

Full Length Research Paper

“Tales from the Hard Side”: A French existentialist perspective on Haruki Murakami’s *Norwegian Wood*

Kieran James^{1*}, Laurie James², Eunice M. James³ and Susan P. Briggs⁴

¹School of Accounting, Economics and Finance, Faculty of Business, University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba Qld. 4350, Australia.

²University of Western Australia, Australia.

³South Fremantle Senior High School, 79 Lefroy Rd, Beaconsfield, Western Australia 6162, Australia.

⁴University of South Australia, Australia.

Accepted 30 May, 2011

This paper employs the French existentialist philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre and Fyodor Dostoyevsky’s *Crime and Punishment* to analyse the classic Japanese novel Haruki Murakami’s *Norwegian Wood*. This paper explores the existential struggles of the main characters, Watanabe, Naoko, Nagasawa, Midori, Hatsumi, and Keiko, as they attempt to come to terms with the stresses of adolescent life in late-1960s Tokyo and forge their own sustainable identities. The suicide death of Kizuki, seventeen-year-old boyfriend of Naoko and best friend of Watanabe, marks a chilling end to their carefree school years and both Watanabe and Naoko flee Kobe for Tokyo to try to rebuild their lives. The paper finds that Watanabe, Keiko, and Midori successfully rebuild their lives according to existentialist principles whereas Naoko never recovers, mentally and emotionally, from her suffocating relationship with Kizuki and his suicide death. Midori emerges as a feisty extroverted companion for Watanabe who takes his heart away from the ghostlike Naoko. Murakami presents Western rock music as a liberating outside influence that gives some of the characters extra motivation and resources to emerge from life’s challenges. The Beatles and other Western musicians help Watanabe and Midori to overcome the ideology inherent in traditional Japanese social mores.

Key words: Beatles, crime and punishment, Dostoyevsky, French existentialism, ideology, Japanese literature, Murakami, *Norwegian Wood*, Sartre.

INTRODUCTION

This paper discusses, from an existentialist perspective, the major characters and key themes in Haruki Murakami’s (2000) commercially and artistically successful Japanese novel *Norwegian Wood*, written in 1987 and translated into English by the American translator, Jay Rubin, in 2000.¹ The authors compare and contrast *Norwegian Wood* with Fyodor Dostoyevsky’s (1991) classic late nineteenth-century Russian

existentialist novel *Crime and Punishment*.² We use a French existentialist/ Sartrean existentialist perspective³ that fits in well with the Western 1960s pop music backdrop to the novel as indicated by its title. Western pop rock and punk music have had an existentialist flavour or ethos since the 1960s. For example, the manager of 1970s English punk band The Clash, Bernie Rhodes, once asked band members Paul Simonon and Mick Jones if they had “read any Jean- Paul Sartre”. The Clash’s 1977 song “London’s Burning”, from the debut self-titled album, was also strongly based upon JG

*Corresponding author. E-mail: jamesk@usq.edu.au. Tel: 61 7 46311456.

¹ The paper’s title “Tales from the Hard Side” is taken from the name of a 1994 song and Youtube video clip by social-realist New York City hardcore band Biohazard.

² Dostoyevsky is the only author known primarily as a novelist rather than as a philosopher featured in the 2004 edited book compilation *Basic Writings of Existentialism* edited by G. Marino.

³ Of course this is not to deny the validity of interpretations not based on existentialism. Fuminobu Murakami (2005), for example, looks at the novel in terms of the modernist-postmodernist dichotomy.

Ballard's 1975 novel *High-Rise* (Ballard, 2006) which explored existentialist themes associated with the anxieties and struggles of modern high-rise living (Gilbert, 2004). Our analysis looks at existentialist self re-creation as a response to the urban alienation and society-based stress faced by the five main characters in Norwegian Wood all but one of whom are Japanese teenagers aged seventeen to 20. The bulk of the novel spans the time period 1968 to 1970, one where traditional Japanese values and concepts of identity collide with the transitory connections and sexual freedoms offered by the West around the time of the break-up of the Beatles. If the novel depicts the disintegration of a society it is hard to be sure if that society is the Anglo-American or the Japanese. The Beatles hang over the novel as a spectre, with the narrator Toru Watanabe, in the opening sequence, landing on a plane in Hamburg, Germany, 20 years after the events covered in the bulk of the novel (Murakami, 2005). On the plane he hears the Beatles' song "Norwegian Wood" which transplants the 37-year-old mentally back in time to Tokyo, 1968 (Murakami, 2005). Nineteen sixty-eight is the year when the novel proper's narration commences. During this year Watanabe shared a dorm in a residential college with a strange character called "Storm Trooper" whilst he was studying English Literature at a private university. Watanabe recalls the girl he was in love with, Naoko, who used to request that "Norwegian Wood" be played during quiet evenings of guitar playing, conversation, and drinking among close friends. On the plane in Germany in 1987, Watanabe realizes that it nowadays takes him longer and longer to recall Naoko's face. The passage of years produces in him sadness as they remind him that the heady days of youth are disappearing rapidly into the distant past. He also realizes that, as time passes, the events reify themselves both in his memory and in reality; they become fixed untouchables (Marx, 1975; Marx and Engels, 1994). It becomes harder and harder to remember the nuances and small details of those times and yet their implications loom louder.

The years of casual bonds and self-discovery left no-one unaffected, some of the characters from the 1968-1970 period suffered sad and unexpected early deaths, while only Watanabe himself, of the five younger characters (and possibly Midori), really grows in maturity during the years covered and is able to re-create himself or herself successfully in the existentialist sense. The name "Toru" in fact literally means "to pass through" while the common family name of Watanabe suggests everyman status (Rubin, 2005, p. 208).

Suicide, mental turmoil bordering on mental illness, and death plague all of the characters from the outset. It is not a pretty picture of youth and Murakami reveals a society struggling to synthesize the traditional and the modern, the East and the West, forever restless and uncomfortable in its own skin. The pressures to graduate from university and secure a stable and socially well regarded job are ever present; the fact that Midori and Watanabe

are studying English literature provokes an image of fiddling while Rome burns. By contrast, the unprincipled Japanese "golden boy", Nagasawa, Watanabe's dorm buddy, is on fast-track to successfully becoming a junior civil servant in the esteemed and elitist Foreign Ministry. Nagasawa is the symbol of a society that has lost its way. Watanabe follows Nagasawa on occasion to bars to grab girls for one-night stands, but even this behaviour has ceased to thrill Nagasawa who finds everything in regimented Japanese life dreary and pointless, even its permitted and calculated excesses. However, unlike Watanabe, Nagasawa is unable or unwilling to change his lifestyle, his actions or his value system as the novel progresses. Only Watanabe, Midori, and the 38-year-old Reiko learn from events, and only then can we observe developing, growing, and changing as the novel moves on.

JAPANESE CULTURAL BACKGROUND⁴

Hofstede (2001), in his revised edition of *Culture's Consequences*, outlines five cultural dimensions, which are: Power Distance, Individualism, Uncertainty Avoidance, Masculinity and Confucian Dynamism. According to these dimensions, Japan's national culture rates highly in the areas of Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, Masculinity and Confucian Dynamism (long-term orientation), and lowly in the area of Individualism. Japan is often regarded as an extreme case, both in terms of the homogeneity of its population in terms of ethnicity and its scores on each of the Hofstedian cultural dimensions. Japan ranks especially highly in Masculinity where it is ranked number one out of 53 countries (Hofstede, 2001).

Leading sociology researchers Bell and Piper (2005, p. 218) have recently classified Japan, Korea and Pakistan as "*rigidly patriarchal*" cultures. They note that these countries do not encourage or allow for either the sending overseas of foreign domestic workers (unlike the Philippines, Indonesia and Sri Lanka), or for the receiving of such workers (unlike Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore). By contrast, those Asian countries which encourage/allow either the sending out or receiving of foreign domestic workers (FDWs) are classified as "*patriarchal*" (but not rigidly so) and as "*egalitarian*" (Bell and Piper, 2005, p. 218). Key figures in the Philippines Government have publicly extended the label "silent heroes" to these workers (Bell and Piper, 2005). Consistent with Bell and Piper (2005), we regard the concept of individual free agents (for example, FDWs) selling their skills and willingness to work on the world market as a characteristic of a less collectivist and less masculine

⁴ This section is based in part upon the already published article: Yee CS-L, Otsuka S, James K, Leung J K-S (2008). Japanese culture and budgeting: a review of the literature and a limited pilot study to illustrate the research agenda. *Man. Aud. Jnl.* 23:873-899.

orientation in both the sending and receiving countries. By contrast, Japan is neither a sending nor a receiving country and is classified as rigidly patriarchal.

In Japan, the group, rather than the individual, is regarded as the most important stabilizing and creative force in society (Reischauer, 1992). The Japanese business world has been characterized by the enduring principle of “lifetime employment” (Allinson, 1997; Reischauer, 1992). A detailed system of working life has been adopted in most major Japanese corporate groups since World War II. Under this system, promising graduates are selected from prestigious universities (Allinson, 1997). They attach their identity to a large degree to their age cohort, which tends to move progressively upwards in the ranks at uniform speed (Allinson, 1997; Reischauer, 1992). When the age cohort reaches near retirement age, some are selected as chief executive officers (CEO), others as CEOs of related companies and the remainder retires early, typically at 55 years of age (Reischauer, 1992). Allinson (1997, p. 111) remarks that the new lifetime employment system that emerged after World War II created a new “social type” that had first arrived on the scene during the pre-war period but only in small numbers. The salaried worker or *sararii-man* became, in Allinson’s (1997, p. 111) words, “the symbol of a new social category to which many [people] now aspired”.

