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### An Intertextual Study of Haruki Murakami's *Kafka on the Shore*

Abstract:

Haruki Murakami's postmodern novel *Kafka on the Shore* contains a dazzling array of obligatory, optional and accidental intertextualities in the form of quotations, direct references, allusions and adaptations. The amalgamation of influences from classical and contemporary literary works, ancient Greek and modern European philosophy, jazz, popular music, films and images from pop culture in the novel constitute a pastiche that pays homage to the originals even as the author freely copies, quotes, borrows to create a uniquely postmodern world. The novel's theme and subthemes, plots and subplots, characters, and settings reveal thematic, psychological and structural similarities with well-known literary works and resonate with undertones of contemporary theoretical concepts such as existentialism, psychoanalytic criticism, feminism, and gender theory. In the process, of reinscribing Western texts, the novel provides an alternate perspective on issues that confront Japanese society and by extension other Asian cultures as well.

Keywords: allusions, Haruki Murakami, intertextuality, Kafka on the Shore, postmodern novel

#### 1. Introduction

Intertextuality, the idea that the meaning of a text is shaped by other texts, is one of the dominant ideas in contemporary literary studies. The concept can be traced back to the concept of "dialogism" espoused by Bakhtin which suggests that all utterances occur inside a social context. This means that every utterance is made in response to what has already been said and what may be said in reply afterwards (Latham, 2008).

Kristeva explored this idea further in her seminal essay “Word, Dialogue, Novel” and in the process coined this literary term. She writes that “any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another. The notion of intertextuality replaces that of intersubjectivity, and poetic language is read as at least double.” (Moi, 1986)

Worton and Still (1990) likewise extended the notion, explaining that the writer is a reader of texts before he is a creator of one and therefore the texts he creates are inevitably filled with various references, quotations, and influences. The reader, for his part, brings at the moment of reading all the texts he has encountered before. This leads him to a uniquely personal interpretation of the text he is reading and of the texts that he may encounter in the future.

In sum, intertextuality regards a literary work as an open artifact holding hints of other texts, providing the reader with many fascinating ways to decipher and appreciate a work of art. In this present world where people are sadly retreating into their own versions of reality, a knowledge of how intertextuality operates may hopefully serve as a bridge to better understanding and empathy between human beings.

## 2. Conceptual Framework

This study analyses a number of significant intertextualities in the selected novel using Fitzsimmons’(2013) classification of intertextualities. The first type is *obligatory intertextuality* which occurs when the writer intentionally compares or associates two or more texts. To understand a literary text he is reading (the hypertext), the reader must have a prior idea of the basis of that text (the hypotext). Without this link being made, the reader’s comprehension will be, at best, inadequate.

The second type is *optional intertextuality* and refers to connections which are helpful but not essential to an understanding of the text. Optional intertextualities are not prerequisites for enjoyment but finding them constitutes a bonus in the form of deeper insights into the literary piece. The third type is *accidental intertextuality* in which the reader independently creates a link between two texts based on his own prior knowledge.

Instances of intertextuality are signalled by literary devices that include direct references, allusions, quotations, plagiarism, translation, adaptation and pastiche. These

devices can function as any of the three types of intertextuality depending on the author's intention and the reader's encounter with them.

### 3. The Novel

*Kafka on the Shore* (Umibe no Kafuka) was published in 2002 by Haruki Murakami, a critically acclaimed Japanese writer and an important figure in postmodern literature whose books and stories have been translated into 50 languages. Rendered into English by Philip Gabriel, the novel combines speculative fiction and magical realism, and is replete with philosophical, religious, and artistic references that render it a fitting subject for an intertextual study.

The novel tells two parallel tales in alternate chapters. One story is about Kafka Tamura and the other about Nakata. Kafka is a 15-year old boy who leaves his home in Tokyo to escape an Oedipal curse that he is destined to kill his father and have sexual relations with his mother and sister. On his way to Takamatsu, he befriends Sakura who he believes is his long-lost sister. Later he finds a job as an assistant in a library through the kindness of Oshima, an erudite transgender who works there under a mysterious fifty-year-old woman named Miss Saeki.

