

## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS

This chapter presents the analysis of self-esteem of the Japanese youth in 1960s based on the characters in *Norwegian Wood* novel.

#### 4.1 Psychological States of Characters in *Norwegian Wood*

Published in 1987, Haruki Murakami's fifth novel, *Norwegian Wood* has received international recognition and marks as Murakami's most notable works. Taken the setting in late 1960s Japan, *Norwegian Wood* tells a story about complicated youth life of main character Toru as he struggles with college life and his romantic relationship with his late friend's girlfriend. The characters in this novel each represent their ways of coping with life pressures. The characters in this novel are; Toru Watanabe, the narrator; Naoko, Toru's 'complicated' lover and the ex-girlfriend of the late Kizuki; Midori Kobayashi, Toru's enthusiastic classmate; Reiko Ishida, Naoko's roommate in sanatorium; Nagasawa, Toru's friend in dorm; and Hatsumi, Nagasawa's devoted girlfriend. The story is told from the first person perspective, Toru. The analysis of this novel are done based on the research question in the first chapter and described based on the analysis in the first table (Table Analysis of Freudian Major Core Issues in *Norwegian Wood*). This section will discuss the analysis of psychological states of each character written as follows:

#### 4.1.1 Toru Watanabe

Toru is the main character and the narrator in the story. In his third year of high school, he lost his only friend, Kizuki, to suicide. The event leave a psychological pain to Toru because Kizuki gives no indication that he would commit suicide. Moreover, Toru cannot bear the fact that he was the last person who saw Kizuki alive. To Toru, Kizuki is a great talker which fascinated Toru because Kizuki could maintain their little circle friendship, including Naoko, Kizuki's girlfriend. Thus, it is very unexpected to Toru that a good boy like Kizuki would end his life that way.

Toru's most apparent personality is his introverted nature. Toru spent most of his time being alone. Toru's introverted personality represents his **low self-esteem**, the negative self-concept someone has about oneself. Toru's introverted personality is apparent in his addiction to books. He prefers to read books rather than getting involve in society, as he narrate:

I read a lot, I like to read my favorites again and again ... I didn't have much to say to anybody but kept to myself and my books. With my eyes closed, I would touch a familiar book and draw its fragrance deep inside me. This was enough to make me happy. (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.3, p.40)

In his narration, Toru expresses his enjoyment of reading his favorite books again and again. At one time, Toru admitted that he had read *Great Gatsby* three times. He assumed that no one around him has the same preference in books or writers as him which is why he does not talk to others. Toru also said

that convinced people to read F. Scott Fitzgerald or tell people that *Great Gatsby* is a wonderful book can be considered as a reactionary act in 1968.

According to James et al., (2011), 1968 is the time when traditional Japanese values and concepts of identity collide with the transitory connections and sexual freedoms offered by the West (p.129). Despite of the great reception of the Western influences in Japan, 1960s was the time when university students are demonstrating against many issues including the policy regarding the United States and Vietnam War. As Nakamura (2002) wrote, Japanese in 1960 showed a most ambivalent attitude toward America. While there were those who were totally engrossed in the Westerns, there grew a strong wave of anti-Americanism (p.218).

Contrary to what people expect, Toru does not have any ambition to become a writer, even though he loves reading books – “The others in the dorm thought I wanted to be a writer because I was always alone with a book, but I had no such ambition. There was nothing I wanted to be.” (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.3, p.39). He does not have passion and dreams to accomplish. Lack of passion and ambition indicating low self-esteem, because he does not have the confidence and trust in himself to become someone he wanted to be. Individual with low self-esteem tend to feel inadequate and always doubt their capability.

Toru’s low self-esteem also can be seen in his inferior belief about himself. He describes himself as an “ordinary kid who liked to read books and listen to music and didn't stand out in any way” (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.2, p.30), and “a person with

no distinctive qualities” (ch.3, p.43). He even questioning why Kizuki and Nagasawa chose him as their friend. He even ponders what do others want from him. This attitude of uncertainty regarding the self indicates that he has low self-esteem.

The last sign of Toru’s low self-esteem is his lonely feeling when he was surrounded by a lot of people. Individual with low self-esteem may feel lonely and alienated from others (Sowislo & Orth, 2013, p.216). Toru’s alienated feeling can be seen in his narration;

In his or her own way, everyone I saw before me looked happy. They did look happy on this pleasant early afternoon in late September, and because of that I felt a kind of loneliness new to me, as if I were the only one here who was not truly part of the scene. (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.4, p.107).

According to the five psychosocial statuses, Toru represents identity diffusion. Diffuse individuals show low levels of autonomy, self-esteem and identity. It represents a kind of apathy in which the youth lacks any kind of passion or commitment. Diffusions are most likely to have difficulties in adapting to a university environment. They either have established no close relationships, or tend to have relationships focused on very superficial issues (Kroger, 2000, p. 213).

Toru’s low self-esteem might lead him to develop fear of intimacy. Toru feels he lack any likeable traits to survive within society, because individual with low self-esteem is often had negative beliefs about the self. Toru’s negative beliefs of himself make him creating emotional distances with others “in the hope that they won’t find out that he is unworthy of them” (Tyson, 2006, p.17).

Another psychological states undergone by Toru is fear of intimacy, the fear of emotional closeness to others in order to avoid being hurt or destroyed. Toru's **fear of intimacy** can be seen in his relationship with others. The first indication of his fear of intimacy is his escape from his hometown in Kobe. After finishing his high school, he decided to continue his study in a private university in Tokyo. The reason why he chose Tokyo is because he wanted to get away from his hometown and the people he knew – "I had to get away from Kobe at any cost. I wanted to begin a new life where I didn't know a soul." (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.2, p.33). Toru's running away from his hometown is the first symptom of his fear of intimacy with others.