Workers in Japan define their primary identity, not as possessors of a certain skill set (such as accountant, welder), but in terms of their belonging to the company group (Reischauer, 1992). A male worker would see himself, for example, as a “Mitsubishi man”, “Mitsui Trading man” or “Finance Ministry man” (Reischauer, 1992, pp. 133, 323). Another vital ingredient of the Japanese system is that, even when demand for the company’s product falls, workers are rarely retrenched. Instead, they are re-assigned to other roles within the company (Allinson, 1997; Reischauer, 1992). This tends to reinforce both worker loyalty and identification with the company. As Allinson (1997, p. 137) explains about the 1974-1989 period:

“Unemployment levels rose to [only] about the 3% level, never reaching the double-digit level that became never reaching the double-digit level that became endemic in some European countries. Japanese employers deserve substantial credit for this outcome. They operated under a social contract that obligated them to find jobs for as many displaced workers as they could. Lingering memories of widespread unemployment in the 1940s, along with a commitment to full-employment policies, determined their responses”.

One negative aspect of the collectivist orientation in the work-place includes the subtle pressures exerted on individuals to conform. For example, workers are expected to join colleagues for after-work drinks on a regular basis.

The demarcation between company time and personal time is much less rigid, compared to the West (Allinson, 1997).

It can be argued that the Japanese approach in the business world, being based on the core principle of lifetime employment, actually *encourages* full and frank discussions and consensual decision making between superiors and subordinates (Reischauer, 1992). The reason is that talented young executives are rarely promoted above a less-talented manager senior to them in years, and so the senior manager feels no threat from the talented junior (Reischauer, 1992). The system encourages and fosters a “benevolent paternalism” where senior managers, feeling that their subordinates are no threat to their position, willingly adopt the roles of mentor and counselor (Reischauer, 1992, p. 324). If this perception is accurate, there may be an inverse association between Hofstede’s (2001) dimensions of Power Distance and Individualism in Japan, with the national culture being characterized as Low Individualism (High Collectivism)/ High Power Distance.

One famous Japanese saying is “the nail that stands out gets banged down” (Reischauer, 1992, p. 136). Compared to the USA, the Japanese culture values much less highly the lone ranger high achiever who does not adhere to the social norms of the group (Reischauer, 1992). In fact, achievement is largely devoid of meaning in Japanese culture outside the context of the group (Otsuka and Smith, 2005; Salili, 1996). A person’s identification with a group, and his/her sharing of group values and identity, injects meaning into Japanese achievements. It can even be argued that the Japanese society only values and recognizes group achievement (Feather and McKee, 1993; Hsu, 1985; Otsuka and Smith, 2005). Because of this worldview, the exact contribution of each individual to group achievement is rarely subjected to detailed scrutiny. The Confucian ideal of *filial piety* is likely to be an important motivating force behind senior management thinking and action, and we expect that its implications will be visible in many corporate policies and processes.

EXISTENTIALIST PHILOSOPHY EXPLORED

This section introduces existentialist philosophy with a particular emphasis upon the writings of Nietzsche (1973, 1990, 1994, 2004) and Jean-Paul Sartre (2003, 2004).

We shall start with Nietzsche. Nietzsche’s existentialism is probably best encapsulated in his late-period polemical works *Beyond Good and Evil* (Nietzsche, 1973), *Twilight of the Idols* (Nietzsche, 1990), and *The Anti-Christ* (Nietzsche, 1990) although a calmer and more balanced perspective can be found in his mid-period work *Human, All Too Human* (Nietzsche, 1994). In *Beyond Good and Evil*, building on insights from his earlier work, Nietzsche (1973) argues that only the aristocratic and the

strong have the ability and courage to create their own values through their actions. The aristocracy maintains what Nietzsche calls master-moralities. By contrast the weak-willed herds merely invert master-moralities to create slave-moralities. The weak are aided by Christianity since the Christian religion inverts the strong's values. Instead of exalting strength and power, it makes virtues of meekness, obedience, submission, humility, etc. This is the perfect answer to the resentment (ressentiment) of the herd since the herd wants to exact its revenge upon the aristocracy and upon the strong. However, the mid-period Nietzsche (1994) acknowledges that weakness on occasion can be beneficial since it might mean an enhanced ability to adapt.

For Nietzsche, Christianity is the perfect vehicle for the herd since it both exalts virtues of weakness (which members of the herd support since they are weak already) whilst referring continually to the day when the Kingdom of God will come and wreck its revenge in the form of divine justice. The herd are, in Nietzsche's words in *On the Genealogy of Morals*, "ultimately satisfied with nothing less than a radical reevaluation of their enemies' values, that is to say, an act of the *most spiritual revenge*" (Nietzsche, 2004, p. 121, emphasis original). Socialism is likewise a tool by which the weak herd, through referring to slave-morality ideologies such as "the equality and brotherhood of man", is able to comfort those who lack the will and power to rule. As Nietzsche (1990, Section 34) writes in *Twilight of the Idols*, socialists place their resentment upon society whereas Christians largely place it upon themselves. Ultimately, Nietzsche believes that everyone is motivated by the sublimated will to power.

Nietzsche suggests that we do not accept at face value that people are motivated completely by noble and selfless motives. In fact, often people's motives are mixed and confused and often even not completely known to themselves. A person who, on the supposed grounds of justice, lobbies people aggressively and with determination for her/his own personal circumstances to be improved but cares little for the circumstances of others (especially after her/his own circumstances are no longer as bad as they once were) may have been motivated originally, at least in part, by covetousness. A trivial example here would be the university student who scores 75% on an assessment item and then launches a vociferous appeal against the assigned score on "justice" grounds.

In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche (1973) claims that the strong are all philosophers since for him philosophy is simply choosing our own values through action. The new philosophers of *Beyond Good and Evil* are essentially the same people as the free spirits of *Human, All Too Human* (1994) and the immoralists of *Twilight of the Idols* (1990). Nietzsche eagerly awaits the rising of the new philosophers of whom he is one. These new philosophers will courageously create their own values through action

whilst being strong enough in mind to reject the tempting herd ideologies of the weak and the resentful (primarily Christianity and Socialism). The new philosophers will inhabit that free realm which lies above *or beyond good and evil* (Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, 1990).

Clearly Nietzsche is an existentialist thinker. He argues that modern thinking and Christianity have artificially separated out the doer from the deed in such a way to imply that the strong can choose not to be strong and the weak can choose not to be weak. Expressed in these terms we can understand Nietzsche's rejection of the free-will doctrine. Free-will to Nietzsche is a displeasing idea since he takes the term to mean ability and willingness to act contrary to one's nature which is either strong or weak. For Nietzsche in *On the Genealogy of Morals* (2004, p. 133), "the deed is everything", or (in our preferred paraphrase, alluding to Derrida's "there is nothing but the text") "there is nothing but the deed". Towards the end of *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche (1973) argues that in Ancient Greece (his heroes include not only Napoleon and Goethe but also the pre-Socratics), human beings themselves were commented upon rather than their actions. However, this does not contradict "there is nothing but the deed". Nietzsche totally deplored the separation of the evaluation of the person from the evaluation of her/his action after the manner of Jeremy Bentham's and John Stuart Mill's utilitarianism which he argues is designed to foist a particularly English form of happiness upon the world. As Nietzsche writes in *On the Genealogy of Morals* (2004, p. 133): "But there is no such substratum; there is no 'being' behind doing, effecting, becoming; 'the doer' is merely a fiction added to the deed – the deed is everything". Likewise, for Nietzsche, the strong and the aristocratic knew "as rounded men, replete with energy and therefore necessarily active, that happiness should not be sundered from action – being active was with them necessarily a part of happiness" (Nietzsche, 2004, p. 126, emphasis original). This is existentialism by definition: we are no more than and no less than the sum of all of our past actions (Sartre, 2003): how we think, feel, carry ourselves, etc. independently of our actions is irrelevant and is *not* at all who we are.

The theory that the weak can never be anything other than weak or the strong anything other than strong is a theory that Nietzsche defends wholeheartedly for the most part especially as it relates to the herd. He argues that the herd wants the bird of prey to be held "accountable" for being a bird of prey which can only happen if it is presumed to be free to choose to act contrary to its natural inclinations (Nietzsche, 2004, p. 134). Nietzsche regards the idea of free-will as a sham. However, to the present authors, Nietzsche's (2004) cherished analogy of the bird of prey fails to convince. A bird of prey is fully driven by its instincts and hence nature (existence) and actions (essence) will always be one and the same. Essence will fully precede existence and so existentialism does not cover this territory (Sartre,

2003). For a thinking and reflexive human being, it can reasonably be argued that nature and action do not always coincide. A strong-willed person can choose to act meekly, for example, in a show of controlled strength. This is also the message of the Christian God on the cross. A reading of the brilliant middle section of *The Anti-Christ* (1990), starting at around Section 29 and concluding around Section 41, makes it very clear that Nietzsche did not despise the historical Jesus and he saw Jesus in existentialist terms as “bequeathing mankind his practice [not doctrine]” (Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ*, 1990, Section 35). The Christmas story of the baby Jesus in the manger (because there was no room at the inn) has proved remarkably attractive and resilient simply because it shows the strong in a deliberately chosen state of meekness and humility. By contrast, when the strong only ever glory in their own strength, they tend to be disliked even if sometimes (depending on the context) grudgingly respected. GK Chesterton (2007, p. 48) claimed that his philosophical opponents (of whom Nietzsche was one although he could not reply since he passed away in 1900) “have never understand the Cross”. If this is true of all of the philosophers and literary figures whom Chesterton (2007) reasoned with in *Heretics* it is most true of Nietzsche who, despite his respect for the *life* of the historical Jesus, labelled the doctrine of the cross “that ghastly paradox” and “that mystery of an unimaginable ultimate cruelty of the self-crucifixion of God *for the salvation of man*” (Nietzsche, 2004, p. 123, emphasis original).

