

**Parallel Storytelling as Executed by Haruki Murakami: *Kafka on the Shore* and *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World***

A Dissertation Submitted

To

**Sikkim University**



**In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of  
Master of Philosophy**

**Submitted By**

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Date: 15/07/2021

### DECLARATION

I, Rohit Kumar De, hereby declare that the research work embodied in the dissertation titled "*Parallel Storytelling as Executed by Haruki Murakami: Kafka on the Shore and Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*" submitted to Sikkim University for the award degree of Master of Philosophy, is the record of own analyses and investigations. I have completed my M. Phil. dissertation under the supervision of Professor Irshad Gulam Ahmed of the Department of English, Sikkim University, Gangtok. This dissertation or any part of it has not been submitted earlier to this or any other University/Institute for any degree, diploma or qualification.

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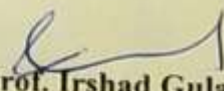
## CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation titled "**Parallel Storytelling as Executed by Haruki Murakami: Kafka on the Shore and Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World**" submitted to Sikkim University in partial fulfillment for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy in the Department of English, embodies the result of a bona fide research work carried out by **Rohit Kumar De** under my guidance and supervision. No part of the dissertation has been submitted earlier to this or any other University/Institute for any degree.

All the assistance and help received during the course of the investigation have been duly acknowledged by him.

I recommend this dissertation to be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

  
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**Parallel Storytelling as Executed by Haruki Murakami: *Kafka on the Shore* and *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World***

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## **CHAPTER-I**

### **Introduction**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

Through parallel storytelling as a writing technique, the artist or the writer achieves a realistic impression of the world's multiplicity consisting of multiple voices and multiple perspectives. The very fundamental premise behind the parallel storytelling technique is to have multiple protagonists and/or antagonists where each traverses through her or his own story with some common thread in between affording the novelist to write numerous stories with less detail than the single plot and subplot structure: less detail because the events in one of the parallel strands or narratives help elucidate the background and the reasons behind the happenings or the events of the other strand with which it is linked. In this way what might possibly have gone as the narrator's building up of background or giving explanations for events in the single narratives get converted with the execution of parallel storytelling to events in the other parallel narrative forming a cause and effect chain throughout the interlinked bodies of the two or more parallel narratives thus heightening dramatic effect where events explaining the events in the other narrative get entangled into complex network of events associated with the different characters, hence requiring analysis which will be the exercise of this dissertation while understanding the working principles of the parallel storytelling technique as used by Haruki Murakami in the selected primary texts for this dissertation.

The simplest of parallel storylines are primarily a two plot combination where two separate stories are either narrated consecutively or they are woven back and forth in the manner of braided structure. Typically, the events of the two narratives overlap at different points in the novel or integrate in the novel's climax or resolution.



The stories which are more complex may structurally have three or more parallel narratives, often bringing in a new narrative point of view in each plot segment. This research will look into two major novels of the contemporary writer from Japan who has garnered much international recognition and attracted general attention, Haruki Murakami and decipher the peculiarities of the parallel storytelling technique as executed by Murakami. The two novels to be analyzed are *Kafka on the Shore* and *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*.

## **1.2 Research Problem**

Magic realism and the issue of human identity with its formation, disruption, crisis and quest thereafter as dealt by Haruki Murakami in his novels has long been an area of critical thinking where very important research works have been conducted. There has been a fair amount of psychoanalytical research done on his works too with the help of, for example, the theories propounded by Freud, Jung and Lacan. Examining Murakami's works through the postmodernist, cultural, historical and political lenses has also been done.

But the problem arises when we look for research work done on the parallel storytelling technique as used by Haruki Murakami. Addressing Murakami's works via the technique of parallel storytelling is important because in many of his novels, Murakami in his play with the human mind, identity, the concept of time, fate, human agency to name a few of his concerns, uses the technique of parallel storytelling with narratives of generally two persons which aid him in the structuring of his characteristic multi-layered depiction of his above mentioned popular concerns and more.

### 1.3 Research Statement

This research will address the identified lacuna or research gap in the body of research work on Haruki Murakami as the unexplored topic of parallel storytelling technique as used by him. This research will examine how Haruki Murakami uses the technique of parallel storytelling as an effective device to work out the concerns of his novels *Kafka on the Shore* and *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*. It will identify the elements and unveil the machinery of this technique as executed by Haruki Murakami.

### 1.4 Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of this research are:

1. To understand the technique of parallel storytelling as used by Haruki Murakami
2. To examine the role of parallel storytelling in the depiction of fate in *Kafka on the Shore*
3. To examine the role of parallel storytelling in the depiction of the issue of the characters' agencies over their own lives in *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*
4. To examine Haruki Murakami's depiction of the real, the unreal, the imaginary and dreams as elements of his parallel storytelling technique
5. To examine and understand how Murakami uses parallel storytelling to depict parallel existence, for example by linking symbols in the two parallel narratives

### 1.5 Research Questions

In the course of this research the following questions will be of major importance:

1. What are the peculiarities of the parallel storytelling technique as used by Haruki Murakami?
2. What is the role of parallel storytelling technique in the depiction of the issue of fate in the novel *Kafka on the Shore* by Haruki Murakami?
3. What is the role of parallel storytelling technique in the depiction of the issue of the characters' agencies over their own lives in the novel *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* by Haruki Murakami?
4. How does Murakami depict dreams, reality, the unreal, the imaginary as elements of his parallel storytelling technique?
5. How does Murakami depict parallel existence by the use of parallel storytelling?

### 1.6 Research Methodology

The methodology used while conducting this research will be interpretative, analytical and qualitative with recourse to critical pluralism. This research will conduct a textual analysis of the two novels mentioned. The primary focus of this research will be on Haruki Murakami's peculiar style of parallel storytelling as he has used while writing the two novels in the scope of this research.

### 1.7 Scope of Research

The scope of this research will be confined to two novels by Haruki Murakami which are *Kafka on the Shore* published originally in Japanese in 2003, its English translation by Philip Gabriel coming out in 2005 and *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* originally published in Japanese in the year of 1985, its English translation by Alfred Birnbaum coming out in the year 1991.

The research will show how Murakami's imaginary world becomes the real, unreal becomes the real, dreams become real, events in the mind become real and have paramount influence on the world which we generally understand as real. It will also show how two characters placed at different locations in the so-called real world connect through the world of the past as in *Kafka on the Shore* which becomes very much real and substantial and how the events surfacing in one's life are influencing the events in the life of the other character in the other narrative as in both the novels in the scope of the research.

### **1.8 Literature Review**

In the essay, "The Quest and Reconstruction of Identity in Haruki Murakami's *Kafka on the Shore*" by Kanya Wattanagun and Suradech Chotiudompant, it is examined how construction of one's identity becomes a process of hoarding or consumption of signs and what on the other hand would be the dynamics of alienation from the society resulting in an empty identity for instance that of the character of Hoshino. Then the essay focuses on the alternative reality of the world which the capitalist society hides and how the magical events developing in *Kafka on the Shore* opens up that hidden world interacting with which changes Hoshino's life. Next, it focuses on how Nakata's inability of comprehension of the realities of daily life due to his loss of memory during a magical event in his childhood too, symbolizes rupture within the consensus reality.

The writers of the essay propose that having neither beautiful memories to nurture, nor intimate relationships to maintain, nor emotional attachment with certain objects to which to bind himself, Kafka is psychologically shut out from potential channels that would have enabled him to restore his spattered identity. The emergence of living spirit, stirring the sad, nostalgic feeling within him, links the boy to one of

these channels. The powerful feeling will stimulate Kafka to view his life and the outside world from different eyes. In this light, bizarre incidents occurring in his life then play the role of tragedy with their cathartic ability to trigger powerful sensations and thereby bring about the dramatic transformation within the protagonist's inner world.

In "Return to What One Imagines to Be There: Masculinity and Racial Otherness in Haruki Murakami's Writings about China" published in *Novel*, 37:3 in 2004, Kwai-Cheung Lo examines how Haruki Murakami's works generally filled with Western literary and pop cultural references and icons deals with the matters of masculinity and national character in opposition to an identity that is not Western but Asian.

In "In search of the real: technology, shock and language in Murakami Haruki's *Sputnik Sweetheart*", published in *Japan Forum*, 16:3 in the year 2004, Michael Fisch writes in his abstract that he "traces Murakami's attempt to imagine a transformation and recovery of language that is predicated on an encounter with achiragawa (the other side)." He writes that he argues that "Murakami's depiction of this encounter draws on a certain psychology of shock as a condition whereby mechanisms of disavowal are short-circuited and that which has been repressed in the unconscious or split off from awareness is allowed to surface momentarily."

In "Girls and the unconscious in Murakami Haruki's *Kafka on the Shore*", published in *Japanese Studies*, 26:1, in the year 2006, Maria Flutsch draws on psychoanalytic literary criticism along the line of Kristeva while focusing on the young women in *Kafka on the Shore*, who, Maria says, as in many of Murakami's novels, play significant roles in the male protagonist's progress through the course of the novels.

In “Murakami Haruki in Greater China: Creative Responses and the Quest for Cosmopolitanism” published in *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 68:3 in 2009, Margaret Hillenbrand looks at the responses to Murakami’s fiction in Hong Kong, China and Taiwan where for the people of this region Murakami has stood out as a conduit to a “cosmopolitan cultural citizenship”.

In “Risk and Home: After Dark by Murakami Haruki”, published in *Japanese Studies*, 29:3 in the year 2009, Rio Otomo focuses on how Murakami’s *After Dark* addresses “safety and danger, home and risk, or the quotidian and the extraordinary”.

In “Equivocal Endings and the Theme of Love in Murakami Haruki’s Love Stories” published in *Japanese Studies*, 33:3 in the year 2013, Virginia Yeung argues that Haruki Murakami has purposefully adopted certain narrative devices as identified by Yeung in the paper in order to avoid determinacy or definiteness, the inconclusiveness of which reflects Murakami’s characteristic concept of love.

In “Between self-promotion and cultural politics: Murakami Haruki’s travelogues”, published in *Japan Forum*, 28:2 in 2016 Rebecca Suter analyzes the ways in which Haruki Murakami uses travel writing to promote his image as a cosmopolitan and culturally sensitive writer. She also highlights how Murakami’s works make the readers critically reflect on Japanese and global cultural and social formations.

After looking through this trajectory of existing research on Haruki Murakami we can discern a pattern or a certain sense of direction in this trajectory. The pattern is so, that the existing body of research has focused on the cultural, racial, cosmopolitan and political study of Murakami’s works, has made psychoanalytical studies of his works, for example on the issues of human identity and the unconscious and has dealt with his ideas of love, home and masculinity. This pattern of research entirely

excludes the concern of the technique of parallel storytelling as executed by Haruki Murakami which has remained unexplored by the existing body of research on his works. This research titled “Parallel Storytelling as Executed by Haruki Murakami : *Kafka on the Shore* and *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*” will address this problem and explore the issue excluded by way of lacuna in the existing body of research work on Haruki Murakami as pointed out.

### **1.9 Research Gap**

Though notable research has been done on Haruki Murakami’s works by incorporating numerous literary and cultural theories, there is no work done on the understanding of his use of parallel storytelling in his works. Till now, there is no research done wholly focusing on deciphering the peculiarities of Haruki Murakami’s use of parallel storytelling technique. This is a major lacuna in the trajectory of research work on Murakami which has remained unexplored and excluded. From this lacuna, stems my research topic focusing on the technique of parallel storytelling as executed by Haruki Murakami.

### **1.10 Chapter Division**

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Fate in *Kafka on the Shore*

Chapter 3: Agency in *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*

Chapter 4: Parallel Existence: Dream, Reality, the Unreal and the Imaginary

Chapter 5: Conclusion

### **Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION**

Chapter 1 has introduced parallel storytelling technique as a tool of writing. It has stated the research problem as the unexplored topic of parallel storytelling as executed by Haruki Murakami. It conducts a literature review of the research work on

Murakami done till now. Then it identifies and states the research gap as the lacuna in the existing body of research work on Haruki Murakami where till now there is no work done on the understanding of his use of parallel storytelling in his works and its peculiarities. The chapter then has presented the research statement stemming from the research gap. It specifies the aims and objectives of this research, presents the research questions to be addressed and states the research methodology to be adopted for conducting this research. It has specified the scope of this research and presented the chapter divisions planned for the research.

## **Chapter 2: FATE IN *KAFKA ON THE SHORE***

Fate is the major issue in Murakami's *Kafka on the Shore*. In the very first chapter of the novel, Crow says to Kafka:

“Sometimes fate is like a small sandstone that keeps changing direction but the sandstorm chases you. You turn again, but the storm adjusts. Over and over you play this out like some ominous dance with death just before dawn. Why? Because this storm isn't something that blew in from far away, something that has nothing to do with you. This storm is you. Something inside you.”

Murakami thus deals with fate as a mechanism not outside but a mechanism which is planted in us or rather is inside of us and hence we can never escape the events which are already programmed in the matrix of our fate. Kafka finds himself entwined in the network of fate as prophesied by his father. Also, Kafka's fate is the fate of another character named Nakata. It is as if one consciousness with a particular fate of it is operating in two bodies and the events in both of their lives complement each other. The above phenomenon is where Murakami works out his surreal and metaphysical novel and in the acknowledgement of this fact we come to realize the handiness of the parallel storytelling technique for Murakami. Thus, this chapter has



examined how the parallel storytelling technique is facilitating Murakami's depiction of the machinery of fate and how all the other characters in the novel like his father, Miss Saeki, Miss Saeki from the past, Komura from the past and Sakura are parts and constituents of this machinery of fate.

### **Chapter 3: AGENCY IN *HARD-BOILED WONDERLAND AND THE END OF THE WORLD***

The old man in *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* who is not named throughout the novel is a scientist who manipulates physical entities to human beings, for instance, he has built a technology which can completely erase sound in a particular region he has selected. Here is an extract at the beginning of the book in Chapter 3:

“Darn,” said the old man, slapping his thigh. “Plum forgot. She is still sound-removed from that experiment. Darn, darn, darn. Got t’go and undo it right now.”

The old man's granddaughter has been sound removed from his experiment and he has forgotten about her. Suddenly he remembers about her and rushes to rectify it. Here we are introduced to the fact how people are at the old man's mercy and he holds the means to manipulate their lives as he desires to. The narrator of the story who too is not named throughout the novel says in the chapter titled “Frankfurt, Door, Independent Operants”:

‘I wanted sleep. Was that too much to ask? First unicorns, now inklings- why me?’

Here we have the reference to the major issue in the novel, that is, the issue of a person's agency over his or her own life. It becomes evident through the development of the plot that the protagonist or the narrator has no control over his life but his life becomes that of a puppet with its strings at the hand of the old scientist. This is happening in the world we call as the real world. There is another world which is

created and installed in the mind of the narrator by the old scientist as a part of his scientific experiment. The narrator completely losing agency over his life, travels in and out of his outside world and the world created inside his mind. Here comes Murakami's parallel storytelling technique to play. This chapter has looked into how the parallel storytelling technique takes forward the narratives of the two separate worlds, each world influencing the events of the other and how the world of the mind takes a concrete shape influencing the world outside a person's consciousness or the so-called real world.

#### **Chapter 4: PARALLEL EXISTENCE: DREAM, REALITY, THE UNREAL AND THE IMAGINARY**

This chapter has examined Murakami's depiction of dreams, reality, the unreal and the imaginary and seen how all these are interconnected but not separated and also how the parallel storytelling technique is functioning in its process of the depiction of the interconnectivity of the world of dreams as in *Kafka on the Shore* or the world of the mind as in *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* and the phenomenal world outside the human body.

In chapter 23 of *Kafka on the Shore*, Oshima says:

“While they're still alive, people can become ghosts.”

