INTERTEXTUAL COMPONENT OF THE REPRESENTATION OF JAPAN IN THE NOVELS OF HARUKI MURAKAMI AND DAVID MITCHELL

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Abstract: This paper aims to present and analyze the differences and affinities in the works of David Mitchell and Haruki Murakami in forming representations of Japan. The article studies the ways Mitchell references Murakami and intertextually invites the Japanese author into his text. The focus is on the image of Japan as a country that is unique in its immutable tradition, as well as on its radical revision in Murakami's and Mitchell's fiction in the aspect of modern ideas about Japan based on the works by Roland Barthes (1983), Koichi Iwabuchi (1994, 2002), etc. Here I argue that the general denominator of Mitchell's artistic concepts is Murakami's novels. However, I try to prove that the intertextuality of Mitchell's novels is not limited to just quoting but rather appears to be an attempt (and a pretty successful one at that) to participate in East-West dialogue regarding the image of Japan.

I. Introduction

Here, the author researches the image of Japan as a complex combination of notions and ideas comprised of national stereotypes and how these stereotypes are deconstructed in the novels of Haruki Murakami and David Mitchell concerning the aspect of contemporary visions of Japan. One of the main themes of Japanese literature in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries has become the search for possible understandings of what it means to be Japanese. The representative examples of this phenomenon and its evolution can be found in the Nobel Prize lectures of two Japanese writers – Yasunari Kawabata (*Japan, the Beautiful, and Myself*, 1964) and Kenzaburo Oe (*Japan, the Ambiguous, and Myself*, 1991), both of whom described themselves in connection to Japan, though defining Japan and Japaneseness differently. The question of understanding Japaneseness becomes complicated because of the controversial history of Japan in the twentieth century. One of Japan's most famous modern writers, Murakami, also contemplates these questions. It is clear from his works, as I attempt to prove later, that Murakami looks for Japaneseness, which was also noted by such researchers as Napier (1996), Rubin (2002), and Suter (2011). However, it is not only Japanese writers but also Western writers who try to understand what Japaneseness is. And one of them is English writer David Mitchell.

Yomota (2009) states that the works of Murakami embody transcultural ideas of the existence of modern man in an open world of today. It has become a sort of artistic guidelines Mitchell, who joins Murakami in a creative dialogue. The importance and justification of comparing the works of two writers in terms of representation of the image of Japan in English and Japanese prose is due to the impact Murakami had on Mitchell; the appeal of both authors to artistic

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representations of the modern image of Japan; and the relevance of the study of the East-West discourse of the modern image Japan in poststructuralist theory (Barthes, 1983; Derrida, 1985).

Any image and especially the image of Japan, is, according to poststructuralists, always a representation. As a result of transnational traffic of image culture, it is always unrepresentable because it can exist only as a total sum of perceptions of it. As Posadas claims, "Japan is a signifier that is overcoded with and overdetermined by shifting constellation of relations through which it is imagined" (Posadas, 2011, 77). Therefore, the study of how writers of East and West (in this case Murakami and Mitchell) see this phenomenon helps overcome the Eurocentric temptation in understanding the subject.

Speaking of Mitchell's prose and his constant appeals to the Japanese author and his work, it may be appropriate to recall the lines from the novel *Metroland* (2011) by Barnes; the lines, which, it seems, describe perfectly well the literary relations between the two writers: "it was not a question of imitation or parody; it was more a question of trading on resonances, that most twentieth-century of techniques" (Barnes, 2011, 126). The importance of this comparative study of "trading on resonances" lies in the fact the English and the Japanese writers join the literary and cultural discussion on stereotypes about Japan and Japaneseness. It is clear that their appeals to the theme of Japan and Japaneseness correlate with constant views on the subject in the literary tradition and everyday consciousness.

II. Haruki Murakami: A Brief Outline of the Intercultural Influences on His Work

Murakami hardly needs any introduction. As Rebecca Suter states, "Murakami is probably the most translated among contemporary Japanese writers" (Suter, 2008, 1), which places him among the most famous writers of modern Japan. Murakami's cultural role, however, is more profound than that – while popularizing Japan in the world, he is also the one who introduces the West to Japan. Suter writes that "he has been very active in introducing American literature to Japan, having translated writers such as F. Scott Fitzgerald, John Irving, Grace Paley, Tim O'Brien, J. D. Salinger and Raymond Carver" (Suter, 2008, 1). For this research, I am more interested in the main features of his style and the main topics he explores. Looking closely into these phenomena will allow analyzing his connection and intertextual dialogue with Mitchell.

