

An Ecocritical Study of Haruki Murakami's *Kafka on The Shore*

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Abstract: Considering the fact that, ecocriticism is a contemporary category of literary criticism, and magic realism is a new convention used in post-modern contemporary era. Haruki Murakami's *Kafka on The Shore* for being a magic realist novel, similar to other works of magic realism, is a post-colonial respond to the dominant western culture. One aspect of this culture is the western anti-environmental view which places human and non-human in a hierarchical position in which man is on the top of it and respectively, other non-humans are placed according to their level of usefulness to human. This study attempted to analyse the magical aspects of the novel and find out about the application of magic realism in the novel regarding this hierarchy. In this approach the implied ecocritical views in the novel are analysed in their relationship with Japanese culture, Deep Ecology, and Buddhism. These three main concepts found in the novel, leads to the theme of the unity of human with non-human. As a consequence of this result, the novel has disregarded the hierarchal relationship in western culture.

Key Words: *Kafka on The Shore*, Ecocriticism, Magic Realism, Deep Ecology, Buddhism, Japanese culture.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Kafka on The Shore, by Haruki Murakami, for being a novel full of magical and extraordinary events mingled with the ordinary life and historical events, is categorized in the genre of magic realism. It is a story of a teenage boy, Kafka Tamura, who decided to leave his father and start a journey. The novel also consists of another plot around the character, Saturu Nakata, who has lost his intellect as a child after an incident which its cause never became detected. These two characters experience spiritual, and magical events in their journeys. The magical incidents such as the rain of sardines and mackerels, talking to cats, visiting the spirits in the forest, and so many others are interconnected with human and non-human relationships including human and animal, human and non-animal. Murakami by creating a world in which the magic becomes part of the cosmos of reality, has made chances of observing the relationship of nature and human in a new perspective different from the west.

In western view of this relationship, human is superior to all the natural elements and those are made for humans' exploitation and economical benefit. This view is different from those in the ancient Eastern and colonized countries. In ancient religions, human was part of nature and not someone outside of it, therefore, the benefactor of nature was the benefactor of human, similar to Japanese culture and religion. Nowadays, we live in environmental crisis which is made by industrialization and exploitation of nature due to the western philosophies of human's dominance. The change in the western view of human and non-human relationship can lead to some greater changes in practicing environmentalism. This study is mostly focused on the inherent philosophies of human and non-human relationships in the novel of *Kafka on The Shore* by the means of revealing how Murakami has broken the western image and depicted the Japanese and Buddhist view of this relationship to support of Deep ecology, by use of magic realist techniques.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Kafka on The Shore is known as a magic realist text. The use of myth, dream and supernatural events in juxtaposition with real life incidents is viewed as some of the characteristics of the magic realism mode in *Kafka on The Shore*. "The realistic and the speculative or fantastic, in the novel under discussion, foregrounds the idea that the former should encompass the latter in order to make better sense of our contemporary world". (Bhat, 2021)

The setting depicted in the novel is post WWII, Japan. The traces of the war in the novel are evidential to every reader. Many critics have argued about the effects of war on people's lives in its context. The violence of war makes "simple people murders" following to the rule of "kill or be killed". (Tanuja, 2019) In the novel, the family name of the owners of the library is taken after Keizo Komura, a navy officer during WWII in Japan. It is through this name that we

see “the novel juxtaposes the present-day image of Japan” which is “pacifist” after being victim of “mushroom clouds of two atomic bombs” (Souza, 2022). If we follow names and dates and the documents of the novel, we vividly see the references to the war, but it is through the magic and dreams of the novel that we can find the effects of war on people which is evident in the psychoanalytical studies which are mentioned in the following sections.

Some studies under the features of magic realism in *Kafka on The Shore* is done by referring to the five post-modern magical elements proposed by Faris (2004). Amirullah (2019) and Xaveria (2019), by relating the elements of the novel with those features, described the novel as a magic realist work of fiction. In addition, Tanuja (2019) argued that “dream” was a magic realist motif attributed to the author, Murakami. And similar to former scholars, he claimed that the line between dreams and actuality is too narrow which puts more emphasis on one of the features proposed by Faris (2004), “unsettling doubt”. These studies, not only prove the novel to be a magic realist one, but also do reveal the post-modern aspects of the novel through the five features.