This points to the fact that Miss Saeki's ghost of her 15 year old self which is operating in the real world in which the middle aged Miss Saeki is living now and then Kafka in the real world falling in passionate love with the 15 year old Miss Saeki is how Murakami is bringing the unreal and the real in close interaction where one is having effect upon the working machinery of the other. The chapter discerns how the lives of Nakata and Kafka are working out in a complementary fashion and how

Haruki Murakami through his parallel storytelling technique has connected the narratives of different lives.

In *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*, similarly, two narratives of the same character are playing along in an interconnected and complementary manner: one being of the so-called real world and the other of the world in the mind of the narrator with the entire story being focused on which of the two worlds does the narrator choose to stay in permanently after leaving the other for ever. In this type of a complex plot, the parallel storytelling technique becomes a key tool for the execution of the intentions of the author and this chapter has wholly dedicated itself towards an intricate understanding of Haruki Murakami's machinery of the parallel storytelling technique.

#### **Chapter 5: CONCLUSION**

This chapter is a summary of the previous chapters. It has presented the findings of this research and thus arrived at the final conclusion.

## CHAPTER-II

### **Fate in *Kafka on the Shore***

The structure of the two interlinked stories of two different characters is the structure on which the whole novel *Kafka on the Shore* by Haruki Murakami stands on. Haruki Murakami by parallelly telling the stories of these two characters works out the whole plot of the novel. Hence, it becomes imperative to make an attempt at understanding the nature of this technique of writing as has been used by Murakami in order to build up the whole story of his *Kafka on the Shore*.

The chapter is titled so because the issue of the fate of the different characters in this novel and primarily those of the characters named Kafka Tamura and Nakata is the context on which the parallel storytelling technique is developed.

#### Kafka and Nakata

Fate has so linked the characters of Kafka Tamura and Nakata that at many instants of the novel, the personality of one character enters the body of another bringing along with it, its own life, motivations, aspiration and of course its own fate. The parallel stories of Kafka and Nakata grants the basic structure or layout of the novel. That is so, because the alternate stories of Kafka and Nakata take up the space of alternate chapters in the novel. We start with the chapter titled 'The Boy Named Crow' which holds the story of the character named Kafka Tamura and the next chapter too begins the story of the other character named Nakata. It is for convenience sake that Nakata is being referred to as the other character but no one between Kafka and Nakata is the other character really. Their lives are so intertwined that it becomes problematic to name the protagonist of the novel. True, apparently Kafka is the protagonist because it is ultimately his fate which is the focal point of the novel but

many key events in Kafka's fate are carried out by Nakata in such a manner that it leaves an impression on us as if Kafka's personality at those times works through the body of Nakata. The border between these two characters and the spaces they inhabit are blurred in such manner by Haruki Murakami and in doing so the writing technique of parallel storytelling becomes the tool for him.

Odd chapters in the novel are for Kafka and the even chapters for Nakata. For readers it becomes an exercise to trace the links between the even and the odd chapters or the parallel stories of Kafka and Nakata.

This section will thus deal with the understanding of how this technique of parallel storytelling has facilitated Murakami in his depiction of the machinery of fate where the stories of Kafka Tamura and Nakata get tied up in the process of which a network of their fate is formed where other characters in the novel get entangled too.

In the first chapter, Crow symbolizes fate in his conversation with Kafka as a sandstorm which keeps chasing Kafka no matter how many times he changes his directions in order to escape the sandstorm because essentially this sandstorm is inside him and not something that has blown in from somewhere else outside his body. In chapter sixteen, an even numbered chapter which we now know to be dealing with Nakata as all other even numbered chapters, Johnnie Walker in his conversation with Nakata who is hesitant to kill Johnnie Walker uses the symbol of war to instruct Nakata in the nature of fate. He says that people are compelled to become soldiers at the time of war without anyone being bothered about whether those people like slaying other people or not. The situation demands that they kill and they have to kill or else they themselves will be cut down on the battlefield. These two points in the story thus refer to the nature of the lives of Kafka and Nakata who find themselves

pitted against a phenomenon called fate over which they have no control whatsoever: Kafka is thus dealing with the metaphorical sandstorm and Nakata is in a metaphorical war. Through parallel storytelling, this most fundamental link in the novel is established where Crow in Kafka's life and Johnnie Walker in Nakata's life reveal the similar tumultuous situation both are in as they unwittingly form the network of their intersecting fate.

In chapter sixteen while Johnnie Walker is instigating Nakata to murder him by fatally tormenting the cats, Nakata finally says that he was going crazy and he does not feel himself anymore. Johnnie Walker replies,

“That's very important Mr Nakata. A person not being himself any more.”

“That's the ticket, Mr. Nakata. Wonderful! The most important thing of all.”

Actually Nakata is no more Nakata but has become Kafka which is really the ticket for fulfilling the fate predicted by Kafka's father. In a very parallel manner in the odd numbered chapter dealing with Kafka's story, Kafka says to Sakura that sometimes he flies into a rage and he feels as if he has blown a fuse or as if somebody has pushed a switch in his head and his body no longer remains under his control doing its own thing before his mind can catch up with what his body has actually been doing. Here again through parallel storytelling the link between Kafka and Nakata is established where we will find that both through this issue of losing control over their own selves due to their own trigger factors fulfill the fate of Kafka killing his father as predicted by his father himself, through the murder of Johnnie Walker who is murdered by Nakata who again loses his self and becomes Kafka. Thus evidently this is a wholly convoluted fabric of fate where the characters are configured by tying up together the threads of different characters forming a dense and complex network

of fate. Parallel storytelling as used by Haruki Murakami thus makes it possible to look at both sides of threads of different characters as configured by the author and the tied up knots of two or more threads of these characters in the nexus of fate as portrayed in *Kafka on the Shore*.

Roland Barthes helps us better understand this style of writing. In his *S/Z*, he writes,

“Since narrative is both merchandise and the relation of the contract of which it is the object, there can no longer be any question of setting up a rhetorical hierarchy between the two parts of the tale, as is common practice: the evening at the Lanty mansion is not a mere prologue, and Sarrasine’s adventure is not the main story: the sculptor is not the hero and the narrator is not a mere protactic character: Sarrasine is not the story of a castrato, but of a contract; it is the story of a force (the narrative) and the action of this force on the very contract controlling it. Thus, the two parts of the text are not detached from one another according to the so-called principle of “nested narratives”.”

Barthes in this book is analyzing the short story, *Sarrasine* written by Honore de Balzac. “Merchandise” refers to the goods to be bought or sold. The exchange of these goods or the “merchandise” as Barthes says, is subject to a contract between people. This contract generates the exchange of merchandise and this exchange happens following the terms of the contract agreed upon which is why it was said in the preceding line that the merchandise is subject to the contract with which it is attached. Now, Barthes quite metaphorically says in the above extract that the narrative in *Sarrasine* “is both merchandise and the relation of the contract of which it

is the object”. This means that the narrative in this short story is both the reason and the object existing because of the processes of the reason.

Similarly in *Kafka on the Shore*, the nature of the narrative with the parallel stories of Kafka and Nakata is such that we cannot set up a hierarchy between the two stories in a cause and effect chain. Both the stories of the two characters progress in a mutually complementary manner and here comes the utter importance of the remark of Barthes on the nature of the narrative of *Sarrasine*: “both merchandise and the relation of the contract of which it is the object”. The same can be said of the two narratives in *Kafka on the Shore* where the plot of the novel is “the story of a force (the narrative)” to quote Roland Barthes or the force of parallel storytelling here which has yoked together the stories of Kafka and Nakata in such a manner where “the two parts of the text are not detached from one another according to the so-called principle of “nested narratives”” as Barthes commented upon *Sarrasine*. This is what is metaphorically referred to as the narrative being “the relation of the contract” and the story being that “of a force (the narrative)”. Now to the other part of Barthes’ comment. The story of *Sarrasine* as pointed by Barthes and the story of *Kafka on the Shore* with which this chapter is concerned besides being the story “of a force (the narrative)” or the “relation of the contract” as explained above and as will be elaborately evident through the course of this chapter, is also the “merchandise” of the contract or the resultant object/product of such type of narrative which here in the concerned novel is the conjoined fate of Kafka and Nakata.

Also, in the entry on Hermeneutics in Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Theodore George writes about how Hermeneutics as an idea stands against the vertical structure of knowledge. He writes,



‘In epistemological foundationalism, our body of beliefs (or at least our justified beliefs) are sometimes said to have the structure of an edifice. Some beliefs are distinguished as foundations, ultimately, because they depend on no further beliefs for their justification; other beliefs are distinguished as founded, in that their justification depends on the foundational beliefs. This is a ‘vertical’ picture of human knowledge in that new beliefs build on established beliefs; new beliefs are justified by still other beliefs, all the way down to the foundational beliefs. Inquiry, then, is an ‘upward’ pursuit, one that adds new ‘floors’ to the edifice of what we already know.’

The cause and effect chain formed in storylines after creating a hierarchy of the most fundamental events or ‘foundational beliefs’ as Theodore George writes associated with those fundamental events stands in similitude with this “structure of an edifice” of “epistemological foundationalism” where the ideas placed at the foundation of this edifice or the ideas lying lower near the base of the vertical edifice of knowledge provide support or justification to the ideas placed in the higher “floors” of the structure in a way that one can trace in a mathematical well defined manner the order of the vertical development of ideas or events in a one way cause and effect chain where what lies in the lower floor is the cause of what lies above or what it has brought to effect. Thus, the one way chain of cause and effect is ontologically equivalent to what Theodore George conceptualizes as the vertical edifice of epistemological foundationalism.

Then, George writes about how the “Hermeneutical Circle” counters “Epistemological Foundationalism”:

‘Hermeneutics opposes what can be described as the ‘vertical’ picture of knowledge at issue in epistemological foundationalism, focusing, instead, on the

‘circularity’ at issue in understanding. . . In hermeneutics, by contrast, the emphasis is on the ‘circularity’ of understanding. This emphasis is familiar from the concept of the hermeneutical circle. . . Broadly, however, the concept of the hermeneutical circle signifies that, in interpretive experience, a new understanding is achieved not on the basis of already securely founded beliefs. Instead, a new understanding is achieved through renewed interpretive attention to further possible meanings of those presuppositions which, sometimes tacitly, inform the understanding that we already have.’

Similar to Hermeneutics, Haruki Murakami while using the parallel storytelling technique, writes in a style where the relationship between the events occurring in the alternate spaces, one inhabited by Kafka and the other by Nakata is not of the nature of a laterally progressing and sequentially developing chain of cause and effect like the vertical edifice of epistemological foundationalism as Theodore George writes but is essentially circular in nature where for example, the effect of a cause happening because of the cause working in the parallel strand is depicted before the cause which again gets depicted in the other parallel or alternate strand.

The entrance stone in *Kafka on the Shore* props up Murakami’s action of parallel storytelling and the progression of the parallel stories of Nakata and Kafka towards the contact with or arriving at the entrance stone is basically the working out of the fate of Kafka as predicted or rather cursed by his father, Koichi Tamura towards its own realization which is that Kafka would sleep with his mother and violate his sister.

Miss Saeki mentions to Kafka that when she was fifteen she had wanted “to go off to some other world, a place beyond anybody’s reach. A place beyond the flow of time.” She says,

“when I was 15, I thought there had to be a place like that in the world. I was sure that somewhere I’d run across the entrance that would take me to that other world.”

This “other world” “beyond the flow of time” is the world where Miss Saeki is united with her dead lover forever and she conceptualizes in her mind an entrance to that world which finds mention in her composed song, “Kafka on the Shore”:

“The drowning girl’s fingers

Search for the entrance stone, and more.

Lifting the hem of her azure dress,

She gazes –

At Kafka on the shore.”

In a very parallel fashion to this in the part of the story where there is Nakata, Hoshino after bringing the entrance stone to Nakata from the shrine tells Nakata that he is guessing from the name of the stone being Entrance Stone that it is “the entrance to something a long time ago.” This is how Murakami’s parallel storytelling for two characters namely Kafka and Nakata is working by directly interlinking the issue of time in both the stories through the object of the entrance stone in this case which we will find later stands as the key instrument for fulfilling the fate of Kafka.

In chapter thirty two we find that on Nakata’s instruction Hoshino flips over the entrance stone to which Nakata thanks him for opening the entrance. Later in

chapter thirty six, Hoshino asks Nakata if on their opening the entrance by lifting the stone has made something happen, to which Nakata replies in the affirmative. Hoshino questions,

“So maybe it’s happening somewhere else, right this minute?”

To this, Nakata replies,

“Yes, I think that’s true. As you said, it’s happening. And I’m waiting for it to finish happening.”

This “happening” is the fated happening and Murakami plays with this “happening” by its mention and discussion on it here in Nakata’s story to his making happen this “happening” in Kafka’s parallel story which is implied by Hoshino’s words, “happening somewhere else”

Kafka and Miss Saeki

Nakata says to Hoshino in chapter twenty four after waking up from his thirty four hours sleep and realizing due to that sleep that he has got to find the entrance stone. This entrance stone finds its first mention in the parallel story of Kafka in the lyrics of Miss Saeki’s song titled “Kafka on the Shore”. Through this “entrance stone” all the characters namely Kafka, Miss Saeki and Nakata get interlocked with each other and get placed on the network of fate as predicted by Kafka’s father. Haruki Murakami through parallel storytelling has initiated one of the most crucial fated actions in his story which is the moving of the entrance stone and here is how he has done it. Nakata says to Hoshino that he does not know about what will happen after moving the entrance stone but all he really knows is that it’s “about time somebody moved it” which he says will be very dangerous and that somebody is Nakata himself. This takes us from here in chapter twenty six back to the odd numbered chapter

twenty three dealing in the parallel story of Miss Saeki and Kafka. Kafka has got hold of the record “Kafka on the Shore” which was composed by Miss Saeki when she was nineteen years old and while Kafka is following the lyrics of the musical composition on the sleeve we read these lines at the end:

“The drowning girl’s fingers

Search for the entrance stone, and more.

Lifting the hem of her azure dress,

She gazes –

At Kafka on the shore”

In the chapter twenty three, Kafka was wondering about “the girl”, “the entrance stone” and just in the next chapter twenty four we see Nakata declaring to Hoshino that we have to find the entrance stone. Strange for us readers and quite very intentional from the side of the author, Murakami that how in this “we” is included Kafka too and us the readers - we all have to know the meaning of that song which is so essential in understanding the whole schema behind the whole background of this network of parallel storytelling and on we venture off on a journey with Nakata.

Right in the middle of the book, chapter twenty five ties up everything: Kafka’s fated journey to the Takamatsu, connecting it with Nakata’s parallel fated journey in search of the entrance stone towards Takamatsu with Hoshino and Miss Saeki’s ghost right inside her like a three dimensional painting in the forest of her heart as Kafka observes and finally Miss Saeki’s desire for the entrance to “that world”. Everything gets tied up here and this is hence the most important chapter placed even numerically at the middle of the novel / book.

We will now delve into the “happening” as mentioned by Hoshino to Nakata in the last section of this chapter because Nakata has opened the “entrance stone”. At chapter twenty seven, we find the fifteen year old girl or the ghost of Miss Saeki’s fifteen year old self having reached the room of Kafka at 2.47 in the night. On calling out at this ghost from a lost time when the now fifty year old Miss Saeki was fifteen year old, Kafka gets concerned that maybe the ghost will get frightened by his voice and leave the room to never return to him again. He says that if that happens he will feel terrible and absolutely devastated. He says,

“If she never came back everything would be lost to me for ever. All meaning, all direction. Everything.”