Murakami has long entered the world of literature and has a reputation as a modern classic. As it was repeatedly stated, the author is considered the least Japanese of all existing Japanese authors. He is the most extensive experimenter of modern Japanese literature and popular among Western readers. Thus, the researchers call him "increasingly international, and increasingly fantastic" (Napier, 2005, 204). He works under the influence of Western, especially American, literary tradition, embodying transcultural ideas of the existence of a modern man in a modern world. Some critics conclude that Murakami is one of the first Japanese writers to look at Japan in his works through Western eyes. For instance, Suter, in her research, defines Murakami's works as "Japanese-American cultural cross-representation" and refers to the author as "a literary and cultural mediator between Japan and the United States" (Suter, 2008,

1). Murakami's works are mediators of intercultural dialogue texts of world culture sources of diverse cultural information in terms of cultural knowledge. Let's look at the architecture of his novels. We can say that Murakami's works present a parable world designed with recognizable symbols. However, the meaning of these symbols remains uncertain. His books are full of philosophical digressions and literary allusions (almost always Western). Combining, in his writings Western (particularly what his characters read and what music they listen to) and Japanese elements (images of the modern post-industrial city, the problematization of Japanese history, etc.), the author creates a specific image of the world as a small village, which remains uncertain as to its identity (examples will follow). Thus, in Murakami's works, the image of Japan emerges not as an exotic, alluring mystery, but as habitual human existence, with all its everyday problems and controversy.

Mitchell is a British writer who lived in Japan for seven years. Mitchell has become extremely popular from the first of his novels (*Ghostwritten*, 1999). The writer has attracted the attention of researchers because of his unique style and the variety of topics he explores. The writer's works do not fit into clear genre boundaries: the signs of various genres can be found – from the usual historical fiction dark dystopian themes to literary farce. In literary criticism, the bar on the assessment of the works of Mitchell was highly praised – his style and techniques have been compared to those of Vladimir Nabokov and Umberto Eco. The postmodern complexity of Mitchel's work has been repeatedly emphasized. Three of his novels – so far – thematize Japan: *Ghostwritten*, *Number9Dream*, and *The Thousand Autumns of Jacob de Zoet*.

Mitchell has been characterised as a cosmopolitan writer. Berthold Schoene in his *The Cosmopolitan Novel* (2009) claims that

> Mitchell's ambition is to imagine globality by depicting worldwide human living in multifaceted, delicately entwined, serialised snapshots of the human condition, marked by global connectivity and virtual proximity as much as psychogeographical detachment and xenophobic segregation. … Mitchell's fiction summons humanity's world-creative potential as well as its tragic (self-) destructiveness into a kind of literary communality which his readers are not only invited to relate to, but must partake of as inhabitants of one and the same world. (Schoene, 2009, 98)

Although not all researchers agree that "one and the same world" results from the "world-creative potential" that Mitchell "awakens" in his readers (O'Donnell, 2015, 5), for instance, thinks that it is "rather multiple worlds traversed by mobile identities"), Schoene makes a solid point about the connectivity of Mitchell's works, which occur "across time, space, region, and domain" (O'Donnell, 2015, 5).

There is a general sense that Mitchell's literary concepts are connected to the works of Murakami. As Mitchell, himself noted, "I had a crush on Murakami" (Mitchell, 2010, 7). In writing, especially in his "Japanese" works, Mitchell sees his goal in reviewing the orientalist visions of Japan: "I wanted to do what Haruki Murakami does, depicting Japan as it is, and finding the beauty in the ugliness" (Mitchell, 2010, 17). Researchers Posadas and Childs were the first to call Mitchell the "intertextual doppelganger" (Posadas & Childs, 2011, 97) of

Murakami (starting by this a certain tradition of looking into the connection between the two authors), significantly simplifying the phenomenon of creative consonance of Murakami and Mitchell and leaving without any attention the most important – the artistic polemic of the writers and intertextual up-building of new meanings in representations of Japan.

Mitchell implements his Japanese experience in his works. He tries to go beyond the stereotypical Orientalist notions about this country and its culture. In an interview, the writer directly declares his tasks: "I wanted the book to travel East to West because it reverses the usual direction of Orientalism and challenges the Eurocentric view of the world map" (Mitchell, 2011, 16). His aim as an artist immersed in the study of the image of Japan. He aspired to revise the Orientalist view of Japan, the very idea formed once in the West: "I have a problem with the way Japan is usually portrayed in the West, as the land of cherry blossoms, geishas, Mt. Fuji, and kamikaze pilots" (Mitchell, 2010, 17).

The intertextuality of Mitchell's novels cannot be reduced only to quotations; it is more a dominant part of the East-West dialogue regarding the image of Japan. Mitchell polemicizes with Murakami's principles not to refer to the stereotypical images while constructing the literary representation of Japan and uses these stereotypes ironically as well as puts more attention into such a significant problem of modern Japan as a loss of family ties, depicting the problem in the way of mimicking the plot lines of Murakami's novels. Japan in Mitchell's works is shown as an ultramodern world of hi-tech, as a cosy place of jazz lover, as a cruel shadowy world of yakuza, as a country of social injustice and racial bias. Creating the Japanese cultural image through the point of view of another nation and then through the point of view of his Japanese character, Mitchell, with such a difficult system of literary techniques underlines conventionalism of dividing the perspective into Self / Other. Intertextual reading of Mitchell's novels via Murakami detects the openness of his works.

