

Murakami Haruki: The Rising of Terrorism in the Absence of Myth, Tradition, and Placement

Abstract

The aftermath of the Tokyo Gas Attack in 1995 introduced terrorism on a scale that had never been seen before in Japan, and invoked the essential fears of its society. The darkness, despair, loneliness, and death that enveloped the country was stifling, not unlike that of post 9/11 in the United States. Murakami, Haruki, through his novels *1Q84* (2009) and *Kafka on the Shore* (2002), does his best to relate why these incidents of terror arose. His book *Underground* (1997), a nonfiction of testimonies and interviews, gives a sense of what has transcended upon the victims. Japan, in a post-World War II state of identity crisis, forsakes tradition in favor of a Westernized society. Murakami's works point to this Westernization, which has led to the destruction of individuality in the East. In my essay, I will show you the way in which Murakami shows that through the desecration of tradition and the dethroning of the Emperor Hirohito, Japan and society in a global sense gives rise to the need for terrorism. The terrorism expressed in Japan has become the violent crutch as individuals forcefully try to find their place in society. The voice of terrorism is never silent but the Westernized assimilated Japan refuses to listen to it clearly. Terrorism, in this sense, has become the cure for Japanese society's inadequacy of tradition, sense of belonging, voice, and identity.

Events

Before going into criticism on both *1Q84* (2009), *Kafka on the Shore* (2002), and his nonfiction work *Underground* (1997) it is best to look at a number of events that led

Murakami to write his novels based on tradition and terrorism. *Chikatetsu Sarin Jiken* (Subway sarin incident) happened on March 20th, 1995. The terrorist attack took place on multiple subway rail lines around the Tokyo area during the morning rush of commuting businessmen and students, resulting in an increased number of victims. The attack resulted in thirteen deaths, fifty critical injuries, and afflicted thousands with vision and breathing problems. The attack focused on the morning trains for the maximum amount of casualties it could inflict; it stood as a statement against the industrialization that had arisen due to Western imperialism that spread in Japan after WWII. Even long after the attack, many have been left with a form of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Individuals from the Aum Shinrikyo (represented as Sakigake in *IQ84*) targeted four subway lines. These events led to the demonization of that religious organization by the media, but oddly enough not by the individuals that were affected.

These attacks have been depicted in a multitude of ways, just as the events of 9/11 in the United States had evoked controversy. In Western society, both the country of origin and its culture are considered to be at fault. Edward Said states this in his work *Orientalism* (1978), making clear that the West uses the term Orient to categorize the East and, in doing so, applies its Westernized logic, rules, and further assimilates them into their culture. The 9/11 event in this way reflects the direct difference between such assimilation of the East and West. In turn, the West deemed that the East became a demonized nation of terrorists in the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attack. When comparing these events to the Subway Sarin Incident, the Japanese involved reflected mostly upon the why and did not lash out in anger against the attackers. They could understand wanting to become a part of a group, wanting

to belong, realizing the lack of identity within their own society and the identity that a religious occult such as Aum, while negative, does possess. This realization gives credit to the notion that the Japanese lacked a concrete identity after their Western assimilation. This is seen in the novel *1Q84* (2009) with the parallel between Asahara Shoko (leader of Aum) and Emperor Hirohito.

Terrorism and *1Q84*

In *1Q84* (2009), the terrorist leader Shoko and the late Emperor of Japan Hirohito gave an identity to their subjects through religion and tradition. The leader of the religious and terrorist occult Aum, gave an identity to his followers by providing a place to belong outside of Westernized society. Aum formed both physical and mental boundaries, through which practicing individuals fostered their own ideas, research, habits, and carried on traditional practices of the Aum religion, distancing themselves from all of society that had been assimilated through Western imperialism. Hirohito himself practiced a much similar practice to Shoko in his declaration to having ties with the Goddess *Amaterasu*. His divinity granted him the ability to shepherd his sovereign subjects by giving them both a tradition based on their myths and a cultural belonging. As Natsume Soseki states in his *Theory of Literature* (1907):

I am a sovereign subject of the nation of Japan. Simple unhappiness is not a reason for leaving Japan. I, who possess the honors and privileges of a sovereign subject of Japan, inhabit this land together with some fifty million others and desire, at the very least, to uphold my fifty-millionth share of those honors and privileges (p. 48).