Adding to post-modern features of the novel, Xaveria (2019) applied Baudrillard’s Hyperreality theory to the novel, by viewing the magic element as an escape from reality for the characters. The hyperreality which became more tolerable for the characters because the “social information” disappeared in it, but they ended up with simulacra and faced their lives. Something which is to be considered in this study is the derogatory use of the term “Hyperreality” and “simulacra” against Modernism by Baudrillard, but it is through these simulacra and the opening of the parallel magical world, that the characters like Kafka, Nakata, and Miss Saeki became able to face the reality of their lives. Murakami depicted this so called Hyperreality as an essential mean to embrace reality for the characters and it is not to be blamed.

The psychoanalytical studies of the novel have proven the importance of magic realism in creating balance and constructing identity of the characters. Souza (2022) claimed that Kafka, Nakata and Miss.Saeki are “victims of traumatic past” who later became the victimizers, Nakata by committing murder, Kafka by raping his sister in his dream, and Miss. Saeki by leaving his child. The novel therefore, shows how the victims who are traumatized would become victimizers. However, there is a more hopeful transformation argued by Souza which is “bridging gap between past and present” that taught “Kafka and Nakata new ways of interpreting their painful past while allowing readers to consider their own sense of shared responsibility”. Another optimistic psychoanalytical reading of the novel, is the transformation of Kafka to Lacanian hero through Yeats’ famous quote “In Dream begins responsibility”. Kafka accepted the fate and reality of his life by confessing about his dreams to Miss.Saeki (Amirullah 2019).

In Addition to the trauma, “Otherness” is what made Kafka, Nakata, and Oshima alienated in the society they lived in. According to Khurana and Thakur (2020), these three characters are otherized, both by themselves and the society. Kafka, for his being abandoned by his mother, Nakata, for being mentally incapable, and Oshima for his being a queer and hemophilic. Khurana and Thakur (2020) also presented the way Oshima, being a queer gender, challenged the two old fashion feminists’ obsessions by revealing his queer identity without being ashamed.

Along with Oshima, Miss. Saeki, if considered to be a mother, challenges the gender stereotypes related to the role of a mother. “Her dual identity does not let her fit into quotidian role of a mother figure. The archetypical mother figure is selfless and devoted, but she is self-serving, sexual and unable to detach from her obsessions with the past” (Khurana and Thakur, 2020). As a result of this observation, gender, sex and gender roles are put into question in *Kafka on The Shore*.

Due to the fact that the novel is intertextual and fragmented, a general look at the various analysis of the novel reveals the capacity of the novel to be interpreted in many different ways. Other analysis done illustrate the intertextuality of the text. Referring to Cheuse (2006), in *Kafka on The Shore* “We are witnessing globalization to an extent we had never before imagined”. *Kafka on The Shore* includes From Greek mythology to the most contemporary western icons and from the most ancient Japanese myths to the most recent Japanese milieux.

According to Cruz (2018): “In the process of re-inscribing Western texts, the novel provides an alternate perspective on issues that confront Japanese society and by extension other Asian cultures as well.” He analyzed the novel in terms of its postmodern feature which is intertextuality. Cruz (2018), in his analysis illustrated on the references and allusions mentioned in the novel such as the title and the name of the protagonist which is taken from Frans Kafka, The oedipal theme which is a very significant element for psychological readings of the text, The Tale of Genji, a Japanese classical story that explains Kafa’s sprit going inside Nakata’s body, The Chrysanthemum Pledge which is another example of spirit flying out of body, Plato’s Symposium, Huckleberry theme, The Catcher in the Rye which according to Marrison (2005), Muakami was translating it into Japanese when he wrote *Kafka on The Shore*; David Thorough’s Walden, and pop culture examples. Cruz’ study, however lacked the religious references in the novel. Although *Kafka on The Shore* carries international references to literature and culture, the role of Japanese culture and religion is still very strong regarding the magic elements. For instance, the moving sprits, inspired by The Gengi, create the plots of the story and relates the Nakato’s story line to Kafka. In addition, The Chrysanthemum Pledge has inspired Murakami to depict the fifteen-year-old spirit of Miss. Saeki out of her body to meet Kafka.

