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A COMPARISON OF SYMBOLISM IN F. SCOTT FITZGERALD'S *THE GREAT GATSBY* AND HARUKI MURAKAMI'S *NORWEGIAN WOOD*

F. SCOTT FITZGERALD'IN *MUHTEŞEM GATSBY* VE HARUKİ MURAKAMI'NİN *İMKANSIZIN ŞARKISI* ROMANLARININ SEMBOLİZM AÇISINDAN KARŞILAŞTIRILMASI

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to conduct a comparative analysis of the symbolism employed in American writer F. Scott Fitzgerald's renowned work, *The Great Gatsby*, and Japanese writer Haruki Murakami's acclaimed novel, *Norwegian Wood* to examine the influence of Fitzgerald's writing style on Murakami's literary expression. Symbolism plays a crucial role in literary works as it discreetly enhances the narrative being conveyed. Symbolism refers to the artistic technique of conveying thoughts and emotions by employing indirect means, rather than explicitly describing or defining them through direct comparisons with tangible representations. Symbolism, as a literary device, serves the purpose of alluding to the underlying thoughts and emotions by evoking them in the reader's mind through the utilization of open-ended symbols. This characteristic sets symbolism apart from the straightforward depiction and explanation found in direct description and definition. Symbolism is a sophisticated mode of communication that excels in conveying thoughts and emotions through understated means. Both Fitzgerald's and Murakami's novels surpass the confined scope of the individual and establish a connection between the subjective and the objective realms by employing symbolism in their respective compositions. Within this context, this study aims to offer a thorough analysis to clarify the shared characteristics that can be observed between these two authors and the insights or knowledge that Murakami has acquired by studying the literary works of Fitzgerald. The study examines the social value and perspective exhibited by the characters in Haruki Murakami's work, which is deeply entrenched in the cultural standards of Japan. Nevertheless, the assessment of these values is shaped by Western, specifically American, cultural standards.

Keywords: *Symbolism, Color, Human, Setting, Music*

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ÖZ

Bu çalışmanın amacı, Amerikalı yazar F. Scott Fitzgerald'ın ünlü eseri *Muhteşem Gatsby* ile Japon yazar Haruki Murakami'nin romanı *İmkansızın Şarkısı*'nda kullanılan sembolizmin karşılaştırmalı bir analizini yaparak Fitzgerald'ın yazım tarzının Murakami'nin edebi tarzı üzerindeki etkisini incelemektir. Sembolizm, aktarılan anlatıyı gizlice güçlendirdiği için edebi eserlerde çok önemli bir rol oynar. Sembolizm, düşünce ve duyguları somut temsillerle doğrudan karşılaştırmalar yoluyla açıkça tanımlamak veya tanımlamak yerine, dolaylı araçlar kullanarak aktarmanın sanatsal tekniğini ifade eder. Edebi bir araç olarak sembolizm, açık uçlu sembollerden yararlanarak, altta yatan düşünce ve duyguları okuyucunun zihninde uyandırarak onlara gönderme yapma amacına hizmet eder. Bu özellik, sembolizmi, doğrudan tanımlama ve tanımlamada bulunan basit tasvir ve açıklamadan ayırır. Sembolizm, düşünceleri ve duyguları abartısız araçlarla aktarmada üstün olan karmaşık bir iletişim biçimidir. Hem Fitzgerald'ın hem de Murakami'nin romanları, bireyin sınırlı alanını aşarak, anlatılarda sembolizmi kullanarak öznel ve nesnel alan arasında bir bağlantı kurar. Bu bağlamda bu çalışma, bu iki yazar arasında gözlemlenebilecek ortak özellikleri ve Murakami'nin Fitzgerald'ın edebi eserlerini inceleyerek edindiği içgörü veya bilgileri açıklığa kavuşturmak için kapsamlı bir analiz sunmayı amaçlamaktadır. Çalışma, Haruki Murakami'nin eserinde, Japonya'nın kültürel standartlarına derinlemesine yerleşmiş olan karakterlerin sergilediği toplumsal değer ve bakış açısını incelemekte, bununla birlikte, bu değerlerin yazınsal olarak ele alınmasının Batı'nın, özellikle de Amerika'nın kültürel standartlarına göre şekillenmekte olduğunu savunmaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: *Sembolizm, Renk, İnsan, Mekan, Müzik*

