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Heterotopia, the Mirror, and the Gendered Gaze in Murakami's *Sputnik Sweetheart*

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Abstract:

This article argues that spatial dislocation and gendered spectatorship are inseparable in Haruki Murakami's *Sputnik Sweetheart* (1999), a novel that spatial and feminist criticism has tended to approach separately. Reading its two defining spaces, a Swiss Ferris wheel and a Greek island, through Foucault's heterotopology, Bachelard's poetics of the threshold, Freud's uncanny double and Mulvey's theory of the gaze, it proposes that the locked gondola is a heterotopia of crisis and illusion in which Miu's enforced spectatorship of her own double collapses Mulvey's active/passive oscillation into a permanent partition. The island then exposes the limits of that partition: Miu's body cannot answer Sumire's desire, and Sumire dissolves. Because this scene stages desire between women, it exceeds Mulvey's heterosexual model and is positioned against Morris's reading through compulsory heterosexuality. Finally, adapting Tsang's narrativised gaze structure, the article shows how the narrator K frames both women's stories.

Keywords: Haruki Murakami, *Sputnik Sweetheart*, heterotopia, gendered gaze, queer desire.

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Introduction

In Sumire's private vocabulary, "Sputnik Sweetheart" is the name for Miu, the older woman with whom she falls in love, and the name immediately calls up the dog Laika: Sumire pictures "the dark, lustrous eyes of the dog gazing out of the tiny window" and asks "what could Laika possibly be looking at?" (Murakami 10). The title thus joins two figures, a sealed capsule and a watching eye. The novel's epigraph, quoted from a world-history chronicle, supplies the fact behind them: Sputnik II carried Laika, "the first living being to leave the Earth's atmosphere," but "the satellite was never recovered" (Murakami, epigraph).

The novel later gives this geometry to a second voice. Near the close of her account of the night before Sumire vanished, Miu tells K what came to her as Sumire sobbed beside her: that the two of them had been "wonderful travelling companions" but also "lonely lumps of metal on their own separate orbits," bodies that look from afar like shooting stars but are "nothing more than prisons, where each of us is locked up alone" (Murakami 128). Sputnik, as Miu has already remarked, means "travelling companion" in Russian (108). The image condenses the novel's central intuition: intimacy as a geometry of sealed enclosures whose orbits occasionally, and catastrophically, cross. It also arrives mediated. Miu speaks it to K, and K reports it to the reader, a chain of telling that the readings below treat as part of the problem.

Murakami's fiction is celebrated for its metaphysical landscapes, wells, shadowy hotels and liminal alleyways, through which isolated protagonists confront their unconscious depths. A substantial body of scholarship has mapped these environments, while a parallel stream of feminist criticism has scrutinised the gender dynamics of his narration. The two have seldom been read together, and *Sputnik Sweetheart* shows what is lost by that separation. Its plot turns on two spatial traumas suffered by its female protagonists, Miu's overnight entrapment in a Ferris wheel gondola in a small Swiss town and Sumire's disappearance from a Greek island,

and both reach the reader through a male narrator's frame. Morris's study, which is devoted to the novel itself, reads Sumire's disappearance as an escape from compulsory heterosexuality into a world free from binaries. It engages the novel's metaphysical structure and its desire, but it casts that other side as a refuge from social constraint, and neither the gaze nor the novel's spaces figure in it as the mechanism of the women's psychic damage.

This article argues that spatial dislocation and gendered spectatorship are inseparable in the novel, and that this is clearest where the novel stages desire between women. Murakami builds the Ferris wheel and the island as Foucauldian heterotopias: real counter-sites that invert and expose ordinary spaces. The gondola, I argue, is a heterotopia of crisis that functions as a space of illusion; the island is a closed system of ferry, holiday time and compensatory idyll. Enforced elevation and exposure produce a "scopic short-circuit" in which Miu watches herself being watched, collapsing the oscillation between active and passive positions that Mulvey describes into a permanent partition. The island is where that partition meets a woman's desire. Sumire's gaze at Miu is active, desiring and legitimised by the text as love, yet Miu's body cannot return it. This is a scopic scene between women that Mulvey's heterosexual model cannot describe, and I position it against Morris's reading of the novel through compulsory heterosexuality and against Zielinska-Elliott's work on male–male sexuality in Murakami. Finally, the narrator K occupies the positions of camera and desiring character at once, so that his mediation reproduces the scopic structure the spaces expose and makes the reader complicit in consuming female trauma.

After reviewing the critical landscape and setting out the theoretical framework, the article reads the Ferris wheel as a heterotopia of crisis and illusion in which Miu's binoculars act as Foucault's mirror and the Freudian double. It then reads the Greek island through Foucault's principles and Bachelard's intimate immensity, turns to the queer scopic scene at

the heart of that reading, and closes by examining K's structural voyeurism and the reader's complicity.

