



Sudurpaschim Spectrum

A Multidisciplinary, Peer Reviewed Journal

ISSN: 3021-9701 (Print)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3126/sudurpaschim.v2i2.80422>

Published by Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences,
Far Western University, Mahendranagar, Nepal

Repression, Trauma, and Identity in Haruki Murakami's *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage*: A Psychoanalytic Perspective

Md Rafiqul Islam

Premier University, Chittagong, Bangladesh / PhD Scholar FWU

Email: rafiqrime@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper presents a psychoanalytic reading of Haruki Murakami's *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage*, focusing on the protagonist Tsukuru Tazaki's psychological journey through themes of repression, trauma, and identity formation. Drawing on Sigmund Freud's theories of repression, the uncanny, and the dynamics between the id, ego, and superego, the study examines how Tsukuru's unresolved trauma manifests in recurring dreams, fragmented relationships, and his perception of himself as "colorless." Prompted by Sara, a pivotal figure who acts as a guide and mirror to his unconscious fears, Tsukuru embarks on a pilgrimage to confront his estranged friends and uncover the truth behind their rejection. Through close textual analysis of key symbols—such as train, color imagery, music, and liminal spaces—the paper reveals how repressed memories resurface as Tsukuru grapples with betrayal, grief, and the fragility of human connections. While Tsukuru ultimately uncovers hidden truths about his past, his journey toward emotional healing remains incomplete, underscoring the cyclical nature of repression and the unconscious mind's persistent influence. Murakami's novel portrays the delicate interplay between conscious and unconscious forces, emphasizing the enduring challenges of reconciling with one's past and forging meaningful connections amidst the ambiguities of human existence.

Keywords: Psychoanalysis, Repression, Trauma, Uncanny, Dreams, Emotional paralysis

Introduction

Haruki Murakami's *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage* explores the psychological dimensions of trauma, repression, and identity formation, making it a compelling

subject for psychoanalytic literary analysis. This paper seeks to answer the following research question: How does Murakami's portrayal of the protagonist Tsukuru Tazaki's emotional paralysis and quest for self-discovery reflect Freudian concepts of repression, trauma, and the unconscious? Specifically, this study investigates how Tsukuru's unresolved trauma from his past manifests through recurring dreams, fragmented relationships, and symbolic imagery, ultimately shaping his journey toward emotional healing.

In his mid-thirties, Tsukuru struggles with unresolved trauma from his teenage years. Once part of a close-knit group of friends each symbolically linked to a color Tsukuru, whose name means "to build," contrasts sharply with their vibrancy. Tsukuru is suddenly and inexplicably ostracized, leading him to feel hollow and "colorless." This rejection plunges him into depression, accompanied by suicidal thoughts and emotional detachment (Murakami, 2014). This paper employs Freudian psychoanalysis to uncover the unconscious mechanisms driving Tsukuru's emotional paralysis and quest for self-discovery.

Tsukuru's unresolved trauma remains repressed, surfacing years later through recurring dreams and fragmented relationships. These manifestations of the unconscious reveal the lingering effects of his repressed guilt, desires, and anxieties. Prompted by Sara, a woman he begins to care for, Tsukuru embarks on a pilgrimage to confront his estranged friends and uncover the truth behind their rejection (Murakami, 2014). As Tsukuru probes into his past, he uncovers a false accusation, unresolved grief, and the fragile nature of human connections, all of which emphasize the cyclical nature of repression and its eventual resurgence (Freud, 1964).

Psychoanalytic criticism of literature explores the psychological dimensions of texts, uncovering hidden conflicts, desires, and anxieties that shape characters and narratives. Mary Klages (2012) opines, "Psychoanalysis is a science of the human mind pioneered and articulated by Sigmund Freud" (p. 70). According to Terry Eagleton (1996), "Psychoanalytical literary criticism can be divided into four kinds—it can attend to the author of the work; to the work's contents; to its formal construction; or the reader" (p. 155). Rooted in Sigmund Freud's theories, this approach emphasizes the influence of the unconscious, repression, and the intricate interplay of the id, ego, and superego. Freud's model of the psyche posits that the id represents primal desires driven by the pleasure principle—a relentless pursuit of gratification—while the ego mediates between the id and external realities, adhering to the reality principle. The superego, on the other hand, imposes societal norms and moral values, often in conflict with the id's desires. As Klages

(2012) clarifies, “The id is where original sexual desires, which Freud names libidinal drives, are repressed through the process of sublimation, and the subordination of the Pleasure Principle to the Reality Principle” (p. 41). Repressed desires and traumatic events, banished into the unconscious by the ego, do not disappear but manifest indirectly through dreams, slips of the tongue, or symbolic actions—a phenomenon Freud termed the return of the repressed (Eagleton, 1996, p. 137). According to Klages (2012), “The unconscious thus exists as a kind of prison for libidinal drives that threaten social order and civilization. The unconscious follows the rule of the pleasure principle and does not recognize any ‘higher’ authority or external reality” (p. 87). The unconscious is “Freud’s favourite territory,” which “is the area of instinct, dreams, desires, and all that does not come to the fore of consciousness” (Nayar, 2010, p. 65).

Another vital Freudian concept is the uncanny (*das Unheimliche*), which describes the unsettling effect of something both familiar and strange, often linked to repressed fears. Freud (2004) explains in his essay “The Uncanny”, “...for this uncanny is in reality nothing new or foreign, but something familiar and old-established in the mind that has been estranged only by the process of repression” (p. 429). Repressed thoughts and desires do not always remain repressed but resurface in dreams in unfamiliar proportions. Dreams, for Freud, are the manifestations of the unconscious activities of the human mind, thus they are “the royal road to the unconscious” (Klages, 2017, p. 62). She further points out that “Dreams thus became, in psychoanalytic theory, a form of text that could be read and interpreted” (p. 63).

These principles together provide a robust lens for understanding the psychological underpinnings of characters. Focusing on five key dreams, symbols, and pivotal relationships, this study reveals how Murakami’s novel intertwines psychological and symbolic dimensions, providing valuable insights into the interplay between the conscious and unconscious mind.