Toru is not only running away from hometown but he also refrain to come home in any occasion. Toru prefer to stay in Tokyo while in break rather than going back home to Kobe. Moreover, Toru even says that he does not have anyone to see or anything fun to do in Kobe – "I didn't have anything especially fun to do in Kobe or anyone I wanted to see." (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.3, p.48). Tyson (2006) wrote that keeping oneself too busy to spend much time with family and friends is the way we can maintain an emotional distance without admitting to ourselves what we are doing (p.16).

When Toru received an invitation letter to a high school reunion, he end up throwing the invitation to the trash bin. Toru does not want to involve with the people he knew from school because it will remind him of his memory with Kizuki.

A class reunion was the last thing I wanted to have anything to do with. That was the class I had been in with Kizuki. I threw the thing into the trash. (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.10, p.323).

Toru's throwing the letter might suggest that he want to throw away or forget the memory he has with Kizuki. He rather avoiding any activity relating to his past in order to suppress his memory of Kizuki.

Toru's fear of intimacy is also apparent in his tendency to enjoy things alone – “I enjoyed living alone.” (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.4, p.67). His hobby to do everything alone also can be seen in his conversation with Midori;

“Do you always travel alone like that?”  
 “Uh-huh.”  
 “You enjoy solitude?” “Travelling alone, eating alone, sitting off by yourself in lecture halls ...” (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.4, p.70).

This attitude of enjoying loneliness suggests that he has fear of involvement with others. As the writer wrote earlier, Toru's fear of intimacy is originated from his low self-esteem. However, his fear of intimacy resulting in him becoming more introverted and lack of social involvement;

All I managed to do was to isolate myself more than ever from my classmates. By remaining silent when my name was called, I made everyone uncomfortable for a few seconds. None of the other students spoke to me, and I spoke to none of them. (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.4, p.65).

Fear of intimacy referred to the fear of intimate relationship with another human being. In the story, Toru often wonders if he really can love anybody. He even admits that he never been in love.

“—I don't know, sometimes I think I've got this hard kernel in my heart, and nothing much can get inside it. I doubt if I can really love anybody.” “Have you ever been in love?” Naoko asked. “Never,” I said. (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.3, p.38)

Fear of intimacy can act as a defense to avoid close interpersonal relationship, especially romantic relationship, because “it keeps us at an emotional distance in relationships most likely to bring our psychological wounds to the surface.” (Tyson, 2006, p.16), by protecting ourselves from intimate relationship with others.

Kizuki's death gives a deep psychological wound in both Toru and Naoko. After the death of Kizuki, Toru feels the presence of death everywhere. The other psychological states suffered by Toru is fear of abandonment, the belief that we will eventually being abandoned by the people around us which usually originated from earlier experience of loss. Toru's **fear of abandonment** can be seen in his thoughts about death. Toru even distancing himself from death and make a clear statement that he is on the life “side” not on the death “side”.

Until that time, I had understood death as something entirely separate from and independent of life. The hand of death is bound to take us, I had felt, but until the day it reaches out for us, it leaves us alone. Life is here, death is over there. I am here, not over there. (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.2, p.33).

Fear of abandonment is related with fear of death, because death is the ultimate abandonment; no matter how close we are to our loved ones, no matter how important we are in our community, when we die we die alone (Tyson, 2006, p.22). The overwhelming feeling of loss is often a feeling of abandonment. Tyson wrote

that fear of abandonment plays a role when we fear the death of others, and thus is responsible for fear of intimacy (p.23).

Toru's fear of abandonment is apparent in his refusal of making friends because he believe sooner or later he will be disappointed. Thus, Toru's fear of abandonment is responsible for his fear of intimacy. The feeling he develop from the wound of getting abandoned make him distancing himself from others because he does not want to be abandoned again.

“Nobody likes being alone that much. I don't go out of my way to make friends, that's all. It just leads to disappointment.” (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.4, p.71).

As the result, it can be concluded that Toru's core issues are low self-esteem generated from his fear of intimacy and fear of abandonment as well. Tyson (2006) wrote that “a given core issue can result from another core issue or can cause the emergence of another core issue” (p.17). These core issues might act as defenses and would make the individual removed and isolated. Toru's fear of intimacy is his defense against his past psychological wounds of being abandoned and getting disappointed by Kizuki's death. By not permitting ourselves to get too close to significant others, we “protect” ourselves from the painful past experiences that intimate relationships inevitably dredge up (Tyson, 2006, p.16). Toru's fear of intimacy encourage him to develop fear of abandonment because he believe that intimate involvement with other human beings would only “leads to disappointment”. Eventually, Toru's psychological states resulted in low self-esteem as he does not socialize and becoming more introverted.



#### 4.1.2 Naoko

Naoko was Kizuki's girlfriend and later involved in a romantic relationship with Toru. In sixth grade, Naoko lost her only sister to suicide. Naoko described her sister as "the best big sister anyone could ask for" (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.6, p.192). Naoko was the one who found her sister dead by hanging herself in her room. The event left a psychological trauma to Naoko, as Naoko explained her situation after her sister suicide; – "For three days after that I couldn't talk. I just lay in bed like a dead person, eyes wide open and staring into space. I didn't know what was happening." (p.195).

Naoko's traumatic experience is intensified by another painful event. After witnessing the death of her sister, she has to suffer from the loss of her boyfriend – also childhood friend– who had been together with her since almost from birth. Naoko's experience of losing both a sibling and a boyfriend is the important reasons behind her mental sickness. Naoko explain to Toru after telling the story of her dead sister:

"I told you in my letter, didn't I? I'm a far more flawed human being than you realize. My sickness is a lot worse than you think: it has far deeper roots. And that's why I want you to go on ahead of me if you can. Don't wait for me..." (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.6, p.195).

