

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

<https://llrjournal.com/index.php/11>

**Echoes in the Silence: Investigating Trauma and the
Fragmentation of Identity through Magical Realism in
Murakami's *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle***



¹Maria Niaz, ²Dr. Fatima Zafar Baig

¹M.Phil. English, Department of English, The Women University Multan. marianiaz2126@gmail.com

²Assistant Professor, Department of English, The Women University Multan. fatimabaig_84@wum.edu.pk

Abstract

This study explores the interplay between trauma and the fragmentation of identity in Murakami's *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* through the lens of magical realism. The problem statement centers on how trauma disrupts selfhood, leading to fractured identities, and how magical realism serves as a narrative mode to articulate these psychological fissures. The research aims to analyze the protagonist's disjointed reality and memory using Wendy B. Faris's theory of magical realism, which highlights the seamless blending of the fantastical with the mundane, and Marianne Hirsch's concept of postmemory, which examines inherited or secondary trauma. Employing a qualitative method with purposive sampling of key textual passages, the study underscores the novel's significance in revealing how magical realism captures the ineffable nature of trauma and identity dissolution, offering broader insights into the psychological and narrative dimensions of post-traumatic experiences.

Keywords: Magical Realism, post memory, identity Fragmentation, trauma.

1. Introduction

1.1 Murakami's Work

The peculiar combination of realistic and surrealistic style is attributed to the literary work of Haruki Murakami who tends to discuss such issues of alienation, existentialism, or fusion between reality and a fantasy. Although the given context does not speak directly to the work of Murakami, we have a possibility to compare it to the elements of surrealism and existentialism brought up in the papers. The surrealist theme can be frequently seen in the writings of Murakami, reminiscent of what is known as digital surrealism (G nduz and Ozener, 2024). His stories often defy traditional world view and develop dream-like settings that resonate with the surreal spatial possibilities discussed in the experience of digital gaming. It is the way to reflect the surrealist project of documenting the marvellous described in Klaus (2021) when real life and imagination are intertwined. Ironically, the work of Murakami appears to fall between two trends that do not necessarily associate with each other, surrealism, and existentialism. Although the theories of surrealism center on the unconscious and fantastic, the theories of existentialism as brought to focus in the life and philosophy of Sartre presented in Flynn (2014) revolve around the individual

being and his freedom. The characters in Murakami have a strong element of existential crises in the surreal world that gives the work of literature its distinct character, denoting the complications of contemporaries. To sum up, literary style of Murakami may certainly be regarded as the modern reworking of surrealism and existentialism, which has been adjusted to the notions of alienation and existential dilemma of the contemporary world.

The *Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* (1994-1995) by Haruki Murakami claims an iconic niche in the contemporary literature market that lies in the boundary between the postmodernism and post-postmodernism. The novel appeared in the era when the impulse of postmodernism was dying out in the Western literature (Hoberek, 2007). It was published at the time of the shift between postmodernism to what some critics call post-postmodernism or meta modernism. However, the work both has elements of postmodern narrative styles, and more classical narrative styles, as the literary atmosphere of the 1990s was changing rapidly at the time of the work being created (Hoberek, 2007; Osterud, 1996). To sum up, the *Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* can be regarded as a transitional novel, the reflection of the postmodernism finish and the adoption of other forms of literature. Locating itself among these alterations in cultural and artistic environments, it managed to find its place in the literary world, and therefore it is an important text that helps to comprehend the concept of cultural shaping of fiction in modern times (Mchale, 2015; Mchale, 2016).

1.2 Historical and Personal Trauma in the Novel

The novel *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* by Haruki Murakami employs the story of WWII, i.e., Lieutenant Mamiya to address collective trauma and how it was carried on in series in Japanese society. Although the given context is not directly dealing with this particular piece of work, we can use the examples of similar research done on the narratives of war as well as collective trauma to examine the way Murakami has treated it. The appropriation of the stories of the WWII in literature has been used to build cultural trauma and establish collective identity on common grounds of experiences (Dinitto, 2014). The testimonial of Lieutenant Mamiya about his experiences on the war front at Manchuria in the novel titled *Murakami* acts as a microcosm of the trauma of the entire Japanese warring period in general. Such

narrative strategy corresponds with the notion of the so-called multidirectional memory described in Dinitto (2014), wherein a personal narrative relates to greater world traumas. Interestingly, this is unlike the common heroic sacrifice themes commonly held in most leadership books where Murakami seems to be trying to go against the grain (Śliwa et al., 2012). Rather, his characters such as Lieutenant Mamiya tend to face psychological traumas in the wake of war which undercuts the conventional definition of heroism and sacrifice. The desecration of the principles of leadership in Murakami work introduces new approaches to the consequences of the war trauma in the long term. The examination of the WWII stories as the collective trauma in the novel represents the prolonged effect of wartime experiences onto the subsequent generations as it is proven in the intergenerational trauma studies (Rzeszutek et al., 2023). But by mixing time and time, Murakami shows how open ends of history still determine the modern Japanese society which should be heard and understood as a healing process and reconciliation within the society.

The *Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* by Haruki Murakami brings issues of unemployment and loss of a spouse as individual traumas and this conforms with research studies on individual traumas done by various researches about these kinds of issues. The traumatic effects of unemployment of the main character of the novel Toru Okada are similar to the effects witnessed in the real world in studies. The studies demonstrate that job loss greatly decreases life satisfaction and spill overs to spouses (Nikolova & Ayhan, 2018). Loss of job satisfaction in cross-spouse is the second effect connected to the loss of a job which in turn affects life satisfaction of individuals involved in marriage where the wives are more affected than the husbands even with the effects being experienced prolonged consequences (Nikolova & Ayhan, 2018). This is the reflection of the unemployment of Toru who impacts on his world and marriage to Kumiko. Interestingly, studies show that joblessness can make people work more on housekeeping, although in Murakami, the lack of work results in seclusion of Toru (Gough & Killewald, 2011). This is compared with relative inactivity of Toru and the way that fiction is free to go against statistical trends to examine the lives of individuals. In the novel there is yet another sort of personal crisis, the loss of a spouse, in the form of the disappearance of Kumiko. The study has

revealed that the loss of a spouse has been linked to depressive symptoms and loneliness (Carr et al., 2019). These results coincide with how Toru processes his emotions once Kumiko disappears. Nevertheless, in contrast to certain real-life situations when companion animals may mitigate adverse psychological consequences of a loss of a spouse (Carr et al., 2019), Toru is not supported this way but feels even more isolated and traumatized.

