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“Always the Ugly Duckling, Never the Swan”

The Paradoxical Authorship of Murakami Haruki

Aurelie van ‘t Slot
s1625365
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Supervisor: Prof.dr. I. B. Smits
Second Reader: dr. E. Minnaard

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If you have anything to say, anything you feel nobody has ever said before, you have got to feel it so desperately that you will find some way to say it that nobody has ever found before, so that the thing you have to say and the way of saying it blend as one matter – as indissolubly as if they were conceived together.

- *F. Scott Fitzgerald (1936)*

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§1 Introduction: The 'Murakami Phenomenon'

> There's no need to be literature's top runner. I went on writing the kind of things I wanted to write, exactly the way I wanted to write them, and if that allowed me to make a normal living, then I couldn´t ask for more. When *Norwegian Wood* [1987] sold way more than anticipated, the comfortable position I had was forced to change a bit […].
>
> *- Murakami Haruki, What I Talk About When I Talk About Running, 2009, p. 38-39*

The contemporary Japanese author Murakami Haruki is world-renowned for his work as a novelist, essayist and translator. The publication of *Norwegian Wood* in 1987 turned the author into a literary celebrity in his home country and appears to have had the exact same effect when translated versions hit the markets in the United Kingdom in 2000 and the Netherlands in 2007. His burgeoning global popularity has provided his Dutch and British publishers with ample opportunities to capitalize on the suspense surrounding a new publication. When *Colourless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage* was released in the Netherlands in January 2014, Murakami's Dutch publisher Atlas Contact organised world's first "Murakami Festival". Ardent fans were able to read the book one month before its official release and attend one of fourteen book clubs held at various locations in Amsterdam. At the end of the evening, participants were invited to an after-party which gave them the opportunity to meet other Murakami buffs. Word spread quickly and the 500 available tickets sold out within nine days (Murakami Festival, November 20, 2013). In the United Kingdom, the publication of the English translation in August 2014 was paired with midnight bookshop openings and projections of the book's front cover on various London landmarks. This frenzy surrounding the publication is part of the 'Murakami Phenomenon', as described by Michael Seats in *Murakami Haruki: The Simulacrum in Contemporary Japanese Culture* (2006, p.25). As the epigram above implies, Murakami ceases to be *just* a novelist, but instead has entered the realm of literary stardom. It seems as if a new Murakami novel has become a global happening, perhaps even reminiscent of the Harry Potter-mania.

Despite his international acclaim and celebrity-like status, Murakami is also known as someone who shuns the limelight and who has a habit of presenting himself as an ordinary run-of-the-mill guy. 'I don't think I'm a great person, a smart person, a talented person, but I could write' (Murakami, in Martin, 2014, para.9). Rather than engaging in public appearances or attending PR events, he chooses to lead a reclusive life in which he keeps to a strict routine of writing five to six hours a day. As one journalist aptly remarked, 'it is hard to square this megastar reputation' with someone as 'modest and unassuming' as Murakami (Martin, 2014,

para.2). Yet, behind this veil of modesty and public reticence lingers a literary entrepreneur who is willing to increase his mainstream success. Although Murakami first upheld the impression that his overnight commercial success came as a surprise to him, he later admitted that writing *Norwegian Wood* (1987) was a strategic attempt to break into the mainstream. 'It was a bestseller in Japan and I expected that result. Many people liked that book. They might then be interested in my other work; so it helps a lot' (Murakami, in Wray, 2004, para. 10-12).

The commercial and critical success of Murakami dismays the Japanese literary elite, who have always regarded him to be an outsider to their circles. 'The world of literary arts [in Japan] saw no value in me, and disliked me' (Murakami, in Strecher, 2014, p.1). As a result, Murakami feels he is 'kind of an outcast of the Japanese literary world. I have been writing for 35 years and from the beginning up to now the situation is almost the same. I am kind of an ugly duckling. Always the duckling, never the swan' (Murakami, in Poole, 2014, para.20). The reason for their antagonism can be found in his distinctive writing style, which does not adhere to the literary conventions of *jun bungaku* or 'pure literature'– the *belles lettres* of Japan. According to Nobel Prize winner and fervent Murakami critic Ōe Kenzaburō, '[he] writes in Japanese, but his writing is not really Japanese' (in Strecher, 2014, p.11). Murakami does not have a 'serious social, political or philosophical agenda', nor does he adhere to a purely aesthetic style, 'to create literary Art for its own sake' (Strecher, 2014, p.4). His lack of social and political commitment led to criticism from the Japanese literary elite, who claimed that Murakami had 'failed to measure up to standards of intellectual social critique that had marked Japan's great writers since the 1960s' (ibid., p.2).

Moreover, Japanese authors who were exported abroad as literary commodities were expected to embrace their role as "cultural ambassadors" of Japan (Muira, 2003). Murakami's overt references to global consumer culture and what Strecher (2014) calls his *mukokuseki* ("nationality-less") style clearly defy these expectations. Hence, some critics have positioned Murakami's prose within a tradition of transnational literature, whose writing style crosses cultural borders and captures a sense of hybridity all too familiar in an era of late capitalist consumer culture (Miura, 2003; Powers, 2008; Strecher, 2011). Yet at the same time, commercial forces such as his British and Dutch publishers still highlight the author's "Japaneseness" in their branding of the literary star. It should come as no surprise then that the Japanese literary elite were concerned Murakami 'would destroy the tradition of Japanese literature' by being lauded overseas as a representative of the Japanese literary scene (Murakami, in Strecher, 2014, p.1).

Murakami's individualistic personality initially caused him to purposefully disassociate

himself from both the Japanese literary establishment and Japanese culture (Rubin, 2012 [2002]; Strecher 2014; Suter, 2008). 'All I could think about when I began writing fiction in my youth was how to run as far as I could from the "Japanese Condition". I wanted to distance myself as much as possible from the curse of Japanese. […] The literary establishment was nothing but a pain for me' (Murakami, in Rubin, 2012 [2002], p.47). His metaphorical distancing in the form of his writing style was paralleled by a literal distancing. He travelled to Europe and the United States, not only to be inspired by the unfamiliar surroundings, but also to get away from pestering requests by the Japanese media and advertising agencies. However, the distance between Murakami and his home country conjured a renewed sense of responsibility to Japanese society. He felt 'the change inside himself, an ongoing revaluation of his values that called for him to go back and take his place in Japanese society' (ibid., p.237). The publication of *Underground* in 1997, in which he reflects on the 1995 Tokyo gas attack by interviewing both victims and members of Aum Shinrikyo, marked one of his first probes into his new role as a public figure. However, his social commentary is not limited to Japan. In recent years, Murakami has taken literary award ceremonies as an opportunity to speak out for those who are being repressed, such as the Palestinians when he accepted the Jerusalem Price in Israel (2009) or Hong Kong's pro-democracy protesters when he received the Welt-Literaturpreis in Berlin (2014).

1.1 Research Objective: Understanding the Global Popularity of Murakami

With these introductory paragraphs, we begin to understand that Murakami's celebrity image can be perceived as comprising of many paradoxical elements of signification. Murakami is a public figure who has the authority to speak out on pertinent global issues, but at the same time he prefers to lead a reclusive life, out of sight from the media's glare. He is a transnational author whose fiction is said to epitomize the zeitgeist of globalization, even though his Dutch and British publishers continue to underscore his Japanese background in their marketing campaigns and cover designs. He is also a celebrity author – a literary entrepreneur of sorts – whose readership extends well beyond the confines of the Japanese peninsula, yet he claims to be nothing more than ordinary. As Gaston Franssen skilfully summed up, whilst 'his literary universe seems to be inhabited by a plethora of faceless characters, paradoxically, the author himself appears to be a man with many different faces' (2017, p.218).

Scholars such as Jay Rubin, Rebecca Suter, Michael Seats and Matthew Carl Strecher have taken an interest in Murakami and have been acclaimed for their in-depth research on this otherwise reclusive author. Their main research objectives, however, were either focused on

the literary analysis of Murakami's prose or sought to bring a comparative perspective to the study of his fiction, in which Japan and the United States tend to make up the two poles of the comparison. With the exception of a few scholarly articles, English-language studies on Murakami seldom discuss the celebrity aspect of his authorship. Yet, as the global popularity of Murakami continues to grow unabated, studying the various elements of signification that reside in his celebrity image can prove highly insightful so as to deepen our understanding of the so-called "Murakami Phenomenon".

Several scholars in the field of celebrity studies and literary studies have touched upon the controversy surrounding the figure of the celebrity author (Moran, 2000; Glass, 2004; York, 2007; Honings & Franssen, 2016; Honings & Franssen, 2017). According to Gaston Franssen, literary celebrity 'results from a clash between two discursive configurations: literary authorship and popular celebrity' (2010, p.91). On the one hand, the conventional discourse on literary authorship is characterized by an aversion towards commodification and commercialism, a wilful disregard of the authorial intent, and the urge to be innovative (ibid.). On the other hand, the discourse on popular celebrity is identified by a vested interest in commercialism, the blurring boundaries of the public and private self, and an endless repetition of predetermined formulas instigated by mass-media and mass production (ibid.).When these discourses clash in the manifestation of a celebrity author, our commonplace understanding of authorship becomes void. It furthermore causes the celebrity author to become a 'highly problematic figure, in whom contradictory conditions and expectations must be reconciled' (Franssen, 2010, p.94).

Considering Murakami Haruki as a "highly problematic figure", this study examines how his celebrity authorship is fabricated in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. It poses the hypothesis that his celebrity authorship is inherently paradoxical, as the author seems to be invested in a multiplicity of subject positions. Analysing these subject positions and their elements of signification in separate geographical contexts is necessary so as to avoid equating the global popularity of Murakami with a universal understanding of his celebrity authorship. The various elements of signification that were touched upon in the introductory paragraphs have informed the following hypothesized paradoxes:

a. *Transnational author vs. national branding*

   In their branding of the author, British and Dutch publishers tend to highlight Murakami's "Japaneseness". This contradicts both the transnational classification of his

prose and his persistent disparagement from the Japanese literary elite, who have excluded him from their circles.

b. *Celebrity author vs. self-purported ordinariness*

Murakami is a celebrity author whose popularity has clearly lost its borders. He has proven to be a literary entrepreneur with a cunning ability to use various media platforms. On other occasions, he portrays himself as an ordinary guy who does not seem to fancy the limelight.

c. *Author-recluse vs. public figure*

In recent years, Murakami has gradually taken on the role of a public figure who, due to his celebrity status and cultural merit, has the ability to intervene in public debates with critical statements. Yet, at the same time, he has a reputation of public reticence and therefore refuses to use this ability frequently, as he rarely engages with the media or comes out in public.

To then validate the hypothesis, this study is divided into three sections. The first section consists of a literature review of seminal scholarly work on Murakami Haruki in the English language, as well as the few academic articles that have taken the celebrity status of Murakami as their vantage point. This literature review has been developed along two different thematic lines: Murakami as a celebrity author, in which we examine responses from both Murakami and his readers about his literary stardom, and Murakami as a contemporary Japanese author, in which we focus on the reception and classification of his work, as well as the rediscovery of his societal engagement on the global stage. The aim of this chapter is to identify current research gaps within Murakami Haruki studies and subsequently addresses how the following study fills those lacunae. As such, it explicates how the following study should be considered an original contribution to the field of Murakami Haruki studies.

The second section turns to the field of celebrity studies, and specifically the topic of celebrity authorship, as a means to provide us with the theoretical approach by which we can analyse the multiplicity of subjectivities that have converged within the persona of Murakami Haruki as a celebrity author. This chapter can be divided into two subsections. The first subsection will introduce the general field of celebrity studies, the various conceptualizations of celebrity it employs and the historical roots of the celebrity phenomenon. It will also touch upon the forces that underlie the establishment and diffusion of celebrity culture. Significant attention is paid to the theories of leading celebrity studies scholars Richard Dyer (1998 [1979]; 2004 [1987]) and P. David Marshall (2011 [1997]), who, in their semiotic understanding of the

celebrity, approach the subject as an intertextual discursive construct whose internal dynamics and power relations can be uncovered when reading into the celebrity's "star image". Instead of focusing on what determines ones celebrity status, Dyer and Marshall probe into what the celebrity represents and how their specific signification is constructed by both themselves and intermediaries. Their insights have been vital in structuring the overall argumentation of the third section which applies their approach to the celebrity authorship of Murakami. The second subsection of this chapter takes the literary celebrity as its focal point, and aims to acquaint the reader with the implications of transferring celebrity culture into the field of literary production. It furthermore addresses the complexity of the discursive oppositions within which the phenomenon of the literary celebrity operates and stresses the importance of incorporating the active attribution by intermediaries into ones analysis of literary stardom.

The third section analyses how the celebrity authorship of Murakami Haruki is fabricated in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, so as to validate whether the hypothesized paradoxes hold true in both countries. The choice for these two countries is both personally and academically motivated. First of all, scholars in the field of Murakami Haruki studies have limited their focus to the United States and East Asia. However, since the author's popularity is globally apparent, extensive academic research on his authorship in Europe warrants more attention. Secondly, familiarity with the languages spoken in both countries has been imperative in carrying out this research. Thirdly, personal interest in Murakami led to attending events on the author during which contact was made with Atlas Contact and Penguin Random House UK, the publishing houses in the respective countries. Central to the fabrication of Murakami's celebrity authorship are the various ways in which the author represents himself (auto-representation) to his readers and the media, as well as how intermediaries – here termed extra-literary forces – such as journalists, publishers and graphic designers represent Murakami in both countries (hetero-representation), as their attributions to his star image significantly influence his celebrity authorship. In this chapter, the various elements of auto- and hetero-representation are discussed within the parameters of the three paradoxes formulated above which function as the chapter's primary analytical structure. The countries this study focuses on constitute its substructure, meaning that every paradox is analysed within the geographical context of the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. The paradoxes will be brought together in the last section of this chapter, not only to reflect on their interplay, but also to identify the differences and similarities in auto- and hetero-representation of Murakami in both countries.

A survey of media coverage on Murakami in both countries functions as source material to analyse the various elements of auto- and hetero-representation. To this end, a database has

been constructed, consisting of journalistic critiques in magazines and newspapers (both digital and hard copies), promotional content, radio broadcasts, and interviews with the author between 2011 and June 2017. Bearing in mind the feasibility of this research within the given word limit, the year 2011 was chosen as a starting point so as to limit the amount of data that had to be perused for analysis. Using "Murakami Haruki" as a search term, sources were gathered through the search engines of major national newspapers such as *NRC Handelsblad* and *de Volkskrant* in the Netherlands, and *The Guardian*, *The Telegraph* and *The Independent* in the United Kingdom. Other source materials such as magazine articles, radio broadcasts and promotional content were found through Facebook pages and/or Twitter feeds. Qualitative codes were made for each hypothesized paradox, the foundation of which were the opposing key terms constituting a given paradox. These key terms were then substantiated with a group of indicators that were either related concepts or manifestations of the key terms. After this, each source was coded in an Excel table according to its relevance to the paradoxes. A total of 136 sources were consulted, though only the most representative of each paradox were used in the final analysis. In addition to the survey of media coverage, an inquiry into the practices of the publishers has been fostered through the inclusion of three semi-structured interviews that were conducted with employees of Penguin Random House UK[1] and Atlas Contact[2], Murakami's British and Dutch publishing houses. Both the interviews and the other source materials gathered in the database were subjected to a multimodal discourse analysis, during which discursive statements of both the author and the extra-literary forces were collected and examined according to the respective paradoxes. A multimodal discourse analysis allowed for cover designs and promotional content to be included into this research, besides written and spoken word. This approach to discourse furthermore underscores the intertextual nature of the celebrity as a discursive construct that is informed by a variety of mediated forms.

With these three sections, this study sheds light on how the celebrity authorship of Murakami Haruki is constructed in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, and whether it should be considered inherently paradoxical. Not only will this research provide a welcome addition to the field of Murakami Haruki studies where his celebrity authorship has yet to be examined in its geographical context, it will also broaden the scope of research on celebrity authorship in general, a field in which case studies on non-Western authors are underrepresented.

[1] Liz Foley (Publishing Director at Harvill Secker) and Suzanne Dean (Creative Director at Vintage), both Harvill Secker and Vintage operate under publishing company Penguin Random House UK.
[2] Jessica Nash (Editor-in-Chief for translated fiction) and Vincent Kolenbrander (publicist).

§2 Literature Review of Murakami Haruki Studies

The first part of this theoretical framework will outline a comprehensive survey of seminal scholarly work on Murakami Haruki in the English language, as well as the few academic articles that have taken the celebrity status of Murakami as their vantage point. As purported in the introduction to this study, the so-called "Murakami Phenomenon" has continued to spread unabated since the publication of *Norwegian Wood* in 1987 (Seats, 2006). Whereas Japanese literary critics were quick to pick up on the movement, English-language monographs dealing with Murakami's work have only began to appear since the late 1990s. The scholars of the monographs under discussion have all been acclaimed for bringing critical acumen to the study of Murakami Haruki. Although these monographs are representative for Murakami studies and include a variety of criticism on the author which had previously been scattered throughout academic journals, magazines and chapters in anthologies, their main research objective is often limited to the literary analysis of the author's prose, either along thematic or comparative lines. With the exception of a few English-language articles, the celebrity aspect of Murakami's authorship is seldom discussed. The lack of academic interest in his celebrity status can be attributed to a poststructuralist tradition which is characterized by a wilful disregard of the authorial intent and a reluctance to study the author "behind the book".

Jay Rubin can perhaps be described at the "godfather of Murakami Haruki studies", since his *Murakami Haruki and the Music of Words* (2002) was the first English-language monograph on the author.[3] Taking a biographical approach, Rubin not only succeeded at eloquently chronicling the life and work of one of the most famous contemporary Japanese authors, but also combines this biographical account with critical discourse. It gives both general readers and literary professionals an insight into some of the more personal decisions that have informed Murakami's career as an author. Michael Seats on the other hand, shies away from using these personal details in *Murakami Haruki: The Simulacrum in Contemporary Japanese Culture* (2006). His primary purpose was to demonstrate how selected works of Murakami's oeuvre 'utilize the structure of simulacrum to develop a complex critique of contemporary Japanese culture' (2006, p.1). He appears to have deliberately distanced himself from previous English-language studies (i.e. articles), as he feels they have been unsuccessful in offering theoretically rigorous discussions of Murakami's prose and 'remain piecemeal and somewhat disparate in their approach' (ibid., p.13).

[3] It should be noted that Rubin published a revised edition of *Haruki Murakami and the Music of Words* in 2012 with Vintage (subdivision of Random House). Chapters 13 and 14 (pp. 264-387) were added in the revised edition. This literature review will only refer to the 2012 edition.

More insights can be derived from Rebecca Suter, who was the first to bring a comparative aspect to the study of Murakami. In her first monograph titled *The Japanization of Modernity: Murakami Haruki between Japan and the United States* (2008), she approached the author as a cultural mediator between Japan and the United States. In studying Murakami's work from a comparative perspective, Suter not only wished to better the understanding of the author and his works, but also 'of the status of contemporary Japanese literature within the context of world literature' (2008, p.1). Lastly, this literature review will also engage with observations by Matthew Carl Strecher.[4] Using an approach that can be described as narratological, in *The Forbidden Worlds of Haruki Murakami* (2014), Strecher explores Murakami's portrayal of the "metaphysical realm" in his prose, whereby the use of language plays a significant role in its various manifestations. The book reflects, in Strecher's own words, his ongoing fascination with Murakami's writing, along with his belief that the development of the author's work is 'important enough to the overall field of Japanese (and even world) literature to merit detailed description and discussion' (2014, p.x).