Naoko's trauma of the loss trigger her **fear of abandonment**, the fear of being deserted by the loved ones, since she has been abandoned two times by people she loved. Tyson (2006) wrote that trauma refers to a painful experience that scars us psychologically; I might experience the childhood trauma of losing a sibling to

illness, accidental death, or suicide and, in later life, experience the trauma of being flooded by all the guilt, denial, and conflict I have repressed concerning that death (p.21). In the story, Naoko is overpowered by the trauma of the dead. In a dialogue with Naoko, Toru explain why she is always feeling guilty,

“You're letting yourself be scared by too many things,” I said. “The dark, bad dreams, the power of the dead. You have to forget them. I'm sure you'll get well if you do.” (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.6, p.195).

Naoko's overwhelming feeling of loss signify her feeling of abandonment. After the death of Kizuki, Naoko said she cannot love another person. Naoko's fear of abandonment is responsible for her inability to love because she is afraid that her trauma of the loss might come into the surface. Tyson (2006) wrote that the death of a loved one pushes our guilt buttons whether we realize it or not; I must have done something wrong or I wouldn't be punished in this way (p.23).

Fear of such a loss, of such intense psychological pain, is probably the biggest reason why some of us are afraid to get too close to another person or are afraid to love too deeply; If I can hold something back, not give my whole self over to the loved one, then I will be better able to bear the loss when the beloved dies. I will try to be emotionally dead to avoid being hurt by death. Our relationship to death, whether or not we are traumatized by it in childhood, is a principal organizer of our psychological experience. Taken to its logical extreme, this relationship to death will result in suicide. The intense fear of losing makes living so painful and frightening that the only escape is death (Tyson, 2006, p.23).

Naoko's feeling of abandonment leads her to develop **fear of intimacy**, the avoidance of interpersonal relationship to protect the self because of the belief that everyone will eventually abandon us. After experiencing the death of sister and boyfriend, Naoko fears the intimate emotional relationship with others. Naoko's fear of intimacy can be seen in her remarks; – "So after he died, I didn't know how to relate to other people. I didn't know what it meant to love another person." (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.6, p.150). Afraid that she might eventually being abandoned like in her past relationship, Naoko protect herself by creating distance from others. Like Toru, Naoko also feels she got abandoned by Kizuki and make her suffer from fear of intimacy.

Naoko also escape from her hometown in Kobe to Tokyo to begin a new life and left everything behind. She said that she chose her school in Tokyo because "nobody from home was coming here" (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.3, p.36). Naoko's departure from her hometown indicates her fear of intimacy because she is no longer want to become close with anyone she knew. Naoko's fear of intimacy also appears in Toru's narration:

She led a spare, simple life with hardly any friends. Back then, she had dressed with real flair and surrounded herself with a million friends. When I saw her room, I realized that, like me, she had wanted to go away to college and begin a new life far from anyone she knew. (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.3, p.36).

Naoko's fear of intimacy resulted in her decision to retreat from society and isolate herself in a sanatorium to "rest my nerves in a quiet place cut off from the world." (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.3, p.59)

Naoko's fear of intimacy is related with her **low self-esteem**. According to Tyson (2006), low self-esteem is the belief that we are less worthy than other people and, therefore, don't deserve attention, love, or any other of life's rewards. Indeed, we often believe that we deserve to be punished by life in some way (p.16). In a dialogue to Toru, Naoko said that if Kizuki had lived, she would be unhappy because she believed she and Kizuki are deserved to be punished by life somehow. Naoko said the reason why Kizuki commit suicide and why she is in a sanatorium because they have "the due bills" of avoiding the pain of growing up.

"We couldn't bear to be apart. So if Kizuki had lived, I'm sure we would gradually growing unhappy. Because we would have had to pay the world back what we owed it. The pain of growing up. We didn't pay when we should have, so now the bills are due." (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.6, p.172).

Naoko undergoes an intense psychological pain triggered by loss. This pain leads to depression in which Freud described as "a profoundly painful dejection, cessation of interest in the outside world, loss of the capacity to love, inhibition of all activity and a lowering of the self-regarding feeling to a degree that finds utterance in self-reproaches and self-reviling" (Pourya Asl, 2014, p.2). Individual with depression might have problems in concentration and getting slower in speech and movement noticed by others.

Naoko is revealed to have certain symptoms of depression. The first symptom is Naoko's problem in speaking. In the beginning of the story, Toru finds that Naoko is struggling from "word searching sickness":

“I was just wondering what communal life would be like. And...” She seemed to be trying – and failing – to find exactly the right word or expression. Then she sighed and looked down. “Oh, I don't know. Never mind.” (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.2, p.25).

Another symptom is Naoko's inability to write. Naoko explains herself in her letter that she has trouble in writing –“Writing is a painful process for me” (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.3, p.58). Reiko also explains in her letter that Naoko is getting worse so she cannot write back to Toru and Reiko send the reply letter instead.

“I see now that the first symptom of her problem was her loss of the ability to write letters. Then she started hearing things. She would hear people talking to her, which made it impossible for her to write. The voices would interfere with her attempts to choose her words.” (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.10, p.324).

Naoko confessed that she could hear her sister and Kizuki talk to her “from the darkness” (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.9, p.309). Naoko may think that she heard them because of the denial of their deaths. She is overwhelmed by the feeling of loss that caused her to develop certain delusion. The hallucination of hearing things is also the symptom of depression.

