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外國語文學系外國文學與語言學碩士班

碩 士 論 文

村上春樹《海邊的卡夫卡》中
暴力與性關係的魔幻寫實論述

Magical Realist Treatments of Violence and Sexual Relations in Haruki Murakami's *Kafka on the Shore*

研 究 生：楊雅如

指導教授：余君偉　博士

中 華 民 國 一0一 年 七 月

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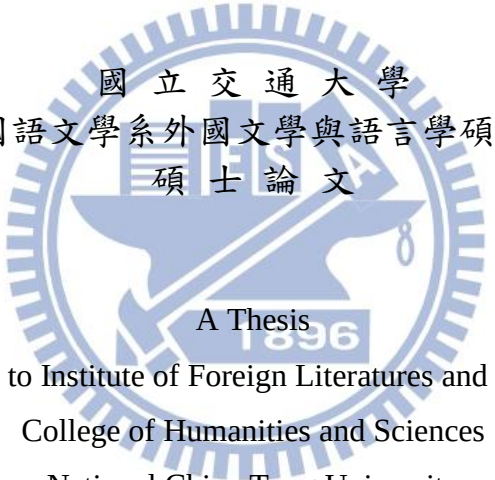

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村上春樹《海邊的卡夫卡》中暴力與性關係的魔幻寫實論述

研究生：楊雅如　　指導教授：余君偉 博士

國立交通大學外國語文學系暨外國文學與語言學碩士班

摘要

本文旨在探討村上春樹（Haruki Mukarami）如何運用魔幻寫實（magical realism）論述模糊小說《海邊的卡夫卡》(*Kafka on the Shore, 海辺のカフカ*, 2002）中的虛實界線，以及透過該手法呈現小說中暴力與性關係兩大議題。這種手法不僅帶來閱讀樂趣與諸多闡釋的可能性，令該作品更具挑戰性，同時亦可引發讀者對此兩大議題的反思。

本論文第一章將介紹魔幻寫實主義的歷史背景與特色，以及村上春樹特有的魔幻寫實寫作風格與技巧。作者的魔幻寫實論述不僅模糊小說中虛實的界線、製造虛實交錯的現象，也隱含諸多諷喻。同時，村上透過魔幻寫實的手法點出兩大議題：暴力與性關係。而這些魔幻的元素亦可能超越一般的解釋與評論。

第二章針對小說中暴力的議題進行文本分析與可能的寓意式閱讀（allegorical reading）。村上春樹在小說中描寫許多關於日本的二戰經驗，同時，角色的暴力行為也暗指相關倫理問題。這些描寫暗示了在和平主義（pacifism）與受害者（victimhood）論述的背後，戰後的道德責任與戰時日本作為侵略者的角色一直都存在。對日本人來說，如何面對二戰歷史、受害者／加害者（victimization）的論述與相關的道德責任仍是一大挑戰。

第三章則分析《海邊的卡夫卡》中主角田村卡夫卡與櫻花的姐弟之情、與佐伯小姐的忘年戀／亂倫以及卡夫卡父親的「伊底帕斯的詛咒」(the “Oedipal malediction”)。村上春樹在小說中顛覆了伊底帕斯情結（the Oedipus complex），並運用魔幻寫實的手法使「詛咒」成真。但事實上，角色的關係有著象徵性的意義，並隱含關於慾望（desire）流動投注的問題。小說中父親的死並非真正的死亡，反而暗示父權（paternity）一直存在。卡夫卡與櫻花的關係也絕非一般的姐弟之情，而包含著性幻想與慾望的壓抑。卡夫卡與佐伯小姐的曖昧關係，涉及複雜曖昧的慾望投注。

關鍵字：村上春樹、《海邊的卡夫卡》、魔幻寫實主義、和平主義、受害者、伊底帕斯情結、慾望。

Magical Realist Treatments of Violence and Sexual Relations in Haruki Murakami's *Kafka on the Shore*

Postgraduate: Ya-ru Yang Advisor: Dr. Eric Kwan-Wai Yu

Institute of Foreign Literatures and Linguistics
National Chiao Tung University

Abstract

This thesis discusses Haruki Murakami's magical realist treatments of violence and sexual relations in *Kafka on the Shore* (海辺のカフカ, 2002). His narrative not only blurs the boundary between the real and fantastic but also brings a special kind of reading pleasure, and defies any simple interpretations of the text. Through this means, the author deals with traumatic history obliquely, inviting readers to reflect on such important issues as violence and sex.

Chapter One briefly introduces the history and characteristics of magical realism and explores Murakami's particular kind of magical realist style. In *Kafka on the Shore*, Murakami confuses the real with the magical, creating ironic effects. I explain how Murakami complicates and problematizes violence and sexual relations.

Chapter Two explores violence and ethical questions concerned in the novel. Murakami's recurring depictions of the Japanese experiences of World War II and other violent historical events suggest that militarism, victimhood, and related ethical problems remain what the Japanese have to face.

Chapter Three focuses on the protagonist Kafka Tamura's unconventional relationships with Sakura and Miss Saeki, and the "Oedipal malediction" from Kafka's father. On the one hand, the author has significantly transformed the features of the Oedipus complex with his magical realist writing. On the other, Kafka's curious relationships with Sakura and Miss Saeki involve strange "sisterly" love and "motherly" love respectively, both are worthy of deeper enquiries.

Keywords: Haruki Murakami, *Kafka on the Shore*, magical realism, pacifism, victimization, Oedipus complex, desire.

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Introduction

Haruki Murakami (村上春樹), one of the most popular and controversial contemporary Japanese writers, gained his popularity after winning Gunzo Newcomers Award (群像新人文学賞) with his first novel *Hear the Wind Sing* (風の歌を聴け) in 1979.[1] At that time he was an owner of a piano jazz bar, writing only for interest. Afterwards, he began his new career as a full-time writer— working on novels, short stories, travelogues, non-fictions, and even translations of American literature from time to time. His works have won wide reception not only in Japan but also worldwide. According to a survey conducted by the Japan Foundation, Murakami's works have been translated into more than 40 languages, and major works such as *A Wild Sheep Chase* (羊をめぐる冒険, 1982) and *Norwegian Wood* (ノルウェイの森, 1987) have been circulated among 37 countries and regions around the globe (136). Murakami's novels and short stories have won awards domestically and internationally. For instance, his *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* (世界の終りとハードボイルド・ワンダーランド, 1985) received the prestigious Tanizaki Literary Prize (谷崎潤一郎賞), and *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* (ねじまき鳥クロニクル, 1995) won the Yomiuri [Newspaper] Literary Prize (読売文学賞). In 2006, Murakami was awarded Frank O'Connor Short Story Award for his short story anthology *Blind Willow, Sleeping Woman* (2006). In the same year, his novel *Kafka on the Shore* (海辺のカフカ, 2002) was awarded both Franz Kafka Prize of the Czech Republic and World Fantasy Award. Despite the polarized comments and reviews that Haruki Murakami and his works have received, it is without question that his works have gained great recognition and reception

[1] Japanese names in my thesis are in the first name/last name order. The title of the books, which may contain Japanese names, will remain unchanged.

worldwide.[2]

The popular and award-winning novel *Kafka on the Shore* has its significance among Murakami's oeuvre. To start with, this novel can be viewed as a transition work in terms of the focalization. Murakami used to write his novels in the first-person perspective. In his interview, he said that such a transition could help include more elements into his works (Murakami, *Long Interview* 9). Thus, one can see that one of the storylines (Satoru Nakata's line) in *Kafka on the Shore* is narrated from a third-person viewpoint. In addition, it is the first time the author chooses an adolescent, the 15-year-old Kafka Tamura (田村カフカ), to be the protognist. The other "hero," Satoru Nakata (中田悟), is a slightly eccentric old man over 60. Such character setting has influneced how Murakami deals with the recurrent themes: violence and sex in this novel. Moreover, the author chooses the magical realist approach to discuss the two major issues, which not only creates the commingling effects of the real and fanatsic but also complicates the two themes. In the following I would briefly summarize the storyplot.

Kafka on the Shore consists of two major storylines. Odd-numbered chapters center upon the teenager protagonist Kafka Tamura. At the age of four, his mother along with his adopted sister left him. Since then, he had lived with his father Koichi Tamura (田村浩一), who was a famous sculptor, yet Kafka and his father were on bad terms and avoided meeting each other. On his fifteenth birthday, Kafka decided to run away from home to escape from his father's "prophecy" and hoped to search for his mother and adopted sister. Accompanied by the magical character Crow, Kafka traveled to Takamatsu, Shikoku (高松，四国). On his way he met Sakura (さくら), a girl in her twenties—around the same age as his sister. He thus viewed Sakura as his

[2] For instance, there was criticism from Donald Keene and Masao Miyoshi. See Jay Rubin, *Haruki Murakami and the Music of Words* (London: Vintage, 2005) 7-8.

possible sister. Kafka lived his new life peacefully, yet one night he suddenly lost his consciousness. As he woke up, he found himself stained with blood—probably somebody else. He turned to Sakura for help and stayed overnight at her place. Kafka left the next day for fear that he would bother Sakura. Or more importantly, he was afraid of having incestuous relationship with this sister figure, which might fulfill part of his father's prophecy. Later, he turned to the librarian Oshima (大島さん) in Komura Memorial Library (甲村記念図書館) for help. Oshima firstly took Kafka to his mountain cabin in Kochi (高知); later they decided to welcome Kafka. Afterwards, Kafka settled down in the library, living in the room which Miss Saeki's (佐伯さん) lover, the eldest son of the Komura family, used to live. (Miss Saeki was in charge of the library.) He later learned his father's death; the date coincided with the day when he fainted behind the Shinto shrine. When Kafka lived in the library, he inadvertently encountered the no-longer-existent 15-year-old Saeki and desperately fell for her. Meanwhile, Kafka suspected that Miss Saeki was highly possibly his mother. One night, however, the real Miss Saeki showed up and made love to Kafka, while she was sleep-walking. After that, Kafka asked Miss Saeki to have sex with him; they thus began their unconventional relationship. Yet, Oshima sent him to the mountain cabin again, for the police was eagerly searching for Kafka because they suspected that Kafka might have conspired with someone to murder his father. Kafka traveled deep into the forest, encountered the two Imperial soldiers, and entered the other world. In that world, he met the young Saeki again, yet she was nameless, memory-less, and very detached. Kafka also met the real (but dead) Miss Saeki. She urged Kafka to go back to the real world, to take the painting "Kafka on the Shore" with him, and to remember her. At the same time, Kafka had found a resolution with this mother figure. At the end, Kafka left the other world and went back to Tokyo to face everything.

Even-numbered chapters, on the other hand, center upon Satoru Nakata's unusual

encounters. The author firstly uses flashbacks to present some pseudo-official military top-secret documents on the "Rice Bowl Hill Incident," a mysterious group unconscious incident in Yamanashi Prefecture (山梨県) in 1944, near the end of World War Two (WWII). The puzzles of the group fainting remained unsolved, yet the teacher Setsuko Okamochi's (岡持節子) letter had given the hidden truth: her vivid dream of having sex with her absent husband, the menstrual blood, and her physical punishment upon the student Satoru Nakata. Later readers realize that the incident had to do with Nakata's childhood. Nakata, as the only exception of the group fainting (he did not come to until a couple of weeks later), became an illiterate but was able to communicate with cats, living on government welfare and his part-time job as a cat tracker. He was entrusted with the task of looking for a missing tortoise-shell cat Goma (ゴマ). Nakata was warned by his cat friend Mimi (ミミ) that there was a cat catcher, Johnnie Walker. One day, a black dog came to Nakata unexpectedly and led him to Johnnie Walker's place. To provoke Nakata into killing him, Johnnie Walker performed cat decapitation in front of Nakata. In order to rescue his cat friends, Nakata finally stabbed Johnnie Walker to death. However, when he woke up, Nakata was at the vacant lot (where he looked for cats) and blood-stainless. Without reason, he felt impelled to head west to Shikoku—the same destination where Kafka had traveled to. With the help and company of Mr. Hoshino (星野さん), a truck driver in his twenties, Nakata found the "entrance stone" and opened "the entrance." They also went to Komura Memorial Library, met Miss Saeki, and helped her burn up all her memoirs. Afterwards, Nakata fell deep in sleep and died peacefully. Hoshino, on the other hand, somehow acquired (or inherited) the ability to speak with cats. A black cat Toro came to inform Hoshino that he had to close the entrance and stop *it* from entering the entrance by killing *it* (the white stuff). Finally, Hoshino completed the task of closing the entrance and killing the mysterious creature and left.

Kafka on the Shore involves Murakami's magical realist narrative when he deals with the recurrent themes of violence and sex—which are also the two major themes that I intend to discuss in my thesis. Indeed, some critics view Murakami's works as a kind of pop literature which seldom deals seriously with social, political and historical issues (Suter 52). Such comment might not be implausible. In fact, in *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*, the author largely portrays Japan's wartime experiences, especially the Nomonhan Incident.[3] In *Kafka on the Shore*, Murakami deals with Japanese historical violence more extensively, especially WWII experiences such as the Rice Bowl Hill Incident, Japan-U.S. relations, and the Japanese student movement in the late 1960s. More significantly, the author has touched upon the justification of using violence and potential ethical responsibilities in his presentation of violent acts in the novel. At the same time, one might not come up with simple interpretations and critiques with the author's magical realist treatments of those events. On the other hand, Murakami used to deal with the issue of sex through his adult characters. In *Norwegian Wood*, for instance, the protagonist Toru Watanabe's (渡辺徹) sexual relations and experiences have played an essential part in the novel. In *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*, Murakami depicts the deteriorating marital relation between Toru Okada (岡田徹) and Kumiko Okada (岡田久美子), adultery, and prostitution (with Crete Kano 加納クレタ). In *Kafka on the Shore*, however, the author chooses 15-year-old Kafka Tamura to be the protagonist, a choice that can be viewed as a crucial transition among his works.[4] The "Oedipal malediction" and Kafka's curious

[3] The Nomonhan Incident, or the Second Soviet–Japanese (Border) War, was the military conflict among the Soviet Union, Mongolia and the Empire of Japan in 1939. It took place near the border between Mongolia and Manchuria (the puppy state that Japan had established in northeast China). This unofficially-declared conflict (the Soviet Union and Japan did not announce a war) was due to the disagreement about the borderline between Manchuria and the Mongolian People's Republic (supported by the Soviet forces). However, the Japanese imperial army was totally defeated by the Soviet army. See Edward J. Drea, "Nomonhan: Japanese Soviet Tactical Combat, 1939," *Leavenworth Papers* 2 (1981).

[4] Discussing his latest novel *1Q84* in an interview, Murakami said that he believed that sex, or puberty, would bring "new elements" to people (my translation). Therefore, he made his two protagonists hold

relations with (hypothetical) family members (biological father and possible sister and mother) have become the focus of the issue of sex. Besides the magical realist effects, it also involves characters' sexual seduction, repression, possible ethical problems, and desire—which appears more complicated than the simple family relation.

My thesis is divided into three chapters, exploring the magical realist narrative, the issue of violence, and that of sex in *Kafka on the Shore* respectively. Chapter One deals with Murakami's magical realist narrative style. Starting with the history and the characteristics of magical realism, I would like to explore Murakami's magical realist writing style in the novel. Some critics such as Susan Napier and Matthew Strecher have discussed magical realism in Murakami's other writings. They regard the author's magical realist strategies as a way of highlighting such themes as identity crisis (Strecher 82) and the problem of modernity (Napier 473). However, none of these critics have explored in depth the commingling effects that such a writing style can make, nor have they attended to the ironic effects so created. One should also note that sometimes the author might have chosen to use magical realism in order to tackle certain complicated issues more obliquely and suggestively. I would thus probe into several major episodes in the novel—the Rice Bowl Hill Incident, the murder, the alternative world, and sisterly love and motherly love—to demonstrate the author's commingling of the real and magical. The magical realist writing can be ironic, pleasurable, and further making allusions to the two critical themes in *Kafka on the Shore*: violence and sex. At the same time, such writing strategies could also complicate the two issues, rejecting simple interpretations and critiques.

In Chapter Two, I would like to focus on Murakami's magical realist treatments of and allusions to historical violence, the possible critiques, and the author's attitude

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their hands together when they were 10 years old. Their destinies were closely tied at that moment. See Haruki Murakami, *Murakami Haruki Long Interview* (Tokyo: SHINCHOCHA, 2010) 58.

toward WWII experiences, victimization, and related ethical questions in *Kafka on the Shore*. The author has made many references to the historical past of Japan, especially the war-related ones. In his magical realist writings, Murakami combines the historical and the fictional, recounting other facets or versions of history. The Rice Bowl Hill Incident is one of the best examples. The author also indirectly refers to Japan's wartime activities through the protagonist Kafka Tamura's reading of trials of Nazi criminals, Napoleon Invasion of Russia in 1812, and his encounter with the two Imperial soldiers lost in the maneuvers. In the post-war era, the relation with the U.S. has greatly influenced Japan in many aspects. One can observe Japan-U.S. post-war relations from the characters Hoshino and Colonel Sanders and the author's recurring depictions of American (western) pop cultural elements in the novel. They may signify certain forms of violence that the U.S. might have inflicted on Japan, yet at the same time it is not simple (political and cultural) oppression but more complicated. Japanese student movement in the late 1960s, an episode related to Japan-U.S. relation, is another event that Murakami often portrays. However, the author expresses a more critical attitude toward the rationale behind the movement and the violence they had imposed on others. Besides the allusions of and possible critiques toward historical events, the author's depictions of violence, such as cat killing, rescuing, and white stuff, indicate the problem of morality as well as justification of using violence. The depictions of violence might suggest that violence and the corresponding issues are the undercurrents beneath the surface of pacifism and victimhood in contemporary Japanese society, which might urge one to contemplate upon historical past, violence, victimizer/victim dichotomy, and ethical responsibility.

In Chapter Three, I would like to explore the other major issue, sex, in the novel. The author presents readers Kafka's elusive family relations and the "Oedipal malediction." That is, Kafka would someday murder his father and copulate with his

mother and sister, which is exactly the Oedipus complex (as well as the related Greek tragedy). The taboos of patricide and incest are somehow fulfilled in the novel with the author's magical realist techniques. In addition to the confusing effects between the real and magical of the occurrence of the taboos, what is more significant is Kafka's poetic patricide, his unorthodox relationships with his potential sister and mother (Sakura and Miss Saeki), and the implied ethical questions. Koichi Tamura's death involves Kafka in his poetic responsibility (for patricide), though he might not be the one that stabs his father to death. Yet, even if the father figure was dead already, Crow's magical attack on Johnnie Walker may suggest that the paternity always haunts. Brother-sister-hood between Kafka and Sakura is in fact related to the sexual initiation and seduction, the repression of desire, and their appealing to the sisterly love. The problematic mother-son and lover relations between Kafka and Miss Saeki have to do with their investment in the subject position/role "Kafka" and "mother." In addition, their ambivalent relationship revolves around painting "Kafka on the Shore." The painting, as a token of love, has become a significant symbol of the memory of love and desire.

