SELF-CONSTITUTING NARRATIVES: READING KAZUO ISHIGURO'S EARLY NOVELS IN THE LIGHT OF NARRATIVE PSYCHOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

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The aim of this dissertation is to analyze Kazuo Ishiguro's early first-person narratives in the light of narrative psychology, a relatively new perspective in the discipline of psychology. The novels that will be dealt with in this regard are *A Pale View of Hills* (1982), *An Artist of the Floating World* (1986), and *The Remains of the Day* (1989). The study argues that the narrator-characters in these novels constitute a temporary sense of self to live by through storytelling no matter how depressing and fluctuating the situation is. Drawing on the works of narrative psychologists like Dan P. McAdams and John McLeod, this study explores the field of narrative psychology and therapy to establish the link between self-construction and storytelling. Analyzing Ishiguro's novels through the method of dialogic narrative analysis proposed by the sociologist Arthur W. Frank, based on the Bakhtinian term "dialogism," will provide important insights into what Ishiguro aims to do by constantly engaging with similar themes, such as storytelling and healing; individual well-being and collective well-being; narrative and world; individual responsibility and world matters. Within this framework, this study suggests that while stories and storytelling help the narrator-characters to attain a sense of psychological well-being

on an individual level, the novels also question this approach, raising critical questions as to possible conflicts between individual well-being and socio-political well-being by creating a distance between the flesh-and-blood reader and the narrator-characters.

Keywords: Kazuo Ishiguro, self-construction, narrative psychology, dialogic narrative analysis, self-constituting narratives.

ÖZ

BENLİK OLUŞTURAN ANLATILAR: KAZUO ISHIGURO'NUN ERKEN DÖNEM ROMANLARINI ANLATI PSİKOLOJİSİ IŞIĞINDA OKUMAK

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Bu tezin amacı, Kazuo Ishiguro'nun erken dönem birinci şahıs anlatılarını, psikoloji disiplininde görece yeni bir bakış açısı olan anlatı psikolojisi ışığında analiz etmektir. Bu bağlamda ele alınacak romanlar *Uzak Tepeler* (1982), *Değişen Dünyada Bir Sanatçı* (1986) ve *Günden Kalanlar*'dır (1989). Bu çalışma, bu romanlardaki anlatıcı-karakterlerin, içinde bulundukları durum ne kadar iç karartıcı ve inişli çıkışlı olursa olsun, ayakta kalmak için hikâye anlatımı yoluyla geçici bir benlik duygusu oluşturduklarını savunmaktadır. Dan P. McAdams ve John McLeod gibi anlatı psikologlarının çalışmalarından yararlanan bu çalışma, benlik inşası ve hikâye anlatımı arasındaki bağlantıyı kurmak için anlatı psikolojisi ve terapi alanını araştırmaktadır. Ishiguro'nun romanlarını sosyolog Arthur W. Frank tarafından önerilen ve Bakhtinci "diyalojizm" kavramına dayanan diyalojik anlatı analizi yöntemiyle inceleyerek Ishiguro'nun hikâye anlatımı ve iyileşme; bireysel esenlik ve kolektif esenlik; anlatı ve dünya; bireysel sorumluluk ve dünya meseleleri gibi benzer temaları sürekli işleyerek ne yapmayı amaçladığına dair önemli içgörüler sağlayacaktır. Bu çerçevede, bu çalışma, hikâyelerin ve hikâye anlatımının anlatıcı-karakterlerin bireysel düzeyde psikolojik esenlik duygusuna ulaşmalarına yardımcı

olduğunu, fakat bu romanların aynı zamanda bu yaklaşımı sorguladığını ve okur ile anlatıcı-karakterler arasında bir mesafe yaratarak bireysel esenlik ile sosyo-politik esenlik arasındaki olası çatışmalara dair eleştirel sorgulamalar getirdiğini öne sürmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kazuo Ishiguro, benlik inşası, anlatı psikolojisi, diyalojik anlatı analizi, benlik oluşturan anlatılar.

“We humans are always held in a web of stories, but we are not bugs caught in some spider’s web. We ourselves weave the web that supports us. And being human, we weave webs that are held in place by others’ webs, including webs from the past; that’s what it is to be social and exist in history. But the possibilities are still endless.” (Frank, “Notes” 16)

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Crowned as the winner of the Nobel prize for literature in 2017, Kazuo Ishiguro has once more demonstrated his status as a global writer through both his literary techniques and the themes he deals with. His writing retains some elements that may seem distinctly Japanese to the reader, while at the same time reflecting his constant fascination with exploring universal themes by addressing global human-related issues (Wong, *Kazuo Ishiguro* 3). In accordance with his persistent interest in human-related issues, the reason why Ishiguro was awarded the Nobel prize was announced as follows by the committee: Kazuo Ishiguro, "in novels of great emotional force, has uncovered the abyss beneath our illusory sense of connection with the world" (The Nobel). This study seeks to explore and characterize this "abyss" between people and the world to some extent by focusing on the first-person narratives of Ishiguro's early novels, attempting to analyze their narrator-characters and their self-narratives, since all the narrators in his early novels recurrently work on the link between their perceptions about themselves and their relationships with the world around them.

In his conversation with Gregory Mason, Ishiguro explicitly expresses his deep interest in the broken relationship between human beings and the world:

> I'm interested in in people who, in all sincerity, work very hard and perhaps courageously in their lifetimes toward something, fully believing that they're contributing to something good, only to find that social climate has done topsy-turvy on them by the time they've reached the ends of their lives. The very things they thought they could be proud of have now become things they have to be ashamed of. (Mason & Ishiguro 339)

This dissertation focuses on similar disruptions in narrator-characters' relationship with the world and the efforts to overcome the ruptures that these disruptions create in their sense of self in Ishiguro's novels. It aims to analyze Kazuo Ishiguro's early

first-person novels which include narrator-characters who self-consciously construct narratives and their selves through their self-narratives simultaneously. The novels that will be dealt with in this regard are *A Pale View of Hills* (1982), *An Artist of the Floating World* (1986), and *The Remains of the Day* (1989).

In *A Pale View of Hills*, the story is told by an elderly Japanese woman living in England, Etsuko. Triggered by a visit from her second daughter Niki, Etsuko reflects upon and recounts the past events involving the most painful moment in her life, the suicide of her first daughter, Keiko. In *An Artist of the Floating World*, Masuji Ono, a former fascist/imperial propagandist painter, looks back on his life through the visits paid by his elder daughter Sachiko and tries to come to grips with his present in which his previous vaunted status as an artist before the Second World War has been devastated and he is not able to escape from his acquaintances' subtle accusations that he is responsible for the harmful consequences of the war. *The Remains of the Day* is the life story of "a most English caricature – the butler" (Wong, *Kazuo Ishiguro* 2), Stevens, who spends his life sticking to the principles of "a great butler" but later comes to question the mistakes he has made and the life he has spent. He embarks on a journey to meet the former housekeeper and his repressed love, Miss Kenton. Through the journey, he recounts his past to search for the meaning of his life and comes to terms with his past, accepts his present condition, and makes projections about the future.

The study argues that the narrator-characters, namely Etsuko, Ono, and Stevens respectively constitute a temporary sense of self to live by through storytelling no matter how depressing and fluctuating the situation is. All the narrators in Ishiguro's early novels look back at their lives and somehow question their lives, which all have troubling aspects. As Yugin Teo suggests, they "are compelled for various reasons to revisit the past in an attempt to right this wrong" (7). The characters' journeys into the past are constantly supported by physical journeys, so temporal travels and spatial movements are intertwined in the narratives. These three novels are selected for this study because in these three novels the narrator-characters have troubles that created narrative ruptures in their lives at the beginning of their storytelling and they come to terms with their past by overcoming their distress and attain a better psychological well-being at the end of their self-

narratives. Through narrating, the narrators in Ishiguro's novels are in a constant dialogue with their pasts to come to grips with their past wrongdoings or present conflicts. While they are in a troubled state of mind in one way or another, they attain some temporary unity to make them keep up with life in the end.

Ishiguro's early novels suggest or portray ways of dealing with life crises through storytelling. They emphasize, in general, a human instinct, which is to survive no matter how depressing the situation is, and the narrators ultimately find consolation in recounting their life stories. The self-narrations of the characters produce soothing or healing effects. Therefore, storytelling becomes a tool in the hands of Ishiguro to allow his protagonists lacking any firm anchoring to construct their self, to establish a secure place in society, and to continue their lives with a renewed sense of self having a better psychological state of mind. In other words, the narrator-characters' narrations have a therapeutic effect on their troubled sense of selves.

The therapeutic effect of writing is something Ishiguro is well aware of and cares about. In one of his conversations on the positive psychological effect of writing, he states the following: "I think a lot of them [writers] do write out of something that is unresolved somewhere deep down and, in fact, it's probably too late ever to resolve it. Writing is a kind of consolation or a therapy" (Vorda et al. 151). Although Ishiguro's observations on the therapeutic nature of writing focus on the actual author in this conversation, it is possible to claim that his claim extends to his protagonists, too. His narrator-characters try to get rid of their troubles by telling their stories. In this respect, Ishiguro's narrator-characters are highly immersed in human experiences. As Matthew Beedlam summarizes aptly, the dominant issue of Ishiguro's oeuvre is "how we live our lives" (101). Ishiguro's characters in his early novels are not detached from everyday life and the concerns that humans experience in ordinary life.

It can be argued that one of Ishiguro's major thematic concerns, that is the disrupted or broken relationship between human beings and the world, has become the subject of many different strands of thought following the institutionalization of postmodernism. Drawing on Giddens's *Modernity and Self-Identity* (1991), the narrative psychologist Dan P. McAdams argues that "amidst the constant change and

indeterminacy of the modern (and postmodern) world, people no longer rely solely on such authoritative sources as the church (or parents) to define who they are. Instead, they invent stories" ("First We Invented Stories" 13). Similar to what McAdams argues, for Ishiguro, the invention of stories, or the construction of self-stories, by narrator-characters turn into a tool for reestablishing their relationship with the world, constructing their selves, seeing themselves in a different light, and reorganizing themselves according to changing situations. In Ishiguro's novels, it is foregrounded that the characters are in search for reconstruction or a rather stable meaning of their lives through storytelling however traumatic, complex, or fluctuating the condition is.

In *Self as Narrative* (1996), Worthington explores the implications of an important question, "If I am always (an)other to myself, how can I make judgments and choices, or hold beliefs?" (12), in terms of engaging in narrative practices and holding moral positions in contemporary fiction. While resonating with Lacanian psychoanalytical criticism, Worthington's speculations are also in line with Ishiguro's response to human subjectivity in contemporary fiction. Ishiguro's narrators struggle to constitute what Frederic Jameson calls "cognitive maps"[1] for themselves, a kind of solid ground and a temporary "secure position" in Zygmunt Bauman's words to live by while revisiting and reinterpreting their lives no matter how fluctuating or slippery the ground is on a personal level. Being in a state of flux as a cultural condition and lacking reference points, Ishiguro's narrators, through storytelling, construct a functioning temporary narrative identity[2] in which they find consolation, recovery, peace, escape, and emancipation. As a response to the lack of cognitive maps, Nicoline Timmer states that, "Quite simply put it is not unthinkable that after endless proposals for deconstructions, a desire to construct will break through" (21). Correspondingly, Ishiguro reveals the human need to make sense of

[1] Mansfield builds on Jameson's theorizations on cognitive maps and claims that their absence defines the anchorless position of human subjectivities: "we lack the cognitive maps that would allow us to position ourselves in this world, and to know where we are" (164). Likewise, Bauman argues that contemporary men and women "suffer, one might say, from a chronic absence of resources with which they could build a truly solid and lasting identity, anchor it and stop if from drifting" (26).

[2] Arthur F. Frank in *Letting Stories Breathe: A Socio-Narratology* (2010) claims that it is more useful to use the term "narrative identifying, emphasizing that sustaining an identity is never final" (49).

their past, present, and future and to have an anchoring point - however transitory it is – amidst the fluctuating life conditions. That is why Ishiguro has full grasp of this "abyss" by constructing his novels around the human desire to reconceptualize through narrating.

This study examines the narrator-characters' disrupted relationship with the world and their coping with it by using narrative psychology as a theoretical framework. That Ishiguro's narrator-characters reconstitute their selves by journeying into the past to cope with their troubles is closely related to the narrative psychological approach. Narrative psychology, which emerged around the 1980s as a sub-category within the discipline of psychology, treats self as narrative. It explores how people create, interpret, and share stories to make sense of their lives, experiences, and identities. Theodore Sarbin and Jeromy Bruner, the forerunners of narrative psychology, assert that people largely construct their selves and communicate their actions through narratives. In *Narrative Psychology: The Storied Nature of Human Existence* (1986), Sarbin defines narrative as "the root metaphor for psychology" and treats it as the organizing principle for human action, as narrative allows the individual to include their reasons for their acts as well as the causes of happenings (3). In "The Narrative Construction of Reality" (1991), Bruner claims that "we organize our experience and our memory of human happenings mainly in the form of narrative" (4). So, narrative appears as a primary mode in the study of human beings in terms of making sense of themselves and their experiences. In parallel, the narrator-characters in Ishiguro's novels under scrutiny make sense of their experiences and construct their selves through their self-narratives. Therefore, narrative psychology appears as a suitable ground to approach the narrators in these novels.

Along with this, this study contends that the self-narratives recounted by the narrators serve a therapeutic purpose, helping the narrators in comprehending and overcoming their distress. In order to explore the relationship between their narration and its therapeutic effects, this study utilizes narrative therapy, which has developed within narrative psychology as a practical application. Narrative therapy aims to help individuals to view their past as a narrative and, by identifying how stories affect their sense of self, it provides an opportunity for individuals to liberate themselves

from disorganized and incoherent stories of self and recognize their own power and agency. In *Narrative Means to Therapeutic Ends* (1990), Michael White and David Epston, early prominent narrative therapists, establish the basis of narrative therapy and illustrate the therapeutic process as follows: "externalizing the problem, mapping the influence of the problem on the people and of the people on the problem, attending to the neglected aspects, revising the relationships in the light of these discoveries, and performing the new story" (qtd. in Dwivedi & Gardner 32). The crucial element here is to bring forth the belief in the individual's transformative capacity and agency. It emphasizes the individual's attempt to dismantle limiting and disempowering stories in interaction and construct a transformative narrative that guides and reshapes those stories with the help of the therapist. In line with this, this study investigates how the narrator-characters work on their troubles and fix the ruptures in their life-narratives by making use of the principles of narrative therapy.

However, the aim of this study is to examine the therapeutic effect of narratives and storytelling on fictional narrator-characters, so the use of narrative psychology and therapy for literary analysis poses some methodological challenges. Narrative psychology and therapy relate to people engaging in a clinical environment principally; thus, narrative therapy entails an interaction between therapist and client and calls for a therapist's involvement and mediation. In these novels, there is no such therapist-character, and the narrators are alone in dealing with the ruptures in their life-narratives. Therefore, directly applying the methods of narrative psychology and therapy to a literary analysis would result in an incongruence. To overcome this obstacle, the method of dialogical narrative analysis proposed by the sociologist Arthur W. Frank in *Letting Stories Breathe: A Socio-Narratology* (2010) is employed for the literary analyses of the novels. Dialogic narrative analysis in its basic sense interrogates the relationship between story, storyteller, and audience. Building on the Bakhtinian term "dialogism," Frank posits five speculative questions in dialogic narrative approach to stories as "artful representations of lives" and claims that "stories reshape the past and imaginatively project the future" (Frank, "Practicing Dialogical Narrative Analysis" 33). Considering that Ishiguro's narrators seek to attain mental well-being through storytelling as in narrative therapy,

dialogical narrative analysis would be a very suitable method in literary analysis for the purposes of this study to see the effect of stories on the narrator's state of mind.

In "Notes on Socio-Narratology and Narrative Therapy" (2017), Arthur W. Frank examines the similarities between narrative therapy and socio-narratology, whose method is dialogic narrative analysis. Frank argues that both share the same conception of the self: "My questions about what sustains a sense of self and what sustains group affiliations are central issues underpinning any therapeutic work, although narrative therapy seems to be the therapeutic modality that most actively engages these questions" ("Notes" 3). Both narrative therapy and socio-narratology recognize that a single authoritative story includes power dynamics at play in itself; therefore, they both foreground "the multiple narrational possibilities" (Frank, "Notes" 6). Both agree that "stories precede experiences" (Frank, "Notes" 8). In addition, they both maintain the belief that stories are partially independent from consciousness. As Frank says, "stories are like seeds, or spores, or viruses; they blow around, they find hosts, they germinate, and they pass on" ("Notes" 9). Furthermore, they both treat stories as companions: "stories as companions in the sense that stories shape humans to be what they are, and humans are perpetually reshaping stories" (Frank, "Notes" 10). Within this respect, narrative therapy and dialogic narrative analysis as an interpretative method of socio-narratology complement each other in order to investigate the effects of stories and storytelling on the storyteller in terms of psychological well-being.

In this context, this study can be considered an interdisciplinary study in which various disciplines converge to evaluate Ishiguro's narrator-characters. Drawing on narrative psychology, an approach within the discipline of psychology, the study tries to examine the effect of the narrators' self-narratives on their psychological well-being by utilizing the principles of narrative therapy, and also attempts to make this inquiry using the method of dialogic narrative analysis, an interpretive method which has recently been frequently used in the field of social sciences. In this context, this study employs a new interdisciplinary methodological approach to understand Ishiguro's narrators' psychological universes and the effects of stories on their psychological well-being.

Narrative psychology and therapy have not been applied in depth to fictional works. In *Do You Feel It Too?: The Post-postmodern Syndrome in American Fiction at the Turn of the Millennium* (2010), Nicoline Timmer made use of narrative psychology as a background to trace post-postmodern aesthetics in American novels. By analyzing the self in new American novels, she fills the gap created by postmodernism with the notion of self in narrative psychology. In this context, this study may be said to parallel her work. What distinguishes this study from her study is that it also utilizes the principles of narrative therapy. Narrative therapy focuses on the process of people coping with their distress by establishing new relationships with their own stories. Narrative psychology and therapy are approaches in the discipline of psychology and counselling which have benefited a lot from the studies in literature. Hence, it is understandable that this is not an approach that is frequently employed in literary studies. However, this study attempts to approach these novels through an interdisciplinary lens by employing dialogic narrative analysis, which maintains close ties with literature as a method applied in the field of social sciences. In this regard, this study introduces a novel theoretical framework by using the principles of narrative psychology and therapy as well as the tools of dialogic narrative analysis.

Examining Ishiguro's narrator-characters through this psychological lens closely aligns with Ishiguro's thematic concerns. In his conversation with Brian Schaffer, Ishiguro explains his psychological viewpoint. While talking about the narrator of *When We Were Orphans* (2000), Kazuo Ishiguro states that "[a] child's logic somehow dictates that when you heal your own past, the whole world will come to be put back together again" (Shaffer & Ishiguro 4). He asserts this point by distinguishing *When We Were Orphans* from his first three novels, as his early novels are about more "realistic assessments" in a more "realistic world" as Ishiguro claims (Shaffer & Ishiguro 5). In fact, Ishiguro's approach here also informs us about his view of Freudian psychoanalysis, which is basically shaped around the assumption that when we return to our childhood and solve the distress there, the symptoms will disappear. However, in the context of Ishiguro's psychological universe, one might contend that such an approach is rather simplistic. Likewise, Cynthia Wong acknowledges that "he [Ishiguro] does not subscribe to Freudian

theory" (*Kazuo Ishiguro* 2). Ishiguro himself admits that Freud's way of looking at the world in the earlier part of the twentieth century was a very valid and useful method (Shaffer & Ishiguro 13). However, in parallel with an Italian critic (Ishiguro does not name the critic), Ishiguro believes that people now have urges that they do not actually have because of bombardments by the media and advertising, as opposed to Freud's way of looking at the world – "seeing human beings as repressing sexual and other urges, as being emotionally repressed" (Shaffer & Ishiguro 13). According to Ishiguro, people are now being manipulated:

> With so many things pulling people in so many different directions, far from being repressed, people are having latent or perhaps even non-existent urges created for them, so that they start to become very unsure about who they are or what their role should be. (Shaffer & Ishiguro 14)

Narrative psychology as a postmodern approach in psychology similarly claims that the self is a narrative which is immersed in other narratives in society. Therefore, other stories in society have an influential role on one's sense of self. On the other hand, narrative therapy as postpsychlogical counselling is based on an outward journey rather than an inward journey, unlike in a psychoanalytical approach. In this respect, the narrative psychological approach seems parallel with Ishiguro's view of psychology. Therefore, this study, which connects the narrators' narratives of the self with other stories in society, provides an appropriate ground for analyzing Ishiguro's narrators.

In this respect, it should be stressed that this study does not psychoanalyze the narrator-characters in terms of their troubles and the way they cope with their distress. Instead of focusing on the deeper meaning of the stories the narrators tell, it focuses on how they make the dysfunctional stories they tell functional and how they deal with the ruptures in their self-narratives. Therefore, this study differs from Brain W. Shaffer's psychoanalytic study of Ishiguro's novels. In *Understanding Kazuo Ishiguro* (1998), Shaffer, one of the pioneering literary analysts who has extensively studied Ishiguro's work, gives a psychoanalytic hearing to Ishiguro's novels. Drawing on Freudian concepts such as the repetition drive, the death instinct, repression mechanisms, and the uncanny, Shaffer argues that "The author [Ishiguro] is more a novelist of the inner character than of the outer world" (8). In contrast to Shaffer's claim, the argument of this study is more in line with the arguments and

conclusions presented by Cynthia Wong and Yugin Teo, although the theoretical framework and method used in this study differs from theirs.

In *Kazuo Ishiguro* (2000), Cynthia F. Wong reads Ishiguro's novels in the light of reader-response theory. She demonstrates that reading Ishiguro's novels in the light of this theory is useful for examining how his narrator-characters respond to historical and personal forces in their lives. Through this theory, Wong approaches Ishiguro's narrator-characters as human beings: "Narrators show a human tendency and need for consolation" (*Kazuo Ishiguro* 19). By focusing on elements of memory and the unreliability of narrators, she examines how Ishiguro's narrators relate to their troubled pasts. As she notes, in Ishiguro's novels, the main characters seek solace for past losses by revisiting trauma, hoping to find "catharsis" through storytelling (Wong, *Kazuo Ishiguro* 2). By reconstructing their own pasts, Wong argues, the narrators are "working through the pain of [their] losses" (*Kazuo Ishiguro* 24). In a similar line of thinking, this study focuses on how the narrator-characters deal with their troubled pasts and how they manage to continue their lives in a better state of mind.

On the other hand, in *Kazuo Ishiguro and Memory* (2014), Yugin Teo predominantly utilizes Paul Ricoeur's theoretical framework to examine the complex functioning of memory in Ishiguro's novels. Teo's emphasis on the interplay between memory, identity, and unreliability resonates with similar focal points in this study and reflects a common thematic concern. In Teo's analysis, the act of the narrators revisiting their personal troubles from the past in Ishiguro's works is approached through Freud's theory of mourning. Teo highlights a departure from the perspectives of both Ricoeur and Freud, as Ishiguro's narrators do not wish to forget the past, thus offering a distinct perspective on the complexities of memory. According to Teo, "The work of memory inherent in Ishiguro's novels involves the prolonging of the memory of the lost object, through engagement with nostalgia and utopian traditions, and allowing for a positive affirmation of the prior existence of the lost object" (Teo 10). Teo is not mistaken in his claim; this study similarly argues that the narrators try to overcome their distress by rewriting the past rather than forgetting it.

The arguments and conclusions presented in this study show remarkable similarities with Wong's and Teo's work. However, this study departs from these previous studies by utilizing a different theoretical framework and methodology to provide a more comprehensive and nuanced view of the complex relationship between storytelling and self-construction, as well as the connection between storytelling and psychological well-being. Previous scholarly efforts have not adequately explored the connections between storytelling and self-construction, as well as the relationship between storytelling and its therapeutic effects. Consequently, the overall aim of this study is to fill this research gap by exploring in depth the multi-dimensional relationships between stories, storytelling techniques, self-formation processes, and indicators of psychological well-being. Through this comprehensive examination, this study aims to enrich our understanding of the profound effects of narratives on human experience and, through an interdisciplinary lens, to pave the way for more nuanced approaches to research focusing on the relationship between story, storytelling and its therapeutic effects.

To give a more general overview of Ishiguro scholarship, one could suggest that his novels have always been quite open to criticism and analysis from a wide range of perspectives, so the boundaries in scholarly studies on Ishiguro's work cannot not easily be marked out. However, it is still possible and worthwhile to highlight the mainstream themes of discussion around his novels. His novels have sparked many valuable discussions on and contributed a lot to memory studies, and it is possible to argue that the study of the narrator in Ishiguro's early novels has so far been somehow confined to the representation of memory and un/reliability issues. This study is in line with the studies claiming that memory is elusive and is shaped by present concerns, or that the first-person narrator is inclined to unreliability while attaining "sympathetic" aspects (Wong, *Kazuo Ishiguro* 52), which may sometimes result in readers' identifying themselves with the characters. However, this study attempts to throw a different light on the issue of the un/reliability of the narrators in the following chapters by highlighting its potential to liberate and soothe the narrators.

The narrators of Ishiguro's novels under scrutiny here offer accounts about their past that are similarly interlocked with historical contexts, so it is impossible to

read their life-narratives without resorting to the social, political, and cultural context created in the novels. To illustrate, in *A Pale View of Hills*, the historical setting is the bombing of Nagasaki during the Second World War, the effects of which determine the life course of Etsuko. Japan's imperial propaganda right before the Second World War is a dominant theme in *An Artist of the Floating World*. Likewise, the rise of Nazism during the period between the two world wars affects the life of all characters of *The Remains of the Day* in terms of the positions they adopt vis-à-vis the ideology of fascism. In this regard, the novels are not just confined to the protagonists' private or individual life stories, rather the protagonists' self-narratives are heavily intertwined with important historical events.

The emphasis on the historical context in Ishiguro's novels is somehow related to the working of memory. As Astrid Erll claims, historical/social/cultural events hold a crucial spot in human memory: "we remember in sociocultural contexts" ("Cultural Memory" 5). In addition to the relationship between storytelling and healing, its foregrounding of the historical context is another reason why narrative psychology and its tools are chosen to study these novels because "narrative psychology puts greater emphasis on the interconnection between *self and culture*" (Bruner, *Acts of Meaning* 95; Crossley, *Narrative Psychology* 9, emphasis added). In narrative psychology, the context always accompanies the notion of the self; similarly, the subject is always embedded in a historical context in the novels by Ishiguro. Some of the previous research treats Ishiguro's early novels as historical novels. They argue that Ishiguro's early novels, in the way they deal with history, are an example of what Linda Hutcheon calls "historiographical metafiction," the postmodern historical novel (Furst 550; Lang 144). The current study, however, is not concerned with how traditional historiography is problematized, rather it focuses on how the narrators relate the historical context to their own states of mind and how they benefit from it for their own individual interests.

It is important to keep in mind that the narratives about the past that Ishiguro's narrators in his early novels recount is already a construct by nature, or one possible version of the past. Smith and Watson point out the fabricated nature of memories: "Memories are records of how we have experienced events, not replicas of the events themselves" (16). In other words, the revisitation of one's past is not

performed to construct it as what originally happened or to mirror an external world. As the experience is a subjective construction at the moment when the subject perceives a particular event, its revisitation later is also a subjective construction. Brian W. Shaffer, in his conversation with Kazuo Ishiguro, claims that all of Ishiguro's first-person narrators "tell stories that characteristically mask or distort rather than uncover the true essence of their tales" (1). Acknowledging this, this study does not question the veracity of the events in great detail, rather the focus is on the perception of the events by the characters and on how the events influence the construction of the self. Thus, the notion of unreliability is considered in a different light. Unless there is a deliberate deception on the part of the narrator-character, fictional characters, like people, tend to unconsciously deceive themselves while constructing the past.

The narrator-characters in Ishiguro's early novels remember the past in order to keep living by reconfiguring, reshaping, and reconstructing the past without necessarily sticking to its original version, if one can ever talk about an original version. As Teo states, "these characters struggle to reconcile past memories with present circumstances and discover that the complicated process of remembering and retelling events leads to a less accurate and less objective version of the past" (9). Self-conscious that memory is less accurate and less objective, Ishiguro's novels offer suitable ground for the narrators to make necessary amendments to unburden themselves of the past. Therefore, they may revisit the past with a different perspective and reconfiguration, and they may reconstruct their past accordingly with a more functioning story. They can construct any version of the past as they choose or make themselves believe. However, it is worthwhile to state that the narrators are not necessarily devoid of any ethical concerns as if they are free to construct the past as they desire in the "re-membering" process of their past. Ishiguro's narrators sometimes deceive themselves because they are highly preoccupied with their own troubled pasts and sometimes avoid confronting their own memories, which seems to be the underlying reason behind the un/reliability of their memory. In discussing *A Pale View of Hills*, Ishiguro highlights a theme that extends to his first three novels, a deep fascination with the "type of language, especially how people use the language of self-deception and self-protection" (Mason & Ishiguro 337). This study will

similarly benefit from self-deception especially as conceptualized by Amit Marcus in *Self-Deception in Literature and Philosophy* (2007). Marcus approaches the concept of self-deception from a broader perspective and problematizes the traditional binary distinction of un/reliability in literature.

The narrators' intense engagement with their past inevitably brings up speculations as to an individual's responsibility towards the past, which can be handled within the scope of the ethics of remembering. In life stories written in first-person, truth claims are always at stake due to the fallible nature of human memory.[3] While the elusive nature of memory undermines the reliability of a first-person account, it can also create a space for the narrators to unburden themselves from their faults and responsibilities in the past. In "Recollecting Memories, Reconstructing Identities," building on Walter Benjamin and Hannah Arendt's theorizations on storytelling, Bizzini argues that "the narrators' [the narrators of Ishiguro's early novels] storytelling is ultimately a passive account of their victimization" (67). With specific reference to *The Remains of the Day*, she puts that Stevens's "narration becomes a way of escaping responsibility" (66). Bizzini's claim may be a meaningful interrogation for Stevens, but it is difficult to defend it for Ishiguro's other two novels, since it is hardly accurate to claim that Etsuko and Ono are running away from responsibility.[4] On the contrary, they partly confront their troubles, but the magnitude of their distress causes them to treat the past in a way that is more palatable to them.

Paul Eakin draws attention to the transformative power of remembering in first-person narrations, arguing that "autobiographical truth is not a fixed but an evolving content in an intricate process of self-discovery and self-creation, and, further, that the self that is the center of all autobiographical narrative is necessarily a fictive structure" (3). As the fallibility of human memory is already posited, this study does not focus on the workings and representation of a fallible memory in the chosen novels. Instead, it analyzes the functions served by the unreliable narrators'

[3] Straub points out the fallible disposition of human memory by stating that what our memory absorbs and preserves are not "bare, objective facts," and memory itself is by no means a "mirror of nature." Straub posits, "Rather, it encodes and stores things which have already been perceived and received beforehand in the light of available representational modi such as terms and concepts, schemata, scripts, as well as symbolic forms" (Straub 226).

[4] These topics will be discussed in more detail in the analyses of the novels.

reconfiguring the past within their present, so this study will focus more on the relationship between the fallibility of memory and the psychological states of the narrators. Other important questions include the relationship between the working of memory and the way the narrators benefit from it or refuse it. If they benefit from the fallibility of memory, that is, if they use their past for their own benefit, the question arises as to how ethically they are acting in this regard. It is precisely this function of memory that Ishiguro himself tries to explore in these novels: "But things like memory, how one uses memory for one's own purposes, one's own ends, those things interest me more deeply" (Mason & Ishiguro 347). The focus in this respect will be around such questions related to the fallibility of memory and the narrators' self-interests. Therefore, the study questions whether there is a discrepancy between psychological well-being on an individual level and on a socio-political level, because Ishiguro seems to create a distance between the narrator-characters and the readers by employing unreliable narrators in the novels.

If one is authorized to change or reconfigure the past according to the present needs - which is an undeniable truth about the working of memory and storytelling about the past, then taking responsibility for the wrongs done in the past may seem a trivial question since people always tend to rationalize themselves in every situation. However, considering that human beings are social beings, it does not seem sufficient for individuals to believe only in their own version of stories, independent of the narratives of society, and thus to be free from feelings of guilt. Therefore, it is necessary to focus on the storytelling process. Narrative digressions, for instance, could be a quite telling narrative strategy that narrators apply. In narrative psychological terms, the digressions in fictional works could be a convenient tool to keep the narrators away from facing the bitter truth, to make oneself believe a comforting lie, or sometimes help the characters see the events from other perspectives. Narrative digression could also help the individuals "externalize the problem[5]" to establish the links between this event and the related events better and to help the individuals create a new identity more easily. As a tool of narrative digression, the narrators may sometimes externalize their own problems by narrating

[5] This is one of the first steps of narrative therapy as proposed by the narrative psychologist Michael White.

the life stories of other characters, which will indeed be a dominant theme in the analysis of *A Pale View of Hills*. Etsuko in this novel employs others' stories to talk about her past, which stands in line with the claim, "When we discuss others, we are always talking about ourselves" (Saresma 616). Similarly, a narrator can transfer his/her problems to other people and may find consolation in narrating a parallel story when the traumatic event is unbearable. So, hindsight, "a vehicle of narrative reflection" (Freeman 8), may produce positive results in terms of the psychological well-being of the narrators by throwing a different light into the past. In this study, along with literary studies, the narrators' retrospective narration will benefit from the perspective provided by the psychologist Mark Freeman's *Hindsight: The Promise and Peril of Looking Backwards* (2010).

This study acknowledges the aforementioned studies and benefits from them but attempts to bring these discussions around the narrator to another ground of discussion, that is the construction of the self. This study argues that the narrative structure of Ishiguro's novels mirrors a narrative psychological approach; his narrators share with the reader their life-narratives not simply to tell what has actually happened, but to make sense of what they have experienced and to cope with their mental state through the process of narration. Approaching Ishiguro's novels from a narrative psychological perspective illuminates the way the protagonists hear, construct, or imagine, and the way their identity interacts with the stories within the cultural stock available to them. In narrative psychological approach, "instead of just concluding or simply positing that we are mediated and fractured, the focus is on how we still do try to make sense of our selves, *even when* fractured and mediated" (Timmer 41-42). In line with this, Ishiguro's novels open a space for the narrator-characters to tell their life stories, and by narrating, they build their selves and establish new relationships with the world around them. Analyzing the self-constituting narratives by Ishiguro's narrators in the light of narrative psychology will offer insight into his choice of recurrent themes and dispositionally similar characters in his early novels.

The following chapter surveys the critical developments in humanities that have followed the narrative turn, such as the relationship between narratives and human psychology and identity construction processes in storytelling, in order to

give an insight into narrative psychology. Drawing on the theorizations by John McLeod and Dan P. McAdams, it discusses the main tenets and strands in narrative psychology and narrative therapy, which is the practical application of the former. This chapter will also discuss dialogical narrative analysis offered by Arthur W. Frank and explain how it can be used to analyze Ishiguro's novels. Then, other related concepts regarding the narrator-character's narration such as "hindsight" and "self-deception" will be elaborated upon in the same chapter.

The third chapter explores Etsuko's narrative psychological journey into her past in *A Pale View of Hills,* focusing on the relationship among stories and storytelling and the psychological well-being of Etsuko. It argues that Etsuko's psychological journey serves as an attempt of self-recovery following the tragic suicide of her daughter Keiko, a traumatic event which created narrative ruptures in her life-story. Since there is not any available narrative to organize her experience around, the reader witnesses how Etsuko struggles to find a narrative where her traumatic experience is contextualized. In order to make sense of Keiko's suicide, she resorts to the historical context of post-war Japan. Furthermore, she tries to come to terms with the suicide using mask-stories. With the help of the story about Sachiko and Mariko, she admits that she made a mistake by bringing Keiko to England. Although there is not full recovery of Etsuko's trauma, it can still be held that she attempts to face the tragedy through a therapeutic re-working of her self-narrative, and at the end there seems to be some progress in her psychological well-being.

The fourth chapter examines how Masuji Ono in *An Artist of the Floating World*, whose paintings constituted a part of the cultural leg of Japan's fascist/imperialist propaganda, interacts with the stories available to him to cope with his sense of guilt. Informed by narrative psychology and therapy, Ono's relationship with the stories in his life and their relation to his psychological well-being will be under scrutiny. The stories that constituted Ono's former self make him unable to breathe in post-war Japan. Although Ono struggles hard to create a space for himself with his storytelling, the stories around him do not allow him to feel comfortable and cause him to be narratively restricted. In time, Ono succeeds in coping with the sense of guilt, and at the end of his storytelling, he largely comes to terms with his past and attains a high level of psychological well-being. The coping strategies that help Ono

get rid of the inner conflicts he has experienced are again made possible through narratives.

The fifth chapter focuses on Stevens in *The Remains of the Day* and the construction of his past in the form of a story and the effects of stories on his sense of self and his psychological well-being. Having shaped his life around the narrative of "a great butler" and thus convinced that he would contribute to humanity through perfection in his job, Stevens recounts his exemplary life to young butlers, though a careful reading shows that it contains some misconceptions. In accordance with the perspectives in narrative psychology and therapy, it may be expected that Stevens recognizes these misconceptions and undergoes a profound process of self-deconstruction and the reconstruction of a new self. However, Stevens fails to see how much trouble these stories produce in both an individual and a collective sense. Stevens does not have an insightful perspective to see the mistakes in his life. The reason for this appears to be the lack of a social life, a social counterpart to validate or negate his perspective. As a consequence of this lack, at the end of his self-narrative, Stevens closes the old books of his life by avoiding the painful retrospective process, which has already created an ethical distance between Stevens and the flesh-and-blood reader.

In the concluding chapter, the key similarities and differences among these three novels will be summarized. The discussion will delve into Ishiguro's primary concerns within these works and establish their place within a literary trend, such as modernism, postmodernism, or post-postmodernism. It will also underscore the significance and contributions of this study and propose recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER II

DEFINITION AND DEVELOPMENT OF NARRATIVE PSYCHOLOGY

This chapter posits the theoretical framework of the present study. After a survey of the definitions and functions attributed to narratives, a discussion concerning the link between narratives and human psychology is offered. Next, the background and various approaches and strands within narrative psychology is offered with a specific emphasis on the theoretical works by John McLeod and Dan P. McAdams. It is important to note that the approaches that will be discussed in this part are clinically based on a therapist/client relationship. In addition to this, this chapter is built on the tools of "dialogic narrative analysis," which will be the method of this study in analyzing fictional works in the following chapters. As there is no therapist/client interaction in the chosen literary works, a therapist's interventions and guidance are not applicable to this study. But it could also be argued that the narrator-characters go through a similar process on their own when narrating and achieve healing through storytelling practices. Therefore, the focus at this point will be on the therapeutic relationship between the stories and the storytellers. Also, the tools of dialogic narrative analysis, which will be explained further in the following part, offer a rich ground for such a literary analysis. The later part of the theory chapter elaborates on the notions of "hindsight" and "self-deception," which will be taken as the yardstick of literary analysis of the narrator-characters in their relationship with their past.

2.1. Narrative and Human Psychology

Before elaborating on narrative psychology and therapy, it would be helpful to start defining the concept of narrative first. Within the sphere of literature, narrative is basically defined as "a story, whether told in prose or verse, involving

events, characters, and what the characters say and do" (Abrams 208). Although by narrative what immediately comes to mind is literature, the term is not actually confined to it. The scope of narrative extends beyond literature; in every field of life there is a story told no matter what the medium is, be it "a printed text, film, graphic novel, sign language, everyday conversation, or even a tale that is projected but is never actualized as a concrete artefact – for example, stories about ourselves that we contemplate telling to friends but then do not, or film scripts that a screenwriter has plans to create in the future" (Herman, "Narrative" 72). As Roland Barthes asserts, "the narratives of the world are numberless" (20). Narrative theorists have come to highlight one or another aspect of narratives through the definitions they offer whereas there are some all-encompassing definitions regarding this notion that could be accepted without hesitation. Among those, the definition of narrative offered in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory* stands out with its highlighting the dynamic nature of narratives and their essential place in human life as it is referred to as "a basic human strategy for coming to terms with time, process, and change" (Herman, Jahn, Ryan ix). Similarly, Mieke Bal argues that narrative is "a mode [which] is alive and active as a cultural force [and which] constitutes a major reservoir of the cultural baggage that enables us to make meaning out of a chaotic world and the incomprehensible events taking place in it" (10). In other words, narrative is a cultural tool to make sense out of chaos, to navigate through unfamiliar events and to survive for human beings. It can function as a tool for humans to establish new relations with the world to overcome an obstacle or an inner dilemma, to make sense of themselves or the world, or to create new maps to proceed in life.

Humans have always produced narratives for various reasons such as entertainment or instruction, but only relatively do recent developments in humanities and cultural theory highlight narrating as an indispensable part of human life. Whereas storytelling is an ancient practice that appears in all human cultures, the idea that individual human lives may readily assume a narrative form and that individual human beings may "have" stories, or "make" stories about their lives, would appear to be a cultural construction that resonates well with the sensibilities of the modern world (McAdams, "First We Invented Stories" 13). For example, Sandra Heinen's naming human beings the "homo Narrans" (196) and the philosopher

Alasdair MacIntyre's statement that "a man is in his actions and practice, as well as in his fictions, essentially a story-telling animal" (216) suggest the recent development in the cultural theory to handle narrating as an essential human activity, which is commonly named "the narrative turn." While it resonated across almost all disciplines of humanities, a narrative turn within the discipline of psychology took place in the Western world around the1980s, and it prepared a suitable ground for postmodern psychotherapies to flourish. Theodore Sarbin argues that the prominence of narratives in the discipline of psychology was a reaction to the shortcomings of positivism: "a crisis in social psychology has created a readiness to set aside positivist assumptions and to replace them with other ways of conceptualizing the human condition" (43). Sarbin treats narrative as the organizing principle for human action since narrative allows for the individual to include their reasons for their acts as well as the causes of happenings. Along with Sarbin, Jerome Bruner is another forerunner psychologist who establishes a link between narrative and identity. Sarbin and Bruner assert that people largely construct and communicate their actions through storytelling. Narrative appears as the organizing principle for human action since it allows humans to include their reasons for their acts as well as the causes of happenings; thus, a better way of approaching the self in psychology is as a narrative construction, as a "self-narrative." Bruner marks this recent paradigm shift within the discipline of psychology in 1981, when a collection of essays appeared in the journal *On Narrative* which dealt with the assumption of "the narrative construction of reality" ("Narrative Construction of Reality" 5). Later, drawing on Bruner's work, Polkinghorne asserted the inherent nature of storytelling in human life and states that "narrative is the natural mode through which human beings make sense of lives in time" ("Reporting" 13).

In a similar vein, Peter Brooks highlights the essential place of narrating in human life and how we are always surrounded by stories:

> Our lives are ceaselessly intertwined with narrative, with the stories we tell and hear told, those we dream or imagine or would like to tell, all of which are reworked in the story of our own lives that we narrate to ourselves in an episodic, sometimes semi-conscious, but virtually uninterrupted monologue. We live immersed in narrative, recounting and reassessing the meaning of our past actions, anticipating the outcome of our future projects, situating ourselves at the intersection of several stories not yet completed. (Brooks 3)

It can be inferred from Brooks's statement that it is not only the stories that we tell or hear, but also the stories we imagine and wish that are involved in the human psyche. As an individual is always a part of narratives which are "alive and active" in Bal's words (Bal 10), narratives and human psychology intersect at the notion of self-formation or identity-construction. As Giddens states, "A person's identity is not to be found in behaviour, nor – important though this is – in the reactions of others, but in the capacity *to keep a particular narrative going*" (54). People construct their identity basically in the form of life-narratives in which the narrator and the protagonist of the story is themselves. Whereas they make sense of their lives in terms of life stories, self-narration does not refer to an ultimate closure for identity formation, rather it indicates an incomplete condition, or one that is "not yet completed" (Brooks 3). As narratives are always retold, the identity constructed through narrative is not permanent, but temporary and dynamic.

Besides self-formation and identity-construction, another primary function of narrative for human psychology is its therapeutic function. It is a commonly held view that writing or producing a narrative concerning distress or an emotional upheaval helps one cope with it. In *The Wounded Storyteller* (1996), Arthur W. Frank focuses on the stories of ill people and argues that there is a need to tell stories on the part of ill people so that they can construct "new maps and new perceptions of their relationships to the world" (3). Similarly, to stress the healing power of narrative production, Julia Kristeva points out that "individuals can control their woe and anxiety by naming it" (qtd. in Saresma 615). There is a score of studies focusing on the healing power of writing or art in recovering from an unbearable situation. For instance, Saresma, in her article analyzing the autobiography of a woman who has lost a family member and coped with it by writing claims that she "needed to write to construct a new identity as a survivor of [her] little brother's suicide, to reorganize my life story" (615). Moreover, there is also a therapeutic intervention which Suzette A. Henke calls "scriptotherapy" in *Scattered Subjects* (1998), in which "speaking and writing about trauma becomes a process through which the narrator finds words to give voice to what was previously unspeakable" (Smith & Watson 22).

In other words, it can be argued that one of the main functions of storytelling is to help individuals to construct a new/alternative narrative where the self is

defined/reconstructed differently. This newly formed identity does not need to be fixed or permanent because by constructing new stories we construct ever newer identities, and we always construct stories. Since the importance of narratives in human life in terms of healing and identity formation is foregrounded, this study refers extensively to the discipline of psychology, specifically to the field of narrative psychology. Therefore, the following section introduces the field of narrative psychology and examines various approaches within the discipline that can be used for the purposes of this study.

2.2. Narrative Psychology and Therapy

The psychologists dealing with the shortcomings of positivism, as Sarbin argues, struggled to establish the prominence of narrative in human life by foregrounding the relationship between narrative and human psychology to offer an alternative perspective, which is named "narrative psychology" (43). The link between narrative and identity in narrative psychology can be surveyed across the three stages of cultural development in the realm of psychology and therapy as posited by John McLeod in *Narrative and Psychotherapy* (1997), which can be listed as traditional, modern, and postmodern. Traditional and modern approaches are differentiated in their handling of the inner self. While in traditional culture, there was no concept of an/the inner self, in modernity there appeared the discovery of the inner self, the notion of autonomous individuality, self-liberation, and self-mastery; likewise, psychotherapy became a professional enterprise. Narrative psychology as a discipline thus far has provided abstract notions regarding the link between the self and storytelling. More concrete insights into the function of narrative for humans are provided by narrative psychotherapy, which belongs to the postmodern or the third stage of cultural development in narrative psychology. Later psychologists and therapists like Dan P. McAdams and John McLeod expanded narrative psychology and produced more down-to-earth works in this regard. The perspective offered by narrative psychotherapy, which is the practical application of narrative psychology, enriches discussions about the concept of self and its link to storytelling in narrative psychology because the end means of psychotherapy is to heal people. While the following section elaborates on various definitions and the scope of narrative

psychotherapy, it is important to note that there is no unison on the way narrative psychotherapy is approached, utilized, and defined. Period-bound definitions, differentiations, and conflicts among the theoreticians in the field of narrative psychology are of no concern for this study, as it builds on a synthesis of various strands within narrative psychotherapy, which has also come to be named as postmodern narrative-informed and postpsychological approaches.[6]

The basic principle of narrative psychology is that "individuals understand themselves through the medium of language, through talking and writing, and it is through these processes that individuals are constantly engaged in the process of creating themselves" (Crossley, *Narrative Psychology* 10). So, in its basic sense, the focus in narrative psychology is precisely on the narrative construction of the self and on how we make sense of ourselves through constructing stories. The use of narrative in psychological studies is generally discussed in two different categories. McLeod appoints two different strands to the way narrative is approached in psychology, or narrative psychology. The practitioners of the former strand use "a narrative perspective to augment psychoanalytic theory" whereas those of the latter "represent a distinct break with mainstream, psychology-based psychotherapy traditions" (McLeod, "Narrative Thinking" 238). A similar differentiation and dichotomy can be seen in Michael Bamberg's *Narrative – State of Art* (2007), in which he suggests that there are two orientations towards narrative in psychological studies**:** "subjectivity centered" and "plot orientation" (2-3). According to Bamberg, in the former trend, narratives are elicited and analyzed as stories that belong to and are owned by the storytellers. In the second one, narratives are not owned by the individual teller – at least not in the same way. Rather, the stories told, even if they deal with very personal and unique experiences, are always part of larger, communally shared, practices of sense making and interpretation. However, it can be argued that such a clear-cut separation does not hold water when it comes to narrative psychotherapy. In examining the relationship between narrative and the self, the use of narrative in both strands can be utilized, since, as Bamberg points out, there is a common point that these two strands share, which is "the active role of the

[6] In the edited book titled *Healing Plots: The Narrative Basis of Psychotherapy* (2004), John McLeod also uses the term "postpsychological counseling" in order to define postmodern approaches to psychology and psychotherapy, such as narrative psychotherapy ("Narrative and Storytelling" 12).

subject as an agent in the construction of social practices on one hand, and on the other, the role of social practices as constitutive ways of thinking, feeling, and acting at the level of individual choices" (Bamberg 3). Thus, this study does not go deeper in these distinctions and benefits from both orientations and classifies narrative psychotherapy as individual-in-culture oriented narrative psychotherapy, which treats the individual as an active member of culture.

