

Beyond cultural nationalism: Murakami Haruki and an emergent Japanese cosmopolitan identity

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Publication Date:

2014

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.26190/unsworks/2545>

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Beyond cultural nationalism: Murakami Haruki and an emergent Japanese cosmopolitan identity

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A thesis in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy



School of Social Sciences
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my supervisor, Associate Professor Dr. Paul Jones, without whom I could not have completed a doctoral thesis. His extensive knowledge of cultural studies, cultural sociology and media studies inspired me throughout this journey. I am grateful for his professional guidance and for saving me from drowning in a sea of uncertainties. I am indebted to my co-supervisor Dr. Claudia Tazreiter whose encouraging and constructive feedback was instrumental in the development of my thesis. Her suggestion of cosmopolitanism invigorated my exploration of contemporary Japanese society.

I would also like to thank my editor Dr. Diana Barnes for helping me to produce the final draft. My sincere thanks go to Maria Zueva at the Learning Centre of the University of New South Wales who supported my writing.

I would like to thank the School of Sociology at the University of New South Wales for providing me this opportunity. The university's excellent library system allowed me to complete my studies from Japan. The Graduate Research School gave generous support to my research while I was overseas.

My deepest appreciation goes to Kyung-Ae Han for sharing the long journey with me, while we were both in Sydney and later when we were in Seoul and Tokyo. Thank you for reading countless drafts and providing valuable feedback. Our discussion of Haruki Murakami and Korean diasporas gave me the courage to take on a path that was unthinkable when the project began.

Thanks to my parents for providing me the education and experience that enabled me to pursue this research. My interest in cultural identity goes back to my early childhood when our family lived in Fiji. My fascination with diasporic identity was instilled by my mother. Her war-time experience as a Japanese girl born in Sakhalin traumatized her throughout her life.

I am grateful to my dear friends, Russell, Michael, Atsuko and Tae Yong for always being there for me.

And last, but not least, I am indebted to my husband Noboru for his passion. His confidence in me made it possible for me to believe in myself. Thank you for letting my Murakami Haruki books dominate our bookshelf, although, as you like to boast, you have never read Haruki.

Abstract

This thesis explores the question of contemporary Japanese cultural identity. Pertaining to the position taken by Cultural Studies that identity is not an essentially fixed entity, it argues for the prospect of cosmopolitan identities as an alternatively self-determined form of autonomous identity. The argument is supported by analyses of emerging cultural public spheres and the everyday cosmopolitanism the thesis finds in the work of contemporary Japanese writer Haruki Murakami.

It is my concern that the prevailing norm of Japanese cultural identity is diminished by its dependence on cultural nationalism. Japanese society in general is under the influence of such a popular discourse concerning ‘Japaneseness’ known as *Nihonjinron* which is imbued with the myth of “one nation, one people” as its central tenet. This thesis interrogates and critiques this discourse for its intrinsic ethnocentrism and its capacity for facilitating the social exclusion of those who do not conform to it.

The development of a cultural public sphere in Japan not only resists such cultural nationalism, but also indicates emergent everyday cosmopolitanism. The “Haruki Murakami phenomenon” is analysed at length by examining its contrasting domestic and international reception in order to demonstrate how its everyday cosmopolitanism could help redefine the concept of Japaneseness. Instead of isolating Japan and its cultural identity, Murakami embodies the possibility of an alternative approach which would position Japan within the inter-connectedness celebrated in the cosmopolitan imaginary.

The prospect for cosmopolitan identities is further explored through the examination of recent Korean diaspora writers in Japan and elsewhere. The diasporic status of Korean writers offer coherent example of struggles with belonging and identity for those without nation. The cases of Murakami and the Korean diasporic writers represent a critical enquiry into multiple belongings and multiple identities that fulfil the cosmopolitan promise of the current globalisation process.

The thesis concludes that there is an alternative approach to the redefining of Japanese cultural identity by establishing a broader perspective for belonging beyond conventional boundaries.

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Note:

Unless those being referred to are writing in English, Japanese, Korean and Chinese names appear in their standard order in those languages which is last name first.

Murakami's works are primarily provided in their original Japanese title (using alphabets for phonetic reading). However, English versions of the titles are used where appropriate for the purpose of flow.

All translation of Japanese text from Japanese references is done by the author of this thesis, unless noted otherwise.

Introduction

This thesis investigates contemporary Japanese cultural identity. Rather than defining identity according to psycho-analytical ideas about personhood, this thesis sociologically probes the meaning of identity within society. In particular, the Cultural Studies' recognition of identity as a cultural construction is foundational to the analysis that follows.

As a result of growing mobility due to the globalisation process of the past few decades, questions concerning identity and belonging have become more pressing for many people across the globe. This research questions the validity of the conventional understanding of Japanese identity promoted in the popular discourse of *Nihonjinron* [Theories of the Japanese]. It problematizes the notions of collective and essentially fixed identity supported by *Nihonjinron* discourse. Furthermore, it asks whether such a “theory” appropriately captures the changes underway in social practice and everyday life in modern Japan.

The hypothesis of this thesis is that an emergent cosmopolitanism is supporting alternative identities in contemporary Japan. The Haruki phenomenon—the global popularity of the writer Murakami Haruki—is a paradigmatic case to consider in relation to Japanese identity. The disparity between Murakami's local and global receptions suggests new developments in conceptions of Japaneseness. This case shows that Japanese cultural identity is not fixed, and that alternative viewpoints from inside and outside Japan may counter conventional Japanese ideas.

The popular discourse of *Nihonjinron* has significant influence over perceptions of Japanese cultural identity. As the *Nihonjinron* sub-genres show, the discourse ties its essentialist conception of Japanese identity to a diverse field of factors ranging from climate, culture and society to economy; and its texts are produced by academics, journalists, novelists and diplomats. The discourse has permeated Japanese society over several decades through a massive number of publications in this popular genre.

Critical studies and analyses of *Nihonjinron* have been produced by scholars in the field of sociology, history and anthropology. Studies by Sugimoto Yoshio (1999) and Harumi Befu (1993) provide sociological and anthropological analysis of the myth of the uniqueness of Japanese promoted by *Nihonjinron*. Historians such as Amino Yoshihiko (2011) and Nishikawa Nagao (1995) question the cultural hegemony of the discourse. Studies point out the links between *Nihonjinron* and cultural nationalism (Yoshino 1992; Befu 1993; Nishikawa 1995; Sugimoto 1999; Lie 2001) and affirm that ethnocentrism is an irrefutable undercurrent.

Nihonjinron promotes an ambiguous concept of “Japaneseness”. The conformist ethnocentric identity represented as Japanese is assumed to be inherent to all Japanese people. The most conspicuous example of this ethnocentric thought is the claim of *tanitsu minzoku* [single nation, single ethnicity], i.e. that the Japanese nation is historically comprised of a single ethnicity. Although there are scholarly critiques of this particular claim for racial and cultural homogeneity (e.g., Oguma 1995; Amino 2011), the “single nation, single ethnicity” myth continues to pervade Japanese society. Amino identifies “[t]he inquiry into why such ‘common sense’ permeated the Japanese people so deeply” (2011: 25 trans. T.W.) as a vital task at hand. For not only does the notion of Japaneseness exclude the Other, but it implicitly imposes a homogeneous identity on its constituents.

Cultural Studies offers contemporary discussions of the subject of cultural identity. During the 1990s the concept of identity became central to cultural studies (Barker 2004). Since then, this discipline has played a significant role in “deconstructing the essentialist notion of the unified agent who possesses a fixed identity” (Barker 2000: 176). It is pertinent for investigating Japan, since Cultural Studies defines identity as a cultural construction. In particular, Stuart Hall’s anti-essentialist position that identity is a process rather than a fixed entity is useful. While the essentialist understanding of identity supports a collective “one true self” that derives from a common ancestry and history that stresses the “whole” through symbolic representation; Hall’s anti-essentialist approach underscores the process of “becoming” by shifting between sameness and differences (Barker 2000: 177).

This thesis aims to develop an alternative analytic perspective capable of recognizing a new Japanese cultural identity unconcerned by *Nihonjinron*. The anti-essentialist approach of Cultural Studies will provide the basis for envisioning this novel outlook. Japanese Cultural Studies scholarship has begun to adapt this Western discipline and to apply it to better understand Japanese society in the milieu of cultural globalization. For example, Iwabuchi (2002, 2007) re-positions Japan as an advanced hybrid culture within Asia. He contests Japan's cultural nationalism and its imposition of an ethnocentric national identity. Furthermore, Japanese Cultural Studies supports the prospect of developing a public sphere. Since the homogeneity endorsed by the "single nation, single ethnicity" myth is associated with Japan's post-war social amnesia, engaging the public is a critical task. The Cultural Typhoon movement conceived by young scholars strives to connect the academic sphere and the public sphere, as well as to develop a network for Cultural Studies in Asia.

The issue of *Nihonjinron* and prospect for cosmopolitan identities

As mentioned above, the role played by *Nihonjinron* discourse in determining Japanese cultural identity is problematic, particularly since it imposes an ambiguous concept of Japaneseness. As scholars argue (e.g. Befu 1995; Sugimoto 1999; Nishikawa 2005), *Nihonjinron* is a hegemonic ideology that promotes Japan's cultural nationalism. It supports ethnocentric ideas that result in conformist and exclusionary attitudes. The homogeneity and conformist groupism promoted by this popular discourse is concomitant with the social amnesia characteristic of post-war Japanese society.

This thesis contends that the development of a cultural public sphere is establishing resistance to this social myth. In order to re-define contemporary Japanese cultural identity, Cultural Studies modes of analysis are applied to highlight the constructed nature of cultural nationalism and identity. Furthermore, Cultural Studies' contribution to the development of a public sphere in Japan shows that a renewed sense of citizenship can resist the social amnesia.

A significant problem is that the collective cultural identity of Japaneseness does not tolerate alternative identities. Although criticism of *Nihonjinron* discourse is established, hitherto the alternative viewpoint of re-examining Japaneseness from a global standpoint has remained underdeveloped. As stated earlier, the purpose of this thesis is to situate Japanese cultural identity in contemporaneity. Therefore, it is imperative to approach the subject from a broader perspective.

In this respect, scholarship on cosmopolitanism offers valuable resources. As an interdisciplinary field that encompasses humanities and social sciences, it provides an open platform for such discussion, by departing from East and West or local and global binaries. Ulrich Beck's second modernity and cosmopolitanization (2006) are pertinent concepts for the analysis of Japan, as is Terhi Rantanen's idea of an everyday cosmopolitanism (2005a) that recognises individualized identities. Furthermore, the cultural dimension of cosmopolitanism advocated in the works of Ulf Hannerz (2006) and Gerard Delanty (2009) provides the foundations for reinterpreting identities in the modern globalized world.

My study seeks to establish an alternative approach that provides an "open" space to discuss alternative identities. I argue that there is an emergent cosmopolitanism that supports cosmopolitan identities. The Haruki phenomenon demonstrates that the issue of Japaneseness is contested, and conceptualised differently in Japan and outside Japan. It implicates the struggle between the local and global, particularly on cultural identity in relation to the global cultural sphere. Although there is much scholarship on Murakami Haruki's works, neither the writer nor his oeuvre have been connected to emergent cosmopolitanism in Japan.

This thesis argues that cosmopolitanism and the cultural public sphere support the development of alternative identities in Japan. The interdisciplinary approach adopted is distinct from conventional studies of *Nihonjinron*. It employs Cultural Studies, public sphere and cosmopolitan theory for analytical purposes. Departure from conventional Japan Studies or anthropological approaches makes it possible to

re-envision contemporary Japanese cultural identity. In order to prioritize the investigation of Murakami Haruki's cosmopolitanism in relation to social events, the thesis circumvents textual analysis of his literary works in favour of focusing primarily on his interviews and speeches. This approach makes it possible to draw out the cosmopolitan disposition of the writer and his works more explicitly. The emergence of cosmopolitan identities is also substantiated by examining diasporic writers in Japan and elsewhere.

Chapter one is a critique of *Nihonjinron* and its espousal of cultural nationalism. It shows that contemporary Japanese cultural identity reflects Japan's historical struggle with the West. The myth of Japaneseness was instrumental in the Japanization initiative to defend Japanese identity against Western modernity. Its ethnocentrism, which serves as a hegemonic ideology, is problematic, however.

Chapter two considers Cultural Studies as an analytic resource for the study of Japanese modern cultural identity. While Cultural Studies contributed to a number of new disciplines including media and communications, gender studies and sub-culture studies, it failed to become established within the Japanese academy. Nevertheless, its contribution to the development of the public sphere is promising. Chapter three explores the development of the cultural public sphere in Japan. Contemporary artist Noda Hideki's resistance to ethnocentric nationalism and persisting social amnesia, is discussed as an example of the potential change effected by cultural exchange facilitated by the global public sphere.

Both Murakami and Noda display cosmopolitan characteristics. This is related to their experiences of living and working overseas. At the same time, they aspire to be "citizens of the world" [kosmopolites], as the Greek origin of the word implies. Chapter four examines the relevance of cosmopolitanism as a theoretical discourse. As mentioned earlier, its openness provides a means of breaking away from binary notions which is invaluable for re-considering cultural identity. Beck's cosmopolitanization theory (2006) is applied to identify emergent cosmopolitanism in Japan. The questions

of belonging and solidarity manifest as matters inseparable from the inquiry into identity.

Identity and belonging are compelling issues for diasporas. Chapter five discusses the cosmopolitan identities assumed by Korean diasporic writers. Since Korean-Japanese are often subject to discrimination as “the other” in Japanese society, the challenge of re-establishing an alternative identity is important. A comparison of two writers of Korean origin – Kaneshiro Kazuki and Chang-rae Lee – is made to clarify the nature of diasporic identity.

Chapters six and seven scrutinize contemporary Japanese writer Murakami Haruki and emergent cosmopolitanism. The Haruki phenomenon and the different cultural representation of Murakami inside and outside Japan complement our understanding of the issue of Japaneseness. The globalized aspect of this phenomenon allows for investigation that traverses the usual East and West dichotomy, since the phenomenon spans various parts of the world. The two speeches delivered by Murakami in 2009 and 2011 affirm his cosmopolitan turn and commitment. Analyses of the texts show his effort to build a cosmopolitan imaginary to break away from the hegemonic monologic imagination. The research confirms that emergent cosmopolitanism supports alternative identities that challenge cultural nationalism in Japan.

Chapter 1

Nihonjinron discourse and its conception of ‘Japaneseness’

***Nihonjinron* and the development of cultural nationalism**

The term *Nihonjinron* [日本人論] is difficult to define. While it can be translated literally as “theories of the Japanese” (Sugimoto 1999: 81), many scholars substitute the word “theory” with “discourse” and offer descriptive characteristics such as “the discourse of Japanese uniqueness” (Yoshino 1992; Befu 1993; Nishikawa 1995; Lie 2001), for example. The influence of this quasi-academic popular discourse, extends to publications in philosophy, psychology, history, literature, science as well as business. Academics analyse its content and question its perpetual popularity.

The purpose of this section, however, is not on to carry out extensive textual analysis of the *Nihonjinron* literature but rather to demystify the construction of *Nihonjinron*. Particular attention will be paid to the processes of cultural assimilation inside and outside Japan. By examining various critical analyses of *Nihonjinron*, this chapter will recount the role of this popular discourse in the construction of modern Japanese cultural identity. The hypothesis is that the prevalence of *Nihonjinron* effectively inhibits autonomous self-identities in Japanese society. Furthermore, Japaneseness, when defined as homogeneous ethnic identity, is employed to distinguish a cultural boundary for promoting national identity. This ideology is used to exclude those who do not comply as “un-Japanese”.

The quest for modern Japanese identity has been a constant struggle between “the East and the West”; that is, a search for Japaneseness in its ethnological origins balanced against the highly industrialised values of Western civilisation. Since the Meiji Restoration (1868-1912) when a government-led Westernization program was launched, Japan has undertaken continuous efforts to “catch-up” with the West. While nationalistic discourses were prevalent during war-times, the keen aspiration to gaining credibility by securing western authenticity has not diminished in Japan today. Japanese cultural self-esteem only emerged after the phenomenal economic growth of

the 1970s and 1980s. The content and rise of *Nihonjinron* mirrors the dynamics of Japanese society's evolution since the nineteenth century.

In its early days, published works in the field of *Nihonjinron* either expressed the inferiority of Japan in relation to the West or encouraged the Japanese to learn from western intellectuals (Aoki 1999; Sugimoto 1999; Funabiki 2010). Overall, *Nihonjinron* is keenly interested in how Japan and the Japanese are viewed by the outside world, and little thought has been given to developing an internally-oriented discussion of how Japanese people perceive themselves. The numerous *Nihonjinron* books, written by Japanese sociologists, anthropologists, psychologists and businessmen, tend to be reactionary and conscious of the West as the Other. According to Ishizawa Yasuharu, one of the best-known *Nihonjinron* works, Doi Takeo's *Amae no Kozo* [*The anatomy of dependence*] (1971), was "inspired by Ruth Benedict's *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*" (1997: 27). Doi applied the word "amae" [the tendency to readily depend] to analyse the uniqueness of Japanese society. According to Aoki Tamotsu, Doi was rejecting the criticism that modern Japan lacked "self" and individualism, by comparison to Western society (1999: 107). Even the well-respected work *Bushido* [*Bushido: the soul of Japan*] (1900)¹ was a defensive response to inquiries the author Nitobe Inazo faced while studying in Europe. Nitobe's account of the exceptional loyalty and self-discipline of the samurai² spirit was written in English and first published in the U.S..

During the 1970s and 1980s, when Japan's economic and technological advancement peaked, the reactionary attitude typical of *Nihonjinron* texts was replaced with assertions of cultural superiority and national accomplishment. Ezra Vogel's international bestseller *Japan as number one: lessons for America* (1979) is representative of *Nihonjinron* discourse of this period. The fact that it was written by a renowned foreign scholar ensured that it was well-received in Japan; the title not only satisfied the nationalistic self-esteem, but provided reassuring evidence of the West's recognition of

¹ It was translated from English to Japanese and published in Japan in 1908.

² Warriors. The term "Bushido" is generally translated as the code of the samurai.

Japan. *Japan as number one* affirmed what Aoki (1999) identifies as the “positive characteristics” of the discourse on Japanese culture. Although, both Benedict and Vogel investigated Japan for an American readership, the Japanese translations of *The chrysanthemum and the sword*, and *Japan as number one* were bestsellers in Japan and sales substantially exceeded those of the original text published in the U.S..³ Vogel sought to understand Japan’s economic success through a wide-ranging examination of Japanese social systems such as politics, education and business. He identified group-ism, or conformity, as a virtuous characteristic of the Japanese social system, and attributed Japan’s overall success in industrialisation to it.

Nishikawa Nagao offers a historical account of the emergence of *Nihonjinron* and *Nihon-bunkaron* [theories of Japanese culture] after the establishment of modern nation-states; and argues that such discussions are closely affiliated with the rise of sovereign states (1995: 166). He observes that over time, theories of Japaneseness and Japanese culture have oscillated in tandem with changing tendencies for Westernization and the restoration of Japanese society (see Nishikawa 2001: 132-137). This recurrent cycle or sequence began during the period in Japanese history known as the first and second “opening of the country”. The first opening refers to the Meiji reform era spanning from 1868-1912, and the second to the period following Japan’s defeat in the Pacific War in 1945. It is a contrasting pulse from self-denial leading to Westernization and universalism, to self-affirmation developing into ultra-nationalism and the suppression of individualistic views.

This account echoes Aoki (1999) and Funabiki Takeo (2010). While scholars quibble over time-frames and the definition of phases, in general terms they agree with the historical account of the emergence of *Nihonjinron* or *Nihon-bunkaron*. Aoki’s analysis focuses on the historical transformation of the cultural discourse. By contrast Nishikawa (1995) seeks to elucidate the identical pattern of development over the two time-periods: the first starting during the Meiji restoration; and the second after the defeat of World War II. He demonstrates how post-war *Nihonjinron* follows the model

³ Over 700,000 copies sold in Japan compared to 40,000 copies in the United States.

of pre-war *Nihonjinron* (Nishikawa 1995: 167). Nishikawa's concern over the similarity between pre- and post-war *Nihonjinron* is understandable, considering the role that pre-war *Nihonjinron* played in supporting ultra-nationalism. Harumi Befu (1993) and Yoshio Sugimoto (1999) also view the cycle of Westernization and restoration as an ideological effect of *Nihonjinron*.

The process involved in the establishment of *Nihonjinron* was contradictory. As Tessa Morris-Suzuki points out, "in reacting against the Eurocentric image of 'the West' as the source of the universal standards of civilization, *Nihonjinron* has ... incorporated the very world view against which it protests" (1998: 154). Despite the shifts in attitude towards the West as "the Other", the notion that Japan is a homogeneous society characterized by groupism and conformity remains an unchanged tenet of the *Nihonjinron* framework. Over recent decades the pursuit of Japaneseness, or conformist collective Japanese identity, has played a significant role in the development of cultural nationalism.

The problem with *Nihonjinron* lies not only in its East versus West orientation, but more significantly in its assimilation of cultural identity with national identity. Sugimoto denounces *Nihonjinron* discourse for "analys[ing] Japan's quintessence and cultural core by using three concepts – nationality, ethnicity and culture – synonymously" (1999: 81). He argues that *Nihonjinron* publications employ an $N=E=C$ equation, that is, a three-way equation between N (nationality), E (ethnicity) and C (culture). The "interchangeable" synonymy between nationality, ethnicity and culture pervades Japanese cultural nationalism.

The notion of Japaneseness is central to the *Nihonjinron* discourse. Here, as Sugimoto points out, Japaneseness is defined as "a set of value orientations that the Japanese are supposed to share" (1999: 82) and *Nihonjinron* advocates unanimously posit Japaneseness as an essential quality that distinguishes them from the West or the Other. Sugimoto denounces *Nihonjinron* analysts for referring to Japanese culture as Japanese "ethnic" culture owned by "racially defined Japanese" (1999: 82). As Sugimoto explains, the discussion of Japanese race and ethnicity is an ambiguous issue, as the

Japanese term *Nihon minzoku* stands for Japanese both as a biological racial group and as a culturally assigned ethnic group. This is the background of the inherently ethnocentric myth of *tanitsu minzoku* [single nation, single ethnicity] in Japan. “Ethnocentrism ... asserts the centrality and implied superiority of a particular cultural identity over others” (Barker 2004: 64), and *Nihonjinron* discourse underscores the exclusivity of Japanese ethnicity. The assumption that Japanese culture is owned by Japanese people, implicitly defines Japaneseness as an intrinsic quality. Sugimoto is concerned that “*Nihonjinron* cultural analysis can and does operate like a façade used to conceal nationalistic and/or racial doctrines that it embodies” (1999: 83). The myth of a culturally defined ethnic nation, provides a *façade* which effectively and implicitly excludes the Other and establishes the uniqueness of Japan.

Yoshino Kosaku (2002) argues that over the course of the development of cultural nationalism in Japan, national identity has often been expressed in abstract terms as ethnic spirit, national character and modes of action or thinking. This he describes as a holistic approach. By contrast the objectifying approach entails expressing national identity through cultural objects such as artistic or literary works, custom, etiquette and social system. These two modes of expression are not exclusive; they are inter-related and sometimes complementary (2002: 80-81). He views *Nihonjinron* as an example of the abstract and holistic approach which sets boundaries (Yoshino 2002: 102).

Since *Nihonjinron* adopts the abstract and holistic approach, Yoshino contends that the discourse on Japaneseness is based on “our” cultural ethos and as such, that it alludes to “racial” identity. The discussion of Japanese identity that occurs in relation to, or through, culture is closely tied to the idea of “race” (Yoshino 1992: 24). While Yoshino admits that this understanding of race is not scientifically supported, he maintains that like ethnicity, it is employed effectively to identify the in-group (1992: 26). He points to the widely-accepted concept of “Japanese blood” as an example of this kind of representation of Japaneseness as follows:

The idiom “Japanese blood” is used in popular speech to refer to the aspect of Japanese identity which tends to be perceived as immutable by the Japanese ... Belief in the “immutable” quality

of Japanese people is just as important as ... belief in distinctive Japanese culture in Japanese perceptions of their national identity ... (1992: 24)

Like the racial classification “Japanese”, the concept of “Japanese blood” is socially constructed (Yoshino 1992). Nevertheless the general public widely accepts such representations of the exclusionary identity of Japanese people as truths bolstered by such idioms as *tanitsu minzoku* meaning “single ethnicity”. As Yoshino observes, “the symbolic image it generates, and the collective sentiment expressed in it, still make it an effective ‘boundary maker’” (1992: 27).

According to Yoshino, the Meiji Government racialised Japanese ethnic identity in creating a family-nation ideology (2002: 146). As scholars argue (Befu 1993; Nishikawa 1995 and 2001; Funabiki 2010), the ideology was mobilised in the service of a modern nation-building agenda geared to unify the nation. As Yoshino explains the Japanese nation was constructed as a family in which members were “perceived to be related ‘by blood’ to one another and ultimately to the emperor” (1992: 26). Furthermore, Shintoism was created as a national tradition based on religious allegiance maintained by worshipping the ancestral family of the Emperor. Officially this family-oriented form of nationalism disappeared upon Japan’s defeat in 1945, but unconsciously the Japanese people continued to hold onto the image of the nation as an “imaginary family” (Yoshino 2002: 146-147). The metaphor of “Japanese blood” sustains this myth of Japanese nationhood.

The enduring popularity of *Nihonjinron* has been attributed to Japan’s quest for identity since the Meiji period. It was also supported by an extraordinary volume of publications for which it has been described variously as a “mass consumption commodity” (Befu 1990), the “national sport of Japan’s reading public” (Sugimoto 1995), or an obsession. As John Lie describes, in these publications “Japan emerges as a valid unit of generalization, which is unchanging, homogeneous, and distinct. These characteristics reflect a particular style of thought: typological thinking” (2001: 159). Typological categorization, he argues, is readily accepted since it fits the wide-spread classificatory impulse that follows from people’s questioning of the meaning of self and identity (Lie 2001: 168).

At the same time, it is conceivable that modern nation-states exploited this inclination, and promoted nationhood in order to establish unity from the diversified identities of its citizens. Craig Calhoun claims that nationalism is distinctively modern and provides “a way of constructing collective identities that arose alongside transformations in state power” (2002a: 29), but it converts to the traditional in order to establish itself. He writes:

Specific nationalist identities and projects have continued to draw on ethnic identities of long standing, on local kinship and community networks, and on claimed connections to ancestral territories. This has been a crucial source of cultural content, emotional commitment, and organizational strength for such identities and projects. (Calhoun 2002a: 29)

This applies to Japan’s modernization, as discussed earlier. The use of the idea of “Japanese blood” to represent Japaneseness (Yoshino 1992) can be understood as the local kinship upon which Japanese nationalism drew. The idea was enhanced by the family-nation ideology of the blood relationship between the Japanese people and the Emperor. Roy Starrs contends that the *Kojiki* [Record of ancient matters] (712) and the *Nihon shoki* [Chronicles of Japan] (720), considered the earliest works of Japanese literature, were used “for the construction of an imperial mythology and to provide divine sanction for the emperor’s rule” (2011: 81). He draws on Konishi Takamitsu’s argument that since the Meiji government advocated these publications as the cultural foundation of Japan, they took part in developing a discourse “constructed by a modern nation-state (*kokumin kokka*) whose ideological under-pinning was the emperor system (*tennousei*)” (Takamitsu cited in Starrs 2011: 81). In the case of Japan, *Nihonjinron* became prevalent over the course of Japan’s becoming a modern nation. As Sugimoto’s N=E=C equation (1999) implies, the pivotal issue is *Nihonjinron*’s relation to nationalism; Sakai (1997), Befu (1993) and Yoshino (1992, 2002) agree. Befu summarizes the academic discussion as follows: “If nationalism has to do ... with national identity and the pride deriving there from, then *Nihonjinron* has everything to do with nationalism” (1993: 125).

***Nihonjinron* and Japanese cultural identity**

Nihonjinron represents a key issue for any inquiry into Japanese cultural identity as Befu (1993), Yoshino (1992), Nishikawa (1995), and Sugimoto's (1999) investigations into Japanese culture and society demonstrate. Although *Nihonjinron* is not considered an academic discipline, its influence is so extensive that it cannot be dismissed. As indicated above, studies identify Ruth Benedict's *The chrysanthemum and the sword* (1946) as the *locus classicus* for *Nihonjinron*. This text provided the model for subsequent contemplation of the uniqueness of Japanese society, and the cultural identity of the Japanese people. As a cultural anthropologist, she aimed to understand Japanese society through culture. Benedict's modelling of the cultural pattern of Japan was widely accepted in Japan. This book was "written for Americans by an American who did not know Japan" (Ishizawa, 1997: 12), and yet remarkably, it became a phenomenal best-seller in Japan.⁴ It was even acclaimed "the original text of post-war *Nihonjinron*" (1997: 12). A number of studies (Ishizawa 1997; Aoki 1999; Funabiki 2010) attribute its extraordinary popularity to the sentiment of lost identity that pervaded post-war Japanese society.

Although *The chrysanthemum and the sword* is widely recognized as the classic text of post-war *Nihonjinron*, the discourse has a longer history beginning with the Meiji Restoration. It is generally agreed that the tradition of *Nihonjinron* literature began in the late nineteenth century. Minami Hiroshi's 1994 study of *Nihonjinron* discourse from the Meiji era to contemporary Japan, covers more than five-hundred publications over a century. As a social psychologist, his primary interest was to understand the self-consciousness of the Japanese people as a nation. To this end, he investigated *Nihonjinron* works that touch upon the issue of nationality or national character. Taking the style of a historical overview, Minami provides critical analysis of representative publications from each period.⁵ He describes the periods in relation to the social sentiment of the particular era, thus providing a comprehensive bibliography

⁴ The Japanese translation was published in 1948. Since then, over 2.3 million copies have been sold.

⁵ The periods are: Meiji, Taisho, Showa (pre-war), Occupation, and contemporary (1960 onwards).

of *Nihonjinron* publications from the Meiji era to the contemporary period. As Minami's scholarship is balanced and judicious, many subsequent *Nihonjinron* studies reference it.

In conclusion, Minami summarizes the eight key arguments endorsed by the *Nihonjinron* legacy as follows:

(i) Although diverse ethnicities constitute Japanese society, since the Meiji era centralising governmental powers combined them to form a single and unified Japanese nation. In this respect, nationality is a historical construction. (ii) Japan's geographical condition led to an insularity that was further entrenched during the three-hundred year Edo era when the "sakoku" [closed country] policy was enforced and foreigners were excluded as "outsiders". (iii) The primordial nationality of Japanese was influenced by foreign civilisation after the Meiji restoration and "crystallised" to form the complex nationality today. (iv) The term "crystallisation" describes the double or multi-layered structure made up of appreciation of the West on one hand and xenophobic thinking on the other. (v) Such crystallised nationality sometimes has eccentric effects such as fascism during the early twentieth century or worshipping the West during the early Meiji. (vi) An uncertain sense of self combined with an authoritarian tendency are at the core of the crystallised Japanese nationality. These factors support the continuance of the emperor system and worship of the West. (vii) In human relationships, the Japanese exhibit a strong tendency for superficiality resulting from their overriding respect for others. This in turn supports groupism and the attendant avoidance of confrontation and conflict between the members of the group. (viii) Today *Nihonjinron* remains prominent due to economic and cultural conflicts. Foreigners view the Japanese as enigmatic. The Japanese hope that *Nihonjinron* will resolve international communication issues (2006: 452-453 trans. T.W.).

According to Minami, Japanese nationality is complex due to a combination of what he describes as the "crystallisation" of its primordial characteristics and the influence of foreign culture. Crystallisation, he argues, has generated particular aspects of Japanese nationality, specifically, and simultaneously, its appreciation of the West and its xenophobia. Most importantly, Minami argues that uncertainty of self "at the core of the crystallised Japanese nationality" (2006: 453) underlines Japan's authoritarian tendency.

Minami defines nationality as “characteristics of consciousness or behaviour that are shared by the majority of people belonging to the Japanese nation” (2006: 1 trans. TW). The national character promoted in *Nihonjinron* discourse is typically invoked as Japaneseness and regarded as the foundation for national identity. Nishikawa observes that *The chrysanthemum and the sword* restores the myth of “nationality” by promoting “patterns of Japanese culture”; and that this myth ensures the book’s continued popularity (1995: 139). He draws on Charles Douglas Lummis’s (1981) argument that due to the ahistorical nature of Benedict’s analysis, he problematically overlooks Japan’s historical transformation and geographical diversity. Furthermore, following Lummis, Minami argues that Benedict’s achievement is not due to her scientific approach but rather to her impressive rhetoric and the crucial role the text has played in setting the ideological terms of the political relationship between post-war Japan and the United States (Minami 2006: 429). In fact the patterns Benedict observed in Japanese society were instilled by the political planners of the Meiji Government and enhanced under the militaristic Showa era (1926-89). It was not a study of Japanese cultural patterns but an ideology endorsed by the state (2006: 429).

Minami proclaims that in order to understand Japanese nationality it is crucial to comprehend the attitude towards the Emperor (2006: 442). After Japan was defeated in World War II the Emperor was no longer regarded as sacred, nevertheless, Minami argues, there was still no open discussion of the emperor system. In his critique of *Nihonjinron*, Minami focuses upon publications that throw light on the general public’s perspective on the Emperor and the emperor system more broadly. Of particular interest are two publications that analyse public surveys of attitudes towards the emperor system: Saito Tetsuo’s *Tenno no Shakai-shinri: Shakaichosa ni miru Minshu no Seishin-kozo* [*Social psychology of the Emperor: the psychological structure of public as revealed by social survey*] (1983), and Araki Moriaki’s *Tenno, Tenno-sei, Hyakusho, Okinawa* [*The Emperor, imperialism, the farmers, Okinawa*] (1989). Both reports document the authoritative disposition of those surveyed. The implication is that the conformist collective character of the general public fosters indirect support for the emperor system. Minami offers detailed accounts of these two publications as below.

In *Tenno no Shakai-shinri*, sociological psychologist Saito reported the findings of surveys conducted in central Tokyo between 1977 and 1978 on the relationship between authoritarianism and the emperor system. According to Minami (2006: 4454-445), Saito found that: (a) the group that supports the emperor system overlaps with the group that admires authoritarianism; (b) the strength of support for the emperor system and authoritarianism are proportionate; and (c) those who support “the emperor as a political or moral symbol” also endorse authoritarianism. Strong adherents of authoritarianism tend to submit to the pressures of authorities. They focus on carrying out orders from authorities rather than knowing the difference between what is good and what is bad. This is because they consider themselves to be agents of the authority and therefore not responsible for their conduct. This, Saito suggests, explains the “irresponsible” manner of the militarists during imperial fascism (Minami 2006: 445).

Another *Nihonjinron* publication introduced by Minami is *Tenno, Tenno-sei, Hyakusho, Okinawa* written by historian Araki, based on his analysis of nationwide media surveys concerning people’s attitudes to the Emperor conducted by major media outlets. He compared how the people’s support for the Emperor and the emperor system differs by regions. According to a 1978 nationwide survey conducted by Nippon Housou Kyoukai (NHK), although 55.7% of those surveyed respected the Emperor, 25.1% did not. The same survey also showed that in Okinawa prefecture, the percentage of those who did not respect the Emperor exceeded those who did. Araki explains that Okinawa was historically unrelated to the emperor system until late the late nineteenth century when it was incorporated by the Meiji government. Other surveys conducted in 1986 by Asahi Shimbun and Yomiuri Shimbun, the two largest nationwide newspapers in Japan, found that those who “respect or feel akin to the emperor” accounted for 57.6% in the Yomiuri survey and 55% in the Asahi survey. On the other hand, those who were indifferent represented 32.8% and 40% in Yomiuri and Asahi respectively. At the same time, however, these surveys reported high support for the symbolic emperor system: 72.4% in the Yomiuri survey and 84% in the Asahi survey. Araki argues that this implies that the emperor system persisted because the people accepted the Emperor

as a symbol of order, conservatism and the ruling class, which explains the authoritarian temperament (Araki cited in Minami 2006: 447).

Funabiki (2010) elaborates further on the authoritarian characteristics described in the above-mentioned texts in his examination of post-war *Nihonjinron*. Funabiki (2010) refers to the radio broadcast of the Emperor's message known as the "Gyokuon-hoso" on 15 August 1945.⁶ He attributes the remarkable effect of this announcement to two factors: first, it was a radio broadcast; and second, it addressed the people as subjects.

The majority of Japanese people had never had an opportunity to listen to the natural voice of the Emperor prior to his 15 August 1945 broadcast. The overwhelming effect of the speech had little to do with the actual content of the Emperor's message to the people. Indeed since the text was written in formal classical Japanese language, it was incomprehensible for many listeners. Funabiki reports that the Emperor's speech was followed by a professional announcer reading the same text, but this incident does not seem to have made a resounding impression upon the people's recollection (2010: 140). Furthermore, due to the poor quality of the radio broadcast, the content of the Emperor's speech was not clearly delivered. Although this is said to have caused further confusion amongst the public, at the same time, many recall the broadcast as the moment when the people realized that the war was over. Funabiki suggests that ordinary people were overridingly excited by the fact that the Emperor addressed them directly, although it was actually a recording (2010: 140).

According to Funabiki, by addressing the people as "subjects" in the Imperial Rescript on Surrender,⁷ the Emperor registered the revision of the "national class system" that had been instituted by the Meiji Constitution. According to this system those who were close to the ruling power were first-class subjects, and the ordinary people were

⁶ Literally translated as the Jewel Voice Broadcast, it was the Emperor's announcement that the Japanese Government had accepted the Potsdam Declaration.

⁷ The original Japanese text was translated into English and broadcasted overseas at the same time. The Japanese term 臣民 (shinmin) [subjects] was coined by the Meiji Government from the Chinese Confucian words 臣(shin) [subjects] and 民 (min) [people].

second-class subjects. However, faced with extinction of the emperor system, the Emperor signalled everyone's equality as subjects by addressing the people directly through a radio broadcast (Funabiki 2010: 142). Funabiki draws on John F. Dower's (1999, trans. 2001) account of "how Japanese people accepted defeat and democracy, after hearing the said radio broadcast" (2010: 143). In this well-known post-war *Nihonjinron* text, Dower observes how Japanese people accepted the "ideal of peace and democracy" under occupation. Funabiki suggests that it was the receptive attitude of the Japanese people that made them susceptible to subjecting themselves to order from above in return for their safety and prosperity.

Lost identity: Westernization and Japanization

Critical studies of the development of *Nihonjinron* agree that this discourse is deeply concerned with Japanese identity (see Befu 1993; Nishikawa 1995; Ishizawa 1997; Sugimoto 1999; and Funabiki 2010, for example). Since the Meiji restoration, there had been an increasing eagerness to understand Japan in relation to the West. Aoki defines *Nihon-bunkaron* (synonymous with *Nihonjinron* but with an explicit focus on culture), as "essentially a discussion of Japanese culture as an object of post-war Japanese identity ... examined in comparison to foreign culture" (1999: 23). In this respect, *The chrysanthemum and the sword* was a symbolic cornerstone of *Nihonjinron* literature. As mentioned above, it provided the comparative model of Japanese culture adopted by subsequent texts in the genre. It also opened the gate for foreign writers' contributions to *Nihonjinron* literature.

Studies of *Nihonjinron* generally agree that Japan's experience of lost identity following the defeat of war was instrumental for its development. Furthermore, the overturn of social values that took place during the Occupation era (1945-51) shaped Japanese nationalism thereafter. From the 1970s to 1980s, *Nihonjinron* was considered "a means of saving Japanese identity which was under threat by Westernization" (Yoshino 2002: 203). It is important to note, however, that the struggle with the West dates back to the Meiji restoration when Japan's modernization began.

According to Nishikawa, although the term *Nihonjinron* came into use over the last couple of decades, the concept of national identity has always been central to the development of the nation or nation state (2003: 26). Referring to Benedict Anderson's account of the nation state as an *imagined community*, Nishikawa argues that as every community is based on unity, it is critical to determine how the unity of a nation state differs from that of other types of communities (2003: 26). To this end, Nishikawa distinguishes five features foundational for the development of the nation state: (i) national borders which delineate political, economical and cultural spaces; (ii) sovereignty; (iii) people as nation⁸; (iv) national apparatus and systems that are vehicles of economic, state, nation and cultural unification; and (v) the World System of nation states (2003: 26-27).⁹

Nishikawa declares that all five conditions underpin national identity. He identifies "people as nation" as most critical, since it directly concerns the concept of identity (2003: 28). He affirms the importance of processes of transformation to notions of nation *and* of identity. Nishikawa's claims that identity should not be considered fixed and, relatedly, that the focus should be on the process of identification are plausible, both from the psycho-analytic stance he takes, but also from a cultural studies point of view (for example, Hall 1990b). More importantly, he contends that like identity, nation is not a fixed entity; it did not exist from the beginning. Historically, people or subjects were transformed into a nation as constituents of a nation state. In order to develop and maintain the nation state, "it was vital to produce/re-produce a new type of people (nation)" (Nishikawa 2003b: 28). In this respect, nationhood was designated legally and ideologically, but also "nationalized" through transformative processes involving time-space, custom, body, language and thought (Nishikawa 2003b: 28).

⁸ According to Nishikawa, the transformation of the people from "subjects" to citizens of the "nation" with equal rights is characteristic of the modern nation state. Thus the nation is not only legally established but its ideological existence is developed by nationalism, national culture and education.

⁹ This is a reference to Immanuel Wallerstein.

As stated above, Nishikawa claims that the proliferation of *Nihonjinron* corresponds with the historical cycle of modernization in Japan after the Meiji Restoration. He describes the phenomenon as the oscillation of “Westernization and Japanization”¹⁰ and contends that the mechanism that produces Westernization and Japanization correlates with the development of nation states (2008: 62). According to Nishikawa, the primary factor contributing to Westernization and Japanization is the expansion of the West since the sixteenth century. In order to avoid being colonised by advanced nations, those nations that were falling behind adopted Westernization policies. Japan’s Meiji government rushed to implement a Westernization policy of modernization as well (Nishikawa 2008: 43). Japanization as nationalization was conceived in parallel to Westernization. Modern nations were developed to establish borders and develop legally equal and homogeneous sovereign territory. The unification of nations by means of education and development of nationalism was essential. It was considered necessary to promote and propagate national symbols, traditions and narratives concerning unique ethnicity, superior tradition and the beauty of natural climate (Nishikawa 2008: 43-44). As Nishikawa claims, such processes led to the development of national identity.

Funabiki (2010) reiterates Nishikawa’s account of the correlation of *Nihonjinron* with Japan’s modernization. He identifies the period between the Sino-Japanese War (1894-5) and the Russo-Japanese War (1904-5) as the first in which *Nihonjinron* thrived. Numerous writings that appealed to national consciousness emerged during the period between the two wars when Japan was faced with a national “risk” (Funabiki 2010: 51). Funabiki selects four representative books published between 1894 and 1906: Shiga Shigetaka’s *Nihon Fukeiron* [*The Japanese landscape*] (1894), Uchimura Kanzo’s *Daihyoteki Nihonjin* [*Japan and the Japanese*] (1894), Nitobe Inazo’s *Bushido* [*Bushido: the soul of Japan*] (1900), and Okakura Tenshin’s *Cha no Hon* [*The book of tea*] (1906). He observes that although they are distinguished by themes and genres, they share some characteristics.

¹⁰ In Japanese, 欧化と回帰 [ouka to kaiki] literally meaning, Westernization and return (to Japan). Sugimoto defines the term Nihon kaiki as “a form of intellectual conversion from internationalism to Japanism” (1999: 84)

Funabiki analyses those shared characteristics by investigating: (i) who; (ii) when; (iii) to whom; and (iv) how, these books were written (2003: 76). He points out that the four authors belong to the same generation. They wrote these books in their thirties between the Russo-Japanese and Sino-Japanese wars. They were also members of a highly-educated elite who had studied overseas. Three of the books were written and published in English, whereas one adopted a literary Japanese style modeled on classical Chinese writing. In light of the writers' backgrounds, Funabiki assumes that they were conscious of how Japan was perceived overseas and that they wished to challenge both the myth of the advanced civilisation of the West, and other countries' perceptions of Japan.

Funabiki argues that these texts were written to address two kinds of uncertainties that Japanese identity faced at the time (2010: 79): the perception that Japan was underdeveloped by comparison to Western countries; and the sense that Japan needed to demonstrate the legitimacy of the Russo-Japanese War and Sino-Japanese War to morally justify its victories (2010: 79). According to Funabiki, *Nihon Fukeiron* and *Daihyoteki Nihonjin* were written to challenge other countries's poor estimation of Japan, whereas *Bushido* and *Cha no Hon* sought to establish Japanese culture and spirit as equal to the West.

Nihonjinron discourse contributed to the development of Japanese national identity, particularly during its modernization. The issues of Westernization and internalisation, perennial *Nihonjinron* themes, reflect Japan's constant struggle with the West as the paradigmatic representative of advanced civilisation. Furthermore, it exhibits Japan's need to establish national identity on both fronts: to be recognized by the West, and to maintain the self-esteem of a unique nation. As Nishikawa (1995) points out, its indivisible connection to war is problematic. Not only did *Nihonjinron* publications contribute to nation-building in times of war, but history shows that *Nihonjinron* thrives when there is a need for enhanced national identity (Funabiki 2010; Minami 2006). As a result, ultra-nationalistic *Nihonjinron* flourished during the period of internalisation (Nishikawa 1995: 183), which Minami (2006) describes as "fascist *Nihonjinron*".

Ideology and nationalism of *Nihonjinron*: myth of Japaneseness

Given that *Nihonjinron* flourished in the quest for Japanese identity, it is important to investigate how it was employed in assimilating cultural identity into national identity. A key culprit here seems to be the notion of “Japaneseness”. Scholars agree that the notion of Japaneseness is central to *Nihonjinron* (Befu 1993; Sugimoto 1999), and define it as “an explicit articulation of the discourse of Japaneseness” (Lie 2001: 150). In particular, *Nihonjinron* assumes that every Japanese person possesses such Japaneseness. Sugimoto proclaims that the notion of Japaneseness is used interchangeably with Japanese culture, and that such culture connotes Japanese ethnic culture (1999: 82). As mentioned earlier, such interchange of ethnicity and culture together with nationality supports Sugimoto’s contention that *Nihonjinron* discourse extensively utilizes the N=E=C [Nationality, Ethnicity and Culture] equation.

As noted, Japaneseness often implies a homogeneous group identity. The problem is that such notions of identity are susceptible to the ideology of cultural nationalism (see Befu 1993; Yoshino 2002). Furthermore, as Lie contends, “Homogeneity and constancy characterize typological categories, which imply essential identities” (2001: 159). He maintains that *Nihonjinron* is founded on typological thinking, that is, the generalization of people, culture and identity (2001: 159). His study shows that such generalization falls short both as a theoretical concept and as empirical investigation (for further discussion see Lie 2001). Therefore, he argues that the idea of Japaneseness or any other national characteristic, is “an empty and floating signifier” (2001: 160) devoid of anything essential.

The discourse of Japaneseness is a palimpsest on which many contradictory things can be noted. The distinguishing quality of Japanese can be rice, the flag, or Mt. Fuji. Needless to say, many cultures eat rice, all nation-states have a flag of their own, many of which in turn look suspiciously similar, and several mountains resemble Mt. Fuji. If rice doesn’t really distinguish Japanese from other peoples, then Mt. Fuji does. If Mt. Fuji seems a rather hollow source of distinction for Japanese people, then perhaps they are remarkable for their

loyalty and militarism. The point is that something can always be adduced to prove the categorical distinction of Japanese from others. (Lie 2001: 160)

The pursuit of Japaneseness, or Japanese identity as conformist ethnocentric culture, has played a significant role in the development of cultural nationalism over recent decades. Critical studies of *Nihonjinron* identify the connection between this discourse and nationalism. In order to identify the tie between cultural identity and national identity, the ideological myth of Japaneseness embedded in *Nihonjinron* must be critically reviewed. Befu pronounces that “*Nihonjinron* is a type of nationalism ... It is a doctrine and a myth about the constitution of Japanese culture, people, and history, constructed particularly to prove ... Japan’s difference from the West, if not from the rest of the world” (1993: 126). Furthermore, he points to how the cultural construction of *Nihonjinron* is bolstered by perception and belief. He is particularly critical of the “conscious decision” of *Nihonjinron* writers to represent a certain conceptual stance (1993: 126). Studies point out that *Nihonjinron* discourses often ignore internal variations within Japan including minority issues and regional differences in order to foster national integration (e.g., Nishikawa 1995; Morris-Suzuki 1998; Lie 2001).

In addition to its attachment to nationalism, it is important to note that *Nihonjinron* is an ideological discourse. As Befu contends, “It is an ideology ... in that it not merely ‘describes’ the constructed world view, but prescribes what is normatively right and therefore how one should conduct oneself” (1993: 126). Befu explains that *Nihonjinron* sets normative standards as moral imperatives and disparages those who do not conform as “un-Japanese” (1993: 116). This dismissive approach recalls the expression *hi-kokumin*, literally meaning “un-national” with the connotation of “traitor”, which was used to reprimand those who were un-patriotic during wartime. Befu asserts that *Nihonjinron* provides “prescriptions of behaviour” thus conveniently providing hegemonic terms ready for the government to exploit (1993: 118). Yoshino’s study (2002) shows that corporate establishments that benefit from the ruling ideology support the scheme by disseminating it.

Through his analysis of the nation-state and national culture including the role played by *Nihonjinron* theory, Nishikawa (1995, 1996, 2001) offers compelling views on the ideological effect of culture and its implications for national identity. Following from his assertion that civilisation and culture operate as ideologies that aid national integration (Nishikawa 2001: 272), he explains that both concepts were introduced in the effort to develop Japan into a modern nation state following the Western model.¹¹ Furthermore, he contends “to the extent that the nation state exists, a national culture will be necessary as an ideology to integrate it” (Nishikawa 1996: 245).

Nishikawa maintains that nation is defined by “race, physical similarity, religion, language, cultural tradition, etc. – in short, by cultural characteristics” (1996: 247). He argues that there is no nation that fulfils such cultural characteristics and that “It is gradually becoming clear, through observing ethnic problems in almost every region on the earth, that “nation” is a fiction of the nation-state era” (Nishikawa 1996: 247). Nevertheless, at the same time, he is concerned that while the concept of nation seems to sway, the idea of national culture encapsulated in *Nihonjinron* discourse continues to thrive.

As mentioned above, the concept of national culture is gradually losing ground as a result of historical findings on the fictitious nature of “nation” and “ethnic group” (Nishikawa 2001: 289). As the continued popularity of *Nihonjinron* corroborates, the notion of national culture is well sustained in Japan. Nishikawa draws on Kato Norihiro’s analysis of the multilayered structure of Japanese culture to demonstrate how a homogeneous “Japanese” nation was constructed. According to Kato (1998), the item “Japanese” is defined as a notion of Japaneseness supported by a multilayered structure accumulated over time. First, the Japanese (people) were defined as residents of the Japanese Archipelago and categorized as a racial group with distinctive characteristics. By inventing the Japanese language, they were established as cultural subjects through language and ethnicity and became members of a nation state (cited in

¹¹ Words such as civilisation 文明 (bunmei) and culture 文化 (bunka) were translated from western languages into Japanese language during the Meiji era.

Nishikawa 2001: 290-291). While Nishikawa acknowledges various historical analyses of these issues, he highlights how Kato offers a way of challenging entrenched preconceptions about Japaneseness and Japanese culture.

The multilayered condition Kato proposes confirms Sugimoto's thesis that in *Nihonjinron* nationality, ethnicity and culture are equated. As stated earlier, Sugimoto condemns how *Nihonjinron* discourse applies the notion of Japaneseness to Japanese culture and assumes, without demographic clarification, that Japanese *ethnic culture* and Japanese race are established concepts (1999: 82). Although, as various studies stress, race and ethnicity are scientifically unfounded concepts, there is an overlap between nation and ethnic group, as the polysemous Japanese term *minzoku* indicates.

