

Indian Journal of Modern Research and Reviews

This Journal is a member of the 'Committee on Publication Ethics'

Online ISSN:2584-184X



Research Article

Architectures Of Uncertainty: Possible Worlds, Walled Selves, And Narrative Reality in Haruki Murakami's 1Q84 And the City and Its Uncertain Walls

¹^{ID} Dr. S. Henry Kishore^{1*}, P.M. Manjusha², Dr. J. Jacintha Maria Florence³^{ID}

^{1,2} Associate Professor, Department of English, Sri Krishna Arts and Science College, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India

³ Assistant Professor, Department of Economic, Nirmala College for Women, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India

Corresponding Author: * Dr. S. Henry Kishore^{ID}

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23010630>

Abstract

Criticism Critics have viewed Haruki Murakami's "other world" as an inherent component of his imagination instead of a construct with a history behind it. By comparing 1Q84 (2009–2010) to The City and Its Uncertain Walls (2023), this study demonstrates a change in the narrative ontology of the author. It utilizes Brian McHale's "ontological dominant," Marie-Laure Ryan's possible-worlds narratology, and the theory of memory and narrative identity by Paul Ricoeur to prove that both novels represent stages of the development of the poetics of ontological uncertainty. In 1Q84, uncertainty acquires a specific external manifestation: reality gets divided into different worlds, marked with a second moon, and a narrative embedded in the main story, Air Chrysalis, contaminates the latter's world. The city internalizes the same uncertainty: the alternative world is walled, entered by surrendering one's shadow, and sustained by memory and the reading of dreams, so that division migrates from the cosmos into the self. Storytelling operates in each novel as an ontological activity, but the later work relocates it from writing to reading. Murakami's late fiction, the study contends, transforms the alternative world from a space the subject enters into a structure produced through memory, narrative, and divided subjectivity, replacing the question "Which world is real?" with the question of how reality is made.

Manuscript Information

- ISSN No: 2584-184X
- Received: 15-07-2026
- Accepted: 21-08-2026
- Published: 28-09-2026
- MRR:4(9); 2026: 265-271
- ©2026, All Rights Reserved
- Plagiarism Checked: Yes
- Peer Review Process: Yes

How to Cite this Article

Kishore S H, P.M. Manjusha, Florence J J M. Architectures Of Uncertainty: Possible Worlds, Walled Selves, And Narrative Reality in Haruki Murakami's 1Q84 And the City and Its Uncertain Walls. Indian J Mod Res Rev. 2026;4(9):265-271.

Access this Article Online



www.mrrjournal.in

KEYWORDS: Haruki Murakami; 1Q84; The City and Its Uncertain Walls; ontological uncertainty; possible worlds; memory; narrative identity; narrative world-making

1. INTRODUCTION

Two images preside over Haruki Murakami's late fiction. The first is a second moon: in *1Q84*, Aomame climbs down an emergency stairway from a Tokyo expressway and finds that the sky holds two moons, so that the year she is living in is no longer quite the year she left. The second is a wall: in *The City and Its Uncertain Walls*, an unnamed narrator enters a town enclosed by a wall that admits no one who has not surrendered his shadow, and works in a library whose shelves hold old dreams rather than books. Both images announce that reality has become uncertain, but they locate that uncertainty differently. In *1Q84* the sky testifies to the difference between worlds; in *The City* nothing can so testify, because the question is no longer which world one inhabits but which part of oneself is doing the inhabiting.

Criticism has long described Murakami's recurrent "other side" in terms of magical realism, the Japanese fantastic, and the therapeutic function of storytelling; what has received less attention is that the structure itself has a history. *1Q84* is a novel of proliferation, in which worlds multiply and a fiction written inside the novel leaks into the world containing it; *The City and Its Uncertain Walls*, translated by Philip Gabriel in 2024, is a novel of enclosure. Murakami has described the later book as a return to a novella of 1980 he never allowed to be reprinted because "I lacked the requisite writing skills at the time" (Limbong). The rewriting of the walled town is therefore not the settling of an old account but a reformulation, on the scale of a single consciousness, of a problem *1Q84* had posed on a cosmic one.

