TECHNO-IMAGES OF JAPAN IN THE WORKS OF HARUKI MURAKAMI AND DAVID MITCHELL

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Abstract: *In this paper, the author studies the image of Japan in the novels by David Mitchell and Haruki Murakami from the orientalist and techno-orientalist perspectives. Orientalism was crucial in causing cross-cultural conflicts regarding complicated relations between East and West. The main reason for that is generally considered the interpretation of the other culture from one's own cultural perspective. Japan, being an Asian country, is not excluded. Here, in the following subchapters, the author looks into the concept of orientalism, described by Edward Said (1979, 1993), and points out the Japanese application of it (I.I); analyzes such peculiar phenomena as "self-orientalization" (I.II) and "techno-orientalism" (I.III). After that, in subchapters II.I and II.II, the author explores how Murakami and Mitchell address the concept of orientalism and techno-orientalism in their literary texts and look into the similarities and differences in their respective standpoints.*

I.I Orientalism and Perceptions of Japan (Instead of Introduction)

During the twentieth century, Japan expanded its influence in all areas of cultural and economic activities. Because of globalization and transcultural interactions, the system of signs called "Japan" was formed in terms of Roland Barthes (1983). This country's image in different art types, including literature, is surrounded by orientalist stereotypes, which, as indicated by Edward Said, are mostly based on cultural biases, especially within Europe and North America (Said, 1979). It was noted that there are a few different kinds of orientalist discourse on Japan, and orientalism and techno-orientalism are the most popular among them (Lozano-Mendez, 2010; Posadas, 2011; Said, 1993). Within these concepts, the West speaks for the Other (non-West), not allowing it to speak for itself. However, the discourse on 'otherness' in Japan has its own specifics, such as self-orientalization, because, as known, the country internalized at some level Western orientalist discourse and identifies now its own identity through it (Iwabuchi 1994, 2002; Wagenaar, 2016). Here the author will focus on these concepts, starting with how orientalism relates to Japan.

As Steven Rosen points out, "Interpretations of Japan, as well as other Asian cultures, often carries an implicit assumption that the West is rational (and superior), whereas the East is bound by ancient traditions (and is inferior)" (Rosen, 2000, 15). This point of view is derived directly from the concept of orientalism, which has long been associated with the particular form of stereotypical Western visions of Asia. Understandably, such an approach can bring about certain problems since any communication is impossible when the other culture is perceived as completely Other. Nowadays, it is essential to overcome straight dichotomies, which divide the world into "us" versus "them." That is why ideas about transcending or overcoming orientalism have emerged in academic fields. It was noticed that Western cultures often project onto Japan a lot of stereotypes, among which the most popular are

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those that regard Japan as "a monolithic culture which is excessively authoritarian, hierarchical, and patriarchal" (Rosen, 2000, 15), which may bear some truth in itself, but does not cover the whole truth. Orientalism is often accompanied by a version of ethnocentrism, which is understood as "the interpretation and evaluation of others through this epistemological screen, with the implicit assumption that one's own mode of understanding is superior because it is invariantly true" (Erchak, 1992, 90). Orientalism, thus, is a cultural myth based on a Western worldview, which, according to Said, "includes a battery of desires, repressions, investments and projections" (Said, 1993, 90). In cultural texts and narratives, including literature, orientalism manifests through certain metaphors, which usually depict the East as strange and exotic and underline its otherness.

The academic study of Japan in the West started with the famous book by Ruth Benedict, *Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (1946). Geertz offers an interesting analysis of it: "this ethnography from afar starts out trying to expose the workings of Japanese society to make it more accessible, but by the end of the book has succeeded in accentuating its strangeness and has persuaded us that they are a truly odd people" (Geertz, 1988, 87). Thus, the "great Japanese myth" was created, which pictured Japan as a homogeneous patriarchal culture and, according to Geertz, "the Impossible Object," an enormous something, intricate and madly busy, that, like an Escher drawing, fails to compute - a challenge not just to our power, but our powers of comprehension (Geertz, 1998, 85). Clearly, the distance to this the Other would seem hard to overcome.

In his research, Rosen asks whether there is a way out of this "epistemological nightmare or crisis of understanding" (Rosen, 2000, 16). He offers a solution by way of sacrificing one's own perspective and "seeing through of those structures which, by their very nature, tend to resist being seen through" (Rosen, 2000, 16). In other words, it would certainly help in cross-cultural communication to get rid of pre-asserted assumptions and stereotypes and act without projecting the pre-existing image on the cultural other.

I.II Self-Orientalism

Self-orientalism is a concept indicating practices of reframing and an extension of orientalism. It suggests that orientalism, in many cases, is not just a Western formation but is constructed with the help of the Orient itself. Self-orientalism usually describes a culture "…adopting and absorbing Western hegemony" (Huisman, 2011, 25), by exploiting orientalist views with the goal of turning the self into the cultural "Other" (Iwabuchi, 1994). As Lozano-Mendez points out, self-orientalism takes the images supplied by Western orientalism and changes their polarization from negative to positive" (Lozano-Méndez, 2010, 187).