A melancholic, or depressive person will develop an enormous sense of personal worthlessness. This condition of low self-esteem and self-hatred leads to self-attack (Pourya Asl, 2014, p.2). As a result, Naoko's traumatic experience of losing sibling and boyfriend leads her to develop certain core issues and depression, which end up with self-destruct.

### 4.1.3 Midori Kobayashi

Midori is Toru's classmate in college. She is attractive and has a bright personality. Midori has the opposite character with Naoko, as Toru describes in his letter to Reiko:

“What I feel for Naoko is a tremendously quiet and gentle and transparent love, but what I feel for Midori is a wholly different emotion. It stands and walks on its own, living and breathing and throbbing and shaking me to the roots of my being.” (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.10, p.354).

Toru finds himself getting caught in love with two women – “And yet I find myself tossed into this labyrinth.” (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.10, p.354). At the time Midori get to know Toru, she actually has a boyfriend who is very indifferent to her. Later in the story, Midori develop romantic feelings toward Toru and demand a response.

Midori's most apparent core issue is **fear of betrayal**, the feeling. Her sense of betrayal is originated from her experience of getting neglected as a child. Since Midori was a kid, her family run a small bookstore so her mother was always too busy to even cook for her daughters. Midori tells Toru about her disappointment toward her mother, – “I hated that even when I was little, I mean like cooking a big pot of curry and eating the same thing three days in a row.” (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.4, p.92). Then, at the third year of middle school, Midori decided to cook for the family but her parents opposed the idea, – “It was hopeless trying to communicate with them. (p.93). Midori's parents was very indifferent toward her. While Midori needed any kind of support from her parents, they discouraged her idea and opinion rather than giving the solution.

According to the five psychosocial statuses, Midori represents negative role identity, the rebellious denial of the expectations of parents or society. It is apparent when she was graduating from high school.

“At graduation they gave me certificates for perfect attendance and perfect punctuality, plus a French dictionary. That's why I'm taking German now. I didn't want to owe this school *anything*. I'm not kidding.” (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.4, p.81)

Midori's parents sent her to a prestigious girl high school that is full of “upper-class girls” which makes Midori cannot understand the reason why they sent her there. Midori even hated her school, –“Six years I went and I never liked it.” (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.4, p.81). Yet, her parents never fully comprehend of what Midori's think.

When Midori's mother die, she did not feel the least bit sad. Yet, she feels relieved because after all she could manage their family budget. Midori's attitude toward her mother's death is elaborated in her reasoning to Toru.

“Things were pretty complicated in this house. But I always thought, I mean, they're my mother and father, of course I'd be sad if they died or I never saw them again. But it didn't happen that way. I didn't feel anything. Not sad, not lonely. I hardly even think of them.” (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.4, p.102).

Midori's indifferent reaction regarding her mother's death is the result of how she was always treated in the family. Midori takes the revenge for the neglectful treatment she had received by feeling relieved when her mother's die because she could take her mother's role.

Midori's fear of betrayal appear in her disbelief toward her father who told her that she should die instead of her mother. Midori's father's statement creates a psychological pain to her –“That's one wound that will never go away.” (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.4, p.97). The hurted feeling she felt from her father's words is the sign of her fear of betrayal.

“What do you think he said to my sister and me when our mother died? ‘I would much rather have lost the two of you than her.’ It knocked the wind out of me. I couldn't say a word. You just can't say something like that. I mean, that's just too terrible. Don't you agree?”(*Norwegian Wood*, ch.4, p.96).

Midori's fear of betrayal prompts her to develop a sense of selfishness. Midori feels that she had never received much love from her parents.

“I was always hungry for love. Just once, I wanted to know what it was like to get my fill of it -to be fed so much love I couldn't take any more. But they never gave that to me. Never, not once ... I'm looking for selfishness. Perfect selfishness.” (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.4, p.102-103).

#### **4.1.4 Reiko Ishida**

Reiko is Naoko's roommate in the sanatorium who has been staying for seven years. Reiko suffered from childhood pressure when she was practicing to be a concert pianist. Everything went easy for Reiko and she used to get people's attention for her talent in piano. However, problems start to appear when she undergoes a mental breakdown. The doctor told Reiko to abandon the idea to become a pianist because she “lacked the mental strength to become a professional pianist” which leaves a psychological pain to her, – “The pain I felt was



excruciating. It was as if my life had ended. Here I was in my early twenties and the best part of my life was over. Do you see how terrible that would be?” (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.6, p.157).

Reiko’s pessimistic mindset after her dream to become a pianist seems to be impossible suggests her **low self-esteem**, the negative belief about oneself caused by experiencing negative events including persistent stress and hardship. Reiko’s life only rotate with her interest in piano. While her passion seems to be burdening her and she is undergoing unexpected situations, she is too overwhelmed with her problems which caused her anxiety to arise. Her mental breakdown shows that she is too distressed with the sudden obstacle. Rather than coming up with another plan of what she is going to be, Reiko became too depressed to overcome with her crisis. Reiko might think that she is not good in any different aspects other than piano.

Later in the story, she is getting married and leads a simple life with one daughter. Yet, one day, her student who is happened to be a lesbian started a bad rumor about her. After figuring out the rumor, Reiko asks her husband to move out but her husband rejected the idea and demand her to hang on a little longer. Eventually, Reiko suffers from the mental breakdown again. She asks her husband to divorce her and then she retreats to the sanatorium.

“And so we divorced. I’m still glad I made him leave me. Really. I knew I’d be like this for the rest of my life, and I didn’t want to drag anyone down with me. I didn’t want to force anyone to live in constant fear that I might lose my mind at any moment.” (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.6, p.214).

Reiko's anxiety come into the surface again after she undergoing negative events and she feel intimidated by the circulating rumor involving her. Reiko feels terrified and wants to run away. However, her husband hold the idea and Reiko asked him to divorce her. Reiko actually lacks the confidence to insist her husband to stay with her because she thought she could be a burden to him and Reiko does not want to "drag anyone down with her" which is the sign of her low self-esteem that will lead to fear of intimacy.

Reiko's another apparent core issue in the story is **fear of intimacy**, the fear of intimate relationships with other people caused by painful past experiences. It begins to show after she asked her husband to divorce her. A divorcement was not something Reiko wish for, as she still adore her husband in her explanation; – "He had been wonderful to me: an ideal husband, faithful, strong and patient, someone I could put my complete trust in. I was happy for six years from the time we were married." (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.6, p.214). Reiko's mental breakdown is the sign of her anxiety and become the reason why she asks her husband to divorce her. Thus Reiko's anxiety reveals her core issue, fear of intimacy.

The first sign of Reiko's fear of intimacy is her rejection of going outside the sanatorium. After spending many years in the sanatorium, Reiko got too attached to the place and make her does not want to go to the "outside world" – "That's why I can't leave this place." "I'm afraid to get involved with the outside world. I'm afraid to meet new people and feel new feelings." (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.6, p.215). Reiko's fear of the outside world mirroring that she actually fear of intimacy with other human beings.

Reiko's fear of intimacy also serves as the defense because it keeps her "at an emotional distance in relationships" from the painful divorce she had been through.

"What have I got in the outside world? There's nobody waiting for me to get out, no family to take me back. I don't have any work to speak of, and almost no friends. And after seven years, I don't know what's going on out there. I wouldn't know what to do if I left." (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.6, p.131).

Tyson (2006) wrote that fear of intimacy is an effective defense against learning about our own psychological wounds because it keeps us at an emotional distance in relationships most likely to bring those wounds to the surface. By not permitting ourselves to get too close to significant others, we "protect" ourselves from the painful past experiences that intimate relationships inevitably dredge up (p.16).

It can be concluded that Reiko's core issues are generated from her childhood pressure that creates her anxiety, or as Freud described as an objectless fear. In this manner, Reiko's anxiety leads her to develop low self-esteem and her fear of intimacy serves as a defense to defend her ego from the overwhelming feeling of her anxiety.

#### 4.1.5 Nagasawa

Nagasawa's core issue that appeared throughout the story is **fear of intimacy**, the unconscious conviction that emotional ties to another human being will result in one's being emotionally devastated (Tyson, 2006, p.39). When

Nagasawa first introduced, Toru describes him as a superior being who is smart, honest, wealthy, “carried himself with real dignity”, and an optimistic leader kind (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.3, p.42).

According to the five psychosocial statuses, Nagasawa represents identity-achievement. Such individuals have developed a strong ego identity. They were stable, concerned with realistic goals, and able to cope with changing environmental demands. They performed better on difficult tasks and majored in more difficult areas in college (Schultz, 2005, p.236). In the story, Nagasawa is described as “known for being smart. He breezed into Tokyo University, he got good marks, he would take the Civil Service Exam, join the Foreign Ministry, and become a diplomat.” (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.3, p.42).

Nagasawa has a steady girlfriend, but that does not prevent him to hunt woman to satisfy his sex hunger. As Toru describes –“Not that he was dying to sleep with the girls he found: it was just a game to him.” (p.45). Nagasawa’s involvement with many women indicate his fear of intimacy because it keeps him from emotional closeness with neither of them. Varying our sexual partners can protect us from getting close to any one person as effectively as avoiding sexual encounters completely (Tyson, 2006, p.25). Nagasawa’s fear of intimacy can be seen in his reasoning to Hatsumi;

“I’ve been with you for three years, and I’ve slept with plenty of women in that time. But I don’t remember a thing about them. I don’t know their names, I don’t remember their faces. I slept with each of them exactly once. Meet ‘em, do it, so long. That’s it.” (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.8, p.275).

Nagasawa's relationship with women including Hatsumi, reveals his "desire for ego gratification rather than for emotional intimacy" (Tyson, 2006, p.40). Nagasawa is known for his dignity and he wants to prove his capability by sleeping around with women despite of the fact that he has a girlfriend. For Nagasawa, Hatsumi represents social superiority considering that Hatsumi came from "the absolute top girls' college in the country". Above all, Hatsumi stay faithful to Nagasawa despite of being hurt. Realizing that he cannot love Hatsumi as much as she does, Nagasawa rather hurt her than to fix his habit.

"It's not that you're not enough for me. That's another phase. It's just a hunger I have inside me. If I've hurt you, I'm sorry. But it's not a question of whether or not you're enough for me. I can only live with that hunger. There's nothing I can do about it, don't you see?"  
(*Norwegian Wood*, ch.8, p.276)

Tyson wrote that fear of intimacy with others is usually a product of fear of intimacy with oneself. In his narration, it is appear that Nagasawa's "old man" also have the womanizing habit: – "My old man usually brings his mistress here." "He's got one in Tokyo, you know." (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.8, p.270). It might suggest that Nagasawa inherit this habit of him from his early family experience. "Because close interpersonal relationships dredge up the psychological residue of earlier family conflicts and bring into play aspects of our identity we don't want to deal with or even know about, the best way to avoid painful psychological self-awareness is to avoid close inter-personal relationships, especially romantic relationships" (Tyson, 2006, p.41).

Nagasawa's fear of intimacy is very apparent in his habit to sleep around with different women. Nagasawa's fear of intimacy might be generated from his family experience and the way to suppress the trauma of his early family experience is by avoiding intimate relationship with others. Nagasawa is aware that he is wrong but he does not want to admit it and rather he decides to keep doing his habit. Nagasawa's womanizing is the result of his fear of intimacy.

#### **4.1.6 Hatsumi**

Hatsumi is an ordinary looking classy girl who is very loyal to her boyfriend, Nagasawa. Toru describes Hatsumi as "quiet, intelligent, funny, caring, and always dressed with immaculate good taste" (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.3, p.47).

In the story, Hatsumi is struggling in her crippled romantic relationship with her unfaithful boyfriend. Hatsumi is very aware with Nagasawa's "game" with other women, but she never made demands to Nagasawa to quit that habit of him – "She never complained to him. She was seriously in love, but she never made demands." (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.3, p.48). In psychoanalytic terms, a woman who falls in love with a man suffering from severe fear of intimacy probably fears of intimacy herself (Tyson, 2006, p.41).

Hatsumi may not demand Nagasawa to stop his womanizing habit, but in her dialogue it can be seen that she actually feels hurt because of it: "I get hurt." "Why am I not enough for you?" (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.8, p.276). Hatsumi expressing her distress over Nagasawa's affair with women might suggest that

Hatsumi actually desires emotional intimacy with Nagasawa. When Toru expressed his disagreement of her relationship with Nagasawa and told Hatsumi to leave him, Hatsumi, even though she knew herself that Nagasawa would only hurt her, still hoping that Nagasawa would change.

“People change, though, don't you think?” ... “But there's nothing I can do but wait for him” (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.8, p.286).

Hatsumi's relationship with Nagasawa is reflecting her **low self-esteem**, the inferior belief about the self. Falling so much in love with a man who was openly unfaithful to her suggests an unconscious belief that she doesn't deserve better (Tyson, 2006, p.42). Low self-esteem is closely related and more likely lead to depression. The negative beliefs one had about oneself are not the symptom but the causal influence of depression. According to Sowislo & Orth (2013), depressive disorder is associated with impaired functioning in the relationship, work, and health domain and with elevated rates of suicidal behavior (p.215).

Hatsumi reached a certain stage in life and decided – almost on the spur of the moment – to end it. Two years after Nagasawa left for Germany, she married, and two years after that she slashed her wrists with a razor blade (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.8, p.280).

After spending the time span of four years since Nagasawa's departure, Hatsumi took her own life by committing suicide. Hatsumi's suicide indicates that she had gone through depressive moment in her life, resulted from her relationship with unfaithful Nagasawa. Stay loyal to an unfaithful partner is a sign of low self-esteem. As a result, Hatsumi's low self-esteem leads to depression and ends up with her suicidal.

## 4.2 Characters' Self-Esteem Development in *Norwegian Wood*

The analysis of this novel are done based on the research questions in the first chapter and described based on the analysis in the second table (Table analysis of Lacanian Tripartite Order in *Norwegian Wood*). This section discusses the analysis of each character's self-esteem development that will be described as follows:

### 4.2.1 Toru Watanabe

Toru Watanabe, as the narrator of the story appears to suffer from his trauma in high school. Toru's trauma is triggered by Kizuki's death and intensified with Naoko's suicide three years later. Toru lost Kizuki in a young age and he was happened to be the last person to see Kizuki alive which made him felt guilty toward Naoko, Kizuki's girlfriend at the time he committed suicide, – "Naoko might have been angry with me because I, not she, had been the last one to see Kizuki." (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.2, p.31).

Toru's crucial trauma from the beginning of the story is the death of Kizuki who has been Toru's only friend in high school. After Kizuki's death, Toru, as if he has lost his way, cannot "find a place for myself in the world around me" (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.2, p.32). Toru symbolizing Kizuki as his adolescence which apparent in his statement – "Kizuki's death had robbed me forever of some part of my adolescence." (ch.4, p.107). Kizuki, who represented as the lost adolescence of



Toru, creates Toru's trauma and sense of lack. However, Toru cannot fulfilled his lack because both Kizuki and his adolescence cannot return to the symbolic world.

Following the loss of Kizuki, Toru tried to fill the lack by sleeping with a girl, yet he failed to fill in the lack.

In the ten months between Kizuki's death and my exams, I was unable to find a place for myself in the world around me. I started sleeping with one of the girls at school, but that didn't last six months. Nothing about her really got to me. (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.2, p.32)

Toru then decided to move out from Kobe as he failed to fill the lack from losing Kizuki. He struggles with all his might to forget everything related with Kizuki and Kizuki's death. He even come up with a decision to create a proper distance between him and everything else. However, Toru's attempts to forget about his loss are failed as he explains – "I tried hard to forget, but there remained inside me a vague knot of air." (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.2, p.33).

While struggling with the aftermath of Kizuki's death, Toru has to deal with Naoko's sickness which is also the effect of losing Kizuki. As time goes by, Naoko's sickness is getting worse and bring an obstacle to her relationship with Toru. When Toru cannot meet Naoko while she is on treatment, Toru feel the greater sense of lack – "I spent three full days after that all but walking on the bottom of the sea." (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.10, p.327). Later, when Toru got informed about Naoko's death, Toru had a hard time to accept that Naoko is no longer exist. He tried to distract his mind by wandering around from town to town aimlessly, but eventually, his attempt is failed. In his journey, Toru thought that he

could hear Naoko talks – “Naoko spoke to me in the spaces between the crashing of the dark waves.” (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.11, p.360). Toru came into the conclusion that – “Death exists, not as the opposite but as a part of life.” (p.360).

From Toru’s trauma, it can be seen that Toru’s self-esteem is low. After the death of Kizuki, Toru becomes more introverted and does not want to make any friends. Beside of the fear of being abandoned, Toru feels he lack of any likeable trait which is the sign of low self-esteem. The other symptom of Toru’s low self-esteem is his less determined life. Toru does not have any dreams and does not know what he wanted to be. Toru’s self-esteem even worsened after Naoko’s death. In the end, Toru still survived with his low self-esteem after Reiko visited him and gave Toru advice to move on. Toru then reached to Midori to rebuild their relationship.