The other tale is about Nakata, a sixty-year-old man who as a young boy became comatose after a mysterious incident. He woke up illiterate but with an ability to converse with cats which earns him some money as a cat finder. His work leads him to Johnny Walker, a serial cat murderer whom he was forced to kill. Exactly at this time in Takamatsu, Kafka wakes up with unexplained blood on his shirt. Two days later, his father is found murdered suggesting that Kafka killed his own father in his dreams through Nakata.

Nakata confesses his crime to an incredulous policeman and then leaves for Takamatsu to search for a magical entrance stone that needs to be shut. He makes friends with a truck driver named Hoshino and together they find the mystic object with the help of Colonel Sanders and closes the time portal. Later the two companions drive around the city and wind up at the library where they meet Miss Saeki. In her office, she and Nakata talk like old friends about their lives and the entrance stone.

Meanwhile, Kafka spends a few days in the cabin of Oshima in the woods after which he starts working in the library and befriends Miss Saeki. In a series of conversations and

dreams it is suggested that Miss Saeki is Kafka's mother while Kafka is the reincarnation of her former boyfriend whose untimely death drove her into seclusion. They feel strangely attracted to each other and make love thus fulfilling another part of the prophecy. By this time, the police are looking for Kafka to question him about his father's death. Oshima takes him back to the forest cabin to hide. He ventures into the woods and is led into a time portal by two WW II-era Japanese soldiers. In that other dimension he meets the spirit of Miss Saeki who bids him a final goodbye.

At this point, it becomes clear that Miss Saeki, in her desire to preserve the happy days with her boyfriend, had somehow opened a portal to another dimension which had the effect of distorting events in the real world. Nakata has been destined to set things right by finding the entrance stone and closing it.

The same day Miss Saeki says goodbye to Kafka in another dimension, she is found dead in her office. Nakata dies peacefully in his sleep, his mission accomplished. Hoshino wraps things up by killing a formless creature that comes out of the old man's mouth. He then leaves the hotel intent on going back to his old job. Kafka, on the other hand, bids Oshima goodbye and goes back to Tokyo with the feeling that he is in a brand-new world.

#### 4. Obligatory Intertextualities

Owing to space constraints, the following is an abbreviated list of the obligatory intertextualities the researcher found in the novel with explanations of their purpose and significance. A discussion of their links to literary theories and themes are given whenever applicable. Excerpts from the novel are taken from the Vintage International Open-Market Edition published in 2005.

##### 4.1. The Title of the Novel

The most obvious instance of obligatory intertextuality in the novel is in the title itself—*Kafka on the Shore*. There is a clear association between the titular character, Kafka Tamura with Franz Kafka, the famous 20th century Czech novelist and short story writer whose works combined elements of realism with the fantastic and whose protagonists are isolated individuals dealing with absurdity, alienation, and guilt.

It is interesting to note that *Kafka on the Shore* also abounds with fantastical elements: talking cats, fish falling from the skies, a portal to another dimension, and so on. The novel's main character, too, is a loner searching for an ineffable goal in life.

While *Kafka on the Shore* does contain similarities with Franz Kafka's themes, it is a wholly different work and develops its theme in its own unique way. As one critic observes, "those looking for Franz in these pages will find only a mild distillation of the Czech author's alienation." (Lorentzen, 2005). It is also interesting to note that Kafka means "crow" in Czech. In the novel, Crow is the name of the alter-ego of Kafka Tamura who acts as a sounding board whenever he contemplates his plans.

#### 4.2. The Oedipal Theme

Another obligatory intertextuality is the evident similarity of the novel's theme with that of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*. Like Oedipus, Kafka Tamura runs away from home to escape a curse that he is doomed to have sexual relations with his mother. But unlike the prophecy in the Greek play, the curse was pronounced on the protagonist by his own father—with a bit more added to the brew: he was also destined to commit incest with his sister.

