CHAPTER IV
MEMORY, HISTORY AND IDENTITY
The novels of Kazuo Ishiguro raise normative issues and the tension between public history and private memory. This chapter takes especial interest in the interface of memory and history. The chapter will subsequently attempt to analyse in detail the four texts, namely, *A Pale View of Hills*, *An Artist of The Floating World*, *The Remains of the Day* and *When We Were Orphans* where these texts rendered the tension between history and memory. The novels of Kazuo Ishiguro - *A Pale View of Hills*, *An Artist of The Floating World*, *The Remains of the Day* and *When We Were Orphans* bear a powerful and sustained interest in the tension between history and memory. Ishiguro seems fascinated with the uneasy coexistence of private and public memories in his characters. One of the struggling conflicts of each of his novels emerges from the main character’s struggle, which is usually an unsuccessful attempt to reconcile his private memories with the public history of the nation and his fellow citizens. In his novels, Ishiguro reflects what Pierre Nora opines as:

> Memory and history, far from being synonymous, appear now to be in fundamental opposition… Memory is a perpetually actual phenomenon, a bond tying us to the eternal present; history is a representation of the past.¹

Nora defines how human society is haunted by memory as well as history. However, history especially as a profession and academic discipline, aims at something wider, more objective and universal than memory. History is always written from some point of view and can be more or less ethnocentric, but as an academic discipline, even within the constraints of nationally based institutions, its aims and especially its rules of evidence, are of a different sort from the memory of an individual.² Significantly, Ishiguro depicts the relationship as well as the tension between history and memory and in this regard, his novels show the twentieth-century transformation of memory as an intellectual shift from a purely individual psychology of remembering to a new
exploration of issues such as identity, literary expression, the mechanisms of memory and the relevance of the past. There is no kind of mental activity in which memory does not intervene. I.A Richards refers to memory as an “apparent revival of past experience to which its richness and complexity is due”. Richard observes that every received stimulus leaves behind an imprint which is capable of being received later, thus contributing to the various manifestations of consciousness and behavior. The human race has developed by means of the interaction between consciousness and reality, between the interior world of the mind and the exterior world, a narrative which is open to interpretation both at the individual as well as the collective level. Subsequently, the central concern of Ishiguro is the role of autobiographical memories which play an important part in recapturing and reliving the openness and contingency of historical moments in the face of deterministic tendencies of the national collective memory. In his novels, he depicts the effect of historical change on the lives of ordinary individuals. In an interview, Ishiguro testifies to the fact that:

I’ve always been interested in what happens to peoples’ values when they have invested all their energies and their lives in the prevalent set of social values, only to see them change… and to see what happens to people when, at the end of their lives, they find the world has changes its mind about what is good and what is bad. But for this particular individual, it’s too late. They had the best intentions, but history has proved them to be either foolish or perhaps even someone who contributed to evil.4

A Pale View of Hills and An Artist of the Floating World are set immediately in post-war Japan and The Remains of the Day presents the decline of Darlington Hall and the setting of the novel coincides with the Suez Crisis. Even though the war is absent in these novels, it hovers around
the narratives of the protagonists. The private memories of the protagonists reflect the history of
the nation and the path they had taken in their attempt to contributing to their country. But after
the war, their social identities are defined only negatively by the public and are marginalized. In
*When We Were Orphans*, Ishiguro presents the tension between history and memory through the
personal accounts of Christopher Banks where his personal memory never quite match his
personal history. Therefore the return to the past is necessary for each protagonist to reconstruct
their identity and to understand their present life.

The effects of history on the lives of the individuals is clearly discernible in these novels
in which first-person narrators attempt to come to terms with their values and identities by their
memories against the background of historical change. Indeed, it is the undercurrent of historical
change that provides the motivating force behind the telling of the tale in each of these texts. Far
from being a historical novelist in the traditional sense, Ishiguro’s attitude to history itself is
anything but straight forward. As he has said:

> What I started to do was to use history … I would look for a moment in
> history that would best serve my purpose, or what I wanted to write
> about.⁵

However complex Ishiguro’s purposes may be, there are distinct feature to his use of history that
recur time and again throughout the novels, regardless of their specific historical contexts. These
recurring features function in ways that highlight different aspects of the tension between the
private and public memory in the changing historical contexts. In other words, even though the
historical contexts of Ishiguro’s texts may be accurate to a greater or lesser degree, and may call
into question specific issues relevant to that particular historical era, this is not the point of the
narrative. Ishiguro’s main interest is in the historical processes and their imprint upon individuals, rather than the historical periods. The personal component of history that is an individual’s retrospection of his or her life is at the centre of Ishiguro’s writings. His main concern is the intermingling of the individual’s personal past especially how people try to cope with their past and public history on the other. His main concern thus becomes – how do people cope with their past? How does the past affect people? How do memories shape identities? In his novels, he tries to reply to these fundamental questions. Ishiguro’s self analysis finds resonance among literary critics. On the junction of the public realm and the private domain, James Procter remarks that Ishiguro’s personal memories:

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do \text{ not unravel within a political vacuum, but share complete relationships with wider historical events shaking the world.}^{6}
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Significantly, *A Pale View of Hills, An Artist of the Floating World*, and *The Remains of the Day* evince the intricate junction of the public realm and the private domain. Ishiguro explores the historical circumstances as a means of disclosing how individuals endure the ordeal of the war, inspect the past which they dread remembering, confront the painful truth that they have been evading, and eventually determine the position that they will take in relation to that particular moment of history. It is circuitously through the quiet revelations of ordinary individuals that historical circumstances reveal themselves in fractions. This pattern of historical reconstruction compromised by narrative self-interest recurs throughout Ishiguro’s fiction. In this way, his novels must be situated, though, within the broader context of the more general tension between private memory and public history. As in *A Pale View of Hills*, and in his subsequent novels, Ishiguro depict narrators whose private memories conflict in various ways with those of
the public historical record. In this connection, Barry Lewis characterizes Ishiguro’s novels as narratives that are:

located in transitional moments of history, when one set of values is replaced by another.\(^7\)