Finally, I would conclude that the author's magical realist writing techniques have brought more reading pleasures, alerting us the issue of violence and the related ethical problems, and has immensely complicated the characters' equivocal relationships. The magical realist narratives of violence and sex might intrigue readers to reflect on the possible interpretations and meanings behind the novels. Also, it is the magical realist writings that have made his text challenging as well as fascinating.

Chapter One

Magical Realist Narrative in *Kafka on the Shore*

Kafka on the Shore might be one of the most fascinating novels among Haruki Murakami's works. It involves the author's commingling of the realist and the magical realist modes. The story consists of two major storylines, one of the writing strategies the author frequently uses. The odd-number chapters show us the story of the 15-year-old protagonist Kafka Tamura. On his fifteenth birthday, Kafka decided to run away from home to Shikoku. Later readers realize that his father had an "Oedipal malediction," prophesying that Kafka would someday murder his father and sleep with his mother and sister. Strangely, his unusual encounters somehow led him to the course of his father's prognostication: his fainting and his father's death, his intriguing relations with Sakura (potential sister) and Miss Saeki (potential mother). In even-number chapters, the author firstly flashes backward the mysterious Rice Bowl Hill Incident, an uncanny group fainting incident near the end of WWII. Later in chapter 6, the story shifts to the present, and the "hero" of this storyline Satoru Nakata appears. Though a victim of the Rice Bowl Hill Incident, he is able to communicate with cats. His special ability to converse with cats also brings him on a magical realistic journey: the cat rescue, the killing of Johnnie Walker, finding the entrance stone, and going to the other world.

These two separate lines are quite irrelevant at first glance, yet the magical realist writing has created latent connections, making the two storylines indistinctly echo and influence each other on the same realistic base. For instance, the date of Koichi Tamura's death coincides with Kafka's fainting and Nakata's cat saving and killing of Johnnie Walker. The entrance stone in Miss Saeki's surreal lyrics of "Kafka on the Shore" really appears in Nakata's line, and Kafka's going to the other world is made

possible with the help of Nakata and Hoshino—to open the entrance. In addition, Kafka's curious (and incestuous) relations with the sister figure Sakura and the mother figure Miss Saeki have to do with the author's magical realist writing. Kafka dreams of raping Sakura; the uncertainty between the reality and dreams confuses him as well as readers. The ghostly young Saeki's appearance attracts Kafka on the one hand; Kafka hypothesizes Miss Saeki to be his mother on the other. Moreover, the painting "Kafka on the Shore" has become a crucial symbol to suggest the baffling between the real and magical, and the elusive amatory and mother-son relations between Kafka Tamura (and Crow), Komura, and (young) Miss Saeki.

In the following I will first introduce the major characteristics of magical realism and Murakami's particular kind of magical realist styles. In fact, some critics such as Susan Napier and Matthew Strecher have discussed the magical realist writing in Murakami's writings. They tend to view Murakami's magical realist writing as an approach to point out certain themes such as identity crisis (Strecher 82) and the problem of modernity (Napier 473) but focus less on its magical effects and oblique and elusive association—which I intend to explore. In addition, I would further probe into several major episodes in *Kafka on the Shore*—the Rice Bowl Hill Incident, the murder event, the alternative world, and sisterly love and motherly love—to demonstrate how Murakami deliberately obscures the boundary between the real and the magical. His magical realist writings not only bring certain effects and pleasure for reading but also allude to two crucial themes: violence and sex. In addition, the magical realist strategies complicate the two issues because they help resist simple ideological critiques and conventional interpretations. His text often intimates some "excessive" or surplus of meaning not readily contained by neat allegorical readings, a feature that makes the novel all the more fascinating and challenging.

Magical Realism

Before we discuss magical realism, we may first briefly trace back to the "realist" tradition. Realism was an artistic movement that began in the mid-19th century. It has to do with the historical background of the 19th century: the political, social, and economic changes, the rise of bourgeoisie, and the popularity and dominance of the novel. Meanwhile, the novel has also become the vehicle for the expression of values and life styles of the middle class. The realist style in literature tends to provide detailed, unembellished depiction of everyday life, and creates a verisimilitude of the objects, characters, and physical environment that conforms to certain historical or cultural settings. In other words, a realist novel would present its fictional world that closely resembles the real world that we live in. Realist works would usually prefer a more impersonal tone and more objective third-person perspective to depict things; since writers might try to represent the fictional-real world as faithfully as possible. Realism also chooses to portray the common folks (people of the middle or lower classes) and ordinary lives, which could reflect certain social problems and reveal some critiques. Briefly defined, one can say that the realist style in literature aims to faithfully represent "reality," or as Roland Barthes argues that Realism is to constitute with all the details an "illusion of reality," a "reality effect," for readers to accept it as a "fact" (148).

As to "magical realism," the term first appeared in German art critic Franz Roh's 1925 essay on a new painting style after Expressionism (i.e. Post-Expressionism). The Post-Expressionist painting, which differs from Expressionist abstract style, returns to realism, yet at the same time integrates Expressionism. The word "magic" aims to point out that "the mystery does not descend to the represented world, but rather hides and palpitates behind it" (Roh 15). The term "magical realism" later was used to refer to the style in Latin American fictions in literary field (Faris 1). Some critics such as

Alejo Carpentier and Angel Flores strongly believe that magical realism has its cultural and political specificities to Latin American literature (Strecher 80). Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967) is considered one of the representative works in Latin American magical realistic fictions. Gradually, magical realism is not specific to Latin American works; post-colonial writers also use magical realism in their writings to show the hybridity of their cultures and socio-political situations. Salman Rushdie's *Midnight Children* (1980) is one of the examples. Perhaps one can view magical realism nowadays, as Wendy B. Faris maintains, as a significant "mode of expression" in literary works worldwide (1).

Yet one might ask what "magical realism" is. In a much briefer definition, according to Faris, magical realism is to combine "realism and the fantastic so that the marvelous seems to grow organically within the ordinary, blurring the distinction between them" (1). She further points out "five primary characteristics" of the magical realist mode: irreducible (magical) element, phenomenal world, readers' unsettling doubts, merging realms, and disruption of time, space, and identity (7). To start with, the irreducible element is something that our common sense, empirical experiences, or logic cannot explain well. At the same time, they are basically based on the phenomenal world; that is to say, they "exist" in the realistic fictional world. This has to do with the realist tradition in magical realism. One of the major features of the realist style, as above mentioned, is its objective representation of reality in the fictional world. It is undeniable that magical realism "follows" the realist tradition and presents a seemingly real "fictional world that resembles the one we live in" (Faris 14). Such "realistic" delineation of the fictional world is with purpose: it helps distinguish magical realism from fantasy and allegory and emphasizes the "clear departure from realism" of magical elements (14). Because of the magic's "organic growing" from the realistic setting, readers would doubt and hesitate to make

judgments and interpretations—which is exactly the third trait "unsettling doubts" in Faris' definition of magical realism. In addition, the merging of magical elements blurs the border between the real/factual and magical/fictional, disturbing one's "received ideas about time, space, and identity" (23).

With the basic definition of magical realism, one may further examine the magical realist traits in Murakami's works. In fact, some critics have considered Murakami's works to be magical realist writings. In her essay "The Magic of Identity: Magic Realism in Modern Japanese Fiction," Susan Napier maintains that the use of magical realism, especially the "duality" and "unsettling tension between real and unreal," (453) has become "a means to search for Japanese identity" in modern Japanese literature (455). She argues that Murakami's works "are permeated with the presence of the marvelous and uncanny" in clearly modern settings along with the contemporary characters, which are the good examples of magical realism in contemporary Japanese literature (471). Murakami's short story "TV people" (TV ピープル, 1989), for instance, has revealed the passive reception of one's identity, reflecting the Japanese younger generation's "unwillingness to assert themselves" (472-73). In his scholarly work on Murakami's fictions *Dances with Sheep,* Matthew Strecher also maintains that magical realism could be applied to Murakami's works. He follows Luis Leal's much liberal definition of magical realism, regarding magical realism as "an attitude toward reality that can be expressed in popular or cultured terms" (qtd. in Strecher 81). This is also quite similar to Faris' idea that magical realism is a "mode of expression" (Faris 1). Strecher argues that Murakami's works simply borrow the writing techniques and style of magical realism but "without necessarily connecting itself in the regional attachments" (82).

The short story "The Tale of the Library" (図書館奇譚, 1982) can be one of the examples to demonstrate Murakami's magical realist writing. The protagonist "I"

went to a public library to borrow books. He walked down to the room 107 at basement, which he just knew for the first time even though he was a frequent visitor to the library. The bold old man there led him to go through many hallways, crossroads, and dark stairs—a labyrinth beneath the library—to reach the reading room. As the protagonist read "Diary of the Tax Gatherer of the Ottoman Empire," he just became the tax gatherer wandering along the street (my translation, Murakami, "The Tale of the Library" 172). The author ingeniously makes the unusual (an underground maze) "grow" from the ordinary (a public library). Besides, those "magical" and unusual encounters raise one's doubt of their actual happenings. As the protagonist finally escaped from the library, he was left alone. One thing for certain was that his newly-bought pair of leather shoes were missing (a symbol of "reality," perhaps), which he believed that they were still at the basement of the library (195). Meanwhile, he was confused whether those things really had happened. Such lingering effect has created a feeling of uncertainty between the real and the fantasy.

Napier emphasizes that Murakami's use of magical realism suggests the "problems of identity" in contemporary Japan (473), and Strecher argues that Murakami's magical realist writing is to depict the inner mind, or "the unconscious Other" (82-83). However, they pay less attention to the "effects" that magical realist writings bring; that is, Murakami's use of magical realism is not simply to explore the characters' unconscious or to refer to the problems of identity. To start with, the interweavement of the magical and the real in his works does create baffling effects in the novel. As I have demonstrated in "The Tale of the Library," the confusion between the real and magical is the intriguing part of the story. Also, sometimes the fantastic happenings may become critical points in the plot development. Besides its narrative functions, the magical realist writing brings certain irony, satires, and entertainment (pleasure for reading). Moreover, those magical elements can be excessive; that is,

they would go beyond simple interpretations. The excessive and unsettling puzzles are also the challenging but fascinating parts of Murakami's works. In *Kafka on the Shore*, one can observe such magical realist style of Haruki Murakami. With the interlocking among the factual history, fictional reality, dreams, and the supernatural, the author blurs the real and fantastic, brings certain ironic or satirical effects, and alludes to the two major themes, violence and sex. Meanwhile, those magical events might help resist facile argumentation. In the following, I would like to examine some crucial events in the novel to demonstrate Murakami's magical realistic style and the issues that those episodes have indicated.

The Rice Bowl Hill Incident: Between History and Fiction

In even-number chapters, a pseudo-official document on the Rice Bowl Hill Incident unfolds the story. The document recorded interviews of the uncanny incident of group unconsciousness in Yamanashi Prefecture near the end of WWII. Teacher Setsuko Okamochi and her 16 primary school students went to Rice Bowl Hill to collect mushrooms. Before they entered the hill, they saw a B-29 flying over it. When they arrived at a clearing, they started to collect mushrooms. However, soon after the students fainted one after another. The cause was thought to be sunstroke, food poison, or gas poison, yet none of them could perfectly explicate the situation. Strangely, the students gradually woke up, yet they have lost the memory of what had happened shortly before they fainted.

It is not difficult for readers to associate the Rice Bowl Hill Incident with the historical past of Japan, and the incident was not too remote from the historical background concerned: the military coercion, food rationing, and B-29 bombing during WWII. Murakami makes the incident more realistic-looking by presenting it in the form of a pseudo-official document:

> The following document, classified Top Secret by the US Department of Defense…. The document is now kept in the National Archives in Washington, DC, and can be accessed there….
>
> **U.S. ARMY INTELLIGNECE SECTION (MIS) REPORT**
>
> **Dated: May 12, 1946**
>
> **Title: Report on the Rice Bowl Hill Incident, 1944**
>
> **Document Number: PTYX-722-8936745-42216-WWN.** (12-13)

The move to present the incident as a historical "episode" during WWII is meant to confuse history and fiction. The form of reportage may aim to convince readers of its "authenticity." When being asked about the "authenticity" and the historical facts of the Rice Bowl Hill Incident in an interview about *Kafka on the Shore*, Murakami replied that he would "rather not to go into that."[5] In fact, it is not difficult to see such depictions of the characters' experiences based on some historical events and moments in Murakami's previous works. In *Wind-up Bird Chronicle*, for instance, he depicts the wartime experiences of the characters such as Nutmeg Akasaka (赤坂ナツメグ) and Lieutenant Mamiya (間宮徳太郎) in Manchuria based on his historical research of the Nomonhan Incident (Rubin, *Music of Words* 223). Those are not simply historical facts but with his magical realistic and imaginative writing techniques. As Strecher observes, Murakami is quite talented in mingling "the elements of fantasy, of magical realism, of historical and fictional narrative, into an imaginative presentation of 'real' historical moments" (160). In other words, the authenticity might be less important; the incident itself aims to write back to WWII, creating new facets of the "historical truths" to challenge and criticize the war.

One can observe such an inversion of history in the Rice Bowl Hill Incident in

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[5] "Questions for Haruki Murakami about KAFKA ON THE SHORE," *Haruki Murakami*, 2004, 20 March 2012 <http://www.randomhouse.com/features/murakami/site.php?id=>.

Kafka on the Shore. Murakami makes up the rumor of B-29 planes using poison gas to attack the Japanese. In fact, the B-29s usually came in large formation bombing the Japanese cities,[6] and it was Japan rather than the U.S. that (secretly) developed poison gas as a weapon.[7] Instead of dealing with history in a realist mode, Murakami re-writes history by blurring the boundary between the historical and fictional in the novel. Yet such inverted treatments and blurring of historical facts do not mean that Murakami intends to reduce history as merely "discourses" as postmodern historiography does. The historiographic metafiction aims to juxtapose "historical and literary discourses" and to "enact a deconstruction of 'history' as the holder of ultimate truth" (Strecher 164-65). In other words, history, or histories, has become merely discourses rather than "truths" as far as postmodernism is concerned (Hutcheon 89). Yet, Murakami may not intend to deny the historical past. As Strecher observes, Murakami aims to rewrite "the conventional interpretations of history" (i.e. Japanese historical textbooks) and "rehumanize" of the participants in those history instead of showing facts like "B-29s bombed the cities" or "the student movement occurred in the late 1960s" (180). That is, Murakami turns those historical events into subjective and personal life encounters; he "recuperates (or invents) the highly personalized stories of individuals" rather than portrays "an impersonal landscape" of the war (182). One can say that Murakami borrows some historical facts and turns them into the characters' encounters to show that history is not something abstract and

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[6] B-29 Superfortress, is the type of the aircraft that the U.S. used to bomb Japan territory during WWII (from June 1944 to August 1945). With its inconclusive attacks, cities in Japan were ruined and hundreds of thousands Japanese were killed or injured. The mission of dropping 2 atomic bombs—"Little Boy" on Hiroshima and "Fat Man" on Nagasaki were also carried by separate B-29s (Enola Gay and Bockscar). See Gordon Daniels, "Before Hiroshima: The Bombing of Japan 1944-45," *History Today* 32.1 (1982), *History Today*, 2012, 5 June 2012 <http://www.historytoday.com/gordon-daniels/hiroshima-bombing-japan-1944-45>.

[7] See Andrew Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan* (New York: Oxford UP, 2009) 219.

remote but very personal lived experiences. It thus becomes possible that his characters who were involved "in WWII" (in the fictional world) held more critical attitudes toward and had negative impressions on the military and the war, which are quite different from Japanese patriotic sentiment and "military mentality" during WWII (Perez 137). The psychiatrist Shigenori Tsukayama (塚山重則), for instance, disliked the military very much. He censures the military for reaching conclusions that meet their preconceptions rather than "pursuing academic truth" (Murakami, *Kafka* 65). His words possibly suggest that the U.S. army is just the other Japanese Imperial Army for ordinary people; both are basically the same: pursuing their own interest and concealing information to the public. Such representations of historical facts, fictional events, and the characters' attitudes might be the author's invitation and challenge to readers to contemplate on the wartime past of Japan and the issue of historical violence.

If the author's presentation of the Rice Bowl Hill Incident aims to confuse the historical and the fictional, the "hidden truth" from the teacher Okamochi further complicates what the characters as well as readers have gained from the fabricated historical incident. In chapter 12, the author presents a letter to "Dear Professor."[8] Okamochi wrote a letter (presumably) to the psychiatrist Tsukayama, who joined the investigation of the incident. This letter of confession revealed the "hidden truth;" that is, Okamochi had a dream at the night before outing, which was so "extremely realistic and sexually charged" that she could not "distinguish between dream and reality" (105). She dreamed of her husband, who had been drafted to the war, and they crazily had sex and reached orgasm again and again in that dream. The next morning, when Okamochi took those children up to the hill, she could still feel the strong

[8] In fact, the letter did not have any signature. From the content readers could infer that it was highly possible a letter from Setsuko Okamochi to Professor of Psychiatry Shigenori Tsukayama.

"lingering effects of sex" as if she were still in that realistic dream (106). Unexpectedly, her menstrual period came. The children had started to collect mushrooms, yet one of the students, Satoru Nakata, discovered the bloody towels that Okamochi had used. Out of shame and anger, she slapped Nakata hard on his cheeks. Not long after the group unconsciousness started.[9]

The "confession" reveals the other facet of the incident: Okamochi's personal deeds. This hidden truth also makes an irony to the cause of the group fainting that the military had strived to dig out. In the meantime, her letter has pointed out the other significant issue—sex—in *Kafka on the Shore*. That is, as individuals who are the victims of historical violence (i.e. WWII), Nakata and other students might also be sexually traumatized because of the teacher's towel with the menstrual blood and accompanying "punishment." Their collective amnesia of the specific violence (Okamochi's physical punishment on Nakata) can be the best illustration. Moreover, because of their memory loss, the "real" cause of the incident would ever be unknown—be it violence or sex, or even both. Yet, the teacher is not a pure victimizer on those children. Since her husband was drafted to the war and died, she was in fact a victim under historical violence. Murakami mingles the historical facts with the uncanny fainting in tackling the Rice Bowl Hill Incident, which is an oblique treatment of WWII. Moreover, Okamochi's dream of the sexual intercourse and her menstrual blood further complicate the incident. The juxtaposition of the historical and fictional has made the issue of violence and sex (sexual trauma) highly related in the incident. Murakami's use of magical elements creates a puzzling effect and possibly satirizes the history. However, the criticism is in fact quite ambivalent, which indicates that there might not be clear-cut explications for the victimization and

[9] A letter to "Dear Professor," chapter 12 in *Kafka on the Shore*. See Haruki Murakami, *Kafka on the Shore* (London: Vintage, 2005) 102-11.

traumatization of those children, the teacher, and even the Japanese.

