



Literary Representations of Trauma and Memory in Kazuo Ishiguro's Select Novels

Tiyasha Roy

Abstract

The current study includes the Literary Representations of Trauma and Memory in the novels of Kazuo Ishiguro. We can understand the major aspects which consists of the arena of memory, retrospective traumatic theme contrasting with the metaphorical intricacies in both the novels "*A Pale View of Hills* and *When We Were Orphans*." This study also aims about the factors of the Feminism and Depiction of Women in both the novels and also the phrase Trauma or Traumatic Memory can also be described as how frightening the facets can be.

Key words: Trauma, Memory, Literary works, Kazuo Ishiguro, Literary Representations.

Introduction

It is problematic to define what distinguishes humans from other mammals, birds, and so on. Some may argue that it is empathy, while many may contend that it is self-recognition or responsiveness. The special ability to recall the past surely contributes to human quality. G. Vingerhoets (149) defines training as the procedure by which humans and other animal classes gain information about their surroundings. Memory is a storehouse of information.

Throughout history, several minds have attempted to distinguish among the different interpretations of the concept of memory, despite the difficulty of defining such a vast subject. Warnock makes a distinction linking "habit memory" and "conscious memory." The former is defined as "skills, rejoinders, or styles of behavior that are learnt by humans, non-human creatures, and even machines," and the latter is defined as "recalling or recollecting past experience" (cited in *Theories of Memory*, 3). So, it appears that sensible memory is one of the distinguishing elements that separates humans from non-humans. Although humans are distinguished by their capability to act in contrast to nature (which other animals obey automatically) and their own will. People or situations that were once important to you may become hazy over time, and you may even forget about them entirely. On the other hand, it is so painful that the researcher tries to forget it and then suddenly recall it. The concept of memory has been a widespread topic among logicians, intellectuals, and novelists throughout history because of its unique properties and its apparent indefinability. "The Art of Memory" (Yates) was already

interested in antiquity, considering it as the most important ability of a rhetorician. Although it has never shunned people's attention over time, we can certainly see a resurgence of interest in memory in the 1990s, extending to other topics such as trauma, Holocaust testimony, false memory syndrome, and community and cultural memory. For years, investigators and professionals have disputed the arrangement of memories. What utmost individuals can agree on is that humans have at least three main types of memory. All other types of memory generally fall into these three main categories. Memories are occasionally grouped into phases and procedures. Those who classify memory into two different types, implicit memory, and explicit memory, believe that additional types of memory, such as sensory memory, short-term memory, and long-term memory, are also stages of memory, not types of memory. These memories however send extreme distressing or troublesome experience. For example, personal trauma like childhood injury. It is not compulsory that physical injury is the only cause of traumatic memory or distress. Ishiguro's novels began as discussions of memory but gradually shifted to emphasize trauma. The researcher is perfectly aware that Ishiguro's writing is not purely trauma fiction. Nevertheless, when it is being examined how memory was used in the novels, it was inevitably driven to the idea of trauma as a whole and discovered that both books had many elements of trauma theory. Because of this, trauma theory is given considerable consideration in this thesis, but it is always done so in connection to how the storytellers depict their experiences.

Objective:

This paper seeks to provide an overview of what the notion of memory has meant throughout history and what it means today, as well as to examine the utilization of memory in two books by Kazuo Ishiguro, *A Pale View of Hills* and *When We Were Orphans*. This paper shall attempt to map out this incredibly vast idea in the first chapter of this thesis by approaching memory from an extensive and conceptual point of view. The second part of the article is devoted to an examination of the 1990s memory boom. In the following half of the 20th century, memory in general and trauma in particular rose to the top of the list of questions to be studied in a number of disciplines. This paper will also briefly discuss the primary causes of this memory boom before providing an overview of the key theoretical works that had a significant impact on both the modern concept of memory and trauma theory. A conceptual and more neuropsychological overview of several methods of recalling and disremembering will be covered in the section that follows. This will next go over the various metaphors for memory that have been utilized, from a wax writing tablet to a computer's hard drive. In succession to later see how the two books by Ishiguro fit into this, the final half of this conceptual chapter will concentrate on how memory and trauma have been portrayed in 20th-century literature.