The significant feature of the poetics of Mitchell's novels *Ghostwritten* (a few chapters) and *Number9Dream* is that the protagonist is always Japanese. Such a technique of speaking from the viewpoint of the Other has its long tradition (*Persian Letters* of Charles-Louis Montesquieu, 1721; *Chinese Letters* of Oliver Goldsmith, 1760 – 61, etc.). Mentioned writers place their characters into a subordinate position and deprive them of their subjectivity. Mitchell's "Japanese" narrative simultaneously provides ground for such an interpretation and refutes it. Mitchell constantly underlines the importance of subjective positions. In such a way, the literary violence against the Other is overcome. This extended imagological diverse specification of the image of Japan (from Fuji to everyday life) defines the modern image of the country, opposing the stereotypical image of exotic East.

One can notice that among the many allusions in Mitchell's novels, primary attention is given to the direct and indirect references to the works of Murakami. Mitchell stresses out that he learned an important lesson underlining that "Murakami's novels show how literature can marry popular culture to cook up humor and metaphor" (Mitchell, 2003, 6). However, Mitchell, as if anticipating critics' reproaches, expresses his hope that "there's enough of me in the book to ensure that it's more than just an homage or an imitation of Murakami" (Mitchell, 2010, 24).

Such possible intertextual relations of Mitchell's works with the works of Murakami bring into focus the feature of Murakami's works those researchers call "un-Japaneseness." Mitchell's text, written in English, unexpectedly defends the Japaneseness of Murakami's novels. It is due to the way of representation of Japan, which Mitchell builds through a complex system of similarities and differences with Murakami's works. Not only has this literary relationship brought together two writers, but their place in the world: the researchers call Murakami's and Mitchell's novels global and planetary. Mitchell responds to the artistic innovations of Murakami in creating the image of Japan-based not only on words but also on allowing into literature images of other channels of information. Nevertheless, the main intext of Mitchel remains in Murakami's works and their reconsidering regarding the image of Japan. Mitchell's borrowed impulse of the image of contemporary postmodern Japan unfolds in a complex plot densely saturated with media images and popular culture scenes. It is clear that Mitchell's dialogue with Murakami largely reflects the English author's innovations regarding the representation of Japan. On the one hand, Mitchell picks most important – a new image of Japan, which is an alternative to the Orientalist vision of the nineteenth century – as an image of his favorite country where he lived for a long time.

III. Intertextuality and the Image of Japan in the Works of Murakami and Mitchell

Here the focus is on the literally connections between the works of Murakami and Mitchell, and the peculiarity of their visions of Japan. I would like to start with the example of intertextuality related to the music motif to provide a general idea of the links between the two authors.

It is well known that Murakami's works are somewhat musical both in their text structure (such as rhythm) and depiction of musical compositions in the text. The names of many works of Murakami are the names of famous pop songs: *Norwegian Wood* (*The Beatles*). "Girl from Ipanema 1963 / 1982" is the reference to the renowned bossanova *The Girl from Ipanema*. The first part of the title of the novel *South of the Border, West of the Sun* is also a well-known song, "South of the Border," *Such bands performed dance* as *Beach Boys* and *The Dell*.

Chapter "Tokyo" in Mitchel's *Ghostwritten* is built around a character named Satoru who perceives the world the same way Murakami's characters do, through jazz and Western pop music. For instance, in Murakami's novel *Dance* we find music references in abundance:

> I put his body in a Seiyu supermarket bag, placed him on the backseat of the car, and drove to the hardware store for a shovel. I turned off the highway a good way up in the hills and found an appropriate grove of trees. A fair distance back from the road I dug a hole one meter deep and laid Kipper in his shopping bag to rest. Then I shoveled dirt on top of him. Sorry, I told the little guy, that's just how it goes. Birds were singing the whole time I was burying him. The upper registers of a flute recital. Once the hole was filled in, I tossed the shovel into the trunk of the car, and got back on the highway. I turned the radio on as I drove home to Tokyo. Which is when the DJ had to put on Ray Charles moan-ing about being born to lose … and now I'm losing you (Murakami, 2010a, 10).

The music references are numerous in Murakami's novels, and it would not be easy to list them all. However, these two quotes easily illustrate the author's attitude towards Western culture in general and music in particular.