In Murakami's fiction reality is not discovered but produced, through perception, memory, and narration, yet the novels distribute that production differently: in *1Q84* a rewritten manuscript brings the world of the two moons into circulation and its events begin to occur in the world that reads it, while in *The City* a town talked into being by two adolescents persists only while a Dream Reader reads its dreams. The question is thus not whether both novels contain alternative realities but how the mechanism of uncertainty changes between them. Proceeding by comparative close reading informed by narratology, possible-worlds analysis, and memory studies, this article argues that storytelling functions in both novels not as representation but as an ontological activity capable of producing, altering, and sustaining a world; what changes is the site of that activity and the kind of subject it requires.

2. Ontology, Possible Worlds, and Narrative Identity

Brian McHale's *Postmodernist Fiction* supplies the first coordinate. Where modernist fiction is organized by an epistemological dominant, postmodernist fiction is organized by an ontological dominant that foregrounds "What is a world? What kinds of world are there . . . and how do they differ?" and what happens "when boundaries between worlds are violated" (9–10). The post-cognitive questions McHale borrows from Dick Higgins— "Which world is this? . . . Which of my selves is to do it?"—divide the novels between them: Aomame doubts

not her senses but the world they report, while the narrator of *The City* doubts which of his selves stands in the town.

Marie-Laure Ryan's possible-worlds narratology gives these questions precision. Reading, for Ryan, is an act of recentering in which the reader relocates into the world the text projects and reconstructs it by a principle of minimal departure, making "only . . . changes that are mandated by the text" ("Possible Worlds"; *Possible Worlds* 51). Difference is thus perceived only inside similarity, which explains why the second moon disturbs: *1Q84* is a near-duplicate of 1984, reconstructed as identical until a single salient fact refuses to fit. In the later novel a girl's fantasy universe, elaborated in conversation, becomes the textual actual world of a third of the book while the actual world is redescribed as a realm of shadows: the modal system has not merely been violated, in McHale's phrase, but inverted.

Memory supplies the third coordinate. Ricoeur's claim that "time becomes human to the extent that it is articulated through a narrative mode" (Time 1: 52) underlies his account of narrative identity, "the fragile offshoot issuing from the union of history and fiction" (3: 246). *Oneself as Another* differentiates two forms of identity, identity as sameness (*idem*) and identity as selfhood (*ipse*), the permanence of a self who keeps promises. The author sees narrative as an intermediary between identity and selfhood: "It is the identity of the story which gives the identity of the character" (147–48). Memory, which is based on the paradox of an absence-presence in *Memory* 7, is used by the self to fulfill its past; people in Murakami's stories have continuity not because the world remains the same but because they have upheld some promises. Jung's concept of shadow acts here as a preliminary interpretative tool, as Murakami refers to Jungian theory via Kawai Hayao (Murakami and Kawai).

The critical field has mapped much of the terrain: Strecher read the other world as a magical-realist device serving a search for identity ("Magical Realism"; *Dances with Sheep*) and later as a "metaphysical realm" composed of language (*Forbidden Worlds*); Rubin traced it to the well of memory, Napier to a Japanese tradition of the fantastic, Seats to the simulacrum, Suter to the traffic between Japanese and American literary cultures, Nihei and Dil to storytelling itself. Yeung shows how narrative embedding exposes *1Q84*'s "lack of self-sufficiency" (426–36) and Welch reads that novel against Orwell (Hansen and Tsang); on *The City*, Xuan reads the walled town as a space of nostalgic stasis and prescriptive forgetting, while reviewers agree that the novel returns to old ground, a book "haunted by its earlier iterations" (Diaz).

What none has done is read the two late novels against each other as stages in a single development. The article therefore proposes a working concept, Murakamian ontological uncertainty: a condition in which neither characters nor readers possess an authoritative means of distinguishing objective reality from worlds generated through memory, fiction, dreams, or desire. It differs from Todorov's hesitation of the fantastic, an epistemological suspension the text eventually resolves (25), since here the suspension is ontological and never resolved; and

from the ludic plurality McHale finds in the postmodernist canon, since this uncertainty is not celebrated but lived, inside a scrupulously ordinary texture of cooking, laundry, and jazz records.

