TOWARDS A POST-HUMAN CONDITION OF THE BQDY IN HARUKI MURAKAMI'S *1Q84*: FROM GRIEF TO NOSTALGIA

FLORINA ILIS*

Abstract The paper discusses the relation between technology and the female body in one of the most controversial books written by the Japanese writer Haruki Muramaki, *1Q84*, starting from cyberpunk fiction and its perspective on the human body as one of the research directions put forth in my doctoral thesis *Fenomenul Science fiction în cultura postmodernă* (*The science fiction phenomenon in postmodern culture*). Somewhere between science fiction and realistic literature, the novel *1Q84* approaches one of the most interesting issues of the contemporary world: the *post-human condition*. The discussion of the *post-human condition* implies a dual perspective. On the one hand, it implies the dissolution of ontological limitations that favour information over matter, understanding consciousness as an epiphenomenon, the body conceived technologically as "adjustable" through an intelligent *implant* (the cyberbody). On the other hand, the posthuman condition creates a tension that renders problematic the traditional conflict between *Nature* and *Culture*, leading to a fictional conceptualization of the human entailing the *Biology–Technology* relation. With this dual perspective in mind, the prefix *post* in *post-human* necessarily implies an evolution to a new order of the *human* (not necessarily a superior one) in a sort of biological *avant-garde*. Instead, the paper advances the concept of *BQdy* for use in Haruki Murakami's case, offering not a new, evolution-based order of *the human (the female body)* but a *different* order or condition which, in the *wQrld* of *1Q84,* is transformed into a *bQdy*.
Keywords post-human body, BQdy, female body, cyberbody, information age

One of the consequences of the bio-technological revolution, as pointed out by the sociologist Francis Fukuyama, is the perspective of a post-human future. Starting from the analysis of the two most famous dystopias of the 20th century, *The Brave New World*, by Aldous Huxley and *1984*, by George Orwell, Francis Fukuyama states that, when bio-technology is advanced

* doi: 10.26424/philobib.2017.22.2.14
Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca. florina.ilis@bcucluj.ro.

enough to *alter* and *re-form* human nature (including everything implied by the term *human*), only then will the negative, malign consequences politically affect the significance of the liberal democracy that centres around the idea of man: "Human nature shapes and constrains the possible kinds of political regimes, so a technology powerful enough to reshape what we are will have possibly malign consequences for liberal democracy and the nature of politics itself."[1] Francis Fukuyama is convinced that Aldous Huxley was correct in foreseeing a future humanity, *altered* by bio-technology: "[…] that the most significant threat posed by contemporary biotechnology is the possibility that it will alter human nature and thereby move us into a 'posthuman' stage of history." [2]

Francis Fukuyama, the philosopher who declared *the end of history and the last man*, thus foresaw a new stage in the development of the human society, a new age, an age of the *post-human*, determined by the development of bio-technology, medical engineering and genetics. If in 2002, the year Fukuyama's study was published, this apocalyptic prediction could have sent shivers down our spines, today, after more than a decade, *the devil no longer appears as black as he was painted*, even to the ones who had initially been frightened by the possible *post-human future*.

The Japanese writer Haruki Murakami, not in the least frightened by the evolution towards our post-human condition, seems to see it as a means to overcome a prolonged, chronic crisis of the human condition. Therefore, in *1Q84*, whose title is a reference to George Orwell's famous novel *1984*, in accordance with the postmodern tradition, Haruki Murakami replaces the *Big Brother*, a terrifying but real memory from the totalitarian societies of the last century, with the *Little People* –beings about which we do not know for certain whether they really exist, but who seem much nicer than Orwell's dictator. The *Little People* are small creatures who can multiply or, in newer terms, who can *clone themselves*. As we well know, in Haruki Murakami's novel, the year 1984 is divided in two worlds, and since the two are like two peas in a pod, the second is given the name 1Q84, in which the letter Q stands for *question mark*.[3] Or, in a Jean Baudrillard-type of setup, Murakami's *1Q84* is "a clone story,"[4] the story of a world of "scissiparity, this reproduction and proliferation through pure contiguity"[5] with the given world. Thus, the only feature that differs between the original, the *1984* world, and the duplicate, the *1Q84* world, is the two moons that appear only in the sky above the *cloned* world. Moreover, due to the fact that some characters from 1984 crossed