So Kafka has gradually fallen in such deep love with Miss Saeki or rather the fifteen year old ghost of the now fifty year old Miss Saeki that he has now come to attach all meaning and direction in his life with Miss Saeki without whom he will fall into nothingness. At the end of this chapter, Kafka speaks to himself,

“Am I in love with Miss Saeki when she was 15? Or with the real, 50-something Miss Saeki upstairs? I don’t know any more. The boundary line separating the two has started to waver, to fade, and I can’t focus. And that confuses me. I close my eyes and try to find some centre inside to hold on to.”

This particularly has happened due to the opening of the entrance stone by Nakata which is very much scripted in the map of fate as designed by Koichi Tamura for his son where he had cursed his son in the fashion of Oedipal fate that Kafka or his son would sleep with his mother. This prediction begins to play between the real world and the world of dreams such that Miss Saeki who is hinted at by Murakami as Kafka’s mother comes into the life of Kafka as Kafka very much like Oedipus from

the classical Greek tragedy had ventured on running away from his home at Nakano Ward to Takamatsu not knowing that by trying to run away from his fate he has even bolstered it through his act of escape. The play between the real world and the world of dreams is such that Kafka becoming Miss Saeki's lover from the past who is already dead falls in love with not the real Miss Saeki of now but the Miss Saeki of past, the ghost of which resides inside her and comes into his room at night. This play between the real and the unreal (or the dream) where the fate of Kafka as predicted by his father begins its course towards fruition is initiated or actuated by Nakata's opening the entrance stone in the parallel story to Kafka which is of Nakata and Hoshino parallelly dealt effectively through the medium of the entrance stone by Haruki Murakami. This is the "happening" as told by Hoshino. This is the "happening" where the bud of the fate of Kafka has begun to flower which has been aided or brought about or rather precisely caused by the writing of Murakami through his parallel storytelling technique.

Commenting upon a similar intricately complex narrative structure of Honore de Balzac's *Sarrasine*, Roland Barthes writes,

"This is the narrative fabric: seemingly subject to the discontinuity of messages, each of which, when it comes into play, is received as a useless supplement (whose very gratuitousness serves to authenticate the fiction by what we have called the *reality effect*), but is in fact saturated with pseudo-logical links, relays, doubly oriented terms: in short, it is calculation which affects the plenitude of this literature: here dissemination is not the random scattering of meanings toward the infinity of the language but a simple – temporary – suspension of affinitive, already magnetized elements, before they are summoned together to take their place, economically, in the same package."

So, considering the elements of the narrative of *Sarrasine*, it consists of or is composed of, as Barthes points out, “discontinuity of messages” which when playing in the body of the narrative seems as “useless supplement” of the story. He uses the word, “gratuitousness” to explain this situation which means “the state or quality of being unnecessary or with no cause”. This whole narrative body consisting of these seemingly “gratuitous” elements for example “pseudo-logical links, relays, doubly oriented terms” holds up meaning only when we as readers commence with our “calculation”: “it is calculation which affects the plenitude of this literature”. Here “plenitude” refers to the abundant meaning emerging out of the “gratuitous” elements of the narrative only after the readers’ “calculation”.

Similarly in *Kafka on the Shore*, for instance we have “doubly oriented” objects and ideas, each different orientation of a single object or idea being laid on the two different strands of the plot of the novel through the parallel storytelling employed by Murakami. For instance, we have the “entrance stone” as discussed above. The orientation of this object as in the story of Nakata is such that it is something to get hold of and Nakata ventures out from his home in the Nakano Ward on an adventurous quest for this entrance stone. In this journey, many surreal events are laid out in the path of Nakata like the fish falling from the sky after he murdered Johnnie Walker. The stone here thus occupies a space in a characteristic adventurous quest having in it murder, journey, meeting new people who become companions in the journey and magical or surreal events too.

Now, turning to the orientation of this stone as in the parallel story of Kafka, we come to know that this stone will serve as an entrance to the world, Miss Saeki aspires to reach. She had said to Kafka as mentioned above that when she was fifteen years old and living in this world with the absence of her lover beside her who had got



fatally wounded in a local brawl, she had deeply wanted “to go off to some other world, a place beyond anybody’s reach. A place beyond the flow of time.” She says, “I was sure that somewhere I’d run across the entrance that would take me to that other world”. The intense urge of Miss Saeki to reach this “other world” is such that the key which would help her reach there or the entrance stone even finds mention in her eponymous musical composition, “Kafka on the Shore”:

“The drowning girl’s fingers

Search for the entrance stone, and more.”

This is what Barthes refers to by “doubly oriented terms” which can also be identified in *Kafka on the Shore*, for instance “the entrance stone” elaborately deliberated upon, above. It is through “calculation” as Barthes says which brings about (“affects”) the abundant meaning of this kind of storytelling (“plenitude of this literature”) which abounds in “pseudo-logical links, relays, doubly oriented terms”: the abundant meaning in case of the “doubly oriented” entrance stone here being that the entrance stone by operating simultaneously but in a double orientation style which is facilitated even further because of its placing in both the narratives concerning Kafka and Nakata, it performing, quite true to its name being “entrance” stone, opens up the space where the course of the curse laid by Koichi Tamura on Kafka will culminate and have fruition, details of which will be pitched and further calculated to use Barthes’ term in the following parts of this chapter.

In chapter twenty nine, Kafka after listening to Miss Saeki’s musical composition from the past, “Kafka on the Shore” when she was twenty years old remarks:

“And once more, whether I like it or not, I’m swept away to that place. To that time.”

This “that place” is where Miss Saeki and her now dead lover both of fifteen years of age make love and “that time” is where both of them are united. Kafka from the present floats back to that time and becomes the fifteen year old lover of the fifteen year old Miss Saeki and this “happening” is stimulated by his listening to the score, “Kafka on the Shore” composed by Miss Saeki inspired from her love. Thus, Murakami uses the song composed in the past, speaking of the past to take the listener Kafka from the present to the past. During this night we find that not the ghost of Miss Saeki but the middle aged Miss Saeki from real life arrives at Kafka’s room. Kafka says that,

“Something’s happening, something very important ... She looks at me for a while, quietly concentrating as when she’s looking at the painting, and a thought hits me - the axis of time. Somewhere I don't know about, something weird is happening to time. Reality and dreams are all mixed up, like sea water and river water flowing together. I struggle to find the meaning behind it all, but nothing makes any sense.”

Both Kafka and Miss Saeki are now in this realm where “nothing makes any sense” anymore. The axis of time as in the phenomenal world does not function in this realm or is redundant. Here in this realm, Kafka of the real world, Miss Saeki’s dead lover from the past, Miss Saeki of the past and the Miss Saeki of the present all get muddled up into a confusion about which Kafka comments, “nothing makes any sense”. This situation now becomes the setting where the curse of Koichi Tamura will work out in a very dreamy style where we as readers will be left in a position having no access to proper words, well-defined ideas or concepts to explain the event which

unfolds before us. The event is such that in this clutter and mess of dreams and reality Kafka and Miss Saeki have coitus thus fulfilling the Oedipal curse laid on Kafka by his father but here is the catch of that event brought about by the chaos of dreams and reality:

“She must be thinking I’m her dead boyfriend from long ago, and that she is doing what they used to do here in this very room. Fast asleep, dreaming, she goes through the motions from long ago.

I think that I’d better wake her up. She is making a terrible mistake, and I have to let her know. This isn’t a dream - it’s real life. But everything’s happening so fast, and I don’t have the strength to resist. Thrown totally off balance, I feel as if I’m being sucked into a time warp.”

So, Miss Saeki is fast asleep. She came to Kafka’s room sleep walking. In her sleep Kafka is her dead lover from the past. Thus physically though she has coitus with Kafka in the present, in her dreams she has entered the past and united with her lover in that time. This is that time she had mentioned about to Kafka and now her wish of entering that time has been made possible by the parallel opening of the entrance stone by Nakata in the parallel story to this about which again we find mention in her song from the past. So, this is how the curse laid on Kafka or his fate foretold by his father is working out towards its fulfilment through the medium of confusing dreams and reality and the interlinking of the two parallel stories of Kafka and Nakata through the use of parallel storytelling by Murakami and this confounding of dreams and reality where the act of deriving meaning or explanation to the happenings fails us is a very unique feature of Haruki Murakami’s style of parallel storytelling. Hence, we now see how the entrance stone which was identified as

“doubly oriented” taking the aid of Barthes’ idea, after “calculation” as done above in detail brings about the abundant meaning of the novel which is the entrance stone being doubly oriented through particularly parallel storytelling in this novel, was acting as the medium for the final realization of Koichi Tamura’s curse laid on Kafka:

“... it is calculation which affects the plenitude of this literature: here dissemination is not the random scattering of meanings toward the infinity of the language but a simple – temporary – suspension of affinitive, already magnetized elements, before they are summoned together to take their place, economically, in the same package.”

Here Kafka says about this:

“There’s one thing, I discover, the girl and I have in common. We’re both in love with someone who’s no longer of this world.”

Kafka is as if in a daze when inside the ‘time warp’. Further, Crow comments that “wiping away the nebula” from his sight, Kafka tries to find where he really is:

“You’re trying to find the direction of the flow, struggling to hold on to the axis of time. But you can’t locate the borderline separating dream and reality. Or even the boundary between what’s real and what’s possible. All you’re sure of is that you’re in a delicate position. Delicate - and dangerous.”

Again through parallel storytelling in order to reinforce his idea that the prophecy of Koichi Tamura is working out through the complementary relationship between the parallel stories of Kafka and Nakata, Murakami has put this dangerous quality of the realm where the borderline between dream and reality separates in the conversation between Nakata and Hoshino too in the other or parallel story. In chapter twenty six, Hoshino says to Nakata,

“But moving that kind of stone must be risky”

Nakata replies to this,

“That’s right. Maybe Nakata shouldn’t bring this up, but it is very dangerous.”

So, after having moved this “dangerous” entrance stone Nakata has initiated the “dangerous” “happening” in the other strand of the two parallel stories where Kafka and Miss Saeki as mentioned above enter into a “time warp” which dissolves within its enfold any boundaries between binaries, here specifically the boundary existing between dream and reality, which makes possible the realization of the prophecy of Koichi Tamura. While again this point of the “time warp” is parallelly dealt with in the story of Nakata again just like the point of the entrance stone being “dangerous”. That is done in the episode of Hoshino and Colonel Sanders who escorts Hoshino to the location of the entrance stone.

A portion of the conversation between Colonel Sanders and Hoshino goes like this, in chapter twenty six, starting with Hoshino:

“ ... So what’s the story?”

“There’s a kind of a warp at work in the world.”

“A warp?”

“You probably don’t know this, but that’s how we have three dimensions. Because of the warp. If you want everything to be nice and straight all the time, then go and live in a world made with a triangular ruler.”

This is Colonel Sanders’ reply to Hoshino on being asked by Hoshino that what business he has got to do “working as a pimp in a back alley in Takamatsu”, he being the famous owner of the international franchise of fried chicken. This means

Sanders has come to deal with time warp recently generated in the world. Later we find Sanders aiding Hoshino in finding the entrance stone who in turn takes it back to Nakata and lays it down beside his pillow. The cause of this generation of the time warp again lies in the parallel story of Kafka where he after getting the access of the song “Kafka on the Shore” with the help of Oshima, listens to it and on listening to it his whole being is transferred from the present to the time which Miss Saeki’s song musicalizes.

Thus, we have now become very much aware of the qualities and peculiarities of Murakami’s execution of the parallel storytelling technique where past, present, dreams, reality, ghost, the axis of time, the self all get muddled up into such a position where we cannot differentiate one from the other or rather we absolutely fail at differentiating between the binaries.

### CHAPTER-III

#### ***Agency in Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World***

The writing technique of parallel storytelling is central to the plot of Haruki Murakami's novel, *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* because the protagonist again like in *Kafka on the Shore* lives in two different spaces but here unlike *Kafka on the Shore* there is no confounding of two different characters Kafka and Nakata, instead in *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*, there is a clear distinction between the unnamed protagonist's living in the physical world and alternatively in the programmed world installed in his mind by the old scientist.

The odd numbered chapters deal with the protagonist's trial in the physical world where there are the Semiotics, the Calcutechs, the old scientist and his granddaughter and the even numbered chapters deal with the plot of "The End of the World" in the protagonist's mind where the same protagonist lives with others in the Town which has the Wall surrounding the Town. These even numbered chapters are the sequences of "The End of the World" and on the other hand "Hard-Boiled Wonderland" is the title given to the sequences of events in the physical world in the odd numbered chapters.

One of the foremost links for these above mentioned two parallel sequences is laid in chapter three of the novel, titled 'Rain Gear, Inklings, Laundry'. We now know that since this is an odd numbered chapter, hence its setting will be the physical world.

The scientist or the professor tells the narrator or the unnamed male protagonist that he has been researching the "mammalian palate" and then the professor shows his shelves in his laboratory "lined with skulls" for his experiments:

“The whole back of the room was flush with shelves, each lined with skulls. Giraffe, horse, panda, mouse, every species of mammal imaginable. There must have been three hundred or four hundred skulls. Naturally, there were human skulls, too. Caucasoid, Negroid, Asiatic, Indian, one male and one female of each.”

This trope of the skull introduced here in this chapter will become a key device for connecting the alternate storylines or narratives very much like trope of the “entrance stone” in *Kafka on the Shore*.

The scientist says that he is trying to “hear the sounds bones make” through his experiments. He says that every bone has a “hidden language” of its own which is its own “unique sound” and his research intends to decode this “hidden language” of bones and “render it artificially controllable”. The old man reveals that he had called the narrator, a Calcutec to both launder and shuffle his data.

Then the narrator explains the process of laundering through his practically doing it on the data provided by the Professor. He says that he directly inputs the data given to him into his right brain, then converts it through “totally unrelated sign-pattern” and after that he transfers his converted data to his left brain which comes as an output of “recoded numbers” as he types those down on paper. This is the outline of the process of laundering of data as explained and performed by the narrator who is a Calcutec. As a Calcutec he is a part of the machinery of the System Central in a futuristic Tokyo as envisioned by the writer. The adversaries of the Calcutecs are the Semiotics. The narrator says:

“Nonetheless, Semiotics can occasionally decode stolen data by means of a temporary bridge . . . The more we Calcutecs up our technologies, the more they up



their counter-technologies. We safeguard the data, they steal it. Your classic cops-and-robbers routine.”

The Semiotics then make deals with their stolen data in the black market, making huge profits and worse than that “they keep the most valuable bits of information for themselves and the benefit of their own organisations” which goes by the name, the Factory. The Semiotics make the Factory and the Calcutecs make the System. The Factory thus is compared to the “Data Mafia” which deals in stolen information and makes money.

In the following ‘The End of the World’ section in the next chapter where the setting is the Town, the Gatekeeper tells the narrator that he from then on will be the “Dreamreader” who will be reading “old dreams” in the library. Like in the previous “Hard Boiled Wonderland” section the narrator is engaged in the mental process of laundering and shuffling data as a working Calcutec, the details of which has been provided above, in a similar fashion in the alternate “The End of the World” section, the narrator will be engaged in the duty of dream reading imposed upon him by the Town which in a parallel manner is a mental work too.

Thus, this is how Murakami has already set upon establishing link between the parallel or alternate narratives right from the very outset of his novel *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and The End of the World* and this chapter will delve into understanding these links, how they are working as constituents of the parallel storytelling technique employed in the novel and what are their influences on the entire plot of the novel, primarily how the parallel storytelling technique becomes the key tool for the author to depict one’s losing her or his agency over one’s life.

The Dreamreader says to the Librarian in chapter four that he has an impression that all people in “The End of the World” have lived elsewhere too in a totally different space and that in some manner all these people including him have forgotten that life. This is indeed, the writer’s attempt to bring in the blurred memory of the life lived in the “Hard-Boiled Wonderland” section to the character now living in the simulation in his mind. It is through memory and recounting of past days that one holds onto his life as lived in his past days but when these memories of a person lose substance then he loses hold over his life because life ultimately is a chain of events and the memories of those.

