
Beyond the Veil: Unravelling the Spectral Resonances of Trauma in Murakami's *Kafka on the Shore*

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Abstract

This study underscores the psychological exploration of hauntology in Murakami's novel *Kafka on the Shore*. The objective of this research is to mirror the spectral reverberation of trauma that refuses to remain buried silently. Moreover, by following the theoretical frameworks of hauntology and Psychoanalysis, this study situates the novel within mystical realms where unheard echoes and traumas contribute to shaping one's personality. This study employs qualitative analysis incorporating close reading and thematic interpretation. Aforementioned, approach allows for profound comprehension of ways in which Murakami's novel reevokes haunting space, thus echoing the unheard and unseen. Through revealing spectral undertones, this study justifies the narrative power as a dual force for illuminating the hidden recesses of human persona. Though this study paves the way to unravel the spectral essences underlying human psyche, however, the prospect of more compelling research in this direction is undeniable.

Keywords: Spectral resonances, Psychoanalysis, Trauma, Hauntology, Trace, Temporality.

Introduction

Whether covertly or overtly literary texts are probed with multilayered narratives that provide a fertile ground for deeper understanding of different philosophical constructs. However, this study underlies psychological exploration of hauntology. It executes a ritualistic purging not by undoing the ghostly presence but by becoming a conduit for their voice, thereby incorporating them into delicate tapestry of life. Correspondingly, the threshold between past

and present stays intact instead of being dismantled. Derrida introduces the concept of spectrality and examines Marx's specter politically and philosophically. The bygone infiltrates the future nevertheless, and that is what Derrida says is "specter" (Derrida, 1993, p.02).

Kafka on the Shore is a world renowned novel due to its intricate blurring of the lines between fact and tall tales, reality and reverie. It confronts the traditional notion of ontology by questioning the paradoxical state of human entities. Meanwhile, the novel follows the story of two parallel yet opposite worlds, involving fifteen year's old Kafka Tamura and elderly Nakata. Their haunting stems not from the ontological disability but from the trauma that refuses to stay quiet. This ontological gap caused by trauma is the core testament of their spectral imprints. Therefore, the journey beyond the veil is basically the deeper understanding of false truths that shape our existence. This study is a towering testament to how literature gives voice to unheard, allowing ghostly echoes to persist through inner voids.

This study embarks on an exploration of the psychological extension of hauntology as a theoretical framework rather than other philosophical tenets. It does not extend to a comprehensive analysis of all characters, nor does it explore other works by the same author. Furthermore, the research is limited to only literary analysis, not to provide empirical data collection. The author's cultural, historical, and biographical contexts are considered only insofar as they illuminate the primary focus on the selected text. Lastly, the subjective nature of the analysis also introduces potential biases in the interpretation of the text.

Literature Review

Many literary studies have been conducted so far to offer an in-depth analysis of Murakami's novel *Kafka on the Shore* from various perspectives. It has grabbed academic attention, with various researchers examining it by applying their own lenses to interpret it. The sole purpose of this study is to critically examine the pre-existing works related to *Kafka on the Shore* and to figure out the promising gap that helps to demonstrate how this study advances in the field. In this section, the already existing literature will be reviewed critically and topically. Comparing chalk and cheese in various sources will offer an engaging and promising study. At the end of this study, a comprehensive elaboration wraps up the review of literature.

Yeung, in one of her remarkable articles, analyzes the novel's complex narrative against the backdrop of temporality. To study the temporality that is prevailing in the novel he combines French structuralist Gérard Genette's and Gary Saul Morson's narrative theories with novel's complex tapestry. She further states how Murakami's use of anachronic disrupts the chronological order of time, thus making it a great masterpiece of the temporality. Yeung further draws attention to the fact that Murakami not only uses the concept of time as a narrative approach that unfolds the story but also as a philosophical concept that shapes character's experiences and reader's interpretation (Yeung, 2016, pp.145-160).

Orgad pens about the conventional Japanese aesthetics of wabi Sabi that challenges the western psychological frameworks. Instead of considering family secrets as a threat in the name of family, Wabi Sabi reconsiders it as a defensive approach for mental growth and harmony, thereby providing an alternative path. This secrecy, apart from being considered a defense mechanism, can also act as a moral quagmire for individuals by restricting their identity formation, positing it as a threat to narcissism. He also highlights the role of melancholy and absence (object petit a), symmetry, and asymmetry in shaping individual identity through the character of Miss Saeki and Kafka (Orgad, 2016, pp.52-73).