[1] Francis Fukuyama, *Our Posthuman Future: Consequences of the Biotechnology Revolution* (New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux, 2002), 7.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Haruki Murakami, *1Q84*, Book 1, "April–June," transl. by Jay Rubin (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), 113, https://www.pdf-archive.com/2015/11/30/haruki-murakami-1q84-v5-0/haruki-murakami-1q84-v5-0.pdf (accessed on 12.10.2017): "Q is for 'question mark'. A world that bears a question."
[4] Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, transl. by Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 96.
[5] Ibid.

over to the 1Q84 *cloned* world, their bodies naturally reproduced (cloned) themselves in a form adapted to the new world, namely the *bQdies*, or imaginary bodies.

Considering the relation between *original* and *duplicate*, which was also analysed by Walter Benjamin in philosophical terms, I will focus on the relation between *body* (1984) and *bQdy* (1Q84), particularly on the issues concerning the concept of *bQdy*, which does not necessarily imply a new evolutionary order of the human condition (namely of the female body), but a different order, metaphorically expressed through the concept of "Air Chrysalis", a type of surrogate matrix within which the embryo develops – an embryo whose yet unclear features or characteristics carry the genes of a new biological mutation, foreseeing the appearance of the *posthuman condition* of the bQdy.

On the one hand, the human condition traditionally implies the existence of a state of being to which any discourse on the subject relates, a state constructed as a complex of principles which define the natural relationship between the individual and society. On the other hand, the relatively new concept of the posthuman includes the use of bio-technology and cybernetics terms when discussing the classic human equation, which, in the future, will reshape the relations between humans and the most advanced technologies from the fields of biology and medicine.

In accordance with the postmodern tradition and in a slightly ironic tone regarding her object of study in *How We Became Posthuman*, Kathrine Hayles begins her argument with the literal meaning of the terms human/posthuman. Therefore, like in the case of modernity/postmodernity, the prefix *post* implies the existence of an already conceptualised term to which it axiomatically relates, but it is obviously essentially different from the term that the prefix *post* precedes and forebodes through differentiation.

> Perhaps it will now be clear that I mean my title, *How We Became Posthuman*, to connote multiple ironies, which do not prevent it from also being taken seriously. Taken straight, this title points to models of subjectivity sufficiently different from the liberal subject that if one assigns the term 'human' to this subject, it makes sense to call the successor 'posthuman'.[6]

The questions raised by N. Katherine Hayles in her endeavour regard the continuously stronger connection between social and cultural practices on the one hand, and the fields of life sciences on the other hand, revitalised by the technological developments and the appearance of the concepts of artificial life and cyborg, concepts introduced in the academic curricula through Donna Haraway's famous manifest. In her quest to identify the steps through which the term *posthuman* was conceptualised, N. Kathrine Hayles first approaches the issue of "how information lost its body", after which she questions "how the cyborg was created as a

[6] N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman. Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature and Informatics* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), 6.

technological artefact and cultural icon"; at the end, she analyses the way "the human is giving way to a different construction called the posthuman."[7]

In common terms, posthuman can be understood as the social result of the union and the association of the human body and the intelligent machines, a situation in which the machine is no longer man's subordinate, but, in the process of trading bio-information, it is a new ally of the individual through the implants of "intelligent" components that thus formed a new "organ" of the body. The two means of association between man and machine, on the bio-technological and cybernetic levels, represent the centre of the two definitions that Donna Haraway gives to the concept of cyborg in a "post-gender world."[8] The other two definitions scrutinise the image of the cyborg in the contexts of social and fictional realities.

N. Katherine Hayles also states that the posthuman condition does not contain absolute differences or contrasts "between bodily existence and computer simulation, cybernetic mechanism and biological organism, robot teleology and human goals."[9]

The issue of the *posthuman condition* therefore requires this double perspective; on the one hand, there is a dissolution of the ontological limitations that favour information over matter, in which case conscience is seen as an epiphenomenon and the body can be manipulated or "grafted" with an intelligent component; on the other hand, there is a tension regarding the traditional conflict between *Nature* and *Culture*, which leads to a new view on humanity.

