

*Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Pázmány Péter Catholic University,
Doctoral School of Literary Studies*

PhD DISSERTATION

GAPS AND SILENCES IN RE-INTERPRETING THE PAST

THE DEVELOPMENT OF KAZUO ISHIGURO'S NARRATIVE TECHNIQUE IN HIS EARLY
NOVELS

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I, the undersigned, *Éva Katalin Szederkényi*, candidate for a PhD degree at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Doctoral School of Literary Studies in English Language and Literature declare herewith that the present PhD thesis is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND REFERENCING

PVH	<i>A Pale View of Hills</i>
AFW	<i>An Artist of the Floating World</i>
RD	<i>The Remains of the Day</i>
UC	<i>The Unconsoled</i>
WWO	<i>When We Were Orphans</i>
NLMG	<i>Never Let Me Go</i>

All references are to the Faber & Faber editions of Kazuo Ishiguro's novels except *When We Were Orphans* which was published at Knopf.

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1. RATIONALE

1.1 Statement and research question

My research concerns the contemporary fiction of Kazuo Ishiguro, the Japanese-born British writer. Using primary sources, *A Pale View of Hills* (1982), *An Artist of the Floating World* (1986) and *The Remains of the Day* (1989), I create a method employing various aspects of re-construction of the stories in the presentation of first-person singular narrators. Their being provocative nature invites different interpretations. On the one hand, it is a deliberate call indicating that the individual is begging for attention. On the other hand, in considering the stories narrated by Ishiguro's main characters; their deflective storytelling, their glossing over the truth, the omissions and gaps in narration, readers can be provoked and wary about what they are told. Analysing Etsuko's, Ono's, Stevens' and also other first person narrators' discourse (Ryder's,¹ Banks,² Kathy H's³) of the Ishiguro oeuvre, the critical reader finds several distortions, pauses acting as gaps and silences and words relating to their history. Hence, this dissertation examines the place that "gaps" and "silences" occupy in Ishiguro's novels. Focusing on first-person narrators, Etsuko in *A Pale View of Hills*, Ono in *An Artist of the Floating World*, and Stevens in *The Remains of the Day* this dissertation brings to the fore some of the main points by which gaps and silences act as defensive tools for hiding, deflecting and distorting stories recounted. Gaps and silences are of lurid, floating character, always escaping cognitive approaches. How can they be located and analysed? In the following dissertation the floating nature of gaps and silences will be explored by means of post-structuralist narrative discourse and psychoanalytic literary criticism.

In Freudian terms omissions, gaps and silences are related to memory-gaps preventing painful and therefore repressed material from becoming conscious. I will argue, that Ishiguro via his first person narrators' gaps and silences reveals more than the reader would anticipate at first. In addition to this the writer invites critical readers to contribute to

¹ Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Unconsoled* (London, Faber, 1995).

² Kazuo Ishiguro, *When We Were Orphans* (London, Faber, 2000).

³ Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* (London, Faber, 2005).

the ongoing process of revealing and concealing. Basic to my analysis, this thesis interprets narration as a perception of the “self.” In other words, I will examine how narrators not only perceive but interpret their character by positioning themselves in front of an imagined audience, i.e. the reader. Via constructing a topical gap between their personae, their stories offer various vantage points from where reinterpretation can be structured. Also I claim that through stereotypical biography tropes first person narrators of Ishiguro⁴ are continuously reworking their narrative by the objectification of the self, i.e. talking about the “what” (breakdowns, misconceptions, failed missions of professions and families) rather than the “who.”

My interest in Ishiguro is manifold. I appreciate his capacity for moral and artistic expression, for his style and intrepid ability to experiment in narrative techniques. In all his novels Ishiguro touches the quick pulse of our contemporary Western way of life, being brave and humanist enough to raise, re-examine and provoke moral questions in literary discourses such as loyalty, commitment, the future of mankind, the collapse of communication between people, dislocation and alienation. This dissertation will focus on the characters’ techniques of digression used in an attempt to reconstruct and reinterpret their past in relation to social and cultural moves. I will explore the psychic role that repressed memories represent via narrative gaps and silences in the formation of the narration. I will also examine the means by which these are employed to avoid answering issues of responsibility, guilt and loyalty. Examining the place that the idea of “silence” occupies in Ishiguro’s novels, I start from the premise that silence is as much an aspect of Ishiguro’s characters as the words that they utter. Focusing on first person narration in Ishiguro’s first three novels, *A Pale View of Hills*, *An Artist of the Floating World* and the third, *The Remains of the Day*, this thesis brings to the fore some of the main points by which silence acts as a provocative and defensive tool. As for the means by which narration is interpreted and in psychoanalytical readings of silences, psychoanalytic concepts of “uncanny,” “doubles” and “desire” will be explored in the text as well as the central idea of “repression” manifested by textual gaps and silences.

Throughout this study, post-structuralist narrative and psychoanalytic literary theories⁵ are applied in order to decipher the heavy silences of Ishiguro’s narrators; the

⁴ E.g. especially in the narration of Stevens when he laments on his failures in life stating “As for myself, I cannot even claim that” In Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*, (London, Faber, 1999), 256.

⁵ On the relationship between literature and psychoanalysis Lindsey Stonebridge writes that the relationship between literature and psychoanalysis at its birth was a “joint venture in forging a new language for the unconscious.” In Stonebridge, *The Destructive Element*, 269.

former being an offshoot of structuralism which “sought from its inception in the 1960s to explain narrative competence by determining a system of units and rules that underlies all narratives.”⁶ The latter approach is what Elizabeth Wright explains as investigation of the text “for the workings of a rhetoric seen as analogous to the mechanisms of the psyche.”⁷ The frame of this discussion will be provided by theorists elaborating the concepts of “gaps” and “silences” in narration. The method will be these central themes to be interpreted from a post-structuralist and psychological point of view (Patricia Oudek Laurence and Dorrit Cohn).

For interpreting Ishiguro’s “silenced” texts, Oudek Laurence’s model will be employed in order to be able to locate and categorize the psychoanalytically interpreted “silences.” I will examine the novels chapter by chapter as I posit that each narrative chapter represents a gap i.e. a beat. Using Patricia Oudek Laurence’s description of psychoanalytical models⁸ on *The Reading of Silence: Virginia Woolf in the English Tradition*, I will also explore the narrative methods in first-person texts I subscribe to Dorrit Cohn’s *Transparent Minds*.⁹

1.2 Research methodology

My method regarding “silences” will be to examine the narratives in order to detach pauses integrated into self-quoted, self-narrated monologues and self-narrated dialogues or silences surrounding them in order to determine the qualitative measure of these silences and their substance. Oudek Laurence’s approach will be applied in exploring different “modalities” of silence in order to distinguish between “keeping silence about something,” “refusal to enact a subordinate position,” and “signalling exclusion” with special focus on reading silence as “ritual of truth” and “self-resistance.”¹⁰ My inquiry will also pay attention to ellipses, pauses and silences and to the role of the inarticulate or taciturn. Analysing the novels in order to explore and demonstrate how readers are required to participate in the ongoing process of revealing and concealing, the study of the sequential

⁶ Katherina Saunders Nash, “Narrative Structure” In *The Encyclopaedia of the Novel*. ed. Peter Melville Logan et al., (Oxford, Blackwell, 2011), 545.

⁷ Elisabeth Wright, *Psychoanalytic Criticism, Theory in Practice* (London, Methuen, 1984), 6.

⁸ Patricia Oudek Laurence, *The Reading of Silence: Virginia Woolf in the English Tradition* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1993)

⁹ Dorrit Cohn, *Transparent Minds. Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness* (New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1978), 143–268.

¹⁰ Patricia Oudek Laurence, *The Reading of Silence: Virginia Woolf in the English Tradition*, 58.

order of narrative chapters will demonstrate the development of the narrative technique within each text. In other words we will explore what type of new story is formed after reconstructing and bridging the “gaps” in the narration.

Given that there is such a stress on the revealed and concealed information by first person narrators, one may be inquisitive as to the aspect of the text that allows free interpretation. Subsequently, there was a need to introduce a model for reading not only “silences” but for interpreting “gaps.” Defining the research methodology further, the concepts of “gaps” and “silences” here are not treated synonymously although in literary theory, as it is demonstrated in Chapters One and Two, they are commonly discussed together. In Ishiguro’s case the concept that readers can write in the strata is what Iser refers to as “blanks” or “gaps” in the text. These instances in the text arise when something crucial to understanding the text is “missing” and must be “deciphered” such as the notion of absences. Taking an example from *The Remains of the Day*, an entire chapter, Day Five is missing from the narrative structure, a gap to be deciphered, involving the reader in the act of reading and interpreting. The gaps function as a kind of pivot on which the whole text-reader relationship revolves. Hence the structured blanks of the text stimulate the process of ideation to be performed by the reader on terms set by the text.”¹¹ Gaps within the text serve as an opportunity for critical readers to join the different segments of the texts in a way that produces a meaning that is in accordance with their own interpretation of the text thus far. Iser goes on to suggest that gaps or blanks are crucial in what he calls “the game of imagination.” By reading the novels of Ishiguro, I claim, one volunteer plays a jigsaw-activity filling in the informative gaps and deciphering auditory or spatial silences. His or her enjoyment of the game depends on the equilibrium between the gaps and what is explicitly stated in the text. In the textual analysis of the narratives, rhetoric forms of gaps are going to be categorized by “the bravura of ventriloquism,”¹² ellipses and periphrasis.

Therefore the research questions that are posed in the thesis are the following: to what extent silence is provocative by deflecting injurious details of the past and how does Ishiguro’s artistic craft construct the layers of his protagonists’ distorted narration? In other words, how does silence assist injurious details by becoming oblivious? The main line of inquiry is to examine how protagonists are trapped by their first-person narration. I will

¹¹ Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 169.

¹² Barry Lewis, *Kazuo Ishiguro* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2000), 93.

also elaborate on the question of how first person narration provokes the idea in psychoanalytical terms, that the protagonists use their self-reflective narration as a “talking cure.” It will be clarified how first person narrators build up their private myth by the application of narrative gaps and silences and what the function of reticence is in distorting their public or private past. Following a research design, the thesis includes this introductory section and definition of research methodology with an overview of the psychoanalytical interpretation of gaps and silences. This will be followed by a detailed study of the novelist’s first three novels, an evaluation of the narrative techniques, a summary of the findings, suggestions for further research and a bibliography. Ishiguro’s narrative technique is described as having “exquisitely fashioned miniatures, miracles of workmanship and tact that suggest everything through absence and retreat”¹³ with “ink-wash elusiveness, an ellipticism almost violent in its reticence.”¹⁴ This elusiveness, which escapes cognitive analysis, makes Ishiguro’s work of art mysterious, metaphysical and yet breathtakingly quintessential. Along with professional failures, other themes that Ishiguro explores with great concern in his fiction are miscommunications manifested in “silences” and deepened by “gaps” between parents and children, between husband and wife. As it is known from everyday life, communication dysfunctions are usually caused by silence or cognitive gaps, by physical absence or latent presence. In this thesis I further propose: absences are also manifested in textual gaps. Stevens never mentions his mother, Etsuko, under no circumstances, gives record of her deceased family, Ono mentions his wife, Michiko only once¹⁵ in the narration.

In Ishiguro’s art, protagonists’ pondering, evading, and deflecting reality, their silence about facts, their under or over-explanation reveal the uneasiness of narrators. The characters of Stevens¹⁶ of *The Remains of the Day* and Ono of *An Artist of the Floating World* are experts in circumlocutions (AFW 25) and exaggerations (RD 54 and AFW 96) while the first person narration of Etsuko in *A Pale View of Hills* is mastering her narrative with confusing plots, characters and chronology,¹⁷ and yet evades talking about war traumas (PVH 11 and 13). Digressions (UC 287–288, 475 and WWO 74–75) in later Ishiguro novels such as *The Unconsoled* and *When We Were Orphans* are also markers of

¹³ Pico Iyer, “Waiting upon History, *The Remains of the Day* by Kazuo Ishiguro” *Partisan Review*, 58, 3, (1991), 588.

¹⁴ Iyer, “Waiting upon History.” 589.

¹⁵ Kazuo Ishiguro, *An Artist of the Floating World* (London, Faber, 2001), 201.

¹⁶ Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*, 41.

¹⁷ Kazuo Ishiguro, *A Pale View of Hills* (London, Faber, 1991), 182.

dysfunctional communication between characters, families, and friends. In the structural complexities of the narratives, (especially in the case of *The Unconsoled* and *When We Were Orphans*) the verbal repetitions of Stevens in *The Remains of the Day*, the musical dynamism of Etsuko and the brightly clear narration of Kathy H in Ishiguro's latest published¹⁸ novel, *Never Let Me Go* all serve the purpose of finding some explanation (exclamation) for the disconnected space and time and for dysfunctional human relations. Ishiguro's texts repeat, modify, transform, rework and invest ideas to achieve a self-modifying creation of "a new home" where protagonists find consolation. As Barry Lewis explains:

Absence, they say, makes the heart grow fonder. Yet absence in *A Pale View of Hills* – absent fathers, absent daughters, absent bombs – is at the heart of the heart itself. (...) The absences inscribed in its ghost stories exemplify the uncanny, the term used by Freud to denote the frisson between the frightening and the familiar. The German word for this is *das Unheimlich*, the negation of the "homely", the disruption of the sense of being "at home" in the world.¹⁹

Evaluating a premise stated earlier, namely that first person narrators in the examined Ishiguro novels are "displaced" being either absent or only virtually present, maybe it is not far-fetched to say that these physical and psychological absences are carefully explained by the first person narrators' *over-talking* (in the case of Stevens) or by circumvention (Etsuko's and Ono's narration is full of digressions) I will explore in the narratives.

Investigating the rhetoric of narrative gaps and silences in Ishiguro's first three novels, perhaps it is not far-fetched to say that their narrators successfully deflect information. In *The Remains of the Day*, the first person narrator Stevens via his hypophoras, i.e. answering his own rhetorical questions (e.g. on "greatness" and "dignity"), with his euphemisms and circumlocutions provokes the idea that there is much more concealed than revealed. In my interpretation Stevens' linguistic eloquences provide for the narrator's desperate need for confession. Stevens' silence is syntactically elevated, structured. At the same time Etsuko's silence is rich in symbols and dreams. The narrator

¹⁸ The latest Ishiguro novel is to be published under the title *The Buried Giant* in March 2015 at Knopf Publishing House and at Faber.

¹⁹ Barry Lewis, *Kazuo Ishiguro* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2000), 44. (Emphasis original.)

of *A Pale View of Hills* is continuously reworking her narrative while attempting to verbalize the impossible (her responsibility in Keiko's suicide). Similar to the narration of Stevens, Ono's pompous style in *An Artist of the Floating World* masks the character's irresistible urge to deflect the truth. Ishiguro tellingly explains in a 1990 interview this heart-rending failed attempt of humans – I would exaggerate – in order to come to terms with their sins, failures, mistakes and lost opportunities:

[w]riting is a kind of consolation or therapy... The best writing comes out of a situation where I think the artist or writer has to some extent come to terms with the fact that it is too late. The wound has come, and it hasn't healed, but it's not going to get any worse; yet, the wound is there.²⁰

In my interpretation not one of the first person narrators of Ishiguro's first three novels finds consolation in listening to the sounds of silence in their empty future. Yet telling their stories may bring momentary ease to their troubled consciences and their wounds might be healed by a "talking cure."²¹

²⁰ A. Vorda and K. Herzinger, "Stuck on the Margins, An Interview with Kazuo Ishiguro," In *Face to Face, Interviews with Contemporary Novelists*, ed. Allan Vorda and Daniel Stern, (Houston, Rice University Press, 1993), 34.

²¹ Sigmund Freud, *Studies in Hysteria*, In *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, (trans) J. Strachey et al. vols. 1–23. London: Hogarth Press, 1953–74. Standard Edition 2.

2. THE USE OF PSYCHOANALYTIC LITERARY THEORY IN ISHIGURO'S NOVELS

“In his [Freud’s] theory the silent world of hidden meanings never displaces the ordinary human suffering which gives rise to them.”²²

In this thesis I shall use psychoanalytic theory to examine the novels of Ishiguro. It is impossible to begin an exploration of the relevance of psychoanalytic texts to Kazuo Ishiguro’s novels without a brief description of psychoanalytical literary theory, since this forms the underlying basis for all the theoretical positions – reading the first person narrators’ deflections, circumlocutions and silences as a means of avoidance and defence – contained in this study. On the other hand, my aim is to avoid the pitfalls of psychoanalytic literary criticism, since the temptation theorists of psychoanalytic approach should resist is “to analyse” the author, the fictitious persons²³ (characters) of the texts. To put it simply, vulgar Freudianism should be avoided. Therefore, primarily with help of theorists such as Elisabeth Wright and Ruth Parkin-Gounelas, the concept of psychoanalytic literary theory is defined. Secondly, it will be explained how psychoanalysis and literature speak to each other regardless of their distinct nature and how psychoanalysis can be used as an interpretative tool following the lines of thought of theorists like Rosalind Minsky, Ruth Parkin-Gounelas, Peter Brooks, Shoshana Felman and others. Thirdly, an assessment of some of the problems related to psychoanalytic literary theory will be offered.

The idea of psychoanalytic literary criticism has been with us since at least 1908, when Freud published his brief essay “Creative Writers and Day-dreaming,”²⁴ yet in literary criticism the psychoanalytical approach “has always been something of an embarrassment,”²⁵ mainly because psychoanalysis and literary criticism are seemingly distant fields of study. The former is a therapeutic tool while the latter is an interpretative theory. As a clinical practice psychoanalysis has been concerned with people with mental problems since Freud made his revolutionary discovery that psychoanalysis has to deal with the psyche caught up in figures of speech and various tropes of language. In other

²² Rosalind Minsky, *Psychoanalysis and Gender, An Introductory Reader* (London, Routledge, 1996), 154.

²³ Peter Brooks, *Psychoanalysis and Storytelling* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1994), 20.

²⁴ Sigmund Freud, “Creative Writers and Day-dreaming”, in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, (trans.) J. Strachey et al. vols. 1–23. London: Hogarth Press, 1953–74. Standard Edition 9. 149–153.

²⁵ Peter Brooks, *Psychoanalysis and Storytelling*, 20.

words, the therapy is centred on the patient's living responses that give way to his anxieties, pursuing meanings ranging from ambivalence to fantasy. As psychoanalysis deals with subjects whose symptoms are an "example of inadequacy at the meeting place of the body and the society,"²⁶ the controversial nature of psychoanalysis is inevitable, argues Elisabeth Wright:

The trope, the figure of speech, has been seen as a mechanism of subversion, or defence, or even both. Such multiple meanings arise because at the interface of body and society conscious and unconscious hold place together; [...] An incessant struggle is at work in language because it is at once cause and effect of the subject's desire.²⁷

In the analysis of Ishiguro's texts the concept of "defence" and "defence mechanisms" as tools for keeping unconscious desires repressed play important roles. In the following a summary is given of the definition of "defence." "What is the ultimate and underlying basis of the defence of the ego?" ask Laplanche and Pontalis in *The Language of Psychoanalysis*.²⁸ "Why does the ego experience a certain instinctual impulse, an unpleasure?" Sigmund Freud's daughter, Anna Freud, who elaborated on the concept of "defence" in her 1936 study, claims that the defensive measures against the id, namely the instincts, are carried out invisibly. We can only reconstruct them in retrospect as we can never witness them in operation. "This statement applies, for instance, to successful repression. The ego knows nothing of it; we are aware of it only subsequently, when it becomes apparent that something is missing."²⁹ My argument on gaps and silences will strongly depend on the above model of the "awareness of the missing" as a defensive measure. According to Anna Freud's theory, the ego's struggle with its instinctual drives, which she calls "defence mechanisms," is motivated by instinctual anxiety, objective anxiety, and anxiety of conscience. Analysing the ways in which defence mechanisms work, the author focuses on ten different types. Along with regression, repression, reaction formation, undoing, isolation, projection, introjection, reversal and turning against the self, she claims there is a tenth type of mechanism, called sublimation or displacement of

²⁶ Elisabeth Wright, *Psychoanalytic Criticism, A Reappraisal* (New York, Routledge, 1998), 192.

²⁷ Elisabeth Wright, *Psychoanalytic Criticism, A Reappraisal*, 192.

²⁸ Laplanche, Jean and Pontalis, Jean-Bertrand, *The Language of Psychoanalysis* (trans.) D. Nicholson-Smith (New York: W.W. Norton, 1973), 106.

²⁹ Anna Freud, *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defence* (New York: International Universities Press, 1966), 8.

instinctual aims.³⁰ In my study of the texts of first person narrators I will claim that isolation marks the character of Etsuko, projection is a characteristic feature for Ono and the reversal and turning against the self characterizes Stevens' evasive narration. Literary critics such as Brian W. Shaffer, Renata Salecl, and Brian H. Finney have also provided their critical survey on psychoanalytical grounds. Focusing on the realist aspects of technique, Brian H. Finney praises Ishiguro's "remarkably lucid prose style"³¹ that is "almost unmatched among modern writers"³² claiming that the writer experiments with non-realist modes of fiction, which Finney³³ calls "narrative manipulation."³⁴ Using the Freudian concepts of wish fulfilment, repetition compulsion, repression and the uncanny, he suggests that Ishiguro's rejection to any chronological order in his novels sets him free to develop the narrative "tonally"³⁵ as Ishiguro puts it in an interview with Gregory Manson. Accordingly, he can "use narrative structure to uncover the structure of the narrator's unconscious."³⁶ As I have noted above, I will explore what the language of the text suggests about the nature of repression and expression,³⁷ using Elisabeth Wright's concept "that the text is the analyst,"³⁸ following a method suggested by Rob Pope³⁹ that will be discussed later in this chapter.

The question might arise: "How do the above psychoanalytic concepts apply to literary criticism?" The role of psychoanalytic literary criticism, Ruth Parkin-Gounelas writes, is "to explore the ways in which the silences and gaps in the texts, the unconscious in all its inaccessibility, can be approached through a range of psychoanalytic concepts or structures which the Freudian revolution has engendered."⁴⁰ Apart from attempting to guess in the gaps and silences of the analysed texts, I will explore the following Freudian concepts in my dissertation: the "uncanny" and "doubles." In Freudian terms "uncanny" (*das Unheimliche*) means an "implication of familiarity, of something known but long

³⁰ Anna Freud, *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defence*, 44.

³¹ Brian Finney, "Figuring the Real, Ishiguro's *When We Were Orphans*." *Jouvert, A Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 7. 1 (2002). <http://english.chass.ncsu.edu/jouvert/v7is1/ishigu.htm> (accessed 25 August 2012).

³² Brian Finney, "Figuring the Real, Ishiguro's *When We Were Orphans*." (accessed 25 August 2012).

³³ Brian Finney discusses that Ishiguro's experiment with different genres rely on figurative language and "symbolic import" in ³³ Brian Finney, "Figuring the Real, Ishiguro's *When We Were Orphans*." (accessed 25 August 2012)

³⁴ Brian Finney, "Figuring the Real, Ishiguro's *When We Were Orphans*." (accessed 25 August 2012)

³⁵ Gregory Mason, "An Interview with Kazuo Ishiguro." *Contemporary Literature*, 30.3 (1989). 342.

³⁶ Brian Finney, "Figuring the Real, Ishiguro's *When We Were Orphans*." (accessed 25 August 2012)

³⁷ Rob Pope, *The English Studies Book: An Introduction to Language, Literature and Culture* (London and New York, Routledge, 1998), 98.

³⁸ Elisabeth Wright, *Psychoanalytic Criticism, A Reappraisal*, 193.

³⁹ Rob Pope, *The English Studies Book: An Introduction to Language, Literature and Culture*, 98.

⁴⁰ Ruth Parkin-Gounelas, *Literature and Psychoanalysis. Intertextual Readings* (London, Palgrave, 2001), xi.

since forgotten (repressed) which makes its emergence so eerie,”⁴¹ whereas a double is an external projection “onto a related figure, of aspects of one’s own mental conflict,”⁴² following Otto Rank’s definition used by Freud. The doublings or shadows of the self release guilt or anxiety, but can also be interpreted as a prediction of death. I will argue that Etsuko’s and Stevens’ narration will bring to mind uncanny feelings and the narrators’ external projection will mark their inner conflict by forming shadows or doubles.

Besides the important mediating role of language, in what ways are psychoanalysis and literature related? Elisabeth Wright observes that while psychoanalysis “brings out the unconscious aspects of language,” literary texts, seen as “art-objects” or the “works of popular culture are forms of persuasion whereby bodies are speaking to bodies, not merely minds to minds.”⁴³ She sees psychoanalytic criticism “as investigating the text for the workings of a rhetoric seen as analogous to the mechanisms of the psyche,”⁴⁴ a definition of psychoanalytic criticism I use as a point of departure in my thesis. Also, it is cogent to agree with her where she claims that assumptions of classical psychoanalytic criticism, which argued that the reader is the analyst and the text is the patient, no longer hold. To reiterate: “the case is rather that the text is the analyst.”⁴⁵

In a thorough study on *Psychoanalytic Criticism, Theory in Practice*, Wright sees that psychoanalysis provides not only a clinical and therapeutic practice but gives a tool to explore language and what has been ignored or prohibited by it.⁴⁶ Since these prohibitions of repressed, unconscious information are coming from the demand of the conscious, a revolutionary new cultural area was introduced by Sigmund Freud by drawing attention to the unconscious. As Rosalind Minsky writes in her introduction to *Psychoanalysis and Gender*,⁴⁷ psychoanalytic theory is radically different from any other theories as the unconscious was made to be its central concept. However, the unconscious is inaccessible to us. First, Freud investigated its dimensions emerging from our early childhood in forms of dreams, jokes, and what he described as neurotic symptoms in the form of anxiety, guilt, depression, phobias, and various psychosomatic illnesses. As the unconscious is constructed via language, as Freud and Joseph Breuer explored it during their treatment of hysterical patients, the working of language is as crucial for literary analysis as it is for

⁴¹ Ruth Parkin-Gounelas, *Literature and Psychoanalysis*, 104.

⁴² Ruth Parkin-Gounelas, *Literature and Psychoanalysis*, 109.

⁴³ Elisabeth Wright, *Psychoanalytic Criticism, A Reappraisal*, 193.

⁴⁴ Elisabeth Wright, *Psychoanalytic Criticism, A Reappraisal*, 193.

⁴⁵ Elisabeth Wright, *Psychoanalytic Criticism, A Reappraisal*, 193.

⁴⁶ Elisabeth Wright, *Psychoanalytic Criticism, Theory in Practice* (London, Methuen, 1984), 1.

⁴⁷ Rosalind Minsky, *Psychoanalysis and Gender, An Introductory Reader* (London, Routledge, 1996), 3.

therapeutic psychoanalysis.

Taking a historical point of view, Lindsey Stonebridge writes that the relationship between literature and psychoanalysis at its birth was a “joint venture in forging a new language for the unconscious.”⁴⁸ She is giving an overview on how psychoanalysis was accepted and “internalised” to British culture, writing that Freud’s work entered the culture in the 1890’s, but in literature it was the Modernists who, like Virginia Woolf, “defined their work not only with Freud, but against psychoanalysis.”⁴⁹ She continues: “The history of the relation between psychoanalysis and English literature is the history of various and diverse attempts to name that enigmatic something.”⁵⁰ Here she refers to psychoanalyst and critic Adam Philips, who said that a Modernist poet and a free associating patient inject something “enigmatic into the culture.”⁵¹

Considering the interdisciplinary relations between literature and psychoanalysis, Shoshana Felman calls it “a seemingly self-evident question,”⁵² but as rightly pointed out, “the very relationship between literature and psychoanalysis – the way in which they inform each other – has in itself to be reinvented.”⁵³ These words are more than thirty years old. However, in literary discourses, especially in navigating the post-modern turn, they may still be considered as stepping stones. She aptly states a point I find very useful in applying psychoanalytic literary criticism to Ishiguro’s texts, that while the former is “considered as a body of language – to be interpreted – psychoanalysis is considered as a body of knowledge, whose competence is called upon to interpret.”⁵⁴ Therefore psychoanalysis occupies the place of a subject, whereas literature is that of an object.⁵⁵

These arguments are demonstrated by the rich diversity of current psychoanalytic criticism, which starts from the classical Freudian one, then continues with id-psychology, followed by post-Freudian ego-psychology criticism, then archetypal and object-relations criticism. Structural psychoanalytic criticism regards the psyche as a text, whereas post-structuralism has seen it the other way around, examining the text as psyche. A distinctly new field sees psychoanalysis as a discourse in theatre, arts and popular culture, and

⁴⁸ Lindsey Stonebridge, “Psychoanalysis and Literature,” in *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century English Literature*, 269.

⁴⁹ Lindsey Stonebridge, “Psychoanalysis and Literature,” 269.

⁵⁰ Lindsey Stonebridge, “Psychoanalysis and Literature,” 269.

⁵¹ Lindsey Stonebridge, “Psychoanalysis and Literature,” 269.

⁵² Shoshana Felman, “To Open the Question” in Ed. Shoshana Felman. *Literature and Psychoanalysis. The Question of Reading, Otherwise* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), 5.

⁵³ Shoshana Felman, “To Open the Question,” 5.

⁵⁴ Shoshana Felman, “To Open the Question,” 5.

⁵⁵ Shoshana Felman, “To Open the Question,” 5.

feminist psychoanalysis is also considered part of this multifarious field.

Ruth Parkin-Gounelas writes of a long process of convergence of literature and psychoanalysis, reiterating that “[r]ecent decades have seen a further acceleration in the convergence of the two, now evident in the way the vocabulary of each permeates the other at every level.”⁵⁶ She further argues that “there seems little justification for worrying about the differences between the two fields when they clearly have so much in common,” since “the post-modern discourse [is] more likely to celebrate a blurring of boundaries between disciplines and the inter-locution of all “texts.”⁵⁷ Finding two major examples of a convergence of literature and psychoanalysis, she writes that on the one hand there are permeations⁵⁸ of their vocabulary, while on the other hand scientific psychoanalytic writings “have become the object of ‘literary’ scrutiny, with focus on features such as narrative strategy, symbolic patterns or repressed subtexts.”⁵⁹ In my interpretations of Ishiguro’s texts these features, i.e. narrative strategy, symbolic patterns and repressed subtexts will be elaborated on.

Similarly, Peter Brooks argues that to decide if psychoanalysis influences literature or vice versa is extremely complex: “[we] sense that there [...] must be some correspondence between literary and psychic processes, that aesthetic structure and form, including literary tropes, must somehow coincide with the psychic structures and operations they both evoke and appeal to.”⁶⁰ He suggests that psychoanalysis allows us to engage with “dramas of desire played out in tropes.”⁶¹

After considering the correlation between literature and psychoanalysis, we should examine how psychoanalytic literary theory can be used as an interpretative tool. As a clinical practice or as a theoretical model, psychoanalysis, as Sue Vice puts it, is an interpretative strategy as well as “concentrating particularly on the language which tries to render the body’s experiences, the role of sexuality in defining the self, and the construction of subjectivity and gender.”⁶² Psychoanalysis therefore can be a collection of processes used by critics as a discourse with which to approach artistic texts, or it can be a subject of representation or via textual analysis a tool to explain literary characters and themes. Most importantly, however, it “can be seen structurally as itself an aesthetic

⁵⁶ Ruth Parkin-Gounelas, *Literature and Psychoanalysis. Intertextual Readings*, x.

⁵⁷ Ruth Parkin-Gounelas, *Literature and Psychoanalysis. Intertextual Readings*, x.

⁵⁸ Ruth Parkin-Gounelas, *Literature and Psychoanalysis. Intertextual Readings*, x.

⁵⁹ Ruth Parkin-Gounelas, *Literature and Psychoanalysis. Intertextual Readings*, x.

