

# Cognitive Foregrounding Through Schematic Knowledge Deviation in Murakami's Kafka on the Shore

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## Abstract

This paper is an attempt to show how schematic challenge can be posed by activating certain levels of schematic default elements across the network of the reader's prototypical schematic expectations. The triggering of certain levels of detail leads to a process of cognitive defamiliarization that takes place through a sort of schematic foregrounding. This type of cognitive foregrounding brings up certain levels of specificity with varying degrees of overspecification or underspecification. Accordingly, a schematic challenge might not involve destroying old schemata or creating new ones but all it takes is simply triggering unexpected levels of detail within the reader's pre-existing schematic toolkit. Murakami's novel Kafka on the Shore sets a cognitive challenge to the reader's schematic expectations in a way that is inherently related to the basic artistic properties of the fantasy literature which the novel belongs to. Murakami injects his novel with a variety of schematic surprises that go against the reader's established schematic expectations.

**Keywords:** *discourse deviation; cognitive challenge; schematic disruption; schematic destroying; level of detail; schematic deviation.*

## البروز الذهني عبر الانحراف المعرفي للإطار الذهني في رواية موروكامي كافكا على الشاطئ

### الملخص

يعد هذا البحث محاولة لإظهار الكيفية التي يُطرحُ بها التحدي الخاص بالإطار الذهني عبر تفعيل بعض مستويات العناصر الافتراضية لذلك الإطار الذهني ضمن شبكة توقعات القارئ الخاصة بالإطارات الذهنية النمطية. إن إثارة بعض مستويات التفاصيل تؤدي إلى عملية التغريب الذهني والتي تحدث من خلال نوع معين من البروز الذهني. ويقود هذا النوع من البروز الذهني إلى بعض مستويات التحديد بدرجات مختلفة من التحديد المفرط أو التحديد القاصر. بثّ موروكامي روايته كافكا على الشاطئ بمختلف المفاجآت الذهنية والتي تتعارض مع التوقعات الذهنية المُقرّرة للقارئ.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الانحراف الخطابي، التحدي الذهني، الاضطراب الذهني، الهدم الذهني، مستوى التفاصيل، الانحراف الذهني.

## 1. Introduction

A diversity of approaches has been suggested to pinpoint the very nature of "literariness". An extensive body of works has been produced to go through the notion of "literariness" but from different perspectives. It might be necessary, for the space limitations, to bring out a panoramic view of these approaches avoiding the overspecified replica of this topic in particular.

Generally speaking, scholars have run across four approaches to investigate "literariness". The first approach involves a diverse body of theories suggested by a plethora of scholars, Shklovsky (1917, 1925); Jakobson (1960); Mukarovsky (1964); and Van Peer (1986). This approach might be called overallly *the linguistic approach*. Though the theories involved in this approach vary slightly in their linguistic milieu, they all get round one particular view that "literariness" results in an exclusive set of language-use features. Thus, *parallelism*, *deviation* and *foregrounding*, for example, are formal features closely related to the poetic, artistic and aesthetic functions of literariness. Hence, literariness is an exclusive property of text language having no role whatsoever in discourse (Cook, 1995:2).

The second perspective on literariness is called *the social approach* (ibid.). May be Halliday's (1964) influential contribution to the social semiotic function of language is quite central in this approach. Literariness is no more simply a function of textual features rather it is a function of discourse within a complex network of relations holding between the interpersonal and ideational. Being another mode of social interaction, literariness loses its distinction as an exclusive property of literature or literary discourse. A literary text is considered so, after all, due to the power of the institutions presenting it and the claims that readers should read it in a certain way (see Foucault, 1979). It could be plausible that linguistic choice might trigger some aesthetic and literary effects; nevertheless, literariness is still not a property of texts, but a reflection of certain relative aesthetic social milieu (Petrey, 2016).

The third approach to literariness is rather provocative, prejudiced and one-

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sided. It reduces all literature to a sort of partial coding system designed to address the specific identity of a particular nation. This national perspective holds that literariness lies in a given set of habitual uses of language codifying national identity. Thus, a given discourse is likely to be classified as literary due to its complex fabric that reflects overallly the values of a specific nation. Harmfully, literariness within this partial framework of interpretation becomes a property produced by a representational machinery (literature) utilized exclusively to reinforce only the nation-state (see Strand, 2009; Newey et al., 1991; Carey, 2002).

As for the fourth approach, it suggests a drastic redefinition of literariness. In a word, literariness is not any more a formal property of a given type of texts but rather a cognitive property of text processing. Since this paper pertains to a specific area within the cognitive approach to literariness, it might be unavoidable to go through the general theoretical underpinning of this approach in some detail.