Kobayashi et al. (2012) had a religious reading of the novel in their article titled *The Buddhist Elements in Kafka on The Shore*:

” As the structure of this story, the chief characters were put into Shikoku as attracted place. Although they felt only a comfort occurred from the perception of the Shiki-soku-zeku (all is vanity) at a beginning, they had the change of the viewpoint occurred from the perception of the Ku-soku-ze-shiki (Vanity make all) at the end.

We suggest that the sense that all phenomena relate mutually is the one of the elements of healing.”

“Shiki so ku ze ku, ku soku ze shini (Phenomena becomes emptiness, Emptiness becomes phenomena)”, is a key concept of Buddhism that Kobayashi et al (2012) discovered within the plot of the novel. One of the other elements of Buddhism that he discovered is “impermanence” (無常), according to Hanh’s speech (2013), because phenomena does not have independence existence, they are always changing. A child, in his example, is a “conventional designation) that is why it does not remain a child forever and it grows. Kobayashi et. all (2012) explained the instability of Kafka’s status of identity by this fact. Calling the library his childhood status and the forest as his adulthood and separation from parents. Kafka went through a process in order to achieve the knowledge of Dharma and that was his salvation.

Along with the cultural and post-colonial readings of *Kafka on The Shore*, many critics have analyzed the novel by post-modern, psychoanalytic, and gender theories. It is because of the studies done by critics such as Faris (2004) which associated Magic realism to post-modernism, post-colonial, and feminism movements, yet there is little study done on the relationship of magic realism with the most contemporary crisis of Environmentalism.

3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK:

This study borrows some concepts from the philosophy of Buddhism, and Deep Ecology to define the human and non-human (nature) relationships in the novel. Since magic realism features and elements are already revealed by the previous studies, this article is more focused on the relationship between the magic realist elements of *Kafka on The Shore* and its ecocritical aspects. The concepts which are chosen are categorized in three groups of Magic Realism, Buddhism and Deep Ecology.

- Magic Realism

Some critics viewed magic realism as a post-colonial reaction to the dominance of Western culture and the western reality which was based on science and pragmatism. This cultural reaction gave voice to the marginalized local people who were once colonized by the Europeans. Slemen (1988) viewed magic realism as “Imaginative reconstruction in post-colonial cultures” which “pushed to the margins of consciousness by imperialism’s centralizing cognitive structures.” Magic realism for its inclusiveness to culture and religion of a specific region, can be a great way to defense against the dominant structures of reality dictated by the imperialists. By reading the literature of this genre we can see the reality better through the eyes of the local people.

- Magic Realism and Japanese Culture

After World War II, the American culture intruded Japan. Therefore, in the 1960s, American culture was so bright and strong in this country. The magic elements used by authors like Murakami are not merely taken from their home country, but all the world, specially including the dominant imperial pop culture such as America. This way of appropriation of magical elements, brings about opportunity for those many cultural voices to be expressed.

Watanabe (1974) compared the western culture with Japanese claiming that “Nature for Japanese has not traditionally been an object of man’s exploitation for human benefit, as it has been for westerners.” He supported this claim by referring to the religious cosmology on man’s position in the world and his hierarchical position. Watanabe (1974) described that in Genesis man was of soil and deep in the earth, there is hell, but he has God’s soul and this gives him the tendency to ascend. In this image, therefore earth is opposite to sky which is heaven, and man is in the middle. “On the other hand, there was no such dichotomy in the traditional Japanese ideas. There, nature was a unity, and man lived in it as a part of this unity.” This “unity” of man and nature, according to Watanabe (1974) is opposite to man’s position in western cosmology in which, man is a “privileged creature”. He gave an example of a Japanese Zen priest who used

mosquito net for sleeping not to prevent mosquito bites, but in order to prevent himself from harming them while he was asleep and to feed them, he left one of his legs out of the net.

Magic Realism as a post-colonial reaction has the potential to represent the marginal aboriginal cultures such as Japanese. These aboriginal cultures live in harmony with nature opposite to the western culture. Consequently, the application of the genre in the milieu of post-WWII Japan could be considered as an act of resistance against the dominance of American culture.

➤ Magic Realism as an Environmental Movement

There has been little study done on the ecocritical analysis of magic realist literature. As mentioned in the previous part, Magic realism as a post-colonial cultural resistance is able to express the marginalized environmental philosophies of aboriginals which was suppressed by the industrial anti-environmental philosophies of the western culture.