⁶⁰ Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* (New York, Knopf, 1984), 4.

⁶¹ Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative*, 17.

⁶² Sue Vice, *Psychoanalytic Criticism, A Reader* (Cambridge, Polity, 1996), 1.

discourse.”⁶³ Through psychoanalytic discourse, Peter Brooks argues, literary criticism could become “the discourse of something anthropologically important.”⁶⁴ Brooks distinguishes between the three major groups of traditional psychoanalytical literary criticism, depending on the object of the analysis. The object can be the author, the fictitious persons of the text and the reader. Among these three, the “classical locus” yet now the most discredited, is the author, whereas the fictitious characters of the text have also been simplified and deconstructed into an effect of textual codes, he claims.⁶⁵ As for the reader, as the third object of analysis, it continues to flourish in “ever-renewed versions.”⁶⁶ This category may concern either real readers or the reader “as psychological everyman.”⁶⁷ But, as Brooks points out “like the other traditional psychoanalytic approaches, it displaces the object of analysis from the text to some person, some other psycho-dynamic structure,”⁶⁸ a displacement he wishes to avoid since his point of view is to take psychoanalytic criticism as merely textual and rhetorical. Supporting his argument, he praises versions of post-structuralism in psychoanalytic criticism, because they:

[have] attempted to move out from the impasses of an inglorious tradition, to make psychoanalysis serve the study of texts and rhetoric rather than authors, and to stage an encounter of psychoanalysis and literature that does not privilege either term, but rather sets them in a dialogue that both exemplifies and questions how we read.⁶⁹

I consider this dialogue vitally important as the psychological implications of narrators’ word-play, i. e. ambiguities and associations as well as their sentence structure serve the study of the rhetoric with help of psychoanalytical concepts. Attempting to define psychoanalytic criticism, Rosalind Minsky adds that there are the two psychoanalytical discourses, the therapeutic and the structural. The former is a clinical tool to understand the fundamentals of ordinary human events, the latter attempts to unveil structures that determine the construction of human identity, while striving for an understanding of the whole human knowledge.⁷⁰ As Ishiguro writes about writing as consolation, “that the

⁶³ Sue Vice, *Psychoanalytic Criticism, A Reader*, 2.

⁶⁴ Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative*, 4.

⁶⁵ Peter Brooks, *Body Work, Objects of Desire in Modern Narrative* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1993), 21.

⁶⁶ Peter Brooks, *Body Work, Objects of Desire in Modern Narrative*, 21.

⁶⁷ Peter Brooks, *Body Work, Objects of Desire in Modern Narrative*, 22.

⁶⁸ Peter Brooks, *Body Work, Objects of Desire in Modern Narrative*, 23.

⁶⁹ Peter Brooks, *Body Work, Objects of Desire in Modern Narrative*, 23.

⁷⁰ Rosalind Minsky, *Psychoanalysis and Gender*, 11.

world isn't quite the way you wanted it but you can somehow reorder it or try and come to terms with it by actually creating your own world and own version of it."⁷¹ In my analysis, this striving for human understanding makes the process of reading so intriguing. In Sue Vice's version this analytic tool does not only give us a better understanding of literary texts and language, but gives a better understanding of their own fictive and textual constructions as subjects.⁷² Deborah H. Britzman, whose psychoanalytic interpretation of Ishiguro's novels will be discussed in later chapters, finds another angle in discussing the advantages of psychoanalytic literary interpretation:

Psychoanalytic reading teaches us a lesson we already know, that we cannot let go of affected life, we are always reading between the lines, wagering meaning and deferring it. Here is where we find that our constructs fail. Illegible experience turns us into slow readers, returning us to a time before language where oral and anal phases reign supreme, where introjecting the world and projecting it back into the world of others marks and reads ontological difficulty.⁷³

Reading between the lines of Ishiguro's texts means that via examination of the silenced information in textual gaps, a new story can be constructed from the silenced subtexts. Therefore, after reading Etsuko's prose in *A Pale View of Hills*, the implied reader is in the position to either believe the first person narrator's narration via examining the self-narrated dialogues and monologues, or to look for clues in the Nagasaki meta-story to reconstruct the narrative of the first person narrator. The same method can be applied in *An Artist of the Floating World* and *The Remains of the Day*.

In the triangle of author, text and reader, in many contemporary approaches, there has been a shift from writer to reader. Therefore, it is not the "minds" of the characters that should be in the spotlight. It is more likely to be the psychological problems realised by these characters that are reflected in contemporary audiences. In this respect contemporary psychological approaches have much in common with those of reception criticism.⁷⁴ In my understanding and in this respect I concur with Rob Pope that a fiction can become a

⁷¹ A. Vorda and K. Herzinger, "Stuck on the Margins, An Interview with Kazuo Ishiguro," In *Face to Face, Interviews with Contemporary Novelists*, ed. Allan Vorda and Daniel Stern, (Houston, Rice University Press, 1993), 34.

⁷² Sue Vice, *Psychoanalytic Criticism, A Reader* (Cambridge, Polity, 1996), 10.

⁷³ Deborah P. Britzman, "On Being a Slow Reader, Psychoanalytic Reading Problems in Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*", 317.

⁷⁴ Rob Pope, *The English Studies Book: An Introduction to Language, Literature and Culture*, 93.

“space” in which the recipient or the implied reader experiments with and explores various versions of reality and the interplay of conscious and unconscious states.⁷⁵ The above argument is consonant with what Mary Jacobus thinks about the reading process in psychoanalytical terms. For the critic it is related to transference, using the transference concept of Freud.⁷⁶ She adopts Georges Poulet’s essay “Criticism and Interiority” from 1970. For Poulet, the book exists neither in its materiality nor in a psychically locatable space, but in what he calls “my innermost self.”⁷⁷ This inner space in Jacobus’ reading is “the scene of reading,”⁷⁸ a scene in which “imagining an open book in an empty room gives rise to a series of equivalences, such as “inside the book” and “inside me.”⁷⁹ She likens transference to reading, in terms of inquiry to the other and resistance to the real meaning that can be seen as an unexpected reply, an approach I would avoid since for me “the scene of reading”⁸⁰ is too hypothetical to rely on and I argue that a psychoanalytic literary approach should not be used for unlocking the secrets of the literary texts. Shoshana Felman explored these pitfalls claiming that a psychoanalytic approach is far from being “an answering machine,”⁸¹ by which the reader gets ready-made answers and therefore the dynamism between the piece of art and the implied reader is finished. According to Felman, there is a textual and rhetorical aspect to this encounter. Ruth Parkin-Gounelas similarly argues that “automatic symbol hunting”⁸² would not take things far in psychoanalytic literary analysis:

Clearly, automatic symbol hunting (a ‘phallus at every lamppost’) was not going to take things very far. And Ernest Jones, who was one of the first to undertake a sustained Freudian literary analysis with his *Hamlet and Oedipus* (1949), came up immediately against the problem that the literary character has no life before the first page.⁸³

⁷⁵ Rob Pope, *The English Studies Book: An Introduction to Language, Literature and Culture*, 93.

⁷⁶ Freud elaborated his concept of transference in *The Dynamics of Transference* SE 12, (London, Hogarth Press, [1912] 1958), 97–108.

⁷⁷ Mary Jacobus, *Psychoanalysis and the Scene of Reading* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996), 18.

⁷⁸ Mary Jacobus, *Psychoanalysis and the Scene of Reading*, 18.

⁷⁹ Mary Jacobus, *Psychoanalysis and the Scene of Reading*, 18.

⁸⁰ Mary Jacobus, *Psychoanalysis and the Scene of Reading*, 18.

⁸¹ Shoshana Felman, “To Open the Question” in Ed. Shoshana Felman. *Literature and Psychoanalysis. The Question of Reading, Otherwise* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), 5.

⁸² Ruth Parkin-Gounelas, *Literature and Psychoanalysis*, xii.

⁸³ Ruth Parkin-Gounelas, *Literature and Psychoanalysis*, xii. (Emphasis original.)

It is not farfetched to say that in my analysis Ishiguro's first person singular narrators, Etsuko, Ono and Stevens do not have a psyche, (or if they have one, they could be treated as analysands), and therefore their psychoanalytical analysis is neither possible, nor proved. Nonetheless, their rhetoric of silence and gaps can be observed and analysed along with the narrative strategy, repressed subtexts and symbolic patterns, as Ruth Parkin-Gounelas has above advised.

Returning to Felman's point on the topic of misusing psychoanalytical literary analysis, Shoshana Felman claims that dissatisfied critics and readers may feel that "the psychoanalytical reading of literary texts precisely misrecognizes (overlooks, leaves out) their literary specificity."⁸⁴ She invites critics to take another angle, namely to see the relationship between literature and psychoanalysis "from the literary point of view,"⁸⁵ stating that literature falls in the realm of psychoanalysis. The latter with its specific logic and rhetoric, also falls within the realm of literature: "Instead of literature being, as is usually the case, submitted to the authority and to the knowledge of psychoanalysis, psychoanalysis itself would then here be submitted to the literary perspective."⁸⁶

Deborah P. Britzman points out another argument which I find particularly useful in avoiding problematic symbol hunting: "Psychoanalytic readings are often accused of reading too much into our reading events, of taking poetic licence, of presenting absence, and of treating the mind as if it is waiting to be read."⁸⁷ Elisabeth Wright is also aware of the dangers of simplified psychoanalytic readings. She claims that the assumptions of classical criticism, "that the text is the patient and the reader is the analyst, no longer hold: the case is rather that the text is the analyst."⁸⁸ Seeing an ongoing debate, Peter Brooks writes that the displacement of the object of analysis has been a major failing of psychoanalytic criticism, further claiming that "[t]he notion of psychoanalysis applied to literary study continues to evoke reductive manoeuvres that flatten the richness of creative texts into well-worn categories, finding the same old stories where we want new ones."⁸⁹ As one of the first literary critics to write a detailed study on Ishiguro, Brian W. Shaffer provides a critical survey on psychoanalytical grounds. Applying Freud's theories on repetition compulsion, the death drive, mechanisms of repression and the uncanny Shaffer

⁸⁴ Shoshana Felman, "To Open the Question," 6.

⁸⁵ Shoshana Felman, "To Open the Question," 6.

⁸⁶ Shoshana Felman, "To Open the Question," 7.

⁸⁷ Deborah P. Britzman, "On Being a Slow Reader, Psychoanalytic Reading Problems in Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*", 309.

⁸⁸ Elisabeth Wright, *Psychoanalytic Criticism, A Reappraisal*, 193.

⁸⁹ Peter Brooks, *Body Work, Objects of Desire in Modern Narrative*, 20.

finds Ishiguro's novels psychologically absorbing. The critic also argues that the Ishiguro oeuvre is rooted in the literary ancestry of British modernist writers, as E. M. Forster, Joseph Conrad, Ford Madox Ford and Henry James. Shaffer further claims that Ishiguro is more a writer of the inner character than of the outer world:

To be sure, these novels readily engage historical and political realities, but history and politics are explored primarily in order to plumb the depths and shallows of the characters' emotional and psychological landscapes and only secondarily to explore, say, World War Two, Japanese fascism, or the English class system.⁹⁰

Shaffer continues that Ishiguro is preoccupied with psychological defences, "the idealization of the self" and "the ways in which individuals" self-protectively mix "memory and desire."⁹¹ In terms of memory work, Shaffer believes, and I concur with the critic in this, that the characters repress knowledge about their past so as to protect themselves from grievous experiences, or "to repress wishes that they cannot face or even admit" – wishes that, in Freud's words, prove to be "incompatible with their ethical and aesthetic standards."⁹²

Barry Lewis more openly addresses psychoanalytical concepts in his book-length study while exploring the central themes of homelessness, dignity and displacement. He is interpreting Ishiguro's novels with particular reference to Freud's idea of displacement which he defends with the following words:

The importance of Freudian displacement to literature is that it encourages the critical gaze to penetrate the surface of the text and look for the substrata of meaning, unconscious avoidances or refigurations of content.⁹³

His reading also involves a Freudian interpretation of repression in *A Pale View of Hills*, the novel being "a study of the unhomeliness and displacements created by a family suicide and a nuclear genocide."⁹⁴ Further investigations are made in the case of Ono, the denials and lies of Stevens and the disoriented Ryder of *The Unconsoled*, whose imaginary

⁹⁰ Brian W. Shaffer, *Understanding Kazuo Ishiguro* (Columbia, University of South Carolina Press, 1998), 8.

⁹¹ Brian W. Shaffer, *Understanding Kazuo Ishiguro*, 8.

⁹² Brian W. Shaffer, *Understanding Kazuo Ishiguro*, 9.

⁹³ Barry Lewis, *Kazuo Ishiguro* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2000), 16.

⁹⁴ Barry Lewis, *Kazuo Ishiguro*, 44.

town is “a projection of Ryder’s unconscious.”⁹⁵ Lewis claims that Ishiguro’s fourth novel, *The Unconsoled* differs from the previous three in the way memory is handled: “Bad experiences from the past are no longer repressed – as they are by Etsuko, Ono and Stevens – but erupt into the consciousness of the central protagonist and are projected outwards into his circumstances.”⁹⁶

Albeit my thesis does not engage itself with Lacanian interpretations, in the following paragraphs I recite Lacanian readings. Charles Sarvan explores Ishiguro’s art in terms of the Lacanian symbolic order. Among the criticism referring to *The Remains of the Day*, Ruth Parkin-Gounelas, Brian H. Finney, Renata Salecl and Earl G. Ingersoll give elaborate discussions of Ishiguro’s art from a post-Freudian point of view. Ruth Parkin-Gounelas traces the Lacanian model of “lost” object⁹⁷ through the novel, making apt interpretations using the Freudian concepts of mourning and superego. Focusing on the realist aspects of technique, Brian H. Finney praises Ishiguro’s “remarkably lucid prose style”⁹⁸ that is “almost unmatched among modern writers”⁹⁹ claiming that the writer experiments with non-realist modes of fiction that Finney¹⁰⁰ calls “narrative manipulation.”¹⁰¹ Using the Freudian concepts of wish fulfilment, repetition compulsion, repression and the uncanny, he suggests that Ishiguro’s rejection to any chronological order in his novels sets him free to develop the narrative “tonally”¹⁰² as Ishiguro puts it in an interview with Gregory Manson. Accordingly, he can “use narrative structure to uncover the structure of the narrator’s unconscious.”¹⁰³ Referring to *The Remains of the Day*, Finney suggests that “Stevens’ cult of dignity serves as a cover for his repression of his emotional life”¹⁰⁴ whereas his euphemistic use of language “keep[s] the unpleasant reality of death at arms’ length.”¹⁰⁵ Pursuing this thought further, Stevens’ emotional

⁹⁵ Barry Lewis, *Kazuo Ishiguro*, 124.

⁹⁶ Barry Lewis, *Kazuo Ishiguro*, 104.

⁹⁷ Ruth Parkin-Gounelas further explains in Lacanian sense to “find oneself in the mirror is ‘losing’ it at once as object of desire” in Ruth Parkin-Gounelas, *Literature and Psychoanalysis. Intertextual Readings* (New York, Palgrave, 2001), 30.

⁹⁸ Brian Finney, “Figuring the Real, Ishiguro’s *When We Were Orphans*.” *Jouvert, A Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 7. 1 (2002). <http://english.chass.ncsu.edu/jouvert/v7is1/ishigu.htm> (accessed 25 August 2012).

⁹⁹ Brian Finney, “Figuring the Real, Ishiguro’s *When We Were Orphans*.” (accessed 25 August 2012).

¹⁰⁰ Brian Finney discusses that Ishiguro’s experiment with different genres rely on figurative language and “symbolic import” in ¹⁰⁰ Brian Finney, “Figuring the Real, Ishiguro’s *When We Were Orphans*.” (accessed 25 August 2012).

¹⁰¹ Brian Finney, “Figuring the Real, Ishiguro’s *When We Were Orphans*.” (accessed 25 August 2012).

¹⁰² Gregory Mason, “An Interview with Kazuo Ishiguro.” *Contemporary Literature*, 30.3 (1989). 342.

¹⁰³ Brian Finney, “Figuring the Real, Ishiguro’s *When We Were Orphans*.” (accessed 25 August 2012)

¹⁰⁴ Brian Finney, “Figuring the Real, Ishiguro’s *When We Were Orphans*.” (accessed 25 August 2012)

¹⁰⁵ Brian Finney, “Figuring the Real, Ishiguro’s *When We Were Orphans*.” (accessed 25 August 2012)

repression holds up a mirror to “the repression implicit in the most oppressive form of nationalism.”¹⁰⁶

Summarising this chapter, we have defined the concept of psychoanalytic literary theory by Elisabeth Wright and Ruth Parkin-Gounelas as well as psychoanalytical concepts of “defence mechanisms,” “uncanny” and “doubles.” Interdisciplinary relations between literature and psychoanalysis were discussed along with the means by which literary analysis can be carried out. Finally, criticism of psychoanalytic literary theory was examined. Concluding with Elisabeth Wright’s above cited definition, I will use psychoanalytic criticism “as investigating the text for the workings of rhetoric seen as analogous to the mechanisms of the psyche.” This thesis’s theoretical aim is to focus on major themes such as incomprehension in *A Pale View of Hills*, isolation and justification in *An Artist of the Floating World* and loyalty versus servility in *The Remains of the Day* from the perspective of psychoanalytical literary theory, just to mention a few major ones. As my aim is to avoid one-sided psychoanalytic interpretation of Ishiguro’s texts in order to decipher crucial information missing from the texts, I will consider the following dimensions.¹⁰⁷ First, by choosing a psychoanalytical reading of observing and decoding the texts’ strategies of revealing and concealing information, I will examine what the language of the texts suggests about the nature of revelation and concealment in general and in relation of both to my understanding of tensions played by gaps and silences. Secondly, grasping the interplay of a range of psychological subjects (text, language, writer, reader), my focus will include social and historical factors as Ishiguro’s examined texts are framed by the wounds of World War II from the perspective of the defeated ones. Finally, I will explore what seems to be concealed or revealed in the three early novels of the author and tackle what we are (not) being told and why.

¹⁰⁶ Brian Finney, “Figuring the Real, Ishiguro’s *When We Were Orphans*.” (accessed 25 August 2012)

¹⁰⁷ Rob Pope, *The English Studies Book: An Introduction to Language, Literature and Culture*, 98.

3. GAPS AND SILENCES

As Rob Pope writes, among the common topics of postmodern literature of “accent and dialect,”¹⁰⁸ “realism and representation,”¹⁰⁹ “foreground and background”¹¹⁰ that recur in contemporary literary criticism, “gaps and silences”¹¹¹ are of key importance. The topic of gaps and silences in contemporary literary discourse is centred on the question of “What isn’t it?”¹¹² Following Derrida’s argument¹¹³, that language is more about absences than presences, as writing – not speech – is more a characteristically linguistic mode, it is probably tenable to suggest that the first-person narration of Etsuko, Ono and Stevens is more about absences, silences and gaps than about speech. Derrida claims that whereas Western thought systems are dominated by the notion of “essence” and “presence” (and there is a greater emphasis on what is unknowable), Eastern philosophies put greater emphasis on what is unknowledgeable and on what cannot be identified, an argument I find crucial in interpreting Ishiguro’s novels.

Psychologically speaking we are never completely self-conscious owing to the absence of our unconscious from the conscious. Therefore, the role of the reader is to read between the lines, to grasp what “stories and histories have been partially displaced or utterly replaced by the very act of telling this story (or history) this way.”¹¹⁴ Examining Etsuko’s, Ono’s and Stevens’ discourse, the critical reader will find several distortions, pauses, silences and utterance in their history. These themes became prominent especially in the era of post-structuralism and in the activity of deconstruction, yet my tool in analysing Ishiguro’s use of gaps and silences in his narrative is going to be a psychoanalytical approach. The premise I find particularly apt in my analysis of Ishiguro’s first three novels is that the text recounted by first person narrators via gaps and silences reveal information concealed in the text, which requires participation in the ongoing process of revealing and concealing. Speaking about Ishiguro’s first three novels in terms of the narrative technique of gaps and silences, I will explore these silences by regarding the text as the analyst. By analysing the first person narration of the Ishiguro novels via

¹⁰⁸ Rob Pope, *The English Studies Book: An Introduction to Language, Literature and Culture*. (London and New York, Routledge, 1998), 158.

¹⁰⁹ Rob Pope, *The English Studies Book: An Introduction to Language, Literature and Culture*, 216.

¹¹⁰ Rob Pope, *The English Studies Book: An Introduction to Language, Literature and Culture*, 195.

¹¹¹ Rob Pope, *The English Studies Book: An Introduction to Language, Literature and Culture*, 156.

¹¹² Rob Pope, *The English Studies Book: An Introduction to Language, Literature and Culture*, 156.

¹¹³ Jacques Derrida, “Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences”, In *Modern Criticism and Theory, A Reader*. Ed. David Lodge. (London, Longman, 1988), 211–224.

¹¹⁴ Rob Pope, *The English Studies Book: An Introduction to Language, Literature and Culture*, 157.

their self-quoted, self-narrated monologues and self-narrated dialogues, by examining their gaps and incoherencies, texts reveal silenced or clandestine information what their creators may have unconsciously repressed or disowned.¹¹⁵

For the sake of clarity, I want first to give a brief description of gaps and silences in psychoanalytical literary discourse. In Freudian terms gaps and silences are related to memory-gaps preventing painful and therefore repressed material from becoming conscious. If we explore the notion of silence and gaps in psychoanalytical literary discourse, gaps are not only preventing painful memories to become manifest, but also in Freudian therapeutic practice gaps and silences were taken as a sign of repression, meaning that painful memories are defensively excluded from the consciousness. In *Repression* (1915), Sigmund Freud gives the most elaborate formulation of his theory. Probably one of his best definitions is given in the essay: “*the essence of repression lies simply in turning something away, and keeping it at a distance, from the conscious.*”¹¹⁶ The relation between fragmented narration, silence, and repressed thoughts, which are analysed in my reading of Ishiguro’s texts, was highlighted by Freud’s own record of his famous “Dora” case. Interestingly, the implications of the duration of Freud’s composition have gone completely unnoticed for a long time, but recently critics observed Freud’s own narrative gaps.¹¹⁷ Critics claim that this scientific study on silences or muteness, i.e. aphonia not only shows Freud’s narrative skill, but also, as literary critic Ruth Parkin-Gounelas observes, “with its gaps and fragmentariness, the Dora case has often been referred to as a classic piece of Modernist narrative.”¹¹⁸ Parkin-Gounelas believes that “Freud’s discomfort, in 1901, with this scandalous strand of Dora’s tale resulted in “silences” of his own in his text.”¹¹⁹

¹¹⁵ Rosalind Minsky, *Psychoanalysis and Gender: An Introductory Reader* (London, Routledge, 1996), 16.

¹¹⁶ Sigmund Freud, “Repression”, in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, (trans) J. Strachey et al. vols. 1–23. London: Hogarth Press, 1953–74. Standard Edition 14. 146–147. (Emphasis original.)

¹¹⁷ Freud wrote up the case “during the two weeks immediately following” termination; his correspondence with Wilhelm Fliess contains explicit facts that he was writing the case history between January 10 and 24 in 1901.

¹¹⁸ Ruth Parkin-Gounelas, *Literature and Psychoanalysis. Intertextual Readings* (New York, Palgrave, 2001), 144.

¹¹⁹ Ruth Parkin-Gounelas, *Literature and Psychoanalysis*, 145. Parkin-Gounelas gives a systematic evaluation of the concept of hysteria in the chapter “The Subject of Hysteria”. She highlights the fact that feminists in the 1970’s and 1980’s accused Freud and Breuer of “patriarchal blindness” in evaluating their female patients’ symptoms. In Ruth Parkin-Gounelas, *Literature and Psychoanalysis*, 136. She argues that recent essays have celebrated Freud’s other patient, Anna O. (Bertha Pappenheim) “for her expression (in symptoms) of what culture represses – in particular anger and resentment”. In Ruth Parkin-Gounelas, *Literature and Psychoanalysis*,¹³⁷ Feminist critics, H  l  ne Cixous and Catherine Cl  ment argue that the repressed past lives on the hysteric is dedicated to reminiscence. The body of a hysteric person, usually of a woman, “is transformed into a theatre of forgotten scenes, relives the past, bearing witness to a lost childhood

Ruth Parkin-Gounelas further elaborates the subject of gaps and silences arguing that “gaps in speech subsequently become for the analyst the nodal points in the signifying chain, the focus of analytic attention as the sign of repression.”¹²⁰ She notes that seemingly psychoanalysis as a “talking cure” has little to do with silence, yet, “the implication that silence needs to be converted into speech has been inherent in the psychoanalytic enterprise since its inception.”¹²¹ What does “talking cure” mean? I will give a short explanation as I interpret the narrative method of first person narration of the Ishiguro texts as a therapeutically applied tool, a “talking” that is self-healing in an attempt to reconstruct narrators’ public and private pasts.

In the history of psychoanalysis, one of the first cases recorded by Josef Breuer and Sigmund Freud, a young lady, Anna O was suffering from hysterical symptoms. In the first stage, Breuer recognized that the twenty-one year old woman could relieve her anxiety by making up and telling stories, such as fairy tales, “always sad and some of them very charming” so Breuer encouraged her to continue. Anna O herself called this activity her special “talking cure” (the origin of this term later used in psychotherapy). Would it be farfetched to say that Ishiguro’s narrators make up and invent their fairy-tale like stories? I endeavour that in *A Pale View of Hills* the narrator Etsuko invents the Nagasaki meta-story by which the narrator is able to remember. Ono in *An Artist of the Floating World* makes up a tale about a superb and talented artist, while Stevens in *The Remains of the Day* creates a narrative based on his perfection and commitment. How protagonists build up their private myth and what is behind the lines of their first-person narration “fairy-tales” are told via narrative gaps and silences, I propose.

We cannot proceed further without discussing the importance of silence in psychoanalytic literary theory. For Freud, Ruth Parkin-Gounelas claims, silence was of special importance, since Freud discovered in his therapeutic practice that for children darkness and silence signifies absence as Freud observed it in the “fort-da”¹²² conflict of

that survives in suffering”. In H el ene Cixous and Catherine Cl ement, *The Newly-Born Woman*, (trans.) B. Wing. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986. 5.

¹²⁰ Ruth Parkin-Gounelas, *Literature and Psychoanalysis*, 163.

¹²¹ Ruth Parkin-Gounelas, *Literature and Psychoanalysis*, 163.

¹²² The fort-da game is the game in which the child by rejecting and retrieving a toy enacts the absence and presence of the mother. Fort-da means roughly “here - there”. Allusions to fort/da refer to Sigmund Freud’s work *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, where Freud interprets a game played by his little grandson, Ernst at the age of eighteen months. See more in Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920g) London, Hogarth Press; Revised edition 1986), 4–15. Freud regarded this behaviour as a way of obtaining satisfaction by causing things to be “gone”. A short time later he observed the child playing with a reel that had a piece of string tied around it, He would toss the reel away from him to where it could no longer be seen, before pulling it back into view and hailing its reappearance with a gleeful “Da!” (“There!”).

his grandson. In his clinical practice, Parkin-Gounelas continues, Freud realised that patients use silence as defence, a phenomena by which the silence of Ishiguro's characters can be interpreted. I will expand my point further claiming that Ishiguro found narrative methods of meditative soliloquies, abysses and informative gaps to represent his characters' repression, thought and feeling, both conscious and unconscious. Etsuko, Ono and Stevens withhold unconscious material from becoming manifest by defence mechanisms of silence, misremembering, avoidance and denial. Rosalind Minsky explains the psychology of these avoidances:

Lacan and others have argued that the words and categories, through which we structure and interpret the world consciously, have meanings we can never totally pin down because of the ever-present potential of unconscious to disrupt meaning. This means that discourses are constructed out of the unconscious as well as social or conscious interests.¹²³

In literary analysis we can decipher silence and the unconscious as “reading beyond language.” Patricia Ondek Laurence stretches this premise further saying that:

[s]ince the unconscious is structured like a form of writing, we must try to “read” the signs and silence that writers “write” in the strata that Virginia Woolf labels the “depths” – signs, symbols, ideography, metaphors, gaps and dreams. The intricate interpretive strategies of deconstruction, poetics and psychology, and linguistics offer new insights, piercing the borders of the self.¹²⁴

Ondek Laurence explains that the unconscious is “devoid of language.”¹²⁵ In order to evaluate the narrative techniques of silence – that are silent “discourse,” internal “monologue,” interior “discourse,” inner “dialogue” and inner “speech” – she argues that one should explore a “rhetoric of silence.”¹²⁶ To reiterate, in the following textual analysis of Ishiguro's characters, I will apply Ondek Laurence's approach exploring different “modalities” of silence, in order to distinguish between “keeping silent about something,”

¹²³ Rosalind Minsky, *Psychoanalysis and Gender: An Introductory Reader* (London, Routledge, 1996), 16.

¹²⁴ Patricia Ondek Laurence, *The Reading of Silence: Virginia Woolf in the English Tradition* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1993), 19.

¹²⁵ Patricia Ondek Laurence, *The Reading of Silence: Virginia Woolf in the English Tradition*, 19.

¹²⁶ Patricia Ondek Laurence, *The Reading of Silence: Virginia Woolf in the English Tradition*, 20.

“refusal to enact a subordinate position,” and “signalling exclusion.” In her “reading of silence” she explores a “ritual of truth” and “self-resistance.”¹²⁷ In narratology silence signals “listening spaces,” “meditative soliloquies” and “psychological ruminations”¹²⁸ – narrative techniques that I will explore in Ishiguro’s texts.

3.1 Silences and gaps in narrative discourse

In the textual analysis of *A Pale View of Hills*, *An Artist of the Floating World* and in *The Remains of the Day*, it is essential to find an interpreting tool that captures and locates the psychoanalytically interpreted gaps and silences in the narration. Therefore narrative techniques related to gaps and silences will be viewed.

Gaps and silences are of floating character, always escaping cognitive approaches. How can they be located and analysed? Leslie Kane’s point is that silence is neither absent from the text, nor neutral within the text, nor more profound than the text. “Silence is a moment in language,”¹²⁹ she defines. Silence can be interpreted also as “absence of speech and implicit expression;” this is her other, alternative definition¹³⁰. Silence is discussed from another perspective by Adam Jaworski. He writes that in narrative discourse “[s]ilence is a category which can be contrasted either with speech or, more generally, with sound [noise].”¹³¹ Adam Jaworski continues describing the functions and forms of silence¹³² as expression and display of emotional and cognitive states like embarrassment, love, hate, anger, indifference. The second category silence falls into is, he argues, that in which it is signalling transitional states and processes such as celebratory, ceremonial or sacrificial silence. As a third group silence can be interpreted as self-censorship or a way of building resistance. Deconstructionalists and poststructuralists are not only interested in gaps and silences, but also in closed and open structures, i.e. “wholes” and “holes.” Jacques Lacan sees that desire is always a craving for “the other,” therefore it is never fulfilled, and is born of a split between need and demand. Slavoj Žižek explores gaps from a Lacanian point of view. Considering “filling in the gaps” is crucial in understanding the

¹²⁷ Patricia Oudek Laurence, *The Reading of Silence: Virginia Woolf in the English Tradition*, 58.

¹²⁸ Patricia Oudek Laurence, *The Reading of Silence: Virginia Woolf in the English Tradition*, 59.

¹²⁹ Leslie Kane, *The Language of Silence: On the Unspoken and the Unspeakable in Modern Drama* (Toronto, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1984), 17.

¹³⁰ Leslie Kane, *The Language of Silence: On the Unspoken and the Unspeakable in Modern Drama*, 17.

¹³¹ Adam Jaworski, *Silence, Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (Berlin, Walter de Gruyter, 1997), 381.

