, as they do the streets of Japan. However, the conspicuous absence of Japanese chains, such as MOS Burger, is significant. The globalised business corporations are named, the Japanese ones, for the most part, are not. The inhabitants of Murakami-land are ambivalent to their presence; McDonald's simply *is*. Furthermore, Murakami's literary style is indebted to Truman Capote, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Raymond Carver, all of whom Murakami cite in his Penguin introduction and several of whom Murakami has translated from English into Japanese. The combination of all these touchstones results in what Tomoki Wakatsuki calls a "cultural neutrality" (5) inherent to Murakami's fiction. In such a way, Murakami's fiction often seems unaffiliated with Japan (as imaginated project), existing in its own space.

[22] For example, the Superior at the Temple visits sex workers and wastes the Temple's money. To one unfamiliar with the Superior's responsibilities, he seems a common wastrel. To one familiar with their religious responsibilities, it is obvious that he is not performing the ascetic lifestyle demanded by his position. This sort of background, contextual information would be inherent to Mishima's imagined contemporary reader.

[23] In *Killing Commendatore*, Murakami gestures to Buddhist live-burial, *The Great Gatsby*, and the Spanish Armada. In each case, he (sometimes awkwardly) has a character explain the reference, as though to an uninformed and confused onlooker. Likewise, if a character's name is written with unusual kanji or is particularly uncommon (such as Aomame in *1Q84*), Murakami provides an in-text explanation of this.

Murakami's novel *Killing Commendatore* engages with the idea of an emergent cultural neutrality. In the novel, Murakami introduces another fictional historical figure. This time the character is a painter, named Tomohiko Amada. Amada is described as having spent his youth studying Western art, travelling to Vienna to study in oil painting. Upon his return to Japan, Amada renounced his earlier intercultural work and instead began to paint in a traditional Japanese style. Amada's son speculates that "going abroad awakens your own ethnic identity, or something" (42). This speculation seems banal; it hints at a Mishima-lite definition-by-opposition conceit, whereby Amada's style emerges as rebellion against the West. The protagonist disagrees, arguing that Amada's stylistic change was "less a shift, more akin to a conversion" (53). The artist initially painted in imitation of the Cubists; bold, but derivative. However, in taking this skillset and reorienting it in the pursuit of mastering Japanese traditional painting, Amada creatively reimagines both forms. Although Amada's later works are deeply traditional, they are informed by the artist's earlier engagements with Western Cubism in terms of perspective. Amada's mysterious mastery as a painter stem from his cubist-inspired compositions, over which he paints more traditionally. Even when Amada paints in the Japanese style, it is underpinned by a shrouded interculturalism that is not immediately apparent. This makes him the ideal artist of Murakami-land, in which the disintegration of national borders underpins every conversation and interaction. Again, Murakami's fiction returns to what Flynn (2016) observes as the twinned "familiar and strange" (90). Although Flynn is specifically referring to Murakami's cityscapes, the idea is present here too; wherein Japanese style is underpinned by European, resulting in a painting that is 'Weird' for viewers from either tradition.

Killing Commendatore significantly functions as a retelling of Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. In an interview with Sarah Lyall for the *New York Times*, Murakami explains his choice of model: "[*The Great Gatsby*]'s a book about a dream – and how people behave when that dream is broken. This is a very important theme for me. I don't think of it as necessarily the American dream, but rather a young man's dream, a dream in general". This suggests two key points: that the 'American dream' is easily amenable to Murakami-land (thanks to their shared emergence from the roots of capitalism); and identifies similarities between (the real writer) Haruki Murakami and (the fictional painter) Tomohiko Amada. Murakami and Amada's art explore post-imperial melancholy and anxiety through a prism of Euro-American influences. This again problematises borders in Murakami-land, not least as *The Great Gatsby* is a semi-chronotopic novel. Fitzgerald's text addresses the specific relationship dynamic between the

nouveau-riche and old money in America. The ease that accompanies Murakami's transposition of Fitzgerald's narrative into the context of Murakami-land[24] implies a direct line of relation. Murakami melds the Japanese geography with American culture (rendered a neutral, common-ground culture) in his rendition of the story. As with Kurosawa, problems arise and details must necessarily be altered to fit the disparate parts (new location/time period and original base-text), further discussed in Chapter II. In Murakami's fiction, anglophone and European cultural production is rendered a neutral space that has subsumed and now underpins global discourses[25]. It becomes a script from which Murakami can perform.

This cultural neutrality then takes the form of a near collage of references. The collage is a post-modern technique, suggesting another way of looking at Murakami. Fredric Jameson (1991) argues that every use of that term is fraught: post-modernism is "not merely contested, it is also internally conflicted and contradictory" (xxi). Brian McHale compares post-modernism to modernism, only with an "even more frantic pace of innovation and obsolescence" (40). It dissolves logic and temporality more fully even than modernism. McHale argues that the 'high' culture versus 'low' culture dichotomy that modernism upholds is rejected in entirety: the national and the international, the classical and the modern, and the sacred and the profane collide in post-modernist texts.

A good synoptic example of this is found in the musical tastes of the inhabitants of Murakami-land. In *Dance, Dance, Dance*, the protagonist expresses his love for jazz and classical music. He is a cultural connoisseur, listening to and ranking different performances of the same songs, prioritizing and judging pieces through their endless reinterpretability. He bonds with a young girl entrusted to his care as they drive without a destination. The teenager, Yuki, is a product of the late eighties; she favours the pop-rock stylings of Talking Heads, Iggy Pop, and Phil Collins. Boku recognises a single song that she plays through the car speakers, the Rolling Stones performance of "Goin' to a Go-Go". The protagonist exclaims "I know this one … The Miracles did it ages ago. Smokey Robinson and the Miracles. Years ago when I was fifteen or sixteen" (111). Meaning is accrued via retelling, and Murakami notes the curtailment of time necessary for a retelling: Mishima retells ancient stories. His imaginated Japan invokes the ghosts of ancient and premodern history to assign importance to his narratives. Kurosawa also does this in a way; he adapts folk tales and international theatre that

[24] *Killing Commendatore* is not unique in Murakami's oeuvre for this: he has written sequels and retellings of Orwell (*1Q84*) and Kafka ('Samsa in Love') too. Arguably, these present symptoms of why Ōe disavows the Japanese-ness of his writing.
[25] A more in-depth analysis of Murakami's retellings and adaptations follows in Chapter II.

is nonetheless temporally vindicated. Murakami-land's modernity is instead discontinuous and overlapping upon itself. This pattern is played against the protagonist's taste in music: he is a fan of classical music and notes the endless performances of single compositions as committed to vinyl. There is no singular 'true' version of a classical piece: interpretations accrue value. Classical music is assigned its value by its survival over hundreds of years, whereas the Rolling Stones demonstrate a miniaturization of this process. Innovation and obsolescence are compressed, as is the process of cultural legitimisation that confers historical value to art. A 'classic work' once took hundreds of years to actualise; now it seems to take less than a single lifespan. Furthermore, the performer is now centralized: the song is perceptibly linked to Smokey Robinson in Boku's experience, and to the Rolling Stones via Yuki. The protagonist is witness to a short-term process of legitimisation that helps to distinguish Murakami-land from Japan.

This assemblage of cultural touchstones and references reveals a curatorial streak inherent to Murakami's fictions, perhaps implying that value is not entirely disintegrated. Rather, Murakami's protagonists preferring a particular performance of Chopin denotes nothing more than their personal tastes. They are awash and drowning in so much culture, that to express a preference – to build one's interests around oneself like a castle – is a necessary act of self-actualisation[26] that is paradoxically de-neutralising: individual character and value are restored to these texts when they are sorted, preferenced, or criticised. This recalls Walter Benjamin's essay "Unpacking My Library", in which Benjamin muses on the invisible auratic connections found in one's personal library. The presence of books, the selection of books, and the ordering of books is arranged around the custodian of the library[27]. In an increasingly interconnected and international world, the streets are overwhelmingly awash with noise, art, music, books. Benjamin predicts that "the most profound enchantment for the collector is the locking of individual items within a magic circle" (60) in which the collector is the discerner. Personal libraries and collections often make sense only to their owners. Selecting, refining, and curating taste therefore becomes a filter: Murakami's protagonists dim the noise of the hyper-modern. They navigate this strange and overactive world by selecting and deselecting that which they deem necessary: they determine that which is canonical to their interests and lives. All else is discarded or irrelevant.

[26] It also suggests their buying power.
[27] Although this reads as formal and business-like, it is more applicable to 'normal' personal libraries (which often appear disordered to anyone but their owner) than it is bookshops or public libraries, both of which have an external order imposed upon them.

The concept of the reduced nostalgia cycle effects this curation. It echoes the material conditions from which both Murakami-land and Mishima's Japan emerge: the country was stripped of the certainties assured by imperialism. Where Mishima returns to tradition, Murakami diverges. This is partially what binds Murakami-land other to yet another image of Japan. It is a different sort of project because its scope of reference is not only modern, but also avowedly global in its perspective. This poses a strange challenge for Murakami's imagology; how does this reckon with Beller and Leerssen's contention that imaginated countries are "singled out from the rest of humanity as being somehow different" (xiv)? If Murakami-land can be said to possess an identity, it is provided by global capital. However, this is where the disordered personality of Murakami-land is most visible. In being constructed upon global capital, Murakami's fictions are built on shifting sands. Fisher (2014) after all likens capitalism to "the Thing in John Carpenter's film of the same name: a monstrous, infinitely plastic entity, capable of metabolizing and absorbing anything with which it comes in contact" (6). Žižek (2001) points to the manifestation of this plasticity in systems of belief, noting the emergence of a bastardised sort of Buddhism, which he terms "Western Buddhism … it enables you to fully participate in the frantic pace of the capitalist game while sustaining the perception that you are not really in it, that you are well aware how worthless this spectacle is" (15). Wallerstein posits too that "a declining hegemonic power begins to find its preferred language out of date and no longer readily acceptable … The capitalist world-economy needs the states, needs the interstate system and needs the periodic appearance of hegemonic powers. But the priority of capitalists is never the maintenance, much less the glorification of any of these structures" (58-59). Without the appearance of Wallerstein's hegemonic powers, cultural production flails; their presence enables the status quo, replacing old authorities such as myth or religion (for example, the Golden Temple). Constancy is necessitated and ensured via a (now shortened) nostalgia cycle: recycled versions of the same songs, the same chain restaurants operating all over the country and the world. These have succeeded the role once occupied by Buddhist temples and imperial structures. After all, the Thing from Carpenter's film is fundamentally an impersonator. It appears to have no singular true form, but its chief point of contact with humanity is through 'Eerie' mimicry. All of this contributes to a sense of endless, sinister familiarity. This is a fitting illustration of global capitalism, to which mutability is its defining characteristic; a characteristic also shared by Murakami-land.

The characters of Murakami-land's avid consumption of Euro-American art, music, and foodstuff (burgers, pasta, and beer) render them further from Littlewood's series of

imagological Japanese touchstones. Returning to *Dance, Dance, Dance*, the protagonist is initially bemused by Yuki's musical taste, dismissing it offhand as "typical teenage girl stuff" (111). However, he too listens to apparently exclusively Euro-American music. The only distinction here is that he prefers classical music and jazz. The restates the importance accrued via retelling: the only song Yuki plays that Boku makes note of is the Smokey Robinson track, which becomes a sort of hegemonic touchstone by virtue of its familiarity. Returning to Benjamin's conception of the collection as magic circle, the shared presence of this track opens both magic circles to one another; they become portals through which the characters can communicate. In essence, they conjure conversational bridges between characters. Murakami's protagonist and the chief secondary character are similarly beholden to Euro-American cultural production in this way; this becomes a bridge between the characters by way of conversation. Retelling the same old songs, the same old stories – staying in stasis, while making something new of the familiar – this is the preferred position of the Murakami narrator. In *Killing Commendatore*, the protagonist rejects the radio; he is more interested in listening to Tomohiko Amada's old record collection, which consists entirely of old classical music performances and opera. How does this figure into the reduced nostalgia cycle of post-imperial Japan/a hyper-capitalist world economy? These characters retreat from an advancing world: novelty is avoided unless it is bolstered by accrued, decades-long legitimacy. The Benjaminite sketch of the collector operates both on an overworld level (Murakami is the collector supreme, organising his favourite 'real' texts in a diegetic order that makes sense only to him), but also in an underworld sense. Every character has their canon; Benjamin's theories serve as an effective guide through Murakami-land, which is composed by (and *of*) collectors. Murakami performs an exciting cover version of a familiar favourite.

Murakami uses Euro-American pop and rock in a deliberate manner in *Dance, Dance, Dance*, along with later short stories, many of which focus on (or are titled after songs or albums by) The Beatles. While Japanese rock acts such as Fishmans, Maximum the Hormone, and The Yellow Monkey have seen varying degrees of worldwide success, their success is confined to a relatively minor status[28]. No J-Rock or J-Pop act has had success on the level of The Rolling Stones or The Beatles (both perennial favourites of Haruki Murakami). In his 1994 interview with folk-rocker John Wesley Harding, Murakami notes this artifice and fixation on the global, instead of chronotopic uniquities. He states that when he is "describing the city of

[28] When Deleuze writes about reclaiming Kafka's minor status as a Czech writer, it is with the understanding that his success has made him 'major' and universal. These performers need no such reclamation; they have never dominated cultural conversation in such a way.

Tokyo, it is not the real Tokyo. It's just a colorful [sic] city. I need very artificial, very strange, weird streets. That's what I want, and yet they [the Japanese literary establishment] say it's not realistic. About six years ago I wrote "Dunkin' Donuts" kind of things; that helped me a lot to create kind of a Blade Runner place". His accelerated hyper-modern Tokyo is not meant as a purely realistic or representational depiction: it instead serves as a pastiche. Again, this coincides with Flynn's (2019) assertion that "the images Murakami chooses [to represent Tokyo in *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*] are an assortment of Western and Eastern elements, Dunkin' Donuts, a Shinto shrine, Jaguars and Porsches, and these add to the plurality of the location. These subtle references to both East and West transcreate the traditional idea of Tokyo into a much more postmodern space" (99). This plurality is at once comforting and alienating; the city of Tokyo in Murakami is littered with these capital non-places that afford both comfort and a distancing.

If Mishima's Golden Temple is the ultimate symbol of Japan's unique spirit, in Beller's sense, then perhaps Murakami-land's recurrent American fast food chain restaurants symbolise this nation's shared cultural heritage with America, which is a nation comprised of capitalist imitation. Murakami's fictions present a world (if not a Japan) wherein the Golden Arches have succeeded the Golden Temple as cultural nexus. Returning to Sklar's terminology, when the post-imperial is the model of imperial authority mapped onto global commerce, Murakami-land's McDonald's and Mishima's temples are indistinguishable in their social function. Both provide a constancy, both are visited by families and individuals at all times of the day, every day of the week. Corporate franchising has replaced – or rather subsumed – the role of imperial hallmarks in Murakami's fiction. Global capitalism permeates every interpersonal, national, and international interaction here and in Murakami-land. If we augment Joon-Ho Bong's theory with Beller and Leerssen's theories of imagology, a new reading of Murakami emerges. His fiction approaches global capitalism on a local level, disintegrating the imaginary barriers between the poles of globality and locality.

The global capitalism of Murakami is best understood with reference to Žižek. In *The Year of Dreaming Dangerously*, Žižek proposes that "one of the main dangers of capitalism … [is that it] is global, encompassing the whole world, it sustains a *stricto sensu* "worldless" ideological constellation, depriving the vast majority of people of any meaningful cognitive orientation. Capitalism is the first socio-economic order which *de-totalizes* meaning: it is not global at the level of meaning" (55). Žižek further notes that capitalism is so all-pervasive and so successfully global because it can "accommodate itself to all civilisations, from Christians

to Hindu or Buddhist, from West to East" (55). This contains an implicit acknowledgement that these different nations, ethnicities, and religions still retain distinct identities in the face of global capitalism, but relates to Fisher's comparison to *The Thing* too. Underneath all this stuff, under the avalanche of traditions, films, CDs, videotapes, there is a pulsating and malign profit margin. The meaningful social cement that the temples served (a space for community interaction) is replaced by an exchange-driven social space (McDonald's, et al). Murakami-land serves to turn the screw further, de-localising Japan in order to accommodate an imagined global spectator.

To further explore this, I return to the Harding-Murakami interview, which contains telling commentary on the short story, "The Second Bakery Attack". This story concerns two young lovers who decide to rob a McDonald's restaurant with a shotgun. Murakami identifies this sequence of events as "very extraordinary [in Japan]. Nobody carries a shotgun. And nobody attacks McDonald's. It's a very strange story in Japan, but it's not a strange story in this country [the United States]". The 'Weird'-ness of this situation recalls Mark Fisher, who defines the 'Weird' as "that which does not belong … [bringing] to the familiar something which ordinarily lies beyond it" (10). The 'Weird'-ness of this story pivots and reorients itself according to readers' norms and contexts. To 'Japanese' readers the out-of-place here is primarily found in the act of robbing a bakery. As Murakami notes, American readers may find that considering McDonald's a bakery is much 'Weird'-er than deciding to rob it. This multiplicity is important to this project's attempts in mapping Murakami-land, which operates on different levels for readers of different origins, while maintaining a stable and consistent philosophical outlook Meaning is delineated and situational: cultural nuances may be different, but the underpinnings of a global capitalist sphere remain intact. Were the robbery to occur in a Japanese fast-food outlet the reader's reception of the story would be different. In selecting McDonald's, Murakami locates the story in a global narrative of cross-border capitalist exchange: Harding is capable of locating and mapping his own lived experiences within the world of the story without difficulty. Murakami utilises the most translatable forms of global capitalism to achieve that which Žižek observes: McDonald's and KFC are spaces bereft of any deeper ideology than profit. Profit is all that matters to McDonald's. When St Patrick's Day arrives, Irish McDonald's will sell shamrock shakes. The store becomes a neutral body whereby the anglophone reader may meet the Japanese text in reassuring comfort. At the same time, McDonalds and KFC are common sights in Japan, where approximately 2900 restaurants are operated (McDonald's Holdings Japan). It is an international meeting space of equal

vapidity, regardless of where it is found. Murakami-land too is a manifestation of the late capital: it is the space of amenability, assigned place only when it assumes form. The forms it assumes are as above: manipulable and unfixed, adjusting and reforming in the pursuit of profit.

(v) Reluctant Actors

Murakami's conversation with John Wesley Harding remains illustrative of this idea of a meeting point (operated above by McDonald's). Harding identifies Murakami's fictions as often possessing a 'key' in the form of a cultural reference, often Euro-American in origin; "like the backwards dream sequence in *Twin Peaks*", "Was that a conscious thing, the Jason [from the myth of Jason and the Argonauts] parallel?". Harding locates Haruki Murakami within a global tapestry of cultural production and myth. His touchstones and his semiotic signposts are unmoored and variably displaced. The invocation of these staples renders the mutability and protean nature of global corporations a central theme in Murakami's work. The paradoxical, shifting nature of say, McDonald's is rendered personal in his fiction. The protagonist of *Dance, Dance, Dance* wonders aloud at the complex paradoxes that accompany global capitalism, situating himself in the aforementioned global tapestry as he does so. His friend, the somewhat successful actor Ryuichi Gotanda is deep in debt and can only alleviate his financial woes by spending *more* and writing off his spending as general 'expenses'. Eating at restaurants, renting a mansion, his sports car, his time with sex workers; all of the listed activities are capable of being written off; Gotanda explains this actor's economy as "a whole system … they [the studio/talent management] can make out these very legitimate receipts. Sex as 'business gifts and entertainment.' Amazing, huh?" (151). The protagonist responds simply: "Advanced capitalism" (151). Gotanda is haunted by the write-off: he can rent everything temporarily and he can sleep with anyone. But he cannot own anything. Just like the multinational corporations mentioned, Gotanda's life operates illogically. The puzzling, paradoxical conundrum of his debts/lavish lifestyle confounds Gotanda, driving him to acts of uncertain violence; in his abjected state, he (possibly) murders the protagonist's ex-girlfriend, Kiki. The novel refuses to satisfy or conclude this mystery; when confronted, Gotanda is puzzled, asking, "What's real anyway? From what point is it all phobia? Or acting?" (353-354). Gotanda's real life becomes no more real than the acting jobs he performs. The performativity of his career collides with his potential crimes, and reality is challenged in the resultant clash. This collision drives Gotanda to suicide; he claims that he can (or will) no longer exist in the

intermediary space between reality and unreality. He can no longer distinguish between his acting or somnambulist murders; everything has melded together and become performance.

Gotanda's situation is absurd. Everything is in his hands, but he knows that nothing can last. The uncertainty Gotanda experiences is analogous to the uncertainty that Murakami-land offers readers. Textual reality in Murakami-land is constantly in flux or challenged by magical forces. This is best illustrated Murakami's use of hotels, such as the Alphaville Hotel in *After Dark* and in the Dolphin Hotel that features in the latter two instalments of the Tetralogy of the Rat. These hotels are themselves Euro-American references: named for Jean Luc-Godard's film *Alphaville* and named after the dolphins of Melville's *Moby Dick* respectively. These easter eggs may be detected by readers of any origin, but their sources (Godard, Melville) remain Euro-American. The Dolphin Hotel exists on both a 'real' physical level alongside a spectral one. At the final novel's (*Dance, Dance, Dance*) opening, the hotel has been newly rebuilt, having replaced an old, identically named hotel that the protagonist lodged at in *A Wild Sheep Chase*. A ghostly shadow of the old hotel appears intermittently, momentarily haunting the new space; the hotel space is rendered a liminal space. *After Dark* presents a less abstract, but still valuable illustration of the liminality of the hotel space. Alphaville is a love hotel, where illegal sex work occurs and both workers and customers are often caught between the folds of the law. This is illustrated by the presence of the Chinese sex worker in the story, beaten by Shirakawa, afraid to seek help for fear of the law.

These hotels may be read in banal terms: hotels are, after all, designed as liminal spaces. They exist in a sort of twilight dimension, presenting any paying customer with a home-away-from-home falsehood. This comfortable bed is not your bed, but it is designed to feel as though it could be. Again, they are devoid of a deeper meaning; their only ideology is exchange-based. The hotel is symptomatic of the problematised reality of Murakami's novel, whether legally in *After Dark* or through more magical means as in *Dance, Dance, Dance*. The elevator in the Dolphin Hotel creaks and delivers its passengers to a floor between floors. Ghosts from the past flit along the corridors and haunt the rooms. Multiple realities are possible at once. Similarly, Gotanda's reality is in question: where does his acting end and his real life begin? Consider his relationship with Kiki. Onscreen, she makes a cameo in the film *Unrequited Love* as Gotanda's character's girlfriend. Offscreen, she is his favourite sex worker, and he frequently enlists her services, before murdering her in a fugue state (in a hotel). Sex is practiced, exchanged, reproduced, repackaged, and sold through the silver screen.

Murakami's presentation of the acting profession can be compared to Mishima's here. Gotanda endlessly reproduces his 'self' on-screen, playing the one character over and over. The effect generated is one of the self as a performance of its own; and leads one to consider the position of the screen actor as identity, and what this means for self-presentation on personal and national levels in late-stage capitalism. In a freakish sense, Gotanda also embodies the self-performance of publicly creating imaginated Japans. Mishima's short story "Star" takes an apparently similar approach to the question of self-representation. "Star" follows a gifted young actor, examining the similarly de-realising effects of a life of endless performativity. Murakami and Mishima both present their readers with images of deeply unsatisfied young men. Neither want for material goods, nor money, nor sex. Their physical needs are fulfilled, but their performances spill over into their personal lives. Mishima's protagonist, Rikio, muses that fame has led him to denounce the "real world. Not my world … no more than a fantasy" (9). In this way, reality and fantasy are upended, superseding one another. The films that Rikio performs in replace what we would consider reality, and vice versa. This is a radical departure from Gotanda's quandary: Gotanda's reality is thrust into question. He grapples without success for something to hold to, for an anchor to reality. There is no stability in Gotanda's existence, unlike Rikio's. Rikio's position is not one that Mishima endorses or supports – the story seems condemnatory of his vulgar excesses and vapidity – but nonetheless, it expresses a solidity that Gotanda is denied. Both actors attempt to manage their public images (via the method of imaginating) to differing levels of success.

Both actors seem to illustrate a response to the film camera's dissipation of the 'aura'. Understandings of aura herein rely on Walter Benjamin. In *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, Benjamin describes the auratic as referring to the presence of being in the space of performance; it is the magnetism between the audience and the performers, upheld by the knowledge that the actors' performances will and can never be exactly replicated. The aura is the air of suspenseful spontaneity that is necessarily void in film, as "the audience is replaced by a piece of equipment" (19). Benjamin (rather grumpily) characterises film as a stunted form, arguing that all screen performances are tainted by an awareness that they exist within a transactional context: "the screen actor is conscious, all the while he is before the camera … he is dealing with the audience: the audience of consumers who constitute the market" (21)[29]. This distends time indefinitely: the performance is ongoing eternally. It is the same infinitely, unlike the stage performance, which changes with every staging. This

[29] This quotation in fact applies to Murakami more than Kurosawa.

distension occurs on two levels: (1.) Films (*Unrequited Love*, for example) exist as commercial products and will be available to watch on-demand via screenings, VHS, and so forth. (2.) Performativity is total in these actors' lives. As idols, their day-to-day life is a carefully curated performance in of itself. Gotanda is held on a tight leash held by his studio producers, Rikio performs a falsity of boyish romance: he is assigned false girlfriends by his agent and maintains a mask of virtue to best appeal to young girls. When Rikio receives a letter from a young female fan, confessing to masturbating daily to his image, Rikio muses that "There was no way my photograph was looking back at her. But there I was, under her voracious gaze!" (56). This presents the reader with a sense of de-centring in the case of the screen actor. They are present when they are not, and permanent when they are not.

The paradoxical state of the actor in both Mishima and Murakami's texts points to a sort of identity crisis. Mishima's actor is presented as craven and delights in privately diverging from his public role, while Murakami's is uncertain. Gotanda can no longer tell his roles (actor and public icon) from reality. In their private lives, the actors are controlled by their jobs; Rikio asserts his individuality by acting in opposition to his preassigned role, while Gotanda cannot distinguish between his screen self and his actual self. To return to Suzuki's reading of *Throne of Blood*, Kurosawa may be said to present yet another portrait of an actor: in the sequence wherein Lord Washizu murders his liege, his face contorts to the expression of the Heida warrior mask from Noh drama. Washizu leans into what Suzuki terms his "pre-scripted role". The character adopts this role, acting (in both cinematic and Noh dramatic terms) in accordance with a prewritten and predestined series of conditions. The certainty of his destiny is contrasted to the uncertainty of the liminal identity that Gotanda occupies, which propels him to potential murder, and certain suicide. The line between performer and performance is increasingly blurred and overlaps occur with devastating consequences. Mishima stands in opposition, while Murakami operates in uncertainty. These actors are metonymic of their writers' imaginated worlds: Mishima's Japan is cruel, performative, and moralistic; Murakami-land is contradictory, overlapping, and diffident.

The idea of 'opting in' is key to understanding these portrayals of duty and assigned roles. Washizu obviously opts into a series of dramatic conventions, becoming Macbeth as he murders his master. This sequence is strangely reflected in a key scene from Mishima's *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion* in which Mizoguchi consciously invites disaster. In this sequence, Mizoguchi has his fortune read: "'Travel – unlucky. Especially avoid travelling in a north-western direction.' On reading this, I decided to make my journey to the north-west"

(170). In such a way, he willingly defies prophecy and invites damnation. Mizoguchi invites monstrosity upon himself: his north-west journey ends with a revelation that inspires him to burn the Golden Temple to the ground. This is somewhat similar to Mishima's own doomed act of rebellion (culminating in his suicide). However, where Washizu and Mizoguchi deliberately act upon their fates, Gotanda is afforded little of the same agency. Gotanda is lost within the myriad roles he performs, until they overlap and he loses sight of reality altogether.

(vi) Further Adventures in Film-Land: The Mishima-*Godzilla* Complex

When Mizoguchi burns down the Gold Temple, it is a shocking event. A frail human has destroyed a place and a concept much larger than himself (both symbolically and physically). However, when the monstrous Godzilla destroys Tokyo in Ishirō Honda's original *kaiju* ('strange beast', a subgenre of Japanese monster cinema) masterpiece, it is somewhat less surprising (although still shocking). Godzilla is positioned against the Tokyo skyline. The creature is as tall, if not taller, than the buildings surrounding it. These buildings, by eye, appear around fifty-feet tall. However, in 1984's *Godzilla* reboot (directed by Koji Hashimoto), the monster found itself in a new city. The Tokyo of the 1980s was a city of rapid modernisation. Newly built buildings would loom over the old Godzilla. Therefore, Hashimoto's version of the monster appears to have doubled in size as it destroys Shinjuku. Some buildings do tower over Godzilla in this rendition, but it is never in doubt that the creature can flatten these. The past enormity of Honda's creature is diminished by the reboot, rendered nearly quaint. By the twenty-first century, Godzilla had reached truly titanic proportions. Gareth Edwards' 2014 American reboot, also entitled *Godzilla*, had the creature tower above the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco (even with part of its body submerged in the bay). In such a way, Godzilla itself embodies the same plasticity of Carpenter's Thing; it is a monster dictated by market forces. The monster Godzilla defines itself against the markers of capital – the skyscrapers that house and permit the constant flow of capitalism. This section of the chapter examines this plasticity with reference to how Godzilla's non-fixed physical state recalls and informs the fictions of Murakami and Mishima as they appear in translation.

The monster accommodates itself to the world of capital, shifting in size in order to continually dwarf humanity. The monster has also invaded and colonised our everyday speech. Writing about the sudden ubiquity of the term post-modern in the 1980s, Fredric Jameson (1991) remarked that the term's sudden coinage and global acceptance constituted a "lexical

neoevent, in which the coinage of a neologism has all the reality impact of a corporate merger, are among the novelties of media society" (xii). What then to make of the term 'bridezilla'? A word coined by M. A. Woodham in 1995, it refers to "a woman thought to have become intolerably obsessive or overbearing in planning the details of her wedding" (Oxford English Dictionary) and constitutes a lexical neoevent of its own. The word is a compound of two words: 'bride' and 'Godzilla'. If there is a corporate merger at play here, it is between everyday anglophone parlance (or American misogyny) and Japanese monster movies. This exact ubiquity – the monster's encroachment into everyday turn of phrase in English-speaking zones – is a large part of why *Godzilla* serves as another useful imaginated version of Japan against which Murakami's literature may be contrasted. The monster presides over the anglophone imagination, manifesting itself not in expected zones (cinema, television screens) but also infiltrating conversations and the every-day.

The original *Godzilla*, directed by Ishirō Honda, is a unique case for imagology. Honda was Kurosawa's primary assistant director, collaborating with Kurosawa on *Stray Dog*, *Kagemusha*, and *Ran*, amongst others. Despite Honda's legacy now resembling that of a journeyman, Kurosawa considered Honda better capable of capturing (or conjuring) cinematically the mood of post-war Japan than himself: "I'm often told that I captured the atmosphere of post-war Japan very well in *Stray Dog*, and if so, I owe a great deal of that success to Honda" (Wild 56). *Godzilla* exemplifies this: the film is concerned with Japan's new place in world politics and power relations, using the sudden appearance of the titular monster as a springboard to examine these issues. The novel nature of the creature, and the sudden destruction wrought, is an obvious analogy to the American nuclear attacks. In such a way, the film positions the Japanese as the only nation capable of 'understanding' the events of the film. After all, the fallout of the radiation-leaking monster's attack is not so different (in effect) to the fallout of the war.

The film uses the monster to instigate a conversation regarding Japan's new opportunity to 'create' itself anew in the wake of the war. Notably, the central narrative concerns a Japanese scientist who has developed a revolutionary new technology. The scientist, Dr Daisuke Serizawa, realises that the micro-oxygen he has engineered is laden with potentiality: it may serve to usher in a democratised and peaceful new world. It is a renewable and clean energy source that is cheap to engineer. However, Serizawa also recognises that the technology may be harnessed to create a bomb that he terms the 'Oxygen Destroyer'. Serizawa notes that the technology represents a temporal crossroads; in a better, less tumultuous time in Japan it may

have been used to its Utopian potential. However, as that contemporary Japan still bore the raw wounds of wartime defeat, alongside the constant aftereffects of nuclear radiation, Serizawa recognises that the Oxygen Destroyer would inevitably be used to militaristic ends. David Kalat (2010) notes that Serizawa's "inner turmoil" (21) is allegorically reflected by the character Emiko, who is torn between an arranged marriage to Serizawa, representing tradition, and her true love, a young soldier. She is trapped between traditional expectations and her true desires, just as Serizawa's invention teeters between becoming a potential disaster or radical force for good. Serizawa notes that the violence of World War II is doomed to repeat infinitely should nation states continuously attempt to assert their political supremacy via new and horrifying weapons of war. While Yukio Mishima imaginated a Japan to metaphorically present a possible future for the post-war nation, Serizawa is literally able to forge the future of (diegetic) Japan. This makes Serizawa's final suicidal sacrifice (obliterating himself, the Oxygen Destroyer, and the monstrous Godzilla) particularly poignant. Serizawa possesses the powers to render Japan the most powerful military force on the planet but does not do so; preferring instead to destroy the technology and himself. Serizawa, and the film at large, diegetically reject the system of one-upmanship that is perceived to constitute international relations: alleviating Japan's wounded condition is only possible by both acknowledging the wound and working to heal it.

Godzilla creates something new by synthesising techniques of Japanese and American film-making; the film reflects its diegetic themes in form. The film was intended to utilise stop-motion effects to depict the titular monster. August Ragone's biography of *Godzilla*'s special effects engineer, *Eiji Tsubaraya: Master of Monsters* notes that the monster would originally have been depicted in the manner of the American special-effects artist Ray Harryhausen, utilising stop motion effects. However, time and budgetary constraints necessitated the use of miniature sets and a man in a rubber Godzilla suit: "Tsubaraya decided that his department's considerable expertise in miniature building and visual effects photography could accommodate working with a live actor in a monster costume instead of using stop-motion techniques" (35). This was a radical departure from prior film-making techniques and remains in vogue in Japan via the continued success of the *Ultraman* and indeed, *Godzilla* multimedia global franchises (although Godzilla has shifted toward primarily computer-generated depictions in recent years). Adversity in the film-making process necessitated film-making ingenuity. Tsubaraya, much like Kurosawa, took a Western staple (the special effects/monster movie and Shakespeare, respectively) and applied a Japanese lens to it. Furthermore, the film was originally written as a variation on the themes and story of the 1953 Harryhausen effects

film, *The Beast From 20,000 Fathoms*. In development, the narrative changed to a more complex and interrelational story; but its origins lie in Harryhausen's picture. Like Kurosawa, Tsubaraya, and Murakami, Honda adopts and adapts Western sensibilities to a Japanese context; creating something new in the process.

It comes as no surprise that Mishima and Murakami have both referenced *Godzilla*. Since the 1954 original, *Godzilla* has remained enduringly popular and nationally important. The franchise has become inseparable from the Japan of the Western imagination. A Godzilla statue (based on the creature's 1989 appearance) towers over Shinjuku, one of the busiest commercial centres of Tokyo. The near forty films in the Godzilla franchise have reliably accrued capital for their parent company Toho and the monster has become a pop culture staple.

When Murakami mentions Godzilla by name, it is in a throwaway or comic fashion (arguable as a sort of holophrase). In *Kafka on the Shore,* when an older character oversleeps, his young companion attempts to rouse him by calling out "Hey, Mr. Nakata. Gramps. Fire! Flood! Earthquake! Revolution! Godzilla's on the loose! Get up, already!" (187). The chain of signifiers here, escalating in severity, assume the form of a joke. The danger turns from potentially trivial (a fire, often, can be extinguished), to parodically dangerous (no matter how old or sleepy the man is, one is not likely to sleep through Godzilla's wrath). Nestled between the perils of Godzilla and an earthquake is the word "revolution". This exposes another key aspect to Murakami's world; it is a space that fears disruption or a reordering. It is content as it is. The possibility of revolution can only be followed by the attack of a fictional monster. This may be read two ways: in literal terms, the attack of the monster is the only possible escalation. Social change is positioned as eclipsing earthquakes or floods, so social change is a bridge between natural disaster and supernatural disaster. The alternate reading is that these threats reach their apex at the point of revolution: the only thing to do at this point is to retreat into the fantastical. Revolution is the peak of imagined hypothetical terrors here. Murakami also parodies the monster in his short story "Super-Frog Saves Tokyo"[30], in which a humorous life-sized frog does battle with a *kaiju* named Worm. Although their battle occurs deep below the city, Worm threatens to destroy the city, like Godzilla does. The comic or throwaway invocation of Godzilla found in Murakami's fiction speaks to two primary factors: the plasticity of Godzilla as a creature well attuned to parody, alongside the material reality of Murakami's

[30] Published in 2002's *after the quake*. Significantly, this means that the story may have been written during the brief period wherein Godzilla was famously 'dead': the 1995 *Godzilla vs Destoroyah* featured the monster's death for the first time since the first film.

fiction. Godzilla in Honda is a monster befitting both the textual world and the 'real' historical moment that surrounds it. Murakami's version of the monster suggests a lighter historical moment. Both are adequate to the realities that their creators wish to project. Nonetheless, Murakami's Super-Frog dies at the end of the story, in a grisly scene reminiscent of Godzilla's death by the Oxygen Destroyer; "one of the boils burst with a loud pop. The skin flew off, and a sticky liquid oozed out … maggot-like worms of all shapes and sizes came crawling out … His two big eyeballs fell from their sockets onto the floor" (101). The scene, while it adds the presence of parasitic life (where Godzilla presents an image of a dead ocean – the fish of the bay and Serizawa are also rendered skeletons), similarly tears its titular monster to pieces, resulting in a monster stripped of flesh and utterly decimated.

Apocryphally, Mishima once dubbed himself "Godzilla's egg", allegedly in 1955. The source for this story (which once appeared on Wikipedia and still displays on a number of fan sites across the internet) appears to be an article Mishima wrote for literary magazine *Chuokoron*, entitled "Gojira no Tamago" (literally, 'Godzilla's egg'). The article is long out of print and was never translated into English. Nonetheless, several writers took inspiration from the story; poet Larry Johnson wrote an amusing poem and critical musing on the topic in 2013, while literary website *Art of Europe* hosts a peculiar pitch for an imagined *Godzilla Vs. Yukio Mishima* film from 1998. While later films in the Godzilla franchise would involve the discovery of an egg containing Godzilla's heir or offspring, the creature is never shown laying an egg[31] and is either agender or presumptively male. Perhaps the reason for such a statement lies in the international reception of Honda's film, which was met with critical disdain by English-language critics of the time. By referencing pivotal classics, Kurosawa was placed in direct conversation with Shakespeare. By contrast, Honda's references (by extension, his referential library) were contemporary monster movies such as Ray Harryhausen's work, in addition to Cooper and Schoedsack's *King Kong*. This sphere of reference colours the perception of the viewer: Kurosawa's subject matter is already acclaimed, and Shakespeare's narratives are already considered timeless. Genre becomes a constraint in *Godzilla*'s case, and it was dismissed as a silly, schlocky film with nothing more than mass appeal. Its influences had not attained the critical standing of Shakespeare's. As a result, kneejerk American and European discourse surrounding *Godzilla* was frequently unfair and misleading. A good example of this is found in Bosley Crowther's *New York Times* review of *Godzilla* from 1954,

[31] The only exception to this is found in Roland Emmerich's much maligned 1997 *Godzilla*, an American production that features an asexually reproductive version of the monster.

which disparaged the film on the grounds that "not one of them [the cast] can act … [despite the fact that the acclaimed actor Takashi Shimura plays a pivotal role in Honda's picture; the same paper had in 1952 declared him the] … best actor in the world". Shimura would later appear in Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai*, where his performance was again lauded by the same paper. Crowther's review continues "the other observers are local actors, whose English dialogue is plainly dubbed, and some several hundred—or thousand—Japanese extras who do nothing but run and scream. The whole thing is in the category of cheap cinematic horror-stuff, and it is too bad that a respectable theatre has to lure children and gullible grown-ups with such fare". The nuclear allegory, which still peripherally haunts the American edit (through the sight of a decimated Tokyo and barren bay), is completely ignored in Crowther's review. The monster film was dismissed out of hand by American critics not because of its actual quality, but because of preconceived perceptions (and a later, bastardized American dub and re-edit).

Therefore, Mishima's apparent approval of *Godzilla* may be intuited as a sort of cultural intervention or rescue: Mishima asserts the literary potential of *Godzilla* that was glossed over by the (perceivedly) ignorant Americans. It ought to be noted here that this is a slightly unfair attitude to assume: the popular, widespread Western release of Godzilla was a heavily re-edited affair entitled *Godzilla! King of the Monsters* in 1956. The film maintains the impressive special effects that depict the fearsome titular monster but elides the tense and anxious human narrative. Instead, new scenes featuring American characters were awkwardly inserted and the Japanese dialogue was translated improperly: thus avoiding mention of the role of the H-Bomb tests at Bikini Atoll in awakening the beast from primordial slumber. This makes *Godzilla* a film that benefits and suffers from the translation process: the film's original appeal lies in its 'Japanised' iteration of the American monster movie tradition. Stop-motion is replaced by suitmation (rubber suits against a scale cityscape to simulate the creature's colossal size). The abstract fear of atomic radiation in US monster movies is translated into more visceral and real terms in Honda's film, particularly in a chilling vignette that occurs as Godzilla tramples Tokyo. A dying mother comforts her doomed children in a burning street, consoling them that you can see your father soon. We'll see him in heaven" (59:22). Later, a temporary hospital shelters victims of Godzilla's radiation: the monster leaks deadly radiation with every step. As doctors in radiation gear pass by crying children, their Geiger counters ping at the excessive levels of radiation. The abstract, hinted violence of American horror/monster movies is rendered more real here: it is analogized to the recent, lingering effects of the then-recent war.

At the same time, the literal act of translation transformed the film from a sombre examination of post-imperial anxieties into a campy, less sincere monster mash. In this process of Americanization may be intuited a reverse orientalism; the spectator/spectacle relationship is upended. A result of this may be that the anglophone audience is flattered to see their canonical texts reproduced (Shakespeare by way of Kurosawa) and embarrassed to see their popular culture (B-horror/monster movies by way of Honda) emulated. This embarrassment is seen in Bosley Crowther's 1956 *New York Times* review of the American version of *Godzilla*: "It looks as though its Japanese producers, assisted by a stray American—fellow named Terry Morse, who is an alumnus of Hollywood's Poverty Row—made a close study of the old film, *King Kong*, then tried to do substantially the same thing with a miniature of a dinosaur made of gum-shoes and about $20 worth of toy buildings and electric trains". Simultaneously, *Godzilla*'s divergence from the normative tropes of Western monster movies is censored for reasons of either national shame or patriotism: releasing a film that directly confronts the atrocities of US post-war nuclear activity in the Pacific would surely be financial suicide. By asserting the canonicity of *Godzilla* in direct opposition to American critical opinion, Mishima seems to champion the film. His anti-American sentiments may colour his admiration of the film: it is impossible to consider Mishima in relation to Godzilla without acknowledging their shared distrust toward America. Mishima's adoption of the "Godzilla's egg" moniker then becomes a sort of foreboding omen; after all, when Mishima dubbed himself this, Godzilla had not been rehabilitated as in later films. Godzilla was still a monster of vast proportions terrorising Japan. Furthermore, the central conceit of the film *Godzilla* is its position at a temporal crossroads: the monster's appearance represents a choice between continuation of the imperial mode or a move toward a more global and less militaristic 'new' Japan. Mishima assumes the mantle of successor to Godzilla as a sort of hubristic challenge to himself: his works are confrontational and inflammatory. He challenges his Japanese readership to rebel against the foreign occupation. In 1970, these challenges are made less abstract by Mishima's failed attempt at instigating a coup. Just like the conclusion of Godzilla, a worsened crisis is avoided by way of suicide: paradoxically moving away from traditional imperialist violence whilst still adhering to its grammar of self-sacrifice. Future and potentiality are nested in an egg that will never crack. At the same time, writers such as Flanagan and Miyoshi situate Murakami as Mishima's literary heir: if Mishima is Godzilla's egg, Murakami is Mishima's.