1.3 Magical Realism as a Trauma Narrative Device

The phenomenon of surrealist images and metaphors can actually be defined as a depiction of repressed memories or repressed psychological workings. It is consistent with the Surrealist movement that focused on the possibility of the unconscious mind discovery and discovery of forgotten truths in art and literature (Krauss, 2021). One can interpret the surrealist inference of the use of the elements of the wells, psychic battles and the mental communication with the birds as allegory of inner psychological conditions or suppressed memories. These metaphors serve as the passage between the realities and levels of meaning, so that complex emotional and psychological experiences can be explored at them (Nowell, 2015). These elements may appear in a surreal way due to the fact that, these memories that are repressed are often fragmented and symbolic as they are brought to light in the mind. The metaphorical thought and symbol construction proceeds throughout adulthood and can be observed in numerous works of Surrealist art and literature (Krauss, 2021; Nowell, 2015).

The way Murakami treats the idea of trauma deviates from conventional realism in a number of ways and challenges the established aesthetics of collective trauma and personal suffering (Dinitto, 2014). In contrast to the common journalistic narratives that aim to be objective, Murakami uses personal-ironic subjectivity which is similar to cultural phenomenology and it challenges the journalism to be able to present reality in a single voice all the time (Harbers & Broersma, 2014). This practice correlates with wider cultural drift that disagrees with the existence of objective truth and opposes similar related epistemological practices .

1.4 Identity Fragmentation and Reconstruction

The reconstruction and fragmentation of identity are quite complicated processes in

which people can undergo in the face of dramatic changes in their life or some complications. It has been indicated that these processes are needed in caring about mental health and recovery (Kerr et al., 2019; Mitchell et al., 2020; Wilson & Stock, 2019). Identity disintegration may happen when there are long-term health illnesses and more so on the part of young adults whereby one is unable to reconcile between being a sick individual and the person one was before the illness and the societal expectations. This is usually characterized by various phases of denial, anger, depression and accepting the outcome in their efforts to build a positive self (Wilson & Stock, 2019). On the same note, those veterans who come back to civilian life after experiencing war may also suffer identity disruption which is relatable to increased PTSD symptoms and reintegration challenges (Mitchell et al., 2020). Interestingly, role-playing games, such as the Dungeons & Dragons, have been established to help on the rebuilding of identity of individuals who are recovering due to mental health-related problems. The said games can help one to feel emotions with the help of characters, train adaptive skills, and work with the topic of mental health without threats (Causo & Quinlan, 2021). Moreover, out-group identities which grant direction and a sense of belonging can improve psychological strain resistance, which is of special concern to migrant groups during the process of integration (Brance et al., 2024). To understand the mechanism of identity formation and its role in social behaviour, it is important to realize that self-categorization is fluid and therefore subject to changes (O'reilly et al., 2023).

The related concepts of dreams, parallel worlds, and the liminal spaces are important in the context of self-discovery and provide a differentiated view of personal identity and pointed consciousness. Dreams are a great form of self-discovery and a problem solving mechanism. They are a product of waking issues and emotions, and the dreams related involve correlations to psychological status (Pesant & Zadra, 2005). Intertwingly, the idea of parallel worlds cannot be confined to dreams only. Liminal spaces Liminal spaces or threshold or ambivalent experience may be regarded as parallel reality. These spaces may be imbedded, staggered, dispersed, and even travelable providing various and compound experiences in and out of apparently single circumstances (Banfield, 2022).

1.5 Problem Statement

An essential exhibition of contemporary fiction, *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* (1994/1995) by Haruki Murakami represents a paradigm shift in modern literature, where the real and the surreal are mixed to address the deepest psychological and existential crisis. The story of the novel is about Toru Okada, an unemployed man whose wife suddenly disappears and causes a maze hiding through dreams, memories and other dimensions. Peppered through the personal disintegration of Toru are shocking reports of the inhumanity of the war in Japan, hint at the national consciousness of a shared trauma. In her portrayal of such traumas, Murakami makes use of the form of magical realism, which is defined by the harmonious incorporation of the elements of the fantastic in the structure of the realistic world. *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* by Haruki Murakami is a precise combination of multiple genres, including trauma, dissolution of identity, and magical realism, and it is not well-researched how exactly magical realism expresses psychological and historical trauma.

1.6 Research Objectives

1. To investigate the intergenerational transmission of trauma and its impact on the fragmentation of identity through Magical realism as a narrative technique.
2. To explore how Murakami uses magical realism and post memory in *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* to depict the intergenerational trauma that shapes individual and collective identities.

1.7 Research Questions

1. How does Murakami employ magical realism to portray the transmission of trauma across generations in *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* and how does it challenge identity construction?
2. How does Murakami intertwine magical realism and post memory to represent the impact of historical trauma on the individual and collective identities of characters in the novel?

