

## Murakami Haruki's Postmemory of the Asia-Pacific War

**ABSTRACT** This article shows how Murakami Haruki's novel *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* (1994–95) constructs a historical narrative to overcome the victim/perpetrator dichotomy and demands ethical response from readers. Drawing on Marianne Hirsch's term *postmemory*, the author analyzes the novel as a postmemory generation's struggle over the question of how postmemory generations of a former perpetrator country would be able to ethically respond to a temporally distanced, shameful, and traumatic past. Murakami's postmemory protagonist archives scattered pieces of the wartime and postwar pasts narrated by directly traumatized others and constructs a historical narrative to critically overcome the victim/perpetrator dichotomy that regulates the discourse surrounding wartime Japan's violent history. By having his nonviolent protagonist assume a violent aspect and turn into a perpetrator, the author argues, Murakami demands an ethical response from contemporary readers, that is, not simply understanding historical violence as a past to be criticized but imagining it as "our" own, ongoing problem.

**KEYWORDS** Japanese history, war crimes, postwar responsibility, memory studies, *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*

In 2020 Murakami Haruki surprised his readers by publishing a personal memoir, *Abandoning a Cat: Memories of My Father* (*Neko o suteru: Chichioya ni tsuite kataru toki*). In this slim piece, the world-famous Japanese novelist known for his reticence regarding his family history, now in his seventies, finally broke his silence. As many had conjectured, Murakami was at odds with his father, Chiaki, whose death in 2008 prompted him to embark on an investigation into the father's past. And yet Murakami found himself unable to set his mind to it. What prevented him from delving into his father's history was that Chiaki, as Murakami remembered, had served in the Twentieth Infantry Regiment during the Asia-Pacific War. This regiment, attached to the Sixteenth Division of the Japanese Imperial Army, was notorious for leading the Battle of Nanjing—a battle now known as the Nanjing Massacre or the Rape of Nanjing—in which Japanese soldiers slaughtered Chinese civilians and unarmed combatants. It took five years for the novelist to overcome his reluctance and discover that Chiaki, contrary to Murakami's memory, was conscripted into the Sixteenth Logistics Regiment of the same division in 1938, not the Twentieth Infantry Regiment that led the 1937 massacre. "Knowing this," Murakami (2020: 40) writes, "I got a feeling that a weight

had been lifted from my heart.” This memoir, however, is not simply a story about how a memory is proven wrong much to the author’s relief. Soon after this quoted passage, Murakami stresses Chiaki’s memory of the beheading of a Chinese captive; though the father recounts that the regiment did it, Murakami seems to believe, judging from the historical evidence, that Chiaki was directly involved. Murakami characterizes this work as an attempt to “inherit” history that is personal as well as collective. Beginning with an episode of abandoning a cat that magically makes its way back home faster than Murakami and Chiaki on bicycles, it is a story about something that is impossible to abandon, a history/memory that keeps returning home. For Murakami, this means the Japanese historical violence during the Asia-Pacific War perpetrated by his father’s generation.

Six years earlier, when asked to comment on the Asia-Pacific War’s approaching seventieth anniversary, Murakami (2014) referred to “avoidance of responsibility” (*sekinin kaihi*) as structuring the postwar Japanese mentality as seen in the aftermath of the war and, more recently, the 2011 earthquake and nuclear disaster in Fukushima. “Basically,” he stated, “Japanese lack perpetrator consciousness” (*kagai-sha demo atta toiu hassō*). They are used to regarding themselves as victims, and “the tendency is only increasing,” which, he believes, “should exasperate Chinese and Korean people.” Though the fact that it was a celebrity of the stature of Murakami who expressed this critical stance against Japanese attitudes toward the past made this newsworthy to some extent, his remarks themselves do not go beyond liberal clichés.<sup>1</sup> Yet what he calls the “avoidance of responsibility” here was the very thing that the novelist found within himself and struggled to confront while living in the United States during the early 1990s. Murakami famously characterized this “turn” as one from “detachment” (*detachment*) to “commitment” (*komittimento*), which he clarified in a conversation with the psychologist Kawai Hayao (Murakami and Kawai 1999). In his early career, recalls Murakami, he “just wanted to flee, flee, and flee” from any social relationship and “was writing novels all by myself” (detachment) (14–15). Yet during his four-and-a-half years as a visiting scholar at Princeton University, he gradually began to feel the need for commitment, which he paraphrases as “connection” or “social responsibility” (71–72). Throughout the 1995 dialogue, Murakami had in mind a specific novel, one that he had just completed: *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* (1994–95).<sup>2</sup> In the novel, he tried to express his commitment by “reconsidering [*arai naosu*] the Asia-Pacific War that resides within myself [*jibun no naka no*]”—a violent history and memory underlying the Japanese avoidance of responsibility.

Murakami’s “turn” had a historical context. The 1980s and 1990s were a time when memories of Japanese wartime crimes resurfaced on a global scale, owing in part to American redress activism, even as Japan witnessed the rise of neo-nationalism. China criticized Japanese revisionism after international history textbook controversies erupted in 1982 and 1987; Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro paid his first official visit to the Yasukuni Shrine, where the spirits of war criminals are enshrined, in 1985; the Nanjing Memorial Hall was built in China the same year; Emperor Hirohito died in 1989; former Korean “comfort women” testified and filed a lawsuit in Tokyo court in 1991; historical evidence of the Japanese government’s systematic involvement in the “comfort system” was revealed in 1992; the fiftieth anniversary of

the end of the war was memorialized in 1995; and the revisionist Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform was organized in 1996. It was in this sociohistorical context that Murakami felt the need to reconsider the Asia-Pacific War. Yet at the same time, as he confesses to Kawai, a therapist old enough to be his father, he did not know how to respond to a war that predated his birth. The sociohistorical situation called for a commitment to Japanese wartime history, which meant, though he does not say so in the dialogue, confronting his father's possible participation in the Nanjing Massacre. Referring to the difficulty of commitment, he identifies it as not just a personal predicament but one facing the Japanese as a whole (Murakami and Kawai 1999: 19). In discussing his turn in literary style, he also talks as a postwar-generation writer about how to confront and critique the Japanese avoidance of responsibility.