Murder in Nakano Ward: Death of Johnnie Walker and Patricide

Following the Rice Bowl Hill Incident, the author shows us a strange conversation between the old man Satoru Nakata and a cat in chapter 6. It reminds readers of the traumatized child in the incident, who had become a mentally-impaired person. As a victim of the strange incident, Nakata also suffered from his illiteracy and peer bullying (227-28). Interestingly, he was somehow gifted with a special ability to speak with cats. The author even earnestly explains to readers Nakata's magical "language acquisition" (228). His blessed gift might echo with the strange incident, suggesting that there is no simple interpretation of the traumatization and victimization. Moreover, his special ability makes him a "hero" in his cat rescue task (and a murderer); that is, he killed Johnnie Walker and saved his cat friends. Nakata's unusual encounter, however, echoes with the other storyline in the novel. On the very same day, Kafka found himself losing consciousness for several hours after supper. He woke up at a Shinto, discovered the blood stain on his t-shirt, and got hurt on his shoulder. Several days later, Kafka learned the news of his father's death (211). As to Nakata, after he stabbed the cat killer Johnnie Walker to death, he fell asleep. When he woke up, he found he was right at the vacant plot where he looked for the missing Goma. There was not any blood-stain on his shirt, yet the two cats Mimi and Goma beside him showed that the killing was not a dream. What is more intriguing is that, the identity of the deceased was not the cat-psychopath Johnnie Walker but the famous sculptor Koichi Tamura, Kafka's father. These two parallel storylines suddenly converge on the murder event. At the same time, the author's use of magical realist elements such as the supernatural and speaking cats creates the baffling effects between the reality and fantasy and draws the connections between the two storylines.

Also, the magical realist writings have certain ironic effects and bring out the issue of violence and the potential introspections for readers to reflect upon.

In chapter 6, the story unfolds with a conversation between Satoru Nakata and a cat (47). Though kind of traumatized by the childhood incident, Nakata developed his "foreign language" skills to speak with cats. Nakata also named his cat friends after "human-like" Japanese last names (48). The cats he met were all quite characteristic like every (human) individual was, such as the kind-of-nonsense Kawamura (80-83) and the clever and educated Mimi (84). With his special language gift, Nakata was able to establish friendship and intimacy with cats. One day, the commanding black dog came to Nakata and led him to a big house. There he met the strange cat killer Johnnie Walker, who borrowed the "appearance and name" from the world-famous whisky icon (135). With debuts of the cats, the dog, and a weird "cosplayer" (costume player) one after another, one has gradually been snared into the author's magical-realistic narrative. Yet, the characters take such happening quite naturally, or one can say that the author's "reticence" has naturalized the unusualness in the magical realist writings (Faris 20). Meanwhile, one can sense that the magical does not melt into the realistic setting but become "a grain of sand in the oyster of that realism" (8-9). The most confusing scene is the transition from Nakata's impetuous killing of Johnnie Walker and cat-rescuing to his waking up in the vacant plot with two meowing cats. Johnnie Walker performed his procedure of cat killing in front of Nakata, provoking Nakata into killing him (Murakami, *Kafka* 155-56). Finally, Nakata could no longer stand the brutal scene; he grabbed a kitchen knife and stabbed Johnnie Walker to death (159). The massive blood spewed on Nakata, Mimi, and Goma, and Nakata held the two cats and fell asleep (160). However, when Nakata woke up, he was right at the vacant plot where he stayed for several days. At the same time, he somehow lost his ability to converse with cats (175).

The sudden turn of the story and Nakata's loss of his language gift just lead readers back to the "ordinary" world; all the extraordinariness just evaporates. Such a "return to the reality" is quite intriguing. One may hesitate to judge the magical real nature of Nakata's previous experiences: he might have imagined that he could talk to cats and fabricated himself a story of cat-rescuing task in a dreamy state—a total fantasy. Readers are exactly like the young police officer in the novel, being perplexed with and hesitating to believe in Nakata's confession. However, when one is still left undetermined to judge from the real and fantasy/dream, Nakata's weather forecast of "fish rain" has confirmed, at the same time confused, that his encounters were not mere fabrications. The author skillfully merges the magical events into the ordinary for readers to view them as a part of the fictional reality. As readers are snared into accepting the strangeness (i.e. speaking cats and Johnnie Walker), the author somehow "betrays" the magical realistic world he has created (Nakata's waking up from a "dream"). Again, Nakata's dream is confirmed with the supernatural fish rain. The deliberate and continuing alternations between the real and fantastic do bring a strong confusing effect on reading.

This murder event is further complicated by the author's juxtaposition of Nakata's magical killing of Johnnie Walker and Kafka Tamura's fainting and "poetic patricide." Koichi Tamura's death happened to be the exact day (May 28th) that Kafka found himself blood-stained and unconscious at a Shinto shrine in Takamastu. Kafka believed that he might have gone through "some special dream circuit" and he was "poetically responsible" for his father's death (219). Interestingly, it was also the day that Nakata made his fish-rain prophecy (215).[10] One could juxtapose Nakata's situation (killing but with no blood) with Kafka's (getting hurt on shoulders, fainting,

[10] The fish rain occurred on May 29th; therefore, Nakata should make his weather forecast on May 28th that tomorrow evening "there will be fish falling from the sky." Murakami, *Kafka* 180 and 215.

and blood), which draws certain connection and makes a comparison between the two. Besides, Nakata's travel route just coincided with Kafka's: both of them lived in Nakano Ward and traveled directly to Takamatsu, Shikoku. Such coincidence of time, itinerary, and blood/no blood raises one's doubt if Kafka and Nakata are related to each other—though realistically speaking Nakata does not know 15-year-old Kafka (387); neither does Kafka knows Nakata (357). A possible connection between the two characters might lie in the "living spirits." Jay Rubin argues that readers could surmise that Kafka's hatred for his father turns Kafka into a living spirit to do the killing (*Music of Words* 276). Through the mechanism of "dream circuit" and "living spirits," the blood that is supposed to be on Nakata is able to be transferred onto Kafka. Rubin may provide the possible explanation for the readers, yet he just ignores the "illogical" nature of the magical realist writings. In fact, magical realist works tend to find its magical elements in myths and folklores. "Living spirits," which might derive from the Japanese "monogatari" (物語, i.e. *The Tale of Genji*), has become one of the magical realist elements in *Kafka on the Shore*.[11] In other words, what is more intriguing is that the author has made the living spirit an "irreducible element," a crucial point to connect the two characters as well as the storylines (Faris 8). Moreover, toward the end of novel, in his conversation with Miss Saeki, Nakata stated that he "took the place of the 15-year-old boy who should've been there" (Murakami, *Kafka* 421). Nakata's words might further suggest that the murder in Nakano Ward was not simply his killing of Johnnie Walker but also Kafka's "poetic responsibility" for his father's death. However, one could not assert there is any actual connection between them. Such elusiveness is exactly in which the pleasure of the magical realist writing lies. The "room for speculations" creates an ostensible relation between the

[11] "Monogatari" (物語) means the Japanese "story" or "narrative." "Monogatari," *Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, Encyclopædia Britannica Inc., 2012, 23 June 2012 <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/389857/monogatari>.

two characters and storylines, an enigmatic truth of the murder incident, and the pleasure for reading and interpretations.

In addition to the boundary blurring and the interweavement of Johnnie Walker's/Koichi Tamura's death, Murakami's magical realist writing is also ironic and playful. To start with, besides their "unusualness," the speaking cats and the black dog make a great contrast to humans and invert the ordinary and extraordinary. Nakata has been enjoying making friends with cats after he discovered his special language gift. In fact, the cats were the ones that taught him about basic knowledge in the world (228). Compared with bullying peers (in school) and his deceiving cousin (230-31), Nakata's feline friends were more reliable and trustworthy. Nakata was an illiterate and a "dumb" in the public's eyes, yet he was "fairly intelligent" as far as a cat could tell (53). Readers may also feel sympathetic for Nakata's situation because of his childhood accident and other misfortune encounters. A social-peripheral or social-inferior he might be, however, his special ability to speak with cats has made him a kind of special "hero" in the story. Besides, he is not totally naïve in terms of adapting into the society; he knows how to use his "inferiority" to enjoy the welfare he could get, such as free bus pass and subsidy. The comparison between humans and cats creates ironic effects on humans' arrogance and discriminations against the inferior. Similarly, the black dog has reversed the master-subordinate relation between humans and animals that one used to take for granted. It was the dog that "commanded" Nakata to follow instead of Nakata walking the huge dog (131). The dog's aggressiveness and masculinity also sharply contrast with Nakata's powerlessness and asexuality. It subverts the sense of superiority/inferiority and the subjugator/the subjugated between a human and a dog in people's perception. However, people (in the novel) were not aware of such an inversion; they gave Nakata, the supposed master of the dog, "reproachful looks" (132). The deliberate narrative

tone and focalization (in a third-person position) provide readers with the pleasure and "superiority" of omniscience in the position of readers, mocking humans' ignorance.

In addition to the ironic effects and playfulness in the magical realist narratives, this episode has indicated the issue of violence and related ethical questions in *Kafka on the Shore*. In order to provoke Nakata, Johnnie Walker performed his cat maltreatment show in front of Nakata. He justified his mistreat on those cats, claiming that it was part of the procedure to make his special flute by collecting those cats' souls (151). Johnnie Walker further compared their situation to the war, an either-or choice between killing cats or him; Nakata was forced/invited to join his "human history in a nutshell" (Murakami, *Kafka* 153 and Rubin, *Music of Words* 282). In order to save his cat friends, Nakata stabbed Johnnie Walker to death. The cat killing, as Rubin states, has taken on "a highly personalized aspect" when the author makes those cats "recognized individuals" rather than "faceless victims" (281). In addition, Nakata's "innocuous" being makes a contrast to his involvement into the violence. When Colonel Sanders informed that the police were after Nakata, Hoshino could hardly believe that, since Nakata was "the last person you'd ever imagine committing a crime" (Murakami, *Kafka* 366). Rubin argues that with this "surreal drama," Murakami might want to make his readers "feel the dilemma faced by those who want peace but also human justice" (*Music of Words* 282).

Rubin's association with the cat killing and the comparison to the war and peace might be quite true, yet what is at issue perhaps lies in the justification of violence and the ethical problems concerned rather than the allegorical readings on the war. The author has chosen to present a magical cat killing rather than a realistic human-killing. Such intentional depictions can help reduce the violent effects, yet it does not mean maltreatment of cats is justified—it is life-threatening case, at least for the cat-friendly Nakata. Nakata finally took extreme measures to save his cat friends—to kill Johnnie

Walker. The once victimized harmless old man just turned into a murderer. Yet, one may stand on Nakata's side; since Johnnie Walker is a villain character. Meanwhile, one could associate it with the death of Kafka's father. Murakami portrays a BAD father and bad father-son relation; this father is also a villain character to some extent (Murakami, *Kafka* 214 and 217-18). On the one hand, to kill one (the villain) in order to save more (i.e. cats and the son), utilitarianly speaking, might appear permissible. On the other, to kill or to take away one's life might not be morally sound. More significantly, there are ethical questions that if violence is some necessary evil (to stop other form of violence), and if one has the right and is justifiable to impose violence on others. Such morally ambivalent situations also appear when Nakata uses leech rain to stop gang of bikers from bullying a man (207) and when Hoshino has to kill the white stuff to prevent it from entering the other world (489). With the magical realistic portrayal of the murder event, Murakami elusively indicates the problem of violence and its ethical questions. It might intrigue his readers to reflect upon the cycle of violence, the justification of violence, and the ethical problems—which transcend the simple dichotomy or the allegorical reading of peace and the war/violence. (I would further elaborate on the issue of violence in the second chapter.)

Entrance Stone, Colonel Sanders, and the Other World

The alternative world in *Kafka on the Shore* is the other significant allusion to the issue of violence (as well as sex and desire, which I would discuss later in this chapter and in the third chapter). With the magical realist writing and interlocking narrative, the author foreshadows the existence of the entrance stone and the other world in the novel. On the one hand, Hoshino met Colonel Sanders, who helped him get the entrance stone. He "opened" the entrance by flipping it over. On the other,

Kafka was able to meet the two nameless Imperial soldiers when he traveled deep into the forest—with the open of the entrance in the other storyline. This alternative world, however, was neither like a world of the dead nor like a fairyland, but more like a plain small countryside deep in the mountain. Yet "people" there looked quite comfortable with the place. In the following section, I will examine the magical realist writings of this episode, the potential interpretations, and its elusive indications of violence.

After killing of Johnnie Walker, Nakata felt impelled (without any reason) to head west for Shikoku to find the "entrance stone" (257). It strikes readers that in Kafka's line, the "entrance stone" appeared in the lyrics of "Kafka on the Shore" written by Miss Saeki: The drowning girl's fingers/ Search for the entrance stone, and more (245 and 270). It suggested that Miss Saeki might have found the stone and reached the other world, a place where she could go beyond "the flow of time" (267-68). The surreal lyrics and Nakata's search for the stone hinted the possible existence of the other world. Though an important stone, it was in fact quite ordinary, contrasting with is importance and "divinity." With the help of the "pimp" Colonel Sanders, Hoshino got the stone. Obviously, one could see that Murakami plays with the icon Colonel Sanders (American fast-food "grandfather"). His appearance does bring certain "comic effect" and make fun of the capitalism, saying that he did not choose to be Mickey Mouse because Disney might be "particular about the rights to their characters" (305). As a pimp, he was in fact quite knowledgeable (talking about Japanese classics, 305) and very experienced in dealing with mundane affairs—kind of ironic to the class/knowledge hierarchy and secularity/divinity (sexual transaction at a Shinto shrine). Sanders with his magical power had become a crucial character to help the story move on: to hand Hoshino "Chekhov's pistol," the entrance stone (309). The author uses a plain stone to represent the entrance to the other world, playing with

the idea of "Chekhov's pistol," or the dramaturgy. Yet, the stone is not always a common one. When it had to be "the entrance," its weight increased to an extreme, going against the logic—a magical treatment (333). Also, the flipping of the stone in Nakata's story had a "butterfly effect" impacting Kafka's storyline: his encounter with the two Imperial soldiers and visit to the other world.

During Kafka's second-time dwelling in the mountain cabin, he decided to travel deep into the forest. The appearance of the two unaging soldiers lost in the maneuvers, marked Kafka's entering into the fantastic world. They were still wearing Imperial-army uniforms and carrying rifles (432 and 434). They were like Charon, ferrymen of Styx in Western mythology, and with their help Kafka traveled to "the other world." However, unlike the underworld in mythologies, this "other world" in *Kafka on the Shore* looked just like some neighboring tiny community: a basin surrounded by the forest, with a stream, roads, and buildings (448). One may find this alternative world familiar; since Murakami has written about "the Town" ("the end of the world") in his previous work *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* (thus *HBW & EW*). It is quite possible that the author uses the Town in *HBW & EW* as a prototype for the town in *Kafka on the Shore*. Differing from the Town in *HBW & EW*, which "exists" in the conscious circuit of protagonist "Watashi" in the plot of "Hard-Boiled Wonderland," the small town in *Kafka on the Shore* appears to be "realistic" existence, a parallel world or reality.[12] Though geographically isolated, the town was not, as the two soldiers explained, "cut off from the world" (450). Instead, they did connect with "outside" and have food transaction. There was also electricity

[12] This would lead us to another storyline in *HBW & EW*. In the "Hard-Boil Wonderland," the protagonist Watashi (私, "I "in Japanese, a formal one) worked as a Calcutec. As a Calcutec, he had to shuffle data in and out of his brain. Watashi was the one with special abilities; that is, there existed another conscious circuit inside him when he did the shuffling. The name of alternative conscious circuit was exactly "The End of the World," which was also the town and the protagonist Boku (僕, "I" in Japanese as well) in the storyline "The End of the World." In other words, the town actually belongs to Watashi's consciousness, one of his conscious circuits. See Haruki Murakami, *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*, trans. Alfred Birnbaum (London: Vintage, 2003).

so that they could use appliances like fridges and TV (it only showed *The Sound of Music*). Paradoxically, the more realistic and ordinary the town and the life appear to be, the more unusual the world is. Such oddity confuses one with the real and magical, the effect that the author's magical realist writing intends to create. Murakami further creates its baffling effect with the great resemblance between the mountain cabin and the house in the other world (449) and Kafka's conversation with Oshima's brother Sada, who had met the two soldiers as well (496), to "support" the idea that this alternative world could really exist.

Besides the unsettling doubts between the real and the magical, what is more significant is the allusions to the issue of violence and the possible sociopolitical connotations in this episode. The "being" of the pop-cultural iconic figure Colonel Sanders, for instance, could allude to Japan's historical past: the U.S. occupation after WWII and the American cultural invasion. The "intrusion" of this American pop cultural figure is metaphorical of the cultural invasion or the Americanization after WWII. His humorous but kind of ironic remarks on the de-mythification of the Japanese emperor have just implied the U.S. power over the Japanese (308). Similarly, the two soldiers in their Imperial uniforms do not intend to show the once-glory Imperial Japan; instead, they insist that the uniforms are the signs of "what we left behind" (434). Interestingly, they choose to remain as "soldiers" rather than to give up such an identity. In fact, they used to be a farmer and a fresh graduate before they were drafted (433). However, they behave in a soldier's way, doing a soldier's job in that world; they stand at attention, salute, and are always on sentry (451 and 480). Their deeds contradict their comments on the war and violence, hinting that it is not easy to come up with a lucid explanation of such ambivalence (447). Similarly, the alternative world in the novel is not like a world of the dead (i.e. a hell) or a fairyland. The realistic setting (with an objective description) and the familiarity of the

alternative world could upset the readers if one expects to see something extraordinary. It looks like a utopia, a social-political ideal place, yet there is no exact "rule" for one to obey. Or, the rule is something very philosophical: "when you're in the forest, you become a seamless part of it. When you're in the rain, you're a part of the rain…" (472). There is also something excessive that one cannot find some appropriate interpretation to "contain" it. For instance, there is no written word in any form: neither labels on clothes nor books (470). The author deliberately expunges any kind of word from this alterative world. If its letter-less-ness suggests the prevention of civilization from infiltrating to this world, it somehow contradicts their use of products that civilization has brought. Such ambivalence and excessiveness are also the fascinating but challenging part in Murakami's magical realistic presentations of the issue of violence in *Kafka on the Shore*.