Narrative psychotherapy as a postpsychological psychotherapy method is a challenge to mainstream psychology. It is formed by voices from other cultures and traditions previously submerged within the dominant culture. It is also transformed by the additions of new ideas from feminism, political activism, religion and spiritual practice, and indigenous health rituals (McLeod, *Narrative and Psychotherapy* 21). Some of the approaches to psychotherapy in the postmodern era can be exemplified as philosophical counseling, sociodynamic therapy, ecological therapy, sociocultural therapy, and narrative psychotherapy. McLeod argues that postpsychological narrative therapies have "the potential to address key contemporary personal and social dilemmas in ways that are not possible within individualist models of therapy" ("Narrative Thinking" 237). Narrative therapy is characterized as the formation of a postpsychological approach to therapy which focuses on issues surrounding the performance of narratives within relationships, community, and culture rather than on inner psychological processes within individuals. A central theme in narrative therapy is that of enabling the person to reauthor his or her life story as a means of resisting the control or subjugation of dominant cultural narratives (McLeod, "Narrative and Storytelling" 13). As McLeod claims,

> These therapists have specifically highlighted the idea that the stories that people tell in their everyday lives are drawn from a shared stock of cultural narratives, which embody moral values and assumptions about what it means to be human within that particular cultural setting. The implication for psychotherapy of this perspective is to shift the point of leverage of the therapist away from intra-psychic cognitive and emotional structures, and toward a primary focus on the relationship between the person and the narrative resources that are available to them in their culture. (McLeod, "Narrative Thinking" 242)

Therefore, narrative therapists position clients not as bounded or autonomous individuals, but as members of networks and communities. A narrative perspective in psychotherapy leads the therapy into the stories of culture rather than into the individual personal experience as McLeod nicely summarizes:

> The stories that, for the most part, construct our lives are "out there," they exist before we are born and continue after we die. The task of being a person in a culture involves creating a satisfactory-enough alignment between individual experience and "the story of which I find myself a part." The job of the therapist is to help the person to do this, particularly at times of crisis or conflict when the alignment has been lost. (*Narrative and Psychotherapy* 27)

Therefore, narrative therapy demonstrates a shift from internal to external, from individual experience to the realm of language and culture. As Brian Schiff also suggests, "from the very beginning, we find ourselves immersed in this world. We are born, *in medias res*, in the midst of ongoing conversation that precede our personal existence" (41). Moreover, the self is not conceived as autonomous, rather it is conceived as being a part of the culture an individual is embedded in. The self is not celebrated as fragmented, rather individuals try to create a functioning story in relation to the stories they are a part of and build a sense of self when the self-story has lost its function. As Schiff continues, "narrative allows us to take an inside path to understanding how persons connect together aspects of their life and world" (45).

Narrative therapy aims to secure a sense of narrative identity for the clients or to strip them away from their troubles or symptoms in the last analysis. McAdams puts it that narrative identity is the internalized and evolving story of a person who invents to explain how he or she has become the person he or she is becoming ("First We Invented Stories" 1). Bringing the selective reconstruction of the past with an imagined anticipated future together, narrative identity provides "a sense of unity, moral purpose, and temporal coherence for humans" (ibid 1). Narrative identities reconstruct the autobiographical past and anticipate the imagined future to provide the self with temporal coherence and some semblance of "psychological unity and purpose" (ibid 2). However, it is not only the stories that we invent shape us; other people's stories also have constitutive effects on our identity: "Narrative identity consists of stories that we tell about ourselves and others, as well as stories others tells about us" (Keskinen 67). In other words, stories we hear from other people are also constitutive of our identities.

A therapeutic procedure described by the distinguished narrative psychotherapist Michael White would be useful here to explain how narrative psychotherapy works and how it helps a person's symptoms to disappear. It entails "externalizing the problem, mapping the influence of the problem on the people and of the people on the problem, attending to the neglected aspects, revising the

relationships in the light of these discoveries, and performing the new story" (qtd. in Dwivedi & Gardner 32). Likewise, Dan McAdams, who is an important name in the domain of the psychology of personality, uses personal life narratives as a tool in his approach. He handles "storytelling as a source of data about persons" (McLeod, "Narrative Thinking" 240). In some of McAdams' studies, the research participants are invited to write their autobiography, which is then analyzed in terms of narrative themes, such as agency and communion (McLeod, "Narrative Thinking" 240). McAdams also claims that Freud, Jung, Adler, and Murray worked on narratives, but none of these classical personality theorists from the first half of the 20th century explicitly imagined human beings as storytellers and human lives as stories to be told ("The Role of Narrative" 19). Differentiating himself from "the modern psychotherapists," McAdams draws heavily on narrative and identity.

To exemplify another narrative psychotherapy process, McLeod presents the case of a young girl (a study conducted by the therapist David Epston), Caroline, who suffers from anorexia, as it is defined by the "medical system (and by herself)." The central aim in therapy focuses on the therapist's efforts to initiate a way of talking in which anorexia is constructed as a "voice of perfection" that is external to Caroline. This voice is characterized as a "discursive parasite" that undermines her capacity to "speak for herself." Through many conversations, she has been invited to accept a narrative of herself as "anorexic," "ill," "disordered," and helpless. Epston, by contrast, seeks to create a counter narrative in which Caroline is positioned as resourceful, and through which her capacity to fight back against the "voice of anorexia and perfection" is privileged (McLeod, "Narrative Thinking" 243). The therapist does not psychoanalyze the client or analyze the psychodynamics of the client; rather s/he works out the narrative the client produces. The therapeutic process in this trend is defined as "an outer journey into the language and symbols of a particular culture" (McLeod, *Narrative and Psychotherapy* 27). What the therapist does here is to collaborate with the client in re-authoring the story by positioning the subject in a different context. Subject positioning is used to externalize the problem from the person, thus reinforcing a worldview that emphasizes connectedness and collaboration. Besides, groups of people struggling to combat dominant cultural discourses are encouraged to join in collective action. Examples of social action

linked to therapy are the "anti-anorexia league" and use of "narrative theatre" to combat domestic violence at both an individual and community level (McLeod, "Narrative Thinking" 243).

Likewise, McAdams exemplifies the way narrative psychotherapy is employed to strip a client off his/her symptoms:

> The analyst and analysand and, therapist and client, work together to revise or rewrite a life narrative that no longer works well. In this sense, a good narrative is internally coherent, makes for a continuous plot line in which early events "cause" or logically lead to later events, embodies closure and a sense of things fitting together into a final form, and is aesthetically appealing. ("Personality, Modernity, and the Storied Self" 314)

McAdams adds further that although psychotic disorders of many kinds, panic attacks, and psychotic delusions are outside the domain of the third level of personality - the realm of identity and narrative, many problems in modern life actually speak to how people make sense of their lives in narrative terms (ibid 314). Therefore, he believes and supports that narrative counselling is a successful method in resolving many issues about identity, that is the narrative self. In contrast to what McAdams claims, where he excludes psychotic disorders from the realm of narrative psychotherapy, there are some studies concerning the narrative facilitation of recovery in the case of "schizophrenia as a psychotic disorder" through narrative psychotherapy. Farmasi et al., for instance, argue that the ability to tell a detailed life story coherently is undoubtedly connected to psychological health and well-being, and claim that narrating personal experience and creating a well-formed personal narrative can be an important part of the process of recovery from schizophrenia (6). This newly constructed coherently functioning story is called "good narrative."

Ramirex-Esparza and Pennebaker explicate further on the markers of a good narrative by building on story coherence, which is not associated with physical health (252). Rather, they argue that "good narratives are not coherent, but good narratives are those whose linguistic markers predict health and well-being" such as the frequency of "emotion words," "cognitive words" regarding causality, "pronoun usage" referring to perspective changes (Ramirex-Esparza & Pennebaker 254). Story coherence is also another anchor point that is much appreciated by McAdams. He argues that coherent life stories "(1) provide convincing causal explanations for the self, (2) reflect the richness of lived experience, and (3) advance socially-valued

action." (McAdams, "Narrative Coherence" 109). McAdams explicates the significance of narrative coherence in narrative psychology as follows: "People construct stories to make sense of their lives; therapists and their clients co-construct new narratives to replace disorganized or incoherent life stories" (Mc Adams, "Narrative Coherence" 110). Such concepts may also help us analyze the cohesion in fictional narrator-characters' lives and approach their psychological well-being.

Another concept McAdams offers is "psychological selfhood," and this notion will be employed in approaching the healing-through-narrating process of the narrator-characters in Ishiguro's novels. McAdams argues, "as the narratives change over time in the direction of greater agency, the adults who tell these stories tend to experience improvement in mental health. … In other words, the story changes first, and then the storyteller gets better" ("First We Invented Stories" 10). Therefore, the way the narrator-characters see themselves in their life stories hints at their psychological states. If the selfhood attributed to the narrated self by the narrator-character changes, it may affect their mental health.

Although there are different perspectives regarding what constitutes a good story leading to recovery, the preliminary aim in the present study is not to pay attention to defining what the qualities of a good story leading to better psychological health are. However, by making use of the concepts highlighted in discussions on the relationship between story elements and psychological condition, this study is attentive to the functions of the self-narrative in terms of psychological well-being, or the nodal points in the narrator-characters' past, and how they achieve psychological well-being by giving a fictional first-person narrative. By focusing on their problem-saturated life-stories, the narrator-characters' narration practices are analyzed in terms of their effects on the narrator-characters' psychological well-being, re-authoring of their past and re-working of their identity.

The common point in both narrative identity construction and a client's stripping off symptoms through narrating is the fact that there is a therapist who co-operates with the client to re-write the story which is not functioning well anymore. Narrative psychotherapy does not aim to present psychological explanations and interventions. Instead, it seeks to collaborate with people by working with the ways in which they talk about issues, and the ways in which they participate in social life.

It is not a movement towards the inner self but towards a person's relationship to the world, the culture, the language of the society. Therefore, narrative therapy has the capacity to channel the energy arising from individual troubles into a productive social action. The concept of narrative in this approach provides "a bridge between the stories told by specific persons, and the dominant discourses and narratives within which we all collectively live our lives" (McLeod, "Narrative Thinking" 244). It focuses on the question of how stories orient people in the world and in relation to one another. That is why, the relation between culture and self-story deserves a lot of attention in order to understand the perception of self in this approach. Ansgar Nünning's definition of culture from the perspective of a cultural narratological framework suits best the concept of culture in narrative psychology. He argues that "cultures are not so much 'imagined communities' (sensu Anderson 1983) but 'narrative communities,' i.e., communities forged and held together by the stories their members tell about themselves and their culture as well as conventionalized forms of storytelling and cultural plots" (61). Therefore, culture is conceptualized "not as text, but as an ensemble of narratives" (Nünning 61). From a narrative psychological perspective, Bruner clearly draws the link between the individual and culture: "To be in a viable culture is to be bound in a set of connecting stories" because "our capacity to render experience in terms of narrative is […] an instrument for making meaning that dominates much of life in culture" (Bruner, *Acts of Meaning* 95). So, it is possible to argue that narrative has a mediatory role between self and culture (Timmer 74) because it is a tool to make sense of our life which gains its meaning only in relation to other stories in the culture.

The status and significance of culture on self-construction is made quite explicit in narrative psychology as a postpsychological trend. What narrative psychology stresses is that one's identity cannot be isolated from the cultural realm; it has a constitutive aspect for the construction of self. As McAdams states, "a life story is a psychosocial construction" ("Personality, Modernity, and the Storied Self" 307), which indicates that although the self-story is constructed by the individual, it also has a constitutive meaning within culture since the dominant stories within culture shape and guide the individuals. Or, in McLeod's conceptualization, "in the case of narrative identity, culture surely specifies the prevailing images, themes,

plots, and meanings that life stories may exhibit within a particular stratum or grouping of human beings" ("First We Invented Stories" 11). To give an example, "the redemptive self" is an especially "American" kind of life story, with prevailing versions extolling canonical American tales of religious atonement, personal emancipation, upward social mobility (the American Dream), and recovery (ibid 11). Likewise, Worthington endorses the view that "the selves are constituted as subjects in intersubjective discursive processes" (9). Drawing on the work of Bruner, Astrid Erll suggests that one of the major cultural shaping forces that work on our individual brains and minds is narrative patterns: certain plot structures, micro-narratives or metaphors give our life-stories form and coherence ("Narratology" 223). Among those, available narratives in the immediate surrounding such as the stories told by intimate friends or family members affect one's formation of their self. The process of self-construction mentioned here also applies to fictional narrators; therefore, how narrator-characters position themselves within the stories presented to them provides insight into how they construct their identities through these stories. Citing Ricoeur, Erll argues that narrative patterns help us, regardless of fictional or flesh-and-blood, "grasp together and integrate into one complete story our multiple and scattered experience" ("Narratology" 224). Therefore, narrative patterns shaped by the sociocultural context lead people to construct their life stories in a coherent way to make sense of the events they experience. These narrative patterns might include oral stories, novels and plays, movies and TV serials, comic strips and popular songs (Erll, "Narratology" 224).

Nicoline Timmer, too, draws attention to the prominence of the sociocultural context by mentioning the emphasis narrative psychology places on it (86), for culture offers "narrative patterns" for the individuals in meaning-making processes along their life-story. However, the sociocultural context is not fully deterministic because narrative has a mediatory role in the interrelation between self and culture. As McAdams puts it, identities are produced collectively in narratives:

> Narrative identity is a joint production, an invention of the storytelling person and the culture within which the person's story finds its meanings and significance. Other people in the author's life, along with groups and institutions, may also exert an authorial force. Therefore, the autobiographical author is, in reality, a co-author. (McAdams, "First We Invented Stories" 14)

This partly stems from the individual's role in this relationship; individuals have two roles in this process: they are both "constructors" of stories and "participants" in the same stories (Timmer 86). These two roles are reminiscent of the story-telling practices of the narrator-characters in fictional works. Thus, the historical context is another narrative that is outside the individual, and it can help flesh-and-blood people, and fictional narrator-characters likewise, to make sense of and find consolation in what happened in their past. Putting conditions at the forefront as the cause of their past mistakes is an example of narrator-characters' fabricating quick responses to problematic aspects of their lives and externalizing their troubles. In this regard, narrative psychology attributes agency to the individuals, which indicates that culture is not the only determiner, which is why Bruner claims that "Our sense of the normative is nourished in narrative, but so is our sense of breach and of exception" (*Acts of Meaning* 97). Therefore, narrative does not always legitimize the dominant cultural values, but it also sometimes offers suitable ground to create counter-narratives. Seen from this viewpoint, it is possible to argue that narrative does not only reproduce the convention, but it is also open for experiment or constructing an oppositional narrative against dominant cultural narratives. The oppositional stories or clashing stories are also made meaningful in the form of narrative. Therefore, it is true that self-narratives gain meaning in relation to cultural narratives, but they do not necessarily legitimize what is normal in the culture. They have the potential to create counter narratives as well due to the agency attributed to the individual.

In this regard, Ishiguro's fiction can be approached from the perspective of narrative psychology and therapy as his novels bear resemblance to the agenda of narrative psychotherapy in terms of the individual's endeavor to construct a sense of self through storytelling. As stated previously, narrative therapy by its nature aims to offer a solution or closure for the clients and it aims to strip them of the symptoms. On the other hand, it should also be stated that there are possible discrepancies in applying narrative therapy to the literary analysis of works of fiction, for narrative therapy deals with people within a professional and clinical setting. To make up for a potential incompatibility in applying it to literary works, while adopting the tenets of narrative therapy, this study follows the five questions of dialogic narrative analysis (DNA), which are conceptualized by the sociologist Arthur W. Frank in *Letting*

Stories Breathe: A Socio-Narratology (2010), in its literary analysis of the chosen Ishiguro novels. The following section offers a detailed description of dialogic narrative analysis and its five analytical questions along with a summary of the tools/concepts that will be used in the literary analysis chapter.

2.3. Dialogic Narrative Analysis

Dialogic narrative analysis (DNA) is a contemporary method within the broad spectrum of narrative analysis approaches, principally from the discipline of sociology while being principally concerned with texts and drawing heavily on literature. Starting off with Mikhail Bakhtin's ideas on "dialogism," dialogic narrative analysis focuses on "the relationship between *at least two* and most often three elements: a story, a storyteller, and a listener" (Frank, *Socio-Narratology* 16). In his book titled *Letting Stories Breathe: A Socio-Narratology* (2010), Frank introduces the theoretical perspective known as socio-narrative and shows an application of DNA as the methodological element underpinning his approach to analyzing stories. As he claims, he is less interested in "finding themes" and more interested in "asking what stories do" (Frank, *Socio-Narratology* 2). Thus, DNA focuses on the effects of narrating on the narrators, or it "analyzes how stories breathe as they animate, assemble, entertain, and enlighten, and also deceive and divide people" (Frank, *Socio-Narratology* 16).

DNA does not lay down specific rules as a way of analyzing stories, nor does it provide a rigid framework for how this analysis should be done. It sees such approaches as "bureaucratic ethos" (Frank, *Socio-Narratology* 74). Therefore, there is no specific framework and rigid way to follow in the analysis. Instead, the analysis process revolves around various questions to understand the capacities and functions of the stories in terms of how the stories make life social. This flexibility allows the researcher the freedom to understand the unique qualities of each story and to conduct an analysis appropriate to the specific contexts. In this way, analysis is not limited to following a technique; instead, it appreciates and explores the richness and diversity of stories. The following section introduces these five questions of DNA, what they entail, which aspects of the stories they focus on and how they will be employed in the literary analysis of Ishiguro novels.

1- “What does the story make narratable?” (Frank, *Socio-Narratology* 75).

Frank claims, “A life that is not fully narratable is vulnerable to devaluation” (Frank, *Socio-Narratology* 75), suggesting that ignoring untold or silenced stories, or lives without a complete narrative, can lead to devaluation. Being able to tell one’s story not only allows for the expression of conflicts, contradictions, successes, mistakes, personal growth, and a life of ups and downs, but it also prevents it from being silenced, jaded, and devalued. Storytelling serves as a form of existence in the face of extinction, as Frank puts it: “Stories animate realities: they bring into being what was not there before” (Frank, *Socio-Narratology* 75). Stories have a transformative power, shedding light on elements that have previously gone unnoticed or ignored, participating in the creation, and shaping of realities. They are not merely passive narratives; they construct and produce meaning. When individuals share their stories, they begin to understand their own lives and sometimes enable others to understand their narratives. As the statement “A life that is not narrated is effectively invisible” (Frank, *Socio-Narratology* 75) suggests, an untold life does not actually exist and only comes into existence through storytelling. However, there are also situations where individuals may prefer not to talk about certain events, such as particular genocides, state-sponsored terrorism, torture, systematic neglect, and ill-treatment (Frank, *Socio-Narratology* 76). Despite this, victims have the potential to make their victimization narratable by transforming their experiences into stories.

Storytelling does not serve good purposes only. As Frank asserts, “Stories are entirely too effective at demonizing” (*Socio-Narratology* 76). When used with a specific intention, narratives have the power to portray individuals, groups, and ideas in a negative light. Storytelling is also an effective weapon for shaping perceptions, antagonizing, and prejudging. It can also be used for dehumanization, which can legitimize discrimination, violence, and other harmful actions against the masses. Frank claims that “war must be narratable before it can be fought” (*Socio-Narratology* 76). Engaging masses in a war requires more than strategic planning; it requires the creation of a narrative framework to justify and contextualize the conflict and make it understandable to those involved. The constructed narrative not only mobilizes support during the war, but also plays an important role in shaping how the conflict is remembered and interpreted in its aftermath. As Frank suggests,

"Stories are not very useful for getting troops into marching formation, but they are rich in capacity for making people willing to march- for making marching seem like a sensible thing to do" (*Socio-Narratology* 77). Thus, a narrative can be a powerful tool to instill a sense of motivation and aspiration among people both in a positive and negative way. During the analyses of the novels, answers will be sought to the questions of what purpose the story serves and what is attempted to be conveyed through the narrators' self-narratives, using this question.

2- "Who is *holding their own* in the story, but also, is the story making it more difficult for other people to hold their own?" (Frank, *Socio-Narratology* 77).

The idea that someone is "holding their own" in a story suggests that a particular character is managing well, maintaining their position, or coping effectively within the narrative. On the other hand, the notion that the story is making it difficult for others to "hold their own" implies that the narrative context or unfolding events may be creating challenges or obstacles for other characters to navigate or maintain their stability.

> As exemplary as stories for speaking truth to power, there is always the complementary, dangerous side: power can use stories to justify its entitlements. Stories can make it more difficult for some others – those who are the objects of righteous violence in the story – to hold their own. (Frank, *Socio-Narratology* 77)

While stories have the potential to challenge authority and speak truth to power, there is a risk that narratives can be manipulated to reinforce existing power structures, making it difficult for those targeted by oppression to defend themselves and challenge systemic injustices. So, it is possible to say that stories have two facets: One character can stand on his/her own feet in the same story while making it difficult for others to do the same. It is therefore important at this point to focus on the aspects of who the story has served and for whom it has made it difficult to hold their own. Frank speculates:

> Who uses a story to hold their own, and how the story does that, are crucial questions. But it must always be complemented by the question of whom the story renders vulnerable; who now has an increased problem of holding their own, once the story has been told? (*Socio-Narratology* 78)

Namely, the focus is on the impact of the story on the narrator and others at this stage. Does the story harm anyone, if any, and for whom is the story useful?

Answering these questions will also form an important part of the literary analysis of the way Ishiguro's narrator-characters reconfigure their past mistakes.

3- "What is the effect of people being caught up in their own stories while living with people caught up in other stories?" (Frank, *Socio-Narratology* 78).

The coexistence of people immersed in different stories may lead to conflicts and misunderstandings. Differences in values, beliefs, and priorities can create tension, especially if individuals are unable or unwilling to empathize with perspectives divergent from their own. These conflicts may arise at personal, interpersonal, or societal levels. Frank states that "Analysis asks what stories different actors are caught up in, what actions those stories authorize and even require, and how stories silence other stories" (*Socio-Narratology* 80). So, dialogical narrative analysis focuses on the clashing narratives over the same event, and how one story dominates the other. In other words, DNA investigates the clashing narratives and the process of how narrative dominance is accomplished. Through this question, the novels will be analyzed in terms of how the characters react when caught up by a certain story, the narrative clashes, and the impact of the conflicting narratives on the narrators' selves.

4- "What is the force of fear in the story, and what animates desire?" (Frank, *Socio-Narratology* 81).

Fear plays an important role in the story, influencing the characters and shaping the plot. Whether it is fear of the unknown or fear of failure, it pushes characters to make important decisions and influences their personal development. This exploration of fear reveals how it affects characters emotionally and shapes their relationships. Desire, on the other hand, acts as a powerful force that pushes characters forward. Whether they seek love, power, revenge, knowledge or freedom, these desires motivate characters throughout the story. Understanding these motivations helps unravel the characters' personalities and adds depth to the overall narrative. Frank discusses the influence on narratives of fear and desire: "Stories make some things fearsome and other things desirable, yet stories do not invent people's hopes and fears. Stories shape fears and desires. They make fears more vivid, and they suggest appropriate and inappropriate objects of desire" (*Socio-Narratology* 81).

Frank argues that stories do not create hopes and fears, but rather shape and influence them. The difference lies in the ability of stories to reinforce and direct these emotions. Narratives play an important role in framing the emotional landscape of individuals, making some things scary and others desirable. According to Frank, dialogic narrative analysis "must, at some point, recognize the interplay of fear and desire that animates anything worth calling a story" (*Socio-Narratology* 82). In this regard, the focus will be on the function and significance of fear and desire in Ishiguro's narrators' stories, and how these emotions shape their selves and their lives.

5- "How does a story help people, individually and collectively, to remember who they are? How does a story do the work of memory?" (Frank, *Socio-Narratology* 82).

Be it personal narratives or cultural myths, stories play an important role in shaping and preserving both individual and collective memory. On a personal level, stories act as a repository of experiences, allowing individuals to construct a coherent sense of self by connecting past events with present understanding. On a larger scale, stories contribute to cultural identity, creating a shared narrative that connects communities and societies. Therefore, as Frank suggests, "stories are good at reconnecting that which is always drifting apart" (*Socio-Narratology* 83).

Frank discusses the work of memory around the term "reassembling" (*Socio-Narratology* 83). Just as individuals and societies are in a constant state of change and adaptation, stories involve a process of reassembly. Thus, narratives are not static; they are shaped and reshaped over time: "The act of reassembling does not mean keeping things, including memories, as they are" (Frank, *Socio-Narratology* 83). Remembering things does not mean keeping everything exactly as it was at the time of its happening. It means that we rearrange the past or change it as we recollect from memory. This is because remembering is not just about storing things in our memory, like a photograph. Instead, our memories can change every time we think about them. So, the process of remembering is more like rearranging pieces than keeping everything unchanged, and this change is informed by the present:

> People remember by telling stories of times past, but they tell in response to the needs of reassembly at the time when the story is told—what Boyd calls salience—and memory then takes that form. Memories are less accurate or forgetful than they are good or bad reassemblies, hardly distinguishable from the stories in which their reassembly work is performed. (Frank, *Socio-Narratology* 83)

In the world of memory and storytelling, people not only remember the past but also reconstruct it through the art of storytelling. As Frank suggests, the act of remembering is not a static repetition of events, but a dynamic process of reassembly that responds to current needs. The stories we tell about our past are not just about accuracy; they serve the purpose of effective reassembly. Memories are not simply described as "accurate or forgetful;" instead, they are judged on their quality as reassembled narratives. Therefore, instead of trying to create clear-cut distinctions between fact and fiction, dialogic narrative analysis perceives all these stories as engaged in the task of reassembling lives. Therefore, it addresses the following two questions in its analysis of reassembled narratives:

> [H]ow is the way the story is told the best way that the storyteller can imagine—using an imagination for which stories set the parameters—to represent his or her life? And complementary to that: how do the stories and narrative resources available to the storyteller shape the process of reassembling his or her memory? (Frank, *Socio-Narratology* 85)

The first question inquires how the storyteller, guided by her/his imagination, chooses to narrate a story as the most fitting representation of her/his self. The second question addresses how the available stories influence the storyteller's process of reconstructing and reassembling her/his own memories. In this context, how the narrator-characters in Ishiguro's early novels use their memories in the novels and the relationship between the way they use their memories and the process of self-construction will be an important point.

Dialogic narrative analysis, or DNA, can be carried out for the analysis of fictive narrations through these five questions in accordance with Frank's theorizations. From novel to novel, some questions might prove more crucial for literary analysis than the others. Besides the five main questions, other speculative questions can also be followed. The main point of focus and concern here is the self-constituting capacity of storytelling, and interconnections among the story, the storyteller, and the listener, if there are any. The following section elaborates on two crucial terms that will be integrated into the five methodological questions of DNA disclosed above. Mark Freeman's "hindsight" and Amit Marcus's "self-deception"

inheres in the narrator-characters' accounts in the chosen Ishiguro novels; thus, they are explained in terms of how they will help us understand the narrator-characters' narrating processes and their effects on their psyche.

2.4. Hindsight

Frank claims that while "stories have capacities to deal with human troubles" they also have "capacities to make [trouble] for humans" (*Socio-Narratology* 28). Likewise, the narrator-characters in the chosen Ishiguro novels look back on their past with an endeavor to overcome a "trouble" in their lives, and their engagement with narratives either leads to betterment or worsening in their self-conception. Looking back at the past brings the discussion to defining what constitutes one's reassembling and the nature of one's examining their past, and ultimately to Mark Freeman's theorization of "hindsight." In *Hindsight: The Promise and the Peril of Looking Backwards* (2010), the psychologist Freeman delves into the nature of looking backwards through the concept of "the hindsight." He defines hindsight as "the process of looking back over the terrain of the past from the standpoint of the present and either seeing things a new or drawing 'connection' […] that could not possibly be drawn during the course of ongoing moments but only in retrospect" (Freeman 4). Since through hindsight one looks back at the past to reconstruct it, hindsight involves the process of "emplotment." That is why Freeman handles memory and plotting jointly in one's looking back at their past, stating "Hindsight is not only about *memory* but about *narrative*" (Freeman 4). Seeing the past is not only about remembering the past, but it also entails creating a meaningful story from these memories. While our memories of past events are not always perfect, they are foundational. The key part is the narrative we build around these memories - the way we connect and make sense of events. When we look back, we go beyond recalling facts; we actively construct a story that connects events, identifies causes and gives significance to what happened. This aspect of storytelling helps us understand the past more deeply, learn from our experiences and make sense of our personal history.

Freeman discusses two important aspects of hindsight. Firstly, hindsight is "a source of distortion of 'what really was'" (Freeman 6). It highlights the internal biases and cognitive processes that come into play when reflecting on past events.

Selective memory, influenced by the present situation, can emphasize some details while downplaying others, contributing to a distorted recall. Biases and the need for consistency can lead to interpretations that align with current beliefs rather than faithfully represent the past. Gaps in memory can be filled by reconstructions, and knowledge of the actual outcome can influence the perceived inevitability of events. Secondly, "hindsight plays an integral role in shaping and deepening moral life" through narrative reflection (Freeman 5). Individuals can revisit their past ethical decisions and learn from their mistakes, promoting personal growth and self-awareness. Looking back at our past and thinking about the stories of what happened helps us become better people. When we reflect on the choices we made, especially in terms of what is right and wrong, we can learn from our mistakes and grow as individuals. It is like putting together a story that helps us understand why we made certain decisions and how those decisions affected ourselves and others. This reflection process helps us refine our values and make more thoughtful choices in the future. In essence, while hindsight offers valuable insights, the potential to distort the objective reality of past events must also be recognized. As Freeman summarizes,

> There is no questioning hindsight's capacity to distort and falsify; we can become trapped in our stories and thereby prevent ourselves from seeing ourselves for what we truly are. But it is also through hindsight that we can pause, look again, and see ourselves anew, "unconcealed" by the urgencies of the moment. (15)

Although it is in the nature of hindsight that it distorts what things really are, the reconstructed version of past is not hierarchically valued more. Since "emplotment" is at the center of hindsight, the memory of the past is always reshaped; memory earns a dynamic potential. In that sense, Freeman does not dwell on the question of what the truth was - if there was one in the first place:

> Important though "the facts of the matter" or "what really happened" may be, they are of a different order than the narrative order. Neither, I maintain, is any more real or true than the other; the fact is, we live in both, shifting between them in line with the demands of our lives. (8)

Freeman argues that neither objective facts nor narrative is more real or true than the other; instead, the two coexist and our experience involves navigating between these two perspectives. While objective facts are very important, the narratives we create around these facts are also important. Humans live in both realms, alternating between accepting raw facts and constructing narratives based on those facts in order

to make sense of their experiences. Freeman, thus, underscores the dynamic interplay between objective reality and the reconstruction of it, emphasizing that our understanding of the truth is influenced by both the facts and the stories we tell about them.

It is worthwhile to remark that Freeman does not suggest that hindsight is "pain-free," or that it is always "redemptive" (Freeman 26). Looking back is not always easy or does not automatically make things better. He suggests that looking back may sometimes be painful and may not always lead to positive outcomes. Reflection on the past can be emotionally draining as it might evoke difficult memories or past regrets. It can be "a vehicle of insight and, at times, a source of deep fulfillment" whereas it can also be "a source of regret and remorse, guilt and shame" (Freeman 26). Therefore, according to Freeman, looking back is Janus-faced: "Hindsight is thus an arena of both promise and peril, pleasure and pain" (27).

In this study, based on Freeman's hindsight analysis, an inquiry will be made into the characters' perspectives on their pasts in Ishiguro's novels. In this context, the gains and losses of the characters through their retrospective perspectives will be analyzed. In addition, the issue of memory will be addressed and the way the narrator-characters experience the functioning of memory will be emphasized. The speculative questions that will be followed in this regard are as follows: How do the characters approach the realities of their past? Do they reflect the past directly or do they attempt to reshape or change it according to their current position? Answers to these questions are expected to offer insight into narrator-characters' relationship with memory and the past in their narrating process.

2.5. Self-Deception

Another concept that is related to one's looking back at their past and narrating their selves through it is "self-deception" as defined by Amit Marcus, which is inevitably interconnected with narrative unreliability. Since narrators are left on their own with their memories of the past and stories as the sole source of narrative and sense of self, self-deception and unreliability go hand in hand in first-person accounts. Because it concerns memory and emplotment, it would be

necessary to dwell on what self-deception is, which is "a subcategory within a much larger category of the unreliable narrator" (*Self-Deception* 90) as Marcus states.

If narrators tend to narrate the past in a way that suits their present situation, it would not be wrong to suggest that this is often done in order to protect their certain interests. By representing past events, experiences or relationships relevant to their current situation, narrators may often seek to portray themselves in a positive light or present themselves in a way that is more favorable to others. Such distortion may be associated with the narrators' desire to protect their own reputation or relationships in accordance with their subjectivities. Narrators, in particular, may be inclined to alter the facts or self-deceive in order to avoid harm and create a peaceable image, which brings about the issue of narrative unreliability. Self-deceiving narrators foreground the importance of subjectivity in un/reliable narration. Therefore, Kathleen Wall's arguments regarding unreliability fits well into this discussion. Wall argues that in the contemporary situation, which is pluralistic, postmodern, and multicultural, the standard classification of unreliability s not very adequate to represent the complex nature of unreliability. So, she contends that the conception of subjectivity should be involved in the discussion of the un/reliability of narrators (Wall 23).

Amit Marcus investigates the nature of self-deception in his book, *Self-Deception in Literature and Philosophy* (2007). He explores the intricacies of self-deception, defining it as a mental state driven by an individual's motivation to adopt a particular belief or position even in the face of contradictory evidence.

> I define self-deception as a mental state in which the subject is *motivated* (as opposed to harboring a conscious intention) to believe a specific proposition or state of affairs *p*. This motivation causes the subject to enact certain *mental strategies* and *behavioral patterns* that convince him of *the truth* of *p*, despite his exposure to information that tips the scales towards accepting the truth of the proposition (or state of affairs) not-*p*. (Marcus, *Self-Deception* 17)

Marcus suggests that self-deception is a mental state in which an individual is motivated to adopt a particular belief or state of affairs without conscious intention. He also asserts that there are two basic types of motivation causing self-deception: "desire (or wish) and anxiety" (Marcus, *Self-Deception* 23). Either they really want something to be true, or they are worried or anxious and want to believe in something that will make them feel better. When motivation is desire, individuals

can shape their beliefs according to what they wish to be true rather than what the facts show. Anxiety-oriented self-deception, on the other hand, occurs when people believe something will reduce their anxiety or fear. So, whether it be wishing something to be true or trying to avoid feeling anxious, these motivations can lead people to deceive themselves about what is actually true.

Marcus argues that there are certain mental strategies that a person must employ in order to "convince himself of the truth of a false preposition" (*Self-Deception* 27). These strategies show the subject's systematic and persistent efforts to conceal from themselves both the truth and the motivation to conceal the truth. There are five primary strategies listed by Marcus in cases of self-deception: a) Selective focus of attention, b) Negative misinterpretation, c) Positive misinterpretation, d) Rationalization, e) Repression.

Selective focus of attention entails that "any subject tends to overlook evidence that weakens the hypothesis that p is true, and to focus his attention on evidence that supports the hypothesis that p is true" (Marcus, *Self-Deception* 27). People tend to focus on information that supports what they believe. They are more likely to notice and remember things that agree with what they already think. This tendency can sometimes lead people to stick to their pre-existing beliefs, even if there is evidence that suggests they might be wrong. People can employ this selective focus consciously or consciously; intentionally or unintentionally; passively or actively (Marcus, *Self-Deception* 28-29). Under regular circumstances, selective focus does not cause any inconveniences, but in emotionally dense situations, it causes self-deception:

> Usually, the subject succeeds in integrating the information that is at the center of his consciousness with the information that is on the margins, thereby adjusting the distortions brought by his selective attention. However, in extreme emotional states, such as intense anxiety or profound grief, the process of integration is more likely to break down. Such a state promotes self-deception. (Marcus, *Self-Deception* 28)

In ordinary situations, people are usually able to combine and make sense of information that stands out in their thoughts with less noticeable details. This helps reduce distortions caused by selective attention (the tendency to focus on certain information while ignoring other relevant details). However, the statement points out

that in intense emotional states, such as strong anxiety or deep grief, this integration process can be disrupted.

Negative misinterpretation stresses that the subject tends to "underestimate" some of the information he/she has acquired if it is incompatible with his/her version of story or threaten its plausibility (*Self-Deception* 28). Or, the subject does not underestimate but "avoids connecting different pieces" (28). Positive misinterpretation, on the other hand, emphasizes that the subject "overestimates" the information that verifies his/her version of the story (Marcus, *Self-Deception* 28).

Rationalization stresses that the self-deceived subject "rationalizes when he employs reason as a means of denying his irrationality in believing the truth of *p*" (Marcus, *Self-Deception* 28). If the person holds onto a belief clashing with his version of the story and the person wants to conceal the irrationality in his narrative, s/he may employ this strategy to make their irrational beliefs sound more rational and convincing. According to Marcus, rationalization and self-deception nurture each other: The causal connection between self-deception and rationalization is bilateral: on the one hand, rationalization that is initially not self-deceptive can promote self-deception, and on the other hand, rationalization is reinforced by self-deception" (*Self-Deception* 29). Once people try to justify their actions or beliefs through rationalization, it may lead them unintentionally into self-deception. At the same time, self-deception enhances rationalization, implying that once individuals have deceived themselves, they are more likely to continue using rationalization to justify or maintain their self-deceptive beliefs. So, there is a mutual influence between rationalization and self-deception.

Repression is another mental strategy that helps "the relegation of anxiety-provoking mental contents from conscious (or preconscious) mind to the realm of unconscious" (Marcus, *Self-Deception* 29). Our mind seeks to protect itself by burying or hiding potentially distressing content. Although it requires much energy, it prevents overwhelming anxiety or discomfort associated with certain thoughts or memories.

Amit Marcus thus delves into the nature of self-deception, a mental state driven by an individual's motivation to believe a state of preposition although there is a set of information falsifying it. In order to deceive herself or himself, one could

employ five basic mental strategies as stated above. Marcus states that self-deceiving narrators oscillate between two poles: reliable or unreliable (194), which makes it harder to assign a clear category. In contrast to the lying narrator, self-deceiving narrators do not tell "consciously or intentionally a faulted version of the story" (Marcus, *Self-Deception* 195). Besides, self-deceiving narrators are "capable of accurately apprehending, interpreting, and judging events and situations that are not pertinent to their motivationally biased belief(s)" (Marcus, *Self-Deception* 196). If the events or situations are unrelated to their core ideas causing their self-deception, then their cognitive capacity to observe and comprehend the world is not distorted. In that sense, it is hard to assign a specific category to the unreliability of self-deceiving narrators.

However, the primary focus of this study is not to categorize the un/reliability of the narrators. Rather, the focus will be given to the question whether the narrators benefit or suffer from their intriguing relationship with the stories around them. The primary aim of this study is to interrogate the link between the storytelling of the narrators and their psychological well-being. Therefore, the discussion on the self-deception of the narrators will be discussed in relation to their mental state of well-being. Using the insight provided by Amit Marcus on self-deception, this study will explore the relationship between the narrators and their attitude towards their past. Since the narrators' self-stories help them to cope with their current distress, the attention will be given to how they reconstruct their narratives leading them to psychological well-being and the mental strategies the narrators employ in dealing with their lives. The focus of attention will be on the motivation behind their self-stories and the question whether they face the painful truth about themselves or prefer to deceive themselves to survive.

The following chapters, in which the early novels of Kazuo Ishiguro are analyzed, will benefit from the main issues discussed in this chapter. The relationship between the way the narrator-characters construct their stories and the effect of stories and storytelling on their psychological well-being will be the primary focus of this investigation. In order to conduct the analyses, the method of dialogic narrative analysis will be utilized in order to see the effect and capacities of stories on the narrators. As the novels under scrutiny have narrator-characters struggling to

overcome a distressing situation, the issues regarding hindsight and self-deception will also be the anchor points of the discussion.

CHAPTER III

THE REWORKING OF TRAUMA: A NARRATIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH TO ETSUKO IN *A PALE VIEW OF HILLS*

A Pale View of Hills (1982) tells the story of Etsuko, the protagonist and narrator of the novel, through a psychological journey centered on her past. Relatively long after the atomic bombing of Nagasaki, Etsuko flees her country and her past and moves to England with her "pure" Japanese daughter Keiko and her new husband, a British journalist. In the present time of the novel, Etsuko is paid a visit by her younger and half-British/half-Japanese daughter Niki. Around the time of Niki's visit, it is revealed that Keiko has recently committed suicide. Thus, Etsuko is still struggling with the pain of Keiko's suicide as she is unable to fully comprehend the truth of this incident and inclined to blame herself. Later in her account, Etsuko discloses the story of her estranged friend Sachiko, whose life seems to bear many similarities to Etsuko's life story. She reveals that Sachiko is struggling to hold on to life in the aftermath of the atomic bombing with her daughter Mariko. By narrating Sachiko's story and reminiscing the times when they were friends, Etsuko reflects on her present relationship with her own daughter Niki and draws parallels among the broken links in the process that led to Keiko's suicide. Thereby, she revisits her past and reworks Keiko's suicide.

The early studies focusing on *A Pale View of the Hills* explore the Japanese influences on Ishiguro's writing. For instance, Barry Lewis, who approaches Ishiguro's novel through notions of displacement and homelessness, focuses on the representation of Japan and the atomic bomb in *A Pale View of Hills* and argues that Ishiguro is "someone who occupies the middle ground [between Japan and England] more than most" (18). Brian W. Shaffer, on the other hand, offers a Freudian psychoanalytic reading of the surface meaning of *A Pale View of Hills*, bringing a

psychoanalytic perspective to the images of death, suicide, the cover story and the river in the novel. Gabriele Annan reviews the novel as a "ghost story" (3), emphasizing the nightmare and ghost motifs that revolve around Keiko's room and cause Etsuko and Niki to be unable to sleep properly. Parallel with this study, Molino reads the novel in the light of trauma theories and argues that Etsuko's struggle to make sense of her past, to place it in a historical context and to fit into a larger social order, is her struggle to cope with her trauma; therefore, according to Molino, "Etsuko's narrative is not a defense or rationalization of past actions" (326).

In her initial analysis of *A Pale View of Hills*, Cynthia F. Wong adopts a post-structuralist approach to the novel: Reading Etsuko's coping with the trauma of her daughter's suicide through the lens of Maurice Blanchot's theory of self-dispossession, Wong writes, "Remembering Nagasaki, Etsuko is able to forget the premonition of the death she connects with that period. Remembering the pain of the past, she is able to forget, momentarily, the horrors of her daughter's demise" ("The Shame of Memory" 129). Later, however, Wong approaches *A Pale View of Hills* in the light of reader-response theory, describing Etsuko's narrative as "an effort to reread and rewrite aspects of her own understanding of life" (*Kazuo Ishiguro* 28). Resting her arguments on split subjectivity, Wong argues that "Etsuko's dispossession of an anguished self is an attempt at recovering comfort for her other self" (*Kazuo Ishiguro* 28). So, she claims that Etsuko tries to find solace in embracing another part of herself by detaching from her troubled self and revisiting and changing her understanding of life. In a similar line of thinking, Yugin Teo, reading the novel from an interdisciplinary perspective focusing on memory, argues that "Etsuko's short but emotionally intense journey to her past in Nagasaki allows her to come to some sense of recognition of her repressed feelings of guilt concerning Keiko's unhappiness and her eventual suicide" (Teo 64-65). Acknowledging both Teo's reading and Wong's later reading in *Kazuo Ishiguro*, this study offers another framework to make a more systematic analysis of their claims and assumes that narrative psychology offers an appropriate perspective to examine how Etsuko comes to terms with the suicide of her daughter and find solace through her self-narrative.

Focusing on the relationship between stories and storytelling and their therapeutic effect on the storyteller, this chapter explores Etsuko's narrative psychological journey into her past in *A Pale View of Hills*. It argues that Etsuko's psychological journey serves as an attempt at self-recovery following the tragic suicide of her daughter Keiko. At the center of Etsuko's story is the suicide of her daughter, which creates narrative ruptures in her life-story as a traumatic event. From a narrative psychological perspective, trauma stands for the breaking up of a coherent life story. Likewise, the narrative ruptures caused by the suicide have had the effect of turning Etsuko's life upside down and disrupting Etsuko's conventional life narrative. At beginning of her storytelling, Etsuko is narratively "restricted," that is she is not able to construct a working narrative where she can situate and give meaning to Keiko's suicide. Since there is not any available narrative to organize her experience around, the reader witnesses how Etsuko struggles to find a narrative through which she can make sense of her daughter's suicide. In the wake of her daughter's tragic end, Etsuko's memories about Nagasaki resurface and lead her to recall her old friend Sachiko's story. Through this narrative, Etsuko draws parallels between Sachiko's struggle with her daughter Mariko after the atomic bombing and her relationship with Keiko, which can be accepted as a way of externalizing the problem from a narrative psychological perspective.

Etsuko tries to come to terms with the suicide using other parallel stories like the story of Sachiko. Along with it, she resorts to the historical context of post-war Japan to contextualize Keiko's suicide. Using "selective focus of attention" and "repression" as mental strategies employed in self-deception in her storytelling, she tries to face her daughter's demise. At the end of her storytelling, there is a partial progress in her release from the trauma. With the help of the story about Sachiko and Mariko, she admits that she made a mistake by bringing Keiko to England. Although there is not full recovery from Etsuko's trauma, it can still be held that she attempts to face the tragedy through a therapeutic re-working of her self-narrative, and at the end there seems to be a progress in her psychological well-being. This study suggests that Etsuko's interweaving of past and present narratives is a deliberate strategy for negotiating the complexities of grief, reworking her daughter's suicide, and ultimately seeking solace through narrative reconfiguration. Overall, the novel

underlines the therapeutic power of storytelling in making sense of trauma, coming to terms with the past, and seeking psychological well-being. In the following section, the literary analysis focuses firstly on Etsuko's state of mind at the beginning of her storytelling, then on the process of her storytelling and how she works on her trauma. In the end, the discussion scrutinizes Etsuko's state of mind at the closing of her storytelling.

3.1. Etsuko's Psychological State at the Beginning of her Storytelling

While it also includes Etsuko's memories, the present time of the narrative is aligned with Etsuko's present time, which is around Niki's five-day visit and shortly after Keiko's death. Etsuko rationalizes this visit as Niki's attempt to save her mother from feeling guilty: "to reassure me I was not responsible for Keiko's death" (Ishiguro, *Pale* 11). However, Niki's visit has the reverse effect as Etsuko is triggered by her visit and "by her anxiety to explain away the suicide of Keiko" (Lee 24). Etsuko begins her storytelling due to this visit. In the beginning, she emerges as a highly traumatized figure due to Keiko's recent suicide, which can be seen in her avoidance to talk about their relationship explicitly. Her attitude towards Keiko in her narrative is defined mainly by repression early in the story: "I have no great wish to dwell on Keiko now, it brings me little comfort. I only mention her here because those were the circumstances around Niki's visit this April, and because it was during that visit that I remembered Sachiko again after all this time" (Ishiguro, *Pale* 11). Although Etsuko does not want to refer to Keiko directly due to the emotional intensity, she still appears as an absent presence throughout her story. The overwhelming emotional burden leads her to employ "repression" (Marcus, *Self-Deception* 29) as a mental strategy to cope with the truth. Although the center of her narrative is the suicide, Etsuko evades the tragedy and directs her attention to other stories related to Niki and Sachiko.

Etsuko's relationship with Niki also gives insight into her communication with Keiko. Although they do not talk about Keiko openly, her communication with Niki still gives the reader some clues about Keiko, as she discloses, "For although we never dwelt long on the subject of Keiko's death, it was never far away, hovering over us whenever we talked" (Ishiguro, *Pale* 10). In traumatic experience, "there is a

simultaneous desire to remember (in attempts to replay and resolve the past) and to forget these experiences" (Vickroy 8). Likewise, Etsuko represents such a paradoxical attitude towards Keiko. On the one hand, she does not want to talk about her, but at the same time she wants to revolve her past through reorganizing the stories about Keiko. She simultaneously "attempts to tell the truth in order to come to terms with it and to hide it, as it is too painful to cope with" (Matek 135; Molino 326).

Etsuko's narrative leaves a huge gap about Keiko's suicide. She makes little reference to her relationship with Keiko before she came to England, so the reader does not know how exactly life for Keiko in Japan was. There is a small amount of information about their life in England before her suicide. It is narrated by Etsuko that Keiko left home six years before her suicide and chose to live alone in Manchester (Ishiguro, *Pale* 53). Keiko does not appear at her English father's funeral and Niki does not attend Keiko's funeral either. The reader witnesses the breakdown of their familial relationship. While Etsuko barely mentions her relationship with Keiko, she reveals that Keiko locked herself in her room two or three years before she left home. Consequently, her relationship with the other members of her family is minimal. When Keiko comes into the living room from time to time, everyone gets tense and Keiko either fights with her father or her sister and then retreats to her room again. In time, everyone gets used to this situation (Ishiguro, *Pale* 53-54). Etsuko's narrative leaves many questions unanswered: How Etsuko made the decision to leave Japan, how she met her English husband, how she left her Japanese husband Jiro, how Keiko was in Japan, how Keiko's life was in England leading up to her suicide are all absent in the narrative. Wigren states that trauma narratives are "incomplete narratives" (415): "When patients talk about traumatic experiences, they frequently cannot tell the story of this experience. Rather, they relate bits and pieces of sensation, image, and affect out of which a narrative must be created" (415). Completed narratives, on the other hand, "make sense" of felt experience (Wigren 416), where the traumatic experience is segmented, action and character are linked, affect is identified, and is made meaningful (Wigren 422). This in turn indicates the release of the traumatic experience. So, it can be argued that Etsuko's narrative is

"incomplete" in that sense, indicating that her sense of self is disintegrated, symbolizing that her narrative is incoherent.

Etsuko's first reaction towards the death of Keiko displays "repression" as a coping mechanism, indicating that she is not over Keiko's suicide. On the third day of Niki's visit, they go to the teashop in the village. On their way home they meet Mrs. Waters, the piano teacher of her daughters, and Etsuko pretends that Keiko is still alive.

> And what about Keiko?" Mrs. Waters turned to me. 'How is Keiko getting on now?"
> "Keiko? Oh, she went to live in Manchester."
> "Oh yes? That's a nice city on the whole. That's what I've heard anyway. And does she like it up there?"
> "I haven't heard from her recently."
> "Oh well. No news is good news, I expect. And does Keiko still play the piano?"
> "I expect she does. I haven't heard from her recently." (Ishiguro, *Pale* 50-51)

She does not tell her that Keiko committed suicide and makes her believe that she is still alive in Manchester. As Niki claims, Etsuko "enjoys" the idea that Keiko is still alive (Ishiguro, *Pale* 52). She has not the mental power to face the truth.

The traumatic experience is "quickly reactivated through encounters, touch, 'triggers,' or associative conditions" (Wigren 416) if a working narrative is not created after the traumatic experience. As Keiko hanged herself in the room of her house in Manchester, Etsuko is still traumatized by this, and she is repeatedly haunted by this situation.