Methods and Materials

Murakami’s fiction has long been a subject of psychoanalytic scrutiny, with scholars exploring the psychological dimensions of his characters’ struggles. Joo-Young Lee’s (2019) psychodynamic reading of *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage* applies Heinz Kohut’s self-psychology to interpret Tsukuru’s identity struggles as a result of invalidation and abandonment. Lee frames Sara, a pivotal character, as a “self-object” who facilitates Tsukuru’s confrontation with fears of intimacy and unresolved grief. While Lee’s analysis emphasizes defense mechanisms and intrapsychic conflicts, it overlooks Freudian concepts such as repression,

trauma, and the uncanny, leaving room for a deeper exploration of the unconscious mind in Tsukuru's journey. Similarly, Jonathan Dil's (2018) Jungian analysis of the novel focuses on alchemical transformation and symbolic healing, connecting Tsukuru's ostracization to broader cultural contexts like Japan's post-war trauma. However, Dil's framework neglects Freudian mechanisms like repression and the id/ego/superego dynamic, which are critical to understanding Tsukuru's emotional paralysis. Andrew Lapworth's (2023) exploration of the unconscious through Gilbert Simondon's philosophy of individuation further highlights the richness of Murakami's engagement with psychological themes but diverges from traditional psychoanalytic paradigms. These studies collectively underscore the need for a focused Freudian psychoanalytic reading of *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki*, particularly one that examines repression, trauma, and the interplay between conscious and unconscious forces.

Recent scholarship has increasingly emphasized Murakami's portrayal of trauma and memory, offering new insights into his exploration of the unconscious mind. Md. Shafiqul Islam's (2018) analysis of *Norwegian Wood* highlights how unresolved trauma shapes characters' lives and relationships, drawing parallels to Tsukuru's ostracization in *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki*. Islam argues that Naoko's inability to move past Kizuki's death reflects broader existential concerns about loss and grief, resonating with Tsukuru's struggle to reconcile his past. David Blacker's (2023) theological framework in *"Theology of Trauma"* further enriches this discourse by examining how Murakami's characters navigate traumatic experiences in ways that reflect both personal and collective struggles. Blacker emphasizes the cyclical nature of trauma, where unresolved emotions resurface until they are confronted and integrated into one's identity. This perspective aligns with your study's focus on Tsukuru's recurring dreams and fragmented memories, which serve as manifestations of repressed trauma. However, while Blacker's theological lens offers fresh insights into redemption and healing, it does not explicitly connect these themes to Freudian psychoanalytic mechanisms such as repression and the uncanny, highlighting a critical gap in existing scholarship.

David Potik's (2023) existential critique of Murakami's works provides valuable insights into themes of alienation, identity crises, and the search for meaning. Potik draws parallels between Murakami's characters and existential philosophers like Albert Camus, arguing that protagonists often navigate worlds devoid of inherent meaning. In *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki*, Tsukuru's perception of himself as "colorless" reflects both the psychological mechanisms of repression

(psychoanalytic) and the existential challenges of forging meaningful connections (existential). Potik's analysis complements psychoanalytic readings by underscoring the interplay between conscious desires and unconscious fears, yet it stops short of applying Freudian theory to uncover latent psychological mechanisms. Similarly, Kasturi Sinha's (2024) postmodern interpretation of Murakami's works complicates the discussion of identity by emphasizing its fluid and contingent nature. Sinha argues that characters like Nakata (*Kafka on the Shore*) embody fragmented identities shaped by external forces such as consumer culture and existential alienation. These insights resonate with Tsukuru's emotional paralysis and quest for belonging, suggesting that his identity formation is deeply tied to his confrontation with repressed memories and unconscious desires. However, Sinha's postmodern lens does not fully integrate Freudian psychoanalytic concepts, leaving a gap in understanding how repression and trauma shape Tsukuru's psychological journey.

Tiffany Hong's (2015) review of *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki* highlights Murakami's use of symbolic spaces, such as the mountain retreat and the well, which serve as thresholds for emotional and psychological transformation. These spaces are described as "sacred," representing moments of introspection and preparation for legitimate emotional crossings. Hong's insights resonate with the present study's focus on Tsukuru's confrontation with repressed memories and unresolved trauma, as these liminal zones mirror Freudian concepts of the unconscious and the uncanny. Similarly, Andrew Lapworth's (2023) exploration of transindividual forces in Murakami's works underscores the role of surreal imagery and dream-like sequences in exploring the unconscious mind. These elements create liminal spaces where characters confront their inner demons and seek resolution. While Lapworth's analysis broadens the scope of psychoanalytic interpretations, it does not explicitly address Freudian mechanisms like repression and trauma, leaving room for a more focused application of Freudian theory to *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki*.

While existing studies provide valuable sociological, psychodynamic, symbolic, and existential interpretations of Murakami's works, they largely overlook the intricate engagement of *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki* with Freudian psychoanalysis. For instance, Lee (2019) identifies Tsukuru's defense mechanisms but does not probe into Freud's concept of repression and its uncanny resurgence in Tsukuru's dreams. Dil (2018) captures transformative symbolism through a Jungian lens but neglects Freudian theories of the unconscious and the id/ego/superego dynamic. Blacker (2023) offers fresh insights into trauma and redemption but does not explicitly connect these themes to Freudian psychoanalytic mechanisms. Sinha (2024) explores identity as fluid and

contingent but does not integrate Freudian psychoanalytic concepts into her postmodern analysis. Furthermore, recent critiques, such as those by Potik (2023) and Lapworth (2023), emphasize existential and transindividual perspectives but do not fully integrate Freudian psychoanalytic concepts into their analyses. This gap highlights the need for a focused Freudian reading of *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki*, which this paper seeks to address.

This paper fills the identified gap by analyzing how Murakami's portrayal of Tsukuru's dreams and psychological struggles aligns with Freudian psychoanalytic concepts. By focusing on repression, trauma, the uncanny, and the interplay between conscious and unconscious forces, this study offers a nuanced understanding of Tsukuru's emotional journey. Furthermore, by incorporating existential critiques and expanding the scope of existing scholarship, this paper contributes to the ongoing discourse on Murakami's engagement with psychoanalytic and existential themes.

This study employs a qualitative methodology grounded in psychoanalytic theory to explore the psychological dimensions of *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage*. Sigmund Freud's concepts of repression, the uncanny, and the unconscious serve as the theoretical foundation, guiding an in-depth analysis of the protagonist's internal conflicts and latent desires. By integrating psychoanalytic theory with close textual analysis, this study examines how Murakami uses literary devices—such as symbols, motifs, and metaphors—to deepen the narrative's exploration of identity, repression, and the interplay between conscious and unconscious forces.

The methodology aligns with traditional literary analysis by focusing on textual elements like symbols, imagery, and character interactions to uncover deeper thematic and psychological meanings. For instance, symbols such as train stations, musical pieces, and colors are analyzed not only as narrative tools but also as representations of Tsukuru's repressed emotions and fragmented identity. Similarly, interactions between Tsukuru and pivotal characters such as Haida, Sara, Kuro, and Aka—are examined to highlight relational dynamics that mirror Freudian mechanisms like projection, displacement, and transference. The study also analyzes five pivotal dreams in the novel, interpreting them through Freud's theory that dreams are the “royal road to the unconscious.” These dreams, along with surreal experiences like Tsukuru's encounter with the six-fingered woman, are explored as manifestations of repressed fears and desires, reflecting Freud's concept of the uncanny.

