

Persistent Nationalism: *A Wild Sheep Chase* and Essential Japanese Identities

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Abstract

This paper reads Murakami's novel as a postwar critique of Japanese inter-war conduct, arguing that *A Wild Sheep Chase* is also an expression of an idealized Japanese identity, a conservative scheme that resolves opposites into an unchanging unity. In the novel, this unified resolution accounts for the persistence across generations of more extreme forms of Japanese nationalist identification. It is significant that the link between Japanese colonial excesses on the continent and that generation of postwar pacifists is made possible by the indigenous presence of an Ainu character. The paper concludes by noting various categories destabilized by Murakami.

Politicized narrative

Murakami Haruki (b. 1949) invites readers to consider the possibilities of challenging the edifice of state power. By depicting characters engaged in physical struggles with the subconscious of the Japanese national psyche, Murakami highlights the persistence of the more virulent forms of Japanese na-

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tionalism that fuelled the Japanese colonial project in East Asia. The presentation of sustained and violent confrontations is one device for politicizing the narratives of Japanese novels: the premise of cultural nationalism that assumes it is the harmony of Japanese culture and the beauty of the four seasons defines Japanese-ness is dismissed by the comment that ‘we Japanese seem to live from war to war.’¹ In addition to presenting intensely physical and moral struggles, Murakami Haruki also juxtaposes the details of the everyday with the social trends of the time. Imported youth culture is central to capturing that pulse:

Those were the days of the Doors, the Stones, the Byrds, Deep Purple, and the Moody Blues. The air was alive, even as everything seemed poised on the verge of collapse, waiting for a push.

She and I would trade books, talk endlessly, drink cheap whisky, engage in unremarkable sex. You know, the stuff of everyday. Meanwhile, the curtain was creaking down on the shambles of the sixties.²

In commenting on the ability of Murakami to blend deep psychology, surreal magic that teases the neat line around imagination separating the real from the artificial, formulaic variation, and historical revision with political concerns, Mathew Stretcher notes:

Kawamoto Saburō said in 1985 that Murakami was a “totally *un*-political” writer whose works nevertheless always made us think of politics. This is one way to phrase the matter. Another would be to say that Murakami is a totally political writer who always pretends he is not. In that regard his literary style is capable of obscuring the political content of his work, but only so far; his political agenda never fails to emerge at some point.³

Murakami addresses the persistence of interwar ideologies in contemporary Japan in *Hitsuji o meguru bōken* (1982) [A Wild Sheep Chase, 1989] and *Nejimaki dori kuronikuru* (1994, 1995) [The Wind-up Bird Chronicle, 1997, 1998]. By outlining the presence of these dormant malignancies in *A Wild Sheep Chase*, I intend to draw attention to the complexity of narratives that reveal how these disturbing powers colonize and are internalized. In this paper, this includes a brief survey of several representations of Ainu in this narrative of national consolidation.

A Strange Man, a story, the truth

Part One of *A Wild Sheep Chase* starts on the day of the suicide by seppuku of Mishima Yukio, November 25 1970.⁴ Eight years later, the male protagonist attends a funeral for a girl who would sleep with anyone. She had been hit by a truck on a corner. Although the narrator cannot remember her name, he recalls her prophesy. After sex on the evening of Mishima's death, they sleep and he wakes up to find her sobbing: 'I thought for a second that maybe it wouldn't be so bad to get murdered by someone. Like when I am sound asleep.'⁵ She announces she will live until she is twenty-five: 'July, eight years later, she was dead at twenty-six'.⁶ With this degree of foretelling, expressions like 'an investigation of possible negligence'⁷ invites the interpretation that this was no accident. Suicide is thematically important because it provides an element of closure to the narrative.

The adventure alluded to by the Japanese title of Murakami's third novel begins with a visit from the Strange Man, a private secretary for a man convicted as a Class A war criminal for activities conducted in Manchuria and across the Chinese mainland. The employer of this black-suited Strange Man

commands almost total power: ‘the Boss sits squarely on top of a trilateral power base of politicians, information services, and the stock market.’⁸

The Strange Man tells a strange tale about the Boss. Having been released from Sugamo Prison and transferred to St Luke’s Hospital in the middle of his unfinished proceedings at the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal, the Boss then used half of his assets to bankroll one faction of the ruling conservative party. The remaining cash was used to monopolize the advertising industry. Against this early postwar background, the narrator is later reminded by his business partner of the current reality of Japanese media: ‘ninety-five percent of the information that reaches you has already been preselected and paid for.’⁹

Sheep as emperor: leading the masses

As a setting for those sorts of tales about the ongoing dominance of Japanese society by criminal elements who initially profited from the looting of mainland China during the Fifteen Years War, Murakami has provided a plausible frame. What makes his account more chilling is the addition of an anthropomorphic element: one exceptionally powerful sheep.

The advertising company co-owned by the narrator-protagonist published a brochure for an insurance company featuring a photograph of an unusual sheep, a variety of sheep not recorded on the government ovine register. This sheep was the same sheep that colonized the Boss after his imprisonment in the winter of 1932 for his role in an attempted assassination plot. Given his opposition to the ruling faction of the conservative party and his resistance to the system of Imperial rule, the Boss was subject to severe interrogations until June 1936: ‘Very probably the sheep found its way into the Boss. That would have been in 1936. And for the next forty years or so, the sheep remained

lodged in the Boss. There inside, it must have found a pasture, a birch forest. Like the one in that photograph.¹⁰ Given that the Boss has been in a coma caused by a dangerously large blood cyst in his brain for a fortnight and is unlikely to recover, the Strange Man is determined to locate ‘this chestnut-colored sheep with the star on its back’¹¹ before the Will of the Boss, ‘a concept that governs time, governs space, and governs possibility’¹² is lost in toto.

The boss of the Boss is this sheep.

This sheep is the star.

The sheep is The Boss, emperor of the universe.