In the process of self-orientalization, the drawbacks become assets: "robotic, gregarious and self-emasculated way of life is presented as a considerate, balanced and reliable behavior" (Lozano-Méndez, 2010, 188). It is argued by many that in order to create the theory of Japanese identity (*nihonjinron*), Japaneseness has to be imagined by the Other as well as by its own members, though differently (Iwabuchi, 1994, 51). Thus, Japan's own perception of Japaneseness borrowed and applied the notion of "uniqueness" of the Japanese culture and its ultimate difference from the West.

I.III Techno-Orientalism

Techno-orientalism presents an alternative to the range of exotic stereotypes about Japan, which were popular in Western culture until the second half of the twentieth century. Techno-orientalism emerged with the rise of Japanese economic power, presenting a technological challenge to Europe and the United States. This new techno-version of the Japanese image creates a satirical pastiche from the techniques of cyberpunk and sci-fi literature and represents Japan as a technological superpower. The term techno-orientalism was first used by David Morley and Kevin Robins in 1995: "a new techno-mythology is being spun," where "Japan has become synonymous with the technologies of the future—with screens, networks, cybernetics, robotics, artificial intelligence, simulation" (Morley&Robins, 1995, 168). As Lozano-Mendez explains, "it refers to a discourse that, from the sixties onward, has promoted an array of stereotypes and deformations about Japan, so that the country has come to epitomize a hyper-technified, dehumanized and materialist society" (Lozano-Méndez, 2010, 183). Japan was by no means the only country to receive techno-orientalist treatment. According to Lozano-Mendez, "[i]n the eighties and the nineties techno-orientalist images begun to be projected on other East Asian populations (Taiwan, Singapore, South Korea, and China)," but Japan was definitely the first in this regard.

Posadas understands techno-orientalism as a phenomenon directly linked to cultural representations of Japan. The researcher sees it as "the production of 'Japan' as aestheticized spectacle, as image … [and] … as image commodity" (Posadas 2011, 84). O'Donnell supports this idea by claiming that techno-orientalism is "the representation of contemporary urban Japanese society as technocratic, mechanized, saturated with gadgetry, yet still nostalgically harking back to Western notions of 'mysterious East' and the 'romantic Orient" (O'Donnell 2015, 51). Below the author will try to demonstrate how Murakami's and Mitchell's novels engage in this particular type of orientalist polemics.

Techno-orientalism, just like the Saidian approach to orientalism, implies certain cognitive strategies which define how Western people perceive things "Japanese" – certain pre-existing stereotypes telling what exactly "Japanese" means. Thus, techno-orientalism did not replace 'orientalism' but joined into its discourse, freely using all the old stereotypes, prejudices, and misconceptions, which go back to the first Jesuit missionaries that visited Japan in 1549. Lozano-Mendez points out that Japan was perceived then as "the world upside down," and "it would seem that they deliberately studied how to differ from everybody" (Lozano-Méndez, 2010, 185). However, even now, these images did not disappear completely in the age of globalization and the cross-cultural communication model, and Japan is still seen as a mysterious and sometimes dangerous Other. It also reveals, to borrow Wagenaar's words, "a resentful and racist side to this discourse" (Wagenaar, 2016, 49). Not only is Japan associated with robotics and artificial intelligence, but the Japanese themselves are "dehuminised" by the Western perspective (McLeod, 2013). Morley and Robins make it quite clear that techno-orientalism "reinforces the idea of Japan as a cold society, where people themselves are like soulless, efficient machines serving under an authoritarian, bureaucratic culture" (Morley & Robins, 1995, 169). The West proclaims its moral and cultural supremacy over Japan through such stereotypes.

It is clear that orientalism has taken many forms and emerged into various types over the years. Though far from being a new concept, it is still widely applicable when a cross-cultural dialogue between East and West is involved. Orientalism, remaining unchanged at its core (trying to reinforce the Western view of non-Western cultures), finds new ways of manifesting itself in modern discourses. The case of Japan, however, proves truly unique – apart from the traditional form of orientalism described by Said, it takes on a techno-orientalist form as well. All the above demonstrates rather vividly that there is still much work to be done to create an environment where it would be possible to see another culture without imposing pre-existing stereotypes and misconceptions on it.