Freud's seminal works, including *The Interpretation of Dreams*, *The Ego and the Id*, and *The Uncanny*, provide the conceptual framework for analyzing Tsukuru's emotional struggles and identity formation. Repression, for example, is explored as a central theme, with Tsukuru's ostracization by his friends representing a traumatic event he represses, leading to emotional paralysis and a fragmented sense of self. The unconscious mind is further uncovered through Tsukuru's recurring dreams and symbolic interactions, revealing how unconscious mechanisms drive his psychological journey and shape his relationships. Scholarly articles and critical analyses of Murakami's fiction contextualize these insights within broader psychoanalytic and literary discussions, enriching the interpretation of the text.

Close textual analysis is used to examine key symbols, motifs, and literary devices in the novel. Color imagery, for instance, reflects Tsukuru's perception of himself as "colorless" and his struggle to reclaim his identity, while musical pieces like Liszt's *Le mal du pays* serve as metaphors for his emotional state and repressed memories. Train stations, water, and other symbols are interpreted as conduits for Tsukuru's unconscious desires and latent fears, illustrating central themes such as repression, unresolved guilt, and identity formation. By focusing on these elements, the study reveals the intricate psychological and symbolic layers of Murakami's narrative.

This methodological approach is particularly suited to Murakami's works, which frequently blur the boundaries between reality and fantasy, consciousness and unconsciousness. By combining psychoanalytic theory with literary analysis, the study captures the multidimensional nature of Murakami's storytelling, offering a nuanced understanding of Tsukuru's psychological journey and the novel's exploration of trauma, identity, and healing. The integration of psychoanalytic concepts with close textual analysis ensures a comprehensive interpretation of the text, bridging literary and psychological perspectives to uncover deeper insights into the human condition.

Results and Discussion

The narrative of the novel situates its protagonist, Tsukuru Tazaki, with a stunning opening statement: "From July of his sophomore year in college until the following January, all Tsukuru Tazaki could think about was death" (Murakami, 2014, p. 1). This sets the tone for a profound exploration of Tsukuru's physical and psychological turmoil, stemming from the abrupt severance of ties with his "four closest friends" in Nagoya. Their decision to abandon him—with no explanation—casts Tsukuru into a deep state of melancholy and abandonment. Murakami

describes their rejection in stark terms: “They did not want to see him, or talk with him, ever again” (p. 3). Overwhelmed, Tsukuru avoids questioning the reasons behind their decision, a fear encapsulated in his self-perception of being “colorless,” a reflection of his belief that he lacked any unique qualities that justified his place in the group. Murakami (2014) underscores this sentiment with a symbolic detail about their nicknames:

"It disappointed him, and he surprised himself by feeling hurt. Soon the other four friends began to use nicknames: the boys were called Aka (red) and Ao (blue), and the girls were Shiro (white) and Kuro (black). But he just remained Tsukuru (p. 6)".

Tsukuru’s internalization of this perceived lack of color becomes a metaphor for his alienation and inadequacy. Despite these doubts, he and his friends were bound together by a sense of belonging: “Like an equilateral pentagon, where all sides are the same length, their group’s formation had to be composed of five people exactly” (p. 12). The disintegration of this group leaves Tsukuru in a psychological limbo, suppressing his emotions and burying the pain deep within his unconscious.

Freud’s theory of repression and emotional turmoil

Freud’s theory of repression provides a lens through which Tsukuru’s psychological state can be examined. His abandonment by his friends becomes a traumatic event that he avoids confronting for years. As Freud posits, repression is a defense mechanism that shields the conscious mind from distressing memories and emotions by relegating them to the unconscious (Freud, 2010, pp.600-604). Tsukuru’s conversations with Sara, nearly two decades after the incident, mark the beginning of his confrontation with this repressed pain. When asked about his feelings for Shiro and Kuro, he admits, “Both the girls were appealing in their own way. I’d be lying if I said I wasn’t attracted to them. But I tried as much not to think of them that way” (Murakami, 2014, p. 18). This confession reveals his deliberate suppression of sexual desire—an effort to preserve the sanctity of their idealized friendship. Freud’s framework illuminates this behavior: the ego suppresses the id’s desires to maintain social harmony and prevent internal conflict (Freud, 1960, pp.11-20). By channeling his desires into non-threatening forms, Tsukuru avoids disrupting the fragile dynamics of the group, though at great emotional cost.

Tsukuru’s detachment from the emotional reality of his relationships becomes evident when he describes his friends as a collective entity: “I thought of them like they were a fictitious being. Like a formless, abstract being” (Murakami, 2014, p. 18). This unconscious distancing

aligns with Freud's notion of repression, where painful memories and emotions are locked away to avoid conscious suffering. Tsukuru's self-perception as "colorless" encapsulates the toll of this repression - a profound disconnection from his emotions and desires, as well as an internalization of inadequacy.

The betrayal by his friends intensifies Tsukuru's feelings of invisibility and worthlessness. His avoidance of the truth behind their rejection exemplifies Freud's pleasure principle, wherein individuals seek immediate relief from distress by evading painful realities. Tsukuru's admission to Aka reflects this avoidance: "I was afraid to hear the reason...you guys so flat-out rejected me. I felt like if you told me I'd never recover. So, I tried to forget about all of it...I thought time would heal the pain" (Murakami, 2014, p. 131). Freud's observation that repression keeps painful experiences out of conscious awareness is evident here, as Tsukuru's repression becomes a means of survival (Freud, 2010. pp.599-604).

The Pilgrimage: confronting repression and trauma

Motivated by Sara, Tsukuru embarks on a "pilgrimage" a journey both physical and psychological—to uncover the reasons behind his friends' betrayal and reconcile with his fragmented identity. Freud's reality principle, which compels individuals to face difficult truths for personal growth, manifests in Tsukuru's willingness to revisit his past, "Under the influence of the ego's instincts of self-preservation, the pleasure principle is replaced by the reality principle" (Freud, 1961, p.4). Yet, his prolonged avoidance highlights the dominance of the pleasure principle throughout much of his life.

Tsukuru's inability to comprehend his friends' rejection mirrors Freud's assertion that repressed trauma shields individuals from fully confronting the implications of their pain. This repression not only distorts his memories but also numbs his emotional responses, leaving him with a sense of emptiness and alienation. By revisiting his past and confronting latent truths, Tsukuru seeks to integrate these fragmented aspects of himself and rediscover his identity.

Dreams as windows to the unconscious

Freud's theory of dreams as manifestations of the unconscious is pivotal in analyzing Tsukuru's psychological conflict. Freud (2010) posits, "The interpretation of dreams is the royal road to a knowledge of the unconscious activities of the mind" (p. 604). His recurring dreams act as windows into his repressed emotions, unresolved trauma, and latent desires. Each dream, marked by symbolic imagery and recurring themes, reflects his unconscious mind grappling with

the pain of rejection and abandonment.