> I have found myself continually bringing to mind that picture — of my daughter hanging in her room for days on end. The horror of that image has never diminished, but it has long ceased to be a morbid matter; as with a wound on one's own body, it is possible to develop an intimacy with the most disturbing of things. (Ishiguro, *Pale* 54)

The image of her daughter Keiko, hanging in her room for days, persistently haunts Etsuko. However, according to Etsuko, this mental image has undergone a transformation over time, diminishing its horror. It can be argued that the shock effect has now lessened and that she has come to accept her suicide and develop a sense of intimacy with her wound. That does not necessarily mean that Etsuko is released from the trauma, but the emotional effect on her has changed. Keiko's death still has a significant impact on both Etsuko and Niki. Niki has come to visit her mother but has trouble sleeping and suffers from bad dreams (Ishiguro, *Pale* 175). The room Niki is staying in now is right across Keiko's room and she feels

uncomfortable and moves to another room. “Well, I can’t help it, Mother. I just feel strange thinking about that room being right opposite” (Ishiguro, *Pale* 53). Etsuko sympathizes with her because she sometimes feels disturbed by Keiko’s room too. They are not able to enter it, which suggests that Etsuko is not able to integrate the suicide into her life narrative.

As Wigren suggests, traumatic experience is activated through “associative conditions” (416). A similar mental state is experienced by Etsuko. Quite a short time after her daughter’s suicide, Etsuko and Niki notice a girl swinging on a swing in the park during Niki’s visit, and this image haunts Etsuko in her dreams over and over again. She had shared her dream with Niki before, but she brings it up again and says that the girl she saw in her dream was not the girl they saw at the party.

> “Well, actually, it isn’t that little girl at all. That’s what I realized this morning. It seemed to be that little girl, but it wasn’t.”
>
> Niki looked at me again. Then she said “I suppose you mean it was her. Keiko.”
> “Keiko?” I laughed a little. “What a strange idea. Why should it be Keiko? No, it was nothing to do with Keiko.”
> Niki continued to look at me uncertainly.
> “It was just a little girl I knew once,” I said to her. “A long time ago.”
> […]
> “In fact, I realized something else this morning,” I said. “Something else about the dream.”
> My daughter did not seem to hear.
> “You see,’’ I said, “the little girl isn’t on a swing at all. It seemed like that at first. But it’s not a swing she’s on.”
> Niki murmured something and carried on reading. (Ishiguro, *Pale* 95-96)

The reader does not understand who exactly she is referring to in the story she tells. There is a girl swinging on a swing, but in fact the image of a child hanging herself is evoked on her mind, which is not related to Keiko at that point according to her. “The past is always there, but Etsuko’s conscious desire to avoid recalling certain events actually inhibits her ability to construct a clearer, more accurate picture of her life” (Lee 22). Etsuko is psychologically disturbed and triggered by the associations linked to the suicide, which shows that Etsuko is still under the overwhelming effect of her daughter’s suicide. However, this instance at the same time shows that Etsuko is working on her trauma. Although the girl on the swing could easily be associated with Keiko just as Niki suggests, she is not able to admit it yet. Instead, she reminisces another related event, concerning her past life in Japan, her friend Sachiko, and her daughter Mariko. Ishiguro’s statement “the whole narrative strategy

of the book was about how someone ends up talking about things they cannot face directly through other people's stories" (Mason & Ishiguro 337) is in line with Etsuko's being taken back to the past. Revisiting her past and revolving around other people's stories, Etsuko in fact works on her trauma. She tries to come to terms with Keiko's suicide through her narrative reworking, although her reworking is not directly linked to Keiko till the very end.

3.2. Etsuko's Narrative Reworking of her Trauma

It can be said that Etsuko is in a narrative crisis concerning her daughter's suicide; therefore, her account lacks coherence and continuity. The narrative of her life that she had previously created has been fractured and she needs to find a narrative that fits her present reality and includes her daughter's suicide. To do this, she has to go back and rewrite her life narrative. Arthur Frank uses the metaphor "the narrative wreckage" to refer to the story one finds for himself/herself after a serious life-altering illness. According to him, one has a functioning life narrative which enables him/her to live by, but after a traumatic event this narrative is disrupted, and one is thrown into a kind of narrative chaos. Since a coherent life story corresponds to mental health, one needs to repair the narrative breakdown through working on the stories to produce a functioning narrative. The healthy individual is capable of holding a coherent, meaningful, and dynamic narrative of himself. According to this perspective, a person whose story is unavailable, flawed, or partial is prone to psychological and emotional difficulties (Tuval-Maschiach et al. 281). According to Tuval-Maschiach et al., there are three factors crucial for effective coping: continuity and coherence, creation of meaning, self-evaluation (282). It can be held that Etsuko is not able to release her trauma effectively yet, as she is still not able to integrate the traumatic event into her life story. However, it can be proposed that she attempts to recover from it, by going back to her past and revisiting her earlier experience to produce a narrative where she can give meaning to the suicide. "Already deeply aware that the return to her past will not bring back her dead daughter, Etsuko is nevertheless compelled to mend her understanding of how events evolved" (Wong, *Kazuo Ishiguro* 29). Since she does not directly refer to Keiko, Etsuko is not able to

create coherence and continuity and an adequate self-evaluation in her narrative. That is why, it is difficult to say that there has been a complete recovery.

There are three different available narratives through which Etsuko can understand and integrate her daughter's suicide into her life. The first one is the British press' interpretation of Keiko's suicide. The second is the British husband's words about Keiko's disposition, and the third is Niki's telling of her mother's story as a success story. However, these three narratives are not enough for Etsuko to make sense of the suicide. Etsuko cannot see these three narratives as a narrative through which she can locate her own experience. The first narrative is the one in which the British press connects Keiko's suicide to a racial/cultural issue. The West's reductionist and prejudiced view of Japan does not match Etsuko's reality at all: "The English are fond of their idea that our race has an instinct for suicide, as if further explanations are unnecessary; for that was all they reported, that she was Japanese and that she had hung herself in her room" (Ishiguro, *Pale* 10). For Etsuko, this British idea is the result of an easy cultural stereotypical understanding. It leads to the understanding that the Japanese have a predisposition to self-destruction, which is a prejudiced understanding that obscures the underlying causes or complexities of the suicide in Etsuko's opinion. That is why Etsuko cannot integrate Keiko's suicide into this narrative. Secondly, the narrative provided by Etsuko's English husband concerning Keiko is not suitable for Etsuko to incorporate the suicide as well. Her English husband's opinion of Keiko is as follows:

> Keiko was a difficult person by nature and there was little we could do for her. In fact, although he never claimed it outright, he would imply that Keiko had inherited her personality from her father. I did little to contradict this, for it was the easy explanation, that Jiro was to blame, not us. (Ishiguro, *Pale* 94)

Etsuko's husband describes Keiko as "an inherently difficult person," which implies that Keiko has personality traits or behaviors that make her difficult to deal with. The use of the word "nature" suggests that these traits are innate in her character. He implies that Keiko inherited her personality from her father Jiro, which indicates a belief that personality traits can be passed on genetically. Etsuko admits that she did little to counter the implication that Jiro was responsible for Keiko's difficult personality, which shift the blame away from themselves and onto Jiro. However, Etsuko knows that her husband is not right. She argues that Niki and Keiko have a lot

in common by nature. “Both had fierce tempers, both were possessive; if they became upset, they would not like other children forget their anger quickly, but would remain moody for most of the day” (Ishiguro, *Pale* 94). She does not “easily” put the blame on Keiko’s nature or Jiro (Ishiguro, *Pale* 94). Deep down Etsuko attributes her daughter’s suicide to her own mistakes.

Thirdly, Niki offers Etsuko another narrative through which she can make sense of Keiko’s suicide. According to her, Etsuko’s life is a success story. From Niki’s point of view, Etsuko’s life is an admirable poetic field of struggle. Niki even mentions that a friend of hers is going to write a poem for her mother. Her father and mother’s departure from Japan was very impressive for them.

> “So many women,” she said, “get stuck with kids and lousy husbands and they’re just miserable. But they can’t pluck up the courage to do a thing about it. They’ll just go on like that for the rest of their lives.”
>
> “I see. So you’re saying they should desert their children, are you, Niki?”
> “You know what I mean. It’s pathetic when people just waste away their lives.”
> […]
> “My friends all think so too,” said Niki. “The ones I’ve told anyway.” (Ishiguro, *Pale* 89-90)

Niki highlights the challenges and frustrations that some women can face in their lives, especially in the context of relationships and family. She admires women who are brave enough to change the course of their lives. Thus, for Niki, her mother’s life is an achievement as she did not accept her situation in Japan. It would not be wrong to suggest that this is the dominant understanding about Etsuko’s story for the English, at least among the youngsters in England of that time. As a woman, she found the courage to change the course of her life, which is found to be poetic. Etsuko, however, does not seem convinced by such a narrative. She questions Niki’s narrative through the situation where women save themselves at the expense of her children. Niki still finds it pathetic that women waste their lives. As Etsuko’s reality does not fit into this narrative either, she may have saved herself, but she may have caused Keiko’s death at the same time. She internally struggles with this guilt. Although there are three available narratives to Etsuko which enable her to integrate the suicide of her daughter, Etsuko is not able to integrate the tragic story to any these narratives.

The reason why these three narratives presented to Etsuko are not acceptable to Etsuko is that in these narratives, it is the British perspective that is managing

well, and it is the Japanese side that is vulnerable. One of the questions that dialogic narrative analysis asks is who in the story is "holding their own" and who the story makes it difficult for "other people to hold their own" (Frank, *Socio-Narratology* 77). In that respect, for Etsuko, these narratives are stereotypical and simplistic explanations that fail to comprehend the complexities underlying Keiko's suicide. The British press attributed Keiko's suicide to the fact that she was Japanese, just as her husband attributed Keiko's suicide to her nature or her biological father. In England, a completely different narrative is created for Japan. Etsuko finds her English husband's, and perhaps England's, approach to this issue inaccurate: "For, in truth, despite all the impressive articles he wrote about Japan, my husband never understood the ways of our culture, even less a man like Jiro" (Ishiguro, *Pale* 90). In a sense, Niki's view of her mother's life as a story to be proud of is linked to the portrait painted by her British father. Therefore, Etsuko finds Niki's approach inaccurate as well.

Crossley suggests that, drawing on the narrative psychologist Polkinghorne, "[narrative] therapists can assist clients in the reconstruction of life narratives that have become too restrictive" (*Narrative Psychology* 62). In this context, it could be argued that Etsuko is narratively restricted by the perspectives on her environment. As she is narratively restricted, she is not able to get release from her trauma. Etsuko therefore needs another narrative to explain Keiko's suicide and find consolation. As Ishiguro states, "she [Etsuko] does need to arrange her memories in a way that allows her to salvage some dignity" (Mason & Ishiguro 338). In her struggle to give meaning to Keiko's suicide she resorts to the historical context of postwar Japan. On the one hand, she establishes a connection and gets into dialogue with her Japanese self, and on the other, she tries to locate and contextualize the suicide into her life story. Apart from that, as narrative psychology asserts, an individual is not autonomous, rather is a part of culture. Since an individual's sense of self cannot be isolated from the culture in which one is embedded, what Etsuko does by referring to the historical and cultural context parallels the understanding of the self in narrative psychology. This way of making sense of her daughter's suicide in her own storytelling also stands in contrast to the three narratives presented to her. As Etsuko's previous self-narrative is disrupted through traumatization, as the narrative

psychologist Crossley suggests, "the importance of narratives again comes into effect, as the individual attempts to 'reconfigure' a sense of order, meaningfulness and coherent identity" ("Trauma" 528). To reconfigure a sense of order and make sense of herself, Etsuko starts searching for meaning in the historical context of Japan. Along with it, as traumatic memories are stored differently from ordinary memories according to neurobiological research (van der Kolk and van der Hart 172), it is possible to claim that Etsuko tries to contextualize her traumatic experience through her stories about Nagasaki so that it can be an ordinary memory where traumatic experience is made sense of.

A question asked by Frank when doing dialogic narrative analysis is that "What is the effect of people being caught up in their own stories while living with people caught up in other stories?" (*Socio-Narratology* 78). The setting in Etsuko's story is Nagasaki following the atomic bombing. The psychosocial landscape narrated by Etsuko regarding Nagasaki is abundant with people "caught up" in different stories. The effects of the atomic bombing in Nagasaki are still devastating, and Etsuko is pregnant with Keiko. "These were days of calm and relief. The world had a feeling of change about it" (Ishiguro, *Pale* 11). Etsuko, at that point in her life, "wanted to be left alone" (Ishiguro, *Pale* 13) due to the tragedies of wartime. Etsuko lives with her husband, Jiro, in an apartment near the city of Nagasaki. It is a time when the city is beginning to heal its wounds, like herself. Some people are somehow going on with their lives despite everything while others are still reeling from the devastating effects of the war and the bomb.

> "There's a young woman I see every week," Mrs. Fujiwara went on. "She must be six or seven months pregnant now. I see her every time I go to visit the cemetery. I've never spoken to her, but she looks so sad, standing there with her husband. It's a shame, a pregnant girl and her husband spending their Sundays thinking about the dead. I know they're being respectful, but all the same, I think it's a shame. They should be thinking about the future." (Ishiguro, *Pale* 25)

Mrs. Fujiwara is a friend of Etsuko's mother and has lost five children and her husband. Now she runs a noodle shop and somehow continues her life. Mrs. Fujiwara represents hope for Etsuko, because Mrs. Fujiwara holds on to life no matter how destructive the situation is. Etsuko too has lost her family in the

bombing. She has been so affected by the bombing that she never seems to get over it. While talking to Ogata-san, Jiro's father, she asks him how she was in those days.

> "What was I like in those days, Father? Was I like a mad person?"
> "You were very shocked, which was only to be expected. We were all shocked, those of us who were left. Now, Etsuko, let's forget these things. I'm sorry I ever brought up the matter." (Ishiguro, *Pale* 58)

The wounds of the atomic bombing are so fresh that people avoid remembering and mentioning this period. Etsuko brings up another dominant issue in Nagasaki during this period that is related to the aftermath of the tragedy, pedicide:

> Received with more urgency were the reports of the child murders that were alarming Nagasaki at the time. First a boy, then a small girl had been found battered to death. When a third victim, another little girl, had been found hanging from a tree there was near-panic amongst the mothers in the neighbourhood. (Ishiguro, *Pale* 100)

It is stated that there was an alarming level of child deaths in Nagasaki during that period with many children brutally beaten to death and a girl who took her own life by hanging. These tragedies must have taken a toll on the psyche of the then mothers, having them get worried over the safety and future of their children. As a consequence of grappling with such tragic events, people displayed various reactions in Nagasaki at that time: Those who hold on to life, those who ended their lives, those who lived in the past, those who looked to the future, those who wanted change, those who sought the old. In such a complex psychosocial landscape, Etsuko is among the ones who try to hold on to life.

In the realm of culture and politics, nothing is settled for Nagasaki either. It is "a place that is caught between decay and progress" (Teo 52). The old narrative of Japan has been destroyed and a new narrative is being created. The society is torn between clashing narratives, causing intergenerational conflicts: On the one hand, there are narratives defending the new Japan that is trying to reconstruct itself; and on the other hand, there are narratives of the previous generation trying to perpetuate the old ways. The bomb has left nothing the same and the defeated Japan is now under the influence of American occupation, the effect of which is increasingly felt in the realm of daily life. To illustrate, Jiro's father Ogata is surprised to learn that the wife of Jiro's friend voted for a different political party from her husband's choice. He associates this with the Americanized ways of living: "'Quite

extraordinary the things that happen now. But that's what's meant by democracy, I suppose.' Ogata-San gave a sigh. 'These things we've learned so eagerly from the Americans, they aren't always to the good'" (Ishiguro, *Pale* 65). The relationship dynamics between men and women begin to change, and the woman, who had been a satellite of the man, begins to assert her free will outside of her husband.

A similar change has taken place in the field of education. Japan is witnessing the Americanization of its education system:

> "Take what happened in my profession, for instance. Here was a system we'd nurtured and cherished for years. The Americans came and stripped it, tore it down without a thought. They decided our schools would be like American schools, the children should learn what American children learn. And the Japanese welcomed it all. Welcomed it with a lot of talk about democracy" — he shook his head — "Many fine things were destroyed in our schools." (Ishiguro, *Pale* 66)

According to Ogata, this cultural imperialism proved to be harmful for it destroyed the old values of the Japanese people. The Japanese people accepted it as democratization, but it caused a cultural erosion. On the other hand, for Jiro, the situation is not exactly as his father perceives it. He seems to be happy that some of the oddities of old Japan have disappeared.

> "That may be a pity, admittedly. But then I remember some odd things from my schooldays. I remember being taught all about how Japan was created by the gods, for instance. How we as a nation were divine and supreme. We had to memorize the text book word for word. Some things aren't such a loss, perhaps." (Ishiguro, *Pale* 66)

The previous education system painted the country as if it were a divine entity, and it imposed tradition by disheartening pupils from critical thinking, which led the country to be seen as an uninhabitable location for its openminded people. "In your day, children in Japan were taught terrible things. They were taught lies of most damaging kind. Worst of all, they were taught not see, not to question. And that's why the country was plunged into the most evil disaster in her entire history" (Ishiguro, *Pale* 147).

Matsuda, like Jiro's father, is a teacher and writes a review criticizing Ogata in "A Teachers' Periodicals" magazine. Ogata cannot accept this situation and takes it very hard on himself. Although he has helped Matsuda in the past, Ogata cannot accept the things he wrote in the article and wants to settle accounts with Matsuda. In the article, Matsuda argues that teachers like Ogata and Endo should have been fired

immediately after the war. Although Ogata emphasized that Endo and others like him were truly working selflessly for the benefit of their country, Matsuda claims that Ogata and Endo had caused teachers who did not think like them to go to jail in the past.

> As a matter of fact, I do happen to be familiar with certain aspects of your career. For instance, the sacking and imprisoning of the five teachers at Nishizaka. April of 1938, if I'm not mistaken. But those men are free now, and they'll help us reach a new dawn. Now please excuse me. (Ishiguro, *Pale* 148)

So, the war changes Japan's narrative about itself. The old stories have become obsolete. Japan is living a new story and is going through a big change in many realms of its culture. The impact of the war on the people is enormous as the taken for granted assumptions were replaced by new approaches in every field of life. Largely, the issue of education, the issue of women, political changes have shaken the foundation of life for people as they are moving back and forth between socially clashing narratives.

Another question dialogical narrative analysis asks is, "How does a story help people, individually and collectively, to remember who they are?" (Frank, *Socio-Narratology* 83). It is possible to argue that these stories about the historical climate of post-war Nagasaki have an impact over Etsuko's psychological well-being, and they are important for her self-understanding. She seems to explain to herself that where she was living at the time was a very turbulent and improper place to raise children. In fact, the then Japan under transformation can be seen as a suitable ground for making different life choices and changing one's life course. In this way, one could argue that Etsuko is contemplating the reasons for her emigration to England, which led to her daughter's suicide, and seeking a way out to settle her mind. Similarly, recent theories on trauma emphasize the intermingling of the social and the individual. Like the understanding of the self in narrative psychology, Gilmore in *The Limits of Autobiography* (2001) argues the following:

> Trauma is never exclusively personal; it always exists within complicated histories that combine harm and pleasure, along with less inflected dimensions of everyday life. Remembering trauma entails contextualizing it within history. Insofar as trauma can be defined as that which breaks the frame, rebuilding the frame to contain it is as fraught with difficulty as it is necessary. (31)

Gilmore stresses the importance of remembering and understanding trauma by placing it within a broader historical framework while acknowledging the challenges involved in restoring the context broken by traumatic experience. In line with this thinking, through the construction of a fluctuating Nagasaki as a dangerous place for children, it can be argued that Etsuko tries to contextualize her trauma and construct a coherent sense of self, where a causal relationship is established between past events and her present circumstance. However, a causal relationship which allows for her to construct a coherent sense of self is not fully established yet by Etsuko. Her narrative about the historical context about postwar Nagasaki is not narratively tied to a conclusion. Her narrative is highly fragmented, and the reader tries hard to construct a meaningful and coherent narrative for Etsuko. In that respect, it is not possible to say that her narrative about the past is narratively coherent, but she is in pursuit of establishing causality between events. She wants to create an integrative narrative, but she is not successful yet.

Etsuko does not yet have the courage to face her present reality because of her intense emotional involvement in the matter; therefore, it is through other people's stories that she tries to come to terms with it. This can be called a mental strategy of self-deception. Employing "selective focus of attention" (Marcus, *Self-Deception* 27), Etsuko focuses on certain aspects of her past stories while ignoring other relevant information to avoid emotional distress. Though through Niki and Sachiko, Etsuko actually talks about Keiko, which she does not admit. It has already been mentioned that there are significant gaps in Etsuko's narrative such as Keiko's life in England, and Keiko's childhood in Japan and the story of her leaving Japan. Etsuko does not include these stories in her narrative directly, rather she fills these gaps with other people's stories: Keiko's life in England is revealed through the parallels with her stories about Niki, Keiko's life in Japan is narrated through the story of Sachiko and Mariko. Wong states that Etsuko's story about Sachiko reveals "what she [Etsuko] had suppressed about her own relationship with her daughter Keiko" (*Kazuo Ishiguro* 30). Wong is quite right in her observation, because through Sachiko, Etsuko can revisit her own past mistakes. Moreover, through her narrative about Niki, Etsuko can reassess and reflect on her relationship with Keiko before her suicide. Therefore, it can be argued that through Niki and Sachiko, Etsuko

establishes the closest contact with Keiko in her storytelling, although it is indirect. Through Niki and Sachiko, she starts to admit her mistakes which appears as the first step towards recovery.

Through Niki, Etsuko seems to approach realizing how she might have neglected Keiko. The opening paragraph of Etsuko's narrative is quite telling in terms of how Etsuko feels regarding her Japanese self which she thinks she has left behind by coming to England. Etsuko comes to England because she wants to leave the collective trauma of Japan behind. She marries a British journalist to get rid of her past and to make a new beginning. She does this despite everything, despite Keiko. The very beginning of her narrative gives important clues about her sense of self in England, which stresses her repulsion towards her past. Etsuko starts her narrative with the naming process of her second daughter Niki.

> Niki, the name we finally gave my younger daughter, is not an abbreviation; it was a compromise I reached with her father. For paradoxically it was he who wanted to give her a Japanese name, and I— perhaps out of some selfish desire not to be reminded of the past — insisted on an English one. He finally agreed to Niki, thinking it had some vague echo of the East about it. (Ishiguro, *Pale* 9)

Niki is an oriental-sounding name and is the result of a negotiation with her English husband. Although she wants an English name for her daughter, the past as an echo in the name of Niki still preserves its existence. Etsuko explicitly avoids the past. Therefore, a narrative that is not functioning emerges here for Etsuko. Even though she does not want to remember her Japanese past, escape from Japan does not seem possible for her. In addition to Niki, who is half-British and half-Japanese just like her name, Keiko, who is "pure" Japanese, is still part of her life. While Etsuko wants to forget Japan because of what she has been through, Keiko, that is, Japan, is actually in her life.

Etsuko's relationship with her Japanese self indicates parallelism towards her relationship Keiko. Before Keiko leaves for Manchester, she isolates herself from the family and locks herself behind her room for a couple of years. Throughout this period, no one does anything against Keiko's locking herself in her room. It is as if Keiko is imprisoned in a room of the house, like the country her mother wants to forget, which might have given Etsuko a sense of comfort. As Molino suggests, Etsuko's desire not to remember Japan and her Japanese identity influences her

relationship with Keiko to the point that Etsuko drives Keiko into "isolation, loneliness, and despair" (332). In other words, Etsuko's attitude towards her Japanese past coincides with Keiko's locking herself in a room. Etsuko seems to confess this too:

> I feel only regret now for those attitudes I displayed towards Keiko. In this country, after all, it is not unexpected that a young woman of that age should wish to leave home. All I succeeded in doing, it would seem, was to ensure that when she finally left— now almost six years ago— she did so severing all her ties with me. But then I never imagined she could so quickly vanish beyond my reach; all I saw was that my daughter, unhappy as she was at home, would find the world outside too much for her. It was for her own protection I opposed her so vehemently. (Ishiguro, *Pale* 88)

Here, it is as if Etsuko is talking to her early self in England, to make sense of her previous self's attitude towards her daughter. It seems that she reacted very harshly to Keiko's leaving home and regrets it as she claims that she "feel[s] only regret now" (Ishiguro, *Pale* 88). It is as if all she has done is to make Keiko sever all ties with her. However, this is, according to Amit Marcus's theory of self-deception, a mental strategy called "positive misinterpretation." Although Keiko has lived in Manchester for 6 years, Etsuko does not attempt to help Keiko solve her problems. Additionally, she never visits the place where Keiko lives. However, according to Etsuko, the only mistake that she made is linked to her opposition to her leaving home. It is positive misinterpretation because Etsuko "overestimates" (Marcus, *Self-Deception* 28) the information she provides to avoid the emotional distress it caused. Moreover, she uses another mental strategy linked to self-deception, that is rationalization. She explains the reason why she reacted so harshly was her instinct to protect her. However, this is not the only mistake she has made towards in her relationship with Keiko.

In addition, the passage above also reveals that Etsuko ties her seemingly excessive reaction to Keiko's desire to leave for Manchester alone to her Japanese self, drawing a contradiction with the lifestyle in England. A similar attitude appears in Niki's anxiety, for she lives in London with her boyfriend, David. Etsuko does not seem to have come to terms with this situation. When they meet Mrs. Waters, Niki tells her teacher that she lives in London, and when asked if she has gone there to study, she says no, she just lives there. Niki then thinks that Etsuko is ashamed of what she said to Mrs. Waters.

> "I suppose I embarrassed you, didn't I?" Niki said to me. We were sitting once again in our armchairs, looking out into the garden.
> "Why do you suppose that?" I said.
> "I should have told her I was thinking of going to university or something like that."
> "I don't mind in the least what you say about yourself. I'm not ashamed of you."
> "No, I suppose not." (Ishiguro, *Pale* 51)

Etsuko has never been able to fully break away from her Japanese self. This is one of Etsuko's contradictions with Keiko: A young girl living alone away from her family. While she has reacted very harshly to Keiko's decision to leave home, we see her trying to work things out with Niki. Niki is far from the culture of marriage, but for Etsuko a young girl can only live elsewhere when she gets married. This seems to be a point of debate for them. Two different people are "caught up" in two different stories, which produces tension between them. Niki feels and knows deep down that her mother cannot tolerate this:

> "I suppose you don't like it very much, do you, Mother?"
> "Like what, Niki?"
> "The way things are with me- You don't like me living away. With David and all that."
> […]
> "I'm not ashamed of you Niki," I said. "You must live as — you think best." (Ishiguro, *Pale* 181)

For Etsuko, the fact that her daughter lives with David in London seems to be a matter of "shame." Niki frames the question as "to like it" or "not to like it," but Etsuko says that she is not ashamed of Niki. Immediately afterwards, Etsuko states that it was a matter of discussion in Japan even when people moved away from their families after marriage (Ishiguro, *Pale* 181). It seems that Etsuko's self in England is never independent of her self in Japan, at least until Niki's current situation. While she reacted so harshly to Keiko's leaving, she does not react as harshly to Niki now as she admits, "I feel only regret now for those attitudes I displayed towards Keiko. In this country, after all, it is not unexpected that a young woman of that age should wish to leave home" (Ishiguro, *Pale* 88). While she failed to do so for Keiko, she seems to have accepted it for Niki. By building a bridge between the self in England and the self in Japan, Etsuko looks as if she has managed to create another narrative, though she failed to do so in her relationship with Keiko. It is apparent that through Niki, Etsuko enters into a kind of self-confrontation about her relationship with Keiko in England. Although she has not yet fully analyzed her role in Keiko's life

and perhaps her mistakes in her relationship, it can be said that she has made some kind of entry into it.

Etsuko's stories about Niki give insight into her psychological well-being after migration. As Matek states, Etsuko's narrative "reflects the complexity and elusiveness of the process of migration which, for her, never seems to complete, leaving her torn between who she was and who she is now" (130). It can be claimed that Etsuko's stories about Niki reveal this aspect of her narrative identity. Etsuko is in a kind of limbo situation where her Japanese self and English self are never reconciled. It can be accepted that another narrative break in Etsuko's life, caused by her migration from Japan to England, is revealed through her narrative incorporating Niki's stories. Though Etsuko does not seem to fully make sense of the effect of her migrant experience yet, she still works on it to make sense of herself and her daughter's suicide.

Although there are still narrative gaps about Keiko's life in England, these gaps are beginning to fill a little. Etsuko gives us further insight into Keiko's life through her story about Sachiko, as an "alternative scenario" (Matek 135). Through her story about Sachiko, Etsuko enters into a dialogue with her earlier self. In her story about Sachiko, Etsuko appears as Sachiko and Mariko as Keiko. Through this parallelism, Etsuko connects to her past and attempts to organize her past. The most important aspect of the narrative therapeutic process, according to White and Epston in *Narrative Means to Therapeutic Ends* (1990), is "the externalization of the problem" (38) where a space for re-authorship is opened. "'Externalizing' is an approach to therapy that encourages persons to objectify and, at times, to personify the problems that they experience as oppressive" (White and Epston, *Narrative Means* 38). From this point of view, it is possible to claim that Etsuko externalizes the problems through Sachiko, which enables her to see the effects of the problem among the parties of the conflict more insightfully. Etsuko's story regarding Japan does not directly address her relationship with Keiko, how she met the British journalist, how she decided to go to England. This narrative gap is in a sense filled by the parallels in Sachiko's story. "Etsuko appropriates the character of Sachiko as a mask to confront her own history, utilizing Sachiko's past to help her analyze the decisions that she made many years ago" (Teo 64). Therefore, Sachiko's story is

claimed to be intertwined with her own story. Etsuko enters a kind of coping process with her pain through the parallelism in Sachiko's life. Sachiko has lost her husband in the war, and she and her daughter Mariko have left Tokyo to live with her husband's uncle. However, Sachiko has an American boyfriend named Frank and plans to move to America with him. Sachiko's relationship with her daughter, Sachiko's relationship with the man she loves, Sachiko's relationship with Japan are all related to Etsuko in some way. In fact, everything she says about them is related to her own reality.

Etsuko represents herself as a benevolent mother in dealing with Sachiko's daughter Mariko, whereas Sachiko displays indifference towards her own daughter. **"**Personal alienation is most pronounced in Sachiko, who has evidently been so traumatized by loss that she avoids any deep emotional attachment" (Eckert 85). Sachiko resides in a wooden cottage on the opposite side of the river from Etsuko's neighborhood, which is an unwelcoming area with mud, ditches, and a prevalence of mosquitoes and stray cats. According to Etsuko's account, Sachiko is romantically involved with an American man named Frank and has plans to relocate to the United States with him. During the times Sachiko is absent from home to meet Frank, Mariko is occasionally left to her own devices. On a particular evening when Sachiko and Frank go on a date, Mariko is again left alone at home. Sachiko cannot find Mariko at home when she comes back, and Etsuko and Sachiko embark on a search for her. Etsuko is particularly concerned for Mariko's well-being because she is aware of the potential dangers the nearby river poses to a young girl while Sachiko seems unbothered:

> We were crossing the bridge, when Sachiko turned to me and said rapidly: "We went to a bar in the end. We were going to go to the cinema, to a film with Gary Cooper, but there was a long queue. The town was very crowded and a lot of people were drunk. We went to a bar in the end and they gave us a little room to ourselves."
> "I see."
> "I suppose you don't go to bars, do you, Etsuko?"
> "No, I don't." (Ishiguro, *Pale* 40)

Mariko has often left home alone before, and each time she has come back again. Partly because of that comfort Sachiko is not worried, so she recklessly tells Etsuko what happened that day with Frank while searching for her daughter. Sachiko is still not worried when they find Mariko lying by the river: "Mariko had been lying in a

puddle and one side of her short dress was soaked in dark water. The blood was coming from a wound on the inside of her thigh" (Ishiguro, *Pale* 41). She states that Mariko has told her that she had fallen out of the tree and injured herself. Though something much more dangerous seems to have happened here, it is not disclosed to the reader.

Sachiko employs a mental strategy used in self-deception, that is rationalization (Marcus, *Self-Deception* 28). On the one hand, Sachiko displays a great deal of indifference towards her daughter, while on the other hand, she states that she has made important decisions in her life for her daughter Mariko. She states that the reason she has left Tokyo and come to Nagasaki is for Mariko's sake. She rationalizes her desire to move to the US by claiming that she is concerned about her daughter's welfare:

> "I didn't need to leave Tokyo, Etsuko," she said. "But I did, for Mariko's sake. I came all this way to stay at my uncle's house, because I thought it would be best for my daughter. I didn't have to do that, I didn't need to leave Tokyo at all."
> I gave a bow. Sachiko looked at me for a moment, then turned and gazed out through the open partitions, out into the darkness.
> "But you've left your uncle now," I said. "And now you're about to leave Japan." (Ishiguro, *Pale* 45)

Etsuko nevertheless says that Sachiko has left her uncle's house and that she is even about to leave Japan, which is a contradiction for her. Similarly, Etsuko refers to the difficulties that Sachiko might face in making the decision to go to America and asks about these difficulties for Mariko, while Sachiko's answer is only about the difficulties she might face. This again indicates that Sachiko is a self-deceived character because she employs "selective focus of attention" (Marcus, *Self-Deception* 27) while talking about the difficulties she may face. Although Etsuko asks about the difficulties thinking of Mariko, Sachiko focuses only on the details about herself, while ignoring other details, such as her daughter's potential difficulties.

> "Of course I am. And I'm very pleased, if this is what you wished. But won't there be…various difficulties?"
> "Difficulties?"
> "I mean, moving to a different country, with a different language and foreign ways."
> "I understand your concern, Etsuko. But really, I don't think there's much for me to worry about. You see, I've heard so much about America, it won't be like an entirely foreign country. And as for the language, I already speak it to a certain extent. Frank-San and I, we always talk in English. Once I've been in America for a little while, I should speak it like an American woman. I really don't see there's any cause for me to be worrying. I know I'll manage."

[…]
"Actually," I said, "it was Mariko I had in mind. What will become of her?" (Ishiguro, *Pale* 43-44)

It appears that Sachiko lacks the concern for her daughter's well-being and that her plans to move to America are primarily self-centered. No matter how much she tries to deceive herself, Etsuko is aware that she distorts the actual situation with Mariko. Etsuko consistently takes Mariko's side in her relationship with Sachiko, demonstrating unwavering concern for her daughter's well-being. Etsuko's persistent reminders to Sachiko about Mariko's presence may stem from Etsuko's own internal dialogues with her past. She, in a sense, attempts to recollect and emphasize her connection with her own daughter, Keiko. Her decision to move to England may have been driven by personal motives, like Sachiko's decision. This story about Sachiko could be her way of addressing and coming to terms with that decision and its potential implications.

It is not only Etsuko who displays parallelism with Sachiko, Mariko is sometimes assumed to be Keiko. In Etsuko's story, both Sachiko and Mariko are represented as traumatized figures, which may be associated with how Etsuko sees herself and Keiko at that time. Mariko constantly talks about a woman who wants to kidnap her. Although at first it is claimed that this is imaginary and the result of childish imagination, Mariko has actually seen such a woman. Sachiko discloses the truth about the mysterious woman:

> "I know it was a terrible thing that happened here in Nagasaki," she said, finally. "But it was bad in Tokyo too. Week after week it went on, it was very bad. Towards the end we were all living in tunnels and derelict buildings and there was nothing but rubble. Everyone who lived in Tokyo saw unpleasant things. And Mariko did too." (Ishiguro, *Pale* 73)

The incident Sachiko mentions includes Mariko's encountering a woman by the canal on a day she runs away from home. This woman is a thin figure with a disturbing demeanor, and Mariko sees her holding a baby submerged in the water. The image of this woman drowning her baby constantly haunts Mariko (Ishiguro, *Pale* 74). This story is in line with previous stories Etsuko shared in her narrative to indicate that Tokyo was not a safe place for people at that time. A similar incident takes Mariko back to this memory, and she finds herself in a situation reminiscent of her past symbolically. In time, she grows attached to the kittens at her uncle's house, so adopting them before her departure to America becomes a top priority for her.

Both her mother, Sachiko, and Frank agree to this plan, as they intend to move to the city of Kobe the following day and, eventually, leave for America. However, Sachiko wants to get rid of the cats despite Mariko's persistent requests.

> "Give me that creature, Mariko," Sachiko said. "Don't you understand, it's just an animal. Why can't you understand that, Mariko? Are you really too young? It's not your little baby, it's just an animal, just like a rat or a snake. Now give it to me." (Ishiguro, *Pale* 165)

On their last night, Mariko witnesses her mother drowning cats, just as the woman drowned her baby in the canal when she was little. "Sachiko brought her hands out of the water and stared at the kitten she was still holding. She brought it closer to her face and the water ran down her wrists and arms" (Ishiguro, *Pale* 167). If Mariko is accepted as Keiko, and Sachiko as Etsuko, it can be stated that both Etsuko and Keiko are represented as traumatic figures. Thus, Sachiko's rendition of the image haunting her daughter indicates that traumatic mothers perpetuate their traumatic daughters' wounds.

From the perspective of dialogical narrative analysis, Frank argues that stories do not create hopes and fears, but they rather shape and influence them (*Socio-Narratology* 81). So, he suggests that the question, "what is the force of fear in the story, and what animates desire?", should be asked while analyzing the narratives (Frank, *Socio-Narratology* 81). In Sachiko's story, her desire to move to USA is explained by her fear to waste her life. Etsuko, like Sachiko, is afraid that she will waste her life in Japan; she longs for a different sort of life. This tension seems to be the source of guilt: Did she sacrifice her daughter's happiness at the expense of her own desire? By questioning Sachiko's ultimate decision to leave for USA, Etsuko in a sense connects to her self in Japan and comes to terms with it. Etsuko has always doubted that Sachiko could go to America. She knows that Frank has taken their money and is suspicious that Sachiko has been tricked, so she discusses this voyage with Sachiko, warning her of possible difficulties.

> "What difference does it make? Why shouldn't I go to Kobe? After all, Etsuko, what do I have to lose? There's nothing for me at my uncle's house. Just a few empty rooms, that's all. I could sit there in a room and grow old. Other than that there'll be nothing. Just empty rooms, that's all. You know that yourself, Etsuko." (Ishiguro, *Pale* 170-71)

Sachiko acknowledges the challenges but is determined to leave her current life. She expresses her dissatisfaction with her current living situation, which she characterizes

as having “nothing” but empty rooms at her uncle’s house. She conveys a strong desire for change, highlighting her readiness to move to Kobe with Frank, as a chance for a better future. Sachiko suggests that she sees little to lose by leaving her current circumstances. The last sentence of her remarks indicates the parallelism between her own life and Etsuko. “You know that yourself, Etsuko.” She seeks validation from Etsuko in her decision-making process, for she knows well that Etsuko is the one who understands her best. This remark also indicates the similar concern Etsuko feels about her life.

3.3. Etsuko’s Psychological Well-Being at the End of her Storytelling

Towards the end of her storytelling, Etsuko gets into the most apparent contact with her Japanese self through Sachiko’s story, which enables her to admit her mistakes and to talk about Keiko directly to Niki. This in turn indicates that there is progress at the end of her storytelling. The parallels between Sachiko and Etsuko’s stories reveal themselves most clearly in Etsuko’s last conversation with Mariko. Her story and Sachiko’s story are so intertwined that it is not clear whether Etsuko is talking to Mariko or Keiko. Mariko stays by the river after her mother drowns the cats there. Etsuko then goes to find Mariko and brings her back to the cottage.

> “I don’t want to go away. I don’t want to go away tomorrow.”
> I gave a sigh. “But you’ll like it. Everyone’s a little frightened of new things. You’ll like it over there.”
> “I don’t want to go away. And I don’t like him. He’s like a pig.”
> “You’re not to speak like that,” I said, angrily. We stared at each other for a moment, then she looked back down at her hands.
> “You mustn’t speak like that,” I said, more calmly, “He’s very fond of you, and he’ll be just like a new father. Everything will turn out well, I promise.”
> The child said nothing. I sighed again.
> “In any case,” I went on, “if you don’t like it over there, we can always come back.”
> This time she looked up at me questioningly.
> “Yes, I promise,” I said. “If you don’t like it over there, we’ll come straight back. But we have to try it and see if we like it there. I’m sure we will.” (Ishiguro, *Pale* 172-73)

The dialogue between Mariko and Etsuko shows the complex interplay between Mariko’s resistance to change and Etsuko’s role in providing support and guidance during such important life transitions. Mariko expresses a strong reluctance to leave Japan and expresses her negative perception of Frank. Etsuko tries to reassure and encourage her by emphasizing the potential for positive experiences in the new environment. The dialogue also shows that Etsuko sets boundaries by responding

sternly to inappropriate language. Ultimately, the narrator makes promises to alleviate the child's fears and emphasizes that they can return if they do not like the new place, by shifting towards the pronoun "we." After a point, as the dialogue suggests, Etsuko talks with Mariko as if she was her own daughter. In a sense, she is speaking with Keiko. Although Etsuko self-consciously reminds herself that her memories have "grown hazy with time" (Ishiguro, *Pale* 41) early in her narrative, highlighting the unreliability of her narration, this dialogue towards the end reveals that she starts to admit and acknowledge her mistakes in her relationship with Keiko**.** This shows that her unreliability caused by the severe emotional distress towards the end of the narrative helps her to confront and make sense of her guilt and trauma.

Perhaps it can be concluded here that Keiko did not want to leave Japan and that she did not love her English father. Etsuko's decision to take her to England is perhaps similar to Sachiko's selfish decision. Instead of understanding her daughter's concerns and perhaps taking another decision, she seems to drag her daughter to a fate Keiko does not want by taking a harsh stance. The adult Etsuko seems to suffer from this inwardly. Indeed, her dialog with Mariko ends in an interesting way. When Etsuko finds Mariko, a piece of rope is caught on her foot, and she is holding it in her hand while talking to Mariko.

> The little girl was watching me closely. "Why are you holding that?" she asked.
> "This? It just caught around my sandal, that's all."
> "Why are you holding it?"
> "I told you. It caught around my foot. What's wrong with you?" I gave a short laugh. "Why are you looking at me like that? I'm not going to hurt you."
> Without taking her eyes from me, she rose slowly to her.
> "What's wrong with you?" I repeated.
> The child began to run, her footsteps drumming along the wooden boards. (Ishiguro, *Pale* 173)

It is interesting that the dialogue follows the scene when Etsuko used those words to persuade Mariko to go to America. It has never occurred to Etsuko that she might unknowingly harm Mariko when she was secretly pushing her to go to America. "[T]he lingering image of rope indicates that she has begun to realize a resemblance between Mariko and Keiko" (Molino 330). In her narrative, stories are parallel and intertwined. The reader does not understand who exactly she is referring to in the story she tells. She tells the story of Sachiko, but that story is about herself. When she talks to Sachiko, sometimes it is as if she was talking to herself. When she talks

to Mariko, sometimes it is as if she was talking to Keiko. On the one hand, she thought that she was doing something good for herself and her child by choosing to come to England, but on the other, she was preparing for her daughter's suicide unknowingly. Through her narrative, she now begins to face this conflict.

In their last happy moment with Mariko and Sachiko, Etsuko goes on a cable-car trip with them before they leave the city, and Mariko is very happy on this trip. When Niki leaves the house, she asks Etsuko to give something from those days to her friend who writes poetry, and she gives him a piece of calendar with a view of hills of Nagasaki on it. The reason she gives it to her is later related to Keiko. Etsuko says: "Keiko was happy that day. We rode on the cable-cars" (Ishiguro, *Pale* 182). Although it is Mariko who is taken on the cable-car trip in her original story, Etsuko implies that Mariko was actually Keiko herself. Through both Niki's story and Sachiko's story, Etsuko is enabled to revisit her past to make the suicide of her daughter sensible to herself. At the end of the narrative, she discloses that Mariko is Keiko in a sense. She also admits her mistake to Niki: "But you see Niki, I knew all along. I knew all along she wouldn't be happy over here. But I decided to bring her just the same" (Ishiguro, *Pale* 176). And now, at the end of her storytelling, Etsuko has managed to talk about Keiko directly; she has started to communicate her trauma. However, that does not necessarily mean that Etsuko is released from her trauma; she is still a traumatized figure. Although the stories related to Niki, Sachiko, and Nagasaki help her to get into contact with her sense of guilt and trauma, she is not fully recovered from them, as she is not able to produce a "complete narrative" including the traumatic experience. At the end of Niki's visit and her storytelling, Etsuko still cannot step into Keiko's room.

> Then, for a moment, I was sure I heard a sound come from within Keiko's room, a small clear sound amidst the singing of the birds outside. I stood still, listening, then began to walk towards the door. There came some more noises, and I realized they were coming from the kitchen downstairs. I remained on the landing for a moment, then made my way down the staircase. (Ishiguro, *Pale* 174)

She cannot enter Keiko's room, which may symbolically mean that Etsuko is still under the effect of the suicide. However, at the end of her storytelling, she attempts to enter her room at the same time. The room no longer evokes a frightening image, but this time behind the door is a place with a birdsong. This is also a partial

development that comes out of Etsuko's storytelling of her own life. It can be held that once she is able to enter her room literally, then one can speak of a healing. Or, once Etsuko is able enter Keiko's room symbolically in her narrative, a "complete narrative" may emerge, and then perhaps one can speak of a healing again.

Although Etsuko uses "the language of self-deception" (Ishiguro qtd. in Mason & Ishiguro 337) while coming to terms with the suicide of her daughter, the unreliability of her narration still helps her to work on her trauma. Etsuko achieves a sense of self-recognition through narrating her story in alternative ways (Teo 64). As Ishiguro claims, "whatever the facts were about what happened to Etsuko and her daughter, they are of interest to Etsuko now because she can use them to talk about herself" (Mason & Ishiguro 337). What is really important is that Etsuko has used Sachiko's story to reveal at the end that she has now started to talk about herself. Therefore, although Matek suggests that Etsuko's "tiptoeing around various traumatic events serves as a means of reshaping the past in order to be able to live with her decisions" (140), this study reveals that her "tiptoeing around various traumatic events" is a reworking of her traumas in order to make sense of them, which is an early step leading to recovery. The "reshaping" of the past helps her to confront the bitter truth about her mistakes. This study also aligns with what Michael Molino argues in relation to the language of self-deception, that is unreliability: "Etsuko's narrative is not a defense or rationalization of past actions. Rather, Etsuko's narrative is a form of memory talk focused primarily on an experience she needs to organize and resolve, namely Keiko's suicide" (326).

Another question dialogic narrative analysis asks is, "How does a story do the work of memory?" (Frank, *Socio-Narratology* 83). It can be suggested that self-deception and the mental strategies employed by Etsuko do not hinder her from confronting the bitter truth about herself. The dynamic nature of memory in Etsuko's narrative helps her to visit her past to organize her life story by integrating the suicide of her daughter into her life story. The question of the reliability of memory functions as a means to reorganize the past, opening a space to ease the distress. Through the stories revolving around Niki and Sachiko, Etsuko attempts to face the suicide of her daughter. Her avoidance of talking about Keiko may lead one to think that Etsuko wants to obliterate the existence of Keiko. Cynthia F. Wong states that

"the attempt to produce a coherent narrative is tied to a desire to forget those very events" ("The Shame of Memory" 133). However, this study is not in line with this argument. Rather, it suggests that her mental strategies employed in her storytelling make way for Etsuko to work on her trauma. The attempt to produce a "complete narrative" from the viewpoint of narrative psychology does not intend to forget the past, rather to produce another functioning narrative, allowing the traumatized one to live by.

Frank suggests that "reassembling" is not just repetition of past events, rather it involves change and changing according to current circumstances (*Socio-Narratology* 85). Therefore, the question whether Sachiko and Mariko do really exist is not the correct question; the more relevant question is whether the story helped Etsuko in dealing with her trauma. In a similar line of thinking, Ishiguro himself states in a conversation how he prefers the emotional aspects of events to the facts: "I am not interested in the solid facts. The focus of the book is elsewhere, in the emotional upheaval" (Mason & Ishiguro 338). As Freeman suggests in his elaboration of hindsight, objective facts and narrative truths are not more real or true than one another; rather**,** both coexist, and our experiences involve navigating between these two perspectives. While objective facts are very important, the narrative truth we create around these facts is also important (Freeman 8). As A. Van der Kolk and Onno van der Hart suggest, similar other stories allow the traumatized person to soften the disintegrating horror of the traumatic experience, inevitably distorting reality, but making it easier to cope with it (178-179). As Song suggests, "facing the truth and letting the pain go off is the beginning of Etsuko's reconciliation with past trauma" (7).

The last question Franks asks while doing dialogical narrative analysis is, "What does the story narratable?" (*Socio-Narratology* 75). The thing that makes Etsuko's narrative narratable is two-fold. On the one hand, her storytelling functions as an attempt at self-recovery from a traumatic experience. Etsuko's narrative is "representative of a longing for the traumatic past to be given a voice" (Teo 54). Her narrative also functions as a tool to make sense of her trauma, organize her life, and integrate the suicide of her daughter into her own life. On the other hand, Etsuko's narrative makes her life visible. *A Pale View of Hills*, as Wong suggests, "depicts

eloquently a truthful version of how people must reconstruct their lives in order to move through the destructive forces present to them; people are engaged in the difficult task of reinterpreting the significance of their life choices following one of their nation's most horrendous crises" (*Kazuo Ishiguro* 37). Along with this, Etsuko's narrative sheds a different light on a suicide, contrary to what is generally accepted. Frank suggests that "stories animate realities: they bring into being what was not there before" (*Socio-Narratology* 75). Etsuko voices a narrative which has been silenced by her immediate surroundings and the complexities underlying the suicide of her daughter. In contrast to the dominant English perspective which relates the suicide to race/culture, disposition or which sees it as a woman's poetic struggle for liberation, Etsuko's narrative makes the devastating effect of the atomic bomb visible. In that sense, it brings an alternative narrative for the suicide into existence.

