

Memories Turning into Mud: A Dystopian Analysis of Haruki Murakami's *Norwegian Wood*

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Abstract

Dystopia is an illustrious demeanor in postmodern literature. Haruki Murakami has mastered the dystopian grey zone to depict the absence of utopia and the dearth of the desired ecstasy from human life with poetic and artful pursuits in *Norwegian Wood*. The absence of blissfulness in human life is the rudimentary gist of dystopia to ensue, eventually, seizure by dystopia doesn't crop up very exclusively. Dystopia habitually progresses as ordinariness; it is a shadow of apparent reality. Unlike Sci-Fi literature, nostalgic love stories such as *Norwegian Wood* are not commonly analyzed as dystopian reading; even though prominent dystopian psychosocial conditions of the central characters are present in the novel. Dystopia is frequently discovered in the novel as an unfolding of the weighty reminiscences which haul the lives of Toru, Naoko, Midori, and Hatsumi. It is found out that the sense of loss is very imperative for the novel which never took place for any acquisitive failure. Interestingly, the loss has been ruled here by the suicides, by not belonging in reality, being gripped in past, and by paying the price for being alive. This paper emits a critical study of dystopia in *Norwegian Wood* by spotlighting how young lives are deteriorating underneath their decaying thoughts of temporal existence which creates dark limbo of dystopia for them. The paper also expedites why postmodern Japanese stories ache for the psychosomatic past and how Murakamian characters turn into clusters of painful memories in their dystopian world.

Keywords: Absent utopia, Decay, Dystopia, Memories, Psychosomatic past, Sense of loss

1. Introduction

A dystopia is an approach in postmodernism where things are shown as something that is not right. Dystopian stories showcase a willingness to taste boundaries. Dystopia as a term was first coined by John Stuart Mill in the 19th century. This finding is associated with Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* from 1500 century. (Mesick, 2015) Most of the trending dystopian stories are found in the sci-fi genre where machines or technologies seem to control human beings. In the interview with Rupert Edwards from BBC UK, Jay Rubin, one of the translators of *Norwegian Wood* and critic of Murakamian writings, says, "Reading Murakami's *Norwegian Wood* is as if something has happened to the characters' brains, I mean, they are actually being prompted, they have turned inside out. It makes your time different. It makes you feel differently" (Edwards, 2020).

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In dystopia, the central characters struggle with a lack of self-satisfaction. *Norwegian Wood* is a love story where the psychosexual chemistry of lovers and the rise and fall of love is not the only discussed points. Murakami has presented the novel with the ability to go to the deepest in Japanese society and to observe the evolution of individualism. The novel carries many references to a well-developed Japan scenario from the 1960s where the setting of the story seems faultless. Deep inside, characters face existential hollowness and infinite hopelessness in absence of psychosocial self-satisfaction. In his blog, David Mesick says, "Some types of dystopian hardships are mental, others are physical. Psychological wounds are often as bad as physical ones." (Mesick, 2015).

Dystopia is a vivid, prominent, and well-magnified theme in various stories. On the contrary, *Norwegian Wood* doesn't offer many ideas of dystopia in preliminary analysis. Rather, Alfred Birnbaum, translator, and critic of Murakamian writing, states:

Readers need to understand the characters' minds and functions. Murakami's representation of Japanese people's psyche and surroundings are also needed to be understood collaboratively to comprehend the stories of the author." (Edwards, 2020) Dystopian reading for *Norwegian Wood* helps to realize absolute emptiness and desolation under the coat of furnished and providential Japanese society.

Wendy Edelstein in the blog "What Haruki Murakami talks about when he talks about writing" says, "Murakami has helped question old perceptions of conservative Japan as the mysterious 'other'" (Edelstein, 2008). Edwards states, after 1930, Japan's invasion of China, and the 1940s' WWII perceptions, Japan has received a massive change in the socio-political arena, specifically in social manners, innovation, and educational sectors. The country witnessed an extremely disciplined lifestyle afterward. Along with strict discipline, an inner rebel started to grow inside the young people of Japan. Japanese youth has adopted foreign musical culture (i.e. jazz and blues, western country music), educational society, and relationship goals as an approach to their rebellious mind. Murakami himself is also a person who in his youth, adopted cultural migrations; he had a rebellious intellect and leaves that upheaval inside his character.(Edwards,2020) The cultural migration was massive; it somehow caused melancholy in people's driven minds and the stability of the inner psyche was difficult to find. The mentioned instability also provokes psychescape (psychological escape) in the youth. Psychescape is not found in the real, physical world for Murakami, so, he infuses his own liberty in his memories of his own existence. Murakami says in his interview with *The Guardian*,

