Outside the Box:

A Multi-Lingual Forum

Volume 11, Issue 1

Spring, 2023

Articles

Language Learning and Teaching

Haruki Murakami: The Cosmopolitan Japanese Writer

Sarara Momokawa
Waseda University

Abstract: *This paper argues that despite the mukokuseki-like (nationality-less) characteristic of the Japanese novelist, Murakami Haruki, that he is not as cosmopolitan a writer as he may first appear to be. Rather, Murakami's Japanese roots can be observed through his fictional characters who display a curious detachment to their society, as well as a lack of distinct societal morals.*

Keywords: Murakami Haruki, translation, postmodern, societal differences

For better or for worse, globalization has made the world become a smaller place. People from different backgrounds can potentially communicate, work with, and perhaps even understand each other. Yet, at the same time, the differences between people have become even more pronounced, especially in the present age when they can be compared in close vicinity to each other.

Murakami Haruki is an intriguing figure because his writings have been described as that of a cosmopolitan writer whose stories are not distinctly Japanese as such. Yet I argue that Murakami Haruki's Japanese roots make the core of his stories. This is done through the analysis of Murakami's representative works as a way of illustrating how he differs from non-Japanese writers, despite his international success.

Murakami's works have been translated into fifty languages (Karashima, 2020). One could safely assume this to mean that his works must contain elements that resonate with diverse readers. For instance, Fuji believes that Murakami's works are read by the young, middle-class Chinese readers, because his stories represent for them their feeling of voidness after the failed democratization movement, as well as to provide a "manual" for how to live in the mass-consumer society (Shibata et al.,

2016, pp. 243-244). A Korean translator of his works mentions that Murakami explores how to live in a capitalistic society without escaping reality, and manage to maintain a cool distance from the society (Shibata et al., 2016, p. 74). Corrine Atlan, a French translator of Murakami's works, has written that the nature of Murakami's works was already global, before there was even the idea of globalization (Atlan, 2015). These views show that Murakami is a cosmopolitan writer whose novels have crossed over the Japanese linguistic borders to readers with different mother tongues.

Murakami's writing style has also been described as *mukokuseki* ("nationality-less"; Strecher, 2014), which may play a part in his international success. According to Murakami, his basic writing approach is to write something deep by using words that are as simple as possible (Murakami & Shibata, 2000, p. 201), which would also then make his works translatable. Murakami himself appears flexible with his translations, for when Jay Rubin (one of his American translators) asked Murakami whether he should use the first- or the third person in one of Murakami's texts, Murakami replied, "Please do what you think would be appropriate" [適当にやって下さい。] (Rubin & Kuroyanagi, 2006, p. 66). Such an exchange could have led Rubin to say, "When you read Haruki Murakami, you're reading me, at least ninety-five per cent of the time" (Kelts, 2013). In addition, Rubin (2016) believes that to convey the

works' mood or their image, a translator must not only be an interpreter, but an inventor (pp. 59-60). The question then arises; can the translated work still be considered the same as its original? A notable example of Jay Rubin's translation is *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle* (1997). At the time of its publication, Murakami's readership was predominantly Japanese. Vintage, the book's publisher, asked Rubin to make an abridged version because they believed that a three-book volume would not sell well in the American market. This is the reason why Rubin reordered and cut out a few chapters to make the book marketable and cohesive (Karashima, 2020, p. 221). Despite Rubin's effort, however, the abridged translated version did not prevent Michiko Kakutani from describing it as "a fragmentary and chaotic book" and a story that "simply mirror[s] the confusions of the world" (Kakutani, 2017). However, Murakami's stance in allowing his translators (great) flexibility in their interpretations (and inventions) have also contributed to making him an international writer. Furthermore, in an interview with Kawakami, Murakami explained his thoughts on sentences:

> I think that sentences are no more than a tool, so I am very interested in just how effectively I can use it … the words themselves that are used are simply a tool. It is just a tool that can be used by anyone and is common to all nations. (448; author's translation)

