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**Translating Magical Realism in *1Q84*:  
A Comparative Study of Surrealistic Elements in English,  
Catalan, and Spanish**

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Title: Translating Magical Realism in *1Q84*. A Comparative Study of Surrealistic Elements in English, Catalan, and Spanish

Traduint realisme màgic a *1Q84*. Un estudi comparatiu d'elements surrealistes en anglès, català i castellà

Traduciendo realismo mágico en *1Q84*. Un estudio comparativo de elementos surrealistas en inglés, catalán y español

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Abstract

This thesis analyses and compares the Catalan, English, and Spanish translations of Haruki Murakami's *1Q84*, which is known for its surreal atmosphere and magical realism. The

analysis focuses primarily on terms related to the magical and fictional elements woven into the characters' everyday lives and breaks down the choices each translator made regarding the handling of the surrealistic elements to transmit the novel's intended message while respecting its original allusiveness. The study reveals that while all three translations preserve the narrative's general tone and structure, they vary notably in their handling of ambiguity, cultural references, and invented terms. The Catalan translation leans toward semantic fidelity, the English version balances accessibility with stylistic clarity, and the Spanish translation frequently domesticates elements to enhance readability. These strategic divergences affect the preservation of the novel's magical realism, with each translation uniquely shaping the reader's perception of Murakami's alternate reality. Ultimately, this comparative study highlights the complex role of the translator as both interpreter and cultural mediator, especially when rendering texts that rely heavily on ambiguity, subtlety and surrealism.

Aquest treball analitza i compara les traduccions al català, anglès i castellà de *1Q84* de Haruki Murakami, una obra coneguda per la seva atmosfera surrealista i pel realisme màgic. L'anàlisi se centra principalment en els termes relacionats amb els elements màgics i ficticis que s'entrellacen amb la quotidianitat dels personatges, i examina les decisions de cada traductor pel que fa al tractament dels elements surrealistes per transmetre el missatge de l'obra respectant el seu caràcter al·lusiú original. L'estudi revela que, tot i que les tres traduccions conserven el to general i l'estructura de la narració, difereixen notablement en el tractament dels termes inventats, les referències culturals i l'ambigüitat. La traducció catalana tendeix cap a la fidelitat semàntica; la versió anglesa busca un equilibri entre accessibilitat i claredat estilística; i la traducció castellana opta sovint per la domesticació per tal de facilitar la lectura. Aquestes divergències estratègiques afecten la preservació del realisme màgic de la novel·la, i cada traducció modela d'una manera única la percepció que

té el lector del món paral·lel de Murakami. En definitiva, aquest estudi comparatiu emfatitza el paper complex del traductor com a intèrpret i mediador cultural, especialment en la traducció de textos que es basen fortament en l'ambigüitat, la subtileza i el surrealisme.

Este trabajo analiza y compara las traducciones al catalán, inglés y español de *1Q84* de Haruki Murakami, una obra conocida por su atmósfera surrealista y su realismo mágico. El análisis se centra principalmente en los términos relacionados con los elementos mágicos y ficticios, que se entrelazan con la vida cotidiana de los personajes, y examina las decisiones que tomó cada traductor respecto al tratamiento de los elementos surrealistas para transmitir el mensaje de la obra, respetando su carácter alusivo original. El estudio revela que, aunque las tres traducciones conservan el tono general y la estructura narrativa, difieren notablemente en el tratamiento de los términos inventados, las referencias culturales y la ambigüedad. La traducción catalana tiende a la fidelidad semántica; la versión inglesa equilibra accesibilidad y claridad estilística; y la traducción española opta frecuentemente por la domesticación para facilitar la lectura. Estas divergencias estratégicas afectan la preservación del realismo mágico de la novela, y cada traducción moldea de manera única la percepción que tiene el lector del mundo de Murakami. En última instancia, este estudio comparativo destaca el papel complejo del traductor como intérprete y mediador cultural, especialmente al traducir textos que dependen en gran medida de la ambigüedad, la sutileza y el surrealismo.

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# 1. Introduction

Haruki Murakami is said to be one of the most relevant writers of contemporary literature, both in Japan and worldwide. His works are widely known around the globe by people of all kinds of cultures and backgrounds. Most of the time, people feel either enraptured or conflicted by Murakami's novels, but very few people remain indifferent towards his stories. His works blend Japanese culture and tradition with Western ideologies acquired through his early readings of Franz Kafka, Fyodor Dostoevsky and Gabriel García Márquez, among others.

*1Q84*, one of Murakami's most ambitious works, was first published in Japan by Shinchōsha Publishing Co Ltd in three separate volumes between 2009 and 2010, and its 2011 English edition made number 2 on *The New York Times* bestseller list. It completely ignores Japan's tendency towards shorter, easier-to-read books and presents both an exceptionally profound argument and a remarkable, elaborate structure that allowed it to become a bestseller within a month, as well as be translated into at least thirty-two languages in the following years. While *1Q84* requires a certain degree of literary commitment from its readers due to its extension and complexity, and may not be suited for all audiences, its mastery is indisputable, not to mention backed up by its commercial success and subsequent influence in contemporary literature.

All of Murakami's notable quirks feature in the trilogy to form a complex yet coherent narrative. While this thesis cannot delve into every single detailed component conforming to the aforementioned book, it is relevant to comment on the dexterity with which it employs historical facts, music, literature, and cultural references. It weaves them into the characters' daily life smoothly, aiding the convoluted, supernatural mosaic that is *1Q84*.

This thesis examines how the magical elements of *1Q84* are translated into English, Catalan, and Spanish, contrasts them with the original Japanese, and explores the effects of these choices on the reader's interpretation of the fantastical world. Its key point is the terminological analysis of elements related to two literary genres which carry great weight in the novel:

magical realism and surrealism. These genres, which are often associated with Murakami's distinctive writing style, pose a challenge due to their abstract nature.

The significance of this thesis lies in the limited research conducted in the field of translation regarding Haruki Murakami's *1Q84*, despite the prominence of both the author and the novel. Although studies have had the novel as their focus, none concentrates on the comparison between translations. This absence of plentiful investigative and academic papers may be attributed to the notable length of the narrative, which spans more than a thousand pages, regardless of the language. The sheer magnitude of the content amplifies the challenges posed by the author's distinctive style, characterised by vagueness and mysticism, key aspects of both his literary success and the inherent strenuousness of translating his works.

This thesis seeks to uncover how translation choices shape the depiction of magical realism in *1Q84* across different languages. The focal point is understanding the role translation plays in conveying the surreal, otherworldly qualities of the text, concentrating on handpicked terms related to the fantastical elements woven into the novel. The magical elements under investigation include terms like *Little People*, *Air Chrysalis*, *Two Moons*, and other surreal or supernatural phenomena that are central to the plot. Furthermore, this research is particularly relevant given Murakami's global accomplishment, along with the cultural and linguistic differences between Japanese and the three chosen languages: English, Catalan, and Spanish. Despite their prominence in Murakami's work, magical realism and surrealism are seldom examined from a translation-oriented perspective. Moreover, there is a substantial potential for insights into how translators address the specific challenges of adapting magical realism, a genre defined by ambiguity and subtlety, and surrealism, a genre that rejects logic to embrace irrationality. This thesis aims to shed light on these challenges, focusing on how they manifest in *1Q84*'s translations. Thus, the following research questions arise:

- How are key magical elements translated into Catalan, English, and Spanish?

- How consistent are the renderings of these novel-native concepts throughout each translation?
- How do different translations handle invented terms and key magical elements in *1Q84* to preserve or adapt their mysterious and otherworldly qualities?
- Do translators lean toward literal strategies to maintain faithfulness, or do they employ interpretative strategies to better adapt the reading experience?

In order to achieve its objectives and answer the questions proposed above, this thesis is structured in five main sections. Following the introduction, the literature review introduces the theoretical framework in which the comparison of the translation of magical realism will be based and examines how this literary mode and surrealist elements are manifested in Haruki Murakami's work, with particular attention to *1Q84*. This section also contextualises the novel, its genres and Murakami's previous work and its characteristics, ending with a consideration of prior academic studies and the broader context of Murakami in translation. The third chapter presents the analytical methodology, details the selected corpus of key terms, and describes the comparative process applied to the three translations. This leads to an in-depth examination of the magical elements and their treatment in each language version. Afterwards, in the discussion that follows, the impact of translation choices is evaluated, considering cultural and linguistic factors, and assessing tendencies of convergence or divergence and whether the translations align with or depart from the original tone and intent across the four language versions. Finally, the conclusion summarises the main findings and reflects on their broader implications for the translation of magical realism in the context of transnational literature. Additionally, for transparency's sake, the References and Bibliography section includes mentions of all the sources that have been consulted, cited or referenced in the process of writing this thesis, even if some of them have not been mentioned in the end.



Throughout this thesis, all Japanese terms included in the corpus selection have been Romanised for ease of reading following the modified Hepburn system, which is the most widespread method in English academia due to its phonetic accessibility (Hadamitzky & Spahn, 1996; Gottlieb, 2005).

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Theoretical Framework for Translating Magical Realism

Magical realism is a literary movement characterised by the overlapping of fantastical elements and a seemingly realistic representation of the world. These magical elements are presented, both to the reader and the characters, in a mundane manner, as part of daily life. Their existence in the narrative goes unquestioned for the most part, a fact that adds ambiguity and unease to the overall reading atmosphere (Bowers, 2004, pp. 20–31). Even though the term is initially closely associated with its Latin-American roots—with authors like Gabriel García Márquez and Alejo Carpentier as prime examples of the genre’s literary excellence—according to Warnes (2009, p. 4–8), it has also been associated with writers outside of that specific cultural context, as is the case with Japanese literature and Haruki Murakami in the eyes of Susan J. Napier (in Zamora & Faris, 1995, pp. 451–475).

As mentioned in the Introduction, magical realism is not the novel’s exclusive genre, and surrealism—which, as Carpentier states, “pursues the marvellous” (in Zamora & Faris, 1995, p. 103)—is also one of the main focus points of this thesis due to the paranormal nature of *IQ84*. Although surrealism is closely tied to its founder, André Breton, it has come to encapsulate a broader meaning after having suffered an expansion in popular culture, including the contemporary criticism of literature. The use of the term surrealism in this work is not limited to the genre’s original strict definition. Rather, it follows the modern take in the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Modernism*, which states in its *Surrealism Overview* that

The word ‘surreal’ is now commonly used as an adjective to describe the unusual or unexpected. Despite the term’s detachment from the original movement, methods and ideas generated in the context of Surrealism have endured and are recognizable in contemporary art practice. (Ortolano et al., 2017, Surrealism section, para. 6)

This usage allows a comprehensive interpretation of the term that showcases the term's current perception without limiting it to a single definition.

Thus, both literary movements are often grouped together and even considered sibling genres in modern times, but they are not to be confused. Among their similarities, we find early-twentieth-century, post-war, European origins, with a style that morphs reality into something different. Wendy Faris further expands on the genres' closely related roots and their differences in her essay *Scheherazade's Children*:

In taking this politics of the familiarisation to eat extreme, magical realism, as is often recognized, is a major legacy of Surrealism. However, in contrast to the magical images constructed by Surrealism out of ordinary objects, which aim to appear virtually unmotivated and thus programmatically resist interpretation, magical realist images, while projecting a similar initial aura of surprising craziness, tend to reveal their motivations—psychological social emotional political—after some scrutiny (in Zamora & Faris, 1995, p. 171).

The key difference lies in their relationship with the ordinary: while magical realism has a subtle and natural approach, blending reality with the extraordinary seamlessly, surrealism intends to free the subconscious to reach a clearer view of the real world than what can be seen with a rational eye. Due to their abstract-inclined nature, defining the concepts of surrealism and magical realism presents a challenge to whoever dares try. A great attempt is made at defining magic realist fiction by Anne C. Hegerfeldt in her book *Lies that Tell the Truth: Magic Realism Seen Through Contemporary Fiction from Britain*, in which she argues that magical realism is not limited to Latin American or postcolonial authors and that it is at the disposal of authors around the globe (2005, pp. 1–7).

Although discussions of magical realism in contemporary academic writing primarily focus on the Latin American tradition—with Gabriel García Márquez and Isabel Allende as two of the

leading representative figures—it is essential to take a step back and consider the genre’s broader historical roots, particularly its origins in post-war Germany and its subsequent expansion across Europe. Without going further, Franz Roh, a German historian, photographer and art critic, coined the term ‘magic realism’ not to refer to a literary style, but to the visual arts, and although experts still differentiate between both terms, the concept has since evolved to what we now understand as “magical realism”, what Maggie Ann Bowers defines as “a term introduced in the 1940s referring to a narrative art that presents extraordinary occurrences as an ordinary part of everyday reality” (2004, p. 131). She produces a comprehensive glossary in *Magic(al) Realism*, where she offers definitions for not only magic realism and magical realism but also the umbrella term her book is named after: “magic(al) realism”.

Artists such as Frida Kahlo and Franz Kafka were indisputable pioneers of the style, but there have since been too many changes to count. In recent years, works like Hegerfeldt’s and Bowers’ have tried to acknowledge the widening of magical realism as a concept, defending that literary and artistic movements are not necessarily confined to a single geographical or cultural context.

As Even-Zohar (1990, pp. 9–11) explains in his *Polysystem Studies*, translations cannot be regarded in isolation, as they must be understood as part of the larger literary system of the target language, which affects the strategies and choices made by translators. Such a perspective is convenient for analysing how elements within *IQ84*, like the “blind goat” or the “two moons”, can be treated differently depending on the literary norms of each language system, such as Catalan, English, and Spanish. In this fashion, translators adapt these elements to the cultural context or preserve their foreignness to maintain the sense of ambiguity and otherness of the narrative.

Additionally, restricting magical realism and surrealism to the regions with which they are most famously associated would be an oversimplification that overlooks their transnational evolution and lasting influence in many other parts of the world.

There are many difficulties translators must face when rendering magical realism, and there is no doubt about how primordial it is to keep an open mind and a wide, multifocal point of view. Eugene Nida's (1964, pp. 159–160) call for *dynamic equivalence* underlines the importance of preserving meaning and effect over literal rendering—an approach especially crucial when dealing with magical realism's subtle layering of fantasy and reality. Similarly, Christiane Nord's functionalist perspective (1991, pp. 10–13), centred on the analysis of the text and its communicative purpose, complements this by advocating for a translation that takes the cultural and textual function into account.

Transcribing the surreal concepts showcased in magical realism is a challenge in itself. The translator must remove themselves from their own judgement and preconceived notions, as one should during any translation. However, the handling of invented terms based on surreal concepts (like *maza* and *dohra*) is not the only struggle brought on by this unique genre. As one starts analysing the multiple aspects that make magical realism feel *magical*, one realises that other notable challenges emerge. For example, maintaining the mysticism surrounding seemingly ordinary words, as is the case with 'blind goat' or 'two moons', both of which could be perfectly common lexicon when separated from their context; manoeuvring opaque metaphors that ask for delicate manipulation from a translation perspective, like the term 'Air Chrysalis'; and respecting the original meaning of expressions charged with cultural connotations, as is the name of the religious sect, Sakigake.

To analyse the translation decision-making process, this thesis will follow multiple complementary theoretical frameworks. Among them, the idea of invisibility through domestication, as opposed to foreignization, proposed by Lawrence Venuti (1995, pp. 1–42)

allows us to observe how translators either adapt magical elements to the cultural context or choose to keep the oddity. It will also follow the principles of the Skopos theory, whose evolution and application have been reviewed by Christina Schäffner (2009), and which is particularly relevant due to its purpose of identifying translation strategies, especially regarding the preservation of tones leaning towards the abstract and surreal. Moreover, *thick translation*, introduced by Kwame Anthony Appiah (1993, pp. 817–819), which emphasises the significance of respecting the semantic and symbolic load of the source text—even at the cost of some opacity—will also be taken into consideration.

Finally, Newmark's foundational studies on communicative and semantic translation relate to other fundamental authors, complementing Nord's functionalism and Venuti's foreignization and domestication. His translation procedures, such as compensation, modulation, and transposition, offer a varied selection to choose from when analysing multiple translations of one text into different languages, allowing the assessment of translators' creativity when faced with linguistic gaps or culturally challenging notions in the original text (Newmark, 1988a, pp. 81–93).

To complement these frameworks, the thesis will occasionally rely on select analytical tools from Descriptive Translation Studies, particularly the categorisation of micro-level translation strategies as outlined by Vinay and Darbelnet (1995, pp. 30–40), which were later expanded by Chesterman (1997). The latter becomes particularly relevant due to the attention to details and nuances present in the categorisation method that the author proposes, permitting a description of changes and a comparison across translation strategies, and ultimately explaining how the translations affect the reader's interpretation of magical elements. These models allow for the identification of syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic shifts across the three versions, providing a more detailed understanding of how each translation negotiates meaning, tone, and cultural specificity. The distinction between literal translation, modulation, or transposition, for

instance, proves especially useful when examining how abstract or fantastical concepts are linguistically restructured (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995, pp. 33–37). In addition, this thesis will adopt aspects of a corpus-based approach, employing visual comparative charts that support a limited quantitative analysis—such as the recurrence of key terms or stylistic patterns—to reinforce qualitative observations and facilitate the recognition of translation tendencies across the corpus. Whenever it is deemed necessary, a back-translation approach will also be used as a quality assessment tool to support any other previous analytical steps taken (Newmark, 1988a, p. 74).

In the Discussion, the fourth section of this thesis, we will further examine the contextualised translations of the magical terms and offer textual examples, following the aforementioned theoretical framework to expand the previous analysis of fantastical elements. This section will identify and showcase instances where translators handled terms similarly, showing convergence, and others where translators took liberties with the terminology and chose to display concepts differently, thus creating divergence.

This theoretical framework allows for an analysis of the translation of 1Q84's key terms from a perspective that is simultaneously literary and pragmatic. The chosen terminology includes expressions like 'Little People', 'Air Chrysalis' or 'the Leader', serving not only as narrative designations, but also as key contributors to the active crafting of an unsettling reading atmosphere. The treatment of these terms in different translations thus displays how each version approaches the conveyance of Murakami's magical realism, ultimately shaping the reading and subsequent interpretation of his novel. To conserve what makes the narrative extraordinary while faithfully transmitting the same tone and message as the original author is a demanding but crucial task for the translators.

