

9-15-2023

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Recommended Citation

Issa, Maha Hamed (2023) "Masculinity and Gender Roles in Selected Stories by Haruki Murakami," *Alustath Journal for Human and Social Sciences*: Vol. 62: Iss. 3, Article 20.

DOI: 10.36473/ujhss.v62i3.2167

Available at: <https://alustath.uobaghdad.edu.iq/journal/vol62/iss3/20>

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Masculinity and Gender Roles in Selected Stories by Haruki Murakami

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Received: 24/3/2023

Accepted: 11 /4 /2023

Published: 15/9/2023

Doi: <https://doi.org/10.36473/ujhss.v62i3.2167>



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Abstract:

Haruki Murakami (1949) is a Japanese novelist who uses fiction to portray modern man's condition. Sexual identity, loneliness, and nostalgia are common themes in his works. *Men without Women* (2014) is a collection of short stories in which Murakami reverses gender roles to show men's desperate seek for companionship in their lives. According to Hans Robert Jauss (1921-1997), a German literary theorist, there is no identical interpretation of any literary text. Yet, a dialogic correspondence between the text and the reader allows the reader's voice to breathe different life into the text. Therefore this study aims to illustrate the identity crisis in a conservative society such as Japan. Murakami's raw style shows the impact of social pressure and isolation of Masculinity in postmodern societies.

Keywords: Correspondence, dialogic, Masculinity, Murakami, nostalgia

الذكورية والدور الجنسي في قصص مختاره لهاروكي ماروكمي

مها حامد عيسى

مدرس مساعد في وزارة التربية المديرية العامة لتربية الكرخ الثانية، العراق

الملخص

هاروكي موراكامي (١٩٤٩) روائي ياباني يستخدم الخيال لتصوير حالة الإنسان الحديث. الهوية الجنسية والشعور بالوحدة والحنين هي مواضيع شائعة في أعماله. رجال بلا نساء (٢٠١٤) هي مجموعة من القصص القصيرة التي يعكس فيها موراكامي أدوار الجنسين لإظهار سعي الرجال اليائس للرفقة في حياتهم. وفقا لهانز روبرت جاوس (١٩٢١-١٩٩٧)، وهو منظر أدبي ألماني، لا يوجد تفسير متطابق لأي نص أدبي. ومع ذلك، هناك نوع من المراسلات الحوارية بين النص والقارئ. وهذا يسمح لصوت القارئ ببث حياة مختلفة في النص. لذلك تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى توضيح أزمة الهوية في مجتمع محافظ مثل اليابان. حيث يُظهر أسلوب موراكامي الخام تأثير الضغط الاجتماعي وعزلة الذكورة في مجتمعات ما بعد الحداثة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الحنين الى الماضي ، الحوار ، الذكورة ، المراسلات ، موراكامي

1. Introduction

The role of Japanese women has been influenced by many changes that affected the whole country. In ancient Japan, Confucius promoted the patriarchal system and women's minimal role in society. In *Seven Conditions for Divorce*, he stated that "A woman's duty is not to control or take charge" or "Women's greatest duty is giving birth to a son" (Ritner, 2018)

Such beliefs molded the Japanese woman into a submissive housewife. It's a gender stereotype that can be found in any given society, and this cultural phenomenon characterizes human beings according to their biological sex (Fejer, 2018). Thus women's existence was perpetuated around obeying her husband's parents and fulfilling her husband's and children's needs. She did not have equal rights. Therefore, Confucius's doctrine was based on sexism, where women were portrayed as either mothers or prostitutes. They were figured as sex objects that reflected the systematic plan implanted by the patriarchal power. *The Captain of Naruto* was written in the thirteen century and emphasized the image of women as submissive to man's domination, to the extent of being ordered by her husband to satisfy the emperor's desires. (Silva, 2010)