In conclusion, Etsuko tries to make sense of her daughter Keiko's suicide and creates her own self-story to cope with this trauma using the language of self-deception. Etsuko's self-narrative therefore "emerges as a post-mortem examination of her relationship with her dead daughter; it also becomes an effort to find suitable term for her own remaining existence" (Wong, *Kazuo Ishiguro* 37). Etsuko tries to make sense of her trauma in the form of a story. Her daughter's suicide creates narrative ruptures in her life, so she attempts to integrate this traumatic experience into her life-story in order to be released of her trauma. It cannot be suggested that she has succeeded in this through her storytelling, but it can be held that there is a partial progress towards self-recovery. Still, Etsuko's narrative is not a "complete narrative" (Wigren 416) in which traumatic experience is made sense of. At the beginning, she employs the strategy of "repression" as a way of coping with the trauma, but then using "selective focus of attention," she resorts to stories related to Niki and Sachiko to talk about the trauma. From a narrative psychological perspective, this is also a way of externalizing the problem which makes way for re-authoring the life story. Her daughter's recent suicide is so fresh that she has not yet had a real confrontation. She sometimes tries to explain Keiko's suicide through her other daughter Niki, and sometimes through Sachiko, with whom she shares a similar fate. She tries to repair the ruptures in her stories with the parallel stories she creates

with others. She makes sense of her own pain or the path to her daughter's suicide only through other stories.

Although the self-deception of Etsuko can easily be linked to her inability to release her trauma, this does not hold true for her, as it enables her to work on the trauma, which may lead in time towards her recovery. In addition to these, Etsuko largely includes the historical context of the aftermath of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki in her story. Etsuko's struggle to make sense of her past, to situate it in a historical context and to locate it in a wider social order, is a struggle to cope with her trauma because trauma is never just an individual phenomenon. Yet, it is not possible to claim that Etsuko has achieved this because her story is full of contingencies. Since her story is not yet a coherent, meaningful, functioning narrative, it is not possible to claim that she has recovered from the trauma, but it is possible to claim that she is trying to cope with her trauma through stories. By alluding to the historical context, on the one hand, she tries to understand her current tragedy through a historical reality. On the other hand, she helps an alternative narrative to come into existence about her daughter's suicide. In the final analysis, the intertwining of her own story with past and present can be characterized as an attempt to survive. Additionally, the knowledge that she was not the only one going through this experience alleviates her traumatic experience through the parallels she establishes in her narrative among the historical events and the stories of the people from her past.

CHAPTER IV

THE REWORKING OF GUILT: A NARRATIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH TO ONO IN *AN ARTIST OF THE FLOATING WORLD*

An Artist of the Floating World (1986) delves into the post-Second World War life of Masuji Ono, a Japanese painter striving to reconcile with his turbulent past. Comprising four chapters set in distinct time periods spanning from 1948 to 1950, the narrative unfolds through the eyes of Ono, a "retired" artist who endured the loss of his wife Michiko in a wartime bombardment and the death of his son Kenji fighting in Manchuria. Sachiko, his elder daughter, resides in another town, leading a married life with her son Ichiro. The storyline starts from Sachiko's visit and centers on the tense marriage negotiations of Ono's second daughter, Noriko, whose earlier engagement was broken off because of an unknown reason. Considering his daughters' vague explanations, Ono grapples with the idea that his own artistic background may have contributed to Noriko's failed first marriage negotiation. Early in his career, Ono has worked in the studio of Master Takeda, reproducing stereotypical depictions of Japan that had little artistic depth and appealed to Western tastes. Later, he immerses himself in the villa of Mori-san, a famous painter, in an attempt to capture the transitory charm of the floating world around the "pleasure district." However, he later abandons this "decadent" artistic approach and adopts an ultra-nationalist stance that leads him to create pro-militarist and pro-imperialist art. At the peak of his career, he works as an official consultant to the nationalist government as well. However, he is in a state of disillusionment after the war. On the one hand, he has faced the losses of his wife and son during the war, and on the other hand, post-war Japan is furious at this older generation for dragging the masses into the war, and besides the old generation is now considered "traitors" in the eyes of the young. When the initial marriage prospect of Noriko is disrupted

and the second marriage negotiation demands a special care now, the past haunts him, and Ono is forced to revisit his past, somehow reconciles with it in the end, and moves on with his life as a transformed person.

The initial responses to *An Artist of the Floating World* are related to its Japanese qualities. As Matthew Beedham reviews, the initial responses range from historical interpretations to its cinematic qualities (25). Later, however, many different aspects of the novel have been under scrutiny. It is possible to refer to four main different approaches to *An Artist of the Floating World*. From a socio-historical perspective, Bareiß argues that Ono shows authoritarian personality traits by making use of Adorno's analysis of authoritarian personality (407). Wright discusses the novel's approach to history, drawing on Benjamin and Adorno, and the "use and abuse" of history in Ishiguro's writing (61). Similarly, Sauerberg explores how the novel uses the dynamics of the past and argues that *An Artist of the Floating World* is neither historical novel nor historiographical metafiction, but rather incorporates both aspects and integrates aesthetics as a central tool for the discussion of coming to terms with the past (197-198). On the other hand, from a narratological perspective, Foniokova explores Ono's narration in depth focusing on his "digressions," "indirectness and incompleteness," and "metanarrative comments" (133) by relating Ono's narration to his simultaneous feeling of nostalgia and fear. Along with it, Karttunen offers a different perspective on the unreliability debate by analyzing the construction of dialogues in the novel. Another study focusing on the narration of the novel is done by Cynthia F. Wong, and she argues that Ono is "the embodiment of 'fictionalization,' as Ono knows his condition well and is ignorant at the same time (*Kazuo Ishiguro* 39). The reason behind the way Ono narrates his past is to gain the reader's sympathy, according to Wong (*Kazuo Ishiguro* 50). From a psychoanalytic perspective, on the other hand, Charles Sarvan gives a Lacanian hearing to *An Artist of the Floating World* and argues that Ono is "caught in the web of a symbolic order in which privileged but 'contaminated' signifiers float free" (93). This study, drawing on such studies, again focuses on the narration, but utilizes a different framework to examine the connection between Ono and his narration and the effects of his narration on his self through narrative psychology.

This chapter examines how Masuji Ono, whose paintings constituted a part of the cultural leg of Japan's fascist/imperialist propaganda, interacts with the stories available to him to cope with his sense of guilt. Informed by narrative psychology, Ono's relationship with the stories in his life and their relation to his psychological well-being will be under scrutiny. At the early stages of his narrative, Ono struggles to overcome his sense of guilt first through "repression," then mostly through "negative misinterpretation," "positive misinterpretation," and "selective focus of attention," the mental strategies employed in self-deception. However, the stories that constituted his former self make him unable to breathe in post-war Japan. Although Ono struggles hard to create a space for himself through his storytelling, the stories around him do not allow him to feel comfortable and cause him to be narratively restricted. It can be argued that during this period Ono is at war with the idea of whether to commit suicide symbolically, if not literally. His narrative of self loses its legitimacy in the eyes of post-war society, and he cannot find a narrative to breathe through, and despite all his efforts, his self-narrative leads to an impasse. Besides, his dark past haunts him in the present and pushes him to confront his past. In the following time periods, however, Ono succeeds in coping with the sense of guilt, and at the end of his storytelling, he largely comes to terms with his past and attains a high level of psychological well-being. The coping strategies that help Ono get rid of the inner conflicts he experienced are again through narratives. In this process, he finds the narratives that enable him to live by and open a space for himself by adapting those narratives. In the narrative he creates at the end of the process, he turns out to be a successful, self-respecting, self-accepting, morally superior person. Ono attains individual psychological well-being, but it is a question whether his individual psychological well-being is also in line with a general sense of well-being. In the following section, the dialogic narrative analysis of Ono's life narrative focuses firstly on Ono's state of mind at the beginning of his storytelling, then on the process of his storytelling and how he works on his "problem-saturated" stories. In the end, the discussion scrutinizes Ono's psychological well-being at the closing of his storytelling.

4.1. Ono's Psychological State at the Beginning of his Storytelling

At the beginning of his narrative, Ono is portrayed as alienated from his art after the war and as experiencing an inner turmoil. He has supported Japan's fascist/imperialist policies with his paintings, but Japan has lost the war, and the new generation is very angry with this old generation that led masses to disaster. Ono has lost his wife and son in the war and at the same time is overwhelmed with guilt. In the face of this turmoil, Ono tries to overcome his inner contradictions with such mental strategies as "repression," "positive misinterpretation," and "selective focus of attention" used in self-deception as defined by Amit Marcus, but it cannot be held that he is entirely successful. He is still under psychological distress, as his narrative clashes with his surroundings. Moreover, he recalls stories from his past that remind him of his current inner contradictions. In addition, his daughters are aware of his self-deception and remind Ono that he needs to revisit his past in order for the new marriage negotiations to go well, which "requires him to symbolically 'kill' his old self" (Wright 61).

Ono has become alienated from his art because the artistic vision he defended before and during the war has made him feel guilty. Having enjoyed a prestigious life in the past, Ono removes his paintings from the walls of his own home and tidies them away in the post-war Japan. He tells his grandson that his paintings are "tidied away for the moment" (Ishiguro, *Artist* 32). Ono wants to eradicate his dark past through "repression." In addition, he no longer practices his art. When his grandson Ichiro questions why he has stopped painting, Ono tells Ichiro that he is now retired.

> "Father says you used to be a famous artist. But you had to finish."
> "I've retired, Ichiro. Everyone retires when they get to a certain age. It's only right, they deserve a rest."
> "Father says you had to finish. Because Japan lost the war." (Ishiguro, *Artist* 32)

There are two different narratives clashing here on the same topic. Ono suggests that he is now retired as a natural process following a successful career, because he is old now. But the contrasting view is that Ono's retirement is not part of a natural progression, but a necessity caused by external factors. As Japan lost the war, his art turned out to be something despised. In contrast to Ichiro's narrative which relates Ono's retirement to his complicity in the war propaganda, Ono ties it to his old age.

It can be argued that Ono employs the mental strategy of "positive misinterpretation," as he disregards the other information conflicting with his narrative, which distracts him from an emotional distress.

Ono's troubled state of mind is deepened by Sachiko's questioning the causes of the failure of Noriko's first marriage negotiations. Inevitably, Ono's attempt to deceive himself by covering up the past, mostly through the strategy of repression, fails. In order for Noriko's second marriage negotiations to go smoothly, Sachiko suggests that Ono must visit some people from his past not to cause any misunderstanding. This in return triggers Ono's anxiety to face the past. In the narrative world in which Japan is portrayed, the marriage of daughters is of prime importance for families. Ono's purchase of the grandiose house he owns is mainly motivated by the fact that he wants his daughters to have a good marriage in the future. His wife pressures him to buy a house: "she had argued the importance of our having a house in keeping with our status – not out of vanity, but for the sake of our children's marriage prospects" (Ishiguro, *Artist* 8). Similarly, Ono associates Sachiko's appearance when she was young with her inability to make a good marriage and worries about it: "In her youth, her mother and I had worried that she was too plain to make a good marriage" (Ishiguro, *Artist* 17). In this context, this narrative, i.e., ensuring that daughters make good marriages, is a source of great concern for families like Ono's.

Indeed, the narrative of daughters making good marriages is a very a crucial reason for Ono to confront his troubling past**.** The fact that Ono's younger daughter Noriko, 26 years old, has not yet been able to marry, and the fact that the groom's side suddenly has ended the meetings during the first marriage negotiations is a big problem for them. Why it ended is not fully understood by the family members. Sachiko repeatedly asks her father why the Miyakes abruptly ended the negotiations a year earlier:

> "Forgive me," Setsuko said, in a new voice. "But did we ever hear any further as to why the proposal fell through last year? It was so unexpected."
>
> "I have no idea. It hardly matters now, does it?"
> "Of course not, forgive me." Setsuko seemed to consider something for a moment, then she spoke again: "It's just that Suichi persists in asking me from time to time about last year, about why the Miyakes should have pulled out like that." She gave a little laugh, almost to

> herself. “He seems convinced I know some secret and that we’re all keeping it from him. I have to continually reassure him that I have no idea myself.”
> “I assure you,” I said a little coldly, “it remains equally a mystery to me. If I knew, I wouldn’t keep it from you and Suichi.” (Ishiguro, *Artist* 18)

Ono declares that he does not know anything about it, but nevertheless this dialogue implies that there is something unresolved about the past. It is as if Ono is hiding something from Sachiko’s husband too. This is not the first time Sachiko has questioned her father about this. Ono cannot understand why Sachiko questions him so much and she does not believe him: “Why she should believe I am keeping something from her, I do not know” (Ishiguro, *Artist* 18). Ono again tends to “repress” the past to avoid distress. One could argue that the fact that Ono says “it hardly matters now” is an attempt to cover up the situation. However, Sachiko keeps bringing it up to her father and questioning why the past meetings ended so abruptly, and this situation cannot be fully repressed for Ono. Ono cannot make sense of this, because the narrative he believes is that his daughter is superior to Jiro in social status. Ono states that difference in social status is the reason for the end of the negotiations with the Miyakes.

> My own guess is that there was nothing so remarkable about the matter. True, their withdrawal at the last moment was most unexpected, but why should one suppose from this that there was anything peculiar in it? My feeling is that it was simply a matter of family status. The Miyakes, from what I saw of them, were just the proud, honest sort who would feel uncomfortable at the thought of their son marrying above his station. (Ishiguro, *Artist* 18-19)

Ono confidently explains that the Miyakes ended the negotiations because his family’s status was higher than theirs. The difference of social status between the families is a useful story for Ono to explain this situation. Since Ono tends to focus on this particular aspect of his past that will not harm him and ignore other possibilities that weaken this perspective, he uses the strategy of “selective focus of attention” to avoid facing the truth and to deceive himself. It is not only Sachiko, but Noriko also makes similar inquiries. Ono again explains to her that the reason is the difference in their family status, but Noriko is sure that this is not the actual reason: “But you know that was just formality, Father. We never found out the real reason. At least, I never got to hear about it” (Ishiguro, *Artist* 53). Therefore, no one around him believes the narrative Ono puts forward. Sachiko advises Ono about this: “I merely wished to say that it is perhaps wise if Father would take certain

precautionary steps. To ensure misunderstandings do not arise" (Ishiguro, *Artist* 49). Sachiko asks Ono to talk to people from her past before the investigation begins, and Ono thus feels obliged to revisit the past. McAdams argues that bringing the selective construction of the past with an imagined anticipated future together, the narrative conceptualization of self provides "a sense of unity, moral purpose, and temporal coherence for humans" ("First We invented Stories" 1). Since Ono's selective construction of his past does not align with an anticipated future, in which his daughter's second marriage negotiations may result in failure again, it can be argued that a sense of unity is not achieved and in corollary a functioning self-narrative is not attained.

Ono is aware that his past collaboration with Japan's imperialist propaganda through his art is seen problematic, and although he tries to cover it up, he is inwardly distressed by it. Noriko says, "He's [Ono] got nothing these days. He will just mope about the house like he always does now" (Ishiguro, *Artist* 39). Constant moping around can be indicative of the mental state in which he finds himself. Ono does not engage in social activities and his constant cleaning of the house is the result of his inner distress. In addition, as he himself states, Ono wanders aimlessly around the rooms of the house: "It is perhaps a sign of my advancing years that I have taken to wandering into rooms for no purpose" (Ishiguro, *Artist* 40). He attributes this to his old age, but it could characterize his psychological state at the same time. It is possible to argue that Ono seems to have lost his purpose in life. His friend Matsuda, with whom he fought for imperialist Japan before the war through art, says of Ono of this time, "Yes, Ono, you seemed very disillusioned" (Ishiguro, *Artist* 199). After the war, Ono is presented as a man who has stopped producing artwork, kept the paintings hidden at home, often sweeping the house, and wandering aimlessly through the rooms.

Another story that shows Ono's troubled state of mind at the beginning of his storytelling is the story he tells about his childhood. This is the only story he tells about his childhood, and this troubling event from his past haunts him in the present. "The roaming through the house, seemingly aimlessly, has a parallel in Ono's manner of narration: he is drifting through various stories without obvious intent, digression from one topic to another in no apparent order (Foniokova 134). As Ono

wanders aimlessly through the rooms of his house, this troubling story appears in his mind. Wigren claims that "incomplete narratives," associated with trauma, "have no resting place in the psyche;" they "remain disorganized and appear not by recall but by associations. This leads to free-floating somatic sensation and memories that appear as flashbacks" (422). Ono remembers this story in such a state of mind. Therefore, it is possible to suggest that the story about his childhood is an incomplete story,[7] which indicates that this experience was not included in his ongoing life story. His father, a businessman, thinks that his son should continue the family business, but Ono is determined to become a painter. Ono remembers that his father told a story about him from the past that he and his wife both knew. When Ono was a newborn, as his father told, a wandering priest came to the house and made some warnings about Ono's future.

> "Masuji's limbs were healthy, he told us, but he had been born with a flaw in his nature. A weak streak that would give him a tendency towards slothfulness and deceit. You remember this, Sachiko?"
> "But I believe the priest also had many positive things to say about our son."
> "This is true. Our son had a lot of good qualities, the priest did point that out. But you recall his warning, Sachiko? He said if the good points were to dominate, we who brought him up would have to be vigilant and check this weak streak whenever it tried to manifest itself. Otherwise, so the old priest told us, Masuji here would grow up to be a good-for-nothing." (Ishiguro, *Artist* 45)

Ono refuses to carry on the family business that his father intends to hand over to him, and his father burns Ono's paintings. His father believes what the wandering priest tells him, and he is worried that Ono will become a "good-for-nothing" person if his character development is not taken care of. Ono's remembering of this particular story from the past, which in fact influenced his whole life, is not accidental; it gives important clues to his current state of mind. Freeman claims that hindsight has two faces: painful and redemptive (26). He suggests that looking backward can sometimes be emotionally difficult and may not always promise positive outcomes (Freeman 27). As memory is dynamic and always in dialogue with the present situation, selective memory can sometimes emphasize negative details while suppressing other positive details. While Ono could have remembered this story in a positive sense by focusing on his mother's narration, he sticks to his

[7] If certain experiences are not incorporated into the narrative of the self, a complete story does not emerge, which in turn remembered through associations. In this respect, the story of his childhood seems like a traumatic event for Ono today.

father's negative version of the past. This, in turn, shows how memory works for Ono at that moment. One of the questions Frank asks when analyzing dialogic narrative is "How does a story do the work of memory" (*Socio-Narratology* 83). One could suggest that Ono is experiencing this conflict again in the present. In his inner world, Ono struggles with the question of whether he has a flaw in his character or not. Therefore, it is not coincidental that he remembers this particular story in his childhood about his character. Because he has a depressive state of mind, he tends to see the negative side of this story about his childhood. His memory is shaped in line with the troubling situation he is in at the present moment.

Therefore, at the beginning of the story, Ono mostly uses the strategies of "repression," "positive misinterpretation," and "selective focus of attention," thus trying to deceive himself and avoid confronting his past, which would cause him discomfort in the present. However, self-deception is not entirely successful, because his daily practices show that Ono is still struggling with distress. McAdams suggests that a good narrative leading to psychological well-being is "internally coherent, makes for a continuous plot line in which early events cause or logically lead to later events" ("Personality, Modernity, and the Storied Self" 314). In this regard, it can be held that Ono fails to overcome his distress because he is not able to incorporate the troubling past event into his self-narrative due to repression. Although, at first, he tries to preserve his sense of self-integrity by attributing Noriko's failed marriage negotiation to their upper social status, this is not found to be convincing enough. Unable to persuade her daughters of his narrative, Ono is forced to revisit his past by throwing a different light into events: "So then I am obliged to think back yet again to that encounter with Miyake, to turn it over from yet another perspective" (Ishiguro, *Artist* 54). Since nobody is conceived by Ono's narrative on the cause of disruption of marriage negotiations, Ono is pushed to reconsider the encounter with Jiro, and therefore his past. It can be concluded that Ono is forced to revise and rework his narrative because the narrative he wants to believe is not approved by others.

From a narrative psychological perspective, Ono's shaping of the past and past stories by deceiving himself does not provide a well-functioning narrative for him to relieve himself. The aim of narrative psychotherapy is to rewrite stories that

do not work and to create a story that works better by allowing the past to be recounted in a different way, leading to recovery. Ono also constructs his past by deceiving himself at this point through his storytelling, but he is not able to get rid of his distress. This may suggest that narratively engaged healing attempts do not yield positive results for Ono, but this is not quite true. Narrative therapy requires a thorough working on the stories that produce the problem, not covering them up. The aim is to explore the problems and build a new narrative that is more productive. In order to produce a new self where the distressing situation is overcome, one must first work on the "problem-saturated" story according to narrative therapy (White and Epston 4). Ono's failure at this stage is caused by his avoidance of working on "the problem-saturated" story, so the narrative he has produced is not acknowledged by those around him. The fact that Ono is still distressed at the present moment and that he has produced an unconvincing narrative about the reason for the failure of the initial marriage force Ono to revisit his past, or the stories of the past.

4.2. Ono's Coping with his Distress through his Storytelling

Ono writes the first chapter of his self-narrative in October, 1948. His first attitude in journeying into his past is to deceive himself by employing "selective focus of attention" as in Marcus's conceptualization of self-deception. By deceiving himself, he tries to construct the past in such a way that it is harmless for him in order not to face the present situation and avoid going through that painful process. But the stories he wants to make himself believe are not compatible with other stories around him, so the strategy of "selective focus of attention" fails. His self-narrative conflicts with the other stories in post-war society so he develops a different kind of relationship with his past, as the parts of himself that he ignored when talking about himself were reminded by those around him. First, we will focus on Ono's process of dealing with the clashing narratives, then we will focus on how he interacts with these stories in an attempt to deal with the past in a different way.

Through "selective focus of attention," Ono constructs himself as a morally superior person in order to shadow his feelings of guilt and social isolation**.** Ono had suggested that Noriko's termination of the marriage negotiation with Jiro Miyake could be due to a difference in social status. The first story he uses to rationalize this

claim and deceive himself is the process of buying the grand house he now resides in. Ono attributes the reason behind buying this estate to his success as an artist, but as Bruce King emphasizes, it is a result of his political influence (208). However, Ono tries to reassure himself by narrating this fact in a different way. The original owner of the house, Akira Sigumura, dies and his daughters decide to sell the house. The daughters find four candidates to sell the house, but they decide who to sell the house "on grounds purely of good character and achievement" (Ishiguro, *Artist* 8). The idea of "auction of prestige" is very appealing to Ono: "How so much more honorable is such a contest, in which one's moral conduct and achievement are brought as witnesses rather than the size of one's purse" (Ishiguro, *Artist* 10). This is how Ono has bought the house for half the price. This shows that Ono was one of the prestigious men of the period in terms of "moral conduct and achievement." Through this story, he struggles to convince himself that he is morally decent enough.

Ono describes himself as someone who did important cultural work in the pre-war period through "negative misinterpretation." He is proud of his contribution to the establishment of the Migi-Hidari, which helped to strengthen the idea of New Japan. For Ono, The Migi-Hidari is the most tangible site of the idea of "New Japan" which he helped to form in the 1930s. This is one of the most important gathering places for Ono and his students. He delivers a very important speech to his students here, revealing his contribution to the dominance of imperialist Japan: "This establishment of ours where we all gather is a testimony to the new emerging spirit and all of us here have a right to be proud" (Ishiguro, *Artist* 74). It is understood that Japan has undergone a transformation in the 1930s, which is, for Ono, a positive transformation in societal values. He encourages his students to be proud of themselves and calls for them to actively participate in being the leaders of this change (Ishiguro, *Artist* 73). This new spirit that Ono refers to is a manly spirit, and the Migi-Hidari symbolizes this "finer" spirit, which is patriotic and supportive of the ideals of imperialist Japan. However, Ono deceives himself through "negative misinterpretation," because he "avoid[s] connecting different pieces" as Marcus suggests (*Self-Deception* 28). He refrains from establishing the causal connection between the ideology of "New Japan" and the defeat and occupation of Japan.

No matter how Ono tries to portray himself as morally superior and beloved by the society in the pre-war period, in the post-war period his narrative of self has been turned upside down. An important question Frank asks when doing dialogic narrative analysis is, "What is the effect of people being caught up in their own stories while living with people caught up in other stories" (*Socio-Narratology* 77). Ono's first attitude towards his former self is his insistence on representing himself as morally superior, as he was in the pre-war period. Ono is caught up in his pre-war narrative where his self was vaunted. However, the society is caught up in another narrative now. The post-war society is furious at people like Ono as they follow a different narrative which blames this old generation for leading the country to disaster and is critical of the way they cling to their past selves as if nothing has happened. Here is a fierce clash to attain dominance between narratives over the same subject. Because society has not yet overcome this opposition, it is possible to claim that there is a narrative contestation for dominance going on in post-war Japan. Since Ono's self-narrative at this point of his storytelling does not form a satisfactory narrative alignment with the narratives in the society, he is unable to succeed in overcoming his distress.

Ono had initially framed his encounter with Jiro Miyake near his workplace as an indicator of the social gulf between the families, but circumstances had forced him to reassess the encounter from a different perspective (Ishiguro, *Artist* 54). When he reconsidered the encounter, it turned out that Jiro was talking about the suicide of the president of the company he worked in. Jiro and Ono had different opinions about the matter. Two different narratives about people committing suicide come to the fore here. On the one hand, Ono believes that these suicides are "a great waste" and that "there's no need to apologize through death" (Ishiguro, *Artist* 55). On the other hand, Jiro finds such acts meaningful and suggests that there is a "relief around the company," as they feel they can now move forward without the burden of "past transgressions" (Ishiguro, *Artist* 55). For this new generation, "Ono's prior life is now viewed as monstrous otherness, a sin for which he must atone in order that society may be healthy again" (Wright 64). Along with these, Ono argues that people who faithfully serve their country in wartime cannot be considered traitors (Ishiguro, *Artist* 56). Yet, on the other hand, Jiro thinks that people who led the country to

disaster should courageously "acknowledge their responsibility" and admit their mistakes (Ishiguro, *Artist* 56). This symbolically means the cleansing of past mistakes. What is evident here is that Ono's narrative is in serious conflict with that of the young generation after the war. He does not find the suicides of the people he identifies with logical and therefore wants to legitimize his narrative in order to justify himself, but Ono's narrative is not acknowledged by the young people.

Ono states that a similar approach was advocated by his son-in-law Suichi who, like Kenji, fought in Manchuria. Ono's son Kenji died in Manchuria, whereupon Suichi explains why he is angry with the people responsible for the war and confides in his father-in-law:

> Those who sent the likes of Kenji out there to die these brave deaths, where are they today? They're carrying on with their lives, much the same as ever.
>
> […]
>
> Brave young men die for stupid causes, and the real culprits are still with us. Afraid to show themselves for what they are, to admit their responsibility. (Ishiguro, *Artist* 58)

In a similar line of thinking, Suichi is angry about the hypocrisy surrounding the war. He notes that those who sent young men like Kenji to their deaths for what he sees as "stupid causes" are often untouched by the consequences. His frustration lies in the sharp contrast between the leaders who go on with their lives and the brave individuals who sacrificed their lives. The term "the greatest cowardice of all" is used to condemn leaders who are unwilling to accept their responsibility for the consequences of their decisions. This epitomizes a critique of the moral failures and injustices associated with wartime leadership. Such criticism is prevalent in post-war Japan. An idiot named "Hirayama boy" was hospitalized for singing old military songs and chanting patriotic slogans (Ishiguro, *Artist* 60). Although Hirayama boy is in his 50s, he mentally resembles a child. Nevertheless, he is severely beaten. There is a lot of anger regarding the past by the young generation. Ono is pushed into a similar sense of responsibility for having produced pro-war artwork in the past. Those who do not accept their mistakes and do not take responsibility are viewed as morally deficient by the society. In fact, this again involves Ono's internal conflict regarding his sense of guilt. He tends to blame himself for supporting the war, and the people around him believe that those responsible should admit their responsibilities. Moreover, suicides are already rampant around Ono. People in his

family, too, think in a similar way. The narrative psychologist Crossley states that "I cannot be a self on my own but in relation to certain 'interlocuters' who are crucial to my language of self-understanding" ("Trauma" 532). Since Ono's understanding of self is not acknowledged by his audience, he is not able to construct a functioning self. Therefore, Ono's self-narrative has become suffocated by the society in which he lives. In other words, Ono feels narratively stuck from a narrative psychological perspective.

While narrating the stories of Jiro and Suichi, Ono notes that human memory can play tricks on his narration. Freeman states that "our memories can in fact lead us back to something like, or something that *feels* like, the past" (175). So, memories are not brought back "uninterpreted and unconstructed" (*Freeman* 174). In congruence with this, Ono is not so sure about the veracity of the events, as the events he recounts have taken place several years earlier. "But as I have said, I could barely recall what had taken place just one week afterwards, and now more than a year has passed" (Ishiguro, *Artist* 54). Both Miyake and Suichi's statements are identical. Ono doubts that Jiro really said what he said, because some of the words were also used by Suichi according to him.

> Did Miyake really say all this to me that afternoon? Perhaps I am getting his words confused with the sort of thing Suichi will come out and say. […] Certainly, phrases like "the greatest cowardice of all" sound much more like Suichi than the mild-mannered young Miyake. (Ishiguro, *Artist* 56)

In this passage, Ono reflects on the fallibility of his memory, particularly in relation to a conversation he had with Jiro Miyake. The possibility of confusion arises as Ono ponders whether Miyake actually said the statements attributed to him, or whether Miyake's words and Suichi's are being confused. Despite the uncertainties, the narrator expresses certainty that a similar conversation took place, underlining the complex and subjective nature of memory. Whether Miyake or Suichi said exactly those words is not known, but even if they did not, the fact that Ono narrates it in this way has to do with how he saw himself at the moment of narration. As Ono approaches a past event from a new perspective, his state of mind shapes his memory. Ono, who has a guilty conscience, confuses similar situations with each other. "Perhaps his problem is not the ability to recall past conversations but the inability to commit them to memory in the first place" (Karttunen 10). Thus, the

fallibility of memory here serves to deepen the contradiction Ono experiences. His memory dominates him in a negative way, which indicates also that the feeling of guilt is not restricted to the individual psyche, and that it also has a social dimension. Ono's sense of guilt is produced by the narratives of society (Wright 63). Instead of leading Ono to healing, the functioning of memory then leads him to blame himself even more at this stage of his storytelling. This in turn makes Ono's fundamental conflict more apparent: To admit mistakes or to somehow move on hiding the past from himself.

Not only is Ono's narrative restriction is caused by the anger of the new generation against the old generation, but there is also no space left for Ono to let his narrative breathe. Narrative psychologists put that "cultures maintain and communicate their identity answers in storied form and their members take in and retain them in storied form" (Polkinghorne, "Explorations" 365). There is not any cultural space allowing Ono to maintain his former self-story. Old buildings that reminded him of Imperial Japan have been demolished; many buildings in the Pleasure district have been destroyed. Only Mrs. Kawakami's place remains, which will be closed at the end of the novel. The Migi-Hidari, which Ono helped establish during the peak of his career, has been bombed during the war and later destroyed.

> But little else has remained unchanged. Coming out of Mrs Kawakami's now, you could stand at her doorway and believe you have just been drinking at some outpost of civilization. All around, there is nothing but a desert of demolished rubble. […] The Migi-Hidari was still there, the windows all blown out, part of the roof fallen in. And I remember wondering to myself as I walked past those shattered buildings, if they would ever again come back to life. Then I came by one morning and the bulldozers had pulled down everything. (Ishiguro, *Artist* 26)

In the aftermath of the war, places that used to be very important to his sense of self are now gone. At the same time, in a way, his past and even his sense of self have been destroyed by bulldozers. Now, after leaving Mrs. Kawakami's, which he often frequents, he feels like he is on the edge of civilization. Therefore, Ono feels nostalgic about this place. "Quite often these days, in the evenings down at Mrs Kawakami's, I find myself reminiscing about the Migi-Hidari and the old days" (Ishiguro, *Artist* 75). Mrs Kawakami's place is now mostly occupied by himself and his old friend Shintaro. The old world that once constituted his self has collapsed, and those ideals and that spirit are gone. The ideas they defended at the time are

perceived as the cause of the country's catastrophe. There is no physical space for Ono to breathe in and for his self-narrative to breathe in at the same time.

In the post-war period, Japan experienced a change in which its established narratives lost their credibility on a cultural political level. The traditional values defended by the older generation seemed to have been replaced by modernity under the dominance of American culture. In both the public and private spheres, individuals from the older generation are being removed from their positions. The company where Jiro Miyake works has dismissed many people from the previous generation. The sublime Japanese identity, once dominated by Ono's ideology of Imperial Japan, is now being replaced by American culture. Ono finds it challenging to accept that his grandson, Ichiro, is more inclined to American culture rather than adopting the identity markers associated with his own Japanese heritage. Ichiro plays alone at home, and Ono struggles to comprehend the nature of his grandson's activities for a while.

> I watched him for a while, but could make little sense of the scenes he was enacting. At intervals, he would repeat his horse movement; at other times, he appeared to be in combat with numerous invisible enemies. (Ishiguro, *Artist* 29)

Ono cannot understand who Ichiro is imitating, a samurai or a ninja, but soon realizes that Ichiro is actually portraying a cowboy named "Lone Ranger." He cannot believe this and asks his grandson to imitate a character from Japanese culture.

> "Ichiro," I said, more firmly, "wait a moment and listen. It's more interesting, more interesting by far, to pretend to be someone like Lord Yoshitsune. Shall I tell you why? Ichiro, listen, Oji will explain it to you. Ichiro, listen to your Oji-san. Ichiro!" (Ishiguro, *Artist* 30)

Ono becomes very upset about this situation and communicates with Ichiro in a displeased tone of voice. He thinks that it is unacceptable for Japanese society to fall under American cultural hegemony. In a futile response to this, Ono aims to take Ichiro to a Japanese horror movie centered on a prehistoric monster. However, Sachiko, resting her argument on the ideas of her husband, thinks that the movie is not pedagogically suitable for Ichiro: "Suichi believes it's better he likes cowboys than that he idolize people like Miyamoto Musashi. Suichi thinks the American heroes are the better models for children now" (Ishiguro, *Artist* 36). American culture has now become a dominant cultural narrative in post-war Japan. Yet, Ono

does not accept this. Blending this with a clearly gender biased mindset, he is insistent about taking his grandson to see this movie: "'Well, Ichiro, we'll just go the day after. We can't have the women ruling over us, can we?' I gave another laugh. 'I expect they thought it would be too scary. Eh, Ichiro?'" (Ishiguro, *Artist* 39). Ono is a fierce defender of sexist attitudes, as if he still lives in the cultural atmosphere of pre-war Japan. Along with it, he wants to instill this culture in Ichiro. Here again, there are two different narratives colliding. While Old Japan no longer exists, Ono remains attached to the culture of old Japan. In that sense, his own self-narrative has lost its legitimacy in the cultural atmosphere of Japan after the war. Moreover, his daughters and their circle have moved away from the old Japanese culture and come under the influence of American culture. Therefore, Ono again cannot find any narrative space to breathe in on a cultural political level.

When Ono wrote the first part of his narrative in 1948, he tried to cope with his distress by clashing his self-narrative with the narratives around him without fully confronting his past. But it was the other narratives around him that triumphed in these clashes**.** He does not want to enter the dark rooms of the past, so he wants to repress his past at the end of the first chapter. Ono runs into Noriko's future father-in-law, Dr. Saito, at the tram. Dr. Saito has met Kuroda, formerly Ono's most loyal student, and talks to him about Ono. Ono is very puzzled by this. He avoids these subjects, but the past haunts him like a ghost.

> But it was not my intention to dwell on Kuroda here. Indeed, he would not be on my mind at all had his name not turned up so unexpectedly last month, during the chance meeting on the tram with Dr Saito. (Ishiguro, *Artist* 78)

As it will be revealed in the coming chapters of the storytelling, Kuroda has an important place in his life, related to his past mistakes. But when he writes this chapter, he portrays Kuroda as a minor character in his life story. He is not yet in a position to confront his past; he wants to bury it and repress it. He closes the first chapter with such an attitude towards his past. At Sachiko's insistence, he wants Noriko's second marriage negotiation to be successful, and Ono goes to talk to a friend from the past about the marriage interrogation. He wonders what Matsuda would say about his past if they came to question him about his daughter's marriage. He is relieved when Matsuda tells him that he has "only the best of things to report

from the past" (Ishiguro, *Artist* 96). This shows that Ono tends to cover up the past rather than confront it. When Matsuda reminds him that there were mistakes in their past, he refuses to accept it. He does not want to see the truth. The dialog between them reveals his early attitude towards his past.

> "I've hardly moved from this house for the last three years," he [Matsuda] said. "But I still keep my ears open for what's happening in this country of ours. I realize there are now those who would condemn the likes of you and me for the very things we were once proud to have achieved. And I suppose this is why you're worried, Ono. You think perhaps I will praise you for things perhaps best forgotten."
> "No such thing," I said hastily. "You and I both have a lot to be proud of. It's merely that where marriage talks are concerned, one has to appreciate the delicacy of the situation. But you've put my mind at rest. I know you'll exercise your judgement as well as ever." (Ishiguro, *Artist* 94)

Matsuda tells Ono's main problem is that he tends to see his past actions as mistakes. He states that Ono is so concerned because he is worried about these mistakes being talked about, but Ono firmly denies this. Ono argues that what he did in the past was not a mistake, but something to be proud of. However, Ono's defense is not convincing. He tries to cover up his past mistakes, but it is not an easy task. His past actions affect Ono's life today. Ono ends the first part of his narrative with Matsuda suggesting to him that he should see Kuroda: "If we're worrying about Miss Noriko's future, perhaps you'd best seek him [Mr Kuroda] out, painful as it may be" (Ishiguro, *Artist* 95). Although Ono tries to repress the past and uses "the selective focus of attention" to deceive himself, he does not achieve this. At the end of the first chapter, he is informed that he must meet Kuroda, the neglected part of his life story at this point, whom he caused to be imprisoned, thereby being forced to face the neglected part of his life.

The memory of the past for Ono and the society is in combat with each other. While Ono wants to forget the past, the society wants him to remember and take responsibility for his misdeeds. In the clash between two different narratives, Ono's self-narrative does not turn out to be successful. The narratives around him do not give legitimacy to his narrative and push him to confess and admit responsibility. Another question Frank asks in dialogic narrative analysis is, "How does a story help people, individually and collectively, to remember who they are" (*Socio-Narratology* 82). The self-narrative Ono constructs in the first chapter does not help him to be released of his trouble, as the narratives around him, or the dominant narrative, do

not allow him to remember himself in the way he constructs himself through the mental strategies employed in self-deception, such as "repression," "positive misinterpretation," or "selective focus of attention." On the contrary, the dominant narrative wants him to confront his past to be released of his trouble in the present. Moreover, from a narrative psychological perspective it can be argued that the self cannot be thought in isolation from the society; they are bound to each other. As John McLeod puts it, "The task of being a person in a culture involves creating a satisfactory-enough alignment between the individual experience and 'the story of which I find myself a part'" (*Narrative and Psychotherapy* 27). Therefore, since the self-narrative Ono authored is not compatible with the narratives around which he finds himself, he cannot attain a psychological well-being at this point.

While the pro-emperors, politicians, military personnel, businessmen, and artists who caused Japan to enter the war committed suicide and this was accepted as an honorable attitude by the society, Ono's alternative narrative where he sees his life in a positive light could not be accepted by the society. Bruner states that "to be in a viable culture is to be bound in a set of connecting stories" (*Acts of Meaning* 95). Ono is not in connection with the stories available to him. Since his self-narrative is not in line with the narratives in the society, he is not able to attain psychological well-being. He is narratively restricted. Moreover, Ono loses in all his narrative reconfigurations with all his narrative contestations, so he continues his life with a fundamental dilemma: Should he commit suicide or not, if not literally? If not, how will he do that? These questions constitute a response to what Frank suggests asking while doing narrative analysis, "What is the force of fear in the story, and what animates desire?" (*Socio-Narratology* 81). The force of fear behind Ono's storytelling is suicide, whereas the desire is to find a way to live by. Since Ono does not commit suicide, it is necessary to look at the stories that prevent him from committing suicide and the process of creating his own self narrative. How does Ono create the narrative through which he can continue his life? The following part will address these questions.

McAdams argues that "narrative identity is a joint production, an invention of the storytelling person and the culture in which the person's story finds meaning and significance" ("First We Invented Stories" 14). In this regard, it can be held that Ono

works on stories that produce trouble in his narrative identity and tries to get rid of his distress by creating a narrative in harmony with society. Ono first seeks partial relief by acknowledging his past mistakes. In that sense, he accepts the story that the society has imposed on him. In the second part, written in 1949, he delves deeper into his past, which he had tried to conceal. Instead of his initial efforts to repress and make himself morally superior, he now begins to see himself as one of the "conscious-troubled men" wandering the Bridge of Hesitation (Ishiguro, *Artist* 99). He confesses his past mistakes to Dr. Saito's family as they gather for Noriko's marriage. However, before this meeting, Ono goes to Kuroda's house to talk to him so that Kuroda will not be an obstacle to the marriage. Since Kuroda is not at home at that moment, he finds the opportunity to talk to Mr. Enchi, one of Kuroda's students. Everything seems to be going well until Mr. Enchi finds out that it is Masuji Ono who visited Kuroda and tries to dismiss him out of the house, treating him like a "traitor." Enchi tells Ono that he does not know what Kuroda went through.

> "Most things are more complicated than they appear, Mr Enchi. Young men of your generation tend to see things far too simply."
>
> […]
>
> "Traitor. That's what they called him. Traitor. Every minute of every day. But now we all know who the real traitors were." (Ishiguro, *Artist* 113)

He cannot say anything in opposition to Enchi's claims. He only expresses that Enchi does not know how complex the world is, but this is not a very satisfying response. He cannot produce a plausible narrative to counter Enchi's narrative. It becomes clear from Enchi's narrative that Kuroda was imprisoned and tortured because of Ono. Considering that he was jailed for being a traitor before the war, in the postwar period there is a different understanding of the concept of traitor. Traitors for the younger generation are now people like Masuji Ono.

Faced with this truth, Ono has nowhere to escape. After this confrontation, the families come together for Noriko's marriage negotiations. Taro's brother Mitsuo is also with them at the dinner. Ono thinks that he is being watched by this young man. "Meanwhile, young Mitsuo, I noticed, was once more watching me" (Ishiguro, *Artist* 99). Ono actually thinks that he is being watched by the whole new generation.

In the light of this situation, Ono is forced to confess his own truth as a result of all this pressure.

> "There are some who would say it is people like myself who are responsible for the terrible things that happened to this nation of ours. As far as I am concerned, I freely admit I made many mistakes. I accept that much of what I did was ultimately harmful to our nation, that mine was part of an influence that resulted in untold suffering for our people. I admit this. You see, Dr Saito, I admit this quite readily." (Ishiguro, *Artist* 123)

Ono admits his past mistakes, openly stating this to Dr. Saito's family. He claims that he is also responsible for the suffering of the people of his country. Saying this, Ono feels a sense of relief, and with this he states that the negotiations have ended successfully (Ishiguro, *Artist* 124). Acting in accordance with the narrative imposed on him by society, Ono admits that he is to blame for supporting through his art the policies that led to the catastrophe of his country. In this context, the self-narrative, which was initially largely disconnected from the narratives of society, begins to connect with them, which in effect paves the way for his psychological well-being.

Having admitted his past mistake, Ono seeks help from the narrative with his storytelling. One narrative that makes Ono feel good about making this confession is the knowledge that he "acted in good faith" (Ishiguro, *Artist* 123). The belief that he could be absolved of his past mistakes because he sincerely believed in what he had done in the past offers him a way out.

> It may not always be an easy thing, but there is certainly a satisfaction and dignity to be gained in coming to terms with the mistakes one has made in the course of one's life. In any case, there is surely no great shame in mistakes made in the best of faith. It is surely a thing far more shameful to be unable or unwilling to acknowledge them. (Ishiguro, *Artist* 124)

Ono knows that facing one's mistakes is a painful process. Looking backwards can be dangerous. As Freeman suggests, "it [hindsight] can cut a knife into the heart of one's existence, revealing painful truths that one could not or would not see earlier on" (81). However, Ono claims that it is an honorable attitude. Just as society imposes its opinion on him, Ono finds the courage to confess his mistakes. The narrative that the mistakes made in the past can be justified if done with conviction and sincerity helps him to reconcile with his past.

Another narrative that has a positive significance for Ono's psychological well-being is that he feels morally superior to people who do not acknowledge and

confront their mistakes. He feels better because those who cannot do so contribute to Ono seeing himself in a higher moral position. The person who takes on this role in the novel is his former student Shintaro, who serves as a foil character for Ono's life story. In the first chapter, Shintaro was a character who resisted "the cynicism" of the present and reminded Ono of his past as a successful and decent person. Spending time with him was therapeutic for Ono, because "it really is as though nothing has changed for Shintaro" (Ishiguro, *Artist* 21). What makes Shintaro beneficial for Ono is that he was one of the people who supported his thoughts about the past. Shintaro adored Ono, just like in the old days. And he was always grateful that he helped his brother find a job. So, he proved that what he said about his past is true. But, later, under the influence of the changing world, Shintaro wants to tear himself away from Ono, which again suggests his "loneliness and alienation" (Sarvan 95). He seeks Ono's assistance for his application to Higashimachi High School. He asks Ono to confirm certain statements to the school committee, expressing that there was a disagreement between them during the China crisis. Shintaro too made significant contribution to the China crisis posters, but Shintaro states that he had some reservation about that as well. Ono does not remember such misgivings and suggests that he face the past:

> "Shintaro," I said, "why don't you simply face up to the past? You gained much credit at the time for your poster campaign. Much credit and much praise. The world may now have a different opinion of your work, but there is no need to lie about yourself." (Ishiguro, *Artist* 103-104)

Shintaro does not listen to him because he desperately needs this job. He leaves the name and address of the committee chairman. It is not clear whether there was a disagreement between them, or Ono just cannot remember. The narrator's lack of clear recollection of the past disagreement with Shintaro could indeed be indicative of selective memory or repression, as the conflict during the Chinese crisis seems to be disturbing for the narrator. It is possible that the events were associated with negative emotions and the narrator consciously or unconsciously chose to repress or forget them in order to avoid emotional distress. According to Ono, Shintaro is not able to confront his past mistake; therefore, he is seen as morally deficient by Ono. Since Shintaro cannot admit his past wrongdoings, Ono finds him morally inferior. "Shintaro would in my view be a happier man today if he had the courage and

honesty to accept what he did in the past" (Ishiguro, *Artist* 20). Ono speculates that Shintaro may find the courage to acknowledge his mistakes after this event related to his employment, but he immediately gives up this idea:

> But my guess is that Shintoro persisted with his small hypocrisies in pursuit of his goals. Indeed, I have come to believe now that there has always been a cunning, underhand side to Shintaro's nature, which I had not really noticed in the past. (Ishiguro, *Artist* 125)

Shintaro was at the beginning of his storytelling someone Ono liked, because he made Ono feel like he was still in his old prestigious days. Once Shintaro denies his past for his own benefit, Ono puts him in an inferior position to feel better about himself. In this way Ono starts to feel better.

Another narrative that paves the way for Ono to get rid of his inner conflicts is the narrative of "rising above the mediocre." No matter how much history proves him mistaken, Ono tries to emphasize his own achievements within this narrative, that is rising above the mediocre. Akira Sugimura, whose house he has bought, is one of the individuals who has risen above the mediocre for Ono to identify with. Sugimura spent a fortune to achieve his goal of transforming Kawabe Park, one of the city's most important landmarks, into a cultural center; unfortunately, he has failed in this goal. However, Ono perceives this as a valuable and praiseworthy achievement.

> I confess I am beginning to feel a certain admiration for the man. For indeed, a man who aspires to rise above the mediocre, to be something more than ordinary, surely deserves admiration, even if in the end he fails and loses a fortune on account of his ambitions. It is my belief, furthermore, that Sugimura did not die an unhappy man. For his failure was quite unlike the undignified failures of most ordinary lives, and a man like Sugimura would have known this. If one has failed only where others have not had the courage or will to try, there is a consolation – indeed, a deep satisfaction – to be gained from this observation when looking back over one's life. (Ishiguro, *Artist* 134)

In Ono's eyes such people have risen above the average person. They have the courage to make mistakes, and even if they do not succeed, it is still a cause of happiness for them. Ono evaluates his own career in a similar way. His own life is an attempt to rise above the mediocre, even though history has shown that he has done some wrong. Ono tells himself that he once had the courage to make mistakes for the sake of a better cause.

The narrative that works best for the psychological well-being of Ono, and which is also the title of the novel, is the narrative of the floating world. Floating means "not permanently fixed in one particular position or a place" (Oxford Dictionary). Ono admits that he made significant mistakes in his past, but the "floating world" narrative, which makes him feel comfortable, gives him a space to get rid of his distress, because the floating world narrative allows Ono to distance the problem from himself, that is, what is perceived is that "the problem is the problem" (White 4). White suggests that externalizing the problem separates the problem from person, thus allowing the person to solve the problem successfully to produce a functioning narrative (4). Through externalization, the problem is not directed to the identity of the person, but rather the problem itself is seen as the problem.

It is the world in flux that determines whether Ono has made a mistake or not. The world is always changing, and it is where history is evolving that determines whether his choices are wrong or not. Because this narrative allows him to understand the place where history evolves by ignoring his own agency and involvement, Ono psychologically gets better. That is why, Ono devotes a very long textual space to the debates with his masters. His reference to these events shows that the world constantly changes. The very acts that are believed to bring about good things in the future can sometimes produce harmful outcomes. Reducing his own role and will or limiting it only to his profession serves his psychological well-being. In his speech to his students at Migi-Hidari, Ono describes how he challenged his masters in the past to show that he was morally superior.

> "Being at Takeda's," I told them, "taught me an important lesson early in my life. That while it was right to look up to teachers, it was always important to question their authority. The Takeda experience taught me never to follow the crowd blindly, but to consider carefully the direction in which I was being pushed. And if there's one thing I've tried to encourage you all to do, it's been to rise above the sway of things." (Ishiguro, *Artist* 73)

He tells his students how valuable it is to challenge the authority of the masters and conventional perspectives. Even his master Mori-san himself finds some of his own early paintings "fatally flawed by trivial concern" (Ishiguro, *Artist* 148). According to Mori-san, his early paintings are lacking in terms of capturing the ephemeral notion of life, as "they don't even hint at these transitory, illusory qualities. They're deeply flawed, Ono" (Ishiguro, *Artist* 150). Mori-san later comments,

> "I suspect the reason I couldn't celebrate the floating world was that I couldn't bring myself to believe in its worth. Young men are often guilt ridden about pleasure, and I suppose I was no different. I suppose I thought that to pass away one's time in such places, to spend one's skills celebrating things so intangible and transient, I suppose I thought it all rather wasteful, all rather decadent. It's hard to appreciate the beauty of a world when one doubts its very validity." (Ishiguro, *Artist* 150)

Mori-san had once found it morally reprehensible as a young man to want to reflect the changing world in his art. Other students fostered a similar culture of contest. Sasaki, once one of Mori-san's most loyal students, was declared a "traitor" and his paintings were taken away from him because he went against Mori-san's understanding of art (Ishiguro, *Artist* 144). When Ono showed the unfinished version of his propogandist painting to Shintaro in Mori-san's villa, Shintaro told Ono that he was a "traitor" (Ishiguro, *Artist* 165). Kuroda himself suffered from a similar fate; he was declared a "traitor" for going beyond Ono's understanding of art. Ono's parting speech to Mori-san reflects his viewpoint about the floating world.