Spatiality, Gender and Queerness in Murakami Criticism: The Divided Shelf

Murakami criticism in English has organised itself into two strands whose limited communication is itself instructive. The first is spatial-metaphysical. Matthew Strecher's pioneering work has traced the topography of the "other world," which he notes many Japanese critics call *achiragawa*, or "over there," reading its wells and subways as doorways to the unconscious (Strecher 71–73). Jay Rubin similarly maps Murakami's metaphysical narrative space (Rubin 490–500). Michael Fisch, writing on *Sputnik Sweetheart* itself, reads the encounter with *achiragawa* as a technologically mediated shock in which disavowal is short-circuited and split-off material briefly surfaces, a moment dangerous but liberating, a way back to language and to the real (Fisch 361–83; Scammell 45). Barbara Thornbury has explored how Tokyo's urban transformation produces sociocultural displacement and disconnection (Thornbury 51–66), and Gemma Jane Scammell has read Murakami's heterotopic spaces through a framework of refuge and resistance in her doctoral thesis (Scammell). Scammell does attend to gender, identifying a gender bias in the fiction and examining how its female characters come to experience other spaces (Scammell 5, 95–104), and Scammell reports that Rio Otomo, the only earlier critic to use heterotopia in analysing gendered space, reads the women of *After Dark* as occupying "a heterotopic enclosure" (qtd. in Scammell 68). Yet the Ferris wheel scene in *Sputnik Sweetheart* is treated differently: Scammell reads Miu's binoculars as a mirror and her split as a Lacanian misrecognition (Scammell 114–15), not as a scopic structure produced by the space itself.

The second strand is feminist. Gitte Marianne Hansen has shown that the overall narrator of Murakami's stories told by a male first-person narrator (*boku* or male *watashi*, both

Japanese words for "I") constructs and edits his female characters, choosing what to tell, what to silence and what to make up, even in *Sputnik Sweetheart*, where the women's consciousness seems directly available (Hansen 95, 103). Michael Tsang has adapted Mulvey's theory of the male gaze to *After Dark*, showing how its narrative structure makes the reader an accomplice in a voyeuristic apparatus (Tsang 113, 122). Ellie Dennis's master's thesis examines how the male gaze, which she attributes to the author's patriarchal influence, shapes the representation of sex, violence and gender in *1Q84* (Dennis). Yet these critics rarely focus on the architectural specificity of the spaces that frame their subjects.

Queer readings form a third, smaller current that cuts across both. Anna Zielinska-Elliott's chapter addresses male–male sexuality in Murakami's fiction (Zielinska-Elliott 147–66). Katelyn Morris, who writes directly on *Sputnik Sweetheart* in an undergraduate thesis published in Kean Quest, reads Sumire's disappearance as a deliberate escape from compulsory heterosexuality into a metaphysical world free from binaries and draws on Rupert Sheldrake's theory of morphic resonance to explain the novel's alternate realities (Morris). Neither asks how desire between women is staged by the novel's built spaces and lines of sight. Morris does treat desire between women, but she locates its obstruction in compulsory heterosexuality and gives it a destination in a metaphysical other side that she presents as a refuge; the male gaze appears only in passing, in a gloss on Rich, and she does not read the gondola or the island as spaces of looking. That is the question this article takes up.

That the spatial and gendered strands occupy separate parts of *Murakami Haruki and Our Years of Pilgrimage* (Part 1, "Temporal and Spatial Dimensions," which includes Thornbury, and Part 2, "Narrative and Genders," which includes Hansen, Tsang and Zielinska-Elliott) demonstrates the gap this article addresses. The spatial critics, including Scammell and Otomo, have attended to gender or to the Ferris wheel scene but have not asked how the space itself produces a gendered look. The feminist critics have rarely asked what space does to the

women the narration frames. The one queer reading of this novel that I have found, Morris's, has not asked how the gaze between women is housed by the novel's spaces.

Sputnik Sweetheart cannot be adequately read within any of these strands alone, because its plot is precisely the conversion of one into another: spaces that partition and dissolve female subjects, a desire between women that those spaces refuse, and a narration that frames both for consumption. Bringing Foucault, Bachelard and Freud into conversation with Mulvey and her adaptors, the readings that follow treat the novel's spatial and scopic regimes as a single mechanism.

Theoretical Framework

This article reads *Sputnik Sweetheart* through four interlocking frameworks, each illuminating a different dimension of the same mechanism. Foucault's heterotopology names the kind of spaces Murakami builds and the rules by which they open, close and invert. Bachelard's phenomenology of inhabited space supplies the experiential texture of dwelling on a threshold, and of what happens when the threshold is sealed or removed. Freud's theory of the uncanny double explains why the spectacle of the self, viewed from an impossible vantage, is experienced as annihilation instead of recognition. Mulvey's psychoanalytic feminism reveals why these spatial events are gendered: the act of looking that activates them is already structured by the active/male, passive/female binary of patriarchal visual culture. The frameworks are applied simultaneously, not in sequence. Each space produces a spatial crisis in Foucault's terms, experienced as a crisis of inside and outside in Bachelard's, figured as the return of a disowned double in Freud's, and activated by the gendered gaze in Mulvey's.

Heterotopia, the Mirror, and Heterochrony (Foucault)

Foucault's concept of heterotopia, sketched in a 1967 lecture published posthumously as "Of Other Spaces," names real places that function as counter-sites, locations "in which the

real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted" (24).[1] The essay offers a mirror and then six principles. This section follows Foucault's own order and numbering, and marks where each bears on the novel.

The mirror comes first. Foucault calls it a hybrid: a utopia, since it shows the subject "there where I am not," and a heterotopia, since the mirror "does exist in reality, where it exerts a sort of counteraction on the position that I occupy" (24):

> I see myself there where I am not, in an unreal, virtual space that opens up behind the surface; I am over there, there where I am not, a sort of shadow that gives my own visibility to myself, that enables me to see myself there where I am absent: such is the utopia of the mirror. (24)

From the standpoint of the mirror, the subject discovers her absence from the place where she is, and begins to reconstitute herself there where she is (24). This is the mechanism Miu's binoculars enact from the gondola.