This notion of not only belonging but also being needed in order to fulfill a duty to the country and its tradition is the very basis in which Shoko and Emperor Hirohito were able to cultivate a place in society where people wanted to belong. The individuals of Japan wanted to belong to something outside of Western assimilation, their simple desire to belong to their own culture, have their own unassimilated traditions outside the imperialistic view of Western law and society. This strong need and desire to be away from the imperialistic view of Western law and society is the very means of how and why terrorism in Japan arose. In this sense, the death of the nation through Hirohito's abdication caused a need for terrorism to arise in order to give new identity outside of the culture that had fallen under Western control. Reiji Andō makes the parallel between Hirohito's abdication and the nation's death apparent in his article '*1Q84' O dō yomu ka* (2009) (How to Read 1Q84).

Religion and Terrorism

Andō depicts the death of a nation from the death of the emperor. This depiction plays off the idea that at Japan's surrender in August 1945, the resigning Emperor Hirohito abdicated his family ties with the Goddess *Amaterasu*. This desecration is described in *Kafka on the Shore* (2002), by the character Colonel Sander: "God only exists in people's minds. Especially in Japan, God's always been kind of a flexible concept. Look at what happened after the war. Douglas MacArthur ordered the divine emperor to quit being God, and he did, making a speech that he was just an ordinary person" (p. 286). Flexibility of religion makes the concept of identity also flexible, as religion is a part of identity. This plays into a globalized perspective when looking at terrorism in the post 9/11 scenario. The

supposed terrorist, Shoko, in this case used fundamentalist theology as a basis for control over his subjects. Likewise, Hirohito used his "divine" power to control and rule over Japan. When Hirohito denounced his own divinity, he denounced what it meant to be Japanese at the time of post-war Japan. This same argument is made by Shibata Shōji and voiced in his *Nakagami Kenji to Murakami Haruki: Datsu 60 nendai teki sekai no yukue* (2009), which describes how WWII left the Japanese with a sense of emptiness. This emptiness comes from the lack of having a concrete identity and place where they, as individuals, can belong outside of the Westernized country of Japan. This cultural belonging falls under the rule of the patriarchal lines, firstly by the Hirohito and his divine right to rule and secondly by Shoko in his parallel to the Emperor, recreating the patriarch in his attempt to give a place and identity to his followers.

A Patriarchal Society

This attenuation is directly seen when the mentally disabled Nakata murders Johnny Walker (who is also Kafka's father) in the novel, it denotes the death of patriarchal rule over Japan. This death then implies that Japan no longer has an identity once the traditional patriarchal rule has been dissolved. However, the parallel that Shibata fails to remark upon is the fact that patriarchal rule continues in *IQ84* (2009) with the presence of Aomame's unborn child. Through her unborn child the patriarch will continue, begotten from the contact Aomame has made with the occult leader of *IQ84* (2009), she is to bear a child that will continue on the tradition of Japan. This is a direct relation to Shoko who wishes to rebirth himself as Emperor. While contact is made between them, her pregnancy is a miraculous conception as sex never occurs. Rather, it is referred to as a gate opening. This

gate opening represents a path that can be taken to reintroduce traditional values outside of Westernization. The gate also represents the actual physical barrier erected by the occult of Aum, showing their secretive seclusions by cutting themselves off from society, in an attempt to rebuild what they had lost in a post WWII Japan. The sub-quasi 1984 in which Aomame finds herself--miraculously pregnant--corresponds to the *Izanagii Izanami* traditional myth.