Holgate (2019) drew an attention to the bond between magic realist fiction and environmental literature in the introduction of his book *Climate and Crisis: Magical Realism as Environmental Discourse*. He mentioned 4 common grounds between them:

“First is a postcolonial perspective, with writers frequently reading against colonial legacies”

[Second,] a desire by authors to develop new kinds of expression and language in order to portray ideas and ways of seeing the world that counter dominant ontologies and epistemologies, usually the scientific rationalism that was a consequence of the European Enlightenment, which views humans and the environment as being separate.”

[third is] “interconnectedness of all things in the universe”

“Fourth, magic realism and environmental literature share a transgressive nature that dismantles binaries, such as human and non-human and animate and inanimate.”

Concepts Based on Philosophies of Buddhism

Japanese culture in relation to nature is also greatly influenced by Zen Buddhism. Masao (1993) Introduced Zen Buddhism as a sect of Buddhism. Buddha was a title Shakyamuni was given to followers of this religion which means “the enlightened” or “awakened one” to the concept of “Dharma”, “the law of the universe, that is the law of the dependent co-origination”. Dharma is a key concept in Buddhism. Buddha is also a given title to those who are awakened to Dharma law and in order to be Buddha, one needs to touch the unity of the world.

➤ Zen Buddhism

Zen Buddhism presents a different method to understand Dharma. Other sects of Buddhism rely on scriptures, while Zen does not. Suzuki (1938) mentioned a quotation which according to Zen:

“A special transmission outside the scripture,

“[And which,] not depending upon the letter,

“But pointing directly to one's Mind,

“[Leads one] to see into Nature itself and attain Buddha-hood.”

In explaining these lines, Suzuki (1938) elaborated that for Zen, the scripture did not matter and the “word” may lead us to misunderstanding, therefore one must experience Dharma directly. And a person who has reached this status is not able to “teach” it to another person by words, so “actual experience” is better.

➤ Emptiness and Sign lessness

Hanh (2013), a Vietnamese Zen Buddhist, in one of his lectures explored two interrelated key concepts of “concentration” as he called “three doors of liberation”: 1. *Emptiness*, from which the two others are derived from. 2. *Sign lessness*

Emptiness in Buddhism is very important, it is also called “void”. But this concept is different from the nothingness and absurdity of post-structuralism. There are two kinds of existence: dependent (on cause and effects) and independent.

In Buddhism, there is no independent existence. Hanh explored emptiness by looking into a flower. He described it as empty, but he believed that the word empty has no meaning unless we asked “empty of what?”. He went further and said “When we look into the flower, we see the sunshine inside, we see a cloud inside. You don’t have to be a poet to see the cloud in the flower.” Emphasizing on the fact that, nothing exists independent of other elements in the universe. He continued and argued that:” if you continue, you see whole cosmos have come together and have the flower to manifest as a wonder.” The flower is only “empty of separate existence” or independent existence or “self-nature”, as he called it. “A flower is a conventional designation”.

This *sign lessness* is different from the concept of *simulacra*, so by following the sign lessness we reach the universe and interrelatedness of all beings, a unity of man with other men and non-human. For Hanh, it is important to protect animals, plants, and minerals because human is nothing without them.

- Deep Ecology

Drengson (1995) in his article *The Deep Ecology Movement*, introduced the history, philosophy and key principles of this movement. According to her, Arne Naess (1973) coined the term Deep Ecology Movement, however he was not the pioneer of this movement, Carson’s *Silent Spring*, and transcendental figures such as Thoreau and Muir had established the framework of this movement. Drengson (1995) argued that Naess had taken the idea of “self-realization” under the influence of Spinoza, Buddhism and Gandhi. It is a “sense of identification to a larger self”. The self here is the larger society which is the universe. Naess believed that human being has the ability to feel a unity with another human as well as with non-human. (Drengson, 1995)

Deep Ecology is against “anthropocentrism” which is “as a bias against other life forms fails to recognize that we are part of their lives and they are part of ours”. (Drengson,1995) “Recognizing the inherent value of all other living things” is the main principle of Deep Ecology. “Intrinsic value” means that all beings have values “independent of the usefulness” for human purpose.