In stark contrast to English-language academics' serious engagement with Murakami, this novelist of detachment has long annoyed and been castigated by Japanese critics—including such prominent figures as Karatani Kōjin ([1990] 1995), Hasumi Shigehiko (1995), Watanabe Naomi (1998), and Komori Yōichi (2006), among many others—for his ahistorical, irresponsible style. This criticism only intensified after the publication of the explicitly historical novel *Wind-Up Bird* because, as Hasumi (1995) alleges, “it totally lacks history [*issai fuzai*].”<sup>3</sup> In arguing against this long-standing critical consensus, Azuma Hiroki (2019), a younger-generation Japanese critic, reconsiders *Wind-Up Bird* in a recent article. This novel is remarkable, Azuma argues, not because it marks Murakami's first serious attempt to confront, perhaps inadequately, Japanese wartime history; its significance lies instead in its critical exploration of “how to pass on perpetrator memory to future generations” when it has already been forgotten (61, 66). Murakami resorted to a magical device, the well, through which the protagonist is able to retrace and retrieve Japan's evil history, to imagine what it means to be perpetrator rather than victim. To better articulate the significance of Murakami's historical novel, I want to unpack Azuma's reading with recourse to memory studies, especially what Marianne Hirsch (1997: 22) terms “postmemory,” which “characterizes the experience of those who grow up dominated by narratives that preceded their birth.” While Hirsch focused on the children of Holocaust survivors, her theory also offers insights for discussing narratives produced by postwar generations in a perpetrator country. “Postmemory is a powerful and very particular form of memory,” Hirsch explains, “precisely because its connection to its object or source is mediated not through recollection but through an imaginative investment and creation” (22). In a country like Japan, where the avoidance of responsibility and willful obliviousness concerning the shameful past are the default positions, postwar generations' engagement with lived history via imagination would assume “a powerful and very particular” aspect because of, not despite, its “mediated” relationality to violent history.

This article shows how Murakami's *Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* constructs a historical narrative in an attempt to overcome the victim/perpetrator dichotomy and demand ethical responsiveness from readers. The novel asks: how should postmemory generations of a former perpetrator country ethically respond to a temporally distanced, shameful, and traumatic past? In considering this question, I begin by offering historical and theoretical context, while bridging Japanese- and English-language academic conversations about war memory and trauma. Next, I analyze

episodes related to Manchuria and sexualized violence narrated in the first person by several characters in the novel, which together testify to the continuum between Japan's wartime ideologies and its postwar social, cultural, and political situation. Murakami's postmemory protagonist, Tōru, archives scattered pieces of the wartime and postwar pasts narrated by directly traumatized others and constructs an alternative historical narrative to overcome the victim/perpetrator dichotomy that dominates the discourse surrounding wartime Japan's violent history. Finally, I discuss how Tōru manages to imagine and constitute his own means of historical engagement. By showing how his nonviolent protagonist becomes violent and transforms into a perpetrator, I conclude, Murakami demands an ethical response from his contemporary readers, one that involves not simply understanding historical violence as a past to be criticized but also imagining it as "our" own, ongoing problem.

### TRAUMA AND (POST)MEMORY OF A PERPETRATOR COUNTRY

Since the "memory boom" that erupted around 1990 in the context of the impending disappearance of World War II survivors, there has been an outpouring of memory studies scholarship concerning how to archive and inherit the testimonies of first-hand witnesses. This critical vogue was concurrent with the boom in trauma theory, and most memory studies scholars were engaged with traumatic events like the Holocaust and the spatiotemporal distance from the original event. In characterizing her seminal idea of postmemory, Hirsch (1997: 22) emphasizes the degree of mediation: "Postmemory is distinguished from memory by generational distance and from history." To articulate what she describes as the "powerful and very particular" potential of postmemory generations' engagement with traumatic history, revisiting Sigmund Freud's classic definition of trauma proves insightful. As Freud theorizes it ([1914] 1958: 152), trauma differs from ordinary "memory" in that it is inaccessible. When it comes to trauma, it is not that a patient is reluctant to recall a painful experience: "[he] cannot remember the whole of what is repressed in him," and all one can do is to compulsively repeat ("act out") the repressed memory without knowing that he or she is repeating it ([1920] 1989: 18). This is where psychoanalysts, who are doctors, come into play; they can intervene in the pathological process precisely because they are outsiders to the traumatic event. They are not traumatized, of course, and therefore are able to help the patient "find the courage to direct his attention to the phenomena of his illness." Psychoanalysts are professional outsiders, so to speak, who can help their patients bring trauma into consciousness. Those who belatedly engage with traumatic history like Murakami, I suggest, can occupy an analogous position from which to facilitate access to lived traumatic histories, precisely because of their outsidership to such events that the directly traumatized generation has been unwilling or unable to constitute and remember. Postmemory can gain discursive power because, paradoxically, of its outsidership and belatedness.

In considering the case of postwar Japan, the Holocaust-memory scholar Gabriele Schwab's *Haunting Legacies* (2010: 71) merits attention for its addressing of postmemory problematics from the perspective of Germany, "a nation of defeated perpetrators." In such fraught cases, people are prevented from mourning either Jewish victims or German victimizers. "How," Schwab asks, "can one mourn the loss of a few lives in one's own family if your people were guilty of trying to exterminate

a whole other people?” (75). In Japan, indeed, this question was a central issue in the so-called debate on historical subjects (*rekishi shutai ronsō*), a heated controversy that broke out in 1995 between the literary critic Katō Norihiro and the French philosophy scholar Takahashi Tetsuya. In response to Katō's (2015: 84) assertion that the Japanese need to establish their own subjectivity by properly mourning fallen Japanese soldiers (*eirei*) before moving on to take responsibility for their war crimes and mourn Asian victims, Takahashi ([1999] 2005: 147–77) condemned Katō's argument as a despicable expression of neoconservatism and insisted that the mourning of Asian victims must come first. While their dispute should not be reduced to this single issue, it subsequently became a kind of political litmus test regarding whether to prioritize Asian victims (liberal) or Japanese soldiers (conservative). More than half a century after the end of the war, however, the sequential order of mourning, it seems to me, should no longer be the focal point for discussion; such a preoccupation could even distract our attention from the more fundamental inability to properly mourn at all. Schwab (2010: 82) writes: “We have arrived at a place in history where we can no longer afford to deal with the histories of victims and perpetrators in isolation.” Murakami, working on his postmemory novel during the same years as this debate, would surely have agreed. His generational distance—a spatiotemporal, psychological, and political one—from the original events enabled him to remove himself from the myopic view of Japanese historical (ir)responsibility.