Introduction

Symbolism is a literary device that employs indirect means of communication, conveying meanings beyond what is explicitly presented or stated; “it is an object, animate or inanimate, which represents or stands for something else” (Cuddon, 1998, p. 885). Symbolism is a distinct artistic technique that can be comprehended through two primary perspectives. Firstly, it involves the utilization of visible symbols to convey abstract concepts. Secondly, it encompasses the association and correlation between symbols and their corresponding significances. The narrative of a fictional work is significantly reliant on the author's adept utilization of symbolism, which serves to propel the development of the characters and themes within the story to elevated levels and enhances their overall allure. The analysis strives to uncover the latent concepts and elements that lie beneath the surface of the phenomena depicted in the fictional work. The text provides the reader with a tangible depiction of an element that holds a larger, more abstract significance within the narrative. The manifestation of this entity can potentially adopt various forms, including that of a human, an animal, or an alternative embodiment altogether. All posits that these objects possess a multitude of interpretations that lie beyond the scope of any explanation that can be deduced through logical means.

A literary symbol refers to an image or object that imparts a meaning that extends beyond its literal depiction as it “combines an image with a concept” (Cuddon, 1998, p. 885). The term “symbol” is used to describe an entity that conveys a greater level of significance to the recipient than it does to both itself and the object it represents. A multitude of diverse symbols manifest themselves to individuals throughout their daily experiences. Love, for example, is symbolically depicted through the image of a rose, while a nation is emblematically represented by a flag, and harmony is exemplified by the presence of a dove. Conversely, a literary symbol exhibits certain distinctions from the aforementioned concept. In a general sense, “in literary usage, [...] a symbol is a specially evocative kind of image; that is, a word or phrase referring to a concrete object, scene or action which also has some further significance associated with it” (Baldick, 2001, pp. 251-25). A literary symbol is an intentionally created symbol that is unique to a particular literary work and lacks widespread recognition in society. In the realm of conveying concepts, symbols serve as a means for writers to more proficiently engage the emotions and sensory experiences of their readers. The utilization of symbolism within a narrative is a pivotal factor that contributes to its attainment of classic status and serves as a compelling mechanism for engaging readers as it “suggests a connection between the ordinary sense of reality and a moral or spiritual order” (Quinn, 2006, p. 408). In order to prompt a more comprehensive examination of a subject matter, the author would introduce particular concepts or components within the text. Due to the inherent difficulty in articulating emotions with precision, tangibility, or profundity, the author occasionally encounters the potential drawback of reader disengagement. However, through the utilization of a symbol, the author prompts the reader to incorporate their personal experiences into the given situation. Consequently, the reader assumes sole responsibility for the emotions that are evoked. The interpretations of the text are deemed acceptable on the condition that the emotions conveyed are impactful and supported by textual evidence.

Within this context, the aim of this study is to perform a comparative analysis of the symbolism utilized in the well-known work of American author F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, and the acclaimed novel of Japanese writer Haruki Murakami, *Norwegian Wood*. The objective is to investigate the impact of Fitzgerald's writing style on Murakami's literary expression. Both the novels of Fitzgerald and Murakami go beyond the limited perspective of the person and make a link between the subjective and objective domains through the use of symbolism in their respective works. In the present setting, the objective of this study is to provide a comprehensive analysis in order to elucidate the common attributes that can be discerned between these two authors, as well as the insights or knowledge that Murakami has gleaned via his examination of Fitzgerald's literary oeuvre.

Lights and Their Symbolic Significance in Color Symbolism

Color symbolism is used to describe the utilization of color as a means of communication in diverse cultural contexts “that acts as a code that provides a deeper level of meaning” (Ghiotto and Wijanarka, 2016, p. 57) multitude of concepts can be symbolically conveyed through a diverse range of colors that “speak in an explicit and implicit language since they can imply the obvious and visible as well as carry a hidden and complex message” (Pawloska, 2022, p. 3). Both painters and writers heavily depend on the utilization of color within their respective artistic endeavors. Color serves as a fundamental instrument utilized by artists to effectively convey the emotions and desires they seek to depict within their artistic creations. For example, painters frequently employ the color green as a means of expressing emotions associated with longing or optimism. In F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby*, the preeminent symbol of utmost significance is the green light. In the denouement of the initial chapter, Fitzgerald introduces the reader to the enigmatic symbol of the green light:

“I decided to call to him. Miss Baker had mentioned him at dinner, and that would do for an introduction. But I didn’t call to him, for he gave a sudden intimation that he was content to be alone—he stretched out his arms toward the dark water in a curious way, and, far as I was from him, I could have sworn he was trembling. Involuntarily I glanced seaward—and distinguished nothing except a single green light, minute and far away, that might have been the end of a dock. When I looked once more for Gatsby he had vanished, and I was alone again in the unquiet darkness” (Fitzgerald, 1993, p. 16).