4. DISCUSSION:

The concepts that were introduced in the previous section all have one result in common and that is “interconnectedness” or “unity” of human and nature. Therefore, this section of the study attempts to find those concepts in the novel in order to see whether the relationship between human and nature in *Kafka on The Shore* has been successful in breaking down the hierarchy of man over nature.

- Magic Realism and Japanese Culture

The novel is a post-colonial respond to the dominance of American culture over Japanese. We can find it in characters like Jonnie Walker and Colonel Sanders. They are icons from American pop culture, but in fact they are some magical concepts, not having a real physical body which control and have the duty to keep the balance in the world. Colonel Sanders introduced himself as “Shape I may take, converse I may, but neither god nor Buddha am I, rather an insensate being whose heart thus differs from that of a man” (Murakami, 2005) and as he himself mentioned it is a quote from a Japanese book; Veda Akiyari’s *Tales of Moonlight and Rain*. This ironical characterization is humiliating the way American culture is taking the surface of Japanese culture, by mentioning it as just a name, on the other hand, when Colonel Sanders introduced himself by referring to a Japanese myth, it is actually an emphasize on intertextuality of *Kafka on The Shore* as a magic realist text. The intertextuality which is meant to give voice to the marginalized and colonized cultures.

Japanese culture, art and literature viewed human part of nature. We can find this relationship in their poems called haiku, in which an image of nature is described in few words, but it contains a lot of emotions and meanings. In haikus, human sees their thoughts and feelings in the frame of an image of nature, so nature becomes part of human psyche. Watanabe (1974), viewed haikus as one of the pieces of evidence of Japanese cultural view towards nature.

Kafka on The Shore is both the name of a song and an image that has a lot of meaning, thoughts and feelings for both Kafka and Miss.Saeki. It is an image of a young boy on the shore. The boy is named Kafka and for Miss.Saeki it reminds her of her boyfriend. And for Kafka it could be himself. There is another picture of shore in the novel, but in this image Kafka’s mother and sister exist (Murakami, 2005). Kafka is seen alone in this image while in the picture from his mother and sister on the shore, he is not alone. So, writing a song about an image which describes human feeling is a metaphor for writing a haiku. *Kafka on The Shore* image and song similar to haikus, embodies sources of different feelings such as nostalgia, loss, lack, and loneliness.

- Magic Realism as an Environmental Discourse

Magic Realism is the merging of imagination and reality in a way that is not distinguishable. Kafka in one of his daydreaming confessed that “It’s hard to tell the difference between sea and sky. Between voyager and sea. Between reality and the working of the heart”. (Murakami, 2005) Kafka not only became incapable of distinguishing between two elements of nature, “sea” and “sky”, but also between “reality” and “working of the heart” or imagination.

Nature in the novel is a source of magic. It is depicted as a magical realm, opposite to the human life which is reality. The magic or nature is the representative of the old believes, while the city is the representative of the world which is dominated by rationality. When in magic realism the border between the two realms fades, nature and human world mingles together, therefore magic realism of this novel gives voice to nature as a source of supernatural power which controls and intervenes human life.

Rice Bowl Hill incident does not have a scientific explanation, but a magical one. It occurs when students go for mushroom hunt in the hill near the woods. Nakata after the incident lost his intellect, his memories, and instead gained the ability to talk to cats. Nakata turned to a medium between the human and natural/supernatural world. It is after that accident that he became able to talk to cats. The teacher described the setting as “The war seemed like something in a faraway land that had nothing to do with us”. Nature in the teacher and students view was a world away from the destructive and violent world of human. At this point of the plot, nature began to intervene with human world. This is exactly opposite to reality in which human is the one who exploit and intervene with the nature and make changes to it and to its lives. (Murakami, 2005)

The setting of the forest is the source of magic. It is where the border between reality and imagination fades away. Kafka spent days in Oshima’s Cottage in the forest. It was in the forest that he made his journey. It seemed that Oshima new about the supernatural aspect of the forest as he guided him to undergo this mental and spiritual experience. Forest in literature is a place of mysterious events. Similar to Hawthorne’s Young Goodman Brown, forest in Murakami’s *Kafka on The Shore* is a place where supernatural figures like devil and ghosts appear. In addition, forest is where the protagonist goes through a self-exploring journey in the darkness and depth of the forest. (Hawthorne, 1992) Kafka described the forest as “the walls of trees”. It seemed that he had entered the labyrinth of his own mind, trying to find himself. (Murakami, 2005)

Forest is also where one can enter the other realm. The two lost soldiers from World War II and Colonel Sanders are from the other realm which is magical. When Kafka met the soldiers, the cottage turned into a different kind of house, this time with other furniture and electricity. (Murakami, 2005) So, we can conclude that forest was a gateway to the magical realm as well as a gateway to the inner psyche of the protagonist.

