Cyber-Subversion: Murakami’s Cyborg and its Psyche

by

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Introduction

This thesis offers a close reading of Haruki Murakami’s novel *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* that explores the relationship individual agency and postmodern ideology. It first examines the novel’s form in order to reveals dynamic of its critique on postmodern society, and specifically the solution to the ills it highlights. In order to inspect its split narrative, which fluctuates between the two literary genres of cyberpunk and fairytale fantasy, it dissects its formal characteristics. First it looks at its two discursive representations of time and space, which in the jargon of narratology is called the chronotope, then it moves on to its two nomenclature forms, such as its character names and chapter titles. The dynamics of the novel’s split form correspond the dynamics of the novel’s ideology. Each of its characters has their own ideology and represent it in the novel through their unique language. The genre is the novelistic aspect that unifies these ideologies, for all of the characters’ languages filters through the genre’s language, which gives them narrative roles. In turn, each character becomes a part of the narrative’s trial of the protagonist’s ideology. So, by using the dynamics of the novel’s form in tandem with the dynamics its ideology, the analysis examines its representation of its cyborg protagonist and its psychological struggle. In doing so, it interprets the novel’s critique on postmodern society and its oppression of the cyborg psyche.

I. Postmodernity

Before this thesis embarks upon its analysis of Murakami’s novel, it is helpful to first outline its socio-historical backdrop. This allows for smoother references to
ideology, which the close reading frequently makes use of. It also facilitates the explication of the terms this analysis uses, such as rationality, technology, postmodernity, unconscious, and cyborg, all of which are either theoretically or socio-historically specific.

The shift from modernity to postmodernity is marked by immense technological advancement and its influence on the cultural and political landscapes. It oversaw the reorganization of power and knowledge dynamics into a form of such complexity that it is “difficult for our minds and imaginations to grasp” (Jameson, 38). In turn, technology of contemporary society became alienated from the individual. This can be seen in our language, as the signifier unit “technology” signifies a concept that the individual does not even understand. Nonetheless, we still use the word, aptly demonstrating the passivity of the postmodern human in accepting its alienating subjection to the postmodern regulation of power and knowledge. It is not just technology that is an important component of this socio-historical narrative, however, but also, as previously stated, the cultural and political landscapes that entwine with technology and thus react to its advancement. This relationship of entanglement manifests in the concept of capital, and in the epoch of postmodernity, the complexification of technology molds capital into a “whole new decentered global network” (Jameson, 38). In this system, the obfuscation of power hierarchies makes it impossible to understand the flow of capital and moreover to know who is in control of the cultural and political landscapes.

II. Closed-World Discourse and the Cyborg
In order to comprehend the full effect of this shift it is helpful to understand both what allowed it to happen and how it happened. The predominant ideology of modernity was the force paving the way for this technological, cultural and political development. This ideology valued progression through rationality. At its crux was the notion that advancement of power and knowledge is valuable and productive and that it occurs through scientific and technological endeavors.

Paul Edwards demonstrates the entanglement of ideology with power and knowledge in his seminal historical investigation *The Closed World: Computers and the Politics of Discourse in Cold War America*. He does so by articulating how the ideological mindset of modernity was a result of what he calls closed-world discourse. The specific definition of closed-world discourse he offers is “articulated geopolitical strategies and metaphors (such as ‘containing’ Communism) in and through military systems for centralized command and control” (Edwards, xii). Furthermore, he states that the “key theme of closed-world discourse was global surveillance and control through high-technology [of computers] and military power. Computers made the closed world work simultaneously as technology, as political system, and as ideological mirage” (Edwards, 1). With this description it becomes clear that technology became used for power and control through the domination and oppression tactic of surveillance. Moreover, it suggests that computer technology works to restrain the individual’s access to the truth through what he calls an ideological mirage, which tells its citizens that it is good for their freedom and independence. Computer technology, then, becomes a weapon against the people who value its progression as advantageous. This corresponds to what was detailed on in the previous paragraph as technology’s
obfuscation of power and knowledge dynamics, as it also demonstrates that computer technology oppresses the individual into a position of ignorance. Circling back to ideology’s entanglement with power and knowledge, Edwards’ description of closed-world discourse demonstrates how ideology, power and knowledge turned into technologies themselves through the computer.

Closed-world discourse defines the architecture of a political narrative and a technological system, but it does not explain its effect on individuals except for their ideological positions of ignorance. A more nuanced explanation of such is given by cyborg discourse which “emerged from this militarized regime of truth, forming the heterogeneous ensemble of psychological theories, experimental designs, machine interfaces, quasi-intelligent devices, and personal practices that constituted subjectivity in the closed world” (Edwards, 178). This all started with the development of cybernetics – the technoscientific term for self-regulating machines. The goal of the cybernetic machine is to achieve “complex behavior of humans through encounters with their environments,” embodying the human mind replacing humans in chains of command; they are the prototype for what later became artificial intelligence. (Edwards, 240). Evelyn Fox Keller demonstrates in her book, Rendering Life, that this resulted in the shift in power from humans to machines. She reads François Jacob’s exhibition of the agential machines, “At any time, the machine that executes its programme is capable of directing its action, of correcting or even interrupting, in accordance with the message received,” as a “total inversion of master and slave” (Keller, 107). Her argument shows that the development of cybernetics stripped the
human of its control of systems of communication and command, and forced the surrender of its agency to machines.

The shift in agency from humans to machines – the reversal of the original power hierarchy – is not limited to the physical but also manifests in the psychological realm. This is because the theory and discourse surrounding cybernetics gave “machine metaphors a new theoretical foundation, creating a new technical terminology and system of quantification – information theory – for describing flexible, self-directed behavior in both machines and minds” (Edwards, 184). In essence, cybernetics entangled machines and minds in a symbiotic relationship of definition, in which self-regulating aspects of the mind became descriptive metaphors for machines and self-regulating aspects of machines became metaphors for the mind. The cyborg, or cybernetic organism, is a term that captures the blurring of boundaries in these metaphors, referring to the construction of “human minds and artificial intelligence as information machines” (Edwards, 2). The discourse surrounding the cyborg gave rise to cognitive psychology, which reconstructed humans as cybernetic machines and digital computers by reconceiving the processes of “perception, memory and language in terms of formalizable transformations of information and feedback circuits or control loops” (Edwards, 179-180). Since technology is a tool for centralized power and control, cognitive psychology, both in practice and theory, constituted the human psyche as a subject of closed world political structures.

The shift of agency from humans to machines that resulted from the development of computer technology is of concern because of two reasons. The first reason, which I pinpointed earlier, is because closed-world discourse creates an
ideological mirage that puts the human in a position of ignorance. The second and more important reason is that the humans that have the task of developing the technology – the scientists – are similarly subjected to the ideological mirage and the loss of agency. Donna Haraway explains this in her *Primate Visions*, in her view of science as the social construction of narrative fictions about facts. The scientist then is an unconscious actor in a process of narrative fiction in which “romanticism passes into realism, and realism into naturalism, genius into progress, insight into fact” (Haraway, 5). By mistaking genius for progress, they blind themselves to the negative impacts of their research. An example such is the development the atomic bomb and its inhumane use of absolute devastation. In brief, the closed-world and cyborg discourses that developed in the shift from modernity to postmodernity stripped humanity of agency, rendering the human vulnerable to the power of machines and constituting the cyborg as a site of psychological oppression.

III. The Power of Science Fiction and its Cyberpunk Sub-Genre

In the obscure throes of power and knowledge in postmodernity, science fiction arises as a literary genre that challenges complacency and passivity to the ideological regulation of the individual to a dominated position. One of Donna Haraway’s central arguments in her *Primate Visions* is that literature serves to highlight and warn of a different conceptualization of social existence, inclusive of physical and material existence. She suggests that science fiction draws on the technology of our social world and through its narrative offers a critique of such that imagines a new relationship between individuals and the augurs of science. In doing so, the literary works of the
science fiction genre offer a path to reclaim agency from the mirage of objectivity and progression that narrative fictions of science cast and its resulting domineering tendency. Frederic Jameson similarly details on the role of literature in regard to ideological obfuscation in the shift from modernity to postmodernity. He states,

“This is a figural process presently best observed in a whole mode of contemporary entertainment literature – one is tempted to characterize it as “high-tech paranoia” – in which the circuits and networks of some putative global computer hookup are narratively mobilized by labyrinthine conspiracies of autonomous but deadly interlocking and competing information agencies in a complexity often beyond the capacity of the normal reading mind.” (Jameson, 38) In this quote Jameson shows that postmodernity’s decentered network of third stage capital and its ideological mirage, or, to use Edwards’ words, closed-world and the cyborg discourse, become intelligible to the critical eye through contemporary literary narratives. Specifically, these postmodern literary narratives constitute the science fiction sub-genre of Cyberpunk, as it defines a “literary realization within a predominantly visual or aural postmodern production.” (Jameson, 38). The novel *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* is Haruki Murakami’s only foray into the genre of science fiction, as one of its dual narratives falls under the classification of cyberpunk. Thus, the following analysis of this book will explore its relation to postmodernity.
Chapter One: Genre(s)

I. Chronotopic Fluctuation

Russian scholar Mikhail Bakhtin drew on the concept of the chronotope in his highly influential essay, “Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel”, from his larger collection, The Dialogic Imagination. This was a central part of his larger theoretical development and exploration of meaning in literary discourse. The term directly translates as, has the literal meaning of “time-space,” and refers to the inherent entanglement of space of and time and its configuration within a given literary discourse. Bakhtin’s essay focuses on showing the chronotope as a genre-defining discursive quality, giving substance to the unique narrative quality of a specific genre. Bakhtin’s essay demonstrates that “the novel’s abstract elements – philosophical and social generalizations, ideas, analyses of cause and effect – gravitate toward the chronotope and through it take on flesh and blood, permitting the imaging power of art to do its work” (Bakhtin, 250). To put simply the importance of the chronotope within the literary work: “every entry into the sphere of meaning is accomplished only through the gates of the chronotope” (Bakhtin, 258). Thus, the chronotope is a ripe place to start, as it establishes a theoretical place for this close reading to approach the novel’s meaning. Thus, this close reading will first explore meaning in Murakami’s Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World from the perspective of the chronotope.

The first chapter of the novel begins with the protagonist, Watashi, in an elevator that is moving through space in a way that disorients the rider. The novel’s commencing paragraph reads:

“The elevator continues its impossibly slow ascent. Or at least I imagined it was ascent. There was no telling for sure: it was so slow that all sense of direction
simply vanished. It could have been going down for all I knew, or maybe it wasn’t moving at all. But let’s just assume it was going up. Merely a guess. Maybe I’d gone up twelve stories, then down three. Maybe I’d circled the globe. How would I know?” (Murakami, 1)

Watashi does not know which direction it is moving nor how fast it is moving nor how far it has moved since he got on. The chronotope is immediately deprived of any semblance of intelligibility. This is similar to the what Bakhtin describes as the chronotope of the chivalric romance genre. In this chronotope, “the whole world becomes miraculous, so the miraculous becomes ordinary without ceasing at the same time to be miraculous” (Bakhtin, 152). Furthermore, both space and time become miraculous. In other words, both space and time, “are dragged out,” or, “are compressed into moments,” without laying bare the dragging out or the compression (Bakhtin, 154). Soon after the novel’s fist sentences, Watashi remarks, “I stood in that hermetically sealed vault for what seemed an eternity” (Murakami 2). Time is “dragged out” rather than “compressed” because Watashi uses the word “eternity” and thus exaggerates how much time his elevator ride actually took. In this highly-exceptional chronotope the expected becomes the unexpected. Both Watashi and the reader begin to expect suspect inconceivable things to occur; events which, of course, are impossible to foresee.

There is a difference between the chivalric romance chronotope and the chronotope in this novel’s first paragraph. First, the narrative explicitly references the chronotope’s compression, and is thus self-consciously aware of the distortion of real world time-space. It achieves this because the chronotope is focalized around Watashi’s own thoughts, which emphasize his disorientation and unfamiliarity with the it. Second, the monologue puts responsibility for such disorientation on the elevator, since the
elevator is what contains him and composes his visual space. Watashi’s calls attention to these two points by stating, “First of all, consider the space. This elevator was so spacious it could have served as an office” (Murakami, 1). He explicitly references the chronotope as an an influencing agent on his perceptual experience and asks for the reader to consider it with him, highlighting the importance it has on his subject position as well as situating the elevator as the governing agent of the irregular time-space. From the novel’s onset, then, this inherently technological chronotope becomes the forefront of its exploration.