Murakami's view that words and sentences are just a tool has earned him some criticism. In particular, they concern the indirect translations of his works. For instance, Hijiya-Kirschenereit described them as a "globalization" of his own works (founded on American taste) and expressed surprise at Murakami for allowing them as someone who is a translator himself (quoted in Rubin, 2002, p. 411). Siegrid Loeffler, a well-known German literature critic, also criticized Murakami's *Kokkyo no Minami, Taiyo no Nishi* (1992) ("South of the Border, West of the Sun"), as "fast-food literature" in a well-known German TV show Literarisches Quartett [Literature Quartet]. Notable is that Loeffler's criticism was in response to Murakami's indirect translation, although whether she would have responded more favorably to a direct translation remains unknown. In any case, no Japanese-to-German translation was available at that time. However, given Murakami's words-as-nothing-than-a-tool stance, it does not come as a surprise that Murakami permits publications of his works' indirect translations. According to Murakami, even if there are subtle and minor mistranslations, he does not mind as long as the story is told, because as long as there is power in his work, small mistranslations can be overcome (Murakami & Shibata, 2000, p. 413). In addition, Murakami's stance also explains his use of the word "idea" in his novel *Killing Commendatore* (2017). Readers will be led astray if they try to understand Commendatore, who claims himself to be an "idea", as Plato's concept of ιδέα. In an interview with Kawakami, Murakami explains that "I just named it as the 'idea', and it is unrelated to the real idea or Plato's ιδέα. I just borrowed the word 'idea.' I liked the sound of the word. The Commendatore simply introduced himself as 'I am an idea.' Whether he is the real idea or not, no one knows such a thing" (Murakami & Kawakami, 2019, p. 194; author's translation). To Kawakami's great astonishment, Murakami also mentions that he was unfamiliar with Plato's concept of ιδέα, so that there really is no connection between the two. It is possible that Murakami was pulling Kawakami's leg, but it still shows that Murakami is a storyteller and does not (seem to) show concern for how each individual word is used.

Readers may forget, since Murakami's books seem almost to be *mukokuseki*, that he was born and raised in Japan. His novels cannot, whether he wills it or not, be unrelated to his Japanese linguistic and cultural background. Then why do Murakami's works enjoy such popularity on an international level? Perhaps globalization has brought Japan closer to the West than ever before, in which case Murakami's cultural background itself may be similar to that of his Western readers. This could be why his works have found such an internationally receptive audience.

However, I argue that the postmodern-like appearance of the Japanese society does not re-

semble that of the West, because the foundations of the respective societies differ on a fundamental level (Suter, 2011; Takagi, 2006). The confusion is already inherent in the use of the word "postmodern," for there is no one commonly accepted definition of this word (Suter, 2011). It is also problematic to apply such words as "modern" or "postmodern" to non-occidental societies because these words originated in the West and are used for the convenience of trying to understand non-Western societies from a Western perspective (Suter, 2011). A brief overview of the Japanese societal structure's history will illuminate the societies' differences. Around the second century A.D., people inhabiting the Japanese islands lived in small societal units. These were held together by their common mythical beliefs in nature's wonders. Around the fifth century A.D., the Japanese imported Buddhism from China. By the sixth century A.D., the societies on the Japanese islands lived by their beliefs in a mixture of myths, Buddhism and *ritsuryo-sei* (a legal system imported from ancient China). During the Edo period, the society took on a combination of the mythic culture and the semifeudal system. The modern period (from the 19th century to the end of the Meiji period) saw a mix of the mythical culture and an electoral system similar to that of the West. The continual difference between the Japanese and the Western society is that in Japan, the emperor has continued to exist as a symbol of a living god. This brief overview shows that the Japanese modern period cannot be compared on the same level as that of the West, because the evolution of the societal formation of these two different cultures differs in their history that span at least two thousand years, if not more.

Consequently, the equivalent of the Western postmodern society never materialized in Japan, because the fundamental components of the society have never been the same. The present-day Japan may appear to resemble the West, but it is only outwardly so.[1]

In the following section, I will discuss two of Murakami's characteristics which partially contribute to his literary characteristics. These two are (a) his treatment of the relationships between individuals and the curious detachment they show from their society, and (b) the sense of societal morals that Murakami's characters possess.

Every individual bears some trace of his societal environmental influence, which contributes to his identity formation. However, characters in Murakami's novels usually possess a curiously cool and detached outlook on their society. They seem to not live in it, but on somewhere along its periphery. The Chinese translator of Murakami's works has described his novels as "an ode to the self" and "hymns of the individual" (Shibata et al., 2006, 303). Similarly, but with a negative twist, the *New York Times* reviewer described his main characters as the *hikikomori* of the Japanese society (Kunzru, 2018). Murakami's characters are not tied down to their living environment. For example, how the Kano sisters in *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle* (1994) make their living is unclear. They take off on a whim to Crete or Malta in search of "good" water, suggesting they have no societal commitments to any one place. In Murakami's novels, most of the characters seem aloof from their respective societies and manage, one way or another, to have as little to do with society at large as possible. Or rather, it may be that their detachment is a manifestation of their inner desperation to avoid their society as much as they can. To a certain extent, Murakami's protagonists succeed in their detachment, while other characters, who either commit suicide or disappear into thin air, fail to bear the reality. Then, what is this reality that they cannot cope with? It is not reality in the sense of real-life problems, such as poverty or discrimination, but of life itself; the evanescence and the impermanence of it. Some of Murakami's characters who succumb to life's impermanence are Rat from the Rat Trilogy (*Hear the Wind Sing,* 1979; *Pinball,* 1973; and *A Wild Sheep*