¹³² Adam Jaworski, *Silence, Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 381–382.

over-proximity to the Lacanian Real: “By way of ‘filling in the gaps’ and ‘telling it all’, what we retreat from is the void as such, which, of course, is ultimately none other than the void of subjectivity.”¹³³ Describing this over-proximity to the Real, he identifies various manifestations of it, such as the technique of “gap filling.”

Silence for aesthetic purposes can also serve narrative purposes. Less structurally, but more psychologically speaking silences are challenging because they evade attempts at simple understanding. As a result we are left to look for clues or keys from the context surrounding a silence to lead us to understand its meaning. Patricia Ondek Laurence is referring to theorists such as George Poulet, Jacques Derrida and Maurice Blanchot, who were forerunners in interpreting the concept of language and the narrative experiments in literature. Taking interesting parallels in Modern English literature, she claims that while Virginia Woolf’s silence is related to the modern preoccupations with “inwardness” and the use of the techniques of indirection in twentieth-century literature:

Henry James is obsessed with “not telling” in *The Golden Bowl*; Samuel Beckett refuses expression in *Malone Dies*; Gustave Flaubert is absorbed with the incidental leading him to “say nothing” in *Madame Bovary*; James Joyce invents an artist who vows “silence, exile and cunning” in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*; Harold Pinter dramatizes a complex of conversational silences in *The Homecoming*; and Gertrude Stein exclaims that “silence is so windowful” in *What Happened*; [...] Woolf prefigures some of the modern notions of silence in Beckett and Jean-Paul Sartre, though not their interest in the silences of the absurd, in Julia Kristeva and her discussions of the expressiveness of the body in space; and in Maurice Blanchot’s presentations of the ineffability of life.¹³⁴

My method will be to scrutinize one text in order to isolate gaps incorporated into narrated monologues and dialogues or silences surrounding them to determine the qualitative and quantitative nature of these silences and their content. I will also focus on ellipses, narrative gaps facilitated by flashbacks and proleptic hoops, as well as on the role of the inarticulate and taciturn. In the terms set by Wolfgang Iser below, it is cogent to claim that using reader response criticism is apt in analysing Ishiguro’s first person narrators as

¹³³ Slavoj Žižek, *The Fright of Real Tears: Krzysztof Kieslowski between Theory and Post-theory* (London, BFI Publishing, 2001), 148.

¹³⁴ Patricia Ondek Laurence, *The Reading of Silence, Virginia Woolf in the English Tradition*, 6–7.

Etsuko, Ono and Stevens invite the reader to take part in the reading process to “bridge”¹³⁵ their gaps, the latent and manifest levels and letting the implied reader grasp insignificant details to become obvious. To cite Iser once more:

Blanks and negations both control the process of communication in their own different ways: the blanks leave open the connections between perspectives in the text, and so spur the reader into coordinating these perspectives – in other words, they induce the reader to perform basic operations within the text.¹³⁶

By examining textual and informational silences and gaps in the text (or in other words, reading between the lines) provokes the implied reader to alter his perceptions of the story being told. Ishiguro’s subtle, muted, economic yet rich style enables his characters to speak the language of the “unspoken”, what is left “unsaid”, what is not yet expressed or formulated, something not say-able based on psychological repression or on traumatic memories or something that is misunderstood.

3.2 Reading “gaps” and “silences” via Dorrit Cohn’s narrative

method

Dorrit Cohn in *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction* (1978) distinguishes between narrative modes of third-person and first-person texts. For the latter she applies the so called “retrospective techniques” in which an element of remembrance is introduced as “past thought must now be presented as *remembered* by the self, as well as expressed by the self.”¹³⁷ The narrative modes for presenting perception of narrators in third-person context are psycho-narration (that is the narrator’s discourse about a character’s consciousness), quoted monologue (referring to a character’s mental discourse) and narrated monologue (a character’s mental discourse in the guise of narrator’s discourse). In first-person text psycho-narration turns into self-narration, and monologues are either self-quoted, or self-narrated. For the textual analysis

¹³⁵ Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading* (London, Routledge, 1978), 169.

¹³⁶ Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading*, 169.

¹³⁷ Dorrit Cohn, *Transparent Minds. Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984), 15. (Emphasis original.)

of narrative “silences” and “gaps,” I employ Dorrit Cohn’s identification of fictional representation of the perceptions of narrators in the thesis. In capsule formulation: dissonant/consonant self-narration, self-quoted monologue, and self-narrated monologue are Cohn’s modes for rendering consciousness. These are more literary than linguistic¹³⁸ in regards to stylistic and psychological aspects, hence my decision on choosing her ideas. Concerning first-person texts¹³⁹, self-narrated monologue is considered to articulate inarticulate states of consciousness, or summarize long-range psychological situations and their slow mental mutations. As a distancing narrative technique, “self-narration” can be “dissonant” if there is a temporal or ideological distance between the narrating self and the experiencing self. It could also be “consonant” in a case where the experiencing self and the narrating self tend to overlap. In the case of a dissonant self-narration there is a knowing narrator, whereas consonant self-narration employs a narrator who closely identifies with his past self, and has no superior knowledge. A discursive, distant self, the narrating *I* can move back and forth in time, can evaluate, analyze and contradict thoughts of the experiencing self, in other words the experiencing *I* can also reflect to the past. Opposite to the dissonant mode, consonant self-narration involves a narrating self reporting from the vantage point that is “proximate to experiencing self and it is difficult to distinguish between the experiencing self and the narrating self.”¹⁴⁰ In other words, as Cohn puts it, there is no self-exegesis.¹⁴¹ Consonant self-narration has been favoured by modern literature in which the event may be focalized exclusively through the experiencing self and the psychological distance between the narrating *I* and the experiencing *I* is very narrow, just in the case of Ishiguro’s first-person narrators. A standard component of the traditional first-person narration is “self-quoted monologue” as in the phrase “I said to myself...”. From the perspective of Ishiguro’s narrators (especially Stevens’ and Ono’s) it is thought-provoking that “self-quoted monologues” can take the form of highly rhetorical speeches and even pathos.¹⁴² Cohn highlights that there is a problem of credibility with this narrative technique as the first-person narrator reaches past thoughts “only by simulation of a perfect memory; long quotation of his past thoughts can quickly appear as a kind of mnemonic overkill.”¹⁴³

¹³⁸ Dorrit Cohn, *Transparent Minds. Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction*, 11.

¹³⁹ Dorrit Cohn, *Transparent Minds. Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction*, 143–268.

¹⁴⁰ Kirsi Hänninen, “Perspectives on the Narrative Construction of Emotions.” *ELORE* 14 (2007):1, 4.

¹⁴¹ Dorrit Cohn, *Transparent Minds. Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction*, 145–158.

¹⁴² Dorrit Cohn, *Transparent Minds. Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction*, 161.

¹⁴³ Dorrit Cohn, *Transparent Minds. Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction*, 162.

These types of monologues can range from set speeches to flickering thoughts. With absence of quotation signals “self-narrated monologue” (in which “the narrator momentarily identifies with his past self, giving up his temporally distanced vantage point and cognitive privilege for his past-time-bound bewilderments and vacillations”¹⁴⁴) creates an illusion of a fiction that “tells itself,”¹⁴⁵ just as in the narrative of Etsuko, Ono and Stevens, even without the assistance of the narrator. I find this type of narrative monologue a marked characteristic of the examined Ishiguro texts as by this technique narrators make statements about past events that are immediately contradicted by what happens next. Also they ask questions that are answered on the following pages. In Stevens’ narration his pondering over “dignity” and “greatness” (RD 18, 20) are examples for the use of “self-narrated monologue.”

3.3 Deciphering “gaps” and “silences” – An adaptation of Patricia

Ondek Laurence’s model

Ishiguro’s silences in my understanding are more related to the notion of concealing than to sensuality of the flowing style of Virginia Woolf. Ishiguro’s use of silence is both fictional and historical in as far as layers are concerned. Fictional in terms of silences of the plot as, in my interpretation, gaps are formal representations of silences, and historical, in terms of the “unimaginable inhumanity”¹⁴⁶ of the war-torn twentieth century.

Interpreting “silences” and “gaps” in Ishiguro’s texts, the literary critic should first consider the method of reading these silences and gaps. How do we locate them in the narration? Is silence a figure or symbol? Rhetoric or a discourse? A theme or a strategy? Is it an absence or presence? Talking about how Virginia Woolf confronts the cultural constraints of her time with the narrativity of silence, Patricia Ondek Laurence asked the above questions.¹⁴⁷ I will also endeavour to answer in order to decipher the enigmas and riddles of silences hidden in the Ishiguro texts. What is a gap? Is it an implicit structure or a physical space in the text, or rather a psychological space for the writer and reader? Where is silence in the reader’s or the writer’s experience and how does the reader “read”

¹⁴⁴ Dorrit Cohn, *Transparent Minds. Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction*, 167.

¹⁴⁵ Dorrit Cohn, *Transparent Minds. Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction*, 169.

¹⁴⁶ Patricia Ondek Laurence, *The Reading of Silence: Virginia Woolf in the English Tradition*, 4.

¹⁴⁷ Patricia Ondek Laurence, *The Reading of Silence: Virginia Woolf in the English Tradition*, 3.

silence? “How,” as psychoanalytical critic Shoshana Felman asks in her book *Writing and Madness*, “can we read the unreadable?”¹⁴⁸ Felman claims that only by modification of the reading process itself can silence be read by claiming that we should not consider what the meaning of the letters and words is but rather concentrate on “what way do the letters escape meaning?”¹⁴⁹ Such questions may seem to subvert their own positions, but many of them inspire the investigation of this dissertation. Analysing Kazuo Ishiguro’s first three novels, and having read his whole works, I posit that in Ishiguro’s oeuvre “silence” is not a figure but rather a symbol. Symbol for a stumbling block in the protagonists’ minds, symbol for the ultimate trauma buried in a troubled psyche. It is not rhetoric but rather a discourse by which first person narrators reconstruct their public and private lives. I contend that it also functions as a strategy to keep troubled memories latent and, via narrative gaps, the dynamism of absences and presences reveal missing information of narrated stories. Furthermore “silence” is not a physical space but rather a psychological one and has an implicit structure.

After presenting the above questions, a concise research method is needed in order to decipher silences. Ondek Laurence categorized the writer’s use of “silence” in the three groups¹⁵⁰ I will use these in Ishiguro’s textual analysis. The “unsaid” refers to something that might have been felt but not said, like Jiro’s unformulated anxiety towards his father, Ogata-san in *A Pale View of Hills*. The “unspoken” in a text can mean something not yet expressed or formulated, such as in the case of first person narrator Etsuko in *A Pale View of Hills* when she is hindering the information that she is Sachiko herself, whereas the “unsayable,” a category I find crucial in the understanding of Ishiguro’s first person narrators, signifies the “not sayable” based on social taboos or “something about life that is ineffable.”¹⁵¹ Here I refer to Stevens’ incomprehension that his life was plague-ridden by empty agendas about “dignity” and “loyalty.” Ondek Laurence claims what Virginia Woolf does is to narrate and confront “silences between islands of speech, inviting the reader, us, to enter into the obscurity and to consult our own minds.”¹⁵² It is consonant with my view on reading Ishiguro’s novels in order to take part in the so far emphasized process of revealing and concealing and to have perseverance in asking repeated questions about the information narrated. As Virginia Woolf’s use of silence, writes her critic, reveals the

¹⁴⁸ Shoshana Felma, *Writing and Madness* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1985), 187.

¹⁴⁹ Shoshana Felma, *Writing and Madness*, 187.

¹⁵⁰ Patricia Ondek Laurence, *The Reading of Silence: Virginia Woolf in the English Tradition*, 1.

¹⁵¹ Patricia Ondek Laurence, *The Reading of Silence: Virginia Woolf in the English Tradition*, 1.

¹⁵² Patricia Ondek Laurence, *The Reading of Silence: Virginia Woolf in the English Tradition*, 1.

textual gravity and weight that “supports the lightness of style and being in her novels,” similarly to this Ishiguro masters in capturing not only the fading or pale beauty of our contemporary floating world but his style is poised upon a weight. Quoting a predecessor, Virginia Woolf: “Beautiful and bright it should be on the surface, feathery and evanescent, one colour melting into another like the colours on a butterfly’s wing; but beneath the fabric must be clamped together with bolts of iron.”¹⁵³

It is crucial to distinguish between linguistically marked and unmarked (those that the text allows) “silences.” Woolf’s literary critic formulated a model of analysing the meta-language of silence “to delineate thought, feeling and character in her novels,”¹⁵⁴ that is the “rhetoric of silence” of punctuation, rhythm, shapes, space, and structure.¹⁵⁵ In order to locate “scenes of silences” in the text, Ondek Laurence advances the idea of using structural semantics. Through methodology of the “lexicon of silence,”¹⁵⁶ awareness of larger implications of the psychological and social themes of “silences” can be developed, in an Ishiguro text, with help of my adaptation of Ondek Laurence’s model¹⁵⁷ below. I have only listed those structures and configurations of silence from the critic’s model, which I find relevant in my analysis of Ishiguro’s texts. Also I included psychoanalytical dimensions. Hereby an abbreviated version applied to the examined Ishiguro’s texts is attached:

I. *Silence and Time*: relates to the auditory, including music, repetition and rhythm.¹⁵⁸

- A. Harmony: silence, pause, quiet, rest;
- B. Disharmony: beat, interruption, gaps, gulfs, broken syllables, negation, fragments;
- C. Suspension (relates to simultaneity): suspense, fixed moment, trance, moment of being, gaze;
- D. Repetition: incantation, echoes, simultaneity;
- E. Degrees of auditory silence: muteness, quiet pauses, interruptions, gaps, murmur;
- F. Punctuation of suspension: use of ellipses and dashes to present incompleteness, haste and hurry as a theme or aspect of voice;

¹⁵³ Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse* (New York, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1927), 255.

¹⁵⁴ Patricia Ondek Laurence, *The Reading of Silence: Virginia Woolf in the English Tradition*, 7.

¹⁵⁵ I have omitted “metaphor” from Ondek Laurence’s original list of the “rhetoric of silence” as I find it more justified to be used as a “configuration of silence.” See relevant pages in Patricia Ondek Laurence, *The Reading of Silence: Virginia Woolf in the English Tradition* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1993), 3, 7, 42–45.

¹⁵⁶ Patricia Ondek Laurence, *The Reading of Silence: Virginia Woolf in the English Tradition*, 111.

¹⁵⁷ Patricia Ondek Laurence, *The Reading of Silence: Virginia Woolf in the English Tradition*, 112.

¹⁵⁸ A detailed Comparative Table with examples from the examined novels is to be found in the Appendices.

II. *Silence and Space via Psychoanalytical Concepts*: relates to the visual, the spatialization of thought and of the body.

- A. Degrees of spatial silence: beat, pale, night, absence, emptiness, nothingness, blank, blank space, void/abyss, gap/fading, crevice;
- B. Movement in space (duration):
 - 1. Positive: surface, rise, up;
 - 2. Negative: sink, fall, drop, down, deep;
- C. Visual repetition: Mirror, shadows, simultaneity;
- D. Punctuation: ..., (), [], “”;
- E. Body silence: paralysis, dream, death, immobility, sleep, illness, disease, inertia, peace, rest, still, quiet, lost in space and time.

As presented above, Ondek Laurence differentiates between two layers of “silences” to enhance our interpretation of the riddles and enigmas of literary texts. Thus by which “silence” is embodied in a syntax and narrative lexicon, called the “the scene of silence.” The formal devices of “silence” that mark changes in the narrative gear, emotional tone and the scene of the writer’s novel examined in this thesis will be the following: pauses, gaps, blanks, abysses, interruptions and absences. However Ondek Laurence claims that night, absence, emptiness, nothingness, voids and gaps, abysses are interconnected with the degrees of spatial silence; I argue that they are more related to the notion of suspension, i.e. correlated with a moment in time particularly in the narration of *A Pale View of Hills* where “dreams” and “night” are crucial, not only crucial metaphors but, carefully located “scenes of silence” of the experiencing self.

4. ISHIGURO'S EARLY NOVELS AND THEIR NARRATIVE EVASIONS VIA GAPS AND SILENCES

This investigation touches on aspects regarding the psychoanalytical quality of Ishiguro's writing, making the case for reconsideration from the vantage point of the role played by gaps and silences in his fiction.¹⁵⁹ It is probably plausible to suggest that the first person narration of Etsuko, Ono and Stevens examined in this study is more about absences, silences and gaps than speech. I have chosen the first three novels (*A Pale View of Hills*, *An Artist of the Floating World* and *The Remains of the Day*), because as Barry Lewis aptly stated these narratives have many things in common:

Each of these novels has first-person narrations in which the unreliabilities of memory and self-deception are well to the fore. The plot of *An Artist of the Floating World* arose from the sub-plot of *A Pale View of Hills*: a Japanese patriot – lauded for his views before the war, but vilified after it – seeks to restore his social esteem. [...] Similarly, *The Remains of the Day* is like an alternative English 'remix' (to use a term from popular music) of attitudes and situations present in *An Artist of the Floating World*. [...] Because of these generative links, it makes sense to think of Ishiguro's first three novels as an informal trilogy.¹⁶⁰

What comes through strongly in Ishiguro's work is a remarkable degree of almost provocative silence which is signalled by textual gaps of narrators. Wolfgang Iser states that "What is said only appears to take on significance as a reference to what is not said; it is the implications and not the statements that give shape and weight on the meaning."¹⁶¹ Throughout Ono's narration of *An Artist of the Floating World* information gaps and allusions (AFW 119) were mentioned in connection with Kuroda, the once most talented pupil of Ono.

¹⁵⁹ Most of this chapter is based on my articles¹⁵⁹ that explored the notion of gaps and silences in the first triad of Ishiguro's novels. In Éva Szederkényi, "Absence and Presence, Conditions of Parenthood in Kazuo Ishiguro's Novels" in *HUSSE10-LitCult. Proceedings of the HUSSE 10 Conference*. ed. Kinga Földvály et al., (Debrecen, Hungarian Society for the Study of English, 2011), 151–159; and "The Provocative Silence of Kazuo Ishiguro's Characters" in *Reverberations of Silence. Proceedings of The Sounds of Silence Conference*. ed. Márta Pellérdi and Gabriella Reuss, (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), 203–216.

¹⁶⁰ Barry Lewis, *Kazuo Ishiguro* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2000), 133.

¹⁶¹ Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading, A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore and London, John Hopkins University Press, 1978), 168.

Hidden allusions, inconsistencies in the recounting of stories of the first person narrators, mistaken chronology of events, absences and presences plot-wise form a matrix of gaps and silences. What can be captivating in Ishiguro's art is how he manages to deal with these textual gaps and absences in the narration. As Rob Pope put it, "In psychological terms, too, the absence of our unconscious from our conscious selves ensures that we are never completely 'self-evident'."¹⁶² Psychologically speaking humans are never completely aware of "reality" owing to our defence mechanisms that keep emotions and experiences latent while pushing them down to the unconscious. I would argue that textual absences are the evidences that we keep things hidden or unarticulated. Barry Lewis tackled the inconsistencies peppering the Ishiguro novels, claiming that:

For instance, in the space of a couple of pages Etsuko contradicts herself about when she first approached Sachiko to express concern about Mariko. She prefaces her recounting of the incident by referring to "one afternoon" (PHV 13) when she saw Sachiko near the housing precinct. (...) There are other inconsistencies: does Etsuko visit Sachiko at Mrs Fujiwara's noodle shop in the afternoon (PVH 23) or morning (PVH 26)?¹⁶³

Barry Lewis argues that these contradictions are attributed to unreliable memory. However, I would argue that repressed memories erupt into the conscious but until they are textually shaped, they remain hidden and the absence itself will locate them. In other words, absences are marking posts for repressed qualities. By forcing experiences to remain latent, by turning painful memories away, and keeping them at a distance enables protagonists to come to terms with their past. In literature, representations of absences are gaps in the narration. In my interpretation these gaps can be informative (e.g. hiding crucial information in the narration of Ono if he was responsible for Kuroda's incarceration) or as noted above, textual (a part of the narration is missing e.g. Day Five in *The Remains of the Day*). To show how informative gaps function in the examined Ishiguro novels, and here I refer to *An Artist of the Floating World*, I claim that in their relationship to their father (Ono), the diplomatic approach Setsuko represents as opposed to Noriko's straightforward attacks is often highlighted, e.g. when she advances the idea

¹⁶² Rob Pope, *The English Studies Book: An Introduction to Language, Literature and Culture* (London and New York, Routledge, 1998), 168.

¹⁶³ Barry Lewis, *Kazuo Ishiguro*, 101–102.

that Ono should visit Kuroda and his other “certain acquaintances from the past” soon, much sooner than the marriage negotiation detectives. Ono pretends not to understand and decides to silence the topic. Yet, interpreting their heated dialogue (AFW 189–194), the critical reader ponders if these lines have ever been said or they are merely invented by the first person narrator. Plot-wise this is the only gap I have found unrevealed in *An Artist of the Floating World*; if we accept Setsuko’s words that she has never warned her father to take precautionary steps to prevent misunderstandings, in order to make Noriko an appropriate bride in the eyes of the Saito, I am perplexed by Ono’s involvement in Kuroda’s betrayal. Textual gaps are represented by an example from *The Remains of the Day* in which the event of the meeting of Miss Kenton on Day Five is entirely absent from the narration. It is recorded later, in retrospect, as it brought a sad end to both of Miss Kenton’s and Stevens’ private lives.

Taking a closer look at the texts, Etsuko, the first person narrator of *A Pale View of Hills* is a middle-aged Japanese housewife, who is looking back over her life after the recent suicide of her elder daughter, Keiko. The daughter has hanged herself in her Manchester room recently and she seems to be haunting Etsuko and her younger daughter, Niki. Etsuko’s reflections upon her past are not only influenced by her recent years in England, but by the post-war trauma of living in Nagasaki and the meta-story about an old friend, Sachiko and her daughter, Mariko. Etsuko conducts her private investigation through recollection. The narrator tries to come to terms with solitude, isolation and the tragic loss of not only Keiko but Niki, whom she hardly sees. The account of her life in the Nagasaki story builds “an extremely accomplished structure”¹⁶⁴ according to Barry Lewis. The two-layered structure of story-telling and the narrative gaps in the plot give rise to intriguing questions, such as who is responsible for Keiko’s death, what was Etsuko’s life like after leaving Japan and what could have happened to her during the war? From the perspective of the first person singular narration in *An Artist of the Floating World* – just like in the case of Ishiguro’s other novels – we understand that Ono was a renowned painter during the tense years of the 1920’s and 1930’s Imperial Japan and was contributing to the military agenda by assisting the regime. The once renowned artist of the imperial Japan feels to be absent in his contemporary country. Ono is dislocated and he dysfunctions as a real or “good enough” father. The three of them – father and two daughters, Noriko and Setsuko – are uncomfortable in each other’s presence. Particularly

¹⁶⁴ Barry Lewis, *Kazuo Ishiguro*, 20.

Noriko is unhappy and frustrated as her marriage negotiations met a dead end last year and although Ishiguro's artistic craft hides the real fact, Noriko was a victim of her father's troubled past. Similarly, a pursuit of Stevens' responsibilities and follies form the plot of *The Remains of the Day*. Stevens, the ageing butler starts his literal and metaphorical journey into his past and into his psyche in July 1956. He wonders through the past three decades of his private and public life. The plot is about his plan to go on a motoring trip to meet and perhaps re-employ his former colleague, the woman with whom, although Stevens never confesses it, he still seems to be attached to. Miss Kenton is now married and called Mrs. Benn. Written in the form of a first-person singular *journal de voyage*¹⁶⁵, the novel records a six-day-long trip during which the first-person narrator faces ethical and emotional turbulences. Living in the stately home of Darlington Hall and serving an American businessman, Mr. Farraday, Stevens is recalling the once glorious days of the mansion under the era of Lord Darlington back in the 1920s and 1930s. During the trip he questions his "lifelong adherence to a singular conception of duty, dignity and vocational propriety."¹⁶⁶ Etsuko's, Ono's and Stevens' self-reflections and inner monologues invite comparison with what Ishiguro said about writing their story. After the publication of his second novel, *The Artist of the Floating World* in 1986, Ishiguro said he was doing "something odd with the narrative."¹⁶⁷ He was interested in "how someone ends up talking about things they cannot face directly through other people's stories"¹⁶⁸ using "the language of self-deception and self-protection."¹⁶⁹ This interest in deception frames Etsuko's and Stevens' narration. In the discussion below, insight on which subject positions Ishiguro's characters take will be elaborated. I would propose in this context that in order to decipher Ishiguro's first person narrators, silences and gaps or missing elements in their narration give clues to that hidden information in their life that leads to isolation and regret. Pursuing this logic further, Macherey sees that

in order to say anything, there are other things *which must not be said*. Freud relegated this absence of certain words to a new place which he was the first to

¹⁶⁵ Wai-chew Sim, *Kazuo Ishiguro, A Routledge Guide* (New York, Routledge, 2010), 44.

¹⁶⁶ Wai-chew Sim, *Kazuo Ishiguro, A Routledge Guide*, 44.

¹⁶⁷ Gregory Mason, "An Interview with Kazuo Ishiguro." In *Conversations with Kazuo Ishiguro*. ed. Brian W. Shaffer, and Cynthia F. Wong, (Jackson, University Press of Mississippi, 2008), 5.

¹⁶⁸ Gregory Mason, "An Interview with Kazuo Ishiguro", 5.

¹⁶⁹ Gregory Mason, "An Interview with Kazuo Ishiguro", 5.

explore, and which he paradoxically named: the unconscious. To reach utterance, all speech envelops itself in the unspoken.¹⁷⁰

What must not be said, because they are far too painful, are the injurious details of the past. Etsuko remembers her weariness and neglected womanhood; her solitude in Japan: “I spent my moments – as I was to do throughout succeeding years – gazing emptily at the view from my apartment window” (PVH 99). Yet, she fails to talk about how she had been accepted and supported by her future father-in-law, Ogata-san, whom she called “Father” during her married years. Neither does she keep records of how she had left Japan and how her life started in England with a British journalist. In the Sachiko meta-story the clues are hidden. Sachiko’s American love, Frank, can be interpreted as Etsuko’s English husband. The way Sachiko is preparing to leave Japan might be Etsuko’s story. Stevens’ interpretive lenses are different. His narration does not juggle with meta-stories but tries to keep the balance between the eloquent style and the urge to keep this language under control and repress painful memories. He is facing turbulent times owing to his weakening health under the command of the new proprietor of Darlington Hall, Mr Farraday. He still cannot come to terms with his role in society outside the walls of Darlington Hall. In literary analysis, as Patricia Odek Laurence argues, we can also decipher silence and the unconscious as “reading beyond language.”¹⁷¹ Odek Laurence stretches this premise further in *The Reading of Silence* (1991) saying that

[s]ince the unconscious is structured like a form of writing, we must try to “read” the signs and silence that writers “write” in the strata that Virginia Woolf labels the “depths” – signs, symbols, ideography, metaphors, gaps and dreams. The intricate interpretive strategies of deconstruction, poetics and psychology, and linguistics offer new insights, piercing the borders of the self.¹⁷²

If we read these signs and the silence that Ishiguro “writes in the strata,”¹⁷³ then it is clearly tenable to suggest that the narrator’s use of first person narration and deliberate non-commenting urges the reader to be suspicious about the reliability of the narrator. The

¹⁷⁰ Pierre Macherey, *A Theory of Literary Production* (New York, Routledge, 1978), 85.

¹⁷¹ Patricia Odek Laurence, *The Reading of Silence: Virginia Woolf in the English Tradition* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1993), 19.

¹⁷² Patricia Odek Laurence, *The Reading of Silence: Virginia Woolf in the English Tradition*, 19.

¹⁷³ Patricia Odek Laurence, *The Reading of Silence: Virginia Woolf in the English Tradition*, 19.

blank places in her story are hidden in the narrative structure. I would go on to suggest that Etsuko's narrative silences or her speech in Chapter 11 of the novel is "that [which] reveals the silence."¹⁷⁴ At first sight, Etsuko seems to be sure about her interpretation of the past and present, but already in the first pages of the novel she admits: "Memory, I realize, can be an unreliable thing" (PVH 16). With flashbacks to recall her life in post-war Japan from the narrative situation of the present she has her excuses for not being able to remember accurately. The narrator blames her failing memory: "It is possible that my memory of these events will have grown hazy with time that things did not happen in quite the way they come back to me today" (PVH 41). There is no account of her leaving Japan, and she is silent about her life in England with her second, British husband. Almost twenty years have passed and they are all blank in Etsuko's memories. She is silent about her sufferings in World War II, in fact, as Barry Lewis puts it: "she blanks out her past."¹⁷⁵ Cynthia F. Wong similarly observes:

How conscious are the narrators of their own efforts to reveal, conceal, evade, and protect? Or, in a related query, how does Ishiguro's artistic manipulation render their silence as provocative as the words they utter?"¹⁷⁶

I find this drastic denial carefully crafted by "defence mechanisms"¹⁷⁷ of projection. Anna Freud observed how defensive aims may make use of the most varied activities and how defence can be directed not only against instinctual claims but also against everything which is liable to give rise to the development of anxiety, e.g. emotions, situations, super ego demands. Her list includes repression, regression, reaction formation, isolation, undoing, projection, introjection, turning against the self, reversal into the opposite, sublimation. Etsuko is projecting her trauma on to the others she is observing, and in many ways she invents the story of Sachiko as the projection of her own life:

Now I do not doubt that amongst those women I lived with then, there were those who had suffered, those with sad and terrible memories. But to watch them each day, busily involved with their husbands and their children, I found this hard to

¹⁷⁴ Pierre Macherey, *A Theory of Literary Production*, 86.

¹⁷⁵ Barry Lewis, *Kazuo Ishiguro*, 39.

¹⁷⁶ Cynthia F. Wong, *Kazuo Ishiguro* (Tavistock, Northcote, 2000), 17.

¹⁷⁷ Anna Freud, *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defence* (London, Hogarth Press, 1937), 42–54.

believe – that their lives had ever held the tragedies and nightmares of wartime (PVH 13).

As Etsuko is involved in her daily routines, as she is preparing supper for her husband, comforting her father-in-law, Ogata-san, helping Sachiko to obtain a job in Mrs Fujiwara's noodle shop, looking after Mariko, most of the time she is lost in herself: "It was never my intention to appear unfriendly, but it was probably true that I made no special effort to seem otherwise. For at that point in my life, I was still wishing to be left alone" (PVH 13). As for denials, symbols and dreams in the first person narrator's meta-story about Sachiko, Mariko provides further clues about the past Etsuko denies. There is only a "pale" view, a shattered perspective she can observe her life from. The mysterious river she is recalling in the Sachiko-story is never-ending, just as Etsuko's sense of guilt; it is sinuous just like the rope which killed Keiko. In this respect, the symbol of the river highlights Etsuko's sense of guilt. The image of the rope will return in the Sachiko meta-story when Mariko is found with a rope twisted around her ankle by Etsuko (PVH 83). Another powerful image, the mud at the bank of the river can be interpreted figuratively as the mud of her memory in which she is trapped and stuck. Interpreting the real story of Etsuko, the "rhetoric of evasion"¹⁷⁸ could be deciphered.