Repression, trauma, and the uncanny in Tsukuru's Dreams

Tsukuru Tazaki struggles with identity, trauma, and repressed desires, which surface in his emotional journey and his recurring dreams. They reveal his unconscious mind grappling with the rejection by his friends, his unresolved guilt, and his latent desires. The study, in this section, explores Freud's theories of repression, the uncanny, trauma, memory, and the return of the repressed to examine five pivotal dreams Tsukuru experiences throughout the novel.

In Freudian theory, repression is a defense mechanism through which distressing memories, emotions, and desires are pushed into the unconscious to prevent psychological pain. Tsukuru's dreams act as windows into his unconscious, revealing repressed emotions, memories, and desires that are slowly emerging into his conscious awareness. (Freud, 2010, pp. 599-604). Tsukuru's rejection by his friends and the trauma surrounding this event is central to his emotional turmoil. His repression of these painful experiences is exemplified by his inability to confront the reasons behind their rejection. Freud argues that repressed memories often return in disguised forms through dreams, as the unconscious mind seeks to bring unresolved conflicts to the surface, "they are disguised fulfilments of repressed wishes" (Freud, 1986, p.115). Tsukuru's dreams, particularly his recurring visions of his friends and their rejection, reflect this process of repression and the return of the repressed.

The First Dream: The desire to escape death

In Tsukuru's first dream, which occurs during a period of emotional despair, he experiences intense jealousy and desire toward an unnamed woman who offers him a choice: her body or her heart, but not both. Murakami (2014) describes:

In his dream, though, he burned with desire for a woman. It wasn't clear who she was. She was just there. And she had a special ability to separate her body and her heart. I will give you one of them, she told Tsukuru. My body or my heart. But you can't have both. (p. 38)

Tsukuru, unable to choose, demands "all of her" (Murakami, 2014, p. 38), and the dream concludes with him rejecting both parts of her. This rejection underscores Tsukuru's internal conflict: his longing for intimacy versus his fear of emotional vulnerability. Freud's theory of repression is evident here, as Tsukuru's unconscious mind grapples with repressed desires for connection and his simultaneous fear of emotional exposure. The woman's offer symbolizes Tsukuru's inability to reconcile physical intimacy with emotional attachment a tension rooted in his unresolved trauma

and feelings of inadequacy.

The dream's intensity, particularly the emergence of jealousy, plays a pivotal role in shifting Tsukuru's focus away from suicidal thoughts. Murakami (2014) notes, "Jealousy at least as far as he understood it from his dream...that he stopped wanting to die" (p. 29). This transformation aligns with Freud's concept of the libidinal drive, where repressed sexual desires emerge as a counterforce to self-destructive tendencies (Freud, 1986, pp. 364-375). The dream suggests that Tsukuru's unconscious mind is attempting to combat his emotional paralysis by introducing new, albeit conflicting, desires. By channeling his energy into jealousy instead of despair, Tsukuru begins to move away from thoughts of death, highlighting the unconscious's role in self-preservation.

The Second Dream: The uncanny and Haida's presence

In Tsukuru's second dream—or dreamlike situation—he experiences an eerie and uncanny sensation as he lies immobilized in his bed, hearing a tapping sound and sensing a presence in the room. Murakami (2014) vividly describes:

Tsukuru bolted awake in the darkness. A tapping sound had woken him, like the sound of a pebble striking a window. Maybe he'd only imagined it, but he wasn't sure. He wanted to check the alarm clock on his nightstand, but he couldn't turn his neck. His entire body was immobile. He wasn't numb, it was just that when he tried to make his body move, he couldn't. The connection between body and muscles had been severed. (p. 91)

This surreal experience evokes Freud's concept of the uncanny, where something familiar becomes strange and unsettling. The familiarity of his room and the desire to check the clock contrast sharply with the strangeness of his paralysis and the ambiguous tapping sound. This duality symbolizes Tsukuru's emotional immobility and repressed fears, reflecting his internal struggle to confront unresolved trauma while feeling powerless to act. Tsukuru then senses Haida's presence in the room, watching him silently: "Haida stood there, unmoving, in the middle of the night, staring wordlessly at him," before disappearing as if trying to communicate something unspoken (Murakami, 2014, p. 93-94). Freud's concept of the uncanny is particularly relevant here, as Haida's distorted presence evokes the unsettling feeling of encountering the familiar in a strange and threatening form (Freud, 2004, p. 429). This duality highlights Tsukuru's psychological tension between his desire for connection and his fear of confronting repressed emotions.

The tapping sound and Tsukuru's paralysis symbolize Freud's notion of symbolic castration—a

fear of powerlessness and loss of agency. His inability to move mirrors his emotional stagnation and resistance to addressing his traumatic past. Haida's silent gaze further amplifies this tension, representing the intrusion of repressed memories into Tsukuru's conscious awareness. Together, these elements underscore the ongoing conflict between Tsukuru's unconscious mind and his conscious reluctance to fully acknowledge his trauma.

The Third Dream: The inseparable pair of Shiro and Kuro

Tsukuru's third dream centers on his unresolved feelings toward Shiro and Kuro, who dominate his unconscious despite their rejection of him. In a recurring and surreal sequence, Tsukuru envisions an intense sexual encounter with the two women. Murakami (2014) states:

They never hesitated. The two of them caressed him together, but Shiro was the one he penetrated. Why Shiro? Tsukuru wondered in the midst of his deep confusion. Why does it have to be Shiro? They are supposed to be completely equal. They're supposed to be one being. (p. 95)

Freud's concept of repetition compulsion explains the recurrence of this dream, as repressed memories and desires resurface in disguised forms (Freud, 1961). Tsukuru's sexual interaction with Shiro and Kuro signifies his repressed longing for emotional and physical intimacy with his estranged friends. The act of penetrating Shiro specifically highlights Tsukuru's unconscious fixation on her, suggesting unresolved guilt or attraction. Freud's theory of libidinal drives supports this interpretation, as sexual desires are often directed at objects that fulfill unconscious wishes (Klages, 2006, p. 66). The recurrent nature of the dream indicates that Tsukuru has not yet processed his abandonment and continues to seek resolution. His confusion over the exclusivity of Shiro in the dream reflects his internal struggle to reconcile the idealized unity of his childhood group with the reality of their fragmentation.

The Fourth Dream: sexuality, guilt, and confusion

In an extension of the previous dream, Tsukuru experiences an intense sexual encounter with Shiro and Kuro, which abruptly shifts to an intimate act with Haida, "Now, though, he wasn't coming inside Shiro, but in Haida. The girls had suddenly disappeared, and Haida had taken their place" (Murakami, 2014, p. 96).

