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## PORTYARAL OF THE PARALLEL WORLDS IN HARUKI MURAKAMI'S *IQ84*

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### **Abstract**

*This paper attempts to focus critically on the idea of parallel worlds in Haruki Murakami's novel IQ84. Firstly, it reveals the connection between the present world and the parallel world represented as 1984 and IQ84. Murakami showcases the shadow of the psyche and society in imagination. It engages in dialogues with other literary world and explores how it opens up new horizons and shapes in challenging reality. Then, it identifies the idea of explaining and resolving the concept of reality and dream of the parallel world in the novel. Further, it examines the inner emotional world and the outer emotional world of the characters along with their existence. In addition, it critically discusses the perspective of the characters that travel to the parallel world of IQ84. Finally, it reflects on how the novelist depicts the characters that are touched by the subtle elements of reality and dream. It helps to preserve and recreate intense emotions from the past and understand the deepest inner workings of the characters and how the author can portray an astounding depiction with elusive phrasing, moving metaphors, and distinctive stories that can define what it is like to be in a parallel world.*

**Keywords:** parallel world, dream, reality, intense emotion, imagination

### **1. Introduction**

Haruki Murakami (1949-) is a contemporary Japanese author who has constructed an unbelievable parallel world. It creates the backdrop in the novel. His works have been described as "Deeply philosophical and teasingly perplexing." (*Independent on Sunday*, 1). His first novel *Hear the Wind Sing* (1979) won the Gunzon Literature prize. This is followed by his other best novels like *Norwegian Wood* (1987), *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* (1994), *Kafka on the Shore* (2002) and *IQ84* (2009). Throughout his literary career, he created a dystopia in a parallel world with many contradictories between reality and dream. The characteristic of Murakami's novel is his protagonist must decide which of the world he wishes to stay in, the inner world or the outer parallel world. According to Andre Breton parallel world helps "to resolve the previously contradictory conditions of reality and dream into an absolute reality, super-reality" (toner magazine 1). Stretcher in this context indicates that Murakami differs from other writers who use magic realism because he

uses it as a tool to find an identity, not to confirm it. (Stretcher, 32). Parallel and alternate world are important themes to Murakami because it explores the justification of good and evil. In every fiction, his main goal is to decipher the inner emotional world one goes through and its effect in shaping the identity of the individual. As a result of “two of the gravest tragedies in Japan’s post-war history” (Boulter, 206), he crafts a novel that portrays man’s quest to find his lost shadow through imagination. As is said by him, “Memories and thoughts age, just as people do. But certain thoughts can never age, and certain memories can never fade”. (Murakami, 184). Murakami’s discussion revolves around the emotional state.

## 2. *1Q84*: A Brief Review

The novel is a story of how a woman named Aomame begins to notice strange changes occurring in the world. She is quickly caught up in a plot involving Sakigake, a religious cult, and her childhood love, Tengo, and embarks on a journey to discover what is "real".

A young woman named Aomame follows a taxi drivers enigmatic suggestion and begins to notice puzzling discrepancies in the world around her. She has entered, she realizes, a parallel existence, which she calls 1Q84 “Q is for ‘question mark.’ A world that bears a question.” ( ). Meanwhile, an aspiring writer named Tengo takes on a suspect ghostwriting project. He becomes so wrapped up with the work and its unusual author that, soon, his previously placid life begins to come unraveled.

As Aomame’s and Tengo’s narratives converge over this single year, we learn of the profound and tangled connections that bind them ever closer: a beautiful, dyslexic teenage girl with a unique vision; a mysterious religious cult that instigated a shoot-out with the metropolitan police; a reclusive, wealthy dowager who runs a shelter for abused women; a hideously ugly private investigator; a mild-mannered yet ruthlessly efficient bodyguard; and a peculiarly insistent television-fee collector.

A love story, a mystery, a fantasy, a novel of self-discovery, a dystopia to rival George Orwell’s *1Q84* is Haruki Murakami's most ambitious undertaking yet: an instant bestseller in his native Japan, and a tremendous feat of imagination from one of our most revered contemporary writers.