The commencing irregular discursive representation of time-space reoccurs throughout the “Hard-Boiled Wonderland” segment, constituting the Cyberpunk chotonotope. The narrative’s discursive representation of its world’s temporal and spatial dynamics is consistently subject to technology’s grip. The chronotope of Cyberpunk has several sub-chronotopes in it, such as the highly-exceptional one just explored. To contrast it with a different sub-chronotope in the same narrative segment:

“Ten minutes later, the woman reappeared. And without so much as a glance in my direction, she opened one of the lockers and removed an armload of some shiny black material, which she brought over to the coffee table” (Murakami, 19).

This moment comes after Watashi gets out of the elevator, and out of its spatio-temporally distorted atmosphere. The sub-chronotope here represents time in a rigid manner that mimics the real world. This is made evident through the phrase, “ten minutes later,” which establishes a strict causal order of time. Furthermore, it represents space as clear-cut and intelligible, as Watashi is confident in the accuracy of his observation of the woman moving from one part of the room to the other. These representations of time and space differ greatly from the one previously explored, but
nonetheless, they are both manifestations of the broader chronotope of Cyberpunk. It is necessary for Cyberpunk to have these polar opposite chronotopes of realist representations of time-space as well ones that are alien to a realist perspective in order to show how the former is a distortion of the latter. Without these realist spatio-temporal representations, the Cyberpunk chronotope would not be able to show how the technoscientific advances have altered the human’s capacity of perception and framework of reality. Without this chronotopic fluctuation the Cyberpunk narrative would not be able to show how the unfamiliar sub-chronotope is the result of technoscience in the familiar one, and this is the genre’s defining quality. By making use of the generic chronotope of realism, the novel casts the non-generic chronotopes as manipulations of the former, paralleling the postmodernist technological manipulations of the cultural and political realms.

Although the spatio-temporal dynamic isn’t always distorted through a dragging out or compression as it often corresponds to realism, it is always part of a larger cohesive chronotope of Cyberpunk. By including the disorienting manifestations, it sets up the expectation of the unexpected, which extends to the non-distorted chronotope. Expecting the unexpected corresponds with Jameson’s definition of Cyberpunk as literature of high-tech paranoia: the abnormal state of expectation aptly describes paranoia and it is technology that gives rise to such expectation in the novel. Watashi articulates his occupation in a state of paranoia when he claims that he, “started to get nervous” (Murakami, 3) due to the highly ambiguous spatio-temporal dynamics within the elevator. Lastly, the Cyberpunk chronotope does not lend itself to a tidy summary that covers all of its events in a way that obeys the strict structures of
realist time. Even though one sub-chronotope may, and even though one can make an educated guess at the amount of days over which the narrative strand takes place, the fact that the larger encompassing Cyberpunk chronotope fluctuates into a sometimes distorted and highly ambiguous representation of time-space makes it so that it resists a realist approach. While certain sub-chronotopes within the narrative strand follow realistic portrayals of space-time, the larger encompassing Cyberpunk chronotope periodically fluctuates into a sometimes distorted and highly ambiguous representation of time-space. The lack of chronotopic consistency in the narrative strand resists a realist approach.

The narrative segment of, “The End of the World” represents a much different chronotope than its opposite narrative strand. This is clear from its outset, as its protagonist, Boku, reflects upon the seasonal changes in his world. The first paragraph reads:

“With the approach of autumn, a layer of long golden fur grows over their bodies. Golden in the purest sense of the word, with not the least intrusion of another hue. There is a gold that comes into this world as gold and exits in this world as gold. Poised between all heaven and earth, they stand steeped in gold” (Murakami, 12)

In this opening paragraph, the first line differentiates from the opposing narrative’s Cyberpunk chronotope. It is reflecting upon the change of time in a confident manner that establishes rigidity to the temporal dynamics of this world. This becomes a trend within this narrative, as the following paragraph begins with Boku remarking, “When I first came to the Town – it was in the spring – the beasts had short fur of varying colors,” and then later noting that, “Spring passed, summer ended, and just now as the light takes on a diaphanous glow and the first gusts of autumn ripple the waters of the
streams, changes become visible in the beasts” (Murakami, 12). The seasonal passage of time quickly becomes a defining quality of this narrative’s chronotope. This seems to give the chronotope an element of realism, but Boku goes on to describe that, “When the morning sun rises and casts newly golden over the world, autumn has descended upon the earth” (Murakami, 13). The shift into autumn completes the year’s seasonal cycle that starts in the first line of the chapter. Although realistic time is cyclical in regard to the seasons, humans conceive of it primarily as a linear progression that coincides with a cycle of seasons. The cycle of the seasons is the primary temporal dynamic of the chronotope imparting upon it a cyclical, repetitive, and infinite quality, departing from representations of realistic time.

The novel includes a map following its copyright page that cartographically defines the chronotope’s qualities of space. The map is a simple rectangle with an ellipse on its inside that takes up most of its space. The spaces on the outside fringes of this eclipse world are the “Beasts Enclosure” on its west side, “The Apple Grove” to the northwest that is symbolized by trees, the “Northern Ridge” to the north that is symbolized by a mountain range, and the “Eastern Ridge” which is also symbolized by a mountain range. There is also a river that runs both on the outside and inside of the world’s eclipsed space. It enters from the eastern ridge and flows west, ending at the “Pool” located in the southwestern edge of the world. This river effectively splits the world in two halves, while the “Old Bridge” joins them together in the center of the world, as well as the nearby “East Bridge”. The interior part of the world that lays north of the river consists of the “North Wood,” “Ruins of House,” and “Northern Swamp” all symbolized by the forest on its east side; the “Abandoned Barrack” symbolized by
a barren building on its northwest side; the “Watchtower” symbolized by a tower, the “Gatehouse” symbolized by a cabin, and the “Shadow Grounds” and “Meadow” symbolized by barren terrain on its West side; the “West Bridge” symbolized by a bridge, the “Library” symbolized by a cubic structure, and the “Clocktower” symbolized by a clock tower in its center where the town is. The interior part of the world that lays south of the river consists of the “Southern Hill” and the “Southern Crags” symbolized by several small mountains in its southern region; the “Eastern Woods” symbolized by the forest and the “Power Station” symbolized by a factory next on the side of mountains on its east side; the “Western Hill Official Residences” symbolized by a street-less block on the town’s grid, the “Industrial Sector,” the “Houses,” and the “Workers’ Quarter” all symbolized by small buildings, and the “Fields” symbolized by a large rectangle of row crops are all in its center where the town is located.

It may seem unnecessary to draw out this list to such a degree, but it is necessary to spell it out in totality in order to demonstrate the cartographical aspects that define the spatial dynamics of the world’s chronotope. The first aspect is the degree of specificity to which the map is drawn. There is not a place within the narrative that the map does not represent, which suggests that it contains all of the specific physical places within the world. The fact that one can comprehend the world to such specificity so quickly is a dynamic of space that is characteristic of fantasy, for its worlds are cohesive figments of imagination. In other words, a fantasy narrative gives its world a cohesive discursive representation; if a quality of the world is absent from its discourse then it does not exist. This contrasts with the cyberpunk narrative’s world of futuristic
Tokyo, which has a larger world than its discourse is able to depict. The second cartographical aspect that defines the world’s chronotope is that there are places outside of the Town’s elliptic border that are on the map. This conveys the ability for one to enter and exit the world, which, in turn, underscores the chronotope’s uniqueness as it differs spatially from other possible chronotopes that one would occupy before and/or after entering or exiting this chronotope. The third cartographic aspect that defines the chronotope is the places’ names being descriptions of their function. The symbols that represent these places are also simple and direct representations of the places name and function, which are two of the same. This gives the chronotope’s spatial dynamics a prototypical quality since it does not have unique characteristics that specifically refer to its worldly location or inhabitants. In other words, the simplicity of place’s names in this world connotes replicability.

The qualities of the “End of the World” chronotope seem to correspond with that of the fairytale fantasy genre. The fantasy aspect of the narrative segment’s chronotope, is constituted by the unreal qualities of the world’s spatio-temporal dynamics, most notably the cyclical and infinite time and the limbo space that the beasts occupy. The fairytale aspect has yet to be discussed and thus requires significantly more explication. Vladamir Propp theoretically lays out the structural qualities of the fairytale through a systematic exploration of 100 Russian fairytales in his Morphology of the Folktale. This theoretical genre study demonstrates several integral aspects of the fairytale using the three literary aspects of dramatis personae functions, and sequence. The dramatis personae is a given character, a function is a character’s actions that move the plot forwards, and the sequence is the order in which the functions
(alternatively called narrative elements) occur. The main point of the genre study is that there is an order to the sequence of functions that any given fairytale follows with little variation. Within this sequence there are thirty-one functions and there are up to seven types of characters that carry out these functions. The functions are given priority over the characters in this type of narrative, as the characters are defined by the functions they carry out. The characters, then, have little, if any, interiority, and any happenstance psychological representation is void of narrative significance, for the genre renders it incapable of defining the character’s narrative role. This theoretical framework of the character manifests in the “End of the World” narrative strand as it characterizes its protagonist Boku by the physical space he inhabits and not interior reflection. To clarify, the way Boku interacts with the external space of the world is what lends his character definition. This, in turn, defines the narrative strand’s spatial dynamic as one that is more or less simple and easy to decipher, for it does not confound Boku into contemplation and reflection which would render his interiority vulnerable to representation.

Propp delineates several chronotopic traits of the fairytale while constructing his structural framework. One trait is that the fairytale, “contains very little pertaining to everyday life” (Propp, 106). Another is that it, “contains such obvious traces of religious notions” (Propp, 106). Both of these traits can be seen in the novel’s fantastical world: the former in the notion that time-space is fantastical and unreal even though it is intelligible and does not confound the subject living within it; and the latter in the limbo space the beasts occupy between heaven and earth as the opening paragraph demonstrates. The last significant trait for this analysis is that the first
element in the narrative’s initial situation is a “temporal-spacial determination,” which, as previously demonstrated, is also quality of the narrative segment under inspection (Propp, 119). Propp, in the concluding portion of his theoretical examination of the fairytale, shows that “the fairy tale in its morphological bases represents a *myth*” (Propp, 90). The chronotope of the “End of the World” narrative segment is not just of the fairytale fantasy genre but is also, at its roots, of the mythical fantasy genre as well.

II. Nomenclature: Cyberpunk vs. Fairytale Fantasy

Analysis of the dual narrative’s respective chronotopes paints an abstract picture of the genre(s) that define it. This creates a framework with which the interpretive analysis of meaning in the novel can use. Although this framework is abstract, it nonetheless makes for more objective less arbitrary analysis by giving interpretive direction – like a formal lens that refracts the light of analysis. The greater the detail on the novel’s genre(s), the more helpful it is as an analytical framework. So, shifting away from the chronotope, this thesis now turns to the two narratives’ formal aspects of nomenclature, specifically their character names and chapter titles.

*Characters*

The names of characters further define the narrative genre(s) as well as differentiate between the two halves of the split narrative and their respective worlds. This is because a character’s name and moreover the name people refer to them by reflects the social dynamic and cultural realm of the world they live in; reflects societal subject positions with a specific emphasis on the subject’s relation to other subjects.
The protagonists’ names will be withheld from analysis until it finishes its investigation of the other character names. This is because they are unique, especially in comparison to the other character names, and thus the analysis benefits from a side by side examination within the same paragraph.

The Cyberpunk narrative has four characters/groups of characters aside from its protagonist: the scientist, the scientist’s granddaughter, the Librarian, and the two criminals Junior and Big boy. The scientist is referred to as the Professor by most characters in the novel. This name connotes respect and establishes a hierarchy of power and knowledge in which the Professor is on the top. The scientist’s granddaughter refers to him as grandfather, even when he is absent and she is in conversation with other people. The novel demonstrates this when she explains to Watashi that the Professor is likely safe from the INKlings even though they raided and ransacked his laboratory, as she refers to him as “Grandfather” 5 times in a brief exchange of words that takes place over just a single page of text (Murakami, 209). In referring to her grandfather with the name that denotes his elder status in relation to her, she connotes the societal hierarchy of power and knowledge of which he is on top. It is important to note that she does not use any possessive word such as “my” before calling him “Grandfather,” but instead uses the noun as a pronoun. The Japanese language allows this to happen because pronouns are an open class in which existing nouns are able to, through frequent usage, transform into new pronouns. Thus, the Professor’s private familial role of being a grandfather becomes his public societal pronoun and persona. In effect, his granddaughter linguistically subjects other people who have no immediate relationship with him to his aforementioned hierarchical
domination. This is because when she calls him grandfather to other people they begin to associate their conception of him with the linguistic connotation of his hierarchical superiority.