Methods:

This study is connected to understand the effect of exercise on the literary representations of trauma and memory in the selected novels *A Pale View of Hills* (1982) and *When We Were Orphans* (2000). The investigation of the standard of living during the post-colonial period is to find out the effect of memory and traumatic memory on culture, politics and also in the personal life. The field of post-colonial studies has a relation to cultural memory and is also very influential in the colonial world. Convergence of memory in cultural aspects is the significance of the present and as much as the serviceability of the past. Ultimately, the traverse of the further research

involves of trauma memory, but it is not possible for the paper to go through all the points especially on the cultural and political direction in Ishiguro's work. Therefore, this paper may feature the particular areas of political and cultural studies. It brings forth the inner life of the protagonists through narrative characterization and fictional views yet there can be an additional approach on the political and cultural field of the research.

Literary works in the arena of memory:

Firstly, as mentioned Maurice Halbwachs (1877-1945), whose work on social structures of memory is best known for his publications *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire* (1925) and *La Mémoire collective* (published posthumously in 1950). Halbwachs' work has been influential on recent public memory and commemoration ideas. A significant part of the paper is paying attentiveness to the special circumstances of recalling and to aspects of memory that are rarely of interest to historians (Rossington in *Theories of Memory*, 135). Collective memories gradually replaced individual memories during the first half of the twentieth century. A 'collective memory' is a collection of remembrances resulting from society and culture. As Halbwachs pointed out, "All memories have meaning only within the social contexts (*cadres sociaux*) of the groups to which each individual belongs" (Henke, 81). His work strongly influenced two texts that paved the way for the boom in study of memory: *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (1982) by Yosef Yerushalmi and *Les Lieux de Mémoire* (1984) by Pierre Nora. According to Rossington and Whitehead, these texts represent a unclouded contrast linking memory and history, with memory being seen as the primordial identity of history. Bringing together memory, culture, and groups through their study of the cultural memory, German couple Jan and Aleida Assmann achieved international recognition. In addition to Halbwachs' focus on memory as a social phenomenon, they focused on the concept of collective memory. In 1999 Assmann distinguished two types of memory: *functional memory* and *storage memory*. It is derived from the storage memory (Ketelaar) that the functional memory constitutes collective identity.

As early as the 1990s, trauma theory began to gain popularity. It is widely acknowledged that Freudian psychoanalysis greatly influenced trauma and memory theory. Trauma was once solely used to describe physical wounds, in spite of that ever since Freud and Pierre Janet, it has come to mean mental trauma as well. The research of hysteria causes by Freud and Breuer, initially using the model of child abuse, then using the current model of the train collision, was significant for trauma theory. According to Freud, when an accident occurs, the mind is unable to deal with it and blocks it out as a form of self-preservation in the human mind. Only later, when you are in a lessened state of consciousness, does the trauma return to you. Cathy Caruth used the train collision model in her discussion of trauma many decades later. She claims that no trauma is registered during the time of impact. The mind simply goes blank. This is the mechanism of dissociation: victims believe they are only witnessing and do not fully experience the trauma at the time. *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (1995), edited by Caruth, was a major turning point in trauma theory. "Caruth provided a framework for thinking about the links linking individual and collective historical experiences, such as war and genocide" (*Theories of Memory*, 7). She rekindled interest in trauma theory with this volume, which was followed by *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, History* (1996), and emphasised the "trans-disciplinary nature of trauma" (Whitehead, 5), combining work by scholars from various fields, such as literary theory, sociology, and

psychiatry. Dominick LaCapra has also been a trailblazer in the aspect of trauma. He has primarily focused on the study of trauma repression, which is linked to entire communities. *Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory, Trauma* (1994) and *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (2000) have been two of his most important works in trauma theory, in which he alerts in contradiction of empathising with trauma sufferers. Over-identification can occasionally result in 'surrogate victimage', which might have occurred in the case of Benjamin Wilkomirski. Of course, the idea of memory has piqued the interest of researchers from various turfs, many of whom have efforted to classify the countless modes of recalling. In the following section, the researcher will provide a run-through of these countless varieties.

Metaphorical intricacies of Memoir:

We have always used a wide variety of various metaphors to depict the human psyche and memory. These many metaphors have developed over time, frequently in response to new knowledge in psychology, medicine, and technology, and frequently emphasize distinct aspects of memory function. The human intellect was frequently correlated to a parchment or a wax writing tablet in classical antiquity, as Cicero did in his *De Oratore*, for instance (*On the Orator*). The word *tabula rasa*, which literally translates as a "scraped tablet" that is ready for new writing, is derived from the metaphor of the writing tablet. Aristotle used the word "*tabula rasa*," which is a loan conversion of *pinakis agraphos*, which literally translates to "unwritten tablet," in his *De Anima (On the Soul)*. Another similar metaphor is that of the warehouse or inventory (Carruthers). When you recall anything, all you have to do is walk to the right hallway and pick out the appropriate file. Memory is referred to in the Bible as "the tablet of the heart,". For a long time, the heart was considered to be the seat of emotions and identity. The emphasis on the heart persisted throughout the Middle Ages. In the time secular poets depicted lovers "reading" their own hearts, mediaeval monks spoke of an internal "scribe" penning a book of memories in the heart (*Jager, Metaphors*). Eric Jager contends that when reading and books became more accessible to everyone and were no longer just for academics, the symbol of the book of the heart also spread to the general populace. The printing press was invented in the early modern era, which caused the metaphors of handwriting to vanish and led to the idea that the book of the heart was a "printed volume, that suggested a more mechanical self." Homecoming to the symbol of the book of the heart, new medical understandings about the heart's role as a pump that distributes blood throughout the body led to a progressive decline in the heart's perception as the seat of the soul. The metaphor of "the book and volume of my brain," as Jager says from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, was superseded by the metaphor of "the book and volume of my brain" as our understanding of that body part improved owing to doctor of medicine and logicians. In previously stated *Note upon the "Mystic Writing-Pad,"* published in 1925, Sigmund Freud went once more to the traditional metaphors of inscription. He views the metaphor of the paper as flawed since it implies that all memories, like all writing on paper, are permanently preserved by the mind. He also thinks the wax tablet model is flawed since it indicates that the mind is unable to store any kind of long-term memory. Therefore, Freud recommends the "mystic writing-pad". Script on the writing pad's initial layer is erasable, while a permanent copy is kept on the second layer. Thus, the mystic writing pad can therefore be compared to the mind. Freud also compared memory to an archaeological dig, although this analogy has drawn considerable criticism since it emphasizes the discovery of historical facts and leaves little opportunity for false memory syndrome or other forms of interpretation.

Although the book has endured as a symbol for the ego or the mind, many additional symbols have emerged over time, the majority of which were inspired by emerging technology. To support his claim that these inventions "helped popularize a more mechanical view of the mind," Jaeger lists watches, steam engines, electric generators, and internal combustion engines (Jaeger). The image became the natural metaphor for memory with the development of taking pictures in the initial part of the nineteenth era.

It was the most precise and long-lasting method of documenting a person, event, or image. People began snapping photos in order to preserve their memories of important occasions or the appearance of someone at a certain moment. As Bergson put it, our memories are made up of a collection of "snapshots of reality." Since then, phrases like "I still have a vivid image in my head of that day" have gained popularity. However, images are quite accurate. They provide us with every single aspect of someone's look at one time, which is something we are unable to recall afterwards with such clarity. The term "photographical memory" still relates to how the analogy of the picture has affected our conception of memory as some type of mechanism that retains precise replicas of information (Jaeger). Evidently, a photograph is not a very good symbol for memory since, in addition to being very exact, memories (*move*) also change with time. In them, people stroll and converse, it may rain or be windy, and automobiles and plains pass by. Simply said, things occur. Memories are not static like a still image.

Feminism and Depiction of Women in Ishiguro's Novel:

Feminism is the concept of equality for women in social, political, and economic realms. Feminism divides opinions on the challenges women encounter as a result of gender prejudice in the political and social spheres. Furthermore, all efforts and struggles aimed at improving the lives of women are grouped together as 'women's issues.' Its focus moved throughout time to various facets of the era. As a result, it can be classified into three groups. The first wave of women's rights took place in the nineteenth and early twentieth eras, followed by the additional wave in the 1960s and 1970s, and the third wave in the 1990s. Feminist philosophy was born as a result of women's organizations. It can be found in a variety of subjects, including women's world, women's history, and women's literature criticism. Feminism has shifted dominant viewpoints in many aspects of Western Civilization, including culture and legislation. Women's rights campaigners have advocated for females' lawful rights, such as bond rights, property rights, and voting rights; women's rights to physical integrity and independence; abortion rights; reproductive rights, including access to contraception and quality prenatal care; protection for women and girls from domestic violence, sexual assault, and rape; and employment rights, such as maternity leave and wage equity. For the most part, working class women in Western Europe and North America were supporters of womanhood ideology and movements. Other ethnic women, on the other hand, have supported other feminist beliefs. As the Human Rights movement gained attraction in the United States and European Colonialism in the Caribbean Islands, Latin America, and Africa began to fade, these women's new ideas and beliefs grew in popularity. In 1982 his initial novel, *A Pale View of Hills*, was published. The tale of Etsuko, a mid-elderly Japanese female existing unaccompanied in England, begins with a conversation linking Etsuko and her young daughter Nikki about Etsuko's eldest daughter, Keiko, who recently committed self-murder. As the novel progresses, the audience learns that Keiko was Etsuko's eldest daughter from her first marriage and Nikki was born from her second marriage to English as the novel unfolds. After her remarriage,