1.8 Significance of the Study

The current study of *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* is highly significant as it contributes to the scholarship on the topic of literature, trauma, and to the overall perception of magical realism as the type of narrative. This paper offers a special

examination of the working of magical realism as a device of trauma account that is present in the novel. It goes beyond thematic readings to consider structural and stylistic decisions that point towards disintegration of the mind. Research on magic realism is mostly concentrated on Latin American works (e.g., Garc(acy) M(acr(melodrama, as in the work of Garcia Marquez. A wider discussion is made as it seeks a way to adapt it to the Japanese fiction setting, and it does so, showing cross-cultural usage of the method. Demonstrates the use of magical realism to present psychological and historical trauma that is valuable to authors wishing to write on the same lines. The positioning of Murakami in the context of global trauma discourse highlights the universality of his themes and at the same time respects their cultural context.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framework

Magical realism is Wendy B. Faris theory and the concept of postmemory by Marianne Hirsch is the theoretical framework that acts as the main theoretical framework of the study done by the researcher. In her book, *Ordinary Enchantments*, Wendy B. Faris presents an extensive theory about the magical realism as a remarkable trend in the modern international fiction (Menton & Faris, 2005). Magical realism is described by her as a narrative style that intertwines the realistic approach with the fantastic in such a manner that the marvelous appears to be the organic outgrowth of the ordinary. This is what Faris considers destabilizing the predominant form of realism depending on empirical definitions of reality and endowing it with the ability to vision (Menton & Faris, 2005). Faris states that magical realism has the capability of being a form of decolonizing agent as it can give a voice to the periphery, erased customs, and new literature to form and produce masterpieces. She also draws the parallel between its cultural purpose and the purpose of traditional shamanic performance that connected the two worlds of everyday life and spirits (Menton & Faris, 2005). Interestingly, however, Faris applies the practice of magical realism to gender issues in that she asks the possibility of a female aspect being in the genre (Menton & Faris, 2005).

2.1.1 Introduction to Trauma Theory

Trauma in literature employs a complex application of many aspects of perceiving both direct psychological and cultural effects of traumatic situations on literature. It relies on the interdisciplinary worldviews by integrating information in applied linguistics, psychology, and studies of cultures (Busch & Mcnamara, 2020). The domain examines the possibilities of language and narrative to articulate, comprehend and perhaps deal with trauma on individual, literary, and institutional levels. Interestingly, debates exist and contradiction continues in the trauma theory. Trauma theory itself has also been hugely influenced by a number of thinkers and other key texts. Unclaimed experience of Cathy Caruth (1996) has been regarded as one of the seminal texts bringing high-level psychoanalytic thinking to bear on collective processes and developing accounts of historical violence that are socially specific and psychologically smart (Forster, 2007).

2.1.2 The Psychology of Identity Fragmentation

Identity and its fragmentation can be studied through different theoretical approaches in different fields: Identity conflict is an incompatibility between different components of identity that affect work experiences as applied in the organizational setting (Vough et al., 2025). This theorization regards identity conflict as an appraisal process having certain antecedents, outcomes and responses. The subdivision in the sphere has caused the problem of knowledge accumulation and creating management tools. The same occurs in urban studies where various theoretical approaches make such partial accounts of cities. The conjunctural approach is suggested to unite the global cities, state rescaling, developmental, and postcolonial perspectives to view them in a more comprehensive way (Sayyn et al., 2020). This pluralism can be considered as involving the overcoming of theoretical and methodological difficulties based on fragmentation. The fragmentation created by the combination of digital culture and religion has taken place in digital religion studies. The evolution of the field may be divided into four stages, namely, descriptive, categorical, theoretical, and integrative, and different theoretical approaches have been encountered throughout the history of the field development (Ergen, 2023).

Traumatic experiences are found to have a considerable influence on traumatic events

on the individual as well as narrative identity. Experiences of trauma are associated with a lack of cohesive narratives and fragmentation in memories, and traumas are not well integrated into other life processes, that is, they are disjointed stories about trauma (Wiesepape et al., 2025). This interference can result in a fracture in the identity and significance, which brings up the significance of story construction in creating memorious sense of self (Crossley, 2000). The trauma, in certain cases, may be included in the personality and, in fact, be regarded as an epiphany or even the sense of life (Berman, 2016). Such a linkage of trauma to identity may result in negative effects, including the severity of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), as well as in positive effects, including posttraumatic growth (Berman, 2016; Bernard et al., 2015). The effects of the trauma on identity are not restricted to the personal experience but move to the communal levels of memory and identity marks the culture. Nevertheless, adaptive psychological functioning and posttraumatic growth can be anticipated by positive event centrality, indicating that the adaptive identity constructions of both negative and positive elements into own identity are relevant to post-trauma adaptation (Bernard et al., 2015).

2.1.3 Magical Realism and Trauma Representation

Magical realism appeared as a literary movement during the beginning of the 20 th century and bars its origin to the art realm. The phrase magical realism was formulated by Franz Roh in 1925, and the idea of the marvelous real was introduced later, in 1949 in the Americas by Alejo Carpentier with the part of the name lo real maravilloso (the marvelous real) (Faris, 1995). Magical realism is known to many as a Latin American literary region; however, through the past it has been adopted as a globally diverse phenomenon having far reaching influence in the diverse world literatures (Faris, 1995). The important characteristic in magical realism is that it is able to naturalize the supernatural; this merges the realistic depiction with fantasy to the point that the marvelous appears to arise organically out of the normal (Menton & Faris, 2005). Interestingly, magical realism can be juxtaposed with the neighboring genres, i.e., realism and fantasy in which there is no magic and the occurrence of magic respectively (Ganzin & Lundmark, 2025). The magic realism is an instrument of postcolonial and marginalised voices that offer a resource that allows sub-merged

traditions and emergent literatures to flourish (Menton & Faris, 2005).

As a literary genre, magical realism becomes an effective tool to present trauma and psychological breakdown effects, making the writer merge the aspects of reality and fantasy in order to communicate complicated feelings (Warnes, 2005). This stylistic device may especially be useful to render the fogged perceptions of time and reality that are often connected to traumatic experiences, which the psychiatry literature refers to as the concept of temporal disintegration (Holman et al., 2023). Remarkably, magical realism can also be used as the way of mending the rift in the web of experience caused by extraordinary or traumatic events, and may promote the process of sensemaking and healing (Ganzin & Lundmark, 2025). To sum up, magical realism is an exceptional narrative technique of the approach to describing the trauma and the psychological fragmentation. Authors have a good chance of expressing traumatic events and the world that follows through them by mixing supernatural elements with naturalistic depictions.