The first principle is the typology (24–25). Foucault distinguishes crisis heterotopias, privileged, sacred or forbidden places reserved for individuals who are, in relation to society and their surroundings, in a state of crisis, from heterotopias of deviation, "those in which individuals whose behavior is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed" (25), such as rest homes, psychiatric hospitals and prisons. He adds that crisis heterotopias are disappearing and giving way to deviation. His modern example of the crisis type is the honeymoon trip, which he describes as a tradition lasting until the middle of the twentieth century, in which a young woman's deflowering could take place "nowhere," the train or honeymoon hotel being the place of that nowhere. The distinction matters because it is the criterion of classification: not what a place is built for but whom it holds, and why.

The second principle is changing function (25). A society, Foucault argues, "can make an existing heterotopia function in a very different fashion" as its history unfolds, so that a heterotopia is defined by what it does, which can change, and not by fixed form.

The third principle is juxtaposition. The heterotopia, Foucault says, is "capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible" (25), as the theatre and the cinema show, and as the garden, which he names as the oldest example, shows.

The fourth principle is heterochrony (26). Heterotopias are "most often linked to slices in time," and function fully "when men arrive at a sort of absolute break with their traditional time" (26). The cemetery is Foucault's paradigm of a heterochrony of loss. Against it he sets heterotopias of festival time, the fairgrounds, "marvelous empty sites on the outskirts of cities" that fill for a season and then empty (26).

The fifth principle is the system of opening and closing. Heterotopias "always presuppose a system of opening and closing that both isolates them and makes them penetrable"; entry may be compulsory, or conditional on rites and gestures (26).

The sixth principle concerns function in relation to the remaining space (27). Heterotopias operate either as spaces of illusion that expose every real space as "still more illusory," or as spaces of compensation, real spaces of meticulous order set against the disorder of our own. Foucault closes with the ship, "a place without a place," self-enclosed yet abandoned to the boundless sea (27).

Applied below, the typology (first), changing function (second), opening and closing (fifth) and illusion (sixth) account for the gondola; juxtaposition (third), heterochrony (fourth), opening and closing (fifth) and compensation (sixth) account for the island.

The Threshold and the Half-Open Being (Bachelard)

Foucault's heterotopology is diagnostic and adversarial; Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space* is phenomenological and, by his own admission, a study of *felicitous* space, the space we love. Vidler reads Bachelard's dreams of the lost birthplace, in *La Terre et les rêveries du repos*, as part of a postwar, anti-modern nostalgia for the house (Vidler 64–65). As Joan Ockman puts it, Foucault's work "begins—consciously—where Bachelard leaves off," confronting the adversity that Bachelard's felicitous space screens out (Ockman). This article does not elide that difference.

On the contrary, *Sputnik Sweetheart* is read here as the narrative of felicitous space turning adversarial, of the shelter that becomes a trap and the shelter that fails to hold. The novel moves from Bachelard's side of the street to Foucault's, and the two vocabularies map its route.

Bachelard's "dialectics of outside and inside" is avowedly asymmetrical: "inside and outside do not receive in the same way the qualifying epithets that are the measure of our adherence" (Bachelard 215). The human being is a threshold creature: "man is half-open being" (222), and the door is therefore "an entire cosmos of the Half-open," the figure of hesitation, temptation and desire; "a threshold is a sacred thing" (222–23). A sealed door does not merely imprison the half-open being; it destroys the equilibrium by which the self negotiates the world. Conversely, a landscape that no longer adheres to a dwelling abolishes the threshold from the other side.

In the chapter "House and Universe," Bachelard describes the winter-besieged house whose exterior is reduced to a "non-house": "snow covers all tracks, blurs the road, muffles every sound, conceals all colors," producing "a form of cosmic negation in action," against which the dreamer "experiences all the qualities of intimacy with increased intensity" (41). The

intensification depends entirely on the house's persistence as shelter. In "Intimate Immensity," Bachelard argues that "immensity is within ourselves," an "expansion of being" that is "the movement of motionless man" (184), a daydream of infinity that consoles precisely because it is experienced from a secure centre. Remove the centre, or let it fail, and the same immensity becomes lethal. These concepts, threshold, half-open being, winter house, cosmic negation and intimate immensity, supply the experiential grammar for both the gondola and the island.

The Uncanny Double (Freud)

Freud's essay "The Uncanny" (1919) provides the psychoanalytic mechanism that Foucault's spatial theory names but does not explain: why the encounter with one's own image, under conditions of spatial deformation, becomes not self-recognition but self-destruction. Freud traces the Doppelgänger to its origins as a psychic defence: the ego, confronting its own finitude, produces a duplicate as "an energetic denial of the power of death," an insurance that something will survive the destruction of the self (Freud 235). But this protective shadow undergoes a reversal. "From having been an assurance of immortality," Freud writes, the double "becomes the uncanny harbinger of death" (Freud 235), because it carries everything the self has disowned, and its return is therefore always the return of the repressed.

The concept illuminates a dimension of Miu's experience that neither Foucault's mirror nor Mulvey's gaze fully captures. Miu does not merely see herself from an impossible vantage; she sees the desiring self she has suppressed since her years of piano discipline (Murakami 169), the half that was kept alive, like a shadow, precisely because it was never acknowledged. The heterotopic space does not conjure this figure from nothing; it creates the conditions, sealed elevation, inverted perspective and binoculars that return her own image from across the dark, under which the disowned half becomes visible. And visibility is fatal. The Freudian double reverses on contact: what had persisted as unconscious insurance against psychic dissolution

becomes, once seen, the announcement of that dissolution. The *heimlich* (the homely), her own body, her own face and her own hair still black (167), is rendered *unheimlich* (uncanny) by the impossible vantage from which she sees it.