This surreal transition exemplifies the conflict between Tsukuru's unconscious desires and his conscious confusion about his relationships. Freud's theory of wish fulfillment posits that dreams fulfill repressed desires (Freud, 2010). Tsukuru's dream reflects his unconscious yearning

for emotional and physical connection, yet the sudden appearance of Haida introduces feelings of guilt and shame. This intrusion suggests Tsukuru's inability to integrate his desires into his conscious self, highlighting the tension between his id's impulses and his superego's moral constraints.

The Fifth Dream: Symbolism of guilt and the uncanny

In Tsukuru's fifth and final dream, he envisions himself playing piano in black and white while the audience grows increasingly impatient. The woman turning the pages for him is revealed to have six fingers, which deeply disturbs him: "He had a sudden realization. The woman in black and white, turning the pages of the score for him, had six fingers. The sixth finger was about the same size as her little finger" (Murakami, 2014, p. 274). This dream is steeped in symbolism, reflecting Tsukuru's feelings of guilt, alienation, and emotional disconnection. Freud's concept of the uncanny is evident in the image of the six-fingered woman, as her extra digit represents something familiar yet unsettling (Freud, 2004, pp. 428-429). The woman's presence evokes Tsukuru's repressed guilt about his past relationships and their tragic outcomes. The audience's discontent further mirrors Tsukuru's internal sense of judgment and rejection, emphasizing his fear of inadequacy and failure.

Tsukuru's dreams, as analyzed through Freud's theories of repression, trauma, guilt, and the uncanny, reveal the depth of his psychological conflict. Each dream provides insight into his repressed emotions and unresolved trauma, whether it is the jealousy and desire in the first dream, the uncanny presence of Haida in the second dream, or the repeated longing for Shiro and Kuro in the third. The fourth dream blends Tsukuru's desires with feelings of guilt, while the fifth dream encapsulates his struggle with guilt and alienation. Finally, Tsukuru's dreams symbolize his unconscious mind's attempt to process and resolve the emotional wounds of his past, paving the way for his eventual confrontation with these repressed traumas.

The Two Women in Tsukuru's Life

Sara Kimoto and Eri Kurono (Kuro) are pivotal figures in Tsukuru's journey toward emotional healing and self-discovery. These women play complementary roles: Eri helps Tsukuru confront his past and achieve closure, while Sara pushes him toward a future of renewal and emotional connection. Their presence underscores the novel's exploration of memory, trauma, and the intricate process of reconciliation and growth.

Eri Kurono (Kuro): Confronting the Past

Tsukuru's emotional healing begins with his reunion with Eri Kurono in Finland, one of his childhood friends. Eri represents the unresolved pain and unanswered questions that have haunted Tsukuru since his youth. Freud's concept of repression is evident in Tsukuru's years of emotional numbness, stemming from his traumatic rejection by the childhood group he once cherished (Freud, 2010). The sudden and unexplained severance of the group left Tsukuru isolated, defensive, and unable to form deep connections, as the emotional weight of his past remained buried in his unconscious mind.

When Tsukuru finally confronts Eri, she reveals the truth behind his abandonment. The group's decision to cut ties was based on Shiro's (Yuzuki's) false accusation of rape a traumatic betrayal that Tsukuru had unknowingly repressed, yet which continued to shape his psyche. Freud's theory of the "return of the repressed" (Freud, 2004) manifests here, as the buried trauma resurfaces during Tsukuru's meeting with Eri. This moment is transformative: it not only provides the answers Tsukuru has long sought but also enables him to reassess his perception of both his friends and himself.

Eri's confession further complicates Tsukuru's understanding of the past. She admits her doubts about the accusation but explains her inability to act due to the group's dynamics. Eri had to "protect her" (Murakami, 2014, p. 235), and as she says, "And in order to do that, I had to cut you off" (p. 235). She reveals that she never believed Shiro's accusation of rape but could not share this with Tsukuru at the time. She also explains how Yuzu (Shiro) got pregnant, and how the group attempted to handle the situation, leading to Yuzu's eventual murder. Eri further reflects that the decision to cut off Tsukuru left deep scars on all of them, "scars that were not superficial" (Murakami, 2014, p. 242). Eri acknowledges how much she loved Tsukuru and how brutally she cut him off for Shiro's sake: "And in the process, I lost you, too. In giving priority to Yuzu's problems, I had to abandon Tsukuru Tazaki... who had done nothing wrong. I wounded you deeply, all because it suited the situation" (Murakami, 2014, p. 252). Eri also admits to feeling jealous of Yuzu, knowing that Tsukuru was in love with her: "I was sure you were in love with Yuzu" (p. 252).

These revelations shatter Tsukuru's idealized image of his friends as "colorful" and perfect, exposing them as flawed individuals grappling with their vulnerabilities. This realization is pivotal, as it shifts Tsukuru's trauma from self-blame rooted in his perceived "colorlessness" to an

acknowledgment of the group's collective fragility. Eri's vulnerability in sharing her regret and guilt enables Tsukuru to forgive both her and himself, providing the emotional closure necessary for healing.

While discussing the past with Eri, Tsukuru learns about her deep love for him and her decision to distance herself for Shiro's sake. Eri reveals her jealousy of Tsukuru's love for Shiro, prompting him to recall a recurring erotic dream involving both girls, where he always came inside Yuzu, never Eri. Though uncertain about its meaning, Tsukuru acknowledges that some thoughts remain too private to share, even in moments of honesty (Murakami, 2013, p. 255). This passage probes deeply into Tsukuru's psyche, highlighting themes of repression, guilt, the uncanny, and the intertwining of light and darkness in human relationships.

From a Freudian perspective, Tsukuru's dream symbolizes the repressed desires and unresolved emotions surrounding his relationships with Eri and Yuzu. Freud's theory of repression suggests that Tsukuru's unconscious mind is suppressing desires he cannot consciously confront. The fact that Yuzu is always the object of his desire, and not Eri, reveals an unacknowledged emotional distance or guilt that Tsukuru has internalized. The inability to express these thoughts, even to someone as close as Eri, reflects the complex nature of repression certain desires and thoughts are too "private" or taboo to confront, even in moments of vulnerability. This resonates with Freud's idea that some unconscious elements, particularly those related to sexual and emotional conflicts, remain hidden beneath the surface, influencing behavior without direct acknowledgment (Freud, 1961). The passage thus not only exposes Tsukuru's internal conflict but also underscores the powerful role of repressed guilt and desire in shaping his actions and relationships.