Above all, it is important to challenge the "myth" of the nation-state that demands "a homogeneous culture which excludes other cultures" (Nishikawa 1995: 204). The most conspicuous Japanese example of this myth is the *tanitsu minzoku* [single nation, single ethnicity] tenet that was advocated enthusiastically during the 1980s and still pervades Japanese society. It is widely known that former Prime Minister Nakasone was a strong proponent and that during and after his political regime he supported the ethnic approach to Japanese identity encapsulated in the slogan "purity and homogeneity" (Burgess, 2004). The debates over single ethnicity and the insufficient scientific evidence for it are detailed in other literature (Befu 1993; Morris-Suzuki 1998; Sugimoto 1999; Lie 2001). Undoubtedly, *Nihonjinron* played a critical role in propagating the "single nation, single ethnicity" myth in Japan,¹² supporting the central government's advocacy of the uniqueness of ethnically Japanese culture in order to endorse nationalism.

The launch of the International Research Center for Japanese Studies in 1987 provides further evidence for the ideological role played by *Nihonjinron* in establishing Japanese identity. Although the vital mission of this government-funded research institute is

¹² Befu asserts that '*Nihonjinron* has been promoted as sources for Japanese cultural and national identity' (1993: 117).

ostensibly to study Japanese culture and history and to support international cooperation between specialists in Japan and those overseas, it was criticised for its close association with then Prime Minister Nakasone and his political agenda. Minami cites Iwasaki Chikatsugu's criticism that the researchers appointed at the Center were protectionists of the emperor system (2004: 313). Iwasaki argues that Prime Minister Nakasone promoted the New Nationalism ideology intending to connect the idea of an international nation with Japanese identity. Iwasaki adds that in order to support his agenda Nakasone planned to create Japanology or Japan Studies by synthesizing Japanese culture as a whole. Iwasaki explicitly mentions this vision of Japanese identity was projected in order to enhance the ideology of the emperor system. In this light it is relevant that Umehara Takeshi, the first Director of the Institute, repeatedly stated that the Emperor symbolizes Japanese identity (Minami 2006: 313).¹³

As the definition of hegemony, Chris Barker explains, "there is a strand of meanings within any given culture that can be called governing or ascendant. [It entails t]he process of making, maintaining and reproducing this authoritative set of meanings, ideologies and practices" (2004: 84). *Nihonjinron* fits this definition. The "strand of meanings" supported by *Nihonjinron* is the *tanitsu minzoku* [single nation, single ethnicity] myth. As Oguma Eiji (2002) contests, this "myth of ethnic homogeneity" and the self-image of Japan as homogeneous society was a construction of the post-war discourse.

¹³ Umehara Takeshi studied philosophy at Kyoto University and is known for his prolific writings on Japanese culture, religion and philosophy.

Chapter Two

Japanese Cultural Studies: a new critical resource?

Introduction

Since *Nihonjionron* is a hegemonic discourse fostering Japanese ethnocentrism and cultural nationalism, it is critical to establish alternative approach to the concept of Japaneseness. This thesis aims to identify and describe an emergent contemporary Japanese identity that is resistant to the hegemonic notion of conformist collective national identity. Cultural Studies will be examined as an alternative method of analysing this issue. The focus is not upon speculating upon whether or not Cultural Studies could become an established academic discipline in Japan, but upon understanding the potential effect of this “new knowledge movement” (Wallerstein 2004: 21) for a society that is under the influence of the myth of Japaneseness.

Japan made a phenomenal recovery following its defeat in the Pacific War. Its lack of positionality, indeed its “facelessness” in the international community, however, has been repeatedly cited within and outside the country. Many relate this lack of identity to the post-war syndrome caused by the drastic change in social and moral values, which still pervades Japanese society. Kang (Kang & Morisu 2002) observes that contemporary Japanese national identity is comprised of economic identity and cultural identity, since the nation was deprived of political identity following the war. As discussed in chapter one, national identity in Japan resorts to an ethnocentric cultural nationalism. It is problematic that the homogeneous model of collectivity allows little space for an alternative perspective. Japan needs to reconstruct its identity, in order to counteract this pervasive social amnesia and escape from persisting cultural nationalism.

This chapter assesses whether Cultural Studies offers a sufficiently robust alternative perspective. Whereas Cultural Studies is an unmistakably Western discipline which first emerged as British Cultural Studies, it has developed as a discourse in Japan over the course of last few decades. The outlook for a distinctly Japanese approach to

Cultural Studies is promising, at least in part, as a movement connecting the academic sphere and the public sphere evolves. Its limit as a critical resource is evident, however, since Cultural Studies has failed to establish itself as an academic discipline in the higher education system in Japan. While the field of publishing is a possible avenue, its development elsewhere as a movement of “academic activism” is yet to be realized in the Japanese case.

In what follows, the relevance, and failures, of Cultural Studies shall be explored by examining: (i) the historical development and the current status of Cultural Studies in Japan; (ii) addressing issues specific to Japanese Cultural Studies; and, (iii) investigating the Cultural Typhoon movement as a possible resource for future development (particularly after the Nuclear power accident in Fukushima on 11 March 2011).

The development of Cultural Studies in Japan

This section will examine the development of Cultural Studies in Japan in the milieu of post-war society. In order to distinguish the distinct character of Japanese Cultural Studies the development of this intellectual movement in Japan will be compared with its development in Anglophone countries over the same period.

British Cultural Studies was first introduced to Japan in the 1960s when the country was recovering from its defeat in World War II. The political legacy of this period was a certain political hollowness characterized by a single-minded focus upon industrialisation and economic growth. During this period, Japan was eager to re-introduce philosophical studies and new intellectual movements from the West. This was the context for the “discovery” of Cultural Studies. From the 1960s key works of New Left intellectuals, such as Raymond Williams, were available in Japanese translation (Sato 2000: 19). The list of books and their publication dates confirm that

foundational left-wing intellectual texts were available in Japan soon after their original publication.¹⁴

Although class divisions are not as distinct in Japan as Britain, nonetheless Marxism provided strong intellectual and the theoretical foundations for this field. Sato Takeshi observes that “[t]he critical research of pre-war and post-war Japanese philosophers and thinkers [activists such as Maruyama, Tosaka, Nakai and others] is rich in material which can today be articulated as Cultural Studies” (2000: 17). In addition to Japan’s aspiration to learn from Western industrialised countries, the concept of working-class culture was accommodated without difficulty at this point in history, since hierarchical value was largely lost in post-war Japanese society.

In the 1980s Cultural Studies became a keyword in media communications and popular culture analysis. This was closely associated with the mood of the time, later described as the bubble-economy. Consumer capitalism accompanied by intense materialism prevailed as a result of Japan’s phenomenal economic growth. At the same time, Japanese culture was highly influenced by the overwhelming influx of American culture. In this climate the thriving advertising and communications industries embraced Cultural Studies as an intellectual discourse largely associated with post-modernism. As Yoshimi sums up, “[c]ultural studies, prevalent throughout the 1980s, was absorbed into the commercial discourse with the fashionable trend of post-modernism” (1998: 68). In the process Cultural Studies was reduced to a mode of audience study for media in a controversial “populist” manner. By placing an unwarranted emphasis on the polysemy of textual reading, such analysis dismissed the political dimension (Yoshimi 1998), thus having the adverse effect of depoliticizing Cultural Studies in Japan.

¹⁴ Some of the main single-volume works translated include: Tamura, ed., (1962) *Bunka kakushin no viji* [A vision of cultural change translation of Anthology from New Left Reader]; Fukuda et al., trans., (1963) *Atarashii sayoku – seijiteki mukanshin kara no dasshutsu* [The new left: escape from political apathy translation of Out of apathy]; Tachihara trans., (1969) *Komyu-nikeshon* [Communication]; Wakamatsu and Hasegawa trans., (1968) *Bunka to shakai, 1780-1950* [Culture and society, 1780-1950]; Kouchi trans., (1974) *Yomikaki noryoku no koyo* [The uses of literacy]; Wakamatsu trans., (1983) *Nagai kakumei* [The long revolution]; Koike trans., (1985) *Bunka to wa* [Culture].

Although it would take another decade or so for Cultural Studies to be accepted at Japanese universities, the entrenchment of this intellectual movement in Anglophone countries influenced the later development of the discourse in Japan, albeit indirectly. Ueno Toshiya and Mouri Yoshitaka suggest that the establishment of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS)¹⁵ at the University of Birmingham was instrumental to the dispersal of the discipline (2002a: 74). A number of Japanese researchers who later became engaged with Cultural Studies first encountered the field overseas. Interestingly the diffusion of British Cultural Studies provided unexpected opportunities elsewhere, and eventually provided a foothold for Japanese Cultural Studies.

The year 1996 is pivotal to the development of Cultural Studies in Japan as it is the year of the first International Cultural Studies conference in Japan. Held in Tokyo, this conference was a joint effort by the members of the Institute of Socio-Information and Communication Studies of the University of Tokyo and their UK counterparts.¹⁶ Not only was this the first such specifically Cultural Studies meeting organized in Japan, it was also a vital moment for many in the field, since it was attended by Stuart Hall and other distinguished British scholars. The event had considerable influence on the scope and significance of the field as it developed in Japan.

As the title “Dialogue with Cultural Studies” underscores, this conference aimed to foster dialogue between researchers from Japan and the UK. Although it was clear that Japan was in a receptive position—as apprentice or new-comer—the organizers sought to establish intellectual exchange on an equal basis, in spite of the British origins of the discipline. The convenors intended:

a meeting of Cultural Studies which was developed in the historical, political and sociological context of Great Britain and the studies of culture that has been attempted over

¹⁵ Founded in 1964 by Richard Hoggart, CCCS played a central role in the study of British Cultural Studies until 2002 when it was closed.

¹⁶ The British Council was the mediator, see: Hanada et al., eds., *Cultural Studies to no taiwa* [Dialogue with Cultural Studies], 1999.

various issues such as media, popular mass culture, gender, nation and colonialism, within the historical, political and sociological contexts of Japan and Asia. (Hanada 1999: 17)

It was a dialogue between Japanese researchers and international guests, but one that also facilitated dialogue between Japanese scholars from various fields within Japan. One of the reasons scholars from diverse disciplines were invited was due to a shortage of Cultural Studies scholars in Japan at the time. The participation of academics from an extensive range of disciplines including sociology, anthropology, literature, history, political science, gender studies, media communications etc., proved highly successful and influenced the development of the field in Japan thereafter. Many researchers reported that they were pleasantly surprised to discover that people in other disciplines were asking the same questions. Young researchers, in particular, found the occasion inspiring, since conventional study group meetings had not allowed a space for vigorous interdisciplinary dialogue hitherto. Such exchange and inter-personal relationships shaped the progress of the project over the past decade. Furthermore, young researchers who were disappointed with the outcome of the symposium sought to organize their own project, which led to the establishment of the Cultural Typhoon movement (discussed below).

Limits and possibilities of Cultural Studies

Cultural studies was then, and has been ever since, an adaptation to its terrain; it has been a conjunctural practice. It has always developed from a different matrix of interdisciplinary studies and disciplines. (Hall 1990a: 11)

The success of “Dialogue with Cultural Studies” in establishing Japanese Cultural Studies can be attributed to maintaining its inter-disciplinary quality. This phenomenon was similar to the early years at CCCS. According to Hall:

It was never a question of which disciplines would contribute to the development of this field, but of how one could decenter or destabilize a series of interdisciplinary fields. We had to

respect and engage with the paradigms and traditions of knowledge and of empirical and concrete work in each of these disciplinary areas (1990a: 16)

Indeed, for Cultural Studies to make progress in Japan, it was crucial that it be inclusive rather than independent. When Cultural Studies began at Birmingham, it did not aim to replace traditional disciplines, rather “[it] sought to ‘open’ the field of knowledge to new possibilities” (Wallerstein 2004: 22).

“Dialogue with Cultural Studies” also initiated critical “transgressions” that shaped the future direction of Cultural Studies in Japan. Significantly it fostered attempts to transgress the perceived distinction between “national” and “national culture”. Thus it strove to establish not only “a critical approach towards nationalism or nationalistic discourse in everyday life, but also to unmask the ideological nature of such discourses purporting to ‘Japanese culture’” (Hanada, & Yoshimi 1999: 25). At the same time, it sought to maintain a global perspective sensitive to gender and ethnicity issues, as well as media communications. The aim was to avoid delimiting the project to “radical attacks” on the nation-state or cultural discourses of nation-state (Hanada & Yoshimi 1999: 25), and thus to remain open to broader discussions with a global focus.

While the above approach was successful groundwork for establishing Cultural Studies in Japan, it presented some problems. The interdisciplinary approach made it difficult for this project to be accepted as an academic discipline. As discussed below, although the critical perspective on culture was elaborated in various publications, it did not gain a foothold within higher education. The attention was directed to media communications and gender studies, owing to increased interest in those subject areas.

A further border the conference sought to transgress was that between “knowledge within the university and outside the academic community”. Cultural Studies was presented as “a new theoretical means of resistance for the marginalized” (Hanada & Yoshimi 1999: 26 trans. T.W.), in other words as a theoretical framework for political and cultural struggles. These aims followed those of the founders of British Cultural Studies. In the 1950s British Cultural Studies was closely associated with the New Left and their works were intended to remain outside the academy. Nonetheless, while

the significance of a theory that aims to reach beyond the academy is sustainable, the prospects for “activism” are regrettably grim in Japanese society. For instance, the annual Cultural Typhoon conference features a “political and cultural performance” segment in addition to discussions by researchers; however, its social impact within Japan seems minimal.

One area that holds potential for the development of Japanese Cultural Studies is publishing. Japan is known for its high literacy with 99% of the total population considered literate (OECD 2002). Therefore, publishing is a major industry with significant social influence. For example, a best-seller in 2003, *Baka no Kabe* [*The wall of a fool*] written by Yoro Takeshi, a former Professor at the University of Tokyo, achieved record-breaking sales of 3.95 million copies¹⁷ and became the top-selling paperback in the culture and education genre in post-war Japan. As stated in Chapter one, the discourse on Japaneseness – *Nihonjinron* or *Nihonbunka-ron* – was popularized through successful publishing. In other words, not only was the discourse of Japaneseness distributed widely to many readers, but the “myth” it promulgated further permeated society as readers discussed what they had read with others. Therefore, considering the above, publishing is a highly effective way to contribute to development of a cultural sphere in Japan. While, in general, academic publications are not expected to become best-sellers, the publishing success of *Nihonjinron* genre or books such as *Baka no Kabe* shows that Japanese readers are very interested to know more and to improve their understanding of social matters.

The “walls” in Yoro’s book describe the barriers people encounter every day “amid the shifting relationships between men and women, parents and children, older and younger generations, as well as between Japan and the world’s political uncertainties” (Ashby, 2004). This along with its “catchy title”, Ashby poses, are reasons for its long-standing popularity (2004). Although Oguma’s *Tan’istu minzoku shinwa no kigen* [*A genealogy of Japanese self-images*] (1995) did not achieve huge sales, this award-winning academic work dealing with the myth of the origin of Japanese received

¹⁷ As of April, 2005 (*Asahi* newspaper, 14 May, 2005).

wide attention. It sold over 20,000 copies, which is astounding for an academic title in the humanities and social sciences.

According to David Askew, Oguma's English translator, the main theme of *A genealogy of 'Japanese' self-images*, as the English version is called, "is the discourse on the modern Japanese national identity" (2004). By examining what pre-war and post-war intellectuals have to say about Japanese ethnicity, Oguma debunks the myth that Japan is a homogeneous nation. As Askew observes, "The debate on national identity took place in a large number of fields. Oguma covers areas including (ancient) history, anthropology, archaeology, ethnology, eugenics, folklore, linguistics and philosophy, to obtain an overview of how a variety of authors ... dealt with the theme of ethnicity" (2004). Although Oguma does not identify himself as a Cultural Studies scholar, his work is indirectly influenced by Cultural Studies. His book carries the traits of classic Cultural Studies, not only in its subject matter, but also its approach.

In light of the historical development and current status of Cultural Studies in Japan, it is reasonable to conclude that this particular field is still in the development stage. The prospects for establishing Cultural Studies as an academic discipline that contests cultural hegemony of Japaneseness seems limited. Its contribution to the public sphere, however, is relevant to the interests of this thesis.

Cultural Studies in the Japanese academic system

It was always in a critical relation to the very theoretical paradigms out of which it grew and to the concrete studies and practices it was attempting to transform. So, in that sense, cultural studies is not one thing; it has never been one thing. (Hall 1990a: 11)

Tamari Tomoko observes that "Cultural Studies in Japan has been attacked and pushed to the peripheries of intellectual life in disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, history, geography and literary studies" (2006a: 294). She identifies the following

typical criticisms: 1) a lack of disciplinary coherence which implies Cultural Studies' short falling as an academic field; 2) a political correctness resulting from its limited scope on ethnic, gender and post-colonial angles; 3) a narrow focus on popular culture; 4) a tendency to become a collection of cultural indices without analysis; and 5) a tendency to undervalue socio-cultural politics in real life.

While subject issues such as gender, post-colonialism and popular culture were successfully grounded, and developed, in gender studies, post-colonial studies and popular/sub-culture studies; it appears that Cultural Studies' aim to be both academic and practical inhibited its establishment as an academic discipline. In particular, two areas must be further explored in order to understand the specific circumstances of the reception of Cultural Studies in Japan, namely: (i) the interdisciplinary character of Cultural Studies; and (ii) the institutionalisation of Cultural Studies in Japan. These topics are interrelated, for the interdisciplinary nature of the field partly explains why it was not "properly" institutionalised here. At the same time, since it was not institutionalised, Cultural Studies retained its critical relation to the theoretical paradigms Hall identifies in his 1990 essay on the development of Cultural Studies.

Considering that British Cultural Studies was first conceived at the University of Birmingham's Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) as a challenge to, and departure from, from the academy (Turner 1990; Barker 2000), it is not surprising that Cultural Studies was not readily accepted at Japanese universities. As Fabian Schäfer explains, "*resistance* towards the new intellectual practice of Cultural Studies" (2009: 30) was bi-directional within the academy. While conservative academics denounced it as an imported foreign intellectual tradition, adherents of postmodernism, itself a new approach in Japan at this time, were unwilling to accept Cultural Studies' novel attempts to combine Marxism and semiotics with postmodernism (Schäfer 2009: 30). Particularly, "What was acutely lacking in cultural semiotics in Japan was the forging of links between semiotic textual analysis and questions of relations of power" (Yoshimi 1998: 68). Semiotics was confined to media and communication studies, while Cultural Studies was categorized as a semi-academic discipline and portrayed as the popular study of sub-cultures. Such indifference in academic circles is confirmed by

the fact that neither an academic society for Cultural Studies nor a journal devoted to the field were established over the past three decades in Japan.

Although adverse circumstances prevented Cultural Studies from becoming established as an independent academic discipline, there was a multi-disciplinary approach to Cultural Studies in Japan that contributed to its development. As the 1996 International Symposium “Dialogue with Cultural Studies” demonstrated, participants were primarily drawn from sociology and political science, and their fields of expertise ranged from cultural theory, media and communication studies, gender studies, history, anthropology and political science. In addition, Schäfer holds, Japan’s economic and political condition—prolonged recession after the collapse of the bubble economy and turn towards neoliberal politics alongside growing nationalism—paved the way for the “internal cohesion” of scholars and disciplines (2009: 29). Therefore she contends:

one can assume that the adoption of CS in Japan was to a lesser extent determined by a common disciplinary orientation of its proponents, but was rather accomplished by the common search for a trans-disciplinary and critical intellectual perspective on contemporary politics of culture. (Schäfer 2009: 29)

Although the 1996 Symposium was instrumental in triggering a Cultural Studies boom in Japan (Yoshimi 2010a: 8), it failed to establish Cultural Studies as a Japanese academic discipline. Schäfer’s observation that “Cultural Studies in Japan ... remained a loose network, a movement or a ‘screen’ that did not assume the shape of an academic discipline” (2009: 29) is critical in understanding the status of the field. At the same time, however, Cultural Studies’ lack of academic standing in Japan may be responsible for the unique character of Japanese Cultural Studies (in particular the Cultural Typhoon movement, see below).

As an academic discipline Cultural Studies was surrounded by uncertainty, yet it received much attention from the publishing industry. Due to a widespread interest in Western intellectual movements and theories in Japan, the number of publications related to Cultural Studies rose steadily. As mentioned above, the canon of literature in the field was published in Japanese translation from as early as the 1960s.

Furthermore, in early 2000 a number of publishers released books in Japanese to introduce Cultural Studies as an academic discipline, or to guide the ‘practice’ of Cultural Studies (for e.g. Yoshimi 2001, 2003; Ueno & Mouri 2002a, 2002b, Motohashi 2002a). Scholars such as Yoshimi Shunya and Motohashi Tetsuya who had participated in the 1996 Symposium wrote multiple books elucidating the subject for the benefit of Japanese students and other interested readers. They were joined by young researchers, such as Ueno Toshiya, Mouri Yoshitaka, Iwabuchi Koichi and others, who had returned to Japan after studying Cultural Studies overseas. Furthermore, books that apply a broadly Cultural Studies approach to issues of nationalism, globalization, ethnicity and post-colonialism, proliferated.¹⁸ It is conceivable that the multi-disciplinary nature of Japanese Cultural Studies contributed to the broad dissemination of Cultural Studies. Although, unfortunately, many of these scholars do not acknowledge the influence of Cultural Studies on their work.

Yoshimi explains that the development of Cultural Studies in Japan was distinct from that of other Asian countries not only due to the multi-disciplinary characteristics of Cultural Studies but the “high level of autonomy” (2010b: 277) of the Japanese educational system.¹⁹ He points out that traditionally, in Japan, the humanities were heavily influenced by French and German theory and since Cultural Studies originated in the U.K. and U.S. it was given little attention (Yoshimi 2010b: 276).

According to Yoshimi (2010b), the issue of autonomy is unique to the Japanese situation. It manifests in the universities which remain influenced by the pre-war system when Japan was the regional imperial power. As an example, he points out that the Japanese academic calendar starts in April. It was introduced following the Russo-Japanese War in order to accommodate the military recruitment and public accountancy term. Not only do former imperial universities, such as the University of

¹⁸ For example, a major bookstore chain Junkudo have a shelf devoted to Cultural Studies. Junkudo’s online store offers over 1,000 titles under cultural studies, including Japanese translations.

¹⁹ Korea, Singapore, Taiwan and Hong Kong.

Tokyo, uphold this legacy, but so do the majority of public and private universities.²⁰ Likewise, new fields of research or disciplines are absorbed or integrated among the existing departments at those former imperial universities. This suggests why Cultural Studies was not established as an independent discipline at those universities.

Furthermore, Japanese intellectual “autonomy” is a function of the status of Japanese language publication. According to Yoshimi, until recently, Japanese academic publishing was self-sufficient and therefore there was little incentive for scholars to seek publication in English or any language other than Japanese. He attributes the self-sufficiency of the Japanese language in the academy and academic publishing, to the insular characteristics of the Japanese university system. Whether intended or not, there is an “invisible” barrier that discourses of foreign origins must traverse in order to infiltrate the Japanese academic system.

In light of these circumstances, Yoshimi observes that “the much-criticized ‘institutionalization’ of Cultural Studies in the English-speaking world has hardly even begun in Japan” (2010b: 278). On the other hand, Ueno (2009) identifies a tendency to industrialise and institutionalise Cultural Studies within the Japanese academy. He finds that this is related to the market-oriented competition introduced to the higher education system globally. In Ueno’s view, since the field of humanities is suffering under this market-oriented system, Cultural Studies has become a useful resource for so-called “university reform” (2009: 3). He denounces the adoption of Cultural Studies as a tool providing accessible concepts to analyse internationalization and cultural diversity.

Yoshimi and Ueno appear to disagree over the institutionalisation of Cultural Studies in Japanese universities, yet their concerns effectively address the issue of Cultural Studies in Japan. While Yoshimi points out the “inertia” of prestigious universities, Ueno’s

²⁰ According to research conducted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, approximately 70% of universities in 215 countries worldwide, start their academic calendar in September or October, and only 7 countries start in April (NHK Jiron-Koron 18 January, 2012). <<http://www.nhk.or.jp/kaisetsu-blog/100/106813.html>> viewed 5 September 2012).

dissatisfaction is directed towards the private higher-education institutions which constitute the majority.²¹ The issue of “inertia” at highly-regarded educational institutions echoes the “resistance” Schäfer mentions (2009). Cultural Studies is being excluded primarily because of its foreign origins. Although the University of Tokyo was the site of the monumental International Symposium in 1996, it has failed to lead the grounding of this newly introduced discipline in the academy. At the same time, as Ueno (2009) deplores, Cultural Studies is viewed reductively as a popular trend with appealing elements such as internationalization and popular culture studies.

Both Yoshimi and Ueno regard the treatment of Cultural Studies at Japanese universities as inappropriate yet they are not uncritical of Cultural Studies as a field. Ueno (2009) pronounces that Cultural Studies has played its role. It was meaningful from the latter half of the 1970s to the early 1990s, when addressing culture, or actively engaging with mass-culture or sub-cultures, was recognized as display of resistance. He finds, however, that the critical or political approach faded following the market capitalisation and commodification of culture of the mid-1990s. For Ueno, the issue of institutionalisation exemplifies the market-oriented trends that have taken grip of the universities, scholars and researchers.

Although Ueno’s concern over the institutionalisation of Cultural Studies cannot be dismissed, the 1990s were undeniably also the beginning of this discipline in Japan. By reviewing the outcome of the 1996 International Symposium and subsequent trends, the role of Cultural Studies in Japan shall be further explored. As mentioned earlier, this particular event was pivotal for its influence on diverse fields of scholars (S. Kang, N. Sakai, R. Narita, C. Ueno etc.) who participated. Although Cultural Studies did not become established as an independent academic discipline, its interdisciplinary progress supported a uniquely Japanese development named Cultural Typhoon. In what follows, the development of this movement and its possible contribution to the formation of a public sphere shall be discussed.

²¹ According to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, there are 86 national universities, 77 public universities and 595 private universities in Japan (2010).

Cultural Typhoon: connecting academic sphere and public sphere

As mentioned above, one of the epoch-making incidents in the trajectory of Cultural Studies in Japan was the University of Tokyo conference entitled “A Dialogue with Cultural Studies” which took place in 1996 (Tamari 2006a and 2006b; Schäfer 2009; Yoshimi 2000). This landmark conference was the first large-scale international Cultural Studies meeting in Japan.²² The invited speakers included key figures in British Cultural Studies at the time such as Stuart Hall, David Morley and Angela McRobbie. In order to establish a constructive dialogue with Japanese critical intellectuals in the field, scholars spanning from cultural history, gender studies to postcolonial studies participated including Ueno Chizuko, Komori Yoichi, Tomiyama Ichiro, and Sang-Jung Kang (Tamari 2006b: 305).

Conference organiser Yoshimi explains that one of the objectives was to change how Cultural Studies was perceived in Japan at that time. In the early 1990s, Cultural Studies was discussed mainly in mass communication studies as a variety of audience studies (Yoshimi 2003). This was partly due to the thriving fields of media and communication studies inspired by textual theory and semiotics influenced by French structuralism and post-structuralism. The popularity of Hall’s “encoding/decoding model” published in 1980 also contributed (Tamari 2006a). By making the conference an interdisciplinary forum rather than one that focused exclusively on media and communication studies, the organisers’ aim to offer a broader view of Cultural Studies was achieved. As a result of this conference, Cultural Studies gained proper recognition as more than a variety of audience studies. As Yoshimi explains:

Cultural studies was able to problematize the dynamics between discourses and subjects and between texts and contexts along with introducing a variety of types of knowledges around cultural practices. After 1996, cultural studies in Japan went beyond mass communication studies (cited in Tamari 2006b: 305).

²² It was held over four days and attended by over 800 delegates.

Although the 1996 conference played a vital role in the development of Cultural Studies in Japan, it had problems. Yoshimi (2010b) admits that there were two main areas of concern. The first was a criticism of the organizers raised by students who had participated in the preparatory workshops for the conference. The students had considered themselves lead players in the conference, but were bitterly disappointed that the panellists were all established academics rather than young researchers. Second, the scope of the conference was limited to establishing a dialogue between British cultural theorists and Japanese scholars. Despite the fact that it was the first large international Cultural Studies conference held in Asia, the Asian context was largely missing. As noted above, the conference organizers seem to have been more keen to showcase Japanese Cultural Studies, than to introduce Cultural Studies as a Western discipline. As a result, the program established a bilateral juxtaposition between the invited speakers from the U.K. and established Japanese experts in the field.

Cultural Typhoon was conceived in response to these issues (Tamari 2006a and 2006b; Yoshimi 2010b). The first Cultural Typhoon conference was organized in 2003 at Waseda University in Tokyo. The organizing committee was mainly constituted by postgraduate students who also took part as presenters and panellists. The inclusion of young researchers and postgraduate students became a common practice of this project onwards. Furthermore, in order to avoid creating a hierarchical system, no association or permanent organizing committee was established. The responsibility for the venue and the organizing committee was passed on to those in charge the following year. Observing these principles, Cultural Typhoon was organized at Ryuku University in 2004 and Ritsumeikan University in 2005 under the continued theme of “Expressive Culture and Anti-Globalization in the Global Era”. During this period, Cultural Typhoon established itself as “the preferred venue for aspiring young Cultural Studies researchers to present their work” (Yoshimi 2010b: 279). Thus the goal of providing a space for all researchers alike, regardless of their status within the universities, was fulfilled.

The Cultural Typhoon held in Shimokitazawa in 2006 strove to connect cultural practices and social movements. Unlike the preceding events, the project stepped out of the university campus and various cultural activities were staged on the streets of a local district in Tokyo. According to the organizing committee, their challenge was to respect the original principles of Cultural Typhoon as a gathering that does not discriminate against those outside the universities. For this reason the organisers strove to transcend the border between lay culture and the academy, as they explained on their official website:

No matter how much we try to incorporate performative cultural practices into the symposium, as long as we stay on the university grounds, we are confined by the view that it is still an academic event. Therefore, Cultural Typhoon is trying to redefine itself by moving into the city and directly experiencing the changes and question these changes in an academic manner. Furthermore, by doing so, we can create a space where cultural activities and social movements can interact with intellectual expressions. (Cultural Typhoon 2006)

After the Shimokitazawa project, the Cultural Typhoons held in Nagoya in 2007 and Sendai in 2008 followed a similar program. They stayed away from university campuses and staged cultural events in certain districts of local cities.

The situation described above resonates with Hall's observations on "the growth and development of Cultural Studies" in Britain (1990a: 11). Firmly resisting any claim that CCCS gave birth to the discipline, he insists that Cultural Studies "has always developed from a different matrix of interdisciplinary studies and disciplines" and that "It was always in a critical relation to the very theoretical paradigms out of which it grew and to the concrete studies and practices it was attempting to transform" (Hall 1990a: 11). Hall explains that Cultural Studies started by questioning humanities, and did not aspire to be an academic discipline. In other words, it was a manifestation of resistance to the humanities by those dissatisfied that the humanities were not effectively addressing the social and cultural change of post-war Britain. Hall reveals that the founding members of the CCCS were formally expelled from the English and Sociology departments at Birmingham (1990a: 13).

The interdisciplinary characteristics of Cultural Studies associated with the struggle with established disciplines persist in Japanese Cultural Studies. Similarly, Japanese Cultural Studies may also fail to become institutionalised within universities. What is intriguing is that key features of the experiences of the founding members of CCCS during the 1960s in Britain were replicated in Japan several decades later. The development of the Cultural Typhoon and its extension to Asia, however, is opening up new possibilities for Cultural Studies.

Another task bestowed upon Cultural Typhoon was to collaborate with other Asian countries and situate Japan in the Asian context. The Inter-Asia Cultural Typhoon organized in 2009 responded to this assignment. This project was a joint effort of Cultural Typhoon and the journal *Inter-Asian Cultural Studies*. As Yoshimi explains in an interview (Tamari 2006b: 310), he met Kuan Hsing Chen at the 1996 conference, and became acquainted with Chua Beng Huat around the same time. As a result, he became involved with Inter-Asian Cultural Studies that these two scholars were launching. Whether Inter-Asia Cultural Typhoon will continue to develop and be established in the region is unknown. Nonetheless, it is reassuring to know that Japanese Cultural Studies is seeking to move beyond conventional Japanese territorial thought through the Cultural Typhoon movement.

Themes and venues of Cultural Typhoon in Japan (2003 – 2011)

Year	Theme	Venue	City
2003	Expressive Culture and Anti-Globalization in the Global Era (1)	Waseda University	Tokyo
2004	Expressive Culture and Anti-Globalization in the Global Era (2)	Ryuku University	Okinawa
2005	Expressive Culture and Anti-Globalization in the Global Era (3)	Ritsumeikan University	Kyoto
2006	CITY	Shimokitazawa	Tokyo
2007	Citizenry/Culture/Economy	Nagoya City	Nagoya
2008	Inter/Space	Sendai City	Sendai
2009	Inter-Asia Cultural Typhoon	Tokyo University of Foreign Studies	Tokyo

2010	Liaising the Public Sphere and Asia Through the Screen	Komazawa University	Tokyo
2011	Rock the Boat!	Kobe City	Kobe

In his enquiry into the location of intellectuals within universities, Motohashi (2007) stresses the importance of reviewing the role of Cultural Studies in Japanese society. He is concerned that the political dimension of Cultural Studies may have been overlooked when it was introduced to Japan. Motohashi denounces the way that over the past few decades, Cultural Studies was “imported” as a critical theory that gradually replaced conventional literary studies at Japanese universities. He argues that those who promoted critical theories did not fully grasp the spirit of Cultural Studies. In particular, he regrets that there was little acknowledgement that “the practices of Stuart Hall and co. were a conscious attempt to resist Thatcherite neoliberal experiments” (Motohashi 2007: 75). In other words, the political dimension of Cultural Studies was demoted when courses such as “Communication Studies” or “Studies of Anglo-American Culture” became prevalent at Japanese universities. He condemns these Culture Programs as “the manifest symptom of absolutist intellectualism characterized by the lack of critical consciousness” (Motohashi 2007: 76). It is worrying that Cultural Studies is generally perceived to be international studies. Furthermore, the charge that Cultural Studies lacks a critical perspective is a serious concern.

Motohashi argues that a significant value of British Cultural Studies was ignored when it was introduced to Japan. He observes that representing resistance towards the establishment was an essential spirit of Cultural Studies vigorously supported by Hall and those who launched the CCCS (Motohashi 2007: 75). Hall confirms Motohashi’s opinion in his 1990 essay “The Emergence of Cultural Studies and the Crisis of the Humanities” in which he offers his views, as a founding member, on the development of this discourse. He states that during the 1970s when he was at the CCCS, there were two practical ramifications of the development of Cultural Studies. First as a pedagogic practice, Cultural Studies was shared between the faculty and graduate students. According to Hall, this was the only realistic way for them to continue the

practice of Cultural Studies due to the small number of faculty staff. More importantly, he maintains that Cultural Studies was a political engagement; he explains:

it was not possible to present the work of cultural studies as if it had no political consequences and no form of political engagement, because what we were inviting students to do was to do what we ourselves had done; to engage with some real problem out there in the dirty world, and to use the enormous advantage given to a tiny handful of us in the British educational system who had the opportunity to go into universities and reflect on those problems, to spend that time usefully to try to understand how the world worked. (1990a: 17)

Probing the political responsibilities of Cultural Studies, Lawrence Grossberg draws on Hall's comment that "Cultural studies' message is a message for academics and intellectuals but, fortunately, for many other people as well" (Hall 1992 cited in Grossberg 2010: 242). Grossberg interprets Hall as implying "that we must put our responsibility to the world above our responsibility to our theories or politics" (2010: 242). It is crucial to revisit such discussions, when considering Cultural Studies in Japan. Although Cultural Typhoon is not exactly positioned as "academic activism", Motohashi's call to restore the political dimension to Cultural Studies in Japan may play a critical role in re-establishing Cultural Studies in Japan. He maintains that:

If we can redefine Cultural Studies as academic activism in the humanities, that is workings of critical consciousness in order to reactivate theories through cultural translations, we should keep a crucial distance from globalism or neoliberalism that encloses people into civilisational absolutism and exclusionary ethnicism that regards culture as a calculable asset and an ethnic possession. (Motohashi 2007: 82)

Motohashi's call to resist ethnocentrism from a cultural perspective is significant to establish Cultural Studies in the Japanese academy. Whether Cultural Typhoon would assume such role is not yet clear.

Inquiring into the role of Cultural Studies in Japan is comparable to investigating the role of universities, or the academy, in society. While Motohashi uses the term "academic activism", Hall defines Cultural Studies as a kind of political engagement that aims to connect academism with society. Hall acknowledges that the interdisciplinary characteristics of Cultural Studies are adequate to address social issues. His statement that "the gap between theory and practice is only overcome in developing

a practice in its own right” (Hall 1990a: 17) clearly demonstrates his conviction that the goal of Cultural Studies is a practice rather than the development of a theory. In addition, Hall specifies that the intellectuals involved in Cultural Studies have a role to play in the public sphere. He explains

I therefore think it is true to say of the Center’s work that it always insisted that intellectuals themselves take responsibility for how the knowledge they produce is then transmitted to society; that they can’t wash their hands of the game of translating knowledge into the practice of culture. (Hall 1990a: 18)

Cultural Typhoon seems to honour Hall’s understanding of Cultural Studies as a “practice [that] bring[s] together theory and practice” (1990a: 17). As stated above, Cultural Typhoon encourages the practice of taking Cultural Studies out of the campus in order to connect the university with the community beyond. Although the Cultural Typhoons hosted at Shimokitazawa (2006), Nagoya (2007), Sendai (2008) and Kobe (2011) did utilise venues beyond the campus, it is unclear whether Cultural Studies was indeed established as a practice that connects theory and practice. In other words, the question is, whether Cultural Studies as a practice can be implemented by merely stepping out of the campus. Furthermore, while Cultural Typhoon itself represents an attempt to bring theory and practice together, thus far the idea of “political engagement” that underlines Hall’s notion seems to have been absent.

As mentioned above, Cultural Studies became widely recognized as a new discourse in media communications by academics and intellectuals interested in this field. This phenomenon is understandable when considering that the 1970s and 1980s was a time when Japanese economy was booming. It was a consumerist era in which media communications was undoubtedly a leading enterprise. In addition, during this period the massive student protest movements of the 1960s had subdued. It can be assumed that one reason for the distinctive apathy concerning political issues in Japanese Cultural Studies lies in the historical background of Japan.

During the 1960s a radical student movement emerged in Japan. The movement grew out of the global anti-war movement against the War in Vietnam. Over the years 1968

to 1969 it culminated as a symbolic campaign against the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty, known as “Anpo”.²³ During this time, the movement expanded nationwide and students closed down campuses by barricading themselves, resulting in armed conflicts with police. It eventually escalated into violence and strife between different sects amongst the activists. After the return of Okinawa to Japan in 1972, an emblematic event for anti-American sentiment and associated movements, the student movements subdued.

Under these circumstances, when Cultural Studies was “imported” to Japan little attention was paid to its political engagement. As Motohashi holds, instead of developing “the critical and emancipatory capacities of Cultural Studies” (2007: 75), the reception in Japan involved “the import of Critical Theories in 1980s, the introduction of Cultural Studies in 1990s, and neoliberal restructuring in academic institutions in 2000s” (2007: 75). He deplores the fact that Literature courses at universities were replaced by Cultural Studies programs called Communication Studies or Anglo-American Cultural Studies (Motohashi 2007: 76). Such neo-liberal movements took hold at the universities, he argues, because traditional literary studies were insufficiently “political”.

Motohashi is right that the apathy of literary studies is responsible for allowing neo-liberalism to take over the Humanities. Regrettably there was little interest in contributing to the development of a public sphere through the political engagement encouraged by classical Cultural Studies. As Tamari (2006a) suggests, Cultural Studies possesses the potential for “academic activism”, a quality unfortunately unrealized in the Humanities at Japanese universities. A number of scholars (Motohashi 2007; Ueno 2009; Yoshimi 2010a and 2010b) critically denounced the closed and unchanging institutional system of Japanese universities. As Hall recalled of Cultural Studies at Birmingham, established disciplines were “relentlessly hostile to its appearance, deeply suspicious of it ... as it were, the cuckoo that had appeared in its

²³ The Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan was signed on 19 January 1960. “Anpo” is an abbreviation of the Japanese term “Anzen Hoshō” which stands for security.

nest” (1990a: 12). This description also fits the intellectual and institutional climate in Japan, as attested by Cultural Studies’s failure to be established as a formal academic discipline.

As stated earlier, Cultural Typhoon is not exactly defined as a political movement. The organizers of past events describe it as:

A transnational network of people who are interested in cultural exploration in a broader context ... This network involves people who are not only associated with the academic sphere ... but also those who actualize social movements through local and cultural industry activities. (Cultural Typhoon 2007)

Clearly, the organizers envision a network that transcends the boundary between the academic and society. Their vision reflects Cultural Studies’ principle aim to connect the academic sphere with the public sphere. This is made patent in the announcement of the event in 2010, which emphasises bringing together “people of different background and positions to engage in dialogue over a specific issue, thus suggesting new possibilities for working together” (Cultural Typhoon 2010).

Furthermore, Cultural Typhoon is conceived as an international event that encourages overseas participation, particularly from Asian regions. In 2009, the Inter-Asia Cultural Typhoon in Tokyo was organized as a joint conference with Inter-Asia Cultural Studies (IACS). According to the publication compiled as a result of this conference, over 2000 participants from all over Asia participated and contributed to discussions resulting in published articles as well as the practice of Cultural Studies in the regions involved (Iwasaki, Kuan-Hsing & Yoshimi 2011: 15). The focus on Asia was carried over in 2010, as its main theme, “Liaising the Public Sphere and Asia Through the Screen”, underscores. The term “screen” is not limited to cinematic films but new sites of visual-media as well as “the sites of dialogue for analysing the socio-cultural situation of contemporary Asia, which ... is composed of many ‘screens’” (Cultural Typhoon 2010).

Although the equivalence between the Japanese and Western notions of the “public sphere” is debatable (see Hanada 2006; Hayashi 2006), Cultural Typhoon has

undeniably contributed towards the development of a public sphere in Japan. Furthermore, it is providing a meaningful demonstration of the capacities of Cultural Studies outside the academy. As Yoshimi states, in Japan, Cultural Studies aimed to transcend: first, the knowledge and culture supporting the notion of “nation”; second, the movement of knowledge inside and beyond the universities; and third, the interdisciplinary expertise of anthropology, history, sociology, literary studies and mass communication studies (2011: 28). This achievement is irrefutably pedagogical, however, it is significant that Cultural Studies is transcending the academic sphere and occupying the public sphere through such activities as Cultural Typhoon.

This Chapter sought to assess the potential of Cultural Studies for contesting ethnocentric cultural nationalism in Japan. Although there have been considerable efforts to establish this interdisciplinary discourse, it falls short of fulfilling the mission to develop a counter-hegemonic discourse. Nevertheless, as an outcome of the struggles, the Cultural Typhoon project which aims to connect the academy to the public sphere is promising, particularly after the Great East Japan Earthquake and Nuclear power plant accidents on 11 March 2011. Anti-nuclear rallies by citizens’ groups are employing a new style of movement where people in disguise parade with music. The style and atmosphere is radically different from conventional organized-style protests; and is comparable to the model promoted by the Cultural Typhoon movement. Mouri (2012) observes that since the decommissioning of nuclear reactors may take several decades, combatting style rallies may no longer be feasible or sustainable mode of protest. He contends that the increased voluntary participation of citizens indicates a democratization movement in Japanese politics. The next Chapter will consider the development of the cultural public sphere and the emergence of cosmopolitanism in response to the global cultural sphere.

Chapter 3

Resisting cultural nationalism in the cultural public sphere

Introduction

As the discussion of the hegemonic *Nihonjinron* discourse in Chapter one establishes, due to the dominant influence of cultural nationalism, contemporary Japanese identity has been conceived as homogeneous, ethnocentric and collective. Over the past few decades, however, there has been a transition from collective identity to alternative diverse identities. This shift is registered in the work of contemporary Japanese artist(s). This chapter will examine the development of a Japanese cultural public sphere that represents resistance to persistent cultural nationalism. Furthermore, the artists' struggle against conventional notions of Japaneseness provides evidence for emergent cosmopolitanism in the representation of contemporary Japanese cultural identity (a discussion to be extended over subsequent chapters, for example in Chapter five's discussion of the diasporic identities of "zainichi," the Korean residents in Japan, and Chapter six's discussion of the Haruki phenomenon).

In order to reflect on the issue of the cultural sphere, the effect of the globalization process and its influence over the transformation of identities around the world must be considered. In particular, the globalization of culture has been discussed in relation to its connection with nationalism (Featherstone 1990; Wallerstein 2004; Hannerz 1990). Mike Featherstone suggests that "cultural integration and cultural disintegration processes ... which transcend the state-society unit ... occur on a trans-national or trans-societal level" (1990: 2). In Japan cultural nationalism was indeed subject to this process, as Yoshino (2002) demonstrates in his study of the historical discourse. Jan NederveenPieterse (2004), Arjun Appadurai (1996) and John Tomlinson (1999) offer various theoretical models for understanding the interconnectivity and unevenness of the relationship between globalization and culture. Their studies affirm that the globalization of culture must be addressed from both global and local points of view. In this respect, Matthew Allen and Rumi Sakamoto's (2006) collection of essays on the globalizing effect of popular culture in Japan, represents a variety of different

approaches to the topic which challenge the once-standard focus on homogenization. Allen and Sakamoto's effort to apply analysis from both inside and outside Japan is reflected in the themes "Reconfiguring Japan" and "Becoming global". These themes accurately reflect the situation in Japan, and testify that for Japan to become truly global, it will have to develop a cultural public sphere.

Studies that address the globalization of culture and how it translates to Japan can be found in an emergent field that could be broadly described as Japanese Cultural Studies (Nishikawa 1995, 2008; Morris-Suzuki 1998; Iwabuchi 2002b, 2007). Although the scholars' disciplinary backgrounds range from sociology, comparative cultural theory to history, their outlook is similar. They introduced the idea that resistance to homogeneous cultural nationalism is essential for the re-establishment of contemporary Japanese cultural identity. For example, Iwabuchi (2002b, 2007) proclaims that amongst Asian nations including Japan there is an increasing awareness of the hybridity of culture. As such, Japanese Cultural Studies has made valuable contributions to the re-consideration of Japanese identity over recent decades. These studies challenge the essentialist perception of national and cultural identity, "The view that Japan is not really culturally homogeneous came to be widely held within academia" (Sakamoto 2006: 139). Nevertheless, as discussed in Chapter two, the critique of *Nihonjionron* discourse remained within the academy for the most part. While Japanese Cultural Studies continues its efforts to connect the academic sphere with the public sphere, the emergence of a cultural public sphere seems promising as a counter-hegemonic practice.

In what follows, the development of a cultural public sphere in conjunction with the prevalence of an emergent global public sphere is explored. Jacob's aesthetic public sphere provides grounds for the inter-connection of the global and local that transforms the local to "become cosmopolitan in its own way" (Daniel Dayan 1999 cited in Jacobs 2006: 4). Japanese artists who have become committed to the development of a cultural public sphere through their exposure to the global public sphere display this cosmopolitan turn.

Global public sphere and cosmopolitan engagement

Resistance to conventional cultural nationalism is not only a key feature of cosmopolitanism in contemporary Japan, it also contributes to the development of a cultural public sphere. As discussed later in Chapter four (and subsequent chapters), there is an emergent cosmopolitanism in Japan that supports alternative identities. It resists the hegemony of ethnocentric cultural nationalism that insists upon the immutable value of “Japaneseness”. Such an approach, as Nancy Fraser (1993) suggests, provides “a way to think about public sphere and hegemony together” (Jones and Holmes 2011: 186). The cosmopolitan consciousness of artists who contribute to the cultural public sphere exhibits features of the Gramscian “organic intellectuals” promoted by Hall (Rojek 2003: 76-80). As Cultural Studies shows, the organic intellectuals “play a ‘de-mystifying’ role in the ‘ideological struggle’” and “highlight the myths and ‘ideologies’ embedded in texts in the hope of producing subject positions, and real subjects, who are enabled to oppose subordination” (Barker 2004: 100). As organic intellectuals, cosmopolitan artists aspire to develop a cultural public sphere in Japan.

The cosmopolitan outlook of artists, such as Murakami Haruki or Noda Hideki, is often criticised for being elitist. The autonomous identity that such artists promote in their struggle against a conformist ethnocentric national identity may have been facilitated by their experience of stepping out of Japan, and gaining a new perspective on the culture of their homeland. Through their participation in the global public sphere, they acquired the ability to look at Japan from the outside, and, in the process, they developed a cosmopolitan outlook.

As Ronald N. Jacobs contends, the inter-relation between global and local cultures “denaturalizes both” as they enter dialogue (2006: 4). Furthermore, he suggests that “the intermingling of global media and local media ... encourages a more reflexive

attitude toward all collective identities” (Jacobs 2006: 4). In his argument on the overstatement of cultural imperialism theory, Jacobs insists that:

the cultural imperialism thesis assumes the centrality of national identity, in a way that seems to privilege the state. Thus, for example, “French culture” or “Dutch culture” is held to be under threat from American television. Needless to say, this kind of argument ignores the invented character of national cultures, whose creation involved naturalizing and essentializing “the nation” at the expense of local and regional cultures ...the diffusion of global media challenges the state domination of the public sphere much more effectively than it destroys local cultures and local publics. (2006: 4)

Jacobs’ argument is useful for overcoming the essentialist notion of “Japanese culture” and its affiliation with the nation. Furthermore, his claim that the intermingling of the global with the local “challenges the state domination of the public sphere” (2006: 4) is pertinent to Japan.

Over the past few decades, resistance to cultural nationalism became evident in the contemporary Japanese cultural scene. As Beck (2006) argues, resistance to nationalism is effectively a display of cosmopolitanism. This section will identify such resistance to nationalism in the works of the contemporary Japanese artist Noda Hideki and verify the connection between the development of a global public sphere and the everyday cosmopolitanism of artists like him who have lived overseas. It is conceivable that the emergence of the global public sphere effectively obscures particular national attachments. Jacobs’ (2006) concepts of the *global public sphere* and *cultural citizenship* are useful here. By his account, the global public sphere refers to “the particular ways that ... television news services produce the subject position of the ‘global audience’ that encourages a new type of attentiveness, a new form of collective monitoring, and a new politics of publicity” (Jacobs 2006: 5). Cultural citizenship, on the other hand, invokes “the ways ... the popular ... come[s] into contact with the civil sphere ... at the level of the social imaginary” (2006: 5). His approach of combining global public spheres and cultural citizenship to show that local and global publics can be brought together and be “denaturalized” is applicable to Japan. As he points out, these cultural spaces support the development of transnational awareness, and encourage social reflexivity.

Noda Hideki exemplifies a contemporary Japanese artist resistant to nationalism. His work as a playwright and director reflects a strong antipathy to the embedded ideology of cultural nationalism and the attendant mythologization of history. The struggle with Japanese imperialism and the historical construction of national identity are persistent themes in his productions. However, Noda was not recognized as an anti-establishment artist at first. He emerged as a luminary in the new generation of Shogekijyo [Small Theatre] in the 1980s. The Shogekijyo movement was established in the 1960s by theatre practitioners dissatisfied with the existing Shingeki²⁴ companies. A group of small underground theatre companies led by talented playwrights sought “to express their own thoughts within in the context of the student activist movement” (Tsuboike 2010 trans. T.W.). The Shogekijyo companies were anti-establishment both in the style of their productions and the ideas they expressed. Unlike preceding theatrical schools that tried either to preserve traditional Japanese theatre, or import Western drama, the central aim of the Shogekijyo movement was to create original new works (Senda 1995). Other artists of Noda’s generation were perceived to have inherited the anti-establishment movement, but his company Yume no Yuminsha was viewed as a symbol of the flamboyant society of the 1980s bubble economy (Senda 1995; Hasebe 2005; Uchida 2009).