II. Techno-Images of Japan in the Works of David Mitchell and Haruki Murakami

Here the author tries to trace techno-colored images of Japan and how exactly they are represented in the works of Murakami and Mitchell. In order to analyze this phenomenon, the author uses the terms such as techno-orientalism, cyberpunk, and remediation. The representation of modern Japan in the works of Mitchell and Murakami appears not only as a deconstruction of stereotypes that have taken root so well in the Western cultural discourse but also as technoculture images (cyberspace, computer games, etc.). Such images seem most appropriate in determining the specific nature of this type of text, which simulates modern information technology. Such a phenomenon is easier to describe with the term 'remediation', which emerged in modern academic fields. Remediation in the culture of the second half of the twentieth century begins to be comprehended and widely applied in modern discourse. The main work in this area is the monograph by David Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (2003), which explores the relationship of literature and art with digital forms of contemporary visual communication: "new visual media achieve their cultural significance precisely by paying homage to, rivaling, and refashioning such earlier media as perspective painting, photography, film, and television" (Bolter&Gruzin 2003). The researchers call this process of refashioning "remediation."

The image of Japan, created by Mitchell and Murakami, imitates certain points and combines different media practices. The literary effect of such remediation is to create an environment in which the reader must process information from various media sources (TV, video games, etc.) to form a specific meaning according to his understanding of data diversity.

II.I "Japanese" Novels by David Mitchell through the Concepts of Techno-Orientalism and Remediation

Explaining the term remediation in his work "Remediation of Japan in *Nuber9Dream*" (2011), Posadas refers to the process of transfer (or relocation) and implementation of a particular communication/transmission channel into another communication channel. This term emphasizes the synthesis of the arts, the use of different types of art in a literary work, and the transfer and assimilation of one system of representation of other communication channels in popular culture.

Criticism of "intentional Japaneseness" or focus on orientalism in the works of Mitchell and Murakami is always based on the idea of "authentic" Japan. Modern imagological discourse suggests that "countries and cultures are not pre-existing

static entities that exist a priori to their representations" (Posadas, 2011, 79). Posadas refers to the modern theories which claim that cultures of different countries are only "image commodities that are transnationally produced and cultivated" (Posadas, 2011, 79). In light of these concepts, it becomes clear that if, for example, the novel of Arthur Holden, *Memoirs of a Geisha,* is more of an orientalist fantasy, Mitchell's works are more of imagological products that, in addition, to a certain extent is "intertextual doppelganger" of the works of Murakami.

The image of Japan in Mitchell and Murakami's works appears quite complex and multi-layered phenomenon with different levels of representation. Therefore, this industrial and technogenic component of modern Japan's image in the novel *Number9Dream* by Mitchell and *Hard-boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* by Murakami (which the author will analyze in the next subchapter) is embodied through cyber poetics and remediation techniques. An outstanding feature of these novels is the remediation of the polymedia space: there are computer games and advertising, movies, music, books, and other "mediated cultural practices," in terms of Bolter and Grusin (Bolter, 2003).

Posadas understands the image of Japan in Mitchell's works not as a referent for representations but as a space that includes all possible representations (Posadas 2011). Compared with the first Mitchell's novel *Ghostwritten* where the image of Japan is created as a space of so-called "shifting signifiers" (as defined by Posadas, who shares Barthes's view for whom Japan is "an empire of signs" [1], in the novel *Number9 Dream* Japan loses its status of the geographical phenomenon and becomes a metaconcept compiled from various intertextual remedial and information channels. Mitchell believes that creating an image of a contemporary Japanese person and Japanese perspective in terms of narrative strategy is the first step toward going beyond Japan's traditional Western orientalist image. As the researcher Chicago Nihey points out in her article "Thinking outside the Chinese Box," the author's acceptance of the "Japanese perspective" as a technique is very different from the traditional format in which the West tells about non-West countries within the supposedly objective perspective. Nihei suggests that Mitchell learned this method from Haruki Murakami (Nihei, 2009, 87), and in his work, Mitchell also wants, using his own words, "to depict Japan as it is." Mitchell stresses that his intention was "to write a bicultural novel, where Japanese perspectives are given an equal weight to European perspectives" (Mitchell, 2007, 5). When in one of the interviews with the author, the interviewer Finbow mentions various stereotypes about Japan, such as "geisha," "sarariiman," "Nintendō," "Aum Shinrikyō," "manga," Mitchell replies that it is not so bad: "This plurality of lenses is no bad thing: one view is never enough… We mustn't tell ourselves, 'OK, I've got Japanese/UK/Any country culture sussed: I can stop trying to understand it now" (Mitchell, 2007, 7). As Nihei observes, the author does not intend to deny the right of existence of the Western view of Japan but tries to point out the importance of a variety of opinions from both outside and inside Japan (Nihei, 2009, 88).

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[1] Here, the author means Roland Barthes's major work on Japan' Empire of Signs' (1970). With this book, Barthes offers a broad-ranging meditation on the culture, society, art, literature, language, and iconography--in short, both the sign-oriented realities and fantasies--of Japan itself.