Cruz in his famous article pens the importance of focusing on rich tapestry of intertextuality that helps the reader to comprehend and analyze the text in a broader way. Instead of re-interpreting the modern western texts, Murakami's novel provides a new path to discuss the issues of Japanese society and culture in association with other cultures, art, and literature. According to him, Murakami's novel is an excellent amalgamation of surrealism with magical realism that invites readers across the globe to engage with its excellency by making it a thought provoking and nostalgic work (Cruz, 2018, pp.569-581).

According to Khurana and Thakur, literary studies are replete with the concept of otherness in broader framework of postcolonial studies, but this study focuses on the concept of 'odd' and 'other' in terms of magical realism. He pens how the use of magical realm invites the global readers to pay attention to the character development, identity, and growth of those peoples whose voices are unheard in the society they lived in. They further argue that this ostracism does not provide a pessimistic view but an optimistic view of their strength and independence. They exist on the edge of society, but their otherness does not confine them,

rather giving them a force to accept themselves and assert their agency (Khurana & Thakur, 2020, pp. 1-6).

Furthermore, Putri explores women objectification by applying gender studies as a literary approach. Putri represents Judith Butler's perspective on female performativity by stating that gender is socio-culturally constructed rather than natural biological drives. She pens that the novel, despite its worldly acknowledgment, perpetuates patriarchal beliefs. According to her women are considered as a mere commodity, used by men to achieve their goals. Moreover, she also highlights the fact that how women are considered as mythical creature rather than normal human being, embodying goddess problem. This highlights the relation of feminist literary criticism about Madonna dichotomy and woman characterization as mystical others (Putri, 2021, pp.1-30).

Krahn, in one of his scholarly articles, "Ontology on the Shore" examines the narrative confusion, chaos and ambiguity created by the blending of first-person narration and third person narration. Moreover, the open-ended interpretation of the novel challenges the ordinary way of thinking by offering a new realm of the world. According to him, metaphysical elements are used as a secret figure in order to solve unresolved conflicts which leads to multiple questions in the mind that cause existential crisis. Murakami's 'other world' depicted as a 'shared space' which has open assessment to any character of this novel (Krahn, 2021, pp.99-114).

Bala and Navaneethamani state that post war Japan is associated with an umbrella term "Cool Japan" by the local government to popularize its pop culture globally. It also marks a striking shift in power dynamics as a means of exerting influence among readers. The further focus is drawn on the notion of infantile capitalism, a term used by Asada Akria where the emphasis is on profit and exploitation rather than subjectivity or social wellbeing. Infantile capitalism pictures modern day Japan, that comes to terms at a cost from psychological to political. This duality fosters Japan as both playful utopia and dystopia for both children and adults (Bala & Navaneethamani, 2023, pp.48-55).

Flenninacia and Shalini offer an engaging analysis of magical realist elements, thereby investigating how Murakami blends surrealism with magical elements to create a thought-provoking narrative. They employ close textual analysis as their primary methodology to

interpret and explain those events and points that contribute to the study of magical realism. Magical realism is a literary technique which is used to blur the lines between reality and fantasy. It challenges individual perception by emphasizing how they perceive reality. They start the study by examining the historical background of magical realism that finds its roots back in 1920's German painting and how it influences Murakami narrative style (Flenninacia & Shalini, 2024, pp.69-72).

Sinha examines the promising features of postmodern theory such as existential crisis, intertextuality and hyper-reality that defies the conventional notions about history being unbiased and linear narrative structure of text. Murakami's ability to apply such postmodern features into his remarkable works makes him a standout in the Japanese literary era. Correspondingly, Sinha examines different literary works of Murakami to pen her arguments. This study aims to analyze literary works of Murakami that challenge the perceptions of the human mind, by blurring the lines between original and fake realities, existential crisis, and capitalism (Sinha, 2024, pp.329-344).

Concisely, this research provides a detailed analysis and thorough understanding of the novel by applying different lenses. But still there is a notable gap of unraveling the spectral trauma through hauntological lens. This promising gap compels to reconsider and rediscover ghostly remnants persisting throughout the novel not only as a medium of force but as a literal manifestation of what Derrida describes as specter. By means of this duality, we can unravel how spectral traces contribute to unveiling the undeniable forces of the past.

Theoretical Framework

In literary studies, various critical approaches help scholars to provide a fertile ground for exploring deeper meanings residing in the text. By dint of this Derrida's concept of specter and Freud's psychoanalysis offer an engaging dimension for the exploration of unseen and silent narrative. Derrida introduces the concept of specter in one of his remarkable books, *Specter of Marx*. It reflects how the past continues to exert its influence in the present, not as a physical manifestation but as a ghostly echo. Correspondingly, it challenges the traditional concept of linearity of time, emphasizing the role of trace and difference in shaping overall meanings.