It should be noted that these monographs on Murakami do not *directly* address the celebrity aspect of his literary authorship, although it often preludes their studies to justify the importance of their research. Research on celebrity authorship tends to be limited to the field of celebrity studies, in which the celebrity author can be approached as a discursive intertextual construct. Scholars scrutinize the various subjectivities the literary star represents, and how their specific signification is constructed by both themselves and intermediaries. Celebrity studies as a whole will be addressed in the next chapter, with specific attention paid to the conceptualization of celebrity authorship. With the exception of Rubin, the relevance of the monographs under discussion in this chapter is often limited to their introductory chapters, in which the scholars comment on Murakami's authorship, either by charting a brief biographical account or by reflecting on the reception of his prose. Nevertheless, it is necessary to acknowledge that many of their observations have been imperative in validating the overall premise of this study, as well as situating the authorship of Murakami within a larger discursive context of Japanese and even transnational literature. Other critical insights have been derived from the few scholarly articles that have in some way dealt with Murakami's celebrity status and are used to identify some of the main tenets with regards to Murakami's celebrity

[4] *The Forbidden Worlds of Haruki Murakami* (2014) is Strecher's third monograph on the best-selling author, following *Dances with Sheep* (2002), which covered Murakami's literary production up to 1999, and *Haruki Murakami's The Wind-up Bird Chronicle* (2002), which dealt exclusively with one novel. Due to their limited relevance for this study, the latter two books have not been incorporated in this literature review.

authorship.[5] The diverse academic backgrounds of these scholars, ranging from translation studies to literary studies, is telling of the various approaches that amalgamate in the field of celebrity studies.

This literature review has been developed along two different thematic lines: Murakami as a celebrity author, in which we examine responses from both his readers and Murakami about his literary stardom, and Murakami as a contemporary Japanese author, in which we focus on the reception and classification of his work, as well as the rediscovery of his societal engagement on the global stage. Sources with a distinct focus on the literary classification of Murakami's prose[6] as well as those who have sought to shed light on the "Western" features of his fiction[7] have been omitted here. That is not to say that these foci will not be (briefly) touched upon in the following review, but to avoid adding too much weight to these sources, the voices of the scholars under discussion have proven both leading and sufficient in addressing these topics. After carefully revising the academic literature at hand, the final subsection of this literature review aims to identify current research gaps within Murakami Haruki studies and subsequently addresses how the following study proposes to fill those lacunae.

2.1 Murakami as a Celebrity Author

To highlight the global popularity of Murakami has, according to Margaret Hillenbrand (2009), become somewhat of a platitude. Needless to say, the author is a perennial bestseller who has amassed a vast readership well beyond the confines of the Japanese peninsula. In *Haruki Murakami and the Music of Words* (2012 [2002]), Jay Rubin, a self-proclaimed "Haruki Murakami fan" and a long-time English translator of his work, manages to pinpoint the exact moment when the author 'was transformed from a writer into a phenomenon' (p.160). The popularity of Murakami reached unseen heights after the publication of *Norwegian Wood* in 1987. Initially thought to entice girls in their teens and early twenties, after selling 3,500,000 volumes in Japan by the end of 1988 it became clear that the novel had a far greater demographic impact (ibid.). *Norwegian Wood* (1987) was not only a runaway bestseller in Japan, but it also initiated the Murakami boom across the Greater China zone. Hillenbrand draws attention to the fact that in Shanghai alone, the book has been reprinted twenty-two times since 2001, selling over 1,000,000 copies. In a nation where the average print per book is about 10,000, these sales figures are staggering to say the least.

Positioning Murakami within the academic discourse on the export of Japanese pop

[5] Franssen (2017), Hadley and Akashi (2015), Hillenbrand (2009) and Lyons (2014).
[6] See for example Kawakami (2002), Miura (2003), Murakami (2002) and Strecher (1998).
[7] See for example Chozick (2008) and Fisher (2000).

culture, Hillenbrand examines the impact of his mid-career fiction across mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan during the period 1994-2004.[8] As she explains, 'Murakami has become a lodestar, *an entity beyond mere authorship* [emphasis added]' (ibid., p. 719). She positions Murakami at the heart of a transnational fan culture, in which Murakami buffs 'track the movements of their quarry through his interviews and public lectures' on Chinese-language fan sites; 'speculate about his private life and habits; they make lateral approaches by writing to translators of his work [and] collect first editions, proof copies, and other publishing memorabilia' (ibid., pp. 719-20). Murakami's hermit-like lifestyle and reluctance to engage with the media has only proven to heighten his fans' infatuation. Hillenbrand (2008) observes that, like many other fan communities across the world, his Chinese-speaking enthusiasts turn to the medium of the Internet to 'share their findings, commune with kindred spirits, and articulate their fandom creatively' (ibid. p.721). The use of the Internet as a way of communication is not limited to his fans, as Murakami himself has had several online forums through which he engaged with his readers and answered their questions. The transcripts of these interactions were usually committed to print and 'provided his fans with rare glimpses of his private life' (Rubin, 2012 [2002], p.265).[9]

Then again, Rubin (2012 [2002]) also implies that the media frenzy surrounding the publication of *Norwegian Wood* (1987) in Japan had somewhat caught Murakami off guard. Not only did he have to come to terms with his newfound status as a literary celebrity, he also loathed the subsequent media attention which he felt violated his private life (ibid.). This media attention wat not only limited to Japan. In the Greater China zone alone, several so called "Murakami manuals" were published from the late 1990s onwards (Hillenbrand, 2009). These fanzines with titles such as *An Illustrated Handbook to Murakami Haruki's Music* (1996), *A Tour of Murakami Haruki's World* (1998) and *Murakami's Recipes* (2001) not only quenched the thirst of fans whilst awaiting the publication of a new Murakami novel, but also helped fans to appropriate the true Murakami lifestyle, turning the author into 'a guru for gracious living' (ibid., p.722). The fanzines only constitute a fraction of what Michael Seats (2006) has called 'the Murakami Phenomenon'. In an innovative way of approaching the variety of discursive forms by which Murakami exudes his global popularity and influence, Seats defines this

[8] Mid-career fiction is specified by Hillenbrand as "On Seeing the 100% Perfect Girl One Beautiful April Morning" (1981), *A Wild Sheep Chase* (1982), *Norwegian Wood* (1987), and *Dance Dance Dance* (1988).
[9] The most recent example is "Mr. Murakami's Place", an online advice column that was launched on Thursday 15th January, 2015. Murakami took on the role of an agony uncle and answered no less than 3,716 questions (out of the received 37,465). Later that year, Japanese publisher Shinchosa released both an e-book (containing all questions) and a print title (featuring a selection of 473 questions). This online advice column will be further examined in chapter 4: (De)Constructing the Phenomenon – subsection 4.3.

phenomenon as a massive intertextual system of genres (literary, academic, journalistic, musical, photographic) in which the name of the literary star is positioned as the central signifier. The phenomenon comprises of both "primary" narrative texts (novels and short stories) and "secondary" narrative texts such as non-fiction works, scholarly critiques in the form of journal articles and monographs, and journalistic critiques in magazines and newspapers (ibid.).[10] The sheer scale and diversity of these secondary narrative texts are almost worthy of a separate study in itself.

Taking Seats' line of thought even further, one could contend that the Murakami phenomenon has turned the author into somewhat of a celebrity brand. In an interview in 2002, Joyce Yen, former International Rights Director of China Times Publishing, noted that Murakami 'is practically an industry here in Taiwan. There are cafés, restaurants and even mixed drinks named after him, his titles and the fictional characters in his books. There is even an entire housing development named for him' (in Hillenbrand, 2009, p.722). It is not only fanzines, cafés and online fan communities that attract the attention of Murakami enthusiasts. His Japanese translations of American classics such as J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951) and F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925) have been equally successful in garnering readers, with the translator's brand name adorning the book covers in a larger font than those of the original authors (Hadley & Akashi, 2015). When juxtaposing the astonishing popularity of Murakami with his consciously asserted ordinariness, one begins to understand why the author is often described as being 'a modest celebrity' (Franssen, 2017, p.226). Rubin observes that '[i]ndeed, in person he does seem quite ordinary, easy-going, a beer-and-baseball kind of guy' (2012 [2002], p.40). His dress code of choice are sneakers, chinos and a sports coat rather than a suit (ibid.). His ordinariness not only foregrounds itself in his physicality, but also during interviews, as both Matthew C. Strecher (2014) and Gaston Franssen (2017) have pointed out. Strecher (2014) asserts that this could be deliberate strategy, since the author might have been concerned that his bizarre fictional worlds made him come across as some sort of nut case. Looking back at his youth, Murakami notes that he was '[j]ust a very ordinary kind of kid. I played baseball, and fished, climbed mountains. […] I was just an ordinary kid' (in Strecher, 2014, p.9). In a close reading of Murakami's interview with John Wray for *The Paris Review* in 2004, Franssen (2017) notices how the author claims to be just like the people who read his books.

[10] Seats uses the term 'meta texts/narratives' instead of 'secondary narrative items' (2006, p.30). Since the term 'metanarratives' is more commonly employed with reference to *La condition postmoderne: rapport sur le savoir* (1979) by Jean-François Lyotard, this study speaks of 'secondary narrative items' to avoid misinterpretation.

Yet, as is evinced by Lyons (2014), Suter (2008) and Franssen (2017), there is a lot more to the celebrity image of Murakami than simply being a modest celebrity author. Examining his global popularity in conjunction with practices of translation, Siobhan Lyons (2014) asserts that American and European readers, who consume his work through translation, can only produce a secondary interpretation of his celebrity status. In her view, the extent of his celebrity status 'appears to be much more authentic in a Japanese context' where his work can be read in its original language (Lyons, 2014, p.344). Such a statement, however, relies on the assertion that the domestic evaluation of the original text is the most correct, which, regardless of its legitimacy, falsely correlates the authenticity of his books with the authenticity of his celebrity status. A wiser analysis of the celebrity status of Murakami would scrutinize the active attribution by extra-literary forces such as publishing houses and the media, rather than assuming that a direct, authentic relation between audience and celebrity exists — this takes authenticity out of the equation completely. On the other hand, Lyons is right in arguing that the process of translation grants Murakami the ability to produce multiple, possibly opposing "selves". In a similar fashion, Rebecca Suter (2008) tries to illustrate how Murakami uses his cross-cultural positioning to 'present different versions of himself to different audiences' (ibid., p.59). She explains that the author positions himself alternatively as 'a Japanese writer or as a Westernized/international one' and as such claims the right to a 'shifting, complex, and multiple subjectivity' (ibid. p. 184). Suter does, however, negate the value of Murakami's commentary on his authorship, as it is her contention that 'Murakami's texts, of course, are where his complex positioning yields the most challenging results' (ibid., p.61).

Franssen (2017) seems to discredit Suter's argument by illustrating how the author utilizes the aforementioned *The Paris Review* interview to construct a highly versatile authorial image. During the interview, the interviewer positions the author as a literary superstar, and whilst Murakami confirms that he often gets recognized in the streets, he emphasizes that he is 'just like the people who read my books' (in Franssen, 2017, p.223). When asked about the "Western" aspects of his fiction, Murakami is quick to admit that his writing style has been heavily influenced by Western literature. Yet, at the same time, he insists that he writes about Japan, 'about our life here […] my stories are my own, and they are not Westernized' (ibid.). Reflecting on these statements, Franssen (2017) concludes that the antinomies that make up the star image of Murakami (or the star image of any other celebrity author for that matter) are 'neither fixed […], nor do they operate in parallel: in our contemporary, democratized and pluralized culture, they are inextricably intertwined, converging at times whilst colliding at others' (ibid., p.218). In underscoring the complex interplay of selves that make up his literary

authorship, it is therefore paramount to understand that Murakami's global popularity should not be equated with a universal understanding of his celebrity image.

2.2 Murakami as a Contemporary Japanese Author?

Another theme brought to the fore by Rubin (2012 [2002]), Strecher (2014) and Suter (2008) is the revolutionary way in which Murakami deliberately set himself apart from the Japanese literary establishment. It appears that in the early stages of his writing career, he already made a conscious decision to break with the post-war Japanese literary tradition. He wanted to 'run as far as [he] could from the Japanese Condition', for he wanted to be an individual, without having to deal with societal restrictions and expectations (Murakami, in Rubin, 2012 [2002], p.47). As Murakami explains in a talk held at the University of California, Berkeley in 1992, he found refuge in the literature of foreign writers such as Kurt Vonnegut, Raymond Carver and John Irving (ibid.). His fondness of American fiction, as well as his love for jazz music must have constituted to the overall American "tone" of his fiction (Strecher, 2014). Reflecting on his debut as a novelist and the subsequent attention he received, Murakami commented that he was 'an odd man out compared to other writers, and was almost completely shut out by the *bundan* [literary guild] system in Japan' (in Strecher, 2014, p.1). In line with Rubin (2012 [2002]), Strecher argues that a 'significant part of Murakami's difficulty in being accepted by the literary establishment lies in *his* refusal to accept *them'* (2014, p.2). Interestingly, he draws a connection to Murakami's personality, arguing that 'this was a typical response on the part of this intensely individualistic man' (ibid. p.3).

That being said, Murakami's exclusion from the literary establishment is two directional. Many Japanese critics scorn the author for his failure 'to measure up to the standards of intellectual social critique that had marked Japan's great writers since the 1960s' (2014, p.2). As Ian Buruma explains '[w]riters [are] still seen as masters, and [are] expected to hold forth on everything from nuclear defence to the desirability of birth-control pills' (in Rubin, 2012 [2002], p.186). Murakami refuses to engage with both the literary establishment and the mass media, making him come across as 'arrogant and insensitive' (ibid.). 'As a result, I'm an outcast in the Tokyo literary world' (Murakami, in Rubin, 2012 [2002], p.186). Due to his commercial success and purported societal disengagement, a number of Japanese critics have denied him the status of writer of 'pure literature' or *jun bungaku* – the *belles lettres* of Japan. Suter ascribes their criticism to the 'predominance of *kindaishugi* ["modernism" or "the ideology of the modern"] in the [post-war] Japanese intellectual world and its image of the historically grounded, politically involved, "modernist" writer' (2008, p.52). The *jun bungaku* authors that

made up the *bundan* in post-war Japan either had a 'serious social, political or philosophical agenda' – Strecher mentions Ōe Kenzaburō, Nakagami Kenji and Abe Kōbō –, or they adhered to a purely aesthetic style, 'to create literary Art for its own sake' such as Kawabata Yasunari and Tanizaki Jun'ichirō (2014, p.4). Murakami's conscious decision to not adhere to the literary conventions of *jun bungaku* caused critics to label him as "postmodernist", meaning a 'non-involved, superficial, commercial writer' who sees storytelling as a form of entertainment (Suter, 2008, p.54).The US-based Japanese scholar Masao Miyoshi is, according to Suter, 'one of the most fervent Murakami-bashers […], harshly criticizing him as the symbol of literature complicit with Japanese capitalism and Japan's worship of American culture' (2008, p.47).

Although Murakami acknowledges that he has been criticized for not adhering to the traditional style and methods of *jun bungaku*, he disproves of such critiques by arguing that authors have the right to choose any method that feels right to them. Whilst commenting on his non-Japanese influences, Murakami asserted that 'novels from now on will have a more diverse mixture of cultural elements. We see this tendency in the writings of Kazuo Ishigiro, Oscar Hijuelos, Amy Tan and Manuel Puig, all of whom have taken their works beyond the confines of a single culture. […] I believe that in the global village, novels will become in this way increasingly interchangeable' (in Rubin, 2012 [2002], p.204). This in part explains why several of his more favourable critics have situated his prose in a tradition of transnational literature and why Strecher (2014) much rather interprets the author's work as "nationality-less". At the cost of the seal of approval from the Japanese literary establishment, Strecher contends that the international commercial success of Murakami has much to owe to his *mukokuseki* (i.e. "without nationality") style. This *mukokuseki* style might explain why most American readers of Murakami do not regard him as "a Japanese writer" but simply as "a writer", although one could question whether that is completely attributable to Murakami's own doing. According to Suter, his American translators have had the tendency to 'domesticate foreign elements in Murakami's fiction […] so that he does not sound "too Japanese" in translation' (2008, p. 36). Granted, these adaptations are only minor, yet Suter argues that they have played a significant role in the reception of his work in the United States to the extent that American literary critics invariably identified the "un-Japaneseness" of Murakami as the most salient trait of his prose.

One aspect of *jun bungaku* that seems to prevent literary critics to align Murakami's prose with this tradition is the required societal engagement. Whilst it may be true that Murakami initially displayed a certain detachment to and disinterest in Japanese culture, both Rubin (2012 [2002]) and Strecher (2014) have drawn attention to a so-called "turning point" from social detachment to valorised social commitment in his career. After spending nearly two

years in the United States, Murakami began to embrace what he saw to be his responsibility as a Japanese author. 'The one thing I can say in all earnestness is that since coming to America I have begun to think with absolute seriousness about my country, Japan, and about the Japanese language' (Murakami, in Rubin, 2012 [2002], p.232). Murakami thus began to agree with the idea that novelists have a serious responsibility towards the culture of their society. As Rubin explains,

> He [Murakami] would have to clarify his political stance and also decide for himself what his work was about. This is not to say he was planning to become a politician or a social worker: through writing he hoped to contribute to an evolutionary change in the ideas and attitudes of society at large. (2012 [2002], p.231)

In 1995, after two major disaster struck Japan, an earthquake near Kobe in January, and a sarin gas attack in the Tokyo subway by members of a new religious cult in March, Murakami felt the urge to return home. He dealt with both catastrophes in his own distinct way. Upon his return, he started working on *Underground* (1997), a book in which he reflects on the 1995 Tokyo gas attack by interviewing both victims of the attack as well as former members of the religious cult that was held responsible for the attack. Several years later, he published *after the quake* (2000), a compilation of short stories indirectly linked to the 1995 Kobe earthquake. Similar to Rubin (2012 [2002]), Strecher positions Murakami as a Japanese author who 'is deeply committed to Japan, to his readers and their welfare' (2014, p. 12). He observes that it is 'not uncommon for persons living abroad for extended periods to rediscover their identity as a member of the culture they have left behind' (ibid. p.12). In an interview with Strecher in the fall of 1994, Murakami told Strecher his rebellious period would soon come to an end as he felt a growing sense of responsibility to Japanese literature and his readers. Whereas Rubin (2012 [2002]) implicitly linked this "turning point" to the successive catastrophes that shocked Japan in 1995, Strecher explicitly denies this correlation, since his interview with Murakami took place months before these incidents happened. He does, however, suggests that these disasters most likely strengthened a sense of urgency in Murakami to take up his role as a socially-engaged author.

This sense of commitment not only manifests itself in his written work. In recent years, Murakami has used literary award ceremonies to comment on global pertinent issues. He gave one of his most memorable acceptance speeches at the Jerusalem International Book Fair in 2009. As Rubin poignantly describes, Murakami 'faced a trail of conscience' when he was invited to accept the Jerusalem Prize (2012 [2002], p.339). 'He knew full well the potential

symbolic power of accepting such an award' and in light of the recent Israeli bombing of the Gaza Palestinians 'his first thought was to reject it' (ibid.). After much contemplation, he decided to use the acceptance speech as an opportunity to directly address his Israeli readers, one of them being the former Israeli President Shimon Peres who attended the ceremony. His speech can at best be described as a 'daring critique' on Israeli military conduct, which he likened to a high, solid wall (ibid., p.346). 'Between a high, solid wall and an egg that breaks against it, I will always stand on the side of the egg. Yes, no matter how right the wall may be and how wrong the egg, I will stand with the egg [Palestinian civilians]' (Murakami, in Rubin, 2012 [2002], p.340). According to Strecher, who also included this passage in the introduction to his monograph, it is highly characteristic for the author to 'root for the egg' (2014, p.3). His compelling speech did not only dismiss the harsh criticism Murakami received over the years for being a run-of-the-mill "pop novelist", but as Rubin observes, it also 'reawakened interest in the novelist beyond the bounds of his usual readership' (2012 [2002], p.346).

2.3 Conclusion: Filling the Gaps

This literature review of Murakami Haruki studies set out to critically assess four English-language monographs, as well as the few academic articles that have taken the celebrity status of Murakami as their vantage point, along two thematic lines: Murakami as a celebrity author and Murakami as a contemporary Japanese author. Based on this discussion, several research gaps and shortcomings can be identified.