3. 1Q84: Reality after the World Splits

3.1 The Threshold

The driver who directs Aomame to the emergency stairway warns her that “the everyday look of things might seem to change a little. . . . But don’t let appearances fool you. There’s always only one reality” (1Q84 bk. 1, ch. 1). The sentence is doubly ironic, spoken by the figure who opens the passage between worlds and asserting the monism the novel will dismantle; the driver’s distinction between appearance and being collapses once the world itself has become plural. Nothing marks the passage as a passage. Aomame keeps her appointment, kills a man with a needle, and only gradually registers that the police carry automatic pistols instead of revolvers, changed after a 1981-gun battle of which she has no memory in a year she lived through (bk. 1, ch. 9). The woman’s reaction is to rename the universe: “1Q84—that’s what I’ll call this new world. . . . The Q stands for ‘question mark. This act of renaming is a truly ontological one: while recognizing that the universe has undergone a change people still believe that there is a subject capable of naming the new universe.

Minimal difference is what causes this threshold to be more disturbing than any standard portals. Reader and character make 1Q84 identical to 1984 in everything that has not been changed but changes are few and insignificant: uniform, a sidearm, a news item, a moon. A world differing in all respects would be just another world, whereas a world differing in almost all respects is just a world that has gone wrong and cannot be left. When Aomame and Tengo climb the stairway in reverse they emerge beneath the same billboard, but the tiger faces the other way and the sky holds one moon (bk. 3, chs. 29–31): not 1984, but a third world differing by an inversion. Multiplication does not reverse.

3.2 The Two Moons

The second moon is an ontological marker, the signature of a different world rather than an anomaly within one, explicable neither as a lapse of memory nor as a change of policy. It is also a sign of restricted visibility, since only those who have entered 1Q84 can see it, so that the moons test shared world-membership; and it is an epistemological problem, since the sign that proves the world has changed cannot be shared with anyone still living in the old one—an objective fact that behaves like a hallucination. Tengo meets the moons first as a passage in the manuscript he is rewriting, so that the reader learns of the small green moon as a description Tengo improves before learning of it as a fact he will later see (bk. 1; bk. 2). The stairway made the world plural by passage; the moons make it plural by description.

3.3 Air Chrysalis

That description belongs to *Air Chrysalis*, dictated by the dyslexic Fuka-Eri and rewritten by Tengo at the instigation of an editor bent on winning a literary prize with a fraud (bk. 1, chs. 2–4). It tells of a girl in a commune, shut up with the corpse of a goat, who is visited by the Little People and taught to spin a chrysalis of air from which a double of herself emerges beneath two moons—a coded account of Sakigake, the community Fuka-Eri fled. In Genette’s terms the novella is a metadiegetic narrative (227–34), and the novel stages a sustained metalepsis, an intrusion “by diegetic characters into a metadiegetic universe . . . or the inverse” (234–35). The inverse is the case: the maza and dohta of the embedded tale become those of the frame, and the Little People leave the manuscript to weave a chrysalis of their own in a Tokyo apartment. The embedded text, in short, does not comment on the primary world but outranks it. What happens in *Air Chrysalis* happens next in 1Q84, until the chrysalis appears on the bed of Tengo’s dying father, containing a ten-year-old Aomame (bk. 2, ch. 24): the frame has become the sequel to the story it contains. The process is nonetheless arrested at the level of the world, for the split is written and the writing is visible in the sky. Uncertainty is total but external; one can point at it. What one cannot decide is which world the writing belongs to, and it is this undecidability the novel bequeaths to *The City*.

4. The City and Its Uncertain Walls: Reality behind the Wall

4.1 The Wall

The city announces its difference in opening pages addressed to a “you,” for the walled town is not entered by accident but told. One summer a sixteen-year-old girl described to the narrator the town where her real self-lived, and the two of them built its wall, gate, library, and beasts out of talk; her claim inverts the ordinary modal order: “The me here with you now isn’t the real me. It’s only a stand-in. Like a wandering shadow” (*City* pt. 1). Where Aomame descended a stairway into her second world, the narrator receives his as a gift of narration: the town exists because she said so and he listened.