Similarly, provocative narrative evasions structure the narration of *The Remains of the Day*, in which Ishiguro raises, re-examines and provokes similar moral questions concerning the collapse of communication between people, and dislocation. In *The Remains of the Day*, however, distortions of the past and the pursuit of loyalty and commitment will be elaborated. Structurally speaking, the treatment of narrative time in *The Remains of the Day* is, as in *A Pale View of Hills*, framed (stretching from the present back to 1920s, 1930s and back to the present). Most of the narrative time (Day Two, Morning and Day Three, Evening) is spent on reconstructing the events in Darlington Hall from the 1920s until 1936. Meeting his former love, Miss Kenton, is at the core of Stevens' recollections. However, this meeting is reported only retrospectively. Perhaps something happened that it is better not to record... It might have taken Stevens a day to recover from the events that happened two days before. The narrator remembers these past days not only with disappointment, but with a feeling of complete defeat. Stevens failed again to have a clear and honest dialogue with the woman of his life and loses her again for good. As

¹⁷⁸ Chu-chueh Cheng, *The Margin without Centre. Kazuo Ishiguro* (Bern and New York, Peter Lang, 2010), 39.

Matthew Beedham observes when quoting Rob Atkinson in *The Novels of Kazuo Ishiguro* (2010):

Kenton fails to establish a dialogue with Stevens because Stevens resists a life outside of his work: he appears to believe that a fuller personal life has nothing to offer him. Stevens' keen desire for professionalism leads him to limit discussions of professional values to high levels of generality, to resist Kenton's attempts to shift their talks from the professional to the personal, and to leave his trip towards self-discovery until late in life.¹⁷⁹

Whether we concur with Atkinson or not, Stevens' narration reports dialogues the way he wants to interpret them. Examining the story from the perspective of the narrator, narrated from Stevens' angle, the diary starts with the following opening lines: "It seems increasingly likely that I really will undertake the expedition that has been preoccupying my imagination now for some days" (RD 3). While Etsuko uses a contemplative tone and simple syntax, Stevens finds satisfaction in his elevated syntax of inversions: "Having made this announcement" (RD 3). The narrator is excessively proud of his great command and upper class style of English. His perfection in verbal utterances helps him to keep distance from what he is reporting. The following is an example of how he uses this complex syntax to convince himself that deceiving the village people about his real identity in Moscombe was coming from a misunderstanding: "I trust I need hardly underline the extent of the discomfort I suffered tonight on account of the unfortunate misunderstanding concerning my person" (RD 203).

For Stevens form is more important than meaning. Repressed memories and thoughts cannot find their way up to the conscious if language acts as a defensive tool. This is the way Stevens conceals troubled experiences. Etsuko's and Stevens' narratives rely on their audience's sympathy. Using the method of hysteron proteron (that is, presenting a reversed order of events in the sub-plot about Sachiko and Mariko), Etsuko's silences about what happened after leaving Nagasaki reveal a great deal more than expected. Stevens' hypophora, which answer his own rhetorical questions about dignity

¹⁷⁹ Matthew Beedham, "The Remains of the Day 3: Interdisciplinary Approaches" In *The Novels of Kazuo Ishiguro* (New York, Palgrave, 2010), 100.

and greatness,¹⁸⁰ do not leave space for the reader to interpret these notions as Stevens promptly answers them. The narrative gap between the message Stevens is conveying and the way it is narrated has hidden elements which have to be filled in. Both Etsuko and Stevens are masters in what Chu-chueh Cheng calls “confession in contradiction,”¹⁸¹ when “[a]n unspeakable past often returns in spectral repetitions to haunt and torment an individual who, in moments of anguish, discloses these phantoms in contending remembrances.”¹⁸² Etsuko’s remorse over her first-born’s self-destruction, Stevens’ regret over his ill-treatment of Miss Kenton and his fatal moral blindness are articulated differently. Etsuko gives only postcard-like descriptions of Nagasaki, the narrator of *The Remains of the Day* offers elaborate descriptions of the countryside on his way to meet Miss Kenton in Cornwall. Etsuko is recalling her life in post-war Japan giving detailed records of only a few days during a hot summer. Stevens’ meticulously structured sentences are provocative in a sense that there is much concealed behind the carefully constructed sentences, yet Etsuko’s style is more sensational as she is incorporating more dialogues in her narration than Stevens. The narrative silence of Stevens is linguistically rich and well structured, perfectionist. It is full of complex syntaxes and euphemisms, as of imitating Lord Darlington’s eloquent speech. When he is recalling the triumphant butler stories of his father, Stevens writes:

Not only was it alleged that the manoeuvre had been a most un-British attack on civilian Boer settlements, overwhelming evidence emerged that it had been irresponsibly commanded with several flouting of elementary military precautions, so that the men who had died – my brother among them – had died quite needlessly (RD 41).

The above paragraph is a good example of his keeping silent about the most important pieces of information by deflections and circumlocutions. Stevens is beating about the bush to avoid painful memories, therefore he is talking about the death of his brother via an embedded butler-story. He is far too disciplined to let his speech flow without restraint.

¹⁸⁰ During his *journal de voyage* Stevens is retrospectively judging his career with certain satisfaction, “In looking back over my career thus far, my chief satisfaction derives from what I achieved during those years, and I am today nothing but proud and grateful to have been given such a privilege.” In Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*, 133. However, at the end of his narration he is reaching the painful conclusion that he had given all he had to Lord Darlington (255), regretting that he did not even make his own mistakes, “Really – one has to ask oneself – what dignity is there in that?” (256).

¹⁸¹ Chu-chueh Cheng, *The Margin without Centre*, 60.

¹⁸² Chu-chueh Cheng, *The Margin without Centre*, 60.

This is the reason why he is reluctant to practice the art of bantering with Mr Farraday. Between the scenes of the Prologue, and the six days, there is silence about what happened to Mr Stevens' and Miss Kenton's love and about the tragic outcome of the secret conferences held in Darlington Hall (which led to the fall and disgrace of Lord Darlington). A proof for this is that he goes back to his habits of evasions in order to distance himself from the current problem. The narrator is quoting from encyclopaedias and travel books before he actually reports the encounter with Miss Kenton. Stevens has not broken his emotional silence, yet when meeting his alter-ego in the last chapter on the pier of Weymouth and facing the greatest loss of his life, realizing that he cannot get Miss Kenton back to Darlington, he admits: "Goodness knows, I've tried and tried, but it's no use. I've given what I had to give. I gave it all to Lord Darlington" (RD 255). The concluding lines reveal that there is not much left for him. After returning to the panoptic of Darlington Hall, he has to "begin practicing with renewed effort" (RD 258) and to force himself into the art of bantering, a linguistic bravado he is disgusted by, while waiting for his remaining days to fade away.

To summarize, the framework of this discussion was centred on two main questions: to what extent is silence provocative in deflecting injurious details of the past, and how does Ishiguro's artistic craft construct the layers of the protagonists' distorted narration? My findings were that Stevens is trying to conceal his memories by *talking too much*, while Etsuko is struggling to say *as little as possible*. Yet, both narrators fail to report on real crucial events. There is no record of Etsuko's post-war Japanese life and her life in England until the 1970s. Her second, English husband is not portrayed in her account. Stevens' is devotedly preparing for his meeting with Miss Kenton, but the crucial chapter of their meeting is missing in the novel. That rainy, gloomy afternoon in the tea-lounge of the "hardly luxurious" (RD 215) Rose Garden Hotel is only reported a day after the actual meeting. In the very attempt to keep painful memories in the unconscious, Etsuko's narration floats among silent discourses, internal monologues, interior discourses, inner dialogues and inner speech. We must therefore explore the "rhetoric of silence,"¹⁸³ as Patricia Ondek Laurence has put it. The protagonist of *A Pale View of Hills* tells the story as being someone else's. Stevens' story, however, is very much his own construction and he invites the reader to share it with him. The inability to confront versions of one's story

¹⁸³ Patricia Ondek Laurence, *The Reading of Silence: Virginia Woolf in the English Tradition*, 20.

forms one of the foundations of Etsuko's and Stevens' clever evasions. Her frozen perspective and his cinematic version give two examples of how Kazuo Ishiguro handles "wounds",¹⁸⁴ and creates "a kind of consolation"¹⁸⁵ in a world full of distortions.

¹⁸⁴ A. Vorda and K. Herzinger, "Stuck on the Margins, An Interview with Kazuo Ishiguro," In *Face to Face, Interviews with Contemporary Novelists*, ed. Allan Vorda and Daniel Stern, (Houston, Rice University Press, 1993), 34.

¹⁸⁵ Vorda, "Stuck on the Margins, An Interview with Kazuo Ishiguro," 34.

5. TELLING THE IMPOSSIBLE – *A PALE VIEW OF HILLS* (1982)

The complexity of narrative discourse and the enigmatic characters of Ishiguro's first novel, *A Pale View of Hills* have been attracting various psychoanalytic readings. Brian H. Finney makes an interesting point when quoting Mike Petry statement that "[e]very decisive character, every important motif and every major scene in *A Pale View of Hills* exists at least twice."¹⁸⁶ Cynthia F. Wong worked with Brian W. Shaffer in editing their book *Conversations with Kazuo Ishiguro* (2008)¹⁸⁷ but earlier she had also published a detailed study on Ishiguro¹⁸⁸ exploring the author's use of memory and the narrator's manipulation of desire. She is addressing these questions by using reader-response criticism through her thoughts on gaps and "silences filling the void"¹⁸⁹ in Etsuko's narration. Nonetheless, I endeavour that these textual gaps are calling for a psychoanalytical interpretation.

Wong is also adopting Jeffrey Berman's broader use of the Freudian term "doppelgänger"¹⁹⁰ or special double. Silences filling these "voids" as referred to by Ondek Laurence's model on degrees of spatial silence are marked by a 1999 study of Mike Petry. He examines the Freudian "slip of the tongue" of Etsuko as postmodern literary trope in the climax of *A Pale View of Hills* when the sudden use of the personal pronoun "we" explains the clandestine or silenced fact of the novel: "The one truly shocking thing about Etsuko's *lapsus linguae* is that the reader must suddenly realize that there has, in a way, never been an *enoncé* level to the story – or at least none other than an almost entirely imaginary one."¹⁹¹ However, I further argue that this shift of the personal pronoun "we" is often overlooked by critics in narrative Chapter One. The unfriendly woman with a Tokyo accent has an American friend and her, roughly, 10-year-old girl is strange and plays truant. As a contrast, in the following lines the narrator claims she was never unfriendly. The narrator recalls that the women in the tram-stop were talking about an unfriendly (PVH 13)

¹⁸⁶ Brian Finney, "Figuring the Real, Ishiguro's *When We Were Orphans*" *Jouvert, A Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 7. 1 (2002). <http://english.chass.ncsu.edu/jouvert/v7is1/ishigu.htm> (Accessed 25 August 2012).

¹⁸⁷ Cynthia F. Wong and Grace Crummett, "A Conversation about Life and Art with Kazuo Ishiguro" in Brian W. Shaffer and Cynthia F. Wong (eds), *Conversations with Kazuo Ishiguro* (Jackson, University Press of Mississippi, 2008), 204-20.

¹⁸⁸ Cynthia F. Wong, *Kazuo Ishiguro* (Tavistock, Northcote, 2000)

¹⁸⁹ Cynthia F. Wong, *Kazuo Ishiguro*, 16.

¹⁹⁰ Cynthia F. Wong, *Kazuo Ishiguro*, 32. Jeffrey Berman considers the synonyms, shadow self, second self, alter ego, opposing self in his study on "Personality (Double-Split-Multiple)", in Jean-Claude Signeuret, *Dictionary of Literary Themes and Motifs* (New York, Greenwood Press, 1988), 963-70.

¹⁹¹ Mike Petry, "Narratives of Personal Pasts," Kazuo Ishiguro in the Context of Postmodern British Fiction, <http://www.gradnet.de/papers/pomo99.papers/Petry99.htm> (accessed 1 February 2014, emphasis original)

newcomer, a woman of the cottage. Dwelling on her memories about people in wartime, the narrator suddenly shifts the perspective saying: “It was never my intention to appear unfriendly” (PVH 13). Why does the narrator think the adjective “unfriendly” (PVH 13) refers to her? I suggest this is the condensation technique the narrator of the Ishiguro text uses to shift from the pseudo-Sachiko (the woman of the bungalow) to herself. Ishiguro further masters this shift as the narrator first watches this mysterious woman from a distance, and later, runs after her to ask some trivial thing. This depiction of the two is carefully proportioned and I claim in this context that Etsuko, while watching Sachiko, basically watches herself from a distance. Citing David Lodge,¹⁹² whose interpretation of these rhetoric slips are taken as postmodern “short circuits”, he writes:

postmodernist writing characteristically tries to short-circuit in order to administer a shock to the reader and thus resist assimilation into conventional categories of the literary. Ways of doing this include: combining in one work violently contrasting modes – the obviously fictive and the apparently factual; introducing the author and the question of authorship into the text; and exposing conventions in the act of using them.¹⁹³

Petry is also interested in Etsuko’s metaphorical and literal gaps marking her communication. These figures of speech as “litotes”¹⁹⁴ imply that eventually Etsuko “is spoken”¹⁹⁵ by her own narrative, a perspective I found particularly useful in my reading of the novels. Mapping Maurice Blanchot’s memory theory, Cynthia F. Wong refers to psychoanalyst and theorist Julia Kristeva when exploring Etsuko’s anxiety about motherhood, a notion I will elaborate in this chapter on *A Pale View of Hills*. Referring to the infanticides in the novel, a notion I also analyse in detail, Wong claims:

The senselessness and arbitrariness of the violence are reflected in the way the child murders also metaphorically pronounce a death of the future, a message that is embedded in several incidents in Etsuko’s narrative. When she speaks of the

¹⁹² David Lodge, *The Modes of Modern Writing, Metaphor, Metonymy, and the Typology of Modern Literature* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1977), 239–40.

¹⁹³ Mike Petry, “Narratives of Personal Pasts,” Kazuo Ishiguro in the Context of Postmodern British Fiction, (accessed 1 February 2014)

¹⁹⁴ Mike Petry, “Narratives of Personal Pasts,” Kazuo Ishiguro in the Context of Postmodern British Fiction, (accessed 1 February 2014)

¹⁹⁵ Mike Petry, “Narratives of Personal Pasts,” Kazuo Ishiguro in the Context of Postmodern British Fiction, (accessed 1 February 2014)

“misgivings” of motherhood, for instance, she herself embodies the fears and uncertainty of, literally, letting out the next generation.¹⁹⁶

Indeed, what comes through strongly in Etsuko’s narration is the remarkable degree of frustration related to motherhood. More importantly Wong sees Etsuko’s narrative as a “post-mortem narrative.”¹⁹⁷ She sees that the storyteller is an omnipotent narrator, quoting Walter Benjamin as “[d]eath is the sanction of everything that the storyteller can tell. He has borrowed his authority from death.”¹⁹⁸ I concur with Benjamin, as the narrator depicts her dwelling she underlines that there is “an unmistakable air of transience there, as if we were all of us waiting for the day we could move to something better” (PVH 12).

Etsuko’s framed narration records a mourning mother of the present, a pregnant mother-to-be in the past and simultaneously an abusive mother of Keiko (Etsuko will take the child to England regardless of Keiko’s resistance as it is revealed in Chapter 11) in the Nagasaki story, and a mourning mother of Keiko in the present tense. Etsuko’s narration is loosely organised, but framed. The treatment of the narrative is elliptic (stretching from the present back to the late 1940’s and again returning to the present), three-quarters of the story is spent in the past. The narrator does not keep an objective distance from what is being narrated; she intrudes to offer her own views. Etsuko’s daughter, Keiko killed herself to put a quick end to a lost childhood. Her mother chooses another form of repression in order to reconstruct her past, via a narrative discourse in which gaps reveal more than what is said.

Taking psychoanalytical themes into consideration, Brian Shaffer is exploring defence mechanisms in *A Pale View of Hills*, such as “projection”¹⁹⁹ and “rationalization”²⁰⁰ claiming that the narrative is used by Etsuko “to deflect her personal guilt onto another.”²⁰¹ As a conclusion Shaffer writes that Etsuko’s subtle narrative “is revealed to be explosive and disturbing, exhibiting the taboo of infanticide at its very core.”²⁰²

¹⁹⁶ Cynthia F. Wong, “The Shame of Memory, Blanchot’s Self-Dispossession in Ishiguro’s *A Pale View of Hills*,” *Clio* (Fort Wayne, Ind.) 24, 2 (1995), 131.

¹⁹⁷ Cynthia F. Wong, “The Shame of Memory, Blanchot’s Self-Dispossession in Ishiguro’s *A Pale View of Hills*,” 131.

¹⁹⁸ Cynthia F. Wong, “The Shame of Memory, Blanchot’s Self-Dispossession in Ishiguro’s *A Pale View of Hills*,” 131.

¹⁹⁹ Brian W. Shaffer, *Understanding Kazuo Ishiguro* (Columbia, University of South Carolina Press, 1998), 24.

²⁰⁰ Brian W. Shaffer, *Understanding Kazuo Ishiguro*, 24.

²⁰¹ Brian W. Shaffer, *Understanding Kazuo Ishiguro*, 24.

²⁰² Brian W. Shaffer, *Understanding Kazuo Ishiguro*, 36.

In my interpretation, although I concur with Shaffer's above approach, the narrator of *A Pale View of Hills* is using another defensive tool called repetition compulsion. Elaborating Freud's repetition compulsion concept, Cathy Caruth interprets Etsuko's memoir in the framework of war history and collective memory and their relations to trauma. She notes that the surprise of waking from a nightmare repeats the unexpectedness of the trauma which, observes Caruth, is not only the repetition of a "failed encounter with death," but "the missed encounter with one's own survival."²⁰³ As Etsuko keeps returning to the Nagasaki story in an elliptic way, in my interpretation Etsuko is using the defence mechanism of projection. She is projecting her trauma into a meta-narrative about Sachiko and Mariko to find consolation in mourning her daughter, Keiko. While Sachiko is the irritated and abusive mother, Etsuko is identifying herself with the aggressor.²⁰⁴ Back to Japan, during the war Etsuko lost all, her family and home. After leaving Japan she destroyed herself by condemning her daughter to homelessness and leaving her Japanese husband, Jiro behind for good. As an orphan, the narrator was living in the house of her later father-in-law, Ogata-san who remembers her as wandering aimlessly in the night playing her violin. She had neither mother nor father left. Etsuko feels homeless both in Japan and then in England. Etsuko is haunted by the loss of Keiko; the uncanny feeling in the house disturbs both her and her daughter, Niki. Etsuko's approach of motherhood is in question, which is carefully portrayed by deliberate silences and gaps in the text via absences and presences.

The suggestion by Barry Lewis that the absences are Ishiguro's deliberate choice of the narrative rather than lapses²⁰⁵ a statement with which I agree, yet further claim that absence points to a hidden presence. In other words, what is absent in the narration, for example, Etsuko's second husband, Mr Sheringham, is more telling than the words used. Mike Petry goes as far as to claim that Sheringham is represented by Frank²⁰⁶, who is also "absent" from the plot, whereas I claim that from self-narrated dialogues readers do have some information about him.

In the following extract Etsuko's subtle narration portrays Niki being very much present whereas Etsuko seems to be absent, passive and distant: "Perhaps she had intended to stay longer, I do not know. But my country house and the quiet that surrounds it made

²⁰³ Cathy Caruth, *Literature in the Ashes of History* (London, John Hopkins University Press, 2013). 6.

²⁰⁴ Anna Freud, *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense* (New York, International Universities Press, 1937), 109–121.

²⁰⁵ Matthew Beedham, *The Novels of Kazuo Ishiguro* (New York, Palgrave, 2010), 14.

²⁰⁶ Mike Petry, *Narratives of Memory and Identity: The Novels of Kazuo Ishiguro* (Frankfurt, Peter Lang, 1999), 39.

her restless, and before long I could see she was anxious to return to her life in London” (PVH 9). In my understanding, split identities (Sachiko/Etsuko, Mariko/Keiko, Frank/Sheringham) show types of avoidances. Etsuko is absent as a mother for her pseudo child, Mariko. Throughout her narration, her second husband is totally omitted, whereas the surrogate father, Ogata-san is very much present. This hide and seek, or in Freudian terms, this “fort-da” game comes through strongly in Ishiguro’s other novels too, yet the Ishiguro narratives maintain a certain degree of coherence. Etsuko’s conflict is within her conscience, as we will see how Ono’s and Stevens’ conflict between their private and public consciences will create a growing tension throughout the narrative.

5.1 Killing the void

This part of my dissertation will observe major themes such as “motherhood,” and the Etsuko-Keiko-Niki, as well as the Sachiko-Mariko “mother-daughter” relationship, introduced in “part One – Chapter One.” Cleverly crafted sharp contrasts of the blocks of flats, apartment and cottage, sun and shadow, hill and riverside, mud and dry ponds where “the drainage was appalling” (PVH 11) will be discussed. Psychoanalytical doubles of the first person narrator, Etsuko and the “friend of her”; Sachiko will be explored as well as the eerie condensation happening between Etsuko/Sachiko and the so called “other woman.” What is Etsuko’s today is Sachiko’s yesterday. From the narrative present episodes the narrator’s name is not revealed, she is simply “Mother” by Niki and entitled as “Mrs Sheringham” by Mrs Waters. The first name “Etsuko” is only used by the narrator while recounting the Nagasaki plot. Violence and child abuse as driving forces in the narrative are also discussed within this section. I will advance the idea that there is a large metaphorical gap between the lodgings of the narrator and the cottage. There is an expansive “wasteground” (PVH 11) between the two buildings indicating the in-betweens or psychological gaps where Etsuko is living. The narrator is stuck between war and peace, being pregnant in the narrative past and as a grieving mother of Keiko in the narrative present, she is squeezed between womanhood and motherhood. From the narrative present’s point of view, her story is recounted in the early seventies, i.e., the narrator is trapped between her Japanese past and British present. I observe in this context that following her trauma of war, the narrator’s psyche was split in two, therefore she is also Sachiko and the “other woman” herself. Etsuko’s inertia can be interpreted as body silence,

whereas the trance-like quality of her narration is a characteristic of a consonant mode in which there is no self-exegesis and the psychological distance, between narrating self and experiencing self, is very narrow. Consequently Etsuko's self-perception is also blurred, characterized by voids in the guise of spatial silences and a constant negative movement in space, i.e. the narrator will record moves (drowning, for example) as movements deep down in the river.

As we have seen, Etsuko's framed narration records a mourning mother of the present, a mother-to-be in the past and simultaneously – in my understanding – an abusive mother of Keiko in the Nagasaki plot and a relatively indifferent mother of Niki in the present. What I find very intriguing in her first lines is that this paragraph is basically a metaphor of her story:

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 (PVH 9).

As we will see from the plot, Etsuko's life itself was a compromise reached with her second husband. Niki's name was discussed between mother and father. What name would a neither entirely Japanese nor English baby have? Etsuko, as a defeated Japanese married to a man of the victorious Allies power, is trapped between two worlds. I argue that Niki will represent this in-between-ness. Finally, Niki's name has vague reminiscences about the East her mother is from and the past she does not willingly want to remember. About the daughter's Japanese-ness the narrator eagerly gives her first critical account:

Keiko, unlike Niki was pure Japanese, and more than one newspaper was quick to pick up on this fact. 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 (PVH 10).

The narrator's plain words are very straightforward, yet in the chapters of her Japanese past the tone is more deceiving, blurred with circumlocutions and ellipses. Although in the first pages the implied reader is already confronted with the narrator's deception. Etsuko claims

that Niki is an “affectionate child,” and yet it is a bit suspicious that she “listened impatiently to my classical records, flicked through numerous magazines” (PVH 9). With a twisted logic, the narrator claims that Niki admires certain aspects of her past, and her daughter reassures her that she should have no regrets. Then, as a final conclusion the narrator states, she is not responsible for Keiko’s death. As opposed to Ono and Stevens who rather exaggerate their status, Etsuko trivialises her own. With discernible deception the narrator states that she only muses over Keiko’s death because of Niki’s visit and that the stopover brought up memories of her friend, Sachiko. Etsuko had already mentioned to Niki “a woman” (PVH 10) she had once known. This mystical woman is somebody from Nagasaki. The Nagasaki plot, starting in a hot June, is going to hover playfully around Sachiko, Etsuko’s friend and the uncanny “other woman”, first mentioned on page 18, seen here as doubles for Etsuko in psychoanalytical terms. In structural terms, doubles are interpreted as shadows, visual repetitions of silence in space according to Ondek Laurence’s adopted model. A disturbing self-narrated dialogue between Sachiko’s daughter, Mariko and the narrator is recorded, the “But that was me” (PVH 18) phrase indicates that the “other woman”, in my interpretation, can be Etsuko herself:

“Why don’t you take a kitten?” the child said. “The other woman said she’d take one.”

“We’ll see, Mariko-San. Which other lady was this?”

“The other woman. The woman from across the river. She said she’d take one.”

“But I don’t think anyone lives over there, Mariko-San. It’s just trees and forest over there.”

“She said she’d take me to her house. She lives across the river. I didn’t go with her.”

I looked at the child for a second. Then a thought struck me and I laughed.

“But that was me, Mariko-San. Don’t you remember? I asked you to come to my house while your mother was away in the town” (PVH 18).

Starting her meta-narrative, a close description of the post-war city is given by depicting a bombed neighbourhood where mud, dry ponds and mosquitoes subsist and a wasteground lays between the small, suffocating blocks of flats and a river. This no man’s land is both a

metaphorical and a spatial gap. It marks, I advance the idea, the threshold²⁰⁷ between new and old, known and unknown, natural and supernatural. Again I am referring to the narrator's in-between-ness, which is not only craftily elaborated by thematic concepts of the in-between (cottage-blocks of flats, Japan-England, Niki as a daughter of Japanese mother-English father). I interpret the narrator's use of these voids as psychoanalytically and narratively marked "gaps":

Of the four, our block had been built last and it marked the point where the rebuilding programme had come to a halt; between us and the river lay an expanse of wasteground, several acres of dried mud and ditches" (PVH 11).

One of the wooden, country cottages is the only building bulldozers left and this is a metaphor of the old, from my perspective. The shabby building is a place, which will later function as a temporary dwelling of Sachiko (where eerie things happen in the narration) and clearly juxtaposes the small but neat apartment Etsuko owns with her Japanese husband, Jiro.

Etsuko recalls she has shattered memories of the first meeting with Sachiko. As the narrating self reports, she witnessed Sachiko's daughter fighting (PVH 14) with two other kids and at the very first mentioning²⁰⁸ of this little girl. In other words, physical violence is attributed to her. Moreover, the next lines of the dialogue also reveal that the little girl had a cut on the cheek (PVH 14). Etsuko warns Sachiko about the dangers Mariko might face, the river is deep and the mud is slippery, there are "ditches," (PVH 16) the latter is not only a very strong psychological representation of absence but also a marked negative movement in space. These hints give the narration an eerie and threatening feeling. To recite Brian W. Shaffer, the river plays a crucial part in the plot and is interpreted by Freudian terms, stating that attraction to the river has a "sado-masochistic urge to self-destruction"²⁰⁹ for characters like Mariko and Keiko. Although in my reading the destructive force of Sachiko is directed against her daughter. All the violent image of "cuts" and the disturbing "ditches" are related to Etsuko's concern about motherhood:

²⁰⁷ About the location of the building the fact that they are built over the ruins of a village the bomb had destroyed is metaphorical for the story and for Etsuko's personality.

²⁰⁸ Her name is first mentioned on page 15.

²⁰⁹ Brian W. Shaffer, *Understanding Kazuo Ishiguro* (Columbia, University of South Carolina Press, 1998), 31.

The child's response had, it is true, upset me somewhat; for in those days, such small things were capable of arousing in me every kind of misgiving about motherhood. I told myself the episode was insignificant, and that in any case, further opportunities to make friends with the little girl were bound to present themselves over the coming days (PVH 17).

Further analysing the concept of "motherhood" in "Chapter Two" these honest and self-assured words are very different from the narrator's timid and uncertain tone when Etsuko is talking to Sachiko: "In those days, returning to the Nakagawa district still provoked in me mixed emotions of sadness and pleasure" (PVH 23). Nonetheless, these lines are providing record of her pre-Nagasaki, war-torn life, causing her disturbance and "a deep sense of loss" (PVH 23). Etsuko is calling on her old acquaintance, Mrs Fujiwara, who is running a noodle shop. This visit provoked the feeling of "loss" and "sadness" (PVH 23) described above by the reminiscing narrator. We are informed about Etsuko via the lenses of the old lady in a self-narrated dialogue, saying that the young woman "looks miserable" (PVH 24). Mrs Fujiwara emphasizes in a long conversation that motherhood needs a lot of "positive attitude to bring up a child" (PVH 25). In interpreting the character's words, it can be construed as Etsuko not displaying this positive attitude. The perturbed feeling is accentuated by the old lady giving account of a young pregnant woman visiting at the cemetery. While it seems that Etsuko is still trapped by her past, the old lady's approach is very pro-active, she claims that they should all look forward: "That's no way to bring a child into the world, visiting the cemetery every week. (...) Cemeteries are no places for young people. Kazuo comes with me sometimes, but I never insist. It's time he started looking ahead too" (PVH 25).

A shocking portrayal of the little girl is given where she is curled up in the darkest corner of the hut stroking a stray cat and, making the situation even more perturbed, she mentions a mysterious "other woman" (PVH 18) whom she converses with when her mother is not at home, during the nights. Etsuko, as the narrator reports, listens attentively and Sachiko is portrayed as being indifferent. She claims that as a worker in Mrs Fujiwara's noodle shop, her daughter, "Mariko won't be a slightest problem" (PVH 20). The abusive conduct towards the girl is very obvious, I give claim to this narrative section being full of tension, spatial and visual gaps and silences. I interpret Etsuko's misgivings about motherhood as a destructive force directed against the daughter.

The condensation technique is further elaborated when first meeting Mariko at the river bank, Etsuko remembers her uneasy feeling (PVH 16) about the girl, while Mariko is alarmed and intimidated. In the cottage, the contrast between Sachiko's delicate tea-set and the dampness of the cottage mark a sharp distinction between Sachiko/Etsuko's past and present in the Nagasaki plot, recorded mostly via self-narrated monologues and self-narrated dialogues. I argue that the narrating self is difficult to distinguish from the experiencing self, hence the use of the condensation technique.

5.2 Silent glances and perturbing guilt

This chapter, following the narrative order of the novel, engages itself with concepts of "war trauma," and the silences that are born from them. Abusive "motherhood" and "mother figures" are juxtaposed with kind and caring "fatherhood" and "father figures" calling for interpretation. Overflowing with pro-vocal silences, i.e. uneasy glances, the narrated self uses auditory silence (PVH 25) to disguise information. Sachiko is dissatisfied by peeling prawns and Mariko is a burden to the owner: "Mrs. Fujiwara glanced up at Sachiko, and for a brief instant I thought they exchanged cold glances" (PVH 26). Heavy silence is further elaborated as Sachiko hardly ever talks to Mariko, and if she does, either she gives orders to her or castigates the little girl, but in most cases the mother is indifferent: "Mariko did not move. Sachiko shrugged, then disappeared inside the kitchen" (PVH 28). As a defensive tool Mariko responds with silence and muteness, the latter is a degree of auditory silence in Ondek Laurence's scale. Mariko barely answers the adults' questions and only talks if she wants to report on the disturbing "other woman" (PVH 27) or the kittens she would love to have. Sachiko never comforts the daughter when the little girl is talking about that mysterious woman, she is clearly obsessed with. Mariko is depicted in the consonant narration as being annoyingly arrogant, having a pale silhouette, not being earthly at all, just "a small figure standing out in the sunlight amidst the rush of passers-by" (PVH 25).

Introducing a new character, Ogata-san, the father-in-law, the narrating tone is warm and amiable. When Etsuko confesses to Ogata-san that "You were like a father to me once," (PVH 34) their lyrical duet portrays the few moments in the plot where there is some ease from the gloomy, eerie world of Etsuko. In the self-narrated dialogues, Jiro is portrayed as an arrogant, meticulous and selfish man, quite the contrary of Ogata-san.