Murakami was asked if he intended the *Kafka on the Shore* as a modern retelling of the Oedipus myth. The author was noncommittal with his answer:

The Oedipus myth is just one of several motifs and isn't necessarily the central element in the novel. From the start I planned to write about a fifteen-year-old boy who runs away from his sinister father and sets off on a journey in search of his mother. This naturally linked up with the Oedipus myth. But as I recall, I didn't have that myth in mind at the beginning. (harukimurakami.com, 2017)

#### 4.3. Direct References

The characters in *Kafka on the Shore* directly references a number of famous persons and their works in their dialogues. References are intertextual devices that writers use to provide information, to pay homage to the original work or its author, to enhance characterizations, or

to stimulate philosophical thoughts from the readers. Since this is done deliberately to inform the readers, the researcher will classify them as obligatory intertextualities.

#### 4.3.1. The Tale of Genji by MurasakiShikibu

Considered as the world's first novel, *The Tale of Genji* is a classic work of Japanese literature that recounts the romantic life of HikaruGenji, the son of an ancient Japanese emperor and describes the customs of the aristocratic society during the Heian period.

The novel is referenced in Chapters 8 and 23. In both instances the characters discuss the existence of vengeful spirits. These are the souls of people so consumed with anger that they temporarily leave the body of persons to exact retribution on their enemies. As Oshima explains:

That's what's called a 'living spirit.' ... The Tale of Genji, for instance, is filled with living spirits [which] travel through space to carry out whatever desires they had...An example is when Lady Rokujo—she's one of Prince Genji's lovers—becomes so consumed with jealousy over Genji's main wife, Lady Aoi, that she turns into an evil spirit that possesses her. Night after night she attacks Lady Aoi in her bed until she finally kills her.”

#### 4.3.2. The Chrysanthemum Pledge by Ueda Akinari

This tale is about two samurai who pledged their lives to each other as blood brothers. Since they lived far apart from each other, one of them wrote that no matter what happened he would visit when the chrysanthemum flowers were in bloom. Unfortunately, he got involved in some trouble and was jailed unable to even send a letter. Meanwhile autumn, the season when Chrysanthemums bloom, had started to set in. Determined to honour his word, the samurai performed seppuku and thus turned himself into a spirit. In that form, he was able to travel the miles swiftly and dine with his friend under the chrysanthemum blooms. He then vanished, satisfied that he had kept his promise.

Written during the Edo period, this poignant story is referenced as a counterpoint to the story of malevolent spirits in *The Tale of Genji*. It shows that the spirit of a person can leave the body to accomplish a noble and selfless aim. More importantly, it foreshadows the

death of Miss Sakei whose spirit afterwards meets Kafka Tamura in the other dimension. It is hinted that, just like the samurai, she makes the ultimate sacrifice to keep her word.

Miss Saeki's the first one to speak. "I want you to know it wasn't easy for me to come here. But I had to see you, and talk with you."

I nod. "I'm glad you came."

#### 4.3.3. Greek Philosophy

Greek philosophy is referenced several times in the novel. Most are done in aid of characterization. For example, Oshima's frequent resort to classical Greek texts builds up his image of an erudite individual who has a keen knowledge of human nature.

In one instance, *Kafka on the Shore* references Aristophanes' ideas on gender and sexuality as recorded in Plato's *Symposium*. This occurs in the conversation between Oshima and Kafka Tamura in which the former narrates how the ancient Greeks explain the origin of the sexes:

"In ancient times people weren't just male or female, but one of three types: male/male, male/female, or female/female. In other words, each person was made out of the components of two people. Everyone was happy with this arrangement and never really gave it much thought. But then God took a knife and cut everybody in half, right down the middle. So after that the world was divided just into male and female, the upshot being that people spend their time running around trying to locate their missing other half."

#### 4.3.4. Psychoanalytic Theory

Psychoanalytic theory is based on Sigmund Freud's study of the unconscious realms of the mind and the part that dreams play in its expression. It argues that literary texts are like dreams that express the author's unconscious desires and anxieties.

*Kafka on the Shore* contains a number of references to psychoanalysis. One of them is in Oshima's explanation of the story in *The Tale of Genji* which tells of how the living spirit of a jealous lover leaves her body every night in order to torment the wife of Genji.

“The world of the grotesque is the darkness within us. Well before Freud and Jung shined a light on the workings of the subconscious, this correlation between darkness and our subconscious, these two forms of darkness, was obvious to people... The physical darkness outside and the inner darkness of the soul were mixed together, with no boundary separating the two.”