Murakami has depicted nature as place for supernatural events as wells as a path to discover human mind. Nature is depicted as powerful and having control over not only human life, but also the whole universe. Nature for its being part of human being shows the interconnected relationship of human and nature in which nature controls human life and it is also part of human being. It is important to note that this relationship is not limited to the situation of protagonist, but to all human society. For instance, when it rains sardines or leeches, it does not merely affect one person’s life, but the whole city. (Murakami, 2005)

In comparison to the established belief that nature is inanimate and is not aware of itself nature is depicted as intellectual. It controls magical element in *Kafka on The Shore* breaks down the hierarchy of man over nature. Magic realism in the novel, gives nature the upper hand in this dichotomy. On the other side we have the nature as part of human mind, in this sense, magic realism has more emphasis on the unity of the two.

The novel also challenges one of the other views that is the superiority of human intellect and language over animals. When Nakata started talking to a black cat, the cat surprisingly said, “...so, you’re able to speak”. (Murakami, 2005) The ability to speak is an attribute of human being in western view. It is believed that it is human being who has the tool of language, but we had never seen animals’ point of view to human language, before hearing this surprised voice of the cat. In the perspective of this black cat human being is not able to speak except Nakata who knows cats’ language. Animals have their own tools of communication, whether by sounds, gestures, or many other ways. “Cats can get by without names. We go by smell, shape, things of this nature” (Murakami, 2005) This part of the novel deconstructs the supremacy of human language over animal language and this is deliberately done by magic realism which gave voice to this creature.

The tone and language human uses to talk to animals is another significant point about Nakata’s relationship with cats. Some people like to *adopt* animals as *pets* and raise them. These people talk to their pets in a childish and informal tone, because they consider the animal’s inability to live independently and they are considered to be less intelligent and literate as an adult human. Murakami questions this treatment of animals with the language Nakata uses to treat the cats: “Do you mind if I sit here for a while? Nakata’s a little tired from walking.” And in many times, he called them with “Mr. and Ms” before their names. (Murakami, 2005) The use of formal language with animals especially cats, means

that Nakata treated them like adults. He did not treat cats like they were more vulnerable and weaker creatures. After all, the author by creating a magical chance for communication of human and animal, filled the gap between the two.

- Concepts Based on Philosophies of Buddhism

The protagonist of the novel, Kafka, undergoes the process of Dharma meditation in order to grasp the idea of the unity of self with the universe besides, selflessness, impermanence following the Zen's instruction based on self-experience.

- Dharma

Dharma is the knowledge of the universe as a wholistic and interconnected. According to the Zen's principle, one needs to gain this knowledge through direct experience. Tanuja (2019): "Self-awareness that comes in Kafka while staying in the cabin: an ability to see himself in relation to the whole world, to get a better perspective of his existence in the world". Being aware that you are part of the whole world including living and non-living things, is the knowledge of Dharma.

Kafka gained the knowledge of Dharma through meditating in the natural places. One of these places as Tanuja (2019) refers to is the cabin in the forest. He found the cabin far from the city life, it was quiet and calm. The sound of birds was relaxing. Kafka did not have to worry about the troubles of his life; however, the forest was mysterious, dark and dangerous. As he tried to go deep in the forest, he did not say that he lost his path, but he said, he lost himself: "I'm totally lost, my identity dying. There is no direction where I am, no sky, no ground". This sense of loss is part of the process of gaining awareness. At first, one gains their identity by the feedbacks they get from the others, however it is through Dharma meditation that one truly finds their identity, so the first step to find oneself is to unlearn what is given to him as his identity. Zen Buddhism emphasizes on not taking information for granted, instead do some experiences in order to gain the knowledge. In the third night of staying in the cabin, Kafka's view towards the stars (as he felt they were watching him; causing a sense of fear), changed: "The stars don't seem as intimidating as before, and I'm starting to feel closer to them". At the end, Kafka figured out that "This forest is basically part of me". This phrase becomes completed by the soldiers "We're like part of the forest". These two quotations from the novel shows the interconnectedness of all beings which is Dharma.