## **2.2. Magical Realism and Surrealism in Haruki Murakami's Works**

As can be deduced from the title of this thesis, our academic focus is Haruki Murakami's narrative style, particularly that which encompasses the uncertainty and oscillation native to the literary genres of magical realism and surrealism.

Although the boundaries between these two genres are not always well defined, magical realism portrays supernatural phenomena that are seamlessly integrated into ordinary life, whereas surrealism emphasises the subconscious and dream symbolism, and implies "a conscious assault on conventionally depicted reality", according to Carpentier (in Zamora & Faris, 1995, p. 75). Murakami's narrative has a tendency to blend the two into his unique literary style.

From Breton's (1972/1924) perspective, while surrealism seeks to disrupt rationality and access the unconscious through dream logic, magical realism integrates the extraordinary into reality without undermining its framework. In Murakami's narratives, surreal elements that may appear through dreamlike sequences or subconscious symbolism coexist with the magical realist elements of everyday supernatural phenomena that are integrated in the fictional world's foundations. The surreal elements may often function in a magical realist mode by being naturalised within the fictional world. This fusion of forms creates narrative ambiguity: the reader accepts the implausible as part of the everyday, even when no explanation is given.

Said genre fusion is particularly prominent in Murakami's *1Q84*, where elements of magical realism and surrealism coexist to build the foundations of a confusing but structured alternate reality. Upon closer inspection, magical realism in *1Q84* takes shape in the form of multiple mysterious phenomena that the characters register gradually, combined with a realistic, detailed description of Tokyo in the 1980s. Following surrealism ideals, these elements are met not with alarm, but rather a sense of acceptance that normalises the genre's logic: that supernatural elements are part of the real world and thus require no explanation.



Extraordinary sights include divine voices, a supernatural impregnation, and the presence of an extra, misshapen green moon and the arcane ‘Little People’, in addition to all the occurring events that are inexplicably connected to both. “Repetition as a narrative principle” and “metafictional dimensions”, as Faris suggests, are common characteristics of contemporary magical realism. that are clearly present in *IQ84* (Zamora & Faris, 1995, pp. 175–177). These characteristics are present alongside the previous fantastical elements, and they have the narrative function of challenging reality, creating liminal spaces and destabilising the flow of time.

The portrayal of these genres can also be appreciated in many of Murakami’s novels. *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* (1994-1995/1997), another of his bestsellers, features a metaphysical descent via a well and a journey into a parallel realm. In *After Dark* (2004/2007), dreamlike occurrences are introduced as part of the ordinary in a world between reality and dream. *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* (1985/1991) alternates between the depiction of a futuristic Tokyo and that of a dreamlike town enclosed by walls; in it, the protagonist’s shadow becomes suddenly detached from his physical body. One of his earlier works, *A Wild Sheep Chase* (1982/1989), follows the story a protagonist who, tasked with an almost absurd search for a sheep with an unusual star-shaped birthmark, encounters strange characters and supernatural occurrences that border on the surreal.

In other works, such as *Kafka on the Shore* (2002/2005), we see clear surrealist elements in multiple events throughout the novel, as well as less well-defined cases of magical realism. From fish raining from the sky to a public figure and pop culture reference like Colonel Sanders casually presenting himself as a pimp to one of the characters, the possibilities are endless thanks to Murakami’s bottomless well of imagination. His renderings, according to García Valero (2012, pp. 18–26), transcend magical realism and any other genre, instead bordering on quantum physics due to the presence of multiple worlds and overlapping realities.

Furthermore, Rebecca Suter (2008, pp. 67–74) wrote a section on Murakami’s supposed reliance on “anglicised” terms, where she talks about how he employs katakana in different categories—such as food, sex, and abstract terms—to foreignize his narrative. The great number of words in katakana is relevant because it has “an anti-realistic effect”, ultimately adding a layer of strangeness that builds on the inherent mysticism of Murakami’s style, which in turn fortifies the magical atmosphere in most of his works. In *IQ84*, this Westernising effect contributes to the is seen in Japanized English words written in katakana script like 「リーダー」 (*rīdā*, “Leader”), 「リトル・ピープル」 (*ritoru pīporu*, “Little People”), 「マジック・タッチ」 (*majikku tocchi*, “magic touch”), as well as in the thematic pairs 「パシヴァ」 and 「レシヴァ」 (*pashiva*, “Perceiver” and *reshiva*, “Receiver”) and 「マザ」 and 「ドウタ」 (*maza*, “maza” and *dōta*, “dohta”).

Common themes include dreamlike experiences, alternate realities, intertwined fates, and surrealistic tasks imposed on the protagonists, among others. All of them are present in his repertoire, blending to produce unsettling liminal spaces where his characters avoid evil forces, experience spiritual journeys, and even have out-of-body experiences. These features come together to portray his unique style, showing readers a variety of new, exciting worlds with familiar characteristics, but full of infinite possibilities.

According to Matthew Strecher (2002, pp. 84–85), Murakami’s protagonists often engage with surreal phenomena and dreamlike experiences that, by becoming vivid incidents, act as “linguistic connections” to the unconscious Other. These tangible metaphorical representations, born from the use of magical realism and surrealism as a narrative mechanism, serve the purpose of externalising the unconscious mind through language. Within this framework, fantastical elements are not strange for the sake of strangeness; rather, they stem from a psychological logic reflecting the characters’ suppressed turmoil and conflicting desires. This interpretation aids in explaining Murakami’s protagonists’ everlasting craving for the

supernatural—a longing that is perpetually unsatisfied, as their journeys often lead to undetermined outcomes.

Murakami himself acknowledged the spontaneity and whimsy of his creative process. In an interview with *The New York Times* he remarked:

“The Little People came suddenly,” he said. “I don’t know who they are. I don’t know what it means. I was a prisoner of the story. I had no choice. They came, and I described it. That is my work.” (Anderson, 2011)

This suggests that Murakami concedes a part of his creative process to a greater force beyond his control, one that provides him with some of the most unorthodox ideas he writes. It also explains why even he does not know or understand the full scope of some concepts portrayed in his stories, as is the case with the Little People.

This concession aligns with Jay Rubin’s (2002, pp. 221–223) interpretation of Murakami’s creative process as one of deep self-examination, achieved through the characters’ exploration of existential dread. In his recollection of *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* (1997), Rubin likens Cinnamon to “the closest thing to an alter-ego for the author”, stating that Murakami, like Cinnamon, was using the novel to explore his existence and detachment from the past.

In light of this analysis, the way magical realism and surrealism interact in Murakami’s works not only defines his narrative identity but also presents considerable problems where translation is concerned. The preservation of the balance between the mundane and the fantastical across cultural and linguistic boundaries is essential to convey the psychological and philosophical depths of his storytelling.

### **2.3. Murakami in Translation**

Murakami’s impact in the field of translation befits his career as a renowned novelist. His groundbreaking style and extensive use of non-Japanese cultural references are possibly the primordial reasons why his works have been translated into so many languages, as well as why

their adaptations have been received so warmly by overseas audiences. His international success is grounded in the planning behind the careful introduction of his works to readers outside of Japan.

His book, *Novelist as a Vocation* (2022, pp. 188–208), has a section dedicated to his breakthrough in the West and the translation of his works into other languages, focusing on how he slowly developed a market in the United States of America that later granted him wider recognition across European audiences. His description of this professional trajectory showcases that his was not a sudden international success, but an unhurried, deliberate effort that required his literary voice to conform to the standards that appealed to a foreign readership while maintaining his original style. Murakami comments on the collaboration with American translators and editors that was involved in the process of polishing his works for the foreign market while ensuring they did not lose their essence.

Being a translator himself (he has translated works by F. Scott Fitzgerald, among others), he offers deep insight on challenges regarding language and cultural nuances in the translation of his works. Chiefly, Murakami talks about how his English translators first approached him, how they helped him establish himself in the United States, and how their styles differ from one another: “Alfred is a more freewheeling translator, while Jay is more the steady type. Each one has his own distinctive flavor” (p. 204). He acknowledges their distinct approaches with an appreciative tone that does not aim to determine the better option but just reflects on their variability, endorsing the fact that these different styles aided in his international success.

This highlighted contrast helps in recognising how translation choices can affect tone and interpretation, aligning with translation studies discussions between dynamic and formal equivalence (Nida, 1964).

As Rebecca Suter argues in *The Japanization of Modernity* (2008, pp. 35–47), Murakami is recognised by laypeople as just “a writer” rather than “a Japanese writer”, which sheds light

into the globalised reach of his works in the field of international literature. She emphasises this fact to highlight the tendency to “domesticate” elements that are too foreign, and how Murakami’s American translators often substitute them for “either generic or American equivalents”, which alters the foreign readership’s perception. Although Murakami’s fiction is often defined by “Westernisation and un-Japaneseness” due to the numerous foreign traits intertwined with Japanese tradition, Suter defends that the Americanisation of his works is rooted in his search for a personal style blending two cultures, rather than in the rejection of his national identity. This relates to Lawrence Venuti’s (1995) “invisibility” concept, which showcases foreignness erasure in mainstream translation practices to draw criticism of the butchering of this delicate cultural negotiation.

This complexity is reinforced in *Haruki Murakami and the Music of Words* (2002, pp. 274–278). Jay Rubin recounts in his book that his and Phillip Gabriel’s American translations of *South of the Border, West of the Sun* (1999) and *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* (1997) had been taken as the “authentic original” source for German re-translations. He considers this re-translation an “absurd procedure”, stressing the inherent imprecision of the practice and counterarguing that, in the case of *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* (1997), despite the fact that it contained reducing modifications that had been authorised by Murakami—who later adopted many of those minor cuts into the Japanese paperback—translators should always refer to the original Japanese to produce faithful renditions in their target languages. Rubin proceeds stating that “translation is an interpretative art, which means that a re-translation is an interpretation of an interpretation”. In other words, re-translation should be considered an imprecise method that is not up to standard with the requirements of the professional field, as it undermines the integrity of the original work as well as the translator’s autonomy.

A different perspective of translating Murakami is obtained through the reading of Albert Nolla’s 2024 interview with *L’illa dels llibres* (Milian, 2024), in which he delves into the

challenges behind the intricate process. Nolla explains that, over the years and through his sustained engagement with Murakami's oeuvre, he has developed an intuitive sense that tells him how the author's voice should resonate in Catalan. Considering the fact that he has been translating Murakami's novels for more than twenty years, it is safe to say that developing a sense for it is no easy task, but a rather complex one.

All of these demanding characteristics pose issues that are not merely technical in nature, in other words, translating Murakami is not just a matter of rendering words from one language to another through linguistic skill. Instead, it is a process that requires a deep understanding and a delicate handling that stem from the translator's careful interpretation. This process is essential in order to faithfully transmit the nuances present in the original text.

While a major part of the scholarly focus in this section has been on Murakami's American translators, it is also worth noting that his Catalan and Spanish translators have expanded his readership further by offering their own interpretations in Spain and other Spanish-speaking countries. Although the number of translators in both languages is greater than that of the smaller, established list of English ones, there are still recurrent translators worth mentioning. In Catalan, two of the most prominent figures include, among others: Albert Nolla Cabellos, who translated *Tòquio blues* [*Norwegian Wood*] (2005), *Kafka a la platja* [*Kafka on the Shore*] (2006), and *La mort del comanador* [*Killing Commendatore*] (2018-2019); and Jordi Mas López, who translated *De què parlo quan parlo d'escriure* [*Novelist as a Vocation*] (2017), *El noi sense color i els seus anys de pelegrinatge* [*Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and his years of pilgrimage*] (2013), and pertinently, *1Q84* (2011b, 2012b), which keeps its straightforward title across languages.

In Spanish, there are many translators who have worked with Murakami's composition, but again, two of the most relevant figures include, among others: Lourdes Porta Fuentes, who translated *Tokio blues* [*Norwegian Wood*] (2007), *Kafka en la orilla* [*Kafka on the Shore*]

(2006), and *El fin del mundo y un despiadado país de las maravillas* [*Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*] (2009); and Gabriel Álvarez Martínez, who translated *Hombres sin mujeres* [*Men Without Women*] (2015), *Los años de peregrinación del chico sin color* [*Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and his years of pilgrimage*] (2013), and again, pertinently, *1Q84* (2011a, 2012a).

Jordi Mas López and Gabriel Álvarez Martínez bring their own interpretations of Murakami's alternative world to offer renditions of *1Q84* that sometimes converge and sometimes diverge from the Anglophone translation strategies. These variations will be showcased along the Japanese original to be explored in depth in later sections

In summary, Murakami's global reach cannot be separated from the traces that translators and editorials leave on his fiction, and their role on facilitating his international success should be acknowledged. It is essential to take their intervention into account when analysing and comparing *1Q84*'s magical realism, surrealism, and invented terminology and how they are translated into Catalan, English and Spanish.

## **2.4. Overview of *1Q84***

First published in Japan between 2009 and 2010, *1Q84* spans three different volumes that tell an uninterrupted story over three months at a time, following the lives of the two main characters through the year 1984. It is a complex trilogy that delves into romance, mystery, suspense, and, needless to say, the magical realism of supernatural phenomena occurring in the characters' everyday lives.

The novel was originally released in two volumes, Books 1 and 2 in 2009 and Book 3 in 2010. The English translation was split in two and worked on individually by Jay Rubin (Books 1 and 2) and Phillip Gabriel (Book 3) and published in 2011. In that same year, Books 1 and 2 were translated into Catalan by Jordi Mas López, and into Spanish by Gabriel Álvarez Martínez, followed by the release of Book 3 in 2012.

The novel alternates between the perspectives of two protagonists—Aomame and Tengo—whose seemingly unconnected lives gradually converge into the same path of fate. This dual narrative continues until the final volume, in which a new narrator is introduced, providing an external point of view that adds tension and ambivalence as chapters shift from one perspective to another, mirroring the characters' parallel journeys.

On the one hand, Aomame is a peculiar woman in her thirties who works at a gym as a personal trainer and freelances as a part-time assassin of abusive men. She has a knack for historical facts, likes to keep up with all relevant newspaper publications, and enjoys helping people at her job with her extensive anatomical knowledge. She is very in tune with her own body as well as other people's, which is the reason why she can so easily find a deadly spot in men's necks that she then strikes to murder them, leaving no evidence behind.

On the other hand, Tengo is a thirty-year-old man juggling two jobs: one as a maths teacher at a cram school and another on the side as a columnist. In his case, his role as a teacher is just a means to an end, which is getting an income, while writing is his true passion. That is why, when a publisher named Komatsu proposes a rewriting of the manuscript of a seemingly dyslexic seventeen-year-old girl, he ends up accepting the offer to edit Fuka-Eri's novel, *Air Chrysalis*. However, as he develops a rewritten version of the story, things around him start to change according to what he has written. It seems that, without his realising, his rewriting of the story has a strange impact on reality, adding to the strangeness of this new world.

The first volume starts in April with Aomame being stuck in a traffic jam in the middle of the highway on her way to one of her part-time job appointments. In the taxi, she experiences a bizarre sensation while listening to Janáček's *Sinfonietta* and gets a forewarning from the driver: "Things are not what they seem" (Murakami, 2012c, p. 12). With no prospects of moving, after waiting for a while and heeding the taxi driver's warnings, she decides to descend the emergency stairs and take the train, while still hearing his advice in her head: "Don't let



appearances fool you. There is always only one reality” (Murakami, 2012c, p. 16). What she doesn’t know yet is that by the time she gets off the stairway, she won’t be in her world anymore. This unsettling first chapter sets the pace for the rest of the story, and the taxi driver’s words of caution accompany Aomame through the whole narration, aiding her in making sense of her new surroundings. As she starts taking note of the changes around her, she quickly decides to assign a name to this new reality to distinguish it from her original world. She settles for 1Q84, basing the assigned name on the year she lived in previously, replacing the nine in 1984 for a similarly shaped Q, resulting in “a world that bears a question” (2012c, p. 158). With this, Murakami is both alluding to and repurposing Orwell’s dystopian *1984* (1949) through a magical realist lens.

In the second chapter, the reader is introduced to Tengo, who is in the middle of a conversation with Komatsu, a well-respected editor of literary magazines with a keen eye for the publishing industry. In the middle of a coffee shop, Tengo is offered to ghostwrite Fuka-Eri’s *Air Chrysalis* with the goal of winning a new-author competition called the Akutagawa Prize. He shows reservation and reticence at first, worried about ethics and the possible legal repercussions of being found out. In the end, however, he ends up accepting the job on the account of being unable to stop thinking about the story and its potential impact.

From here on, their existence in a parallel world that resembles the one described in the novel *Air Chrysalis* causes Aomame and Tengo’s lives to be irrevocably turned upside down in the subtlest of ways. They must face the mystical forces of the altered reality they inhabit, which gain more and more influence as time progresses, and unearth the mysteries posed throughout the novels, as well as explore their own latent powers and determine the roles they occupy in the storyline. Aomame and Tengo struggle to exercise their free will to achieve their mutual objective of finding each other and returning to their original world, fighting fiercely against fate.

Recurring symbols like the air chrysalis, the Little People and the two moons come together to intensify the novel's surreal yet ordinarily detailed atmosphere. These elements are simultaneously used as plot devices and a way to introduce thematic weight into the novel's questioning of authorship, control and identity. They also pose considerable challenges for translators, who must maintain the layers of meaning and tone intact in the target version. This blend of magical realism and surrealism, powered by the distortion of everyday reality and the potentiality of dreams and free will, accurately exemplifies Murakami's hybrid, unique style. Two-thirds of the way through, in the trilogy's last instalment, the third narrator is introduced in this dual narrative in the form of a secondary character named Toshiharu Ushikawa. He is described as a persistent private investigator with high perception skills who is employed by the Leader's organisation, Sakigake, and with his point of view come chapters as bizarre and unsettling as his persona.

As Tengo thinks in Chapter 3 of Book 3, "what has gone forward can't go back to where it came from" (Murakami, 2012c, p. 890). This is one of the story's main themes from the very beginning, and the narrative develops how its characters overcome this train of thought.

The books explore overlapping themes of free will as opposed to fate, the nature of memory, the fluidity of reality, and the transformative power of storytelling.

As things start falling into place, Aomame and Tengo continue to question the events happening around them and fight for a way to reunite and return to their original world.

The final chapters solve as many of the readers' doubts as questions they leave unanswered. The novel's ending, ambiguous in nature, provides an open-ended resolution that encourages philosophical reflection. This purposeful ambiguity reinforces the novel's main themes of reality fluidity and the unreliability of perception, further complicating its potential interpretation and its translation.