---

[1] To give one example, people from Murakami's generation became adults during the end of the 1960s. At this time, the first must-read Bildungsroman for the young Japanese people was the *Jiro-Monogatari* by Kojin Shimamura. According to this novel, the types of morals that one should possess were 1. Bushido, 2. Loyalty, 3. Filial piety, 4. Compassion. When taking this into consideration, it is clear that Japan differs greatly in comparison to today's Western society with its underlying foundation of Christianity.

Chase, 1982), Gotanda, the actor, from *Dance Dance Dance* (1988), Naoko from *The Norwegian Wood* (1987), Miss Saeki from *Kafka on the Shore* (2002) and most recently, Kimi (you) from *Machi to, sono futashika na kabe* (2023). These characters are, in essence, the protagonists' double, for they reveal what the protagonists so desperately struggle to conceal deep within their unconscious (Momokawa, 2004).

1Q84 (2009) is an interesting novel because readers may identify Sakigake, a mysterious cult group, as Murakami's representation of Aum Shinrikyo and thus assume that Murakami is uncharacteristically dealing with society itself in his fictional work. However, society and its relation to Sakigake remain unclear, because Murakami's theme in this novel (along with his others) is not to describe their impact on the society. Sakigake exists as a tool in Murakami's narrative construction. Sakigake is not a group planning a terrorist attack like Aum Shinrikyo. In fact, the group has little connection to the rest of the world.[2]

The second of Murakami's literary characteristics is Murakami's treatment of societal morals, or how a society comes to determine what is good and evil. Through his characters, Murakami portrays evil through individual's characteristics. This relates back to the first of Murakami's literary characteristics (his characters detachment from their society), because the characters' evil remains within those individuals and generally do not become a societal evil to be examined. Also, his characters who show obvious traits of evil are still either underdeveloped or ambivalent in their evilness. In Murakami's works, irrefutable and absolute evil, like Voldemort from J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter books or Stephen King's *It*, do not exist. This is because for the general Japanese, evil may be determined by context. As the Buddhist phrase 善悪不二 (*zenakufuni*: good and evil

are two sides of the same coin) shows, absolute good, like absolute evil, does not exist within this concept. The Japanese society, which is arguably non-religious in nature (by religious, I mean in the Western sense of the belief in the almighty God), and the Absolutes are nonexistent. However international and *mukokuseki* a writer Murakami may seem, this trait is decidedly Japanese, and I believe it is reflected in his works.

In the following paragraphs, I will examine some of Murakami's works in order to analyze the ambiguity of his evil characters. Let us begin with one of the major characters from *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*. Noboru Wataya, a promising young politician, is an example of banal evil who, in his past, defiled his own sisters (one of whom is the protagonist's wife) as well as Creta Kano. It is as though Murakami tried to develop Noboru into an undeniable character of evil, yet fell short of it. The protagonist, Toru Okada, readily admits his hate for Noboru, although exactly what it is about Noboru that he hates, he cannot pin down. In one conversation with Malta Kano, Toru says:

> Every time I talk to that guy, I get this incredibly empty feeling inside. Every single object in the room begins to look as if it has no substance to it. Everything appears hollow. Exactly why this should be, I could never explain to you with any precision. Because of this feeling, I end up saying and doing things that are simply not me. And I feel terrible about it afterward. If I could manage never to see him again, nothing would make me happier." (Murakami & Rubin, 1998, p. 204)

However, Toru seems drawn to Noboru precisely for a part of his character that resonates with Toru himself, which he deeply resents. In Rubin's translation, two substantial parts from the Japanese original are omitted, and these are the