The wall produces uncertainty by a means opposite to the moons, for 1Q84 multiplied where *The City* encloses. The Gatekeeper states: “Once a person passes through and goes inside, they can’t ever go outside again. The wall doesn’t allow it” (pt. 1). Inside the wall, of course, the sources of doubt vanish bit by bit: the clock tower has no hands, the library girl remains sixteen forever, and no one remembers the life before. However, the wall remains “uncertain,” and the adjective is appropriate because the word indicates that the wall is imaginary; two teenagers have built the wall through communication with each other and made it exist through the process of reading.

Sakigake, in the earlier novel, is also a walled system, but one characters infiltrate, flee, and assassinate; its wall is that of Murakami’s Jerusalem Prize address, where the individual is an egg “confronting a high, solid wall” whose name “is The

System” (“Always”). The walled town changes the valence: no one is coerced into it, and its cost is not violence but subtraction—of shadow, of memory, of time. Xuan reads this stasis as an ambivalent utopia of nostalgic forgetting; ontologically, it demonstrates that certainty is available only as enclosure, and that enclosure is exclusion practised upon the self.

4.2 The Shadow

If the wall converts multiplication into enclosure, the shadow converts the doubling of the world into the doubling of the self. The doubles of *IQ84* are external and generative, the maza producing a dohta; the shadow of *The City* is subtractive, separated from the body at the gate and unable long to survive, since “Shadows separated from the body are like plants without roots” (*City* pt. 1). The Gatekeeper’s operation literalizes the novel’s central question—which of the two, the man inside the wall or the shadow outside it, is the self? —and the refusal to answer is its argument. At the end of Part One the shadow escapes and the narrator stay (pt. 1, ch. 26); Part Two opens with him awake in Tokyo, unable to say who returned: “Sometimes I think I’m merely a shadow” (pt. 2). Koyasu, himself a ghost without a shadow, offers the nearest approach to a doctrine: “The real self and his shadow are essentially two sides of the same coin . . . the person here right now is indeed you” (pt. 2).

The Jungian resonance is deliberate, and *IQ84* had made it explicit in the Leader’s quotation of Jung on light and shadow (bk. 2, chs. 9–13). But where Jung’s shadow is “a moral problem that challenges the whole ego-personality” (*Aion* par. 14), the shadow of *The City* bears everything the town excludes: memory, ageing, the desire to leave, the capacity to grieve. The town has performed the opposite of integration, amputated the shadow and called the remainder the real self, though the part attached to time and loss is the part still attached to reality. The movement from *IQ84* to *The City* is one from cosmological to psychological uncertainty.

4.3 Memory and the Lost Girl

The girl exists in several registers at once: a person, a sixteen-year-old who writes letters that one day stop; a memory, preserved through the decades in which the narrator “could never build a genuine relationship built on trust” (pt. 2); an absence around which his adult life is organized; and a narrative construct, co-author of the town and of his role within it: “All you need to do is read all the old dreams collected on the shelves” (pt. 1). The moment he arrives to visit her she has those qualities except for the first one; the librarian is a sixteen-year-old and doesn’t happen to know him.

Ricoeur’s differentiation explains the goal the narrator has been pursuing: the librarian possesses identity since she has the same face and age and gestures but lacks selfhood, which can be understood as fidelity to a promise and a certain state of mind (Oneself 113–39). The narrator has fulfilled his promise and has been the Dream Reader, hiding part of his heart for many years. His identity has ipse nature, and. He discovers that the

beloved with identity of hers is not the one he can love and that the sense of continuity he has been searching for is only the one he owns. In *IQ84* memory had been a resource for recognizing others across worlds; in the later novel memory is the world. The wall encloses a space where reality has been reduced to what can be remembered, and what can be remembered reduced to nothing. That is what makes it peaceful, and that is why he leaves.

5. Books, Libraries, and Narrative World-Making

Both novels are set, to an unusual degree, among books. *IQ84* is a novel about the production of a novel: a manuscript dictated by a girl who cannot read, rewritten by a mathematics teacher, sold by an editor, read by the assassin who will soon be hiding from its consequences. The city is a novel about libraries. The difference is a shift from an ontology of writing to one of reading.