## 2.5. Previous Studies on *1Q84*

*1Q84* has been the object of study in several research articles and other scholarly publications that address multiple facets of its complex narrative structure, its magical realistic and surrealistic elements, and their resonance in translation. In this section, a collection of some of the most relevant approaches in existing research will be presented.

In the first place, Virginia Yeung's (2016) study on the multiple narrative embeddings in *1Q84* further exemplifies the relevance of terms like 'Air Chrysalis' and 'The Town of Cats', shedding light on their dual roles as metafictional devices and metaphysical strategies. She argues that these stories buried in the main story contribute greatly to the labyrinthine narrative structure, which in turn reflects the ontological ambiguity native to the world of 1Q84, opening a philosophical perspective on the nature of being.

On a similar note, Ruth Cubillo Paniagua (2013) analyses the novel's metafiction and intertextuality, paying special attention to the numerous literary and musical references that enhance symbolic richness and open new perspectives, establishing multiple levels of understanding for readers.

Additionally, Wendy B. Faris (2020) makes a notable contribution from a magical realism perspective in the chapter "Proximate Magic", included in *Magical Realism and Literature*. She interprets the magical phenomena in 1Q84 as plot devices that serve the purpose of bridging the detachment among characters in a disconnected urban environment—an interpretation that is considered to reflect society's predicaments like the search for meaning or isolation. Ultimately, she aims for the unravelling of the mysterious aim behind what she calls "proximate magic" events.

From a translation perspective, on the one hand, Tingting and Feng (2022) probe the extent to which faithfulness is respected in the portrayal of Murakami's narrative style in the English translation of 1Q84. They reveal a number of strategies used to preserve the author's voice and

analyse how cultural peculiarities, repetitions, and verb tense usage are approached. On the other hand, Anna Zielinska-Elliott and Mette Holm (2013) talk about European renditions of *IQ84* in *Two Moons Over Europe: Translating Haruki Murakami's IQ84*. They question the translators' roles when dealing with the expression of Japanese writing scripts, the adaptation of tone and dialogue, and the handling of mistakes, both in the translations and in the original. These lines of research align with the comparison of different language versions proposed in this thesis.

In addition, Jenkin Suen's (2013) master's thesis relates Jung and Lacan's concepts regarding the unconscious and the individuation process to *IQ84*'s representation of the collective Japanese psyche. The author interprets the novel as a psychological journey full of symbolism, where characters travel to an alternate reality representing a metaphor of unresolved social trauma to reconnect the past and the present.

Furthermore, Barbara Clerici (2018) covers the question of authorial auto-representation through a literary and sociological approach. According to her, *IQ84* is injected with an implicit reflection of Murakami's public figure. She argues that the novel tests the limits between an anonymous narrative voice and a mediatic author, offering a metanarrative that contemplates the construction of literary fame.

Lastly, there have been some translation focused studies that remain irrelevant in this thesis because of their differing language focus, like Lica Hashimoto's *Translating Haruki Murakami's "IQ84" in Brazil: Transferring Culture, Transferring Alterity* (2015)—focusing on Portuguese—or Mette Holm's *Translating Murakami Haruki as a Multilingual Experience* (2015)—focusing on Danish—, both included in a special section on Murakami in volume 49 of the *Japanese Language and Literature* journal.

In sum, the mentioned studies offer a solid base for understanding the complexities—symbolical, philosophical, structural—of *IQ84*, as well as the challenges they pose in

translation. However, despite the broad reach of existing research, an underexplored framework remains regarding the comparative analysis of the translation of magical elements across different languages. This void justifies the focus of this thesis, which aims to examine how the novel's fantastical and surreal elements are translated across the Catalan, English, and Spanish versions, and how each translator choice influences reader interpretation and reception. In the following section, a detailed analysis of the most relevant magical elements is introduced from a structured comparative framework.

### 3. Analysis of Magical Elements

#### 3.1. Analytical Approach

To answer the research questions proposed for this thesis, the chosen terms are analysed using a qualitative research approach through the comparison of the translations into Catalan, English, and Spanish.

These three target languages were selected for multiple reasons. Firstly, Catalan and Spanish are the official languages of the country of publication, and the researcher's native proficiency in both allows a nuanced understanding of the linguistic and stylistic choices present in each translation. Secondly, English—alongside Japanese—has constituted a central focus of the researcher's academic training. Notably, the English translation was the first version of *IQ84* encountered, which provided the initial interpretative framework. Furthermore, English's status as a lingua Franca, particularly in the fields of academics and literature, reinforces the relevance of its presence in the comparative analysis. Lastly, the distinct cultural and linguistic traditions associated with each language contribute to divergent interpretations and influence perception in each rendering, allowing different perspectives of magical realism and offering great comparative insight.

The translation theory strategies used in the comparative analysis are the ones previously mentioned in the Theoretical Framework for Translating Magical Realism section of this thesis. Starting with the domestication and foreignization techniques explored by Venuti in his work *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (1995), which help in distinguishing the intentions behind the translation choices, continuing with Vinay and Darbelnet's proposal of the seven procedures in *Comparative stylistics of French and English: A methodology for translation* (1995), which allow a general categorisation of the translation techniques used in magical realistic literature, and ending with the extended, more nuanced classifying list of methods by Newmark in *A textbook of Translation* (1988a). This analysis addresses the three

central research questions outlined in the Introduction section, focusing on ambiguity, cultural adaptation, and figurative language.

Although the analysis of the elements might be susceptible to subjective interpretation, allowing a certain degree of interpretative variability, the aim is for the thesis' findings to maintain neutrality and methodological consistency. This is attempted through the consistent application of methods that aim to reduce interpretative drift, including theoretical categories and the division of translations with visual tools, i.e. comparative charts. Regardless of how this research may be constrained by the objective limitations of its qualitative approach and human analysis, it seeks to avoid intentional bias.

Moreover, when selecting the fragments where the terms appear, this thesis aims to show its readers those extracts that provide a better understanding of the magical elements of the main text through contextualised segments. To achieve that, the selected passages contain narrative moments where the characters either give or are given explanations of the analysed concepts, come to a plot-decisive realisation about them, or simply hear and reflect about them for the first time. Only those excerpts that properly showcase the function, symbolism, or narrative importance of each term have been retained. The passages are aligned with the plot, so that the reader gets to experience the terms in their intended context within the broader text and learn about the circumstances and happenings surrounding the terms in their original literary setting.

### **3.2. Translation Comparison Process**

This thesis will analyse 15 terms essential to the construction of the magical realism genre throughout the trilogy of *IQ84*. Some related terminology was excluded from this study due to its reduced relevance. These discarded terms had a symbolic or narrative charge that was lesser than that of the selected terms and were therefore considered inessential. Only 15 terms were chosen to maintain manageability while ensuring depth of analysis.

Each term is analysed through one or two excerpts reflecting their narrative function and character perception, offering a multifaceted selection that observes the translators' strategies through a wider lens. All textual comparisons are sourced from the 2020 digital edition by Shinchobunko in Japanese, the 2011 Empúries editions in Catalan, the 2012 Vintage edition in English, and the 2011 Tusquets editions in Spanish.

In order to analyse the translation strategies applied to each version of *IQ84* with precision, this thesis adopts a structured comparative approach, combining quantitative and qualitative analysis. By using charts to compare the chosen terms, the visual representations of the selected novel segments are made clear, thus facilitating pattern recognition, the identification of lexical and semantic drifts, and of the specific strategies translators chose to employ.

This parallel arrangement allows for an easier observation of how the terminology of fantastical elements is transformed, nuanced or replicated in each language. Focusing the comparison on shorter segments—single words, fixed expressions, and key syntagms—, syntactic structure is analysed only when examining general text clarity and genre preservation.

Grounded in a previously mentioned wide theoretical framework, this method includes the concept of thick translation proposed by Kwame Anthony Appiah (1993, pp. 817–819), the distinction between domestication and foreignization developed by Lawrence Venuti (1995), and the Skopos theory as last reviewed by Christina Schäffner (2009). These approaches, along with the others mentioned in the literature review section, allow the evaluation of how translators deal with ambiguity, the surrealistic tone, and the symbological charge of the original work.

Analytical tools from translation descriptive studies, particularly the micro-textual categories by Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) and the more nuanced classifications by Chesterman (1997), who distinguishes between syntactic, semantic and pragmatic strategies, and by Newmark (1988a), who offers a wider range of translation procedures.



The framework by Vinay and Darbelnet aids in the identification of shifts, mainly consisting of borrowing, equivalence, or modulation, whereas Chesterman and Newmark's classifications offer a more detailed insight, allowing a deeper analysis of the techniques used and their pragmatic and semantic effects.

Moreover, some elements of corpus-based translation studies are applied utilising a limited quantitative analysis—such as the counting of lexical variations and terminological repetitions—which supports qualitative observations empirically. This approach permits the detection of translation tendencies and priorities in each version, especially regarding the handling of supernatural concepts and the preservation of internal coherence. The analysis is reinforced by stylistic and narrative considerations, which in turn aid in comprehending how elements like the rhythm, the narrative voice or metaphors are replicated or adjusted in each target language. Finally, in any case in which it is deemed relevant, back-translation will be taken into consideration and used as a tool of exploration, to help accentuate any possible semantic losses or implicit interpretative decisions, especially in those excerpts in which indeterminacy plays a fundamental role. It will be applied selectively in cases where divergence is unequivocal, such as when the target language version makes use of characteristics absent from the source text, e.g., simplification or cultural substitution.

This methodology allows for a cross-comparative examination and reading of the translators' choices, supplying a critical view of how the limits between reality and fiction are rebuilt in accordance with the cultural and linguistic context of each of the target languages.

To help manageability, the scope of this study is limited to the selected terms, occasionally considering a broader perspective when it is relevant to the effect of the magical tone. It will not cover syntax differences or full sentence structure for the same reason, unless they affect the reader's interpretation of magical realism.

The selection of the corpus is grounded on the researcher's reading experience. After reading the book in Catalan and English to achieve a multifaceted point of view, the terms were chosen based on their magical charge and their relevance in the characters' lives and the progress of the narrative. The compiled list of key terms contains every notable supernatural presence in the novel that plays an active role in the development of the plot. From entities holding otherworldly power (like the Leader, the Little People, the blind goat, and Aomame with her magic touch), to items shrouded in mystery (such as the air chrysalis and the ice pick). Ominous symbols that generate trepidation (like crows, or the strong, long arms), and inexplicable roles that have their own presence (like the "*maza/dohta*" and "Perceiver/Receiver" pairs). Even locations—physical or otherwise—where the plot and the characters evolve (the Sakigake commune and the Town of Cats).

The terms present in the Corpus and Key Terms and Case Studies sections will be displayed in alphabetical order. This organisational system was chosen to maximise clarity and facilitate navigability over other systems like narrative or thematic arrangement, given the frequency and the existing correlation between some of the terms. Additionally, the terminological pairs '*maza* and *dohta*' and 'Perceiver and Receiver' will be listed and defined as separate terms but will be presented and compared alongside each other in the Case Studies section, respecting the way they are grouped together in the novels, thus avoiding the repetition of their citations.

### 3.3. Corpus and Key Terms

The corpus of this thesis is composed of Haruki Murakami's *1Q84* original Japanese and its official translations into Catalan, English and Spanish. The consulted translations include the following versions of Murakami's work: the Catalan versions, *1Q84: Llibres 1 i 2* and *1Q84: Llibre 3*, published in two separate volumes by Empúries (2011b; 2012b); the English *1Q84: The Complete Trilogy* paperback of the entire trilogy by Vintage (2012c); and the Spanish two-volume edition consisting of *1Q84 (Libros 1 y 2)* and *1Q84 (Libro 3)* by Tusquets Editores (2011a; 2012a). The Japanese original is the electronic edition encompassing the full trilogy *1Q84 (Book 1-3)*, published by Shinchobunko (2020).

To provide a comprehensive understanding before the analysis of the magical elements present in the novel, both a chart of key terms across the four languages and a list of definitions and analytical descriptions have been crafted, containing the main components that help create the fantastical atmosphere surrounding the alternative-world Tokyo where the plot is developed. While the translations of specific terms will be compared later, a comprehensive list is presented first for clarity and reference, including all aspects that should be taken into consideration. Refer to the Analytical Approach and the Translation Comparison Process sections for the justification and development of the reasoning behind the terminology selection process.

The list of key terms includes a total of 15 terms related to the magical realism present in the novel, ranging from locations to objects and entities, as discussed previously in the Analytical Approach section. To illustrate the variations in the translation of key magical terms across languages, the chart below shows the original Japanese terms alongside their respective translations into Catalan, English, and Spanish. After the chart is a list containing a brief analytical description of the words of magical or fantastical nature that this thesis will examine.

Japanese	Catalan	English	Spanish
ichi kyū hachi yon 1Q84	1Q84	1Q84	1Q84
kūkisanagi 空気さなぎ	Crisàlide d'aire	Air Chrysalis	Crisálida de aire
mōmoku no yagi 盲目の山羊	cabra cega	blind goat	cabra ciega
karasu カラス	corbs	crows	cuervos
dōta ドウタ	<i>filia</i>	<i>dohta</i>	<i>daughter</i> / dóter
aisu pikku アイスピック	punxó de gel	ice pick	picahielos
rīdā リーダー	Líder	Leader	Líder
ritoru pīpuru リトル・ピープル chiisana hitotachi / 小さな人たち / chiisana hitobito 小さな人々	la gent petita / les persones petites / homenets petits	the Little People / tiny people	la Little People / la lítel pípol / la gente pequeñita / personas de baja estatura
chikarazuyoku ( 力強く ) nagai ude 長い腕	braç molt llarg (i molt fort)	long (strong) arms	largos (y fuertes) brazos
maza マザ	<i>mater</i>	<i>maza</i>	<i>Mother</i> / móder
majikku tocchi マジック・トッチ	Tacte màgic	magic touch	toque mágico
pashiva パシヴァ / perceiver	<i>Perceiver</i> / <i>parsiva</i>	Perceiver	<i>Perceiver</i> / <i>persiver</i>
rejiva レジヴァ / receiver	<i>Receiver</i> / <i>resciva</i>	Receiver	<i>Receiver</i> / <i>resiver</i>
sakigake さきがけ	Sakigake	Sakigake / Forerunner	Vanguardia
koe kami no koe 声 / 神の声	les veus / la veu dels déus	the voices / the voices of the gods	la voz / la voz de Dios
neko no machi 猫の町 / ねこのまち	El poble dels gats	Town of Cats	El pueblo de los gatos
futatsu no tsuki 二つの月 / tsuki ga futatsu 月が二つ	dues llunes	two moons	dos lunas

## **1Q84**

Coined by Aomame, 1Q84 is the name of the alternative world she enters at the beginning of the book. This world is based on the 1984 she previously inhabited, but it shows subtle differences that allow her to notice a shift in the air and the scene. Aomame reasons for her choice, saying that the ‘Q’ stands for ‘question mark’ and represents the unknown.

The letter Q in the book’s title highlights the altered but familiar reality, and its importance relies on the letter ‘Q’ being a homophone for nine (or 九 pronounced *kyū*) in the original Japanese. Furthermore, Murakami goes beyond and utilises the mirror-like parallelism inherent in the shapes of the number ‘9’ and the letter ‘Q’ to assist in reflecting the parallel world the characters live in. This representation of the altered reality remains perfectly clear to readers regardless of language. Moreover, with this title choice, Murakami boldly hints at Orwell’s *1984* (1949), linking its themes of surveillance and reality’s distortion to his own work.

## **Air Chrysalis**

Throughout the story, this term refers to two separate concepts: Fuka-Eri’s novel and what gives the book its name. On one hand, *Air Chrysalis* is the story embedded in *1Q84*’s narrative that Fuka-Eri recounted and Tengo rewrote. On the other hand, an air chrysalis is a cocoon-like structure created by the Little People that houses or produces a spiritual or metaphysical presence. This vaguely delineated concept serves the purpose of giving a *maza* its *dohta*. This purposefully ambiguous and mysterious object, described by Tengo as having “beautiful curves” and emitting a faint pale bluish light, is made from a special thread the Little People spin for this purpose only, resembles an invisible but somehow tangible cocoon with a copy of a person, or as they say in the novel, a *dohta*, inside.

## **Blind goat**

A sacred animal that Fuka-Eri cares for as part of her assigned chores in the Sakigake commune. The blind goat serves as a channel through which the Little People travel between different

worlds, and it is mentioned throughout the book because of its relevance in the plot of *Air Chrysalis* and regarding Fuka-Eri's experience with the Little People.

### **Crows**

A symbolic animal in both Western and Japanese culture, crows often represent ominous foreboding, mysteriousness and otherworldly forces. They are often used as subtle foreshadowing in literature, being harbingers of change, as is the case in *1Q84*, where they help shine light on the transformations and strange phenomena that happen around Tengo.

### ***Doh*ta**

*Doh*ta is a transliteration of the original Japanese ‘ドウタ’, which is, in turn, a questionable transliteration of the English term ‘daughter’. The Little People create an air chrysalis in which the *doh*ta grows to be a shadow of the heart and mind of the *maza*. A *doh*ta is the Perceiver who conveys to the Receiver.

### **Ice Pick**

A sharp, thin tool that Aomame develops to kill men who have wronged women. She tries to carry it with her at all times, which is an odd enough object for a woman to carry around so casually as Aomame does, regardless of its intended purpose in the novel.

Thanks to her supernatural abilities, she is able to find a deadly spot on people's necks that, when stabbed with this special tool, emulates a natural death, traceless. This allows her to engage in the ‘tasks’ the dowager assigns to her, which consist on disposing of men that were being abusive to their wives, children and women in general, in order to make the world a better place.

### **Leader**

The figure of the Leader holds notable significance in the context of the Sakigake commune and the 1Q84 world. This mysterious figure is surrounded by irrationality and magical elements and turns out to be Fuka-Eri's father, Tamotsu Fukada, a former university professor and the

founder of the Sakigake commune. He is said to have mystical powers that allow him to cure terminal illnesses and bring about paranormal phenomena. As he later explains to Aomame, those veridic powers come from an external, omnipresent power he calls “the voices of the gods”.

This character maintains a close relationship with the Little People and plays an important role as the representative in connecting them to the people.