During the Seventeenth Century, Japanese women occupied a new profession. As the center of Japanese culture, the Geisha flourished in Kyoto and was considered art. The word Geisha stood for women who represented an exotic depiction of Japan's traditional performance. It could be regarded as a high-ranking courtesan of the elite in Japanese society. (Pedersen, 2018)

Women were treated as symbols of shame and humiliation in modern Japanese literature. The term Moga played an essential role in depicting the personification of modern Japanese women, who embraced western culture. The writers used the term to criticize independent women's behavior and exploration of the world. *Women of Tokyo* in 1933 portrayed a Japanese woman who indulged in Tokyo's nightlife and was urged by her brother to commit suicide due to her scandalous attitude. (Kaynar, 2019)

After the Second World War, Japan began to have a new way of life due to economic and social development. The US invasion promoted gender equality, as women had liberation and political rights. (Fan, 2019)

Still, women were treated as objects. The entertainment industry pictured them as a plastic scripture who always smiled and set their role in supporting men. These subordinate roles showed prejudice toward women. (Al-Zubaidi, 2019b). Haruki Murakami (1949) changed this prototype since he was born and raised in Kyoto, the city of contradictions. The city is the womb that gave birth to the Geisha, which marked women for centuries. In addition, it held Kyoto Women's University, a private college for women in 1899. Many pioneer women graduated from this university. (Faculties and Departments, n.d.)

Murakami blended the two dimensions of women. One used her

intelligence to access man's world, and the other used her femininity to seduce men.

2. Haruki Murakami

The Japanese novelist Haruki Murakami (1949) was born in Kyoto. It was a city that blended modernity with traditions since it was Japan's first capital. Kyoto's flavor placed it as a cultural center due to its rich history. His parents were familiar with Japanese canonical literature and embraced the western culture. They encouraged their son to develop an interest in classical European and American writers. Raymond Chandler(1888-1959), Frans Kafka(1883-1924), Fyodor Dostoevsky(1821-1881), and F. Scott Fitzgerald(1896-1940) all influenced drove and Murakami who learned English to read their works properly. (*Haruki Murakami / Biography, Books and Facts*, 2013)

In 1949 Japan survived a nuclear war that evoked aggression toward the Japanese. The Japanese were persecuted as an antagonist during the war. As a reflection of society, Japanese fiction was stained with themes of war and devastation. Haruki and other postmodernist writers tried to change the serotype fiction of Japanese heritage. (*Postwar Japanese Literature, a Brief Survey of the Field – Teaching Postwar Japanese Fiction*, 2016)

His raw style is simple, with elegant inaccessibility reflecting his limited vocabulary. Although his native language is Japanese, he forced himself to think in English to let his writing fit the container. Even the tone of his writing has distinctive vibes as it reflects jazz music. (Snyder, 2017)

Fate, nostalgia, detachment, loneliness, and sexual identity were Haruki's common themes. His obsession with those issues reflected his coeval of the societal pressure that blocked people's consciousness and caused constant anxiety. Thus his writing style mirrored mukokuseki , "the state of nationality-less which evokes no racial features" . (ALTIOK, 2022) That universality enabled Haruki to access different cultures around the world. Kenzaburō Ōe (1935) commented: "Murakami Haruki writes in Japanese. However, his writing is not really Japanese. If you translate it into American English, it can be read very naturally in New York." (Strecher, 2014.p, 11) That technique helps Haruki to filter his works in the process of translation from Japanese to English to simplify his style to readers outside Japan .