Thus, Mitchell and Murakami create a technoorientalist alternative to the exotic stereotype of Japan, which was popular in Western culture until the second half of the twentieth century, using a sort of a satirical pastiche from the techniques of cyberpunk literature and representing Japan as a technological country. As Lozano-Mendez explains,

> The term techno-orientalism was coined by David Morley and Kevin Robins in 1995. It refers to a discourse that, from the sixties onward, has promoted an array of stereotypes and deformations about Japan, so that the country has come to epitomize a hyper-technified, dehumanized and materialist society. (Lozano-Mendez, 2010, 183)

The most thorough representation in literature techno-orientalism is in the cyberpunk genre.

Cyberpunk is generally believed to be a subgenre of science fiction set in the near future and tends to focus on society as "high tech low life." It basically features advanced technological and scientific achievements, such as information technology and cybernetics, juxtaposed with a degree of breakdown or radical change in the social order. As rightly observed in numerous works, much of the genre's atmosphere echoes film noir, and written works in the genre often use techniques from detective fiction (Nakamura, 2002; Tatsumi, 2006).

Various cyberpunk techniques can easily be found in Mitchell's novel *Number9Dream*. For example, there are a lot of open quotations from and mention such iconic works of cyberpunk as Ridley Scott's film *Blade Runner* and the novel by William Gibson *Neuromancer. "*I have lost track of who is human and who is a replicant on Bladerunner" (Mitchell, 2001, 296), says Eiji, openly referring to Blade Runner.

Allusions to Gibson are more subtle: for instance, the famous opening of Gibson's novel line "The sky above the port was the color of television, tuned to a dead channel" (Gibson, 1984, 1) gets transferred in Mitchel's work as "in the back of bioborg taxi, rounding the West side of Yoyogi Park, under a sky as stained as a bachelor's underfuton" (Mitchell, 2001, 14), where both the ironic description of the sky and mentioning of the bioborg taxi refer to Gibson's novel. However, *Number9Dream* cannot be reduced just to a straightforward reading as a work of the cyberpunk genre; therefore, it is difficult to agree with the statements of Posadas, who defines the novel that way (Posadas, 2011).

The poetics of postmodern work, showing the blurred and ceasing line between reality and unreality of the modern Japanese world with its endless techno-innovations, already existing today or yet to be invented, is subject to the establishment of a monstrous, grotesque ultramodern world where the line between Japanese and non-Japanese is being erased. For example, in *Number9Dream*, Eiji says:

> I feel I'm on holiday on another planet, passing myself off as a native alien. I might even stay on. I like flashing my JR travel pass to the train man at the barrier. I like the way nobody pokes their nose into your business. I like the way the adverts change every week. (Mitchell, 2001, 56)

Being Japanese, he feels like a foreigner or even an alien dropped off on "planet Japan." *Number9Dream* is a novel-grotesque, which mocks in a way the present

and future techno-orientalist 'japanoid' world that is defined as "the globalist age product" in "The Japanoid Manifesto: Toward a New Poetics of Invisible Culture" (Tatsumi, 2002, 2-18). The main idea of the artistic work cannot be understood without the ironic subtext and the aggregated and accumulated literature techniques. Thus, the novel contains not only cyber representations of Tokyo through an endless stream of advertising on billboards ('Tokyo is so close up you cannot always see it' (Mitchell, 2001, 3), as in the movie *Blade Runner*; and not just representations of Tokyo as an escape of the character into the cyberspace through gaming devices. If "reality is the page," then why not a webpage: "Time may be what prevents everything from happening at the same time in waking reality, but the rules are different in dreams" (Mitchell, 2001, 400). Within this world, the novel resembles Gibson's *Neuromancer*, which became a genre classic. However, *Number9Dream* creates the world of Tokyo and Japan as both ultra-modern and phantasmagorical.

It does not seem right to reduce Mitchell's novel to the "doppelganger" of Murakami's works, although the intertextuality of Mitchell's books is related to direct and indirect references to the various works of Murakami (such as *Norwegian Wood*, *Wild sheep chase*, *Clockwork Bird Chronicles, Hard-boiled Wonderland and the End of the World,* etc.). Mitchell playfully admits it himself in his novel through the words of his character John Lennon who describes his song "Number9Dream" and its relation to The Beatles' song "Norwegian Wood":

> "Truth is", John continues, "Number9Dream" is a descendant of "Norwegian Wood". Both are ghost stories. "She" in *Norwegian Wood* curses you with loneliness. The "Two spirits dancing so strange" in *Number9Dream* bless you with harmony. But people prefer loneliness to harmony. "What does it mean?" "the ninth dream begins after every ending." (Mitchell, 2001, 398)

Although it is the song that Mitchell's John is talking about, Mitchell himself describes where his novel comes from, meaning Murakami's famous work *Norwegian Wood*.