"I am an outcast of Japanese literature. I have collected so many memories in my chest, the chest of my mind. I think everybody has a lot of memories of his/her own. But it's a special gift to find the right drawer. I can do that, if I need something, I can point to the right drawer. To be near the right drawer, you have to be strong to descend into the darkness of your mind." (Guardian, 2014)

From the protagonist's point of view, it is seen that the novel's central characters are attracted to complications. Toru feels indulged because of Naoko's complications. These characters suffer from perfection and happiness. They constantly fight to pull off the growth of their present and to shift their real existence into bygone memories. They try to build a utopia in complex memories and toxic desires but they are defocused from reality and positive opportunities. They seek tranquility in a bottomless, imaginary utopia, which in reality, turns into the opposite in suffocating dystopia. Jay Rubin mentions Murakami's significant quote in *Haruki Murakami and the Music of Words*, "Life is what you make it, there is nothing exterior, there is nothing outside the brain, there's all inside. All of reality is in your synapses. Whatever meaning it has, has been assigned to you" (Rubin, 2005)

In an interview with Edwards, Rubin states that Murakami searches for Japanese identity; he speaks about what it signifies to be Japanese, and also, he preaches about what it means to be human. Murakami's power to evoke the essence of adolescence has made the story to be surrounded by dystopia. People can't be in denial, they need to learn from the past and cleanse the present. (Edwards, 2020) It is a strange phenomenon of what common people think as desired, can also make them vulnerable after reaching that desired status.

The purpose of this paper is to illustrate how existential void and intense dissatisfaction can take birth from an ordinary, convenient, and desired Japanese life. Characters of *Norwegian Wood* have been seen to cling to their nostalgic, lifeless, mournful memories. Even though there were opportunities for Naoko to accept Toru instead of the dead Kizuki, for Toru to accept Midori instead of Naoko and for Hatsumi to leave Nagasawa and restart an optimistic life, they chose to stick in deepest misery and they struggled to have their desire fulfilled into the darkness of memories. It is so intriguing to find out that a mindful present is the motive of the decayed, suicidal psyche that seeks shelter in the distressing past for Murakami characters. Here, the definition of happiness and satisfaction confronts ultimate doubt.

2. Analysis

Haruki Murakami's *Norwegian Wood* showcases a Japanese Society where the young lives of some teenagers are agonized as a consequence of their memories

of past and shared life. The entire narration of the novel, the references to music, the foods, and the spatial identity of people all are responsive to the distress of the characters. Murakami's notion of representing the Japanese young generation's angst comes in very smart and modern attire. The angst or unfathomable anxiety of the story is presented with motifs of modern music, mostly with the cocooned young people who are more comfortable in their own unspoken world. Throughout the whole story, there are excellently sophisticated descriptions of how the advanced, progressive society can decay and die in search of its dystopia. It's an undesirable but customary tendency of the suffering human mind to walk into the darkness without considering the aftermath.

Toru Watanabe, the narrator of the story, who carries a self-reflection of Murakami's own self, has shared love with Naoko, the fiancée of his dead best friend Kizuki. Kizuki committed suicide at the age of 17. Toru faces the toxic taste of life while he shares love with Naoko. Eventually, he becomes sluggish, and numb, and has consented to an immense void in all his existence.

Murakami has used spatial apparatus in an evocative manner to bring up the subtle darkness of the story. Common dystopian stories carry a surface of Sci-Fi facts with loss of forest, natural vegetation, desertification, or extreme weather. *Norwegian Wood* has some unusual features about the dystopian atmosphere. The ongoing sense of alienation of *Norwegian Wood* is quite understandable. The field well in the novel is a deep abyss of memories for Naoko which only exists inside her head, not in reality. She is obsessed with darkness, field well, and uncanny. A question arises at this point: if the field well doesn't exist, why did Naoko talk about it and give repetition to it? It is a mere representation of an altered world which eventually becomes repellent for Naoko's condition. The field well's idea is also a core issue of Naoko's psyche which is descriptive, vividly elaborative, and also is a utopia (a false Utopia) for her, a place that is owned by her heart. The well, considered Naoko's fascination, pretends to contain all the answers to Naoko's paranoia, trauma, and intense melancholia. All these motifs are like a testimony to Naoko's sickness. And her ultimate sickness is the death of Kizuki. Naoko tells in her letter while living in the sanatorium:

"All I know about the well was its frightening depth. It was deep beyond measuring and crammed full of darkness as if all the world's darknesses had been boiled down to their ultimate density. "It's really, really deep," said Naoko, choosing her words with care. She would speak that way sometimes, slowing down to find the exact word she was looking for. "But no one knows where it is," she continued. "The one thing I know for sure is that it's around here somewhere." (Murakami, 2013)

The well in the meadow is a spatial idea that creates a dystopia where everything is structured without harmony, with an intense gloomy mood; it attracts an interest to taste the alternative world of death. The dimness of Naoko's inner soul is reflected through the desire to meet the depth of darkness. It's a story about the eternal struggle of the living to meet the dead. Jay Rubin says that Murakami hasn't put any supernatural pattern inside this novel unlike his other literary pieces, but the intensity of mystic beautification surely creates magic for the readers of *Norwegian Wood*. (Rubin, 2005)

Susan M. Inez states that dystopian loss can be a loss of individual choice. This loss goes unnoticed until an approach to living with a bewildering habit comes forward. (Inez, 2018) Naoko says to Toru:

If I relaxed for a second, I'd never find my way back. I'd go to pieces, and the pieces would be blown away. (Murakami, 2013)

The actions and thoughts of Naoko for not losing her paranoid phase are unnatural and foreign to common human consciousness. Naoko challenges the realities in which she is living; she challenges the perfection and hope to live and to be happy and found herself destined in a sanatorium. When Toru's endless love is offered, Naoko chooses to stay with dead Kizuki's memory; she encourages the readers to question the idea of happiness and existence. Also, the earlier chapters of the novel give a key icon of the dystopian spatial idea which represents the ominous beckon of trailing minds.

Edwards expresses that Murakami's stories are filled with people who choose to not have places to go; people who hold back the urge for time. (Edwards, 2020) Toru narrates about his and Naoko's despaired journey of dystopian survival in chapter one of the novel. Jonathan Vars states that very often the quest for survival is a result of one of the many themes; this quest for survival is made for an exciting storyline and unexpected twists. (Vars, 2003) In *Norwegian Wood*, people try to survive in a controlled world. This restricted world is provoked by Kizuki's death. Naoko's melancholia about Kizuki's death and Toru's memories of an unsuccessful affair and dead friend are catalysts that make the readers explore their restricted world.

According to Hanson, dystopian literature is connected with an emotional response to the story that keeps the reader waiting for more. Some characters fall into despair and they can be uplifted by those around them. (Hanson 28) In Murakamian literary works, the epistolary narrative style is evident to understand the emotional responses of the characters and their contacts. The whole text is associated with several recalling of memoirs of the characters; Naoko and Toru are seen to

utter their flashbacks from a past life as if the incidents are witnessed at the present time. The intertwining of the epistolary narrative, from Naoko to Toru, from Toru to the whole story is evidence that the memories suggest a thickness that is suffocating the ease of their life. Naoko wants to be memorized by Toru in such a way:

“I want you to always remember me. Will you remember that I existed and that I stood next to you here like this?” “Always,” I said. “I’ll always remember.” (Murakami, 2013)

Naoko always wanted to get lost in an eternal depth and dark wish. After the death of Kizuki and after losing the desired teen she shared with Kizuki, she wanted to escape from the real world. She wishes to move towards Kizuki but has a hope to be remembered in the real world through memory. Murakami often swaps dreams, memory, and reality. *Norwegian Wood* is also one of those novels where the wish, fortitude, and essence of life are released through memories of life. With a fear of loss and the fear to be grasped by memories, Toru murmurs:

What if somewhere inside me there is a dark limbo where all the truly important memories are heaped and slowly turning into mud? Be that as it may, it's all I have to work with. Clutching these faded, fading, imperfect memories to my breast, I go on writing this book with all the desperate intensity of a starving man sucking on bones. This is the only way I know to keep my promise to Naoko. (Murakami, 2013)