Shifting focus from the scientist to the granddaughter, the narrator refers to her as “the granddaughter”. If he doesn’t then he simply uses “she” because his statement has clear context. By referring to her by the familial position she occupies in relation to the Professor, Watashi conceives of her purely as a social construction of her relationships. The word “granddaughter” connotes the notion that she is not seen or represented as her own individual being but rather as a physical analog of the socially dominant Professor.

Moving on to the Librarian, she is Watashi’s object of desire. Although the narrative defines her in part through her occupation and its physical location, it more importantly defines her through her relationship with Watashi. It achieves this by Watashi calling her “my longhaired librarian,” “my friendly librarian,” “my reference librarian,” and even simply just, “my librarian” (Murakami, 126, 232, 326, 392). These references define her a name and identity through Watashi’s possession of her as a social object. Additionally, her name is never capitalized, which is an important distinction because it formally differentiates it from the other narrative segment’s character the Librarian.

Lastly, Junior and Big Boy’s names are given to them by Watashi’s because of their physical relation to one another. Neither of the criminals introduce themselves or state their name during the narrative scene. The narration provides insights into Watashi’s thoughts as he bears witness to their breaking in to his apartment, as it reads,
“Enter one mountain of a main … He must have stood two meters tall, with shoulders so broad that the buttons on his aloha shirt were practically flying off his chest,” and in regard to the other criminal, “This guy came in at under a meter and a half, a slim, trim figure” (Murakami, 131-132). The narration continues through Watashi’s thoughts while he comes to terms with the threatening situation in his apartment. The narrative reflects his thought process and ultimate comprehension through his shift in the names he uses to refer to the two criminals. First, he calls the big one “Hulk” and before later changes his name to “Big Boy” (Murakami, 132). Subsequently, he defines Junior’s name because of his relatively small body. In this moment he defines their names by linking them with the physical descriptions of their character’s actions – Junior being quiet and Big Boy being heavy. Their names, then, are products of their subject relation to one another, for one is consistently given definition through its opposition with the other and vice versa.

The fairytale fantasy narrative has five characters besides the protagonist. They are the Shadow, the Gatekeeper, the Librarian, the Colonel, and the Caretaker. Another turn to Vladimir Propp gives this analysis a framework that elucidates how these names fits in with the fairytale fantasy genre. Propp states, “the sphere of action exactly corresponds to the character,” which means that the characters of the fairytale are defined by their actions (Propp, 80). This is why the 7 character types that Propp identifies are given the following descriptive labels: the villain, donor, helper, princess (a sought-for person), dispatcher, hero and false hero (Propp, 79-80). As alluded to earlier, the characters serve the strict role of external action that moves the plot forward and lack an interior world of emotion and thought that could give them further
definition. In the fairytale, then, actions rather than thoughts occupy a privileged in relation to characters – the physical is privileged over the psychological. Propp’s theoretical definition of the fairytale character corresponds to the characters in the “End of the World”, specifically regarding their relation to individual action and objects. This differs from the other narrative segment’s mode of character definition, which regards their relation to social relations and other subjects. Thus, the fairytale fantasy narrative segment’s mode of defining characters does not impose social hierarchy of power and knowledge. In fact, the narrative segment’s character names do not connote the social realm at all. They do refer the job position that the subject holds and the physical places that they occupy, but these do not have to do with the social realm in their world. The notion that a job lacks social significance may seem erroneous, but in the world of this narrative segment a job is an individual’s hobby and not a role that society imposes upon the individual through notions of responsibility and necessity.

Turning back to Propp one last time gives this analysis a more specific framework with which it can understand the fairytale fantasy narrative segment’s individual character names and roles. His theoretical framework defines the fairytale character’s traits as trifold: of “external appearance and nomenclature, particularities of introduction into the narrative, and dwelling place” (Propp, 88). The first character trait validates the central notion of this part of the analysis that a character’s name defines them. This is partly due to the link between the character name and their external appearance since they unify under a single trait. The use of the specific word nomenclature also connotes a scientific or jargon-oriented name, furthering the idea that names offer identity and purpose rather than just a label. This trait in conjunction
with the third trait – that the dwelling place defines the character – are apt definitions of the character names in “The End of the World” narrative segment. Shifting focus back to these character names, it becomes clear that they don’t all fit into Propp’s character defining framework in the same way. Two of these character names – the Gatekeeper, the Librarian – are also their job titles. The Colonel and the Shadow coincide with the places these characters occupy – the former in the Barracks and the latter in the Shadow Grounds – which is the third trait Propp offers. Also, the Shadow has the external appearance of a shadow, which ties in the first trait with the third trait in defining his name and in turn his narrative role. Unlike the other characters, however, he does not appear in the narrative under the name “the Shadow,” but rather he appears under the name “my shadow” or “your shadow” (Murakami, 105-106). This fits in nicely with the preceding logic because the narrative defines the Shadow through the cyberpunk narrative’s world; it embodies Watashi’s mind which is why the Gatekeeper must exterminate it in order for Boku to complete his initiation into the Town’s world. So, his name appears in the narrative after a determiner that defines him in relation to Boku as well as an object that Boku possesses, connoting his subjection to Boku’s decisions and actions.

The Caretaker is another character name that does not seamlessly fit in to Propp’s framework at first glance. Just as with the Shadow, although in a different way, this is because the Caretaker is not completely a part of the Town, as he is neither a member of the “The End of the World” society nor an occupant of its Town. He was banished from society and forced to live outside of Town’s elliptic border because he did not follow the society’s defining rule of letting his shadow die a slow death in the
Shadow Ground’s prison. Since he occupies a unique physical space to the other characters, who live within the Town, he also occupies a different subject position in relation to the physical realm than them.

ii. Pronoun Split: Watashi/Boku

The dual narrative’s respective protagonists have highly unique names in contrast to the common nomenclature of the rest of the novel’s characters. A comparison and contrast of their names further delineates the novel’s narrative split. The cyberpunk narrative’s protagonist is named “Watashi” while the fairytale fantasy narrative’s protagonist is named “Boku”. Both of these words are first person Japanese pronouns written in romanticized Japanese, which is the latin scripture of the Japanese word’s sound, in order to be phonetically legible to romance language readers. Japanese has many pronouns that have different uses that depend upon the formality of the speaking act’s context as well as the speaker’s gender, age, and socio-cultural status and their relative position to those of the addressee. Since gender, age and socio-cultural status in Japan are all more or less hierarchical, they all, then, correspond to spectrums of respect. The spectrum of pronouns thus similarly corresponds to a spectrum of respect, and “Watashi” and “Boku” represent two different spectral points.

The difference of respect between the two words is matter of formality. At the risk of oversimplifying, “Watashi” is the first person formal pronoun “I” and “Boku” is the first person informal pronoun “I”. The former pronoun is used more frequently in Japanese society because it is the social norm and considered polite. Since its use is contextually conditioned by the speaker’s inferior socio-cultural status and/or the
societal expectation of the speaker to show traditional respect for the addressee, the person that is the direct or indirect object-noun of their sentence, and anybody who is listening. The pronoun’s connotation of socio-cultural status exemplifies the honorific norm of Japanese language, its parts of speech that emphasize the contextual degrees of social separation of the addressee and the addressee; the disparity and distance or similarity and intimacy of the multiple socio-cultural statuses in a given context. The pronoun “Boku”, on the other hand, is used less frequently than the pronoun “Watashi” since it is not as polite. This is because it does not conform to the traditional socio-cultural norms of respect.

The last analytical point of inspection in regard to the division between the between the two first person pronouns “Watashi” and “Boku” as well as names of the novel’s two protagonists is gender. The pronoun “Watashi” is gender neutral in its formal use. The pronoun “Boku” is almost exclusively used by men and is by nature of casual use. Additionally, it has the specific connotation of masculinity and youthful energy. The Watashi narrative represents its protagonist as unsure of his identity. Gender plays an important role in the formation of identity. In light of such, the narrative’s representation of Watashi’s inability to comprehend either the form that facilitates the construction of his identity – his mutually regulated subjection to technology and to cultural and political rhetoric – or the content of his identity – cyborg discourse, cultural discourse and political discourse – in effect renders him gender-neutral. The Boku narrative represents its protagonist as surer of his identity through the progressive development of his confidence, decision making ability, and worldly intrigue. So, in contrast to its narrative counterpart, this narrative renders its protagonist
Boku both masculine and youthful. This makes sense because he is able to reflect upon and search for his identity in a way that, by the end of the narrative, begins to reveal its content, in which lies his masculine gender. Furthermore, the narrative’s world is a place in which time moves cyclically rather than linearly, and thus the process of aging is non-existent. Things experience the cycle of the seasons but their they live in eternal repetition. Living in the world of the Town subjects Boku frozen time as well as, logically, to the same youthful body he occupies throughout the narrative. It makes sense that his name, then, will forever connote a youthful energy.

To conclude: Watashi and Boku’s name reflect their respective narrative’s form of representing character identities. Watashi’s name specifically reflects both his narrative’s representation of its characters’ inability to understand their identities as well as its characters’ identities as socially constructed through their social subject relation to other subjects. Boku’s name specifically reflects his narrative’s representation of its characters’ ability to search for their identities and eventually understand it as well as its characters’ identities as individually constructed through their physical subject relation to space. This contrast analysis of the two protagonists’ names serves, then, as a vantage point for further analyzing the form of the dual narrative’s split and its narrative purpose. The pronoun-names of Watashi and Boku respectively reflect two worlds that have opposing qualities. The narrative split thus reads as a line that does not separate two narrative fragments and their worlds, but rather binds them along a seam of inversion, stitching them together in a way that frames them as opposites – like the line bisecting yin and yang.
iii. Chapter Titles

The chapter titles constitute another aspect of the narrative that reflects its split. Before the novel’s body text even begins the reader is given significant narrative information in its front matter. One notable part of the novel’s front matter is the illustration of map of the “End of the World” that represents its unique spatial topography that reads as imaginary and fantastical world, or, if only given a quick glance, at least part of a different world than the one we inhabit. The other notable part of the novel’s front matter that offers the reader significant narrative information is in the table of contents. The aesthetic of the table of content’s chapter title list calls attention to the narrative split. It achieves this through the use of two aesthetic techniques that occur randomly in no specific order. One of its aesthetic techniques is the alternating lengths of the chapter titles. The odd-number chapter titles consist of three words while the even numbered chapter titles consist of only a single word or a single multi-word concept. The second aesthetic technique that calls attention to the split narrative form is the vacillation of upright and italic typeface between odd and even chapters. Together, these two aesthetic forms of the table of contents visually allude to the novel’s split narrative form before the first chapter even begins.

When the novel’s body text does begin, every new chapter reveals its corresponding split narrative segment, and, in turn, the chronological pattern of the chapter-narrative segment relationship takes shape. The pattern is as follows: the odd numbered chapters with tripartite titles compose the cyberpunk narrative and the even numbered chapters with single word titles compose the fairytale fantasy narrative. Upon revealing itself, it is possible to retroactively interpret the meaning of the chapter
title’s aesthetic form of alternating chapter lengths as well as analyze the qualities of its form that are not aesthetically focused.

The tripartite chapter titles of the cyberpunk narrative segment consist of words that are quite specific in comparison to the fairytale fantasy narrative’s single word chapter titles. Their specificity lies in their referencing of unique parts of their corresponding chapter’s narrative. For example, the first chapter title, “Elevator, Silence, Overweight”, refers to the elevator Watashi rides, the Professor’s silencing of his Granddaughter and the waterfall outside his underground laboratory, and the Granddaughter’s overweight body. Another example is the third chapter title, “Rain Gear, INKlings, Laundry”, which refers to the water-repellent clothes that the Granddaughter forces Watashi to change into before they adventure through the Tokyo underground, the INKlings predators they evade during their adventure, and the data encryption process called laundering that Watashi conducts for the Professor (he inputs data into his right brain, converts it to his left brain through an encryption code, and outputs the data hidden in its new form). These three aspects structurally fragment the chapter into three parts – its beginning, middle and end – as well as symbolically marks three roots of its thematic exploration, which are the conceptual sites where it entangles with the rest of the split narrative segment. Also, to the uninformed eye, these chapter titles are meaningless; empty signs that are void of signification. This is because the signified counterparts to its signifier units requires context in order to symbolize its thematic exploration.