Izanagi and Izanami are the original representations of Japan in the *Yomi no Kuni* myth. In these myths, the father Izanagi gives birth to the Goddess *Amaterasu*, *Tsukuyomi*, and *Susano-o*. This idea of a father giving birth leads the reader of *IQ84* (2009) to question these patriarchal lines. Aomame's non-sexual contact with the occult leader recreated the patriarchal line needed for Japan to regain an identity. It is through myth that tradition is continued, reinstating an identity that is relatable to the Japanese, away from the Westernization and its desecration of such tradition caused by Hirohito's forced abdication of his divinity. It is through terrorist activities, both in the novel and reality that gave tradition a chance to resurface. Shoko's Aum occult tried to fight against the imperialism that has consumed Japan. The demonstration against a commuting train filled with businessmen elucidates Shoko's desire to destroy capitalism, while instilling the reconstruction of traditional values. In this sense, Shoko indicates several historical factors. First, Japan's isolationist period where foreign influence was kept to a minimum in an attempt to preserve Japan's heritage and cultural identity. Secondly, Shoko's desire to rid Japan of industrialism and capitalism, removing the businessmen and replacing them with more traditional roles in society, as seen in his own sanctuary, where people lived in a way

Shoko felt was a more natural way of life by farming, researching, meditating, and focusing on the removal of Western society. The Aum occult in this way uses terrorism as a rebirthing of both religion and tradition to bring about change in Japan.

The New Emperor

It is only through Aomame becoming pregnant that she is able to finally move forward with Tengo (her childhood love), "hand in hand, [making] their way out of the forest" (Murakami, 2011, p. 1136). Her pregnancy reinstates the traditional myth that was lost by Hirohito's abdication and recreates a position for the new Emperor, her child, bringing Japan back to its natural order. However, the little people of the novel, who embody the West, wish to use the new child as a means to continue their imperialism, recreating a puppet Emperor as Hirohito had become after his abdication of his divine heritage. The forests in Murakami's novels are described as "labyrinths," as also seen in *Kafka on the Shore* (2002). Leaving this forest means that the two of them have overcome the obstacles set before them: the loss of identity. Sakigake, (*1Q84's* terrorist organization), who wishes to perpetuate their control through the literary device that Murakami names as "the little people", constructs this labyrinth. The little people's labyrinth obstructs the process of finding their identity. The West, through industrialization, has obscured the route for Japan to navigate its way back to their tradition. Terrorism, such as Aum's Tokyo Gas Attack, breaks the imperialist spell placed by the West and allows society to reflect upon the *why* of the terrorist incident.

Analysis

Murakami's story could have taken place in nearly any culture and any city. From *Toshi shōsetsu kara sekai bungaku e* (2010) (From Urban Novels to World Literature):

Such fictitious occurrences that explore the relationship between religious cults and lost freedoms, not only do they occur in Japan, that are events capable of happening in any city all over the globe. In this sense, Murakami perhaps has attempted to create an urban novel that could be considered world literature (Matsumoto, p. 211).

What Matsumoto Kenichi means is that this narration in *Underground* (1997) could occur anywhere, and so could the Aum terrorists attack. The occult Sakigake of *IQ84* (2009) is neither a representation of the culture nor the backlash seen towards it. In this way, neither Aum nor Sakigake are representatives of the society, but instead a creation of society.

Kenichi feels that the terrorist events are not specific to only Japan. The subway attack that Aum designed could have occurred in any country that had lost its cultural identity through assimilation. Such similarities are seen with 9/11 or the Munich Massacre of 1972. Both attacks were motivated by the notion that each culture had been imposed upon by Western imperialism. Through this assimilation, the identity of the culture had become attenuated and by such the use of terrorism was needed as a way to state their dissatisfaction with Western influence and their cultural heritage having been lost.

As Matthew Strecher rightfully points out in his *A Report on the State of Murakami Studies* (2011):

That in *IQ84* Murakami has added a more global perspective to the central thesis of *Underground*, namely that it is both dangerous and self-delusional to view terrorism

and religious fanaticism in the simplistic terms of "evil people doing bad things to good people (p. 865).

In other words, *IQ84* (2009) has expanded the Aum incident to a global stage. In addition, *IQ84* (2009) also touches upon the traditions that led towards this globalization of terrorism. The destruction of tradition itself led to the increased "need" for both control and security. This same idea is reflected in Daniel Metraux's *Religious Terrorism in Japan: The Fatal Appeal of Aum Shinriko* (1995). He states the believers:

Form part of an ongoing historical process and what is new about them is not to be found in their content so much as in their emergence as socio-religious organizations with the aim of reworking and revitalizing of traditional beliefs and practices for the purpose of ensuring their relevance to daily life at a time of unprecedented change in all spheres (p. 1141).