Freud's double is a psychic mechanism, but its return in this novel is never merely mental; it always requires a specific kind of space to stage it. As Anthony Vidler's study of the architectural uncanny shows, the modern *unheimlich* is bound up with built and domestic space as much as with the psyche. The house, as the most intimate shelter, is the site where the contrast with invasion by an alien presence is felt most sharply (Vidler 17), and Freud's intuition, in Vidler's account, is that there is "a single passage" from the homely house to the haunted one (Vidler 32). The gondola is precisely such a site. It offers the appearance of a familiar, domestic vantage, since Miu watches her own apartment as she would from home, while the structure of the gondola guarantees that the vantage will betray her: sealed, elevated and inverted, it is a house turned inside out. Freud's theory explains why the returning double is experienced as annihilation rather than recognition; Vidler's spatial account of the uncanny supplies the missing premise, that the double can return through a space built, however briefly, to resemble home.

The Gendered Gaze and Its Afterthoughts (Mulvey)

Mulvey's "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" theorises the gaze as a structure of sexual imbalance. Scopophilia, the pleasure of taking another person as an erotic object of sight, subjects the looked-at person to "a controlling and curious gaze" (Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure" 8, 10), while a second, narcissistic structure of looking, rooted in Lacan's mirror stage, produces ego identification with the image seen (9). In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, Mulvey argues, "pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female." The determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto a female figure who is

styled accordingly, so that she can be said to "connote to-be-looked-at-ness," while "[w]oman displayed as sexual object is the leit-motif of erotic spectacle" (11). Mulvey further distinguishes three looks: that of the camera, that of the audience and that of the characters at one another within the screen illusion (17–18), the first two subordinated to the third so that the spectator possesses the female object through the male protagonist's eyes. The model presumes a heterosexual scopic regime in which the looker is male and the looked-at female, an assumption that becomes both a problem and a resource for the reading of the island below.

Two refinements matter for what follows. In "Afterthoughts" (1981), Mulvey addresses the female spectator, who may find herself enjoying, almost unconsciously, the freedom and control over the story world that identification with a hero offers (Mulvey, "Afterthoughts" 12). Such a spectator oscillates between the masculine-coded active position and the feminine-coded passive one, and her fantasy of masculinisation, in Mulvey's image, is "restless in its transvestite clothes" (15). Miu's tragedy, as the reading of the Ferris wheel below argues, is that this oscillation, dynamic and survivable in the melodrama, freezes into permanence in the gondola.

The second refinement is narratological. Tsang's adaptation of Mulvey to prose demonstrates that the cinematic apparatus has an equivalent in narration. His "narrativised gaze structure" distinguishes four tiers, splitting the director or author from the camera or narrator while retaining the male character and the spectator (Tsang 114–16). This refinement is crucial for the discussion of the narrator below: K occupies two tiers at once. He is the camera through which everything is seen, and he is a desiring male character within the scene he frames.

The Ferris Wheel: A Heterotopia of Crisis and Illusion

The episode that partitions Miu is told in a titled inset, "The Tale of Miu and the Ferris Wheel" (Murakami 154), inside the text Sumire later labels Document 2. Miu is twenty-five, a

pianist studying in Paris, who has taken a short-term apartment on a hill in a small Swiss town near the French border (154–55). From her window she can see an amusement park whose Ferris wheel is lit all night (155), and the narrator remarks that Ferris wheels "don't go anywhere" (155): they rise and come back down, a roundabout trip, in the same words, "going nowhere," that Miu later uses of the satellites (128).

Miu is also, already, in crisis. A man from Barcelona, Ferdinando, seems to follow her, and "she sniffed a hint of sexual desire, and it frightened her" (156). The pleasant town begins to feel narrow, and she senses "an invisible prejudice against her as an Asian" (156); she wants to leave but finds that "she couldn't drag herself away from the town" (157). Foucault's typology offers two candidates for the space that then holds her, and only one is supported by the text. Miu is not placed in the gondola for deviance, as a prisoner or a patient is. She is locked in by accident: the elderly man who runs the wheel stops it and leaves, apparently forgetting her, as she supposes (160–61). The gondola is therefore not a heterotopia of deviation. It is a heterotopia of crisis in Foucault's sense, a place that is effectively nowhere in which a young woman at a sexual and cultural threshold passes through an event that has no place in her ordinary life, as the honeymoon train once held a passage that could occur nowhere else. Deviation enters only afterwards, and as a social effect, not as a spatial function. When the police compare her face with her passport photograph and ask whether she is really twenty-five (166), the white hair that the gondola has produced marks her as deviant from the norm of her own papers, and Miu spends fourteen years dyeing it away (153).

The episode begins as idle curiosity, and the thought that sets it in motion is a reversal: "It would be fun to see my apartment from the Ferris wheel, she suddenly thought, instead of the other way around" (158). The reversal is the whole mechanism in miniature. Miu exchanges the subject position she occupies every evening, the apartment dweller who looks out, for the

object position of one who looks back at her own dwelling. She sets in motion, without knowing it, her own scopic displacement.

The space she enters changes function in real time, as Foucault's second principle allows. As a fairground, the amusement park belongs to the festival heterochronies of his fourth principle, sites that fill for a season. But Miu rides alone, at closing time. The park empties, the lights go out, and the attendant "locked it from the outside. For safety's sake, no doubt" (159). The festival site, closed, becomes a cell, a sealed capsule like the one in the novel's epigraph. The fifth principle supplies the machinery. Entry was conditional on a ticket and the hour; exit is now under another's control, and the door "wouldn't budge" (159). The system of opening and closing that both isolates and makes penetrable here isolates absolutely, and entry has become, in Foucault's terms, compulsory.