Similarly, Freud's psychoanalysis revolves around what is hidden and repressed in the unconscious. It foreshadows the core issues by becoming an active participant, thereby reflecting the breakdown of defence mechanisms. According to him, when a person fails to recall those dormant memories, they often reappear through reiteration. Hence, both frameworks center around the themes of return and recurrence. Moreover, literature also inhibits ghostly nature when it comes to storytelling. More precisely, to narrate is to create a space where the past can be revisited in an exceptional way.

This makes literary analysis particularly fertile ground for examining how memory, trauma, and the uncanny manifest through the dual lens of haunt-ology and psychoanalysis. Here, both these theories highlight the ostensibly absent perspective. Freud's return of the repressed and Derrida's spectral trace both points to the persistence of what was considered lost. In the analysis that follows, this study examines how their shared emphasis on memory, repetition, and the spectral allows us to read certain texts as haunted by histories, traumas, and silences that refuse to fade away.

Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression by Derrida mentions that the act of archiving is always haunted by what it ought to forgo or repress. As he asserts that the act of archivization tends to reproduce or re evoke as much as it witnesses (Derrida, 1998, p.17). Just as Freud saw repression as necessary to psychic life, Derrida sees repression as built into the logic of the archive. What is left out returns to being haunted; every archive is haunted by the specters of what it excludes.

This is where hauntology and Freudian repression meet: both deal with the return of what should have been lost, the incomplete work of mourning, and the ghosts of memory. In a nutshell, this theoretical fusion is particularly suited to literature that deals with memory, trauma, and repression.

Methodology

Following the qualitative analysis of Murakami's novel *Kafka on the Shore*, this research provides the psychological exploration of hauntology. However, a central focus is given to the primary text as well as to those chapters and fundamental elements that constitute the basic tenets of hauntology. Afterwards, these elements are analyzed through the spectral

Lense, examining how they confront the linearity of time and the self as a coherent, unified entity. This methodological approach is corroborated by psychological insights referring to trauma, war, and unconsciousness.

Discussion And Analysis

This research examines the novel's narrative, characters, and archetypes to reveal the spectral motifs not only as a literal manifestation but also as a psychological force. Following a spectral approach, this study examines how untreated traumas continue to exert their influence in the meantime, thereby reflecting spectral residue. Moreover, it also waves a new spectral narrative —persisting through narrative, time, and memory. Correspondingly, Murakami's characters inhabit ghostly presence by residing in a liminal space, thereby foreshadowing the distorted nature of traumatic memory.

Unquestionably, this research stands as a prime monument to psycho-hauntogenic approach. Through the mystical realm, Murakami constructs a world where the vestiges of trauma continue to exert their influence like an invisible force. By asserting agency and voice, Murakami leaves everything open-ended to interpret. Now it's on your discretion to go and figure it out for yourself. Hence, Murakami's use of spectrality is autobiographical. The central focus is given to his father in this case. Though he rarely talks about his father, his influence is deeply rooted in this. Thus, developing under such circumstances is like being enveloped in gloom. Murakami's encounter with unheard echoes and false truths stems from his melancholic past, thereby reflecting the transmission of transgenerational trauma as well as collective amnesia.

Furthermore, the mentioned historical background is not only premeditated but also a structural engagement with the novel's storyline. Moreover, Murakami's voluntary banishment from Japan galvanizes his existence as an outsider, a perspective central to novel's investigation of traumatic past and fragmented uniqueness. Therefore, the analysis as followed is structured sequentially, starting with elements or events foreshadowing the spectral residue till the exploration of characters grappled with ambiguity.

This study aims to discover how the process of haunting correlates with human psychology, thereby enabling individuals to resurface their repressed desires and emotions. The analysis is

divided into five research objectives, and each section plays a crucial role in providing textual evidence to further strengthen the arguments. The aforementioned novel is a story of two parallel yet opposite worlds, where each character finds themselves in a liminal zone, struggling to find the meaning of their very being. The story revolves around two main characters: Kafka Tamura and Satoru Nakata. Kafka Tamura who tries to defy the oedipal curse and Satoru Nakata, an old person with an exceptional aptness to converse with animals especially cats.

