

Mapping the Subterranean of Haruki Murakami's Literary World

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Abstract

"A good map is worth a thousand words, cartographers say, and they are right: because it produces a thousand words: it raises doubts, ideas. It poses new questions, and forces you to look for new answers", said Franco Moretti (Moretti 1999, pp. 3-4). The purpose of this article is to bring to light relations that would otherwise remain hidden in this current time of globalization and to analyze the literary works of Haruki Murakami in a literary topography: in other words, through literary maps above and under the ground, of today and of the past, and on this world and on the other world. Making literary maps of Murakami's novels, especially of the routes of the characters walks in Tokyo, has been popular (e.g. Tokyo Kurenaidan 1999, Urazumi 2000). When we consider Murakami's obsession with the subterranean world, his fictional metaphors of features like a field well and the bottom of the sea, and the characters' strange semiconscious walks, however, mapping just the surface of the ground is not enough. We should focus on Murakami's subterrane as long as he is obsessed with the subterranean world. Therefore, I superimposed a map of ancient Tokyo on that of today. The result is that you find Murakami's characters, even when they walk in downtown Tokyo, tend to walk along the water's edge and through cemeteries and burial mounds: in short, they walk with or as spirits of the dead. These mappings show the past or the dead violently controls characters in the "here and now", and is a pattern from his early novels, which are set in Ashiya, Hyogo. Murakami tells that "Yamikuro" live under the world and controls violence above the ground. The anagram of "Yamikuro" is "I mark you". It means that people on the ground are controlled by the past or the dead under the ground, which is a typical expression for power of memory of Japanese.

Key words: Murakami, subterranean, maps, literary topography

1. Introduction

One of the characteristics of Murakami's novels is their characters' walking through famous buildings and in well-known places whose names are concretely referred to, such as Tokyo Tower, Aoyama Boulevard, and Shibuya. Generic places are also described concretely enough to identify them, as in the "Hyakken-cho" area (steps in the love motel alley in Shibuya) in the novel *After Dark*. Therefore, mapping the paths of the characters' routes in Murakami's novels has become popular. For example, Urazumi makes a map of the path of the route of main characters in *Norwegian Wood*, and infers that they visit historical scenes of violence, such as a massive youth movement, in the 1960s, in which the novel was set, and ascribes the characters' depression to the violence (Urazumi 2000, pp. 34-7). While Murakami's literary world can be localized in this way, it can still be read from the perspective of other countries, as well. Some of the buildings described in Murakami's novels belong to transnational companies, such as Nike, McDonald's, KFC, and so on. Their buildings are landmarks of the current consumer society in this time of globalization. In addition, Urazumi observes that it is sometimes said that cities and towns in Murakami's novels have an artificial, modern surface which is not in line with their histories (Urazumi 2000, p. 132). From the architectonic viewpoint, too, a similar perspective is proposed (e.g. Suzuki et. al. 1995). Regarding "The international 'Haruki Boom'," Inuhiko Yomota, who says "Murakami's novels are largely devoid of anything suggestive of [...] traditional 'Japaneseness'" (p. 35), explains as follows:

In every society, his works are first accepted as texts that assuage the political, disillusionment, romantic impulse, loneliness, and emptiness of readers. Only later do they fully realize that the author was born in Japan and that the books are actually translations. While it is true that Murakami is a Japanese writer who writes in Japanese, the cultural sensibility that he draws on, the music and films that appear in his works, and the urban way of life that he depicts are all of a nature that cannot be attributed to any single place or people, drifting and circulating as they do in the globalized world (pp. 34-5).

In this way, readers all over the world can easily walk in cities and towns in Murakami's novels in their own imagination, as if they were walking in their own countries, which is said to be one of the reasons why Murakami's fiction is popular all over the world (Yonemura 2008).

Walking on or mapping just the surface of the ground is, however, superficial because, while Murakami describes the world on the ground very concretely, he always has in mind the subterranean world of Japan with its links to violence and death. In an interview with Ian Buruma, Murakami explained that a key to understanding Japan is violence and that the "Yamikuro"¹ under the ground commit all the violence in Japan (Buruma 1996, p. 60). In this passage from his book *Underground: the Tokyo Gas Attack*, Murakami relates the Tokyo subway sarin gas attack to the Yamikuro under the ground.

Subterranean worlds—wells, underpasses, caves, underground springs and rivers, dark alleys, subways—have always fascinated me and are an important motif in my novels. The images, the mere idea of a hidden pathway, immediately fills my head with stories. [...]

¹ "Yamikuro" is translated into "INKlings" in English. However, for the purposes of this essay I retain "Yamikuro" both in my discussion and in quotations from English versions where "INKlings" was used. As I discuss later, the anagram of "Yamikuro", "I mark you", is important for understanding this aspect of Murakami's work.

[...] In *Hard-boiled Wonderland* a fictional race called Yamikuro has lived beneath us since time immemorial. Horrible creatures, they have no eyes and feed upon rotting flesh. They have dug a vast underground network of tunnels beneath Tokyo, linking their “nests”. Ordinary people, however, never even suspect their presence. [...]

[...] A childish fantasy, admittedly. Yet, like it or not, when news of the Tokyo gas attack reached me, I have to admit “Yamikuro” came to mind.... If I were to give free rein to a very private paranoia, I’d have imagined some causal link between the evil creatures of my creation and those dark underlings who preyed upon the subway commuters. (Murakami 2003c, pp. 208-9)²

Yamikuro’s commitment to violence is not restricted to that in Tokyo, but also of other places in Japan.

What is the significance of locating the tensions and traumas of his novels in terms of the Yamikuro? The subterranean world where the Yamikuro live is the place of the past, and the world on the ground is the place of present day. To this point, I superimposed a map of ancient Japan on that of present-day Japan and found that the concretely mentioned buildings and places on the ground in Murakami’s novels are actually located above archaeological digs such as an ancient tomb, a cemetery, a crematorium, a ritual place; in other words they are built on top of the places under which the dead are concealed. For example, Tokyo Tower is made of the steel which was used for American-built tanks in the Korean War—violence and death—but the subterranean of the tower has many ancient tombs (Nakazawa 2005a, pp. 78-9). The structure registers literal layers in this motif of violence and death. The buildings and the places detailed in Murakami’s texts are landmarks which symbolize modernization and capitalism, but simultaneously they are the traces of Japanese history and hence memories of violence and/or death.

This is the environment where the characters in Murakami’s novels live, people who are depressed, lonely, and bored, like the living dead. Let us remember the race which is the driving force of all the violence on the ground. It is the Yamikuro. Murakami explained that a key to understanding Japan is violence and that the Yamikuro under the ground commit all the violence in Japan. “Yami” means darkness, and “kuro” means black. Additionally, the anagram of Yamikuro in Roman characters for the Japanese is, I found, “I mark you”. It means that people who are in the past mark you and drag you into the subterranean world. This signifies death, either physical or psychological.