First of all, with the exception of Rubin (2012 [2002]) and Franssen (2017), most scholars have sought to understand the author through his fiction. Their observations are not so much based on secondary sources such as interviews or non-scholarly articles. Seats offers the clearest example of this, since the arguments presented in his book are not based 'on any personal interviews of Murakami by myself [Seats], nor do they include many references to the background details of his life, influences or interests' (2006., p.xii). Seats warns his reader not to interpret his approach as a lack of interest in Murakami's career as a novelist, but rather as a deliberate strategy to respect the author's own habit of avoiding discussions that involve the interpretation of his work, as well as to 'temper the cultism surrounding the popular author and literary star' (ibid., p. xiii). Suter (2008), on the other hand, claims to provide an examination of American and Japanese views on Murakami, as well as a brief paragraph on how the author presents himself to his readership. Her choice of critical (book) reviews lacks methodological justification and leaves the reader pondering the validity of her generalising claims. Furthermore, she completely disregards the value of Murakami's own statements on his

authorship, as it is her belief that his cross-cultural positioning is best exemplified through his fiction. Strecher (2014) does employ information gathered from his personal interviews with Murakami, but the majority of his study comprises of a wide array of close readings during which he relates the "metaphysical realm" to critical themes such as mythology, journalism, religion and semiotics. The studies of Rubin (2012 [2002]) and Franssen (2017) have proven that the use of secondary sources can be highly insightful to further enhance our understanding of Murakami's authorship. It is therefore somewhat unfortunate that other scholars, whether implicitly or explicitly, depreciate the use of these sources.

Secondly, of the few studies that actually had a geographical focus such as Suter (2008) and Hillenbrand (2009), this focus was limited to the United States and East Asia. Thus far, a comprehensive study of Murakami's celebrity authorship in Europe has not been conducted.

Thirdly, although Suter (2008), Lyons (2014) and Franssen (2017) contend that the author has the ability to produce multiple, possibly opposing selves to different audiences, a practical application of this multiplicity of the self, in which various subjectivities in different countries are compared, has not been carried out yet. As a consequence, one is tempted to equate the global popularity of Murakami with a universal understanding of his celebrity image. If we wish to fully fathom the dynamics of his celebrity authorship on the global stage, it is essential to define these subjectivities in their geographical and societal context, as well as to examine how Murakami has managed to reconcile them in his authorship. Therefore, the following study analyses how the celebrity authorship of Murakami is fabricated in Europa, more specifically in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, and aims to do so not based on his fiction, but through the analysis of secondary sources.

§3 When the Author Meets the Celebrity

Having indicated the current research gaps within Murakami Haruki studies, we now turn to the field of celebrity studies, specifically celebrity authorship, as a means to provide us with the theoretical approach by which we can analyse how the multiplicity of the self in its various socio-cultural domains have converged within the persona of Murakami Haruki as a celebrity author. This chapter can be divided into two sections. The first section aims to present a general introduction to the field, followed by a conceptualization of the celebrity and its historical roots, and will also touch upon the forces that underlie the establishment and diffusion of celebrity culture. Two edited volumes by Gaston Franssen and Rick Honings are consulted in this discussion, namely *Celebrity Authorship and Afterlives in English and American Literature* (2016) and *Idolizing Authorship: Literary Celebrity and the Construction of Identity, 1800 to the Present* (2017). Their introductory chapters to both volumes have proven valuable in charting the dynamics of the field. This study moreover aligns itself with leading scholars Richard Dyer (1998 [1979]; 2004 [1987]) and P. David Marshall (2011 [1997]), who approach the celebrity as an intertextual discursive construct whose internal dynamics and power relations can be uncovered when reading into the celebrity's "star image". Instead of focusing on what determines ones celebrity status, they probe into what the celebrity represents and how their specific signification is constructed by both themselves and intermediaries.

Many of these critical observations are revisited in the second section, which takes the literary celebrity as its focal point. Much like the celebrity in general, the literary celebrity is a highly ambiguous and at times contested figure. Due to several academic traditions in which the autonomy of the literary work has long prevailed – and to some extent, still does –, scholars have been reluctant in studying the person "behind the book". Yet, since the celebrity author does in fact have a socio-cultural function, deconstructing the complex nature of celebrity authorship must be corroborated as valuable research practice. In this second section, the works of Franssen and Honings (2016, 2017) will function as a general introduction to the phenomenon. In an attempt to provide an overarching framework that can be employed for the analysis of Murakami´s celebrity authorship, their work will be complemented by other influential texts on the topic. The works of Franssen (2010), York (2007) and Moran (2000) are consulted to conceptualize the rather uncomfortable position of the literary star as a tug-of-war between mass cultural celebrity and canonical literary prestige. This double-positioning comes with many contradictory conditions, of which the private versus the public realm will be elaborated on due to its particular relevance for the figure of the author-recluse. Both Moran (2000) and Glass (2004) have attempted to explain this struggle between marketability and

cultural authority by linking it to Pierre Bourdieu's theory on the field of cultural production. Bourdieu's insights also play an important role when reflecting on the posture of the literary celebrity, as will be discussed with reference to Jerôme Meizoz (2007; 2010). In short, this subsection not only aims to acquaint the reader with the implications of transferring celebrity culture into the field of literary production, it also explicates the complexity of the discursive oppositions within which the phenomenon of the literary celebrity operates.

One major limitation to the framework as it is presented in the current study, is the fact that in all of the (seminal) works that have been consulted, Western culture and its attendant values remain at the forefront, causing the (historical) specificity of a non-Western context to become obscured. In his plea for the need of 'more cross-cultural research and case studies from non-western celebrity cultures' Olivier Driessens is the only scholar who acknowledges the short-sightedness of the dominant Anglo-American model (2012, p.654). It thus remains to be seen if the framework holds true for the study of a contemporary Japanese author.

3.1 Introduction to Celebrity Studies

According to Franssen and Honings (2017), celebrity and celebrity culture are relatively new areas of research. As they state in the introduction to *Idolizing Authorship*, '[…] the field of celebrity studies has been developing particularly rapidly over the past decade, especially in the English-speaking world. Monographs have appeared, there is the *Celebrity Studies Journal* and large international conferences have been devoted to the subject' (2017, p.13). Not only sociologists but also scholars with a background in literary studies, media studies and historiography have ventured into this field, often resulting in a multidisciplinary approach to bear fruit. Yet, even though it might seem as if celebrity culture is a modern phenomenon, Franssen and Honings (2017) are quick to point out that it is by no means *new*.

3.1.1 Celebrity Culture and its Historical Roots

In his study *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America* (1962), Daniel Boorstin links the advent of celebrity culture to the mass circulation and content shift of popular magazines starting from the 1920s onwards (in Turner, 2004). Similarly, P. David Marshall notes that 'celebrity itself generated an entire industry in the second decade of the twentieth century with the emergence of movie fan magazines […] that openly celebrated movie stars and their lives' (2011 [1997], pp. 8-9). Chris Rojek also links the starting point of the phenomenon to the twentieth century, describing it as 'a phenomenon of mass-circulation newspapers, TV, radio and film (in Turner, 2004, p.10). In *Intimate Strangers: The Culture of Celebrity* (1985), Richard Schickel even goes as far to say that 'there was no such thing as celebrity prior to the

beginning of the twentieth century' (in Turner, 2004, p.4). Whilst Graeme Turner himself recognizes that 'a phenomenon as culturally pervasive as celebrity must have numerous points of origin, numerous points of change', he does seem to agree that 'the growth of celebrity is attached to the spread of the mass media (particularly visual media)' in the twentieth century (2004, pp. 10-12).

Yet, there are others who claim that contemporary celebrity culture is nothing but a continuity of a long historical process. Franssen and Honings mention Robert van Krieken, who likens the phenomenon to 'the court culture of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the role of its "economy of attention" in the construction of social identities' (2016, p.4). In a similar vein, Leo Braudy insists that celebrity culture shares similarities with earlier versions of fame. In *The Frenzy of Renown: Fame & Its History* (1986), Braudy writes 'a history of fame that begins in early Roman times' and contends that 'the desire for fame has been a fundamental component of western societies over many centuries' (in Turner, 2004, p.10). Lastly, Fred Inglis argues that the phenomenon has been in the making 'for two and a half centuries' when the rise of urban democracy provided the perfect proving ground for the celebrity (2010, p.3). These conflicting statements show that the opinions with regards to the historical roots of the phenomenon vary greatly.

3.1.2 Defining Celebrity

However, not only the origin of celebrity culture is up for debate, the conceptualization of the term "celebrity" has been equally challenging to define. One of the most widely quoted definitions of celebrity comes from Daniel Boorstin, who argued that 'the celebrity is a person who is well-known for their well-knownness' – someone who is famous for being famous (in Turner, 2004, p.5). This definition is not wholly convincing, as it eschews 'an act of attribution, by audiences, cultural institutions and intermediaries' (Franssen & Honings, 2017, p.11). In *Celebrity* (2001), Rojek defines these intermediaries as a 'collective term for agents, publicists, marketing personnel, promoters, photographers […] Their task is to concoct the public presentation of celebrity personalities that will result in an enduring appeal for the audience of fans' (pp. 10-11). In other words, public recognition cannot be achieved without the support of these intermediaries. Boorstin acknowledges that celebrity presence is stage-managed by others, but does so in a negative light. Whilst heroic figures develop their capacity for fame by their achievements or by 'the great simple virtues of their character', celebrities differentiate themselves 'mainly by trivia of personality' (Boorstin, in Turner, 2004, p.5). The celebrity, he contends, is the human equivalent of a "pseudo-event", 'fabricated for the media and evaluated

in terms of the scale and effectiveness of their media visibility' (ibid.). Franssen and Honings note that a similar distinction has been made by James Monaco and Leo Braudy. In *Celebrity: The Media as Image Makers* (1978), Monaco distinguishes between heroes, who achieve fame 'because of a special accomplishment' and celebrities, whose fame 'is first and foremost a media construct' (Franssen & Honings, 2016, p.4). Supporting this view, Braudy sees fame as a form of 'reticence and the sanction of neglect', whereas celebrity 'stares us right in the face, flaunting its performance and trying desperately to keep our attention' (in Franssen & Honings, 2016, p.5).

3.1.3 Challenging Emptiness Theories: A Semiotic Understanding of the Phenomenon

The aforementioned definitions of the celebrity phenomenon often seem to imply a moral judgement towards the celebrity (Franssen & Honings, 2016). These "emptiness theories" denounce present-day celebrity as 'a hollowed-out version of an earlier age's hero' (York, 2007, p.8). To avoid the inherent negativity of the emptiness theories, it might be more fruitful to employ a definition of celebrity 'that at least holds open the possibility that being celebrated need not always be a negative thing, that it can operate and signify variously within culture, and that audiences, in turn, can act and signify upon it' (ibid., p.11). According to Franssen and Honings (2016), the studies of Richard Dyer and P. David Marshall offer a less biased approach to the topic. Instead of focusing on what celebrities are, they invite us to think about what celebrities do and how we can interpret their actions. Both Dyer and Marshall have elaborated on the importance of celebrity culture for social cohesion and identity formation. In *Heavenly Bodies* (2004 [1986]), Dyer explains that '[s]tars articulate what it is to be a human being in contemporary society; that is, they express the particular notion we hold of the person, of the "individual"' (p.7). In a similar fashion, Marshall asserts that celebrities 'represent the active construction of identity in the social world' (2011 [1997], p.xi). Their approach is mostly grounded in semiotic theory, which provides them the analytical tools to identify that what the celebrity represents and how their specific signification is constructed (Marshall, 2011 [1997], pp. 56-61; Dyer, 1998 [1979], pp.1-2).

Moreover, both authors hold that in their active enactment of what it means to exist in contemporary society, celebrities are inextricably intertwined with both consumer capitalism, where they articulate the individual as marketable commodity, and democratic discourses, through which they uphold the myth that their privileged position is attainable to anybody, even though the celebrity phenomenon remains deeply hierarchical and exclusive. One can thus conclude that there is a relationship between celebrities and societies: as overtly public figures,

they seek to either resolve or subvert ideological contradictions that reside in a specific society (Dyer, 1998 [1979]). The celebrity as such, becomes 'a negotiated "terrain" of significance' (Marshall, 2011 [1997], p. 47). Although 'production and consumption are differentially determining forces in the creation of stars' Dyer asserts that 'both are always mediated by and in ideology' (1998 [1979], p.20).

3.1.4 The Paradoxical Star Image

Such ideological underpinnings can be uncovered, when reading into the celebrity's "star image", which Dyer defines as 'a complex configuration of visual, verbal and aural signs' (ibid., p.34). These signs manifests themselves in range of media texts (e.g. newspaper stories, television programmes, advertisements, interviews etc.) which 'constitute the general image of stardom or of a particular star' (ibid.). In his semiotic analysis of the star image, Dyer identifies several types of media texts such as promotion, publicity, criticism and commentaries. Promotion refers to texts that are produced 'as a deliberate creation/manufacture of a particular image or image-context for a particular star' (ibid., p.60). Concerning this category, one can think of press hand-outs, public appearances and magazine ads which are controlled by either the celebrity or its agent. Publicity, on the other hand, is 'what the press find outs' or 'what the star lets slip in an interview' (ibid., p.61). To the public, media texts that fall under this category seem to provide access to the real person of the celebrity, even though Dyer asserts that many of these texts are in fact also overseen by those responsible for the promotion of the star image. Lastly, criticism and commentaries include that which is said or written about celebrities 'in terms of appreciation or interpretation by critics' such as reviews of films, books, concerts etc. (ibid., p.62). It is very much possible that a disparity occurs between the promotional construction of the star image and the way criticism and commentaries shape the public opinion of a celebrity. According to Dyer, this accounts for 'the complexity, contradictoriness and "polysemy" of the star image' (ibid., p.63). This polysemy pertains to the multiplicity of meanings that the star image signifies. As Dyer explains,

> [i]n some cases, the various elements of signification may *reinforce* one another. In other cases, the elements may be to some degree in *opposition* or *contradiction*, in which case the star's image is characterised by attempts to negotiate, reconcile or mask the difference between the elements, or else simply hold them in tension. (ibid., pp. 63-64)

Dyer furthermore stresses that star images have a temporal dimension in that they develop or change over time. It would therefore be wrong to assume that these star images lend themselves

to a straightforward interpretation. Marshall, for instance, argues that the celebrity sign can never fully be determined, since it is subject to a process of constant negotiation and signification. He likens the celebrity to a "discursive battleground" in which 'the norms of individuality and personality' are shaped (2011 [1997], p.65). In line with Marshall, John Ellis argues the following:

> Star images are *paradoxical*. They are composed of elements which do not cohere, of contradictory tendencies. They are composed of clues rather than complete meanings […]. The star image is an *incoherent* image. [emphasis added] (in Holmes and Redmond, 2007, p.90)

As noted by Dyer, the paradoxical nature of the celebrity means 'that the whole phenomenon is unstable, never at a point of rest or equilibrium, constantly lurching from one formulation of what being human is to another' (2004 [1986], p.16). One such paradox rests on the fact that the celebrity is ordinary and extraordinary at the same time. On the one hand, celebrities must be "like us" to foster identification, whilst on the other hand, there is a need to be distinct and special enough to set them apart from non-famous people. The discursive complexity of the celebrity is reflected in their performances, images and representations. The coherence then, lies in the conviction that behind this range of representations exists an 'irreducible core' that is the 'reality of the star's private self' (Dyer, 2004 [1986], p.10). Through a rhetoric of sincerity and authenticity, media outlets manufacture and reaffirm this belief to such an extent that the celebrities' lives or lifestyles 'attract greater public interest than their professional lives' (Turner, 2004, p.3). Turner therefore argues that 'the precise moment a public figure becomes a celebrity' occurs when 'media interest in their activities is transferred from reporting on their public role […] to investigating the details of their private lives' (ibid., p.8). The cultural contradictions that are embedded in the discursive regime of celebrity are thus especially palpable when it crosses the boundary between the public and private realm. In studying the social and cultural function of the celebrity, the phenomenon becomes perceived as a dynamic framework within which vacillating subject positions and the private/public boundary are negotiated and (re)defined.

3.1.5 Indicators and "Moulding Forces" of Celebritization

The reason for the disparate views on both the historical trajectory and the conceptualization of the phenomenon can be found in 'the matrix of (meta) processes and factors influencing the creation and importance of celebrity' (Driessens, 2012, pp. 650-651). These processes lie at the

heart of the "celebritization" of our society, which Driessens delineates as 'meta-process involving changes in the nature of celebrity, and its social and cultural embedding' (ibid., p.653). It distinguishes itself from "celebrification" in that the latter involves 'changes at the individual level […] by which ordinary people or public figures are transformed into celebrities', whereas the former occurs at a much broader level in various social fields (ibid.). In an attempt to integrate the disparate views of celebritization into one overarching framework, Driessens presents a multidimensional model in which both the indicators and "moulding forces" of the process are defined.

The first indicator of celebritization is the changing nature of celebrity and can be explained as the proliferation of democratization over a culture of market meritocracy, when achievements or innate talents still set the bar for public recognition. The democratization of celebrity culture indicates 'a shift from achieved celebrity to attributed celebrity' and as such dovetails nicely with Rojek's definition of celebrity as 'the *attribution* of glamourous or notorious status to an individual within the public sphere [emphasis added]' (ibid., p.646; Rojek, 2001, p.10). A second indicator listed by Driessens is diversification of celebrity culture, by which he means that the phenomenon is no longer exclusive to the domains of media, entertainment or sports. Other social fields such as politics, gastronomy and academia, have also seen their fair share of famous individuals, although each field seems 'to value celebrity status and other (power) resources in different ways, while market rules resort to diverse effects depending on the organization of the field' (2012, p.648). A third and final indicator is migration or 'the process through which celebrities use both their relative autonomy as public personality and their celebrity status to develop other professional activities' (ibid.). Celebrity migration can either take place internally, meaning that celebrities diversify their activities within their established field, or externally, which involves an attempt to penetrate into a new social field. Internal and external field migrations involve a high element of risk, both in terms of alienating the original audience as well as acquiring a new audience (Giles, 2015).

Having described three manifestations that evince the societal and cultural prominence of celebrity culture, Driessens also details three "moulding forces" that have driven the constituency of celebritization: mediatization, personalization and commodification. In general, Driessens argues, mediatization can be considered 'both a prerequisite and a possible catalyst for celebritization' (2012, p.650). As was mentioned before when discussing the various definitions of celebrity, the rise and growing influence of (mass) media plays a crucial role in fabricating "well-knownness". Yet, as each social field abides by different internal dynamics, it would be wrong to assume that mediatization is the sole engine of celebritization. Equally

important is the growing interest in the personal, the individual and the private. Personalization as such can be described as 'the (increasing) centrality of the disembedded individual over the collective' (ibid., p.651). The prominence of the individual subject has been made clear in the aforementioned theories of both Dyer and Marshall. A final driving force behind celebritization is commodification, which turns 'these individual subjects […] into commodities by bestowing economic value on them' (Driessens, 2012, p. 652). As Dyer explains in *Heavenly Bodies* (2004 [1986]), celebrities 'are both labour and the thing that labour produces' (p.5). The celebrity thus serves 'as a powerful type of legitimation of the political economic model of exchange and value – the basis of capitalism – and extends that model to include the individual' (Marshall, 1997, p.x).

3.1.6 Diversifying Celebrity Culture to the Field of Literary Production

In line with Driessens, Franssen and Honings argue that these three distinct but interacting historical and social developments have been imperative in the 'establishment and dissemination of celebrity culture' (2016, p.5). Yet, as each scholar within his or her disciplinary context 'stresses different dimensions, aspects, and explanatory factors', one begins to understand what might have contributed to the diverse discursive investments on the origin and conceptualization of the celebrity phenomenon (Driessens, 2012, p.642). As we shall see, the same tensions arise when analysing celebrity authorship. In questioning whether we can use notions such as "fame" and "celebrity" to describe authors - 'those notorious privacy-seeking, solitary scribblers' - the literary celebrity appears to be a contradiction in terms (York, 2007, p.5). How can a 'bookstore, publishing house, or an individual reader's private experience of consuming words' ever measure up against globalized media such as 'film, television, and pop music' as a breeding ground of global popularity (ibid., pp. 5-6)? At first glance, the relevance of aforementioned observations such as the growing influence of (mass) media, the increasing centrality of the private life and the commodification of the individual seems to be confined to the domains of media and entertainment. However, the ensuing discussion attempts to demonstrate that these findings resonate just as strongly in the manifestation of the celebrity author. Lorraine York, for one, argues that authors are increasingly expected to be visible in the promotion of their books and in meeting their readership, 'and yet the more they do this, the more they present before their readers' eyes a self that, like the celebrities of the early twentieth century, they might prefer to keep private and uncommodified' (2007, p.19). What are the implications of their public presence as media personalities for their authorship? How does

celebritization affect literary production and marketing? In charting an overarching framework of literary celebrity, the following subsection seeks to probe these questions.

