

# Haruki Murakami

*Haruki Murakami: Storytelling and Productive Distance* studies the evolution of the *monogatari* or narrative and storytelling in the works of Haruki Murakami. Author Chikako Nihei argues that Murakami's power of *monogatari* lies in his use of distancing effects; storytelling allows individuals to "cross" into a different context, through which they can effectively observe themselves and reality. His belief in the importance of *monogatari* is closely linked to his generation's experience of the counterculture movement in the late 1960s and his research on the 1995 Tokyo sarin gas attack caused by the *Aum shinrikyō* cult, and major events in post-war Japan that revealed many people's desire for a stable narrative to interact with and form their identity from.

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Storytelling and Productive Distance  
*Chikako Nihei*

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## Storytelling and Productive Distance

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First published 2019  
by Routledge  
52 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York, NY 10017

and by Routledge  
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an  
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*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

Names: Nihei, Chikako, author.

Title: Haruki Murakami : storytelling and productive distance /  
Chikako Nihei.

Description: New York, NY : Routledge, 2019. |

Series: Routledge studies in contemporary literature ; 31 |

Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2019009066 | ISBN 9780367256418  
(hardback)

Subjects: LCSH: Murakami, Haruki, 1949—Criticism and  
interpretation. | Storytelling. | Narration (Rhetoric)

Classification: LCC PL856.U673 Z835 2019 |

DDC 895.63/5—dc23

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2019009066>

ISBN: 978-0-367-25641-8 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-0-367-26665-3 (ebk)

Typeset in Sabon  
by codeMantra

**For my parents**



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# Acknowledgements

The research on which this book is based took its first form in my 2013 PhD thesis, entitled *Storytelling and Productive Distance: Representations of Otherness in Murakami Haruki*. I wish to thank various people for their contributions to this project. My deepest gratitude goes to Associate Professor Rebecca Suter, my PhD supervisor at the University of Sydney. I am proud from the bottom of my heart to be her first doctoral student. For professional and institutional support, Dr. Olivier Ansart, Dr. Lionel Babicz, Professor Matsui Sakuko, Professor Yasuko Claremont, Associate Professor Romit Dasgupta, and Professor Motoyuki Shibata. For writing support, Jeffrey Luz-Alterman. For friendship and emotional support, Dr. Katsuhiko Suganuma, Dr. Andrew Houwen, Dr. Gitte Marianne Hansen, Keisuke Hayashi, and Cabby Vial. I would also like to send my special thanks to Professor Matthew Carl Strecher, who has always given me encouraging comments about my research and constantly pushed me to make the thesis into a book. Finally, I am very grateful for my parents' constant support and help throughout my study and career.



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# 1 Introduction

Murakami Haruki is one of the most renowned Japanese authors in the world today. His work has been translated into more than 50 languages. There has been a boom in Murakami Haruki studies and there are entire conferences, both domestic and overseas, devoted to him. “Murakami Haruki” is also a popular subject for university courses both inside and outside Japan.

The purpose of this monograph is to analyse the evolution of what Murakami describes as the power of *monogatari*, which I translate as “storytelling” or “narrative,” both in Murakami Haruki’s works and in his career. I argue that Murakami’s power of *monogatari* lies in his use of distancing effects, whereby individuals cross into a different context, through which they can effectively observe themselves and reality. The distancing effects I examine in this book can be compared to Viktor Shklovsky’s theory of defamiliarisation in “Art as Technique.” According to Shklovsky, “[i]f we start to examine the general laws of perception, we see that as perception becomes habitual, it becomes automatic. Thus, for example, all of our habits retreat into the area of the unconsciously automatic” (Newton, 1997: 3–4). Shklovsky argues that automated perception can be defamiliarised through art: “[t]he technique of art is to make objects ‘unfamiliar’” (ibid.: 4), which encourages the reader to question their familiar perception and recognise problems that can be obvious from other perspectives. These distancing effects can be demonstrated in a variety of ways through an analysis of Murakami’s writing and his career. As will be discussed throughout the book, its effects result in expanding one’s perspectives, and this helps deal with his/her mental difficulties and build subjectivity.