Etsuko left for England with her husband and two daughters. But unlike Nikki, who spoke half English, Keiko was completely Japanese, so she could not communicate in English. This made her feel more and more isolated from her life, which eventually led to self-murder. Etsuko suffers from guilt over Keiko's death. Apologizing for her tale, Etsuko tries to restrain herself as her storyteller. It is worth noting that many of the female characters in Ishiguro's book reflect stereotypes about Japanese women. First, the main characters Etsuko and Keiko and the supporting characters Sachiko and Hanada's wife are overly dependent on others in the novel *A Pale View of Hills*. Aside from Keiko's tale, these support structures are the men of their lives. Etsuko and Jiro's marriage was not perfect, if not unhappy. After the breakup of her marriage, she found refuge from the affections of the British, whom she soon married. One of the goals of this marriage is to make Keiko feel good, but it didn't work out. In fact, there was also a reaction from Keiko. His family broke up with him. His low self-esteem confirmed and self-murder is another important aspect of Japanese society. As a form of competition, the Japanese have traditionally viewed self-murder to praise and restore their identity. This belief is presented in a news article in the novel about this self-murder. Etsuko was shocked to learn that the British considered Japanese to be genocide. Keiko, unlike Nikki, was a faithful Japanese woman, which has been mentioned in several publications. This is understandable given that she is a typical Japanese woman. She is portrayed as a widow who did a second marriage with a motive of giving her daughter a better life. Her fidelity has long been a symbol of Japanese women's submission to their husbands. Finally, it can be said that Ishiguro did a great job portraying the female characters. However, most of these women embody the qualities and characteristics of typical women of Japan, and the natural mother stories they portray are attractive worldwide. They are often willing to preserve for their children. In addition, Ishiguro's consideration of the status of women around the world is reflected in family and social remedies these women seek. He portrayed women's struggles and mental abilities, showing them how to endure and overcome suffering.

Retrospective memory in *When We Were Orphans*:

When We Were Orphans is narrated by and centers on Christopher Banks. It's the 1930s in England, and famed detective Banks is companions with a number of the most well-known people in British society. He describes his rise as a successful detective and how his closeness for Miss Sarah Hemmings grew. However, the foremost chapters of the book are primarily focused on Banks' memories of his youth in Shanghai, China, and his companionship with Akira, the Japanese boy who lived next door. Christopher's nurturing in Shanghai came to an unexpected stop when his father and later his mother disappeared and he moved to live in England. He resolves to try to solve the mystery that has defined his life now that he has become a successful detective. He returns to Shanghai, sure that he will discover his guardians flourishing and well, and therefore save development from disaster. However, due to the war with Japan, a portion of Shanghai is in disarray, and Banks finds himself in the midst of the fighting while looking for his guardians. When he comes across an injured Japanese fighter, he misidentifies him as his adolescence companion Akira. Christopher learns from his Uncle Philip after they are both successfully evacuated from the battlefield that his father fled with his lover and passed away from typhoid two years later. It was true that his mother had been kidnapped. He eventually gave in to war lord Wang Ku's pressure and took her as his courtesan. In the closing chapter, Banks completes his memoirs by describing a visit he paid to his mother while she was in a psychiatric hospital.

Cultural Analysis:

In his first book in five years, *When We Were Orphans*, he revisits this subject matter in a masterfully realized tale that highlights how one's history may influence their present. At age nine, Christopher Banks, an English child born in Shanghai in the early 20th century, becomes an orphan after his guardians mysteriously disappear. He was then relocated to England as a schoolboy, where he grew up into a prominent investigator. Twenty years later, when the Sino-Japanese War broke out, he returned to Shanghai to unravel the mystery of his disappearance. By employing historical details as a setting for his characters, Ishiguro defamiliarizes actual historical truths. One could consider the confession to be the true plot of the detective narrative. It is not the investigator who makes an interesting departure from ordinary detective conventions and uncovers the truth of the case. Banks tried again to find his guardians and put an end to the societal turmoil but was unsuccessful; instead, he employs psychological ratiocination to pinpoint the origins of his pain and moves on with his life. The plot is uncomplicated. His tale is amazing. Christopher's voice is discreet, precise, and far away. Its accuracy should be expected of a person who has devoted his life to a careful study of details and the rigor of critical thinking. However, as time goes on, things that he cannot or don't want to see slowly appear in different layers of his history. His memory, despite what he would like to believe, was swept away by the tragedy of his youth. that his perception, the proud clarity of his vision, can blind and brighten; And the most basic desire - a child for guardians, a man for understanding - can give birth to the most complex truths.