3.2 The Literary Celebrity

The history of celebrity authorship can be traced back to the Romantic period when a 'modern regime of authorship' was introduced (Woodmansee & Jaszi, in Franssen & Honings, 2016, p.8). Much like the celebrity, who has been described by Dyer as a 'different order of being, a different "ontological category"', the author was positioned as a superior and extraordinary figure (1998 [1979], p.43). Historical examples mentioned by Franssen and Honings (2017) are Lord Byron, Charles Dickens and Oscar Wilde. Whether we can actually compare the 'allure of a nineteenth-century author' with the media hype surrounding present-day literary celebrities such as J.K. Rowling is of course debatable (ibid., p.16). The expansion of the mass-market publishing industry in the Romantic period most certainly played a significant role in the establishment of the literary celebrity, but the growing influence of (mass) media and popular consumer culture in the twentieth century no doubt heightened the visibility and diffusion of the phenomenon. The author as such became a conveyor of subject positions or, as Moran puts it, 'a vehicle for ideologies which promote the autonomy and singularity of the individual subject' (2000, p.59). This individualistic notion of authorship is precisely what Roland Barthes aimed to criticize in *The Death of the Author* (1968) as he found the 'image of literature […] in ordinary culture [to be] tyrannically centred on the author, his person, his life, his tastes, his passions' (in Moran, 2000, p.59). Of course, whereas academic literary criticism thought the author to be dead or absent, 'this figure still seems to be very much alive in non-academic culture' (ibid., p.58).

3.2.1 Similarities in Discursive Origin

As argued by Franssen and Honings (2016), authorship and celebrity are alike in that both are historically and culturally situated forms of subjectivity. To substantiate their claim, they draw upon the canonical text *Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur* (1969) by Michel Foucault. In examining the discourse of authorship, Foucault coined the notion of "author function". The author function is not simply 'the attribution of a discourse to an individual [i.e. the author]', but should be understood as a discursive construct that involves a wide array of actors within the literary field (Foucault, 1998 [1969], p.213). Critics, editors, journalists, literary agents, translators and readers, ascribe a corpus of statements, beliefs and interpretative decisions to the author, thereby causing the author to be 'the product of an interdiscursive practice' (Franssen & Honings, 2016, p.10). Seen in this way, both Foucault and Barthes were right in questioning the author as the

'only authoritative source of textual meaning' (Moran, 2000, p.59).

Authors are by no means deprived of their agency, as they can 'influence this process by commenting publicly on their oeuvre and their craft', for example in interviews or during public appearances (Franssen, 2010, p.92). Franssen and Honings therefore contend that 'an author's stature is created within a complex tension field of power relations where different parties claim authority' (2017, p.17). The author function correlates with aforementioned observations by Dyer and Marshall, who, in similar terms, interpreted the celebrity as an intertextual discursive construct of subjectivity. Marshall, for one, made this correlation between the author function and the celebrity function explicit in *Celebrity and Power* (2011 [1997]). He claims that 'the "celebrity-function" is as important as Foucault's "author-function" in its power to organize the legitimate and illegitimate domains of the personal and individual within the social' (2011 [1997], p.57). Once again, the celebrity retains a certain sense of control over this process, yet Marshall stresses that the celebrity's strength as a discourse can only be 'derived from the *collective* configuration of its meaning' [emphasis added] (ibid., p.65).

3.2.2 Charting the Differences between Authorship and Celebrity

Despite their similarities in discursive origins, Franssen (2010) has attempted to show that the celebrity author remains subjected to constant oscillation between celebrity and authorship or, as York put it, 'the seemingly exclusive worlds of popularity and literary prestige' (2007, p.31). At a broader level, the celebrity author is positioned between high culture, associated with 'intellectual pleasures, cultural capital, and elitist refinement', and mass culture, linked to 'popular entertainment, commercialism, and mass production' (Franssen & Honings, 2017, p.17). In other words, the author is required to move within two cultural domains that are incompatible with one another. This double-positioning continues to play a role when charting the differences between literary authorship and celebrity. Firstly, literary authorship is characterized by an aversion towards commodification and commercialism. As Franssen explains, 'many authors and critics still believe that literary writers ought to distance themselves from commercial success and the wider audience' (2010, p.93). The celebrity, as was noted above with reference to Dyer and Marshall, is identified by a vested interest in commercialism. The celebrity presents itself as a marketable commodity and thus serves as a model 'of consumption for everyone in consumer culture' (Dyer, 1998 [1979], p.39). Secondly, the conventional discourse on literary authorship upholds a wilful disregard of the authorial intent. In approaching the literary work as an autonomous artefact, 'the personality of the author should be disregarded when interpreting or evaluating the work he put to paper' (Franssen, 2010, pp.

93-94). The celebrity phenomenon, on the contrary, is known for its foregrounding of private and personal issues. As Turner noted earlier, we are often more fascinated by the private life of a celebrity than his or her professional career. Thirdly, whereas literary authorship is associated with the urge to be innovative, the celebrity is linked to an endless repetition of predetermined formulas instigated by mass-media and mass production. When these conditions clash in the manifestation of a celebrity author, our commonplace understanding of what it means to be an author becomes void.

3.2.3 Private/Public Dichotomy and the Author Recluse

One of the contradictions that tends to be highlighted by scholars who have taken an interest in the phenomenon of the literary celebrity is the articulation of professional life vis-à-vis private life. This contradiction appears to be intensified in the figure of the celebrity author because his profession is *par excellence* a task that is carried out in privacy. As York puts is, 'the very activity that has given rise to the writer's well-knownness – writing – is exactly that which cannot be represented to advantage in primarily visual marketing media' (2007, p.13). And of course, the countless book signings, interviews and public readings that are expected of both the aspiring and successful literary star ironically enough only obstruct the author in doing what he or she prefers to do, which is to write in solitude. The irony of this situation is also observed by Joe Moran. He argues that on the one hand, the lives and works of literary stars 'are ransacked for their human interest', whereas on the other hand, 'they are lauded for their difference and aloofness' from commercial interests (Moran, 2000, p.8). There is a danger that the intense focus on the private life of the author – and by extension his or her personality – might actually jeopardize the notion of authorship as an individualistic activity, 'taking away agency from the author at the same time as it apparently celebrates that author's autonomy as a "star author"' (ibid., p.61). This irony is most apparent in the 'paradoxical fascination with author-recluses in celebrity culture' (ibid., p.120). Author-recluses are defined by Moran as those whose 'apparent distance from celebrity seems to contribute to their fame' (ibid., p.54). Their private selves are often seen as more authentic than their celebrity-counterparts, as it is seemingly 'untouched by the contaminating effects of the publicity machine' (ibid., p.64). Given that their public reticence runs counter to the idea that the literary fame game is primarily based on marketable personalities, our fascination with such authors is rather peculiar. In referencing Ron Rosenbaum, Moran asserts that their appeal rests on their ability to critique the celebrity system from within. 'Their varieties of reticence and concealment and self-effacement

cumulatively constitute a provocative dissent from the culture of self-promotion that has swept contemporary publishing' (Rosenbaum, in Moran, 2000, p.56).

3.2.4 Between the Fields of Restricted and Large-Scale Production

The extensive focus on the private life of the celebrity author also relates to a previously mentioned assertion by Driessens, who argued that the democratization of celebrity culture indicates a 'shift from *achieved* celebrity to *attributed* celebrity' [emphasis added] (2012, p.646). Drawing upon Pierre Bourdieu's seminal theory on the field of cultural production, one could contend that a historical understanding of literary fame was established in what Bourdieu termed 'the field of restricted production' (1993, p.39). In this restricted market where cultural goods are produced by and for specialists, 'the value of a text is based on its contents, which can only be judged after the book is read, and which is then critically attributed to the literary labour exerted by the talented author' (Glass, 2004, pp. 12-13). In other words, cultural merit can only be bestowed upon the author through *literary achievement* (i.e. the quality of his prose). This model renders the author as 'a solitary creative genius whose work goes unrecognized by the mainstream' and therefore functions under the assumption that 'great literature is somehow beyond or outside the logic of the market' (ibid., p.6; p.2). Hence the reason why the field of restricted production is specifically concerned with the 'creation and dissemination of cultural capital', which can only be acquired when 'directly economic interests are either absent or concealed' (Moran, 2000, p.4). However, in an era of advanced capitalist societies, the author enters the 'field of large-scale production' where cultural goods are not only produced for the public at large, but where marketable personalities are as important as the quality of their literary production (Bourdieu, 1993, p.39). Glass therefore concludes that 'literary value inheres not in the text but in the public perception of the author', which is 'as much the product of publisher's promotion and advertising' (*attribution*) as it is of the author's own literary talent (2004, p.25). In a similar vein, Moran has argued that 'the increasing importance of book publicity in promoting authors as "personalities" is […] a symptom of the continuing integration of literary production into the entertainment industry' (2000, p.41). The field of large-scale production is mostly concerned with gaining economic capital.

Of course, with an explanation of literary celebrity as the one provided above, one is at risk of falling into the pitfalls of the emptiness theory in which the star system '[…] confuses traditional forms of achievement [and] focuses on the personality rather than on the work' (Boorstin, in Moran, 2000, p.2). Though it might seem that Bourdieu, like Franssen, maintains the dichotomy between the field of restricted production and the field of large-scale production,

both York and Moran have pointed out that he does in fact acknowledge the porosity of the boundaries between both fields, as well as 'their continual mutual interaction and conflict' (Moran, 2000, p.5). One should therefore be wary not to approach the phenomenon of literary celebrity in a 'jeremiadic vein [by] opposing the hype and publicity of celebrity to an earlier, purer form of deserved fame' (ibid., p.2). Moran attempts to challenge such a polarized discourse from two perspectives. Firstly, as the aforementioned observations by Dyer and Marshall have evinced, the celebrity author cannot be characterized by a straightforward opposition between marketable personalities and literary respect. Instead, the phenomenon is inherently paradoxical and subject to a constant process of negotiation and signification by both the readership and professional intermediaries. Second, the discursive complexity of the celebrity phenomenon is even more apparent in the literary celebrity since its star image is dependent on the active attribution by extra-literary forces. In this highly complex process, various parties claim the right to determine the value and meaning of the celebrity author.

Therefore, Moran concludes that rather than being an effect of the commodification of literature, the contemporary literary star raises 'significant questions about the relationship between literature and the marketplace' (ibid., p.4). In Glass' opinion, this relationship should no longer be characterized by mutual exclusion – especially now that literary production is bound by the logic of the market and conventions of (mass) media – but instead should be seen as one of 'dialogic interdependence and dialectical engagement' (2004, p.22). Since the celebrity author represents both cultural and economic capital, he or she occupies a contested area of cultural production between the fields of restricted and large-scale production. The ambiguous position of the literary celebrity is complicated by the commercial interests of their publishers, which have to be reconciled with the pivotal role of cultural capital in the literary marketplace. Examples of the interdependence and engagement between literature and the market can be found in the exploitation of literary prizes, which not only stimulates book sales and media coverage but also appeals to 'the existence of higher values which surpass commercial considerations', and literary festivals, where readers can meet their favourite author whilst publishers attempt to stimulate their book sales (Moran, 2000, p.44).

3.2.5 Literary Posture and the Active Attribution by Intermediaries

Bourdieu's field theory also inspired the Swiss literary theorist Jerôme Meizoz in his highly influential study on authorial self-representation titled *Postures Littéraires: Mise en scène modernes de l'auteur* (2007). Although sporadically used by Bourdieu, the notion of "postures littéraires" was first defined by Alain Viala as 'the manner of taking up a position in the field'

and thereby constituting as one of the components that make up the '(general) way of being (of a) writer' (Viala, in Meizoz, 2010, p.83). Meizoz agrees with Viala that posture 'n'est signifiante qu'en relation avec la position réellement occupée par un author dans l'espace des positions littéraires du moment' (2007, p.21). This does not mean that an author's posture always corresponds with the position in the literary field. Once the position is known, 'on peut décrire comment une posture la rejoue ou la déjoue' (ibid. p.18). Whereas for Viala, posture manifested itself in the fictional work of the author, Meizoz chose to widen the notion in a 'sens englobant' which not only includes 'la dimension rhétorique (textuelle)' but also looks at '[la dimension] actionelle (contextuelle)' (ibid., p.17). In other words, posture 'presupposes a dual observation track' that is made up by the author's discursive identity ('textual self-image'), which is to be found through the analysis of his written work, and his non-discursive identity, which is informed by non-verbal behaviour such as media appearances, clothing, hairstyle and certain gestures (Meizoz, 2010, p.85). That being said, Meizoz also remarks that 'posture is not uniquely an author's own construction' but should rather be seen as an interactive process whereby the author's image in co-constructed by 'various mediators (journalists, criticism, biographies)' who serve the reading public (ibid., p.84).

Thus, when analysing the discursive construction of literary stardom, one not only has to take into account the self-representation of the author, but one should also be aware of the active attribution by intermediaries, such as critics, journalists, literary agents and publishers. In their fabrication of the celebrity image, all parties claim a certain sense of authority over the meaning and valuation of the celebrity author. Of course, incorporating the practices of these intermediaries into our analysis of the literary celebrity is not an easy task, given the fact that it has become increasingly difficult to draw a line between auto-representation and hetero-representation. As Odile Heynders aptly remarks, 'in the highly developed media society in which we currently live [...] [s]elf-images created by contemporary authors and the images made of them by others are immediately spread over various [media] platforms […] breaking free from their source and original context' (in Franssen & Honings, 2016, pp. 183-184). Whereas Franssen and Honings claim that the literary celebrity should reject their success 'in an attempt to retain a form of control over their authorship', Heynders argues the opposite (2017, p.17). In her view, contemporary authors need to employ their self-representation as a form of branding through which they can achieve financial independence. Only then they will be granted the creative freedom to engage in projects they feel committed to whilst at the same time maintaining a certain sense of control over the construction of their authorial image.

What makes the inquiry into the production of the literary star even more critical is the

fact that the celebrity system as a whole has a vested interest is disguising its own logic and operations. As Roland Barthes argued, '[t]hrough star-making, society imposes a strong tension which permits the fan to consume stars without however dignifying the processes which produce them' (in Moran, 2000, p.9). The work of publicity and promotions, such as 'profiles of writers in magazines and newspapers, detailed publishing figures, and advertisements for their books and for films based on their books', can offer us a new perspective on the fabrication of authorial identity; one that is not only discursively constructed, but also professionally managed (York, 2007, p.27). Moran, for instance, has argued that 'profiles and interviews are prearranged long before books are subjected to press reviews or appear in bookstores' with the sole intention to circumvent 'normal critical responses which books receive […] by pitching the book directly at the individual consumer' (2000, p.39). Furthermore, several large book chains such as Waterstone's aim to promote bestselling authors 'by giving them particular attention through book signings and "dumpbins" (special displays for prioritized books)' (ibid., p.40). In this regard, Dyer's distinction between promotion and publicity provides a useful categorization by which to distinguish marketing strategies. Dyer suggests that the latter tends to be evaluated by the public as more authentic in that 'it does not appear to be *deliberate* image-making', although many publicity activities are in fact controlled by extra-literary forces (1998 [1979], p.61). Examining these relatively concealed processes helps us to demystify the "taken-for-granted" nature of literary fame.

3.3 Conclusion: Entering the Discursive Battleground

Drawing upon several seminal works in the field of celebrity studies, with specific attention paid to celebrity authorship, this chapter set out to provide a conceptual framework based on which the celebrity authorship of Murakami Haruki will be analysed in the next chapter of this study. The first subsection documented the historical roots of the celebrity phenomenon and briefly touched upon several approaches that were developed for its academic analysis. Instead of aligning itself with emptiness theories, in which celebrities become hollowed-out media constructs, this study supports the insights that were put forward by P. David Marshall and Richard Dyer. In their semiotic understanding of the celebrity phenomenon, Marshall and Dyer interpret the celebrity as an intertextual discursive construct of subjectivity who articulate what is means to be a human in contemporary society. Dyer's notion of the "star image" has proven instrumental in uncovering the multiplicity of meanings that the celebrity signifies. It was argued that star images are paradoxical, since the various elements of signification do not always cohere nor are they ever at a point of rest. It should be noted, however, that neither Dyer

nor Marshall ‘deal extensively with literary celebrity’ (Glass, 2004, p.3). Their scholarly accounts of the celebrity phenomenon focus on public figures of the more celluloid variety in culture industries such as film and television. Transferring celebrity phenomena from one cultural medium to another is by no means unproblematic, especially when it concerns the field of literary production. ‘Tempting though these big connections are,’ cautions Turner, ‘they tend to obscure the fact that what constitutes celebrity in one cultural domain may be quite different in another’ (2004, p.17). A similar observation was made by Driessens in his discussion of the processes that underlie the establishment and diffusion of celebrity culture, by arguing that one must always be aware of the specificity and internal dynamics of the particular domain.

These internal dynamics soon became clear in the second subsection, which, broadly speaking, examined literary authorship in relation to celebrity culture. The literary celebrity appears to be ‘a highly problematic figure, in whom contradictory conditions and expectations must be reconciled’ (Franssen, 2010, p.94). The meanings that circulate in their star image can be incommensurate and complex, so it should come as no surprise that similar to the celebrity, the nature of the literary celebrity is one of many paradoxes. Perhaps the most important paradox that surrounds the contemporary literary star system is the relationship between marketability and cultural authority. Straddling the boundaries between the fields of restricted and large-scale production causes the phenomenon to be considered ambiguous, unstable and multifaceted. Those who still believe that great literature should take place outside of the realm of the marketplace are concerned that market values will undermine the authorial autonomy by transforming the author into a celebrity-commodity. Such concerns should be tempered, since authors themselves are equally complicit in the production of their celebrity image and can ‘influence this process by commenting publicly on their oeuvre and their craft’ (Franssen, 2010, p. 92). Moreover, by shunting literary stars off aside as ‘products of a media-fixated, market-driven contemporary culture’ and therefore unworthy of scholarly interest, one underappreciates their value as complex discursive constructs that function as cultural signifiers for authorial subjectivity (Moran, 2000, p.15).

Following Marshall’s line of thought, the celebrity is negotiated terrain of significance or a “discursive battleground” in which subject positions are shaped and (re)negotiated. Bearing in mind the various cultural intermediaries (e.g. publishers, literary agents etc.) who all claim a sense of authority over the authorial image, one could argue that the same holds true for the literary celebrity. That is not to say that celebrity status is simply imposed on the author. In acknowledging literary celebrity as a discursive construct that is made up by a whole range of media texts, from promotional material to literary criticism, it is vital to remember that the

author is not only produced by these discourses, but is also actively engaged in producing them himself. Our task, then, is to critically assess this battleground by analysing not only how Murakami Haruki himself has grappled with his status as literary celebrity and the meanings that are attached to it (auto-representation), but also how others have managed and disseminated his star image (hetero-representation).

§4 (De)constructing the Phenomenon: A Multimodal Discourse Analysis of Murakami's Celebrity Authorship in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom

Entering the discursive battleground of Murakami Haruki's celebrity authorship is by no means an easy task. Due to its paradoxical nature, the star image of a literary celebrity does not lend itself well to straightforward interpretation. Yet, considering the current lack of in-depth academic research with a specific focus on Murakami's celebrity authorship[11], it is essential to define the multiplicity of subjectivities that reside in his star image within their geographical and societal context. Hence, the following chapter will use the conceptual framework that was set out in the previous chapter to analyse the celebrity authorship of Murakami Haruki in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. A survey of media coverage on Murakami in both countries functions as the primary material for this analysis. To this end, I have constructed a database with sources from both Dutch and British media outlets between 2011 and June 2017. Bearing in mind the feasibility of this research within the given word limit, the year 2011 was chosen as a starting point so as to limit the amount of data that had to be reviewed for analysis. Moreover, 2011 marks the year in which the complete English translation of *1Q84* was published, as well as the third volume of the same novel in the Netherlands. The database consists mainly of journalistic critiques in magazines and newspapers (both digital and in hard copy), promotional content, interviews, and radio broadcasts. A total of 136 sources were consulted, though only a fraction were used in the final analysis. When referring to Dutch sources, the quotations have been translated into English. The materials were interpreted through the use of multimodal discourse analysis, during which, depending on the contents, specific attention has been paid to discursive statements related to the author's auto-representation. How has Murakami dealt with his status as a literary celebrity? How does he position himself as an author in both the Netherlands and the United Kingdom? What meanings does he attach to his celebrity authorship?