Ultimately, both worlds meet at the nexus of entrance stone. Hence, they continue their journey towards self-exploration. They defy the cyclic process of being victim at the hands of fate. As the story continues, one can witness the self-asserted agency of the characters, where they take a stand for themselves and try to move to the outside world. Moreover, Murakami's use of Japanese Ikiryo myth disrupts the ontological boundaries, thus creating a world beyond imagination. Such an exceptional narrative, making it a thought-provoking example that goes beyond conventional interpretation. Though certain limitations are there, Murakami's novel still employs ghostly echoes that disclose the lingering aspects of the past.

The analysis is structured around five research questions. Firstly, it will examine the character of Miss Saeki, who is living in a liminal state. Secondly, it will explore the tendency of music to reinvokate repressed memories. Thirdly, it will unveil how metaphysical elements disrupt the ontological stability by creating a haunting space. Then, the novel turns its table down towards the nexus of entrance stone, acting as a converging point of two opposite realms. Lastly, it will explore the psycho-hauntogenic nature of the forest, thereby mirroring the psychological conditions of the individuals in an eerie zone.

Kafka on the Shore takes readers on psychological expeditions where spectral residues affect the existential state. In this case, the character of Miss Saeki acts as a spectral embodiment. Her untreated trauma creates a ghostly space that she inhabits unconsciously, making her a monumental study for analyzing how emotional scars exhibit the existential dread by blurring the lines between reality and fantasy. Historical events, especially WW11, affect her to a greater extent. During WW11 she lost her lover, which affected her the most. This loss parallels the theme of ecstasy of love that she longs to fulfill. Living in a spatial time frame, her younger self tends to reappear repeatedly to find her lost love. This act directs a parallel

to the Freudian concept of Melancholia. Instead of mourning, she incorporates him (her lover) and her other half into her ego. According to Freud, Miss Saeki incorporates her lover into her ego, becoming a walking wound (Murakami, 2005, p.249).

Meanwhile, according to Murakami, “Anyone who falls in love is searching for the missing pieces of themselves. It’s only a natural feeling” (Murakami, 2005, p.389). Miss Saeki’s emotional and spiritual state reflects what Derrida has described, the state of being haunted. “Miss Saeki’s mind went blank at the pointless death of his boyfriend” (Murakami, 2005, p.209). After his death nobody knows where she has gone. As Oshima says, “She vanishes into thin air” (Murakami, 2005, p.209). She is immensely affected by this trauma. Her traumatic past is her present now. She dwells in a perpetual reenactment of a bygone moment.

Her ontological state echoes in the ruins of her reminiscence. She is living in a state what Derrida asserts as disjointness of time. Miss Saeki’s current existence and her actions (presence in library, entrance stone,) etc. are spectral resonances of trauma far away from logical explanation of linear flow of time.

The duality in her character describes what Derrida calls this condition undecidable, fundamentally correlated with spectral ambiguity. She represents a bridge between the real and the spectral, and her association with her son Kafka is deep, representing both a maternal figure and a love insect. It is clear when Miss Saeki answers Kafka about being his mother, “A long time ago I threw away something I shouldn’t have. Something I loved more than anything else. I was afraid that someday I’d lose it” (Murakami, 2005, p.581).

Here time plays a leading role in becoming a gateway to past traces. Miss Saeki’s ghost is the literal manifestation of return of repressed. The living spirit of Miss Saeki is the segregated part of her ego, wandering the library-physical being of melancholic identification turned spectral. On the other hand, Miss Saeki’s dual appearance in the library both as a living ghost and her self-highlights Derrida’s concept of revenant. It means the one who appears from the past to haunt the present.

Her representation as a library assistant also mirrors the spectral resonances. Because libraries are supposed to be a place full of unheard echoes that persist to be heard through the text, belonging to different time zones. The library’s inherent hauntological potential (as an

archive of the past) resonates with Miss Saeki's personal spectral energy, providing the ideal environment for the manifestation of her dissociated self.

Kafka and Nakata perceive and validate Miss Saeki's psycho-hauntological reality, proving it is not merely subjective but an objective force within the novel's diegesis. Despite the fact that she is Kafka's real biological mother or not, her feelings for him make him able to forgo the altering reality. Furthermore, when Saeki asks for forgiveness from Kafka, he asserts, "Yes, I forgive you. And with those words, audibly, the frozen part of her heart dissolves" (Murakami, 2005, p.581). Before she leaves, "She takes the hairpin out of her hair and without a moment's hesitation stabs the sharp tip into the flesh of her arm" (Murakami, 2005, p.581). This symbolic act of love and drinking of blood symbolizes purgation of their traumas as well as Kafka's and Saeki's journey to the timeless world and completes their process of recovery.