The writer shows the events of the life of the Calcutec as lived in the “Hard-Boiled Wonderland” and then through parallel storytelling blurs the memories of this life for the Dreamreader who was the Calcutec in “Hard-Boiled Wonderland”. By doing this, he shows that how the Dreamreader has already begun realizing that he himself having agency over his life is questionable. Hence, parallel storytelling aiding the depiction of one’s losing agency over her or his life is evident right from chapter four of the novel.

In chapter thirteen titled “Frankfurt, Door, Independent Operants”, Junior who has broken into the house of the Calcutec says to the Calcutec that they know many things: they know about the Professor, the data shuffled by the Calcutec and also about the skull gifted by the Professor. In reply to Junior’s enquiring about who bribed the gas inspector to enter into the Calcutec’s house and steal the skull, the Calcutec said:

““You think I know?” I said. “All I know is I don’t need the grief.”

To this, Junior says:

““We figured that. You don’t know nothing. You’re being used.””

This finally exposes the fact that the Calcutec has turned into a toy at the mercy of the network of the Professor, the Calcutecs and the Semiotics, primarily becoming a guinea pig for the Professor’s experiment which will be disclosed later in the text. The following lines spoken in the same chapter by Junior bolsters the idea of the Calcutec losing agency over his life:

““The Professor answers to nobody,” Junior said, sizing up his lighter from various angles. “He’s the best and he knows it. The Semiotics know it, the Calcutecs know it. He just plays the in-betweens. That way he can push on, doing what he pleases with his research. One of these days he’s gonna break through. That’s where you fit in.””

““... he’s been studying all about you. He’s been preparing something for a long time now.””

““So we figure, the Professor’s about to throw you in the box and tie things up.””

In Chapter eighteen titled, “Dreamreading”, the process of the Dreamreader’s reading of old dreams from the skulls in the “The End of the World” sequence is laid out. The Dreamreader says to the Librarian that the more old dreams he reads, the more he apprehends his helplessness wherein he cannot decipher the message conveyed by the dreams. Towards the end of the chapter, the Librarian asks that if her not responding to the love appeals of the Dreamreader has made his mind “hard shut” which is causing his inability to interpret the dreams. The conversation which follows this, between the Dreamreader and the Librarian starting with the Dreamreader is:

“It’s not that way at all,” I say. “It is something in me. My mind is turning away from me. I’m confused.”

“Is the mind beyond you?”

“I don’t know,” I say. “There are times when the understanding does not come until later, when it no longer matters. Others times I do what I must do, not knowing my own mind, and I am led astray.”

Hence, the experiment carried out by the Professor on the Calcutec is showing results in the mind of the Dreamreader of the parallel sequence “The End of the World”. We see how the Dreamreader just like the Calcutec in the parallel section as discussed above is losing agency over his own life because his mind is “turning away from me” as he says and the understanding of it all comes at a time when this understanding does not matter anymore.

This is the chief play by Murakami’s use of the parallel storytelling. In one section of the parallel narratives, we see how he builds up the suspense in the details of the physical life of the Calcutec and then he extends this chain of built up suspense to the other narrative with the Dreamreader in it where this chain of suspense begins taking up events from the mental life of the Dreamreader which are again consequences of the events of the physical life of the Calcutec. All of this because the writer wants to show that both the physical and the mental selves of the unnamed protagonist of the novel are losing agencies over themselves with each having effect upon the other in a cyclical manner. It is to be kept in mind that the Calcutec in “Hard-Boiled Wonderland” and the Dreamreader in “The End of the World” are the same person or to say more appropriately the Dreamreader is the mental self of the Calcutec. Hence, the most important element and the reason behind Murakami’s use

of parallel storytelling with regard to his focus on agency over one's life has been justly laid out with ample evidence and reasoning.

Similar links in alternate chapters are laid throughout the text by means of parallel storytelling. The girl referred to as the "chubby girl" by the narrator in "Hard-Boiled Wonderland" sequence tells the Calcutec in Chapter twenty one that once they find her Grandfather or the Professor, everything will be sorted out and be alright and that the Calcutec "can't go back now." This is in response to the Calcutec's complaining that the Professor has got him involved in the network of the warring Calcutecs and Semiotics, getting into the whirlpool of which he got his gut slit. Similarly, the Gatekeeper in the preceding sequence of "The End of the World" tells the Dreamreader that the beasts cannot leave the Town. This is his response to the Dreamreader on being asked why do the beasts in the Town not move to the south of the Town where they could stay away from the harsh snow instead of dying:

"But the beasts cannot leave. They belong to the Town; they are captured by it. Just as you and I are. By their own instincts, they know this."

What all of this is doing to the text or the plot of the text as a whole is impart a downcast atmosphere inside which the instances of the plot play out. "Downcast" because the overall mood of the text is gloomy, because the characters in both the alternate sequences realize in tandem that they have no control over their lives and this realization in tandem we see happens only because of the employment of the parallel storytelling technique by the writer.

Chapter twenty five titled "Meal, Elephant Factory, Trap" is the most important chapter in the novel because here the Professor reveals what he has done with the mind of the Calcutec. The Professor says that he has tampered with the

cognitive system of the Calcutec on a “phenomenological level” and created a computer visualization from the subconscious mind of the Calcutec or the black box as the Professor calls. Basically the Professor has made a video of the “core consciousness” of the Calcutec and what goes on in his “core consciousness”. Then, the Professor installed a separate circuit in the brain of the Calcutec and hence made his cognition a three-way circuitry. In the third circuit thus created, he uploaded his edited version of the computer visualization of the Calcutec’s core consciousness. Here is the reply the Professor gave to the Calcutec on being asked why did he do this to the brain of the Calcutec:

“I wanted t’find out how an edited consciousness put in order by someone else would function in the original subjects themselves.”

The Professor calls this his “edited input consciousness”. He further says:

“The vision displayed in your consciousness is the End of the World. Why you have the likes of that tucked away in there, I can’t say. But for whatever reason, it’s there. Meanwhile, this world in your mind here is coming to an end. Or t’put it another way, your mind will be living there, in the place called the End of the World.”

So, here everything regarding the process and the reason for the alternate lives of the Calcutec is revealed. We also come to know about the reason behind the naming of the alternate sequence as “The End of the World”. It is now evident why parallel storytelling is the most important method for working with the plot of this novel which moves around the issue of one’s losing agency over his own life. The story of the life of the Dreamreader in the “edited input consciousness” has to move forward marching alongside the story of the life of the Calcutec because both the

events in both the spaces, one in the input consciousness and the other in the “Hard-Boiled Wonderland” are complementing each other in a cyclical cause and effect chain. For instance, the extracts given above from chapter twenty five revealing the mechanism of how the Calcutec is living double life makes the definitive point that the Calcutec’s life has gone to the hands of the scientist who has been using him as a subject for his experiments. Similarly in the parallel sequence of “The End of the World” preceding this chapter, the Dreamreader says to his shadow:

“How can I be strong when I do not know my own mind? I am lost.”

This is happening with the Dreamreader because of what has been done to his other life as the Calcutec by the scientist which the writer elaborates in the next chapter of the alternate world as discussed above. Thus, we see that one particular characteristic of the method of parallel storytelling employed by the writer is that the alternate stories delineated are not at all independent with measured linking points between them but the narratives of both the sides are totally dependent on each other in a cause and effect cycle where this cause and effect movement is not linear like in traditional stories but as we see in the above mentioned instance, the effect of the scientist’s “input consciousness” on the Calcutec in the parallel world of the Dreamreader coming before the cause in the next chapter. The Dreamreader says to its separated or rather cut off shadow that he is lost because he is not able to comprehend his own mind only because in the alternate “Hard-Boiled Wonderland” section, the Professor is playing with the mind of the Calcutec for the sake of his scientific experiment.

What comes out of all of this discussion of the nature of the parallel storytelling employed by Haruki Murakami in this novel is that a person is losing

control over his life where all events of his life are getting determined by the designs of another, here the Professor.

The Professor's experiments on the Calcutec leads the text towards the exploration of the relationship between the "I" and the "non-I". This issue receives a big impetus in the conversation between the Librarian and the Dreamreader where they are talking about the Dreamreader's planning of leaving the town. The Librarian asks the Dreamreader whether he will never again return to the Town after he escapes from its bound and dictates. To this the Dreamreader replies in the negative because that particular option is a technical impossibility. The shadow of the Dreamreader which has been chipped off from him is used as a metaphor by the writer for the mind of the Dreamreader. The Dreamreader explains to the Librarian that earlier he had thought about helping his shadow escape the Town and himself staying behind which would mean that he still would be having a mind because the shadow is alive whereas the whole mechanics of the Town works towards demolishing the shadow of the townspeople. From this we get to know that the shadow is the remnant of the outside world. The shadow is the last trace of the outside world living in the simulation or the Town. In that sense the shadow still connects the "I" with "non-I" if we consider the "I" in the real and the "non-I" as the inhabitant of the simulation. This is the importance of the shadow in Murakami's execution of the parallel storytelling technique. The shadow works symbolically connecting the two strands of "Hard-Boiled Wonderland" and "The End of the World". We will further delve into the nature of the consequences of Murakami's linking the two strands of the parallel stories with the symbol of the shadow.

The Dreamreader is adamant on getting out of the Town and enter the real world. He has all plans in place which he and his shadow has formulated in great



details in order to find out the weak point of the Town through which their desired escape will be possible. He is so emotionally attached to this mission that he even promises the Librarian girl that he will find her mind for her no matter what:

“If you believe in me at all, then believe this: I promise you I will find it. Everything depends on this”

This is how the trace of the real world is working upon the Dreamreader to pull him towards the real world and out of the simulation inside him. Here, develops the force of tension working upon the element which is linking the two worlds, which is the shadow. The shadow experiences this force working upon it and bears the brunt of it or the tension formed by the contradicting forces each trying to eliminate the other and attain independence.

About this simulation in him, the Calcutec tells the chubby girl in chapter thirty five titled “Nail Clippers, Butter Sause, Iron Vase” that deep inside his consciousness there is a core which cannot be exactly perceived even by him. He says that in his case, this core is a town. This is a reference to the Town where the Dreamreader is with the Librarian. He says:

“A town with a river flowing through it and a high brick wall surrounding it. None of the people in the town can leave. Only unicorns can go in and out. The unicorns absorb the egos of the townpeople like blotter paper and carry them outside the wall. So the people in the town have no ego, no self. I live in the town – or so the story goes. I don’t know any more than that, since I haven’t actually seen any of this with my own eyes.”

This is how Murakami’s execution of the parallel storytelling technique is working. The Dreamreader in the Town is making plans to escape physically to the

real world and the Calcutec is laying down the details of his mental visualization of the Town where the Dreamreader resides. It is important to once again point out that the Calcutec and the Dreamreader are the same person, the former the physical, the later mental. It is interesting to note that the physical is mentally linked with the Town whereas the one in the Town which is a mindscape after all is making a physical attempt to escape the Town from his own perspective.

Chapter thirty six titled “Accordion” carries a powerful shift in the mentality of the Dreamreader. The irony is that the more close he is approaching towards the actualization of his plan with the shadow of leaving the Town along with it, the more he is feeling attachment towards the Town though like in a lucid dream he very well is aware that he is inside a simulated reality inside his head and not outside in the real world. The Town gains its power over the Dreamreader who is planning to leave it and again we come to the question of the agency over one’s life in *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*. Murakami through parallel storytelling has developed tension and injected anxiety in this issue where we as readers swing like a pendulum between the Calcutec’s shady or muddy account of the Town and the Dreamreader’s attempt to escape this Town in the parallel strand. This swinging between the parallel stories gains momentum with the writer’s pitching up the element of suspense in the events surrounding the Dreamreader. The question that whether the Dreamreader will really be successful in fleeing from the Town and what will be the consequences if that really happens is the key which heightens the suspense towards the end of the novel.

To return to the point of the major shift in the Dreamreader’s perception of the Town, we note that in this chapter the Dreamreader says that he is well aware of his impending loss of each person of the Town. He points out the mistake of the Town for

its inhabitants having no mind which infers that the Dreamreader has all rights to leave this place which is faulty. But then suddenly he turns away from the last statement and says:

“I feel almost a ...love...toward the Town. I cannot stay in this place, yet I do not want to lose it.”

He cannot stay in this place because this is not the real world and from this develops the axiom that this place is where he as his “non-I” lives in. That is why his being sure about his decision to leave this place because from the “non-I” he has to flee and with the “I” outside in the real world he has to unite. But the catch is that though he knows that he has to leave this place, he does not want to lose this place because:

“The whole Town lives and breathes in the music I play. The streets shift their weight with my every move. The Wall stretches and flexes as if my own flesh and skin. I repeat the song several times, then set the accordion down on the floor, lean back, and close my eyes. Everything here is a part of me – the Wall and Gate and Woods and River and Pool. It is all my self.”

The Town, the Dreamreader realises is made up of his own self and he feels each aspect and movement of the Town as if those are parts and functions of his own body.

The playing of this accordion becomes an act of the mind of the Dreamreader because he for the first time feels the Town on his body and realises the Town as a part of himself or his self which we will later see will imply the complete comprehension of the Dreamreader as to the Town being his own construction. Only an act of the still living mind of the Dreamreader symbolized by his dwindling

shadow can enlighten him to wholly comprehend the Town as the fruit of his own seed. The proof of the Dreamreader's playing the accordion being an act of his mind is that the Librarian on listening to it clings to him:

“Long after I set down the instrument, she clings to me with both hands, eyes closed. Tears run down her cheeks. I put my arm around her shoulder and touch my lips to her eyelids. The tears give her a moist, gentle heat.”

This happens because the Dreamreader's playing the accordion has revealed the mind of that girl to find which the Dreamreader had promised the girl. The Dreamreader finds the room in which they are is aglow though this light was not some phenomenon from the heavens. He spots the source of this glow on turning out the ceiling lamp. The light was actually emanating from the collection of the skulls:

“An ancient fire that has lain dormant in them is now awakening. The phosphorescence yields pure to the eye; it soothes with memories that warm and fill my heart.”

Then, the Dreamreader approaches the pile of skulls and from there picks up a skull and runs his fingers over the surface of the skull. In this skull he senses “a glimmer, a remembrance of mind”. Next he identifies this mind as the mind of the Librarian which he had promised to find.

This is why the playing of the accordion was an act of the mind of the Dreamreader which by its functioning roused the mind of the girl too. No other act could rouse the minds of the townspeople. It is the mind which stands as the sole subversion against the working principles of the Town and it is the mind which the Town suppresses and kills, hence it is only the subverting mind and its workings which can arouse another dormant mind which the Town will never want. The

presence of this unicorn skull as the gift from the Professor in the parallel strand of the Calcutec acts as a cue for the skull's own working in the parallel strand of the Dreamreader. This is thus another peculiarity of Murakami's execution of parallel storytelling.

The Dreamreader on finding the mind of the Librarian says that her mind was never lost and he will now have to bring the pieces together in order to read her mind out which after all is the job of the assigned Dreamreader of the Town. He victoriously proclaims that at last he has found the mind they have lost. This one victory initiates a thought of affirmation towards the ultimate plan of the Dreamreader turning out to be successful too. The Dreamreader sure has got the hang of revealing minds and reading those and surely he has been getting access to the means for leaving the Town but a problem will crop up at the end. While reading the Librarian's mind, the Dreamreader says that gradually "in distinct movements of heat" he is getting hold of her mind at his fingertips. This getting hold of the Librarian's mind and reading it, anticipates his own flight from the Town to claim back his own mind.