Similarly, Satoru goes through his day constantly thinking of it in jazz terms: "Static hisses on telephone lines. Jimmy Cobb's percussion on 'Blue in Green'," "I felt in a Billie Holiday mood," "It was a Mal Waldron time of day. […] Every note of 'Left Alone' fell, a drop of lead into a deep well. Jackie McLean's saxophone circled in the air, so sad it could barely leave the ground," and "It was a morning for Ella Fitzgerald" (Mitchell, 2007, 17). Such a technique of representation of Japan through the popular Western musical compositions is an artistic innovation of Mitchell, who is willing to open the new aesthetical channel of seeing Japan, to look at it differently, destroying the formed stereotypes of the famous dichotomy "East is East, and West is West,"[1] making the image of the Other closer. Here we can witness the representation of modern Japan in terms of Western music, which creates an image of a Westernised country under the undeniable influence of America.

In order to expand the range of the representation of modern Japan, the author focus on Mitchell's "Japanese" novels, which have the most significant and most easily detectable links to Murakami's works. Those novels are *Ghostwritten* (1999) and *Number9Dream* (2001). The author will base the analysis on them, demonstrating where it is possible the influences of Murakami, or the difference between the two authors, especially regarding the image of Japan.

Ghostwritten can be interpreted as a kind of artistic imagological experiment. The work's central theme is the representation of non-Western nations and ethnic groups. It exposes Orientalist stereotypes and attempts to withdraw from ethnocentric clichés in portraying the world as a "global village,"[2] in which the barriers between different nations and cultures are gradually disappearing. Hugo Dyserinck, a Belgian philologist and specialist in literature, famous for his imagological studies, emphasizes the importance of analyzing the post-ethnic and post-national models: "imagology should also investigate the possibility of developing – in literature and its surrounding field – post-national identity models" (Dyserinck, 2003, 6). In his first novel, Mitchell undertakes this task in a literary form, investigating the possibilities of representing the Other without going back to stereotypical ethno-centered thinking.

Although some chapters of *Ghostwritten* are set in centers of Western culture and economy (London and New York), most of the events are concentrated in countries traditionally perceived by Western cultural consciousness as Other – Japan, Hong Kong, China, Mongolia, and Russia. Thus, *Ghostwritten* is a multi-layered phenomenon of interconnected narratives and subjectivities that constantly overlap and are absorbed by one another. The themes that combine different characters and different scenes are the following: the role of chance, guilt, responsibility, apocalyptic motif. As one of the characters of the novel states, "We drift, often on a whim, searching for something to search for" (Mitchell,

[1] A line from the poem "The Ballad of East and West" (1889) by Rudyard Kipling.

[2] "Global village" is a term introduced by Marshall McLuhan, popularized in his books *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (1962).

2007, 153). This search (which now and then proves to be useless) includes looking for one's identity as well as for sustainable features of national character.

Mitchell further developed the topic of Japan in his second novel *Number9 Dream* (2001). Childs and Green, outlining Bakhtin's theory of dialogism, argue that *Number9 Dream* is "a palimpsest of competing voices and styles that cycle through disparate but always interlinked temporal and spatial settings" (Childs & Green, 2011, 26), which are always related to the search for identity. Thus, we can see the author continue to develop the topic he started in his previous novel. To work on this theme, Mitchell chooses Japan. He writes the novel on behalf of a local because, as he expresses in an interview, "using Japanese protagonists seems to be a more convincing way to go about that" (Mitchell, 2014, 17). It means that to explore the Japanese identity, it was easier for Mitchell to take on a Japanese perspective through his Japanese characters rather than introducing a Western character and representing Japan through his/her eyes.

The plot of *Number9 Dream* builds up around the search of a young Japanese, Eiji Miyake, for his father. Eiji comes from the distant island of Yakushima and is intended to find his parent in the big postmodern post-industrial city of Tokyo. The novel picks up and develops themes commonly found in traditional coming-of-age novels, or *Bildungsroman*. Kate Simpson goes as far as to call it "postmodern *Bildungsroman"* that "questions the viability of the conventional coming-of-age quest or self-knowledge in a postmodern, late-capitalist context while simultaneously tantalizing the reader with this possibility" (Simpson, 2011, 51). Against this background, an eventful plot unfolds where the real adventures are skillfully interwoven with fantasies, dreams, memories, hallucinations, and so on. Moreover, it is impossible to distinguish one from another on the spot. As O'Donnel notes, "*Number9Dream* is a hallucinatory journey through late-twentieth-century Japanese urban culture" (O'Donnell, 2015, 51). Notably, fantasies dominate the protagonist's thoughts, and he always retreats into them. For instance, in his imagination, Eiji sees his father's lawyer. However, he never does, having not mustered the courage to do so in reality. However, the novel's end shows how reality can cruelly interfere with such fantasies.

In his works, Mitchell creates specific images, which can be considered exoticisms; however, the writer uses them in a particular way. It is necessary to underline that, unlike Murakami, whose leading feature of the creative method is so-called Westernization of the text and displaying of the Japanese flavor without using traditional symbols of Japanese culture, Mitchell does not give up his exotic view on the country but translates this implanted strangeness into his own radically different language, turning the stereotype of traditional Japaneseness into extreme parodies.