(vii) Conclusion: Generative and Generated

The post-crisis Japan is thus realised as a component of the global network of late-stage capitalism across these texts. While these renditions of Japan face internal conflicts (Serizawa notes the implicit dangers of his micro-oxygen, Mishima seeks to instigate war), by adopting the canon and the cliches of the Western world, Japan is rendered closer to it. A textual conversation is instigated that positions the two as equals: Western art informs Japanese art. This seems a levelling of the wartime rhetoric that haunts early Mishima and Kurosawa. Whilst linguistic differences remain, commerce is rendered a new, transcendent, and unifying force. In Murakami-land, the narratives of Shakespeare and the message of McDonald's are allowed to transcend physical, linguistic, and spatial boundaries: they are perceptibly constant. Whilst Honda and Mishima seem to wrestle with the implications of this upon Japanese culture (and the nation's immediate future), Kurosawa and Murakami seem to flow with it. Japan is a part of the global contract of capitalism, adopting its constraints whilst attempting to retain its own identity: for this reason, Kurosawa and Murakami's canonical texts retain a Japanese setting to communicate ostensibly Western narratives. Mishima's anxieties regarding undue American influence in Japanese art may be considered a sort of curatorial anxiety: the story of Japan becomes a part of the story of the world. Mishima seeks to maintain the wounded condition of post-war Japan; realising that this precise state of intense national psychic trauma is a uniting and exclusive identity. Inhabitants of Mishima's Japan are those who see the wounds visited upon the country and rally around this wound: not necessarily striking out (although this is encouraged), but remaining unique in the world by way of these wounds. This intrinsic difference is one that Mishima seeks to maintain in his novels, particularly evident in his novel *The Sailor Who Fell From Grace With the Sea*.

Murakami-land is also linked to *Godzilla* via Kazuki Ōmori, a Japanese director known primarily for directing a number of *Godzilla* films, including the fantastical *Godzilla vs King Ghidorah*. His version of the character is the avowedly fantastical and super-heroic Godzilla: a less allegorical creature that battles greater evils. Earlier in his career, Ōmori directed a little-known (and little-seen) film adaptation of Murakami's first novel. Ōmori's 1981 Murakami adaptation, *Hear the Song of the Wind*, is a strange and bewitching film. Ōmori found Murakami a difficult writer to adapt as "actors recite lines from Murakami's novels, because no Japanese person actually talks like his characters do" (Marshall). Ōmori's *Godzilla* film is conspicuous for its American influences; there is a time-travelling android assassin who resembles Arnold Schwarzenegger's Terminator figure, while Godzilla and King Ghidorah's

time-travelling battle recalls *Back to the Future*. Yet, the film's Japanese identity is never in question. It exists within an imaginated Japan, not another place like Murakami-land. Murakami-land is distinct and different,

Godzilla emerges from the realm of myth diegetically; the monster is a myth from the fictional Odo Island. When a young woman says that the monster is "just a legend", a village elder responds promptly with "Perhaps, but it's still true. We may have to give up a girl as a sacrifice" (10:01). While the creature may be an awakened dinosaur or a mutated lifeform, it is situated in relation to humanity in this way. The creature Godzilla binds together the real (nuclear warfare) and the imagined (myth). *Godzilla* is generated from myth (the islanders), but simultaneously generates myth in the form of Mishima. *Godzilla*, like Murakami, manifests itself in both expected and unexpected manners. Both are subject to the wiles and whims of capitalism, their form shifting to accommodate the market forces that underpin every aspect of modern life. Both exhibit the global and the local, coexisting and overlapping, and at times contradicting one another. How is Godzilla a primordial legend from Odo Island and simultaneously a child of the atomic bomb? Likewise, how does Murakami's fiction manage to be both specifically Japanese and at once international? Chapter II moves toward an analysis of the myths that constitute and create the world of Murakami's fiction and how these permit such seeming contradictions.

Chapter II – Mythic Routes into (and out of) Murakami-land

Understanding Capitalism as a Connective Tissue

Towards the end of John Carpenter's *The Thing*, the character MacReady confronts the final form of the titular monster. At this point in the film, the Thing has abandoned any attempt at subterfuge and appears as a being of pure rage and malignant intent, composed of Lovecraftian tentacles, spiny attachments, and fleshy appendages. Yet the creature's appearance also betrays its previous hosts: the biologist Blair's distorted face is visible, canine heads erupt from unexpected points along the creature's body, and the biological mass of the monster is composed of the corpses of its victims. The spines, spikes, and tentacles too may be holdovers from previous victims of the creature's assimilatory predation. To return to Fisher's (2014) reading of Carpenter's monster as an illustration of capitalism "metabolizing and absorbing anything with which it comes in contact" (6), the final form of the creature appears to lay these components bare. The façade of harmonious subjection is shattered and the incongruity of the constituent forces that combine to form the Thing are made apparent. This chapter attempts to lay bare the constituent myths that coalesce to create a Murakami-land. In doing so, Murakami's fictions will be left like the Thing: an exposed, wriggling mass of seemingly incongruous and ill-fitting references that combine to form an Uncanny whole. In order to illustrate this, the chapter examines Murakami's more referential novels, such as *Killing Commendatore* and *Kafka on the Shore*. By examining several of these novels' referential touchstones, the true stuff of Murakami-land becomes more visible.

In order to do this, the chapter lays bare some of the international myths that coalesce to generate Murakami-land. Much like Mishima, Honda, and Kurosawa's divergent imaginated Japans, the curation of tropes to Murakami-land is important. What elements of 'real' Japan (or Mishima's imaginated Japan, or Kurosawa's) are integrated or ignored has implications on the meanings and potentials of a Murakami-land, which is particularly fraught owing to the wide variety of mythic traditions from which Murakami borrows. This is most clearly seen in Murakami's use of myth and retelling. The tales retold in Murakami-land confer their abiding 'value' or cultural capital (returning to Bourdieu's concept) onto the newer text, conveying preestablished understandings and assumptions. This is the essence of myth and folklore and is the chief focus of the following chapter, which maps Murakami's invocation of myth and the manner in which myth deftly interweaves traditional and modern versions of myth. As such,

the chapter is divided into five main sections, beginning with a clarification on what exactly is meant by myth in this context. These definitions carry through and inform the argumentation of this chapter and the following. Hereafter, the chapter looks at how Murakami uses two Greek mythic structures (Oedipus and the Omphalos), before examining the phenomenon of modern myth in Murakami. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the break from myth structures as a significant individuating moment in Murakami-land. Murakami's *Kafka on the Shore* is used as the central text of this chapter, as it best encapsulates these ideas. This novel moves between traditional myth (invoking Oedipus, alongside the Omphalos), modern myth (invoking Fitzgerald and Kafka), and shattering myth (at the termination of the novel). Traditional and modern myth are distinguished purely on a linguistic as well as temporal level. My understanding of traditional myth is itself both traditional, drawing upon strands of historical traditions, and modern myth draws on Roland Barthes' ideas of myth as a way of speech. Myth from both oral and literary traditions is referenced here.

(i) What's a Myth, Anyways?

Joseph Campbell, in *The Power of Myth*, provides a series of useful ways to consider myth: myths are "clues to the spiritual potentialities of the human life" (16), "there are two totally different orders of mythology. There is the mythology that relates you to your nature and to the natural world, of which you're a part. And there is the mythology that is strictly sociological, linking you to a particular society. You are not simply a natural man, you are a member of a particular group" (40). Myths are intrinsic too to the imagological; myth serves as a channel through which a nation's individuality may be asserted. William Bascom's (1965) understanding of myth as perceived truth that emerges from a distant past (10), is also useful here. What matters here is how these perceived truths endure or are distorted through the passage of history. What is forgotten from myth is as is important as that which remains.

Bascom's definition leads to a second understanding of myth, which builds upon Roland Barthes' definition as provided in *Mythologies*, in which myth is positioned as "a type of speech … with a type of social *usage* which is added to pure matter" (117-118). Barthes defines the "threshold of myth" as occurring within a sort of metalanguage that studies "language-object[s]" (124). Barthes' language-object is a theorised series of bases upon which myth is built. It is the linguistic construction materials that constitute myth. Barthes' myth enfolds signifier, signified, and sign together: it becomes malleable, adaptable, and a capable

method of processing the world[32]. It is current, continuous, and describes anything that has accrued sufficient semiotic power as to be almost self-explanatory in its implication, so a person who undertakes a task beyond their intellectual capabilities is an Icarus. Again, the imagological uses this form of myth. Beller writes; "The statement 'France is a republic' is by and of itself not imaginated; the statement 'The French are freedom-loving individualists' is" (27-28). Here, a mythology is established: the pure matter here is French history, replete with rebellions and short-lived tyrants. The pure matter is augmented by the social usage, which is the essentialisation of this history in the national character of France itself; this results in an effective social myth.

Within this chapter, I apply this understanding of myth to literature. It is a way of talking about what occurs when a literary work moves beyond being merely that, and into a sort of holophrastic shorthand in an accelerative culture that enables (or necessitates) the quick formation (and discarding) of new myths. Noah Baumbach's 2005 film *The Squid and the Whale* provides a useful example of this, wherein the character Walt recommends a book he has not read (Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*) to his girlfriend, under the pretence of having read it. Against his expectations, she reads the book and attempts to talk to him about it. He manages, weakly, to remark that the end of the novella is "very Kafkaesque" (25:48). The moment, while humorous, illustrates the extent to which Kafka's world informs our own understandings of social capital and norms. The irony of the scene is that the situation itself is Kafkaesque in its absurdity: Walt has trapped himself by pretending to have read the novel and now must navigate a treacherous social labyrinth to escape with dignity (keep up the pretence of having read the novel, without betraying the fact that he has not). The film version of Murakami's short story "Barn Burning", Chang-Dong Lee's *Burning*, contains a similar scene in which the protagonist Jong-Su bitterly muses; "There are so many Gatsbys in Korea" (53:47) in reference to a rich sociopath's mysterious and seemingly unearned wealth. Literature has entered into conversational parlance and a change has occurred. There are many ways to classify this shift (cultural capital, for example), but here it is considered as constituting a movement toward Barthesian myth within the bounds of Murakami's fictions. Murakami's textual references to *The Great Gatsby* and the fictions of Franz Kafka are examined through this lens, which allows for social myth to be discussed alongside historical myth.

[32] Aptly illustrated in the book cited, in which Barthes satirically traces, interrogates, and critiques the 'myths' of TV wrestling, detergents, and stripteases. The book considers the everyday as comprised of a series of myths of varying degrees (although Barthes stops short of ranking or sorting these myths).

In her landmark book, *Differencing the Canon: Feminism and the Writing of Art's Histories*, Griselda Pollock uses the Oedipus myth as a model for tracing Western canons of art and literature. The works common to these canons constitute an "illustrated Story of Man" (25). Pollock considers the Oedipus myth as a founding myth for the 'story of art' (much as it would later form a founding myth role for Murakami-land, as discussed in the first part of this chapter) and argues that the repetitions of style alongside constant allusions to previous masterpieces renders many of the great, canonised artists 'Oedipal': they act in imitation to that which came before and are incapable of generating something truly new. To catch these references is the thing, however. It becomes a game of cultural capital I-spy[33]. As Bourdieu has it, "cultivated pleasure feeds on these intertwined references, which reinforce and legitimise each other, producing, inseparably, belief in the value of works of art" (501). Value and importance are conferred to new works of art through reference and proximity to prior, accepted masterpieces, resulting in an endless chain of references that overlap endlessly. The new art is legitimised by the old, while its sustained invocation of the past reinforces the status of the older piece.

(ii) Oedipal Destinies

In *The Forbidden Worlds of Haruki Murakami*, Matthew Carl Strecher maps mythic supernatural occurrences in Murakami's fictions. Strecher's approach is formulated around the intervention of "spirits" (120) in Murakami, asserting that these figures serve to blur boundaries between myth and a textual reality. Strecher positions *Kafka on the Shore* as a central text in understanding Murakami's use of myth, centring the Oedipal valences of the text. He notes that the protagonist, Kafka Tamura, is similarly prophesied to kill his father, and bed his mother (although there is also a unique wrinkle in this evolution of the Oedipus myth, as he is also fated to have sex with his sister). The choice of name, Kafka, is significant too. It evokes the Czech writer Franz Kafka, whose distinctive alienation finds its match in Murakami's character. This presents a double bind of unfortunate prophecies, which presents an awful model for life; Oedipus and Franz Kafka both lead difficult and traumatic lives. Murakami's character then is placed in conversation with these. Strecher differentiates Murakami's Kafka from Oedipus by way of their reckoning with prophecy; Oedipus runs from his fated patricide

[33] This is a game that literary fandom encourages; Murakami bingo is discussed in the next chapter. This bingo is simultaneously a series of references to Euro-American culture as well as Murakami clichés.

and incest, while Kafka 'opts in' to participate in the prophecy[34]. The imaginated state binds together and equates the mythic signifiers of Oedipus and Franz Kafka. The Czech writer is positioned á la Oedipus: a signifier whose innate meaning is inalienable. The invocation of both myths positions them as near-founding myths for Murakami-land. Without an understanding or awareness of Oedipus or Kafka's specific 'meanings' (cultural expression/explanation of the incest taboo, 'Kafkaesque' absurdity), their utility falls flat. A basic awareness of their semiotic functions is necessary to map or understand Murakami-land. As such, these myths are essential for the construction of Murakami-land.

These myths are not selected at random. Their international status points to their difference from the spirits that Strecher mentions. The divine beings that recurrently appear in Murakami-land through texts such as *Kafka on the Shore*, *1Q84*, and *Killing Commendatore* are all interventionistic beings. Furthermore, the Oedipus myth is not an entirely unique mythic tale. It is merely one expression of the cultural anxieties that surround incest and familial relations, as noted by Ashliman and Duggan in "Incest, Various Motifs in A (and T)" (2005). In this chapter, they mention the similarities between the Oedipus myth and that of Judas Iscariot, alongside other myths from Finland, Hungary, Romania, Cape Verde, Massachusetts, and Albania. Perhaps the unique element of the Oedipus myth is its influence on the detective story, as William Marx alludes to in *The Tomb of Oedipus*. Marx notes a Japanese Noh equivalent to the Oedipus myth, Zeami's *Semimaru* (22). *Semimaru* is narratively similar (an injured prince exiled to rurality encounters separated family members), and is similarly cloaked in mystery. Marx illustrates the differences between the Semimaru and Oedipus stories[35] clearly: "Zeami's play is incomprehensible … if we do not consider it through the lens of its essential relationship to the place it claims to illustrate. But it does more than illustrate it: it finds roots, meaning, and purpose there. It is inseparable from it" (31). Marx argues for the locality and geographical specificity of myths like Oedipus and Semimaru. Although their narratives may resemble one another, it is their quirks and vernacular idioms that renders them specific to their regions.

In the case of Oedipus, his investigation is what distinguishes the Greek (specifically Sophocles' version) myth from other renditions of the same taboo. The tragedy of Oedipus' damnation is heightened as it is self-inflicted: thanks to his skills as a detective, his methods of

[34] In such a way, Kafka Tamura is rendered close to Lord Washizu from *Throne of Blood* or Mizoguchi from *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion.*
[35] Important to note that both tales have primarily endured in dramatic form.

detection, and investigation he discovers the truth of his predicament. By contrast, Semimaru's relation (in Zeami's play, it is his sister) stumbles upon him living in exile by coincidence. Other variations on the incest/Oedipus theme, such as the Albanian myth, conceive of the incest as a wicked plot enacted by a jealously lustful mother. The Oedipus myth (with all its self-sabotage, misdirection, and detective work) is often considered the first detective story ever recorded by writers such as Page DuBois (2005). As such, the Oedipus myth is echoed in detective noir (and parodied in neo-noir[36]). This detective work and the dramatic tension conjured by the narrative framing of Sophocles are the specificities that set Oedipus apart from other ruminations on the same anxieties. The play also renders areas of the city places in Tuan's terms: Mt. Cithaeron assumes a sinister air, while the palace is suffused with both incestuous malaise and a sort of doomed nobility through the experience of the play.

At its most basic level, the Oedipus myth is merely an expression of a common cultural sentiment. The specificity of its invocation (or rather, that Murakami selects this version of the expression rather than the Albanian or Finnish versions) speaks to Murakami's desire to ground Murakami-land in the tradition of detective fiction and Greek dramatic mythology. Semimaru, like Kafka Tamura, is separated from his sister and parents; but Semimaru is passive. He does not seek, he remains in exile. This passivity of Murakami-land inhabitants is a comfortable way of life that must be disturbed; a wife, a girlfriend, or a cat goes missing and domestic stillness is interrupted by sexually explicit phone calls. The protagonist leaves their kitchen to search back alleys and dreamscapes. Oedipus' thirst for knowledge forms an effective model for the protagonists of Murakami's fiction, such as Toru Okada from *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*. Toru becomes a sort of detective, obsessed with finding his missing wife. Just like in the case of Oedipus, there is a sort of sexual taboo at the heart of the mystery: where Oedipus found himself married to his mother, Toru's wife is implied to be the victim of incestuous abuse at the hands of her brother, Noboru Wataya. Kafka represents a slight twist on this: he disturbs his own life, by becoming a runaway. However, even this is complicated by the fact that he is caught in a prophecy (which he later decides to lean into).

[36] For example, Alan Parker's *Angel Heart,* which sets Mickey Rourke in search of a mysterious womanizing Satanic drifter. After having sex with his target's daughter, he soon discovers that he is in fact, the Satanic drifter. Denis Villeneuve's *Blade Runner 2049* is a similarly parodic invocation of similar themes; the protagonist searches for and apprehends his own father, in search of a conspiracy at which he is at the heart of. His discovery at the film's climax (that he is in fact, not Deckard's son) devastates him to the point of reckless self-endangerment, culminating in his death.

Thus, Semimaru is not a fitting cultural/mythological mould for the Murakami-land inhabitant. Strecher also notes the curious absence of traditionally 'Japanese' mythic influence in the worlds of Murakami's fictions, focussing on the absence of minor deities such as the *kami* and *inari* spirits that accompany many mythic Japanese exports (Studio Ghibli's popular animated family classics *My Neighbour Totoro*, released in 1988, or *Spirited Away*, released in 2001, as obvious examples). These spirits are paradoxically present and not. Strecher questions their divinity: comparing them to Greek gods etc means engaging in a sort of asinine power-scaling contest. If they are present in Murakami's texts, they are present in a shrouded sense. They are only truly acknowledged either through implication or absence; the short story "Kino", from *Men Without Women* (2018), features a mysterious character with the kanji for *kami* present in his name. The character's name, Kamita, is actually explained in text ("My name is Kamita, he said. It's written with the characters for "god" – *kami* – and "field" – "god's field"", 154), another example of Murakami effectively footnoting himself. Even when the *kami* threaten to appear in Murakami, they need explanation. Meanwhile in *Kafka on the Shore*, Colonel Sanders vocally denies being a *kami*; "Neither god nor Buddha am I" (305). He is something different altogether. He is, perhaps not to be understood along the lines of Greek or Norse deities, either. Sanders is instead an avatar of a uniquely Murakami-landian deity. Strecher argues against measuring *kami* and *inari* against the Gods of other cultures: one quickly becomes "bogged down in hopeless (and pointless) speculation about how Japanese deities compare, both to one another and to other deities from mythologies around the world" (120). The Sanders character – alongside the other deistic characters of Murakami-land such as Frog, Worm, and the Commendatore – are their own new thing. They are interventionistic, yet reticent; physically present, yet seek avatars. They seem to represent a subjective reality in Murakami-land. A person's values and beliefs are reflected by these deities: for this reason, an omnipresent deity is represented by KFC's mascot, or the whiskey brand mascot Johnnie Walker, or a character from the opera (and folk tales of) Don Giovanni. They do not appear as a form beyond their subject's comprehension. Furthermore, they appear as extensions of the capitalist realism that informs Murakami-land; these same powers find new forms and methods of expression.

This has consequences for Murakami-land's anglophonic appeal. That these Gods appear as capitalist mascots is not surprising; as Flynn and Suter have helped to establish, Japan is a hyper-capitalist state. The everyday of Japan is a complex interconnected web of internationalism; Suter explains that Murakami "tends to encourage this view of himself as

'Americanized'. On the other hand, he 'Japanizes' American culture" (45) in his narratives, creating a fusion world that is communicated using anglophone[37] forms. Around every corner lurks a new *kawaii* ('cute') creature representing consumer goods or services. For example, Japanese Suica travel cards are emblazoned with a cute anthropomorphic penguin (Japan Guide, 2024), while Tokyo Customs (located at Narita and Haneda airports) have a big-eyed dog in a blue shirt as their mascot (featured on their website accessible at customs.co.jp). Japanese *konbini* ('convenience stores') regularly enlist promotional images of anime characters or popular musical acts to sell daily goods. For example, in 2024 the popular Meiji Himilk chocolate bar was emblazoned with characters from the then-airing anime *Kaiju No. 8*, recorded on Instagram by username kain_japan. The anime characters are matched to different flavours of chocolate that correspond to their traits: a sword-wielding side character decorates the matcha chocolate bar (linking the Japanese flavour to Japanese history by way of the katana). The grim and determined supporting lead is assigned dark chocolate to match his gloomy disposition. All of these correspondences communicate a link between the everyday and the idea of the character/mascot. Despite this, the gods of Murakami-land do not appear to its inhabitants as mascots such as the Suica Penguin, or other popular anime characters such as Satoru Gojo from *Jujutsu Kaisen* or Ichigo Kurosaki from *Bleach: Thousand Year Blood War*. Instead, they overwhelmingly appear in the form of the faces of global (not local) capitalism in *Kafka on the Shore*. The faces of capitalism carry their own meaning now.

While these international gods appear in *Kafka on the Shore,* the protagonist is also forced to live out an international sort of curse. Kafka Tamura is forced to reckon with and actively engage with his own Oedipal destiny. After the librarian Oshima tells him that his life story resembles that of Oedipus, he stops avoiding his destiny. Instead, Kafka (like Mishima's Mizoguchi from *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion* when he decides to travel north-west) begins to opt into his sinister fate. Strecher notes that after he discovers the specifics of his curse, Kafka consciously 'adopts' Miss Saeki as his mother-figure (148). His own mother has been absent his whole life, so he uses a proxy (Miss Saeki) in order to fulfil the conditions of the Oedipus myth. This 'adoption' becomes central to understanding the transposition of pre-existing myth into Murakami-land. Strecher notes that Kafka's willing participation in the prophecy renders his actions "an act of will … they allow Kafka to succeed where Oedipus

[37] It is probably more accurate to call Murakami anglophonized (or Anglo-Europeanized), rather than Americanized. While these terms are clunkier than Suter's, they acknowledge the role of continental myth, music, and food in Murakami's texts. They also reflect the substantial time Murakami has spent in Italy and Greece.

failed: he completes the prophesy placed in his path (reasoning that there was no way to avoid it), and in so doing he turns it to his advantage" (148). This has a similar effect to that which was mapped earlier in the *Killing Commendatore* section: the self begins in a chrysalis-like imitation of prior textual/mythic heroes. However, the self is actually defined by emergence from these chrysalises; the act of becoming is found in divergence from preassigned pathways. There is a double-bind here: by willingly fulfilling the Oedipus myth, Kafka rejects it. This further distinguishes Murakami's fictions from Mishima's fiction and Kurosawa's films, in which opting in leads to madness or death. The role (ill fate, Macbeth, Heida) is inescapable in their narratives. Murakami's Kafka finds a way out that paradoxically is only achieved by adhering to prophecy. Oedipus would (presumably) never have willingly married his mother; Murakami presents one possible universe in which he did.

The invocation of a preestablished 'classic' imbues the newer work with some of its auratic essence. So, by naming and explicitly referencing the Oedipus myth, Murakami-land is placed in direct conversation with the preexisting myth. There is a sort of equivalence at play. But it is important to note that Oedipus (like other cultural expressions of the incest taboo) is not a story that emerged from the void. It is shaped and informed by prior stories, such as that of Orestes. Discussing specifically Euripides and Sophocles' renditions of Oedipus, William Marx likens them to "an evolution of the tragic … [that is] found in a raw and archaic form in Aeschylus" (68), citing his *Oresteia* cycle as an example. Specificity and colour have been added to the bones of the story, alongside heightened dramatic tension. Nonetheless, the core of the Orestes myth is common to Oedipus. In "Orestes and Oedipus: Differences, Similarities, Contaminations" (323-333), Ruxandra Cesereanu argues more explicitly that the Oedipus myth exists as slant retelling of the earlier story of Orestes. Where Oedipus commits patricide, Orestes commits matricide. The two characters are inextricably linked; both characters act as proxies of their fathers. Orestes takes a revenge that his father cannot (for his murder), whilst Oedipus fills his father's side of the bed. However, whilst Oedipus is a complex and conflicted character, Orestes is more of a cipher than a character. His own sister Electra even considers "Orestes a surrogate figure for everything" (328). To Electra, he fulfils the roles of father, brother, mother. He exists as a sign, not as a person. Oedipus seems to run from these familial labels; he runs from his foster family. Both characters are shackled to fate; they are proxies for the Gods' (or how humankind imagines the Gods) ideas of justice. By invoking the continuity of tragedy in this manner, Murakami-land's 'new' myth (an interpolation of Kafka and Oedipus) is positioned as yet another transformative evolution of primal concerns that find

expression in global cultures. There is at once an evolution and a return to origins: Orestes knows his fate, Pylades tells him of it. Oedipus however must discover his fate through detective work (much of which is carried out by his archaic private eye, Creon). Kafka knows of his fate, like Orestes, but the specificities are explained by Oshima. Murakami seems anxious that the positioning of his tale be evidently in a chain of tragedy; he leaves evident breadcrumbs pointing to such a fact. Murakami-land's Oedipal twist is its own local tragedy, like Semimaru before it.

That a work should exist within a chain of tragedy is nothing new or unique. Much as the Oedipus myth exists both without and within the context of the Oresteia[38], it functions as academic shorthand that allegorically explains innumerable phenomena. This is where Griselda Pollock's framework is useful. Pollock's Oedipal artists look backward and imitate their forebears, replicating their work in a self-referential manner. *Kafka on the Shore* functions parodically here; it adheres to Pollock's model explicitly and overtly. Its point of reference is not merely another prior writer (although Murakami-land quilts together Carver, Chandler, and other writers Murakami admires) but Oedipus itself. The dramatic tension in Euripides and Aeschylus is derived from the protagonist's lack of awareness: he does not know that his marriage is incestuous and doomed. By contrast, the tension in Murakami-land's expression lies in its awareness. Kafka knows his fate and decides to plunge *into* it.

Preassignment and prophecy is key therefore. All of these figures – Kafka Tamura, *Killing Commendatore*'s Menshiki, Orestes, Oedipus, artists – act in imitation because it is all they know. Pathways – modes of living – have been laid before them and they see no other option but to follow these examples. Oedipus and Orestes are rendered proxies of fate and destiny: they fulfil a role set out by the gods. Indeed, when Orestes hesitates to butcher his mother, Pylades reminds him that he has no choice in the matter. Oedipus' fate is a variation on this: his story is twisted so that his transgressions are even more horrific. Kafka's fate follows this trend and is further twisted. Kafka is doomed to kill his father, bed his mother, and bed his sister. The wheel moves and moves again. Despite the narrative similarities in Kafka's predicament however, Murakami's tragic hero diverges sharply from his Greek forebears. Kafka is allowed to exhibit a greater sense of agency: Strecher astutely observes that Kafka – like a film director (and indeed, like the protagonist of *Killing Commendatore*) – 'casts' his mother and his sister roles (53). In the novel, when Miss Saeki denies any relation to Kafka, he

[38] And when it exists within this context, it is typically in specialist hands; one interested in myth enough to trace these etchings back through time.

insists that she is wrong. Later in the same scene, she asks his true identity, to which he responds: "I'm Kafka on the Shore … Your lover – and your son" (343). The familial, biological truth is secondary to Kafka's willing adoption of a mother figure in the pursuit of the prophecy's completion. Furthermore, Orestes and Oedipus are used as unwilling proxies of the gods; they dispense justice in the name of Apollo or suffer tremendous godly punishment in the face of blasphemy. Their bodies are rendered a space of action for the whims of the gods. Kafka reverses this. If the powers of possession indicate divinity, then Kafka seems to exhibit a kind of godhood; he possesses Nakata as a proxy, murdering his father in a dreamlike trance[39]. In addition, Kafka assigns the semiotic roles of 'sister' and 'mother' to characters he encounters and later has sex with. Kafka is deterministic and acting, where the Greek heroes are acted upon and through. The classical fated heroes are puppets of fate, but both *Killing Commendatore*'s protagonist and Kafka are allowed to manufacture their own fate. In both cases, the protagonists recognise the shackles of narrative familiarity that bind them tightly, but act differently. In *Killing Commendatore*, discussed further later in the chapter, the Gatsby myth is dispelled in the opposite manner to the Oedipus myth in *Kafka on the Shore*. The protagonist opts out in this case.

Murakami textually leans into the power of myth by recognising the power of names. In classic mythologies, names carry power and are often ironic or significant in their translation. For example, Drew R. Griffith reads Oedipus' name as a Grecian pun on both the contraction for *swollen foot* ('oideo pus') and the verb *to know* or *to see* ('oida') (72). The name ironically references Oedipus' foot wound, sustained from a trap he was placed in as a baby, alongside his state of wise ignorance; with all of his wisdom, he remains oblivious to the fact of his incestuous marriage. Despite his name, he does not know. Murakami plays with this: Kafka's name simultaneously reflects both his alienation (alluding to recurring themes in the writings of Franz Kafka) and his alter-ego, The Boy Named Crow (as Kafka translates to 'crow' in Czech). Causality is called into play, as with the Grecian characters. Did Orestes' ('stands on a mountain', Cesereanu) pardoning for murder occur by pure coincidence atop a mountain? Was he presagely named for the event, or did the event happen for his name? The same questions may be begged of Oedipus; in any case, these characters did not name themselves. Murakami's Kafka did, and the reader never learns his birth name: it does not matter. His

[39] Despite this supernatural ability, it remains ambiguous whether Kafka is truly 'in control' here.

adopted moniker becomes his real name. The name Kafka communicates his dissatisfaction and his 'cast-out' status; it is a self-fulfilling prophetic name.

(iii) Omphalos Syndrome(s)

Murakami-land borrows further from Greek mythology, making it one of his most significant 'planes' of reference, along with global capitalism and Euro-American culture and pop-culture (that there is no sorting of these references – that all coincide and overlap – suggests that this multiplicity is at the heart of the Murakami-land experience). Murakami also invokes the mythic image of the magical entry-stone at multiple points in his work. This concept is derived from the mythic Greek Omphalos; a magic lodestone that focusses godly powers and marks the intersectional point between the world of humanity and the world of deistic magics. An example of this appears prominently in the *Oresteia* and is the setting for the final instalment of this cycle. The Omphalos in Greek myth is usually the stone that the god Zeus fed to his father Cronos and is used to symbolise the collision of the disparate forces of reality and magic. In *The Libation Bearers*, Orestes seeks refuge at the Omphalos of Delphi, a site sacred to the Greek god Apollo. This Omphalos allows Orestes to rest and escape the Furies, who torment Orestes for his matricide. The Omphalos here represents a space between spaces, where the human who is guided by the gods can seek refuge from his fated torment (even if only momentarily). This motif is invoked (both overtly and covertly) at numerous junctures in Murakami-land. It occurs most obviously in "The Kidney-Shaped Stone That Moves Everyday" (featured in the 2007 collection *Blind Willow, Sleeping Woman*) and *Kafka on the Shore*. Much like Gatsby and Oedipus, it is not the invocation of the myth but rather the specificity of the invocation that is pertinent. How Murakami adopts, reconfigures, and reimagines the motif shapes Murakami-land.

The Omphalos motif informs political discourse as much as mythological. Samuel Edgerton defines 'Omphalos syndrome' as the heightened importance conveyed on a certain place of significant religious, financial, or symbolic importance. He uses Jerusalem in medieval Christian society as an example of an Omphalos for its connection to the prophet Jesus Christ (26). Omphalos syndrome also works in a contemporary political sense, denoting the attachment of inflated importance to a singular physical location. Should Buckingham Palace be subject to a terror attack, it would be seen as a greater affront to the British state than if a Sainsbury's store were napalmed. In the destabilised and de-centred country of Murakami-land,

however, where is an Omphalos found? In Mishima's imaginated Japan, Omphalos sites are easily identified. The Golden Temple in *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion* is the most obvious example, not least because its destruction (or the fear of its destruction) has a rallying, awakening effect on the inhabitants around it. In Murakami-land however, the Omphalos is more difficult to identify. This sort of focal lodestone location is rarely found in Murakami. Even in "Super-Frog Saves Tokyo" – which features the threat of Tokyo's utter annihilation by a *kaiju* named Worm – the threat is framed not as a political or semiotic one. Rather, the statistical loss of life is that which is to be feared. Is this humanistic or just a fear of a disaster statistically worse than the 1995 Kobe earthquake? Murakami keeps the answer to himself here.

This is unlike, for example, a *kaiju* film, which usually features a tourist-board style variety of destructible environs. The aforementioned *Godzilla* franchise includes (but is not limited to) the Tokyo Tower and Atami Castle in Japan, and elsewhere, Fenway Park[40], the Golden Gate Bridge, and the Sydney Opera House[41]. All of these locations fill the role of the Omphalos; they are easily identifiable markers of place and geographical importance[42]. In a literary sense, the destruction of these national monuments becomes a visual shorthand for the destruction of a nation and the Omphalos is often conflated with epistemologies of destruction. Furthermore, their experiential qualities become a point of reference to audiences; as Tuan asserts, place-ness is predicated on function, experience, and memory. When Godzilla trashes Odaiba or marches through the Golden Gate Bridge, a not-insignificant audience overlay their memories of these locations with the onscreen visual experience. The synthesis of the two results in a more viscerally felt aesthetic of destruction.

When Murakami illustrates city-based destruction, he does so in an odd and idiosyncratic manner that is mostly bereft of these Omphalos figures. Murakami's most explicit engagements with epistemologies of destruction comes in the form of 2000's *Underground*, Murakami's non-fiction collection of interview accounts of the Tokyo sarin attacks; and *after the quake*[43]*,* a collection of at times allegorical short stories written in response to the Kobe earthquake of 1995. Again, both collections focus on the loss of life, not the symbolic

[40] Fenway Park also has a famous left-field stand known as 'The Green Monster'.
[41] Rival *kaiju* franchise, *Gamera*, has the unenviable task of picking alternate, non-Godzilla-fied sites for destruction. So, the monstrous Gamera must be content with laying waste to lesser monuments, such as Kyoto Station and the Fukuoka Dome baseball stadium. Were Gamera to attack the same monuments as Godzilla, Gamera would be open to unfavorable comparisons to its more famous counterpart. The invocation of monuments recalls other textual invocations of the same monuments.
[42] Although their functions differ, they are rendered equal in their status as desirably destructible settings.
[43] The title of this collection is published stylised in lowercase.

disruption of the nation's markers of success. In the latter volume, the short story "Super Frog Saves Tokyo" tells the semi-humorous story of two *kaiju*, Frog and Worm. The benevolent and erudite Frog (who is an enormous frog) warns the protagonist, Katagiri, that the evil Worm (who is an enormous…worm) intends to attack Tokyo. Its attack will kill at least "a hundred and fifty thousand [people]… People will be made to realise what a fragile condition the intense collectivity known as 'city' is" (86). Murakami does not frame the story around the potential destruction of (for example) the Tokyo Tower or Tokyo Imperial Palace, the real loss alluded to is instead the lives of the city's inhabitants. In fact, the only location named by Frog as a potential victim of Worm's thrashing rampage is Katagiri's workplace, the Shinjuku branch of the Tokyo Security Trust Bank. This location is not even the Trust Bank's headquarters; hardly an Omphalos-style landmark. Its diegetic importance instead probably rests on Katagiri's proximity to the bank: Katagiri has "no wife, no kids, both parents [are] dead, [and his] brother and sister he had put through college married off" (87). He is alone. His life is his job, and his job is the bank. This Omphalos is rhizomatic: Omphalos importance lies not in some sort of cultural capital or history. It is interwebbed with personal experiences and subjectivity. If Murakami does invoke the Omphalos motif then, it is as subjective as his deities. The destruction of Katagiri's life-Omphalos would be the effective destruction of his life: he has built himself around his bank job. Just as the bombed-out shell of Buckingham Palace would spell the end of an imagined version of London, the destruction of the bank would mark the end of Katagiri as the reader knows him. Stripped of his job (and his position as earner for his alluded-to family members), there is little else to Katagiri. This is, in part, what makes Murakami-land so easily approached and amenable to the anglophonic reader. It is ostensibly a literary version of Japan that does not require the reader to think about Japan at all: it is a Wildean Japan, it does not exist until it is spoken into being.

This mythic subjectivity is furthered through the invocation of the Omphalos motif in *Kafka on the Shore* and "The Kidney-Shaped Stone That Moves Everyday" from the 2007 collection *Blind Willow, Sleeping Woman*. These texts utilise the Omphalos as a literal, physical stone that enacts change in those around it. In *Kafka on the Shore*, Hoshino understands the stone as a portal through which evil forces can operate on Nakata. Following Nakata's death and Hoshino's killing of the evil parasite, the stone loses its powers. Hoshino speaks to the stone after he has turned it, in doing so, closing the magical entry point: "it was back to being just an ordinary stone, cool and rough to the touch" (492). This Omphalos loses its powers when belief in the stone is lost: it operates on a dream-logic, connecting to an alternate reality

of ideas. Or perhaps, it is through the Omphalos that external forces such as the imposition of the Oedipus model for life and the presence of Johnnie Walker and Colonel Sanders, can act upon the characters. Regardless, the stone is left impotent when Hoshino has flipped it. Indeed, the magical occurrences in the novel are predicated on belief. In "The Kidney-Shaped Stone That Moves Everyday", the stone motif connects the frame story of Junpei to the contained plot that gives the short story its name. This encapsulated story is a short story that Junpei writes about a young doctor who finds a kidney-shaped stone. It moves every day when she is not looking. Junpei works on the story as he and Kirie fall into a sort-of-romantic relationship. After the doctor in Junpei's story throws away her kidney-shaped stone, Kirie abandons Junpei. In both texts, the stone connects diegetic reality to the realm of subjective imagination: in the novel, this realm is magical, while the short story is explicitly diegetically imaginative. Both serve much the same function: the stone is granted power by the faith that characters hold in the Omphalos. This is true also of Murakami's mythic invocations at large; they are successful because they are familiar and carry a sort of cultural credit or legitimacy. The story illustrates the potential magical properties inherent to storytelling as a medium; the 'real', represented by Kirie, reflects the 'story', represented by the doctor. In such a way, Murakami presents a retelling of his own system wherein Kafka Tamura/Menshiki reflect and imitate Oedipus/Jay Gatsby. Lines of flight exist in both cases, but they are achieved through divergent means. Escape may be found either through opposing one's destiny as in *Killing Commendatore*, or through conforming to it, as in *Kafka on the Shore*. In such a way, the Oedipus curse's legitimacy or dreadful power is restated and reinforced: it is the thing that cannot be broken, while Gatsby can.

(iv) New Mythic Structures

Murakami uses myth in order to co-ordinate character and narrative development. He also uses to either confirm or confound expectations (and sometimes both at once). His imagology comprises of self-reflective mythic motifs and narratives from contending but complementary traditions and sources, ranging from ancient Greek stories to more modern classics. These modern literatures (chiefly *The Great Gatsby* and detective noir) are elevated in Murakami-land; they operate on the same level as the traditionally mythic. In *Killing Commendatore*, Murakami does not merely retell *The Great Gatsby*. Instead, he adopts it as a mythic framework akin to his use of Oedipus in *Kafka on the Shore*. These mythic invocations similarly extend

beyond any Japanese national context, and are instead profoundly anglophonic for the most part. Murakami's references to international (predominantly Euro-American) influences belie an apparently relaxation about anachronism, using ancient and contemporary myths in conjunction.

The sustained continuity of this strange brew of cultural influences seems to signify a breakdown of international borders and, if not the universalisation of Murakami-land, then its amenability to anglophonic visitors. This means that the particular pleasures of a trip to Murakami-land are divergent from the pleasures that visiting *Godzilla* or Mishima's imaginated Japan(s) offer. Those spaces contain, for the English-speaking reader, an internal tension between textual non-conformity to anglophone sensibilities and simultaneous subservience towards them. Mishima was influenced by Nietzsche while writing in protest of the American occupation of Japan[44] and deliberately invoked Proust at points. John Nathan, Mishima's translator and later biographer, recounts the origin of the English-language title for *Gogo no Eiko* (a pun on homonyms for 'glory' and 'tug' in Japanese and Chinese), translated as *The Sailor Who Fell from Grace with the Sea*. Mishima, realising that the pun was untranslatable, remarked; "Let's come up with a long title, like Proust" (84). Honda's original *Godzilla* film contains similar tensions; it was radically reedited by Terry O. Morse and Jewell Enterprises. The resultant (censored) film[45] was more akin to a traditional American disaster movie in the vein of *Them!* (1954) or *The Deadly Mantis* (1957). This tension is curiously absent in Murakami's fiction, which presents a non-hierarchical series of allusions. In *Killing Commendatore*, Murakami laboriously retells the story of *The Great Gatsby* and explains ancient Buddhist burial techniques: nobody is 'left out' or uncatered to. Murakami-land is a 'cosy' space with a terrific tourist board: no reader is allowed to be confused by cultural reference or textual occurrence. Until they are supposed to be confused, at which point the confusion is abject and terrifying (see: the Little People of *1Q84*). These cultural references range from the story of Don Juan and *The Great Gatsby* in *Killing Commendatore*, to Kafka's *Metamorphosis* in "Samsa in Love", or indeed Kafka's appearance (alongside T.S. Eliot) in *Kafka on the Shore*.

All of these invocations serve a mythic function, akin to Murakami-land's adoption of the Oedipus motif as cultural and imagological concrete. It can be tricky to situate some of

[44] And more specifically, the effect that this occupation had on Japanese masculine identity.
[45] When the edit (entitled *Godzilla: King of the Monsters!*) was theatrically released in 1956, it proved much more popular than Honda's original film – even in Japan (Baker 43).

these as ‘myths’ in a traditional sense; Fitzgerald is no Sophocles, for better or worse. Nonetheless, Murakami’s approach (at least in Fitzgerald’s case) is not without precedence. Michelson contends in his paper “The Myth of Gatsby” that Fitzgerald consciously wrote *The Great Gatsby* under the influence of the myths of antiquity, specifically citing Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. More particularly, Michelson situates Fitzgerald’s novel as terminating with an evolutionary retelling of the Phaeton myth; reading Gatsby’s car as a stand-in for Helios’ chariot. The details of the novel itself are discussed as self-consciously mythic in their design. Michelson concludes his discussion by declaring that “the story is ancient in more than way, and that is precisely why it stays with us, not only powerful, but invincibly true” (577). Read through such a lens, Fitzgerald’s West Egg appears a sort of precursor to the world of Murakami’s fiction. Both Fitzgerald and Murakami bind together mythology and modernity (or modernism?!) to approximate a new space of physical and psychic boundaries.

If West Egg showcases the tragic dimensions common to both New York and Ancient Greek myths (while lending the story a heightened dramatic tension as a result), Murakami’s transposition of Gatsby’s tale to Hakone and the mountains outside Tokyo lends this locale an undertone of bubbling violence that may otherwise be absent[46]. However, the Gatsby element to the plot must be found. After all, in Murakami-land, inhabitants eat American fast food, drive German cars, listen to Austrian music, and discuss the Spanish Armada’s failed journey to Ireland. Fitzgerald’s text is but one part of a quilt. The unifying thread of this quilt is commerce: which equates Gatsby’s West Egg and Menshiki’s mountain retreat: both are the resides of archetypal self-made men in lands of plentiful potential. In such a way, Murakami positions the Gatsby character as a sort of newly mythicised (and if we consider Murakami’s fiction as constituting a place, also an imagological) figure: he is to Menshiki what Oedipus is to Kafka Tamura. Let us twist Leerssen’s turn of phrase on the imaginating of France to reflect what Murakami does to Fitzgerald’s novel: the statement ‘Gatsby is a rich man’ is by and of itself not imaginated, the statement ‘Gatsbies are lovelorn and lonely rich men who stop at nothing to be loved’ is. Gatsby becomes archetypal here.

This amenability in Fitzgerald’s text (Murakami transposes the action with ease) is replicated by Murakami, who is easily adapted in places outside of Japan. This is not always true of Japanese texts, which are often too linked to Japanese culture to easily travel. In Lewis John Carlino’s 1976 film *The Sailor Who Fell from Grace with the Sea*, an adaptation of the

[46] There is another element to consider: Menshiki is a tech-guru-millionaire. The internet here serves the New York role: unruly and a playground for capital excess.

Mishima novel of the same name, the action is uneasily transposed from coastal Japan to the English coastline. In doing so, the thematic issue of orientalism raised in Mishima's text (by the character Fusako's export business) is erased. Her stand-in for the film adaptation is an antiques dealer named Anne. Concerns of Japanese emasculation that were present in Mishima are also suppressed[47]. Thematically the film shifts from national military-induced emasculation to a more generalised theme of defeatist/defeated cultures. Both versions illustrate this in a propulsive and shocking manner, but the themes also clearly diverge. This divergence is necessitated by Mishima's specificity of temporal and spatial settings; his chronotopic approach binds location and narrative in the original novel, and his storytelling is intrinsically bound to imagological ideals. Mishima attempts to encapsulate the mood of a populace, place, and time in literature, thus making adaptations difficult. Indeed, Mishima's fiction often appears hostile toward a non-Japanese (and particularly European/American) readership (it is implied that the children in this specific novel despise Ryuji because his weakness is symptomatic of national failure following wartime defeat), not least because Westerners are often villains or negative spectres that haunt the protagonists. This means that adaptations such as Carlino's necessarily leave a very different impression on the reader/viewer, because such culturally antagonistic figures have been removed.