## 3. Literature Review

According to M. Randy Utama(2017), Haruki Murakami's literary works mostly focus on the theme of the Surreal world. This identifies the characteristic that builds the idea of surrealism in the novel along with explaining how surrealism works to resolve the idea of reality and dream in the novel. The writer uses *Surrealism* theory, which focusing on *Automatic Writing* with *Juxtaposition* as its characteristic to build the surrealism idea and *Surrealist Image* as a result of *Automatic Writing* itself to resolve the idea of reality and dream in the novel.

Suen Jenkin(2014) thinks that analysis of the representation of the personal and collective unconscious of

Japan in Murakami Haruki's *1Q84*. In particular, employing the concepts of Carl G. Jung and Jacques Lacan, this dissertation examines how Murakami showcases the shadow of the Japanese psyche and society by reimagination of history. It contends that Murakami seeks to revisit the past in *1Q84* to reflect on history, make sense of the present and instill reflections on the System and moral complexity.

Srikanth Venkataraman Kamuna (2015) conflict grows from any form of opposition is perhaps nowhere more evident than in Haruki Murakami's novels, where his use of opposing elements—specifically in terms of thematic architecture, story structure, and plot—is meticulous, leading to the creation of alternate and parallel worlds both within and outside his characters. Murakami's use of conventional narrative devices in his novel to describe the alternate world is unique in this way.

#### 4. Murakami's Novels and the Position of *1Q84*

Murakami's novels are marked by the clash of the belief that there is an identical and opposite force that accompanies every aspect of life. The parallel world constantly attempts to balance life. His themes are distinguished by their study of opposites i.e. being and non-being, the conscious and subconscious state of mind, reality, and illusion. According to Mishima Murakami's work are "The secret of art to be found in the word 'resistance'" (qt. Reuters). *1Q84* unravels the parallel experience of Aomame and Tengo when they entered the

world of 1Q84 from 1984. As Jonathan Dil argues in respect of Murakami's previous works, "the unconscious is trying to bring ... losses back into consciousness again" so that the protagonists can return to mourning (as distinct from melancholia as coined by Freud) to get the process of individuation moving again (55).

It all started when Aomame gets herself in a traffic jam in the expressway. The traffic is long as she is in rush she climbed down the emergency stairway of Tokoyo expresses way. When Aomame gets out the driver says something strange all of a sudden:

"Things may look different to you than they did before. I've had that experience myself. But don't let appearances fool you. There's always only one reality." (*1Q84*,12).

He alerts Aomame that she might experience something unusual. Aomame notices something has changed around her. As she reaches the station she passes a policeman on the street wearing the uniform and weapon which are different from her memory.

"How could police uniforms and pistols have changed without her being aware of it? It was practically unthinkable...She remembered them clearly. It was very strange." (*1Q84* 41-42). The world she lived in is changed that was not the same world everyone was living in. That world was a parallel world of an alternate reality. Thus she wanted to call this new world 1Q84 where Q stands for the question mark. She thinks of it as her speculation

toward the change of the world. She is not convinced that she is yanked to a parallel world. She doubts that it is not 1984 she knew. It is another 1984.

“1Q84 – that’s what I’ll call this new world. Q is for the question mark. A world that bears a question.” (*1Q84*, 138).

She describes the parallel world. She began to notice strange changes occurring in her new world. The world has been shifted or she has been shifted between the worlds. She struggles to come to grips with the truth in which she finds herself.

“At some point in time, the world I knew either vanished or withdrew, and another world came to take its place.

Meanwhile, elsewhere in Tokyo, a young man named Tengo ghost-writes a story about the little people in “Air Chrysalis”. It became a national sensation and sets in motion a chain of events that brings Tengo and Aomame together. They intertwine with one another through their encounter with Sakigake commune which is represented by the tiny people.

The portrayal of an extra moon and tiny people represents the dream to settle the idea of reality and dream in the novel. “There were two moons in the .....as though thinly covered with moss.” (*1Q84*, 245-246).

The image of a moon gets distorted into a dream-like image and psychologically contrasting. It makes up

an idea of reality being shifted to another world, a parallel world. Another world that mirrors the real world, but in the mirrored world there are two moons in the sky to tell the difference.

Murakami designs the world with two moons as a tool to settle the contradiction between the idea of reality and dream. When two moons appear it remarks the beginning of a parallel world. The appearance of moons distorts the image of one moon with the other. It shows the uncertainty of the world Aomame lives in.