Japanese novelist Maruya Saiichi had already described Murakami’s emergence as “an event” for Japanese literature (Maruya, 1979: 118) when the author won his first literary prize in 1979 for his first novel *Kaze no uta o kike* (*Hear the Wind Sing*); indeed, in the following years, Murakami turned out to be the most popular and most controversial contemporary writer in Japan. What is often regarded as problematic, especially among Japanese intellectuals, is his wilful distancing from Japan, Japanese culture, Japanese literature, and Japanese language. The lack of apparently

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“Japanese” elements in his work, his frequent reference to Euro-American cultural products and literature, his use of what they call “translationese” language projected his image as a “not-very authentically Japanese” author. On the other hand, the act of distancing from Japan constitutes an essential element of his work, considering the author’s prolific translation of American novels and its impact on the formation of his language. The theme of distancing is equally seen in his characters, who are often problematically described as detached, passive, and apathetic. Yet, it is this style of personality that supports the popularity of Murakami’s novels both inside and outside Japan.

The significant popularity of Murakami’s work, for example, takes shape in the emergence of dedicated sections in bookstores for publications by and about Murakami Haruki. Today, large bookstores in Japan usually have a corner dedicated to Murakami’s novels, his translation works, and publications of “Murakami Haruki Studies.” Many of them are guidebooks of Murakami’s stories, which outline the plot of each and briefly explain themes that commonly appear in his work. Critic Yomota Inuhiko aptly summarised the state of Murakami’s popularity when he stated, “I was even kindly advised by a publisher to write a book about Haruki because it would definitely sell” (Shibata et al., 2006: 250). Murakami is now also a common topic at universities and postgraduate theses both inside and outside Japan.

With his achievement of international publicity, the so-called “Murakami Haruki phenomenon” is no longer a domestic event but has made its way into an international space. Murakami’s novels have been translated into over 50 languages, and he has received a number of international literary prizes. He is now a regular face among novelists who are mentioned as possible recipients of the Nobel Prize in literature.

Following the growth of Murakami’s international fame, critical attention has increasingly focused on the reasons for his popularity. Shibata Motoyuki, a translator and scholar who has published books on translation with Murakami, points out that Japanese critics tend to pay less attention to Murakami’s texts than to his phenomenal popularity:

[...] writings about Murakami found in Japan on the whole have been losing their liveliness for quite some time. When Murakami first appeared, people mainly discussed why his stories were interesting or not, based on the critics’ personal interpretation. But, probably since the large success of *Norwegian Wood*, “why Murakami Haruki’s novels sell so well” has become a common topic, and at times the merits of his works are simply taken for granted. In any case, it seems that individual readers’ interpretations [of his texts] have been disregarded.

(Shibata et al., 2006: 231)

Shibata says he rather enjoys reviews written in English-speaking countries in which the pleasure of reading Murakami's novels continues to be expressed.

The "Murakami Haruki phenomenon" is also a popular topic among scholars outside Japan. Similar to Japanese intellectuals, they tend to focus on Murakami's un-Japaneseness, concentrating, for example, on his frequent references to Western culture. They also emphasise the postmodern elements of his work, focusing on the chaotic structure of the world he describes. When it comes to his international success, attention is commonly paid to individual components of his work such as his language, his use of particular cultural elements, and his employment of postmodern frameworks. In other cases, his popularity is taken as an effect of globalisation that homogenises cultures. These focuses are by no means illegitimate. However, as Shibata points out, the more the attention to Murakami's international success grows, the less carefully his texts are treated as stories.

In recent years, Murakami has produced journal essays and given public speeches, where he emphasises his role as a storyteller and the power of *monogatari*. He began to speak about the power of *monogatari* more clearly after the 1995 Tokyo subway sarin gas attack, the first terrorist attack that Japan had experienced since the Second World War, resulting in 13 dead and nearly 6,000 injuries. On 20 March 1995, during the morning rush hour, five members of *Aum shinrikyō* released sarin gas on three lines of the Tokyo subway system passing through Kasumigaseki Station, near the Japanese parliament, aiming to "purify" Japanese society. That Asahara's followers were students at and graduates from elite universities was particularly shocking to the public. Murakami interviewed the survivors of the gas attack as well as members of the *Aum*, and published the interviews, respectively, in *Underground* (*Andōguraundo*, 1997) and in *The Place That Was Promised, Underground 2* (*Yakusokusareta basho de: Andōguraundo 2*, 1998). Through his interviews and research on *Aum*, Murakami learned that it was the cult leader Asahara Shōkō's powerful *monogatari* that established his "kingdom" and led to the terrorist attack. No matter how much "junk" Asahara's *monogatari* contained, Asahara's establishment of his kingdom and the cult's eventual turn to terrorism demonstrated the critical lack of a meaningful narrative in contemporary society.