The chapter titles of the fairytale fantasy narrative segment consist of words and concepts that are more specific than those of the other narrative segment. The
consistency of the chapter titles, demonstrated by the ability to group chapter titles into categories, best reflects their specificity. Most frequently the chapter titles are names of the physical places in the narrative’s world. Examples of these chapter titles are chapter 4 “The Library”, chapter 10 “The Wall”, chapter 14, “Woods”, chapter 24 “Shadow Grounds”, and chapter 26 “Power Station”. These places slowly reveal themselves throughout the narrative, but the map illustration in the novel’s frontispiece consists of all of them. The second most frequent category of this narrative’s chapter titles are names of physical objects. Examples of this chapter title category are chapter 12 “A Map of the End of the World”, chapter 28 “Musical Instruments”, chapter 34 “Skulls” and chapter 36 “Accordion”. The words of these physical objects are similarly abstract as the words that compose the other narrative’s chapter titles, but since they are only one word or concept they are less puzzling. Although their signification requires context, their singularity evades a connotation of randomness. The third category of chapter titles are physical events. Some examples are Chapter 18 “Dreamreading”, Chapter 20 “The Death of the Beasts” and Chapter 38 “Escape”. Most importantly, these titles read as narrative events and thus when void of context to the uninformed eye they retain purpose. The last category of chapter titles is character names. The two examples are chapter 6 “The Shadow” and chapter 8 “The Colonel”. The narrative introduces these characters before the respective chapter that has their name as its title. Thus, similarly to most of the other chapter titles in its split narrative segment, the titles in this category have relatively clear significance when they appear in the narrative.
The difference between the chapter titles reflects the difference between the split narrative worlds. The cyberpunk narrative’s chapter titles’ significance rely on their respective chapter’s content to contextualize their significance. This is because they are words that signify thematic concepts that are unique to the narrative’s science fiction world. Often the signifier units are not unique to the world themselves, such as “elevator” or “laundry”, but their simplicity and lack of context makes for infinite possible signifieds and in turn obscures their signification. The titles also have signifier units that are specific to the world, such as “INKlings”, and, needless to say, they similarly require context to reveal its signification, regardless of their limited possible signifieds. The fairytale fantasy narrative’s chapter titles do not rely on, or in specific cases rely significantly less on, their respective chapter’s content to contextualize their significance. This is because the narrative either introduces the words and concepts before they manifest in a chapter title or they have simple and relatively explicit signifieds. Essentially, the difference of signification between the two narratives’ chapter titles boils down to a difference of depth. The cyberpunk narrative titles each signify multiple thematic concepts that have deep narrative roots. The fairytale fantasy narrative titles each signify only one part of the narrative aspect that has significantly less thematic focus and thus, in comparison, their narrative roots are shallow. This difference in depth of signification correlates to the difference in signifieds between the two narratives’ chapter titles. Since the cyberpunk narrative chapter titles have thematic focus their signifieds are first and foremost conceptual and rather than physical. The fairytale fantasy narrative titles on the other hand have signified that are physical, as they are either a place, a person, an object or a physical event. These
qualities reflect the difference between the chapters themselves: the cyberpunk narrative’s discourse defines its content in relation to the social realm and its titles signify concepts that obtain definition through the social while the fairytale fantasy narrative’s discourse defines its content in relation to the physical realm and its titles signify physical things.
Chapter Two: Ideology

I. Heteroglossia

The dual narrative’s genre(s) is the backdrop and guiding framework for the following section’s inspection meaning in the novel. The interpretive endeavor at hand uses another one of Mikhail Bakhtin’s essay “Discourse in the Novel” from his larger collection The Dialogic Imagination in order to investigate the finer points of the narrative. In doing so, it explores the dynamics of ideology in the novel. The ideologies that it draws upon are those present in modernity and postmodernity, including ideologies of bureaucracy, ideologies of science, and ideologies of the cyborg.

The following analysis uses Bakhtin’s literary concept of heteroglossia to inspect the dynamics of ideology in the novel. In Greek, the semantic units of “heteroglossia” are “hetero” and “glōssa”, which in English means “different” and "language" or “tongue” respectively. Bakhtin puts these two Greek words together into a single literary concept that means, when put simplistically, the different aspects of the novel’s language. The different aspects of language refer to the “internal stratification of language, social heteroglossia, and the variety of individual voices” (Bakhtin, 264). Bakhtin’s essay uses the term language in a different way than the preceding technical definition does. This is because the theory of heteroglossia defines and applies it in two different ways. In one way, language is the singular entity of the novel’s entire and undivided prose. In the other way, language refers to the “diversity of speech types and individual voices” within the novel’s prose. This second definition of language allows it to be plural and not just singular since it can reference multiple speech types and voices – languages – at once. These languages are “social dialects,
characteristic group behaviour, professional jargons, generic languages, languages of
generations and age groups, tendentious languages, languages of the authorities, of
various circles and of passing fashions” (Bakhtin, 262-263). The concept of ideology
is at the crux of heteroglossia because it embeds in the languages within the novel. This
is because “language is developed in vital connection with the process of sociopolitical
and cultural centralization” and thus they are inherently socio-ideological (Bakhtin,
271).

The novel’s genre is essential to the novel’s heteroglossia. It has its own
language, which Bakhtin calls “generic languages,” and it is the principal stratifying
agent of the novel’s language insomuch as the other languages follow in suit. In other
words, the novel’s genre establishes the initial stratification of the novel’s language,
and in turn it plays the primary narrative role of socio-ideological representation. This
is crucial to understanding how this thesis section’s examination of heteroglossia both
relates to the preceding section’s investigation of chronotopes as well as implements
its developments as a guiding framework. Simply put, genre is what guides both the
orientation of languages in the novel as well as their social and historical themes.
Genre, then, is the intermediary role of between the novel’s multiple languages and
unitary language.

The following analysis requires the explication of one last aspect of
heteroglossia before it can commence. This aspect is the novel’s trial of ideology
through the intersection of languages. The novel is able to conduct an exploration of
and form a commentary on ideology because its “languages do not exclude one another,
they intersect with each other” (Bakhtin, 291). The coexistence of and conflict between
its speech types and voices creates narrative spaces in which different ideologies are set against each other dialogically: “one point of view opposed to another, one evaluation opposed to another, one accent opposed to another” (Bakhtin, 314). The novel represents these intersecting ideologies through its characters, for each one has its own speech and each speech has own belief system. In addition to their speech, their actions also pertain to ideology, for they associate “with an ideological motif and occupies a definite ideological position” (Bakhtin, 334). So, the novel’s dialogical intersection of ideology occurs through discursive character conflicts. The result of these conflicts is either the protagonists’ domination or oppression – its ideology either shifts accordingly or forces another character’s ideology to do so. The narrative conclusion of these hierarchical outcomes demonstrates the novel’s own ideological position in regard to societal power hierarchies of ideology and their influence on societal subjects. This is what Bakhtin refers to as the novel’s singular undifferentiated language. In turn, the resulting verdict becomes the locus of the novel’s ideological critique of society (Bakhtin, 389). So, the following analysis examines the respective ideologies and ideological intersections of the novel’s two protagonists’ in order to construct the bedrock of its interpretation of novel’s critique on postmodern society.

II. Cybermorphism: Watashi’s Ideology

Throughout the narrative Watashi’s ideology intersects with all of the other characters’ ideologies. In effect, these intersections inform and mold Watashi’s ideology. In the beginning of the narrative Watashi’s ideology views his cyborg disposition as a tool for him to counter his subjection to technology, gain autonomy
over his self, and alleviate his high-tech paranoia. As the narrative progresses and Watashi ideologically intersects with other characters, his ideology dynamically molds into a new form. Specifically, his intersections with the Professor, the System, and the Factory, all force his ideology to realize that his cyborg disposition, contrary to what his initial ideology holds, subjects him to a lack of autonomy over his self and institutional oppression. Upon this realization, however, he does not believe he is unable to reclaim autonomy over his self. This belief continues until his last transformative ideological intersection, in which he Boku accepts his inability to revolt against his subjection and reclaim autonomy over his self. The intersections progressively force Watashi to come to these ideological realizations by calling attention to technology’s guise of power and knowledge and its hindrance of the individual’s autonomy over its self. This directly corresponds to the rise of what the generic language of cyberpunk refers to as a high-tech paranoia within Watashi, which manifests in the narrative through his character traits of fear, indecision and apathy. The following analysis traces the development of Watashi’s ideology as well as his character traits throughout the narrative in order to demonstrate how the intersections increasingly instill a high-tech paranoia within him. Furthermore, it inspects how the diminishing of his high-tech paranoia results in his final ideological transformation.

ii. The Tri-Morphology of High-Tech Paranoia

Throughout the narrative Watashi’s high-tech paranoia has three different morphologies which progressively integrate the three phases of time: present, future and past. This progressive integration corresponds to Watashi’s realizations of
technology’s grip over his cyborg disposition. The first morphology of Watashi’s high-tech paranoia regards solely present time, as Watashi realizes that technology has the ability to distort reality and therefore his perceptions. Its second morphology incorporates the future time, as Watashi realizes the technology in his brain sets a finite time-limit on his future. Naturally, Watashi only experiences his high-tech paranoia in the present, thus its integration of future concern works in tandem with its present concern to heighten it. It achieves this by simultaneously making Watashi question his perceptions as well as concern himself with wasting and running out of time. The above quotes mark the second morphology of Watashi’s anxiety, which results from his being led to believe that he has a finite amount of time left to live – that his death is imminent. The high-tech paranoia’s third morphology incorporates the past, as Watashi realizes that technology in his brain is controlling – morphing, editing and fabricating – his memories. This results in him not trusting in the authenticity of the contents of his unconscious, namely his identity and his desire. This concern merges with Watashi’s concern with the present and future, once again heightening his high-tech paranoia.

*First Morphology: Present*

While Watashi occupies the first morphology of his high-tech paranoia, he progressively accepts that his cyborg disposition subjects him to a lack of autonomy over his self and institutional oppression. Furthermore, his character traits of fear, indecision, and apathy develop alongside his ideological progression.

One way the first morphology of Watashi’s high-tech paranoia manifests in the narrative is in the fear that his ideological intersection with the Professor arises within
him. This occurs when Watashi visits the professor for the first time and the Professor shares with Watashi his radical and resolute views about techo-science, to which Watashi reacts in fear. One example is when the Professor tells Watashi about his sound removal device and its hypothetical implications on society, “Sound removal is just one of the more harmless applications,” and in reaction Watashi reflects to himself, “Harmless? Fiddling with the volume was screwy enough. What was the rest going to be like?” (Murakami, 34). The Professor in this exchange of words uses the language of science, which is objective in its speculations. The Professor’s use of this language fears Watashi, for his inner-thoughts in this narrative moment demonstrate he considers what the Professor calls harmless to be have significant implications on reality and therefore his perceptions. Furthermore, when Watashi ponders, “What was the rest going to be like?,” it reads as a rhetorical question because of its relation to his first question at the beginning of his reflection, which is also rhetorical. Watashi’s reaction, then, serves to represent the state of awe that the Professor’s remark puts him in as well as underscore the fearfulness of sound-removal’s implications.

Not much later in the chapter, the narrative represents Watashi’s feelings on the subject of sound-removal in a similar light when the topic resurfaces. The Professor’s granddaughter up until this point in the narrative is silent and only able to mouth words to Watashi. This provokes him to ask the Professor if she is mute, to which the Professor responds, “Plum forgot. She’s still sound-removed from that experiment. Darn, darn, darn. Got t’go and undo it right now,” (Murakami, 36). Seemingly lost for words, Watashi manages to vocalize a mere “Oh” in response (Murakami, 36). Watashi’s response, or lack thereof, conveys his fear of the hypothetical negative implications of
the Professor’s scientific endeavors. What differs this exchange from the previous one is that Watashi sees the negative implications in action rather than just hearing about their possibility. This relates to his witnessing the Professor’s oversight, which counters any previous belief regarding the Professor’s infallibility. So, while the first exchange demonstrates Watashi’s shock in regard to the negative applications of scientific technology, the second one solidifies his fear, for his response to the Professor’s mishap of forgetting to unmute his granddaughter for several days implies a state of disbelief.