### **Little People**

The Little People are small, otherworldly beings resembling folkloric figures like elves or gnomes. They are mysterious, supernatural entities who hold great power over the world of 1Q84 and who function as the primary antagonistic force within the novel’s magical framework. Although their physical appearances and behaviours are childlike or diminutive, they possess immense metaphysical power and act according to rules that lie beyond human understanding, being influential enough to be able to control people’s destinies, in one form or another. Their origins are unclear, and they communicate in cryptic language, often emerging from the mouths of the dead or out of thin air.

The Little People are significantly relevant due to their close relationship with the creation of the air chrysalis and their manipulation of reality within the 1Q84 world. They influence the strange happenings occurring in Aomame’s and Tengo’s new reality, such as the presence of two moons, the creation of air chrysalises, and the granting of supernatural powers to the Leader, in addition to being ultimately responsible for Fuka-Eri’s novel *Air Chrysalis*.

They are neither strictly evil nor good, but embody a kind of amoral force whose actions reflect a different cosmological logic. Even the characters themselves are hesitant to judge their true nature. Importantly, the Little People operate outside conventional human time and morality, and their interventions blur the line between reality, fiction, and dream. Their presence

challenges the characters' perceptions of agency and truth, suggesting a universe governed by hidden structures and metaphysical hierarchies invisible to the naked eye.

### **Long arms**

These 'long arms' (also 'long, strong arms') are mentioned by Tengo to describe situations in which he feels impotence when facing unfamiliar and uncontrollable situations. They are a metaphorical presence used to represent the ample reach and apparent omnipresence of the Little People, who seem to have eyes everywhere.

### ***Maza***

'*Maza*' is a transliteration of the original Japanese 'マザ', which is, in turn, a questionable transliteration of the English term 'mother'. The *maza* is the person whom the Little People use as a reference to create the *dohta*, the Receiver that collects what the Perceiver discerns. A *maza* becomes so when the Little People create an air chrysalis in which its *dohta* grows, and from then on, they must stay close to and care for the *dohta* to prevent losing the shadow of their mind and soul.

### **Magic Touch**

This is the expression the Leader uses to define Aomame's innate ability to identify and find even the most minuscule of muscles or tendons in the human anatomy. While Aomame doesn't give it a name, she acknowledges her supernatural abilities throughout the story, as they play an important role in her relationship with the Dowager and the men they kill.

### **Perceiver**

The Perceiver is a character who is aware of the altered reality, especially concerning the metaphysical duality which exists between the worlds of 1984 and 1Q84. Perceivers are not merely observers but active agents, as they confront the changes and inconsistencies brought along by a new, magical world (i.e., the appearance of a misshapen second moon or the presence and influence of the Little People). This active role implies a sharper psychological



ability, a greater intuition, and a unique sensibility to changes in spatial and temporal dimensions that should not be simplified into a keen eye. Perceivers like Aomame and Fuka-Eri play a crucial narrative function, delimiting what is real and what is surreal, often experiencing a profound existential tension as a consequence. Aomame embodies this role with utmost clarity: her growing consciousness regarding the surrealistic elements around her environment pushes her deeper into the alternative world and leads her to a moral and metaphysical confrontation. This term serves as a way to reflect how the characters confront the reality of the physical world surrounding them.

### **Receiver**

The Receiver is a character who channels outside forces and acts as a vessel for supernatural power and knowledge in the world of 1Q84. In contrast to the Perceiver, the Receiver has a passive role, does not question the information they convey, and seldom analyses it; rather, they serve as conduits through which otherworldly forces such as the Little People enter the human realm, and through which their messages are transmitted. This passivity makes them both essential and vulnerable—they are at once connected to a higher plane and lacking in agency. The Receiver's role is especially significant concerning the air chrysalis, a cocoon-like structure created by the Little People that houses or produces a spiritual or metaphysical presence. In the story's first half, Fuka-Eri acts as a quintessential Receiver while transmitting the Little People's story through her narration of *Air Chrysalis*: she does not claim authorship of the novella, but rather delivers it as a transcription of what she has received. Over time, she withdraws from this role to take on that of the Perceiver, harmonising and balancing the magical scales when Tengo also assumes the characteristics of a Receiver, particularly as he engages more deeply with the story he edits and the world it reveals. Whatever reality is created by mystic forces through fiction, they embody the supernatural and give it a way to come to life.

The vagueness surrounding both Perceiver and Receiver (as well as many other key terms analysed) is not accidental; instead, it is purposefully wielded as a tool that aids in keeping the narrative's new reality obscure concerning its magical elements.

### **Sakigake**

Sakigake, also called "Forerunner" on its first introduction, is the commune and religious cult that Tamotsu Fukada created, where Fuka-Eri was raised, and in which the events of *Air Chrysalis* took place. This commune is described as a tightly controlled, isolated environment in the mountains of Tokyo's outskirts, functioning simultaneously as a spiritual movement and an agricultural collective. Its beginnings are rooted in a larger, more moderate commune called Takashima Academy, where Fukada's family and devout followers sought refuge after a series of revolutionary incidents and learnt the agricultural techniques they needed to break away and form their community in 1974. Instead of sticking to simple communal living, their spiritual practices evolved into a religious sect that followed a series of ritualistic activities justified by the Leader's divine enlightenment.

Sakigake's atmosphere suffers a gradual transformation under the Leader's guidance and slowly becomes oppressive and secluded in secrecy, a fact that ultimately leads Fuka-Eri to escape the commune and find sanctuary with her father's estranged friend, Professor Ebisuno. In *1Q84*, this commune is a symbolic space that embodies a microcosm of the alternate world's invisible forces at play, where external agents manipulate characters' lives and exert influence through religious dogma and metaphysical powers indiscriminately. The novel's pivotal themes of psychological manipulation, blurred boundaries of the real and the surreal, and intangible power systems are transmitted accurately through this portrayal of a world where the line between the seen and the unseen is fragile.

### **The voices of the gods**

These omnipresent voices of the gods have an important role within the 1Q84 lore, being that

they are directly related to the Leader, the Little People, and Aomame's special abilities. There is a strong relationship between these voices of the gods that dictate who acquires heavenly capabilities and who does not, and the primordial representative symbols of power within the world of 1Q84.

### **Town of Cats**

*Town of Cats* is the title of an embedded story Tengo starts reading in Book 2, Chapter 8: *Time for the Cats to Come*, which he later reads to his father (2012c, pp. 570–584). Reflecting the world of 1Q84, the tale is set in a slightly altered reality. In the story, a young man gets off the train at an eerie, lost town run exclusively by large cats, and he later discovers that he is unable to leave.

It serves Tengo as a tool to explore alternative realities more deeply. Much like *Air Chrysalis*, also an embedded story, *Town of Cats* makes its readers question reality as they know it, blurring the lines between worlds. Fuka-Eri refers to it as a real place where Tengo went and came back from after visiting his father in the hospital.

### **Two moons**

In 1Q84, a greenish, misshapen moon appears beside our familiar Moon. As it is revealed during the story, this second moon represents the *dohta*, while the original one symbolises the *maza*. Additionally, the two moons are said to cast the shadow of the *dohta*'s heart and mind after she wakes up, thus reinforcing the representation of the mother-daughter duo.

It is not only the addition of a green moon alongside our usual view of the night sky but also the descriptions of how the characters, especially Aomame, perceive the sky and the clouds as different from those in the original 1984. The scenery of the sky looming over everyone living on Earth serves the purpose of making the characters feel unsettled and helps portray the magical ambience of the new, alternative world.

### 3.4. Case Studies: Translating Magical Elements in *1Q84*

#### 1Q84

In Book 1, Chapter 9: *New Scenery, New Rules*, Aomame gives the new world she resides in a name to distinguish it from her real world, and provides a logical explanation for her choice, attributing the use of the letter Q to a “question mark” to all the incognitas this alternate reality poses and referring to 1Q84 as 「その疑問符つきの世界」 (“a world with a question mark”).

<b>Japanese</b>	<p><u>1Q84</u> 年—私はこの新しい世界をそのように呼ぶことにしよう、青豆はそう決めた。</p> <p>Q は question mark の Q だ。疑問を背負ったもの。</p> <p>彼女は歩きながら一人で肯いた。</p> <p>好もうが好むまいが、私は今この「1Q84 年」に身を置いている。私の知っていた 1984 年はもうどこにも存在しない。今は 1Q84 年だ。空気が変わり、風景が変わった。私はその疑問符つきの世界のあり方に、できるだけ迅速に適応しなくてはならない。新しい森に放たれた動物と同じだ。自分の身を護り、生き延びていくためには、その場所のルールを一刻も早く理解し、それに合わせなくてはならない。</p> <p>(Murakami, 2020, p. 233)</p>
<b>Catalan</b>	<p>«<u>1Q84</u>: així és com em referiré a aquest món nou», va decidir l’Aomame.</p> <p>La lletra <i>q</i> feia referencia al signe d’interrogació, a la qüestió que es plantejava.</p> <p>Va fer que sí amb el cap, tot caminant.</p> <p>Ara, tant si li agradava com si no, es trobava a l’any 1Q84. L’any 1984 que coneixia ja no existia. Ara era al 1Q84. L’aire havia canviat, i també havia canviat el paisatge. Havia d’adaptar-se tan aviat com fos possible a les regles. D’aquell món ple d’interrogants, igual que un animal quan l’alliberen en un bosc que no coneix. Havia d’entendre les regles d’aquell lloc sense perdre ni un moment per tal de poder-s’hi emmotllar i ser capaç de protegir-se i sobreviure. (Murakami, 2011b, pp. 156–157)</p>
<b>English</b>	<p><u>1Q84</u>—that’s what I’ll call this new world, Aomame decided.</p> <p><i>Q</i> is for “question mark.” A world that bears a question.</p>

	<p>Aomame nodded to herself as she walked along.</p> <p><i>Like it or not, I'm here now, in the year 1Q84. The 1984 that I knew no longer exists. It's 1Q84 now. The air has changed, the scene has changed. I have to adapt to this world-with-a-question-mark as soon as I can. Like an animal released into a new forest. In order to protect myself and survive, I have to learn the rules of this place and adapt myself to them.</i> (Murakami, 2012c, p. 158)</p>
<b>Spanish</b>	<p>«<u>1Q84</u><sup>[7]</sup>: así voy a denominar este nuevo mundo», decidió Aomame.</p> <p>«Q de <i>question mark</i>. Algo que carga con una interrogación a sus espaldas».</p> <p>Aomame asintió sola mientras caminaba.</p> <p>«Me guste o no, ahora me encuentro en “1Q84”. El año 1984 que yo conocía ya no existe. Esto es 1Q84. El aire ha cambiado, el paisaje ha cambiado. Me tengo que adaptar rápidamente a la forma de ser de este mundo con signo de interrogación. Igual que un animal liberado en un nuevo bosque. Para protegerme y sobrevivir, tengo que comprender sin dilación las reglas del lugar y amoldarme a ellas».</p> <p><sup>[7]</sup>El número 9 y la letra q se pronuncian en japonés del mismo modo: <i>kyū</i>. (N. del T.) (Murakami, 2011a, p. 149)</p>

The phonetical similarity between ‘Q’ and ‘9’ previously mentioned in the list of descriptions in the Corpus and Key Terms section, which is obvious to Japanese readers, goes completely overlooked in the Catalan and English versions, where the phonetic pun is not preserved. In contrast, the Spanish version provides a footnote with the pronunciation similarity and goes beyond by explaining the significance of the title in the synopsis.

Concerning translation strategies, while the Spanish prioritises fidelity to the original text’s implicit phonetic reference through external annotation, the Catalan and English versions lean towards the preservation of the reading flow, contributing to the readers’ immersive experience. In Catalan, the translation of 1Q84 uses a retention strategy for the original term. Yet, the translator opts for semantic adaptation and an equivalence strategy in the text surrounding the word 1Q84, specifically the explanation of the letter Q and the questionable new world, making

subtle changes like adapting the Japanese 「疑問を背負ったもの」 (*mono o gimon o seotta*, “something carrying a question”) into a more concrete rendering “*a la qüestió que es plantejava*” (“to the question that was posed”) to enhance the readability for Catalan readers, all while maintaining the uncertainty present in the terms with which Aomame describes the world.

In English, a simple and relatively straightforward literal translation strategy is used, with slight variations to be more explicit, yet focusing on preserving the metaphorical language, echoing the Catalan version.

In Spanish, the preservation of the magical atmosphere is taken as seriously as in the other two, and although the transmitted information is greater than in its counterparts, the Catalan and English versions, the execution could be considered to achieve a poorer result, as a technical footnote is likely to distract the reader and separate them from the metaphorical ambience. Nevertheless, this approach showcases the translator’s respect for the original work and his refusal to let subtle but crucial details be lost in translation.

Additionally, it is worth noting that the novel’s title in Japanese is originally intended to be read as ‘*ichi-kyū-hachi-yon*’ (literally ‘one-q-eight-four’), as the official pronunciation of the ‘*ichi-kew-hachi-yon*’ that appears under the title on the covers of the Japanese editions, in contrast with the alternative of reading 1Q84 as if it were a real year, which would be read as ‘*sen kyū hyaku hachi jū yon*’ (‘one thousand, nine hundred eighty-four’).

The Catalan version addresses the magical connotations of the term 1Q84 in a unique manner. The translator deliberately steers clear of the traditional use of the apostrophe that precedes the number one if the world’s name is read as *u-qu-vuit-quatre*, in a literally translated adaptation of the transcription present on the Japanese covers. This attention to detail proves to be quite useful in the Catalan translation, as it allows the reader to decide for themselves whether to call the world *u-qu-vuit-quatre* or *mil qu vuitanta-quatre*, resembling a conventional year. Thus,

across the three versions, the handling of 1Q84 illustrates the delicate balancing act between literal faithfulness, reader immersion, and the preservation of the original’s magical uncertainty.

### Air Chrysalis

In Book 2, Chapter 24: *As Long as this Warmth Remains*, Tengo sees an air chrysalis at his father’s hospital bed, an exact rendering of his description for Fuka-Eri’s book.

<b>Japanese</b>	それから天吾ははっと気づいた。空気さなぎだ。(Murakami, 2020, p. 1180)
<b>Catalan</b>	Després, de sobte, se’n va adonar: era una <u>crisàlide d’aire</u> . (Murakami, 2011b, p. 775)
<b>English</b>	Then it suddenly hit him: <i>This is an <u>air chrysalis</u>!</i> (Murakami, 2012c, p. 836)
<b>Spanish</b>	De pronto, Tengo se dio cuenta. «Es la <u>crisálida de aire</u> ». (Murakami, 2011a, p. 732)

While English syntactical structure allows for a calque, Catalan and Spanish use a literal translation strategy when dealing with 「空気さなぎ」 (*kūki sanagi*; “air chrysalis”). In distinguishing the translation of key terms, it is useful to clarify the difference between literal translation, calque, and free translation. A literal translation transposes the source words directly while maintaining naturalness in the target language. A calque, however, reproduces the structure of the original expression more rigidly, sometimes resulting in unfamiliar or slightly foreign phrasing. The English “air chrysalis”, following the Japanese 「空気さなぎ」 (*kūki sanagi*), is best understood as a calque, as it mirrors the internal composition of the source term while maintaining its strangeness. Thus, the Catalan and Spanish renderings cannot be considered loan words, as the languages’ syntax does not allow them to be translated as “*aire crisàlide*” or “*aire crisálida*”, respectively. Free translation, by contrast, would prioritise adapting the expression to the target culture, possibly at the cost of some of its original ambiguity, which opposes the intended approach (Nida, 1964, pp. 159-160).

### Blind goat

Book 1, Chapter 6: *Does this mean we're going pretty far from the city?*, Tengo starts summarising the plot of *Air Chrysalis*.

<b>Japanese</b>	<p>彼女は十歳の少女で、山中にある特殊なコミュニンで（あるいはコミュニンに類する場所で）一匹の<u>盲目の山羊</u>の世話をしている。それが彼女に与えられた仕事だ。すべての子供たちはそれぞれの仕事を与えられている。その山羊は年老いてはいるがそのコミュニティーにとってとくべつな意味を持つ山羊であり、何かに損なわれないように見張っている必要がある。いつときも目を離してはならない。彼女はそう言いつけられる。しかしついうっかりして目を離し、そのあいだに山羊は死んでしまう。彼女はそのことで懲罰を受ける。古い土蔵に死んだ山羊と一緒に入れられる。その十日間、少女は完全に隔離され、外に出ることは許されない。誰かと口をきくことも許されていない。</p> <p>山羊はリトル・ピープルとこの世界の通路の役をつとめている。 (Murakami, 2020, pp. 156–157)</p>
<b>Catalan</b>	<p>Tractava d'una nena de deu anys que vivia en una comuna, o una mena de comuna, molt particular i cuidava una <u>cabra cega</u>. Aquesta era la feina que li havien assignat, perquè tots els nens tenien una tasca assignada. La cabra era vella, però tenia un simbolisme especial per a la comunitat, i l'havien de vigilar perquè no li passés res. No se la podia perdre de vista ni un moment: això era el que li havien dit. La nena, però, se'n descuidava, la perdia de vista un instant i la cabra es moria. Per això, la protagonista rebia un càstig: la tancaven amb la cabra morta en un magatzem, i durant deu dies hi havia de viure totalment isolada, sense poder-ne sortir. També tenia prohibit parlar amb ningú.</p> <p>La cabra feia de via d'entrada al món per a la gent petita. (Murakami, 2011b, p. 104)</p>
<b>English</b>	<p>A ten-year-old girl, she lived in a special mountain commune (or commune-like place), where she was assigned to look after a <u>blind goat</u>. All the children in the commune had work assignments. Though the goat was old, it had special meaning for the community, so the girl's duty was to make sure that no harm came to it. She was not allowed to take her eyes off it for a second. One day, however, in a moment of carelessness, she did exactly that, and the goat died.</p>



	<p>As her punishment, the girl was put in total isolation for ten days, locked in an old storehouse with the goat's corpse.</p> <p>The goat served as a passageway to this world for the Little People. (Murakami, 2012c, p. 101)</p>
<b>Spanish</b>	<p>Con diez años, cuidaba de una <u>cabra ciega</u> en un tipo de comuna (o algo parecido a una comuna) en medio de las montañas. Le habían asignado ese trabajo. A todos los niños les asignaban su propio trabajo. La cabra estaba vieja, pero tenía un valor especial para la comunidad y era necesario vigilarla para que no sufriera ningún daño. No podía apartar la vista de ella ni un solo momento. Es lo que le habían mandado. Sin embargo, en un descuido, la perdió de vista y la cabra se murió. Como consecuencia, a ella la castigaron. La metieron en un viejo almacén de paredes revocadas junto a la cabra muerta. Durante diez días permaneció completamente aislada y no la dejaron salir al exterior. Tampoco le permitieron hablar con nadie.</p> <p>La cabra servía de pasaje entre la Little People y este mundo. (Murakami, 2011a, pp. 99–100)</p>

「盲目の山羊」 (*mōmoku no yagi*) is a term constructed with two perfectly ordinary words that is charged to the brim with symbolism and metaphoric meaning within the magical realism framework. The term is likewise translated in Catalan (“*cabra cega*”), English (“*blind goat*”), and Spanish (“*cabra ciega*”), using a shared strategy combining direct translation and foreignization.