According to Bergson's theoretical postulate, freedom exists, depending upon two different selves. Despite her death, true to hauntology, specter's trace continues to haunt. Saeki's song "Kafka on the Shore" continues to play. Her presence lingers in Kafka's consciousness and the library's atmosphere. The memory of her unresolved pain, the sheer weight of the loss she carried, remains. As Derrida asserts, it does not matter even if specter departs, but the ethical weight it carries always demands justice, thereby highlighting the lingering presence of absent present. In the case of Miss Saeki, her unresolved past echoes justice, an exploration of untreated psychic wounds that haunt the world at large.

Correspondingly, Murakami's use of music to re-evoked the memories that are repressed in the unconscious is both admirable and a core tenet of hauntology. His way of evoking memories with the help of music gives rise to cultural and historical stagnation. He infuses cultural and jazz music in such a way that unravels the spectral remnants. When this past memory becomes part of present time then it takes the shape of what modernism calls surrealism. Music is supposed to project advantageously what is repressed or hidden in an unexpected way.

Also, it can express human emotions and values in multiple ways. Music acts as a therapeutic tool to re-experience the memories of loss, pain, and grief. Thus, it is not passive yet an active measure that offers holistic anchors to the past. It correlates with nostalgia, whether it

is happy or traumatic. It also has a regulating authority to resurface bygone incidents in such a way that they play a very crucial role in self-analysis.

In *Power of Music*, Marcel Proust says, “Music . . . helped me to descend into myself, to discover new things; the variety that I had sought in vain in life, in travel, but a longing for which was nonetheless renewed in me by this sonorous tide” (Sacks, 2006, p.2528-2532). On the other hand, according to Jonathan Miller, the true and foremost role of music is to take one’s self into the labyrinth of memory.

The title of the novel, *Kafka on the Shore* is influenced by an American songwriter-singer, Bob Dylan. The song Kafka on the Shore in the novel is written by Saeki, Kafka’s mother. Saeki wrote it in remembrance of her boyfriend to summon her lover. As Oshima tells Kafka that she wrote it at a very young age of 19 and “the lyrics, on the other hand, were symbolic, contemplative, hard to work out” (Murakami, 2005, p.206). When he listens to the lyrics of songs, it seems as if it is directly developing a connection with him. Here, the repressed thoughts become powerful enough to express themselves in an alternative manner and he begins to experience her sorrow by encountering the atmosphere lingering around her: “the hush of the air, the dim light, the smell of old paper and cedar wood” (Murakami, 2005, p.152).

Murakami’s characters reside in liminality, where memory is here now, not the past but a kind of climate. Later in the chapter he confesses his love for Saeki, but according to Saeki, Kafka only loves her in theory. This musters Kafka to begin to view the reality of the outside world and his own identity from a different angle. The lyrics of the song are very intricate and complex, and a kind of confabulation among them discloses the fact that Kafka acquired the memory from frozen time to gratify his desires. It is evident when Saeki says, “In order to keep on living... I have to. People need something like a place they can go back to. There’s still time to make it, I think. For me and for you” (Murakami, 2005, p. 417).

Murakami’s excellency is not only restricted to jazz music. Holistically, he draws attention towards classical music worldwide. He refers to classical music to challenge the stability of one's subconscious mind. One of the most versatile western music composers, Ludwig Van Beethoven, is continually cited in the novel. According to E.T.A Hoffman Beethoven’s

composition unravels the realm of potency and limitlessness. Although Kafka listens to the music of many composers, the song written by Saeki retains the novel's haunting atmosphere.

As Murakami asserts, "The music remained, like a scent clinging to the air" (Murakami, 2005, p.143). On the other hand, Rubin asserts that Murakami's "music replaces dialogue, the soundscape bearing the emotional weight that words cannot" (Rubin, 2002, p.217). Beethoven's songs are used to revive the trauma of lost childhood, so is the case with Hoshino, the truck driver in the novel. His songs reflect Hoshino's lost childhood and his traumas. He uses a more panoramic view to refer another great music composer, Franz peter Schubert's Sonata to pen about Oshima's unpredictable life.

As Oshima says, "You can appreciate Schubert if you train yourself. I was the same way when I first listened to him. You'll appreciate it in time" (Murakami, 2005, p.146). He further asserts that listening to him makes one capable of considering about the unconditioned limits of life. Being disapproved by the society Oshima potently satires about his own death by reckless driving as he says, "I'm not going to have an accident. I keep my car in tip-top condition, too" (Murakami, 2005, p.143). But in case if I have an accident then I just want to die a peaceful death.