Watashi’s fear continues to swell in the wake of his ideological intersection with the Professor. Although the first two examples are relatively subtle instances of the emotional effect of the two character’s ideological intersection, the narrative goes on to offer a more explicit instance of its effect. In turn, it advances the previous paragraph’s ideological analysis. This occurs when Watashi wakes up from a slumber after his meeting with the Professor and shortly afterwards his thoughts read, “Something put me on edge,” (Murakami, 69). Although he is no longer in the physical vicinity of the Professor, his encounter with him has permanently shifted his disposition. What he sees and discusses with the Professor heightens his fear to such a degree that it does not dissipate with time. A similar manifestation of his fear occurs when he is leaving the library to get the librarian an ice cream when he reflects, “I couldn’t shake the feeling that things were not normal” (Murakami, 76). The Professor makes it clear to Watashi that scientific technology has the power to radically transform reality, which makes it so that Watashi can no longer disregard any experiential abnormality. In turn, he now reflects on strange feelings and fleeting oddities with a firm suspicion that they are real and have a direct impact on his experience. Thus, the Professor’s ideology,
which speaks in the language of scientific jargon, heightens Watashi’s high-tech paranoia by inflating his fear.

Another narrative manifestation of the Watashi’s ideological development, that is, aside from his fear, is his indecision and apathy. This narrative first represents this in Watashi’s ideological intersection with the Factory. This moment occurs after a random civilian, who the Factory bribes, breaks into his apartment and unsuccessfully tries to steal the unicorn skull that the Professor gifts him. This attempt of burglary reveals to Watashi the danger that his relationship with the Professor puts him in, upon which he contemplates his plan of action, “At this point I had two options: one, explain everything to the System, so they’d protect me from the Semiotecs and safeguard the skull; or two, contact the chubby girl and get the lowdown on the skull” (Murakami, 79). He immediately goes on to reject both of these options and justifies it with unconvincing excuses. In regard to the first option he claims, “Huge organizations and me don’t get along. They’re too inflexible, waste too much time, have too many stupid people” (Murakami, 79). This excuse is overtly irrational since the danger of doing nothing is significantly more threatening than the nuisance of working with the System. In regard to the second option, Watashi considers it is impossible because he does not have the granddaughter’s phone number, because “leaving [his] own apartment now was dangerous,” does not think he can “talk [his] way into that top-security building” (Murakami, 79). His excuse is more rational than the one he gives for the first option, for it is in fact hard for him to get into contact with the granddaughter, but he nonetheless overstates its difficulty by calling it impossible. Both excuses, then, are simplistic and mediocre at best, suggesting that he does not actually care to change the
situation he finds himself in. The conclusion to his train of thought ties the analysis of his excuses as unconvincing with the character qualities of indecision and apathy, as it reads, “I made up my mind: I would do nothing,” (Murakami, 79). These character traits precipitate from his ideological intersection with the Professor, and thus, Watashi’s ideological narrative intersection with the Factory advances its effects, heightening his high-tech paranoia.

Watashi’s second ideological section with the Factory also heightens his indecision and apathy. At the beginning of this intersection, two Semiotecs are breaking into his apartment and Watashi does nothing to protect himself from harm. In this moment, the narrative reads, “I got a potato salad and a beer from the refrigerator for lunch. I thought about escaping via the emergency rope ladder on the balcony, but why bother? Running away wouldn’t solve anything” (Murakami, 131). The first sentence of the quote exhibits both his indecision and apathy because he defers the process of contemplating the imminent danger and evaluating his options to evade it. Instead, he acts as if nothing is happening and focuses on his lunch routine. This reflects his indecision and his apathy: Indecision in his choice of routine over novelty and apathy in his nonchalant attitude towards the Semiotec criminals and specifically the dangerous threat they pose. This quote also manifests Watashi’s ideology in its question, “why bother?,” for it defines apathy, although somewhat indirectly. The quote also consists of the statement, “running away wouldn’t solve anything,” which transcends the narrative’s manifestation of Watashi’s ideology through his character qualities by explicitly representing his ideology of lacking autonomy over his self. It achieves this through his conviction in his inability to escape the Factory’s grip, which
strips him of his ability to choose his own actions, and by definition results is his lack of autonomy over his self. Thus, this narrative moment, by reflecting Watashi’s indecision and apathy, also demonstrates that his ideological intersection with the Factory – through its agents Junior and Big Boy – underscores his ideological advancement during the first morphology of his high-tech paranoia.

Watashi’s ideological intersection with the System instensifies his belief in his lack of autonomy over his self. This is the because the System’s scientists operate on Watashi’s brain and consequently advance his hybridization with cybernetics – his metamorphosis into a cyborg. They tell Watashi that the operation restructures his conscious mind by isolating his core consciousness, which they describe as the pit of “condensed chaos” at the center of the “overall chaos” that is his conscious mind (Murakami, 113). To briefly clarifying although they never explicitly explain core consciousness in the jargon of psychoanalysis, they indirectly imply that it is their own terminology for the isolation of his unconscious in a specific time-space. Watashi’s reflection upon the operation reflects how it advances his metamorphosis into a cyborg, as he states, “This mechanism was programmed into me. An unconscious tunnel, as it were, input right through the middle of my brain.” (Murakami, 114-115). The diction of these two sentences pertain to the cybernetic device, as the words “mechanism” and “programmed” in the first sentence and the word “input” in the second sentence are part of cybernetic dialect. Watashi, then, is using the language of cyborgs. The diction also renders Watashi as an object under the control of the agential scientists, for the object-nouns are respectively Watashi and his brain and the subject-nouns are “they” which refers to the scientists. Watashi continues to reflect the operation’s advancement
of his metamorphosis into a cyborg in a way that strips him of his agency, as the narrative goes on to read,

“Whenever I shuffle, I am rendered utterly defenseless and subject to mood swings. … I am merely a vessel to be used. My consciousness is borrowed and something is processed while I’m unaware. I hardly feel I can be called a Calcutec when it comes to shuffling” (Murakami, 115)

Watashi’s thoughts in this moment explicitly articulate his vulnerability as a direct result of his hybridization with cybernetics. The System furthers his adoption cyborg qualities through the operation, and thus its strips him of autonomy over his self.

*Second Morphology: Present, Future*

The second morphology of Watashi’s high-tech paranoia incorporates future time into its concern. This occurs towards the end of Watashi’s instersection with the System’s agents Junior and Big Boy telling him that the technology in his head is a ticking time bomb. Watashi does not question their assertion because up to its narrative moment point they use tendentious language and language of the authorities to influence Watashi’s disposition. This is successful as Watashi exhibits they advance his ideology of lacking autonomy over his self. The first manifestation of these two languages impacting Watashi is when Junior says, “This System of yours is big, too big. The right hand never knows what the left is doing. Too much information, more than you can keep track of. And the Semiotecs are just as bad” (Murakami, 139). The aspects of tendentious language in this statement are its sweeping generalizations and telling Watashi that he inherently is unable to understand how they work and what they are doing. This has the effect of making Watashi believe in the ignorance of his subject-position. The tendentious language also serves as a tactic of persuasion by making
Watashi, through inducing his realization of his inferior subject-position, believe everything the two agents subsequently claim. Thus, it lays the groundworks for the absolutisms in the language of the authorities to come across as objective and irrevocable. In effect, the use of this language, from Watashi’s perspective, gives the agents a quality of not just superiority but of omniscience. Shortly after the above statement Junior goes on to tell Watashi, “The data [you converted] was a program. A time bomb. Time come and—booom!” (Murakami, 140). Due to the effect of in the preceding quote’s heteroglossic languages, Watashi believes them and resultantly, his high-tech paranoia transforms into its second morphology, concerning itself with issues of the future, or rather, lack thereof.

While in the second morphology of his high-tech paranoia, he continues to realize the lack of autonomy he has over his self. Again, this manifests in his fear, indecision, and apathy. For example, after Watashi shifts morphologies, the Factory’s agents Junior and Big Boy inform him that he will be tortured, which substantially heightens his fear. He reacts with few words, as he chokes out the word, “Torture?” and moments later he chokes out again, “Torture?” (Murakami, 156). Watashi’s repetition of the question achieves two things. First, it demonstrates his shock at this piece of information. Secondly, the gap between the first and second instances of his statement alludes to a moment of contemplation that the narrative does not represent in words. The threat of torture scares Watashi, so naturally he does not want it to happen. However, his lack of agency and the character quality indecision it forces him to adopt makes it so that he has no option but to accept his fate. Thus, his indecision, by only giving him one option, leads his thoughts of resistance back to their origin disbelief and
fear, which is why he repeats the same thing as before this narrative gap of contemplation. Lastly, at the end of the chapter Watashi shows that his indecision and apathy heightens to a depressing degree, as he states, “My life is nothing, I thought. Zero. Zilch. A blank” (Murakami, 164). Watashi’s belief that he is unable to make an impact on his world and that his life is void of meaning aptly represents his indecision and apathy. In comparison with his indecision and apathy in the beginning of the narrative during the first morphology of his high-tech paranoia, his same character qualities are significantly heightened. Moreover, they at unsurmountable degrees, which is his morphosis into the third morphology of his high-tech paranoia incubates his outrage and facilitates the inversion of his character traits.

*Third Morphology: Present, Future, Past*

Up until this point his high-tech paranoia manifests in the narrative through his character traits of fear, indecision, and apathy. This third and final morphological development, however, outrages Watashi and consequently inverts these three character traits into courage, decisiveness, and passion. His paranoia’s morpholigcal morphosis occurs when Watashi’s is on the subterranean mission to find the Professor and he begins to auto-hallucinate his memories. When a dam breaks open and a massive body of water gushes towards him, the narrative reads, “tons of water, sluicing through darkness. In the next instant, I am a child in a movie theater, watching a newsreel of the inauguration of a dam” (Murakami, 237). The hallucination continues shortly after as the narrative reads, “Back to the newsreel, arcs of water shooting across the screen, spillway emptying into the big bowl below,” and subsequently goes on for five
paragraphs. The hallucination naturally perplex Watashi as he shifts back into reality, sparking a chain of thought which leads him to realize that the System’s operation on his brain is in charge of his psyche’s access to these memories. It is with this realization that his high-tech paranoia takes its third form, as it incorporates a concern with the past, merging it with its already established concerns with the present and future. In this final morphology, then, Watashi fears technology’s control over his immediate experiences of reality, his ability to have a future, and his memories of his past.

The third morphological formulation of Watashi’s high-tech paranoia facilitates Watashi’s an overhaul of Watashi’s ideology as his complete lack of psychological agency outrages him. Resultantly, his ideology morphs into believing he regain autonomy over his self. He demonstrates his infuriation as well as the ideological overhaul it sparks when he firmly states,

“They had stolen my memories from me! Nobody had that right. Nobody! My memories belonged to me. Stealing memories was stealing time. I got so mad, I lost all fear. I didn’t care what happened. I want to live. I told myself. I will live. I will get out of this insane netherworld and get back my stolen memories back and live. Forget the end of the world, I was ready to reclaim my whole self.” (Murakami, 239)

Watashi, in what is one of the most important moments in the narrative, makes explicit his ideological struggle – the trial of his ideology – throughout the narrative thus far. In doing so, he lays bare his former ideology: by claiming that he lost all fear he substantiates the notion that he was fearful; by claiming that he now wants to live he substantiates the notion that before he did not want to live – his lack of passion; and by claiming that he will live and get his stolen memories back he substantiates the notion that he had no will to live – his indecision. His ideology inverts, then, to believe in his ability to reclaim autonomy over his self.
II. Post-Morphology

Once Watashi’s character traits invert, his high-tech paranoia recedes and his ideology no longer manifests in the narrative through them. Instead the narrative represents his ideology explicitly in his inability to explain aspects of his self, namely his identity and desire.