In the first place, from a microstrategic perspective, the term's translation could be classified as a direct translation (following the categorisation by Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995, pp. 30–42), as there is neither cultural adaptation nor modifications concerning structure or semantics. The main reason behind conserving the original formulation lies in the translator's volition of sustaining the expression's false simplicity, contrasting with its symbolic load within the narrative.

Nevertheless, this choice is not merely literalist, but weaves itself into a foreignization strategy, as defined by Lawrence Venuti (1995, pp. 23–25). By choosing a translation that sustains that image without culturally domesticating it, the translators preserve the inherent strangeness

present in said magical element. The *blind goat*, as a symbolic creature surrounded by mystery, acts as a link connecting different worlds and, accordingly, the reader must not perceive it as an ordinary element. This decision correlates with Venuti's notion of resistance, a strategy in which the translator can steer clear of domestication to conserve the text's cultural alienness and the foreign texture (Venuti, 1995, pp. 20–23).

By using a direct translation that does not seek cultural parallelism or idiomatic reinterpretations, this term's preservation allows the strain between the ordinary and the extraordinary to continue having a central role. Hence, combining a seemingly simple technique (direct translation) along with a functionally significant strategy (foreignization) contributes greatly to the preservation of the ambiguous atmosphere and the narrative function that was intended in the original work (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995, pp. 33–35; Venuti, 1995, pp. 23–25).

The term is preserved without cultural adaptation and translated directly without altering its form or meaning to maintain the sense of strangeness and ambiguity inherent in magical realism.

## Crows

In Book 2, Chapter 10: *You Have Declined Our Offer*, the cawing crows act as an ominous symbol and an omnipotent presence just before Tengo leaves his father's side after an ostensibly one-sided emotional conversation.

<b>Japanese</b>	<p>カラスが何羽かかたまって、鳴きながら空を横切っていった。天吾は腕時計を見た。もうそこを出なくてはならない時刻だった。彼は椅子から立ち上がり、父親のそばに行って肩に手を置いた。</p> <p>「さよなら、お父さん。近いうちにまた来ます」 (Murakami, 2020, pp. 853–854)</p>
<b>Catalan</b>	<p>Un <u>estol de corbs</u> van solcar el cel grallant. En Tengo es va mirar el rellotge. Ja era l'hora de marxar d'allí. Es va aixecar de la cadira, es va acostar al seu pare i li va posar la mà a l'espatlla.</p>

	—Adéu, pare. Tornaré a venir aviat. (Murakami, 2011b, p. 566)
<b>English</b>	A <u>pack of crows</u> cut across the sky, cawing. Tengo looked at his watch. It was time for him to leave. He stood up, went over to his father, and put his hand on his shoulder.  “Good-bye, Father. I’ll come again soon.” (Murakami, 2012c, p. 604)
<b>Spanish</b>	Una <u>bandada de cuervos</u> atravesó el cielo graznando. Tengo miró su reloj de pulsera. Ya era hora de irse. Se levantó de la silla, fue junto al padre y puso la mano sobre su hombro.  —Adiós, papá. Volveré pronto. (Murakami, 2012a, p. 535)

Due to the fact that crows share a symbolic load across cultures, this term can be easily identified by most target readers. There are some differences between the Japanese beliefs about crows and their superstitious meaning in English, Catalan and Spanish, which complicates the transmission of their connotations. Following Western superstition, the three target languages associate these animals with bad omens and death, but also transformation, wisdom and adaptability. In Japanese culture, 「カラス」 (*karasu*) are associated with all of the above, as well as being traditionally considered messengers of the gods and seen as symbols of guidance and marks of rejuvenation, which creates a contradictory symbolism easily lost in translation. Nevertheless, Murakami’s distinctive style features a frequent reliance on Western culture born out of his upbringing and subsequent appreciation of relevant European and American authors. These influences, which include authors like Edgar Allan Poe—a figure notable for his macabre stories full of mystery starring symbolic animals like black cats and ravens—, could lead to the conclusion that Murakami meant to transmit the negative significance of crows, rather than the positive, although this reasoning is up to interpretation. Another relevant factor to take into account is the distinction between the terms “raven” (*Corvus corax*) and “crow” (*Corvus corone*), which exists in the three target languages. The Catalan, which translated 「カラス」 (*karasu*) for “corbs” (*Corvus corax*) rather than “cornelles” (*Corvus corone*), choosing the term associated with literary symbolism, thus using

a domesticating strategy (Venuti, 1995, pp. 20–23). The English version opted for “crows” (*Corvus corone*) in a literal translation faithful to the original (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995), as there is virtually no difference between them and ravens, excluding ravens’ larger anatomy. The Spanish translation chose “*cuervos*” (*Corvus corax*) over “*corneja*” (*Corvus corone*) for the same reason the Catalan did “corbs”, following the same technique.

The collective nouns used in each translation are also worth mentioning. The original goes for a generic counter particle for birds (「羽」, *wa*), preceded by the prefix (「何」, *nan*, “how many”) which is in turn followed by the counter (「か」, *ka*), altogether becoming (「何羽か」, *nanwaka*) meaning “several birds” or “some birds”. In Catalan and Spanish, the terms “*estol*” and “*bandada*” (sets of people or animals) are employed in collocation with the usual usage for “corbs” and “*cuervos*”, demonstrating further instances domestication techniques (Venuti, 1995, pp. 20–23). In English, a group of crows is commonly referred to as a “murder”, “mob”, or “horde”, all of which hold threatening connotations and predator intention. However, the collective term used in the translation is “pack”, a term usually reserved for groups of wolves, which shows the use of a modulation opposing the translation of “crows” (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995, pp. 36–37). This unusual collocation might have intended to disrupt the readers’ focus and make them think about the lexical shift in depth, attempting to link the outside forces pressuring Tengo (i.e.: the “long, strong arms” and the Little People) to these birds.

In Book 2, Chapter 6: *We Have Very Long Arms*, Tengo describes the happenings surrounding him after a restless night.

<b>Japanese</b>	<p>予想されたことではあるが、安らかな眠りは訪れなかった。朝の淡い光が窓のカーテンを染め、タフな都会の<u>鳥たち</u>が目を覚まして一日の労働を始めるまで、(…)</p> <p>(Murakami, 2020, p. 783)</p>
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<b>Catalan</b>	Tal com s’esperava, el son reparador no el va visitar. Fins que la llum tènue del matí va tenyir les Cortines de la finestra i els <u>ocells</u> aguerrius de la gran ciutat es van despertar i van començar la seva feina diària, (...). (Murakami, 2012b, p. 519)
<b>English</b>	As he had imagined, restful sleep paid Tengo no visits that night. Until the pale light of dawn began colouring the curtains and the tough city <u>crows</u> woke to begin their day’s work, (...). (Murakami, 2012c, p. 553)
<b>Spanish</b>	Como había previsto, fue incapaz de conciliar el sueño. Hasta que la tenue luz de la mañana no tiñó las cortinas y los afanosos <u>pájaros</u> de la ciudad no se despertaron y dieron comienzo a una nueva jornada, (...). (Murakami, 2012a, p. 490)

However, in this instance, we see the term “crows” in only one of the versions of the novel. Neither the original Japanese nor the Catalan and Spanish translations use the term “crows”, but the English version does.

When translating 「鳥たち」 (*toritachi*, “birds”) into “crows”, the English translator chose to implement a creative translation and use the metaphorical resource embedded in the narrative instead of a literal translation to deepen the passage’s impact, offering an immersive experience of the magical world of 1Q84. This aligns with Newmark’s take on communicative translation and the modulation (1988a, pp. 88–89) and adaptation (1988a, p. 46) techniques exposed in his work, which allow a creative take on translation. This approach shows the translator’s will to further the target text’s symbolic charge and convey the narrative’s unsettling ambience.

### Ice pick

In Book 1, Chapter 3: *Some Changed Facts*, Aomame takes her ice pick out of her purse for the first time, providing the reader with an accurate description of this object. Later in the chapter, she describes how she uses it with great naturality.

<b>Japanese</b>	片手で器用にその布をほどくと、中から出てきたのは小振りな <u>アイスピック</u> に似たものだった。全長は十センチほど。柄の部分は小さく引き締まった木製になってい
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	<p>る。でもそれはアイスピックではない。ただ<u>アイスピック</u>に似たかたちをとっているだけだ。氷を砕くためのものではない。彼女は自分でそれを考案し、製作した。先端はまるで縫い針のように鋭く尖っている。その鋭い先端は折れることがないように、小さなコルク片に突き刺してある。特別に加工して綿のように柔らかくしたコルクだ。 (Murakami, 2020, pp. 85–86)</p>
<b>Catalan</b>	<p>La va desembolicar molt hàbilment amb una sola mà i va aparèixer un objecte que semblava un <u>punxó de gel</u> petit. Feia uns deu centímetres de llarg, i la part del mànec, de fusta, era petita i compacta. Però no era cap <u>punxó de gel</u>: només s’hi assemblava per la forma. No servia pas per trencar gel. L’havia fet i dissenyat ella mateixa. La part davantera era fina i punxeguda com una agulla de cosir, i, perquè no es trenqués, a la punta hi havia clavat una petita peça d’un suro fet especialment perquè fos suau com el cotó. (Murakami, 2011b, p. 57)</p>
<b>English</b>	<p>With a few deft moves she unfolded the cloth, revealing something like a small <u>ice pick</u> about four inches in length with a compact wooden handle. It looked like an <u>ice pick</u>, but it was not meant for cracking ice. Aomame had designed and made it herself. The tip was as sharp and pointed as a needle, and it was protected from breakage by a small piece of cork—cork that had been specially processed to make it as soft as cotton. (Murakami, 2012c, p. 52)</p>
<b>Spanish</b>	<p>Al desanudar el paño habilidosamente con una mano, salió algo semejante a un pequeño <u>picahielos</u>. Tendría una longitud de unos diez centímetros. La empuñadura era pequeña, de madera maciza. Pero aquello no era un <u>picahielos</u>. Sólo tenía la forma. No servía para picar hielo. Ella misma lo había diseñado y fabricado. La punta era muy aguda, como una aguja de coser. Para que el punzón no se doblara, iba clavado en un pequeño trozo de corcho. Era un corcho de elaboración especial, blando como el algodón. (Murakami, 2011a, p. 57)</p>

The original Japanese uses the loanword 「アイスピック」 (*aisu pikku*), a transliteration of the English term “ice pick”, and while there are synonyms that use the traditional Japanese writing systems of hiragana and kanji, like 「氷割り」 (*kōriwari*) and 「氷砕き」 (*kōrikudaki*), which mean “ice breaker”, both of them are associated with much larger and far less delicate

ice-breaking tools used to combat severe weather conditions, which would contradict the description provided by the author.

The translations of 「アイスピック」 (*aisu pikku*) into Catalan (“*punxó de gel*”), English (“ice pick”), and Spanish (“*picahielos*”) seem quite uniform when they are presented side by side. Once the translator ruled out the possibility of the term being a false friend and of it having a different meaning, the English version became a matter of directly translating it back to its original language.

Similarly, the Spanish language provides a straightforward coined equivalent with *picahielos*, described in the *Diccionario de la Lengua Española* (Dictionary of the Spanish Language) as a “kitchen utensil for breaking ice”<sup>1</sup>. In Catalan, however, finding a counterpart is not as simple, as there is no specific term listed in the Catalan dictionaries to refer to such a tool.

While native Catalan speakers may identify *punxó de gel* easily, this lack of official translations leads to a more subjective interpretation. The analogous term used in the translation can be divided into three components: “*punxó*”, a pick or punch, the meaning of which is closely associated with artisanal crafts; “*de*”, a preposition meaning “of”; and “*gel*”, meaning “ice”. Similarly to English, the term’s meaning could cause some ambiguity, as it can be interpreted as a pick made of ice or a pick for breaking ice. The latter option is the most common interpretation in English, but, taken out of context, the Catalan term remains open to debate. This happens because, while the English “ice pick” is a noun adjunct acting as an adjective, the Catalan “*punxó de gel*”. This does not happen in Spanish, as the term is unified in one word. While the term can be seen in standard usage, no entry in any Catalan dictionaries relates “*punxó*” (“pick”) with “*gel*” (“ice”).

The issue is further complicated by the first component, “*punxó*”, being associated with craftsmanship, such as leatherwork, woodwork, felt, and other traditional handiwork, as well

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<sup>1</sup> Retrieved from <https://dle.rae.es/picahielos?m=form>.

as professional fields like the textile industry and archaeology, but not officially with “*gel*”. Nevertheless, when consulting *TERMCAT*’s multilingual online search engine, *Cercaterm*, one encounters an entry relating “*punxó*” to kitchen utensils. However, the definition mentions a pick used to check the cooking point of meats—again, nothing related to ice.

On the one hand, the English and Spanish translations belong to the category of literal translation (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995). On the other hand, the Catalan one cannot be categorised as easily. The strategy used in the Catalan version aligns closely with the principles of thick translation (Appiah, 1993, pp. 817–819), which emphasises preserving the symbolic weight of culturally significant terms even at the risk of reduced transparency for the target audience. Here, the ice pick serves as a metaphorical extension of Aomame’s character, defined by a machine-like approach to violence, as well as a subtle nod to the cold and sharp precision of her moral code.

All three translations preserve the direct, surface-level meaning of the term, aligning with what is classified as a literal translation and revealing a foreignizing approach with the use of a dynamic equivalent (Venuti, 1995, pp. 23–25). However, this straightforward approach belies a deeper strategic choice, as each language captures slightly different connotations, reflecting the translators’ attempts to balance accuracy with the preservation of the original’s unsettling tone. By refusing domestication, the strategy permits the otherworldly atmosphere to remain as impactful as it is in the original text. The ice pick deserts its ordinary existence as a tool to become a symbol, the ultimate lethal instrument with the power to end a life tracelessly, embodying a simple kitchen utensil that mirrors Aomame’s plain appearance but holds potentially deadly qualities much like hers. Sustaining this imagery without adaptation fortifies the oddness and mysteriousness, adding to the magical realism narrative in every language.

## **Leader**



In Book 1, Chapter 18: *No longer a place for a Big Brother*, the Dowager mentions the Leader to Aomame for the first time, giving her some of the context behind his name.

<b>Japanese</b>	<p>「世間にはほとんど知られていないことですが、この教団には『<u>リーダー</u>』という名前と呼ばれる教祖がいます。彼は特殊能力を持っていると見なされています。その能力を用いて時として難病を治したり、未来を予言したり、様々な超常現象を起こしたりするということです。もちろんみんな手の込んだインチキに違いありませんが、それもあって、多くの人々が彼のもとに引き寄せられていくようです」</p> <p>(Murakami, 2020, p. 495)</p>
<b>Catalan</b>	<p>—Gairebé ningú no en sap res, d'aquesta secta, però tenen un cap espiritual a qui anomenen «<u>Líder</u>». Ells pensen que aquest Líder té poders especials, i que de vegades els fa servir per guarir malalties incurables, per predir el futur o per produir diversos fenòmens sobrenaturals. Segur que tot és un muntatge, és clar, però això li serveix per atreure gent. (Murakami, 2011b, p. 331)</p>
<b>English</b>	<p>“Very few people know this, but the group has a guru they call ‘<u>Leader</u>’. They view him as having special powers, which he supposedly uses to cure serious illnesses, to predict the future, to bring about paranormal phenomena, and such. They’re all elaborate ruses, I’m sure, but they are another reason that many people are drawn to him.” (Murakami, 2012c, p. 349)</p>
<b>Spanish</b>	<p>—(...): Aunque casi nadie lo sabe, esta organización tiene un fundador al que llaman «<u>líder</u>». Se considera que posee poderes especiales. Mediante esos poderes, a veces puede sanar enfermedades incurables, predecir el futuro y realizar distintos fenómenos paranormales. Aunque no cabe ninguna duda de que se trata de un fraude muy bien pensado, parece que va atrayendo a mucha gente a su alrededor. (Murakami, 2011a, p. 313)</p>

「リーダー」 (*rīdā*) is the sobriquet used to refer to Tamotsu Fukada, the authority figure in the Sakigake commune. The original term is a loanword born of the transliteration of the English word “leader”. Because of this, its translation into its original language is as easy as it was with “ice pick”. In Catalan and Spanish, the translation also remains simple since, in both languages, “*líder*” finds its etymological roots in the English language. However, both English

and Catalan translations chose to capitalise the first letter of the word to mark it as a proper name and someone's title, adding to the strangeness of the narrative, while this is omitted in Spanish in favour of the generalisation of the term.

Thus, the three versions use literal translation, but the Catalan and the Spanish have the added layer of using a naturalised borrowing technique (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995, pp. 31–32).

## Little People

In Book 2, *Chapter 11: Balance Itself Is the Good*, we find this conversation between Aomame and the Leader, who converse about the lore surrounding the Little People and their name, which turns out to have been created by the Leader's daughter, Fuka-Eri.