This serves to identify several inherent thematic reconsiderations that are associated with transpositional adaptations of texts whose settings permeate their narrative. In selecting Fitzgerald's text, Murakami is placed in a role more akin to Carlino than to Kurosawa. Fitzgerald's text is, like Mishima's, chronotopic[48]. The tensions between the old money and the *nouveau riche* of *The Great Gatsby* are specific to Fitzgerald's New York. The narrative is steeped in a New York atmosphere; oscillating from exclusive estates on the city's periphery to ashen industrial wasteland to Manhattan jazz bars, Fitzgerald weaves the clichéd Roaring Twenties atmosphere into the narrative, much as Mishima binds post-war resentment and anxiety to his novel's narrative. It is interesting then, that such temporally and geographically specific texts become modern myths that are used as inspiration for new, displaced works. This has been conceived of as a lack of spatial consideration by critics of Murakami, such as Oe. When considering Murakami as a non-Japanese writer, it is important not to conceive of this

[47] Britain was however experiencing its own post-imperial moment; India had recently gained independence. The global pillars of the British empire had crumbled.

[48] Important to note that these are contemporary illustrations of the societies that the writers lived in. They are not imagined chronotopes, they are representations of a familiar and everyday series of places. That these stories become inextricable from place and time occurs after the fact in Fitzgerald.

tag as derogatory. The creation of Murakami-land is simply another space, outside of Japan. The new colours attached to the Gatsby myth, the Oedipus myth, and the Don Juan legend are symptomatic of an identity that is still under construction. Murakami's realities are more inherently adaptable then: his narratives lend well to relocation and transposition. These stories occur within what Joon-Ho Bong termed the country of capitalism (Romain) and are thus amenable to relocation in any of its global outlets.

Killing Commendatore parodically depicts the act of myth-making (or history-making) wherein the narrator and Mr Menshiki retrospectively invent a mythic, explanatory story of 'Japanese painting'. The narrator ponders: "with the appearance of western art from abroad, the concept of Japanese art was born as a way of asserting something that could be distinguished as standing in opposition to Western art" (108). The characters sift through the mire of history and identify 'canonical' or important moments to seize upon. An interesting effect of this is that Menshiki and the protagonist study Western art as comprised of multiple styles; they look at cubism, realism, and surrealism respectively. Western art is afforded multiplicity, Japanese art is rendered in singular and linear terms. Menshiki and the protagonist perceive and explore the past, establishing a succession of events that lead to the current moment. This operates as a synoptic retelling of Murakami's creation of Murakami-land. They curate a canon to explain their present. This refracts Murakami's own curation of a canon in the creation of Murakami-land. His characters sketch, sort, and identify relevant facts just as he does. This is rendered more interesting by Mr Menshiki's relationship to *The Great Gatsby*: Menshiki exists solely in relation to Jay Gatsby (and less significantly, Bluebeard). Menshiki is beholden to and forced to observe the major events of Gatsby's narrative. He is rebuffed by a lover and struggles with his obsessive fixation over this fact. The details that Murakami changes represent a development, not a changing, of the central conceit; the core remains intact.

This struggle with 'myth' and historical narratives is central to *Killing Commendatore*. The titular Commendatore (who, we are told, is an Idea personified), implores the protagonist to kill him in as strict an imitation possible of the 'original' act, in what appears a metadiegetic act. The Commendatore must die for the opera to continue, so it follows that the Commendatore character must be sacrificed for Murakami's novel to progress. This original killing refers to a fictive painting by Tomohiko Amada, also entitled 'Killing Commendatore'. This painting is itself a depiction of a sequence in Mozart and Da Ponte's opera *Don Giovanni* wherein Giovanni kills an unnamed Commendatore, the father of one of his many conquests/victims, Donna Anna. The visual adaptation is one of an act of patricide, situating the painting and the

novel, by extension, in a parental chain as in *Kafka on the Shore*. Mozart and Da Ponte's opera itself operates as a retelling or a reimagining of Tirso de Molina's Don Juan in *The Trickster of Seville and the Stone Guest*, itself derived from folklore. This act of embodied retelling is rendered even more complex by the painting's dual purpose: it not only depicts Don Giovanni slaying Donna Anna's father, it also expresses Amada's frustrations at his own failed assassination attempt on a Nazi commandant. The protagonist struggles to make sense of the twisted act of killing. The act is after all, a retelling of a retelling of an alternate history, coupled with a retelling. The protagonist muses with some anxiety; "Who is killing who? Who is the Commendatore? Who is the murderer Don Giovanni? And who is the mysterious bearded fellow with the long face poking his head out of the ground …?" (535). The ritual is observed with the overt intent of luring this long-faced fellow into the 'real' world. This hints at a sort of self-fulfilling nature to these processes. Observation of and adherence to established artistic forms binds one to these forms. Readers can act in the rhythms of that which they observe or consume and position themselves protagonistically *within* the work of art. In this way, the screen actors discussed in Chapter I become prototypes; they foreshadow the internalisation of performativity observed in the average Murakami-land inhabitant. This lends another valence to the question of Menshiki and Gatsby. Is Menshiki's similarity assigned by the metaphorical hand of God (Murakami himself) or consciously adopted by the character? After all, Fitzgerald is name-dropped diegetically in the text by Menshiki. Perhaps Menshiki sees himself in Gatsby and acted out of a similarly doomed yearning, along prior observed lines of yearning. Nonetheless, the protagonist and the Commendatore's observance of the newly formed tradition pulls Long Face into the 'real' world and out of his shadow dimension. This alone speaks to a powerful metaphoric valence to the act; Long Face cannot help but perform his role. He is bound to it, just as the protagonist is if he wishes to locate Mariye. Adopting a role – imitating protagonists of art and literature – gives form to life in Murakami's novel and directly diagnoses our understanding of the world as mediated through adaptations of form.

What Murakami elevates to the level of myth in the novel is interesting. Returning to Bourdieu, Murakami's references establish a chain of connection that legitimize Murakami-land by association. *Killing Commendatore* is in conversation with Fitzgerald – it is as important as *The Great Gatsby – The Great Gatsby* is still important a century later. Murakami establishes chains of relation: just as Oedipus is an evolution of Orestes, or Gatsby an evolution of Phaeton, Murakami-land is positioned as the next step. These texts serve as a pattern from which Murakami can develop a Murakami-land. Subject matter is recycled, handed down

intergenerationally in an Oedipal manner that creates an endpoint canon comprised almost entirely of self-reflection. The refraction of canonical texts creates an 'Eerie' and uncomfortably closed circle of literary doppelgangers. This closed feedback loop is perhaps best summated by Franco Moretti in "The Slaughterhouse of Literature", in which he posits that as "more readers select Conan Doyle over L. T. Meade and Grant Allen, more readers are likely to select Conan Doyle again in the future, until he ends up occupying 80, 90, 99.9 percent of the market for nineteenth-century detective fiction" (211). A key question to consider here is this: does Murakami intentionally play with or against this preinstalled canon? By referencing pre-existing stories, Murakami accepts the importance of certain texts over others: *The Great Gatsby* is given preferential treatment compared to say, the same author's lesser read *The Beautiful and the Damned* from 1922. The reasons for this are immediately obvious: the authority of Murakami-land is constructed upon the recognition of fundamentally familiar precursor texts. In engaging with Murakami's fiction, readers might well have the sense that they have been in this space before. Murakami-land is a place of reminiscence.

In the case of "Samsa in Love" or *Killing Commendatore*, Murakami does not merely invoke, mention, or recruit these writers for cameo appearances. Murakami instead replicates, reorients, and reuses their key traits. The joint emotional intensity and cool detachment of Fitzgerald is recreated faithfully, as is the absurdity of Kafka. As a result, Murakami-land can resemble a bricolage or collage; there seems to be an arbitrariness to his use of textual references. However, at the same time, Murakami intentionally uses these mythic functions as narrative tools. They foreshadow events to come, or reveal hidden dimensions to characters. This is key to understanding myth in Murakami. Just as Kafka has entered the realm of modern, linguistic, Barthesian myth through the promulgation of the term Kafkaesque (which is now a term so commonplace, it may be used more widely than Kafka himself is read, as parodically illustrated in 2005's *The Squid and the Whale*), it is easy to conceive of 'Murakamiesque' or 'Murakamian' becoming new terms to denote this recycling process in art. Murakami-land absorbs and rereleases myth in new and freakish shapes, creating a mythos at once familiar and, to reuse Michelson's term, "invincibly new".

It is productive to once more briefly compare Murakami-land to Kurosawa's imaginated Japan here. Kurosawa operates at an intersection between Mishima and Murakami. In *Rashomon*, Kurosawa adapts two early 20th century stories by Ryunosuke Akutagawa ("Rashomon" and "In a Grove"). "In a Grove" and *Rashomon* present a singular event (the murder of a Samurai and the rape of his wife) from multiple perspectives. With each subsequent

retelling, details change, and the audience is presented with no clear-cut revelation by the film's close. The film is readable as a metacommentary on modernist retellings and discontinuity: the stories overlap and contradict. Kurosawa also adapted Shakespeare at multiple points in his career: notably his 1957 film *Throne of Blood* and 1985's *Ran*, which adapt *Macbeth* and *King Lear* respectively. Kurosawa's adaptations maintain a Japanese setting and combine to create yet another imaginated Japan that is defined by how it differentiates itself from the Anglophonic source material. *Rashomon* is a particularly apt text to compare to Murakami-land. In *Rashomon*, contending truths vie for supremacy. They overlap, masking and shrouding whatever did occur in the grove. The truth has been rendered ephemeral – it has, to borrow from Karl Marx, melted into air. The intangibility of the truth is comparable to the untouchable thing-ness of Murakami-land, the underlying capitalism that connects and equates and levels all of Murakami's allusions.

Murakami-land's utility of brand iconography is also an example of modern myth in action. Where Mishima's imaginated Japan uses iconography and characters from Japanese tradition and folklore, such as the Golden Temple and the folk hero Natsuko, Murakami employs Colonel Sanders and Johnnie Walker. It is important to note that these characters are not just decorative signifiers, rather they are involved participants in the narrative at play. Colonel Sanders and Johnnie Walker exist as embodied characters who interact with Hoshino and Nakata, while also influencing the narrative developments of *Kafka on the Shore*. Colonel Sanders explains his choice of form to Hoshino; "I decided to take on a familiar shape, that of a famous capitalist icon. I was toying with the idea of Mickey Mouse, but Disney are particular about the rights to their characters" (305). The familiarity of Sanders is the key to the adoption of this particular face, while his mock-anxiety surrounding a litigious Disney hints that capitalism is a spectre that envelops all, even these spirits. When these spirits intervene, they must do so through the form of capital, which appears as a global connective tissue.

Sanders also arranges a sex worker for Hoshino, who remarks that adopting the face of KFC is apt for his assumed role as pimp; "Dressing up like Colonel Sanders fits your character too" (305), to which the spirit responds, "But I don't have a character" (305). The exchange is strange, establishing an assumed connection between fast food fried chicken and sex work; both consumptive acts wherein the purchaser biologically encroaches upon the purchased body. Indeed, this point again reinforces a sense of capitalist logic. As Žižek (2012) would have it, "capitalism is the first socio-economic order which de-totalizes meaning: it is not global at the

level of meaning" (55). The spirit is indicative of a non-ideological force of capital. There are no morals, there are no values, there is no particular logic outside of profit.

Murakami's web of modern-day allusions therefore does not distinguish between high and low cultures, rather it is primarily interested in current global capitalism. Murakami identifies that the hallmarks of American societal success in Fitzgerald's novel (capital, big house, nice car) – alongside the hallmarks of failure (unrequited love/familial drama) – hold as true in 21st century Japan as early 20th century West Egg, New York. When Murakami identifies the American dream at the heart of *The Great Gatsby* as merely "a young man's dream"[49] (Lyall), there is a sense of denial here. What Murakami means is that Murakami-land functions along the same cultural logic as America in innate ways. There is no particularly detailed background or historical reading on Japan needed to read Murakami's fiction. Mishima's *Temple of the Golden Pavilion* is published with explanatory notes, as is the Penguin collection of Akutagawa short stories, *Rashomon and Seventeen Other Stories*. Murakami sees no need to explain Ronald McDonald, Johnny Walker, or Colonel Sanders. These are pure capitalist icons, as familiar to Japanese readers as they are to global readers. Ronald McDonald, with his clown aesthetic, embodies the mirth without joy that capitalism engenders. Johnny Walker, true to his name, is frozen in perpetual motion, one leg forever outstretched in an illusion of progress. Meanwhile, Colonel Sanders' look is defined by his pimpish moustache and Santa Claus-style smile. All three sell to consumers, they have no deeper meanings beyond their status as salespeople. Murakami-land's modern myths are an eclectic and bizarre mixture of high and low culture, literary figures and capitalist mascots. The relationship between Murakami-land and modern myth is best encapsulated by the following episode. When Menshiki mentions that "someday he might build a two-lane twenty-five-meter lap pool" (264), the reader is instantly reminded of Jay Gatsby's fate; shot to death in his own swimming pool. The reader is encouraged to situate the characters against their forebears in Fitzgerald's text. Who occupies the Daisy Buchanan role? Who is Tom Buchanan in this model? That Murakami is so concerned with adherence to myth begs its inverse. The myth is broken.

[49] This is at the heart of situating Gatsby as a mythic figure: his dream transcends time and place.

(v) Breaking Mythic Structures

Menshiki survives the events of *Killing Commendatore*. Although he is explicitly and painstakingly positioned as a 'Gatsby' (as the narrator is a 'Nick', or Kafka Tamura is an 'Oedipus'), he fails to fulfil this role entirely. The pool is never built and the bullet never arrives in his back. The Gatsby narrative is shattered by our stand-in Nick Carraway's premature departure from the stand-in location for West Egg. He consciously abandons Fitzgerald's framework, moving back in with his ex-wife, who is pregnant with a child that may or may not have been conceived during a bout of unusual astral projection. If Menshiki is a willing Gatsby, the protagonist becomes an unwilling Carraway. Overly faithful observations of these roles has a homogenizing effect; Menshiki becomes indistinguishable from Gatsby, or indeed the Idea becomes indistinguishable from the Commendatore, who is also melded with the Nazi commandant that Tomohiko Amada failed to assassinate. This sense is bolstered by the Commendatore's strange method of addressing the characters he interacts with. He only ever appears to one character at a time, and refers to them invariably not by name, but rather as "my friends" (235). This continued and deliberate multiplicity in addressing a singular denotes homogenization. It is similar to the effect generated when one watches multiple filmic adaptations of say, *The Great Gatsby*, Gatsby becomes multiple. DiCaprio, Redford, and Ladd become multiple faces of the one being: Gatsby become Gatsbies. If all represent the one being, the certainty of this being is rendered further ephemeral. There is no single face to Jay Gatsby. "My friends" is used to denote the repetition of the character roles observed by Mariye (Daisy Buchanan) and the protagonist (Nick Carraway). The Commendatore may be said to perceive the characters performing these roles as subsuming all performances: they are functionally identical.

Kafka is similar (if more complicated). Kafka's Oedipal nightmare ends when he leans into his role: Oedipus is a myth about a man doomed by his ignorance. *Kafka on the Shore* is a novel about a young man following a mythic framework in order to liberate himself from it. His conformity is a paradoxical act of resistance. Kafka accepts his destiny and does not attempt to circumvent it. He instead follows through on it, casting Ms Saeki in the role of his absent mother and adopting Sakura as the sister with whom he is fated to have sex with. In his dream state, Kafka is committed to fulfilling his destiny, going so far as to horrifically rape Sakura

within a dream[50] to conform to the prophecy. This scene is among the most important in Murakami's novel:

> My erection's not letting up … At the same time, in a hollow inside me, something struggles to break out of its shell. Before I realise what's happening, there's a pair of eyes turned in on me, and I can observe this whole scene. I don't yet know if this thing inside me is good or bad, but whichever it is, I can't hold it back or stop it. It's still a slimy, faceless being, but it will soon break free of its shell, show its face and slough off its jelly-like coating … I make up my mind. No, actually I haven't made up my mind about anything. Making up your mind means you have a choice, and I don't. (397)

At this point, Kafka begins to rape Sakura. The act is described in horrific terms, as Sakura vocally resists him. By knowingly participating in the prophecy, Kafka himself is comparable to the faceless being he feels inside himself; the act allows the being to assume a face. By following through with the curse, Kafka asserts his own personhood and identity at the cost of Sakura's dignity. Murakami finds an even more disturbing taboo here than Oedipus: a version of the character who knows the acts they are fated to commit, but who commits them anyways.

By committing these acts knowingly – by not attempting to run away (like Oedipus is forced to) – Kafka can shatter the myth. Oedipus blinds himself because he could not see the truth when he had eyes. Kafka has no such need for self-mutilation because after speaking to Oshima, he is no longer blind to the truth, thinking to himself "if there's a curse in all this, you mean to grab it by the horns and fulfil the programme that's been laid out for you" (398). He self-determinedly fulfils his prophecy to escape it. Murakami-land operates at the breaking point of myths then: just as the Gatsby narrative is shattered, so too are the Oedipus, and the *Godzilla*[51] narratives. The stories and myths invoked are not myths that the inhabitants of Murakami-land can live by, they are insufficient myths for the world of Murakami's texts, incompatible with the way of life and living depicted. Murakami-land is defined by its invocation and subsequent shattering of myths as protagonists 'opt out' from their preassigned roles at the climaxes of both texts.

Fisher proves useful here. Murakami-land is a deeply 'Weird' space. If the 'Weird' is that which "brings to the familiar something which ordinarily lies beyond it" (10), it seems to

[50] Significantly, Sakura in the waking world does not experience (or at least, remember) the event.
[51] "Super-Frog Saves Tokyo" manages to imagine a *Godzilla* story in which nobody dies, and no buildings are destroyed.

encapsulate what Murakami-land does to these myths. It invokes them, asking a reader to identify, notice, and understand them. Kafka is Oedipal, Menshiki is Gatsbyesque – one will blind himself, the other will die as a result of his morbid curiosity and attachment to the past. Or at least such would come to pass in another land; Murakami-land operates on 'Weird' logic. Neither prophecies' terms are fully met. Writing on David Lynch's *Mulholland Drive* as an exemplary model of the 'Weird', Fisher observes that the film is "something that cannot be made to add up" (56). This is true of the narratives above. Even with preassigned narrative pathways, they must diverge. They become 'Weird', misshapen, and unfamiliar stories. This is because they are stories of an as-yet-unmapped country. The capitalist realist world that Murakami depicts readily adopts these forms, taking them as its preferred language. But their continuance or sustenance is not of chief value: once they have outlived their use, they are sacrificed diegetically, imploding or discarded.

Kafka Tamura best embodies this 'Weird'-ness. He is not only burdened by the myth of Oedipus; he also has his auspicious namesake to deal with. There are two familiar semiotic handholds for a reader here. This character will probably fulfil his destiny, blind himself, and maybe laugh at the absurdity of his situation. Perhaps he will even have to fill out a form, or wait to be seen in an office of some sort (if we reduce the Kafkaesque to its everyday, banal usage). György Lukács writes that successful modernist art, such as Kafka's novels, relies on internal complications and paradoxical internal polarities. Modernist "realistic detail [exists] as a precondition for the communication of a sense of absurdity … [it is a] dialectic process" (48). So, the strangeness that is produced in Murakami's *Kafka on the Shore* and *Killing Commendatore* are dependent on the uneasy marriage of polarities. Most evidently, the experience of reality and fantasy often merge, best illustrated in "Super-Frog Saves Tokyo", wherein Katagiri sits down for a cup of tea with a six-foot tall frog. The frog's polite and amiable demeanour is rendered all the more odd by the apparent 'normality' of its requests and conversation. Strange marriages occur in the semiotic combination of Kafka and Oedipus, or the enmeshment of Western cultural influences in an ostensibly 'Japanese' setting. Traditionally 'Japanese' cultural signifiers do appear in Murakami's texts, particularly in Murakami's descriptions of cities (such as in *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*). However, they are rarely foregrounded. Their role is minimal and major plot events do not occur in these spaces. Another observation of Lukács is valuable here: that "art is the selection of the essential and subtraction of the inessential" (53). In Murakami's fictions, the essential includes Colonel Sanders, the

inessential includes Japanese tradition[52]. KFC does however, have a unique quality in Japan, where it is considered a Christmas staple. Reporting on the matter for BBC, Eric Barton (2016) notes that Japanese families preorder KFC meals weeks in advance of the 25th of December and that "stores dressed up the company mascot, the smiling white-haired Colonel Sanders, in Santa outfits. In a country that puts high value on its elders, the red satin-suited Sanders soon became a symbol of a holiday". This, combined with the secular celebration of Christmas in Japan – Barton notes that it is often celebrated as a romantic occasion akin to Valentine's Day – means that the use of Sanders in *Kafka on the Shore* reads differently in Japan than in anglophone countries. This is lost on readers who do not know this background information, akin to the references to the events of *The Great Gatsby* mentioned in *Killing Commendatore*. Being in on the joke requires external knowledge. This is why it is doubly significant that Murakami often explains Buddhist traditions and Japanese historical events. What remains is the essential, the common ground, the bridging of a Western/Japanese translational gap. However, there is still space for a local reference (or a withholding of information), embodied by Sanders in the example above.

This is best seen in the contrast between Murakami's expository asides and the lack of such in other Japanese texts. For example, as prior mentioned, *The Penguin Book of Japanese Short Stories* begins with an introduction by Murakami. This introduction takes the form of a series of explanatory notes for the constituent sections of the book, which sorts stories by theme (rather that chronologically or alphabetically). In the passage for the section of the book entitled 'Loyal Warriors', the act of *seppuku* is meticulously explained and reasoned. This is necessary for the non-Japanese reader, as there is no explanation offered in the *seppuku* tales included. However, when Murakami introduces an element that is unfamiliar to a non-Japanese audience (for example, the Buddhist burial rites mentioned in *Killing Commendatore*), he inserts an ignorant character to the scene. Exposition becomes a necessary facet of Murakami-land in these cases.

In *The Empire of Signs*, Barthes (1992) identifies that the pleasure derived by the Western reader of Japanese texts is found in "'entertain[ing]' the idea of an unheard-of symbolic system, one altogether detached from our own" (3). To conceive of Japan as an 'other' catapults the Western reader into a side-line role; neither Barthes nor I are the intended reader

[52] Returning to explanatory publishers' notes and Murakami's expository info-dumps: these are considered necessary to describe the monk burial in *Killing Commendatore*, but not so for the inclusion of American popular iconography and Western fashion branding in general. Although both are present in everyday Japan, only the traditional is explained in Murakami's fiction. Knowledge of capital is instead presumed.

of an imaginated, exclusive Japan like Mishima's. The Western reader becomes a voyeur, gazing unobserved (and subsequently uncatered to) into a Japanese text. *Killing Commendatore*'s explanatory (and almost Wikipedia-lite) references to Buddhist traditions of self-starvation and mummification do something quite different to this. The Western reader is not allowed to gaze into an unheard-of symbolic system here: their everyday is reproduced within and most 'Japanese' mysteries[53] are explained to the reader. For Barthes, pleasure is not derived from learning about the symbolic and cultural systems of Japan, but rather from occupying an outsider role. When Murakami-land diegetically references and refracts Western culture (and literary form), it returns the gaze. Simultaneously, the manipulation of this language (the distortion of familiar myth) communicates a depth to this conversation that moves beyond national stereotypes or one-note readings: Murakami moves beyond an empire of signs and creates an inter-nation of symbols.

(vi) Conclusion: What's next?

When these protagonists break their cycles of myth, they are liberated. When Kafka fulfils his prophecies and Ms Saeki dies, he travels back to Tokyo. On the train, he thinks to himself: "You are part of a brand new world" (505), the final words of the novel. At the end of 'Samsa in Love', Gregor (who is no longer a beetle) must re-learn how to be a human being, and formats this learning around romantic love instead of his job: "The world was waiting for him to learn" (77). Finally, in *Killing Commendatore,* the substitute Carraway essentially breaks up with his Gatsby in the book's closing motions: "We had become neighbours who lived across the valley from one another, no more, and I wanted to keep it that way" (667). He moves from the valley, reconciles with his wife, and becomes a father. In each case, when the protagonist leaves the stage, they can become something or somebody else. This twist on old narratives becomes a 'Weird' appendage to each myth, rendering Murakami-land as a state of evolution that paradoxically terminates once evolution is possible. The prophecies and myth-models enchant the narratives. When they are dispelled, and the worlds of the texts are disenchanted, they must conclude.

Killing Commendatore is the best example of this. Throughout the novel, the protagonist is stripped of agency at multiple turns: his wife breaks up with him and initiates

[53] There are exceptions: *Norwegian Wood* may be read as featuring *shinju* ('lover's suicide') tropes and *A Wild Sheep Chase* riffs on Mishima's *Natsuko no Bouken*.

divorce proceedings. He only moves into Amada's old house at the request of the artist's son, and whilst there, every major action is orchestrated by Menshiki or the Commendatore. By choosing to leave Menshiki/Gatsby, he defuses the narrative tension and thus saves Menshiki. Without Nick, Gatsby is not shot and killed in his swimming pool. The abandonment of a structured narrative pathway is reflected by the physical destruction of Tomohiko Amada's old house, containing the titular painting of 'Killing Commendatore'. The house burns down because no-one tends to it; were the narrator to remain, Gatsby would die, and the painting would survive. Fitzgerald's formal, structural chains would still shackle the characters. The particularly inspired aspect of this adaptational equation is that when the protagonist abandons Menshiki, he also abandons his own apparent destiny. Throughout the novel it becomes clear that the narrator is following in Menshiki's footsteps; unknowingly or otherwise. He similarly may or may not have conceived a child with a woman (Yuzu in the protagonist's case) who mysteriously leaves him. Unlike Menshiki, who resigns himself to yearning and reaching for his own green light (Mariye), the protagonist takes immediate action. Murakami allows the narrator to achieve self-actuality by diverging from the Gatsby-script. He escapes his fated performance as the next Gatsby in a chain of charismatic but doomed men. When the protagonist descends to an underworld space (and it is fundamentally a space, not a place: it is alien, uninviting, with few markers by which the protagonist can situate their self), it metaphorizes how these deep shared structures of myth and narrative both offer deep-set pathways and possibilities of connection, both interculturally and interpersonally.

Murakami's fiction absorbs, subsumes, and reorients the myths (in oral and literary forms) of other cultures in order to approximate one of its own. If this place (if it is indeed a place) is built upon the bones of its precursors, they are not sacred bones. They are edited, reshaped, and made somewhat new. 'Weirdness' predominates, it is what makes Murakami's reality both difficult to navigate and allows for mobility in these worlds. An understanding of Murakami-land as a 'Weird' space emerges (although this is not the only understanding of Murakami-land); difficult to navigate and as familiar as it is alien. If this inherent 'Weirdness' is present in Murakami's use of inherited myth, it is also present in how he generates mythologies by himself, as if Murakami-land really has a life of its own.

Chapter III – Auto-Mythologization

The Constituent, Repetitious Imagery and Language of Murakami's Worlds

In 2014, Haruki Murakami attended the Edinburgh International Book Festival, promoting his then-latest novel *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage*. While there, Murakami participated in an open Q and A session, fielding questions from the festivalgoers (Bausells, 2014). His answers offered generous (and refreshingly direct) insights to his literary process and writing techniques. At the event, Murakami mentioned his influences (Chandler, Carver), his interests (running, jazz), and most revealingly, his penchant for repetitious imagery (Bausells). This final feature is at the heart of the chapter to follow; these repeated images are part of that which forms a sort of bedrock for Murakami-land. Murakami's public image is, after all, inseparable from images of cats (adorning the front cover of Strecher's *The Forbidden Worlds of Haruki Murakami* and the logo of Murakami's own radio show). At the event, Murakami acknowledged several of his central images; "I'm obsessed with the well. And the elephant. The refrigerator. The cat. And the ironing. I can't explain it". These obsessions – missing animals/companions and menial tasks – are all cornerstones of the everyday that Murakami establishes and form a core grounding upon which Murakami-land is systematically constructed. The images discussed are not exhaustive, but are instead indicative of an underlying series of semiotic connections that inform the experience of encountering Murakami-land, similar to how imagological presuppositions inform reading differing imaginated Japans, as offered by Kurosawa, Mishima, and Honda.

The images listed by Murakami (the well, the elephant, the fridge, the cat, and the ironing) are far from the only repeated images in his work. One need only consult the Murakami bingo images discussed in Chapter IV for evidence of further iconic images of Murakami-land: creepy cars, eroticised ears, the skull motif, unicorns, ever-ringing telephones, and so on. The point of this chapter is not to decode every single repeated image, but rather to examine the phenomenon of repetition itself. Close readings are instead offered of several of the images Murakami mentioned in Edinburgh.

(i) A Curation of Quirks

Beller and Leerssen's imagology is similar to what Murakami does in Edinburgh: imagology (and imaginating) is the curation of specific cultural quirks and oddities, which Murakami embodies through repeated imagery and unique naming conventions. The reality of a given state is recycled into material for the creation of an external approximation of this state, which has throughout history produced "a wealth of images of exotic alienation" (6). It is, as such, a curation of stereotypes that the spectant can navigate with the privilege of their own 'normality'. A foreign visitor to Japan may be stuck by the selection of food and drinks available in *konbini*, or marvel at the *pachinko* gambling parlours found in every town. These elements of the Japanese everyday can only be rendered strange by relating them to an imaginated neutral 'homeland' where normality presides. The exotic Other is a sounding board against which normality is constructed. This is part of why Murakami-land is a kind of other-than-Japanese space, it defies the imaginated series of conditions that denote 'Japan' (as discussed in the Chapters I and II). If a person wakes up in a strange city in a strange country (entirely unfamiliar to them), they will look for giveaway traits that betray the origins of their surroundings – evidence of an exotic alienation. This chapter explores several of these traits as found in Murakami-land.

The chapter keeps alive the previous chapter's provocation of myth as a linguistic mechanism to make sense of the world. As such, it begins with an analysis of name-myths; names are the first point of contact between a reader and the fictional characters, worlds, and places of these texts. I explore the effects and impact of character names in Murakami's fiction, where names often operate prophetically or in unexpected ways. This advances the previous chapter's analysis of pre-existing name-myths, such as Kafka Tamura's relationship with Franz Kafka. Here, emergent, unique name-myths of Murakami-land are examined through reference to Derrida's "White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy", which engages with the question of name and predestination. The chief concern of this reading is in showing how Murakami builds off these extradiegetic examples (Kafka) to create his own unique semiotics of naming (or non-naming). The chapter continues with a close reading of the images mentioned by Murakami at Edinburgh above. The chief focus in reading such images (cat, well, elephant) is on the hollowing effect Murakami's mythic images have on the self and its formations. Beyond considerations of these as individual images, they are also considered as items, aligning with Jameson's theory of itemization. What these people eat, drink, wear, and

listen to is all discussed in this chapter is part of a pattern of insistent repetition central to the imaginated land.

This is all augmented by a complication of Deleuze and Guattari's thoughts on the arboreal. It is tempting to consider Murakami's protagonists as acting in an arboreal manner, in accordance with what has come before. They act in imitation of their own Murakami-land forebears, they aspire toward the same middling heights, and do not, subsequently become 'new'. They are merely repackaged versions of one another and thus become limited. Such a reading borrows from *A Thousand Plateaus*: "Arborescent systems are hierarchical systems with centers of significance and subjectification, central automata like organised memories. In the corresponding models, an element only receives information from a higher unit, and only receives a subjective affection along preestablished paths" (16). At first glance, this seems readily applicable here. However, Murakami-land as an anglophone thing, lacks this centre or imitative origin point[54]. Instead, like Carpenter's Thing, it is without original form: the anglophone Murakami is encountered in an out-of-sequence jumble. His first two novels were not published in anglophone zones until 2015, making it difficult to relate all subsequent characters to these as an origin point. At the same time, the first Murakami novel widely available in English translation (*Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*) is to receive a new translation from Vintage books by the end of 2024 (now entitled *The End of the World and Hard-Boiled Wonderland*), to correct some of the creative liberties taken in Birnbaum's original translation (discussed briefly later this chapter). So, while Deleuze and Guattari refer to organised memories, it is more fitting to consider Murakami-land as emerging from disorganised, disordered, and confused memories.

As such, the rhizome seems more fitting a model: rhizomes are built outwards, based on interconnections that spiral endlessly. There is no culminating point, no peak to which they build. Instead, they function like mantras that ground and situate both character and reader. Murakami, much like Deleuze and Guattari, is "tired of trees … nothing is beautiful or loving or political aside from underground stems and aerial roots" (15). *A Thousand Plateaus* is constituted of non-sequential essays that do not build upon one another (and can consequently be read in any such order as the reader chooses). It is a work that celebrates underground and unseen, unobserved, but still perceptible forms of connection. The anglophone Murakami is similarly encountered, existing outside of any temporal logic, or any logic whatsoever, outside

[54] The equivalent (Murakami's fiction in Japanese) is untouchable by a reader without that language.

of capital. This aligns again with Deleuze and Guattari, who write; “There is no universal capitalism, there is not capitalism in itself; capitalism is at the crossroads of all kinds of formations” (21). This makes a feature of Murakami’s Thing-ness then. The repetitions and emergent myths of Murakami-land serve to obscure this fact, stitching together an identity based off a system of nothingness. One cannot imagine a focal culminating point in Murakami’s fiction, any more than Fisher could imagine an end to capitalism. Repetition is the thing; the ordering of these less important. Understanding this, do not expect the following discussion to constitute a Tower of Babel, unifying and clarifying Murakami’s mythic images and repetitions. Consider it instead a semi-ordered – if still disorientating – swamp of associations. While this is a miasmic field, it nonetheless is host to numerous possible lines of flight, discussed further in the chapter.

(ii) What’s in a Name?

Names mythicise because they carry preordained meanings and communicate fundamental assumptions about societal relations. If I meet someone called Padraig Ní Mhúrchú, several assumptions are immediately obvious. This person is probably Irish (or of Irish extraction) and potentially a man. Furthermore, their name is Irish and retains the presence of fadas. They are not ‘Patrick Murphy’, an anglicised version of the same name. This could mean that whoever named them ‘Padraig’ has pride in the Irish language, or that Padraig themselves might have made a political choice to use the Irish version of their name, or that they come from a family of Irish speakers who wanted to maintain Irish in their family over generations. It could of course be ironic; Padraig may hate the Irish and despise this name. But nonetheless – they are situated in relation to the Irish language. It is a cognitive compass. In this way, names can convey class, power, status, nationality, and age. They also convey groupings and family ties: names situate a person relationally, as well as in fiction and in memory. It is significant therefore that many of Murakami’s narrators are defined by a lack of a name; they exist as nameless ciphers. In the introduction to this thesis, the nameless narrator of the Tetralogy of the Rat is assigned the name Boku precisely because Murakami withholds even a name from the reader. This is borrowed from other writers, primarily Jay Rubin, who identify the nameless narrators according to the Japanese pronoun they use (*boku* or *watashi*). In a sense, this namelessness unmoors them from preassigned fates (or assumed literary meanings), freeing

them from the arborescence of their peers. At the same time, this may suggest that the selfhood of the Murakami-land protagonist lies outsides of their name.

Of course, there are exceptions among Murakami's protagonists. Even a simple, common, or neutral name like the anglophonic 'John' or a similarly neutral Japanese name such as 'Shinji' or 'Toru' convey an inherent normality to the character assigned said name. So, when the teenage protagonist of *Kafka on the Shore* adopts the Czech writer's name as their own, it represents a disruption in the fabric of Murakami-land. Where Kafka's protagonistic peers are mostly nameless, Kafka assigns himself a name in an act of imaginative meaning-making. The name becomes a stand-in for his own abject alienation and sense of absurdity. Of course, the name is entangled with contending meanings: literally, 'Kafka' means crow. Simultaneously, it refers to the Kafkaesque and general malaise that haunts the Czech writer's work. This tension (literal, 'original' meaning versus accrued meanings) is externalised by the character's alter ego (The Boy Named Crow)'s appearances, alongside Oshima's reaction to the name; "Kind of strange" (60). Subsequently, Oshima talks to Kafka Tamura about Franz Kafka, rendering the name a conversational pivot. The name Kafka implies a sort of alienation or escape from the everyday Japanese culture that surrounds the character. This line of flight is necessarily troubled, as Deleuze and Guattari put it; "the line of flight is part of the rhizome. These lines always tie back to one another … You may make a rupture, draw a line of flight, yet there is still a danger that you will reencounter organisations that restratify everything, formations that restore power to a signifier" (9). The name Kafka is precisely that. When the teenager runs away from home and adopts this new name, he does not escape anything. Rather he enters a new assumptive structure, associated with the new name.

The popular 2018 anime film *I Want to Eat your Pancreas*, directed by Shinichiro Ushijima, makes use of similar name-based semiotics. The film corresponds (and at its climax, contrasts) with Murakami-land's naming conventions. The film follows a young unnamed Japanese teenager coming to terms with his best friend's impending death. In the final scene of the film, the boy's name is revealed as Haruki. The name reveal occurs at the point at which the protagonist decides to make new friends and actively engage with society at large. Such a clear-cut and defined revelatory moment is absent in the Murakami-land narratives that concern unnamed men. The name 'Haruki Murakami' meanwhile carries meanings of its own; *Ancestry.com* notes that the forename means 'spring child', while the family name means 'upper part of the town' or 'above the village'. Such a name can communicate a sense of impending maturity (the movement of spring to summer) and societal class. In the film, the

protagonist's name is only revealed after the traumatic and premature death of his partner. The point at which the name is revealed is the very moment at which the protagonist decides to move forward and make new friends after the loss: they are entering a new spring of their life after a winter of despair. The sustained absence of a name is therefore an absence of (or divorce from) meaning at the outset that is crucially never resolved. Jacques Lacan summarises these ideas of name-based predestination in "The Insistence of the Letter in the Unconscious": "The speaking subject, if he seems to be thus a slave of language, is all the more so of a discourse in the universal moment of which he finds himself at birth, even if only by dint of his pro" (114). By denying names to the protagonists of Murakami-land, Murakami denies the reader a basis on which we may immediately understand the characters[55]. They are not "slaves" to their assigned names. This is another element somewhat unique to Murakami-land as an anglophone construction, rather than its Japanese counterpart. In Japanese, Murakami uses different personal pronouns for his male protagonists. In *Pinball, 1973* alongside other novels, for example, he uses the personal pronoun *boku*, which implies that the speaker is a young or immature male. In *Killing Commendatore* however, Murakami uses the pronoun *watashi*, which implies that the speaker is a more polite, mature, and public-facing character. *Watashi* is also used by both male and female Japanese speakers. To date, only one English language translation of Murakami has had to truly engage with this pronoun issue, Alfred Birnbaum's controversial[56] translation of *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*. The Japanese novel is unique insofar as it uses both pronouns interchangeably to represent the same character, wherein *boku* denotes a sequence occurring in 'Wonderland' and *watashi* denotes a sequence occurring in normative reality. Birnbaum's translation uses the present tense to denote the *boku* sequences and the past tense to denote the *watashi* ones. The absence of these clear signs of distinction in any other English translation – the pronoun 'I' is used in translations of both *Killing Commendatore* and *A Wild Sheep Chase*, for example – paradoxically lends another meaning to the anglophone narrators of Murakami-land, who are bound together by a shared semiotic anonymity. While *boku* does not constitute a name, it serves a similar literary function as a signifier of identity that is null in English.

[55] This does not mean however, that their state of namelessness is itself meaningless. Instead, they are similar to Clint Eastwood's Man with No Name. There is a sense of mystery inherent to these figures.
[56] Karashima notes that Birnbaum's translation adds a bizarre reference to Birnbaum's father (111) and quotes Birnbaum's explanation for cutting entire scenes out of the novel; "American readers aren't as patient as Japanese readers. There was criticism that the book was baggy even after all the cuts we made" (118).

Motoyuki Shibata summarises these pronoun issues, by running through a number of the pronouns mentioned above: "when translating from English into Japanese, there are several options for the pronoun 'I': the standard *watashi* …; the youngish *boku*, favored by Haruki Murakami narrators; and the more roguish *ore*" (162). Shibata later draws attention to another pronoun, the self-aggrandising *wagahai*, famously used by Soseki Natsume in his most famous novel, *I am a Cat*. In each case, the personal pronoun betrays something about the character. Soseki's feline protagonist is revealed as arrogant through the use of what Shibata terms "the extremely pompous *wagahai*" (162). These contextual clues are erased in the English translation. As such, the issue of pronouns is central to understanding Murakami-land as particularly anglophonic in nature. The shift toward a general and blank 'I', away from *boku*, removes the inherent immaturity in these narrators. One potential way to restore this quality is found by swapping 'I' for 'me'. As such, the introductory sentence to *Dance, Dance, Dance* would read "Me often dream about the Dolphin hotel" instead of "I often dream about the Dolphin hotel" (1). Of course, this is an overcorrection. It conveys too extreme an infantilising effect: the pronoun constitutes a sort of translational gap that is a part of the limbo-like Murakami-land experience.

In 2021, a collection of Murakami's short fiction, *First Person Singular*, was published in English translation by Harvill Secker. A slight collection, it comprises of eight short stories all translated by Philip Gabriel. The book jacket describes the stories as being linked by their form: "told in the first person by a classic Murakami narrator". In this context, the narrators range from middle-aged to youthful, from poets to friends of monkeys. However, all but one of these narrators is effectively nameless in this collection. In the English language translation, the nameless narrators appear interchangeable, despite their circumstantial differences. They are all distant, music-obsessed, and detail-oriented. Moving beyond this collection, part of this overarching impression is linguistic. In English, there is no distinction between personal pronouns, thus these characters seem near identical. This impression is compounded by a sameness that extends beyond names: they share similar interests, are similar ages, and live similarly middle-class lives. They are often mediocre, underachieving young to middle-aged college-educated men, ambivalent to the comfort of their middle-class prosperity. If they are in a relationship, there is disinterest and potential infidelity on one or both sides.

This bored-male-in-a-bad-relationship archetype recurs in Murakami's novels[57]: the Tetralogy of the Rat, *South of the Border, West of the Sun*, *Sputnik Sweetheart* (2002), *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*, and *Killing Commendatore* (among others) all share nameless, superficially identical, male narrators. Unlike previously discussed named characters, these narrators have no nominal model. Murakami's Kafka's alienation mirrors Franz Kafka's; all of Murakami's Toru characters are likewise similar. An unnamed character is stripped of this sort of preassignment. Murakami utilises these characters' anonymity to create a mythos of maleness in Murakami-land; a land where men are defined by their lack of/and desire. This lack functions metaphorically, operating as a stand-in for their other absences (their missing spouse, their missing pets, their lack of motivation, willpower, or desire to live). This unknowable quality lends to these characters a Derridean sensibility. In "White Mythology: Metaphor in the Age of Philosophy", Derrida asserts that a metaphor "at once conceals and is concealed" (8). The original meaning is obscured by a layer of associations mapped over itself; this "becomes a metaphor when put in circulation in philosophical discourse" (9). In the case of the Murakami-land nameless protagonist; they are at once a metaphor and bereft of even this status. Their namelessness functions as a stand-in for their inner emptiness, rendering them 'Eerie' inhabitants of this new state. Their status of nameless emptiness precludes them from entering into Derrida's philosophical discourse in the manner of his named characters, such as Kafka Tamura. They are sheer vacuums: they have no names and little in the way of want or desire.

There are some unexpected twists in this particular issue, however. Murakami subverts and distorts the presence of the writer in the text by engaging in autobiographical fictive exercises. The collection *First Person Singular* contains a story entitled "The Yakult Swallows Poetry Collection" that purports to be from the perspective of a character named 'Haruki Murakami'. Is this a short story or a memoir? Why publish a memoir in the form of a short story (not to mention in the context of a collection of short fiction)? There is a resultant tension present in the reading of the story, but the more pertinent after-effect of this exercise is felt in Murakami's other short stories. The revelation that "The Yakult Swallows Poetry Collection" is narrated by a version of Haruki Murakami is dropped casually and incidentally; "1969. This was the year Haruki Murakami became a Sankei Atoms fan" (205). The information is communicated simply, in a non-revelatory manner. It is so casually mentioned, and the style is

[57] This tropic character setup is also repeatedly present in Murakami's short fictions, but this argument mainly hinges on Murakami's ideal male narrator; his novels are primarily narrated by males.

so indistinguishable from the Murakami-land male perspective that it is conceivable that the speaker here is any one of Murakami's unnamed male narrators, as the book jacket suggests. This version of Murakami is yet another "classic Murakami narrator". Much like Murakami's use of mythic structures (or reliance on his own tropes), part of the pleasure derived from the reading is knowing that the fiction exists as a version. Even were "The Yakult Swallows Poetry Collection" published as a memoir or record of fact (as *What I Talk About When I Talk About Running* or *Underground* were), it would still be an intellectual exercise of some fiction[58]. Indeed, the quotation above is based on fact: Murakami has written about his love for this baseball team before. The Atoms changed their name in the 1970s to the Swallows, while the change in forename represents the teams' corporate sponsorship. That a name is subject and mutable thanks to market factors is significant here with reference to Kafka Tamura. The teenager after all, effectively 'rebrands' himself upon taking the name. At the same time, these names become temporal markers: the use of "Sankei Atoms" and the lack of usage of Kafka's original name places these names on a timeline. They are representative of the instability and shiftable nature of identity in Murakami-land.