---

2   Some scholars associate Sakigake with Aum Shinrikyo (i.e., Suter), but the group's model may be closer to that of Koufuku-kai Yamagishi-kai (known as Yamagishi-kai) founded in 1953. The ideology of Yamagishi-kai is to build a society in which every person is happy. It aims to be a utopian communal living group whose members grow vegetables and do livestock farming, just as Sakigake does in *1Q84* (Yamagishism). It may be that Murakami's non-fiction work, *Underground* (1997), which dealt with Aum Shinrikyo, has led some of his Western readers to associate Aum Shinrikyo as the model of the Sakigake. Another factor may be that while Aum Shinrikyo's sarin subway attack in 1995 made headlines around the world, Yamagishi-kai is not classified as a terrorist group and may be less familiar for the non-Japanese readers.

ones that involve a lengthy treatment of Noboru. The first one is an online conversation between Toru and Noboru. In this conversation, Toru declares that he knows what Noboru has done to his wife's sister and the secret underneath Noboru's masked self. The second omission is Toru's last conversation with Ushikawa, a man described as "one of the ugliest human beings I [Toru] had ever encountered" (p. 427; author's translation). Ushikawa says to Toru, "Deep down, Mr. Wataya and I are similar to each other….when one takes off a layer of one's skin, we are all about the same" (p. 431; author's translation). It is in this conversation that Noboru's half-baked evilness is revealed. Murakami may initially have tried to develop Noboru as a character in possession of absolute evil, but Ushikawa's description of Noboru boils down the novel's plot into a familiar narrative; the good guy (Toru) rescues the woman (Toru's wife) from the bad guy (Noboru).

In an interview with the writer, Mieko Kawakami, Murakami states that he did not consciously intend to write about evil when working on *Kafka on the Shore* (2002) and *After Dark* (2004) (105). Murakami goes on to explain that his portrayal of "evil" is "a nation, society, or organization that has a solid system that cannot help but bring about and extract 'evil'…I would like to portray how such things are, but if I do so, it would inevitably become a political message, and that is something I would like to avoid, if possible. That is not what I am hoping to convey" (Murakami & Kawakami, 2019, p. 407; author's translation). Yet, is it really realistic for a writer to avoid being political, even in his works of fiction? It is likely that by "political", Murakami means "a political system", such as capitalism, communism, or oligarchy. All humans live within and is restricted by some kind of a system. A novel's theme does not need to be about a political system, but a story devoid of it seems impossible. Murakami's desire to avoid a clear portrayal of "evil" may be the reason for his ambiguously evil characters.

Johnnie Walker, another character from Murakami's *Kafka on the Shore*, is a man who cuts out cats' hearts and eats them raw. At first, he appears unquestionably evil, for he slays innocent cats for no apparent reason other than to make a "magic flute" out of their souls, whatever that may mean. However, readers find that Johnny Walker may or may not have existed. It appears likely that he did, because the news that Kafka Tamura's father, Koichi Tamura, is found murdered in his house suggests that Koichi Tamura is Johnnie Walker, perhaps in the form of his alter ego. In Murakami's novels, both reality and fantasy blend into each other. Readers can never be sure what Murakami had in mind. It may even be that Murakami welcomes his novels to multiple interpretations.

1Q84 is yet another novel open to multiple interpretations along with inexplainable characters. For example, there is no clear description of who the Little People are, nor of the role the "Air Chrysalis" serves. Sakigake's leader is initially described as an evil character who defiles the Sakigake commune's girls. Aomame, one of the protagonists, is commissioned to kill him for his evil acts. Yet, when Aomame prepares to insert the needle into his neck (at the precise pressure point where it would stop his breathing), the leader tells Aomame that it is the Little People who made him rape the girls and that they used him as a leader of the group. The leader then asks Aomame to kill him, because his entire body is in great pain, and he can no longer bear to live with it. Does this mean that the Little People are the evil ones, and the leader simply their puppet? The *New York Times* reviewer Janet Maslin has criticized the novel for the novel's "unanswered questions" and its "loose ends", going so far as to warn the readers that if they have the "spare time" to "wade through nearly 1,000 uneventful pages, then go ahead and read the novel" (2011). It is likely, however, that Murakami is aware of the readers' possible frustration. In an interview with Kawakami, he said, "Don't you think it is useless to write something that the head can interpret? A story becomes a story because one can't interpret it. If the writer unpackages it each time by saying this has this kind of meaning, that is not interesting at all" (p. 145; author's translation). Then, with Mu-