As was argued in the previous chapter, when analysing the discursive constructiveness of literary stardom, it is equally important to take into account the practices of intermediaries, such as journalists, publicists and publishers, as their decisions significantly influence the author's star image. Therefore, hetero-representation is another an important focal point for this analysis. An inquiry into the practices of these intermediaries, here termed extra-literary forces, has furthermore been fostered through the inclusion of three semi-structured interviews that

[11] Also see subsection 2.3 Conclusion: Filling the Gaps

were conducted with employees of Penguin Random House UK[12] and Atlas Contact[13], Murakami's respective British and Dutch publishing houses. The interviewees gave their permission for the interviews to be recorded and to be used for academic purposes.[14] In preparation, they received an interview guide that was developed by the interviewer. Topics that were covered during the interview were related to the publishing history of Murakami Haruki, the workings of the publishing industry, the cover designs in relation to branding, media exposure of the author, Murakami events, and Murakami as a celebrity author. Because the interviews were semi-structured, the interviewer sometimes followed topical trajectories that stemmed from the interview guide. Quotations from the interview with employees of Atlas Contact have been translated into English. When referring to information that was gathered from the interviews, the term personal communication has been used for referencing.

The various elements of auto- and hetero-representation will be discussed along the three paradoxes that were identified in the introduction to this thesis, thereby functioning as the primary analytical structure of this chapter. The countries this study focuses on constitute its substructure, meaning that every paradox will be analysed within the geographical context of the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. To reiterate, the hypothesised paradoxes that converge in the star image of Murakami Haruki are:

a) Transnational author vs. national branding;
b) Celebrity status vs. self-purported ordinariness;
c) Author-recluse vs. public figure.

Of course, here one should do well to remember that these various elements of signification are 'neither fixed […], nor do they operate in parallel […] they are inextricably intertwined, converging at times whilst colliding at others' (Franssen, 2017, p.218). For the sake of both clarity and workability, the various elements of Murakami's star image are nevertheless analysed separately. In the last section of this chapter, they will be brought together, not only to reflect on the complex interplay between these paradoxes, but also to identify the differences and similarities in auto- and hetero-representation of Murakami in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

[12] Liz Foley (Publishing Director at Harvill Secker) and Suzanne Dean (Creative Director at Vintage). Both Harvill Secker and Vintage operate under publishing company Penguin Random House UK.
[13] Jessica Nash (Editor-in-Chief for translated fiction) and Vincent Kolenbrander (publicist) at Dutch publishing house Atlas Contact.
[14] Both the audio files and the transcriptions of the interviews are available upon request.

Publishing Murakami Haruki in the Netherlands

The publishing history of Murakami Haruki in the Netherlands started in 1990 with the publication of *A Wild Sheep Chase*[15], followed by *Hard-boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*[16] in 1994. Due to disappointing sales figures, former publishing house Bert Bakker decided to end further publications of Murakami's work in the Netherlands. For a number of years, Murakami did not have a Dutch publisher, until Emile Brugman, former publisher at Atlas, rediscovered Murakami during one of his trips to London where he saw the author's work in bookstores. After reading several of the English translations, he decided to publish a Dutch translation of *South of the Border, West of the Sun*[17] in 2001. Despite it not being an overwhelming success, Brugman continued his publishing activities, leading to critical acclaim in 2003 with *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*[18] and eventually the author's commercial breakthrough with the Dutch translation of *Norwegian Wood*[19] in 2007. According to Jessica Nash, Editor-in-Chief for translated fiction at Atlas Contact, part of the reason why *Norwegian Wood* became a bestseller in the Netherlands is due to the fact that Dutch novelist Tim Krabbé praised the author in a popular Dutch talk show shortly after the release of the book.[20] Although it remains difficult to pinpoint the exact reason for success, Vincent Kolenbrander, publicist at Atlas Contact, argued that television programmes can function as useful measuring tools, which, in the case of *Norwegian Wood*, had an almost immediate effect on the sales (personal communication, June 21, 2017).

Atlas Contact, Murakami's current publisher in the Netherlands, was formed in 2012 after the merging of several smaller publishing houses. One of them was former publishing house Atlas, established in 1994 by Emile Brugman and Ellen Schalken, who had been representing Murakami since 2001. Since Atlas Contact is currently one the largest publishing houses in the Netherlands, Nash and Kolenbrander were asked whether they would agree with previously mentioned observations by Glass (2004) and Moran (2000), who both argued that literary production has been absorbed by the global entertainment industry. A prime example

[15] *De jacht op het verloren schaap* (Dutch title), translated by Jacques Westerhoven. Originally published in Japanese in 1982.
[16] *Hard-boiled Wonderland en het Einde van de Wereld* (Dutch title), translated by Marion Op den Kamp and Maxim de Winter from English. Originally published in Japanese in 1985.
[17] *Ten zuiden van de grens, ten westen van de zon* (Dutch title, shortened to *Ten zuiden van de grens* since 2008), translated by Elbrich Fennema. Originally published in Japanese in 1992.
[18] *De opwindvogelkronieken* (Dutch title), translated by Jacques Westerhoven. Originally published in Japanese in 1994-1995.
[19] Same title in Dutch, translated by Elbrich Fennema. Originally published in Japanese in 1987.
[20] A video fragment of the talk show in which Murakami's books were discussed can be found via https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ydyj94mL9Ic&t=18s

of their continuing integration is the increasing importance of the author's personality as a promotional component for book publicity (Moran, 2004). At first, Nash and Kolenbrander were hesitant to respond affirmatively, perhaps afraid to devalue the author as a marketable commodity. Nash even said that she 'was trying to resist this [absorption]', and as such clearly ratified how the common discourse on literary authorship can be characterized by an aversion towards commodification and commercialization (personal communication, June 21, 2017). Eventually, they did confirm that the author's public image has become a valuable marketing tool. As Kolenbrander explained,

> In the 80s or the 90s, the author would write a book, he would give one or two interviews, the book would be reviewed, it would sell and that was fine. My job [publicist] did not even exist at that time. But nowadays, it is very important for the author to come out in public [and] to give several interviews for newspapers, television shows or radio programmes. This has to be managed and coordinated. (ibid.)

Since they are competing with a vast amount of other forms of entertainment, Nash argued that '[i]n the current publishing industry, you have to come up with new things. It is not enough anymore to simple arrange the PR. You won't survive if you only get good book reviews in the "NRC Handelsblad" and "de Volkskrant" [Dutch newspapers]' (ibid.). These comments not only confirm that the author's public image is being professionally managed, they also exemplify how his personality can be utilized as a form of product differentiation.

Publishing Murakami Haruki in the United Kingdom

The publishing history of Murakami in the United Kingdom started with the publication of *A Wild Sheep Chase* in 1990, followed by *Hard-boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* (1991) and *Dance Dance Dance* (1994). These three books were published by Hamish Hamilton, but received very few reviews and did not sell, leading Hamish Hamilton to end further publications (Vintage Podcast, 2016). When Hamish Hamilton took this decision, John Mitchinson was a marketing director for the British book retailer Waterstone's. He had read *A Wild Sheep Chase* and found it to be quite intriguing, 'because it was his [Murakami's] third novel and by that stage, he had already become a bestselling Japanese novelist. [Mitchinson] couldn't quite see why he wasn't going to become a bestselling novelist in Britain and America as well' (in Vintage Podcast, 2016). In 1995, Mitchinson was appointed Managing Director of The Harvill Press after which he was given the opportunity to publish an English translation of *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* in 1998. Similar to the Netherlands, the English translation of

Norwegian Wood became the author's runaway bestseller in 2000, which was most likely instigated by the enthusiasm and fervour it had caused in Japan (Foley, personal communication, July 13, 2017).

The Harvill Press, Murakami's second British publisher, was bought by Random House in 2002 (ibid.). By that time, Random House, a US-based publishing company under the direction of mass media conglomerate Bertelsmann, had already acquired several small to medium-sized independent houses. In 2004, Random House decided to merge The Harvill Press with Secker & Warburg to form a single publishing imprint under the name Harvill Secker (booktrade.info, 2004, para.1). Christopher MacLehose, former publisher at The Harvill Press, regretted its loss of independence, but commented that 'the climate of the trade in Britain at any rate has dictated that that (sic) only within the shelter of a major publishing force can the authors of small and quality houses flourish' (ibid., para.2). In 2013, Bertelsmann came to an agreement with Pearson PLC, a British publishing and education company, to merge their respective publishing companies, Random House and Penguin Group (The Telegraph, 2013). Harvill Secker continued to exist as an imprint under Vintage, a subdivision of Penguin Random House UK. As Joe Moran rightly observed in *Star Authors*, these mergers have brought 'all the major book trade publishers into the hands of large, transnational communications conglomerates with holdings and interests in many other, usually more profitable, areas of the mass media' (2000, p.36). Bertelsmann, for instance, owns Europe's largest broadcasting organization (RTL Group), magazines and newspapers (Gruner + Jahr), and an international record label (BMG) (Bertelsmann, 2017).

During an interview at the Penguin Random House UK headquarters in London, Liz Foley, the current Publishing Director at Harvill Secker, indeed agreed that as a publisher, 'we are part of the entertainment industry. It's not just that the literary world is entirely separate and we only speak through the book pages or newspapers' (personal communication, July 13, 2017). Although the publisher 'definitely [has] to compete with other forms of entertainment', Foley claimed that this does not 'necessarily change the integrity of what a publishing house is trying to do' (ibid.). When asked whether she thought this incorporation into the mass entertainment industry had certain implications for the agency of the authors in the sense that they might lose control over their public image, Foley quite decisively said it does not play a part 'in the kind of publishing we do […] we are a conduit for their work and obviously we are going to try and market them and sell their books, that's our job. But that doesn't mean we would ever do something they are uncomfortable with, or push an author to be a certain way' (ibid.). Then again, in saying that 'all of the publicity we do around books, with people being interviewed,

or, you know, going to visit book shops, or doing events, is all helpful in getting attention for your book', Foley did affirm that an author's marketable personality can contribute as a viable promotional component to the literary marketplace (ibid.). In her opinion, it seems that the relationship between literature and mass media also offers new opportunities, for example in digital marketing where the publisher uses 'keywords that link to other [types of] media' such as films (ibid.). However, Foley stressed that it always depends 'on what the individual author wants to do and what their strengths are' and as such places the author's individualism in high regard (ibid.).

4.1 Transnational author vs. national branding

The first paradox of Murakami's star image relates to a discrepancy between the ways in which his literature is marketed and the content of his novels. Although it was made clear from the onset that this study will not limit its focus to the literary analysis of selected texts as so many others have done before, following the literature review of Murakami Haruki studies, one can conclude that Murakami's prose can best be situated in a tradition of transnational literature. His *mukokuseki* (nationality-less) style and overt references to global consumer culture speak to those who feel as if their fixed sense of national identity is disappearing 'into the flows of global capital and commerce' (Strecher, 2014; Powers, 2008, p.51). Instead of representing Japanese culture, Murakami's work eloquently portrays the fluidity of commoditized life in our late capitalist society (Powers, 2008). Similar to the pop tunes that are often featured in his work, his books are now being consumed worldwide as transnational cultural commodities. Precisely this aspect of Murakami's prose has been criticized by the Japanese literary elite, as they were afraid that the author would destroy the tradition of Japanese literature by being lauded overseas as a representative of the Japanese literary scene (Murakami, in Strecher, 2014).

4.1.1 The Netherlands

A survey of journalistic critiques in magazines and national newspapers on Murakami in the Netherlands seems to confirm the idea that his novels consist of a diverse mixture of cultural elements, although very few journalists dare to completely negate the author's Japanese cultural background. Murakami's prose is devoid of geishas, tea rituals, samurai and calligraphy – that much is certain. The author is heavily influenced by Western movies, literature and music, and, as Rob Schouten argued, the stories Murakami tells could quite easily 'take place in Western Europe or America' (2016, para. 19). Olaf Tempelman recalls the moment a friend recommended 'a Japanese novel that wasn't Japanese at all' to him (2015, para. 3). Auke Hulst

speaks of the ‘hybrid quality’ of Murakami’s work, whereas Schouten reflects on the ‘universal tendencies’ of the author’s recurring themes and motives (2014b, para. 22; 2016, para. 19). Much like Powers, Arjan Peters once poignantly described Murakami’s fictional world as one where ‘identities are never fixed’ (2016, para. 1). Surely, all these statements are connote transnational tendencies in Murakami’s novels. But when it comes to pinpointing that what makes his prose so unique and susceptible to an international audience, Dutch journalists tend to fall back on traditional geographical spaces to construct their argument. In their view, Murakami manages to combine ‘Japanese perception with Western culture’ (Schouten, 2016, para. 14) and his literature consists of ‘equal parts [of] Japanese and American culture’ (Hulst, 2014a, para. 2). His characters are ‘unmistakably rooted in ancient Japanese culture’ but they ‘listen to Western pop music and carry cell phones’ (Schouten, 2014, para. 3), fostering a form of ‘cross-fertilisation between East and West’ (Hulst, 2014b, para. 22). In short, according to most Dutch journalists, the success of Murakami’s literature lies in the fact that it is both exotic and familiar.

Interestingly, it is precisely the exotic aspect of the Murakami’s prose that seems to be exploited in the branding of his novels in the Netherlands. This can most notably be found in the book cover designs, which, as Nash suggested, have played an important role in the author’s success (personal communication, June 21, 2017). The Japanese iconography is most evident in the book cover designs that appeared under Eldorado, a mass market imprint of former Dutch publisher Atlas (Figure 1).

Figure 1. [First Dutch Edition] [Compilation of Murakami Haruki book covers]. (n.d.) Retrieved from https://flavorwire.files.wordpress.com/2012/01/hard-boiled-dutch.jpg

In 2013, Atlas Contact cooperated with graphic design studio Vruchtvlees to renew the entire backlist (Figure 2). This partly had to do with the upcoming Dutch translation of *Colourless*

Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage[21] in January 2014, which would be Murakami's first new novel since 2010. According to Nash, '[Atlas Contact] wanted to do something big and that required a new design. Sometimes you need to do something new to generate attention for the backlist' (personal communication, June 21, 2017). Although far less exotic than the covers featured in Figure 1, the inclusion of "Murakami Haruki" in *kanji* (Figure 2) functions purely as a signifier of "Japaneseness", even though most Dutch consumers do not read Japanese. They might even think that the author is Chinese or Korean. Nash laughingly said that this does not matter, since their primary objective was to develop a unique type of branding, different from the way in which other authors are presented. The inclusion of the *kanji* fulfils this objective: '[it] is something that sticks, oh yes, that is the author with the strange Japanese characters' (ibid.).[22]

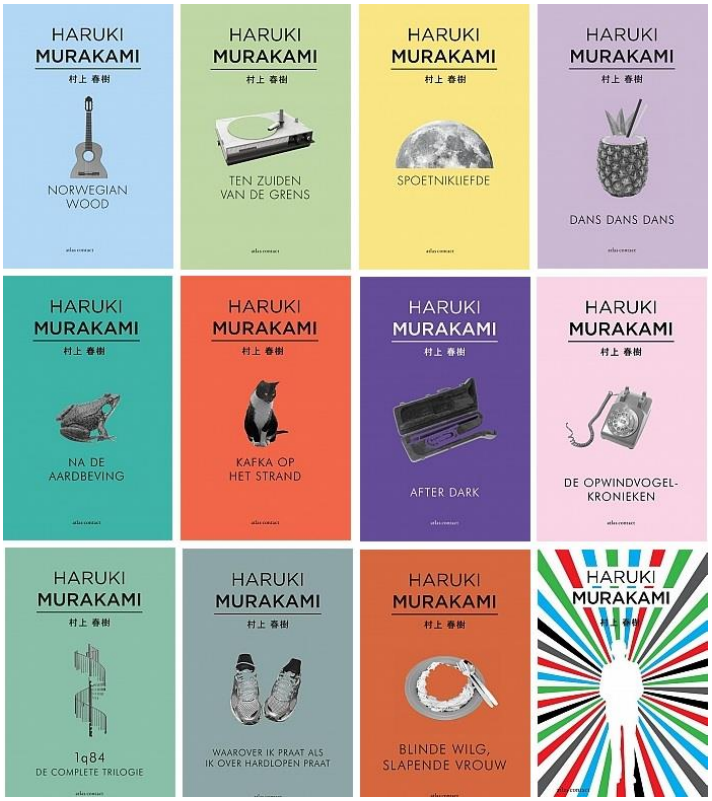

Figure 2. Stikkelorum, R. (n.d.). [Compilation of Murakami Haruki book covers]. Retrieved from http://www.murakami.nl/

The cover that stands out is that of *Colourless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage* (2014) in the bottom right-hand corner of Figure 2. The design seems to be inspired by the

[21] *De kleurloze Tsukuru Tazaki en zijn pelgrimsjaren* (in Dutch), translated by Jacques Westerhoven. Originally published in Japanese in 2013.
[22] The Dutch newspaper *de Volkskrant* even spent an entire article on the new cover designs. This can be read (in Dutch) via http://www.volkskrant.nl/archief/omslag-studio-vruchtvlees~a3550091/

kyokujitsu-ki ("rising sun flag") that is still used by the Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force, although one is left to wonder why the illustrator chose to associate this with the author. One will also notice that the title has been omitted, perhaps indicating that the Murakami trademark alone has enough leverage to persuade potential readers to pick up the book. Nash and Kolenbrander did not necessarily agree with this reading, as they found it indiscreet to think of Murakami as a brand name. 'Once you have this kind of success, you do not like to call someone a brand' (Kolenbrander, personal communication, June 21, 2017). Yet, at the same time, they could not deny that they are in fact branding the author. Their disinclination towards this kind of marketing terminology can be seen as indicative of their contested position between the field of restricted production (high culture) and the field of large-scale production (mas culture).

Evoking a sense of "Japaneseness" is not only limited to the cover designs, as it can also be found in the promotion of the Murakami Festival that was organised by Atlas Contact in January 2014. The publisher partnered up with literary magazine *Das Magazin*[23] to organize an event in celebration of the publication of *Colourless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage*. The promotional video is filled with Japanese iconography. Figure 3 features a Daruma doll, a talisman of good luck and perseverance in Japan, with Murakami's name in *kanji* in the bottom left- and top right-hand corners. Figure 4 is yet another reference to the *kyokujitsu-ki* ("rising sun flag"), whereas Figure 5 includes the Japanese word *subarashii* (meaning "marvellous", "splendid") in both *rōmaji* and *kanji*. Similar to the use of Murakami's name in *kanji*, very few participants would have known what this word actually means. Its sole function is to conjure an exotic feeling of "Japaneseness" and therefore validates the premise of national branding.

Figure 3. Reprinted from [Het Murakami Festival] (2013), by *Das Magazin*. Copyright 2015 by YouTube. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zpig6NOGDwo

[23] In 2015, *Das Magazin* expanded its business and became a publisher under the name "Das Mag".

Figure 4. Reprinted from [Het Murakami Festival] (2013), by *Das Magazin*. Copyright 2015 by YouTube. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zpig6NOGDwo

Figure 5. Reprinted from [Het Murakami Festival] (2013), by *Das Magazin*. Copyright 2015 by YouTube. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zpig6NOGDwo

Japanese cultural signifiers were also used in the decoration of the actual festival, as is evinced in Figure 6. The main stage featured a *maneki neko*, a Japanese hand fan, Japanese paper lanterns and sake, as well as a *koinobori* and a Japanese *shoji* screen in the background to the left of the panellists. When asked why they chose to decorate the venue with the kind of cultural signifiers that are completely absent in Murakami's work, Kolenbrander quite openly said that '[t]his has do to with the fact that the average reader [in the Netherlands] does not know any author from Japan. I think we can be honest about this. So if there is one author they do know, it is Murakami. This makes it more interesting to highlight these aspects of Japanese culture' (personal communication, June 21, 2017). Nash furthermore added that it is 'a way to highlight another unique aspect of Murakami's literature. By playing with the symbolism, you can create a sense of fascination in the reader' (ibid.).