Murakami illustrates that Toru is the ultimate witness of the dystopian atmosphere. With the utmost sublime, Toru revises his memory lane; he carries his existence as a heavy burden after Naoko is gone. Toru seems to be the survivor of the novel who receives a continuous struggle with despair and a very dim hope of life after the death of Naoko. Toru has continuous questions: why should he bother about the most important things and what if all his memories have turned into mud inside his dark limbo? The idea of limbo, a place for unsanctified individuals is not anywhere outside this world, rather it's inside the brains of the characters of this novel. Each character is carrying ecstasy and agony inside their own brain. Followed by that, Toru Watanabe is pushed to dystopia by existing in real life for which he faces fatal nihilism and a sense of loss as unavoidable aftermath after Naoko left him.

Inside *Norwegian Wood*, the characters witness changes in their lives when something strange comes through. Suicides, in this story, are a strange phenomenon that comes through and changes lives. Episodes of suicides and their references in the story have controlled the time frame and the actions of the characters. Toru

Watanabe has an eternal struggle to survive Kizuki's and Naoko's suicide. With the new sequence, characters push themselves to escape from the change. Toru's escape from Kizuki's and Naoko's death, Naoko's attempts to escape from the ceaseless shared teen with Kizuki, and Nagasawa's escape from the monogamous relationship are phenomenal in this discussion of accepting changes. Also, Toru faces an eternal loss of individualism while escaping from the deaths of Kizuki and Naoko. In Toru's narrative, we find that he is far away from the opposition of Life and death; rather he stands in a gray zone of intertwined life and death. Toru says,

The night Kizuki died, however, I lost the ability to see death (and life) in such simple terms. Death was not the opposite of life. It was already here, within my being, it had always been here, and no struggle would permit me to forget that. When it took the 17-year-old Kizuki that night in May, death took me as well. (Murakami, 2013)

The memory of Kizuki's death created a loop of weight in Toru's soul. Toru's sense became vague by losing the ability to see death as the opposite of life. Toru goes on infinitely spinning in circles and everything about Toru's individualism revolves around death. It seems that Toru Watanabe has a life that is centered on death.

The common impression of human growth suggests the blooming of young life and stepping out of teenage to upcoming adulthood. But for Naoko, her entire existence is in fact decaying in dystopia along with her growth. She challenges her own self to go on with her memories. These memories also mutate into metaphorical mud which heaves all willpower to achieving happiness and pushes a person toward a dark limbo. Throughout the entire novel, Kizuki's memories are selective ones but these memories are untouchable for Kizuki's beloved Naoko. Turning 20 has made Naoko's existence unloved by herself as she has moved on from the teenage years when Kizuki existed. The age of 20 brings nothing blissful for Naoko. Murakami showcases the topsy-turvy of Naoko with sheer observation in Toru's narratives:

There was something strange about her becoming 20. I felt as if the only thing that made sense, whether for Naoko or for me, was to keep going back and forth between 18 and 19. After 18 would come 19, and after 19, 18, of course. But she turned 20. And in the autumn, I would do the same. Only the dead stay 17 forever. (Murakami, 2013)

To understand the dystopian narrative, comprehending the spatial juncture is significant. It seems that the spatial transformation for Naoko would bring betterment, rather, it did just the opposite and the sanatorium was the stage for Naoko's suicide. In her own words, Naoko expressed to Toru:

It's not exactly a hospital, more a sanatorium kind of thing with a far freer style of treatment. I'll leave the details in another letter. What I need now is to rest my nerves in a quiet place cut off from the world. I feel grateful in my own way for the year of companionship you gave me. Please believe that much even if you believe nothing else. You are not the one who hurt me. I myself am the one who did that. (Murakami, 2013)

Sanatorium is the escape for Naoko from the truth that she can never have Kizuki back in her life. The surroundings of the place and the company of Reiko along with other medical support could heal Naoko, but she chose to be tied with her sickness. Gradually she turned into a schizophrenic, she started to hear Kizuki's voice and led herself to take her own life. The idea of space in the above quotation clarifies to the reader that healing is not welcomed when the human mind is obsessed with dystopian fantasy.