In *Dance, Dance, Dance*, Murakami also plays with these ideas, parodying his own career to date through the anagrammatic 'Hikaru Makimura'. Makimura is known for his "early novels and a collection of short stories. Pretty good stuff … [after which] He never wrote anything decent. His next two or three books were a joke. The critics panned them, they didn't sell" (113-114). However, neither "The Yakult Swallows Poetry Collection" nor *Dance, Dance Dance* present straight retellings of historical truth. The short story diverges from reality (the Murakami character speaking in the story publishes a poetry collection entitled *The Yakult Swallows Poetry Collection*: no such collection exists in reality), and Makimura's career is not actually analogous to Murakami's. Instead fictionalised textual versions of the writer are as much a representation of the 'real' Murakami as Murakami-land is a representation of Japan. Both use the network of the real as metaphorical building blocks, allowing the inventions to enter philosophical conversation with their original counterparts. Both approximate their topics only in order to diverge and create a new thing or series of things. This intermingling of fact and fiction – echoed in *1Q84*'s utility of cult history (the Sakigake group are used in place of Aum Shinrikyo or any of the other many Japanese cults of the twentieth century[59]) – represents

[58] This gestures again toward Murakami's postmodern entanglement of past/present, reality/invented reality established in Chapter I.

[59] This intermingling is also found in Derek Hartfield, discussed in Chapter I. Another compelling example is the story "Charlie Parker Plays Bossa Nova", in which an unnamed I-narrator invents the titular record as a

not only Murakami's curatorial nature, but also renders Murakami-land an untrustworthy space. The careless reader may not be able to tell fact from fiction easily.

In the above ways, Murakami uses names – or their lack – to create typologies of people. These 'types' correspond to naming conventions, but they also relate to a deeper unifying imaginary that seems to pre-date Murakami-land. Murakami's generation of a world is dependent upon his generation of structures of language, gesture and persona that suggest the informing presence of a kind of preexisting native folklore, structures of story and identity that pre-exist the terms of nationality. This cultural logic envelops Murakami-land and consequently extends to side characters, who are often as seemingly interchangeable as the protagonists. They appear to exist almost as recurrent stock characters; their value lies in how they respond to the strange rhythms of Murakami-land's stories. There are many examples of these classic stock characters in Murakami-land: the young, ambivalent male college student, the adulterous (but paradoxically still loving) spouse[60], the controlling brother-in-law, and the reclusive rich person. This last example is present in *Killing Commendatore*'s Mr Menshiki and Mrs Miu from *Sputnik Sweetheart*. Both are strange, sad, and lonely characters; they are disparate from their surroundings and ostensibly sexually inactive characters (Miu is married, but this marriage is exclusively a bond of friendship, bereft of sexuality). They are pragmatic rich folk, who manipulate both *Killing Commendatore*'s protagonist and Sumire from *Sputnik Sweetheart*.

These rich characters are similarly reclusive and secretive, qualities inherent to wealth in Murakami-land; the Boss in *A Wild Sheep Chase*, Noboru Wataya in *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, the Dowager in *1Q84*, and the wealthy owner of the restaurant in the short story "Birthday Girl" are all similarly neurotic, paranoiac rich singletons. All these characters are defined by their 'lack'; Menshiki has no relatives or friends, Miu has no sex drive[61], the Boss has lost his brain functions, the Dowager's life is defined by her daughter's suicide, Noboru fears losing his absolute control over his sister, and the restaurant owner leads a life of total solitude, never leaving his apartment. This lack is insufficient on its own; each of these

creative exercise, publishing a review of the false record before later spotting it in a shop. Boundaries between reality and fantasy are malleable in Murakami's fictions; the reader must take precautions lest they too be fooled.

[60] Typically, the wife (*The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle, Sputnik Sweetheart*, "Drive My Car"), but occasionally the husband too (*South of the Border, West of the Sun*, "Barn Burning").

[61] She is married and has sex with Sumire (once). However, both factors are negated in the text: the marriage is a sexless and aromantic friendship, while the sex with Sumire causes Sumire to disappear. It is as though Miu's transgression of her preassigned role in Murakami-land is a taboo that punishes Sumire.

characters are tormented by their lack and wish to change this. Despite the (varying levels of) power wielded by these characters, their want/lack/desires eclipse that which they possess. Despite his international criminal enterprise, the Boss needs to find the Sheep or he will perish. Despite Menshiki, Miu, and the restauranteur's wealth; they are totally unequipped to navigate society at large and bereft of sustainable, meaningful friendship.

Arguing against taxing the rich, Irish politician Leo Varadkar once argued that millionaires and billionaires are deserving of public sympathy as many are "all fur coat and no knickers" (Molony). Varadkar argues for leniency for the obscenely rich by pointing to an inherent absence in their condition, much as Murakami does. Their outward show of wealth masks an internal hollowness. However, Murakami's portrayal is less appeasing to his subjects. Murakami's rich one-percenters are inherently lacking, but their spite and cruelty is of their own making. Murakami's most complete narrative is *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, which (despite its deviations, subplots, and anecdotes) tells a somewhat (as ever with Murakami, tentative qualifiers like 'somewhat' abound) straightforward story of a man seeking revenge against his billionaire archnemesis. When Toru finally confronts Wataya in the dream world, he bashes his brains out across the floor: "I heard something crack open in the darkness like a piece of fruit. Like a watermelon" (586). He does not extend any sympathy, nor should he. Wataya's predatory nature as a man cohabits with his billionaire status; they are inextricable. In Derrida's words, "the inscription on a coin is most often the point of crossover" (14). Derrida relates this to the intersection of metaphor and reality represented by the coin's physical form (the value of gold meets numerical value on the plane of the coin), which is rendered intangible in Murakami-land. The point of understanding (physical wealth) is rendered null here; Wataya and Menshiki's wealth is digital and spectral. They possess the trappings of wealth (houses, cars), but their actual money is never seen. They are rarely, if ever, shown to actually touch their money in-text; everything is digital or transferred or wired. Money is unfixed and omnipresent, haunting conversations and interpersonal interactions like a spectre. Physical cash and transactional interactions are both gauche. The characters (and their wealth) emerge as empty metaphors. The only rich people that Murakami spares are those who transparently share their wealth in a transparent manner: Miu pampers Sumire, frequently buying her treats and personally taking her away on holidays. The Dowager hosts abused women in her mansion and provides extended financial aid to both these women and Aomame, who she employs as an assassin. The restaurant owner pays his workers remarkably high wages. The other rich characters (whose wealth is more intangible) are either killed (Wataya, the Boss) or left alone

and miserable (Menshiki). Murakami's rich person is one species, with two breeds: the benign and the malign. This is not to claim that Murakami-land has an overarching morality tied to financial wellbeing, but rather that these characters fall into unavoidably imitative narrative rhythms.

The reclusive and secretive rich person is merely one example of an archetype within Murakami-land. The bored college student, the long-lost childhood friend, and the cheating spouse in Murakami's texts are other examples of the archetypes of this land. However, there are some characters whose presence extends beyond the realm of archetype; they are closer to direct repetitions, extending to repeated character traits combined with a particular name. The name 'Noboru Watanabe' is the most significant example of this. This name is used in several Murakami short stories ("A Family Affair", "The Wind-Up Bird and Tuesday's Women", and "The Elephant Vanishes": all stories featured in the collection *The Elephant Vanishes*, 2003) available in the English language. These Noboru characters are seemingly dissimilar; one is a young man on the precipice of marriage, one is a missing 63-year-old elephant minder, and one is an awkward brother-in-law. Murakami would later evolve the short story "The Wind-Up Bird and Tuesday's Women" into his epic novel *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*. This brother-in-law from the short story became the horrific villain of *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, but his name changes to Noboru Wataya. The novel was conceived as a darker extrapolation of the short story. Wataya is again the brother-in-law of the protagonist (now assigned the name Toru). Murakami retains most of the details of the earlier short story, so the nominal shift is a significant one that hints at the true nature of Murakami's 'Noboru Watanabe' character mold.

There is a peculiar sort of intertextuality at play in Noboru-istic studies; the reader is forced to orient these characters against one another in Murakami's oeuvre. What is the relationship between one Noboru Watanabe and another? Why does Murakami recycle and reuse this particular name? Jay Rubin answers the latter question in *Haruki Murakami and the Music of Words*. In this behind-the-scenes[62] look at Murakami, Rubin explains that the Noboru archetype emerged as a sort of in-joke; Noboru Watanabe was the real name of famous artist Mizumaru Anzai, with whom Murakami was a close friend. When Murakami returned to the "The Wind-Up Bird and Tuesday's Women" short story, he discovered that the brother-in-law (originally Noboru Watanabe) had begun to evolve into "into the embodiment of national evil,

[62] Rubin's relationship with Murakami appears extremely close, as evidenced by their personal correspondences and conversations recorded in Rubin's *Haruki Murakami and the Music of Words*. Murakami reads each of Rubin's English language translations and provides extensive notes and feedback.

[and therefore] he felt that he ought to at least change the surname" (140). The idea of national evil is interesting here: does Rubin (and by extension, Murakami) refer to the nation of Japan or Murakami-land (as Murakami is frequently considered a non-Japanese writer by writers such as Ōe)? This question is ultimately unresolved, but Noboru Watanabe is clearly a playful sort of rhythmic exercise for Murakami: the name is unremarkable in Japan, and thus functions effectively as an alias. When Murakami's friend Watanabe assumed the public identity of 'Mizumaru Anzai', his original name was cast by the wayside (in the same manner as Bob Dylan discards 'Robert Zimmerman'). Murakami picks an abandoned anonymous name from the proverbial trash and uses it as a signifier of the everyday man of the modern age (while simultaneously establishing an artistic in-joke with his friend). There are clear limitations to this exercise: Noboru Watanabe is trapped in a guise of pleasant nonchalance. He is never allowed to be a character of great significance[63] or strong feeling. When he reaches such a point, he must morph into another form (Noboru Wataya). The Watanabe character archetype is shaped by the extradiegetic friendship between Murakami and Anzai. Watanabe is not allowed to stand in for national evil; he must remain in the background waiting in the wings.

Despite this explanation, Noboru Watanabe cannot be dismissed as simply an in-joke between friends. In "The Elephant Vanishes", the presence of Watanabe is minor and incidental. However, in both "A Family Affair" and "The Wind-Up Bird and Tuesday's Women", Watanabe occupies the same role. In both cases, he is an intermediary between the protagonist and a woman. In the former, he is the protagonist's sister's soon-to-be-husband. In the latter, he is the protagonist's wife's brother (and shares his name with the couple's cat). Noboru Watanabe is rendered a sort of liminal character: defined by his spectral sort-of-presence that is defined by his proximity to others. Even the name Watanabe has been identified as particularly normal or everyday by Rubin; "quite common in Japan and probably used by Murakami precisely because of its ordinariness" (140). There is no hint of interiority or complexity to any of these Watanabes: instead, each seem to be happily background characters. They are emotional set dressing organised around the locus of their supporting nature. They are never protagonists, they are never anything more than a secondary character.

The curated impression of 'Noboru Watanabe' refracts Murakami's teenage Kafka, a boy who adopts the portentous name of the famous author. The teen's past name ceases to matter and is conspicuously absent in the novel. In fact, this character adopts yet another alias

[63] The story in which he is apparently most important ("The Elephant Vanishes"), he is mentioned by name only once.

(The Boy Named Crow; used in his internal monologues), further eroding his past identity. Murakami refuses to let this nominal abandonment happen with Anzai. Murakami's utility of the same-name-conundrum echoes his hypermodern anxieties around identity (or its lack) at the heart of the celebrity project. These anxieties are embodied also by Ryuichi Gotanda (as discussed in Chapter I). Noboru Watanabe becomes yet another name to decorate imaginary billboards, positioned between Gotanda and Brad Pitt. Anzai's abandoned name's identity is subdivided and scattered across Murakami's short stories. The signifier of 'Noboru Watanabe' is inseparable from its origin as a non-signifying name outside of Murakami-land. By becoming a sign, deeper identity is voided. Should a more concrete, individual identity emerge, it is the end of Noboru Watanabe and the birth of Noboru Wataya. Noboru Watanabe is not so much a series of criteria that must be fulfilled, as it is an identity defined by what it cannot be: Noboru Watanabe cannot be more than a sort of inoffensive everyman side character. Excessive malice or wealth negates this, necessitating a name change.

Name-based repetition is rife in Murakami-land. Noboru Watanabe is a repeated full name, but there are also multiple repeated single names, such as Toru, Ushikawa, and Naoko. Ushikawa is the most remarkable of these, functioning as a parody of the very idea of repetition. Murakami-land's namesakes act in maniacal impersonation of one another until their façade of individuality shatters; at which point their narrative terminates. They embody the "slave to language" (114) that Lacan writes of: Torus are doomed to wait on their ill partner[64], Naokos are doomed to succumb to illness, Noboru Watanabes are doomed to haunt the periphery. That there are so many repeated names, archetypes, and character situations is important: the same-name phenomenon is not even permitted to be unique in Murakami-land. Noboru Watanabe is not unique in it his insistent reappearance, even that would be too much individuality.

The character Ushikawa is perhaps the most intriguing, repeated name within Murakami-land, seemingly appearing in both *1Q84* and *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*. Unlike the diverse Noboru characters, the two Ushikawa characters initially appear to be the very same person. Ushikawa is short, fat, and wears terrible clothes. Where each Noboru is unremarkable, Ushikawa is bizarre. In each text, Ushikawa is a private detective and is described as an incredibly ugly man. Ushikawa is lonely, regarded as pathetic by everyone he encounters. In both texts, Ushikawa has the same name, job, and seemingly repulsive appearance: "one of the

[64] There are other potential readings of names, of course. Flynn (2019) argues that Toru is a fitting name for the protagonist of *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*. The name Toru roughly translates to 'passing through', Flynn compares this to Toru's passage through the city. It might also refer to his passage through the prewritten conditions for being in Murakami's fictions.

ugliest human beings [Toru had] ever encountered" (*The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* 427) / a person "that had crawled out of a hole in the earth – a slimy thing" (*1Q84: Books One and Two* 543). Both have unsightly haircuts that resemble pubic hair and inspire disgust in everyone they encounter. In an uncharacteristically cruel episode depicted in *1Q84: Book Three*, a child flees from the sight of Ushikawa's face (149). Such a character stands out in Murakami-land, where male characters are rarely described physically (and never in such grotesque detail as poor Ushikawa). Ushikawa thus seems a bridging or recurring character between two novels.

The two appear to be the one character, branching separate novels, until one consults the novels' timelines. *1Q84* occurs in an altered version of the year 1984 (dubbed 1Q84), while Ushikawa's first appearance in *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* is in October 1985. By December 1984/1Q84, *1Q84*'s Ushikawa has been killed: he is violently strangled and left hanging upside down in a rented apartment. Before the year is out, his body is reduced to ashes and scattered amongst the mountains by a reclusive cult[65]. How then can he reappear in *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*? The reader is left utterly confounded: why does Murakami recycle this peculiar face and name entirely if they are not meant to be the same character? Ushikawa is a uniquely Murakami-land invention that needs little introduction or contextualisation. He becomes akin to the Man with No Name, Fincher's the Killer, or even Batman. The character has become archetypal, retaining name, title, and general family situation, resembling a modern Creon. Simultaneously, the character has not developed between texts. He has changed, but in non-linear ways, resembling a rhizomatic planter. The two are of the same species, but their stems twist in different directions.

The Ushikawa in *1Q84* then is not the same character as his 1985 counterpart. This version of the character is centrally important to *1Q84*; he is the only character outside of the deuter-protagonists (Tengo and Aomame) with awareness of the dimensional change that has occurred. Tengo, Aomame, and Ushikawa are the only characters to traverse the two worlds of 1984 and 1Q84, existing simultaneously 'beyond' and 'between' them. This exceptionalism is reflected textually: the trilogy is told exclusively from these three characters' point-of-views. If Ushikawa dies in *1Q84*, surely, he cannot encounter Toru in 1985, and his presence here is thus rendered truly 'Weird'. The pervading sense of wrongness that other characters endure from his physical appearance is conveyed out-of-text through this 'Weird'-ness. In such a way,

[65] Ushikawa, alongside Tengo and Aomame, is privy to the changed state of the world in the year 1Q84. As such, the same rules apply to him as Aomame (their deaths in the mirror year apply to themselves in the 'real' year of 1984).

Ushikawa is further rendered a semi-quantum character. He is capable of existing in multiple spaces at once and follows no single discernible spatial or temporal logic. Ushikawa has preprogrammed functions, characteristics, and tropic elements; through these, he (like Noboru Watanabe before him) is rendered an archetypic plaything of Murakami-land. The Ushikawa discrepancies of course only matter to the Murakami superfan; a casual reader (or a reader of only one of these two texts) will not detect the 'Weird'-ness of Ushikawa, nor would they detect it in Noboru Watanabe or the rhyming Toru/Naoko relationship.

Another key difference lies in Ushikawas' past: both men had been married, but their wives have left them. In *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, Ushikawa's wife and children left him after he became abusive. He was mockingly called 'Ushi' (roughly "cow") by co-workers, and enraged, beat his wife horrifically; he would "slam her against the wall and kick her, pour hot tea on her, throw things at her" (431). When Ushikawa broke his daughter's arm, his family left him forever. *1Q84*'s Ushikawa is meeker and less sinister. His wife and children don't even remember him, having left him on account of his repulsive appearance and diminutive personality. This character shift is clearly intentional on Murakami's part: a central theme of *1Q84* is domestic abuse. Were Ushikawa an abuser, Tamaru would have a diegetic impulse to murder him. It would read as justice, not as the unhappy series of misfortunes that are presented in the text. Eliding this sordid element from Ushikawa's backstory further removes him from the world of the text, while splitting the characters into two disparate entities. The reader is left with the distinct impression that these Ushikawas are separate entities that bear the same face, but different qualities. He serves as a negative print to Noboru Watanabe, to whom domestic violence is too strong a character trait. As such, these characters serve the Murakami-land equivalent roles to the Creon roles in Greek myth and tragic theatre; much as Creon is always a well-meaning elder, Noboru Watanabe is always an unremarkable man and Ushikawa an ugly detective. These characters are enslaved by their names, shackled to preordained destinies that operate outside of temporal and spatial logic.

Murakami significantly provides in-text explanations for several of these names. In *1Q84: Books One and Two*, Ushikawa explains that the first part of his name translates to 'bull' (451). Within the same novel, Aomame explains her unusual name in an internal monologue ("written with exactly the same characters as the word for "green peas" and pronounced with the same four syllables, "Ah-oh-mah-meh"", 4). Both examples read somewhat unnaturally; they feel as though they are written specifically with a non-Japanese audience in mind. Aomame, as the matured version of edamame beans, is not unfamiliar to Japanese readers. It

needs no explanation. However, by explaining it in such a way, Murakami is able to communicate the strangeness of this name to Euro-American readers (where aomame is less common than edamame). This presents another example of Murakami foot-noting himself; again, there is no editorial oversight necessary, no footnotes to clarify. The clarification is in the text, and the text itself stretches to accommodate this, rendering these names doubly important.

Toru and Naoko are also recycled character archetypes of Murakami-land. 'Toru' and 'Naoko' from *Norwegian Wood* appear to feature in the short story "Blind Willow, Sleeping Woman". Both texts follow a trio of childhood friends – one female (Naoko), two male (Toru and another) – who grow up together. The friend group develops an awkward love triangle when they all reach college age. In both narratives, the female friend takes ill, and the other characters visit her while she undergoes treatment. Although Toru Okada in *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* seems different (for one, he has no Naoko), Strecher identifies that character's role thus: "we see the true function of Okada Tōru in this novel: to read (or listen to) the stories of the afflicted and, in doing so, to recognize them as individuals and thereby restore some small part of their core identity to them" (46). Both of the other Torus do this too: the short story character listens to his young cousin's anxieties surrounding his incessant earaches, while *Norwegian Wood*'s Toru listens to Reiko's tragic past. All of the Toru character help afflicted or hurt people around them alleviate their conditions, simply by confiding in them. Toru then is a listener, and 'passing through' takes on a new meaning; these characters are vessels for the pain of those around them. They take this pain, process it, and free the speakers.

The short story was originally published in 1983, and later reworked in 1995. The 1995 version was published in translation in *Harpers* in 2002. The story was finally anthologised in translation in a 2007 collection of the same name, *Blind Willow, Sleeping Woman*. The 2007 collection also includes the short story "Firefly", which was also incorporated – albeit nearly entirely unchanged – into the midsection of *Norwegian Wood*. The revisions and alterations to the story "Blind Willow, Sleeping Woman" (both from its original form and in its relation to *Norwegian Wood*) makes it an interesting point of study. If the 1995 rendition of Toru and Naoko's tragedy ("Blind Willow, Sleeping Woman") was the earlier published work, the relationship between the texts would be clear: the short story would be a prelude or a work in progress to the novel. This transition from the 'minor' form of the short story to the 'major' form of the novel would repeat the relationship between "The Wind-Up Bird and Tuesday's Women" and *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle.* The novel would appear as the ideal, 'completed'

version of the nascent story. But the reverse complicates matters. The short story form's rendition of the same tale is thus rendered strange, uncanny, and 'Weird'. Just as a visitor to Murakami-land does not expect to meet the dead Ushikawa living again, visitors are propelled into a strange intellectual space by rejoining Toru and Naoko. The 'original' tragic romance is transformed into a forked pathway: the left leads to *Norwegian Wood*, the right leads to a more refined short story. The nominal similarities cast the semiotic deviances into greater relief. Fisher's 'Weird'-ness is relative here: expectations of narrative development or character pathways are dictated by encounters with Murakami-land's canon. Ushikawa's wife-beating is either expected or surprising in its absence: whether present or absent, it cannot be forgotten.

(iii) The Elephant (not) in the Room

The images that Murakami highlighted in Edinburgh speak to an absence as much as a presence in Murakami-land: cats and elephants disappear in Murakami's fiction, while the empty well image illustrates an internal absence or 'want'. The elephant and the cat are not the only animals that Murakami-land features prominently (fireflies and crabs both lend their names to short stories), but they serve an important role in constructing the everyday of this space. The missing cat is perhaps the single most recognisable trope of Murakami-land; missing cats feature in *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, *Kafka on the Shore*, *1Q84*, *Pinball, 1973*, *Sputnik Sweetheart*, amongst others. Cats decorate official Murakami-branded merchandise, appearing on his UNIQLO collaboration t-shirts[66]. While cats are present in the real-world commercialisation advertising Murakami-land, in the land itself cats are often conspicuously absent. They appear as pets, but usually missing pets. This is a role specific to the cat; dogs do not go missing in Murakami-land. In *1Q84*, one of the rare times Murakami features a dog, the pet does not go missing. Instead, it is violently dismembered. This explicit obsession with the feline is at once baffling and endearing: spotting a cat in Murakami becomes a sort of game for the attentive reader. It becomes (like all of his memetic images) a narrative signpost by which we can identify with clarity that, yes, this text occurs in the unique space of Murakami-land. At its basic level, the missing cat represents a relatable 'quest' narrative. Joseph Campbell establishes the quest as fundamentally a search in *The Power of Myth*, pointing to Telemachus' search for his father as comparable to any young person's search for identity, career, or stability (164).

[66] Accessible here: https://hypebeast.com/2021/3/haruki-murakami-uniqlo-ut-books-radio-collection-tee-shirts-stickers-pins

The cat allows this in a way; after all, only by searching for his cat does Toru Okada meet May Kasahara. Hoshino's job as a cat-finder (neo-noir) in *Kafka on the Shore* also leads him to the sinister Johnnie Walker.

Only a fifteen minute-walk from the Haruki Murakami Library in Waseda-Minami, Tokyo, the Natsume Soseki Memorial Museum can be found. The signs pointing to this museum display the image of a cat. Soseki's most popular novel, *I am a Cat*, uses an aristocratic cat to embody cultural differences between Britain and Japan. Part of the impetus behind Soseki's choice of animal is its agency: the cat is a preferential subject to the dog or the fish owing to its freedom of movement and independence. Cats possess lives of their own. Murakami could likewise use a missing dog, frog, or fish in the plaice of a cat. *Sputnik Sweetheart*'s description of anthropophagic cats hints at a potential reason for the central and unique importance of cats as a repeated image. A chapter of *Sputnik Sweetheart* is an extended adaptation of an earlier Murakami short story, "Man-Eating Cats", its insertion to the surrounding story echoing his incorporation of "Firefly" into *Norwegian Wood*. In both the short story and its revision in *Sputnik Sweetheart*, a man reads a news article in which an old woman died of a heart attack at her house. The woman's three cats partially eat her corpse. This case causes the protagonist to recall a childhood pet cat, who climbed up a tree and vanished without a trace. In both cases, the cats exhibit a unique sense of agency. Even when a pet cat is present, they are only half-present. Cats wander. Cats in Murakami's world embody a sort of emotional instability and malleability. Their satisfaction and sustained presence implies calmness and stability in the life of their respective owner (typically the protagonist). When they go missing, they communicate to the searcher that they are missing something beyond just their pet. They come and go as they please and occasionally even speak. *Sputnik Sweetheart* encapsulates Murakami's use of the cat: the cats refuse to starve and eat their dead owner. The protagonist's cat leaves (pre-textually) without reason or logic; the reader is presented with an understandable act of consumption and a baffling vanishing act. Murakami-land's cats juxtapose the corporeal worlds with the spiritual world that cats tangentially interact with. In *Kafka on the Shore*, the cats speak and interact with the Johnnie Walker character; in *Sputnik Sweetheart*, the childhood pet cat's disappearance serves as a *mise-en-abyme* for Sumire's disappearance. Cats are the perfect vessel for this venture: a fish can hardly eat their owner (not impossible, merely logistically difficult)[67].

[67] They are also not likely to run away.

The cat possesses mythological significance. Cats in Egypt were revered as holy beings in ancient times. However, the reason the cat (and the subsequent images) appear here and not in the previous chapter is found in how Murakami creates a new, exclusive meaning out of the familiar tropic element (these semiotic signs in isolation). He does not readily appeal to or reference these myths in the fashion of Chapter II's subjects. The cat is adopted by Murakami as a semiotic drawing board (or projection screen) upon which his characters (and readers) are encouraged to peer upon and consider. The lack of singular meaning is intentional: the cat appears as a sort of brand imagery. Just as the golden arches signify fast food, the cat signifies magical realism, infidelity, myth, and hypermodern anxiety. This is compounded by Murakami's considered utility of cats as literal advertisement material: his radio show (imaginatively entitled 'Murakami Radio') features a cat on its logo. In interviews, he claims to befriend cats (despite not owning a cat); "I go jogging … and I regularly see three or four cats – they are friends of mine … we know each other very well" (Treisman). In film adaptations of Murakami such as Chang-Dong Lee's *Burning* and Pierre Földes' *Blind Willow, Sleeping Woman*, cats are inserted into adaptations of stories that originally did not feature cats. The cat is self-consciously fashioned into and adopted as a signifier of Murakami-land by its architect(s).

The least domesticated image Murakami mentioned in Edinburgh is the elephant. The elephant, although infrequently used in Murakami's fiction, reflects the above process of sign-adoption. In the short story "The Elephant Vanishes", a small town adopts an elephant both physically and symbolically. They physically adopt the elephant, building an enclosure to house the animal. When pushed to explain this public expenditure, the mayor of the town argues "the elephant could become the town's symbol" (311). Outside of this, the elephant appears little (if ever) on marketing materials and Murakami periphery than the cat or the ear. Nonetheless, when the elephant appears it serves a key function. The elephant, even more so than the cat, is overtly defined by its absence. The cat's disappearance is emblematic of the every-day's dissolution in Murakami's narratives. This meaning is partially communicated by the cat's every-day presence. The elephant is different: if the cat represents normality, the elephant represents a break from normality. Elephants are not found in the wild in Japan and would only be encountered in a zoo setting (or in a televised environment). Their appearance in 'Japan' and Murakami-land carries with it a heightened sense of artifice. When the elephant appears in the short story "The Elephant Vanishes" or the novel *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*; it is a

foreign narrative object. On a basic level, the elephant in Murakami-land represents the bizarre or the extraordinary.

However, the elephant's purpose still resembles that of the cat; both inspire a sort of internal change in the inhabitants of Murakami-land. However, these changes occur on different levels. The missing cat inspires an external search: Toru searches all over the neighbourhood and Hoshino walks all over the city, looking for cats down back alleys. The search the elephant inspires is more internalised and subjective. Searching for the cat is an act of connection. Toru's search for the cat brings Toru and May Kasahara together, while in *Sputnik Sweetheart*, the image of the missing cat binds the protagonist and Miss Miu together. By contrast, the elephant seems to drive people apart: mentioning the elephant obliterates the erotic potential of the couple in 'The Elephant Vanishes', while the elephant chapters in *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* occur before these characters die or are exiled to a Russian *gulag*. Furthermore, despite Murakami's professed adoration for the elephant motif, it only seems to appear in a significant manner in the two key texts mentioned above. In *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, the titular bird observes the killing of zoo animals during World War II. In this part of the novel (which occurs in a non-sequitur chronological narrative break), a zoo veterinarian is complicit in the massacre of both zoo animals and prisoners of war. Despite the unrelenting bleakness of this chapter, the elephants are spared from their fellow animals' fate. In the short story, "The Elephant Vanishes" Murakami once again focusses on a zookeeper's relationship to the elephant. In this story, both an elephant and its keeper, Noboru Watanabe, vanish. The narrator of the story is fascinated by this occurrence; the elephant and owner vanish with no sign of forced escape or struggle. No one in the vicinity is awoken by the sound of an aged creature of massive proportion stomping through the streets of Tokyo.

In both cases, the elephant is an aberration, disrupting normality on two key levels. The first and most obvious level is found in its constrained and curated oddness. It is a measured and controlled break from the humdrum and the everyday. Furthermore, the elephants in *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* are distinguished from the other animals in the zoo for the reason of their survival. Although they are listed on the liquidation list, the soldiers realise that attempting to kill these creatures would simply consume too much ammunition. The elephant is the symbol of the circus, the fairground, the carnival. By its very presence, it invokes the carnivalesque and the upending of social norms. This is juxtaposed with the calmness of the zoo setting and the calmness of the creature, who operates as a sort of spectre observing the futility of the failing Japanese war effort. The controlled nature of the zoo is discarded within *The Wind-Up*

Bird Chronicle, where it becomes a setting for brutal war crimes instead of purported education. In "The Elephant Vanishes", the zoo's normativity is turned upon itself in another way. The zoo is a normalizing environment: the bizarre, the exotic, and the strange are all presented in a matter-of-fact method. Their individual semiotic rainbows are unwoven by explanatory placards and their idiosyncratic species behaviours are sandpapered to oblivion by lack of visible enrichment or stimulation. The magic and excitement of seeing a Komodo dragon, a lion, and an elephant in the same day is dimmed by their dully homogenous behaviour: oftentimes, all these creatures in a simulated environment behave the same. These animals will all sit or stand in groups together, heads in the dirt. Stripped of their ability to roam, they 'vanish' into normalcy.

There is a notorious phrase found in Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*; "Is it surprising that prisons resemble factories, schools, barracks, hospitals, which all resemble prison?" (228) We can add zoos to this list. Zoos function narratively alike these others; if they appear in a work of fiction, their chief purpose is usually the circumvention of their own laws. Their very presence begs the appearance of their shadow. It is for this reason that they are so often the settings for escape narratives. So, when Murakami features the zoo and attempts to use the elephant as a restoratively odd creature, he is faced with a clear problem. How does he break the paramount law of the zoo (that being the imprisonment of the animals) without himself adhering to the rules of the escape genre? The elephant's escape from the zoo could easily be depicted as echoing Nicolas Cage's escape from prison in John Woo's 1997 *Face/Off*, Ferris Bueller's escape from school in the 1986 John Hughes comedy *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*, or indeed the zookeeper and elephant's escape from a Munich Zoo in Michael Winner's 1969 war comedy *Hannibal Brooks*. For Murakami to escape the narrative shackles his forebears lay before him, he must break the rules of the escape genre. To restore magic to the elephant in 'The Elephant Vanishes', the escape is conducted atypically. It occurs before the action of the text and is entirely unexplained. Overnight, the elephant simply ceases to be. It is an absurd occurrence: there is no explanation, there is no clear logic underpinning the elephant's escape and disappearance. In this way, Murakami makes the absence of the elephant the 'new elephant': its disappearance inspires the sublimity that the creature no longer can. Simultaneously, by denying the reader the expected satisfaction of the story beats that constitute the escape genre, Murakami actually enacts an escape of his own: an escape from genre. The absence of a thing becomes a stronger thing in this way.

These ideas have basis in Murakami's *Killing Commendatore*, in which 'ideas' (and their subsequent dissipation) play a key role. The title is derived from the act as featured in *Don Giovanni* and the in-text repetition of this act (repeated in Amada's paintings too) opens a portal to a sort of netherworld. Imitative action animates a magic system in Murakami-land that underpins the creation of such a space. Such repetitive magic is as important in its absence as it is in its presence. If every novel features a cat, the reader seeks and expects cats. The image of the cat becomes a logical hook or in-route for the reader. The presence of the cat is a soothing, grounding element in Murakami-land. It becomes the opposite of Fisher's 'Weird', which utilises cognitive estrangement: "an unworlding, a falling away of any sense that there is any 'fundamental' level which could operate as a foundation" (48). The insistent repetition of the cat, the elephant, the nameless protagonist, and Noboru Watanabe constitute a sort of cognitive orientation. Each of these are so inherent to the heart of the Murakami-land project that it is difficult to imagine a new Murakami work that does not feature any of them (even in negation, such as the search for an absent cat). Of course, if these factors are themselves absent, the Murakami fan embarks on a search within the text; becoming themselves, the searchers.

However, when these elements are destroyed or made to disappear, the space of the 'Weird' is conjured with a greater strength. For example, the shadow realm in *Killing Commendatore* can only be reached by the simultaneous oblivion and invocation of repetitive action. The Commendatore is killed, imitating both the painting and *Don Giovanni*. However, simultaneously the Gatsby structure that dictates the narrative is dispelled, as though there is space for only one retelling at a time. The shadow realm opened by the Commendatore's death becomes a sort of interspace that allows the protagonist to escape the narrative pathways followed up to that point in the novel. This shadow realm is located underground becomes a space through which Murakami can tap into Deleuze and Guattari's "beautiful … underground stems" (15) and disentangle his own narrative from the sapping energies of preexisting models. At the same time, in *1Q84*, the dimensional shift occurs when Aomame enters an underground space of sorts – an emergency ladder on an elevated Tokyo highway. When she emerges from this service space, the world has changed. There are now two moons orbiting the earth and all policemen in Japan carry guns. The act of descending the ladder paradoxically entangles her and Tengo inside a dense web of literary allusions (Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*, among others); serving as a mirror image to *Killing Commendatore*'s underground adventure. The suggestive space of the underground seems to contain potentialities for Murakami; the protagonist of *Killing Commendatore* irretrievably loses his

sister in a cave system as a child, but can only find Mariye and ensure her safety through a metaphorical system of caves. The underground is a treacherous place in which one may either shed allusions or be unavoidably shackled to them.

These paradoxes serve as a series of implicatory challenges. Captivity implies escape, wonder implies drudgery, and – by this circuitous logic - East implies West. This final point is a destructive one; understanding Murakami-land requires that a movement away from this deceptively simple and one-point interpretative exercise. It is instead helpful to conceive of Murakami-land's world philosophy as a porous, interpolated one. If Murakami characters eat spaghetti or look at an elephant in a zoo, this does not necessarily imply that their 'Japanese' identity has been diminished by interaction with the outside world. Rather it reminds the reader of the inescapable commonality between cultures under capitalism that gives rise to (and perhaps necessitates) the formation of Murakami-land as an 'other' space. Inhabitants are thus subsumed in a semiotic soup of consumer-internationalism; of zoos, spaghetti, movies, histories both real and imagined, and pop music. Murakami's understanding of their position is Žižekian (2012); his characters are deprived "of any meaningful cognitive orientation … [under an international capitalist system] which *de-totalizes meaning*" (55). Murakami-land serves to carve out a series of images to restore to his characters a cognitive orientation through ritualistic repetition.

(iv) A Cure for Wellness

A key image mentioned at Edinburgh International Book Festival is the well. The well is another significant repeated image in Murakami's work, showing up time and time again. Wells are like a form of capitalist rupture; they appear at significant geographical locations (markers of place) and suggest an interconnected subterranean system. They illustrate the potential of deeper, interconnected meanings. In *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, Toru renovates a house with an empty well in its garden, meditating at the bottom of this seemingly functionless well. This is echoed in other Murakami works, particularly *Killing Commendatore*, which features several instances of underground contemplation; there is an abandoned Buddhist burial site that resembles a well, in which both the protagonist and Mr Menshiki meditate. Strecher argues that the well is a portal to an underworld realm of potential magics, linking its repeated invocation to Buddhist, Hindu, and Christian traditions (246). The well is also present in Japanese folklore (as collected by Lafcadio Hearn/Koizumi Yakumo) and popular culture. Particularly in popular

culture, the well is used as a nexus point wherein the worlds of the dead and the living uncomfortably meet and overlap. This is seen in films such as *Onibaba*, *Ring*, and videogames such as *Dark Souls*[68] The image of the well is in direct conversation with surrounding Japanese culture, but is filtered through Murakami-land's processes of the detotalisation of meaning. In interviews with anglophonic sources, Murakami openly discusses this. His openness on this topic is at odds with his typical approach toward magic realism in the worlds of his texts; the nature of which he usually chooses not to explain (as witnessed at the Edinburgh event). In the Bausells interview, Murakami alludes to the appeal of the well; "It's my lifetime dream to be sitting at the bottom of a well. It's a dream come true. … I thought: it's fun to write a novel, you can be anything! So I thought: I can sit at the bottom of a well, isolated … Wonderful!". The well thus serves a different role to that played by Murakami's cats. Murakami's characters typically like cats. They tolerate, feed, play, and enjoy the company of the cat. Such is established by the beginning of most of his cat narratives.

The well, by contrast, is a becoming-image or a symbol of processes. The cat is significant by its ubiquity, and its subsequent disappearance. If a cat is present, it will soon be non-present; this non-presence inspires growth, change, and improvement in the protagonist (who is, ironically, more fixated on the cat in its absence). By contrast, the well represents absence physically (the 'meaning' is absent), while also serving as a representation of character development and growth. This is most clearly illustrated in *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, in which Toru develops both his mental and supernatural abilities through meditating at the bottom of an empty well. In *Kwaidan*'s "Insect Studies" section, Lafcadio Hearn associates wells with death, pointing to the wells in Japanese cemeteries. These wells, Hearn argues, forment mosquito populations (64). Mosquitoes, Hearn recounts, are the reincarnated souls of wicked evildoers in Buddhism. In such a way, the descent to the well in Murakami's fictions can be seen as tapping into some of this evil; whether to resolve, defeat, or succumb to it, depends on the narrative.

The well is in some ways a simpler image than the cat or the elephant. Wells are functional things. A well serves an apparent singular purpose; to contain safe, drinkable, attainable water. A dry well, by definition, fails to meet these criteria. It has become divorced from its meaning and its function. There is thus a rupture at the heart of the Murakami-land

[68] The *Dark Souls* franchise (2011-2017) adopts wells as a sort of visual shorthand; wells are often sites where equipment is found, or non-player characters may be interacted with. In the first game, the hub area (Firelink Shrine) is host to a small number of friendly non-player characters huddled around and near a well. Equipment is found nearby.

well, which is a tool bereft of use. The well is a metonym in Murakami, illustrating his lonely protagonists' sense of unmoored abandonment. Additionally, the well serves a metatextual role: it serves to bind together characters within and outside of narrative bounds. The protagonist, sitting at the bottom of an empty well is the quintessential image of Murakami's oeuvre. It encapsulates the loneliness, lack of purpose, and the absurdity that accompanies the everyday in this space. While this image seems initially a direct riff on Japanese and (Shinto) Buddhist traditions, it is also consciously adaptable. It is an example of what Žižek terms 'Western Buddhism' in *On Belief*: this form of bastardised Buddhism represents the "perfect ideological supplement" (12) to capitalist life. The protagonist's utility of an empty well is a commonality between characters. These processes constitute the "most efficient way … to fully participate in the capitalist dynamic while retaining the appearance of mental stability" (13). The *Killing Commendatore* protagonist imitates his friend Menshiki's subterranean meditations. Toru from *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* imitates Lt. Mamiya's subterranean meditations. Well-sitting is a palatable exercise akin to *feng shui*, capable of crossing borders whilst retaining a superficial appearance of 'meaning'. The empty well simultaneously becomes a sort of vessel for male friendships. Indeed, it seems significant that when Toru finds himself trapped and in danger of drowning in a rapidly filling well, he is saved not by Lt. Mamiya but by Cinnamon (who is a woman). This scene pivots on Hearn: where he points to mosquitoes thriving in damp wells, Toru is nearly killed in one. This seems to reassert Toru's innate goodness, just as Hearn views the well as the home of the wicked (64). Meditation in the well becomes a ritual of Murakami-land; an interlinking act that brings about revelations in those who perform it. When a man sits at the bottom of an empty well, it is significant too that the well ceases to be empty.

The act of meditation in the dark, dank, hollowness of the well is an act of restorative semiotics; the meaningless (a well without water) has had meaning restored (meditation space). The well serves an externalising purpose too then: a tenet of Zen Buddhist meditation is found in the "emptying of awareness" (Shulman 127). The Murakami-land well externalises this emptiness: certainly, it is empty in a physical sense, but also in a semiotic sense. A well without water is like a car without wheels, a name without syllables, or a cat without independence. Signs and symbols, as per Barthes, convey and carry significance, suggestion, and an amorphous meaning. The well's divorce from its original water-bearing meaning opens an absence that interplays with Murakami's characters' internal hollowness. In *Killing Commendatore*, the protagonist descends into his well stand-in following his divorce; an event that has shaken him to his core and destroyed his sense of self. In *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*,

Toru descends into his well following his wife's abduction. Lt. Mamiya is trapped in a dry well following the killing of his comrades; an event that shatters his self-perception. This is partially communicated through his maintaining military title as name; unlike the Sankei Atoms or Kafka Tamura, Lt. Mamiya cannot conceive of a rebranding. By communing with the empty and the meaningless, these men can try to alleviate their own sense of empty meaninglessness. Subterranean meditation is restorative on two fronts: it heals the men's self-image. They emerge from their wells reaffirmed and stronger than before. Furthermore, it restores meaning to the unmoored wells, which now serve a new purpose.

Without citing these specific examples, referencing popular culture, and history, Murakami's use of wells can be obscure. It is useful to compare the wells then, to Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus*. The play is a strange drama, filled with unusual philosophical asides and discussions of perplexing laws. William Marx writes of the play that "details in the text will forever remain incomprehensible to us because they are linked to vanished elements of the landscape and to monuments and local traditions of which any memory has been lost for centuries" (32). The drama is firmly rooted in its setting. If Murakami's fictions seem lost in transit, haunted by the shadow of a non-placeifying global capital, his wells too are haunted. Ought they be read through the lens of Japanese culture, as above, or through another lens? And if so, what lens best fits? The 'well' in *Killing Commendatore* reads like a parody of this query. It is, for one, not necessarily even a well. It is speculated by Menshiki to be the remains of a Buddhist priest's burial ground, as implied by the bells found within. Nonetheless, the deep hole's impressively construction resembles a well to the protagonist. Subsequently, the hole is used in the same manner as the well in *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*. It is a site for meditation and growth. Even if Menshiki is correct, then much like the empty wells, the burial site is bereft of its purpose. There is no corpse within. New meaning is dictated externally. This is true on several levels; yes, as normal, the protagonist's soul searching renders the space a newfound area of reflection and emotional growth. The well space in *Killing Commendatore* is disentangled from purpose and unmoored from certainty.