2. 1.4 Haruki Murakami and Trauma Narratives

The manner in which Murakami has addressed trauma and some of the other repeated themes of identity and loss and more importantly what it means to remember and forget has been an important subject of critical reading, particularly that which addresses cultural trauma and collective memory. The short story by Murakami, titled Little eucalyptus leaves addresses the trauma of the 3/11 triple disaster in Japan to the multidirectional memory of other world traumas such as Auschwitz, in the context of the 3/11 triple disaster in Japan (Dinitto, 2014). Such strategy shows that Murakami can bring individual pain to the level of collective tragedy, and this helps develop 3/11 as a cultural trauma. Murakami helps to make a national story of survival possible by linking the misfortunes in his home to those in world history as a means of creating a national memory or we to this trauma that can be used either to support or contradict national traumatic narratives of recovery. To sum up, transgression of trauma and the fact that throughout his work Murakami employs the same themes of identity, loss and memory have been accepted with critical doubts as a tremendous investigation of the overlapping between personal and shared trauma in culture and cultural identity. The fact he can depict local incidents in the context of world historical traumas leads to a

larger interpretation of the formation of cultural trauma and collective memory; this has placed his work within the significant discourses of multiculturalism and post colonialism.

2.1.5 The Theory of Post-Memory

The theory of post memory by irsch is concentrated on how traumatic memories are transferred with generations and more specifically during the holocaust (Weedon & Jordan, 2012). This theory discusses the process of inheriting and internalizing the memories of the events that the descendants of trauma survivors did not witness first-hand. Post memory is the state of close connection with the past whose transmission occurs through stories, pictures and manners that are acquired by people in the families and other cultures (Kidron, 2003).

2.2 Interdisciplinary Perspectives

The post-World War II Japan saw as the reconstruction of identity largely tainted with trauma of war, defeat, and occupation through the literature of the period. The research by Sharalyn Orbaugh focuses on tracing the redeployment and reuse of the wartime propaganda rhetoric in postwar fiction in order to redefine Japanese identity with the aid of trauma analysis, gender and racial studies, and literary theory, respectively (Orbaugh, 2007). Such response to trauma and transformation in literature is further discussed in a piece of work about the thematic preoccupations that prolonged authors, through their engrossment and recalcitrance in the war, where a thesis is raised that the notion of the term postwar grew nearly parallel with the war itself (Plain, 2013). Remarkably it is not just the Japanese who have to contend with historical trauma, this problem also manifests itself in the Asian American and in some cases Asian American communities as a whole who have had to endure large scale events like the Japanese American incarceration which occurred during the World War II period. It, amongst other issues, has been found that these traumas produce long-term implications on identity and coping throughout the generations (Cai & Lee, 2022; Nagata et al., 2015). This combination of personal and cultural trauma shows how interwoven the issue of a specific person and a larger history is. To sum it up, the literature of the postwar Japan is an important channel to discuss the meeting point between the national history and personal trauma. The

redeployment of war time rhetoric to the extents of exploring the themes of documenting and desiring, grieving, Japanese writers struggled with the profound nature of the war both on individual and communal identities. This work of literature is not only a response to the late stages of the war process, but still determines the cultural memory and identity development of generations and communities.

3 Research Methodology

The present qualitative study employs a purposive sampling technique to pick the novel, *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* by Haruki Murakami to study. Under the aspect of Wendy B. Faris Theory of Magical Realism and Marianne Hirsch Theory of Post memory, the researchers use them to perform a critical analysis of the text. Using these theoretical frameworks this study then attempts to see how the themes of trauma and fragmentation of identity come out in the novel, and how the issues of such complex phenomenon as magical realism helps the novel to address these issues.

4 Data Analysis

4.1 Narrative Techniques of Magical Realism

4.1.1 The Blurring of Boundaries

Murakami merges mundane reality with surreal events (e.g., talking cats) to depict trauma as an inescapable, lived experience that distorts ordinary life. In *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, Murakami uses magical realism (conceptualized by Wendy B. Faris) to bring the hereditary transfer of trauma to the outside, knocking off the household terms in the fixed concepts of identity. The scene “Kumiko’s mother was the ... to have meaning for her. (Murakami, 1997, p.79), dealing with Mrs. Wataya, her short-sightedness, robbery view, and concern with her appearance, is a larger theme of fragmented perception expressed in the whole novel. Similar to her, other characters like Toru and Kumiko face the world where the past invades in the most surreal, dreamlike manifestations (the well, psychic scars, and ghostly violence), and they start to forget about the many differences between the memory and imagination. Faris states that the magical realism breaks the linearity in the narration which reflects on the fact that identity has been distorted by inherited trauma.

4.1.2 Symbolism and Metaphors: their connection to trauma and memory.

Key symbols like the **well** represent subconscious retreat and isolation, while

the **wind-up bird** symbolizes the mechanical, wound-up nature of traumatic memory replaying. Mrs. This is illustrated in scene “Kumiko’s mother was the ... to have meaning for her. (Murakami, 1997, p.79), when Wataya spends the entire time lamenting on her failure to see herself as an entity and whereby she can only be herself through reception by the other even at the risk of the wounds of the past. Such unspeakable legacies that define the Wataya family are, therefore, literally revealed through the supernatural aspects of Murakami in the disappearance of Kumiko, which indicates how trauma destroys stable identity.

