

# The theme of identity in kafka on the shore

[Literature](#), [Books](#)



Identity is essentially who you are, the way you think about yourself, the way you are viewed by the world and the characteristics that define you, however in the novel these factors can vary and increase with each character, identity is unique to each person (and character in the book) it is what makes us incomparable and our own person, the different themes and elements associated with identity and the loss of identity. Identity is formed through cultural experiences such as food, music and typically cultural traditions as well as family. In the novel *Kafka on the Shore* by Haruki Murakami family plays an enormous role in the formation as well as alteration to the characters identity but more specifically to Kafka. Kafka is the novel's main character who flees from Tokyo to the town of Takamatsu due to a struggling and abusive relationship with his father and the lack of presence and recollection of his mother, this relates to the idea of family and identity. In this case Kafka's lack of relationships with his parental figures has created and altered his identity. However gradually, Kafka establishes a whole, stable personality. Hoshino and Nakata play supporting roles which demonstrate how individual identity is formed by symbolic consumption and how it can contribute to alienation. While Hoshino represents a person who lives in the capitalist society and lives according to his philosophy, Nakata personifies a more marginal point of view. Overall the main factors of identity formation and alteration are affected by the rapid growth and spread of globalisation and the attributes that come with it as well as family relationships.

Kafka struggles to find his identity throughout the novel hence creating a persona; Crow who directs guidance and provides advice to Kafka in times of

danger this acts as a coping mechanism for Kafka and acts as the anchor that reminds Kafka of his inner self that he is struggling to navigate. “ Sometimes fate is like a sandstorm that keeps changing directions. You change directions but the sandstorm chases you. You turn again, but the storm adjusts. Over and over you play this out, like some ominous dance with death just before dawn. Why? Because this storm isn’t something that blew in from far away, something that has nothing to do with you. This storm is you. Something inside of you” in this quote crow is giving Kafka guidance and tells him that the storm isn’t something that’s inside of him but is him, much like identity the storm is inside of him. Reading books for him is a diversion and enables him to acquire a new identity where he feels a sense of belonging however it doesn’t mask his problems and he leaves home in the hope of running away from his insecurities and fears. Kafkas battle with identity results with difficulties in his school life, leading him astray from friends and isolating him from the world this can be described as a result from his abandonment from his mother and sister and lack of connection with his father which pushed him to run away as he does so “ He also takes an old photo of himself and his older sister standing on the beach many years ago. The photo fills him with questions — he can’t remember the trip to the beach, or his mother or sister” the photograph shows him that he feels lonely, with no recollection of his mother and sister. Kafka has turned his family’s sense of isolation and loneliness into a desire to escape and live alone.

Although it is clear that Kafka does not have a strong sense of identity and is going through some sort of identity crisis Kafka’s encounter with Miss Saeki

and Sakura helps him find some kind of identity as he strongly believes that they could potentially be his mother and sister

Kafka is captivated by Miss Saeki's beauty and intelligence, feeling attracted to her as both a romantic partner and mother figure.

The lyrics to 'Kafka on the Sea' that Miss Saeki wrote when she was younger speak directly to Kafka, serving as one of many real or imagined pieces of evidence that convince him to be attracted by destiny to Miss Saeki. Indeed, there are many references in the song that link together various elements of the novel, adding a note of surrealism and coincidence that helps explain why characters like Kafka might so strongly believe in fate. The most prominent example of this is the association with the name of Kafka, which seems especially effective because he has chosen for himself the name 'Kafka.'

The reference to the 'quest for the entrance rock' ties the story of Miss Saeki and Kafka to that of Hoshino and Nakata, confirming most characters' fear in the novel that their lives are on predetermined routes.

## **Refugees UNHCR and Kafka**

Refugee identities are complex and influenced not only by internal emotions, values, ethnic and cultural patterns, but also by external factors such as resettlement procedures, forced migrants' policies, cultural traditions, and their new host country's economic, political and social conditions. Over time, refugees are undergoing a challenging identification cycle.

The reformulation of involuntary migrant identity can typically be explored in several stages: the preliminary process to seek asylum, the time spent

waiting for a verdict on the application for asylum and after obtaining refugee status. When scholars have linked part of identity building to location, often during their travels and while awaiting the asylum decision, asylum seekers are seen as people without a place

They are most often held in tents during most of the application process upon arrival in their country of destination. Such camps are also known to be placeless and are often situated in remote areas of a country and/or not technically part of the country they belong to.

It strengthens the sensation of placelessness. refugee camps have been described as 'non-detention areas' emphasizing their positionless status. Since identity has been linked to position, what happens when asylum seekers with no legal identity live in a place without a legal basis? Will they continue to build their identity on their country of origin?

When refugees are granted refugee status and resettled to their new host country, they begin another process of reformulation of identity. Resettling refugees into new social, cultural, economic and/or political settings can disrupt their identity and sense of belonging in their host country. Potentially impacting the status of refugees is the political (positive or negative) point of view of a state and policies against voluntary and forced immigrants that can decide the acceptance of a refugee in the country of destination. One might presume that all immigrants face new living conditions that can influence their identities.

Refugees must also accept the new 'refugee' classification that may impact the identity reform process; an aspect that they had not previously had to acknowledge while residing in their country of origin. The refugee label affects not only the classification and categorization of individuals, but also the effect of the label on a person who has to bear it which can influence the feeling of being lost and not knowing your identity

There are many aspects in which the refugee crisis is related to Kafka's. Despite the fact that Kafka is not a refugee, he can be represented as a refugee inside himself or a prisoner in his own mind. He runs away voluntarily from home which is unlike a refugee who is forced out of their own home. Identity plays a significant role in both, refugees are driven into a new lifestyle with a society that is drastically different from the one they were brought up with and many are separated from their loved ones and children who have no relatives.