Sex, Incest, and Desire

With the magical-realistic writings and interweavement of the narratives, Kafka had certain relation with Satoru Nakata and got involved in his father's death, which coincidentally fulfilled his father's "Oedipal malediction" against him (patricide). The other part of his father's curse was that Kafka would have incestuous relations with his sister and mother. In the novel, Kafka met two women that he viewed as his potential sister and mother: Sakura and Miss Saeki. With the magical realistic narrative effects and "play" of the Oedipus complex, Murakami not only blurs the realistic and fantastic but also creates certain "relationships"—partly incest and partly romances—between Kafka and Sakura, and Kafka and Miss Saeki: Sakura's "hand job" on Kafka, Kafka's dream of rape, Kafka's love for the ghostly young Saeki/the real Miss Saeki, and their potential mother-son and lover relations. The elusive relationships between the characters also complicate the possible interpretations.

Kafka's chance encounter with Sakura on his bus travel to Takamatsu had started the strange brother-sister-hood between them. Kafka considered Sakura to be his potential (adopted) sister; since she was around the age of his missing sister. Kafka might also remind Sakura of her younger brother (20). However, as a boy at puberty, Kafka held some sexual fantasy toward this sister figure (23-24). Afterwards, Kafka asked Sakura for help and stayed overnight at her place after his fainting. This sisterly love became problematic as Sakura invited Kafka to her bed and held together as "brother and sister" (96). Unintentionally Sakura might be, Kafka just got an erection uncontrollably. Moreover, Sakura helped him come, and Kafka was permitted to imagine her naked at the same time (96-98). This brotherly/sisterly affection turned complicated with Sakura's sympathy for Kafka, unintentional "seduction," and the ambivalent almost-incestuous masturbation.

This problematic sisterly love turned more intriguing as Kafka had a wet dream that he broke into Sakura's dream and raped her. Murakami skillfully creates a baffling effect of the reality and dream, and Crow's appearance in the dream further confuses the real and magical. During his second-time stay at Oshima's mountain cabin, Kafka dreamed of Sakura one night. It could be simply viewed as his wet dream, yet its vividness and consistency made Kafka himself hesitate to judge its nature (396). He felt like he was on certain diverging point of an alternative reality (396). Meanwhile, in Kafka's dream (or an alternative reality), Sakura was deeply asleep, having her own dream. The detailed descriptions (or the "reality effect") of the scene and its "layers" of the reality/dream have subverted and blurred the boundary between the real and fantasy. Besides, Crow's appearance further complicates such an inversion. In his "dream," Kafka constantly heard a crow cry out, sending a message to him (396). Later readers know that it was exactly the boy name Crow that squawked in Kafka's dream (416). Moreover, as Kafka was raping Sakura, the focus

shifted from Kafka to Crow, and Crow was “witnessing” the occurrence. Crow’s metamorphosis and his “ability” to travel between the reality and dreams do further strengthen the magical realist effects of Kafka’s wet dream. It appears that the “prophecy” of having incest with a sister figure was fulfilled in this alternative reality/dream.

In addition to the elusive and magical sisterly love, the relation between Kafka and Miss Saeki is more complicated. It involves not only the possible (incestuous) mother-son relation but also some unusual affair between them, along with the author’s magical realist narrative strategies and effects. Kafka’s biological mother left him and his father when he was four. The absence of mother had made Kafka tend to imagine the middle-aged women he met as his potential mother (41). As Kafka met Miss Saeki for the first time, the tendency was somehow much stronger: he felt certain “wistful and nostalgic” feeling toward her without reason (41). Moreover, Miss Saeki once wrote a book on interviewing survivors under lightning strikes (268). It reminded Kafka that his father Koichi Tamura did have such an experience (270-71). Such coincidence made Kafka strongly believe that Miss Saeki was highly possible his mother. Interestingly, in the meanwhile, he encountered the ghostly 15-year-old Saeki (young Saeki). This young girl looked like “real” and alive; her perfection made her a person stepping “out of a dream” (235). Her magical appearance did not surprise Kafka; instead, he naturally accepted her “existence.” This unworldly real ghost had confused and even inverted the borders between the reality and dream, life and death. Kafka felt like he were dead, and the moment with her was an eternity, a never-ending dream. The room also turned heterotopia-like: Kafka became the intruder, witnessing an unusual ritual/routine of young Saeki: to gaze at the painting “Kafka on the Shore” and to be lost perhaps in her memory of love. However, Kafka Tamura hopelessly just fell for this ghostly girl. This unworldly romance was stronger than anything he had

experienced: the taste of love and jealousy. The more real the ghost young Saeki appears to be, the deeper her love for Komura, or the "Kafka" in that painting is—as if she had become a "living spirit." The more unreal young Saeki is, the more real is Kafka's love for her (as well as his jealousy of Komura) is.

However, Kafka's midnight romance became problematic when the real Miss Saeki appeared one night and made love to him in a somnambulistic state. Miss Saeki might be dreaming of his dead boyfriend Komura, mistaking Kafka to be her dead lover. The deliberate mix-up of the reality and dream also imbues the romance with incest, since Kafka supposed that Miss Saeki was his mother. Interestingly, to call their relation an incestuous one would be over-simplified. Murakami intentionally makes the lover's relationship and mother-son relation elusive as well as inseparable. The way that Miss Saeki addressed Kafka was as if she were talking to a lover, and Kafka's reply was like he were addressing a lover. At the same time, Crow's infiltration into the narrative made the conversation more ambiguous. For instance, when Miss Saeki and Kafka sat on the beach and talked about the locations where the painting was drawn, she asked "why did you have to die" and Kafka just answered that "I couldn't help it"—in Crow's narration (321). Also, when they met again in the other world, she said to Kafka that the painting was "originally *yours*" and she was there watching him (475). At the same moment, Kafka felt the "roughness" of the deckchair and was in love with that young girl (476). Kafka further asked Miss Saeki that if she were his mother, she replied equivocally that "you already know the answer to that"—an answer that could not be put into words (476). The possibility of mother and son between the two characters still exists besides their amatory. In the end, it was Crow (replacing Kafka) who uttered the word "mother," leaving an indefinite answer to the relations between Kafka and Miss Saeki—lovers, mother and son, or both.

The author has created some baffling effects of the reality and dreams, of

possible mother-son and lovers relations with magical realist strategies. On the one hand, Murakami plays with the "Oedipal malediction," or the idea of Oedipus complex, making one suspect the possibility of incest between Kafka and his possible sister and mother. On the other, the sisterly love as well as motherly love is not mere incest or romance, but the commingling of the two. It is the confusion and uncertainty that sustain certain reading pleasure, yet one might also note its allusions to the issue of violence (rape) and ethics (incestuous or problematic sexual relation). More importantly, the ambivalent relation between Kafka and Miss Saeki/young Saeki has something to do with the painting "Kafka on the Shore"— the name of "Kafka," the replacement of love object, and their desire—which I would further explore in Chapter 3.

From the above discussion, one can see that Murakami's magical realist narratives have blurred the real and the fantastic and the historical and fictional in *Kafka on the Shore*. At the same time, with the magical realist writings, the author alludes to the critical issues such as (historical) violence and sex in the novel. Yet, there might not be simple interpretations or critiques under the magical-realist writings. In the next chapter, I will discuss the issue of (historical) violence and explore the possible allusions and critiques in the novel. In Chapter 3, I would like to probe into Murakami's dealing with the theme of sex, his treatments of the intriguing relation of "Oedipal malediction" (or the Oedipus complex) and the unconventional sisterly love and motherly love/lover.

Chapter Two

WWII Experiences, Pacifism, and Victimization

Murakami uses magical realistic writings to confuse the boundary between the real and fantasy and create intriguing relations between characters in *Kafka on the Shore*. In this chapter, I would like to focus on the author's treatments of violence in the novel. Some critics see Murakami's works as a kind of pop literature that seldom address social, political or historical issues (Suter 52). Such a simplistic view is not really tenable. For instance, in *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*, the author largely portrays the Japanese wartime experiences, especially the Nomonhan Incident.[13] Similarly, in *Kafka on the Shore*, one can see the author's depictions of various events related to the Japanese historical past, especially WWII-related experiences, including the fictitious Rice Bowl Hill Incident, Japan-U.S. post-war relations, and the student movement in the late 1960s. In addition, with the magical realistic writing techniques, the author creates some seemingly true and historical-related events to invite readers to reflect on the WWII experiences of Japan. The issue of violence leads us to certain ethical concerns, especially in relations to the Japanese aggression and victimization and moral responsibilities for their historical past.

In what follows I will discuss Murakami's treatments of and allusions to historical violence and explore the author's attitude toward WWII, Japan-U.S. relations, the student movement, pacifism, and victimization in *Kafka on the Shore*. To start from WWII experiences, I would like to examine the Rice Bowl Hill Incident, an uncanny "anecdote" about the Second World War, which combines some historical facts with sheer fantasy. In addition to the incident, Murakami also makes use of several episodes that mention war-related issues to allude to Japan's wartime activities,

[13] See footnote no. 3 and Drea "Nomonhan."

including Kafka's reading of the trial of Nazi criminals and Napoleon's Invasion of Russia in 1812, and his encounter with the two soldiers lost in maneuvers. Moreover, after WWII, the U.S. occupation has greatly influenced Japan's political, social, and cultural aspects, and one can observe Japan-U.S. post-war relations from the characters Hoshino and Colonel Sanders and the author's large depictions of American (western) pop cultural elements in the novel. The student movement, the other frequent event depicted in Murakami's works, is also highly related to Japan-U.S. political relation as well as Japanese social movement. However, Murakami expresses reservations about the rationale of the movement and criticize the violence involved. Violence also appears to be a necessary evil, the very means for characters to stop from violence. If one cannot escape from the shadow of violence, the moral justification of using violence is thus very significant. Finally, after her defeat in WWII, Japan has become a society that emphasizes on pacifism and victimhood; Japanese often present themselves as a peace-loving people and victims of nuclear bomb attacks (Orr, "Victims, Victimizers" 6-9). In other words, they tend to evade rather than face their moral responsibilities for WWII. Murakami's depictions of violence in the novel obviously undermine the lopsided picture of presumed Japanese pacifism, challenge their victimizer/victim dichotomy, and hint that there are important ethical issues that the Japanese must confront now and even in the future to come.

World War II, Militarism, and Pseudo-Historical Incidents

One can see there are two major storylines in alternate chapters of *Kafka on the Shore*. In chapter 2, a pseudo-official document of the Rice Bow Hill Incident unfolds the story. The incident is supposed to occur near the end of WWII in Yamanashi Prefecture, which was about a group of children falling unconscious mysteriously. In

the subsequent chapters, the author presents the interviews with people who were involved in the incident: the teacher Setsuko Okamochi, the local doctor Juichi Nakazawa (中澤重一), and Professor of Psychiatry Shigenori Tsukayama. The teacher Okamochi and 16 children went collecting mushrooms on Rice Bowl Hill in their neighborhood. Before they entered the woods, they saw a strange silver light, highly possibly a B-29, even though the military did not record any B-29 flying over the region (Murakami, *Kafka* 13). Not long after they arrived at a clearing and started collecting mushrooms, several students began to collapse (16). Like having some contagious disease, the children fell unconscious one after another. After a couple of hours, most of them have recovered from the unconscious except Satoru Nakata, a student who was evacuated from Tokyo (30).

As we have discussed in Chapter 1, the incident involves some factual elements concerning wartime Japan, such as food rationing (14), military coercion (65), and B-29 air raids. The document, presented to us at the beginning of chapter 2, makes a truth claim with its pseudo-official form (12-13). Such deliberate commingling of the history and fiction is one of Murakami's writing strategies. Strecher comments that Murakami is quite talented in mingling with the fantastic elements, historical facts, and fictional narratives to present the "'real' historical moments" (160). Yet, as I have mentioned in Chapter 1, Murakami does not intend to challenge the history as such through interweaving (of the historical and fictional), but attempts to introduce other possibilities and invites readers to reflect on the historical truth. In addition, one might find some possible critiques of the war in the author's magical realistic presentation of the Rice Bowl Hill Incident. At the diegetic level, the cause of the students' fainting was suspected as gas poisoning, since they claimed to see a B-29 flying over the region and it was rumored that the Americans were developing some new kind of poison-gas bomb (Murakami, *Kafka* 29). As far as historical facts are concerned,

however, one may know that it is Japan herself that was developing poison gas and biological weapons (Gordon 219). Such an inversion could satirize the Japanese war atrocity that they have intended to conceal from the public. Besides, the characters involved in this incident were quite critical toward the military and war, which was rather different from the Japanese "military mentality" during WWII (Perez 137). They complained about the strict censorship, bureaucratic style, and preconception of the Imperial army. For instance, the doctor Nakazawa muttered about the strict wartime censorship. The military was "afraid of any anti-war or pacifist sentiment" (Murakami *Kafka* 30-31). To prevent from social unrest, the Japanese authority and the military warned them of not to reveal any relevant information. Teacher Okamochi shared the same opinion with Nakazawa in her letter. Under the censorship, the news of the incident was concealed to the public. For them, the incident itself might be far more "real" and closer to their lives than the mass slaughter and death in WWII, yet they were unable to say anything. In the other interview, Dr. Tsukayama directly criticized that the military tended to "arrive at conclusions" that would match their preconceived ideas rather than pursuing some academic truth (65). Okamochi also commented that there was no difference between Japanese or American military; it was always the same that the military "conducted their own investigation behind closed doors" (104). One can see that in this pseudo-historical incident, the author shows us a kind of "alterative," possible history and expresses some criticism through his writings and characters.

Interestingly, following this uncanny event, chapter 12, Okamochi's letter to Dr. Tsukayama, complicates the truths behind the pseudo-official documents. That is, on the surface, the Rice Bowl Hill Incident might have to do with the war and military biological experiments, it turns out to be involving some perplexing episodes: a sex dream, menstrual blood, and physical punishment (violence). In the confession letter

from Setsuko Okamochi, she revealed her sexually-charged dream, unexpected menstrual blood, her slapping on Nakata, and the group fainting and amnesia.[14] This letter makes the "truths" of the incident more ambiguous. In addition to the war-associated issues, the "truths" that this letter revealed have cast other shadows upon the Rice Bowl Hill Incident—violence and sex. Satoru Nakata, as the only exception in the group collapse, might suffer more than others. As an evacuated child from Tokyo, 9-year-old Nakata had been a victim of the war. At the same time, he might also suffer from long-term domestic violence. Differing from the physical violence in rural families, the violence that Nakata was exposed to appeared more severe and complicated. Okamochi could observe Nakata's "involuntary flinch" from time to time in his self-disciplined manner (110). For Nakata, the towels with (menstrual) blood could suggest violence (wounds and blood) as well as allude to his sexual initiation. However, before he realized what really had happened (both violence and sex), Okamochi had traumatized him with physical violence that Nakata had long suffered from. Moreover, her punishment also triggered a chain reaction among the children; all of them collapsed one after another on the spot and had lost the memory of that specific episode after regaining their consciousness. It is possible that other children have also been traumatized (either sexually or physically); their short-term unconsciousness and selective amnesia were the best evidences. Okamochi's slaps upon Nakata, however, had become the last straw crashing him. As he woke up from his "sleep" after a couple of weeks, he did not have conception of anything (71). He had no clue what violence (88) and sexuality were (51 and 422); or he had chosen to "repress" them for life during his unconsciousness. Nakata's amnesia of the unpleasant experiences of the war, of the physical abuse, and of the sexual trauma is the best illustration that the author has made violence (war, domestic

[14] Murakami, *Kafka* 102-11.

violence, and physical punishment) and sex (initiation and traumatization) closely interwoven in the incident as well as in the novel.

Compared with the pseudo-historical Rice Bowl Hill Incident, Kafka Tamura's readings of Nazi criminals Adolf Eichmann and Napoleon Russian War are less direct and "magical" in referring to the Japanese wartime activities. Still, one can observe the allusions with their close relations: the Nazi Germany and Japanese militarism in Axis alliance and the Russo-Japanese military conflicts in the Japanese modern history.[15] In other words, instead of getting the characters directly involved in the war, Murakami chooses to present the war in the characters' second-hand (or even third-/fourth-hand) experiences by readings and oral stories (the two Imperial soldiers). When Kafka stayed in the mountain cabin in Kochi, he happened to pick up the book about the trial of the Nazi criminal Adolf Eichmann. Eichmann was assigned to carry out the genocide plan—to eliminate the Jews in Europe after the outbreak of WWII. Being a practical "technician," he tried to optimize his most efficient methods to exterminate as many Jews as he could. He emotionlessly described all the details in the court, not expressing any regret. Very ironically, as a Nazi member, he hated the war itself; his words seemed to suggest that he was also a victim of the war because it had resulted in the imperfection of his plan.[16] One can easily associate with the Nazis' atrocity with Japanese militarism during WWII; Nazi's genocide of the Jews may imply that Japanese had once invaded neighboring Asian countries and cruelly inflicted on his enemies like Nanking Massacre in WWII. (Kafka also read Oshima's comment: "It's all a question of imagination" (141). The idea of "imagination" also appeared in Oshima's straight-forward criticism on radical feminists as well as the

[15] In addition to the Nomonhan Incident mentioned above, Russo-Japanese conflict could be traced back to early 20th century. The first Russo-Japanese war took place in 1904-05. See Louis, G. Perez, *The History of Japan*, 2nd ed. (London: Greenwood, 2009) 109-11.

[16] Kafka's reading of the trial of Adolf Eichmann. Murakami, *Kafka* 140-42 and 145-46.

student movement, which I will discuss later.)