#### **4.2.2 Naoko**

Naoko shared the same painful trauma as Toru in losing Kizuki. However, Naoko had already experiencing losing her sibling to suicide. Naoko’s earlier trauma is caused by her sister’s suicide and Naoko was the one who found her dead body hanging in her room. After finding out that her sister is dead, Naoko expressed her disbelief by “I just stood there, spacing out, for maybe five or six minutes, a total blank, like something inside me had died.” (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.6, p.194). She never expected her sister would commit suicide because “she (Naoko’s sister) was such a bright, steady girl” (p.193). However, Naoko’s sister was already

showing her problem since four years before she committed suicide. In a dialogue with Toru, Naoko relating her sister's death with Kizuki;

“Nobody knew why she killed herself. The same as Kizuki. Exactly the same. She was seventeen, too, and she never gave the slightest hint she was going to commit suicide. She didn't leave a note, either. Really, it was exactly the same.” (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.6, p.192)

Not long after her sister's death, Naoko overheard her father talking about his younger brother who also had committed suicide at young age. Naoko's uncle also had been a very bright person, but had stayed shut in the house for four years. Naoko's father then assumed that “Maybe it's in the blood, from my (Naoko's father) side” (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.6, p.193).

Several years later, Naoko lost Kizuki also from suicide. Like Toru, Naoko run away from Kobe to Tokyo in hope she would forget about the event and in order to begin a new start.

When I saw her room, I realized that, like me, she had wanted to go away to college and begin a new life far from anyone she knew. (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.3, p.36)

Naoko then met Toru in a Tokyo subway by accident. Sharing the same painful past, the two of them are growing closer and eventually falling in love with each other. They try to fill each other's lack by being together. In the night of Naoko's twentieth birthday, they sleep together and that was the first time Naoko slept with someone. Feeling guilty toward the late Kizuki, Naoko retreat to a sanatorium called Ami hostel.

Naoko's trauma of losing Kizuki is far more serious than Toru. Naoko has known Kizuki since childhood and they grew up together. Naoko explained her relationship with Kizuki as a "truly special relationship". However, Naoko is very aware that she has the price to pay by growing up together with Kizuki.

"We couldn't bear to be apart. So if Kizuki had lived, I'm sure we would have been together, loving each other, and gradually growing unhappy." "Because we would have had to pay the world back what we owed it," "The pain of growing up. We didn't pay when we should have, so now the bills are due." (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.6, p.172)

Growing too attached with the late Kizuki, Naoko was having a hard time after he died. When receiving treatment in the sanatorium, Naoko even thought that she could hear Kizuki and her sister talk to her.

"When I'm lonely at night, people talk to me from the darkness. They talk to me the way trees moan in the wind at night. Kizuki; my sister: they talk to me like that all the time. They're lonely, too, and looking for someone to talk to." (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.9, p.309)

In psychology, this phenomenon (or usually called auditory hallucinations) are common with patients with schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, major depression, or posttraumatic stress disorder.

One of the important features in *Norwegian Wood* is the un-existed well Naoko talked about to Toru, as Toru describes;

I have no idea whether there was such a well. It might have been an image or a sign that existed only inside Naoko, like all the other things she used to spin into existence inside her mind in those dark days. (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.1, p.6)

Toru explains the well as “deep beyond measuring, and crammed full of darkness, as if all the world’s darkness had been boiled to their ultimate density.” (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.1, p.7). The well represents Naoko’s unconscious mind. Lacan believes that the unconscious can be acquired in the Symbolic order where all desires are repressed by the law of the father and therefore stored in the unconscious. Dil (2007) wrote that the well in Murakami fiction is usually a metaphor for the self (p.137). The well becomes an important symbol of Naoko’s mental state and for digging into Naoko’s problematic inner self. The well is a symbol of nothingness and the finality of death. The un-existed well reveals Naoko’s death desire.

Naoko’s trauma causes her to develop low self-esteem. It is revealed at the beginning of the story that Naoko is used to surround herself with a lot of friends. However, after the death of Kizuki, Naoko becomes a different person and hardly makes any friends. Naoko thinks she is a flawed human being which is the sign of low self-esteem. Naoko is overwhelmed with her life difficulties and she cannot overcome with it. Eventually, Naoko suffered from depression and committed suicide.

#### **4.2.3 Midori Kobayashi**

Midori has the contrast characteristics with Naoko. Midori is very open to sexual matters and has a lot of curiosity. Midori’s trauma originated from her early family experiences. She felt she was not given adequate love from her parents and was forced to grow up too quickly.

Midori wants to re-experience the feeling of wholeness in childhood by returning to the Imaginary order because she spent her life taking care of her family. Mother and father figure did not work properly in Midori's period of life. The loss of the mother figure in her childhood is the object of her desire. To fulfill her desire, she is so determined to find a selfish love, which is why she has a lot of demands toward Toru –“I'm looking for selfishness. Perfect selfishness.” (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.4, p.103). The feeling of loss and lack presented in the Symbolic order. When Toru gets tied up in his affairs involving Naoko and Midori, he choose Naoko and forget Midori. Midori got angry and refuse to talk to him.

“But I'm so lonely! I know I'm doing terrible things to you, but you're the only one I can do stuff like that to! I've never been able to have my own way with anybody, not once in the twenty years I've been alive.” (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.9, p.300).