In *IQ84* writing makes worlds, and the effect of Tengo’s rewriting is not literary but ontological. The fraudulent bestseller is the truest document in the novel, the only public account of Sakigake, the Little People, and the two moons, and its circulation alters the balance of forces: the Leader tells Aomame that publication has damaged the Little People and that Tengo and Fuka-Eri have unknowingly formed a team against them (bk. 2, chs. 9–13). Authorship is distributed and mediumistic, a chain the Leader’s vocabulary of “Receiver” and “Perceiver” makes explicit, and Strecher’s account of the other world as a realm made of language finds its most literal instance here (*Forbidden Worlds*). Reading, by contrast, is subordinate: the making of worlds is done at the desk.

The city reverses the priority, for the narrator does not write but reads. The library in the walled town holds no books, only old dreams, which the Dream Reader warms in his hands and reads without comprehension. The dreams are, he comes to suspect, “echoes of the minds left behind by real people, people who’ve been banished from the town in order for it to exist” (pt. 1): the archive is made of what the town has excluded, and reading is the town’s condition of existence. According to Ryan’s explanation, it is only the act of a reader that can actualize possible worlds, and the Dream Reader is the embodiment of this reader. Reading means not consumption but caring and the ethical structure of this act lies in the term of paying attention without possessing something and letting go without comprehension of the object.

The library of Fukushima fulfills the fragments of theme. The architect Koyasu, has created the library after the death of his Spouse and child, and has continued to oversee it till date after his demise. He has opened the portal of sorrow to people while the protagonist of the boy learned all the words he read which told about sorrow but did not help him overcome the difficulties (Memory 56–92). In the book *IQ84* the question was: ‘what influence the written story may have on the life of the people?’ and in *The City* we come to understand what the people can do for the written story.

6. Memory, Love, and the Ethics of Connection

Both fiction pieces state that the only link that exists when objective reality is not reliable is a relationship; the two stories differ in terms of what they ask the relationship to convey. *1Q84* calls the world “an endless battle of contrasting memories” (bk. 1, ch. 23), and its answer is a single shared memory: the childhood connection between Aomame and Tengo, a hand held in an empty classroom when both were ten, survives not only time but the displacement of an entire world. Aomame’s creed is the ethical core: “If you can love someone with your whole heart, even one person, then there’s salvation in life” (bk. 1, ch. 15). Within the novel’s ontology this is not sentimental, for it proposes that the modal centre of a person’s universe, in Ryan’s terms, may be another person rather than a set of facts. What makes the third world habitable is not that it is real but that the two of them are in it together.

The city inherits the ethic and complicates it, for the narrator’s remembered attachment has sustained him and also walled him in: the fidelity that keeps the girl alive in his memory has kept every other person out of it. Part Two surrounds him with figures who model other relations to loss—Koyasu, who has turned grief into a library; the woman in the coffee shop, whose companionship asks him to remain in time; the boy, who connects most completely of all by taking the narrator’s place. When the narrator blows out the candle in the small lit room and returns to the world where his shadow waits, he chooses loss, ageing, and other people over presence without memory (pt. 3), answering a question Murakami set himself: “How is it possible for both extreme isolation and warm feelings of empathy to co-exist?” (Limbong).

The answer is that memory, to sustain a self, must remain porous. *1Q84* showed relational memory surviving the loss of a world; *The City* shows that a memory protected from every loss becomes a wall. The Dream Reader’s work figures the alternative: to read the dreams of others without possessing them, to let the girl remain sixteen without requiring oneself to remain seventeen. The connection with absence referred to by Ricoeur as happy memory illustrates this discipline of thought and the ethics of connection in Murakami’s later works indicating a double burden of being loyal to the absent and hospitable to the present.

7. From Two Moons to Uncertain Walls: A Comparative Synthesis

The novels provide a trajectory rather than repetition, with each axis marking a movement of something moving inward. In *1Q84* there is multiplication of worlds, while in *The City* the world is closed. The marker of the difference is another moon which can be seen by the ones who cross over and an impassable wall which can’t be seen by the ones who are outside. Doubling happens through creation and then through subtraction; first, there is writing as a means of creation, then reading. At last, there is an escape up the staircase into the other world without even negotiation with the location and insistent decision to finally leave.