Figure 6. Reprinted from [Het Murakami Festival] (2013), by *Das Magazin*. Copyright 2015 by Facebook. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/events/610438339018017/

Although it is questionable whether such a predictable set of decorative items actually highlights a unique aspect of Murakami's literature, it is quite an intriguing and clever way of positioning the author. Both the event and the cover designs exploit orientalist views of Japan with the sole goal of exoticizing the literary commodity and by extension the author himself, making it more attractive to Dutch consumers. Following academic literary criticism, one could argue that the content of the novels is largely devoid of a nationalist framework, meaning that a misunderstanding of Japanese culture can be avoided whilst identification is fostered through the use of references to global consumer culture. As Murakami has to give his approval for all of the cover designs[24], both the publisher and the author are equally complicit in the production of a celebrity image that to some extent stresses his "Japaneseness".

4.1.2 The United Kingdom

A survey of journalistic critiques on Murakami's novels in the national newspapers of the United Kingdom has shown that British journalists make little to no reference to the author's cultural background when reviewing his books. His international success is most commonly explained by his ability to explore 'alienation and other modern ills' (Page, 2011, para.10), whilst combining 'surrealism, science fiction and fantasy ideas' with 'otherwise ultra-realistic, even mundane narratives' (Thorne, 2011, para.6). In similar terms, Steven Poole spoke of the 'two dimensions, or realities' that can be found in the author's prose: 'a normal, beautifully evoked everyday world, and a weirder supernatural realm' (2014, para.7). The transnational

[24] That being said, Nash could not confirm whether Murakami was aware of the festival. She does inform Murakami's agent in London, but, contrary to the cover designs, she does not need the author's approval for the event nor its promotional content (personal communication, June 21, 2017).

characteristics of his work have also been alluded to in the British media, for example when arguing that the author has a 'unique ability to transcend high and low [culture], east and west' (Haddow, 2011, para.5). Lowry Pei even went as far to say that the author's fiction 'occupies a cultural space of its own' in which 'each individual's existence […] must constantly be re-affirmed through the story one tells oneself' (2016, para.3). In a fictional world where 'identity is always threatening to dissolve' (Adams, 2011, para.9), the author's references to global consumer culture can function as 'touchstones to help anchor people in Murakami's shifting realities' (Poole, 2011, para.12). On the rare occasions that journalists do comment upon his Japanese background, they tend to appeal to authority instead of making their own judgement. Such is the case in one article where Jay Rubin was quoted in saying that '[…] it is not because he [Murakami] is writing about Japan that people love him. I'm not sure his readers are interested in Japan' (in Beaumont, 2011, para.8). Peper Popham referred to the author's first translator Alfred Birnbaum who argued that '[p]art of his popularity is that his novels are dislocated from Japan in a globalised nowhere. I tend to think of him as an American writer who happens to write in Japanese – sort of a reverse Kazuo Ishiguro' (2014, para.12). On the other hand, Liz Bury quoted Philip Gabriel, a long-time translator of Murakami's work, who said that the author 'is very much a Japanese writer' (2013, para.6).

Whereas the exotic aspect in Murakami's body of work is almost negligibly appreciated or interpreted by journalists, it certainly played an important part in the early cover designs. Suzanne Dean, Creative Director at Vintage, was given the task to redesign the book covers of the backlist when The Harvill Press joined Random House in 2002. As can be seen in Figure 7, these designs made use of photographs in a mostly monochromatic colour scheme. Some of the covers feature rather erotic images of Japanese women and according to Dean, 'the calligraphy [in the titles] slightly hints at Japan' (personal communication, 2017, July 13). She explained that the designs had been quite a leap from what they have done before, but Dean felt that the Japanese imagery 'was something that was very of the moment' (ibid.). Perhaps it was no coincidence that in the same year, American journalist Douglas McGray (2002) published an article titled "Japan's Gross National Cool", in which he argued that Japan had reinvented itself as a global cultural superpower through its national branding. Contrary to the Japanese exporting strategy in the 1990s, which focused on consumer goods and media content without any reference to their Japanese origin, the new marketing approach recognized 'the growing appeal of Japaneseness among target markets' (Daliot-Bul, 2009, p. 252). In saying that it 'was something that was very of the moment', Dean must have recognized this appeal as well.

Figure 7. [Compilation of book covers under The Harvill Press/Harvill Secker]. (n.d.). Made by the author.

In 2012, Harvill Secker cooperated with illustrator Noma Bar to renew the cover designs of the entire backlist. Both Foley and Dean argued that it was very important to them that the covers would accurately reflect the spirit of Murakami's work. Although the content of the book functions as their main inspiration, Foley said that they would not 'put something on the jacket which is against what our image of the author is' (personal communication, 2017, July 13). In the case of the Noma Bar covers, Dean commented that the illustrator thinks of Murakami's work 'of it being layers and puzzles' (ibid.). She herself sees the novels as 'stylish, intelligent, clever and multi-layered' which she felt has been represented in the designs since 'they are not narrative […] and ask the reader to do a bit of work. I'm anticipating that the Murakami reader has that intelligence and appreciates it' (ibid.). In the later editions (Figure 8), one notices that the national branding has been toned down a notch. In its subtlety, the cover designs are more in line with the author's critical reception in the United Kingdom, as was established above after analysing the media coverage between 2011 and June 2017.

Figure 8. Bar, N. (2013.). [Compilation of book covers under Harvill Secker]. Retrieved from http://editorial.designtaxi.com/news-murakamibooks0310/1.jpg

That being said, the Japanese iconography is still apparent in the colour scheme and the reappearing motif of the circle. During Murakami event held in London in November 2016, one of the attendants commented on the colour scheme that is used in Figure 8. Dean said it was an 'obvious choice when thinking about Japan' (Vintage Podcast, 2016) and during the interview reaffirmed that the Japanese background of the author 'probably influenced me in my colour palette' (personal communication, 2017, July 13). Dean also disclosed that the circle, though absent in the non-fiction titles in order to differentiate them from the other work, is a reference to the Japanese flag. Through the cover designs, she is 'trying to make people visually click: Japanese' (ibid.). When asked why Harvill Secker felt it was necessary to emphasize the author's "Japaneseness", Foley replied that 'he is the best-known Japanese author in the world, so it is definitely part of how we distinguish him from other writers. I think for our packaging, it is all about reflecting what is in the books, so they are set in Japan […] by a Japanese writer. It would feel strange to completely deny that fact' (personal communication, 2017, July 13). Foley moreover stressed that the publisher is not 'using his Japaneseness as a way of selling his books', yet she qualified this statement by acknowledging that Murakami's cultural background does function as a means to set him apart from other authors (ibid.). Thus, whereas critical reception in the United Kingdom is almost indifferent to the exotic aspect of his prose, Harvill Secker still feels the urge to, albeit subtly, highlight this aspect in its cover designs so as to

properly represent both the author and the setting of his novels. At the same time, it is employed as a form of product differentiation, thereby disseminating an image of the author that slightly foreshadows his "Japaneseness".

4.2 Celebrity status vs. self-purported ordinariness

The second paradox refers to what was briefly touched upon in subsection 3.1.4: The Paradoxical Star Image, namely the extraordinary nature of the celebrity phenomenon versus the ordinariness by which the celebrity is able to foster identification with his or her fan base. Based on the literature review of Murakami Haruki Studies in chapter 2, one can conclude that Murakami's global popularity is indeed quite extraordinary, especially when juxtaposed with his consciously asserted ordinariness. Several scholars have commented upon his ordinary physicality (Rubin, 2012 [2002]) and discursive statements that indicate how the author's purports to be 'just like the people who read my books' (in Franssen, 2017, p.233). In order to establish whether the same paradox holds true in the auto- and hetero-representation of the author in the Netherlands and in the United Kingdom, the following subsection aims to analyse the language of stardom that either implicitly or explicitly exemplifies both Murakami's celebrity status and his consciously asserted ordinariness in Dutch and British media texts. In addition, events and marketing techniques that are indicative of how the author's star image is dependent on the active attribution by his publishers will also be scrutinized to determine whether these practices promote the author's celebrity status.

4.2.1 The Netherlands

After the publication of the first two volumes of *1Q84*[25] in June 2010, Dutch media coverage on Murakami went rather quiet up until February 2013, when the Dutch newspaper *NRC Handelsblad* announced that a new novel was set to be published in Japan in April 2013 (Kort, 2013a). Both *de Volkskrant* and *NRC Handelsblad* did publish an article in 2011 on the book launch of *1Q84* in the United States. In *de Volkskrant,* the article reported that 'American book stores would remain open until midnight to fulfil the high demand. This is usually the course of events for the publication of a new Harry Potter [novel], rather than the appearance of a Japanese trilogy of a 1000 pages' (van Lier, 2011, para. 1-2). In similar terms, *NRC Handelsblad* reported that these midnight openings 'were rather to be expected when a new Harry Potter [novel] appeared, but also Murakami has acquired the status of a star author' (2011, para.2). In 2014, the media frenzy picked up again, following the Dutch translation of

[25] Same title in Dutch, translated by Jacques Westerhoven. Originally published in Japanese in 2009.

Colourless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage in January of that year. Media coverage from this period invariably introduced the author as a literary star. In an article for the online magazine of the Amsterdam City Theatre, an employee of *Das Magazin* was quoted saying that '[i]n Japan, Murakami's star shines so bright that people are lining up for his latest novel as if it were a new Harry Potter [novel]' (in Dieleman, 2014, para. 6). These comparisons with J.K. Rowling clearly show that Murakami's celebrity status is now perceived as on par with perhaps one the greatest celebrity authors of the twenty-first century. Many of the book reviews did not only cover the content of the novel, but also the Murakami Festival that accompanied the publication of *Colourless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage*. One journalist likened the book launch to that of a pop album in the heyday of the LP: 'The new Murakami, a happening similar to the new [Rolling] Stones four decades ago' (Tempelman, 2014, para. 5). This reference to pop music is once again suggestive of how literary production has been incorporated into the entertainment industry. By positioning Murakami within a discourse of celebrity, the journalist emphasizes his status as a star author.

The Murakami Festival not only received considerable media attention in the Netherlands, it was also picked up by foreign media outlets.[26] Although it was evident that the festival was organized to generate awareness for the book, Nash and Kolenbrander said that the media coverage did exceed their expectations (personal communication, June 21, 2017). On the day of the event, *NRC Handelsblad* even published an eight page spread on Murakami and his newest book, including comments from participants of the festival, a book review, art work and a Murakami board game. Additionally, Murakami enthusiasts were able to buy an e-book entitled *The Murakami Chronicles* ("De Murakamikronieken") compiled by *NRC Handelsblad* with extra book reviews and his first interview with a Dutch journalist from 1991. When Atlas first organized a small literary event in 2010 to celebrate the publication of *1Q84*, the publisher slowly started to realise that a fan base had emerged in the Netherlands. 'In the case of Murakami, you are dealing with an author who does not only have a readership, but also a broad fan base. And when we notice that an author has fans, then we will make use of the opportunities this has to offer' (Kolenbrander, personal communication, June 21, 2017). This statement is indicative of how celebritization affects the publisher's marketing techniques in the sense that Murakami, being a star author, receives special promotional effort from his publisher. In January 2015, Atlas Contact hosted a "Murakami Dinner" at its headquarters in Amsterdam in

[26] Spanish digital newspaper Estandarte; Belgian newsmagazine Knack; Belgian newspaper De Morgen even organised a contest to win two tickets.

celebration of the Dutch translation of *Wind/Pinball*[27]. At the event, Murakami fans were given the opportunity to buy merchandise and a limited selection of signed novels. Moreover, the publisher displayed a pair of gloves (Figure 9) and a hat (Figure 10) that were worn by Murakami during the Boston and New York marathon in 1997 and 1998. Since Murakami himself is considered elusive and inaccessible[28], celebrity artefacts like these can feed into the fan's imagination of proximity to the star author.

Figure 9. [Pair of gloves worn during New York marathon in 1998]. Picture taken by the author on January 16, 2015 in Amsterdam.

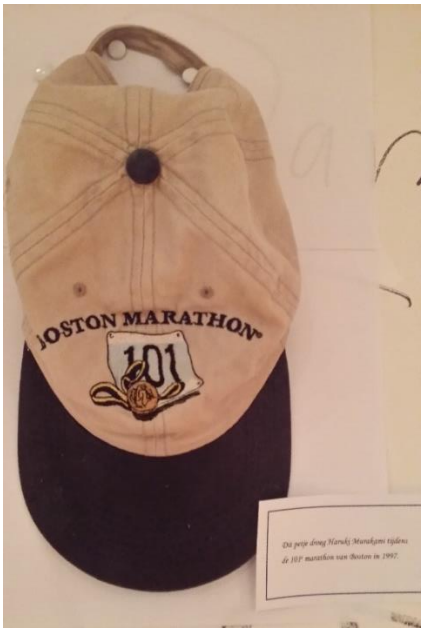

Figure 10. [Hat worn during Boston marathon in 1997]. Picture taken by the author on January 16, 2015 in Amsterdam.

[27] *Luister naar de wind*; *Flipperen in 1973* (Dutch title), translated by Jacques Westerhoven. Originally published in Japanese in 1979 (Hear the Wind Sing) and 1980 (Pinball, 1973).
[28] Also see 4.3 Author-recluse vs. Public figure.

The latest endeavour of Atlas Contact is to organise a Murakami Weekend in January 2018 that accompanies the publication of Murakami's newest novel *Killing Commendatore*[29]. The weekend will take place on a cruise ship in Rotterdam, offering space for an astonishing 2000 Murakami fans. As Kolenbrander explains, '[s]ince *Colourless Tsukuru Tazaki* sold very well, we realized that Murakami's readership had grown, including his fan base. So we wanted to organize another event. We thought about how we could surpass the Murakami Festival and we ended up with a weekend' (personal communication, June 21, 2017). In order to promote the event, the publisher has said to be cooperating with book stores throughout the country, which exemplifies the increasing interdependence and engagement between literary production and the logic of the marketplace. Events like these prove that Murakami's celebrity image is very much a 'product of the publisher's promotion and advertising' (Glass, 2004, p.25). In knowing that the author does not have to give his approval for these kind of promotional activities, yet still attaches his name to them, one could indeed argue that his authorial agency is jeopardized by those commercial forces who effectively control his celebrity image and, to some extent, treat it as public property. In other words, these examples have shown how the publisher celebrates the author's autonomy as a literary star whilst at the same time taking away his agency. Of course, as was argued with reference to Franssen (2010), the author is capable of influencing this process by commenting publicly on his craft during interviews or public appearances. In the case of Murakami, however, one is dealing with a celebrity author who is rather publicity-shy and rarely gives interviews. To date, the Dutch press has only been able to interview the author in 1991 and in 2013. Only the latter interview falls within the temporal scope of this study and will therefore be what is subjected to closer analysis here.

In December 2013, Dutch journalist Auke Hulst travelled to Honolulu where he would meet Murakami, who was in the process of finishing his guest authorship at the University of Hawaii. Hulst introduces the author as a 'small, toned man of sixty-four who rather shakes hands than bows' wearing 'short trousers – a street urchin with an old head' (2014a, para.3). The decoration of his office, 'hardly one and a halve meters by two meters' in dimension, is described as 'Spartan: a bookcase with his own work and a steel desk with a picture of his literary hero Franz Kafka' (ibid.). In other words, it was not the kind of environment you expect to encounter when meeting a literary superstar. This modest and rather unassuming image is later reaffirmed by Murakami in a way only he could describe it. 'When I walk away from my

[29] *De moord op commendatore* (Dutch title), translator unknown. Originally published in Japanese in February 2017. Part one of the Dutch translation is set to be published on December 1, 2017, followed by part two on January 13, 2018.

writing table, I am nothing special. The desk is for me what the telephone cell is for Superman, knowing that when Superman wears his daily togs he only pretends to be ordinary. I *am* it [ordinary]. Especially as a teenager, I used to think what Tsukuru Tazaki thinks. What kind of special gifts do I have? None' (Murakami, in Hulst, 2014a, para. 11). Such a statement is a clear example of how the author tries to fashion his own star image. By positioning himself as an ordinary run-of-the-mill guy, Murakami not only fosters identification with his readership, but also seems to be reclaiming the agency that is taken away from him by the extra-literary forces, who constantly emphasize and exploit his celebrity status. Yet, behind this veil of modesty lingers a literary entrepreneur whose publishing strategies aim to increase his mainstream success. As he explained during the interview, 'before *Norwegian Wood* I would sell 100.000 copies. Not bad, but I felt I could reach a lot more people. I am ambitious […] *Norwegian Wood* was the crowbar with which I could break open the gate. And after this book, I told myself: ok, I can do this, but it's not what I want' (ibid., para. 20). Since it was the publication of *Norwegian Wood* that spiralled Murakami into stardom, one can conclude that his celebrity status is not only imposed by external forces, it is also partly self-inflicted.

4.2.2 The United Kingdom

In 2011, the media circus in the United Kingdom was in full swing with the English translation of *1Q84.* On both sides of the Atlantic, the book was welcomed with 'midnight openings, queues round the block, magazine covers and unprecedented pre-orders' (Haddow, 2011, para.1), which several journalists likened to razzmatazz more commonly associated with the release of a Harry Potter book (Adams, 2011; Beaumont, 2011; Flood, 2011b; Cummins, 2011). Alison Flood reported that the 'UK's largest book chain Waterstone's is celebrating its [1Q84] release with a midnight opening […] preceded by a "Murakami Mastermind" quiz […] with a £750 limited edition copy of the book as a prize' (2011b, para.2). Similar events were held by other book chains and independent bookshops to satisfy their customers' demand. Douglas Haddow spoke of *1Q84* in terms of a 'global event novel, a rare form of literary commodity' that is scorned by those who assume 'the ivory towers of serious literature and distinct national voices' will have to make way for books that are solely 'judged on their capacity to serve as marketing vehicles' (2011, para.4). Here, one enters into a polarized discourse that sees the relationship between the fields of restricted and large scale production as mutually exclusive. As was argued in Chapter 3 with reference to Glass (2004), now that literary production is bound by the logic of the market and conventions of (mass) media, this relationship should be perceived as one of interdependence and engagement. Haddow advocates such a view in

asserting Murakami has demonstrated that ‘a cult of literature can and should compete with the cults of celebrity, personality, technology and sport that preoccupy the media 99% of the time’ (ibid., para.7), a statement that appears to be echoed by many other journalists in the United Kingdom who unfailingly introduce the author as a global superstar (e.g. Thorne, 2011; Martin, 2014; O’Hagan, 2014; Popham, 2014; Tonkin, 2014; Akbar, 2015; Brown, 2015).

In April 2013, both *The Guardian* and *The Telegraph* reported on the by now customary hysteria which the publication of *Colourless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage* received in Japan (McCurry & Flood, 2013; Capon, 2013b). Sean O’Hagan later wrote that ‘the pre-order sales alone made it the fastest-selling book even on Amazon Japan […] A week after its publication, the book had been reprinted eight times, with sales of more than one million copies’ (2014, para.1). In February 2014, *The Guardian* announced that the novel was set for publication in The United Kingdom in August of that year (Flood, 2014a). The Murakami mania that had swept Japan would soon find its way to the United Kingdom, especially after it was revealed that Murakami himself would visit the country for the first time in ten years to attend a book signing. Leading up to the launch of *Colourless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage*, Vintage cooperated with an out-of-home agency to create a poster campaign that spread throughout the United Kingdom (Figure 11). On the eve of the book’s publication, bookshops across the country marked the occasion by organising midnight openings and special events. Moreover, as part of the marketing campaign, the book cover was projected on several London landmarks, including the chimney of the Tate Modern, the Royal Opera House and Waterstone’s in Piccadilly (Figure 12).