“This is the year 1Q84. A strange world where anything can happen”. (*1Q84*, 889). On the other hand, Tengo describes two moons in the novel he rewrites “Air Chrysalis”. The novel is the work of Fuka-Eri, daughter of Sakigake’s leader. In reality, the existence of two moons remarks the switching of reality.

Aomame and Tengo are separated into two worlds with one moon and the world with two moons. They are entangled with the issue of the Sakigake religious cult. Aomame with her intends to kill the Leader of Sakigake and Tengo with his rewriting of Air Chrysalis. Their world contradicts reality and dreams. The idea of dream or imagination in Tengo’s novel becomes reality. It is explained when Tengo sees the two moons for the first time in the novel:

“It was then that Tengo realized there was .....with solid outlines up there.” (*1Q84*,662).

The two moons resolve the idea of reality and dream to reunite them in the world of *IQ84*. The two moons act as a guide for the two in seeking each other.

“We came into *this world* so that .....defied explanation”. (*IQ84*,1141).

They both encounter Sakigake commune and are reunited by the two moons. The Sakigake represents cult domination over Japan. Tengo reaches the world of *IQ84* by rewriting Air Chrysalis angering Sakigake and revealing the secrets of forbidden “Little People”. Little people come out of the little girl Fuka-Eri’s mouth when she sleeps and builds a kind of chrysalis by drawing threads from the air. When the making of chrysalis ends it contains a shadow version of one’s character without a soul. “Little people” represents the dark nature within humans which comes only when we are alone and truly lonely. In *IQ84*, a person’s soul can be split into two parts occupying two bodies which are termed as maza and dohta:

“A dohta is just the shadow of the .....her heart and mind.” (*IQ84*,768-769).

Aomam was scared to confront reality. She could only survive in a dream and her self-constructed utopia. As the Leader of Sakigake, Tamotsu Fukada observes Aomame and Tengo could not reach one another in 1984. After Aomame’s dialogue with the Leader and Tengo’s visits to his father in the “Town of Cats” both of them embraced the shadow

of their past to reach one another. As both meet each other, the moon already fulfills the role in meeting the two of them, and Aomame asks for Tengo to leave the world of *IQ84* in the way she came in before through the stairway.

“The stairway has to be here, she told herself. I have to believe it...We have to get out of this world. To do that I have to believe, from the bottom of my heart, that these stairs will lead to the expressway. I believe.” (*IQ84*,1147)

After they climb up the stairway, they come out onto Metropolitan Expressway No. 3 where Aomame got out from the taxi and from there climb down the stairway to the *IQ84*. They are convinced by doing that they get out from *IQ84*. There is only one way to make sure of it, which is by looking at the moon. The clouds finally broke and the moon came into view:

“There was just one moon. That familiar, yellow, solitary moon. They knew without asking that they were seeing the same scene. We’re back in 1984, Aomame told herself. This is’t *IQ84* anymore. This is the world of 1984, the world I came from.” (*IQ84*,1151)

They’re coming back to the 1984 remarks at the end of the story which they are reunited once again by encountering Sakigake in *IQ84*.

“Two storylines at work, with different starting points but running parallel to each other.” (*IQ84*,876).

The image of the two moons in the novel is a realization of the parallel world. Murakami uses the idea of a parallel world to write things that are normally impossible to accept in reality. Reality itself gets distorted in those happenings in another world by the appearance of the two moons- a world where anything can happen.

Daysa (2015) in her article rightly puts it that:

Murakami introduces us to a novel of dualities; two moons.....what is manipulation? (Internet article: "Magic realism, magic dualism: Murakami's *1Q84*")

## 5. Conclusion

Haruki Murakami uses the theme of being and non-being, the conscious and sub-conscious states of the human mind, the connection between the two, memory and illusion and life and death are used by Murakami in this novel to reflect these themes by creating separate worlds. It shows the surge and tension between opposing forces. The juggling between two worlds in *1Q84* emphasizes the existence of two separate worlds. He uses the idea of the two moons to create a

parallel world to resolve the contradiction. It gives the idea of internal reflection and awakens the dream or the subconscious desires.

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