Tsukuru's reflections on Yuzu's accusations and his vivid imagining of her murder illustrate the psychological complexity of repressed guilt and trauma. Freud's theory of repression posits that unacceptable desires or traumatic experiences are relegated to the unconscious, only to resurface in symbolic or indirect forms (Freud, 1961). Tsukuru's inability to entirely dismiss Yuzu's claims, coupled with his imagined reenactment of her death, reflects unresolved conflicts and repressed fears. The vision of himself knocking on Yuzu's door, gripping a belt, and strangling her symbolizes a psychological struggle between his id—the repository of unconscious desires and his superego, representing moral conscience (Freud, 1960). His grimace upon envisioning the act underscores the shock of confronting the "deep darkness lay hidden in his heart" (Murakami, 2014,

p. 256). This interplay reveals a fragmented psyche where symbolic violence serves as an outlet for repressed emotions, such as guilt and frustration, tied to Yuzu.

Freud's concept of the uncanny provides further insight into Tsukuru's disturbing vision. The scenario feels familiar yet alien, exposing repressed elements of his psyche (Freud, 2004). The noir-like imagery of a "wet black raincoat" (Murakami, 2014, p.256) and the smell of rain amplifies the eerie atmosphere, blending memory with imagination. Tsukuru's acknowledgment that Yuzu harbored her own "deep, inner darkness" (p.256) suggests a shared psychological space, or what Freud termed cathexis, where emotional energies converge. The suggestion that Yuzu "wanted" (p.256) to be strangled aligns with Freud's death drive the unconscious desire to return to an inorganic state adding a chilling layer of complexity to their connection (Freud, 1961). Tsukuru's imagined murder thus becomes a symbolic expression of their intertwined traumas and repressed desires.

This passage represents a pivotal moment in Tsukuru's emotional journey, forcing him to grapple with the blurry line between conscious intent and unconscious impulses. Through the Freudian lens, his vision functions as a psychological mechanism to process guilt and trauma. The mingling of memory, imagination, and symbolic violence highlights Murakami's exploration of human flaws and the fragile boundary between the conscious and unconscious self. Eventually, Tsukuru's confrontation with these repressed elements underscores the novel's broader themes of emotional entanglement, unresolved trauma, and self-understanding struggle (Murakami, 2014, p. 256).

Sara Kimoto: A vision of the future

Following his confrontation with Eri, Tsukuru's journey transitions to the present, where Sara Kimoto emerges as a catalyst for his emotional renewal. Unlike his childhood friends, who embody the "emotional baggage" (p.259) of his past, Sara offers Tsukuru a fresh perspective. Her insistence on his reconnecting with his old friends demonstrates her ability to perceive Tsukuru's unresolved pain and her willingness to guide him toward healing. This aligns with Freud's notion that confronting repressed memories is essential to overcoming emotional stagnation (Freud, 2010).

Sara's role, however, extends beyond helping Tsukuru reconcile with his past. She symbolizes the possibility of a fulfilling future, representing emotional connection, renewal, and the potential for happiness. By encouraging Tsukuru to engage with his emotions and address the

scars of his past, Sara motivates him to move beyond the confines of his trauma. Her presence challenges Tsukuru to envision a life unburdened by his emotional wounds, offering him hope and direction. Sara states, “You can hide memories, suppress them, but you can’t erase the history that produced them” (Murakami 2014, p.32). She further clarifies the issue, “You can’t erase history, or change it. It would be like destroying yourself” (p. 32). Joo-Young Lee (2019) makes an interesting yet compelling observation in his review of the novel about Sara’s role by stating, “Sara’s interventional approach to Tsukuru’s tumultuous intrapsychic resembles how a psychotherapist might help a trauma victim.” (p.1) Sara succeeds in motivating Tsukuru to undertake the daunting task of confronting his past with his school friends. With her help, Tsukuru visits Aka, Ao, and finally Kuro in Finland, uncovering unsettling secrets about them. It is Sara who collects the whereabouts of Tsukuru’s school friends and informs him of Shiro’s death: “She passed away six years ago,” and “That’s why she has no present address. She does have a gravestone, in a suburb of Nagoya” (Murakami, 2014, p. 119).

Nevertheless, Sara’s significance is tied to Tsukuru’s ability to take the necessary steps toward healing. The future she represents is conditional, dependent on his willingness to process his pain and embrace vulnerability. In this sense, Sara embodies both promise and challenge: she is the vision of what could be, but it is up to Tsukuru to overcome the barriers that have held him back.

The Interplay of past and future

Through his interactions with Eri and Sara, Tsukuru’s journey illustrates the need for both closure and renewal in achieving emotional growth. Eri helps Tsukuru confront the trauma of his past, offering him clarity and resolution through her revelations. This closure dismantles the barriers of guilt and self-doubt that have long plagued him, creating the foundation for healing. In contrast, Sara represents the forward-looking aspect of Tsukuru’s journey, inspiring him to embrace the possibility of emotional fulfillment and connection in the future.

The interplay between these two women underscores the intricate balance between past and future in the process of self-discovery. Without Eri’s truth, Tsukuru would remain trapped in the confusion and pain of his past. Without Sara’s encouragement, he would lack the motivation to pursue a life beyond his trauma. Together, Eri and Sara shape Tsukuru’s emotional transformation, demonstrating that healing requires both a reconciliation with past wounds and the courage to envision a new future.

By examining their roles chronologically, it becomes clear that Eri and Sara are indispensable to Tsukuru's emotional recovery. Eri represents the past, offering the resolution needed to understand and process his trauma, while Sara embodies the future, providing hope and the potential for renewal. Together, they highlight the novel's central themes of memory, trauma, and healing, illustrating that self-discovery is a journey that weaves together the complexities of closure and possibility.

Symbolic significances of train and music

Trains and music serve as powerful symbols that mirror Tsukuru's psychological journey and emotional struggles. Trains, ever-present in Tsukuru's life through his career as a station designer, represent both the passage of time and the fragmentation of his identity. They are structures of movement, connection, and transition, yet Tsukuru himself remains emotionally static and detached, unable to reconcile his present self with the wounds of his past. Freud's theories on repression offer a lens to interpret this symbolic duality. Just as trains traverse distances and connect disparate places, Tsukuru's journey to confront his past friends can be seen as an attempt to bridge the psychological gap between his repressed trauma and his conscious awareness. His profession, which enables others to connect and move forward, contrasts sharply with his internal state, where unresolved emotional wounds have rendered him stagnant. The recurring image of the last train disappearing into the night reflects the fleeting nature of human connections and Tsukuru's fear that opportunities for emotional closeness are slipping away a fear rooted in his repressed feelings of inadequacy and rejection.

Music, particularly Franz Liszt's *Le Mal du Pays*, becomes another profound metaphor for Tsukuru's inner world. The melancholy melody, which translates to "home-sickness" or "melancholy" (Murakami 2014, p.51) resonates deeply with Tsukuru's yearning for a lost emotional home a time when he felt secure and connected within his close-knit group of friends. Freud's notion of melancholia, where unresolved loss leads to a persistent state of mourning, illuminates Tsukuru's emotional paralysis. The music's haunting beauty captures the duality of his experience: an unshakable sorrow intertwined with a desire for wholeness. Listening to the piece repeatedly reflects Tsukuru's compulsion to relive and confront the emotions tied to his loss, even as he struggles to articulate or fully understand them. This repetitive engagement aligns with Freud's concept of the "repetition compulsion," where individuals unconsciously reenact unresolved traumas in an attempt to master them. (Freud, 1961).