Mitchell's protagonist in chapter "Tokyo," novel *Ghostwritten*, can be viewed as a direct analogy of the character of Murakami's works – Boku (which means "I" in Japanese). As in most of Murakami's works, the narration in the mentioned chapter is from the first person. Thus, the English writer constructs dialogical subtext to the mentioned chapter. Satoru, the protagonist, knows little about whom he wants to be but is aware of whom he does not want to be, which is why he is trying to fall out of the system. After school, he takes no exams and works in a record store. Murakami's characters behave somewhat similarly. For instance, Kafka Tamura from the novel *Kafka on the Shore* (2002) is a turbulent teenager who drops out of school. Toru Okada from *The Wind-Up Bird*

Chronicle (1994-5) leaves a law firm where he used to work. Tetsuya Takahashi from *After Dark* (2004) is a law student who cannot imagine himself as an employee of a big company. Satoru cannot find his place in this big world. However, he admires jazz, watches old movies with Humphrey Bogart, enjoys Western literature, and has no specific goal in life.

However, in the architectonics of the images of Mitchell's Satoru and Murakami's Boku also can find a few differences, both insignificant and impressive, which proves the originality of perspective in the works of Mitchell. Thus, in contrast to Murakami's Americanized Japanese protagonists, who usually drink beer and coffee, Satoru starts his mornings with tea. The author takes the most deliberate and almost ironic clarification: "An entirely ordinary morning. Time for oolong tea" (Mitchell, 2007, 35), as if intentionally yet jokingly emphasizing Oriental identity of his protagonist. Even more impressive distinguishing feature of the image of Satoru is his nationality. In Murakami's works, despite all the diversity of national entries in his text (Western brands and names, music, books, Asian (non-Japanese) characters), the protagonist Boku is always a thoroughbred Japanese. The main reason for his concern is only a territorial origin: most of Murakami's characters, as the author himself, come from the Kansai area and then move to Tokyo, where they start feeling estranged. Murakami problematizes the semantics of feelings of Self-Other. He depicts that strangers can be perceived not only as non-Japanese but also as the Japanese themselves in their native country. This category is related to the inside of the "self."

Mitchell's text also deploys this motif of regional differences in Japan. However, suppose in Murakami's novels, those can be viewed as cultural barriers. In that case, Mitchell raises them to the level of stereotype, ironically depicting the geographical and cultural dichotomies. Thus, one of the clients of the record store where Satoru works is the editor Fujimoto, whom one day returns to Tokyo from a trip to Kyoto and goes to buy some records. He points out: "Oh, Kyoto was Kyoto. Temples and shrines, meetings with printers. Uppity shopkeepers who think they have a monopoly on manners. It's good to be back. Once a Tokyoite, always a Tokyoite" (Mitchell, 2007, 60). In this way, the widespread rivalry of Tokyo-Kyoto (Kansai-Kanto regions) is represented. It shows how people from Tokyo think people from Kyoto to be arrogant, more traditional, and conservative. Murakami, Kansai-born himself, also represents a similar theme in his works when his characters come to Tokyo (Kanto) from the Kansai area. However, he does not go as far as to make jokes. This alienation is comparable to the alienation of a foreigner in a foreign country, but this comparison is not entirely appropriate.

As the author mentioned before, Murakami' Boku is always Japanese, but Mitchell goes further in his literary and imagological experiment. Satoru is a "pure" Japanese only according to the documents but is half Japanese on his father's side: Satoru's mother was a Filipina, expelled from the country. Mama-san brought up Satoru in one of the hostess clubs and received full Japanese citizenship through influential friends of his foster mother. In this situation of alienation in their own country, the nationalist image of Japan is modified, pointing out the image of the so-called monoethnic Japanese nation. This issue is examined in detail in the study *Multiethnic Japan* by John Lie (2004). Satoru's non-Japanese background affects his fate, for people always find

the truth: "it was as tough as having Korean parents. People find out. Gossip works telepathically in Tokyo. The city is vast, but there is always someone who knows someone whom someone knows" (Mitchell, 2007, 44). The rumors about his non-Japanese background came up during his school years. It is causing Satoru to be bullied at times, which is just another feature of the education system in Japan. It is essential for the recreation of a socio-cultural image of the country.