rakami's permission, I would venture to interpret that the "Air Chrysalis" is a metaphor of *daijyo-sai*, which is a highly secretive rite performed at the emperor's enthronement. On this occasion, the emperor is said to clothe himself in a *matoko-ofusuma* and enter the *shinza* (seat of god) in order to envelope himself with the spirit of rice. This is how he supposedly becomes at one with *Amaterasu-Omikami* (the goddess of the sun). However, because the exactly procedures of the rite remain a carefully guarded secret, the *shin-zashigisetsu* ("seat of god secret ritual theory") remains a scholarly speculation (*Daikawarikou Daijyosai Misshitsu de Annei to Houjyo-Inori*). Based on this imperial ritual, my interpretation is that Sakigake's leader is the symbolic emperor (Uchida, 2012) and the Little People are the spirits of rice. This interpretation (and as Murakami says, there is no one correct interpretation) leads me to conclude that the leader is not the figure of absolute evil. The same goes for the Little People, for as Maslin points out, all they ever say is "Ho, ho" (2011). The readers are given too little information to pronounce any judgment on them.

A relatively recent novel by Murakami is *Killing Commendatore* (2017). Similar to his other novels, there is no definite evil in this novel, although there is a stronger sense of *zenakufuni* in it than in his other ones.[3] For example, Menshiki appears to be a good character, but his background is unclear (Menshiki made his past irretraceable). Also, when Marie Akigawa hides in Menshiki's wardrobe, she senses something "evil" stand in front of the wardrobe's door; something that physically could be no one but Menshiki. There is also the "Man with the white Subaru Forester", whose portrait the main character *watashi* ("I") tries to paint but is unable to complete it. Both Menshiki and the "Man with the white Subaru Forester" remain ambiguous in nature, but Tomohiko Amada, the painter, is possibly the most mysterious figure of all. Puzzling,

for example, is his painting, *Killing Commendatore*, which depicts Don Giovanni killing the Commendatore, while the Commendatore's wife, Anna, looks on in horror. One possible interpretation is that the evil Don Giovanni kills an innocent father who is trying to protect his daughter. Then, readers learn that Amada, who was studying in Vienna at the outbreak of World War II, had been involved in an assassination plot of a high-ranking SS official. This leads one to speculate, once more, that Amada is relieved to see the Commendatore (the one who claimed to be an "idea") killed (by *watashi*, the protagonist) before his own death, because this fulfills, metaphorically-speaking, the assassination he failed to carry out when he was in Vienna (Asari, 2018). The other more probable interpretation is that Amada, who portrayed himself as Don Giovanni (the evil one), is relieved to know that he too would go to hell (like Don Giovanni), because he could at last atone for his "sin" of leaving behind his lover and comrades back in Austria while he alone fled back to Japan, where he would be safe.

I began by questioning how it is that Murakami enjoys such diverse readership. It is likely that there is no single answer to this question. It may be that translators, as cultural interpreters of Murakami's works, have "invented" them in their respective languages. However, as *mukokuseki* as his works may seem, I have tried to illuminate two themes—an individual and his relationship to society, and societal morals that define what good and evil are—as indicators that illustrate Murakami, well-known as a cosmopolitan writer, as a distinctly Japanese writer, whose stories deceptively appear "Western" and even universal.

Perhaps that is Murakami's intention. His stories can be read by many different people, precisely because Murakami makes sure to leave them open to multiple interpretations. This may be the secret to his international success.

---

[3] It appears that Murakami is reverting back to the traditional Japanese way of thinking. Particularly notable is the influence of popularized Buddhism. There are at least three indicators of this influence: (a) In the prologue, the appearance of a man without a face asks the main character to draw his portrait. Murakami may have gotten the hint from Zen's 公案 *koan*, (b) 善悪不二 *zenakufuni*, and (c) 無常観 *mujōkan*, that the world is only an illusion.

References

Asari, F. (2018, April 1). 'Killing Commendatore': Taking idea and metaphor into consideration." *Ibunka*, *19*. https://doi.org/10.15002/00014479.

Atlan, C. (2015, May). Furansu ni okeru Murakami Haruki [Murakami Haruki in French]." *Newsweek,* 27-30.

Daikawarikou Daijyosai Misshitsu De Annei to Houjyo-Inori [Thought upon the Change of the Throne, Festival of the Enthronement of the Emeperor Prayer for Peace and Fertility in the Secret Chamber.]" *Tokyo Shinbun TOKYO Web*, Tokyo Shinbun, 26 May 2020, www.tokyo-np.co.jp/article/18832.

Hijiya-Kirschnereit, I. (2014). Orchestrating translations: The case of Murakami Haruki. *Nippon.com* 10.

