



Center for Japanese Studies 50th Anniversary *Hybrid Japan*

Haruki Murakami: A Conversation **October 10 – October 12, 2008**

[Japanese Literature on the Global Stage: The Murakami Symposium](#)

[All 50th Anniversary Events Video Archive](#)

On Saturday, October 11th, 2008, the Center for Japanese Studies presented a special reading and lecture by world-renowned Japanese novelist, Haruki Murakami, at UC Berkeley's Zellerbach Hall in front of a sold-out crowd. Murakami offered a reading, in both Japanese and English, of a short story called "The Rise and Fall of Sharpie Cakes." He shared with the audience his story of how he went from being the manager of a Tokyo jazz club to becoming a writer. This was followed by an on-stage conversation with Roland Kelts (author of Japanamerica), where they discussed everything from Murakami's works, his day-to-day routine, writing process, and hobbies. An audience Q&A followed the interview.

On the previous afternoon, Friday, October 10th, Murakami was honored with the Inaugural Berkeley Japan Prize, a lifetime achievement award from the Center for Japanese Studies to an individual who has made significant contributions in furthering the understanding of Japan on the global stage. The award ceremony was held at the Morrison Reading Room in the Doe Library. Earlier in the afternoon, Murakami made a guest appearance at two Japanese literature classes at UC Berkeley where students were able to ask him about his novels that they were reading in their classes.

On Sunday, October 12th, the Center for Japanese Studies presented a symposium featuring a distinguished panel of speakers to discuss Haruki Murakami's writings and the impact it has had in bringing Japanese literature to the global stage. The panelists were Jay Rubin (Professor, Harvard University), Rebecca Suter (Professor, University of Sydney), Matthew Strecher (Professor, Winona State University), and Stephen Snyder (Professor, Middlebury College). Rubin described the many challenges and dilemmas he faced as a translator when working with Murakami on translating *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* and *Norwegian Wood*. He shared the story of a time when he gave Murakami a headache with his pages and pages of notes and questions, seeking clarity on things such as ambiguous language use to inconsistencies in the narrative that could have been either deliberate or unintentional. Suter spoke on Murakami's use of foreign vocabulary and structure, which she said was not an attempt to imitate western writers, but rather the creation of his own style that frees himself from the constraints of mainstream Japanese literature. She described Murakami's writing

as a Japanization of western language and indicative of the relationship between Japan and the West, which is not so much a passive imitation of foreign models but an active appropriation that destabilizes it. Strecher discussed the metaphysical world of Murakami's writing, focusing particularly on Murakami's more recent work, *Kafka on the Shore*. He proposes that Murakami employs a hybrid mythology, both Japanese and Greek, where he plays with the Oedipal theme in his writing. Snyder spoke on the growing trend whereby foreign publishers and readers are seeking a Murakami successor, who has been a great influence on the process of and prospects for the globalization of Japanese fiction around the world. He says that the popularity of Murakami's writing demonstrates the concentration of literary prestige and a homogenization of expectations for Japanese fiction among foreign publishers and foreign readers. The discussion and Q&A were moderated by H. Mack Horton (Professor, UC Berkeley).

Haruki Murakami: Claiming a global readership and internationally recognized as Japan's leading novelist, writer, and translator, Haruki Murakami is the winner of the Yomiuri Prize for his critically acclaimed *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*. The author's numerous works, which have been translated into 36 languages, lead the reader along the interstices between the mundane and the sublime. His work has been described as easily accessible, yet profoundly complex.

Event Program: October 10, 2008

THE INAUGURAL BERKELEY JAPAN PRIZE AWARD CEREMONY

Location: Morrison Reading Room, Doe Library, UC Berkeley

Time: 4:00pm-5:30pm

WELCOME REMARKS

Duncan Williams (Chair, Center for Japanese Studies)

AWARD CEREMONY

2008-2009 Berkeley Japan Prize: Haruki Murakami

ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

Haruki Murakami



The inaugural Berkeley Japan Prize presented to Haruki Murakami by CJS Chair Duncan Williams

Event Program: October 11, 2008

HARUKI MURAKAMI: A CONVERSATION

Location: Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley

Time: 6:00pm-8:00pm

OPENING REMARKS AND INTRODUCTION

Duncan Williams (Chair, Center for Japanese Studies)

A READING AND LECTURE

Haruki Murakami

A CONVERSATION WITH HARUKI MURAKAMI

On-stage interview by **Roland Kelts** (author of *Japanamerica*)



AUDIENCE QUESTION & ANSWER

With **Haruki Murakami**, moderated by **Roland Kelts**

Co-sponsored by: Cal Performances

Event Program: October 12, 2008

JAPANESE LITERATURE ON THE GLOBAL STAGE: THE MURAKAMI SYMPOSIUM

Location: Toll Room, Alumni House, UC Berkeley

Time: 10:00am-2:00pm

OPENING REMARKS

Duncan Williams (Chair, Center for Japanese Studies)

INTRODUCTION

H. Mack Horton (East Asian Languages and Cultures, UC Berkeley)

PRESENTATIONS

"Crazed Translator Gives Japanese Author Excedrin Headache"

Jay Rubin (Japanese Studies, Harvard University), translator of Murakami's *Norwegian Wood* and *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, author of *Murakami Haruki and the Music of Words*

"Lost in Translation? Murakami Haruki and the Japanization of the English Language"

Rebecca Suter (Japanese Studies, University of Sydney), author of *The Japanization of Modernity: Murakami Haruki between Japan and the United States*

"A Spatial Odyssey or, It's All Greek to Me: East Meets West in Murakami Haruki's *Kafka On the Shore*"

Matthew Strecher (Global Studies, Winona State University), author of *Dances with Sheep: The Quest for Identity in the Fiction of Murakami Haruki* and *Haruki Murakami's Wind-up Bird Chronicle: A Reader's Guide*

"Are There Any More Like You at Home? Cloning Murakami Haruki for the U.S. Market"

Stephen Snyder (Japanese Studies, Middlebury College), translator of novels by Natsuo Kirino, Kenzaburo Oe, and Ryu Murakami

QUESTION & ANSWER

Moderated by **H. Mack Horton**

Co-sponsored by: East Asian Languages and Cultures, and the Townsend Center for the Humanities