When it comes to the question of memory, Murakami's protagonists are “notoriously forgetful” (Treat 2013: 94). In *Wind-Up Bird*, which marks Murakami's turn toward historical and ethical commitment, however, he did not simply do away with the iconic plot and characterization of his earlier detached style; instead, he self-critically recast them in the service of serious historical inquiry. In the typical Murakami story, a young male protagonist's wife or girlfriend disappears for no apparent reason while he plays it cool. In *Wind-Up Bird*, the protagonist Tōru's wife, Kumiko, also vanishes (as does their cat). This time, however, Tōru seriously engages in trying to find her, during which process he gradually realizes that her mysterious disappearance is ultimately rooted in Japan's failure to fully address its historical violence in the Asia-Pacific War. While inheriting the Murakamiesque tradition, Tōru, repeatedly observing that he tries to recall but cannot, initially embodies postwar Japan's historical obliviousness. *Wind-Up Bird* marks the novelist's historical turn in recasting such detached traits as symptoms of Japan's collective avoidance of responsibility and questioning how an oblivious, detached Japanese protagonist might move toward commitment. While awakening to the nation's historical responsibility and the need to commit himself to it, Tōru, mirroring Murakami's predicament, struggles to find a practical way in which to concretize his responsibility as a postmemory subject. What are the conditions and criteria of later generations' ethical responsibility toward distant histories of violence in which they did not participate? In seeking to answer this question, *Wind-Up Bird* implicitly draws on Japanese literary precedents.

While distancing himself from Japanese literary circles (*bundan*), Murakami has always paid attention to the work of Ōe Kenzaburō, the most prominent war-generation novelist and politically committed intellectual. Though Ōe is known as a harsh critic of early Murakami—he once asserted that Murakami's style was nothing

more than a mimicry of American novelists—*Wind-Up Bird*, in fact, can be read as a politico-literary response to Ōe's 1964 (1969) novel *A Personal Matter* from a post-memory perspective. The latter's protagonist, Bird, is struggling with the question of whether to let his deformed newborn baby live or die. This anguish, which corresponded to Ōe's own predicament regarding his congenitally disabled child, is what the novel's title refers to. It is "limited to me," the protagonist declares of his ethical bind; "it's entirely a personal matter." Bird continues, "What I'm experiencing personally now is like digging a vertical mine shaft in isolation; it goes straight down to a hopeless depth and never opens on anybody else's world" (120). Thus Ōe thematizes the inability to share such a personal matter with others, though Bird eventually manages to find "a side tunnel" connected to "everyone." What happens in *Wind-Up Bird* is quite the reverse. Tōru has no personal matter that he hopes to share with others; traumatized others feel compelled to share their personal matters with him. Tōru's commitment is gradually constituted through relational networking with individuals whose (post)war personal matters are identified vaguely as "something" (*nanika*, always with the emphasis dot in Japanese) throughout the novel. This something can be read as the Japanese wartime psycho-historical complex that was not adequately addressed after the war and keeps giving rise to various symptoms such as violence, numbness, and incurable disease; it is a generic term for unconstituted Japanese collective historical memory. To locate side tunnels connected to everyone, Tōru goes down to the bottom of a dry well—Murakami's version of a vertical mine shaft—into which others' personal matters flow. Tōru, whose name means "pass through" in Japanese, functions as a medium through which traumatized subjects' fragmented memories can be recollected to form an inheritable narrative. Murakami's work is an archive, as Jonathan Boulter (2011: 16) observes, that keeps displaced traumas imaginatively recurring. *Wind-Up Bird* is a story about a postmemory protagonist whose personal trauma is not interwoven into the fabric of Japanese collective memory. As a postwar-generation novelist, Murakami answers Ōe's criticism for lacking sociopolitical commitment by revamping his predecessor's methodology as a means of accessing Japan's distanced history.

Reassessing the broadly accepted view of Murakami as an ahistorical novelist parallels memory studies' efforts to critically reconsider the supposed hierarchical relationship between the memory generation's purported authenticity and later generations' inauthenticity in telling war stories, a binary that tends to generate disrespect toward postwar generations' struggles to engage with history. As Jay Rubin ([2002] 2012: 213) rightly observes, Tōru has no relation to Japanese wartime history "except that he is Japanese." This fact can serve both as a pretext to deny one's responsibility toward war crimes and as an impediment to one's willing historical engagement, and Murakami's novel thematizes the latter. For postmemory generations, even if they manage to arrive at a decision to assume responsibility, it is from this precarious connection to the past that they must figure out how to begin to commit themselves to distanced history. If the avoidance of responsibility permeates postwar Japanese society, then we have to not only critique irresponsibility but also consider how such irresponsible subjects would be able to change their minds. This question has broader implications ranging beyond Japan. Every historical event will eventually be bequeathed to its post-event, postmemory generations, so we need to

talk about the ethics of those who come after, those who might appear “ahistorical” to older generations. Tracing how Tōru changes throughout the narrative and examining how Murakami invites readers to self-critically reflect on our response toward Tōru’s transformation, I seek to contribute to the conversation surrounding memory studies and Japan’s postwar responsibility by articulating the postmemory generations’ potential for creating their own viable forms of historical engagement.

### MANCHURIA EPISODES: BEYOND VICTIMS AND PERPETRATORS

Tōru is introduced to Japanese wartime history and memory through listening to and reading a series of firsthand accounts of Manchuria, where the Japanese empire established a puppet state called Manchukuo across Northeast China and Inner Mongolia in 1932. Until its dissolution in 1945, Manchukuo operated as a geopolitical pivot for Japanese colonial expansion across the continent for thirteen years. Mr. Honda, a nearly deaf veteran, provides the first Manchurian episode in the novel. He served in the Japanese Imperial Army as a corporal during the Nomonhan incident, an armed conflict fought along the border between Manchuria (under Japanese control) and Outer Mongolia (under the Soviet Union’s control) in 1939. The Nomonhan incident exposed the backwardness of the Japanese Imperial Army vis-à-vis the Soviet Union’s modernized military forces. Learning nothing from this debacle, Japan went on to repeat the same absurdity against the United States, which is why the incident is often characterized as a prelude to the Asia-Pacific War. Yet not only does Manchuria encapsulate a principle that governed wartime Japan; the legacies of this ephemeral state endured well into the postwar era. For example, the indicted class A war criminal Kishi Nobusuke was able to become prime minister in 1957, as historian Yamamuro Shin’ichi ([2006] 2009: 285) notes, thanks to his “personal connections and capital resources from Manchuria.” Beyond this particular case, “the plutocratic essence of political parties in Japan to this day owes its origin to [Manchukuo].” This is why Murakami has Honda tell his story in 1978, six years before the contemporary present of the main plot, a year that the spirits (*eirei*) of fourteen convicted class A war criminals were enshrined in Yasukuni.<sup>4</sup> Amid the surge of neo-nationalism in Japan in the early 1990s, Murakami chose Manchuria as a venue to approach the whole structure of wartime and postwar Japanese historical irresponsibility.