Based on all the above, it is possible to say that the image of Mitchell's Satoru has various connections to Murakami's Boku: on the music level, regional level, or his general attitudes to the Western culture. In this sense, Satoru is a kind of complicated pastiche. In the postmodernist interpretation of Ihab Hassan (1987), Fredric Jameson (1993), and others, pastiche is defined as a collision in an intertextual space of two or more pieces of content and different textual worlds. Thus, the quasi-parodying effect can be found, and each piece of irony overcomes all others is ironically overcome by each of them. The intertextual relationship of Mitchell with the artistic technique of creating images in Murakami's work is manifested here most clearly. Satoru, this character-pastiche, feels his difficult existence. This feeling is reflected in his thoughts: "For a moment I had an odd sensation of being in a story that someone was writing, but soon that sensation too was being swallowed up" (Mitchell, 2007, 45). This passage is bidirectional, for it is not just about Satoru, who thinks himself to be a book character. It hints at the "author" himself, the Ghostwriter (as the name of the novel is *Ghostwritten*), who "writes" these "biographies" given in the novel. On the other hand, Eiji, the hero of the *Number9Dream*, concludes that "Reality is the page. Life is the word" (Mitchell, 2001, 267). This remark may also be an echo of poststructuralist theories of modern culture. Satoru's and Eiji's words signify the entering of Murakami's citations in Mitchell's text inscribed in a broad cultural context of today. Thus, Murakami's Toru Okada of *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* considers himself a literary character. It is even implausible that "And soon the thought crossed my mind that my failure to develop an appetite might be owing to the lack within me of this kind of literary reality. I felt as if I had become part of a badly written novel, that someone was taking me to task for being utterly unreal. And perhaps it was true" (Murakami, 2010b, 181). From the given quotations, it is clear that both authors create their characters within the text space, being aware of the contemporary postmodern literary theories. Mitchell also uses this to strengthen his link to Murakami's texts. The disappearing line between reality and pseudo-reality of human existence and its connection to a literary text was once outlined in the famous play by Luigi Pirandello, *Six Characters in Search of an Author* (2016). This postmodern game with the reader comes in the mentioned passages of both authors. However, in Mitchell's works, it is also a deliberate component of polyvalent quotations as an essential component of the images of Satoru and Eiji. It involves Murakami's works and Gustave Flaubert, Jerome David Salinger.

Another important motif in Mitchell's works is the protagonist's search for his roots. In this, we can trace a topic important for the literary context of the twentieth and early twenty-first century: problematization of one's own identity, including national identity. Mitchell's technique of artistic reverse in textual modelling of the consciousness of a modern Japanese person is the primary strategy of representing of auto-image of Japan in his works. Satoru does not know his father; his mother was expelled. Satoru never saw him. There was only

a random encounter with a stranger who came to the shop and in whom Satoru "saw himself" for a moment and guessed that this man could have been his father. The lack of a father figure confuses the character much more than the mother's absence. Starting from his first novel, Mitchell resorts to this type of male character that Kate Simpson (2011) calls "surrogate father." Thus, the role of father for Satoru to a varying degree is performed by the following characters: Taro, a bouncer in a hostess club, whom several times saved the boy's life; Fujimoto, an editor in a publishing house, who constantly provides Satoru with books in exchange for Satoru's advice on jazz.

The motifs of "father" as well as "father search" receive their maximum development in Mitchell's second novel *Number9Dream* (2001). The main character is looking for his father throughout the whole novel. Along the way, he gets to meet the leader of the Yakuza, his grandfather on the paternal side, Buntaro, his landlord. All of them, to some extent, replace for him the father figure, highlighting different facets of the image of modern Japan. In Mitchell's third novel, *Cloud Atlas* (2004), we can also find the implementation of a topic: Robert Frobisher, a musician from a good family, who was deprived of the parental recognition and heritage, finds a new home (and the symbolic father-teacher) in Belgium in a family of a famous but old and sick composer. From this, it can be understood that for Mitchell, this "father" topic is not accidental since he actualizes it in a number of his books.

It should be noted that this motif of the search for fatherhood does not acquire such a profound development in Murakami's works. However, it is present in the novels *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicl* (1994–5), *Dance Dance Dance* (1988), *After Dark* (2004), *Kafka on the Shore* (2002), and *1Q84* (2009–10). In his avoidance of family ties, the deterioration of family relationships in Japan is reflected. As a result, instead of searching for family happiness, Murakami's characters flee their houses and kill their parents (like in *Kafka on the Shore*), or beat their wives and abuse their sisters (as in *1Q84*). In Mitchell's *Ghostwritten*, especially in chapter "Tokyo," this motif of fatherhood is also revealed as the inability and impossibility of the characters (father and son) to meet. Satoru realizes that his father must be from a good and wealthy family. If in 18 years (since the time Satoru was born), he was able "to clean up the stink of such a scandal" (Mitchell, 2007, 39), as he was a patron of hostess bars. As mentioned earlier, Satoru is sure that he once saw his father. In one of the random visitors of the store where he works, Satoru "recognizes himself": "I knew I recognized him from somewhere, but I thought he was a musician. He looked around the shop and asked for a Chick Corea recording that we happened to have. He bought it, I wrapped it for him, and he left. Only afterward did I realize that he reminded me of me" (Mitchell, 2007, 56). Reflecting on this, Satoru concludes that such a coincidence is impossible in a city like Tokyo. His father came to buy a record to look at his son.