<b>Japanese</b>	「彼らはこれまで様々な名前と呼ばれてきたし、おおかたの場合、どんな名前でも呼ばれなかった。彼らはただそこにいた。リトル・ピープルという名前はあくまで便宜的なものに過ぎない。当時まだ幼かったわたしの娘が彼らを『 <u>小さな人たち</u> 』と呼んだ。彼女が彼らを連れてきた。わたしがその名前を『 <u>リトル・ピープル</u> 』に変えた。その方が言い易かったからだ」 (Murakami, 2020, p. 895)
<b>Catalan</b>	—En el passat han rebut diversos noms, però la majoria de vegades, no n'han rebut cap: senzillament, eren allí. «Gent petita» no és res més que una manera pràctica d'anomenar-los. Quan la meva filla encara era petita, en deia « <u>les persones petitetes</u> ». Va ser ella qui els va portar. Jo els vaig canviar el nom pel de « <u>gent petita</u> », perquè era més fàcil. (Murakami, 2011b, p. 592)
<b>English</b>	“ <i>They</i> have been called many different names, but in most cases have not been called anything at all. <i>They were simply there</i> . The expression ‘ <u>Little People</u> ’ is just an expedient. My daughter called them <u>that</u> when she was very young and brought them with her.” (Murakami, 2012c, p. 632)
<b>Spanish</b>	—A ellos se les ha llamado por diversos nombres y, en la mayoría de los casos, no se les ha llamado nada. <i>Ellos simplemente están ahí</i> . La denominación Little People sólo se les ha puesto por conveniencia. Cuando todavía era pequeña, mi hija les llamaba « <u>la gente pequeña</u> ». Fue

	ella quien los trajo. Yo les cambié ese nombre por el de « <u>Little People</u> », porque resulta más fácil de decir. (Murakami, 2011a, p. 560)
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When we look at the Japanese original, Murakami employs the fact that 「リトル・ピープル」 (*ritoru pīporu*) is an English transliteration to create a contrast with the equivalent term in Japanese, 「小さな人たち」 (*chīsana hitotachi*). The Catalan and Spanish versions are both similar to each other and the original text, while the English version follows a completely different path.

Whilst the Catalan opts for a literal translation and calls them “*gent petita*”, taking it a step further with a domesticating technique that reflects Catalan traditions, the Spanish version maintains the original Japanese, borrowing “*Little People*” from English as the main term in a show of foreignization. Furthermore, the Spanish version makes a similar translator choice to the one seen with the terminological pair “Receiver” and “Perceiver”, transforming the term into “*lítel pípol*” with a foreignizing approach (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995, pp. 31–35; Venuti, 1995, pp. 20–25).

This last translation of the term is an adapted phonetical reading that is used whenever Fuka-Eri mentions the “*Little People*”. This is illustrated, for example, in Book 1, Chapter 4: If that Is What You Want to Do, where she says to Tengo: “*La lítel pípol existe de verdad*” (Murakami, 2011a, p. 74).

Additionally, these languages’ similarities come into action for the domesticating literal translations of the secondary term 「小さな人たち」 (*chīsana hitotachi*), referred to as “*la gente pequeña*” and “*les persones petites*” respectively, but exclusively in this chapter (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995, pp. 31–35; Venuti, 1995, pp. 20–25).

In the English version, however, Rubin decided to refer to them only as the “Little People” and to omit the use of the secondary term 「小さな人たち」 (*chīsana hitotachi*) to talk about a

single concept, adding the demonstrative pronoun “that” as a replacement. This follows various translation techniques, including pronominalisation, which falls under the broader umbrella of modulation, and literal translation, as described by Vinay and Darbelnet (1995, pp. 33–37). This happens due to the fact that there is no need for clarification with a secondary term, as the primary one is already in English and thus understood clearly.

In this instance, although the Catalan and Spanish versions lean more towards the original and are more faithful to the Japanese text, if the fact that “Little People” is already an English term is considered, the omission in the English translation can be justified because the original meaning remains implicit in the passage with the use of the demonstrative pronoun “that”.

In Book 2, Chapter 19: *When the dohta wakes up*, Aomame reads through *Air Chrysalis* after learning Tengo had had a part in writing it.

<b>Japanese</b>	<p>三日目の夜に、山羊が大きく口を開けた。その口は内側から押し開けられたのだ。そしてそこから<u>小さな人々</u>がぞろぞろと出てきた。全部で六人。出てきた時は高さが十センチほどしかなかったが、地面に立つと、まるで雨のあとにキノコが伸びるように、彼らは急速に大きくなった。といっても、せいぜい六十センチくらいのものだ。そして自分たちは「<u>リトル・ピープル</u>」だと言った。 (Murakami, 2020, p. 1076)</p>
<b>Catalan</b>	<p>A la tercera nit, la cabra va obrir completament la boca. L’hi havien oberta empenyent des de dins. Tot seguit, en van sortir uns <u>homenets petits</u>, un rere l’altre. Eren sis en total. Quan sortien només feien uns deus centímetres d’alçada, però així que tocaven a terra començaven a créixer ràpidament, com bolets després de la pluja. Tanmateix, només van arribar a fer uns seixanta centímetres. Van dir que eren «<u>la gent petita</u>». (Murakami, 2011b, p. 708)</p>
<b>English</b>	<p>On the third night, the goat’s mouth opens wide. It has been pushed open from the inside, and out of the mouth comes a number of <u>tiny people</u>, six in all. They are only four inches high when they first emerge, but as soon as they set foot on the ground, they begin to grow like mushrooms sprouting after the rain. Even so, they are no more than two feet tall. They tell the girl that they</p>

	are called the <u>Little People</u> . (Murakami, 2012c, p. 762)
<b>Spanish</b>	A la tercera noche, la cabra abrió completamente la boca. La habían abierto a la fuerza desde dentro. De ella salieron unas tras otras varias <u>personas de baja estatura</u> . Eran seis en total. Al salir sólo medían diez centímetros, pero una vez en tierra crecieron rápidamente, igual que las setas después de la lluvia. Con todo, a lo sumo medían sesenta centímetros. Le dijeron que eran la « <u>Little People</u> ». (Murakami, 2011a, p. 668)

In this instance, the narrator of *Air Chrysalis* (younger Fuka-Eri), uses a different secondary term to refer to the Little People before learning their name when she sees them for the first time. 「小さな人々」 (*chiisana hitobito*) is a descriptive term that is translated using a different approach for each language.

In Catalan, the domesticating phrase “*homenets petits*” is used, along with the modulation present in the conceptual shift form 「人々」 (*hitobito*, “people”) to “*homenets*” (“little men”) (Venuti, 1995, pp. 20–25; Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995, pp. 36–37). Using a diminutive of “*home*” (“man”), along with “*petits*” (“little”), it reduces ambiguity while reinforcing the idea that the 「小さな人々」 (*chiisana hitobito*) are tiny humanoid figures.

In English, the literal translation “tiny people” is a descriptive, neutral rendering of 「小さな人々」 (*chiisana hitobito*) (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995, pp. 31–35).

In Spanish, a domesticating phrase is also used, alongside transposition and explication, with “*personas de baja estatura*” (“short people”, or more literally, “people of low height”) as the rendering, one that is less stylised than the other two translations, which could lead to the dilution of the surrealism surrounding the term (Venuti, 1995, pp. 20–25; Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995, pp. 36–37; Molina & Hurtado, 2002, p. 500).

The translation of the main term 「リトル・ピープル」 (*ritoru pīporu*) remains consistent with the rest of its mentions, as mentioned in the analysis of the previous passages.

### **Long arms**

In Book 2, Chapter 6: *We have very long arms*, Tengo mentions how the thoughts of his older girlfriend Kyoko and a long, strong arm kept him up all night. Previously in the same chapter, he wonders why Kyoko hadn't shown up to their date a week prior (2012c, p. 538), only to later receive a most unusual call from her husband, informing Tengo that “she will no longer be *able* to visit” him (Murakami, 2012c, p. 541).

<b>Japanese</b>	予想されたことではあるが、安らかな眠りは訪れなかった。朝の淡い光が窓のカーテンを染め、タフな都会の鳥たちが目を覚まして一日の労働を始めるまで、天吾は床に座って壁にもたれ、年上のガールフレンドのことや、どこから伸びてくる <u>力強く長い腕</u> のことを考えた。(Murakami, 2020, p. 783)
<b>Catalan</b>	Tal com s'esperava, el son reparador no el va visitar. Fins que la llum tènue del matí va tenyir les cortines de la finestra i els ocells aguerrits de la gran ciutat es van despertar i van començar la seva feina diària, es va estar assegut a terra amb l'esquena a la paret, pensant en la seva amiga i en un <u>braç molt llarg i molt fort</u> que venia d'alguna banda. (Murakami, 2011b, p. 519)
<b>English</b>	As he had imagined, restful sleep paid Tengo no visits that night. Until the pale light of dawn began coloring the curtains and the tough city crows woke to begin their day's work, Tengo sat on the floor, leaning against the wall and thinking about his girlfriend and about the <u>long, strong arms</u> reaching toward him from some unknown place. (Murakami, 2012c, p. 553)
<b>Spanish</b>	Como había previsto, fue incapaz de conciliar el sueño. Hasta que la tenue luz de la mañana no tiñó las cortinas y los afanosos pájaros de la ciudad no se despertaron y dieron comienzo a una nueva jornada, Tengo estuvo sentado en el suelo, apoyando la espalda contra la pared, mientras reflexionaba sobre lo de su novia y sobre los <u>largos y fuertes brazos</u> que se habían extendido desde algún sitio. (Murakami, 2011a, p. 490)

This term reflects the otherworldly forces at play in the novel and serves to represent Tengo's helplessness when confronted with them. The renderings in Catalan (“*braç molt llarg i molt fort*”), English (“*long, strong arms*”), and Spanish (“*largos y fuertes brazos*”), differ in the noun-adjective order, plurality, and the emphasis provided by 「力強く」 (*chikarazuyoku*,

“strong”). The Catalan especially deviates from the original 「力強く長い腕」 (*chikarazuyoku nagai ude*) by adding “molt” (very) twice, using an expansion procedure (Newmark, 1988a, p.90). Nevertheless, the overall translation approach in all three languages remains straightforward, relying on literal translation as a technique as described by Vinay and Darbelnet (1995, pp. 33–35).

In Book 2, Chapter 10: *You have declined our offer*, the arms appear again.

<b>Japanese</b>	<u>長い腕</u> がどこかから伸びてこうとしている。(Murakami, 2020, p. 876)
<b>Catalan</b>	Des d’alguna banda, se’ls apropava un <u>braç molt llarg</u> , (...). (Murakami, 2011b, p. 580)
<b>English</b>	Those <u>long arms</u> were reaching out from somewhere. (Murakami, 2012c, p. 619)
<b>Spanish</b>	Un <u>largo brazo</u> se está extendiendo. (Murakami, 2011a, p. 548)

It was crucial to identify the term 「長い腕」 (*nagai ude*) as the simplified version of 「力強く長い腕」 (*chikarazuyoi ude*), as they are conveying the looming evil and dread that Tengo feels from an unknown third party in the previous extracts. Equally, this shortened version of the term employs the same technique as the original one, with the Catalan again adding “molt”, maintaining consistency within the grater text.

## Maza and Dohta

In Book 2, Chapter 19: *When the Dohta Wakes Up*, Aomame reads the story of *Air Chrysalis* with rapt interest, and in this passage, the Little People explain the concepts of *maza* and *dohta* to a younger Fuka-Eri during her time at the commune.

<b>Japanese</b>	<p>「そこにいるのはキミの<u>ドウタ</u>だ」としゃがれた声のリトル・ピープルが言った。</p> <p>そしてひとつ咳払いをした。</p> <p>後ろを振りかえると、いつの間にか七人のリトル・ピープルが、そこに扇形に並んで立っていた。</p>
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	<p>「<u>ドウタ</u>」と少女は自動的に言葉を繰り返す。</p> <p>「そしてキミは<u>マザ</u>と呼ばれる」と低音が言った。</p> <p>「<u>マザ</u>と<u>ドウタ</u>」と少女は繰り返す。(Murakami, 2020, p. 1086)</p>
<b>Catalan</b>	<p>—Aquesta d'aquí és la teva <u>filia</u> —va dir el que tenia la veu ronca, i després va tossir.</p> <p>En girar-se, es va adonar que de sobte hi havia els set homenets i formaven un semicercle.</p> <p>—<u>Filia</u> —va repetir la nena mecànicament.</p> <p>—I tu ets la seva <u>mater</u> —va dir el de la veu greu.</p> <p>—<u>Mater</u> i <u>filia</u> —va repetir la nena. (Murakami, 2011b, p. 713)</p>
<b>English</b>	<p>One of the Little People speaks to her—the one with the hoarse voice: “That is your <i>dohta</i>,” he says, and then clears his throat.</p> <p>The girl turns to find the seven Little People fanned out behind her in a row.</p> <p>“<i>Dohta</i>,” she says, mechanically repeating the word.</p> <p>“And what you are called is ‘<i>maza</i>,’ ” the bass says.</p> <p>“<i>Maza</i> and <i>dohta</i>,” the girl says. (Murakami, 2012c, pp. 768)</p>
<b>Spanish</b>	<p>—Ésa es tu <u>daughter</u>—dijo el Little People de voz ronca. Tras lo cual carraspeó.</p> <p>Al darse la vuelta ve, de pronto, que los siete Little People están allí de pie, formando un abanico.</p> <p>—<u>Dóter</u> —repite automáticamente la niña.</p> <p>—Y tú eres lo que llamamos <u>mother</u> —dijo el de la voz de bajo.</p> <p>—<u>Móder</u> y <u>dóter</u> —repite la niña. (Murakami, 2011a, p. 674)</p>

The translation of the terms 「マザ」 (*maza*) and 「ドウタ」 (*dōta*) involves the same creative process behind their creation in the original Japanese. Murakami’s rendering of these terms is questionable in and of itself, as they come from Fuka-Eri’s point of view and her probably traumatic experiences as a child. The terms are faulty transcriptions of the English words “mother” and “daughter”, which younger Fuka-Eri did not understand; she simply repeated the sounds rather mindlessly, trying hard to decipher them. This adds an additional layer to the magical atmosphere of the novel. Because of this, the translators could take more liberties with



these terms when communicating their oddness to the target reader, which is exactly what they did.

The Catalan translation chose to reference its language's native words for “mother” and “daughter”, “*mare*” and “*filla*”, relying on their Latin roots and using their nominative cases “*mater*” and “*filia*”.

The English version, choosing to maintain the readers in the dark as much as possible to respect the original text, rendered the terms in a similar manner to Fuka-Eri's character in the original, sticking to this stylistic choice. Adapting “*maza*” and “*dohta*” directly from their Japanese spelling and treating them as though they were genuine Japanese words.

The Spanish version makes a similar stylistic choice, preserving the neologisms the Japanese original came up with, but adapting them phonetically directly from their English forms to match the mispronunciation and misspelling that would occur if a Spanish speaker repeated the words thoughtlessly, with 「マザ」 (*maza*) becoming “mother” and being adapted as “*móder*”, and 「ドウタ」 (*dōta*) becoming “daughter” and being adapted as “*dóter*”.

Although it might not appear so at first glance, the three translations come together to translate the terms 「マザ」 (*maza*) and 「ドウタ」 (*dōta*) as borrowings which are pure and transcribed literally and in italics in the case of Catalan and English, and a phonetically adapted borrowing in the case of Spanish (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995, pp. 31–32). All of these are clear examples of foreignization with the purpose of maintaining the mystery-cloaked reading environment (Venuti, 1995, pp. 23–25).

Although their connotation might be easily noticed by the readers, their meaning is only hinted at through Fuka-Eri's unreliable point of view and the characters' interpretation of her experiences as they were narrated in *Air Chrysalis*. Within the novel, their full meanings and the scope of their influence remain unexplained until the third volume, when they're analysed in depth by Komatsu:

“The girl’s alter ego is inside the chrysalis and a mother-daughter relationship is formed—the *maza* and the *dohta*. There are two moons in that world, a large one and a small one, probably symbolizing the *maza* and the *dohta*.” (2012c, pp. 1131–1132)

This snippet provides great insight and connects the dots that were merely implicit until then, clarifying doubts and making tangible connections between previously irrational and separate concepts, such as the air chrysalis, the presence of the two moons, and the *maza* and *dohta*, ultimately being all intertwined.

### Magic touch

In Book 2, Chapter 11: *Balance Itself Is the Good*, Aomame has a conversation with the Leader involving the nature of 1Q84’s intrinsic magic, their powers, otherworldly entities, and reoccurring supernatural phenomena.

<b>Japanese</b>	<p>「いずれにせよ、あなたはマジック・タッチを持っている」と彼は言った。</p> <p>「マジック・タッチ？」</p> <p>「普通ではない力を発する指だ。人間の身体の特異なポイントを探りあてることのできる鋭い感覚だ。それは特別な資格であり、ごく限られた数の人間にしか与えられない。学習や訓練によって得られるものではない。わたしも種類こそ違い、同じ成り立ちのものを手にしている。しかしすべての恩寵がそうであるように、人は受け取ったギフトの代価をどこかで払わなくてはならない」 (Murakami, 2020, p. 889)</p>
<b>Catalan</b>	<p>—Siguei com sigui, tens un <u>tacte màgic</u> —va dir.</p> <p>—¿Un <u>tacte màgic</u>?</p> <p>—Uns dits amb un poder que no és normal, un tacte molt sensible que et permet trobar punts especials al cos de la gent. És una habilitat molt específica, que tan sols ha estat concedida a un nombre molt reduït de persones, i que no es pot aconseguir amb l’estudi i la pràctica. Jo també tinc aquesta mena d’habilitats, per bé que són d’una altra mena. Però, com passa amb totes les gràcies, he de pagar un preu per la que he rebut. (Murakami, 2011b, pp. 588–589)</p>
<b>English</b>	<p>“In any case, you have a <i>magic touch</i>,” he said, using the English expression.</p>

	<p>“<i>Magic touch</i>?”</p> <p>“Fingers that give off extraordinary power. An acute sense for locating those special points on the body. A special capacity that is granted to very few individuals. This is not something you can learn through study and practice. I have something – a very different kind of something – that came to me in the same way. But as with all forms of heavenly grace, people have to pay a price for the gifts they are given.” (Murakami, 2012c, p. 628)</p>
<b>Spanish</b>	<p>—En cualquier caso, tienes un <u>toque mágico</u> —dijo él.</p> <p>—¿Un <u>toque mágico</u>?</p> <p>—Unos dedos que emanan una energía fuera de lo común, una gran sensibilidad que te permite encontrar los puntos especiales del cuerpo humano. Eso sólo se le concede a un número muy limitado de personas, con cualidades especiales. No se trata de algo que se adquiriera mediante aprendizaje y entrenamiento. Yo también poseo algo, de una clase diferente, pero cuyo origen es el mismo. Sin embargo, como con todas las gracias divinas, para que así sea la persona tiene que pagar en algún momento el precio del don que ha recibido. (Murakami, 2011a, p. 556)</p>

「マジック・タッチ」 (*majikku tocchi*) is the expression that the Leader uses to acknowledge Aomame’s gifted skill: an intrinsic knowledge of the human body and its anatomy. Its translation into Catalan (“*tacte màgic*”), English (“magic touch”), and Spanish (“*toque mágico*”) has a straightforward, direct translation approach aligning with the strategies by Vinay and Darbelnet (1995, pp. 33–35).