In *A Pale View of Hills*, Ishiguro portrays the replacement of the nation’s set of values. Ogata (Etsuko’s father-in-law) represents the older generation of Japanese that were prominent up to and during the war, and his presence is an unwelcome reminder for the younger Japanese. In *An Artist of the Floating World*, the aging artist Masuji Ono’s constant efforts to reevaluate his youthful, pro-imperialist propaganda paintings never quite match the official reevaluations of that work by his colleagues, students, and the government. In the early sections of the novel, Ono downplays the significance of his work, gently fending off the implicit condemnations of his family and friends. When he reverses his tactic, and attempts to make a public confession of his influential complicity in the imperialist enterprise, he discovers that public memory has bypassed him and in the process he has become a historical footnote. The tension between private and public memories is at its most acute in *The Remains of the Day*. Stevens served with unquestioning loyalty a man who arranged unofficial meetings between British government officials and representatives of the German Nazi government. Much of Stevens’ narration in the novel consists of his attempts to justify or explain his blind submission to Lord Darlington, even when Lord Darlington asked him to commit the morally repugnant act of cleansing the household of Jewish servants in order to placate visiting Nazi dignitaries. Throughout the novel, Stevens struggles to reconcile his own private memories of Lord Darlington (and what seemed to Stevens, in historical context, as Darlington’s noble and virtuous - though perhaps naive - intentions) with the subsequent public vilification of Darlington after the war. As the narrators
seek to reconstruct, through private memories, a public historical context which they have experienced, they do so at least in part, in order to excuse their own behavior in that public context. Ron Eyerman states:

Theories of identity – formation or socialization tend to conceptualize memory as part of the development of the self or personality and to locate that process within an individual, with the aim of understanding human actions and their emotional basis. In such accounts, the past becomes present through the embodied reactions of individuals as they carry out their lives. In this way, memory helps to account for human behavior.\(^8\)

Similarly, Ishiguro deploys memory as an essential element in the formation of an identity, whether individual or collective as memory has bridged the gap between the past and the present and this in turn makes it possible to comprehend how an individual or a group come to be what they are in the present time. Nonetheless, memory and identity are ‘flexible’ in the sense that:

Identities and memories change over time and they are not fixed things, but representations or constructions of reality, subjective rather than objective phenomena.\(^9\)

Setting his novels in a period of shifting values and customs, Ishiguro’s characters find themselves displaced, inhabiting a space between cultures and generations, suspended between residual tradition and uncertain change. Their social identities can be defined only negatively, as they fail to meet their societies’ standards of inclusion. Unable to adapt to the changes of their surrounding landscapes, Ishiguro’s characters are marginalized and neglected. In order to come
to terms with their own identity, they return to their past with their memories which however is often in tension with public history. Ishiguro denotes:

I’m interested 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 the social climate has done a topsy-turvy on them by the time they’ve reached the end of their lives. The very things they thought they could be proud of have now become the things they have to be ashamed of.\textsuperscript{10}

Here, Ishiguro characterizes the tension between private memory and public history as one which emerges from the contrasting attitudes and sentiments of different social climates. For instance, \textit{An Artist of the Floating World} is set in the years immediately after Japan’s unconditional surrender at the end of the Second World War, a time when the country was experiencing profound changes. As Ruth Benedict states in \textit{The Chrysanthemum and the Sword}, within the space of just one generation, the values of Japanese citizens underwent a volte-face. Before the war, Japan was encouraged to aggressively take its place in the world, military or any other means. This was partly to revive its economy, which had suffered as a result of the global depression in the 1930s, but also to restore its glorious samurai warrior past. After the war, it surprised many when the country accepted defeat with as much vigour as it had once urged victory. Imperialist sympathizers were quickly condemned as war criminals.\textsuperscript{11} It is because of this shift in Japanese society that Ono has to reconstruct his life story and return to the past with his memory in order to render a convincing identity. Through the character of Ono, Ishiguro explores the condition in which the individual finds himself adhering to a set of beliefs that appear self-evidently correct, but with the passage of time are shown to be problematic or even
repugnant. Like individual memories and public records, the collective memories of these social climates can evolve and dissipate and consecutive social climates may explicit contrasting attitudes towards their collective pasts. Through their memory, it is revealed that Ishiguro’s narrators acted according to the ideals of social climate in which they lived, but when that climate had shifted, they suddenly find that their actions have been reevaluated in the light of a new set of ideals and public sentiments. James M. Lang analyses:

Public memory can be notoriously short-lived, and the difficulty which Ishiguro’s characters face is that the collective ideals and popular sentiments of one social climate have no tolerance for – or even any recollection of - those past ideals and sentiments to which Ishiguro’s characters were once committed.\textsuperscript{12}

Hence their narrative task is to reconstruct the social climate in which they acted through their private memories in order to establish their identity in the changing environment. However, this narrative motivation produces the tension between private memory and public history in Ishiguro’s fiction. In “Individual Remembering and Collective Memory: Theoretical Presuppositions and Contemporary Debates”, Anna Green denotes:

In practice, individual and collective memories are often in tension, and the recollections of individuals frequently challenge the construction of partial accounts designed primarily to achieve collective unity.\textsuperscript{13}

The competing strategies of historicization in Ishiguro’s novels - official, public, diplomatic history in contrast with the private memories of the protagonists - find a parallel in the slow movement, on the part of twentieth-century historians, away from the grand narratives
and grand characters of earlier historiography toward the lives and experiences of the ordinary, the mundane, the marginalized, and the dispossessed. This interest in the margins can be traced in part from the practices of the mid-twentieth-century historians - like those associated with the Annales school in France - who, rejecting the nineteenth-century grand narrative tradition of historiography, began to borrow more systematically from the methodologies and quantitative analytic tools of the social sciences. Those historians compiled portraits of everyday life, usually doing so without the help of much traditional narrative. In this respect, much postwar historiography partakes of a common trend in postmodernism, as it has been defined by Linda Hutcheon and others, in freely borrowing methods and strategies from past traditions without necessarily embracing the philosophical convictions which, in the past, had underlain those methods. In her *Poetics of Postmodernism*, Hutcheon consistently finds an “ideology of plurality and a recognition of difference”, or a recognition that adapt older narrative and historiographic forms without the philosophical baggage which accompanied those forms in earlier manifestations. Perhaps the most dramatic instance of the contemporary historian’s commitment to a new kind of history appears in the opening dedication of French historian Michel de Certeau’s *The Practice of Everyday Life*: “To the ordinary man ... To a common hero, an ubiquitous character, walking in countless thousands on the streets ...”. De Certeau goes on to suggest that his interest in this ordinary man represents an inevitable or progressive stage of historical analysis:

> The floodlights have moved away from the actors who possess proper names and social blazons, turning first toward the chorus of secondary characters, then settling on the mass of the audience. The increasingly sociological and anthropological perspective of inquiry privileges the
anonymous and the everyday ... Slowly the representatives that formerly symbolized families, groups, and orders disappear from the stage they dominated during the epoch of the name.\textsuperscript{18}