Much has been written about the wartime performance of Japanese-ness as the sacramental duty of citizens.¹³ In this context, it is important to note that the Will of the Boss as the force which shapes the possible direction of Japanese political life also appears to have a touch of the sacred. The Boss is a ruler of an empire and like the wartime emperor, his existence is almost the absolute source of meaning and purpose for the Strange Man. The chauffeur of the Boss tells the narrator that the Boss told him God’s telephone number and that once the Boss is dead, the chauffeur loses his direct line access to God.¹⁴ The Will that the Strange Man is so desperate to inherit has less to do with the Boss than being the intelligence of this one sheep expressed through the controlled actions of the Boss.¹⁵ The quest of the Strange Man to locate this sheep is the postwar Japanese inability to escape from an almost subconscious obsession with that form of political power grounded on the lethal logic of the divine nation.¹⁶

Murakami’s novel comments on the meta-narrative of Japanese nationalism. The longevity of extreme forms of Japanese-ness can be explained by the ability of this one extraordinary sheep to occupy and dominate its human host.

The Strange Man tells the narrator that the Boss was resurrected by the comprehensive intelligence of the sheep and quickly rose to become the unassailable top of the Japanese right wing. No longer a barely literate boy from a Hokkaido farm who became an aimless and angry young man, the Boss was reborn as charismatic and politically astute orator who was blessed by ‘the ability to steer society by using the weaknesses of the masses for leverage.’¹⁷ Armed with these instincts, the Boss became a shadowy presence that created international incidents that fed the Japanese advance throughout China.¹⁸ Although the Strange Man then explains the role of the Boss in postwar history, the methodology he outlines is the means by which the wartime government shifted ‘from “total war” [*zentai sen*], which is focused on military equipment and personnel alone, to an “all-out war” [*sōryoku sen*] that mobilizes the entire economy, social structure, and spirituality of a people in a comprehensive state ideology’.¹⁹

“We built a kingdom,” the man began again. “A powerful underground kingdom. We pulled everything into the picture. Politics, finance, mass communications, the bureaucracy, culture, all sorts of things you would never dream of. We even subsumed elements that were hostile to us. From the establishment to the anti-establishment, everything. Very few if any of them even noticed they had been co-opted. In other words, we had ourselves a tremendously sophisticated organization. All of which the Boss built single-handedly after the war. It is as if the Boss commandeered the hull of a giant ship of state. If he pulls out the plug, the ship goes down. Passengers and all, lost at sea, and surely before anyone becomes aware of that fact.”²⁰

Given the almost stereotypical representation of contemporary Japanese-ness as the beauty of communal action and the restraint of individual expres-

sion,²¹ the overwhelming mental dominance of this sheep with the star on its back subverts the expectation of mindless conformity that usually characterized lesser members of its species. This theme of mutual destiny was a unifying force during the fifteen-year war (1931–1945), ‘dissolving into the whole’ immediately suggested the physical erasure of the self or *kyoshi*, which could mean one’s own death. The slogan *ichioku gyokusai* or ‘the total suicidal death of one hundred million’ was another wartime expression of Japanese-ness, but thematically this notion of shared identity becomes relevant to *The Wild Sheep Chase* with the appearance of the Sheep Man. In the Alfred Birnbaum translation, the Sheep Man switches between using the first person singular and the first person plural.²² By smoothly alternating between the singular and plural forms of the first person pronoun, Murakami uses the Sheep Man to collapse the distinction between individual responsibility and group actions.

This is what is most worrying: while the beliefs of those men of the generation of the Boss should largely pass away when these Japanese pillagers of the Chinese continent die, the sheep commandeers another human host.

Sheep, empire, anarchy

In *A Wild Sheep Chase*, it is this one peculiar sheep that has the ability to migrate from those who have outlived their utility. There are also other forms of animate presence, and there is the worm universe where symbolic dreams and symbolic realities overlap producing a ‘universe of alternative considerations ... In the worm universe there is nothing unusual about a dairy cow seeking a pair of pliers. A cow is bound to get her pliers sometime.’²³ There is mobility across species. As the following example shows this shift from the terrestrial realm to the maritime world occurs at the level of accommodation nomen-

clature.

Following the profound intuition of his girlfriend, the recently divorced narrator locates the Sheep Professor at the Dolphin Hotel, formerly the Hokkaido Ovine Hall that was owned by the Hokkaido Ovine Association.²⁴ The Sheep Professor tells them that when he was a young sheep specialist sleeping in a cave near the Manchuria–Mongolia border in the summer of 1935, a unique sheep from a thickset variety he had never seen before asked permission to be inside him. As the Rat explains much later, that one sheep was determined to change the human world and transform humanity by creating ‘ “A realm of total conceptual anarchy. A scheme in which all opposites would be resolved into unity. With me and the sheep at the center.” ’²⁵

The Sheep Professor outlines the individual costs of being too close to the immanent power of that sheep which he should not have woken by entering its cave:

“In parts of Northern China and Mongol territory, it’s not uncommon to hear of sheep entering people’s bodies. Among the locals, it’s believed that a sheep entering the body is a blessing from the gods. For instance, in one book published in the Yuan dynasty it’s written that a ‘star-bearing white sheep’ entered the body of Genghis Khan. ... The sheep that enters a body is thought to be immortal. And so too the person who hosts the sheep is thought to become immortal. However, should the sheep escape, the immortality goes. It’s all up to the sheep. If the sheep likes the host, it’ll stay for decades. If not—zip!—it’s gone. People abandoned by the sheep are called the ‘sheepless’. ... The sheep goes away leaving only an idea. But without the sheep there is no expelling that idea. That is what it is to be ‘sheepless.’ ”²⁶

This divine sheep colonises the Sheep Professor in 1935 and uses him to get to Japan. This sacred embodiment of the impulse to empire and dynasty that spans history and crosses cultures then lodges in the brain of the Boss in 1936. Roughly four decades later the next victim of this star-marked sheep is Rat, a friend of the narrator. In a May 1978 appeal for help, Rat sends his friend the problematic photograph. In this second letter, signed '*Your friend, The Rat*', the Rat asks his friend to put the picture of the sheep somewhere people can see it: '*I'll let you have every last ounce of my sex appeal if you do me this favor. I can't tell you the reason why, though. This photo is important to me. Sometime, at a later date, I'll explain everything to you.*'²⁷ Once published in the public relations bulletin of 'P' Life Insurance Company, that image of the star sheep catches the scrupulous attention of the Strange Man because he continues to conduct the weekly review of all Japanese reference materials published on domestic and foreign sheep that was formerly observed by the Boss.