It has to be admitted that there are occasions where Nietzsche does regard the exercise of self-mastery and self-control *by the strong* as a positive thing although the weak and the working-class are not permitted this luxury. Nietzsche’s thinking here can be viewed as a precursor to Foucault’s (1985, 1986) theory of “care of the self” in *The History of Sexuality Volumes 2 and 3*. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche (1973) lists some advantages of religion for three groups of people: the rulers, those preparing to rule, and the herd. For those preparing to rule, Nietzsche (1973) argues that religion assists in training in self-mastery and self-control which will be of use later when the opportunity to rule arrives. We now move on to Sartre. Sartre (2004), in his essay “Existentialism”, argues that Kant’s categorical imperative is extremely limiting in practice because often an alternate course of action will satisfy the imperative as often as neither does. He gives the example of one of his students who once asked him what he should do in a moral dilemma in which he found himself: The student’s father had been a Nazi collaborator in war-time France and his older brother had been killed. As his mother’s only remaining child, should he stay with her in France or go to England to fight with the resistance against Germany which had an uncertain prospect of winning? One course of action treated his mother as an end and the cause as a means; for the other course of action the cause was an

end and the mother was a means. As Sartre (2004) makes clear, the categorical imperative can give us no clear-cut answer to this dilemma. Sartre’s advice was for the young student to create his own future through his choice which, once taken, immediately removed the other possibility. As Nietzsche writes in *Twilight of the Idols* (1990, Section 11, emphasis original), “each one of us should devise *his* own virtue, *his* own categorical imperative”. Although for many of us today would view Sartre’s conclusion (and Nietzsche’s) as unsatisfying, Sartre refuses to go beyond it. Since, for Sartre, the goal of human existence is to choose one’s own path, he acknowledges the possibility of there being existentialist ethics which maintains that we should assist others in finding the path towards their own freedom. By acting we express our choice for the world. Sartre (2004) argues that our actions are always automatically and unavoidably universal ones.

The concept of “bad faith”, integral to a correct understanding of Sartre, is discussed early on in *Being and Nothingness* (Sartre, 2003, pp. 70-94). “Bad faith”, because it is condemned by Sartre, could be viewed as being the closest that we get in Sartre’s definitive work to an articulated worldview about what and why some actions are unethical. “Bad faith” means treating oneself, part of oneself or someone else as an objective, reified *essence* rather than what Sartre deems as more appropriate, defining oneself or the other exclusively in terms of past actions. Acting in bad faith amounts to a practical refutation of the reality that as humans we are “condemned to be free” (Sartre, 2003, p. 506) or, in other words, that “existence precedes *essence*” (Sartre, 2003, p. 490). We must define our own essence through our actions in the real world. This worldview *alone* fully acknowledges the reality of our human condition in this world but it involves courage, renunciation, loneliness, and anguish because we cannot hide behind conventional worldviews, the status quo, and the mentality of the herd. “Bad faith” reflects a fundamental cowardice and a fundamental refusal to acknowledge our true conditions of existence in this world. It is a form of flight to safety and security in the known, the mundane, the established, and the conventional. Sartre (2003, pp. 78-83) gives two vivid descriptions of individuals that are operating in bad faith – the “young girl in the taxi” and the “waiter” stories. The young girl in the taxi refuses to give either positive or negative feedback to the male friend placing his arm around her in the taxi while the waiter makes exaggerated showy movements and is simply “playing at being a waiter in a cafe” (Sartre, 2003, p. 82, emphasis original). As Warnock (2003) explains, in her Introduction to the Routledge Classic edition of *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre’s stories of bad faith are not given to serve as mere examples of a more general principle but are intended to cause us to recognize, by first recognizing the existence of bad faith in the stories, bad faith’s existence in the real world. In other words, because the stories

depict bad faith, and the stories concern lived life, bad faith is possible as a part of consciousness in the present world.

Before we go on to apply existentialism to *Norwegian Wood* in Section 4, it is worth pausing to consider Bauman's (1976) objection to existentialism grounded in critical sociology. For Bauman, existentialism is only ever partial, as Durkheim and Parsons' functional sociology is only ever partial. Bauman (1976) writes that in existentialist philosophy, the outside world of other and society is forever fixed – it is a limit to freedom caused by others exercising their freedoms. By contrast, in the Frankfurt School's neo-Marxian critical sociology, the thesis and anti-thesis are involved in a process of dynamic struggle; the bourgeoisie and the proletariat are engaged in continuous action upon each other so that each one is simultaneously subject and object. The actual outcomes are the results of a contingent historical process. Bauman (1976) claims that because existentialism assumes that the other is fixed and immutable, it cannot be a complete philosophy. Bauman (1976) argues that, while in contemplation of a single act, society may be viewed as fixed, in regards to a series of acts that is not the case as each act in the series has a consequence and changes the present including people's consciousness of the present. After one act, the world is changed forever. However, a close reading of *Being and Nothingness* reveals that for Sartre (2003) one act does forever change the world so for Sartre making a person immortal would not reduce the validity of choice in the present since "the moment" can never be re-captured or "the stars aligned" in exactly the same way. Sartre's goal is to provide people with a philosophy that can assist them in the present where it may not be unreasonable in most cases to view society as fixed. The popular adage, often incorporated into the home-spun wisdom of football coaches, of "control what you can control; do not worry about what you cannot control" is clearly Sartrean. Warnock (2003) claims that existentialism was never intended to be a philosophy that was complete within itself. It could be supplemented with other philosophies as Sartre attempted to do by adding Marxism to his mix. While existentialism encourages people to choose goals it does not tell them what those goals should be. However, Sartre also is careful not to rely on the actions of others in the present or the future. He states that there is no reason why advancing Marxist causes cannot be a person's goal but that person would be deluded if she/he buys into the utopian dream that people will continue to fight to advance the Marxist cause in remote parts of the world and/or after her/his own death. For Sartre all these things outside a person's direct control should not be presumed upon. As Trotsky (2004) laments in *The Revolution Betrayed*, the Bolshevik Party instigators of the Russian Revolution, himself included, acted upon the *presumption* that proletariat revolutions would occur quickly in other European countries. Joseph Stalin was more existentialist than Trotsky. Stalin's official doctrine of "socialism in one

country" infuriated Trotsky and the Trotskyites because of its practicality and its reflection of Stalin's extreme determination to pursue his own goals independently of what others might do.

If Japanese culture is seen as a set of cultural rules to be blindly and fearfully followed then Nietzsche would regard it as the province of the weak. However, Nietzsche's analysis of Christianity cannot be so easily applied to such a masculine culture as Japan's, a culture which Nietzsche probably would have greatly admired. In some respects Japanese culture scorns the weak. It certainly scorns and finds it hard to find a place for those who cannot abide by its masculine norms of academic and financial achievement, strategic goal orientation, and continuous improvement. However, for women, Japanese culture can be oppressive and hence Nietzsche would presumably suggest that a woman should throw off her shackles even if it means becoming more like the stereotypical Japanese man fully free to choose all of his behaviours. Nietzschean existentialism appears to offer a kinder judgement on Nagasawa than on Hatsumi. However, a more nuanced Sartrean existentialism, which relies upon the bad faith concept, may also condemn Nagasawa since he too is *acting out a role* that his society permits him to act out. The tacit support of Nagasawa's society cannot be seen by the existentialist as acceptable justification for his ultimately conformist behaviour.

DISCUSSION

The novel *Norwegian Wood's* main characters are Watanabe, Naoko, Nagasawa, Midori, Hatsumi, and Reiko. All other characters in the novel are underdeveloped and are merely accessories to and catalysts for the events that occur. As with *Crime and Punishment*, we follow a young male student (Watanabe), living in the big city. The city involved is late-1960s Tokyo in *Norwegian Wood*, whereas in *Crime and Punishment* it is 1860s St Petersburg (known as Leningrad during the Soviet era). In both novels the principal young male student character has and forms a few vital relationships that emerge naturally from events and serve to (variously) challenge, confuse, revitalize, and empower him. Like *Crime and Punishment*, the key characters are magnets for events, for minor characters, and for each other. Events take time to unfold and their consequences take time to play out. Long intense conversations between couples or at most trios occur frequently. All characters in *Norwegian Wood* struggle to maintain emotional stability, a moral compass, and hope for the future, after Naoko's childhood boyfriend and Watanabe's best school-friend, Kizuki, suicides at age seventeen. The group of friends in *Norwegian Wood* is very similar to the group of friends centered on Astrid Kirchherr, a German student, who the young Beatles met in Hamburg (Kirchherr et al., 2010). As Rubin (2005) points out, it is singularly appropriate that Norwegian

Wood begins with Watanabe landing at Hamburg Airport. When the Beatles were drawn into that group of people, John Lennon called them the "Exis", because of their lifestyle and ideology which was based on French existentialism. Photographs of the Beatles gave Kirchherr everlasting fame but blighted the rest of her photographic career. The best photograph of the Beatles in Hamburg, as a group, shows the extent to which Pete Best and Stuart Sutcliffe were on the edges of the group by this stage, one on either side, with Lennon and McCartney closest to each other and with George Harrison, the third member of the inner group, being less close to John than Paul. The physical positions are a clear indication of their ranking within the group and an indication that Pete was inevitably on his way out, while Stuart would have followed had he not died before the Beatles became famous.

The narration of *Norwegian Wood* (after the opening section set in 1987) begins with Watanabe, as a young man, living in a male residential college and studying an English Literature course. This mirrors the life of Watanabe himself who lived in a similar college while studying Literature at Tokyo's Waseda University (Rubin, 2005). Also like Murakami, Watanabe has left his home in Kobe for the anonymity of Tokyo and the opportunity to re-create his life as a university student. Watanabe is fleeing the suicide of his close male friend Kizuki where he was the last person to see him alive (at a pool venue). Naoko also leaves her parent's home in Kobe to go to university far away and lives on her own in a humble and distant flat. The seventeen-year-old Kizuki's suicide death hangs over the rest of the novel, after being the catalyst that drives the initial events. The death explains much of the desperation and existential angst of Watanabe and Naoko (that the reader "feels" very easily). Ultimately, existentially speaking, Watanabe is able to mentally and emotionally recover from the devastating event while Naoko, who becomes mentally and physically ill and a shadow of a person, eventually, finds self re-creation too hard and a continuation of the journey pointless. She nearly, but not quite, succeeds in emotionally manipulating and controlling Watanabe and dragging him into her insane world of endless worrying, self-pity, and living in the past. Murakami (2005) has suggested that *Norwegian Wood* is interesting as a "love story" because Watanabe and Naoko do not love each other and it is a story of miscommunication and of alienation. The comment about alienation is clearly correct, but arguably Watanabe loves at least the image and idea of Naoko for some time while Naoko appears to be emotionally and mentally incapable of love (as Murakami, 2005).