Palpable in Ishiguro’s representation of the Second World War is that the significance of a historical incident is defined by ordinary people rather than by a political entity. The depiction is reminiscent of Michel de Certeau’s veneration of everyday life: history has shifted its limelight from “the actors who possess proper names and social blazons” toward “the anonymous and the everyday,” seeking in the mundane existence “metonymic details” of a specific epoch.\textsuperscript{19} Center-staging little narratives of ordinary people, Ishiguro’s novels depicted ordinary individuals who replace heroic figures and their accounts of the warfare’s psychological repercussions supplement, if not succeed, official chronicles of political negotiations, military actions and casualties. \textit{A Pale View of Hills} and \textit{An Artist of the Floating World} delineate, respectively from a housewife and retired artist, how the war has devastated the landscape of Japan and traumatized the collective psyche of its civilians. \textit{The Remains of the Day} captures, from the standpoint of an aging butler, Britain’s nostalgia for the prewar splendor. \textit{When We Were Orphans} has delineated from the detective perspective the opium trade in China which he thought had some connection with the disappearance of his parents.

The diversity of these four narrators indicate Ishiguro’s consciousness that cultural, gender and ideological positions an individual takes at once inform and restrict his or her historical perspectives. Though experiencing the war firsthand, each of them witnesses merely minute segment of reality and thereby fails to comprehend the war as a whole and its aftermath. Living through world events, they do not always understand these occurrences’ significance nor immediately discern any correlation among them. As Cynthia F. Wong remarks:
All of Ishiguro’s narrators structure their tales according to discernable historical events and, in the unfolding of their texts, the narrators appear to arrive closer at uncovering some missing version of truth about that period.\textsuperscript{20}

For the truth they gradually uncover is not “veritable historical objectivity” but “the emotional conditions of people undergoing intense experiences related to recognizable world events”.\textsuperscript{21}

Centering on the witness-narrator’s vision and deception, the four novels, \textit{A Pale View of Hills, An Artist of the Floating World, The Remains of the Day} and \textit{When We Were Orphans} disclose that the position the protagonists take varies with the historical distance that they hold from a reminisced past, the geographical location that they were born into, the gender role(s) that they are expected to play, and the emotional state one has to maintain in relation to earlier incidents. Each of the novels’ narrators looks back to an individual past which is entangled with the national history. This unfurls an ordinary existence that is crushed by the imperial folly of their nation, exposes personal anguish that is too often muffled by the official rhetoric of patriotism, and divulges through the disjointed memories the apertures that are concealed in cohesive historical explanations. As Liz James notes that, “identities are actively constructed instead of being discovered”,\textsuperscript{22} Ishiguro’s narrators construct their identities by returning to their past and promotes their identity through the awareness of the past and self in time.

In each of the four novels, diary entries juxtapose the first-person narrator’s current thoughts and earlier experiences, with the former encasing the latter. Framing the past in the present, the diary fiction achieves desirable effects. Ishiguro states that in diary entries recognizable events can be strategically encoded in the dates of entries. Generically private, a
journal prefigures the absence of any explanation as to why certain dates are selected, and purposely leaving the gap for the reader to fill. The internal and subjective time reminisced in the narrators’ diary contrast the aspects of external objective time which is indicated in the entry dates. That is, while journals are kept in chronological order, memories emerge in disrupted and recurrent temporality. Thus in the novels the post-war years are pieced together in the narrators’ disjointed remembrances which is an epoch of drastic social disintegration. Other than a literary device to capture changes of the diarist – narrators’ emotional condition, the diary novel is instrumental in justifying the obscurity of the significant. Marked with dates, diary entries situate the narrators firmly in time, intimating the background of narration. The publishing date of each novel, on the other hand informs the reader from what temporal distance certain historical events are represented and how that distance is translated into narration.

Ishiguro’s critical stance is discernible when he juxtaposed his text with its context; that is, the historical events are analyzed in the light of the protagonists’ memories and collective experiences are glimpsed through accounts of personal reflection. Set against the nuclear calamities of Nagasaki and Hiroshima, A Pale View of Hills and An Artist of the Floating World capture in the narrators’ retrospect, the overwhelming agony individuals undergo during bomb-induced devastation. In A Pale View of Hills, Etsuko’s diary entries refer to the five-day stay of her younger daughter Niki after the suicide of her elder daughter Keiko. Though triggered by Niki’s recent visit, the content of Etsuko’s diary revolves around Etsuko’s past in Nagasaki rather than Niki’s stay. Etsuko neither marks the dates of her entries nor specifies the years of her Nagasaki past. Etsuko narrates her memories of life in Nagasaki in the aftermath of the falling of the atom bomb on the city on August 9th 1945. Her reference at the beginning of her narrative to the “Americans soldiers were as numerous as ever - for there was fighting in Korea but in
Nagasaki after what had gone before, those were days of calm and relief”, date her memories to the period of transition when the Allied Occupation (1945-52) came to a near end and the US military gradually diverted their attention to the conflict in Korea (1950-53). The world, she argues, “had a feeling of change about it”. Throughout the novel, the atomic bombing in Nagasaki, a tragedy that alters the course of Etsuko’s fate, is nonchalantly spoken of as “the bomb” on three occasions. The silence of the atomic bombing is inherently deliberate and for good reasons. One of the two cities ravaged by the nuclear warfare, Hiroshima often overshadows Nagasaki because it was assaulted first, on 6 August 1945, and Nagasaki was attacked three days later. Hiroshima also suffered significantly greater damages and casualties. The two cities have accordingly become synonymous with the nuclear catastrophe, and contemporary literature on the horror of atomic bombing inevitably taps into the historical implication which the city’s name evokes. The high-profile absence of the bomb explains the unutterable desolation that Ishiguro has intended for individual introspection. To explicitly evoke the memory of the bomb, Ishiguro may have even risked trivializing the grief which is most private to the survivors (and this is a risk he avoids). Obscuring the bomb, the novel implies that the horror can neither be fully articulated nor be expelled, for it is a past that continues to haunt and disturb the present moment. But the effects of the bomb are still uncomfortably close in people’s minds.