Of course, not only Japanese but also people in other countries live with memories of violence and/or death among landmarks which symbolize modernization. The memories, however, are different in areas in the world. In addition, violent events sparked by these traumatic memories are various; a riot, a civil conflict, a war. The Yamikuro in modern Japan, in which Murakami’s novels are set, do not bring about such events but rather drag the people into a subterranean world, dragged there by their own memories. (One of the examples is suicide. In fact, there are many suicides in Japan.) From the comparison, the Yamikuro certainly live *in* Japan. “INKlings”, an English translation of the Yamikuro, live in other areas.

In “the Spirit of Place”, the first chapter of *Studies in Classic American Literature*, D. H. Lawrence suggests the importance of thinking of literary fictions in terms of their local places.

² Quotations from Murakami’s novels are basically taken from their English versions, but I changed some parts or added some words in quotations for accuracy of translation.

Every continent has its own great spirit of place. Every people is polarized in some particular locality, which is home, the homeland. Different places on the face of the earth have different vital effluence, different vibration, different chemical exhalation, different polarity with different stars: call it what you like. But the spirit of place is a great reality. The Nile valley produced not only the corn, but the terrific religions of Egypt. China produces the Chinese, and will go on doing so. The Chinese in San Francisco will in time cease to be Chinese, for America is a great melting pot. (Lawrence 1923 [1964], pp. 5-6)

When we think of the title of the chapter, “The Spirit of Place”, and his comments in other chapters, Lawrence seems to look at the subterranean world as well as above the ground. Such a view is important in reading Murakami’s fictional worlds when his works travel in the current time of globalization.

Let us observe how the Yamikuro take action in *Norwegian Wood*, from the following chapter on.

2. *Norwegian Wood* – Naoko and the Subterranean World

The story of *Norwegian Wood* begins developing in the second chapter, when Watanabe says “Death exists, not as the opposite but as a part of life” (Murakami 2003b, p. 30) and “In the midst of life, everything revolved around death” (Murakami 2003b, p. 31), while remembering the sudden death of Kizuki, who is one of his friends and Naoko’s boyfriend. Since his death, Watanabe and Naoko have met each other for the first time by chance at Yotsuya Station, and they start walking through Tokyo. Judging from her emaciated form, Naoko seems to be shocked by the death of her boyfriend and is unable to forget him. She is still with the dead Kizuki. Not incidentally, in her walking with Watanabe, Naoko’s frame of mind is mystifying, as if something controls her walking. When arriving at Komagome, she asks Watanabe “Where are we?” Before long, she becomes mentally ill and finally commits suicide. What happened when Naoko walked in Tokyo?

Naoko’s seemingly inexplicable walk is explained when Watanabe follows Naoko from Yotsuya Station to Komagome. This walk is special for them and thus significant to the novel. They “were always out walking together, side by side” (Murakami 2003b, p. 3) in Tokyo, but only the route between Yotsuya and Komagome is described in detail in the text and is remembered by Watanabe after Naoko’s death.

Naoko and Watanabe “left the train at Yotsuya and were walking [toward Ichigaya] along the embankment by [the rail tracks]” (Murakami 2003b, p. 20),³ and

[s]he turned right at Iidabashi, came out at the [old castle] moat, crossed the intersection at Jinbocho, climbed the hill at Ochanomizu, and came out at Hongo. From there she followed the trolley tracks to Komagome [...]

“Where are we?” asked Naoko as if noticing our surroundings for the first time.

³ Translation in English of this sentence is “We had left the train at Yotsuya and were walking along the embankment by the station” (p. 20). The Japanese original text says, however, that the route along which they walked is “along the rail tracks”, and in addition, the direction where they walked is “Ichigaya”, so I translated the Japanese here. The altered phrase is put in the brackets as follows: “[toward Ichigaya] along the embankment by [the rail tracks]”.

“Komagome”, I said. “Didn’t you know? We made this big arc”.

“Why did we come here?”

“You brought us here. I was just following you” (Murakami 2003b, p. 23).

Now let us confirm their route with a current map of Tokyo. First, they “left the train at Yotsuya” (figure 1).⁴



Figure 1

Then, they “were walking [toward Ichigaya] along the embankment by [the rail tracks]” (figure 2).



Figure 2

⁴ English words in the maps in this paper are by the author.

She “turned right at Iidabashi” (figure 3),



Figure 3

and “came out the old castle moat” (figure 4),



Figure 4

“crossed the intersection at Jinbocho” (figure 5),



Figure 5

“climbed the hill at Ochanomizu” (figure 6),



Figure 6

“and came out at Hongo” (figure 7).



Figure 7

“From there she followed the trolley tracks to Komagome” (figure 8).



Figure 8

Their walking route can be simply shown as follows (figure 9).



Figure 9

There are several routes to Komagome, but Naoko chooses a roundabout one. She could have chosen the straight route to Komagome, but she “turned right at Iidabashi”. This turn is the beginning of her roundabout trip. Why did Naoko choose this route? Urazumi infers that they are visiting historical scenes of violence, for example, universities which had a massive youth movement, such as Nihon University, Hosei University, Tokyo University, and Japan Ground Self-Defense Force Camp Ichigaya, where Yukio Mishima committed suicide (Urazumi 2000, pp. 34-7). However, if this is so, Naoko could have chosen another route, too. For instance, she could go straight at Iidabashi, instead of “turn[ing] right at Iidabashi”, reach Komagome first, and then pass Tokyo University, Ochanomizu, the intersection at Jinbocho, and arrive at Iidabashi. In addition, there are several other universities which had a vast youth movement. Still, of course, Naoko cannot answer the reason why she chose the route, for she cannot remember anything; she merely feels as if she were being led by a force beyond her consciousness.

What is the force? In order to consider Naoko’s obsession with “the ‘field well’” (Murakami 2003b, p. 4), which is a pass between the ground and the subterranean world, it would be valuable to take notice of the subterranean world: in other words, the ancient geological layer of the route where Naoko and Watanabe walked. Let us descend into “the well”.

Figure 10 is a map of Tokyo superimposed on a map of ancient Japan: what Murakami refers to as “time immemorial”, as evidenced earlier in the quotation regarding the Yamikuro. Iidabashi and Komagome are on contiguous ground now, but according to the map of ancient Japan, there was much that used to be under water.