Midori is a character in Murakami's novel that stands far from the dense fog of dystopia compared to the other characters. She is Toru Watanabe's classmate who is intimidated by Toru. On the contrary, Toru questions himself about his togetherness with Midori. While Midori's spontaneity could add a smile to Toru's gloomy life, he keeps roaming around Naoko and her discontented thoughts. According to Inez, this is proof of dystopia where optimism is questioned. (Inez, 2018) Toru's bond with Midori explains an optimistic utopian idea that showcases the dissimilar function of the novel's melancholic dystopia as well. The willingness to be happy doesn't deserve to be questioned. Human beings seek sources of happiness. But dystopia is a state where the desire for happiness is inquired. Toru's bond with Midori and his attention towards joyfulness is not bold and clear in the story; rather it belongs to a gray zone where everything is hesitant. Midori gets rid of her parent's sufferings, her parents' falling into grave sickness and death, her scattered childhood, and deviated thoughts all are feedings for the novel's dystopian ground. Jay Rubin summarizes that Haruki Murakami was a child in Japan who saw the devastation after World War II; he witnessed the calamitous community and culture. A thick dilemma worked for him to applaud his community's life and his culture. That's why, from their teenage years, Murakami was influenced by foreign life and culture, especially American Culture. A continuous escapism from Japanese culture worked for Murakami. Since the essence of a writer's soul always reflects in their work, Murakami's stories carry his escapism from core Japanese life. (Rubin, 2005) The letters of Naoko from her sanatorium time reflect this fact of escapism prominently. Naoko writes the following line in a letter to Toru:

This time I am very, very calm. Clean air, a quiet world cut off from the outside. (Murakami, 2013).

From the alienated settings of the sanatorium, the isolated life, and the dominated mental trauma of Naoko it is visible that Naoko chooses to be in that environment where life is out of the busy real world. Reality can alarm her for the failure of not being with Kizuki anymore. Naoko prefers to stay in a place where everyone is distressed by psychosomatic hostilities. As a result, Naoko receives a sense of loss and intense knowledge of suffering. She has to pay the price of living without Kizuki and refuses Toru's love for her. These factors cause her ultimate doom as she commits suicide in the sanatorium and leaves the heaviest of her dystopian contentment to Toru.

To understand Murakamian narrative's dystopian attire, the darkness and the hugeness are some important leaseholders. Loss of eternal fulfillment of life is the mirror reflection of where dystopia stands proudly. Dystopia is also portrayed as the altered world of Naoko which she eventually thinks is her cure for her schizophrenic extremity. Thus, the dystopian scenario thickens the existential 'Nada' or nothingness inside Naoko and afterward pushes her interest from the living world to death. In Naoko's schizophrenic darkness, all blue memories knit enormous wretchedness for her, and for Toru and subsequently, their reminiscences of the dead Kizuki are dejected. Naoko mentions:

We are here not to correct the deformation but to accustom ourselves to it: that one of our problems was our inability to recognize and accept our own deformities. (Murakami, 2013).

From the above quote, it is understood that deep despair has successfully taken place inside Naoko. It's a never-ending paranoia for which Naoko gradually cocoons herself to conceal her cheerful feelings and she hides her willpower to be loved and to be alive. It is also notable that the desire of getting well is not mentioned in the above quote, rather agreeing with deformities is expected. By following the Freudian mental iceberg, the id is the level that stays in the subconscious or unconscious mind. It controls the psyche's forces (i.e. Eros, Thanatos), instincts, repressed traumas, and painful emotions. (Freud, 1981) In *Norwegian Wood*, Naoko's sense of being own self is dominantly transgressed by the death of Kizuki. The time Naoko spent with Kizuki creates a different self from whom she turns into after Kizuki commits suicide. She refuses to grow up as her teenage years were shared with Kizuki. She wishes to be in that teen utopia and fantasizes about her childhood.

Naoko has an absence of an active super ego. A guilty conscience is created inside her when she couldn't stop Kizuki's suicide and found herself alienated from the outer world. Naoko is obsessed with her sickness and she doesn't want to leave the mode of sickness. It is fairly understood that Naoko faces problematic id forma

tion during and after Kizuki. It was more enhanced by Naoko's absence of reality's values and that brings the absence of stigma. Real life makes people like Naoko choke as they start to lose existential roots and start to multiply the pixels of dystopian hollowness. In Naoko's topographical world, each space makes her think that she is no more able to connect with the outer world as Kizuki was her only exposure to the outside. The sanatorium is the only place where Naoko could escape her other psychic deformedness but finally, the pain and the sense of loss dominated her normalcy. All these above elements generate phantasmal topos for Naoko's identity and existential crisis. She can only find her oneness inside the sanatorium as she says to Toru in the following quote:

This is a special place, and it has a special system, and some people can't get into it. (Murakami, 2013).