Honda’s war stories, which sound “like fairy tales” to Tōru, increasingly assume postmemory significance when Lieutenant Mamiya takes the stage. After the 2020 publication of his memoir, it became apparent that Murakami modeled this character on his father (both were prevented from becoming teachers owing to conscription). Tōru receives a letter announcing Honda’s death from Mamiya, who has undertaken to distribute his keepsakes. He brings the last one to Tōru, a fancy gift box of whiskey, which turns out to be empty. Honda and Mamiya together participated in a secret military operation before the Nomonhan incident, and the latter’s account, in a section of the novel titled “Lieutenant Mamiya’s Long Story,” reveals that the two veterans shared a traumatic experience that Honda, despite his postwar talkativeness, never mentioned. Thus Honda’s intention seems to have been to bring the two together so that Tōru could inherit their shared traumatic memory: “Having managed at long last . . . to pass my story on to you [*yōyaku hikiwata-*

seta],” Mamiya later tells Tōru, “I will be able to disappear with some small degree of contentment” (564). During the secret mission, Mamiya and Honda witness an unidentified man named Yamamoto, seemingly a secret service agent, being skinned alive by a Mongolian soldier under the command of a Russian officer. “For both of us,” Mamiya explains, “it had simply been too enormous an experience. We shared it *by not talking about it*” (170). This encounter involves the transgenerational inheritance of theretofore unuttered traumatic war memory, which Tōru gradually draws on to constitute his stereoscopic vision of Japanese history. Though this episode seems to be about Russo-Mongolian violence against Japan, this is of course a consequence of the Japanese invasion and colonization of this region, a fact that Mamiya underscores while talking about Russian atrocities: “I felt the same way about what we Japanese had done in Manchuria. I’m sure you can’t imagine the number of Chinese laborers killed in the course of constructing the secret base at Hailar” (539), a fortress built in the 1930s. In the 1990s, Mamiya intimates to Tōru that, to quote Schwab again, they “can no longer afford to deal with the histories of victims and perpetrators in isolation.”

In book 3, Akasaka Nutmeg and her son, Cinnamon, foreground the victim/perpetrator complex by further pushing it into the realm of postmemory. Nutmeg has a supernatural power that she, as a professional healer, utilizes to alleviate “something” that lurks in Japanese women’s psyches. When she comes across Tōru, she immediately realizes that she had found her “successor” (*kōkeisha*), because he has a mark on his cheek identical to that of her father. On a transport ship that repatriates her from Manchuria to Japan in August 1945, Nutmeg as a girl “witnesses” her father’s experience in Manchuria via her magical clairvoyance. While recounting such stories, she enters what trauma theorists call an altered state of consciousness, a state of mind under which traumatized subjects act out repressed memory without knowing it. Her story, in which her veterinarian father is involved as a bystander, is titled “A Clumsy Massacre” (“Yōryō no warui gyakusatsu”). She becomes traumatized through witnessing her father’s witnessing; Tōru again inherits Japanese wartime traumatic memory in a highly mediated form, that is, as postmemory. Moreover, the young Nutmeg witnesses her father’s experience in Manchuria while the Japanese transport ship is being confronted by a US submarine. Despite being informed that the vessel is unarmed and carrying five hundred civilians, the Americans declare that they will sink it in exactly ten minutes, aiming their cannons at the defenseless vessel. Immediately before firing, however, the submarine receives the news of Japan’s surrender and submerges. The following day, August 16, Nutmeg lands at Sasebo, a port city in Nagasaki Prefecture, which has just been obliterated seven days earlier by the second atomic bomb that the United States dropped on Japanese soil (though unspecified, she is a secondary *hibakusha*, an atomic bomb survivor who was not directly injured in the blast). Thus Nutmeg witnesses Japanese colonial violence against China in juxtaposition to American nuclear violence against Japan on the threshold between war and postwar.

Nutmeg’s story serves as a prelude to a sequel composed by her mute son, in the section of the novel titled “A Second Clumsy Massacre.” As a boy, Cinnamon had lost his voice through a dreamlike traumatizing incident associated with his father’s brutal murder and decapitation, and Tōru reads the story that Cinnamon



inherited orally from Nutmeg. When it becomes clear that there is no hope for Japan to defend Manchukuo's capital, Hsin-ching, from the Soviet Union's invasion at the end of the war, Japanese soldiers—led by a lieutenant and a corporal, reminiscent of Lieutenant Mamiya and Corporal Honda—are ordered to shoot to death all the dangerous zoo animals that might attack people if they escaped amid the chaos. This is the first “massacre” that Nutmeg narrates, one in which her veterinarian father was forced to be involved. On the following day, however, the Japanese soldiers return to the zoo with four captives and four dead bodies, all Chinese, and the second massacre begins—echoing the one committed on a much larger scale in Nanjing eight years prior. These Chinese are “cadets in the Manchukuo Army officer candidate school,” the lieutenant explains: “They refused to participate in the defense of Hsin-ching. They killed two of their Japanese instructors last night and tried to run away” (517). The lieutenant is ordered to slaughter all the remaining prisoners, and the leader of the revolt must be killed with the same baseball bat—a symbol of the United States—that he used to kill his Japanese instructors. It is important that there are two “clumsy massacres” so that the reader can juxtapose these two incidents; in contrast to the US submarine's calling off the attack on August 15, the Japanese army in Manchuria carries out these executions on the following day, that is, after the end of the war. Postwar Japan has strategically deployed Hiroshima and Nagasaki as a means of foregrounding collective Japanese victimhood and thereby obscuring its own war crimes. In paralleling American and Japanese violence, the Akasakas' massacre stories compel the protagonist and readers to consider the perpetrator/victim problematics within the context of the postwar Japan–United States relationship.