Murakami associates the lack of narrative mainly with the collapse of the Cold War system (Ozawa, 2011), which could also be understood through Jean-Francois Lyotard's discussion about the demise of grand narratives, where society or politics can no longer provide citizens with a clear system of value judgments. In such a society, people struggle to find a stable narrative on which to rely. According to Murakami's illustration,

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People cannot live long without *monogatari*. *Monogatari* helps you transcend the logical system—or the systematic logic—that restricts your life. It is a secret key and a safety belt. *Monogatari* is certainly a story. The story is neither logic nor ethics nor philosophy. It is a dream you are constantly in.

(Murakami, 1999: 750)

In a society that fails to provide a stable narrative, individuals are required to make their own decisions according to their own value system, which is by no means easy. Asahara provided his followers with a comfortable *monogatari*. In this sense, Murakami denies the view that the followers were purely victims who were brainwashed by Asahara, because to some extent “they wanted to be controlled by Asahara” to be released from the burdens of seeking their own *monogatari* (ibid.: 749). In return, Murakami says, they offered their ego to him. Without their ego, they lost the ability to create their own *monogatari* and as a consequence, became dependent on Asahara’s narrative. In this way, the case of *Aum* thus demonstrates the dark power of *monogatari*, which lends itself to forming a terrorist group. Murakami emphasises the effects of crossing through *monogatari* first and foremost in the sense that it allows individuals to observe themselves and society from multiple perspectives, which he believes helps them establish autonomy and prevents them from being exploited by what he calls “the System,” a power structure that capitalises on individuals.

I choose to focus on Murakami’s emphasis on the power of *monogatari* because the consideration of his belief in *monogatari* also provides a better understanding of his international success. While his popularity in the international arena is often associated with his “un-Japanese” stories and his references to Western cultural products, a close analysis shows that when readers, regardless of their background, enjoy his stories, they focus on the *monogatari* rather than his writing style.

On the other hand, Murakami’s “un-Japaneseness” and his peculiar representation of cultural elements constitute a salient feature of his stories. He tries to explore the effects caused by the act of crossing cultures and languages, which are different from conventional ways such as post-colonial frameworks, in which one’s contact with a different culture is commonly examined based on the idea of cultural hierarchy. This discussion further suggests an important connection between Murakami and modern Japanese writers in terms of their reliance on cross-cultural effects. I propose to situate Murakami within the context of Japanese literature because their similarities and differences more effectively demonstrate the author’s skilful employment of his peculiar position between Japan and the cultural Other.

Thus, I investigate the similar, productive effects of crossing both on the individual level and on the cultural level. For this purpose, I consider

the mutual influence on Murakami's stories from his own cross-cultural experience. While his contact with the cultural Other is usually associated with his "un-Japanese" writing style, I instead analyse the impact of his own experience of crossing cultures on the way his characters are exposed to similar effects through *monogatari*.

As I discuss in the second chapter, one of Murakami's aims in his writing is to create readable novels to bring people's attention back to literature in the face of its generalised demise. Interestingly, such readability applies only to the author's language, but not to his stories. His stories are usually complicated by a number of mysterious metaphors, and readers often struggle to grasp their meanings. Arguably the novels' readability creates the illusion that readable writing does not require much effort to understand; at the same time, the stories themselves prove to be complicated. Significantly, when Murakami lectured on Japanese post-war literature at Princeton University and Tufts University in the early 1990s, he advised his students to read a text as many times as possible for analysis (Murakami, 1997: 239). Murakami's advice for reading literature is rather basic, yet it is something we should keep in mind when we reflect on the "Murakami Haruki phenomenon."