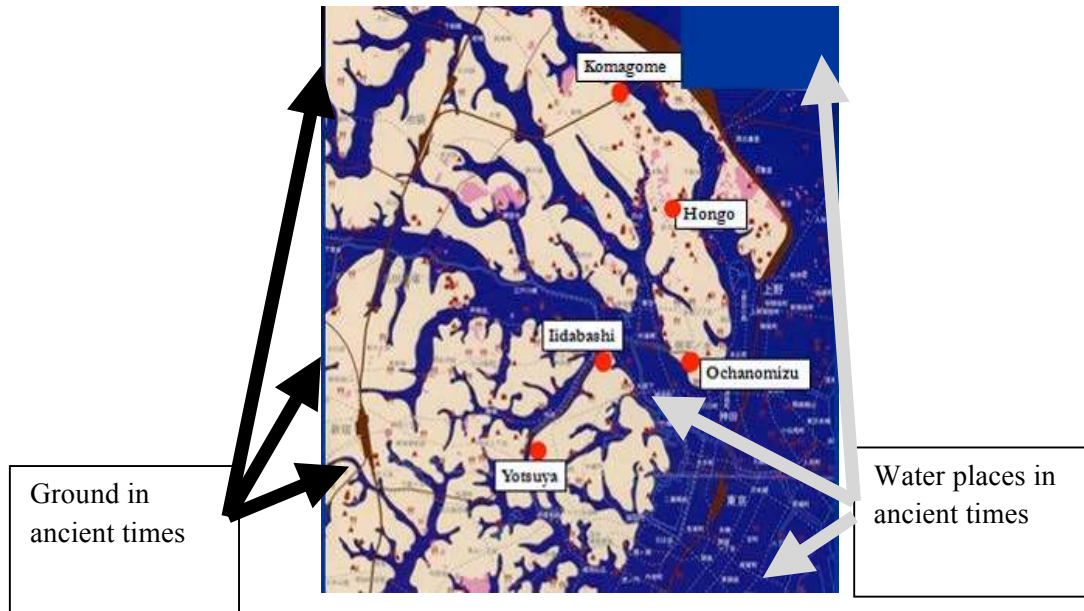


Figure 10

The ancient maps (figures 11, 12, 13, and 14) show that Naoko walks on the ground belonging to the ancient layer, along the edge of the tongue-shaped cape, like moving in an arc (from Yotsuya to the old castle moat). She cannot choose but to “turn right at Iidabashi” because if she continues straight, she will run into the water. Of course, she could theoretically continue this straight route, but according to the ancient maps, she would have been down in the wetlands again and again on her way to Komagome. Her route is a (ancient) shortcut to Komagome.

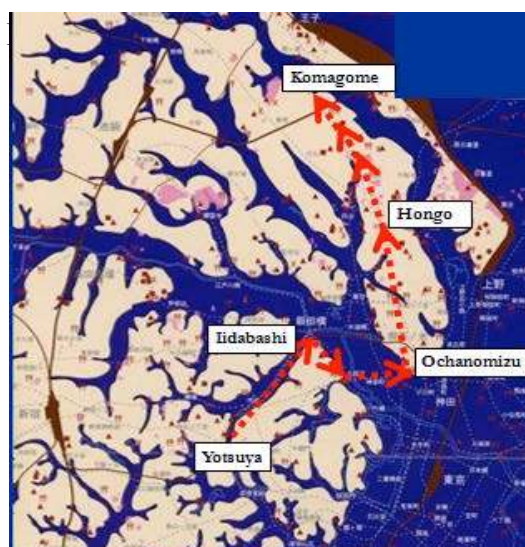


Figure 11

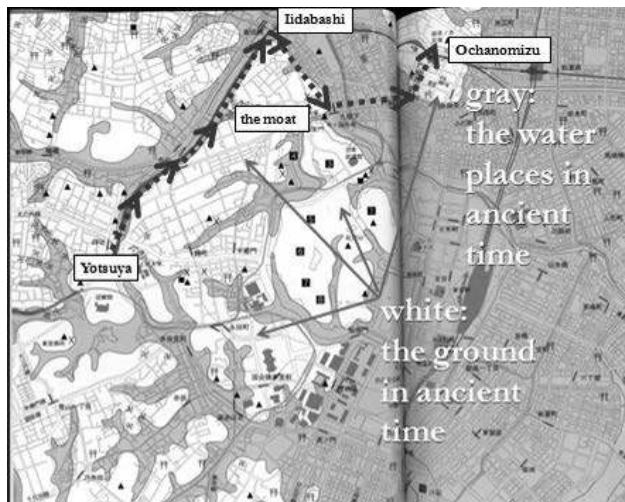


Figure 12

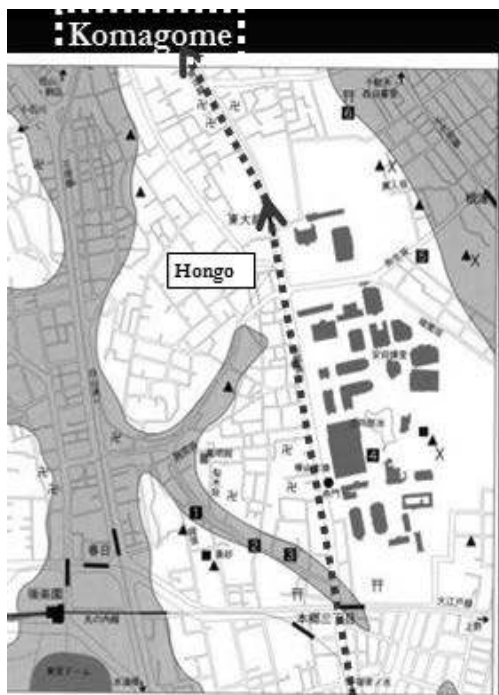


Figure 13

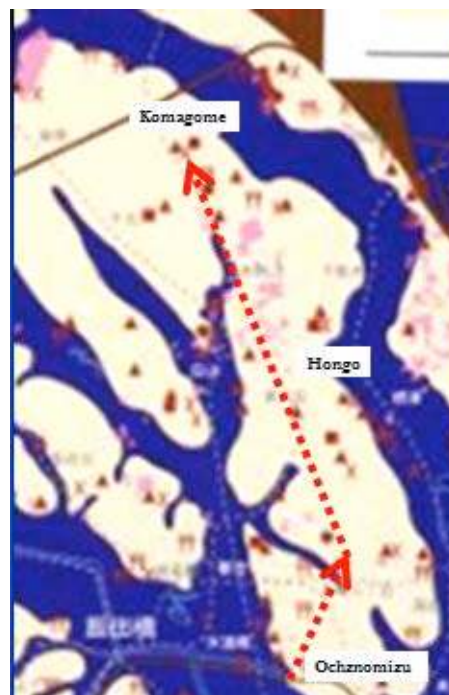


Figure 14

(●: ancient burial mound, pink: huge cemetery, ■: Paleolithic ruin, ▲: ruin in the Jomon period (the 145th century B.C. to the 10th century B.C.), ×: ruin in the Yayoi period (the 10th century B.C. to the 3rd century A.D.), 卍: temple, graveyard, 开: shrine)

In a sense, the sentence translated in English, “We made this big arc”, is based on the view of just the ground. The original Japanese texts says “回ったんだよ” (“mawattandayo” or “meguttandayo”) here. “回った” (“mawatta” or “megutta”) is the past tense of “回る” (“mawaru” or “meguru”). When we consider the subterranean world, the “回る” means “moving in an arc” (“mawaru”) and “walking some spots in order” (“meguru”) as well. This sense is true because Naoko not only chooses the route on the solid land, but she also moves

in an arc along the edge of the cape and walks through certain historical spots in a particular order. The spots through which Naoko unconsciously passes are the historical places relating to the spirits of the dead from the ancient past to the modern times of Japan (figure 15).