Bachelard supplies the phenomenology: the locked gondola is a home inverted, an inside that no longer adheres to its inhabitant, a door that has ceased to be an "entire cosmos of the Half-open" and become a seal (Bachelard 215, 222). Elevation, the Ferris wheel's gift, is also its gag: Miu leans out and knows that no one will hear, because she is too high, "her voice too small" (Murakami 160–61).

Alone in the capsule, she trains her binoculars on her own apartment. The preliminary look already carries the charge. Looking at her empty rooms gives her "a guilty feeling," "as if she were peeking in on herself"; she reassures herself, "But I'm not there" (160). Scopophilic guilt precedes its object; the taboo she violates is not another's privacy but her own. Then the apartment fills. Near midnight she sees a naked man in her bedroom, and it is Ferdinando, "No mistake about it" (164). Then a woman appears in the window: "What she saw was herself" (164). Miu's mind goes blank. Her own perception is that the scene is staged for her: "They know I'm watching" (165). Whether or not the double returns her look, Miu believes that it does, and "still she couldn't pull her eyes away" (165). Later, in the account she gives Sumire

in Burgundy, even the man dissolves: “in the end it wasn’t even Ferdinando any more” (166). The threat was never him; the menace is endogenous.

The figure Miu watches is not a stranger, and Freud explains why its familiarity is the source of horror. What Miu sees through the binoculars is not Ferdinando, and not a hallucination: it is the desiring self she disowned in her devotion to becoming a world-class pianist, so complete that, as she says, “never once did I truly love someone” (169). The gondola supplies what the psyche alone cannot, a literal vantage from which that disowned half becomes visible, and the *heimlich* turns *unheimlich* the instant it is seen. K himself, reading Document 2, names the episode in the vocabulary of the uncanny: Miu, he notes, “saw a second self there. A doppelgänger” (173). Miu cannot stop watching because she cannot stop recognising.

The binoculars are Foucault’s mirror perfected into an instrument. Through them Miu sees herself, in Foucault’s words, “there where I am not” (Foucault 24), from an impossible vantage. Scammell also reads the binoculars as a mirror, through Lacan’s mirror stage (Scammell 114–15). But Foucault’s mirror reconstitutes the subject; Miu’s shatters her. The difference is the gendered structure Mulvey names. Patriarchal visual culture splits pleasure between the active male bearer of the look and the passive female bearer of to-be-looked-at-ness (Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure” 11). The gondola forces Miu to occupy both halves of the split at once. She is the active voyeur, controlling and curious, and she is the exhibited spectacle, and she cannot stop being either. This is the scopic short-circuit: the oscillation that Mulvey’s female spectator performs dynamically, shifting restlessly between masculine-coded activity and feminine-coded passivity, collapses into simultaneity (Mulvey, “Afterthoughts” 12, 15). Miu is stranded, in Mulvey’s exact geography, “between the deep blue sea of passive femininity and the devil of regressive masculinity” (15), with nowhere left to shift to.

The body bears the cost of a scopic position it cannot sustain. She is found the next morning unconscious (Murakami 166), and in the hospital bathroom she discovers that her hair

has turned white: “At first she thought it was somebody else in the mirror,” until “the white-haired woman staring back at her was herself” (167). The formula repeats the gondola’s (“was herself”), and a second mirror confirms the first recognition.

Foucault’s sixth principle names what the gondola has done. It is a space of illusion that exposes every real space as still more illusory (Foucault 27). From its height, Miu’s “real” life, the orderly apartment, the avoided suitor and the self she presented to the world, is revealed as the actual fiction, a staging by a double she did not know she had. In the same document, Miu reaches the same conclusion in the flattest possible terms: “what happened in Switzerland 14 years ago may well have been something I created myself” (Murakami 169). The heterotopia did not show her the truth about her life; it showed her that the life she had arranged was the illusion.

Small wonder that her own summary of the aftermath is ontological. “The person here now isn’t the real me,” she tells Sumire at dinner, before the story has been told: “Fourteen years ago I became half the person I used to be” (52). In Burgundy she says that “another me, maybe half of me, had gone over to the other side,” taking with it “my black hair, my sexual desire, my periods, my ovulation” (167), and that “[j]ust a single mirror separates us from the other side. But I can never cross the boundary of that single pane of glass” (167). The mirror that constituted her visibility now walls her off from her own missing half. Fourteen years later she is still inside the heterochrony of that night, an accumulating present in which nothing is worked through because the threshold cannot be re-crossed in either direction. The clearest external sign of the partition is her hair, which “turned entirely white” overnight (153); the clearest internal sign is the one that will govern the reading of the island below: since that night, as she tells K, reporting what she told Sumire, “I haven’t been able to give myself to anyone in this world” (127). The Ferris wheel did not merely frighten her. It confiscated her desiring self and locked it on the far side of the mirror.

The Greek Island: Closure, Compensation and Dissolution

If the Ferris wheel enacts heterotopia as partition, the Greek island enacts it as dissolution. The geometries are inverted. The gondola was vertical, a sealed cell raised above a town, concentrating its occupant to a point. The island is horizontal: open water, open sky, a landscape that extends the walker outward until the figure becomes indistinguishable from the terrain. That difference should not hide a structural kinship. The island is also a heterotopia in Foucault's sense, and it answers to several of his principles at once.