Correspondingly, global silence, unheard echoes, and traumatic past are exceedingly difficult to illustrate. It is not only problematic for those who have experienced it but also for the passive ones. he terms traumatic past and repressed memories are associated to catastrophic historical events such as Holocaust, war, slavery, colonization, and other events. Usually, they find it too hard to speak about such incidents, even if they want to share their past with someone, they find it too gruesome to talk about.

In this context, magical realism, a postmodern technique, is one of the most effective ways to express inexpressible emotions in a less damaging way. In *Kafka on the Shore*, Murakami makes skillful use of supernatural elements that create tension and chaos among everyone by its surreal presence. Furthermore, Gioia asserts that Murakami excels at blending reality with fantasy, thereby deconstructing the conventional notion of reality as fixed and self as coherent. (Gioia, 2021, p.01).

In a magical realm, a ghost is the central and important figure. In the novel, Murakami portrays ghosts as living persona, thus maintaining the dominance of mystical ambiance throughout the novel- persisting presence of haunted past by means of metaphors.

A detailed description is given below by following the storyline of different characters from different magical perspectives. Firstly, the commentary begins with the main character, Kafka Tamura whose alter ego, a boy named crow, haunting him throughout his decision to abscond as Crow says, “Sometimes fate is like a sandstorm that keeps changing direction...No matter how metaphysical or symbolic it might be, make no mistake about it.... Once you come out of the storm you won’t be the same person who walked in” (Murakami, 2005, p.05).

He personifies Kafka’s inborn trauma and his survival instinct. He is just like a voice box to all those repressed feelings that Kafka feels suffocated to explain. Crow gives voice to unheard harsh realities that Kafka’s avoids putting into words. As Crow says, “You’ve got to be the world’s toughest boy. That’s the only way you’re going to survive” (Murakami, 2005, p.04). Continuously, he makes Kafka realize his inability to escape from his inevitable fate by saying, “You change direction, but the storm adjusts. Over and over you play this out, like some ominous dance with death just before death” (Murakami, 2005, p.04).

So, Crow is not merely Kafka’s alter ego, but his lingering presence throughout the novel challenges Kafka’s ontology, thus creating a haunted space. Is Crow Kafka’s alter ego, his guide or a supernatural fragmented entity that creates a haunting space? This equivocal subverts Kafka’s single, unified identity- a characteristic feature of magical realism. It is evident through the scene when Kafka finds himself covered in blood (after some unconscious episode of Nakata’s actions). Then Kafka pleads to Crow, his coping mechanism to keep him strong as Crow says, “Get a hold of yourself. Take some deep breaths and start

using your head. Things will be fine. But you have to be very careful” (Murakami, 2005, p.90).

Furthermore, imperialistic Japan, its doctrines and the lingering effects of war are also discussed in the novel. For instance, while describing the Rice Bowl Hill incidents Dr. Juichi Nakazawa says, “This incident never made the newspapers. My guess is the authorities decided it would only cause unrest, so they censored any mention of it” (Murakami, 2005, p.37). In context of this, such uncertain and surreal transformations can be perceived throughout the mystical route in the novel. It is evident through the incident when, “the slimy creatures squirmed all around” (Murakami, 2005, p.255).

Exclaimed with shock, the authorities investigated the whole scene but “they dismissed the possibility that it was some elaborate practical joke. Who would possibly do something so utterly outlandish” (Murakami, 2005, p.221). The past is reconsidered through the art of flashbacks and mythical resonances, unravelling new insights. The storyline, which is linear and unidirectional, continues to blur as the story progresses, creating a lingering effect. Whenever there is metaphysical existence, time laps over there, thus creating a surreal and haunting effect.

In mystical realm, the use of myth blurs reality by becoming a part of everyday life, thus creating a haunting effect. It also challenges the ontological boundaries in ways that correlates with Derrida’s spectrality. Critically, magical realism rarely explains the mythic elements. Is it really a ghost, or a manifestation of grief? This cultural ambiguity reveals the tension prevailing among the characters. Such a spectral ambiguity is the fundamental principle of hauntology. Is it a curse, or an illness bound by culture and belief? Kafka on the Shore never manifests a defined answer. This spectral ambiguity shapes the base of its haunting effects.

The readers as well as the characters never find any certainty; both must expect that the myths may *the real* in the mystical world of the novel. Despite all this, the normal logical flow of ideas is not present here, thereby destabilizing the logical boundaries. This perplexity leads to entangled reality and existence. The novel is replete with strange events all around, for instance, Nakata’s communication with cats, Colonel Sander as a metaphysical guide, and

fish raining from the sky. All these uncertain happenings are the result of a cause-and-effect framework in a mystical realm.