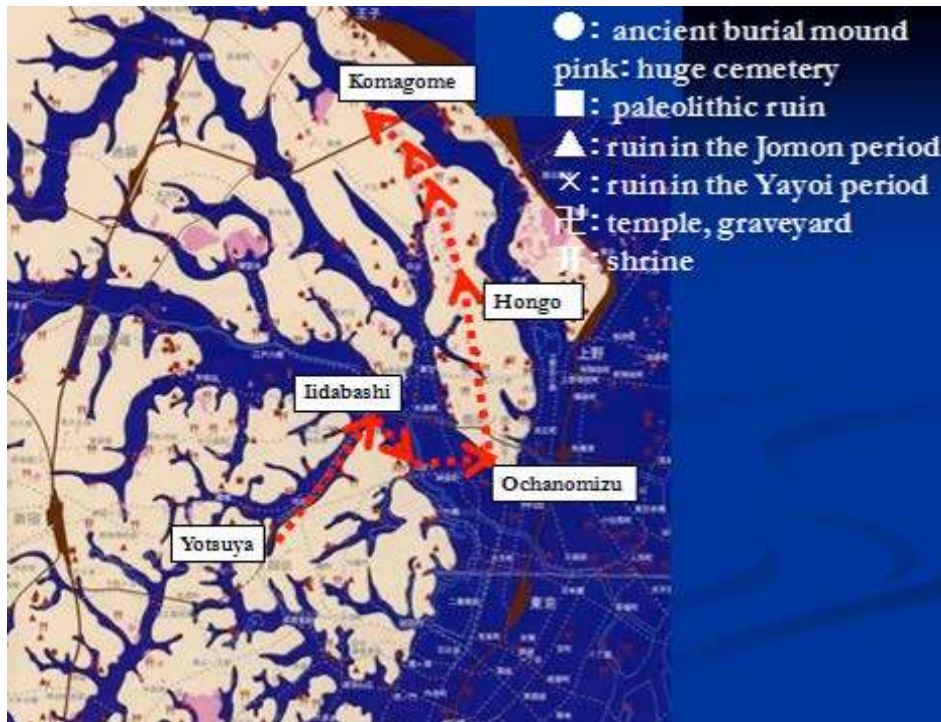


Figure 15

First, Yotsuya, the starting point of their walking, is a place known as the origin of the ghost story “Yotsuya Kaidan”, which was written between the 18th and the 19th centuries. It is a ghost story about a woman named “Oiwa” who is killed by her husband who loves another woman, but she gains her revenge as a ghost. In Yotsuya there is in fact a shrine which protects Oiwa there. “Yotsuya Kaidan” is not regarded just as fiction but as a story based on a historical act of violence. In addition, many Japanese people are still fearful of Oiwa’s curse. Originally, Yotsuya was a place of the dead. In the subterranean near Yotsuya Station there are several ruins from the Jomon period which can also be found in other parts of Naoko’s route.

After Naoko leaves Yotsuya with Watanabe, they walk to Iidabashi. On the right side on the way is the Yasukuni shrine, which protects the people who died in the civil wars in Japan and in the wars against foreign countries: more violence. After this, Naoko and Watanabe walk through the Kudan area, which is the top of the cape. The top also has ruins from the Jomon and Yayoi (around the 10th century B.C. to approximately the 3rd century A.D.) periods. Archaeologically speaking, the top of the cape and the water’s edge are contact points between the living in this world and the dead in the otherworld, and they are entrances into the world of the dead in ancient people’s minds (Nakazawa 2005a, pp. 60-1). In the sense, Naoko and Watanabe walk on the land and the place of life and at the same time the area of the spirits of the dead.

On the top of the other cape, the Ochanomizu area, there are again ruins from the Jomon period. On the way from Ochanomizu through Hongo to Komagome, there are many ruins and cemeteries from ancient times. Finally they reach Komagome. Here, over 20 settlements in the Yayoi period were discovered, and near the area, there are ruins from ancient times. Moreover, one legend tells that Komagome was named by “Yamato Takeru-no Mikoto”, a

mythical, celebrated man who contributed to the violent nation-building in Japan by the Yamato dynasty. He had fiery temper and was distinguished by valor. The Yamato dynasty did not exist in the ante-Christum. However, *Kojiki, A Record of Ancient Matters*, which was written after the dynasty started, tells that the dynasty stems from the mythological age, including the paleolithic, the Jomon, and the Yayoi eras. In short, Komagome directly connects to the origin of the history of Japan, which started with violence and death.

Thus, Naoko walks on the layers of violence and death toward the origin of Japan, as Table 1 illustrates.

Route (Present)	History on the ground (Modern time: after the W.W.II)	History under the ground (Ancient times: paleolithic era to 113A.D.)
Yotsuya	Yotsuya Kaidan, shrines	cape & ruin in ancient times
Yotsuya — Iidabashi (Ichigaya)	Hosei Univ (student movement), Japanese Army (Mishima's suicide), shrines, temples	cape & ruin in ancient times
the old castle moat	Kudanshita (Yasukuni shrine)	< the top of the cape > cape & ruin in ancient times
Ochanomizu	Nihon Univ (student movement), shrines, temples	< the top of the cape > cape & ruin in ancient times
Hongo	Tokyo Univ (student movement), shrines, temples	ruin in ancient times necropolises
Komagome		Yamato Takeru-no Mikoto (mythological age, the beginning of Japan with violence and death), huge cemetery, ruins
【Summary】 “回った” on the spots of death and the spirits of ancient people	death & violence in modern times	death & the spirits of ancient people