Murakami had a distinctive way of presenting his characters, whether they were male or female. Gergana Ivanova, a Japanese culture and literature professor, discussed how Japanese women were traditionally portrayed through male perspectives. They manufactured a distorted image of women as submissive wives or daughters who had no right to express their wills. Haruki Murakami since he tried to show women in a position of power. The world of *Women and Men* in Murakami's fiction is presented in a surrealistic way. Sex in his work had a thematic passage. Women used intimacy as access to men's world. Women were portrayed as a medium who delivered a prophecy from God to men to help them in

different places or status. (Shōnagon, 2020)

Stephen Snyder, a professor at Middlebury College, believed that Haruki was a misogynist by stating, “In earlier novels, it was more utilitarian and problematic, but that fits in with the historical norm. Recently, he’s shifted to a more progressive mindset, using more female characters. But still, a Murakami book will always be about some schlubby 30 year old guy.” (Margolis, 2019)

In most of Murakami’s works, a male character was presented as a passive receiver waiting for the opportunity to cross the gate of transformation through the excessive use of sex scenes. In his interview with Mieko Kawakami, a postmodern feminist writer, the interviewer insisted on the thought that: “A common reading is that your male characters are fighting their battles unconsciously, on the inside, leaving the women to do the fighting in the real world.” Haruki defended himself by explaining that: “These women aren’t just novelistic instruments for me. Each individual work calls for its own circumstances. I’m not making excuses. I’m speaking from feeling and experience.” (Literary Hub, 2020)

His statement strengthened the idea that only through fiction he could tackle such complicated issues in a conservative Japanese society. It is not a matter of positive or negative portrayal, but it was about men and women who survived depending on each other.

3. Reception Theory

Reception Theory is a new pattern of literary criticism that concentrates on the relationship between the text and the reader. Hans Robert Jauss (1921-1997) conceptualized Reception theory in his essay *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception* 1960. Reception theory can be considered a historical application of Reader-response theory, which emphasizes the difference between the author’s original intention and the reader’s interpretation of the text. (Mambrol, 2016b).

In 1969, Hans Robert Jauss published his essay: *The Changed in the Paradigm of Literary Scholarship*, which emphasized the difference between the author’s original intention and the reader’s interpretation of the text. (Jauss, 2010). According to Jauss, literature is a “dialectical process of production and Reception” (Jauss, 2010.p.57); thus, the attention is focused on the reader’s different interpretations.

In *Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory* (1969), Jauss suggested that the literary text was not a whole entity created by the reader’s subjectivity. However, it was a combination of both:

literature and art only obtain a history that has the character of a process when the succession of works is mediated not only through the producing subject but also through the consuming subject—through the interaction of author and public. (Jauss, 1982.p.39)

Wolfgang Iser 1926 a prominent figure in propagating Reception theory, showed the significance of the reader's involvement in coinciding with the meaning of literature:

literary work cannot be completely identical with the text, or with the realization of the text [by the reader], but in fact must lie halfway between the two. The work is more than the text, for the text only takes on life when it is realized, and furthermore the realization is by no means independent of the individual disposition of the reader...The convergence of text and reader brings the literary work into existence, and this convergence can never be precisely pinpointed, but must always remain virtual, as it is not to be identified either with the reality of the text or with the individual disposition of the reader.(Iser, 1974.p. xi)

Iser agreed with Jauss that the interpretation of the literary text was a mutual correspondence between the reader and the text. Therefore it was considered a new way of tackling literature because it concentrates on the reader's decisive role in the reading process. Yet, the reader was not functioning as a dominant force but as part of the text's development.

Hans coined the term "Horizon of Expectation" to identify the reading process and realize its importance in understanding readers' interpretations. The Horizon of expectation revealed how the text interacted with the reader and construct the text since it :

awakens memories of that which was already read, bring the reader to a specific emotional attitude, and with its beginning arouses expectations for the "middle and end," which can then be maintained intact or altered, reoriented, or even fulfilled ironically in the course of the reading according to specific rules of the genre or type of text. (Kent,1986.p.148)

Thus Horizon of expectation reflected the reader's approval, disappointment, or acceptance since his expectations, language, and beliefs changed overtime. Even the way of criticism was constantly developing. According to Jauss, no literary work could be fixed or universal since it did not have the same response or appeal to the reader from different eras. In this sense, history could be treated as a fundamental factor in Reception theory since it linked literature with society: "The social function of literature manifests itself in its genuine possibility only where the literary experience of the reader enters into the Horizon of expectation" (j, 2010.p.39)