The Rat as star: Sheep Man

In the figure of the Rat, a longtime friend of the protagonist whose real name is never revealed, even incidentally by his wife, the themes of suicide and national duty are drawn together. The suicide of the famous Mishima is barely paid any attention by students. The media coverage of Mishima's death contrasts with the almost unnoticed but nonetheless questionable death at the intersection of the anonymous girl known only by her conduct.²⁸ Although the consequences of the actions of the Rat should be widely felt in Japanese society, only the narrator knows the details of the confession of the Rat and the rationale for the timing of his actions.

In *A Wild Sheep Chase* Murakami presents the final actions of Mishima as

less-than-comprehensible. The disturbing death of Mishima was fuelled by his particular brand of nationalism that demanded a return to the bushido spirit. In his 1967 *Bunka Bōeiron* (『文化防衛論』, A Defense of Culture), Mishima argues that Hirohito should have abdicated and taken responsibility for the war dead.

Male protagonists of Murakami Haruki often find themselves being sent on a quest. Driven by some notions of ideals, duty and private integrity, the suicides of Mishima and the Rat have an external significance that exceeds the more anonymous death of the almost nameless girl. Although this sense of their mission may imply something epic which may approach the territory of the heroic, there is also a reductive wink at the pre-metrosexual shortcomings of Japanese masculinity in late modernity in other Murakami writing:

“I’m an absolutely ordinary guy. Less than ordinary. I’m going bald, I’m getting a potbelly, I turned 40 last month. My feet are flat. The doctor told me recently that I have diabetic tendencies. It’s been three months or more since I last slept with a woman—and I had to pay for it. I do get some recognition within the division for my ability to collect on loans, but no real respect. I don’t have a single person who likes me, either at work or in my private life. I don’t know how to talk to people, and I’m bad with strangers, so I never make friends. I have no athletic ability, I’m tone-deaf, short, phimotic, nearsighted—and astigmatic. I live a horrible life. All I do is eat, sleep and shit. I don’t know why I’m even living. Why should a person like me have to be the one to save Tokyo?”²⁹

Men of this ilk are the raw material that was consumed by the postwar economic growth overseen by the Boss, and our saviour must help a giant frog in his duel with the huge but unhappy earthworm who causes earthquakes.

Masculinity as the intersection of nature and culture: this *after the quake* anti-hero recalls

all those Japanese who, in spite of their lack of strength, put on a bold face and went off to the Sino-Japanese and Pacific Wars. In those dark days both the strong, who in reality were few in number, and the weak calmly acknowledged their combined weakness. It was believed that as long as there were those who, despite their weakness, were willing to submit their all to the highest good, it was possible for Japan to restore order to the world. This was a terrifying, savage way of thinking and the exact opposite of humanism. However, rooted in the darkest desires of people, it had the power to captivate them at a time when the outer veneer of civilization was being stripped away.³⁰

In ‘Super-Frog Saves Tokyo’ Murakami smoothly blends a surreal mix of the pre-modern world with the gritty reality of that peculiar species of bottom feeders that emerged as the economic bubble burst into late Japanese modernity. In this post-Kobe earthquake story, our grip on rationality, logic and morality is given a gentle tickle by the well-read and articulate persona of the talking frog.

After assuming the form of the Sheep Man, former non-smoker the Rat as *the Sheep Man* litters the mountain landscape of Hokkaido with the butts of Seven Stars cigarettes. Winding the grandfather clock was the last thing the Rat did before committing suicide. As he is talking to his friend, the now dead Rat silences that noisy timepiece by stopping its pendulum:

All sound, all time, vanished.

“What happened was this,” said the Rat. “I died with the sheep in me. I waited until the sheep was fast asleep, then I tied a rope over the

beam in the kitchen and hanged myself. There wasn't enough time for the sucker to escape. ... The Sheep Man buried me next to the garage."³¹

Stretcher provides a persuasive argument for the figure of the Sheep Man being interpreted as representing Japanese subjectivity, characterized by the contemporary tensions between alternative subcultures and the state-shaped official culture of Japanese-ness.³² What is important for our wider concern with indigenous issues is the connections between the Rat-as-the-Sheep Man and the Ainu man whose tale is recounted in the narrator's reading of the *Authoritative History of Junitaki Township*.

The Rat as Ainu: Full Moon on the Wane

The early modern section of that publication reveals that Junitaki is where the 32 year old Sheep Professor establishes a sheep ranch in 1937. Much later, after the appearance of the Sheep Man, the wartime edition of *The Heritage of Pan-Asianism*, complete with certain words excised by the censors, lists the permanent residence of the Boss as Junitaki-cho.

The life story of "Full Moon on the Wane" intersects with national narratives of development, agriculture and warfare. This Ainu youth guided those debt-absconding farmers who finally settled down on July 8, 1881. They were 150 miles away from Sapporo, safely out of reach of their Tsugaru creditors. The taxonomy of Ainu skills necessary for resisting the severity of winter that the youth shared with the debtor-farmers was crucial to the survival of that community.³³ After the summer attack of locusts destroyed their first harvest, they reverted to the staples of Ainu subsistence: "They went back to eating fish and wild vegetables all through the next winter."³⁴ Although the impoverished

farmers stoically dealt with this setback twice in their first two years of settlement, the Ainu youth wept the first time it happened. By 1897, the settlement had prospered to the extent that it was officially a village and subject to administrative attention: “The Ainu youth, by now in his mid-thirties, was particularly upset by these developments. He could not understand why such things as taxes and military service were at all necessary.”³⁵ As the Russo-Japanese War was approaching, the Ministry of Agriculture and Business was intent on meeting the military demand for self-sufficiency in the sort of thermal wool that would keep Japanese soldiers from freezing to death. The Territorial Government was subsidizing the purchase of sheep flocks to farmers, and the Ainu man became the local sheep expert. Five village sons were conscripted into frontline service in China and two were able to return to their families:

One of the dead was the eldest son of the Ainu youth-turned shepherd. He died wearing an army-issue wool overcoat.

“Why send boys off to war in a foreign land?” the Ainu shepherd went around asking people.³⁶

Although no sheep entered him, the Ainu shepherd spent his waking and sleeping hours in their company after his wife died and his daughters were married. The village paid him a pittance for sheep-minding services, until he was found frozen to death inside the sheep house. The sheep were noisily tucking into the hay, oblivious to his death.