> "I have learnt many things over these past years. I have learnt much in contemplating the world of pleasure, and recognizing its fragile beauty. But I now feel it is time for me to progress to other things. Sensei, it is my belief that in such troubled times as these, artists must learn to value something more tangible than those pleasurable things that disappear with the morning light. It is not necessary that artists always occupy a decadent and enclosed world. My conscience, Sensei, tells me I cannot remain forever an artist of the floating world." (Ishiguro, *Artist* 179-180)[8]

Ono wanted to produce works of art that were not ephemeral, not decadent. When the world was going through such troubled times, he wanted to adopt an understanding of art that was worthwhile. He wanted to abandon what Mori-san once thought for his own understanding of art for similar reasons. However, Mori-san decided that his own understanding of art was important in the final analysis, and he was proud of himself for making paintings of the floating world.

> "But I've long since lost all such doubts, Ono," he continued. "When I am an old man, when I look back over my life and see I have devoted it to the task of capturing the unique beauty of that world, I believe I will be well satisfied. And no man will make me believe I've wasted my time." (Ishiguro, *Artist* 150-151)

Even though Mori-san has sometimes disagreed with his own understanding of art, he is happy in the end that he has adopted such an understanding of art. He no longer

[8] Ironically, Ono defends this understanding at the end.

doubts that his art is not valuable. Just like Mori-san, Ona makes a similar speech while defending another understanding of art that is politically motivated.

> It is possible, of course, that Mori-san did not use those exact words. Indeed, on reflection, such phrases sound rather more like the sort of thing I myself would declare to my own pupils after we had been drinking a little at the Migi-Hidari. "As the new generation of Japanese artists, you have a great responsibility towards the culture of this nation. I am proud to have the likes of you as my pupils. And while I may deserve only the smallest praise for my own paintings, when I come to look back over my life and remember I have nurtured and assisted the careers of all of you here, why then no man will make me believe I have wasted my time." (Ishiguro, *Artist* 151)

Ono displays similar attitudes towards the changing understanding of art. Like Mori-san, he wants to convince himself that his life was not spent in vain. Along with it, Ono's remarks also highlight that the different voices blend while recalling what happened in the past. In other words, what this passage shows is that objections and breaking away from teachers and adopting other artistic approaches never end. Everyone seems to share a similar fate. Nothing remains fixed in this world.

The merging of voices can be explained by the fallibility of memory. The fact that Ono's memory does not exactly identify who is saying what to whom shows that this is actually something that has been repeated very often throughout his life. In this regard, the fallibility of memory allows him to strengthen the idea of the floating world which helps him to be relieved of his distress. It also causes the concept of "traitor" to blur for him, as in the narrative of the floating world "the signifiers are not fixed and permanent" (Sarvan 96). "Ono begins to see […] what is 'correct' has changed" (Walkowitz 128). He himself was declared a traitor, having caused his once most loyal student Kuroda to be imprisoned for the art he had made in the pre-war period. The paintings made by Kuroda were dangerous art for the period in which Japan was in. For this reason, some of his paintings were burned and some of them were seized as evidence. Ono confesses that he was responsible for this. He wanted to prevent the police from raiding Kuroda's house and burning some of his paintings and using some as evidence.

> "I am the man on whose information you have been brought here. I am Masuji Ono, the artist and member of the Cultural Committee of the Interior Department. Indeed, I am an official adviser to the Committee of Unpatriotic Activities. I believe there's been some sort of mistake here and I would like to speak with whoever is in charge." (Ishiguro, *Artist* 182)

He is the one who caused his student's house to be raided and he is the one who is responsible for his imprisonment. He himself had not imagined this, but he was responsible for it. He wanted to stop the police from coming to the house, but he remained powerless to do so. "'I had no idea', I said, 'something like this would happen. I merely suggested to the committee someone come round and give Mr Kuroda a talking- to for his own good'" (Ishiguro, *Artist* 183). Although he did not expect things to go this far, Kuroda's plight was his own fault. Yet, it was Ono who was declared a traitor after the war. Ono tries to render the concept of traitor harmless for himself by explaining at length the frequent use of the term traitor in his artistic career at different points, and by utilizing the fallibility of memory to his advantage by interweaving the voices, which helps him to normalize the word traitor.

Frank suggests that in dialogic narrative analysis one can ask, "How does a story do the work of memory?" (*Socio-Narratology* 82). In this regard, it can be argued that the fallibility of memory has both negative and positive functions for Ono**.** Retrospective narration has two dimensions: on the one hand, it allows us to revisit the past and see our mistakes, but on the other, it is also affected by the present situation, since memory cannot be evaluated independently of the present. At the very beginning of the novel, Ono had mentioned that Sachiko had suggested to him that he should have taken "certain precautionary steps" during the second marriage negotiations. For that reason, Ono was, in a sense, pushed into the process of confronting his past. However, after Noriko gets married, Ono's conversation with Sachiko reveals that Sachiko does not remember saying such a thing. Ono, suffering from remorse, may have interpreted what Sachiko said differently.

> "Noriko told me she was extremely puzzled by Father's behaviour that night. It seems the Saitos were equally puzzled. No one was at all sure what Father meant by it all. Indeed, Suichi also expressed his bewilderment when I read him Noriko's letter."
> "But this is extraordinary," I said, laughing. "Why, Setsuko, it was you yourself who pushed me to it last year. It was you who suggested I take 'precautionary steps' so that we didn't slip up with the Saitos as we did with the Miyakes. Do you not remember?"
> "No doubt I am being most forgetful, but I am afraid I have no recollection of what Father refers to."
> "Now, Setsuko, this is extraordinary." (Ishiguro, *Artist* 191)

Noriko's bewilderment is caused by her father's accusation of his own art during the marriage negotiations dinner, whereas her father interprets her bewilderment as his courageously admitting his past mistakes and telling them in advance so that they

would not cause a problem. In addition, it seems that Sachiko does not remember having suggested taking precautionary steps. Or, even if she did, what Sachiko means is not related to his own artistic vision. The fallibility of memory caused by "negative misinterpretation" directly speaks to Ono's guilty conscience.

The fallibility of memory gives Ono clear advantages too. He sometimes claims that he cannot remember what happened a week ago, but he remembers well Noriko's father-in-law spoke of him sixteen years ago. Sachiko tells Ono that Dr. Saito first knew him at their marriage meeting. However, Ono refuses to believe it.

> My recollection of the first time I ever met Dr Saito remains quite vivid, and I am thus confident enough of its accuracy. It must have been all of sixteen years ago now, on the day after I moved into my house.
>
> […]
>
> "So you are Mr Ono," he remarked. "Well now, this is a real honour. A real honour to have someone of your stature here in our neighbourhood."
>
> […]
>
> But my memory of that first meeting, and of Dr Saito recognizing my name on the gatepost, is sufficiently clear for me to assert with some confidence that my elder daughter, Setsuko, was quite mistaken in at least some of the things she tried to imply last month. It is hardly possible, for instance, that Dr Saito had no idea who I was until the marriage negotiations last year obliged him to find out. (Ishiguro, *Artist* 131-132)

In this case, it is very difficult to believe what Ono says, but that does not necessarily mean that he is consciously manipulating us. He himself wants to believe it, because that is how he convinces himself that he is a respectable person. Ono is quite self-conscious about self-representation: "I cannot recall any colleague who could paint a self- portrait with absolute honesty" (Ishiguro, *Artist* 67), admitting that his self-narrative also includes distortions. Although there is not any textual evidence to support their first meeting sixteen years ago, Ono does not give up this belief. In front of his daughter, he brings this matter up with Dr. Saito's son to convince Sachiko. While Taro does not explicitly support Ono in any way, Ono claims that Taro supports his belief, and he strongly believes that Sachiko is wrong. "I remember that meeting quite clearly, and there can be no doubt that Setsuko is mistaken" (Ishiguro, *Artist* 194). Ono again employs "negative misinterpretation" to ease his mind.

For Ono, the courage to admit mistakes, acting in good faith, foregrounding morally inferior positions and the floating of the world are the narratives in which he finds relief. There is another narrative around him in which he may feel much more

comfortable, but Ono does not accept it: the narrative of art's contribution being marginal in social matters**.** Whether or not art plays a role in influencing social events is revealed in the novel as the conflict between Ono's and Matsuda's views on art. Ono is an artist of the floating world before he meets Matsuda. His conception of art is to praise the unique beauty of the floating world as in Mori-san's teaching, but Matsuda's conception of art is a political art that deals with social issues. Matsuda tries to politicize Ono's art and thinks that his art, if expressed in other ways, could be a cure for Japan's poverty, but Ono finds Matsuda "naïve" on this aspect. Advocating a more abstract and aesthetic conception of art, Ono argues that the artist's main concern is "to capture beauty wherever he finds it" (Ishiguro, *Artist* 172). By dismissing the artist's impact on wider social issues, he implies that belief in the transformative power of art may be overly optimistic. Ono believes that the understanding of art as defined by Matsuda is based on a naïve misunderstanding of art's capacity to address important social or political issues. In contrast to this, Matsuda defends art's political influence on social matters.

> "You know full well, Ono, we do not see things so simply. The fact is, the Okada-Shingen does not exist in isolation. There are young men like us in all walks of life – in politics, in the military – who think the same way. We are the emerging generation. Together, it is within our capability to achieve something of real value." (Ishiguro, *Artist* 173)

Matsuda advocates a broader and more socially engaged approach to art. He sees art not in isolation but as part of a broader movement embodied by young people in various social spheres, including politics and the military. He argues that artists should not be left to their own, producing only aesthetically pleasing but socially disconnected works, especially in times of economic hardship and widespread suffering. This perspective advocates an understanding of art that actively engages with the immediate concerns of the time, seeing art as a means to address social issues and contribute to meaningful change.

However, Ono's understanding of art takes on a political dimension under Matsuda's influence in time, moving from "pure aesthetics" towards "pure didactics of propaganda" (Sauerberg 189). Responding to Matsuda's "interpellation" in an Althusserian sense of the concept, Ono produces two important paintings contributing to the imperialist militarist politics of the time. In a painting he calls "Complacency," children in a poor area have masculine samurai looks on their faces

and hold sticks in classic kendo stances. Above the children's heads is another scene. Three fat, good-looking men are sitting in a bar, laughing. These two contrasting images are juxtaposed against the coastline of the Japanese islands. On the right edge is the word "Complacency" in bold red characters; on the left edge is the phrase, "But the youth are ready to fight for their dignity" in smaller characters (Ishiguro, *Artist* 168). The other painting is a reworking of the earlier one, "Eyes to the Horizon" (Ishiguro, *Artist* 168). The top image shows three well-dressed men, but this time with tense expressions on their faces, looking at each other for initiative. And these faces are likened to three prominent politicians of the period. In the lower, more dominant image, the three poor children of the old painting are now hard-faced soldiers, two of them holding rifles with bayonets and standing next to an officer with his sword pointing the way forward, westwards, towards Asia. Behind them there is no more poverty, only the military flag of the rising sun. The word "Complacency" in the right margin is replaced by "Eyes on the Horizon!" and in the left margin by "No time for cowardly talk. Japan must go forward" (Ishiguro, *Artist* 169). The two paintings Ono produces tell a story, a story which motivates people to be a part of imperialist Japan's policy of the invasion of Asia. Frank argues that "as actors, stories and narratives are resources for people, and they conduct people, as a conductor conducts an orchestra; they set up a tempo, indicate emphases, and instigate performance options" (*Socio-Narratology* 15). It can be held that Ono's story similarly guided and influenced people's actions of that time through his stories in the paintings. If Frank's claim, "war must be narratable before it can be fought" (*Socio-Narratology* 76), is true, Ono's art made war narratable for people so that it could be fought. In this sense, as Sarvan suggests, several paintings destroyed in the course of the novel seems to suggest the role and importance of art (100).

The two paintings Ono made in the pre-war period are an important reason why he is distressed. He feels that he contributed to the war with these two paintings. His close circle was aware that he saw some commonalities between him and Yukio Naguichi, the composer who committed suicide, and that he was deeply affected by this. Naguichi had contributed to the war by composing war marches and committed suicide after the war to apologize to the society for causing the disaster. His family finds it hard to make sense of why Ono identifies himself with Naguichi. For

Sachiko, Naguichi's suicide is explicable, because "Mr Naguchi's songs came to have enormous prevalence at every level of the war effort. There would thus appear to have been some substance to his wish that he should share responsibility along with the politicians and generals" (Ishiguro, *Artist* 192). But for Sachiko, the same does not hold true for her father, who is just a painter.

> "Forgive me, but it is perhaps important to see things in a proper perspective. Father painted some splendid pictures, and was no doubt most influential amongst other such painters. But Father's work had hardly to do with these larger matters of which we are speaking. Father was simply a painter. He must stop believing he has done some great wrong." (Ishiguro, *Artist* 192-193)

Sachiko thinks that her father should not feel guilty as a painter. After all, she says, the role of a painter in such major social events is limited. However, Ono does not approve this idea. He states that he never contemplated suicide like Naguichi did, but at the same time, he himself was once "a man of some influence, who used that influence towards a disastrous end" (Ishiguro, *Artist* 192). Ono's refusal to acknowledge that his contribution to the war through his painting was marginal has to do with the fact that he does not want to be considered an insignificant person. Ono attributes an agency to himself by rejecting the idea that his art was marginal in influence for Japan before the war. To attribute agency to oneself is associated with mental health. McAdams suggests that "as the narratives change over time in the direction of greater agency, the adults who tell these stories tend to experience improvement in mental health" ("First We Invented Stories" 10). In this regard, it can be suggested that Ono's rejection of the narrative of art's marginal contribution to social matters indicates the greater agency Ono attributes to himself, thereby allowing him to improve his psychological well-being.

4.3. Ono's Psychological Well-Being at the End of his Storytelling

In the last chapter, written in June 1950, Ono begins to view his self in a more positive light. He has now completed his confrontation with his past, developed new narratives for conflicting stories, overcome his guilty conscience, and achieved a state of psychological well-being. This is mostly done through "selective focus of attention," a strategy used for self-deception in Marcus's conceptualization, because Ono remembers positive aspects of his self while ignoring the negative sides of it

anymore. Foniokova introduces Ono as a "selective narrator,"[9] and she claims that Ono "successfully deceives himself in order to achieve self-satisfaction" through such a narrative technique (133). Ishiguro himself states in a conversation that he is much more interested in the language of self-deception, rather than the actuality of past events.

> What I'm interested in is not the actual fact that my characters have done things they later regret […] I'm interested in how they come to terms with it. On the one hand there is a need for honesty, on the other hand a need to deceive themselves – to preserve a sense of dignity, some sort of self-respect. (Ishiguro qtd. in Sloane 165)

Self-deceived through "selective focus of attention" in Marcus's conceptualization, Ono has returned to his profession in the end, which he had given up because he was disillusioned. "A few watercolors to pass the time. Plants and flowers mostly, just for my own amusement" (Ishiguro, *Artist* 199). He has started painting again, but this time only for himself, and his paintings are not political, but depicting the still life. He makes peace with his painting now as his pro-war campaigns, which were seen as dangerous and problematic in post-war society, are now being talked about without shame. In his last conversation with Matsuda, Ono no longer talks about his past with remorse and in a concealed way:

> "But if we'd seen things a little more clearly, then the likes of you and I me, Matsuda – who knows? – we may have done some real good. We had much energy and courage once. Indeed, we must have had plenty of both to conduct something like that New Japan campaign, you remember?" (Ishiguro, *Artist* 199)

Even though they both admit that they have done wrong, they remember that they struggled sincerely. For Ono, this way of narrating his past is an indication of his psychological well-being, because he foregrounds positive aspects of his self by acknowledging the negative aspects. Matsuda, like Ono, accepts that their past is full of mistakes. Yet, Matsuda comforts himself with two other narratives. The first narrative in which Matsuda finds comfort is the acknowledgment that he is

[9] Foniokova acknowledges Ono as "the selective narrator," focusing on his manner of narration. The main aspects of Ono's narration are digressions, indirectness and metanarrative comments (133). The author rests her arguments on unreliability in the end by foregrounding the function of it. In a similar line of thinking, Wong suggests that "Ishiguro has created a character who is the embodiment of 'fictionalization' and who seems both profoundly aware and ignorant of his condition" (*Kazuo Ishiguro* 39). What Wong is actually hinting at here is that Ono is a self-deceived narrator, which is in line with the idea of the self as a narrative. Acknowledging them, this study employs "the selective focus of attention" as a strategy utilized in self-deception in Amit Marcus's way of formulation and rests its arguments on narrative therapy.

ultimately an "ordinary person:" "It's just that in the end we turned out to be ordinary men. Ordinary men with no special gifts of insight. It was simply our misfortune to have been ordinary men during such times" (Ishiguro, *Artist* 199-200). The other is the narrative that their contribution was marginal. "'Army officers, politicians, businessman,' Matsuda said. 'They've all been blamed for what happened to this country. But as for the likes of us, Ono, our contribution was always marginal'" (Ishiguro, *Artist* 201). Matsuda attains a relief by minimizing and trivializing his agency. Ono, however, has taken a different position.

> And surely there was no reason for him [Matsuda] to have died disillusioned. He may indeed have looked back over his life and seen certain flaws, but surely he would have recognized also those aspects he could feel proud of. For, as he pointed out himself, the likes of him and me, we have the satisfaction of knowing that whatever we did, we did at the time in the best of faith. Of course, we took some bold steps and often did things with much single-mindedness; but this is surely preferable to never putting one's convictions to the test, for lack of will or courage. When one holds convictions deeply enough, there surely comes a point when it is despicable to prevaricate further. I feel confident Matsuda would have thought along these same lines when looking back over his life. (Ishiguro, *Artist* 201-202)

They admit that they have made mistakes, but Ono feels that they have something to be proud of at the same time. They held a belief sincerely and they acted sincerely within that understanding. It's quite true that they had parochial perspectives, and they did some dangerous things, pushing the limits too far. But Ono thinks that they were not cowards like ordinary people; they were brave to make mistakes. Therefore, Ono is psychologically better off because he accepts his mistakes and starts to see the positive aspects of his life narrative. Rather than being relieved by minimizing his role and influence like Matsuda, he acknowledges his mistakes and demonstrates his positive sides.

Ono does not suffer from the distress of remembering unpleasant things in the past and having his narrative clash with other narratives as he experienced at the beginning of his storytelling, but at the end of his storytelling he frequently recalls his achievements in the past. "There is a particular moment I often bring to my mind – it was in the May of 1938, just after I had been presented with the Shigeta Foundation Award" (Ishiguro, *Artist* 202). He remembers more and more the moments in his past that made him happy. He goes to Mori-san's villa and feels a great relief when he looks at it from a distance. Mori-san had suggested to him that

his paintings would damage his career and that he would do poor, low-profile work. On the contrary, Mori-san himself ended up in that situation.

> His endeavours to bring European influence into the Utamaro tradition had come to be regarded as fundamentally unpatriotic, and he would be heard of from time to time holding struggling exhibitions at ever less prestigious venues. In fact, I had heard from more than one source that he had begun illustrating popular magazines to maintain his income. (Ishiguro, *Artist* 202-203)

The fate that Mori-san had predicted for Ono was carried out by his master. Unlike himself, his master's efforts were not rewarded. Ono becomes a Sensei during his collaboration with the imperialist regime, which "places him higher in the hierarchy than Mori-san" (Tellini 4). When he sees Mori-san in such a condition, he is overjoyed. It is Ono who has succeeded instead of his master.

> It was a profound sense of happiness deriving from the conviction that one's efforts have been justified; that the hard work undertaken, the doubts overcome, have all been worthwhile; that one has achieved something of real value and distinction. (Ishiguro, *Artist* 204)

Ono has never felt this happy even when he received the award from the Shigeta Foundation in the past. When he is watching the villa, he is happy that Mori-san had fallen and that he had been wrong and that he had accomplished something important. The other biggest relief is that Ono puts himself morally above Shintaro and experiences happiness through him.

> It is not, I fancy, a feeling many people will come to experience. The likes of the Tortoise – the likes of Shintaro – they may plod on, competent and inoffensive, but their kind will never know the sort of happiness I felt that day. For their kind do not know what it is to risk everything in the endeavour to rise above the mediocre. (Ishiguro, *Artist* 203)

Ono feels happy that he has risen above the average person by creating a duality between himself and people like Shintaro who are not able to admit their mistakes. Because these people have never been brave enough to make mistakes, they will never experience true happiness in their lives. When he finally looks at his life, what he sees is a situation that makes him feel good about himself: "For however one may come in later years to reassess one's achievements, it is always a consolation to know that one's life has contained a moment or two of real satisfaction such as I experienced that day up on that high mountain path" (Ishiguro, *Artist* 204).

From a narrative psychological point of view, Ono is able to feel better by working on the problem-saturated stories in his past that were not functioning well

and by constructing them in a different way through his storytelling. His psychological well-being is quite high at the end because he now reads his life as a success story. However, does the achievement of individual psychological well-being also lead to a similar improvement when considered in terms of socio-political well-being? According to Ono, indeed it does. At the end of his self-narrative, Ono ends up as a person who is nostalgic for the past and hopeful for the future.

> I feel a certain nostalgia for the past and the district as it used to be. But to see how our city has been rebuilt, how things have recovered so rapidly over these years, fills me with genuine gladness. Our nation, it seems, whatever mistakes it may have made in the past, has now another chance to make a better go of things. One can only wish these young people well. (Ishiguro, *Artist* 206)

Ono finds himself in a complex web of emotions as he reflects on the past and observes the rapid transformation of his city. He experiences a deep sense of nostalgia, longing for days gone by when the city had a different landscape. At the same time, Ono is filled with a deep sense of happiness and pride as he witnesses the city's extraordinary resilience and the nation's spirit of recovery. He acknowledges that the city faced difficulties and made mistakes along the way, but for him, what really matters is the extraordinary ability of the community to come together and rebuild. Moreover, Ono's perspective goes beyond the present. He sees the rapid rebuilding of the city as a sign of hope for the future, as if the renewed city and nation symbolize a new beginning. Ishiguro comments on the ending of novel from Ono's perspective in his conversation with Shaffer:

> Ono has got to accept that a man's life is much too short to have a second chance. He had a go; it's too late for him to have another. But he takes comfort in the fact that a nation's life isn't like a man's life. A new generation comes along; Japan can try another. So there's a mixed hope – I intended that anyway – at the end of that book. (Shaffer & Ishiguro 11)

Therefore, it can be suggested that knowing that he cannot relive his life to make everything right, Ono has embraced the past and its complexities and feels more hopeful about the future similar to the mood of the city, which in return suggests that Ono attains a psychological well-being at the end of his storytelling which stands in line with the narratives in the socio-political realm.

Although Ono parallels his own healing and the healing of the city, it may seem to some readers that Ono has achieved his individual well-being in an ethically questionable way. Franks suggests the following question as one of the questions to

be asked when doing dialogic narrative analysis: "Who is *holding their own* in the story, but also, is the story making it more difficult for other people to hold their own?" (*Socio-Narratology* 77). Ono's self-narrative helps him hold his own to a greater extent by achieving well-being in the end and opening a space for his self-narrative to breathe in post-war Japan, but, at the same time, it makes it more difficult for people like Shintaro, Mori-san, and Kuroda to hold their own, as they are represented as morally inferior, low-profile in terms of artistic achievement, and once politically threatening. Since Ono is a self-deceived narrator, one can approach his self-narrative from a morally distant position. Ono caused his student Kuroda to be tortured and imprisoned for years. This cannot be restricted only to the difference in understanding of art that Ono defended. He advised the fascist administration of the period about those who practiced unpatriotic art. In other words, because of his influence, Kuroda was labeled a "traitor" and deprived of his individual freedom for years. Although in the post-war society people like Kuroda were restored some kind of dignity by society, part of his life was spent in captivity. Although Ono legitimizes this situation by normalizing his own responsibility within the narrative of the floating world, hence contributing to his individual psychological well-being, this may not seem ethically valid to the reader.

In relation to this, one happiness Ono experienced in his life was the reversal of the fate that Mori-san had assigned to him and the realization that Mori-san himself had suffered from that fate. Ono states that Mori-san's art was found to be "fundamentally unpatriotic" (Ishiguro, *Artist* 202), and his career was dragged to a very low point. Considering that Ono was an eminent figure in defining what unpatriotic art was, it would not be wrong to argue that Ono is responsible for Mori-san's fallen career to some extent. Similarly, even if Ono's self-glorification of his own morality by making Tortoises like Shintaro seem morally degraded and thus glorifying himself is accepted as useful storytelling, readers may not see what Ono intends to do here as morally justifiable. Apart from that, the floating world narrative can also be seen as ethically problematic. The narrative of the floating world may have secured a great comfort for Ono to attain a high level of psychological well-being, but the same narrative may give legitimacy to the U.S. occupation of Japan.

> It is easy to criticize the early Ono, who fervently entered into the spirit of Imperial Japan, for failing to understand the historical context of his actions. Yet the harder and more painful observation to make is that the new Ono equally fails to recognize how embedded he is in a historical context, the extent to which his actions, and the actions of all those around him, are still complicit in structures of power. (Wright 78)

Ono spends his life in a state of situational irony. While his former self considered the invasion of Asia by Japan politically just, in the aftermath of the war his country was invaded. The people under occupation, as Ono describes it, constructed their selves according to the order under this occupation. But perhaps when the American occupation ends, those who cooperate with this domination can justify themselves with a similar narrative. In this context, the floating world narrative can legitimize the moral position of siding with power by presenting it as the only option. In this sense, Rebecca L. Walkowitz clearly defines what Ono needs as a perspective.

> The lesson is not that new loyalties must replace old ones […] It is not enough to follow the American generals instead of Japanese emperor, Ishiguro suggests; instead, Ono has to learn to distinguish attitudes of loyalty, conflicting loyalties (to country, children, friends, art), and the interest that any given loyalty serves. (129)

In this regard, loyalty for Ono "is not a question of obeying a specific master or a specific ideology but of a general readiness to submit oneself to hegemonic and hierarchical structures" (Bareiß 398). He has previously described himself as someone who does not follow "the crowds blindly" (Ishiguro, *Artist* 73), but contrary to what he says, his actions do not prove his self-portrayal. He does not take positions according to an ideology and he is not able to comprehend power relations and "the historical context of his actions." It is therefore reasonable for Ono to choose the people of his city as narratee because they are the only ones who can understand Ono and give legitimacy for his self-narrative, because they have chosen to act like Ono. Considering this, the fact that the audience of Ono's narrative is limited to the people of one city is also an indication of the limitation of his perspective. Ishiguro clearly states that this limitation is the cause of Ono's downfall: "To a large extent, the reason for Ono's downfall was that he lacked a perspective to see beyond his own environment and to stand outside the actual values of his time" (Mason & Ishiguro 341).

One of the questions to ask when doing dialogic narrative analysis is the following: "What does the story make narratable?" (Frank, *Socio-Narratology* 75).

Ono's self-narrative makes him not only attain a better level of psychological well-being on an individual level, but also his narrative earns him visibility in the eyes of the narratee, the residents of the city. Ono makes his self-story narratable to the people of the city through his storytelling, to the people who want to forget and obliterate such people of the old generation from the cultural narratives by silencing their own self-narratives. In this sense, Ono's struggle with the dilemma of suicide in post-war Japan is not accidental. Ono makes his story of struggle to survive narratable to the city dwellers, thereby being able to survive in the society through his self-narrative.

Frank argues that "a good life requires telling any story from as many alternative perspectives as possible and recognizing how *all* the characters are trying to hold their own" (*Socio-Narratology* 146). If what Frank claims is credible, then it can be suggested that Ono's life falls short of certain requirements needed for leading "a good life," as in his self-narrative some people cannot hold their own. However, the novel does not give a definitive answer to this questioning; it can be claimed that it calls Ono's morality into question by constructing him as a self-deceived narrator, and thereby leaving an ethical space between the reader and the narrator. However, it should also be emphasized that this ethical gap is not necessarily huge in the novel, since it is difficult to assign a specific category to the un/reliability of self-deceived narrators because they do not tell "consciously or intentionally a faulted version of the story" (Marcus, *Self-Deception* 195). In this regard, what Timothy Wright suggests drawing on Malcolm Bradbury's observation proves true: "Ishiguro makes his readers work to unlock the painful silences in the texts: the reader must fill in these silences, both in the text and, ultimately, in him- or herself" (86).

Therefore, from a narrative psychological point of view, Ono's stories and storytelling have been successful and he has been freed from the distress of the stories that did not work. Instead of stories that created problems, he has created a self-narrative that encompasses the contours of his reality and is at peace with the present order. In this way he achieves psychological well-being. However, the thought that he may have attained well-being sometimes in a morally problematic way remains a challenge for the reader. This raises the question of whether Ono's psychological well-being has brought about social well-being in the fullest sense. Is

individual well-being also social well-being? I think, the answer to these is no, because the reality of war and bombing, which correspond to a collective trauma, still haunts Ono. In the last part of the novel and Ono's narrative, the smell of smoke coming from Matsuda's garden still makes him feel distressed. "'The smell of burning still makes me uneasy,' I remarked. 'It's not so long ago it meant bombings and fire'" (Ishiguro, *Artist* 200). Ono has achieved psychological well-being because he has emerged from the psychology of guilt on an individual sense, but his trauma in the social sense is still lingering.

In conclusion, Ono is a disillusioned artist who suffers from a guilty conscience at the beginning of his narrative and believes that he has made terrible mistakes in his past that he is ashamed of. He is narratively imprisoned in post-war society, which makes it difficult for him to find space for his self-narrative. The stories around him prove to him that he cannot get out of this by repressing his past. Ono then feels that he is obliged to revisit his past. The narrative struggle, which begins with the narrative that he must admit his mistakes imposed on him by society, leads him to construct the events of his past that cause him distress within the framework of a new self-narrative. Ono finds suitable narratives in which he can explain himself about his past and takes refuge in them. In this way, he overcomes his distress and his guilt, and improves his psychological well-being as a consequence of his storytelling. Since Ono is a self-deceived narrator, his coping strategies and the well-functioning narratives he finds while dealing with his distress may not be morally convincing to some readers. Therefore, it may not be wrong to argue that Ono's achievement of his individual psychological well-being by positioning himself as superior to others creates an ethical gap between him and the reader. Although he has recovered from his distress in the individual sense, his social trauma is still very much alive. In this context, it would be difficult for us to assert that social-political well-being is followed by individual psychological well-being in *An Artist of the Floating World*.

CHAPTER V

THE REWORKING OF A WASTED LIFE: A NARRATIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH TO STEVENS IN *THE REMAINS OF THE DAY*

The Remains of the Day (1989) tells the story of Stevens, an elderly butler, embarking on a six-day journey which he might be doing for the first time in his life. His new employer, Mr. Farraday, leaves for America for a few weeks and suggests that Stevens take a vacation too. Repressing his unacknowledged interest in Miss Kenton, Stevens is driven to travel to the west of the country with the intention of recruiting her to his staff. Narrating each chapter of his story in the form of a journal in a different city, Stevens delves deeper into his memories and life with each chapter of his journey. In this regard, this journey is also a psychological voyage into his own past. In the narrative revolving around his profession as "a great butler" at Darlington Hall between two world wars, Stevens reflects on his past and reconsiders his relationships with his father, his former employer Lord Darlington, and the former housekeeper Miss Kenton from a new perspective, setting out on a process of reassessing his life and identity. Along with the realization that Miss Kenton is content with her life and does not intend to return to Darlington Hall, Stevens, whose life has been largely shaped by his aspiration to be "a great butler" and who has expressed his contribution to humanity through the perfection in his job, feels in the last part of his narrative that his life is not exactly as he sees it. However, convinced that he cannot bring the past back and that there is no point in dwelling on the past heavily in the end, Stevens moves on living the remaining part of his life as he used to be.

The Remains of the Day has been the subject of extensive scholarly examination since its publication, with researchers approaching the novel from

diverse viewpoints. Appiah, from a political perspective, interprets Stevens's life as an example of a failed life because Stevens accepts the servitude of a slave, not a servant: "Servility isn't just happily earning your living by working for another; it's acting as an unfree person, a person whose will is somehow subjected to another's" (315). Salecl, employing Freudian concept "day residues" (182) and drawing on Althusserian theory, argues that Stevens is "the prototype of an ideological servant: he never questions his role in the machinery, he never opposes his boss even when he makes obvious mistakes, that is, he does not think but obeys" (180). Shaffer offers a Freudian psychoanalytic reading of *The Remains of the Day*, arguing that the novel is "one of the most profound novelistic representations of [sexual repression masquerading as professionalism, yet it also aimed at an entire nation's mythical sense of itself" (Shaffer 87). Benefiting from postcolonial and psychoanalytic theories, Westerman, on the other hand, argues that "as the world around him changes (over time and, as he travels, spatially), he [Stevens] begins to suspect the internal tensions and contradiction of his subjecthood" (160). Apart from these studies, in terms of Rhetorical Narratology, the scholarly contributions of Kathleen Wall, James Phelan and Mary Patricia Martin, and Amit Marcus have facilitated a reassessment and expansion of the traditional classification of narrative un/reliability, as exemplified in their analyses of *The Remains of the Day*. Focusing on Stevens's narration using reader-response theory, Wong suggests that "Stevens' narrative incorporate both his knowledge of and his blindness to the events he recounts" (*Kazuo Ishiguro* 52) while deceiving and protecting himself at the same time. Informed by these studies, this study examines Stevens's self-narrative, narration, and its impact on his self through narrative psychology.

Drawing on narrative psychology, this chapter focuses on Stevens's construction of his past in the form of a story and the effects of stories on his psychological well-being. Stevens, who has deceived himself all his life, is a self-deceived narrator at the beginning of his story and therefore creates his story to justify past life choices. Having shaped his life around the idea of being "a great butler" and thus convinced that he would contribute to humanity through perfection in his job, Stevens recounts his exemplary life to young butlers, though containing some misconceptions. In accordance with the perspectives in narrative psychology and therapy, it may be expected that Stevens will recognize these misconceptions and

undergo a profound process of self-deconstruction and reconstruction of a new self. While Stevens's narrative has very successfully created an environment for the study of "problem-saturated" stories, Stevens fails to see how much trouble these stories actually produce, both individually and collectively. He tells the stories that have shaped his life, but he cannot see that his life contains some vital mistakes because these stories have rendered him unable to see, hear or feel.

Stevens's life has always been dominated by "negative misinterpretation," which Amit Marcus describes as a mental strategy for self-deception. He mostly either "underestimates" or "avoids connecting different pieces" of information that conflict with his story. His whole story is an attempt to understand how, despite doing everything perfectly, at the end of the day he has ended up like this. However, Stevens cannot establish a proper connection between events and their significance as was always the case. Looking back at his past, one would expect "hindsight" to enrich his perspective, to identify his mistakes, and bring about a change in him, but Stevens rejects the benefits of "hindsight." At the end of his storytelling, he finally realizes the flaw in his perspective regarding Miss Kenton, but he is unable to face this truth in other areas of his life. Narrative psychology and therapy emphasize the idea that by going back into one's past and revisiting past stories, one can see one's mistakes and confront them, but this is not the case with Stevens. Stevens does not have an insightful perspective to see the mistakes in his life. The reason for this appears to be the lack of a social life, a social counterpart to validate or negate his perspective. In this regard, it is possible to claim that Stevens catches the glimpse of the core of his troubles at the end of his storytelling – that is "human warmth," but he again misinterprets events and continues his life as it is by deceiving himself. In the following section, the dialogical analysis of Stevens's life-narrative focuses first on Stevens's state of mind at the beginning of the storytelling, then on the storytelling process and how he works on his past full of mistakes. Finally, Stevens's mood at the close of this self-narrative is analyzed to detect a change in his well-being.

5.1. Stevens's State of Mind at the Beginning of his Narrative

To see the impact of the stories and his self-narrative on Stevens's psychological well-being, it is important first to consider Stevens's state of mind

before he begins his story. Stevens's "Prologue: 1956, Darlington Hall," composed before he embarks on his journey, is important for understanding his state of mind before his self-narrative. At the beginning of his storytelling, it can be argued that Stevens does not suffer from any explicit trouble known to himself. However, just because Stevens is not aware that he has a problem does not mean that he does not have a problem. As Phelan and Martin state, "Ishiguro's audience infers a great deal more from Stevens's narration than the butler is aware that he is communicating" (91). Stevens has undergone significant transitions which produces narrative breaks in his life, and he is not aware of the impact these changes have had on him. The narrative in which he had previously breathed is now rendered invalid and, in addition to aging, he has some troubles in keeping up with the changing world, and its narrative.

His employer, Lord Darlington, whom he had served so faithfully for so many years, has passed away in grief, realizing that the lofty ideals he had championed all his life had proved otherwise. While Lord Darlington thought he was fighting for peace in Europe, he turned out to be the apparatus of Nazism in Britain and unknowingly enabled Nazism to gain ascendancy. Stevens, who sincerely served his employer, is expected to come to terms with this misconception. Yet, Stevens does not realize at the beginning of his story how much trouble is in store for him. His fundamental trouble resides in the fact that his old self-narrative, through which he had previously constructed his self, serves a mistake; therefore, after Lord Darlington's death, he is expected to construct a new self-narrative that acknowledges his mistakes. Narrative psychology highlights that one of the main functions of storytelling is to help individuals construct new identities for unfamiliar and distressing situations (Frank, *Wounded Storyteller* 3). Stevens's old narrative of the self has been disrupted and he can be expected to mend the rupture by forging new links with his narrative. However, at the beginning of his story he lacks the awareness of how important a source of distress this is for him. He is unaware of this fundamental trouble of his life and is concerned with less significant parts of the problem.

When Stevens begins his story in the face of such a significant change, he does not in any way suggest any negative connotation of Lord Darlington. Stevens

never mentions this tragic situation to his narratee at this point. It is as if it was not a problem of such importance to him. It is possible to argue that Stevens's failure to make any negative reference to Lord Darlington at the beginning of his story, and also at the beginning of his journey, is a way for him to deceive himself by engaging in the mental strategy of "selective focus of attention"[10] that Amit Marcus describes (*Self-Deception* 27). Although in his narrative he creates the impression that this is not a very important situation for him, Stevens is actually deceiving himself. Confronting this grim situation would be a heavy emotional burden for him, so he avoids it. Instead of revealing the truth about Lord Darlington, he chooses to represent Darlington Hall as an important grand house of aristocracy. He tends to overlook the troubled information regarding Lord Darlington.

An initial impression of Stevens's state of mind is that he has low self-esteem, but this is not a source of trouble for him. The first sentence of the novel is very telling in this sense: "It seems increasingly likely that I really will undertake the expedition that has been preoccupying my imagination now for some days" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 3). Stevens is not sure about himself and his plans, so he owns a hesitating voice. In addition, Stevens's relationship with Mr. Farraday provides important insights into his present self. His relationship with Mr. Farraday is also a dysfunctional one. He is caught between his old habits and the new expectations of his employer. When Mr. Farraday asks him to have a break as he has stayed for quite a long time in Lord Darlington's house, the butler is not confident enough to give a definitive answer (Ishiguro, *Remains* 4). His reply in the end is quite interesting, "It has been my privilege to see the best of England over the years, sir, within these very walls" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 4). As important people gathered there from every part of England, Stevens thinks that he has seen everything he could see within the very walls of the Darlington Hall. That is why, Stevens cannot understand Farraday's offer for him to have a break and attributes it to his lack of knowledge of English customs. It is clear from this instance that a major change has occurred in Stevens's

[10] What Stevens does at this point can be explained by another mental strategy of self-deception referred to by Marcus as "repression" (*Self-Deception* 29), but this is not very convincing. Marcus, based on Freud's theory of repression, holds that repression requires a great deal of libidinal energy to transfer the negative thought from the conscious to the unconscious (*Self-Deception* 29), whereas Stevens only makes a choice in his account of Lord Darlington; he chooses not to include the troubling information about Darlington at this stage.

life, and he is experiencing communication difficulties with his new employer Mr. Farraday due to this fundamental change in the ownership of the Darlington Hall. However, it never occurs to Stevens that he himself might be the source of trouble.

Stevens's inability to banter stands as a challenge in front of him as a result of the changing world imposed on him. "Lord Darlington certainly does not speak to Stevens in anything other than formal, almost solemn mode, giving his orders in brevity and authority" (Furst 542). He wants to be able to do bantering to please his new employer, but he cannot find a roadmap on how to deal with this problem. Stevens is unable to respond to the witty banter of the American Mr. Farraday, the new owner of Darlington Hall after the death of Lord Darlington. For Stevens, who has devoted his life to being the best in his profession as a butler, his inability to banter is a major problem. Since the new employer is American, Stevens begins to feel incomplete in his profession because he cannot keep up with this change: "For it may well be that in America, it is all part of what is considered good professional service that an employee provide entertaining banter" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 16). The world and Stevens's world have changed, and the new order imposes new demands on his self. According to Furst, bantering is "prime indicator of his entrenchment in the norms of previous era" (542). Stevens cannot banter because he is deeply committed to the order of the old world, which leaves no room for flexibility. Stevens is aware that the world is changing, but it is unclear how he will survive in this changing world: "It is all very well, in these changing times, to adapt one's work to take in duties not traditionally within one's realm; but bantering is of another dimension together" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 16). At the beginning of the story, bantering appears a significant challenge for Stevens, but he has no idea why he cannot do it and no idea how to do it.

Although Stevens is not sure if he should take that six-day journey to Cornwall where Miss Kenton (now Mrs. Benn) resides at the beginning, he gradually convinces himself and points to the letter from Miss Kenton as the most obvious reason for his ultimate decision. He believes that Miss Kenton is unhappy in her marriage and harbors a secret desire to come back to Darlington Hall and decides that he should make the trip as it has attained a professional purpose. Stevens constantly justifies his trip to Cornwall as a professional requirement, saying "a good

professional motive behind my request" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 14). As he himself has made a small mistake in making the staff plan, he needs a new staff member now. However, this is not convincing enough, for he directly engages in justification, over-explaining himself, and trying to convince his narratee.[11] It can be argued that Stevens is again trying to deceive himself here. Through "rationalization," another mental strategy used in self-deception mentioned by Marcus (*Self-Deception* 28), Stevens is motivated by the desire to ascribe a professional meaning to his journey. He thinks that the difficulties in the staff plan and the workload on him have caused him to make mistakes and explains at length why he needs a new staff member. The textual space his rationalization covers is too long for a trivial subject. The reader feels that he has a conscious or an unconscious attraction towards Miss Kenton. "I have, I should make clear, reread Miss Kenton's recent letter several times, and there is no possibility I am merely imagining the presence of these hints on her part" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 10). He is sure that the letter contains distinct hints of her desire to return home. However, there is another strategy employed by Stevens in reading Miss Kenton's letter, which is "positive misinterpretation," as Marcus refers with regard to self-deception (*Self-Deception* 28). It is highly doubtful that Miss Kenton's letter clearly stated that she wished to return to Darlington Hall. At this point, it is highly possible that Stevens "overestimates" (Marcus, *Self-Deception* 28) the information that verifies his version of the story. The more the butler tries to limit his relation to his profession, the more he raises doubts in the reader about his attraction towards Miss Kenton as well. So, it is a strong possibility for the reader that Stevens had an emotional attachment to Miss Kenton, but that he did not have the courage to express it to her and to himself though there are textual hints that Miss Kenton reciprocated his attraction. However, it is not a matter of question for Stevens why they never nourished their feelings for each other in the past. Nor is it a question for him why he is so self-deceived. Why he could not and cannot openly share his feelings for Miss Kenton with the narratee does not seem to be a serious trouble for him to solve. In this context, it is possible to claim that the distance between Stevens and the reader is considerable.

[11] The narratee in his narrative is young English butlers.

Etsuko in *A Pale View of the Hills* and Ono in *An Artist of the Floating World* are also self-deceived narrators like Stevens.[12] However, it can be argued that the distance between Stevens and the reader is much greater than that between the other narrators and the reader. This study approaches unreliability in this novel through Amit Marcus's arguments on self-deception,[13] which sees "the narration as the main cause of the transformation" ("The Role of Narration" 126). Wall adds the dimension of "subjectivity" to the discussion of unreliability and reads the novel in this way and argues that: "Stevens is seen to lack the self-knowledge necessary to a *more* reliable narration of life" (37). In Wall's understanding, un/reliability is "a matter of degree" rather than a "moral aberration" (22). In line with this, she states that the ironic gap between the implied author and Stevens "narrows" towards the end, as Stevens makes some adjustment to his view of dignity (37). However, this study is not in line with this claim, because it holds the view that Stevens's position towards his past follows a similar attitude, which is "negative misinterpretation." To a large extent, this huge distance, which never closes, is created by the duality of the narrator's story. Resting her arguments on Wall's ideas, Öztabak-Avcı refers to the double voice in Stevens's narration by focusing on Stevens's subjectivity.

> The whole novel is an attestation to how Stevens cannot "be," in that the "I" as he thinks of himself does not correspond to the "I" that speaks. The idealized image of the Self is dismantled by the "I" that narrates. He fails to render in a transparent manner both his narrative and his subjectivity. ("You Never Know" 51)

In this regard, it can be argued that two different narrative layers emerge in *The Remains of the Day* from the very beginning of Stevens's storytelling. The first is the narrative that Stevens tells. The other is the narrative that the reader constructs from Stevens's story. It is understandable that the novel has two layers, because every unreliable narrative produces two different ways of reading. Kazuo Ishiguro's

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[12] Peter Sloane establishes a parallel between Ono and Stevens because one aims to contribute to society with his paintings and the other wanted to do so by working his best as a butler (160). Sloane is right to identify the two narrators in this sense, but another similarity could be with the character of Shintaro in *An Artist of the Floating World*, since Stevens, like Shintaro, seems to avoid confronting the past in depth.

[13] Phelan and Martin approach Stevens's unreliability through the six types of unreliability: misreporting, misreading, misevaluating, underreporting, underreading, and underregarding (95). This study does not by any means falsify Phelan and Martin's approach but recognizes that Marcus's approach is more in line with a narrative psychological perspective.

creation of these two levels in the novel, thus putting distance between the narrator and the reader, is related to the fact that he wants us to reconstruct the butler's story around other values and perhaps develop a critical attitude. Since the novel is based on an aging butler's relationship with his own past and the events of his life, it is therefore important to focus on the relationship between narrative and the self.

Stevens's earlier narrative of self is no longer valid, but he does not recognize this fact and is still living in his old story and thus deceives himself. He has a communication problem with Mr. Farraday, but he does not realize that part of the problem is his own. His lack of bantering skills represents a point where he fails at work, but he is still trying to prove what a great butler he is through the rest of his narrative. He cannot admit to himself that he feels an emotional attachment to Miss Kenton outside of work. It is only when he finds a professional cover that he is able to travel to visit her. In this context, Stevens does not recognize at the beginning of his story that he is a victim of self-deception which he has been engaging in all his life, so he continues to deceive himself. The inability to banter is a challenge for him, but Stevens does not construct his story to solve this problem. He is not able to admit his emotional ties with Miss Kenton in the past and in the present, but he does not construct his story to solve this problem either. His "fascist-inclined former employer" (Fluet 265) Lord Darlington, to whom he devoted almost his entire life, has produced results contrary to the ideals he stood for, and indirectly his own life is an illusion for him, but Stevens is not aware of this and does not construct his story to solve this. In short, Stevens does not try to solve any problems in his life story because he does not feel a problem in himself. He is still living in his old narrative in which his qualities as a butler were highly praised, but he does not want to admit that the world has changed, and he has made some mistakes and thus he is deceiving himself. In that respect, unlike the two previous novels, Ishiguro here focuses on the creation of a life story by a person who is not able to define his distress accurately.

The most obvious reason for him to tell his story is that he believes that he is "a great butler" and that he has dedicated his life to this, and now that he is getting old, he wants to tell his exemplary life to young butlers. The only narrative that gives him integrity is that of a great butler. The most suitable audience for his story in this respect is the young butlers, the narratee of his life-narrative written in journal style.

This study therefore does not support the claim that the butler's reason for telling his story is to absolve himself of his guilt, because Stevens does not realize this at the beginning of his story, as he does not engage in a deep reckoning with the idea that this is a big problem in his life. Prior to his self-narrative, the possibility that perhaps he has wasted his life for a futile cause never crosses his mind. He has busied himself with his profession, so he did not have the chance ponder about his life. The world he is used to has changed, and he realizes that he lacks meeting the needs of his new employer. In this floating world, the only way Stevens can take a vacation is complying with his employer's thought and giving the vacation a professional facade. It is no coincidence that Stevens, who has completely internalized his life as a requirement of his job, chooses young servants as his audience at this point. It is only through this job that his life has gained meaning and only through this job that his self exists. Fluet argues that "Stevens firmly believes that he is a part of 'we' – not a family or a couple, but rather the 'we' of his generation. Someone so alone shouldn't, by rights, feel part of a collective – and yet he does" (266). In that sense, it is understandable why Stevens behaves in this way, since he associates his life only with his profession and only there does his self exist, though the way he relates to his profession produces troubles of which he is not aware. In the next section that follows, an examination of how Stevens constructs his own life story and how it relates to his past and the stories around him will be analyzed.