The process of interpretation encompassed, as Stuart Hall described "Encoding-Decoding" approach. Stuart Hall (1932-2014), a Marxist British-Jamaican sociologist focused on cultural studies. Being Born in a middle-class family in Kingesto , jamica Hall understood the interactions among people and their surroundings , since he grew up in a British colony in Jamaica. Therefore his uprising in such an environment played a vital role in formulating his theory. His writing focused on cultural and social studies like prejudice, race, and media. According to him, the reader would depend on his artistic background to interpret the text. Therefore his interpretation would differ from the author's since it

depended on his personal experience. Hall considered language, personal experiences, and different beliefs as barriers that prevented the text's identical interpretations. In every literary text, there is a message, an encoding, decoding process between the author and the reader, and many steps can affect the decoding; thus, the reader could change the meaning of the text to fit his social context. (Teel, 2017). He believed there was no fixed meaning in any text due to the process of interpretation resulting from different ideologies and beliefs. Thus the message could be accepted, negotiated, or being opposed.

According to Hall, the formulation of the meaning circulates among the different social classes that analyze the text. In *Culture, Media, Language* 1980, Hall conceptualized the encoding/decoding perception. The interpretation of any text was encoded by the writer and decoded by the reader. The sender's message was capsulated by his ideas and perceptions, and decoded by the receiver's understanding, which depended on different norms; such as his experience, age, and background.

Therefore, there could be misunderstanding or miscommunication between the author and the reader due to their different social context. Yet, if the sender and the receiver are from identical cultural biases, that allow the transition of perception to flow smoothly. In a negotiation manner, the receiver can understand and decode the sender's message within the same context but different since he added his personal biases in the decoding process.

4. *Men without Women*

Men without Women (2014) is a homonymous collection of short stories by Haruki Murakami. The seven tales reflect Murakami's observation of the lives of seven male protagonists. The student, actor, bartender, lovesick doctor, and Kafka Geroje Samsa all are strung together to portray the loneliness and alienation of postmodern Japanese men. The author explores man's suffering in losing their women, who are dramatic figures in all seven stories. (Khalaf & Diyaiy, 2019)

In *Despair and Alienation of Modern Man in the Society*, Martina Pavlikov states that *Men without Women* is "fundamental for understanding the modern man's crisis, his solitude, inner suffering, and conflicts." (Pavlikova 2015: 194). As the titles suggested, each story takes the reader deep inside the world of relationships.

"Drive my car" is the first story performed into a long film winning the Oscar on its 94th anniversary. The story is about a middle-aged theater actor who has recently lost his wife because of cancer. Kafuku's, bad eyes sight, forced him to hire a female driver Misak watari, despite his distrust of female driving. Misak's skillful driving techniques compensated for her lack of speaking and beauty. Kafuku overcomes his pride in being driven by a woman and starts to have a relationship with her. Being a good listener makes Kafuku trust her to the point of telling her about his odd relationship with a man who was in love with his dead wife.

From a first reading, one would accuse Murakami of being misogynistic and sexist since he states that women's driving "irritate others on the road" (Murakami

,2017,p.3) . He described their attitudes in the streets as : “nothing but scorn , and they were proud that they , at least , weren’t like that. They were oblivious to the gasps and slammed brakes that accompanied their sudden and daring lane changes , and less-than—complimentary words directed at them by their fellow drivers” (Murakami ,2017,p.3). He even classifies women drivers to be “a little too aggressive or a little too timid” (Murakami ,2017,p.4). Men’s driving skills are “seemed to be able to separate their tension and who they are in natural – likely unconscious way . They could conserve and act normaly even while focused on the road .” (Murakami ,2017,p.4)

This classification reveals Kafuku’s way of seeing the world. In the story, there are two women generate two opposite forces. His wife was the negative force that made him wonder about adultery :

Kafuku adored his wife. He had fallen deeply in love with her when they first met (he was twenty-nine), and this feeling had remained unchanged until the day she died (he had been forty-nine then). He hadn’t slept with another woman in all the years of marriage. The urge had never arisen, although he had received his fair share of opportunities. (Murakami ,2017,p.15)

His wife symbolizes his weaknesses, and she is the reason for his anxiety because he wonders about her reasons for betraying him. He devoted his life to her while she used to have illegal affairs with other men : “His wife, however, slept with other men on occasion. As far as he knew, there had been four such affairs.” (Murakami ,2017,p.15). He even makes an awkward decision to have a wired friendship with his wife’s lover to determine the reason for cheating on him :

They shook hands once again on parting. A fine rain was falling outside. After Takatsuki had walked off into the drizzle in his beige raincoat, Kafuku, as was his habit, looked down at his right palm. It was that hand that had caressed my wife’s naked body, he thought. (Murakami ,2017,p.21)

The other woman in the story is Misaka, who compensates for his blindness . She helps him preserve the world in an insightful way rather than his incomplete vision. Kafuku never lets a woman drive his car; he always is in control of his choices. But with this relationship, the vehicle symbolizes his private and public life with a partner that listens to him. Misaka is like the conflict between his inner mind and external factors determining his choices. It seems that the author wants to say that sex does not bind men and women, but being together serves as smooth magic that completes the shortage in their lives

In “Independent organ”, Murakami presents lovesickness as a serious medical condition. Dr. Tokai is a devoted lover who decides to live his life happily without marriage and children : “He never felt needed a woman around the house” (Murakami ,2017,p.79). Many criticize Murakami for being racist toward women since he labeled :

Women are all born with special , independent organ that allows them to lie.... But at certain point in their lives, all women tell lies, and they lie about important things. They lie about unimportant things, too, but they also don't hesitate to lie about the most important things. And when they do/ most women's expressions and voices don't change at all. Since it's not lying , but this independent organ they're equipped. (Murakami ,2017,p.111).

This story is a direct confession of Haruki's opinion about women. A male author narrates this story with a male protagonist but from a feminine lens. In the beginning, Haruki reflects the conventional view about men, especially in Japanese society, with their lack of need for women: "He never felt he needed a woman around the house , never felt bored spending time alone , and hardly ever felt lonely sleeping by himself" (Murakami ,2017,p.79). Modern man is not: "suited for married life" (Murakami ,2017,p.79), as their world of relations is based only on: "physical relations were ,after all, just physical" (Murakami ,2017,p.80).

With this introduction, Murakami presents his case and gives his direct statement about modern women, stating that : "I think most women in the world are fed up with men who are always panting to get them into bed" (Murakami ,2017,p.80).

Dr. Tokai reverses the stereotypical feminine behavior since women's affection provides him with : "warm and wonderful time" (Murakami ,2017,p.82). Without women, he has a superficial, meaningless life : "I have finally experienced what the poet felt . The deep sense of loss after you' ve met the woman you love , have made love . then said goodbye" (Murakami ,2017,p.92).

This unrequited love gives Dr. Tokai an existential awakening since he starts to ask himself, "who in the world am I?" (Murakami ,2017,p.93). Therefore, Haruki isn't racist toward women but tries to present the actual states of men without women. This exchange of seats changes the expectations about love because Tokai is introduced in the form of a woman who realizes his incompleteness with his partner. Even in his way of committing suicide, he chooses anorexia: "it's almost always young women who get anorexia. They cut back on calories And they end up starving themselves to reduce their weight to nothing." (Murakami ,2017,p.106). He wants to vanish from this world by reducing himself to nothing.

"kino" is the fifth story, and it is a reminder of Murakami's surrealistic world of 1984. The classical elements of Murakami's fiction like jazz, cats, unhappy marriage, and mysterious guests are all seen in this story. Kino discovers that his wife cheats on him, so he quits his job and starts a new business as a bar owner. He spends his time reading and listening to jazz.

The story begins with a statement: "**THE MAN ALWAYS SAT IN THE SAME SEAT**" (Murakami ,2017,p.146), which indicates the traditional psychological state of Japanese men and their preference of announcing their territory. In *The Psychology Behind Why you Always Want to Sit in the Same Seat*

Shekhar Chandra identifies this behavior as a : “spatial organizing mechanism that expresses itself in surprising ways. Usually territoriality is thought of in terms of aggression and defense, such as when nations or gangs fight, but actually its most common purpose is to keep the peace” (Chandra, 2018). At the back yard there is a willow tree shading the bar: “the limbs of the tree , covered in green , sagging heavily down , nearly to the ground.....(183). This tree manifests a mysterious power that protects and maintains his territory.

In a dominant male society in which gender inequality is : “ranked 121st out of 153 countries in the Global Gender Gap Report 2020, marking the country as one of the lowest ranking in the world when it comes to female political empowerment.” (Jarmuth, 2020). Haruki from the beginning, announces that this story is about a man who cannot find his place in the world, due to woman’s absence in his life. Kino is a reflection of a man in the postmodern cities. His life is meaningless and empty : “Happiness? He wasn’t even sure what that meant. He didn’t have a clear sense , either , of emotions like pain or anger , disappointment or resignation , and how they were supposed to feel” (Murakami ,2017,p.153). Thus the bar starts to be metaphorically Kino’s hyperreal place, which can endure his pain and numbness. The bar is like a landscape that all men in the world of *Men Without Women* want to be in.

The place has different visitors: a man from a parallel world, a woman who suffers from a sadomasochistic boyfriend, and pets like serpents and a cat. Firstly, his world is being visited by a stray cat : “A young grey female with a long , lovely tail . the cat favored to sunken display case in the corner of the bar and liked to curl up there to sleep” (Murakami ,2017,p.153). In Japanese folklore, a cat symbolizes a protection power. It is a good omen, and since it is a female, it firmly indicated that woman is a lucky charm in Kino’s life : “the cat may have brought a good luck” (Murakami ,2017,p.155) , “it was also like a good-luck charm for the bar” (Murakami ,2017,p.170)

In *CAT IMAGERY IN HARUKI MURAKAMI’S FICTION*, Adelina Vasile states that : “Cats are elusive creatures in Murakami’s fiction because not only do they tend to disappear from their owners’ lives, but also elude understanding, owing to the richness of ideas and images that merge into Murakamian cat symbolism” (Vasile, 2012) , thus for Kino the cat

is the only way he can control the situation externally and preserve what is left of his relationship with his wife. The cat becomes a transitional object meant to provide the narrator with comfort, to ease the pain of separateness and aloneness. (Vasile, 2012) When the cat disappears , Kino felt that something is wrong, especially with the appearance of the snakes : “the cat disappeared . Then the snakes started to show up.” (Murakami ,2017,p.169)

In the contrary, snakes are an ill omen that foresees a hideous power that starts to haunt him

Kino knows nothing about snakes, but this one struck on him as the most dangerous . It looked poisonous , somehow, though he couldn’t be sure...

Three snakes within the space of a week, no matter how you consider it , was too many. Something strange was going on ... a snake leads you , you don't know whether it's taking you in a good direction or a bad one . In most cases, it's a combination of good and evil (Murakami ,2017,p.171)

One of the most critical issues raised in this story is violence against women and how the world stands indifferent toward such issues. Kino's bar is visited by a woman who: "wear tight –fitting dress that showed off her slender, shapely figure" (Murakami ,2017,p.161). Her physical appearance reflects the ideal stereotypical image of women. This woman has "irregular sprinkling of small marks the color of faded charcoal, like bruises" (Murakami ,2017,p.163). Her toxic, violent relationship is considered normal because, since her childhood, she has been fed up with society's traditions that oblige her to accept her role as an obedient woman.

According to the National Police Agency in Japan, "74.8% of the alleged domestic violence victims were women." (Author, 2022). This state of obedience is different now because "Her body was no longer his , though. No longer could he see it, let alone touch it. All he could do was imagine it (Murakami ,2017,p.169)

"Scheherazade" and "Samsa in love" present isolation in their literal meaning. The protagonists in both stories are being cut off from the world. Scheherazade syndrome is a procedure that psychiatrists use to distract their patients from their painful and unpleasant reality. The female protagonists use this technique to help Habara . She is the protagonist who represents of hikikomori . It is an idiom frequently used to describe adolescent Japanese who are unable to work or go out instead, they recklessly leave their parent's house (Author, 2022). Therefore, the dubbed woman he hires is his means of communication with the outside world. She detaches him from his unprofitable reality by entertaining him through her stories. He enjoyed her stories without questioning their reliability She erases his worries and fears by traveling him beyond his apartment through her imagination to forget his surroundings:

Scheherazade had a gift for telling stories that touched the heart. No matter what sort of story it was , she made it special . Her voice , her timing , her pacing were all flawless... Who could ask for more ? At this point in his life , that kind of forgetting was what Habara desired more than anything else (Murakami ,2017,p.115)

Habara embodies the emotional isolation that withholds people, especially men. The story addresses the challenges facing men in a highly gender society like Japanese society . He thinks himself a "deserted Isle". He is afraid of losing woman's companionship because : "her gifts was inexhaustible. The prospect of losing that made him saddest of all" (Murakami ,2017,p.144). Murakami presents the female character clinically. She is a nurse that cures him of his isolation. Her job is like a Geisha that muse and listens to her client.

As Habara names her, Scheherazade claims she had three lives in her former life. At first, she : "was a lamprey eel in a former life" (Murakami

,2017,p.118). It is a parasitic animal that feeds on other fish's scraps. In her second life, she was a rebellious teenager, who used to break into her classmate's bedroom and communicate with him by intimate code. While in her third life, she is a postmodern personification of Scheherazade, who seduces men with her stories rather than her appearance.

These three lives stands for Japanese woman's evolution. It starts as a thoughtless parasite that depends entirely on others, without a futuristic vision. Then she is a rebellious teenager who begins breaks taboos due to the American cultural invasion and the new wave of liberation. Then, she becomes a woman in postmodern time, who is packed with self-confidence and manipulates men by using her intelligence rather than her beauty. So this story reverses the roles of structured society in Japan because men's thoughts and emotions are unleashed when a woman breaks their fences ; otherwise, they will keep hiding till their "surroundings were enfolded in deep darkness" (Murakami ,2017,p.145)

The final story to summarize Murakami's views is "Samsa in Love". Haruki reverses Frans kafka *Metamorphosis* to fit the process of alienation in 21st century. The Japanese Geroge Samsa wakes up to find himself a nasty bug. And during his turbulent time, he starts to have urgent desires for a hunchback girl . Both characters are deserted from their families and society. They are like the postmodern edition of Adam and Eve . He is a hideous creature who is deformed, and she is not the typical beautiful protagonist

Conclusion

Haruki Murakami shows the consequences of the lack of social understanding among Human beings. Murakami wants to detach people from their alienation by using the old form of communication. Identity crisis in these short stories is the recent problem that fiction tackled loudly. Through his characters, he exposes how technology turned society into a meaningless advanced culture that lacks spiritual substances. In *Men without women* Haruki portrayed the powerful emotional struggle that men endure in contemporary societies. His use of western references added different colors of place and time in his works. Such techniques allowed his stories to be approachable worldwide and not restricted by a specific culture. Reception Theory enables this research to explore different shades of Haruki Murakami as he presents women as a vessel of liberation and a need for men's existence.

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