Table 1

The Yamato dynasty started with violence and death. After the “dawn” of time, from Jomon period and the Yayoi invasion to the end of late-empire building of the Pacific War, Japan, like all nations, is built on blood. The Heian era ends with samurais, who are warriors fought strictly as professionals. Since then, they had killed each other, thinking of building a better society in their mind. The peak was the Age of Japanese Civil Wars, which began with the turmoil of the Onin war in 1467. In the Edo era after the summer campaign of Osaka (1615), the relative peaceful world came, but the Boshin War happened in 1868 and the Emperor

Meiji brought Japan out of the Samurai era as a modern nation with westernization and militarization with a break with old Japan and Asia. After then, Japan experienced the Sino-Japanese War (1894-95), the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05), the World War I (1914-18), and caused the Sino-Japan War (1937) and went to the World War II (1939-45). In the postwar as well, violent-and-death events always happen, such as the student movement in the 1960s and the 1970s, school violence in the 1980s, the Tokyo sarin gas attack in 1995. Violence and death never stop. It is a kind of a chain linked by memory. If violent events in the postwar happened because of modernized society, the society links to memory of the defeat of the W.W.II linking to memory of the victories of the wars against foreign countries linking to memory of the beginning of modernization and imperialism in the Meiji era linking to memory of the feudal society in the Edo era linking to memory of killings in the Age of Japanese Civil Wars linking to memory of turmoil in the previous eras linking the memory of time immemorial. The trace of violence and death is continuous to ancient times and to the underworld. Though it is said that Murakami's novel includes criticism against Japanese Imperial system⁵, the criticism itself trace back through history to the dawn of Japan.

In Murakami's novels, memory, the water's edge, a modernized city on the ground, and its subterranean world are all linked to death. This is a pattern from his first novel *Hear the Wind Sing*. In his second novel *1973 PINBALL* Rat goes on a date in a cemetery in Ashiya city, which faces the sea, in Hyogo prefecture. The novel ends with the scene in which Rat hears the sound of waves in the cemetery. One of Murakami's early short stories, "A Coastline in May", which has not yet been translated, even says the water's edge is a contact point between the living in this world and the dead in the otherworld. The contact points in downtown Tokyo today have disappeared because the sea level has receded; however, according to the map of ancient Japan, Watanabe and Naoko certainly walk these points. Their walk is really "a kind of magical baptism to link the world on this side with the world on the other side", as "K", one of the main characters in *Sputnik Sweetheart*, says (Murakami 2002, p. 17).

Naoko's walk is driven metaphorically by the subterranean spirits as Naoko lives with the memory of Kizuki. Her mind is occupied with him, so it is natural that she cannot remember where she walks or how she arrives at her destination. It is, however, not at all different from walking with a dead person in her internal frame of reference. In other words, the driving force behind her walking is the power of memory, which ties Naoko with the person in the past: the dead person under the ground. This walk is supported by the metaphoric topography of the novel: her obsession with the memory of Kizuki lets her traverse the route under which there are many spirits of the dead. It reminds us of Watanabe's remarks, "Death exists, not as the opposite but as a part of life" and "In the midst of life, everything revolved around death". After walking, Naoko is attacked by mental illness and eventually kills herself. This is at a point in the cycle of violence and death, and she is dragged into the subterranean world by the dead Kizuki.

The Ami Hostel, a sanatorium in Kyoto where Naoko stays until her death, also vividly links the world of ill-defined borders between the ground and the underworld. Reigi Tanaka has already identified the route into the mountain in Kyoto (Tanaka 1995, pp. 78-81), and Yoshio Inoue identified the Ami Hostel itself (Inoue 1999, pp. 52-3). Both of them actually traced the path of Watanabe in the novel, and Tanaka found that Watanabe went into Mt. Daihizan in Kyoto by bus and Inoue found that the Ami Hostel is a Japanese-style inn, Miyamasou, near

⁵ See e.g. Shibata (2009).

the old temple Bujo in the mountain.⁶ The name of Daihizan means a mountain covered by the great Deity of Mercy. The old temple Bujo is a temple for Japanese traditional religion, Shugendo. The main purpose in Shugendo is to become a living Buddha through training in the holy mountains. Near the Bujo temple is Miyamasou, which was previously used as a dormitory for the mountain priests. This former dormitory is the Ami Hostel. Naoko goes to the dormitory to become a living Buddha with help of the great Deity of Mercy, but instead, she becomes “Buddha-like”. The Japanese think that people will become Buddha-like after they die: meaning they will come to nothing but absolute peace.

Why does Naoko go to Kyoto in the novel? One of the reasons lies in the fact Murakami was born in Kyoto; thus he is knowledgeable regarding the geography. Moreover, we should remember that Kyoto itself is a place where many spirits of the dead are underground. Kyoto was the metropolis of Japan for over 800 years before Tokyo. In the subterranean of Kyoto today are many ruins and spirits of the dead.

The pattern which I analyzed is true in other Murakami novels. There is considerable evidence; however, I will be brief and demonstrate this point through the maps of the subterranean. Figure 16 is the map of the route where the protagonist of *Dance, Dance, Dance* always walks. Superimposing the ancient map on that of today (figure 17), we find he also walks along the edge of the capes and passes the huge cemetery. He starts in Shibuya and returns there. Shibuya was the bottom of the valley and the bottom of the sea. The area has many ancient tombs and a huge crematorium under the ground. This also has to do with the structure of *After Dark*.



Figure 16

⁶ Miyamasou opens. See <http://miyamasou.jp/html/index.html>.



Figure 17

Figure 18 is the map inserted in the revised version of *Hard-boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*. The town is similar to the Edo castle in the era (under the ground), Aoyama, and the area surrounded by Meiji Jingu Shrine, Meiji Jingu Gaien, and Aoyama Cemetery (on the ground) (figure 19). The layers of the land remind us of traditional Japan and westernized and modernized Japan.⁷

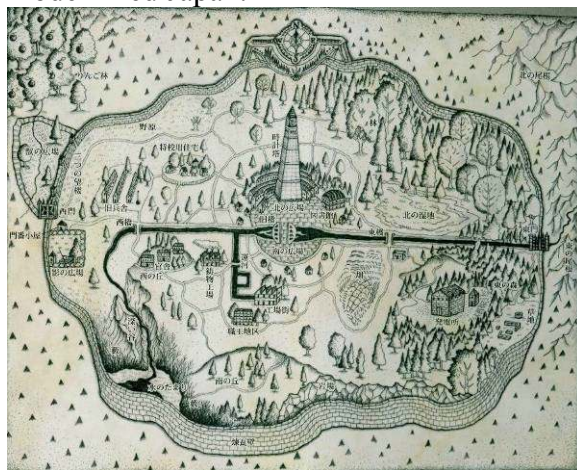


Figure 18

⁷ The upper-right map of figure 19 is Aoyama area of today, and Murakami lived near the tower. The novel, hence, could be said to deal with Murakami himself, who is controlled by the past in his personal life and in Japanese history.