As discussed later, Noda’s movement towards social commitment over the 1990s reflects changes afoot in Japanese society. His engagement with the global public sphere is a distinguishing feature of his work. From his experience living overseas, he acquired the ability to observe Japan more objectively, from the outside, and he used this perspective to clarify the premises of his artistic practice (Hasebe 2005). This is evident in the plays he wrote and performed after returning from London in 1993.

Born in 1955, Noda established his theatre company Yume no Yuminsha while studying at the University of Tokyo. Noda became known as the playwright, director

²⁴ Shingeki, New Drama, or Western-style theatre, emerged in reaction to traditional Kabuki and Shinpa theatre.

and actor of this company. In 1983, as a young and talented dramatist, he received the prestigious Kushida Kunio Drama Award²⁵ followed by another esteemed drama award from Kinokuniya in 1986. During the 1980s Yume no Yuminsha became one of the most popular theatrical companies. On the company's tenth anniversary in 1986, it performed on 146 different stages and attracted over 100,000 audience members in a single year (Takahagi 2009: 139). Its popularity continued to grow until 1992 when the company disbanded.

Since Yume no Yuminsha disbanded at the point when its commercial success and popularity was at its peak, the incident stimulated much controversy. Uchida Yoichi (2009) observes that Yume no Yuminsha represented the mature consumerism of the 1980s (2009: 118). Japan was then an extremely consumerist society in the midst of an economic bubble. According to Uchida, it was a time when “fiction became reality and reality felt like fiction” which made Japanese society seem a virtual reality (2009: 119). Noda's decision to disband the company was not unrelated. In an open lecture delivered at the University of Tokyo in 2008, he made the connection, recalling that “It was six or seven years after [establishing the theatre company], the economic bubble began. Japanese society seemed to be filled with the thinking that all culture is for consumption. Yume no Yuminsha was completely consumed in the course of such times” (Uchida, 2009 trans. T.W.).

Noda acknowledges, that participating at theatre festivals overseas brought him to recognize that he no longer wished to make plays simply for Japanese “consumption”.²⁶ After Yume no Yuminsha disbanded, Noda left Japan to study in London through the Program of Overseas Study for Upcoming Artists administered by the Agency for Cultural Affairs. Motohashi (2001) observes that not only was this the defining moment of his career, but it significantly influenced his creative style as an artist thereafter. In London, Noda met actor, writer and director Simon McBurney and

²⁵ The Kushida Kunio Drama Award is a prestigious dramatic award named after Kunio Kishida, the founder of modern Japanese drama.

²⁶ Noda participated in international festivals in 1988 (Edinburgh International Art Festival) and 1989 (New York).

became associated with his company Théâtre de Complicité. Traditionally known for speech-oriented productions exemplified by Shakespeare, English theatre generally prioritizes words and lines. Théâtre de Complicité was leading a new trend called physical theatre. Noda was impressed by this encounter, as physicality was a characteristic feature of his own theatrical making. Motohashi suggests that Noda saw the prospect of a kind of physical expression capable of transcending nationality, and a form of creativity that stimulates the imagination of the audience.

After returning from London Noda's rediscovery of physical expression shaped his creative style (Motohashi 2001; Hasebe 2004; Uchida 2009). With *Yume no Yuminsha*, Noda successfully adapted the techniques of classic Japanese popular culture.²⁷ His post-London works relied less on utilizing traditional techniques, however, and more upon exploring a new style. This was realized by adopting a dichotomous structure by which to present stories. As a result, Noda's narratives became simpler, and certain political themes manifested. As Hasebe Hiroshi (2004, 2005) observes, the topics of "nation" or "nation-state" pervaded Noda's post-London work. His new production company, NODA MAP, explored themes, such as cultural imperialism (*KIRU*, 1994), terrorism (*Nisesaku Tsumi to Batsu*, 1995) and the Japanese imperial system (*TABOO*, 1996). He describes the principles underlying Noda's *KIRU* as follows:

Our future does not exist in the framework of the nation state. The future of politics, economy and culture in particular, must be sketched out in a zone beyond the control of the nation. The blue sky in "KIRU" symbolizes the skies above the people that transcend national borders and history. That is precisely how Noda Hideki envisions the twenty-first century; by breaking away from the kind of nationalism that excludes or oppresses minorities on the grounds of difference. (Hasebe 2005: 11 trans. T.W.)

Hasebe's critique offers a valid interpretation of the final scene of *KIRU* which displays a clear blue sky and horizon on stage. While it indicates peace after a long conflict, it also symbolises the equality of humanity. It alludes to Noda's conviction that understanding the Other is the way for the future of the world.

²⁷ As Motohashi (2001) explains, Inoue Hisashi points this out in *Nokemono Kitarite* (1982 :256-257).

Contemplating the Japanese cultural public sphere

Prior to examining Noda's international engagement and the repudiation of ethnocentric nationalism and social amnesia that is a persisting theme in his works, it is critical to establish how the notion of the cultural public sphere applies to contemporary Japan. Jim McGuigan (2005) defines the cultural public in relation to Jürgen Habermas's (1989 [1962]) thesis that a literary public sphere is necessary in order to maintain a healthy political public sphere. According to McGuigan, since the political public sphere centres on the "transient news" of journalism, the Habermasian literary public sphere fulfils a different function offering the possibility of developing a critical social sphere. To this end, McGuigan reiterates Terry Eagleton's argument that "[t]he very practice of criticism was literary before it was directly political" in order to highlight the social role of literature (Eagleton 1984 cited in McGuigan 2005: 430).

McGuigan's cultural public sphere argument extends Habermas' notion of the literary public sphere. While maintaining the critical role of the literary public sphere, he expands the concept to consider its representation of the working-class. He claims that the cultural public sphere is no longer restricted to the literary, but that it includes mass-popular culture and entertainment as well as aesthetic and emotional reflections on contemporary life. According to McGuigan, "The concept of a cultural public sphere refers to the articulation of politics, public and personal, as a contested terrain through affective (aesthetic and emotional) modes of communication" (2005: 435). He demonstrates this in his discussion of the media's representation of the shared public emotion over the death of Princess Diana in 1997. McGuigan points out that the public response over the shocking death of "the People's Princess" gave rise to a controversial debate over the role of the monarchy. Furthermore, he points out, the controversy initiated public debate of the status of Diana's personal relationships in the wake of her divorce from Prince Charles. In this discussion, he claims, people sought "to work out how to live in a de-traditionalized moral universe where the old

conventions are in question” (McGuigan 2005: 436), thereby offering a resounding characterisation of everyday life in the late-modern world.

Jacobs’s notion of the “aesthetic public sphere” (2006: 11), as a space in which cultural criticism combines with social commentary, refigures the Harbermasian literary public sphere. It endorses the role of entertainment media focusing primarily on how American television constitutes a critical public sphere that fosters “texts that challenge public authority, a space of criticism (in the academic and journalistic fields) that serves to define the criteria for making evaluative judgments; and a set of overlapping communicative spaces where individuals participate in collective television criticism” (2006: 11). Jacobs argues that fictional entertainment media motivate “collective public dialogues about matters of common concern” (2006: 11) and thus he corroborates McGuigan’s claims for the cultural public sphere.

Both McGuigan and Jacobs effectively illuminate the role of the cultural public sphere in contemporary Japan. As established in Chapter one’s discussion of *Nihonjinron* discourse, Japanese society’s underlying consent about its collective identity combined with its assimilative tendency hinders the development of autonomous non-conformist identity in Japan. Furthermore, this disposition seems to inhibit critical debate of social issues. Therefore, there is a vital role that could be assumed by a cultural public sphere, namely to address the state of social amnesia in contemporary Japan. In addition, the development of a cultural sphere that utilises “affective modes of communication” (McGuigan 2005) or introduces the notion of an “aesthetic public sphere” (Jacobs 2006) would provide an alternative perspective from which to scrutinise the media. As Japanese Cultural Studies (see Chapter two) has established, media journalism in Japan has functioned as an accomplice to the government and established institutions, rather than as an independent public sphere of discussion, critique and debate. This substantiates Habermas’s conviction that a literary public sphere is necessary for a robust public sphere.

Crucially, as both McGuigan and Jacobs contend, the emergence of a cultural public sphere depends upon the globalization process. In his study of the public sphere,

McGuigan alludes to Nicholas Garnham's (1992) argument that the notion of the public sphere must be reconsidered on a global scale (2004: 54). While McGuigan supports Garnham's call for a fresh approach that attends to how transnational forces undermine national public spheres, he does not support Garnham's ideal of global citizenship in a universal public sphere, because it suggests that unification, rather than diversification, should result from the globalization process. Correspondingly, Jacobs argues that the prevailing cultural imperialism thesis on American television is overstated. He maintains that American television is not as dominant as some critics argue and that its spread of ideological monoculture and its influence over the audience is overemphasized (Jacobs 2006: 3). Such arguments supporting diversification rather than unification or dominant influences are applicable to Japan. Although Japan was under American influence during and after occupation,²⁸ globalization allows for more diverse interactions.

In order to illuminate the global character of the cultural sphere in contemporary Japan, it is vital to note that Japan has steadily imported Western culture since the Meiji Restoration in the late nineteenth century. As the call for "civilization and enlightenment" that was a national slogan in the early Meiji era suggests,²⁹ Westernization has been a central aim of Japan's modernization from the outset. The national policy for Westernization actively encouraged the development of Western culture and a concurrent departure from long-standing feudalism. Westernization became a symbol of intellectual advancement and a demonstration of wealth, as considerable financial resources were required to obtain Western cultural capital. During this period, cultural assets relied heavily on European culture; and it was generally believed that Western cultural assets made a person more civilized (see Nishikawa 1995).

The next wave of Westernization began in 1945 after the end of World War II. During this phase, Nishikawa (1999) observes, "culture" became a symbolic term. He argues

²⁸ 1945-1951.

²⁹ Wakon-yosai [和魂洋才] is the concept of accepting Western learning (civilisation) while maintaining the traditional Japanese spirit and thereby combining the two.

that the article in the newly established constitution stating “the right to maintain the minimum standards of wholesome and cultured living”,³⁰ reflects the belief that “cultured living” was the way forward for Japan. It would alleviate poverty (Nishikawa 1999: 117-118). While Japanese society was suffering from the aftermath of the war, the allied forces occupying Japan exhibited the power and strength of Western industrialized nations. In particular, the Japanese people aspired to American prosperity, specifically its affluent lifestyle and culture.

Presumably this radical post-war turn towards Westernization had a significant influence upon the cultural identity of Japanese people. In the first place, Westernization was a departure from traditional Japanese culture and entailed a drastic change in values, specifically a vigorous move towards democratization. Therefore, it was not surprising that resistance to traditional Japanese cultural identity developed. Yoshino (2002) observes that from 1945 to the 1950s, there was a strong tendency for Japanese intellectuals to reject Japanese heritage. He explains that many believed that persisting feudalism was hindering the progress of democratization in Japan. He shows that for a couple of decades after the war, most critical literature focused on the cultural difference between Japan and the West; and very few studies asserted the superiority of Japanese culture (Yoshino 2002: 122-124). At the same time, however, the *Nihonjinron* discourse flourished because it provided a means of salvaging Japanese identity threatened by Westernization (Yoshino 2002: 203).

From the 1960s to the 1990s, the period of Japanese economic development, the *Nihonjinron* discourse reflected a growing confidence in Japanese society. As discussed in Chapter one, publications on the advantages of Japanese characteristics, particularly in business, increased. Largely, this was due to the rise of multinational companies, such as Sony and Toyota, symbolizing Japan’s success in the global economy. Paul Du Gay, Stuart Hall, Linda Janes, Hugh Mackay and Keith Negus’ important 1997 Cultural Studies analysis of Sony Walkman investigated how this

³⁰ The constitution of Japan. Article 25. All people shall have the right to maintain the minimum standards of wholesome and cultured living. In all spheres of life, the State shall use its endeavours for the promotion and extension of social welfare and security, and of public health.

globally-distributed cultural artefact reflects Japaneseness. While this exemplifies a period of Japan's participation in the global cultural sphere, since the Meiji era Japanese cultural identity has undergone a constant struggle between Westernization and Japanization (Nishikawa 2008).

This struggle continues today and is reflected in the efforts of contemporary Japanese artists to address the global public sphere while re-establishing their identities as Japanese without resorting to conventional "Japaneseness". In their collection *Popular Culture, Globalization and Japan* (2006), Allen and Sakamoto point out that simply addressing the Japaneseness of Japanese popular culture is problematic, since it often assumes an essential national culture. Studies of contemporary Japanese popular culture (Treat 1996; Craig 2000), frequently deplore the fact that "many such works seem to retain the local/global (national/international) dichotomy and the assumption that Japanese popular culture is essentially a 'national' culture" (Allen and Sakamoto 2006: 5). In addition, they protest the prevalent notion of "essentialized Japan" these works promote. The case studies compiled in this volume not only demonstrate the diversity of Japanese popular culture widely available and embraced, but they also suggest that the conventional notion of Japaneseness as a code to represent essentialized Japan has become less important today.

The assumption that Japanese culture is homogeneous and, relatedly, the dichotomy between Japan and the Other are problematic. While a number of studies primarily focus on the Japaneseness of contemporary Japanese culture, very few scrutinize Japanese cultural representation in the context of globalization. Allen and Sakamoto's idea that "there are many 'insides' ('localities') and many more 'outsiders' ('extra-localities'), which inform the production and consumption of 'Japanese popular culture'" (2006: 3) provides a means of departing from the dichotomy between Japan and the Other. In other words, they recognize the "multiple connections with places and cultures" (Allen and Sakamoto 2006: 3) that characterize Japanese people's engagement with contemporary popular culture.

Noda's challenge and the cultural public sphere

This section will examine how Noda Hideki's engagement with the global cultural sphere has materialised into an aspiration to develop a cultural public sphere. As discussed earlier, Noda's resistance to cultural nationalism reflects his quest for Japanese cultural identity. While his works often explore historical incidents in order to comprehend the present, his experience overseas provided him with clearer insight into Japan; and more importantly, he realized the significance of transcending the national framework.

Noda is a leader in contemporary Japanese theatre. He is the recipient of numerous major performing arts awards including Japan's Purple Ribbon medal and the Order of the British Empire.³¹ According to Hasebe (2005), Noda's career in contemporary theatre is unparalleled. Not only has he remained the top-runner over three decades but he is still a major influence at the forefront of theatrical innovation. Hasebe points out the three main areas Noda actively pursues: (a) commitment to society; (b) involvement with Kabuki theatre;³² and (c) increased activities overseas. Close examination of these areas shows how this artist contributes to the development of a cultural public sphere in Japan. One attribute Noda shares with Murakami (whose extensive popularity overseas is discussed in later chapters) is a cosmopolitan outlook. This angle shall be examined in contemplating Noda's enthusiasm for establishing cultural communication through his work in performing arts.

As discussed above, Noda disbanded his company Yume no Yuminsha in 1992. After studying performing arts in London for a year, he returned to Japan in 1993 and established a new company NODA MAP. Since then, as Hasebe observes, "scrutinizing Japan and its people as a nation, by focusing on the Emperor system, has

³¹ Noda was awarded the Purple Ribbon medal (a Japanese award for academic or artistic excellence) in 2011 and the Order of the British Empire in 2009.

³² Kabuki is a traditional public entertainment in Japan that has a history of about 400 years and flourished in the Edo era. It is a comprehensive art that incorporates theatrical performance with dance and music.

been central to his works” (2004: 86 trans. T.W.). The fact that Noda writes and directs all NODA MAP productions underscores his determination to develop a cultural public sphere by engaging the audience in contentious debates over history, war and the Other. His works challenge social amnesia which is largely “historical amnesia” (Huyssens 1995) demonstrated in the proliferation of *Nihonjionron*.

Noda’s social commitment was clearly expressed in his 1999 play *Pandora no Kane* [*Pandora’s bell*] (Senda 2002; Hasebe 2005). While this original play manifests his anti-nationalism, it also questions the recklessness of the people and connects it to social amnesia. In 2003, Noda staged *OIL*, a continuation of *Pandora no Kane* that deals with war. *OIL* presented a theatrical challenge to America’s continuation of war “under the name of God” (Uchida 2009: 172). This performance provocatively coincided with the Iraq War (Gulf War II) making the staging increasingly realistic for the audience. In addition to its criticism of the forces of war, the play questions the people for accepting it. According to Hasebe, while *OIL* and *Pandora no Kane* both have a bi-focal structure intertwining an imaginary war with a historical one, *OIL* projects a completely different impression of the relationship between ancient and modern attitudes to war. He observes that “Noda’s political and societal message manifested in this production. It was a sharp criticism of Japan for blindly following America, dwelling on how media-led public opinion supported a war geared to exploit oil from the third world” (Hasebe 2005: 91 trans. T.W.).

Another feature of Noda’s career is his engagement with Japanese traditional theatre. At first both his followers and Kabuki fans viewed his collaboration with Kabuki with the disbelief. This has much to do with the historical perception of Japanese theatre. Since the Meiji Period (1868-1912), Japanese theatre has been heavily influenced by rapid modernization and Westernization (Tsuboike, 2010). First, Shinpa [New School]³³ developed in response to Kabuki, and then Shingeki [New Theatre]³⁴

³³ Shinpa, or New School literally, originated in the mid-Meiji period. Played by young political activists, this form dramatized contemporary material.

³⁴ Shingeki, or New Drama, originated in the early twentieth century. It performed European modern drama in Japanese translation.

emerged as a reaction to Kabuki and Shinpa. The latest development, Shogekijyo [Small Theatre] in the 1960s, was recognized as a response to Shingeki. As the leading figure of the Shogekijyo movement, Noda's association with Kabuki, the most popular style of traditional Japanese theatre since the seventeenth century, was unthinkable. As the history of modern Japanese theatre shows, contemporary theatre performance developed as a challenge to traditional dramatic form, style and content. Noda's project was considered a major turning point for the history of Kabuki (Hasebe 2005: 173).

Noda-ban Togitatsu no Utare [*Revenge on Togitatsu: Noda version*], a dramatic work written and directed by Noda, was performed in 2001 at the Kabuki Theatre in Tokyo. Contrary to the general expectation that this “experimental” combination would fail, this production was not only applauded by the regular Kabuki audience but successfully attracted the younger generation to Kabuki. Hasebe observes that over the previous decades Kabuki had been losing its appeal due to its complacency and it was desperate to regain its vitality by embracing contemporary theatre (2004: 87). The performance of *Noda-ban Togitatsu no Utare* revitalised conventional Kabuki. Noda's understanding of Kabuki, particularly its development as public entertainment during the Edo period, was responsible.³⁵ As the affix “Noda-ban”, or Noda's version, indicates, the play *Togitatsu no Utare* represents Noda's point of view as the writer and director of this performance. Not only was this title unorthodox, but Noda's scenario and direction underscored the significance of parody to Kabuki, a feature that had appealed to the public in the Edo era but which had been obscured by subsequent generations.

Visual representation of Togitatsu no Utare



Poster of the cinema Kabuki which shows a popular scene from Noda's “Togitatsu no Utare”. The actors are imitating a scene from “The West-side Story”.

58), Ec

gawa shogunate

Noda's interest in Kabuki suggests that he was attracted to it as a popular mass-entertainment that contributed to the cultural public sphere. The Kabuki theatre enjoyed by the public in the Edo period (1603-1867) included satirical scenarios that took the style of entertainment. Noda admits that early in his performance career he studied Kabuki by reading books such as *Yakusharongo* (1776).³⁶ In 1989 and 1994 he produced a modern version of *Kokusen'ya kassen* [*The battles of Coxinga*],³⁷ a Kabuki classic written by Chikamatsu Monzaemon.³⁸ *Kokusen'ya kassen* was first performed in 1715 as Ningyo Jyoruri [puppet theatre] and later turned into Kabuki due to its popularity. *Kokusen'ya kassen* is loosely based on Chinese history, specifically an attempt to restore a rightful dynasty. Noda applies this episode to a story about the establishment of Japanese nationhood in the third-century. By inquiring into the foundation of the nation, Noda casts doubt upon the *Nihonjinron* myth of "single ethnicity, single nation" that is centralized on the Emperor. Uchida explains that when Noda was preparing this play in 1988, the Showa Emperor fell seriously ill. Upon witnessing the reaction of the Japanese people and society to the Emperor's illness, Noda became more conscious of the formation of Japanese nationhood and how the power of imagination could be employed to explore it (Uchida 2009: 157). Noda's approach to *Kokusen'ya kassen* reflects his ability to effectively utilize the familiar structure of Kabuki plays to conduct his inquiry into modern-day Japan. Through the Kabuki text he selected, he urged his audience to reflect on fundamental issues facing them as members of Japanese society.

³⁶ *Yakusharongo* (1776) is a Kabuki classic comprised of a collection of Kabuki actors' analects.

³⁷ *Noda-ban Kokusen'ya kassen* at Ginza Saison Theatre in 1989. *Tora, Noda Hideki no Kokusen'ya kassen* at Nissei Theatre in 1994.

³⁸ 1653-1725. Japanese dramatist of Ningyo jyoruri and Kabuki.

Togitatsu no Utare was written by Kimura Kinka, adapted by Hirata Kenzaburo, and performed in the Kabuki Theatre in 1925. The original script was based on an incident that took place a century earlier in the county of Sanuki when a sword polisher killed a samurai, and then became the target of vengeance.³⁹ Kinka's text depicts vengeance as murder, but since Kabuki respects the practice of vengeance by samurai warriors, Kabuki productions conventionally elide Kinka's scepticism. By contrast Noda's version highlights this angle by reference to the famous "Chushingura" episode.⁴⁰ Hasebe (2004) observes that the original Kimura and Hirata version displays the authors' intention to parody vengeance stories. Tatsuji, the sword polisher, is promoted to samurai status because his work is favoured by the lord. Due to his class origins, his fellow samurai do not welcome him into their ranks. Tatsuji tries to surprise the chief retainer Hirai because he was publicly humiliated in the fencing training hall. When Hirai dies accidentally, Tatsuji becomes the target of the vengeance of Hirai's two sons. The play's attraction is that Tatsuji, the ordinary townsman, runs for his life instead of facing the duel. In the Edo period, it was considered to be an honour for a samurai to fight a duel. The Hirai brothers, however, are reluctant to pursue Tatsuji, but due to the recent celebrated revenge of the Akaho ronin [masterless samurai], they find it difficult to resist the pressure to carry out their obligation as samurai. The original play was popular for its comical representation of the enemy (Tatsuji) trying to flee from his pursuers. Whereas the enemy figure is conventionally strong and tough, here the protagonist (and enemy) is a timid person whose cowardly conduct is comical. Noda uses the caricature of Tatsuji shamelessly running for his life to expose the futility of the samurai ethos.

In this play Noda not only resists established customs, he also exposes "the violence of mass psychology" (Hasebe 2006: 89 trans. T.W.). He situates the action in the huge public reaction to the famous revenge of the forty-seven ronin [masterless samurai]. Tatsuji, who has no samurai pride, provides a clear contrast to the loyal samurai who became heroes by accomplishing revenge and then committing seppuku, another

³⁹ Sanuki is the present day Kagawa prefecture.

⁴⁰ Fictional accounts of the historical revenge by the forty-seven ronin [master-less samurai] of Akaho. One of the most popular stories of samurai vengeance in Japan.

demonstration of samurai loyalty.⁴¹ Uchida points out that Kinka's original script states that revenge is just another form of murder; however, this statement was generally eliminated to comply with Kabuki's traditional view of vengeance as virtue. Noda restores Kinka's line and compounds its effect by adding the looming power of mass excitement (2009: 171). Hasebe (2004) points out that the training hall scene, in which each samurai speaks to the success of the revenge, skilfully portrays how a "collective will" is constructed and overwhelms the rest. Noda's stage direction demonstrates that such processes of developing a collective power authorized revenge and in this case allowed an innocent man to be made into a target for reasons that are unsubstantiated.

As seen above, the issue of social amnesia is a recurrent theme in Noda's plays to be further discussed in relation to Noda's *Pandora no Kane* [*Pandora's bell*]. Murakami shares Noda's interest in social amnesia as discussed in Chapter seven. In his non-fictional account of the Sarin Gas Tokyo subway attacks by AUM Shinrikyo cult members, Murakami questions why and how the cult followers became perpetrators of a terrorist act. He argues that although they were subjected to the "mind control" of the cult leader, they were not simply passive victims, since "they themselves actively sought to be controlled by Asahara" (Murakami 2003: 201). Similarly, as Hasebe (2005) points out, *Noda-ban Togitatsu no Utare* shows how "the violence of mass psychology" persuades an innocent man to become a murderer. Thus, Noda's work contributes to an aesthetic public sphere that combines cultural criticism with social commentary to "infuse popular media with a sense of public relevance, engaging the civic identities of their audiences at the same time as they provide the communicative infrastructure for constituting a critical public sphere" (Jacobs 2006: 11).

Noda's resistance to nationalism is demonstrated in NODA MAP's 1999 performance *Pandora no Kane* [*Pandora's bell*]. Noda describes this play as his "concluding message for the twentieth century" (trans. T.W.).⁴² It was critically acclaimed as one

⁴¹ Ritual self-disembowelment. Only attributed to Samurai and considered as a respectful way of dying.

⁴² From the stage pamphlet.

of his best works.⁴³ *Pandora no Kane* carries a significant message about the history of twentieth-century Japan with specific reference to World War II and the atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki. In addition critics perceive that it raises the taboo subject of the Emperor's responsibility in the war (Motohashi 2001; Kawasaki 2001; Tatsumi 2001; Hassebe 2005), although Noda rejects this interpretation. In a dialogue with Japanese philosopher Nakazawa Shinichi,⁴⁴ Noda admits that his own position is ambiguous, but explains that the issue is not so clear-cut that one can simply take a transparent position. He wrote about it in order to establish a rational viewpoint, if possible (2001 EUREKA). As Nakazawa explains, Noda's critique is directed at the Japanese people's tendency to pretend that they were not involved in the warfare.

Noda's play instigates critical enquiry into this social amnesia. McGuigan's (2005) argument about the significance of the cultural public sphere resonates here. As described earlier, McGuigan renews Habermas' concept of the literary public sphere and expands the category to include media and popular culture. More importantly, he identifies "affective modes of communication" constituted by aesthetic and emotional modes. While Habermas' literary public sphere was positioned by contrast to the established political public sphere, McGuigan defines the cultural public sphere by distinction to journalism. Since "Journalists are often agents of social amnesia, only interested in the latest thing" (McGuigan 2005: 430), a better sociological insight into culture and society is provided by literary fiction rather than newspapers. Furthermore, he argues that "the value of affective communication is not confined to great literature ... Affective communications are not only valuable as historical evidence; they are themselves sites of disputation, as the history of the arts in general would attest" (2005: 430). In this respect, Noda challenges the social amnesia of Japanese society, including its media. His play presents an affective mode of communication foundational to the notion of cultural public sphere McGuigan endorses. In what follows, *Pandora no Kane* will be examined from the standpoint of Noda's contribution

⁴³ "Pandora no Kane" received a number of prestigious awards including Kinokuniya Theatre Award for Best Individual, Minister of Education Art Encouragement Award and Yomiuri Theatre Award for Best Work.

⁴⁴ Born in 1950, Nakazawa Shinichi is a Japanese philosopher, anthropologist and scholar of religion.

to the aesthetic and emotional modes of communication that underpins the cultural public sphere in contemporary Japan.

The title *Pandora no Kane* [*Pandora's bell*] suggests the Greek myth of Pandora's Box. The huge bell displayed on stage evoked the image of the famous Noh play *Dojyoji*.⁴⁵ The shape and scale of the object also reminded the audience of the atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki in 1945. As significant as this bell was to the stage set, the speech of Himejyo, the queen of the ancient kingdom, is possibly the most memorable aspect of this play. She urges everyone to listen to the sound of the bell.

People have pretended to see nothing, like it was air. They were afraid to call it insanity. But you were breathing that air. This kingdom was protected by continuing to hide the insanity and defeat. Now, the tolling of Pandora's bell will bring everything into light. That is why you must listen to it. Although the tolling predicts our destruction you must have the courage to listen (2000: 121 trans. T.W.).

This scene invokes the situation in Japan prior to the end of World War II. At this time, Japanese society was manipulated by government and military controlled media (Asahi Shimbun 'Shimbun to Senso' Shuzaihan 2008; NHK Shuzaihan 2011). Noda not only criticises the establishment, but also the public as a group for its evasiveness. This is reflected in Himejyo's assertion that the people pretend to see nothing as though the situation were as transparent as the air everyone is breathing. Like the opening of Pandora's Box, the tolling of the bell unleashes the concealed evil. Despite the circumstances, she asks her people to take courage and listen, that is, to face reality and confront the problem.

The play *Pandora no Kane* moves between the ancient kingdom and the present where the Pinkerton Foundation—a reference to the Lieutenant in Giacomo Puccini's opera *Madame Butterfly* based in Nagasaki—is conducting an excavation. The huge bell is rediscovered in the process. At the same time, the bell is brought onto stage as a war trophy in the ancient kingdom. Noda explains that he was inspired by an object he saw

⁴⁵ Traditional Noh play also transformed to a popular Kabuki play named "Musume Dojyoji". It is practically the only Noh play to use a substantial prop which is a huge bell. Dojyoji temple exists in Wakayama Prefecture, Japan.

at the British Museum in London. While he was impressed by the scale of the British museum, he was struck by the fact that so many goods on display were of foreign origin. He told writer/director Simon McBurney that the bell reminded him of the atomic bomb, perhaps because he was born in Nagasaki. McBurney encouraged Noda to write about it, since it is a story that only someone from such a place can write (Hasebe 2005). Noda affirms that until then, he had not realized how meaningful it would be to write a story based in his birthplace Nagasaki. Thus Noda's dialogue with a British artist led him to recognize his locality and to inquire into Japanese society.

In the ancient kingdom, Pandora's bell is a funeral bell. Whenever someone is buried, the bell is rung. Mizuo, the protagonist calls himself the "Burial King", for he is obsessed with burying bodies. He has been surrounded by dead bodies since he was born; burying them is the only thing he knows. *Pandora no Kane* is a melodramatic romance between members of different social classes—for example, the Queen (Himejyo) and an undertaker (Mizuo)—that challenges the audience with crucial questions concerning: human and nature, war and plunder, the atomic bomb and death, negativity and pride (Hasebe 2005: 110). At first, the audience is puzzled by the implied link between the ancient kingdom and the excavation, but gradually the audience is led to realize the reference to the fate of Nagasaki at the end of the Pacific War.

Most importantly the play addresses the issue of the Emperor's war responsibility (Hasebe 2005: 111). Since the ringing of Pandora's bell will inform the people that many lives have been taken, Himejyo's subjects recommend that she orders Mizuo to stop ringing it. This episode invokes Japan's behaviour towards the end of the World War II. Historians have revealed that the Japanese government withheld information and did not inform the public that Japan was losing the war. Media was regulated and controlled under the General National Mobilization Law. Newspapers and radios only covered what the Imperial Headquarters reported. In *Pandora no Kane*, Himejyo the Queen refuses to stop Mizuo from ringing the bell, because she takes pride in her position. She states that as Queen she will keep her promise no matter what. Critics and scholars recognize this episode as Noda's criticism of the Emperor's failure to

intervene which effectively prolonged the war (see Motohashi 2001; Tatsumi 2001; Hasebe 2005).

In addition to the issue of non-intervention, the other significant matter concerning the issue of war responsibility implied is the bombing of Nagasaki. The insanity Himejyo mentions in the cited passage, is a reference to her brother, King of the ancient kingdom. He is discovered holding onto a paper cylinder containing “the ultimatum” from the enemy. The word “ultimatum” makes an obvious reference to the Potsdam Declaration, the document that called for Japan’s immediate unconditional surrender in World War II.⁴⁶ It is perceived that since the Emperor’s conditions were not stated, the Japanese government chose not to respond immediately. Noda’s script indicates that by ignoring the ultimatum, the atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima on 6 August and subsequently on Nagasaki on 9 August 1945.

In the play, a bomb is about to be dropped due to inaction caused by the King’s madness and Himejyo intends to save her people by sacrificing her life. She asks Mizuo to bury her saying that the enemy country called “the Future” will stop bombing her state when they learn that she is dead. Hasebe explains that “by depicting the strong will of the Queen who chooses to die for her nation, it questions the war responsibility of the Showa Emperor. It explicitly states that only you (the Emperor) could have stopped the war” (Hasebe 2005: 115 trans. T.W.). Furthermore, the name Mizuo invokes the people’s desperate calls for water after the bombing: “Mizu o kure” means “give me water” in Japanese. This indicates that Mizuo was re-born in the future, witnessed the atomic bomb and its aftermath when the victims suffering from extraordinary heat after the explosion called for water. His life-long obsession with burying bodies foreshadows these events.

As critics argue, *Pandora no Kane* conveys anti-war and anti-imperialist implications (see Hasebe 2005; Tatsumi 2001; Motohashi 2001). Noda addresses the Japanese

⁴⁶ Proclamation defining the terms for the Japanese Surrender. A statement issued by the United States, United Kingdom and China on 26 July, 1945 calling for the surrender of Japan.

imperial system through the framework of classic Japanese myth in earlier works such as *Nisesaku Sakura no Mori no Mankai no Shita* [*Forgery: in the forest, under cherries in full bloom*] (1992). This play, or “forgery” as its title proclaims, is based on Sakaguchi Ango’s popular short story written in 1947.⁴⁷ While the original story is about twelfth-century bandits living in a cherry blossom forest in the mountains, Noda’s drama draws on *Jinshin no Ran* [Jinshin war] a dispute over succession that followed the death of Emperor Tenji in 672, the year of Jinshin. Noda’s 1996 production *TABOO* depicts the life of the historical figure Ikkyu, an illegitimate child born between the two competing imperial courts of the fourteenth century. Like *Nisesaku Sakura no Mori no Mankai no Shita*, it is an enquiry into the foundations of a nation.

In addition to the critical enquiry into Japanese nationalism, *Pandora no Kane* asks serious questions about Japanese social amnesia. As discussed in relation to *Noda-ban Togitatsu no Utare*, the protagonist’s forced flight from revenge eventually leads to his death. The audience realizes that the situation surrounding Tatsuji, particularly the final scene where public enjoy “a show of revenge” at first, is a form of mass violence. The more Tatsuji strives to avoid a duel and stay alive no matter how humiliating, the clearer it becomes that revenge is futile. These means of inspiring imagination are indeed aesthetic and emotional contributions to the cultural public sphere.

The cultural public sphere in contemporary Japan identified and discussed above, is primarily a space for the contestation of cultural nationalism and social amnesia. Both the challenges Noda faced over his career and his success in doing so confirm the emergence of a cultural public sphere in Japan. It was by encountering the global public sphere, that Noda came to a new understanding of his role as a Japanese artist. As a result, he staged works that address the post-war historical amnesia of Japan, such as *Pandora’s bell* for example. His association with Kabuki may have been inspired by his experience of living overseas, as it is an attempt to renew a traditional culture. Noda’s effort to re-establish contemporary Japanese identity is realized through a

⁴⁷ The original work is *Sakura no mori no mankai no shita* (1947) by Sakaguchi Ango. The term “Nisesaku” means “forgery”.

cosmopolitan vision that does not allude to ethnocentrism. Such resistance towards nationalism suggests that there is an emergent cosmopolitanism in contemporary Japan. The next chapter will explore cosmopolitanism and its application to Japan.

Chapter 4

Cosmopolitanism and Japan

Introduction

Cosmopolitanism is an ancient concept with contemporary relevance. The word ‘cosmopolitan’ is derived from the Greek word *cosmos* meaning the universe or the world, and *polis* meaning a city or a state. The Cynic Diogenes’⁴⁸ claim to be a ‘citizen of the world’ [*kosmopolites*] is often quoted to define cosmopolitan. In ancient times the Greek Stoics advanced and spread the idea of cosmopolitanism (Nussbaum 1994: 3). Immanuel Kant reapproached the original Greek concept in moral and political terms to argue for cosmopolitan law and the cosmopolitan rights of the people. With contact between people and cultures increasing on a global scale, “cosmopolitanism has ... become seen as a way of life as much as a sense of political or ethical obligation to the world as a whole” (Holton 2009: 2).

Over recent years, cosmopolitanism has taken shape as an interdisciplinary field of study that encompasses humanities and social sciences, including philosophy, sociology, political studies, legal studies, international relations, anthropology and cultural studies. A number of scholars identify a *cosmopolitan turn* taking place in their respective fields of study (Beck 2002; Delanty and Inglis 2010; Holton 2009). It takes various forms including “aesthetic cosmopolitanism” (Urry 1995), “alternative cosmopolitanism” (Delanty and Inglis 2010), “banal cosmopolitanism” (Beck 2002, 2006), “comparative cosmopolitanisms” (Robbins and Bruce 1998), “consumerist cosmopolitanism” (Calhoun 2002b), “methodological cosmopolitanism” (Beck 2002), “rooted cosmopolitanism” (Appiah 1997), “thick cosmopolitanism” (Roudometof 2005), “vernacular cosmopolitanism” (Bhaba 1996) and “cosmopolitanism from below” (Kurasawa 2004) to name a few varieties. Others link cosmopolitan concepts to their respective fields of study (Appiah 2006; Turner 2002; Fine 2007).

⁴⁸ Diogenes the Cynic (412 or 404 BCE to 323 BCE) founded Greek Cynic philosophy.

The current interest in cosmopolitanism reflects a widespread perception that it is relevant to contemporary issues. Gerard Delanty and David Inglis observe that “cosmopolitanism encourages the development of new, hybrid analytic approaches – ways of thinking that breach disciplinary boundaries in order to grasp the complexities of the forms of thought and types of social practice to which cosmopolitanism points” (2010: 1). Beck (2006) identifies a paradigmatic shift from nationalism to cosmopolitanism, supported by prevalent uncertainty regarding the nation-state system.

The advantage of the concept of cosmopolitanism is its encompassing perspective on the complex changing forms of social practice across borders. Cosmopolitanism supports an inclusive alternative to dichotomous “us” and “them” approaches and other discriminatory perspectives upon “the other”. Although some scholars criticise its abstract universalism, there is value nevertheless in contemplating a new interdisciplinary analytic approach, particularly in order to consider the development of globalization during this period of flourishing cosmopolitanism spanning from 1990s to the present. In what follows, cosmopolitanism will be employed for the purpose of analysing dimensions of contemporary Japanese cultural identity. This in turn serves the larger objective of this thesis: to assess emergent intellectual and aesthetic developments that might disconnect that identity from the ethnocentrism of conventional *Nihonjinron* discourse.

The recent development of cosmopolitanism has coincided with the globalization process influencing the lifestyles and thoughts of people across the world. This is due largely to people’s increased mobility via travel, short-term and long-term migration, as well as displacement. In addition, the expansion and availability of media communication networks have provided the preconditions for a global cultural sphere. Therefore, while it is an ongoing situation, research in humanities and social sciences today cannot be dissociated from the “cosmopolitan turn” (Beck 2006; Rantanen 2005a). In order to examine the usefulness of cosmopolitanism for addressing the issue of contemporary Japanese cultural identity, it is important to understand the circumstances that prompted the emergence of cosmopolitanism as a growing field of study, and how effectively the concept illuminates a broader terrain, including non-Western cultures

such as Japan. Delanty observes that the dynamic of globalization sends “globalization theory in the direction of a new conception of cosmopolitanism as a mode of world disclosure and as a way in which to theorize the transformation of subjectivity in terms of relations of self, Other and world” (2009: 6). In this respect, globalization and cosmopolitanism are not merely developing in parallel. Rather they are interdependent.

Scholars agree that globalization is not a recent phenomenon, but their viewpoints upon it, and their classification of it, diverge widely, depending on their own theoretical position and the specific academic fields that they address. The association between globalization and ancient civilisation is well documented, yet the majority of scholars agree that it is inseparable from the development of the modern era. The signing of the Westphalia treaty in 1648 is often regarded as a symbolic point of origin, since this treaty established the modern nation-state system in Europe. Late nineteenth-century imperialism and the periods after the two World Wars during the twentieth century are also identified. During the former period, the world, specifically its political economy, began to converge, and the latter periods saw the rise of American hegemony (Nishikawa 2003a: xxi).

Yet historically globalization can be traced back to the Hellenistic Age when warfare and trade directed the economy and culture to geographies beyond the borders of ancient Greece. Accounts of globalization often begin with the fifteenth century, the so-called Age of Discovery, when Europeans sailed out to the New World. Christopher Columbus’ discovery of the Americas is frequently designated the beginning of globalization (Robertson 1992; Nishikawa 2001, 2003; Motohashi 2002b). The current globalization, however, is attributed more directly to the debate over economic and cultural imperialism that has taken shape over the past two decades or so. After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, an event widely recognized as marking the end of the cold war, and the beginning of a new phase of global relations during which capitalist influence began to pervade former socialist countries. The powerful global economic influence of the United States of America was critically denounced as

American imperialism. The developing global economy supported what scholars have described as “cultural imperialism” (Tomlinson 1991).

As we have seen, cosmopolitanism originated from the Greek Cynics and Stoics of the fifth century BC and scholars and politicians of the times of Alexander the Great and the Hellenistic Age (Harris 1927; Heater 1996; Scheffler 1999). Delanty and Inglis stress that accounts of modern cosmopolitanism should not overlook this historical context, as follows:

Stoic cosmopolitanism emerged at the critical juncture of the decline of the classical Athenian city-state and the rise of the Hellenistic Empire of Alexander the Great; whose conquest took Greek culture far beyond the Greek city-states. In this vast trading and cultural world, ... the social conditions were established for a new way of thinking that opened the hitherto closed world of the *polis* to a wider and more globally connected world. (2010: 3)

Further, there is the important role played by Enlightenment cosmopolitanism (2010: 5). Immanuel Kant revived this ancient idea in his essay “Toward Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch” (1795).⁴⁹ In it Kant promotes the “cosmopolitan right[s]” of “citizens of a universal state of human beings” (1795) under the principle of universalism. The philosophical and political interest in cosmopolitanism was re-ignited by Martha Nussbaum’s 1994 essay “Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism” (*Boston Review*, October 1, 1994). She drew on Kantian cosmopolitanism in a call to re-establish the Stoic position on universalism.

The cultural dimension of cosmopolitanism is found in the disposition of openness grounded in original Greek conceptions of encountering the other. As mentioned earlier, the ancient Greeks promoted the idea of belonging to a world without borders that would divide “us” and “them”. Today, the ever-increasing inter-connectedness of the world effected by processes of globalization undoubtedly finds a strong connection with cosmopolitanism. In other words, cultural cosmopolitanism is inherently attached to certain values facilitated, but by no means guaranteed, by globalization, namely

⁴⁹ Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) is a German philosopher often described as the father of modern western philosophy.

universal humanity and humanitarianism. Cultural cosmopolitanism is more focused upon everyday matters, such as constantly changing lifestyles and the identities of individuals and communities, than moral cosmopolitanism, philosophical cosmopolitanism or political cosmopolitanism.

I argue that in respect to everyday practice and culture, the reorientation of the cosmopolitan project towards non-Western worlds was inevitable. As Delanty observes “the emphasis [of contemporary cosmopolitanism] is now placed on multiple forms of belonging and identity” (2010: 8). Due to the mobility of many populations and the development and penetration of advanced technological means of communication, the question of belonging and identity seems to have entered a new stage. Although cosmopolitanism was conceived and developed in the West, it is now appropriate to apply the concept to examine non-Western geographies.

While post-colonial analysis has thrown light on the relationship between East and West, cosmopolitanism offers a new means of interrogating the global sphere without recourse to an East-West dichotomy. In this respect, the cosmopolitan project will undoubtedly stimulate further contemplation of the issues of globalization and cultural identity. In order to address contemporary cultural cosmopolitanism from a wider perspective, it is critical that we consider the diasporic communities around the globe for whom the issues of belonging and identity manifest as direct results of globalization.

Beck’s second modernity and cosmopolitanization: Is contemporary Japan a cosmopolitan society?

In order to determine whether analysis of cosmopolitanism is applicable to contemporary Japan, contemporary cosmopolitan theory must be carefully reviewed. The key questions are: (i) whether it is feasible to apply this intrinsically Western conception to Japan; and (ii) whether it is plausible to identify contemporary Japan as a cosmopolitan society. Specifically, does cosmopolitanism throw light upon the Haruki phenomenon? As later Chapters will demonstrate, the “Haruki phenomenon”—the

unprecedented global reception accorded to contemporary Japanese writer Murakami Haruki—suggests the emergence of a global cultural sphere in which Japanese culture circulates. The crucial concern, then, is to distinguish whether such a global culture sphere has had any consequences for contemporary Japanese cultural identity, when examined via the theoretical discourse of cosmopolitanism.

Since the current trend of cosmopolitanism materialized following the globalization process triggered by the events of 1989 in Europe and their aftermath, most studies of cosmopolitanism concern the reorganization of Europe. It may be plausible to assert that the present discussion of cosmopolitanism began in Europe during the 1990s. The field of political cosmopolitanism actively engaged with issues regarding the European Union. As Delanty and Inglis (2010: 9) observe, the study of cosmopolitanism was initially Eurocentric. Following September 11, 2001 in New York, however, non-Western identities and religious beliefs became highly contentious topics of discussion. Subsequently, critics, such as Daniele Archibugi and David Held (1995), Appadurai (1996), Hannerz (1990, 2004) and Kwame Anthony Appiah (2006), to name a few, contributed to discussions concerning the cultural dimension of cosmopolitanism.

Very little of the current inquiry into cosmopolitanism has focussed upon Japan. Nevertheless this theoretical discussion seems highly relevant to understanding contemporary Japan, specifically for questioning its cultural identity. The “Haruki phenomenon” demonstrates that a global cultural sphere, which renders the boundaries of national cultures more porous, has developed. In this sphere the traditional polarization of West and East is no longer relevant and the binary system of ideas from which it derived—central versus peripheral, global versus provincial, high versus low, etc.—now seems meaningless. The key concern here is to acknowledge the currency, and broader application, of contemporary cosmopolitanism to contemporary Japan.

In “The Cosmopolitan Society and its Enemies” (2002), Beck redefines cosmopolitan society and cosmopolitan sociology. He criticises the mono-cultural focus of Western

discussions about modernity which pay little attention to the diversity of societies or the alternative status of non-Western others. He also objects to the monologic imagination supported by the national perspective (2002: 18). He maintains that cosmopolitanism would transform this vision by acknowledging the diversity of non-Western developed societies. He stresses that “many Asian countries are not interested in colonialism or in post-colonialism, but are in the process of constructing *alternative modernities* based on new relations with their populations, with capital and with the West” (2002: 22). While this comment does not directly refer to Japan, it raises the question of whether Japan is a cosmopolitan society and whether cosmopolitan sociology is a feasible means of investigating contemporary Japan. To address this question, the foundational concepts of Beck’s theory of cosmopolitanism will be examined.

Although Beck’s theorization of modernity is constructed fundamentally in relation to the West and focused primarily upon Europe, his argument for a “second modernity” is particularly relevant to contemporary Japan. The second modernity is a result of the globalization process, specifically what Beck calls the “internalized globalization” of societies, and this concept is pertinent to non-Western societies. This concept makes it hypothetically possible to examine contemporary Japanese society without either regressing into a nationalistic debate between “us and them”, or insisting upon historical and cultural specifics. As Beck affirms, “The national perspective is a monologic imagination, which excludes the otherness of the other. The cosmopolitan perspective is an alternative imagination, an imagination of alternative ways of life and rationalities, which include the otherness of the other” (2002: 18). Although Beck’s perspective is situated in the West, the monologic imagination mentioned above is applicable to the Japanese nationalistic discourse examined in Chapter one. The exclusivity of ethno-centric cultural nationalism is demonstrated in the ideological designation ascribed to national culture. This nationalist outlook is largely based on traditional ethnocentric thinking. By contrast the emergent cosmopolitan perspective takes an alternative viewpoint that is more inclusive.

In order to examine contemporary Japanese cultural identity objectively and from a broader perspective, it is critical to depart from the kind of monologic imagination Beck

condemns. In addition, it is crucial to note the particular features of Japanese modernity. As Starrs explains:

The onset of modernity in this Far Eastern nation is commonly said to differ from that in Western countries in at least three important respects: historically, it was inaugurated on a specific date (with the ouster of the feudal Tokugawa regime in early 1868) and radically transformed Japanese culture within a few short decades (almost ‘overnight’ in the long view of history); culturally, it was associated with the importation of a foreign and fundamentally alien civilization; politically, it was initially imposed ‘from above’ by the new Meiji nation-state itself as part of its nation-building project, undertaken in response to the threat of late 19th century Western imperialism. (2011: 6)

This portrait of Japanese modernity implies that as much as modernity was uniquely situated in Japan, it was primarily an importation of Western civilization. Therefore, as Starrs observes, it is understandable that there has been “ambivalence” identified in Japanese attitudes towards the progress of modernization. Furthermore, he contends that it explains “why certain influential segments of the population – especially certain intellectual, political, religious, and cultural leaders – ultimately became determined to resist or ‘overcome modernity’” (2011: 5). The issue of ambivalence and the struggle with the Western idea of modernity offers a significant aspect for analysing Japanese cultural identity. As discussed in Chapter one, the *Nihonjinron* discourse demonstrates Japanese writers’ constant awareness of how Japan is perceived by Western intellectuals. At the same time, *Nihonjinron* promotes traditional cultural values in order to distinguish Japanese culture. Its historical trajectory of oscillation between Westernization and Japanization (Nishikawa 1995) exhibits such ambivalence and struggle.

This study aims not to scrutinize Japanese modernity, but to examine contemporary Japanese society from a novel standpoint without being baffled by conventional viewpoints. In order to achieve this, it is important to move away from the discriminatory perspective that rests on the nation-state framework, and to acquire a new vantage point upon contemporary globalization. Not only does Beck’s second modernity facilitate such a project, but it provides a sociological approach for doing so.

Beck's second modernity is a fresh departure. He repudiates the common paradigm of modernity followed by post-modernity in favour of classifying modernity into two phases: "first modernity" and "second modernity". As a sociologist Beck's concern is less upon chronological order, and more the status of the world system or changes brought about in relation to the globalization process. Accordingly he describes second modernity as being non-nation-state centred, and first modernity as nationalistic or nation-state centred. The critical distinction between first and second modernity is the perception of boundaries. Beck asserts that the blurring of boundaries, including those of the nation-state, is a distinctive characteristic of second modernity. Although this is obvious in the case of the European Union (E.U.), it may not be directly applicable to Japan. The concept of second modernity as "internalized globalization" (Beck 2002), however, offers a persuasive viewpoint on Japan, particularly in light of the struggles associated with the inception of the idea of modernity in Japan mentioned above.

This approach seems particularly apt for contemplating post-war Japanese society. After the defeat of World War II, Japan was occupied by the Allied Powers led by the United States. While the symbolic status of the emperor system was maintained, people increasingly distrusted the pre-war imperialist ethos. It is generally understood that post-war Japanese society moved away from the nationalist outlook that supports imperial nation-state system. Nevertheless, as discussed in earlier Chapter(s), during this period cultural nationalism emerged as did the deliberate construction of distinctly Japanese cultural identity. Japan's economic development during the 1960's to 1980's also contributed to development of a certain cultural nationalism (see Iwabuchi 2007; Yoshimi 2003).