Etsuko is undoubtedly in denial, not just about Keiko, but also about what she suffered in Nagasaki during the war. When she was first taken in by Ogata, she was in such a state of shock that she behaved like a ‘mad person’ even playing the violin obsessively in the middle of the night. In spite of her experiences, she never once spoke about her loss. Instead, she alluded vaguely a few times to the “worst days” and the “nightmares of wartime.” Barry Lewis
observes that “Etsuko’s need to blank out her past does not account fully, though, for the astonishing absence at the centre of the novel. Nor does it explain the arcane process of how the novel manages to affirm that which is denied”. Wood denotes:

Almost everything is unspeakable here, and yet it gets spoken. In *A Pale View of Hills*, the tension between history and memory is depicted through Etsuko’s recollection which reveals that her father-in-law Ogata San’s values are at odds with the American process of democratization which the public embraced. Ogata San is incredulous that the newly implemented system of democratic government enables wives to vote differently from their husbands abandoning their “obligations”. The American occupation of Japan between 1945 and 1952 is deemed counter-productive to Japan’s cultural uniqueness, as evidenced by Ogata’s comments to his son Jiro:

Discipline, loyalty, such things held Japan together once. That may sound fanciful, but it’s true. People were bound by a sense of duty. Towards one’s family, towards superiors, towards the country. But now instead there’s all this talk of democracy. You hear it whenever people want to be selfish, whenever they want to forget obligations.

The values that Ogata espouses unsettle Jiro, who, it seems, wishes to forget them. He forces Jiro to “glance back” at things he would rather not confront. For this reason scenes between Ogata and Jiro are often adversarial. On one occasion Ogata asks Jiro to respond to an article written by his former student, Shigeo that represents disapprovingly the careers of Ogata and his friend, Endo. When Ogata asks Jiro if he has fulfilled his wishes during a game of chess, Jiro evades the issue by claiming to be “too busy”. He is unwilling to perform the task. The game is interrupted
by the surprise visit of Jiro’s colleagues, and the chess pieces become disturbed. When Ogata invites Jiro to complete the game later, he begins to criticize Jiro’s strategy, warning his son that he has not paid attention to what he has been taught. Jiro’s response is to admit defeat:

‘A game isn’t won and lost at a point when the king is finally cornered. The game’s sealed when a player gives up having any strategy at all. When his soldiers are all scattered, they have no common cause, and they move one piece at a time, that’s when you’ve lost’.

‘Very well Father, I admit it. I’ve lost. Now perhaps we can forget about it’.

‘Why Jiro, this is sheer defeatism. The game’s far from lost; I’ve just told you. You should be planning your defense now, to survive and fight me again’. 36

Through the conversation between Ogata and Jiro in their game of chess, Ishiguro articulates the differing views that concern Japan’s failure in the war. Jiro’s acceptance of defeat invites a reading of his mood as exemplary of the emergent Japanese generation - admitting defeat, accepting loss and trying to forget. For Ogata, this unwillingness to follow that which has been taught is incomprehensible, nothing short of giving in to opposition. Jiro’s mood seems typical. It emerges also in the comments of Ogata’s former pupil, Shigeo, during a visit from his old master. The importance of Japan’s culture is openly rejected by Shigeo, who accuses Ogata of doing great damage as a teacher by espousing principles that have led to destruction:

‘[... ] In your day, children in Japan were taught terrible things. They were taught lies of the most damaging, kind. Worst of all, they were taught not
to see, not to question. And that’s why the country was plunged into the most evil disaster in her entire history’.

‘We may have lost the war’, Ogata-san interrupted, ‘but that’s no reason to ape the ways of the enemy. We lost the war because we didn’t have enough guns and tanks, not because our people were cowardly, not because our country was shallow. [...]’

Ogata’s reflection of the history of Japan shows that the defeat was caused by lack of military strength. On the other hand, Shigeo believes the war rendered redundant the values cherished by Ogata and his contemporaries. He tells Ogata that “we live in a different age from those days when ... when you were an influential figure” implying that the militaristic Japan Ogata supports has been discredited, and superseded by a better society. However, Shigeo’s vocabulary suggests that elements from Ogata’s Japan may well remain embedded in the attitudes of the younger generation, despite their seeming opposition to the previous generation.

What is obfuscated in Etsuko’s remembrance is the reason as to why she divorces her first husband Jiro and settles in England with her second husband Sheringham. She mentions neither how she meets Sheringham, a journalist posted in Japan then, nor why Jiro agrees to give up Keiko’s custody. She mentions Sheringham only twice throughout the narrative, giving sketchy portraits of an Englishman whose understanding of Japan is superficial. Though the phrase “war bride” never surfaces in Etsuko’s narration, it may very well explain how she starts anew through marrying a British journalist. Etsuko’s second marriage fits the profile of war bride marriage. Quietly integrated into the core narrative of the novel, this war-induced social phenomenon fills certain gaps in Etsuko’s narration, in particular shame-induced prevarications. Chu-cheuh Cheng observes:
Japanese women of Etsuko’s generation wish for something other than the material comfort that American products give; they seek the freedom and opportunities that America promises. Therefore empowered by the Allied-initiated democratization, Etsuko is no longer willing to endure the constraints of gender responsibilities and she seeks a means of escape. For her, America signifies hopes and chances that she cannot have in a war-ravaged Japan. And it is against the backdrop of defeated and divided Japan that Etsuko relates Sachiko’s liaison with an American soldier and dream of starting anew in the States. She remembers that Sachiko talks constantly about opportunities which she and her daughter Mariko will enjoy in America. Unfolding her friend Sachiko’s indiscreet womanhood and negligent motherhood, Etsuko indirectly divulges her remorse for marrying Sheringham against Keiko’s wish. She considers her decision as unwise as that of Sachiko, who, in spite of Mariko’s objection, seeks a new life in the States through the sexual liaison with an untrustworthy American soldier. Etsuko regrets that she barters a future with Keiko’s inconsolable despair and this is the reason that she reflects her past in order to assert her right in leaving Japan and also to establish an account of her identity. As she looks back to the chaotic moment of Allied Occupation and the Korean War, Etsuko reorders her chaotic life and the identity which she has constructed with her memory enables her to move forward. She also offers a deceptively serene account of a Japanese war bride whose psychological wound, like that of her deceased daughter Keiko and many other bomb-survivors continue to hurt.