Its system of opening and closing is the ferry. K reaches the island only because Miu telephones and summons him; there are two ferries a day from Rhodes, and Miu will meet each at the harbour (Murakami 89–90). The island is penetrable, but on a schedule and by invitation. When Sumire vanishes, the system closes: the ferry captain and the ticket seller recall no young Japanese woman boarding, so she "must still be on the island" (130). Yet she is never found. The closed system that should have held her turns out to have no outside and no inside either: "In the end we never found out what happened to Sumire" (183). Her disappearance is repeatedly described in a single figure, "like smoke" (103, 183).

The fourth principle, linking heterotopias to slices of time, fits the holiday itself. The island is lived in summer, outside the working year, a suspended time that K must leave when "the new school term was around the corner" (183), and Miu voices the wish that belongs to such a time: "I'd stay here for ever" (120). The cemetery, Foucault's paradigm heterochrony, is the "quasi-eternity in which her permanent lot is dissolution and disappearance" (Foucault 26). The island turns the holiday's wish to remain for ever into that permanent lot for Sumire, who is never found. It is also, through the novel's governing figure, the fate of Laika, the living creature sealed in a capsule and launched past every threshold of the habitable, and "never recovered" (Murakami, epigraph).

The third principle, juxtaposition, is written into the novel by Sumire herself. In Document 2, the narrator observes that, outside, "the boundaries begin to dissolve, everything melting into a chaotic ooze," while "Inside the house, though, it's pleasantly cool" (Murakami 152). The cottage, with its veranda, living room, front-door key and Brahms (119–20, 129), is a domestic interior set against an exterior that dissolves. The island places the two in one location, and the novel's question is what happens to a woman who passes from one to the other.

The sixth principle makes the island a space of compensation. For Miu, it is the place where the disguise can be dropped. "Nobody knows me here, so it didn't matter," she tells K, which is why she stopped dyeing her hair after their arrival (126), and in the cottage bathroom she meets her own white hair in the mirror (124). That she dyes it again before K arrives, so as not to give him "a strange first impression" (126), shows what the compensation is for: a space in which the sign of the partition need not be concealed from women, though it must be from a male visitor. For Sumire, the island is where she writes more intently than Miu has ever seen her write (119). Compensation, however, depends on the idyll holding, and it does not hold once desire is introduced.

Sumire's letters reach K from the road, the second "posted from some obscure French village" (83), and then the channel stops. What K eventually reads are not letters but texts found after she has gone. He searches her small room, opens a locked suitcase with the combination of his own area code, and finds a diary and a floppy disk holding two untitled documents, Document 1 and Document 2 (139–40). Even her writing migrates from the communicative to the posthumous: addressed to K in letters, it now lies locked in a suitcase, addressed to no one. The documents themselves are threshold texts. Document 1 recounts a dream of her dead mother, who is pulled into a hole "as if sucked by some giant vacuum on the other side" (149), the island's pull figured as suction into depth. Where Miu's mirror walled her out of her own

other half, Sumire's mirror draws her in. When Sumire first looks into Miu's eyes, she sees "her own soul being sucked into the other side of a mirror," and the text adds that "Sumire loved that vision, and at the same time it frightened her" (43). She does not only fear the crossing; she desires it.

Bachelard explains why this landscape kills. The island is "intimate immensity" without the intimacy. Immensity, for Bachelard, is safe only when anchored: the "movement of motionless man" expands outward from a shelter that holds the self together while it daydreams infinity (Bachelard 184). The winter-besieged house turns even cosmic negation into an intensifier of intimacy because the house persists as a protective centre against the white erasure outside (41). The island does offer Sumire a house, and the novel stages precisely how a shelter can fail to hold. On the night before she vanishes, she is found crouched between the door and the wardrobe of Miu's room, curled up "as if to protect herself from something falling from the sky" (Murakami 121). By the following morning she has left the cottage in pyjamas and flip-flops, with her passport, bag, shoes and swimsuit left behind and the front-door key lying on her desk (129). The threshold is crossed in the one direction the half-open being cannot return from. The dialectic of inside and outside, "the measure of our adherence" (Bachelard 215), loses its terms: the cottage can no longer adhere to her, and the landscape beyond it will not hold her. Immensity without intimacy is no longer a daydream but an exposure, and the boundary between self and world becomes fatally permeable.

A Gaze Between Women: Queer Desire and Its Refusal

Miu's eyes in that early scene work as a mirror, and it is a woman's eye. The detail has consequences for Mulvey. Her model presumes a heterosexual scopic regime, an active male look and a passive female image, and the Swiss episode can be read within it, since the voyeuristic scene is assembled around a man and a woman who is both looker and looked-at.

The decisive scenes on the island, however, are a woman's gaze at a woman. Sumire loves Miu; her looking is active, desiring and legitimised by the text as love instead of voyeurism. Realising that she loves Miu, she thinks: "Danger may be lurking there," and "there's no turning back" (Murakami 28), and K, narrating her thoughts, adds: "Now, after the fact, I know her hunch turned out to be correct" (28).

Miu's look at Sumire is the more instructive. Undressing the rigid, sweating girl on the night before she vanishes, Miu feels she is looking at secrets, "something forbidden she shouldn't be seeing," and avoids looking at her naked skin (123). The desiring look is interrupted by its own prohibition. When Sumire then reaches for her, Miu does not resist, but her body does: "My heart and my head were aroused," she tells K, but the rest of her was "a hard, dry stone" (127). She explains it by the Swiss night. The desiring self that would have met Sumire's gaze is, in the novel's own terms, on the other side of the mirror (167). The threshold fails at the level of the body at the very moment the landscape is about to dissolve it at the level of space.

