1   Murakami Haruki's postmodern world

The end of modernity: *A Wild Sheep Chase*

The first of Murakami Haruki's novels I shall deal with is *A Wild Sheep Chase* (*Hitsuji o meguru bōken*, 1982).[1] It will be read in terms of the crisis of the legitimacy of rationality and the attack on the modernist 'grand narrative' (Lyotard 1979) together with its obsession with progress. The latter is a common postmodern theme and, I believe, is also inscribed as a main theme in this story. The hero of the novel, 'I', is a copywriter who is blackmailed by a dying right-wing Boss' secretary into going to Japan's northern-most island, Hokkaido, to find a sheep with a star-shaped birth-mark. The sheep has the demonic ability to possess and manipulate people, and the hero finally discovers that his friend, Rat, had been possessed by this sheep and committed suicide in order to kill it. Most readers probably wonder what the sheep symbolises.[2]

Kawamoto Saburō believes that the sheep stands for the idea of revolution and self-denial pervasive in Japan from the 1960s to the 1970s (Kawamoto 1988: 113–114). For him, the image of the sheep represents the students' movement of that period. Introducing Kawamoto's interpretation, Fukami Haruka construes the sheep as a sort of symbol of the absolute idea in modern Japan.

> What is the sheep with the star-shaped birthmark?…If we follow the trajectory of the story of the town of Junitaki-cho and the Sheep Professor's and the Boss' lives, the answer appears before our eyes. The Japanese invasion and suppression of the Ainu; the conscription of the son of an Ainu shepherd and his death in China; the birth of the Sheep Professor in the same year; Japan's aggressive expansion on the Chinese continent; the woollen and worsted industry as one of the developments of industrialism; and the Boss' claim to the whole underside of post-war politics, economics and media. As the sheep thrives, Japan starts the climb out of poverty and the oppression of the Ainu begins. Japan invades the Chinese continent and, when this venture fails, the sheep turns to the search for a total conceptual realm. Behind these movements,

the contamination of hometown rivers and the seas, and the people's outrage at this, are quietly growing. It seems that the sheep symbolises the modernist, which includes the anti-modernist, idea; in other words, the absoluteness of ideas.

(Fukami 1990: 36; my translation)

Karatani Kōjin presents a different interpretation. He extracts from the secretary's words an idea of 'the sheep' that resists the 'Western humanism, individual cognition and evolutionary continuity' (Murakami 1982 I: 189)[3] from which nothing but a 'world of uniformity and certainty' (I: 187) and 'what can be counted in numbers' (I: 192) survives. The notion of 'the sheep', for Karatani, is a symbol that represents the negation of thought as it is understood in terms deriving from Western individualism and humanism; a symbol which attempts to maintain people's uniqueness and unpredictability in contrast to a world of uniformity and certainty. He also finds a connecting link between the idea of the sheep and the ideas of Mishima Yukio (1925–1970) who killed himself in imitation of the patriot soldiers in the 26 February incident in 1936[4] (Karatani 1995a: 121–124). Mishima had opposed the 1960s students' movement because he saw it as based upon individualism, and instead advocated the 'cultural defence' of Japan.

What Karatani sensed in the image of the sheep was the Japanese uniqueness in the context of Asia; the significance of this uniqueness was articulated by Okakura Tenshin (1862–1913) and Yasuda Yojūrō (1910–1981) and carefully analysed by Takeuchi Yoshimi (1910–1977) but has now been lost through Euro-American influence. The disappearance of this uniqueness was symbolically enacted in 1970 by two suicides: Mishima Yukio's own suicide and the suicide of the fictional character, Takashi, in Ōe Kenzaburō's *The Silent Cry* (*Man'en gannen no futtobōru*). This uniqueness is something like the 'ethos' described in minute detail in Oketani Hideaki's two books *A Spiritual History of Shōwa* (*Shōwa seishin shi*, 1992) and *A Spiritual History of Shōwa: Postwar Period* (*Shōwa seishin shi: Sengo hen*, 2000) as a spirit that died out with Japan's defeat in the Pacific War in 1945 (Oketani 1992: 654).

It seems that in contrast to Fukami, who focuses on the dark side of Westernised modern Japan – its aggressive expansion including the invasion and suppression of other Asian countries, and its industrial development at the cost of the natural environment – Karatani lamented the loss of the Japanese people's uniqueness. In other words, while Fukami sees in the sheep Murakami's attack on modern Japan, Karatani finds a sort of mourning for something lost during the modernisation of Japan. It seems reasonable to suppose that the sheep is related to both these opposing sides of Japanese modernism at the same time.

Referring to Imai Kiyoto's detailed examination of the concept of the sheep,[5] let me first review here briefly how the sheep is described in *Wild Sheep Chase*. The sheep in this story possesses (in the demonic sense) three

people. The first is the Sheep Professor who was born in Sendai in 1905, graduated from the Agricultural Faculty of Tokyo Imperial University, and entered the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry as one of the elite. He was dispatched by the Ministry to the Korean peninsula to establish a self-sufficiency programme based on sheep for the imminent, large-scale North China campaign. In July 1935, during an observation tour of Manchuria, the sheep with the star-shaped birthmark entered his body (Murakami 1982 II: 40–56).

The second person the sheep possesses is a major right-wing Boss. He was born as the third son of a poor farming household in Hokkaido. His father's generation, though poor, was the one that invaded Hokkaido and suppressed the indigenous Ainu people who were living there. When he was twelve, he left home for Korea, and upon his return to Japan, joined a right-wing group (Murakami 1982 I: 184). Soon afterwards, in 1932 (the year of the 15 May incident),[6] he was imprisoned on charges of complicity in a plot to assassinate a key political figure, and his imprisonment lasted until June 1936 (the year of the 26 February incident), when the sheep entered his body from that of the Sheep Professor (I: 182). Released from prison, he became a major right-wing Boss, and headed over to mainland China where he built up an intelligence network and a personal fortune in the process. After the end of the war, utilising the fortune he brought back from China, he became a key figure in the whole underside world of post-war politics, economics and media. (II: 57–58).

The story of *A Wild Sheep Chase* begins when the sheep possesses its third victim, Rat, a friend of the copywriter, the hero of the novel. Rat's father has already been introduced in another of Murakami's works, *Hear the Wind Sing* (*Kaze no uta o kike*, 1979). He was one of a number of Japanese businessmen who became affluent through taking advantage of the Sino-Japanese, Pacific and Korean wars (Murakami 1979: 86). As the story unfolds, the lives of the Sheep Professor and the major right-wing Boss are gradually revealed to both the protagonist and the reader, and finally the copywriter meets the ghost of his dead friend, Rat, in his vacation villa in Hokkaido. Rat explains how the sheep used the Boss to build up a supreme power base, then earmarked Rat for possession in an attempt to create a realm of total conceptual unity in which consciousness, values, emotions, pain, everything would disappear and all opposites would be resolved, with Rat and the sheep at the centre of this world (Murakami 1982 II: 204–205). Rat killed himself with the sheep in his body, because he valued the things that would have been lost had the sheep won.

If we consider the careers of the characters in the story, it seems clear that the history of modern Japan unfolds around the sheep. These characters are, in a sense, representative of common types found in Japan since the Meiji Restoration (1868). The Sheep Professor is a highly ambitious man with outstanding intellectual abilities, who has a mission to unite east Asia; the major right-wing Boss was born in poverty to the son of an invader of the Ainu's land, made his fortune on the back of Japan's aggressive expansion

policy in mainland China, and surreptitiously manipulated post-war Japan's politics, economics and media; and Rat is the son of a merchant who became rich by taking advantage of the wars.[7]

A secretary to the major right-wing Boss tells the hero about the sheep which were introduced into Japan during the Ansei era (1854–1859), just prior to the Meiji period. Up until then, few Japanese had ever seen a sheep or understood what one was. They were imported at the state level from America, and sheep husbandry enjoyed a brief boom. After the war, when the import of wool and mutton from Australia and New Zealand was liberalised, there was no reason to continue raising sheep in Japan and sheep again became scarce. Talking to the hero, the secretary describes sheep as tragic animals that embody the very image of modern Japan (Murakami 1982 I: 172–173).

Though it now appears clear that the sheep is indeed related to modern Japan, we should also investigate the sheep's hopes for the future: the prospect of a total conceptual realm in which consciousness, values, emotions, pain, everything would disappear and all opposites would be resolved, with Rat and the sheep at the centre of this world (Murakami 1982 II: 204–205). The text tells us that Rat is possessed by the sheep because of his weakness in the areas of morality, consciousness, and existence itself (II: 202), but he summons up all his strength and kills the sheep, for he has realised that he is attached to his weakness, his pain and suffering, as well as to summer light, the smell of a breeze, the sound of cicadas, and having a beer with his friend (II: 205). We can see here the sheep's intention to progress, following the line of the modernist endeavour, and Rat's final decision to go against this, instead revaluing his weakness, pain, suffering, and his indulgence in supposed meaningless trifles.

It would seem, therefore, more pertinent to argue that what the sheep symbolises is not simply confined to modernist endeavours and their ethos, but also includes the idea of an evolutional current of time which underlies the modernist way of thinking. The sheep in this story follows the trajectory of modern Japanese society – the unification and oppression of Asian people (Sheep Professor), the consolidation of Japanese people and defence of their culture (right-wing Boss) – and a vision of the future resulting in total conceptual unity (Japanese businessman's son, Rat) – as inevitable stages of evolution.

A Wild Sheep Chase can be interpreted as a work which describes modernist ideology in Japan: its cult of the intellectual, its pursuit of knowledge and rationality; development of political and economic power; its suppression of the 'Other', its deep love and identification with ideological constructions of Japanese tradition, and its future unity. This is contrasted with Rat's rejection of the above and the prospect of an anti-modernist, I would like to call it postmodern, society.[8] The story of *A Wild Sheep Chase* moves away from the modernist ideology, which believes that the strong, powerful, intellectual, and hardworking are good for evolution and which approves of the suppression of the weak, to a postmodern world in which people are attached to their weakness,

their pain and suffering, as well as 'to summer light, the smell of a breeze, the sound of cicadas, beers with (their) friend(s)'.

Imai Kiyoto points out Rat's intersubjectivity shared with people, and consequently he regards the sheep as the symbol of this intersubjectivity (Imai 1999: 111–114). But I would like to argue that the intersubjectivity is found in the Rat's preference for identifying with nature, rather than with people. In this sense I agree with Kasai Kiyoshi who sees in the Rat's preference for/identification with nature a Baudelairian sense of 'correspondence' (Kasai 1999: 231–232). The point that I would like to raise here is that, if we compare the identification with nature and the desire to conquer nature, we find in the former postmodernist and in the latter modernist characteristics. We can therefore suppose that Rat intends to prefer the unspoiled, uncontaminated countryside to the modernist evolutional development.[9] In this novel, Rat declares that we should not support the modernist attempt to promote, develop, cultivate, learn, and achieve a higher stage of evolution, and should instead move on to a postmodern world which in this story is symbolised by the countryside that has escaped the modernisation and industrial development of cities.