This can be broken down in several ways in comparison to *IQ84* (2009) and *Kafka on the Shore* (2002). The historical process mentioned afore is the fact that Japan was once under rule of Hirohito, and his abdication from the position of God left the nation in flux. New Religion like Aum Shinrikyō appealed to younger generations because they broke the social norm and gave purpose to their everyday individual lives. New Religions, like Aum Shinrikyō, rose out of social necessity to give a place to individuals dissatisfied with the Westernization that Japan had undergone. Additionally, Japan's economic depression of the 1920's and the Western occupation post WWII attributed to the rise in need for a traditional belonging, a need for individual and small-group identity. Such factors isolated the Japanese, and their need to assimilate under Western pressure drove individuals to look

elsewhere to belong. In this way, individuals came together under the theology of New Religions.

New Religions

New Religions allowed for a greater focus on groups with only a small number of members and differed from Christianity which was promoted after the Shinto State of Japan had been dissolved. These new religions relied heavily on religions of Shinto and Buddhism, allowing for a practice of traditional religions through their new adaptations. This circumvented large and ambiguous religions that had no sense of individuality but rather were a collective group. Within New Religion, the smaller number of members gave a greater sense of individuality and accomplishment. The reinvention of traditional beliefs transcends the boundaries of mere cultural tradition, and branches off into the sociological aspect of culture. In Japan, there is an order in society that revolves around completing certain tasks before another can be undertaken. For example, a university degree is often followed by low-level entry positions, followed by years of work before the individual is allowed to express their own views, create projects, or design experiments. The New Religion called Aum Shinrikyō, shortened to Aum, let many young, prestigious, and promising individuals into their group with access to technology, money, and the freedom to complete their own research. A part of the appeal of Aum was the ability to quickly rise and be recognized within a group. Their "relevance to daily life," as Metraux states, refers directly to the fact that individuals felt constrained by the capitalistic and industrialized West. The ability to rise inside the work force became contingent on their acceptance of not having an identity, becoming a single unthinking entity of the industrialized West. While

some joined Aum to break free from the conformity of Western society, others joined to replace or supplement the lack of tradition that was evident in their lives.

Metraux continues, declaring that "it became a haven for a few members of a younger generation...it offered members a way out of the anomie of modern Japan . . . [and] thrived because of the perceived need of some Japanese for a degree of spirituality in their lives" (p. 1149). It is plausible that they wished for New Religion since others, such as the government and industrialized society, were too conformist in thought. Benjamin Dorman brings to light in his *SCAP's Scapegoat? The Authorities, New Religion, and a Postwar Taboo* (2004) the generalized idea that New Religion was not policed, and that the authorities "were virtually blind to, or disinterested in, the possibility that a religious group such as Aum could initiate terrorist acts" (p. 107). Dorman fails to admit, however, the need for such religions. These New Religions were, at the time—and possibly still—needed to cope with the fall of the countries' own tradition. This can be seen not only in Japan but also in a globalized perspective, such as in the rise in power of the Irish Republic Army, and in the continual war between Israel and Palestine. Each faction involved in these conflicts is fighting for a home and an identity. Each fought or continues to fight against the assimilation that Westernization has imposed upon them.

Their traditions are displaced in the same way that Japan's are. Through imperialistic conquest, the country being conquered turns to terrorism in an attempt to fight against the occurring assimilation. Japan, in the same regards, created New Religions in order to protect their individuality and identity. However, while most New Religions were non-violent, some like Aum wished to send a much louder message to the nation rather than

dissimilating from society entirely. Terrorism--which in itself can be fluid in definition--can be aroused by the notion of nationalism, belonging, and identity. Such nationalism has been replaced by a more Western notion. The dissolution of tradition has entrapped these individuals; the need for tradition and identity outside the normal confines of modern society has led to the rise of occults like Aum.