> What is the posthuman? […] First, the posthuman view privileges informational pattern over material instatiation, so that embodiment in a biological substrate is seen as an accident of history rather than an inevitability of life. Second, the posthuman view considers consciousness, […], as an epiphenomenon, as an evolutionary upstart trying to claim that it is the whole show when in actuality it is only a minor sideshow. Third, the posthuman view thinks of the body as the original prosthesis we all learn to manipulate, […]. Fourth, and most important, by these and other means, the posthuman view configures human being so that it can be seamlessly articulated with intelligent machines.[10]

An analysis of Haruki Murakami's work shows that the Japanese writer is familiar with the current debates in the fields of cultural sociology and anthropology regarding postmodernism, particularly with the discussions on the polarity of certain terms that are difficult to conceptually dislocate from a secular cultural tradition. Among these pairs of dual terms, body–conscience and female–male are also approached. If Haruki Murakami "does not

[7] Ibid., 2.

[8] Donna Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century," in Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York and London: Routledge, 1991), 151.

[9] Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman*…, 3.

[10] Ibid., 2–3.

invent, but discovers possible worlds,"[11] a natural question arises: what are the translation possibilities in the newly "discovered" worlds, or what happens during the passage into this new world of the body and how are the limits of the body overcome? Can we still talk about a duality of the body, in the sense of the romantic duality or, on the contrary, is it a duplication or even a cloning, in the context of the current bio-technologies? In my opinion, the novel *1Q84* opens a new approach of the subject of possible worlds in Murakami's universe; the stage of interpreting the "romantic duality" from a postmodern viewpoint is exceeded by the appearance of the imaginary body or of the bQdy.

Besides the emphasis on how easy it is to surpass the borders between worlds, due to a high level of awareness adopted by the characters in relation with the *alternative* world, a constant analysis of these borders is also present in Haruki Murakami's universe, where the disappearance of these borders has unforeseen but plausible consequences in each world. Together with the novel 1Q84, the vision of possible, parallel, distinctive and alternative worlds that can communicate with each other through different channels, as is the case in Murakami's novel *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*, loses its romantic, equivocal meaning and gains the characteristics of a "fissiparous" world, in which the second world grows from the stem of the first. An interesting aspect in this sense is that this time Haruki Murakami does not offer multiple means of interpreting the appearance of the second world. Obviously, the idea of duplicating the world (represented by the metaphor of the two moons in the sky) points to the debates that began in the 1990s regarding the polemic of sexual reproduction through engineering and lab technology. The fact that the subject had been adapted to this discussion is even more transparent as the author tries to hide serious social issues in the poetics of possible worlds: sadomasochist types of sexual violence, domestic violence or sexual abuse of minors, as well as the deontological issue that arises from the appearance of the so-called *cloned beings*.

Without a doubt, the issue of the body, which, throughout the three volumes, gains considerable weight, illustrates all of these aspects and finds its solution in Haruki Murakami's style. There is nothing that emphasises the body better than its physical traits and its sexuality, the two elements that make the issue of the body (especially the female body) a subject of utmost importance in *1Q84*.

In the 1970s, the body played an essential role in the feminist movements and it was at the centre of the debates and of all legal claims. During the years of sexual liberation, the separation between sexuality and procreation, access to contraceptives and legalising abortions became the principles to which all of the feminist movements related, regardless of their ideological orientations. Obviously, the militant success of these movements, besides the legal rights that had thus been obtained, had consequences in the field of knowledge and although it did not cause spectacular overturns, at least it provoked a reassessment of the one-sided, privileged masculine view, as well as a critique of any self-declared authority. The social and historical context was favourable, from this viewpoint; the political changes and the

[11]Rodica Frenţiu, *Haruki Murakami. Jocul metaforic al lumilor alternative* (Haruki Murakami. The metaphorical game of alternative worlds) (Cluj-Napoca: Argonaut, 2007), 111.

development of information technologies allowed the feminist movements to break away from the cold war of the sexes. Donna Haraway's statement according to which she would rather be a cyborg than a goddess, besides the obvious polemic feature, implies a dose of cynicism towards the fact that the discovery of a single means (of genetic engineering and bio-technology) to escape from the female-male duality of the body does not necessarily represent a *solution* in the field of knowledge, but a *failure* which, if needed, can *also* pass as a victory.