Besides the book on Adolf Eichmann, Kafka read the book about the Napoleon invasion of Russia in 1812 (375-76). Oshima also told Kafka that there were two Japanese Imperial soldiers lost in the forest in maneuvers just before WWII (378). Kafka's reading of Napoleon invasion of Russia and the two lost soldiers in the forest are, in my opinion, indicating the Nomonhan Incident in 1939. In fact, Murakami has spent pages on portraying the Nomonhan Incident in *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*, making historical events the charcter's personal encounters and combining the historical and ficitonal/magical. Historical violence related to the Nomonhan Incident has become the siginificant issues in that novel. Lieutenat Mamiya's personal encounters in that l incident and Cinnamon Akasaka's (赤坂シナモン) creative writing "The Wind-up Bird Chronicle" are a couple of good examples.[17] In *Kafka on the Shore*, Murakami touches upon the Nomonhan Incident much more obliquely and subtly. The massive death in the Napoleon invasion of Russia in 1812, for instance, could have implied Japan's failure in the military conflict in Manchuria in 1939. Similarly, Oshima mentioned that in his mountain the Japanese Imperial troops once staged "mock battles with the Soviet army in the Siberian forests" before WWII. Ironically, the terrain and climate in Kochi were totally different from that in Siberia (378). Such "mock battles" satirizes that the Imperial army's maneuvers for the Nomonhan Incident is doomed to fail.

Although Murakami less explicitly addresses Japanese war experiences in *Kafka on the Shore*, through the characters, one could still detect his critical attitude toward the war and historical violence in general. Take Kafka Tamura for instance: when Kafka went deep into the forest, he thought of the Napoleon War he had read about

[17] See Haruki Murakami, *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*, trans. Jay Rubin (London: Vintage, 2003) 135-72 and 507-22.

and associated it with the Imperial soldiers who were once marching in the forests. He started to think over the reason for people to wage wars: "Why do people wage war? …. Do people start wars out of anger? Or fear? Or are anger and fear just two aspects of the same spirit?" (415). Through the protagonist's questions, one may speculate that Murakami intends to question the meaning of and rationale behind the war. The most direct criticism comes from the two Imperial soldiers deep in the forest of Kochi. When Kafka encountered the two soldiers who came from the time of WWII, they were still wearing "fatigues of the old imperial army," with uniforms, gaiters, knapsacks, and caps (432). They also carried rifles, though they claimed that there were no bullets inside (434). The two soldiers, who were trained to go to the war, disliked the violence, so they decided to run away from the maneuvers and happened to stay in the forest. On their way to the other world, they talked about how they were forced to "practice ripping open the enemy's stomach with a bayonet" (447).[18] They had no idea doing such cruelty to others, yet they were asked to do so. They disliked the war for its ferocity, and more importantly, the irrationality that drove people to impose violence on others (447). Moreover, their uniforms and rifles become something highly contradictory. They explained that the uniforms and bullet-less rifles were not something redundant and worthless; instead, they were "a kind of *sign*… of what they [we] left behind" (434). For a soldier, the uniforms (and arms) might represent his pride of being a soldier and of the Imperial army. However, they have given up such pride and left behind the cruelty of the war and even of reality. Their dress-up has become their symbol of anti-war, reminding them of the brutalities they despised. These two "imperial troopers," as Philip Gabriel has just said, "… are people who have, significantly, *rejected violence*" (126). One can argue that

[18] Murakami has written how Japanese use bayonet to stab the Chinese. Murakami, *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle* 515-16.

Murakami has given a new meaning of the military uniforms of the two Imperial soldiers. Interestingly, they did not resume their previous identity (a farmer and a fresh graduate; Murakami, *Kafka* 433) but chose to remain as soldiers. In other words, the identity of a soldier and those symbols of historical violence (i.e. the war) are also something they have decided to carry/ bear in order not to forget—which might suggest they would not easily get rid of historical burden. Such a curious practice—to reject but at the same time to remember—might well imply a complicated feeling about Japanese militarism in Murakami himself. Through the author's unconventional treatments of the two Imperial soldiers, Kafka's readings, and the Rice Bowl Hill Incident, one can detect Murakami's critical attitude toward and ambivalent feeling about WWII.

Japan-U.S. Post-war Relations

Another war-related issue is Japan-U.S. post-war relation, which may be regarded as the continuum of the war experiences. After WWII, Japan has undergone the occupation by the U.S. (1945-1952) and thus deeply influenced in many ways.[19] In *Kafka on the Shore*, there are many implications about Japan-U.S. relations. Murakami claimed that he has been profoundly influenced by the American culture, or more broadly speaking, by Western culture (Rubin, *Music of Words* 15). Therefore, in his works one can see many western cultural elements such as Jazz, American rocks, and (American) literary works, to name just a few. In addition, one can read the

[19] MacArthur, the leader of Supreme Commander of Allied Powers (SCAP), was the primary conductor of "reformation" project of Japan during the Occupation. He aimed to create a democratic society of Japan; thus there were four "de-s" to "liberate" Japan: "demobilization, demilitarization, decentralization (of government power and plutocrat, or zaibatsu, 財閥), and demythification" (of the Emperor). Undoubtedly, the most important legacy of MacArthur was the peace constitution of Japan, especially the article 9. One could say that Japan underwent dramatic change in every aspect during the Occupation. In 1952, the San Francisco treaty officially marked the end of WWII and the beginning of the Japanese independence. Interestingly, Japan might not be "truly" independent; the treaty was just an opening of Japan-U.S. relations in the post-war era. Perez, *The History of Japan* 135-46 and Gordon, *A Modern History* 224-36.

author's oblique treatments of Japan-U.S. post-war relations through his characters Hoshino and Colonel Sanders. Their remarks have indicated the intimate yet unequal relations between the two countries and also alluded to the issue of violence.

To start with, Hoshino's naïve "claim" that "Japan was never occupied by America," though quite ridiculous, has said a lot to Japan's post-war recovery and the younger Japanese's lack of historical understanding (Murakami, *Kafka* 232). In fact, it is possible for such a young man as Hoshino, who was born around 1970s, to be unaware of WWII.[20] It was not long after the 1970s Japan was in economic boom (Perez 152). Hoshino's unintentional remarks correspond to the young Japanese understanding of WWII nowadays. In 2002, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) conducted a research, which aimed to find Japanese generational change relations. In the research, they divided generations into two major groups: *Showa* (昭和) generation and *Heisei* (平成) generation. The former referred to the Japanese who were born before 1952 and had war and post-war memory; the latter was the Japanese who were born after 1952. In the survey of "Questions about WWII," the statistics showed that *Heisei* generation tended to have limited knowledge of WWII and "Japanese wartime activities," relatively lower than *Showa* generation (CSIS 6-7). In addition, people of *Heisei* generation held the opinion that they were not "personally responsible for Japan's wartime past" and felt "less personal sense of debt" to the U.S. in Japan's postwar recovery (6). In other words, younger Japanese who grew up in peace and prosperity were less historical-burdened as well as less aware of their historical past, which they considered to be not responsible for. Their limited knowledge also pointed out the problems of historical education in Japan.

[20] The year that the whole novel took place might be 1997 or 2003. The inference was based on Nakata's age (he was nine in 1944 and now past sixties) and that the day Kafka left home (May, 19) was Monday. Hoshino was around his twenties; therefore, he might be born around or after 1970s. Rubin, *Music of Words* 271 and 392, n. 434.

According to the CSIS research, Japan put less emphasis on the modern history, and the wartime past has become a tabooed issue (7). In other words, the Japanese authority consciously repressed WWII issue in education. This research may well explicate Hoshino's sentence that "Japan was never occupied by America" (Murakami, *Kafka* 232); since his lack of such historical knowledge was partly due to the educational system. The research, however, may also hint that Japanese intentionally evade their historical past and the role of aggressor during WWII.

On the other, Hoshino's remarks implied Japanese post-war recovery, economic prosperity, and more importantly, "Americanization." The post-war recovery and economic affluence have mostly concealed the fact that Japan was once involved in WWII. Besides, Japan has been politically, economically, and culturally intimate with the U.S. after WWII. The Japan-U.S. Joint Security Treaty and Japan-U.S. frequent business activities are the evidences of the close relations between the two countries. American pop culture such as Jazz and Rock music has also greatly penetrated into the daily lives of Japanese, so did Murakami's writings. For instance, the music that Kafka listened to was primarily the pop music in the 1960s. Interestingly, the TV in the other world also showed the old film *The Sound of Music* (452). The broadcast of the film might create an illusion that this village had certain connection with the outside world. At the same time, one can also say that even this alternative world was "invaded" by western culture.

What is more intriguing might be Murakami's creation of the character Colonel Sanders. When Hoshino wandered in the streets, someone who looked like Colonel Sanders called his name. As I have discussed in Chapter 1, the popping out of such "undecipherable" characters like Colonel Sanders is one of the author's magical realist writing strategies in the novel. Interestingly, this magical character plays a part in the novel. Colonel Sanders, as one of the representatives of the American pop

(fast-food) culture, just indicates how the American pop iconic figures have become a part of people's lives, not only for the Japanese but also for people worldwide. In the novel, his job as a pimp could possibly imply the American cultural invasion, alluring Japanese to be "Americanized" or westernized. The relation between a pimp and a customer could metaphorically refer to Japan-U.S. relations: the U.S. provides her social, cultural stuff for the Japanese to enjoy the pleasure of being Americanized or westernized. It looks as though the Japanese has no choice but to succumb to the U.S. power, yet to some extent it might satirize their all-too-ready reception of the American culture. Besides, in Sanders' remarks on the god, one can clearly observe the implementation of the policy and the adaptation of the Japanese under the U.S. political and military power. When Hoshino had to take the "entrance stone," he was afraid of being punished by God for he was stealing things from a Shinto shrine. He and Sanders argued over the concept of God, and Sanders made a sharp retort:

> "Listen—God only exists in people's minds. Especially in Japan, God's always been kind of a flexible concept. Look at what happened after the war. Douglas MacArthur ordered the divine emperor to quit being God, and he did, making a speech saying he was just an ordinary person. So after 1946 he wasn't God any more.... Some American chomping on a cheap pipe gives the order… —God's no longer God. A very postmodern kind of thing…." (308)

Sanders' humorous remarks just points out the U.S. power over Japan and the Japanese "adaptation." On the one hand, it is undeniable that as a defeated country Japan had succumbed to the pressure under the Occupation. The emperor was "demythified" under the U.S. authority (Perez 139). Religion could also be flexible under the political and military force, which has hinted the issue of violence. On the other, it shows that the Japanese could (or had to) swiftly change their attitude in

order to adapt to the new social order. Such quick adjustment could be satirical to both the U.S. power over the Japanese and the Japanese reception of the American culture.

Similarly, it is also possible to read the influence of American culture on Japanese in many aspects, to a certain extent, as another form of "invasion" in the post-war relations. From the pimp Colonel Sanders, one could observe Japan-U.S. relations both culturally and politically. Americanization, the permeation of the American culture, and Japan's "flexibility" after WWII have shown how the U.S. has influenced Japanese society. It is plausible to say that Murakami himself is also allured, since he is quite "Americanized" (or "westernized") in many ways. In fact, it has to do with the author's grow-up experiences. Murakami grew up in "an increasingly affluent Japan that still admired America for its wealth and culture" (Rubin, *Music of Words* 16). He spent his teens in Kobe, a city with many foreign residents and of Occupation (17). He received many exotic things earlier; meanwhile, he took less interest in Japanese classic literature. Such growth experiences and personal penchants have largely contributed to Murakami's receptiveness to foreign cultures as well as the exotic elements. However, I do not consider Murakami does express either positive or negative attitude toward Americanization; instead, his attitude is quite complex. As a Japanese, he may feel uneasy about Japan-U.S. relations, yet it is undeniable that the U.S. has had profound influence in Japan. Similarly, Murakami's creation of such a character as Colonel Sanders looks "playful" and "magical," yet it implies that one cannot negate the impact and influence that the U.S. has brought upon the Japanese. Through the two characters Hoshino and Colonel Sanders, one may read the author's indications of Japan-U.S. post-war relations in many aspects. Ironical and critical he might be, Murakami also expresses a more ambivalent attitude toward Americanization (or westernization).

The Student Movement and Justification of Violence

In addition to Murakami's unconventional treatments of Japan-U.S. post-war relations and its connotations, one can note the issue of violence in other depictions such as the student movement and other violent acts in *Kafka on the Shore*. Those delineations intend to question the rationale and justification of employing violence and indicate the ethical questions concerned.

The Japanese student movement in the late 1960s, or the *Zenkyoto* (全共闘), has always been one of the major themes in Murakami's works. Strecher maintains that Murakami's fictions, especially the first trilogy, usually "revisit, reexamine, and reevaluate" the issue of the counterculture movement in the late 1960s (10).[21] He believes that Murakami intends to point out the disjuntion of the Japanese identity, "the 1960/1970 transition," in his depictions of the movement (174). The occurrence of the *Zenkyoto* in the late 1960s had something to do with Japan-U.S. post-war relations. At the very beginning of the movement, students protested against the Japan-U.S. Joint Security Treaty (*Ampo* Treaty) and Vietnam War (Steinhoff 4).[22] Gradually, however, they had diverged from Japan-U.S. relations but turned to questioning the social and political problems in Japan. Meanwhile, they became more organized and sometimes were armed, establishing All-Campus Joint Struggle Committee (the *Zenkyoto*). They usually struck around the college campuses, which provided them a safe base, since the police would not easily go into schools (5). One of the most famous events in the movement is the protest in University of Tokyo in

[21] The first trilogy refers to *Hear the Wing Sing*, *Pinball, 1973* (1973 年のピンボール, 1980), and *A Wild Sheep Chase*.

[22] The full title of the treaty is The Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan. In the background of the Occupation and the cold war period, the U.S. and Japan signed this treaty. It proposed the mutual military assistance between the two countries once either of them was under threats or attacks.

1968. The medical students took the lead to protest against "the working conditions of interns" (5). Following the conflict, the student movements/strikes around Japan mushroomed. However, it came to a sudden end when a University Control Law was passed by the Diet, and the riot police entered colleges "paralyzing student strikes" (5-6). The student movement had sharply declined since then.

Murakami directly depicts the *Zenkyoto* in his novel *Norwegian Wood*. In the novel, the protagonist Toru Watanabe experienced the student strikes in his college life. However, he was only busy himself with his part-time jobs, detaching himself from the movement (Murakami, *Norwegian Wood* 53-54). He showed no concern to their "simplistic sloganeering" (74). One can see the character's "apathy" toward the movement in *Norwegian Wood*. Some critics argue that such portrayal of the *Zenkyoto* lacks of social commitment (Suter 52) and romanticizes the movement (qtd. in Strecher 160). Differing from the "romanticized" student movement in *Norwegian Wood*, the one in *Kafka on the Shore* appears more "realistic," presenting the fervid part of the movement. Mr. Komura, Miss Saeki's lover in youth, went to Tokyo to attend college when he was 18. A couple of years later, his college was shut down due to the student strike. Unfortunately, he was mistaken for a leader of a rival group. He was thus interrogated, bullied, and tortured to death. Komura's life came to a sudden end at 20. After the riot police suppressed the revolt, some of the students were prosecuted for murder. However, people who committed the crime were considered "premeditated"; in the end, they were only "convicted of involuntary manslaughter and given short prison sentences" (Murakami, *Kafka* 170). The death, in Oshima's words, was "totally pointless" (170).

One can observe that the *Zenkyoto* in both novels is the author's re-writing and commingling the historical events/moments with his characters' personal experiences. Although the depictions in two novels look quite polarized (mild, aloof in the former

and brutal in the latter), one can detect the author's critical attitude toward the movement, questioning the rationale behind it and the abuse of violence. To begin with, I believe it would be over-simplified to call it apathy in Watanabe's case. In *Norwegian Wood*, when Watanabe went back to the university after the strike, he was surprised that the campus remained "intact" under the strike (Murakami 61). Students who were leading the conflict, however, were the first ones attending lectures, saying that they feared of failing the class because of their low attendance rates (62). Obviously, when they joined the movement, they appealed much more to the emotional intensity rather than to certain "guiding ideology" and "systemized thinking" in mind (qtd. in Strecher 76). In other words, they only followed the blind passion, not realizing the true meaning behind the campaign. Similarly, in *Kafka on the Shore*, Murakami expresses his critical attitude toward the movement through his character Oshima's comments on the two radical feminists. These two women came examining the library facilities "from a woman's point of view," caviling at the use of toilets and the alphabetical arrangement of books (male authors prior to female authors, Murakami, *Kafka* 188-90). They insisted that such a sexually-unequal environment be hostile toward women. Ironically, they appeared to be the exact persons discriminating against others: randomly calling people as "typical sexist," "patriarchal," and "phallocentric," feeling complacent over their knowledge and guarding women's rights by categorizing others as chauvinists (193). Oshima's ambivalent and androgynous being, however, to a great extent, overthrew their common sense and beliefs, leaving them speechless:

> "My body is physically female, but my mind's completely male," Oshima goes on. "Emotionally I live as a man…. But I'm not a lesbian, even though I dress this way. My sexual preference is for men. In other words, *I'm a female, but I'm gay…. So, what am I discriminating against*?

Could somebody enlighten me?" (italics emphasized, 193)

Oshima called this type of people as "hollow" and "unimaginative" people, and they are precisely the "murderers" of Miss Saeki's lover (195-96). His comment on the Nazis was the same: "a question of imagination" (141). Coincidentally, the protagonist Watanabe in *Norwegian Wood* shared the same opinion. He believed that the enemy of those student movement activists was in fact their "Lack of Imagination" rather than the State Power (Murakami, *Norwegian Wood* 75). In other words, what disappoints and discontents Oshima and Watanabe (as well as the author Murakami, one can speculate) is the "unimaginative" people: they frantically follow some empty ideologies and impose violence on others based on it but without realizing the rationales and the consequences of their deeds. Komura's death was the best evidence of the abuse of violence under the blind passion. Wars, genocide, the *Zenkyoto*, and even radical feminism, to a certain extent, can be viewed as the "products" out of their lack of imagination. One can see that in *Kafka on the Shore* (and in *Norwegian Wood*) Murakami has put more emphasis not on the 1960/1970 identity split as Strecher proposes, but on the irrationality, emptiness, and the abuse of violence in the *Zenkyoto*.