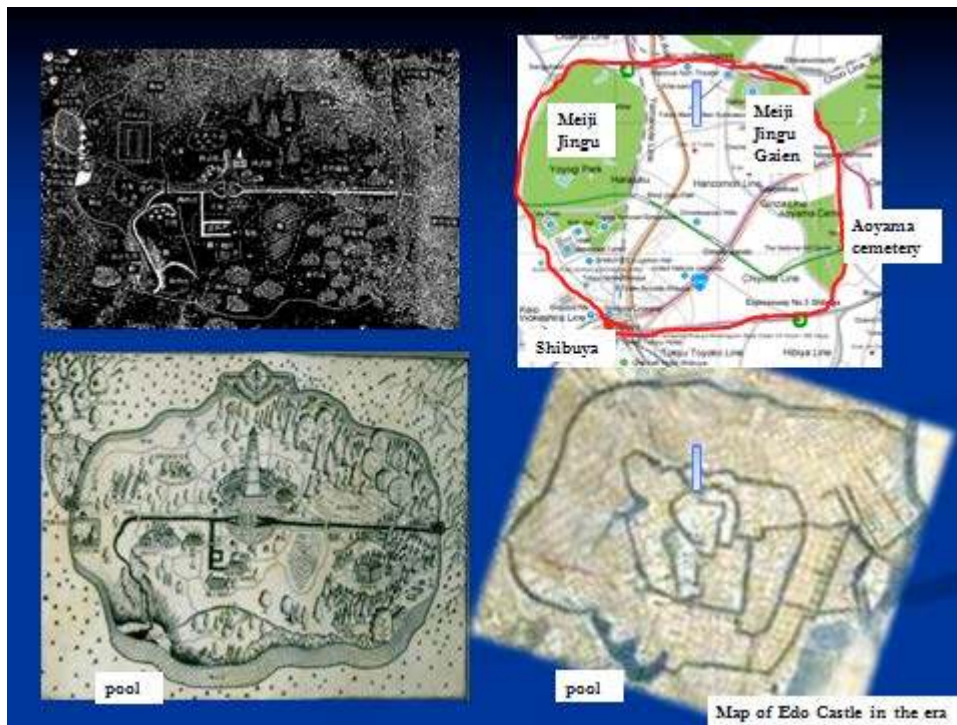


Figure 19

3. Norwegian Wood – Watanabe and the Subterranean World

Watanabe, like Naoko, also spends his everyday life in the areas of the spirits of the dead. As seen by superimposing the map of ancient Japan on the area of Waseda, Waseda University, of which Watanabe is a student, No. 3 on the map (figure 20), is on an ancient cape. Wakejuku, the dormitory in which Murakami lived and which is the model of Watanabe's dormitory, is on the top of the cape. The cape is an immense spirit world. It has ancient cemeteries, ancient ruins under the ground, and temples and shrines on the ground. On the edge of the entrance of the cape, there are two shrines: the Ana Hachiman shrine and the Mizu Inari shrine. "Inari" is a god which protects the world of the dead, and most of the areas in Tokyo where the "Inari" shrines are located are on ancient cemeteries (Nakazawa 2005a, p. 158). Waseda University's nickname is "Miyako no Seihoku" (the northwest of the metropolis); the direction of northwest has been regarded in Japan as the place where the spirits of the dead gather. Additionally, near the Wakejuku dormitory, there is even a slope whose name is "Yurei-zaka" (Yurei = ghost, zaka=slope).



Figure 20

(●: ancient burial mound, pink: huge cemetery, ■: Paleolithic ruin, ▲: ruin in the Jomon period, ×: ruin in the Yayoi period, 卍: temple, graveyard, 卍: shrine)

While Naoko is in Kyoto, Watanabe goes to Midori's house in Otsuka in Tokyo; he travels along the edge of the old cape again and then unconsciously passes near the huge cemetery. Between Waseda and Otsuka there are two main routes by train: the Yamanote line and the Toden Arakawa line. Watanabe chooses the latter when he goes to Midori's house.⁸ Waseda Station, on the Arakawa line, is on the top of the cape (figure 21). The train goes through the tops of the old capes, which are the places for the spirits of the dead in ancient times, and through the cemetery of ancient times (figure 22). The cemetery is now Zoshigaya Cemetery. Nearby, on the old cape is the Kishibojin temple, which protects the spirits of dead babies and dead children. Then, the train reaches Otsuka.⁹ Watanabe again “回る” (“moves in an arc” around) the places where the spirits of the dead on the ground and under the ground are.

⁸ For reference, the protagonist of *A Wild Sheep Chase* also uses the Toden Arakawa line from Waseda Station.

⁹ The Chinese characters of Otsuka can be read as a huge (=o) tomb (=tsuka) in Japanese, also.



Figure 21

(●: ancient burial mound, pink: huge cemetery, ■: Paleolithic ruin, ▲: ruin in the Jomon period, ×: ruin in the Yayoi period, 卍: temple, graveyard, 开: shrine)

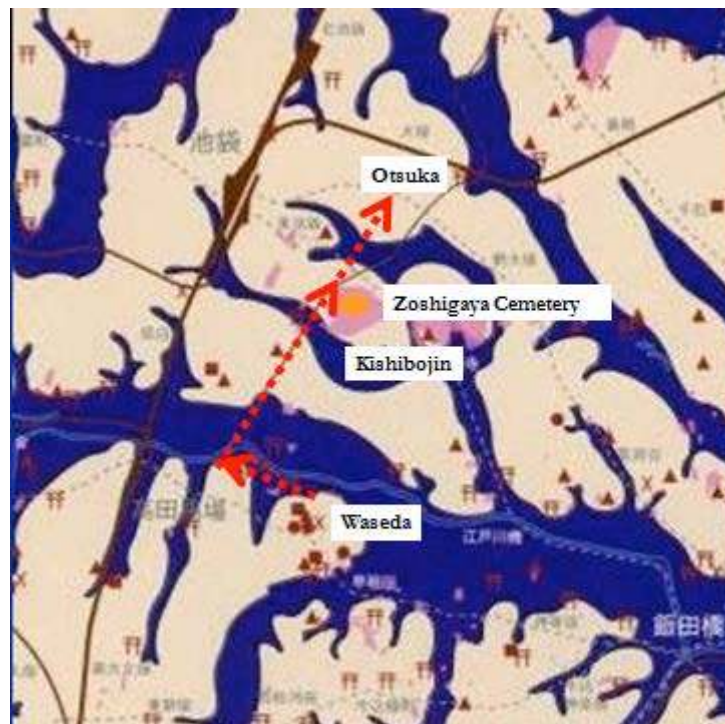


Figure 22

(●: ancient burial mound, pink: huge cemetery, ■: Paleolithic ruin, ▲: ruin in the Jomon period, ×: ruin in the Yayoi period, 卍: temple, graveyard, 开: shrine)

There are more places where Watanabe “回る”, especially the border between the water and the land. After Naoko's death, with the memory of her, he was “moving down the coast” and

“walking along the seashore” (Murakami 2003b, pp. 358-9). The seashore is a place for Watanabe to live in memory with the dead person:

The memories would slam against me like the waves of an incoming tide, sweeping my body along to some strange new place—a place where I lived with the dead. There Naoko lived, and I could speak with her and hold her in my arms. Death in that place was not a decisive element that brought life to an end. There, death was but one of many elements comprising life. There Naoko lived with death inside her (Murakami 2003b, p. 360).