These Manchuria episodes share a significant structure that is replicated in the novel time and again. There is an original event that is or was too traumatic for its immediate participant to gain access to, which is eventually conveyed to post-memory generations via temporal, geographic, and emotional mediations. Each personal memory is too fragmentary and sometimes one-sided for later generations to “understand” the nature of the war, but the chain of events that are more or less contiguous with each other gradually begin to constitute in Tōru's and the readers' minds a multidimensional matrix of what transpired during the conflict. These individual stories assume historical significance when juxtaposed to other interrelated ones, thereby forming a spectrum from victimhood to perpetration, or from the insider's overwhelming experience (personal trauma) to postmemory generations' mediated, belated, and sometimes modified version of witnessing. In shifting trauma studies' analytical focus from survivors to recipients of traumatic memories, Thomas Trezise's (2013: 3) aptly titled *Witnessing Witnessing* emphasizes “the degree to which reception depends on how well listeners hear themselves.” The effectiveness of the transgenerational transmittance of historical trauma hinges on the way in which postmemory generations inherit and engage it. Throughout the novel, Tōru performs the role of good listener—he is like a screen on which everybody around him wants to project their own trauma story. This archival practice emerged when the war generation felt an urge to pass their memories on to subsequent generations; in the case of Japanese wartime history, it was the early 1990s that created the initial, urgent impetus to do so. From a postmemory viewpoint in which no one “can no longer afford to deal with the histories of victims and pepe-

trators in isolation,” Murakami’s novel critically overcomes the bifurcated discourse that limits its discussion to either/or regarding victimhood/perpetration and to before/after regarding mourning.

### “PAIN IS QUITE AN UNFAIR THING”: JAPANESE MILITARISM AND SEXUALIZED VIOLENCE

Murakami’s works almost always vividly portray sexual intercourse, and this tendency, which often seems to verge on indulgent male fantasy, has long offended critics, feminist and otherwise. In the case of *Wind-Up Bird*, however, sex merits attention in its own right because it is unmistakably informed by Japanese militarism and its resilient afterlives in the postwar era. Murakami was writing the novel amid the intense global attention on the comfort women issue after three Korean women filed a lawsuit and testified at Tokyo District Court in December 1991. Though the issue had not been entirely unknown, the ensuing international problematization of “the comfort system” was the first occasion when Japanese war crimes were viewed in the framework of sexualized violence. As Ueno Chizuko ([1998] 2004: 82–91) formulates, it took the epistemological shift from “the prostitution paradigm” to “the military sexual slavery paradigm” to recognize the comfort women issue as a matter of coercive sexual violence rather than that of free will and choice, a shift brought about in the wake of the Vienna Conference of Human Rights in 1993 and the Coomaraswamy Report in 1996. While international feminist discourse did cast a new light on war-related violence, we also have to interrogate how the discourse itself was formed under the decisive influence of the United States and, as Laura Hyung Yi Kang (2020) demonstrates, ultimately failed to fully acknowledge the violence. The comfort women issue has been “largely silenced in highbrow fictional literature,” as Kristina Iwata-Weickgenannt (2020: 836) observes, but Japanese “highbrow” literature, including Murakami, tends to deal with it in an allegorical fashion.<sup>5</sup> Thematising sexual violence as a kind of postwar reincarnation of the comfort women issue, *Wind-Up Bird* captures how the chronic structure of avoidance of responsibility continues to give rise to comparable violence in sexualized form, and that Japanese wartime violence was strategically obscured by the master narrative of Japanese-US inter-imperial hegemony.

It is Kumiko’s older brother, Wataya Noboru, Tōru’s nemesis, who inherits and embodies imperial Japan’s sexualized violence in the present. Later in the novel, Tōru learns that Noboru’s uncle Yoshitaka, a wartime technocrat and logistics specialist, was dispatched to Manchukuo in 1932 to assess the region. During his service there, he became acquainted with Ishiwara Kanji, the historical initiator of the Manchurian Incident as a high-ranking officer of the Kwantung Army. Since its establishment in 1919, this army, which initially undertook the guarding of the Manchurian railway, gradually came to seize political control of this area (the “clumsy massacres” were perpetrated by them). Yoshitaka’s postwar career replicates Prime Minister Kishi’s trajectory: “Yoshitaka Wataya had been purged from holding public office by MacArthur’s Occupation after the war and for a time had lived in seclusion in his native Niigata,” a prefecture known as a major constituency base for the conservative Liberal Democratic Party, “but he had been persuaded by the Conservative party to run for office after the purge was lifted and served two

terms in the Upper House before changing to the Lower House” (497). Murakami’s intention here is clear: Japanese wartime spirit survived the defeat—“Now his political constituency had been inherited by his nephew, Noboru Wataya” (497). Manchurian history eloquently testifies to the long-standing entanglement of Japanese militarism and sexualized violence. As historian Yoshimi Yoshiaki ([1995] 2002: 47) reports, it was young Japanese female sex workers conscripted and sent abroad, the *karayuki-san*, who were first settled in this area en masse in the 1880s, and the first documented military comfort station was built in March 1933 in Pingquan to house thirty-five Korean and three Japanese women. This was just “the tip of the iceberg” (47), suggests Yoshimi. The invisible substructure of this iceberg remained undissolved thanks to the policies of the US occupation force, whose troops were able to enjoy analogous “comfort facilities” set up by Japanese authorities (Dower 1999: 124–25). What Noboru inherits from his uncle is not just his “political constituency”; he symptomatizes the preservation and perpetuation of Japanese wartime sexualized violence.

There are three women victimized by Noboru: his (and Kumiko’s) deceased sister; Kanō Creta; and Kumiko. Creta is sexually assaulted by Noboru, though it was “not rape in the ordinary sense of the word” (211). After her failed suicide attempt at the age of twenty, she decides to become a sex worker, and her last customer is Noboru. Ordering her to lie face down, he inspects her body for a long while, and then begins to touch her. “His ten fingers moved down my body . . . in search of something,” Creta recounts. “His fingers moved over my body with the utmost care, as if tracing a route on a map” (299). Then he inserts something inside Creta from behind, which is not his penis, and “with an irresistible force” he “drag[s] out the jellied contents” of Creta’s “memory” (301). Obviously, Noboru’s violence is not merely sexual in nature. He has the clear intention of dispossessing Creta of something, and before that he carefully studies her body like a logistician preparing for an invasion of a foreign land. His peculiar kind of violence seems to be decoupled from sexual lust, yet we need to note that “rapes in wartime,” as Joshua S. Goldstein (2001: 363) observes, are “not driven by sexual desire”; the sexualized violence inflicted on the female body is “an instrument of territorial control and domination.” Toward the end, Tōru detects the historical root of Noboru’s violence: “It’s a tremendously dangerous thing, this thing that he is trying to draw out: it’s fatally [*shukumeiteki ni*] smeared with violence and blood, and it’s directly connected to the darkest depths of history, because its final effect is to destroy and obliterate people on a massive scale” (579). The something in Creta—which has always been inside her as “something of which [she] had no knowledge” (301)—is the memory, or rather the postmemory of Japanese militarism embedded in the realm of the Japanese collective historical unconscious. This is what Noboru tries to take control of and abuse for his political purposes.