The creative dialogue of the writers on the problem of representation of Japan and the Japanese national character in modern culture has many similarities in approaches and assessments. The first thing to keep in mind is the rejection of stereotypes of exotic Japan and the representation of Japanese characters in the spirit of "Fuji/cherry blossom/geisha/samurai" or representing Japan as a harsh militaristic, and fanatic nation. It is also essential to understand something that was underlined by Mitchell's character in the *Ghostwritten*: "phenomena are interconnected regardless of distance" (Mitchell, 2007,266). This interrelatedness of the whole human world, and not the division into an antagonistic confrontation between East and West, is perhaps the central unifying idea of the works of Murakami and Mitchell.

One of the main features of the protagonist strikes from the very first pages of Mitchell's novel *Number9Dream*, defining a narrative strategy that the author uses in his work: Eiji constantly tends to retreat into the world of tehno-fantasy, although he says himself, "How do daydreams translate into reality? I sigh. Not very well, not very often" (Mitchell, 2001, 4). As stated in the epigraph to the novel, a quote from the famous novel by contemporary American postmodernist writer Delillo, *Americana*: "It is so much simpler to bury reality than it is to dispose of dreams"

(Delillo, 1989, 334). Most often, Eiji's escape into the digital world of fantasy is accompanied by no signs or signals that could notify the reader of the transition from the real world to the fantasy world. Even the character has to ask himself now and then: "Am I in one of those dreams where the closer you get the farther away you are?" (Mitchell, 2001, 24). That is why it is almost impossible to find the line between reality and computer hyperreality in the text. As Posadas underlines, this text structure creates a sense of unreliability in the narrative, for the reader never knows if he reads "facts" or dreams (within the artistic world of the novel).

It is easy to notice that Eiji's fantasies are a tribute to popular culture. Scholars emphasize that in Mitchell's writings, it is possible to find out the characteristic feature of the new postmodern culture: a combination of elitism with the mass culture. The first fantasy of Eiji is written in the cyberpunk genre with a direct reference to it in the text – a quote from the movie *Blade Runner*. For example, the lawyer Eiji is looking for is represented as a cyberpunk "replicant," an android:

> I look at the Akiko Kato still slumped in her chair. The doorway Kato laughs, a grin twisted and broad. Emeralds and rubies are set in her teeth. 'A bioborg, dummy! A replicant! You never watched Bladerunner. We saw you coming!' (Mitchell, 2001, 11-12)

Most of the characteristics of cyberpunk are somehow embodied in the novel in the form of parody. Posadas defines the main technique that the author uses in the first chapter of the novel as the "technique of surplus signification" (Posadas, 2011, 82). This technique manifests itself in endless brands and excessive details, which is also one of the attributes of the cyberpunk genre. It should be noted that Murakami, in his books, sometimes uses very similar strategies, depicting landscapes of urban Tokyo, which the author will analyze later. In other words, Tokyo in Mitchell's novel is a place of the disappearance of "real" meanings where "nothing seems real," an abstract city of the future in which it is impossible to trace the origins of anything, a certain simulacrum (in Baudrillard's terms). Eiji, the protagonist of *Number9Dream*, asks himself: "I wonder what Tokyo is for" (Mitchell, 2001, 56-57).

The speed of life in Tokyo is described by Mitchell in the following way: "Not a single person is standing still. Rivers, snowstorms, traffic, bytes, generations, a thousand faces per minute" (Mitchell 2001, p. 7). Such representation of Tokyo can be related to the words of the famous American pop figure Anthony Bourdain: "Tokyo is like one long film trailer … the pace getting quicker and quicker, the action more frenzied, leading up to sudden blackness" (Bourdain, 2002, 136). More clearly, it is manifested in the scene where Eiji sits in a coffee shop, "Jupiter," in the center of Tokyo and watches the rapid succession of images on the street screens and billboards. It also raises the possibility of the indirect quotation of the model cyberpunk works such as *Blade Runner* by Ridley Scott and *Neuromancer* by William Gibson. In Mitchell's novel, just as in the mentioned iconic works of cyberpunk, Tokyo continually produces images, thus turning itself into an imaginary, nonexistent city. O'Donnell sums up the image of Tokyo in Mitchell's novel as a "conglomeration of buildings, traffic, noise, points of congestion and routes of entrapment and escape that demarcate its ill-concealed systems of power" (O'Donnell, 2015, 61). In addition, Mitchell also underlines the anti-humanity of Tokyo, a soulless metropolis that "turns you into a bank account balance with a

carcass in tow" (Mitchell 2001, p. 16); and its unsafety and perils: "Tokyo, Tokyo," cackles Lao Tzu. "If it ain't fire, it's earthquake. If it ain't earthquake, it's bombs. If it ain't bombs, it's floods" (Mitchell 2001, p. 17).