From the author's depiction and criticism of the student movement, one may further reflect on the related ethical concerns; that is, the justification of violence. As mentioned above, some of the students were accused of killing Komura, yet in the end they were only convicted of "involuntary manslaughter" and sentenced short terms in prison (Murakami, *Kafka* 170). Though they might have paid their moral debts to Komura's death, they might fail realizing the ethical questions behind their killing; that is, whether they had the right to imposing violence on others. One can also detect the ethical questions in other cases in *Kafka on the Shore*. For instance, in order to reach his goal of making special flutes, Johnnie Walker caught, killed, and decapitated

as many cats as he could. To save his cat friends, Nakata had no choice but to kill Johnnie Walker (159-60). Similarly, toward the end of the novel, Hoshino had to complete the tasks of closing the entrance and eliminate "it" (the white stuff). He mercilessly liquidated the stuff and chopped it to pieces (489-91). Diegetically speaking, the presentation of the animal maltreatment and the white stuff may serve reducing the violent effect, a mild treatment of violence. Yet, those depictions have indicated the justification of using violence and the ethical problems; that is, the problems lie in that if one has the right to use violence and if violence is some "necessary evil" to stop from violence. Johnnie Walker's psychopathic deed on cats, though justified by his project of the soul-collecting and flute-making, is less ethically justifiable. Nakata's killing of Walker may earn more approval because he had slain a villain and saved his cat friends, yet it is questionable if he has the right and if it is necessary to kill in order to save. Similarly, Hoshino's elimination of the white stuff looks righteous because he has stopped the white stuff from going into the other world. Though a deformed creature, the white stuff is also alive. Again, it is possible to inquire if violence is indispensable. What is more curious is that, when those characters are imposing violence on others, they express no remorse and regret, and even feel no dilemma. Instead, they are quite resolute, calm, and even relieved after the violent deeds. In his conversation with Hayao Kawai, Murakami once mentioned that his depictions of violence may have to do with the "impact" and the "catharsis" he aimed to create (my translation, Kawai 136).[23] One may construe that the characters' violent deeds aim to bring "impacts" and their reliefs have to do with the "catharsis." At the same time, however, those depictions may suggest that there might

[23] The term "catharsis" originates from Aristotle's *Poetics* on the effects of true tragedy on the spectator. "Catharsis," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, Encyclopædia Britannica Inc., 2012, 24 July 2012 <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/99492/catharsis>.

not be definite answers for the cycle of violence as well as ethical questions. In other words, besides the impacting effects on reading, what is more significant is that the author's presentation of violence in the novel has shown the ethical questions and ambivalence behind violence.

Pacifism, Victimization, and Morality

Murakami's depictions of violence may greatly contradict the thinking that Japanese would prefer emphasizing for decades—peace. After her defeat in WWII, Japan has undergone the Occupation by the U.S. and drastic political, social, and cultural changes, and been profoundly influenced in many aspects ever since.[24] Under the U.S. supervision, Japan was forced to demilitarize and to re-make its Constitution. The most special part of Constitution of Japan is Article 9. Based on the Article, Japan has declared renouncing "war as a sovereign right of the nation" and has entrusted herself with maintaining "international peace" (The Solon Law Archive). In order to "accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph," Japan thus would not maintain any type of forces and "the right of belligerency" of Japan will not be recognized (The Solon Law Archive). From then on, Japan has maintained the role of pacifist in the world. The authority may also be glad to choose the road on pacifism for its practicality. In his essay "The Rise and Decline of Japanese Pacifism," Yuan Cai observes that Japanese pacifism differs from the one within Western philosophical

[24] As mentioned in the footnote no. 19, the San Francisco Treaty in 1952 marked the official end of WWII. Yet, it was simply the beginning of Japan-U.S. post-war relations. Mutual Security Treaty between two countries came into force at the same year. The treaty stated that U.S. was granted to maintain certain forces in Japan and to provide protection for Japan and Asia region. For Japan, it was a strategic and beneficial way to help their post-war economic recovery, since they could spend less governmental expenditure (1%) on the military (SDF).The alliance also became an essential tie between the two countries. However, it also suggested that Japan was "trapped" under the protection, or supervision of the U.S., be it politically or economically, from the post-war era till today. Take the recent news on the U.S. Marine bases in Okinawa for instance. The Japanese would have to share almost 2/3 total expenditure to help move the Marines, yet still not all the Marines would move away. In other words, Japan needs to "pay its price" because the enforcement of the treaty. Perez, *The History of Japan* 142-53. "U.S. Comes to Agreement with Japan to Move 9,000 Marines off Okinawa," 27 April 2012, *The Washington Post*, 4 June 2012 <http://www.washingtonpost.com >.

tradition (181). The factors that contribute to Japanese pacifism have to do with the people's war-weariness: economic deprivation, human suffering, questions of the war, and the fear of the resurgence of militarism. Strategically speaking, to choose the road on pacifism can help Japan avoid being involved in international affairs and throw her people in pursuing economic growth—a very feasible way to regain Japanese nationality and reputation in the world. In other words, pacifism as well as the Peace Constitution have become the best protective umbrella for the Japanese post-war recovery, protection from the resurgence of Japanese militarism, and avoidance of military conflicts.

If pacifism is beneficial for the post-war recovery of Japan, the emphasis on victimhood may also work in the same way. In fact, Japan was a perpetrator during WWII. After their defeat, however, they seldom mentioned their responsibility for the war. Instead, they have presented themselves mostly as victims of WWII and atomic bombs. Such emphasis on peace and victimhood of WWII can be traced earlier to the year after WWII. In his article "The Memory of the Second World War and the Essence of 'New Japan,'" Sigal Ben-Rafael Galanti examines the special session of the Diet on the post-war Constitution of Japan in 1946 to demonstrate that the authority's general attitude toward WWII. He quotes politicians of all backgrounds—right-wing, left-wing, and socialists, to name just a few—and many of them agreed that the post-war democratic constitution was the most promising and positive way to "transform Japan into a pacifist" (134), "contribute Japan's development" (134), and "enhance its reputation in the world" (132).[25] Moreover, the majority blamed Japan's defeat for certain groups: "all participants in the debate ascribed Japan's involvement and failure in the war to notions such as militarism,

[25] Indeed, it is undeniable that Japan regained her reputation with the economic boom in 1970s and Japanese pop culture is around the world in the present.

capitalism or colonialism…" (139). In other words, Japan herself has become the victim of WWII. Neither the Japanese historical wrongdoings nor their responsibilities for the war were mentioned; the role of perpetrator (i.e. on neighboring Asian countries) was almost downplayed and repressed. Such mechanism as "victim consciousness," argued the social critic Makoto Oda (小田実) in the 1960s, had blurred "the fact that we[Japanese] were, in principle at least, among the perpetrators in the war" (qtd. in Orr "Victims, Victimizers" 1). In fact, one can observe the emphasis on victimhood in *Kafka on the Shore*. Teacher Okamochi, for instance, in the interview stated that her husband died in Luson (Murakami, *Kafka* 14). She became indeed the victim of WWII because of her husband's death. She also expressed her dislike for the military; however, she did not mention anything about Japan's invasion during the war (104).

The ideas of the pacifist sentiments and victimhood have gained strength reciprocally till today. Nowadays, Japanese is often portrayed as a peace-loving people. The younger generation of the Japanese is less historical-burdened and less informative of the wartime past. They also feel less historically responsible for the past. However, the emphasis on pacifism and victimhood is indeed problematic; the historical past of Japan, including the perpetrator's role, militarism, and their ferocity, remains unsolved. The problem has lasted since the end of WWII. As James Orr observes, early in Vietnam War period (from the 1960s to 70s), social critic Oda had pointed out that "without a critical understanding of their own past as victimizer..., the Japanese people were unable to challenge the Japanese state's contemporary complicity in waging a war…"; therefore, it is urgent to "unearth" Japanese experiences as victimizers as well as the potential and "indict them dispassionately and tenaciously" (qtd. in Orr, "Victims, Victimizers" 4). Jacques Sélmelin shares the same opinion that the victim consciousness, or the victimhood, could "lead to further

victimization, as in the case of future perpetrators who justify their predations on the basis of their own sense as victims of history" (qtd. in Orr, "Victims and Perpetrators" 55). These critics have hinted that the pacifism and victimhood may soothe all the uneasiness on the surface, yet the truth is that the undercurrent is turbulent; that is, the issue of the Japanese war atrocities and role of aggressor are seldom seriously confronted. Without real confrontation with their historical past, Japanese might again turn themselves into victimizers and leave themselves "susceptible to future manipulation" (Orr, "Victims, Victimizers," 4). Murakami has also sensed such oddity in the Japanese society:

> "…. We go on believing that we live in the so-called free 'civil state' we call 'Japan' with our fundamental human rights guaranteed, but is this truly the case? Peel back a layer of skin, and what do we find breathing and pulsating there but the same old sealed national system or ideology." (qtd. in Rubin, "Murakami Haruki" 70)

Putting stress on pacifism and the role of sufferer is less likely to eliminate the truths of Japan's aggressions during the WWII. In fact, there is no easy dichotomy between the role of sufferer and perpetrator. The once victims may turn themselves into victimizers, and vice versa. One can detect such ambivalence in *Kafka on the Shore* as well. Okamochi, a victim of the war, was a perpetrator on Nakata and other students. Miss Saeki, who suffered from the calamity of her lover's death, became (possibly) a victimizer on the Tamura family. Koichi Tamura (Johnnie Walker), a victim of his love, turned into a perpetrator on cats and his son. Similarly, Satoru Nakata, the very victim of his traumatic childhood experiences, killed Johnnie Walker. Moreover, the ambivalent roles of victim/victimizer have indicated other crucial issues such as morality and ethics. When the characters became victimizers imposing violence on others, they hardly expressed any remorse or regret for their deeds. Take Nakata's

killing of Johnnie Walker for instance. It might be morally sound to kill on in order to save more lives (i.e. cats), yet it appears less morally justifiable to take away any kind of life. More critically speaking, one can challenge that if one has the right to kill and exert violence on others and if violence is some necessary evil to stop from violence.

Such moral questions may help one think over Japan's perpetrator role in WWII. Even though Japanese has turned to pacifism and presented themselves as sufferers, it is not possible to erase their historical past and avoid the moral responsibilities as aggressors for other countries. The deliberate downplays of their historical past would just highlight the contradictions within their society. On the one hand, the Japanese authority has tried to confront the wartime issue for decades. Official apology from successive Prime Ministers such as Tomiichi Murayama (村山富市, term 1994-1996) and Junichiro Koizumi (小泉純一郎, term 2001-2005) expresses their deep regret for Japan's wrongdoings in the past and at the same time reiterating Japan's role of pacifist in the world. On the other, however, historical textbooks of Japan,[26] Prime Ministers' (such as Koizumi) visits to Yasukuni Shrine (靖国神社),[27] and the move to "normalize" Self-Defence Force[28] have aroused controversy. Those deeds just show that Japan expresses no repentance for other victimized countries but gives approval to Japanese militarism. It is truly doubtful whether Japan has really faced up to and been ready coping with the violence and the moral problems that WWII has brought.

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[26] History textbooks of Japan approved by the Japanese government, falsified the wartime history, "glorified" their wartime past, and evaded "responsibility for crimes." It was seriously criticized by South Korea and China. "Japan Textbook Angers Chinese, Korean Press," 6 April 2005, *BBC*, 20 March 2012 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/4416593.stm>.

[27] Yasukuni Shrine is dedicated to soldiers who died fighting on behalf of Empire of Japan. However, the enshrinement of war criminals (especially Class A war criminals in WWII) raised controversy. Thus the visits to Yasukuni Shrine, especially the political ones, have become controversial in Japan as well as in the world. Kyodo News, "Paper: Yasukuni, State in '69 OK'd War Criminal Inclusion," *The Japan Times Online*, 29 March 2007, 20 March 2012 <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/text/nn20070329a5.html >.

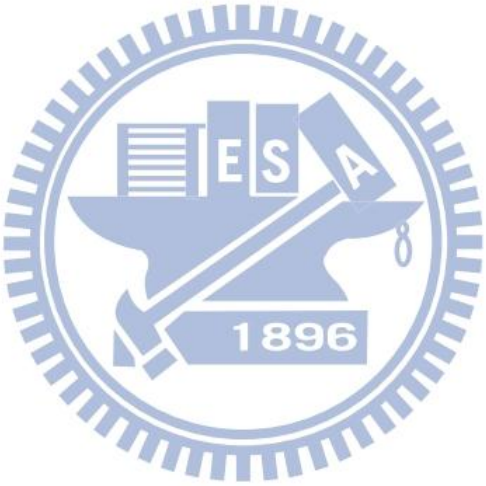
[28] For instance, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (安倍晋三, term 2005-2006) disliked the war-renouncing Constitution of Japan and called for the "normalization" of Self-Defence Force. "Mr. Abe's Worrisome Plan for Japan," *The Japan Times Online*, 21 Sep. 2007, 20 March 2012 <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/text/ed20060921a1.html>.

Besides, it is possible that the Japanese would turn themselves as aggressors in such ostensibly righteous discourse of victimhood. In his conversation with psychologist Hayao Kawai, Murakami himself has observed the issue of violence in Japanese society:

> "The biggest problem for Japan is that the overwhelming violence of the war finds no relative outlet after WWII. Instead of taking responsibility for the war, everyone seems to turn themselves into victims, claiming something ambivalent like 'we should not make such a mistake again.'…. Our generation has grown up in peace and in the three major principles 'priority in peace,' 'never again,' and 'renouncing the war.'…. However, as we grow up, the contradiction as well as the disagreement [between violence and peace] also grows." (my translation, Kawai 138)

Murakami's writings and depictions of violence, to a certain extent, may imply that (historical) violence somehow pervades in the Japanese society no matter how hard people try to repress it. At the same time, the contradiction and disagreement would always exist. His observation also hints that the Japanese has not really reflected upon the role of aggressor and moral issue: as individuals and citizens in Japan, how the Japanese should face up to historical violence and what kinds of moral responsibilities should be taken. Yet, in my opinion, Murakami himself may also be uncertain about the approaches to cope with the historical past and morality issue. At the end of *Kafka on the Shore*, Kafka Tamura decided to bring the painting with him, go back to Tokyo, and deal with all the things he had left behind: the police and the school (Murakami 501). In other words, he had decided to confront his life and to be responsible for it. Kafka's going back to Tokyo might be metaphorical of what is inevitable for the Japanese is to "confront" and "be responsible for" all the WWII-related issues. By leaving an unknown answer of Kafka's future, however, Murakami also leaves

unanswered of the future of Japan. In brief, by largely depicting violence, Murakami highlights what is at issue is the ambivalence of victim/victimizer and peace/violence (i.e. war and militarism). To be a mere sufferer or a perpetrator is relatively easy, yet what the Japanese will have to cope with is not something dichotomy but the ambivalent roles as both sufferer and perpetrator. At the same time, the accompanying moral dilemma is also inevitable: the cycle of (historical) violence, the justification of violence, discourse of victimization, and delicate responsibilities that one (as both roles) should take. These would be the challenges and issues that the Japanese will have to transcend in the future to come.



Chapter Three

Death, Desire, and the "Oedipal Malediction"

Murakami's magical realist narrative of *Kafka on the Shore* does only creates some intriguing effects and provides a curious kind of reading pleasure, but also brings out two significant themes in the novel, namely, violence and sex. In this chapter, I would like to probe into the issue of sex in *Kafka on the Shore*. In fact, sex has always been one of the crucial issues in Murakami's oeuvre. In his previous works, Murakami used to focus on the sexual relations among grown-ups. In *Norwegian Wood*, for instance, the protagonist Toru Watanabe's sexual relations and experiences play an essential part in the novel. In *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*, Murakami depicts the deteriorating marital relation between Toru Okada and Kumiko Okada, adultery, and even prostitution. With the depiction of sex and sexually-related events of those characters, the author explores their mindsets and interpersonal relationship. Differing from the treatments of sexual relations in adults in his previous works, in *Kafka on the Shore* Murakami focuses on an adolescent, that is, the 15-year-old protagonist Kafka Tamura's psycho-sexual development and his unconventional relationships with a potential sister and a mother figure, Sakura and Miss Saeki respectively. On his 15th birthday, Kafka left home where he had always wished to escape from. He was forsaken by his mother (who ran away with an adopted sister) when he was only 4, and he had lived with his father Koichi Tamura ever since. His father, however, had repeated his "Oedipal malediction" to Kafka: prophesying that he would someday murder his father and violate his mother and sister. Kafka's interpersonal relations, especially with the two women he met—Miss Saeki and Sakura—revolved around this "prophecy" and his yearning for missing family members. Interestingly, the malediction was somehow realized in the author's magical realist narratives involving

dreams and the juxtaposition of the realistic and fantastic. Kafka's father Koichi Tamura was eventually killed, and Kafka's fainting and unidentified blood involved him in his "poetic responsibility" for his father's death. Yet, besides the magical effects of patricide, the incident alludes to the issue of violence and the symbolic meaning of the death of and the revolt against the father figure. Similarly, Kafka's relations with Sakura and Miss Saeki are related to the desire in addition to the magical sisterly love and motherly love. That is, they are not mere "incestuous" relations but are very likely to have to do with sexual invitation/seduction and related ethical questions.

In this chapter, therefore, I would like to explore the "Oedipal malediction" in the novel, the "poetic" patricide, Kafka's relations with his possible sister and mother respectively, and the magical realist effects concerned. To start with, the "Oedipal malediction" in the novel has to do with the Greek tragedy *Oedipus the King* and the psychoanalytic concept Oedipus complex. The tragedy centered upon Oedipus. On his way to Thebes, Oedipus killed king Laius by accident, not knowing that Laius was in fact his biological father. Oedipus later solved the riddle of the Sphinx, saved Thebes, became the king, and married the queen of Thebes—the prophecy of patricide and incest was thus fulfilled. Sigmund Freud later derived the term "Oedipus complex" from the Greek myth to suggest a child's (usually a boy) unconscious wish/desire for his love for mother and jealousy of father (Laplanche 283). The complex and its successful resolution is a child's normal process of growing up. In *Kafka on the Shore*, however, the complex has become the father's foretelling of his son's future. Moreover, the taboos of patricide and incest were somehow fulfilled, yet it involved the author's magical realist narratives: Kafka's imaginary family relations and the deliberate confusion between the reality and dream. One can say that the author has borrowed and played with the idea of Oedipus complex. In addition to the author's

magical play with patricide and incest, it is also possible to read the suggestive parts in each case. The death of Koichi Tamura/Johnnie Walker not only indicates Kafka's "poetic responsibility" for patricide but also implies the issues of "necessary violence" and paternity. The problematic brother-sister love between Kafka and Sakura involves sexual initiation and seduction and implies ethical problems. Finally, the relation between Kafka and Miss Saeki is not simply about mother and son or between lovers, but has to do with their psychical investment in certain subject positions. Also, the painting "Kafka on the Shore" plays a significant part in their ambivalent relations. The ambiguities of patricide, incest, Oedipus complex, and the author's magical realistic techniques have greatly complicated the characters' equivocal relationships.

Imaginary Family and Beyond the "Oedipal Malediction"

Kafka's imaginary family relations and his father's "Oedipal malediction" play important parts in the plot development of the novel. After his mother (and adopted sister) left, Kafka had lived with his father Koichi Tamura. Yet, the father-son relation was quite bad, and his father even foretold that Kafka would someday kill his father and violate his sister and mother. Due to his traumatic childhood experience (abandoned by his mother), Kafka had a tendency to see women he met of the right ages as his possible sister or mother. Interestingly, the plot development has indicated that Kafka was following the prognostication: his father got killed and he was having some incestuous relationships with his possible sister and mother. In fact, Murakami borrows the idea of Oedipus complex, and the taboos of patricide and incest are skillfully connected with the idea of *Bildungsroman* (or personal growth) and Kafka's hypothetical family under the commingling effects of the real and magical.