Shortly after Watashi experiences this character transformation, he has a long conversation with the Professor that results in his acceptance of his permanent inability to reclaim autonomy over his self, as well as marks his last transformative ideological intersection. This differs from his former ideology because although he believed in his subjection to technology and lack of autonomy over his self, he always thought that he had the ability to free himself and reclaim autonomy. The narrative reflects this in Watashi’s reaction learning that the Scientist input an artificial third cognitive system into his brain through a filmic editing process of his memories, which reads, “I took a gulp of whiskey. This was turning into a nightmare.” (Murakami, 266). Up until this point in the narrative Watashi knew that technology had a grip on his experience of the past, present, and future but he did not know that this grip was physically in his brain. Thus, this moment marks Watashi’s realization of his being a physical cyborg. The Professor then informs him that the System and the Factory are on the quest to extinguish them, leading Watashi to state, “So it’s all a forgone conclusion. I’m screwed. Both sides are after me, and if I stand still my existence is annulled” (Murakami, 273). Watashi realizes in this moment his total loss of both his autonomy over his self.
Watashi’s ideological realization at this point in the narrative consequently incubates another ideological development of identifying his self in its subjected state and not wrestling to control it anymore. He demonstrates this in his statement that follows his realization, “Whatever the reason, I feel pretty much at home with what I am,” for it reflects his comfort in his subject position and identity even though he lacks control over it (Murakami, 273). He furthers the notion that he accepts his subjection and moreover identifies with this version of his self when he assures the Professor that he is glad he told him the truth, “But either way, I’d have wanted to know. At least where my life’s concerned” (Murakami, 287). In this quote, Watashi reflects how he prefers knowing the truth of his permanent lack of autonomy over his self rather than be ignorant of it and keep believing he can reclaim such autonomy. Thus, he rather identify with his self in a state of subjection rather than an idealized self free from subjection. Throughout the rest of the narrative, Watashi occupies the ideology of accepting his subjection and identifying with it.

III. Arabesques of Desire: Boku’s Ideology

The “End of the World” narrative segment’s ideological trial of its protagonist Boku structures his ideological makeup around the belief that everything in the world has meaning. His ideology in the beginning of the narrative is essentially void, as he is new to the Town’s world and thus the only thing he believes in is his own ignorance. Thus, he embarkss upon a mission to understand the world. Throughout his mission he ideologically intersects with all of the narrative’s characters. However, only three of these characters significantly inform his ideological formation: the Gatekeeper, the
Shadow and the Caretaker. The Town’s regulations of personal and social life define all of these character’s ideologies in different ways. The Gatekeeper has the ideology of governance, the Shadow has the ideology of revolt, and the Gatekeeper as the ideology of exemption. After these intersections and at the end of that narrative, his concluding ideology consists of an obsession with the world but a rejection of its governing prescriptions. The following analysis looks at the narrative dynamics of his ideology formation in regard to these three characters.

Boku’s first ideological intersection in the narrative is with the Gatekeeper, who refuses Boku’s search for meaning. This occurs when Boku observes the Gatekeeper and feels a compulsion to ask him, “Why do you round up the beasts at nightfall and send them outside the walls, only to let them back in again in the morning?” to which the Gatekeeper responds, “We do it that way, and that is how it is. The same as the sun rising in the east and setting in the west” (Murakami, 15). The Gatekeeper has the ideology of the Town’s governance, which means that he uses the language of the authorities in order to attempt to impress upon Boku the Town’s principles. In the above exchange of words, the form of the Gatekeeper’s response is a direct answer, but its content differs from such. Instead, its content refuses to answer Boku’s question by claiming that, just as with the sun’s rotation, his job does is subject to forces that he can neither control nor completely explain with rational thought. In effect, the content of his response parallels natural phenomena with cultural phenomena and in turn invalidates the purpose questions of reason have in this world. The Gatekeeper’s response in this moment instantiates his consistent proclamation of the lack of meaning in the world throughout the rest of the narrative. His continues to do this because Boku
refuses to accept this ideological belief. Boku demonstrates his resistance to the Gatekeeper’s ideological prescription when he soon after ponders, “What is one meant to feel here? All is adrift in a vague sense of loss” (Murakami, 37). He refuses to accept things as true without understanding their meaning, which is how he struggles against his “sense of loss.” Furthermore, his ideological intersection with the Gatekeeper, who indirectly insists that he accepts his sense of loss, fuels his curiosity, as he begins questioning more significant questions that pertain to his self. Essentially, his ideological intersection with the Gatekeeper sparks his mission to make sense of everything in the world.

By giving rise to Boku’s narrative mission, his ideological intersection with the Gatekeeper, in turn, plants the seed of his ideology. This seed sprouts in in their second narrative intersection, which occurs when Boku visits the Gatehouse. Throughout his visit his desires clash with those of the Gatekeeper: he wants to talk to the Gatekeeper but the Gatekeeper makes him wait a long time in order to do so; be wants to see his shadow but the Gatekeeper refuses his request and tells him, “forget your shadow”; Boku wants the freedom to go where he pleases but the Gatekeeper tells him that “nobody leaves here” (Murakami, 109). In the Gatekeeper’s ideological intersection with Boku he uses only authoritative language and not tendentious language. As the analysis shows in the cyberpunk narrative with the System and the Professor, both of these languages work together by hybridizing in a character’s speech order to ideologically oppress a given subject, which in these cases is Watashi. The Gatekeeper’s lack of tendentious language makes it so that he clashes with Boku, for he comes across as unhelpful and “not sympathetic” (Murakami, 109). So, once Boku
leaves the Gatehouse he does the opposite of what the Gatekeeper prescribes, as he ponders,

“I think about what the Gatekeeper said. … Why did I cast off my past to come here to the End of the World? What possible event of meaning or purpose could there have been? … Something has summoned me here” (Murakami, 109).

This quote represents the first time in the narrative in which Boku questions his purpose for being in this world and what it means. It also exhibits his conviction in there being objective answer to his questions, contrary to what the Gatekeeper claims. Lastly, it ties in his past with the unknown reason for his being here, as he theorizes an “event of meaning or purpose” to summon him out of his former life and into his present situation in the Town. Thus, this narrative moment marks the beginning of his ideological becoming, which centers around the belief that there meaning in his world. This ideology develops, or, to use the metaphor of the tree, grows, as the narrative progresses and Boku ideologically intersects with the Caretaker and his Shadow.

Boku’s ideological intersection with the Caretaker validates the possibility for him to maintain his ideology within this world. This narrative intersection occurs when Boku leaves travels beyond the Town’s boarders to visit the Caretaker in the woods. When he meets the Caretaker, their discussion demonstrates that the Gatekeepers ideology does not impose itself upon the Caretakers. This is because the Caretaker understands there to be reason for everything. For example, when he tells Boku about his job, he states,

“The Town is lighted by wind … There is a powerful cry in the earth here. We harness it to turn the works … On days with no wind, I tighten the bolts on the fan, grease the shaft, see that the valves and switches do not freeze. And I send the power generated to Town, again by underground.” (Murakami, 280)
In this description of his job the Caretaker gives reasons for doing specific things, such as maintaining the turbine apparatus so it does not freeze and sending power to Town so it can have artificial light. In contrast, as recently inspected, the Gatekeeper claims there is no specific reason for his job or jobs in general in the Town. The Caretaker goes on to claim, “I also know the sounds of the Woods,” which reflects his ability to ascertain the meaning of certain things (Murakami, 281). Again, this contrasts the Gatekeeper’s ideology which does not believe there is meaning in anything. As the scene progresses the Caretaker shows Boku his musical instruments, which Boku observes with great intrigue. The Caretaker states,

“Do you want to know why I collect these things? … No one in the Town takes any interest in them. No one in the Town has the least interest. Everyone has the things they need for living … It is enough that their needs are met. Not me, however. I am very interested in these things. I do not know why. I feel drawn to them. Their forms, their beauty.” (Murakami, 293)

The Caretaker’s explanation of his fascination explicitly contrasts his ideology to those who live in the town, and more specifically the Gatekeeper’s ideology, since he enforces it amongst the subjects of the Town. Furthermore, it defines the dichotomy between the two ideologies through desire and necessity, the former aligning with the Caretaker and the latter with the Caretaker and the Town’s subjects.

When Boku begins to play with the musical instruments, the ensuing conversation between him and the Caretaker demonstrates the alignment of their respective ideologies. This first occurs when the Caretaker says, “Musical instruments are wonderful things. I do not know how to use them, I may not want to use them, I enjoy their beauty. It is enough for me. Is that strange?” and Boku responds, “Musical instrumental are very beautiful. … There is nothing strange about that” (Murakami,
Boku’s response to the Caretaker demonstrates that he aligns himself with the Caretaker’s belief that they are beautiful, and following the logic of the preceding paragraph, that he desires the pleasure that beauty offers. Boku goes on to play the instrument and states, “It seems each button makes a note,” I explain. “Each one is different. Some sounds belong together and some do not,” to which the Caretaker responds, “What do you mean? … Those sounds belong together? … I do not understand” (Murakami, 294). In this exchange it is the Caretaker’s response that demonstrates his alignment with Boku’s ideology, for he is now the one asking the questions that only Boku asks up to this point in the narrative. Thus, Boku demonstrates his ideological alignment with the Caretaker first and then, inversely, the Caretaker demonstrates his ideological alignment with Boku. Their mutual ideology, then, is the belief in desire and meaning.

The impact this ideological intersection has on Boku is the solidification of his ideology in his mind. This becomes clear once he leaves the Power Station with the musical instruments and returns to the Town. Once he is alone with the musical instrument he tries to understand it, as he realizes out, “This is an accordion!” and “one is supposed to work the bellows in a rhythm!” (Murakami, 315). As he progressively understands the accordion and specifically how to play it, his fascination turns into an obsession, which reveals itself when he states, “No melody comes. Still, I press on, hoping to strike some semblance of song” (315). His persistence in face of failure is the result of his ideological intersection with the Caretaker. He understands that he may never come to a complete understanding of its meaning, but he knows that meaning is there for him to strive towards attaining. He demonstrates his ideological
approach to meaning when he ponders, “Will I never be able to recall a tune? Is the accordion on the table to remain beautiful but useless?” (Murakami, 316). He furthermore demonstrates the inherent impossibility of understanding everything, as he later explicitly states, “There is no reading everything of the mind” (Murakami, 378). Regardless of his inability to achieve satisfaction for his desires, he nonetheless embraces his them, for they give him purpose – they give his life meaning – rather than gratification. In other words, Boku desires give him perpetual pleasure rather than instances of contentment.

The form of the arabesque serves as a metaphor in the narrative for Boku’s ideological makeup. The narrative offers this metaphor when it describes the accordion’s wooden boards, which reads, “They bear a filigreed decoration, the intricate green arabesques well preserve.” (Murakami, 315). The arabesque is a decorative form that, in a sense, is the inverse of the hieroglyph, for the hieroglyph does not impress the viewer as meaningful, but a close examination reveals the opposite to be the truth. The arabesque, then, beckons the viewer to understand its signification – to make sense of it as a cohesive image. But, its geometric form “proliferates in fantastic ways” and as a result “confuses categories, releasing the artist into the realms of unbounded fantasy” (Stephen Arch, Seminar). The arabesque form, then, is the false promise of meaning that entices the reader into a limitless fantasy, and thus it serves as a metaphor for Boku’s ideological asymptotic obsession with meaning. The arabesque form also applies to the type of life that Boku chooses for himself at the end of the narrative’s ideological intersection of him and his Shadow.
When Boku ideologically intersects with the Shadow he demonstrates the end of his ideological becoming through his resolute decision to occupy a limbo between the Town’s world and his former world. This final intersection occurs when Boku meets his shadow in the shadow grounds to execute their plan to escape the world through the Pool at the southwest boarder of the Town. However, contrary to what he leads his shadow to think, he decides to only help his shadow escape the Town and continue to remain in it himself. He tells the shadow, “I have discovered the reason the Town exists … This is my world. The Wall is here to hold me in, the River flows through me, the smoke is me burning. I must know why” (Murakami, 398-399). Boku’s explanation reflects his ideological desire and its arabesque form. It achieves this by providing the answer to the question that marks the sprouting of his ideology in his second ideological intersection with the Gatekeeper: what is the reason for him being in this world? The answer he provides is that it is because it is his own creation and thus it provides a medium through which he can understand his self. The development of his question – his desire – is in the form arabesque, for the answer to his first question becomes a question in itself. Following this logic, any answer he finds to his new question will inherently pose another question. This creates a feedback loop of analysis, in which inputs are questions and outputs are answers, that asymptotically works towards a comprehensive analysis of meaning. Thus, since Boku believes that the everything in the town is his own creation and directly relates to his self, this feedback loop of analysis will bring him asymptotically towards an understanding of his self, i.e. will bring him towards but never allow him to fully comprehend his self. The shadow articulates to Boku the asymptotic nature of this feedback loop of meaning, as he states,
“There is no ‘why’ in a world that would be perfect in itself;” which essentially mimics the ideology of the Gatekeeper (Murakami, 399). Boku, however, explains, “Little by little, I will recall things. People and places from our former world, different qualities of light, different songs. And as I remember, I may find the key to my own creation, and to its undoing” (Murakami, 399). This demonstrates that his exploration of meaning within his world does not concern itself with the Town’s world but rather it concerns itself with his former world that his shadow is escaping to. He believes that it will allow him to understand his self – understand Watashi.