The glowing green light at the end of Daisy’s pier is a metaphor for Gatsby’s upbeat attitude and vivid imagination: “Compared to the great distance that had separated him from Daisy it had seemed very near to her, almost touching her. It had seemed as close as a star to the moon” (Fitzgerald, 1993, p. 60). The significance of the green light extends beyond its literal representation for Gatsby, as it has evolved to symbolize his ideal romantic companion, artistic ingenuity, and the fulfillment of his aspirations: “He had thrown himself into out with every bright feather that drifted his way. No amount of fire or freshness can challenge what a man will store up in his ghostly heart” (Fitzgerald, 1993, p. 62). The enigmatic green light symbolizes Gatsby’s profound emotional attachment to Daisy and his relentless endeavors to materialize this attachment. In this sense, it “symbolizes the hope and optimism for Gatsby to have Daisy and reunite with her” (Ismael and Samardali, 2018, p. 43). However, it is an oversimplification to interpret the presence of light as a mere indication of Gatsby’s longing for Daisy. Fitzgerald has delegated the task of ascertaining the precise significance of the symbol to the reader. The fantasy of Gatsby encompasses the presence of Daisy, while the green light serves as a symbol that extends beyond this singular representation. According to certain critics, the green light is also interpreted as a representation of the American Dream. Gatsby possesses a strong desire to actualize

his ideal, linking it to the pursuit of financial prosperity and affluence, while simultaneously endeavoring to establish a novel sense of self in an unfamiliar setting. The aforementioned examples exemplify the unbridled materialism and pioneering individualism that Fitzgerald believed characterized American culture during the 1920s.

Upon Daisy's eventual return, Gatsby comes to the realization that she has failed to meet his anticipated standards. The occurrence of this phenomenon is not attributable to any error or fault on her behalf; instead, it can be attributed to the significant intensity and liveliness of his hallucinatory experience. The significance of the green light has experienced a certain degree of reduction, albeit it continues to hold a position of superiority over Daisy and other elements. It possesses an aesthetic quality attributed to the beauty of Daisy, while its coloration is a reflection of Daisy's melancholic disposition. Furthermore, it serves as a symbolic representation of Daisy. Daisy serves as the source of inspiration for both of these attributes. The lush, vibrant landscape of the newly discovered continent symbolically responds to the green light, embodying Gatsby's personal aspirations, positive outlook, and chosen path.

Fitzgerald provides a more comprehensive portrayal of Gatsby by employing the motif of light. The analysis of Gatsby's relationship with light has been approached from various perspectives, including the examination of different sources of light such as lamplight, moonlight, and starlight. Nick's attention is immediately attracted to a cat moving back and forth gracefully under the moonlight upon their initial encounter. Upon redirecting his gaze towards the cat, he experiences an abrupt realization that his presence was not solitary within the confines of the room:

"[...] fifty feet away a figure had emerged from the shadow of my neighbor's mansion and was standing with his hands in his pockets regarding the silver pepper of the stars. Something in his leisurely movements and the secure position of his feet upon the lawn suggested that it was Mr. Gatsby himself, come out to determine what share was his of our local heaven (Fitzgerald, 1993, pp. 15-16).

When Nick leaves Gatsby's party, he sees "a wafer of a moon was shining over Gatsby's house, making the night fine as before" (Fitzgerald, 1993, p. 37). In light of the emotional impact caused by Daisy, Gatsby makes the decision to allocate a portion of his time to reside at Daisy's residence during the evening hours, engaging in the activity of observing the surroundings without any specific focus. Upon closer examination of the symbolism associated with the green light, it becomes evident that it has assumed the role of representing the collective aspiration of the American dream for the entirety of the nation. Fitzgerald offers a more comprehensive elucidation of the green light from this perspective, as he adeptly intertwines the symbols representing individuality and societal constructs. Gatsby encounters substantial barriers in seeking validation, thereby rendering the achievement of his objectives arduous. The mention of

the green light in the novel's denouement serves as a satirical device aimed at readers who endeavor to comprehend an unattainable illusion:

“Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us. It eluded us then, but that's no matter—tomorrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms farther...And one fine morning- so we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past” (Fitzgerald, 1993, pp. 115).