The Symbolic order is the realm of the Other, or the symbolic father, who imposes rules and regulates desires. The real father is the agent of the symbolic father that shapes desires and has a decisive role in shaping the subject's identity (Darabi, 2013, p.68). In this sense, Midori's mother and father both represent the Other who rule Midori's desires and forced her to obey their law. However, Midori realizes that she has no power to disobey the law of the Other. It can be seen when Midori expresses her dissatisfaction toward her parents' decision in Midori's school.

“I really didn't want to go to this school.” “I wanted to go to an absolutely ordinary public high school. But my parents thought it would look good for me to go to this fancy place. They're the ones who stuck me in here. I went for six years and I never liked it.” (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.4, p.81)

Midori's parents' unconsciously create Midori's trauma out of their enforcement. Moreover, they also suppress Midori's desires. The suppression of Midori's desire is apparent when she wants to cook for the family. Her parents discourage her decision and did not support her.

“It wasn't easy, growing up in a house where nobody gave a damn about food, ‘What we have now is good enough,’ they'd say. It was hopeless trying to communicate with them. I saved up my allowance and bought real professional knives and pots and strainers and stuff.” (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.4, p.92-3).

Midori's father as an authority figure creates another trauma by saying that he rather lost Midori and her sister than her mother.

“What do you think he said to my sister and me when our mother died? ‘I would much rather have lost the two of you than her.’ It knocked the wind out of me. I couldn't say a word. You just can't say something like that.” “That's one wound that will never go away.” (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.4, p.96-7)

Midori's trauma is the result of her repressed and unfulfilled desires caused by the rules imposed by the Other. As the outcome of her trauma, she become rebellious toward her parents and show an indifferent attitude when her mother died and her father left her.

“You know, when my mother died...” “I didn't feel the least bit sad.” “And I didn't feel sad when my father left, either.” “Things were pretty complicated in this house. But I always thought, I mean, they're my mother and father, of course I'd be sad if they died or I never saw them again. But it didn't happen that way. I didn't feel anything. Not sad, not lonely. I hardly even think of them.” (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.4, p.101-2).

Midori's trauma makes her develop selfish personality. However, it does not prevent her to make a lot of friends. Her easy going personality is the sign of high self-esteem. Individual with high self-esteem claims to be more likeable and attractive, has better relationship, and better impression on others than people with low self-esteem (Baumeister et al., 2003, p.1).

#### **4.2.4 Reiko Ishida**

Reiko is suffered from the pressure to be a pianist since childhood. She felt that everyone around her are having a great expectation of her. Despite of her convenience life, she actually endures the burden to be a concert pianist. Reiko's first symptom is shown when she was preparing for a competition. Her little finger suddenly stop moving and after going through several tests, it was assumed that her problem must be psychological so she decided to stay away from piano for a while. However, Reiko cannot stop thinking about piano and then she realize that she cannot live without piano. It was the first time Reiko's mind become a total blank and required her to be hospitalized for two months.

Reiko's life depends only with her passion in piano. Piano represents her life. When her dream to become a pianist had vanished, she felt her life has ended as well. Reiko could not bear the fact and eventually her anxiety arises. Reiko symbolizing piano as her life, "And no wonder: piano had been my whole life up to that point." (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.6, p.157).



Reiko is always anxious even after she was recovered. She blame herself for being a failure to her parents and because of the fact that she is a returnee from a mental hospital. So then her anxiety arise and her mind went blank again for the second time so she need to return to the hospital.

Reiko's trauma is the manifestation of her childhood pressure. She thought she could pull off the burden of becoming a pianist while in fact her mental condition is not strong enough to handle the pressure. Reiko's trauma then creates her anxiety that could arise at any moment. Her anxiety shows that she has low self-esteem.

#### **4.2.5 Nagasawa**

Nagasawa's trauma is not really apparent throughout the story. However, his earlier trauma might be originated from his earlier family experience. As Nagasawa once revealed that his father has a mistress in Tokyo, it can be assumed that his father is actually a ladies' man. Nagasawa's manifestation of trauma from his family affected his way to treat a woman.

Nagasawa has a steady girlfriend, Hatsumi, who is very devoted to him. Yet, Nagasawa still sleeping around with any women he found in a club. Even though Nagasawa is aware that he hurt Hatsumi, he keep on doing it, saying "that's what makes me me" (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.8, p.276).

Nagasawa's father represents the symbolic father that shapes desires and has a decisive role in shaping Nagasawa's identity. This signifies that Nagasawa's

father influenced Nagasawa's way to treat woman. Nagasawa placed himself as a superior being in his relationship with Hatsumi and other women as well. This suggests that Nagasawa has high self-esteem, because high self-esteem individual tends to be inflated, arrogant, grandiose, unwarranted sense of conceited superiority over others (Baumeister et al., 2003, p.2). High self-esteem also makes people develop good leadership skills and has a causal relationship with good intelligence which is similar to Nagasawa's personality.

#### **4.2.6 Hatsumi**

Hatsumi's trauma in the story can be seen in her relationship with Nagasawa. Even though she had the idea that Nagasawa is always hungry for women, she never made demands to him. Once she confessed to Nagasawa that she actually got hurt of Nagasawa's behavior.

"You can't even call what I do sleeping around. It's just a game. Nobody gets hurt," said Nagasawa. "I get hurt," said Hatsumi. "Why am I not enough for you?" (*Norwegian Wood*, ch.8, p.275-6)

Hatsumi's trauma is the manifestation of her relationship with Nagasawa which leads her to develop low self-esteem. Hatsumi stays faithful to Nagasawa even though she deserves better than him. Yet, Hatsumi's low self-esteem resulted with her suicide four years after she broke up with Nagasawa. Even though Hatsumi was married at the time, it seems that her married status cannot help her to forget about the pain she endured with Nagasawa.