The novels provide a trajectory rather than repetition, with each axis marking a movement of something moving inward. In *1Q84* there is multiplication of worlds, while in *The City* the world is closed. The marker of the difference is another moon which can be seen by the ones who cross over and an impassable wall which can’t be seen by the ones who are outside. Doubling happens through creation and then through subtraction; first, there is writing as a means of creation, then reading. At last, there is an escape up the staircase into the other world without even negotiation with the location and insistent decision to finally leave. The development may finally be stated as three formulations of one proposition: that reality may have alternatives, a formulation *1Q84* inherits from *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*; that reality depends upon perception and text, since the alternatives are written and seen before they are lived; and, in the mature formulation *The City* reaches, that reality is continually narrated, remembered, and relationally sustained, the alternative world being not a place but a structure of the divided subject. Murakami has said the walled town “might be viewed as a metaphor for the worldwide lockdown” during which it was written (Limbong), and the afterword describes a story carried for more than forty years (*City*, afterword). The rewriting of one’s own early text is the authorial counterpart of Tengo’s rewriting of *Air Chrysalis*. Preston’s complaint that Murakami’s books “have not evolved—they have just got longer” therefore mistakes the direction of the change, while what Cao identifies as the novel’s “more open and warm response” to the questions of its 1985 predecessor is precisely the effect of that inward turn.

8. CONCLUSION

The Murakami’s late work revolves around the symbolism of the two moons, the wall, and the shadow. This study argues that the three symbols must be read in a specific order rather than simultaneously. The two moons symbolize the difference that exists in the world, allowing *1Q84* to explore the ideas concerning a split world without forcing its characters to do the same. The wall transforms this difference into confinement, which illustrates that a world free from alternatives can only be accessed by sacrificing something. Lastly, the shadow demonstrates the conclusion of the process of excluding something by leaving behind what was excluded in the individual. There is no loss of difference; it has been incorporated by Murakami.

Two conclusions can now be drawn regarding the relevance of this ontology to ethics. First, it follows that the alternative to uncertainty is not the certainty of the real but closure, and closure comes at the cost of memory, difference and portions of the self. The enclosed town is not an unreal town but a real town made real through subtraction and the Gatekeeper is correct in asserting that one cannot get out of it, since the self who has lost its shadow has nothing left to travel away from. Second, real existence in such a fiction requires permeable borders. These borders are those between the self and the other, as the self is made of many; shows the boundary between the

fiction and reality since the story can be more real than it happened in the world; and shows the limits of the memory and imagination since a town built on the talk can exist even after many decades. The taxi driver is right when he speaks about "the one and only reality," thus implying the existence of a plethora of realities and the fact that all of them together are only one real thing. Murakami's later fiction asks its readers, in the end, to become like the narrator of *The City*, readers of dreams: attentive to what they hold, and willing, when the time comes, to let it go.