The obvious point of connection between the Rat as the sixties radical and the Ainu man from the nineteenth century are their anti-war pacifist sentiments. When the Rat as the Sheep Man accounts for his exiled presence up in the isolated hills, he confesses “Ididn’twanttogoofftowar.”³⁷ The Sheep Man has no sense of history, trapped in the fears from seven decades ago, he can-

not even identify the enemy. The implication is that who the enemy is not important because war is the one constant of early modern Japanese history:

But I didn't want to go. Anyway that's why I'm a sheep.

As sheep who stays where he belongs here. ... Heard about the war?³⁸

In addition to sharing the incomprehension of the Ainu man with the modernizing project of international warfare, what marks the Sheep Man as being close-to-Ainu is his survival techniques and knowledge of the natural environment. The Sheep Man grins with self-satisfaction as he explains why no one would be able to see any camp smoke: ‘“We got a special way of building fires.”’³⁹ Logically speaking, the we who have a special way of building fires are probably not sheep. Perhaps the collective identity being implied here is the Ainu presence. The diet of the Sheep Man sounds like the Hokkaido version of what Australian Aborigines call bush tucker: ‘“Tubers shoots nuts birds whatever little fish and crabs I can catch.”’⁴⁰ These levels of mastery suggest indigenous expertise has been attained by the Rat as the Sheep Man, and reinforce the echo of their shared preference for peace across the period spanning from Japan's early modern self-invention to its current condition in late modernity.

Beyond the Rat as Ainu: towards closure

Aligning the Rat across history with “Full Moon on the Wane” and then merging the subjectivity of the Rat with the Sheep Man is relatively simple. What Murakami does is add an additional complexity. In the same way that the will of the sheep controls the Will of the Boss, the intentions of the Rat are directing the Sheep Man to scare away the unnecessarily complicating presence of the girlfriend with the intuitive ears: ‘The area was being swept clean and purified. Something was about to happen.’⁴¹

The Rat has killed himself to thwart the aspirations of the dominating sheep. This self-sacrifice is not his final duty. Although the Rat has already made one request to the narrator (the publication of the image of the sheep with the star), the Rat needs the co-operation of the protagonist to complete his mission. The narrator is asked restart the grandfather clock and to wire it to a bomb timed to explode when the Rat has a showdown with the Strange Man. High noon, boom, boom. Mission accomplished. The Strange Man in the black suit will not be able to transfer the sheep out of the Rat into himself. The Rat has saved himself and others from sheep domination.

Towards conciliation

The historical subtext to *A Wild Sheep Chase* is the violent excesses inflicted on Chinese citizens in an undeclared war. The use of force, as an implied threat or the actual use of force, are pressures that are present throughout the novel. The understated Chinese presence in *A Wild Sheep Chase* is a significant counterpoint to the historical movements of Japanese military forces across the continent. In the same way that the possibility of Sino-Japanese friendship is suggested in *After Dark* (2004, Jay Rubin translation published in 2007), a *zainichi* resident Chinese bar owner is a stable and trustworthy presence. J is a widower who still remembers the first time the narrator got drunk, thirteen years ago:

J's real name was some unpronounceable Chinese polysyllable. The nickname J was given to him by some GIs on the base where he worked after the war. His real name was soon forgotten.⁴²

After being paid off by the Strange Man for locating the sheep with the star, the narrator gives that cheque to J and asks that he and the Rat be made silent

partners. No interest, no dividends. The catch:

“All you got to do in return is take in the Rat and me whenever one of us gets in a fix.”

“That’s no different than what I’ve done all along.”⁴³

In this individual way, the historical responsibility for Japanese excesses on the continent is to some extent privately resolved. The sheep with the star colonized the Sheep Professor, the Boss and the Rat. The sheep rode the Sheep Professor back to Japan where the sheep then proceeded to locate someone more capable than a merely academic specialist to build an empire. In his incarnation inside the Boss, the sheep created the circumstances of Chinese suffering and exploitation under Japanese domination that funded the postwar control of Japanese conservative politics and advertising. Like one of the youthful student kamikaze pilots, the Rat sacrificed himself to kill off the sheep. Even after his death, he lures the Strange Man into a booby trap with the assistance of the narrator. The financial benefits of this partnership between the Rat and the narrator accrue to J, based on the earlier pledge given by the protagonist while he was in the mountain lodge, the ‘house that the Sheep Professor had built forty years before and the Rat’s father had then bought’,⁴⁴ waiting for the Sheep Man:

Now if we could get J to come up here, I’m sure things would work out fine. Everything should revolve around him, with forgiveness, compassion, and acceptance at the center.⁴⁵

These attempts at mutual understanding are the conventional niceties of everyday life as Japanese citizens deal with themselves but are conspicuously absent from their international diplomacy. This reluctance to psychologically and emotionally assume the position the other was particularly evident when certain ele-

ments of the Japanese government, bureaucracy and history profession closed ranks in response to late twentieth century international criticism of how Japanese colonialism is represented in Ministry of Education–vetted secondary history textbooks.⁴⁶ Murakami has rewritten a history of denial: the protagonist has advanced the moral values that would allow Japan to move beyond its colonial past.

The instability of borders: individual, national, temporal

Literature can not simply mirror history: in the politicized tales of Murakami there are framing processes of selection, sequencing and editing which affect the balance of how the details of events are felt as experience, recounted as memories, and interpreted as narrative momentum. The thematic pacing of *A Wild Sheep Chase* is modulated by the narrator–protagonist encountering a series of contrasts and similarities: an internationally notorious suicide in a nationally distinctive mode of self-immolation, an almost nameless death in an ‘accident’, and a suicide that silently saves the nation from the chaos of ovine domination; the Strange Man and the Sheep Man both glide between the first person singular and first person plural pronouns;⁴⁷ after the sheep with the star colonizes the Sheep Professor, the Boss and the Rat, the Rat then assumes the form of the Sheep Man.⁴⁸ In the worlds created by Murakami, discreet boundaries between characters break down as the novel advances into increasingly surreal territory where the supposedly absolute categories of time, life and death lose their tight integrity.⁴⁹

As closure approaches, the Rat explains that the movement is in the direction of collective identity: ‘“A realm of total conceptual anarchy. A scheme in which all opposites would be resolved into unity. With me and the sheep at the

center.”⁵⁰

The Strange Man reports that the Will of the Boss is a force governing time, space and possibility, and the narrator later reflects on the fluidity of his friend's presence in the vacation villa that the Rat's father had bought from the Sheep Professor: “The more I thought about it, the more difficult I found it to escape the feeling that the Sheep Man's actions reflected the Rat's will.”⁵¹

The surface contrast between the two men is obvious. The Rat is a drifter who disappears for no apparent reason and years later re-establishes contact with the narrator through two letters. With the Strange Man acting as his agent, the Boss oversees an extensive empire of political, financial and advertising connections that he directs as he determines the direction of Japanese society. Despite being the kind of person who does not say goodbye to his closest friends, the Rat knows that he has an intelligence that exceeds the conceptual range of the Boss: “The man was zero as a thinker, after all.”⁵² Although the Boss can be regarded as the antithesis of the Rat because of these external differences, the internal presence of the sheep meant both men were able to exert influence over others in unconventional ways.