The effect of topography or the effects of spatial identity justly links the isolation and otherness of Naoko. Life is not ideal for her after Kizuki died. Durkheim's "excessive individualization", which is referred to in egoistic suicide, supports Naoko's alienation of their own self for apathy, melancholia, depression, and suicide. (Alexander & Smith, 2008) Even though Toru opens his entire mind to love Naoko and to receive Naoko's love for him, Naoko goes on and on as standing apart and all happy memories and good feelings sink under intense sadness. Toru follows Naoko and he tries reading her mind. According to Rubin, the foundation of the story belongs to a distressed world. It's an age old story about a struggle with the issues of peace and acceptance. (Rubin, 2005) And this dystopian idea of space in the novel also is representative of the mixture of landscape (the beauty of Japanese life) and the psychescape where the reader never leaves the scenario.

Norwegian Wood is a lucid reflection of the Beatles band's song 'Norwegian Wood' starting as "I once had a girl // or should I say she once had me". This novel starts with a reference to music through which reminiscence takes place. Thus the focal character Toru Watanabe represents the idea of longing and loss of a lover which is upturned with melody. The Beatles song 'Norwegian Wood' is also evidence of Toru's and Naoko's dilemma of having a happy ending similar to the song lyrics "And when I awoke, I was alone, this bird had flown". Though they both have feelings for each other, they cannot stay together, they are at heart, alone in their life. The widened gap makes Toru realize that being captivated by Naoko, he is owned by Naoko. But all of Naoko's sick bruised heart will always be ruled by Kizuki's memory. The song has an intense effect on Naoko by which she can get touched by her fear to confront her dead lover's absence. The crisis of existence, the loss of the beloved, and the discontent haunting the remembrance are obviously presented through the gusts of the passion of an ached lover. Naoko talks about the song as such:

"That song can make me feel so sad," said Naoko. "I don't know, I guess I imagine myself wandering in a deep wood. I'm all alone and it's cold and dark, and nobody comes to save me. That's why Reiko never plays it unless I request it. (Murakami, 2013).

The above quote reflects how the song affects Naoko's psychological condition and her schizophrenia. The song also speaks about the dystopian epistolary narrative where love suffers for the lover's lost mind. The entire chaos within self is the offspring of Naoko's disturbed physical intercourse with Kizuki, her failure to stay away from Kizuki's memory. The chaos is broadened by failure to have eternal teenage and by being stopped to grow up around Kizuki just like Kizuki stopped everything by committing suicide. All these above reasons are dystopian motifs of why Naoko was a seeker of refuge inside the song 'Norwegian Wood'.

In Murakami's novel, Midori has a stable psychological condition in a world full of regret and a heavily burdened heart. She is more like coping with the flow of life. She shows an esteemed resistance to not diving into her dead parents' memory but in due course, the gust of dystopia finds out Midori too. The girl has lost her parents, and before that she lost a sound relationship with her parents. She drags her young self to serve the severely sick parents and bid them farewell to the world of the dead. Funerals became a regular phenomenon in her life. Midori's circumstance represents the theme of the tough choices of any dystopian narrative. Also, the hardship of seeing deaths builds a strong sense of loss which creates a sense to desiccate the consciousness of grief, and melancholia and gradually, the burden of the heart gets heavier day by day. In specific, there are words uttered by Midori:

"My father died a few minutes ago," Midori said in a small, quiet voice. I asked her if there was anything I could do. "Thanks," she said. "There's really nothing. We're used to funerals. (Murakami, 2013).

Midori holds life and psychology which define the designation of normalcy. But after her father's demise, some psychosomatic trauma took place and stayed inside her as repressed trauma long ago. Midori searches for happiness and the bounty of life, rather she receives a handful of distrust of being left alone by her beloved one. Fear takes place deep down inside her and makes her clutch Toru and hold him tight. Midori's life faced hardship when her mother died, her father moved to Uruguay for no reason. She and her sister hold the concept of family along with running the Kobayashi bookshop. Abundance and hardship are turned into psychological wounds after serving the sick and the living. She is accompanied by the sickness of others for a long time. Normal life turns into devastation for Midori by bidding farewell to the deceased ones.