This resolution effectively addresses the central theme of the novel and serves as a conclusive element in the overall narrative. Upon witnessing Jay Gatsby's nocturnal act of stretching his arms towards the water, Nick discerns the green light as the luminous beacon situated at the terminus of Daisy's pier. The verdant expanse of the American landscape has a similar symbolic significance to Daisy's dock's bright beacon. This parallel can be observed not only in Gatsby's perception but also in the historical experiences of explorers and visionaries who came before him. The opulence and affluence exhibited by Jay Gatsby bear a striking resemblance to the American Dream, a notion that remained elusive and ultimately lost its substantive and significant nature. According to Nick, a prevailing contention exists that a significant portion of individuals are driven by a collective inclination to advance towards a forthcoming state in which their ambitions are actualized. Furthermore, the color green can also symbolize the concept of “proceed”. The green light serves as a symbolic representation urging Gatsby to promptly engage in proactive measures to pursue his aspirations and endeavor towards an improved state of being. He possesses knowledge regarding the auspicious prospects that lie ahead of him. He utilizes a variety of strategies at his disposal in an attempt to reconcile with Daisy, firmly convinced that no obstacle could impede their reunion. From an early age, Gatsby had made the deliberate choice to pursue a path that would lead him to attain widespread recognition and prominence. The green light symbolizes his aspirations and his unwavering commitment to Daisy.

In the novel *Norwegian Wood*, Haruki Murakami also employs the thematic element of light. Upon Toru's arrival at Ami Hostel in the evening, he finds solace and a sense of warmth emanating from the illumination in Naoko's room:

“Where the road sloped upwards beyond the trees, I sat and looked towards the building where Naoko lived. It was easy to tell her room. All I had to do was find the one window towards the back where a faint light trembled. I focused on that point of light for a long, long time. It made me think of something like the final pulse of a soul's dying embers. I wanted to cup my hands over what was left and keep it alive. I went on watching it the way Jay Gatsby watched that tiny light on the opposite shore night after night” (Murakami, 2001, p. 137).

Similar to Naoko, Toru possesses an inner perception of a subtle luminosity symbolizing his ultimate goal and resolute ambitions. Kizuki, who was Toru's closest

companion during their high school years, was romantically involved with a woman named Naoko at one point. Toru's realization of his inability to return to his former way of life following Kizuki's demise was a significant finding. Despite his best attempts, he was unable to completely erase the memory, leaving a lingering sense of unease within him. Over the course of time, the knot gradually acquired a distinct and essential structure, which the individual was able to articulate in the following manner: "Death exists, not as the opposite but as a part of life." (Murakami, 2001, p. 31). Following the demise of Kizuki, Toru experiences a notable decline in his emotional stability, rendering him incapable of discerning the distinction between vitality and mortality. There is no inherent incompatibility between life and death. Upon reflection of the period subsequent to Kizuki's passing, Toru discerns that the notion of mortality appeared to be ubiquitous throughout each and every one of those days. Subsequently, he acquired knowledge that she was engaged in a romantic relationship, yet he remained emotionally indifferent towards her. Occasionally, he develops the notion that his cardiac organ is an impervious core, impeding any form of penetration. Prior to his reunion with Naoko, he held the belief that he would be incapable of experiencing genuine affection towards another individual. Toru's encounter with Naoko for the first time leads to his initial experience of emotions associated with affinity and aesthetic appeal. Due to his conviction that a life lacking Naoko would be characterized by monotony and a lack of meaning, he possesses a profound inclination to devote all of his conscious moments to her presence. Naoko successfully retains the fundamental characteristics and spirit of both Toru and the port associated with him. Toru finds solace and alleviation from his feelings of isolation through Naoko's serene, elegant, and pure affection, which can be likened to the gentle movement of light in the wind. Naoko's affection alleviates Toru's sense of isolation. This location serves as a sanctuary for Toru's spiritual odyssey. Consequently, the illumination serves as a symbol of Toru's perpetual sentiments of fondness towards Naoko, while also serving as his spiritual foundation for persevering in life.

The Symbolic Meaning of Humans

The living entities within the context can be construed as symbolic representations of the main characters and their respective philosophies on life, provided that the illumination is interpreted as a metaphor for the protagonists' optimism, aspirations, and emotional stability. The initial chapter of F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel, *The Great Gatsby*, presents a detailed depiction of Gatsby's abode:

"The one on my right was a colossal affair by any standard—it was a factual imitation of some Hotel de Ville in Normandy, with a tower on one side, spanking new under a thin beard of raw ivy, and a marble swimming pool, and more than forty acres of lawn and garden. It was Gatsby's mansion" (Fitzgerald, 1993, p. 5).