The shadow identifies the River in the Town from the Town as the way to the real world. It says that on looking at the water it could feel the River to be "full of life":

'I looked down at the water. The River was full of life. I could feel this. There is nothing bad about it. I believe that if we give ourselves over to the water, the flow of the River will lead us out. Out of the Town and back to a real world.'

The line, "There is nothing bad about it" spoken by the shadow infers that everything else in the Town is "bad" and everything in the real world is good the last remains of which in the Town is the River. This proposition of what is good and what

bad is from the perspective of the shadow who we have seen is the final trace of the real world on the being of the Dreamreader and the other townspeople.

This River figured as a memory in the parallel strand “Hard-Boiled Wonderland”. Now we are delving into revealing and analyzing another point of contact in Murakami’s way of parallel storytelling: the River.

In Chapter twenty five titled “Meal, Elephant Factory, Trap” on being enquired by the Professor about facing any symptoms due to the implant in his mind, the Calcutec says that he had got a memory of something that he has forgotten of even experiencing. This is because this memory which has come to the Calcutec is the memory not of his experiences in the real world but of his events in the Town as the Dreamreader. Hence, being in the real world he cannot grasp hold of his life in the Town as the Dreamreader but since he himself is the Dreamreader in the Town, hence he has a memory of the Town but a memory which cannot be associated with his life in the real world. Hence, the disjoint between the memory and the event which made that memory.

The River thus stands as the symbol from the real world yet unalloyed in the Town standing for the disjoint in an agent’s cognition of the two parallel worlds portrayed in Murakami’s use of the parallel storytelling.

The Calcutec on hearing the sound of water was triggered to experience a vivid and continuous memory which he was sure about not being a mere hallucination.

‘It was a substantial memory. I know that beyond a doubt.’

The shadow then proceeds to modify the axiom which is inferred about the real world being good from its last proposition. It says:

“It’s not the best of all worlds,” says my shadow. “I make no promises, but it is the world where we belong. There will be good and bad. There will be neither good nor bad. It is where you were born and where you will live and where you will die. And when you die, I too will die. It’s the natural course of things.”

Hence, from the everything good inferred about the real world, the shadow shifts to “the natural course of things”. The reason justifying the way of life in the real world to be natural is that it was where the Dreamreader was actually born as the Calcutec and it is the space where when the Dreamreader as Calcutec will die then his shadow will die along with him whereas that is not allowed in the Town, where the shadow of a person is cut off from him and then there are measures to ensure that the shadow withers and dies.

The nature of Murakami’s parallel storytelling is that the shadow persuades the Dreamreader in “The End of the World” section to escape to the “Hard-Boiled Wonderland” section whereas the Professor reasons out to the Calcutec about why staying in “The End of the World” section as the Dreamreader is not a bad option as his life as Calcutec will end shortly.

Murakami through parallel storytelling builds a contradiction with the statements of the shadow in the parallel sequence of “Hard-Boiled Wonderland”. We are now delving into another intention behind Murakami’s use of the parallel storytelling technique which we will find again raises the question of the protagonist’s agency over his own life.

In the same chapter titled, “Meal, Elephant Factory, Trap”, the Professor for the first time lays down the single most important tenet of the Town as in the mind of the Calcutec where he resides as the Dreamreader:

“‘Everythin’ that’s in this world here and now is missin’ from that world. There’s no time, no life, no death. No values in any strict sense. No self. In that world of yours, people’s selves are externalized into beasts.’”

The Town thus as an existence stands in total contradiction to the real world. All phenomena which defines, builds and governs the real world lose their functions in the Town. Regarding the impending death of the Calcutec, the Professor says that his existence will not be altogether annulled but he will continue living in another world forever. He comforts the Calcutec saying that in this whole murky business of living simultaneously or rather dividing time between two worlds where the Calcutec is sure to die in the real world, all is not lost after all. The reason which the Professor gives to justify this is that once the Calcutec is there in the Town permanently, he can reclaim for himself everything from the real world in the Town which he had forsaken on permanently departing from the real world. The proof of this lies in the event of the Dreamreader’s finding out the mind of the Librarian which is after all an act of reclaiming from the real world into the Town the most important possession of a person: the mind. But then again to return to the argument of the shadow against the Town, the Town does not function according to the natural order of things where one is born, then lives and finally dies with his shadow dying along with him.

In developing all of the tension between the ways of the two worlds, parallel storytelling we find came to great aid for the writer. The writer has placed the Professor and the shadow as counterparts in the two strands and each counterpart vehemently opposes, challenges its other. In this way the tension in the plot of the novel is developed because both the worlds with their alternate and contradictory working principles collide repeatedly. This repetitive collision of the two worlds is possible only because of Murakami’s peculiar use of the parallel storytelling where



arguments in favour of and against each world is laid down in alternate odd, even chapters with odd chapters dealing with the real world or the “Hard-Boiled Wonderland” and the even chapters dealing with the Town or “The End of the World”. What happens with that is that in the real world section we get the idea of that world and about the Town from the perspective of the person standing in that world whereas in the parallel sequence concerning the Town, we form the idea of the working principles and consequences of living in the Town from the perspective of someone who stands on the Town itself and since the working principles of these two worlds are contradictory, the ideas of these two worlds formed from the standpoint of the alternate worlds will always collide. Hence, the shadow’s negative impression of the Town for it not working according to the natural order of things whereas the Professor’s colliding thought that everything from the real world can be regained in the world of the Town. All this stitching together of two strands of two parallel worlds we thus see achieves building up tension in the plot by virtue of the colliding ideas of the Professor and the shadow and the subsequent building up of their respective arguments through the progression of the chapters.

The Calcutec or the Dreamreader bears the impact of all these collisions because neither the Professor nor the shadow directly combat each other. The collision is all happening inside the consciousness of the Calcutec in the real world and the Dreamreader in the Town who are the same person and his life we see is determined by this tussle between the ideologies and the actions of the Professor and the shadow without the intervention of his own decisions or ideas. As a Calcutec he is at the mercy of the Professor whose experiment on him determines the fatal end of his life no matter what he does himself to save himself. All efforts are fruitless. On the other hand, as the Dreamreader he is molded according to what his shadow prescribes to be

good for him and hence makes the plan along with the shadow to leave the Town. His aim of life in the Town becomes to escape the Town along with the shadow. This is why it is now reasonable to assert after much evidences and analysis of those evidences that Murakami has given shape to his parallel storytelling in a way where the protagonist suffering the collisions of the two parallel and antagonistic strands of stories loses the agency over his own life as the consequence of the impact of these collisions.

In the last chapter titled “Birds”, the shadow true to the chapter title tells the Dreamreader on approaching the exit of the Town that they are now free as birds as nothing any longer can keep them in the Town. It affirms with conviction that a whole new world lies on the other end of the Pool before which they now are standing. They are now supposed to take a plunge into the Pool together, reach the other end together, unite with each other in the real world, live and die together as the very natural order of things as mentioned by the shadow earlier.

The Dreamreader says to the shadow:

“I have been thinking it over . . . ,” I dredge up the words. “I’m not going.”

Everything in the novel developed till now by the writer changes here with a shock when only two more pages are left for the novel to end. At the final moment of what had been developing in “The End of the World” sequence, the Dreamreader makes a clean about-turn. The Dreamreader subverts the whole body of the developing events in “The End of the World” and asserts his own self with its own intentions in front of his shadow which is the last vestige of himself from the real world.

The Dreamreader says that he knows very well what staying in the Town means and he understands very well that what is the most sensible course of action is the one which had been happening till now leading to the world on the other side of the Pool but he cannot bring himself to leave this world, the Town. The Dreamreader has discovered that something involves him in the Town more than he could ever have thought of. He has discovered the source which has created and sustains the Town. The shadow confirms that it is indeed the Dreamreader himself who has created the Town and has made everything there:

‘You made everything here. The Wall, the River, the Woods, the Library, the Gate, everything. Even this Pool.’

To this the Dreamreader adds that he has responsibilities towards the people, places and things he has created here in his Town. He explains that he knows he is doing a terrible wrong by not leaving the Town when the outlet is right before him and also that perhaps he is doing himself wrong too but he must see the consequences of his own creation:

‘This is my world. The Wall is here to hold me in, the River flows through me, the smoke is me burning. I must know why.’

After the above quoted line Murakami again takes advantage of the parallel storytelling technique to make the last collision in the novel which will keep the novel open ended for the readers.

The Professor in the “Hard-Boiled Wonderland” section as pointed out before too had told with the confidence of a scientist who knows his stuff properly that everything the Calcutec loses with his termination in the real world can be reclaimed by him as the Dreamreader in the Town and that his death in the real world would not

mean his complete obliteration as his life as the Dreamreader in the Town will continue.

On the parallel strand what Murakami does is make the idea of the Professor become the aim of life of the Dreamreader. Paradoxically the Dreamreader claims his own self and challenges his shadow but ultimately the Dreamreader is unknowingly choosing the inevitable or ineluctable consequences of the Professor's experiment. Thus, it would be a mistake to state from the events at the end of the novel that the Dreamreader gains agency over his life. From the perspective of the Dreamreader and the shadow, yes the Dreamreader finally decides for himself the world he will live in but on the bigger picture, the Dreamreader chose the consequences already decided by the Professor with his experiment on the Calcutec. Hence, till the end, none of the two identities of the same man, the Calcutec and the Dreamreader gains agency over his life. The Calcutec knows that he is at the mercy of the Professor's experiment. The Dreamreader is under the illusion that he has finally chosen the Town for himself by going against his shadow whereas that was already determined by the experiment that the Calcutec's life would be terminated within a specified time but he would continue living as the Dreamreader in the Town.

Murakami thus aligning the life purpose of the Dreamreader now with the assertions of the Professor makes a direct link between the two by giving the following dialogue to the Dreamreader which runs parallel to the Professor saying that everything lost from the real world can be reclaimed in the Town:

‘. . . A little by little, I will recall things. People and places from our former world, different qualities of light, different songs. And as I remember, I may find the key to my own creation, and to its undoing.’

This is exactly what Murakami is doing with his execution of the parallel storytelling technique: aligning and colliding the two strands by symbols, ideas, ideologies participating in the two strands, each interacting with the other through the layout of the novel whose alternate chapters deal with alternate worlds. All of this has been traced, analysed and interpreted throughout this chapter.

After the above aligning with the Professor's idea, Murakami effects a collision of another idea in this same parallel strand with the same idea of the Professor which lies on the other strand. The shadow contradicts the Dreamreader saying that he doubts the Dreamreader will be able to find the key to his creation by recalling things or reclaiming things from the real world as the Professor would say. The shadow says that the aim of the Dreamreader will not be fulfilled during his staying sealed inside himself by his choosing to stay in the Town permanently. The shadow says that the Dreamreader will need its company or association like in the natural order of things of the real world in order to achieve what the Dreamreader is planning to pursue in the Town but the Town as we have seen till now functions on the principle that people should be separated from their shadows and their shadows subsequently killed. Explaining this the shadow plunges into the Pool to take itself to the world on the other side leaving the Dreamreader shadowless in the Town. Here is the sequence of what Murakami did at the end of the novel through parallel storytelling:

1. Lay down the argument of the Professor about the ability of the Calcutec to reclaim in the Town things lost in the real world with his termination there.
2. Align in the parallel strand, the subversive idea of the Dreamreader with the idea of the Professor. The Dreamreader at the last moment subverts the

plan of its shadow of leaving the Town and decides to stay put in the Town.

3. Then the writer brings about a collision of the idea of the Professor and the subsequent aligned idea of the Dreamreader with the countering idea of the shadow. The shadow explains that the Dreamreader will not be able to “recall things” as he is planning without the shadow staying in association with him as is natural in the world on the other end of the Pool in front of them now. Then the shadow plunges into the Pool and leaves the Town.

The novel ends at the last point. What really happened with the last sequence of the writer’s exercise of the parallel storytelling is that by aligning the Dreamreader’s intention with the Professor’s idea and then creating a clash with it with the shadow’s proclamation, the novel has been left open ended for the readers who are thrown into the world of the novel to decipher for themselves if the Dreamreader will really be able to reclaim in the Town the things lost in the real world and “find the key to my own creation, and to its undoing.”

## CHAPTER-IV

### **Parallel Existence: Dream, Reality, the Unreal and the Imaginary**

Parallel existence is the fundamental phenomenon around which the entire plots of both the novels, *Kafka on the Shore* and *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* are wound with the respective concerns and motivations of each novel. The network of the interconnections between the lives of Kafka-Nakata, Miss Saeki-Miss Saeki's ghost in *Kafka on the Shore* and the Calcutec-the Dreamreader in *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* paints the picture of parallel existences in both the novels where the events in the life of each entity influences the life of the entity on the other end of the hyphen as laid down above. In *Kafka on the Shore*, the complementary parallel existence of Kafka-Nakata exerts influence over the parallel existence of Miss Saeki-Miss Saeki's ghost, the crux of it all being the idea that in this complex network of parallel existence everything, every event in the world seemingly random is connected with each other.

Kafka in chapter 23, first puts down the idea that Miss Saeki of now and the ghost of Miss Saeki's fifteen year old self are living simultaneously in the world. Regarding the girl which had entered Kafka's room the last night, Kafka says that he is certain of that girl being Miss Saeki. In the photo of the record-sleeve, Kafka identifies the nineteen year old Miss Saeki as mentioned by Oshima – Miss Saeki in a song recording studio and in front of a piano. Kafka says that her picture gives the impression of her being the symbol representing something:

‘A certain time, a certain place. A certain state of mind.’

This is exactly the constitution of the girl that had visited Kafka's room the last night. She stands for something, she stands for a lost time. The evidence of the

last statement lies in Kafka's being sure that that girl was Miss Saeki indeed after cross checking from the picture of Miss Saeki on the record-sleeve. The cross checking yielded positive result for what Kafka already knew because the constitution of both the nineteen year old Miss Saeki on the record-sleeve and that of the girl who had visited Kafka's room the last night were similar and hence the identification on the part of Kafka that the girl was Miss Saeki indeed:

'I knew from the first that the young girl who visited my room last night was Miss Saeki. I never doubted it for a second, but just had to make sure.'

The reasoning done above in order to bring out the fact that both the nineteen year old Miss Saeki on the record-sleeve as a picture and the ghost of fifteen year old Miss Saeki carrying the same constitution, that being both standing as a symbol of "A certain time, a certain place .A certain state of mind" holds the key to the nature of the parallel existence as happening for Miss Saeki.

Kafka identifies that there is a crucial difference between the Miss Saeki of now and the one on the record-sleeve. He says:

'Still, there's something in this photo of the nineteen-year-old that the middle-aged woman I know has lost for ever. You might call it an outpouring of energy. Nothing showy, it's colourless, transparent, like fresh water secretly seeping out between rocks – a kind of natural, unspoiled appeal that shoots straight to your heart. That brilliant energy seeps out of her entire being as she sits there at the piano. Just looking at that happy smile, you can trace the beautiful path that a contented heart must follow. Like a firefly's glow that persists, long after it's disappeared into the darkness.'



The “middle-aged woman” is Miss Saeki of now in the Komura library. Kafka identifies a “something” in the nineteen year old Miss Saeki which is no more in the “middle-aged woman” and the specifications of that “something” are given in the above extract in a very metaphorical manner. All in all what can be inferred is that the life force which was in the nineteen year old Miss Saeki is no more present in the middle aged Miss Saeki of now. By virtue of the reasoning pursued above in order to arrive at the proposition that the nineteen year old Miss Saeki in the record-sleeve carries the same constitution as that of the ghost of the fifteen year old Miss Saeki who visited Kafka’s room during the night, we can now infer that this ghost carries the same life force too as that of the nineteen year old Miss Saeki. This particular proposition arrived at by the reasoning based on the evidences in the text is the key to understand the nature of the parallel existence of Miss Saeki which will be deciphered henceforth.