Reading the narrative in this way is, however, problematic in that the arguments for and against modernism and postmodernism are developed in suggestive and abstract ways through the lives and opinions of the characters, particularly the Boss' secretary and Rat. The secretary tries to help the sheep achieve its aim, no matter what that may be, whereas Rat attempts to thwart it. While the former approves of whatever is evolutionary, even though it may result in losing something dear to him, the latter ventures to stop it, even at the cost of his own life, no matter how beautiful the promised future life may be.

The meaning of the story, however, seems to lie not in their arguments, but rather in the attitude of the protagonist 'I' towards them. The copywriter almost never engages in discussion with either the secretary or Rat. Rather, he problematises the secretary's questions, enquiring whether they make sense (Murakami 1982 I: 187), or responds to Rat's individual questions with generalities (Murakami 1982 II: 202). He remains outside the argument or at least plays with the terms of discussion. 'Do you believe the world is getting better?' Rat asks and the copywriter answers: 'Better or worse, who can tell?' This attitude is of crucial importance to this story, for no matter how categorically the postmodernist rejects ideas of aim, purpose and improvement through evolution, if this rejection itself becomes an aim, then a paradox results. In order to escape this paradox, the copywriter queries whether the questions posed to him themselves make sense by using self-reflexive language[10] that deconstructs the two opposites. In so doing, he can distance himself from the surrounding situation and subvert it. If we regard deconstruction or indifferentiation as tactics characteristic of postmodernism, then there is no one more postmodern than the copywriter in this story.

Murakami Haruki's fundamental detachment from the modernist ideology of aim and purpose is also evident in many of his other characters,

who live in their own aimless and lacklustre worlds. The protagonist of *Pinball, 1973* (*1973-nen no pinbōru*) opens a small translation service with one of his friends. Their working style is presented as being very laid-back and comfortable (Murakami 1980: 31–32). Every day the translator arrives at the office at ten, carefully sharpens his six pencils, and then, while listening to music, slowly gets down to business until noon. During the lunch break he plays with some Abyssinian cats at a nearby pet shop. Back at the office, after resharpening his six pencils, he starts his afternoon session. At four he leaves the office and on the way home shops for dinner at the supermarket (75–77). They lead comfortable lives not because they are men of wealth, but because they are free from ambition.

In *Dance Dance Dance* (*Dansu dansu dansu*, 1988), a later novel, the protagonist, a writer, describes his attitude to work as follows:

> I was never choosy about the jobs I did. I was willing to do anything, I met my deadlines, I never complained, I wrote legibly. And I was thorough. Where others slacked off, I did an honest write. I was never snide, even when the pay was low…
>
> And with not one speck of ambition, not one iota of expectation. My only concern was to do things systematically, from one end to the other. I sometimes wonder if this might not prove to be the bane of my life. After wasting so much pulp and ink myself, who was I to complain about waste? We live in an advanced capitalist society, after all. Waste is the name of the game, its greatest virtue. Politicians call it 'refinements in domestic consumption'. I call it meaningless waste. A difference of opinion. Which doesn't change the way we live.
>
> (Murakami 1988: 12)

For these characters, life is meaningless. But, they are not existentialists who agonise over the meaninglessness of life; rather they enjoy playing with it. Complaining and being snide is pointless, for their jobs are from the very beginning pointless. But they still work honestly and systematically, and find satisfaction in doing so. Such postmodern labour is well symbolised by the old men digging a large hole in the town of *The End of the World* (Murakami 1985: 313–317). This hole, which has no special function or meaning, does not transport them anywhere. They have nothing to achieve by their labours, nowhere to get to, no victory, and no defeat. But then again, they enjoy digging the meaningless hole. This lifestyle is typical of Murakami's postmodern characters.

In *Pinball, 1973*, Rat says to J: 'Say…J…here I've lived twenty-five years, and it seems to me I haven't really learned a thing'. J answers: 'Me, I've seen forty-five years, and I've only figured out one thing. That's this: if a person would just make the effort, there's something to be learned from everything. From even the most ordinary, commonplace things, there's always something you can learn' (Murakami 1980: 95–96).

Rat nods and starts thinking; 'I think I see what you're getting at, but…', and swallows the thought. 'But – what? Once the word was on his lips, there wasn't anything more he could say'. Rat's hesitation to approve of the idea that there is something to be learned from everything again indicates a sort of collapse of the modern ideology of instrumental and meritocratic learning. Further, the translator in *Pinball, 1973* says:

> 'I was born under a strange sign. You see, whatever I've wanted I've always been able to get. But whenever I get that something, I manage to spoil something else. You know what I mean?'
>
> 'Kind of'.
>
> 'Nobody believes me, but it's true. I only realized it myself three years ago. That's when I thought, better just not want anything any more'.
>
> She nodded. 'And so that's how you plan to spend the rest of your life?'
>
> 'Probably. At least I won't be bothering anybody'.
>
> 'If you really feel that way', she said, 'why not live in a shoe box?'
>
> A charming idea.
>
> (Murakami 1980: 108–109)

Whenever you get one thing, you manage to spoil something else, so better just not want anything any more. This is diametrically opposed to modernist ways of thinking. Modernists want to reach the goal – a better life. To set oneself a goal and to work hard to achieve it is considered laudable in modern society. But this also requires that we push others aside, and that human relations, including our relationship to ourselves, be characterised by struggle.

These characters indicate a society in which the idea of development or evolution on the basis of rationality – a main cause of domination and suppression of people – does not exist. The lack of ambition and competitiveness displayed by Murakami's characters reflects an antithetical attitude to modernist ideals that force people to progress in order to reach an aim based on rationality. Once we discard the desire to evolve, rationality no longer functions as a driving force for people in society. Freedom and fairness would find their proper places in human relations. But we must keep in mind that in such a world, as Rat says, we would have to lose the beauty of modernity.

Lack of mind: *The Hard-Boiled Wonderland* and *The End of the World*

The Town in *The End of the World* is an imaginary world created by the protagonist, a Calcutec from *The Hard-Boiled Wonderland*, and is completely surrounded by walls. The two stories, *The End of the World* and *The Hard-Boiled Wonderland*, simultaneously unfold chapter by chapter, like Faulkner's

The Wild Palm. The difference is that in Murakami's novel the two are chronologically linked; the story of *The End of the World* starts at the end of *The Hard-Boiled Wonderland*.

In order to prevent information from leaking out, a professor at the 'Central Research System' invented a way of fixing, through brain surgery, a circuit that can hold information in a person's core subconscious. Important information is kept in the subconscious of twenty-six specially trained men, called Calcutecs. The operators in the research organisation can call up information whenever necessary by a method called 'shuffling'. As the next step, the Professor succeeded in visualising the subconscious as a sort of story. By installing another separate circuit into the junction boxes in the Calcutecs's brains, namely by creating a three-way cognitive circuitry, he loaded the visualised core subconscious into the third circuit. As a consequence, the Calcutecs have three different subconscious minds: the normal, frozen and visualised. The title of the visualised story of the protagonist in *The Hard-Boiled Wonderland* is *The End of the World*.

In the plot of this novel, an accident causes him to become stuck inside the third circuit, his own imaginary town in *The End of the World*, with no hope of return. *The Hard-Boiled Wonderland* narrates the hero's everyday life until he becomes trapped in his own imaginary world, and *The End of the World* unfolds that world. Since the latter is created by the imagination of the protagonist of the former world, the two worlds are naturally affected by each other and linked through many commonalties, such as paperclips, the song *Danny Boy*, a young female librarian, and a unicorn's skull which glows when the characters' hearts are in correspondence. With regard to the narrative time of the two stories, the former is gradually approaching the beginning of the latter, and the latter evolves with the expectation of returning to the former, a chronology that is ultimately rejected by the hero.

In the Town in *The End of the World* people have no minds. When newcomers enter the Town, they must strip away the 'shadows' that are the groundings of the self, and let them die. The 'minds' that rise each day are collected and then taken outside the Wall by quiet, calm unicorns. These animals wander around the Town absorbing traces of mind, then ferry them to the outside world where they die in the winter with the residue of people's selves inside them. The Gatekeeper cuts off the heads from the bodies. The skulls are then scraped clean and buried for a full year in the ground to allow their energy to disperse, then they are taken to the Library stacks where they sit until the Dreamreader's hands can release the last glimmers of mind into the air (Murakami 1985: 335–336). 'Mind' in this work is depicted as a sort of desire encompassing love, hatred, longing, etc., in other words the irrational, affective and passionate aspects of human nature. The Colonel in *The End of the World* says to the Dreamreader (who is the Calcutec in *The Hard-Boiled Wonderland*) when he questions whether kindness is the sign of a caring mind: 'No. Kindness and a caring mind are two separate qualities. Kindness is manners. It is superficial custom, an acquired

practice. Not so the mind. The mind is deeper, stronger, and, I believe, it is far more inconstant' (Murakami 1985: 170).

According to the Professor in *The Hard-Boiled Wonderland*, the mind forms an identity of self:

> Each individual behaves on the basis of his individual mnemonic makeup. No two human beings are alike; it's a question of identity. And what is identity? The cognitive system arising from the aggregate memories of that individual's past experiences. The layman's word for this is the mind.
>
> (Murakami 1985: 255)

People in *The End of the World* lack this mind. What is it like in a world in which people have no minds? It is calm and peaceful. The Colonel says, 'You are fearful now of losing your mind, as I once feared it myself. Let me say, however, that to relinquish your self carries no shame.…Lay down your mind and peace will come. A peace deeper than anything you have known' (Murakami 1985: 318). Little by little the Dreamreader has come to appreciate the Town and the people who live there. He describes the selfless world:

> No one hurts each other here, no one fights. Life is uneventful, but full enough in its way. Everyone is equal. No one speaks ill of anyone else, no one steals. They work, but they enjoy their work. It's work purely for the sake of work, not forced labor. No one is jealous of anyone. There are no complaints, no worries.
>
> (Murakami 1985: 333)

It is easy to understand that if we were to lose our minds or self-identities, we would gain instead a peaceful society in which people are equal and there is no competition. This is precisely Murakami Haruki's postmodern utopia. But it is realised only through the sacrifice of love and respect that have long been considered positive values. No matter how deeply the Dreamreader, who still has a trace of a mind, loves the librarian, his love can never be requited, because she has no mind (Murakami 1985: 169).

The End of the World describes a postmodern utopia, whereas *The Hard-Boiled Wonderland* represents modern society. In the latter people are always rushing about, either chasing after something or fleeing from something else; they must compete in order to achieve. People live their lives in haste because it is necessary to strictly organise time in order to achieve their goals sooner. They also love and hate each other. In the postmodern utopia, however, people do not run. Time stops because once life becomes aimless, time no longer linearly connects the present to the future; it just eternally revolves. People live happily there, but they do not have strong attachments to others, nor do they have music to listen to. They do not hate, but at the same time they cannot love deeply. *The End of the World* is established

through the realisation that in order to avoid the failure of modernism, its individualisation of power structures, totalitarian militarism, two world wars, and discrimination, it is necessary to lose, or at least diminish, the functions of the mind, including both love and respect.

Murakami's characters often refer to wars, and the author's emotionally detached attitude is particularly clear here. For instance, in *Pinball, 1973*, the hero talks with twins named 208 and 209 about the Vietnam War.