Creation of an identity can be seen in several instances in Murakami's *Kafka on the Shore* (2002), where Kafka himself abandons his name and takes on the pseudonym and title of the novel. This abandonment of social constraints leaves Kafka without an identity but also free to explore his own sense of nationalism and identity. He confronts these actions without violence and without religion in both the labyrinth of his mind and the physical labyrinth of the forests of Japan. Kafka states, "a lot of things were stolen from my childhood. Lots of important things. And now I have to get them back. In order to keep living. I nod. I have to. People need a place they can go back to. There is still time to make it, I think" (Murakami, p. 295). The things stolen are the traditions and basis for the culture itself. The displacement of tradition leaves emptiness in cultural identity. This emptiness gives rise to a powerful voice and a push to bring back tradition. As Kafka states, there is a need for people to have a place in which they belong. In a society that focuses on capitalism, industrialism, and its assimilation into Western culture, it has lost its ability to allow its citizens to be individuals. Terrorism supplements this by creating a signifier that allows for the fighting back against society and its demands. The religion of Aum would not have been successful had it not given people a place where they felt they belonged. By creating a supplement to the nation that deserted its own traditional values, the individuals

of the occult fought to keep this identity and through the occult expand their enlightened state to those outside of Aum.

Kafka realizes the need for these and knows that "people need a place" in which to call home; a place that is grounded with their own identity and not with a globalized (westernized) or industrialized sense. "Many people," as Metraux states, "especially younger Japanese and middle-aged women, began to lose a clear sense of purpose in their lives. This created a spiritual void in many of their lives that often led to a fascination with mystical and occult phenomena often associated with "New Age" religious practiced" (1999, p. 70). *Aum Shinriko and the Japanese Youth* (1999) points out that people needed grounding, a thought echoed directly by Kafka. Terrorism in this sense came out of necessity for assimilation into a society in which the individual could feel socially and traditionally connected. Japan's lost identity gave need for the rise of terrorism in order for society to reconnect with its tradition. The terrorist attack by Aum allowed Japan, if only for a moment, to reconnect to its past tradition, to look carefully at what Aum as a religion was trying to elucidate. In doing so, the terrorist attack gave individuality back to Japan before its re-assimilation into Westernized society. Many individuals, in Murakami's *Underground* (1997), were fascinated with the why and explained that Shoko wanted to make a declaration against capitalism and industrialism. They could not only understand but could also relate to wanting to be a part of something outside of Western society. In this way, terrorism brought about the past for further explication by the viewer. The Japanese through looking at their history are able to get a better sense of what has happened to their tradition and why terrorism has supplemented the loss.

Identity Through History

Mark Pendleton expresses that without an understanding of their past, the Japanese as a culture are unable to find their identity as well as their place in the world: "the process of engaging with history [--] not therefore a simple search for origins, but instead a subjective construction of a relation to the past, a construction that can change through the substitution and surrogacy of performance" (p. 363). The first half of Pendleton's argument that, looking at one's own history is not only to find one's origin (or identity) but also to construct a relationship to that past is apt. However, his notion that history can be surrogated by performance does not account for the fact that performance infers the current moment or industrialized nation itself. Such performance is the demonstration of Japan's history being Westernized, and its nation undergoing industrialization. If a nation such as Japan has been usurped by Western ideology, then, has not its history also been changed? If the majority of the society destroys a history beyond the point of recognition, then, there can be no establishment of origin. Without this establishment of origin, people feel a sense of emptiness. This emptiness is filled by the "surrogacy," not of performance, but of any gap-filling device that can give the society an identity or individuality.

Aum's simplistic ideology allowed for the possibility of individuals to escape from the "rat race" that Japan had become under Western assimilation through money and by providing resources to its followers. Aum provided the means to escape from a Westernized society and its capitalistic foundation. It provided religious freedom in the fourth generation of "New Religions" titled *shinshinshūkyō* (New New Religion), which continues to this day. Aum itself is still prevalent and practiced under the new name of Aleph with offshoot

Hikari no Wa (Circle of Light). The Japan Times recently released an article stating that "the agency said the two groups remain dangerous. They retain antisocial traits and teach their followers that the sarin gas attack was justified" (2014). While this last statement may have accurately represented Aum previously, nowhere does the new group state that they believe the sarin gas attack was "justified." Propaganda, like the statements from the Japan Times, can be seen in any culture that has been attacked--the hatred, confusion, and demonization of a group in whole. Just as the outcry from Maya Lin, who designed the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, was the subject of controversy, these new religions are viewed with the same leery eye. In many parts of *Underground* (1997), interviewees stated "either way, I couldn't stand the media coverage of Aum. I don't even want to look at it" (Murakami, p. 58). The media created a spectacle of the situation and called the trial of Asahara Shoko (the engineer of the Aum terrorist attack and leader of Aum), "the trial of the century".