Figure 11. Jack Arts. (2014). [Poster campaign]. Retrieved from http://www.jackagency.co.uk/work/murakami/

Figure 12. Jack Arts. (2014). [Book cover projection at Waterstone's Piccadilly]. Retrieved from http://www.jackagency.co.uk/work/murakami/

On 30th August 2014, Murakami held a book signing at Waterstone's Piccadilly, London. Journalist Tim Martin visited the bookshop 'through which the great author's publicity hurricane was blowing' and seemed baffled by the amount of people that had shown up (2014, para.1). As he explained, 'I already knew that Murakami was a big deal in Japan. […] But even in London, the response seemed only a mite less fanatical. The first readers through the door at Waterstone's had been queuing since the previous evening, and were joined in the morning by more than 600 others' (ibid.). Such scenes are obviously a testament to the author's burgeoning popularity and it should come as no surprise that Murakami has therefore been referred to as 'an idol of a worldwide sect of votaries' (Tonkin, 2011, para.1). Following the release of *Colourless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage*, Mark Lawson rightly observed that '[a]lmost without precedent in modern times, he [Murakami] has combined giddy popularity […] with the literary prestige of admiring reviews from giants such as [John] Updike' (2014, para.2). This statement in itself is a prime example of how the author successfully straddles the boundaries between the 'seemingly exclusive worlds of popularity and literary prestige' (York, 2007, p.31).

Media coverage on the author in the United Kingdom is thus not limited to mere book reviews, but often focuses on the extraordinary public adulation that accompanies the arrival of a new Murakami novel, not to mention the countless articles on the author's chances of winning the Nobel Prize for literature (e.g. Bryant, 2012; Lewis, 2013; Flood, 2014b; Flood, 2016a). Although Foley said that the publisher is 'not pushing stories to the media', the extensive

promotional activities that are undertaken for Murakami certainly help in garnering the media's attention (personal communication, 2017, July 13). Murakami is one of the lead authors for Harvill Secker, both 'from a sales point of view and from a kind of literary point of view' – this distinction made by Foley indicates how the commercial interests of the publisher and the cultural capital of the author are evaluated independently. Since Murakami is a 'high-selling and respected author', Foley disclosed that this offers the publisher the possibility to work closely with retailers that are 'particularly supportive of him' and who would like to have special editions and displays that promote the author's work more prominently to their customers (ibid.). Many of these customers will belong to the broad fan base that Murakami has beguiled in the United Kingdom. According to Foley, it is both 'the sort of fans he has as much as the number' that allows the publisher to capitalize on the suspense surrounding a new publication (ibid.). 'There are lots of very popular authors who sell lots of copies but you would never be able to get bookshops to open at midnight to let fans in because the fans […] would not be so dedicated that they would want to go and queue up on the street. So he [Murakami] is unusual in that way' (ibid.).

Besides events that often accompany book launches, the publisher has also put out a fair amount of limited and special editions that feed into the consumer behaviour of fans, whose fascination with the celebrity author drives their hyper-consumption. For example, the first editions of *Colourless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage* included a special sheet of stickers designed by five Japanese illustrators (Figure 13). Other special editions include deluxe hardcover boxsets and 3D versions of *A Wild Sheep Chase* and *Wind/Pinball*. In January 2013, the publisher even launched a "Murakami diary app" that coincided with the paperback release of *1Q84,* the repackaging of the backlist and the author's birthday (Capon, 2013a; Dredge, 2013).

Figure 13. [Sticker sheet in *Coloursless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage*]. (2014). Retrieved from http://yukoart.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/tsukuru_tazaki_3.jpg

These promotional activities are often picked up and commented on by the media, which most likely leads to more conventional marketing success. One article in *The Guardian* even spoke of 'Haruki Murakami and the marketing madness of publishers' (Irvine, 2014). As Dean explained, although they are mostly catering for Murakami enthusiasts, she also hoped that 'other people would be interested and maybe discover his work […] I am always looking for that, so to broaden the fan base' (personal communication, 2017, July 13). Through their marketing campaigns and distinctive cover designs, Dean moreover felt that the publisher has established a strong brand that makes Murakami's book stand out. What further illustrates this unique branding is the removal of the author's first name from his book covers. Because of his prominence, '[w]e do not have to put his first name on it. There are other Murakami's'– Murakami Ryū might spring to mind – 'but he is *the* Murakami' (Foley, personal communication, 2017, July 13). This rather bold decision was not left unnoticed by the media, as one journalist mentioned that it evinced how Murakami has established himself as a global brand (O'Hagan, 2014, para.2). These statements and practices have thus demonstrated how celebritization affects the publisher's marketing techniques in the sense that the author's celebrity status and broad fan base warrant extensive promotional activities. Through its marketing and advertising, the publisher is actively engaged in the construction of the author's star image as a global brand in the United Kingdom, a star image that is further cultivated in the national media. In knowing that Murakami has to give his permission for 'absolutely everything', he consciously agrees to the dispersal and promotion of his celebrity status which undoubtedly bolsters his commercial success (Dean & Foley, personal communication, 2017, July 13).

Yet, it is hard to align this image of a literary entrepreneur who has a megastar reputation with someone as 'modest and unassuming' as Murakami (Martin, 2014, para.2). Between 2011 and June 2017, the author has given three interviews to British media that are all remarkably consistent in terms of auto-representation. In 2011, journalist Emma Brockes travelled to Waikiki, Hawaii for *The Guardian* to speak with the author, 'who still looks like an adolescent skateboarder', about *1Q84* (2011, para.2). Early on in the interview, Brockes remarked that the author said more than once: 'I don't think of myself as an artist. I'm just a guy who can write' (Murakami, in Brockes, 2011, para.3).

His own popularity apparently still baffled him, as he explained that,

> When I go to the States or Europe, many people know me. It was so strange. Some years ago I went to Barcelona and did a signing and, you know, 1,000 people came. The girls kissed me. I was so surprised. What happened to me? (ibid., para.19)

Several years later, in 2014, Tim Martin met Murakami in London for an interview for *The Telegraph,* during which the author said almost the exact same thing.

> You know, I'm a writer. I'm kind of famous. […] I'm kind of successful and I have readers worldwide but I don't understand why that happened. It seems to me like a miracle. I don't think I'm a great person, a smart person, a talented person, but I could write. I just want to find out why that happened to me. (Murakami, in Martin, 2014, para.9)

The author reiterated that he should not be perceived as an artist: '[b]asically I think of myself as an engineer or a gardener or something like that. Not a creator, that's too heavy for me. I'm not that kind of person' (ibid., para.13). Also, in 2014, Steven Poole interviewed Murakami for *The Guardian* during which the author repeated himself once again,

> I see myself as a kind of ordinary guy. I don't think of myself as an artist, mostly. I guess I'm just engineering something. I like to write. I like to choose the right word, I like to write the right sentence. It's just like gardening or something. You put the seed into the soil at the right time, in the right place. (Murakami, in Poole, para.15).

These statements are clear examples of how the author tries to fashion his own star image in the United Kingdom. By referring to himself as an engineer or a gardener rather than an artist or a creator, Murakami is trying to refute that he has some kind of innate talent, since that would make him extraordinary. His bewilderment towards his own popularity can be interpreted as strategy through which he upholds an image of aloofness to commercial interests, although he knows all too well the lengths his publisher will go to promote his work. His ordinariness had become his trademark, a central characteristic of his star image that authenticates his private self as someone who his readership can identify with, whilst at the same time counterbalancing extensive promotional efforts through which his celebrity status is consistently emphasized.

4.3 Author-recluse vs. public figure

The third and final paradox hones in on the private/public dichotomy that tends to be a focal point for scholars who have taken an interest in the phenomenon of the literary celebrity. As was argued above with reference to York, the profession of the celebrity author is a task that is carried out in privacy which therefore 'cannot be represented to advantage in primarily visual marketing media' (2007, p.13). Yet, the conviction that, behind the multiplicity of meanings that reside in the author's star image, an 'irreducible core' exists that is the 'reality of the [author's] private self', nurtures our infatuation with the celebrity author's life or lifestyle (Dyer, 2004 [1986], p.10). In the case of Murakami Haruki, however, one is dealing with a literary star who is well-known for his public reticence and who, according to Rubin (2012 [2002]), loathes the media attention that accompanies his celebrity status as the author felt his private life to be violated by the pestering media requests. Then again, although Murakami might shun the limelight, when the author does appear in public he seems to see this as an opportunity to intervene in the public debate with critical statements, as was evinced by his compelling acceptance speech for the Jerusalem Prize in 2009 (Rubin 2012 [2002], Strecher (2014). Thus, based on the information gathered from the literature review on Murakami Haruki studies, one could characterize the literary star as an author-recluse, defined by Moran as those authors whose 'apparent distance from celebrity seems to contribute to their fame' (2000, p.54). Yet, at the same time, his celebrity status and cultural merit grants him the opportunity to take on the role of a public figure who has the ability to comment on pertinent global issues. The following paragraphs, then, aim to analyse whether and if so, how, this paradox bears fruit in the star image of Murakami in the Netherlands and in the United Kingdom.

4.3.1 The Netherlands

A survey of media coverage on Murakami in the Netherlands confirms his particularly distinctive star image of a media-shy author, although most references to his reclusiveness were made in January 2014 shortly before or after the Dutch publication of *Colourless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage*. In an article for *NRC Handelsblad*, Sebastiaan Kort introduced the author as someone who is 'known for his media-shyness' (2014, para.3). Shortly after the Murakami Festival took place, a nightly radio show devoted a segment to the festival during which radio host Maarten Westerveen (2014) described Murakami as 'almost a kind of legend. The man carries an aura of mysteriousness, [he] is difficult to interview and when this does happen, it is not very satisfying because he remains rather vague'. In a similar vein, an employee of *Das Magazin* remarked that 'Murakami shuns the limelight, which only adds to his mystery and attraction' (in Dieleman, 2014, para. 6). Kolenbrander substantiated the latter

in asserting that the reclusiveness 'offers a lot of opportunities' (personal communication, June 21, 2017). Nash agreed that 'the mysteriousness only helps, and with every novel, you can reveal something new' but she also found his public reticence quite frustrating because the author 'does not want to travel. He does not want to come to the Netherlands for promotional affairs' (ibid.). Following these statements, one can conclude that the hetero-representation of Murakami as an author-recluse only feeds into his mystique, which subsequently contributes to his celebrity status. Yet, from the publisher's point of view, the author's conscious decision to keep everything that has to do with fame at bay is not necessarily advantageous when operating in an industry that increasingly depends on marketable personalities (Moran, 2000).

While his reclusiveness might be frustrating, Nash and Kolenbrander also contend that it seems to be appreciated by the literary critics in the Netherlands. In an interview with Westerveen (2014), Dutch journalist Theo Hakkert said he finds it '[…] quite nice that he only gives one interview per year and that he now gave his second interview in the Netherlands. I like this, I think it has style' and as such confirms this contention. Nash explains that Murakami 'does not want to give interviews, because he wants to write. He does not like his picture to be taken, because he does not want to be recognized on the streets. He wants to be able to write without distractions. I think that critics appreciate this, they do not think he is doing this for commercial reasons' (personal communication, June 21, 2017). Likewise, Kolenbrander points out that 'critics have nothing else but the literary work. So the only thing you can do is focus on his novels. You do not get distracted by possible statements in a television programme. So I think it is beneficial for the work' (ibid.). Such an interpretation dovetails nicely with Moran's line of thought, who argued that celebrity authors are 'lauded for their difference and aloofness' from commercial interests (2000, p.8). As was argued in Chapter 3 with reference to Rosenbaum, this holds even more true for the author-recluse, whose public reticence 'constitute a provocative dissent from the culture of self-promotion that has swept contemporary publishing' (in Moran, 2000, p.56).

Yet, even an author-recluse such as Murakami cannot escape to be 'ransacked for [his] human interest' (Moran, 2000, p.8). Although Dutch journalists have little to go by in terms of information about the private life of the author, several accounts can be found of their attempt to satisfy our desire to unmask the reality behind the literary star. One such example are travelogues of journalists who have retraced Murakami's footsteps in Japan. In 2010, Auke Hulst travelled to Japan to visit locations that were featured in Murakami's novels. Several years later, he interviewed the author in Hawaii, after which he combined the experiences of both travels for an article titled "Travelogue: This is what it is like to interview the great Haruki

Murakami" (Hulst, 2014b). In an article for *de Volkskrant* titled "What he talks about when he talks about Tokyo", a spin on Murakami's memoir *What I Talk About When I Talk About Running*[30] (2007), Olaf Tempelman travelled to Tokyo in 2015 in search of significant places in Murakami's life before he attained the status of celebrity author.[31] The latter article in particular evinces an earlier claim made by Turner (2004), who argued that public figures are transformed into celebrities as soon as the media starts to take an interest in the details of their private lives. In December 2015, *NRC Handelsblad* even published two articles on the author's borrowing record of his former school library, which were leaked by a Japanese newspaper. In one of the articles titled "Murakami borrowed French novels", the newspaper reported that the author 'although known for his knowledge of American literature […] borrowed amongst others the complete works of Joseph Kessel' (2015, para.1). Despite its banality, it goes to show that in consideration of his reclusiveness, the media seems cling to any information about the author's private life.

On the rare occasions that Murakami chooses to make a public appearance, it is immediately considered newsworthy. In April 2013, *NRC Handelsblad* published an article titled "The Japanese can finally hear Murakami again" in which it said that the author would speaking to an audience in his home country for the first time in eighteen years (Kort, 2013b). Two years later, the same newspaper commented upon Murakami's online advice column that went live on 15th January 2015 in cooperation with Japanese publishing house Shinchosa. Journalist Roderick Nieuwenhuis reported that '[t]he publicity-shy author felt it was time to come out in public. The last time he organised a similar action was nine years ago, in 2006' and quoted the author in saying that '[a]fter such a long period, I [Murakami] want to have email correspondence with my readers' (2015, para.4). Although the website appeared in Japanese, Nieuwenhuis assured readers that it was possible to ask questions in English: 'Where does his obsession for cats come from? How are things going with his favourite Japanese baseball team the Yakult Swallows? You can ask him everything' (2015, para.1). Juxtaposing his role as an online agony uncle with that of the author-recluse, one certainly begins to get a grasp of the contradictoriness manifested in the author's star image. When interpreted in Dyer's terms, it appears as if the author is trying to negotiate two different elements of signification (public vs.

[30] *Waarover ik praat als ik over hardlopen praat* (Dutch title), translated by Luk van Haute and published in the Netherlands in 2009. Originally published in Japanese in 2007.

[31] Tempelman visited Waseda University, where the Murakami studied dramaturgy in 1968; Shinjuku Records, where the author used to buy his records; the former location of the author's jazz club *Peter Cat*; Jingu-stadium, where the author got the idea to write a novel in 1978; Kinokuniya Shinjuku, where the author bought a fountain pen and paper to write his first novel; and the outer gardens of the Meiji Shrine, where the author has said to run often when he is in Tokyo.

private) and as such illustrates how the celebrity phenomenon 'is never at a point of rest or equilibrium' but instead should be seen as a dynamic framework within which vacillating subject positions are negotiated (2004 [1986], p.16).

One aspect that has not been analysed up until now is Murakami's ability to intervene in the public debate as a public figure. With the exception of one relatively short feature on Murakami's acceptance speech of the International Catalunya Prize during which he condemned Japan's nuclear energy policy, this aspect of his star image hardly receives any attention in the Dutch media (NRC Handelsblad, 2011). The author's shift from social detachment to social commitment, however, was discussed during the interview that was held with Dutch journalist Auke Hulst shortly before the publication of *Colourless Tsukuru Tazaki and his years of pilgrimage* in the Netherlands. Hulst (2014a) described Murakami as someone who has the reputation of being rather reluctant to speak to the press and who is difficult to interview. Although the author's assistant in Tokyo had clearly instructed Hulst to remain within the given time frame and to avoid political questions, the journalist found Murakami to be 'surprisingly flexible with regards to both points' (ibid., para.26). During the interview, Murakami told Hulst that '[s]ometimes I do enjoy giving interviews. As an author, you are never as good verbally as on paper, but I have to try now and again. Readers want to hear a voice that accompanies the work. I simply need to remain vigilant that there are not too many [interviews]' (in Hulst, 2014a, para.27). This statement implies that Murakami is well aware of the growing importance of the author's personality in the literary market place, yet he remains selective about the extent to which he engages with the media, thereby upholding his posture as an author-recluse.

Hulst furthermore remarked that the author has gradually become less self-centred, 'especially after 1995, the year of the Kobe earthquake and the terrorist attack in the Tokyo subway. You came back to Japan and wrote "Underground" (1997) and "After the Quake (2000)' (2014a, para.68). In response to this observation, Murakami said that '[i]t was an important year [1995]. I felt that, in my work, I had to be more open to the world. I wanted to take up responsibility' (in Hulst, 2014a, para.69). When asked whether he felt the urge to become a spokesperson for the left, Murakami said that 'now and again, I like to express my opinion. But at the core, I am a story teller. That is what I can [do]. I will open up my window and shout something at people. But then, this window has to close again, and I have to focus on my work' (ibid., para.73). Then, after a long silence, Murakami seemed to think aloud and added: '[a]nd still… I am looking for ways to do something. If I can do something, I will do it. But where, when and how? I don't know…' (ibid., para.74). This internal struggle between the

private and the public realm, here externalized during the interview, is a prime example of the contradictory tendencies that are held in tension by the author in his star image. The author's shift from detachment to commitment, as argued by both Rubin (2012 [2002]) and Strecher (2014) in Chapter 2 and thus affirmed by Murakami during this interview, goes to show that his star image has a temporal dimension in that it has changed over time and is subject to a process of constant negotiation.

4.3.2 The United Kingdom

Based on the survey of media coverage on Murakami in the United Kingdom, one can conclude that the author's public reticence plays an important role in his hetero-representation by British journalists. The author is often introduced as someone who is publicity-shy and rarely makes public appearances or gives interviews. One journalist from *The Guardian* called Murakami 'Mr. publicity-shy himself' (Flood, 2015a, para.1), whereas in *The Telegraph* he has been repeatedly labelled as 'the famously reclusive author' (Capon, 2013a, para.10; Chilton, 2014, para.4; Brown, 2015, para.2). Others have described the author as someone 'who guards his privacy fiercely' (Quine, 2015, para.3) and 'who spends much of his time hiding from the glare of the media' (Telegraph reporters, 2015, para.19; Agence France-Presse, 2015, para.7). According to Boyd Tonkin, 'Murakami has inadvertently deepened his charisma [...] by backing away from the limelight for so long. […] He's at once extremely famous and virtually anonymous' (2014, para.4-5). In a similar vein, Foley argued that Murakami's reticence 'is part of his charm' (personal communication, 2017, July 13). The fact that Murakami is not physically present to promote his books also 'brings a huge amount of creativity out of our [Harvill Secker's] marketing department. […] it gives us an opportunity to do different things in a different way' (ibid.).

Thus, although it might seem as if Murakami's image as an author-recluse does little to provoke idolatry, it actually heightens the author's popularity in the sense that it adds to his charm as a literary star who refuses to visibly profit from his marketable personality. Yet, here, one also touches upon the difficulty of drawing a line between promotion and self-promotion. In knowing that Murakami willingly agrees to all promotional activities, which by necessity have to be made more persuasive due to the author's own invisibility, it would be rather hard to maintain that his reclusiveness has inadvertently contributed to his fame, let alone argue that the author is 'untouched by the contaminating effects of the publicity machine' (Moran, 2000, p.64). On the contrary, the author seems to be well aware of the marketing effects of his public reticence. However, as was noted in Chapter 3, the celebrity system has a vested interest in

concealing its own logic and operations, which permits fans and journalists to consume the literary star without being aware of the ways in which the author himself is actively engaged in producing and disseminating his celebrity status.

When details about the author's private life are made public, it is bound to receive a fair amount of attention from the media. Such was the case when Murakami's library records were leaked by Japanese newspaper the *Kobe Shimbun*. In an article titled "Librarians in uproar after borrowing record of Haruki Murakami is leaked", *The Guardian* reported that '[l]ibrarians in Japan have ditched their tradition regard for silence to accuse a newspaper of violating the privacy of Haruki Murakami […] after it revealed his teenage reading habits' (McCurry, 2015b, para.1). The *Kobe Shimbun* defended its actions arguing that the author is the face of contemporary Japanese literature and 'anything related to his professional life was of legitimate interest' (ibid., para.8). An employee of the *Kobe Shimbun* did, however, admit that 'the newspaper had not tried to contact Murakami' (ibid., para.10). Although the overall tone of the article was somewhat hostile towards the newspaper for betraying the author's privacy, *The Guardian* nevertheless happily disclosed that Murakami borrowed the complete works of French writer Joseph Kessel. Earlier that year, *The Guardian* even published an article on Murakami's office, including a meticulous list of objects that were found on his desk (Bausells, 2015). The fact these trivial details are considered newsworthy can be seen as an example of how celebritization increases the centrality of the literary star's private life. In the case of Murakami, his reclusiveness makes such revelations all the more scarce.