### Perceiver and Receiver

In Book 2, Chapter 22: *As Long as There Are Two Moons in the Sky*, Fuka-Eri sheds some light on the roles of Perceiver and Receiver, giving Tengo a deeper understanding of the roles they have been given without a choice.

<b>Japanese</b>	<p>「わたしが<u>パシヴァ</u>であなたが<u>レシヴァ</u>」</p> <p>「<u>perceiver</u> と <u>receiver</u>」 天吾は正しい言葉に言い換えた。</p> <p>「つまり君が知覚し、僕がそれを受け入れる。そういうことだね？」 (Murakami,</p>
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	2020, p. 1136)
<b>Catalan</b>	<p>—Jo sóc la <u>parsiva</u> i tu ets el <u>resciva</u>.</p> <p>—La <u>perceiver</u> i el <u>receiver</u> —va repetir en Tengo corregint les paraules—. O sigui que tu ets la qui percep i jo sóc el qui rep. ¿És això, el que vols dir? (Murakami, 2011b, pp. 745–746)</p>
<b>English</b>	<p>“I’m a <u>Perceiver</u>, and you’re a <u>Receiver</u>.”</p> <p>“In other words, you ‘perceive’ things and I ‘receive’ them?” (Murakami, 2012c, p. 803)</p>
<b>Spanish</b>	<p>—Yo soy <u>persiver</u> y tú, <u>resiver</u>.</p> <p>—<u>Perceiver</u> y <u>receiver</u>. —Tengo las pronunció de forma correcta—. Es decir, tú percibes y yo recibo. ¿No es así? (Murakami, 2011a, p. 705)</p>

The terms 「パシヴァ」 (*pashiva*, “perceiver”) and 「レシヴァ」 (*reshiva*, “receiver”) are first presented in katakana, a Japanese script used to spell loan words and foreign terms and names (among other things). Immediately after, they are corrected by Tengo, whose dialogue line uses the Latin alphabet to correct the pronunciation and clear up the meaning for the reader. Their creation is questionable due to their flawed nature, comparable to the “*maza/dohta*” pair, and likewise allows translators to proceed with slightly more freedom than with other terms with stricter etymology.

The Catalan and Spanish translations respect the original and keep the passage’s structure intact, maintaining Fuka-Eri’s characteristic mispronunciation and the explanatory correction by Tengo. Both versions opt for maintaining the English loan words used in the Japanese with a borrowing, although each translator used their own judgement to come up with the mispronounced transliteration of the words: the Catalan translation settled on “*parsiva*” and “*resciva*”, and the Spanish on “*perciver*” and “*resiver*” (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995, pp. 31–32). The English version, being the source from which the words were borrowed, decided on a reduction technique (Newmark, 1988a, p. 90), eliminating the mispronunciation and ensuing correction to present the correct terms directly. Although this strips the narration of a layer of

magical realism, given the language’s unique situation, the use of this technique is justified in light of the Skopos theory, as outlined by Christina Schäffner (2009), which defends the use of techniques based on the purpose of the translation.

In the Japanese edition, the use of the katakana script is a show of foreignization in and of itself, and it represents Fuka-Eri’s lack of understanding regarding the terms. This shows the readers that she is simply repeating words she heard based on their sounds, without comprehending the meaning. This happens throughout the story with other ordinary terms, such as “foot-binding” (2012c, p. 176) or even “real” (2012c, p. 652), portraying Fuka-Eri’s strange hollowness and her remarkable linguistic ignorance.

Note that, in the English translation, while the mispronunciation and subsequent correction are omitted, Rubin chose to accentuate the words’ strangeness by capitalising the first letter of each.

### **Sakigake**

In Book 1, Chapter 10: *A Real Revolution with Real Bloodshed*, Professor Ebisuno, Fuka-Eri’s guardian, and her father’s former friend, explains the timeline of events before the formation of the commune and Fuka-Eri’s subsequent escape to Tengen.

<b>Japanese</b>	(…)新生のウミューンは『 <u>さきがけ</u> 』という名前と呼ばれることになった」  さきがけ? と天吾は思った。名前には聞き覚えがある。しかしどこでそれを耳にしたのか思い出せない。記憶をたどることができない。それが彼の神経をいつになく苛立たせた。先生は話を続けた。 (Murakami, 2020, p. 260)
<b>Catalan</b>	(...) El nom que van escollir per a la nova comuna va ser el de <u>Sakigake</u> . ¿ <u>Sakigake</u> ?, va pensar en Tengen. Aquest nom li sonava, però, per molt que s’hi esforçés, no aconseguia recordar on l’havia sentit. Això el va posar insòlitàment nerviós. El professor va continuar l’explicació. (Murakami, 2011b, p. 174)
<b>English</b>	“(…) They called their new commune “ <u>Sakigake</u> ,” or “ <u>Forerunner</u> .” <u>Sakigake</u> ? The name sounded familiar to Tengen, but he couldn’t remember where he might have heard it before. When his attempt to trace the memory back ended in failure, he felt unusually frustrated.

	The professor continued, “(...)”. (Murakami, 2012c, pp. 177–178)
<b>Spanish</b>	(...) La nueva comuna pasó a llamarse « <u>Vanguardia</u> ». «¿ <u>Vanguardia</u> ?», pensó Tengo. Este nombre le sonaba, pero no se acordaba de dónde lo había oído. La memoria le fallaba, y eso lo irritaba un poco. El profesor siguió hablando. (Murakami, 2011a, p. 166)

In this instance, three different translation approaches were used regarding the term 「さきがけ」 (*sakigake*), meaning “pioneer”, “forerunner”, or “to lead an attack”.

Firstly, the Catalan version, “*Sakigake*” opts for a pure transcription of the Japanese word with a borrowing, which leaves the reader in the dark about its meaning and cultural context while maintaining the mysteriousness and the Japanese setting (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995, pp. 31–32). This technique follows the foreignizing approach described by Venuti (1995, pp. 23–25). Secondly, the Spanish version, “*Vanguardia*” (“forefront”) opts for a semantic translation that culturally adapts 「さきがけ」 (*sakigake*) to the target language with an expansion, conveying the meaning omitted in the Catalan version (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995; Newmark, 1988a, p. 90). This follows a domesticating technique that opposes the previous foreignization (Venuti, 1995, pp. 20–25).

Finally, the English translation offers a blended approach with a dual technique that transmits the semantic meaning while maintaining the Japanese setting. To achieve this, first a transcription is provided with “*Sakigake*”, which is used in the rest of the book. The transcription is followed by “or ‘Forerunner’”, a one-time expansion that supplies the reader with the semantic understanding of the term for the remainder of the story (Newmark, 1988a, p. 90; Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995).

### **The Voices of the Gods**

In Book 2, Chapter 11: *Balance Itself Is the Good*, the Leader provides Aomame with an explanation of the origins of his supernatural powers and their connection to the Little People, as well as the way they were referred to in ancient times.

<p><b>Japanese</b></p>	<p>「興味深い本だ。それは様々な事実を我々に教えてくれる。歴史のある時期、ずっと古代の頃だが、世界のいくつもの地域において、王は任期が終了すれば殺されるものと決まっていた。任期は十年から十二年くらいのものだ。任期が終了すると人々がやってきて、彼を惨殺した。それが共同体にとって必要とされたし、王も進んでそれを受け入れた。その殺し方は無惨で血なまぐさいものでなくてはならなかった。またそのように殺されることが、王たるものに与えられる大きな名誉だった。どうして王は殺されなくてはならなかったか？その時代にあつては王とは、人々の代表として〈<u>声</u>を聴くもの〉であったからだ。そのような者たちは進んで彼らと我々を結ぶ回路となった。そして一定の期間を経た後に、その〈<u>声</u>を聴くもの〉を惨殺することが、共同体にとっては欠くことのできない作業だった。地上に生きる人々の意識と、リトル・ピープルの発揮する力とのバランスを、うまく維持するためだ。古代の世界においては、統治することは、<u>神の声</u>を聴くことと同義だった。しかしもちろんそのようなシステムはいつしか廃止され、王が殺されることもなくなり、王位は世俗的で世襲的なものになった。そのようにして人々は<u>声</u>を聴くことをやめた」 (Murakami, 2020, p. 894)</p>
<p><b>Catalan</b></p>	<p>És una obra molt interessant ens ensenya moltes coses. En temps històrics, encara que molt reculats, en diverses zones del món el Rei era assassinat quan s'acabava el seu regnat. El regnat donava uns deu o dotze anys. Quan arribava a la fi, la gent venia i el matava d'una manera molt cruel. Es considerava que això era necessari per al funcionament del col·lectiu, i el rei ho acceptava per voluntat pròpia. L'assassinat havia de ser cruel i sagnant, i, a més a més, es considerava que aquesta mort era un gran honor per a la persona que regnava. ¿I per què havia de ser assassinat, el rei? Doncs perquè, en aquella època, el rei era «el qui sent <u>les veus</u>» com a representant dels homes. La persona que es convertir en rei feia de canal de comunicació entre ells i nosaltres. I per al col·lectiu era imprescindible matar cruelment aquesta persona que «sentia <u>les veus</u>» quan s'acabava el termini del temps fixat, per mantenir l'equilibri entre la consciència de la gent que viu en aquest món i el poder que desencadena la gent petita. Al món antic, regnar i escoltar <u>la veu dels déus</u> era el mateix. Però, evidentment, aquest sistema va anar</p>

	<p>desapareixent, els reis a poc a poc van deixar de ser assassinats, i les monarquies es van convertir en una institució terrenal i hereditària. I la gent va parar d'escoltar <u>les veus dels déus</u>. (Murakami, 2011b, p. 592)</p>
<b>English</b>	<p>“It is a very interesting book that has much to teach us. In certain periods of history in several parts of the world – in ancient times, of course – the king was often killed at the end of his reign, usually after a fixed period of ten to twelve years. When the term ended, the people would gather together and slaughter him. This was deemed necessary for the community, and the king themselves willingly accepted it. The killing had to be cruel and bloody, and it was considered a great honour based upon the one who was king. Now, why did the king have to be killed? It was because in those days the king was the <i>one who listened to <u>the voices</u></i>, as the representative of the people. Such a person would take it upon himself to become the circuit connecting ‘us’ with ‘them’. And slaughtering the <i>one who listened to <u>the voices</u></i> was the indispensable task of the community to maintain balance between the minds of those who lived on the Earth and the power manifested by the Little People. In the ancient world, ‘to rule’ was synonymous with ‘listening to <u>the voices of the gods</u>’. Such a system was at some point abandoned, of course. Kings were no longer killed, and kingship became secular and hereditary. In this way, people stopped hearing <u>the voices</u>.” (Murakami, 2012c, p. 632)</p>
<b>Spanish</b>	<p>Es un libro muy interesante que nos enseña unas cuantas verdades. En cierto periodo histórico de la Antigüedad, en varios territorios del mundo se había establecido que, cuando un monarca terminaba su mandato, debía ser asesinado. Los mandatos duraban entre diez y doce años. Finalizado el mandato, la gente iba y le infligía una muerte cruel. Era necesario para la comunidad, y el monarca lo aceptaba de buen grado. La manera de matarlo tenía que ser despiadada y sangrienta. Además, ser asesinado de tal modo era un gran honor sólo digno de un rey. ¿Por qué se debía asesinar al monarca? Pues porque, por aquel entonces, el monarca era «el que escuchaba <u>la voz</u>» en nombre del pueblo. Por propia voluntad, se convertía en el circuito que los unía a <i>ellos</i> con <i>nosotros</i>. Y pasado un periodo de tiempo determinado, el acto de matar de manera violenta a «el que escuchaba <u>la voz</u>» se revelaba como algo indispensable para la comunidad. Era necesario para preservar el equilibrio entre la conciencia de la gente que vivía en el mundo y el poder ejercido por la Little People. En la Antigüedad, gobernar era sinónimo</p>



	de escuchar <u>la voz de Dios</u> . Pero, claro, poco después, ese sistema fue abolido, se dejó de asesinar al monarca y el trono se convirtió en algo mundano y hereditario. Así fue como las personas dejaron de escuchar <u>la voz</u> . (Murakami, 2011a, p. 559)
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In this passage, there are four mentions of the term in each language version, including 「声」 (*koe*, “voice”) and its variation 「神の声」 (*kami no koe*, “god’s voice” or “the voices of the gods”). The translation approach for the first and the second mention remains simple across all versions with a literal translation technique in the three languages, rendering 「声」 (*koe*) into “*les veus*”, “the voices”, and “*la voz*”, respectively (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995, pp. 33–35). Due to the fact that Japanese nouns do not necessarily have to be modified to express plurality, instead relying on context, numbers with counter particles, or pluralising suffixes—usually 「たち」 (*tachi*) or 「ら」 (*ra*)—, there is room for interpretation when dealing with 「声」 (*koe*), as it could be either “voice” or “voices”. For these first two mentions, the Spanish version opts for a singular interpretation, while the Catalan and English translations decided on a plural one.

In the case of the secondary term used in the third mention, 「神の声」 (*kami no koe*), we encounter the same issue with subjective plurality, but this instance gives a much needed context: the Leader is talking about the voice of a deity (or multiple). Based on the context of the polytheistic religious beliefs of the majority of the Japanese population, it is safe to say that the use of the term “神” (*kami*) could most likely be referring to an unnumbered plural of gods. However, the possibility of singularity always remains. Because of this, the renderings “*la veu dels déus*”, “the voices of the gods”, and “*la voz de Dios*” are plausible as long as they respect the surrounding context and remain consistent with the passage’s grammatical agreement.

In the fourth and last mention, 「声」 (*koe*) is again translated literally in the English and Spanish versions, as “the voices” and “*la voz*” respectively, while the Catalan translation

deviates from the previous choices, using an expansion technique to translate it into “*les veus dels déus*” (Newmark, 1988a, p. 90).

### Town of Cats

In Book 2, Chapter 8: *Time for the Cats to Come*, Tengo starts reading a book about social alienation with a fantastical touch that will help him reflect upon his own life experiences. This introspection, in turn, will provide him with a better understanding of how the mechanics work in 1Q84 and how the otherworldly forces at play impact his and others’ lives.

<b>Japanese</b>	『 <u>猫の町</u> 』というのがそのタイトルだ。幻想的な物語で、名前を聞いたことのないドイツ人の作家によって書かれていた。(Murakami, 2020, p. 806)
<b>Catalan</b>	Es titulava « <u>El poble dels gats</u> ». Era una història fantàstica escrita per un autor alemany el nom del qual no havia sentit mai. (Murakami, 2011b, p. 536)
<b>English</b>	“ <u>Town of Cats</u> ” was the title. It was a fantastical piece by a German writer with whom he was not familiar. (Murakami, 2012c, p. 570)
<b>Spanish</b>	Se titulaba « <u>El pueblo de los gatos</u> ». Se trataba de una historia fantástica escrita por un autor alemán de quien nunca había oído hablar. (Murakami, 2011a, pp. 506–507)

The tale 「猫の町」 (*neko no machi*, “town of cats”) is an embedded story written by Murakami himself, and although an English translation by Jay Rubin was published as a short story in *The New Yorker* (2011c), it exists only in the context of the *1Q84* trilogy.

Having no already-translated title to use as a reference, the translators had the freedom to translate it by themselves. Reading “*El poble dels gats*” in Catalan, “Town of Cats” in English, and “*El pueblo de los gatos*” in Spanish, the translation techniques used fall under the literal translation method, (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995).

### Two moons

In Book 1, Chapter 15: *Firmly, Like Attaching an Anchor to a Balloon*, Aomame notices the presence of a secondary, greenish moon in the sky alongside the usual one, reminding her of

the strangeness and otherness of the new world she is in, as well as confirming the presence of physical evidence supporting her theory.

<b>Japanese</b>	<p>空には<u>月が二つ</u>浮かんでいた。小さな月と、大きな月。それが並んで空に浮かんでいる。大きな方がいつもの見慣れた月だ。満月に近く、黄色い。しかしその隣にもうひとつ、別の月があった。見慣れないかたちの月だ。いくぶんいびつで、色もうっすら苔が生えたみたいに緑がかっている。それが彼女の視野の捉えたものだった。(Murakami, 2020, p. 403)</p>
<b>Catalan</b>	<p>Al cel hi havia <u>dues llunes</u>, una de petita i una de grossa. El recorrien una al costat de l'altra. La grossa era la de sempre, gairebé plena, de color groc. Al seu costat, però, n'hi havia una altra de diferent, una lluna de forma insòlita, irregular. Era d'un to verdós, com si estigués coberta de molsa. Allò era el que li mostrava la vista. (Murakami, 2011b, p. 270)</p>
<b>English</b>	<p>There were <u>two moons</u> in the sky – a small moon and a large one. They were floating there side by side. The large one was the usual moon the way she had always seen. It was nearly full, and yellow. But there was another moon right next to it. It had an unfamiliar shape. It was somewhat lopsided, and greenish, as though thinly covered by moss. This was what her vision had seized upon. (Murakami, 2012c, p. 282)</p>
<b>Spanish</b>	<p><u>Dos lunas</u> flotaban en el cielo. Una luna pequeña y otra grande. Ambas se alineaban en el cielo. La grande era a la que estaba acostumbrada. Próxima al plenilunio, amarilla. Pero a su lado había otra luna diferente. Una luna de forma desconocida. Un tanto deforme y ligeramente verdosa, como si estuviera cubierta de musgo. Eso era lo que su visión captaba. (Murakami, 2011a, p. 257)</p>

The significance of the term relies on the categorical truths known to humans: grass is green, the sky is blue, the sun shines by day, and Earth has a single moon. When Aomame discovers an additional moon in the sky, her perplexity is palpable, and the readers are as likely to be bewildered as she is. Because the existence of the term is already unsettling enough, there is no need to overcomplicate the translation, and a literal translation approach is used in the three

languages, with “*dues llunes*”, “two moons” and “*dos lunas*” as a result from translating 「月が二つ」 (*tsuki ga futatsu*) (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995).