4.1.3 Dream Sequences and Unreliable Narration

These techniques mirror the fractured psyche, presenting memories and trauma not as linear facts but as disjointed, subjective impressions. The concept of postmemory presented by Marianne Hirsch also provides an explanation of the generational trauma in Mrs. Wataya. Her snobbery and her fascination with status are indicators of the lack of connections with the brutal history of Japan, which was a trademark of postwar bourgeois subjugation. According to Hirsch, postmemory is a mediated, trans-generational connectedness with trauma and it is applied to a situation in which Mrs. Wataya assumes the perspectives of her husband and focuses on what the world thinks about them instead of obsessing with scrutinizing herself. Her small vision is also reflective of the larger sense of phantom history in the novel: in experiencing the ghosts of the war, especially Lieutenant Mamiya when he was alive (e.g., the ghosts Toru encountered), there is unresolved trauma to be discovered in the later period. Mrs. The rigidity of Wataya, her preoccupation with the academic achievements of her son, and the career of her husband, shows how postmemory becomes a way of narrowing identity into the slots, avoiding interaction with the past. Finally, magical realism as demonstrated by Murakami and postmemory as exhibited by Hirsch come together to illustrate that the trauma which is never analyzed distorts identity into a cycle of repetition and repressed memory like in case of Mrs. Wataya.

4.2 Intergenerational Trauma and Postmemory

4.2.1 Historical and Familial Traumas

The unresolved legacy of WWII and family secrets (e.g., Lieutenant Mamiya’s story) directly haunt characters, showing how personal trauma is embedded in national

history, As in .“I could go on and on listing all ... deal of faith, however. (Murakami, 1997, p.101). The speaker has already been isolated like the Wataya family as the disconnection between the generations is represented with unprocessed wounds causing surreal interruptions, which destroy any stable view of an intact self.

4.2.2 Inherited Memories

Characters like Toru engage with vivid, visceral memories of events they never witnessed, illustrating how trauma can be transmitted emotionally across generations. As in “I could go on and on listing all ... deal of faith, however. (Murakami, 1997, p.101).. The pain of the speaker within the framework of postmemory presented by Marianne Hirsch demonstrates a specific symbolic language of intergenerational trauma- a trauma one did not take part in but received as a pass-through experience left without physical signs but only emotional and psychic ones.

4.2.3 Silences and Gaps: role of unspoken traumas in shaping identity

The narrative is structured around what is left unsaid; these omissions powerfully shape characters' identities and motivate their searches for meaning. As in “I could go on and on listing all ... deal of faith, however. (Murakami, 1997, p.101). The pointlessness of the speaker in his attempts to comprehend his experience (I tried to ask people about pain) indicates the mediation of postmemory as an experience that cannot be fully defined as traumatic or post-traumatic (the speaker has a feeling of it but cannot make sense out of it). This corresponds to the war echoes (e.g., Lieutenant Mamiya pain) of the novel, which have been haunting characters like haunting spirits. The patterns of going back and forth between despair and hope reflect the repressions of the individuals and the fragmented sense of self throughout postwar Japan, where trauma is not dealt with and does not lead to a resolution. Magical realism and postmemory in turn merge in order to demonstrate that an unprocessed past gives an individual and a nation a distorted picture of identity and reduces people to become lost in a world of unresolved pain and unrealistic repetition.

4.3. Fragmentation of Identity

4.3.1 Individual Identity Disintegration: Toru Okada's search for his wife as a metaphor for lost self.

Toru's passive search for his missing wife, Kumiko, parallels his own loss of purpose

and coherent self, becoming a quest to reassemble his fractured identity.. As in “I could go on and on listing all ... deal of faith, however. (Murakami, 1997, p.101). The use of magical realism in *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* as identified by Wendy B. Faris, turns trauma into the embodied and surreal being, destabilizing identity due to the lack of distinction between the reality and the unconscious. The body of pain presented as being similar to a virtual sample book in the passage ventrifies pain as a near supernatural responsibility, an ability that Faris portrays in his concept of magical realism which possesses an inexplicable component of magic, which pain as trauma cannot be explained.

4.3.2 Collective Identity and Cultural Memory: shared historical traumas impact Japan’s societal identity

Shared national traumas, like the war in Manchuria, create a fragmented cultural psyche, where history is a collective wound influencing societal detachment. As in “I could go on and on listing all ... deal of faith, however. (Murakami, 1997, p.101). The faith of the speaker that a pain can go away in one night can be seen in the general purpose of the novel where elements of dreams and uncertainties have been used in a manner such as the well of Toru or the metaphysical of Creta Kano, to explain how the trauma of persecution is constantly inherited and disjointed into the identities of the offspring.

4.4. The Role of Postmemory

4.4.1 Mediated Memories: Murakami portraying characters grappling with inherited, mediated memories of trauma

As in “ Several questions remained ... with me through them.” (Murakami, 1997, p.385)

The narrative elements of Haruki Murakami in *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* that utilize the literary genre of magical realism serve to dramatize the intergenerational stress down transfers as a result of blurring cuts of reality and the surreal, which are redefinitions of the fixed sense of identity. The confusion of the protagonist as to whether Kumiko was sincere in her purpose and whether she will come back to her family can be viewed to the inability to articulate all that is real in the manner described by Wendy B. Faris through her discussion of magical realism.

Faris believes that MR can rupture linearity and establish a scene where trauma can occur not only on personal but also inherited levels and take the form of something strange. In this case, both the confused farewell of Kumiko and mysterious communications of her family are a magical realist effect that points to the possibility that she does not act as an individual but she is entangled with family and historical heritage.

4.4.2 Influence on Present Actions: Postmemory Shapes Characters' Relationships and Choices

These inherited memories dictate present choices, such as Toru's descent into the well, which is a direct engagement with a traumatic past that is not his own. As in "Several questions remained ... with me through them." (Murakami, 1997, p.385). His failure to understand the independence of Kumiko with her supposedly recaptured family affects his own sense of self, the same struggle that underlies the greater theme of trauma and how it affects identity. The surreal experience in the novel (dreams, omens, alternate realities) can be viewed as a metaphor of a trauma that is not processed and remains in part unconscious and capable of being passed down the generations.