Dreams occupy a central place in the *Kafka on the Shore*. The fact that psychoanalysis considers dreams as a way to access the unconscious provides a basis for interpreting the inner conflicts experienced by the characters. The fulfilment of the novel's Oedipal prophecy is largely through dreams: Kafka has sex with Sakura (his sister) and with Miss Sakei (his mother) while he is asleep. Even the murder of his father is carried out in a dream where he inhabits the body of Nakura who kills Johnny Walker (his father).

#### 4.4. Quotations

The characters in the novels use a number of quotations in their conversations to stress a point. These can be considered as obligatory intertextualities because they are done deliberately to show the level of education and maturity of the characters and to challenge stereotypes. In the scene between Hoshino and the Hegel-quoting prostitute, the aim is more than just to show how the perception of reality has been distorted by the opening of the time portal. The novelist, in effect, is questioning the common stereotype of a sex worker as a low-educated person concerned only with financial gain.

##### 4.4.1. “Everything's a metaphor.” – Goethe

This quotation is lifted from Act V of *Faust 2* written by German novelist and philosopher Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749 – 1832). Translations from the original vary: “All perishable is but an allegory”; “All that is transitory is but a metaphor” and “All that must disappear is but a parable.”

*Kafka on the Shore* references this when Oshima and Kafka Tamura are discussing the plot of Natsume Soseki's *The Miner* which tells the story of a teenager who searched for meaning by working in a copper mine:

“Do you see yourself as sort of like the hero of *The Miner*?”

I shake my head. “No, I never thought of it that way.”

“But people need to cling to something,” Oshima says. “They have to.

You’re doing the same, even though you don’t realize it. It’s like Goethe said: Everything’s a metaphor.”

The novel alludes to the same idea three more times. In the conversation between Kafka Tamura and Miss Saeki in her office (“We’re not metaphors.” P. 306); In their final conversation inside the time portal (“The cup looks like a metaphor. A metaphor of memories that, before long, will be lost.” p. 463); and in the conversation between Oshima and Kafka Tamura towards the end of the novel (“The world is a metaphor, Kafka Tamura.” P. 486.)

These references and allusions describe the delicate balance between the two dimensions where the main characters live. The reality is the complicated life lived in Tokyo, the forest and the library. The dream is the life lived in the timeless dimension where the characters remain young but forever incomplete.

4.4.2. “How could any woman of generous spirit behave otherwise, given the torments that I face.” - Sophocles

The quotation is from the tragedy *Electra* by Sophocles which recounts the revenge that the eponymous heroine and her brother Orestes take on their mother and stepfather for the murder of their father, Agamemnon. The quotation is mentioned by Oshima in the midst of an argument with the two feminist visitors to the library.

Oshima quotes Sophocles apparently to show exasperation with his visitors. It is worth noting that Oshima uses this quotation by a female protagonist of the play as a prelude to his revelation that he is actually a woman. In addition, it supports the existential subtheme of the novel since *Electra* expresses the struggle between her authentic self and the tragic events in her life that are corrupting her real nature and pushing her to do the unthinkable. This mirrors also the conflicting emotions that Kafka Tamura feels towards his father and his futile attempt to escape a predetermined fate.

## 5. Optional Intertextualities

Unlike obligatory intertextuality which is required for a deeper understanding of the text, an optional intertextuality is not absolutely necessary for a proper appreciation. However, it is possible that the reader may gain additional insight by grasping the link that may or may not have been consciously employed by the writer. The following are some of the optional intertextualities that the researcher has gleaned from *Kafka on the Shore*:

### 5.1. The Huckleberry Finn Theme

*Kafka on the Shore* has a few things in common with Mark Twain's novel *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Like Huckleberry "Huck" Finn who escapes from his alcoholic father and travels down the Mississippi River with the fugitive slave Nigger Jim, Kafka Tamura leaves his psychologically abusive father and encounters various people who help him in his journey. As one critic notes:

Kafka Tamura is a Huck Finn-like runaway, leaving his father's house in Tokyo and heading toward the provinces in search of his destiny, and the idiot-savant Nakata, who always refers to himself in the third person, serves—in alternating chapters about his own flight from Tokyo after being forced into a fantastic murder—as a Japanese Nigger Jim who makes good omelets and converses with cats." (Cheuse, 2006).