> Cyborg imagery can suggest a way out of the maze of dualisms in which we have explained our bodies and our tools to ourselves. […] It is an imagination of a feminist speaking in tongues to strike fear into the circuits of the superavers of the new right. It means both building and destroying machines, identities, categories, relationships, space stories. Though both are bound in the spiral dance, I would rather be a cyborg than a goddess.[12]

Thus, starting with the 1970s, the female/male relation also receives a suggestive transformation in which sexuality, when it is not regarded as a function of reproduction, loses its *aura* through sexual liberation and the intensity of the attributes that characterised the dichotomous, traditional relation is also weakened to the brink of dissolution. By losing their sacral nature given by all of the traditional societies, the taboos regarding sexuality lose their vigour and we can also notice a reversal of the female-male relation (by reversing the *passive principle–active principle relation*); the possibility of assisted fertilisation places the Mother and Father figure in a mathematical *ars combinatoria* of genes. Haruki Murakami's familiarity with the debates regarding the *posthuman condition* and the current highly debated relation between body–technology–reproduction is proven in his novel *1Q84*, in which the Japanese writer, in a dystopian story with a happy ending, hides issues like domestic violence, abuse of minors and reproduction through assisted fertilisation. Therefore, the profound meanings of this novel cannot be comprehended without considering the issue regarding the body, especially the female body and its relation with sexuality, which makes *1Q84* an exceptionally fresh novel. It remains to be seen how Murakami defines the poshuman and especially the post-female condition and where exactly it is placed between the cyborg and the goddess, as Donna Haraway puts it.

Regardless how it is approached, this relation penetrates Murakami's novel in two ways – first, as a consequence of the postmodern cultural theories and debates that find their echo in his literature; second, as an inherent aesthetic requirement , where the interferences of the fictional worlds or, in *1Q84*, of the duality of the worlds leads to a reconfiguration of the borders between the object and the subject, the real body and the imaginary physical bQdy, the female condition and a possible post-female condition. Therefore, in *1Q84*, this transfer between the two worlds happens on two levels: on a physical level (mental and physical features) and on a sexual level (starting with the female–male relation).

[12] Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto…," 181.

Regarding the physical aspect, Haruki Murakami insists on the physical qualities of his female characters. Thus, we encounter three different types of bodies, according to the age of the protagonists: the yet undeveloped body of the little girl, the athletic body of the young woman and the body of the elderly woman who kept all of her physical qualities through training. These three physical types of bodies correspond, in the 1Q84 world, with three mental (imaginary) types of bQdies: the physically abused bQdy of the little girl, like in the case of the character Tsubasa, the bQdy of the female assassin, represented by Aomame and the bQdy of the unnamed female leader, who in the novel is represented by The Dowager of the Willow House.

Out of all three types, Aomame is the only one who appears to be aware of the existence of the other two worlds and who therefore understands the transformation of her body in the imaginary bQdy. Aomame is a stretching instructor, a sort of modeller of body muscles, she herself having an impeccable athletic constitution, but few people were capable of describing her face:

> no one ever had a vivid impression of her face […]. Aomame resembled an insect skilled at biological mimicry. What she most wanted was to blend in with her background by changing color and shape, to remain inconspicuous and not easily remembered. This was how she had protected herself since childhood.[13]

Alternatively, Aomame developed incredible physical capabilities, practicing a special technique of identifying, through a simple form of massage, those certain key points in the human body that represent the important centres of transmitting information to the brain. Since she was capable of detecting these centres, she knew how to unclog the blocked circuits and to re-establish the body's balance, restoring it to its proper functions. But Aomame did not only use this exceptional power with healing purposes, but also to kill. She was capable of identifying an essential point on the back of someone's neck and, with the help of a simple small chisel lodged there, similar in style to acupuncture, she could kill the ones she was meant to take out. Her victims were especially violent men who had been pathologically aggressive towards their wives. She attracted her victims by using her sexual charm, sexuality representing the second aspect of the issue of the body, one that is intensely exploited in Haruki Murakami's writing.