The in-text image is acted upon by Murakami's out-of-text authorial output in a uniquely 'Weird' and 'Eerie' manner (why is this space empty, followed by the question of why these men should wish to fill this emptiness with their own bodies). The shadow of diegetic uncertainty that haunts Murakami's protagonist and Menshiki (is this a well or a burial ground?) is somewhat dispelled by Murakami's prior established obsession with the well as an image. Recognising the well, or the cat, or the elephant becomes akin to recognising the more

traditionally 'mythic' invocations mentioned in Chapter II. *Kafka on the Shore*'s incestuous dimensions are implied as soon as an Oedipal curse is mentioned. Murakami-land thoroughly creates and (more importantly) cultivates a self-sustaining mythos of its own. If a cat appears, it will disappear. If there is a hole in the ground, it is a well. And if that well is empty, it will soon be filled with a man. The well becomes then a symbol of the lines of escape mentioned earlier in the chapter. If these frameworks and mythic structures underpin Murakami's fictions, the wells represent a channel through which escape or retreat is possible. Strecher suggests something similar when he points to *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, in which Mamiya "is placed into the earth — the "body" of all living things — and then removed from it, a "core" with no body" (90). Mamiya is placed in an empty well, but upon leaving it finds that he has lost some intangible part or element of his own identity. The well giveth, the well taketh away.

(v) Conclusion: Wells, Holes, and Escape

The well, like Murakami's repetitive names, serves as waypoints around which Murakami's characters revolve. Names define the self and create typologies in Murakami-land, while the empty well is a symbol of portent and growth in Murakami-land. Murakami's fiction generates its own cultural logic and subsequent functions of growth. The well is the best illustration of this. Flynn (2019) sketches the well in *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* as existing in a liminal and "contradictory" (93) zone, in a vacant house, down an obstructed laneway. The dry well is cut off from the flow of human traffic and life altogether. The well, no longer a source of physical sustenance, then takes on a different form. It is a spiritually sustaining space.

When the protagonists' cat disappears, character development is near at hand. Murakami juxtaposes the minutia of everyday life (missing cat) with the surreality of high-stakes mental battles (Noboru Wataya). Yet one cannot exist without the other. This is a natural evolution from the concerns that concluded last chapter; which referred to how Murakami takes myths from 'the outside' to lend credence and power to his world. Furthermore, the incessant appearance of the well leads a reader to see wells where they may not even be: the burial site in *Killing Commendatore* lends itself to being read through the lens of well-ness, but is not necessarily a well at all. In such a way, holes become wells here. But at what point does a well become simply a hole? After all, Murakami-land is full of holes; in *1Q84*, Aomame descends an emergency service stairs in the heart of Tokyo. In *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*, the protagonist's adventure begins in a malfunctioning elevator. In both cases, the

world beyond the hole is a very different space altogether. The impression lingers that Murakami is leaving something out here, that he is artificially creating an *Oedipus at Colonus* feeling or sensation: these holes are incomprehensible to us.

The endless repetition of particular, unique mythic images renders Murakami-land a minor literature of sorts. Deleuze and Guattari's assertion from "What is a Minor Literature?" (166-177) that "there is nothing that is major or revolutionary except for the minor" (175) holds true here. Murakami positions himself against (perceptibly) dominant versions of Japan (Chapter I) in order to cast himself apart. The smaller details, the inherent unique grammatical construct of symbols that constitute Murakami-land (cats, elephants, wells) are its most important hallmarks. Murakami seeks the crevice, not the pulpit: Murakami-land is at its most vibrant when it speaks to itself and when it forces its interloper (the reader) to accommodate themselves to it. Murakami allows (and at points, seems to insist) that his readers fixate on smaller details that might otherwise seem unremarkable or banal. If the details of his setting appear incomprehensible, it is up to the reader to make the fiction make sense. This is what fans do in modern culture. In fandom, there is an abundance of theories, speculation, fan art, and fan fiction. At this point, the thesis pivots into the subject of fandom and Murakami in the real world (while also querying what this might mean). This second half to the thesis is a descent of another sort; a descent into the mania known as Harukism.

Chapter IV – Fandom and Murakami-land

Toward a methodology of fan cultures for anglophone Murakami

On March 2nd 2023, I attended a sold-out screening of Pierre Földes' film *Blind Willow, Sleeping Woman* (2022) at the Light House Cinema in Smithfield, Dublin. The film, an adaptation of several Murakami short stories, was showing as a part of the Dublin International Film Festival. After the film, I conducted a live Q&A session with Földes, who had come to Dublin for the occasion. Toward the end of the interview, we welcomed questions from the audience. Predominantly young, many of the attendees were dressed in Murakami-branded merchandise. UNIQLO t-shirts, print-to-order Redbubble peaky caps, DIY Murakami moon-and-cats tote bags; the event attracted an audience more akin to a comic book convention than a literary adaptation. Murakami seems to attract this sort of fandom[69] alongside a more traditional literary engagement. The cultivation of such overt branding of the self (as fan) is a way through which Murakami-land is rendered not only 'real', but also a collaborative project that is upheld through fan participation. This chapter traces and analyses how fans can and do participate in the creation and cultivation of the many nuances and specificities of Murakami-land's idiosyncratic identity. This is achieved first by a discussion of fan content in which I look briefly at Murakami's online fandom (communities, fanart, and fanfic). This section traces the presence of Murakami online fandom as a non-isolated phenomenon: it interpenetrates other fan groupings. I then consider Murakami fandom in the physical world; earlier chapters examined how Murakami-land folds in 'our' reality and history. I trace how Murakami-land is folded into the 'real world' here, primarily focusing on Waseda University's Haruki Murakami International Library. These discussions are formative for Chapter V's discussion of Lacan's theory of the Real. This chapter also surveys and analyses how anglophone news media has reacted to and reported on Murakami-mania through news and cultural criticism. This includes a brief discussion of Murakami-as-semiotic-signifier and his role in constructing celebrity identity in the anglophone world.

[69] Which occurs on a different register than 'literary appreciation'. It instead functions as entertainment-mediated social signifiers. Murakami fans are nearly like genre fans.

(i) The Haruki World

Murakami's success is mostly unlike that of his late-twentieth century contemporary literary greats. A useful point of comparison may be Kazuo Ishiguro. Ishiguro is a similar giant of popular literary fiction; like Murakami, his work sells by the millions and has been adapted multiple times for screen and stage. However, readers express appreciation and interest in these writers in different manners. While both writers' literature is feted through the traditional means of celebratory news articles, *The New Yorker*-style profiles, and high-publicity reviews; Murakami fandom has an additional dimension that constitutes a further turning of the screw here. When a Murakami novel[70] is published, it is usually accompanied by an uncommon fervour; there are memes posted to social media and midnight book launches attended by cosplaying 'Harukists' across the anglosphere (and beyond, but this is where my attention is focussed) Harukist is a term for Murakami superfans, coined by Roland Kelts in a 2012 article for *The New Yorker*, "The Harukists – Disappointed". The term is used to refer to Murakami fans herein. Ishiguro, by comparison, does seem to generate this particular sort of fan content or behaviours (nor does he seem to have a Reddit community at all), nor do his books compel shops to reopen at the stroke of midnight. Indeed, it is difficult even to imagine what an Ishiguro meme might look like. Where the term Harukist applies to Murakami fans, there is no such equivalent for Ishiguro fans.

Instead, Murakami's success seems nearly more comparable to that of genre fiction, such as Stephanie Meyer's *Twilight* series (2005-2020). Rittenberg (2022) points to the phenomenon of midnight book launches as emerging from genre fiction, citing spoiler culture as a possible impetus for such early releases. However, as Murakami's fiction does not follow a long-gestating vampire-werewolf-human love triangle, spoiler culture seems somewhat irrelevant to Murakami book launches. Rittenberg instead mentions a *Killing Commendatore* midnight launch; "Fans participated in a trivia competition, and the winner got a tote bag full of pasta and tomato sauce. Only true Murakami heads get the joke". The joke is precisely the reason for these launches; Murakami-fandom becomes a viable language for the hours of the book launch alone. Alison Flood reported on these for *The Guardian* in 2011, noting various activities that included film screenings, inspired-by-Murakami food tastings, quizzes, and Murakami-inspired jazz performances. For the release of *Killing Commendatore* in 2017, Fran

[70] And it is usually a novel that receives this treatment; his short story collections garner less excitement and fan frenzy. This is because the short stories have usually been published elsewhere in advance (for example, "A Shinagawa Monkey" was published in *The New Yorker* over a year in advance of its appearance in the collection *First Person Singular* in 2020). Auratic excitement is dissipated in such a case.

Bigman closely records the events of one similar launch event; a release party hosted by the bookstore Three Lives, in West Village New York. Quizzes, conversations, and fan votes for the "most loved Murakami book" were all held at this celebration of Murakami. Both Flood and Bigman's articles open by comparing Murakami midnight releases to *Harry Potter* (1997-2007) midnight releases.

It is significant for a writer of apparently serious literary fiction to have a readership so impassioned and overtly fan-ish in their devotion and celebration of his work. Fandom allows for (and thrives on) a plurality of voices, experiences, and outlooks. A significant part of Murakami fandom (and indeed fandom in general) is a similar sense of collaborative and interactive fun. At the same time, the fandom allows for a retreat from the real world into a pocket dimension where all inhabitants are bound by their shared appreciation for cats, refrigerators, and wells (or holes). In other words, reading Murakami novels and interacting with his fanbase can constitute a passport and subsequent holiday to Murakami-land. An oft-cited example of Murakami fandom is a famous piece of fanart entitled "Murakami Bingo" (Fig. 3) by Grant Snider. In an interesting turn, this fanart has proven popular enough to inspire copycats, notably illustrator Andra Nijman's alternate Murakami bingo (Fig. 4). Nijman, who works professionally under the alias Stutpak, recycles some bingo elements from Snider's (both note the presence of cats and sexually appealing ears in Murakami-land), while adding some new (including 'Adulterous Sex'. On her website, there is the choice to download the original artwork or a censored version, which blurs and obscures this square; presumably in the hopes that fans will hang this on their wall).

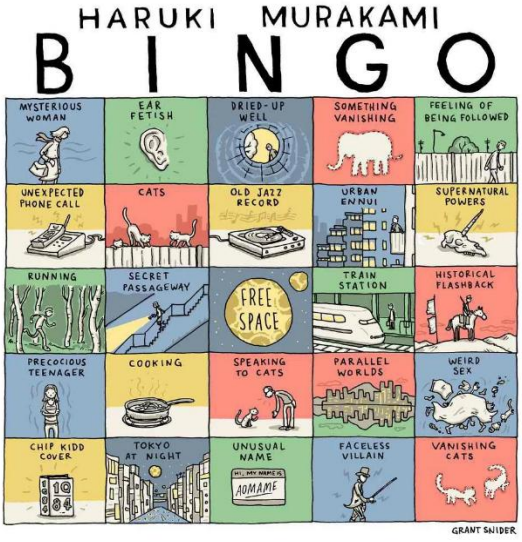

Fig. 3: Grant Snider's 'Haruki Murakami Bingo'. Published in *The New York Times Book Review*, 3rd June 2012.

Fig. 4: Stutpak's 'Haruki Murakami Bingo'. Published on the artist's personal website, Stutpak.com.

There is a sense of participatory, mandatory fun in Murakami fandom then; manifested through interactive fanart[71] and group events. This takes us back to the language of Jameson's itemization. Jameson (2024) writes that; "We have, in postmodernism, given up on the attempt to "estrange" our daily life and see it new, poetic or nightmarish, ways: we have given up the analysis of it in terms of the commodity form, in a situation in which everything by now is a commodity" (202). This is clearly rendered above: the 'Weird'-ness of Murakami's fiction is mitigated and diminished by these bingo games. They assign constraints to what Murakami can do. Is Kafka's rape of Sakura just another manifestation of what Snider calls "weird sex"? This sort of 'fun' sands the edges of this often problematic and uncomfortable fiction, closing off possible routes for the estrangement or interrogation that Jameson champions.

Murakami is not entirely without precedent as a phenomenon in this way. Jane Austen fans predate Murakami-mania and echo their cultural activities in many ways[72]. Janeites embark on pilgrimages to Bath and Winchester, dress up as their favourite characters, roleplay, and produce fan-art that engages with and responds to the world(s) of Austen's texts. In *Austentatious: The Evolving World of Jane Austen Fans*, Holly Luetkenhaus and Zoe Weinstein provide a useful framework for navigating online fandom in relation to serious literature. They note an inescapable "tension that exists between scholarship and fannishness … We identify ourselves as fans because it is our hobby— it's a self-identification. We are scholars because we are paid to be scholars, most of the time ... Fandom, though, is something we choose to do in our free time, something we dedicate ourselves to for fun, not profit" (11). They demarcate the two experiences: scholarship is active and professional, while fandom is more casual and personal. Fandom is rendered as a sort of retreat or intellectual cubby hole. This is illustrated within the bounds of this very thesis. The past two chapters have traced and analysed several of Murakami's tropic elements (through the lens of how they construct the imaginated Murakami-land). Compare the language and discussion in those chapters to the two Murakami bingos above: they contain the immediacy and humour associated with fandom. They are amusing, diverting, and surface-level in their analysis, while serving as closed circuits. Murakami novels deliver on the bingo. This then seems to be a requisite for a Murakami novel to truly be considered a Murakami novel: are the novels and stories that do not conform to these minigames considered un-Murakami in a sense?

[71] While it is tempting to consider Snider's work an illustration instead of fanart (if these borders exist), he explains on his blog that "[he had] spent the last few years devouring the books of Haruki Murakami" and refers to the "genius of Murakami". The job is clearly based on passion, rather than commercial interest.
[72] Well, except for the midnight book launches.

Assertions of divergencies between scholarship and fandom are not unique to Luetkenhaus and Weinstein. The idea of the academic fan and academic fandom (later shortened to 'acafan' and aca-fandom) dominated fandom discourse in the early 2010s. The idea was contentious; does fandom – existing as it does as a continuous practice – interfere with and prevent academic rigour in both teaching and research? This is particularly contested in the realm of academia and fandom of serious or canonical works. Should a card-carrying Janeite teach *Pride and Prejudice* and can they be trusted not to spend their time talking about a wet-shirted Colin Firth? Booth argues in favour of this. He states that "people study what has been ideologically groomed to be important" (*Flowjournal*). Fandom is inextricable from its subjects; Booth argues that this is only right. How fans react to and against their chosen interests matters as much as the content of these interests. After all, fandom represents a shared-interest-space that is sequestered from the everyday. Booth contests that fandom represents an evolution of the text, showing how it simultaneously interacts with and retreats from literary discourse. What a fandom comprises of, values, and denigrates are all interest. What then does a Murakami fandom look like or prize? The popularity of the bingo pieces seems to imply that Harukists favour a regulation of their chosen interest.

If fandom is to be understood in these terms – a retreat from the real, a space to enthuse and "to squeal" (Luetkenhaus and Weinstein 10) – then in Murakami's case, it represents a semi-tangible version of Murakami-land. This choice of language ('squeal') is interesting; it implies an excitement and an uncontrollability. Fandom is both of these things, it is unpredictable and mercurial. Weinstein and Luetkenhaus note how fan perceptions of characters and events can be irrevocably changed in an instant, citing Mr Darcy's wet shirt scene in the 1995 BBC version of *Pride and Prejudice* as a key example. The scene, newly invented for the TV production, has since become an iconic image of Janeism. Luetkenhaus and Weinstein note that "moments such as [this] … have entered the fan community as facts of the text (also known as "fan canon," or "fanon"), even though that moment never appears in the original *Pride and Prejudice*" (44). The scene started as a fan idea inserted into an adaptation, subsequently warmly received by fans. The transformational nature of this reaction has shaped current ideas surrounding Austen adaptations (and arguably paving the way for the success of fan works such as Seth Grahame Smith's *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*, 2009, and its subsequent film adaptation). Fandom is an intellectual exercise and a collaborative project that works not only forward (creating new content in-universe etc) but also backwards (dictating and determining how the original work is viewed by future readers). This

collaboration can be hosted and exercised through in-person events (such as those outlined above) alongside online communities. The in-person events carry an auratic quality; they are defined by their immediacy and by their singular natures. For example, Pierre Földes would only come to Dublin to discuss *Blind Willow, Sleeping Woman* once. A midnight book launch is, by its nature, temporally specific and non-repeated. However, online discourses and the endless proliferation of fan-content are just that – endless and temporally unmoored. They are continuous and continuing.

Murakami fandom is housed across multiple sites on the internet, which Wakatsuki refers to as the "Haruki world" (93). Wakatsuki only makes off-hand reference to Murakami's online fandom, however. By studying Murakami in English alone, this thesis is able to closely examine a few specific online Murakami fan spaces. Wakatsuki looks at Murakami both in Japanese and English, while also referencing Murakami's Asian fanbase at large. This means that the scope of Wakatsuki's research is broader. Particular attention is paid in this chapter to spaces in which 'the Haruki world' is easily traceable or identifiable, with a focus on Reddit, Discord, and TikTok. Reddit and Discord host dedicated forums (dubbed 'subreddits' and 'servers' respectively) for fans of the writer. These are bordered spaces, they have homepages, discussion threads; they are not randomly encountered scrolling through one's newsfeed. They must be subscribed to. The spaces are collaborative and specifically tailored to engage conversation, serve as an archive for fan content, and report on happenings in Murakami-land. The (primary) Murakami subreddit (r/Murakami) is a particularly interesting example of this. Reddit functions as a series of forums. Users can post discussion threads, embed images, and share content via links. Each of these posts are voted upon by users: in a binary system, users can 'upvote' or 'downvote' posts. Posts can be organised and viewed in three main ways: 'Hot', 'New', and 'Top'. Hot refers to the most active and engaged-with of recent posts in the subreddit. New allows users to view posts as they are uploaded, newest first. Under the Top banner, users can view the most upvoted posts on the subreddit in descending order. They may be viewed as top posts of all time, the current year, current week, current day, and current hour. Under each post, users can discuss, analyse, and (frequently) argue. With over 82 million daily active users according to *Forbes* (Saul), Reddit is among the most popular sites for discussion on the internet. In bold lettering on the site's homepage, Reddit describes itself as "the front page of the internet". r/Murakami is currently ranked in the top 5% of subreddit communities

on Reddit, with a total number of 29,770 users[73]. Reviewing the all-time top posts of this community helps to illuminate how fans engage (and value engagement) with Murakami's texts. The graph below (Fig. 5) displays a typology of the top 40 posts (as of 23rd June 2023) on r/Murakami.

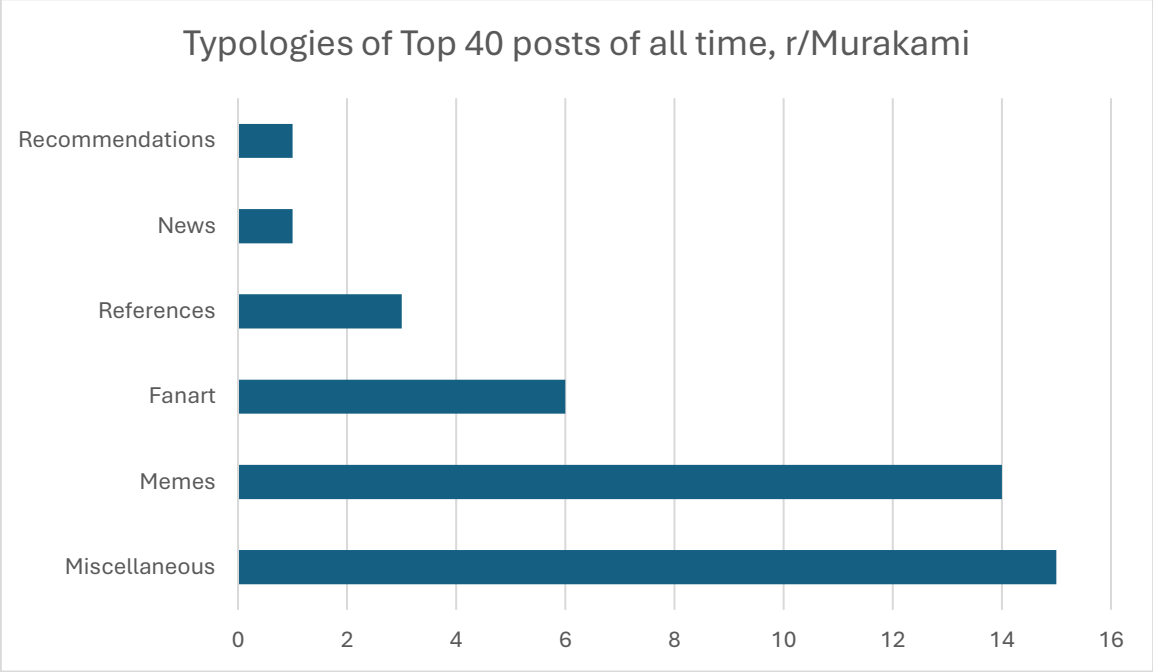

Fig. 5: Sorted most popular post types. Miscellaneous includes generic photos of cats and users' Murakami collections (books, T-shirts, DVDs). Memes include generically humorous posts and jokes. If a borderline meme-post contains original artwork (as the bingos do), it is classified as fanart.

It is unsurprising that miscellaneous is the top-ranked type of post here. Fandom, after all, carries with it a sort of competition. While this is a relatively small sample size, it illustrates a tendency inherent to fandom. Fans compete to be considered the 'biggest' fan of their selected property ("I've read all his books – and you haven't!"), and physical ownership (as an extant of consumer capitalism) is an easy way to win this war ("I have the limited-edition Chip Kidd illustrated *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki* – and you don't!"). Also included in the miscellaneous tab are generic photos of cats and images of Murakami's UNIQLO T-shirt collaboration. It is somewhat unfair to reduce this topic to simply fan competition however: it remains a way to trace, inform, and sustain conversations regarding Murakami 'in the real'. A fan wearing a

[73] In relation to the active userbase, this seems like a low number. However, there are two factors to consider here: (i) Reddit users do not need to subscribe to a forum to contribute to it, they may visit as they please, and (ii) there are over 2.8 million subreddits on the website. Not all of these communities are still active, so consistent activity on r/Murakami propels his community up the internal rankings of the website.

Murakami UNIQLO shirt is an example of Murakami-land's entry into the 'real' world (further developed in Chapter V). The miscellaneous section is in fact mostly preoccupied with Murakami-land's breach into our dimension; there is an obsessively haptic quality to the posts here. The near runner-up category, memes, is more self-explanatory but displays some of the same characteristics and tendencies. Low-effort, (debatably) humorous posts are among the highest ranked posts on most media-based subreddits and they reflect the fandom's in-group status on a dual level; they require the user to be familiar with a given meme format and the Murakami text to which they refer. For example, username mastmalang1110 uploaded a meme entitled "Laughs in Aomame". The meme depicts a hand moving at speed toward a blue button. The hand is labelled "Haruki Murakami", while the button is labelled "A woman who isn't exactly beautiful, not the type who would turn heads, but who has pleasant, regular features and smallish breasts". This post is typical of this community; it assumes familiarity with Murakami's tropes (insecure female protagonist), alongside knowledge of the meme format (the button press implies a strong desire for what is labelled: either the Reddit user is drawing attention to Murakami's repeated invocation of the character as a trope or they are expressing their personal preferences, using Murakami as a vessel. If there is any humour to be found here, it is expelled by explanation). This is a defining hallmark of online fandoms, which are often as much fans of internet culture in general, as they are fans of their selected interest. This is why there is such a homogeneity to media-based subreddits: they are similar users recycling the same meme formats with different actors in an endless theatre of the terminally online. It must also be noted that anyone can view the posts collated here; users need not be subscribed to r/Murakami, nor must they be logged in at all. However, users must log in to actively add to this discourse. One must be logged in to leave comments and upload posts, but they do not need to subscribe to the subreddit. This means that (particularly in the event of a Murakami news story, such as a new release or adaptation) there can be a discrepancy between the number of subscribers and the level of conversation on the platform.

Perhaps the most interesting of the topics listed is fanart. The top-rated piece of Murakami fanart on r/Murakami is a fan-made mock-up of cover art for *1Q84* posted by user geoffbingo27. It accrued 583 upvotes and is currently the fifth-highest rated post of all time in the r/Murakami community. The comments unanimously praise the piece, with one user (WallyTusket) writing "This is really incredible. One of my favorite things to do after finishing a Murakami is looking up art for it that fans have done. There's a lot of good stuff out there." There is a sort of produsage imperative at play here. This concept (a portmanteau of production

and usage) was coined by Axel Bruns and seeks to explain and address new media production in online spaces. He defines produsage as the "collaborative and continuous building and extending of existing content in pursuit of further improvement" (101). The traditional gap between the creator and the consumer is somewhat broken by the internet. Produsage is a key element of fandom; if it does not occur, there is no fandom. It is part of how the internet operates. An example: when Chicago rock band The Smashing Pumpkins released the album *Zeitgeist* in 2007, fan opinions were split. Although the album represented a return to the quiet-loud rock dynamics that originally made the band popular, the production was divisive. The album, produced by Roy Thomas Baker (best known for producing Queen), had an expansive arena rock sound. The more polished production and cleaner sonic palette is particularly felt on the vocals, which now sat atop the mix, replacing the shoegaze textures of the band's earlier music. Produsage occurred in response to the release: a fan (or produser), YouTube used Zero remixed the album[74] to sound more like old records by The Smashing Pumpkins. When Murakami releases a new novel, produsers design alternate cover art or illustrate key scenes. The collaborative continuation of produsage is important to consider when looking at how produsage informs a Murakami-land[75] outside of Murakami's texts.

A different mode of online fandom is found in the Murakami Discord channel. Links between r/Murakami and the Discord channel have been shared repeatedly by both communities. Discord is structured differently to Reddit; each server hosts live discussions on their given subject. The Murakami server is then broken into several 'channels' of individual topics. There is a channel for each book published by Murakami in English, alongside dedicated channels for book suggestions, other authors, a semi-functional virtual book club, film adaptation discussion spaces, and other smaller chatrooms. Discord is different to Reddit insofar as it functions as a large-scale group chat. There is no option to sort by popular posts, nor is there the ability to vote on the quality of new submissions. Instead, discussions are ongoing and preserved (as of writing) indefinitely. Users must be invited to join the server. The invitation process consists of pressing a unique URL provided by a user from the server. Multiple users can join using the same URL, which is how users are recruited via Reddit.

[74] Several re-edits of the album have been uploaded and subsequently removed from YouTube. In the video description for their 2024 re-edit of opening track "Doomsday Clock", username Zero notes that remixing the album has "been done a million times, so I'm taking my own spin on things".

[75] Murakami's fictions invite and encourages produsage: his fiction is littered with fictional pieces of art and music (such as the 'Killing Commendatore' painting, the pop song 'Kafka on the Shore', or the writings of Derek Hartfield.)

The Discord channel is different to r/Murakami structurally. It has a much lower userbase (366 users as of 24th June 2023), but interactions are typically more intense and sustained here. Owing to its informal and conversational structure, Discord encourages less formal and less concentrated fan discussions. This means that instead of each meme being posted individually á la r/Murakami, memes are used as reaction images or conversation instigators. They do not constitute content on their own here, but rather serve to prompt new conversations or respond to preexisting ones.

Like r/Murakami, the Discord channel hosts fanart. There is a dedicated subchannel for this purpose on the server. However, Discord does not effectively function as an archive for a number of reasons. It has no search function for images, nor a gallery setting. That photos are posted without a necessary attached comment means that they are ephemeral and fleeting – should too much new content be uploaded, older pieces of fanart may be lost or made difficult to retrieve. This encourages cultivation on the part of the userbase; if an image is striking or evocative, they must download the image to find it again. Sometimes, users may download an image from the Discord and subsequently share it on r/Murakami, and vice versa. This crosspollination gives the impression of a sort of closed feedback loop, where both social media have the same discussions about the same art inspired by the same books. At least the conversations are conducted in the differing manners of forum and group chat. Both of these online spaces serve as pocket-sized representations of Murakami-land. They serve as mediated, controlled spaces in which fans may theorise, discuss, and argue amongst one another. Although these spaces are not closed or private (anyone can view r/Murakami or join the Discord with public links posted to r/Murakami), they are semi-sealed discursive chambers. Non-fans are unlikely to stumble upon these groups[76]; Discord operates on an invitation basis, while the front page of Reddit is composed of 'default' subreddits. These usually encompass discussions on a theme or a form. As such, r/Books is default for example, while r/Murakami is not.

(ii) Soft-Boiled Fanfiction

A significant element of produsage is fanfiction (or fanfic), as Luetkenhaus and Weinstein illustrate. Fanfic is popular within fandoms for obvious reasons; the practice allows fans to

[76] Although this does occasionally happen; fans of Japanese pop-artist Takashi 'Pom' Murakami occasionally stray into Haruki Murakami fandom spaces.

imagine seemingly endless 'what if' situations. What if Satan was actually a complex character instead of merely a cipher for evil? *Paradise Lost*, which may be considered the greatest piece of fanfic ever written. Writing about the phenomenon of Jane Austen fanfic, Luetkenhaus and Weinstein note that fanfic "is often viewed as a deviant practice, and fan spaces are often female-centric" (40). Readers and writers may "use fanfiction as a way of exploring their own identities and developing their own writing style, in a place free from pressure and constraints of the 'real world' outside of fan communities" (41). The fandom becomes a theoretical gated community wherein its inhabitants make their own rules and value judgments. While Luetkenhaus and Weinstein exclusively apply this to fanfic, it may also be observed in fanart. Is Stutpak's bingo artistically beautiful? It is subjective certainly, but its quasi-commercial-announcement-by-way-of-Facebook's in-house art style is unappealing to these eyes. Nonetheless, in r/Murakami, the piece is lauded and celebrated. Being 'in on the joke' shields the fan-artist/fanfic writer from criticism. The subject and the sense of being 'in on the joke' mediate the reception of this fanart. The networked Murakami-land celebrates its artists.

Returning to fanfic, Murakami finds himself at an interesting juncture. Murakami fanfic is structured differently to Jane Austen fanfic as outlined by Luetkenhaus and Weinstein. They categorise Jane Austen fanfic as falling into two main categories; affirmational and transformational (43). Affirmational fanfic operates within Austen's canon; few rules are broken, characters stay close to their in-text personas, and empty spaces in the source texts are filled with fanfic fluff (such as Mr Darcy getting his shirt wet or additional scenes of smouldering yearning). Transformational fanfics often warp the action into alternate universes (AUs), insert new characters, kill or save characters, and insert marginalised people otherwise unserved or underrepresented in the original text. This theory of underrepresentation is important and ties to Chin and Morimoto's "Towards a Theory of Transcultural Fandom" (91-108), which outlines a theory of transcultural homology. They augment Hebdige, Hill, and Willis' previous work in the area to articulate a theory of fandom that supersedes and overwrites geographical and cultural divides. Chin and Morimoto draw on fanart and fanfic within the *yaoi*[77] genre. The concept of transcultural homology is important in analysing anglophonic fanfic, which often relates to and borrows from these preexisting generic conventions. As such,

[77] Refers to the Japanese 'Boy Love' genre. A Japanese fan-driven genre popular synonymous with *doujinshi* (unlicensed fan spinoffs (manga or light novels) derived from existing media). The genre focusses on sexual relations between male characters (often androgynous characters). The lesbian equivalent, *yuri*, is still popular but less ubiquitous.

much of the fanfic that is discussed herein deals with slash-pairings and non-canonical romantic plots.

Luetkenhaus cite Reddit, Fanfiction.net, and Archive of Our Own (AO3) as examples of popular host sites[78] for Janeite fanfics. Fanfiction.net and AO3 are the largest semi-centralised repositories of media-fanfic on the anglophone internet. In Fig. 5 however, fanfic does not appear among r/Murakami's most popular posts. In fact, neither this community nor the Discord channel seem to host any fanfic whatsoever. Fanfiction seems to reside in other places, distinct and separate from the main sites of fandom. A survey of the other sites mentioned (AO3 and Fanfiction.net) does yield some results, however. Fanfiction.net is home to 16 stories tagged Haruki Murakami, while AO3 has 299 (as of 26th June 2023). For comparison, AO3 (the larger of the two) is home to 428,919 stories tagged 'Harry Potter'. Nonetheless, in terms of literary fiction at least, Murakami greatly outperforms AO3 fanfic for Kazuo Ishiguro (137 fanfics), David Foster Wallace (60), and Paul Auster (12).

But what of the content? Murakami fanfic seems almost entirely transformational in nature, unlike Austen fanfic. While there are example of affirmational fanfic (notably, user cmaggin's "Sirius", which imagines the protagonist's angst at the end of Murakami's *Sputnik Sweetheart*), they are few in number. Instead, the majority of stories are either transformational or fall into a new category, which I term dedicational. Dedicational fanfiction borrows quotations to foreshadow, give shape, or borrow canonical authority from a text. Dedicational fanfics include username FitzGAYrald's "The Walk to Remember", a fanfic for the popular CW teen drama *The Vampire Diaries*. This story begins with the Murakami quote "Death is not the opposite of life but a part of it"; the quote informs and reinforces the story's themes of mortality and the complications that accompany vampirism. The choice of quotation seems apt, but betrays an unfamiliarity with Murakami. This quote shows up in a number of dedicational fanfics. However, it is not a Murakami quote. FitzGAYrald does not credit the quote to a specific novel or character, but it most closely resembles a line from Jay Rubin's translation of *Norwegian Wood*. Toru, in light of Naoko and Kizuki's suicide, muses that "death exists, not as the opposite but as a part of life" (360). Even in Birnbaum's earlier (and much more difficult to track down) translation of the novel, the line is different; "Death is not the opposite of life, but something underlying this life we live" (222). In a way, the line itself does not matter. The

[78] They also mention Tumblr. I omit Tumblr from this discussion owing to its ban on (and subsequent purge of) adult content. This ban was introduced in early 2019, while *Austentatious* released in June 2019 and likely could not account for the effect that this ban had on fanfic, which is often sexual in nature.

specificity of the wording is a wet, white shirt; just as the shirt is an image of Janeism, the sentiment expressed here is rendered a brand of Murakami fandom. Neither the content, the speaker, nor the novel matter: what matters is that Murakami is implicated in the fanfic to lend an air of melancholy and credence to the story's content. This is a technique and feature of dedicational fanfic, which sometimes use a smokescreen of 'meaningful quotes' to lend their own narratives emotional value and impact that they may not conjure singlehandedly. The existence of dedicational fanfic also means that the numbers cited above must not be taken at face value: although this is technically a fanfic for both Murakami and *The Vampire Diaries*, it only truly engages meaningfully with the latter. Characters from the show are featured, Murakami characters are not. Dedicational fanfic can operate at a severe remove from its quotational source.

Transformational Murakami fanfics are more interesting in a number of ways. Where Luetkenhaus and Weinstein observe Janeite fanfic as a space wherein disenfranchised voices may be inserted to plots that otherwise exclude them, transformational Murakami fanfics more often integrate other fandoms. This is a common feature of fanfic, and is in itself, nothing new. There are countless fanfics that follow the basic pattern thus: Interest A wakes up in the world of Interest B. So, One Direction might find themselves attending Hogwarts in a classic transformational fanfic narrative. Borrowing from *Austentatious*' term, this not only allows a writer/reader to 'squeal' their excitement, they may do so doubly, at the same time, thanks to the crossover appeal of twinned interests. The Korean boy band BTS are often the subject of such transformational fanfics. In lilacflowers' "Can't Help Myself", several members of the group awaken in the Elder Scrolls fantasy videogame universe and embark on various, increasingly homoerotic adventures. Such is typical, conforming to the model above. In "Little Lost Sputnik" by user bluecircus, the group members experience some of the events of Murakami's *Sputnik Sweetheart*. More than simply retelling the plot of the novel (with a famous cast) however, bluecircus weaves in references to and elements from other Murakami works; a character craves to meditate underground, mysterious unidentified skeletons and aural fixations are mentioned, and there is a characteristically postmodern twist wherein the protagonist reads a Murakami novel. This conforms again to the model above: BTS are enveloped into another world. Only this time, it is not a world of dragons and demonic entities – it is Murakami-land. Its tropic elements are visible in the fanfic. Even the Korean idol who leads the story is morphed into a classic Murakami-an protagonist; his partner has disappeared, he has taken to drinking, and has become an avid reader. *Little Lost Sputnik* is not unique in

this, although it does perhaps represent the most successful convocation of fan properties encountered in this research. The very existence of transformational Murakami fanfic (and its intersection with larger, more obvious fan groupings) points to the existence of an observable Murakami-land as a tangible setting. Furthermore, this Murakami-land is collaborative and evolving; in both BTS fanfic examples, the transcultural homology of *yaoi* is observed: Murakami-land is augmented by the queer fantasies[79] that underpin these fanfics.

(iii) Literary Tourism and Murakami-land

Though it is tempting to think about Murakami-land's construction as an entirely intellectual pursuit, fandom craves tactility. Janeites flock to Bath, Potterheads descend on Universal Studios' uncanny Hogwarts replicas, and Tolkien fans are regular pilgrims to New Zealand's Hobbiton (thanks to Peter Jackson's adaptations). Luetkenhaus and Weinstein conceive of this tourism as an assertion of fandom; "fans can prove their level of fannishness by lording it over other fans that only they have been to the true location, or touched the true material, or been in contact with the real creator" (10). Murakami fandom is slightly different. Harukists often travel to Japan, certainly, but where specifically? Tolkien fans can specifically visit filming locations such as the Shire, Janeites can visit the Jane Austen Centre in Bath or the Jane Austen House Museum in Hampshire. Theoretically, Murakami fans can also visit the physical locations where short stories and novels occur. However, these locations are often fictitious, no longer accessible, or private areas (such as the Shinjuku Security Trust Bank featured in 'Super-Frog Saves Tokyo'). Even areas such as universities or parks (such as Inokashira Park, which features prominently in *Norwegian Wood*) seem nearly pointless to visit. There are no commemorative statues or shrines to Murakami in these places.

In 2016, Ken Lawrence published *The Murakami Pilgrimage: A Guide to the Real-Life Places of Haruki Murakami's Fiction*, a guide to Murakami locations in Japan. Lawrence's work – a relatively minor and difficult to source book – exposes this pointlessness. The book was published by Sailingstone Press, a subsidiary of Sailingstone Travel, a travel guide website. The book is difficult to track down in hard copy; on Amazon, it currently retails for over £40 (https://amzn.eu/d/3RXU4fb). Meanwhile the e-book is not, in fact, an e-book at all. The

[79] The most referenced Murakami novel among these fanfictions is *Sputnik Sweetheart*, which significantly features a lesbian couple.

website for *The Murakami Pilgrimage* is comprised of a series of hidden, paywalled articles that are all unlocked by purchasing the e-book option and logging in. These articles cover most of Murakami's fiction up to 2016, while the website was updated in 2019 to account for locations such as Odawara from *Killing Commendatore*. This has the effect of making the e-book feel like an ephemeral purchase: the link may one day simply cease to work. The existence of the book at all seems strange in light of Murakami's interview with John Wesley Harding, in which Murakami dismissed any particular reality to his Tokyo ("it is not the real Tokyo"). The book's apparent lack of commercial success (there is no sign of a reprint or updated version) suggests that the placelessness of Murakami-land is in fact part of its appeal. For example, *Norwegian Wood*'s Inokashira Park may as well be New York's Central Park, Dublin's Stephen's Green, or Drogheda's St Dominic's Park. If Toru and Midori had visited Nara and interacted with the (famously very polite) deer that inhabit that area, things would be different. Nara deer are unique and geographically specific. The park bench that the pair sit and talk on is not unique nor is it geographically specific. Since 2004, the benches in the park have become 'memory benches'; small messages are engraved on a plaque on each bench. None bear mention of Toru, Naoko, or Midori. The frequent lack of spatial specificity in Murakami is part of what makes Murakami-land such an observable, translatable, and transcultural concept.

However, this seems to be changing somewhat. In October 2021, Waseda University – Haruki Murakami's alma mater – opened the Waseda International House of Literature, more commonly known as the Haruki Murakami Library, on the university's main campus, Nishi-Waseda. Lawrence's book has not been updated to include this location. The library hosts Murakami's personal record collection (over 10,000 vinyl records, including jazz, pop, and rock), personal library, and assorted valuable Murakami ephemera. These include personal notebooks, novel manuscripts, and scrapbooks containing reviews and other content. There is also a novelty Murakami café that serves themed food and drink (the café is named The Orange Cat in reference to Murakami's old jazz café, Peter Cat). The library also serves as a performance space, where literary and musical events are held. Occasionally Murakami himself will conduct onstage interviews or readings here. The Murakami Library serves as nexus for fan activity on two levels. On the first, it reflects Murakami's own identity as a fan. His library obsessively chronicles his favourite writers' works (Chandler, Carver, Hemingway), while his record collection is completionist. The library is an interesting sort of fan space. Curiosities hosted here include international editions of Murakami's works, alongside stage props from

the theatrical adaptation of *Kafka on the Shore* directed by Yukio Ninagawa. The walls are decorated with enlarged versions of Murakami's original illustrations for *Dance, Dance, Dance* and *A Wild Sheep Chase*, and readers are invited to drink their coffee sitting beside depictions of the Sheep Man.

The library's exterior is visually striking. Designed by famous Japanese architect Kengo Kuma, it resembles a small office building when viewed from the back or sides. The façade is plain, lacking windows, but embossed in a grid-like pattern that simulates windows at a glance. It is non-descript and even plain, somewhat at odds with the ornate mock Elizabethan theatre, the Tsubouchi Memorial Museum, that stands just opposite. The library building is adorned with a strange metal netting that cascades like waves, entwining the otherwise ordinary structure, and forming an arc above the front door. This strange touch is complemented by dense shrubbery either side of the main door. The unique style of these two buildings contrast with the surrounding campus, which is somewhat mundane and style-less. The library aspect of the space is perhaps the most immediately interesting. The books hosted here are not available for withdrawal but are instead designed to be read and examined in-house, over a cup of coffee from The Orange Cat. These books are stored primarily on the ground floor, along the staircase, and in the basement. The ground floor consists mainly of Murakami's own novels in various forms of publication. Some editions are housed in glass, and full collections of Murakami sets are stored together. For example, Chip Kidd's distinctive collage-inspired Harvill-Secker editions are stored together. A select number of books are left out for perusal. These editions are often rare or possess some sort of haptic, interactive quality that makes them attractive to a passing visitor. Chip Kidd's edition of *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and his Years of Pilgrimage* is among these, as is an illustrated Hindi translation of *after the quake*, and a Chinese translation of *Killing Commendatore*. These works are particularly striking and meaningful to fans, laden with easter eggs in the form of referential art. The Chip Kidd edition of Murakami's 2014 novel is particularly intriguing. This cover is discussed in the introduction to this thesis and its haptic gimmickry lends itself well to passing perusal in a library setting (especially one where visitors are likely to have already read the novel itself). The illustrated edition of *after the quake* is similarly fascinating. These little-seen drawings depict a messier and less clinical side to the mainstream image of Murakami perpetuated by his anglophone publishers (particularly through the smartly homogenous Vintage Books cover art). The images of Super-Frog and Worm are striking in their transgression from this assumed visual aesthetic (one that otherwise seems to underpin the design of the Murakami Library as a whole. The

illustrations are inky and blotchy, and the rendition of Worm is coloured in a deliberately messy and violent manner. Each story in the collection is illustrated and all of these works are similarly messy and visually 'outside' of anglophone Murakami-land. The Chinese edition of *Killing Commendatore* is significant insofar as sales of the novel were heavily restricted in Hong Kong, where the novel was considered indecent and potentially dangerous (Flood, 2015). This fact is not advertised in the library. It instead becomes an Easter Egg or piece of trivia to exchange among fans; a permissible vessel for fans to prove their devotion.

The basement of the space houses The Orange Cat, where students serve coffee, snacks, and meals to literary tourists. The meals here are particularly themed; Harukists can order themed sandwiches, such as the 'Wind-Up'(tomato, mozzarella, and basil) or 'Wonderland' (cucumber, pork, quattro formaggi, lettuce, and honey mustard). Hard-boiled eggs are in ample supply, as are Italian and French inspired coffees and pasta dishes. The visitor is submerged in the semi-European culinary traditions of Murakami-land; these dishes can be accompanied by matcha or sometimes possess a uniquely Japanese twist (the cod roe spaghetti dish for example). The café also sells Radio Murakami themed goods, including t-shirts, mugs, and teacloths. The T-shirts are a mixture of unique, seemingly bespoke designs and mass-produced UNIQLO collaborations. This particular space is immediately welcoming and accommodating to fans.

Between the collection of Murakami books and the café/eating area, there is a staircase flanked by long bookshelves. These shelves run the length of the staircase and open toward the left and right, leading the visitor to the café. The books in these shelves appear like a random assortment of interesting, but apparently disconnected international literature (Natsume Soseki's *I am a Cat* is placed by Denis Johnson's *Jesus' Son* which sits near Mishima's *Temple of the Golden Pavilion*, which is near Dinah Fried's *Fictitious Dishes*). As disparate and unsorted as this section seems, the library helpfully provides a mission statement. A sign above this section of the library declares that these books use "stories written by Haruki Murakami as a starting point … [and allow the visitor] to enjoy expansive connections to a variety of texts that transcend nation and epoch". The texts seem to form a sort of complementary canon to Murakami-land, coinciding with style of philosophical outlook.