Though Kumiko was led to believe that her older sister died of food poisoning, she in fact committed suicide, which, predictably, was caused by Noboru. Two years after the death of this unnamed sister, Kumiko catches Noboru masturbating while smelling her sister’s clothes. “I’m not even sure he had a sexual interest in her,” Kumiko tells Tōru, “but he certainly had *something*, and I suspect he’s never been able to get away from that something” (124). Again, the form Noboru’s desire takes is unmistakably sexual (masturbation), in this case incestuous, but there is something

more to it; he must have raped his sister, too, in some way, and it is a symptom of deeper and broader psychopathological violence that takes sexual form in this scene. Yet it is no coincidence that his victims tend to be women; when Creta asserts that “pain is quite an unfair thing [*hijō ni fukōhei na mono*]” (92; translation modified), she implies gender inequality in the distribution of violence. Kumiko had to leave Tōru not only because Noboru needed her “to play the role [their] sister had once played for him” but also because she sensed that her “blood” was tainted with something, “some kind of dark secret” (579–78). In her case, this something—which she characterizes as “an incurable disease” (489)—manifests, in one instance, as sexual frigidity. As she confides in a confessional letter to Tōru, she had never experienced any pleasure during sex with him, but she was possessed by an “unreasonable [*rifujin na*] lust” (276) after she left him. Her frigidity is one of the recurrent symptoms of numbness from which most characters in the novel suffer—it is rooted in the same historical obliviousness of postwar Japan, the structure of avoidance of responsibility, and an inability of historical commitment. Tōru and the reader hear her appeal at the beginning of the novel when the protagonist receives a phone call from an anonymous woman who tempts him to have phone sex with her. “You must have some kind of blind spot [*shikaku*] in your memory” (129), warns this mysterious woman, who turns out to be Kumiko. Tōru hangs up.

Paradoxically enough, the person who can intervene in this historical numbness is Noboru himself. This is attested to by Creta, who embodies Kumiko’s vacillation between numbness and hypersensitivity in a more extreme form. Her body, “a virtual sample book of pain” (92), as she calls it, had been suffering from hyperalgesia, and for this reason she decides to terminate her life. After her suicide attempt, however, she finds all her sensory feelings are gone, and it is Noboru’s rape, his stimulation and manipulation of the theretofore dormant something inside her, that revives her physical pain and sexual pleasure at the same time: “I was writhing as much in pleasure as in pain.” And Noboru’s ambivalent violence, by arousing “fatal” (*shukumei teki*) and “unreasonable” (*rifujin na*) pain, has the power to remold her identity by disintegrating her body: “Things both tangible and intangible turned to liquid and flowed out through my flesh,” Creta recounts. “It seemed as if all my memories, all my consciousness, had just slipped away. . . . And when I regained consciousness, I was a different person” (301–2). In postwar Japan, as epitomized by the wartime term *kokutai*, which designates the emperor system and literally means the “national body,” the body has served as a metaphor for the nation and has been associated with nostalgia for empire. “The discursively constructed body becomes the central site for the reconfiguration of Japan’s national image,” as Yoshikuni Igarashi (2000: 13) argues. “Bodily images,” according to him, “attest to the dual process of the expression and repression of the past in postwar cultural discourse. The healthy body of the nation was dismembered as imperial Japan experienced a radical transformation, and these dismembered bodily images were assembled again in the postwar period in order to articulate the new nationhood” (14). Though he fails to accomplish his goal with Creta, Noboru’s rape is a sexualized instance of postwar Japan’s attempt to regain and reconstitute imperial Japan’s “healthy” *kokutai* through violently disintegrating and rearranging vulnerable people’s bodies and identities. Yet the postwar Japanese body itself is indeed suffering from a disease caused by something, and a

cure needs to be found lest Noboru take fatal advantage of it. As Tōru descends into the dark realm of historical unconscious, his bodily disintegration demonstrates an alternative way of reconstructing postwar Japanese identity.

### “THIS IS MY WAR”: TŌRU’S POSTMEMORY AND COMMITMENT

After Kumiko’s disappearance, Tōru goes down into the bottom of a dry well in his neighborhood to reflect on his past, including how he came to know and marry Kumiko. They initially meet in a hospital where Kumiko’s mother is under treatment, and Tōru, a lawyer’s assistant at the time, goes “to see a wealthy client concerning the inheritance of his property” (223), who demands that his will be revised again and again. Thus the two encounter one another against the symbolic background of the impending deaths of the war generation and the difficulty of inheritance. On their first date, Kumiko suggests going to an aquarium in Ueno Zoo (where animals were actually slaughtered in 1943 [Ueno Zoological Gardens 2021]), which is holding a special exhibit on jellyfish. While Kumiko loves jellyfish, Tōru harbors a kind of instinctive abhorrence (*daikirai*) of them. He offers the following childhood memory:

I had often been stung by jellyfish while swimming in the ocean as a boy. Once, when swimming far out by myself, I wandered into a whole school of them. . . . In the center of that whirlpool of jellyfish, an immense terror overtook me, as if I had been dragged into a bottomless darkness. I wasn’t stung, for some reason, but in my panic I gulped a lot of ocean water. Which is why I would have liked to skip the jellyfish display if possible and go to see some ordinary fish, like tuna or flounder. (224)

When Tōru gets dizzy and collapses on a bench outside, Kumiko explains: “The real world is in a much darker and deeper place than this, and most of it is occupied by jellyfish and things [*kurage mitaina mono*]. We just happen to forget all that” (226). This sequence resonates with the “jellied contents” that Noboru drags out of Creta’s body. The realm of jellyfish is connected to disavowed Japanese wartime history, a metaphor freighted with historical implication: Emperor Hirohito is known for his outstanding achievements in jellyfish research. Tōru’s inexplicable terror is rooted not in his personal trauma but in what memory scholars call collective memory. As Maurice Halbwachs ([1952] 1992: 38) writes in his foundational text, “There is no point in seeking where [collective memories] are preserved in my brain . . . for they are recalled to me externally, and the groups of which I am a part at any time give me the means to reconstruct them.” In the novel, jellyfish that provoke terror in the postmemory generations’ mind represent the disavowed collective memory of imperial Japan, which some characters “happen to forget.”