Mitchell creates a similar situation in his second novel, *Number9Dream*. On a sleepless night, Eiji receives a phone call from a man ordering a pizza with some really weird ingredients in it. As it turns out, the man is Eiji's father, and this motif of fortuitousness is brought up in such a description of events. The father figure is also created with its specifics: he knows about his son's existence. He consciously rejects him and yet, just for fun and out of curiosity, comes to

look at his offspring (in *Ghostwritten*) or calls him on the phone to discuss unusual pizza choices.

In deploying the family theme, we can see much in common with Murakami's novels. However, stylistically Mitchell's works, if compared to the "deadpan" style of the Japanese author, are imbued with lyricism. It can be seen in the image of the cat in the novel *Number9Dream*, the character's feelings about her possible death, establishing relationships with his mother, and the image of his deceased twin sister Anju and warm relationship with the landlord and all his family. Eiji's search for a national and cultural identity manifested in the theme of fatherhood ends up in his refusal to meet with his biological father. As O'Donnell points out, "the logic of the classic Bildungsroman would dictate that, after numerous external and internal divagations and false leads, his quest would end in a paternal acknowledgment that would equalize the loss of his twin sister (affectively, a loss of the self) with the relocation of Eiji's identity in the generational symbolic order" (O'Donnell, 2015, 55). When he finally meets Daisuke Tsukiyama, though, he decides against identifying himself. Thus, this final loss of interest in his roots indicates deconstruction of one of the important topics in the literature of the twentieth century, the problem of the self-search.[3] The fact, which constitutes the primary law of human existence for his grandfather, however, does not lose its meaning for Eiji as well: "Flesh and blood matter, Miyake. Blood-lines are the stuff of life. Of identity! Knowing who you are from is a requisite of self-knowledge" (Mitchell, 2001, 274). While searching for his father, Eiji learns about himself and his family he never met (the "samurai" kamikaze-pilot Subaru Tsukiyama). He decides after long hesitation to re-establish his relationship with his mother. She, unlike Daisuke Tsukiyama, wants to get closer to her son, though once she nearly killed him.

Eiji reflects on the history of his country, questioning the legality and reasons of the war, which involved his great-grandfather Subaru Tsukiyama. He asks himself if Subaru gave his life for this Japan, which came into existence after World War II. However, he never diminishes the heroism of his relative. On returning home, he reads Subaru's diaries on his sister's empty grave (the actual grave for drowned Anju, as for Subaru, was the ocean itself). Thus, not Japaneseness but humanity is the defining feature of Mitchell's character. As Holden Caulfield in Salinger's *The Cather in the Rye* (1951) feels gently for his sister Phoebe, Mitchell's character Eiji loves his sister Anju. The feelings of pain and loss are what establish the basis of his humanity, rather than his exclusive Japaneseness of "flesh and blood."

Another component of the image of Japan in the novels of Murakami and Mitchell is defined by the attitude of Japanese people to foreigners. The first foreigner to appear in the chapter "Tokyo" in *Ghostwritten* is the first buyer of the week in the store of music records where Satoru works. The Japanese character finds it difficult to comprehend where the foreigner is from Europe, America, or

[3] This problem in the context of the twentieth century literature was thoroughly studied, among others, by Ihab Hassan, particularly in his paper "Quest for the Subject: The Self in Literature" (1998); Jean-François Lyotard in *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (1984); Jean Baudrillard in *Simulacra and Simulation* (2014) and *The Illusion of the End* (1994); Gerhard Hoffmann in *From Modernism to Postmodernism. Concepts and Strategies of Postmodern American Fiction* (2005).

Australia. And here we see the example of Satoru's stereotypical thinking: "you can never tell because they all look the same. A lanky, zitty foreigner." (Mitchell, 2007, 35) Here can be found some bias towards Europeans and Americans. Furthermore, although Satoru notices the visitor's knowledge of jazz and his professional approach to record search, his friendly attitude toward the foreigner immediately changes when he notices the foreigner's lack of Japanese language skills: "I asked him where he was from. He said thank you very much. Westerners can't learn Japanese" (Mitchell, 2007, 35) As many researchers point out, this stereotype is extremely common among the Japanese. Iwabuchi (1994, 2002) indicates that there is a belief that only the Japanese can understand the Japanese themselves. Exactly in this way, another character of the novel, Fujimoto, stresses the attitude of the Japanese to the cherry blossom: "The last of the cherry blossom. On the tree, it turns ever more perfect. And when it's perfect, it falls. And then of course once it hits the ground it gets all mushed up. So, it's only absolutely perfect when it's falling through the air, this way and that, for the briefest time... I think that only we Japanese can really understand that, don't you?" (Mitchell 2007, 36) Coming from a Japanese person, a character in the English novel, it sounds rather ironic.