The untamed ivy bears a striking resemblance to Jay Gatsby in various aspects, including his yearning for Daisy, his relentless pursuit of affluence and social standing, and his endeavors to integrate himself into the upper echelons of society. The ivy's placement aptly symbolizes Gatsby's persona: he is a self-constructed individual, devoid of a prestigious familial lineage or formal education, and represents the quintessence of newfound wealth. Gatsby exhibits an exceptional aptitude for optimism, an enhanced receptiveness towards the potentialities of existence, and a predisposition towards romanticism "shaped by radical individualism. This individualism means separation from the society" (Güven&Erdoğan, 2021, p.233) as in the case of Gatsby who has become accustomed to forming broad commitments and establishing regular patterns from an early age. Upon encountering Daisy, Gatsby develops a heightened perception of the enigmatic nature and vitality that affluence obscures and sustains, as well as the youthful essence embodied by various attires. Daisy herself radiates a luminous aura akin to silver, exuding a sense of assurance and self-assurance that transcends the struggles endured by the less privileged. The departure of Daisy serves as a catalyst for his aspiration for wealth and renown. The individual acquires a grand residence and regularly organizes social gatherings on weekends in order to ostentatiously display their wealth and social standing. Gatsby's fragility can be likened to the delicate nature of ivy's thin beard, stemming from the exceptional rarity of an individual from a lower socioeconomic background successfully ascending to the ranks of the newly affluent class within a capitalist society. In juxtaposition to the Georgian Colonial residence owned by Tom, Gatsby's estate is characterized by a pervasive sense of vacuity and desolation, engendering a profound sense of seclusion for its proprietor. Tom, who embodies the entrenched aristocracy, finds himself unable to effectively challenge Gatsby as a result of the latter's immaturity and inherent frailty. The ultimate demise of Gatsby is inevitable. The demise of him is not a result of happenstance, but rather a consequence of the clash between these two entities.

A parallel representation of the protagonist's mindset can be observed in the novel *Norwegian Wood*, where a firefly, gifted to the protagonist by a Storm Trooper, serves as a comparable symbol: "The firefly made a faint glow in the bottom of the jar, its light too weak, its color too pale" (Murakami, 2001, p. 55). From Toru's viewpoint, a firefly is perceived as an entity capable of emitting a significantly intensified luminosity amidst the obscurity of the summer shadows, simultaneously possessing an aesthetic appeal that encompasses elements of both beauty and melancholy:

"I twisted open the lid of the jar and took out the firefly, setting it on the two-inch lip of the water tank. It seemed not to grasp its new surroundings. It hobbled around the head of a steel bolt, catching its legs on curling scabs of paint. It moved to the right until it found its way blocked, then circled back to the left. Finally, with some effort, it mounted the head of the bolt and crouched there for a while, unmoving, as if it had taken its last breath" (Murakami, 2001, p. 56).

This unfortunate creature bears a striking resemblance to Toru, the protagonist in the novel *Norwegian Wood*, as they both share characteristics of being diminutive, frail, solitary, and utterly dependent. The firefly persists in its aerial movements within the absence of light, its feeble luminosity gradually diminishing, evoking a sense of forsakenness akin to a disembodied spirit:

“Thinking back on the year 1969, all that comes to mind for me is a swamp [...] I walk through the mud, exhausted. In front of me, behind me, I can see nothing but the endless darkness of a swamp [...] The people around me had gone on ahead long before, while my time and I hung back, struggling through the mud. The world around me was on the verge of great transformations” (Murakami, 2001, p. 282).

The novel *Norwegian Wood* portrays several characters who exhibit certain shared characteristics, such as Midori's occasional irrational aversion towards various aspects, Reiko's mental illness, and Nagasawa's distinctive experience of an optimistic yet challenging existence. These individuals can be likened to a small firefly, as they navigate their solitary and vulnerable journey along the path of life, ultimately departing or succumbing to their circumstances. The suicides of Kizuki, Naoko, and Hutsumi serve as illustrations of the parallelism between other characters and the aforementioned firefly. There is a widespread and intense pursuit for solutions amidst the profound conflict that individuals are experiencing in relation to the global community.

The Symbolic Meaning of Settings

The environment often plays a substantial role in shaping the occurrence of events. The introductory section of *The Great Gatsby* serves to establish the temporal and spatial context within which the narrative unfolds. The Valley of Ashes serves as a backdrop for various memorials and carries significant symbolic implications that contribute to the overall portrayal of the setting. The Valley of Ashes is vividly depicted in a dramatic manner:

“This is a valley of ashes—a fantastic farm where ashes grow like wheat into ridges and hills and grotesque gardens; where ashes take the forms of houses and chimneys and rising smoke and, finally, with a transcendent effort, of ash-gey men who move dimly and already crumbling through the powdery air” (Fitzgerald, 1993, p. 16).