A particular case is represented by Fuka-Eri, the author of the story entitled *The Air Chrysalis* who had also been a victim of child sexual abuse. She and other little girls from a closed religious commune called "Sakigake," or "Forerunner", had been subjected to sexual abuse, justified by the members' fanatic conviction that one of these girls, through their relations with the Leader, will give birth to a new leader who would assume the symbolic functions of the Leader, the only one capable of listening to the voices of the invisible forces that govern the world, forces represented by the Little People. Fuka-Eri managed to escape the

[13] Murakami, *1Q84*, Book 1., 13–14.

commune but one of the other girls, Tsubasa, who ended up at the Willow House where there was a sanctuary for women who had been the victims of domestic violence, represents the image of the first age, of childhood, of what we called imaginary body, the *bQdy*. Despite the fact that the little girl is visible, what both Aomame and the Dowager of the Willow House see is only a mental representation, a sort of hologram of the real girl that continues to live physically in the commune. The dual image of this little girl who in the real world is subjected to sexual abuse is metaphorically expressed through the second moon, slightly smaller than the real moon, paler and of a somewhat greenish colour. The little girl then disappeared from the Willow House just as mysteriously as she had appeared, leaving no traces, as if the source of energy that had been making her visible was disconnected.

The antipode of the defenceless little girl is represented by another image of femininity, namely the Dowager of the Willow House, the type of woman-leader who is independent due to her immense financial power, but whose intelligence gradually transforms her intro a vengeful deity whose vigilante nature knows no other solution for the cases of domestic violence than the death of the aggressor. She thus convinces Aomame to join her crusade against violent men. Aomame's character embodies the features of a woman who knows no fear, who can fend for herself and who is, in fact, paid to kill. The feminine features hide the lucidity of an assassin and an overwhelming mental strength. The two women thus complete each other without cancelling each other out, in a kind of mind–body unity, or a perfect imaginary bQdy.

Obviously, Aomame's exceptional physical abilities are not only the products of her physical training, necessary traits for her job as a trainer, but they are also, I suppose, the products of rigorous mental training. And yet, the fact that the narrative emphasises her physical abilities does not make her a predictable stereotype with a predetermined evolution. What saves her from a "Charlie's Angels"-like cliché of female typology is, on the one hand, an inner, personal motivation for the crimes she carries out in cold blood as a hired assassin and, on the other hand, the memory of a childhood love story she cannot forget.

In her imaginary relationship with Tengo (her childhood sweetheart), from the viewpoint of the female/male relationship, their roles are reversed. Aomame is the active principle, who seems to know more than Tengo, despite the fact that he is writing the book they both belong to – thus, she assumes a role that is usually played by the man. Furthermore, she is the one who takes part in the field combat, who assumes all the risks, while Tengo simply waits for the events to unravel, watching from a distance. Tengo plays the same passive role in relation with Fuka-Eri, the young girl who leads the sexual act in which the man has no say. This role reversal seems possible in the 1Q84 world, although Tengo does not represent the traditional image of masculinity in the real world either, since, according to his memories, his preference for older women points to a mentally immature man who wishes to be dominated, not to dominate.

The current discussions regarding the body and sexuality have emphasised not only "the historical and material reality of the masculinism of much modernist practice,"[14] constantly attacked by the feminist movements, undermining it, but also the destabilising effect of the postmodern cultural practices regarding the traditional concept of masculinity, which is seen as a natural, universal and undividable concept: "self-evident, natural, universal; above all as unitary and whole, not multiple and divided."[15]

The unitary nature of masculinity from the traditional worldview is opposed by a new, ambiguous and divided character that, in relation with the new female consciousness liberated from inhibitions, adopts a passive stance, waiting for the reaction of the other partner. The passive role played by the male principle is emphasised by his reaction to the change that occurred in the state of things –the dualization of the worlds and the new means of obtaining the *posthuman condition*. The main characters, Aomame and Tengo, represent the two poles of this reaction.