Ogata-san is described as having a “relaxed, generous manner about him” (PVH 29) and he is “still in the best of health, displaying a well-built physique and the robust energy of a much younger man” (PVH 29). In contrast, Jiro, the husband has a “stern expression” (PVH 28) and being “fastidious about his appearance” (PVH 28), even at home he would wear a shirt and tie. Jiro is as obsessed with position and work as the other Ishiguro characters of his first three novels; Ono in *An Artist of the Floating World* and Stevens in *The Remains of the Day*.

Analyzing the dynamism of loyalty and betrayal, I claim that as the narrator recalls one occasion, when the retired teacher, Ogata-san is trying to ask his son to act on behalf of him, the craftily described Ogata-san picture becomes slightly altered. Jiro’s school friend, Matsuda wrote an unconstructive article about Ogata-san’s involvement in pre-war Imperialist Japan, claiming that the old teacher was serving Japanese war-ideas. Jiro refuses to help Ogata-san and resists asking for an apology from young Matsuda. Whereas the father-child relationship is clearly shadowed by Jiro’s indifference and arrogance, the relationship between Etsuko and the father-in-law is relaxed and trustworthy. What we know from their dialogue is that Etsuko had found shelter by Ogata-san and his family and that later she married Jiro.

Plot-wise, a criticism of the American dream is introduced when Sachiko wants to flee from Japan with an American man; she confesses this when she calls in Etsuko’s family, looking for Mariko. She is giving a short plea about her decision, which in post-war Japan can be interpreted as treason. With means of denial, Sachiko insists she is not ashamed at all and the web of silence is sewn between characters:

“Aren’t you going to ask me anything more?” Sachiko said, catching up with me.

“Aren’t you going to ask me why I’m going? And who I’m going with?”

“I’m very glad if this is what you wanted,” I said. “But perhaps we should find your daughter first.”

“Etsuko, you must understand there’s nothing I’m ashamed of. There’s nothing I want to hide from anyone. Please ask me anything you want, I’m not ashamed.”

“I thought perhaps we should find your daughter first” (PVH 37).

The above, self-narrated dialogue is repeated twice on the same page emphasizing the dead end of their communication. When Sachiko asks something, Etsuko would not answer. When Mariko poses a question, Sachiko would not consider it important. When Etsuko asks Jiro about things she is engaged in, the husband responds abruptly. When Ogata-san

asks Jiro a favour, he refuses it via being silent. Chu-chueh Cheng gives an interesting insight about their conversations calling them “synchronous monologues,”²¹⁰ their comments easily follow the other’s speeches and give an “impression of double-voiced soliloquies, symptomatic of Etsuko’s internal conflict.”²¹¹

Probably this inner conflict involves the uncanny feeling to return when the two women start searching for the girl along the river-bank. They are exploring the woods and the dark cottage. The ground is “uneven” (PVH 39) and “marshy” (PVH 40), the “opposite bank” (PVH 40) is full of insects. The narrator recalls her alarm by describing the scenery: “Perhaps it is just my fancy that I felt a cold touch of unease there on that bank, a feeling not unlike premonition, which caused me to walk with renewed urgency towards the darkness of the trees before us” (PVH 40). Sachiko spots Mariko finally in this uncanny atmosphere but apart from tensed atmosphere no further information is revealed until the narration proceeds. Overflowing with pro-vocal silences, this narrative part, the narrated self, used devices of auditory silence (PVH 25) to disguise information and to generate further tension.

5.3 Rape, isolation, assaults

A very disturbing chapter, “Chapter Three” starts with reminiscences about the Japanese past and continues along the previous chapter’s thriller-like atmosphere. I advance the idea that upon finding Mariko bleeding from her inner thighs, in the deserted woods, the adults had witnessed the evidence of a rape or assault. “Silences” in the text are of great importance as well as “gazes” that mark them. In passages referring to the present framed by a dream, mother and daughter are taking a walk and encountering disturbing questions about Keiko via talking to passers-by. Two-thirds of the narration alternates between recent and earlier episodes of the narrator’s present. Etsuko’s thoughts are circling around Keiko. A long, eerie monologue over Keiko’s final years are elaborated, in which the theme of “room”, linked to “isolation”, “cold” and “spell”, are discussed thus helping the implied reader to navigate between facts and fiction as presented by the narrator. As Ishiguro himself noted, in *A Pale View of Hills* he is “not interested in the solid facts. The

²¹⁰ Chu-chueh Cheng, *The Margin without Centre*. Kazuo Ishiguro (Bern and New York, Peter Lang, 2010), 168.

²¹¹ Chu-chueh Cheng, *The Margin without Centre*. Kazuo Ishiguro, 168.

focus of the book is elsewhere, in the emotional upheaval”²¹² when responding to George Mason’s questions in a 1989 interview. Navigating between facts and fiction, my interpretation of Mariko’s bleeding is as follows. Etsuko continues to remember that night when they were searching for Mariko. The “eerie spell which seemed to bind the two of us” (PVH 41), the fact that the girl was “lying curled on her side, knees hunched” and the fact that her eyes “stared up at us with a peculiar blankness” (PVH 41) are proof of a recent shock the girl has suffered. Probably, it is not farfetched to say that as she was wounded on “the inside of her thigh” (PVH 41), Etsuko’s stubborn insistence (PVH 42–43) to call the police and asking if the girl was really on her own that night, indicates to me that Mariko was actually raped or attacked, though she could walk steadily after they had found her and calling the police was considered (PVH 42). To restate, “motherhood” in the presentation of Sachiko is a disturbing phenomena. Sachiko as a mother is careless, abusive, intolerant, and indifferent. She is aggressive, which is evident when slapping one kitten sharply with the back of her hand (PVH 47), however the kittens are Mariko’s favourite pets. Etsuko is an anxious mother to be but she seems to have much more affection towards Mariko than Sachiko has.

After the abusive mother-episode, it is probably not an accident that the narration continues with Etsuko’s memories of the recent past and of Keiko’s suicide. In the present scenes of the narration, I argue that the dissonant mode is applied, as the discourse focuses more clearly on the previous and distant self, the narrating self is disturbed by the recurring dreams of a little girl. Dreams, from the perspective Ondek Laurence’s model, can be interpreted as a silence in time, yet Ondek Laurence claims that “night, absence, emptiness, nothingness, voids and gaps, abysses are interconnected with the degrees of spatial silence; I argue that they are more linked to the notion of time-related suspension. Psychoanalytically speaking, dreams are crucial in avoiding the manifestation of disturbing memories.

The narrator is intimidated by the “strange spell” (PVH 53) that grew in strength after her suicide and remembers how Keiko was living as part of the family but like a hermit, in psychoanalytical terms, as an “other within.” The room and her clothes were stinky; Keiko refused to wash her clothes. Keiko’s isolation is overwhelming, as the narrator reports: “every few weeks I would find a bag of washing outside her door, which I would wash and return. In the end, the rest of us grew used to her ways, and when by some

²¹² Matthew Beedham, *The Novels of Kazuo Ishiguro* (New York, Palgrave, 2010), 11.

impulse Keiko ventured down into our living room, we would all feel a great tension” (PVH 54). In contrast with the “dream” as silence in time, the theme of “room” is linked to “isolation,” “cold” (PVH 54), “spell” and “spare,” and, I claim, it can be interpreted as a spatial “gap” in which Keiko isolated herself.

5.5 Silent pauses

Silences are represented by “pauses” (PVH 60) in this part of the novel, “Chapter Four,” and therefore, a more auditory characteristic of silence will be applied in the narration. In *The Remains of the Day* sensuality is not a characteristic for the text, however in *An Artist of the Floating World* there is a great emphasis on both visual and auditory modes. Here I am referring to the “clicking of numerous sandals” and “laughter of people” (AFW 25) as sensual images.

“War,” at this narrative point is mentioned from the perspective of Ogata-san and Jiro. Ogata-san ponders on changes after the war, when “so many things in Japan today to sway a young man away” (PVH 59). When two of Jiro’s colleagues stop by, a light-hearted episode describing how Hanada, a colleague of Jiro could not get his wife to vote for the same party, indicates that things are changing in contemporary Japan quickly. He was threatening his wife with a golf-club. Hanada innocently argues:

My wife votes for Yoshida just because he looks like her uncle. That’s typical of women. They don’t understand politics. They think they can choose the country’s leaders the same way they choose dresses (PVH 63).

Couples voting for different parties meant for Ogata-san that no loyalty and duty has remained in the new world. His, relatively feudal, reasoning has some interesting points on the interpretation of women, that “a wife these days feels no sense of loyalty towards the household” (PVH 63). Consequently, Ogata fears that discipline and loyalty that held Japan together for centuries will be sacrificed under the spell of American democratic ideas (PVH 66). Jiro yawns (PVH 65), a silent pause reflecting Jiro’s indifference. Yet, at one point he answers respectfully and recalls that he has had to memorize the textbooks by heart and learn that Japan is “divine” (PVH 66) and “supreme” (PVH 66).

As a retort, Ogata echoes Stevens, the narrator of *The Remains of the Day*, when he is talking about duty and the sacrifice that goes with it: “We did our best, men like Endo and I, we did our best to nurture what was good in the country. A lot of good has been destroyed” (PVH 67). Justine Baillie and Sean Matthews rightly observe how traditional Japanese cultural activities, such as chess and music, have altered in the new post-war era. “It is impossible for her to function in the maternal regenerative role allotted to her by her elders”²¹³ as social and patriarchal patterns shift. Ogata, the elderly retired teacher must face this quick shift of change whether he likes it or not: the younger generation will make him to do so.

5.6 A war-trauma narrative

So far the war-narrative has included three character’s angles, Mrs Fujiwara’s, Sachiko’s and Etsuko’s. I highlight Sachiko’s story on Tokyo-traumas where the truth is revealed about the child murderer, “the other woman.” This troubled “motherhood” echoes Sachiko’s negligent parenthood and Etsuko’s anxiety over her pregnancy as presented from Mrs Fujiwara’s point of view. We see a traumatized child, Mariko. I venture that here the child is fighting on three fronts. On the one hand she is troubled by the traumas of war. On the other hand Mariko is bullied by her mother, she is both an outcast in the child-world and an outlaw in the post-war world. I interpret her weird reactions as coming from despair.

In medias res it becomes obvious that Frank-San disappeared without trace. The two women, Sachiko and Etsuko in the narrative past, are conversing about how Sachiko will deal with this pitfall. Sachiko’s reported matrix of denial is further constructed when she calls Frank’s disappearance a “slight delay” (PVH 69). During a verbal duel Sachiko keeps challenging and provoking Etsuko to ask questions about an undoubtedly unreliable lover, who is a double-embarrassment both for being American and in an illegitimate relationship. Etsuko’s silence here is stubborn, murmuring only “But really, I...” (PVH 72) phrases. Sachiko’s denials are also notable. She insists that these disappointments are not new for her; i.e. the implied reader should read between the lines about what traumas

²¹³ Justine Baillie and Sean Matthews, “History, Memory, and the Construction of Gender in *A Pale View of Hills*” In Sean Matthews and Sebastian Groes (eds), *Kazuo Ishiguro. Contemporary Critical Perspectives* (London, Continuum, 2009), 53.

Sachiko's has been through in order to say "You see, when you've come through some of the things I have, you learn not to let small set-backs like this worry you" (PVH 68).

Sachiko's character has already been shadowed by presumptions. She is portrayed as a negligent mother and an arrogant woman. Her friendship with Etsuko is selfish and she is merciless, which is highlighted in the text by asking the pregnant friend for money, without even thanking her for it (PVH 72). The character of Sachiko only talks when she wishes to, as in the case of her opening up about war traumas:

"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." She continued to gaze at the back of her hands (PVH 73).

The trauma lying behind Mariko's state is revealed by hearing the story of "the other woman," who killed her baby (PVH 74) by drowning it in the canal, and then later cutting her own throat. Mariko has been recalling the episode related to this woman, though – as her mother described – she has seen worse things. War-trauma is recorded from another perspective when Mrs Fujiwara remembers that once she had to make breakfast "for them all" (PVH 77) indicating that her family was once much bigger than just two living members, her son, Kazuo and herself. Conversing with Etsuko she reveals two important pieces of information which were so far missing from the puzzle. During the war Etsuko lost a man dear to her, Nakamura-San, she is seen –although she denies it – as a worn out and anxious mother to be in Mrs Fujiwara's eyes.

As a contrast, Mrs Fujiwara's exhilaration is marked by her laughing and amiable conversations with customers as she describes to Etsuko that it is all past now: "We've all had to put things behind us. You too, Etsuko, I remember you were very heartbroken once. But you managed to carry on" (PVH 77). The old lady does not deny, does not pretend and does not hold anything back. She is the most balanced of Ishiguro's characters in the examined novels, I would say.

5.7 Unexpected turns and abysses

Uncanny ropes twisted around ankles echoing hanging, empty stares on teapots and a disillusioned hypocritical sermon on motherhood serve as the backbone of this discussion about a visually crafted sixth chapter. The “rope” metaphor is introduced while searching for Mariko on the babysitting night, the pregnant Etsuko is walking through “muddy” and damp grounds. She finds the girl under a willow tree and a serpent-like rope is twisted around her ankle “with a rustling noise as if a snake were sliding in the grass behind me” (PVH 83). Mariko is paralyzed by seeing the rope – echoing the one Keiko strangled herself with – her fright is emphasized by alarming repetitions in the narrative (PVH 84). There might be many interpretations of this scene, but I advance the idea that Mariko is intimidated by Etsuko as if the woman was attacking her. The mirrored question within the self-narrated dialogue “Why have you got that?” and later in the paragraph, “Why have you got that rope?” can be interpreted as textual proof of a presumptive attack on the girl. Sachiko’s opening up to Etsuko on her doomed relationship with the American is bound to Sachiko’s false plea on “motherhood”. She claims that she is only interested in the child’s welfare and will not follow Frank to America because he was flirting with saloon girls (PVH 87). Sachiko requested her to consider her daughter’s needs after being dumped by her lover. This is why I find her self-assuring lines fake.

Ishiguro plays with contrasts when he portrays a relatively happy and caring friendship between the narrator and Niki, as opposed to the alienated relationship she might have had with Keiko and the abusive one portrayed in the Sachiko-Mariko relationship. On the fifth day of Niki’s visit, dialogues are predominated by Niki’s admiration over her mother’s bravery to abandon her husband and start a new life in England with Keiko. Nonetheless, as Sean Matthews and Sebastioan Groes point out, Etsuko/Sachiko only rejected a “proscribed maternal role” and choose exile from “loyalty, duty, and assimilation.”²¹⁴ Although in admiringly honest lines the narrator confesses:

I do not claim to recall Jiro with affection, but then he was never the oafish man my husband considered him to be. Jiro worked hard to do his part for the family and he expected me to do mine; in his own terms, he was a dutiful husband. And indeed,

²¹⁴ Justine Baillie and Sean Matthews, “History, Memory, and the Construction of Gender in *A Pale View of Hills*” In Sean Matthews and Sebastian Groes (eds), *Kazuo Ishiguro. Contemporary Critical Perspectives* (London, Continuum, 2009), 53.

for the seven years he knew his daughter, he was a good father to her. Whatever else I convinced myself of during those final days, I never pretended Keiko would not miss him (PVH 90).

The verbal communication between mother and daughter has deficiencies as Niki is very silent about the facts of her life in London: “There is a certain subtle and yet quiet emphatic manner Niki adopts whenever I display curiosity concerning her life in London” (PVH 94). Sudden and unexpected turns in the narration make Ishiguro’s prose so vivid and impulsive, even thriller-like, when the narration continues in the present. Feeling regret toward the way she has treated Keiko, the narrator is positive about Niki’s bright future but in response Niki only murmurs. From Ondek Laurence’s model, murmur is a degree of auditory silence, so shaping the above part of the narration.

5.8 Empty silences

I propose that the more Etsuko’s pregnancy advances, the more she gets to be depressed and this change of emotion is reflected in the surroundings, referring to “Part Two-Chapter Seven.” An important self-confession is recorded by the narrator about her future, claiming that “I spent many moments – as I was to do throughout succeeding years – gazing emptily at the view from my apartment window” (PVH 99). At this point in the narration, the angle broadened by the following concepts; “hill,” “bridge,” “harbour” (PVH 103) and “cable-car” (PVH 112), which echo the positive attitude the narrator was willing to continue her life with. Yet, alarming child murders are mentioned in newspaper stories. A boy and a girl were battered to death (PVH 100) and another girl was found hanging from a tree. These assaults offer us association to Keiko’s death and the assault Mariko was very likely to be objected to. The narrator meticulously describes how the way to Sachiko’s cottage is getting to be more fearful as the soil “bred all manner of insects” (PVH 99) and these journeys to the cottage give the narrator “misgivings” (PVH 99) about her motherhood. An important self-confession is recorded by the narrator about her future:

On clearer days, I could see far beyond the trees on the opposite bank of the river, a pale outline of hills visible against the clouds. It was not an unpleasant view, and on

occasions it brought me a rare sense of relief from the emptiness of those long afternoons I spent in that apartment (PVH 99).

The above extract pictures a mother burdened with anxiety and depression. This empty gaze through the window, as a degree of spatial silence, reminds me of Miss Kenton, yet this character of *The Remains of the Day* usually finds relief in these quiet moments of pondering at the back corridor. In *A Pale View of Hills* the adjective “pale” is equivalent to a degree of silence, i.e. “emptiness.” If we pursue this thought further, the notion of “silence” along with “reluctance” and “emptiness” can be associated with loss in my reading. So far the narrator had been depicting her microcosm; the apartment, the cottage, a riverbank. In Chapter Seven she describes a broader scenery, even refers to politics as “the occupation coming to an end” (PVH 99) and “reports of child murders” (PVH 100). I find evidence of Ishiguro’s artistic craft in these sharp changes of tone. One minute the text is about a relatively optimistic project and, the next moment words are reinventing and evoking the same eerie feeling that is characteristic of the Nagasaki plot as well as the narrative present one. This mentioning of the alarming child murders rings a bell, warning that it is time to watch out again. Not only one killing but three are compressed in the following five lines. In the narration there is a huge information gap about what happened to Sachiko’s husband, and we are not told exactly whom Etsuko had lost in the war. The narrating self only confesses with a type of projection that Mrs Fujiwara “lost more than I did” (PVH 111) grieving four children and her husband who all died during the infamous Nagasaki bombing.

In the previous chapters the narrator was depicting her microcosm; the apartment, the cottage, the riverbank. In “Chapter Seven,” though she describes broader sceneries; a short ferry-trip to the hilly Inasa²¹⁵ is meticulously recalled. This is the only occasion when the narration takes a positive movement in space related silence, a way up to the hill. Hitherto the surroundings the narrator was living in were vertical, or spatially speaking negative, being full of “ditches” (PVH 99) and the “wasteground” (PVH 99) was breeding insects and mosquitoes.

²¹⁵ Etsuko’s sentences recall another Ishiguro character, Stevens. From the perspective of his microcosm, the butler’s six-day trip to the West Country was similarly electrifying as this one day trip for Etsuko.

5.9 Suspended communication

Setting an indoor family-scene, in “Chapter Eight” a metaphorical chess-game demonstrates key concepts of nervous tension between old and young, father and son. The narrator meticulously reports dialogues, though does not maintain a subjective angle and, I claim that, this dissonant narrative mode is applied when recalling less disturbing past events. However, when defeatism and perseverance are the subjects touched upon, the narrative twists into a more consonant mode which is proximate to the experiencing self. The latter, I argue, is a highly important one, as by looking back, the narrator gives a very important clue: “Had he not, years later, faced another crisis in much the same manner, it may be that I would never have left Nagasaki.” It is not more than half a sentence about what might have happened with their marriage if Jiro did not avoid confrontation and – as his defeatism (PVH 127) is portrayed in the chess game – had not given her up. It implies that she did not have a strong intention to leave Jiro and Japan. As a new sketch to Jiro’s portrait, we assume that he avoids confrontation with Matsuda, his former schoolmate. His hypocrisy is imaginatively recorded by Etsuko:

my husband was simply waiting for Ogata-san to return home to Fukuoka so the whole affair could be forgotten. Meanwhile, he would continue to agree readily that such an attack on the family name should be dealt with both promptly and firmly, that the matter was his concern as much as his father’s, and that he would write to his old school friend as soon as he had time (PVH 126).

Describing their marital bonds with apparent care, the narrator recalls that she wanted to convince Jiro about the Matsuda affair, “in any case, it was never in the nature of our relationship to discuss such things openly” (PVH 127). It seems that the narrator has a very clear understanding of Jiro and the marriage. As Jiro advances in his career, the more stiff and rigid he becomes. Although he advances, his strategy lacks enthusiasm and perseverance as it is described by Ogata-san and his words might refer to the future Sheringham-Etsuko-Jiro love triangle which is never clearly outlined in the text. Ogata, half-warningly, emphasizes that a good chess player should think ahead, “three moves on at the very least” (PVH 128) and tries to teach Jiro the basic steps of a successful life. Jiro gives his own reasons for his backing-off strategy and claims this is Ogata’s fault. Ogata,

however, insists that a father can recognize these “unwelcome traits” and he is not proud of his son. He castigates Jiro for being “defeatist” (PVH 129) by saying that he gives up as soon as his first strategy has collapsed (PVH 129). I endeavour, that after the lost war, “defeatism” is the greatest insult a young man can face. No wonder Jiro is annoyed and almost knocks over the chess-board. Tea is spilled over the tatami. He retorts his father’s words with planned indifference and he is determined not to help in the Matsuda-affair. Neither has he conversed amiably with his wife. Either they eat in silence or he nags Etsuko for trivial things, as not to meddle with his ties (PVH 132). The tone between the couple is edgy and strained.

While father and son are competing and accusing each other, the tone between father-in-law and sister-in-law protégée is amiable, cordial, and genuinely warm. Etsuko even teases the old man with sentences like: “I was just about to throw Father’s breakfast away. I thought he’d be far too lazy to get up much before noon.” Even when she is advanced in her pregnancy, she accompanies her father-in-law to the war memorial park and to Matsuda’s house, regardless the heat (PVH 141). They deliberately – the narrator observes – avoid the route that would have passed “the house I had once lived in with my parents” (PVH 141).

Ogata has the same habit of gazing through the window; a crevice is inserted in the narration, a means of spatial silence: “He continued to gaze out of the window; in the sharp morning light, all I could see of his head and shoulders was a hazy outline” (PVH 135). From affection and caring he planted azaleas (PVH 137) In the gateway of their old house, which is also proof of their caring and loving relationship that juxtaposes both the marriage between Jiro and Etsuko, the family of Ogata and Jiro and, in the Sachiko-meta story, the Sachiko-Mariko relationship. Speaking about the Etsuko-Keiko relationship, we have only allusions built on evidence from the text, but these indications allow us to read between the lines.

Tension between generations, couples and teacher-pupil relations marked the main junctions of the narration. Uneasy silences between married couples and deliberately proportioned ones between father and son highlighted the failure of communication. The game and contest between generations is portrayed via the chess match, in which the old and wise triumph, the restless and hazardous fail.

5.10 Marked contrasts and suspensions

In my further analysis I argue that, until now Ogata has been portrayed as a jovial and jolly old man, whose caring for the orphaned Etsuko is one of the most lyrical parts of the novel. I further claim that the character of Ogata is later elaborated in the character of Ono and I venture that concepts of “misguided loyalty,” “honour,” “dignity,” and “justified deeds” will further be sophisticated by the characters²¹⁶ of Lord Darlington and Stevens in *The Remains of the Day*. Following the comforting Ogata-episodes, the uncanny atmosphere of the Sachiko sub-plot scenes has once returned.

After preparing a seemingly incidental meeting with Matsuda, Ogata observes how the courteous pupil Matsuda suddenly changes as “an air of authority seemed to enter his manner” (PVH 147). The former student uses a similar argument that will take place between Ono and Kuroda’s protégée in *An Artist of the Floating World*. Ogata does not seem to understand the young man’s argument; he insists that they were acting along correct values (PVH 147–148). Yet, Ishiguro’s artistic craft is once more demonstrated by using a very intriguing shift to a narrated dialogue from the vantage point of a third-person narrator on pages 144–149. Stating that “Shiego Matsuda tied the bucket of his briefcase, then glancing about him” (PVH 144) this is clearly not a narrative that is recorded by Etsuko. Matsuda who introduces an, entirely new, aspect of Ogata’s career that is that he had sacked and had five teachers imprisoned in April 1938 (PVH 148). Therefore, the portrait of the patriarchal and jovial Ogata-san must be altered. The narrating *I* only returned on page 149 when a self-narrated monologue returns with first person singular.

In the Ishiguro-universe we should always care for nuances. In the following setting, a simple supper-scene, Ishiguro is able to make even this everyday setting dynamic. Etsuko asks Ogata to stay for another week, as Jiro has some days off. On hearing so, Jiro stops eating in astonishment. When Ogata resists Etsuko’s compassionate persuasion, Jiro is relieved and “began to eat once more” (PVH 155). All three continued to eat in silence. Being relieved the old man is leaving and Jiro offers sake to her father. He nods to Etsuko and she reads the non-verbal sign. She rises to her feet and brings two cups along with the bottle. The narrator recalls that afternoon, when she refers back to the newspaper story mentioned about a little girl found hanged, in a dissonant mode with a

²¹⁶ The imprudent direction Lord Darlington was taking by joining the Nazis was his decision. Yet, Stevens’ as a servant was not obliged by his lord to share the same values, though he voluntarily agreed to do so. Therefore Lord Darlington and Stevens have shared responsibility.

certain suspension in the narrative describing the way she approaches the cottage, mirroring her anxiety; moving slowly in the heat: “the journey across those few dried acres seemed to take an eternity” (PVH 157).

5.11 Juxtaposed and restrained reports

Being the most enigmatic and powerful chapter, this episode of the Ishiguro text offers the reader the clues to decipher the whole novel. The cottage is depicted as a prison-like cell along with a disturbing personification of Death. Ishiguro’s mastery in describing the drowning scene is nerve-wrecking. The writer meticulously records every move of Sachiko’s character and her brutal determination for destruction is juxtaposed by the narrator’s filtered and restrained report. I advance the idea that when Sachiko disappears from the narration Etsuko puts on her character. I interpret Sachiko as Etsuko’s conscience, her double. Shifting from a dissonant to a consonant narrative mode, Sachiko fades and the narrating self, Etsuko enters, which is suggested by the famous and crafty blur of pronouns. The noun “pig” will ring a bell for the implied reader as it was used in connection with Frank. In previous scenes Sachiko and Mariko were arguing about the man. The girl called him “pig” and claimed that he drank his own piss, an accusation her mother was not able to respond to. One would venture how is it that Mariko addresses this offence to Etsuko while they are talking about the girl’s new life? Playing with the fortitude and resilience of the implied reader, the narrator reports that she has just entered the cottage in which a prison-like atmosphere strengthens the apprehension of the situation, light coming through “narrow gaps” (PVH 158).

An encounter with Death gives the narration special tension. In the cottage an old woman is with Mariko. Her characterization brings us to the allusion that she might be Death itself. Her face is very thin and has a “chalky paleness” (PVH 158) about her that unnerves Etsuko. The kimono she is wearing is dark, “the kind normally worn in mourning” (PVH 158). Her eyes are “slightly hooded and watched me with no apparent emotion” (PVH 158). The spooky poltergeist seems to be Sachiko’s cousin, Yasuko-San, a very rational figure who came to persuade Sachiko to return to her uncle’s house. After these surreal opening lines the discourse returns to a realistic one. Nagasaki has changed, it is reported, and as Yasuko-San puts it, Mariko needs a proper shelter. Mariko is very optimistic about this return to safe-life but Sachiko has different plans. The vegetable box

Mariko won at the *kujibiki* stand is converted into a dwelling for the kittens. A “wave of irritation” (PVH 164) crosses Sachiko’s face and a heated dialogue portrays how much the girl is desperate to keep the animals, she insists that her mother once agreed on the issue. She repeats this accusation four times in a few lines (PVH 163–165). Sachiko answers with growing anger and claims that Mariko is “deliberately awkward, as you always are. What does it matter about the dirty little creatures” (PVH 165)? As the tension reaches a peak Sachiko puts all the kittens into the box, except for the one Mariko is holding firmly, but she has to give in: “Mariko stared up at her mother. Then slowly, she lowered the kitten and let it drop to the tatami in front of her” (PVH 166). The narrator is witnessing the situation with growing panic. Sachiko is making preparation to drown the kittens without hesitation. Etsuko – as it is reported – tries to convince her to let them go. Sachiko mercilessly answers with the same alternating lines: “It’s just an animal” (PVH 167). Ishiguro’s mastery in describing the drowning scene is very disturbing. The writer meticulously records every move of Sachiko’s character, her brutal determination for destruction is juxtaposed by the narrator’s filtered and restrained report:

Sachiko adjusted her position then pushed the vegetable box over the edge of the bank; the box rolled and landed in the water. To prevent it floating, Sachiko leaned forward and held it down. The water came almost halfway up the wire-grid. She continued to hold down the box, then finally pushed it with both hands. The box floated a little way into the river, bobbed and sank further. Sachiko got to her feet, and we both of us watched the box. It continued to float, then caught in the current and began moving more swiftly downstream (PVH 167–168).

Mariko is watching the scene and her face is “expressionless” (PVH 168). The shock she has suffered is even more severe as she was mortified to death by the war-trauma of witnessing a woman drowning her baby (PVH 74). The trauma behind Mariko’s state is revealed by hearing the story of “the other woman”, who killed her baby (PVH 74) by drowning it in the canal and then cutting her throat. Mariko follows the box down the river, which is, as it is repeated in the text for a second time, “dirty” (PVH 168). This “filthy” water is metaphorical in my understanding since in it babies and animals are brutally killed. This is consonant with which Brian Shaffer declares that Sachiko’s drowning of the

kittens is a “figurative murder of her daughter,”²¹⁷ Shaffer calls this a symbolic murder. Etsuko pursues Sachiko into the cottage and they converse about the reasons for leaving Japan. The mother is not concerned how her daughter will cope with the new life. She indifferently repeats that Mariko will manage well enough, as she has to (PVH 171). She also insists that “Japan is no place for a girl” (PVH 169). As it is very vividly described; the cottage filled with the metaphorical “pale light” and “Behind her the sky had become pale and faded” (PVH 169). In my interpretation this “pale” light connotes to the meaning of “uncertainty,” as it is “misty” and “blurred.” And indeed, Sachiko is fading away, her silhouette dissolves into the darkening sky. At this point in the narration, I put forward the idea that when Sachiko disappears from the narration Etsuko puts on her real character. In other words, I interpret Sachiko as Etsuko’s conscience, her double. As soon as Sachiko fades, the real Etsuko enters, which is shown by the famous and crafty change of pronouns. The key is hidden in a grammatical trick, the second person plural “you” meaning Sachiko, Mariko is altered to the first person plural “we” referring to Mariko and Etsuko:

“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” (PVH 173).

The insects are intolerable and there is a threatening tranquillity pending over the place. Etsuko’s tone changes from the, so far, craven and intimidated to an authoritative, even angry manner as she keeps asking Mariko (PVH 172). It is not farfetched to say that, probably, Etsuko is Sachiko and she is the one who plans to move to America/England with Frank/Sheringham and Mariko/Keiko. Personas are blurred into new characters, giving the Ishiguro-text a brand new angle: Sachiko’s past is Etsuko’s present and future. To make the situation more complex, the image of “rope” returns with equally terrifying effect for Mariko. Now Etsuko is holding a rope which the girl is very afraid of, echoing a previous episode. As Wai-chew Sim rightly observes, not only “this situation mirrors an earlier scene when Etsuko had also found Mariko after she ran off”²¹⁸ but also, the

²¹⁷ Matthew Beedham, *The Novels of Kazuo Ishiguro*, 21.