The metaphorical representation of societal degradation and the moral decline of its constituents is encapsulated in the evocative depiction of this desolate and arid valley, permeated by dust and smoke. The Valley of Ashes “stands as one of Fitzgerald's primary symbols of the corruption of modern life arises there” (Hauhart, 2013, p. 200). After the conclusion of World War I, the 1920s witnessed a decline in societal values and ethics, evident in the era's prevalent embrace of cynicism and hedonism. Daisy is

portrayed as an artificial and arrogant persona within the novel, with her vocal expressions exuding a distinct aura of affluence. Tom possesses a robust physical structure characterized by a substantial amount of mechanical advantage. His pair of self-assured and captivating eyes create the perception of a constant inclination towards assertiveness. Jordan Baker exhibits a persistent tendency to engage in deceitful behavior. During the period in which Gatsby is indulging in his hallucinogenic substances, the attendees of the party exhibit behavior reminiscent of moths, while also levying unfounded allegations against him. The ash refers to the unclean particulate matter that remained as residue from the visions that plagued Gatsby. Upon exhausting all conceivable avenues to access the wasteland, Gatsby is left solely with the darkness that represents the demise of his former fantastical aspirations. The individuals who are still alive but considered deceased assert their possession of Gatsby. The Valley of Ashes, characterized by its inert and foreboding nature, serves as a symbolic representation of the demise of the American Dream, ultimately leading to Gatsby's tragic demise. The symbolization pertains to the ethical and communal deterioration that transpires when financial considerations supersede all else, encompassing religious and divine matters. The unrestrained pursuit of prosperity is the underlying cause of this phenomenon. Furthermore, the Valley of Ashes serves as a symbolic representation of the squalor experienced by the underprivileged, exemplified by the character of George Wilson, who gradually succumbs to the debilitating effects of the filthy ashes.

The Well, as a form of location, is present in the novel *Norwegian Wood*. In the opening sequence of the novel, Toru and Naoko can be observed leisurely walking upon a verdant expanse, while being gently caressed by the October wind. During their stroll, Naoko engages in a conversation with Toru regarding wells. The precise location where the meadow terminated and the forest commenced is occupied by a natural well. The ground contains a black hole with a diameter of one yard, which is concealed by a layer of meadow grass. The precise whereabouts of the deep well remain unknown to all. In the event of a single failure, the potential for complete loss would ensue. It is a fact that such incidents do happen occasionally: “[...] Maybe once in two or three years. Somebody disappears all of a sudden, and they just can't find him. So then the people around here say, “Oh, he fell in the field well” (Murakami, 2001, p. 9). In this particular case, the well serves as a symbolic representation of mortality within the novel. The narrative of the novel takes place in the vicinity of the denouement of the 1960s in Japan, a period marked by the disillusionment of young students who have already experienced the failure of the student movement. The characters exhibit characteristics of moral corruption, a negative outlook on life, and a profound sense of self-neglect that is indicative of a desire for self-harm. Furthermore, their emotional well-being has been overshadowed by a metaphorical representation of dense vegetation. Several characters in the narrative disappear through means that resemble suicide, such as falling into wells or departing from existence. The entirety of the text is enveloped in the metaphorical representation of mortality, spanning from its commencement to its conclusion. The concept of death occupies a central position within the realm of existence. As a result,

following Kizuki's demise, Toru reaches the conclusion that death is not an adversary, but rather an inherent aspect of existence. The relationship between death and existence can be likened to the interconnectedness of a well and grass:

"The night Kizuki died, however, I lost the ability to see death (and life) in such simple terms. Death was not the opposite of life. It was already here, within my being, it had always been here, and no struggle would permit me to forget that. When it took the 17-year-old Kizuki that night in May, death took me as well" (Murakami, 2001, p. 31).

The aperture of the well gradually widens, anticipating the inadvertent descent of an individual. The concept of death perpetually seeks out individuals who have relinquished their sense of hope in the realm of existence. The contemporary human experience in the twenty-first century can be likened to navigating through a metaphorical landscape characterized by challenges and uncertainties. It entails confronting various obstacles such as temptation, mortality, and the inherent complexities of one's own psyche. The well plays a crucial role in the contextual backdrop of *Norwegian Wood*.