In a way, Tokyo becomes the main character of Mitchell's novel, a kind of "zirconium gothic" nightmare, as Eiji defines it, a super monster of automation made out of glass and metal with stressed technological features: "Tokyo is one massive machine made of smaller components." (Mitchell 2001, p. 33). O'Donnell claims that

> To some degree, the protagonist of this failed and fractured *bildungsroman* is not Eiji Miyake, but the metropolis itself that, beneath its shiny corporate surfaces, chronologies, and organisational systems underlying everything from pizza delivery schedules to gang hierarchies, encrypts the secret of a labyrinthine and chaotic reality. (O'Donnell 2015, p. 59)

While it may appear difficult to agree about Eiji not being the novel's protagonist completely, Tokyo definitely is the focus of the author's attention in the narrative. Tokyo is also a center of modernization in Japan, colonizing the country from within. The atmosphere of the techno-landscapes of the city is described by Mitchell in every detail: from the pink love hotels to the luxury meeting rooms where Yakuza sitting at mahogany tables plan their bloody operations. Tokyo workers, "drones," as Eiji calls them, become a kind of faceless background of Tokyo and the novel itself circling between their work and home. The city lives its own life, conducts its own affairs, constantly producing commodities and destroying the very concept of humanity and thus embodying in itself all the signs of dehumanization. Eiji thinks of it as follows: "Tokyo is a dirty eraser" (Mitchell 2001, p. 164), which underlines the city's skill to eliminate all the feelings and everything alive.

The image of Japan with its techno-orientalist outlines created by Mitchell is filled with impressive intertextual remediation: computer games, films, Eiji's fantasies in cyberpunk style, billboards, advertisements, etc., as well as references to the works by Haruki Murakami and some other writers – Junichiro Tanizaki, Osamu Dadzai, William Shakespeare, Thornton Wilder, Don DeLillo. This image of Japan contrasts with the rudiments of anachronistic views on decorative Japaneseness: Fuji-Geisha-Samurai, which is also manifested in Mitchell's novel. Posadas claims that this contrast techno-oriental image of Japan is one of the leading features of the new modern aesthetic mode of representation of Japaneseness (Posadas 2011).

Mitchell created his remediated novels fifteen years after the development of the theory of remediation by Bolter: "We call the representation of one medium in another remediation, and we will argue that remediation is a defining characteristic of the new digital media" (Bolter 2003, p. 45). Earlier, there was a similar theory of McLuhan:

> The electric light is pure information. It is a medium without a message, as it were, unless it is used to spell out some verbal ad or name. This fact, characteristic of all media, means that the 'content' of any medium is always another medium. (McLuhan 1964, pp. 23-24)

A few years later, Murakami published his first publication. The first work by a Japanese author was written in 1979. Mitchell's first novel was published in 1999, when innovations in technology and communications, which affect our everyday life, radically changed the channels and principles of perception and representation of reality. In Mitchell's novel *Number9Dream* the mages of modern Japan in general and Tokyo, in particular, appear in the likeness of a supercomputer that threatens to destroy everything human that still exists in this world. Thus, Eiji refers to Tokyo in the following way, considering its cyberpunk aspects: "These are days when computers humanize, and humans computerize" (Mitchell 2001, p. 115). However, the image of Japan in Mitchell's works cannot be reduced or restricted to this abstracted idea, even though the final episode of the novel *Number9Dream* leaves no doubt that the diagnosis that Eiji makes about Tokyo is quite right: a terrible earthquake happens in Tokyo as a response to one of Eiji's fantasies about the destruction of the city. The brightness and accuracy of the media tools the author uses in the novel, including computer games, jazz, movies, Eiji's dreams, fantasies and nightmares, and so on, provide the image of Japan with the locally outlined and recognizable traits of a new habitat of humankind.

II. Dystopian Features of Techno-Images in Murakami's Works

As Napier rightly noted, the twentieth century itself is a world of dystopia (Napier 1996, p. 4). The image of Tokyo in Mitchell's novel largely coincides with the image of a big city in Murakami's works. Both have distinctive features of a dystopian display. Murakami, in his novels, creates a brutal, material, devoid of cultural and historical coloring dystopian world of ambiguous existence of the lost people. This image of the big city represents the center of consumer society itself, and the very image of Japan turns out to be a satirical pastiche that is also a product of consumption. Murakami often depicts people who live in Tokyo as lonely and eccentric. In such a way, the writer destroys the stereotype of Japanese corporate unity and morality. His characters, the inhabitants of the big city, are often miserable and somewhat lost people: among them, we can find a man who was nauseous for about forty days (the story "Nausea," 1979), a woman who could not fall asleep for seventeen days (a story "The Sleep," 1992), a girl who, by contrast, could sleep for several months without waking up (a novel *After Dark,* 2004), a man who can communicate with cats (a novel *Kafka on the Shore,* 2002), a mute (character ironically called Cinnamon from the novel *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle,* 1994-5), a mysterious girl with dyslexia (a novel *1Q84*, 2009-10) and many others.In Mitchell's novels the Japanese are also depicted as lonely people lost in this huge terrible world, and the author does a good job, representing all kinds of characters: yakuza leaders, hostesses from the night clubs, a landlord from the video rental, hairdressers, pizzeria night workers, and even a hacker. The latter character is a kind of embodiment of a cyber city itself, a particular image of whom defines the features of the created city: billboards, constant flow of information, technological world, and modern dystopia.