²¹⁸ Wai-chew Sim, *Kazuo Ishiguro* (New York, Routledge, 2010), 30.

“unexplained repetition adds an element of the macabre.”²¹⁹ To restate once more: the “rope” metaphor is introduced while searching for Mariko on the night of babysitting. The pregnant Etsuko is walking through “muddy” and damp grounds. She finds the girl under a willow tree and a serpent-like rope is twisted around her ankle “with a rustling noise as if a snake were sliding in the grass behind me” (PVH 83). Mariko is paralyzed by seeing the rope – echoing the one Keiko strangled herself with – this fright is emphasized by alarming repetitions in the narrative. The same narrative technique is exercised here. Mariko asks Etsuko about the rope twice and she gives her “suspicious” (PVH 173) looks. Etsuko plainly answers that it was caught around her sandal. Keiko’s rope is associated with Etsuko’s and the similarity gap between the two makes the tension almost unbearable. It seems as if Etsuko wanted to strangle Mariko, as the baby and the kittens were.

5.12 A moment in space – pages torn apart

The reconciliatory tone of this chapter clearly contrasts with the thriller-like one of the previous chapter. The pouring, English rain and the grey light markedly juxtapose the heat and the strong sunlight of the Nagasaki-story. Keiko’s spirit is lingering over the place in which mother and daughter are reconciled with the past. Niki is leaving for London, the narrator is planning to sell the house and her life goes on, even with the troubling awareness of her part in Keiko’s suicide. With an unexpected turn in the discourse she remembers, without Keiko’s name being mentioned: “I suppose Dad should have looked after her a bit more, shouldn’t he? He ignored her most of the time. It wasn’t fair really” (PVH 175). First the narrator defends her husband but admits her own responsibility: “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” (PVH 176). Niki objects and ensures that her mother did the right thing and, at least, made an effort to live a happier life. The change of atmosphere from the previous chapter’s thriller-like air to a reconciliatory tone in this episode is reflected in the description of the weather and “the sky seemed clearer than on previous mornings” (PVH 176). The pulse of life is represented by Niki. She continues her life in London leaving her widowed mother behind (PVH 183). Etsuko pretends not to mind Niki’s leaving her but the subtle tone and the simple syntax provoked the idea of the opposite. This is the technique Ishiguro uses throughout the novel: ideas are presented but

²¹⁹ Wai-chew Sim, *Kazuo Ishiguro*, 30.

the tone by which they are told is more than doubtful. After getting a phone call, Niki is off to London and asks for a souvenir or some memory from Nagasaki, her friend is planning to write a poem on the narrator's enigmatic life. The mother finds only one old calendar with a photo of Nagasaki harbour. Metaphorically all but the last pages were torn away (PVH 179). As she hands it on to Niki with self-accusing words, once proving that Keiko is equivalent to Mariko (PVH 182), the narrator is trapped between past and present, or rather suspended in time, being stuck in Nagasaki to that day when her pages fall apart.

5.13 Conclusion

First Etsuko's narration served the purpose of "keeping silence about something" but as the narrative evolved around past and present scenes, denials and distortions, by the end of the narration silence was partly broken. From this perspective Etsuko's self reflective narration succeeded in being a "talking cure." Her incomprehension, which is also a very marked characteristic feature for other Ishiguro protagonists, I argue that her self-deception, omissions in the narration and the reluctance of admittance all drove her into a mental state in which she divided the split-characters of her life into two, allowing herself space from what she had done and the reality she distances herself from. It is further claimed, that by employing the separation of realities, the inner and outer, a useful distinction was offered. When Sachiko disappeared from the narration, Etsuko put on her real character. As soon as Sachiko faded, the real Etsuko entered. The key is hidden in a grammatical trick, this was when the second person plural "you" meaning Sachiko and Mariko was altered to the first person plural "we" referring to Mariko and Etsuko. Etsuko's private myth was centred on the failed attempt to disguise her responsibility in a "miscarried" motherhood by trivializing facts. The recurring dimensions of her narration are embodied in a narrative lexicon and syntax: trances, abysses, nothingness, emptiness, and the sense of waste. Ishiguro's artistic craft is once demonstrated in the Matsuda – Ogata-san theme by using a very intriguing shift to a narrated dialogue from the vantage point of a third-person narrator, on pages 144–149. Stating that "Shiego Matsuda tied the buckle of his briefcase, then glancing about him" is clearly not a narrative that is recorded by Etsuko. I propose that the narrator distanced herself from the scene when her beloved father-in-law was dishonoured. I also advance the idea that when Sachiko disappears from the narration, Etsuko puts on her character. I interpret Sachiko as Etsuko's conscience, her double.

Shifting from a dissonant to a consonant narrative mode, Sachiko fades and the narrating self, Etsuko enters, which offers proof by using the, famous and crafty, blur of pronouns. I similarly hold that Etsuko's trapped narrative is about in-between-ness between past and present, between Japan and England, between war and peace, motherhood and womanhood. I point out that with the help of the reframed narrative technique the narrator can keep the narrative at bay.

6. THE IRRESISTIBLE URGE FOR DEFLECTION – *AN ARTIST OF THE FLOATING WORLD (1986)*

In Ishiguro's second novel the main character, Ono is a retired artist and his life is on an "auction of prestige" (AFW 10). The frame of narration is linear: the plot is set out around four major chapters, starts in October 1948 and ends in June 1950. The treatment of narrative time is framed, as in the case of *A Pale View of Hills* (1982) or *The Remains of the Day* (1989), it stretches from the present to the recent past and back to 1918 as well as to the 1920's and the 1930's, i.e. the plot is a-chronological. The majority of narrative time is spent in the present with recollections of the past. There are more references to the past but strictly from the perspective of the present. Ono's perspective is more frozen than Etsuko's and Stevens'. In many respects the character of Ono and Stevens are alterations of each other. The narrator is a master of blurring facts yet, I reckon that, unlike Stevens Ono does not lack empathetic observations. His reports even back up Tortoise, and old friend, but how much can we believe Ono and what he is implying, as he is calling these events retrospectively? Is Ono the lantern that lights the place or, on the contrary, does he hide in the shadows? In the plot, it is implied that he betrayed his former student, Kuroda and sent him to prison under torture. He also betrayed Sasaki in artistic terms. Old Morisan mirrors Ono and the artist's only success in moral terms is the apology to the composer, Naguchi. In family terms, Ono also succeeds in betrothing his daughter to the son of Dr Saito, in spite of his involvement in militarist agenda prior to and during the war.

If we posit the question whether in the examined novels the narrators maintain an objective distance from what is being narrated or whether they intrude to offer their own views, we can conclude that there is no objective distance from what is being narrated. Nonetheless, as the narration proceeds, at particularly important and disturbing junctions, narrators of Ishiguro question if the characters' memory is reliable. As well as in Etsuko's and Stevens', Ono's narration is also marked with narrative irony. As for focalization, the narrator's angle does not change. Ono, like Stevens, not only addresses the reader but reminds himself that he has drifted from the subject, however Etsuko's narration lacks these types of narrative techniques. Ono's seemingly self-assured lines are marked by hidden allusions, evasions and distortion of facts. Brian W. Shaffer writes that the first person narrator, Ono "conveniently forgets certain things and remembers (or

misremembers) others in an attempt to allay his feelings of guilt.”²²⁰ While Ono tailors his guilt into controversial memories, the first person narrator of *The Remains of the Day*, Stevens “clothes his repression” in various metaphoric and literal disguises. According to Shaffer, and I concur with the monographer, Stevens uses repression (in Freudian terms) both as “self-deception and self-censorship.”²²¹ As for the novel proper, Shaffer offers his conclusion that “the novel associates Stevens’ deceptive self-deception with that of England’s at large”²²² and ponders over the issues of “professionalism”²²³ and “repression,”²²⁴ whereas Ono painting his self-portrait is giving false information about his “reputation.”

The tone of the text alternates from melancholic reminiscences (e.g. about the pleasure district and of the Migi-Hidari bar, “our pleasure district” (AFW 24)) with realistically recorded memories (a visit to Matsuda, domestic scenes with his daughters). As the narrator observes with some degree of sentiment and self-praise, similar to Stevens’: “I had played my own small part in the Migi Hidari’s coming to so dwarf its competitors, and in recognition of this, our group had been provided with a table in one corner for our sole use” (AFW 24), the concept of “reputation” will be central for the narrator to build up his private and public myth. Going back to the question of the narrative situation, I argue that the present episodes are realistic, yet past scenes are not “cinematic” settings as in the case of the Darlington Hall-episodes in *The Remains of the Day* or the surrealistic scenes of the Sachiko-meta-story in *A Pale View of Hills*. Rather the past is depicted by involving senses, i.e. colours and smells describe scenes and places. The narration of the characters’ consciousness is executed via self-narrated monologues and self-narrated dialogues, formed strictly from the point of view of the narrator. In the following arguments, I will demonstrate the way readers are participating in the process of revealing and concealing and how a new story is formed.

Similarly as in the case of *The Remains of the Day*, the main themes are centred on the notions of “connection,” “position” and “reputation.” The floating prose of Ishiguro reflects the restless and buoyant nature of the main protagonist’s troubled conscience. What I find exceptionally interesting in the prose of *An Artist of the Floating World* is the overwhelming effort the narrator is taking in avoiding countenance with his past. In private

²²⁰ Brian W. Shaffer, *Understanding Kazuo Ishiguro* (Columbia, University of South Carolina Press, 1998), 44.

²²¹ Brian W. Shaffer, *Understanding Kazuo Ishiguro*, 68.

²²² Brian W. Shaffer, *Understanding Kazuo Ishiguro*, 88.

²²³ Brian W. Shaffer, *Understanding Kazuo Ishiguro*, 89.

²²⁴ Brian W. Shaffer, *Understanding Kazuo Ishiguro*, 89.

life terms, Ono is a patriarchal father who has little communion with his daughters, yet more with his grandson, Ichiro (AFW 28–34). His wife was a victim of a bombing, his only son died in action. These facts are carefully hidden in the narration. The three share glances, or sit in “uncomfortable smiles” (AFW 38) or are just “sitting in silence reading their magazines” (AFW 39). Ono cannot find a bond of communication with his youngest daughter Noriko who thinks her retired father “just mopes about the house like he always does now” (AFW 39). Only the older child, Setsuko respects him and enables Ono to be at least virtually present in his family. As Ono cannot “capture the fragile lantern light of the pleasure world” (AFW 174), he tries his best to get closer to the bounds that seem to be the only genuine substance in his floating world. He has to come to terms with his betrayal of true artistic principles.

More importantly, apart from what in *An Artist of the Floating World*, Ishiguro’s concept of art is inspected in his fourth novel, *The Unconsoled* (1995) and in his latest composition of stories, *Nocturnes* (2009). In *An Artist of the Floating World* the central character and narrator, Ono, as Michael Wood interestingly observes, is a Japanese artist “who doesn’t know how much he should or can regret his pre-war patriotism.”²²⁵ In my interpretation, Ono not only knows but also regrets his servitude or else the narration would not be mapped by denials and circumlocutions. According to the first person narration, his painting career starts in employment with the Takeda firm in making mass-produced goods, then later he is engaged, with the rise of militarism in the early 1920’s, producing propagandist pieces of art. Basically, throughout his profession, I believe, Ono is just creating counterfeit crafts. Notably and probably, his true art and genuine intentions were destroyed by his own father who brutally burnt his works to prevent him from being a lousy artist. Sasaki was also a destructive character as well as Mori-san. Could we imply that only true art is castigated and persecuted, and only counterfeit and servile qualities succeed? What it means to be an artist and how art is valued are the major aesthetic questions Ishiguro elaborates, re-evaluates and gives weight to in this novel. As Ono is not an exceptional personality, but simply mediocre, both as a human and as an artist, he “floats” with the tide. His “floating world” represents his inability to persevere and resist bigger moral or aesthetic storms. Ono is nostalgic about the “pleasure district” he spent his youth in, these melancholies embroider the Ishiguro-prose in an economic, refined and understated elegance.

²²⁵ Michael Wood, *Children of Silence: on Contemporary Fiction* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1998), 176.

6.1 An act of suspension – Bridging past and present

The first narrative part of the novel will start by a description of a neighbourhood, it is set in October 1948 where Masuji Ono, the first person narrator uses a “house” metaphor, as is also characteristic in *A Pale View of Hills* and *The Remains of the Day*. Here, Ono’s house and there, Darlington Hall is the psychoanalytically interpreted “castle” of the protagonists representing their place in society. By situating himself, in the opening lines he recapitulates who he really is, i.e. a wealthy man owning a respectable house which stood out from all others nearby (AFW 7), we will comprehend instantly how Ono, the narrator would like to perceive himself. The “Bridge of Hesitation” next to his house, I advance, is not a metaphor for Ono’s indecisiveness to confess, or to hide his shame, but a spatial gap, a suspension according to Ondek Laurence’s model. It can be taken as a metaphor for in-between-ness, a notion so powerful in *A Pale View of Hills*. Passing a “bridge,” like a “corridor” suggests that one is neither “here” nor “there,” neither present, nor absent, neither influential, nor potential, an Everyman on no man’s land, like the main characters analysed in this dissertation. Another central metaphor, the “house” is introduced by a description of Ono’s. This house with “an imposing air” (AFW 7) was the propriety of Akira Sugismura, a once respected and influential man, just as Lord Darlington was. Sometime in the early thirties the renowned artist, Ono was privileged to buy the house from Sugismura which at that time was an “auction of prestige” (AFW 9–10) but as we will see, in the narrative present it is regarded as a shame.

The tone Ono is using, immediately exhibited in the opening lines of *An Artist of the Floating World*, is analogous to Stevens’. Their prose is circuitous with silences “recorded” in both time and space. Their inner conflicts of private and public life, their constant floating between initiation vs. termination, braveness vs. cowardice, denial vs. acceptance, pretension vs. honesty, integrity vs. incompleteness, accomplishment and frustration, achievement and failure, consummation and insatiability, awareness and insensitivity, linking the prose of the two first person narrators. The following extract illustrates their pompous, self-centred and mockingly serious tone, a self-narrated monologue: “I can still recall the deep satisfaction I felt when I learnt that Sugismura – after the most thorough investigation – had deemed me the most worthy of the house they so prized” (AFW 10). Though the house suffered great damage after the surrender of Japan, Ono is giving a long description of the home, with special importance to the

corridor, which is also a crucial metaphor for both Miss Kenton and Stevens in *The Remains of the Day*:

The corridor was, in any case, one of the most appealing features of the house; in the afternoon, its entire length would be crossed by the lights and shades of the foliage outside, so that one felt one was walking through a garden tunnel (AFW 11).

Structurally speaking the “corridor” can be seen as a degree of spatial silence, a crevice in space. As the old days are clearly described by contrasts of “how glorious it was” (AFW 12) and of the damage with “large gaps in the ceiling” (AFW 12), here again is a good example for a psychoanalytical gap and as a degree of spatial silence. Pondering over the damage the blast caused in the delicate veranda and in the east wing, the narrator has the chance to introduce the topic of his elder daughter, Setsuko’s visit, this first dialogue gives a snapshot of new characters, Noriko and Setsuko. Noriko, the unmarried daughter via a self-narrated dialogue is complaining whilst Setsuko is uncomfortable. Noriko portrays her father as a tyrant, she claims: “There’s no need to be afraid of him any more” (AFW 13) contrasting the information of the statement saying that “he is more domesticated” (AFW 13) today. Communication within the family is uneasy. Only Ichiro, Setsuko’s son has a way with his grandfather. While Setsuko is shy and retiring, Noriko is headstrong. The first gap revealed is introduced by the following statements of Setsuko: “I would suppose what happened last year greatly upset Noriko” (AFW 17) and “Such things are a terrible blow to a woman” (AFW 17). On Noriko’s engagement brake up, Ono abruptly stops Setsuko and reveals in the next self-narrated sentence: “True, their withdrawal at the last moment was most unexpected” (AFW 18) and fails to admit his share in the shame.

On the contrary, the narrator uses negation and he is blurring facts saying 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” (AFW 18–19). As Stevens’, Ono’s narration is also perfect in blurring facts which can be attributed to the concept of consonant self-narration. Ono delivers a short plea about the broken engagement and pretends not to be interested in his own status in society, yet, highlights his importance in assisting his protégées gain jobs back in the good old days (AFW 19). The way in which the narrator recollects certain meta-stories of his splendid past in helping his student, Shintaro find a good job, clearly mirrors Stevens’:

“This visit – I must admit – left me with a certain feeling of achievement” (AFW 21). The narrator is overwhelmed by the extent of his importance and unhappy about the “cynicism and bitterness of our day” (AFW 21).

Scrutinizing Ono’s exaggerated importance further, more textual verifications are hidden in the text. About Shintaro, his old pupil the narrator is quick to state that he was not contaminated by the “current cynicism” (AFW 23) and “he has remained somehow unscathed by things” (AFW 23), leading Ono to enjoy his company more and more over the recent years. In my reading it implies that Ono wanted to have things stay the same and the ideal tutee for him is an obedient, “unscathed” and artistically non-challenging pupil such as Shintaro. He is the only one in the narrative present still calling Ono “Teacher”, or in Japanese “Sensei,” a great privilege Ono is ready to accept. Basically, only the seemingly half-witted Shintaro insists that Ono is still a “Sensei.” Nonetheless the narrator during his consonant self-narration gives more evidence of his unquestionable reputation by introducing more characters from the past, e.g. Kuroda. The talented student, Ono recalls, once praised his master with the following words, upon which, paraphrasing Stevens’ words, Sensei “experienced a warm glow of satisfaction” (AFW 25): “His reputation will become all the greater, and in years to come, our proudest honour will be to tell others that we were once the pupils of Masuji Ono” (AFW 25). Ono is so self-assured that his narration will not reveal the secret about Kuroda. The narrator is so confident that he quotes Kuroda.

Another deception is concealed as we scrutinize the Migi-Hidari characters portrayed in the narrative present. Contrasting Ono’s description, psychoanalytically speaking, I propose that, these characters are only vague shadows of the past. Shadows, according to Ondek Laurence’s model, are visual repetitions of silences in space. In the narrative present Shintaro is pictured as naïve and passive, instead of high art he only produces sketches of fire engines. Mrs Kawakami, the bar owner, who can be compared to the noodle-shop owner, Mrs Fujiwara of *A Pale View of Hills*, is greatly affected by the years of war that aged her, “broken and sagged” (AFW 22). I have already spoken about how sensual Ono’s narration is, further textual evidence is in the description of the vivid Migi-Hidari bar of the 1920’s, 1930’s with sensational images such as “clicking of numerous sandals” (AFW 25) and “laughter of people” (AFW 25) as opposed to the “rubble” (AFW 26) and “war damage” (AFW 26) of the present example. The pleasure district, and in many ways Ono’s past, has turned into the “midst of graveyard” (AFW 26) commemorating the dawn of an era, the pleasure district is in ruins, its “columns against

the sky” (AFW 28) are “like pyres at some abandoned funeral” (AFW 28). By confessing that he is “digressing” (AFW 28) a switching technique I see used here, the consonant self-narration sliding into a dissonant one in which the discourse focuses on the previous and the current self, the narrator moves to the present and visualises a homely genre-picture. Here Ichiro’s planning to go to see American movies and playing cowboy at home, marking an ironic or – from another perspective – tragic, surrender to the winners of World War II. As Chu-chueh Cheng rightly observes: “Concurrent with Ono’s narration is the era of Allied Occupation (1945–1952) during which the individualistic heroism that Popeye and the Lone Ranger epitomise supersedes the social harmony that Japanese samurais symbolise.”²²⁶

This relatively peaceful and comfortable domestic scene strongly juxtaposes the next episode, in which the narrator recalls the way his father bullied him while his mother tried to protect the young artist-to-be. Ono as a young boy was a talented artist, information revealed only from the perspective of the first person narrator, yet in the tradition of his family he should have followed his father’s footsteps, to be a businessman. The father is portrayed as authoritative and headstrong, even threatening when saying: “While you’re fetching her, Masuji, gather together the rest of your paintings and bring them to me” (AFW 44). This authoritative figure is depicted as ignorant and tyrannical, both wife and son were ordered to sit in silence (AFW 44) in front of him.

Talking about family dynamism, a central concept in Ishiguro’s novels, here the mother-figure lacks any detailed description, whereas in *The Remains of the Day* the “mother” is entirely absent, in *A Pale View of Hills* “fathers” are ghost-like figures. When the narrator remembers the mother the, already highlighted, “corridor” image is used in connection with her blurred figure (AFW 44). However, when protection is needed, to prevent his son’s paintings from being burnt by the enraged father, the mother’s so far obedient tone changes into ferocity. During their conversation about Ono’s future the father recalls a wandering priest foretelling that: “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” (AFW 45). The question might arise, if an artist can be a truly great creator with such weak moral qualities. In the Ishiguro oeuvre, I point out, art is crucial, but in *A Pale View of Hills* the only “artefact” mentioned is a torn

²²⁶ Chu-chueh Cheng, *Chic Clichés: The Reinvention of Myths and Stereotypes in Kazuo Ishiguro’s Novels*. 1–39. http://www.brunel.ac.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0005/185864/ET53ChengEd2.pdf. (accessed 30 October 2014)

calendar, whereas in *The Remains of the Day* only “bantering” is related to fine art, so much so that Stevens calls it an “art” (RD 258). In *The Unconsoled*, the main character is Ryder, a pianist, the whole narration revolves around the plot of a musical concert, whereas artistic presentations by the children for the annual fair in *Never Let Me Go* are essential for their whole existence and for the survival of the clones. Only in *When We Were Orphans* I could not find central importance in the concept of “art,” given if Christopher Banks’ expertise as a detective cannot be interpreted as such. Retrospectively we could think about this hint and wonder if Ono’s father was eventually right about his son’s weak character after all. In the text I find the following line of thought convincing enough. “Weakness” is reiterated a few pages later. The father claims that “It can’t be denied, there is a weakness running through our son’s character. There’s little in the way of malice in him. But unceasingly, we’ve had to combat his laziness, his dislike of useful work, his weak will” (AFW 46). Continuing their parental argument, while Ono himself is present, the father accuses artists of being weak-willed and “depraved” (AFW 46) and thinks his son is not a strong enough character to be a great painter.

Silence marks the uneasiness of the above dialogue. Mother and son are sitting in silence in front of the father. This silence can be interpreted as defensive (mother and son) and authoritative (father). The old Ono remembers these silences with growing anxiety when he recalls his heated dialogue with his mother (AFW 48). Talking of further dynamics, the dialogue between husband and wife (AFW 44–48) and between mother and son are the only lengthy ones in the examined Ishiguro novels. In *A Pale View of Hills* Etsuko and Jiro converse very briefly, maybe with as few as five or seven sentences. In *The Remains of the Day* the dialogue between Stevens and his father is slightly altered from Etsuko’s or Ono’s parental discourse as it takes place between a grown-up son and an aging father. The problematic drive of generations is also an important phenomenon in the Ishiguro-texts. In the previous chapter of the dissertation I have already elaborated on the topic of family in connection with *A Pale View of Hills*. The next chapter on *The Remains of the Day* will also explore the notion of generation, i.e. how old Stevens Senior is subordinated to his son.

Silences, accusations and blame characterize the communication between young and old. Only in the relationship of Ichiro, the grandson and Ono are described as lacking rivalry and uneasiness. In *An Artist of the Floating World* the generations are explored via three perspectives. One is in the narrative past between young Ono and his father, as well as Mori-san and Ono’s young ambitious circle. The perspective is the fight between

Kuroda and Setsuko's husband, Suichi with the elderly Ono and Matsuda in the narrative present, and then, thirdly, the comfort and trust between Setsuko and Ichiro. When the narrator switches to the present from the troubled "father scene" of the past, it is described how Noriko's planned marriage was cancelled. Setsuko hints that there were some misunderstandings (AFW 49) about Ono's past that the narrator refuses to accept (AFW 50). Upon recalling his meeting with the prospective family in-law of Miyake, the tension between generations enlarges into the tension between ideologies.

For the war-trauma present in Ono's family, Ishiguro uses self-narrated dialogues again to contrast the first person singular narrator's self-narrated monologues. An informative gap is revealed by the heated dialogues (not by Ono's own narration, that Kenji, Ono's son died in the war). The son-in-law, Suichi was fighting in the war and has a bad conscience about his brother-in-law, Kenji, who was killed in Manchuria. Setsuko tries to negotiate between her outraged, bitter husband and her father by saying that Suichi is "angry about the waste", the torment his generation has suffered during the war and about "those who sent the likes of Kenji out there" (AFW 58). Ono calls these heroes "brave" which further enrages Suichi: "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" (AFW 58). Suichi's accusation is further explicated from Ono's perspective, portraying the young man as being "with no trace of the rigid manners he had had before going to war" (AFW 59). It is not said clearly in the text but we can assume that Ono was never in active combat; his donation was to prepare the way to war with propaganda. Exploring the trauma of war further, Ishiguro artistically contrasts the story of young veteran Suichi to the pseudo-victim of the Hirayama boy.

Plot-wise Ishiguro uses journeys, to or from, to make narrators shift back from past to present. I go on to suggest, when the narrator faces troublesome memories he continues his line of thought by lamenting on his city and its districts. The motoring trip in the case of the first person narrator of *The Remains of the Day*, is akin to the tram-journey(s) within the city for Etsuko and Ono. The same logic is used by Stevens, nonetheless, as he ponders over the great English landscape. Etsuko's description of sceneries involves disturbing images in the narrative past, i.e. the Nagasaki story or the Sachiko tale, yet in the narrative present these descriptions are more subtle and reverberate resentment. In *An Artist of the Floating World* a good example for Ono's shift is in the mentioning of the Arakawa district. Ono's and Stevens' recollections are both pompous, as I have already pointed out

and Ono's words are echoed in Stevens' prose²²⁷ when talking about their involvement in world matters regarding the Migi-Hidari or Darlington-Hall:

I believe I have already mentioned the fact that I played a small part in the Migi-Hidari's coming into existence. Of course, not being a man of wealth, there was little I could do financially. But by that time my reputation in this city had grown to a certain extent; as I recall, I was not yet serving on the arts committee of the State Department, but I had many personal links there and was already being consulted frequently on matters of policy. So then, my petition to the authorities on Yamagata's behalf was not without weight (AFW 63).

Similarly Stevens, when attempting to make false impressions about his personae while meeting part-time personnel, a previous batman, now chauffeur uses a pompous tone; the narrator uses sentence inversions,²²⁸ pathetic self-quoted monologues which are in sharp contrast to the previous chapter's realistically recorded self-narrated monologues. Ono's pseudo-world, the Migi-Hidari should be the place of the patriotic spirit in Japan, the narrator thought to commence with an intriguing line of thought, namely that enjoyment is not incompatible with the New Spirit of Japan (AFW 64). Ono's self-praise over his involvement in creating a pleasure district is followed by an instant flash from the past. The narrator recalls his arrival in the city in 1913 and the early days at the Takeda business. The Takeda-episode enables the narrator to give snapshots of new characters. Tortoise is a co-student with the firm who provides a contrast with the once able, fervent and committed young Ono. The thin, timid man with spectacles is bullied by students but Ono – as he recalls he might not remember well (AFW 68) – steps into the fight and rescues (AFW 68) Tortoise. The narrator remembers how Tortoise praised his “courage and integrity” (AFW 70–71). By this time the young artist has decided to move on and work for the more prosperous firm of Moriyama. Ono encourages the hesitant Tortoise to follow him, but the thin man refuses on grounds of loyalty. Young Ono on the contrary, says that loyalty has to be earned:

²²⁷ “These were – I recollect it clearly – his lordship's actual words and so it is not simply my fantasy that the state of the silver had made a small, but significant contribution towards the easing of relations between Lord Halifax and Herr Ribbentrop that evening.” In Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*. (London: Faber, 1999), 135–136.

²²⁸ E.g. “Having enjoyed a good motoring trip (...)” In Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*, 123 or “On hearing of my problem,” In Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*, 124.

“But of course, Ono-san, I don’t imply *you* are in any way disloyal. Circumstances are different in your case. I wouldn’t presume...” He faded off into embarrassed giggling. Then with an effort, he pulled himself together to ask: “Are you serious about leaving Master Takeda, Ono-san?”

“In my opinion,” I said, “Master Takeda doesn’t deserve the loyalty of the likes of you and me. Loyalty has to be earned. There’s too much made of loyalty. All too often men talk of loyalty and follow blindly. I for one have no wish to lead my life like that” (AFW 72).

With a sudden shift to the 1930’s the narrator links the “loyalty” issue to one of Kuroda’s, his pupil’s. This is the first scene in which Ono is portrayed as a renowned artist and respected teacher. Kuroda was already mentioned in the beginning of the text (AFW 25) when the narrator amplified his own importance. The former pupil is a central character in the story. It seems at this point of the narration that he was betrayed by his former Sensei, Ono. I venture that the narrator’s frequent quoting of young Kuroda covers up his responsibility in the young artist’s treachery. In other words, with this psychological “repetition compulsion”, that can be interpreted via the Ondek Laurence-model, is a silence related to the auditory including repetition, The narrator tries to convince the critical reader and himself that Kuroda had a high respect for Ono as he recalls that “a circle of faces” (AFW 73) was waiting for replies and he gave a programmed speech, being encouraged by his students who wanted to “raise above the sway of things” (AFW 73). Kuroda and the pupils were young and naive whereas Ono was already a Sensei and an experienced man. The more the narrator is trying to persuade himself that he has no responsibility in the younger generations’ sufferings, the more suspicious the information becomes.

From my perspective the Migi-Hidari is condemned to be forgotten with all the patriotic spirit it once represented. It is now a doomed place, a visual repetition of the old one, i.e. it is a silence in space, which ghosts of killed soldiers and civilians haunt along with the half-dead Kuroda, in spite of Shintaro’s awkward vision that as a war-lord Ono “must gather his men again” (AFW 76). Kuroda might be one of these men. He is described as a “former protégée” by Ono and it is not yet revealed what has happened to the once talented young artist. In so much as the narrator is hastily declaring that it was not his intention to dwell on his pupil (AFW 78). Kuroda’s “hollow face” (AFW 78) and his broken umbrella insinuate that the man himself is broken and wretched; looking “expressionlessly” towards Ono and then walks off, yet a disturbing feeling lingers over

the meeting. This inertia²²⁹ is a way of presenting body silence. Meeting with the father of Noriko's new prospective husband, Saito brings up the topic of Kuroda, which unnerves the narrator. The critical reader does not know what is so frightening about Kuroda, but recalling the doomed meeting with Miyake one can associate danger. When Ono brings up the subject with his daughters, over supper, the women are startled. In family dynamism recorded from the perspective of self-narrated dialogues, Noriko is harsh while Setsuko is the one seeking compromise. Glances here are "listening spaces,"²³⁰ and degrees of auditory silence:

"Incidentally, we met Dr Saito on the tram. He was travelling up to see someone."

When I said this, my two daughters both stopped eating and looked at me with surprise.

"But we didn't talk about anything significant," I said, with a small laugh. "Really. We just exchanged pleasantries, that's all."

My daughters seemed unconvinced, but they began to eat again. Noriko glanced over to her elder sister, then Setsuko said: "Dr Saito was well?"

"He appeared to be."

We ate on quietly for a while. Perhaps Ichiro began to talk about the movie again. In any case, it was a little later in the meal that I said:

"An odd thing. It turns out Dr Saito met a former pupil of mine. Kuroda, in fact. It seems Kuroda's taking up a post at the new college."

I looked up from my bowl and saw my daughters had again stopped eating. It was clear they had just exchanged glances, and it was one of those instances last month when I got a distinct impression they had at some point been discussing certain things about me (AFW 83).