The Symbolic Meaning of Music

Fitzgerald's literary works exhibit several discernible attributes, among which is the prevalent utilization of instrumental symbolism. Furthermore, his writing has been enriched by the integration of a diverse range of musical techniques. The literary works authored by Haruki Murakami also serve as illustrations of writers who adhere to this particular criterion. The distinctiveness of Haruki Murakami's writings would be significantly diminished if they were devoid of musical techniques.

In essence, *The Great Gatsby* is replete with musical devices. Chapter three of the novel portrays the arrival of the orchestra at Gatsby's gathering in a significantly augmented manner, as opposed to a mere quintet ensemble. The ensemble comprises a variety of musical instruments, such as low and high drums, viols, piccolos, saxophones, trombones, and oboes. Additional evidence supporting the utilization of musical techniques is also accessible. Chapter three asserts that during a social gathering, a highly acclaimed contralto performed jazz music, while a widely recognized tenor showcased his vocal prowess through Italian compositions. The musical composition titled "The Jazz History of the World," authored by Mr. Vladimir Tostoff, is also performed by the ensemble. Furthermore, a youthful female individual with crimson hair, under the influence of intoxicating substances, becomes a member of a renowned vocal ensemble and proceeds to deliver a melancholic musical piece during the nocturnal hours: "[...] during the course of her song [...] she was not only singing, she was weeping too. Whenever there was a pause in the song she filled it with gasping, broken sobs, and then took up the lyric again in a quavering soprano" (Fitzgerald, 1993, p. 34). Jazz music is a dynamic and invigorating musical genre characterized by the

deliberate modification of melody and rhythm in response to specific thematic considerations. The term “jazz” initially carries connotations of sensuality, subsequently evolving into a designated space for social dancing, and ultimately becoming associated with a distinct genre of music. When engaging in discourse surrounding jazz music, individuals often make reference to a heightened state of tension akin to a nerve on the verge of being stimulated, a state that materializes prior to the eruption of conflict within a significant urban center. According to Fitzgerald, jazz possesses the capacity to elicit emotions characterized by apprehension, despondency, and dread. Fitzgerald bestowed upon his era the moniker “Jazz Age” due to his perception of its defining attributes. Fitzgerald incorporated elements of jazz into his literary works, wherein the relentless pursuit of the American Dream and indulgence in excess are accompanied by an undercurrent of hopelessness, emptiness, fear, profound sorrow, and even a sense of helplessness.

When employing musical technique, Fitzgerald and Murakami demonstrate a propensity for delving beyond superficiality. Music, in the context of human existence and comprehension, functions as a form of emotional expression that mirrors the essence of life. They possess a deep understanding of the true essence and significance of music. Fitzgerald exhibits a preference for portraying his contemporary period by means of jazz music. Although jazz music experienced a surge in popularity during the 20th century in the United States, Fitzgerald held the belief that jazz music possessed a complexity that surpassed its mere auditory nature. The author employs specific terminology within his novel to delineate a distinct temporal epoch that he perceives as personally significant. Moreover, he holds the belief that every musical composition encapsulates the essence of the historical era it intends to portray. Consequently, the author employs music as a vehicle for articulating individuals' emotions within his literary work, positing its potency as surpassing that of mere verbal communication.

Murakami's literary compositions exhibit a greater prevalence of musical elements in comparison to Fitzgerald's oeuvre. In the novel, “American popular cultures such as pop and jazz music become one of the influential issues throughout the story” (Nugroho, 2020, p. 5). The musical elements present in *Norwegian Wood* are integral to the novel, serving as a foundational aspect and a significant recurring motif. Undoubtedly, “many of the characters and scenes in the novel are associated with music” (Searles, 2012, p. 11). The song “Norwegian Wood” by the band The Beatles is the source of inspiration for the naming of the novel. The song exhibits a subdued and melancholic tone and “increases the constant sorrow of loneliness in human's life” (Hang and Back, 2019, p. 241). The element serves to establish the musical motif of the novel and provides the structural basis for its somber atmosphere. Within the pages of his novel, the author incorporates a musical composition that serves as a recollection of various events from his formative years. These events encompass the unfortunate departure of Toru's intimate companion, his subsequent experience of sorrow, shedding of tears, and subsequent estrangement from societal norms. Additionally, the song also alludes to the

untimely demise of Toru's youthful and captivating romantic partner. The narrative of this story is presented from a first-person perspective, with Toru serving as the narrator. Toru's tone throughout the narrative exhibits a somewhat melancholic quality. The novel endeavors to establish a connection between the musical compositions of The Beatles and the overarching conceptual framework of the book, while also utilizing these compositions as a means to effectively communicate and evoke emotional responses. Although the specific subject matter of the song remains undisclosed, it is imperative to acknowledge that the reader's engagement with the song is contingent upon their interest in the piece. The readers will derive advantages from acquiring a more profound understanding of this music while engaging with the content of the novel. The utilization of various musical symbols within the novel serves the purpose of eliciting emotional and affective responses from readers during their engagement with the text. The musical symbol possesses a distinctive significance for enthusiasts of music. The novel is imbued with a vivid sense of vitality through the incorporation of music, thereby enhancing the readers' perceptiveness and emotional responsiveness.