Beck explains that while postmodernity "celebrates [this] multiplication and opening up of boundaries, second modernity posits that every individual and institutional decision presupposes the existence of boundaries" (Slater & Ritzer 2001: 266). For example, Murakami Haruki's detachment from society early in his career during the 1980's can be considered a reflection of the "freedom" postmodernists celebrated. A number of new generation post-war writers, including Murakami, surfaced around this time, and

their works reflected the increasingly westernised attitudes of the time period. Their generation was renouncing the traditional Japanese values that lingered after the war. Murakami's turn to commitment in the mid-1990s, however, reflects his embrace of individual autonomy inspired by the experience of living abroad for several years (see Murakami 2011). His efforts to become *engaged* by transcending the "us and them" binary reflects a cosmopolitan perspective that recognises multiple boundaries in society. Murakami's *cosmopolitan turn*, mentioned above, shall be discussed further in Chapters six and seven.

Starrs (2011) maintains that modernity in Japan was not only about scientific and technological progress but it also entailed ideological developments such as nation-building and nationalism, democratization as well as other socio-cultural and economic changes. He points out that under the influence of the nineteenth-century Western idea of national literature, the Japanese novel became "a very powerful vehicle of modernization and nation-building" (2011: 85). Therefore, modernism in the Japanese context, is a concept "that embraces not just the familiar *radical innovation in the arts* but also wider social, political and cultural practices and ideologies" (Roger Griffin 2010 cited in Starrs 2011: 8). Starrs' study of Japanese attitudes towards modernity is useful for the examination of second modernity in Japan.⁵⁰

Starrs observes that there was struggle between nationalism and cosmopolitanism in early twentieth-century in Japan, which was resolved in the early twenty-first century when Japan was globalized (2011: 151-152). He compares Akutagawa Ryunosuke, a renowned writer of the modern period with Murakami Haruki, insisting that Murakami does not show any of Akutagawa's "anxieties of influence" (2011: 151). According to Starrs, "anxiety of influence" is a reflection of the Japanese modernity complex which originates from a fear that by totally accepting Western culture, the Japanese would become "unJapanese" (2011: 195). Drawing on Suter, he portrays Akutagawa as a cosmopolitan modern intellectual who inherited both the Eastern tradition and Western

⁵⁰ For detailed definitions of the terms "modernity", "modernization" and "modernism" assumed here see: Jones and Holmes, 2011.

cultural practice.⁵¹ Akutagawa represents the Taisho cosmopolitan, an aesthetic kind of cosmopolitanism that proliferated during the Taisho era (1912-1925). The comparison between Akutagawa and Murakami highlights two distinctively different modernities.

The anxiety of becoming “unJapanese” is indicative of concerns over cultural identity. While fully embracing the modernization progress of Westernization, Akutagawa was troubled about his cultural identity. This is characteristic of the first modernity’s persisting concern about national boundaries. Murakami, on the other hand, is unconcerned about his “Japaneseness”; this suggests that he embodies the “alternative imagination” (Beck 2002) of an emergent cosmopolitanism. As discussed later (in Chapter six), Murakami’s un-Japaneseness is criticised as “odourless” (Yomota 2006) since there is little to indicate cultural roots or locality in his works. The claim that Murakami’s popularity overseas owes to his un-Japaneseness, reflects the older concern that an artist’s cultural heritage should be confined by the boundaries of his or her national culture.

Of particular significance in Beck’s account of second modernity is his discussion of the multiplicity of boundaries. According to Beck, “One definition of second modernity is that the boundaries between social spheres are multiplied”; and that each of the boundaries becomes pluralized (2001: 266). Furthermore, he contends that the presence of multiple boundaries changes the nature of boundaries as well as the collectivity defined by those boundaries (2001: 266). As discussed in Chapter one, Japan was recognised for the monolithic disposition of society towards a single ethnic nation-state (see Oguma 1995). The hegemonic notion of single ethnicity was pervasive and discriminatory. Although there were multiple social spheres in Japan, minority social spheres were considered invisible or subjected to assimilation. In her study of Japanese history, culture and nationality, Morris-Suzuki (1998) shows that the “Japanization” of such peripheries began in the mid-nineteenth century and it was

⁵¹ Akutagawa’s work reflects “Taisho Japan’s own oscillation between cosmopolitanism and nationalism, multiculturalism and assimilationism” (Suter 2008 cited in Starrs 2011: 150).

deeply connected to the development of Japan as a modern nation-state. Her study offers historical accounts of the cultural assimilation of the Ainu and the people of Ryukyu Islands. She attests that visible cultural differences were “reconciled” with the ideological construction of the nation, for the purpose of achieving unity as a single ethnicity (Morris-Suzuki 1998: 33).

In this respect, Beck’s contention that within second modernity, boundaries are choices, rather than givens, has significant implications. In addition to the minority ethnic communities mentioned above, migrants from former colonies such as Korea and Taiwan are confronted with identity issues. As discussed later (in Chapter five), the issue of cultural identity and legal citizenship became contentious, as increased numbers of third or fourth generation Koreans began to opt for Japanese citizenship. This can be understood as a transition facilitated by the kind of circumstances Beck observes.

Cosmopolitanization is a key principle underpinning Beck’s conception of second modernity. He explains that “cosmopolitanization means *internal* globalization”; therefore, it is “globalization *from within* national societies” (2002: 17). In his world-risk society thesis, he proposes “cosmopolitan sociology” for a better understanding of societies that are globalized and interconnected. Significantly Beck adopts the word cosmopolitanization to underscore the paradigmatic transition from nationalism. He distinguishes cosmopolitanization from cosmopolitanism as follows: “Cosmopolitanism ... is a large, ancient, rich and controversial set of political ideas, philosophies and ideologies”, whereas “Cosmopolitanization ... is a frame of reference for empirical exploration for globalization *from within*” (2002: 25-26). Cosmopolitanization is a methodological concept that departs from the practice of vertically dividing the world, and offers an alternative horizontal viewpoint that transcends conventional boundaries.

Notably, Beck’s argument on cosmopolitanism does not entirely deny nation states or national societies. He is more concerned with the *internal* globalization, or cosmopolitanization, taking place within national societies. Beck argues that “Cosmopolitanization means that the key questions of a way of life, such as

nourishment, production, identity, fear, memory, pleasure, fate, can no longer be located nationally or locally, but only globally or glocally” (2002: 29-30). This argument is particularly relevant to his contention about the world-risk society (Beck 1998). At the same time, issues of identity, memory and pleasure as “a way of life” are pertinent for contemplation of the cultural sphere. For example, his statement that the “sphere of experience”, in terms of time-space, has become glocal.⁵² By the term glocal he means that the globally networked life-world enabled by information technology such as the internet and mobile phones, is a combination of “home and non-place” (Beck 2002: 31) which supports the emergence of a global cultural sphere, as discussed in Chapter three.

Beck uses the term *de-territorialization* to explain the transformation of the cultural sphere, as a result of time-space compression associated with globalized media communication. He maintains that conventional ties between culture and place are no longer persuasive. Instead, the “imagined presence” (Urry 2000) of others and geographically distant worlds is more relevant to cosmopolitan sociology research. For contemplating the issue of belonging, Beck argues that “the actions of migrants and minorities are major examples of dialogic imaginative ways of life and everyday cosmopolitanism” (2002: 30).

Beck cautions us not to confuse the optimistic view of cosmopolitanism with the methodological analysis of cosmopolitanization. While cosmopolitanization offers an alternative approach that steps out of the conventional nationalistic framework, it is also important to address the effect of individualization that cosmopolitanism presupposes (2002: 37). For instance, the *internal globalization* Beck equates with the pluralisation of borders not only applies to the societal framework but also seems to indicate that the inhabitants, as members of society, are increasingly influenced and transformed as individuals. The question is whether or not it is reasonable to say that *internal globalization* mostly concerns the everyday lives of people as constituents of such society? While cosmopolitanization focuses on discerning a sociological approach towards the structural issues of the paradigm change, examination of cosmopolitanism

based on the individualization of society should not be disregarded. Therefore, the research interest here is upon the consciousness of the people as individuals regardless of the blurring of boundaries. Thus investigating cosmopolitan society may be highly relevant to this analysis of contemporary Japanese society through the theory of cosmopolitanism.

Beck observes the emergence of a *cosmopolitan society* characterised by “a new way of doing business and of working, a new kind of identity and politics as well as a new kind of everyday space-time experience and of human sociability” (2002: 30). He argues that in view of the ongoing transnationalization, the concept of “society” needs to be re-considered. At the same time, however, Beck admits that “It is impossible even to outline this claim here” (2002: 30), for cosmopolitanization is a historically unprecedented phenomenon. Since the conditions by which to determine whether contemporary Japan can be described as a cosmopolitan society are undefined, Beck’s theory shall be investigated by recognizing the challenging conditions.

Beck identifies nationalism, globalism and democratic authoritarianism as three “enemies of cosmopolitan societies” (2002: 38). Recognizing these “enemies” may help us to determine whether or not cosmopolitan society is emerging. First, in terms of nationalism, Beck observes that although the nation-state system of societies is imploding, ironically an ethnic globalization paradox is surfacing. He argues that a burgeoning essentialist nationalistic approach towards ethnicities and ideologies is replacing the old nationalism. Second, he holds that globalism, in connection with neoliberalism or free-market ideology, is undermining democratic politics and identities. Third, he identifies democratic authoritarianism as an enemy to democratic power. Beck is concerned that democratic power is at risk, and that its loss might go unnoticed because authoritarian ways are being effectively covered over by a democratic *façade*.

Japan of the last few decades seems to satisfy the conditions by which Beck defines as “enemies” of cosmopolitan society. Attitudes towards ethnocentric national discourse suggest that cultural nationalism has been re-emerging over the last few decades. Nishikawa (1999, 2001) points out that Japan’s modernization process since the Meiji

Restoration in 1868 has followed a pattern of oscillating *Westernization* and *Japanization*. He shows that Westernization and nationalization ideologies have alternated from the late 1800s to the 1980s, at approximately twenty-year intervals. Nishikawa observes that this particular cycle correlates ideological trends in the discourses of *Nihonjinron* and Japanese culture more broadly (1999: 167). As discussed in Chapter one, *Nihonjinron* discourse is ideological in so far as it indirectly designates what it means to be an “authentic” Japanese (Befu 1993). It also exhibits the anxiety of becoming “unJapanese” identified by Starrs (2011). Nishikawa’s study confirms the complexities of the Japanese modernization process from a socio-cultural viewpoint.

As established in Chapter one, *Nihonjinron* discourse encapsulates a hegemonic ideology (see Befu 1993; Sugimoto 1999). It is problematic because of its ethnocentric tenet of rejecting others. The ethnocentric propensity of “Japaneseness” promoted by *Nihonjinron* discourse diminishes autonomous self-identity, since conforming to the ethnocentric collective is prioritized. As long as nationalism in Japan continues to resort to such hegemonic cultural ascription, it will be difficult to establish “the recognition of the whole [nation] by its members, and a sense of individual self that includes membership in the whole” (Calhoun 2002a: 4).

Nishikawa claims that after the Meiji Restoration, one of the most important tasks facing Japan was to develop a modern nation-state. Therefore, he maintains that the cycle of Westernization and nationalization in Japan is predicated upon ideological confrontation within the modern nation-state framework (2001: 132). According to Nishikawa, modern nation-states aspire to become members of the world system of nation-states, and such aspirations are reflected in developing ideologies that support internationalization or Westernization. The first period coincided with the period that culminated in the Meiji Restoration (1868). The second wave followed the defeat of World War II in 1945, a period of what is often referred to as post-war democracy. On the other hand, when a nation-state is isolated or at risk within the international community, a shift towards national unification or nationalization often prevails. Therefore, it is no coincidence that the first and second periods of Japanization are

connected to periods of war (Nishikawa 2001: 137). This proposition is supported by the fact that the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) and the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905) overlap with the first period of nationalization; and the Pacific War coincides with the second nationalization period.

Although Nishikawa effectively inspects the oscillation that has characterized the history of Japanese Westernization and nationalization, he acknowledges that the decade after the mid-1980s is difficult to classify (1999: 187). To illustrate his point, he discusses the speeches of two Japanese writers, Kawabata Yasunari and Oe Kenzaburo, awarded Nobel Prizes in Literature in 1969 and 1994 respectively. Kawabata, the recipient of the 1969 award, entitled his speech “Japan, the beautiful, and myself” [Utsukushii Nihon no Watashi]. He was the first Japanese author to receive this prestigious award; and his title expresses his pride in receiving it as a Japanese national. His attitude was made patent by his wearing a traditional Japanese kimono at the award ceremony. According to Nishikawa, Kawabata’s speech reflects attitudes dominant during a period of nationalization influenced by the Korean War. On the other hand, Oe entitled his 1994 speech “Japan, the ambiguous, and myself” [Aimaina Nihon no Watashi], making an obvious reference to Kawabata’s title only to underscore the very different sentiment he wished to convey.

Two and a half decades later, upon receiving the same international award, Oe rejects the nationalistic tenor of Kawabata’s speech. By substituting the word “beautiful” with “ambiguous” to express Japan, Oe challenges Kawabata’s message. The word *ambiguous* exhibits his uncertainty about the earlier nationalistic ideology of Japan as a nation. Oe’s resistance to upfront nationalism and his struggle to maintain his distance from the conventional binary positions may be interpreted as signs of an emergent cosmopolitan orientation. Furthermore, his choice of the word *ambiguity* seems to resonate with Beck’s idea of a second modernity in which the boundaries are blurred. Considering that 1990s was a time of developing globalization particularly in terms of economy and culture, it is understandable that Oe’s speech represented both a modernized post-war Japan and a certain attachment to traditional Japanese culture.

Oe's attitude may be viewed as an indication of an emergent cosmopolitanization. Although it is a single speech, both the occasion and the social standing of literary authors warrant applying this concept to Japanese society. First, since Japan was shunned from international society after the defeat of World War II, the awarding of the Nobel Prize for Literature to Kawabata in 1968 was deemed a symbol of its economic development as well as its acceptance by the international community. Second, literary fiction, as explained earlier, is a cultural genre deeply connected to the modern nation-building project. Therefore, writers were conferred with a certain social status as public intellectuals. Considering the prestige of Kawabata and Oe, in addition to the occasion of Nobel lectures, it is reasonable to consider their speeches as accounts of Japanese society. However, the reaction to Oe's speech in Japan was mixed and was subject to dispute. This implies that although Oe may represent Japan's emergent cosmopolitanization, attachment to traditional cultural values persists. Such competing forces in contemporary Japanese society can be identified in the controversy over Murakami Haruki as well. This will be discussed further in Chapters six and seven.

While nationalism remains a major issue, as well as probably the most significant "enemy" for cosmopolitan society, the other two positions Beck identifies – globalism and democratic authoritarianism – also operate in Japan's case. As a result of Japan's declining position in the global economy, particularly since the beginning of the 1990s, Japanese society seems to be under-going another cycle of "nationalization". As mentioned earlier, nationalization resurfaces during phases of diminished confidence. For this reason, such nationalization trends are generally accompanied by enhanced ethno-nationalism. For example, critics denounced the enforcement of the 1999 Act of National Flag and Anthem as a demonstration of such a nationalistic shift.⁵³ Scholars, journalists and school teachers directly affected by this law protested that it went against

⁵³ Law concerning the national flag and national anthem, number 127, 13 August, 1999.

the Japanese constitution which stipulates that freedom of thought and conscience shall not be violated under the ‘Rights and Duties of the People.’⁵⁴

Similarly, the issue regarding government authorisation of history text-books for junior high-schools re-kindled disputes over Japan’s responsibility with regards to World War II. As Morris-Suzuki (2002: 75-79) points out, neo-conservative movements, or “populist nationalism”, represented by Atrashii Kyokasho no Kai [New Text-book Group], seem to pervade Japanese society, particularly the younger generation. Her concerns over the nationalistic narrative they construct and circulate is founded: people tend to sympathise with the new text-book proponents’ claim that traditional history books were too self-critical.

Beck identifies democratic authoritarianism as another “enemy of cosmopolitan society.” Over the past few decades, the era Nishikawa declares indefinable, Japanese society seems to have been under the relatively strong influence of democratic authoritarianism. This is evident in the period during Prime Minister Koizumi Kotaro’s government from 2001 to 2006. First, this government promoted the free-market ideology that supported globalism and neo-liberalism. In its call to rebuild the Japanese economy, Koizumi’s government endorsed market liberalization and emphasized that Japan had to meet global standards. Second, it vigorously promoted the idea of a more competitive society. As a result, the conventional model of Japanese society based on seniority and life-time employment dissolved gradually.

Despite accusations that such measures blindly followed the American model leading the global market economy, Prime Minister Koizumi remained popular. During his term, polarization became a critical social issue characterized by the increasing prevalence of terms such as “working poor”⁵⁵ which described the reality for many

⁵⁴ Chapter III, Rights and duties of the people, Article 19 – Freedom of thought and conscience shall not be violated.

⁵⁵ According to the research on labour structure conducted by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, the percentage of households that are considered to belong to the working poor class has increased from 12.8% in 1997 to 24.5% in 2009.

members of the younger generation who suffered substantially lower incomes than the previous generation. Although Prime Minister Koizumi's political opponents, and scholars (Otake 2006; Yamaguchi 2004), declared him a populist, he won overwhelming majority support in the 2005 general election and remained in political power until his resignation the following year upon fulfilling his term. Notably, Koizumi's government was one of the longest political regimes of the last three decades in Japan.

The above-mentioned cases seem to demonstrate that Japan has had ample experience of the three enemies of cosmopolitan society Beck outlines. Therefore it fulfills Beck's concept of cosmopolitan society defined, as Inglis and Delanty explain, as "the second age of modernity where there has been a paradigmatic shift from societies operating within the nation-state framework" (2010: 47). Accordingly, Japan's persistent resistance to enemies of cosmopolitan societies may be considered a sign of such a paradigm shift. As Oe suggested in his speech, Japan's modernity is more accurately represented by the term *ambiguity*, making it difficult to distinguish a paradigm shift that is more obvious in the West. The co-existence of the "enemies" and resistance to them, however, indicates a situation in Japan suggestive of an emergent cosmopolitanism. This is more conspicuous in the scope of everyday life and culture, which will be further explored in the following section.

Everyday cosmopolitanism and the prospect of cosmopolitan identities

It is generally understood that Kant conceived cosmopolitanism in response to a period of continuous war in Europe in the late eighteenth century. He sought to establish a philosophical means of realizing peace in Europe, and the idea of "cosmopolitan right" underscored the key principle of universal hospitality (1795). Kant believed that establishing the ideal of cosmopolitanism was critical for bringing peace to the European nations. As stated earlier, the late-twentieth-century development of globalization re-awoke the Kantian spirit of cosmopolitanism. Nussbaum's

interpretation (1994) was instrumental in reinstating Kant's cosmopolitanism, but it focused mainly on the political and ethical perspective. Although the political dimension is meaningful for promoting the idea of citizenship as a cosmopolitan right, it is also important to address the sociological aspect which affords a wider application of the Kantian ideal extending to non-Western spheres.

This section examines how the notion of renewed cosmopolitanism can be identified in Japan by exploring the influence of such cosmopolitanism in everyday life and culture. Beck's conception of cosmopolitanization is useful for reviewing this subject from a sociological point of view. His proposal of "cosmopolitan sociology" (2002) moves away from the conventional sociological focus upon class within the national framework. Considering the non-Western context of Japanese modernity, Beck's approach seems to be apt for investigating contemporary Japanese society. Since this Chapter assumes that due to cosmopolitanization, national boundaries are blurred and more individuals are transcending social and cultural boundaries, Rantanen's ideas about everyday cosmopolitanism are highly relevant to the account of such autonomous individuals. Beck's account of internal globalization as a process by which the consciousness and identities of members of society are transformed, is comparable to Rantanen's idea of everyday cosmopolitanism (2005a). Both Beck and Rantanen identify mobility as a characteristic feature of globalization. As Robert J. Holton explains, "the contemporary age of mass migration is widely seen as an age of cosmopolitanism" (2009: 40) and movement across borders is considered a major structural condition for cosmopolitanism (2009: 40).

According to Beck, a *banal cosmopolitanism* is emerging following the rapid development of mobility (2002). This expression derives from Michael Billig's term "banal nationalism" (1995), making clear the connection between *banal cosmopolitanism* and nationalism. Beck's argument on cosmopolitanism may well manifest both his resistance to nationalism and his observation of the transformation of nationalism initiated by the globalization process. Rantanen's claim for *everyday cosmopolitanism* is also supported by increased mobility on a global scale. Her approach relies on concrete case studies that gauge individualized standpoints. Her

notion of the everyday illuminates how people perceive themselves and their sense of belonging to society. Therefore, while Beck's *banal cosmopolitanism* is linked to nationalism and conventional sociological viewpoints, *everyday cosmopolitanism* pays attention to a broader range of globally mobile people, many of whom are overlooked by "elitist" notions of cosmopolitanism.

According to Rantanen, while studies link cosmopolitanism to globalization, its affiliation with mass, or the possibility of mass movements generated by media and communications, has not been appraised (2005a: 119). She quotes Ulf Hannerz's statement that "cosmopolitanism is a perspective, a state of mind, or a mode of managing meaning, and cosmopolitans are those who have a willingness to engage with the other" (Hannerz 1990 cited in 2005a: 120). As much as she acknowledges the validity of this description, Rantanen finds it problematic that Hannerz delimits the acquisition of such skill to travelling or face-to-face communication requiring physical presence. She asks whether there is cosmopolitanism amongst the millions of ordinary people, those people who are neither tourists, exiles, expatriates, transnational employees, nor migrant workers and are not conventionally defined as cosmopolitan. Her question is pertinent for investigating emergent cosmopolitanism in contemporary Japan.

Rantanen argues that cosmopolitan qualities or a cosmopolitan identity can be developed; not only by physical mobility but through what she calls "mediated cosmopolitanism" (2005a: 124). Although her study does not directly concern cosmopolitanism, the concrete examples of dislocated people and refugees she provides in her field studies have important implications for understanding everyday cosmopolitanism. Rantanen proposes the following five "zones", or areas, which provide what she perceives to be the conditions for everyday cosmopolitanism:

1. media and communications
2. learning another language
3. living/working abroad or having a family member living abroad
4. living with a person from another culture
5. engaging with foreigners in your locality or across a frontier

In what follows, these zones are closely reviewed. The purpose is not only to better understand Rantanen's notion of everyday cosmopolitanism, but to determine whether this particular concept illuminates the Haruki phenomenon and the development of cosmopolitan identity associated with his work.

First, on media and communications, few would deny Rantanen's statement that "media is about connecting strangers to one another" (2005a: 125). In my view, the media is a field where "cosmopolitan consciousness" (Fine 2007) thrives since media communication allows people to become connected regardless of geographical location. Robert Fine identifies two aspects of cosmopolitanism: the cosmopolitan outlook and the cosmopolitan condition. He explains that:

By the cosmopolitan outlook I mean a way of seeing the world, a form of consciousness, an emerging paradigm of sociological analysis. It is cosmopolitanism's interpretive moment. ... By the cosmopolitan condition, I refer to an existing social reality, a state of the world, a set of properties belonging to our age. It is cosmopolitanism's external moment. (2007: 134)

For Fine "cosmopolitan consciousness" is the way one approaches the world. Furthermore, he affirms that "the development of cosmopolitan consciousness is itself part of social reality, a vital element of the cosmopolitan condition" (2007: 134) suggesting that cosmopolitan consciousness contributes to the development of the cosmopolitan condition.

Rantanen also acknowledges, however, that the media has long been an accomplice to nationalism, at times even facilitating its promotion. The examples she provides of how the media connects strangers – e.g. the televised funeral of Princess Diana in 1997, and sports and entertainment events – are cases in which televised media promote nationalism. Cultural studies provides ample scholarships on this particular issue (see Hall 1977; Hall *et al.* 1996; Barker 2000). Yoshimi's studies (2003) show how the development of media communications contributed to sustaining the modern emperor system in Japan. In this light, Rantanen's observation that the development of cosmopolitan awareness depends on the people seems optimistic.

This is not to deny that cosmopolitanism is conveyed by, or instituted through, media and communications. Indeed, developing cosmopolitan awareness through media is comparable to travelling, in the sense that the level of engagement cannot be prescribed. In other words, there is no guarantee that everyone will engage with other cultures. The manner in which each individual accepts, recognises and apprehends such encounters depends upon on each person's readiness and flexibility. Scholarship in cosmopolitanism frequently defines this quality as openness. It seems that both travelling and media experiences can initiate a step towards cosmopolitanism. The discrepancy may be that while travelling involves a time-space experience away from home and a departure from everyday life, media communications offer encounters within the time-space of everyday life.

For the purpose of this analysis, it would be worthwhile to juxtapose Murakami's works of literature to media. Although literary narratives are not news stories or entertainment programs, the critical similarity between news stories, entertainment programs and novels is that they are shared by an audience. From a consumption point of view, Murakami's works function to nurture a sense of everyday cosmopolitanism in similar ways to the media. As much as his works are enjoyed on a global scale, the distribution and readership networks transcend national boundaries like media communications.

Furthermore, Murakami's works exhibit cultural neutrality or impartiality that makes them function as mediums, in the global cultural sphere. First, they often lack geographical affiliation, and this enables the readers to sympathise with the characters or their situation more readily. In addition, references to Western culture, such as jazz, classical music, sandwiches, spaghetti, situated in the everyday life of the characters, promote the impression that the plot may be unfolding anywhere, that is, in any modern city, not necessarily a Japanese one. Additionally, Murakami employs common contemporary universal signs, such as McDonalds, Coca Cola and Heineken, that are not intrinsically connected to a particular nationality or locality. There is also the issue of accessibility, which relates to the second zone Rantanen identifies.

Learning another language is Rantanen's second zone. The pivotal question is whether someone who knows only one language can acquire cosmopolitan qualities. Rantanen contends that "leaving one's safety zone" (2005a: 127) by using a language that is not one's mother tongue is critical in this respect. She qualifies the issue of English, defining it as "a working language of politics, business, culture and tourism" (2005a: 126). As more people use English, Rantanen affirms, it becomes increasingly useful to have a facility for English. At the same time, she cautions that being able to speak English does not make one a cosmopolitan.

The issue of language raises an interesting angle from which to analyse the Haruki phenomenon. A conspicuous reason for the popularity of Murakami's works being referred to as the Haruki phenomenon, is the fact that they have been translated into over 40 languages. This makes him one of the most translated contemporary Japanese authors. Scholars (for example, Fujii 2007; Numnoa 2008; Rubin 2005; Yomota 2006) confirm that the Haruki phenomenon is global, for not only are his works popular in the English language community but his popularity is widespread throughout Asia and other parts of Europe where English is not the common language.

According to the survey published by the Japan Foundation (Shibata *et al.* 2006), the first overseas translation of Murakami Haruki's work was in 1986.⁵⁶ It was followed by the publication of his works in 1989 when *A wild sheep chase* in English and *Norwegian wood* in Korean were published. The table below shows the publication years of *A wild sheep chase* and *Norwegian wood* in those countries that these titles were made available. While in Japan there were five years between the publication of *A wild sheep chase* and that of *Norwegian wood*, the timing of the publication of the titles in other countries differed for each title. Whereas *A wild sheep chase* introduced Murakami to English-language readers, the East Asian market was exposed to *Norwegian wood* first. Aside from commercial reasons, this appears to reflect some linguistic characteristics. In those countries (China and Korea) where direct translation from Japanese to the local language was available, *Norwegian wood* (which

⁵⁶ 1973nen no Pin-boru was translated into Chinese and published in Taiwan.

became a record breaking best-seller in Japan) was published before *A wild sheep chase*.

Publication years and countries of A wild sheep chase and Norwegian wood

Year	A wild sheep chase	Norwegian wood
1982	Japan	
1987		Japan
1989	USA	Korea, Taiwan
1990	France, UK	
1991	Germany, Greece, Netherland, Spain	Hong Kong
1992	Finland, Hong Kong, Italy	
1993	Norway	
1994		France, Italy
1995	Poland, Taiwan	
1996	Denmark	China
1997	Korea, China	
1998	Russia	Norway
2000		Israel, UK, USA
2001		Germany
2002		Czech, Poland, Romania
2003	Lithuania, Romania	Russia, Latvia, Sweden
2004	Israel, Latvia, Slovakia	
2005		Bulgaria, Denmark, Lithuania, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain

(Source: Shibata *et al.* 2006)

The different patterns of the spread of Haruki phenomenon reflected in the above comparison are further discussed in Chapter six as “Wood-high, Sheep-low” theory in East Asia (Fujii 2007).

From 1990, Murakami’s short stories were introduced in *The New Yorker*. The magazine’s renown contributed to his gaining literary acclaim, for he was one of the first Japanese writers whose work was published in it (Murakami 2006: 13). Murakami signed a contract with an American publisher and English translations of his

short stories as well as novels became available from 1992.⁵⁷ Since, at first, many European translations were re-translated from the English text, the proliferation of Murakami's works in English in addition to his reputation were significant factors for the global expansion of his reputation as a writer. As Rantanen suggests, English is useful as "a working language", but it was not the only reason for the development of the Haruki phenomenon.

In this respect, everyday cosmopolitanism manifests in the wide range of languages into which Murakami's works have been translated. As Chapter six will establish, some readers voluntarily undertook to translate his work out of their own interest. For example, Anna Zielinska-Elliott, now the translator of most of Murakami's works into Polish, first read his novels in 1987. She was studying Japanese language at a university and chose to read Murakami. Fascinated by the story, she began translating *A wild sheep chase* into Polish without any particular prospect for publication, since Murakami was still unknown in Poland at that time. The first translation was published in 1995 as part of a "Japan pocket edition" series, but only people with a particular interest in Japan read it. Later in 2003, due to Murakami's popularity elsewhere, a major local publishing company decided to publish his works in Poland and she became the official translator of Murakami into Polish (Shibata *et al.* 2006: 105).

The next two zones – when someone in a family lives or works abroad, and living with a person from another culture – are not widely applicable to Japan. The issue of migrant workers is reminiscent of pre-war times when there was an overflow of domestic labour. Many Japanese moved abroad to seek jobs and better quality of life. There was considerable Japanese emigration to countries such as the U.S., Canada, Brazil, Peru and Manchuria from 1868 until the end of World War II. Post-war economic growth, however, caused the situation to reverse. Japan became a country to

⁵⁷ The U.S. publisher Knopf published the following translations: *Elephant vanishes* (short stories) (1992), *The wind-up bird chronicle* (1997), *South of the border, west of the sun* (1999), *Sputnik sweetheart* (2001) and *Kafka on the shore* (2005).

which people from other countries, particularly those in the Asia Pacific region, sought to immigrate.

Although Japan's border control and legal system makes it difficult to accept high numbers of migrant workers, according to the Immigration Bureau, in 2005, the number of foreign residents in Japan rose above two million.⁵⁸ Consequently, communities of migrant workers developed in parts of Japan. In metropolitan Tokyo, for example, certain areas became associated with particular ethnic communities, such as the Iranian community in Ueno, or the Chinese community in Shinjuku. In the remote regions, the number of foreign factory and farm workers also increased. Also, due to the aging society, the healthcare sector was deregulated under the Economic Partnership Agreement (E.P.A.) in order to employ nurses and caretakers from Indonesia and Philippines. While increasing opportunities to encounter foreigners in everyday life seem to be fostering awareness, further research and investigation is necessary in order to determine whether everyday cosmopolitanism is developing.

Rantanen proposes that living and working abroad fosters everyday cosmopolitanism. Murakami is uniquely positioned as a Japanese writer who has lived abroad and no doubt this experience nurtured his notion of everyday cosmopolitanism. Murakami and his wife lived in Europe for three years (from 1986 to 1990) and during this period he wrote two novels and a short story (Murakami 1993). He stresses that while in Europe they were "constant travellers". Although they had an address in Rome, they moved from one place to another at whim. They were neither permanent residents nor temporary travellers and did not belong to any company or organization (Murakami 1993: 20).

Murakami explains that he was motivated to go abroad in order to accomplish a work – a novel that he could only write – before he reached the age of forty. The title of his essay invokes the sound of distant drumming he heard one morning that inspired his

⁵⁸ Viewed 23 July 2013,
<http://www.moj.go.jp/nyuukokukanri/kouhou/press_060530-1_060530-1.html>.

decision to embark upon a long journey (Murakami 1993: 19). One of the novels he wrote in Europe, *Norwegian wood*, became a record bestseller in 1998. If *Norwegian wood* was the first turning point of his career as a writer, the novel viewed as his second turning point was written during another period of self-imposed exile from his homeland. In 1991, Murakami left Japan to spend four years in Princeton, New Jersey. During his stay in the U.S., he wrote *Nejimakidori kuronikuru* [*The wind-up bird chronicle*] (1994-95). Living abroad not only nurtured Murakami's everyday cosmopolitanism; the experience also initiated a major turning point in his development as a writer. Murakami's novels are categorized by two contrasting, but closely related, themes associated with this period (see Chapter six), a shift "from detachment to commitment" (see Kato 2008; Kawamura 2006; Kuroko 2007a). Murakami admits that his turn from detachment to commitment was partly a result of his experience of living overseas (Murakami 1996).

"Engaging with other cultures in your locality" (2005a: 129) is the final zone Rantanen identifies. She argues that it is possible to engage with foreigners without leaving your country or even your city; this is particularly true of large "global" cities, such as London. This resonates with Beck's concept of cosmopolitanization, which is equivalent to "internal globalization". A pertinent example for Japan is the case of Zainichi-Chosenjin [Residential Koreans]. Although there are over 545,000 Residential Koreans currently living in Japan,⁵⁹ they are treated as "foreigners" in terms of citizenship. Furthermore, as the term *zainichi* meaning "resident" suggests, they are deemed as outsiders and often subject to discrimination. Recent studies show that increased numbers of third or fourth generations are choosing "naturalization", that is, electing to adopt Japanese citizenship (see Wender 2005). While there are issues of cultural identity including loyalty to the ethnic Korean community, the effect of cosmopolitanization is evident, as exemplified in the autobiographic novel *GO* (2007) by Kaneshiro Kazuki. The identity struggle of diasporic Koreans shall be further discussed in Chapter five.

⁵⁹ The Ministry of Justice announced these statistics of foreign residents on 22 February 2013.

Rantanen's conception of everyday cosmopolitanism is distinct from the form of cosmopolitanism often criticised for being elitist or having limited application to Western cultures (Calhoun 2002b, 2003). Whereas Beck's "banal cosmopolitanism" (2000) or Appiah's "rooted cosmopolitanism" (1997) approach cosmopolitanism as a social or anthropological framework, Rantanen shows how individuals become cosmopolitans. She proclaims that "Cosmopolitan identity is like any other identity and is not an overall identity that excludes every other identity ... people can develop cosmopolitan qualities, a cosmopolitan identity" (Rantanen 2005a: 124). The case studies presented in her research show that individuals acquire cosmopolitan qualities unconsciously through the combined effect of experience in the different zones she outlines. Therefore, she contends that it is the appreciation of places beyond their borders that makes people "more cosmopolitan, if not cosmopolitans" (2005a: 137). Rantanen observes that emerging diasporic groups use media and communications to develop "a third culture" (2005a: 130) combining elements from the country of origin and the country of residence, to make something new and different. As the above analysis of the Haruki phenomenon and the conditions of everyday cosmopolitanism show, the question of diasporic groups is relevant to the inquiry into contemporary Japanese identity (see Chapter five).

In today's globalized world, the issue of mobility renews tensions between identity and belonging. Until recently, it was generally accepted that geographical belonging provided the basis of one's identity. Such identity was usually collective and based upon belonging to a nation-state. Now, however, there are increasing uncertainties regarding an individual's belonging. Studies show that transnational migration and the development of technological means of communication allow individuals a sense of transnational or multiple identity (Beck 2002: 36-37). As Rantanen observes, with increasing numbers of people living away from their native land or country, diasporic identity is becoming a vital social issue across the globe.

Diasporic identities, as exhibited by overseas Korean writers (discussed in Chapter five), display a characteristic independence. While their works seem to express a deep longing for affiliation, association and acceptance, as their plots unfold their

protagonists re-position themselves in society by realizing strong individualized viewpoints. Instead of striving to achieve connection to a society by seeking recognition, these authors suggest that it is critical to establish one-self as an autonomous individual. Here, the question of belonging emerges at a critical juncture for contemplating the issue of cosmopolitan identities.

Belonging as cosmopolitans

Cosmos and polis – those two elements are combined. Cosmos means everybody is part of the cosmos, part of nature, part of humanity ... There are no basic differences in relation to the cosmos. But, at the same time, they are part of a different polis – state, ethnicity, gender, religion, whatever. This is a model of differentiation, which does not lead to the “either/or” principle. It is an “as well as” principle. It’s a different model of identity. The national logic brought up this “either/or”, this “we or the other”.

(Ulrich Beck quoted in Rantanen 2005b: 258)

In view of the continued development of globalization and the re-emergence of cosmopolitanism today, it is understandable that there are dispersed modes of identity, as represented by diasporic identities. Although being diasporic implies being remote or isolated, it is noteworthy that individuals living away from their native land inevitably express a strong interest in the issue of belonging (see Chapter five). The question is whether cosmopolitan identities, like diasporas, strive to belong, or remain uninterested in any particular form of belonging.

Calhoun criticises what he calls “cosmopolitan liberals” for failing to recognize the social conditions that they claim and “presenting [such arguments] as freedom from social belonging rather than a special sort of belonging, a view from nowhere or everywhere rather than from particular social spaces” (2003: 532). Calhoun defends social solidarity; he sees belonging as deriving from specific cultural and social settings. For him, solidarity is necessary for the “weak”, whereas cosmopolitanism caters for individualistic elites who do not require social solidarity. Calhoun is apprehensive of a

cosmopolitan outlook that he believes is potentially capable of undermining solidarities. He is particularly concerned about those social groups, such as ethnic or religious minorities and migrants, that require such bonds for their survival within society.

Calhoun condemns cosmopolitan liberals as elitists whose views represent their privileged position. He is seriously concerned about the connection made between cosmopolitan liberalism and individualism, for he believes that the combination is appealing but will benefit only those with the resources to support individual action. He finds it problematic that those who depend upon ethnic, national, and communal solidarities are likely to be compromised. It is understandable that such criticism developed from the sociological evaluation of privileged cosmopolitan travellers in the current global economy, as this group is much discussed in reference to the mobility of cosmopolitans (Calhoun 2002b).

Calhoun's argument, that cosmopolitan theory is overly abstract and undermines the concrete value of humanity, is not fully convincing. A strong proponent of particular solidarities such as nations, ethnicities, local communities or religions, he insists that "an approach that starts with individuals and treats culture as contingent cannot do justice to the legitimate claims made on behalf of 'communities'" (2003: 532). This claim seems to be based upon his view of political cosmopolitanism, and not cosmopolitanism more broadly conceived. For instance, Calhoun repeatedly points to the "real world" in which people live and condemns cosmopolitanism for being "abstract" and unrealistic. Recent studies of cosmopolitanism, however, characteristically focus upon the lives of people in the "real world." For example, Beck (2002) identifies "banal cosmopolitanism", Appiah (1997) "rooted cosmopolitanism" and Rantanen (2005a) "everyday cosmopolitanism". Their studies unanimously support the contention that cosmopolitanism no longer describes only the privileged elites but is a theoretical notion applicable to everyone living in the age of modern globalization, including inhabitants of the "real world" to which Calhoun alludes.

It is important to reaffirm the fact that the more “individualized” perspective of cosmopolitanism does not necessarily encourage selfish freedom or detachment from communities. Rather the cosmopolitan imagination offers a liberal understanding of self: identity as self-understanding (Delanty 2009). It provides an alternative to essentialist notions of identity. The perspective offered by cosmopolitanism benefits not only elites, but also provides opportunities for what Calhoun regards as “weak” members of society. This cosmopolitan conception of solidarity does not aim to restrict “weak” members of society. The belonging offered by solidarity may lead to a more positive collective identity than that offered by ethnocentric nationalism, for example, but at the same time, an “individualized” approach to identity should not be denied for the sake of belonging.

It is crucial that discussions of contemporary cosmopolitanism depart from the dichotomy between solidarity and individualism. Needless to say cosmopolitanism does not refute local, ethnic or communal belonging. Since its conception in ancient Greece, the idea has been founded upon the principle of openness. According to scholars, cosmopolitanism supports an idea of belonging that is not delimited by defined boundaries. Cosmopolitan consciousness does not seek to build walls for the sake of establishing “belonging” to a certain territory. In other words, this borderless conception of identity escapes the dichotomous pressure of choosing sides. While Calhoun’s concern over the loss of solidarity, or its ineffectualness, is understandable, he fails to acknowledge that cosmopolitanism is an ideal that aspires to build solidarity through the interaction of each individual. By encouraging encounters with strangers, the cosmopolitan project promotes communication and understanding at every level of society – not only elite cosmopolitan travellers but increasingly amongst more ordinary people who migrate, travel or meet in virtual space or gain experience through the media.

As explained above, cosmopolitan consciousness is not entirely incompatible with the notion of solidarity. When it is applied to conceptualize identity, however, this may entail a confrontation with nationalism. Whereas nationalism allows fewer opportunities for belonging beyond the limits prescribed by national borders,

cosmopolitanism's central tenet of becoming "citizens of the world" resists such singular and restrictive modes of exclusive identity. When Calhoun speaks of the abstraction of cosmopolitan theory he may be alluding to these universal ideas (Calhoun 2003). Just as nations can be critically described as "imagined communities" (Benedict 1983), so too can cosmopolitans' struggle to become citizens of the world be described equally as imaginary yet also realistic, in view of global inter-connectedness. Cosmopolitanism is not a denial of solidarity provided the spirit of such solidarity remains inclusive and not discriminatory. For cosmopolitans, the question is not where he or she belongs, but with whom the belonging is established and to whom it is extended.

In this respect, encountering strangers is a critical component of cosmopolitan style. The ancient Greek Stoics encouraged such endeavours in order to better understand other cultures. Hugh Harris (1927) maintains that scientific research – to better understand the world – was a compelling motivation for cosmopolitan travel. In other words, ancient Greeks set out to other regions in search of the "real" world. Similarly, Hannerz (1990) affirms that travel encourages modern cosmopolitans to develop a better understanding of other cultures. Kant's conception of "universal hospitality" or the arriving stranger's right to be treated without hostility, remains pertinent.

It is the sociological perspective of Beck's "cosmopolitanization" theory that makes it possible to apply this Western conception to the analysis of contemporary Japan. As discussed above, contemporary cosmopolitanism suggests that there are "multiple forms of belonging and identity" (Delanty & Inglis 2010) that uphold autonomous self-identity. This aspect is critical for contesting the conformist collective identity prevalent in Japanese cultural nationalism. Furthermore, as the ancient Greek Stoics propose, meeting with strangers is an important agenda for cosmopolitans. The following Chapter examines the struggle for identity and belonging of members of diasporas who are "strangers" in an increasingly globalizing world. Since the Korean-Japanese are often discriminated against as the Other in Japanese homogeneous society, investigating the identity issue of the Korean diaspora is pertinent for contemplating the emergent cosmopolitanism in Japanese society.

Chapter 5

Diasporic identities: Shifting towards cosmopolitan identities

Introduction: Is blood thicker than water? Blood, belonging and identity

The case of the identity of Koreans living in Japan provides an interesting viewpoint on the idea of contemporary Japanese identity and the possibility for cosmopolitan identities. As shown in Chapter one, *Nihonjinron* discourse proclaims the immunity of “Japanese blood” to support Japanese identity, thus sustaining the ethnocentric myth of “single nation, single ethnicity”. Interestingly, a similar belief in “blood” and ethnicity is key to Korean identity. The historical context of Japanese Koreans provides insight into the construction of national and ethnic identity in Japanese society. While *Nihonjinron* discourse plays a significant role in constructing a collective ethnocentric cultural identity for Japanese people, ethnic Koreans resident in Japan excluded from this nationalistic ethos seek to establish their own identity. Since they cannot resort to a predetermined group identity, they strive to construct their own Korean identity. This includes cosmopolitan identities, as Rantanen (2005a) proposes (see Chapter four). One conspicuous example is the desperate quest to establish identity expressed by diasporic Korean writers living in various countries across the world, including Japan. This Chapter investigates the issue of identity addressed by diasporic Korean writers.

Contemporary Korean writer Kim Yeonsu (2008) deliberates over Korean-born writer Astrid Trotzig’s *Blood is thicker than water* (1996). Trotzig was born in Pusan, Korea, in 1970, the same year as Kim. She was adopted soon after birth, under the international adoption program that sent thousands of Korean children abroad during the 1960s and 1970s, initially as a consequence of the Korean War and later for other reasons including societal causes.⁶⁰ *Blood is thicker than water* is an autobiographical account of Trotzig’s experience of growing up in Sweden. In it she describes a trip

⁶⁰ During the 1960s and 1970s a total of 8500 children were adopted from Korea into Sweden, see <http://blog.goo.ne.jp/yoshi_swe/e/4292f05c251ef874113f7cbfb8e189d9> viewed 14 January 2014.

made to Pusan, her place of birth, twenty-five years after leaving. According to Yngvesson and Mahoney (2000), in such accounts the adoptee-writers seek to establish authenticity in blood (or birth) and belonging, and thereby to re-establish their identities. They explain:

Identity narratives of people who have undergone such displacements tell about experiences of loss, of struggles to belong, even of non-existence, that reveal a more general dynamic between cultural discourses (of wholeness, coherence and of rootedness in a national soil or in a ‘blood’ connection) and the force of desire for a point of ‘fundamental immobility’. (2000: 77)

As the following episode shows, the term “blood” signifies identity and belonging for displaced people like Trotzig. In these terms the cultural discourse of “blood” connection is comparable to kinship, which Calhoun views as a rhetoric that alludes to nationhood (2002a: 37)

Although Trotzig’s physical appearance is undeniably Asian, she found herself totally out of place when she returned to Korea in 1995. Since she neither spoke the local language nor was she accustomed to the local culture; just getting around town was problematic. Her confusion and despair led her to conclude that it would have been easier for her, if she had looked like a Westerner (Kim 2008: 208). The issue of her outward appearance—the fact that she did not look Scandinavian—had constantly tormented her in Sweden, and did not go away in her country of birth. Despite the fact that she looked like everyone else in Korea, Trotzig was asked where she was from because she acted like a foreigner. Again, her identity was under question. As she explains, although official documents show that she is Swedish because of her Asian appearance she requires proof when she travels around Europe although Swedish citizens do not require passports for this purpose. Barbara Yngvesson and Maureen A. Mahoney observe that Trotzig’s “profound experience of constantly negotiating her own sense of *inauthenticity* is what emerges most strongly in this text, providing a story of living between identities that questions the very authenticity she longs for” (2000: 98). Trotzig could take neither her nationality nor ethnicity for granted. Trotzig’s enquiry into her identity is symptomatic of life in the diaspora, and is a common contemporary experience.

Trotzig's memoir was not only a bestseller in Sweden but was also translated and published in Korea. Consequently she was acclaimed both as a Swedish *and* Korean writer. At the reception for a convention for writers of Korean-descent, however, she resisted being identified as Korean, insisting that she was a Swedish writer (Kim 2008: 212). Kim interprets this as her refusal to apply special meaning to blood. Furthermore, he contends that for Astrid, literature is "a process of finding identity with the tool of language". Therefore, it is impossible to confine her work to geographic boundaries or an ethnicity defined by the metaphor of "blood" (2008: 212).

Kim sympathises that blood is not thicker than water; and proclaims that he wishes to make his blood "as thin as water" in order to share what he calls a "certain reality" with another writer of his generation. As someone born and raised in South Korea, he positions himself as "an insider" by contrast to Astrid and other writers living overseas in the Korean diaspora. Kim's motivation for conceiving of identity independently of blood is related to the role of nationalism in Korea:

Nationalism means closing of borders and expulsion of foreigners. Nationalism obliterates the uniqueness of an individual identity. Nationalism makes a judgment only on the basis of blood. So the Korean peninsula became full of people who share the sameness of blood, those who claim that blood is thicker than water. Under colonialism, the resistance-nationalism is acceptable. Of course, even then, that nationalism did not give protection to those who were outside of the borders. It was only provided for those inside of the borders. When the liberation came, when the restrictive term "resistance" fell away, nationalism was used solely for the inside of borders. There was no way of knowing beyond the borders, there was no reason to know either. Nationalism was the most comfortable ideology for us, those who live inside the borders. (Kim 2008: 217-218 trans. K. Han)

According to Kim, nationalism is an ideology that "erases the unique identity of an individual" (2008: 217); it establishes collective ethnocentric identity through the metaphor of blood.

In a study of ethnic identity in the literature of *zainichi*, or resident Koreans in Japan, Mellisa L. Wender points out that traditionally both Japanese and Koreans place a high

value on blood relations and commonly equate citizenship with ethnicity and race (2005: 7). The term *zainichi* literally means “resident in Japan” with the connotation of temporary resident, but it is commonly used to describe resident Koreans in Japan. Amongst the numerous works on the literature of resident Koreans in Japan (Kawamura 1999; Hayashi 2002; Isogai 2004; Kuroko 2007b), Wender’s study of the *zainichi* ethnic identity in the context of legal citizenship in Japan is distinctive for its focus on contemporary narratives written between 1965 and 2000, and its attempt to connect literary works with grassroots legal movements. Wender explains that she wanted to understand the issue of ethnic identity “as something experienced in a manner that is deeply internal, psychological, and individual and radically public, political, and communitarian” (Wender 2005: 2). Wender ambitiously positions literary works as narratives that “propose and produce identities that counter the hegemonic ideology of the Japanese nation” (2005: 13), and thereby illuminates a connection between the individual life narratives and the legal activism of resident Koreans in Japan.

Wender’s conception of identity “as something that people construct through the telling of individual histories” (Wender 2005: 24) is apposite in the current climate of globalization and high individual mobility. Her primary interest is in the interaction between literature and political discourse and action, and how literature, together with political discourse and action, effected change in the legal status of the *zainichi* community in post-war Japan. While the political positioning of literary works as narratives is important, this chapter will not examine the legal dimensions of ethnic identity. Rather it aims to examine the ideas about identity and belonging put forward by a number of young contemporary writers of Korean descent located in diverse locations—Korea, Japan, the U.S. and Sweden—through fictional narratives and life stories in order to identify what they share and to better understand how they differ.

My hypothesis is that the work of the group of writers of Korean descent under discussion documents a transition from “diasporic identities” to “cosmopolitan identities” that is a distinctly contemporary experience. Their work grapples with questions intrinsically connected to issues of identity and belonging, such as: “where are you from?” and “where do I belong?” The writers strive to establish their identities as

individuals and to resist conforming to a collective identity defined by blood or ethnic identity. Their tenacity as writers consciously and unconsciously drives their life stories. Hall's statement that "Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference" (1990b: 244) applies, since these writers resort to neither national nor ethnic belongings to authenticate their identity. Consequently they represent compelling examples of diasporic individuals.

The rise of diasporic individualism is a contemporary phenomenon precipitated by the processes of economic and cultural globalization, which have increased individuals' mobility and led to the development of everyday cosmopolitanism (see Chapter four). The question of belonging is no longer only relevant for diasporas but for everyone. As studies of the role of media in fostering everyday cosmopolitanism demonstrate, people are connected beyond time and space on a global scale (see Rantenan 2005a). Hall's contention that "[c]ultural identities are the points of identification, the unstable points of identification or suture, which are made, within the discourses of history and culture. Not an essence but a *positioning*" (1990b: 237) is useful in contemplating the identities of diasporas today. The subject of *zainichi* identity is particularly significant for examining diasporic identity in Japan, since Japanese society dwells in a cloud of amnesia sustained by the *Nihonjinron* ethos of homogeneous cultural identity that alienates others including the resident Korean community. As the discussion of everyday cosmopolitanism indicates, the ethnic Korean community presents a highly relevant case in this examination of emergent cosmopolitan perspective in Japan.