To begin with, it is quite easy for one to associate the "Oedipal malediction" in

Kafka on the Shore with the Greek tragedy *Oedipus the King*. What is more significant may be its association with the Oedipus complex in the Freudian psychoanalytic theory. Oedipus complex, originated from the Greek tragedy *Oedipus the King*, is one of the crucial ideas in Freudian psychoanalysis. Freud claims that a child (a boy) would undergo the feeling of incestuous desire for the parent of opposite sex (mother figure) and the feeling of dislike for the parent of the same sex (father figure). Such psychic development usually occurs at the age of 3 to 5; this period is also called "Oedipal phase." To undergo the Oedipal crisis and the "threat of castration," a child should learn to give up his desire for the opposite-sex parent and at the same time identify with the same-sex parent (Laplanche 285). One can also compare the Oedipus complex to a person's growth in Western tradition/society; that is, once a person is entering the society, he would have to follow the social order, such as law and social confinement (Felluga, *General Introduction to Psychoanalysis*). To summarize briefly, Oedipus complex refers to a crucial transition in a child's psycho-sexual growth: by identifying with the father figure and social order, the child must repress his desire (for the mother). At the same time, the complex suggests that a child will have to separate from his parenting figures and start to establish relations with others in social groups. In other words, one may construe the Oedipus complex as a psycho-sexual being's process of entering society (Lear 183).

Reiko Abe Auestad reads Kafka's journey in *Kafka on the Shore* and the Greek myth inter-textually (304). Yet, its bizarreness lies perhaps not in the inter-textuality but in its perversion of the "Oedipal scenario." That is, the author borrows the Oedipus complex and makes believe that Kafka was undergoing his Oedipal crisis because of the malediction from his father. In fact, the essential "family," the desire, and the hostility might have less to do with his Oedipal crisis. Interestingly, the author further creates for Kafka a possible sister and mother, and his relations with them

somehow fit into the "Oedipal malediction." As mentioned above, the father-son relationship between Kafka and Koichi Tamura was totally bad and malfunctioning. Kafka hardly knew his father, and he claimed that his father hurt everything and everyone around him (Murakami, *Kafka* 218 and 270). When Kafka learned of his father's death, he showed no sorrow; instead, he only regretted that "he didn't die sooner" (214). One can see that Kafka hated his father a lot. Also, the author deliberately leaves Kafka's experiences of growing up a blank and only gives readers the conclusion that Koichi Tamura was a BAD father. Such intentional "blankness" and downplaying of the father figure are likely to lead us to speculate that Kafka is still at his Oedipal crisis and he might have killed his father because of his hatred—which coincidentally fits into the Oedipus complex and psychological taboo. However, one should notice that the malediction in *Kafka on the Shore* is a perversion of the typical Oedipus scenario. As I have previously explained, the complex has to do with a child's desire for mother; his hostility toward father is out of father's possession of a child's desired object. Kafka's strong dislike, however, might not have originated from such a loving-hate relationship; the object of desire "mother" was in fact absent from Kafka's life. (Instead, Kafka was jealous of Komura when he fell for Miss Saeki, which will be discussed later in relation to Kafka's relationship with Miss Saeki.) In other words, Kafka's hatred toward father could be related to his father's ill treatments of the family rather than the rivalry in the Oedipus complex.

However, because of the absence of his mother and sister, Kafka appeared to have much more yearning for them. When he thought of the girl at the hotel counter, for instance, he would imagine her as his sister (63). Interestingly, Kafka's ties with Sakura and with Miss Saeki are more than some random thoughts. When Kafka met Sakura on his way to Shikoku, he got an idea that if his real sister could be her. Sakura also said that she had younger brother. There is a possibility, however slight, that

Kafka could be that brother (24). Later, when Kafka found himself losing conscious, he called Sakura for help and stayed at her place overnight. Sakura explained to him the reason why she left her phone number to Kafka: she was once a runaway thus she could somehow be aware of Kafka's situation (78). Kafka might have aroused Sakura's caring and sympathetic nature. She treated Kafka as her younger brother, thinking that it would be nice if they were real sister and brother (98). This strange brother-sister-hood was thus established on Sakura's sympathy and Kafka's yearning for and investment in this possible sister. Similarly, when Kafka met Miss Saeki for the first time, he also considered the possibility that she might be his mother. Interestingly, Kafka had stronger feeling of nostalgia when he saw Miss Saeki (41). Moreover, Miss Saeki told Kafka that she once wrote a book on interviewing the survivors under lightning strikes, which coincidentally reminded Kafka of his father's experiences (268 and 270-71). The possibility that Miss Saeki was Kafka's mother was quite high. In addition, Miss Saeki refused to answer Kafka if she had any offspring (342). Kafka's yearning for sister and mother work reciprocally with the elusive relations that the author creates. Such "space for imagination" could snare readers into believing that there are certain "relations" among the characters.

Moreover, the "Oedipal malediction" was fulfilled with the author's intentional play with the Oedipus complex and the magical realist writings. Or, one may say that the "imaginary family" and the "Oedipal malediction" work reciprocally at the magical realist level. On the one hand, the curse and the verbalization of the unconscious taboos (patricide and incest) has greatly influenced how the novel unfolds; it is one of the critical points for Kafka to start his unusual "journey." On the other, the author intentionally creates for Kafka an imaginary family, portraying a loving-hate feeling/relation that looks like the one in the Oedipus complex: the bad father-son relation and the desire for (sister and) mother. Moreover, Murakami has

"realized" Kafka's unconscious wish: Kafka might have committed patricide, and his relation with Sakura and Miss Saeki could be incestuous ones. Though the occurrence of patricide and incest has taken on a more fantastic level and commingled the real and the magical (i.e. the dreams and magical realist writings), it looks like that one could draw connections to the taboos of patricide and incest (from the Oedipus complex) here. Yet, the prognostication is in fact the perversion of the typical complex. The absence of mother, or the absent object of desire, also makes the foretelling differ from the original one. Kafka's hatred toward his father might not be out of his father's possession of his mother, and his yearning for mother (and sister) could have to do with his traumatization and his desire for being loved. One could say that the author has provided a virtual family structure and the imaginary "realm" (the magical realist narrative) for the "prophecy" to take place. In other words, besides the brother-sister-hood and mother-son relation, one might also examine Kafka's relationships with Sakura and Miss Saeki in relations to the desire. With the appeals to the "family" and "Oedipal malediction," the author has rendered sisterly love and motherly love more unusual and complicated.

The Poetic Patricide

As mentioned above, Murakami portrays the deteriorating father-child relationship and deliberately downplays Koichi Tamura as a BAD father. This BAD father made an "Oedipal malediction" against Kafka, and his death in the novel was like claiming that the patricide in his prophecy was realized, involving the author's magical realistic writings and the interweavement of the two storylines. What is more intriguing is that, toward the end of the novel, the boy named Crow turned into a real crow to attack Johnnie Walker. It not only suggests the connections between Koichi Tamura and Johnnie Walker and between the two storylines, but is also metaphorical

of Kafka's revolt against paternity at a magical-real level. One might also see the issue of "necessary violence" in relation to ethics in Kafka's "poetic" patricide and Crow's magical revolt.

One can detect the "Oedipal malediction" is an unconventional one, and Kafka's hatred was not out of the rivalry feeling in the Oedipus complex. Still, the patricide was eventually realized when Oshima showed Kafka the news of his father's death (211). In fact, the death of Koichi Tamura involves the author's magical realist writings and interlocking narrative strategies. As I have explained in Chapter 1, the author draws certain connection between Nakata's encounter and Kafka's. In Nakata's line, he met the cat killer Johnnie Walker and stabbed him to death in order to save his cat friends. When he "woke up," however, he was blood-stainless and yet the two meowing cats Mimi and Goma were beside him. Coincidentally, on the same day (May 28th) of Johnnie Walkers' death, Koichi Tamura was murdered. It was also the day that Kafka found himself losing consciousness and drenched in blood. It is possible for readers to associate Nakata's "bloodless" killing with Kafka's "blood-stained" fainting in the alternate chapters of the novel. Moreover, toward the end of the story, Nakata said to Miss Saeki that he "took the place of the 15-year-old boy who should've been there" (421). Such statement just indicated Kafka's possible involvement. In brief, the author has deliberately juxtaposed Nakata's killing of Johnnie Walker and Kafka Tamura's fainting at a Shinto, creating complementary effects between the two storylines. Kafka's "patricide" is thus made possible with the magical realist narrative in *Kafka on the Shore*.

Besides the mysterious death of the father figure (and patricide), one may detect the ethical questions behind the violence and its elusive symbolic meaning. To begin with, the author's portrayal of the villain-like father is rather usual. On the one hand, the author's intentional downplaying of the father figure and bad father-son relation

might make readers feel sympathetic for Kafka; since Koichi Tamura's bad father image and "heartless behavior toward his vulnerable son," as Auestad states, would earn readers' compassion (305). On the other, it might also sound more justifiable for the villain's death—both as a bad father and as an animal-abusing maniac. However, the death of Johnnie Walker/Koichi Tamura, which looked a just one, also alludes to some ethical problems of patricide and violence. It might sound less morally correct to kill someone simply because that he is considered evil whether he is a bad father or a cat-psychopath; that is, the problem lies in the justification of using "necessary" violence. However, instead of directly pointing to the possible ethical problems, Murakami chooses to deal with the patricide as well as the cat rescue at a magical realist level. Kafka might not be the person who stabbed his father, yet his amnesia and the unidentified blood on his shirt got him involved in his "poetic responsibilities" for his father's death. By the same token, the two cats beside the blood-stainless Nakata indicated that he was highly possibly involved in Johnnie Walker's death. Such a magical realist presentation of patricide might be criticized, since both Kafka and Nakata could appear less responsible for the murder/the death of the villain. Interestingly, though Kafka had sensed that his father was "connected to something very unusual," till the end he was not notified of his father's "the other facet" as a cat killer (if Koichi were Johnnie Walker). Similarly, Nakata did not have any clue who Koichi Tamura was; he only knew about Johnnie Walker. Kafka could be less guilty if he knew the cat killer was his father; it is also possible that Nakata would hesitate to kill if he knew Johnnie Walker was someone's father. To show the villainous side (a bad father and a cat killer) is definitely one of the author's strategies, yet it also suggests that both characters are involved in the ethical questions behind the death of Koichi Tamura/Johnnie Walker. Murakami has chosen to represent patricide in a more oblique way to invite readers to think over the equivocal ethical

questions concerned.

However, the patricide and its accompanying ethical questions do not come to an end but become even more intriguing in the magical character Crow's attack on Johnnie Walker. Toward the end of the novel (between chapter 46 and 47), the boy named Crow turned into a real crow, flying over the forest and looking for someone. Finally he located the man in his red sweatsuit, black silk hat, and with a khaki bag. The dress code of this character reminds readers of Johnnie Walker. He said to Crow that in his bag there were flutes made of cats' souls, and he intended to go through this forest to reach the place (possibly to the other world) where he could make a super-size flute. Crow tried to stop him from moving forward, yet Johnnie Walker said he was "a soul in transition," a soul between life and death ("limbo"), and Crow was not qualified to stop him because Crow was nothing but an "illusion." Johnnie Walker even provoked Crow into attacking him. Crow just pecked ferociously on the man's eyes and face and even pulled his tongue out, yet he only kept laughing soundlessly but loudly—Crow could hear it—which was just like some "other-worldly flute."[29]

This bizarre chapter about Crow's attack might be the most surreal part in *Kafka on the Shore*. One can again see "violence" in Crow's attack. It is possible to view the attack as the continuation of the magical and "poetic" patricide: Johnnie Walker (or Koichi Tamura) intended to invade the peaceful alternative world, and Crow had to stop him. It metaphorically suggests Kafka's revolt against his father at a magical realistic level. Indeed, in his interview, Murakami said that paternity is one of his important themes, and paternity, or even patriarchy, could more broadly refer to institutional restrictions (Murakami, *Long Interview* 59). To counteract such paternity is also one of the crucial themes in his works (59). It is possible to interpret the death

[29] "The Boy Name Crow." Murakami, *Kafka* 465-68.

of Koichi Tamura/Johnnie Walker as the "death" of the law, social confinements etc.—which could also be metaphorical of the various possibilities of the magical realistic events in the novel. Interestingly, the death of the father figure, or the death of paternity, is only an "end" at the diegetic level; this paternal figure still haunts Kafka (and Crow) even after his death. Interestingly, the author does not say if Crow successfully stopped this father figure under his violent attack, suggesting that paternity always haunts and the counteraction would persist. At the same time, the violence along with the ethical issue that his attack alludes to would not easily come to an end. In the magical realist depictions of the death of father and Crow's attack, one may see the perplexity—violence, ethics, and paternity—behind it, which defies facile interpretations.

Problematic Sisterly Love

Besides the patricide, the taboo of incest (with sister and mother figures) is the other significant part in the "Oedipal malediction." In the following, I would focus on the uncommon relation between Kafka and Sakura. The author establishes certain brother-sister-hood between the two characters. Their interactions, however, go beyond the sibling love; something "incestuous" is taking place. Furthermore, Kafka's vivid wet dream makes one believe that he did realized his father's prognostication. Besides the magical realist effects and play with the Oedipus complex in this sisterly love, it also involves Murakami's treatments of Kafka's sexual initiation, Sakura's sympathy (and seduction), and the oblique ethical problems behind their relationship.

As mentioned above, Kafka's "chance encounter" with Sakura had initiated the strange brother-sister-hood between them (Murakami, *Kafka* 20). Though he regarded Sakura as his sister, as a boy at puberty, Kafka also had some sexual fantasy toward Sakura (as a female) (23-24). When he went to Sakura's place and stayed overnight,

Sakura explained to him that she had once been a runaway; thus she could somehow be aware of Kafka's situation (78). Kafka might have aroused Sakura's caring and sympathetic nature. She invited Kafka to her bed and held him as if they were real "brother and sister" (96). However, as they were holding each other, Kafka got an erection uncontrollably. Sakura just decided to help him come; Kafka asked for permission to picture he naked body at the same time (96-98). It is as if Kafka and Sakura were walking on a thin line between sex/non-sex (or incest/non-incest).

Sakura's help with masturbation has problematized their brother-sister relationship. Though both the characters claim that they treated on another as brother and sister, it can be over-simplistic to regard their relation as such. Actually, Sakura is the one who invites Kafka to her bed. As Kafka climbed to her bed, Sakura told him that she had a steady boyfriend and she did not have random sex anymore, though she used to be wild (96). She wanted Kafka to think of them "as brother and sister" (96). Sakura's invitation might skillfully evade the charge of the "seduction" by appealing to her sympathy for Kafka. Her "boyfriend declaration" helps justify that her "invitation" is "innocent" of sexual desire. However, despite the declaration, one can construe that she probably does not merely treat Kafka as a younger brother but potentially as a sexual partner as well. In this sense, her clarification is a means to prevent Kafka (or even herself) from getting too deep into sexual relationship. Moreover, when she noticed Kafka's hard-on, she did hesitate for a moment then decided to help him (96). This problematic "hand job" was off limits for their brother-sister-hood, yet Sakura claimed that the "manual stimulation" was just "massage" rather than "sex;" she only aimed to help Kafka relax (97). After the deed, she said again that it would be nice if she were Kafka's real sister (98). One cannot be sure if there is any ulterior motive and if Sakura's act was an entirely altruist one. Yet, it is possible to say that to emphasize her sisterly love, Sakura could craftily evade the

moral problem, reduce her sense of guilt about "corrupting" her boyfriend, and at the same time enjoy some sexual pleasure without any commitment. As to Kafka, this problematic sisterly love has involved two parts: the taboo of incest and his sexual initiation and fantasy. On the one hand, Kafka viewed Sakura as his potential sister. He was afraid that he would really realize his father's malediction: "I'd have a semi-permanent hard-on, with semi-permanent fantasies. …can't keep asking her permission to let my imagination roam. But most of all I can't forget what she did for me last light" (100). Therefore, he decided to leave Sakura's place the next day. On the other hand, one can detect that Kafka held some sexual fantasy toward Sakura. Moreover, Sakura's hand job might indicate Kafka's sexual initiation, and Sakura's place was full of too many "stimuli" for him (99). In other words, Kafka's leave might have to do with his fear of losing control over his sexual impulse, which could result in destroying the wonderful sibling love between them.

Interestingly, this bizarre brother-sister-hood did not end with Kafka's departure but became more complicated when Kafka had a vivid wet dream—a dream of "breaking into" Sakura's dream and raping her. During his second stay in the mountain cabin, Kafka dreamed of Sakura. The vividness of the dream had made Kafka hesitate to judge if it was real or not (396). Kafka was in Sakura's apartment and woke up because of thirst at midnight. He climbed to Sakura's bed and fondled her, while Sakura was still deeply asleep. Kafka then went inside her, and suddenly Sakura woke up. She admonished him to get it out, since she had a steady boyfriend and Kafka had come to her dream without permission. Even if they were not blood-related, said Sakura, it was morally wrong. However, Kafka did not listen to her and kept on violating her. Sakura told Kafka that he was raping her, and because of this, they would never meet each other again. Finally Kafka came in the dream. At that time Kafka woke up from the vivid dream and found himself very thirsty, so he

went gulp down many glasses of water.[30]

As I have mentioned in Chapter 1, the baffling effect between the reality and dreams is part of Murakami's magical realist writing strategies. One can observe such confusion in Kafka's wet dream as well. The vividness and consistency of the dream constructs certain alternate reality. Kafka felt that he got caught in the "turning point" of realities, unable to decide if he were in a dream or if he had become a living-spirit, going to the other reality. The boundary between reality and dream became more confusing when Kafka, in this possible alternative reality, broke into Sakura's dream (397). Such mixture of layers of dream and reality has further complicated the situation. In addition, Crow's "presence" in the dream might have strengthened the illusion that Kafka did rape Sakura through some magical-real means. It again confuses readers of the real and fantastic. With the author's magical realist narrative (the reality/fantasy and the magical Crow), one is getting caught in the uncertainty of the real and magical.

