

## Trauma, Pseudodementia, and Magical Realism in Haruki Murakami's "A Shinagawa Monkey"

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### *Abstract*

This article focuses on pseudodementia, which occurs when individuals have been so wounded beyond recovery that they constrict their cognitive functions and behave as if they were partly demented. Haruki Murakami's short story "A Shinagawa Monkey" (2006) serves as an excellent laboratory to observe this condition, as the main character suffers and eventually recovers from trauma-induced pseudodementia. By exploring trauma theories advanced by Henry Krystal, it is proposed that the main character suffers from pseudodementia, because she has experienced the trauma of "crib shock." This position is confirmed by studying not only the main character's psychology from a psychoanalytic perspective (Freud, Horney, and Klein), but also from a literary theory approach. Macherey's and Iser's literary theories support the argument that the role of the omniscient narrator and the presence of gaps in the story are related to the condition of pseudodementia. In light of Lacan's and Bettelheim's theories, it is also proposed that imaginative thinking, originating from the unconscious realm, restores memory after psychic suffering and that the "paranormal" (magical realism) thus serves as a source of therapy. Thus, relying on both literary and psychoanalytic theories, we propose how Murakami's magical realism "works".

**Keywords:** Murakami, trauma, pseudodementia, magical realism