The Strange Man explains the breakthrough achieved by the Boss in terms of individual cognition and the evolutionary continuity of language being negated:

“To put it in simple terms for you, his was a revolution of labor incorporating capital and capital incorporating labor. ... Existence ceases for the individuum as we know it, and all becomes chaos. You cease to be a unique entity unto yourself, but exist simply as chaos. And not just the chaos that is you; your chaos is also my chaos. To wit, existence is communication, and communication, existence.”⁵³

With the sheep inside them, the Boss and the Rat were both able to exist beyond individual boundaries. The sheepled Boss and the Strange Man shared many things ‘ “that reached beyond rationality and logic and morality” ⁵⁴ but the Boss and the Rat were touched by the insane beauty of ‘ “a dynamo manifesting the vital force at the root of all life in one solitary point of the universe.” ⁵⁵

The Rat was chosen by the sheep to succeed the Boss, the Rat was the new host to sustain the sheep as it implements the next stage of developing its power base. However, during the extended conversation with the Rat as the Sheep Man, the narrator realizes that the Sheep Man is not reflected in the mirror: ‘In the mirror world, I was alone.’⁵⁶ The absence of the Sheep Man from that the reflection of that once-dirty mirror, which had been deliberately and conspicuously left untouched in an otherwise well-kept house, reveals that the Rat is already dead.

The deceased Rat explains to the protagonist how his suicide killed the sheep. The Rat hung himself from a beam in the kitchen while the sheep was asleep and unable to escape. The Sheep Man buried the Rat next to the garage.⁵⁷

In contrast to the Boss simply going mad because he was driven out of his mind by the awe of the sheep’s power, the Rat realized the sheep was not merely a dominating presence. In the context of our discussion of how the Murakami world is constructed and thematically sustained by the incremental blending of character identities, it is important to note that this Rat insight applies what the girlfriend practices when she meets someone for the first time: ‘ “I size them up from the exact opposite perspective of all they’ve told me.” ⁵⁸ The Rat knew that the supreme power of the sheep meant it was also somehow

vulnerable. The Rat identified and exploited the weakness of the sheep as an imprisoned host, something the Boss was not intelligent enough to consider. Postmodern sensibilities attuned to distance will notice the irony that it was his attachment to his own weaknesses that gave the Rat the strength to kill himself and therefore save himself and others.⁵⁹

Thematically, the reaction of the narrator to the beauty of the ears of his girlfriend resonates with the Rat account of how the sheep seductively tantalized its host by never revealing the real totality of its power.⁶⁰ The narrator-protagonist is mutely transfixed by how the girlfriend transforms herself by simply tying her hair back and bringing her ears to life:

Beauty of a variety I'd never imagined existed. As expansive as the entire universe, yet as dense as a glacier. Unabashedly excessive, yet at the same time pared down to an essence. It transcended all concepts within the boundaries of my awareness. She was at one with her ears, gliding down the oblique face of time like a protean beam of light.⁶¹

Murakami blurs the lines separating characters and offers several alternatives to the notion of time as linear.⁶² In the character of the Rat these manoeuvres are intensified. The Rat embodies three specific epochs of Japan: the early modern past when the idea of a Japanese nation was being invented, the interwar past, and the postwar present. In the postwar present, the Rat assumes the form of the Sheep Man. By sharing anti-war values with the Ainu guide who made settlement of Junitaki possible, the Sheep Man links the early Meiji project of inventing modern Japan with the military activities that occurred following the 1937 subterfuge of the Boss.⁶³ By slaying the sheep, the Rat defiantly expresses an irrevocable judgement on the colonial aspirations of the country which sought to justify the notion of a divine war.⁶⁴ In contrast to

the wartime ideology that invoked the sacred martial spirit of Japan as being destined to protect the homeland as Urayasu no Kuni (Land of Peace), Yamato (Great Harmony) and Yasukuni (Peaceful Land), the Rat justifies his action in the more modest scale of private subjectivity: ‘ “My own self with my own memories and my own weaknesses.” ’⁶⁵ In a strong contrast to the death of Mishima that appealed to the wartime fantasy of bushidō as the immanent expression of Japanese-ness, the Rat performs an explicit rejection of the master narrative of national identity. In the same way that the donation of the cheque to J signals a deep recognition by the protagonist-narrator of the need for compassionate acceptance, the conduct of the Rat suggests that the individual conscience is where meaningful engagements and struggles are decided.

Now, that might sound conventionally neat and tidy enough but an appeal to the category of individual conscience is no way to end an analysis of post-modern literature. This is particularly the case when the distinction between real and artificial is reversed. Upon finally arriving at the location of the problematic photograph, the narrator is unsettled by the sense that the Hokkaido scenery was somehow staged: ‘The depth of the actual place seemed artificial.’⁶⁶ This tension between a concrete location being overshadowed by its representation in a two-dimensional print is later intensified when an imaginary self supplants an actual self.⁶⁷ Murakami then uses the image of a benign doppelgänger in a mirror, further eroding the myth of a unified self with an ironic reduction of the privileged status usually granted to free will.⁶⁸

In the mirror world, the narrator-protagonist was not alone.

Appendix: Discussion Questions

These questions are intended for students enrolled at the Center for Inter-

national Programs of Fukuoka University. All pages numbers are from this edition translated by Alfred Birnbaum: Murakami Haruki, *A Wild Sheep Chase* (New York: Vintage, 1989 [1982]).

Week 1:

PART ONE, Chapter 1: Discuss how death, the sixties, heterosexual relationships, dreams and foretelling are represented.

PART TWO, Chapter 2: p. 22 What is the point now?

Chapter 3: Marriage, a restless aquatic organism, a lukewarm protoplasm. How is the recently male mind being represented?