What further illustrates the media's thirst for information about the author's private life is the extensive news coverage on Murakami's online advice column. In January 2015, *The Guardian, The Telegraph* and *The Independent* announced that Murakami would soon be answering his readers' questions on a website titled "Mr. Murakami's place" ("Murakami-san no tokoro"). As an online agony uncle, the author was quoted saying that it 'might show people a different side of me' (Murakami, in Flood, 2015b, para.6). It certainly was an unexpected move coming from someone who is known to be publicity-shy, as was noted by several journalists (Telegraph reporters, 2015; Agence France-Press, 2015; Flood, 2015a; Quine, 2015). These announcements were followed by reports on the answers he had given to his readers' questions, ranging from 'whether he has ever wanted to be a cat (no), to how to stop a partner from burping, and his feelings on his perennial position as a prime contender to with the Nobel prize for literature' (Flood, 2015b, para.4). Justin McCurry did, however, remark that the author 'predictably steered away from offering any insights into his private life' (2015a, para.2). Juggling his persona as an author-recluse with that of the agony uncle, Murakami

appears to be inhabiting a liminal space between spotlight and shadow. Through his auto-representation, the author wants to show the public "a different side" of himself, thereby opposing his posture of public reticence, which nonetheless remains a strong focal point in his hetero-representation by the media.

Another way in which the author opposes his image as an author-recluse is by taking on the role of a public figure who has the ability to intervene in the public debate with critical statements. This element of the author's star image receives considerable attention in the British media, most notably by *The Guardian*. Most of these statements are made during literary award ceremonies, as was the case when Murakami lamented Japan's nuclear policy after he received the International Catalunya prize. *The Guardian* reported on his acceptance speech, during which he said that the situation at the Fukushima plant was 'the second major nuclear detriment that the Japanese people have experienced. […] However, this time it was not a bomb being dropped upon us, but a mistake committed by our very own hands' (in Flood, 2011a, para.2). It should be noted that his social commentary is not limited to affairs related to his home country. In 2014, Murakami received Die Welt Literaturpreis in Berlin, after which his complete acceptance speech was made public by *The Guardian.* During the speech, he recalled his own memories of the Berlin Wall when he visited Germany in 1983 with his wife. He likened ongoing conflicts throughout the world to a system of walls: 'a wall of ethnicity, of religion, a wall of intolerance, of fundamentalism, a wall of greed, a wall of fear. Are we unable to live without a system of walls?' (2014, para.6). The task of the novelist, according to Murakami, is to break through these walls and to transmit that experience to his readers, tapping into the power of imagination. 'In a world of walls, imagining a world without them, clearly seeing that kind of world in our imagination may, in some cases, lead us to see it in reality. I would like to keep on believing that stories have that kind of power' (ibid., para.10). He explicitly directed this message to the Hong Kong pro-democracy protesters, 'who are struggling against their wall at this moment' (ibid., para.11).

Speaking at the ceremony of the Hans Christian Andersen award in 2016, the author returned to his metaphor of the wall, as he warned that 'no matter how high a wall we build to keep intruders out, no matter how strictly we exclude outsiders, no matter how much we rewrite history to suit us, we just end up damaging and hurting ourselves' (in Flood, 2016b, para.1). He did not address who he was directing his message at, but *The Guardian* quoted the Japanese press in saying that Murakami might have been 'referring to the increasingly mounting anti-refugee and anti-immigrant sentiment in Europe and elsewhere' (Flood, 2016b, para.13). Thus, although the author may seem to shy away from using his personality as a marketing tool, he

certainly does not hesitate to take the stage if it allows him to convey his personal stance on contentious topics to, as well as for, a public. Considering the amount of press coverage his acceptance speeches receive, one can assert that his role as a public figure is an important aspect his star image in the United Kingdom, thereby opposing his reputation of public reticence.

4.4 Conclusion: The Paradoxical Roles of Murakami

The main objective of this chapter has been to gain insight into how the celebrity authorship of Murakami Haruki is fabricated in the contexts of the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, so as to validate the overall premise of this study, which purports that Murakami's celebrity authorship is inherently paradoxical. In conclusion, this analysis has first and foremost demonstrated that the three hypothesized paradoxes are found within the star image of Murakami Haruki, regardless of the geographical context. Whereas the ways in which the author represents himself in both countries is remarkably consistent, intriguing differences came to light when comparing how the various subjectivities that reside in his star image were given a more prominent place in the author's hetero-representation depending on the country under analysis.

Reflecting on some of the more general remarks made about the publishing industry in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, it is safe to conclude that both publishing houses acknowledged how literary production has been absorbed by the global entertainment industry. Yet, whereas the employees of Atlas Contact spoke about their aversion towards this absorption, and that they were wary about how this had affected their publishing strategies in the sense that an author's public image had to professionally managed, the Publishing Director at Harvill Secker felt that this development did not necessarily implicate the integral workings of the publishing house. Nonetheless, the fact remains that both publishers, whether implicitly or explicitly, recognize how an author's personality can be employed as a valuable promotional component for book publicity.

Concerning the first paradox, which contrasted the transnational author with national branding, one such aspect of the author's personality that is used by both publishers in their branding of the literary star, albeit to varying degrees, is his Japanese background. Whether it is through the use of a specific colour palette, the motif of the circle, a font or the inclusion of the author's name in *kanji*, Atlas Contact and Harvill Secker highlight Murakami's "Japaneseness" in the cover designs of his books. In underscoring his cultural background, both publishers try to develop a unique type of branding that sets Murakami apart from other authors, thus functioning as a form of product differentiation. Murakami himself agrees with this

branding, as he has to approve of all cover designs in both countries. It should come as no surprise that the Japanese literary elite expressed their dismay over the fact that Murakami might be lauded overseas as a representative of the Japanese literary scene, even though his *mukokuseki* style and overt references to global consumer culture do not adhere to the literary conventions of *jun bungaku* – the *belles lettres* of Japan. These concerns certainly hold true in view of the Netherlands, where journalists most commonly explain the author's success in terms of his ability to combine exoticism (Japanese culture) with familiarity (Western culture). In the United Kingdom, however, journalistic criticism and commentaries do not sustain this exotic aspect of his star image. Instead, British journalists often allude to the transnational characteristics of his prose. This disparity between the promotional construction of Murakami's star image and the way in which journalistic critiques shape the public opinion of the literary star accounts for how these attributions by extra-literary forces contradict one another in the United Kingdom.

Concerning the second paradox, which contrasted the celebrity status of Murakami with his self-purported ordinariness, it was noted that in both countries, the author's celebrity status has certainly affected his publishers' marketing techniques, in the sense that the release of a new Murakami novel warrants additional promotional efforts. For instance, his popularity offers the publishers the possibility to work closely with retailers who want to promote the author's work more prominently to their customers, which in itself is a testament to the increasing interdependence and engagement between literary production and the logic of the marketplace. A noteworthy difference between both countries lies in that fact that in the Netherlands, Murakami only has to give his approval for his cover designs, whereas in the United Kingdom, this extends to all promotional activities. As a result, it was argued that the commercial interests of the Dutch publisher might therefore actually undermine the author's agency in utilizing his brand name during so called "Murakami events" without his explicit consent. By opposing his celebrity status with his self-purported ordinariness in his auto-representation, Murakami fashions a counter-narrative in his interviews with the media through which he can regain control over his star image. Although loss of agency is not so much of concern in the United Kingdom, as the author is well aware of the lengths to which his British publisher will go to promote his work, his ordinariness asserts itself as an invaluable aspect of his public posturing in both countries. With remarkable consistency, Murakami invariably describes himself as an ordinary run-of-the-mill guy. In interviews with the British press, the author moreover referred to himself as an engineer or a gardener, rather than as an artist or a creator, as the latter would make him come across as someone who possesses extraordinary

talents. His level of ordinariness authenticates his private self and allows for easy audience identification, whilst at the same counteracting a sense of vanity that is most commonly associated with the figure of the celebrity.

Inherent to the author's celebrity status is his contested position between the fields of restricted and large-scale production. This ambiguous position of the literary celebrity is complicated by the commercial interests of his publishers, which have to be reconciled with the pivotal role of cultural capital in the literary marketplace. Murakami might be idolised for his literary achievements, yet, it is precisely this public adulation that has caused the publishers in both countries to commodify the literary star into a well-established brand. Murakami appears to oppose this commodification through his posture of public reticence, an aspect of his star image that was categorized under the third paradox. Here, one notices how the various elements of signification that reside in Murakami's celebrity authorship can be intertwined, which corroborates the necessity of addressing them simultaneously in the conclusion to this analysis. Both in the Dutch and British media, Murakami is positioned as someone who is known to shun the limelight and who is reluctant to make public appearances or give interviews. His reclusiveness has become a shield through which he can guard his privacy, as well as upholding his apparent detachment from commercial interests. Since it was established that promotional campaigns by the Dutch publisher do not require his direct permission, meaning that the author is not actively engaged in increasing his commercial success, his refusal to visibly profit from his marketable personality might actually be genuine in the Netherlands. However, in the United Kingdom, Murakami is fully aware of the marketing effects of his own invisibility – after all, he has to give his consent to all promotional activities. Yet, such insights are concealed from the wider public, allowing his readers to consume a celebrity author whose withdrawal from public view testifies to his aversion of the literary fame game. In interviews with the British media, Murakami actively sustains such an image by expressing his bewilderment towards his own popularity.

Concerning the third paradox, this analysis found that Murakami has attempted to reconcile elements of public reticence with that of the public figure who communicates with his readers and takes up responsibility as an engaged author. One such attempt was found in his online advice column, although it is questionable whether his role as an online agony uncle was found convincing by the British and the Dutch media. News coverage in the Netherlands was limited, and in the United Kingdom, it was noted that Murakami did not offer any real insights into his private life. Other attempts manifest themselves during literary award ceremonies, which constitute the rare occasions where Murakami makes public appearances. The author

appears to be making a habit out of using his acceptance speeches as a way of voicing his opinion on pertinent global issues, ranging from Japan's nuclear policy to the European refugee crisis. Through his auto-representation, he positions himself as an engaged author, whose social commentary appeals to values that surpass commercial considerations. In this respect, a significant difference in terms of hetero-representation was found between both countries. Compared with the media coverage in the United Kingdom, this element of Murakami's star image plays a notably less important role in the author's hetero-representation by the Dutch press.

Thus, in terms of auto-representation, Murakami has managed to fashion a particularly distinctive yet unstable public image, in which vacillating subject positions are constantly negotiated and reconciled. Whether this reconciliation is successful very much depends on how extra-literary forces in their hetero-representation of the literary star both recognize and evaluate these various subjectivities. Moreover, this analysis found that in their hetero-representation, these extra-literary forces can and have attributed certain characteristics to Murakami's star image, which were in some cases opposed by the author in his public posturing. As such, it has been demonstrated how Murakami's celebrity authorship is the product of a complex field of power relations where different parties claim authority over the meaning of the literary star. Furthermore, differences in hetero-representation between the Netherlands and the United Kingdom underscore that the global popularity of Murakami should not be equated with a universal understanding of his celebrity authorship, since the strength of his star image as a discursive construct can only be derived from the collective configuration of its meaning. His star image should be therefore interpreted as a multifaceted discursive construct in which opposing elements of signification contribute to the paradoxical nature of his celebrity authorship.

§5 Conclusion: Murakami Haruki on the Global Stage

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts […]
- *William Shakespeare, As You Like It (1632)*

If there is one conclusion to be drawn from the preceding chapters, it must surely be that the celebrity authorship of Murakami Haruki cannot be defined in any simple way. Indeed, the author does seem to play many different parts, yet up until now it was unclear as to how the author managed to reconcile these vacillating subject positions that often seem to be contradictory and even incompatible. This study set out to examine how the celebrity authorship of Murakami Haruki is fabricated in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, and posed the hypothesis that his celebrity authorship should be perceived as inherently paradoxical.

The first section attempted to demonstrate the relevance and originality of this study to the field of Murakami Haruki studies. After carefully reviewing four seminal English-language monographs, it became clear that most of the leading scholars in the field have sought to understand the authorship of Murakami through a literary analysis of his prose. The celebrity aspect of his authorship receives little attention and most scholars shy away from incorporating secondary sources such as non-scholarly-articles or interviews with the author into their research. When applicable, geographical foci were limited to the United States and East Asia. The few academic articles that have taken the celebrity status of Murakami as their vantage point often argued that the author has the ability to produce multiple, possibly opposing selves to different audiences. However, a thorough literature review found that a practical application of this assertion, in which various subjectivities in different countries are analysed and compared, had not been carried out yet. Such a study is paramount if one wishes to fully fathom the dynamics of his celebrity authorship on the global stage. As such, this research not only claims to shed light on an under-researched topic in Murakami Haruki studies, it also purports to be the first contribution to a potential portfolio of case studies in which the celebrity authorship of Murakami is examined and compared in its respective geographical contexts.

Drawing upon several seminal works in the field of celebrity studies, with specific attention paid to celebrity authorship, the second section set out to provide a conceptual framework that would later be used to scrutinize the findings of the case studies in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. Celebrity studies in general can be characterized by its

disparate views on both the historical trajectory and conceptualization of the celebrity phenomenon. In contrast to so-called "emptiness theories" that denounce present-day celebrity as a hollowed-out media construct, this study chose to align itself with the approach of leading scholars Richard Dyer and P. David Marshall who, in their semiotic understanding of the celebrity phenomenon, interpret the celebrity as an intertextual, discursive construct of subjectivity that articulates what it means to be a human in contemporary society. Dyer's notion of the "star image", defined as the complex configuration of aural, visual and verbal signs that constitute the general image of the celebrity in a wide array of mediated forms, has proven instrumental in uncovering the multiplicity of meanings that the celebrity signifies. It was argued that star images are necessarily paradoxical, since their various elements of signification do not always cohere nor are they ever at a point of rest. The celebrity should therefore be understood as a negotiated terrain of significance or a "discursive battleground" in which subject positions are shaped and (re)negotiated.

The second section of this study furthermore addressed the three "moulding forces" that have driven the establishment and dissemination of celebrity culture. It became clear that the growing influence of (mass) media, the increasing centrality of the private life and the commodification of the individual are no longer confined to the domains of media and entertainment, but resonate just as strongly in the manifestation of literary stardom. It was argued that the once restricted field of literary production has now been absorbed into the large-scale field of the global entertainment industry, an assertion that would later be confirmed by Murakami's publishers in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. This affects the literary celebrity insofar as his personality has become an increasingly valuable promotional component of book publicity. This development not only opposes the traditional assumption that the literary writer ought to distance himself from commercial interests, it might even jeopardize the agency of the author, whose star image has to be professionally managed by his publisher. In this respect, specific attention was paid to the figure of the author-recluse. Despite the fact that their public reticence runs counter to the idea of a literary fame game primarily based on marketable personalities, the apparent aloofness of an author-recluse from commercial success not only contributes to their popularity, but also authenticates their private self as one that is not commodified by the logic of the marketplace.

Straddling the boundaries between the fields of restricted and large-scale production, the literary celebrity finds himself occupying a contested position of cultural production, in which the ideological contradiction between acclaimed literary prestige and mass market appeal has to be negotiated. This causes the phenomenon of celebrity authorship to be considered

ambiguous, unstable and multifaceted. What complicates this double-positioning is the fact that the author's star image is very much dependent on the active attributions by extra-literary forces, who all claim the right to determine the value and meaning of the celebrity author. That is not to say that celebrity status is simply imposed on the author. In acknowledging literary celebrity as a discursive construct that is made up by a whole range of media texts from promotional material to literary criticism, it is vital to remember that the author is not only produced by these discourses (hetero-representation), but is also actively engaged in producing them himself (auto-representation).

The third section of this study employed a multimodal discourse analysis to examine how the celebrity authorship of Murakami Haruki is fabricated in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, so as to test whether the hypothesized paradoxes that were outlined in the introduction to this thesis hold true in both countries. Since case studies of non-western authors are underrepresented in the field of celebrity studies, the conceptual framework formulated in the second section was based on theories in which Western celebrity culture and its attendant values remain at the forefront. Although initially wary about the applicability of these theoretical considerations for the study of a contemporary Japanese author, this analysis experienced no issues in corroborating the collected data with the theories at hand. However, considering the geographical focus of this study did not extend the Western scope, this finding does not refute the short-sightedness of the dominant Anglo-American model present in celebrity studies.

This analysis found the auto-representation of Murakami Haruki in both the Netherlands and the United Kingdom to be remarkably consistent. In line with the theoretical observations of Dyer and Marshall, his star image consists of various elements of signification that do not always cohere, yet the author does not portray different versions of himself to the different audiences from the countries under analysis. His self-purported ordinariness, for instance, asserts itself as an invaluable aspect of his public posturing in both countries. It allows him to oppose his celebrity status with a level of ordinariness that authenticates his private self, fosters audience identification and counteracts negative connotations that tend to be associated with one's celebrity status. It also became clear that by adopting a role as an author-recluse, Murakami has found a way to reconcile the ideological contradiction between acclaimed literary prestige and mass market appeal. His reclusiveness has become a shield through which he can uphold his apparent detachment from commercial interests. Yet, at the same time, this analysis found that Murakami has also attempted to reconcile elements of public reticence with that of a public figure, by communicating with his readers via the medium of the internet, and

by positioning himself as an engaged author, whose social commentary appeals to values that surpass commercial considerations.

Murakami is thus a literary star who embodies a variety of vacillating subject positions, but by no means is his celebrity authorship the work of a single man. This analysis has not only found that extra-literary forces have been equally important in attributing elements of signification that are now part and parcel of his star image, their active attributions can also sustain, oppose or simply ignore the ways in which the author himself fashions his celebrity authorship. This subsequently means that the author's reconciliation strategies are contingent on the hetero-representation by extra-literary forces in their respective geographical context. For example, although Murakami might make use of literary award ceremonies to position himself as an engaged author, this aspect of his star image hardly receives any attention in the Netherlands, whereas in the United Kingdom, his acceptance speeches are often scrutinized by the media. This analysis then not only exemplified how the celebrity authorship of Murakami is the product of a "discursive battlefield" in which discursive investments of both the author and the extra-literary forces claim a sense of authority over his star image, it also revealed intriguing differences in the hetero-representation of the author in both countries. As such, this study evinces the necessity of a relativistic approach to the Murakami phenomenon, since one can infer from the differences in hetero-representation after comparing British and Dutch extra-literary forces that the global popularity of Murakami should not be equated with a universal understanding of his celebrity authorship.

Of course, this study can only paint a partial picture of the Murakami phenomenon. In order to fully demonstrate the complexity and diversity of the phenomenon, it would be necessary to compare multiple geographical contexts to analyse the various ways in which his celebrity authorship has been constructed, but also how Murakami might have turned to different approaches from the ones discussed in this thesis to manage and control his celebrity image. Furthermore, the focus of this study was limited to the production side of his celebrity authorship. In further research, it would be worthwhile to employ audience studies in order to gain a better understanding of how his star image is consumed by his readership, or his fans, in various countries.

In conclusion, this research has shown that the celebrity authorship of Murakami Haruki is more than simply the product of 'a media-fixated, market-driven contemporary culture' (Moran, 2000, p.15). The diversification of celebrity culture into the field of literary production has certainly affected the practices of extra-literary forces. Nevertheless, this study argues that Murakami has had the ability to influence in this process by exerting his auto-representation as

a strategy to maintain a sense of control over his star image. Approaching the Murakami phenomenon as an intertextual, discursive construct elucidated the complex interplay of opposing elements of signification that inform the paradoxical nature of his celebrity authorship. But perhaps most importantly, it has allowed us to reflect on the discursive oppositions within which the phenomenon of the literary celebrity operates, which ultimately leads to a deeper understanding of what it means to be a literary star in contemporary society.

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