Kizuki and Naoko had been childhood and school lovers, with the relationship and its excessive familiarity and lack of breathing space being presented as safe, comforting, and suffocating for Naoko (Murakami, 2005). This is the only way of relating that she has known. The relationship has blurred the normal boundaries between

friends and lovers and childhood and maturity. The blurred boundaries within this relationship eventually mentally cripple the young Naoko, and it is genuinely saddening for the reader to observe her continual struggle and the lack of progress she makes in dealing with the past. Despite escaping, as Watanabe does, to a distant university far away from her family, Naoko ultimately fails to re-create herself from the existentialist standpoint. The memories of the dead lover, forever aged seventeen, cast a spell over the living Watanabe and Naoko who fear the responsibilities of growing older past seventeen and who yet want to cling to the memory of the departed. Sartre's maxim "to be dead is to be a prey for the living" (Sartre, 2003, p. 564) is grotesquely inverted and, for Naoko at least, "to be living is to be prey for the dead". This is partly the case also for Watanabe's second female love interest, his extroverted and exuberant classmate, Midori Kobayashi, who is unable to come to terms with her father's death and who, in a strange display of turbulent emotion, strips naked deliberately in front of the picture of her late father which is being used as a Buddhist/ Taoist shrine of household devotion. By taunting and wrestling with the dead, in such a seemingly disrespectful manner, Midori is able to free herself from the past and move ahead whereas, for Naoko, her dead boyfriend's presence only grows stronger for her as time passes and she is increasingly unable to distinguish this world from the next. We see Naoko as being bound by the norms and responsibilities of Japanese society so that, as a young woman, she lacks the resources, willpower, and strategies to free herself from societal expectations. Ultimately, their study of English literature and their love of Western pop records serve as gateways to freedom for Watanabe and Midori since they are not fully part of the hierarchical traditional Japanese world that the other characters submit to. By contrast, we perceive the Western influences upon Watanabe and Midori to be largely positive ones because they provide empowerment and resources to overcome the suffocation that is caused by a highly regimented traditional culture. The Beatles really are heroes to these young people living a whole world away from Liverpool, Lime Street, and the Cavern Club. The Beatles' mid-period song "Eleanor Rigby" (1966), on the *Revolver* album, describes the alienation and restlessness in their lives perfectly and, for once, it is not Roman Catholicism in *Norwegian Wood* that can be blamed. We can say that there is sincerity in Watanabe and Midori's struggles and self re-creation. This is not to say that they reject Japanese culture but that they traverse a path *through it and in relation to it*. Japanese culture is a part of an authentic synthesis in worldviews and actions that these characters form in conjunction with the Western influences. Rubin (2005) suggests that Watanabe's writing of the notes because he does not want to lose the memory of the events described helps add existential charm to his narration. Murakami takes advantage of his book using

the autobiographical style of Japanese I-fiction without the book being very obviously a straight autobiography (Rubin, 2005). Although there are some similarities between Watanabe and Midori and, respectively, Murakami and his wife Yoko Takahashi, Midori is clearly a fictional character as part of the information about her is not derived from Yoko (Rubin, 2005). Naoko is not based, even in part, upon a former love interest of Murakami (Rubin, 2005). The novel has autobiographic elements and purely fictional elements. Murakami himself has said about his “relationship” with Watanabe:

“After I wrote this novel [*Noruei no mori* or *Norwegian Wood*], I received many letters and for some reason all the readers automatically identify the ‘I’ in the novel with me. It is true that the novel is in the first person and that the period in which it is set is the same of my adolescence, but people go too far in equating me with that character” (Suter, 2008, p. 107).

The style of the novel and the autobiographic aspects add to the authenticity factor and are reasons for the novel’s great popularity.

After both leaving Kobe due to the end of school days and the death of Kizuki, Watanabe and Naoko then meet again by chance one Sunday on a Tokyo train and thereafter keep each other company on long Sunday walks through Tokyo as they cling to one another and try to process what has happened. The chance meeting on the Tokyo subway hints at the loneliness and disconnection of urban life where we meet important others only by chance in public places. The subway, symbol of alienation in songs by New York City hardcore band Biohazard⁵, confounds us by being the literal mechanism here that brings the duo back together. Alienation threatens to morph into its dialectical opposite connection, although the subway provides only a literal physical connection, with the promise of emotional connection held at a distance. We remember that in 1968, prior to the internet and mobile phones, if friends lost physical contact with each other then the friendship would be finished unless it was revived by a chance connection as is the case here. Watanabe sometimes visits Naoko in her flat where she lives alone. Slowly, Watanabe becomes more and more important to her as the only living link to her past life and to her dead boyfriend. The duo share affection and care, but the relationship continues

the way it had begun, that is platonically, at least on the conscious level and at the level of behaviour. However, what links them is a “tie that binds” since it is also the mental block to her moving on afresh as obviously her parents hope that she can do. We see Japanese social expectations presented by Murakami as a Foucauldian surveillance and control tool that causes monitoring to be internalized as self-discipline (Foucault, 1977, 1980a, b, c). The social expectations are something even above and largely independent of Naoko’s parents who, although they never enter the narrative of the novel per se, appear to compassionately hope and wish for her total mental recovery. Naoko’s parents appear as benign figures, one-degree-of-separation away from the narrator and his narration, and as powerless and lost as Naoko herself is.

Watanabe, as a generally responsible young man, is the character that, in his calm and balanced nature, holds the narrative thread and many of its key relationships together. His responsibility, calm, and analytical manner (Rubin, 2005) allows us, the readers, to trust the veracity of his narrative. Rubin (2005) describes Watanabe as “kind and thoughtful” (p. 160) and as “an extraordinarily self-possessed young man, a good storyteller ... and an even better listener to other people’s stories” (p. 154). The young man is far from perfect and suffers his own occasional moral and emotional setbacks and lapses, especially with regards to his prolonging of his friendship with the morally bankrupt Nagasawa. Murakami (2005, p. 42) states that: “Murakami [no relation] has remarked in an interview with Shibata Motoyuki that he regards Nagasawa as a morally fallen man, whereas Watanabe is free from that defect”. We agree that Watanabe is, on balance, a positive and life-affirming character. To compare with *Crime and Punishment*, Watanabe is a cross between Razumikhin and Raskolnikov. In terms of (calm and rational) temperament, he is closer to the former than to the latter. We trust Watanabe’s narration as not providing too gross a distortion of reality.

On one very significant night, at Watanabe and Naoko’s private celebration of Naoko’s birthday at her remote rental flat, the couple drink wine and afterwards share sexually intimate (Murakami, 2000, pp. 47-51). This is the first time that their complex relationship, bound together and defined by age, student status, and a shared significant death, officially crosses over into the sexually intimate. Both enjoy the intimate encounter tremendously as there is no pressure or social expectation associated with it; it is simply the natural result of a common experience shared. The night is characterized by spontaneity, but there is also undeniable warmth and affection between the pair. Of all the people that Naoko has known, only Watanabe has lasted the distance and he is there *physically* (thus passing an existential test) at Naoko’s remote and lonely flat on and for her birthday. There was no calculated or cynical planning or deviousness by Watanabe and it is very likely that Naoko would have seen through self-centredness and insincerity in any

⁵ See, for example, the 1994 Youtube video-clip for “Five Blocks to the Subway” which shows the band walking along rough Brooklyn streets, decrying the rule of the drug-dealers, and finishes with vaporous gas filling an empty subway train carriage and a young man swinging upside down on railings inside the carriage seemingly oblivious to the gas. The clip can be viewed at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zL632M1-C3E> [accessed 27 May 2011]. More generally, Biohazard’s video clips depict harsh urban New York/ Brooklyn street and industrial wasteland settings which scream out alienation. The band’s attempts to communicate an ethical position within such settings (see, for example, the band member remonstrating with the prosperous drug-dealer in the “Tales from the Hard Side” video-clip) are both admirable and reasonably effective.

case. Interestingly, it was a chance encounter that set the chain of events in motion and “permitted” the birthday meeting to occur. Naoko did not forget this. It may be that chance encounters are fate, according to a Japanese mindset, and hence are accorded equal or more legitimacy than pre-planned meetings. Therefore, the eventual fruit or product of a chance meeting is accorded more significance and legitimacy than the fruit or product of a pre-planned meeting. Alternatively, from the existentialist perspective, our focus is on choices and in and through his choices Watanabe demonstrates his dedication and commitment to Naoko. Existentially, Watanabe’s *physical* presence on that night (which Naoko responds to so positively) should be seen as the product of his past actions in the world. He willed and wished a closer relationship with Naoko and he was able and willing to act in manners consistent with such intentions. In Sartre’s (2003, p. 519) words: “I do not decide it by debating it, by deliberating over it, and in each instance evaluating the importance of this or that prior event; but by projecting myself towards my ends”. We see here that existentialist and Japanese fate- and honour-based interpretations are in dynamic tension, and may conflict or coincide in specific situations.