Napier in her monumental work *The Fantastic in Modern Japanese Literature: The Subversion of Modernity* (1996) claims that

> In its own way the idea of Japan itself is at the convergence of Utopian and fantastic traditions, a country whose economic success has defamiliarized the

very notion of capitalist development by allowing the West to see itself through a glass darkly. (Napier 1996, p. 4)

Napier also notes that there is a certain difference between Western and Japanese dystopia: traditional Japanese dystopia is usually less concerned about losing personal freedom or will.

Modern Japan has contained both Utopian and dystopian aspects, not only in the eyes of its citizens but in the eyes of the West as well. Exotic, even larger than life, Japan seemed in the twentieth century to be constituted in extremes. (Napier 1996, p. 179)

We should remember, though, as it has been noted repeatedly, that the idea of Utopia as it was during the Enlightenment period, the dream of the future, turns out to be a nightmare. Researcher Winter, analyzing the genre of Utopia, states that in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, "The order of things is achieved from the inside out, without any connection to reality, the beautiful symmetry of things becomes in the process a symmetry of evil. The ideal of order becomes a terrorism of order" (Winter 1985, p. 102). However, Japanese dystopias are mostly concentrated on the topic of a technological nightmare. It is emphasized that the Japanese gladly adopt this aspect (and even to a larger extent than Western writers), pointing out not only the general "failure" of the technology but "the dark interlocking nexus between industry, science, and the military" (Napier 1996, p. 187).

In the works of Murakami, the image of Japan also emerges as cyberspace; Napier defines some of them in the following way: "a fascinating work which problematises the question of both Utopia and dystopia within a high-tech information-driven society." Most definitely, it can be traced in such novels as *After Dark* and *Hard-boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*. The writer compares the city with a permanently functioning body or artificial intelligence of a supercomputer:

> In our broad sweep, the city looks like a single gigantic creature - or more like a single collective entity created by many intertwining organism. Countless arteries stretch to the ends of its elusive body, circulating a continuous supply of fresh blood cells, sending out new data and collecting the old, sending out new consumables and collecting the old, sending out new contradictions and collecting the old. To the rhythm of its pulsing, all parts of the body flicker and flare up and squirm. Midnight is approaching, and while the peak of activity has passed, the basal metabolism that maintains life continues undiminished, producing the basso continuo of the city's moan, a monotonous sound that neither rises nor falls but is pregnant with foreboding. (Murakami 2007, p.3)

Murakami's image of Japan also includes certain dystopian features. In the works of both Mitchell and Murakami, the protagonist's crisis is always associated with the changing urban landscape that belies the main character's expectations of the specific presence of something permanent. Consequently, the landscape itself, as well as the character's personality, is to be in continuous fragmentation and deconstruction. It should be noted that the concept of landscape in the works of Murakami was studied by prominent Japanese researcher Karatani (1999), who saw in it an epistemological inversion of consciousness. It is what can be related to the

works of Mitchell and Murakami as the image of the urban landscape and perception of it by the protagonist in shaping the image of modern Japan.

The narration in Murakami's novel *Hard-boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* is divided into two separate narratives, "Wonderland" and "End of the World," that depict two different worlds – a dystopian one and the world of a Utopian pastoral. Thus, in the narrative of "Wonderland," the image of Japan is manifested as a stereotypical techno-orientalist image of a dystopian world. Events are taking place in Tokyo soon. The two media organizations (corporate conglomerate "System" and the illegal information mafia "Factory") are waging war for information and power. Generally, all part of "Wonderland" is a sort of pastiche based on different pop culture genres. Thus, the old genius scientist turns out to be eccentric and good-natured, apparently a reference to the tradition of science fiction of the 1950s. Shadow corporation 'System' and its equally shadowy antagonist 'Factory' compared with the genre of 'paranoid horror' (in Napier's terms), which refers to the works by Kobo Abe and discourse of beating the system. As for the information wars in high-tech style, it is possible to assume those are an apparent intertextual reference to cyberpunk fiction and works by William Gibson. He brilliantly illustrated "data dance" (and coined the term, too). On the other hand, a witty lone protagonist points to the tradition of the 'hard-boiled detective genre," and the whole narrative structure reminds one of a "well-worked-out' whodunit. Murakami, like Mitchell, builds a literary image of Japan at the crossroads of many pop culture traditions, hiding behind such a "not serious" form some severe issues of identity and understanding of Japaneseness.