4.5. Thematic Implications

4.5.1 Dislocation and Disorientation: Magical Realism Conveying the Sense of Displacement caused by Trauma

Magical realism creates a pervasive sense of being unmoored, reflecting the destabilizing impact of trauma on one's perception of reality and place in the world. As in "Several questions remained ... with me through them." (Murakami, 1997, p.385). The postmemory theory proposed by Marianne Hirsch also throws more light on the role played by intergenerational trauma in the novel. The term Postmemory is used to explain how the subsequent generations are endowed with traumatic events that they have not personally experienced, but they live because of them. The restlessness of Kumiko, who is having a bad relationship with her family members, is an indication of trauma between relatives, which may be connected to the wounds that Japan has as a nation (e.g., World War II). Her father and her brother are evasive in their statements, which can be read as an element of the post memory as a form of relying on the indirect, mediated information about the past. This lack of faith in

Kumiko getting back to her family shows the gap between lived experience and trauma passed through generation, one of the main tensions in concept of postmemory.

4.5.2 Healing and Confrontation

This dissonance is increased through magical realism, which captures much of the mystifying, unsettled presence of transgenerational trauma in the way these surreal elements, such as the eludeness of Kumiko, represent it. In combination, the theories of Faris and Hirsch demonstrate that the identity construction processes are unsteady in their nature and are influenced by the ghosts of the past, as narrated by Murakami.

5 Findings And Conclusions

Based on the analysis, it has become evident that the use of magical realism in Murakami's *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* is related to the idea that Wendy B. Faris theorizes about the possible destabilization of traditional perception of reality and identity especially in frame of transgenerational trauma. The confusion experienced by the main character as to why Kumiko went away, as well as the uncertain role of her relatives, carries reflection of a story in which truth is hard to find, and mental scars are reminiscent of surrealistic nature. This is consistent with Faris who assumes that magical realism is a means of breaking down the binary real/unreal to enable trauma to reveal itself in fragmented, dreamlike manifestations. Also, the postmemory concept developed by Marianne Hirsch can be used to decode how the family interactions of Kumiko point to the trauma, perhaps a trauma of historical Japanese violence, as the cause of her actions, which she would then inherit and similarly shape the protagonist to see Kumiko as a trauma carrier. The overlapping of the individual and communal memory in the novel casts light on the fact that identity is not essentialized; it is instead a fluid environment that is dependent on unresolved history.

Finally, *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* is an example of how magical realism and postmemory serve storytelling purposes to reflect the destabilizing impacts of transgenerational trauma. Incorporating surreal aspects in the psyche of the protagonist, Murakami shows how traumatization impairs the reality and creates difficulties in the process of self-realization. According to the novel, identity is not a secluded construction but a construction heavily interwoven with family and historical reverberations such that the past remains unresolved, and haunting in the uncanny

fashion. In such a way, Murakami provides critique of the larger processes of memory and forgetting in human cultures, which helps to understand the ongoing prevalence of both individual and accepted trauma across generations, the traumas that haunt the present days and reconstruct the futures. The lasting strength of the novel is that it has made trauma not a thing of the past but something spectral, a vexing force that cannot be reconciled in a linear fashion.

6 Future Implications

Upvote the framework to other Murakami novels (Kafka on the Shore, 1Q84). Comparative research to other texts of magical realist trauma (e.g. to *Beloved*, *The Satanic Verses*). Consider the variants of such approach in the context of film/media studies (e.g., Lynchian surrealism as trauma narrative).

References

- Banfield, J. (2022). From liminal spaces to the spatialities of liminality. *Area*, 54(4), 610–617. <https://doi.org/10.1111/area.12791>
- Baray, G., Postmes, T., & Jetten, J. (2009). When I equals we: Exploring the relation between social and personal identity of extreme right-wing political party members. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 48(4), 625–647. <https://doi.org/10.1348/014466608x389582>
- Benito, J., Manzananas, A. M., & Simal, B. (2009). *Uncertain mirrors*. <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789042026018>
- Berman, S. L. (2016). Identity and trauma. *Journal of Traumatic Stress Disorders & Treatment*, 05(02). <https://doi.org/10.4172/2324-8947.1000e108>
- Bernard, J. D., Whittles, R. L., Kertz, S. J., & Burke, P. A. (2014). Trauma and event centrality: Valence and incorporation into identity influence well-being more than exposure. *Psychological Trauma Theory Research Practice and Policy*, 7(1), 11–17. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0037331>
- Brance, K., Chatzimpyros, V., & Bentall, R. P. (2024). Social identity, mental health and the experience of migration. *British Journal of Social Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjso.12745>
- Brinkmann, S. (2009). Literature as qualitative inquiry. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 15(8), 1376–1394. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800409332030>

- Buelens, G., Durrant, S., & Eaglestone, R. (2013). The future of trauma Theory. In *Routledge eBooks*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203493106>
- Busch, B., & McNamara, T. (2020). Language and Trauma: An Introduction. *Applied Linguistics*, 41(3), 323–333. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amaa002>
- Cai, J., & Lee, R. M. (2022). Intergenerational Communication about Historical Trauma in Asian American Families. *Adversity and Resilience Science*, 3(3), 233–245. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42844-022-00064-y>
- Carr, D. C., Taylor, M. G., Gee, N. R., & Sachs-Ericsson, N. (2019). Psychological health benefits of companion animals following a social loss. *The Gerontologist*, 60(3), 428–438. <https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/gnz109>
- Causo, F., & Quinlan, E. (2021). Defeating dragons and demons: consumers' perspectives on mental health recovery in role-playing games. *Australian Psychologist*, 56(3), 256–267. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00050067.2021.1890983>
- Cooper, B. (2010). *Magical realism in West African fiction*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203451397>
- Crespo, M., & Fernández-Lansac, V. (2015). Memory and narrative of traumatic events: A literature review. *Psychological Trauma Theory Research Practice and Policy*, 8(2), 149–156. <https://doi.org/10.1037/tra0000041>
- Crossley, M. L. (2000). Narrative Psychology, Trauma and the Study of Self/Identity. *Theory & Psychology*, 10(4), 527–546. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0959354300104005>
- Danieli, Y. (1998). International Handbook of Multigenerational Legacies of Trauma. In *Springer eBooks*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4757-5567-1>
- Dinitto, R. (2014). Narrating the cultural trauma of 3/11: the debris of post-Fukushima literature and film. *Japan Forum*, 26(3), 340–360. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09555803.2014.915867>
- Ergen, Y. (2023). Framing the Study of Digital Religion: waves of academic research, theoretical approaches and themes. *Medya Ve Din Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 6(2), 137–166. <https://doi.org/10.47951/mediad.1363608>
- Eyerman, R. (2004). Cultural trauma: Slavery and the formation of African American