In a study of Korean diasporic literature, Kim states that it is crucial to understand how overseas Korean writers "go about resolving the competing—sometimes conflicting—demands, pressures, and influences of the two different traditions and communities they embody in themselves" (2001: 267). He observes that the extent of isolation depends on the level of participation in the economic, political, social, and cultural life of the host country (2001: 267). Kim argues that of the over five-million Koreans living abroad in 140 countries, Korean residents in Japan probably suffered

worse feelings of exclusion and alienation resulting in an “acute sense of self-division” (2001: 267). He quotes the following observation on this issue:

Japan is a closed, culturally and ethnically homogeneous society. Cultural pluralism has been an unknown concept in Japan. Compared to other advanced nations, Japan remains much more closed to the entry of outsiders ... For the Koreans in Japan, Japanization has meant a surrender to an empty promise, thus creating tension in ethnic relations.

(Choi Hyup 1991 cited in Kim 2001: 267)

As Choi asserts, for Koreans, the decision to become “Japanized”, or politically naturalised, necessarily involved inner conflict as well as a sense of betrayal of their ethnic community. Such feelings of conflict and tension are reflected in *zainichi* literature, a diasporic literature unique to Japan.

Kaneshiro Kazuki’s quest for identity without belonging

In 2000 second-generation Japanese born Korean writer Kaneshiro Kazuki won the prestigious Naoki Award with his novel *GO* (2000). *GO* is about a young *zainichi* Korean-Japanese boy who struggles to establish his identity through his relationships with his parents, mainly his father, his school friends at the local Korean school, and his Japanese girlfriend. It was made into a movie and gained broad support, particularly from a younger generation audience, for its unconventional storyline and highly entertaining style.⁶¹ The fact that the protagonist appeared to be an alter-ego of the writer himself brought Kaneshiro himself under the spotlight and he was deemed representative of a new breed of Koreans in Japan.

GO depicts a desperate struggle with the blood issue for *zainichi*. Whereas Trotzgi agonized over the disjunction between her Asian appearance and western upbringing, *GO* probes how tensions between Korean and Japanese culture are intensified by proximity. Perhaps it is the physical resemblance between Koreans and Japanese that makes the issue of blood inescapable for Kaneshiro. This is highlighted in the final

⁶¹ *GO* was ranked top for 2001 by film magazine *Kinema Junpo*.

chapter when Sugihara, the protagonist, reveals his national/ethnic identity to Sakurai, his Japanese girlfriend, in a hotel room just before they are about to have sex for the first time. Sakurai “shrinks back from him, having been told by her father never to date a Korean or a Chinese because of their tainted blood” (Kaneshiro [GO] trans. & cited in Wender 2005: 199). Sugihara attempts to convince her by offering a scientific account of the origins of the Japanese; he eventually realizes, however, that “reason often proves powerless against prejudice” (Kaneshiro [GO] trans. & cited in Sminkey 2002: 18-19). As he leaves the room, he tells her “My real name is *Lee*. As in *Bruce Lee*.⁶² I didn’t want to tell you because it’s a ridiculously foreign-sounding name, and I was scared I would lose you – like I just did” (Kaneshiro [GO] trans. & cited in Sminkey 2002: 18-19). According to Paul Sminkey this scene shows Sugihara’s vulnerability and his fear of rejection but when he associates himself with Bruce Lee “the perennial outsider fighting for inclusion”, he takes pride in giving his actual name for the first time (2002: 19). In addition, by identifying with Bruce Lee, Sugihara attempts to dissociate himself from a fixed ethnic identity. Bruce Lee is an Asian action movie-star of global repute. By invoking Lee, Kaneshiro holds up a pan-Asian hero immensely popular in the West who transcends his nationality.

Kaneshiro’s fiction sheds fresh light on the issue of *zainichi* or resident Korean identity. His novel is unconventional, not only because it depicts the present status of *zainichi* society from an everyday standpoint, but also because in doing so it departs from established conventions of *zainichi* literature, namely the view that ideological issues are central to the production of literature. Isogai Jiro, observes that by departing from these conventions *GO* challenges the old and new conundrum of *zainichi* (2004: 238). Historically *zainichi* identity has been the core subject matter of *zainichi* literature (Kawamura 1999; Wender 2005; Kuroko 2007b; Lie 2008). Isogai (2004) explains that it is because resident Koreans have faced an identity crisis due to their diasporic status (in Japanese society) that *zainichi* literature in Japan is characteristically concerned with the pursuit of identity. Isogai (2004) identifies four variations of this

⁶² Bruce Lee (1940-1973) is a martial arts actor from Hong Kong. He emigrated to the U.S. at the age of nineteen and became widely regarded as the most influential martial artist of the twentieth century and a cultural icon. Viewed 29 August, 2013 <<http://www.bruceleefoundation.com/index.cfm/pid/10585>>

theme in *zainichi* literature: (i) resistance established via the critique of colonial history; (ii) ethnic identity figured as compassion towards the motherland and desire for unification (of the nation); (iii) *zainichi*⁶³ identity that confronts the absurdity of living as Koreans within the Japanese nation and society; and (iv) existential identity characterised by an inward-looking inquiry into human existence.

These four varieties of identity are established through the terms of an ongoing confrontation between the Japanese nation and the resident Koreans who oppose and resist assimilation. Isogai argues that today's writers, including *GO*'s author Kaneshiro, take a step away from such confrontation. Rather than pursuing *zainichi*, they seek to establish *transcendent identity* that validates the individual's own internal world, in other words a form of *in-between identity*, that is neither Korean nor Japanese (Isogai 2004: 35-36). For example, Kaneshiro refuses to adhere to the categorical phrase *zainichi* and adopts the term "Korean-Japanese" instead. From a legal perspective, the term Korean-Japanese only applies to Korean descendants who are legally naturalized Japanese citizens, but Kaneshiro insists on using the expression regardless of its legal connotations. His decision to use the expression "Korean-Japanese" [コリアン・ジャパニーズ] by employing *katakana*⁶⁴ which implies that the term is foreign, instead of the Japanese expression "kankokukei nihonjin" [韓国系日本人] conveys an important message. This deliberate choice manifests his strong desire to produce an alternative expression to establish a cultural identity that refutes the conventional bonds of ethnic affiliation. For Kaneshiro, as a legal identity, "Korean-Japanese" has no value, and is meaningless; he seeks to be liberated from restrictive notions of identity including national/ethnic ones. This is explicitly demonstrated in *GO* when Sugihara confronts his Japanese girlfriend about his national/ethnic identity as follows:

Sometimes I want to kill every one of you, you Japanese. How can you call me a "*Zainichi*" without thinking twice? I was born and raised here, dammit. How dare you use the same language you use for people who've come from other places, like the "*Zainichi*" American

⁶³ Here the term *zainichi* is used in the original sense of temporary resident in Japan.

⁶⁴ *Katakana* is a Japanese script most often used for transcription of words from foreign languages.

Army or “*Zainichi* Iranians”! It’s like you’re saying I’m some foreigner who’s going to leave some day. Do you get it? Had the thought ever even crossed your mind? ... But if you want to call me “*Zainichi*”, go right ahead. You guys, you’re afraid of me, right? If you don’t analyse me and give me a name, you won’t rest easy, right? But I don’t have to accept it ... I’m not “*Zainichi*”, I’m not South Korean, I’m not North Korean, and I’m not Mongoloid. Stop trying to put me into some neat little box. I’m ME. No, even that’s not good. I want to be free even from having to be me. I’m going to look for something that lets me forget even that I’m me. I’ll go wherever I have to. If I can’t find it in this country, I’ll leave, the way you all wish I would. You guys can’t do that. You guys are trapped by the state, or land, or position, or convention, or tradition, or culture, or something. You’ll die that way. Take a good look. I don’t have any of that, so I can go anywhere I please. I can go whenever I want to. (Kaneshiro 2000: 233-34 cited and trans. Wender 2005: 199)

Wender recognizes Kaneshiro’s novel as a literary work that deals with the issue of identity and citizenship, but questions why it was not advertised and promoted in those terms. Ethnic identity *is* the critical theme of the novel, but its impact is diluted by over-emphasising the love story. She argues that “the serious stuff is made palatable with romance. The cover advertises *GO* not only as about ethnic identity, but also as a tale of love” (Wender 2005: 198). Furthermore, she expresses grave concerns regarding the use of gender to mark up ethnic distinctions in Kaneshiro’s narrative, explaining that “at the novel’s centre is the hero’s burgeoning relationship with [a] very middle-class beauty” (Wender 2005: 198). Wender’s concerns over the role of love-romance in advertising the book and the stereo-typical depiction of the Japanese girl within the narrative are legitimate, but, it is doubtful that *GO* would have been able to attract such a wide readership and thereby give public exposure to the issue of *zainichi* identity without adhering to these mainstream conventions and the dominant values they sustain.

In a dialogue with Japanese sociologist Oguma, Kaneshiro (2001a, b) confided that he explained the circumstances of *zainichi* community today in the first chapter of *GO* because he was frustrated with the way conventional *zainichi* literature presupposed that

readers were aware of *zainichi* people. This assumption, he felt, ensured that *zainichi* literature was exclusively read by a limited group of people.⁶⁵ He explains: “So, *GO* itself was an ‘introductory chapter’ ... I wanted to offer the situation surrounding *zainichi* people in an entertaining style” (Kaneshiro 2001a: 267). Kaneshiro consciously presents the subject of identity in a highly entertaining manner in order to transcend the conventions and limitations of *zainichi* literature. The teenage romance with a Japanese girl is an indispensable plot device designed to enhance the entertainment value, and thereby readability or palatability, of his serious investigation into ethnic identity.

Significantly, Kaneshiro uses the character of an attractive young girl as a vehicle for his own clandestine thoughts on nationality. As he explains to Oguma, the young girl Sakurai symbolizes Japan and her refusal of Sugihara in the hotel scene represents *zainichi* being refused by Japan (2001a: 272). The family name Sakurai comes from the Japanese word *sakura* meaning cherry [tree], a recognized symbol for Japan. Sugihara’s floundering relationship with Sakurai plays out some of the complex issues of identity bearing upon resident Koreans in Japanese society. As Trotzig points up in her essay *Blood thicker than water*, there is a strong tendency to consider blood an essential and defining element of a person’s identity. In *GO*, Kaneshiro demonstrates the transferability of nationality in an episode in which Sugihara’s father changes his nationality from North Korean to South Korean simply in order to travel to Hawaii. This is corroborated by Sugihara’s frustration with Sakurai’s ignorance over the long-standing issue of *zainichi* in Japanese society. Lie draws on T.H. Marshall’s term “social citizenship” to point out that the *zainichi* lack the right to “share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in the society”. He explains that:

Beyond the statistics and the structures of discrimination, what seared Zainichi consciousness was their illegitimacy—*disrecognition*, or lack of recognition—in postwar Japanese society. Here I use *recognition* not to mean re-identification but a complex of

⁶⁵ Conventionally, *zainichi* literature had a fixed group of readers who were aware of the historical condition of *zainichi* people. A few exceptions are those works that received literary awards.

attributes—love, right, and esteem—that endow people with a sense of acceptance and acknowledgement. In the prewar period, ethnic Koreans may have been deemed inferior, but they were a familiar group with their rightful, albeit lesser, place in Japanese society. In the postwar period, though the legacy of colonial hierarchy slowly dissipated, ethnic Koreans lost their legitimate place in monoethnic Japan. That is, when acknowledged, they were deemed inferior, but more commonly they were not even acknowledged. (2008: 80)

Thus, as Isogai argues, Kaneshiro's strategic literary approach "not only transforms the preconceived notion and the literary paradigm of *zainichi* community but also intends to transform the paradigm of Japanese society which is held by a mono-ethnic nation state vision" (2004: 242). It appears that Sugihara's quest for identity mirrors the author's own enquiry as a *zainichi* writer.

In order to examine Kaneshiro's position in the trajectory of *zainichi* literature, it is crucial to explore the historical transition of this particular genre by focusing on the issue of identity. *Zainichi* literature is diasporic writing; the term literally refers to "literature written in Japanese (language) by Koreans" (Hayashi 2002). At first, it was recognised as neither Korean nor Japanese literature. Since it is neither written in Korean nor published in Korea, it was not accepted as Korean literature. At the same time, although *zainichi* literature was written and published in Japan, it was not initially recognised as Japanese literature.

The first step towards the recognition of a *zainichi* literary tradition was made by Korean scholar Han Chang Lee who classified *zainichi* Korean literature into the following five periods: (i) establishment: 1881–1920s; (ii) resistance and conversion: 1920s–1945; (iii) ethnic reality literature: 1945–mid-1960s; (iv) social accusation literature: late 1960s–late 1970s; and (v) quest for subjectivity: 1980s–the present (Hayashi 2002). Lee's framework is a useful starting point for understanding the tradition, but, Hayashi Koji argues that while Lee's categorisation correctly reflects the historical phases of Koreans writing in Japanese, it should be classified as "literature written in Japanese (language) by Koreans" and not *zainichi* literature. Alternatively, Hayashi proposes that the period up to 1945 should be categorized either as the

pre-history of *zainichi* Korean literature or the inception of Japanese literature written by *zainichi* Koreans. He argues that “as a result of the negative assets of the colonial rule, the resident Koreans were robbed of the chance to create freely in their mother tongue” (Hayashi 2002: 6). Therefore it would be more appropriate to consider the period after World War II as the first phase of *zainichi* Korean literature during which writers such as Kim Darusu emerged.

Hayashi (2002) describes the period from the 1960s as the later phase of *zainichi* Korean literature. He identifies Ri Kaisei and Kin Kakuei as central figures for this period. Both Ri and Kin were distinct from writers of the previous generation: they were second-generation resident Koreans born in Japan in the 1930s, and were fluent in Japanese. They not only received major literary awards but were commercially successful in publishing and received major literary awards. Kin won the Bungei Award in 1966 with *Kogoeru Kuchi* [*Benumbed mouth*] and Ri became the first non-Japanese author to win the Akutagawa Award in 1971 with *Kinuta o Utsu Onna* [*The woman beating the cloth*]. Ri and Kin are often compared for their outstanding achievements. Although both were educated at prestigious Japanese universities and were the first resident Koreans to win major Japanese literary awards, their work and writing lives contrast starkly. Whereas Kin did not claim ethnic belonging with Korea and established his identity as a writer by means of self-denial, Ri aggressively delved into what it meant to be Korean (Hayashi 2002: 9).

The distinction between Ri and Kin offers an insight into the issue of identity for contemporary *zainichi* literature. Critics at a roundtable discussion (published in 1970) held up Ri’s work for its Koreanness.⁶⁶ According to Wender, the participants praised Ri’s work for “incorporating Korean humour” and “speak[ing] to a real audience”. Furthermore, it was celebrated for “confront[ing] the external world ... and find[ing] its roots in a community” (Wender 2005: 55). On the other hand, Kin was often compared

⁶⁶ “Kyokaisen no bungaku-Zainichi Chosenjin sakka no imi” [Literature on the borderline—the meaning of resident Korean writers] in *Shin Nihon bunagku* [New Japanese Literature].

unfavourably to Ri during the 1960s and 70s. Critics argued that his inward-looking focus appealed only to the intelligentsia. Wender concludes that:

the relative indifference critics showed towards Kin Kakuei's works in contrast to the ardour with which they discussed Ri Kaisei reflects not only their aesthetic values (which at any rate are necessarily political), but also their awareness of the professed political beliefs of the authors. (2005: 55)

It can be reasonably assumed that this reflected the ethno-national bias of *zainichi* ideology in which the "valorization of the political and the collective eschewed the stress on the personal and the private" (Lie 2008: 117).

Wender observes that Kin's fiction tends to maintain distance from political issues and to focus on the self (2005: 56). She identifies similarities between Kin and fellow Japanese writers on this point. Wender does not find Kin necessarily indifferent either to politics or his national/ethnic identity, however. She cites the stuttering protagonist of his award-winning novel *Kogoeru Kuchi* [*Benumbed mouth*] as evidence that "Even those motifs seen as distinctive to Kin the individual, such as the consideration of stuttering ... act in service to an underlying argument about the meaning of human life within late capitalist society" (Wender 2005: 58). Furthermore, Kin's individualistic disposition, she argues, was a means of evading the political dichotomy of Korean-Japanese identity. While some critics interpret the motif of personal affliction as a metaphor for the pain of living as Koreans in a Japanese society, others, view it as a means by which "Resident Koreans ... define themselves first and foremost in a manner that is not political" (Wender 2005: 59). As *zainichi* philosopher and literary critic Takeda Seiji, put it:

Kin's distinctive contribution as a *Zainichi* author was to grasp the difficulty of living as *Zainichi* by layering it upon the difficulty of living with a *stutter*, being the first to question the categorizing of the problem [of *Zainichi* identity] as a choice between North and South. (Takeda '*Zainichi*' to *iu konkyo* [*'Zainichi*' as foundation] 1995 cited & trans. Wender 2005: 59)

Kang Sang-jung, a renowned *zainichi* scholar and public intellectual, corroborates Takeda's view. In his autobiographical essay entitled *Zainichi* (Kang 2004), he

recounts how he suddenly started stuttering when he was in junior high school. He affirms that his affliction was connected to his being *zainichi*; stuttering reflected his anxiety that he would not be accepted by society because he was *zainichi* (2004: 93). In his account of the identity crisis of *zainichi* writers, Kuroko Kazuo (2007b) refers to Kang Sang-jung's text and highlights Kang's choice of the word "destiny" to express how he felt about Japan:

I was born in Japan and Japanese is my mother-tongue, and the language I use to express my feelings and thoughts. In this respect, the language of Japan as well as its cultural climate is something like a destiny for me. (Kang Sang-jung, *Aikoku no sahou* [*How to love one's country*] 2006, cited in Kuroko 2007b: 48 trans. T.W.).

According to Kuroko, Kang's use of the word "destiny" expresses the sentiment of second-generation *zainichi*. Whereas the earlier generation demonstrated attachment to the motherland, the generation that follows express feelings of ambivalence towards it. Kin Kakuei also puts the word "destiny" into the mouth of a *zainichi* character who concludes:

Born in Japan, educated in Japan, living in the Japanese environment, and where I continue to live, I cannot escape the Japan within myself. I cannot escape my "destiny" as someone who is neither Korean nor Japanese, or Korean and Japanese – Isn't that all right? (Kin Kakuei, *Manazashi no Kabe* 2006 cited in Lie 2008: 95)

Both Kin and Kaneshiro pursue an alternative identity by repudiating their belonging to an ethnic/national group. It is through this most difficult choice as *zainichi* Koreans that they seek to emerge as autonomous individuals. In *GO*, Sugihara, the protagonist, or alter-ego of the author, proudly announces that "I'm not *zainichi*, I'm not South Korean, I'm not North Korean, and I'm not Mongoloid ... I'm ME" (Kaneshiro 2000: 231). By acknowledging that he is an outsider, Sugihara strongly asserts his individualism (Sminkey 2002: 19). Sugihara's intense and physically combative relationship with his father constitutes another path to the realization of his identity. His father changed his own nationality from North to South Korean in order to make it easier to obtain a visa to visit Hawaii. In so doing, however, he estranges himself from friends and neighbours and loses the support of the local ethnic groups Chongryon and

Mindān.⁶⁷ According to Lie, since ethnic Koreans in Japan could not be united by language, community, religion or culture, *zainichi* solidarity was constituted by recognition of the “undeniable reality of discrimination” (2008: 119). For this reason Sugihara’s father’s repudiation of both Chongryun and Mindan solidarity was a grave and self-destructive undertaking. When Sugihara recognizes his debt to his father for abandoning those affiliations in order to liberate his son so that he can pursue his own path, he becomes stronger and “vows to his father that he will *eliminate borders*” (Sminkey 2002: 20).

This episode demonstrates Kaneshiro’s position on national identity: rather than seeking to belong to a particular nation state, he aspires to transgress boundaries. At first, he advocates the term *Korean-Japanese* in order to dissociate himself from the connotations of the common phrase *zainichi*. As explained earlier, although the phrase “kankokukei nihonjin” [韓国系日本人], literally meaning “Korean-Japanese”, has been in use, Kaneshiro expressed it directly in *katakana* as “korian japaniizu” (*Korean-Japanese*) [コリアンジャパニーズ].⁶⁸ By using *katakana* the script conventionally used to represent foreign words in Japanese, he highlighted the close affinity between this unfamiliar term and *Korean-American* [コリアンアメリカン] which conveys a positive and fresh impression. In a number of interviews Kaneshiro admits⁶⁹ that he wanted to distance himself from the negative connotations of the word *zainichi*.

Scholars generally agree that Kaneshiro’s innovative use of the categorical phrase, *Korean-Japanese*, renewed a certain group identity. This was not Kaneshiro’s main concern, however, for he sought to depart from past history by abandoning the conventional category of *zainichi*. Consequently the term *Korean-Japanese* became common but once the new category was established, Kaneshiro ceased using it to

⁶⁷ Chongryon is an abbreviation for the General Association of Korean Residents in Japan known as Chōsen Sōren. Mindan is an abbreviation for the Korean Residents Union in Japan. Chongryon is tied to North Korea and Mindan is tied to South Korea.

⁶⁸ Since Japanese is an ideogram, not only the pronunciation but also the use of character (in this case, kanji [Chinese characters] or katakana) is meaningful.

⁶⁹ Shukan Asahi (2000), Shinkan Tembou (2000), Shukan Post (2001).

describe his own identity. In an interview in 2001, instead of calling himself *Korean-Japanese*, he adopted the Spanish term *desarraigado* meaning rootless. He explains that *desarraigado* is not necessarily his ultimate choice and that in time he may opt for other expressions such as “dance with wolves” or “runs faster than dogs”. This attitude clearly demonstrates his resistance to conventional methods of labelling. He revealed his intention remarking that: “I’d like to become universal; transcending names, races, nation states and languages” (Kaneshiro 2001c: 91 trans. T.W.). Here Kaneshiro asserts his ongoing resistance to fixed identity, and thereby reveals his cosmopolitan tendency. This interpretative approach will be established below through a comparison with the Korean-American novelist, Chang-rae Lee.

The idea that belonging determines identity lingers for *zainichi* Koreans due to their diasporic status. Naturalization is a means of settling the legal status, but there is strong opposition amongst *zainichi* Koreans who view it as assimilation and loss of identity (Lie 2008). Given the history of Koreans in Japan, even if their official status were established, the prolonged inquiry into their cultural identity would remain unresolved. Accepting Japanese citizenship is viewed as “an act of exposing oneself to a new diasporic fate” (Oh 2012: 654) since it means abandoning Korean ethnic identity to become a member of mainstream Japanese society.

In *GO*, Kaneshiro idealises about rapprochement between the two cultures through a romantic interaction between Sugihara and Sakurai. While dating, they enjoy exchanging a diverse and international array of books and CDs selected on the basis of “coolness”. Sminkey observes that “Such a positive and liberating response to culture is a new experience for Sugihara, and foreshadows his new view of himself as a wanderer, who transcends all borders”. Furthermore, through this experience, Sugihara develops “a more liberal attitude towards culture, one not defined or limited by his nationality or country of residence” (Sminkey 2002: 19-20). Kaneshiro seeks to establish a means of transcending ethnic identity in order to reconnect as individuals; this cultural episode expresses his vision. Furthermore, he expresses hope for the reconciliation of *zainichi* with Japan. The episode of Sakurai’s rejection of Sugihara when she discovers Sugihara’s ethnic identity demonstrates this. Until that moment

Sakurai is a rather solid character who is progressive and open-minded, but when she learns that Sugihara is a resident Korean, she suddenly falls apart and reveals her vulnerability. In response to critics who viewed this scene as unrealistic, Kaneshiro has defended his representation of Sakurai's cataclysmic transformation insisting that it was based on certain personal experiences. He explains that because Sakurai symbolizes Japan, it was crucial that Sakurai accept Sugihara at the end of the story although she rejects him at first. For Kaneshiro, it implies that *zainichi* is rejected by Japan, but later in the story Sugihara is saved by Sakurai's acceptance (2001a: 272-273). Kaneshiro's explanation provides a clue to deciphering Sakurai's contradictory manner, since for *zainichi* "It is possible to bypass disrecognition by disengagement, but recognition can only be won through engagement" (Lie 2008: 95-96). Sugihara challenged Sakurai in order to gain her recognition, and although it is not without pain, *GO* provides a happy ending. Kaneshiro defies exclusive and suppressive modes of collective belonging; he aspires to re-establish connection as individuals. There is an indication that he seeks some hope in extending such individual connection to the better understanding of the majority in society.

Isogai (2004) expresses concern that the contemporary movement (i.e. from the mid 1980s onwards) in *zainichi* literature that aspires to "transcend ethnicity" may jeopardize the memory of ethnic Koreans in Japan. He is concerned that the idea of "transcending" can be used as an excuse for avoiding the painful memory and status of *zainichi*. He claims that Kaneshiro uses his literary talent to address the conundrum of *zainichi* from a contemporary standpoint and thus renew and broaden the persisting question of identity for the *zainichi* community. *GO* not only successfully deviated from the ideological notion of residential Koreans in Japan but also overturned the fixed idea of *zainichi* amongst Japanese readers (2004: 242). While Isogai observes that this was mostly accomplished by the refreshing style in which the story was delivered, it is also achieved by a change in emphasis. In particular he highlights the change from "What nationality am I?" to "Who am I?" and argues that this reflects a transition in the history of Korean literature in Japan. This turn of the inquiry from nationality to self is significant, as it resonates with diasporic Korean writers of the same generation in other parts of the world. As mentioned earlier, Trotzig's questioning of nationality and

ethnicity was subjugated when she realized that neither represented her identity. The following section will demonstrate that another Korean diaspora writer, Chang-Rae Lee addresses the same question through his story of a Korean-American protagonist who was raised in Japan. These cases represent – in the form of the writer’s own experience or mirrored in the author’s alter-ego protagonist – the persisting question of “Who am I” accompanied by an aspiration for belonging.

GO follows *zainichi* literature in pursuing the fundamental question of identity. Contemporary Korean-Japanese literature of the past couple of decades engages in a struggle for identity that resists national or ethnic belonging, but it is too soon to determine whether, overall, contemporary *zainichi* literature affirms in-between identity, transcending identity or something else. Evidently, this is related to the process of globalization and an increasingly cosmopolitan approach towards cultural globalization. Rather than being confined by the dichotomy of choosing one or the other ethnic identity, writers such as Kaneshiro Kazuki and Chang-Rae Lee aspire to be recognized as individuals in a world where the question “Who am I” is more relevant than questions of ethnic belonging. The following section will establish Kaneshiro’s cosmopolitanism through a comparison with the Korean-American writer Chang-Rae Lee.

From diasporic to cosmopolitan notions of identity: Kaneshiro Kazuki and Chang-rae Lee

The word diaspora has etymological origins in the Greek word *diaspeirein* meaning “to scatter about” or “disperse”. It refers to a dispersed community of people who share the same roots. Like the term cosmopolitan, which also originates in ancient Greek, it is both old and new, and became relevant today due to growing mobilisation on a global scale. Both the ideas of the diaspora and the cosmopolitan are intimately connected to the modern nation-state system, since those who deviate from this framework become diasporas and cosmopolitans. As Jana Evans Braziel and Anita Mannur proclaim “Diaspora forces us to rethink the rubrics of nation and nationalism, while refiguring the

relations of citizens and nation-states” (2003: 7). In addition, diaspora provides a unique opportunity for contemplating identity. In particular, it inspires the thought that identity is not necessarily a fixed entity; which is an idea supported by this thesis. Barker’s statement that “[t]he strength of the concept of diaspora lies in its encouragement to think about identities in terms of contingency, indeterminacy and conflict, of identities in motion rather than of absolutes of nature or culture” (2004: 51) offers a guideline to be followed here. While the contemporary use of cosmopolitan often describe elite expatriots who travel around the world freely (Hannerz 1990; Calhoun 2002b), diaspora is defined as the “naming of the other which has historically referred to displaced communities of people who have been dislocated from their native homeland through the movements of migration, immigration, or exile” (Brazier & Mannur 2003: 1). Therefore, it must be acknowledged that historically, millions of people were subsumed into this category against their will. Furthermore, as Brazier and Mannur point out, “Diaspora offers myriad, dislocated sites of contestation to the hegemonic, homogenizing forces of globalization” (2003: 10); this confirms the relevance of addressing diasporas to contemplate contemporary cultural identity.

This section aims to explore the shift from diasporic nationalism to an individualized understanding of identity that I will argue, pursues a cosmopolitan understanding of belonging beyond national or ethnic borders. By comparing two writers of Korean descent—one resident in Japan and the other in the U.S.—this section seeks to show that they both respond to this shift despite the complex and contradictory cultural and political environment surrounding each of them. The struggle for identity represented in the narratives of these two writers of Korean descent is indicative of a new development in the trajectory of cultural identity in the era of globalization. While in one place skin colour is an explicit factor for outplacement, in the other the invisible element of “blood” overwhelms all aspects of appearance (including skin colour). These patterns suggest that identity is no longer determined by racial/ethnic physical traits. Although the conditions in the U.S. and Japan differ, both writers find resolution in personal relationships where identity is rediscovered as belonging to the self.

Before comparing the writers, the notion of diaspora, particularly as it is applied to contemporary Korean diasporas, must be defined. According to Lie, in contemporary parlance diaspora refers to modern Jewish identity defined according to common descent and belonging, and as such the term represents a deviation from the nationalist norm of one nation, one people, one country. Consequently, he continues:

Diaspora ... refers to a people who live outside of their nation: deviants from the standpoint of national belonging and nationalist ideology. Diasporic peoples are resident aliens, immigrants, ethnonational minorities, or long-term foreign residents who constitute the host nation's Other because they belong to their homeland not only conceptually but literally. (Lie 2008: 172)

Despite the common perception that nationalism and diaspora are irreconcilable, Lie contends that the existence of diaspora has contributed to nationalism by affirming the necessity of the nation-state. Since diasporas aspire to return to a homeland, they are closely attached to an “imaginary homeland” and promote a strong sense of “diasporic nationalism” (Oh 2012: 654). Oh Ingyu documents how the evolution from diaspora, post-diaspora to transnational diaspora effects an identity crisis for Koreans in Japan. He concludes that “[t]he very act of distancing oneself from this institutional support for nationalistic repatriation was the turning point of the Korean-Japanese migration toward transnational diaspora” (Oh 2012: 666) and suggests that the *zainichi* community is facing an identity crisis because it is abandoning diasporic nationalism.

Over the past half-century Korean immigrants became a global presence.⁷⁰ Lie addresses “the complex reality of diasporic Koreans, whose significance has been systematically minimized by the nationalist mind-set” (2008: 176) in his extensive study of *zainichi*. He maintains that

[Nationalism] is an ideology that asserts an isomorphism between a people – often thought of as a racial or an ethnic group who share common descent and contemporary commonality – and a territory. That is, geographical boundaries in principle define the nation. The

⁷⁰ Studies show the diasporic status of Koreans to be a result of high post-war migration (Kim 2001; Lie 2008). At the end of the colonial period (mid-1940s), there were already over two million Koreans living in Japan. Many others arrived in Southeast Asia and the Pacific islands during the same period. There were sizable communities in China and the Soviet Union. After World War II, particularly after 1965, migration to the Americas, Europe and Australasia surged.

chief criterion of membership is involuntary yet inclusionary; common descent guarantees belonging regardless of moral worth, native intelligence, or personal achievement ... Like home, it seems natural and eternal, ineffable and lovable ... Therefore, political belonging – state or national identity – supersedes both the supranational (e.g., civilizational or religious) and the infranational (e.g., village or regional). (Lie 2008: 170)

Thus Lie identifies *zainichi* ideology as a form of diasporic nationalism that “defines the terms and theories of *Zainichi* identity” (2008: 116). Lie denounces the essentialism of *zainichi* ideology as follows:

Zainichi ideology fractured almost from the moment it crystallized not only because of the impossibility of formulating an essentialized identity but also because it was an intellectual construct that faced the withering criticism of rapid obsolescence and ultimate irrelevance ... it was disengaged not only from the dominant ethnic organizations but also from the experiences and longings of the people who sought to counter Japanese disrecognition. (2008: 112)

While Lie observes that since the *zainichi* were neither Japanese nor Korean, autonomous diasporic identity was appealing because it defined the group as existing independently and not as a homogeneous ethno-national group (2008: 114). *Zainichi* ideology did not liberate Korean-Japanese, however, as “[i]n promoting diasporic nationalism, *zainichi* ideology erects a prison-house of *zainichi*-ness, a collective confinement to ethnic essentialism” (Lie 2008: 116).

Lie identifies essentialism as the key discontent of *zainichi* ideology. By the turn of the century, due to changing social circumstances and transitions in the consciousness of residential Koreans, a considerable number of *zainichi* were rejecting the idea of diasporic nationalism as a solution. *Zainichi* ideology lost its audience: as the *zainichi* increasingly wanted to represent themselves as individuals and “the received vocabulary of blood and nation, ethnicity and purity, no longer made sense” (Lie 2008: 157). This is echoed in the struggle of the protagonist depicted in Kaneshiro’s *GO*. As Lie sums up: “[c]oncrete lives resist simple, reductionist, and essentialist characterization, *Zainichi* ideology mischaracterized and mis-recognized *Zainichi* realities’ (2008: 132). As *zainichi* identity waned, Lie argues, Korean-Japanese identity emerged, and it “was something of a non-identity” (2008: 157). As Kaneshiro explained on his decision to

define himself not as *Korean-Japanese* but *desarraigado* [rootless], it is a refusal to accept categorical identity on the assumption that identity is fixed.

Whereas members of a diaspora typically share “a collective memory and myth about the homeland, including its location, history, suffering and achievements” and “a strong ethnic group consciousness” (Cohen 2008: 17), the cosmopolitan is detached from the kind of fixed notions that support collective thinking as the norm. Lie argues that there was a transition from diasporic to cosmopolitan identity for Koreans in Japan. Rather than be caught between either staying Korean, or opting to be naturalized as Japanese, the ‘third way’ for Koreans in Japan was to assume *zainichi* identity and in so doing to reject the collective myth surrounding the “imagined homeland”. The forth mode of identity that Lie calls “non-identity” is represented in the novel *GO* in which the protagonist decides to be anything, that is himself. This does not suggest, however, that Koreans in Japan abandoned their identity. The three preceding modes of identity – Korean, Japanese, *zainichi* – were varieties of group consciousness predicated on the nation-state system. “Non-identity” is distinguishable from such conventional modes, since it places the self as central to the determination of identity rather than nationality, ethnicity or other attributes. A renewed notion of identity that does not resort to conformist collective thinking is explored in the works of the two Korean diasporic writers under discussion.

Kaneshiro and Lee: diasporas at home

Scholars attest to the importance of personal narratives as a vehicle for discussing identities, particularly diasporic ones (Yngvesson & Mahoney 2000; Lie 2008). According to Lie, such narratives not only reflect “the way in which identities are constituted and constructed”, but also undertake “a rich repository of the ways in which people make sense of themselves, which are, after all, the very stuff of identity” (2008: 185). In this respect, consideration of the writing of Kaneshiro Kazuki and Chang-rae Lee provides a meaningful perspective upon the issue of Korean diasporic identity. By analysing the stream of consciousness on identity represented in the novels of these two

writers, Korean-Japanese and Korean-American respectively, we can identify a shared cosmopolitan perspective on identity. In order to clarify the task at hand, the analysis will be limited to two titles: Kaneshiro's *GO* and Lee's *A gesture life* (1999).

Kaneshiro's Korean-Japanese (*zainichi*) background and Lee's Korean-American background are significant determinants of the questions that drive their work. Their experience of life in the Korean diaspora, living as outsiders or immigrants within another culture, explains the centrality of questions of belonging and identity to their writing. Although *GO* and *A gesture life* are written and published in different countries, different cultural milieus and in different languages (Japanese and English respectively), there is a surprising resemblance between them, that becomes obvious when the question of identity is placed in context (see below). Lee and Kaneshiro have similar profiles as writers: Lee won the PEN/Hemingway Award with his first novel *Native speaker* in 1995, while Kaneshiro was selected for a new-comer award⁷¹ with his first novel *Revolution no.3* in 1998 and later received the prestigious Naoki Award for *GO* in 2000. Both became successful at thirty-years of age, relatively early in their writing careers. *GO* is Kaneshiro's second novel and *A gesture life* is Lee's second novel, also. Considering that both works were written after the two made successful debuts as award-winning writers, we can assume that these works embody vital issues for them.

The two writers, Lee and Kaneshiro, had unconventional educational backgrounds. Kaneshiro is a second-generation Korean-Japanese who was born and raised in Japan. Initially he attended an ethnic school where he was educated in Korean, but switched to a Japanese high school in order to enter a Japanese university. Lee is a first-generation Korean-American who was born in Korea and immigrated to the U.S. with his family. Lee emigrated at the age of three, but, as his enrolment at a prestigious university demonstrates, he does not seem to have been disadvantaged by this. Lee does mention, however, the complications of dealing with his mother who had linguistic difficulties

⁷¹ Shosetsu Gendai Shinjin-sho is an annual award given to new writers by the literary magazine *Shosetsu Gendai* [Contemporary Novels].

after immigrating to the U.S. in 1996. This experience is reflected in his examination of “the problems of identity crisis and a process of assimilating fundamentally different cultures” in his work (Lee, Y-O 2005a: 66). Lee describes his feelings regarding his position as a writer in a diasporic situation in the following terms: “I’m interested in people who find themselves in places, either of their choosing or not, and who are forced to decide how best to live there. That feeling of both citizenship and exile, of always being an expatriate – with all the attendant problems and complications and delight” (Garner 1999: 6). Both Lee and Kaneshiro experienced becoming outsiders at a relatively young age: Lee when his family immigrated to the U.S., and Kaneshiro when he changed schools. Such experiences are reflected in their pursuit of questions of identity and belonging in their novels. It is likely that both writers were isolated within their families, due to their education and command of a second language. Lee’s dealings with his mother in particular, is reminiscent of this difficulty; children of immigrant parents feel embarrassment about their parents’ linguistic incompetence.

One significant connection between *GO* and *A gesture life* is that their protagonists both engage in the act of “passing”, that is to pretend to be someone else under a false identity. In *GO*, the second-generation *zainichi* protagonist Sugihara agonizes over the fact that he is not revealing his true identity to Sakurai, his Japanese girlfriend. When he makes the confession, she rejects him almost impulsively, corroborating his fear that revealing his ethnicity would jeopardize their relationship. Although Sugihara had anticipated Sakurai’s reaction, he finds her spontaneity, failure to hesitate and lack of sympathy devastating. This particular episode has preoccupied critics. Both Wender (2005) and Sminkey (2002), for example, cite the scene extensively, and Lie (2008) makes several references to it in his discussion of *zainichi* identity.

Passing complicates the situation of *zainichi* since it is accompanied by intense feelings of guilt (Kang 2004; Lie 2008). Sugihara tries to explain to Sakurai that it was not his intention to hide his ethnic identity. Obviously he could have “come out” to her earlier, if he had not been anxious about the outcome. His fear was confirmed when the egalitarianism and open-mindedness Sakurai and her family espouse dissolves as soon as they learn of Sugihara’s ethnic identity. Sakurai’s ignorance about the

circumstances of *zainichi* is symptomatic of Japanese society's general indifference on this matter. Her accusation that Sugihara has been dishonest with her is not only self-centred but insensitive since she makes no effort to understand his reasons. It seems unjustifiably one-sided that only Sugihara suffers guilt over having hidden his ethnicity. While he is accused of dishonesty, Sakurai's "disrecognition" or lack of recognition, as defined by Lie (2008: 80), is never questioned nor challenged. This episode of interrelation correlates with Lie's view that the Japanese community's "disrecognition" effectively illegitimizes the *zainichi*. He writes: "In spite of the existence of 'good' Japanese and the invariable variability of individual experience, colonial hierarchy and its postcolonial legacy made *Zainichi* objects of dislike, disenfranchisement, and degradation that were simultaneously unrecognized: in short, objects of disrespect and disrecognition" (Lie 2008: 80). It does not occur to Sakurai that Sugihara may be tormented by the burden of bilateral guilt: he may have been untruthful to her by "passing" as Japanese, but in so doing he also betrayed his family and the community in which he grew up. In other words, Sugihara was jeopardizing his own ethnic belonging and group identity in order to build a relationship with Sakurai.

While *GO* does not specify the specific historical context of this story, one can assume its association with the period in which the author, Kaneshiro, grew up. Since Kaneshiro was born in 1968 and grew up during the 1970s and 1980s at the peak of Japan's economic boom, societal influence cannot be overlooked. Lie points out that during this period of rapid economic growth, dislike of cultural difference was manifest in Japanese society. Consequently, "passing ... was a default condition" and using a Korean name and deciding not to pass as Japanese "required a conscious effort" (Lie 2008: 80). He observes that:

Passing was, then, natural and comfortable, but also unenviable and unviable. It was tantamount to living a lie: ethnic pride and individual dignity militated against the inauthentic life of passing. The disclosure of Korean ancestry, moreover, could jeopardize a personal or employment relationship (Lie 2008: 80).

As Sugihara stresses, he was "born and raised in Japan" and therefore, he argues, Japan undeniably was his homeland. His physical appearance and posture in conjunction

with a Japanese name, led Sakurai and her family to assume that he *was* Japanese. Although he did not make a “conscious effort” *not* to pass as Japanese, he alone should not take the blame. Rather, as Lie (2008) asserts, lack of social citizenship is related to such acts of passing; and discriminatory social surroundings determine human action. Sakurai’s rejection of Sugihara on the grounds of blood is unfounded. Nevertheless, it represents the pervasive mood and belief system bound up with the nationalist myth of Japan’s mono-ethnicity. Had there been no such discriminatory position in the first place, passing would have been unnecessary. As Lie points out, “disrecognition” is perhaps an even more callous treatment of others than discrimination. It is less obvious: only those subjected to such mistreatment witness and suffer it.

For both Kaneshiro and Lee “passing” reflects the ambiguity of one’s belonging. As Lee’s title, *A gesture life*, suggests, this is a novel about passing. The protagonist, Dr. Franklin Hata, is accused by his adopted daughter Sunny of making “a whole life out of gestures and politeness” (Lee, C-R 1999: 95). This lifestyle is inseparable from Hata’s personal history: he was born in Korea but raised in Japan by adoptive parents. He passed as Japanese (under the Japanese name Kurohata) and almost regarded himself as Japanese. While working for the Japanese Army as a paramedic, he met a Korean girl who had been brought, by deceptive means, to the war zone in Burma as a “comfort woman” (see Morris-Suzuki 2007). Hata’s identity is suddenly challenged by K (the Korean girl) who instinctively recognizes his Korean origin. Young-oak Lee observes that Hata “is desperate to demonstrate to his adoptive parents and fellow Japanese that he is thoroughly Japanese”; however, “K takes charge and asks him unsettling questions that touch his most sensitive spot, his national identity” (Lee, Y-O 2005b: 148-149). The scene contrasts Hata’s bewilderment and K’s composure as follows:

She had been watching me as I put away the supplies.

And then she said, quite plainly: “You are a Korean.”

“No,” I told her. “I am not.”

“I think you are,” she said, not looking away as she spoke. I didn’t know what to say.

(Lee, C-R 1999: 234)

The exchange between Hata and K resembles the episode in which Sugihara reveals his true identity to Sakurai in *GO*. Whereas Hata almost denounces his previous desire to

become “wholly Japanese” as he is “drawn to K and the country she represents” (Lee, Y-O 2005b: 150), Sugihara begins to hope for recognition due to his growing attraction to Sakurai. In both cases, the girls represent countries: K symbolizes Korea and Sakurai Japan. Both Hata and Sugihara sway because as their feelings for the girls grow, they suffer from guilt over their betrayal of the ethnic group to which they are affiliated. Their longing for connection is full of contradiction and confusion. On the one hand, the yearning of young love is filled with the innocent desire to bond with another; and on the other, the characters need to pledge allegiance to their ethnic group. In other words, while both protagonists wish to relate to the girls as individuals, they are inhibited by their awareness that their membership of a group prohibits such behaviour. Here, the question of belonging is inescapably complex for those who seek connection on multiple layers. As Lie states, “Although collective identities exist – as they do in all social situations – this should not imply their ready identification with constituent individuals” (2000: 200). The protagonists of both *GO* and *A gesture life* are torn between conformist collective identity, which includes nationality, ethnicity, community and family; and an autonomous self-identity.

Passing is inseparable from the issue of assimilation. While Sugihara passes as Japanese if he does not make a conscious effort to foreground his Korean ancestry, Hata’s Asian origins are visible in the U.S.. For this reason, “in a desperate gesture”, he adopts the American name Franklin and tries to make “his social and public façade impeccable and impenetrable to blend into the society he has adopted” (Lee, Y-O 2005a: 153-154). In a *New York Times* interview with Pam Belluck (1995), Lee admits that during the course of writing the novel,⁷² he questioned the things he had done in order to assimilate. He wonders whether it was because he desperately wanted to belong to the present community in which he lived that he refused to translate for his mother who had problems speaking English, went to Exeter, one of the best preparatory schools in the U.S., and dated white women (see Lee, Y-O 2005b). He recalls repressing “feelings of anger and resentment at being treated like an outsider” (Belluck

⁷² Chang-rae Lee’s *Native speaker* was published in 1995, before he wrote *A gesture life*, yet these two books share a common theme of cultural identity and the assimilation of protagonists who are outsiders.

1995: 10). Such comments suggest that such feelings of “disrecognition” led Lee to aspire to belong to the default cultural group. Since visible passing was unattainable, he endeavoured to excel in education (Exeter) and have a relationship with a white woman who embodied hegemonic culture. In other words, in this case, assimilation was a way of passing. Lee’s remarks, however, indicate the affliction that accompanies successful passing. He acknowledges, “I wonder about the betrayals I had made – to myself, to my family” (Belluck 1995: 10).

In *A gesture life*, Hata’s relentless effort to become American is epitomized in the maintenance of his home. As Dwight Garner points out, this is an act of passing, since “In the United States, owning a house means you’re an American. Tending a Lawn is patriotic” (Garner 1999: 6). It is understandable that Hata’s complex national identity – Korean born, adopted and raised in Japan but later immigrated to the U.S. and considered a Japanese-American – completely isolated him from family ties or ethnic belonging. He is a member of a *diaspora* deprived not only of nationality but ethnicity and family belonging; his stranded existence explains his attachment to a home or a place. For Hata, the most significant cultural attributes of being American were ownership of a respectable house in a reputable community and impeccable personal standing.

As stated above, the lifestyle Hata puts on display was a pursuit for perfection, and an integral part of his act of “passing”. This applied to the case with Sunny, the daughter Hata adopted from Korea. He raised her as if on a mission to complete his perfect family portrait. Unlike maintaining a house, however, building a relationship with Sunny requires Hata to expose himself which he finds difficult. Since Hata’s life is devoted to passing which is an act of disguise, it is impossible for him to establish human relations with another person. According to Baret Magarian, Hata views his daughter through his recollection of K; and “[t]he exchanges between father and daughter are powerful, as his desire to protect her from the horrors of the world can be read in terms of a residual love for Kkyutaeh” (2000: 56). It can also be interpreted as an attempt to “overcome the past and to re-create his own history” (Lee, Y-O 2005b:

153) after assuming a new identity as Japanese-American. As long as Hata remains preoccupied in past events, however, building a new relationship is unlikely to succeed.

Another significant issue related to “passing” is Hata’s racial prejudice. Young-Oak Lee observes that it is clearly expressed in Hata’s relationship with Sunny. “[Hata’s] innocent design to compensate for his past mistake through Sunny is foredoomed” since “he represses Sunny, the object of his racism, and thus symbolically wields patriarchal and colonial power against his adopted child” (Lee, Y-O 2005b: 153). As Lee explains, the reason Sunny reflects Hata’s racism is that:

Hata’s obsession with K drives him to look for a child through an adoption agency; and because of the unavailability of any Japanese children, he was given a girl from Pusan, Korea. When Hata first sees his adopted child, “a skinny, jointy young girl, with thick, wavy black hair and dark-hued skin”, he is disappointed (204). He assumed that they would have “a ready, natural affinity” and that people “would have little trouble quickly accepting [their] being of a single kind and blood” (204) ... Hata, biased against the black race, cannot bring himself to genuinely welcome this mixed-blood, part-Korean and part-black child for she thwarts Hata’s effort to fit seamlessly into his environment. (Lee, Y-O 2005b: 154)

Sunny senses her adoptive father’s uneasiness and prejudice. After criticizing him for making “a whole life out of gestures and politeness” (Lee, C-R 1999: 95), she runs away from home. Once again, Hata fails to develop a relationship due to his obsession with passing. The episode surrounding Sunny (and K) suggests that as long as Hata seeks assimilation through his act of passing, he is unable to establish a relationship. It is also implied that Hata’s prejudice propelled his passing.

Towards the end of the novel, Hata seeks reconciliation with Sunny who is now a single mother. Hata gives up his house and begins a new life with Sunny and his grandson and in so doing makes an irrevocable decision to abandon his attachment to a place, and to depart from the default society. He realizes that he should not blame the “adoptive” status of his family relationships or his own nationality. As long as he strives for perfection in passing, he is unable to establish genuine relationships with others. This is because in passing he betrays himself. As Young-Oak Lee points out, “[t]hrough

out the novel, his foremost preoccupation is belonging” (2005b: 154). Finally Hata recognizes, however, that passing does not proffer belonging.

The diasporic status of the two protagonists – Sugihara and Hata – propels them to engage in passing. Since passing is an act of pursuing a false identity, it is not surprising that Kaneshiro and Lee, as Korean diasporic writers, have adopted the same plot for their narratives. Both stories end by expressing hope for a new belonging. What they imagine is not the diasporic aspiration for an “imagined” identity, but a cosmopolitan belonging that transcends the “blood” connection such as race, ethnicity or nation-state.

Towards cosmopolitan identities

In a study of identity and globalization, Nishikawa (2006) nominates Kaneshiro as a representative *zainichi* writer of the age of globalization.⁷³ He identifies several factors that made *GO* a bestseller – a patriarchal father, poverty, friendship, love, violence and physicality, resistance to existing authority, masculinity and femininity – and observes that the book appealed to readers’ nostalgia because these things are generally lost in Japanese society today (Nishikawa 2006: 110). Nishikawa affirms that *GO* is written to entertain, but also to challenge the norms of *zainichi* literature. In support he refers to Kaneshiro’s statement that he wrote *GO* because he did not want to be “used by Japanese intelligentsia” (Kaneshiro 2001a: 274 trans. T.W.). Kaneshiro felt that the Japanese intelligentsia focused on the issue of minorities because they had no other identity issues with which to deal. He was frustrated that conventional *zainichi* literature was written to address a particular class of Japanese people.⁷⁴ As a *zainichi* himself, he found *zainichi* literature unrealistic. The radical style in which *GO*

⁷³ This expression is used in accordance with the definition Cohen provides as follows: “I prefer the phrase ‘the age of globalization’ to ‘post-modernity’ or ‘late modernity’ as the first expresses process rather than outcome and alludes more clearly to the totality of world-wide changes, not just to the shifts in the consciousness of the intelligentsia in the metropolises” (1996: 517)

⁷⁴ Kaneshiro is referring to the fact that although *zainichi* literature is an established literary genre, the readers are limited to those with shared interests.

is written manifests his refusal to be included in the “inner circle” of intelligentsia (Kaneshiro 2001a: 274-275). Furthermore, he wanted to present something that represented the everyday lives of young *zainichi* as an alternative to the relentless pursuit of nationality and ethnicity that pervades traditional *zainichi* literature.