Each one, Watanabe and Naoko, is the living remainder and reminder of an integral part of the other’s past and it is this factor that drives them to stay in contact after their surprise encounter on the Tokyo subway. However, Naoko remains a seductive and enigmatic mystery which Watanabe is unable to understand properly, and this explains her continual fascination to him, a fascination that has not died some 20 years later. The source of Watanabe’s fascination appears to be a combination of Naoko’s beauty, her original forbidden status as best friend Kizuki’s girlfriend, and her continued inability to know herself or what she wants in life. She is forever a little girl lost in the novel as Watanabe faces difficulties, overcomes challenges, and matures over time whereas she does none of these things. Naoko’s increasingly fragile mental state becomes progressively more apparent and Watanabe, like Murakami’s readers, is surprised when, only a few days after the birthday night, Naoko departs permanently from her rented flat for destination unknown. She is simply unable to digest the sexual encounter or give it satisfactory meaning and so she flees the physical scene. Does she hope that, by fleeing the physical scene, she can erase history or at least erase the theory that history has meaning and that all acts are meaningful by being either progressive or reactionary (which was the Stalinist understanding of history? (Žižek, 2009, 2010). The reader is drawn into the web of Naoko’s loneliness and fragile emotions. The reader also joins Watanabe in hoping for a recovery for her. To hope for a recovery for her can be viewed as a type of “loving” of her even though by itself it does not make it romantic love since clearly Naoko’s parents love her in the same way by having the same hope. In this sense Watanabe does

love her. Clearly Naoko’s society has not given her the problem-solving skills or the face-saving “way out” or “Plan B” when life’s circumstances do not line up according to the plan laid out for the elite of the youth. The rigidity of the Japanese social structure provides security for those who make the grade in the conventional manner but provides a harsh sword to the mavericks and to those who do not attain conventional goals according to conventional time frames. We have referred in an earlier section to the Japanese saying “the nail that stands out gets banged down”, a saying which can be viewed as being anti-existentialist and anathema to self re-creation. The Japanese society does not appear to allow gallant losers an honourable way out or a positive image of themselves. There have been reports of unemployed Japanese men who dress in office attire every day and take the bus to the city in the morning and return home at night so as to give their community and even their own families the perception that they are gainfully employed. Such inauthentic behaviour is clearly bad faith in the Sartrean sense.

The novel shows that those most appreciative of Western philosophy and pop music, Watanabe and Midori, the two *English Literature* students, are in a better position to emerge successfully from life’s struggles than those more in tune with traditional Japanese cultural values and practices. Even Nagasawa, outwardly a success according to the Japanese system, inwardly has already died because he views the whole system, to which he remains committed, as ultimately pointless and unsatisfying. His decision to live the high-flying Japanese life *anyway*, regardless of his own attitude towards it, is a defeat for existentialism since Nagasawa purely lives as “being-for-others” (Sartre, 2003, p. 243), totally alienated and detached from his own crippled being-for-self which never is allowed to *act in the world* to further its own beliefs and values. As Sartre (2003, p. 83) writes: “There are indeed many [social] precautions to imprison a man in what he is, as if we lived in perpetual fear that he might escape from it, that he might break away and suddenly elude his condition”. For example, society expects that a soldier has “a straight look which does not see at all” (Sartre, 2003, p. 83). His sight must be “*fixed at ten paces*” (Sartre, 2003, p. 83). The public demands that a grocer limit herself or himself “to his function as a grocer” (Sartre, 2003, p. 82) since “[a] grocer who dreams is offensive to the buyer” (Sartre, 2003, p. 82). To flee bad faith then inevitably means to wrestle against a myriad of oppressive social conventions.

By this time, Naoko, having vacated her rental flat after the sexual encounter with Watanabe, is sent to a remote countryside recovery hostel with a disciplinary timetable and set of rules designed to help a resident individual regain her/his mental stability and equilibrium. The hostel does not appear to be connected to any particular religion but resembles in spirit the Spartan recovery homes run by the Roman Catholic Church or the Salvation Army.

However, the rules are not too rigid and Naoko shares a flat inside the compound with an older lady, Reiko, aged in her late-30s. The ethos of the hostel is on self-healing through regular work, self-discipline, friendships, and the country air. If a person leaves the compound then she/he is not allowed to come back. We see again the shadowy but comforting presence of Naoko's parents as clearly it was they who chose to send her to the recovery hostel. We are pleased that they care for her enough that they are willing to have her depart from the rat-race of Japanese life to pursue a very non-material and counter-hegemonic set of values. It appears that either they put her well-being above their public "face" or they consider that their face has been so long ago lost that they need not give it consideration anymore! A new dialectical contradiction emerges in the novel, and stays for its duration, between the fast pace, brutality, and superficiality of city life and the measured pace and holistic and noble attitude towards personal recovery exhibited by the countryside hostel and all connected with it. As in Count Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* (2003) and *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* (2008), the complexity and false values of the city people are contrasted with the goodness and measured pace of the country folk whose lives are simple but happy. The country people's lives follow the time-honoured rhythms of the natural seasons and the cultural and religious festivals whereas the fast pace of city life tracks industrial production and the discipline of the factory. However, although this is clearly the picture originally presented the ultimate failure of the hostel to "cure" Naoko leaves us questioning and most likely rejecting the Tolstoyan thesis.

Watanabe travels the long distance by train and bus to the "end of civilization" to visit Naoko in the hostel two or three times during the novel. By the end of the exhausting trip to the ends of the earth, very few passengers still remain on the public bus. On each visit he stays two to three days in the flat that Naoko shares with Reiko within the compound. On one of these trips the young couple walk alone through the woods. This scene, when Naoko urges Watanabe to always remember her and this moment, comes back in flashback form at the start of the novel before the narration leaps back from 1987 to 1968. Naoko appears to be responding well to the home's routines and countryside lifestyle, and Reiko is a strong, encouraging role model and best friend. With Reiko's consent, at times Watanabe and Naoko go for isolated walks together through the woods. These emotionally tortured conversations appear to offer momentary relief for Naoko but further mental stress and confusion for Watanabe. He can never be sure when she is teasing or manipulating him, and he is unsure whether her mental wanderings are caused by illness or are deliberate. Naoko is a classic tease, hinting at Watanabe's importance to her but more often than not becoming trapped and lost within her own insecurities and self-absorption. Watanabe thinks he loves her and later, after being

strongly drawn towards Midori the "real" woman, as opposed to Naoko, the "ghost", becomes guilty if he is not sufficiently devoted in thought and memory to her. The relationship does not appear to be heading anywhere as Naoko cannot yield to or produce intimacy within another person on a regular basis (Murakami, 2005). Murakami (2005, p. 37), in line with his theoretical perspective, explains this in terms of "[s]chizophrenic post-modernists [being] incapable of loving each other". Naoko's lack of self-knowledge frustrates all communication; residual childish pride prevents her admitting need and weakness and clearly stating her feelings for Watanabe (if she in fact has any). The period in the suffocating relationship with Kizuki seems to have been a time when Naoko withdrew from true relationship with herself and with the world (Murakami, 2005), and she no longer has the skills or the will to achieve such relational connection. At nights, the three play Beatles songs in the flat, with Reiko, the former professional piano teacher cum expert acoustic guitarist. Naoko always requests "*Norwegian Wood*", and Reiko always accommodates. As a result, "*Norwegian Wood*" becomes the theme song for the novel, and the symbol linking the present with the past and linking Watanabe with Naoko. Reiko sees herself in a mentoring role, monitoring Naoko's mental health and guiding her down a mentored pathway towards balanced thinking and spiritual wholeness. However, later events and conversations reveal Reiko's own mental fragility. For example, we learn of her over-reaction to the somewhat unrealistic attempted seduction of her by her thirteen-year-old lesbian piano student (Rubin, 2005) which causes Reiko to leave her husband because he is not willing to relocate the family quickly enough. As a result of learning of such past events, we begin to doubt the mentally fragile Reiko's ability to "save" Naoko or even to "save" herself. Watanabe selflessly gives care and attention to both women as best as he can but he clearly sees himself always as belonging to the outside world rather than to the recovery home. Ultimately this perspective is what "saves" him as Naoko's mental decline later causes us to lose faith in the healing power of the recovery home. Watanabe is always on the right side of mental stability, and there is a hint in the novel (as in Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy), that good moral values are positively associated with mental stability but not in any linear or mathematical fashion. At times Watanabe seems unable to grasp how far Naoko has fallen mentally, let alone the reasons for the fall.

As time passes, Watanabe's fascination for Naoko begins to dwindle and he is naturally attracted to his extroverted classmate, Midori, a sexually aware and self-confident Japanese woman who takes Watanabe to an S&M film in a public cinema. In fact it is the women and not the men who are the most sexually open in the novel and who initiate sexual activities. However, since sex is presented as a safety-valve and escape mechanism for alienated and stressed out youth, this is not altogether

surprising. It is Naoko, Midori, and Reiko who are more alienated and stressed out than Watanabe.

Watanabe finds himself absorbed in guilt because of his new relationship with Midori. He feels guilty because he has *mentally* abandoned the sick Naoko. As if by some psychic connection, Naoko's mental health then worsens as Midori replaces Naoko as Watanabe's main mental fascination. In actual fact, Watanabe rightfully realizes that Naoko does not know herself and cannot enter into a reasonable mutually giving relationship with any individual. She cannot love him since love requires an awareness of the personhood of both the self and the other and an awareness of the distance between the self and the other. This is the nothingness in between the human beings for Jean-Paul Sartre or what produces, in its extreme form, the Gethsemane-Golgotha experience or, in the words of singer-songwriter Bruce Springsteen's 1978 album title, "the darkness on the edge of town". Springsteen writes that "*Darkness* [the album] ... was about stripping away everything – relationships, everything – and getting down to the core of who you were" (Clinch, 2010, p. 82). Encountering and wrestling with oneself (and/or with God as in Genesis 32, verses 22-32) in the darkness is a necessary pre-requisite to self-recreation.

Later in the novel Watanabe learns of Naoko's suicide. Like Svidrigailov, the lewd old country landowner haunted by the ghost of his dead wife and manservant in *Crime and Punishment*, Naoko is ultimately too tired, too troubled, and too self-centred to re-create herself. We interpret the act of suicide in the existentialist way as lacking honour rather than in the traditional Japanese way of the "honourable way out" of impossible circumstances. Naoko is forever stuck in the past and incredibly self-absorbed. The night of sexual intimacy with Watanabe, when she could freely give and receive pleasure (which she is unable to do at any other time as she cannot achieve physical wetness), was the high point of her short life when it could have been and should have been the start of a new beginning. Instead she reified it over time within her own memory until it became unapproachable and godlike. She literally "alienates herself from the experience", in the Marxist sense (Marx, 1975; Marx and Engels, 1994), since it took on its own life in her imagination. Towards the end of her life Naoko reified that night by setting it up in her own mind as the high point of her experiences. She then realized the harsh logical implication of her own ideological behaviour: she could never attain such a high point again. She is then overcome by mental anguish and self-pity.