The first reaction, illustrated through Aomame, is represented by a voluntary exaggeration of the limitations, both physical and mental, of the female human condition, and, in order not to be excluded from the game, she accepts the impulse and the transformation of the imaginary body, the bQdy, brought by the passage to another world. The second, opposite reaction, illustrated through Tengo, represents a rejection of the new powers through a hectic search for a way back and a desperate attempt to reclaim the human condition which functions through different parameters than the initial ones. These two types of reactions can be regarded, in the case of the former, as an *acceptance* of the new, posthuman condition and, in the case of the latter, as an *abnegation* of the new condition and the *assumption* of a human destiny in a changed, *posthuman* world. Aomame, on the one hand, is the first to realise the switch between worlds, but, in order to survive, she is determined to assume the new condition without hesitation. She trains both physically and mentally in order to be able to face the new living conditions. On the other hand, Tengo realises the dualisation of the worlds much later and, although he embodies all of the qualities of a *chosen one*, all of the qualities of a possible successor of the Leader of an important religious organisation, he prefers to take the difficult course of recovering the human condition from which he feels he had drifted away and wondered, in a romantic sense, into the "Town of Cats" from which he cannot leave.

The escape from the body and the possibility of gaining a mental statute of the body, the bQdy, ontologically motivated by conscience, are obtained through an alchemic wedding, on the outskirts of the humane, of the corporeal and of the subject, in a parallelism of worlds in which the partners are mentally/imaginarily interchanged. Through Aomame, Tengo, Fukaeri and the Leader, the escape from the corporeal is managed by diving into the corporeal, through a both imaginary and real sexual act in which the two sexual partners seem to be duplicates of the other two. After entering the Leader's room in order to kill him, Aomame has some kind of imaginary sex with him, a moment which coincides with another strange sex

[14] Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism. History, Theory, Fiction* (New York and London: Routledge, 1996), 66.
[15] David Buchbinder, *Masculinities and Identities* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1988), 1.

scene between Tengo and Fuka-Eri, who is none other than the daughter who had been expelled from the Leader's organisation. More or less as a surprise comes the fact that, through this imaginary sex act, Aomame conceives a child whose father, by interchanging the protagonists, seems to be Tengo. The two parallel sex scenes from the two (cloned) worlds overlap in a manner that is impossible to explain using traditional logic. This scene – in which Fuka-Eri represents Aomame's mental double and has intercourse with Tengo while the Leader, Tengo's mental double has relations with Aomame – facilitates the union between two physical bodies from a distance and, moreover, it facilitates the fertilisation and the conception of a child. The way in which the two sex scenes are connected represents the most mysterious moment in the novel because, in spite of the explanations Haruki Murakami always offers in order not to confuse his readers, this time he leaves everything very vague. If the Japanese writer had not tried to create a possible world grafted from the stem of the real world, a world in which all of the important events in the lives of the characters unfold, then the conception of a child through virtual partners would have represented a new medical process regarding in vitro fertilisation. However, the narrative context in which the two protagonists' adventure unravels is not the real world, but the 1Q84 world, a surrogate world – a simulacrum – for the reality in which Aomame and Tengu cannot causally be together.

Book Three, which ends in romance, with a predictable happy end, should never have existed. Many of Haruki Murakami's critics asserted this idea, although the sequel had been awaited by fans from all over the world. Whether Murakami gave in to the fans' expectations, or he gave in to his own convictions, Book Three offers the solutions for all of the conflicts in the text and seems to clarify all the cliffhangers left by the previous two volumes.

My conviction is that Haruki Murakami wanted to give the story a more profound meaning and, in accordance with the happy ending, to express a more optimistic and apparently "un-serious" view of the pessimistic predictions regarding man's posthuman future conceived in a test tube. Murakami was often perceived as a serious writer who expresses himself un-seriously: "Murakami's works give one the impression of a serious artist who expresses himself in a distinctly un-serious manner."[16]