- identity. In *University of California Press eBooks* (pp. 60–111).
<https://doi.org/10.1525/california/9780520235946.003.0003>
- Flynn, T. R. (2014). *Sartre*. <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9781139020206>
- Forter, G. (2007). Freud, Faulkner, Caruth: Trauma and the Politics of Literary form. *Narrative*, 15(3), 259–285. <https://doi.org/10.1353/nar.2007.0022>
- Ganzin, M., & Lundmark, E. (2025). Bending reality to your will: entrepreneurship through the lens of magical realism. *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*, 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08985626.2025.2455613>
- Gough, M., & Killewald, A. (2011). Unemployment in families: the case of housework. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 73(5), 1085–1100. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2011.00867.x>
- Gündüz, E. N., & Özener, O. Ö. (2024). Digital Surrealism: Video game space. *Journal of Computational Design*, 5(1), 139–162. <https://doi.org/10.53710/jcode.1419955>
- Harbers, F., & Broersma, M. (2014). Between engagement and ironic ambiguity: Mediating subjectivity in narrative journalism. *Journalism*, 15(5), 639–654. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884914523236>
- Hoberek, A. (2007). Introduction: After postmodernism. *Twentieth Century Literature*, 53(3), 233–247. <https://doi.org/10.1215/0041462x-2007-4007>
- Holman, E. A., & Silver, R. C. (1998). Getting “stuck” in the past: Temporal orientation and coping with trauma. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 74(5), 1146–1163. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.74.5.1146>
- Holman, E. A., Jones, N. M., Garfin, D. R., & Silver, R. C. (2022). Distortions in time perception during collective trauma: Insights from a national longitudinal study during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Psychological Trauma Theory Research Practice and Policy*, 15(5), 800–807. <https://doi.org/10.1037/tra0001326>
- Kaminer, D. (2006a). Healing Processes in Trauma Narratives: A review. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 36(3), 481–499. <https://doi.org/10.1177/008124630603600304>
- Kansteiner, W. (2004). Genealogy of a category mistake: a critical intellectual history

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

- of the cultural trauma metaphor. *Rethinking History*, 8(2), 193–221.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13642520410001683905>
- Kerr, D. J. R., Deane, F. P., & Crowe, T. P. (2019). A Complexity Perspective on Narrative Identity Reconstruction in Mental Health recovery. *Qualitative Health Research*, 30(4), 634–649. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732319886285>
- Kidron, C. A. (2003). Surviving a Distant Past: A case study of the cultural construction of Trauma Descendant Identity. *Ethos*, 31(4), 513–544.
<https://doi.org/10.1525/eth.2003.31.4.513>
- Krauss, R. (2021). The photographic conditions of surrealism. In *Routledge eBooks* (pp. 76–90). <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003135630-14>
- Land, R., Rattray, J., & Vivian, P. (2014). Learning in the liminal space: a semiotic approach to threshold concepts. *Higher Education*, 67(2), 199–217.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-013-9705-x>
- Liu, J. H., & László, J. (2007). A narrative theory of history and identity. In *Palgrave Macmillan US eBooks* (pp. 85–107).
https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230609181_6
- Lock, D., & Heere, B. (2017). Identity crisis: a theoretical analysis of ‘team identification’ research. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 17(4), 413–435. <https://doi.org/10.1080/16184742.2017.1306872>
- Mahlomaholo, S. (2009). Critical emancipatory research and academic identity. *Africa Education Review*, 6(2), 224–237.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/18146620903274555>
- McHale, B. (2015). *The Cambridge Introduction to Postmodernism*.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9781139108706>
- McHale, B., McHale, B., McHale, B., Platt, L., Bray, J., Eaglestone, R., D’haen, T., Nadel, A., McHale, B., Johnston, J., Shumway, D. R., Stevenson, R., Faris, W. B., Docherty, T., McHale, B., McHale, B., Mercil, M., Hellmann, J., Warhol, R., . . . McHale, B. (2016). The Cambridge History of Postmodern Literature. In *Cambridge University Press eBooks*.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/cho9781316492697>
- Menton, S., & Faris, W. B. (2005). Ordinary Enchantments: magical realism and the

- remystification of narrative. *World Literature Today*, 79(2), 110.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/40158753>
- Mitchell, L. L., Frazier, P. A., & Sayer, N. A. (2020). Identity disruption and its association with mental health among veterans with reintegration difficulty. *Developmental Psychology*, 56(11), 2152–2166.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/dev0001106>
- Muldoon, O. T., Haslam, S. A., Haslam, C., Cruwys, T., Kearns, M., & Jetten, J. (2019). The social psychology of responses to trauma: social identity pathways associated with divergent traumatic responses. *European Review of Social Psychology*, 30(1), 311–348.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10463283.2020.1711628>
- Murphy, J., & McDowell, S. (2018). Transitional optics: Exploring liminal spaces after conflict. *Urban Studies*, 56(12), 2499–2514.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098018788988>
- Nagata, D. K., Kim, J. H. J., & Nguyen, T. U. (2015). Processing Cultural trauma: Intergenerational effects of the Japanese American incarceration. *Journal of Social Issues*, 71(2), 356–370. <https://doi.org/10.1111/josi.12115>
- Nikolova, M., & Ayhan, S. H. (2018). Your spouse is fired! How much do you care? *Journal of Population Economics*, 32(3), 799–844.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s00148-018-0693-0>
- Nowell, A. (2015). Children, metaphorical thinking and upper paleolithic visual cultures. *Childhood in the Past*, 8(2), 122–132.
<https://doi.org/10.1179/1758571615z.000000000034>
- O'Reilly, C., Maher, P. J., Smith, E. M., MacCarron, P., & Quayle, M. (2023). Social identity emergence in attitude interactions and the identity strengthening effects of cumulative attitude agreement. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 54(1), 97–117. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.3000>
- Onorato, R. S., & Turner, J. C. (2004). Fluidity in the self-concept: the shift from personal to social identity. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 34(3), 257–278. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.195>
- Orbaugh, S. (2007). *Japanese fiction of the Allied Occupation*.