However, the allusion to Huckleberry Finn is not as obvious as the Oedipal theme which is overtly acknowledged by the characters themselves. In addition, the similarities are off in some respects. For example, Kafka Tamura and Nakata appear in alternate chapters of Murakami's novel. They do not meet and travel together as do Huck Finn and Nigger Jim in Twain's epic.

### 5.2. The Catcher in the Rye Theme

*Kafka in the Shore* also alludes to *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951), J.D. Salinger's novel of teenage rebellion. Holden Caulfield, the protagonist in Salinger's work, abruptly leaves his school and spends the next few days wandering in New York City. Similarly, Kafka Tamura

leaves his home and wanders for about a week in Takamatsu. Morrison (2005) notes interestingly that Murakami was translating *Catcher in the Rye* into Japanese when he was writing his novel.

Some characters in both novels are intriguingly alike. Holden Caulfield, like Kafka Tamura, is a loner searching for meaning in his adolescent life. Phoebe, Holden's affectionate sister, resembles the sympathetic Sakura, Kafka's sister, minus the incestuous elements of their relationship. Mr. Antolini, Holden's English teacher, shares a similar ambiguous sexuality with Kafka's librarian friend, Oshima.

### 5.3. The Walden Theme

Another intertextuality that forms a sub-theme in *Kafka on the Shore* is the link to *Walden* (1854), a memoir published by American transcendentalist Henry David Thoreau. It describes the two years the author spent in a woodland near Concord, Massachusetts where he reflected on society and self-reliance.

Kafka Tamura undergoes a similar experience in Chapter 16 of the novel where he spends three days in the forest cabin of his friend, Oshima. Miles away from civilization, he communes with nature and experiences the sounds and sights of the mysterious woods. Kafka's musings during this time clearly echoes that of Thoreau's in *Walden*.

The similarity is not lost to some critics like Lorentzen (2005) who notes how Kafka "befriends the clerk, Oshima, who puts him up in his family's backwoods cabin, allowing a chance for some Waldenesque soul-searching."

### 5.4. Classical Music

Music, to a large extent, creates the atmosphere in the novel. The title of the novel, *Kafka on the Shore* is also the title of the enigmatic song that Miss Saeki composed when she was a teenager. But most apparent is the preponderance of references to classical music and composers.

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 – 1827) is referenced several times in the *Kafka on the Shore*. In Chapter 34, Hoshino wanders into a coffee shop where Beethoven's "Archduke Trio" is being played. He likes the music so much that he gets into a lengthy discussion with the shop owner who turns out to be very knowledgeable about the artist:

“Beethoven dedicated it to the Austrian archduke Rudolph...a very skilled musician, who studied piano and music theory with Beethoven starting when he was sixteen. He ... sort of stood in the shadows lending a helping hand to Beethoven, who didn't know much about getting ahead in the world. If it hadn't been for him, Beethoven would have had a much tougher time.”

Some kind of parallelism is palpable here: Just as Beethoven needed the archduke to help him deal with the world around him, the naïve Nakata required the assistance of Hoshino in finding his way around Takamatsu to search for the magical entrance stone. Beethoven is referenced again in the succeeding chapter when Hoshino and Nakata visit the Komura Memorial Library where the former chose to read a book entitled *Beethoven and His Generation*.

These references to Beethoven more than just show parallels with the Murakami's characters. They serve to enhance the atmosphere of his work, almost as if Beethoven's music is playing as the reader reads the novel.

### 5.5. Jazz

Murakami owned and operated a jazz bar with his wife for seven years before deciding to become a writer. It is no wonder that this type of music permeates certain scenes in *Kafka on the Shore*. In Chapter 41, Kafka makes a second trip to the forest, deciding to go in farther as if drawn by a mysterious force. As he trudges further into the dark foliage, he summons his musical memories to dispel the stillness:

“I try whistling to fill in the silence. The soprano sax from Coltrane's “My Favorite Things,” though of course my dubious whistling doesn't come anywhere near the complex, lightning-quick original. I just add bits so what I hear in my head approximates the sound. Better than nothing, I figure.”