Metraux, on the topic of the need for organizations such as Aum and how such religious organizations replaced tradition, states that "religious organizations have the main characteristics of revitalization movements" (1995, p. 1141). This revitalization is in essence the revival of tradition and thereby the continued need for tradition. In *IQ84* (2009), Murakami describes Aomame's prayer—her meaningless mantra—as only an "action" that comforts her. This symbolizes Japan's deep need of comfort, not only in the wake of post WWII, but also for the decentralization religion. The culture of Japan was heavily influenced by religion, and as Peter Clarke and Jeffrey Somers state in their *Japanese New Religions in the West* (1994), "[the reworking and reshaping of] traditional

beliefs, rituals, and symbols in such a way as to make them relevant to the social, cultural and spiritual needs of the present" (p. 3-8). Those traditions are mocked by Murakami's characters, who both feel that there is a necessity for tradition and a lack the knowledge of how to rebuild a traditional society. Post-WWII Japan, under the influence of both occupation and westernization, forgot part of its traditional beliefs. Cults like Aum or the fictitious Sakigake led the people back to the country's roots while incorporating technology and science. Their reintroduction of tradition allowed for a more gradual transition from the old to the new, rather than the sudden knee-jerk reaction that was Hirohito's surrender at the end of WWII.

The aforementioned globalization and universality of *1Q84* (2009) and Murakami's other works fits it in with any culture, any city, any religion. Terrorism is not region-specific, and the definition remains relatively constant. However, few have tried to understand the real reason for terrorist actions. Terrorism is rarely quiet; from the Gun Powder Plot of 1605 where the accused directly stated their reasons for treason to the post 9/11 *Letter to America* from Osama Bin Laden—terrorism speaks. Worldwide, terrorists have always wanted to let those on the receiving end of the attack know their reasons. Several interviews with the Aum religious occult leader, Asahara Shoko, show that his "supreme enlightenment" stemmed from the relinquishing of material wealth, though his statement was hypocritical due to the way that he lived. His ideology behind his doomsday approach was to awaken the world to their greed and to the salvation that he could provide. A biography of Shoko cites that he wished to overthrow the government and to become the new emperor of Japan. His greatest desire was to lead people to the salvation that only he

could bring by becoming a Christ figure. Many of the individuals attracted to Aum stated, "All the time I knew I was eventually going to renounce the world" (Murakami, 1997, p. 278), as Mitsuharu Inaba described in an interview with Murakami. *Underground* (1997) serves as a testimony of the individuals involved; the survivors, the witnesses and the members of Aum that were willing to be interviewed.

Shoko's speech parallels that of Bin Laden's *Letter to America* (2002) on his organization fought. Each leader annotates that there were very specific reasons for their attack, each citing Westernization, attenuating identity and cultural heritage, and lastly the industrialization and capitalism that has changed the foundations of their home. On the other hand, the individuals involved were simply looking for understanding and a place to belong. Mitsuharu also went on to state his desire to withdraw from contemporary society. Shoko stated that the industrialization and material wealth created was the reason for his attack. Like others have speculated before, many of these desires come from anti-western sentiments. Anti-western sentiments resulted from the loss of tradition, in turn giving way towards New Religion to supplement this loss. The supplement then became the notion that wished to bring around an overall national change. This change led to terrorism in an attempt to highlight the wrongs done to Japan.