The above extract demonstrates two things. On the one side Ono is an observant character, on the other side in this scene, Setsuko is uncharacteristic in being proactive and she inquires about the Saito-meeting, as Noriko – we assume – is too worried and proud to ask herself. The younger sister increasingly gets irritated and annoys her father. These verbal attacks are blunted by Setsuko, who often volunteers to break the silences (AFW 85). I

²²⁹ Patricia Oudek Laurence, *The Reading of Silence: Virginia Woolf in the English Tradition* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1993). 112.

²³⁰ Patricia Oudek Laurence, *The Reading of Silence: Virginia Woolf in the English Tradition*, 59.

have already pointed out that when the narrator faces troublesome memories, he continues his line of thought by lamenting on his city and its districts. In the narrative structure the narrator again uses this deceiving tool of evasion, as I interpret this drifting from sensitive topics to more neutral ones as in the description of places. Evasion is examined from the perspective of Charles Sarvan, who claims that in the memoir of Masuji Ono can be read as a Lacanian text in terms of “indeterminacy”²³¹ and free “floating.”²³² As he tartly states, Ono is “caught in the web of a symbolic order in which privileged but “contaminated” signifiers float free, consequently Masuji Ono is alienated not only from the world but from himself.”²³³ Ono is trapped between signifier and signified and he moves from “metaphoric identification to metonymic deferment.”²³⁴ Sarvan argues that in Ono’s narrative, his “symbolic stage” is characterized by “isolation, evasion and lack of clarity.”²³⁵ I concur with Sarvan about Ono’s alienation but I prefer to interpret it as him being stuck between realities. To clarify, in Lacanian terms he is a “lack,” in Iserian terms he hides in the “gaps” or as Iser often uses the term, “blanks.”

The once glorious Arakawa district, however, mirrors Ono’s life. In other words, it acts as a metaphor for lost glory. Ono’s tram trip has a destination: the narrator introduces Matsuda via a self-narrated dialogue from the past when he was still with the Takeda-firm. Matsuda approached him to persuade the young artist to work for the Okada-Shigen Society and so win critical acclaim (AFW 87). In the self-narrated monologue of the present, Ono insists he had nothing to do (AFW 88) with the society, again his denials are very telling. Contrasting the “dandyish dressed” (AFW 87) man with the one whose body “has become broken down by ill-health, his once handsome, arrogant face has become distorted by a lower jaw that seems no longer able to align itself with the upper” (AFW 89) demonstrates Ishiguro’s artistic ability to blur information in a few lines while giving a quick sketch of the destruction time punishes humans with. From their perturbed conversation it becomes obvious that Ono wants to ask a favour of Matsuda. The closest Ono gets in paraphrasing his favour is the following: “You see, the present negotiations

²³¹ Charles Sarvan, “Floating Signifiers and *An Artist of the Floating World*,” *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, (1997), 32 (1), 93.

²³² Charles Sarvan, “Floating Signifiers and *An Artist of the Floating World*,” 93.

²³³ Charles Sarvan, “Floating Signifiers and *An Artist of the Floating World*,” 93.

²³⁴ Charles Sarvan, “Floating Signifiers and *An Artist of the Floating World*,” 93. The Lacanian symbolic is a universal structure involving the function of language, and that of the signifier. The symbolic or the symbolic order is essentially latent. The concept of signifier/signified came from the French linguist Ferdinand de Saussure and was introduced into psychoanalysis by Jacques Lacan in the 1950’s. The bar that separates *S* (signifier) from *s* (signified) marks the relationship between the subject and the language. The subject is subordinated to signifiers, i. e. to language, without always having access to the meaning that they bound.

²³⁵ Charles Sarvan, “Floating Signifiers and *An Artist of the Floating World*,” 99.

may be quite delicate in nature. I'd be extremely beholden to you if you'd answer any queries which may come your way with delicacy" (AFW 94). Matsuda is startled but comforts Ono in that they have to be proud of certain things, but his plea is blunt as he does not define what things there are to be proud of (AFW 94). One taboo is discussed, but Matsuda also brings up the topic of Kuroda. Ono goes pale as the narrated question from Matsuda is understood. The old man urges Ono to seek Kuroda out "painful as it may be" (AFW 95) Ono accepts Matsuda's advice and while heading back home, in a self-deceiving manner (which is exceptionally familiar to Stevens'), he assures himself and the implied reader: "I felt a certain comfort in recalling Matsuda's assurance that he would have 'only the best of things to report from the past'. Of course, I could have been reasonably confident of this without my having gone to visit him (AFW 96).

The narrative chapter started with the image of a bridge, a suspension according to Ondek Laurence's model. From consonant to dissonant narrative modes the narrating self and the experiencing self were alternating, giving a certain dynamic perspective for Ono's story.

6.2 Interruptions and intimidating silences

Trying to reconcile with his past, the *miai* gives a great opportunity for the narrator to reposition himself in the public eye in chapter "April 1949". As a symbolic union, the *miai* in the plot acts as an excuse for the narrator to compose his revolutionary moment of self-confession. Ono faces three trials. As part of his trial to come to terms with his past, Ono recalls a disturbing memory related to Shintaro, his former student and only companion in the *Migi-Hidari*, and again in the even more disturbing scene with young Enchi, Kuroda's protégée. The biggest ordeal is the *miai* during which Ono openly confesses his sinful contribution to war traumas, a coming-out returned with perplexity on behalf of the Saito's. I argue that as a mediocre narrator, he cannot commit large sins, just minor ones, or the way he was trying to face his vices is not adequate in the public eye; Ono's plea is almost satirical. Chu-cheh Cheng similarly observes that while "readers anticipate that Ono will take a similarly drastic action, the narrative progresses with a humorous twist. The

ceremonial death is deprived of its heroic connotation because Ono can never muster enough courage to terminate his life. Instead, he acknowledges his guilt.”²³⁶

While his conversation with Mrs Kawakami in a deserted bar functions as saying farewell to the old days and to his hesitation on whether to dwell on the past or advance to the future, Ono has no choice as Noriko’s future is at stake. I again highlight that the “bridge” represents a link between present and past, a suspension in action. From here the narrator has a good vantage point on his life, i.e. from one direction he can look back on the pleasure district as a symbolic part of his past and from the other side he can spot the construction work of the new “apartment blocks for future employees” (AFW 99). Further symbolic meanings can be attained from the “bridge.” As it is wooden it is fragile and temporary, yet the passenger can move back and forth by walking on it. The possessive noun bestowed to “bridge” is “hesitation”, mirroring the tentative and faltering nature of one’s facing reality. In my opinion Ono emphasises the significance of “hesitation” by denying himself the option to progress (AFW 99). “Bridge” can be interpreted as a threshold of the past and as a link to the future. In my interpretation “pier” in *The Remains of the Day* very much functions in the same way. Both are man-made constructions to allow transportation. Metaphorically speaking recalling memory is also a way of constructing past and present in order to understand one’s course of life. Consequently, constructing a symbolic bridge or pier symbolizes the effort of the narrators to comprehend, digest, and come to terms with their past.

Lamenting on the fading beauty of the pleasure district, Ono retrospectively recalls a disturbing memory related to Shintaro, his former student and only source of company in the Migi-Hidari. Shintaro is now seeking work. He openly asks his former teacher to write an assuring letter of reference to the committee stating that Shintaro had no links with his fascist agenda. Their dialogue floats between veneration, admiration, formal gratitude, intimidation, accusation and denial. Ono insists that he cannot recall the episode when Shintaro had disagreements with him in the past, though the latter insists that he resisted Ono’s suggestions concerning his employment. Shintaro tries his best to corner Ono via his shrewd circumlocutions but the narrator in the self-narrated dialogues states openly:

²³⁶ Chu-chueh Cheng, *Chic Clichés: The Reinvention of Myths and Stereotypes in Kazuo Ishiguro’s Novels*. 1–39. http://www.brunel.ac.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0005/185864/ET53ChengEd2.pdf. (accessed 30 October 2014)

“You wish me to write a letter to your committee,” I said eventually, “disassociating you from my influence. This is what your request amounts to.”

“Nothing of the sort, Sensei. You misunderstand. I am as proud as ever to be associated with your name. It’s simply that over the matter of the China poster campaign, if the committee could just be reassured...” (AFW 103)

The next few lines will mark Ishiguro’s craft to record emotions via actions. Shown here by the way Ono turns to the window and gazes through “a tiny gap” (AFW 103) it is interpreted as a degree of spatial silence, and is obviously portraying that his emotions are frozen: “I gazed through the gap, across the veranda and out into the garden. The snow was falling in slow drifting flakes (AFW 103). At this point in the narration Ono stops being defensive, for example as he was with Suichi. He openly asks Shintaro why he would not face the past. Very rightly Ono observes that there was much credit for Shintaro in working with him (AFW 103–104). With growing self-confidence Shintaro retorts that it is easy for Ono as he is retired while he is in the “midst” (AFW 104) of his career. However, as opposed to Stevens, who never really admits that he was unfair either on his father or Miss Kenton, Ono divulges that he was deliberately hard and “unsympathetic” (AFW 104) on his former student because of the disturbing events related to Noriko’s *miai*. Retrospectively the narrator recalls that Noriko’s *miai* in November was arranged to take place in the Kasuga Park Hotel which had a “vulgar air” (AFW 105) about it. Noriko, as Ono recounts, was so tense that she was constantly pestering her father. Ono, out of a bad conscience, allows the frustrated woman to continue with her “insinuations” (AFW 105). Ono as a father in these self-narrated monologues is portrayed as a caring, considerate and compassionate man. He even readily admits that “a franker approach” (AFW 106) to the prospected *miai* would ease Noriko, yet Ono was not ready to give account of his failed attempts to seek help from his old relations of his past. Noriko cannot stop blaming him that he is not considerate enough to help the smooth negotiation by paying conciliatory visits to Kuroda, for example. The narrator clearly comprehends complex emotions, he even understands every movement his daughter makes, he is ready to go and call on Kuroda (AFW 108). This stopover has fatal consequences on Ono’s pride. So far, still not a lot was said about Kuroda. Yet, the following lines decipher crucial facts: “Kuroda, it seemed, had not fared at all badly since his release at the end of the war. Such are the ways of this world that his years in prison gave him strong credentials, and certain groups had made a point of welcoming him and seeing to his needs” (AFW 108). It is assumed that

Ono had some role in his captivity, as we will see from the dialogue between Enchi, Kuroda's protégée and Ono. Upon Ono's renouncing his name, the young man freezes into silence and shows Ono to the door. The narrator describes that he was not ready to give way and subtly accuses the young man that he was merely too young to understand the course of events that resulted in Kuroda's imprisonment. The "fresh faced" (AFW 109) young man loses self control and is all the more bewildered, so much so that he reveals more information on the brutality Kuroda had to suffer:

"The full details, Mr Ono," he said, and his voice had a strange kind of composure. "It is clearly you who are ignorant of the full details. Or else how would you dare come here like this? For instance, sir, I take it you never knew about Mr Kuroda's shoulder? He was in great pain, but the warders conveniently forgot to report the injury and it was not attended to until the end of the war. But of course, they remembered it well enough whenever they decided to give him another beating. Traitor. That's what they called him. Traitor. Every minute of every day. But now we all know who the real traitors were" (AFW 113).

Ono has the nerve to lace his shoes (AFW 113) while the young man, Enchi is addressing the above accusations to him. The narrator only records his disturbance after leaving the apartment. He denies that he was greatly disturbed by the young man's words, yet when he describes his unease he promptly wrote an apologetic letter to Kuroda including asking the favour to not mention his part in Kuroda's suffering, the refusal that came a few days later "cast something of a shadow" (AFW 114) over Ono as the *miai* was approaching very soon. Noriko still accuses him of being incompetent to help her: "That's Father's trouble. He's too proud to prepare properly for these things" (AFW 115).

Plot-wise the significant *miai* is described in ten pages and in much detail from Ono's perspective. This shift to the dissonant mode in which a discursive self evaluates and analyses past actions provokes the idea that whenever a, difficult or, demanding situation occurs the narration shifts from consonant to dissonant mode. The Saitos' frame of mind is portrayed via their young son, Mitsuo, who casts angry looks on Ono. The narrator sharply detects that the young man is an "indicator" (AFW 117) of the family's own disgust: "Mitsuo's attitude was not in fact any different from that of the rest of his family – it was simply that he was not as skilled in disguising it" (AFW 117). The Saitos challenge him, though Taro, the empathic, prospective husband steps in when Ono is

provoked to his limit. Old Saito addresses the following lines on purpose: “But the underlying spirit – that people feel the need to express their views openly and strongly – now that’s a healthy thing, don’t you think so, Mr Ono?” The atmosphere of his ordeal is heavy, despite his excessive drinking and the prospected couple’s growing sympathy, Ono is distressed to the point of abruptly making a confession which the company accepts with confusion and perplexity:

“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 own people. I admit this. You see, Dr Saito, I admit this quite readily” (AFW 123).

Noriko is so astonished by Ono’s unexpected coming out that she forgets her embarrassment and “her customary flippancy came back” for the first time in the evening, as the narrator recalls, she gives a natural and smart statement. Crucial to the understanding of the novel, the narrator gives an account of his moral self confession:

Having said this, I must say I find it hard to understand how any man who values his self-respect would wish for long to avoid responsibility for his past deeds; 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 (AFW 124–125).

As in Japanese culture the ultimate penitence for disloyalties is hara-kiri, or another means of suicide, as it is highlighted twice in the text and both these episodes are connected to the two suitors of Noriko. On the one hand Miyake’s President committed suicide which the embittered young man approved of. On the other hand the composer, Naguschi was mentioned in connection with suicide and Taro’s approach was very much the same as Miyake’s. The younger generation has an apparent principle about how the old should conduct their moral affairs, even they do not consider Ono’s role in world affairs that apparent, as we will see at the end of the novel. By all means, Ono does not have any intention to sacrifice himself, I endeavour this is one reason he cannot rise above the

mediocre. “Mediocre” also means that somebody is trapped between the exceptional and the ordinary. This spatial gap, a degree of silence, shapes the self perception of Ishiguro’s narrators Ono and Stevens. As Ono will describe later: “Let me assure you, Setsuko, I wouldn’t for a moment consider the sort of action Naguchi took. But then I am not too proud to see that I too was a man of some influence, who used that influence towards a disastrous end” (AFW 192). Like Stevens who managed to confess at the end of *The Remains of the Day* that he did not even commit his own mistakes, Ono has to face the same humiliation at the end of the *miai*: he was not influential enough to be blamed for Kuroda’s imprisonment.

In summary, the *miai* is described in ten pages and in much detail from Ono’s perspective. This shift to the dissonant mode in which a discursive self evaluates past actions provokes the idea that whenever a difficult or demanding situation occurs, the narration shifts from consonant to dissonant mode. In terms of degrees of silence, “mediocre” furthermore means that somebody is trapped between the exceptional and the ordinary. This spatial gap is an uneasy in-between-ness and shapes the self-perception of Ishiguro’s narrators Ono and Stevens.

6.3 A web of pro-vocative silences

Questions of treachery, responsibility and surrender remain alternating schemes within the narrative in “November 1949.” Examining the gaps in the text, the critical reader is invited to interpret them as they map the arena between the narrator’s statements and those of other characters in the story. Crucial to understanding the novel, survival instincts, such as in the likes of Tortoise, will be juxtaposed with Ono’s pure cowardice. As the narrator explains to Taro, his future son-in-law that the “Tortoises of this world” (AFW 159) are not to be admired as “their plodding steadiness and ability to survive, one suspects their lack of frankness, their capacity for treachery” (AFW 159), I interpret his fierce opposition to Tortoise as self-defence as the latter can be regarded as Ono’s negative double. While the ethos to “rise above the mediocre” (AFW 159) serves as Ono’s moral *ars poetica*, it will be demonstrated how his new aesthetics develop into propaganda after Mori-san, just as Ono’s father actions displayed when he took and supposedly destroyed (AFW 181) the painting of Ono. After the young artist joined Matsuda’s military agenda, he remembers how Kuroda was captured and when Setsuko confronts him, claiming that her father’s art

“had hardly (anything) to do with these larger matters of which we are speaking” (AFW 193), the question arises concerning what responsibility the narrator has in Kuroda’s condemnation.

Pondering over the past and the dawn of his career in a consonant mode, the majority of the narrative is spent on, collecting past reminiscences on artistic principles. To present himself in front of the reader as an influential artist Ono quotes Dr Saito at the beginning and at the end of this part of the novel: “A great honour to have an artist of your stature in our neighbourhood, Mr Ono” (AFW 131 and 194). Dr Saito’s words are framing the chapter and so we will put them under scrutiny. The narrator is rather puzzled if he remembers this meeting well:

But my memory of that first meeting, and of Dr Saito recognising 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 (AFW 132).

All the more his insistence is gaining suspicion as the concluding lines of the chapter echo this meeting and the assurance that Setsuko was mistaken:

I have, for instance, the most vivid recollection of that sunny day some sixteen years ago when Dr Saito first addressed me as I stood adjusting the fence outside my new house. “A great honour to have an artist of your stature in our neighbourhood,” he had said, recognising my name on the gatepost. I remember that meeting quite clearly, and there can be no doubt that Setsuko is mistaken (AFW 194).

It is important to note that even though “echo” here is not an auditory degree of silence, it is in the narrative, a repetition, i.e. can be interpreted as a gap between said and unsaid. What is the self-perception with which the narrating self is to present to the reader? In his early career Ono was an obedient student and an intriguing episode reflects his hard character. Once he backed Tortoise, but we know this from his own record only. The first account of Ono’s treachery is recalled when he remembers Sasaki, formally a leading pupil with Mori-san, he was consequently, apt to challenge the master. Sasaki was regarded as a

“traitor” due to his revenge, Mori-san fired him and Sasaki was hoping for support from Ono. The latter refused his aid by staying silent (AFW 143). However, this silence was equally devastating in the Shintaro episode when the old pupil asked old Ono to “disassociate” himself from his previous career. This refusal can be interpreted as a means of loyalty towards Mori-san (AFW 109). With a detailed description about the “floating world” (AFW 144) Mori-san was depicting and expecting his student to follow the aesthetics of beauty, of water lanterns and the murmur of people in a nostalgic pre-war era: “We lived throughout those years almost entirely in accordance with his values and lifestyle, and this entailed spending much time exploring the city’s “floating world” – the night-time world of pleasure, entertainment and drink which formed the backdrop for all our paintings (AFW 145). Exploring the notion of “floating world”, so central to the novel that its title incorporates it, the alluring yet fragile character of this beauty is further described, yet its validity is questioned (AFW 150). In young Ono’s self-portrayal the narrator is ready to give account of Ono’s bravery when the protégée confronts Mori-san after drifting to a short domestic episode in the narrative present (AFW 151–155). This episode, in which Ono is conversing with Ichiro about a recently deceased war-composer, Naguchi, will have special importance as it will be slightly altered but reiterated at the end of this discussion of the narrative. Upon visiting the newly-married Taro and Noriko, Ono engages into a lengthy conversation about the “Tortoises” (AFW 159) of the world, i.e. those who are ready to sacrifice their ethical inner convictions merely for their survival instincts. The complexity of the Tortoise-Naguchi-Ono triangle, a geometric profile with a large spatial gap between its angles, lies in the fact that Ono associates his artistic career with the likes of Naguchi, whose “songs came to have enormous prevalence at every level of the war effort” (AFW 192). I interpret his fierce opposition to Tortoise as self-defence since Tortoise can be regarded as Ono’s negative double. The passive resistance of their strategy, their avoidance of danger and weakness, to be unable to rise above the mediocre, in their characters are all common features they possess and yet they disgust Ono: “I suppose, in the end, one despises their unwillingness to take chances in the name of ambition or for the sake of a principle they claim to believe in” (AFW 159). While this “rise above the mediocre” (AFW 159) serves as Ono’s moral *ars poetica*, the following lines demonstrate his new aesthetics adopted after leaving Mori-san:

“Tell me, Tortoise, don’t you have ambitions to one day produce paintings of genuine importance? I don’t mean simply work that we may admire and praise

amongst ourselves here at the villa. I refer to work of real importance. Work that will be a significant contribution to the people of our nation. It's to this end, Tortoise, I talk of the need for a new approach" (AFW 163).

The above quotation is from the narrative past, the narrator has drifted back to the Taro-dialogue in which Ono, is accused of being a "traitor" by Tortoise. Ironically, later Kuroda will be persecuted by Ono, allegedly for being a traitor. Ono recalls how he found new inspiration in reality, however brutal, after abandoning the decadent beauty of the "floating world". Though while working for Mori-san he thought that an artist's concern is "to capture the beauty whenever he finds it" (AFW 172). The new shift in his aesthetics is bound to his engagement in Matsuda's new universe and the Okada-Shingen Society. As Ono recalls, his inspiration came from the random visit to the deprived district, Nishizuru. As Lucifer was taking Jesus to the heights of Jerusalem to tempt him, Matsuda, who "was dressed that day in an elegant white summer jacket and, as ever, wore his hat slanted down stylishly" (AFW 165) took young Ono across a bridge to the top of a hill. Truly in a Lucifer tone, Matsuda entices the artist to take a closer look at the "shanty" (AFW 166) district which grows like bad fungus (AFW 166). Crossing the demolished neighbourhood the two men spot small boys "with scowls on their faces and although I saw nothing, something in their manner told me they were torturing some animal" (AFW 168) he later used this as a central image to his painting, "Complacency." This contrast to the "fragile" (AFW 174) beauty of the floating world made high impact on Ono's art and he decided to break up with Mori-san, which resulted in his paintings being expropriated by his former master, just like they were burnt by his father. Matsuda in this self-narrated dialogue is convincing but dangerously didactic. Eventually Ono joins Matsuda's military agenda and the Okada-Shingen Society to "produce work of genuine value" (AFW 172).

This encounter with Matsuda made Ono, as he recalls, break up with Mori-san and decide to turn his back on his past aesthetics of beauty. As he puts it: "I cannot remain forever an artist of the floating world" (AFW 180). Immediately after this twist in the story another crucial fact is reported. Ono remembers how he visited Kuroda, a year before the breakout of the war, and how he had to face the fact that Kuroda was taken for questioning (AFW 170). Stepping into Kuroda's house he is struck by the smell of paintings, the "unpatriotic trash" (AFW 183) as the policemen witness them being burned, again art is subject to destruction. As Ono remembers and Setsuko is going to confront him, she claims that Ono's art "had hardly to do with these larger matters of which we are speaking" (AFW

193), the question arises: what responsibility he bears related to Kuroda's condemnation. The sinister atmosphere of the Kuroda episode is clearly contrasted to the pleasant domestic scene in which the newlyweds welcome their new family. An irritating morning conversation with the always obedient Setsuko comes back to his mind. I interpret their conversation crucial to the narrative. To put it simply, Ono brings up the topic of Dr Saito and himself being well connected by reputation (AFW 189), a topic he started his narration of this narrative chapter with. Setsuko, who is a compromise-seeker, is going to argue in ten premises that Ono is totally wrong about himself. Firstly they disagree that they were very worried about Noriko's marriage prospects. Ono insists/claims that those "precautionary steps" that Setsuko was warning him of were unnecessary. To the greatest astonishment of the critical reader Setsuko denies three times in one page that she has given such advice. Quoting Noriko's letter, Setsuko is apt to have Ono recall that Noriko and all the Saitos were very "puzzled" (AFW 191) and embarrassed about his coming out at the *miai*. The narrator, his embarrassment marked by his awkward laughter (in the like of Stevens), insists that his daughter remembers incorrectly (AFW 191). In spite of his argument, the daughter reports how Suichi also expressed his "bewilderment" (AFW 191) over Ono's confession. Taro was equally puzzled about it. She refers to Taro's and Ono's conversation with relation to Mr Naguchi, the composer who had recently committed suicide and expressed the family's concern that Ono would draw a "comparison" (AFW 191) with the composer's career and his own work. This gives a fatal blow to Ono on the realisation of how unimportant his involvement was in state affairs.

Basically perspectives are blurred and this is one reason for the misunderstanding and pitfalls of communication between the two characters (AFW 192–193). Setsuko insists that she does not understand the references to the marriage of Noriko and she further undermines Ono's persuasion about himself being an influential artist, claiming that Dr Saito did not know Ono well before actually meeting at the *miai*. So it seems Dr Saito's imagined praise about Ono, in the narrator's line of thought is obvious. He openly denies: "You're quite wrong, Setsuko," I said with a laugh. "Dr Saito and I have known about each other for many years. We often used to stop in the street and exchange news about the art world" (AFW 193). His daughter's final and tenth premise is that "it is nevertheless important to stress that no one has ever considered Father's past (as) something to view with recrimination. One hopes then that Father will cease to think of himself in terms of men like that unfortunate composer" (AFW 193). Following this confrontational dialogue the narrator asserts that Setsuko "was in error over much of what she asserted" (AFW 194)

and – by completing the narrative frame of this chapter – insists that, in fact, he did know Dr Saito well and he can recall vividly that summer day sixteen years earlier when they met.

This dialogue was an example how the narrator’s carefully crafted private and public myths collated with reality. Yet, I argue, Setsuko’s words are recoded from the vantage point of the narrator via the self-narrated monologue. Consequently, it remains a mystery whether these words were ever uttered or if the whole narrative of Ono is merely a self-addressed, one-to-one, self defence plea formed by provocative “silences” and informative “gaps.”

6.4 Visual repetition – Doubles and shadows found

In the last lines of Ono’s narration, “June 1950” Ono’s struggle to find some dignity in his life is backed by Matsuda’s comforting remarks, yet the critical reader ponders over the sincerity of Ono’s words. His last lines are conciliatory, but I venture that by exaggerating his own triumph, Ono juxtaposes it with the likes of Shintaro and Tortoise, who, according to him, never experienced such success: “For their kind do not know what it is to risk everything in the endeavour to rise above the mediocre” (AFW 204). While reiterating his core of self-conceit: “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” (AFW 204), I find Ono’s use of the general pronoun “one” intriguing as he, as opposed to Stevens’, hardly uses it. By replacing “we” with “one,” in my interpretation, the narrator enlarges and expands his statement in a weak effort to make it universal, i.e., more acceptable and convincing.

Recalling his last visit to Matsuda, the narrator again passes through the “Bridge of Hesitation.” The two old men exchange pleasantries and converse openly, Ono’s most straightforward dialogues are with Matsuda. Therefore, I propose the idea that Matsuda is Ono’s double too, the soft and weak Tortoise was one, the strong, influential Matsuda the other. The condensation of the two is indicated in the text by the narrator’s agreement with Matsuda’s sharp remark claiming that Ono “wanted so badly to make a grand contribution” (AFW 199) to life and admits that unfortunately he had “a narrow artist’s perspective” (AFW 199). Matsuda thinks now that they should not blame themselves though, he phrases

the key sentence about Ono's so greatly feared mediocrity: "We at least acted on what we believed and did our utmost. 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" (AFW 200).

Ono does not respond to these key lines, but the smell in the air instantly reminds him of burning. Here I refer to young Ono's paintings being burned by his father and later Kuroda's paintings being burned by the police. Moreover, he refers to his deceased wife, Michiko and the bombing in which she was killed, information gaps that were thus far not revealed. While Matsuda mercilessly portrays themselves as people with "marginal" (AFW 201) contributions, Ono observes that in spite of Matsuda's imponderable present, the old friend is not disillusioned (AFW 202). Nonetheless, the narrator, in my view, is not ready to share Matsuda's clear and undeceiving point. For the rest of the narration Ono will argue, as Stevens does at the beginning and in the middle of *The Remains of the Day* (but not at the end), that he has had satisfactory and triumphant moments in his life that contributed to great things. Exaggerating his own triumph, he juxtaposes it with the like of Shintaro and Tortoise, who, according to the narrator, never experienced such success: "For their kind do not know what it is to risk everything in the endeavour to rise above the mediocre" (AFW 204) while reiterating his core of self-conceit: "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" (AFW 204). Once more crossing the "Bridge of Hesitation," the narrator amuses himself with the scenery that has so hastily changed in the pleasure district and the Migi-Hidari to a wide "concrete road with heavy trucks" (AFW 204). He also glimpses the young, optimistic employees "on the doorsteps of that glass-fronted building, laughing together in the sunshine. With no trace of his work of art left to be proud of, with certain nostalgia Ono, the artist says good-bye to the aesthetics of beauty with water lanterns and murmurs of people. While he is facing the empty days in the large house of Akira Sigismura, a house he was once so proud of, he is sitting down on a bench, just like Stevens will do at the end of *The Remains of the Day*, observing the activities around him, he provokes his last self-deceiving optimism on a splendid future:

[...] all those people gathered beneath the lamps, laughing a little more boisterously perhaps than those young men yesterday, but with much the same good heartedness, 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 (AFW 206).

His pathos, as Chu-cheh Cheng points out, is “deflated, for neither his own family nor the Saito family ever consider him an artist of notable influence, much less one capable of advocating militarism.”²³⁷ In talking about failed attempts, “silences” and “gaps” help the narrator to disguise this humiliating fact. As a contrast to silence, Noriko’s verbal attacks on her father are blunted by Setsuko who often volunteers to break silences (AFW 85). The diplomatic approach Setsuko represents as opposed to Noriko’s straightforward attacks is often highlighted, e.g. when she suggests the idea that Ono should visit Kuroda and “certain acquaintances from the past” (AFW 85) soon, much sooner than the marriage negotiation detectives. Ono pretends not to understand and decides to silence the topic. Yet, interpreting their heated dialogue on pages 189–194, the critical reader would be amused if these lines have ever been said. Plot-wise this is the only gap I have found to be unrevealed; if we accept Setsuko’s words that she has never warned her father to take “precautionary steps” (AFW 191) to prevent “unnecessary misunderstandings” (AFW 85) in order to make Noriko an appropriate bride in the eyes of the Saito’s. I am not convinced about Ono’s involvement in Kuroda’s betrayal. The only evidence in the text that Ono and Kuroda have exchanged letters is known from the narrator. The self-narrated dialogues between Enchi and Ono is also only reported from the narrator’s perspective. Deduced from the above argument, I am unable to concur with Wai-chew Sim that “the lack of clarity about who said what, as well as Ono’s manner of being simultaneously blameworthy (but less so), might be said to reference these about-faces and disavowals.”²³⁸

²³⁷ Chu-chueh Cheng, *Chic Clichés: The Reinvention of Myths and Stereotypes in Kazuo Ishiguro’s Novels*. 1–39. http://www.brunel.ac.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0005/185864/ET53ChengEd2.pdf. (accessed 30 October 2014)

²³⁸ Wai-chew Sim, *Kazuo Ishiguro* (New York, Routledge, 2010), 43.

6.5 Conclusion

Discrepancies mark the narrative of Ono. The characters have different understandings of reality and Ono finds it difficult to change perspectives, even though he is a painter. It is ironic how Ono first fears prosecution at the *miai*, afraid of ruining his daughter's marriage prospects again. The Miyakes, as we will get to know from their conversation, were not involved in the military agenda of pre-war Japan, while Ono was. In the narrative present and after the surrender of Japan, Ono and the likes of him are stigmatized and Noriko has to suffer from his father's past. Miyake and Ono have a dynamic dialogue about an acquaintance who took on the responsibility to commit suicide, a hint Miyake makes that Ono should also take the similar action for his involvement in the war. While Ono does not feel he has to apologize, although Miyake, Noriko's suitor, on moral grounds, accuses Ono for being a coward: "Indeed, sir, it is a pity. Sometimes I think there are many who should be giving their lives in apology, who are too coward to face up to their responsibilities" (AFW 56). Ono cleverly retorts saying, exactly what Stevens was trying to explain in his Smith-scene (RD 205–206) in *The Remains of the Day*, that those who were fighting loyally for Imperial Japan could not be regarded as war criminals (AFW 56). From the start of the novel the reader assumes from Ono's words that the painter was an iconic artist. By the end of the narration a shrivelled and perplexed narrator concludes his self-assuring lines on peaceful and honourable days to come. Small heroes have small fates.