The ghost which can be said to occupy the realm of the imaginary as in the title of this chapter becomes the other parallel self of Miss Saeki which still retains and sustains the life force in her fifteen year old self of the past which now no more exists in the present. It becomes her channel to the past which is preserved in the self of the ghost. The past thus is preserved by the ghost who arrives to the present from the past bringing along with it life as it was in the past. The past is hence not lost because the ghost of the past still lurks in the room of Kafka during the night. Kafka attests to this idea further by recognising contrary to what Oshima had said that he thinks contrary to Oshima that people can indeed be at “two places at once”. He then says that he doesn’t only think that but is sure of that:

‘While they’re still alive, people can become ghosts.’

The contact of this ghost from the realm of the imaginary with the real is made concrete by the event of Kafka from the real world of the present falling in love with the ghost from the imaginary and of the past. Kafka says that he is drawn to and attracted to this ghost of Miss Saeki but not to the Miss Saeki of the present. Here is the contact of the real and the imaginary and in order to bolster this event further what Murakami does is use the mechanics of parallel storytelling. Murakami links and supports this seemingly unreal event of the contact between the imaginary and the real as shown above by associating it with the event of the murder of Koichi Tamura in the alternate parallel strand where Nakata carries out the murderous task on being instigated by the gruesome and fatal troubling of cats as done by Johnnie Walker who again is equated in the text with the same Koichi Tamura as being the same person. We know that this murder really happened in the parallel strand of Nakata, the blood of which act had transferred to the body of Kafka in the other strand of the two stories. Hence, we stand sure of the fact that the ghost of Miss Saeki exists too with whom Kafka has fallen in love with because after all Kafka says that that which he is feeling for Miss Saeki is as real for him as the blood which he had had all over his chest from the murder in the other parallel strand of Nakata:

‘These feelings are as real as the blood all over my chest that awful night.’

So the sequence of what Murakami has exactly done with his use of the parallel storytelling here is that:

1. Depict a seemingly unnatural and imaginary phenomenon which is the arrival of the ghost of Miss Saeki’s fifteen year old self in the room of Kafka.

2. Make Kafka from the real world fall in love with the ghost of Miss Saeki from the realm of the imaginary. Thus the imaginary in this way makes contact with the real and establishes a concrete connection between the two.
3. In order to strengthen this established contact between the two, the real and the imaginary or the unreal, Murakami reaches out to take the aid of the mechanics of parallel storytelling. He pulls the event of the murder of Koichi Tamura or Johnnie Walker by the hands of Nakata to this alternate strand of Kafka, the blood of which act strangely arrived on the body of Kafka in the parallel strand as if Kafka and Nakata from two different spaces are the same person, one fulfilling the fate of the other which has already been elaborately explored in Chapter 2 titled “Fate in *Kafka on the Shore*”. After pulling this event from the alternate strand to here in the present strand, Murakami uses this event pulled to support the present event of the existence of the ghost and Kafka’s falling in love with this ghost. Since, the apparently unreal event of the blood from Nakata’s murderous act transporting to another space which is the alternate space of Kafka really happened, it becomes an efficient evidence and consequent support system to verify that the existence of the ghost of Miss Saeki and Kafka’s falling in love with this ghost can happen too just like the transportation of the blood from the murder of Koichi Tamura from one space to a completely different space happened too.

The above sequence of exercises made by Murakami depicts how he is using the parallel storytelling technique in a logical progression order for making connections between the real and the imaginary or the unreal in a way that the

depiction of the real becomes a support system for the verification of the unreal or the imaginary, here the ghost of Miss Saeki's fifteen year old self.

Thus, we have traced another key feature Murakami's use of the parallel storytelling technique in this chapter where parallel storytelling becomes the means for the networking of the real and the unreal or the imaginary, each supporting the other by virtue of this network formed through the alternate spaces of the alternate chapters of *Kafka on the Shore*.

Marie-Laure Ryan in "From Parallel Universes to Possible Worlds: Ontological Pluralism in Physics, Narratology, and Narrative", writes that the line of separation existing between the possible and the impossible worlds depends on the interpretation applied in the text to the notion of accessibility of the concerned worlds. The general interpretation links possibility with logic or the logical laws: every world that abides by the "principles of non-contradiction" is a possible or possibly existing world. Taking this model of reasoning as the basis, one can define a proposition to be necessary and true if that proposition turns out to be true in every world connected to the actual world( here the spaces occupied by Kafka and Nakata). The same proposition can be considered as possible if it stands out to be true in some of the worlds connected to the so called actual world and impossible or rather contradictory if the same proposition stands out to be false in all of the worlds in the network of possible worlds. The same proposition becomes compulsorily or necessarily true if it proves out to be true or is verified in just the actual world of the network and not some other worlds.

This possible world model is based upon a basic difference between the actual world and on the other hand the merely possible or probably possible ones. But what

actually is that which singles out one of the possible worlds in the network as the actual? What actually, to speak in other words, is the nature and the identifying features of actuality or the so called objective reality? Here we are faced with two possibilities. The most general view coming up to provide answers to the above posed questions regarding reality is the absolutist view. According to that view the actual world differs characteristically in ontological condition from the merely possible worlds in the sense that this world on which on the onlooker is actually standing upon physically presents an autonomous existence, which basically means: exists physically. All the other worlds in the network are the products of mental activities, such as “dreaming, imagining, foretelling, promising, or storytelling”. This is the classical idea cropping up when it comes to differentiating between the real and the unreal or the imaginary.

Whereas David Lewis in his *Counterfactuals*, proposes the idea which he calls modal realism with regard to the differentiation between the real and the unreal or the imaginary. The theory says that all of the possible worlds are equally substantial, real and solid and that all possibilities and random interactions between these possibilities are actually realized in some world, independent of whether some agent is thinking of these possibilities and their workings or not. But then we arrive at the question that if all possible worlds are real, how can one pick one of these possible worlds and identify that as the actual?

For Lewis, reality or actuality is an indexical notion whose reference alters and varies with the speaker, for example the reference of deictics like “I” and “you” and “here” and “now.” “The actual world” ideally means “the world where I am located,” or physically positioned and hence all possible worlds are real or actual from the perspective or the point of view of the respective inhabitants of those worlds

when considered independent of the ruminations of another agent of another world as already pointed out above. This is what Lewis means when he reasons out that when considered independently each world in the network of possible worlds is a concrete and actual existence and hence from this we can infer that our world, which we all unanimously regard as an objective actual world, will actually turn out to be a nonactual possible world when considered from the viewpoint of the inhabitants of those worlds that we consider as nonactual.

Thus, through its characteristic and fundamental opposition of one world to the other worlds, the possible worlds theory gives us a map comprised of narrative universes which establishes connections between the factual and the nonfactual, the physical and the mental and the real and the unreal or the imaginary and reasons out that all the possibilities are actual when considered independently and not from the viewpoint of somebody standing on other world and not the world under consideration.

Thus, from the perspective of the ghost of Miss Saeki's fifteen year old self from the time when she was so aged unlike her now being at middle age, the ghost and the world from where it has arrived is all real, substantial and solid when viewed independently from the perspective of the ghost itself and not from the perspective of Kafka who belongs to another world of another time and from whose perspective the ghost from the lost time seems imaginary or unreal.

Kafka next identifies the current location of the ghost from another world:

'As it gets near closing time Miss Saeki comes downstairs, her heels clicking on each step. When I see, I tense up and can hear my heart pounding. I see the 15-

year-old girl inside her. Like some small animal in hibernation, she's curled up in a hollow inside Miss Saeki, asleep.'

The ghost from the past has chosen the "hollow" inside of Miss Saeki as its resting place in the present. The "hollow" in Miss Saeki thus becomes the site of the present world where the entity from another world of another time altogether, here the ghost is accommodated in the present world. The "hollow" thus provides further verification of the existence of another world by providing accommodation to an entity from the other world seemingly of Kafka's imagination. It thus becomes easy for the one standing in the present world as a reference point for the verification of another world to attest to the notion of the reality of the other seemingly unreal worlds because the site which accommodates the entity from the other world belongs very much to the world on which he is standing upon and using as his reference point. Since the accommodating site belongs to the world of the person trying to verify the existence or the reality of another world, the other world gets automatically verified for its being accommodated in the world of the same person.

The following extract from chapter 11 is the next point of consideration and starting point rather, in order to understand Murakami's depiction of the network formed by dreams and the reality through his mode of parallel storytelling:

"This is the first time something this bad's happened. This time . . . I don't know how it started, and I can't remember what happened at all. It's as if my memory was wiped clean. It never was this bad before."

She looks at the T-shirt I pull out of my backpack, carefully checking the stain of blood I couldn't wash out. "So the last thing you remember is eating dinner, right? At a restaurant near the station?"

I nod.

“And everything after that’s a blank. The next thing you knew, you were lying in the bushes behind that shrine. About four hours later. Your shirt covered in blood and your left shoulder aching?”

This is in connection to the murder of Koichi Tamura as fated for Kafka which has been elaborately discussed in relation to the technique of parallel storytelling in chapter 2 titled “Fate in Kafka on the Shore”. What’s important to note here in this chapter discussing the nature of the link between the real and the dreams forged by parallel storytelling is the point that what happened with Kafka who had been eating his dinner at a restaurant was that he went “blank” and after about four hours he found himself lying behind the shrine in the bushes with his shirt covered in blood and an aching left shoulder. Also, it is important to note that his memory too about what had happened to cause the blood on his shirt and the ache in his left shoulder has been “wiped clean”. This cleaning out of the memory of Kafka and the impossibility of Kafka to go to Nakano Ward and kill his father as pointed out by Oshima in the text points out to the fact that Kafka had drifted off to a dream in which he killed his father by becoming Nakata who too as pointed out in chapter 2 had lost his self during the act of the murder and became somebody else. Thus, dreams are becoming concrete and palpable by the interactions between Kafka and Nakata from the alternate, parallel spaces technically brought about by Murakami’s use of parallel storytelling to say from the perspective of the functioning of narrative which is causing the fruition of the type of instances as pointed above.

For a text to impose a world in which two altogether different spaces interact through the dreams of the participating agents from their respective spaces, it must be



based upon parallel branches, and all these branches must be in possession of equal ontological status and independence. But this much is not sufficient for creating instances and situations of narrative entanglement in the text. In order to do that as in the entanglement of the worlds of Kafka and Nakata, the text must not only move vertically up and down along the branches in the order of the sequence of the development of the whole plot, but must also execute lateral or horizontal jumps from branch to branch, and there must compulsorily be a consciousness within the body of the narrative entanglement that is partly or fully aware of this act of narrative leaping. In a fully realized narrative entanglement, characters will either travel physically from one branch to another branch or will know with certainty that other branches exist too objectively and independently, in a position of interaction with further branches. This is the knowledge which Nakata has and which affects his behaviour and consequently alters the events of his own space along with the space which Kafka occupies with which Nakata interacts too, brought about again technically by virtue of the narrative entanglement made possible by Murakami's execution of the parallel storytelling technique.

The textual evidence of Nakata's knowing about the entanglement with other spaces happening with him lies at the end of chapter 10 of the novel where the narrator says that switching off his mind and letting his body relax, Nakata allows things to flow through him which is very natural for him and which has been something that he has been doing since childhood without any hesitation. As soon as he did this particular act of letting things flow through him as they are "the borders of his consciousness fluttered around, just like the butterflies." What lies outside these borders of consciousness, says the narrator, is "a dark abyss":

‘Occasionally his consciousness would fly over the border and hover over that dizzying, black crevasse. But Nakata wasn’t afraid of the darkness or how deep it was. And why should he be? That bottomless world of darkness, that weighty silence and chaos, was an old friend, a part of him already.’

And in this above stage Nakata dozed off. Thus again it is evident from the side of Nakata too that the entanglement happening between him and Kafka resulting to one doing the actions of the other is happening all because of the entangling of the dreams of Nakata and Kafka made possible by the execution of the parallel storytelling technique. This is what looking at the elementary level of the parallel existences between Nakata and Kafka reveals.

Ryan in the same “From Parallel Universes to Possible Worlds: Ontological Pluralism in Physics, Narratology, and Narrative”, writes:

‘But in a variant that I call the wormhole narrative, transworld—or rather cross-world—travel is limited to narrow portals usually open only to those with special powers (supernatural abilities, birthright, being selected among all individuals by the masters of the other world, etc.), and passing through these portals amounts to being transported into an alternate reality. These narratives usually present what Pavel (1986: 57) calls a salient structure or dual ontology: two realms differing sharply as to what is possible in them, such as the sacred and the profane. In the first book of C. S. Lewis’s *Chronicles of Narnia*, for instance, children go through a wardrobe in the house of an old professor and end up in the magical realm of Narnia, where they meet supernatural creatures, such as Aslan the Lion and his antagonist, the Witch. In the fairy tale *Jack and the Beanstalk*, Jack climbs what looks like an ordinary plant and discovers that the leaves support entire worlds. And in *Harry Potter*, the wall at

platform 9¾ of the King's Cross railway station in London serves as a portal between the world of everyday life, where Harry is a poor orphan mistreated by his adoptive family, and the magic world of the Hogwarts school of witchcraft, where he learns to be a master wizard. Whether this type of narrative rests on a two-world ontology with back-and-forth movement or on a network of interconnected worlds (Dannenberg 1998), it presupposes a discontinuous space-time pierced with secret passageways, similar to the wormholes in the fabric of the cosmos that connect the universes of level 2 (cf. Greene 2004: 264–65; Kaku 2005: 401 and *passim*).'

Haruki Murakami's use of the interactions of alternate spaces but not alternate worlds in his *Kafka on the Shore* with regard to what is happening with the network formed between Kafka and Nakata differs from what Ryan has pointed out in the above quoted extract from her article. Ryan is writing about physical portals in the worlds of literary narratives or fiction like the wardrobe in C.S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia* or the wall at platform 9¾ of the King's Cross railway station in London in J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter series. These portals are physical and the children in *The Chronicles of Narnia* physically walk through the wardrobe as the portal to arrive at the alternate world. Similarly, Harry Potter and the other children intending to arrive at the alternate world for boarding the train to Hogwarts of this alternate world, physically pass through the wall as the portal to the alternate world. The difference with the interactions between Kafka and Nakata in *Kafka on the Shore* is that the portal for each of them to arrive at and carry out tasks in the alternate spaces is their dreams. Hence the passage is not physical as would have happened through "the wormholes in the fabric of the universe" as written by Ryan in his article but the passage here in the case of Kafka-Nakata is on the level of their consciousness where one becomes the other in the other's space by passing through their

interconnected portal of dreams made possible for depiction by Murakami's forming of a network of worlds and spaces by the use of parallel storytelling. They pass through this portal of dreams once subjected to their trigger factors which have been elaborately deliberated upon in chapter 2. All of this happens in a narrative bid for the fulfilment of the Oedipal fate of Kafka Tamura as predicted by his father, Koichi Tamura.

This is how Haruki Murakami in his *Kafka on the Shore* has wound together dreams and reality by forming a network through parallel storytelling of two different worlds from different times in case of the interactions between Kafka, Miss Saeki's ghost and Miss Saeki and on the other hand he has formed a network of two different spaces inhabited by two different characters, Kafka and Nakata who constantly keep on interacting with each other by passing through the portal of dreams and then carry out the fated tasks as predicted by Koichi Tamura in reality or the real world. Dreams, reality and the imaginary are hence bound together by the mechanics or the working principles of the parallel storytelling technique essentially used by Murakami to portray the nature or the principles of parallel existence in his *Kafka on the Shore*.