PART THREE, Chapter 4: Various sex lives and the whale's penis.

The relationship between my ears (real and blocked) and your feelings.

p. 42 How valuable is the application of the opposite perspective?

Week 2:

Chapter 5: p. 45 Describe beauty.

Chapter 6: p. 47 What didn't I understand?

Meaning and the whale's penis.

p. 49 Telepathy, telephone, sheep.

PART FOUR, Chapter 7: Happily drunk partner, booming economy.

Explain exploitation.

Chapter 8: p. 61 A troop of animals, deep primal memories.

Guess his specialization.

Week 3:

Chapter 9: The Boss is a Class A war criminal, the Boss is a vegetable.

What is the weak point of my company?

Chapter 10: Explain the limits of a metaphor's usefulness.

How useful is the application of the opposite perspective?

Thirty two, thirty three?

Chapter 11: Explain the cow dream.

Chapter 12: Decode life at the centre of the worm universe.

Week 4:

PART FIVE, Chapter 13: Where does the opposite perspective occur?

p. 88 What is all this bullshit about anyway?

What are the benefits that accrue to drifters?

Chapter 14: Who does the Rat ask me to say farewell to?

Chapter 15: p. 101 More boredom.

Social history of the postwar and the career mobility of J.

Chapter 16: I've got the picture?

Elephants, tortoises.

Two dimensions and realities, unrealities, and things that last.

Week 5:

PART SIX, Chapter 17: p. 127 Mediocre realists and mediocre dreamers: what is the value of the opposite perspective here?

p. 130 Explain how the sheep is a tragic animal, the image of modern Japan.

Chapter 18: Compare p. 125 honesty and truth with p. 140 Will and Gains.

After comparing Compare p. 69 with p. 144, can you argue that the Boss resembles an emperor?

Given the wartime atrocities the Boss was responsible for in China (remember the 2001 film *Riben Guizi* 「日本鬼子」), what does the dedication of the Strange Man to the Boss tell us about the Strange Man?

Chapter 19: Being Christian, working for the Boss and having direct access to the simultaneous presence of God: the Driver says he is a radical.

p. 149 Explain how the Boss is an honourable man.

Silver Dupont and Bic disposable: a fair trade or irony in theft?

Chapter 20: The veteran: what is the irony about time?

Week 6:

Chapter 21: p. 159 Why the bad feeling, what is the hook?

Chapter 22: p. 163 What have I got to lose?

Why thirteen stars?

p. 165 What kind of money?

p. 167 Ten years, no here and now, not really me. Explain time as flow.

Chapter 23: How do you turn an aging cat into bargaining leverage?

p. 173 Is this a plan for life during wartime: consolidate your battle line, pre-industrial revolution translation business?

Chapter 24: p. 176 Explain the prewar expressionist movie as landscape.

p. 179 What is the most lethal weapon in the arsenal of Kipper?

p. 180 How does this augur well: *Spirit of St. Louis* compared with *Enola Gay* as they head to the airport?

p. 182 Why the cow dream?

pp. 183 – 184 Does time flow?

Week 7:

PART SEVEN, Chapter 25: p.188 Explain the Ice Age ring to ‘we.’

p. 196 Why must the sheep hunt begin at the Dolphin Hotel?

Compare the ex-wife with Ear Woman.

Chapter 26: p. 201 Where is the message being delivered?

p. 202 What would be the value of the opposite perspective when something poses only a limited range of possibilities?

p. 207 *Moby Dick*, sheep chase, thrill of the hunt.

p. 208 Outline the history of the Dolphin Hotel.

Chapter 27: How does the early career of the Sheep Professor intersect with Japanese colonialism.

p. 216 Me, in other words. List the various genres/ accounts that construct this chapter.

p. 219 Explain the hell of the Sheep Professor.

p. 222 Explain the basic stupidity of modern Japan.

p. 223 What was the major purpose of the sheep?

p. 224 What did the sheep use of the Sheep Professor and the Boss for?

p. 227 What can one lone individual do against the sheep?

Chapter 28: p. 229 What is life like?

p. 230 Is there anything wrong with watching someone watching others having intercourse? Is there anything wrong with a person who makes another person watch someone else watching others having intercourse?

Week 8:

PART EIGHT, Chapter 29: Why is the Ainu Full Moon on the Wane like a hippy from the sixties?

Are there any examples of Ainu humour or resistance to the colonist presence of Japanese debt absconders?

What ironies are captured by *Authoritative History of Junitaki Township*?

Chapter 30: p. 247 What does a chronological comparison between Junitaki and Japan reveal?

p. 248 What are the sheep devouring?

p. 249 Why sand?

p. 251 Where is the agrarian boundary of Japanese-ness?

pp. 258, 260 Who are the two intruders in this chapter?

Chapter 31: p. 265 Explain the pre-dream dream.

Chapter 32: Compare sheep time and human experiences of time.

p. 372 More sand.

p. 277 Why Seven Stars?

p. 278 How useful is the line between the real and the artificial?

Week 9:

Chapter 33: p. 288 Where is the real me?

Chapter 34: List the evidence of the presence of the Rat.

Chapter 35: Please account for the peculiar shift of first personal pronouns in the speech of the Sheep Man.

pp. 300 – 301 What are the differences/similarities between the Rat and the Sheep Man?

p. 303 What values are associated with J?

Chapter 36: p. 308 What is the relationship between actions and will?

Why is the Sheep Man like Ainu in general and Full Moon on the Wane in particular? Cp. p. 242.

p. 314 What is the February 26th incident?

Week 10:

Chapter 37: p. 138 Why did the Rat leave the one mirror dirty?

p. 319 Explain free will and the real me. Cp. pp. 324 – 325.

Please list the shifts of first personal pronouns in the speech of the Sheep Man.

p. 323 Why was the dream so terrifying?

Chapter 38: p. 325 What has the ex-wife said that comments on loss of self?

p. 325 Explain the relationship between darkness and time.

Chapter 39: p. 328 Where does the Sheep Professor live?

p. 330 What does the Rat finally say?

Chapter 40: p. 332 What happened when the Rat grabbed the pendulum?

p. 322 When can suicide be murder?

p. 335 Explain beauty.

p. 335 What happened to the Boss?

p. 336 Why could the Rat reject the attraction of a scheme were all opposites were resolved into unity, with the Sheep and the Rat at the centre of conceptual anarchy?