The attraction of cults and religions stems not so much from people's very valid desire to live a peaceful life, but from the fact that they feel threatened and backed into a corner. Murakami, in his commentary of why he undertook the project of *Underground* (1997), declares that "what I really wanted to know for myself was the violence that must lie hidden in our society, just below our feet"(p.89), while obviously a play on his

nonfiction work and commentary on his other contemporary works, Murakami acknowledges the buried feelings that must lay just beneath the surface. Many of the Japanese interviewed were reserved, respectful and to quote "I'd just like to know what they thought they were doing. I'd demand a full explanation and an apology. I'd absolutely insist upon it" (Murakami, p. 44). Tomoko Takasaki relates that she was not truly angry for what they had done--she was simply confused as to why. Tomoko was a victim of the sarin gas and had continual problems with headaches and breathing. Despite her disability resulting from the attack, Tomoko did not wish for the death penalty for the attackers or the kind of war that arose from the hatred in post-9/11 United States. Much of this rises from the notion that the occult of Aum was understood and accepted. The Japanese were able to identify real applicability and need for the want to be a part of a grounded foundation that allowed for individualism.

Tomoko's case is not singular. As Hideki Sono relates, "with society the way it is, everyone just chasing after money, I can sort of understand how young people might be attracted to something more spiritual like religion" (Murakami, 1997, p. 54). Hideki, in his testimony, does not excuse the attack, but can understand that there is a need for something besides the material wealth that has replaced traditional beliefs and religion. Throughout the entire book runs a trend of similar instances, with a scattered few individuals who felt that those at fault should be punished with more than mere prison sentences. Most felt that those who had actually planted the sarin on the trains were innocent, and the leader Aum was the one who should be held accountable. Murakami does not give his own opinions on the incident, except to express his condolences to those involved. It is clear he feels that

there is something missing, however, because in *1Q84* (2009) where the incidents of Aum are repeated, he juxtaposes the cult leader, Big Brother, to the "little people" (or fairies) of the novel. In congruence with these sentiments is Pendleton, who states "the subconscious shadows carried around with 'us', the bitter aftertaste, the face we want to see, the seeping evil emerging from under foot— and in them something underpins, but simultaneously haunts, all of contemporary Japanese society" (p. 366- 367). This haunting is the still present need to replace something lost. The notion that tradition, religion and culture once dominated a capitalistic society— a society that Hideki had stated he could understand. Terrorism surrogated this loss in the form of New Religion. In the rise of capitalism in post WWII Japan, tradition was displaced; Murakami's novels capture this loss in the fictional works of both *Kafka on the Shore* (2002) and *1Q84* (2009). The individual that has been repressed searches for a surrogacy to fill the emptiness, this emptiness becomes terrorism in an attempt to break free from the binds placed upon them by society.

The individual must react to the totalitarian rule placed by the West; however, in doing so the individual becomes alienated. "Modern civilization," Soseki starts:

Uses every possible means to develop individuality, and having done so, tries everything in its power to stamp it out. It allots a few square yards to each person, and tells him that he is free to lead his life as he pleases within that area. At the same time, it erects railings around him, and threatens him with all sorts of dire consequences if he should dare to take but one step beyond their compass

(Kusmakura., p. 181).

Society encourages individualism; however, individualism is not allowed to spill out from the strict boundaries created by Western society. Inasmuch, individuality cannot exist without the expressive will of the West. In doing so, the West controls tradition, culture, and heritage in an attempt to dominate a nation. The boundaries that Soseki speculates on are broken by New Religion and occults like Aum. These boundaries alienate the practicing individuals, but this alienation gives the group the strength necessary to perform acts of terrorism. Through terrorism, the individual group is able to rise to recognition in the eyes of society. Whether alienated or accepted the group's role is to present its problems to the group assimilated in Western society. Aum, in this respect, succeeded. Their purpose was to bring about change to reintroduce tradition and make known the dangers of Western capitalism. The nation understood, however, it was unable to respond.