> 'They're fighting because they think different, right?' 208 pursued the question.
>
> 'You could say that'.
>
> 'So there's two opposite ways of thinking, am I correct?' 208 continued.
>
> 'Yes, but…there's got to be a million opposing schools of thought in the world. No, probably even more than that'.
>
> 'So hardly anybody's friends with anybody?' puzzled 209.
>
> 'I guess not', said I. 'Almost no one's friends with anyone else'.
>
> Dostoyevsky had prophesied it; I lived it out. That was my lifestyle in the 1970s.
>
> (Murakami 1980: 39–40)

People fight because there are always two opposite ways of approaching any problem. In order to establish these opposite poles, people must take sides: insiders become friends and outsiders, enemies. Friends are united by love, respect, a sense of belonging and mutual benefit, and they regard their enemies with hatred. This is the typical pattern of war. Deleuze and Guattari trace the process whereby an extrinsic or Nomad war machine was appropriated by the State (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 418). What motivated the appropriation was certainly the desire to protect 'our State' for the benefit of 'our people'. Wars are undertaken not by crazed individuals completely different from us, but rather they are the inevitable consequence of the paranoid modern ideology of identification and differentiation, individualisation and totalisation. The lifestyle of Murakami's main postmodern characters is, however, different – almost no one is friends with anyone else. They hardly ever fight, and they scarcely bother other people.

Georges Bataille remarks on war from a different perspective, saying that 'The origins of war, sacrifice and orgy are identical; they spring from the existence of taboos set up to counter liberty in murder or sexual violence' (Bataille 1986: 116). Taboos come from a strong diametrical antinomy between desire and prohibition. Yet once again Murakami's characters have no need of taboos, because they do not experience strong desires. Miyoshi Masao comments on this point rather negatively remarking that 'even his [Murakami's] sex scenes are stylish; their copulating couples remain

collected, observant, and uninvolved as they pace themselves through orgasms' (Miyoshi 1991: 234). Though I do not agree with Miyoshi's negative evaluation, it is true that many of Murakami's narrators certainly give the impression that they are almost always cool and detached, both from themselves and from the events taking place before their eyes.

This striking emotional and rational detachment is also evident in Murakami's narrative style. One of the characteristics of early modern narrative style in the Japanese novel is the ubiquitous presence of an introspective narrator's self-consciousness, as can be seen in the character of Bunzō in *The Drifting Clouds* (*Ukigumo*, 1886–1889), in many of Sōseki's heroes, and in the narrative voice of the I-novel (*shishōsetsu*). *Shishōsetsu*, in particular, are characterised by this kind of reflexive self-consciousness. As Suzuki Tomi has remarked on Tayama Katai's *The Quilt* (*Futon*, 1907), which is often regarded as the first I-novel, what is significant in the Japanese I-novel is the problem of self-consciousness – the critical distance between the 'objectified self' and the 'objectifying self', and not the tacitly accepted single-voiced, direct monologue by the author/protagonist (Suzuki 1996: 70–71).

One of the differences in narrative style between Murakami Haruki and the writers of the I-novel, therefore, lies not in the difference between the single-voiced monologue and the dual-voice of evident self-consciousness, but in the stance or the psychological distance between the 'objectifying self' and the 'objectified self'. This narrative style significantly corresponds with the attitude of many of Murakami's protagonists who attempt to deconstruct two opposites and distance themselves from the surrounding situations and subvert them.

If we look at the grammar, on the sentence level it cannot be said that Murakami's narrators' narrative distance is wide, for in most cases he uses the first person and does not alter the narrative distance with frequent changes of narrative perspective and voice. In general, Murakami's stories are consistently narrated by the first person narrator–hero's voice and from his perspective, except in the characters' letters. Characteristic elements of his narrative style include his use of conversation rather than monologue (Ueno *et al*. 1992: 261, 269, 274) in order to avoid introspection. Also, he never forgets irony, a sure sign of detachment. When he narrates a serious topic, as he does in *Norwegian Wood* (*Noruwei no mori*, 1987), he does so retrospectively, thus achieving temporal distance. These narrative characteristics result in a psychologically wider distance, not between the narrator and protagonist, but between the narrator–protagonist's own self and self-consciousness, as well as between the self and its surroundings. The narrator looks at himself as he would look at others. That is to say, he avoids discriminating between self and others, as well as being torn between polarised binary oppositions of rationality and emotion/desire or individualisation and totalisation.

This stance, as has often been remarked, is evident in the frequent use of phrases which indicate a withdrawal from reality, such as '*yare yare*' which cannot be translated into English; its usage is somewhat like the expletives

that people murmur to themselves when they step outside a traumatic occasion in which they have been deeply involved (Katō N. 1988: 104–128; Ueno *et al*. 1992: 274). Other phrases include '*sō iu koto da*' (that's the way it is/so it goes) or '*sore dake da*' (that's all), both of which express a sense of resignation towards reality (Katō K. 1983: 210; Miura 1997: 44), '*bengiteki*' (for convenience's sake) which indicates a lack of serious commitment, and '*betsu ni kamawa nai*' (it's no big deal/I don't care/I don't mind), which also reveals the narrator–character's indifference to the events he is confronted with. The regular occurrence of these phrases illustrates the sense of dissociation felt by the narrator towards that which he is narrating. At the same time they are spoken in recognition of the fact that there is nothing in this world worth pursuing, for, as David Harvey puts it (Harvey 1989: 27–28), the idea that there is only one possible mode of representation has already collapsed.

In the last scene of *The Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*, the hero, Dreamreader, is tempted by his shadow (self) to go back to the former world of the modernists. But he rejects the temptation and decides to stay in the Town of the postmodern utopia/dystopia.[11] Though he understands that it makes perfect sense to return to his former world together with his shadow, once he discovers that he is the one who has created the Town, he cannot bring himself to leave. 'I have responsibilities', he says, 'I cannot forsake the people and places and things I have created…I must see out the consequences of my own doings. This is my world. The Wall is here to hold *me* in, the River flows through *me*, the smoke is *me* burning. I must know why' (Murakami 1985: 399).

In interpreting this incident, Susan Napier says that '[i]n this late-twentieth-century world the protagonist feels that his responsibilities are to himself, not to a wider society or history' (Napier 1996: 5). Though elsewhere in the same book she mentions that the Dreamreader's concern with responsibilities 'might be seen as in some ways admirable, rather than only self-serving, emblematic of a generation which realizes that to change the world one must start with oneself' (Napier 1996: 214), it seems clear that she interprets the Dreamreader's decision to remain inside his own postmodern consciousness as an abandonment or at least a deferral of his responsibilities in real life. Karatani Kōjin more severely attacks the Dreamreader's final decision by saying that 'the responsibility for people, places and things one has created by one's own discretion is another name for irresponsibility. To emphasise the responsibility for meaningless things is to make the responsibility worthless' (Karatani 1995a: 127; my translation).

Yet I still sense in this last scene the author's own strong determination. Though we should not read too much about the author's intention into the story, in this case it seems that the voice of Murakami, the author, can be discerned in the Dreamreader's words. He tries to stay in the postmodern world to see what will happen there. Murakami himself says in an interview with Kawamoto Saburō that if it is he who has created the fictional 'end of the world' then it would be, in a sense, a sort of [irresponsible] escape to flee

from there (Murakami and Kawamoto 1985: 79). He declares that he will take responsibility as author along with the character Dreamreader, for having created the postmodern world, and by remaining there see out the consequences of his own actions.

A love story between postmodern people: *Norwegian Wood*

Norwegian Wood (*Noruwei no mori*, 1987) opens with thirty-seven-year-old Watanabe Toru seated in a Boeing 747, about to land at Hamburg Airport. The background music in the passenger cabin is some orchestra's muzak rendition of the Beatles's *Norwegian Wood*. The melody reminds Watanabe of a meadow in the suburbs of Kyoto where he walked with his girlfriend who was fond of the song, some eighteen years before. At the time, he was thinking about himself and the beautiful woman walking besides him, feeling confident that he was in love with her. *Norwegian Wood*, as opposed to Murakami's other novels, is a realistic and haunting story of love, youth, and tragedy (or, so says the advertisement for the book), which is 'uncharacteristically (for Murakami) devoid of fantasy elements' (Rubin, J. 1992: 492). But it is misleading to read this novel as a love story, because Watanabe and Naoko, two of the major characters in the novel, do not love each other. Ueno Chizuko interprets this story as depicting discommunication. 'If love is a human relation', she says, 'this novel does not describe any love, but instead it follows the process in which people fail to communicate' (Ueno *et al.* 1992: 274, 308).[12]

When Watanabe asks Naoko if they can live together, she rejects his proposal. Naoko explains herself by saying:

> But it's impossible.…Because it can't be. It's just no good. It…wouldn't be the right thing to do. Not for you, not for me…it's just impossible, the idea of somebody watching over someone else for ever and ever.…That just wouldn't be a fair arrangement. You couldn't call that a relationship, could you?
>
> (Murakami 1987 I: 15–16)

Naoko's perspective is based on the idea that people are independent, different and alienated. The story unfolds around the relationship between this alienated couple who can never love each other, no matter how hard they try. Eventually, Naoko kills herself, and Watanabe loses his sense of identity as formed by modern human relations.

Marx considered capitalist society to be a major cause of alienation, and he advocated its elimination in order to re-establish human bonds in a communist society. But there is no absolute reason why the kind of human relations proposed by Marx should be considered ideal. It is possible, after all, to create comfortable relationships between people even in an alienated society. It is not impossible to suppose that the Marxian ideal of an egalitarian society is only realisable at the expense of the ideal of human

unification. As we have seen in the previous section, in order to avoid hatred and discrimination, Murakami's postmodern characters advocate discarding love, unity and social identity. Though they subscribe to Marx's ideal of an egalitarian society, they attempt to realise it not through a sense of community, but in a society of alienated people. To this extent, according to a postmodern understanding, that which is lost is not just the contents of experiences, which can be shared, but also the very notion of sharing itself. When the ties that bind people together, rooted in rationality, morality and affection, are lost – the result is schizophrenia, in Fredric Jameson's sense.

Jameson, using Lacan's account of schizophrenia and Saussurean structuralism, defines schizophrenia in a slightly different way from Deleuze and Guattari (Deleuze and Guattari 1984). He explains that meaning is not a one-to-one relationship between signifier and signified, but is generated by the movement from signifier to signifier. Thus, when the relationship among signifiers breaks down, that is, when the links in the signifying chain snap, schizophrenia results 'in the form of a rubble of distinct and unrelated signifiers' (Jameson 1991: 25–31; Harvey 1989: 53–54). Though Jameson focused on the temporal unification of personal identity and on schizophrenia as its result, his ideas are also applicable to the inter-human unification of personal identity, since the relationship between signifiers and the links of the signifying chain are formed *a priori* in inter-human communication as *langue*, and presented to newcomers in a language culture.

Schizophrenics apprehend the relation between signifiers differently from others and, as their ways of categorising phenomena are disparate, we cannot understand them nor they us. The concept of alienation presupposes a self-identity (particular) that is alienated from a social identity (universal). But if a common sense of social identity is missing in society, then the concept of alienation is clearly inapplicable. From this perspective, schizophrenia can be read as a symbol for how an individual's identity, forged through both temporal and inter-human unification, is now in the process of transformation; the individual prefers a fragmented sense of self rather than a perceived unity with others. A lack of social identity results in the collapse of self-identity, too, for the latter is necessarily formed reflexively through distancing itself from the former.

In *Norwegian Wood*, Naoko's mental disease is supposedly a type of symbolic schizophrenia in Jameson's sense. She has trouble writing letters to Watanabe. Reiko, Naoko's roommate in a convalescence home, says in a letter to Watanabe: 'The more I think about it, the first sign was that she couldn't write letters…Whenever she started to write a letter, all sorts of voices would talk to her and interfere. They'd prevent her from choosing her words' (Murakami 1987 II: 176). Naoko explains her own illness in the following terms:

> I'm not good at talking,…Haven't been for the longest while. I start to say something and the wrong words come out. Wrong or sometimes

completely backward. I try to go back and correct it, but things get even more complicated and confused, so that I don't even remember what I started to say in the first place. Like I was split in two or something, one half chasing the other. And there's this big pillar in the middle and they go chasing each other around and around it. The other me always latches on to the right word and this me absolutely never catches up.

(Murakami 1987 I: 41)

When Watanabe answers her: 'That happens more or less to everyone, … Everybody goes through times when they want to say something, but they can't and they get upset', Naoko seems almost disappointed at his answer and says: 'That's something else'. Watanabe's response presupposes that people have a message they want to convey, but Naoko's trouble is that her self has been split.

If Naoko were completely schizophrenic then she would not suffer from mental anguish. Her problem is that she is split into two schizophrenic and paranoid selves, and in order to cure herself, she must choose one or the other. Reiko explains the characteristics of their (Naoko's and her own) illness:

You know, the most important thing for us who have these problems is reliability. Knowing that I could leave things up to him and if my condition took the slightest turn for the worse, if the screw started to come loose, he'd notice and carefully, patiently, fix me back up – tighten the screw, unravel the ball of yarn. Just knowing we can rely on someone is enough to keep our problems at bay. As long as there's that sense of reliance, it's pretty much no more *sproing*!

(Murakami 1987 I: 225)

The most important component of their problem is their need for someone on whom they can rely. This, however, leads them to establish paranoid modernist human relations.

Naoko probably lost her paranoid relations with others when her boyfriend, Kizuki, committed suicide. They had grown up hand in hand loving each other, as an inseparable unit. They had retreated from outside society into their own world. Their only friend had been Watanabe (Murakami 1987 I: 240–241). Consequently, when Kizuki killed himself, Naoko could not establish deep human relations with anyone else in the outside world. Neither Kizuki nor Naoko could bear their paranoid human relations, but at the same time they could not be contented among schizophrenic people either. They are in this regard neither complete modernists nor perfect postmodernists. They are doomed to exile from modern society, and yet are unable to find their own postmodern world.

In *Norwegian Wood* there is a character called Nagasawa who is an elite student at Tokyo University. At first sight, he is very different from the other postmodern characters in the story, but he does share certain features with

them in that he is a complete schizophrenic. While talking to Watanabe, Nagasawa emphasises the importance of effort, which is typically modern.

'How come these simpletons don't make an effort? They don't make an effort and they complain that things are unfair!'

I shot Nagasawa a surprised look. 'Correct me if I'm wrong, but from where I sit I sure get the impression that people are grinding away like mad. Am I wrong?'

'That's not effort, that's just labor', Nagasawa spat out. 'Not the effort I'm talking about. The effort I'm talking about is to go about things with will and purpose.'

'Like taking up Spanish once you've landed a job, when everybody else would just lie back?'

'Precisely. I'm going to master Spanish by spring. To add to my English and German and French, plus passable Italian. Can you get this far without making an effort?'

(Murakami 1987 II: 103)

It is typically modern to make an effort through willpower and purpose. Ueno Chizuko finds something of the spirit of the 1960s in Nagasawa, probably deriving from this type of passage (Ueno *et al*. 1992: 269). But Nagasawa's effort is fundamentally opposed to the modernist effort. When the second part of the Foreign Ministry exam that Nagasawa is taking has finished, Watanabe asks him why he wants to enter the Ministry. Nagasawa answers:

'I want to test my mettle in the biggest pool around, the state. Just to see how far I can rise in this vast bureaucracy, how far I can go on my own talents. You follow?'

'It all sounds like a game.'

'Exactly…I don't have any of this lust for wealth or power – well, hardly any…I'm your selfless, emotionless, detached man. What I do have is curiosity. That and a will to try my stuff in the tough, wide world.'

'Which leaves no room for ideals, I take it?'

'Of course not…What's needed isn't ideals but role models.'

….

'So tell me, Nagasawa, what the hell kind of role model do you have?' I thought to ask.

'You'd laugh, I know', he said.

'Laugh? Not me', I said.

'A gentleman, that is what I aspire to be.'

…

'And just what does this being a gentleman entail?…'

'A gentleman is he who does not what he wants to do but what he ought
to do.'

<div align="right">(Murakami 1987 I: 105–107)</div>

Nagasawa has no lust for wealth or power; he is a selfless, emotionless,
detached man. He has nothing but curiosity and a will to try, surely not a
will to power. What he needs is not an ideal but a role model, the gentleman
– a person who does not do what he wants to do, but what he ought to do.
Everything is a game for Nagasawa and in this respect he is a quintessen-
tially postmodern character.

Nagasawa's remark that he and Watanabe are alike is interesting. When
Watanabe, Nagasawa and his girlfriend, Hatsumi, are having dinner together
to celebrate Nagasawa's success in the examination, Nagasawa mentions
several times that both he and Watanabe have certain things in common.
Nagasawa says that they are basically alike in that they are really only inter-
ested in themselves. Neither is interested in being understood by other
people and they are both incapable of loving. The only difference between
them is that Watanabe does not yet quite recognise this side of his person-
ality, and that is why his feelings are capable of being hurt (Murakami 1987
II: 113–117). Nagasawa declares that Watanabe is a postmodernist, and that
he cannot love anyone.

Watanabe, like many other characters in Murakami's novels, is primarily
concerned with not being disturbed by others. When Kizuki, his intimate
friend in Kobe, committed suicide, he made up his mind to no longer take
things too seriously and not to let things get too close (Murakami 1987 I:
48). Though in this story the reader is given the impression that Watanabe is
deeply and desperately in love with Naoko, through his relationship with
Midori he gradually realises that he cannot love Naoko. Schizophrenic post-
modernists are incapable of loving each other.

Another of Nagasawa's characteristics is his fairness and honesty; he
never lies, and always admits his own errors and faults. Nor does he hide
things that are not to his advantage (Murakami 1987 I: 62–63). As mentioned
before, fairness and justice are crucial values in a postmodern society. After
deconstructing idealistic truth, morality and aims founded on rationality
which used to provide links between people, a pragmatic fairness and justice
still remain for postmodernists; these do not serve to unite people emotion-
ally or rationally, but simply to prevent society from falling apart. In modern
society, people devalue fairness in favour of love and progress: for the sake of
loved ones and for the sake of progress, people sacrifice fairness and justice.
Max Weber illustrates this when he points out that:

> Whenever the external order of the social community has turned into the culture community of the state it obviously could be maintained only by brutal force, which was concerned with justice only nominally and occasionally and in any case only so far as reasons of state have permitted. This force has inevitably bred new deeds of violence against external and internal enemies; in addition, it has bred dishonest pretexts for such deeds. Hence it has signified an overt, or what must appear worse, a pharisaically veiled, absence of love.
>
> (Weber 1991: 355)

Two points in Weber's analysis are pertinent here: the absence of justice and of love for maintaining cultural community. Justice in the modern period must be subordinate to reason, and we now know that reason is founded on evolution. In this sense, Nagasawa can only be fair to the extent that he has no strong desire for progress to the idealistic aim. As for the absence of love that Weber diagnosed as a consequence of reason, postmodern thought approves of this because it is a safeguard against discrimination. Thus Nagasawa is able to be fair because he loves no one deeply.

Concerning beauty, happiness and fairness, Naoko, on her part, writes in a letter to Watanabe:

> Over these four months I've done a lot of thinking about you. And the more thinking I do, the more I've come to realize that I wasn't fair to you. Couldn't I have acted more like a responsible human being?
>
> But maybe this line of thought isn't quite normal. For one thing, girls my age would never use the word 'fair'. Basically, what does the average girl care whether something is fair or not? The really typical thing for girls is not whether something is fair or not, but whether it's beautiful or if it can make her happy, and that's the heart of it. 'Fairness' just seems to be one of these words that males use. Even so, I can't help feeling there is something perfectly apt about this word 'fairness'.
>
> (Murakami 1987 I: 163–164)

Disregarding Murakami's assumptions about female/male discrimination, it is possible to see that Naoko is here arguing for a shift from beauty and happiness towards common fairness: the former being characteristic of modernist and the latter postmodernist positions.

Lyotard also argues for justice, saying that '[c]onsensus has become an outmoded and suspect value. But justice as a value is neither outmoded nor suspect. We must thus arrive at an idea and practice of justice that is not linked to that of consensus' (Lyotard 1979: 66). But what is justice without consensus? Without consensus, it would surely invite nothing but turmoil. Watanabe talks with Midori's father on his deathbed about the *deus ex machina* in Euripides' plays.

> All sorts of people appear, each of whom has their say about their circumstances and reasons, each seeking justice and happiness in their own way. Which throws everything into one fine mess. Predictably. Even in principle it would be impossible for everyone to receive justice or for everyone to achieve happiness. What you get is chaos. So what do you think happens? It's really very simple. In the end, the gods come out. To kind of conduct traffic. You come here, you go there, you two get together, you stay right there a while, like that. A regular fixer. That's the way everything falls into place, nice and neat. It's called *deus ex machina*.
>
> (Murakami 1987 II: 82–83)

As Watanabe predicted, if we were to lose the consensus underlying justice, it would result in chaos. Furthermore, it should not be forgotten that ideas of justice, equity, fairness or morality are forged on the basis of rationality. For postmodernists who doubt the legitimacy of rationality, the concept of a unitary justice, equity, fairness or morality is nothing but an illusion. As Watanabe tells Midori's father, there seem to be multiple justices, fairnesses, etc., each demanding its own legitimacy.

The rationality versus emotion/desire issue, which is problematised by postmodernists, can be subsumed, to a certain extent, in the wider category of universality/generality versus originality/particularity[13] – since both rationality and emotion/desire are factors that serve to unite and differentiate between people. It seems pertinent to understand this conflict between universality/generality and originality/particularity, not as something outside the individual (universal/general) as opposed to something inside (original/particular), but as two sides confronting each other within an individual. In this paradigm justice, equity, fairness and morality are not construed as something external to individuality. As Richard Rorty and John McGowan insist, we should think of morality 'as the voice of ourselves as members of a community, speakers of a common language' (Rorty 1989: 59; McGowan 1991: 194). If we take this dichotomy of universality and particularity that exists within ourselves into consideration, we can replace the notion of normative justice, fairness and morality with our own voices as members of a community, speakers of a common language in Rorty's sense.

We have to be careful here. As Lyotard noted, without a single rule of judgement, we cannot communicate with each other, but a single universal norm tends to get caught up in totalitarianism. We have to avoid both extremes. I can see the possibility in Stanley Raffel's suggestion that justice without consensus in Lyotard's sense resides in 'something like being as certain as possible that no one is forcing anyone else to do anything against their will' (Raffel 1992: 60). In this respect, the concept of postmodern justice and fairness reminds us of the notion of kindness mentioned by the Colonel in *The End of the World*, as well as the role models suggested by Nagasawa.

Compared with the mind, which is deeper, stronger, and far more inconsistent, kindness is a manner, a superficial custom, and an acquired practice.

The mind produces profound love and hate relationships, but kindness results in a shallow etiquette which helps reduce friction. In contrast to ideals for which people must strive at the cost of their dignity and for whose sake they must disadvantage others, resulting in anxiety and paranoia, the gentleman simply follows by etiquette. One of the significant characteristics of the paradigm shift from modernism to postmodernism is the change from abstract ideals to practical etiquette and from deep love to shallow kindness. When ideals are invoked, people struggle and swing from one extreme to another – from disappointment to fulfilment, from alienation to unification; and they necessarily coerce others to follow them. In this paradigm, an externally enforced norm is necessary in order to keep society on course. In contrast, in the postmodern paradigm, morality and justice as normative forces have been replaced with kindness and etiquette. Justice in Lyotard and Raffel's sense appears only in the latter paradigm.

As has often been mentioned, it is paradoxical to say that 'there is no truth in this world' or 'nothing in this world is universal'.[14] What is involved then, in making this statement, is not so much the collapse of universality in favour of fragmentation, but to effect a paradigm shift from modern to postmodern ideology. For modernism, as we have noted, the main ideologies are evolution-is-good and love-is-beautiful, which are underpinned by notions of justice and morality that serve to maintain the status quo.

In contrast, in the postmodern paradigm evolution is understood as the cause of suppression and oppression of the weak, love (totalitarianism/consensus) is construed as a factor producing discrimination against and hatred of others, and justice and morality are seen as normative, external forces that restrain people. Regarding the above negative aspects of modernism, the postmodernists favour egalitarianism, schizophrenic fragmentation, and the waning of affection. The rule of the game is fairness or justice without force. The postmodern endeavour can be conceived, from this perspective, simply as valuing fairness and justice over evolution and love.

Though Watanabe is an unwitting postmodernist, he also exhibits modern characteristics. Nagasawa's talent amazes him, but he also harbours a sort of longing for his late friend Kizuki whose minor talents were used to help both Naoko and himself. Nagasawa however, dispenses his overwhelming mastery in all directions, as if it were all a game (Murakami 1987 I: 66). This kind of longing for Kizuki is typical of modernity. Watanabe also feels more comfortable with Midori's father than with Nagasawa, because the former cares too much for his family and his daughter to consider the difference between effort and labour which Nagasawa mentions (Murakami 1987 II: 103–104). Watanabe is here rather sentimental about modernist human relations.

Nagasawa's girlfriend Hatsumi is depicted as a symbol of empathy since she wants to be understood by others. As Nagasawa points out, normal

people call it love when one individual wants to understand another (Murakami 1987 II: 115–116). Some twelve or thirteen years later, when Watanabe is in Santa Fe, New Mexico, he sees a miraculously beautiful sunset and, suddenly, in the face of that overwhelming view, he is reminded of Hatsumi, understanding that what she evoked in him was an unfulfilled – and eternally unfulfillable – adolescent infatuation; an infatuation which was pure, unblemished, and unremitting, and which had long been set aside inside him, its very existence erased from memory (Murakami 1987 II: 117–119). Hatsumi is a compassionate figure who seeks empathic love, and who possesses romantic characteristics.

In her study of relations between Japanese romantic and realist traditions, Susan Napier, with reference to Jameson, finds in the works of Mishima Yukio and Ōe Kenzaburō several anti-mimetic elements. She points out that their use of romance or fantasy offers means of escape from the suffocatingly bleak realism of the Naturalists in Japan of the 1960s and 1970s (Napier 1991: 8–9). As Napier points out, Fredric Jameson also argued that the role of romance in the nineteenth century was part of the gradual reification of realism in late capitalism wherein romance came to be seen as the place of narrative heterogeneity and of freedom from that reality principle to which an oppressive realistic representation was hostage (Jameson 1981: 104).

We should first clarify the meaning of romance. Napier focuses on romance as 'an extraordinary and improbable tale of adventure' (Napier 1991: 228), while for Jameson, romance is something which offers the possibility of sensing other historical rhythms and of demonic or Utopian transformations of a real world (Jameson 1981: 104); yet there is at least one more side to romance, what Northrop Frye calls the idyllic world. Frye presents two worlds of romance:

> There is, first, a world associated with happiness, security, and peace; the emphasis is often thrown on childhood or on an 'innocent' or pre-genital period of youth, and the images are those of spring and summer, flowers and sunshine. I shall call this world the idyllic world. The other is a world of exciting adventures, but adventures that involve separation, loneliness, humiliation, pain, and the threat of more pain. I shall call this world the demonic or night world. Because of the powerful polarizing tendency in romance, we are usually carried directly from one to the other.
>
> (Frye 1976: 53)

In contrast to Napier and Jameson who focus on the second of Frye's two worlds of romance, I want to highlight the tension between the worlds. Gerald N. Izenberg characterises romanticism by saying that:

> in Romantic imagery and concept, whether it be that of humankind's relationship with nature or with the state, whether it be the artist's rela-

tion to the work of art or the lover's relation to the beloved, the Romantic idea of infinite individuality is always linked with the notion of an all-inclusive totality other and greater than the self, in a relationship not of reciprocity but of dependency. The Romantic contradiction is that the individuated self's dependency on, even fusion with, this totality, invariably figured in maternal terms, is the very condition of absolute free individuality; or to reverse the terms, the absolute, ungrounded agency of the self is seen to derive from the dissolution of the self into a larger whole.

(Izenberg 1992: 8)

This quotation shows how most romantics oscillate between infinity of self (individuality/differentiation) and belonging to others (totality/identification). They are pulled in both directions by these two contradictory yearnings. In most romantic works, individual freedom is usually reconciled in a happy unification and can be understood as the unfulfillable adolescent desire to reunite with the mother. That is the reason why modernists in their adolescence, when they are forming their self-identities, fall desperately in love with others.[15]

In contrast to romance, fantasy has its own features. As Tzvetan Todorov points out, fantasy also, as a literary text, creates a situation in which the reader identifies with the character (Todorov 1973: 33). But compared with romance, fantasy is too far from verisimilitude to ensure empathic identification between reader and character. Further, as Marshall Tymn defines it, fantasy goes beyond rational consideration and opens doors to other worlds and other peoples (Tymn *et al*. 1979: 3–4, 37–38). This analysis is reminiscent of the characteristics of postmodernism.[16] I shall define as 'fantasy' works that overly stress the role of the imagination in either or both of these two worlds of romance, to the extent that they lose close correspondence to the ordinary world of experience. If we accept this distinction between romance and fantasy, Jameson's and Napier's definition of 'romance' as something which offers the possibility of flight from the reality principle and of sensing other historical rhythms seems to be more applicable to fantasy than to romance. Predictably, paranoid romance will disappear in postmodernism as a result of the schizophrenic lack of empathy.

In *Norwegian Wood*, Hatsumi is depicted as a symbol of romance searching for empathic love with Nagasawa. That is why she evokes in Watanabe an eternal and unfulfillable adolescent infatuation; a romantic unification of two people in the throes of a love that has been set aside and long disregarded, its very existence erased from memory. This means that when Watanabe remembers Hatsumi in Mexico, he has long since given up the paranoid ways of modernist life.

The relation between Hatsumi's romantic, paranoid and modern love, depicted as beautiful and priceless, and Nagasawa's apathetic, schizophrenic and postmodern tendencies is complex. Though it is certain that Hatsumi's

love is depicted as an elegy for something that is disappearing, something which has faded, whether the narrative leads the reader to attempt to recover or discard this is ambiguous. Also, as Katō Kōichi mentioned, we should pay attention to Nagasawa's mistreatment of a drunken woman (Murakami 1987 I: 63; Katō Kōichi 1999: 114–115). His nasty character is a result of a lack of empathy – a facet of the apathy typical of postmodernists. At this point, a certain amount of clarification is necessary.

It seems that what underlies postmodernism is a political, economic and social egalitarianism in which each schizophrenic individual approves of the differences displayed by every other individual. But, as has been seen, in order to achieve this, two basic desires – evolution and romantic empathic love must be discarded. Is the narrative of this novel suggesting that we should go on living without evolution and love? Here, I should mention that the author Murakami himself, not only later but even when he wrote this novel, seems reluctant to go on living without at least attachment (love). The evidence abounds: at the beginning of this story, thirty-seven-year-old Watanabe apparently regrets and misses what he has lost; the narrator's attitude towards Nagasawa is indifferent, whereas towards Hatsumi he is, as mentioned before, compassionate. Also Murakami has remarked in an interview with Shibata Motoyuki that he regards Nagasawa as a morally fallen man, whereas Watanabe is free from that defect (Murakami and Shibata 1989: 20–21). Furthermore, as I will mention in the following sections, in *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* (*Nejimakidori kuronikuru*, 1994–1995) Murakami later deals with violence which is closely related to compassionate love.

To go back to *Norwegian Wood*, Murakami mentions in the interview with Shibata Motoyuki cited above that he is split into two people: Murakami the writer and Murakami the man. He is a different person when he is writing a novel and when he is not; when writing, a sort of 'demonic' force controls him. Hence, it is possible to suggest that while Murakami Haruki the man, during an interview for instance, is attached to the idea of empathic love, his hidden 'demonic' side, which appears only when he is writing a novel, is indifferent. Also, I believe that this story awoke this 'demonic' element that lay dormant in its more than 3.5 million readers in late 1980s Japan[17].

In the last scene of *Norwegian Wood*, Watanabe, having lost Naoko, decides to live with Midori and calls her.

> I called Midori and told her I simply had to talk to her. I had loads to tell her. Things I had to get off my chest. There was nothing else I wanted in this world but her. Let's meet and talk, I said, everything depends on that.
>
> Midori stayed silent on the other end of the line the whole while. Silent as all the rain in the world falling over all the grass of the world, on and

on. I pressed my forehead against the windowpane and shut my eyes. And finally Midori spoke to me. 'Where are you now?' she calmly asked.

Where was I now?

I looked up, receiver in hand, and spun around in the phone booth, taking in my surroundings. Where the hell was I? I couldn't tell. Not a clue. All I could see about me were people, scores of people, all tired of walking about aimlessly. I held on to the line to Midori from there in the middle of nowhere.

(Murakami 1987 II: 255–256)

Ueno Chizuko focuses on Midori's psychology in this last scene and mentions that Midori rejects Watanabe because she senses that he is not calling out of concern for her (Ueno *et al*. 1992: 289). But if we pay attention to the trajectory of Watanabe's life, we can interpret the last scene to mean that when he decides to live with Midori and calls her, he loses his place. Because of Naoko's influence, and also because of his own inclination, Watanabe has unconsciously transformed himself from a modernist to a postmodernist. But, he is still drawn towards the empathic and romantic love of the modernists, embodied in his love for Midori. Once he decides to act on that empathic love, he unavoidably loses his place in modern society because of his postmodern characteristics. This never happens when modernists establish relations with each other.

This last scene highlights the influence of post-war Japanese literature on Murakami's work. Although Ōe Kenzaburō believes that there is nothing directly linking Murakami with the postwar Japanese literature of the 1946–1970 period, Murakami's deliberate dissociation from Mishima Yukio and Ōe himself has been noticed by Karatani Kōjin (Ōe 1989: 200; Karatani 1995a). In this final scene from *Norwegian Wood* we can also see Abe Kōbō's influence. In the last scene of *The Ruined Map* (*Moetsukita chizu,* 1970; original 1967) Abe's protagonist detective calls a woman from a telephone booth.

I dialed, and this time the line was free and I could hear the bell ringing…

It was a woman's voice…At once a glib lie came mechanically to my lips.

'Excuse me, but I've found a purse. There was a piece of paper in it with this number on it. I called, thinking it might by chance be yours…'

The response was more than I expected. Suddenly the woman broke out laughing.

'What? It's you, isn't it?' she said guilelessly and smoothly in a low, throaty voice. 'What were you saying?'

'Do you know me…who I am…? Someone…'

'Don't go on with that ridiculous joke.'

'I want you to help me…I'm in the telephone booth at the foot of the slope that leads to High Town. Please. Come and get me here.'

'You're terrible…at this hour! Are you tight?'

'Please! I'm sick. Please. Won't you do something?'

'You're impossible. Well…wait there where you are. Don't move. I'll be right down.'

<div align="right">(Abe 1970: 295–296)</div>

Replacing the receiver, however, Abe's hero makes a dash for the other side of the street, directly opposite the telephone booth, and conceals himself in an alley there. The woman appears and searches the booth and the area around it. But the detective continues to hide himself in the narrow, dark crevice, choking back his screams behind clenched teeth, until she is gone. Abe's protagonist is deeply attached to others and looks for their help, and at the same time he ceaselessly attempts to escape from them. In contrast, Murakami's hero simply rejects them and is rejected by them. We can see here a significant shift from the late modernist to the early postmodernist.

A new switch-panel in a death chamber: *Dance Dance Dance*

Dance Dance Dance (*Dansu dansu dansu*, 1988) is the sequel to *A Wild Sheep Chase*. The copywriter in the latter work has now become a freelance writer. He often dreams about the Dolphin Hotel where he stayed in *A Wild Sheep Chase*, and feels he belongs to the hotel – he is part of it. He hears someone softly, almost imperceptibly, weeping for him there. Supposing that Kiki, his girlfriend in the previous novel, is seeking him once more and that only by becoming part of the Dolphin Hotel will he ever see her again, he once again journeys to Hokkaido. Once there, he finds that the old five-story Dolphin Hotel has been completely rebuilt and transformed into a gleaming twenty-six-story Bauhaus Art-Deco symphony of glass and steel, with the flags of various nations waving along the driveway, smartly uniformed doormen hailing taxis and a glass elevator shooting up to a penthouse restaurant. With the hotel as the connecting link, a new story unfolds around the writer, the hotel receptionist Yumiyoshi, Yuki, the daughter of a famous photographer called Amé, and an old friend of the writer, now a movie star, called Gotanda.

The other worlds appear more clearly here than in Murakami's other novels, namely in the Sheep Man's room at the Dolphin Hotel and in the death chamber in downtown Honolulu. The author himself refers to these different worlds in an interview with Shibata Motoyuki.

> Most novels I have written include two worlds; in short, this world and
> that world. *Norwegian Wood* is no exception. Simply speaking, the
> world of the convalescence home in Kyoto where Naoko stays is that
> world, while the world in Tokyo in which Midori lives is this world.
> Apart from them, in my consciousness, there are two kinds of time
> concepts, this time and that time. Specifically these are the limited real-
> istic time of the 60s, 70s and 80s that is the stage of my novels, and an
> unrealistic time beyond that.
>
> <div align="right">(Murakami and Shibata 1989: 18–19; my translation)</div>

This unrealistic time flows in the Sheep Man's room at the Dolphin Hotel
and in the death chamber in downtown Honolulu.

This kind of pluralism is one of the key characteristics of postmodern
fiction. Discussing Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities*, Brian McHale draws our
attention to the space that is capable of accommodating incommensurable and
mutually exclusive worlds. He explains that this space juxtaposes, like Michel
Foucault's concept of a *heterotopia*, worlds of incompatible structure (McHale
1987: 43–44). Quoting a passage from Borges, Foucault means by *heterotopia* a
world that is organised by epistemological categories quite other than our own.
In such a world (described by Borges), animals are categorised as (1) property
of the Emperor, (2) embalmed, (3) tame, (4) having just broken the water
pitcher, etc. In Foucault's *heterotopia* they 'make it impossible to name this *and*
that, because they shatter or tangle common names, because they destroy
"syntax" in advance, and not only the syntax with which we construct
sentences but also that less apparent syntax which causes words and things
(next to and also opposite one another) to "hold together"' (Foucault 1994:
xviii). Foucault here is describing precisely the breakdown of the relationship
of signifiers among themselves, what Jameson refers to as snaps in the links of
the signifying chain. As we have noted, it results in a world of schizophrenics
who lose their grasp on common prevailing relations between signifiers.

The pluralism of *utopias* and *heterotopias* suggests the collapse of a single
correct mode of representation. As David Harvey also mentions, this is 'co-
existence' in 'an impossible space' of a 'large number of fragmentary
possible worlds' or, more simply, incommensurable spaces juxtaposed or
superimposed upon each other. Characters no longer contemplate how they
can unravel or unmask a central mystery, but are forced instead to ask,
'Which world is this? What is to be done in it? Which of myselves is to do
it?' (Harvey 1989: 48). The pluralism of different, co-existing worlds can also
be found in *A Wild Sheep Chase*.

> Turning all this over in my mind, I started to imagine another me some-
> where, sitting in a bar, nursing a whiskey, without a care in the world.
> The more I thought about it, the more that other me became the real
> me, making this me here not real at all.
>
> <div align="right">(Murakami 1982 II: 144)</div>

I wasn't seeing my mirror-flat mirror-image. It wasn't myself I was seeing; on the contrary, it was as if I were the reflection of the mirror and this flat-me-of-an-image were seeing the real me. I brought my right hand up in front of my face and wiped my mouth. The me through the looking glass went through the same motions. But maybe it was only me copying what the me in the mirror had done. I couldn't be certain I'd wiped my mouth out of my own free will.

I filed the word 'free will' away in my head and pinched my ear with my left hand. The me in the mirror did exactly the same. Apparently he had filed the word 'free will' away in his head the same as I had.

I gave up and left the mirror. He also left the mirror.

(Murakami 1982 II: 182–183)

These feelings must be related to losing one's place in the real world, as Watanabe does in the last scene of *Norwegian Wood*. The mirror-image, which reflects reality, becomes more real because he has lost his place in this real world. One can identify one's place by confirming the location of the fabric knot of relations with others. Lack or change of the location of that knot results in losing one's place in this real world.

Again, we find Abe Kōbō's hero in *The Ruined Map* expressing himself in similar terms almost twenty years previously:

No, perhaps I was not the one who had lost himself but the one who had been lost. I had experienced a moment's pain as if I had been thrown off the bus when it had started off a while ago. If that were true, the I here was not the lost I but the I that had suffered the loss.

(Abe 1970: 286)

Both have lost their places in this real world. The difference is that while Abe's detective is suffering, Murakami's copywriter is rather playing with his alter ego.

In *Dance Dance Dance*, the room at the Dolphin Hotel on the 15th, 16th or 17th floor (the first time the hero discovers it, it is on the 15th floor, the second and third times on the 16th and 17th respectively), which varies in dimensional space, and the death chamber in downtown Honolulu are supposed to be set in a different reality in which a different order prevails. According to the Sheep Man, the room at the Dolphin Hotel (*this world*) works like a switchboard through which people are connected (Murakami 1988: 84). The room is the freelance writer's own place, where he can put himself in relation to others.

He tells the Sheep Man about his life: how he has managed to support himself, yet never managed to go anywhere, but aged all the same; how he lost track of what mattered; how he worked like a fool; how it didn't make a difference either way; how he was losing form, the tissues hardening, stiffening from within, terrifying him; how he barely made the connection to this place

(Murakami 1988: 82–83). The Sheep Man says that what he must do is to dance as long as the music plays. Once his feet stop, he must stay in *this world*. He is going to be dragged from *that world* to *this world*. The writer wonders what *this world* is about, because it is meant to help him connect with others; it must exist for him. The Sheep Man's answer is simply that the writer is not ready for this place, not yet. It is too dark, too big, and too cold, there is nothing to eat. Though this is not the world of death, it is a different reality from the writer's world. The reason the Sheep Man chose this one is that he dislikes war and has nothing to lose. But since the writer has still got warmth, the Sheep Man advises that he should stay in *that world* (Murakami 1988: 86).

At the end of *A Wild Sheep Chase*, Rat commits suicide in order to stop the modern ideology of progress and to subvert the concept of human unification. That is why the writer tries to forget about Rat in *Dance Dance Dance* (Murakami 1988: 82). He wants a life completely dissociated from *this place* of connecting people. But he cannot have that, so he comes back to *this place*. He cannot get *this place* out of his mind. No matter how hard he tries to forget things, and regardless of whether he likes it or not, he realises that he belongs to *this place*. In his dreams about *this place*, he is part of everything; someone is crying for him here, someone wants him (Murakami 1988: 82). The Sheep Man's room and the death chamber (*this world*) are doubtless places in which people are connected. But it is hard to imagine the story going back to the modern human relations of the 1960s, when people were united by rationality and emotional love. These rooms must be different other worlds in which schizophrenics are to be connected, and so must have the same qualities as the world in *The End of the World*.

Led there by Kiki, in Honolulu the writer discovers a downtown death chamber, which contains six human skeletons.

> Two human skeletons were seated side by side on the sofa. Two complete skeletons, one larger, one smaller, sitting exactly as they might have when they were alive. The larger skeleton rested one arm on the back of the sofa. The smaller one had both hands placed neatly on its lap …
>
> I walked slowly around the room. There were six skeletons in all. Except for one, all were whole. All sat in natural positions. One man (at least from the size, I imagined it was a man) had his line of vision fixed on a television. Another was bent over a table still set with dishes, the food now dust. Yet another, the only skeleton in an imperfect state, lay in bed. Its left arm was missing from the shoulder.
>
> (Murakami 1988: 271)

All together six skeletons. The one whose left arm is missing from the shoulder must be Dick North, Amé's boyfriend who lost his left arm in Vietnam and was later killed in a traffic accident in Japan (Murakami 1988: 309), and the one with his line of vision fixed on a television must be Gotanda. The writer supposes that the others must be Rat, Kiki and Mei

(360). And when Yuki says that, 'You were such a good guy. I never met anyone like you', the writer wonders *'Why the past tense?'* (345), so we may perhaps suppose the last skeleton to be that of the writer himself. But we are not quite ready to reach this conclusion yet.[18]

It is apparent that *Dance Dance Dance* is a sequel to *A Wild Sheep Chase*. The Dolphin Hotel is the hub between the two works. But connections with *The Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* can also be detected. The writer thinks of the coldness of the Sheep Man's room: 'The temperature was falling. I suddenly seemed to remember this chill. A bone-piercing, damp chill. Long ago and far away. But where? My mind was paralyzed. Fixed and rigid' (Murakami 1988: 87).

The coldness reminds us of that in *The End of the World*. Most readers will vividly recall the coldness there. The writer in *Dance Dance Dance* is trying to remember the chill of *The End of the World*.[19] Further, Gotanda talks about his shadow when he says that he has killed Kiki:

> 'I strangled her. But I wasn't strangling *her*, I was strangling my *shadow*. I remember thinking, if only I could choke my shadow off, I'd get some health. Except it wasn't my shadow. It was Kiki.'

> '*It all took place in that dark world.* You know what I'm talking about? Not here in this one.'
>
> (Murakami 1988: 356)

Gotanda has attempted to lose his mind in the other world by killing the shadow that carries his ego. This feature is also from the story of *The End of the World*; a different world of imagination in which people must strip away the shadows.

It is mentioned several times that in the room at the Dolphin Hotel, or in the death chamber in Honolulu, someone is weeping for the writer: 'I listen carefully. That's when I hear someone softly, almost imperceptibly, weeping. A sobbing from somewhere in the darkness. Someone is crying for me' (Murakami 1988: 2), and 'After all, that whole place is for you. Everyone there cries for you' (371). On the other hand, when the hero of *The End of the World* plays *Danny Boy* on the accordion, the librarian girl weeps.

> Long after I set down the instrument, she clings to me with both hands, eyes closed. Tears run down her cheeks. I put my arm around her shoulder and touch my lips to her eyelids. The tears give her a moist, gentle heat.
>
> (Murakami 1985: 369)

The weeping librarian girl in *The End of the World* is narrated as a duplication of the librarian girl in *The Hard-Boiled Wonderland* who suffers from gastric dilation. The skeleton bent over a table set with dishes might be the librarian girl. She is weeping and calling for him to connect with her in the world without mind.

The small skeleton seated on the sofa with both hands placed neatly in its lap reminds us of the Sheep Man in *A Wild Sheep Chase* who, when he came to visit Rat's vacation villa in Junitaki-cho, placed both hands on his knees when he sat down on the sofa (Murakami 1982 II: 154). So there is a possibility that the two human skeletons seated side by side on the sofa are Rat and the Sheep Man. Rat killed the sheep, the symbol of modernism, and further, as Murakami revealed, Rat is the alter ego of the protagonist (Murakami and Shibata 1989: 21). In this sense Yuki's prophecy came true. The writer left his alter ego in the chamber.

They are the ones who have lost their minds. The Sheep Man's room and the death chamber are conceived as places in which postmodern people who have lost their minds are connected. Yumiyoshi and the writer's self in the real world can have no place there for themselves, because at the very end of the story they have passed through the wall to the other world (*that world*) from *this world*. In the last scene, back in the Sheep Man's room at the Dolphin Hotel, the writer carelessly lets go of Yumiyoshi's hand.

> At the very moment I extended my hand, her body was absorbed into the wall. Just like Kiki had passed through the wall of the death chamber. Just like quicksand. She was gone, she had disappeared, together with the glow of the penlight.
>
> 'Yumiyoshi!' I yelled.
>
> No one answered. Silence and cold reigned, the darkness deepened.
>
> 'Yumiyoshi!' I yelled again.
>
> 'Hey, it's simple', came Yumiyoshi's voice from beyond the wall. 'Really simple. You can pass right through the wall.'
>
> 'No!' I screamed. 'Don't be tricked. You think it's simple, but you'll never get back. It's different over there. That's the otherworld. It's not like here.'
>
> No answer came from her. Silence filled the room, pressing down as if I were on the ocean floor.
>
> I was overwhelmed by my helplessness, despairing. Yumiyoshi was gone. After all this, I would never be able to reach her again. She was gone.
>
> There was no time to think. What was there to do? I loved her, I couldn't lose her. I followed her into the wall. I found myself passing through a transparent pocket of air.
>
> (Murakami 1988: 390–391)

Then he wakes up and finds himself lying on the bed. Yumiyoshi smiles as she sits on the sofa besides the bed. They have returned from the postmodern world without mind to the modernist world of love and progress, becuase he loves her.

In *Dance Dance Dance*, the hero has returned from the world of *The End of the World*. If the Sheep Man's room is a place where postmodern schizophrenics can be connected, the last scene where the writer escapes from there to the room where Yumiyoshi is waiting for him indicates that this is a move from the postmodern to the modern world. Is this based on the realisation that we cannot live in the world of *The End of the World*? Did Murakami resign his responsibility for having created that postmodern world? Is it because, as the Sheep Man says, the writer is not ready, not yet? Has the writer still got warmth? Is it too dark and too cold in the postmodern world?

It seems to me that Murakami Haruki finished his postmodern adventure with *Dance Dance Dance*. He concludes his later essay on the translation by saying:

> The most necessary thing for translation is probably language ability, but no less important than that, I think, especially in the case of fiction, is love full of personal prejudice.…The love full of prejudice is one of the things in this unstable world that I love most – prejudiced though it is.
>
> (Murakami 1996a: 69; my translation)

The love full of personal prejudice is far removed from the postmodern world. Kimata Satoshi compares Murakami's *The Blind Willow and the Sleeping Woman* (*Mekura yanagi to nemuru onna*) in its original version from 1983 and its revised one in 1995 and points out that a sort of morality has appeared in the latter. Kimata also mentions that in Murakami's later work *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* (*Nejimakidori kuronikuru*, 1994–1995), the author has shifted his moral consciousness from leaving the moral void as it is in his early novels to fighting it in this novel (Kimata 1995: 4).

Murakami's *South of the Border, West of the Sun* (*Kokkyō no minami, taiyō no nishi*, 1992), published between *Dance Dance Dance* (1988) and *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* (1994–1995), is criticised by Mukai Satoshi who labels it a 'failed work' (Mukai 1993: 300–303). At first sight, the novel certainly appears to lack the tension between the modern and post-modern worlds familiar in Murakami's other works. Instead, it can be read in the tradition of Abe Kōbō's heroes' escape from communal relations with neighbours (*rinjin*) to relations with strangers (*tanin*). In his three novels from the 1960s, Abe's heroes start from a neighbours' (*rinjin*) rela-tionship in the sand-hole, representative of peaceful communal life (*The Woman in the Dunes*, 1967a; original 1962); experience alienation as strangers (*tanin*) in neighbour's (*rinjin*) society, with a face disfigured by a laboratory explosion (*The Face of Another*, 1967b; original 1964); and attempt to discover self-identity through anonymous collectivity or inter-subjectivity in *tanin* society (*The Ruined Map*, 1970; original 1967) (Murakami F. 1996: 50–61). These heroes either attempt to escape from their families or try regaining them, and consequently find a new relation with other alienated people. In contrast, Hajime in *South of the Border,*

West of the Sun knows full well that we must hurt each other in this world, but nevertheless finally decides to stay with his family.

In this novel we find two important metaphors: the desert (Kobayashi 1995: 85) and the lack of facial expression, both of which are found in Abe's *The Woman in the Dunes* and *The Face of Another* respectively, and both of which seem to represent the lack of human relations. In this reading, as Mukai has pointed out, *South of the Border, West of the Sun* appears to lose its tension and we cannot help but read the novel as no more than an illicit love story with a happy ending, illustrating a decline in Abe's fiction. But probably, the directions and the meanings of this and that world are reversed here. As Yokoo Kazuhiro (1994) and Saitō Eiji (1993) have suggested, Shimamoto, heroine of this story, may have come as a spirit from a different world to seduce and lead the hero Hajime there.[20] That different world is probably somewhere like room 208 of the hotel in *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*: a place for complete mutual understanding and violence. In this reading, though he is strongly attracted by that world, Hajime is somehow released from there through Shimamoto's mercy and returns to this world without the deep love of identification. That is, this real world of the story-now is already postmodern for Murakami, and that other world is imagined as the modern world with love, hate and violence.

Concerning this change in the meaning of the other world, two reasons can be put forward. First, it seems to be based on Murakami's realisation of the futility of his static postmodern world in *The Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*. And second, it might correspond with changes in his understanding of the present situation: from solidarity experienced between people in the 1960s and 1970s to their indifference in the 1980s and 1990s. Murakami himself mentions that he changed his position from one of 'detachment' to one of 'commitment' after staying in the USA in 1991 (Murakami and Kawai 1996: 9–18), or from 'individuality' to 'something beyond individuality' (Murakami 1995: 276). In an interview with Ian Buruma, Murakami also mentions that before going to the USA, he had wanted personal independence and individual freedom, whereas in America he felt that the question was where to go from there (Buruma 1996: 70). That is, the transformation of the author's recognition of this world underlies the exchange of the two other worlds in his stories. For Murakami, this world has already lost human empathy, but is still not entirely indifferent to human relations. We are now at a turning point from deep dark empathy to mindless indifference. In his early novels, Murakami attempted a release from the former power, but now he seems to have realised that he is already in the latter world and is trying instead to find something to cure the wounds inflicted there.[21]

Violence and empathy: *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* and beyond

Many would agree that one of the unique points of *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* (*Nejimakidori kuronikuru*, 1994–1995) is that it narrates the violent

action that has been rarely depicted in Murakami's previous novels.[22] The hero of the story, Okada Toru describes himself, like other Murakami's heroes, as a detached man. He says that he can distinguish between himself and another as beings of two different realms, and claims that it is a kind of talent or a special power, because it is not an easy thing to do (Murakami 1994–1995: 78). But in the process of the story he gradually realises two important points. One is that he can use violent action in order to save his beloved, and the other is that he shares something with others as human beings. That is, in this new approach to the modern world, Toru, as well as the author Murakami, seems to notice the two different typically modern ideologies we have been considering in this chapter: strong-is-good and love-is-beautiful. The former is mentioned in a description of a character, Toru's wife Kumiko's father, in *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*.

> The father was convinced that the only way to live a full life in Japanese society was to earn the highest possible marks and to shove aside anyone and everyone standing in your path to the top. He believed this with utter conviction.
>
> It was shortly after I had married his daughter that I heard these very words from the man himself. All men are *not* created equal, he said. That was just some righteous-sounding nonsense they taught you in school. Japan might have the political structure of a democratic nation, but it was at the same time a fiercely carnivorous class society in which the weak were devoured by the strong, and unless you became one of the elite, there was no point in living in this country. You'd just be ground to dust. You had to fight your way up every rung of the ladder. This kind of ambition was entirely healthy. If people lost that ambition, Japan would perish.
>
> (Murakami 1994–1995: 72–73; emphasis in the original)

Toru counters this argument by saying that it exhibits a terribly shallow, one-sided and arrogant philosophy; it does not pay attention to nameless people who are supporting the society at its base; it does not allow for introspection into man's inner world and the significance of life; and it lacks imagination and scepticism.[23] In spite of this criticism of the idea of strong-is-good, Toru is, if unconsciously, affected by the same idea when he is forced by Wataya Noboru, Kumiko's brother, to divorce his wife Kumiko. He says to Noboru: 'I may be a nobody, but at least I'm not a sandbag. I'm a living, breathing human being. If somebody hits me, I hit back' (Murakami 1994–1995: 203). He calls it *Wild Kingdom* (204). This is the understanding of the world governed by efficiency and the law of the jungle exactly described by Kumiko's father (560).