The blurred lines between the real and unreal world make reality more capricious. All this leads to the inclusion of supernatural elements in ordinary life. The discussed narrative seems unpredictable as the interplay of sudden and disturbing moments infer that hidden forces are at work. According to Derrida, all this spectral ambiguity lies in a liminal zone, thereby creating a haunting space by becoming a driving force. As Updike asserts, “not only do not us, the readers, seem to know what exactly will happen next but the author himself as well” (Updike, 2005, p.01). Keeping in view the materialistic nature of the world, it is evident that animals and non-human figures seem more involved and dwell in nature and its meaning.

This also creates uneasiness as human beings appear to be lost by comparison. Likely, symbolism makes the plot of the novel more intriguing. Here, Colonel Sander captures the limelight. He acts as a poignant example of what Lacan calls *Sinthome*. He artistically blurs the boundary between artificial creation and real experience. Similarly, the entrance stone is of profound importance. It is the point of juncture between both worlds. It makes the characters absorb hidden traumas and pain.

Both Nakata and Kafka enter this realm with the messianic hope that calls into action for justice and resolution. This is not an ordinary stone but a gateway to the world outside. The traditional belief engraved in the stone highlights “the change”. Those who pass through it are transformed. Kafka here, enters as a confused boy however; he returns with a stronger sense of belief in himself.

Moreover, it holds historical importance, referring to WW1, a traumatic incident. Meanwhile Nakata enters it as an empty vessel with the uncanny ability but fulfills his goal. Both Nakata and Kafka are in a state of limbo, no longer what they were at once but not yet what they will become. Nakata represents the unconscious phenomenal world while Kafka represents the conscious real, physical world. It is an absence present, a messianic hope that demands justice and attention. It calls to action for justice and resolution. The stone is related to a primitive, unresolved trauma, the Komura massacre during WW1, an event that created Nakata and left a wound in the fabric of reality.

Kafka is unknowingly attracted to it before he even knows about its whereabouts. He tries to flee from his home to defy the oedipal curse placed upon him by his father but paradoxically ends up going towards the designed path (fate). His entire journey from Tokyo to Takamatsu is a conscious escape from the curse placed upon him by his father, but subconsciously it is a journey towards the proximity of that curse. The library, and his encounter with the younger self of Miss Saeki, there is not a random endpoint but a stone's antechamber.

Saeki's haunting melancholic past and her living ghost are direct reflection of stone's open wound in time. Afterwards, by having real intimacy with Saeki, he asserts, "We're caught up in a whirlpool, pulled beyond time. Somewhere, we were struck by lightning... That night you make love again" (Murakami, 2005, p.418). Lately when he wakes up with the stains of blood on his shirt with no memory of it, it increases the tension. As Kafka observes something and says, "I touch it and my hands come away all sticky. I need to calm down so, consciously taking my time, I take off both my shirts. The blood's still fresh, wet, and there's lots of it" (Murakami, 2005, p.89).

The tension from sleeping with his mother and the blood on his shirt increases the weight of his curse subconsciously. As a result of this when he comes back to Oshima place in the cabin to lie down, he has a wet dream about his sister as he says, "I dream of Sakura" (Murakami, 2005, p.482).

It highlights the fulfilment of the Oedipal curse and his inability to escape from his fate, no matter how hard he has tried to turn the table. Suddenly, Crow appears and tells Kafka that "That curse is branded on your soul even deeper than before. You should realise that by now. That curse is part of your DNA....They're all still inside you, torturing you" (Murakami, 2005, p.507). Crow encourages him to overcome his fears of being "hollow man" and look forward the symbolic world as a "free man" (Murakami, 2005, p.508). It is a specter of the past that seeps into the present and acts as a gateway to the future.

Afterwards, by taking that burden Kafka decides to go deep "into the heart of forest". There he encounters the two WW11 soldiers who were lost in the forest and act as a guide towards a predestined path. The stone's gravity is the gravity of the unknown, the hidden, and the prophesied, attracting him toward the inevitable culmination. Nakata's story in the parallel universe is inverse to Kafka. He works according to imagery level and brushes against reality.

On his way to find the lost cat, named Goma, he meets another mysterious character, Johnnie Walker, but later dies at the hands of Nakata.

After this he does not have any idea of where he is going and why he is doing all this. The only thing that he knows about is that he had to “cross a big bridge around here, that’s the one to Shikoku” (Murakami, 2005, p.275). On his journey towards entrance stone, he meets Colonel Sander who guides Hoshino to find Entrance stone which Nakata urges to find and open it. Nakata’s act of locating and opening the entrance stone symbolizes opening the door of parallel realm, where the other halves of Miss Saeki and Kafka had encountered each other. They enter this realm with half of their shadows while their other halves are still waiting for them in the alternative world.

His actions such as talking to stone and then to cats reflect a psyche that has finally accepted fluid existence within narrative. Afterwards, the cat guides Hoshino that he needs to kill a sinister creature that would appear that night and try to cross the bridge. Hoshino kills it in its abstract form and closes the entrance stone. Hoshino’s act of killing Johnnie Walker and closing the opening of entrance stone reflects a different sense of strength, responsibility and wisdom that was lacking at the start of the journey.

The abrupt shift in the narrative from Nakata to Hoshino is not merely a literary technique, but a psychological embankment in the liminal zone. Moreover, the talking cat and Colonel Sander appear to be the guiding compass between reality and the utopian world. They exist at the border of reality, thus destabilizing the ontological boundaries. In this context, the mystical realm of forest acts as a byproduct of an unconscious mind. The other halves of both Nakata and Miss Saeki represent what Lacan describes as *objet petit a*. They make the audience clear that the reality is not fixed and stable. This in betweenness taps the hidden minds where the shattered pieces of Nakata and Miss Saeki move towards the entrance stone. The stone transforms haunted feelings into real experiences.

Here, the forest is not just an active force but also a way towards peace and calmness. The novel projects the interplay of nature and human experiences. Such an exceptional relation uptakes the reading experience by confronting the very logic of existentialism. Correspondingly, it refers to what Derrida described as the concept of *différance*. In the given

text, the forest in Takamatsu is the literal manifestation of this experience. All this unentangles the haunting space which is between the real and imaginary world. By considering the hauntological perspective, all this leads to what Derrida described as the concept of “beyond”- a ghostly incarnation into the fabric of reality.

The first act of forest spurs the unfolding of cyclic movements. *Kafka on the Shore* represents two opposites, yet parallel journeys towards the forest's liminal zone. Although Kafka is intelligent and determinant but is still vulnerable to forces that he cannot control. While Nakata is more drawn to natural phenomenon, thus asserting that noetic power does not compare to ecological sync. Murakami's characters exhibit this inherent transgenerational trauma while encountering the natural phenomenon which perceives their hidden emotions and responds accordingly.

The natural landscapes such as the library in Shikoku and forest serve as an agency that challenges spirituality. Here, the forest acts as a gateway for Kafka's dissolution of time, certainty and more preciously his ego. It can be witnessed through repetitive warnings that are given to him by the boy named Crow. Crow says, “Once the storm is over you won't remember how you made it through, how you manages to survive. But one thing is certain. When you come out of the storm, you won't be the same person who walked in. That's what this storm is all about” (Murakami, 2005, p.05). The dark, deep, devil and unheard echo of nature tangle the conscious state of mind. As Jung asserts that one does not become conscious of everything just by getting known to it but by letting the darkness seep into consciousness (Jung, 1945 p.335).

Throughout the surreal journey of the novel, the reader witnesses Kafka's attempt to get himself free from the curse but always ends up coming closer to a destined journey. It seems like a melancholic longing or something that needs to be fulfilled. In Eco-psychological terms, it looks like nature itself is carrying the burden on its shoulders. At the core of these descriptions lies Nakata, through which nature demonstrates ruptures. When Nakata finds something distressing inside himself, then nature becomes strange and destructive as well. Undoubtedly, these absurd encounters correlate with the idea of synchronicity.

Therefore, unheard, and invisible seem to be heard and seen again in a logical way. The evilness of the horrific incidents leaves no stone unturned for disbelief by making nature

porous to the psyche. Similarly, in the case of Nakata, his act of killing Johnie Walker is the mere confrontation of his own haunted stolen past – a past that forest helps to echo and resolve. Therefore, with the opening of entrance stone, the forest becomes the gaping wound of reality, thus highlighting the shared collective responsibility.

Conclusion

In a nutshell, stepping into the realm of Haruki Murakami's *Kafka on the Shore* is to enter an echoing chamber where every sound is a living resonance rather than a simple recollection. These unheard echoes are not only part and parcel of unconscious memories but the fundamental testaments of living reverberation that contribute to shaping one's personality. This study elevates the concept of spectrality not merely as a critical approach but as an instrumental widget that helps to unravel the hidden mysteries throughout the course of narrative. This method tends to discover a world beyond the imagination where the bygone acts as a gravitational pull, thereby attracting the path of identity, time, and perception towards itself.

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