Existentially, Midori, as a woman of action, is Naoko's dialectical opposite and the one that pulls Watanabe away from Naoko's spectre. We feel that Watanabe is increasingly relating to Naoko's spectre regardless of whether she is physically separate from him in the recovery home or in the afterlife. We are disappointed that Naoko cannot re-create herself and achieve mental

stability of a type that requires one to end one's obsession with one's self as a pre-requisite. The morbid introspection of Naoko and its ultimate failure may be viewed as being quintessentially Japanese in a novel that, apart from place names and proper nouns, does not strike the Western reader as being particularly foreign. The Japanese characters, the Western translator, and the Western readers are bound up together with Murakami in the same world because of his (Murakami's) social-realist story-telling and the Western music, mostly Beatles, which serves as its soundtrack. Rubin (2005, p. 353) describes Murakami as "'Americanized'" while, for Suter (2008, p. 179), he is a "Euro-American modernist". For Murakami, it is the Beatles and Western philosophy that shed light on some of the darkest corners of Japanese traditional society, cultural practices, and attitudes. Murakami himself had a jazz club in Tokyo named Peter Cat (Rubin, 2005). Although the club was not named after the Kiss drummer Peter Criss, who wore the cat make-up during the original incarnation of that band, the American rock-and-roll associations of the club's name still seem singularly appropriate and no doubt Murakami was aware of them. Themes of urban alienation and the pain, pressures, turmoil, and mental anguish of youth are well understood and appreciated by most (post-) modern urban readers from both West and East. However, one wonders if the pressures are not even greater for the youth of Japan because of the extreme need to graduate with high marks and get a stable and socially respected career? Prospects for Japanese youth, as presented by Murakami, are bleak. Even Nagasawa, the one character in *Norwegian Wood* who is a clear success, as defined by the Japanese system, is a long way away from happiness by his own admission. As we have argued, the system's greatest success (Nagasawa) is existentially the greatest failure.

After learning of Naoko's death, we (the readers) question whether the recovery home, with its "ground-zero" or "scorched-earth" ideology, really helps a struggling person or confirms and hastens her/his demise? If the latter is correct, then the institution is Foucauldian in the most awful sense of having the goal of eradicating deviancy. Once we believe that we "belong to the home" is that belief also the end for us? Reiko later decides to leave the home permanently and join people she knows in relaxed and rural Hokkaido. She confirms her belief that sooner or later one must make a break from the home if one is to have any chance of living successfully in the outside world. The home then turns into a symbol of dashed hopes and death rather than renewed hope. Murakami seems to be saying that to live successfully in the home is not really living at all because ultimately it means rejecting out of fear the harsh nature of the outside world. The hostel is a place to go temporarily, if at all. In Naoko's case the home fails. The idiotic insane gate attendant who repetitively discusses the quality of food in Tokyo with Watanabe signifies the home's

ultimate lack of relevance. The man has reified a pleasant past experience he had long ago with Tokyo food. Possibly what he is really wanting to venerate is not Tokyo food but Tokyo itself. The messy real world, with its one million and one shades of grey, then can be seen as the pathway to sanity.

Hanging as a shadow over the novel are the passage of time, which refuses to allow anyone except for Kizuki to remain an eternal seventeen-year-old, and the stresses imposed on youth and parents by the elitist and functionalist Japanese education system. Midori is too world-weary to believe in the doctrines of the Marxist university students, knowing only too well that, after graduation, the “Marxists” will get proper jobs, cut their hair, and work valiantly to reproduce the status quo. The harsh reality of the world and the cynical opportunism of individuals mean that the idealism of the campus “Marxists” must be immediately exposed for what it is. Life’s lessons are practical and not doctrinal; Watanabe develops into a more mature person after he looks after Midori’s dying father in hospital for an hour or two, and, shortly afterwards, learns of his death. Midori self-consciously speaks of her father’s only moderately successful and very anti-intellectual suburban bookstore, a store that she does not respect. However, she is able to grasp the other side of this dialectical contradiction: the humble bookstore was the vehicle which allowed her late father to support his daughters financially through school and college. Once his “job” of financial provision is complete, it seems somehow even natural to Midori that he passes away; it simplifies life. She dotes on him in hospital, but underneath all that does not seem to respect him much at all. We could be wrong in this analysis; she may simply be smart enough to “go through the motions” of being a daughter, thus shutting her off to the excess of emotions and “ties that bind” that could cripple her. By focusing on her and others’ actions in the world, rather than emotions, sentiments, guilt or obligations, she shows herself to live according to existentialist principles. She refuses to reify the secondary school she went to, joking to Watanabe about the school’s furnace being needed to burn the tampons of a thousand girls every day! Such a description fights reification by pointing to each precious girl’s dirty humanity. Murakami’s wife, Yoko, also was the only girl from an ordinary family at her prestigious school (Rubin, 2005). Watanabe is surprised by but quite enjoys Midori’s feistiness and lack of reverence; he is not quick to associate her iconoclasm with any underlying defects of character. After her father’s death, Midori and her sister, without a fragment of guilt (and this may be their salvation), sell the bookstore and the old family home and together move into a modern and comfortable apartment. Midori seems to have no trouble re-creating herself although materialism is clearly a temptation or at least it is a distraction from excessive anguish and regret. By this time Watanabe too has moved out of his conveniently located male dormitory to a

remote detached house, at the rear of his landlord’s property, where he lives alone. Murakami made the same move in real life although he only lasted six months in the dormitory as compared to Watanabe’s two years (Rubin, 2005). Midori is hurt as Watanabe’s busyness providing for himself and his new home mean that he has less time to think of contacting her. At the end of the novel we do not know whether they form a lasting relationship or get married but we suspect not. Rubin (2005, p. 155) agrees with this interpretation, stating that “there is no suggestion that he and Midori ever stayed together, and he comes across as a glum and lonely wanderer”. However, Rubin (2005, p. 159) may stray too far beyond the text when he claims that: “Toru will live with his memories of Naoko rather than give himself over to the vitality of Midori”. By contrast, our interpretation is that Watanabe does choose Midori over Naoko during the novel itself. In other words, he chooses life over death. It may be that he had a relationship with Midori after novel’s end. Perhaps she ultimately rejected him or they broke up over unrelated matters.

On the last page of the novel, Reiko’s train pulls out of the station and the long train journey of events that make up the novel immediately finish. Watanabe is struck by loneliness and rushes to call Midori who says “where have you been?” The world then seems to crash in around him, he feels total alienation for the first time; and we wonder whether the whole narration is just an unstable young man’s attempt at bravado for the benefit of his women’s (and audience’s?) stability. Murakami (2005) provides an interesting interpretation here, arguing that Watanabe unconsciously switches from the modern to the postmodern as he too proves incapable of loving. Murakami (2005, p. 43) suggests that: “Once he decides to act on that empathic love [of Midori], he unavoidably loses his place in modern society because of his postmodern characteristics”. Another interpretation is that telephoning Midori is an act which increases his vulnerability and it causes cracks to appear in his strong ego. The act of telephoning creates feelings of alienation because he is hanging on her words and the subtleties of her voice tone in such a crowded public place. The noise around him appears deafening but it is also a form of anonymity and safety. Watanabe perhaps can save others but he cannot save himself (St Luke 23, verse 35, authors’ paraphrase). Telephoning itself is an alienating medium because of the absence of sight which means that the non-verbals so crucial to the Japanese are missing.

As already alluded to, another interesting and vital character in the novel is Watanabe’s dorm-mate Nagasawa who is clearly Watanabe’s “evil double”. Commentators of *Crime and Punishment* refer to Sonya as Raskolnikov’s “good double” and Svidrigailov as Raskolnikov’s “evil double” (James, 2009, p. 145; James et al., 2011; McDuff, 1991, p. xxiv). In this novel, there is no obvious “good double” but Nagasawa can

easily be characterized as Watanabe's "evil double", the man that makes him look extremely noble, selfless, and principled by comparison. Nagasawa is cynical to such an extent that it disconcerts and mildly disturbs both Watanabe and the reader that a man so young can be so grossly cynical and manipulative, and devoid of any noble intentions or feelings whatsoever. The character is probably an attempt by Murakami to critique Japanese society, its hierarchical nature, its unashamed sexism, and its time-honoured lifetime employment principle (referred to Japanese cultural background). Rubin (2005, p. 221) suggests that Nagasawa may be an expression of Murakami's "own emotional void". The Nagasawa character plays a key role in the novel but the character's weaknesses are that he is too evil and he is evil in stereotypical ways. He routinely enjoys nights out cruising in bars and bedding unknown young women in one-night stands. He has a devoted girlfriend, Hatsumi, who is aware of his behaviour and who, for the most part, chooses to suffer in silence. As with Svidrigailov in *Crime and Punishment*, Nagasawa's cynicism has reached the point where he no longer enjoys his own depravity but he carries on with it regardless. We applaud Murakami for showing that in the real world there is a diminishing marginal utility to pleasure. Nagasawa feels impelled to continue his behaviour out of boredom and as a way of constantly parading and hence verifying (although he never doubts it) his masculinity and high social status within Japanese society. He is not a nail that stands out and needs to be banged down. He goes on, in large part, because society says that he can and, in actual fact, expects it of him. He is playing out a role like the waiter in Sartre's (2003) story; he is primarily a Sartrean "being-for-others" rather than primarily a Sartrean "being-for-self". Sartre (2003, pp. 70-94) would classify his behaviour as being in "bad faith" by putting essence (type or nature) before existence (actions) in order of importance. Existentially Nagasawa can easily be condemned as a failure. Watanabe sometimes goes on the trips to the bars with Nagasawa, finding him disgusting but, at the same time, joining him in going through the mechanics of sexual conquest. Watanabe is at his least impressive here. On one occasion he (Watanabe) even accompanies two Japanese girls looking for a drink after the bars close (and in Tokyo that is very late indeed!) and sleeps with one of these girls as she cries out a stranger's name. This is Watanabe's lowest point and yet we never regard this event as defining him or limiting him. It is simply a mistake with no severe consequences. We even find it plausible that his main motivation in keeping the two girls company is to physically protect them. It is not a lifestyle for Watanabe and this is where he does plainly differ from Nagasawa. Watanabe still treats people as human beings and not means-for-ends. Again, the humanitarian and emancipatory values of Western 1960s pop rock culture can reasonably be seen as a positive influence here on Watanabe and, importantly, Nagasawa

does not share this outside cultural influence. Watanabe's moral disgust at Nagasawa comforts the reader here and is used to help the reader identify with Watanabe as a morally credible character; the reader then also can accept the credibility and moral position of Watanabe's narrative.