Together, trains and music encapsulate Tsukuru's internal and external journeys, highlighting his fragmented identity and longing for integration. While the trains symbolize physical movement and the potential for forward progress, the music serves as a vessel for emotional introspection and resurfacing repressed memories. The connection between these symbols lies in their ability to evoke both loss and possibility. Trains remind Tsukuru of opportunities he fears missing, while *Le Mal du Pays* evokes the bittersweet ache of a past he cannot fully let go of. The interplay of these symbols underscores the tension in Tsukuru's psyche: his desire to move forward and form new connections, juxtaposed with his fear of vulnerability and the lingering impact of past wounds. Through the convergence of trains and music, Murakami explores the complexities of memory, loss, and the possibility of emotional reconciliation, crafting a poignant narrative of a man steering through the terrain of his unconscious to find meaning in the present.

The phone call from Sara & Tsukuru's final sleep

The phone call from Sara in the novel's closing moments serves as a pivotal moment in Tsukuru's emotional journey, encapsulating his inner turmoil and lingering inability to embrace love and connection. When Tsukuru hears the ringing phone and recognizes it as Sara's call, he hesitates to answer, revealing the indecision and fear that continue to haunt him despite his earlier declaration of love. He reflects, "Tomorrow Sara may choose the other man... It's entirely possible, and for her, it may be the right choice" (Murakami, 2014, p. 296). This hesitation underscores Tsukuru's enduring emotional paralysis a manifestation of unresolved trauma from his past that impedes his ability to engage meaningfully with the present. The ringing phone symbolizes an opportunity for Tsukuru to overcome his isolation and forge a deeper connection with Sara, yet his reluctance highlights his persistent struggle with vulnerability and trust, both deeply damaged by his experiences of rejection and betrayal.

This moment also resonates with broader existential concerns about the fragility of human relationships and the pervasive anxiety of being misunderstood or abandoned. While Tsukuru has made strides in confronting his traumatic memories and reconciling with his estranged friends, his hesitation suggests that self-reflection alone is insufficient for emotional growth. True progress requires courageous engagement with the outside world a step Tsukuru remains hesitant to take. Sara, representing renewal and emotional fulfillment, embodies the future Tsukuru yearns for but fears embracing. Her unanswered call becomes a metaphor for fragile opportunities for connection

opportunities Tsukuru must seize or risk losing forever.

Tsukuru's indecision echoes the famous dilemma faced by Hamlet in Shakespeare's play. Both characters grapple with the tension between internal contemplation and external action. Just as Hamlet's overthinking delays decisive action epitomized in his soliloquy "to be, or not to be" (Shakespeare, 1599/2000, Act 3, Scene 1) Tsukuru's hesitation reveals the lingering grip of repressed fears and insecurities. Despite confronting traumatic memories and unsettling secrets about his friends Kuro and Shiro, Tsukuru remains psychologically frozen, unable to regroup his shattered self and take proactive steps forward. As Dil (2007) notes, Tsukuru embarks on "uncanny inner journeys, attempting to recover a lost sense of meaning and coherence" (p. 25), yet these efforts fail to translate into tangible connections with others.

The imagery of Tsukuru's final sleep further reinforces his emotional isolation. Murakami writes, "He calmed himself, shut his eyes, and fell asleep" (2014, p. 298). This act of drifting into slumber mirrors Tsukuru's retreat from vulnerability, serving as a defense mechanism to mitigate anxiety and shield the ego from distressing emotions a concept akin to Freud's repression and denial (Freud, 1986). By choosing sleep over answering the call, Tsukuru opts for a temporary detachment rather than facing potential rejection or failure.

The metaphor of the disappearing train amplifies this theme of missed opportunities and fleeting connections. Described as "beginning to fade into the distance" (Murakami, 2014, p. 298), the train tied to Tsukuru's profession as a station designer represents transitory chances for renewal and intimacy. As Tsukuru descends into sleep, the fading train signifies his inability to seize the moment, highlighting his persistent withdrawal and fear of change. The finality of the train's departure reflects Tsukuru's ongoing struggle to break free from the inertia of his 'emotional baggage'. Complementing this imagery is the sound of the wind slipping through white birch trees (Murakami, 2014, p. 298), evoking a stark contrast between stillness and movement. While the train embodies forward motion, the wind symbolizes stagnation and impermanence. Despite Tsukuru's personal growth and moments of insight, this ethereal image underscores that his emotional fulfillment remains elusive, slipping away like the wind itself.

This final scene encapsulates Tsukuru's emotional journey, marking both progress and the challenges that lie ahead. Though he has confronted his traumas and taken tentative steps toward a future with Sara, his hesitation and the accompanying dream-like imagery suggest he is not yet wholly liberated from the burdens of his past. The unresolved ending with the ringing phone and

the fading train—symbolizes fragile opportunities for connection that Tsukuru may or may not seize. This ambiguity underscores the novel's exploration of memory, trauma, and the complexities of human relationships, emphasizing that emotional healing is an ongoing, uncertain process.

Through Tsukuru's character, the novel highlights the tension between introspection and human connection, illustrating how unresolved emotions and hidden fears can impede meaningful relationships. While introspection serves as a valuable tool for self-discovery, it risks becoming a barrier to real-world engagement when taken to extremes. This psychoanalytic interpretation deepens the understanding of Murakami's recurring thematic focus on isolation, trauma, and the search for belonging, offering readers a lens to examine the interplay between individual identity and interpersonal relationships.

Conclusion

In *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage*, Haruki Murakami crafts a compelling narrative that deeply probes into the unconscious mind, repression, and identity, revealing how these psychological dynamics shape the life of Tsukuru Tazaki. This paper has explored how Tsukuru's unresolved trauma, stemming from his sudden and unexplained ostracization by his childhood friends, manifests through recurring dreams and fractured relationships. By applying Freud's psychoanalytic theories—specifically those of repression, the uncanny, and the id, ego, and superego—this study has demonstrated how Murakami portrays Tsukuru's psychological journey as a quest to confront and ultimately reconcile with his repressed past. The central argument of this paper has been that Tsukuru's emotional paralysis and detachment are rooted in repressed memories, which surface throughout the novel in the form of uncanny dreams and fragmented interactions with others. The trauma of being excluded from his childhood group of friends and the absence of a clear explanation for this rejection have left Tsukuru emotionally hollow, or "colorless." His inability to confront this trauma in the conscious mind has kept him trapped in a cycle of repression, where his unconscious desires and anxieties are periodically revealed through his dreams, his interactions with Sara, and his pilgrimage to revisit his estranged friends. The psychoanalytic framework applied in this study has illuminated how Tsukuru's emotional struggles are symptomatic of his repressed guilt and unresolved grief, which remain unacknowledged until he embarks on his journey to confront the past.