“My Favorite Things” is a familiar tune from the movie *The Sound of Music*, which American jazz saxophonist John Coltrane turned into “a hypnotic eastern dervish dance” (Sanchez, 2017). In juxtaposing jazz music with Kafka's introspection, Murakami could be mining the relationship between jazz music and existentialism. In fact, Jean Paul Sartre the

founder existentialism was a known jazz fan. Quoting critic Ted Goia, Jones (2017) says that Sartre “saw jazz as the musical manifestation of the existential freedom he described in his philosophical texts.” In addition, he noted that Sartre who described hearing it live among a sweating, throbbing crowd, considered jazz as an authentic experience of freedom and a means of transcendence.

### 5.6. Popular Music

A number of pop and rock musicians are referenced in the novel. Among them is Prince (1958-2016), an American singer-songwriter and musical innovator notorious for using sexually explicit lyrics in some of his works. The practice famously led to the mandatory use of warning labels on covers of records with lyrics deemed unsuitable for minors.

In Chapter 33, Kafka Tamura works out in a gym while listening to Prince. The night before he had gone to bed with Miss Saeki:

I go through the machines in the usual order, my mind filled with Miss Saeki. About the sex we had. I try to clear my head, blank everything out, but it’s not easy. I focus on my muscles, absorb myself in the routine. The same machines as always, same weights, same number of reps. Prince is singing “Sexy Motherfucker” now.”

The title of the song is a clear allusion to Oedipus who unknowingly married his mother and whose story forms one of the main themes of the novel.

### 5.7. Popular Culture

The novel also references popular culture icons, among them the fast food giant Kentucky Fried Chicken and the famous whiskey brand Johnny Walker.

#### 5.7.1. Colonel Sanders of Kentucky Fried Chicken

Perhaps the quirkiest character in the novel is the one in the form of Colonel Sanders of Kentucky Fried Chicken fame. He appears in Chapter 26 similarly sporting a white moustache and goatee, glasses, and a white suit with a string tie. He talks to an incredulous Hoshino offering to help him find the entrance stone and at the same time recommending the services of a prostitute:

“Okay. . . But if you’re the real Colonel Sanders, what the heck are you doing working as a pimp in a back alley in Takamatsu? You’re famous, and must be raking in the dough from license fees alone. You should be kicking back at a poolside somewhere in the States, enjoying your retirement. So what’s the story?”

“There’s a kind of a warp at work in the world.”

There is much that could be analysed here: What is the writer’s purpose in borrowing a character from popular culture? Was it simply to show the temporal complication (“a kind of a warp”) that can occur when a portal to another dimension is opened? Or is it a jab at the crass commercialism and unbridled consumerism (symbolized by a fast-food icon acting like a pimp) that has resulted from the post-war Japanese economic boom?

#### 5.7.2. Johnny Walker

Another equally intriguing character from popular culture is Johnny Walker, the black-coated striding figure of the famous whiskey brand. He introduces himself to Nakata in Chapter 14:

“My name is Johnnie Walker. Johnnie Walker. Most everyone knows who I am. Not to boast, but I’m famous all over the world. An iconic figure, you might say. I’m not the real Johnnie Walker, mind you. I have nothing to do with the British distilling company. I’ve just borrowed his appearance and name. A person’s got to have an appearance and name, am I right?”

He turns out to be a deranged cat-killer with a penchant for storing the severed heads of his victims in a refrigerator. Oddly, he wants Nakata to kill him and makes a great show of eviscerating two cats to taunt the old man who tries mightily to resist the urge to slay him despite the vile spectacle. But when Johnny Walker is about to kill the Siamese cat that he has long been searching for, Nakata finally grabs a knife and stabs Johnny Walker who dies laughing.

Like Colonel Sanders, Johnny Walker “borrowed his appearance and name.” They are vessels of ideas or forces from another dimension that seeks to accomplish a tangible deed in this world. As Colonel Sanders says,

“I’m a metaphysical, conceptual object. I can take on any form, but I lack substance. And to perform a real act, I need someone with substance to help out.”