IV. Ideology Synthesis: Boku and Watashi

Boku believes that after his shadow goes back to their former world – the cyberpunk narrative’s world – and he is living in the Woods – as the Caretaker does – then he will be able to understand his self by analyzing his physical world. His former self is the Watashi who is a cyborg that operates as a black box feedback loop of data encryption. Boku is also a cyborg, though not in the physical sense like Watashi, for he operates as an analytical feedback loop. Since the narrative concludes with Boku embarking upon his mission to analyze and understand Watashi, he operates as a second-order cyborg. While a first order cyborg is a human feedback loop, a second-order cyborg is a human feedback loop that analyzes another human feedback loop. Thus, Watashi and Boku – and their respective cyberpunk and the fairytale fantasy narrative narratives – are connected through a cybernetic system; the former pertaining to its first-order and the latter to its second-order.
The two protagonists also narratively connect with each other through their parallel endings. In both narratives’ conclusion the protagonists share the same ideology that believes life has meaning. More specifically, their concluding ideology believes that since life has meaning, knowledge is preferable to ignorance. Watashi demonstrates this quality of his ideology when he responds to the Professor, who suggests it might have been better if he did not tell Watashi about his inevitable death, “either way, I’d have wanted to know” (Murakami, 287). Boku demonstrates this same quality in his response to his shadow who states after they collapse from fatigue during their escape, “If I said nothing to you and quietly died, you would have been happy. In your own way,” (Murakami, 385). Boku response reads, “I am not sorry to know. I needed to know,” which shows that he, just like Watashi, prefers to know of the truth even if it reveals unfortunate information (Murakami, 385). This is because they both have ideologies regarding autonomy over the self—over its identity and its desires. The following section will map the ideological progressions of these narratives’ protagonists onto a psychoanalytic framework in order to understand how they impact the cyborg’s psyche. This will produce a psychoanalysis of the cyborg in the novel, and in turn it will reveal the novel’s critique on postmodernist society.
Ch.3 Psychoanalysis

I. Dual Frameworks

Both Watashi and Boku’s ideological developments throughout the novel have do with autonomy over the self. This means that their respective belief systems adjust throughout the novel in regard to their beliefs about having control over their identity through their thoughts and actions. Although these two characters connect in several ways – their narratives end similarly, several aspects of their ideology parallel one another, and most importantly they are parts of the same person – their ideological narratives are different and thus require respective psychoanalytic readings. The following section reads Watashi’s narrative through Jacque Lacan’s framework of the unconscious in his essay “Subverted Subject and the Dialectic of Desire” and Boku’s narrative through Félix Guattari’s reworking of the Lacanian framework in his chapter, “The Role of the Signifier in the Institution” from his book *Molecular Revolution*. When put in conversation with each other, the two psychoanalytic readings clarify the nature of the relationship between the two protagonists, synthesizing the two narratives into a singular novelistic unity. The resulting psychoanalytic narrative cohesion grants this thesis access to the novel’s critique on postmodernist society and the psychical disposition of its cyborg subjects.

II. Jacques Lacan’s Unconscious

Jacques Lacan’s essay, “The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire in the Freudian Unconscious”, provides a theoretical framework of the unconscious by reworking it through the rhetoric of semiology. At the crux of this
framework is the subject and its linguistic relation to desire. Lacan theorizes that the subject becomes a subject through language and body – through the two signifying realms of meaning and enjoyment. This is because when the subject uses language it passes through the signifying chain of meaning, then through the signifying chain of enjoyment, and then loops back around and passes through both signifying chains again in reverse order, moving to vector’s end-point of self-identity. More specifically, the subject enters the realm of meaning through its ideal-ego, enters the realm of enjoyment through its desire, exits the realm of enjoyment and re-enters the realm of meaning through its fantasy, and exits the realm of meaning and achieves self-identity through its ego-ideal. Since castration is at the end of the signifying chain of enjoyment, and this realm of enjoyment constitutes the reason for the subject’s speech act, castration regulates the split formation of the subject. It achieves this by regulating the subject’s desire and constructing fantasy to allow for the identification with the Other in the symbolic order. In simpler terms, the reason for the subject’s speech act is its fear of castration. This is also a drive towards jouissance – the opposite of castration. Lacan defines jouissance as the “being of non-being,” and claims that it “is how I comes on the scene as a subject … by a discourse in which it is death that sustains existence” (Lacan, 679). A less theoretical explanation of jouissance, then, is a drive towards death, a drive towards the state before the subject enters the world and experiences the trauma that induces a fear of castration. This state is a perfect, homeostatic state, void of pain and fear.

Shifting focus to the realm of meaning, the ego-ideal formation, also known as the mirror function, facilitates the process of castration because it constitutes the
subject’s identification with the Other. It achieves this through transforming its ideal-ego – the spectacular image of our ideal rather than real self – into the ego-ideal – the image we see as our real self. In other words, the subject internalizes the ideal-ego through the ego-ideal formation and in turn it identifies with the Other. As a result, the subject does not realize its alienation due to the Other’s construction of its self-identity, for by internalizing the ideal-ego it thinks of it as its own and not the Others. This facilitates the splitting of the subject because it creates the “illusion of the self as the autonomous agency which is present from the very beginning as the origin of its acts: this imaginary self-experience is for the subject the way to misrecognize his radical dependence on the big Other, on the symbolic order as his decentered cause” (Zizek, 105). So, simply put, the subject becomes a subject through the castration of language facilitated by the ego-ideal formation, or, rather, the subject is inherently split because it because language castrates it in its internalization of the ideal-ego. Lacan justifies this claim by explaining that the catastrophe of language is the inability to articulate the true reason for given speech acts, as he states, “Man’s desire is the Other’s desire [le désir de l’homme est le désir de l’Autre]…. [I]t is qua Other that man desires (this is what provides the true scope of human passion)” (Lacan, 690). So, in less theoretical terms, the subject is split because it is unable to articulate the reason for its speech act.
Lacan’s Graph of Desire

III. Watashi the Castrato

In the beginning the novel Watashi believes that his cyborg disposition allows him to counter his subjection to technology and the discourses its propogates and in turn alleviate his high-tech paranoia. Since he naturally does not understand his own desires, his initial ideology makes him minimize the degree to which he does not understand his self as well as its importance. As the novel progresses, his ideological intersections force him to realize that, contrary to his initial belief, his cyborg disposition facilitates his subjugation to technology and the cultural and political powers that control it. Although he realizes this, he nonetheless still struggles against it by wanting to understand his desires and reclaim autonomy of his self. By the end of
the novel he capitulates to his subjugation, as he accepts his inability to free himself from its oppression it, and in turn attempts to compensate for his lost self by identifying with his current self rather than his ideal self.

Watashi’s initial ideology of his subjecthood conforms to Lacan’s theory of the unconscious. He comprehends his self-identity as his own and not the Others, alienating his subjecthood from his self. This is why he believes he understands his own desires. For example, when he is counting change in the elevator he claims, “Repetition can improve your technique and refine your style. If for no other reason than this, I always keep my hands busy” (Murakami, 4). In this quote, Watashi articulates his desires, which Lacan’s theory understands as inherently inaccurate. Furthermore, Lacan’s theory shows that the impossibility for the subject to articulate the reason behind its desires is what constitutes the splitting of the subject. Thus, this quote demonstrates Watashi’s misrecognition of his dependence on the Other and his split subjecthood. He continues, “If the third sum corresponded to either sums I’d feel better. … Under the peculiar conditions I found myself, I may have been anxious, not to mention a little over-confident. That was my first mistake. Anyway, an accurate recount was all I needed to remedy the situation, to put things right” (Murakami, 6). This quote demonstrates, to a greater degree than the previous one, his belief that he can understand the reason for his desires. He believes his peculiar situation is responsible for his anxiety and that an accurate recount will make him feel comfortable and in control. Just as before, Lacan’s theory claims that this explanation, if not wrong, only scratches the surface of the deeper truth. Watashi also tries to comprehend the reason for his lust for the granddaughter since it confuses him.
Watashi also demonstrates his attempt to establish a reason for his desires when he discovers his sexual attraction to the granddaughter. Upon his realization he states, “I am demanded to assume a posture toward her. I could end up sleeping with her. That is probably where all the confusion comes in” (Murakami, 8). After trying to reason through his desire, he justifies his reasoning by saying, “I don’t get turned on by that many women. If anything, I think of myself as more the non-turn-on type. So when I do get turned on, I don’t trust it; I have to investigate the source” (Murakami, 9). Watashi’s justification of his reasoning through his confusion explicitly represents his ignorance that he is unable to articulate his desires because they belong to the Other and not himself. The narrative underscores this interpretation in Watashi’s suggestion, “In this sense, sleeping with fat women can be a challenge. There must be as many paths of human fat as there are ways of human death” (Murakami, 8). Watashi does not consciously understand that the reason for his attraction to the granddaughter is his fear of castration, which the explication of Lacan’s theory exhibits is also his death drive – his drive towards jouissance. The quote entangles death with his attraction, but Watashi is seemingly unaware of the reason for this analogical form of understanding. Thus, his statement offers the Lacanian reason for his desire while also representing his ignorance of this reason. Furthermore, it juxtaposes his reasoning with his ignorance, underscoring not just the futility of his attempt to comprehend the reason for his desire but also his blindness to such futility.

After Watashi’s ideological narrative intersection with the Professor he understands that his cyborg disposition facilitates his subjugation to technology and the cultural and political powers that control it. Although he realizes this, he nonetheless
still struggles against it by wanting to understand his desires and reclaim autonomy over his self. He demonstrates this when he is on his subterranean mission with the granddaughter and he gets an erection while looking at her. Upon realizing his arousal, he states, “I have a hard on. Which, halfway down the ladder, is what I noticed. Just great. Why now? Why didn’t I get an erection when I needed one?” (Murakami, 205). This shows that although at this point in the narrative he understands his cyborg disposition’s subjection to technology and the powers have autonomy over it, which in turn have power over the Other of society, he still asks the questions that regard his desires that confuse him. He does not accept that his subjection to the Other makes it so that he can never understand his desires because he is a split subject. Not much later in the narrative, he asks the granddaughter if she wears her earrings while she showers to which she responds in the affirmative and goes on to ask him if he finds it sexy. Watashi is frustrated that he asks her this and goes on to reflect, “Why did I have to go and bring up the subject” (Murakami, 206). Again, Watashi asks a question that Lacan’s theory posits he can never answer. Thus, although Watashi understands his cyborg disposition’s subjection to technology and the societal powers with autonomy over the Other, he still does not realize its subversion and split nature.

When the Professor informs Watashi that he is a physical cyborg and that the technology in his brain edits his past memories and sets a time limit on his future, he finally realizes the complete lack of autonomy he has over his self. Also, when the Professor explains to Watashi the reason that he is the sole survivor of the technoscience experiment because he cohesively and rigidly structures his unconscious while the other subjects of the experiment do not. In the words of the Professor,
“Yours was the least random, most coherent. Well-plotted, even perfect. It could have passed for a novel or a movie. The other twenty-five were different. They were all confused, murky, ramblin’, a mess. … I thought and thought, now why should that be? And I came to one conclusion”: this was somethin’ you yourself made. You gave structure to your images.” (Murakami, 268)

This confirms the readings of Watashi’s subjecthood so far in the narrative, for the Professor is suggesting, using Lacanian rhetoric, that Watashi cohesively structures his self-identity. This means that he fixes his ego-ideal through a totalizing internalization of his ideal-ego. The other subjects, on the other hand, have “murky” ego-ideals because they fragmentally and incompletely internalize their ideal-egos. In this sense, Watashi unconsciously identifies with the Other to such an extent that the Professor claims he completely alienates his unconscious self-identity from his subjecthood and thus they are two completely different identities. The Professor validates this analysis when he subsequently states, “I can think of many possible causes […] Childhood trauma, misguided upbringin’, over-objectified ego […] Whatever it was made you extremely self-protective, made you harden your shell” (Murakami, 268). The reasons that the Professor give fit in perfectly to Lacan’s framework of the unconscious, as “childhood trauma” and “misguided upbringin’” pertain to the fear of castration and “over-objectified ego” pertains to the ego-ideal and its symbolization in self-identity. In sum, when Watashi receives this information he realizes that the Other constructs his self and his desires.