In a subtly mocking way, Mitchell represents a stereotypical Japanese uniqueness formed in Western culture. In *Number9 Dream* we can find another proof for such a view. The basis for this particular case of parody may be found in Basho's famous haiku about the lake and the frog: "Old pond — frogs jumped in — the sound of water" (Basho, 2003, para 2), which is associatively linked to the situation in the novel where two Japanese are admiring the rain and the puddles: "Circles are born, while circles born a second ago live. Circles live, while circles living a second ago die. Circles die, while new circles are born" (Mitchell, 2001, 287). These are the words that appear in the diary of Subaru Tsukiyama, great-grandfather of Eiji, and here in particular, he describes the aesthetic discussion between himself and his colleague Kusakabe. This image of Kusakabe, the bearer of the traditional Japanese worldview, though episodic, is opposed to the image of the lieutenant, who also positions himself as a representative of Japan as a traditional nation. However, unlike Kusakabe's aesthetic aspirations, the lieutenant actualizes the "samurai spirit." It unites the spirit of the time described (World War II), causing constant culturally and ideologically loaded clashes between lieutenant and Kusakabe. The irony of the scene where Subaru and Kusakabe contemplate puddles is multiplied by Subaru's earnest and severe commentary and Kusakabe's response to it: "I told him he should have been born a wandering poet-priest. He said maybe he was, once" (Mitchell, 2001, 287).

Significantly, in the works of Murakami, aesthetic Japaneseness, even in its ironic way, does not reveal itself and, thus, serves more of a deliberate "minus-technique."[4] In contrast to these representations, Mitchell's images appear more ironic, as mentioned earlier. By introducing some stereotypes (such as cherry blossoms) into his text, the author at once playfully destroys it by saying: "I think that only we Japanese can really understand that, don't you?" (Mitchell, 2007, 36).

[4] The term was suggested by the semiotician Yuri Lotman (Лотман, 1998).

Unlike Mitchell, Murakami intentionally avoids the ironic presentation of the unique Japanese aesthetic worldview. His characters are modern Japanese, who are not that different from Western people. Apart from the distinctively Japanese names, Murakami's books lack representations of the specific Japanese aesthetics but implement the image of Americanized Japan, where there is no place for the old values and images.

Another problematic topic – stereotypical attitudes of Japanese to foreigners and notions of the Japanese uniqueness – can be found in Mitchell's novel *Ghostwritten*. Mithell's character, Satoru, shows his disgust openly to the Western way of relaxation. He thinks to himself, for instance: "I've seen foreigners get drunk in bars out in Shibuya and places, and they turn into animals. Japanese people never do that" (Mitchell, 2007, 61). The apparent contrast between the "purity" of the Japanese and "dirt" of the Europeans fits into a standard image of the West and Westerners in the eyes of the Japanese. Mitchell intentionally reinforces this kind of stereotypical image of Japan regarding foreigners. On the other hand, Murakami seems to avoid writing on this topic: his characters speak with anyone freely. In his first novel, *Hear the Wind Sing*, the bartender Jay, a Chinese, even says: "But we are all brothers after all" (Murakami, 2016, 102). However, it is worth noting that the historical connotations of Japan's aggressive war in China and atrocities on the continent mark Murakami's novels and shape his specific attitude to China.

From the analysis, we can conclude that Mitchell offers an imagological vision of contemporary Japan's national and cultural identity. He joins the discourse of a cross-cultural phenomenon of the image of modern Japan. III.

IV Conclusion

The extended and diverse imagological specification of the image of Japan defines the modern image of the country, opposing the stereotypical image of the distant exotic East. It is represented as a cultural universal that prevails in Western literature of the previous period. Therefore, the comparative analysis of the "Japanese" novels of the English writer (*Ghostwritten* and *Number9Dream*) as well as works of Murakami (*A Wild Sheep Chase*, *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*, etc.) reveal the range of problems involving the dichotomies of East vs. West and show how the writers construct images of Japan from the viewpoint of both foreigners and Japanese themselves. This narrative strategy is crucial in representing the modern complexity of intercultural contacts and historical memory as the basis of misunderstandings that arise during the transcultural dialogue.

One of the characteristics of Murakami's fiction, apart from being "deadpan" and lacking emotion/sentimentalism, is, on a certain level, being "mimetic." It is pretty striking that being a Japanese himself, Murakami does not use stereotypical icons of Japaneseness. More specifically, Murakami recreates the atmosphere of modern Japan in his writing, something resonant to the reader, to represent Japan.

On the other hand, inspired by Murakami in many ways, Mitchell preserves his creative individuality. He does not try to avoid stereotypes in his novels. However, he uses them playfully, in postmodern ironic and parodic fashion, deconstructing them. Thus, the image of Japan is represented in Mitchell's novels as a complex dialogue with the artistic representation of Japaneseness in the

novels of Murakami. The authors share the feature of the accentuation of cultural and historical changes regarding Japan and Japaneseness. Their refusal to follow cultural and ethnocentric concepts developed long ago.

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