Week 11:

Chapter 41: p. 340 What happens when I try to vomit?

p. 340 What is the function of this feverish dream sequence in the structure of the novel?

Chapter 42: p. 342

p. 343 Who says farewell to who?

p. 343 How is the house personified?

Chapter 43: p. 345 What do the Strange Man and the Boss share?

p. 346 What was the key element that the Strange Man relied on for the spontaneous accomplishment of his plan?

p. 348 Explain why the chauffeur has lost his access to God.

Chapter 44: p. 350 Whose distant voice will call out of the lacquer blackness?

p. 352 Who are J's new co-partners?

p. 353 What is not surprising about more sand?

Endnotes

¹ Murakami Haruki, *A Wild Sheep Chase* (New York: Vintage, 1989 [1982]), p. 247. All subsequent references are to this edition translated by Alfred Birnbaum, unless otherwise noted. The comment is made by the intuitive girlfriend of the narrator. Once she opens her ears she has remarkable powers of intuition. These sorts of leaps stand in di-

rect contrast to the ‘singularly methodical ... thinking’ of his former wife. Moments related to her foretelling occur on pages 49, 156, 192, 196, 201 and 210. The former lover of the Rat is also able to identify the protagonist without needing any idea of his appearance on pages 112 and 119.

² Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 5. Mathew Stretcher renders the second sentence of this extract with a more intense physicality that better catches the edgy sense of pre-seventies possibilities: ‘The air crackled with an invisible tension, as though with one determined push you could smash everything to pieces.’ Mathew Stretcher, *Dances with Sheep: The Quest for Indentity in the Fiction of Murakami Haruki* (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 2002), p. 172.

³ Stretcher, *Dances with Sheep*, pp. 214 – 215. Although Stretcher presents a convincing argument for a reading of *A Wild Sheep Chase* as the failure of Zenkyōtō movement of the late sixties and assembles a comprehensive survey of the historiography of Murakami, my intentions here are more modest. While initially following his analysis of how history is implicated in the fiction of Murakami, I am hoping to outline how the links between certain characters function as a vision of the deep unity of apparently contradictory Japanese identities. Having said that, the multiple readings of the overlap between the sheep, the Rat and the Sheepman, pp. 171 – 172, are important points advanced by Stretcher.

⁴ Mishima’s death is rendered as a distant, almost incomprehensible event of minimal consequence: ‘It was two in the afternoon, and Yukio Mishima’s picture kept flashing on the lounge TV. The volume control was broken so we could hardly make out what was being said. But it didn’t matter to us one way or the other. A student got up on a chair and tried fooling with the volume, but eventually he gave up and wandered off.’ Murakami Haruki (trans. Alfred Birnbaum), *A Wild Sheep Chase* (New York: Vintage, 1989), p. 9. All subsequent references from this edition.

⁵ Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 10.

⁶ Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 11.

⁷ Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 3.

⁸ Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 69.

⁹ Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 68. For an examination of the influence of the *kisha kurabu* system on the relationship between media, the government and Japanese citizens, see William Kelly, Tomoko Masumoto and Dirk Gibson, ‘*Kisha kurabu* and *koho*: Japanese media relations and public relations’, *Public Relations Review*, vol. 28, no. 3 (2002), pp. 265 – 281.

¹⁰ Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 144.

¹¹ Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 142.

¹² Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 141. This use of Will by the Strange Man requires

clarification: ‘More precisely, our organization can be divided into two elements. The part that moves ahead and the part that drives it ahead. ... The part at the forefront is the Will, and the part that backs up the forefront is the Gains. When people talk about the Boss, they make an issue only out of his Gains. ... Nobody wants the Will, because no one understands it.’ Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, pp. 140–141.

¹³ Abe, Mark Nornes, ‘Cherry trees and corpses: representations of violence from WWII’, in Abe Mark Nornes and Fukushima Yukio (eds), *The Japan/America Film Wars: World War II Propaganda and Its Cultural Contents* (Harwood Academic Publishers, Switzerland, 1992), pp. 147–161.

Fujimura Tsukuru (ed.), *Nihon Gaku no Taikei to Kokumin Kyōiku; Kokugo Kyōiku Shichū* [The System of Japan Studies and National Citizen Education; Currents of Thought in Japanese Language Education] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1936–1937).

Gauntlett, J. O. (trans.), *Kokutai no Hongi: Cardinal Principles of the National Entity of Japan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949).

¹⁴ Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, pp. 149–150, 348.

¹⁵ The Strange Man admits that ‘The scale of things is far too vast for me to do much of anything. My only wish is to see it all out at last with my own eyes. And if that sheep should wish anything, I shall do everything in my power to comply. Once the Boss dies, my life will have lost almost all meaning anyway.’ Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 144.

¹⁶ One characteristic of this divine nation perspective is the historical tendency of true believers to assume that their view best serves national and international interests. For example, Japanese political leaders argued that their Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere (大東亜共栄圏 *Dai Tōa Kyō Eiken*) project to free Asia from white colonialism was good for all of Asia. The Strange Man says ‘And if the Boss dies, the mystery of the sheep with the star on its back will be buried with him forever. I, for one, am not about to stand by and let that happen. Not for reasons of my own personal loss, but for the greater good of all.’ Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 143.

¹⁷ Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 138. In *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*, this same ability is part of the skill set of rising conservative politician, Noboru Wataya.

¹⁸ ‘The path he chose was more covert—a shadow path. Never out in the open, his was to be a presence that manipulated society from behind the scenes. And for that reason, in 1937 he headed over to the Chinese mainland.’ Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 139. Murakami is presumably referring here to the Marco Polo Bridge Incident of July 7 1937.

¹⁹ James W. Heisig, *Philosophers of Nothingness: An Essay on the Kyoto School* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1994), p. 206.

²⁰ Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 139.

²¹ I am indebted to Nakazato Shuichi for this idea of the beauty of group action in a discussion about the institutional necessity of strict policies governing the appearance of junior high school students.

²² ‘“Sometimes it’s like the sheep in me and the human in me are at odds so I get like that. ... And besides you come on saying things to threaten us.” ’ Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 299.

²³ Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 79.

²⁴ Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, pp. 208–209. On page 207 the hotel owner compares the narrator’s search with the thrill of the hunt in *Moby Dick*, before explaining that Melville’s scene of the dolphins inspired his naming of the hotel. When the narrator suggests that the Whale Hotel would have been a better name, the hotel owner replies: ‘“Whales don’t have quite the image,” he admitted with some regret.’