The Ogata-San sub-plot of A Pale View of Hills, and its examination of the tension between private memory and public history is displaced on to the centre-stage of An Artist of the Floating World. The dilemma of the central character, Masuji Ono, is a refiguration of the plight
of Ogata, as he struggles to justify his previous nationalist sympathies in the light of his post-war loss of reputation. Ishiguro notes:

In the first book [A Pale View of Hills], a lot of things that I thought were just going to be subplots took over … When I finish it, I thought: “Well, the aspect of this book that is most important to me is this bit that has ended up as subplot” which is a story about this old teacher, whose career has coincided to a certain extent with the rise of militarism in Japan before World War II, and who, after the war, in retirement, finds himself in the awkward position of having to reassess his life’s work. I thought I would like to explore that strand much more thoroughly.42

Similarly, Barry Lewis expresses:

Ishiguro frequently returns to the same themes throughout his fictions, teasing them out in different ways.43

The changing political circumstances of the country in the 1930s had persuaded Ono to become a propaganda artist for the militant Japanese Emperor in An Artist of the Floating World. His reformation results in a temporary period of success for Ono, and by the time of the China crisis in 1937 he is surrounded by acolytes and patriotic banners in his favourite inn, the Migi-Hidari. He is ostracized after the war, when the American forces occupy Japan and begin the process of socio-economic liberalization. Ono now fears exposure as a war criminal, as he had betrayed his most gifted pupil, Kuroda, to the police, and had supported a corrupt and defeated regime. So in order to assert his right and to render himself a convincing identity, he returns to the past with the aid of his memory. Maurice Halbwachs opines that “memory depends on the social
environment”, as the recognition of memory requires pre-acquisition of knowledge prior to the events, and similarly, Tim Woods and Peter Middleton also denotes:

The dominant models of individual memory help shape the self understanding of social memory too and sometimes direct the memories.

Significantly, Ono’s memory relates the social environment where he had served his country with the best intentions but unfortunately the present generation had condemned it at a later time.

In An Artist of the Floating World, Ono’s private memory is at odds with public memory. For instance, the public memory is depicted through the account of Ono’s son-in-law Suichi, who accused many Japanese militarists and states that they are “too cowardly to face up to their responsibilities.” Mortified by Suichi’s blunt remarks, Ono retorts:

Those who fought and worked loyally for our country during the war cannot be called war criminal.

This argument subtly gyrates around the International Tribunal in Ichigaya, which is a current affair that Ono does not wish to address but unfortunately finds no way to dodge. In this regard, the dates of Ono’s diary become significant. The war trials of prominent Japanese figures were conducted between May 1946 and November 1948. Ono’s reflections begin at a moment when these trials were reaching their climax and verdicts were pending. They are contextualized by a public process of reflection and judgement upon the years of war just passed, and Ono’s memories reflect these processes at a personal level. Among those sentenced to death in the trial, General Tojo gathers the greatest attention. The mastermind of Japan’s imperialist aggression, Tojo initiated invasions of Manchuria and other parts of Southeast Asia in the 1930s. Indeed, the public trial of Tojo and other major accomplices inevitably propels the artist to inspect his
earlier misdeeds. The synchronization of the public investigation and private repentance intimidates that a nation’s large-scale aggression evolves from its leading figures’ ambition and materializes through the general public’s compliance. In Ono’s propagandist aesthetics and his pupils’ injudicious emulation, there are glimpses disturbing reflections of the Japanese elite’s jingoism and the civilians’ blind loyalty. Similarly in the artist’s guilt-induced circumlocution, the collective prevarication of a disgraceful past has been depicted.

Tojo’s execution constitutes merely one aspect of the larger historical context in which Ono’s diary entries are situated. The Allied (or more precisely American) Occupation, concomitant with Ono’s narration, is also tactfully fused into his retirement and it remains an occurrence tacitly woven into his diary entries. Implicit in Ono’s narration are the facts that during the Allied-initiated purge of Japan’s militarism he must “finish” his career and his artworks must be “tied away”. His dishonor causes the Miyakes’ cancellation of the marriage proposal to his younger daughter Noriko and his former student Shintaro’s request for a letter of dissociation. The Allied occupation nearly eludes attention because American characters are completely absent in the novel. It is indirectly through Ono’s grandson Ichiro’s Americanized manners and the younger generation’s avid embrace of American values that one discerns the happening of the Occupation. In one family gathering, Ono’s son-in-law Taro praises America for the many good things that it has brought to Japan, such as “democracy and individual rights” and for that “Japan has finally established a foundation on which to built a brilliant future”. On this occasion, the names of successful companies such as “Nippon Electrics” and “KNC” are mentioned when young family members express confidence in Japan’s speedy growth under the Allies-led recovery plan. The extensive political, social, and economic reforms the Allied Force instituted in postwar Japan have contributed to the sweeping changes that leave Ono obsolete in
a radically altered society. In its reticence on the International Tribunal in Ichigaya and the Occupation, the novel captures a period of collective shame through a former militarist’s remorse, and in his nostalgia for prewar grandeur captures a shattered Japan in transition.

Consequently, *An Artist of the Floating World* delineates how Ono gains a limited but appreciable insight into the contours of his life. The past cannot be re-made. The realization that one has wasted large portions of one’s life can nevertheless be borne with dignity. Taking up an established model of narration, the novel seems to chart the growing self-understanding of Ono. Wai Chew Sim emphasizes that it is at this moment that Ishiguro throws a spanner into the works by introducing an element of radical indeterminacy. As a result everything established up until this point is put in doubt. A reading that ignores this sharp reversal runs the risk of being incomplete. With the recognition plot seemingly secured, the novel ends on a note of resignation. It depicts Ono’s gaze at the pleasure district he knew as a youth, now razed to the ground and converted into a business quarter. He sits on a bench looking at the scene and admits a nostalgic longing for those “brightly lit bars” where he spent his youth. Nevertheless the sight of the rebuilt city fills him with “genuine gladness”. Ono’s memory of his past thus produced an alternative history which does not correspond to the dominant history. Even though there is tension between his private memory and history, his return to the past has helped him in constructing his own identity and at the end, he is able to wish the young people around him and hope they will avoid the errors that he had made.

Ishiguro’s third novel, *The Remains of the Day*, shifts focus from Japan to England. As with the other novels, this novel is based upon the memories of Stevens, the butler of Darlington Hall and the novel sets an individual’s lonely old age against the backdrop of an earlier colossal event. Once the family seat of Lord Darlington, the hall is now the possession of an American,
Mr Farraday. Stevens’ narrative records a motoring journey he takes to the south west of England in July 1956. On his journey he remembers his years of service to Lord Darlington before the Second World War and affords an opportunity to measure the extent to which the England of 1956 has changed from that of the 1920s and 1930s. As it shuttles between these moments in history, the narrative complicates linear progression in a way that recalls An Artist of the Floating World. But the uncertainties that Ono cultivated in the previous novel are not as welcome to Stevens. The gaps in time between each section of Stevens’ narrative are shorter than those in An Artist of the Floating World, often a night or a couple of hours. The novel has provided a much clearer indication of the occasions of the moments which Stevens recalls. The manner of Stevens’ narrative is characterized by a meticulousness that protects against more spontaneous, direct statements, such as the bantering that he struggles to master in order to please Mr Farraday. It betrays his anxiety to render more stable accounts of both the past and the present. This is his main difference from Ono. Whereas Ono is engaged partly in cultivating referential uncertainty, Stevens fails to finds the means to preserve the values of an older age in the present. Stevens’ defense of Lord Darlington’s co-operation with the Nazis succeeds only if the values he internalized as a servant of the aristocracy still have hegemony after the war. His defense is an attempt to recover a paternalistic model of ‘Englishness’ in the post-war era. However, his journey through England in July 1956 exposes his version of ‘Englishness’ to be in ruins. In contrast with Etsuko’s and Ono’s Japan, in Stevens’ England, elements from the past struggle to remain. The values that would legitimate his version of history have not been preserved. His definition of ‘Englishness’ is derived from the class which he served is brought into conflict with other versions of ‘Englishness’ that he encounters on his journey. This results
in a crisis of identity. The old certainties that have given meaning to Stevens’ identity are challenged after the war.