Toru's violent actions also derive from the idea of love-is-beautiful. It is significant that the two people against whom Toru uses violence are 1) a guitar player who calls for the audience's empathy by burning his palm in an

after-concert trick show and 2) Wataya Noboru who has the ability to draw from others the power of empathy and violence by means of symbolic incest.[24] Thus, the relationship between empathy – or feeling of sharing – and violence is apparent.

This feeling of sharing is described by Lieutenant Mamiya, a character in this story, in his experience in the midst of the Mongolian steppe where the surrounding space is so vast that it becomes more and more difficult to keep a balanced grip on his being. He feels that his self, as an individual human being, is slowly unravelling in the landscape. The mind expands to fill the entire landscape, becoming so diffuse in the process that one loses the ability to keep it fastened to the physical self (Murakami 1994–1995: 139). In this isolated region, a Russian officer catches Mamiya and compels him to jump into a well, where he is left to die. Then, when a blinding flood of sunlight pours straight down the well at high noon, Mamiya experiences a wonderful sense of 'oneness', an overflowing sense of 'unity' (166). Later he calls it the very core of his own consciousness (208). He felt he ought to die right then and there (166). But he could not die there, and after coming back to Japan he lived like an empty shell (171).

This understanding of Mamiya corresponds with Rat's insistence on killing the sheep in *A Wild Sheep Chase*. As we have seen, Rat killed himself with the sheep in his body in order to stop the sheep's attempt to create a realm of total conceptual unity in which consciousness, values, emotions, pain, everything would disappear and all opposites would be resolved, because he has realised that he is attached to his weakness, his pain and suffering (Murakami 1982 II: 204–205). Thus, the violence and love, the feeling of sharing, the wonderful sense of oneness Mamiya experiences at the bottom of the well are exactly what Rat attempted to stop at the cost of his own life in *A Wild Sheep Chase*. It is the modernist ideal world of total conceptual unity between people by the power of deep love.

In *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, room 208 at the hotel in the other world is also depicted as a place for mutual understanding, sex, incestuous empathy and violence. The empathy and violence are depicted here as interrelated and strongly connected through the hero's conduct. They lie at the centre of man's mind and the sharing of these desires is confirmed by repeatedly emphasising the lack of free will of human beings (Murakami 1994–1995: 261–262, 510, 525). The story narrates the process whereby Toru frees his wife Kumiko from the hotel room, because he loves her (577). Though Katō Norihiro sees a continuity of the theme of a different world in all of Murakami's stories and calls it an 'autistic world' (*naihei*)[25] (Katō N. 1996: 205), it seems to me that in this novel, the meaning of that world has thoroughly changed from a cold, dry end of the world (*The Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* and *Dance Dance Dance*) to the hotel's dark bedroom smelling of flowers, with air dense as mud (*The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*).

If we dig deep in the well, the very core of one's own consciousness, we will find something human beings have in common.[26] Underlying room 208

is the very core of one's own consciousness shared with others. It is the bottom of the well in the vacant house where Miyawaki was living, and, as we have seen, also the bottom of Mamiya's well in the Mongolian steppe. There must be a deep sexual desire and the desire for violence in the total unity between people. *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* narrates the protagonist's attempts to save his wife Kumiko from room 208, but this is a symbolic action. As Kasahara May says, Toru is fighting for a lot of other people at the same time he is fighting for his wife (Murakami 1994–1995: 325). Toru's mission in this novel is most probably to distil love and discard violence from the depths of human consciousness.

In Murakami's later novel *Sputnik Sweetheart* (*Supūtoniku no koibito*, 1999; English translation 2001) a female character Miu took piano lessons in Paris when she was 25. One summer she stayed alone in a small town in Switzerland. One day in the town she was stuck inside a Ferris wheel overnight in an amusement park. Looking through binoculars at her own apartment room, she saw a naked man, Ferdinando, whom she suspected of following her. He was there making love with her second self, her Doppelgänger. Later she recalls the event and says: 'It was all meaningless and obscene, with only one goal in mind – to make me thoroughly polluted' (Murakami 1999: 170).

As Tsuge Teruhiko points out (1999: 17–18), this corresponds with the incident in which Wataya Noboru defiled Kano Creta in *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* (Murakami 1994–1995: 211). Both actions must be symbolic of mutual understanding, sexual desire, incestuous empathy and polluted violence. Miu says that her other self took her black hair, her sexual desire, her periods and her ovulation, and part of her will to live (172). By the symbolic action of looking at her own desires in her own apartment room from the little gondola of a Ferris wheel, and feeling them to be horrible, she left another 'her' in the room together with her desire to live. That is why her hair turned white in this world.

As has been repeatedly mentioned, there are two sides of human nature; detachment and attachment; differentiation and identification; individuality and empathy. Miu in *Sputnik Sweetheart* explains that she lacked the latter sides when she was young. While she was studying music in France, she noticed that pianists whose technique was worse than hers – and who did not practise nearly half as much as she did – were able to move their audiences more than she ever could. Something was missing from her. Something absolutely critical, the kind of depth of emotion a person needs to make music that will inspire others (Murakami 1999: 173).

Music is here again used as a metaphor of mutual empathy as in *The End of the World*, in which postmodern people do not have music to listen to, and in which the tears of the girl librarian as she listens to *Danny Boy* on the accordion suggest a trace of a 'mind' (Murakami 1985: 369). Miu says:

> Being tough isn't of itself a bad thing. Looking back on it, though, I can see I was too used to being strong, and never tried to understand

those who were weak. I was too used to being fortunate, and didn't try to understand those less fortunate. Too used to being healthy, and didn't try to understand the pain of those who weren't.

<div style="text-align: right">(Murakami 1999: 174)</div>

Miu lacks empathy.

Therefore, it is certain that in *Sputnik Sweetheart* Miu is divided into two, one half is the one who has the flair of mutual understanding, sexual desire, incestuous empathy, and the desire of violence symbolised by her Doppelgänger who is making love with Ferdinando in the *other* world. Meanwhile the half in *this* world lacks empathy (Murakami 1999: 51, 230). The *other* world in this novel, the apartment room where Miu's Doppelgänger is making love with Ferdinando, is therefore, like room 208 of the hotel in *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, and unlike the Sheep Man's room at the Dolphin Hotel in *Dance Dance Dance*, set as a world for mutual understanding, sex, incestuous empathy, and violence.

A lot of the relating metaphors, which describe the other world and this world, are used in *Sputnik Sweetheart*, too. Later when the protagonist teacher is seduced to go into the *other* world, the things that invite him are music and moonlight (Murakami 1999: 184–185). In order to flee from there the teacher retreats to his usual place of refuge. It is the very bottom of the freezing, dark, sea of consciousness, which reminds us once again of the town of *The End of the World* (186). *This* world is narrated as a lonely place. Though people here are yearning for others to satisfy them they are, nevertheless, isolating themselves. They are like

> the descendants of Sputnik, even now circling the Earth, gravity their only tie to the planet. Lonely metal souls in the unimpeded darkness of space, they meet, pass each other, and part, never to meet again. No words passing between them. No promises to keep.
>
> <div style="text-align: right">(Murakami 1999: 196)</div>

Although the *other* world is narrated as a dark and polluted place, if we compare the two worlds in the following passage, we recognise that the *other* world for Murakami is also imagined as an ideal world. In the penultimate chapter of the novel the teacher tells one of his pupils, called Carrot, a story of his own childhood days.

> I feel like I've been alone ever since I was a child. I had parents and an older sister at home, but I didn't get along with them. I couldn't communicate with anyone in my family. So I often imagined I was adopted…I imagined a town far away. There was a house there, where my real family lived. Just a modest little house, but warm and inviting. Everyone there can understand one another, they say whatever they feel like. In the evening you can hear Mum bustling around in the kitchen getting

dinner ready, and there's a warm, delicious fragrance. *That's* where I belong. I was always picturing this place in my mind, with me as a part of the picture.

(Murakami 1999: 212; emphasis in the original)

Would it be possible to realise his imagined world, excluding Miu's *other* world of polluted sexual desire and violence?

In Murakami's more recent novel *Kafka on the Shore* (*Umibe no Kafuka*, 2002) the relation between incestuous sexual desire and violence is succinctly narrated as Oedipal desire (Murakami 2002 II: 348).[27] The story's young hero Tamura Kafka killed his father and committed incest with his mother and sister (as in many cases of Murakami's works, whether the murder of the father and incest with the mother and sister are conducted in reality or in an imaginary world is ambiguous). For Murakami's reader, this story contains a lot of nostalgically familiar elements. At the beginning of the story Kafka says that in order to reduce the baggage for travel, he would better not go to a cold place. This implies that the destination, Shikoku, is in this story regarded not as the postmodern world of the cold town in *The End of the World*, but again as a place of violence and incestuous sexual desire (Murakami 2002 I: 12).

In contrast, the wood Kafka enters and comes back from in the latter half of the story is considered a place without violence like *The End of the World*. A tall soldier says 'There is nothing to hurt you in the woods.…Poisonous snakes, spiders, insects and mushrooms, even the Other will not hurt you here'. (Murakami 2002 II: 332; my translation). There are two persons in this story, Nakata and Saeki, whose shadows are dimmer than those of others (I: 87; I: 368; II: 138–139; II: 289). Like Miu in *Sputnik Sweetheart*, they have lost their sexual desire and the desire to do violence.

Significant in this novel is that violence, power and strength, which have been seamlessly united in Murakami's previous stories, are now clarified. The ideal strength is clearly stated by the protagonist Kafka who says:

What I want, the strength I want is not the strength with which people win or lose. Nor do I want walls to push back the power from the outside. What I want is the strength to grasp the outside power and endure it. It is the strength with which we can quietly bear the unfairness, misfortune, sorrow, misunderstanding and lack of perception.

(Murakami 2002 II: 155; my translation)

We may now be able to say that *Sputnik Sweetheart* and *Kafka on the Shore* go some steps further in the direction of understanding violence. What Murakami's stories aim to overcome is the Oedipal desire of modernity, the desire to grasp the outside power and endure it, and to go back to one's imagined nostalgic family with oneself as a part of it.

Though the last scene of *Dance Dance Dance* appears to be a turning point in the return to the modernist world, and *South of the Border, West of*

the Sun, *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, *Sputnik Sweetheart* and *Kafka on the Shore*, all seem to take steps towards a new understanding of empathy and violence, Murakami Haruki's early works in general allow the reader a glimpse of a postmodern world: a comfortable and cosy, yet mindless and anti-evolutionary world. At the same time, they also make us realise the features of modernity, its progress and beautiful love and its discrimination and suppression of others. We can see the two polarised forces of individual-isation and totalisation, or identification and differentiation, underlying these features of modernity. It is in any case worth remembering that in the late 1970s and the early 1980s, the Japanese people, the younger generation in particular, enthusiastically welcomed Murakami's static and futile post-modern world, to such an extent as to create a noteworthy social phenomenon. Also, following the postmodern world depicted in his early works and the subsequent space for mutual understanding, sex, incestuous empathy and the desire for violence narrated in his later novels, which is the future direction of Murakami's narrative that is worth paying attention to.