In a key scene (Murakami, 2000, pp. 267-285), Nagasawa takes his girlfriend Hatsumi and Watanabe to a high-class French restaurant in the Azabu area of Tokyo. The forced uneasy equilibrium that characterizes Nagasawa's relationship is disturbed by Watanabe's honest presence and all are comforted by his being there; he is the "paid conscience" for the group that night thus giving him a priestly role. Eventually Hatsumi is offended by Nagasawa's boasting of his exploits and his lack of shame and she takes a taxi away with Watanabe. The atmosphere at the restaurant magnifies the contradiction between Watanabe's existential honesty and Nagasawa's unashamed cynicism, and Hatsumi publicly takes sides and rejects *officially and in theory* the conduct of Nagasawa, although in practice, in terms of real actions, she continues to accept Nagasawa (as boyfriend). However, Nagasawa does lose her respect. Existentially Hatsumi misses this key opportunity to re-create herself through rejecting the insincerity, boasting, and cynicism of Nagasawa. Ultimately, her actions are just a *performance* since she returns back to Nagasawa. Whilst, for Watanabe and the reader, Nagasawa's actions and manner are only mildly out-of-order in the macho atmosphere of the Tokyo bars, in the context of the French restaurant, with its romantic associations, his behaviour is seen as beyond the pale. We are quick to judge Nagasawa harshly, but we should remember that it is impossible for even him to change his behaviour during the course of an evening. Our patience with him, like Hatsumi's, can be extended no longer. Are we also ruled by emotions and by the (French restaurant) atmosphere of the moment? Are we too harsh? Watanabe and Hatsumi share a time of close friendship that night, but not sexual intimacy, in her apartment in the early hours of the morning. The lady is so seemingly honest that she asks Watanabe what she should do with Nagasawa, and Watanabe bravely and sincerely advises her to leave him. Nagasawa has decided on a career with the high-powered Foreign Ministry which would involve him living overseas for a lengthy period. Under the lifetime employment principle, he can be comforted by the thought that effectively he has a career for life. Nagasawa has no intention of either marrying or dumping Hatsumi; it is a relationship of appearances and convenience. Clearly this is yet another of Nagasawa's existential crimes. He refuses to make a choice; he wants Hatsumi and the Foreign Ministry and his one-night stands and freedom in the future to be single. He will not let Hatsumi be free or, at least, he does not assist her in her journey towards freedom and integrity. The Beatles' Paul McCartney had a number of girlfriends, including Dot Rhone, a fellow

student who was devastated when he broke up with her, and Jane Asher. However, he did not leave them hanging on, as Hatsumi was.

We are somewhat amazed that Hatsumi actually listens to Watanabe's advice but we are very disappointed that she refuses to act according to it. Later Nagasawa confronts Watanabe about the advice but he is not angry and he even admits that his (Watanabe's) advice was right according to the requirements of logic. Clearly to be angry here would violate his "cool" image and so Nagasawa, assuming he really is angry, is trapped by his own prior essentialism. All of these events lead the foreign reader to realize the intricate nature of obligations and ceremonial role-playing in Japanese society as well as the fatalistic attitude of Japanese lovers. Why does Hatsumi refused to leave Nagasawa? Is the high status of her man the socially accepted compensation for his serial unfaithfulness? Would rejecting him break the Japanese social contract and destroy Japanese society because every woman would then leave her husband? Has she died for her society in some Christlike manner by putting to death her hopes and dreams for happiness on the Cross? (The answer to this question has to be "no".) Certainly her society would not willingly die for her! Murakami (2005, p. 41) argues that: "Hatsumi is depicted as a symbol of romance searching for empathic love with Nagasawa". He goes on to write that "the narrator's attitude towards Nagasawa is indifferent, whereas towards Hatsumi he is ... compassionate" (p. 42). Furthermore, Nagasawa's "nasty character is a result of a lack of empathy – a facet of the apathy typical of postmodernists" (p. 42). Watanabe clings to the modern with his infatuation with Hatsumi. Without adopting Murakami's (2005) modernist-postmodernist dichotomy, we agree with his more general points that Watanabe is closer to the romantic attitude of Hatsumi than he is to Nagasawa and that he tries to cling to Hatsumi's romantic attitude. Furthermore, Murakami (2005, p. 42) makes the interesting observation that it is "ambiguous" "whether the narrative leads the reader to attempt to recover or discard" Hatsumi's modernist romantic longings. We would argue that it is the former.

We see these Japanese social obligations as genuine obstacles to Sartrean authenticity, good decision-making and self re-creation. As sons and daughters of Sartre and Marx (and Western 1960s pop-rock), we cry out to Hatsumi to cast off her chains! Nagasawa is too far gone but, with the help of Watanabe, Hatsumi can be "saved". What we forget is that Hatsumi's influences are the same as Nagasawa's not Watanabe's. As far as we know she is not a fan of Western pop-rock or of Western emancipatory literature. Years later Nagasawa writes to Watanabe about Hatsumi's suicide (after she married someone else and had children) and admits that the event has affected him deeply. Disgusted, Watanabe ends all contact with Nagasawa as if to say that he (Nagasawa) contributed to her death by not really wanting her to be free or assisting

her in the existential journey to be free. Nagasawa could no longer say all were playing their part in a game or, if he stuck to this line, then the game as a whole is reprehensible, as well as all those who played it. The suicide of an unhappy and frustrated woman is always too high a price to pay for an outwardly stable and prosperous society. Existentially speaking, Naoko and Hatsumi both fail but it is Hatsumi alone who wins the "prize" in the Japanese cultural sense. Neither woman manages to re-create herself successfully according to existentialist principles.

Naoko does not know what she wants, but Hatsumi knows (or does she?) The Western reader condemns what Hatsumi wants as irrational and contrary to her own ultimate good. We have to say that, according to Japanese cultural norms, Hatsumi comes out of the death process in a more satisfactory state than Naoko, but we cannot accept this perspective. If anything Hatsumi's suicide is more harmful to others since she has a husband and possibly children as well. Naoko mildly hurts Watanabe but at least she allows him to be free. She does aim to manipulate, but this is not extremely successful. Midori arrives and Watanabe follows her. Naoko mildly hurts her parents, but they have a life outside of her. Naoko's crime against her own future is not given much significance or much weight by Japanese society. Hatsumi's crime against her own future is socially acceptable if not socially required. We realize that Japanese society is much kinder to the males than to females since the male's right to "love-and-leave" at least allows for mistakes to be learned from and a better future to be aimed at. However, such freedom is not the same as existentialist self re-creation which also involves the refusal to be bound by ideology and the creation of an authentic and workable "synthesis" (Sartre, 2003, p. 79) of "*facticity*" (Sartre, 2003, p. 79, emphasis original) and "*transcendence*" (Sartre, 2003, p. 79, emphasis original).

The dialectical opposite to Hatsumi and her old-fashioned ways are (in addition to Midori) the young girls who do one-night stands with Nagasawa. Does Nagasawa not have power only over *one night* of their lives? Yes, but, according to Japanese eyes, these girls may also be performing a social role in a gigantic play, but a part lower in status to that played by Hatsumi. In such a case, though, it is the girls at the lower end of the social spectrum (who no man "owns") who have the most freedom. If the bourgeoisie suffer most in a social system then that system really is a complex one and a painful one since it requires and demands such suffering for the system to reproduce itself. To break the spell what is needed is an authoritative voice that tells the sufferer to "pick up thy bed and walk"! (St Mark 2, verse 9) Western pop-rock music, and the French existentialist philosophy that might be said to underpin it, is one of those empowering voices for Murakami and those trapped within his painful half-rural, half-urban; half-ancient, half-modern; and half-West, half-East world. There is a

Hegelian synthesis out there to be reached for the “tramps like us” that are “born to run” (Bruce Springsteen, “Born to Run”, from the Born to Run album, 1975). However, the only way to get there is to pay a price. One must confront “the darkness on the edge of town”.

By enjoying sexual intimacy with Watanabe on their last night together, before she leaves for Hokkaido right at the end of the novel, Reiko reclaims more power by initiating the intimacy and “discarding” Watanabe (who, over fifteen years her junior, is a “toy-boy”) whilst still staying on as “friends”. Rubin (2005, p. 158) argues that this sexual intimacy is “unsettling and morally questionable”, given Reiko’s troubled mental state, but it is probably intended by Murakami to signify new beginnings for Watanabe and a symbolic break with Naoko. He met Reiko through Naoko and Reiko survives the events physically whereas Naoko does not. Therefore, Reiko can be seen as a replacement for Naoko and a cancellation of what went before (Rubin, 2005) just as Christ cancels out Adam or the proletarian revolution cancels out private property and the alienation of man.

In the words of Marx and Engels (1994), Watanabe’s struggle is against *ideology*, and it takes him the entire novel to win this victory, since ideology is so persuasive and so ever-present that Marx and Engels (1994, p. 111) in the *German Ideology* term it “the language of real life” or (in an alternative translation) “the language of actual life”. Perhaps Midori is ahead of Watanabe when she so easily sees through the behaviour of the university “Marxists”. Will the suicide of Hatsumi change Nagasawa? Clearly any painful self re-creation Nagasawa undergoes will be done without the reassuring presence of Watanabe by his side. The breaking of ties can be liberating because one is more likely to “play up” and “act out” in familiar ways in front of one’s old friends or acquaintances. No doubt, one could also point out cynically, another attractive young woman will arrive on the scene very soon to provide Nagasawa with his badly needed “support”.