Nishikawa’s primary interest in *zainichi* literature lies in his conviction that language and notions of culture and ethnicity are the central support systems of the nation-state (2006: 101). He observes that the modern globalization process irrevocably changed language, and that Japanese is no exception. Nishikawa explains that while modern literature was inseparable from the nation-state system, in Japan today literature has undergone drastic changes due to globalization (2006: 104). He identifies five significant developments manifest in contemporary Japanese literature. First, young writers who share globalized fashion and pop music trends rather than traditional Japanese literature have established a new genre called “J-literature”.⁷⁵ Second, a group of writers strongly influenced by America represented by Murakami Haruki, Murakami Ryu and Yamada Eimy have achieved global readerships.⁷⁶ Third, a group of bi-lingual Japanese writers who grew up overseas, Mizumori Minae and Tawada Yoko, publish in Japanese but tend to blur the borderline between Japanese language and foreign languages by mixing the languages liberally or paying little attention to authentic Japanese writing. Four, a group of foreign writers, such as Liebe Hideo and David Zopeti, who write in Japanese and emulate the style of traditional Japanese literature.

According to Nishikawa, each of these groups of writers is making a vital contribution to modern Japanese literature, but he singles out the crucial role played by *zainichi* literature, the fifth group he identifies. Nishikawa sympathetically cites Liebe Hideo as a writer who has a sharp understanding of the present status of language and literature in Japan, as follows:

⁷⁵ J-literature is a category introduced by critics. It was created in reference to the term J-Pop.

⁷⁶ Nishikawa views their work as colonial literature.

The descendants of those who were forcibly brought here (Japan), now bear the destiny to represent and express the Japanese language. This, however, may indicate the fall of Japan's modern myth that is founded on a single race, culture and language; and perhaps demonstrate the victory of the Japanese language that stripped off the restriction of a single ethnicity ideology. (Liebe Hideo, 1992 cited in Nishikawa 2006: 106 trans. T.W.) Liebe uses the word "victory" in an ambivalent acknowledgement that Japanese no longer maintains its status as an authentic language used exclusively by ethnic Japanese, for it has been liberated from the constraint of a single-ethnic ideology.

According to Nishikawa, early *zainichi* writers, such as Kim Si Chong, Ri Kaisei (Lee Hoe Sung), Kim Sok Po, and Yan Sogil, active in the 1960's, were preoccupied with the classic issue of the nation state, since they were compelled to live in the country of a former ruler and suffered by having to write in the language of the ruler (2006: 107). Therefore, their works were based on their own constant struggle for ethnic pride and identity. In other words, the issue of identity was always directly connected to the question of nationality and ethnicity. While acknowledging that third-generation *zainichi* writers represented by Kaneshiro exist in a postcolonial environment markedly different from that of their predecessors, many of whom suffered mistreatment, Nishikawa suggests that *zainichi* literature holds a special position in the current context of globalization. He maintains that "the internalized drama of history" that is developing in the world is "expressed in the most condensed form" (Nishikawa 2006: 112 trans. T.W.) in *zainichi* literature in Japan.

Kaneshiro and Lee's novelistic representation of passing illustrates the "internalized drama of history" Nishikawa describes (2006: 112). Although both writers display indifference to their respective status as Korean-Japanese or Korean-American, their works are constantly directed towards the critical question of identity as belonging. The common denominator is not so much the writers' postcolonial status, but their shared struggle for self-identification. The narratives of these two young writers of Korean descent are connected, not in their ethnic origin, but in their articulation of a diasporic notion of being outplaced. Similarly, Kim (Yeonsu) sympathises with Trotzig as a fellow writer whose diasporic status is reminiscent of the tragic history of

the Korean Peninsula. Rather than addressing her as a successful international writer of Korean descent, Kim describes her as a person whose childhood embodies a certain period of suffering and turmoil in history. As a writer whose works are highly regarded for exploring the stories of individuals in historical realities, Kim is critical of the “blood” connection claim particularly for its implication of nationalism. The empathy that Kim feels for Trotzki, and the connection between Kaneshiro and Lee is not founded on “blood” but the “internalized drama” of individual members of the Korean diaspora who seek to establish their own identities without resorting to collective notions of identity.

Together the work of these writers of Korean descent exemplifies diasporic writing as a shared inquiry into identity that repudiates the collective resolution of nationality or ethnicity. As Nishikawa maintains, this literary phenomenon reflects modern processes of globalization. By determining what these writers share and how they differ, it is clear that rather than attempt to authenticate identity by conforming to collective belonging, their literary engagement demonstrates strong aspirations for autonomous self-identification. Their writing documents the shift from diasporic to cosmopolitan identity that is in progress.

Chapter 6

The Haruki phenomenon and the question of Japaneseness

Introduction

The Haruki phenomenon refers to the unprecedented popularity of the contemporary Japanese writer Murakami Haruki. It is remarkable that a Japanese writer has become exceedingly popular on a global scale, despite the fact that his novels were originally written in Japanese. Admittedly, Murakami is one of the best-selling authors in Japan but his popularity overseas is outstanding. His works have been translated into over forty languages (Shibata *et al.* 2006), and his readership spans from Asia to the West. No other Japanese author has been translated so widely or received with such international acclaim since the advent of modern Japanese literature (Kawamura 2006: 12).

Although there are numerous studies of Murakami's literature, few offer contextual analysis of the circumstances of his world-wide popularity. This phenomenon is particularly relevant to understanding cultural identity in contemporary Japan. Despite his esteem overseas, in his home country, Murakami *and* his works have been regarded as untraditional and unconventional (see Kawamura 2006; Kuroko 2007 and by contrast Tomioka 2000; Uchida 2007; Shimizu 2008). As a result, there has been little effort to connect Murakami to Japanese identity. The overriding reluctance to acknowledge Murakami as Japanese stems from the persistent influence of cultural nationalism in Japan. In what follows, this will be demonstrated by examining the social circumstances surrounding Murakami with particular focus on the issue of Japaneseness as cultural representation.

The Haruki phenomenon is significant as it embodies issues related to Japanese cultural identity. As the discussion of the discourse of *Nihonjinron* in Chapter one demonstrates, the notion of Japaneseness is the established representation of the cultural identity of Japanese nation. Although Murakami is recognized as a representative novelist from Japan and non-Japanese readers sense the Japanese quality of his works,

at home there is reluctance to acknowledge his works as “truly” Japanese (Kawamura 2006; Kuroko 2007a). Furthermore, there is a marked disparity in the literary value attributed to Murakami’s works in Japan and overseas. The discrepancy between Murakami’s reputation as a writer within and outside Japan reveals the undercurrent of cultural nationalism in Japan. Even the Japanese *literati* refuse to acknowledge him as representing *Japaneseness* or Japanese culture. At the same time, however, Murakami’s works are supported in a global cultural sphere developed by readers who share everyday cosmopolitanism (see Chapters three and four). The Haruki phenomenon suggests a struggle between a conservative ethnocentric system that supports an essentially “traditional” Japanese culture against an emergent post-ethnocentric identity. While the “traditional” Japanese identity assumes collectivity as the norm, the new alternative identity embraces greater individual autonomy.

The Haruki phenomenon is both a literary and a cultural enterprise, one that reflects Japan’s ambivalent relationship to the globalization processes that have taken place over the last few decades. Although Westernization has been a critical agenda for Japan since the Meiji Restoration in 1889, cultural insularity persists. This tendency is manifest in *Nihonjinron* discourse (see Chapter one). The circumstances surrounding Murakami’s domestic reception reveal how Japanese cultural nationalism is embedded in the concept of *Japaneseness*. Although numerous critical analyses of Murakami that consider his growing popularity overseas have been published in Japan, problematically, the majority of these studies exhibit insularity and ethnocentrism. In other words, the viewpoints of critics, particularly those who question Murakami’s literary value, are invariably rooted in Japan.

This chapter explores *everyday cosmopolitanism* in the works of Murakami Haruki in order to sketch the contours of a new understanding of contemporary Japanese identity reliant upon neither traditional culture nor ethnic exclusivity. Conventional approaches to culture in Japan fail to apprehend the existence of globalized cultural spheres. They do not recognize that a cosmopolitan perspective is indispensable for positioning a contemporary cultural identity that does not simply resort to ethnicity or

nation-state boundaries for definition. The Haruki phenomenon is an effect of the development of everyday cosmopolitanism. As such it reflects the condition of “blurring boundaries of nations and cultures” that Rantanen (2004) and Beck (2006) identify as a condition that fosters cosmopolitanism. Beck (2006) observes that society is being deterritorialized and is becoming increasingly borderless, as a result of the globalization process (see Chapter four). The Haruki phenomenon fits Beck’s insight concerning the emergence of *banal cosmopolitanism* that “is manifested in concrete, everyday ways by the fact that differentiations between us and them are becoming confused, both at the national and at international level” (2006: 10). The translation of Murakami’s works into various languages that led to the expansive readership in diverse regions reflects this development. The sense of banal or everyday cosmopolitanism both in the globalized spread of the phenomenon and in Murakami’s works contributes to his widespread admiration.

The Haruki phenomenon

The term “Murakami Haruki phenomenon”, or simply “Haruki phenomenon”, was first used in social news stories in Japanese newspapers.⁷⁷ Initially, it denoted the young generation of readers that sympathised and followed the lifestyle of the protagonists of Murakami’s novels. Many were attracted to the independent and non-conformist manner of the protagonists of Murakami’s early works—such as *Kaze no uta o kike* [*Hear the wind sing*] (1979), *1973-nen no pinboru* [*Pinball, 1973*] (1980), or *Hitsuji o meguru boken* [*A wild sheep chase*] (1982)—and they aspired to follow the post-traditional urban lifestyle Murakami described. It was also considered a social phenomenon that reflected Japan’s burgeoning economy and changing society over the 1970s and 1980s, as the country faced a major turning point after World War II (Nakano 1989; Shimizu 2008). After *Noruei no mori* [*Norwegian wood*] (1987)

⁷⁷ “Murakami phenomenon” Mainichi Shimbun, morning edition, 18 November, 1985 (Oi Koichi in Japan Foundation 2008: 112).

achieved a record sale of over four million copies, the writer's sensational success in Japan was described as the Haruki phenomenon.

The expression was disseminated in Asian countries where Murakami's novels had become popular, such as South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan and China. In South Korea, for example, Murakami's books were best-sellers from 1989 when *Norwegian wood* was first translated and published. According to Kim Choon Mie (2008), the "386 generation"—those in their thirties who were born in the 1960s and were students in the 1980s—responded to the youths depicted in Murakami's novels. Members of the 386 generation experienced a shared sense of loss after the widespread student movements failed. Kim observes that "Murakami's works perfectly echoed the anguish of these youths, the loss of ideology in the course of late capitalist society's shift away from politics and history, the appetite for consumption that filled the void, and the ambience of a vain, if affluent, society" (2008: 66-67). The Murakami boom spread as *Norwegian wood* became a "must-read" for young Korean students along with J.D. Salinger's *The catcher in the rye*. Furthermore, she describes a paper by respected scholar and literary critic, Yu Jongho, entitled "The fall of literature: a look at the Murakami phenomenon" and presented at a seminar at the Korean Culture and Arts Foundation in 2006. In it the writer expressed concerns over the overwhelming popularity of Murakami's works. Kim declares:

what interests me is not so much the question of what to make of the argument as the very fact that a learned scholar at the apex of South Korean wisdom was compelled to address the phenomenon of the Murakami boom at such a dignified place as the Korean Culture and Arts Foundation. It eloquently demonstrates that the popularity of Murakami has taken root in South Korea as a social phenomenon. (2008: 70)

According to Fujii Shozo (2007), Murakami was first introduced to the Chinese language market—that is, China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore and Malaysia where Mandarin is the major publishing language—in 1985. Murakami is one of the most popular writers in the Chinese language market, despite the vast differences in the political economies of these countries and regions (Fujii 2007: 75). Considering the broad range within the Chinese Murakami readership, "it can be said that Haruki

Murakami mirrors the city culture and the process of social maturity in the Chinese language sphere” (Fujii 2007: 75 trans. T.W.). Studies show that in Taiwan, *Norwegian wood* became a best seller in 1989 which led to a Murakami boom symbolized by the term 非常村上 [very Murakami] (Fujii 2007; Shibata *et al.* 2006). The translation of *Norwegian wood* was released in 1991 in Hong Kong and became a best seller. Although *Norwegian wood* was published in China in 1989, it did not precipitate a Murakami boom as it did in Taiwan and Hong Kong. In 1998, however, the novel suddenly thrived in Shanghai and then Beijing and after a decade the novel had sold a million copies in China. The term 絶対村上 [absolutely Murakami] represents the Murakami phenomenon in this particular region (Fujii 2007). As the booms in Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and China suggest, Murakami’s works impacted the lifestyles of younger generations in this region; its influence upon culture manifested particularly in activities such as music, food, hobbies etc. Scholars point out that the myriad websites, or fan-sites, coffee shops and bars named after Murakami’s novels in this region substantiates the claim that the Haruki phenomenon was a social phenomenon (Shibata *et al.* 2006).

It is noteworthy however, that this social phenomenon was predominantly occurring in the Asian region. While Murakami’s novels were translated and published in English as early as 1989⁷⁸ (Shibata *et al.* 2006), the readership developed fairly steadily. It was not until the mid-1990s that Murakami’s name and works became widely recognized. Similarly, while Murakami had “core” fans in European countries, such as France and Germany, where translations of his novels became available in the beginning of the 1990s, the scale was limited. According to Corinne Atlan who has translated a number of Murakami’s works into French, the year 2006, when translation of *Umibe no Kafka* [*Kafka by the shore*] was released, marks “the beginning of a new era” (Atlan in Shibata *et al.* 2006: 81) for Murakami in France. The novel received critical and media acclaim unprecedented for a contemporary Japanese novel in France. Rather than acquiring a broad readership almost instantly as he did in Japan and a number of Asian countries, Murakami’s reception in the West was diverse and varied

⁷⁸ *A wild sheep chase* (U.S.) Kodansha International.

depending on the region. By mid-2000, however, Murakami Haruki's works were popular on a global scale.

In response to Murakami's growing reputation and acclaim, the term Haruki phenomenon was employed to describe his world-wide popularity. Richard Powers characterizes the situation as follows:

[Murakami's] works have been translated into three-dozen languages. He is a perennial bestseller throughout Europe. He has spawned a generation of imitators around the Pacific Rim. He is the subject of full-length books, countless scholarly articles, and television documentaries. In the United States, he is considered among the few truly important international writers. How can the same writer be a runaway bestseller in Italy and Korea, a cultural phenomenon in Turkey, and the object of highest literary respect in countries as different as Russia and China? (2008: 49)

Powers maintains that Murakami's stories "embody" globalization since there is growing displacement on a global scale and "our fixed sense of national identity is vanishing" (2008: 50). This account resonates with the developing discourse of diasporic identities discussed in Chapter five. Powers also celebrates Murakami's books for acknowledging "the terrifying disorientation of late, globalizing capitalism and our status as a refugee inside it" (2008: 51). He suggests that in addition to physical displacement, the increasing sense of uncertainty in the world is reflected in the global popularity of Murakami's works.

When Powers discusses the Haruki phenomenon, he describes how cosmopolitanism emerged through the process of economic and cultural globalization over the late twentieth century. He finds Murakami like the characters in his stories "neither wholly Japanese nor wholly Americanized" (2008: 50); he does not assume a particular group identity. Furthermore, Powers claims, "This ambivalence towards nationality places him among the first truly global writers without fixed abode, free to travel everywhere" (2008: 50). Powers accounts for Murakami's cosmopolitan outlook through the global issue of reduced national identity. The fact that the "quest for identity" (Strecher 2002) is central to Murakami's works, and is also a universal theme, was instrumental in establishing Murakami's popularity on a global scale. On the other hand, as stated

above, mainstream Japanese literary circles have been critical of his non-belonging and lack of Japaneseness. This aspect of national culture and cultural identity shall be further discussed later in this chapter.

While the Haruki phenomenon is closely affiliated with globalization and ensuing cosmopolitanism, it is critical to recognize that what makes Murakami's works popular around the world is neither detachment nor the diasporic dimension of cosmopolitanism. Rather, the works' *everyday cosmopolitanism* allows people to communicate and understand others beyond national borders regardless of ethnic or religious allegiances. The International Symposium of Japan 2006, entitled "A wild Haruki chase: how the world is reading and translating Murakami", provides a good example of how such everyday cosmopolitanism manifested. The symposium was the first meeting of translators from as many as seventeen countries to discuss issues concerning translation and cultural contexts of a single contemporary Japanese author. One of the facilitators of this event, Jay Rubin, describes the experience as follows:

Even if it was the brainchild of a semi-government organization designed to solidify a Japanese author's claim on the Nobel Prize as some of us suspected, the "International symposium and workshop: a wild Haruki chase" was a wonderful occasion – especially for the participants. This was an unprecedented opportunity to meet fellow translators from all over the world and share ideas and impressions not only during the public events ... but over meals and during walks in the woods near Mt. Fuji. Talk about "confluence": this was it in spades! (Rubin 2008: 9-10)

Rubin uses the word confluence to describe the momentum developed by the inter-communication of people who gathered at the symposium from all over the world. Murakami Haruki was "at the center" of this international confluence without being present in person.

According to Sato Koji of The Japan Foundation,⁷⁹ there were two specific objectives in organizing the symposium. By making it a gathering of translators from around the

⁷⁹ An Independent Administrative Institution that undertakes public works and reports to government ministries. The mission of the Japan Foundation is to promote international cultural exchange and mutual understanding between Japan and other countries.

world, it aimed “to identify the diverse ways in which Murakami’s works are being read ... and to explore what aspects of Murakami’s literary world are winning the sympathy of those on the receiving end” (Sato 2008: 126). It also aimed to identify “the possibilities for the acceptance of contemporary literature across national borders in the global age” (Sato 2008: 126). The discussion between translators from various countries and regions facilitated by the symposium revealed that the reception of Murakami’s works was diverse owing to geopolitical conditions. While some identified Japaneseness in Murakami’s work, others saw it as borderless or universal. As mentioned earlier, the relative popularity of different titles varied depending on the region or market. For example, although *Norwegian wood* was instrumental in instigating the Haruki phenomenon in Asia, it was not the most popular title in either Europe or North America.

The effect of everyday cosmopolitanism is stimulated by the increasing mobilisation of ordinary people around the world. Such everyday cosmopolitanism is embodied in the feeling towards Murakami shared by the translators who participated in the 2006 symposium. It is noteworthy that a number of the translators began reading Murakami while living in Japan. They unanimously testified that they enjoyed reading and translating Murakami, but this is not surprising considering their present career as translators. Interestingly when discussing Murakami’s works, the translators express a sense of affinity with one another. Their rapport is founded on cosmopolitan consciousness developed through their everyday experience. It implies the shared feeling of everyday cosmopolitanism. Prior to the advent of Murakami, interest in Japanese literature overseas was restricted to those specifically attracted to Japanese literary studies. Although the works of Nobel laureates, Kawabata Yasunari and Oe Kenzaburo along with Akutagawa Ryunosuke and Mishima Yukio, were translated and published in a number of languages, the readership remained limited. By contrast, Murakami’s works were appreciated in many countries by readers who were not primarily interested in Japanese literature *per se*. Murakami’s writing penetrated a broader market by capturing a much wider readership beyond enthusiasts of traditional Japanese literature. As the translators affirm, Murakami’s books are read in their

countries not because it is Japanese literature but because they can be enjoyed by many different kinds of readers.

One scholar of comparative culture and literature, Cho Kyo (2010), contends that literary works tend to assume that the language in which it was originally composed is the native language of the readers. Therefore, Japanese novels are indisputably preconditioned by Japanese sensitivity and emotional expressions (2010: 42). While she acknowledges that Murakami's novels are not exceptions to this rule, Cho argues that it gained wide foreign readership because it was understandable to those without prior knowledge of Japanese culture or society (2010: 42). For example, the characters in *Norwegian wood* are fond of listening to Western music and reading American novels. Most importantly "they do not talk about things that only Japanese people can understand" (2010: 43). As Cho suggests, it is unlikely that the author's approach was a premeditated attempt to gain a wide readership overseas. Undoubtedly, the protagonists of Murakami's novels gave the impression that they were no different from the non-Japanese readers themselves. Such affinity, according to Cho, was refreshing for foreign readers who had the impression that collective behaviour and group identity was characteristic of Japanese people in general. Cho's account confirms that the independent individuality displayed by Murakami's protagonists was a critical element in terms of his popularity overseas.

Murakami is a prolific writer. He has published over one hundred titles in Japan including essays, translation of contemporary American literature and children's books. In addition to the many books by the author himself, countless "Murakami-related" books demonstrate the extent of the Murakami phenomenon in Japan. For example, a compilation of all the music used in Murakami's novels or a recipe book of the food cooked in his stories.⁸⁰ Some of those titles have been translated and published in other Asian countries as well. His own works have been translated into over forty languages. Such increasing popularity abroad attracted the attention of literary and

⁸⁰ *Popularity no Lesson: Murakami Haruki Chohen shosetsu Ongaku Guide* [Lesson on Popularity: Music guide for Haruki Murakami's novels] (2000), *Shinko Music*, *Murakami Recipe* (2001), Asuka Shinsha.

socio-cultural scholars at home and during the period between 2005 and mid-2007 alone, over twenty books on Murakami's works were published in Japan (Shibata *et al.* 2006). Notably, there is an increasing scholarship on Murakami from non-literary disciplines, demonstrating that the surging interest has outgrown literary studies, but also that this fascination with Murakami constitutes a sociological phenomenon, as discussed earlier, clearly connected to the emergent global cultural sphere.

Due to Murakami's popularity overseas, scholars of non-Japanese literature offer valuable analyses that contribute to the sociological analysis of his phenomenal success. Contemporary Chinese literature expert Fujii (2007) analyses the Haruki phenomenon that emerged initially in East Asia. He offers four principles that are applicable to this phenomenon in the Chinese-speaking world, that is, mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. His approach takes into account the socio-economic conditions of each of the regions in question. First, Fujii draws attention to the economic growth in the Chinese-speaking world that coincided with the rising popularity of Murakami. He refers to it as the "clockwise principle" since the spread began in Taiwan and then moved to Hong Kong and then to Shanghai and on to Beijing. As mentioned earlier (Fujii 2007: 4), in this region the Haruki phenomenon was linked to the release of *Norwegian wood*. The first translation became available in Taiwan in 1989, and in Hong Kong in 1991: the novel became a best seller in each region. Later in 1998, *Norwegian wood* became a smash hit in Shanghai and then in Beijing (2007: 76-77). Fujii's second principle, the "economic levelling-off principle", is applied since Murakami's popularity first flourished in each region at the point when rapid economic growth had levelled off. This is distinctively demonstrated by the case of China. Although the translation of *Norwegian wood* was available in China as early as 1989, it was not until 1998 that the title and Murakami were widely acknowledged.

While Fujii's first two principles focus on the economic conditions of East Asia, the third deals with democratic movements in the region. According to Fujii, whereas in Taiwan in the late 1980s the movement resulted in democratization through bloodless reform, by contrast in 1989 mainland China suffered the tragic repression at Tiananmen Square. The failure of this protest overshadowed the people of Hong Kong, since

Hong Kong was to be returned to China in 1997 and there was already some anxiety that they may lose their democracy. He concludes that such outcomes shaped the nature of Murakami's acceptance in each area; this he calls the "post-democratic movement" principle (2007: 77).

Fujii's third principle signifies a shared emotion particularly amongst the younger generation of the region including Japan. The key is the feeling of loss accompanied by emptiness. This resonates with Kim's account of Murakami's popularity in South Korea. Her studies show that the so-called "386 generation," that is, people born in the 1960s, became students in the 1980s and were in their thirties in the 1990s, constituted core Murakami fans. She observes that Korean youths who were afflicted with a sense of lethargy and hollowness due to the socio-political situation of their country identified with Murakami's depiction of "the sense of failure and loss that Japanese youths experienced ... and the psychological conflict that they subsequently must have experienced in the transition to consumer capitalism" (Kim 2008: 66). Kim's description of Korean readers' sentiment corresponds to that of the young Japanese readers who supported Murakami in his early years. Kuroko points out that Murakami's starting point was his experience in the student movements of the late 1960s and early 1970s. The generation that had shared this experience sympathised with his debut story, *Hear the wind sing*, which was reminiscent of the 1970s (Kuroko 2007a: 28).

Fujii's fourth principle, the "wood-high sheep-low" principle, emerges from an insightful analysis of the discrepancy in the up-take of Murakami in East Asia, North America and Europe. This is particularly significant since not only does it demystify the Haruki phenomenon from a geographical viewpoint, but it demonstrates the significance of socio-economic conditions to an analysis of the distribution of Murakami's novels. The "wood" in the "wood-high sheep-low" principle represents the novel *Norwegian wood* which became a sensational success in Japan in 1987. Following its record-breaking sales, the translation of this novel was available from

1989 initiating the Murakami boom in Taiwan, Hong Kong and Korea.⁸¹ Although *A wild sheep chase* was originally published in Japan in 1982, it was not available in translation until 1995 in Taiwan, and 1997 in China and Korea. On the other hand, both *Norwegian wood* and *A wild sheep chase* were translated into English and published by Kodansha International in 1989. As Fujii points out, it was not until 2000 that *Norwegian wood* was published in paperback by Vintage Books in New York with a new translation by Jay Rubin, whereas the original translation of *A wild sheep chase* by Alfred Birnbaum was published in paperback as early as 1992 in Tokyo, New York and London. Therefore, Fujii observes, unlike its Chinese version, the English version of *A wild sheep chase* is as popular as *Norwegian wood* (2007: 77-78). Translations in France, Germany and Russia follow a similar pattern to that of the English version. As shown in Chapter four, *A wild sheep chase* was translated in 1990 in France, 1991 in Germany and 1998 in Russia, and *Norwegian wood* became available in 1994 in France, 2001 in Germany, and 2003 in Russia.

By contrast to the “wood-high sheep-low” principle in East Asia, the popularity of Murakami in North America and Europe is better described as *sheep-high wood-low* (Fujii 2007: 78). Rubin (2003) explains that Alfred Birnbaum, who first translated Murakami’s works into English, was crucial to the introduction of *A wild sheep chase* to the U.S. and the English language market. Birnbaum was a young American living in Tokyo involved in the Kodansha English Library project geared to providing study aids for Japanese high-school language students. Since the project provided English translations of popular contemporary novels, Murakami’s work was selected for translation. Although Birnbaum suggested *A wild sheep chase* because he liked the particular work, it had been rejected due to its volume and another fairly short piece (*Pinball*, 1973) was published. An American editor, Elmer Luke, recognized the appeal of *A wild sheep chase* and worked with Birnbaum to offer it to an international readership (Rubin 2003: 189). This was 1988 when “Everything Japanese was of interest in America ... especially the story of a cool young guy who didn’t buy in to the

⁸¹ The first translation of Murakami’s work into Chinese was in 1985 in the August issue of the Taipei journal *Xin shu yue kan* (Fujii 2008: 88).

economic mystique; and from America the interest spread to Europe” (Rubin 2003: 190).

Rubin maintains that by 1989 Murakami had attracted a substantial audience in America that extended beyond those in the field of Japanese literary studies. In addition to the publishing of *A wild sheep chase*, in 1990 *The New Yorker* introduced Murakami as a short-story writer publishing “TV People” in September, followed by “The wind-up bird and Tuesday’s women” in November. *The New Yorker* magazine is respected for the quality of short stories it publishes. Its legacy of introducing American contemporary writers such as Truman Capote, J.D. Salinger, John Updike and Raymond Carver, is well-known. Murakami’s regular contribution to this prestigious magazine helped to establish his position in the U.S. publishing market. The fact that only two other Japanese writers (Oe Kenzaburo and Ogawa Yoko) besides Murakami have been introduced in *The New Yorker*, shows that the magazine recognized the quality of Murakami’s writing. Since then, Murakami has emerged as one of the most popular novelists in the U.S. and Europe. The English publications of his novels, *The wind-up bird chronicle* (1997) and *Kafka on the shore* (2005), were well received and established Murakami as a contemporary Japanese writer with a worldwide readership.

The popularity of Murakami’s works over the last decade is often associated with the “Cool Japan” phenomenon as well as the global penetration of Japanese pop-culture such as animation, comics and video-games (Kelts 2006; Yomota 2006). Rather than mystifying such cultural products under the ambiguous category of Cool Japan, it is important to identify what made Murakami the forerunner of modern Japanese literature overseas. Matthew Strecher contends that;

[*The wind-up bird chronicle*] may not have started any major trends, but it is part of a major trend, one that forces Japanese and non-Japanese alike to confront the changing shape of “national culture”, perhaps even to accept that, as cultural boundaries constantly shift, the idea of an insular, homogenized, “native” culture becomes obsolete. (2002: 83)

This blurring of cultural boundaries is significant, especially in terms of Murakami’s Japaneseness. His perceived lack of Japaneseness accounts for the critical attitude to his work in Japan, but as the penetration of Japanese animation and comics overseas

demonstrates, the perception of Japaneseness as a national culture has changed over the years. While provincial “native” culture has become out-dated, a new “cosmopolite” Japaneseness has emerged through an inter-play with global cultural sphere (Jacobs 2006; Fraser 1993). Murakami’s extensive readership indicates that Japaneseness is no longer a major deterrent for non-Japanese readers around the world.

Another conspicuous example of the Haruki phenomenon is represented in the term “Murakami Children” used to describe writers who claim Murakami’s influence. As was the case with the Haruki phenomenon, “Murakami Children” is also found across national borders. Since emerging as an award-winning novelist in 1980s, Murakami stayed on the best-seller list in Japan for three decades. Considering the competitiveness of the publishing market in Japan, retaining the position as the top-selling writer for so long is exceptional. Today Murakami shares his top-selling status with young writers who read his works before becoming professional writers themselves.⁸² This group, known as the “Murakami Children”, include award-winning writers, Isaka Kotaro, Yoshida Shuichi and Ishida Ira.⁸³

Murakami Children are also found in other parts of the world. According to Fujii (2007), quite a few east-Asian writers and film-makers are known for their devotion to Murakami’s literature. Fujii uncovers close ties between the father of contemporary Chinese literature Lu Xun (1881-1936) and Murakami Haruki. Both “played critical roles in shaping the closely interrelated identities of nation, citizen, and region in twentieth-century East Asia” (Fujii 2008: 82), and suggests that the East Asian legacy passed from Lu Xun to Haruki Murakami and then onto the Hong Kong film director Wong Kar-wai. New generation writers, such as Hui Wei and Annie Baby, are also considered Murakami Children (Fujii 2007: 180-182). The phenomenon is widespread. According to the Asahi newspaper (2006), there are even writers identified as Murakami Children in Korea, the U.K., and the Ukraine.

⁸² See <http://www.j-lit.or.jp/e/programs/newtrends/nobuko_yoshimoto_en.html> viewed 15 October 2007.

⁸³ Kotaro Isaka won the 2003 Naoki Award; Shuichi Ochiai won the Akutagawa Award in 2002; and Ira Ishida also won the Naoki Award in 2003.

The question of Japaneseness: the cultural representation and literary evaluation of Murakami

A peculiar characteristic of the Haruki phenomenon is the marked discrepancy between its manifestation in Japan and other parts of the world. In Japan, the Haruki phenomenon began with the astounding commercial success of his novel *Noruei no mori* [*Norwegian wood*] (1987). The record-breaking sales were attributed to the novel's advertising by-line, "100% pure love story," and that fact that the red and green covers used for the two separate volumes coincided with Christmas time. According to Rubin "With the 1987 publication of *Norwegian wood* Murakami was transformed from a writer into a phenomenon" (2003: 160). By phenomenon Rubin refers to the extensive range of readers from young girls to men in their forties, and the influence over other industries such as advertising and music. On the other hand, as described above, the Haruki phenomenon is a global incident closely affiliated with the globalization of culture that has taken place over the last two to three decades. The overwhelming success of *Norwegian wood* in Japan attracted international interest, but the phenomenon is diverse: popular titles and reception vary depending on the market. In East Asia, readers sympathised with the feeling of loss depicted in Murakami's earlier novels including *Norwegian wood*. Scholars (Fujii 2007; Kim 2006; Cho 2010) affirm that this was largely due to the rapid socio-economic change that went hand in hand with the emergence of late-consumer society. Reportedly, a similar situation took place in the Eastern European countries that experienced a major social change to democratization and economic growth. In addition, the Murakami phenomenon was indivisible from Japan's economic growth at the time. As mentioned earlier, "Everything Japanese was of interest in America" (Rubin 2003: 190), due to the emerging economic presence of Japan in the world. As such, Murakami's readership continued to grow in the West in proportion to the increasing number of languages and areas in which his works were published.

There are two significant gaps in the evaluation of Murakami in Japan and abroad. First is the question of cultural representation: Murakami's Japaneseness and the fact that his works have become increasingly controversial in proportion to his popularity overseas. On the other hand, Murakami's reputation as a literary author was established overseas when he received a number of literary awards including the Frank O'Connor International Short Story Award and the Franz Kafka prize in 2006. Such international acclaim leads to the second point: literary evaluation. Despite being held in high esteem overseas, in Japan his literary value is constantly questioned. This is inherently connected to the question of Japaneseness. Although scholars, such as Shibata Motoyuki, Numano Mitsuyoshi *et al.* (2006), advocate the concept of world literature, their ability to authorise the literary value of Murakami's works is limited since they are engaged in foreign literature.⁸⁴ On the other hand, numerous mainstream critics and Japanese literature experts (see Uchida 2007; Ichikawa 2010) have expressed concerns over whether such a "Westernized" writer is representative of Japanese literature. Since both the issues of the cultural representation and literary evaluation of Murakami are founded on the question of Japaneseness, and are thus inter-related, they will be addressed together in the following examination.

According to the history of modern Japanese literature, the literary genre of the "shosetsu" [novel] was introduced in the Meiji era when the writer Tsubouchi Shoyo translated the English word novel to "shosetsu" in Japanese. In his socio-cultural overview of modern Japanese literature, Ichikawa Makoto contends that novels functioned as a kind of educational apparatus for the promotion of modernity in Meiji Japan (2010: 202). He describes how the print media (particularly newspapers) projected what Benedict Anderson describes as "imagined communities" designed to promote the development of the modern Japanese state. Newspapers' nation-wide coverage effectively contributed to the country's political and cultural integration by offering readers a vision of Japan as a nation-state (Ichikawa 2010: 192-195). In the Meiji era, novels were serialized in newspapers which offered daily episodes and

⁸⁴ Numano's expertise is Russian literature; Shibata's is in American literature; and Uchida is a philosopher whose background is French literature and philosophy.

thereby attracted a wide readership. According to Ichikawa, this practice played the role of promoting the “internal image” of modernity, and informed people how to behave as citizens of a Japanese nation (2010: 202).

As described above, the emergence of Japanese novels was associated with the development of “print-capitalism” which Anderson contributes to “the creation of national consciousness” ([1983] 2006: 37-46). Generally it is understood that state formation introduced a number of changes including linguistic standardization, “that helped produce a new consciousness of national identity” (Calhoun 2002a: 10). The effect of print-capitalism in creating a “language-of-power” (Anderson 2006: 45) through the standardization of language, applies to the modernization process in Japan during the Meiji Restoration. The issue of language and its intimate relationship to national culture is a critical factor for the evaluation of Japanese literature, and specifically of Murakami and his works.

The cultural representation of Murakami has been the subject of relentless enquiry: particularly the question of his acceptance as a Japanese writer. As stated earlier, domestic literary authorities dismissed Murakami at large on the grounds that he was a popular writer, but not an authentic writer of “pure” literature.⁸⁵ The fact that he did not receive the Akutagawa Award, one of the most prestigious literary awards in Japan, suggests that Japanese literary authorities were reluctant to recognize him. Although Murakami was shortlisted for *Kaze no uta o kike* [*Hear the wind sing*] in 1979 and *1973-nen no pinboru* [*Pinball, 1973*] in 1980, his works did not gain sufficient endorsement from the selection committees on those occasions. Upon analysing the official comments provided by the selection committee, Ichikawa observes that many members of the committee were reluctant to endorse Murakami’s work because it was so heavily influenced by American culture (2010: 36-45). Due to the outstanding commercial success of *Noruei no mori* [*Norwegian wood*], Murakami was categorized as a writer of popular fiction rather than serious literature. In addition, since

⁸⁵ In Japan, there is the category “Jyun-bungaku”, literally meaning ‘pure’ literature, defines authentic Japanese literature.

Norwegian wood was promoted commercially as a love story targeted primarily at young women, the novel's literary value was questioned. Also, Murakami's personal lifestyle was considered unconventional even disrespectful, for he maintained a secluded life and dissociated himself from traditional literary circles.⁸⁶ For this reason he was regarded as being non-conformist. His decision to live in exile and write abroad was deemed unusual for a Japanese author.

Conventionally in Japan, a line has been drawn between “pure” and popular mass literature. Murakami consciously resists this binary division. Strecher argues that Murakami's fiction has been regarded as resisting the serious artistic paradigms of the Japanese novel and that it was effective in undermining “the most basic aspects of the distinction between “serious” and “popular” writing” (2006: 11). In a speech concerning his role as a Japanese novelist, Murakami explained that by contrast to the diversity of American society:

In Japan, with its relatively homogeneous population, different literary customs have evolved. The language used in literary works tends to be the kind that communicates to a small group of like-minded people. Once a piece of writing is given the seal of approval with the label *jun-bungaku* – “pure literature” – the assumption takes hold that it only needs to communicate to a few critics and a small segment of the populace ... Using new methods and a new style, I am writing new Japanese stories – new *monogatari*. I have been criticized for not using traditional styles and methods, but, after all, an author has the right to choose any methods that feel right to him. (Murakami cited in Rubin 2003: 202)

Instead of *jun-bungaku* or “pure literature”, Murakami insists that he is writing *monogatari* which is literally translated as “story”. His attitude echoes Kaneshiro Kazuki's determination to depart from conventional *zainichi* literature, in order to express the reality of his generation of Korean-Japanese (see Chapter five). The fact that both Murakami and Kaneshiro gained a new audience suggests that this literature was playing a new and alternative role, irrespective of whether it could be described in conventional terms as “serious” or “pure”. As Murakami professes, he is more interested in telling original stories than receiving literary authentication. Furthermore,

⁸⁶ Referred to as “Bundan” in Japan. It is a society of authors, who are mostly award winners and such.

the concept of *monogatari* transforms from “stories” to “narratives” later in his career, as if to prove his commitment to society. This particular aspect of Murakami’s social commitment shall be discussed in Chapter seven.

As described above, whereas the literary evaluation of Murakami in Japan involves an aesthetic debate between high culture and popular culture, this is not an issue in the critical reception of Murakami overseas. For example, in Russia, Murakami’s novels are found at bookstores alongside contemporary authors such as Milan Kundera, Gabriel García Márquez and Vladimir Nabokov and he is “firmly settled in the educated reader’s canon” (Numano 2005: 2). In the U.S., as discussed, Murakami is one of the most frequently published authors in *The New Yorker* magazine. The American literary scene raises few questions concerning either this writer’s nationality, or the aesthetic value of his works. The prestigious international awards that he has received confirm the recognition of his literary value overseas.

In Japan, however, the literary evaluation of Murakami remains unsettled. Most of all, mainstream literary critics denounce his lack of Japaneseness. Uchida Tatsuru observes, in an essay entitled “Naze Murakami Haruki wa Bungei-hihyoka kara Nikumareru-noka?” [Why Murakami Haruki is hated by literary critics] (2007: 167-172), that instead of appreciating the universal appeal of Murakami’s work, critics repudiate its lack of locality. He argues that such concerns about “rootless-ness” or “absence of the memory of Japanese modern literature” (Matsuura Hisaki cited in Uchida, 2007: 167) are irrelevant for appraising literary works. Uchida’s enquiry demonstrates the insularity of critics who insist on defining Japanese literature within “national” perimeters. Literary critic Kawamura Minato’s comment that Murakami’s works are popular abroad because “they do not belong to a distinct ‘place’ – namely ‘Japan’” (2006: 79) is illustrative of such reservations. Evidently, Kawamura is critical that Murakami’s works do not show belonging to Japan, but instead explore

“new worlds” such as America, Australia, Hokkaido and Manchuria (2006: 79).⁸⁷ As Uchida detects, “locality”, or Japaneseness, is viewed as the most critical element for literary value. Therefore, whereas novelists, such as Kawabata and Mishima, whose works were “read for exoticism or orientalism towards Japan” (Kawamura 2006: 79) are highly regarded for their popularity abroad, by contrast, Murakami’s worldwide readership is not respected owing to the lack of these elements in his writing.

These circumstances imply that in Japan literary evaluation is intrinsically indebted to the ethnic notion of cultural representation. The assumption is that Japanese literature should represent Japanese “high” culture and the ensuing (national) cultural identity. Therefore, authentic Japanese literature is predestined to seek the “roots” of essential Japaneseness. From this standpoint, the Murakami phenomenon was unacceptable to the literary establishment because his works could be deemed neither “high” culture nor rooted in Japan. Apparently, the denunciation of Murakami’s literature reflects the fixed notion of Japanese cultural identity held by those mainstream literary critics who unanimously identify his lack of Japaneseness. While no clear definition of Japaneseness is provided, such critiques seem to rest on a binary distinction determined by questioning whether or not a work belongs to “us”. In this respect, the Murakami phenomenon encapsulates the disparity between cultural representation in Japan and overseas. For readers overseas, Murakami is accepted as a Japanese writer whose works transcend national borders. There is appreciation for a new “cosmopolite” Japaneseness that involves engagement without precluding others. On the other hand, critics in Japan refuse to accept Murakami’s writing as Japanese because it is not explicitly “rooted” in Japan.

As discussed in Chapter one, Japaneseness is an ambiguous concept applied to represent the cultural identity of the Japanese nation. Of national identity, Hall maintains that “a nation is not only a political entity but something which produces meanings – *a system of cultural representation*. People are not only legal citizens of a nation; they

⁸⁷ *Hear the wind sing* and *Pinball*, 1973 were heavily influenced by America. *A wild sheep chase* and *Dance dance dance* were staged in Hokkaido. There is a short story ‘*Green Street in Sydney*’ which takes place in Australia and an episode set in Manchuria in *The wind-up bird chronicle*.

participate in the *idea* of the nation as represented in its national culture” (1992: 292). Furthermore, he declares that “A national culture is a discourse – a way of constructing meanings which influences and organizes both our actions and our conceptions of ourselves” (1992: 292). Based on Anderson’s statement of national identity as an “imagined community” (1983), Hall identifies some important elements that contribute to the construction of national culture. While the *narrative of the nation* (Hall 1992: 293)—including national histories, literatures, the media and popular culture—is obviously of interest, the one concerning Japaneseness is the intention of national culture to “unify” (1992: 297). Hall declares:

One way of unifying [national identities] has been to represent them as the expression of the underlying culture of “one people”. Ethnicity is the term we give to cultural features – language, religion, custom, traditions, feeling for “place” – which are shared by a people. It is therefore tempting to try to use ethnicity in this “foundational” way. But this belief turns out, in the modern world, to be a myth. (Hall 1992: 297)

Hall’s description is applicable to the ethnic orientation of Japaneseness as the representation of Japanese cultural identity. As mentioned earlier, the persistent questioning of Murakami’s Japaneseness often rests on “locality” (Uchida 2010) or “place” (Kawamura 2006), as does the discussion of his untraditional writing style and the Western lifestyle of his protagonists.

Rubin (2003) observes that Japanese literary critics have been predominantly critical of Murakami’s writing style and have questioned its literary quality. He notes that they attribute Murakami’s popularity to his being a “popular” writer rather than a serious writer of literature. Rubin cites the example of the Japanese critic Miyoshi Masao who describes Murakami as an entrepreneur rather than a writer. According to Rubin, Miyoshi associates Murakami with Mishima Yukio stating that both “displayed an exotic Japan”; but while Mishima represents the nationalist side, Murakami presents the “international version” that purposely accommodates the interests of readers abroad (Rubin 2003: 7). As Rubin mentions, Miyoshi “warns” academics that “only a very few would be silly enough to get interested in deep reading” (Miyoshi cited in Rubin, 2003:7). Considering when Miyoshi’s remarks were made, it is conceivable that he perceived Murakami’s popularity as symptomatic of the increased influence of

American culture in Japan's rapidly developing consumer society. Miyoshi fails, however, to scrutinize why readers in Japan as well as overseas embraced Murakami's works. In this respect, Strecher offers an enlightening viewpoint:

Murakami has forced Western readers to reconsider their perceptions of what Japanese literature is or should be. In place of the "inscrutable oriental" image of Kawabata, Murakami shows us a literary establishment that is, at last, keeping pace with globalization, and representing major increase in the *bilateral* flow of cultural influence between East and West. (2002: 81)

It is significant that what attracted readers overseas was not necessarily the "exotic" view of Japan. As Strecher points out, Murakami's novels embodied a "bilateral flow" of culture. Strecher's contention that Murakami's literature is Japanese literature that reflects contemporary (up-to-date) Japan with "an alternative picture of Japanese culture that shows how one can affect foreign cultural icons – Levi's, Budweiser beer, The Beatles – and still be 'Japanese'" (2006: 83), accurately describes the appeal of the world Murakami depicts. This perception was shared by Japanese readers who sympathised with the lifestyle of the characters in Murakami's early titles. In particular, the post-war generation responded to a new representational formula that they could negotiate readily. As Ogida Akihiko recounts, "When readers of his generation found him quoting Beach Boys lyrics, they bonded with him instantly: he was writing about their world, not something exotic or foreign" (Ogida cited in Rubin 2003: 17)

The repudiation of the Murakami phenomenon suggests that it is an issue of cultural representation rather than literary quality. In an attempt to demystify the Murakami phenomenon, Yomota Inuhiko argues that Murakami is "culturally odourless" (2006: 198). He explains that Murakami represents neither stereotypical nor traditional Japanese culture, and argues that this "odourless-ness" has contributed to his global appeal. He corroborates his argument by referring to manga comics and animations as being similarly culturally odourless and also popular abroad over the 1980s and 1990s. Yomota's argument appears to replicate Iwabuchi's analysis of the proliferation of Japanese audio-visual products in Asia. Iwabuchi's pivotal work (2002a) focuses on the transnational flow of Japanese culture; particularly the penetration of the Asian

market by Japanese media/audio-visual products. While specifying the term “culturally odour” as “the way in which the cultural presence of a country of origin and images or ideas of its way of life are *positively* associated with a particular product in the consumption process” (2002a: 27), he contends that Japanese exports were typically culturally odourless. Iwabuchi identifies three C’s that represent this category, namely Consumer technologies, Comics and Cartoons (animation) and Computer/video games.

Yomomota’s expression “culturally odourless” and the parallel he makes between Murakami’s work and comics and animation, implies his perception of Murakami. By aligning Murakami’s literature with comics and animation, he deliberately reduces the literary value of Murakami’s novels. Not only does his attempt to resolve the Murakami phenomenon in the context of Japanese cultural export seem partial if not inappropriate, it displays an inescapable insularity. Although Yomota’s attempt to comprehend Murakami as a socio-cultural phenomenon is insightful, his viewpoint is too firmly rooted in Japan. While dealing with the effect of globalising culture, he remains primarily concerned with the issue of locality. Yomota’s provincialism manifests in his remark on the reception of Japanese culture abroad: he asks “Is it so that Japanese culture is only accepted by erasing Japanese quality?” (2006: 220). His reference to writer Nakagami Kenji signals his unshakable attachment to the local. Comparing Nakagami with Murakami, Yomota laments that Nakagami is not known as well outside Japan due to his locality; and stresses that Nakagami’s reputation within the literary community in Japan is high, whereas Murakami is “ignored by most literari” in Japan (2006: 219-220). Nakagami is the first writer born after World War II to receive the Akutagawa Award.⁸⁸ His works focus on the local region of Kumanowhere he was born a Burakumin, that is, a descendant of an outcast feudal group. The struggle between families and society is a major theme in his writing. Nakagami is compared to Oe Kenzaburo whose work is often located in his hometown in Shikoku region. Rubin calls him “the Faulkneresque novelist” (2003: 15). Yomota’s disappointment over Nakagami’s lack of international recognition is admissible, however, his comparison between the literary value of Nakagami and Murakami is

⁸⁸ Nakagami won the Akutagawa Award in 1976, for *Misaki* [*The cape*].

misleading. His assumptions that literature is “high” culture and that the *literati* determine literary value, however, do not help to explain the Murakami phenomenon. A broader consideration of the global formation of readership is required.

In Iwabuchi’s study of the cultural penetration of Japanese products in Asia, mentioned earlier, he maintains that while “glocalization” was the key to successful establishment of culturally odourless Japanese products in Asia; more importantly, it was the result of deliberate marketing strategies. Drawing on various examples, he points out that Japanese animation industries as well as software game companies have strategically targeted the global market and that the same applies to consumer technology companies such as SONY (2002a: 258-259). For the purposes of glocalization, it is crucial to erase the cultural odour “associated with racial and bodily images of a country of origin” (2002a: 258); for this reason, those characteristics were intentionally diminished in the cultural commodities referred to as Japan’s three Cs. As far as Murakami’s practice is concerned, there is no evidence of such strategic and deliberate cultivation of cultural odourless-ness or glocalization. Although his frequent use of Western items expressed in *katakana* — a set of Japanese characters used for foreign words — undermined the quality of his writing in the eyes of domestic literary authorities, it was an accurate portrait of everyday contemporary life in Japan (Rubin 2003: 17). For this reason his work was embraced by young Japanese readers who grew up amid the massive flow of Western consumerism of the 1980’s. Similarly, readers worldwide responded to Murakami’s work by acknowledging those cultural icons as universal signs. The spread of such cultural icons was accelerated by the globalization of the market economy from the late 1980s to the turn of the century. As Murakami admitted at a lecture delivered at Harvard University in 2005, cultural icons functioned as reference points that made his writing readily accessible to readers in Asia, Europe and the other places in which his novels were published. If glocalization played a part in the Murakami phenomenon, it was through the practice of “local transformation” (Iwabuchi 1998: 74), carried out by the translators and readers who recognized the affinity between their everyday lives and his stories.

The concept of local transformation mentioned above foregrounds the contention of this thesis regarding the effect of everyday cosmopolitanism. During the course of translation, Murakami's novels are not only processed linguistically but culturally transformed. Most of the translators present at the International Symposium in Tokyo (2006) had had some experience of living in Japan, either studying or working. Many revealed that initially their reasons for translating Murakami were personal. Their reasons ranged from language practice, the recommendation of a Japanese friend, or just pure interest. What they shared was recognition that the process involved both literary and cultural translation. There is a quality of everyday cosmopolitanism discernible in the translators' willingness to participate in the trans-national cultural sphere. Apparently, they were unconcerned by the issue of Japaneseness. A number of them were scholars of Japanese literature including experts on other modern Japanese writers. They pointed out that readers in their countries do observe a certain Japanese quality in Murakami's works. For instance, German translator Ursula Gräfe contended that Murakami is "very Japanese", not only because of the structure consisting of ambiguous endings and the episodic appearance of characters, but because the behavioural patterns of the protagonists allude to those represented in traditional Japanese novels such as Shiga Naoya's *Anyakoro* and Natsume Soseki's works (Gräfe in Shibata *et al.* 2006: 294). Ivan Logatchev protested that in Russia, Murakami has become the *de facto* standard of contemporary Japanese writers. He mentioned that "there was no contemporary Japanese writer read in Russia before Murakami" (Logatchev in Shibata *et al.* 2006: 206) and due to the exponential growth of the Murakami readership among the younger generation of twenty and thirty-year olds, the image of Japan that the older generation carried—samurai, geisha, Fujiyama—would change eventually. Translators and scholars from Korea, Poland, France and other countries attested that while there is a certain cosmopolitanism or borderlessness associated with Murakami's works, the writer is acknowledged as a Japanese author and readers do see Japaneseness in his novels.