However, Haruki Murakami is without a doubt an excellent master of the frontiers, who knows the perfect formula to configure them in detail and, implicitly, to abolish and open any borders. Therefore, the correct interpretation of his choice to provide a happy ending must be sought elsewhere. Tengo and Aomame had first met at the age of ten. The only thing that united them then had been a simple handshake. Later on, life separated them forever. In the real, causal universe it would have been impossible for the two characters to reunite after they had lost all connections. Their individual adventures became a sort of signal transmitted with intermissions in the cosmic void that separated two people in a great metropolis, in the hope that one day that signal will be repeated and will reach its mark. Therefore, it is possible that the 1Q84 world had appeared from the two characters' desire to reunite, after they seemed to have been forever separated. However, things get complicated when the reality basis in which

[16] Matthew C. Strecher, "Beyond 'Pure' Literature: Mimesis, Formula, and the Postmodern in the Fiction of Murakami Haruki," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 57.2 (May 1998), 355.

the two characters evolve loses its substance, it duplicates in the sense defined by Baudrillard and starts to coincide with the fourth stage of the simulacrum of reality, in which signs are no longer connected to reality – a pure simulacrum: "It bears no relation to any reality whatever: it is its own pure simulacrum."[17] In this stage of the simulacrum it would appear that nothing could be done. The optimistic solution proposed by Haruki Murakami seems to be an attempt to *resacralise* a world of simulacra, in which all references to reality had disappeared, *through sexuality*.

This also appears to be the hidden meaning of the sexual ritual that took place between the four protagonists and which resulted in the conception of Aomame and Tengo's child, in the absence of any previous relations between the two. Some anthropologists and specialists in primitive religions have proven that sexuality used to have a sacred nature,[18] but it has faded and it was lost in modern civilisation. Haruki Murakami, aware of the crisis of the human condition in all of its aspects, revisits this primitive, sacred character of sexuality, forcing the idea of a sacrificial crisis in which the Leader of a religious organisation (the symbolic King) sacrifices himself by letting himself be killed for the good of humanity after transferring his "special" genes into a new matrix which would ensure the survival of the world after his death. Therefore, by duplicating the bQdy that participates physically and imaginarily in the sexual act, the body is resacralised and it becomes the subject of debate; its symbolic nature is thus annihilated and one of its basic functions, sexuality, is altered due to the new possibilities of reproduction. Baudrillard's assessment "What, if not the death drive, would push sexed beings to regress to a form of reproduction prior to sexuation"[19]" has a deeper meaning in Haruki Murakami's work.

That certain *unio mystica* of the four protagonists' physical and mental bodies that occurred in different spaces and in somewhat different time intervals but during the same stormy night resacralises the sexual act through a violent, criminal act that, in religious terms, can be seen as a sacrifice in which an old order falls so that a new one takes its place.[20] Basically, this also illustrates the solution to the Greek tragedy equation, read in its historical context in which the great Greek tragedians thrived, namely the transition period between a tribal, archaic world towards a new world that abode by the rules of the city-states.

Murakami's work also contains two orders, but the question arises which one is the new and which one is the old… Could the 1984 world be the old world and the 1Q84 world the new one and, implicitly, the posthuman future? Not even Aomame can answer this question. Nonetheless, at the end of the novel, the two protagonists find themselves at the dawn of a new order, with a single moon in the sky:

[17] Jean Baudrillard, "Simulacra and Simulations," in *Selected Writings*, ed. by Mark Poster (Stanford University Press, 1988), 170.
[18] Roger Caillois, *Sexe et sacré* in Idem, *L'homme et le sacré* (Paris: Gallimard, 1993), 188.
[19]Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, transl. by Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 96.
[20] René Girard, *Violenţa şi sacrul* (Violence and the sacred), transl. by Mona Antohi (Bucharest: Nemira, 1995), 51.

I still don't know what sort of world this is, she thought. But whatever world we're in now, I'm sure this is where I will stay. Where we will stay. This world must have its own threats, its own dangers, must be filled with its own type of riddles and contradictions. We may have to travel down many dark paths, leading who knows where. But that's okay. It's not a problem. I'll just have to accept it. I'm not going anywhere. Come what may, this is where we'll remain, in this world with one moon. The three of us—Tengo and me, and the little one.[21]

Translated from the Romanian by Anca Chiorean

[21] Haruki Murakami, *1Q84*, Book 3, "October–December," 900.