In addition, he cannot remember how and where he walks, mirroring Naoko’s lack of memory in Tokyo:

Where I went on my travels, it’s impossible for me to recall. I remember the sights and sounds and smells clearly enough, but the names of the towns are gone, as well as any sense of the order in which I travelled from place to place (Murakami 2003b, p. 357).

When Watanabe walks with Reiko in Kichijoji in Tokyo, where he moved from Waseda after Naoko’s death, he feels he is repeating the walk with the dead person. When Watanabe walks with Reiko, she is like Naoko. She even wears Naoko’s clothes. Watanabe feels Reiko’s “build was almost identical to Naoko’s” and as for “the shape of her face and her thin arms and legs”, too, “she was surprisingly solid” (Murakami 2003b, p. 370). In addition, the subterranean world of Kichijoji is also the border between the water and the land, where ancient spirits gather (figure 23).¹⁰

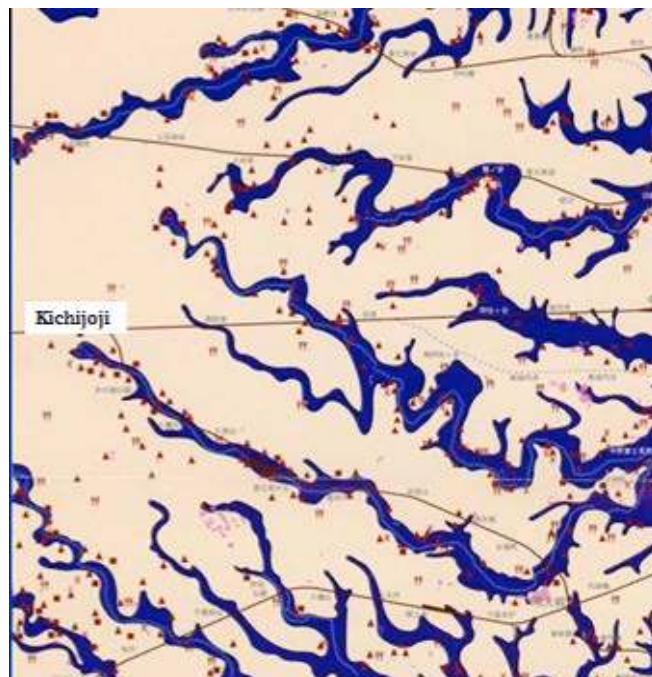


Figure 23

(●: ancient burial mound, pink: huge cemetery, ■: Paleolithic ruin, ▲: ruin in the Jomon period, ×: ruin in the Yayoi period, 卍: temple, graveyard, 开: shrine)

¹⁰ Nagasawa moves to Mita, which is also the world of the dead (Nakazawa 2005a, pp. 78-9).

After Naoko's death, Watanabe lives with the memory of her. At the end of the novel, Watanabe says "Where [am] I now?" (Murakami 2003b, p. 386). He is finally driven by the underworld, like Naoko in the time before she was attacked by mental illness and died. It is a chain of death. Indeed, Watanabe says "Once upon a time, [Kizuki] dragged a part of me into the world of the dead, and now Naoko has dragged another part of me into that world" (Murakami 2003b, p. 364). He is, however, now alive, and unlike Naoko, instead of committing suicide, he writes this novel *Norwegian Wood*. Watanabe says, "Each time [the dead Naoko] appears, it delivers a kick to some part of my mind. *Wake up*, it says. [...] At Hamburg airport, though, the kicks were longer and harder than usual. Which is why I am writing this book" (Murakami 2003b, p. 4). He lives in the fragile balance between the world and the underworld. He can manage to connect with the world by concentrating on writing the novel; he lives here and now, or on the ground, in touch with the past, the underworld.

The "death" of a person is a memory and a psychological violence, which suddenly assaults a person's everyday life. After Naoko's death, Watanabe cannot forget her and says "I felt sure that Naoko was still beside me" (Murakami 2003b, p. 359). Watanabe's "here and now" is always eaten away by his past, and his existence is with the dead. His world consists of ill-defined borders between the present and the past and the living and the dead; consequently the past and the dead edge into his present life. To put it topographically, the surface (the present/the living) is always eaten away by the underworld (the past/the dead) or the ground eaten away by the sea.

4. Other Characters and the Subterranean World

The power of memory also generally controls the other characters in *Norwegian Wood*. Midori is consumed by the memory of her mother and father in the subterranean world. When she remembers them, she complains to Watanabe that they should have loved her more. Watanabe sleeps with Midori in pajamas belonging to Midori's dead father. For Midori, Watanabe is the father by whom she wants to be loved. Midori's desire to be loved by a dead person is the same as Naoko's. Indeed, Midori also goes to the area of the spirits of the dead and then walks on the edge of the cape after the funeral of her father. The former is Nara, which was the metropolis of Japan before Kyoto. Nara also has many temples and tombs of ancient politicians. Contrarily, the cape where Midori goes is "Shimokita, Tappi, places like that" (Murakami 2003b, p. 292). The "places like that" are the water's edge and the cape in Aomori prefecture (figure 24).

Additionally, Ochanomizu, where her father died in the hospital, and Ueno, to which her father referred – in a trance – to Watanabe, are also on the top of a cape where numerous spirits of the dead remain (figure 25). As for Ueno, Midori remembers that her father told her "stuff he didn't usually talk about", "like about the big earthquake of 1923 or about the war" (Murakami 2003b, p. 255), that is to say, topics of violence and death.