Murakami's magical realism and world literature

The unparalleled popularity of Murakami Haruki overseas is of particular interest, not only because of the scale and impact of the phenomenon, but because it re-defines Japanese cultural identity at a time when the notion of national culture is becoming increasingly blurred. The Haruki phenomenon is extraordinary: this writer has been embraced abroad more emphatically than any other popular Japanese writer in the past. Instead of the exoticism or orientalism found in the writings of Tanizaki, Mishima or Kawabata, Murakami's work has an allure that seems to originate in closeness. Rather than encountering an exotic Japan through his writing, readers overseas enjoy becoming engaged in the stories. They describe feelings of affinity; they identify with the characters or their social surroundings. Scholars and translators attest that readers in Japan as well as abroad find such elements as societal detachment and personal identity magnetic; this contributes to Murakami's universal appeal (Shibata *et al.* 2006).

This section will explore the literary aspect of the Haruki phenomenon, focusing on Murakami's use of magical realism and the discussion of world literature. While Murakami is often regarded as a postmodern writer in Japan and overseas, there is little to connect him to magical realism and world literature. Nevertheless, this is a significant angle for understanding Murakami's worldwide popularity, and his literary ambition. Furthermore, it allows us to depart from the provincial viewpoint on Japaneseness and approach Murakami from an alternative perspective. The discussion of world literature effectively elucidates the global reception of Murakami's works.

Susan Napier (1995) and Strecher (1998, 2002) show that Murakami's magical realism was primarily a search for identity. It is my contention that the cosmopolitan outlook of magical realism was instrumental in developing his readership around the world. As discussed in Chapters four and five, the inquiry into an individualized sense of identity and social belonging has become a relevant issue for many, due to the increased mobility of people around the world and the consequent emergence of everyday cosmopolitanism. Under such circumstances, the search for identity is a shared concern; and the prevalence of magical realist literature over the last few decades is connected. At the same time the field of world literature is taking sharper definition. Although studies of magical realism and world literature are primarily centred on the

West, there is sufficient reason to suggest that these discourses are relevant to contemporary Japan, as the notion of cosmopolitanism is.

In a comprehensive overview of this genre, entitled *Magic(al) Realism* (2004), Maggie Ann Bowers states that:

What the narrative mode offers is a way to discuss alternative approaches to reality to that of Western philosophy, expressed in many postcolonial and non-Western works of contemporary fiction by, most famously, writers such as Gabriel García Márquez and Salman Rushdie. It is this aspect that has made it most pertinent to late twentieth-century literature. (2004: 1)

As Bowers explains, magical realism provides a versatile approach to reality which is particularly relevant to contemporary non-Western literature. She explains that magical realism was a narrative mode preferred by writers defying totalitarian regimes, because it offered “a means to attack the definitions and assumptions which support such systems (e.g. colonialism) by attacking the stability of the definitions upon which these systems rely” (Bowers 2004: 4). While admitting that there is ongoing debate over defining the terms, Bowers maintains that magic(al) realism or marvellous realism can be regarded as “concepts of reality” (2004: 4). By comparing the terms magic and magical realism with other literary modes such as realism, surrealism, allegory and the fantastic, Bowers shows how the concept applies to the field of narrative fiction. According to her analysis, the “magic” in magical realism specifically applies to “any extraordinary occurrence and particularly to anything spiritual or unaccountable by rational science” (2004: 20). “Magic” and “realism” are contrasting terms. “Realism” is the attempt “to present many details that contribute to a realistic impression” (2004: 21) and thus magical realism involves the “magic(al)” treatment of “a matter of fact” manner in the writing. This describes Murakami’s narratives.

Magical or magic realism originated in Latin America in postcolonial literature that resisted the culturally dominant influence of Europe. Bowers (2004) points out, however, that it has become more divergent and multicultural over the last few decades. Therefore, it is not surprising that a number of writers who employ magical realism today are also cosmopolitan. For example, the two most prominent writers

representing the genre are emigrant cosmopolitans. The British-Indian writer Salman Rushdie whose *Midnight's children* is a highly acclaimed magical realist text, is a middle-class emigrant. Canadian writer Michael Ondaatje was born in Sri Lanka and emigrated to Canada. The trans-cultural settings of his narratives are Sri Lanka, the United States, Canada, war-torn Europe and North Africa (Bowers 2004: 53).

Despite the proliferation of magical realist works around the world, there is little to connect it to Japanese literature or Murakami Haruki. In a valuable study of magical realism in modern Japanese literature, Napier (1995) makes the case that Murakami's works clearly exemplify contemporary Japanese magical realism. She identifies a strand of "fantastic" writings that employ surreal or supernatural elements in a group of modern Japanese novels. Following the Meiji Restoration in 1868 when Japan ended its isolation policy and opened the country, Napier proclaims, Japan faced an "identity crisis" and sought to define itself in relation to the West and modernity. At this point, she argues, the magical realist style gained a foothold in modern Japanese fiction. She asserts that "[t]his theme of a constantly and negatively shifting form of identity is a fundamental one in modern Japanese literature, and one that is particularly suited to the genre of the fantastic" (1995: 452). She argues that renowned contemporary Japanese writers, such as Akutagawa Ryunosuke, Natsume Soseki, Izumi Kyoka, Kawabata Yasunari, Abe Kobo, Oe Kenzaburo and Murakami Haruki, engage in the search for identity characteristic of Japanese magical realism. She describes these writers' different applications of magical realism:

Overall, the most pervasive use of magic realism in modern Japanese literature has been as a means to search for Japanese identity, often through the process of recovering history by resuscitating myth (Oe Kenzaburo, Izumi Kyoka, Inoue Hisashi) or in the image of a mysterious, marvellous woman who may represent old Japan as a maternal figure, forgiving those who have abandoned her (Kyoka) or of a virginal girl (Kawabata) whose purity suggests a lost innocence that can be restored only for a fleeting moment. Writers such as Abe Kobo and, more subtly, Murakami Haruki show this search for identity only to underline its ultimate futility in visions of a grotesque and anonymous modern world. (Napier 1995: 455)

The extensive range of cases provided confirms that magical realism was an established style in modern Japanese literature.

Another key quality of Japanese magical realism, according to Napier, is the use of history. Although the term magical realism was not directly applied, Japanese writers use fantastic elements to represent Japan's relationship with the West. Napier observes that Japanese fiction during the post-Meiji Restoration period was defined by the "modern vs. traditional" opposition. This manifested in "a conflict between the Western-inspired dominant literary current of naturalism and the various fictional reactions against it" (1995: 453). It is important to note that unlike Latin American magical realism, the Japanese version is not as overtly political, although it does tend to reject the image of "harmonious society" promoted by the government and media (Napier 1995: 455).

Napier claims that Murakami's magical realism reflects his attitude towards history. Drawing on the example of the phantom sheep that appears in *A wild sheep chase* (1982), she maintains that readers are guided "to confront previously unacknowledged or downplayed aspects of Japanese history" (1995: 473) by following the protagonist's quest for the phantom sheep. The specific history to which Napier refers is the colonial aspect of Hokkaido, the northern island of Japan, where the story takes place. Hokkaido was annexed in the Meiji era (1869); the historical relationship between the mainland and Hokkaido is colonial (see Morris-Suzuki 1998). Murakami explains that he decided to use the sheep as a central metaphor when he learned of its history, as follows:

[Sheep] had been imported as exotic animals early in the Meiji period. The Meiji government had a policy of encouraging the raising of sheep, but now sheep have been all but abandoned by the government as an uneconomical investment. In other words, sheep are a kind of symbol of the reckless speed with which the Japanese state pursued a course of modernization. When I learned all this, I decided once and for all that I would write a novel with "sheep" as a key word. (Murakami cited in Rubin 2003: 91)

Murakami also states that he "needed some supernatural power to tell a story" and that he thought "a supernatural, fantastic story" would be more realistic (Gregory, Miyawaki

& McCafery 2002: 119). His assertion that he used the “supernatural” as a means of being “more realistic” confirms that he consciously adopted magical realism to enhance his narrative.

Rubin (2003) offers another significant account of the sheep and its connection to history. He maintains that Murakami was exploring Japan’s controversial relationship with Asia (2003: 92). According to Rubin, the sheep symbolizes “the evil ‘Will’ that has wrought [such] wide-scale suffering in Asia” (2003: 93), implying the Sino-Japanese War (1894-5), Russo-Japanese War (1904-5), the annexation of Korea (1910) as well as the period between 1931 to 1945 when “The mission of the Emperor’s sacred troops was to establish the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere” (2003: 93). In the dark episode set in wartime Manchuria in *The wind-up bird chronicle* (1994-5) Murakami reiterates his criticism of Japan’s historical relationship with Asia.

As explained earlier, magical realism is generally recognized as a literary style adopted by writers to resist European cultural dominance. As Napier demonstrates, however, modern Japanese literature has traditionally employed this literary method in the quest for Japanese identity. Strecher agrees that the search for identity was critical for Murakami, but he suggests that the identity discussed is an individualized one:

Murakami’s use of magical realism, while closely linked with the *quest* for identity, is not necessarily involved with the *assertion* of an identity. Put another way, magical realism in Murakami is used as a tool to seek a highly individualized, personal sense of identity in each person, rather than as a rejection of the thinking of one-time colonial powers, or the assertion of a national (cultural) identity based on indigenous beliefs and ideologies (2002: 82).

Strecher’s argument that Murakami’s central theme is the quest for identity is persuasive. Such identity, according to Strecher, is “the concept of individual identity (that) runs counter to the dominant social structure of post-1970 Japan, what he refers to as the ‘system’” (2002: 94). Drawing on how the protagonist and some other characters in *A wild sheep chase* refuse to submit to the system, Strecher argues that identity is:

“a matter of will” for Murakami. Although Murakami’s characters often seem passive, it does not necessarily mean that they are without identity. Rather, the passivity is interpreted

as their unwillingness to submit to the consumerism or collective ruling of (Japanese) society. (2002: 94)

Napier's contention that writers employed magical realism in the search for Japanese identity is credible; so too is Strecher's observation that Murakami's mission was a quest for individual identity. It is what distinguishes Murakami from other Japanese writers. In this respect, it is plausible that such pursuit of an autonomous self-identity that refutes the hegemonic power of the conforming collective was the critical element that resonated with readers around the world. The development of everyday cosmopolitanism demonstrates that people's experience of being mobilized and then isolated makes them aspire to establish an individualized identity and social belonging concurrently. Murakami's protagonists are often engaged in a search, although the object of their search is unknown to them most of the time. This suggests that they are in search of their own identity, because identity for them is literally "a matter of will" (Strecher 2002: 94). By establishing such "will" or self-identification, it becomes possible for them to confront history brought back to life by magic realist devices.

The universal appeal of Murakami's works raises the question of whether his works should be classified as world literature. The term *Weltliteratur* [world literature] was originally conceived by Johan Wolfgang von Goethe to describe the expanding publishing marketplace of the late nineteenth century. The proliferation of Murakami's works today epitomizes world literature at the turn of the millennium. Since the first Chinese translation of his novel was published in 1986, the number of languages and geographical markets where translations of his works became available has increased constantly (Shibata *et al.* 2006). Although Goethe's observation is criticised for pre-supposing the "national" (Prendergast 2004: 2-3), it was effective in acknowledging the influence of the market and that literature transcends national borders.

David Damrosch has taken the concept a step further to define world literature as "encompass[ing] all literary works that circulate beyond their culture of origin" (2003: 4). He proclaims that "world literature is not an infinite, ungraspable canon of works" and designates it rather as *a mode of circulation and of reading* (Damrosch 2003: 5).

Damrosch describes how a given work becomes accepted as world literature: “A work enters into world literature by a double process: first, by being read as literature; second, by circulating out into a broader world beyond its linguistic and cultural point of origin” (2003: 6). Furthermore, he contends that it is important to understand the significant role played by translation, and therefore also by circulation and reading (as discussed above). This conception of world literature as trans-national and trans-cultural seems particularly relevant, as evidence to support a counter-argument to the “rootless” or “ordourless” charge against Murakami’s works.

Japanese world literature advocate, Numano (2006) observes that Goethe’s concept of world literature is grounded in the erroneous assumption that literature has universal value. Instead of submitting to this ideal, Numano seeks to define world literature “in the present progressive form that retains the cultural context of the country of origin” (2006: 238 trans. T.W.). Supporting Damrosch’s principle that world literature is a *mode of circulation*, Numano identifies the Murakami phenomenon as part of a new world literature that is distributed globally while being refracted by the prism of various languages and cultures through translation (2006: 238).

Numano suggests that the conditions surrounding Murakami’s popularity are cultivating new horizons for world literature by invalidating traditional literary critical endeavours to determine whether a work is Japanese or Western, and relatedly whether it is entertainment or pure literature (2006: 239). For Numano, world literature is a ubiquitous form of art that circulates in various cultural contexts through translation, and that translation enables each work to begin a new life in a new context. Drawing on Damrosch’s definition of a *mode of circulation and reading*, Numano contends that Murakami fits this description owing to the global scale of readership and popularity of his work. Therefore, he argues, there is no single Murakami literature but multiple diversified variables corresponding to the number of languages and translators. In this respect, Numano’s world literature approach offers a new perspective on the Haruki phenomenon, one that departs from that held in traditional Japanese literary circles. In addition, it sheds light on the role of translation, as an act of everyday cosmopolitanism that complements the phenomenon.

From a literary perspective, Murakami has been criticised for his writing style, particularly his open embrace of foreign literary influences, and his frequent reference to Western cultural icons. These elements of his style are often cited as evidence that Murakami is un-Japanese and therefore not a mainstream literary writer. For example, in a comprehensive collection of his reviews of Murakami, *Murakami Haruki o dou yomuka?* [*How to read Murakami Haruki*], literary critic Kawamura states that he should have asked “When will Murakami Haruki become literature?” (2006: 228). Furthermore, Kawamura criticises Murakami’s writing style, and describes his language “a pack of indigestible signs” (2006: 228). While admitting that he belongs to the generation that “cannot leave the paradigm of Japanese modern literature”, Kawamura refuses to acknowledge Murakami’s novels as authentic Japanese literature (2006: 228).

Paradoxically, it was precisely those supposed shortcomings which gave Murakami’s works such broad appeal across the globe. For example, his writing style encouraged many new translators to attempt to translate directly from Japanese into their native languages. Prior to Murakami, the general practice for translating Japanese literature had been to work through an English translation rather than to translate directly from the original Japanese. Damrosch maintains that “the question of translatability is distinct from questions of value” and explains that “literature stays within its national or regional tradition when it usually loses in translation, whereas works become world literature when they gain on balance in translation, stylistic losses offset by an expansion in depth as they increase their range” (2003: 289). In this respect, Murakami’s works became world literature for its shared cosmopolitan outlook and everyday cosmopolitanism of the translators in various countries and regions. A number of translators at the International Symposium in Tokyo (2006) testified that they first read Murakami’s books to practise Japanese language skills. It is not difficult to assume the reasons for such common practice because: (i) Murakami was widely read when these translators spent time in Japan; (ii) his novels were known to depict Japanese society specifically the youth; and (iii) his writing style was plain and accessible for beginners of Japanese. Apparently, translators with literary

backgrounds found Murakami's novels so fascinating that they felt compelled to translate his works although they had no prior publishing arrangements.

Kawamura referred to Murakami's use of readily recognizable Western cultural icons, such as Coca Cola, Kentucky Fried Chicken and jazz music, to foster cross-cultural communication as "a pack of indigestible signs" (2006: 228 trans. T.W.). While the criticism that his writing was overly "Westernized" may have discounted him from prestigious Japanese literary awards, the acclaim awarded to him in a series of prestigious international awards has discounted the validity of questions about the literary value of his work. As Murakami's acclaim grew abroad, the authenticity of the traditional Japanese literary circle seems to have diminished. On the other hand, "J-Lit"⁸⁹ writers emerged as the generation of young Japanese writers to follow Murakami. Furthermore there has been a boom in publishing Japanese literature in countries and regions where there had been little exposure to Japan's literary heritage prior to Murakami's international publications. Tomas Jurkovic argues that before Murakami's *Norwegian wood* was published in 2002 in Czechoslovakia, it was difficult to imagine Japanese literature other than classics such as Kawabata Yasunari or Tanizaki Junichiro. He describes the translation and publishing of Murakami's works as "a revolutionary event" (Jurkovic in Shibata *et al.* 2006: 115).

On Murakami's relationship to Japan and the Japanese language, Rubin pronounces that:

It is important to note how shocking Murakami's cultural relativism is in the context of Japanese literature. Readers unfamiliar with the quasi-religious rhapsodizing about the spiritual superiority or unique magic of Japanese that has passed for serious intellectual commentary in Japan ... may not realize that Murakami's cosmopolitanism is almost revolutionary. (2003: 233)

As a scholar of Japanese literature, Rubin is keenly aware of the tradition of modern Japanese literature. The "spiritual superiority" to which he refers is the myth of the Japanese nation and its cultural traditions. It is because modern Japanese literature has

⁸⁹ An abbreviation of Japanese Literature used in parallel with words such as J-Pop.

been encumbered with the mission to preserve Japaneseness (as discussed above), that Murakami's cosmopolitanism is deemed un-Japanese. As Rubin points out, it has been accused of undermining the literary and cultural value of Japaneseness. In response, Murakami insists that Japanese literature must endeavour to remain open:

The world of literature is probably 85 per cent feeling and desire, things that transcend differences of race or language or gender, and these are basically things that admit of mutual exchange ... It's my belief that Japanese literature has to open itself much more broadly than it now does to the scrutiny of the world at large. (Murakami cited in Rubin 2003: 234)

Here in responding to a reader's question about whether Japanese literature is written for Japanese readers and therefore unlikely to be fully comprehensible to foreigners, Murakami explains his thoughts on literature. Murakami's commitment to openness rather than exclusiveness confirms his cosmopolitanism,

Delanty identifies a nascent cosmopolitanism in Japan by analysing Japanese modernity and changing forms of consumption. He finds that the older forms of consumption supported group identities where individual identities were only acceptable within the group, but the new modes of consumption provide distance between the individual and the group as well as the product (2004: 124). Hence, he holds that the contemporary style of consumption is an "individuated kind" which he relates to a nascent cosmopolitanism and expression of self-identity (2004: 127-128). As discussed in this chapter, the Haruki phenomenon indicates that the popularity of Murakami's work is due to neither to its Japaneseness nor to its non-Japaneseness (rootlessness). While there are numerous factors that contribute to his extensive popularity, the "quest for identity" is certainly a contemporary issue pressing upon people globally. Delanty's observation that "[t]he global public is inside as well as outside national publics and is the central dynamic in cosmopolitanism, conceived of as an opening up of discursive spaces and which has a critical function in shaping the social world" (2009: 69) is useful in understanding the cosmopolitan aspect of the Haruki phenomenon. Although Delanty's conception of the "cosmopolitan public sphere" primarily concerns the public sphere as a site of solidarity and ethical cosmopolitanism (2009: 107), it may be extended to apply to the aesthetic cultural sphere. The following chapter will consider

Murakami's cosmopolitanism and his engagement in the global "cultural public sphere".

Chapter 7

Towards a cosmopolitan imaginary

Introduction

In recent years Murakami's cosmopolitan turn has become increasingly explicit. The shift in his outlook is exemplified in two speeches he delivered at international literary awards: the Jerusalem Prize in 2009, and the Catalunya International Prize in 2011. The two speeches are significant documents of his cosmopolitan imaginary. In the Jerusalem speech, Murakami demonstrates how his shift from detachment to commitment after the events of the Great Hanshin Earthquake and Sarin Gas attacks of Tokyo subways in 1995, has evolved into a cosmopolitan commitment to being a "citizen of the world". The acceptance speech, delivered in Barcelona three months after the tsunami disaster of the Great East Japan Earthquake and the nuclear power plant accident in Fukushima, confirms Murakami's cosmopolitan turn.

As the previous chapters establish, there are two identifiable currents of cosmopolitanism in Murakami. One is exemplified in his "cosmopolitan exile" (Nussbaum 1997), and is epitomized in his detachment from society early in his career. As Nussbaum contends, cosmopolitan exile is a lonely business. Murakami's own lifestyle and that of his protagonists displays this disposition. The other stream of cosmopolitanism fictionalized in his works is "everyday cosmopolitanism" (Rantanen 2005a). His works are characteristically located in "no place" (Powers 2008) and concern the "search for identity" (Strecher 2002), and for this reason his works are equally embraced by readers around the world. Both varieties of cosmopolitanism contest Japaneseness, specifically the intrinsic ethnocentrism concealed in Japanese cultural nationalism and authoritarian collectivism.

Murakami's move from detachment to commitment was established as his convictions about the responsibility of the writer took firmer shape over his career. As discussed later in this chapter, his non-fictional account of the Sarin Gas terrorist attacks of Tokyo subways in 1995 was a significant contribution to the development of a literary public

sphere. In *Underground* (2003), he questions the media's dichotomized approach to "good" and "evil"; his alternative is to offer the nuanced stories of individuals painted neither as perpetrators nor victims. This work offered an alternative perspective on an event that overwhelmed Japanese society. According to Rubin, Murakami "challenges his readers to think for themselves and not simply and uncritically to accept the narrative offered by society or religion or the state" (2005: 246). In this respect, for Murakami, *Underground* was an attempt to offer an alternative perspective. Like Noda's attempts to challenge social amnesia through his theatrical productions (see Chapter three), Murakami aspires to produce a counternarrative. As the speeches in Jerusalem and Barcelona imply, he aims to build a cosmopolitan imaginary (Beck 2002) to overcome the hegemonic monologic imagination.

Beck maintains that the alternative imagination of the cosmopolitan perspective defies the tendency of the monologic imagination of the national perspective to exclude the otherness of the other (2002: 18). Similarly, the notion of everyday cosmopolitanism identified in the Haruki phenomenon challenges hegemonic notions of Japaneseness. It demonstrates the cosmopolitanization effect of "internal globalization" (Beck 2006) that opens up the national public sphere to greater intercultural dialogue. As a result, the borderline is blurred and new discursive spaces open up, since "the global public is inside as well as outside national publics" (Delanty 2009: 69). As discussed in Chapter six, Murakami's works were a "new" phenomenon abroad; no Japanese writer had received such an international reception before. Whereas some Japanese literature is appreciated abroad primarily for its exoticism, Murakami's works are enjoyed for their non-Japaneseness and Japaneseness (Shibata *et al.* 2006). Murakami presented an alternative imaginary of a new Japaneseness oblivious to the "authentic" Japaneseness endorsed by the *Nihonjinron* and it was celebrated and shared in the global cultural sphere

The Barcelona speech

On 11 March 2011, Japan suffered a catastrophic disaster. Following a mega earthquake of magnitude 9.0, a powerful tsunami swept the pacific coast of the Tohoku district. Over 390,000 houses were destroyed and more than 300,000 people were evacuated. The casualties, including those missing, reached 24,703,⁹⁰ and after two years the count of deaths caused by the disaster exceeded 2,600 (Nakamura 2013). Furthermore, as a result of the earthquake and tsunami, there were nuclear power plant accidents in Fukushima. Three reactors underwent meltdowns and hydrogen gas explosions led to serious radiation leaks. As much as the earthquake and tsunami were devastating, the nuclear power accidents were particularly traumatic for a nation with memories of the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Various significant issues concerning nuclear power were raised by the Fukushima disaster. The ongoing debate in Japan has exhibited the development of a new dimension of Japanese society: a critical public sphere. This new element is exemplified by the anti-nuclear power rally held every Friday near the National Diet building and the Prime Minister's office. It began in 2011 and by April 2013, it had taken place fifty times (*Asahi Shimbun*, 13 April 2013). This rally is noted for its public characteristics: large numbers of citizens participate to show their concern. The *Asahi Shimbun* [newspaper] article includes a comment from a 72-year-old woman who explained that this was the first time in her life she had participated in a political rally, but she believes that it is her duty to do so as a Tokyo resident. Intellectuals have shown their support for the movement. Oe Kenzaburo, in particular, is actively involved in anti-nuclear movements. He is a leading member of the "10 Million People's Action to say Goodbye to Nuclear Power Plants" campaign.⁹¹ This is a citizen's network that aims to collect 10 million signatures on a petition geared to realize a sustainable society without nuclear power.

Three months after the Great East Japan Earthquake, Murakami was in Barcelona to receive the Catalunya International Prize 2011. He delivered a speech in Japanese

⁹⁰ Announced by the Headquarters for Emergency Disaster Control. 28 May 2013.

⁹¹ Campaign homepage, viewed 11 July 2013, < http://sayonara-nukes.org/sayonara-nukes_w/>.

entitled “Higenjitsuteki na musoka toshite” [Speaking as an unrealistic dreamer]. This so-called Barcelona speech encapsulates Murakami’s cosmopolitan consciousness and his contestation of Japanese cultural nationalism. Hence, it is not surprising that the responses to his message are reminiscent of attitudes towards the Murakami phenomenon (see Chapter six). On the positive side, it was embraced by many people in Japan and overseas, including those who are not typical Murakami readers. As the speech was covered by the global media, it attracted the widespread praise and sympathy of journalists and intellectuals abroad. At the same time his speech was subject to the criticism of a number of Japanese critics and journalists. Why was Murakami’s speech criticized by his own country-men, despite his effort to respond to a national crisis? Murakami’s cosmopolitan outlook is the key here, as this chapter will demonstrate.

The criticism of Murakami’s Barcelona speech displays a kind of nationalism that “moves people emotionally” (Calhoun 2002a: 126). For instance, Murakami’s intent to contribute to a critical public sphere from a cosmopolitan perspective was misunderstood and he was accused of being irresponsible or hypocritical. Writer and photographer Fujiwara Shinya (2011) denounced Murakami for speaking from a safe zone without visiting the site.⁹² He insisted that literary authors should share the experience of “hell” in Japan by being there. Literary critic Kuroko (2013) charged Murakami with speaking overseas yet remaining silent in Japan. He states that he is disappointed that Murakami has not taken any action since the speech in Barcelona. Comparing Murakami with Oe whose active involvement in the anti-nuclear movement is recognized, Kuroko views Murakami’s speech as just a “performance” staged for the world (2013: 176). These critics dismiss Murakami’s effort overall, simply because he delivered the speech overseas or is not engaged in anti-nuclear activities in Japan. However, as Roger Pulvers argues, “Murakami equates Japan’s problems with those of countries around the world, making clear the problem is global” (2011). As Pulvers underscores, the nuclear issue is a global concern, and not an issue pressing only upon Japan.

Murakami's Barcelona speech was a cosmopolitan move that promoted solidarity in the face of a catastrophic natural disaster and a nuclear accident. Whereas the 2009 Jerusalem speech was delivered in English, the acceptance speech in Barcelona was given in Japanese. This suggests that Murakami's Barcelona message was primarily aimed at the people in Japan. He made reference to the Japanese spirit to survive its history of natural disasters. Many people who learned about Murakami's speech through the media were heartened and encouraged by his message. Evidently, Murakami was also communicating with the rest of the world at the same time. He called everyone to become "unrealistic dreamers":

If all of you in Catalonia, and all of us in Japan, could become "unrealistic dreamers", if we could come together to create a "spiritual community" that unfolds beyond the limits of borders and cultures, what a wonderful thing that would be.

The term "unrealistic dreamer" connotes a person who questions the "reality" of our dependence on nuclear power. Deploing the massive number of nuclear reactors built in Japan under the illusion that nuclear power was safe, Murakami declares:

The "reality" which the promoters of nuclear power referred to when they called on us to "face reality" was, in fact, not reality at all. It was nothing more than skin-deep "convenience." When they made that "convenience" into a "reality" through a play of words, they were using a rhetorical sleight of hand.

He argues that the "reality" that we are dependent on nuclear energy can be resisted. He urges everyone to question the ethos of "efficiency" and "convenience", which he holds accountable for the extensive use of nuclear energy today.

By calling the Fukushima nuclear power accident "our second massive nuclear disaster", Murakami makes a crucial allusion to the atomic bombs that were dropped on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, as follows:

But this time no one dropped a bomb on us. We set the stage, we committed the crime with our own hands, we are destroying our own lands, and we are destroying our own lives.

Murakami declares, “We Japanese should have continued to shout ‘no’ to the atom”.⁹³ He clearly denies “the peaceful use of nuclear energy” agenda that the Japanese government has promoted since the end of World War II.⁹⁴ At the same time, he reflects on the “collective responsibility” of the Japanese nation. Maintaining that post-war Japan should have taken steps towards non-nuclear energy, he proclaims:

Such a response should have been our way of taking collective responsibility for the many victims who perished at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. We needed a substantial moral foundation of just that kind, just such an ethical standard, precisely that sort of a social message. That could have been a tremendous opportunity for us truly to contribute, as Japanese, to the world.

Murakami urges the Japanese people to acknowledge that “At the same time that we are victims, we are also perpetrators”. He refers to the words engraved on the monument in Hiroshima: “Please rest in peace. We will not repeat this mistake”. Murakami elucidates that these words imply we are all victims when faced with the overwhelming power of the atom bomb; however, we are also responsible for uncovering atomic power and for continuing to use it. Murakami connects the issues raised by this grim history with the Fukushima nuclear power accident. Takeda Toru (2011) observes that in his speech Murakami enquires whether humanity is capable of controlling “the nature” of mankind that has already “broken the seal of nuclear energy”. Therefore, he surmises that this is why Murakami calls for the reconceptualization of morals and ethical standards.

In the following passage Murakami argues that professional writers have a responsibility to contribute to efforts to rebuild morals and ethics:

In this great collective effort, there should be a space where those of us who specialize in words, professional writers, can be positively involved. We should weave together with

⁹³ Translator’s note: The phrase “Kaku ni tai suru” (核に対する) here suggests both nuclear power and nuclear weapons. The standard term for “nuclear” employed in the case of nuclear power is “genshi”, Murakami intentionally employs the term “kaku” more commonly associated with nuclear weapons here to suggest a link between the two technologies. (Pastreich 2011).

⁹⁴ Known as part of “Atoms for Peace” policy that U.S. President Eisenhower launched at the U.N. General Assembly in December 1953, details viewed 23 July 2013, <<http://www.japanfocus.org/-yuki-tanaka/3521>>.

words new morals and new ethical standards. We should plant vibrant new stories and make them sprout and flourish. Those stories will become our shared story.

The term *monogatari*, or story, is used in the original Japanese text translated above. Since the word *monogatari* can also be translated as narrative, the project of creating a new *monogatari* is consistent with Murakami's ambition to develop a new narrative.

As discussed later in this chapter, Murakami demonstrated a cosmopolitan commitment in his Jerusalem speech. His change from detachment to commitment, motivated by the Great Hanshin Earthquake and Sarin gas Tokyo Subway attacks in 1995, was directed to Japanese society. The commitment he displayed in Jerusalem and Barcelona also exhibited his engagement with the world. In the Barcelona speech, Murakami emphasized this by describing himself and his audience "as citizens of the world".

Murakami's Barcelona speech clearly demonstrates his awareness of his role as a public intellectual. It manifests his determination as an "organic intellectual" to confront the hegemonic influence of the institutional powers behind nuclear energy. As Murakami explains in the speech, despite tremendous suffering caused by the atomic bomb, nuclear energy was promoted in Japan under the rubric of "peaceful usage" of nuclear power. According to the special series on nuclear power and the atomic bomb published by Asahi Shimbun, this implausible agenda was accepted by Japanese society because viewing nuclear power as a new scientific technology provided hope for restoration after the defeat (Kato & Watanabe 2011). Since there are victims in Fukushima as well as those in Hiroshima and Nagasaki who are still suffering after sixty-eight years, it is a complicated matter to address. Murakami confronted the issue by presenting the Japanese as both "victims and perpetrators". In this assertion Murakami took a distinct step towards developing a "cosmopolitan public sphere" (Delanty 2009) in which citizens should debate moral and ethical issues. Although he maintains that he was expressing his "personal opinion", his message that "[w]e Japanese should have continued to shout 'no' to the atom" was unequivocal and resolute.

Belonging in the cosmopolitan imaginary

In the previous chapter, the Haruki phenomenon was analysed to show how the reception of Murakami Haruki and his literary œuvre differed in Japan from other parts of the world. The ambiguously defined cultural identity, “Japaneseness”, was applied to discount him as a Japanese writer at home. Murakami displays a contemporary Japanese cultural identity that is distinct from the conventional notion of Japaneseness. Rather than defining Japanese culture by its uniqueness, Murakami shows how it engages with the sense of “everyday cosmopolitanism” (Rantanen 2005a) emerging around the world. The global scale of Murakami’s readership reflects his success in this endeavour.

Murakami’s departure from conventional notions of Japanese identity raises questions about his alternative perception of identity and belonging. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the search for identity is critical to his work. Murakami seeks to establish an autonomous self-identity that does not concede to the conforming collective (see Strecher 2002; Rubin 2003). As demonstrated by the diasporic writers discussed in Chapter five, any effort to establish an individuated standpoint requires a shift from conventional ideas of belonging founded on collective frameworks such as nationality, ethnicity or religion. Kaneshiro’s protagonist in *GO* (2000) expresses this when he refuses to be categorised as *zainichi* in favour of embracing a new non-ethnic, non-national identity: Korean-Japanese. Likewise, Murakami strives to establish a self-determined identity in the search for identity he represents in his work.

As the proliferation of *Nihonjinron* discourse demonstrates (see Chapter one), Japaneseness is widely accepted as the essential condition for Japanese cultural identity, although the concept is ill-defined and ambiguous. Furthermore, there is a tendency to dichotomise cultural orientation in Japan according to whether or not a characteristic belongs to “us”. This attitude is reflected in the perennial criticism that Murakami’s work is “rootless” (see Chapter six). There is a strong and wide-spread resistance to defining Japanese culture, possibly because cultural nationalism played such an important role in the process of state-building and modernization in Japan (see

Nishikawa 2001; Yoshino 2002; Starrs 2011). This cultural climate made it inevitable that Murakami would be accused of being un-Japanese owing to his openly cosmopolitan disposition.

In his work Murakami represents the ideal of cultural cosmopolitanism, i.e. the aspiration to transcend boundaries of nation, ethnicity or religion through cultural interaction or “connectivity” as defined in John Tomlinson’s (1999) account of globalization and culture. For Tomlinson, it is vital that cosmopolitans have “a sense of wider cultural *commitment* – of belonging to the world as a whole” (1999: 186). The non-elitist, non-ethnocentric, non-patriarchial and non-“globalist” cultural disposition he endorses (1999: 194) is compatible with Murakami’s cosmopolitan approach.

As discussed earlier, Murakami’s cosmopolitan turn is identified in his commitment to society as a “citizen of the world”. It is further explored by reviewing the speech he gave on the occasion of receiving the 2009 Jerusalem Award, and an interview in which he described the context. Since Murakami rarely makes public appearances or expresses his opinions about contemporary politics, his Jerusalem speech was exceptional. After returning to Japan, an article accompanied by the original speech text was published in a magazine. In it, Murakami offered a full account of his decision to accept the Jerusalem prize and deliver a speech in Israel’s capital. Murakami’s speech text and journal article will be analysed to elucidate his cosmopolitanism. This will be supported by critical examination of his two non-fictional accounts of the 1995 Tokyo subway Sarin gas attacks. This analysis is particularly relevant, since it allows us to account for Murakami’s transition from detachment to the social commitment integral to his cosmopolitan turn. As a writer, Murakami seeks to fulfil his responsibility to society by contributing to the literary public sphere. Murakami’s account of the Sarin gas incident reflects his conviction that alternative perspectives are required to maintain a healthy society. Above all, he resists the conventional discriminatory dichotomies between “good” and “evil”, and “us” and “them”. This chapter will demonstrate the inherently cosmopolitan nature of this attitude.

As mentioned above, Murakami's cosmopolitanism aims to maintain individual autonomy. This does not suggest, however, that he refutes "belonging". On the contrary, his aspiration to connect to the world as a writer *and* as an individual is clearly expressed in both the Jerusalem speech and the Barcelona speech. As an internationally recognized contemporary writer, Murakami is vulnerable to the charge that his cosmopolitanism represents the privileged attitude of those who seek "belonging to the global cosmopolitan class" (Calhoun 2008: 440). Calhoun doubts whether individuals can choose their "identifications", and argues that "real people" are generally ignored in such pursuits for identification (2008: 443). Since the spirit of cosmopolitanism rests on its openness to "engage with the other" (Ulrich Hannerz 1990 cited in Rantanen 2005a: 120), however, the cosmopolitan ideal entails transcending borders including social demarcations of class. Furthermore, since the cosmopolitan identity under consideration upholds individual autonomy, it seems inappropriate to assume that it would conform to a group identity such as that of the "global cosmopolitan class". Certainly Calhoun's concern for the non-privileged ordinary people is worthy, but he fails to acknowledge that the cosmopolitan ideal of belonging-ness seeks to be open and inclusive rather than exclusive. Murakami's visit to Jerusalem exemplifies his conscious effort to connect to the world as an autonomous individual.

The Jerusalem Speech

On 15 February 2009, Haruki Murakami delivered a speech as the winner of the Jerusalem Prize. Officially called the Jerusalem Prize for the Freedom of the Individual in Society, this is an international literary award given to writers whose work addresses human freedom, society, politics and government. According to *The Guardian* (Flood 2009), the announcement justifying the committee's decision to confer the prize upon Murakami stated that the award "was made out of profound esteem for his artistic achievements and love of people" and for the humanism expressed in his

writings. The award acknowledged Murakami as one of the most popular, and best-selling, foreign authors in Israel.

The international acclaim given Murakami by the city of Jerusalem propelled him to take an unprecedented political stance. Critics and journalists questioned whether Murakami had intentionally placed himself in this position, for he was known to be fairly unconcerned with political issues. In fact hitherto critics had often criticised him for being apolitical. The timing made his decision highly controversial. The long-standing bloody conflict between Israel and Palestine had opened into open fire a few months prior to the award ceremony; the political situation was intense. Consequently, Murakami's acceptance of the Jerusalem Award had international political implications. The Palestine Forum Japan, a pro-Palestinian group, for example, sent an open letter urging Murakami to decline the prize. They asked him to consider "what sort of message the world would receive" regarding the Middle East situation. They were concerned that Murakami's visit to Jerusalem would support the impression that Israel's bombing of Gaza was permissible. The Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel also demanded that Murakami not accept the prize.⁹⁵ Despite this pressure, Murakami decided to participate in the award ceremony and the bi-annual international book fair in Jerusalem at which it took place and to deliver a speech.

Murakami had received harsh criticism in the past, but primarily on literary grounds. He usually remained silent to criticism, but this time, he felt the situation required him to declare his position. He felt compelled to explain himself in the acceptance speech which meant that he had to undertake the challenging task of discussing political matters abroad. Consequently, his acceptance speech drew the attention of a broad international audience spanning from political activists to members of the cultural community.

⁹⁵ Several news resources have reported of the protests for example Flood, 2009.

The global scale of the media attention devoted to Murakami's acceptance speech was comparable to that given to the Japanese writer Oe Kenzaburo's Nobel Prize acceptance speech in 1994. While Oe's case was an occasion for celebration, Murakami's was subject to intense scrutiny and fierce political critique and yet their speeches were similar: both writers spoke as individuals rather than as representatives of national Japanese culture. As discussed in Chapter four, Oe contested the renowned speech by Kawabata Yasunari, the first Japanese writer to receive the Nobel Prize. Kawabata's speech entitled "Japan, the Beautiful, and Myself" had famously acclaimed Japan's cultural heritage by contrast to the West. Both Murakami and Oe express a cosmopolitan perspective, depart from cultural nationalism, and aspire to engage with the world as "ordinary" individuals.

"Of Walls and Eggs", the title of Murakami's Jerusalem speech alludes to people's shared humanity in a call for a common understanding between people regardless of nationality or religious beliefs. He employed the metaphor of "eggs" to represent the vulnerability of human beings against the "walls" that create divisions and effect confrontations. In this respect, Murakami's speech ascribes to Hannerz's idea of cosmopolitanism that entails "the ability to make one's way into other cultures" (2006: 13). Hannerz maintains that such an ability is "a resource for cosmopolitical commitments" (2006: 13), since culture and politics are interconnected fronts of cosmopolitanism. The Jerusalem speech forced Murakami to undertake the challenging task of addressing an international political conflict through a cultural context. This precipitated the manifestation of his cosmopolitan consciousness.

Murakami's official statement appeared in the monthly magazine *Bungei Shunju* (2009a: 4) in the form of an exclusive interview. The article included a full text of the acceptance speech in Japanese and English.⁹⁶ As the title "Boku wa naze Jerusalem he ittanoka" [Why I went to Jerusalem] suggests, in it Murakami offers an earnest and forthright account of his reasons for visiting Jerusalem and accepting the prize. It is

⁹⁶ Murakami delivered the speech in English in Jerusalem, but the original draft was written in Japanese and translated by Jay Rubin, the translator of a number of Murakami's novels.

notable that he repeatedly asserts that he attended the award ceremony “as a writer” thereby emphasising that he attended in an individual capacity and not to represent other interests. Since Murakami rarely makes public media appearances, his assertion that the primary purpose of his visit was to speak directly to his readers in Israel seemed reasonable. Nonetheless, this particular event was unusual for two reasons. First, although Murakami had given speeches before, including acceptance speeches for other international awards, this was the first time that he had publically stated his position on a political event as highly visible as the Gaza conflict. Second, Murakami gave a detailed account of the events leading up to his acceptance speech in Jerusalem and explained references made in his speech.

In order to understand the political circumstances at the time Murakami accepted the award in Jerusalem, it is useful to re-examine the timeline of events. According to Murakami, the secretariat contacted him on 25 November 2008 to ascertain that he intended to accept the award. Murakami professes that at first he hesitated and considered declining on the grounds that he believed that Israel’s policy of enclosing Palestinians in the West bank and Gaza was not right (2009a: 157). After discovering that past recipients of this award, such as Susan Sontag and Arthur Miller, had given speeches that were openly critical of Israel, he reconsidered. He thought that the occasion could provide a meaningful opportunity to speak to readers in Israel directly, provided that he could express himself freely, without any intervention. Murakami explains: “To decline the award is a negative message, but to speak at the award ceremony is a positive message. My style is to always choose the positive side as much as possible” (2009a: 157 trans. T.W.). Whether or not Murakami’s visit to Jerusalem gave a positive message is debatable since pro-Palestinian political activists were totally opposed to his participation in the prize-awarding ceremony.⁹⁷ He was

⁹⁷ A pro-Palestinian group, the Palestine Forum Japan, wrote an open letter asking Murakami to reconsider accepting the prize and participating in the book fair: “Please turn your attention to the Palestinians, who are being denied their freedom and dignity as human beings”. The letter continued: “We would humbly ask you to consider the effects your receipt of the Jerusalem prize would have, what sort of message the world would receive in this Middle East situation, what kind of propaganda value it could have to Israel and the possibility of aggravating the critical situation Palestinians are facing”. The Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel also appealed to Murakami not to accept the prize. (*The Guardian*, 16 February 2009)

acutely aware of the political situation; he decided to address a potential international dispute.

The bombing of Gaza began on 27 December 2008 and continued until the 17 January 2009 cease-fire declaration.⁹⁸ Four days later, on 21 January 2009, a major Israeli newspaper announced that Murakami was the recipient of the Jerusalem award. By this time, it had been reported that over 1,300 Palestinian lives had been lost as the result of the bombings. At this point, Murakami claims, he was writing his acceptance speech, and he thought that a writer could make a statement, whereas diplomats or politicians could not. He declares that if he had been asked to change any expression or reconsider his draft, he was prepared to renounce the award. As his speech draft was received without any complications, Murakami decided to attend the ceremony. He delivered the speech in the presence of President Shimon Peres, approximately seven hundred attendees, and broadcast viewers in a number of countries. Murakami explains that he found the timeline of events compelling and that he was fully aware of the situation when preparing for the award ceremony, and that at times he swayed. It appears that his determination to “make a statement” (2009a: 156) was formidable enough to repel warnings against going to Jerusalem. Much of the scrutiny of the media and political activists focused on Murakami’s appearance and delivery of the speech. The task of critically reviewing the contents of his speech remains.

In what follows, Murakami’s speech text and his account of the events surrounding his acceptance of the Jerusalem Award will be analysed as valuable material for understanding his personal principles and social standing. Two features of the speech underscore Murakami’s commitment to cosmopolitanism. The first is his effort to establish an autonomous standpoint that does not surrender to hegemonic collectivity endorsed by national or fundamentalism. As discussed in Chapter six, Murakami aspires to maintain individual autonomy, and for him, this endeavour is “a matter of will” (Strecher 2002). It is the will to establish a self-determined identity that does not

⁹⁸ According to sources (*The Observer*, 18 January, 2009; *The New York Times*, 17 January, 2009), this was without consensus and therefore one-sided.

submit to the ambiguous claims of Japanese cultural nationalism. This does not mean, however, that Murakami is an individualist who refutes solidarity or “belonging”. Rather, he demonstrates a disposition to engage with Others, a characteristic of the kind of inclusive openness promoted by cosmopolitanism (Hannerz 2006: 13). Murakami’s determination is underlined by his stance as a professional writer. He refers repeatedly to his occupation in the speech. He implies that a writer is not affiliated with any particular institution. At the same time, he seeks to fulfil the responsibility of a writer by delivering this speech. The second aspect is his implicit resistance to collectivism as a source for division or discrimination, implied by the analogy he makes between the wall and *The System*. His speech title, “Of Walls and Eggs”, alludes to these two metaphors: the “walls” signify the invisible *System* that divides us, and the “eggs” connote human beings’ extreme vulnerability.

Murakami’s cosmopolitan turn: to be engaged

Murakami’s cosmopolitanism is evident in his insistence that he belongs to the world as an *autonomous identity*, regardless of his national or ethnic affiliation. He emphasizes his profession from the beginning of his speech in order to establish himself as an autonomous individual without attachment to any institutions. He opens the speech by introducing himself as a *novelist* and uses the word “lies” to distinguish his position from that of politicians and diplomats, as follows:

I have come to Jerusalem today as a novelist, which is to say as a professional spinner of lies. Of course, novelists are not the only ones who tell lies. Politicians do it, too, as we all know. Diplomats and military men tell their own kinds of lies on occasion, as do used car salesmen, butchers and builders. The lies of novelists differ from others, however, in that no one criticizes the novelist as immoral for telling lies. Indeed, the bigger and better his lies and the more ingeniously he creates them, the more he is likely to be praised by the public and the critics. Why should that be?

In this opening paragraph, Murakami states his reason for coming to Jerusalem: to fulfill his responsibility as a professional writer. Due to the political conflict, the occasion became “a trial of conscience” for him (Rubin 2005: 339). It is therefore

suggestive of his strong commitment as a writer. As Uchida observes, Murakami's skill as a "craftsman of words" (2009: 140) is demonstrated in his bold assertion that he is "a professional spinner of lies" which deftly mixes humour and sincerity. This remarkable opening not only succeeded in capturing the attention of the audience, but in maintaining their interest until the latter half of his speech when he relayed his essential message (2009: 140). Uchida praises Murakami's skill in turning a literary award ceremony into an occasion to exhibit opposition to Israeli foreign policy.

In the interview, Murakami asserts that a writer may be able to make a statement, although diplomats or politicians may not (Murakami 2009a: 158). This demonstrates his ardent commitment to what he believes to be the writer's responsibilities. As mentioned earlier, hitherto Murakami had not been seen as a writer with a particular interest in social or political affairs. On the contrary, Japanese literary critics often criticised his "detachment" from society (Kuroko 2007a: 174-177). When Murakami began his career in the early 1980's, he was regarded as a member of a new generation of writers whose stories were characterized by their indifference to society. His works were deemed reflections of the anti-social sentiment of a generation that had experienced the failure of the students' movement of the 1970s. Since Murakami was a college student during that time, the protagonist exhibiting feelings of loss due to the futile results of the students' movement was viewed as a depiction of himself. At the same time, this aloofness was considered to be the crucial reason for his popularity amongst the young generation. Although his first novel *Kaze no uta o kike* [*Hear the wind song*] (1979) received the Gunzo Prize for young emerging writers, Murakami was not awarded major literary awards such as the Akutagawa Prize or the Naoki Prize (see Chapter six). One reason he was considered a popular writer rather than an author of serious literature was due to his perceived lack of social commitment.

Murakami's transition from social detachment to commitment took place during the 1990s.⁹⁹ He lived in the U.S. from 1991, and during this time he became aware of "his role as a Japanese novelist in the modern world" (Rubin 2003: 202). This was largely a result of his experience giving lectures at American universities and speaking directly to audiences; something he had done rarely in Japan. In a public lecture delivered at Berkeley in 1992, he began to talk about his responsibility as a Japanese writer in the following terms:

until I came to America, I had never spoken like this before an audience. I had always assumed that there was no need for me to do such a thing because my job is to write, not to speak. Since coming to live in America, however, I have gradually begun to feel that I wanted to speak to people. I have come to feel more strongly that I want the people of America – the people of the world – to know what I, as one Japanese writer, am thinking. This is an enormous change for me. (Murakami cited in Rubin 2003: 203)

Nejimakidori kuronikuru [*The wind-up bird chronicle*] (1994-95), written during his stay in the U.S., reflects this transition. This novel was also instrumental in changing his literary reputation in Japan.¹⁰⁰

Murakami's conscious decision to "become engaged" can be perceived as his cosmopolitan turn. Not only did Murakami's change of attitude occur as a result of living overseas, but, he clearly states in the cited lecture, from a desire to become engaged with "the people of the world" as an individual Japanese writer. This intention to connect to the world as an individual or a person is consistent with the notion of everyday cosmopolitanism. Furthermore, this is identical to the case of Noda Hideki (see Chapter three), whose stay in London inspired him to write something that only a Japanese playwright could write. Since both Murakami and Noda are writers,¹⁰¹ they also contribute to the development of literary public sphere in Japan. Noda challenges the "taboo" of Japanese society in terms of the ethno-centric cultural

⁹⁹ The transition from detachment to commitment was acknowledged in Murakami 1996. In a dialogue with psychologist Kawai, Murakami admits that his thinking has changed after living overseas and this is reflected in his works.

¹⁰⁰ The episode that Nobel laureate Oe Kenzaburo who was known to be critical of Murakami's works gave his blessing at the award ceremony of the Yomiuri Literature prize denotes such change (Rubin 2003: 235).

¹⁰¹ Noda not only writes plays, but also numerous essays and novels.

identity foundational to the myth of nation-building. In *Nejimakidori kuronikuru* Murakami contests the memory of the nation by depicting a controversial incident during the Pacific War. Similar to Noda's challenge to the implicit "violence" of the collective in *Togitatsu no Utare*,¹⁰² Murakami's document of the Sarin gas attacks in Tokyo probes the diminution of individualities. As this chapter will show, the publication of *Andagraundo* [*Underground*] (1997) exemplifies Murakami's social commitment in a number of ways. Murakami convinced the publisher to undertake it, for he strongly felt that such a significant incident should not be forgotten so quickly (1999: 55). He explains that upon his return to Japan in June 1995, he was shocked to find that public interest in both the earthquake and the Sarin subway attack that had taken place earlier that year was fading quickly (1999: 55).

The year 1995 was a critical year for Murakami, due to two catastrophes in Japan: the Great Hanshin Earthquake and the Sarin gas subway attacks. The Great Hanshin Earthquake took place on 17 January 1995. At a magnitude of 6.8, this earthquake was one of the worst in Japan in the twentieth century. Over 6,000 lives were lost and more than 43,000 were injured. The city of Kobe where Murakami was born and raised, was one of the most heavily affected areas, making this disaster particularly shocking for him. Two months later, in March, subways in Tokyo were simultaneously attacked with toxic Sarin gas. The Sarin gas attacks represent the first indiscriminate terrorist use of poisonous gas. Thirteen people were killed, dozens were severely injured and thousands of commuters were affected. Soon after his return to Japan Murakami set out to write a non-fictional account of the Sarin gas attacks. This resulted in the publication of two books controversial for both their style and content.