I would also like to draw attention to Murakami's prolificacy, not only in his fictional works but also in his interviews and essays. While Murakami often provides the impression that he evades questions from interviewers or makes comments seemingly irrelevant to his works, a close analysis in this book will demonstrate that he is rather willing to share his thoughts about his novels honestly. I by no means intend to say that the author is the one who knows his works best. Murakami refuses to limit the interpretation of his stories to his own but stresses that once the work is released, its interpretation relies on the reader. On the other hand, his frequent visibility in the media and willingness to speak about his work is worth noticing. Nevertheless, despite his willingness to provide readers with his thoughts, intellectuals often attempt to discuss the author's novels by heavily relying on external contexts and theories and end up disconnecting the discussion from the author's original works, which I regard as one of the problems in the existing studies of Murakami Haruki. In order to take account of the author's intention, I aim at conducting a textual analysis of Murakami's fiction by reflecting on as much material of his own as possible. Through this, I try to stress the reciprocity of his fiction and nonfiction. As I propose throughout the book, the primary role of *monogatari* is to help the reader to expand perspectives to observe an object for a deeper understanding. I hope that my study of Murakami Haruki will help the reader understand his work from multiple viewpoints. Furthermore, reviewing a broad range of material in both Japanese and English, my approach seeks to bridge the study of Murakami Haruki in the two languages. Although a number of

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studies have been done in other languages, due to my language competency, I focus on the material in Japanese and English.

In this book, I examine the productivity of distancing that appears in Murakami's use of the function of *monogatari*. Following this introduction, Chapter 2 discusses how the author promotes the notion of the "power of *monogatari*" and uses this to illuminate the critical reception of his works, particularly the polarisation of critics' and readers' reactions. In Chapter 3, based on Murakami's early works, I examine how his protagonists' wilful distancing from others is related to the author's long-term struggle to write and his thorough reflection on the function of writing as engagement. In Chapter 4, focusing on *Norwegian Wood* (*Noruei no mori*, 1987), I discuss the author's peculiar idea of the realist novel in contrast with the Japanese realistic tradition, and demonstrate how the effects of distancing are paradoxically portrayed through the protagonist's failure to rely on the function of narrating. In Chapter 5, using *Kafka on the Shore* (*Umibe no Kafuka*, 2002), I delve into Murakami's emphasis on the use of metaphor as a device to build distance through *monogatari*. In Chapter 6, shifting attention from Murakami's storytelling to his language experiments and his activity as a translator, I discuss how he tries to explore the effects of crossing different cultures and languages.

As I explain in the concluding chapter, Murakami's established belief in the power of *monogatari* is addressed more directly in his magnum opus *1Q84* (2009–10). However, this connection to Murakami's previous works has been little studied. Murakami instead stresses the importance of considering the process of the evolution of his works: "the works I've written so far are all separate and independent texts, but the sequence—or the flow—of one text to another is rather meaningful" (Yukawa and Koyama, 2003: 17). For this reason, while I do discuss *1Q84* in my concluding remarks, I focus instead on the rest of his corpus of works, in order to trace the history of the author's long-term deliberation on storytelling and productive distancing, and to elucidate the complex and often convoluted process through which these developments took place. The book concludes with a brief discussion about *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage* (*Shikisai o motanai Tazaki Tsukuru to kareno junrei no toshi*, 2013) and *Killing Commendatore* (*Kishidanchō goroshi*, 2017), the two novels Murakami published after the 2011 disasters in northeastern Japan.

As a note to readers, names of Japanese writers and scholars are written in the Japanese order – family name followed by given name – unless they have published in English. I have used my own translation for Murakami's works, although many of them have been translated into English. My translations are closer to the originals to the extent that they may sound unnatural in English. I avoided using the published versions because the translators occasionally place priority on the natural flow of



the English rather than the reproduction of meaning from the original. However, I do not mean to challenge the translators' professional work. My intention is to discuss Murakami's attempt to elucidate the power of *monogatari* in the original versions, which may be less clearly reproduced in the translated versions. In Chapter 6, however, I draw attention to his translators' significant contributions to promoting his work on the international market through their clever and creative translations.