The six days journey is documented in eight entries and the start of Stevens’ motor-car trip, July 1956, concurs with the Egyptian governments’ nationalization of the Suez canal, and it is a detail several critics attend to. Meera Tamaya considers the date of Stevens’ journey as presenting ‘the determining historical context of the characters’ attitudes and aspirations’. James M. Lang similarly holds that Ishiguro purposely sets the narration contemporaneous with the historical event, even though it is ‘entirely obscured’ in Stevens narration. Tamaya and Lang’s remarks evince that to strategically obscure the Suez Crisis in *The Remains of the Day*, Ishiguro succeeds in drawing attention to its absence and signification of that absence.

The transference of Darlington Hall which concurs with the nationalization of the Suez Canal is symbolic. Transacted and under-staffed, the Hall parallels the Canal in signaling the collapse of the British Empire. The demise of Lord Darlington and the advent of Farraday allegorize the post-war configuration of the global power structure. While serving his American employer, Stevens is also, as Susie O’Brien aptly puts, “serving a new world order”. It is true that if the social hierarchy within which Stevens served Darlington is an old order, the economic hierarchy within which he now serves Farraday is a newly emerging structure of world power. The Suez crisis heralds a new era during which the United States fills the void left by Britain and France after they lose control of the Mediterranean Sea. The new world order that O’Brien refers to, is at once the actual situation that America replaces Britain as the leading Western power in the region, and the fictional scenario that Farraday succeeds Lord Darlington as the proprietor of the Hall.
In *The Remains of the Day*, Ishiguro explicitly lays out contrasting portraits of the world-making events of the novel: one sketched by Stevens in his narration, and one laid out for the public record in the form of postwar perceptions of Darlington’s role in the war. It is only through Stevens that the version of the public record is depicted but from his narration, it is clear enough how vastly different the two sets of historical accounts – Stevens’ and the public’s - really are. James M. Lang opines:

Public history, both in the postwar English press and as it emerges from the mouths of individual citizens whom Stevens encounters on his journey across the English countryside, condemns Lord Darlington for not recognizing, in the mid- and late-1930s, the extent and nature of the atrocities eventually perpetrated by the Nazis.⁵⁸

Significantly, Stevens’ narrative consists of his attempt to recreate, from his perspective as a private individual at the margins of power, the full historical context in which Lord Darlington made his ill-fated decisions. In this way, the novel transcribes a dialogue between the grand narratives of the war and the minor, subjective narrative of Stevens - between the macronarratives of public history and the micronarratives of private memory.⁵⁹ Dialogue plays itself out in numerous ways throughout the novel, and especially in Stevens’ encounters with small-town English citizens. In those scenes, he is committed to reconciling the apparent gaps between public history and his private memories of the past: both of his own past and of the past of his employer. Stevens’ recollection construct a narrative which can join coherently the generous, noble, and dignified Lord Darlington with the public vilifications of Darlington as a traitor which culminated in the years following the war. His sympathetic descriptions of Lord
Darlington’s character betray a defensiveness obviously borne of Stevens’ unease at the extent of the contrast between the public’s perceptions of Darlington’s character and his own private ones:

A great deal of nonsense has been spoken and written in recent years concerning his lordship and the prominent role he came to play in great affairs, and some utterly ignorant reports have had it that he was motivated by egotism or else arrogance. Let me say here that nothing could be further from the truth. It was completely contrary to Lord Darlington’s natural tendencies to take such public stances as he came to do and I can say with conviction that his lordship was persuaded to overcome his more retiring side only through a deep sense of moral duty ... he was a truly good man at heart, a gentleman through and through .... 60

Stevens is working here to accommodate to his private memory both the public record of Darlington’s actions and the surprisingly and undeniably immoral actions of Darlington – “to take such public stances as he came to do”61 - in deference to visiting Nazi diplomats. Stevens’ memory focuses upon the admirable qualities of Lord Darlington’s character: he is a gentleman, he has noble instincts, and he feels compassion for a defeated foe. The postwar public press and British citizenry, with the hindsight afforded to them by the war, and by the German attacks on British soil, see only the despicable qualities of Lord Darlington: he attempted to negotiate and normalize relations between the British and the Nazi governments.

Kathleen Wall suggests that the novel gives mixed feelings about the accuracy of Stevens’ historical reconstructions which “foregrounds the problem of truth”.62 In this way it can be argued that if any historical truth exists in this novel, it lies somewhat uneasily between
two competing accounts - public and private - of the past. The interactions of public history and private memory in the novel, of grand and minor narratives, reflect both a cautionary attitude toward established public memory and a guarded faith in the ability of private memory to help recapture history in the face of public memory’s ‘backshadowings’ and historical revisions. The novel highlights the public record’s capacity to situate Lord Darlington’s actions within the larger narrative of the war, but it also lays bare the inadequacy of the public record in the face of the historical contextualization which the private memories of Stevens make available. Stevens’ private memory struggle to return to the past in order to associate with his own present: the recognition that an era had stood open to multiple possible futures - not just the horrific future which did in fact ensue. Ishiguro conveys mixed signals about Stevens’ ability to succeed in this endeavor, hinting regularly that Stevens’ motivation derives from his desire to excuse his own - and Lord Darlington’s - behavior.

Therefore, in *The Remains of the Day*, Ishiguro skillfully reveals Stevens’ perception of the world at the same time he unveils, more importantly, how these perceptions blind him. Although Stevens remembers with pride his years of service to Lord Darlington, his memory also evokes incidents that demonstrate layers of guilt, hidden regrets and a capacity for self-questioning. His vain attempts to justify his actions resound with feelings:

There was surely nothing to indicate at the time that such … incidents would render whole dreams irredeemable.64

In the last section of the novel, Stevens finally come to terms with his own identity:
I trusted in his lordship’s wisdom. All those years I served him, I trusted that 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? 