Between Sumire's desiring gaze and K's possessive, narrating gaze, the novel maps an ethics of looking. K confesses to a violent desire to push Sumire down on the floor (71); his look does not ask to be returned. One look asks to be returned and is refused by a partitioned body; the other never asks at all. Sumire, caught between the two, makes the crossing neither look can make for her, and the verb of her longing is the novel's own: satellites burn up (128), and she imagines being "burned up, gone for ever" (28).

This is where the article departs from, and builds on, existing queer readings. Morris attributes Sumire's disappearance to a deliberate crossing into a metaphysical world "free from judgment, binaries, and compulsory heterosexuality," and she reads Miu's Ferris-wheel splitting as a metaphor for that institution (Morris). She comes closest to the present argument when she reads Ferdinando's presumed entitlement to Miu through Rich's account of lesbian

existence as an attack on male right of access to women, but she does not treat the binocular scene as a scene of looking. Her explanation therefore places the explanatory weight on a social institution and on a metaphysics that she treats as a refuge, not on the spaces or sightlines. The reading proposed here shifts the weight to the structure of looking and the spaces that stage it: what fails on the island is not only Sumire's place in a heterosexual order but the capacity of a partitioned body, sealed behind a mirror by an earlier scopic trauma, to return a woman's look. Zielinska-Elliott's chapter addresses male–male sexuality; the staging of desire between women, and the spaces and sightlines that stage it, has a different structure, and it is that structure this reading traces. Mulvey's model, built for a heterosexual regime, is not discarded but stretched: in this novel the active look is a woman's, and the refusal belongs to a woman's body.

Sumire's disappearance is thus not a metaphor imposed by the critic but the island's spatial logic completed. Where Miu was sealed inside while her double operated outside, Sumire passes through the threshold entirely and finds that there is no outside. Sumire had wondered what Laika could be looking at out of the tiny window (10). The island answers: the same thing Miu saw through the binoculars, herself, on the other side of a mirror (43, 164).

The Structural Voyeur: K and the Narrativised Gaze

The two spaces thus form a single devastating sequence: crisis, then closure; vertical partition, then horizontal dissolution; two catastrophes of one structure, the impossibility of maintaining the threshold between self and world. Both catastrophes, however, reach the reader only through a third enclosure. Neither event is narrated where it happens. Both are framed, edited and delivered by a man who loves one woman, Sumire, who loves another.

Miu's partition and Sumire's dissolution arrive filtered through K's retrospection. The formal architecture of his first-person narration acts as the novel's final enclosure, a structure

of language holding their traumas for the reader's inspection. Tsang's narrativised gaze structure makes the mechanism precise. In his adaptation of Mulvey, the cinematic apparatus distributes four positions: the author as director, the narrator as camera, the male character as bearer of the diegetic look, and the reader as spectator (Tsang 116). Tsang himself notes, in closing, that the model may be applied to other Murakami novels and that *Sputnik Sweetheart*, despite its abundant focalisation on its female characters, is still framed through the gaze of its comparatively effaced male narrator K (Tsang 124). Hansen likewise observes that even here the first-person narrator remains the overall narrator (Hansen 95). The argument that follows develops that shared observation. K's peculiarity is that he occupies the middle two positions at once. He is the camera: everything the reader sees of Sumire and Miu is selected, angled and timed by him. He concedes as much early in the story: "Of course this story is about Sumire, not me. Still, I'm the one whose eyes the story is told through" (Murakami 59). He is also a desiring male character inside the frame: he loves Sumire, who loves Miu, who, by her own account, cannot give herself to anyone (127). The bearer of the look is also its subject; the voyeur is also a supplicant. Unrequited in the diegesis, K exercises in the narration the possession denied him in the plot. His passivity is the instrument.

K also narrates what he cannot have seen. He renders Sumire's private thoughts (28), and he renders Miu's spoken account of the last night, told to him over meals on the island (103), in the third person and from inside Miu's consciousness, so that she "thought" of Sumire's body and "mused" about Brahms (119–26). A story told aloud becomes a scene in his prose, and its erotic detail, Sumire's body "like some ancient ceramic" (123), is Miu's memory aestheticised by K's frame.

For most of the novel K does not travel; he remains in Tokyo while the women traverse the dangerous spaces of Europe, and his relationship to their ordeals is textual before it is physical. Sumire's letters reach him from the road, and he reads them at a safe distance,

consuming her approach to the threshold as prose (74–83). When she vanishes, he flies to the island, summoned by Miu's call (89–90), and reads again: a diary, a floppy disk, two documents, a room (139–40, 171). Even Miu's trauma reaches him not as a spoken tale but as a found text, and a belated one. On the island, Miu tells him only that "a very unusual experience" turned her hair white overnight (126). The Ferris wheel episode is told in full to Sumire in Burgundy, and Sumire, who describes herself in Document 2 as a narrator gathering fragments, gaps and elisions into a whole (154), writes it down as Document 2, which K discovers and reads only after Sumire has vanished.

The novel thus stages the Ferris wheel trauma through a triple mediation: Miu's experience; Sumire's written rendering of it, with all the editorial choices that act entails, and Document 2 itself admits its gaps; and K's retrospective narration of both. The women do speak; the novel is punctuated by their voices. But every female voice arrives inside K's transcription, and Hansen's question about narrative control has here not one answer but three (Hansen 88). Miu tells her story to Sumire; Sumire writes Miu telling it; K tells us Sumire writing Miu telling it. The structural voyeur is not the first reader. He is the last before us.