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## Notes

- 1 Murakami also suggests the operation of relativisation through a "three-way discussion." He says when he writes a novel he imagines the presence of a third person (or an eel, just because he likes eels) between him and the reader. The "eel" is, he says, a sort of alter ego that is shared by both the writer and the reader and through which he keeps some space between himself and the reader, which requires the reader not to rely on the author for the understanding of his work but to think on his/her own (Shibata, 2004: 278–9).
- 2 Here, Murakami is not equating a religion and *Aum*. His disapproval of *Aum* as a religion is constantly expressed in his research of *Aum*.
- 1 The story was first released in the magazine *Takarajima* in 1982.
- 1 The variation is limited even within the *kanji* choice. The *kanji* 哀しい is used for *kanashii* instead of the counterpart 悲しい. 哀しい has an implication of the inability to express one's sadness and pain when verbalising feelings. As for *sabishii*, 淋しい is used instead of 寂しい, which has a connotation of loneliness epitomised in a scene where water quietly and constantly drops from the leaves of trees; this also corresponds to the rainy weather often associated with Naoko.
- 2 Similarly, Naoko describes her feeling as *konran* (Murakami, 2007b: 15, 34, 339) and her parents feel *konran* about her ending up in the sanatorium (ibid.: 131). Midori complains about those who are "confused" about her verbal and behavioural deviations from what people think is normal and about the fact that they blame her for her behaviour (ibid.: 258). Midori eventually falls in love with Watanabe, although she has a boyfriend, and expresses her feeling as "confusion" (ibid.: 374). Watanabe employs *konran* to describe his trouble fitting back into his daily life in Tokyo after staying a couple of days in the peaceful and quiet environment of the sanatorium (ibid.: 241). He writes to Reiko about his being in love with Midori and uses the word *konran* to describe his sense of guilt about his change of heart towards Naoko. In Jay Rubin's English translation, on the other hand, the language use is more varied. *Tsurai* in the original text is translated as "in pain," "painful," "to hurt," "hard," "horrible," and "bad"; *Kanashii* by comparison is translated as "sad," "sorrow," and "blue"; *sabishii* as "sad," "lonely," and "to miss"; and *konran* as "shudder," "to hit," "upset," "mixed up," and "confused" (Murakami, 2000).
- 3 Contrary to the author's deliberate avoidance of psychological vocabulary, the novel is usually read sentimentally by its readers. The recent movie adaptation by Tran Anh Hung, *Norwegian Wood* (2010), too, strongly encourages the audience to be touched by the subject of the heroine's mental suffering.
- 4 Other examples of the use of "100%" include Watanabe's roommate called Storm Trooper, who is 100% indifferent to politics, Reiko lets her students play the piano 100% freely, and Kizuki plays a 100% good shot of billiards before he kills himself (Katō, 1997: 115).
- 5 In terms of the ending, Midori in the movie *Norwegian Wood* receives Watanabe's phone call and has an obvious smile on her face. This facilitates the audience's interpretation that she is happy to accept him. In this sense, the movie disregards the productive ambiguity of the original novel.

- 1 Tokō Kōji (2007: 131) explains that Japanese critics' reaction was not much as it was expected because of their concentrated interest in colonial history of Japan.
- 2 Murakami explains that the novel is not about a parallel world like *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*, in which two stories embody reality and fantasy, respectively. Rather, in *Kafka on the Shore*, the two plots happen independently on the same level of reality (Yukawa and Koyama, 2003: 12).
- 3 Ōshima is socially recognised as female. However, without breast development or menstruation, she describes her body as neither male nor female (Murakami, 2007a: 382).
- 4 Saitō Tamaki, appreciating Murakami's use of metaphor as a characteristic that differentiates him from other Japanese writers, explains that despite his characters' apathetic attitude in a world where communication has failed and reluctance to relate to others has become pervasive, he is not an escapist because he "constantly attempts to bridge disconnected worlds through metaphor and stakes his creativity on the desperate attempt" (Saitō, 2000: 66).
- 5 Murakami explains the effective use of metaphor in novels by referring to Raymond Chandler's novels:

There is a sentence in a novel by Chandler: "the room was suddenly full of heavy silence, like a fallen cake." It's a simple metaphor, but readers straightaway grasp, almost visually, what sort of silence it is. If you try to explain this without a metaphor, it would be tedious, and readers wouldn't be patient with such an operation. In this sense, metaphors should work visually, and therefore descriptions have to be short and function visually. More importantly, metaphors should come from the author's kindness for readers; they should help liberate readers from the state of endurance. And readers' patience should be reserved for more important descriptions.