Watashi’s realization corresponds to what Lacan defines as truth, and as a result he stops idealizing the Other and accepts his self-identity. Lacan’s definition of truth reads, “Truth is nothing but what knowledge can learn that it knows by putting its ignorance to work” (Lacan, 675). Watashi, then, is aware of the effects of the Lacanian
subversion of the subject and identification with the Other, which is his inability to know his real self as well as his lack of autonomy over his self. By having the truth and understanding that all of his knowledge is actually ignorance, Watashi stops trying to understand his desire, halts his ego-ideal formation, and accepts the Other’s construction of his self-identity as his self.

The narrative shows that he stops trying to understand his desire several times after he realizes the Lacanian truth of his situation. One instance of this is when he is whistling a song and the granddaughter asks him, “Why do you want to whistle a song like that?,” to which he responds, “ Beats’s me” (Murakami, 309). Before his realization he would have given a reason such as the one he gave for counting in the first chapter, which was that it was a process that allows him to kill time. Instead, he simply admits he does not know since he knows he the nature of his desire is foreign to him. The narrative also represents his new relationship with desire when he the granddaughter takes a shower in his apartment and hangs her clothes in the bathroom. Upon seeing her clothes, Watashi states, “I never did like underwear and stockings hanging in the bathroom. Don’t ask me why, I just don’t” (Murakami, 328). In this moment he explicitly states that he does not want to be asked the question “why” because he now knows it is impossible for him to answer any question interrogating the reason for something. So, after Watashi’s realization in his last ideological intersection with the Professor, he stops analyzing his desire.

The narrative also shows that he halts his ego-ideal formation and accepts the Other’s construction of his self-identity as his self several times after Watashi’s realization. This first occurs when he looks in the mirror and reflects, “I looked myself
in the mirror. Not bad. The combination of the navy blazer with burnt orange shirt did smack of yuppie ad exec, but better than troglodyte” (Murakami, 341). By looking into a mirror Watashi explicitly calls to mind the Lacanian mirror stage, which corresponds to Lacan’s ego-ideal formation. In this process, the subject looks in the mirror and they see the image of their idealization of the Other, or rather their ideal-ego. In turn, they internalize this image as they believe it is their own and it molds into their ego-ideal. When Watashi looks into the mirror he does not see an idealized image of the Other, but rather he sees an image that he does not necessarily want, as he says it looks “not bad” and that although it “did smack of yuppie ad exec” it was still better than a caveman. He sees his non-idealized image in the mirror, which represents his halting of the ego-ideal formation and its idealization of the Other. The narrative also represents his halting of his idealization of the Other when he reflects upon his past,

“When I was younger, I thought I could be someone else. … I’d tune in on a better life, something more suited to my true self. … But like a boat with a twisted rudder, I kept coming back to the same place. I wasn’t going anywhere. I was myself, waiting on the shore for me to return.” (Murakami, 341-342)

In this moment Watashi shows that he realizes he can never actually become someone else, and that by trying to do distances him from his self. Lacan also demonstrates that the two parts of the split subject correspond to the different pronouns “I” and a “me”. The last sentence of the quote claims that by trying to be someone else the “me” distances itself from the “I”, but that the “I” is always waiting for the “me” to return. Thus, Lacan’s splitting of the subject’s pronouns validates this analysis of Watashi’s statement. Lastly, the narrative shows that he accepts the Other’s construction of his self-identity as his self when he states, “everything – this life I was losing – was me. And I couldn’t be any other self but my self” (Murakami, 341). In this statement
Watashi demonstrates that he believes that regardless of whether his self is not his own construction, that he must accept it as his self because the real version is inaccessible to him. Thus, by the end of the novel, Watashi succumbs to the notion that he does not have autonomy over, stops idealizing the Other and accepts his current self-identity as his self.

Although Watashi halts the Lacanian subversion of the subject and identification with the Other he cannot undo his past subversion and identification with the Other. However, the Professor tells him that once he leaves the cyberpunk futuristic world and enters the fairytale fantasy End of the World – Boku’s narrative world – he can “reclaim all [he had] lost,” and that, “What’s lost never perishes” (Murakami, 396). Watashi details further on this statement when he claims,

“I might actually create a new self. I could become happy, or at least less miserable. And dare I say it, I could become a better person. But that had nothing to do with me now. That would be another self. For now, I was an immutable, historical fact.” (Murakami, 342)

These two quotes demonstrate that Watashi is not able to reclaim his former self that he alienates by idealizing the Other and trying to be someone else. Furthermore, it exhibits that he is unable to reclaim his self – to counter his subversion – in his current life. By halting the Lacanian subversion, he simply becomes an “immutable, historical fact” that will never be able to change. Change is only possible in the alternate reality of the End of the World.

IV. Félix Guattari’s Unconscious

Félix Guattari’s framework of the unconscious in his chapter, “The Role of the Signifier in the Institution” from his book Molecular Revolution, critiques and reworks
Jacque Lacan’s framework of the unconscious in his “Subversion of the Subject and Dialectic of Desire”. Unlike Lacan’s its predecessor, Guattari’s framework conceives of the self, and not the Other, as in control of desire, as autonomous and powerful, and as capable of productive change that reclaimed a total awareness of the self. Guattari’s theory, then, contrary to Lacan’s theory, offers a psychoanalytic framework through which Boku’s ideological progression and his narrative conclusion makes sense.

The reason why Guattari’s framework of the unconscious more applicable than Lacan’s is because the two narratives segments represent autonomy and psychological change differently. In the cyberpunk narrative conclusion, Watashi does not make a decision because he lacks the ability to change for the better. This thesis applies Lacan’s framework to this narrative segment because it does not conceive of productive change in which the subject can undo their previous subversions. In the fairytale fantasy narrative conclusion, contrastingly, Boku makes a decision because he believes he is able to facilitate productive change. His belief corresponds to the Professor’s claim in the cyberpunk narrative that Watashi will be able to reclaim his lost, castrated self once he is in the End of the World. The agreement between the two narrative conclusions suggests that Boku’s decision does in fact allows him to understand his former self – Watashi’s lost self. This thesis applies Guattari’s framework to this narrative segment because it reworks Lacan’s theory in order to incorporate productive change that works towards attaining awareness of the self.

Guattari’s framework of the unconscious critiques and reworks Lacan’s by opposing what he refers to as his non-signifying semiotics to Lacan’s signifying semiotics. Guattari claims that Lacan’s signifying semiotics consists of a rigid one to
one relationship between signifiers and signifieds. Furthermore, he claims that “signifying machines” promote this form of semiotics and creates a world of “dominant signification” in which institutional structures enforce their subjective signification as objective (Guattari, 76). The crux of Guattari’s critique of Lacan’s framework is that it one of these signifying machines and as a result it perpetuates institutional hierarchies of signification and oppresses individuals in marginal positions of desire. Guattari defines his non-signifying semiotics against signifying semiotics, as he claims it breaks down signifying semiotic’s hierarchy of signification. This reorganization of signification allows for signs and things to “engage one another independently of subjective control that agents of individual utterance claim to have over them” (Guattari, 76). Additionally, it makes the illusion of the human subject vanish by calling attention to the its fictive construction by the political and economic systems that empower the institution. In turn, the self supplants the human subject’s position at the center of the unconscious framework, granting autonomy to the individual rather than to the institution.

Guattari goes on to argue in favor an interpretative analysis of the unconscious that uses his non-signifying semiotics as a framework. He calls this mode of interpretation “schizo-analysis” as a semiotic and social resistance to the institution’s oppression by the institution (Guattari, 77). It achieves this by giving equal acceptance to all desire regardless if it makes sense or not and in turn allowing the individual to understand the components of their unconscious and their relationship to their unconscious as a whole. Thus, schizo-analysis grants the individual autonomy over their unconscious because it allows them to productively work towards to a pure
awareness of their self. The following exploration will apply Guattari’s schizo-analysis framework to Boku’s ideological progression and concluding decision in the fairytale fantasy narrative segment.

V. Boku: The Schizo- Analyst

In the beginning of the novel Boku does not believe anything besides his own ignorance and thus tries to understand his world. As the novel progresses his ideological intersections incubate his belief that there is meaning in the world and there is a reason for his being there – that he has a purpose. By the end of the novel he believes that by living in between his former world and his new world – between the two narrative worlds – he can analyze the dynamics of the latter’s physical space in order to understand his former self. Boku, then, follows a linear and simple ideological progression, which is that he progressively believes that there is meaning in the world and eventually believes that this meaning pertains to his former self, or, rather, Watashi’s lost, castrated self.

Boku’s ideology adopts a Guittarian perspective when it incorporates the belief that meaning in the Town pertains to his former self. In the beginning Boku believes there is meaning in the world, but he does not understand the reason for this belief. This demonstrates that although he desires to understand the world and to access its meaning, his does not understand his desire, which alienates him from his self. As the narrative develops, he progresses towards believing that the Town is an externalization of his unconscious and that through interpreting it he can develop an understanding of his former self. When he does eventually believe this, he adopts a Guattarian
perspective, for his interpretations of the fragments of the town in order his cohesive
unconscious and self corresponds to, in Guattarian rhetoric, a molecular becoming,
which is a productive process of increasingly understands one’s self by understanding
its individual components. Boku’s final decision to occupy a limbo space in between
the two narrative worlds of the Town and futuristic Tokyo corresponds to his complete
adoption of Guattari’s shizo-analysis perspective. Since he occupies this place in order
to interpret the Town’s physical space and in turn understand his former self, he is
engaging in a molecular becoming in which he increasingly understands his self by
making sense of its components.

VI. Psychoanalytic Synthesis: The Cyborg’s Counter-Subversion

Watashi is unable to understand his self from due to his cyborg disposition in
postmodern society. Even though he is understands his lack of autonomy over his self,
he is not able to reclaim his lost self. Simply put, Watashi can only slow down or stop
his alienation from his self, but he can never reverse its effects. Boku, however, is able
to reverse Watashi’s alienation through a schizo-analysis of his unconscious’s
components, allowing him to progressively become aware of his former self – of
Watashi’s self. Boku, then, reclaims autonomy over the self and the ability to
understand desire for Watashi. In Guattarian rhetoric, Boku revolts against the
bureaucratic institutions that subject Watashi to a state of psychological oppression.
The psychoanalytical reading of the two protagonists’ relationship reveals the unitary
narrative that the novel’s two narrative segments construct. In sum, Boku represents
the part of Watashi’s brain that is socially isolate, separate from the Lacanian Other
and, in socio-historical rhetoric, from cultural and political discourses, in which the he can approach and become aware of his self.
Conclusion

In postmodernist society the cyborg is the site of psychological conflict between individuals and socio-political powers. This conflict occurs in both the informational and the physical realms. Regarding the former, technology complexifies to such a degree that individual’s are no longer able to grasp its dynamics nor its power. This oppresses the cyborg in a position of inferior knowledge. In regard to the latter, highly complex technology hybridizes with the human organism and strips it of autonomy over its self. Technology takes control over the individual’s autonomy over their self and facilitates their socio-political oppression.

Murakami’s *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* simulates the conflict of psychological agency at the site of the cyborg. In its “Hard-Boiled Wonderland” narrative segment it represents postmodernity’s development of the cyborg and its resulting oppression of the human psyche. In doing so, it critiques postmodern society as facilitating the technological subversion of the cyborg’s autonomy over their self. In its “End of the World” narrative segment it offers a way for the cyborgs to counter its psychological oppression by understanding its self.

Boku represents the part of Watashi’s brain that is socially isolate, separate from society’s cultural and political discourses, or, in the Lacanian rhetoric, the Other. In the narrative conclusion, Boku moves to a new psychical space in between the socially isolate psychological world and the social cyberpunk physical world, occupying a chronotopic limbo that is ideal for searching for the self. In this space, Boku reclaims agency for Watashi by understanding his self – Watashi – and subverting the technological grip that cultural and political discourses have on the cyborg’s psyche.
Although the narrative’s conclusion suggests that Watashi will never live again, the novel’s unitary narrative nonetheless points towards a way the cyborg can use its own technology to understand itself and reclaim agency. The cyborg, then, can subvert the hierarchies of power and knowledge and liberate itself from its psychological oppression. Murakami’s novel suggests the cyborg can control its own subversion and use it to wage a counter-subversion.
Bibliography:


