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EXISTENTIAL QUESTIONS RAISED IN HARUKO MURAKAMI'S NOVEL "NORWEGIAN WOOD"

ANNOTATION

The article is dedicated to the philosophical analysis of artistic features of Haruko Murakami's novel "Norwegian Wood". Philosophical tendencies first appeared in contemporary European literature because of several factors including the terrors of the two World Wars, and emerging of atomic bombs and their explosion in Japanese cities Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The main philosophical movement that appeared in the post-war period was Existentialism that challenged the theory of Essentialism invented by Greek philosophers. The founder of Existentialism is claimed to be French philosopher and writer, Jean Paul Sartre. A lot of modern writers were influenced by Existentialism, and started to imply this philosophy into their works of fiction. The aim of this article is to analyze the novel "Norwegian Wood" from the Existentialism point of view. In our research we used philosophical approach, historical-cultural, empirical and comparative methods. Also, we implied the theories established by famous thinkers and writers including, Jean Paul Sartre, Martin Heidegger, Albert Camus, and Iris Murdoch.

Haruko Murakami (1949) is a Japanese well known writer, the author of fifteen novels, whose works became bestsellers around the world. One of his books that brought him fame was "Norwegian Wood" published in 1987. In this novel the author

HARUKO MURAKAMINING "NORVEGIYA O'RMONI" ROMANIDA KO'TARILGAN EKZISTENSIAL SAVOLLAR

ANNOTATSIYA

Maqola Haruko Murakamining "Norvegiya o'rmoni" romanining badiiy xususiyatlarini falsafiy nuqtayi nazardan tahlil qilishga bag'ishlangan. Falsafiy tendensiyalar birinchi marotaba zamonaviy Yevropa adabiyotida bir qancha omillar, shu jumladan, ikki jahon urushining dahshatlari, atom bombasining yaratilishi hamda uning Yaponiyaning Xirosima va Nagasaki shaharlarida portlashi oqibatida paydo bo'ldi. Urushdan keyingi davrda yaratilgan falsafiy harakat yunon faylasuflari tomonidan asos solingan essensializm nazariyasiga qarshi chiqqan ekzistensializm nazariyasi edi. Ekzistensializm oqimining vakillaridan biri fransuz faylasufi va yozuvchisi Jan Pol Sartr hisoblanadi. Ko'pgina zamonaviy yozuvchilar ekzistensializm ta'sirida badiiy asarlar yarata boshladilar. Ushbu maqolaning maqsadi "Norvegiya o'rmoni" romanini ekzistensializm nuqtai nazardan tahlil qilishdir. Tadqiqotda falsafiy yondashuv, tarixiy-madaniy, empirik va qiyosiy usullardan tashqari mashhur mutafakkir va yozuvchilar, jumladan, Jan Pol Sartr, Martin Xaydegger, Albert Kamyu va Ayris Myordok tomonidan o'rnatilgan nazariyalardan foydalanildi.

Haruko Murakami yaponiyalik taniqli yozuvchi, o'n besh roman muallifi bo'lib, uning asarlari butun dunyo bo'ylab bestsellerga

mostly considers the motives of death and life, and the theme of suicide taken as a priority, and the main problem raised in the novel portraying the young generation of the late XX century in Japan. We tried to investigate existential problems outlined in the novel. As the research results, we detected some existential notions like absurdity, alienation, isolation and free choice, presented by the author with the help of artistic narrating and language. Haruko Murakami in his novel "Norwegian Wood" highlights the meaningless of the life, and challenges his main characters face going through harsh free choices.

The conclusion of the research includes several findings. Firstly, the novel clearly contains some philosophical views about life and death. Murakami points out Existential problems which are the main theme in our research object. Also, the author with artistic interpretation gives a proper solution to existential crisis. In his views given in the novel, we found many similarities with European writers' philosophically coated works.

Key words: novel, existentialism, absurd, alienation, isolation, free choice, suicide, morality, love.

INTRODUCTION

Philosophical tendencies in literature appeared because of several factors including two World Wars, Cold War, explosion of the atomic bombs in Japanese cities, which affected many people having doubts about virtues in human beings, collapsing the beliefs in religion and traditional values and lead art and literature to modernism. Haruko Murakami can be called the modern writer in his full spirit, and he clearly touches Existential problems in his novel "Norwegian Wood" that people mostly face in the postwar-period in Japan. Existentialism claimed to be the philosophical trend that appeared after the Second World War in the late XX century. Its roots go to the German origins, to Martin Heidegger's theories of phenomenology. Several French writers and thinkers were influenced by him, especially Jean Paul Sartre who reconstructed the philosophy of ancient Greek thinkers such as Socrates and Aristotle, and their essentialism which proclaimed the human beings were born with certain core properties. On the contrary, according to Jean Paul Sartre people first exist, and then they themselves shape their identity. His new claim was called Existentialism and it influenced the great quantity of writers of the following generation.

Haruko Murakami was born in 1949, Kyoto, Japan. He is a Japanese prominent

aylangan. Unga shuhrat keltirgan kitoblaridan biri 1987-yilda nashr etilgan "Norvegiya o'rmoni"dir. Ushbu romanda muallif o'lim va hayot motivlarini, o'z joniga qasd qilish mavzusini XX asr oxiri Yaponiya yosh avlodi tasviri asosida asosiy muammo qilib yoritadi. Biz romanda muhokama qilingan ekzistensial muammolarni o'rganishga harakat qildik. Tadqiqot natijalari sifatida muallif tomonidan badiiy talqin va lisoniy jihatdan tadqiq qilingan ba'zi ekzistensial tushunchalar, jumladan, absurdlik, begonalashish, izolyatsiya va erkin tanlov kabilarni aniqladik. Haruko Murakami "Norvegiya o'rmoni" romani qahramonlarini erkin tanlovlardan o'tishga olib boradi.

Tadqiqotxulosasiga quyidagitadqiqotnatijalari kiritildi. Birinchidan, romanda hayot va o'lim haqidagi falsafiy munozaralar aniq ko'rsatilgan. Murakami bizning tadqiqot obyektimizning asosiy mavzusi sifatida ekzistensial muammolarni ta'kidlaydi. Shuningdek, badiiy talqin bilan muallif ekzistensial inqirozga to'g'ri yechim beradi. Uning romanda berilgan qarashlarida biz Yevropa yozuvchilarining falsafiy yondashuvi aks etgan asarlari bilan ko'p o'xshashliklarni topdik. Romanda ba'zi falsafiy munozaralar aniq ko'rsatilgan.

Kalit so'zlar: roman, ekzistensializm, absurd, begonalashish, izolyatsiya, erkin tanlov, axloq, sevgi.

writer of post-modernism. His books became bestsellers not only in Japan, but also becoming famous around the world. The author till today published fifteen novels. Among them the best known are “A Wild Sheep Chase” (1982), “Hear the Wind Sing” and “Pinball” (1973), “Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World” (1985) written in the genre of fantasy, “Dance Dance Dance” (1988), and several novels with dystopian elements such as “The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle” (1994–95), “Kafka on the Shore” (2002), “1Q84” (2009), which title refers to “Nineteen Eighty-four” (1949) by George Orwell. Haruko Murakami touches several themes in his fictional works, and his writing style changes in the course of time. In his novels we sense magical realism, ambiguity and mostly domination of modern style of narrating, and Existential themes are not exceptions. His novel “Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage” (2013), is about the existential quest of a young man who becomes separated from his surrounding people. Another novel “Killing Commendatore” published in 2017 raises the themes of isolation, alienation, and art. In our research we analyzed his well-known work “Norwegian Wood” (1987), the novel which brought the author pretty deserving fame. We analyzed the novel using a philosophical approach, implying the theories put by above mentioned philosophers-writers such as Jean Paul Sartre, Soren Kierkegaard, Albert Camus and others. To investigate our research, we will imply historical-cultural, empirical comparative methods. The main motives of the novel are *death*, *suicide* and *life*.

MAIN PART

The book begins using flashback to delve into the memories of Toru Watanabe, the main character, when he was an eighteen years old student. The title of the novel “Norwegian Wood” is an allusion to music created and sung by popular pop music band Beatles. This song forces Toru Watanabe to remember all his experiences with teen-mates and beloved girls, the history that has passed like an illusion and mirage. The evidence takes place in the 1970s, when Toru attends Tokyo's Waseda University. We can describe him as a person who aimlessly wanders in life, who hasn't yet found what the meaning of his existence is. His disregarded attitude towards the students' revolution (parallel to the real student revolts in Tokyo in late 1960s) in Waseda University proves his indifference to what is happening around him in the society. On the contrary he is mostly busy with individualities surrounding him, with his more spiritual state. His aimlessness and isolation may be linked with his lost friend Kizuki, who has committed suicide at the age of seventeen. Toru was the last person whom Kizuki spoke before killing himself. Nevertheless, everything seems to Toru fading away till he meets Naoko, Kizuki's beloved girl, who reincarnates all suffers of lost. Toru starts to date with Naoko, spends much of his time talking to her, and finally finds out that she has become mentally disbalanced after Kizuki's death. In the novel, Naoko is the key character for Existential quest. She is mostly influenced by the death of her lover, as a result understanding the absurdity of the life. Prominent English writer and philosopher, Iris Murdoch says that near-death experiences can provide awareness of Truth. Acknowledging the death entails accepting the fate and the meaninglessness

of one's existence; everything that pulls a person away from himself/herself brings him/her closer to Reality and Truth [Antonaccio, 2007]. From existential point of view Kizuki's death awakes the main heroes of the novel including Toru and more influencing Naoko spiritually. They have become aware that death is not a contrast to life, but indeed a part of the life that is inevitable. Toru and Naoko experience the existential state of alienation and absurdity. It is said that the universe isn't created for a purpose, and it doesn't function for a reason, which is referred to as absurd in formal terms. The term alienation has been established by Heidegger, and sometimes it is rendered as *uncanny*. The word *heim*, which means *home* in German, refers to situations in which we are not at ease in society. Jean Paul Sartre put in dispute the form of alienation in his book of analysis "The Look" [Sartre, 1992; 58]. So long as the individual participates in an activity without thinking about it, he/she is nothing more than the first-person's viewpoint that defines something as having a distinct significance in the context of what he/she is doing. A person is immersed in the world and he/she does not comprehend his/her behavior in any third-person explanation, as an example of a social activity. In the novel, comparing to Naoko, Toru seems more stable, because he has many acquaintances like Nagasawa and Midori who remind him about the real life. Only once, after Naoko's death Toru falls into desperation, seeing hallucination of Naoko calling him, forcing him to commit suicide, however he has been rescued by Reiko and Midori's support. Famous French writer Albert Camus in his essay "The Myth of Sisyphus" says that there is only one serious philosophical question – question of suicide [Camus, 2022; 386]. As we mentioned above the motive suicide has a big role in the novel, and the question – *why do people commit a suicide?* might appear in readers' mind after finishing the novel. Albert Camus says that a lot of people commit suicide, after deciding that life is not worse to make any efforts to live. And this state mostly appears when people cannot find the meaning of life, or loose the meaning of life. In the novel, for Naoko, Kizuki was a very important part of her life, they were raised together, loved each other, however they had never slept together. Their intimacy was more spiritual, and Naoko might simply feel guilt for Kizuki's death, because she couldn't change his meaningless life. After his death Naoko experiences anxiety, which is another notion of existentialism, the anxiety of being alone, or as she remarks to falling into deep and dark abyss. "All I knew about the well was its frightening depth. It was deep beyond measuring, and crammed full of darkness, as if the entire world's darkness 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, 2001; 9]. Albert Camus suggests that committing suicide is like a confession that life suppressed you, or life is meaningless [Camus, 2022; 388]. Naoko in the novel tries to fill her life with the presence of Toru, but fails in the attempts to replace Kizuki. On the other hand, Toru strives to rescue Naoko from falling into abyss, but instead he himself is infected by Naoko's death, however being saved by Midori. The feeling of absurd appears when

we realize that life is only a theatre and decoration. The actions lead by people as committing suicide in the novel mostly happened not because they felt guilty, but because they comprehended absurdity and death.

In 1962, English writer Sid Chaplin published “The Watchers and the Watched”. The main idea is expressed in the epigraph, “We are all the watched or we are watchers. The only escape from our jailers is death” [Chaplin, 1989]. In “Norwegian Wood” we can divide the characters into the category of *watchers* and *watched*. For instance, Naoko is a *watched*, while Toru is a *watcher*, and the meaning of the statement is that every individual is responsible for his/her own actions, and no one can intrude into other’s life. As we see, Toru or Reiko couldn’t save Naoko, despite of their great effort, or Naoko couldn’t save Kizuki or her sister, despite of her love toward them. On the other hand, Toru can be *watched*, while Midori is a *watcher*, because Midori wants Toru be with her, but despite of her love or even Toru’s feelings toward her, she can’t make him to set loose Naoko. When an individual experiences anxiety, the theme of absurd appears in the first plan. A person can follow other people’s advices for making some serious decisions in his/her life, but from existential point of view no individual can interact with each other. The others are just humans like us, and a person should accept his/her freedom with the light of absurdity. However, in a state of fear, it is only the character, the one who vanishes from the scene. Since a person is no longer actively engaged, the sense that once occupied him/her as the density of its being, now looks as a mere name, as something he knows but no longer claims. Similar to the situation in which an individual stresses a statement until it loses its meaning, anxiety ruins the sense that objects are considered to have. They end up being absurd. Objects do not vanish, but all that exists is an empty awareness of their existence, an impression that tells a key scene in French existentialist, Sartre's novel “Nausea”. Existentialists refer to people who reject the absurdity of the life, and who just blindly search meaning from others as to be in bad faith.

We are protected from awakening and estrangement when we are obliged to socialize. Continuous monotony oftentimes leaves one dissatisfied with life. The question “why?” then appears, which indicates that the brain is beginning to function and is beginning to understand absurdity. This experience after some time leads to suicide, or restoring the balance in life [Camus, 2022; 396]. We can compare Naoko to Paulo Coelho’s heroine in his novel “Veronica Decides to Die” (1998) [Coelho, 2021]. Naoko and Veronica are much alike; both are confused, and cannot find their place in this life. Both heroines try to recover in the place for mentally disabled, Naoko in Ami Hostel, Veronica in Villette – mental hospital in Slovenia. In the end, Naoko commits suicide, while Veronica revives the harmony of her life. Both of the characters make their own life choices.

Existentialism declares that existence precedes essence, that we are responsible for our actions, for shaping our identity. This movement highlights free choices that are not bound with destiny, which means an individual freely can make a choice for his/her way of life without any boundaries. Sartre suggests that no one general or universal can answer what the human is, why does he/she exist, except individual

himself/herself, and through existence itself. Existentialism notes that through making choices, we create essence [Fackenheim, 1961]. “In Aristotelian sense there is no such thing as human nature, a person does not have an inbuilt set of values that they are inherently structured to pursue. Rather, the values that shape persons’ behavior result from the choices they have made” [Webber, 2018; 14]. Kizuki’s death leads the main characters to existential anxiety and absurd which also clarifies their authenticity and freedom pushing them into life choices and suicide. In existential experience Naoko lost herself between the past and the present. She couldn’t hide her past, at the same time she couldn’t adopt the present.

Naoko’s presence in Ami Hostel sanatorium can be the illustration of escapism from the real world. Naoko tries to hide from the bitter reality where she loses the dearest people and suffers a lot. The sanatorium is portrayed in dystopian sense, where everything just seems perfect and balanced. In the book, Naoko describes the place like this: “Far from it: it might be more accurate to say the place is on the empty side. It’s big and filled with nature and everybody lives quietly – so quietly you sometimes feel that this is the normal, real world, which, of course, it’s not. We can have it this way because we live here under certain preconditions” [Murakami, 2001; 104]. Dystopian world means the attempt of reaching Utopian life which goes wrong, as the recovering in the Ami Hostel is just an imagination. The Ami Hostel doesn’t help Naoko, but instead it makes her even more isolated, that eventually she kills herself. On the other hand, the second leading character, Reiko, is able to break the chains of illusion, and returns to real world accepting all its absurdity and hardships. Naoko also writes to Toru defining the real conditions of the Ami Hostel: “The one real problem with this place is that once you’re here you don’t want to leave – or you’re afraid to leave. As long as we’re here, we feel calm and peaceful. Our deformities seem natural. We think we’ve recovered. But we can never be sure that the outside world will accept us in the same way” [Murakami, 2001; 106]. In dystopian sense the sanatorium represents vacuous and hollow existence, while the real world is unbearable *inferno* for those who existentially awoken. And only escape for Naoko unintentionally became death.

Toru Watanabe is a more vivid character than Naoko. He lives in the parallel worlds of illusions and reality. For him Naoko represents illusion of happiness, someone who is enchanting and appealing, and someone like a princess who needs to be saved. Iris Murdoch suggests in her philosophical book “The Sovereignty of Good” that art has got a function to console human beings in their fantasies, especially for those who want to escape from harsh reality, at the same time people try to oppose it with more perfect reality [Murdoch, 1970; 352]. Naoko was far away from the reality, and Toru couldn’t drive her into the social life at all. Naoko has more egoistic nature than compassionate, and this is the main reason she ends up committing suicide, while Toru is able to love without his ego satisfaction. After Naoko’s death, he chooses to stay with Midori, rather than to escape from the life, even though he has a desire to being vanished from the life after Naoko’s death.

Midori and Naoko are totally opposite characters, the two polar creatures of the world. As we said Naoko represented illusions, on the contrary Midori – reality. Midori

is a very strong character, we need to mention that she also experiences existential loneliness, isolation, the death of her mother and father but still, she confronts the life's difficulties, continues to live in reality. It is clearly highlighted in the book that she personifies the reality: "Let me just tell you this, Watanabe," said Midori, pressing her cheek against my neck. "I'm a real, live girl, with real, live blood gushing through my veins" [Murakami, 2001; 315].

Somerset Maugham, a well-known English author, famously stated in his short story "Happy Man": "Each one of us is a prisoner in a solitary tower and he communicates with the other prisoners, who form mankind, by conventional signs that have not quite the same meaning for them as for himself" [Maugham, 2008]. Toru Watanabe understands his own solitude after Naoko's death. Except Naoko, all other characters including Toru, Midori, Reiko are Sisyphean tragic heroes. Sisyphus is the ancient Greek mythological hero, who is eternally punished by Greek Gods to roll up a boulder upon a hill. When the rock is on the top of the hill, it rolls down and Sisyphus starts his task again. Albert Camus allegorizes Sisyphus's myth implying it to the ordinary life. All of us are Sisyphus with our ant-like busy life, with its achievements and failures. Sisyphus represents absurdity in its full light, and if the person is aware of its absurdity, which means he/she has experienced existential awareness, he/she must make his/her own choices to accept the absurd life or to escape it, by committing suicide [Camus, 1955]. From existentialist point of view, each individual must make his/her own choice, following others is not a solution. Toru Watanabe overcomes this life choices, he is able to make more moral choice rather to kill himself. He is a modern Sisyphean hero, who also has a dilemma of living in a fairy tale like imaginary life with Naoko, or has to live in an absurd life with Midori. Naoko's death proves that life he has desired is only a mirage, the life with Midori is real. "Naoko was dead, and Midori was still here. Naoko was a mound of white ash, and Midori was a living, breathing human being" [Murakami, 2001; 303]. Toru's life choices also remark the strict line between morality and permissiveness in modern life of chaos. Toru has never slept with Midori which proves that he tries to protect her morally; his love toward her is free from his egocentric nature, from Freudian ID – the part of a human nature, the libido, and the animalistic desires of human being. Also, we want to mention, that Iris Murdoch in her work of philosophy claims that, – "Love is the perception of individuals. Love is the extremely difficult realization that something other than oneself is real. Love, and so art and morals, is the discovery of reality" [Murdoch, 1999; 215]. Thereby, both of the writers of two different continents point out to *love* which is free from ego satisfaction to be a solution to existential crisis. Being morally healthy or reaching this state is a solution of an existential problem. Iris Murdoch sees this solution in Platonic concept of Good. Murdoch suggests, that "the Good is like a light that enables us to see goodness in particular things" [Stephen, 1967; 93]. Murdoch also doesn't deny the absurdity of life, but says "We are simply here with no larger purpose or *telos*. But in the face of this purposelessness, being and becoming a morally good person through a suppression or transcendence of self is the best aspiration we can have" [Stephen, 1967; 79].

Toru's dilemma about the true love can be compared to other characters' existential struggles in prominent novels like "The Sandcastle" (1957) by Iris Murdoch regarding her Bill Mor [Murdoch, 1957], "The Unbearable Lightness of Being" (1984) by Milan Kundera and his Thomas [Milan, 2009], or John Fowles's "Ebony Tower" (1974) and the challenges of life the main hero David faces [Fowles, 1974]. Toru, Thomas, Bill and David are the same modern Sisyphean tragic heroes. From an existentialist perspective, everyone is accountable for own actions. Individuals become anxious knowing that they are ultimately responsible for their choices and attitude. They attempt to stop feeling anxious by refusing or dismissing their freedom. Existentialists criticize this fall into self-deception from a position of autonomy. They emphasize that people must take full responsibility for their actions, no matter how difficult it may be. If one wishes to live a reasonable and fulfilling life in a strange and absurd universe, one must first become completely conscious of the true essence of human existence and bravely embrace it. Murakami in one of his interviews says, – "When I was in my teens, in the 1960s, that was the age of idealism. We believed the world would get better if we tried. People today don't believe that, and I think that's very sad. People say my books are weird, but beyond the weirdness, there should be a better world. It's just that we have to experience the weirdness before we get to the better world. That's the fundamental structure of my stories: you have to go through the darkness, through the underground, before you get to the light" [Burkemen, 2018]. Hence, Murakami in "Norwegian Wood" tries to give explanation to absurd environment of his age. Albert Camus once cited "Should I kill myself, or have a cup of coffee". The life is full of choices, and there are too many people like Toru, Naoko or Midori. Haruko Murakami in this novel showed readers the perplexity of life with its own challenges, existential problems that merely each of us faced, the thin red line between life and death, and accepting the absurdity of life through existentialist vision with artistic approach.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Philosophical tendencies became one of the main literary inclinations in the XX century. The trends have recently born compared to a big amount of historical heritage in literature. The influence of these new tendencies is felt mostly in European countries, and partly in America. Nevertheless, nowadays we see the influence of these tendencies on the Eastern countries too. The writers of postmodernism, not fully adopting French existentialism, created their marvelous philosophical fictions. These writers were able to show their philosophical views to the world through literature; at the same time, they managed to keep fiction's aesthetic value. Hence, their works of fiction are interesting, vivid, memorable, and unpredictable. Their works reached fame around the world, and we felt duty-bound to investigate philosophical tendencies in Haruko Murakami's prominent novel "Norwegian Wood" and present it to the audience.

European writers of the XX century were obsessed with philosophical ideas including Existentialistic ones, and the question – *what is the meaning of life?* has become the main research problem for those Existentialist writers. The art, Murdoch

declares, embraces all concerns of human being, and the genre of a novel mostly argues about the meaning of life, the existence of the individual [Murdoch, 1959; 278]. Thus, philosophical inclination reached the status of a serious literature over documentary genre and popular for that age commercial literature. Russian scholar Valentina Ivasheva states that Existentialism mostly flourished in Western countries in the late 1940's having impact on the literature of the XX century, and many researches were done according to them [Ivasheva, 1978; 44]. Our research considers the Eastern postmodern writer whose particular work of fiction contains Existential thoughts. Haruko Murakami's work "Norwegian Wood" is a postmodern novel, because as a key feature of modernism we see the rejection of traditional and religious values in the novel, hence the author never touches these themes or gives them as a solution to the moral problems that the main characters face. Instead, the author gives existential explanation to the problems that young Japanese generation strives to overcome. Haruko Murakami emphasized individuality of each character in the novel, mostly portraying their inner feelings, emotions, their moral breakdowns and the way the characters retreated into solitude with their existential problems. The author in his work showed the life in absurdity, and some of the characters of the novel could accept it, some of them not. In the research we found many similarities between the philosophical views presented in the novel and the concept *absurd* given by Albert Camus.

CONCLUSION

As a conclusion we declare, that "Norwegian Wood" is a philosophically coated novel written by Haruko Murakami, and can be interpreted from Existentialistic point of view. Existentialism is a philosophical movement emerged in Germany, from the phenomenology by Heidegger, later influencing French and English writers. In the late of the XX century, precisely in 1987 the novel "Norwegian Wood" was published and introduced to Japan, the country which experienced the terror of atomic bombs. The author portrayed the generation free from religious or military tractates, from traditional responsibilities and family values. The generation, which struggles to find its own place in the society, which is depressed by chaotic life, and which tries to survive. Tragic fate of the characters is portrayed with the great artistic professionalism that leaves readers with the feelings of agony, sadness and compassion.

The author chose in the novel the theme of suicide as the main existential problem. We found many similarities in Murakami's attitude with Albert Camus' philosophical thoughts. The notion of *absurd* and the meaningless of the life is raised in the novel as the main priority. Murakami gives the solution to the existential problem with the character Midori. Midori's love toward Toru, as well as Toru's feelings toward Midori saved the main hero from escaping from the absurd life, from killing himself. The novel can be interpreted from aesthetic and philosophical perspectives because it provides answers to a number of existential issues, according to the research finding.

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