5.2. Stevens's Self-Narrative and the Effects of Stories on him

Narrative psychology foregrounds the idea of self as a narrative. According to this understanding, humans' constructing a sense of self by building life stories comes to the fore as this is how they make sense of their life, personality, and self. The psychologist Jefferson A. Singer holds that to understand the process of identity formation is to understand how individuals construct narratives from their experiences, how they tell these stories within themselves and to others, and ultimately how they apply these stories to knowledge about the self, the other and the world at large (438). In this context, first, the stories that constitute Stevens's self will be analyzed, and then it will be questioned how these stories affect and interact with his experiences. In Stevens's narrative, stories play a major role in the formation

of his self. He establishes the core of narrative identity at the beginning of his storytelling. As McAdams claims, narrative identity provides "a sense of unity, moral purpose, and temporal coherence for humans" ("First We Invented Stories" 1). His own self is ultimately shaped by the dominant stories in society and in his immediate surroundings, which serve as "templates" (Frank, *Socio-Narratology* 25) for his future experiences. When we take his narrative as it is, we see that he is trapped in the stories that he can access or that are imposed on him. Considering his social, class, cultural and economic environment, it is possible to say that Stevens is detached from his own reality, victimized, depersonalized and narratively constrained, thus robbed of his will because of the way he positions himself among these stories. First, how his life has been affected by such outside narratives will be examined by identifying the stories that formed the center of Stevens's self.

As stated previously, in line with the narrative psychological view that the self is narrative, it can be argued that the narrative of "a great butler" constitutes Stevens's self. He has lived his entire life according to this ideal, shaped all his decisions, lifestyle, and relationships around this narrative. Indeed, his life is organized around his desire to be "a great butler." In order to reach this ideal and never waver from the standards of greatness, he molds his whole life around the notion of a great butler. So much so that the only audience that he has on his mind when composing his travelogue/journal is butlers who might aspire to greatness. In other words, those who symbolically accompany him on his journey to his own past are those who practice the same profession. These aspects of his account indicate that his whole life and perhaps his whole existence has gained meaning through the notion of a great butler. Therefore, the most important question in Stevens's story is "*What* is a 'great' butler?" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 119; emphasis added). The way Stevens formulates this question has significant implications that are reminiscent of the notion of self as a narrative: It is not "who" a great butler is, or what the qualifications of a great butler are, but it asks "what" a great butler is. Therefore, it is possible to argue that "a great butler" is a narrative which is constructed, and Stevens's self is mainly composed of this narrative. In the light of this deduction, the next section explores how Stevens constructs his self within the narrative of a great butler and which stories constitute this narrative web.

There are two important sources from which Stevens constructs the narrative of a great butler: The Hayes Society and his father, a butler like himself. All these stories are dangerous narratives for Stevens because they destroy his actuality and reduce him to a mere role. As Frank says, "stories make dangerous companions when they reduce too much complexity and are too good at concealing what they reduce" (Frank, *Socio-Narratology* 149). Similarly, these stories reduce Stevens to a role, concealing the complexity of life and self. The Hayes Society, which is an important institution for butlers in the 1920s and 1930s in England, offers professionalism as a dominant story for them and is an exclusive society open to very limited membership. It is also important to note that this society was highly desirable for the butlers of the time as it symbolized a prestigious place within their profession. The narrative of professionalism is also very important for the other characters in the novel other than Stevens. Mr. Lewis, the American guest in the first conference at Darlington Hall, criticizes the Europeans as being amateurs in international relations. "You gentlemen here, forgive me, but you are just a bunch of naïve dreamers. And if you didn't insist on meddling in large affairs that affect the globe, you would indeed be charming" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 106). His analysis of Lord Darlington is quite significant in that respect. Mr. Lewis says:

> What is he? He is a gentleman. No one here, I trust, would care to disagree. A classic English gentleman. Decent, honest, well-meaning. But his lordship here is *an amateur*. … He is an amateur and international affairs today are no longer for gentleman amateurs. The sooner you here in Europe realize the better. […] If you don't realize that soon you're headed for disaster. A toast, gentlemen. Let me make a toast. To professionalism. (Ishiguro, *Remains* 106-107)

Mr. Lewis argues that Lord Darlington is not able to figure out the relations among European countries and thinks that Europeans are heading for a disaster due to their lack of insight in seeing the political agenda of Germany. As Mr. Lewis's speech, or lecture, revolves around the notions of professionalism and amateurism, it can be inferred that the narrative of professionalism functions like an organizing principle or a master narrative for people and the society.

The Hayes Society, which presents a narrative of professionalism in the butler's profession, attempts to "devise criteria for membership" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 32). Three important criteria are listed by this society: (1) An applicant should be "attached to a distinguished household" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 32). (2) An applicant

should not be "from the houses of businessmen or the 'newly rich'" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 33). (3) An applicant should be possessed of a "dignity in keeping with his position" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 32). Stevens is quite sure that he possesses all the criteria, and interestingly explicates more on the third item, which may alternatively indicate that he is not actually quite self-assured about dignity. Stevens thinks that "dignity is something one can meaningfully strive for throughout one's career" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 34). Dignity which is strived for life-long appears to be the narrative that he lives by throughout his life. As the Hayes Society does not clearly define what they mean by "dignity in keeping with his position," the butler resorts to the stories related to his father whom he thinks, at the peak of his career at Loughborough House, was indeed the embodiment of dignity, and thus a great butler (Ishiguro, *Remains* 36).

There are three important stories about his father that Stevens resorts to in order to define "the dignity in keeping with his position." These stories hold a life-long significance for Stevens. As Frank puts it, "People do not simply listen to stories. They become *caught up*, a phrase that can be explained only by another metaphor: stories get under people's skin. Once stories are under people's skin, they affect the terms in which people think, know, and perceive" (*Socio-Narratology* 48). The stories Stevens hears about/from his father *get under his skin* so much that he cannot separate himself from them for the rest of his life. The first story has been told by his father on numerous occasions since Stevens's childhood. A butler accompanies his employer to India and continues to serve diligently. During a dinner party at their home, he discovers a tiger under the dining table. The butler discreetly informs his employer and readily kills the tiger without leaving a trace, and then the dinner is served at the prearranged time as if nothing has happened.[14] Stevens knows that this story is not real, because there are no hints as to its authenticity. However, the key point in this story is its significance in illustrating what a butler can potentially do in keeping with his job. It appears that his father builds his entire career or perhaps even his life around this anecdote. As Stevens states, "when I look back over his career, I can see with hindsight that he must have striven throughout

[14] Öztabak-Avcı interprets the circulation of this story from generation to generation as "a manifestation of the British working-class complicity in imperialism" and "colonialism" ("Ideological Servant" 100).

his years somehow to *become* that butler of his story" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 37; emphasis is original). The same holds true for Stevens as well: He is *caught up* in this story too.

The second story is narrated to the butler by Mr. Charles who frequents Darlington Hall**.** One day, Stevens's father as a driver takes three gentlemen on a motor trip to visit local villages. Two of them, excluding Mr. Charles, are heavily drunk. Although they are supposed to visit three villages in order, the father butler takes them to the villages in a different sequence. The two drunk gentlemen bother his father excessively. Despite all these humiliations, his father remains composed. However, when it is time for insults to be directed at his employer, Mr. Silvers, Stevens's father stops the car, gets out, and stares expressionlessly into the car, effectively silencing them. The intoxicated gentlemen are terrified by this gesture, apologize, and do not speak for the rest of the journey. According to Mr. Charles, the butler's father "did not display any obvious anger" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 40) and remained composed whatever the situation was.

The third story is witnessed by Stevens himself. A general's tactical mistake leads to the death of Stevens's brother along with many others in the Boer Wars; thus, he dies not as a war hero but due to a military error. Ten years later, the very same general is invited to Mr. Silvers's house, who is the former employer of Stevens's father, for a business matter. Mr. Silvers offers Stevens's father to take a few days off to avoid emotional distress, but he declines and instead serves the general for four days closely. Despite the general's frequent talk of wartime heroics, the butler's father remains stoic and provides an exceptional service, earning a generous tip in return. However, he does not accept the tip and requests the money be donated to charity (Ishiguro, *Remains* 41-42).

It is noteworthy that Stevens's great butler narrative also has a nationalist vein[15] as it can be inferred from his statement, "when you think of a great butler, he is bound, almost by definition, to be an Englishman" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 44). In this context, his narrative of a great butler is essentially "a great English butler."

[15] There is a close connection between Stevens professional identity and Englishness. For more detailed information, Stefanie Fricke's essay titled "Reworking Myths: Stereotypes and Genre Conventions in Kazuo Ishiguro's Work" can be consulted.

Alongside a strong and exclusivist nationalist tone, the self of Stevens seems to be under the influence of fascism[16] as a political ideology and a narrative in the period. Fascism, according to Terry Eagleton, "strips the veils of social democratic decency from the monopoly capitalist machine: the relations between the dominant social class and the state become less and less discreetly mediated through apparatuses like parliament and political parties, and become more and more brutally visible and direct" (101). In the aftermath of the First World War, fascist ideologies flourished in Europe. In fact, Stevens's universe at Darlington Hall harbors a fascist atmosphere in which the sole authority is in the hand of Lord Darlington, and the rest serves him. Tamaya asserts that "The truth is that Lord Darlington, far from having been admirable, was actually a crypto Fascist, busily engaged in the appeasement of Hitler" (51). Lord Darlington owns all the power at Darlington Hall, and it is impossible for Stevens to make decisions on his own. The most obvious manifestation of this can be found in Lord Darlington's attitude towards democracy. "Democracy is something for a bygone era. The world's far too complicated a place now for universal suffrage and such like" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 208). He adds further:

> "Look at Germany and Italy, Stevens. See what strong leadership can do if it's allowed to act. None of this universal suffrage nonsense there. If your house is on fire, you don't call the household into the drawing room and debate the various options for escape for an hour, do you?" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 208-209)

The form of political rule that Lord Darlington finds meaningful is fascism, as in Germany and Italy. In such a regime, people do not have a voice; all choices are made by the person at the top, which is against basic human rights such as freedom and agency. That is why Mr. Harry Smith, a resident of the village of Moscombe with whom Stevens comes across on his journey, relates the fight against fascism to dignity: "That's what we fought Hitler for, after all. If Hitler had had things his way, we'd just be slaves now. The whole world would be a few masters and millions upon millions of slaves" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 196). Considering that Stevens's self is also the narrative of a great English butler, one could claim that his self is intimately intertwined with fascism. Sönmez-Demir's claim is well founded in this regard: "As the pawn of a pawn, butler Stevens performs the role of an English citizen by being a

[16] Berberich asserts that *The Remains of the Day* is "a direct criticism of British engagement with fascism" (128).

‘first-class’ butler and he is involved in the process of nationalist myth-making” (70). In this context, it can be argued that Stevens’s self is also shaped by the influence of fascism, as he cannot voice any objection to this political viewpoint. Or, to put it another way, it is possible to argue that Stevens is a victim to the ideology of fascism.

What these stories imply and how they might affect Stevens’s self can be analyzed through a question posited by Frank in conducting a dialogic narrative analysis, “Who is holding their own in the story, but also is the story making it more difficult for other people to hold their own?” (*Socio-Narratology* 77). The narrative of professionalism supported by the stories about/of Stevens’s father and the fascist ideology make it hard for Stevens to hold his own, as they reduce him to a role that cuts him off from his emotions and human connections and enslaves him. By contrast, these narratives always empower the aristocracy, putting great power in the hands of a small group, thus further empowering those in power, such as Lord Darlington. The stories about his father illustrate the concept of “dignity in keeping with his position.” In the first story, the butler puts his own life in danger without ever thinking about himself. Here, as it appears, whether the story is true or false is not important; what matters is the message conveyed by the story to other butlers. In the second story, when insulted personally, Stevens’s father does not cross the intoxicated guests. However, when the insults are directed to his employer, he reacts harshly. That is Stevens’s father setting aside his own self to keep the integrity of his employer’s image. In the third story, even though serving the general is painful, he fulfills his duty with dignity and maintains composure in the face of an emotional turmoil. Under no circumstances does he show his emotions while serving the man whose military error costed his son’s life. The stories highlight how the actions of Stevens’s father are shaped by a sense of maintaining his own position as a professional and dignity. Therefore, Stevens states, “‘dignity’ has to do crucially with a butler’s ability not to abandon the professional being he inhabits” (Ishiguro, *Remains* 43).

According to Stevens, “one could recognize a great butler as such only after one had seen him perform under some severe test” (Ishiguro, *Remains* 44). For him, “each of us may better strive towards attaining ‘dignity’ for ourselves” (Ishiguro,

Remains 45). Therefore, it is possible to argue that these stories function as the cornerstone of the self for Stevens. Stevens is "caught up" in the web of these stories. Overall, in such an atmosphere, a type of enslaved human being who is stripped of his agency emerges, and Stevens leads exactly this kind of life. He is an enslaved person whose will has been subjugated. In this regard, these stories can be accepted as "indoctrination stories" (11), borrowing the term from Arthur W. Frank in *Letting Stories Breathe: A Socio-Narratology* (2010). Consequentially, Stevens is not able to develop an independent self, and he has been deprived of the role of asserting his will, influencing circumstances, and directing developments. His social, cultural, economic, and political power is very weak. In other words, it can be said that the rising political and social climate in Europe has also affected Stevens's self. Stevens's ideas clearly confirm this fascist ideology: To serve a great gentleman is to serve humanity (Ishiguro, *Remains* 123). His political vision puts Lord Darlington in the position of a master and makes him a kind of slave.

Darlington Hall, the hub of the stories around him and the place where fascist ideology reigns recklessly, has become an integral part of Stevens's life. It is "a central meeting place for Britain's fascist movement" (Bareiß 299) at that time, and Stevens is positioned precisely as a literal servant within this ideology. McAdams argues that "narrative identity is a joint production, an intervention of the storytelling person and the culture within which the person's story finds its meaning and significance" ("First We Invented Stories" 14). From this perspective, it is possible to argue that Stevens's intervention, or his will, agency, is minimum in the construction of his self in relation to the culture. He has unknowingly imprisoned himself in the narratives given to him without any intervention on his part. For Stevens, Darlington Hall is the most important part of his self, as opposed to being the center of his troubles and conflicts in actuality, as it can be inferred from his anxiety over leaving its premises:

> Once I departed, Darlington Hall would stand empty for probably first time this century […] It was an odd feeling and perhaps accounts for why I delayed my departure so long, wandering around the house many times over, checking one last time that all was in order. (Ishiguro, *Remains* 23)

The butler exhibits a strong psychological identification with Darlington Hall, integrating it closely into his sense of self. This, in fact, demonstrates the extent of

his narrative confinement. Darlington Hall is a static entity, but life or the self is dynamic. This narrative and cognitive constriction also bears resemblance to a form of psychological constriction. As his narrative imagination is curtailed by Darlington Hall, a great house of the aristocracy, his departure from it may signify a crossing of psychological boundaries, allowing for the emergence of an alternative narrative. In this regard, it is no coincidence that his "spatial journey" is also "a temporal journey" (Marcus, "The Role of Narration" 125). He travels to his own past to throw, maybe, a new light into the old events. As Stevens asserts, "I have never in all these years thought of the matter in quite this way; but it is perhaps in the nature of coming away on a trip such as this that one is prompted towards such surprising new perspectives on topics one imagined one had long ago thought through thoroughly" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 123). As Yugin Teo puts it, Stevens's temporary departure from Darlington Hall allows him to move from being an "observer" to being "observed" as he opens himself to the "illumination of public scrutiny" (30). So, it is only when he steps away from Darlington Hall that Stevens can have the opportunity to look at his life in a different light.

However, this retrospective narration or revisiting one's past does not necessarily mean that it should lead to a moral growth. There are two facets of hindsight, which is "the process of looking backward from the standpoint of the present" (Freeman 4): on the one hand, it may give you an insight where "you can pause, look again, and see ourselves a new, 'unconcealed' by the urgencies of the moment," but at the same time "we can become entrapped in our stories and thereby prevent ourselves from what we truly are" (Freeman, 15). Here, the butler's narrative does not lead to a moral growth, where he examines his life by seeing his mistakes, rather his narrative aims to vindicate that he is entrapped by the earlier narratives, so his narrative serves a "self-serving and self-protective source of illusion." As Mark Freeman suggests, "hindsight is not only about *memory* but about *narrative*" (4), so an indispensable aspect of it is "emplotment" (Freeman 4). Stevens emplots his past in such a way as to justify Lord Darlington and his actions by remaining stuck in the past.

Stevens "has internalized the master-servant dynamic to the point where it determines every feature of his consciousness as well as his social relations" (Parkes

56). Stories are a powerful tool that reflects the value systems and priorities of a society or individuals. What values are emphasized or downplayed depends on how the story is presented. Drawing on Habermas, Singer argues that "we can draw inferences from stories with particular self-relevance in order to gain insight into our own nature, values, and goals. The accumulating knowledge that emerges from reasoning about our narrative memories yields a life story schema that provides causal, temporal, and thematic coherence to an overall sense of identity" (442). Stevens has developed a value system in the light of the narratives he was exposed to and lived his life according to this system. However, his value system does not guarantee that it will coincide with the reader's value system. In fact, what these stories reveal is this: events that could be seen as a "dignity crisis" from the perspective of others[17] are presented as expressions of maintaining dignity and behaving in a respectable manner when seen through the butler's eyes. So, while the narrative of professionalism emphasizes doing one's job particularly well, the "dignity" in his father's stories highlights total submission to one's employer. In a manner detached from his authentic selves, Stevens assumes the role of a mere supporting figure in the narratives of his employers, where his own agency has been conspicuously absent. If agency is defined as "the capacity to choose for one's own course of action, as opposed to […] being a function of forces external to one's own mind" (Brown 283), then it can be argued that Stevens lacks agency as he becomes a function of the dominant narratives and therefore a puppet. In this respect, it is important to remind ourselves of Polkinghorne's discussion concerning dominant cultural stories and individuals' position within them that narrative therapy aims to achieve:

> The basic theory of narrative therapy draws on Foucault's notions of societies' dominant stories and holds that people normally incorporate for their identities the dominant story of the culture. In the dominant story, people are passive and under the control of the problematic parts of their selves. The purpose of the therapeutic work is to assist people in forming a more agentic identity story in which they assume the control over their lives. ("Explorations" 366)

[17] This claim rests on Phelan and Martin's idea on the role of "ethical criticism" in the discussion of un/reliability in relation to "not just the authorial audience but also to the flesh-and-blood readers" (89).

Under the light of this perspective, Stevens's self is said to be imprisoned by available dominant stories. He is in a sense pacified by the dominant stories. Narrative therapy aims to help people take control of their lives and therefore of their narratives. In this context, it supports the deconstruction of the narratives that make up one's self, and the construction of other confident beginnings between individuals and the stories around them. However, Stevens fails to see the detrimental effect these narratives have on his self. Stevens has absorbed these stories around him and formed them as an integral part of his self. His self has been captured by these stories and diminished into a role. However, he is not aware of this. Because he lives in the light of these stories, he believes that his own behavior confirms that he is "a great butler" within this narrative, which could be called "enslavement" in another sense. It is possible to argue that these narratives influence all of Stevens's relationships and choices. In the light of these stories, Stevens tries to explain to young butlers and also to himself that he has lived as a very exemplary butler. He is so "caught up," using Frank's word (*Socio-Narratology* 78), in these stories that it seems impossible for him to step out these narratives.

How Stevens's self-narrative enters into a dialogue with all these stories will be analyzed through his narration. Reading Stevens's story around the relationships he builds with his environment, it will be clearer how the stories he has been exposed to have had an impact on him and how they have shaped his own self. This issue is also related to another question Frank asks when analyzing dialogic narrative: "How does a story help people, individually and collectively, to remember who they are?" (*Socio-Narratology* 82). All these stories he has been exposed to remind Stevens how he should behave in the face of events, how he should live his life, and what his values are. These stories function as templates for all the ways in which Mr. Stevens relates to Darlington, Miss Kenton, his father, and Mr. Farraday. However, conforming to dominant narratives or total submission to them does not guarantee individual well-being; it may sometimes even create troubles. Frank argues that "Stories have the capacity to deal with human trouble, but also the capacity to make trouble for humans" (*Socio-Narratology* 25). Likewise, the stories Stevens are cast into create troubles for him. His way of relating to others is superficial, ambiguous, and within the limits imposed on him by the narratives, although he sees it as a story

of success. Likewise, Fluet argues that Stevens's faulty configuration of the stories around himself like the narrative of dignity lead him to establish unhealthy relationships with the people closest to him: "During the course of the narrative Stevens finds himself compelled, precisely because of his idealism and sense of dignity, to distance himself from those people who seem to be the likeliest objects of his affection: his father and, in particular, Miss Kenton" (266). Therefore, it is possible to claim that the sense of self the butler constructs renders him unable to see, hear or feel, almost as an inauthentic entity.

Fluet's discussion entails Stevens's superficial relationship with the people in his close circle, and his father is a prominent figure in this regard for dominating his narrative identity construction process. Stevens's relationship with his father is not an ordinary father-son relationship of affection and closeness; instead, it solely revolves around their profession. Despite this lack of warmth and depth, Stevens equates their father-son relationship with the notion of a great butler, as if their situation brings him closer to this ideal. For Stevens, his father William Stevens was a man of dignity in terms of his profession by all accounts. The stories told by/about him, all of them of a professional nature, served as essential role models in Stevens's professional and daily life. Stevens's success in his profession and the kind of butler he becomes is based on the narratives about his father. However, William Stevens is a person who does not value himself at all: He puts his employer at the center of his life, and he can suppress his grieving over his lost son to keep his position at work.

Stevens reciprocates the lack of sentiment on his father's part in the same way as he is emotionally distant from him too, as can be clearly seen in the events taking place on his father's last day. While his father is on his deathbed, Stevens is busy with the big conference, during which no mistake is acceptable. That's why, Stevens does not spare a moment to spend with his father except for their brief conversation, which later proves to be their last one. Even at that moment, Stevens does not allow any emotional state to surface. To his father's words, "I am proud of you. A good son. I hope I've been a good father to you. I suppose I haven't" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 101), Stevens replies coldly: "I'm afraid we're extremely busy now, but we can talk again in the morning" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 101). Stevens's father is not sure whether he has been a good father to Stevens. Although he wants to hear

something about his fatherhood from Stevens, maybe, to ease himself, Stevens has duties in his mind, and wants to return to work immediately. His father looks at his hands repeatedly, as if he is irritated by his hands (Ishiguro, *Remains* 101), indicating that he is wondering how it all has come to this. Furthermore, after his father gives his last breath, Miss Kenton calls Stevens upstairs so he can see his father for the last time, but he does not stop serving the guests of the conference despite knowing deep down that he desires to be by his father's side. As an explanation to Miss Kenton, he states that "You see, I know my father would have wished me to carry on just now" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 111), and he genuinely believes this, adding "To do otherwise, I feel, would be to let him down" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 111). In accordance with the role attributed to him in the narratives that constitute Stevens's self, he does not quit his job and accompany his father in his deathbed. However, that does not mean that Stevens is an unfeeling man; on the contrary, he feels pain deep inside, but he chooses to deceive himself through the great butler stories. When Lord Darlington realizes his suffering and asks: "You look as though you are crying" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 110), he distracts Lord Darlington by saying it is caused by the hard day. Although he is emotionally injured by his loss, he suppresses his sorrow and fulfils the butler duties expected from him, like his father did when serving the general that caused his son's death. Though he fails in connecting with his father emotionally in his last chance to do so, Stevens believes that the way he acted under the circumstances of his father's death brings him closer to the ideal of a great butler, and closer to his father too in a twisted way.

For Stevens, it is impossible to go beyond these narratives of greatness and dignity. As a prisoner of his own self-making, he does not go to his father's bedside as he dies but feels a sense of triumph instead. His father had done so in the past and he himself has not let his emotions overcome him in the face of such an emotionally charged event. Therefore, when Stevens remembers that important day, he says: "For all its sad associations, whenever I recall that evening today, I find I do so with a large sense of triumph" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 115). Stevens's retrospective assessment of that evening is fundamentally grounded in the narrative patterns encountered in previous narratives. The way he responds to various situations and the construction of his self are intricately interwoven with his ongoing process of storytelling. His

tendency to recount his father's final moments, marked by a sense of triumph, stems from his steadfast belief in the necessity of passing significant trials to attain the esteemed status of "a great butler." Stevens's failure in establishing a functional relationship with his father in which they can share their emotions with each other is reflected in his relationship with his brother as well. Although he passed away long ago, Stevens does not elaborate on his feelings concerning his brother, or even disclose information about him. These indicate that Stevens's familial ties are very weak, and he fails in establishing any emotional tie with any member of his family, which might stem from his belief that if he wants to be great butler, then he is supposed to suppress his emotive ties even those with his family. Likewise, both in his father's narrative and Stevens's account, there is not any reference to any family bond, which indicates that the family in this environment is torn apart. Moreover, the disintegration of the family at the expense of the job and the suppression of human emotions at the expense of the continuation of the job is an appreciated behavior and therefore a matter of achievement for Stevens.

When Stevens looks back on his life, he sees his suppression of his emotional intimacy with Miss Kenton as yet another success story. He has always tried to build his relationship with Miss Kenton within the framework of professionalism. Stevens has almost avoided developing a romantic relationship with Miss Kenton because he is quite catatonic when it comes to experiencing and/or voicing his emotions. Through the years when they were co-workers, two important events undermine any possible relationship he could have had with Miss Kenton. When Miss Kenton starts working at Darlington Hall, she brings flowers into Stevens's room to try to brighten it up. However, Stevens refuses her to bring flowers. Another significant event is Stevens's terminating their evening meetings. Upon learning that Miss Kenton will leave Darlington Hall for a date with a possible suitor, Stevens quits meeting with Miss Kenton in the evenings by restricting their relationship to only professional matters. Stevens's final account of his relationship with Miss Kenton takes place on the night the German Ambassador, the British Prime Minister, and Lord Darlington meet. That night Miss Kenton gets a marriage proposal and discloses this to Stevens. Stevens congratulates her in an impersonal tone and does not go deeper in his statements, for there is an important meeting in which "matters of global significance

[are] taking place upstairs" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 230). Stevens sees this episode in his life as a test again, as if he would perform his duties no matter what happened. He is triumphant in that he has proved to himself that he is not distracted by Miss Kenton, his unacknowledged love: "A deep feeling of triumph started to well up within me. […] I had managed to preserve a 'dignity in keeping with my position' -and had done so, moreover, in a manner even my father might have been proud of" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 238). Stevens has again been able to suppress his emotional affair with Miss Kenton in accordance with the stories around him and has therefore acted out his role in the narrative of the great butler successfully.

Stevens's relationship with Lord Darlington has also developed in line with the early narratives to which he has been exposed. His father's approach to his employer was one of complete submission, which reinforced Stevens's total loyalty to his own employer. Moreover, being a butler, by the nature of the profession, is in line with the master-slave relationship as it is basically based on "serving." Within this framework, another narrative that Stevens believes is that a characteristic of his generation is that it has noble ideals; thus, he can pursue significant goals in a self-interested way during the time when the world was undergoing profound changes. He justifies this selfishly commenting that he aspired to make a small contribution to making the world a better place:

> We are, as I say, an idealistic generation for whom the question was not simply one of how well one practised one's skills, but *to what end* one did so; each of us harboured the desire to make our small contribution to the creation of a better world. (Ishiguro, *Remains* 122)

As the world is evolving towards a new direction, he assumes himself to be taking on a great responsibility. At this point, historical reality pushes him in this direction; he wants to do good things for the future of the world as a butler. The best way to do this, he thinks, was to serve a gentleman in the best possible way as he discloses, "[We] saw that, as professionals, the surest means of doing so would be to serve the great gentlemen of our times in whose hand civilization had been entrusted" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 122). However, this is not any gentleman. He claims that unlike the previous generation's butlers, they are more concerned with "the moral status of an employer," that is whether they further "the progress of humanity" or not (Ishiguro, *Remains* 120). He does not mean that every employer could be completely

trusted, but there comes a time when one says: “this employer embodies all that I find noble and admirable. I will hereafter devote myself to serving him” (Ishiguro, *Remains* 211). After finding a suitable employer, Stevens explains his task as follows:

> A butler’s duty is to provide good service. It is not to meddle in great affairs of the nation. The fact is, such great affairs will always be beyond the understanding of those such as you and me, and those of us who wish to make our mark must realize that we best do so by concentrating on what *is* within our realm; that is to say, by devoting our attention to providing the best possible service to those great gentlemen in whose hands the destiny of civilization truly lies. (Ishiguro, *Remains* 209)

At this point, Steven wants to find a way through all the narratives he has previously interacted with. His employer, Lord Darlington, is a man of noble and admirable qualities, a man of great deeds, a man who can direct where civilization evolves, a man to whom he can completely surrender his will to contribute to the betterment of the world. According to Stevens, this is loyalty “*intelligently* bestowed” (Ishiguro, *Remains* 211; emphasis is original). Since he thinks that as a servant he cannot contribute to the policies that shape the world, he thinks that the best way to do this is to serve the employers he trusts, and he proposes that this is “loyalty intelligently bestowed.” Stevens can be considered here as attributing an agency to himself. If one accepts that the profession of a butler is one that is stripped of many powers and limited to a specific role, and that Stevens nevertheless pursued his lofty ideals and did not abandon the goal of contributing to the world, then one might argue that this approach is an honorable one that involves an agency. However, this is not quite the case. Stevens acted in accordance with the role he was assigned. The existing narrative he is in has given him the understanding that by playing his role to the best of his ability and serving his employer faithfully, he is also serving the world. In short, it is part of his role to trust his employer and think that he is contributing to the world. Therefore, while Stevens thinks he asserts his will here, he is in fact fulfilling what the fascist ideology dictates. In that sense, it can be seen as an illusion created by the dominant ideology.

For Stevens, Lord Darlington is exactly the kind of employer he can trust, because he is a man who fights to make the world a better place. Since 1923, there have been meetings at Darlington Hall that have influenced world politics. Two of them are very important. The first is the meeting concerning the need for a review of

the Treaty of Versailles. Lord Darlington thinks that Germany is having a lot of difficulties after the first world war with the treaty. The reason for hosting this meeting is to establish peace and justice in Europe. At the end of the conference, Lord Darlington invites his guests to raise their cups "to peace and justice in Europe" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 103). It is inferred from here that Lord Darlington is on the side of peace in Europe, his aim is not to cause further problems. It is also known that he has a close relationship with Germany. By being on the side of Germany, he thinks that peace and justice in Europe will be secured.

The second most important meeting is when the British Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary and the German Ambassador meet through Lord Darlington. For Stevens, the important decisions of the world are made in these great houses: "To us, then, the world was a wheel, revolving with these great houses at the hub, their mighty decisions emanating out to all else, rich and poor, who revolved around them" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 122). How close he is to this hub is an indication of how great a butler he is. After this meeting is over and he performs his duty without any problems, he thinks that he is now approaching the "great butler" category as he states, "Who would doubt at that moment that I had indeed come as close to the great hub of things as any butler could wish?" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 238). For him, the important thing is to be close to this center: "the most powerful gentlemen of Europe were conferring over the fate of our continent" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 238). This, in turn, was one of his great professional achievements.

Stevens's relationship with Lord Darlington involves complete and unquestioning obedience, but Stevens does not see any problem with this as it can be inferred from the incident where Lord Darlington discloses to Stevens that he does not want any Jewish staff in his house. He states, "I've been doing a great deal of thinking, Stevens. A great deal of thinking. And I've reached my conclusion. We cannot have Jews on the Staff here at Darlington Hall" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 154-155). When Stevens questions the decision to expel Jewish staff as he cannot comprehend the reason behind it, Lord Darlington replies: "There is the safety and well-being of my guests to consider" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 155). Thus, the decision is made. The sole authority is Lord Darlington, and there is not any genuine objection from Stevens's side. When the butler later informs Miss Kenton about the dismissal of two

housemaids, Miss Kenton strictly opposes this idea, and Stevens's response is quite in line with this fascist ideology:

> The fact is, the world of today is a very complicated and treacherous place. There are many things you and I are simply not in a position to understand concerning, say, the nature of Jewry. Whereas his lordship, I might venture, is somewhat better placed to judge what is for the best. (Ishiguro, *Remains* 157-58)

Stevens has literally positioned himself within the narrative imposed on him. He has embraced the approach that renders his agency insignificant. He has entrusted all his will to Lord Darlington and uses all his power for his benefit. He believes that he has no power over anything, no influence on the politics of the country or the world. "There is, after all, a real limit to how much ordinary people can learn and know, and to demand that each and every one of them contribute 'strong opinions' to the great debates of the nation cannot, surely, be wise" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 204). He is convinced that he does not have the educational, social, political, and economic conditions to be involved in all these things. There is no other alternative he can think of.

Although Stevens appears to be a victim of the narratives he is exposed to or interacts with, his unconditional surrender of his will to Lord Darlington is highly problematic, but Stevens does not want to see it due to "negative misinterpretation" by "avoiding connecting different pieces," as Marcus discusses in relation to self-deception. The desire to do something to make the world a better place has dignity in it, but the desire to do it through someone else's authority rather than oneself implies an unwillingness to take responsibility. He unconditionally surrenders his will to someone else because he does not feel that he has the will or the ability to change things. Stevens's narrative underscores how individual responses to concrete events are intrinsically tied to their deeply rooted narrative patterns. People's thoughts regarding events fundamentally stem from their early narrative patterns. Stevens has been so profoundly influenced by the stories accumulated throughout his life that expecting him to act differently would be excessive. He is acting in the light of the narratives to which he feels attached. In a sense, he is imprisoned within his stories. It should also be emphasized that the butler's sense of self cannot be isolated from fascism which he is a part of. However, Stevens, who creates himself around the stories he has interacted with, is a self who seems to have troubles in seeing, hearing,

or feeling. As Lisa Fluet comments, Stevens "allows his own intentions and exertions to lose their individual affiliation, to vanish into someone else's labors, someone else's struggle, someone else's mission" (266). For instance, he is not able to see the truth behind Lord Darlington's politics, he is not able to hear other political views, and he is not able to express and live his feelings. Stevens is essentially a construct, contaminated by the narratives given to him. The fact that his is a fabricated identity, or an identity clashing with his own truth, is also evident in Miss Kenton's expressions. One year after the incident of the two Jewish maids' being dismissed from Darlington Hall, Lord Darlington decides that his decision to fire them was a mistake. Stevens discloses Lord Darlington's change of mind to Miss Kenton along with the claim that he thought the same at that time: "Now really, Miss Kenton, that is quite incorrect and unfair. The whole matter caused me great concern, great concern indeed" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 162). Miss Kenton says she would have preferred him to voice his true opinions at that time of the incident, and she protests, "Why, Mr Stevens, why, why, why do you always have to pretend?" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 162). This suggests that Stevens's self is not actually built on his own truth and his "self-understanding is still limited" (Phelan & Martin 101). His self has been poisoned by dangerous narratives which reduce his basic human aspects into a function. He just plays the role that was assigned to him, that is why he cannot voice his opinion and cross Lord Darlington as Miss Kenton expects him to do.

So far Stevens's own account of his past has been examined, and it is clear that in the final analysis he has been unable to act otherwise in his present circumstances, and that he has lacked the necessary instruments to take actions outside the narratives presented to him. Despite all his deprivations, the butler carried out the responsibility to do his part to make the world a better place. Even though the man he trusted, Lord Darlington, was involved in the political progress of the Nazism in England, as a butler, as a man from the lower class who had been stripped of all his power, Stevens took a position on where the world was going to move. In such a situation, that is, under the influence of the narratives to which he has access and to which he is exposed, Stevens can be considered a victim. However, his victimization can easily be refuted when seen from a different perspective. Stevens might be unwilling to take responsibility, adding onto his victimization, but one may find him

guilty as he could and should have taken responsibility within the scope of his position judging from his attitude towards Lord Darlington and the way his post-World War II self, which is his present self in the novel, looks at his own past. McAdams elaborates on the definition of narrative coherence in "Problems of Narrative Coherence" and argues that as narrative coherence is related to psychological well-being it is also a concern of the "social context"; thus, it is related to the "narrative audience" (11). He underlines the importance of the narrative audience's involvement in the coherence of a narrative with the example "a story told in a foreign language is incomprehensible to a native audience" (McAdams "Problems of Narrative Coherence" 11). In a similar line of thinking, some connections made by the storyteller may not be regarded as coherent for the narrative audience. It is possible to argue that there is a similar problem in Stevens self-narrative. Stevens's self-narrative is coherent according to him, but it is not fully coherent for the readers of his narrative. Stevens's value system and the narratives through which he organizes his life have led him to deceive himself by creating connections between events that are essentially blind to the source of the problems. For the reader, therefore, his narrative is not coherent, as the causal connections are drawn differently by the reader. If narrative coherence is related to psychological well-being, we can argue that Stevens's psychological well-being is low. Indeed, his problems are still very much alive, even if he does not fully realize it.

The major problem in Stevens's view of life is that he cannot see the connection between small things and their big effects. The reader is aware of Stevens's self-deception and could identify his core of self-deception as "negative misinterpretation" on a larger scale. Marcus states that if one finds conflicts within the story one believes, one tends to "underestimate" other conflicting information. Relatedly, he claims that sometimes one does not "underestimate" but tends to "avoid connecting different pieces" (*Self-Deception* 28). It would not be wrong to argue that Stevens's trouble in life is "negative misinterpretation," because he is not able to connect different pieces. As Newton puts it, Stevens self-narrative is a story of "looking away:" "The story of narration itself occludes a set of details it prefers not to tell […] And finally at the level of simple sense impression, the story of the narrator's field of vision occludes that which it necessarily excludes – this is the

story, in other words, of 'looking away'" (270). This can be seen as a very human tendency but considering that Stevens has been doing this all his life, it is safe to say that it has led to detrimental results.

The Remains of the Day contains many important anecdotes about Stevens's failure to grasp "the relationship between small things and their greater significance" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 65). An anecdote about his father holds true for Stevens in this regard. His father cannot perform his duties properly anymore due to his old age. Lord Darlington does not want his father to appear during the conference, because he fears that it may have a negative effect on the guests of the upcoming conference. Although Stevens claims that his father's mistakes are not of significance, Lord Darlington responds, "these errors may be trivial in themselves, Stevens, but you must yourself realize their larger significance" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 65). Unlike Stevens, Lord Darlington is cautious and predicts that William Stevens's present failures can easily turn into bigger ones during the upcoming conference as he knows these mistakes stem from an incurable source: his old age. That is why, he states that any mistake William Stevens makes "might jeopardize the success of our forthcoming conference" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 65). Stevens is not able to establish this cause/effect connection, which causes him to fall into the status of a victim time after time. In all his relationships, Stevens fails to connect events properly, either by "underestimating" information that conflicts with his beliefs or by "avoiding connecting different pieces," which Marcus associates with "negative misinterpretation" as a mental strategy employed in self-deception.

When Steven is constantly confronted with other information that contradicts the narrative he believes in, he rejects it. By "avoiding connecting different pieces" (Marcus, *Self-Deception* 28), Stevens misinterprets the events. In the case of the firing of the Jewish staff, Miss Kenton claims that she will not accept their dismissal and will leave Darlington Hall herself, if necessary. Despite this, it never occurs to him that Lord Darlington could be mistaken. On the evening of the second most important meeting at Darlington Hall, the columnist Mr. Cardinal arrives at the house to thwart Darlington from helping Germany. Mr. Cardinal has long conversations with Stevens, and it is at this point that the reader strongly suspects that Lord Darlington has become a pawn in the hands of the Nazis:

> "He is out of his depth. He is being manoeuvred. The Nazis are manoeuvring him like a pawn. Have you noticed this, Stevens? Have you noticed this is what has been happening for the last three or four years at least?" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 233)

Despite these strong allegations that Lord Darlington's policies are serving the Nazis, Stevens ignores them. Mr. Cardinal repeatedly asks Stevens if he does not notice the significance of this meeting and its deadly effects.

> "Tell me, Stevens, aren't you struck by even the remote possibility that I am correct? Are you not, at least, curious about what I am saying?"
> "I am sorry, sir, but I have to say that I have every trust in his lordship's good judgment."
> "No one with good judgment could persist in believing anything Herr Hitler says after the Rhineland, Stevens. His lordship is out of his depth." (Ishiguro, *Remains* 236)

It never crosses Stevens's mind to doubt or even question Lord Darlington's ways. He is sticking to the narrative about dignity and integrity as a butler. When other people say something contrary to the way he has been used to thinking, he simply does not give them any credit. When there are strong suspicions about the person to whom he has surrendered his will, Stevens pays them no heed. Therefore, he deceives himself by avoiding establishing a connection between different the information clashing with his own version of the narrative.

Stevens's attitude after Lord Darlington's death and in the present time of the novel is to avoid seeing the truth, as he did in the past. Sometimes he denies the truth and lies, sometimes he refuses to draw connections when narratives that conflict with his own beliefs are revealed, thus engaging in "negative misinterpretation." A recent event that has taken place between Stevens and one of the new master's guests is exemplary in this sense. While Mr. Farraday, who has bought Darlington Hall after the second World War, gives a tour of the house to his guests, one of them asks the butler in private if he really worked for Lord Darlington, and Stevens definitively says he did not meet the Lord himself (Ishiguro, *Remains* 130). When Mr. Farraday questions why the butler has told such a lie to his guest, Stevens manipulates him very easily. The butler's first argument is, "that is not customary in England for an employee to discuss his past employers" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 131). Mr. Farraday asks him why he said he was the first employer, and Stevens distracts him, saying "If a divorced lady were present in the company of her second husband, it is often thought desirable not to allude to the original marriage at all. There is a similar custom as regards our profession, sir" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 131). He uses other narratives in the

society, the English custom, to manipulate Mr. Farraday. Stevens's reticence about his past engagement with Lord Darlington comes up in another incident with a stranger who questions him about the Lord. While helping him repair the car, a man asks Stevens where he works and if he knew Lord Darlington later, to which Stevens again responds in negative (Ishiguro, *Remains* 126). He clearly does not want to tell people the truth about his past; therefore, he openly manipulates Mr. Farraday and other people by making excuses or directly lying as he cannot bring himself to face the truth about Lord Darlington:

> The great majority of what one hears said about his lordship today is, an any case, utter nonsense, based on an almost complete ignorance of the facts. […] I have chosen to tell white lies in both instances as the simplest means of avoiding unpleasantness. (Ishiguro, *Remains* 132)

Stevens states that he is frustrated with the negative and "inaccurate" public opinion about Lord Darlington. In order to protect his feelings or his psychological integrity, he avoids the truth and chooses white lies about Lord Darlington instead. He displays a similar attitude towards other situations in his life as well. For example, he does not revise the notions in his mind and take an opportunity for self-reflection. While it is apparent that his notion of dignity is different than that of Mr. Harry Smith, Stevens does not voice his objection openly and stand by his argument. He even avoids revealing his true identity as a butler when Mr. Harry Smith and other townspeople assume him to be a gentleman. As Sloane suggests, "in somewhat parodic fashion, Stevens pantomimes as a great lord" (161) in this episode:

> "Dignity isn't just something gentlemen have. Dignity's something every man and woman in this country can strive and get."
> I perceived, of course, that Mr Harry Smith and I were rather at cross purposes on this matter, and that it would be far too complicated a task for me to explain myself more clearly to these people. I thus judged it best to smile and say: "of course, you're quite correct." (Ishiguro, *Remains* 195)

Here, Stevens is exposed to a different kind of dignity other than his own belief in dignity, which could enlarge his horizon, but he makes a negative misinterpretation by underestimating it. He is unwilling to face the fact that the understanding he is defending is wrong. Stevens does not take these people seriously, because he does not want to explain himself further. He then explains himself to us:

> There is surely little in his statements that merits serious consideration. Of course, one has to allow that Mr Harry Smith was employing the word "dignity" in a quite different sense altogether from my own understanding of it. Even so, even taken on their own terms, his statements were, surely, far too idealistic, far too theoretical, to deserve respect. […] but life being what it is, how can ordinary people truly be expected to have 'strong opinions' on all manner of things. (Ishiguro, *Remains* 203-204)

It is impossible even at the present time of the novel to claim that there has been an improvement on the side of Stevens in terms of his way of relationship with the narratives around himself. He still holds the same views as he held years ago. He exhibits no self-criticism and no tendency to see his mistakes. In a sense, he is still asserting that he is right. One may ask the following questions: Is it possible to expect such a genuine and profound self-criticism from someone with the same condition and disposition as Stevens? Given the social, political, cultural, and economic conditions, the changing structure of the time and rising fascism, how likely is it that a butler would be able to do such a thing? *Yes, it is possible*. Stevens is not being self-critical about himself and not attempting to see the relationship between small things and their larger significance, although there were other butlers who could think differently:

> I refer to that strand of opinion in the profession which suggested that any butler with serious aspirations should make it his business to be forever reappraising his employer – scrutinizing the latter's motives, analyzing the implications of his views. (Ishiguro, *Remains* 209-20)

However, those who did so, Stevens argues, had their careers ended and had to keep changing employers. Stevens did not want to do this because it conflicted with his goal of becoming a great butler. Furthermore, in that profession, when one constantly criticizes his employer, it contradicts with the concept of loyalty, which does not fit with the notion of the professional butler as drawn by him and imposed by the dominant ideology.

Along with his resistance to changing his old ways, Stevens rejects the benefit that hindsight can provide. Freeman suggests that "self-understanding occurs, in significant part, through narrative reflection, which is itself a product of hindsight" (4). At the same time, he adds, "there is no question that hindsight bias is quite real and that it can result in bad history; that is in portraits of the past that confer illusionary significance or prominence on certain events" (Freeman 6). Nevertheless, Freeman suggests that "hindsight remains the primary source of the examined life

(8). In his relationship with Miss Kenton, Stevens does not benefit from the insight provided by hindsight but regards it as a bias. Stevens refers to two important events in his relationship with Miss Kenton. The first incident is when he wanted Miss Kenton to stop bringing flowers to his room, and the other is when he put an end to their evening meetings upon learning that Miss Kenton is engaged as stated previously. In the past Miss Kenton genuinely acted in accordance with her feelings, but Stevens did not want to understand what it all meant at the time. Now, looking back, he realizes what it all meant, but he feels that this information is no longer useful. Stevens realizes that these incidents were actually turning points in his relationship with Miss Kenton. Yet he does not blame himself for not recognizing this. On the contrary, he sees it as a matter of hindsight bias, and states,

> But what is the sense in forever speculating what might have happened had such and such a moment turned out differently? One could presumably drive oneself to distraction in this way. In any case, while it is all very well to talk of "turning points," one can surely only recognize such moments in retrospect. Naturally, when one looks back to such instances today, they may indeed take the appearance of being crucial, precious moments in one's life; but of course, at the time, this was not the impression one had. […] there was surely nothing to indicate at the time such evidently small incidents would render whole dreams forever irredeemable. (Ishiguro, *Remains* 187-189)

Stevens highlights a possible effect of hindsight, which is "we can become prisoners of our stories, locked in a world of our narrative designs" (Freeman 6). He points out that hindsight does not actually do much good, except to speculate over and over again. However, hindsight also plays "an integral role in shaping and deepening moral life" (Freeman 5). Stevens does not see the benefit of this perspective. He does not use his failure as self-criticism or a lesson for the future. He brushes it off by saying that there was nothing at the time to show that this was so important. Freeman suggests that the peril of hindsight could be seen as biased judgment. Hindsight is "the tendency for people with outcome knowledge to believe falsely that they would have predicted the reported outcome of an event" (Freeman 22). When Stevens looked back over his relationship with Miss Kenton from the present, he could see more clearly the meaning of certain events more properly. Yet, he does not value this perspective. He rejects the insight hindsight provides (Wong, *Kazuo Ishiguro* 58). He tries to comfort himself by claiming that it was not possible to see them at that time. In this way, it is possible to say that Stevens avoided the painful process that hindsight can bring forth.

There are many points in his relationship with Lord Darlington that suggest it might be wrong for him to submit his will completely to this erroneous character, but Stevens is unable to put the disparate pieces together, so he deceives himself through "narrative misinterpretation" again. The probability that his letting go of his agency is wrong has been brought to Stevens's attention multiple times, but he does not take them into consideration as he does not question the way he lives ever. He again fails to see the larger significance behind small events. There are many elements suggesting that Lord Darlington was in league with the Nazis such as Lord Darlington's ceasing donation to a local charity as it includes Jewish people and his firing the two Jewish maids. Lord Darlington is also in close contact with Herr Ribbentrop, people from the Blackshirts movement and members of the fascist party as he hosts them multiple times at Darlington Hall and meets them in Germany. Although all these details clearly reveal that Lord Darlington has a close relationship with the Nazi ideology, Stevens is far from seeing the truth and produces alternative explanations for all these without suspecting Lord Darlington's actions. According to Stevens, the cutting off donations to local charities and the dismissal of Jewish staff were the result of those days, "a few insignificant weeks in the early thirties" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 153), during which Mrs. Barnet, a member of the Blackshirts, had influence over Lord Darlington (Ishiguro, *Remains* 153). He hints that Lord Darlington was in fact deceived by Mrs. Barnet and that the Blackshirts betrayed its true nature. Yet, "His lordship was quicker than most in noticing it" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 146) and the Lord never met them again. As for Herr Ribbentrop, Stevens never accepts that Lord Darlington had made a mistake.

> It is, of course, generally accepted today that Herr Ribbentrop was a trickster: that it was Hitler's plan throughout those years to deceive England for as long as possible concerning his true intentions, and that Herr Ribbenstrop's sole mission in our country was to orchestrate this deception. […] It is, however, rather irksome to have to hear people talking today as though they were never for a moment taken in by Herr Ribbenstrop – as though Lord Darlington was alone in believing Herr Ribbenstrop and honourable gentleman and developing a working relationship with him. (Ishiguro, *Remains* 144)

Through his narration, Stevens extends the blame to other people, claiming that it is a common misconception that could happen to anyone in order to paint Lord Darlington as innocent and justify his decisions. Stevens again rejects hindsight by foregrounding its danger, that is it is biased judgment formed in accordance with the

present day. People read the past from the perspective of the outcome and therefore, according to Stevens's perspective, they misjudge the past by distorting it. In addition, he uses changing historicity as an argument to justify his point of view, on the grounds that the future of the world cannot be known in the present. Stevens again rejects the power of hindsight. Hindsight can bring about a painful process of confrontation, but Stevens tries to avoid this painful process by normalizing what happened in the past, so he rejects "the strengthening and deepening moral life" aspect of hindsight (Freeman 24).