To return to Luetkenhaus and Weinstein's original definition of literary fan-spaces/tourist destinations as places of bragging rights ("true location, … true material, … contact with the author"), the Haruki Murakami Library partially fulfils these particular aims.

It is a space explicitly constructed for literary fandom tourism. The library is curated by the author and devised to cater to the fans. This renders it a somewhat artificial, theme park-lite space: on my visit, the staff encouraged me to pose beside the Sheep Man's picture and took countless photos. It is not a site encountered by the characters of Murakami-land, nor does it possess an innate meaning of its own. It is assembled to serve the role of tourism and does so aptly, successfully existing in a way out-of-Japan while serving as a portal to Murakami-land.

Earlier in this thesis, the idea of the Omphalos was invoked, if only to illustrate its negation in Murakami-land. There are few spaces that can serve as incidental tourist spots like the Martello tower at Sandymount does for Joyceans visiting Dublin. This makes the few exceptions to this significant. I have previously noted that many locations mentioned by Murakami are fictional, private, or nonspecific. In English language translation anyways, this is maintained. In *Norwegian Wood*, a bored Toru goes to Shinjuku, buys a Faulkner novel in Kinokuniya, and heads to "the noisiest jazz café [he] could think of" (238). The jazz café (in the English translation at least) is unnamed. Nonetheless, the small jazz café Dug, located on the busy Yasukuni Street, is identified apocryphally as the location mentioned. It fulfils the conditions: a five-minute walk from Kinokuniya, jazzy, and noisy (but a quiet, cosy sort of day-drinking, jazz-loving noisy). In a 2018 interview with now-defunct anglophone tourist website Shinjuku Guide, Louis Nakadaira, the son of the café's founder Hozumi Nakadaira[80], explains that "the reason many visitors from overseas come to our bar is because it appeared in Haruki Murakami's novel *Norwegian Wood*". Despite (or because of) this, Dug betrays no visible link to Murakami or Murakami-land. In nearby Harajuku, there is a *gyūdon* ('beef rice bowl') restaurant called Red Rock Harajuku. Red Rock was visited in 2017 by members of the prior mentioned K-pop act BTS. Seven years after their visit, I ate at the restaurant. The table and chairs that the pop idols once sat at are now adorned with stickers, figurines, and fan paraphernalia. In Dug, there are no comparable signifiers to denote where Toru sat. This paradoxically makes Dug a lesser and a greater tourist spot. It is at once less obviously 'Murakami' than the library at Waseda, while being more true to the spirit of Murakami-land. It is immersive: visitors can sit and imagine Toru's visit. There are no commemorative plaques to highlight the artifice of this activity, there is no shrine of Murakami to which patrons pray. Instead, the barrier between worlds is dissolved and the visitor is immersed in Murakami-land. The drinks menu – with its Irish Coffees, Miles Davis-themed highballs, and Italian cocktails

[80] A famous jazz photographer, alongside café owner. Known for his intimate and expressive photographs of Miles Davis.

– reflects the culinary appetites and impulses familiar to Murakami-land. The vinyl records and jazz postcards that decorate the walls are familiar figures from the pages of Murakami: Miles Davis, Charlie Parker, and John Coltrane. Descending the steps into Dug also resembles Aomame's service staircase trip: beginning in one world (the bustle of Shibuya) and exiting in another (mellow jazz café). In spite of Dug's lack of apparent physical tribute or acknowledgement of Murakami, the jazz café is the "true location" (to borrow from Luetkenhaus and Weinstein) closest to Murakami-land.

(iv) Conclusion: Murakami and Anti-Fandom

The contemporary Japanese novelist Mieko Kawakami is an avowed fan of Haruki Murakami. Kawakami has recently found anglophone success with best-selling translations of her novels *Breasts and Eggs* in 2020 and *Heaven* in 2021. *Breasts and Eggs*, published by Picador in the UK, was printed with a one-word quote on its jacket ("Breathtaking") credited to Haruki Murakami. The mutual literary admiration between Murakami and Kawakami inspired the two to meet in 2017. The pair became friends after this meeting and stay in contact. Their 2017 interview was wide-ranging, evolving into four separate interviews, spanning sixteen hours combined. These conversations were compiled in the collection *Mimizuku wa Tasogare ni Tobitatsu: Kawakami Mieko kiku Murakami Haruki Kataru* (translating roughly to 'The Owl Spreads Its Wings with the Falling of the Dusk; Murakami Haruki, a Long, Long Interview by Kawakami Mieko'), published by Shinchosha in 2017.

Notably, this collection has not been translated into English, except for one particular section of Kawakami and Murakami's conversation. The excerpt, published in translation by Sam Bett and David Boyd on the website Lithub (2020), tellingly features a discussion of the misogyny commonly identified in Murakami's fictions. Kawakami puts the following question to Murakami, noting "it's common for my female friends to say to me, 'If you love Haruki Murakami's work so much, how do you justify his portrayal of women?' The notion being that there's something disconcerting about the depiction of women in your stories. It irks some people, men and women alike". In the interview there is a telltale element of fannish defensiveness and a refusal to label Murakami's fictions as outright misogynistic (Kawakami after all stops short of this, instead asking why he writes women in such a way that he is open to the accusation). Fans are protective of their subject, but Murakami fandom can still present as a critical space where these matters are queried. The subreddit is a good example of this,

hosting frequent discussions on the subject of Murakami's sexism (or lack of)[81]. Murakami himself is, as ever, elusive[82] on the topic. In response to Kawakami, he remarks that "any pattern is purely coincidental … women aren't just novelistic instruments for me. Each individual work calls for its own circumstances". Murakami's remark here seems a rebuke to the Murakami Bingo fandom approach; each of these women ought to be approached individually, they are individual rhizomatic expressions and not constituent branches of a single arboreal entity. Of course, this is according to Murakami speaking in Japanese, in an as yet untranslated book.

As a fan, Kawakami is sensitive to Murakami's style, writing in a separate essay, also hosted by Lithub; "I felt like I could have read any given page forever—the writing was overwhelmingly fantastic. What made it fantastic had nothing to do with gender, the author's or my own … From then on, Murakami was a very special writer to me" (Kawakami). This essay, entitled 'Acts of Recognition: On the Women Characters of Haruki Murakami', is particularly concerned with the reception that Murakami's female characters have faced in recent years. Kawakami mentions that she is a long-term Murakami reader, writing that she has spoken about Murakami with academics, translators, and fans throughout the years. However, she notes that "about ten years ago, men and women alike started asking one question with particular urgency: "How do you feel about Murakami's representation of women?"". Kawakami writes incisively, specifically, and critically. The essay (written after her interviews with Murakami) arrives at a decisive sort of non-conclusion; she declares that "the narrator in [Murakami's short story] "Sleep" was the first woman in fiction I could truly recognise as a person", while entertaining the possibility that Murakami's fictions may remain problematic when read through a feminist lens.

While Kawakami points to the emergence of a discussion among fans regarding Murakami's sexism (or not), this discussion has since left fan circles. On the platforms discussed prior, frequent arguments arise concerning Murakami's misogyny. These occur within the groups mentioned above (the Reddit community is particularly easy to search), but also in broader contexts. For example, the Reddit community examined is r/Murakami; a space dedicated to fandom. However, the much larger default Reddit community r/Books (a

[81] User Remarkable-Student-1's post "Is there really a problem with Murakami's portrayal of women?" provides an example of one such conversation.
[82] The word 'evasive' could be used here instead. However, the fan is always tempted to give Murakami the benefit of the doubt. This is a moment where my status as a Murakami fan may be said to interfere with the scholarship I am attempting to perform here.

community with over 24 million subscribers) features circular discussion on this exact point. Within the last six months, posts such as ImaginedFlower's "My problem with Murakami: how he writes women" (uploaded in April 2024) and Clean_Elevator_2247's "Norwegion [sic] wood is the first and last murakami book I'll ever read" (uploaded in June 2024) have been submitted, generating intense online debate. In both cases, Kawakami's interview with Murakami is mentioned in comments, while her reflective essay is not. The top-voted comment on the latter post reads simply "It has been 1 0 days since someone has complained about Murakami on /r/Books" (LG03). Both r/Books posts present a series of well-argued points that compellingly argue for the presence of misogyny in Murakami's fiction (whether depicted or on the part of the author).

This may be contrasted with the manner in which Murakami is discussed on another social media platform, TikTok. Here, users often post memes and short video reactions to Murakami (and the plot twists of his respective novels). TikTok fandom (and less significantly for this project, fandoms housed on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) is more difficult to quantify than Discord or Reddit, which are both gated or centralised communities. These other social media utilise hashtags as their main fandom search element; a user must enter " #murakami " or a derivative of this (such as " #harukimurakami " or " #1Q84 ") into the search bar in order to locate fan content that pertains to their interest. Without a gated community like r/Murakami or the Discord channel, this fan material is usually unmoderated and unsortable. It is an avalanche of data that cannot feasibly be filtered or sorted as gated communities frequently allow. Misidentifications, such as fans of Takashi Murakami or Ryu Murakami co-using #murakami, means that tracking TikTok Haruki Murakami fandom is mostly quite difficult. Furthermore, on TikTok, Haruki Murakami criticism is sometimes easier to find than fandom material. Simply searching #murakami will yield posts such as user trashling's "When you're reading Murakami and the Murakami starts Murakamying" or user shyyasian's "Sexualisation of women is NOT HOT … Haruki Murakami is NOT HOT", intermingled with more traditional fan-content (memes) and some book reviews. The anti-fandom examples have 27,000 and 157,000 likes respectively. Murakami, like Wes Anderson since[83], has become a TikTok phenomenon. Just like TikTok users know that Wes Anderson's entire filmography consists of symmetrical shots of bored people (it doesn't), they also know that Murakami's

[83] In the summer of 2023, Wes Anderson's idiosyncratic filmmaking style became a meme on TikTok, where users attempt to imitate it (Marks, 2023). A similar flattening occurred: Anderson's films were suddenly considered no more than mid-distance, symmetrical close-ups, accompanied by dry wit and deadpan performances.

entire bibliography consists of weird sexual fantasies (it doesn't). While these are present in both artists' work, they have been reduced to cultural signifier here. The meat of their art has been boiled off, resulting in a bone stew that is flavoured with only one condiment – not salt, but sexism or symmetry. While TikTok hegemony is often symptomatic of an intellectual laziness, it is interesting that the website seems to foster an anti-fandom. Since at least mid-2022, this style of Murakami 'callout' TikTok has been replicated, reposted, and imitated on a rolling basis. The frame of reference is always the same: Murakami is accused of sexism with gestures to Naoko's suicide *Norwegian Wood*, *1Q84*, or the symbolic incest and rape in *Kafka on the Shore*.

Yet, a vagueness to some of these charges persists; in these channels, direct quotations are rarely provided. Furthermore, the recurrently odd approach to sexuality in Murakami has been identified by some as a trope, akin to his use of wells and cats. In a somewhat critical review of *Killing Commendatore*, Kevin Power writes that "the faults of Murakami's work are largely indissoluble from its virtues … his plots feel improvised: oh, look! The strange man who lives across the valley has a hidden story of thwarted love! Now they're digging up a well … he really, really likes describing women with small breasts … [which has] the unfortunate effect of making Murakami look like a bit of a perv". Murakami's strange depictions of sex are inseparable from his style. However, Murakami fandom often has the effect of constraining the discomfort that accompanies sexuality in these fictions. By reducing Kafka's rape of Sakura (or Noboru Wataya's abuse of Kumiko) to bingo-style "weird sex" (to borrow Snider's terms), the horror found in these events is regulated.

The formation of an anti-fandom then is an interesting phenomenon. It is purposely fleeting: the TikTok videos see more traffic than the Reddit posts, while inspiring much less debate or critical engagement. All of this serves to sand down the edges of the misogynistic in Murakami. *1Q84* (mentioned by ImaginedFlower on Reddit) is a good example of this. This novel features a rape cult who have steered the course of history throughout the millennia. The mechanics of their societal control are bizarre, involving beings called the *maza* and the *dohta*. Spoken aloud, these resemble the English words 'mother' and 'daughter'. Indeed, the *maza* (a young girl) generates the *dohta*, which is described as a "living shadow" (632) or clone in *1Q84: Books One and Two*. This 'shadow' is an emotionless replicant of the *maza*, which is then forced to "have congress" (631) with the father-figure cult leader. The act of rape summons the Little People, who manipulate human history; "in the ancient world, 'to rule' was synonymous with 'listening to the voices of the gods'" (605). This seems to diegetically excuse

or explain the paedophilic relationship between the cult and the *dohta*s, who are offered to the Leader as sexual tributes. Late in the novel, Tengo takes the Leader's place momentarily, to "have congress" with Fuka-Eri. What happens here may be read moralistically, along the lines of ImaginedFlower's Reddit post ("When Tengo is "forced" to have sex with Fukaeri [sic] I had no words. I just thought it was too easy for him to have sex with this wonderful minor while having an excuse to do it … I just find it gross.") or the TikTok posts ("the Murakami starts Murakamying"[84]). These fan interactions (particularly the Reddit examples) are valuable, they engage very directly with the text at hand. There is an affected distance in critical or academic writing that is circumvented in ImaginedFlower's Reddit post. At the same time, the TikTok examples provided are less valuable, functioning as a moralistic response to an uncited offence.

Such a clearly moralistic approach is not entirely satisfactory here. Similarly, none of the fandom material referenced in this chapter seems equipped to critically engage with the sheer brutality of the sustained cultic rape and misogyny of this cult (and its uncomfortable manifestation in an otherwise standard Murakami protagonist), suggesting a limit to the potential engagement that this style of fandom engenders. As this is an act that cannot be mapped onto a Bingo, nor readily parodied without deadening explanation and justification, it is a manifestation of the problems surrounding any identification or classification of a Murakami-land. Yet, the act is mapped onto these bingos under the headings "weird sex" (Snider) and "underage girl" (Stutpak); both of which dispel the seriousness of what has occurred narratively. There is a sinister side to Murakami's fictions that falls outside the remit of this self-consciously fun engagement. Murakami-land is both other-than-Japan (whilst retaining Japan in it) and other-than-bingo (whilst retaining its elements). The final effect of the attempted regulation of what Murakami is (and is not), is the curation of a Murakami imaginary, by the fans, for the fans. However, it is one thing for a fan to project their fantasies and fanfiction across Murakami's fiction. It is quite another for mass culture to do the same, as explored in the next chapter.

[84] This word is surprisingly telling. The unsuccessful and clumsy verbal-ising effect of Murakami's name in romanization points to a potential irreconcilability between Murakami and this form of engagement. Murakami is too slippery to be engaged with in this way.

Chapter V – Murakami-land and the Real

If Haruki Murakami is the Punchline, What's the Joke?

In March 2024, the popular American sketch show *Saturday Night Live* released a trailer[85] via YouTube for their March 2nd episode. In this trailer, an actress (Sydney Sweeney) and an actor (Michael Longfellow) cross paths. She is walking, engrossed in a book she is reading; he is likewise reading a script mid-stride. The two collide, instigating a sort of rom-com meet-cute predicated on two common factors: (i) their shared clumsiness and (ii) their shared interest in the book she is reading. They both apologise and the man picks up her dropped book, which is Murakami's *Kafka on the Shore*. The book is the key to this sequence; Longfellow's immediate recognition of the book and unsuccessful attempt to flirt with the actress (using the novel as a channel) taps into the metalanguage surrounding Murakami fandom discussed in Chapter IV. He appears as fan; his immediate recognition is Luetkenhaus and Weinstein's 'squeal' of fandom. However, the supposed punchline of the trailer occurs when Sweeney is revealed to have walked away while Longfellow was mid-pickup attempt; his performative recognition of the novel has been for naught. Upon noticing this, he remarks: "Whatever, I didn't like this book anyways" (0:28) revealing that Longfellow is in fact, not truly a Harukist at all. This was a role adopted in order to attract Sweeney. The Harukist has thus been rendered an (ineffectual here) assumed role that serves a particular function of attraction or communication of one's intellectual capacity/emotional sensitivity.

This episode points to several aspects of Murakami-land's intervention in the 'real world'. The Real here refers to the out-of-text and derives from Lacan's theories of the Real, particularly as explained by Žižek (2007). Žižek explains the Real thus: "if what we experience as 'reality' is structured by fantasy, and if fantasy acts as the screen that prevents us from being directly overwhelmed by the raw Real, then reality itself can function as an escape from encountering the Real" (57). He illustrates this with reference to Kubrick's *Eyes Wide Shut*, asserting that the film is a representation of the tension between the worlds of the fantasy and the Real. The film's natural (and seemingly inevitable) conclusion occurs at the point at which one conquers the other; Kidman's final line ("There is something very important that we need

[85] Listed on YouTube as "Sydney Sweeney and Michael Longfellow Have a SNL Meet-Cute".

to do as soon as possible … Fuck") transforms the spoken fantasies into a physical reality that the viewer is excluded from: it is made into a potentiality. Many other texts lend themselves to such Lacanian readings: Hideaki Anno's 2021 anime film *Evangelion 3.0+1.01: Thrice Upon A Time* ends with a near imperceptible dissolve from animation into live action as its characters break free of the fantasy world that imprisons them, while the final episodes of the 2017 season of *Twin Peaks* conclude with Special Agent Dale Cooper trawling through old footage of the original series (1990-1991), before being teleported into a world in which the murder of Laura Palmer has not occurred. Indeed, Murakami's own *Killing Commendatore* finishes with the protagonist escaping the fantastical curse that surrounds him, breaking the narrative framework of *The Great Gatsby*. In each case, the fantasy is sold to both character and reader/viewer: these worlds are fully created, composing of signifiers and unique symbols (sexual fantasies in Kubrick, enormous biomechanoids in *Evangelion 3.0+1.01*). With the disintegration or erasure (sex becomes an action instead of a discussion; the biomechanoid creatures are dispelled by transforming into *kaiju*-style suits, then storyboards, and finally disappearing altogether) of these, the Real begins to loom. The *Saturday Night Live* skit similarly shatters a constructed, textual imaginary: the earnestness of the Harukist is depicted as a shallow and self-serving ploy by young men to attract women. The fact that this illusion or fantasy is considered worth shattering – not to mention, supposedly humourous – speaks to the reach of Murakami-land, which is now manifest in the mundane, everyday aspects of anglophone pop culture.

In this chapter Murakami-land's cultural exports are examined as constituting a sort of imagological quilt of linguistic and cultural associations that combine to more fully appropriate the Murakami-land outlined throughout this thesis. How this space is made manifest in popular culture is explored here, with particular reference to popular film and music. Music is explored in this chapter with reference to two key mainstream pop acts, BTS and Harry Styles. Both have mentioned and used Murakami in their careers, referencing him in song lyrics and interviews. The particular effect that this has on the construction and cultivation of Murakami-land is explored here. This is followed by a discussion of Murakami-land on film. The discussion here includes the following licensed adaptations of Murakami's texts: *Burning*, *Blind Willow, Sleeping Woman*, *Drive My Car*, and *Norwegian Wood*. These texts project a Murakami-land and attempt to bring into being a more concrete version of Murakami-land as a sort of place or setting.

(i) Murakami and/in/as Popular Culture

The *Saturday Night Live* example is only one of many suggestions of the existence of a Murakami-land found in mediated popular culture. By looking at popular film and music, a vision emerges of how the illusion mentioned above is constructed through celebrities and film representations of Murakami-land. Both help to shape and direct mass understandings of Murakami-land. The *Saturday Night Live* skit filters this through to the everyday, non-celebrity world. Any humour (subjective) found here is rooted in popular anglophone understandings of Murakami, formed by both readers and non-readers of Murakami. The *Saturday Night Live* skit would affect a different response had the book in question been Masoch's 1870 novel *Venus in Furs*, Bret Easton Ellis' 1991 *American Psycho*, or even Yukio Mishima's *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion*. Each of these texts carry a different sort of social capital. Quality and humour aside, the skit functions as a parodic retelling of countless celebrity interviews with various young male popular media figures such as Harry Styles, Joe Jonas, George Ezra, and BTS. The sketch illustrates Murakami's transformation into a sort of prop or adornment: Murakami has become a fashion accessory with an in-built cultural capital. At its crudest level, the *Saturday Night Live* skit operates on an assumed internal monologue on the part of the male actor: "I like girl. Girls like Harry Styles. Harry Styles likes Murakami. I must like Murakami too. Then girls like me."

In recent years, *Saturday Night Live*-style Murakami asides have occurred in popular culture with increasing frequency. In the first episode of the second season (2023) of ongoing popular US television comic drama, *The Bear*, a character describes the plot of *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage* without mentioning the title of the novel: "In one of these books, there's this dude who's got like, no skills, no personality, nothing … And he's got this group of friends he's has since he was a little kid. And they're the shit and they're outgrowing him; like, one's like a sick athlete, one's a genius. This other one's nasty on the keys … And then, one day out of the blue, boom. They drop his ass" (7:02). In this scene, the speaking character analogises his own life to that of the speaker in Murakami's novel, utilising Murakami as a sort of therapeutic outlet. Another ongoing mainstream American comedy, the animated DC Comics show *Harley Quinn*, features Murakami's *1Q84* as a sight gag (shown in Fig. 6). The cover design featured in this show is original to the production, but its colours correspond to the Vintage editions' red, black, and white colour scheme, implying that

Murakami-land's popular understanding is enmeshed with the business model of conformist book jackets. *Kafka on the Shore* is also featured as an unremarked upon prop in an episode of season three of the Apple TV series *Ted Lasso*. In each example, including the *Saturday Night Live* skit, Murakami requires little to no explanation. The invocation of the anglophone Murakami is a message in itself: Murakami as pickup tool, Murakami as self-help, Murakami as comically unexpected reading material for a Batman villain, and Murakami as background prop. All of this points to Murakami's cultural capital. Murakami's fiction is a signifier of taste, which manifests differently across these various texts (erotic potential in *Saturday Night Live*, emotional clarity in *The Bear*, curiosity in *Harley Quinn*). The *Saturday Night Live* skit is perhaps the most effective of these, functioning as a microcosmic rebuttal of the novel's narrative. Where Kafka leans into his preassigned role (successfully attaining his goals as a result), Longfellow attempts to similarly lean into a preassigned role (the Harukist). His practiced speech and the dramatic stage lighting combine to imply that this approach has been successful in the past. However, Sweeney's rejection of the stand-up comic breaks the curse. In such a way, even parodic and off-hand references to Murakami can still engage with many of the same thematic concerns of his novels.

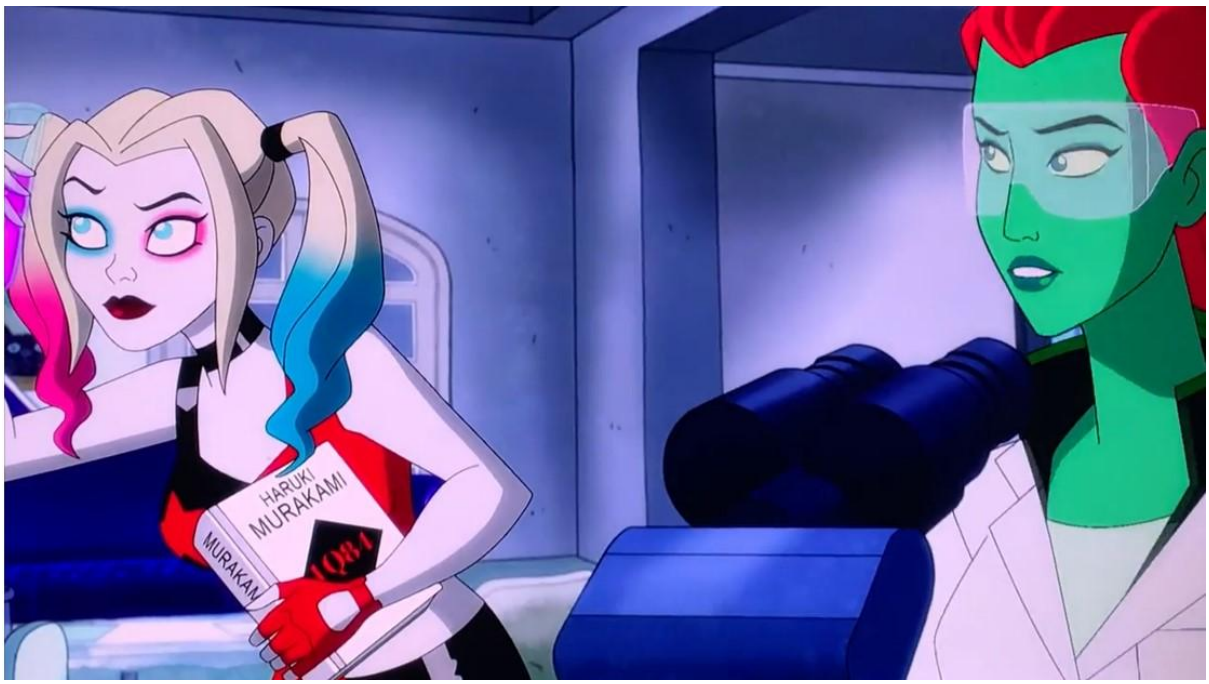

Fig. 6: Murakami's *1Q84* as featured in Season 3, Episode 4 of DC's "Harley Quinn" (2022).

Murakami-land is thus shaped partially (or primarily) by its cultural exports and the subsequent imaginated network of hegemonic assumptions that accompany said exports. The previous chapter alluded to this world-cultivation with reference to dedicational fanfiction. This sort of fanfiction superficially links a preexisting writer's literary status to a new, emergent piece of fanfiction. In doing so, this dedicational fanfiction betrays assumptions that non-stakeholders have toward the invoked writer. The discussion of adaptational theory applied in the music section carries through the chapter, underpinning the discussions that follow. Another reason for the selection of these films lies in their accessibility. After all, accessibility is key to the anglophone Murakami-land, which comprises of easily-accessed texts, references, and allusions. The specific films here are selected for their availability in anglophone nations. At the end of the chapter, I look also at unlicensed or contraband tales set in Murakami-land. The proof of the reality of the Murakami-land phenomenon is found in the existence of these knock offs.

The discussion of these cinematic and musical adaptations (or versions) of Murakami-land borrows theoretically from Linda Hutcheon. Hutcheon asserts that cinematic adaptations of prewritten narratives must be understood as "both a product and a process of creation and reception" (xvi). Hutcheon asserts that change is necessary between forms of *telling* (novels, stories) and forms of *showing* (films, television). However, Hutcheon also points toward an evolution in recent years, citing a boom in the promulgation of internet parodies and fan works, alongside viral marketing campaigns for Hollywood films (she notes big budget and micro-budget examples, ranging from *The Blair Witch Project* in 1999 to Michael Bay's 2007 *Transformers*). Presaging the current state of Hollywood superhero universes, Hutcheon notes that such transmedia effectively allows for the creation of cinematic universes or "storyworlds" (185):

> What further complicates the overlapping between adaptation and transmedia storytelling as distinct processes is that where unauthorized adaptation, recreation, and remixing were once viewed as infringements of copyright, a number of key players in the field of convergent media and transmedia production, Jeff Gomez and Tim Kring most prominently, have championed fan participation and fangenerated content as a welcome demonstration of fan loyalty to a given storyworld and brand. (185)

The adaptations discussed here act upon the stories of Murakami, discarding elements of each novel/short story and incorporating aspects of other texts occupying the same space of

Murakami-land; in effect, theses confluences conjure and create a storyworld that approximates Murakami-land. While the space is itself 'originally' intertextual (the novels and stories are built upon the insistent presence of Murakami's tropes of allusion), intertextuality is also key to adaptation as process. This is particularly obvious, if not uniquely true, of Murakami-land adaptations, both musical and cinematic. These adaptations extend beyond their chosen, supposed 'individual' subjects to tap into the mythic stuff of Murakami-land, integrating aspects of Murakami's writing outside of the single texts each film professes to 'adapt'. There is also a recency bias at play here; the texts that 'become multiple' (interweaving more than one Murakami narrative) are all recent, released within the last six years. The oldest adaptation discussed, *Tony Takitani*, adapts just one short story. The multiplicity that has come to define modern cinematic Murakami adaptations points to the writer's popularity (as well as perhaps an anxiety to tick off more fan-bingo spaces). There are certain expectations in watching a Murakami film now that Murakami has accrued such cultural capital.

(ii) Musical Manifestations of Murakami-land

Longfellow's performance in the *Saturday Night Live* piece discussed at the beginning of this chapter is based on Murakami's pop cultural capital. This is perhaps best epitomised by Murakami's repeated invocation by popstars and musicians. As evidenced by their Spotify pages, BTS and Harry Styles are two of the biggest contemporary pop acts in the world. At the time of writing (October 2024), Styles' biggest song on the platform, 2022's "As It Was", boasts nearly three and a half billion streams, while BTS' largest song, 2020's "Dynamite", has about two billion streams. Their tours sell out instantly, their new music regularly breaks streaming records (Spotify), and they both share an interest in the works of Haruki Murakami. BTS and Harry Styles mention him in interviews and cite his fiction as a chief inspiration for their music. In an interview with Rob Sheffield for *Rolling Stone* (entitled "The Eternal Sunshine of Harry Styles"), Styles remarked, "I love Murakami". Meanwhile, BTS leader Namjoon Kim has recommended several Murakami books (*1Q84*, *Kafka on the Shore*, *Norwegian Wood*, and *Killing Commendatore*) to fans of the group (Kpop Post, 2020). In Styles' case, Murakami is adopted as something of a fetish with which he may adorn his music, while BTS engage more specifically with Murakami's texts. The group even directly reference or adapt Murakami in the lyrics to their 2015 song "Butterfly", which alludes to Murakami's epochal *Kafka on the Shore*, and 2017's "Sea", which refers to *1Q84*.

The level of interaction between these musicians' music and Murakami's texts is flexible and may broadly be understood along the lines of fandom established in the previous chapter. However, the dedicational content of Styles or the affirmational songs of BTS bring a necessarily distinct quality to the creation of Murakami-land than that which accompanies 'pure' or produser-led fanfic. Murakami seems an unusual fit for pop star inspiration. His strange, complex narratives are nonetheless fuel for BTS and Styles' earworms. Styles bemoans the superficiality and loneliness that accompanies his pop star status in songs such as "From the Dining Table". Meanwhile, BTS have albums devoted to the psychoanalytic theories of Carl Jung (*Map of the Soul: 7*) and the themes of Herman Hesse's 1919 novel *Demian* (2016 album *Wings*). While their influences are displayed and referenced in supplementary album materials, such as booklets, photoshoots, or music videos; Styles' influences are mostly communicated through interview and his adoption of book as fashion accessory. However, both musical artists enter into the storyworld of Murakami-land through invoking these works. This entry occurs on two level, what I term the invocational and the inspirational. The invocational consists of Murakami-inspired interviews. Mentioning Murakami during promotional tours lends an aura to one's work. This is primarily discussed with reference to Styles, while BTS are discussed as using Murakami-land inspirationally; that is to say that Murakami's fiction plays a role in lyrics, song construction, and so forth.

The invocational use of Murakami by male pop stars is deliberate, and extends far beyond these two acts. Artists such as BTS, Harry Styles, George Ezra, and Joe Jonas invoke Murakami-land partially in order to situate their own masculinity as commodity. BTS are particularly useful in understanding this: Rebecca Chiyoko King-O'Riain attributes the international appeal of male K-pop stars to their sexual ambiguity, artistic devotions, and non-threatening stage personas ("Idols are seen to be extremely caring, kind, and polite, but these are judgments that reinforce fans' sense that they are gaining access to [their] "real" personalities"). This hyper-curated, sometimes androgynous, 'soft' aesthetic is cultivated through flamboyant dress and elaborate dance – all of which Styles especially endeavours to feature in his videos and stage persona – alongside a heightened emotional honesty and vulnerability. This is of course, all a performance – the popstar who claims to be most like their listener is furthest from them – but the use of Murakami in constructing the façade of intellectual, sensitive young male celebrity is important. Literary sensitivity is a component to the construction of this particular pop star identity, and Murakami is a permissible (and

perpetual) shorthand for establishing this front. Furthermore, Murakami is mentioned by these acts in pursuit of what King-O'Riain calls a sense of ""real" personality" or identity.

In Styles' case, the role of Murakami is made most readily apparent in interviews and album promotion. In another feature with *Rolling Stone*, Styles declares himself a Harukist as he reminisces on a "very Murakami birthday" (Spanos) he once enjoyed. In the piece, he goes on to describe his twenty-fifth birthday. It consisted of spending time alone in Tokyo, buying food and coffee, and reading an unspecified book for "five hours". He namechecks *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* and *Norwegian Wood* during the interview, also mentioning that in his time in Tokyo he frequented a vinyl bar and bought the owner a record as a gift. A Murakami birthday is already a loaded term – Murakami selected and assembled a collection of stories by other writers on the subject of birthdays, *Birthday Stories*, published by Vintage Books in 2006 – but the components of this birthday are telling of an emergent popular understanding of Murakami engendered by pop figures such as Styles. Murakami (already an itemiser, who has been itemised in previous chapters) is continually itemised by his own fans: what Styles does here is a sort of reprise of the Murakami bingo games. Murakami (and by extension, Murakami-land) is reduced to a series of activities or observable elements. When these conditions are met, one may be said to arrive in Murakami-land, or at least to experience a Murakami day. The presence of the fantastical or the macabre in Murakami's fiction is thereby elided in this understanding of a Murakami day. Through the sustained promotional referencing of Murakami, Styles' music too enters the conversation of Murakami-land in a devotional fanfiction sense.

BTS allude to Murakami in both devotional and inspirational manners (to return to the language of fan content), referencing his work in both their lyrics and their interviews. This means that their use of Murakami is more neatly an adaptation of his work: the selection and curation of the elements of *Kafka on the Shore* that are retained in "Butterfly", for example, are important. The song, which features the central line "naui haebyeon-ui kapeukayeo" (literally 'my Kafka on the Shore'), and alludes to the "woods" (likely the same woods in which Kafka loses himself and encounters the strange village toward the climax of the novel). The song is featured on a best-selling album, *The Most Beautiful Moment in Life Pt 2*, and is sung in a combination of Korean and English. For example, the main chorus (continuous, mock-stuttered repetitions of the title) and a selection of fragmentary phrases ("Is true? Is it true?/ You, you …/Untrue, untrue/ You, you, you") are sung in English. The song is popular, even by the standards of chart-topping pop, with 250 million streams on Spotify (excluding streams of

alternate mixes of the song) as of April 26th, 2024. This not the only BTS song to reference Murakami; their song "Sea" also references Murakami's *1Q84*. That song directly quotes Aomame's line from *1Q84: Book Three*: "Where there's hope there is always trial" (32), which is adopted as the chorus of the song. This song is similarly sung in both Korean and English, with the direct quotation sung in Korean and a refrain of "Where there is hope" sung repeatedly in English. This song is more obscure than "Butterfly", and was featured as a hidden track on physical releases of the album *Love Yourself: Her*. The track is not available on Spotify, making it difficult to numerically compare the two tracks. Nonetheless, these two explicitly Murakami-inspired songs by the K-pop group may be somewhat responsible for the dedicational fanfiction discussed in Chapter IV. Both conjure a disaffected and mystic sense of banality that envelops song and singers into the storyworld of Murakami. They are the actors that Hutcheon mentions: they are not bound to Murakami in any sense, but through reference to Murakami-land help to expand its influence. It represents a development of Hutcheon's theory, which focuses on fan participation. In the case of BTS, two fan groups are enmeshed. While BTS enter Murakami-land, Murakami is also rendered a part of the BTS equivalent, serving as a symbol of their supposed sensitivity and intellectual curiosity. The two fan spaces envelop one another, and both are suffused with the others' aura. Murakami-land is soundtracked by BTS, while Murakami himself becomes a signifier of BTS (and potentially their equivalent space).

Murakami has become a sort of fashion accessory herein; his novels have been rendered symbols that connote a sort of sensitivity and intellectual curiosity. This is seen in the television examples that introduce this chapter, but there is a specifically masculine valence to the accessorization of Murakami's fiction. In the case of these musical artists, Murakami is a portal through which their masculinity can be considered 'gentle', soft, and friendly. What simultaneously occurs is an easing of access to Murakami-land: it becomes a permissible, normalised state to visit. It's certainly apolitical and an easy interview answer: Murakami is a safe favourite writer or musical point of allusion. Murakami's status as accessory seems completed by the following situation: in early 2019, the pop star Harry Styles was preparing to release his second album, *Fine Line*, released the same year. His fans did as fans do, and obsessed over every minor detail available in the time preceding its release. One such fan runs a popular page known as Harry Styles Lookbook (using the same tag across platforms; @styleslookbook), active on Twitter and Instagram. The page is dedicated to identifying, cataloguing, and posting links to every item of clothing the celebrity is pictured wearing. Typically, this means that a candid photo of the singer will be republished by Harry Styles

Lookbook with items of clothing now labelled. Fans may clamour to wear the same model of Levi's or Skechers as their idol. In these posts, the price tag and information is attached for the idle amusement of curious fans (the most casual and thoughtless incarnation of consumer capitalism's intersection with popular celebrity fandom).

On March 3rd 2019, Harry Styles Lookbook posted a picture (Fig. 7) of Mr Styles posing with a fan, with a book under his arm. The book is identifiably Murakami's *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*. Here, Murakami's transformation into accessory seems finally complete. And not just in a metaphorical sense, he is an accessory to Harry Styles: his work has been rendered indistinguishable from Nike runners or Gucci jackets (at the same time, to a Murakami fan Styles may be the accessory here). Furthermore, a carelessness pervades. Styles' subsequent album release featured no reckoning with wartime trauma, flagellation, or psychic rape as featured in Murakami's novel. In fact, all of these elements are entirely absent from Styles' discography, which instead is more in-line with outsider impressions of Murakami discussed earlier in the thesis: a sad boy who thinks deeply and acts inoffensively. Murakami is likewise rendered a symbol for Harry Styles as a literate, intellectual popstar. Many popstars cite Murakami as an influence, but Styles is unique in being photographed casually with Murakami in-hand, if not entirely in-mind. This shows the chaos of what lies behind the holophrase of Murakami-land: on the one hand it points to shopping and the pleasures of easily coded behaviour, but at the same time it contains rape, infidelity, and colonial terror. Murakami-land in this guise softens the blow of rape, infidelity, murder, and torture through erosive and inane bingo minigames, fan squeals, and its subsumption into the pop cultural.

Fig. 7: Harry Styles poses with a fan for a photo. Murakami's *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* is tucked under his arm.

This sort of pop star itemization is also conducted by fans of BTS, who catalogue the reading habits of band leader Namjoon Kim (who also operates under the stage name RM). This main page is currently inactive, but still receives traffic on its Twitter page 'Namjoon's Library[7]' (using the same tag across platforms; @joonieslibrary) and has inspired a number of spinoff/copycat accounts across Instagram and Twitter. The virtual library contains four novels by Haruki Murakami (*1Q84*, *Norwegian Wood*, *Kafka on the Shore*, and *Killing Commendatore*) alongside quite diverse works of philosophy, history, and poetry (Rilke and Eliot, mostly). As a resource for pop fandom, it is unconventional. The library carries links to the singer discussing each book, while also linking to several pieces of writing (interviews, reviews, and analyses) of the writers featured. For Murakami, these features include pieces from *The LA Review of Books* and *The Guardian*. In Chapter IV, I recounted my visit to the restaurant Red Rock Harajuku, now a tourist destination for fans of this group. In a basic Weinstein and Luetkenhaus sense, fans feel closer to their idols when they sit where they once sat, ate where they once ate, and so on. This is where the reality and fantasy collide and overlap. And so, fans may feel closer yet by travelling to the same land (in this case, Murakami-land)

as their idols, and tracing the lost cats and repeated, 'Eerie' faces of Murakami-land[86]. In doing so, and by upholding this parodic model of understanding the fiction of Haruki Murakami, the true violence, horror, and ambiguity of his work is elided or made minor. At the same time, a Harry Styles superfan may listen to his latest release and resonate with the melancholic lyrics and upbeat pop melodies. Upon seeing a picture of Styles with a Murakami paperback, they may read the novel. In doing so, they encounter the same melancholic air, disillusionment, and detachment. However, they may also be shocked at Lt. Mamiya's story of flagellation or the animal massacre section. The sheer shock of these moments is rendered all the more impactful and 'Weird' thanks to the Murakami imaginary that has replaced and de-canonised such extremities in Murakami's fiction. These moments are 'off-brand' for BTS and Harry Styles.

Murakami's repeated appearance in pop-cultural interviews (such as Styles') must necessarily contend with this. The appearance of his texts, and by extension, Murakami-land serves the same purpose as an invocation of any other land. It has become a thing toward which peoples real and imagined may gesture as a sign of their own cultural savvy, intellect, and taste. It is the appropriation of a national mood or signifier. In Hanif Kureishi's novel *The Buddha of Suburbia*, the character Eva develops a fixation on an Indian family. She uses the aesthetics of Indian culture (such as yoga, meditation, and food) to climb the social ladder of sixties-seventies London. By the novel's end, she has moved on from India, toward a fetishisation of Japan instead. One of the final scenes in the novel featuring Eva has her express a desire to make her room "more Japanese" (261). Eva gestures broadly toward a delicateness of touch, a grace, and a tastefulness that is hegemonically inextricable from the Western anglophone creation/curation of 'Japan'. Nonetheless, it remains unclear what the specifics of the comment entail: perhaps the introduction of sliding doors. Throughout the novel, India and Japan are rendered props by Eva. They are symbolic stand-ins, not actual places, presaging the use of Murakami-land by popstars discussed above.

The adoption of Murakami as interview prop results in a sustained hegemonic understanding of the writer and his world as a near cosy space or retreat. The strangeness of the suicide-obsessed, manic-depressed, and haunted space of Murakami's fictions is alchemised into an aesthetic plaything (Murakami-land) that allows celebrities and fans to express their own vulnerabilities. It is itemised, not interrogated. On Harry Styles' very

[86] Fisher (2016) wrote that a chief component of the 'Eerie' is found in either a lack of apparent agency or the feeling that the logic of agency is precluded from the reader (63). What is the point of visiting a Murakami setting or location, beyond sheer curiosity?

Murakami birthday, he did not sit in a well (as far as we know). In other words, Murakami-land has been given the tourist treatment. Just as Kureishi's "more Japanese" does not refer to anything more substantial than interior design, a Murakami birthday does not extend beyond a surface level reading of Murakami-land. The invocation is enough; it becomes a sort of two-way ticket into both Murakami-land and the fandom spaces of these pop acts.

Hardcore Harukists might respond to Mr Styles' birthday comments by referring him to Murakami's curated collection *Birthday Stories*, which brings together stories on the subject by the writer himself, alongside David Foster Wallace, Claire Keegan, and more. However, the same impulse underpins both: curation. Styles' comments are best read as a gesture toward the becoming-major of Murakami. This is where Murakami-land is a useful construct: distinct from discussing Haruki Murakami as a singular writer, it allows readers to analyse the imagined space that emerges in/from his major texts. This general version of Murakami that emerges is akin to the generality represented in Kureishi's text above. The itemization of Murakami-land is an inevitable (and probably welcome) development. In Chapter I, the entry of the word 'bridezilla' into the everyday lexicon was discussed briefly. That event signified *Godzilla*'s ubiquity in anglophone zones. Now, consistent reference to Murakami in popular culture is rapidly propelling the author toward a similar status: just as everyone 'knows' *Godzilla*, everyone too will soon 'know' Murakami. It is the externalisation of what occurs in the space already; Murakami's fictions consistently itemize mention and invoke popular music, alongside jazz and classical, at every turn. Murakami is itemized alongside these now. A further turn: artists mentioned by Murakami include chart-topping acts such as The Beatles, Talking Heads, and Michael Jackson. The influence of these acts is clearly felt in the work of BTS and Harry Styles. Future works in Murakami-land may soon borrow from or feature the music of these modern pop artists.

(iii) Cinematic Murakami-land and Coherency

Murakami's fiction is often perplexingly hazy or indistinct. It is haunted by spectres, such as the white creature in *Kafka on the Shore*, the faceless man in *Killing Commendatore*, or the wriggling souls in *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*. Part of the power of these creations is in their 'Weird' intangibility, barely glimpsed or comprehended, they imply a world beyond that of the itemization. Cinematic representations of Murakami-land must contend with this sort of focus Murakami style. These adaptations must reify and make concrete that which is indistinct. One

way these films attempt to do so is through their original soundtracks. For each transformation of Murakami's fiction into film, a different composer has attempted to aurally translate Murakami-land. Foremost among these is the venerated Japanese composer Ryuichi Sakamoto. World-famous, Sakamoto worked on film composition, pop music, and jazz until his death from cancer in 2023. Shortly before he died, Sakamoto met and collaborated on a song with a member of BTS. A commonality between Sakamoto and the band member, Yoongi Min, lies in their shared affinity for Murakami: Sakamoto soundtracked Jun Ichikawa's Murakami adaptation *Tony Takitani*, while Murakami's literary influence permeates BTS' discography. Other composers for film adaptations include Johnny Greenwood (*Norwegian Wood*), Eiko Ishibashi (*Drive My Car*), Mowg (Burning), and Pierre Foldes (*Blind Willow, Sleeping Woman*). It is worth noting that these are mostly celebrity composers: Greenwood is lead guitarist in Radiohead and has soundtracked multiple award-winning films; Ishibashi is a popular Japanese act and has collaborated with electronic music pioneer Merzbow and ex-Sonic Youth guitarist Jim O'Rourke (who plays a guitar solo on the *Drive My Car* soundtrack), while Mowg (real name Sung-Hyun Lee) is a multi-award-winning Korean film composer. Foldes is the least famous of these names, although he also wrote, produced, acted in, and directed *Blind Willow, Sleeping Woman*.

Despite such a varied assortment of musicians, these scores coalesce to create a unified soundscape for Murakami-land. Provided by Johnny Greenwood of Radiohead fame, *Norwegian Wood*'s score is dominated by a "heightened sense of fragility and violent emotion while retaining a sense of restraint" (Perry). Compare this to reviews of the other films' scores. The soundtrack of *Drive My Car* "possesses a cool remove, mirroring the film's glacial profundity with organic nuance and contemplative improvisation" (Moreland); *Blind Willow, Sleeping Woman* has a "superb soundtrack [which] deepens that push-pull [of the narrative], in the sibilant whoosh of ocean waves, the gentle percussion of rain against a city window, the incessant murmur of an airport terminal" (Linden); while *Tony Takitani* presents "minimalist stripped-down sounds and images, is filled with countless half-perceptible epiphanies and near-inaudible revelations" (Duggan). A singular, cohesive picture emerges: these films are sonically linked; all incorporate classical motifs, ambient cues, and flourishes of jazz (diegetically in the case of *Tony Takitani*). On one level, this is somewhat unremarkable. Murakami has been accused (and is guilty) of repeating plotlines, plot elements, and characters outright. This repetition is after all, partially the bedrock of Murakami's fiction. It follows that depictions of

such sameness may fall into a sort of 'Eerie' meta double-sameness. The agency or impetus behind the repetition is what intrigues and entrances.

These sonic similarities help to construct a version of Murakami-land that extends beyond the page, facilitating its breach into the supposed real-world. Much as Murakami summons the imaginated space by invoking his mythic signifiers, Harukists are permitted to summon another Murakami-land through these soundtracks. Writing about the East Asian imaginary that permits Murakami's easy translation to Korean cinema, Yamada asserts that Steven Yeun's portrayal of the sinister Ben is compounded by his accent; "American actor with an accent … accentuates his unnatural presence in the film" (64). Johnny Greenwood's original score and his use of anglophone sixties psychedelia (several songs by the German band Can are featured) in *Norwegian Wood* conjure a similar aural effect here; the in-text storyworld is soundtracked by Western acts. They help to distinguish the film from other Japanese sixties period pieces: something anglophone, something other pervades and moves the action from Japan and into Murakami-land. Such concerted effort and curation proves that Ōe is correct about Murakami-land's (if not Murakami's novels) non-Japaneseness.

Licensed music is also key in these films. These songs serve as a channel through which the filmmakers can invoke the itemization that underpins Murakami-land. Both *Drive My Car* and *Norwegian Wood* derive their titles from Beatles songs, yet neither film feature their original title track. In the film, The Beatles' song "Norwegian Wood" is sang by the character Reiko, but original track never materialises. In *Norwegian Wood*'s case, this is not an aversion to licensed music of the period; Can and The Doors are both featured prominently. Ryûsuke Hamaguchi remarked in an interview promoting *Drive My Car* that he had tried to feature the title track of the film in the end credits, but licensing the song was simply too difficult[87]. He incorporated a string quartet by Beethoven (mentioned in the story "Drive My Car") over the end credits. Film representations of Murakami-land must contend with the same issues of bureaucracy and legality that drive Ryuichi Gotanda to madness: there is always compromise on the cinema screen. Nothing is exactly as intended. The absence of these expected musical touchstones become somewhat 'Eerie' therefore, furthering situating Murakami-land as a bewildering and uncanny space, while inviting close readings of these absences. Does the absence of The Beatles' song "Drive My Car" refract for the audience the

[87] Hamaguchi explains this in an interview: "I listened to The Beatles' 'Drive My Car' a lot. I would be lying if I said I didn't dream of using the song but it's too difficult to get it, as expected. The song directly referenced from the original story is a string quartet by Beethoven" (Wong).

feelings of loss that Kafuku feels? In a way, it does function as a refraction of the lack of closure that Kafuku receives from his wife. Much is left unsaid, and the films leaves the Beatles' track unheard. Then, the Beethoven piece may be read as a salve to the 'true' Harukist, again reinstating concepts of cultural capital and fan hierarchy. To recognise the obscure or the minor in the major, is to touch the real stuff of Murakami-land.

There is a sort of 'inside the house' verification of Murakami's output that accompanies direct and (if not author-approved, then at least author's estate-) approved adaptations, spinoff media, and merchandising; thus distinguishing these from the merely Murakami-inspired, illustrated by the serendipitously coincidental release of Foldes' *Blind Willow, Sleeping Woman* and Makoto Shinkai's *Suzume*, both inspired by Murakami's "Super-Frog Saves Tokyo" (Osmond) and released within months of one another in anglophone zones. However, of the two, only Foldes' film is officially sanctioned by Murakami. So, while Shinkai's film is interesting for its outsider representation of the land (talking cats, precocious schoolgirls, a subterranean realm that houses a destructive worm), it falls outside of self-representation. These unlicensed or counterfeit Murakami-lands are further discussed at the end of this chapter.

This also points to another interesting component of the emergent representation of Murakami-land in movie form: the question of their point of origin. *Burning* is a Korean film, *Blind Willow, Sleeping Woman* a multi-national European production, and *Norwegian Wood* is directed by Anh Hùng Trần, a Vietnamese-French auteur who has directed films in French, Vietnamese, English, and Japanese. This seems to corroborate Ōe's remark that Murakami's writing is "not Japanese" (Chozick). It is tempting to accept this and argue that the cinematic version of Murakami-land discussed here is entirely transnational and porous. However, there are problems with such a perspective: *Drive My Car* was Japan's national entry for the 2022 Academy Awards' Best International Feature category, which the film won[88]. *Drive My Car* was originally set to shoot (and take place) in Busan, Korea, until the Covid-19 pandemic interrupted that iteration of the film. New sanctions on international travel meant that Hamaguchi was forced to move the setting from Busan to Hiroshima (Hoad, 2021). The film remained a multilingual production, incorporating Japanese, Korean, English, German, Mandarin, and Korean sign language alongside an international supporting cast. 2004's *Tony*

[88] Only the second in-competition winner of this award for Japan: the country was previously awarded honorary accolades in 1951, 1954, and 1955. This is also the main nationalist award in ceremony: each participating country nominates a single film as national representative. These are then submitted and screened for Academy members.

Takitani then seems the least international production: it is set in Japan, with a primarily Japanese cast, a Japanese director, and a soundtrack by Sakamoto.

The cinematic adaptations discussed here are not the only filmic adaptations of Murakami. However, these adaptations are considered the most important in the context of this thesis for the following reasons pertinent to the overall argument: each film received a cinematic release in Anglophonic countries including Ireland, the UK, or the United States; each film is currently and readily available to watch (either via streaming, digital rental or purchase, or via physical media through mainstream outlets such as Amazon etc); each film is officially an adaptation of Haruki Murakami's fiction; each film is critically acclaimed, participating in (and winning awards at) various international film festivals. This means that other films such as Matsunaga's 2018 *Hanalei Bay* or Ōmori's 1981 *Hear the Wind Sing* are not discussed here: while worthy films, their underseen nature means that they do not have any discernible effect on the formation of Murakami-land in the anglophone world. The imaginated space is constructed in part through discourse; this is rendered impossible in terms of fandom without a proper release or impassioned fan projects[89] (neither of these films are currently available via mainstream methods, nor have fan translations made an impact on Murakami fandom). Just as Murakami-land is capable of eroding the darker aspects of Murakami's fiction (as seen in BTS and Styles' utility of the space), Murakami-land's canon of films filters out the unavailable or the difficult to source.

The films mentioned tap into the storyworld of Murakami-land by adopting and curating several of the motifs mentioned throughout the thesis. They introduce an inner-intertextuality which occurs via the introduction of these motifs to stories originally lacking in them. Chang-Dong Lee's *Burning* is a good example. In this film a short story of less than twenty pages is spun out to nearly two and a half hours of screentime. The film expands and stretches the source material, distending certain points, distorting others. These deviations are somewhat mundane – the protagonist of the short story is middle-aged and married, the film's is young and single; the story is set in Japan, while the film is set in Korea – but each shift in the narrative introduces a new wrinkle to the fabric of the adaptation. Each of these individual changes form part of the process that constitutes the product. Key among these is the relationship between the protagonist and the missing woman, which coalesces in the form of a

[89] *Hanalei Bay* is at least available via YouTube at the following link. It is important to note that this is not an official upload, rather an illegal upload by username nijirosubs, a fan of an actor (Nijiro Murakami) appearing in the film. There is also a French upload available on the site.

cat. Murakami's missing woman ('her', aged twenty) meets the older protagonist at a wedding reception, where they strike up a casual and emotionless sexual relationship. The film's missing woman (Hae-Mi) has grown up with the protagonist. Hae-Mi's relationship with the protagonist is solidified when she asks him to mind her cat as she travels abroad. She later reminisces on an occasion wherein he pulled her out of a deep, dark well as schoolchildren. This perfunctory, box-tick style tour across Murakami-land's signifiers stresses their importance in the cultivation of the imaginated space.

This is also the impetus behind Ken Lawrence's *The Murakami Pilgrimage*, which comprises of list of canonical places to see. Once these are seen, the pilgrimage is complete. The filmmaker adopts a similar approach to Murakami as subject matter and the setting of the film becomes a series of tropic elements. The dissolution and destruction of the self (as illustrated in the case of Ryuichi Gotanda) is wryly reconstructed in an extradiegetic sense; a Harukist (or similarly informed viewer) may slip into a sort of mania watching the adaptation, rocking slowly back and forth, muttering 'this isn't how it goes, this isn't how it goes' ad infinitum. The film loosely adapts Murakami by splicing his tropes through the genes of a singular text. The original story "Barn Burning" after all does feature some of the chief tropes of Murakami (missing women, ambiguous murderers, an unresolved mystery), but it is mostly bereft of the images of Murakami. There are no cats, there are no dry wells, and there are no refrigerators. Lee's insertion of all three reinstate them as key to the Murakami mythos.

This idea of the destruction (or wilful erasure) of the self is rooted in Murakami's fiction, particularly *Dance, Dance, Dance*. This novel features the cinema more overtly than any other Murakami fiction (in which the cinema is just another non-place, like train stations or service tunnels). The novel's obsession with cinema is illustrated at two key points: (i) the antagonist, Ryuichi Gotanda's crumbling mental state derives from an insanity brought on by his acting career, and (ii) when the protagonist lapses into a chapter long film-based fantasy (70-73). The fantasy consists of an imaginary cinematic production of a romance between Cleopatra (portrayed by Jodie Foster) and a young prince (played by Ryuichi Gotanda). The film will include a love triangle, when a "dark, dark Arabian prince" (72) played by Michael Jackson enters the film. The choice of Foster as an actor here is deeply important and speaks to how anglophone and Japanese Murakamis (at least at time of release) are dissimilar. At the time of the novel's Japanese release in 1988, Jodie Foster's career had come to a stall. She appeared in a slew of average to decent films throughout the 1980s, but nothing that would rival her role in *Taxi Driver*. Furthermore, mentioning Foster in the novel immediately casts

one to consider Scorsese's film in light of the plot of *Dance, Dance, Dance*. Boku is no Travis Bickle, but he likewise embeds himself in a young girl (Yuki)'s life, attempting to fix issues that he cannot. The spectre of the John Hinckley Jr case also hangs over proceedings. Hinckley stalked Foster, before attempting to murder Ronald Reagan in an effort to impress her. This uneasy, implied violent potential eventually comes to a boil in Murakami's novel; Gotanda has murdered women across Tokyo. The English language translation was released in 1994. At this point, Foster had appeared in Demme's *The Silence of the Lambs*, winning an Academy Award for her performance. At this point, reading Yuki as Foster is inevitable: the young girl acts as a detective in Murakami's novel, sensing that there is something wrong or evil about Gotanda's car, the space in which he has murdered Kiki.

The most significant element of this imagined film is how the speaker maps himself onto Gotanda's character: they fantasise about the sex scene between Cleopatra and the young prince, but when they "tried to picture [in the first person] sleeping with an Egyptian court lady, … the image wouldn't gel" (72). Gotanda becomes a permissible body through which the protagonist is allowed to imagine and impress their will upon others. Independently, Yamada identifies the same tendency in the protagonist of the film *Burning*;

> Ben speaks to the doubling of selves that resemble the doubling of the virtual and actual in time crystals, suggesting that he can exist simultaneously in different locations: 'I am here, and I am there…I am in Seoul, and I am in Africa.' Rather than an independent character, the one-dimensional Ben manifests as a foil or even doppelganger for Jongsu. He shows up as a third wheel just as Jongsu and Haemi's relationship begins to develop. His manner of interacting with others is odd: He never changes his expression or reacts in an emotional way, even when he is being killed by Jongsu at the end of the film. That Ben is played by a Korean American actor with an accent, Steven Yeun, only accentuates his unnatural presence in the film. (64)

This echoes the case of *Dance, Dance, Dance*, wherein the protagonist's ex-partner is murdered by Gotanda in a similarly out-of-text manner, after engaging in an apparently cruel and transactional sexual relationship. In both cases, the sociopathic and murderous double is killed (both die in their cars). Furthermore, the invocation of the doppelganger motif recalls Ushikawa and Noboru Watanabe from earlier discussions. Although these two characters have not been successfully transferred to the cinema screen at time of writing, the impression they create has. Yamada also identifies that Ichikawa's *Tony Takitani* employs two actors in dual roles: Issey Ogata plays both the titular Tony, alongside this character's father Shozaburo; Rie Miyazawa

plays both Konuma Eiko (Tony's wife) and Hisako. Yamada compares the doubling effect here to that featured in *Burning*: it has become an inalienable quality in depictions of Murakami-land onscreen. Yamada's argumentation surrounding Steven Yeun is shaky, however. Yeun's "unnatural" presence does not stem from any accent. This seems a rather essentialising argument that ignores the nuances of the Ben character. Ben is an unnatural presence in the film, but this is expressed through body language. In a club sequence, late in the film, Ben lets out an exaggerated yawn as he makes eye contact with Jong-Su. His catlike demeanour, coupled with repeated actions (this yawn is repeated from earlier in the film and signifies when he is becoming tired of his current girlfriend, who will invariable disappear after such a point), means that Ben is unnatural because Yeun's performance is impressively transparent. He lets Jong-Su see that he is performing: the character is obvious artifice.

Blind Willow, Sleeping Woman also features a strange rendition of the doppelganger motif, whereby most characters in the film share the same or similar faces, leading to confusion and disorientation in conversation sequences. Whether this is a shortcoming of the film's innovative animation style is unclear. Nonetheless, the 'Eeriness' produced by these repetitions is key to Murakami-land's translation to the cinema screen. This is also performed extradiegetically in the case of *Drive My Car*, the lead actor of which (Hidetoshi Nishijima[90]) also appears as the voice of the narrator for *Tony Takitani*. The closed circuits represented textually through naming conventions (Watanabe, Ushikawa) are replicated in the cinematic space by the voices and faces of actors. The reality of these texts collides with the Real facts of these faces' endless recurrences within the rhyming prison of Murakami-land.

Another unifying thread is that these films purport to adapt a single story, but in fact incorporate several, weaving layers of Murakami-land together to create a vivid whole. *Blind Willow, Sleeping Woman* and *Drive My Car* both appear initially as adaptations of the stories from which they take their names, "Blind Willow, Sleeping Woman" and "Drive My Car". However, while both films do adapt these, the stories are used as portals toward constructing a filmic Murakami-land, building unseen connections between small details in the stories adapted. A compression occurs, similar to cinematic tourism witnessed in spatially specific film sequences. This is a sort of an evolution of the Omphalos trope; in the classic 1996 Michael Bay action film, *The Rock*, Nicolas Cage and Sean Connery wreak havoc in San Francisco.

[90] This is not to position Nishijima as the face of Murakami-land, any more than he is the face of Japanese period dramas or *tokusatsu* (both of which he has appeared in many productions of). Rather, it points to a convergence between literary Murakami and the cinematic Murakami-land.

Because it is San Francisco (and owing no doubt, to tourist board investments/incentives), the characters move between cornerstones of the city; the Fairmont Hotel (and surrounding affluent area), the Palace of Fine Arts, streetcars, and finally Alcatraz. Establishing shots ensure that the Golden Gate Bridge and the Oakland Bay Bridge are included. The city is compressed and focussed to allow for this cinematic tourism to occur; all of these inclusions combine to approximate an idea of the city. Likewise, it rarely seems sufficient for a Murakami adaptation to merely be that: for example *Burning* introduces a missing cat (named Boil) narrative in a clear invocation of the Murakami-land mythic image, meanwhile *Blind Willow, Sleeping Woman* invents connective tissue between Murakami's short fictions (so the speaker of "Blind Willow, Sleeping Woman" is also the speaker of "UFO in Kushiro" and works in the same office as Katagiri from "Super Frog Saves Tokyo" and so on). When Hutcheson mentions fan participation as key to the creation of cinematic universes (the storyworld idea), it is reflected doubly here. Fans participate, yes, through creating fan content and so on, but they must also critically engage with and draw out these lines of intertextuality in an engaged manner.

Further to this idea of forced approximation, any adaptation – not simply those of Murakami-land – must undergo a process of appropriation. Ashcroft et al define appropriation along linguistic lines in *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (2002), encompassing "various ways to express widely differing cultural experiences. These differences may exist in cultures which appear to be quite similar. For in one sense all post-colonial literatures are cross-cultural because they negotiate a gap between 'worlds'" (38). This definition is mostly in reference to translation studies and presented alongside a discussion of abrogation ("a refusal of the categories of the imperial system … a vital moment in the de-colonizing of the language and the writing of 'english'", 38). It is nonetheless applicable here; Murakami-land emerges from the ashes of the empire that burned in the aftermath of WWII, and then smouldered into ember and ash through Mishima and *Godzilla*. The aesthetic requirements for cinematic representations of Murakami-land are therefore clearly distinct from those adopted in representations of Japan. This is partially why transnational adaptations of Murakami's texts are so beguiling: Chang-Dong Lee's film works just as well in Korea as it would in Japan. What occurs instead is precisely the process of appropriation: the new space of Murakami-land is reduced to a series of signifiers á la San Francisco in *The Rock*. However, as Murakami-land can be read both as a space (it is unmoored capital, occupied by drifting men searching for cats or women, with no point around which to orient themselves) or a place (the cats, women, and the wells constitute the points of

orientation: they are the map markers), cinematic representation is more complicated that the usual Hollywood model of tourist board whistle-stop tours.

Beyond the adoption of familiar tropic elements, these filmmakers must effectively construct a cinematic language for Murakami-land onscreen. This language naturally corresponds to the plotlines of each text; a romance such as *Norwegian Wood* is shot naturalistically and contemplatively. It is composed of long, still shots alongside steady tracking shots. Much as in the novel, any violence (in the form of suicide) occurs offscreen. Nonetheless, the style of the film is akin to *Drive My Car*, *Tony Takitani*, and *Burning*. All of these films favour a near slow-cinema wistfulness, while *Tony Takitani* and *Norwegian Wood* both feature contemplative voiceovers that directly quote from their source materials. *Drive My Car* and *Burning* do not; if there is a voiceover present in *Burning* it is the occasionally present background noise of North Korean propaganda broadcasts that underscore scenes occurring at the protagonist's home. While this seems to root the film in a particular time and place (i.e. The North-South border area of Korea from the mid twentieth-century onward), it gestures toward an evolution of the East-Asian imaginary that Yamada mentions. Yamada theorises that Korea is a space particularly amenable to transpositional Murakami adaptations owing to the two countries' shared tumultuous past century of war, recession, and rapid modernisation. Certainly, even the North Korean propaganda broadcasts are common to the two countries; Chongryon (or General Association of Korean Residents in Japan) affiliated institutions, such as schools and education centres (Kim, 2023). Chongryon, a North Korea-funded organisation, owns institutions all across Japan (as education centres, they also broadcast propaganda messages daily). However, while they are never mentioned in Murakami's texts, Lee's utility of North Korean broadcasts makes sense as a sort of localisation. Korean propaganda broadcasts convey a sense of the Real to *Burning*. There is, as often in Murakami, no explanation necessary (and if there is, it is typically provided in-text). As such, the voiceover effect from the original story is not excised, it is articulated in a new cinematic way. *Blind Willow, Sleeping Woman* does something similar in order to link together many disparate Murakami stories. Like *Tony Takitani*, they are communicated via narration. However, the narration here is conducted in-text: the stories are often told or exchanged between characters. The telling of the story becomes a feature of each story (save for the wraparound stories of "Super-Frog Saves Tokyo" and the interlinked stories of the main protagonist). This narration (or direct quotation from the original texts) is apt for adaptations. However, in recent years texts set in Murakami-land have begun to appear without the benefit

of an original text whatsoever. These represent a Murakami-land *without* Haruki Murakami at all.

(iv) Conclusions: Murakami-land as an open setting

Ridley Scott's 2021 film *House of Gucci* features a scene that is illustrative of a shared logic between the titular Gucci fashion house and Murakami-land. In a mid-film sequence, Patrizia Gucci (played by Lady Gaga) confronts her husband (played by Adam Driver) after discovering illegitimate, contraband imitations of Gucci designer goods. These knockoffs are hawked on the street at a discounted price. Gaga is shocked at Driver's lack of concern. Not only do the family not care about the copyright infringement, they are able to profit from it. The family brand's social capital is asserted by public desire to imitate or masquerade as purchasers of it. The 'real thing' is heightened in importance and value. It is worth copying. Again, Žižek on Lacan proves helpful here: writing on postmodern fourth-wall breakages, Žižek notes that such are "desperate attempts to avoid the real of the illusion itself, the Real that emerges in the guise of an illusory spectacle" (59). In these fakes – with their misspelled brand names or off-kilter pattern work – the tension between the Real and the fantastic is strained and the viewer/buyer is estranged. At the same time, because Murakami's fiction is so derivative of other fiction (such as Chandler and Carver), this tension is at the heart of Murakami-land itself.

A month after hosting the Q and A session with Pierre Foldes in Spring 2023, I saw another film in the same cinema. The film, Makoto Shinkai's anime *Suzume* (2022), appears to take place in an off-brand version of Murakami-land. These films' engagement with "Super-Frog Saves Tokyo" is immediately apparent; both films follow an ordinary Japanese person recruited by a supernatural figure to combat an enormous worm that wriggles beneath Japan. The worm's thrashing will result in the deaths of thousands if left unchecked. In both cases, this appears to be a reference to Namazu, a mythical enormous catfish imprisoned beneath Japan by a thunder god (Bradshaw). Namazu was a folkloric explanation for Japan's frequent earthquakes. The creature's transformation to a spectral worm in both films is a clear sign of Murakami's influence on Shinkai's work. These earthquakes are yet another commonality between the short story and these films; Murakami's story is included in the collection *after the quake*, dedicated to the memory of the 1995 Kobe Earthquake. Meanwhile, Shinkai's film addresses the fallout of the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake (Bradshaw). Osmond also notes the similarities between *Suzume* and *Blind Willow, Sleeping Woman*, pointing to the fact that

Shinkai himself has acknowledged the inspiration of Murakami on his film. Osmond identifies the film as a response to the original "Super-Frog Saves Tokyo" story, "though it eschews the ambiguity of Murakami's story". Beyond the central dynamic of supernatural supporting hero and malevolent worm, the film extends its central 'Murakami-ness' in several other ways. There is a talking cat, a precocious schoolgirl (echoing Yuki from *Dance, Dance, Dance*), a curatorial music fan, and repressed familial memories (recalling *1Q84* and "All God's Children Can Dance").

Meanwhile, the imagined destruction of Japanese cityscapes necessarily recalls *Godzilla* yet again. Shinkai's film presents a Japan heedless of the *kaiju* threat; the Worm of *Suzume* is invisible to most Japanese citizens. In a way, this coincides with Toru's ambivalence toward the student protest movement in *Norwegian Wood*. This background element in Murakami's novel is evocatively sketched in the film adaptation, which depicts the riots as literal background events. The indifference (or act of not-looking) is further compounded in the *mise-en-scene* at 39:25 wherein posters of Honda's *Godzilla* can be glimpsed at an angle, decorating the walls of an old corridor. The protestors and *Godzilla* are both background figures: while both are figures of social upheaval born out of unprecedented times, they are out of focus for Toru. Toru's main concerns are Naoko and Midori. This backgrounding effect is echoed in *Suzume*, wherein the inhabitants of Tokyo are utterly indifferent to the *kaiju* around them (like Katagiri in "Super-Frog Saves Tokyo", until he is made to care by Frog). Shinkai's film flips the script: the protagonist does care, the protagonist is directly implicated and involved in the fate of the city in a very real sense.

The convergence of these tropic elements (both adhered to and queried), specific details, and Shinkai's vocal appreciation for Murakami's work: all of these factors, when taken together, suggest that the film occurs in a pocket of Murakami-land. This is where Murakami-land is complicated: as a space, Murakami-land is conjurable. Although it can be adopted as a setting (as seen in the fanfiction examples), it is not a neat space for transposition. In the previous chapter, Rowling's Hogwarts and Tolkien's Middle Earth were briefly referenced as potential fanfiction settings. They are neat spaces: a character can adventure through The Shire or Dol Guldur. Murakami-land is more porous and permeable: certainly, the titular Suzume travels to common settings from Murakami's fictions. However, these settings are McDonalds chain restaurants and train stations. Instead, Murakami-land relies on the sustained appearance of the identified tropes above. Although *Suzume* is the most recent example of it, Shinaki's admiration for Murakami extends beyond just this one film. Kelts (2018) notes that Shinkai

studied literature at university, showing a particular affinity for Murakami's texts. An early short film, "An Enclosed World", follows two eggs in an apocalyptic scenario in a seeming allusion to *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*. Other films, such as 2019's *Weathering With You* also prominently feature McDonalds and magical realist tropes. *Suzume* emerges then as the most obvious evocation of Murakami in Shinkai's oeuvre, subsuming and reorienting one particular short story.

Suzume also interacts with cinematic versions of Murakami-land. The film's score, available on Spotify, occasionally resembles the other soundtracks of Murakami-land film discussed elsewhere; opening track "The First Encounter" is slight and melancholic, with sparse piano and tense strings. It resembles Sakamoto's *Tony Takitani* score in its frigid tones and spacey reverb. However, for every track like this, there is another, more upbeat pop-rock inspired piece, alongside limited licensed material. It should be noted that several of the action tracks ("Cat Chase" for example) incorporate jazz stylings, further linking the film sonically to Murakami-land. Some tracks also incorporate the sound of the *shakuhachi*, a traditional Japanese flute. Shinkai's use of licensed songs is also different to Greenwood's use in *Norwegian Wood*. Although, like Murakami (and Greenwood), Shinkai uses rock music to situate his film temporally, the music Shinkai uses is typically Japanese. While Murakami's use of rock and pop music destabilises and displaces the physical action of his storylines through the use of American and European acts, Shinkai's music physically locates his action in Japan. He frequently collaborates with contemporary Japanese pop-rock act RADWIMPS, sometimes restructuring his films to better fit the songs that they provide. In *Suzume*, he temporally destabilises the action of his film through the use of Showa era songs and traditional instrumentation in the film's score.

Murakami-land also emerges in other forms; the writer David Mitchell's 2001 novel *Number9dream* has been identified as a riff on Murakami's tropes and style (Nihei), while even its title (derived from a John Lennon single) is a nod to *Norwegian Wood*'s The Beatles-inspired title. Chikako Nihei traces the similarities between Mitchell and Murakami; quoting Mitchell as saying that he "wanted to do what Haruki Murakami does, depicting Japan as it is, and finding beauty in the ugliness" (92). Nihei recounts a sequence from Mitchell's novel, in which an apparition of John Lennon (appearing like Col. Sanders in *Kafka on the Shore*) tells the protagonist that the song "#9 Dream" is the child of earlier track "Norwegian Wood". One can only assume that this follows for Mitchell's novel, although in his case the novel is the progeny of Murakami's earlier text. In a 2018 interview with Murakami, Roland Kelts identifies

Mitchell as writing in the Murakami mode. Kelts also points to several other iterations of Murakami in modern popular culture. He cites Shinkai: "Murakami's influence is there, too, in anime's youngest superstar, the director Makoto Shinkai, who studied literature as a student, specializing in Murakami's oeuvre" and Mitchell: "his influence is felt and openly acknowledged in the work of major Western writers", while also pointing to Japanese fiction writers such as Mieko Kawakami and Sayaka Murata's work. However, Kelts does not point to what comes next. Makoto Shinkai himself points to the future, while acknowledging the influence of Murakami's fiction on his work. He situates *Suzume* in relation to Murakami's work in interviews (Solomon) by comparing the impact of the 2011 earthquake on his work to that of the 1995 one on Murakami's, while also predicting that younger creators will be similarly inspired by the Covid-19 pandemic. Like Mitchell, he adopts the hallmarks of Murakami-land in order to articulate similar concerns and query norms. Each of these texts use Murakami-land as a sort of springboard or interactive setting that establish an initial mood and tonality to their text. These off-brand texts use Murakami-land with the intention of breaking it: *Suzume*, in particular, ends in the most un-Murakami of manners. The character Suzume achieves direct closure with her dead mother's ghost, speaking clearly to her. This stands in sharp contrast to *Killing Commendatore*'s obscure and uncertain resolution of the missing sister subplot. In both cases, a female family member is trapped in an otherworldly dimension: the setup is the same, but the resolution is vastly different. However, what comes next?

Murakami-land is also beginning to emerge in other forms of artistic expression, such as videogames, where it has only emerged in contraband form. The 2017 videogame, *Memoranda*, is the most obvious example of an interactive Murakami-land. Available on both PC and Nintendo Switch (on which it released in 2020), the game is described on Nintendo's official virtual storefront (Nintendo eShop) as a "point and click adventure game with magic realism elements" and includes a cast ranging "from a World War II veteran to an elephant taking shelter in a man's cottage hoping to become a human … [all] on the verge of losing something. It could be a name, a loved one or even their own sanity". If there was any ambiguity in the above, the description continues: "the story is inspired by various Haruki Murakami short stories that describe a surreal world full of lonely characters". Curiously, this distinction is only made on the US storefront. The European and UK storefront description reads the same, but omits the single line that acknowledges Murakami's influence on the videogame. The reach of the game has proven relatively minor; little sales data is available, and the game is an indie publication. Its gameplay is resolutely old-fashioned, unlikely to

entrance a large audience, while its release has gone largely unremarked upon. Few reviews of the game exist: review aggregator Metacritic lists 19 reviews for the game, all of which are from small publications and blogs such as *God Is A Geek* and *New Game Network*. The game holds an average score of 58% on Metacritic.

While *Memoranda* is a relatively minor work, it and *Suzume* are indicative of a shift in Murakami-land. Murakami has become a piece of everyday life, something unknowingly ever-present. Murakami-land is a viable multimedia playground or setting; it is an accessory for popstars, a prop for television dramas, inspiration for official (and unofficial) films, and a setting for videogames. As videogaming begins to shift more into virtual reality and boundaries between the in-game and out-of-game worlds are blurred via Augmented Reality (AR) gaming experiences such as *Pokémon Go* (2016), Murakami-land seems an obvious potential future gaming setting. Lacan's Real is complicated through these gaming experiences: "reality itself can function as an escape from encountering the Real" (Žižek 57). One can only imagine that a potential videogame (*Murakami-land Go*) would further distort these tenuous boundaries further: if *Pokémon Go* works by allowing the player to capture the titular monsters in real world spaces. As such, a dingy and disused back alley is rendered a place of potential level-ups and acquirable loot. Reality is smoothened and covers over the Real. A *Murakami-land Go* would perhaps permit players to find missing virtual cats and build up points through purchasing grocery store lettuce. Until such a game materialises, the closest thing to an AR Murakami-land videogame may be grocery store reward system applications such as Tesco Clubcard.

The endless proliferation of this Murakami-stuff is evident. Furthermore, the new formations of a Murakami-without-Murakami is at the heart of this thesis' overarching argument. Murakami-land is built on a distancing; translated Murakami has always been at a remove from Haruki Murakami, thanks to the efforts of Birnbaum in early translations. The texts discussed above represent a logical next step: Murakami-land without the voice of Murakami whatsoever. This is built out of the cultural capital that Murakami has, in English, accrued. As these new formulations of Murakami's tropes, narratives, and scenarios emerge, so too will new plateaus of understanding. All lines of flight will relate back to something; this endless proliferation may yet approach a sort of singularity event, when all these divergent Murakamis come to mean something more, something concrete.

Conclusion – Continuances

What do You Call Too Many Events Occurring at Once?

In 2021, Japanese clothing brand UNIQLO partnered with Haruki Murakami to release a line of t-shirts commemorating his global success. In 2023, the company re-partnered with Murakami to release a special t-shirt promoting world peace. Toward the end of the same year, Arcola Theatre staged an adaptation of *Sputnik Sweetheart* in London. On June 17th, 2024, news website This American Life put out an appeal via their Facebook page: "We're working on a story about a romantic relationship that ends after one person in the couple reads the book "South of the Border, West of the Sun" by Haruki Murakami. Has this happened to you or anyone you know after reading this specific book?". The post concludes with contact details. Less than a week later, pop singer Camila Cabello released a new single ("Chanel No. 5") that namedrops Murakami. In November 2024, Murakami's latest novel, *The City and Its Uncertain Walls*, will be released in English. In December 2024, Jay Rubin's new translation of Murakami's 1985 novel will be released, under the name *The End of the World and Hard-Boiled Wonderland*. This is an accumulation of happenings, of events. More precisely, there is a seemingly endless proliferation of Murakami items.

To help process these, Žižek can be consulted one final time. In *Event: Philosophy in Transit* (2014), Žižek defines an event as something that occurs "out of joint, that appears to happen all of a sudden and interrupts the usual flow of things … without discernible causes, an appearance without solid being as its foundation" (2). Using this framework, the scheduled releases of Murakami books this year do not quite constitute events. However, each helps to reformulate and shape Murakami-land as it shifts and pivots with each new accumulation. The seemingly random and unexpected appearances of Murakami are miniature events outside of Murakami-land (within it, they are immense). Murakami appears in popular culture, in television, in music, in the news cycle. These events are unpredictable, but they also appear to happen with an intensified frequency. Murakami is increasingly present in the anglophone world. As these events multiply (seemingly exponentially), the holophrase Murakami-land becomes a more valuable and important way of considering the entangled, multimedia experience of anglophone Murakami. These events will, I predict, soon reach a point of singularity from which an everyday term for Murakami will emerge. Like the words bridezilla and Kafkaesque, Murakami's anglophone ever-presence (an effervescent ever-presence:

Murakami's fiction now seems forever on the edge of utterance in anglophone culture, while the man himself seems non-existent) may soon spawn a word that helps to navigate (and simplify and flanderise and negate) the experience of Murakami-land. For now, Murakami-land suffices. However, the output of Murakami-land, the appearance of his name and texts in the anglophone world gives rise to a sort of branded commodity that can be termed Murakamitems. This in turn implies a process; just as items lead toward Jameson's itemization, Murakamitems lead toward Murakamitemization .

(i) A Thousand Ways to Wear a Shirt

The rapid uptick in Murakamitemization is ongoing and impossible to predict. UNIQLO is a good example. The Japanese clothing brand have recently revealed that they intend to open over twenty new stores in the United States alone by the end of 2024 (Wilson, 2024). Stores are also opening across Europe; new stores have appeared in Rome, Edinburgh, London, Nice, and Milan in the first half of 2024 alone. The company is expanding globally at a rapid pace. Marianne Wilson notes that the company – which currently operates seventy-four stores across North America – plans to reach two hundred operational shops in America by 2030. Under the right circumstances, every single one of these shops might soon stock Murakamitems.

In a review of *Killing Commendatore*, Jeva Lange wrote "Murakami is terrible now". It is perhaps more apt to say that Murakami is everywhere now. Murakami's collaboration with an everyday clothing brand further situates his entry into the everyday of English-speaking zones. That UNIQLO would not only agree to collaborate, but also to stock the collaboration globally, speaks to Murakami's popular cultural capital. Why wear a Murakami t-shirt, after all? To start a conversation, to mark oneself as a fan, to attempt to reach the erotic potential that Longfellow failed to actualise with Sydney Sweeney? All are plausible, all are possible. Even if there were only a thousand fans of Murakami, there would still be a thousand versions of Murakami, and subsequently, a thousand ways to wear a shirt. This, coupled with the writer's cultural capital, makes the shirts themselves secondary. The reference (the striking off of bingo items) is what counts. The initial UNIQLO shirt line took a literal approach, reprinting book jackets and Murakami's radio branding on t-shirts (pictured in Fig. 8). Later, when Murakami designed a t-shirt for "world peace" (according to its product description) in 2023 (Fig. 9), he strikes off a number of the bingo items (cats, music, and a solitary man, represented by Murakami himself, whose oldest friends are books, music, and cats).

The existence of the UNIQLO Murakami collaboration is further evidence of Murakami's social capital, expressed in the previous chapter through popular culture's repeated use of Murakami as set dressing, as reference, as punchline. As this cultural capital becomes increasingly clear and increasingly insistent in its appearance, Murakami-land may add additional, new points of reference and approach. In the time since writing the previous chapter, a new song by pop singer Camilla Cabello has been released, on June 21st 2024, entitled 'Chanel No. 5'. The song features a verse that runs thus:

> Fold for me like origami
> Magic and real like Murakami
> Red chipped nails, I'm *wabi-sabi*
> I'm the heartbreaker, nobody's got me, yet
> Make you tongue tied like new *shibari*
> Subtle and complex like *umami*
> Up to me like *omakase*
> I'm a wild horse and nobody's got me, yet.

Murakami[91] is but one of a chain of signifiers here, gesturing toward, if not Japan, then at least an Other. What it means to be "like" Murakami is left unclear, what is clear is that Murakami has become a sort of shorthand. However, the use of his name is an unusual, jarring note in the song's chain[92]. Origami implies that the speaker's partner will capitulate to her demands, while *wabi-sabi* points toward finding beauty in the loss of her nails' lustre. The mention of the tongue in connection to *shibari* (Japanese rope-based BDSM play) introduces a more sexual element to the song, which intertwines with the consumptive imagery of the final three allusions; *umami* suggests the speaker's obscurity and supposedly difficult to summate personality (it must be felt, not described), *omakase* suggests that the speaker is in control here, while the wild horse lends itself to both major and minor readings. The major: the untamed horse must be chased down and caught, tamed, in a clichéd and tired illustration of the heterosexual pursuit. The minor: to return strictly to Japan here, horse *sashimi* is a booming trade. In this line, the speaker is simultaneously above and below their charge's station; they are elusive, but they will also be

[91] Cabello has confirmed on social media (Twitter) that the Murakami mentioned here is Haruki, not Ryu or Takashi.
[92] A politically dubious chain of signifiers, anyways.

consumed[93]. But what's Murakami doing in the middle of all this? "Magic and real" points to a magic realist reading of the writer. This again carries a sort of cultural capital I-spy effect. As a Murakamitem, the song says nothing about Haruki Murakami. But this is itemization at its core: it is the very failure to do anything but list. Cabello here has "given up on the attempt to "estrange" … daily life" (202). The other elements Cabello mentions carry specific meanings; they are things, items, philosophies. Murakami does not carry the same singular contextual meaning. This makes his inclusion in the song a bum note which disintegrates the verse's house of cards. It is however, still useful as an example of the industrious nature of the Murakamitem trade.

This is but one example of a development in Murakami-land that the dissertation is unable to fully account for. There will be others, and they will be both expected and unexpected. More popstars and celebrities will cite Murakami as an influence or favourite writer. More fanfiction will centre his literature. The forthcoming publication of Murakami's latest novel, *The City and its Uncertain Walls*, is scheduled to be published in English in November 2024, will likely inspire further pieces of fanart and further discussions on the question of Murakami's sexism. Most interestingly, Jay Rubin's re-translation of *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*, is due for release in December 2024. Whether this version will, in years to come, replace the Birnbaum version remains to be seen. Undoubtedly, the reception to this retranslated (and supposedly more faithful) version of the novel will help to put Murakami-land in sharper relief.

[93] Horse *sashimi* is somewhat regionally specific to Japan, as horse is not a popular meat for consumption in most other regions. Perhaps this too functions as a defense mechanism, preloaded in the song's lyrics, should it fail to chart. It too is specific.

Fig. 8: Front and back view of UNIQLO "Murakami Radio" shirt. Other shirts were produced celebrating *1Q84*, *Norwegian Wood*, *Sputnik Sweetheart,* and *Kafka on the Shore*.

Fig. 9: Murakami's "Peace For All" UNIQLO shirt (Fast Retailing, 2022). Designed by the author.

In 2021, Murakami released the short book *Murakami T: The T-Shirts I Love*, an amusing guide to the writer's t-shirt collection. The book is comprised of a series of short articles Murakami wrote for the popular Japanese magazine *Popeye* between 2018 and 2020. His collection ranges from band shirts to local election shirts[94] to more traditionally tourist shirts (a Guinness shirt

[94] It is from one of these that Murakami took the name Tony Takitani, for the short story of the same name published in the short story collection *Blind Willow, Sleeping Woman*.

marks his time in Ireland). Each t-shirt is accompanied by a few short lines, explaining the significance (or in many cases, the lack of significance) Murakami ascribes to each of these shirts. The most telling part of the book occurs when Murakami reveals his fondness for t-shirts decorated with no image, only text: "These aren't T-shirts with some significant written message, but ones with a kind of random writing that make you shake your head, wondering what the heck it means ... They also go with lots of other clothes. Which is why whenever I spot one of these, I end up buying it" (52). The book is a banal little thing; there are no major surprises in his collection of t-shirts. And yet – a sense of the 'Weird' abounds. The book is entirely out of sync with what is expected of a supposedly serious literary writer (earlier, comparisons were drawn between Murakmai and Ishiguro: it is difficult to imagine Ishiguro releasing a similar book). When Murakami mentions wondering "what the heck" a t-shirt slogan means, the feeling of bewilderment is transferred to the reader as they leaf through photographs of Murakami's slogan shirts. By the end of the reading experience, the book has assumed another form. It seems a companion to the UNIQLO collaborations. Both are catalogued collections of t-shirts: one allows the wearer to dress up as a fan of Murakami, the other allows the wearer to dress up as Murakami himself.

(ii) Conclusion: My Murakami Day, my Murakami year

Murakami-land is ever-evolving. In 2008, Vintage released the *Murakami Diary* for the year 2009. Although out of print, Amazon still hosts a store page facilitating the sale of used copies (currently there is one available for a mere £684.99, plus shipping). On the store page, a blurb serves as a time capsule that captures the innate 'meaning' of anglophone Murakami at the time: "[t]his is a diary like no other, faithful to all that is witty, surreal, sexy and beautiful in Murakami's work. A must-have for fans of Murakami, fans of Vintage fiction and fans of unique design, this diary will appeal to everyone as a quirky companion for 2009". In 2019, Vintage published a new diary, *Murakami 2020 Diary*. The Amazon page for this iteration runs thus: "Murakami's distinctive blend of the mysterious and the everyday, of melancholy and humour, continues to enchant readers, ensuring his place as one of the world's most acclaimed and well-loved writers. This diary includes visual and textual references to his works, from *Wind/Pinball*, *A Wild Sheep Chase* and *Norwegian Wood* to *Killing Commendatore*".

In the period between the two diaries, the selling of Murakami has shifted drastically. Where once his fiction was "witty, surreal, sexy", it has become a "blend of the mysterious and

the everyday". The change in product descriptions was somewhat apt in retrospect; the year 2020 saw the arrival of COVID-19, which disrupted any prior understanding of what the "everyday" could mean. Suddenly, the 'Murakami year' that the diary promises is more akin to the experiences of Aomame (social isolation and confinement to one's apartment/house), than it is to the flâneur experience of Murakami-land (embodied by Toru Okada's adventures). This is at the heart of why Murakami-land is a fraught term: Murakami represents multiple different things at once, to different people, at different times. Situating Murakami necessitates an understanding of time, space, and place. Sometimes, Murakami's appearance in everyday culture is baffling and leaves one like Murakami, wondering "what the heck it means" (52). This is the first step toward a Murakami-land: accepting the possibility of pluralities and the limitations of space and place as a way of locating his fictions. The diaries point to an extension of Harry Styles' Murakami birthday. However, both fall short. A Murakami year or birthday is bought, exchanged, resold. But Murakami-land can – through fan culture, though close reading, through adaptation – become a lens, a way of seeing, and a way of restoring a mystic, mythic, and potentive quality to the world around us.