The leading role in the representation of Tokyo in the novel Murakami belongs to the descriptions of the Tokyo subway, which represents contemporary Japanese fears related to the Sarin attack of 1995. Thus, in the subway of "Wonderland," some appalling living creatures, *yamikuro*, hunt at night. This image also echoes another Murakami's story, "Super-Frog Saves Tokyo," where a huge toad goes to the Tokyo subway to exterminate Tokyo's main threat, embodied in the vast worm. Murakami's Tokyo appears to be a dismal and alienated city, a world based on the principle of mindless consumption of products, from Italian food to media. Technology is out of control and has become extremely dangerous; it even justifies violence. Furthermore, the union of groups that are supposed to be hostile towards each other– "Systems" and "Factory" – recreates the state's image, where politicians are in constant and tight collaboration with criminals, and citizens are constantly oppressed and misinformed. It forms the image of the country, which more or less reflects modern Japan.

Representations of urban life in Murakami's works are a kind of escape into everyday reality (cooking, washing, cleaning, shopping, pools, and bars). In Mitchell's novel *Number9Dream,* the image of the postindustrial city is functionally different: it is a background for coming of age. As stated earlier, in Murakami's urban texts, we fail to find the figure of a parent (or family at all). In Mitchell's works, on the contrary, we can see the image of a protagonist trying to establish family relationships and find some warmth (which can be traced even in its relations with the cat).

Both of the authors depict the situation of the imaginary destruction of the city and its gloomy landscapes. Murakami, in the last episode of his short story "A Slow Boat to China," illustrates this in the following excerpt:

Our city, these streets, I don't know why it makes me so depressed. That old familiar gloom that befalls the city dweller, regular as due dates, cloudy as mental Jell-O. The dirty facades, the nameless crowds, the unremitting noise, the packed rush-hour trains, the gray skies, the billboards on every square centimeter of available space, the hopes and resignation, irritation and excitement. And everywhere, infinite options, infinite possibilities. An infinity, and at the same time, zero. We try to scoop it all up in our hands, and what we get is a handful of zero. (Murakami, 1993, p. 238)

Another example can be found in this passage as well:

> Tokyo – one day, as I ride the Yamanote Loop, all of a sudden this city will start to go. In a flash, the buildings will crumble. And I'll be holding my ticket, watching it all. Over the Tokyo streets will fall my China, like ash, leaching into everything it touches. Slowly, gradually, until nothing remains. No, this isn't a place for me. That is how we will lose our speech, how our dreams will turn to mist. The way our adolescence, so tedious we worried it would last forever, evaporated. (Murakami, 1993, p. 238)

Mitchell does it just as well: we can find it in Eiji's fantasy about the flood, which brings destruction to the city and death to Eiji himself. It can also be found in another of Mitchell's novels, *Ghostwritten*, where the protagonist Quasar is willing 'to clean' Tokyo and all of Japan. Another of Mitchell's characters character Satoru also thinks about Tokyo with despair:

> Twenty million people live and work in Tokyo. It's so big that nobody really knows where it stops. It's long since filled up the plain, and now it's creeping up the mountains to the West and reclaiming land from the bay in the east. The city never stops rewriting itself. In the time one street guide is produced, it's already become out of date. It's a tall city, and a deep one, as well as a spread-out one. (Mitchell 2007, p. 37)

Such an attitude towards a big city, demonstrated by Murakami's and Mitchell's protagonists, signals the anxiety and depression associated with urban life, which is transformed into the question often asked by the characters: "What am I doing here?" The protagonist in *Ghostwritten* answers this question quite ironically: "Sorting out the meaning of existence" (Mitchell 2007, p. 48). Mitchell's and Murakami's characters seem to implement their searches in clearly defined techno-orientalist dystopian decorations.

It is also worth mentioning that both Mitchell and Murakami use numbers and dates as a distinctive feature of their writing, showing the "digitization" of the world and the "self": in Murakami's works, we can find a constant game with dates (mentioning the year of the events without naming the event, such as 1969 – the year of the student movement in Japan), and Mitchell massively plays with the number "nine," starting from the very title of his novel.

III. Conclusion

The narrative technique and the semantics of the images created by Mitchell and Murakami demonstrate the apparent link between their works and the techno-

orientalist model of the image of Japan. As was shown above, techno-orientalism combines the depiction of high technology images and anachronistic images of exotic Japan. In the novels of Murakami and Mitchell, information networks and spaces are combined with an exotic urban landscape. Depiction of modernity takes place in a slightly fetishized form. The image of Japan acquires an unlimited number of images in which the reality of Japan itself is lost. Techno-orientalist poetics of Mitchell's novel is a kind of encyclopedia on parody and pastiche about cyberpunk, with a continuous quotation of cross-referential and techno-orientalist images. This technique has much in common with the works of contemporary writers in the East and the West, such as *Neuromancer* by William Gibson, *The Dream Messenge* (*Yumezukai*) by Masahiko Shimada, *Paprika* by Yasutaka Tsutsui, and so on. Both Mitchell and Murakami find a new way of representing futuristic Japan without making it too fantastic and "science fiction," showing it in more realistic ways. The talent of the mentioned writers lies in such a combination of realistic and techno-oriental techniques.

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