Kafka at the beginning of the novel, before setting off for his journey, did a guided meditation. His guide was The Boy Named Crow. He told Kafka to empty his mind and imagine a sand storm: Kafka said, "I do what he says, get everything else out of my heard. I forget who I am, even. I'm a total blank. Then things start to surface. Things that -as we sit here on the old leather sofa in my father's study- both of us can see" And after imagining the sand storm, Crow told him that "This storm is you. Something inside you" (Murakami, 2005) During this meditation Kafka forgets who he is and loses his arbitrary knowledge of himself. "Then things start to surface" These things are the clues to understand his inner world. Crow, uses the simile of sand storm to describe Kafka's real self. Sand storm is a part of nature which is violent. Nature is not always calm the same goes with human mind.

- Emptiness and Sign lessens

Emptiness and sign lessness (selflessness) are two sides of a coin in Hanh (2013 words) things are "empty of an independent self". Kafka during his journey took the procedure of embracing his self, and identity as the result of cosmos of the world. He first as mentioned in the Dharma section needed to forget about what the society recognizes as his identity and search for his own identity as something interconnected with the people and nature.

At the very beginning of the novel, Kafka tried to find his identity by looking at the mirror:

"I gaze carefully at my face in the mirror. Genes I'd gotten from my father and mother_ not that I have any recollection of what she looked like created this face." (Murakami, 2005)

One of the examples selflessness is the notion that we are half our fathers and half our mothers, therefore our existence is not independent. We are empty of a self, but we are our parents and ancestors. However, Kafka hated his father and could not forgive his mother for leaving him.

"There's no way to erase the DNA they passed down to me. If I wanted to drive that away. I'd have to get rid of me" (Murakami, 2005)

As we can find in this quotation, if one hates his parents, he hates himself. Hopefully, at the end, when Kafka tried to accept his parents and his fate (consequently his identity), he could start over his life in harmony.

In another instance of realization of selflessness happens when Kafka started to daydream when he looked at Sakura sleeping on the bus:

“As she breathes, the rounded peaks move up and down like the swell of waves, somehow reminding me of rain falling softly on a broad stretch of sea. I’m the lonely voyager standing on deck, and she’s the sea. The sky is a blanket of gray, merging with the gray sea of the sky. Between voyager and sea. Between reality and working of the heart”. (Murakami 2005)

Kafka stimulated a scene in which he was a “voyager” in the “sea”. The “sea” is the metaphor for Sakura. When he said that the “sea”, “sky”, and the “voyager” all merge together, we can find the traces of interconnectedness of natural elements. When it rains in the sea, the sea is dark as sky and stars are not seen and when the voyager and his boat are among huge waves of storm, the voyager gets lost. This image which is grounded on sexual imaginations of the protagonist imply the possible intercourse that is able to mingle the sea (Sakura) with the voyager (Kafka). In contrary, if we consider the last sentence “Between reality and working of the heart”, we can conclude that this interconnectedness is not just an image of sexual intercourse, but in more general terms refers to rationality and emotions.

Murakami artfully has used the image of storm in the ocean. The image which is made by the element of “water”. The water in the sky, the water in the rain, the water in the sea and of course, water that encompasses most of human body. Water is the element that exists as a component part of many living and non-living things in the universe, thus it is a very good example of the connection of the elements in the universe. Therefore, sea is part of the voyager’s self. The same goes with other elements of the nature, the sea cannot be sea without having sky in it. This is one proof to “emptiness” proposed by the philosophy of Buddhism. What is more, sea, sky and the voyager are just designated conventions and consequently, sign less. Anything that is sign less or selfless, finally will transform to something else, therefore things are impermanent, because it is made by the process of cause and effect and it finally will transform to something else by other forms of cosmos.

- Deep Ecology

Anthropocentrism is what the novel intends to stand against. Anthropocentrism sees human at the center of the universe, consequently it puts human centers as a prior to the other living a nonliving feature of the universe. This section is divided into two parts of “animal” and “non-animal” to analyze the relationship of human being with both living and non-living elements of nature and see what *Kafka on The Shore* implies about the “intrinsic value” of these two notions.