As in the case of Naoko, a 20-year-old, through charm, can get away with much worse and much more self-centred behaviour than can a 40-year-old. Watanabe finally demonstrates to us his core decency and his moral and spiritual progress as he eventually cuts off, once and for all, his friendship with Nagasawa, a friendship that begins through such a transient connection as shared residence in a student dormitory. We feel that this relationship should have been ended much earlier by Watanabe. We accept that Nagasawa’s devil-may-care attitude, his roguishness, his self-confidence, and his charm impress Watanabe to a certain extent. Does the final ending of this relationship represent a further act of self re-creation by Watanabe and a final rejection of essences or *being-for-others* that hinder one in one’s struggle along the pathway towards authenticity?

Nagasawa appears a little like Svidrigailov in *Crime and Punishment*. Watanabe and Midori are then Raskolnikov

and Sonya respectively – is Naoko, as the tie that binds one to the established order, the murdered pawnbroker? Svidrigailov is attracted to Raskolnikov’s courage, urgency, and sense of purpose. These same characteristics of Watanabe may conceivably have attracted Nagasawa to him in the beginning. In the atmosphere of the male dormitory Watanabe is no wimp or goody-two-shoes. Few readers either would accept a hero from either one of these categories. Ultimately, however, Svidrigailov suicides (James, 2009; James et al., 2011) rather than following Raskolnikov’s example of self re-creation through positive actions. He is “too tired, jaded, and corrupt” (James, 2009, p. 146) to be willing and able to believe that his life can change as he changes his actions. Existentially it requires great bravery and courage to, as “being”, attempt to triumph over “nothingness”. Svidrigailov’s last attitude is one of arrogance and impatience as he refuses to commit the time and energy needed to change his own life. Vladimir Ilyich Lenin (1992, p. 23) was right to view the proletariat as the “only revolutionary class” with “nothing to lose but their chains” (Marx and Engels, 1992, p. 48). As the French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1969, p. 156, emphasis original) writes, if the proletariat remains passive, then “*it is clear that no other class can replace the proletariat in this [revolutionary] task*”. We expect that Nagasawa is too wedded to the established order to be willing and able to break free and create his own authentic person despite all of his empty and grand philosophizing.

We conclude the paper as follows. In *Norwegian Wood* only Watanabe and the 30-something Keiko are, clearly and obviously, able and willing to adapt to difficulties and existentially re-create themselves in the manner of Sartre and Dostoyevsky’s Raskolnikov. They are the novel’s “successes” and they are there alive at the end to tell the tale. Naoko and Nagasawa clearly lack any moral compass and willpower to learn from past failures and setbacks. The same comment about willpower applies to Hatsumi, but issues of moral compass in her case are more complex. Nagasawa’s life, admittedly, has so far contained few failures of the conventional type, but surely the suicide death of Hatsumi signifies and marks his greatest failure no matter what excuses his culture might afford him. Naoko, Nagasawa, and Hatsumi lack the willpower and courage to forge new, caring, and socially responsible synthetic identities. Each is playing out an *essential* role in a grand drama, roles laid out for them by Japanese society: the ghostlike beauty; the successful career-oriented womanizer; and the devoted and self-sacrificing female “enabler” for the Japanese businessman’s lifestyle excesses. When Nagasawa receives news of Hatsumi’s suicide the moral chasm between him and Watanabe widens to become unbridgeable; Nagasawa’s life and worldview are so pre-determined and systematized (which shows the dangers of ideology) that making major changes in key areas of his life would be a formidable task if not impossible. But Truman Capote,

Scott Fitzgerald, the Beatles, and Bruce Springsteen (whose breakthrough album *Born to Run* was released in 1975, five years after *Norwegian Wood's* narration ends) might offer him some help!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We acknowledge the helpful and constructive comments of the two anonymous reviewers for this journal. We also acknowledge Dr. Setsuo Otsuka whose many discussions with one of the authors on Japanese culture topics have proved insightful.

REFERENCES

- Allinson GD (1997). *Japan's Postwar History*. Cornell: Cornell University Press.
- Kirchherr A, Clough MH, Fallows C (2010). *Astrid Kirchherr: A Retrospective*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press
- Ballard JG (2006). *High-Rise*. London: Harper-Perennial, pp 1-173
- Bauman Z (1976). *Towards a Critical Sociology*. Sydney: Law Book Co of Australasia.
- Bell DA, Piper N (2005). Justice for migrant workers? The case of foreign domestic workers in Hong Kong and Singapore. In: W. Kymlicka and B. He, eds. *Multiculturalism in Asia*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, Chapter 9. pp 196-222
- Chesterton GK (2007). *Heretics*. Peabody: Hendrickson. pp 1-177
- Clinch B (2010). "Leader of the pack", *MOJO*, August, pp. 76-86.
- Dostoyevsky F (1991). *Crime and Punishment*, D. McDuff, trans. London: Penguin Classics, pp 1-718
- Feather NT, MacKee IR (1993). Global self-esteem and attitudes toward the high achiever for Australian and Japanese students. *Social Psychol. Q.*, 56: 65-76.
- Foucault M (1977). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Harmondsworth: Penguin. pp 1-352.
- Foucault M (1980a). Truth and power. In: C. Gordon, ed. *Power/Knowledge – Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*. New York: Random House.
- Foucault M (1980b). Powers and strategies. In: C. Gordon, ed. *Power/Knowledge – Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*. New York: Random House.
- Foucault M (1980c). The eye of power. In: C. Gordon, ed. *Power/Knowledge – Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*. New York: Random House.
- Foucault M (1985). *The Use of Pleasure: The History of Sexuality* (R. Hurley, Trans.). London: Penguin Books, 2: 1-304.
- Foucault M (1986). *The Care of the Self: The History of Sexuality Volume Three*. London: Penguin Books. pp 1-288.
- Gilbert P (2004). *Passion is a Fashion: The Real Story of the Clash*, Hardcover ed. London: Aurum Press.
- Hofstede G (2001). *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions and Organizations across Nations*, 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, pp 1-616.
- Hsu FLK (1985). The self in cross-cultural perspectives. In A.J. Marsella, G. DeVos and F.L.K. Hsu, eds. *Culture and Self: Asian and Western perspectives*. New York: Tavistock Publications, pp. 24-55.
- James K (2009). *A Radical Approach to Accounting Education: Educating the Whole Person as a Response to the Business Crises of Tomorrow*. Saarbrücken: VDM-Verlag Publishing House.
- James K, Briggs SP, James EM (2011). Raskolnikov speaks today: Marxism and alienation in Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment* and the implications for business ethics education. *Int. J. Crit. Acc. Forthcom.*, pp 1-25.
- Lenin VI (1992). *The State and Revolution*. London: Penguin Classics. pp 1-192.
- Marx KH (1975). *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*. In: *Early Writings*, R. Livingstone and G. Benton, trans. London: Penguin Classics, pp 279-400.
- Marx KH, Engels, F (1992). *The Communist Manifesto*. New York: Bantam Classics. Also available online: <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ch04.htm> [accessed 6 December 2010].
- Marx KH, Engels F (1994). *The German Ideology*. In: L.H. Simon, ed. *Selected Writings*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co.
- McDuff D (1991). Introduction. In: *Crime and Punishment*. London: Penguin Classics.
- Merleau-Ponty M (1969). *Humanism and Terror*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Murakami F (2005). *Postmodern, Feminist and Postcolonial Currents in Contemporary Japanese Culture: A Reading of Murakami Haruki, Yoshimoto Banana, Yoshimoto Takaaki and Karatani Kojin*. Abingdon: Routledge, pp 1-206.
- Murakami H (2000). *Norwegian Wood*, J. Rubin, trans. New York: Vintage Press.
- Nietzsche F (1973). *Beyond Good and Evil*. London: Penguin Classics, pp 1-238.
- Nietzsche F (1990). *Twilight of the Idols and the Anti-Christ*. London: Penguin Classics, pp 1-199.
- Nietzsche F (1994). *Human, All Too Human*. London: Penguin Classics. pp 1-304.
- Nietzsche F (2004). On the Genealogy of Morals. In: G. Marino, ed. *Basic Writings of Existentialism*. New York: The Modern Library, pp. 111-187.
- Otsuka S, Smith ID (2005). Educational applications of the expectancy-value model of achievement motivation in the diverse cultural contexts of the west and east. *Change: Trans. in Educ.* 8:91-109.
- Reischauer EO (1992). *The Japanese Today: Change and Continuity*, 7th ed. Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Co., pp 1-438.
- Rubin J (2005). *Haruki Murakami and the Music of Words*. London: Vintage Random House.
- Sallii F (1996). Accepting personal responsibility for learning. In: D. Watkins and J. Biggs, eds. *The Chinese Learner: Cultural, Psychological and Contextual Influences*. Hong Kong and Camberwell: Centre for Comparative Research in Education and Australian Council for Educational Research, pp. 85-105.
- Sartre J-P (2003). *Being and Nothingness*, H.E. Barnes, trans. Milton Park: Routledge Classics, pp 1-647.
- Sartre J-P (2004). *Existentialism*. In: G. Marino, ed. *Basic Writings of Existentialism*. New York: The Modern Library, pp. 341-367.
- Suter R (2008). *The Japanization of Modernity: Murakami Haruki between Japan and the United States*. Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press.
- Tolstoy L (2003). *Anna Karenina*. London: Penguin Classics. pp 1-817
- Yee CS-L, Otsuka S, James K, Leung J K-S (2008). Japanese culture and budgeting: a review of the literature and a limited pilot study to
- Tolstoy L (2008). *The Death of Ivan Ilyich and Other Stories*. London: Penguin Classics, pp 155-218.
- Trotsky L (2004). *The Revolution Betrayed*. New York: Dover Publications. pp 1-240.
- Warnock M. (2003). Introduction. In: H.E. Barnes, trans. *Being and Nothingness*. Milton Park: Routledge Classics, pp. xi-xxi.
- Yee CS-L, Otsuka S, James K, Leung J K-S (2008). Japanese culture and budgeting: a review of the literature and a limited pilot study to illustrate the research agenda. *Man Audit. J.*, 23: 873-899.
- Žižek S (2009). *In Defense of Lost Causes*. London and New York: Verso, pp 1-530.
- Žižek S (2010). *Living in the End Times*. London and New York: Verso, pp 1-520.