The final point of analysis in this chapter is how the parallel storytelling technique as employed by Haruki Murakami in his novel, *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* aids in the interactions between the unreal and the reality and the intentions going behind the binding of the unreal and the reality.

We know from chapter 3 of this dissertation that the alternate and parallel sequences of the novel now under our consideration carry two different titles: one being "Hard-Boiled Wonderland" and the other "The End of the World". In the "Hard-Boiled Wonderland" sequence resides the Calcutec and in the other parallel

and alternate strand dealing with an alternate and parallel world in the mind of the same Calcutec titled “The End of the World” resides the Dreamreader. Again, the Calcutec and the Dreamreader are one and the same person, the first the physical self and the later the mental self of the same person. The setting of the “Hard-Boiled Wonderland” sequence is futuristic Tokyo with warring Calcutecs on one hand and Semiotics on the other who basically deal in information as antagonists. The Semiotics steal data or information, make deals with those in the black market and hence make huge profits and even worse than this business with data “they keep the most valuable bits of information for themselves and the benefit of their own organization” which goes by the name, the Factory. The Calcutecs on the other hand prevent this from happening and the name of their organization countering the criminal activities of the Semiotics or The Factory is the System Central:

‘The more we Calcutecs up our technologies, the more they up their counter-technologies. We safeguard the data, they steal it. Your classic cops-and-robbers routine.’

The unnamed protagonist here is a Semiotic. This altogether is the setting of the “Hard-Boiled Wonderland”. On the other hand, the setting of the parallel sequence “The End of the World” is the Town wherein resides the Dreamreader, the mental self of the same Calcutec in the “Hard-Boiled Wonderland”. These alternate sequences run through alternate chapters of the novel with the odd numbered chapters dealing with the “Hard-Boiled Wonderland” sequence and the even numbered chapters dealing with “The End of the World” sequence both interacting with each other through symbols, metaphors, ideas, counter-ideas and ideologies of characters made possible by the execution of the parallel storytelling technique as has been delineated upon in chapter 3 which is wholly dedicated to this novel.

In chapter 10 of the novel under consideration now, titled “The Wall”, the Gatekeeper tells the Dreamreader who has enquired about whether he can meet his chipped off shadow that the Dreamreader cannot yet meet his shadow because the shadow is very strong still now. The Gatekeeper asks the Dreamreader to wait till days get shorter meaning till winter arrives so that the shadow dwindles and gets weaker. Only then the Dreamreader can meet his shadow or else what would happen otherwise as said by the Gatekeeper is quoted below:

“For your own sake, wait,” he continues. “Getting too close to your shadow makes trouble. Seen it happen before.”

The Gatekeeper further tells the Dreamreader that he has to endure everything in the Town and if he does that successfully, everything else will work out and be alright. There will henceforth be no worry and most importantly no suffering. Worries and sufferings will disappear. The Gatekeeper asks the Dreamreader to forget about his shadow because where he is now is the “End of the World” where the world literally ends and there is no place further to go.

The Dreamreader then on his way back to his room thinks upon the words of the Gatekeeper as laid out above and begins questioning himself. He questions that what might have been the reason behind his casting off his past and arrive here to the “End of the World”. He questions about the details of the event which has led to this or maybe some meaning or purpose behind his arrival in the “End of the World”. He questions why he cannot even remember the life in some place which has led to his coming to the “End of the World” or which has triggered him to forsake his other life and arrive here in another.

Now, in the succeeding alternate odd numbered chapter dealing with the alternate world of “Hard-Boiled Wonderland” with the Calcutec in it, let us have a peek into the nature of the life a Calcutec or rather to write more appropriately the nature of the life of our Calcutec, the unnamed protagonist in the “Hard-Boiled Wonderland” sequence. In this chapter titled “Dressing, Watermelon, Chaos”, the Calcutec tells that he had undergone a full year of training at the System Central and after he had passed the final exam, they put him on ice for two weeks for conducting elaborate tests on his brainwaves as a result of which, the core of his consciousness was extracted. The patterns of this extracted “core” were then “transcoded” into the password he uses for his activity of shuffling about the details of which, the preceding chapter of this dissertation already deals. What happened due to this implant made by the System Central in his mind was that:

‘Thus was my conscious mind completely restructured. First there was the overall chaos of my conscious mind, then inside that, a distinct plum pit of condensed chaos as the centre.’

The Calcutec thus informs about how his mind became an object for experimentation for the organisation he is employed in or the System Central, how the System Central “completely restructured” and played with the conscious mind of the Calcutec as they wished in the garb of their organisational procedures. Also, we have already seen in the last chapter titled “Agency in *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*” that how the Calcutec in the “Hard-Boiled Wonderland” sequence is thrown into the murky information war between the Professor, the System Central and the Factory with him never wishing to be so disturbed due to this frightening war.

Now, one by one, let us have a look at the reactions of the Calcutec on understanding in stages that the Professor has made a complete guinea pig out of him by performing the implant of what he calls “edited input consciousness” of the Calcutec into the mind of the Calcutec which we have seen in chapter 3 of this dissertation decides the fatal end of the Calcutec, no matter what he does or intends to do in order to avoid or escape that end which is ineluctable in nature after all.

In chapter 25, titled “Meal, Elephant Factory, Trap”, the Calcutec tells the Professor:

“So you used us as your monkeys.”

In the same chapter, in response to the Professor saying that he desired to see the effects of implanting the edited consciousness on the subjects of the consciousness under consideration themselves, the Calcutec questions the Professor:

“And for that reason, you screwed around in our heads, laying down those electric train tracks of yours?”

Further extracts from the text and quotes of the Calcutec responding to the Professor with the pain of desperation on realizing in stages that he has lost all agency over his own life are:

“Well, then, what about me?” I said. “Come tomorrow, I might be dead.”

‘I took a gulp of whiskey. This was turning into a nightmare.’

“Trust you? After you’ve been deceiving me all this time? Lying to me, making me do those phony tabulations . . .”



“Terribly sorry?” The words veered out abstractly. “Terribly sorry? Easy for you to say, but what the hell’s going to become of me? This is no game! This is my life!”

“Great,” I said, “just great.” Then those two guys who came and wasted my apartment and slit my stomach had been Semiotics after all. They’d put on that song and dance of a story to divert System attention. Which meant I’d fallen right into their trap. “So it’s all a foregone conclusion. I’m screwed. Both sides are after me, and if I stand still my existence is annulled.”

“As far as I can see, the responsibility for all this is one hundred percent yours. You started it, you developed it, you dragged me into it. Wiring quack circuitry into people’s heads, faking request forms to get me to do your phony shuffling job, making me cross the System, putting the Semiotics on my tail, luring me down into this hell hole, and now you are snuffing my world! This is worse than a horror movie! Who the fuck do you think you are? I don’t care what you think. Get me back the way I was.”

The purpose of all the above quoting from the text is to provide the essential proofs from the text of the frustration of the Calcutec with the life he has got himself involved into, unbeknown to him, where he is tossed and turned as according to the whims of the Calcutecs and the Semiotics contending with each other and most glaringly the Professor who made a complete guinea pig or “monkey” out of him as the Calcutec says in one of the quotes above. The Calcutec is adamant upon getting back his life as it was but the experiment of the Professor already carried out in the Calcutec’s mind is of the nature that its consequences or the results of the experiment cannot be altered at all with the termination of the Calcutec in the “Hard-Boiled

Wonderland” sequence is already determined by the process initiated inside the Calcutec by the experiment. The Calcutec attacks the Professor and prays with frustration and anger for the Professor’s accountability for the moral crime he has committed but to no avail because the experiment has already decided that his end is inevitable.

Now, if we contrast this dreadful situation of the Calcutec with what the Gatekeeper says to the Dreamreader as laid down right before the last deliberation upon the nature of the impact of the Professor’s experiment on the Calcutec, then life as a Dreamreader in the Town seemingly holds better prospects for the Dreamreader. It is again important to point out here that the Dreamreader and the Calcutec are the same person, the former the mental self of the unnamed protagonist of the novel living in the simulation called the Town in the “End of the World” sequence and the later the physical self of the same unnamed protagonist living in futuristic Tokyo in the “Hard-Boiled Wonderland” sequence among the Calcutecs, the Semiotics and the Professor.

Life as a Dreamreader seemingly holds better prospects than the life of a Calcutec because as the Gatekeeper says that if the Dreamreader learns to endure the Town then there will be no worry for him and most importantly no suffering because worries and sufferings will disappear for him if he learns to go by what the Town prescribes, primary among which is forgetting about his shadow because as the Gatekeeper says that where the Dreamreader is now is the “End of the World” where the world literally ends and there is no place further to go. This is why the shadow repeatedly persuades the Dreamreader to leave the Town and arrive in the real world through the portal of the Pool as we have observed and analysed in chapter 3 of this dissertation because a world which doesn’t allow one to have his shadow going along

with him and cut off that shadow from the person making sure that the shadow gradually dwindles and dies is an “unreal” world after all running counter to the natural order of things as operating in the “real” world where shadows go along with the people and are as if in built and inseparable parts of people. Hence, the unreality of the world of the Town in the “End of the World” sequence. But the catch is that apparently in this “unreal” alternate world of the Town, the Dreamreader who is the Calcutec in the so called “real” world stands in the chance of being free from the care and frustrations and the dreadful instance and lifelong consequences of losing his agency over his own life altogether due to the Professor’s experiment on him and due to getting enmeshed without his intention into the frightening network of the warring Calcutecs and the Semiotics. The Gatekeeper after all assures the Dreamreader that there will be no worry or suffering for the Dreamreader if he learns to forget about his shadow and forsake it altogether.

After this, what Haruki Murakami does with his use of the parallel storytelling technique is re-assert this same assurance in the Town made available through the words of the Gatekeeper as addressed to the Dreamreader, in the alternate so called “real” world too through the words of the same Professor who for the Calcutec apparently is causing all the sorrow now in his life and even deciding the end of his life through his experiment with what he calls the “edited input consciousness” of the Calcutec where the Town exists as the alternate reality for the Calcutec and where the phenomenon of his parallel existence as the Dreamreader takes shape and substance.

The assurance the Professor gives to the Calcutec running parallel to the assurance of the Gatekeeper to the Dreamreader as had occurred in the alternate and parallel world of the Town as pointed above is, as quoted in chapter 3 too:

“‘Tis a small comfort, I know,” the Professor said meekly, “but all’s not lost. Once you’re there in that world, you can reclaim everything from this world, everything you’re goin’ t’have t’give up.”

Thus, everything forsaken by the Calcutec in the “Hard-Boiled Wonderland” sequence will not be lost on the Calcutec’s termination according to the Professor as the alternate self of the Calcutec which is the Dreamreader living in the alternate reality or the alternate world of the Town can reclaim back those which were apparently lost. This idea and the network this above idea of the Professor forms with other similar and also contending ideas has been discussed in detail in chapter 3 of this dissertation along with the implications of the network thus formed on the plot of the novel altogether. We are picking up this proclamation made by the Professor again because it will along with the proclamations of the Gatekeeper already discussed and that of the shadow will aid us to arrive at the close of the argument developed till now in this section on understanding the working principles of the parallel storytelling technique while operating to depict the parallel existence of a person in two alternate worlds in *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*.

Till now we have observed that with regard to the parallel existence of the protagonist of the novel as the Calcutec in the “real” world and the Dreamreader in the “unreal” world or the Town, what Haruki Murakami does with his execution of the parallel storytelling technique is form such a network between these two worlds through the dialogues of the characters laid down in a parallel manner in either of the two alternate and interacting worlds and through symbols and metaphors as discussed upon exhaustively in chapter 3 of this dissertation, such that the alternate reality or the alternate world of the Town as in the mind or the “edited input consciousness” of the Calcutec becomes the other space though “unreal” for the Calcutec to apparently

break free from the dictates of all of the entities who have taken control over his life in the "Hard-Boiled Wonderland" sequence and hence live the alternate life of the Dreamreader who according to the Gatekeeper will be potentially free from any worry or suffering if he learns to completely forsake his already chipped off or separated shadow. That act of completely forsaking the shadow in the Town will stand as his final act of cutting all ties with the world on the other side or the so-called "real" world by the shadow. The "unreal" world of the Town thus becomes the space for having or attaining what is not possible in the "real", the "unreal" becomes the space for exerting one's agency over his or her own life which is not happening for the Calcutec in the "real" and finally the parallel existence in the "unreal" holds the following promise for the Dreamreader which wouldn't have been possible in the parallel existence in the "real":

“...A little by little, I will recall things. People and places from our former world, different qualities of light, different songs. And as I remember, I may find the key to my own creation, and to its undoing.”

This is how parallel storytelling as a writing technique is operating as when executed by Haruki Murakami in his *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*, where the parallel depiction of the "real" or the reality and the "unreal" becomes the trope for the functioning of parallel existence of a character in two alternate worlds exploring the possibilities of the alternate "unreal" world and deciphering the potentialities it holds as an alternate reality.

## CHAPTER-V

### Conclusion

This dissertation has focussed on deciphering the working principles of parallel storytelling as executed by Haruki Murakami in his two novels namely, *Kafka on the Shore* and *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*.

The Research Gap pointed out after the Literature Review carried out in Chapter 1 of this dissertation titled Introduction is that though notable research has been done on Haruki Murakami's works majorly making cultural, racial, cosmopolitan, political, psychoanalytical study of his works, there is no work done on the understanding of his use of parallel storytelling in his works. Till now, there is no research work done on deciphering the working principles of Haruki Murakami's use of parallel storytelling technique. From this lacuna, stems my research topic focusing on the technique of parallel storytelling as executed by Haruki Murakami in the selected primary texts for this dissertation.

The major premise of Chapter 2 titled Fate in *Kafka on the Shore* is that parallel storytelling technique becomes a necessary tool for Haruki Murakami for depicting in his novel the very intertwined fate of the two characters Kafka and Nakata or the technique of parallel storytelling has facilitated Murakami in his depiction of the machinery of fate where the stories of Kafka Tamura and Nakata get tied up in the process of which a network of their fate is formed with other characters in the novel getting entangled in this nexus of fate too forming a resultant wholly convoluted fabric of fate. In proving this, the chapter delineates in the process, the nature, the form and the peculiarities of parallel storytelling as executed by Murakami in his *Kafka on the Shore* for the depiction of the interlaced fate of Kafka in one

strand of the two parallel stories and Nakata in the other strand where the alternate stories of Kafka and Nakata take up the space of alternate chapters of the novel.

The primary proposition of chapter 3 titled Agency in *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* is that the mechanics or the working principles of parallel storytelling as executed by Haruki Murakami in his *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*, the details of which are traced throughout this chapter, is central to the plot of the novel because the protagonist here, again like in *Kafka on the Shore* lives in two different spaces but here unlike *Kafka on the Shore* there is no confounding of two different characters Kafka and Nakata, instead here there is a clear distinction between the unnamed protagonist's living in the physical world and alternatively in the programmed world installed in his mind by the Professor or the old scientist. The chapter by identifying the working principles and the peculiarities of the parallel storytelling technique as used by Murakami proves how these characteristics have become necessary, by way of similitude, for the depiction of the issue of the unnamed protagonist's losing agency over his life: the similitude lying in the fact that true to the nature of a parallel narrative, the unnamed protagonist in *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*, lives the life of losing self-agency in double worlds through double selves which the chapter elaborately discusses.