After extended meditation in the well, Tōru discovers a mark on his face similar to the one Nutmeg’s father had. Soon, to raise money to buy the deserted land where the well is located, he begins to work at Nutmeg’s office as a peculiar kind of prostitute. After he is instructed to put on blinding goggles, a female customer comes into the room to caress and then lick the mark on his cheek, which makes him ejaculate. This is “amazingly similar to the work of Creta Kano had done as a call girl” (372), he realizes on the following day. Nutmeg had been working as a psychic healer for seven

years, and the customers she “fitted”—*karinui* in Japanese, a needlework metaphor that indicates the stopgap nature of her treatment—were all women around whom “lingered that special smell produced by the combination of power and money” (456). Though their privacy is strictly protected, this emphasis on their elevated social status suggests that they are the wives of politically and economically powerful families like the Watayas—they are female victims like Kumiko, who has been living under Noboru’s baleful influence. “Over the years, [Nutmeg] went on ‘fitting’ the ‘something’ that each of her clients carried within,” but she began to feel powerless because “all that her curative powers could do was reduce their activity somewhat for a time” (458). The significance of Tōru’s inheriting her practice is explained by the reference to its similarity to Creta’s sex work. After being raped by Noboru, she becomes “a prostitute of the mind” in order to recover: “Things pass through me” (*Watashi ha tsūka sareru mono nanodesu*) (212), Creta says. Tōru now becomes the one to be passed through (*tōru*), thereby incorporating fragments of the something, in this case female victimhood, into his own psyche and soma for others’ healing purposes. This is a process of learning what the something is and realizing that it has always lurked within himself as well, as the visualized mark on his face now eloquently testifies.

In the well, Tōru’s consciousness, in “some kind of *something* that happened to take the form of a dream” (241), floats into an imaginary hotel. In this magical dreamscape connected to the Japanese historical unconscious, the protagonist finally confronts Noboru in room 208, where the as-yet unidentified phone-sex operator, Kumiko, has been imprisoned. “What it all boils down to,” Tōru says as he recapitulates the complicated plot, “is that you [Kumiko] have gone over from my world to the world of Noboru Wataya” (578). This imaginary world/hotel is dominated by Noboru—who is taking control of Japanese collective memory—and Tōru has to bring Kumiko back to his side. Identifying Murakami as a writer seeking Japanese postwar identity, Matthew Carl Strecher (2002: 100–107) reads *Wind-Up Bird* as a story of Tōru restoring women’s “core identity,” which for Strecher equals the something removed or destroyed by “purely evil” Noboru. True, Tōru trains as a healer, and the novel’s climax is the confrontation between the good Tōru and the evil Noboru. Yet the primary concern of this novel, I argue, lies in critiquing this very Manichaeic binary, a binary consonant with the victim/perpetrator dichotomy; it is the protagonist himself who has to reconstitute his postwar identity by incorporating his, and Japan’s, disavowed violent self that Noboru embodies. In the well, he undergoes a process of bodily disintegration similar to that of Creta, a disintegration and rearrangement of the self in the process of remaking one’s identity:

Despite these efforts, my body began to lose its density and weight, like sand gradually being washed away by flowing water. . . . The thought struck me that my own body was a mere provisional husk that had been prepared for my mind by a rearrangement of the signs known as chromosomes. If the signs were rearranged yet again, I would find myself inside a wholly different body than before. “Prostitute of the mind,” Creta Kano had called herself. I no longer had any trouble accepting the phrase. (231)

Unlike Creta's case, a new "sign" that is incorporated or discovered within himself through this remaking process is anger and violence, two elements that found no place for expression in Murakami's earlier detached style. One day, back in the real world, Tōru is assailed by an anonymous man with a bat and fights back reflexively in terror, which soon turns to "unmistakable anger," and he nearly kills him. "Never in my life had I been involved in a fistfight," he reflects, "but now hitting was all I could do." He adds, "There were two of me now, I realized. I had split in two, but *this* me had lost the power to stop the other me" (335–36). Tōru's enemy is not only the evil other but also his own violent self; Noboru is a double of Tōru. He thereafter develops a habit of bringing the bat into the well as a kind of talisman. The well had belonged to "a real superelite officer" of the Japanese Imperial Army and a former war criminal who, in North China, is said to have executed "five hundred POWs, forcing tens of thousands of farmers to work for them until half of them dropped dead" (117). It is with this bat, the same weapon with which the lieutenant massacred the Chinese captives in Manchuria, that Tōru finally envisions bludgeoning Noboru to death in the dreamlike room 208.

This incident discourages us from simplifying the ensuing imaginary battle between Tōru and Noboru as purely Manichean. According to Murakami, the English translator Jay Rubin objected to depicting Tōru's extreme violence (Murakami and Kawai 1999: 193). Since readers sympathize with the nice protagonist, Rubin believed, they would feel betrayed by his brutal murder of Noboru, no matter how evil Noboru was. Yet this sympathy is the very thing that *Wind-Up Bird* aims to unsettle. For Japanese—and for Americans for that matter—it is a dangerous assumption that one is always on the side of nice people and is allowed to safely sympathize with the good protagonist vis-à-vis the evil other. Orchestrating the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, the United States executed militarists like Tōjō Hideki as responsible for deceiving the nation, including the emperor, thereby constructing a narrative of successful democratization and demilitarization. In turn, postwar Japan was able to disavow its war crimes through this scapegoating, and "ordinary" Japanese lost a sense of connection to their own country's historical misdeeds; it was those evil extremists who did it. Regarding his nemesis, Tōru believed that "there was no common ground between us" (78) and declared, "I don't simply dislike him: I cannot accept the fact of his very existence" (434). The critical implication here is that the protagonist assumes a violent aspect, as if he were remembering the anger and violence long repressed in his unconscious. The inability to imagine committing violence as one's own potentiality, or the lack of perpetrator consciousness, is the structural basis for what Murakami calls the avoidance of responsibility. The evil figure that Tōru fights in his dreamscape is his, Japan's, repressed and forgotten violent self that assumes the shape of Wataya Noboru. "This is my war" (582; translation modified), he declares, and it is one he eventually wins. But he does not simply defeat and deny Noboru's evil world; he also psychically incorporates it as an integral part of Japanese history. To reconstitute the postwar Japanese identity, Tōru must learn not only how victims suffer but also what it is like to be a perpetrator. Post-memory generations can no longer address the histories of victims and perpetrators in isolation. They need to go through both to reconstitute their own identities.