## 2. The Cognitive Approach

Though the cognitive approach entails several strands with different perspectives, this approach is still basically holding one common ground related to an attempt to integrate the research findings in *human cognitive processing*, *literature*, and *arts*. Jaen and Simon (2013) use a sort of comprehensive term to encompass all these strands which is "cognitive literary studies". Such studies include a dynamic array of multidisciplinary investigations: *cognitive poetics* (Tsur 1992 and Freeman 1998, 2007, 2008); *conceptual metaphor studies* (Lakoff and Turner 1989, Fauconnier and Turner 2002, Semino and Culpeper 2002, Stockwell 2002, Gavins and Steen 2003 and Brône and Vandaele 2009); *cognitive narratology* (Fludernik 1993, Sanford and Emmott 2012, Herman 2002, Huhn 2009); *text world theory* (Gavins 2007, Werth 1995, Semino 1997); *cognitive stylistics* (Semino and Culpeper 2002, Burke 2011); *cognitive archaeology* (Mithen 1996); . . . etc.

All these diverse investigation lines might suggest that the cognitive approach is

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slightly heterogeneous. However, such a lack of homogeneity is due to an inevitable set of differences in the kind of questions raised in each one of these strands and the differences in the ways by which "one explores the cognitive processes at work in experiencing literature" (Tsur, 2008: 623).

This paper is concerned with one specific area amongst the ramifications of the cognitive approach. This area is called *cognitive stylistics* which itself holds a variety of further investigation lines. Going through a literary text from a cognitive stylistic viewpoint requires researchers to utilize theoretical frameworks related to areas such as cognitive psychology, artificial intelligence, and computing (Jefferies et al., 2010:126).

Nevertheless, the major focus of almost every cognitive stylistic analysis is supposed to be interpretation and not experience. To conduct a cognitive stylistic analysis is to bring together two types of consideration: a consideration of the linguistic choices and patterning within the fabric of the text, and another consideration of the mental processes and cognitive representations a reader activates to reach an interpretation of the same text (Freeman, 2014: 313-315). That is to say, a researcher is not urged only to investigate the linguistic make-up of the literary text, but also the cognitive make-up: the mental processes and mechanisms a text producer utilizes to create his literary language and the same processes and mechanisms a reader utilizes to shape his responses to the text producer's language (Tsur, 2008). This kind of interactive investigation might help much in exploring how the findings of the cognitive sciences can contribute to the systematic study and interpretation of literature.

Therefore, literariness is redefined within a rather drastic set of cognitive defaults. A literary text is considered so as long as it achieves its aesthetic effects through an interaction of both its linguistic forms and the cognitive processes these forms trigger within the reader's mind. An isolated description of the linguistic fabric or the cognitive make-up of a text is by far not enough for this text to attain the literary status.

3.

#### 4. Schema Theory: History and Applications

The type of questions raised in cognitive stylistics has its own repercussions on the areas of interest within this field. The focus of almost any cognitive stylistic analysis is expected to be on the nature of the mental processes a reader activates to respond to certain aspects of a text, the type of the schematic knowledge a reader needs to retrieve so that an appropriate interpretation is processed, and how such knowledge packages are used to impose structure on our world views (Jefferies et al., 2010: 126-27).

Hence, schema theory is but one specific line of enquiry, amongst others, within the general framework of cognitive stylistics. Two points might lack consensus on schema theory: its history and its versions or range of applications.

Tracing the historical origins of the theory is mystified by the various fields that contributed to the maturation of the "schema" as a notion. The interdisciplinary nature of the theoretical underpinnings of the schema theory locates the very notion of "schema" within four basic areas of enquiry: *philosophy*, *Gestalt psychology*, *artificial intelligence* and *cognitive psychology*. Each one of these areas had made its own rigorous and contextualized use of "schema".

In philosophy, the notion of schema is usually traced back to Kant in his book *Critique of Pure Reason* (1787) and later developed by Nietzsche (1870s) (Mark and Stockwell, 2005: 60). Within the philosophical framework, schema is used interchangeably in the sense of "a plan" and "a map" (Cook, 1995: 16). In Gestalt psychology, the British psychologist Bartlett (1932) is frequently quoted by researchers as the father of the schema theory in its modern version, though he himself attributes the whole notion of schema to an earlier scholar, Henry Head (ibid.). Bartlett was the first scholar to use schema in the sense of "a prior knowledge" and he identified the term "schema" as being a basic organizational unit of prior knowledge (Semino, 1995: 3).

Throughout the 1970s, artificial intelligence (AI) came up with an exceptional set of attempts to produce computerized models simulating human text processing. The computational perspective of language, however, is a sort of a

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process of communication that acquires its efficiency from the nature of the processed knowledge (Wingord,1983:13). Accordingly, simulating human linguistic intelligence by a machine does not require only "knowledge of language" but also "knowledge of the world" (Cook, 1995:18). This latter type of knowledge helps computers process texts in a human-like way.

Schema is used within artificial intelligence context in the sense of some "structured computational knowledge bases which would reflect a normal reader's schemata" (Emmott et al, 2014:269). Schema is used interchangeably with other terms suggested by artificial intelligence researchers such as "frame", Minsky (1975), "script", Schank and Abelson (1977), and "scenario", Sanford and Garrod (1981, 1998). Nevertheless, these alternative terms highlight particular aspects of the schematic background knowledge: a *frame* handles knowledge packed in visual perception, a *script* is a schema with a dynamic sequence of events, a *scenario* is a schema conditioned by a situation-specific knowledge ( Emmot et al, 2014: 269).