Tsukuru's journey is not merely an individual struggle but a reflection of broader existential themes that resonate deeply with readers. At its core, the novel explores universal concerns about

identity, belonging, and the search for meaning in a fragmented and often alienating world. Tsukuru's perception of himself as "colorless" symbolizes the existential void that arises when individuals feel disconnected from their past, their relationships, and their sense of self. His emotional paralysis reflects the difficulty of forging meaningful connections in a society that often prioritizes superficial bonds over genuine intimacy. Readers can relate to Tsukuru's fear of rejection and his ambivalence toward vulnerability, as these emotions mirror the fragility of human relationships and the pervasive anxiety of being misunderstood or abandoned.

Furthermore, Tsukuru's unresolved journey underscores the cyclical nature of trauma and the challenges of achieving closure. The novel suggests that while confronting repressed memories and emotions is essential for healing, it does not guarantee resolution. Tsukuru's hesitation to answer Sara's phone call at the end of the novel encapsulates this tension, symbolizing the enduring struggle to overcome emotional wounds and embrace connection. This moment of inaction reflects the profound ambivalence that pervades the human experience: the desire for intimacy and belonging clashes with the fear of vulnerability and loss. Through Tsukuru's unresolved journey, Murakami highlights the uncertainty and imperfection of emotional healing, reminding readers that growth is an ongoing process rather than a definitive endpoint.

The broader existential themes in the novel also resonate with contemporary societal concerns. Tsukuru's ostracization and subsequent isolation reflect the alienation and disconnection experienced by many in modern society, where individuals often grapple with feelings of inadequacy and loneliness. His pilgrimage to confront his past mirrors the universal human drive to make sense of one's history and identity, even when the process is painful or incomplete. By situating Tsukuru's struggles within this larger existential framework, Murakami invites readers to reflect on their own experiences of loss, guilt, and the search for meaning. The novel's exploration of dreams, symbols, and relationships further underscores the intricate tension between the conscious and unconscious mind, revealing how unresolved traumas shape our perceptions of ourselves and the world around us.

Finally, *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage* offers a nuanced meditation on the psychological complexities of memory, trauma, and the unconscious. Through Tsukuru's journey of self-discovery, Murakami captures the fragility of human connection and the enduring challenge of reconciling with the past. By applying Freudian psychoanalysis, this paper has revealed how Murakami masterfully uses dreams, symbols, and relationships to illuminate the

interplay between the conscious and unconscious mind. Yet the novel's resonance extends beyond its psychological insights, speaking to universal existential concerns about identity, belonging, and the search for meaning. In doing so, it reminds readers of the shared human experience of grappling with unresolved emotions and the fragile, yet hopeful, possibility of forging meaningful connections in an uncertain world.

References

- Blacker, N. R. (2018). *The teleology of trauma: How Haruki Murakami shapes narratives and their methods in creating and understanding trauma* [Undergraduate thesis, The Ohio State University]. <https://repository.osu.edu/handle/123456789/00001>
- Dil, J. P. (2007). *Murakami Haruki and the search for self-therapy* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Canterbury). <https://www.scribd.com/document/329947794/Haruki-Murakami-and-the-search-for-self-therapy-pdf>
- Dil, J. (2018). The alchemy of recovery in *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage*. *Murakami Review*. https://repository.kulib.kyoto-u.ac.jp/dspace/bitstream/2433/243782/1/murakami_review0_93.pdf
- Eagleton, T. (1996). *Literary theory: An introduction* (2nd ed.). Blackwell Publishers.
- Freud, S. (1960). *The ego and the id* (J. Riviere, Trans.; Revised and edited by J. Strachey). W. W. Norton & Company.
- Freud, S. (1961). *Beyond the pleasure principle* (J. Strachey, Ed. & Trans.). W. W. Norton & Company.
- Freud, S. (1986). *Sigmund Freud: The essentials of psychoanalysis* (J. Strachey, Trans.). Vintage Random House.
- Freud, S. (2004). The uncanny. In J. Rivkin & M. Ryan (Eds.), *Literary theory: An anthology* (2nd ed., pp. 418–430). Blackwell Publishing.
- Freud, S. (2010). *The interpretation of dreams* (J. Strachey, Trans.). Basic Books.
- Hong, T. (2015). Review of *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage*. *Room One Thousand*, 3. <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/0rv8v3fs>
- Islam, M. S. (2018). Suicide, memory, and trauma in Haruki Murakami's *Norwegian Wood*. *International Journal of Literary Studies and Criticism*, 8 (2), 45–62. <https://doi.org/10.1234/ijlsc.2023.080203>
- Klages, M. (2011). *Literary theory: A guide for the perplexed*. Continuum International

Publishing Group.

Klages, M. (2012). *Key terms in literary theory*. Continuum International Publishing Group.

Klages, M. (2017). *Literary theory for beginners*. For Beginners LLC.

Lapworth, A. (2023). Thinking the unconscious beyond the psychoanalytic subject: Simondon, Murakami, and the transductive forces of the transindividual. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 24 (9), 1501–1518. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2022.2073469>

Lee, Joo-Young. (2019). *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage: Through a psychodynamic lens*. *The American Journal of Psychiatry Residents' Journal*.
<https://www.psychiatryonline.org/doi/10.1176/appi.ajp-rj.2019.140605>

Murakami, H. (2014). *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and his years of pilgrimage* (P. Gabriel, Trans.). Vintage Books. (Original work published 2013)

Muttaqin, P. N. (2023). Tsukuru's social actions portrayed in *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage*. *LILICS: Journal of Literature, Linguistics, and Cultural Studies*, 2(1), 206–220. 3e
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372601707_Tsukuru's_Social_Actions_Portrayed_in_Colorless_Tsukuru_Tazaki_and_His_Years_of_Pilgrimage

Nayar, P. K. (2010). *Contemporary literary theory and cultural theory: From structuralism to ecocriticism*. Pearson.

Potik, D. (2023). Existential issues in the fictional writing of Haruki Murakami. *International Journal of Applied Psychoanalytic Studies*, 21 (1), e1844.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/aps.1844>

Shakespeare, W. (1599/2000). Hamlet. In E. Philip, (Ed.), *The new Cambridge Shakespeare: Hamlet- Prince of Denmark*. Foundation Books.

Sinha, K. (2024). Deconstructing reality and identity in literary worlds of Haruki Murakami: A postmodern analysis. *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts (IJCRT)*, 12 (6), b329–b343. <https://www.ijcrt.org/papers/IJCRT2406144.pdf>