Besides its magical realistic effects and uncertainty that the author intends to create, one might also explicate Kafka's wet dream from a psychoanalytic perspective. It has to do with Murakami's play with the Oedipus complex; at the same time, it is possibly related to Kafka's sexual fantasy and repression. To start with, it might not be difficult for one to associate "dreams" with Freud's distinguished work *Interpretation of Dreams* (1900). Freud believes that a dream is related to a person's unconscious wish and his daily experiences. This unconscious wish will link up with the daily residues and "[effect] a transference on to them," and a dream is thus formed (Freud, *SE V* 573). It looks like that Kafka did have "daily stimuli" (his overnight stay at Sakura's place) and the "unconscious wish" (the incest taboo in his father's malediction and his sexual fantasy). On the one hand, Kafka might fear the fulfillment

[30] Kafka's dream of Sakura. Murakami, *Kafka* 396-99.

of his father's foretelling. The content of the dream can be viewed as something Kafka least wants to "accomplish": to violate his (potential) sister—the incest taboo. In this way, it appears that Murakami just reinforces the "Oedipal malediction" with Kafka's dream of Sakura, connecting the forbidden incest with a dream of the unconscious wish. In other words, the author deliberately creates the sisterly love and the wet dream to convince readers of Kafka's realization of the "prophecy" and committing incest—under his magical-real play with the psychological taboo. One may also take Kafka's sexual fantasy into consideration on the other. As I have mentioned above, besides the sisterly love, Kafka held certain sexual fantasy and impulsion toward Sakura. One can treat this vivid wet dream to be the direct realization of Kafka's fantasy and repression. Interestingly, in this dream Sakura again said to Kafka that she had got a steady boyfriend and appealed to their brother-sister relation—though not necessarily a blood-related one (Murakami, *Kafka* 397-98). This second-time "boyfriend declaration" in Kafka's wet dream would certainly echo with what Sakura had said to Kafka when they were holding together. It is possible to say that Kafka's wet dream, to a certain extent, is an "expression" of his repressed wish, since he may believe that he should not violate this sister and he should not violate someone's girlfriend. Moreover, Sakura in the dream said to Kafka that he came into her dream without permission (397), still Kafka chose to "rape" her. The dream may hint that Kafka might not feel content about their brother-sister-hood, yet Sakura (at least in Kafka's dream) might want a "less" sexual relation by appealing to sisterly love.

From the above discussion, one can see that the brother-sister love between Kafka and Sakura is indeed far more complicated. The author creates certain bond between the two and suggests that they might have committed incest and fulfilled of the "Oedipal malediction" if unwittingly. It involves not simply the magical realistic

effects but also the repression of sexual desire and fantasy, which is indeed the most intriguing part of their unusual sisterly love.

Mother and Lover: "Kafka" and Miss Saeki

The relationship between Kafka and Miss Saeki is the most ambivalent but crucial one in *Kafka on the Shore*. It involves not only the problematic mother-son relation but also some bizarre amatory events, involving the author's magical realist writings. The author firstly creates a possible mother-son relation between Kafka and Miss Saeki. In the meantime, Kafka starts his midnight romance with the ghostly 15-year-old Saeki. Suddenly, the midnight romance confuses with the probable mother-son relations when Miss Saeki made love to Kafka in a sleep-walking state. Finally, the motherly love and amatory reaches a climax when Kafka entered the other world and met the young Saeki and Miss Saeki (the latter was dead in the real world). Yet, their ambivalent relations have to do with their psychical investments in the painting "Kafka on the Shore," or more specifically, the "Kafka" (i.e. Komura, Miss Saeki's lover in youth) in that painting. In the following, I would like to examine how author complicates the relation between Kafka and Miss Saeki and discuss the possible interpretations of their relations and the suggestive meanings of the painting, which would also refer to the title of the novel "Kafka on the Shore."

To start with, Koichi Tamura's "Oedipal malediction" and the absence of mother have motivated Kafka to search for his missing mother. Kafka was unable to recall what his biological mother looked like. When Oshima asked Kafka if he had some memory of his mother since they had lived together till Kafka was 4, Kafka replied firmly that he did not remember her at all (264). It can be partly true that Kafka had a faint memory of his mother, yet it is obvious that Kafka intentionally repressed his memory of the mother because of his traumatization. One can speculate that Kafka

resented his mother for abandoning him (430). Such absence and "repression" of his memory of mother made it easier for Kafka to picture a mother figure. Therefore, Kafka had a tendency toward viewing "charming, middle-aged woman" as his potential mother (41). The same feeling also arose when Kafka saw Miss Saeki for the first time, yet the strong sense of nostalgia (if the author intends to create) made Kafka hold the possibility that Miss Saeki might be his mother (41). The coincidence between Miss Saeki's interview book and his father's personal encounter made Kafka more convinced that she could be his mother (268 and 270-71). Moreover, when Kafka asked whether Miss Saeki had any child, the answer was neither yes nor no (289). With such "coincidence" and "reticence," one could speculate that Miss Saeki was highly possibly Kafka's mother.

Besides his strong investment in the potential mother-son relation, Kafka was experiencing his "midnight romance" at the same time—with the young Saeki. When Kafka lived in Komura Memorial Library, he encountered the ghostly young Saeki in the midnight. The appearance of this beautiful "phantom" did confuse Kafka (as well as readers) the real and fantastic. However, Kafka somehow desperately fell for her; the taste of love and jealousy were much stronger and real than the ones he felt, comparatively speaking, in a "real" world. He got caught in an impossible love triangle, being jealous of the no-longer-existent rival Komura:

> **You're jealous of that pitiful, 20-year-old boy mistaken for someone else and pointlessly murdered…. You want more than anything to be that boy. Even knowing that at the age of 20 he was going to be... beaten to death, you'd still change places with him…. And after you die, your love will become a story etched for ever in her heart. Every single night she'll love you in her memory.** (260)

With the appearance of the ghostly girl and Kafka's "real" affection for her, one could

see the author's intentional play with the real and magical. Besides a lover's identity, Kafka's jealousy might take on the other meaning. Kafka had viewed Miss Saeki as his potential mother, and she was still deeply in love with Komura even after his death. In a sense, Komura is the one who really possesses "mother"; it is possible to say that Kafka's hostility toward Komura, to a certain extent, might be related to his Oedipus complex. This again shows that the author has inverted the original psychoanalytic concept in the "Oedipal malediction." Meanwhile, one can observe that the relation between Kafka and Miss Saeki has become equivocal.

The author further makes their relation more confusing when Miss Saeki appeared at midnight in a somnambulistic state and made love to Kafka (302). The "midnight romance" somehow became the problematic "incest." Miss Saeki was probably dreaming of her dead boyfriend Komura and mistaking Kafka to be her dead lover. In fact, she found some similarities between Kafka and her dead lover Komura; Kafka Tamura did remind her of Komura (268). The deliberate mix-up of the reality and dreams makes their love-making problematic and incestuous and wavers the potential mother-son and lover relations between the two characters. Auestad criticizes that such a love-making has created the "sexual liaison between Kafka and Saeki-san" (309). They can somehow benefit from each other and enjoy the sexual pleasure without feeling guilty: Kafka fulfills the tabooed desire of sleeping with his mother, while Miss Saeki enjoys "the illusion of having an affair with a young incarnation of her old boyfriend…" (309). In other words, the author cleverly offers Kafka and Miss Saeki a way to escape from their moral problem of incest and confrontation with the reality by making love in a sleep-walking state. Auestad's observation could be true, yet perhaps what is more unusual lies in that Kafka "actively" asked Miss Saeki to have sex with him after their love-making in a dreamy status. Kafka only said that everything was "in flux" and had "a double meaning"

(Murakami, *Kafka* 316-17). To one's astonishment, Miss Saeki accepted Kafka's sexual invitation. This is indeed much more problematic than their copulation in a somnambulistic condition. That is, whether their relationship is lover or mother and son, either of the relations is morally suspect. On the one hand, their intergenerational love is less appropriate if one views Kafka's words as courtship and Miss Saeki's reply as reception. On the other, their relation would become an incestuous one if they were mother and son. It is "technically possible" for Kafka to claim his innocence of incest with Miss Saeki, since he is uncertain if Miss Saeki is truly his mother (Auestad 304). It is less likely, however, to avoid the moral questions their intergenerational love could have brought.

In addition to the possible incest and May-December romance, the unconventional relation between Kafka and Miss Saeki reached a climax after Kafka entered the alternative world and met the young Saeki and Miss Saeki again. Their conversations suggest that the most significant and perplexing part of their relation lies in their investment in the subject positions: "Kafka" and "mother." In fact, one can observe that the person that Miss Saeki addressed to was not really Kafka Tamura but someone else, probably "Kafka" in the painting (Murakami, Kafka 321). In her conversation with Nakata, Miss Saeki also admitted that she could not help but become a 15-year-old girl again and make love to "*him*" (422). "To become a 15-year-old girl" (either in a mental way or in a "living-spirit" way) is technically possible for Miss Saeki to free from the accusation of the incestuous love and intergenerational romance. Yet, it is highly possible that she views Kafka as her dead lover Komura, the "Kafka" in the painting. Interestingly, Kafka also accepted to become "someone else" (343). In fact, such investment may be related to the painting "Kafka on the shore" and memory. When Kafka met Miss Saeki again in the alternative world, she had all her memory burned up, yet she urged Kafka to go back

the real world and take the painting "Kafka on the Shore" with him. Kafka questioned if the painting belonged to someone; Miss Saeki replied that the painting was a gift from "him" when he went to college. After all, the painting was "originally *yours*"; Kafka was in the painting, and Miss Saeki was beside him:

> I close my eyes. I'm at the beach and it's summer. I'm lying back in a deckchair. I can feel the roughness of its canvas on my skin…. Nearby, someone is painting a picture of me. And beside him sits a young girl in a short-sleeved light blue dress, gazing in my direction…. I'm in love with her. And she's in love with me.
>
> That's memory. (475-76)

It is curious why Miss Saeki insisted that the painting be "yours" and why Kafka should feel as if he were right in the painting. Specifically speaking, the painting belongs to "Kafka" in the painting rather than Kafka Tamura. At the moment, however, Miss Saeki invests her love for "Kafka" in Kafka Tamura; he then becomes "Kafka." The reason that Kafka fits into the subject position of "Kafka" might have to do with his desire for being loved. Similar to his jealousy of "Kafka" (Komura), to become the boy in the painting has its double meaning: he could be a lover of Miss Saeki and be a son that finally possesses his mother. In other words, by being "Kafka," Kafka Tamura is able to enjoy the feeling of love and being loved both as a son and a lover (343). Paradoxically, Kafka also becomes a replacement lover when he chooses to be "Kafka." Miss Saeki's true love is always for the idealized "Kafka" in the painting rather than Kafka Tamura. In a sense, it is possible to say that Kafka would never really become "Kafka." The "Kafka" (the dead Komura) in the painting has signified the "idealized love" that both Miss Saeki and Kafka would never obtain. One might also detect certain connections between Kafka's anticlimactic relation (with the young Saeki) with this idealized love. Though alive and real enough this girl

was, she was nameless, memory-less, detached, and frigid (455). The chemistry of love disappears; it is an anti-climax of Kafka's midnight romance, a deliberate frustration of his (sexual) desire. It might have to do the "completeness" of the other world: a world without time, words/letters, name/identity, memory, and perhaps most importantly, (sexual) desire. However, one may also interpret her desire-less-ness has to do with the idealized love: she is the one who owns the idealized love so that she does not have to "quest" for it—though she is unable to recall it at all.

In addition, the two characters find certain resolution/compensation in the motherly love. After their lover-like conversation, Kafka finally asked whether Miss Saeki was his mother. She replied that Kafka had already known the answer (466). Kafka also said he did know, yet the answer was something that could not be put into words, which (language) would destroy its meaning (466). Miss Saeki further expressed her regret that she had thrown away something that she loved more than anything else, and she asked for forgiveness:

> "You were discarded by the very one who never should have done that," Miss Saeki says. "Kafka—do you forgive me?"
>
> "Do I have the right to?"
>
> …. "As long as anger and fear don't prevent you."
>
> "Miss Saeki, if I really do have to right to, then yes—I do forgive you," I tell her.
>
> **Mother, you say, I forgive you. And with those words, audibly, the frozen part of your heart dissolves.** (476-77)

Moreover, after the forgiveness, Miss Saeki stabbed herself with a hairpin on her arm and made blood seep out. Kafka drank the blood and realized his desire for that blood (477). Kafka's hypothesis still works, so it is possible for Kafka to have the "right" to forgive his mother. Interestingly, when Miss Saeki asked for forgiveness from Kafka,

Crow spoke “mother” and forgave Miss Saeki in replace of Kafka. One might wonder if they are “real” mother and son, yet what is more significant might be that Miss Saeki has taken on the role of “mother” in this mother-son conversation. It has to do with Kafka’s strong investment in the subject position “mother.” In other words, Miss Saeki is not necessarily Kafka’s real mother, yet by becoming “mother,” she might assuage Kafka’s anger and fear. Kafka can also find reconciliation for his feeling of being once abandoned.

Such equivocal ending would also arouse critics’ discontents. Through the narrative techniques, as Auestad maintains, the author snares readers to believing in “salvation and forgiveness” at the end of the novel with his art of story-telling (310). Moreover, the novel creates the atmosphere to convince readers that “there is a ‘thick’ relational bond” between Kafka and Miss Saeki, either as lovers or as mother and son (310). It is quite true that the unsolved puzzle and equivocal remarks between the two characters can sustain the reading pleasure, and they can benefit from the confusing ending. However, it might be less important to figure out the problem of “either (mother-son) or (lover);” since it could be “both” and “neither nor.” Instead, the significance and unusualness of their relations lie in the investment in the subject positions of “Kafka” and “mother.” In this way, it sounds less convincing that there is a “thick bond” between the two characters. In fact, in my speculation, the “bond” between Kafka and Miss Saeki might start from the “blood drinking.” To drink blood from Miss Saeki is quite metaphorical; it could suggest that Kafka would “inherit” something from Miss Saeki—perhaps the “blood-relationship,” desire, memory, and most important of all, the painting “Kafka on the Shore.” In fact, the painting “Kafka on the Shore” involves their desire for love and memory. Though unable to recall her memory of love, the young Saeki’s “being” is perhaps the best evidence for her love for “Kafka” and the happiness that she used to have and tried to preserve. Besides,

Miss Saeki chooses to burn up all her "memory," yet she only keeps the painting "Kafka on the Shore." Before her death, she closes her eyes and feels that she were again being in the scene of the painting—her memory of love (Murakami, *Kafka* 424). Interestingly, she particularly leaves the painting to Kafka Tamura and wants him to "remember" her. On the one hand, Kafka is a replacement lover who Miss Saeki could invest her affections in. On the other, the painting, as a token of love, is "Kafka's" (Komura's) legacy to Miss Saeki. It is likely that Miss Saeki wants Kafka to be the "witness of love": that she was once so deeply in love with "Kafka." It is also possible to speculate that the painting could always remind Kafka that he is being loved—as a lover, a son, and "Kafka"—which would help make up for his traumatic childhood. In addition, Miss Saeki could thus always live in Kafka's memory, so does "Kafka" would always live in the form of painting and memory for eternity. In a sense, as long as Kafka lives and keeps the painting "Kafka on the Shore," he could always be the witness of Miss Saeki's love for "Kafka" and keep the memory of love alive.

From the above discussion, one can see that the unorthodox and complicated relationship between Kafka and Miss Saeki. The author firstly draws a connection between the two as possible mother and son. With the bafflement between the real and magical, Kafka somehow fulfills the incest part of the malediction. However, it actually has to do with their investment of affections in the positions of "Kafka" and "mother." With his magical realist strategies, Murakami creates a virtual family, plays with the idea of the Oedipus complex, and snares readers into believing that Kafka has fell into the scheme of the "Oedipal malediction." In fact, Kafka's relations with his potential sister figure and mother figure are more complicated, ambivalent, and suggestive. It makes various interpretations possible, yet at the same time quite challenging—which is also the fascinating parts of *Kafka on the Shore*.

Afterwords

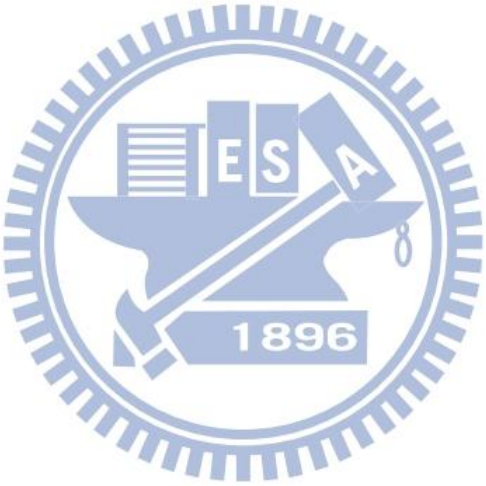
The magical realist narrative in *Kafka on the Shore* not only creates the commingling effects of the real and fantastic but also provides a curious kind of reading pleasure. With the confusion between the real and magical, the author also brings out the issues of violence and sex. Murakami's magical realist writings could be viewed as an innovative approach to deal with the two crucial themes. The oblique treatments of violence and sex defy simple interpretations and urge readers to ponder on their deeper meanings.

In Chapter Two, one can observe that the author deliberately creates the pseudo-historical Rice Bow Hill Incident, confusing his readers with the interlocking of the historical and fictional, showing some other "facets" of WWII that one might not have considered before. In portraying the magical character Colonel Sanders and the less-historical-burdened Hoshino, the author alludes to Japan-U.S. post-war relations, the U.S. power over the Japanese, and the profound influences that the U.S. has brought. Murakami might be satirical as well as critical of Americanization or westernization through his presentation of these two characters, yet one can also detect the ambivalence behind such complex. Moreover, the author's magical-real depictions of violence might provoke readers to think over historical violence, the victim/victimizer dichotomy, and the important ethical problems concerned

Chapter Three tackles family relations, the myth of "Oedipus" (the "Oedipal malediction" and the Oedipus complex), seduction, repression, and desire. The brother-sister love between Kafka and Sakura involves Kafka's sexual fantasy, Sakura's ambivalent attitude, and the moral questions concerned. The relationship between Kafka and Miss Saeki is much more complicated. On the one hand, they are possible mother and son; there is also a surreal romance between them on the other.

Their strange relations as possible mother and son as well as lovers have much to do with their affective investments in the love subjects of “Kafka” and “mother” respectively. Such investments have enormously complicated the relations between Kafka and Miss Saeki.

In brief, Murakami has blurred the boundary between the real and fantasy through his magical realist narrative, which has brought a special kind of reading pleasure. Such a writing strategy also makes the story very challenging for its readers, defying any conventional interpretations. It is likely that Murakami intends to challenge and invite readers to reflect upon these two crucial themes more profoundly.



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