(Ozawa, 2011: 16)

Murakami explains that metaphor is an effective device to direct readers' attention to important scenes and to make the novel more enjoyable. This reflects his concern about his works' accessibility to readers, as I explained in Chapter 2.

- 6 Murakami's reference to feminists needs a careful treatment as his description of women, who are passive, often disappear, get killed, or made silent, has been seen as problematic. In this scene, although the author's intention seems to criticise a lack of imagination, his choice of feminists for this purpose leaves a question to the reader.
- 7 Interestingly, Murakami describes a similar scene while explaining the act of writing a novel a decade earlier in *Distant Drums*:

writing a long novel is a special action for me. [...] It is like going into forests completely alone, without a map, a compass, or any food. Overgrown bushes tower like a wall, and enormous branches that lie on top of each other cover up the sky.

(Murakami, 2001: 242)

- 8 Similarly, Murakami argues for the power of memory in dealing with history. Through his research on the Nomonhan incident during World War Two and visiting the site of the incident in Mongolia, Murakami is shocked by the meaningless battle fought by the Japanese army. He says that all he can do as a Japanese person is "not to forget. There is probably nothing I could do besides that" (Murakami, 2008: 190).
- 9 In the published English version, Philip Gabriel, in order to carry over Nakata's peculiar use of *katakana*, translates "theory of finance" as "theory of fine ants," "Department chief" as "depart mint chief," and "Ministry of trade and industry" (MITI) as "minis tree of trade and indus tree" (Murakami, 2006: 48).

- 1 Karatani's discussion of Murakami's attempt to subvert conventional values is rather negative, equating Murakami's characters' focus on their own values with their absolute refusal to concede to the social system, and calls such an attitude "romantic irony" (1995: 106). This can be subverted by Murakami's actual negotiation with distancing rather than mere avoidance, as is discussed throughout the chapter.
- 2 The influence of Japanese translations of European and English sentences on Japanese sentence structure includes the increase in the use of personal/impersonal pronouns, inanimate subjects, plural forms of nouns, anastrophe, and relative clauses. For example, the frequent appearance of relative clauses in European and English languages makes Japanese sentences longer. This tendency is also instrumental in increasing the use of the case particle "wa," which subverts the conventional frequency of "ga" over "wa" (Mizuno, 2007: 32). Futabatei's use of the copula *de aru* ("to be"), borrowed from Russian syntax, has also become a common feature of written style today (Levy, 2006: 39).
- 3 The title of Murakami's first novel *Hear the Wind Sing* derives from "Think of nothing things. Think of wind," a passage from "Shut a Final Door," a short story of Truman Capote, another favourite author of Murakami (Inoue, 1999: 210; Yukawa and Koyama, 2003: 40).
- 4 Murakami also compares himself with Raymond Carver in terms of their experience of working as blue-collar workers and its salient contribution to their literary works (Murakami, 2004: 194–5).
- 5 In the Japanese language, traditionally the interrogative form is not marked with a question mark but with an end of sentence particle such as *ka* or *no*. However, in recent years, a question mark is commonly used in informal speech where the question is given by intonation without an ending particle, as is seen in Tengo's speech. Fuka-Eri's speech that does not take the ending particle does not make sense without a question mark. On the other hand, considering that the question mark is a foreign import, the informal question form without a particle is constituted by the foreign element. The peculiar yet salient role of the question mark is thus implied through its absence, in a similar way that the absence of Japanese cultural elements in Murakami's works provides the stories with a strong shadow of the missing objects.
- 6 Murakami makes use of the special effects in the Japanese language also by putting meaningful connotations on the choice of the first person pronouns and appellation. While Murakami's protagonist almost always addresses himself with the first-person male pronoun *boku*, in *Hard-boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* one of the narrators of the parallel stories calls himself *watashi*, a more formal first-person than *boku*. The two narrators eventually turn out to be the same character; *watashi* represents his voice in reality and *boku* in his mind. Yet, the use of *watashi* and *boku* effectively differentiates their voices and characters and the atmosphere of the two narrating spaces. In his English translation of the novel, Alfred Birnbaum employs different tenses for the two narrators in order to tell them apart, as a sign of his acknowledgement of the salient effect in the original text.