Though Tōru's war is waged in his dreamscape, it brings about consequences in the real world; Noboru collapses due to cerebral hemorrhage, and it seems that he will not recover. "Was there any link between what had happened there and this reality?" (587), our protagonist wonders. This question foregrounds and problematizes the relationship between fiction and reality as well as the ethics of the former. In his essays on Murakami, Christopher Weinberger theorizes ethics in Murakami's fiction in terms of reader response. Both in English-language and Japanese scholarship, according to Weinberger, literary critics have based their ethical judgment on the mimetic capacity of the novel and how our empathetic immersion in the fictional world can subsequently serve for our real life, a convention that has prevented us from recognizing the ethics inherent in Murakami's explicitly metafictional, fantastic style. "Murakami calls attention to the ethics of our responses to the genre and representational structures of the novel itself" (2016: 410), that is, the fictional world in which "physical action produces the kinds of cognitive and affective transformation that it appears to symbolize, because reality itself is already manifestly symbolic" (2015: 106). This unstable milieu, Weinberger argues, demands that both characters and readers "continually adapt their value systems and modes of response to accommodate the different forms of surface contact [as opposed to empathetic immersion] with alterity that the novel experience makes available" (2016: 425–26). Building on this insight, I argue that *Wind-Up Bird* initially invites readers, mostly those already familiar with Murakami's works, to identify, empathize, or sympathize with Tōru and then surprises us through "contact with alterity," that is, the possibility of its detached protagonist becoming a perpetrator. Murakami's ethics lies not in simply critiquing wartime Japan's violent history but also in presenting it as a contemporary, ongoing issue; it is not they but we who could become perpetrators in the future. When we simply repudiate Tōru's violence as non-sympathizable alterity, whether Japanese or not, we are repeating and reinforcing what Murakami called the avoidance of responsibility. Our responsibility as readers hinges on whether we can be responsive to the protagonist's change—this is not an endorsement of violence but a critical consideration of its implications and a self-critical reflection on our own implication in it.

### CONCLUSION: HISTORY, FICTION, AND ETHICS

Toward the end of the novel, Tōru finds Cinnamon's computer screen glowing in the darkness. Someone, no doubt Cinnamon, seems to have remotely booted up the program titled "The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle," which invites Tōru to choose one of sixteen texts. The one he chooses, number 8, turns out to be "A Second Clumsy Massacre." There is no doubt that these stories are told by Cinnamon, but, Tōru wonders, "was every bit of it Cinnamon's creation, or were parts of it based on actual events?" (524). He does not know, but at least he believes he can see what Cinnamon is trying to do. "He was engaged in a serious search for the meaning of his own existence [*sonzai riyū*]. And he was hoping to find it by looking into the events that had preceded his birth" (525). Cinnamon's "Wind-Up" is doing something quite similar to Murakami's novel; he is another character struggling to (re)construct his postwar identity through archiving other people's traumatic, historical episodes. Tōru continues to ruminate on the historicity of Cinnamon's work:



To do that, Cinnamon had to fill in those blank spots [*kūhaku*] in the past that he could not reach with his own hands. By using those hands to make a story, he was trying to supply the missing links. From the stories he had heard repeatedly from his mother, he derived further stories in an attempt to re-create the enigmatic figure of his grandfather in a new setting. He inherited from his mother's stories the fundamental style he used, unaltered, in his own stories: namely, the assumption that *fact* [*jijitsu*] *may not be truth* [*shinjitsu*], and *truth may not be factual*. (525)

This passage echoes historian Hayden White's argument about the interpenetrative relationship between fiction and history, here from a fiction writer's perspective. In his book *Tropics of Discourse*, White famously argued that professional historians' historiography is nothing other than constructed, selective versions of the past. "A historical narrative," he (1978: 51) writes, "is thus necessarily a mixture of adequately and inadequately explained events, a congeries of established and inferred facts, at once a representation that is an interpretation and an interpretation that passes for an explanation of the whole process mirrored in the narrative." In a more recent book, White (2014) directly relates this argument to the question of ethics. "Insofar as I turn to 'the past' at all for aid in deciding 'What should I do?' here, now, in this present situation," he states, "it is a past which I (or community with which I identify) believe to be most relevant to my inquiries" (76). As opposed to "the historical past," he calls it "the practical past," one that is deliberately buried "not least by historians who limit themselves to the recounting of the fact of the matter" (24). Featuring Michel de Certeau's maxim "Fiction is the repressed other of history," White believes that the historiography written by historians who believe they can exclude all fictional, imaginative, and literary elements (which is impossible) tells us nothing about what we should do, and fiction is an open venue for us to access that repressed history which critically informs our present situation. Fiction connects history to ethics. And, I would add, this process of connecting history to ethics cannot be accomplished without readers. In constructing fictional-historical stories, Cinnamon is engaging in "a serious search for the meaning of his own existence"—he is making the past practical. And by giving Tōru access to it, he is not only guiding the protagonist toward saving Kumiko but also demanding the reader of his "Wind-Up" to share the ethical question of what *we* should do—and so does Murakami's *Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*. Postmemory storytellers need responsive and responsible readers, and our readerly ethics depends on our personal and collective commitment to it.

## NOTES

1. For the construction of postwar Japan's "victim narrative," see Berger (2012: 123–74).
2. The novel consists of three books: book 1 was serialized in *Shinchō* magazine from 1992 to 1993, and books 1 and 2 appeared in book form in 1994. Murakami decided to add book 3 after returning to Japan, which came out in 1995. Since the present article's methodology necessitates a substantial number of quotations from the novel, I cite the English translation, while referring to the original language where necessary.
3. Nathen Clerici (2016: 266) documents well how "the perspective of an elite cultural and literary critic" in Japan has failed to take Murakami's works seriously.
4. For the outpouring of Japanese veterans' autobiographical stories, see Yoshida (2005: 216–21).

5. See, for example, David C. Stahl's (2018) allegorical reading of Kawabata Yasunari's novel *Sleeping Beauties*.

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