

ABSTRACT

Haruki Murakami is a Japanese writer who has won many prestigious literary awards and critical acclaim. His novels have been translated into more than forty-five languages and Murakami is considered to be one of the most influential authors of the present time.

The aim of this doctoral dissertation is to explore how techniques discover the identities of the protagonists in the novels *Hard-boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* (1991), *Kafka on the Shore* (2002), *Wild Sheep Chase* (1982) and *Dance Dance Dance* (1998). This thesis explores the sociological, psychological and the philosophical aspects of the characters in the chosen novels to understand the enigma of identity. The study traces the choices that the protagonists make to assume an identity.

Chapter I introduces Japanese literature by tracing its history in order to situate Haruki Murakami on the literary map. The biography of Murakami along with his works and contemporaries are elucidated and the objective of the dissertation is established. The psychological theory of defense mechanisms of Dr. George Valliant and Mark Schorer's theory of techniques, *Technique as Discovery* is applied to the study. The techniques that are explored in the select novels in this thesis include symbols, monologues, interior monologues, dialogues, narrative modes, juxtaposition, simulacra, defamiliarization, magical realism and dreams. The role that these theories play in elucidating the identity of characters is briefly described and the hypothesis is presented.

Chapter II entitled 'The Conflict' investigates into the discord that is present in each of the protagonists. The social background of each novel is delineated and the problem that the protagonist faces due to some stimulus from the society is seen. The chapter recognizes the elements of society that instigate the conflict between individual desire and socially accepted norms and the reason for the interference of the defense mechanisms. The fear of an Oedipal prophecy in *Kafka on the Shore* is the cause for Kafka's conflict, where the struggle

between fate and free will is evident along with the burden of choice. The battle against authority is the reason for the conflict in *Hard-boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* since the protagonist is neither able to shirk off the role that his society has assigned to him, nor is he able to accept it. Similarly fear of the unknown along with the desire for survival drives the conflict within the narrator in *Wild Sheep Chase*. Guilt along with the concept of the ideal, is the pivotal reason for the narrator's conflict in *Dance Dance Dance*. The inability to strike a balance between the standards of society and the individual needs, aggravates these conflicts, which is revealed to the readers through techniques like symbols, monologues, interior monologues and dialogues in the select novels to show how these techniques highlight the conflict of the protagonist.

Chapter III entitled 'The Psyche' traces the psychological aspects in the chosen novels highlighting the play of defense mechanisms that are employed by the characters due to the conflict delineated in chapter II. The chapter also focuses on how these defense mechanisms help the character to adapt to his society. The psychological theory of Dr. George Vaillant is used to analyze the psyche of the characters. Defense mechanisms are identified in the protagonists in each of the novels taken for study: The Caluctec along with the Dreamreader in *Hard-boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*, Kafka Tamura in *Kafka on the Shore*, The narrator and the Rat in *Wild Sheep Chase* and *Dance Dance Dance*. The defense mechanisms that are described and traced are Dissociation, Acting out, Fantasy, Idealization, Projective Identification, Narcissism, Passive Aggression, Humour, Sublimation, Suppression, Repression, Rationalization, Isolation, Withdrawal, Distortion, Intellectualization, Courage and Respect, in the characters with the aid of various literary techniques like Narrative mode, Juxtaposition, Defamiliarization, Technoculture and Simulacra in the select novels. The presence of defense mechanisms allows the characters to function and exist by temporarily resolving the conflict. Thereby the psyche of the

protagonist is discovered in each of the novels. The characters are able to find a permanent solution for their chronic conflict only with the realization of their true identity.

Chapter IV entitled 'The Identity' focuses on the enigma of identity and the struggle to realize the true predicament of the character and accept a single identity that lies within the protagonists. The chapter identifies the individual identity of the protagonist in each novel as well as the social identity of the protagonist, which leads to the realizing of the conflict between the identities. The choice and sacrifice that each of the protagonists makes to assume an identity is analyzed. The choice of retaining the social identity, while the individual identity is cast off is seen in *Hard-boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*. In *Kafka on the Shore*, the choice of the character to retain his individual identity and lose his social identity is explored, while in *Wild Sheep Chase*, the attempt to retain the balance between the social and the individual identities is seen. The struggle is seen to continue in the sequel *Dance Dance Dance*, where the individual identity is camouflaged by the social identity in an attempt to keep the balance between them. The resolution of the conflict is depicted as a journey of the individual. The journey is both literal as well as metaphorical. In *Hard-boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* the Calcutek is forced to travel through a secret path, which resembles the sewers of a big city in order to escape the System. In *Kafka on the Shore*, Kafka Tamura leaves home in fear of an Oedipal prophesy and travels to a new place in order to avoid it. Similarly Satoru Nakata makes the same journey in search of the corner stone to open an entrance. In *Wild Sheep Chase* the protagonist is forced to go looking for a Sheep that has a star on its back and in *Dance Dance Dance* the same narrator makes the same journey again in search of a woman who calls out for him in his dreams. Metaphorically this search or voyage taken by the protagonists could reflect the journey of each individual in search of their desires or the flight from their fears. The search ends only when they discover their real predicament, which is the problem that lies in their perception of who they are and

only then are they able to make the right choices that suit their needs. Their desires and fears lie within themselves. It is not something that is present in their external environment but in their perception of it. This is a search for their individual identities. Techniques like Magical Realism and Dreams are ascertained through which the identities are discovered. The realization of the predicament and choosing one's destination is the focus of this chapter, which is brought out with the help of the mentioned techniques.

Chapter V sums up the findings of the study, highlighting the areas of focus in the chosen novels. The novels studied are perceived and interpreted in three layers. The first layer scrutinizes characters and their predicament as described by the narrator, the second layer can be perceived as the psychological manifestation of identities within the character itself and the third and deepest layer will be to unpack the novel for its implications of the individual identity against the social identity of each protagonist. Haruki Murakami champions for the individual and delineates the inflexibility and the authority of society that distorts the individual identity. Murakami calls such authority 'The System' and often refers to it as a wall, which restricts individual expression. The resolution of conflict in the search for identity is seen in the protagonists of the select novels.