REFERENCES

1. Cao S. Review of *The City and Its Uncertain Walls*, by Haruki Murakami, translated by Philip Gabriel. *World Literature Today*. 2025 Mar. Available from: worldliteraturetoday.org/2025/march/city-and-its-uncertain-walls-haruki-murakami.
2. Diaz J. Haruki Murakami's new novel doesn't feel all that new. *The New York Times*. 2024 Nov 18. Available from: www.nytimes.com/2024/11/18/books/review/haruki-murakami-city-and-its-uncertain-walls.html.
3. Dil J. *Haruki Murakami and the search for self-therapy: stories from the second basement*. Bloomsbury Academic; 2022.
4. Genette G. *Narrative discourse: an essay in method*. Translated by Lewin JE. Cornell University Press; 1980.
5. Hansen GM, Tsang M, editors. *Murakami Haruki and our years of pilgrimage*. Routledge; 2021.
6. Jung CG. *Aion: researches into the phenomenology of the self*. Translated by Hull RFC. 2nd ed. Princeton University Press; 1968. Vol. 9, pt. 2 of the collected works of C. G. Jung.
7. Limbong A. It was 'great relief' for Haruki Murakami to finish his latest novel. NPR. 2024 Nov 11. Available from: www.npr.org/2024/11/11/nx-sl-5184497/haruki-murakami-interview-new-novel-the-city-and-its-uncertain-walls.
8. McHale B. *Postmodernist fiction*. Methuen; 1987.
9. Murakami H. Always on the side of the egg. *Haaretz*. 2009 Feb 17. Available from: www.haaretz.com/israel-news/culture/2009-02-17/ty-article/always-on-the-side-of-the-egg/0000017f-db26-d3ff-a7ff-fba694020000.
10. Murakami H. *The city and its uncertain walls*. Translated by Gabriel P. Alfred A. Knopf; 2024.
11. Murakami H. *Hard-boiled wonderland and the end of the world*. Translated by Birnbaum A. Kodansha International; 1991.
12. Murakami H. *1Q84*. Translated by Rubin J, Gabriel P. Alfred A. Knopf; 2011.
13. Murakami H, Kawai H. *Haruki Murakami goes to meet Hayao Kawai*. Translated by Stephens C. Daimon Verlag; 2016.
14. Napier SJ. *The fantastic in modern Japanese literature: the subversion of modernity*. Routledge; 1996.
15. Nihei C. *Haruki Murakami: storytelling and productive distance*. Routledge; 2019.
16. Preston A. *The city and its uncertain walls* by Haruki Murakami review – a lack of magic and meaning. *The Guardian*. 2024 Nov 10. Available from: www.theguardian.com/books/2024/nov/10/the-city-and-its-uncertain-walls-by-haruki-murakami-review-a-lack-of-magic-and-meaning.
17. Ricoeur P. *Memory, history, forgetting*. Translated by Blamey K, Pellauer D. University of Chicago Press; 2004.
18. Ricoeur P. *Oneself as another*. Translated by Blamey K. University of Chicago Press; 1992.
19. Ricoeur P. *Time and narrative*. Translated by McLaughlin K, Pellauer D. Vol. 1. University of Chicago Press; 1984.
20. Ricoeur P. *Time and narrative*. Translated by Blamey K, Pellauer D. Vol. 3. University of Chicago Press; 1988.
21. Rubin J. *Haruki Murakami and the music of words*. Harvill Press; 2002.
22. Ryan ML. *Possible worlds*. In: Huhn P, et al., editors. *The Living Handbook of Narratology*. Hamburg University; 2012. Revised 2013. Available from: www-archiv.fdm.uni-hamburg.de/lhn/node/54.html.
23. Ryan ML. *Possible worlds, artificial intelligence, and narrative theory*. Indiana University Press; 1991.
24. Seats M. *Murakami Haruki: the simulacrum in contemporary Japanese culture*. Lexington Books; 2006.
25. Strecher MC. *Dances with sheep: the quest for identity in the fiction of Murakami Haruki*. Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan; 2002.
26. Strecher MC. *The forbidden worlds of Haruki Murakami*. University of Minnesota Press; 2014.
27. Strecher MC. *Magical realism and the search for identity in the fiction of Murakami Haruki*. *Journal of Japanese Studies*. 1999;25(2):263-298.
28. Suter R. *The Japanization of modernity: Murakami Haruki between Japan and the United States*. Harvard University Asia Center; 2008.
29. Todorov T. *The fantastic: a structural approach to a literary genre*. Translated by Howard R. Cornell University Press; 1975.
30. Xuan Z. *The ambivalent utopia: layers of nostalgia and memory in Murakami Haruki's The City and Its Uncertain Walls*. *Japan Forum*. 2026 Jan 16:1-23. doi:10.1080/09555803.2026.2615085.
31. Yeung V. *Stories within stories: a study of narrative embedding in Haruki Murakami's 1Q84*. *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*. 2017;58(4):426-436. doi:10.1080/00111619.2016.1242474.

Creative Commons License

This article is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution–Non-commercial–No Derivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) License. This license permits users to copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format for non-commercial purposes only, provided that appropriate credit is given to the original author(s) and the source. No modifications, adaptations, or derivative works are permitted.

About the Corresponding Author

Dr. S. Henry Kishore is an Associate Professor in the Department of English at Sri Krishna Arts and Science College, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India. His academic interests encompass English language and literature, literary studies, and contemporary critical approaches. He is actively engaged in teaching, research, academic writing, and mentoring students in higher education.