Reading Stevens's narrative in the light of Adorno's analysis of the authoritarian personality, Bareiß argues that Stevens engages in full "authoritarian submission" and that "Stevens never questions his former master but instead continues to shield him from criticism by either aggressively dismissing allegations as 'foolish speculations' or by trying to justify his actions" (399). In addition to these, Stevens is trying to justify what Lord Darlington did, sometimes by claiming to having been influenced by some other person, and sometimes by acknowledging the danger of hindsight, of looking at things in the past from the perspective of the present. However, the fact that Stevens still defends Lord Darlington, even though Lord Darlington himself admitted before his death that he had made terrible mistakes, can only be explained by his refusal to admit that what he believed in the past was wrong. And if he accepts it, he risks losing his psychological integrity and might end up hating his past self. Yet the butler cannot find the courage to do this. Therefore, he exploits historicity in accordance with his own interests, saying, "How can one possibly be held to blame in any sense because, say, the passage of time has shown that Lord Darlington's efforts were misguided, even foolish?" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 211). He argues that judging the past from the present leads to a mistaken perspective, thus rejects the insight hindsight provides. From the perspective of narrative therapy, as Lieblich et al. puts it, "the therapists and clients coconstruct stories, create and revise narratives with the hope of finding solutions to personal problems, better coping strategies to meet life's challenges, enhanced growth and development, and greater psychological insight" ("Introduction" 4). Although the therapeutic effect is achieved with the help of the therapist in narrative therapy, it is possible to argue that some narrators become successful in their struggle to achieve a

greater insight into their lives and attain psychological well-being by working on their past stories like Etsuko in *A Pale View of Hills* and Ono in *An Artist of The Floating World*. However, looking back at his life as a story, Stevens has not behaved in any other way than his previous attitude to the past. He refuses to see the connection between events. While looking at the past from the present would have enabled him to see things better and would otherwise have thrown a different light into his past by acknowledging his mistakes, he rejects this point of view. Therefore, the outcome of his self-narrative is no different and does not attain a moral growth. While he could have evaluated these situations with a new perspective and gained insight through hindsight, Stevens does not give up the attitude he has displayed throughout his life, that is "negative misinterpretations."

Stevens's relationship with the past is far from the idea that human memory is fallible, which prevents him from reflecting on his past in a different light and thus opening up a wider space for new connections with the troubled past to emerge. This subject can be addressed with one of the questions Frank asks when conducting a dialogic narrative analysis, that is "How does a story do the work of memory" (*Socio-Narratology* 82). Stevens does not deal with the events of his past in line with the idea that memory is fallible. For him, the construction of the past is independent of the power or influence of the working of memory. Therefore, when he narrates past events, their veracity is not a matter of debate for him. The way he constructs his stories, and thus his connection with his past, is built on a rejection of the effect of the present. Hence, it can be argued that Stevens does not foreground the fallibility of human memory while recounting his past. Besides, Stevens underlines the idea that our understanding of the past is influenced and distorted by our current circumstances, beliefs, and social context. He argues that the lens through which we view past events can be colored by our current perspectives, potentially leading to biases and inaccuracies in our interpretations. He therefore rejects reading the past from the perspective of the present and thus refuses the benefits of such a perspective. In this context, Stevens's way of employing memory is different from the narrators in the other two novels. Etsuko and Ono are aware of the fallibility of memory and sometimes use it for their own personal gain. But Stevens does not

adopt the past for his own benefit. On the contrary, his shaping of the past is not influenced by the present; he rejects the present point of view.

5.3. Stevens's State of Mind at the End of his Storytelling

Although his dealing with his past stories in his self-narrative does not bring any significant change in Stevens's self, it is possible to argue that he has overcome his partial misinterpretation about Miss Kenton and experienced a kind of confrontation (Marcus, "The Role of Narration" 137). At the end of his story, he realizes that he is mistaken in thinking that Miss Kenton's marriage has been going poorly and that she wants to go back to Darlington Hall. However, he could not reach this conclusion on his own through entering into a dialogue with his past. Nor could he read things differently on his own in another light and conclude that such a reading was not correct. Thus, his change of mind about Miss Kenton has not come about spontaneously as a result of the connection he has made in the previous stories. Rather, it is the other participant in the dialogue, Miss Kenton, who revealed that Stevens's interpretation has been wrong. Therefore, the only progress in Stevens's view of his past is the one concerning Miss Kenton and this has been possible only through Miss Kenton's own words. Stevens has not changed significantly in his assessment of his relationship with Lord Darlington either. He has failed to realize that his habitual ways of thinking are faulty and continues to misinterpret events as before, rather than identifying the root of the problem. He has brought a different perspective to the issue of bantering, which was identified as a problem at the beginning of his story, but he has continued his life without making any significant changes in his life. In narrative therapy, the aim is to help the client to construct their "life narratives that have become too restrictive" (Crossley, *Narrative Psychology* 62). However, Stevens fails to see that his life is too narratively constrained, and since he is not involved in a social life where he can go beyond his narrative limitations, he is unable to shed a different light on his narrative and create alternative narratives.

The only real and meaningful confrontation Stevens makes with his past is made possible through his exchange with Miss Kenton. At the end of the novel, they wait at the bus stop with Mrs. Benn, the name she has earned after marriage. "On the

other side of the road, all I could see were more farm fields; a line of telegraph poles led my eye over them into the far distance" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 249). For the first time, Stevens is able to undo the approach that has characterized his entire life, his inability to make connections between events properly and thus to deceive himself. Like the wires of a telegraph, the connections between events are correctly established, and Stevens is able to break out of his self-deception in this particular case. It is the moment when Steven first establishes a genuine and sincere connection with his past. From then on, the pieces are brought together as the line of telegraph poles connects. Stevens asks whether she is happy with her marriage, thinking that her marriage will end. Mrs. Benn says yes. Although there had been some serious problems which once led her to leave home for a while, she says she is happy in general (Ishiguro, *Remains* 250). In the last chapter of the novel, Stevens learns the truth about and catches a glimpse into Mrs Benn's life. Contrary to what he has believed, she in fact had no intention of returning to Darlington Hall, and her marriage was not as negative as he had perceived.

It is not thanks to his engagement with his life that Stevens comes to the realization that his interpretation at the beginning of his storytelling was faulty. Mrs. Benn herself has made a painful journey into her past at the cost of suffering, but Stevens has never confronted himself to this extent.

> When I left Darlington Hall all these years ago, I never realized I was really, truly leaving. I believe I thought of it as simply another ruse, Mr Stevens, to annoy you. […] But that doesn't mean to say, of course, there aren't occasions now and then – extremely desolate occasions – when you think to yourself: "What a terrible mistake I've made with my life." And you get to thinking about a different life, a better life you might have had. For instance, I get to thinking about a life I might have with you, Mr Stevens. And I suppose that's when I get angry over some trivial little thing and leave. But each time I do so, I realize before long – my rightful place is with my husband. After all, there's no turning back the clock now. One can't be forever dwelling on what might have been. One should realize one has as good as most, perhaps better, and be grateful. (Ishiguro, *Remains* 251)

Examining Mrs. Benn's engagement with her own past, it is remarkable to see how brave she is in comparison to Stevens. She has contemplated the entire past regarding Stevens and closed it in her own way. Yet, the butler is not courageous enough to make such an attempt. He avoids the pain that can come with hindsight. Stevens's interaction with Mrs. Benn also shows that Stevens's approach to life in general tends to be a refusal to see the truth. In other areas of his life, Stevens has not

abandoned his tendency to self-deception. He tells her about Mr. Cardinal's death in the war in Belgium and tells her about Lord Darlington's miserable death, but Stevens, as usual, refuses to discuss unhappy topics. Even though these two events are of vital importance to him, even though they show how he has made the wrong decisions in his life, he avoids unpleasant topics. Therefore, he does not want to establish connection between these events and his attitude and thus deceives himself.

Stevens continues to deceive himself by refusing to draw connections between events other than the truth about Mrs. Benn; therefore, he continues to employ the strategy of "negative misinterpretation." Towards the end of his journey, after Stevens parts with Mrs. Benn, he converses with a stranger footman at the pier. He is now aware that he is not as good as he once was in his profession and makes a confession to a stranger: "Goodness knows, I've tried and tried, but it's no use. I have given what I had to give. I gave it all to Lord Darlington" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 255). Stevens admits that he is getting old and that he is no longer as successful in his work as he used to be. He thinks that the reason for this failure is that he has given all his energy to Lord Darlington. But, on the other hand, he seems to be lamenting the failure of his life and the mistake of his submission to Lord Darlington, but he cannot admit it because he does not realize it. He cannot openly say, even to a person he does not even know him now, that he was wrong in the decisions he made. He just cries:

> Lord Darlington wasn't a bad man. He wasn't a bad man at all. And at least he had the privilege of being able to say at the end of his life that he made his own mistakes. His lordship was a courageous man. He chose a certain path in life, it proved to be a misguided one, but there, he chose it, he can say that at least. As for myself, I cannot even claim that. You see, I *trusted*. I trusted in his lordship's wisdom. All those years I served him, I trusted I was doing something worthwhile. I can't even say I made my own mistakes. Really – one has to ask oneself – what dignity is there in that. (Ishiguro, *Remains* 256)

The fact that Stevens thinks that Lord Darlington was a good person and admits that he made mistakes can be regarded as a partial release from self-deception. However, when one considers that Stevens's main concern in his self-narrative is himself, that is to say, that Stevens's goal from the beginning of his self-narrative is essentially the way he relates to Lord Darlington, not Lord Darlington himself, then his statement that he could not even make his own mistakes in contrast to Lord Darlington can be considered as a more important revelation. As Marcus claims, "Stevens's narration

accelerates his acknowledgment of the need to reexamine his life, but the scope of this reexamination remains limited" ("The Role of Narration" 135). The most important point of Stevens's narrative is a reflection on the attitudes he has taken in his life. He tried very hard to explain to himself the correctness of his attitudes. However, in the end it became important for him to realize that he, unlike Lord Darlington, could not make his own judgements. He has not explicitly shared the process how he came to this resolution with his narratee, so it is rather abrupt.

One could speculate that he actually recognized his mistakes in the end of his narrative, but he hid it from the narratee and hence from the flesh-and-blood reader. Yet, in fact it is more convincing to claim that he did not see these connections at all. As Furst states, Stevens "blocks the recognition that he has himself been a victim and a victimizer" (547). The assertion that "I can't even say I made my own mistakes" even seems to be an easy and abrupt conclusion Stevens arrives at. On top of that, it is not possible to claim that he has gone through a process of deep introspection. There are strong doubts on the part of the reader that Stevens has established the connections between events correctly. As Wong states, "Stevens's declared enlightenment is a false one and promises nothing in the way of a spiritual consolation" (*Kazuo Ishiguro* 52). In addition, it could be argued that to say that "I can't even say I made my own mistakes" is again an example of self-deception through negative misinterpretation. For one to say at the end of their life that they could not even make their own mistakes may actually indicate that they did not read things correctly as a result of their engagement in a dialogue with the past. In such instances, "It is often difficult to empathise with Stevens as he skirts his way around the major issues in his life by making excuses and avoiding responsibility" (Teo 36). For some readers, Stevens's life is full of mistakes, but he is so incapable of seeing his mistakes that he cannot associate them with events properly. Therefore, even at the end of his story Stevens has a limited capacity to see his mistakes so he deceives himself.

Stevens's conversation with the footman also indicates his superficial resolution of his life narrative too. The stranger footman wants to console him and tells what Stevens in his desperate situation wants to hear: "Don't keep looking back all the time, you're bound to get depressed […] You've got to enjoy yourself […]

The evening's the best part of the day" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 256). Newton, in his book titled *Narrative Ethics* (1995), makes a beautiful analysis of the title of the novel: The title of a novel denotes a double meaning: "the remains of the day can mean either 'diurnal ruin' ('the butt-ends of my days,' in J. Alfred Prufrock's pithy phrase) or, less ominously, merely what is left of the day before nightfall" (270). It is the latter perspective that the stranger footman offers Stevens to look at and it is Stevens's interpretation of his life, whereas for the reader his life is a kind of "diurnal ruin." Without realizing that his life is a ruin, Stevens finds no point in looking back in the time he has left. After the footman's remarks, Stevens quickly reaches at a resolution of his life.

> The man is right, he says. After all, what can we ever gain in forever looking back and blaming ourselves if our lives have not turned out quite as we might have wished? The hard reality is, surely, that for the likes of you and me, there is little choice other than to leave our fate, ultimately, in the hands of those great gentlemen at the hub of this world who employ our services. What is the point in worrying oneself too much about what one could or could not have done to control the course one's life took? Surely it is enough that the likes of you and me at least *try* to make a small contribution count for something true and worthy. And if some of us are prepared to sacrifice much in life in order to pursue such aspirations, surely that is in itself, whatever the outcome, cause for pride and contentment. (Ishiguro, *Remains* 257)

Stevens's dramatic mode changes very rapidly. To be able to exhibit a radical change in his self, his analysis needed to be much deeper. Only twenty minutes earlier, he had been in tears in front of the footman, but with the footman's encouragement to "look ahead," he easily moves away from confronting the past and avoids the emotional burden. He finds solace in the idea that people like himself, at the very least, try to make the world a better place. "Stevens stresses that he has no reason to feel tormented: his motives were good, only the consequences were not as he had wished" (Marcus, "The Role of Narration" 136). Beyond that, he views the attitude of other butlers who sacrifice much more as a source of "pride and contentment" but never claims that true dignity actually lies there. In this instance, it is not possible to trace a significant change in Stevens's approach to dignity since Stevens cannot take an in-depth approach to the concept of dignity.

There are two different perspectives in the previous research on whether Stevens has been able to overcome self-deception about his past. In the final analysis, Marcus comes up with the idea that to the questions of "the partial release of self-

deception" of Stevens "cannot be given an unambiguous answer" ("The Role of Narration" 138). Supporting the idea that there is a transformation in Stevens which brings him closer to the norms of the reader, Öztabak-Avcı states that "by the end of the novel, the 'you' addressed by Stevens becomes larger, or more inclusive" ("You Never Know" 56), and adds that "The 'we' in this passage is not limited to a community strictly defined by a national identity" ("You Never Know" 57). In this regard, she argues that the distance between Stevens and the actual reader gets closer. However, this study reveals that the distance between Stevens and the flesh-and-blood readers does not get closer, because what Stevens does here can be accepted as another attempt to console himself and to look away from the troubling truth. Even if construction of his self-narrative is an opportunity for Stevens to see his past from another perspective, his sense of self at the beginning of Stevens's narrative is not at a different point at the end of his self-narrative and his journey. In line with what Marcus argues, it is possible to claim that Stevens never explicitly discusses "the moral and existential implications of his doubts" ("The Role of Narration" 137). It could be expected of Stevens to realize how flawed his life had been and realize why giving over his will to someone else was a problem. He could have admitted his responsibility and his indirect contribution to Nazism through Lord Darlington, but it is not a matter of dispute for him. He could have realized that he had accepted the narratives presented to him without question and that throughout his life these narratives had enslaved him and cut him off from his own truth. But Stevens has not been able to resolve any of this and turns his back on the path of insight by hindsight. In this context, contrary to what Freeman claims, the narrated life is *not* the examined life.[18] Yes, Stevens has looked into his past but has not achieved any meaningful transformation.

The narrators in *A Pale View of Hills* and *An Artist of the Floating World* have made a turn for the better by making other narrative connections to their past and present troubles, but this did not work for Stevens. Stevens, too, revisits the past and its stories, but he does not realize the mistakes in his life; on the contrary, perhaps the revision of his past through stories made him mentally worse, but he basically continues his attitude at the beginning as he is used to through negative

[18] Freeman suggests that "the narrated life is the examined life" (176).

misinterpretation. “Falling short of a full confession, his dairy-like entries also fail to provide any recognition of need for change” (Wong, *Kazuo Ishiguro* 53-54). So why could not Stevens make the expected progress by creating his self-narrative? The answer to this question can be explained by the fact that Stevens needed the presence of another human being for his story to lead to real self-criticism and transformation. For this, it may be useful to recall what is practiced in narrative therapy:

> The therapist helps clients articulate and bring to language and awareness the narratives they have developed that give meaning to their lives. The clients are then able to examine and reflect on the themes they are using to organize their lives and to interpret their own actions and the actions of others. The reflective awareness of one’s personal narrative provides the realisation that past events are not meaningful in themselves, but are given significance by the reconfiguration of one’s narrative. This realisation can release people from the control of past interpretations they have attached to events and open up the possibility of renewal and freedom for change. (Polkinghorne, “Reporting” 183)

It could be argued that Stevens is well aware of the narratives that give meaning to life. However, his awareness in evaluating them is rather weak. The narrative therapist works with the client on these narratives and helps them to better evaluate these stories. By reflecting on them from the perspective of the present, one can avoid being trapped in past events and get rid of the troubling shadow of the past. But Stevens on his own has not been successful at this stage of the process. He completely rejected the insights that could come from hindsight and thus could not escape from the prison of the past.

One might say that Stevens needs professional help because it is not possible for anyone to do it on their own. This is a valid point of view, but it is not very plausible for the characters of this novel. The narrator is on his own and the possibility of professional support in his relationship with the stories is out of question, at least in the context of this novel. It is important for Ishiguro to show that not everyone can narratively connect with the past on the same level, identify the problem, and experience a transformation. However, does the novel not offer a way out even if such a situation remains to be true? No, even in this case it is possible to argue that the novel offers a way out. The road to a way out for a narrator like Stevens is through his involvement in social life. Only in this way can the self-narrative evolve elsewhere, i.e., if the other narratives in the community undergo a real conflict with his self-narrative. It is impossible to claim that Stevens actually

engages in productive narrative clashes. He has always avoided such clashes. This is reminiscent of the speculative point Frank raises when doing dialogic narrative analysis: "what is the effect of people being caught up in their own stories while living with people caught up in other stories" (*Socio-Narratology* 78). There is no meaningful answer to this question in Stevens's self-narrative. His self-narrative is never engaged in a useful narrative conflict with other available narratives. Ishiguro's other narrators, Etsuko and Ono, have engaged in and benefited from narrative conflicts. But because Stevens avoids narrative clashes, he does not experience a transformation because he does not have access to narrative enrichment. Therefore, his involvement in social life appears to be a prerequisite for his transformation.

Stevens's social isolation is also an indication of his narrative isolation, i.e., caught up in certain stories, as his narratee is very limited. The fact that Stevens's narratee is the young butlers shows how narrow his world is, but it also suggests that he tells his story to a small audience because he thinks they alone will understand him. Considering that Ishiguro's novel is read by an international audience, it can be argued that Stevens's point of view in terms of his narratee deepens the distance between the reader and himself. Focusing on the discrepancy between the audiences of Stevens's story, Öztabak-Avcı argues the following:

> The direct addresses of a narrator, such as the butler Stevens, whose present textual time is 1956, to an external audience (who reads, however, these remarks from 1988 onwards) emerge as a very powerful strategy to distance Stevens from the novel's implied international readers. There is a huge lack of correspondence between the inscribed 'you' in the narrative and the implied reader of the novel consisting of an audience diverse in terms of national and racial belongings. ("You Never Know" 55-56)

In this context, the reader is even more distanced from Stevens's narrative because of the great difference between the "you" in the narrative and the international audience. In other words, Stevens is narratively left even more isolated. This increases the impression that his point of view is much narrower. This narrowness of Stevens's point of view has therefore further paved the way for his misinterpretation of events. In order for him to realize his problems and perhaps find narrative solutions to his problems and heal through narrative, he needs to expand socially and interact with a wider audience. Öztabak-Avcı adds further that, "in the novel there is

neither a correspondence between Stevens' 'I' nor between the inscribed 'you' and the actual 'you'" ("You Never Know" 56). When considered within the framework of narrative psychology, the unification of the I's in Stevens would bring about a realization of his problems and a narrative confrontation with himself which may lead him to healing. Therefore, it is possible to claim that as the distance between the "you"s in the novel gets closer, the distance between "I"s as narrators gets close. When Ishiguro's novels are evaluated in terms of their audience, it can be argued that the distance between narrator and audience in *The Remains of Day* is greater than in his early novels. Etsuko does not have a specific audience; she tells her self-narrative to herself. Ono tells his story to the people of the city he lives in. As for Stevens, he narrates to the British young butlers. As the audience gets more limited, the distance between them and the flesh-and-blood reader increases and so does self-deception, which proves true, from another angle, Wall's contention that un/reliability (so is self-deception) is a "matter of degree" (37). The greater the self-deception, the more distant the healing is for the narrators.

Although he is not fully aware, Stevens at the end of his self-narrative is claimed to get closer to what he lacks in his life, which may constitute the core of his mistakes, that is "human warmth." At the end of the novel, while sitting on the pier, he sees people who do not know each other coming together. "[F]amilies with children; couples, young and elderly, walking arm in arm" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 257). He continues, "it is curious how people can build such warmth among themselves so swiftly" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 257). It is possible to claim that at the end of this journey, Stevens has not been able to catch a glimpse that perhaps the solution to his trouble in life is to come together with people. However, Stevens cannot establish the link between events and their larger significance throughout his life. The only time that he was released of his self-deception was with Miss Kenton, another person. Only through other people can he change the value system of his life. But Steven is so isolated and so disconnected from human connections that he cannot live his life properly. Participating in social life could have helped him see these connections. In *An Artist of the Floating World*, it is only through the narratives of her daughter, son-in-law, and others around him that Ono is able to admit his mistakes. Ono's transformation has been possible only through the confirmation or falsification of

another person's involvement. But this is absent in Stevens's life. That is why, at the end of the book, the connection between people makes him feel good. Perhaps the reason why his life is full of mistakes is that he is cut off from these human connections. In the end, he has come close to realizing that the vague and superficial way of relating to his environment which he established might be a source of his past mistakes, and that perhaps the solution might be possible by changing his way of relating. But again, he does not fully understand this either. He instead confines human warmth to his profession. "In bantering lies the key to human warmth" (Ishiguro, *Remains* 258). At the very end, he aims to practice his bantering skills so that he will be "in a position to pleasantly surprise" Mr. Farraday, his employer (Ishiguro, *Remains* 258). In line with what D'hoker states, "Stevens' plea for 'bantering' is but an old habit cast in a new guise" (154).[19] It is as if he has changed clothes in the role he has played all his life; therefore, it would not be wrong to claim that Stevens continues voluntary servitude. In this context, Stevens, unfortunately, continues to deceive himself because he is not able to make proper connections between events.

Another question Frank asks in doing dialogic narrative analysis is, "What does the story make narratable?" (*Socio-Narratology* 75). Stevens's self-narrative tells the story of a person's inability to look at his turbulent and flawed past and see his mistakes because he does not have an insightful perspective from which to see them. Narrative psychology argues that people can evaluate their lives through stories and only through stories can they make meaningful connections with their environment. From this point of view, narrative psychotherapy claims that people can get rid of their distress by reconnecting with the stories that produce problems, working on them and rewriting them with the help of a therapist. In a related vein, some people, by reconnecting with stories on their own, can better understand themselves and find solutions to their problems. Similarly, in *A Pale View of Hills* and *An Artist of the Floating World*, the narrators were able to cope with some of the problems in their lives by working on their stories. But Stevens has not been able to

[19] Unlike this reading, Phelan and Martin consider Stevens's resolution to seek greater human warmth in his life as a progress, although they also stress that to reach it through bantering is an example of "underregarding" (107). In a similar vein, Marcus finds Stevens's equation of bantering with human warmth "naïve" and his attitude towards bantering "ridiculous" ("The Role of Narration" 137).

do this. *The Remains of the Day* shows the reader that each person on his or her own may not be able to look back into the past, confront it in a meaningful way and make a significant change. *The Remains of the Day* may suggest that narrative psychology and therapy alone may not be enough for healing, which might pose a problematic perspective. However, a second look reveals that this is not the case. The self-construction in narrative psychology considers the human being as a part of society and can more easily lead us to the idea that Stevens's relative social isolation may be the source of his troubles. And that Stevens's social isolation is a result of dominant narratives rather than an underlying character problem. It is precisely at this point that narrative psychotherapy tries to overcome this disconnection by working with the client. Unlike other novels, *The Remains of the Day* shows that not every person can do this alone. In the actual world, a therapist can help, or, as this novel suggests, participation in social life can enrich one's perspective and enable a more meaningful connection to one's past and the stories around them. Yet, the narrator is not aware of this.

In addition to that, Stevens's self-narrative also makes the inability of a person to connect different pieces together especially in politics narratable. Kazuo Ishiguro, by focusing on the interaction of a butler with his environment between the two World Wars, prompts readers to discuss their responsibilities in world politics and national politics. In one of his conversations, Ishiguro claims that "we would like to tell ourselves that this larger thing that we're contributing towards is something good and not something bad and that's how we draw a lot of our dignity. Often we just don't know enough about what's going on out there and I felt that that's what we're like. We're like butlers" (Vorda et al. 152). This is not to say that Ishiguro naturalizes it; rather, it can be accepted as a kind of warning that we too can easily behave in ways that can lead to unintended and unforeseen horrible consequences through being caught up in "dangerous stories." In that sense, it is a functioning metaphor to show that the limited human capacity can sometimes be manipulated by the power to serve its own interests. It also shows that it depends on us to choose whether we want to be a butler like Stevens who victimizes himself through dominant stories or one of those butlers who can criticize their employers and do not think that human dignity is a virtue reserved only for gentlemen.

By way of conclusion, perhaps the most challenging and painful journey a person may undertake in their lifetime is the internal journey. In Stevens's case, he should have embarked on this painful journey given his circumstances, but he has stubbornly avoided the pain. This, in turn, hinders him from experiencing a real transformation. From a narrative psychological perspective, it can be stated that Stevens has chosen to depict himself in the stories he interacts with as a victim or a narrative prisoner. This way, he has attempted to shift the responsibility for his wrongdoings away from himself. He has wanted this journey to create the feeling in the audience that it is a sincere exploration of his own past and an instrument for recognizing past errors. However, an alternative reading of his story reveals that Stevens has not been able to sincerely deconstruct his old self which is not functioning anymore. He has not been able to find the courage to confront his past. He has merely wanted to convince himself of a convenient version of the past to protect his psychological integrity and avoid an emotional breakdown. In this way, he has preserved his psychological well-being and, consequently, salvaged his day. But he has not conducted a proper self-examination. In fact, he has narrowly missed a solution. The solution maybe lies in his struggle to develop relationships. The Stevens of the interwar period was a character who could not build genuine relationships, but he realizes at the pier that interaction might have been the key to his salvation. However, he turns his back on this truth and chooses to continue living with the reality he is accustomed to. Ultimately, he once again misses the relationship between small things and their larger significance. He may have protected his individual psychological well-being according to him, but whether a reckoning with the past in the way Stevens did contributes to well-being in the social sense remains in the reader's mind as an important ethical question.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis has been to examine the relationship between the narrator-characters' pasts, their stories, and the way they narrate and relate to these stories, and their psychological well-being in Kazuo Ishiguro's early novels, namely *A Pale View of Hills*, *An Artist of the Floating World*, and *The Remains of the Day,* in the context of narrative psychology and therapy. Narrative psychology and therapy have common ground in their recognition of the central role of storytelling and narrative construction in human psychology and psychological well-being. The narrators in these three novels, namely Etsuko, Ono, and Stevens, try to cope with their distress by narrating their past from the advanced stages of their lives. All three have had troubles before starting their stories, and they develop new connections to the stories, replacing the stories that do not work with other kinds of narratives that make them feel better. The principles of narrative psychology and therapy have provided an appropriate conceptual basis for this research, and dialogic narrative analysis has been used as a method to study these narrators. Dialogic narrative analysis focuses on the relationship between the storyteller, the story, and the audience and examines the interrelationship of these three elements. In this context, the questioning of the psychological well-being of the narrators through their storytelling has been conducted within the framework of dialogic narrative analysis.

The study has shown that at the beginning of their self-narratives, these three narrators grapple with different narrative psychological problems. In *A Pale View of Hills*, the trauma of her daughter Keiko's suicide has created narrative breaks in Etsuko's self, and she tries to repair these ruptures through stories. In *An Artist of the Floating World*, Ono has become narratively trapped and unable to breathe within the existing order when the imperialist/fascist policies of Japan, which he supported

with his art before the Second World War, were condemned by society after the war. Ono gets out of this trouble by returning to the past, reading stories from the present and constructing them in a different way while Etsuko resorts to the story of her friend who experienced similar events as she did. In *The Remains of the Day*, the beliefs and principles of Lord Darlington, to whom Stevens has completely surrendered his will, have disastrous consequences, and Stevens is caught between the new narrative of the changing world and the old narrative, in a kind of narrative limbo. Unaware that the old narrative of the self has caused him trouble, he defends the old narrative against the narrative of the new world and resists changing his self-narrative, which is bound to break down though he is not yet aware of this at the close of his narrative.

The state of mind of these three narrators at the beginning of their storytelling is different from each other. In the light of Amit Marcus's approach, all three narrators are self-deceived narrators, but they differ from each other in terms of the ways and degrees of deception they engage in. Etsuko is deeply affected by her daughter's suicide, and she tends to "repress" it at the beginning, but she does not show a strong tendency to avoid confronting her daughter's suicide in time. Ono, like Etsuko, struggles to overcome his sense of guilt first through "repression," but, in addition, Ono wants to avoid the painful truth mostly through "negative misinterpretation," "positive misinterpretation," and "selective focus of attention." Like Etsuko, Ono is aware of his problem, but unlike her, he tries harder to deceive himself. Unlike these two narrators, Stevens is unaware of the fundamental problem and intensely deceives himself through "selective focus of attention." If there is a connection between the initial state of mind of these narrators, we can say that the distance between the flesh-and-blood reader and the narrators is gradually becoming wider from novel to novel. As Wong states, Ishiguro "presents ethical dilemmas confronting his characters and asks readers to examine the life strategies explored in the fiction" (Wong, *Kazuo Ishiguro* 14). The way these three narrator-characters respond to their ethical dilemmas and narrative congestion affects the way the reader would relate to their state of mind.

Ishiguro also creates a distance between the narrators and the flesh-and-blood reader through the narratees of the narrators' self-narratives. The narratee of these

novels can be listed respectively as “no specific person,” “the people of a city,” and “the young English butlers.” Etsuko does not limit her audience; she does not have a specific audience; one could even say that she is her own narratee as she deals with her own trauma. Ono addresses his story to the people of the city where he resides. Stevens, on the other hand, tells it only to young butlers who are practicing their profession. It is clear that the audience of the stories is gradually narrowing in scope. Therefore, one can argue that the more the narrators deceive themselves with their past in the narratives they construct, the narrower their audience becomes. Wong suggests that “direct appeals to the reader/listener of their stories allow the narrators to produce focused, if limited, versions of their stories” (*Kazuo Ishiguro* 65). From another perspective, then, it can be argued that narrators can only ensure the plausibility of their stories by limiting the audience that can witness their stories. In other words, by limiting the number of people who have access to their stories, narrators can have more control over how their stories are perceived. In parallel, it can be argued that narrators seem to gain psychological well-being as they narrow their audience, as the version of their self-narrative is more easily accepted by the audience, and thus they achieve psychological well-being. However, this also implies that the narrower the audience of the narrators, the greater the distance between them and the flesh-and-blood reader. In parallel with this, the less credible the narrators are, the deeper suspicion there is on the part of the flesh-and-blood reader. Therefore, identification with Ishiguro’s narrators gradually decreases from the first to the third. Therefore, unreliability increases as self-deception increases.

In terms of dealing with their troubles, these three narrators relate to their pasts in different ways. Etsuko confronts her past through the stories about others in order to repair the narrative fractures created by the traumatic event she experienced. Ono tries to escape the troubling effects of his past by clashing with the narratives of the society and sometimes accepting the narrative of the society and sometimes re-authoring his own past from a different point of view, and he struggles to find narratives that make him feel better. Stevens, on the other hand, still wants to maintain his old self-narrative in a drastically changed world, but from a narrative perspective he is unable to confront and recover from his past mistakes due to social isolation and narrative escape from other stories in society. In the first two novels,

the narrators achieve a sense of psychological well-being through storytelling. However, in the third novel, Stevens's past stories make him more distressed at some point rather than bringing him to a better state of mind through storytelling, but he does not realize this because he constantly misinterprets his experiences throughout his life. In this context, as narrative psychology points out, the narrators here make sense of their lives and their experiences through storytelling and construct their selves as a story at the same time. As narrative therapy emphasizes, stories and the way they are constructed are closely related to the narrators' state of mind.

The narrators of these novels feed on the narratives available in the culture and society in various ways. Narrative psychology emphasizes that the self is a narrative and therefore the self is in a reciprocal relationship with other narratives in the environment. In this context, the individual self cannot be separated from society. Etsuko, who lives in England, interprets her daughter's suicide mainly by referring to the post-war socio-cultural context of Nagasaki. For her, the narrative of the society and the historical period help her to contextualize her trauma and thus create a narrative through which she can make sense of it and articulate it. This also creates an understanding for the reader that an individual event is related to a larger social event. In this context, individual psychological well-being cannot be separated from social well-being. On the other hand, the event that causes Ono's distress is his artistic-political actions that led to Japan's entry into the war. Ono is in great distress because the narrative of the post-war period has completely changed and has rendered him unable to breathe in public. Ono achieves his psychological well-being by creating a narrative space for himself, sometimes by doing what the public narrative expects from him, and sometimes by re-authoring public narratives for his own psychological well-being. Here, however, individual well-being is not directly related to social well-being. Ono's individual well-being is partly constituted by his acknowledgment of his mistakes, but a deep confrontation is not carried out in a properly ethical way from the point of view of the actual reader. Ono does not address the responsibility for his mistakes in any depth, and the social good does not seem to be of Ono's concern. Nevertheless, through the stories and his storytelling, he attains individual well-being.

Stevens is different from these two narrators. In his past, he indirectly contributed to the rise of Nazism by serving Lord Darlington. However, he seems to lack the perspective to relate his psychological well-being to these social events, as he does not elaborate on this connection on a satisfactory level. Since he cannot see the relationship between the narrative of the self and social events, his journey into his past does not produce results similar to Etsuko and Ono. Since Stevens is not able to clearly define the core of his troubles through his self-narrative, he cannot reflect on his life thoroughly and experience a significant transformation. Therefore, the therapeutic effect of his storytelling cannot be observed in his case in the way Etsuko and Ono experience this. However, Stevens finds consolation at the end by closing the old chapters without having a substantial confrontation. Stevens's inability to achieve a real confrontation with his turbulent past through his narrative can be explained through his extreme isolation from social life. Since his self-narrative has a weak relationship with the narrative of the society, he cannot experience a significant confrontation through narrative clashes to make sense of his past mistakes. Since he cannot undertake such an endeavor on an individual level, it can be argued that social well-being does not emerge either.

Ishiguro states in one of his conversations that he is deeply interested in how one uses their memory for their own purposes, for their own ends (Mason & Ishiguro 347). The employment of memory for the narrators of these novels also differs. Utilizing the fallibility of memory, Etsuko confronts the truth as the first stage of her recovery from her trauma by making connections with another parallel story from the past, as the story about Sachiko and Mariko can be considered essentially her own story. Thus, the fallibility of memory works in her favor. For Ono, the workings of memory have two different effects. Increasing his sense of guilt, memory plays tricks on him at the beginning. But as he begins to achieve psychological well-being in time, memory's fallibility allows him to feel better. In stark contrast to them, Stevens's way of employing memory is quite different from the others, as he treats the past as a static phenomenon. He rejects the aspect of memory that is influenced and reconfigured by the present, which makes it dynamic; he therefore denies the insight that hindsight provides. Instead of shaping the self-narrative of his past according to the changing social narrative, he relates his old self-narrative to the old

narratives of society, and even if he himself does not realize it, in the eyes of the actual reader he is in a state of situational irony. Therefore, the workings of memory do not contribute positively to his state of mind.

At the end of their self-narratives, the narrators' psychological well-being varies from one to another. Etsuko's self-deception in dealing with her daughter's suicide makes her better able to deal with the truth of Keiko's suicide at the end of the novel. Etsuko's self-deception has a positive effect on her coping with her trauma, as she comes to the point where she is able to express to herself that the story she has been telling through Sachiko and Moriko is essentially about her and Keiko, and then she overcomes her self-deception and makes progress. Ono has clearly achieved psychological well-being, first by repressing his troubling past, then by facing the truth, and then again partly by self-deception. However, his achievement of well-being seems ethically problematic to the reader at some points. To a large extent, Ono achieves individual well-being without considering social well-being. By creating a space for his own self-narrative within the narrative of the society, he gets rid of the trouble. Stevens, on the other hand, is no further from his initial state of mind at the end of the storytelling. Since he has not been able to see the connections between the events clearly, he ends his story in the same way as he has started, by confining his desperate need of participation in social life to a narrow space and decides to constitute his self via a dysfunctional story.

These novels under scrutiny bear witness to the ways through which the narrators relate to their own narratives and the narratives of society in the past, and as a result of this relationship, they take certain actions, but these well-intentioned relationships produce negative consequences in their aftermath. They confront these troubling situations by narrating their lives and move on with their lives in the light of new self-constituting narratives. As Ishiguro himself claims, "the very things they [Etsuko, Ono, Stevens] thought they could be proud of have now become things they have to be ashamed of" (Mason & Ishiguro 339). In the first novel, a mother who has unknowingly paved the way to her daughter's suicide, in the second, an artist whose ideology of his art have led to the death of the masses, and in the last, a butler who has indirectly supported the rise of Nazism in order to make the world a better place. These novels show how these three different characters construct a narrative in

which they move on with their lives, even though the consequences of their past actions are quite harmful. Yugin Teo claims that "in employing broader themes, Ishiguro creates fiction that allows readers to use their own personal experiences to relate to the characters and their situations" (9). Therefore, the flesh-and-blood readers' own experiences crucial in determining how narrators approach their pasts.

Kazuo Ishiguro notes that what unites these three novels is that they deal with a similar territory. What these first three novels have in common is that the narrators make certain distressing and disorienting experiences in their past less harmful for themselves in the present. He is interested in the way people sometimes lie to themselves in order to bear the mistakes of their past, the way they attribute positive meanings to their failures in spite of everything, and at the same time the way they always want to benefit more from their achievements. As he puts it, "In a way, the first three books were each an attempt to rewrite or hone down the material used in the previous one" (Jaggi 23). So, these three novels actually deal with a similar theme, that is one looks back at their past and re-configures their troubling experiences to make it more bearable. In this regard, Ishiguro's early novels can be handled as a trilogy, as a *memory trilogy* or *reminiscence trilogy*.

Along with this, (the generic types of) first-person narration and narrator-characters in fiction are found in – but are not restricted to – fictional works focusing on an individual's life story, which have come to be defined under various categories: autobiography, biography, fictional biography, autobiographical fiction, biographical fiction, autofiction, biographical metafiction, fictional metabiography, bildungsroman, anti-bildungsroman, life narrative, bio-fiction, memoir, diaries, letters, and so on. The plethora of terms could make differentiating one from another difficult. For the purposes of convenience, it is possible to put them under a general category such as "life writing," which is posited as a comprehensive term for all such types of fiction by Smith and Watson: "Life writing as a general term for writing of diverse kinds that takes a life as its subject" (3). This study has altered this term and adopted "self-constituting narratives" to define Ishiguro's early novels. In these novels, narrator-characters narrate their life story to constitute a temporary sense of self and construct an anchor point for themselves during the times of crisis, at the threshold of transition, or after a radical change. In other words, Ishiguro's fiction

offers a space for its struggling narrator-characters to build a sense of self through narrating so that they can continue their lives by constructing a working self-story in relation to dominant cultural stories.

The contribution of this study to the field is multi-layered. Kazuo Ishiguro's early novels have been widely studied with respect to the narrators' transformation. In these studies, it has often been said that the narrators experience a transformation by constructing their past. However, this has not been explored in depth. Using the principles of narrative psychology and therapy to see the impact of storytelling on the narrator has provided a more suitable ground for an inquiry into healing and transformation through storytelling. In addition, the use of dialogic narrative analysis has made a significant contribution to how such research could be conducted. Dialogic narrative analysis made it possible to identify the narratives that influenced the narrators' state of mind clearly, to trace how these narratives affected their storytelling, and to see the state of mind they were at the end of the self-narrative. Therefore, this novel methodology has contributed to the field by allowing us to revisit Ishiguro's early novels on a more appropriate terrain, leading to more comprehensive research.

Some scholars place Ishiguro's early novels in the category of Linda Hutcheon's "historiographic metafiction" – a poetics of postmodernism (Furst 550, Lang 144), as they think that these narrators provide an alternative version of the historical periods. However, this does not seem entirely accurate because these narrators do not primarily question the veracity of historical facts. Rather, they are more concerned with their own relationship with the historical context. In line with this, Teo states that, "Ishiguro appropriates history and stereotypes that exist in the consciousness of the reading public in order to explore his broad themes" (57). In one of his conversations, Ishiguro[20] is asked why the central character of his second novel is not a novelist but a painter. He states that he tries "to avoid that very postmodern element" in his novels (Mason & Ishiguro 340). This shows that Ishiguro establishes a distance from postmodernism in his fiction on purpose. In this respect, this study aligns with what Wright states in relation to categorizing Ishiguro's novels

[20] In his conversation with Vorda and Herzinger, Ishiguro clearly distinguishes himself from Salman Rushdie, a major figure of postmodernism (135-136).

under postmodernist literature: "Ishiguro's works exhibit none of the playful historical relativism of postmodernism proper" (Wright 84). Instead, Wright places Ishiguro in the category of "late modernism"[21] (85), thinking that Ishiguro, like Samuel Beckett and J. M. Coetzee, does "not attempt to affirm a different or better reality;" rather he works "within the present one, undermining it, rendering it unhomely" (85). Along with these, D'hoker argues that Ishiguro remains committed to "a form of psychological realism," as he is interested in "memory, trauma, identity and in unconscious process […]" (169).

However, this study suggests that Ishiguro's novels can also be discussed under the category of literature after postmodernism, because these novels try to fill in the space created by postmodernism in literature, that is the sense of fragmentation and therefore purposelessness. This study has shown that the focus of Ishiguro's early novels is on the narrators' struggle to survive despite their past mistakes, the construction of self-narratives embedded in historical facts, and the reassembling of shattered aspects into a temporary self-constituting narrative. Such concerns distance Ishiguro's early novels from mainstream postmodernist fiction. Robert L. McLaughlin, who conceptualizes the literature beyond postmodernism as "post-postmodernism," asserts that "the emphasis in the post-postmodernist writers is less on the self-conscious wordplay and the violation of narrative conventions and more on representing the world we all more or less share" (67). In the same line of thinking, Ihab Hassan strongly holds that "We must turn to truth, truth spoken not only to power but, more anguished, truth spoken to ourselves" (313). Hassan adds further:

> Beyond postmodernism, beyond the evasions of poststructuralist theories and pieties of postcolonial studies, we need to discover new relations between selves and others, margins and centers, fragments and wholes – indeed, new relations between selves and selves, margins and margins, centers and centers – discover what I call a new, pragmatic and planetary civility. (Hassan 307)

Hassan's argument is quite clear on the need in the era of postmodernity with respect to the aesthetics of literature after postmodernism. His approach clearly indicates a powerful urge to break away from poststructuralist theories as they are embodied in

[21] Likewise, Walkowitz approaches Ishiguro's novels in the context of modernist fiction, because Ishiguro, according to her, uses modernist strategies while treating national topics within international concerns.

literature. What Hassan offers is "realism," "empathy," and "an aesthetic of trust." In other words, what he preaches is sincerity, connection, and communication. Huber traces similar concerns in contemporary fiction. As Huber puts it, "realism, sincerity and authenticity make their appearance with a striking frequency" in literature after postmodernism (6). The focus in contemporary fiction shifts towards reconstruction, (re-)connection, communication, and engagement. This study suggests that dwelling on protagonists' life stories written in the first person, Ishiguro's novels seem to demonstrate a need for the reconstructing of the self, which resonates well with the arguments concerning fiction after postmodernism. Contrary to the previous culturally dominant representation of the self that is decentered, what is foregrounded in his novels in the end is the idea that however bad, complex, or fluctuating the condition is, Ishiguro's characters are in search for reconstruction, a rather stable meaning, or values of their lives. As there are diverse views regarding the aesthetic categorization of Ishiguro's novels, further research could be directed towards a categorical positioning of Ishiguro's novels, especially relating them to the fiction after postmodernism.

Other suggestions for future studies may also be made. The theoretical and methodological framework used in this study – narrative psychology through dialogic narrative analysis – has not been used in literary studies before to our knowledge. This framework, which focuses on narrators' psychological states of mind in relation to stories and storytelling practices and characters' processes of confronting their own pasts, can be used in other studies involving character-narrators to examine whether narrators have similar or different tendencies. Moreover, the narrators' individual attainment of well-being can be seen as ethically problematic in *The Remains of the Day*. In this context, the ethical position of narrators and novels in general can be examined more closely. In this respect, "narrative ethics," which "explores the intersections between the domain of stories and storytelling and that of moral values" (Phelan, "Narrative Ethics"), and Ishiguro's novels could be another field to explore. Apart from that, the question of how the created world influences or shapes the narrators' selves by focusing on the relationship between "narrative world-making/building," which explores "how people use storytelling practices to build, update, and modify narrative worlds"

(Herman 71), and “self-narratives” could be the subject of another study. Furthermore, this study has examined the narrators’ psychological states in different phases of narrative, but one can ask, “what about the readers’ psychological states during the act of reading and after completing the narrative?” Within the framework of cognitive narratology, the salutary effects of reading on the reader could also be studied. In this respect, “salutogenesis” in the field of medical sociology, which refers to the study of narratives to maintain health and promote well-being, could provide fertile ground for such a study.

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APPENDICES

A. CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Surname, Name: Nazli, Elzem
Country of Birth: Türkiye
Email: [redacted]

EDUCATION

Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
MA	METU, English Literature	2016
BA	Akdeniz University, English Language Teaching	2012
High School	Savaştepe Anatolian Teacher Training High School	2007

WORK EXPERIENCE

Year	Place	Enrollment
2013-Present	METU, Department of Foreign Language Education	Research Assistant
2013-2013	Batman University, Department of Western Languages and Literatures	Research Assistant

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Advanced English, Beginner German.

PUBLICATIONS

1. Nazli, Elzem. "The Ideal Ego vs. the Ego Ideal: Fictionalization of Lacanian Perversion in Poe's 'The Imp of the Perverse.'" *Cankaya University Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences,* vol. 15. no. 1, 2021, pp. 122-134.
2. Nazli, Elzem. "History as Fiction: D. M. Thomas's *The White Hotel* as an Example of Historiographic Metafiction." *Gaziantep University Journal of Social Sciences*, vol. 18, no. 1, 2019, pp. 13-28.

3. Nazli, Elzem & Elif Öztabak-Avcı. “A Rhetorical Narratological Approach to the Treatment of Crime and Criminals in *Great Expectations*.” *Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi,* vol. 58. no.1, 2018, pp. 571–594.

B. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

2017'de Nobel Edebiyat Ödülü'nü kazanan Kazuo Ishiguro hem edebi teknikleri hem de ele aldığı temalarla küresel bir yazar olduğunu bir kez daha göstermiştir. Yazdıkları, okuyucuya belirgin bir şekilde Japon kültürüyle ilişkili bazı unsurları korurken, aynı zamanda küresel insani meseleleri ele alarak evrensel temaları keşfetme konusundaki sürekli hayranlığını da yansıtmaktadır (Wong, *Kazuo Ishiguro* 3). Ishiguro'nun Nobel ödülüne layık görülme nedeni, insani konulara olan ısrarlı ilgisine uygun olarak, komite tarafından şu şekilde açıklanmıştır: Kazuo Ishiguro, "büyük duygusal güce sahip romanlarında, dünyayla olan hayali bağlantı hissimizin altındaki uçurumu ortaya çıkarmıştır" (The Nobel). Bu çalışma, Ishiguro'nun erken dönem romanlarındaki birinci şahıs anlatılarına odaklanarak, anlatıcı-karakterlerini ve onların benlik-anlatılarını analiz etmeye çalışarak, insanlar ve dünya arasındaki bu "uçurumu" bir dereceye kadar keşfetmeyi ve karakterize etmeyi amaçlamaktadır, çünkü Ishiguro'nun ilk romanlarındaki tüm anlatıcılar, kendileri hakkındaki algıları ve çevrelerindeki dünyayla ilişkileri arasındaki bağlantı üzerinde tekrar tekrar çalışmaktadır.

Gregory Mason ile yaptığı söyleşide Ishiguro, insanoğlu ile dünya arasındaki kopuk ilişkiye duyduğu derin ilgiyi açıkça ifade eder: "Tüm samimiyetleriyle, hayatları boyunca bir şey için çok sıkı ve belki de cesurca çalışan, iyi bir şeye katkıda bulunduklarına tamamen inanan, ancak hayatlarının sonuna geldiklerinde sosyal iklimin onları alt üst ettiğini gören insanlarla ilgileniyorum" (Mason & Ishiguro 339). Bu tez, Ishiguro'nun romanlarında anlatıcı-karakterlerin dünya ile ilişkilerinde yaşanan benzer kırılmalara ve bu kırılmaların benliklerinde yarattığı kırılmaları aşma çabalarına odaklanmaktadır. Kazuo Ishiguro'nun anlatılarını ve benliklerini benlik-anlatıları aracılığıyla eşzamanlı olarak bilinçli bir şekilde inşa eden anlatıcı-karakterler içeren erken dönem birinci şahıs romanlarını analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu bağlamda ele alınacak romanlar *Uzak Tepeler* (1982), *Değişen Dünyada Bir Sanatçı* (1986) ve *Günden Kalanlar* (1989)'dir.

Uzak Tepeler'de hikâye, İngiltere'de yaşayan yaşlı bir Japon kadın olan Etsuko tarafından anlatılır. İkinci kızı Niki'nin ziyaretiyle tetiklenen Etsuko, hayatındaki en acı anı, ilk kızı Keiko'nun intiharıyla ilişkili geçmiş olayları düşünür ve anlatır. *Değişen Dünyada Bir Sanatçı*'da, eski bir faşist/emperyalist propagandacı ressam olan Masuji Ono, büyük kızı Sachiko'nun ziyaretleri aracılığıyla geçmişine bakar ve İkinci Dünya Savaşı'ndan önce bir sanatçı olarak övündüğü statüsünün yerle bir olduğu ve tanıdıklarının onun savaşın zararlı sonuçlarından sorumlu olduğu yönündeki suçlamalarından kaçamadığı bugünüyle başa çıkmaya çalışır. *Günden Kalanlar* ise hayatını "büyük bir kâhya" olma ilkelerine bağlı kalarak geçiren ancak daha sonra yaptığı hataları ve yaşadığı hayatı sorgulamaya başlayan kâhya Stevens'ın yaşam öyküsüdür. Eski kâhyası ve bastırılmış aşkı Bayan Kenton ile buluşmak üzere bir yolculuğa çıkar. Yolculuk boyunca, hayatının anlamını aramak için geçmişini anlatır ve geçmişiyle hesaplaşır, şimdiki durumunu kabullenir ve geleceğe dair öngörülerde bulunur.