Asimilar case in which the choice of appellation has an effective function can be seen in "Kaerukun, Tōkyō o sukuu" ("Superfrog Saves Tokyo"), a short story issued in *Kami no kodomotachi wa mina odoru* (*All God's Children Can Dance*, 2000a). The protagonist Katagiri meets a gigantic frog and the frog asks to be called "kaeru-kun," but Katagiri would not reduce his politeness to the frog and keeps calling him "kaeru-san." They both would not give up their attitude and repeat the same words. The frog's rejection of Katagiri's politeness and Katagiri's hesitation to reduce his distance from his interlocutor are effectively explained by the choice of *kun* and *san*, which is again another difficult nuance to translate into other languages (see Suter, 2008).

- 7 While translators into English and European languages have trouble keeping the foreignness of Murakami's texts in their translations, translators into Asian languages have a different type of problem. Taiwanese translator Lai Ming Zhu explains that the Western cultural products that appear in Murakami's novels are difficult to translate when the country is not as Westernised as Japan and the readers are not familiar with these products, yet. A harder situation is that those *katakana* words are spelled out in Japanese pronunciation, and therefore the translator has to first identify the original English or European words and then look up their meanings. Lai includes some notes for words that are supposed to be unfamiliar to her readers in her translations. For example, for the translation of "Cafe au lait" that a character drinks in *Norwegian Wood*, as "珈琲欧蕾 (Cafe au lait 鮮奶和珈琲各半的大杯法式早餐珈琲)" (Shibata et al., 2006: 9). This example is indicative of further variation in the presentation of Murakami's *katakana* words.
- 8 In his translation of "Rēdāhōsen," Alfred Birnbaum misreads "komi" (including) as "gomi" (garbage), and translates the part that originally means "Mother abandoned Father including me without telling us anything" as "And yet here was Mother throwing me out with Father, like so much garbage." In his retranslated version of the same story, Murakami translates it as in Birnbaum's translation by rendering "garbage" as "(nama) gomi" (Engetsu, 2010: 610).
- 9 The theme of suicide also appears in *A Pale View of Hills*, in which the Japanese female protagonist, after getting divorced from her Japanese husband, goes to England with her daughter to live with her (second) British husband. She is traumatised by her daughter's suicide. In the novel, Ishiguro satirises Western readers' easy association between Japanese and suicide by describing the narrator questioning English journalists, who conclude that her daughter's suicide was driven by her Japanese nature. In the same novel, the protagonist becomes frustrated also by her British husband's attempt to pigeonhole her dead daughter's personality into Western stereotypes of Japan (Nosaki, 2008: 100).
- 10 For example, for the Japanese translation of *A Pale View of Hills*, Ishiguro requested his translator to spell his Japanese characters' names in *katakana* rather than *kanji*. In this way, Ishiguro tries to avoid the symbolic resonance of *kanji*, which is "inherently allusive," since "each carr[ies] particular symbolic or historical tones" (Shibata and Sugano, 2009: 25–6). Ishiguro also tries to maintain foreignness in the novel to disconnect his work from other novels set in Japan. Another example appears in the translation of *An Artist of the Floating World*. The novel is history-based, dealing with Japan's war memory and responsibility for the militarism of the 1930s and early 1940s. In order to reduce historical connotations that would anger some Japanese readers, Ishiguro asked his Japanese translator to change the parts that allude to the Emperor to a mayor and to make some revisions to suppress the militarist implications (ibid.: 29–30).
- 1 In this novel, Murakami's playful employment of *katakana* is outstanding. He spells words such as *reshiva*, *pashiva*, and *douta* based on the English pronunciation, yet they are modified from the way they are usually pronounced in Japanese; "receiver," "perceiver," and "daughter" are commonly spelled, respectively, as "reshivā," "pashivā" and "dōtā." Considering the significant role of the estrangement effects in the novel, I use the Japanese spelling of these terms in this chapter.