²⁵ Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 335.

²⁶ Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, pp. 221–223.

²⁷ Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 97.

²⁸ ‘“Back then, there was this girl who’d sleep with anyone.” That’s her name.’ Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 5.

²⁹ Murakami Haruki (trans. Jay Rubin), ‘Super-Frog Saves Tokyo’ [Kaeru-kun, Tōkyō wo sukuu, 1999], *after the quake* (London: Vintage, 2003), p. 93.

³⁰ Satō Tadao (Gregory Barrett trans.), *Currents in Japanese Cinema* (Tokyo and London: Kodansha, 1982 [1976]), p. 44.

³¹ Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, pp. 332, 331.

³² ‘Finally, there is the Sheepman, who holds everything together at the centre of the protagonist’s inner consciousness. The Sheepman ... began his existence as a peculiar image created from the protagonist’s desperate desire to connect with his inner self, represented by Rat, in the final chapters ... We might look upon him as simultaneously a representation of the self—the part of the protagonist that is associated with Rat and counterculture—and also of the Other, in the symbolic sense, the sheep signifying the repression of the state, or dominant cultural paradigm. Indeed, taken to its logical conclusion, the absurd character of the “Sheepman”—from his grotesque appearance to his confused and diffuse personality—shows the peculiar reality of combining mainstream and counterculture in a single body: that of contemporary Japanese society.’ Stretcher, *Dances with Sheep*, pp. 145–146.

³³ Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 237.

³⁴ Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 238.

³⁵ Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 240.

³⁶ Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 242.

³⁷ Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 312.

³⁸ Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 312.

³⁹ Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 311.

⁴⁰ Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 311.

⁴¹ Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 308.

⁴² Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 102.

⁴³ Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 352.

⁴⁴ Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 278.

⁴⁵ This reading of the Rat as successful and the persistent presence of the wartime ethos of ‘individual sacrifice for the national good’ contrasts with the Stretcher account which argues that the Rat represents the shortcomings of the late sixties attempt to restructure Japanese political life away from the influence of imperial forms of authority. This is the paradox: the Rat self-destructs to oppose those extreme forms of Japanese-ness that warranted claims that the Special Attack Unit kamikaze were necessary. Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 303.

⁴⁶ The full name is Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, commonly abbreviated to MEXT. Christopher Barnard, *Language, Ideology and Japanese History Textbooks* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

Julia Yonetani, ‘The “history wars” in comparative perspective: Australia and Japan’, *Cultural Studies Review*, vol. 10, no. 2 (2004), pp. 33–50.

⁴⁷ During the Strange Man’s strange tale, he makes an offer to the narrator-protagonist that cannot be refused: ‘I will send you out in search of the sheep. These are our final terms. If within two months from now you succeed in finding the sheep, we are prepared to reward you however you would care to request. But if you should fail to find it, it will be the end of you and your company.’ Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, pp. 145–146.

⁴⁸ In the manner of a trickster, the Rat confesses to being a shape-shifter who colonizes the Sheep Man: ‘I took his form.’ Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 337.

⁴⁹ This tendency is more strongly evident in *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*.

⁵⁰ Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 335.

⁵¹ Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 308.

⁵² Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 335. With his release of the problematic photograph and his intention to be saved by the narrator-protagonist, the Rat also rivals the calculated planning of the Strange Man. In the same way that the presence of the girlfriend with the hypersensitive ears was an extra element that the Rat had not anticipated, being blown up by the deceased host of the sheep was not part of the minutely constructed program of the Strange Man. For the details of the Strange Man’s smug satisfaction, see Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 346. Although space limitations prevent me from exploring the relationship between free will and weakness, it is an important

theme that is developed throughout the novel.

⁵³ Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, pp. 141 – 142.

⁵⁴ Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 345.

⁵⁵ Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 335.

⁵⁶ Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 322. For a mirror-cleaning account that undercuts the integrity of the concept of free will, see Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, pp. 318 – 319.

⁵⁷ Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, pp. 331 – 332.

⁵⁸ Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 42. The narrator also employs this alternative perspective approach on p. 72. In arguing for the unity of Japanese identity by linking the Ainu Man, the Boss, the Sheep Man and the Rat, I have attempted an ‘exact opposite perspective’ reading of the novel.

⁵⁹ Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, pp. 333 – 334.

⁶⁰ Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 334.

⁶¹ Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 45.

⁶² Time experienced as flow, Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, pp. 167, 288. Historiography and time, Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 243. Cyclic sheep time, Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 268. Time experienced as vertigo, Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 281. Chunks of time, Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 285. Time as a door to be closed, Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 339.

⁶³ At exactly the same moment in its history, Hokkaido served as an entrance for the arrival of western technologies for Japan and an exit for the Ainu’s traditional ways of life. ... The Ainu were the “other” that had to be destroyed in order to justify the emergence of a new and modern Japanese self.’

Sidney C. H. Cheung, ‘Photographing the Ainu and the Emperor: Modernity in Meiji Japan’, *CUHK Journal of Humanities*, no. 1 (1997), pp. 254 – 255, 266.

The Ainu man formerly known as Full Moon on Wane wants to resist the nationalist imperatives of military service, as does the Sheep Man several decades later. The Sheep Man also displays high levels of indigenous survival skills.

⁶⁴ For an account of how the Sheep Professor was implicated in agricultural administration with a colonial agenda, see Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, pp. 212 – 215. For a connection between the Japan Self Defense Forces and sheep caretaking, see Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 259.

⁶⁵ These synonyms for Japan and their renditions into English come from the second of seven appendixes. John Owen Gauntlett (trans.), *Kokutai no Hongi: Cardinal Principles of the National Entity of Japan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949), p. 189. I would like to offer belated thanks to Professor Matsuzaka Shunzō of the History Department of Fukuoka University for bringing *Kokutai no Hongi* to my attention.

Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 333.

⁶⁶ Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 278.

⁶⁷ 'I started to imagine another me somewhere, sitting in a bar, nursing a whiskey, without a care in the world. The more I thought about it, the more that other me became the real me, making this me here not real at all.' Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 288.

⁶⁸ 'It wasn't myself I was seeing; on the contrary, it was as if I were the reflection of the mirror and this flat-me-of-an-image were seeing the real me. ... I filed the word "free will" away in my head and pinched my ear with my left hand. The me in the mirror did exactly the same. Apparently he had filed the word "free will" away in his head the same as I had.' Murakami, *A Wild Sheep Chase*, p. 319.