Figure 24

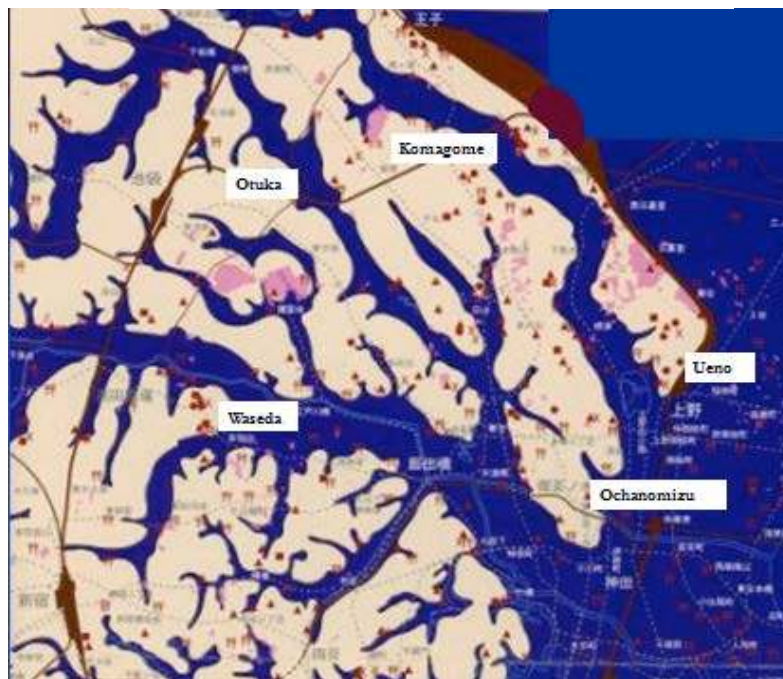


Figure 25

(●: ancient burial mound, pink: huge cemetery, ■: Paleolithic ruin, ▲: ruin in the Jomon period, ×: ruin in the Yayoi period, 卍: temple, graveyard, 开: shrine)

Reiko, Naoko's roommate in the Ami Hostel, is also mentally damaged. She expresses herself as a dead person, and she confesses that she is also driven not by her will but by the power of memory.

"I'm finished as a human being. All you're looking at is the lingering memory of what I used to be. The most important part of me, what used to be inside, died years ago, and I'm just functioning by auto-memory". (Murakami 2003b, p. 378)

The reason for her dying inside lies in her separation from her husband and child because of her piano student's lie that Reiko had raped her, which made her abhorred in her

neighborhood. Reiko was suddenly attacked by psychological violence, and she has been alone since then. Naoko supports her in the hostel. Their relationship is sometimes like a parent and child and sometimes like a couple. Therefore, Reiko walking with Watanabe in Tokyo after Naoko's death, as seen earlier, is equivalent to Watanabe's walking with the dead Naoko at that time. Certainly, what Reiko says to Watanabe in the end of the novel is exactly same as what both Midori and Naoko have said: "Don't forget me".

Thinking of the bad relationship of Reiko's student with her family, we could say that she also wants love. It is true that the student wants Reiko to love her; however, Reiko refuses the student's seduction. It is psychological violence for the student because she seeks love. Reiko's refusal drives the student to lie and in turn creates psychological violence for Reiko; it makes her lonely and forces her into the hostel in the mountain of the great Deity of Mercy. Now Reiko lives with the memory of the past, as she says, "I'm just functioning by auto-memory" (Murakami 2003, p. 378).

5. Conclusion

All the main characters in the novel want love and lose it, and the loss of love creates for them psychological violence and mental or physical death. They live with the memories of the past. It also drives them to connect with other people on the ground, by way of the past people under the ground. Memory is the bridge of everything and everybody. It is like a nest: a nest of the Yamikuro, which under the ground commit all the violence in Japan. It is impossible to disassemble the nest. Watanabe says, "[The well] was deep beyond measuring, and crammed full of darkness, as if all the world's darknesses had been boiled down to their ultimate density" (Murakami 2003b, p. 5). One's memory continues linking to the first memory in the bottom of its layer, like Naoko and Watanabe walking toward Komagome, which is a symbolic place of the dawn of Japan with violence. Japanese people live in a chain of violence and death. Watanabe says in the end of the novel, "Where was I now? I had no idea. No idea at all. Where was this place? All that flashed into my eyes were the countless shapes of people walking by to nowhere" (Murakami 2003b, p. 386). Like Watanabe and Naoko, Japanese people also might be walking now to nowhere and simultaneously to somewhere by the force of the subterranean world. Again, remember the anagram of Yamikuro: "I mark you". There is no border between the ground and the subterranean. Japanese are always controlled, through memory, by the past, and dragged into the world of death. The embodiment of this standpoint, which is expressed in the maps of the ground and the subterranean world of Japan and the spirit of place, is the world of Murakami.

I conclude this essay with the words of "K" in *Sputnik Sweetheart*, which echoes Murakami's standpoint and Lawrence's view quoted at the beginning.

After a while I started to speak. "A long time ago in China there were three cities with high walls around them, with huge, magnificent gates. The gates weren't just doors for letting people in or out, they had greater significance. People believed the city's soul resided in the gates. Or at least that it *should* reside there. It's like in Europe in the Middle Ages when people felt a city's heart lay in its cathedral and central square. Which is why even today in China there are lots of wonderful gates still standing. Do you know how the Chinese built these gates? [. . .]

People would take carts out to old battlefields and gather the bleached bones that were buried there or lay scattered about. China's a pretty ancient country—lots of old battlefields—so they never had to search far. At the entrance to the city they'd construct a huge gate and seal the bones up inside. They hoped that by commemorating the dead soldiers in this way they would continue to guard their town. There's more. When the gate was finished they'd ring several

dogs over to it, slit their throats, and sprinkle their blood on the gate. Only by mixing fresh blood with the dried-out bones would the ancient souls of the dead magically revive. At least that was the idea. [. . .]

Writing novels is much the same. You gather up bones and make your gate, but no matter how wonderful the gate might be, that alone doesn't make it a living, breathing novel. A story is not something of this world. A real story requires a kind of magical baptism to link the world on this side with the world on the *other* side [. . .]

'It's a metaphor', I said. 'You don't have to actually kill anything'". (Murakami 2002, pp. 16-8)¹¹

¹¹ Koshikawa (2000) takes notice of this passages as a proof that Murakami's novels fill with metaphors to link this world and the other world (pp. 205-6).

Figures

Figures 1-8. Mapion.

Figure 9. Chiyodaku mansion.com.

Figures 10-11. Nakazawa 2005b.

Figure 12. Nakazawa 2005a, pp. 230-1.

Figure 13. Nakazawa 2005a, p. 119.

Figures 14-15. Nakazawa 2005b.

Figure 16. Web M-tabii.

Figure 17. Nakazawa 2005b.

Figure 18. Murakami (2003a).

Figure 19. Clockwise from top left, Murakami (2003a), Web M-tabii, Korejio (2007), and Murakami (2010).

Figures 20-21. Nakazawa 2005a, p. 151.

Figures 22-23. Nakazawa 2005b.

Figure 24. Mapion.

Figure 25. Nakazawa 2005b.

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