Almost halfway through the story of *Norwegian Wood*, a character appears named Nagasawa, a guy from Toru's dorm. He is a person who is portrayed as very successful in his career and studies a lot. On the contrary, he constantly hurts his steady girlfriend Hatsumi with his polygamous attitude. David Mesick says, "Dystopian situations bear trust issues through the situation's insider characters." (Mesick, 2015) Nagasawa risks the love and trust which Hatsumi carries for him wholeheartedly. Here is a quote from Nagasawa and Hatsumi's conversation:

"You can't even call what I do sleeping around. It's just a game. Nobody gets hurt," said Nagasawa. "I get hurt," said Hatsumi. "Why am I not enough for you?" Nagasawa kept silent for a moment and swirled the whisky in his glass. (Murakami, 2013).

Jonathan Vars states that there is always a chance of betrayal made by those characters that turn all memories of love into sour flashbacks and eventually push the betrayed person into an indeterminate state of distress. (Vars, 2003) Hatsumi's dystopian shift from a sound relationship with Nagasawa to grave frustration is also caused by the sense of abundance and existential crisis. Hatsumi's dystopian periphery is also created by severely casual acceptance from Nagasawa. Hatsumi's choice was tough as she chose a person like Nagasawa whose presence can make someone empty inside and alone as he is an extremely floating character. The ignorance of Nagasawa for Hatsumi goes unnoticed until she makes another tough choice to kill herself.

Murakami says in his interview with Edwards, "writing something is like searching something in dark places, so you need help, sometimes it's a cat, and sometimes it's a corridor, a well, a wide place. They actually help. Small details always wait to create the story while you meet with them. Stories are like a maze or labyrinth where you can find yourself." (Edwards, 2020) Naoko's physical and psychological degeneration are described in small elements which are catalysts to understanding the prominence of dystopian zest in *Norwegian Wood*. Her narrations are accountable to take the whole knot of the novel into a deep dark abyss of dissatisfaction of the human mind. Naoko's nihilism also drags Toru to the sludge of grief for everything. Naoko's schizophrenic phase is raised because of the swelling of their ego which is caused by her flaw of being an 'other' from 'Kizuki'. Her imperfect sexual bond with Kizuki, her not being able to be apart from her sister and Kizuki's heavy memories all are obvious to make her struggle and escape from life and the living world. With the embedding of these motifs inside the story, Murakami makes readers explore a little more psychic darkness through Naoko's quote:

When I'm lonely at night, people talk to me from the darkness. They

talk to me the way trees moan in the wind at night. Kizuki; my sister: they talk to me like that all the time. They're lonely, too, and looking for someone to talk to. (Murakami, 2013).

Naoko's loneliness gradually collapses with her growing Schizophrenia and hysteria. The unnaturalness of being hauled by death attracts her to move towards dead people's company. It seems that her utopia has moved towards the nonliving world from the living people. All her psychotic pains are relieved by her responding to the dead people. Naoko's attraction to the deceased is also the entrance into the dark where memory turns into delusion, thick as mud, which hazes Naoko's thoughts and seals her from reality. Naoko turns gradually more silent. The schizophrenic attitude encored paranoia of hearing voices; these elements create a space where the human soul cannot find any spirit to be happy or to feel any utopian bliss. Dystopia knits stitches to Naoko's wounds so that wounds can resurrect again because of her eternal nothingness. After Naoko commits suicide, Toru passes his days at the seashore in complete alienation. Toru mentions in his narrative:

My whole body felt enveloped in some kind of membrane, cutting off any direct contact between me and the outside world. (Murakami, 2013).