This same essence is seen globally in the Irish literature of Beckett and Joyce, the European literature of Shakespeare, Milton, Spenser, the literature of the Far East and contemporary literature in all cultures. These writers all deal with the notion that continued capitalization diminishes the society, and that the repression of individuality causes terrorism not just by madmen but by people that are searching for something, a place to call home--a place to belong. Aum gave a place to belong; in return, they asked its dedicated members to fight against the power that had led them to join— capitalism and industrialization. Shoko's intention was to demonstrate that Aum could replace the loss that was created through Western imperialism through terrorism. This terrorism is a direct cause from the loss of identity. Without Western imperialism, Aum would have had no power, it is the colonization and assimilation that has given a rise and need to these terrorist

organizations. In this way, the West was the cause of terrorism in Japan through Japanese society's desire to have a place of their own.

Mathew Strecher in his *(R)evolution in the Land of the Lonely: Murakami Ryū and the Project to Overcome Modernity* (2008) describes Japan's social problems and finds the root cause of Japan's "project of modernization." He also describes how Japan's current social structure needs to enter a new stage of development. Strecher echoes many others in his take on the evolution of Japan's "social problems." Namely, Western influence post WWII left Japan with little sense of identity, and the subsequent era, featuring either New Religion or other forms self-elucidation, is, while relevant, beginning to wane. There is a need for tradition and originality--a need to become part of the old Japan before Hirohito destroyed that image.

Newsweek writer Michael Hirsh remarks again on such imagery, stating:

Despite Japan's vaunted social regimentation, proper behavior is enforced not by absolute sense of right and wrong ... but by devotion to social unity and harmony. Morality is "relativistic," shifting with time and circumstance and often built around a social purpose, like the postwar rebuilding effort. For a while the economic ride was enough for some people, but there isn't a whole lot you can hook into Japanese society if you're looking for something to give your life meaning (1995, p.52).

What Hirsh says is indeed correct, that the Japanese are even now trying to find something to hold onto. In a terrible tragedy, "the incident if one of 'memory', and particularly the perception that memories of the incident are fading in Japanese society" (Pendleton, p. 360). While Japan struggles to find its footing in the post-WWII globalization of Western

imperialism, religion and cults are taking advantage of this confusion; even if an incident is tragic and an act of terrorism, it is quickly lost in the frenzy of media coverage.

Hirsh states that there is no meaning in the kind of life that currently exists, or at least that the meaning of materialism is not enough for the majority of the people that joined the occult Aum or similar terrorist organizations. It is through materialism, inequality of wealth, and discrimination in job opportunity that created an occult like Aum and its appeal to individuals. By escaping the capitalistic world of the West they would be allowed to explore their individuality through meditation, advanced their career through research and budgets unattainable in assimilated society. Terrorism grew from the dissent of individuals towards the Westernized, capitalistic approach to life. It is from this imperialism that terrorism was able to manifest, to combat the attenuation of identity.

Summary

Objective analysis of the aftermath of the Tokyo Gas Attack of 1995 depends not only on reading the accounts of those who were involved, but also on examining its relationship to terrorism on a globalized scale. Tradition, specifically religion, has taken a back seat following the Westernization of the East. What was once viewed as sacred is now no longer viable. People are aware that "something" is missing from their lives, but as Murakami demonstrated in his contemporary works, religion is not a large part of people's lives. Although religion did not have to be the main focus that replaced Hirohito in 1945, religion does have a place in giving individuals a sense of belonging outside of the capitalized society that has run Japan and much of the world for years. Religion in this sense stems from the need to belong, filling the gap materialized by Western assimilation.

Terrorism then rises from these new religions in an attempt to recreate the tradition that has been destroyed through capitalism. As critics have pointed out, the lack of this "something" does not excuse the event of terror nor the lives that it disrupts. Rather, what should be conveyed is the sense that if no replacement for tradition is found, groups such as Aum (Aleph) and other sects of religion or occult will arise to help those who long for a substantially different identity. Hirsh mentions the social conformity that Japan adheres to, but while social etiquette has its place, there is also a need for individuality among its people. I believe that without this individuality, the identity of Japan and other such countries cannot be defined. Terrorism is a product of the capitalistic Westernization that has beset Japan, and through its rise supplements tradition and heritage, giving a place where individuals are allowed to think freely. Through Murakami's novels of both fiction and nonfiction it is clear that through the attenuation of tradition terrorism is given birth to, perpetuated by the imperialism of Western capitalism and industrialism.

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