<https://doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004155466.i-518>

Østerud, Ø. (1996). Antinomies of postmodernism in international studies. *Journal of Peace Research*, 33(4), 385–390.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343396033004001>

Pekrun, R. (2024). Overcoming fragmentation in motivation science: why, when, and how should we integrate theories? *Educational Psychology Review*, 36(1).

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-024-09846-5>

Peluso, D. M. (2004). That which I dream is true: Dream narratives in an Amazonian community. *Dreaming*, 14(2–3), 107–119. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1053-0797.14.2-3.107>

Pesant, N., & Zadra, A. (2005). Dream content and psychological well-being: A longitudinal study of the continuity hypothesis. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 62(1), 111–121. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jclp.20212>

Pierson, S., & LaCapra, D. (1985). Rethinking Intellectual history: texts, contexts, language. *Comparative Literature*, 37(4), 359. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1770282>

Plain, G. (2013). *Literature of the 1940s: War, Postwar and “Peace.”* <https://doi.org/10.3366/edinburgh/9780748627448.001.0001>

Radstone, S. (2007). Trauma Theory: Contexts, Politics, Ethics. *Paragraph*, 30(1), 9–29. <https://doi.org/10.3366/prg.2007.0015>

Rzeszutek, M., Dragan, M., Lis-Turlejska, M., Schier, K., Holas, P., Pięta, M., Van Hoy, A., Drabarek, K., Poncyliusz, C., Michałowska, M., Wdowczyk, G., Borowska, N., & Szumiał, S. (2023). Long-lasting effects of World War II trauma on PTSD symptoms and embodiment levels in a national sample of Poles. *Scientific Reports*, 13(1). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-023-44300-6>

Sanyal, D., & LaCapra, D. (2002). Writing history, writing trauma. *SubStance*, 31(2/3), 301. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3685496>

Sayın, Ö., Hoyler, M., & Harrison, J. (2020a). Doing comparative urbanism differently: Conjunctural cities and the stress-testing of urban theory. *Urban Studies*, 59(2), 263–280. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098020957499>

Sayın, Ö., Hoyler, M., & Harrison, J. (2020b). Doing comparative urbanism

- differently: Conjunctural cities and the stress-testing of urban theory. *Urban Studies*, 59(2), 263–280. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098020957499>
- Śliwa, M., Spoelstra, S., Sørensen, B. M., & Land, C. (2012). Profaning the sacred in leadership studies: a reading of Murakami's A Wild Sheep Chase. *Organization*, 20(6), 860–880. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508412455837>
- Thompson, L. (2021). Toward a feminist psychological theory of “institutional trauma.” *Feminism & Psychology*, 31(1), 99–118. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0959353520968374>
- Tythacott, L. (2003). *Surrealism and the exotic*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203218754>
- Văran, C., & Crețan, R. (2017). Place and the spatial politics of intergenerational remembrance of the Iron Gates displacements in Romania, 1966–1972. *Area*, 50(4), 509–519. <https://doi.org/10.1111/area.12387>
- Varghese, M., Morgan, B., Johnston, B., & Johnson, K. A. (2005). Theorizing Language Teacher Identity: Three Perspectives and Beyond. *Journal of Language Identity & Education*, 4(1), 21–44. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327701jlie0401_2
- Visser, I. (2011). Trauma theory and postcolonial literary studies. *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 47(3), 270–282. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17449855.2011.569378>
- Visser, I. (2015). Decolonizing Trauma Theory: Retrospect and Prospects. *Humanities*, 4(2), 250–265. <https://doi.org/10.3390/h4020250>
- Vough, H. C., Cardador, M. T., Caza, B. B., & Campion, E. D. (2024). The identity conflict process: Appraisal theory as an integrative framework for understanding identity conflict at work. *Journal of Applied Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0001223>
- Warnes, C. (2005). Naturalizing the supernatural: faith, irreverence and magical realism. *Literature Compass*, 2(1). <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-4113.2005.00106.x>
- Weedon, C., & Jordan, G. (2012). Collective memory: theory and politics. *Social Semiotics*, 22(2), 143–153. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10350330.2012.664969>

- Wiesepape, C. N., Smith, E. A., Muth, A. J., & Faith, L. A. (2025). Personal Narratives in Trauma-Related Disorders: Contributions from a Metacognitive Approach and Treatment Considerations. *Behavioral Sciences*, 15(2), 150. <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs15020150>
- Wilson, C., & Stock, J. (2019). The impact of living with long-term conditions in young adulthood on mental health and identity: What can help? *Health Expectations*, 22(5), 1111–1121. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hex.12944>
- Windt, J. M. (2017). Predictive brains, dreaming selves, sleeping bodies: how the analysis of dream movement can inform a theory of self- and world-simulation in dreams. *Synthese*, 195(6), 2577–2625. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11229-017-1525-6>
- Zaleski, K. L., Johnson, D. K., & Klein, J. T. (2016). Grounding Judith Herman's Trauma Theory within Interpersonal Neuroscience and Evidence-Based Practice Modalities for Trauma Treatment. *Smith College Studies in Social Work*, 86(4), 377–393. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00377317.2016.1222110>
- Zamora, L. P., & Faris, W. B. (1995). Magical realism. In *Duke University Press eBooks*. <https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822397212>