➤ Animal

As elaborated in “Magic Realism as an Environmental Reaction”, in the discussion part, Nakata’s relationship with cats (discussed in terms of animal language and intellect), questions the anthropocentric ideology behind human language.

Besides knowing a special intellect and language for cats, Murakami introduced the spiritual aspects of animals. The animals in *Kafka on The Shore* possessed spirit similar to human being:

“Nakata knew it wasn’t the dog talking but Jonnie Walker, speaking to Nakata through him. Looking at Nakata through the dog’s eyes” (Murakami, 2005)

It shows how a dog was haunted by a spirit, so if a dog’s body can be haunted by a spirit in order to be animate and living. It must be able to exist by an individual spirit in accordance to its own identity. The existence of spirit in the body of animals is also evident for the cats in the novel:

‘Jonnie walker said, “I’m killing them to collect their souls which I use to create a special kind of flute”’

Possessing intellect, language, and spirit is a common feature between human and animal. In addition, it breaks down the anthropocentrism and the hierarchical relationship of man and animal. However, this does not necessarily prove the animals’ intrinsic value, while a deeper analysis of Jonnie Walker’s actions is needed.

Jonnie Walker killed the cats for his own profit. He ate the hearts of the murdered cats saying that “It’s soft and warm just like fresh eel liver”. (Murakami, 2005) He compared the cat heart with eel liver meat, because eel’s meat is more commonly used as human food than cat meat. Jonnie Walker, in order to lessen the pain of the animals, used drugs to make them numb before killing them. This justification may cause the reader to think about the ethics of eating

animal's meat. Jonnie Walker, in order to lessen the pain of the animals, used drugs to make them numb before killing them.

Yet, it is important to consider the purpose behind his killing cat which is not just nourishing his body to survive. Murakami in writing the fiction, was not against eating meat and did not see it as an unethical act since Nakata talked about his interest in some kinds of food made of animal meat. (Murakami, 2005) Jonnie Walker wanted to rule the world. According to Deep Ecology this purpose is unethical and violates the intrinsic value of that animal.

➤ Non-animal

Murakami has introduced animals in the novel as intellectual and having spirit. Now the question arises that does the same animism exist about non-animals in *Kafka on The Shore*?

What Kafka experiences about the trees and the stars in the forest can answer this question:

“They (trees) have a physical power, their breath gazing any humans who might chase by, their gaze zeroing in on the intruder like they've spotted their prey.” (Murakami, 2005)

Kafka felt that the trees were similar to animals who wanted to protect their territory. Kafka felt the same thing about the stars:

“The stars are like the trees in the forest, alive and breathing. And they're watching me.” (Murakami, 2005)

The act of watching needs an aware observer. If it was not a magic realist text, one would consider these instances as mere personification, but it is not a poetic one here with the purpose of aesthetic beauty of the text. In fact, it is the magical and spiritual power of nature. In the realistic view, it is the human who observes the nature, however in magic realism, the nature has a spiritual power and similar to human, has an understanding of its surroundings. The intellect and awareness of the trees and stars puts them in a position equal to human.

The trees, as the most important part of a forest, are not depicted as a source for human exploitation. In fact, human in the novel does not cut the trees to use them. On the other hand, another use of the forest is depicted which is spiritual and meditative use. The trees, therefore, have intrinsic value instead of economical or constructional value.

5. CONCLUSION:

The magical realist realm of *Kafka on The Shore*, has created a new perspective towards the relationship of human and nature by giving some magical and spiritual power to nature and natural elements. These magical elements are in support of the environmental philosophies inherent in Zen Buddhism and other sects of Buddhism as well as the most important principle of Deep Ecology which is “intrinsic” value. Both Buddhism and Deep Ecology sees human as part of nature, not against it or superior to it. These environmental philosophies implied in the novel, changes the dominant western perspective to the nature, in which nature is created for human use and it is valuable depending on its usefulness for human benefit.

In conclusion, Murakami's *Kafka on The Shore* has been successful in questioning the superiority of man over nature, by putting human as part of nature, and nature as part of human being. The unity and interconnectedness which can create a harmony in human and non-human relationship. This study was focused on this relationship, still, the question of animal rights in Nakata's plot is left for further ecocritical studies of the novel.

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