Conclusion

This paper has covered a wide range of topics in this assignment, including memory in all of its facets and how it relates to Kazuo Ishiguro books in precise. It became obvious through studying the development of philosophers' theories of memory that, initially, memory was primarily thought of as a tool for students and rhetoricians. There are methods for maximising your memory, such the place system. The emphasis shifted throughout the Romantic era, from memory to imagination and originality, with an increasing reliance on the former. John Locke and others began to believe that our identity is determined by our memories. Your entire past is contained within your memories, and it affects how you respond to events and people in the present. Proust and Freud are two important figures in how we perceive memory. One of the most well-known literary depictions of unconscious memory was written by Proust. The foundation for trauma theory was laid by Freud. Even today, trauma theorists still draw inspiration from his investigations of problematic memories. In the second section, the researcher goes into more detail about how trauma theory has taken part in an accountable role in the 1990s research of memory. Technology and the escalating gap in tempo linking the present and important historical events, like the Holocaust, have both contributed to this memory explosion. After that, it is provided a brief summary of some books that have had a significant impact on the study of memory. The other types were described of recalling and disremembering as they are classified by psychologists in order to gain a deeper scientific understanding of how memory functions. Finally, the researcher has focused on the literary representations of trauma and memory that postmodern writers have provided.

References

- Ackerman, Diane. *A Natural History of the Senses*. London: Chapman's, 1992
- A Pale View of Hills. London: Faber, 1982.
- Brewer, William F. "What is Autobiographical Memory?" from *Autobiographical Memory: Theoretical and Applied Perspectives*. (ed. David C. Rubin). Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- Carruthers, Mary J. *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*. Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Charles I. Whitfield. "Traumatic amnesia: The evolution of our understanding from a clinical and legal perspective", *Sexual Addiction & Compulsivity*, 1997.
- Draaisma, Douwe. *Metaphors of Memory: A History of Ideas about the Mind*. Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Doring, Tobias. "Sherlock Holmes-He Dead: Disenchanted the English Detective in Kazuo Ishiguro's *When We Were Orphans*." Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd, 2007.
- Frederick M. Holmes. "1. Realism, Dreams and the Unconscious in the Novels of Kazuo Ishiguro", Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2005
- Henke, Christopher. "Recalling Selves, Constructing Selves. Memory and Identity in Contemporary British Fiction." *Journal for the study of British Cultures*.
- Ishiguro, Kazuo. *When We Were Orphans*. London: Faber, 2000.
- Interview with Nermeen Shaikh Q & A Source – www.asiasource.org.
- Jager, Eric. "Books, Computers and Other Metaphors of Memory." *The Chronicle*.
- Jan M, Ziolkowski, eds. *The Medieval Craft of Memory: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures*.
- Jager, Eric. "Books, Computers and Other Metaphors of Memory." *The Chronicle*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002.
- Jennifer Richards. "1. Classical and Early Modern Ideas of Memory", Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2007.
- "Kazuo Ishiguro", Springer Nature, 2011
- Ketelaar, Eric. "The Archive as a Time Machine."
- Lewis, Barry. *Kazuo Ishiguro*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000. *Memento*. Dir. Christopher Nolan. Perf. Guy Pearce. Newmarket Films, 2001.
- Petry, Mike. *Narratives of Memory and Identity: The Novels of Kazuo Ishiguro*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1999.
- Rosington, Michael and Anne Whitehead, eds. *Theories of Memory. An Audience. Texture of Memory – Ishiguro's interview with Donna Liquori*. Times Union.
- Vinet, Dominique. "Revisiting the Memory of Guilt in Ishiguro's *When We Were Orphans*."
- Wong, Cynthia F. *Kazuo Ishiguro*. Tavistock: Northcote House, 2005.
- Winter, Jay. *Recalling War. The Great War Linking Memory and History in the Twentieth Century*.
- Whitehead, Anne. *Trauma Fiction*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd, 2004. www.books.google.co.in
- Yates, Frances. *The Art of Memory*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974.
- Zinck, Pascal. "The Palimpsest of Memory in Kazuo Ishiguro's *When We Were Orphans*."

Research Through Innovation