The distribution of the novel's central image makes the arrangement visible, and it runs against the expectation that a voyeuristic narration would show the spectacle first. The novel withholds Miu's white hair from K's eyes. Miu dyes it before his arrival (126), and when K finally sees her white-haired, near the end of the novel, he notes that he "had only seen Miu with black hair" and that it took him a while to match the two women (217). Its aetiology, however, he has already read, in Document 2 (153, 167). The order is therefore the reverse of melodrama's: the story that makes the spectacle intelligible reaches K, in the woman's own voice, before he sees the sign, and he sees it at last as an unnoticed watcher. "Miu didn't notice I was watching her from nearby" (217), he reports, from a taxi, with the windows of her car "shut tight" (217): a last enclosure in which he looks and is not looked at in return. His

description lingers on her "stunning mane of white hair" and pronounces her "an empty shell" (217). K's control over what the reader sees is real; he is the camera, but it is not total, and the text marks the limit: the meaning of the white hair is told not by the camera but by the woman it films, through Sumire's document, inside the man's frame. The structural voyeur frames the tale; he cannot author it.

A reader might object that this indictment confuses elegy with voyeurism, that K is a mourner, not a consumer, and that the novel exposes the objectifying gaze instead of performing it. The objection has force, and the novel has prepared for it. Mulvey showed that the apparatus works through disavowal: the spectator's pleasure depends on not noticing the camera (Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure" 17–18). *Sputnik Sweetheart* systematically cancels that invisibility. It has its narrator announce his mediation early in the story (Murakami 59); it hands its most traumatic inset to a female narrator, Sumire; it lets Miu diagnose her own partition and even float the possibility that the trauma was self-authored (169). The novel is not innocent of the gaze it criticises. Sumire and Miu remain, page by page, objects of exquisite description held in a male frame, but the text renders the complicity palpable, and the reader who has been consuming female trauma is made to notice that consumption. The critique is not beside the voyeurism; it is administered through it. That double posture is the novel's ethics.

The ending confirms this position while refusing K any transcendence. K's elsewhere is a name. In a coffee shop, with Sumire across the table and a bossa nova playing, he idly wonders, "Aruanda—what's it like there?" (34); later, imagining Sumire far away, he lists it among Rome, Greece and Timbuktu: wherever she was, "it didn't matter" (84). Aruanda is a name without a location, the pure utopia in Foucault's strict sense of a place with no real place. The women were given real counter-sites, a locked gondola and an exposed island, and those heterotopias partitioned one and dissolved the other. K, the structural voyeur, is given a name that points nowhere. "Something inside has burned up and vanished," he admits as he prepares

to leave the island. “Blood has been shed” (189). The novel’s last pages put him at a window, waiting for a call that may come from Sumire or only from his longing, from a telephone box whose location its caller cannot name (220–21). Yeung reads the final scene’s shift to simultaneous narration as destabilising it, so that it appears imaginary or unreal (Yeung 279–95), and the same present tense leaves K’s window as indeterminate as the call. “I’m ready,” he says. “I can go anywhere” (221), and the novel does not say where. The satellites have completed their orbits: one recovered, white-haired and half; one unrecovered entirely; one still circling alone, looking out from the window of his own narration.

Conclusion

Sputnik Sweetheart demonstrates that spatial dislocation and gendered spectatorship in Murakami’s fiction are a single mechanism. Read through Foucault, Bachelard, Freud and Mulvey together, instead of through the spatial and feminist critical strands separately, the novel’s two great set pieces resolve into one continuous argument. The Ferris wheel is a fairground heterotopia converted by closure into a heterotopia of crisis and illusion, where a woman is forced to be both bearer and object of the gaze until the oscillation Mulvey described freezes into lifelong partition. The novel records the damage in her white hair, her halved self and her confiscated desire. The Greek island is a closed system of ferry, holiday time and compensatory idyll, intimate immensity stripped of a shelter that can hold, where a refused queer gaze and a mirror that draws her in together lead Sumire into dissolution. That gaze between women exceeds the heterosexual model on which Mulvey built, and it is the point at which the spatial, the feminist and the queer readings of the novel meet.

The narration that delivers both catastrophes is itself an enclosure: K, camera and character in one body, frames the women’s traumas for a reader made complicit. The architecture of that framing is more elaborate than it first appears. The Ferris wheel story

reaches K not from Miu's lips but from Sumire's document, a missing woman's transcription of another woman's trauma. The novel thus turns the question of who tells a woman's story into a hall of mirrors: Miu to Sumire, Sumire to floppy disk, disk to K, and K to us. At the same time, by announcing its mediation, ceding one version of the tale to each woman in turn, and stranding its voyeur with a name that points nowhere, the novel turns the frame against itself. This reading bridges a divide that Murakami scholarship has institutionalised: the spatial critics who map the other world without asking whose bodies it injures, and the feminist critics who interrogate the narration without asking what its spaces do.

Foucault, Bachelard and Freud supply the architecture of the novel's traumas; Mulvey and her adaptors supply the reason those traumas are gendered. Read together, the two strands show that the novel's spaces are never merely settings. They are the mechanism by which the text enacts, and simultaneously exposes, its own patriarchal scopic economy. Murakami titled this novel with Sumire's private name for Miu, a name that evokes a machine built to orbit the earth in total isolation, and gave its epigraph to a passenger who was never recovered. Space, in his universe, is never innocent; neither is looking. The capsule and the gaze are the same enclosure, and *Sputnik Sweetheart* is the record of what that enclosure costs the women sealed inside it, and of the man who remains after their departures, still watching from the window.

Notes:

1. Foucault's essay derives from a March 1967 lecture; as the note to its first English publication observed, the text was not reviewed for publication by Foucault and is not part of the official corpus of his work. Quotations follow the standard *Diacritics* pagination. The concept's provisional and sometimes contradictory sketch has been widely noted; this article relies only on its most stable principles.

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