Stevens’ ultimate confessions of his mistakes establish his identity and this is done through his return to the past with his memory. His introspection has made him aware of the wrong path that he had taken in the course of his life. Memory is again depicted as a constructive mechanism as Stevens, like Etsuko and Ono, finds himself incapable of “serving” as he once had.

The first three novels *A Pale View of Hills, An Artist of the Floating World* and *The Remains of the Day* share many things in common. Each of the three novels depicted the tension between memory and history through private memory and public history. However, in *When We Were Orphans*, Ishiguro depart from his previous strategy, as he states:

I have to be careful not to confuse my narrators with my own identity as a writer. It’s so easy, in all walks of life, to get trapped into a corner by things that once earned you praise and esteem.

Accordingly, in *When We Were Orphans*, Ishiguro explores the tension between history and memory through Banks’ private memory and private history. Banks’ first diary entry dated 24th July 1930 coincide with the launch of the Japanese occupation of Manchuria. His narration also suggest the causation between Britain’s opium trade in China, and suspects that his parents being missing is related to the opium trade. However in contrast to the first three novels, the historical event in *When We Were Orphans* is not very significant. In this novel, Ishiguro elaborates more on the ambivalent nature of memory. On the one hand, it gives a powerful stimulus for intruding in history which is either unknown, or, as the protagonist suspects, has been falsified. Memory
nurture the ambition to make a private, (if metaphorical) sense of history. On the other hand, memory also works as a playground for a stockpile of facts and myths that followed them. Even if memory favours personal and local stories, their meaning is negotiated with history’s discursive trends. As to why memory is so complex in evoking the past is partly explicated by Foucault’s ideas on the hermeneutic character of interpretation. Namely, as Foucault points out, the act of interpretation occurs as a response to the violence exerted by former interpretations on individuals’ comprehension of historical phenomena. Interpretation does not concern bare facts and can never directly refer to them. Rather, interpretation functions as a commentary on the statements that have been already used on facts. In contrast to the first three novels, in *When We Were Orphans*, the origin “in” and “of” history is not available for public use. In order to confront the history that had shaped his life, Banks concentrates all his attention on performing retrospection. Since memory, as contrasted with a detectivist investigation, does not deem historical incidents more or less crucial it is a more adequate instrument for dealing with past stories. Therefore, even for detective Banks, juvenile memories speaking through an adult male play the main part in reviving by-gone reality. For most of the time investigative tools are taken for granted in the novel. Banks relies on childhood memory much more than scientific methods of inquiry. Consequently, memories become the primal material in his analysis.

The protagonist knows that his remembering the past could have been, to varying degrees, shaped by other people’s recounting given incidents. The possibility to differentiate between memory, interpretation of memories as well as other people’s accounts that have been remembered (and institute interpretative strategies for dealing with the dominant discourse of history) is absolutely excluded. Additionally, the more the images from the past fade in time, the more the narratives supplement them in order to bridge gaps in the incomplete idea of history:
For the truth is, over the past year, I have become increasingly preoccupied with my memories, a preoccupation encouraged by the discovery that these memories – of my childhood, of my parents – have lately begun to blur. A number of times recently I have found myself struggling to recall something that only two or three years ago I believed was ingrained in my mind forever. I have been obliged to accept, in other words, that with each passing year, my life in Shanghai will grow less distinct, until one day all that will remain will be a few muddled images.\textsuperscript{69}

Apparently, the only way to retain a comprehensive picture of history is discovering the truth about it before the potential to remember will have been exhausted. For Banks, reminiscences give ground for a large-scale inquiry. As a consequence, ordinary techniques of research are substituted by a more personal and local method of tracking down the path of history. The mechanism, provided in such a way, oscillates between evoking a past event and fantasizing about it which, in actual fact, constitutes every historical narration. It therefore operates on the level of the minutest details. In this sense, Banks is in constant search of what is similar and analogical. Foucault writes that memory and emotions that accompanied it undergo “assujetissement” – adjustment to a certain commonsensical adequacy and continuity which is generated by an intentional representation.\textsuperscript{70} Consequently, Banks is incapable of making any “rational” statements about history since his point of departure is posited in opposition to the reason which is supposed to enhance the representation.

Indeed, Banks undertakes his task not only to get to know the truth about the past. He wants to find out which of the stories narrated by his memory is his real story. He is also conscious that the truth about him is located somewhere in the discourse of history. Banks
engages all his time and energy to sort the issue out. When Banks is about to solve his case, it turns out that history as he remembered it has no visible reflection in reality. Even the beginning of his story – the source of his identity – everything has been remodeled by distance and time. The sense of history, even though approached from a personal stance, did not obey his intention. Banks is disillusioned with history because it did not supply him with the story that he meant to find:

But now do you see how the world really is? You see what made possible your comfortable life in England? How you were able to become a celebrated detective? A detective! What good is that to anyone? Stolen jewels, aristocrats murdered for their inheritance. Do you suppose that’s all there is to contend with? Your mother, she wanted you to live in your enchanted world for ever. But it’s all impossible. In the end it has to shatter. It’s a miracle it survived so long for you.71

To Banks, history reveals that there is no source or origin and that there have never been any whatsoever. His idea of the world, his family and even the political situation come to disempower his detective authority and also undermine the value of childhood reminiscences. In “Nietzsche, Genealogia, Historia”, Foucault follows Nietzsche and dismisses the concept of source as definable in a historical research and presumes it to be a metaphysical predicament.72 He further denotes that true stories exist only as wishful projections: one of them is the supposition that history can be examined and explained at every point it makes and that it contains or constitutes the truth about the past. There is no truth in history – on the contrary – the only history is that of untruthfulness.73 As a consequence, Banks realizes that the significance of his memories is minor since they either prove to have never been true or cease to be true after he
has believed they were. It is not because the memories are faint or inadequate but because there is no certainty as to the creditable link between the emergence of reminiscences and the history that surrounded them. There is, furthermore, no effective interpretative stance for a historical subject that would facilitate discrimination between interpretation which results in ‘objective’ knowledge and the assumption of the ‘objective’ truth which is the by-product of interpretation:

Knowledge whether it is true or not, whether it is only a perception based on myth or whether it is based on fact, can equally ‘make itself true’ changing the fabric of the real world.\(^{74}\)

Now, Banks is deprived of any illusions concerning his life. During all the time that he spent in England, he was neither an orphan nor was he a legitimate member of the higher walks of life. But the belief in his origin made him live his life by almost aristocratic standards. What he presumed to be his fate and vocation turned out to be a waste of time. To a paradox, it was also a waste of his mother’s sacrifice which she made in order to save her son from history and he unconsciously used it in order to live up to it:

Perhaps there are those who are able to go about their lives unfettered by such concerns. But for those like us, our fate is to face the world as orphans, chasing through long years the shadows of vanished parents. There is nothing for it but to try and see through our missions to the end, as best we can, for until we do so, we will be permitted no calm.\(^{75}\)

Finally, Banks confirms that a single story cannot prevail in the battle with history. Banks declares his identity outside the order of linear history. For several years trying to locate the whereabouts of his parents, Banks learns how to come to terms with the undesired identity.
The use of individual or autobiographical memory in Ishiguro’s novels - *A Pale View of Hills, An Artist of The Floating World, The Remains of the Day* and *When We Were Orphans* - is in contrast with history. The narrators’ subjective treatment of memory enables them to establish a relationship with their personal identity. The transition from helplessness to hope and the recovery of identity from the recognition of the scars of history is witnessed at the end of each novel by the narrators, triumph over the forces of destruction and solitude that permeate their remembrances. Ishiguro’s novels develop a series of individualistic autobiographical searches which become the revelation of traditions and recollections of disseminated identities, resulting in personal retrospection that attempts to gain a sense of identity and a vision for the future. The characters’ use of memory implies an interpretation of history that at times severs its connection to memory. The memories reconstructed in Ishiguro’s novels accomplish a reflexive revision of the past in such a way that the value and purpose of retrospection become central to their mission. Memory is not a historical object, but rather its own referent which recognizes two forms of legitimacy: historical and literary.

This chapter excludes *Never Let Me Go* because in this novel, Ishiguro has departed from his earlier technique of using the history of the nation as turning points in the life of the protagonists. His first three books, each featured a diffident narrator, namely, a widow from bomb-ravaged Nagasaki in *A Pale View of Hills*, an artist damaged by collusion with Japanese militarism in *An Artist of The Floating World*, and a butler tainted by service to a fascist British aristocrat in *The Remains of the Day* comprise a kind of ‘trilogy’ about the disorientation caused by the war. Ishiguro observes:

> In the first three novels, I was rewriting the same thing. I was on the same piece of territory, and each time I was refining what I wanted to say. …
my second novel was an expansion of the sub-plot of my first novel, but it’s about how somebody wasted his life in terms of his career … The Remains of the Day is a re-write of An Artist of the Floating World, except it’s about a man who wasted his life in his career and his personal arena. Each time, I’d think, “It’s not quite here yet. I’ve got to do it again but with another dimension”.76

Following the publication of each of Ishiguro’s first three novels, Ishiguro was labeled as a writer who wrote only about Japanese topics. What Ishiguro had attempted was to produce a book with universal theme and in the first three novels, he never intended to emphasize on his Japanese ethnicity. In an interview, he expresses that A Pale View of Hills and An Artist of the Floating World have been misread respectively as a realistic description of post-war Japan and The Remains of the Day as about Britain’s aristocracy and the country’s involvement in fascism and the Second World War and When We Were Orphans as the Sino-Japanese war.77 Therefore, from his fourth novel, The Unconsoled (1995) [which is not included in the study], a shift occurs. Mathew Beedham correctly notes:

Frustrated by critics who attempted to categorize him as a realist and who continually sought to ground his novels in their historical context, he introduced a radically new structure that has had a sharply polarizing effect on readers …and have a unique contribution to the representation of consciousness.78

Ishiguro has therefore departed from his previous technique and has developed a new strategy in order to convey what matters to him most: “the extent to which we accepted our fates, the kind
of lives we were allowed to live as people, rather than focus on the rebellion spirit we gain and try to move out of our lives.” Therefore, in *Never Let Me Go*, Ishiguro emphatically explores what preoccupies him that is, the constructive nature of memory which becomes a means of relating the past to the present in order to make sense of the present life. Historical event is completely absent and Ishiguro has created characters who are clones and who have no public history (prior to the moment they were made) and the novel is also set in fictional England in the 1980s. Again, the novel was regarded by reviewers like Leona Toker and Daniel Chertoff amongst others as science fiction because of Ishiguro’s use of clones. But Ishiguro notes:

> There are things I am more interested in than the clone thing. How are they trying to find their place in the world and make sense of their lives? To what extent can they transcend their fate? As time starts to run out, what are the things that really matter? Most of the things that concern them concern us all, but with them it is concertinaed into this relatively short period of time. These are the things that really interest me and having come to the realization that I probably have limited opportunities to explore these things, that’s what I want to concentrate on.

However, in *Never Let Me Go* Ishiguro still continues to explore the underlying themes of memory and identity. Even though public history or historical event is absent in the novel, the personal component of history, that is, an individual’s retrospection of his or her life is still at the centre in *Never Let Me Go* which is also very significant in *A Pale View of Hills, An Artist of the Floating World, The Remains of the Day* and *When We Were Orphans*. Therefore, Ishiguro’s narratives define the function of memory as a primary source for understanding how differing versions of the past are reconstructed. Memory, as such, is the process by which the quest for
identity becomes the search for one’s own history. By producing alternate narrative patterns, Ishiguro’s writing provides openings for other narratives, and other versions of history which are precipitated by memory and reinforce remembering.
NOTES


18 Ibid.


21 Ibid.


27 Ibid. 11, 137-38.


34 Ibid.

35 Ibid. 59.

36 Ibid. 89.

37 Ibid. 147.

38 Ibid. 146.

39 Ibid. 9, 90.

40 Cheng, chu-Cheuh. *The Margin Without Centre: Kazuo Ishiguro*. Bern: Peter Lang, 2010. Print. 164. Cheng states that “War bride” refers to a woman who married a foreign GI (usually Westerners) working in the military during the Second World War; the man was not necessarily a soldier, for he could have been a military police, a journalist, or even a clerk.

41 Ibid.


Ibid.


Ibid. 185-86.


Ibid.


59 Ibid.


61 Ibid.


63 James M. Lang, “Public Memory, Private History: Kazuo Ishiguro’s The Remains of the Day”, *CLIO* 29.2 (2000). Lang uses the term “backshadowing” to explain the retrospective interpretation of happenings through hindsight knowledge of both the dynamics of the overall situation and the implications of every detail for the whole picture.


65 Ibid. 243.