Bu çalışma, sırasıyla Etsuko, Ono ve Stevens adlı anlatıcı-karakterlerin, durum ne kadar iç karartıcı ve inişli çıkışlı olursa olsun, hikâye anlatımı yoluyla hayatlarına devam edebilmek için geçici bir benlik duygusu oluşturduğunu savunmaktadır. Ishiguro'nun bu ilk romanlarındaki tüm anlatıcılar hayatlarına dönüp bakar ve bir şekilde sıkıntılı yönleri olan hayatlarını sorgularlar. Yugin Teo'nun da belirttiği gibi, bu anlatıcılar "çeşitli nedenlerle bu yanlışı düzeltmek için geçmişe dönmek zorunda kalırlar" (7). Anlatıcı-karakterlerin geçmişe yaptıkları yolculuklar sürekli olarak fiziksel yolculuklarla desteklenir, dolayısıyla zamansal yolculuklar ve mekânsal hareketler anlatılarda iç içe geçer. Bu çalışma için bu üç romanın seçilmesinin nedeni, bu üç romanda anlatıcı-karakterlerin hikâye anlatımlarının başında hayatlarında anlatısal kırılmalar yaratan sıkıntılar yaşamaları ve benlik-anlatılarının sonunda sıkıntılarının üstesinden gelerek geçmişleriyle hesaplaşmaları ve daha iyi bir psikolojik esenliğe kavuşmalarıdır. Ishiguro'nun romanlarındaki anlatıcılar, anlatı yoluyla geçmişteki yanlışlarıyla ya da şimdiki çatışmalarıyla yüzleşmek için geçmişleriyle sürekli bir diyalog halindedirler. Öyle ya da böyle sıkıntılı bir ruh hali içindeyken, sonunda ayakta kalmalarını sağlayacak geçici bir bütünlüğe kavuşurlar.

Ishiguro'nun ilk romanları, anlatıcıların hikâye anlatımı yoluyla yaşam krizleriyle başa çıkmasının yollarını tasvir eder. Genel olarak, durum ne kadar iç karartıcı olursa olsun hayatta kalmak gibi bir insan içgüdüsünü vurgularlar ve anlatıcılar nihayetinde hayat hikâyelerini yeniden oluşturarak teselli bulurlar. Karakterlerin oluşturdukları benlik-anlatıları psikolojik anlamda yatıştırıcı ya da iyileştirici etkiler yaratır. Dolayısıyla hikâye anlatıcılığı, Ishiguro'nun elinde, sağlam bir dayanaktan yoksun kahramanlarının benliklerini inşa etmelerine, toplumda güvenli bir yer edinmelerine ve daha iyi bir psikolojik ruh haline sahip olarak yenilenmiş bir benlik duygusuyla hayatlarına devam etmelerine olanak tanıyan bir araca dönüşür. Başka bir deyişle, anlatıcı-karakterlerin anlatıları, onların sorunlu benlik algıları üzerinde terapötik bir etkiye sahiptir.

Yazmanın terapötik etkisi Ishiguro'nun çok iyi bildiği ve önemsediği bir olgudur. Yazmanın olumlu psikolojik etkisi üzerine yaptığı bir konuşmada şunları söylüyor: "Bence pek çok [yazar] derinlerde bir yerde olan bir şeyden dolayı yazıyor ve aslında bunu çözmek için muhtemelen çok geç. Yazmak bir tür teselli ya da terapidir" (Vorda vd. 151). Ishiguro'nun yazmanın terapötik doğasına dair gözlemleri bu konuşmada asıl olarak yazara odaklansa da iddiasının kahramanlarını da kapsadığını iddia etmek mümkündür. Onun anlatıcı-karakterleri, hikâyelerini anlatarak sıkıntılarından kurtulmaya çalışırlar. Bu yönüyle Ishiguro'nun anlatıcı-karakterleri insani deneyimlerin içine fazlasıyla girmiş, dolayısıyla insana benzeyen figürlerdir. Matthew Beedlam'ın güzel bir şekilde özetlediği gibi, Ishiguro'nun eserlerinin temel meselelerinden biri "hayatlarımızı nasıl yaşadığımızdır" (101). Ishiguro'nun ilk romanlarındaki karakterleri gündelik hayattan ve insanların sıradan hayatta yaşadıkları kaygılardan kopuk değildir. Bu nedenle bu çalışma Ishiguro'nun anlatıcı-karakterlerini metinsel kurgulardan ziyade insan benzeri figürler olarak ele almakta ve anlatıcı-karakterlerin sıkıntılarıyla başa çıkma yollarını incelemektedir.

Bu çalışma, anlatı psikolojisini kuramsal bir çerçeve olarak kullanarak anlatıcı-karakterlerin dünya ile bozulan ilişkilerini ve bununla başa çıkma yöntemlerini incelemektedir. Ishiguro'nun anlatıcı-karakterlerinin yaşadıkları sıkıntılarla başa çıkmak için geçmişe yolculuk yaparak benliklerini yeniden oluşturmaları anlatı psikolojisi yaklaşımıyla yakından ilişkilidir. 1980'lerde psikoloji disiplini içinde ortaya çıkan nispeten yeni bir yaklaşım olan anlatı psikolojisi, benliği

anlatı olarak ele alır. İnsanların yaşamlarını, deneyimlerini ve kimliklerini anlamlandırmak için nasıl hikâyeler yarattıklarını, yorumladıklarını ve paylaştıklarını araştırır. Anlatı psikolojisinin öncüleri olan Theodore Sarbin ve Jeromy Bruner, insanların büyük ölçüde benliklerini anlatı yoluyla inşa ettiklerini ve eylemlerini anlatılar aracılığıyla belirlediklerini ileri sürmektedir. *The Storied Nature of Human Existence* (1986) adlı kitabında Sarbin, anlatıyı "psikolojinin kök metaforu" olarak tanımlamakta ve anlatıyı insan eylemlerinin düzenleyici ilkesi olarak ele almaktadır; çünkü anlatı, bireyin eylemlerinin nedenlerinin yanı sıra olayların nedenlerini de içermesine olanak sağlamaktadır (3). "The Narrative Construction of Reality" (1991) adlı çalışmasında Bruner ise "deneyimlerimizi ve insani olaylara ilişkin belleğimizi esas olarak anlatı biçiminde düzenlediğimizi" iddia eder (4). Dolayısıyla anlatı, insanların kendilerini ve deneyimlerini anlamlandırmaları açısından birincil bir eğilim olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Buna paralel olarak, Ishiguro'nun incelenen romanlarındaki anlatıcı-karakterler de benlik-anlatıları aracılığıyla deneyimlerini anlamlandırmakta ve benliklerini inşa etmektedirler. Dolayısıyla anlatı psikolojisi, bu romanlardaki anlatıcılara yaklaşmak için uygun bir zemin olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır.

Bununla birlikte, bu çalışma, anlatıcılar tarafından aktarılan benlik-anlatıların terapötik bir amaca hizmet ettiğini, anlatıcıların sıkıntılarını anlamalarına ve üstesinden gelmelerine yardımcı olduğunu iddia etmektedir. Bu çalışmada, anlatılar ve terapötik etkileri arasındaki ilişkiyi keşfetmek için, bir uygulama olarak anlatı psikolojisi üzerinden gelişen anlatı terapisinden yararlanılmıştır. Anlatı terapisi, bireylerin geçmişlerini bir anlatı olarak görmelerine yardımcı olmayı amaçlar ve hikâyelerin benlik duygularını nasıl etkilediğini belirleyerek, bireylerin kendilerini dağınık ve tutarsız benlik hikâyelerinden kurtarmaları ve kendi güç ve eylemliliklerini tanımaları için bir fırsat sağlar. Önde gelen anlatı terapistlerinden Michael White ve David Epston, *Narrative Means to Therapeutic Ends* (1990) adlı eserlerinde anlatı terapisinin temelini oluşturmakta ve terapötik süreci şu şekilde açıklamaktadırlar: "Sorunu dışsallaştırmak, sorunun insanlar üzerindeki ve insanların sorun üzerindeki etkisini haritalamak, ihmal edilen yönlere dikkat çekmek, bu keşifler ışığında ilişkileri gözden geçirmek ve yeni hikâyeyi gerçekleştirmek" (Dwivedi & Gardner 32). Buradaki en önemli unsur, bireyin dönüştürücü

kapasitesine ve iradesine olan inancı ortaya koymaktır. Bireyin etkileşim içinde olduğu sınırlayıcı ve güçsüzleştirici hikâyeleri parçalara ayırma ve terapistin yardımıyla bu hikâyeleri yeniden şekillendiren dönüştürücü bir anlatı inşa etme girişimini vurgular. Bu doğrultuda, bu çalışma anlatı terapisinden yararlanarak anlatıcı-karakterlerin sıkıntıları üzerinde nasıl çalıştıklarını ve yaşam-anlatılarındaki kırılmaları nasıl düzelttiklerini araştırmaktadır.

Ancak, bu çalışmanın amacı anlatıların ve hikâye anlatımının kurgusal anlatıcı-karakterler üzerindeki terapötik etkisini incelemek olduğundan, anlatı psikolojisi ve terapisinin edebi analiz için kullanılması bazı yöntemsel zorluklar ortaya çıkarmaktadır. Anlatı psikolojisi ve terapisi temelde klinik bir ortamda bulunan insanlar üzerine kuruludur; dolayısıyla anlatı terapisi terapist ve danışan arasında bir etkileşim gerektirir ve terapistin katılımını ve aracılığını gerektirir. Bu romanlarda terapist diye bir karakter yoktur ve anlatıcılar yaşam anlatılarındaki kırılmalarla baş etmede yalnızdırlar. Bu nedenle, anlatı psikolojisi ve terapi yöntemlerini doğrudan edebi bir analize uygulamak bir uyumsuzluğa yol açacaktır. Bu engeli aşmak için sosyoloji alanında araştırma yapan Arthur W. Frank'ın *Letting Stories Breathe: A Socio-Narratology* (2010) adlı kitabında önerdiği diyalojik anlatı analizi yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Diyalojik anlatı analizi temel anlamıyla hikâye, anlatıcı ve dinleyici arasındaki ilişkiyi sorgular. Bakhtinci "diyalojizm" teriminden yola çıkan Frank, diyalojik anlatı yaklaşımında "yaşamların sanatsal temsilleri" olarak öykülere beş spekülatif soru yöneltir ve "öykülerin geçmişi yeniden şekillendirdiğini ve geleceği imgesel olarak yansıttığını" iddia eder (Frank, "Practicing Dialogical Narrative Analysis" 33). Ishiguro'nun anlatıcılarının anlatı terapisinde olduğu gibi hikâye anlatma yoluyla psikolojik esenliğe ulaşmaya çalıştıkları düşünüldüğünde, hikâyelerin anlatıcının ruh hali üzerindeki etkisini görmek için diyalojik anlatı analizi bu çalışmanın amaçları doğrultusunda edebi analizde uygun bir yöntem olacaktır.

Bu bağlamda bu çalışma, Ishiguro'nun anlatıcı-karakterlerini değerlendirmek üzere çeşitli disiplinlerin bir araya geldiği disiplinlerarası bir çalışmadır. Psikoloji disiplini içerisinde yer alan bir yaklaşım olan anlatı psikolojisinden yararlanarak, anlatıcıların benlik-anlatılarının psikolojik iyi oluşları üzerindeki etkisini klinik bir yaklaşım olan anlatı terapisinden yararlanarak incelemeye çalışmakta, ayrıca bu

sorgulamayı son zamanlarda sosyal bilimler alanında sıklıkla kullanılan yorumlayıcı bir yöntem olan diyalojik anlatı analizi yöntemiyle yapmaya çalışmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, bu çalışma Ishiguro'nun anlatıcılarının psikolojik evrenlerini ve öykülerin onların psikolojik iyi oluşları üzerindeki etkilerini anlamak için yeni bir yöntemsel yaklaşım kullanmaktadır.

Bu çalışmanın argümanı, Cynthia Wong ve Yugin Teo tarafından sunulan argüman ve sonuçlarla benzerlikler göstermektedir, ancak bu çalışmada kullanılan teorik çerçeve ve yöntem onlardan farklıdır. Cynthia F. Wong, *Kazuo Ishiguro* (2000) adlı çalışmasında Ishiguro'nun romanlarını Okur-Tepkisi kuramı ışığında okur. Wong, Ishiguro'nun romanlarını bu kuram ışığında okumanın, anlatıcı-karakterlerinin yaşamlarındaki tarihsel ve kişisel güçlere nasıl tepki verdiklerini incelemek için yararlı olduğunu iddia eder. Wong, bu teori aracılığıyla Ishiguro'nun anlatıcı-karakterlerine insan olarak yaklaşmaktadır: "Anlatıcılar insani bir eğilim ve teselli ihtiyacı gösterirler" (*Kazuo Ishiguro* 19). Hafıza unsurlarına ve anlatıcıların güvenilmezliğine odaklanarak, Ishiguro'nun anlatıcılarının sorunlu geçmişleriyle nasıl ilişki kurduklarını inceler. Wong'un belirttiği gibi, Ishiguro'nun romanlarında ana karakterler, hikâye anlatımı yoluyla "katharsis" yaşamayı umarak travmayı yeniden ziyaret ederek geçmiş kayıpları için teselli ararlar (Wong, *Kazuo Ishiguro* 2). Wong, anlatıcıların kendi geçmişlerini yeniden inşa ederek "kayıplarının acısıyla başa çıkmaya çalıştıklarını" savunur (*Kazuo Ishiguro* 24). Bu çalışma da benzer bir düşünceyle, anlatıcı-karakterlerin sorunlu geçmişleriyle nasıl başa çıktıklarına ve hayatlarına daha iyi bir ruh haliyle devam etmeyi nasıl başardıklarına odaklanmaktadır.

Öte yandan, *Kazuo Ishiguro and Memory* (2014) adlı çalışmasında Yugin Teo, Ishiguro'nun romanlarında hafızanın karmaşık işleyişini incelemek için ağırlıklı olarak Paul Ricoeur'ün kuramsal çerçevesinden yararlanır. Teo'nun bellek, kimlik ve güvenilmezlik arasındaki etkileşime yaptığı vurgu, bu çalışmadaki benzer odak noktalarıyla örtüşmekte ve ortak bir tematik kaygıyı yansıtmaktadır. Teo'nun analizinde, Ishiguro'nun eserlerinde anlatıcıların geçmişteki kişisel sıkıntılarını yeniden ziyaret etme eylemi Freud'un melankoli kavramı üzerinden ele alınmaktadır. Teo, Ishiguro'nun anlatıcıları geçmişi unutmak istemedikleri için hem Ricoeur hem de Freud'un bakış açılarından bir farklılığın altını çizer ve böylece hafızanın

karmaşıklığına dair farklı bir bakış açısı sunar. Teo'ya göre, "Ishiguro'nun romanlarına içkin olan bellek çalışması, nostalji ve ütopik geleneklerle ilişki kurarak kayıp nesnenin belleğinin uzatılmasını ve kayıp nesnenin önceki varlığının olumlu bir şekilde onaylanmasını içerir" (10). Teo bu iddiasında yanılmamaktadır; bu çalışma da benzer şekilde anlatıcıların geçmişi unutmak yerine onu yeniden yazarak sıkıntılarının üstesinden gelmeye çalıştıklarını savunuyor.

Bu çalışmada sunulan argümanlar ve sonuçlar Wong ve Teo'nun çalışmalarıyla dikkate değer benzerlikler göstermektedir. Ancak bu çalışma, hikâye anlatıcılığı ve benlik inşası arasındaki karmaşık ilişkinin yanı sıra hikâye anlatıcılığı ve psikolojik esenlik arasındaki bağlantıya daha kapsamlı ve incelikli bir bakış açısı sağlamak için farklı bir teorik çerçeve ve yöntem kullanarak önceki çalışmalardan ayrılmaktadır. Önceki akademik çabalar, hikâye anlatıcılığı ve benlik inşası arasındaki bağlantıların yanı sıra hikâye anlatıcılığı ve terapötik etkileri arasındaki ilişkiyi yeterince derinlikli bir biçimde ele almamıştır. Sonuç olarak, bu çalışmanın genel amacı, hikâyeler, hikâye anlatma teknikleri, benlik oluşum süreçleri ve psikolojik iyi oluş göstergeleri arasındaki çok boyutlu ilişkileri derinlemesine inceleyerek bu araştırma boşluğunu doldurmaktır. Bu kapsamlı inceleme sayesinde, bu çalışma, anlatıların insan deneyimi üzerindeki derin etkilerine dair anlayışımızı zenginleştirmeyi ve hikâye, hikâye anlatımı ve bunların terapötik etkileri arasındaki ilişkiye odaklanan araştırmalara daha incelikli yaklaşımların önünü açmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Bu çalışmanın teorik bölümü, anlatılara atfedilen tanım ve işlevlerin bir incelemesini sunmakta, anlatılar ve insan psikolojisi arasındaki bağlantıya ilişkin bir tartışma sunmaktadır. Daha sonra, John McLeod ve Dan P. McAdams'ın teorik çalışmalarına özel bir vurgu yapılarak anlatı psikolojisinin arka planı ve çeşitli yaklaşım ve akımları sunulmaktadır. Bu bölümde tartışılan yaklaşımların klinik olarak terapist/danışan ilişkisine dayandığını belirtmek önemlidir. Buna ek olarak, bu bölüm, kurgusal eserlerin analizinde bu çalışmanın yöntemi olan "diyalojik anlatı analizi" araçları üzerine inşa edilmiştir. Seçilen edebi eserlerde terapist/danışan etkileşimi olmadığından, bir terapistin müdahaleleri ve yönlendirmeleri bu çalışma için geçerli değildir. Ancak anlatıcı-karakterlerin hikâyelerini anlatırken kendi başlarına benzer bir süreçten geçtikleri ve hikâye anlatma pratikleri yoluyla iyileşme

sağladıkları da iddia edilebilir. Dolayısıyla bu noktada odak noktası, hikâyeler ve hikâye anlatıcıları arasındaki terapötik ilişkidir. Teori bölümünün ilerleyen kısımlarında, anlatıcı-karakterlerin geçmişleriyle olan ilişkilerinde edebi analizin ölçütü olarak ela alınan "geriye bakış" ve "kendini kandırma" kavramları üzerinde durulmuştur.

Tezin ilk analiz bölümü, hikâyeler ve hikâye anlatıcılığı arasındaki ilişkiye ve bunların hikâye anlatıcısı üzerindeki terapötik etkisine odaklanarak Etsuko'nun *Uzak Teperler*'de geçmişine yaptığı psikolojik yolculuğu incelemektedir. Etsuko'nun psikolojik yolculuğunun, kızı Keiko'nun trajik intiharının ardından kendini toparlama çabasına hizmet ettiği savunulmaktadır. Etsuko'nun hikâyesinin merkezinde, travmatik bir olay olarak yaşam öyküsünde anlatısal kırılmalar yaratan kızının intiharı yer almaktadır. Anlatı psikolojisi perspektifinden bakıldığında travma, tutarlı bir yaşam öyküsünün parçalanması anlamına gelir. Benzer şekilde, intiharın neden olduğu anlatı kırılmaları Etsuko'nun hayatını alt üst eden ve Etsuko'nun geleneksel yaşam anlatısını bozan bir etkiye sahiptir. Hikâye anlatımının başında Etsuko anlatısal olarak "kısıtlanmıştır," yani Keiko'nun intiharını konumlandırabileceği ve anlamlandırabileceği işleyen bir anlatı inşa edememektedir. Deneyimini etrafında düzenleyebileceği mevcut bir anlatı olmadığından, okuyucu Etsuko'nun kızının intiharını anlamlandırabileceği bir anlatı bulmak için nasıl mücadele ettiğine tanık olur. Kızının trajik sonunun ardından Etsuko'nun Nagasaki ile ilgili anıları yeniden su yüzüne çıkar ve onu eski arkadaşı Sachiko'nun hikâyesini hatırlamaya yöneltir. Bu hikâye aracılığıyla Etsuko, atom bombası sonrasında Sachiko'nun kızı Mariko ile olan ilişkisi ile kendisinin Keiko ile olan ilişkisi arasında paralellikler kurar ki bu da anlatı psikolojisi perspektifinden sorunu dışsallaştırmanın bir yolu olarak kabul edilebilir.

Etsuko, Sachiko'nun hikâyesi gibi diğer paralel hikâyeleri kullanarak kızının intiharını kabullenmeye çalışır. Bununla birlikte, Keiko'nun intiharını bağlamsallaştırmak için savaş sonrası Japonya'nın tarihsel bağlamına başvurur. Hikâye anlatımında kendini kandırmada kullanılan zihinsel stratejiler olarak "seçici dikkat odağı" ve "bastırma"yı kullanarak kızının ölümüyle yüzleşmeye çalışır. Hikâyesinin sonunda, travmadan kurtulmasında kısmi bir ilerleme vardır. Sachiko ve Mariko ile ilgili hikâyenin de yardımıyla Etsuko Keiko'yu İngiltere'ye getirmekle

hata yaptığını kabul eder. Etsuko'nun travmasından tam olarak aşmasa da benlik anlatısının terapötik olarak yeniden işlenmesi yoluyla trajediyle yüzleşmeye çalıştığı ve sonunda psikolojik refahında bir ilerleme olduğu söylenebilir. Bu çalışma, Etsuko'nun geçmiş ve şimdiki anlatıları iç içe geçirmesinin, yasın karmaşıklığını müzakere etmek, kızının intiharını yeniden işlemek ve nihayetinde anlatıyı yeniden yapılandırarak teselli aramak için kasıtlı bir strateji olduğunu öne sürmektedir. Genel olarak roman, travmayı anlamlandırmada, geçmişle yüzleşmede ve psikolojik esenlik arayışında hikâye anlatımının terapötik gücünün altını çizmektedir. Edebi analiz ilk olarak Etsuko'nun hikâye anlatımının başlangıcındaki ruh haline, ardından hikâye anlatımı sürecine ve travması üzerinde nasıl çalıştığına odaklanmaktadır. Son olarak, analiz Etsuko'nun hikâye anlatımının kapanışındaki ruh halini odaklanmaktadır.

İkinci analiz bölümü, tabloları Japonya'nın faşist/emperyalist propagandasının bir parçasını oluşturan Masuji Ono'nun, suçluluk hissiyle başa çıkma sürecindeki hikâyelerle nasıl etkileşimde bulunduğunu inceler. Anlatı psikolojisinden faydalanan bu bölüm, Ono'nun hayatındaki hikâyelerle ilişkisi ve psikolojik iyilik hali arasındaki ilişkiyi inceler. Ono'nun anlatısının erken aşamalarında, öncelikle "baskılama" aracılığıyla suçluluk hissini yenmeye çalışır, ardından kendini aldatma içgüdüsünde kullanılan "olumsuz yanlı yorumlama," "olumlu yanlı yorumlama" ve "seçici dikkat odaklama" gibi zihinsel stratejilerle mücadele eder. Ancak, eski benliğini oluşturan hikâyeler, savaştan sonraki Japonya'da onun nefes almasını engeller. Ono, kendine bir alan yaratmak için çaba harcasa da etrafındaki hikâyeler onun rahat hissetmesine izin vermez ve onu anlatısal olarak sınırlar. Bu dönemde Ono'nun sembolik olarak intihar etme noktasında içsel bir savaş verdiği savunulabilir. Ono'nun kendi anlatısı, savaş sonrası toplumun gözünde meşruiyetini kaybeder ve geçmişine karşı bir çözüm bulamaz, tüm çabalarına rağmen, kendi anlatısı bir çıkmaza girer. Ayrıca, karanlık geçmişi şu anda Ono'nun yakasını bırakmaz ve onu geçmişiyle yüzleşmeye zorlar. Ancak, sonraki dönemlerde Ono, suçluluk hissiyle başa çıkmada başarılı olur ve anlatısının sonunda geçmişiyle büyük ölçüde barışır ve yüksek bir psikolojik iyilik hali elde eder. Ono'nun içsel çatışmalardan kurtulmasına yardımcı olan başa çıkma stratejileri yine anlatılar aracılığıyla gerçekleşir. Bu süreçte, kendisine yaşama imkânı tanıyan ve ona bir alan açan anlatıları bulur. Sürecin sonunda oluşturduğu anlatıda, başarılı,

özsaygılı, kendini kabul eden ve ahlaki olarak üstün bir kişi olarak betimler. Ono bireysel psikolojik iyilik haline ulaşır, ancak bireysel psikolojik iyilik halinin genel bir iyi haliyle uyumlu olup olmadığı bir tartışma konusudur. Bu analiz bölümü, öncelikle Ono'nun anlatısının başlangıcındaki ruh haline, ardından anlatma sürecine ve "problemlerle dolu" hikâyeleri nasıl işlediğine odaklanır. Son olarak, Ono'nun anlatısının sonunda eriştiği psikolojik iyilik halini inceler.

Üçüncü analiz bölümü, anlatı psikolojisinden yararlanarak Stevens'ın geçmişini bir hikâye biçiminde oluşturmasına ve hikâyelerin psikolojik iyilik hali üzerindeki etkilerine odaklanır. Tüm hayatını kendini aldatarak geçiren Stevens, hikâyesinin başlangıcında kendini büyük ölçüde aldatmış bir anlatıcıdır ve bu nedenle geçmiş yaşam tercihlerini haklı çıkarmak için hikâyesini oluşturur. Hayatını "büyük bir kâhya" olma fikri etrafında şekillendiren ve bu yolla işinde mükemmelliğe ulaşarak insanlığa katkıda bulunacağına inanan Stevens, genç kâhyalara kendi yaşamını örnek bir hayat olarak anlatır, ancak Stevens bazı yanılgılar içerisindedir. Anlatı psikolojisi ve terapisi perspektifleri doğrultusunda, Stevens'ın bu yanılgıları tespit edip derinlemesine bir öz-yıkım süreci geçirmesi ve yeni bir benlik inşa etmesi beklenir. Stevens'ın anlatısı "problemlerle dolu" hikâyelerin incelenmesi için çok başarılı bir ortam yaratmış olsa da Stevens bu hikâyelerin aslında bireysel ve toplumsal anlamda ne kadar sorun yarattığını görememektedir. Hayatını şekillendiren hikâyeleri anlatır, ancak bu hikâyelerin onun görmesini, duymasını veya hissetmesini engellediğini görememektedir. Stevens'ın hayatı her zaman Amit Marcus'un kendini aldatma için bir zihinsel strateji olarak tanımladığı "olumsuz yanlı yorumlama" tarafından yönetilmiştir. Çoğunlukla, hikâyesiyle çelişen bilgi parçalarını ya "küçümser" ya da "farklı parçaları birleştirmeyi kaçınır." Tüm hikâyesi, her şeyi mükemmel bir şekilde yapmasına rağmen, günün sonunda nasıl böyle bir sonuca ulaştığını anlamaya yöneliktir. Ancak, Stevens olaylar arasında uygun bir bağlantı kuramaz, ki bu her zaman durumun böyle olmuştur. Geçmişine geri dönüp bakması, perspektifini zenginleştirmesi, hatalarını tanımlaması ve onda bir değişiklik yapması beklenir, ancak Stevens "geçmişe bakmanın" faydalarını reddeder. Hikâyenin sonunda, nihayet Miss Kenton hakkındaki bakış açısındaki kusuru fark eder, ancak diğer yaşam alanlarında bu gerçekle yüzleşemez. Anlatı psikolojisi ve terapi, birinin geçmişine geri dönüp eski

hikâyeleri gözden geçirerek hatalarını görebileceği ve bunlarla yüzleşebileceği fikrini vurgular, ancak bu durum Stevens için geçerli değildir. Stevens'ın hayatındaki hataları görmesi için içgörülü bir perspektifi yoktur. Bunun nedeni, bakış açısını doğrulamak veya reddetmek için bir sosyal hayat, bir sosyal muhatap eksikliğidir gibi görünmektedir. Bu bağlamda, Stevens'ın hikâyenin sonunda sorunlarının özünü yakaladığı söylenebilir- yani "insan sıcaklığı," ancak o yine olayları yanlış yorumlar ve kendini aldatarak yaşamına devam eder. Stevens'ın yaşam hikâyesinin diyalojik analizi öncelikle Stevens'ın anlatı başlangıcındaki ruh haline, ardından anlatma sürecine ve hatalarla dolu geçmişi üzerinde nasıl çalıştığına odaklanır. Son olarak, Stevens'ın bu benlik-anlatısının sonunda nasıl bir ruh halinde olduğu üzerinde durulmaktadır.

Bu çalışma, bu üç anlatıcının benlik anlatılarının başlangıcında farklı anlatı psikolojik sorunlarla uğraştığını göstermiştir. *Uzak Tepeler*'de, kızı Keiko'nun intiharının Etsuko'nun benliğinde anlatısal kopukluklar yarattığı ve bu kırılmaları hikâyeler aracılığıyla tamir etmeye çalıştığı görülmektedir. *Değişen Dünyada Bir Sanatçı*'da, Ono, Japonya'nın emperyalist/faşist politikalarının, İkinci Dünya Savaşı'ndan sonra toplum tarafından kınanmasıyla var olan düzende anlatısal olarak sıkışmış ve nefes alamaz hale gelmiştir. Ono, bu sıkıntıdan kendi geçmişine dönerek çıkar ve Etsuko, benzer olaylar yaşamış olan arkadaşının hikâyesine başvururken, geçmişi şimdiki bakış açısından okuyarak ve onları farklı bir şekilde hikâyeleştirerek bu sıkıntıdan kurtulur. *Günden Kalanlar*'da, Stevens'ın tamamen iradesini teslim ettiği Lord Darlington'ın politikalarının felaket getirdiği ve Stevens'ın değişen dünya anlatısının ve eski anlatının arasında, bir tür anlatısal belirsizlikte kaldığı görülüyor. Kendisine eski benlik anlatısının sorun yarattığının farkında olmayan Stevens, eski anlatıyı yeni dünya anlatısına karşı savunur ve benlik anlatısını değiştirmekte direnir, ki bu da hikâyesinin sonunda bile farkında olmasa da yıkılmaya mahkumdur.

Bu üç anlatıcının anlatılarının başlangıçtaki ruhsal durumları birbirinden farklıdır. Amit Marcus'un yaklaşımı ışığında, üç anlatıcı da kendini aldatan anlatıcılardır, ancak kendilerini aldatma şekilleri ve dereceleri açısından birbirlerinden farklıdırlar. Etsuko, kızının intiharından derin bir biçimde etkilenmiştir ve başlangıçta bunu "baskılama" eğilimindedir, ancak kızının intiharıyla yüzleşmekten kaçınma eğilimi göstermez. Ono, Etsuko gibi, suçluluk hissini

öncelikle "baskılama" yoluyla yenmeye çalışır, ancak ek olarak, Ono acı gerçeği çoğunlukla "olumsuz yanlı yorumlama," "olumlu yanlı yorumlama" ve "seçici dikkat odaklama" aracılığıyla kaçınmak ister. Etsuko gibi, Ono da problemin farkındadır, ancak kendini aldatmak için daha çok çaba harcar. Bu iki anlatıcının aksine, Stevens temel problemin farkında değildir ve "seçici dikkat odaklama" aracılığıyla kendini güçlü bir şekilde aldatır. Bu anlatıcıların başlangıçtaki ruhsal durumları arasında bir bağlantı kurulması gerekirse, okuyucu ile anlatıcılar arasındaki mesafenin her romanla birlikte giderek genişlediğini söyleyebiliriz. Wong'un belirttiği gibi, Ishiguro "karakterlerini karşı karşıya kaldığı etik ikilemlerle sunar ve okuyucuları kurguda incelenen yaşam stratejilerini incelemeye çağırır" (*Kazuo Ishiguro* 14).

Ishiguro, aynı zamanda, anlatıcılarla gerçek okuyucu arasındaki mesafeyi anlatıcıların hikâyelerini anlatırken ki hedef okuru (Ing. Narratee) aracılığıyla da yaratır. Bu romanların anlatıcılarının hedef okuru sırasıyla "belirli bir kişi yok," "bir şehrin insanları" ve "genç İngiliz kâhyalar" olarak sıralanabilir. Etsuko, hedef okuru sınırlamaz; belirli bir okura sahip değildir, hatta kendi travmasıyla başa çıkarken hedef okurun kendisi olduğunu söylemek mümkündür. Ono yaşadığı şehrin insanlarına hikâyesini anlatır. Stevens ise hikâyesini kendi mesleğini icra eden genç kâhyalara anlatır. Hikâyelerin hedef okuru kademeli olarak daralmaktadır. Dolayısıyla, anlatıcılar kendi geçmişlerine dair oluşturdukları hikâyelerde kendilerini daha fazla aldattıkça, hikâyelerinin hedef okuru da aynı ölçüde daralmaktadır. Bu nedenle, anlatıcılar hikâyelerinin şahidi olabilecek hedef okur kitlesini sınırlayarak hikâyelerinin nasıl algılanacağı üzerinde daha fazla kontrol sahibi olmaktadır. Bununla birlikte, bu aynı zamanda, anlatıcıların hedef okur kitlesini daraltmalarıyla, benlik-anlatılarının versiyonunun hedef okur tarafından daha kolay kabul edilmesi ve dolayısıyla psikolojik iyi olma durumuna ulaşmalarına yardımcı olur. Ancak, bu durum aynı zamanda, anlatıcıların hedef okur kitlesinin ne kadar dar olduğuyla, dolayısıyla anlatıcıların gerçek okuyucu ile aralarındaki mesafenin ne kadar büyük olduğu anlamına gelir. Bu paralelde, anlatıcıların güvenilirliği azaldıkça, gerçek okuyucu tarafından duyulan şüphe de artar. Bu nedenle, Ishiguro'nun gerçek okurun anlatıcılarıyla özdeşlik kurması ilk romandan üçüncüye doğru giderek azalır. Bu nedenle, kendi kendini aldatma arttıkça güvenilmezlik artar.

Bu üç anlatıcının sorunlarıyla başa çıkmaları açısından, kendi geçmişleriyle kurdukları bağ değişiklik göstermektedir. Etsuko, yaşadığı travmatik olayın yarattığı anlatı çatlaklarını onarmak amacıyla, başkaları hakkındaki hikâyeler aracılığıyla geçmişiyle yüzleşir. Ono, geçmişinin rahatsız edici etkilerinden anlatısal olarak kaçmaya çalışırken, toplumun hikâyeleriyle çatışır ve bazen toplumun hikâyesini kabul eder ve bazen de kendi geçmişini farklı bir bakış açısı altında yeniden yazarak kendini daha iyi hissettiren anlatıları bulmaya çalışır. Stevens ise eski benlik anlatısını artık büyük ölçüde değişmiş bir dünyada halen sürdürmek ister, ancak toplumsal izolasyon ve toplumdaki diğer hikâyelerle anlatısal çatışmalardan kaçarak geçmiş hatalarıyla yüzleşemez ve dolayısıyla iyileşme konusunda başarısız olur. İlk iki romanda, anlatıcılar anlatıları aracılığıyla psikolojik iyi olma hissi elde ederler. Ancak üçüncü romanda, Stevens'ın geçmiş hikâyeleri, onu bazı noktalarda daha fazla sıkıntıya sokar, ancak bu hikâyeler onu anlatılar aracılığıyla daha iyi bir ruh haline getirmez, çünkü hayatı boyunca deneyimlerini sürekli yanlış yorumlar. Bu bağlamda, anlatı psikolojisi işaret ettiği gibi, anlatıcılar burada yaşamlarını ve deneyimlerini anlatılar aracılığıyla anlamlandırırken, benliklerini aynı zamanda bir hikâye olarak inşa ederler. Anlatı terapisi vurguladığı gibi, hikâyeler ve bunların nasıl oluşturuldukları anlatıcıların ruh haliyle sıkı bir şekilde ilişkilidir.

Bu romanların anlatıcıları, toplumda bulunan hikâyelerden farklı şekillerde beslenirler. Anlatı psikolojisi, benliğin bir hikâye olduğunu vurgular ve bu nedenle benlik, çevredeki diğer hikâyelerle karşılıklı bir ilişki içindedir. Bu bağlamda, benlik toplumdaki hikâyelerden bağımsız düşünülemez. İngiltere'de yaşayan Etsuko, kızının intiharını çoğunlukla Nagazaki'nin savaş sonrası sosyo-kültürel bağlamına başvurarak yorumlar. Onun için, toplumun ve tarihi dönemin hikâyesi, travmasını bir bağlama oturmasına ve böylece onu anlamasına ve ifade etmesine yardımcı olur. Bu aynı zamanda okuyucuya, bir bireysel olayın daha büyük bir toplumsal olayla ilişkili olduğunu düşündürür. Bu yüzden, bireysel psikolojik iyi olma, toplumsal iyi olmaktan ayrılamaz. Öte yandan, Ono'yu rahatsız eden olay, Japonya'nın savaşa girmesine katkı sağlayan politik-sanat eylemleridir. Ono, savaş sonrası dönemin hikâyesinin tamamen değiştiğinden ve onu kamusal alanda nefes alamaz hale getirdiği için büyük sıkıntı içindedir. Ono, bazen toplumsal hikâyenin ondan beklentilerini yerine getirerek, bazen de kendi psikolojik iyi olması için toplumsal

hikâyeleri yeniden düzenleyerek kendisi için bir anlatı alanı yaratır ve bu şekilde psikolojik esenlik haline erişir. Ancak burada, bireysel iyi olma hali doğrudan toplumsal iyi olmayla ilişkili değildir. Ono'nun bireysel anlamda kendisini daha iyi hissetmesi, hatalarını kabul etmesiyle kısmen oluşturulmuştur, ancak gerçek okuyucunun bakış açısına göre etik açıdan derin bir yüzleşme gerçekleştirememiştir. Ono, hatalarından sorumluluğu derinlemesine ele almaz ve toplumsal boyutla iyi olma hali Ono için bir endişe kaynağı değildir. Bununla birlikte, hikâyeleri ve onları anlatım şekliyle bireysel psikolojik iyi olma durumuna erişir.

Stevens ise bu iki anlatıcıdan farklıdır. Geçmişinde, Lord Darlington'a hizmet ederek dolaylı olarak Nazizmin yükselişine katkıda bulunmuştur. Ancak, psikolojik iyi olma halini bu sosyal olaylarla ilişkilendirmek için yeterli bakış açısına sahip gibi görünmemektedir, çünkü bu bağlantıyı tatmin edici bir düzeyde açıklamamaktadır. Benlik anlatısıyla toplumsal olaylar arasındaki ilişkiyi göremediğinden, geçmişine doğru yolculuğu Etsuko ve Ono'da olduğu gibi benzer sonuçlar doğurmamaktadır. Stevens, benlik anlatısı aracılığıyla sıkıntılarının özünü net bir şekilde tanımlayamadığı için hayatını derinlemesine çözümleyemez ve önemli bir dönüşüm yaşayamaz. Bu nedenle, hikâye anlatımının terapötik etkisi, Etsuko ve Ono'nun deneyimlediği şekilde Stevens'ın durumunda gözlemlenemez. Bununla birlikte, Stevens, önemli bir yüzleşme yaşamadan eski defterleri kapatma yoluyla kendisini hikâyenin sonunda teselli eder. Stevens'ın benlik anlatısı aracılığıyla geçmişindeki çalkantılı dönemle gerçek bir yüzleşme sağlayamamasının nedeni, aşırı sosyal izolasyonundan kaynaklanır. Benlik anlatısının toplumun hikâyesi ile zayıf bir ilişkisi içerisinde olduğu için, geçmiş hatalarını anlamak için anlatı çatışmaları aracılığıyla önemli bir yüzleşme yaşayamaz. Böyle bir girişimi bireysel düzeyde gerçekleştiremediğinden, toplumsal iyi olma halinin de ortaya çıkmadığı savunulabilir.

Ishiguro insanın belleğini kendi çıkarları için kullanılmasıyla yakından ilgilenir. Bu romanlardaki anlatıcıların belleği kullanım biçimleri de farklılık gösterir. Belleğin yanılabilirliğinden yararlanarak, Etsuko başkalarının hikâyeleriyle kendi travması arasında bağlantılar kurarak iyileşme sürecinin ilk adımını atar, çünkü Sachiko ve Mariko hakkındaki hikâye esasen kendi hikâyesi olarak kabul edilebilir. Dolayısıyla, belleğin yanılabilirliği onun lehine çalışır. Ono için, belleğin işleyişi iki

farklı etkiye sahiptir. Başlangıçta ondaki suçluluk duygusunu artırırken, zamanla psikolojik iyi olma durumu elde etmeye başladığında, belleğin yanılabilirliği onun kendini daha iyi hissetmesine yardımcı olur. Stevens'ın belleği kullanma şekli ise diğerlerinden oldukça farklıdır, çünkü geçmişi statik bir olgu olarak ele alır. Geçmişi, şimdiki zamandan etkilenen ve yeniden yapılandırılan, dolayısıyla dinamik olan yönünü reddeder; bu nedenle, gerçekten sağlanan içgörüyü inkâr eder. Geçmiş benlik hikâyesini değişen toplumsal anlatıya göre şekillendirmek yerine, eski benlik hikâyesini eski toplumsal hikâyelerle ilişkilendirir. Stevens bunun farkında olmasa da gerçek okuyucunun gözünde o durumsal bir ironi içerisindedir. Bu nedenle, belleğin işleyişi onun ruh haline olumlu bir katkı sağlamaz.

Benlik anlatılarının sonunda, anlatıcıların psikolojik iyi olma durumları birbirinden farklıdır. Etsuko'nun kızının intiharını ele alma konusunda kendini aldatması, romanın sonunda Keiko'nun intiharının gerçeğiyle başa çıkmasını daha mümkün kılar. Etsuko'nun kendini aldatması, travmasıyla başa çıkmasında olumlu bir etkiye sahiptir, çünkü Sachiko ve Moriko aracılığıyla anlattığı hikâyenin aslında kendisi ve Keiko hakkında olduğunu kendisine ifade edebilecek noktaya gelir ve ardından kendini aldatmasını aşar ve ilerleme kaydeder. Ono, önce rahatsız edici geçmişini bastırarak, sonra gerçekle yüzleşerek ve sonra tekrar kısmen kendini aldatarak belirgin bir şekilde psikolojik iyi olma haline erişir. Ancak, Ono'nun psikolojik esenliğe erişmiş olması, okuyucuya bazı noktalarda etik olarak sorunlu görünmektedir. Ono, büyük ölçüde, toplumsal iyi olma halini hesaba katmadan bireysel anlamda psikolojik esenliğe ulaşmıştır. Toplumun anlatısının içinde kendi kişisel hikâyesine bir alan yaratarak, sorundan kurtulmuştur. Öte yandan, Stevens, anlatımın sonunda başlangıçtaki ruh halinden daha da uzak değildir. Olaylar arasındaki bağlantıları net bir şekilde göremediğinden, hikâyesini başlangıçta olduğu gibi sonlandırır, yani sosyal yaşama katılımı için acil ihtiyacını dar bir alana hapsetmeye ve benliğini işlevsiz bir hikâye aracılığıyla oluşturmayı tercih eder.

İncelenen romanlar, anlatıcıların benlik anlatılarının toplumsal anlatılarıyla nasıl ilişki kurduklarını gösterir. Bu ilişkinin sonucunda anlatıcılar belirli eylemler de bulunurlar, ancak bu iyi niyetli eylemler sonrasında olumsuz sonuçlar ortaya çıkar. Anlatıcılar bu rahatsız edici durumlarla kendi yaşamlarını anlatıp yüzleşerek ve oluşturdukları yeni bir benlik inşa eden anlatılar ışığında yaşamlarına devam ederler.

Ishiguro'nun kendisinin de iddia ettiği gibi, anlatıcıların "gurur duyabileceklerini düşündükleri şeyler, şimdi utanmaları gereken şeyler haline gelir" (Mason & Ishiguro 339). İlk romanda, kızının ölümüne neden olan bir anne, ikincisinde, politik sanatı kitlelerin yok olmasına yol açan bir sanatçı ve sonuncusunda, dünyayı daha iyi bir yer haline getirmek için Nazizmin yükselişini dolaylı olarak destekleyen bir kâhya vardır. Bu romanlar, bu üç farklı karakterin, geçmiş eylemlerinin sonuçları oldukça zararlı olsa da yaşamlarına devam etmelerini sağlayan bir anlatı inşa etmeyi nasıl başardıklarını gösterir. Yugin Teo, "Ishiguro'nun geniş temaları kullanarak okuyucuların kendi kişisel deneyimlerini karakterler ve durumlarla ilişkilendirmelerine izin veren romanlar oluşturduğunu" iddia ediyor (9). Gerçek okuyucuların kendi deneyimleri anlatıcıların geçmişlerine nasıl yaklaştıklarını belirlemede tek önemli unsur değildir, aynı zamanda gerçek okuyucuların bu anlatıcıların benlik-anlatılarına katılım biçimleri de kendi deneyimlerini nasıl anladıklarını da etkiler.

Bu bağlamda, Ishiguro'nun erken dönem romanlarında iki yönlü bir iletişim olduğu iddia edilebilir: Okuyucunun, anlatıcıların geçmişlerine olan tutumlarına etkisi ve anlatıcıların zayıflıklarının tanınmasıyla okuyucu üzerindeki etkisi. Okuyucu, bu anlatıcıların kendilerini aldatma sürecine tanık olduğunda ve yaşamlarına devam ettiklerini gördüğünde, bu anlatıcıları etik noktalarda daha fazla eleştirerek kendi sorumluluk duygularının arttığını söylemek mümkündür. Bu üç romanda anlatıcıların hatalarının büyüklüğü giderek artmasına rağmen, okuyucu bu anlatıcıların bu hatalarla yüzleşmelerinin sırasıyla daha yüzeysel hale geldiğine tanık olur. Okuyucu, bu nedenle, bu anlatıcıların daha derin bir yüzleşme içine girmesi gerektiği fikrine inanır. Bu fikir, okuyucuların bu romanlarda tanık oldukları benlik anlatılarının versiyonlarını inşa etme sürecinde giderek daha aktif bir şekilde katılımını gerektirdiği göz önüne alındığında, bunun da okuyucunun kendi benlik anlatılarına daha derin bir şekilde katılım kapasitelerini genişlettiğini iddia edebiliriz. Wright'ın önerdiği gibi, "Ishiguro okuyucularını, metinlerdeki acı verici sessizlikleri açığa çıkarmak için çalışmaya zorlar, okuyucu bu sessizlikleri hem metin içinde hem de nihayetinde kendisinde doldurmalıdır" (86). Dolayısıyla, Ishiguro, gerçek okuyucuların geçmişleriyle daha derin bir yüzleşme yaşamalarına olanak sağlar. Bu anlamda, Ishiguro'nun okuyuculara daha derinlikli bir şekilde sorunlarını ele

almaları için davet etme çağrısının, bu üç romanla birlikte zamanla daha da belirgin hale geldiği iddia edilebilir.

Sonuç olarak, Kazuo Ishiguro'nun bu üç romanda benzer bir temayla ilgilenmektedir. Bu ilk üç romanın ortak noktası, anlatıcıların geçmişte yaşadıkları bazı rahatsız edici ve kendilerini şaşırtan deneyimleri, bugün için daha az zararlı hale getirmeleridir. İlgilendiği şey, insanların bazen geçmiş hatalarıyla yaşamak için kendilerine yalan söyledikleri, geçmişlerindeki başarısızlıklarına rağmen kendilerine olumlu anlamlar atfettikleri ve aynı zamanda her zaman başarılarından daha fazla yararlanmak istedikleri biçimlerdir. Onun ifadesiyle, "Bir bakıma, ilk üç kitap, öncekilerde kullanılan malzemeyi yeniden yazma veya şekillendirme girişimiydi" (Jaggi 23). Dolayısıyla, bu üç roman aslında benzer bir tema ile ilgilenir, yani birisi geçmişine bakar ve rahatsız edici deneyimlerini yeniden yapılandırarak bu hikâyeyi daha katlanılabilir hale getirir. Bu açıdan, Ishiguro'nun erken dönem romanları, bir üçleme olarak ele alınabilir: bir anı üçlemesi veya hatırlama üçlemesi.

Bu bağlamda, kurgusal eserlerdeki birinci şahıs anlatımı ve anlatıcı karakterlerin genel türleri çeşitli kategoriler altında tanımlanmıştır: otobiyografi, biyografi, kurgusal biyografi, otobiyografik kurgu, biyografik kurgu, otobiyografi, biyografik metakurgu, kurgusal metabiyografi, gelişim romanı, anti-gelişim romanı, yaşam öyküsü, biyo-kurgu, anı, günlükler, mektuplar, ve benzerleri. Bu terimlerin bolluğu, birbirinden ayırt etmeyi zorlaştırabilir. Kolaylık sağlamak amacıyla, bunları "yaşam anlatıları" gibi genel bir kategori altında toplamak mümkündür, ki bu da Smith ve Watson tarafından tüm bu türlerin kapsamlı bir terimi olarak önerilmiştir: "Yaşam anlatıları, bir hayatı konu alan çeşitli türlerde yazının genel bir terimidir" (3). Bu çalışma, bu terimi biraz değiştirerek Ishiguro'nun erken dönem romanlarını "benlik oluşturan anlatılar" olarak tanımlar. Bu romanlarda, anlatıcı karakterler, kriz zamanlarında, geçiş eşiğinde veya köklü bir değişiklikten sonra geçici bir benlik duygusu oluşturmak ve kendileri için bir dayanak noktası inşa etmek amacıyla yaşam hikâyelerini anlatırlar. Başka bir deyişle, Ishiguro'nun kurgusu, geçmişleri sıkıntı olan anlatıcı karakterlerinin geçmişlerini yeniden oluşturarak yeni bir benlik duygusu inşa etmeleri için bir alan sunar, böylece onlar, toplumsal hikâyelerle daha sağlıklı ilişki içinde olan yeni bir benlik anlatısı inşa ederek yaşamlarını sürdürürler.

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