

Emotional Trauma and Emotional Maturity: A Study in Haruki Murakami's *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage*

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Abstract:

Japanese Literature portrays its vast culture, history and language. The modern Japanese Literature also includes the life of young generation, plight of modern era people and position of women in the society as well as family and so on. One among the modern writers who focused on writing different dimensions of youth's life and adding his own writing style like magic realism and surrealism is Haruki Murakami. He has written many realist novels, science fiction, and magical realism using themes like bildungsroman, memory, unrequited love and realistic life of youngsters. This fetched him a huge number of readers who could connect themselves with his novels.

In this article, the researcher has analyzed the novel titled *Colourless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage* written by Haruki Murakami. This realist fiction portrays the life of the protagonist Tsukuru Tazaki—his growth from childhood into an adult—the emotional trauma he undergoes and the impact it creates in his life.

Key words: memory, trauma, development, bildungsroman.

1. Introduction:

Colourless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage is the thirteenth novel of Haruki Murakami that is published in the year 2013. This novel makes the readers explore the life of Tsukuru Tazaki who believes that he is colourless because of his name. It just starts as a small problem in the beginning, but at one point of time, a sudden change in the behaviour of his friends has a great shock in his life. This incident gives him myriad experiences in life and opens his eyes to many truths.

When the novel opens, Tsukuru Tazaki is working for train track parts manufacturing company. At one point, he remembers his past and feels a pang of pain. When he lived in Nagoya, Japan, he had four best friends- Eri Kuroono, Yuzuki Shirane, Kei Akamatsu and Yoshio Oumi. All the four friends have a colour in their name like Kuro-black, Shiro- white, Aka-Red and Ao-blue. However, Tsukuru does not have any colour in his name and his name can be translated as 'to make.'

After school studies gets over, the four friends remains in their hometown whereas Tsukuru moves out of Nagoya and joins in a university. They plan to meet whenever they can and call each other. The first semester goes smoothly according to their plan. However by the end of first year, suddenly everyone stops calling Tsukuru and do not meet him. When his semester gets over and he reaches Nagoya, Tsukuru calls each of his friends. However, either the four friends' parents or siblings attend the call and inform Tsukuru that they are not available. He understands that they are no more friends of his and have abandoned him. Therefore, he leaves Nagoya and stays in Tokyo to continue his college studies.

Living without friends is a very big task for Tsukuru. He has no idea why his friends left him in the first place. Therefore, he has many suicidal thoughts. He also wanted to come out of it. He chooses swimming as a means to come out of it. One of his juniors, Haida also accompanies him for swimming training and they create a good bond with each other. Slowly they become friends and it makes Tsukuru to forget his own friends for some time. But one day, Haida leaves his dormitory when semester ends and never turns up. When Tsukuru enquires in the administration section, he comes to know that Haida has dropped out of his studies and he has never informed Tsukuru about it. Once again, Tsukuru becomes a lonely man.

When Tsukuru becomes an adult and joins in a company, he falls in love with a woman names Sarah. However, for some reasons, he cannot have an intimate relationship with her. There seems to be an unknown barrier between them. When she asks about his past, for the first time Tsukuru speaks about his friends and the way they left him without any explanation. Sarah assumes that this is the reason he cannot move on in his life. She encourages him to contact his old friends and ask for the reason behind abrupt end. When Tsukuru meets up with his friend Ao, he learns that one of their friends Shiro accused Tsukuru of raping her. However, it is waste to enquire now as she is murdered six years ago. Aka also tells the same and both of them egrets their decision to cut their relationship but they did because of Shiro's terrible state at that time. They believed her words to be true.

Tsukuru meets Eri in Finland and through her; he comes to know that Shiro is indeed raped by someone. When she wants to blame someone for her state, she pointed her fingers at Tsukuru. Even when Eri knows that her accusation is false, she accepted it thinking that among all the friends, Tsukuru is the strongest and emotionally stable person. So, even if everyone neglects him, he can endure it and come out of it. She also thinks that her interest on Tsukuru

would have made Shiro to feel jealous of him and wanted to get rid of him. Finally, Tsukuru understands that there is no problem with him because all had very good opinion about him and thought of him in a high position. Whereas, Tsukuru is the only person who belittled his own self. When he realized his mistake, he felt a surge of relief and comfort and hoped for a better future.

2. Trauma and Maturity

Trauma occurs in a person when any incident in his/her life affected them a lot and caused physical or emotional pain and thereby not allowing them to overcome that particular incident. In this novel, Tsukuru was already affected by a negative thought i.e., his name. When all his four friends have good names with colour in it, Tsukuru is left out from their group that is colourful. Even when other friends do not think about the matter, it is burden for Tsukuru.

The emotional trauma occurs when the friends leave Tsukuru and stop having any kind of communication with him, his whole world collapses. He has many suicidal thoughts and it was a Herculean task for him to overcome that dreadful desire. Haida helps him to overcome suicidal thought; however, he too leaves him without any proper explanation that shatters Tsukuru. He never had any romantic relationship during his college studies.

Tsukuru understands that he has an unknown issue i.e. it is difficult for him to initiate an intimate conversation with anyone and have a meaningful and lasting relationship. Sarah finds out that it has a connection with his past. When he realizes this, he becomes determine to change for good. As a result, he goes to Nagoya-his hometown to learn the truth. Only there, he realizes that his own friend Shiro who is dead now frames him as a rapist. After speaking with three of his friends and hear all their opinion on him, Tsukuru understands that everyone thinks highly of

him except his own self. A huge weight is lifted from his heart. That brings out maturity in his mind.

3. Conclusion:

This novel shows the growth of the protagonist, attains emotional maturity, and refines his own identity. Through this novel, the readers can understand that facing the problems in one's life is better than ignoring it thinking about the pain it will create. The trauma a person receives during their childhood day lasts even after thirty or forty years. However, dealing with fears and facing it brings solution and peace for oneself. In the article titled "Deep Chords" it is stated that, "The important thing is to keep living because only by living can you see what happens next." Suicide is not a solution though living is more painful for people who are affected by various reasons. Whereas, living through it will eventually bring answers.

4. Works Cited:

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