Chapter 4 titled Parallel Existence: Dream, Reality, the Unreal and the Imaginary deal with both the novels, *Kafka on the Shore* and *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*. The fundamental premise of this chapter which the chapter proves through the analysis of textual evidences is that the mechanics or the way of working of the parallel storytelling technique as executed by Haruki Murakami in both the primary texts taken up for this dissertation is an

indispensable tool for the depiction of the parallel existence of characters existing through complementary communications between the two spaces or two alternate realities brought about and made possible due to the use of parallel storytelling itself. The details of the nature of the parallel storytelling technique while being used by Haruki Murakami in the two texts, for the depiction of parallel existence of characters are pointed out in this chapter and then put through analysis for proving how these details of this technique as executed by Haruki Murakami aid him in creating entanglement of dreams, reality, the unreal and the imaginary, hence using this entanglement as the foundation and the overall nature of parallel existence as depicted by him in the two selected texts.

#### Findings:

1. In *Kafka on the Shore*, the link between Kafka and Nakata is established through employing parallel storytelling where we find that both through losing control over their own selves due to their own trigger factors walk on the path of fulfilling the fate of Kafka killing his father as predicted by his father himself, through the murder of Johnnie Walker who is murdered by Nakata who again loses his self and becomes Kafka. This instance of both losing control over their selves is connected by means of the employment of parallel storytelling. Thus manifestly this is a web of fate where the characters true to the structure of a web are configured and placed into the narrative by tying up together the threads of other characters of the novel forming an altogether complex network of fate. Parallel storytelling as used by Haruki Murakami makes it possible to look at both sides of the threads of every character as configured by the author and also to look at the tied up knots of two or more threads of these characters in the nexus of fate as portrayed in *Kafka on the Shore*.



2. In *Kafka on the Shore*, the nature of the narrative with the parallel stories of Kafka and Nakata is such that we cannot lay down a hierarchy between the two stories in a cause and effect chain. Both the stories of the two characters progress in a mutually complementary manner.
3. Similar to Hermeutics, Haruki Murakami while using the parallel storytelling technique in *Kafka on the Shore*, writes in a style where the relationship between the events occurring in the alternate spaces, one inhabited by Kafka and the other by Nakata is not of the nature of a laterally progressing and sequentially developing chain of cause and effect like the vertical edifice of epistemological foundationalism about which Theodore George writes in the entry on "Hermeneutics" in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, but is essentially circular in nature where for example, the effect of a cause happening because of the cause working in the parallel strand is depicted before the cause which again gets depicted in the other parallel or alternate strand.
4. The entrance stone in *Kafka on the Shore* provides a prop to Murakami's act of parallel storytelling and the progression of the parallel stories of Nakata and Kafka towards the contact with or arriving at the entrance stone is in substance, the working out of the fate of Kafka as predicted or rather cursed by his father, Koichi Tamura towards its consummation which is that Kafka would sleep with his mother and violate his sister.
5. In the very middle of *Kafka on the Shore*, chapter twenty five ties up everything happening in the novel : Kafka's fated journey to Takamatsu is connected with Nakata's parallel fated journey in search of the entrance stone towards Takamatsu with Hoshino and also connected with Miss Saeki's ghost right inside her like a three dimensional painting in the forest of her heart as Kafka observes and finally

the last piece for the network of these connections being Miss Saeki's desire for the entrance to "that world". All chief concerns of the novel attached with the different characters gets tied up here in this chapter and this is hence the most important chapter placed even numerically at the very middle of the novel.

6. In Haruki Murakami's execution of the parallel storytelling technique in *Kafka on the Shore*, the past, present, dreams, reality, ghost, the axis of time, the self all get muddled up into such a position where we cannot differentiate one from the other. We absolutely fail at differentiating between the binaries.
7. In *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*, Haruki Murakami shows the events in the life of the Calcutec as lived in the "Hard Boiled Wonderland" sequence and then through parallel storytelling blurs the memories of this life for the Dreamreader living in "The End of the World" sequence who is the same Calcutec but the mental self of the Calcutec. The mental self of the Calcutec which is the Dreamreader or the "edited input consciousness" as the Professor says, lives in the Town which is a simulation in the mind of the Calcutec dealt with in the alternate "The End of the World" section of the novel. By doing thus, the writer shows how the Dreamreader has already begun realizing that he himself having agency over his life is now questionable. Hence, parallel storytelling aiding the depiction of one's losing agency over her or his life is evident right from chapter four of the novel.
8. In one section of the parallel narratives in *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*, Murakami builds up the suspense in the details of the physical life of the Calcutec and then he extends this chain of built up suspense to the other narrative with the Dreamreader in it where this chain of suspense begins taking up events from the mental life of the Dreamreader which are again consequences of

the events of the physical life of the Calcutec. All of this is done because the writer wants to show that both the physical and the mental selves of the unnamed protagonist of his novel are losing agencies over themselves with each having effect upon the other in a cyclical manner.

9. Another characteristic of the method of parallel storytelling employed by the writer in *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* is that the alternate stories delineated are not at all independent with measured linking points between them but the narratives of both the sides are totally dependent on each other in a cause and effect cycle where this cause and effect movement is not linear like in traditional stories.
10. Murakami through parallel storytelling has developed tension and injected anxiety into the issue of the protagonist's losing agency over his life in *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*, where we as readers swing like a pendulum between the Calcutec's shady or muddy account of the Town and the Dreamreader's attempt to escape this Town in the parallel strand. This swinging between the parallel stories gains momentum with the writer's pitching up the element of suspense in the events surrounding the Dreamreader. The questions that whether the Dreamreader will really be successful in fleeing from the Town and what will be the consequences if that really happens is the key which heightens the suspense towards the end of the novel.
11. In developing all of the tension between the ways of the two worlds in *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*, parallel storytelling has come to great aid for the writer. The writer has placed the Professor and the shadow as counterparts in the two strands and each counterpart vehemently opposes, challenges its other. In this way the tension in the plot of the novel is developed

because both the worlds with their alternate and contradictory working principles collide repeatedly. This repeatative collision of the two worlds is possible only because of Murakami's peculiar use of the parallel storytelling where arguments in favour of and against each world is laid down in alternate odd, even chapters with odd chapters dealing with the real world or the "Hard-Boiled Wonderland" sequence and the even chapters dealing with the "unreal" world or the Town or "The End of the World" sequence. What happens with that is that in the real world section we get the idea of that world and about the Town from the perspective of the person standing in the real world itself whereas in the parallel sequence concerning the Town, we form the idea of the working principles and consequences of living in the Town from the perspective of someone who stands on the Town itself and since the working principles of these two worlds are contradictory, the ideas of these two worlds formed from the standpoint of the alternate worlds will always collide. Hence, the shadow's negative impression of the Town for it not working according to the natural order of things whereas the Professor's colliding thought that everything from the real world can be regained in the world of the Town. All this stitching together of two strands of two parallel worlds, we thus see, achieves building up tension in the plot by virtue of the colliding ideas of the Professor and the shadow and the subsequent building up of their respective arguments through the progression of the alternate chapters dealing with the alternate worlds.

12. The sequence of what Murakami does at the end of *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* through parallel storytelling is:
  - a. Lay down the argument of the Professor about the ability of the Calcutec to reclaim in the Town things lost in the real world with his termination there.

- b. Align in the parallel strand, the subversive idea of the Dreamreader with the idea of the Professor. The Dreamreader at the last moment subverts the plan of its shadow of leaving the Town and decides to stay put in the Town.
- c. Then the writer brings about a collision of the idea of the Professor and the subsequent aligned idea of the Dreamreader with the countering idea of the shadow. The shadow explains to the Dreamreader that he will not be able to “recall things” as he is planning, without the shadow staying in association with him as is natural in the world on the other end of the Pool. Then the shadow plunges into the Pool and leaves the Town.

The novel ends at the last point above. What really happens with the last sequence of the writer’s exercise of the parallel storytelling is that by aligning the Dreamreader’s intention with the Professor’s idea and then creating a clash with it with the shadow’s proclamation, the novel has been left open ended for the readers who are thrown into the world of the novel to decipher for themselves if the Dreamreader will really be able to reclaim in the Town the things lost in the real world and “find the key to my own creation, and to its undoing.”

13. In *Kafka on the Shore*, the contact of the ghost of Miss Saeki’s fifteen year old self from the realm of the imaginary with the real is made concrete by the event of Kafka from the real world of the present falling in love with the ghost from the imaginary and of the past. Kafka says that he is drawn to and attracted to this ghost of Miss Saeki but not to the Miss Saeki of the present. Here lies the contact of the real and the imaginary and in order to bolster this event further what Murakami does is use the mechanics of parallel storytelling. Murakami links and supports this seemingly unreal event of the contact between the imaginary and the real by associating it with the event of the murder of Koichi Tamura in the

alternate parallel strand where Nakata carries out the murderous task on being instigated by the gruesome and fatal troubling of cats as done by Johnnie Walker who again is equated in the text with the same Koichi Tamura as being the same person. We know that this murder really happened in the parallel strand of Nakata, the blood of which act had transferred to the body of Kafka in the other strand of the two stories. Hence, we stand assured of the fact that the ghost of Miss Saeki exists too with whom Kafka has fallen in love with because after all Kafka says that that which he is feeling for Miss Saeki is as real for him as the blood which he had had all over his chest from the murder in the other parallel strand of Nakata. This is how parallel storytelling is working as used by Haruki Murakami where events in one strand dealing with the space of one character goes ahead to link up with another space inhabited by another character and confirm the plausibility of the events in the other parallel and alternate strand.

14. Dreams become concrete and palpable in *Kafka on the Shore*, by the interactions between Kafka and Nakata from the alternate, parallel spaces technically brought about by Murakami's use of parallel storytelling to say from the perspective of the functioning of narrative which is causing the fruition of the type of instances as pointed in the chapter four of this dissertation.
15. For a text to impose a world in which two altogether different spaces interact through the dreams of the participating agents from their respective spaces, it must be based upon parallel branches, and all these branches must be in possession of equal ontological status and independence. But this much is not sufficient for creating instances and situations of narrative entanglement in the text. In order to do that as in the entanglement of the worlds of Kafka and Nakata in *Kafka on the Shore*, the text must not only move vertically up and down along the branches in

the order of the sequence of the development of the whole plot, but must also execute lateral or horizontal jumps from branch to branch, and there must compulsorily be a consciousness within the body of the narrative entanglement that is partly or fully aware of this act of narrative leaping. In a fully realized narrative entanglement, characters will either travel physically from one branch to another branch or will know with certainty that other branches exist too, objectively and independently, in a position of interaction with even further branches. This is the knowledge which Nakata has and which affects his behaviour and consequently alters the events of his own space along with the space which Kafka occupies with which Nakata interacts too, brought about again technically by virtue of the narrative entanglement made possible by the parallel storytelling technique as executed by Haruki Murakami where parallel storytelling causes lateral jumps between separate narratives, keeping one consciousness or one character, here Nakata, aware of these jumps causing the entanglement of the two alternate spaces.

16. Haruki Murakami's use of the interactions of alternate spaces but not alternate worlds in his *Kafka on the Shore* with regard to what is happening with the network formed between Kafka and Nakata differs from what Marie-Laure Ryan has pointed out in her article, "From Parallel Universes to Possible Worlds: Ontological Pluralism in Physics, Narratology, and Narrative". Ryan writes about physical portals in the worlds of literary narratives or fiction like the wardrobe in C.S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia* or the wall at platform 9¾ of the King's Cross railway station in London in J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter series. These portals are physical and the children in *The Chronicles of Narnia* physically walk through the wardrobe as the portal to arrive at the alternate world. Similarly,

Harry Potter and the other children intending to arrive at the alternate world for boarding the train to Hogwarts of this alternate world, physically pass through the wall as the portal to the target alternate world. The difference with the interactions between Kafka and Nakata in *Kafka on the Shore* is that the portal for each of them to arrive at and carry out tasks in the alternate spaces is their dreams. Hence the passage is not physical as would have happened through “the wormholes in the fabric of the universe” as written by Ryan in her article but the passage here in the case of Kafka-Nakata is on the level of their consciousness where one becomes the other in the other’s space by passing through their interconnected portal of dreams made possible for depiction only by Murakami’s forming of a network of worlds and spaces by the use of parallel storytelling. They pass through this portal of dreams once subjected to their trigger factors which have been elaborately deliberated upon in chapter two of this dissertation. All of this happens in a narrative bid for the fulfilment of the Oedipal fate of Kafka Tamura as predicted by his father, Koichi Tamura.

17. Murakami in his *Kafka on the Shore* has wound up together dreams and reality by forming a network through parallel storytelling of two different worlds from different times in case of the interactions between Kafka, Miss Saeki’s ghost and Miss Saeki and on the other hand he has formed a network of two different spaces inhabited by two different characters, Kafka and Nakata who constantly keep on interacting with each other by passing through the portal of dreams and then carry out the fated tasks as predicted by Koichi Tamura in reality or the real world. Dreams, reality and the imaginary are hence wound up together by the mechanics or the working principles of the parallel storytelling technique essentially used by



Murakami to portray the nature or the principles of parallel existence pertaining to the characters Kafka, Nakata and Miss Saeki in his *Kafka on the Shore*.

18. With regard to the parallel existence of the protagonist of the novel, *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*, as the Calcutec in the “real” world and the Dreamreader in the “unreal” world or the Town, what Haruki Murakami does with his execution of the parallel storytelling technique is form such a network between these two worlds through the dialogues of the characters laid down in a parallel manner in either of the two alternate and interacting worlds and through symbols and metaphors as discussed upon exhaustively in chapter three of this dissertation, such that the alternate reality or the alternate world of the Town as in the mind or the “edited input consciousness” of the Calcutec becomes the other space though “unreal” for the Calcutec to apparently break free from the dictates of all of the entities who have taken control over his life in the “Hard-Boiled Wonderland” sequence and hence live the alternate life of the Dreamreader who according to the Gatekeeper will be potentially free from any worry or suffering if he learns to completely forsake his already chipped off or separated shadow. That act of completely forsaking the shadow in the Town will stand as his final act of cutting all ties with the world on the other side or the so-called “real” world by the shadow. The “unreal” world of the Town thus becomes the space for having or attaining what is not possible in the “real”, the “unreal” apparently becomes the space for exerting one’s agency over her or his own life which is not happening for the Calcutec in the “real” and ultimately the parallel existence in the “unreal” holds the mentioned promise for the Dreamreader which wouldn’t have been possible to attain in the parallel existence in the “real”.

As already has been proved through this dissertation, the concerns or the issues of both the novels, *Kafka on the Shore* and *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* are such that those necessarily require the parallel storytelling technique for their depiction on the page: those being the issue of fate in *Kafka on the Shore* and the issue of one's agency over her or his own life in *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*. The fate of the two characters Kafka and Nakata are intertwined in such a manner that parallel storytelling is required for its depiction. This issue of fate as in *Kafka on the Shore* requires certain particular technical features of the parallel storytelling technique so that its depiction as it is in essence or as the writer has intended it to be is possible. Hence develops certain characteristic features of the parallel storytelling technique as used by Haruki Murakami in his *Kafka on the Shore*. These technical details have been identified and analyzed in the dissertation.

Same can be said for the novel *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*. The unnamed protagonist here lives double lives as the Calcutec in the physical world and as the Dreamreader in the mental world of the Town and through movement between these two alternate, parallel and interacting worlds, one in the "Hard-Boiled Wonderland" sequence and the other in the alternate and parallel "The End of the World" sequence, the protagonist loses agency over his life and becomes a guinea-pig for the Professor's scientific experiment. The fact that these two alternate worlds for the same person are interacting, the events in one having consequences in the other, again requires the writing tool of parallel storytelling so that the depiction of these two interacting worlds can be made by virtue of the mechanics or the working principles of the parallel storytelling technique as executed by Haruki Murakami in this novel. Again when parallel storytelling technique is used by

Murakami for the purpose of the depiction of these two interacting worlds with a resultant losing of agency over his own life for the protagonist, it will acquire particular characteristics so that the above mentioned targeted depiction is possible on page. These details have again been traced and analyzed in this dissertation.

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