The previous translations remain consistent across all three versions in other instances where the mention of this term is not 「月が二つ」 (*tsuki ga futatsu*) but 「二つの月」 (*futatsu no tsuki*).

## 4. Discussion

### 4.1. Reader Impact and Genre Preservation in Translation Choices

The effect of translation strategies on the reader is one of the most significant factors to consider when evaluating the quality and faithfulness of a literary translation. This rings especially true in the case of *IQ84*, a text where the lines between fantasy and reality become persistently blurred. The translation choices have the ability to enhance and preserve the inherent ambiguity of magical realism and surrealism, or to favour a clear, explicit portrayal of fantastical elements that affects interpretation, thus conditioning the reader's genre perception.

The way the analysis of terms is laid out in the Case Studies section showcases varying approaches to the representation of the alternate reality in *IQ84*. The Catalan version, for example, tends to preserve the original ambiguity through the usage of minimally intrusive terminology (like “cabra cega” or “dues llunes”) and neutral syntactic structures, allowing readers to experience an uncertainty that is similar to that perceived in the original narrative.

A clear example of this is the fragment on Aomame naming the new world she resides in as “1Q84”: the original Japanese 「疑問を背負ったもの」 (*gimon o seotta mono*) describes the world as something that carries a doubt, question or suspicion on its back. The Spanish version opts for a literal rendering with “*algo que carga con una interrogación a sus espaldas*”, while the English one does a freer, more interpretative adaptation with “a world that bears a question”. However, the Catalan version simplifies this with “[*La lletra q feia referencia al signe d'interrogació,*] a la qüestió que es plantejava”. This strategy is employed to relate the letter “Q” with a word starting with it, avoiding complicated metaphors, and thus facilitating the passage's reading and encouraging a broader space for interpretation.

These stylistic choices directly influence reader perception on the literary genre: when ambiguity is reduced and supernatural phenomena are rationalised, the text can come across as fantastical or even resemble science fiction. On the contrary, when the mysteriousness of these

elements is maintained and their explanations are kept limited, magical realism's balance is preserved, reinforcing the characterising disquietude in Murakami's oeuvre. As Faris (1995, pp. 163–186) suggests, magical realism is characterised by the combination of realism and the fantastic in such a way that the sprouting of magical elements is completely organic and aligned with reality's rules.

Translation comparison shows translators adopting differing approaches to transmit the same original message based on the target audience, their culture, and their expectations (Even-Zohar, 1990, pp. 45–52). This has consequences that resonate in the construction of narrative tone: a translation that respects the vagueness of an inconsistent terminology, as can be observed in some passages in each language, can result in a text that is less accessible to the reader, but more faithful to the original ambivalence.

Then, this section cements how translation strategies not only affect denotative content but also have a major role influencing the genre perception and the interpretative and emotional impact the reader experiences through the novel. The preservation of both the oneiric atmosphere and the semantic uncertainty in *IQ84* is crucial to retain its identity as a work of magical realism and surrealism.

## **4.2. Cultural and Linguistic Factors**

Translation choices are never arbitrary. They are conditioned by a series of cultural, linguistic, and editorial factors unique to the reception context of each target language, as previously exemplified with the observations by Rubin (2005) and Even-Zohar (1990). In the case of *IQ84*, this latent pressure to please the readers and their expectations is manifested in the form of register and tone modulation, adjustments in syntactical structure, and the adaptation of surreal elements and fantastical terminology.

The cultural and literary system in which the translation is presented strongly conditions the extent to which the translator intervenes. As highlighted in *Polysystem Studies*, “To say that

translated literature maintains a central position in the literary polysystem means that it participates actively in shaping the center of the polysystem” (Even-Zohar, 1990, pp. 46–48). In other words, translations can hold a central or peripheral position within the literary polysystem: when they are perceived as central, translations can have an innovative role, whereas when they are perceived as peripheral, they tend to conform to dominant patterns. In this sense, the English version of *1Q84*, which is inserted in a well-established literary market where Murakami is a widely acknowledged figure, showcases a tendency to remain conservative in order to improve readability, prioritising communicative efficiency over peculiarity. In contrast, the Catalan version, although stemming from a cultural background that has been exposed less frequently to Japanese aesthetics, maintains notable faithfulness in the lexical and syntactic levels. This is clearly illustrated with the literal translation of terminology like the secondary terms of 「リトル・ピープル」 (*ritoru pīporu*, “Little People”), 「小さな人たち」 (*chīsana hitotachi*) and 「小さな人々」 (*chiisana hitobito*), as “*les persones petites*” and “*homenets petits*” respectively, which preserve the original mysterious atmosphere.

On the other hand, the Spanish version fluctuates between adaptation and literal perspectives, which is probably rooted in the resolve to balance clarity and faithfulness. This becomes evident in the translation of 「1Q84」 (*ichi kyū hachi yon*), where the Spanish opts for a slightly explicative translation with a footnote that is missing in the other two languages. This intervention on the part of the translator reflects an inclination towards interpretative explanations, which in some cases could reduce the ambiguity Murakami proposes.

Some other illustrating examples include the handling of the character named 「リーダー」 (*rīdā*, “Leader”). In Catalan, “*el Líder*”, with a capital letter and a definite article, transmits the message that the character holds an authoritarian, symbolic charge. In English, the term “the Leader” is conserved as a proper name, and capitalisation of the first letter is also used for the

same reason. In Spanish, it is translated as “*el Líder*”, and unlike the Catalan and English versions, it is introduced as a neutral “*fundador*” (“founder”), rather than a “*cap espiritual*” (“spiritual leader”) or a “guru”, which frame the character as a religious figure as the original does with the term 「教祖」 (*kyōso*, “founder of a religious sect”). Choices like these, regarding textual transparency, ultimately affect reader perception and add or reduce distance from the original neutrality.

It is also crucial to consider the differences among language systems. While Japanese admits implicit messages and ellipses in high density, Catalan, English, and Spanish tend to follow structures that are more comprehensive and explicit. This forces translators to make delicate decisions: clarifying can aid readers’ comprehension but poses the risk of betraying the mysterious tone of the novel. The use of terms like “Little People” or “Leader” exhibits this tension: in English they are preserved as calques, while in Catalan and Spanish they oscillate between literal translation and contextualisation.

Following Nord’s (1990) functionalist perspective, it is safe to say that each translator adapts their text obeying the *skopos* provided by their cultural, linguistic and editorial context. That is to say, translating involves not only conveying meaning but also negotiating the limitations of the reader expectations according to the degree of cultural distancing that they can manage and the degree of strangeness they are willing to accept. These factors pose translation queries throughout the novel that have to be taken into consideration in order to avoid varied receptions of *IQ84* based on the language it is read in.

In sum, cultural and linguistic factors deeply condition translation strategies and the degree of faithfulness or adaptation of the novel. Understanding these constraints helps explain not only *what* translation choices were made, but also *why* they were made, as can be seen in the Case Studies section.



### 4.3. Strategies: Harmonising or Distancing

The analysis of the translations of *IQ84* reveals that translators opt for two broad strategic lines. On one hand, harmonising, which seeks text accessibility and reader proximity, and on the other hand, distancing, which maintains the original work's ambiguity, complexity, and strangeness. These two strategies help categorise the specific techniques that were employed in broader terms: harmonising includes cultural adaptation, explicitation, modulation and omission, while distancing manifests as borrowings, calques, and literal translations.

The coherence between method and technique is essential when evaluating whether translation strategies should be classified as harmonising or distancing. As Molina and Hurtado state in *Translation Techniques Revisited: A Dynamic and Functionalist Approach*: “Logically, method and functions should function harmoniously in the text. For example, if the aim of a translation method is to produce a foreignizing version, then borrowing will be one of the most frequently used translation techniques” (2002, p. 508). Along these lines, if a translator were to choose to preserve foreign elements present in the Japanese original, one would expect consistent use of techniques like borrowings, calques, or literal translations across terms of a similar nature; however, this is not always the case.

A clear example of partial distancing is the Catalan translation of the term 「さきがけ」 (*sakigake*), which is borrowed directly from Japanese without any contextual explanation, something that does not happen in the English and Spanish versions, which provide adapted, contextualising terms alongside the original. This decision reinforces mystery and leaves room for interpretation, thus ceding that responsibility to the reader. Conversely, other terms with Japanese origins or symbolic roots are translated or partially explained in the other versions, thus creating strategic divergence within a single work. This phenomenon can be observed in English, where the handling of terms of similar nature differs, as is the case with the terminological pairs 「マザ」 (*maza*, “maza”) and 「ドウタ」 (*dōta*, “dohta”), and 「パシヴ

ア」 (*pashiva*, “perceiver”) and 「レシヴァ」 (*reshiva*, “receiver”). In the case of the first pair, the direct borrowings from Japanese follow the same logic as the one used in the Catalan version with the previous example; in the case of the second pair, a clarification is made by omitting the mispronounced, phonetic renderings and instead using a literal translation for the English terms used in the original Japanese. These inconsistencies reflect how the English version does not maintain a uniform standard, instead oscillating between a set of different criteria combining clarification, conceptual adaptation, and literal translation.

In contrast, there are cases of strategic convergence across languages. For example, the translation of the term 「カラス」 (*karasu*) is systematically kept across all versions as “*corbs*” in Catalan, “crows” in English, and “*cuervos*” in Spanish, each employing their own cultural equivalents, which happen to be interchangeable terms. They are chosen over other translation options (like “ravens”, in the case of English), and their symbolic meaning, although slightly reduced from the broad sense unique to the original, is not modified. This consistency reinforces the symbolic charge and surreal atmosphere that accompanies these elements throughout the text.

Another relevant feature is the internal coherence within each translation. Whereas the Catalan version tends to keep a faithful and formally neutral line of expression with distancing strategies, there are instances where harmonising is preferred—like in the case of “*la gent petita*”, which adapts the concept of 「リトル・ピープル」 (*ritoru pīporu*, “Little People”) with a formulation rooted in Catalan traditions. The English version, as illustrated earlier, shows a preference for variability, evident in the use of opaque transliterations like “*maza*” and “*dohta*” versus the use of functional equivalents like “Perceiver” and “Receiver”, a fact that generates contrast. Finally, this oscillation is also present in the Spanish version: the use of untranslated borrowings (like “*Little People*”, borrowed from English without quotation marks

or italics) occurs alongside additional explanations (like the footnote discussing the phonetics of “*IQ84*”), reflecting a hybrid school of thought.

Thus, choosing harmonising translation strategies over distancing ones, or vice versa, is a recourse that is not always consistent within a single translation, and oftentimes is adjusted to each fragment following audience, editorial, or genre criteria. This fact directly impacts reader perception and the preservation of the fragmentary, unsettling tone native to *IQ84*. A systematic employment of techniques that remain coherent with the adopted method—according to Molina and Hurtado’s (2002) functionalist classification—is essential to ensure a faithful and effective translation.

## 5. Conclusions

This thesis aimed to analyse how magical and surrealist elements are translated across the Catalan, English and Spanish versions of Haruki Murakami's novel, *1Q84*. Through a detailed and qualitative comparison of 15 terms related to the fantastical elements portrayed throughout the novel, it examined whether and how translation choices impact the original tone and the transmission of magical realism. The objectives outlined at the beginning have been accomplished, due to the fact that it has observed a variety of strategies that shed light on the interpretative nature of the literary translation of magical and surrealist elements.

The findings show that, even though there is considerable internal coherence within each of the three languages' translations, there are also significant divergences across versions. For example, the term 「盲目の山羊」 (*mōmoku no yagi*)—faithfully rendered in Catalan as “*cabra cega*”, in English as “*blind goat*”, and in Spanish as “*cabra ciega*”—is translated using a dual strategy combining direct translation and foreignization in all three languages, thus showing a converging strategy. Whereas the translation of 「さきがけ」 (*sakigake*) uses a clearly differing strategy: in Catalan it is preserved without explanation as a proper noun “*Sakigake*”, showcasing distancing; in Spanish it is adapted as “*Vanguardia*” to provide the reader with a better understanding, displaying harmonising; but in English it is both conserved and domesticated with an explanatory, dual usage of “*Sakigake*” and “*Forerunner*” in its first mention, which both distances and harmonises. Another relevant case is the asymmetrical handling of the terminological pairs “*maza/dohta*” and “*Perceiver/Receiver*”, which uses differing strategies based on the context. These findings reflect not only technical variability but also the aesthetic, cultural, and linguistic factors that guide each translation.

On a methodological level, the analysis based in a combination of theoretical categories—like Venuti's (1995) domestication and foreignization, Appiah's (1993) thick translation, or Vinay and Derbelnet (1995) and Newmark's (1988a) procedures—, along the use of visual tools like

comparative charts, has allowed precision in pattern identification and has made the interpretation of findings easier. The selective implementation of a back-translation approach, although ultimately deemed unnecessary during the Analytical Approach section, remains a complementary tool that can be useful for future studies, especially in cases where a considerable degree of ambiguity is present.

To further clarify the findings, specific answers to each of the research questions posed in the Introduction section will be provided below.

In response to the first research question—how key magical elements are translated into Catalan, English, and Spanish—, this study has shown that all three versions often rely on direct translation strategies when dealing with clearly referential terms, such as “blind goat” or “two moons”, where semantic transparency facilitates straightforward equivalence. Nonetheless, when the terms are more ambiguous or carry a heavier load of cultural or metaphysical connotation (for example, “Air Chrysalis” or “Little People”), translations notably differ: each one opts for different degrees of adaptation, explication, or preservation, following their target language’s linguistic and editorial rules. This reinforces the difficulty that is specific to the translation of magical realism, particularly where there exists a symbolic charge in the invented terms.

Regarding the second question—how consistent the renderings of novel-native concepts are throughout each translation—, the findings suggest that all three versions maintain a considerable internal coherence, although some oscillations are detected. The Spanish version stands out with terms are rendered with lexical variations, like 「リトル・ピープル」 (*ritoru pīporu*, “Little People”), which is adapted into four different renderings across the translated text (“*la Little People*”, “*la lítel pípol*”, “*la gente pequeña*”, and “*personas de baja estatura*”), in contrast with the three Japanese original terms, three Catalan ones, and two English ones. The English version demonstrates the highest degree of terminological regularity, which can

be limiting in the aforementioned example, whereas the Catalan version, though generally consistent, sometimes oscillates between near-synonymous options (e.g., “*les persones petites*” versus “*la gent petita*”). Despite these fluctuations, the overall coherence of each translation is maintained, which contributes to the preservation of the novel’s internal logic and surreal tone.

Concerning the third question—how different translations handle invented terms and key magical elements to preserve or adjust their mysterious and otherworldly qualities—it has been observed how invented terms such as “*maza*” and “*dohta*” or the symbolic “*air chrysalis*” pose substantial interpretative challenges. Both the Catalan and English versions tend to preserve opacity opting for transliteration or minimal intervention, which aligns with the function of those terms within the narrative as vague metaphysical concepts. The Spanish version, however, often gravitates toward clarification or naturalisation, thereby reducing the ambiguity but enhancing accessibility. These tendencies reflect each translator’s stance in the progression between mystification and explication.

With reference to the fourth and last question—whether translators favour literal strategies to maintain fidelity or adopt interpretative strategies to enhance the reading experience—it has become clear that all three translations operate on a spectrum. While literal strategies (e.g., borrowing, calque) are common whenever lexical correspondence is viable, many segments reflect clear instances of equivalence, modulation, and even explication, particularly in Spanish. The English version frequently balances literal and interpretive tendencies often preserving structure while subtly adapting tone. The Catalan version generally leans towards fidelity, except in cases where cultural adaptation is necessary to ensure legibility. These findings demonstrate that the strategies used are neither strictly literal nor entirely interpretative, but are instead calibrated according to genre, function, and target audience.

In relation to these implications, this study demonstrates how translation choices can directly influence the reader's genre perception, and the integrity of the magical realism and surrealism present in the novel's overall atmosphere. Translating magical realism not only implies a terminological challenge but also an aesthetic and symbolic one. The tendency to culturally adapt, explain, or simplify elements present in some versions can alter the ambiguous and suggestive nature native to Murakami's original work. This highlights the importance of coherence between method and technique—as noted by Molina and Hurtado (2002)—and of taking into account both the function of the text and its cultural and literary context.

These findings contribute to ongoing discussion in the field of translation studies about the balance between transparency and ambiguity in translated fiction, particularly in genres like magical realism and surrealism, where uncertainty is an aesthetic core. They also highlight the translator's interpretative power in preserving not just meaning, but genre integrity.

In spite of the obtained findings, this thesis has also faced certain limitations. One of the main challenges has been the lack of publicly available commentary by the translators, which made it difficult to access their rationale, interpretative intentions, and strategic justifications. What's more, the limited number of analysed terms, although comprehensive enough to obtain a relevant comparative point of view, does not include the analysis of the broader text surrounding it, and instead only includes a partial view of the novel's full translation landscape. In this regard, it is worth mentioning that the Catalan translator of *1Q84* is also the supervisor of this thesis. Nevertheless, to preserve objectivity and avoid potential bias in favour of the Catalan version, direct consultation on translation-related issues has been deliberately avoided and limited strictly to academic supervision. This measure was taken in order to ensure a balanced and impartial assessment of all three translations. To overcome the mentioned limitations, future studies could complement this approach with interviews with the translators,

reader reception analyses, or empirical quantitative research focused on pattern frequency and usage.

Furthermore, expanding the study towards other languages and works by Murakami is recommended, as his literary style constitutes a particularly paradigmatic case within contemporary magical realism. Apart from expanding the research on Murakami's exemplary use of the genre, it would also be of interest to explore how these phenomena are perceived by different kinds of reading audiences, as well as the role translation plays in the construction of its worldwide success.

Ultimately, this thesis highlights how literary translation can transform the reading experience, and influence the potential interpretations of magical elements, especially in works with such carefully crafted ambiguity as *1Q84*. The choice of a translation strategy is not limited to linguistic decision-making, it also poses the necessity to take an aesthetic and ideological stance, which places the reader in front of one of multiple renderings of the world—as vague and obscure as the title suggested from the beginning. As Aomame says when she names the new reality “1Q84”: “Q is for ‘question mark.’ A world that bears a question.” (Murakami, 2012c, p. 158). Perhaps this very uncertainty is what every translator of magical realism must learn to preserve.



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