Andagraundo [*Underground*],¹⁰³ a collection of interviews of Sarin gas attack victims, was published in 1997. It was followed in 1999 by *Yakusoku sareta basho de: andaagraundo 2* [*The place that was promised: underground 2*], a collection of

¹⁰² This was an adaptation of the original Kabuki drama by Noda, staged in 2001.

¹⁰³ English translation published in 2001 by Vintage combines the two Japanese publications *Andagraundo* (1997) and *Yakusoku sareta basho de* (1998).

interviews of members of the Aum Shinrikyo, the cult religious group responsible for the subway attacks. Readers were surprised to find that Murakami had embarked upon non-fiction. Furthermore, they were astonished that he had interviewed not only the families and victims of the indiscriminate terrorism but also members of the cult group that had committed the crime. The first collection of interviews *Andaagraundo* (1997) consists in over sixty interviews with the victims and family members of the Sarin attack. The sequel *Yakusoku sareta basho de: andaagraundo 2*¹⁰⁴ covered the incident from the other side. Rubin observes that it was Murakami's attempt "to convey how little separates the sick world of Aum from the everyday world of ordinary Japanese" (2003: 239). He suggests that Murakami saw a structural resemblance between the Aum cult and war-time Japan which he represented in the novel *Nejimakidori kuronikuru* in an episode set in Manchuria. Rubin writes:

The individuality-crushing pressures of Japanese society can lead highly educated, ambitious, idealistic young people to abandon the places that have been promised them in search of worlds of unknown potential under misguided religious leaders. In a similar way, young members of the elite abandoned the positions offered them in pre-war Japanese society to join the government's misguided ventures in Manchuria in the name of utopian slogans that masked a bloody reality. The greatest distinction between victims and perpetrators is that the latter are desperate enough to try to do something about the emptiness that both feel. (2003: 239-240)

Rubin's observation that the Aum cult members and war-time Japanese military were young elites who "abandon[ed] the places that have been promised them" corresponds to the title of Murakami's second book on the Sarin gas incident, *Yakusoku sareta basho de* [*In the place that was promised*]. Murakami describes *Andaagraundo* and *Yakusokusareta basho de* as collections of personal stories, although technically they are categorised as non-fiction.

As mentioned above, readers received the two non-fiction works – *Andaagraundo* and *Yakusokusareta basho de: andaagraundo 2* – with surprise. Seasoned readers of Murakami were astonished by his venture into a new genre that appeared to be distant

¹⁰⁴ *Yakusoku sareta basho de* received the Takeo Kuwahara Literary Award.

from his characteristic story-making style of which they were fond. Although Murakami was known already for his non-novelistic writing, such as essays, short stories and translations of American novels, his decision to write about such a high-profile social crime was unexpected. In an essay on the objectives of non-fiction works, Matsuoka Naomi (2002) argues that Murakami wrote his first work of non-fiction in an effort to better understand contemporary Japanese society. In *Andaagraundo*, she holds, Murakami successfully showed how “the line dividing ‘us’ and ‘them’ in extremely confrontational situations begins to disappear” and “we are left facing our own inner darkness” (2002: 305). She explains that Murakami was not convinced by “the simple dichotomy of the ‘evil’ Aum Shinrikyo versus the ‘innocent’ victims, which the government, the police, and the media offered in explanation of the unprecedented act of terrorism” (2002: 306), and that he found the media coverage of the Aum cult frequently emotional and one-sided. Murakami interviewed the victims and later the Aum followers to seek the truth (2002: 306).

Murakami’s approach to representing the Sarin gas subway attack not only reflects his cosmopolitan commitment to create what Tomlinson calls “*no others*” (1999: 186), but also his contribution to the literary public sphere. Murakami offered an alternative perspective to the one-sided media reportage of the Aum cult and thereby significantly contributed to the public sphere. His cosmopolitan consciousness is evident in his focus on the individual and his effort to “engage” not only with the victims but the members of the cult group responsible for the indiscriminate attack upon commuters. By telling their stories from an egalitarian viewpoint, Murakami departs from the conventional, and often overly simplistic, dichotomy between “good” and “evil”. Rather than following the conventional media in “discriminat[ing] the harmful and unhealthy perpetrators [from] the sound and healthy victims” (Murakami 1998: 10 trans. T.W.), Murakami shows that the violence is not an isolated event but one deeply rooted in Japanese society.

In the preface of *Andaagraundo*, Murakami states that the victims of the Sarin gas attack suffered from a double violence: first, the unfortunate coincidence of being on the subway that was attacked; and second, the “social violence” that followed. He

calls it “social violence” to highlight the discrimination victims experienced after the event. He recalls that while reading a magazine:

one of the [readers’] letters caught my attention. It was from a woman whose husband had lost his job because of the Tokyo gas attack. A subway commuter, he had been unfortunate enough to be on his way to work in one of the carriages in which the sarin gas was released ... But even after several days’ recuperation, the after-effects lingered on, and he couldn’t get himself back into the working routine. At first, he was tolerated, but as time went on his boss and colleagues began to make snide remarks. Unable to bear the icy atmosphere any longer, feeling almost forced out he resigned. (2003: 3)

Here Murakami writes about his concern that the “them-and-us” attitude leads to “secondary victimization” (2003: 4). Such cases of “secondary victimization” are also associated with the Fukushima nuclear power accident where people evacuated from the radiated areas were refused at hotels in other cities (*Asahi Shimbun*, 19 March 2011). It is known that victims of the atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki also faced discrimination due to misunderstanding and heartless rumours about radiation. A number of journalists as well as human rights activists have appealed to the public not to repeat history and to protect Fukushima evacuees from such discrimination.¹⁰⁵

In *Yakusoku sareta basho de: andaagraundo 2* (1998), the sequel to *Andaagraundo*, Murakami interviews Aum Shinrikyo cult members. This controversial project risked giving the impression that Murakami was sympathetic to the cult group involved in the criminal act. Murakami explains, in the preface, that he published *Andaagraundo* in the first place, because he felt sincerely that the truth about the victims of the incident had not been portrayed in the very limited account of the incident offered in the media. He writes:

What I am trying to provide here is the same thing I hoped to convey in *Andaagraundo* – not one clear viewpoint, but flesh-and-blood material from which to construct *multiple* viewpoints which is the same goal I have in mind when I write novels. (2003: 215)

According to Matsuoka, *Yakusoku sareta basho de: andaagraundo 2* (1998) “reveals that the divide in Japanese society is not really between the evil Aum Cult and the innocent

¹⁰⁵ Collaborative Reference Database on this issue, viewed 23 July 2013, <http://crd.ndl.go.jp/reference/modules/d3ndlcrdentry/index.php?page=ref_view&id=1000116182>.

ordinary people, but rather between mainstream establishment and the suppressed masses” (Matsuoka 2002: 308). Whether Murakami deliberately aimed at portraying this divide is uncertain, but as stated in the above-mentioned preface, it was his intention to offer an alternative viewpoint. In this respect, Matsuoka’s explanation that Murakami presents the individual stories of the victims of the sarin gas attack as well as the followers of the Aum Shinrikyo cult “as a counterbalance to the stories by the government, the police, and the media” (2002: 305) is sufficient. In what follows, Murakami’s mission as a writer shall be further explored in relation to the Jerusalem Speech.

Like the publication of *Andaagraundo*, Murakami’s visit to Jerusalem was criticised and his motivation questioned (Tateno 2009; Sasaki 2009). As discussed, however, his decision to visit Jerusalem is understandable as manifestation of his cosmopolitan disposition to be engaged. Furthermore, by delivering the speech on site, his message reached many people including Israelis. Owing to the massive media coverage, many people in Japan were reminded of the conflict in Jerusalem. Murakami’s commitment to society, particularly to international society in this case, is demonstrated directly in his own words. In the passage following the opening of his speech, Murakami speaks of the responsibility of a writer, pointing out that by “making up fictions that appear to be true” “the novelist can bring a truth out to a new location and shine a new light on it”. Furthermore, he concludes decisively that before attempting this, writers “first have to clarify where the truth lies within us”. Murakami’s preparedness to question his own integrity clearly demonstrates his commitment to society as a writer.

In the following paragraphs, Murakami elucidates the purpose of his appearance in Jerusalem. He acknowledges that he was fully aware of the situation in Gaza, and that his associates and friends advised him not to go to Jerusalem. He also discloses that some people tried to intimidate him.

In Japan a fair number of people advised me not to come here to accept the Jerusalem Prize. Some even warned me they would instigate a boycott of my books if I came. The reason for this, of course, was the fierce battle that was raging in Gaza. The U.N. reported that more

than a thousand people had lost their lives in the blockaded Gaza City, many of them unarmed citizens – children and old people.

Any number of times after receiving notice of the award, I asked myself whether travelling to Israel at a time like this and accepting a literary prize was the proper thing to do, whether this would create the impression that I supported one side in the conflict, that I endorsed the policies of a nation that chose to unleash its overwhelming military power. This is an impression, of course, that I would not wish to give. I do not approve of any war, and I do not support any nation. Neither, of course, do I wish to see my books subjected to a boycott.

Here Murakami defends his individuality and self-esteem asserting that it is a novelist's nature to resist advice or instruction. In other words, Murakami considers it the novelist's role to see and feel for him/herself. He contends that "if writers always tell the right thing, then words will lose power and stories will die", explaining that his first objective was to appeal with his own words, rather than to try to mount a sound argument (Murakami 2009a: 158). As Murakami states, he could have chosen not to attend the award ceremony in Jerusalem or to decline the award, but he chose to assume his responsibility and fulfil his commitment by delivering the speech. As Pulvers points out, "It took personal courage on his part to denounce Israel's apartheid-like policies while there" (2009). Murakami himself admits that it was difficult to criticize the country that offered him the prize (2009a: 160-161). He insists, however, that it was his decision as a novelist to visit Jerusalem in order to engage with the people there, explaining that:

Novelists are a special breed. They cannot genuinely trust anything they have not seen with their own eyes or touched with their own hands.

And that is why I am here. I chose to come here rather than stay away. I chose to see for myself rather than not to see. I chose to speak to you rather than to say nothing.

Murakami had gained broad popularity overseas over the previous couple of decades, and his acceptance of the Jerusalem Prize was further confirmation of his international recognition. His assertion in the interview that he aimed to go to Jerusalem "without making noises and do whatever has to be done" (2009a: 158 trans. T.W.) corroborates his comments on the writer's obligation to embrace opportunities to communicate face-to-face with readers as much as possible (2009a: 160). Murakami's critics

challenge the integrity of this assertion. Tateno Masahiro questions Murakami's claim that the purpose of visiting Jerusalem was to deliver the speech because he wished to express his thoughts as a writer. Tateno accuses Murakami of consciously becoming an accomplice to a calculated deal, since he was highly aware of the political implications of the Jerusalem Award (2009: 211). It is Tateno's opinion that it would be very naïve of Murakami to claim to be ignorant of the political implications of the Award Ceremony (2009: 211). He argues that "There is little if any humane rage, anger, hatred nor declaration of resistance that is shared by a person who declares that he will always stand on the side of the egg" (2009: 212), although Murakami admits being aware that so many Palestinians were killed by the air raid by the time he wrote the speech text.

Tateno's critique is symptomatic of the general disapproval of the Japanese literati. Although Murakami shifted from detachment to commitment, his writings continued to be criticised as "short of sending alert signals to invoke resistance or to stimulate numb emotions, suspended thinking or buried consciousness" (Tateno 2009: 213 trans. T.W.). Such critique, however, overlooks Murakami's cosmopolitan values, the key reason for his popularity abroad.

Of Eggs and Walls

"Between a high, solid wall and an egg that breaks against it, I will always stand on the side of the egg". In this statement Murakami presents the metaphor of eggs and walls, and the central premise of his speech. He emphasises that he will stand with the egg "no matter how right the wall may be and how wrong the egg". Most of the press reporting Murakami's speech in Jerusalem cited this pivotal message. For example, Kyodo News, a Japanese international news agency reported the event under the headline "Haruki Murakami wins Jerusalem Prize, calls for end to conflict" (16 February 2009). Various accounts of the meaning and intent of the metaphor were offered, and some analysts proposed that Murakami was taking the political stand of

criticizing Israel's bombing of Gaza; they found support for this interpretation in Murakami's declaration that he would support the egg no matter "how wrong" it is.

In the interview article discussing the visit to Jerusalem, Murakami affirms that he thought carefully about how to communicate his criticism of the Israeli government, but insists that the purpose of his speech was to address his readers. He states that "As a writer, it has been my consistent theme to write about the relationship between the soul of every human being and the Establishment or the System" (2009a: 160 trans. T.W.). To emphasise his position, he introduced his central theme as a direct plea, as follows:

Please do allow me to deliver one very personal message. It is something that I always keep in mind while I am writing fiction. I have never gone so far as to write it on a piece of paper and paste it to the wall: rather, it is carved into the wall of my mind, and it goes something like this:

"Between a high, solid wall and an egg that breaks against it, I will always stand on the side of the egg."

Yes, no matter how right the wall may be and how wrong the egg, I will stand with the egg. Someone else will have to decide what is right and what is wrong; perhaps time or history will decide. If there were a novelist who, for whatever reason, wrote works standing with the wall, of what value would such works be?

The metaphor of the wall and egg stirred speculation over Murakami's intention. While it invoked the image of civilians victimized by bombs, it was not clear to which civilian victims he referred. Murakami coaxed his audience to take a further step, and to think beyond the physical wall that separates them. As though speaking to them directly from the podium, he asked:

What is the meaning of this metaphor? In some cases, it is all too simple and clear. Bombers and tanks and rockets and white phosphorus shells are that high, solid wall. The eggs are the unarmed civilians who are crushed and burned and shot by them. This is one meaning of the metaphor.

This is not all, though. It carries a deeper meaning. Think of it this way. Each of us is, more or less, an egg. Each of us is a unique, irreplaceable soul enclosed in a fragile shell.

This is true of me, and it is true of each of you. And each of us, to a greater or lesser degree, is confronting a high, solid wall. The wall has a name: it is “The System”. The System is supposed to protect us, but sometimes it takes on a life of its own, and then it begins to kill us and cause us to kill others – coldly, efficiently, systematically.

As Murakami elucidates, the metaphor of eggs and walls works on two levels. One relates directly to the imminent clash in Gaza. The metaphor of the wall alludes to militaristic weapons by which civilians as “eggs” are crushed. The second “deeper meaning” is a common theme of Murakami’s literary works. “The System” which corresponds to the wall signifies the power of evil that the protagonists of his novels challenge. In order to further understand the significance of these metaphors, the egg and the wall are analysed, respectively, below.

The metaphor of the wall and egg is relevant to understanding Murakami’s cosmopolitanism. Many suggest that the combination of the wall and egg invokes “Humpty Dumpty”, the traditional English nursery rhyme. Humpty Dumpty also appears in another classic work of English literature: Lewis Carroll’s *Through the looking glass* (1872). This reference complements the analogy further. *Through the looking glass* is a sequel to the popular *Alice’s adventures in wonderland* (1865); it contains the following dialogue between Humpty Dumpty and Alice on the subject of semantics (see Hancher 1981).

“When *I* use a word,” Humpty Dumpty said, in a rather a scornful tone, “it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less.”

“The question is,” said Alice, “whether you *can* make words mean so many different things.”

“The question is,” said Humpty Dumpty, “which is to be master—that’s all.” (Carroll 1872)

Considering the international recognition of “Humpty Dumpty”, it is plausible that Murakami had this popular nursery rhyme in mind when he used the metaphor of the eggs and walls. At the same time, the above mentioned conversation on the meaning of words seems to correlate with the opening part of the speech on truth and lies; where Murakami asserts that “by telling skilful lies ... the novelist can bring a truth out”. More importantly, this episode on Humpty Dumpty and Alice leads to another pertinent source for examination.

Paul Auster's novel *City of glass* (1987) is another possible influence on Murakami. Auster is a Jewish-American writer whose career was established through The New York Trilogy, a series of three novels: *City of glass*, *Ghosts* and *The locked room*. Auster's works are recognized for their focus on the issue of identity (Kimizuka 1992). They were translated into Japanese by Shibata Motoyuki, a scholar of contemporary American literature. Shibata also advises Murakami on his translation projects¹⁰⁶ and together they have co-authored two books on translation.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, in the essay collection *Yagate kanashiki gaikokugo* (1994), Murakami mentions meeting Paul Auster in person at a friend's party while he was living in the U.S..

In *City of glass*, Auster makes reference to the Humpty Dumpty episode in *Through the looking glass*. This particular citation throws light on Murakami's use of the analogy in his speech. Not only does Auster refer to Humpty Dumpty as "the egg", but also as "the purest embodiment of the human condition" and "a philosopher of language".

- The initials HD in the name Henry Dark refer to Humpty Dumpty.
- Who?
- Humpty Dumpty. You know who I mean. The egg.
- As in 'Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall?'
- Exactly.
- I don't understand.
- Humpty Dumpty: the purest embodiment of the human condition. ... More than that, he is a philosopher of language. "When I use a word, Humpty Dumpty said, in rather a scornful tone, it means just what I choose it to mean – neither more nor less. The question is, said Alice, whether you CAN make words mean so different things. The question is, said Humpty Dumpty, which is to be master – that's all".
- Lewis Carroll.
- *Through the Looking Glass*, chapter six.
- Interesting. (Auster 1987: 127)

¹⁰⁶ Murakami has translated and published over 30 books in Japan. He is the translator of contemporary American writers such as Raymond Carver, Truman Capote, F. Scott Fitzgerald and Raymond Chandler.

¹⁰⁷ *Honyaku yawa* (2000) and *Honyaku yawa 2* (2003) both from Bungei Shunjyusha, Tokyo.

The juxtaposition of Henry Dark with Humpty Dumpty suggests that names are meaningless for identifying a person. While using non-human characters for naming is a common method taken by Murakami, the significant question to ask here is “who we are”. This corresponds to Murakami’s call for a common understanding in humanity in his Jerusalem speech. Furthermore, the statement that “[Humpty Dumpty] is a philosopher of language” also describes the profession of a writer. Considering that Murakami’s speech in Jerusalem was expected to be scrutinized due to the political situation there, Humpty Dumpty’s contention “When I use a word ... it means just what I choose it to mean – neither more nor less” is suggestive of Murakami’s justification for delivering the speech.

Another phrase that echoes with Murakami’s speech is the protagonist’s assertion that “all men are eggs” because human beings are forms of potential that have not achieved their destiny. Auster describes man as “a fallen creature”, and compares helping put Humpty Dumpty back together again to helping ourselves: “It is our duty as human being: to put the egg together again. For each of us, sir, is Humpty Dumpty”. The passage continues as follows:

- It is more than interesting, sir. It’s crucial. Listen carefully, and perhaps you will learn something. In his little speech to Alice, Humpty Dumpty sketches the future of human hopes and gives the clue to our salvation: to become master of the words we speak, to make language answer our needs. Humpty Dumpty was a prophet, a man who spoke truths the world was not ready for.

- A man?

- Excuse me. A slip of tongue. I mean an egg. But the slip is instructive and helps to prove my point. For all men are eggs, in a manner of speaking. We exist, but we have not yet achieved the form that is our destiny. We are pure potential, an example of the not yet arrived. For man is a fallen creature – we know that from Genesis. Humpty Dumpty is also a fallen creature. He falls from his wall, and no one can put him back together again – neither the king, nor his horses, nor his men. But that is what we must all now strive to do. It is our duty as human beings: to put the egg back together again. For each of us, sir, is Humpty Dumpty. And to help him is to help ourselves. (Auster 1987: 127-128)

This paragraph resonates both with Murakami's metaphor of the egg as vulnerable human being, and his assertion that we must stand up to the wall or *The System*. Furthermore, it emphasizes the power of words by asserting that "Humpty Dumpty sketches the future of human hopes and gives the clue to our salvation: to become master of the words we speak, to make language answer our needs" (Auster 1987: 128). Such deliberation over the power of language corroborates Murakami's justification for coming to Jerusalem simply as a writer. In the line that follows Auster describes Humpty Dumpty as "a man who spoke truths the world was not ready for" (1987: 128), in other words as a prophet. This conclusion seems to address the circumstances Murakami faced in delivering a speech in a highly controversial and contested context. Using the analogy of the egg and the wall, Murakami signals his belief in the power of words and the profession of the novelist.

Murakami defends his profession as a writer as follows:

I have only one reason to write novels, and that is to bring the dignity of the individual soul to the surface and shine a light upon it. The purpose of a story is to sound an alarm, to keep a light trained on The System in order to prevent it from tangling our souls in its web and demeaning them. I fully believe it is the novelist's job to keep trying to clarify the uniqueness of each individual soul by writing stories – stories of life and death, stories of love, stories that make people cry and quake with fear and shake with laughter. This is why we go on, day after day, concocting fictions with utter seriousness.

Murakami had never described his standpoint as a novelist and explained his reason for writing fiction so transparently before. A number of critics support Murakami's claims and observe that such posture contributes to his global popularity. For example, Shimizu Yoshinori (2009: 143) maintains that Murakami's preparedness to pursue universal themes of humanity demonstrates his quality as a writer of world literature. Uchida (2009) interprets Murakami's metaphor of the egg as a reference to the vulnerability of the human being. According to Uchida, characters in Murakami's stories exhibit such weakness and have the tendency to end their lives or disappear when they reach their limit: Naoko in *Norwegian wood* and the young protagonist in *Kafka on the shore*, for example, exemplify this. Therefore, Uchida contends, depicting vulnerability or weakness at the core of human tragedy is essential to

Murakami's work (2009: 141). As much as the analogy of the egg is consistent with Murakami's ethos as a writer, the analogy of the wall is also relevant for him.

The term *The System* is not unfamiliar to Murakami's readers. It recurs in his fiction and interviews. His Jerusalem speech, however, was possibly the first time he had offered a comprehensive explanation of it. In the speech, Murakami remarks that "The wall has a name: it is *The System*". Furthermore, he explains, although *The System* may appear to defend us, it can impose upon us against our wills at the same time. He states that "*The System* is supposed to protect us, but sometimes it takes on a life of its own, and then it begins to kill us and cause us to kill others – coldly, efficiently, systematically". In a speech delivered amid the conflict in Gaza, this statement makes a clear reference to the warfare and violence caused by national confrontations.

Murakami maintains, however, that *The System* encompasses a variety of meanings. It is neither a direct reference to the nation-state system nor to the religious beliefs entwined with issues of national borders. He observes that as far as the conflict in Palestine is concerned, the most contentious issue is the confrontation between Zionism and Islamic fundamentalism to which he refers in the interview as "the intensity of these two 'moments'" (2009a: 166 trans. T.W.). He contends that although the two "moments" of fundamentalism are not directly responsible, their confrontation and ensuing victimisation of citizens exemplifies the structural scheme of *The System*. Hence, he warns of the danger of entrusting *The System*, particularly since it appears easier to submit rather than oppose it. He fears that once people submit to orders from above they abandon thinking for themselves and in so doing "They are transferring their soul to *The System*" (2009a: 166 trans. T.W.).

Murakami finds the problem with trusting *The System* reminiscent of Japan during World War II. As discussed, the Japanese people were subject to militaristic imperialism and collectivism during the war. As the writer Oe Kenzaburo recalls of his boyhood, it was not admissible for people to question the war or the symbolic rule of the Emperor. Oe describes being beaten by his headmaster every day for questioning the practice of worshiping the Emperor's photograph (Kuroko 2003: 35-36).

The totalitarian undercurrent that controlled the people at the time is comparable to the situation in Gaza, since in both moments in time *The System* took precedence over the people, and the people's lives were threatened and sacrificed. Murakami's wall and egg analogy alludes to such framework that exists between *The System* and the individual human being.

This may explain why in the Jerusalem speech Murakami told a story about his father who had participated in the war. He recalled:

My father died last year at the age of ninety. He was a retired teacher and a part-time Buddhist priest. When he was in graduate school, he was drafted into the army and sent to fight in China. As a child born after the war, I used to see him every morning before breakfast offering up long, deeply-felt prayers at the Buddhist altar in our house. One time I asked him why he did this, and he told me he was praying for the people who had died in the battlefield. He was praying for all the people who died, he said, both ally and enemy alike. Staring at his back as he knelt at the altar, I seemed to feel the shadow of death hovering around him.

My father died, and with him he took his memories, memories that I can never know. But the presence of death that lurked about him remains in my own memory. It is one of the few things I carry on from him, and one of the most important.

This was the first time Murakami had talked about his father in public (Uchida 2010: 50). Murakami's cosmopolitan consciousness is evident in the justification he gives for speaking about his father on this occasion. In the magazine article, he states that prior to World War II, Japan was under the influence of *The System*, that is, the Emperor system and militarism. Murakami reminds his audience that during the war many Japanese people lost their lives and many people in Asia were killed. This is a burden the Japanese people carry to this day. These are the terms in which he decided to speak as a Japanese person in Israel (2009a: 166). When Murakami claims that "we are all eggs" he alerts people to the way that the "wall" or *System* propels the "eggs" to kill each other.

As stated, Murakami views the Palestinian issue as a confrontation between Zionism and Islamic fundamentalism. Moreover, he suggests that there is a resemblance

between this confrontation and the 1995 Sarin gas attacks perpetrated by the Aum Shinrikyo cult. Nonetheless, Murakami argues that the members of the Aum cult may be “victims of fundamentalism” (2009a: 168) at the same time. He blames *The System* for what happened and describes the cult followers who carried out the crime as “eggs” controlled by *The System*. In Murakami’s eyes, these accused criminals surrendered themselves to the Guru and lived inside walls that completely isolated them from the real world. By the time the culprits were handed bags containing Sarin and ordered to pierce them in the subways to release the toxic gas, they were unable to escape the psychological wall that surrounded them (2009a: 168).

While *The System* describes the powers that cause war, Murakami’s primary concern is how vulnerable human beings allow this structural scheme to exploit their weakness. Murakami’s analogy refers to a number of walls: the physical wall in the city of Jerusalem, the wall from which Humpty Dumpty fell, national borders that divide a nation such as the Berlin Wall, and the walls built in people’s minds. Murakami’s vital message warns mankind not to create such walls. He appeals: “We must not allow *The System* to exploit us. We must not allow *The System* to take on a life of its own. *The System* did not make us; we made *The System*”. Therefore, the critical issue is not *The System*, but *how* it is sustained. As discussed in Chapter one, the ideology of nationalism discriminates against the Other; in order to solidify the nation-building process of integration. Murakami’s cosmopolitanism opposes such ideas and aims to transcend borders between “us” and “them”, the walls created in people’s minds. In the final paragraph of his speech, he states:

I have only one thing I hope to convey to you today. We are all human beings, individuals transcending nationality and race and religion, fragile eggs faced with a solid wall called The System. To all appearances, we have no hope of winning. The wall is too high, too strong – and too cold. If we have any hope of victory at all, it will have to come from our believing in the utter uniqueness and irreplaceability of our own and others’ souls and from the warmth we gain by joining souls together.

Take a moment to think about this. Each of us possesses a tangible, living soul. The System has no such thing. We must not allow The System to exploit us. We must not

allow The System to take on a life of its own. The System did not make us; we made The System.

That is all I have to say to you.

Since the Barcelona speech in 2011, Murakami has responded to some major affairs both in Japan and overseas, thereby manifesting his cosmopolitan commitment as a “citizen of the world”. He contributed a front-page opinion piece to *Asahi Shimbun* on 28 September 2012, concerning the territorial dispute between Japan and China over the Senkaku islands (known as the Diaoyu in China). Murakami accused “both countries of inflaming the situation by using nationalist rhetoric” and called on both countries to “wean themselves off the ‘cheap alcohol’ of nationalism” (Murakami cited in McCurry 2012). Murakami contributed an essay entitled “Boston, from One Citizen of the World Who Calls Himself a Runner” to *The New Yorker* magazine (2013) following the Boston marathon explosion on 15 April 2013.

When Kawabata Yasunari received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1968, Japan was showing a successful recovery from the defeat of World War II. In 1964, the Tokyo Olympic Games was held followed by the Japan World Exposition in Osaka in 1970. Japan’s GNP (Gross National Product) was ranked the second in the world by 1969. The Award Ceremony speech presenting Kawabata describes, “in the postwar wave of violent Americanization, his novel is a gentle reminder of the necessity of trying to save something of the old Japan’s beauty” (Nobel Prize 2013a). According to the *Nihonjinron* trajectory (see Nishikawa 1995; Minami 2006), it was a period of turning towards Japanization. Hence, Kawabata’s Nobel Lecture entitled “Japan, the beautiful and myself” is listed as a *Nihonjinron* text. Twenty-six years later when Oe Kenzaburo became the Nobel laureate in 1994, he replaced the word “beautiful” with “ambiguity” for his Nobel lecture, thus entitled “Japan, the ambiguous, and myself”. In the speech, Oe professed that “after one hundred and twenty years of modernization since the opening of the country, present-day Japan is split between two poles of ambiguity” (Nobel Prize 2013b). *Nihonjinron* defines this time as a period of internationalization (Nishikawa 1995). While Oe confronted the Japaneseness demonstrated by Kawabata and sought mentorship from the West, as a contemporary

Japanese writer, Murakami, remains impartial regarding both the struggle with the West and the Japaneseness discourse.

The cosmopolitan imaginary embodied by Murakami may suggest a new Japanese cultural identity that is unbound.

Appendix - 1: The Jerusalem Speech in full text

(Translated by Jay Rubin)

Of Walls and Eggs

I have come to Jerusalem today as a novelist, which is to say as a professional spinner of lies.

Of course, novelists are not the only ones who tell lies. Politicians do it, too, as we all know. Diplomats and military men tell their own kinds of lies on occasion, as do used car salesmen, butchers and builders. The lies of novelists differ from others, however, in that no one criticizes the novelist as immoral for telling lies. Indeed, the bigger and better his lies and the more ingeniously he creates them, the more he is likely to be praised by the public and the critics. Why should that be?

My answer would be this: namely, that by telling skilful lies – which is to say, by making up fictions that appear to be true – the novelist can bring a truth out to a new location and shine a new light on it. In most cases, it is virtually impossible to grasp a truth in its original form and depict it accurately. This is why we try to grab its tail by luring the truth from its hiding place, transferring it to a fictional location, and replacing it with a fictional form. In order to accomplish this, however, we first have to clarify where the truth lies within us. This is an important qualification for making up good lies.

Today, however, I have no intention of lying. I will try to be as honest as I can. There are a few days in the year when I do not engage in telling lies, and today happens to be one of them.

So let me tell you the truth. In Japan a fair number of people advised me not to come here to accept the Jerusalem Prize. Some even warned me they would instigate a boycott of my books if I came. The reason for this, of course, was the fierce battle that was raging in Gaza. The U.N. reported that more than a thousand people had lost their lives in the blockaded Gaza City, many of them unarmed citizens – children and old people.

Any number of times after receiving notice of the award, I asked myself whether travelling to Israel at a time like this and accepting a literary prize was the proper thing to do, whether this would create the impression that I supported one side in the conflict, that I endorsed the policies of a nation that chose to unleash its overwhelming military power. This is an impression, of course, that I would not wish to give. I do not approve of any war, and I do not support any nation. Neither, of course, do I wish to see my books subjected to a boycott.

Finally, however, after careful consideration, I made up my mind to come here. One reason for my decision was that all too many people advised me not to do it. Perhaps, like many other novelists, I tend to do the exact opposite of what I am told. If people are telling me – and especially if they are warning me – ‘Don’t go there,’ ‘Don’t do that,’ I tend to want to ‘go there’ and ‘do that’. It’s in my nature, you might say, as a novelist. Novelists are a

special breed. They cannot genuinely trust anything they have not seen with their own eyes or touched with their own hands.

And that is why I am here. I chose to come here rather than stay away. I chose to see for myself rather than not to see. I chose to speak to you rather than to say nothing.

Please do allow me to deliver one very personal message. It is something that I always keep in mind while I am writing fiction. I have never gone so far as to write it on a piece of paper and paste it to the wall: rather, it is carved into the wall of my mind, and it goes something like this:

‘Between a high, solid wall and an egg that breaks against it, I will always stand on the side of the egg.’

Yes, no matter how right the wall may be and how wrong the egg, I will stand with the egg. Someone else will have to decide what is right and what is wrong; perhaps time or history will decide. If there were a novelist who, for whatever reason, wrote works standing with the wall, of what value would such works be?

What is the meaning of this metaphor? In some cases, it is all too simple and clear. Bombers and tanks and rockets and white phosphorus shells are that high, solid wall. The eggs are the unarmed civilians who are crushed and burned and shot by them. This is one meaning of the metaphor.

This is not all, though. It carries a deeper meaning. Think of it this way. Each of us is, more or less, an egg. Each of us is a unique, irreplaceable soul enclosed in a fragile shell. This is true of me, and it is true of each of you. And each of us, to a greater or lesser degree, is confronting a high, solid wall. The wall has a name: it is ‘The System’. The System is supposed to protect us, but sometimes it takes on a life of its own, and then it begins to kill us and cause us to kill others – coldly, efficiently, systematically.

I have only one reason to write novels, and that is to bring the dignity of the individual soul to the surface and shine a light upon it. The purpose of a story is to sound an alarm, to keep a light trained on The System in order to prevent it from tangling our souls in its web and demeaning them. I fully believe it is the novelist’s job to keep trying to clarify the uniqueness of each individual soul by writing stories – stories of life and death, stories of love, stories that make people cry and quake with fear and shake with laughter. This is why we go on, day after day, concocting fictions with utter seriousness.

My father died last year at the age of ninety. He was a retired teacher and a part-time Buddhist priest. When he was in graduate school, he was drafted into the army and sent to fight in China. As a child born after the war, I used to see him every morning before breakfast offering up long, deeply-felt prayers at the Buddhist altar in our house. One time I asked him why he did this, and he told me he was praying for the people who had died in the battlefield. He was praying for all the people who died, he said, both ally and enemy alike. Staring at his back as he knelt at the altar, I seemed to feel the shadow of death hovering around him.

My father died, and with him he took his memories, memories that I can never know. But the presence of death that lurked about him remains in my own memory. It is one of the few things I carry on from him, and one of the most important.

I have only one thing I hope to convey to you today. We are all human beings, individuals transcending nationality and race and religion, fragile eggs faced with a solid wall called The System. To all appearances, we have no hope of winning. The wall is too high, too strong – and too cold. If we have any hope of victory at all, it will have to come from our believing in the utter uniqueness and irreplaceability of our own and others' souls and from the warmth we gain by joining souls together.

Take a moment to think about this. Each of us possesses a tangible, living soul. The System has no such thing. We must not allow The System to exploit us. We must not allow The System to take on a life of its own. The System did not make us; we made The System.

That is all I have to say to you.

I am grateful to have been awarded the Jerusalem prize. I am grateful that my books are being read by people in many parts of the world. I would like to express my gratitude to the readers in Israel. You are the biggest reason why I am here. I hope we are sharing something – something very meaningful. And I am glad to have had the opportunity to speak to you here today.

Appendix - 2: The Barcelona Speech in full text

(Translated by Emanuel Pastreich)

Speaking as an Unrealistic Dreamer

I last visited Barcelona two years ago in the spring. An amazing number of readers gathered when I held a book signing. Long lines formed and I still could not finish signing all the books even after one and a half hours. The reason it took so long is that so many of the female readers wanted to kiss me. That was time consuming.

I have held book signings in many cities around the world, but Barcelona was the only place in the world where the female readers asked for kisses. That one example is sufficient evidence of just what a fantastic city Barcelona is. And what good fortune it is that I have another chance to return to this city whose beautiful streets are resplendent with refined culture and a long history.

But, unfortunately, I am not going to talk about kisses today. I must talk about something a bit more serious.

As you well know, on March 11 at 2:46 PM a tremendous earthquake shook the Tohoku region of Northeast Japan. So great was the earthquake that the rotation of the earth was slightly accelerated, and the day shortened by 1.8 millionths of a second.

The damage caused by the earthquake was tremendous. The tsunami that followed left its deep and terrible talon marks on the earth. In some places, the tsunami reached a height of thirty-nine meters. Even if you run to the top of a ten-story building you will not be safe if a tsunami reaches thirty-nine meters. People near the ocean had no way to escape, so close to 24,000 people lost their lives. Out of that number, almost nine thousand remain unaccounted for. They were carried off by that tremendous wave that swept over the dikes. Their bodies were never recovered. Probably most of those bodies have sunk to the floor of the cold sea.

When I think about it, imaging myself as someone facing that tsunami, it wrings my heart. Most of those who survived the tsunami still lost family members and friends, home and property. They lost their communities and they lost the foundations for their lives and livelihoods. Some villages were reduced to ghost towns. There are many people from whom the very hope that inspires life has been torn away.

To be Japanese means, in a certain sense, to live alongside a variety of natural catastrophes. Much of Japan lies on the route of typhoons from the summer through the fall. Every year, inevitably, those typhoons cause terrible tragedy and many lives are lost. There are active volcanoes scattered across the archipelago, and then there are the earthquakes. The Japanese archipelago finds itself situated in a corner to the East of the Asian continent, riding atop four enormous tectonic plates. The location is precarious. We pass our days, as it were, atop a nest of earthquakes.

The season for typhoon is known and to some degree their trajectories can be predicted. But earthquakes cannot be predicted. The only thing of which we can be sure is that this recent earthquake is not the last; another great earthquake will follow, without fail, in the near future. Many scientists predict that in the next twenty to thirty years an earthquake with a magnitude of eight or more will strike the Tokyo metropolitan region. That earthquake might come in ten years, or it might come tomorrow afternoon. If an earthquake of that magnitude were to occur with its epicenter directly under a dense metropolis like Tokyo, nobody really knows how much damage it would cause.

Nevertheless, in the city of Tokyo alone, thirteen million people are living “normal” lives today. Those people continue to ride packed subway cars to the office and they continue to work high up in tall buildings. I have not heard any indications of a decrease in the population of Tokyo since the Tohoku earthquake.

“Why is that?” you might ask. “Why do so many people think it so natural to live in such a terrifying place? How can they keep from going out of their minds with fear?”

There is an expression in Japanese, “mujō.” Mujō means that there is no steady state that will continue forever in life. All things that inhabit this world will pass away; all things continue to change without end. We cannot find permanent stability. We cannot find anything to rely on that will not change or decay. Although mujō finds its roots in Buddhism, the concept of mujō has taken on a significance beyond its original religious sense. This concept of mujō has been seared deeply into the Japanese spirit, forming a national mindset that has continued on almost without change since ancient times.

The mujō perspective that all things must pass away can be understood as a resigned worldview. From such a perspective, even if humans struggle against the natural flow, that effort will be in vain in the end. But even in the midst of such resignation, the Japanese are able to actively discover sources of true beauty.

In the case of nature, for example, we take pleasure from cherry blossoms in spring, from the fireflies in summer and from the crimson foliage in autumn. We do so as a group and we do so as a matter of custom. We enthusiastically enjoy such fleeting seasonal moments, as if the pleasures they offered admitted of no further explanation. The places in Japan famous for cherry blossoms, or fireflies, or autumn foliage, are crowded with people when their season comes. Hotel reservations can be quite difficult to obtain.

Why is that?

Because cherry blossoms, fireflies and autumn foliage all lose their exquisite beauty in a very short span of time. We travel far to witness that moment of the natural phenomenon in its full glory. Yet it is not merely a matter of observing a beautiful locale. Before our eyes, evanescent cherry blossoms scatter, the fireflies’ will-o’-the-wisp vanishes, and the bright autumn leaves are snatched away. We recognize these events and we find in these changes a certain relief. Oddly, it brings us a certain peace of mind that the height of beauty passes and fades away.

Whether or not that spiritual perspective has been influenced by those natural catastrophes of Japan is beyond my understanding. Nevertheless, we have overcome wave upon wave of natural disasters in Japan and we have come to accept them as “unavoidable things” (shigata ga nai mono¹⁰⁸). We have overcome those catastrophes as a group and it is clear we have carried on in our lives. Perhaps those experiences have influenced our aesthetic sensibility.

The recent earthquake came as a tremendous shock for almost all Japanese. Even we Japanese who are so accustomed to earthquakes were completely overwhelmed by the sheer scale of the damage. Gripped by a sense of powerlessness, we feel uncertainty about the future of our country.

But, in time, we will pull ourselves together mentally and devote ourselves to the task of reconstruction. I am not that concerned about that point. We are a nation that has survived a long history of such disasters. We will not continue to be stunned by the blow forever. The damaged homes will be rebuilt and the damaged roads will be repaired.

Ultimately, we have appropriated this planet called earth for ourselves. It's not as if the earth came up and asked us, “Please come live here.” Just because the ground shakes a bit is not a reason to complain. After all, such is the nature of the earth that it shakes from time to time. We have no choice but to live together with nature, whether we like it or not.

What I want to touch on here is not buildings or roads, but rather those things that cannot be so easily repaired. What I mean by that is things like morality, or ethical standards. Those are things that do not have tangible forms. It is not so easy to restore them to their original state if they are damaged. These are things that cannot be just put together if machinery is provided, materials supplied, and workers recruited.

To be more specific, I am referring to the nuclear power plant at Fukushima.

As all of you are no doubt aware, out of the six nuclear power reactors in Fukushima damaged by the earthquake and tsunami, at least three have yet to be repaired and are spewing radiation into the area. Meltdowns have occurred and the surrounding soil has been contaminated. Most likely, highly radioactive waste water is flowing out into the surrounding ocean. In turn, the winds are pushing that radiation out over a wide area.

One hundred thousand people who inhabit the vicinity of the nuclear power plant have been forced to leave their land. Fields and rice paddies, factories, shopping districts and harbors, have been left deserted. The people who lived there may never be able to return to their homes. And the damage from this accident may not be limited to Japan. It is with great regret that I say this, but the impact of the accident will probably extend to neighboring nations.

¹⁰⁸ In the original text in Japanese, this is expressed “shikata nai mono”. Shikata-nai being the correct pronunciation. The meaning does not change.

What was it that brought about such a tragic chain of events? The cause is clear. The individuals who designed that nuclear power plant did not take into account the possibility that a tsunami of that magnitude would hit the plant. Some experts pointed out that tsunamis of that size had hit the coast previously and demanded a revision of the safety standards for the plant. But the electric company did not take such suggestions seriously. Why? Because investing considerable funds to prepare for a tsunami that might or might not come once in a hundred years was not a welcome proposition for a company run for profit.

And the government, which should have strictly enforced safety precautions for nuclear power plants, was so busy pushing its nuclear power policies that it seems to have lowered its own safety standards.

We must investigate what happened and if there have been mistakes, we must make them public. Those mistakes have forced over one hundred thousand people from their land and left them to rebuild their lives. We ought to be outraged. Naturally we ought to be.

For some reason, the Japanese are a people who tend not to get angry easily. We are good at enduring things, but not very talented when it comes to letting our emotions pour out. That aspect of the Japanese is perhaps a bit different from what we see in the people of Barcelona. But this time, indeed, the citizens of Japan will become really angry.

But at the same time, we Japanese are the ones who allowed such a distorted system to operate until now. Maybe we will have to take ourselves to task for tacitly permitting such behavior. This state of affairs is closely linked to our own sense of morals and our personal standards.

As you know, the Japanese people are the only people in history to experience the blast of an atomic bomb. In August of 1945, atomic bombs were dropped on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki from United States bombers. Over two hundred thousand people lost their lives. Almost all the dead were unarmed civilians. But my purpose today is not to debate the pros and cons of those acts.

What I want to talk about is not only the deaths of those two hundred thousand people who died immediately after the bombing, but also the deaths over a period of time of the many who survived the bombings, those who suffered from illnesses caused by exposure to radiation. We have learned from the sacrifices of those people how destructive a nuclear weapon can be, and how deep the scars are that radiation leaves behind in this world, in the bodies of people.

The way taken by Japan in the postwar period has two primary roots: the pursuit of economic development and the renunciation of war. Japan followed two new guiding principles after World War Two: never to take military action, no matter what the situation, and to pursue economic prosperity—and also to wish for peace.

There is a monument set up to pacify the spirits of those who lost their lives to the atomic bomb at Hiroshima. These are the words engraved there:

“Please rest in peace. We will not repeat this mistake.”

What remarkable words they are! At the same time that we are victims, we are also perpetrators. That is the nuance of those words. Faced with the overwhelming power of the atom, we are all, all of us, victims, and at the same time, we are all perpetrators. In that we are threatened by the power of the atom, we are all victims. At the same time, in that we are the ones who uncovered the power of the atom, and we have failed to stop the use of that power, we are all perpetrators as well.

And now, today, sixty-six years after the dropping of the atomic bombs, the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant has been spewing out radiation continuously for three months, polluting the ground, the ocean and the atmosphere around the plant. And no one knows when and how this spewing of radiation will be stopped. This is a historic experience for us Japanese: our second massive nuclear disaster.

But this time no one dropped a bomb on us. We set the stage, we committed the crime with our own hands, we are destroying our own lands, and we are destroying our own lives.

How could something like this happen? That strong rejection of nuclear technology that we embraced for so many years after the war...where did it go? What was it that so completely undermined and distorted the peaceful and prosperous society that previously we had sought for so consistently?

The cause is simple: “efficiency.”

The nuclear reactor is a highly efficient system for generating electricity according to the arguments of the electric power company. That is to say, it is a system efficient for increasing profits. The Japanese government started to doubt the stability of petroleum supplies, especially after the 1973 “oil shock,” and pushed the generation of electricity by nuclear power as national policy. Electric companies poured immense amounts of money into advertising, buying up the media and planting the illusion in the minds of the people that nuclear power is safe in every respect.

And then, before we knew it, about thirty percent of Japan’s electricity was being generated by nuclear power plants. Before the people could grasp what was going on, this narrow archipelago frequented by earthquakes was third in the world in the consumption of electricity from nuclear power.

And now we find ourselves with no way to go back. A *fait accompli* has been achieved. And those who harbor fears about nuclear power receive responses like, “Well then, it wouldn’t bother you if you if you don’t have enough electricity”—responses that sound rather like threats. And a general resignation has spread among citizens, a feeling that there’s not much you can do about the dependency on nuclear power since to go without air conditioning during the hot and humid Japanese summers would be torture. The label of “unrealistic dreamer” has been slapped on anyone who expresses reservations about nuclear power.

And so we have carried on to the present day. And now, the supposedly “highly efficient” nuclear reactor has opened the gates of hell before us. Such is the lamentable state we have fallen into. That is the reality.

The “reality” which the promoters of nuclear power referred to when they called on us to “face reality” was, in fact, not reality at all. It was nothing more than skin-deep “convenience.” When they made that “convenience” into a “reality” through a play of words, they were using a rhetorical sleight of hand.

This state of affairs represents both the collapse of a myth, the belief in the power of technology that has been a source of pride to the Japanese for so many years, and the failure of our morals and our ethical standards. We were the ones who permitted such a sleight of hand. Of course we criticize the government and the electric company. That is natural and it is also necessary. But at the same time there is something we must report about our actions. While we are the victims, we are also the perpetrators. We must fix our eyes on this fact. If we fail to do so, we will inevitably repeat the same mistake again, somewhere else.

“Please rest in peace. We will not repeat this mistake.”

Once more we must make sure that those words are engraved in our hearts.

Dr. Robert Oppenheimer was the central figure in the development of the atomic bomb during the Second World War. But when Oppenheimer learned of the horrific results of those nuclear bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, he was deeply disturbed. Reportedly he turned to President Truman and said,

“Mr. President, I feel I have blood on my hands.”

President Truman took from his pocket a neatly folded white handkerchief, remarking, “Well here, would you like to wipe your hands?”

Needless to say, you cannot find a spotless handkerchief large enough to wipe away that much blood anywhere in the world.

We Japanese should have continued to shout “no” to the atom. That is my personal opinion. We should have combined all our technological expertise, massed all our wisdom and know-how, and invested all our social capital to develop effective energy sources to replace nuclear power, pursuing that effort at the national level. Even if the international community had mocked us, saying, “There is no energy source as efficient as nuclear power. These Japanese who do not use it are idiots,” we should have maintained, without compromise, our aversion for things nuclear that was planted in us by the experience of nuclear war. The development of non-nuclear energy sources should have been the primary direction for Japan in the post-war period.

Such a response should have been our way of taking collective responsibility for the many victims who perished at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. We needed a substantial moral foundation of just that kind, just such an ethical standard, precisely that sort of a social message. That could have been a tremendous opportunity for us truly to contribute, as Japanese, to the world. But as we rushed down the path of economic development, we were swayed by that simple standard of “efficiency.” We lost sight of that important alternative course that lay before us.

As I mentioned before, no matter how terrible and serious the situation is, we can overcome the sufferings of natural calamities and continue on our way. And by overcoming calamities, we become stronger spiritually and our understanding is deepened. We will manage, one way or another, to achieve that goal.

The work of repairing damaged roads and rebuilding houses is the dominion of the appropriate experts. But when it comes to rebuilding damaged morals and ethical standards, the responsibility falls on all our shoulders. We will begin the task because of such natural feelings as mourning the dead, thinking of those who suffer from the disaster, and wishing that the pains and wounds with which they were afflicted will not have been in vain. We mourn the loss of the dead and we feel compassion for those who suffer this disaster. Naturally, not wanting the suffering and wounds to have been in vain, we should take up the task at hand. That task will be unassuming and will not draw attention. It will be a labor that demands patience and endurance. Just as in the morning on a sunny spring day the people of the village gather together, head out to the rice paddies, till the earth and sow seeds, so we must combine our efforts to carry out this duty. Each individual will carry on in his or her own way, but the effort should be of one mind.

In this great collective effort, there should be a space where those of us who specialize in words, professional writers, can be positively involved. We should weave together with words new morals and new ethical standards. We should plant vibrant new stories and make them sprout and flourish. Those stories will become our shared story. Like the songs that are sung when sowing the fields, our stories should have rhythms that encourage the people as they carry out their work. Professional writers took up that role in the past. We supported the rebuilding of Japan after it was reduced to scorched earth by war. We must return to that starting point again.

As I mentioned earlier, we live in the fleeting and insubstantial world of “mujō.” This life into which we are born slips by, and soon, without exception, fades away. Faced with the overwhelming power of nature, humans are helpless. Awareness of the insubstantiality of experience is one of the core ideas of Japanese culture. But at the same time, we also have within all of us a positive mind, a respect for things that have passed away and a quiet determination to go on living with vigor in this fragile world filled with dangers.

I am honored that people of Catalonia have appreciated my works, and bestowed this outstanding award. The place where I live is far from here and the language that I speak is different. For those reasons, the culture is also quite different. And yet, at the very same time, we are all citizens of the world, shouldering similar burdens, and embracing similar joys and sorrows. And that is why so many novels written by Japanese writers have been translated into Catalan and are read by the people. It delights me that I can share with all of you this common

narrative. The writer's work is the dreaming of dreams. But we have even more important work: to share those dreams with everyone. If one does not possess that sense of sharing, one cannot be a novelist.

I know that the people of Catalonia have overcome tremendous hardships in their history. Although you suffered terrible trials at times, you have carried on with tremendous vitality and preserved your rich culture. There is much that we can share between us.

If all of you in Catalonia, and all of us in Japan, could become "unrealistic dreamers," if we could come together to create a "spiritual community" that unfolds beyond the limits of borders and cultures, what a wonderful thing that would be. I believe that would be the starting point for the rebirth of all of us who have passed through assorted terrible disasters and terrors of unmitigated sadness over recent years. We should not be afraid to dream dreams. We should not allow the dogs of misfortune named "efficiency" and "convenience" to overtake us. We must be "unrealistic dreamers" who step forward with a strong stride. A person must die one day and disappear from this earth. But humanity will remain. That humanity will continue on without end. We must first believe in the power of humanity.

Let me say in closing that I intend to donate the funds from this prize to help the victims of the earthquake and of the nuclear power plant accident. My deep thanks to the people of Catalonia and everyone at Generalitat de Catalunya for giving me such an opportunity. Finally, I would also like to express my deep condolences for the victims of the recent Lorca earthquake.

Barcelona, June 9, 2011.

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Note: All translations of Japanese titles by the author, except for those titles that are published translations.