The artificial intelligence account of schema theory made a deep impact on the way the notion of schema is handled in cognitive psychology. It could be a mistake to think of this impact as unidirectional. There has been a "two-way traffic" influence. Artificial intelligence researchers have drawn upon cognitive psychology accounts of human cognition nature; and cognitive psychologists have used the precious findings brought up by artificial intelligence researchers to put forward a sophisticated computerized simulation of human linguistic intelligence (Field, 2006:3).

Despite the reciprocal influence of artificial intelligence and cognitive psychology the latter flagged up a central issue in schema theory regardless of the theoretical framework cognitive psychology takes on. This central issue defines the notion of schema as a relevant package of prior knowledge a reader needs to activate within his mental store so that he can achieve an appropriate level of comprehension (Semino, 1997:123).

## 5. Literariness Within Schema Theory

Schema theory has also been used to re-identify the concept of "literariness" within the same central issue of schematic comprehension of texts. Comprehension of any text, literary or non-literary, depends on triggering certain relevant schemata (ibid.). Generally speaking, both texts, literary and non-literary, undergo the same stages of schematic comprehension but with significantly different outputs.

Within a non-literary text, schematic comprehension goes like this: the text triggers some relevant schemata by "headers" or "textual cues" which will activate either a single schema or a configuration of schemata. The last stage will end up with the reader instantiating (a) schema(ta) by applying the activated schema(ta) to the textual input. So, for example, in the sentence – "I went to the dermatology clinic" – two elements function as "headers" triggering our "DOCTOR/ PATIENT INTERVIEW" schema: the motion verb, "went", and the location, "dermatology clinic". The moment the reader pulls down the intended schema, he starts applying all the details involved in this cognitive package, e.g. actions, preconditions, locations, roles . . . etc., to the interpretation of the running textual input.

As for the literary text, the comprehension process might have the same starting stages as those involved in the non-literary comprehension but later on things will go quite differently. Literary comprehension requires a challenging interplay between reader's schematic knowledge and text: the process starts with the literary text triggering certain schema(ta) by textual cues or headers that will further lead to a process of either single schema or a configuration of schema(ta) activation.

The crucial difference between literary and non-literary comprehension lies in the process of schema(ta) instantiation. In a literary text the reader is exposed to a given cognitive disruption of instantiation or schematic application. This cognitive disruption causes a sort of schema change or challenge. The distinction between literary and non-literary texts on such a cognitive ground is

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basically suggested by Cook (1995) in his model of *discourse deviation* as a defining characteristic of the literary status a text might gain.

### 5.1 Cook's Model of *Discourse Deviation*

The concept of *discourse deviation* suggested by Cook (1995) seems to be the cognitive equivalence of the formal concept of defamiliarization. Cook's contribution is a blend of both formalist stylistics tradition and schema theory. The concept of defamiliarization is used within the traditions of Russian formalism (1920s) to highlight the inherent distinctiveness of the literary language in contrast with the non-literary language. Shklovsky (1917:12) describes defamiliarization as an artistic technique used in literary language to de-automatize what is already familiar, habitual and routine. It is one of the basic functions of art in general and literary language in particular to provide humanity with artistic creations that can address the dilemma of habituation and monotony (Van Peer et al., 2007:198).

Nevertheless, the defamiliarized language, as a defining property and inherent characteristic of literary texts, takes place by an established mechanism called *foregrounding*. Certain linguistic features tend to foreground or "stand out" in relation to the other surrounding linguistic features all throughout the literary text (Mukarovsky, 1964). This effect of bringing a particular feature to the fore is basically achieved by either linguistic deviation (Shklovsky, 1917) or linguistic parallelism (Jakobson, 1966).

Shklovsky (1917) stressed the role of linguistic deviation in the aesthetic function of the literary language. A literary text is typically characterized by a language-use that deviates from some well-established linguistic norms (Simpson, 2004:50). This irregularity in language-use goes against the readers' linguistic expectations bringing out a sense of surprise to the readers' attention.

Cook (1995) geared his attention precisely toward the cognitive underlyings of foregrounding. The functional potentialities of foregrounding have not been realized beyond text-analysis till Cook presented his concept of discourse



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deviation. Foregrounding, as a mechanism of defamiliarization, has its own effects on text-processing, not only text-analysis. What might be brought to the fore in a literary text is not only a linguistic feature but also a conceptual or cognitive feature. Hence, the foregrounded cognitive feature is recognized as such as a result of the cognitive deviation it brings against the expected norms of the readers' text-processing habits.

This type of cognitive deviation, according to Cook, is an essential complementary property of literariness. Cook (ibid: 10, 23) argues that literariness cannot be exclusively restricted to certain linguistic and formal properties of language-use, rather, it should be extended to involve a given set of cognitive properties of text-processing. Hence, literariness is produced as an outcome of a sort of interaction between the linguistic and "text-structural levels" and the cognitive or schematic level. This type of interplay is presented by the schematic knowledge readers call upon to reach an interpretation of the text they process. What is more, the deviations on the linguistic levels could be no more than a side-effect of deviations on the schematic level (ibid: 10). This interaction is called "discourse deviation" which is a dynamic phenomenon by which linguistic and structural deviation in a given text is related to a cognitive or schematic deviation in the reader (ibid:197-98). Accordingly, for a linguistic deviation to be cognitively literary and artistic, it is expected to correspond to a deviation at the level of the schematic knowledge that is likely to be shared by the readers.

Literariness is then essentially attributed to a particular text if and only if this text induces some kind of schema challenge, or schema disruption, leading to a sort of schema change, or schema refreshment. Cook (ibid: 11) stresses the very fact that the major function of literary texts is that of cognitive change. Literature is not exclusively associated with either ideational or interpersonal functions but with a third function related to *schematic change*. Literary texts in essence evoke schematic change which might involve destroying old schemata, creating totally new ones, or modifying pre-existing ones.

## 5.2 Schema Theory and Level of Detail

Usually *level of detail* is considered one of the problems that schema theory needs to come to terms with. A schema, after all, is an integrated package of different levels of abstractions and elaborations (Tabakowska, 1993: 37). To instantiate a particular schema is to retrieve it from memory as a single unit applying a particular elaboration level within this retrieved unit.

The choice of a specific level of schematic elaboration or of default details might be inadequately explained in schema theory (Cook, 1995: 76). Each schema instantiation seems to be torn and stretched up between two ends: *schematization* (more abstractions and generalizations) and *elaboration* (more specifications and details). A schema involves a network of various instantiations and various levels of schematic details. A schema instantiation might occur across two general levels: a higher-level (with more abstractions and overgeneralizations) and a lower-level (with more overelaborations and overextensions). Nevertheless, this dichotomy of levels is quite relative due to the hierarchical nature of the schema instantiation levels. Thus what might be a schematic instantiation on a higher-level could be a schema for a lower-level of instantiation and so on and so forth (Tabakowska, 1993: 37).

But the questions that challenge the feasibility of schema theory when it comes to the levels of schematic instantiation are unavoidable. Why does the instantiation process occur across certain levels? What does specify the reasons behind the speaker's/ writer's choice of the level of schematic detail?

Schema theory cannot address the challenge set by such questions adequately simply because it is basically "concerned with information", i.e. with the ideational function of language. As for the reasons behind choosing one level of detail rather than another, they are related to the interpersonal function of language (Cook, 1995: 76). Ultimately, at some level of abstraction and generalization, schema might look like a point of reference in terms of which levels of instantiation can go in two directions – either towards *less specification* or towards *more specification*.

If the choice of a particular level of detail or specification within a given

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schematic instantiation cannot be fully addressed in schema theory, it contributes, nevertheless, to the notion of style as choice in a literary context. The following section explains how this happens by working out some examples taken from a fantasy novel.

## 6. Literariness Through Schematic Level of Detail

The major argument raised in this paper is related to an observation that the *schematic challenge* could be brought up in some literary texts simply by disrupting the very expected and stereotypical level of detail normally triggered within a given schema. The point is that the reader sometimes has to figure out more than that which schematic knowledge is triggered in this or that textual part, but also which level of detail in particular the schema evokes and why.

What is more, the notion of schema seems to be closely related to the notion of *expectation* in the sense that every single schema encountered by a reader is mapped against a stereotypical version of it stored in the reader's memory and compared (Brown et al., 1983: 236). In literature, this kind of *schematic expectation* could be failed in terms of the level of detail in two ways: either by triggering an unusually *overextended level of detail* or unusually reduced and *underextended level of detail*. In either case the predictable level of information presumed by the reader is not there.

In the remainder of this paper I will examine the way the level of detail is utilized in *Kafka on the Shore* to achieve a sort of schematic cognitive foregrounding.

### 6.1 *Kafka on the Shore*

*Kafka on the Shore* is a novel written in 2002 by the postmodern Japanese novelist *Haruki Murakami*. It was translated by *Philip Gabriel* into English in 2005. The novel is a blend of various and complex themes: popular culture, magical realism, fantasy, humour and mundane detail (see Mathew, 1999). The last theme of "mundane detail", in particular, is quite evident throughout various textual sections within the novel.

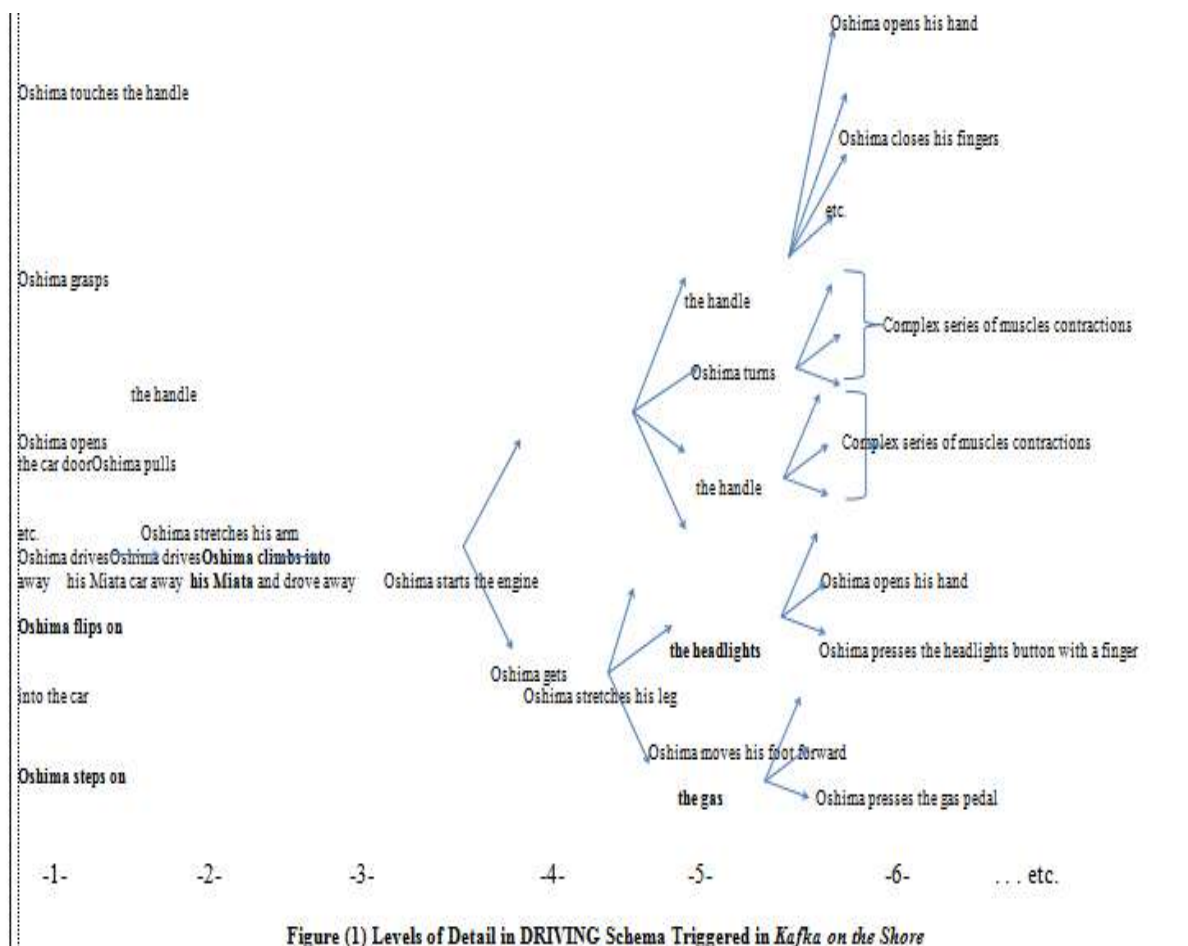
It is noted that the highly detailed descriptions of *the mundane* across *Kafka on the Shore* deviate from the readers' general schematic expectations. Within an

average schema instantiation, the reader expects every recoverable detail to be overlooked and left unnoticed. Consequently, the narrator in *Kafka on the Shore* makes explicit reference to some schematic instantiations that evoke certain levels of detail or recoverable default elements of a schema. Usually these default elements are assumed to be present within the readers' and narrator's shared background knowledge, hence, not mentioned but implicitly recovered. The narrator, however, in *Kafka on the Shore* insists, in different parts across the novel, on spelling out every piece of information that is already assumed to be known and familiar to a reader:

Oshima climbs into his Miata and flips on the headlights. As he steps on the gas, pebbles shoot up, scraping the bottom of the car. He backs up, then turns around to face the road. He raises his hand in farewell, and I do the same. The brake lights are swallowed up in darkness, the sound of the engine fading.

(Murakami: 93)

The headers in the text above, for example, trigger DRIVING schema: *Miata*, *headlights*, *gas*, *car*, and *engine*. Figure (1) below provides a representation of a hierarchy of various levels of detail involved within DRIVING schema.



Within the hierarchy of levels of specificity the narrator picks up various details across various levels. Figure (1) seems to be stretched out between two extremes: utmost *schematicity*, which might be represented simply by the sentence "Oshima drives away", and utmost *elaboration*, represented complexly by a description of the muscles contractions and even much further into the description of matter and nerves. The narrator, however, makes his choices somewhere in between and clearly ignores level (1) and even (2) jumping into level (3) and then into level (5).

Even more deviant and complex schematic levels of detail are triggered and evoked on page (164) of *Kafka on the Shore*:

Miss Saeki's asking me something but I can't reply. I don't even know what she said. I can hear her, of course--her words vibrate my eardrums and transmit a message to my brain that's converted into language--but there's a disconnect between words and meaning.

(Murakami: 164)

The textual cues involved in the paragraph above activate a weird network of levels of detail within the general framework of the readers' schematic knowledge related to the process of HEARING. These textual headers are *reply, said, hear, vibrate, eardrums, transmit, brain and converted*.

Figure (2) below diagrams the various levels of detail which might be included in the schema of HEARING.

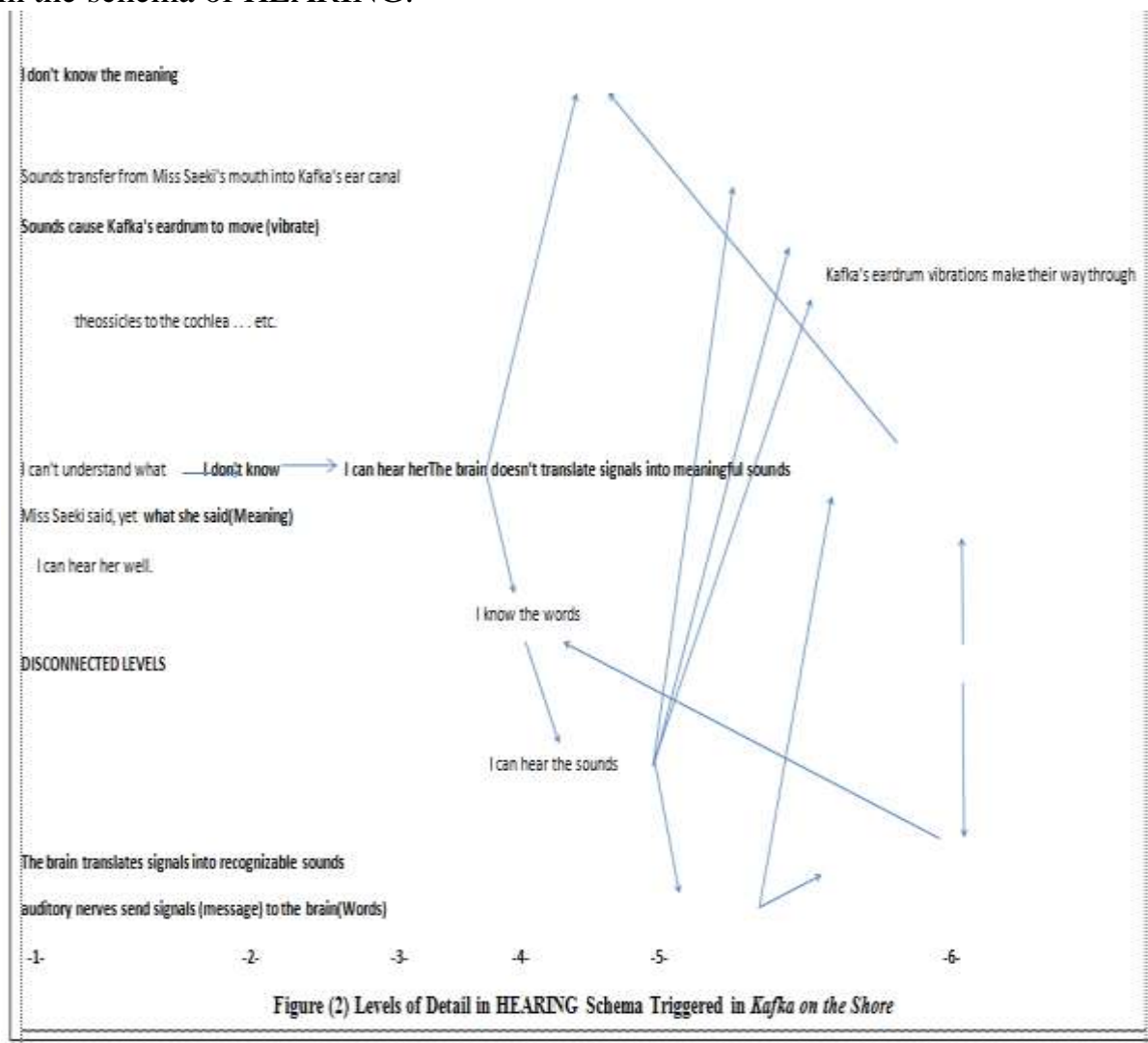


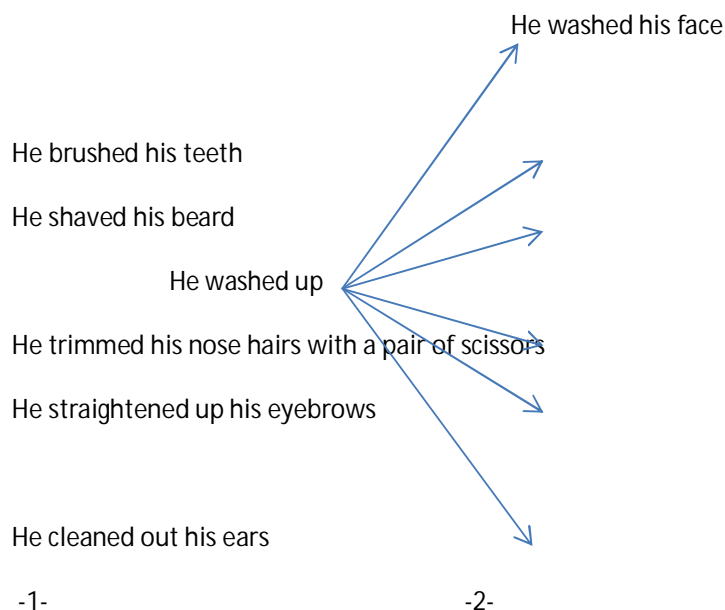
Figure (2) Levels of Detail in HEARING Schema Triggered in *Kafka on the Shore*

The narrator selects some levels of detail and excludes some others in what looks like a complex network of schematic choices within which the narrator makes various artistic maneuvers. Thus, instead of choosing simply the highly reduced and schematized sentence "*I can't understand what Miss Saeki said, yet I can hear her well*" which is available in level (1), the narrator makes a series of choices across different specification levels ranging from levels (2), (3), (4), (5) to (6) and then bouncing back from level (6) to level (4).

The same process of selecting the specification levels proceeds even with the most mundane and routine event such as "washing up":

Nakata set off down the hall, plastic bag with toilet kit inside in hand, to the communal sinks. He washed his face, brushed his teeth, and shaved with a safety razor. Each operation took time. He carefully washed his face, taking his time, carefully brushed his teeth, taking his time, carefully shaved, taking his time. He trimmed his nose hairs with a pair of scissors, straightened up his eyebrows, cleaned out his ears. (Murakami: 222)

Again the narrator shows a persistent avoidance of schematic under-specification and an appetite to over-specification within the context of the most familiarized experiences to the readers. The narrator accounts every level of detail involved in WASHING UP schema a matter that goes quite against the readers' schematic expectations that would anticipate usually one simplified and schematicized sentence like: "he washed up." (See figure 3).

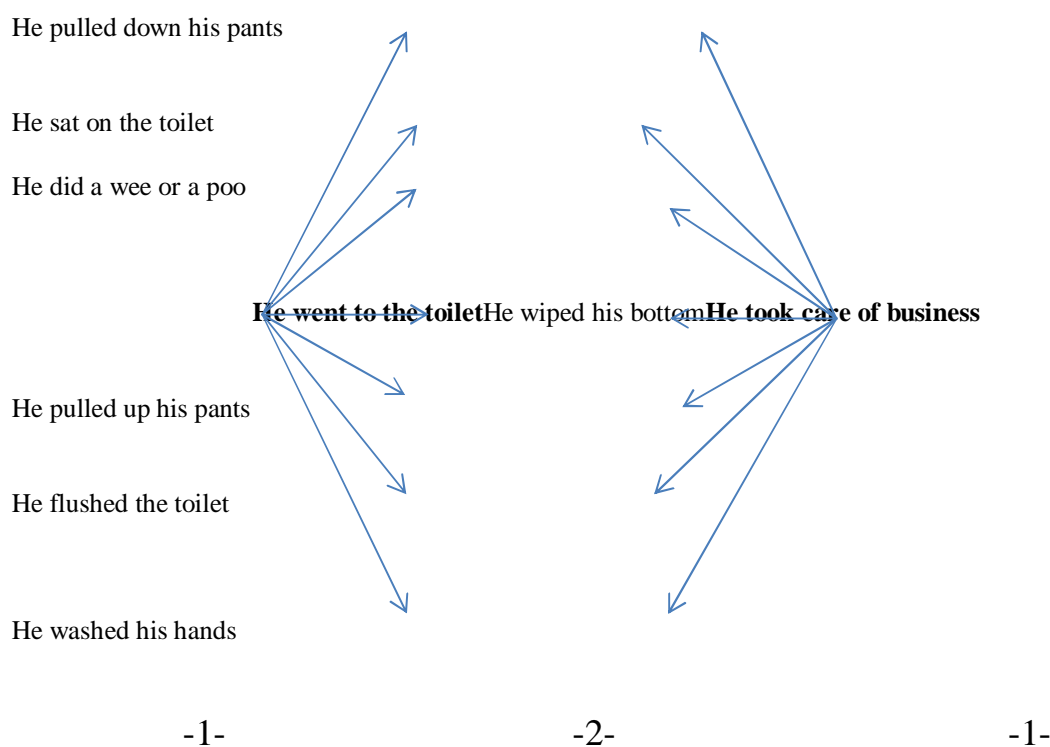


**Figure (3) Levels of Detail in WASHING UP Schema Triggered in *Kafka on the Shore***

What is interesting is the very fact that readers of *Kafka on the Shore* are not given any break to stabilize a specific level of schematic expectations throughout the whole narration. Thus, at the very moment when the readers get used to the narrator's over-specified schematic choices that evoke unnecessary recoverable levels of detail, the narrator decides strikingly and all of a sudden to fail the readers' over-specified schematic expectations with an extremely *underspecified* description of GOING TO TOILET schema.

After washing up, he went to the toilet and took care of business as usual. (Murakami: 222)

The over-specified schematic norm established throughout various parts and sections in the novel is not fulfilled as expected in the text above. The readers would expect the narrator to go through all the familiar details filling the slots of the GOING TO TOILET schema as it can be seen in figure (4) below.



**Figure (4) Levels of Detail in GOING TO TOILET Schema Triggered in *Kafka on the Shore***

All the various levels of schematic elaborations involved in the schema of GOING TO TOILET are extremely neutralized and schematized into two over-generalized and schematically condensed sentences:

He went to the toilet.

He took care of business as usual.

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This high schematic brevity stands out in a sort of internal deviation against a norm of high schematic specificity established repeatedly across the novel.

In the remaining part of the novel the norm of the over-extended levels of schematic detail goes on and on cataloguing the most predictable and stereotypical default elements which readers are assumed to be quite familiar with and hence the strangeness of bringing them to the fore:

"Oshima nods again. "Great. You look like a rap singer from a nice family." **He shifts to first, slowly steps on the gas, and lets out the clutch.**"

(Murakami: 243)

"I go back to my room and packup. There's no need to rush since it only takes five minutes to get ready. **I take down the laundry I had hanging in the bathroom, stuff my toilet kit, books, and diary in my backpack, then get dressed and straighten up the bed. Pull the sheets tight, plump up the pillows, straighten out the covers**(Murakami: 243).

I have time for a quick bowl of cornflakes. **Wash up the bowl and spoon and put them away. Brush my teeth, wash my face. I'm checking out my face in the mirror when I hear the Miata pull into the parking lot.** (Murakami: 243)

## 6.2 Aesthetic Goals of Schematic Level Choice

Within the context of literariness, the choice of the appropriate level of detail or specificity in a particular schema depends ultimately on the text producer's artistic and aesthetic goals. Whether it goes towards underspecification or overspecification, the level of detail triggered in a text is quite likely an artistic repercussion of the author's conscious or unconscious choice. This choice is supposed to be shaped by the text producer's artistic intentions and aesthetic purposes.

Cruse (1977: 163) puts it simply: on the one hand, underspecification is by logic a deemphasis of the aesthetic value of the details omitted or recovered from the schematic context, and overspecification, on the other, is an emphasis or even an intensification of the aesthetic effect of the details mentioned explicitly in the text. This functional dichotomy (of emphasis and deemphasis) brings us back to the very nature of the literature *Kafka on the Shore* belongs to.

*Kafka on the Shore* is a fantasynovel (see Updike, 2005; and C. Strecher, 1999) ; it has received the World Fantasy Award for 2006. The whole novel is broken down into various narratives with various contradictory themes: the mundane and the magical, the most typical and familiar and the most extraordinary. The



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attaching of the everyday to the extraordinary, the prosaic to the fantastic seems to be a sort of scale or balance in *Kafka on the Shore*. The schematic knowledge deviation established by spelling out the most familiar and recoverable default elements serves the purpose of defamiliarizing the everyday experience.

What is notable in *Kafka on the Shore* is that every triggering of the most prosaic and mundane level of schematic details is either followed or preceded by a strange and surrealistic narrative. Murakami appeals to the most familiar levels of detail in a schematic description as a way into the weirdest and most extraneous experiences.

The familiarity of the DRIVING schema described in figure (1), for example, is immediately followed by an extremely bizarre SLEEPING schema. After being given a ride by Oshima, Kafka tries to get some sleep in a secluded cabin deep in a forest. A swarm of strange sounds is described:

Something trampling on fallen leaves. Something heavy rustling the branches. The sound of a deep breath. The occasional ominous creak of floorboards on the porch. They sound like they're right near the cabin, an army of invisible creatures that populates the darkness and has me surrounded. (Murakami:93)

The same can be observed with the absolute technical default elements of the HEARING schema described diagrammatically in figure (2). The technical familiarity of this schema was balanced by a preceding description of a magical schema related to "people having their own ghosts while alive." Kafka describes a fantasy of a ghost of a young girl visiting his room at night. And in a way or another he confuses this girl with Miss Saeki:

I knew from the first that the young girl who visited my room last night was Miss Saeki. I never doubted it for a second, but just had to make sure. (Murakami:163)

The source of oddity comes from Kafka's certainty that:

In fact, I'm sure of it. While they're still alive, people can become ghosts.

(Murakami:163)

What is more, Kafka is not attracted physically to the real Miss Saeki but rather to her ghost when she was fifteen years old:

I'm drawn to that ghost, attracted to her. Not to the Miss Saeki who's here right now, but to the fifteen-year-old who isn't. Very attracted, a feeling so strong I can't explain it. And no matter what anybody says, this is real. Maybe she doesn't really exist, but just thinking about her makes my heart—my flesh and blood, my real heart--thump like mad. These feelings are as

real as the blood all over my chest that awful night.

(Murakami:163)

It seems that Murakami doesn't like throwing the reader right into the unfamiliar and magical world without providing him with a lifejacket, so to speak, of exceptionally overspecified familiarity of everyday life experiences. It looks like a typical feature of fantasy literature to juxtapose contrasting types of incidents and experiences: the familiar with the unfamiliar, the prosaic with the extraordinary (see Eco, 1979).

## 7. Conclusions

Cognitively speaking, literariness results from an interaction between the reader's schematic knowledge and the language of a literary text in a way that this interaction induces a sort of cognitive challenge to the reader's pre-existing schemata. It is a basic property of literary texts to provoke schematic challenge throughout the process of literary comprehension. This paper has shown how this schematic challenge can be posed by activating certain levels of schematic default elements across the network of the reader's prototypical schematic expectations.

The triggering of such levels of detail leads to a process of cognitive defamiliarization that takes place through a sort of schematic foregrounding. This type of cognitive foregrounding brings up certain levels of specificity with varying degrees of overspecification or underspecification. Accordingly, a schematic challenge might not involve destroying old schemata or creating new ones but all what it takes is simply triggering unexpected levels of detail within the reader's pre-existing schematic toolkit.

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