Despite its limited presence within the narrative, music exerts a substantial artistic influence on the entirety of the novel. The primary concern is the functionality and effectiveness of the subject matter. The utilization of the song within the novel serves as a metaphorical device, establishing an intertextual connection between the two. It is noteworthy to acknowledge that Murakami possesses a comprehensive understanding of jazz, as evidenced by the pervasive presence of jazz-inspired motifs within his literary works. The primary function of musical techniques in literature lies in their capacity to evoke emotional and sensory responses in readers. The musical composition elicits an ineffable profundity of emotional sentiment and lived encounters for individuals who possess familiarity with it. The utilization of musical techniques enhances the vibrancy and excitement of the narrative.

CONCLUSION

The literary works of Fitzgerald and Murakami transcend the narrow confines of individual perspectives by establishing a connection between the subjective and objective realms through the utilization of symbolism in their respective novels. This inclination is particularly evident in two key elements. The primacy lies in the symbolic significance of the characters. Fitzgerald's utilization of symbolism in *The Great Gatsby* serves to enhance the literary quality of his writing beyond the limitations of the singular, establishing connections between various themes and objects, and enhancing the readers' personal encounters with the text. Fitzgerald's influences are evident in Gatsby's renowned existence, encompassing his initial experience of poverty, his dependence on familial assistance for financial sustenance during his college years, and his eventual triumph following persistent labor and dedication. Fitzgerald not only depicts personal experiences, but also imbues Gatsby with societal significance. Indeed, Gatsby's representation and symbolism encapsulate the pursuit and ultimate

disillusionment of the individual's quest for the American Dream. Similarly, The "I" in *Norwegian Wood* encompasses not only a significant cohort of young Japanese students during the late 1960s who experienced shattered ideals, a sense of desolation, and even abandonment, but also serves as a reflection of Haruki Murakami's personal experiences. It is worth mentioning that Haruki Murakami upholds the Japanese literary tradition of the intimate narrative in his work *Norwegian Wood* which primarily embodies his personal expression, introspection, psychological analysis, recollections, and idealized perception of reality. The second strategy employed by symbolism is the utilization of expressive techniques. Fitzgerald effectively employs impressionistic description in *The Great Gatsby* to imbue each image with a profound sense of sensation. However, in the novel *Norwegian Wood*, Haruki Murakami skillfully utilizes intricate descriptions to enhance the importance of symbolic imagery.

By conducting a thorough examination of the symbolic elements employed in the novels, it can be argued that *Norwegian Wood* does not overtly portray American culture or its attributes. Instead, it demonstrates a notable influence derived from contemporary American literature, particularly the distinctive atmosphere observed in *The Great Gatsby*. This holds true irrespective of the artistic tone, writing style, or innovative methodology employed in the work. Both narratives explore the romantic experiences of young individuals residing in urban settings, delving into their inner thoughts and emotions. The protagonists in both stories are depicted as possessing admirable qualities, displaying a sense of humor, and experiencing tragic circumstances. Additionally, both narratives employ the use of flashbacks narrated from a first-person perspective to convey the unfolding of the plot. Furthermore, these narratives intertwine various contrasting themes, including but not limited to life and death, sadness and happiness, as well as fantasy and reality. From an analytical standpoint, it can be argued that Murakami was greatly influenced by Fitzgerald during the development of his novel, and it would be reasonable to assert that he can be considered a contemporary of Fitzgerald. Consequently, it becomes readily apparent that the novel by Haruki Murakami is deeply rooted in Japanese culture, despite its pronounced incorporation of Western cultural elements and a Westernized mode of expression. This discourse encompasses several illustrative instances, such as the essence of personal narratives, the poignant allure of living beings, the prominent motifs of mortality and sexuality, the transient perspective on the cycle of existence, and additional elements. In alternative terms, the characters in Haruki Murakami's work possess a social value and perspective that is rooted in Japanese cultural norms. However, the framework through which these values are evaluated is influenced by Western, particularly American, cultural norms.

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