Johnny Walker is essentially Kafka Tamura’s father whom he is doomed to slay in fulfilment of the Oedipal prophecy. As a disembodied concept, Walker can only be slain in a dream which is what seems to have happened when Tamura wakes up in Takamatsu with mysterious blood on his shirt. His spirit had apparently left his body while he was asleep and inhabited Nakata’s form in order to fulfil the prophecy of murdering his own father.

#### 5.8. Films

Films, like music, are referenced several times in the novel. It is part of popular culture but is separately analysed here. One of the films is the Hollywood classic *Casablanca*, a 1942 romantic drama starring Humphrey Bogart as Rick Blaine and Ingrid Bergman as Ilsa Lund.

*Casablanca* is widely considered as one of the greatest films in history. In one iconic scene, Ilsa enters Rick’s café and tells the house pianist: “Play it, Sam. Play 'As Time Goes By'." Sam initially refused because he was clearly instructed by Rick never to play that song. However, Bergman was insistent and Sam relented.

This is the scene referenced by Oshima when he gave Kafka a vinyl copy of the song “Kafka on the Shore” which Miss Saeki recorded when she was young.

Oshima raises a finger, like a teacher warning a pupil. “One thing, though. Make sure you never play it when Miss Saeki’s here. No matter what. Understood?”

I nod again.

“Like in *Casablanca*,” he says, and hums the opening bars of ‘As Time Goes By.’ “Just don’t play that one song, okay?”

As in *Casablanca*, a love song evokes painful memories for a main character. “Kafka on the Shore” was also the title of the enigmatic song that Miss Saeki composed during happier times with her boyfriend. When he died, she withdrew from the world despite the big commercial success of her work. Oshima is aware of this and instructs Kafka not to play the song when Miss Saeki is around to spare her from the painful memories that it might evoke.

#### 6. Accidental Intertextualities

Readers often get a sudden insight while reading a novel or story. It can take the form of an unexpected connection to a personal experience or to a novel or story previously read. This can happen without any basis from the original text, nor any intention from the writer. It is purely the result of a reader's previous knowledge being summoned by a related text. The *Forrest Gump* character is one of the accidental intertextualities present in *Kafka on the Shore*:

*Forrest Gump* is a 1994 American film in which Tom Hanks played the role of a slow-witted but lovable man—the archetypal simpleton who dishes out words of wisdom unwittingly. Other popular films with this kind of character is *Rain Man* (1988) in which Dustin Hoffman played an autistic savant with a prodigious memory, and *Being There* (1979) where Peter Sellers played a simple-minded gardener whose words were so misunderstood as profound that he was considered for the presidency. The character of Nakata, a gentle and illiterate man who possesses otherworldly powers, is from the same mould.

In response to the observation that the character of Nakata is similar to Forrest Gump, the novel's translator Philip Gabriel remarks that Nakata actually goes beyond the archetype:

“I'd say Nakata is a new type of character in Japanese literature, and therein lies part of Murakami's originality. I think Nakata's companion Hoshino hits it on the head when he suggests that there is something spiritual about Nakata. Being with Nakata gives Hoshino the feeling he imagines Buddha's or Jesus's followers felt, a certain “rightness” about the world when he's around.” (harukimurakami.com, 2017)

## 7. Conclusion

The lush montage of intertextualities in *Kafka on the Shore* is a prime example of postmodernism in literature in which individual works are not isolated creations but are interwoven with the fabric of other texts. The intertextualities appear in all three forms—obligatory, optional and accidental. They include references to Ancient Greek and Western philosophy, Ancient Greek, European, Anglo-American, and Japanese literatures, classical music, films, jazz and pop music, and images of popular culture. The various references reflect ideas in gender and feminist theories embedded in the work. The allusions also point to psychoanalytic elements that reveal the existential angst of the characters. Together they offer an alternative view of current issues confronting Japanese society and those of other Asian countries as well.

The list of intertextualities herein presented have obviously been shortened due to space constraints. Nonetheless, any exhaustive tally will always be, in a way, incomplete. Even if all possible references and influences are identified, there will always be more since it is the nature of intertextuality to form and reform with each new reading and reader.

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