The above situation presents the dystopian spatial identity of Toru. Murakami characterizes a space as an altered world far from aesthetic convenience; here, altered rules are moving Toru distant from the real world. The altered world's rules are opposing Toru's resistance from sinking into the dark labyrinth whereas Naoko already has sunk. Toru feels a membrane or envelop is surrounding him and questioning the potency of a blissful life. The ability to accept the truth about Naoko's suicide is associated with Toru's wrapping himself from the real world. Naoko never gets well in absence of Kizuki, she never loved Toru and Toru is not able to take place in the depth of Naoko's heart; these are the absolute functions of this novel. After Naoko's suicide, Toru's concealment of their own self represents his obsession with obscurity and unwillingness, his moving towards the uncanny, and his inability to accept positive forces such as Midori's love for him. Toru is enchanted by the same psychescape that Naoko took after the demise of a lover.

About Murakamian writing, Matthew C Strecher summarizes, "The essential theme of the stories are suffered human life's losing all strengths to move towards optimism." (Strecher, 1999) Naoko could have moved on with Toru, she could have stopped suffering from Kizuki's death. Toru could have moved on with Midori by letting go of Naoko as she never loved him truly. Hatsumi could move on with another guy other than Nagasawa. But they all choose to live on memories of

beloved ones, their journeys are tied to their beloved ones; they are lost with time and they craft all their memories into the mud in which they take the plunge and conceal their tranquility. Thus, Naoko, Toru, and Hatsumi all are travelers who light up their memories as the fuel of the journey inside a dark dystopia; their journey is inside a topos opposite to the ecstasy of the living world!

Towards the end of *Norwegian Wood*, it is found that the entire plot is created in a deep chasm of sorrow, imperfection, anguish, and nihilistic endlessness. According to Jay Rubin, the fragments of Japanese culture's growth which are also experienced by Murakami formulates the Japanese people's mind vulnerable (Rubin, 2005). Specifically for the urban youth, the vulnerability is severe as they experience transitions more often for their moving in multiple paths. Rupert Edwards states that the Japanese cultural growth after WWII, Japan- the China war, and the Nanjing massacre is hemmed in at a time when everything was taking place in a different worrying world (Edwards, 2020). Toru's emotion after Naoko's suicide is noticeable that how people of his community absorbed their sadness, mournfulness, and absence of dear ones. The sense of loss is active both in the personal phenomenon and also in the communal manners of Japanese society. Toru says in his narrative:

I had heard the nails being driven into the lid of her coffin, but I still couldn't adjust to the fact that she had returned to nothingness. (Murakami, 2013)

Toru narrates Naoko's suicide as her return to nothingness. Here, Murakami questions every conceptual idea of eternal return and he represents the human soul's struggle to escape from the hardship of being alive. Naoko's extreme desire to be paired with Kizuki, to be fixed in eternal childhood with Kizuki, and to pay the price for living without Kizuki are the features of her utopian world and the world was always trapped in Naoko's teenage years. Followed by that, Toru's inability to be adjusted to the fact that Naoko is not alive anymore is a link to tie Toru to Naoko's memory; the memories are too detailed in Toru's mind and eventually turn into a claustrophobic void, emptiness, melancholia, regression, and alienation.

Dystopia in *Norwegian Wood* strikes hard when it appears that nothing exclusive, no supernatural or science fictional force is obligatory to embed dystopia in human life. When the strength of life or spirit of optimism is banished into the dark chambers of the mind, dystopia heightens its flag. Even in an absolutely disciplined progressing social life like Japan has, dystopia doesn't find it hard to invade people's minds. The existence of dystopia is as common as life and death are. But dystopia paves its own path in the most distinct way when people start to reconsider themselves as a portion of dead peoples' memory and when they relocate memories as solitary kindlers of life and death.

3. Conclusion

Memories have the strength to swipe the human mind to a place of nowhere. No death, no heartbreaking memories are actually strange and these can emerge anytime inside anyone. The ordinariness of deep melancholia will inhale all desires to live merrily and the territory of dystopia will exist proudly as it does inside Naoko. The life which is drowning with dead people's memory will hunt down ordinary people like Toru Watanabe who faces the countless shapes of Naoko's memory, of Kizuki's memory.

Murakami, in his celebrated novel *Norwegian Wood*, lets the reader observe a straight and simple challenge to have contentment for every struggling and suffering human soul, lost in memory's deep cloud. This is how we receive Murakami's message to understand how dystopia echoes inside the human soul as a common phenomenon. Furthermore, people have to live on their loved one's memory. Memory can be blissful or mournful; it is an immensity of our psyche and can have the supremacy to construct dystopia as the ultimate misery in a very ordinary manner, in numerous periods of life.

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