Kakutani, M. (1997, October 31). On a nightmarish trek through history's web. *The New York Times*, www.nytimes.com/1997/10/31/books/books-of-the-times-on-a-nightmarish-trek-through-history-s-web.html.

Karashima, D. J. (2020). *Who we're reading when we're reading Murakami*. Soft Skull Press.

Kelts, R. (2013, May 9). Lost in translation? *The New Yorker*, www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/lost-in-translation.

King, S. (2019). *It*. Hodder.

Kunzru, H. (2018, October 16). In Haruki Murakami's new novel, a painter's inspiration is supernatural. *The New York Times*. www.nytimes.com/2018/10/16/books/review/haruki-murakami-killing-commendatore.html.

Maslin, J. (2011, November 9). A Tokyo with two moons and many more puzzles. *The New York Times*. www.nytimes.com/2011/11/10/books/1q84-by-haruki-murakami-review.html.

Momokawa, T. (2004). *Yumeno Kyusaku: Houhou toshiteno Ikai* [Yumeno Kyusaku: Ikai as the method]. Iwanami Shoten.

Murakami, H. (2023). *Machi to sono futashikana kabe* [The town and its uncertain wall]. Shinchosha.

Murakami, H., & Rubin, J. (1998). *The wind-up bird chronicle*. Vintage International.

Haruki Murakami // Literarisches Quartett (with English Subtitles), YouTube, 28 Feb. 2013, www.youtube.com/watch?v=4pwS5g0a8ac.

Murakami, H. & Kawakami, M. (2019). *Mimizuku WA TASOGARE Ni Tobitatsu: Murakami Haruki a Long, Long Interview [A horned owl flies in the dusk: Murakami Haruki a Long, Long Interview]*. Shinchōsha.

Murakami, H., & Shibata, M. (2000). *Honyakuyawa [Translation Evening Stories]*. Bungei Shunjuu.

Murakami, H. *Kishidancho goroshi [Killing Commendatore]*. Shinchōsha, 2017.

Murakami, H. (1995). *Nejimakidori Kuronikuru [The Wind-up Bird Chronicle]*. Shinchōsha.

Murakami, H. (2002). *Umibe no Kafuka [Kafka on the Shore]*. Shinchōsha.

Rowling, J. K. (1999). *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*. Bloomsbury Children's.

Rubin, J., & Kuroyanagi, K. (2006). *Haruki Murakami to Kotoba No Ongaku [Haruki Murakami and the Music of Words]*. Shinchōsha.

Rubin, J. (2016). *Murakami Haruki to Watakushi: Nihon No Bungaku to Bunka Ni Kokoro o Ubawareta Riyu [Murakami Haruki and I: The Reason Why My Heart was Stolen by Japanese Literature and Culture]*. Toyokeizai-shinposha.

Shibata, M. et al. (2006). *Sekai Wa Murakami Haruki o Dō Yomuka = A Wild Haruki Chase [How Does the World Read Murakami Haruki = A Wild Haruki Chase]*. Bungei Shunjū.

Strecher, M. C. (1998). Beyond 'pure' literature: Mimesis, formula, and the postmodern in the fiction of Murakami Haruki. *The Journal of Asian Studies, 57*(2), 354–378. www.jstor.org/stable/2658828.

Strecher, M. (2014). *The forbidden worlds of Haruki Murakami*. University of Minnesota Press.

Suter, R. (2011). *The Japanization of modernity: Murakami Haruki between Japan and the United States*. Harvard University Asia Center.

Takagi, C. (2009). *From postmodern to post Bildungsroman from the ashes: An alternative reading of Murakami Haruki and postwar Japanese culture*. [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Uchida, Y. (2012). The weavers of myths and histories: On Haruki Murakami's '1Q84'. *Tamkang Japanese Journal,* 3-28. https://doi.org/10.29714/TKJJ.201212.0002.

Yamagishizumu Shakai Jikkennchi. *Yamagishism Jikkennchi Official Homepage*, www.yamagishi.or.jp/

About the author: **Sarara Momokawa** teaches at Kyorin University and Kunitachi College of Music and is a doctoral candidate at Waseda University in the Graduate School of International Culture and Communication.

Call for manuscripts: Our review process is ongoing, so prospective authors are encouraged to submit any and all manuscripts for consideration. Manuscripts are vetted with a double blind-review process. Please submit manuscripts using the submission link on the OTB Publications webpage or as an email attachments to **editor@otbforum.net**