Acknowledgements

I would like to first express my profound thanks to Dr. Michael Hinds, for being a both patient and trusting supervisor. He pushed this project in many new, unexpected, and strange directions, all the while ensuring that my wayward ramblings were supported by some measure of critical theory. His knowledge, interest, and lived experience in my areas of research made the daunting task of a PhD doable.

I would also like to show my gratitude to the DCU School of English, who fostered a productive and friendly research culture. I would especially like to thank: Dr. Keith O'Sullivan for facilitating my research trip to Tokyo in the Summer of 2023; Dr. Paula Murphy and Dr. Kit Fryatt for their formative and encouraging feedback at annual research reviews and key points in the project; Dr. Gearóid O'Flaherty for his support with my teaching responsibilities; and David Wilders for countless coffee breaks and conversations. Every member of the School of English has helped in one or many ways and I am grateful to have completed my research in such a positive environment.

My thanks too, to all of my family. I would especially like to thank my parents, Sharon and Gerry, and my aunt, Elaine. The interest, support, and patience offered by all made this thesis a reality. I am profoundly grateful to all of their support in a very difficult final year. Thanks too, to all of the Caffrey, Mills, and Smith families: all helped to support and encourage me in various ways through the entire PhD process.

My eternal gratitude and love, finally, to my wife Amy Smith. I am thankful for her guidance in the areas of fandom and online fan cultures. Her expert BTS knowledge proved invaluable. My deepest gratitude for her belief in my abilities, her love, and her support across an often difficult four years. You made it possible.

Bibliography

"A Feminist Critique of Murakami Novels, With Murakami Himself". *Lithub*. Translated by Sam Bett and David Boyd. 7 Apr. 2020, https://lithub.com/a-feminist-critique-of-murakami-novels-with-murakami-himself/

"A Thief, A Mole, An Orgy". *Harley Quinn*, created by Justin Halpern, series 3, episode 4, *HBO Max*, 9 Oct. 2022. [Streaming]

"Beef". *The Bear*, created by Christopher Storer, series 2, episode 1, *Disney Plus*, 18 Jul. 2023. [Streaming]

"Bridezilla". *Oxford English Dictionary*, accessed 25 Feb. 2024, https://www.oed.com/dictionary/bridezilla_n?tab=factsheet#176958152

"BTS Artist Homepage". *Spotify*, accessed 24 Oct. 2024, https://open.spotify.com/artist/3Nrfpe0tUJi4K4DXYWgMUX?si=6d2DIxKeTTyEktndapzqyg

"Dive Underground to Shinjuku Dug, A Charming Old Jazz Café". *Shinjuku Guide,* 22 Nov. 2018, https://web.archive.org/web/20240105112124/https://www.shinjuku-guide.com/articles/other/dive-underground-shinjuku-dug-charming-old-jazz-cafe.html [Website archived, accessible via the Wayback Machine]

"Godzilla Vs. Yukio Mishima". *Art of Europe*, 1998, https://www.artofeurope.com/misc/mishima.html

"Harry Styles Artist Homepage". Spotify, accessed 22 Oct. 2024, https://open.spotify.com/artist/6KImCVD70vtIoJWnq6nGn3?si=4BVPaWnSQYGwmJaPWi0VMw

"Here are 12+ Recommended Books from BTS RM for You to Read". *KPop Post*. 7 Sep. 2020, https://www.kpoppost.com/12-recommended-books-from-bts-rm/

"Holophrase". *Oxford English Dictionary*. Accessed 15 Jan. 2024, https://www.oed.com/dictionary/holophrase_n?tab=factsheet#1472888

"Information on Clearance Procedures for International Mail". Tokyo Customs. Accessed 24 Oct. 2024, https://www.customs.go.jp/tokyo/english/yuubin/index.htm

"Japan – The Last Samurai". *Time Magazine*, 7 Dec. 1970, https://time.com/archive/6814844/japan-the-last-samurai/

"Meaning of the first name Haruki" *Ancestry*, 2024. https://www.ancestry.com/first-name-meaning/haruki

"Memoranda". *Nintendo eStore*. 6 Nov. 2022, https://www.nintendo.com/us/store/products/memoranda-switch/

"Murakami Family History". *Ancestry*. 2024, https://www.ancestry.com/name-origin?surname=murakami#:~:text=Murakami%20Family%20History-,Murakami%20Surname%20Meaning,Murakami%20(926%E2%80%93967).

"Peace For All". *Fast Retailing*, 28 Oct. 2022, https://www.fastretailing.com/eng/sustainability/community/peace_for_all.html

"Smashing Pumpkins - Doomsday Clock Reimagined (01)". *YouTube*. Uploaded by Zero, 14 Jan. 2024, https://youtu.be/kH8AIEWjkeo?feature=shared

"Sydney Sweeney and Michael Longfellow Have a SNL Meet-Cute", *YouTube*. Uploaded by Saturday Night Live, 28 Feb. 2024, https://youtu.be/Vrz7iGQQsY0?feature=shared

"UT Meets T-shirt Fan Haruki Murakami". *UT Magazine*, 11 Mar. 2021 https://www.uniqlo.com/jp/en/contents/feature/ut-magazine/s72/

Aeschylus; and Richmond Alexander Lattimore. *Oresteia: Agamemnon, The Libation Bearers, The Eumenides*. University of Chicago Press, 1953.

Akashi, Motoko. "Translator celebrity: investigating Haruki Murakami's visibility as a translator". *Celebrity Studies*, 9(2), 2018, 271–278. https://doi.org/10.1080/19392397.2018.1458531

Anno, Hideaki; Kazuya Tsurumaki, Katsuichi Nakayama, and Mahiro Maeda, directors. *Evangelion 3.0+1.01: Thrice Upon A Time*. Toho Co./Toei Co., 2022. [DVD]

Aramaki, Shinji, director. *Appleseed*. Toho, 2004. [DVD]

Armitrage, Simon. "Rough Crossings". *The New Yorker*, 16 Dec. 2007, https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2007/12/24/rough-crossings

Ashcroft, Bill; Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures.* 2nd ed., Routledge, 2002.

Ashliman, D.L.; and Anne E. Duggan. “Incest, Various Motifs in A (and T)”. *Archetypes and Motifs in Folklore and Literature: A Handbook*, edited by Jane Garry and Hasan El-Shamy, Routledge, 2005, pp 432-445.

Augé, Marc. *Non-places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Super-Modernity*. Translated by John Howe, Verso Books, 1997.

Baker, J.I. “Godzilla”. *LIFE Magazine*, vol. 19, May 2019.

Bakhtin, Mikhail. “Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel”. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, translated by Michael Holquist and Caryl Emerson, edited by Michael Holquist, University of Texas Press, 1981, pp 84-259.

Barthes, Roland. *Mythologies*. Translated by Annette Lavers, Paladin Books, 1989.

Barthes, Roland. *The Empire of Signs*. Translated by Richard Howard, Noonday, 1992.

Barton, Eric. “Why Japan celebrates Christmas with KFC”. BBC, 19 Dec. 2016, https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20161216-why-japan-celebrates-christmas-with-kfc

Bascom, William. “The Forms of Folklore: Prose Narratives”. *Journal of American Folklore*, vol. 78, No. 307, 1965, pp 3-20. *JSTOR*. https://www.jstor.org/stable/538099

Baumbach, Noah, director. *The Squid and the Whale*. Sony Pictures, 2006. [DVD]

Bausells, Marta. “Haruki Murakami: 'My lifetime dream is to be sitting at the bottom of a well'”. *The Guardian*, 24 Aug. 2014, https://www.theguardian.com/books/booksblog/2014/aug/24/haruki-murakami-my-lifetime-dream-is-to-be-sitting-at-the-bottom-of-a-well

Bay, Michael, director. *The Rock*. Buena Vista, 1996. *Disney Plus* [Streaming]

Beller, Manfred; and Joep Leerssen. “Foreword”. *Imagology: The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters*, edited by Manfred Beller and Joep Leerssen, Rodopi, 2007, pp XIII-3.

Benjamin, Walter. “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”. *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, translated by J. A. Underwood, Penguin, 2008.

Benjamin, Walter. “Unpacking my Library”. *Illuminations*, translated by Harry Zohn, edited by Hannah Arendt, Schocken Books, 2007, pp 59-69.

Berger, John. *Ways of Seeing*. Penguin Classics, 2008.

Bigman, Fran. “With the Haruki Murakami Superfans at a Midnight Launch Party”, *Lithub*, 12 Oct. 2018, https://lithub.com/with-the-haruki-murakami-superfans-at-a-midnight-launch-party/

bluecircus. “Little Lost Sputnik”. *Archive of Our Own*, 13 Oct. 2017, https://archiveofourown.org/works/12349761/chapters/28170117#workskin

Bong, Joon-Ho, director. *Okja*. Netflix, 2017. *Netflix* [Streaming]

Bong, Joon-Ho, director. *Parasite*. Criterion Collection, 2019. [Blu-ray]

Booth, Paul. “Fandom In/As The Academy”. *Flowjournal.org*, Special Issue: Aca-Fandom, 17 Dec. 2010, https://www.flowjournal.org/2010/12/fandom-in-as-the-academy/

Bourdieu, Pierre. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Translated by Richard Nice, Harvard University Press, 1984.

Bradshaw, Nick. “The Mad Mad Mad Mad Worlds of Shinkai Makoto”. *Sight and Sound*, vol. 33, issue 4, pp 38-46.

Bruns, Axel. “Produsage: Towards a Broader Framework for User-Led Content”. *C&C'07: Proceedings of the 6th ACM SIGCHI conference on Creativity & cognition*, 13 June 2007 https://doi.org/10.1145/1254960.1254975, pp 99-106.

BTS. “Butterfly”. *The Most Beautiful Moment in Life Pt. 2*, BIGHIT Music, 2015. [CD]

BTS. “Sea”. *Love Yourself: Her*, BIGHIT Music, 2017. [CD]

BTS. *Map of the Soul: 7*. BIGHIT Music, 2020. [CD]

BTS. *Wings*. BIGHIT Music, 2016. [CD]

Buruma, Ian. *Inventing Japan*. Modern Library, 2004.

Cabello, Camila. “Chanel No. 5”, *C, XOXO*, Geffen/Interscope Records, 2024. *Spotify* [Streaming]

Cabello, Camila. “the world of C, XOXO is a very sensual one , and in the root meaning sense of that word. sensual meaning “of the senses”- taste, touch, sight, smell, sound

…” *Twitter*, 20 Jun. 2024, https://x.com/Camila_Cabello/status/1803896427804004543

Caffrey, Thomas. “What do Harry Styles and BTS have in common?” *RTE*, 26 Jul. 2022, https://www.rte.ie/brainstorm/2022/0726/1312251-harry-styles-bts-haruki-murakami/

Campbell, Joseph; and Bill Moyers. *The Power of Myth*. First Anchor Books, 1991.

Carlino, Lewis John, director. *The Sailor Who Fell From Grace With the Sea*. Avco, 1976.

Carpenter, John, director. *The Thing*. Universal Studios, 1982. [DVD]

Cesereanu, Ruxandra. “Orestes and Oedipus: Differences, Similarities, and Contaminations”. *Caietele Echinox*, vol. 17, 2009, https://www.academia.edu/42611290/Orestes_and_Oedipus pp. 323-333.

Chin, Bertha; and Lori Hitchcock Morimoto. “Towards a Theory of Transcultural Fandom”. *Participations Journal of Audience & Reception Studies*, vol. 10, issue 1, May 2013, http://dx.doi.org/10.17613/M6RP98 pp. 91-108

Chozick, Matthew Richard. “DE-EXOTICIZING HARUKI MURAKAMI’S RECEPTION.” *Comparative Literature Studies*, vol. 45, no. 1, 2008, *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25659633 pp 62-73.

Clean_Elevator_2247. “‘Norwegion wood is the first and last murakami book I’ll ever read’”. *Reddit*, 2024, https://www.reddit.com/r/books/comments/1dc1vci/norwegion_wood_is_the_first_and_last_murakami/ [Post]

cmaggin. “Sirius”. *Fanfiction.net*, 2 Apr. 2014, https://www.fanfiction.net/s/10238170/1/Sirius-Sputnik-Sweetheart-Fan-Fiction

Coppola, Sofia, director. *Lost in Translation*. Focus Features, 2003. [DVD]

Crowther, Bosley. “Screen: Horror Import; ‘Godzilla’ a Japanese film, Is at State”. The New York Times, 28 Apr. 1956, https://www.nytimes.com/1956/04/28/archives/screen-horror-import-godzilla-a-japanese-film-is-at-state.html

Cuarón, Carlos, director. *The Second Bakery Attack*. Malule Entertainment, 2010. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xAYrMdirtBo

Damon, S. Foster. *A Blake Dictionary.* Thames and Hudson, 1965.

Dark Souls. Prepare to Die Edition, Fromsoftware, 2011.

Deleuze, Gilles; and Félix Guattari. "What is a Minor Literature?". *The Routledge Critical and Cultural Theory Reader*, edited by Neil Badmington and Julia Thomas, Routledge, 2008, pp. 166-177.

Deleuze, Gilles; and Félix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus*. Translated by Brian Massumi, Bloomsbury, 2021.

Derrida, Jacques. "White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy". *New Literary History*, vol. 6, no. 1, translated by F. C. T. Moore, Johns Hopkins, Autumn 1974, *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/468341 pp 5-74.

Dil, Jonathan. "What's Wrong With These People? The Anatomy of Dependence in *Norwegian Wood*" *Haruki Murakami: Challenging Authors*. Edited by Matthew Carl Strecher and Paul L. Thomas, Sense Publishers, 2016. pp. 73-87.

Dubois, Page. "Oedipus as Detective: Sophocles, Simenon, Robbe-Grillet." *Yale French Studies*, no. 108, 2005, *JSTOR*, https://doi.org/10.2307/4149301 pp. 102–15.

Duggan, Katie. "The Sounds of Solitude in 'Tony Takitani'" 24 Jul. 2020, https://filmdaze.net/tony-takitani/

Edgerton, Samuel. "From mental matrix to mappamundi to Christian empire: the heritage of Ptolemaic cartography in the renaissance". *Art and Cartography: Six Historical Essays*, edited by D. Woodward, University of Chicago Press.

Edwards, Gareth, director. *Godzilla*. Warner Bros., 2014. [DVD]

Emmerich, Roland, director. *Godzilla*. Sony, 1997. [VHS]

Fisher, Mark. *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* Zero Books, 2014.

Fisher, Mark. *The Weird and the Eerie*. Zero Books, 2016.

FitzGAYrald. "The Walk to Remember". *Archive of Our Own*, 11 Jan. 2011, https://archiveofourown.org/works/28514619/chapters/69871773

Fitzgerald, F. Scott. *The Great Gatsby*. Wordsworth Editions, 1992.

Flanagan, Damian. *Yukio Mishima*, Reaktion Books, 2014. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.dcu.idm.oclc.org/lib/dcu/detail.action?docID=1839951.

Flood, Alison. “Haruki Murakami’s new novel deemed ‘indecent’ by Hong Kong Censors”. *The Guardian*, 25 Jul. 2015, https://www.theguardian.com/books/2018/jul/25/haruki-murakami-novel-indecent-hong-kong-censors-killing-commendatore

Flood, Alison. “Murakami’s 1Q84 launches with midnight openings”. *The Guardian*, 17. Oct. 2011., https://www.theguardian.com/books/2011/oct/17/murakami-1q84-midnight-openings

Flynn, Deirdre. “The Transcreation of Tokyo: The Universality of Murakami’s Urban Landscape”. *Haruki Murakami: Challenging Authors*. Edited by Matthew Carl Strecher and Paul L. Thomas. Sense Publishers, 2016. pp. 87-10.1

Flynn, Deirdre. “The Uncanny City: Delving into the Sewers and Subconscious of Tokyo in Haruki Murakami’s *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*”. *Supernatural Cities: Enchantment, Anxiety, and Spectrality*. Edited by Karl Bell. Boydell Press, 2019. pp. 206-229.

Foldes, Pierre, director. *Blind Willow, Sleeping Woman*. Dublin International Film Festival, 2023. [Screening]

Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish*. Translated by Alan Sheridan, Penguin, 2019.

geoffbingo27. “finished 1Q84 for the first time and drew this alternate cover.” *Reddit*, 2020, https://www.reddit.com/r/murakami/comments/k74cci/finished_1q84_for_the_first_time_and_drew_this/ [Post]

Gluck, Carol. "The Past in the Present". *Postwar Japan as History*. Edited by Andrew Gordon, University of California Press, 1993. pp 64-96

Greenwood, Johnny. *Norwegian Wood OST*. Nonesuch Records, 2011. *Spotify*. [Streaming]

Griffith, R. Drew. *The Theatre of Apollo: Divine Justice and Sophocles' Oedipus the King.* McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996, https://hdl-handle-net.dcu.idm.oclc.org/2027/heb33522.0001.001.

Hamaguchi, Ryûsuke. *Drive My Car*. Modern Films, 2021. *Mubi* [Streaming]

Hammett, Dashiel. *Red Harvest*. Vintage Books, 1992.

Harding, John Wesley, and Haruki Murakami. “Haruki Murakami.” *BOMB*, no. 46, 1994, *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40424740. pp. 40–43.

Harry Styles Lookbook. “While out in London, Harry was seen carrying a copy of “The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle” by Haruki Murakami. Thank you for @SlickNik3 for the tip! ...”. *Twitter*. 3 Mar. 2019, 1:17pm, https://x.com/styleslookbook/status/1102196410198441986

Hashimoto, Koji. *Godzilla*. Toho, 1984. *Criterion Channel*. [Streaming]

Hearn, Lafcadio. *Kwaidan: Stories and Studies of Strange Things*. E-artnow, 2021.

Hegarty, Stephanie. “Haruki Murakami: How a Japanese writer conquered the world”, *BBC*. 17 Oct. 2011, https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-15316678

Herbert, Frank. *Dune*. Hodder & Stoughton, 2015.

Honda, Ishirō. *Godzilla*, Toho, 1954. *Criterion*. [Blu-Ray]

Hughes, John. *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*. Paramount, 1986. [DVD]

Hutcheon, Linda; and Siobhan O’Flynn. *A Theory of Adaptation / Linda Hutcheon ; with Siobhan O’Flynn*. 2nd ed., Routledge, 2013, doi:10.4324/9780203095010.

Ichikawa, Jun. *Tony Takitani*. Axiom Films, 2004. [DVD]

ImaginedFlower. “My problem with Murakami: how he writes women”. *Reddit*, 2024, https://www.reddit.com/r/books/comments/1cdeaph/my_problem_with_murakami_how_he_writes_women/ [Post]

Irodori. Starter, Elementary 1, and Elementary 2. Japan Foundation, 2023. https://www.irodori.jpf.go.jp/en/starter/pdf.html

Ishibashi, Eiko. *Drive My Car Original Soundtrack*. Space Shower Music, 2021. *Spotify*. [Streaming]

Ishiguro, Hide. “Writer, Rightist, or Freak?” *The New York Review*. 11 Dec. 1975, https://www.nybooks.com/articles/1975/12/11/writer-rightist-or-freak/

Jackson, Kevin. “Pen and Sword”. *Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters*, directed by Paul Schrader. American Zoetrope, 1985. *Criterion*. [Blu-ray]

Jameson, Fredric. *Inventions of a Present: The Novel in its Crisis of Globalization*. Verso, 2024.

Jameson, Fredric. *POSTMODERNISM, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Duke University Press, 1991.

Johnson, Larry. "Yukio Mishima, the Unambiguous, and Myself: Living Through a Writer's Legacy". *Advances in Literary Study*, 2013. Vol.1, No.4, Published Online October 2013. https://www.scirp.org/html/38712.html pp. 50-53.

Kafka, Franz. *The Metamorphosis*. Translated by Michael Hoffman, Penguin, 2022.

Kain_japan. "Meiji x Kaiju No. 8 Collaboration Milk Chocolate, Hi Milk Chocolate, Black Chocolate, Strawberry Chocolate, Matcha Chocolate …" *Instagram*, 31 Jul. 2024, https://www.instagram.com/p/C-FOAleSmYc/?igsh=MWkxbnc3ZDQxYmtjNA== [Post]

Kalat, David. *A Critical History of Toho's Godzilla Series*, McFarland & Company Publishers, Jefferson, 2010.

Karashima, David. *Who We're Reading When We're Reading Murakami*. Catapult, 2020.

Kawakami, Mieko. "Acts of Recognition". *Lithub*. Translated by Sam Bett and David Boyd, 3 Oct. 2019, https://lithub.com/acts-of-recognition-on-the-women-characters-of-haruki-murakami/

Kawakami, Mieko. *Breasts and Eggs*. Picador, 2020.

Kawakami, Mieko; and Haruki Murakami. *Mimizuku wa Tasogare ni Tobitatsu: Kawakami Mieko kiku Murakami Haruki Kataru*. Shinchosha, 2017.

Kelts, Roland. "Still swinging for the fences: Murakami in conversation". Times Literary Supplement. 23 Feb. 2019, https://www.the-tls.co.uk/literature/haruki-murakami-roland-kelts-interview/

Kelts, Roland. "The Harukists - Disappointed". *The New Yorker*. 16 Oct. 2012, https://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/the-harukists-disappointed

Kelts, Roland. *Japanamerica: How Japanese Pop Culture Has Invaded the US*. Palgrave MacMillan, 2006.

Kida, Takahiro. Personal correspondence. July 2024.

Kim, Soyoung. “Chongryon: The only way North Korea talks to Japan”. *Asia Times*. 18th January 2023, https://asiatimes.com/2023/01/chongryon-the-only-way-north-korea-talks-to-japan/

King-O’Riain, Rebecca Chiyoko. ““They were having so much fun, so genuinely . . .”: K-pop fan online affect and corroborated authenticity”. *New Media & Society*, vol. 23, issue 9, 2021, https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444820941194 pp 2820-2838

Kubrick, Stanley, director. *Eyes Wide Shut*. Warner Bros., 1999. [DVD]

Kureishi, Hanif. *The Buddha of Suburbia*. Faber and Faber, 1990.

Kurosawa, Akira, director. *Drunken Angel*. Toho, 1948.

Kurosawa, Akira, director. *Ikiru*. Toho, 1952. *BFI* [DVD]

Kurosawa, Akira, director. *Kagemusha*. Toho, 1980. [DVD]

Kurosawa, Akira, director. *Ran*. Toho, 1985. [DVD]

Kurosawa, Akira, director. *Rashomon*. Toho, 1950. *Mubi* [Streaming]

Kurosawa, Akira, director. *Sanshiro Sugata*. Toho, 1943. [DVD]

Kurosawa, Akira, director. *Stray Dog*. Toho, 1949. *Criterion* [DVD]

Kurosawa, Akira, director. *The Idiot*. Toho, 1951. [DVD]

Kurosawa, Akira, director. *Throne of Blood*. Toho, 1957. *BFI* [DVD]

Kurosawa, Akira, director. *Yojimbo*. Toho, 1961. *BFI* [DVD]

Lacan, Jacques. “The Insistence of the Letter in the Unconscious”. *Yale French Studies*, no. 36/37, Structuralism, 1966, pp. 112-147.

Lange, Jeva. “Murakami is Terrible Now”. *The Week*, 9 Oct. 2018, https://theweek.com/articles/800717/murakami-terrible-now

Lawrence, Ken. *The Murakami Pilgrimage*. Sailingstone Press, 2016.

Lee, Chang-Dong. *Burning*. Thunderbird Releasing, 2018. [DVD]

Leerssen, Joep. “Imagology: History and Method”. *Imagology: The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters*, edited by Manfred Beller and Joep Leerssen, Rodopi, 2007. Pp 17-33.

LG03. “It has been 1 0 days since someone has complained about Murakami on /r/books”, *Reddit*. 2024, https://www.reddit.com/r/books/comments/1dc1vci/comment/l7w7f8h/?utm_source=share&utm_medium=web3x&utm_name=web3xcss&utm_term=1&utm_content=share_button [Comment]

lilacflowers. “Can’t Help Myself”. *Archive of Our Own*. 12 Dec. 2016, https://archiveofourown.org/works/8823658

Linden, Sheri. “‘Blind Willow, Sleeping Woman’ Review: A Resonant Dreamscape of Aftershocks”. *The Hollywood Reporter*. 13 Apr. 2023,https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/movies/movie-reviews/blind-willow-sleeping-woman-review-haruki-murakami-1235365214/

Littlewood, Ian. “Japan”, *Imagology: The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters*, edited by Manfred Beller and Joep Leerssen, Rodopi, 2007. Pp 200-202.

Luetkenhaus, Holly & Weinstein, Zoe. *Austentatious: The Evolving World of Jane Austen Fans*. University of Iowa Press, 2019.

Lukács, György. *The Meaning of Contemporary Realism.* Translated by John & Necke Mander, Redwood Press, 1963.

Lyall, Sarah. “Haruki Murakami Says He Doesn’t Dream. He Writes”. *The New York Times*. 10 Oct. 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/10/books/murakami-killing-commendatore.html [Paywalled]

Marks, Andrea. “Too Twee or Not Too Twee: Meet the People Behind the Wes Anderson TikTok Trend” *Rolling Stone*. 21 Apr. 2023, https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-features/wes-anderson-tik-tok-trend-1234721548/

Marshall, Colin. “Murakami in the Movies” *The New Yorker*. 4 May 2023, https://www.newyorker.com/culture/cultural-comment/murakami-in-the-movies

Marx, William. *The Tomb of Oedipus: Why Greek Tragedies were Not Tragic*. Verso, 2022.

Mastmalang1110. “Laughs in Aomame”. *Reddit*. 2022, https://www.reddit.com/r/murakami/comments/unaa7v/laughs_in_aomame/ [Post]

McCurry, Justin. “Secrets and advice: Haruki Murakami responds to readers’ questions online”. *The Guardian*. 15 Jan. 2015, https://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/jan/16/haruki-murakami-agony-uncle-fans-online-questions

Meitgang, Herbert. “From Japan, Big Macs and Marlboros in Stories”, *The New York Times*, 12 May 1993, https://www.nytimes.com/1993/05/12/books/from-japan-big-macs-and-marlboros-in-stories.html [paywalled]

Michelson, Bruce. “The Myth of Gatsby”. *Modern Fiction Studies*. 1981 Vol. 26, No. 4 (Winter 1980-81), *JSTOR*, https://www.jstor.org/stable/26280602 pp. 563-577

Mirrlees, Hope. *Paris*. Faber and Faber, 2020.

Mishima, Yukio, director. “Patriotism”. Japan Art Theatre Guild, 1965. *Mubi* [Streaming]

Mishima, Yukio. “Gojira no Tamago”. *Chuokoron*, 1955.

Mishima, Yukio. “Patriotism”. *The Penguin Book of Japanese Short Stories*. Translated by Geoffrey W. Sargent, Penguin, 2019.

Mishima, Yukio. “Star”. *Star*. Translated by Jonathan Samuel Bett, Penguin, 2019.

Mishima, Yukio. *Confessions of a Mask*. Translated by Meredith Weatherby, Penguin, 2017.

Mishima, Yukio. *The Sailor Who Fell From Grace with the Sea*. Translated by John Nathan, Vintage Books, 1999.

Mishima, Yukio. *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion*. Translated by Ivan Morris, Vintage, 2001.

Mishima, Yukio. *Thirst for Love*. Translated by Alfred H. Marks, Vintage Books, 2009.

Miyoshi, Masao. *Off Center: Power and Culture Relations Between Japan and the United States*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge. 1991.

Molony, Senan. “Taoiseach Leo Varadkar says some people are ‘all fur coat and no knickers’ amid calls for a wealth tax”. *Irish Independent*, Jan. 2023, https://www.independent.ie/irish-news/politics/taoiseach-leo-varadkar-says-some-people-are-all-fur-coat-and-no-knickers-amid-calls-for-a-wealth-tax/42296290.html

Moreland, Quinn. “Drive My Car – Original Soundtrack”. *Pitchfork*, 14 Feb. 2022, https://pitchfork.com/reviews/albums/eiko-ishibashi-drive-my-car-original-soundtrack/ [Review]

Mowg. *Burning (Original Movie Soundtrack)*. Milan Entertainment, 2020. *Spotify*. [Streaming, currently unavailable in region]

“Murakami 2020 Diary”. *Amazon*, 8 Aug. 2019, https://www.amazon.co.uk/Murakami-2020-Diary-Haruki/dp/1787301621

“Murakami Diary”. *Amazon*, 7 Aug. 2008, https://www.amazon.co.uk/Murakami-Diary-Haruki/dp/0099523671

Murakami, Haruki. “Barn Burning”. *The Elephant Vanishes*, translated by Alfred Birnbaum, Vintage Books, 2003.

Murakami, Haruki. “Blind Willow, Sleeping Woman”. *Blind Willow, Sleeping Woman*, translated by Philip Gabriel, Vintage Books, 2007.

Murakami, Haruki. “Family Affair”. *The Elephant Vanishes*, translated by Jay Rubin, Vintage Books, 2003.

Murakami, Haruki. “Firefly”. *Blind Willow, Sleeping Woman*, translated by Philip Gabriel, 2007.

Murakami, Haruki. “Hear the Wind Sing”. *Wind/Pinball*, translated by Ted Goossen, Vintage Books, 2015.

Murakami, Haruki. “Introduction”. *The Penguin Book of Japanese Short Stories*, translated by Jay Rubin, Penguin, 2019.

Murakami, Haruki. “Kino”. *Men Without Women*, translated by Philip Gabriel, Vintage Books, 2018.

Murakami, Haruki. “Pinball, 1973”. *Wind/Pinball*, translated by Ted Goossen, Vintage Books, 2015.

Murakami, Haruki. “Sleep”. *The Elephant Vanishes*, translated by Jay Rubin, Vintage Books, 2003.

Murakami, Haruki. “Super-Frog Saves Tokyo”. *after the quake*, translated by Jay Rubin, Vintage Books, 2002.

Murakami, Haruki. “The Elephant Vanishes”. *The Elephant Vanishes*, translated by Jay Rubin, Vintage Books, 2003.

Murakami, Haruki. “The Kidney-Shaped Stone That Moves Everyday”. *Blind Willow, Sleeping Woman*, translated by Jay Rubin, Vintage Books, 2007.

Murakami, Haruki. “The Second Bakery Attack”. *The Elephant Vanishes*, translated by Jay Rubin, Vintage Books, 2003.

Murakami, Haruki. “The Wind-Up Bird and Tuesday’s Women”. *The Elephant Vanishes*, translated by Alfred Birnbaum, Vintage Books, 2003.

Murakami, Haruki. “Tony Takitani”. *Blind Willow, Sleeping Woman*, translated by Jay Rubin, Vintage Books, 2007.

Murakami, Haruki. *1Q84: Book Three*. Translated by Jay Rubin, Vintage Books, 2012.

Murakami, Haruki. *1Q84: Books One and Two*. Translated by Jay Rubin, Vintage Books, 2012.

Murakami, Haruki. *A Wild Sheep Chase*. Translated by Alfred Birnbaum, Vintage Books, 2003.

Murakami, Haruki. *After Dark*. Translated by Jay Rubin, Vintage Books, 2007.

Murakami, Haruki. *Birthday Stories*. Translated by Jay Rubin, Vintage Books, 2006.

Murakami, Haruki. *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage*. Translated by Philip Gabriel, Vintage Books, 2014.

Murakami, Haruki. *Dance, Dance, Dance*. Translated by Alfred Birnbaum, The Harvill Press, 1994.

Murakami, Haruki. *End of the World and Hard-Boiled Wonderland*. Translated by Jay Rubin, Vintage Books, 2024.

Murakami, Haruki. *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*. Translated by Alfred Birnbaum, Vintage Books, 2003.

Murakami, Haruki. *Killing Commendatore*. Translated by Philip Gabriel and Ted Goossen, Vintage Books, 2018.

Murakami, Haruki. *Murakami T: The T-Shirts I Love*. Translated by Philip Gabriel, Penguin Random House, 2021.

Murakami, Haruki. *Norwegian Wood*. Translated by Alfred Birnbaum, Kodansha, 1989.

Murakami, Haruki. *Norwegian Wood*. Translated by Jay Rubin, Vintage Books, 2003.

Murakami, Haruki. *South of the Border, West of the Sun*. Translated by Philip Gabriel. Vintage Books, 1999.

Murakami, Haruki. *Sputnik Sweetheart*. Translated by Philip Gabriel. Vintage Books, 2002.

Murakami, Haruki. *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*. Translated by Jay Rubin, Vintage Books, 2003.

Murakami, Haruki. *Underground*. Translated by Alfred Birnbaum and Philip Gabriel, Vintage Books, 2000.

Murakami, Haruki. *Kafka on the Shore*. Translated by Philip Gabriel, Vintage Books, 2005.

Namjoon's Library. "Books". Joonies Library, https://joonieslibrary.carrd.co/#books

Nathan, John. *Living Carelessly in Tokyo and Elsewhere: A Memoir*. Free Press, 2008.

Nihei, Chikako. "Thinking outside the Chinese Box: David Mitchell and Murakami Haruki's subversion of stereotypes about Japan". *New Voices*, vol. 3, Dec. 2009, DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.21159/nv.03.05 pp. 86-103.

Obama, Barack. [@BarackObama] "As we wind down 2019, I wanted to share with you my annual list of favorites that made the last year a little brighter. We'll start with books today – movies and music coming soon. I hope you enjoy these as much as I did." *Twitter*. 28 December 2019, 9:16pm, https://x.com/BarackObama/status/1211033245812441091?t=AjROVNEcuIuvhzZgu-hhWA&s=19

Obama, Barack. [@BarackObama] "Next up are my favorite movies of the year. Each of these films tells a powerful story, and I hope you enjoy them as much as I did." *Twitter*. 16 December 2021, 6:36pm, https://x.com/BarackObama/status/1471549865247260677?t=0k-ayYY6_SBZQcGmyNB4eA&s=19

Oe, Kenzaburo. *The Silent Cry*. Translated by John Bester, Kodansha International, 1974.

Okawara, Takao, director. *Godzilla vs Destoroyah*. Toho, 1995. [DVD]

Osmon, Andre. “How a Murakami story about a worm inspired two new animated films”. *BFI*, 30 Mar. 2023, https://www.bfi.org.uk/features/how-murakami-story-about-worm-inspired-two-new-animated-films

Parker, Alan, director. *Angel Heart*. Tristar Pictures, 1987. [DVD]

Perry, Tom. “Johnny Greenwood Norwegian Wood OST”. Drowned in Sound, 7 Mar. 2011, https://drownedinsound.com/releases/16077/reviews/4142293 [Review]

Pokémon Go. Niantic, 2016.

Pollock, Griselda. *Differencing the Canon: Feminism and the Writing of Art’s Histories.* Routledge, 1999.

Power, Kevin. “Another portion of literary fast food from Murakami”. *Business Post*, 14 Oct. 2018, https://www.businesspost.ie/more-life-arts/another-portion-of-literary-fast-food-from-murakami/

RADWIMPS; and Kazuma Jinnouchi. *Suzume (Motion Picture Soundtrack).* Vogue ting co., 2022. *Spotify* [Streaming]

Ragone, August. *Eiji Tsubaraya: Master of Monsters,* Chronicle Books, 2007.

Remarkable-Student-1. “Is there really a problem with Murakami’s portrayal of women?”. *Reddit*, 2024, https://www.reddit.com/r/murakami/comments/19afago/is_there_really_a_problem_with_murakamis/ [Post]

Rich, Nathaniel. “The Mystery of Murakami”, *The Atlantic*, September 2014, https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/09/the-mystery-of-murakami/375064/ [paywalled]

Richie, Donald. “A Personal Record.” *Film Quarterly*, vol. 14, no. 1, 1960, *JSTOR*, https://doi.org/10.2307/1211059. pp. 20–30. Accessed 24 June 2024.

Rittenberg, Julia. “A History of the Midnight Release Party”, *Book Riot*, 18 Aug.2022, https://bookriot.com/history-of-the-midnight-release-party/

Romain, Lindsey. “Bong Joon-Ho on Capitalism, Musicals, and the Global Appeal of Parasite”. *Nerdist*, 10 Oct. 2019. https://nerdist.com/article/bong-joon-ho-parasite-interview/

Rubin, Jay. *Haruki Murakami and the Music of Words*. Vintage Books, 2012.

Sakamoto, Ryuichi. *Tony Takitani*. KAB America, 2005. [CD]

Saul, Derek. "Reddit Stock Jumps 15% After First-Ever Earnings Report". *Forbes*, 7 May 2024. https://www.forbes.com/sites/dereksaul/2024/05/07/reddit-stock-jumps-15-after-first-ever-earning report/#:~:text=Reddit%20reported%20%24243%20million%20in,revenue%20per%20user%20(%242.90)

Schrader, Paul, director. *Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters*. American Zoetrope, 1985. *Criterion*. [Blu-ray]

Scott, Ridley, director. *House of Gucci*. MGM, 2021. *Prime Video*. [Streaming]

Shapiro, Lila. "The Stories Behind Haruki Murakami's Most Iconic Book Covers". *Vulture*, 21 Sep. 2018, https://www.vulture.com/2018/09/haruki-murakami-book-covers-stories-behind-them.html

Sheffield, Rob. "The Eternal Sunshine of Harry Styles". *Rolling Stone*, 26 Aug. 2019, https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-features/harry-styles-cover-interview-album-871568/

Shibata, Motoyuki. "On first person singular". *MONKEY: New Writing from Japan*, volume 3, Kinokuniya 2022. pp 162.

Shinkai, Makoto, director. "An Enclosed World". *YouTube*, 1999, uploaded by ErickAnime 14 Feb. 2021 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XBtZdmU3FXU

Shinkai, Makoto, director. *Suzume*. Anime Co., 2023. [DVD]

Shinkai, Makoto, director. *Weathering With You*. Anime Co., 2020. [DVD]

Shulman, Eviatar. *Rethinking the Buddha: Early Buddhist Philosophy as Meditative Perception*. Cambridge University Press, 2014. eBook: https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107477100

shyyasian. "Sexualisation of women is NOT HOT … Haruki Murakami is NOT HOT". *TikTok*. 12 Jan. 2023, https://www.tiktok.com/@sshyasian/video/7187753713451207941?is_from_webapp=1&web_id=7226026959628764699

Silbert, Jake. “UNIQLO UT's Charming Illustrations Celebrate Haruki Murakami's Novels and Radio Show”. *HypeBeast*, 2 Mar. 2021, https://hypebeast.com/2021/3/haruki-murakami-uniqlo-ut-books-radio-collection-tee-shirts-stickers-pins

Sklar, Richard L. "Postimperialism: Concepts and Implications". *Post-imperialism and World Politics*, Edited by David G. Becker and Richard L. Sklar, CT:Prefer Publishers, 1999. 11-36

Snider, Grant. “Haruki Murakami Bingo”. *Incidental Comics*, 1 June 2012, http://www.incidentalcomics.com/2012/06/haruki-murakami-bingo.html

Solomon, Charles. “INTERVIEW: Makoto Shinkai on Suzume”. *Animation Scoop*, 27 Nov. 2023, https://www.animationscoop.com/interview-makoto-shinkai-on-suzume/

Stanton, Andrew, director. *Wall-E*. Disney, 2008. Criterion [Blu-ray]

Strecher, Matthew Carl. *The Forbidden Worlds of Haruki Murakami*. 1st ed., University of Minnesota Press, 2014.

Stutpak. “Murakami Bingo”. *Stutpak*, accessed 11 Jul. 2020, https://www.stutpak.com/haruki-murakami-bingo

Styles, Harry. “From the Dining Table”. *Harry Styles*, Colombia Records, 2017. *Spotify* [Streaming]

Suter, Rebecca. *The Japanization of Modernity: Murakami Haruki Between Japan and the United States*. Harvard University Asia Center, 2008.

Suzuki, Erin. “Lost in Translation: Reconsidering Shakespeare’s Macbeth and Kurosawa’s *Throne of Blood*”. *Literature/Film Quarterly*, web, 2006 https://lfq.salisbury.edu/_issues/48_2/lost_in_translation_reconsidering_shakespeares_macbeth_and_kurosawas_throne_of_blood.html

Ted Lasso. Created by Jason Sudeikis, series 3, *Apple TV*, 15 Mar. 2023. [Streaming]

The Smashing Pumpkins. *Zeitgeist*. Martha’s Music, 2007. [CD]

This American Life. “Hello! We're working on a story about a romantic relationship that ends after one person in the couple reads the book "South of the Border, West of the Sun" …”. *Facebook*, 17 June 2024, <iframe src="https://www.facebook.com/plugins/post.php?href=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.face

book.com%2Fthislife%2Fposts%2Fpfbid0TyiQoBWQaxc6PqGNSAsEW5HkXWhQk71d1ZvXHXWFfHuzc7ZKGCmappasSNRs9utNl&show_text=true&width=500" width="500" height="250" style="border:none;overflow:hidden" scrolling="no" frameborder="0" allowfullscreen="true" allow="autoplay; clipboard-write; encrypted-media; picture-in-picture; web-share"></iframe>

Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Lord of the Rings*. HarperCollins, 1997.

Trần, Anh Hùng. *Norwegian Wood*. Soda Pictures, 2012. [DVD]

Trashling. "when you're reading murakami and the murakami starts murakamying". *TikTok*, 2023 https://www.tiktok.com/@trashling/video/7185939650140196102?is_from_webapp=1&web_id=7226026959628764699

Treisman, Deborah. "The Underground Worlds of Haruki Murakami". *The New Yorker*, 10 Feb. 2019, https://www.newyorker.com/culture/the-new-yorker-interview/the-underground-worlds-of-haruki-murakami#:~:text=The%20writer%20on%20his%20style,he%20encounters%20on%20the%20page.

Tuan, Yi-Fi. *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience.* University of Minnesota Press, 2001.

Twin Peaks. Created by David Lynch and Mark Frost. Showtime Home Entertainment, 2018. [DVD]

Ushijima, Shinichiro, director. *I Want To Eat Your Pancreas*. CrunchyRoll, 2020. [DVD]

Villeneuve, Denis. *Blade Runner 2049*. Warner Bros, 2017. *Netflix* [Streaming]

Wachowski, Lilly; and Lan Wachowski, directors. *The Matrix*. Warner Bros. Home Entertainment, 1999. [DVD]

Wakatsuki, Tomoki. *The Haruki Phenomenon: Haruki Murakami as Cosmopolitan Writer*. Springer, 2020.

Wallerstein, Immanuel. *World Systems Analysis: An Introduction,* Duke University Press, 2004.

WallyTusket. "This is really incredible. One of my favorite things to do after finishing a Murakami is looking up art for it that fans have done. There's a lot of good stuff out there. What's the Japanese say?" *Reddit*, 2020,

https://www.reddit.com/r/murakami/comments/k74cci/finished_1q84_for_the_first_time_and_drew_this/gephi5b/ [Comment]

White, Hilary A. “Killing Commendatore: A blizzard of the bizarre from an Eastern giant”. *Irish Independent*, 7 Oct. 2018, https://www.independent.ie/entertainment/books/book-reviews/killing-commendatore-a-blizzard-of-the-bizarre-from-an-eastern-giant/37386247.html

Wild, Peter. *Akira Kurosawa / Peter Wild*. 1st ed., Reaktion Books, 2014.

Wilde, Oscar. *The Decay of Lying*. Lamb Publishing, 1909.

Wilson, Marianne. “Uniqlo to open 20-plus stores in 2024, enter new state — here are the locations”. *Chain Store Age*, 4 May 2024, https://chainstoreage.com/uniqlo-open-20-plus-stores-2024-enter-new-state-here-are-locations

Winner, Michael, director. *Hannibal Brooks*. United Artists, 1969.

Wong, Silvia. “Berlin prize-winner Ryusuke Hamaguchi talks Cannes Competition title Drive My Car”. *Screen Daily*, 9 Jul. 2021, https://www.screendaily.com/features/berlin-prize-winner-ryusuke-hamaguchi-talks-cannes-competition-title-drive-my-car/5161390.article

Woo, John, director. *Face/Off*. 20th Century Fox, 1997. *Disney Plus* [Streaming]

Yamada, Marc. (2020) “Merging matter and memory in cinematic adaptations of Murakami Haruki’s fiction”, *Journal of Japanese and Korean Cinema*, 12:1, 2020 DOI: 10.1080/17564905.2020.1738050 pp 53-68.

Yoshihiko, Asao. “Hangul to Yale Romanization Converter”, *Asaokitan*, https://asaokitan.net/tools/hangul2yale/

Žižek, Slavoj. *Event: Philosophy in Transit*. Penguin Books, 2014.

Žižek, Slavoj. *How to Read Lacan*. Granta Books, 2006.

Žižek, Slavoj. *On Belief.* Routledge, 2001.

Žižek, Slavoj. *The Year of Dreaming Dangerously*. Verso, 2011.