If we concern ourselves with the characteristics of the narrator, we can assume that what Ono, as well as the main protagonist and narrator of *The Remains of the Day*, Stevens, cannot face is the fact of being only mediocre. Probably it is not farfetched to say that all his life Ono wanted to rise above average. But he is not more than average and it is a trap for him. Therefore via the narration Ono paints a favourable self-portrait, a private and public myth constructed via a matrix of digressions.

7. A DESPERATE NEED FOR CONFESSION – *THE REMAINS OF THE DAY* (1989)

As a first-person narrator Stevens questions, maybe for the first time, as Wai-chew Sim puts it, “his lifelong adherence to a singular conception of duty, dignity and vocational propriety,”²³⁹ while the ageing butler is undertaking a motoring trip to the West Country of England, a metaphorically retrospective voyage to his past. In his memory, self-reflective silences, mutterings and oscillations mark the trip. The art of Ishiguro is shown in the way he weaves metaphorical, fictional and the meta-fictional in elegant ways. Ishiguro’s style is minimalist and consequently highly suggestive. I advance the idea that his psychological realism is a new form of depicting reality. By omitting, oscillating, denying and withholding facts, the writer leads the first person narrator to prepare a very cunning façade, within the matrix of the text, so creating tension between narrative and reader.²⁴⁰

As Mike Petry observes:

More than (in) his other three novels, it is again *The Remains of the Day* that strikes me as being – in terms of mode of narrative – located precisely on that (imaginary and in any case blurred) line of demarcation that separates a “realistic” mode of writing (one that would seem to aim at “aesthetic illusion,” i.e. a representation/imitation of an “extra-linguistic” reality), from a more playful, more or less purely self-conscious/self-reflexive, and thus it appears to be, a much less mimetic type of literature.²⁴¹

In her postcolonial and Lacanian interpretation Molly Westerman explores Stevens’ split subjectivity, claiming that Stevens’ symbolic structure is fixed; he cannot push himself beyond his stereotype of the English butler as a metonymy for Britain. In her reading the inconsistencies in the narrator’s language substantiates the butler as not an unreliable narrator:

²³⁹ Wai-chew Sim, *Kazuo Ishiguro: A Routledge Guide* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 44.

²⁴⁰ Zuzana Fonioková observes that first person narrators of Ishiguro do “not directly warn the narratee about the gaps in the narraton.” In: Fonioková, Zuzana. *Bending Facts Within and Beyond the Borders of Unreliable Narration in Selected Novels by Kazuo Ishiguro and Max Frisch*. (PhD Thesis), Masarykova univerzita Filozofická fakulta. Ústav slavistiky Literárníkomparatistika, 2009. http://is.muni.cz/th/39866/ff_d/?lang=en (accessed 12 October 2013)

²⁴¹ Mike Petry, “Narratives of Personal Pasts”: *Kazuo Ishiguro in the Context of Postmodern British Fiction*, <http://www.gradnet.de/papers/pomo99.papers/Petry99.htm> (accessed 15 February 2014)

The Remains of the Day uses the frustrations and limitations of Stevens' language as modes of representation, providing a dense account of its narrator's split subjectivity. They allow the novel to include precisely what its narrator does not know and cannot say.²⁴²

Westerman observes in this context that Stevens uses "language in a process of identifying his sense of lack and rushing to mask it from himself (...) and the narrative shows us this process."²⁴³ Quoting Lacan's *Agency of the Letter in the Unconscious or Reason since Freud* (1986), she argues that by the end of the narration the butler's fixation reaches a new objective, namely bantering. Stevens returns to his symbolic structure as he is unable to define himself from outside this structure, i.e. outside the house, even though his relationship with the new order, Mr Farraday is "as gap ridden"²⁴⁴, as it is with his late father.

In order to understand the complexity of Ishiguro's narrative discourse, I will refer to the psychoanalytic concepts of "double," "uncanny" and "desire." I will also touch upon the use of gender dynamism in the novel. However and in order to have a more satisfactory angle, I have introduced my own ideas of a coordinate system in which the rather complex names of chapters are explained. I see the Prologue as a separate chapter as Ishiguro does not allocate specific coordinates to it. My argument rests upon the idea of Ishiguro drawing a coordinate system giving fixed points in the narration with a special axis which will be revealed later in this argument. This system could be interpreted by three dimensions, to understand the plot, and in chapter four the implied reader requires a universal look at the matrix of public or private history by complex narrative flashbacks. Therefore I introduce two concepts, that of an "actual narrative present" and, a "pseudo narrative present." The first describes the very present of narration including the "Prologue" and chapter six "Day Four – Afternoon," which mark a linear structure. The latter describes the "travelogue" narration during the motoring trip (July 1956) stretching through "Day One – Evening" to "Day Three – Evening." These are the most hopeful chapters in the plot. Whereas the seventh, "Day Six – Evening" is narrated retrospectively, as is the "travelogue" chapters, with troublesome and painful meeting with Miss Kenton. I concur with James Phelan and

²⁴² Molly Westerman, "Is the Butler Home? Narrative and the Split Subject in *The Remains of the Day*," *Mosaic*, 37:3 (2004), 170.

²⁴³ Molly Westerman, "Is the Butler Home? Narrative and the Split Subject in *The Remains of the Day*," 169.

²⁴⁴ Molly Westerman, "Is the Butler Home? Narrative and the Split Subject in *The Remains of the Day*," 168.

Mary Patricia Martin,²⁴⁵ who discuss “the ethics of reading” providing various distinctions about the “unreliability” of the narrator. They claim that Stevens is “underreporting” and “underreading.” As Matthew Beedham explains their argument:

Underreporting would mean he is not admitting what he and the reader know to be true, an unreliability related to ethics. Underreading would mean he does not read what we do about his personal interest, not an unreliability of ethics or events but a previously unnoticed axis of knowledge and perception.²⁴⁶

Disagreeing with the above cited critics, I suggest that Stevens cannot admit his life-long adherence to pretence, as this is too painful for him. By “gaps” and “silences” the narration makes the narrator himself rework his own narration. By deflecting from injurious details from the past, by continuous shifting from the layers of narrative past to the narrative present and back again, Ishiguro establishes gaps between Stevens’ definitions and their illumination of the events. As Deborah Guth²⁴⁷ observes, the narration slips away from Stevens’ grasp. She characterizes two narrative plots: those of the dignity-related and the Miss Kenton-love affair. The plot on dignity has a latent level and a manifest one. The latter forms a base for insignificant details to come to light. The love-plot is shaped by the driving force of repression and repetition. Guth allocates mental failure to Stevens as he is unable to remember sufficiently, an argument I do not concur with. I would rather point out that by revealing and concealing crucial information is by which the narrator builds up his private and public history. I argue Stevens is unable to remember as it is too painful for him. His regret and pain are so overwhelming; he is blocked by trauma and cannot verbalize nor express his emotions. I interpret his shifts in narration as avoidances, as Margaret Scanlan²⁴⁸ reviews, and I therefore advance the idea that those chapters, or rather parts of the narration, with hope and prospect are narrated in “actual narrative presence”, whereas those giving the framework and recording episodes are in “pseudo narrative present” and those with the most painful memories are told in retrospect, following the logic of latent memories finding their way to the surface. The meeting of Miss Kenton on

²⁴⁵ James Phelan and Mary Patricia Martin, “The Lessons of ‘Weymouth’: Homodiegesis, Unreliability, Ethics and *The Remains of the Day*.” *Narratologies: New Perspectives on Narrative Analysis*. Ed. David Herman. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1999. 88–109.

²⁴⁶ Matthew Beedham, *The Novels of Kazuo Ishiguro* (New York: Palgrave, 2010), 56.

²⁴⁷ Deborah Guth, “Submerged Narratives in Kazuo Ishiguro’s *The Remains of the Day*,” *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 35:2 (1999), 126–137.

²⁴⁸ Margaret Scanlan, “Mistaken Identities: First-Person Narration in Kazuo Ishiguro,” *Journal of Narrative and Life History*. 2–3 (1993): 139–154.

Day Five is entirely missing from the narration. It is recorded later and in retrospect, bringing a disastrous end to both Miss Kenton's and Stevens' private lives. These narrative gaps mark the painfully concealed narrative I attribute to psychoanalytic interpretation of the text.

Continuing with the textual analysis, it is notable to state that in *The Remains of the Day* the narrator's angle is quite fixed, the structure of his narration is rather rigid having a frame of "actual narrative present" tense, and a "travelogue,"²⁴⁹ using Bo G. Ekelund's terms. Etsuko's narration, as we have seen, was less complex, yet the rigidity of the perspective applies there as well. Yet Stevens is more aware of the narrative situation, whereas Etsuko is pretending to recall memories randomly. The concept of addressing an implied reader is a difficult one. Stevens either addresses the reader to bear witness to his life, or reminds himself he has drifted from the subject, although the reader is provoked to follow his logic of narration only when the narrator wants to emphasize or over-explain something: "I hope you do not think me unduly vain" (RD 11) or "But let me say immediately" (RD 53) imply there is an audience whom Stevens is talking to. The interactivity played by the author keeps the implied reader active, encouraging him to read between the lines. So as to say, the author is hidden in the irony; the reader's task is to decode Stevens' text while the narrator is desperately trying to maintain the status quo of his life and "his story." The artistic craft of the novelist can be demonstrated with another narrative technique, by the interpretation of scenes from the narrator, the characters and the implied reader's point of view. The latter is again aided by the hidden irony played by Ishiguro through Stevens' self-assuring, sometimes hypocritical storytelling. One good example is when, at the beginning of the motoring trip, Stevens is trying to give reasons for his going on this errand recalling Miss Kenton's letter:

It is of course tragic that her marriage is now ending in failure. At this very moment, no doubt, she is pondering with regret decisions made in the far-off past that have now left her, deep in middle age, so alone and desolate. And it is easy to see how in such a frame of mind, the thought of returning to Darlington Hall would be a great comfort to her (RD 50).

²⁴⁹ Bo G. Ekelund, "Misrecognizing History: Complicitous Genres in Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day*," *The International Fiction Review*, 32 (1-2), 70-90.
<http://journals.hil.unb.ca/index.php/IFR/article/view/7801/8858> (accessed 15 Feb 2014)

At this point in time, the narrator seems to project his regrets and desires to the reader as if they were Miss Kenton's. I regard these dialogues as starting points for interpreting this on examination, on the one hand, in terms of relation to the narration and then in terms of their textual places. Miss Kenton's, Harry Smith's, Dr Carnegie's "relating" dialogues (as I would call them) are in most cases juxtaposing the information transmitted by Stevens' narration, or in the case of dialogues with Mr Farraday, fragments of information are elaborated or justified; referring here to Lord Darlington's dialogues with the narrator.

The author and his irony carefully play with the contradictions coming from the narrator's "actual narrative present" or "pseudo narrative present" or even from his recalled memories. I have found three other types of dialogue. One, may be part of the memory work (even Stevens claims these are the most unreliable) for instance Miss Kenton's, these are rather self-explanatory, they could be part of the "pseudo narrative present" and quite descriptive (dialogues conducted with Dr Carnegie, Harry Smith, to the first conference in March 1923) The third and, usually, closest to the "truth" due to the irony dissolving here (dialogue with the butler-counterpart on the pier of Weymouth) are set in the "actual narrative present."

We have seen that in playing with the narrator's text and the tension it creates within the text (juxtaposing dialogues) or with the textual place of the dialogues in relation to the narrator's text, the author manages to create cognitive and textual gaps that the implied readers should fill in. This textual and – I might justly call – psychological dynamism makes Ishiguro's texts enigmatic, detective story-like, rich and moving.

Now we will proceed further to discuss the language and words used by the first-person narrator and in the dialogues. The types of language – grammatical structure, terms, and syntax – Stevens and his depicted characters use or fail to use? We try to read the linguistic signs and the missing ones to get a real picture. Written in the form of a "*journal de voyage*"²⁵⁰ or rather as Bo G. Ekelund pointed out, a "travelogue" although he distinguishes four other genres: "political memoirs, country house romance (which, as we will see, is related to the detective genres), farce, and an essay on values",²⁵¹ the Ishiguro text describes six days of Stevens' life. His given name is never revealed, as is neither Etsuko's maiden nor married name in *A Pale View of Hills*. The novel is set in the 1950's

²⁵⁰ Wai-chew Sim, *Kazuo Ishiguro: A Routledge Guide* (New York, Routledge, 2010), 44. (Emphasis original.)

²⁵¹ Bo G. Ekelund, "Misrecognizing History: Complicitous Genres in Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day*," *The International Fiction Review*, 32 (1–2), 70–90.
<http://journals.hil.unb.ca/index.php/IFR/article/view/7801/8858> (accessed 15 Feb 2014)

with flashbacks to the 1920's and 1930's. Stevens had been working as a butler for decades, being the rare representative of an old fashioned profession even then, in 1956, the year the present tense narration starts. After the death of his long-term employer, Lord Darlington, he finds himself in the service of an American, Mr Farraday, who recently bought the stately home, Darlington Hall.

In the discussion below, a reading of the novel will be interpreted by the textual analysis of gaps and silences. I will concentrate on central ideas connected to structural gaps and silences. Bantering, dignity and loyalty will be observed from the perspective of the main character, first-person narrator Stevens and stock characters (e.g. the vagrant, Mr Cardinal, Dr Carlisle and the unknown man). I will argue that encounters are holding up a mirror to Stevens about who he really is, as well as central metaphors as “silhouette,” “back corridor,” “silver,” “armoury” and the playful usage of light and darkness will be further discussed. In the narrative, I will concentrate on what stock characters think about Stevens via examination of the dialogues. Psychoanalytically speaking, I advance the idea that Stevens might suffer from shell shock after World War One, being emotionally paralyzed and acting like an automaton. The fact that nothing about Stevens' past, before the 1920's, is revealed, this silence is either a silenced subtext, a deliberate denial or simply that the first person narrator does not find the recording of these years significant.

7.1 Stuck in a moment

The main protagonist, Stevens sets out, in the present tense, on a metaphorical expedition in “Prologue – July 1956.” Via first person singular narration he retrospectively remembers how he was planning the journey (RD 8–9). Stevens in the narrative present is planning to undertake a journey to the West of England to meet his former colleague, Miss Kenton. As he reports, he was hardly ever outside the walls of Darlington Hall, the mansion now in the possession of the American Mr Farraday. Before Mr Farraday's time it was the house of Lord Darlington's estate. After his present employer offers him to take leave “for as much as five or six days” (RD 3), the butler responds with genuine pride that he need not have to travel as he sees England's greatest people within the walls of Darlington Hall. Utilizing a remarkable degree of self-quoted monologue, a narrative device never used in *A Pale View of Hills* and frequently used in *An Artist of the Floating World*, the narrator Stevens starts his narration with an eloquent and yet stereotypical biographical phrase “As you might

expect” (RD 4), and continues to elaborate on the subject of how he plans to start his journey. He mentions Miss Kenton and her letter – the first in some seven years – as an excuse, explaining that “professional matters” (RD 5) preoccupy his mind as he has been responsible for some minor errors in carrying out his daily routine. Here he starts building his defence plea:

As so often occurs in these situations, I had become blind to the obvious – that is, until my pondering over the implications of Miss Kenton’s letter finally opened my eyes to the simple truth: that these small errors of recent months have derived from nothing more sinister than a faulty staff plan (RD 5).

It is fair to say that by giving opportunity to a marked suspension in the narrative, this opening introduction mirrors as well as juxtaposes the last premise and in many ways, confession of Stevens on page 255:

I have tried and tried, but whatever I do I find I am far from reaching the standards I once set myself. More and more errors are appearing in my work. Quite trivial in themselves – at least so far. But they’re of the sort I would never have made before, and I know what they signify. Goodness knows, I’ve tried and tried, but it’s no use. I’ve given what I had to give. I gave it all to Lord Darlington (RD 255).

In this narrative frame, prior to taking the six-day trip to the West of England, the protagonist arrives to the above conclusion and ponders on what to do with his remaining days. But before arriving at this conclusion he is off on his trip and this tour is going to be his crucible. At the end of his first person narration, he will explain how Lord Darlington had made his own mistakes:

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 (RD 256 Emphasis original).

Presenting a central theme of a “staff plan” (RD 5–10) and exploring this for four pages, it gives him an excuse to talk about Miss Kenton and to justify his journey to visit the former housekeeper. I put forward the idea that the “margin,”²⁵² mentioned three times on one page, can also be interpreted as spatial time related silence, a “gap,” though it is also a semantic one: “best staff plans are those which give clear margins of error to allow for those days when an employee is ill or for one reason or another below par” (RD 9). A margin is an empty place next to the main text, it is a gap between the text and the edge of the book. In my interpretation Stevens’ life metaphorically speaking has been spent on the margins, both sociologically and mentally. Elaborating the “margins” further, a few lines down the page, the narrator justifies that the errors he has been committing are due to overwork:

I fear, however, that in my anxiety to win the support of Mrs Clements and the girls, I did not perhaps assess quite as stringently my own limitations; and although my experience and customary caution in such matters prevented my giving myself more than I could actually carry out, I was perhaps negligent over this question of allowing myself a margin (RD 9).

Stevens is short numbered in his workforce, has only three people under his command when he starts thinking about a motoring trip after receiving Miss Kenton’s letter, the first letter in seven years. Financially Stevens seems to be very dependent; he does not have money for fuel and has no proper clothing (RD 11) or it could be that his employer is happy to support him financially: “Then there was the question of what sort of costume were appropriate on such a journey, and whether or not it was worth my while to invest in a new set of clothes” (RD 11). The question might arise in how it is that in the 1950s a middle-aged man should not have an appropriate set of “travelling clothes” (RD 11) for a trip of merely six days. Following the narration it becomes clear that Stevens does have a wardrobe but it dates back to the 1930’s. On the narrator’s account – which could be interpreted as a sad list of chattel, he has a set of clothes from 1931 or 1932 supplied to him by Sir Edward Blair and a “number of splendid suits, kindly passed on to me over the

²⁵² Interestingly, the notion of “margin” in Ishiguro’s art has been explored from a post-colonialist point of view by Vorda, A. and K. Herzinger in “Stuck on the Margins: an Interview with Kazuo Ishiguro” in *Face to Face: Interviews with Contemporary Novelists*, edited by Allan Vorda and Daniel Stern (Houston and Texas: Rice University Press, 1993), 1–16. One of the monographers of Ishiguro, Chu-chueh Cheng, titled his book *The Margin without Centre. Kazuo Ishiguro* (Bern and New York: Peter Lang), 2010.

years by Lord Darlington himself” (RD 11). In my interpretation the narrator’s obsession with the past finds its first argument in when he decides he is going to use a travel book from the 1930s, Mrs Jane Symons’s *The Wonders of England*. The narrator’s undisputed loyalty to his land is carefully contrasted by the writer, as Chu-cheh Cheng observes: “Comparable to *A Pale View of Hills* and *An Artist of the Floating World* that tease the Western misconceptions of Japan, *The Remains of the Day* derides Britain’s self-delusive superiority by juxtaposing its drastic decline to America’s post-war ascendance.”²⁵³ Presuming a cordial relationship with the reader or imagined audience, the narrator “heartily” (RD 11) recommends the volumes, claiming that the German bombs might not have altered the English countryside much to make Mrs Symons’s book obsolete. There is also another reason the narrator recommends these seven volumes of trip advisory, the author was a frequent visitor to Darlington Hall during the thirties. Reading from the Devon and Cornwall volumes whenever he had an “odd moment” (RD 11) the narrator introduces another key fact: after leaving Darlington Hall Miss Kenton spent her married life in Cornwall. Looking up those volumes again, Stevens’ growing excitement strengthens him to ask his employer for days off. He carefully chooses the appropriate moment, I find this information crucial in understanding his character. Stevens is frequently interpreted as stiff or in Barry Lewis’ words “impeccable,”²⁵⁴ emotionally dull, though I would advance the idea that if somebody can so carefully circle around his employer as described for leave of duty, finding “the most prudent moment” (RD 13), i.e. when his employer is in a bantering mood, this character does not lack empathy. On the contrary, he even finds himself trying to study the art of bantering that Mr Farraday is so fond of.

The notion of bantering, explored between pages 13–18, is a real crucible for the protagonist and is a threat to the clumsy, irrationally eloquent butler. To my best understanding bantering is not an obligation described in a butler’s job description. During the six pages Mr Farraday torments Stevens with his erroneously interpreted bantering. It results in Stevens’ embarrassment and in some ways, humiliation. This degrading effect occurred many times in Stevens’ career within the dynamism of servant and master.²⁵⁵ At the end of the novel the very last lines conclude with Stevens’ pondering over “bantering”

²⁵³ Chu-chueh Cheng, *Chic Clichés: the Reinvention of Myths and Stereotypes in Kazuo Ishiguro’s Novels*. 1–39. http://www.brunel.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/185864/ET53ChengEd2.pdf. (accessed 30 October 2014)

²⁵⁴ Barry Lewis, *Kazuo Ishiguro* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 74.

²⁵⁵ Moral crucibles e.g. the humiliation in *The Remains of the Day* by Mr Farraday, see page 15 or by Mr Spencer see pages 205–206 will be later explored in this chapter.

while concealing his abhorrence against these light hearted, humorous chit-chats so atypical of him (RD 258). He remains unsure how to respond to Mr Farraday's harsh and insensitive, sometimes sexual remarks which Stevens' employer claims to be bantering comments. Five times the narrator records his humiliation. One is the special "bantering" moment when the butler brings up the topic of travel but is embarrassed when accused by Mr Farraday about the trip's errand being a private one, to meet Miss Kenton (RD 13). The second is when he tries to deny these accusations but he is too petrified (RD 17). The third is a recollection by the narrator, in the very first days since Mr Farraday's arrival, he asks if a wife will accompany a certain guest:

"God help us if she does come," Mr Farraday replied. "Maybe you could keep her off our hands, Stevens. Maybe you could take her out to one of those stables around Mr Morgan's farm. Keep her entertained in all that hay. She may be just your type" (RD 15).

First Stevens is puzzled but does not respond. Later he records that "some residue of my bewilderment, not to say shock, remained detectable in my expression" (RD 15) and he decides "to smile in the correct manner" (RD 15) whenever he detects the mischievous tone in Mr Farraday's voice. On the fourth occasion he tries to make up his own bantering remarks but they are so awkward that Mr Farraday cannot understand them. The fifth crucible with bantering happens when his employer urges him "all the more to respond in a like-minded spirit" (RD 18) but naturally Stevens fails: "I have not been able to think of other such witticisms quickly enough" (RD 18).

As opposed to the forlorn present, Stevens recalls how the glorious days of Darlington Hall was meant to have "fellow professionals" (RD 18) and the "finest professionals in England talking late into the night" (RD 18). "Professionalism" as the next important narrative topic for Stevens is eloquently elaborated on the text recalling the superhero valet-butler Mr Graham, Stevens expects him to visit and hopes to discuss the bantering issue but to his disappointment Mr Graham (RD 20) was not in his master's service (as Sir James Chambers no longer had full time staff) Addressing the imagined audience the narrator asks permission to return to the original thread, the trip to the West Country. He decides to remind his master "to foot the bill for the gas" (RD 20).

In the discussion above we have explored major narrative concepts as “margins,” which I interpret as sociological and emotional “gaps,” the “letter” as the purpose of the trip as well as the only meta-text in the novel, the ominous shortage of staff and the “staff plan” as excuses to go and visit Miss Kenton. I have reiterated that Stevens does inhibit emotional sensitivity, “empathy” though it is restrained. Also the notion of “bantering” as a threatening but demanding device was elaborated on as well as nostalgic reminiscences to the good old days. In the above narrative part of the novel, “margins” had noticeable importance. In my interpretation Stevens’ life metaphorically speaking has been spent on the margins, sociologically, psychologically and mentally speaking, he is stuck between “silences” and “gaps.”

7.2 An empty castle

Crucial to the understanding of the novel, for twenty-four pages the narrator via self-narrated monologue ponders over the notion of “dignity” and “professionalism” in the first chapter “Day One – Evening in Salisbury.” The former is mentioned nineteen times. The protagonist is on an expedition in his masters’ elegant Ford automobile and presumably his master’s clothes, commenting on how difficult it was to leave Darlington Hall as it would stand empty for the first time since it was erected. Stevens is meticulously recording the first day even commenting on the first twenty minutes or so. The major thematic points of his narration are a surreal experience which he relates to a “castle” (RD 24), and an uncanny vagrant he encounters. In my interpretation the narrator grows uneasy as he is leaving the intimate surroundings of Darlington Hall, noting “a slight sense of alarm” (RD 24) as the surroundings grew strange around him (RD 24). As with the first-person narrators Etsuko and Ono, I interpret Stevens’ long descriptions of landscape and scenery as an excuse, or rather as a metaphor, in order to conceal his emotions. The reported scenery here, with small trees and thickets, can be reminiscent of the English landscape portrayed in *A Pale View of Hills*. During this afternoon he encounters a rover and he takes him for a “vagrant” (RD 25). I endeavour that this event in this context will be mirrored in the last pages of the novel with the encounter of a man on the pier. In this chapter the two strangers share some pleasantries; however, the narrator is alerted by the “vulgar laugh” (RD 25) the old man makes and also by his “bantering remark” (RD 26). His companion urges him to take the footpath and the protagonist is off on a metaphorical journey into the

wilderness. The narrator is lost (RD 24–25) and wonders through metaphorical scenery (RD 25–26), this is his first attempt to pretend (RD 27) that he is more than just a manservant. In an associative manner the narration revolves around the question of dignity via introducing another figure of the butler profession, Stevens' father (RD 33). In *The Remains of the Day* no mother figure is present. Ruth Parkin-Gounelas advanced the idea in her analysis on *The Remains of the Day* that not only women and sexuality, but mother figures are left out of the themes of the novel:

Who was and what became of Stevens' mother, for example? Why did Lord Darlington never marry? Here, we could say, is a classic example of the way masculinity can be seen to be inhabited by repressed femininity, a phenomenon which had received attention in recent feminist criticism.²⁵⁶

Nonetheless the critic spots “a couple of arresting moments when the “feminine” breaks through this arid, masculine setting.”²⁵⁷ She refers to Miss Kenton's sometimes brave, sometimes desperate sieges against Stevens' sanctum, his pantry, where the housekeeper faces her ultimate enemy, Stevens' awkward avoidance. For Freud, as Parkin-Gounelas explains, the father was the “primary object of desire”²⁵⁸ and “on introjection, stood as prototype of all subsequent authority figures.”²⁵⁹ In *The Remains of the Day* many models for introjected superego can be traced. Stevens' character not only involves “internalization of the imperative submission to the hierarchy of class”²⁶⁰ but other than with his father and social hierarchy he is also insubordinate to another super-ego, Lord Darlington. Pursuing this line of thought Parkin-Gounelas aptly states that in Freudian terms identification with the father involves a form of “desexualisation”²⁶¹ after which the erotic component has no further power to block destructive forces that are combined with it. Parkin-Gounelas reaches the conclusion, which I have found particularly thought provoking in my research, that Stevens does not *repress* his emotions by “the dictates of the superego”²⁶² but these dictates “have replaced”²⁶³ them.

²⁵⁶ Ruth Parkin-Gounelas, *Literature and Psychoanalysis. Intertextual Readings* (London, Palgrave, 2001), 40.

²⁵⁷ Ruth Parkin-Gounelas, *Literature and Psychoanalysis. Intertextual Readings*, 40.

²⁵⁸ Ruth Parkin-Gounelas, *Literature and Psychoanalysis. Intertextual Readings*, 37.

²⁵⁹ Ruth Parkin-Gounelas, *Literature and Psychoanalysis. Intertextual Readings*, 37.

²⁶⁰ Ruth Parkin-Gounelas, *Literature and Psychoanalysis. Intertextual Readings*, 39.

²⁶¹ Ruth Parkin-Gounelas, *Literature and Psychoanalysis. Intertextual Readings*, 40.

²⁶² Ruth Parkin-Gounelas, *Literature and Psychoanalysis. Intertextual Readings*, 41.

²⁶³ Ruth Parkin-Gounelas, *Literature and Psychoanalysis. Intertextual Readings*, 4. (Emphasis original.)

Being frozen in a class structure of pre-war Britain, Stevens' relationship with his own father, therefore is split into two: Stevens senior is a real one and Lord Darlington, the employer is a pseudo one. Stevens' filial intimacy is just as hidden or repressed as his love for Miss Kenton.²⁶⁴ Adam Parkes²⁶⁵ argues that Stevens senior encouraged his son sacrificing everything for his profession: "If Stevens hadn't told us that the under-butler was his father, we could be forgiven for thinking of their relationship as an exclusively professional affair."²⁶⁶ By contrast, I claim that the son-father relationship and its challenges are not only explained by Stevens' perspective, that is from the vantage point of the self-narrated monologues, but further described by the narrator who starts to structure the butler-mythology through three stories (RD 36–37, 39–41 and 41–43). Where the legendary story of the perfect butler, told by his father, is retold by the narrator in a witty, humorous tone. Old Stevens' physical appearance is described and the key issue of "duty" is explained on page 42. After recollecting memories from the past, with an associative mode the narrator returns to the notion of "dignity" (RD 44), claiming that in being a butler he is wearing his professionalism as armour. My interpretation is that Stevens' seemingly insensitive character is due to the fact, that he is wearing his existence as a perfect shell, and this can be interpreted as a spatial silence, as a gap. "Great butlers" (RD 44) says the narrator, "wear their professionalism as a decent gentleman will wear his suit (...) It is, as I say, a matter of 'dignity'" (RD 44). The butler-metaphor²⁶⁷ in my interpretation also represents a sociological gap: a butler is the highest ranking manservant and he is trapped between ordinary servants and the master. He embodies a break between the two classes; moreover, a butler is not part of the third class, the bourgeois. One could question if he or "we"²⁶⁸ even exist, as it is questioned by Stevens himself during the first pages:

Now naturally, like many of us, I have a reluctance to change too much of the old ways. But there is no virtue at all in clinging as some do to tradition merely for its own sake. In this age of electricity and modern heating systems, there is no need at all to employ the sorts of numbers necessary even a generation ago (RD 7–8).

²⁶⁴ The female counterpart is Miss Kenton, who is an orphan, notably just an aunt of her is mentioned briefly in the novel. Her own motherhood will give the final verdict not returning to Darlington Hall after hearing the news of a grandchild to be born.

²⁶⁵ Adam Parkes. *Kazuo Ishiguro's The Remains of the Day: A Reader's Guide* (London: Continuum, 2001), 49.

²⁶⁶ Adam Parkes, *Kazuo Ishiguro's The Remains of the Day: A Reader's Guide*, 48.

²⁶⁷ The "butler" metaphor is stretching through pages 30–36, followed by the three sermons on servant-hood by old Stevens.

²⁶⁸ When he is talking about his career, Stevens usually uses first person plural, e.g. on page 7.

Darlington Hall with all the reminiscences of its past has found itself in a historical Bermuda triangle. The walls are standing, the rooms are kept clean, yet the whole concept of an “old, grand house” does not exist anymore in the narrative time in which the novel is set. With the adjective “operative” (RD 8) another metaphor is introduced at the very start of the novel: the military one. Stevens uses many military related connotations throughout his narration. When he is recalling his preparation for the conference in March 1923, he describes the days as of preparation for a battle: “I even gave the staff a military-style ‘pep-talk’, impressing upon them that, for all their having to work at an exhausting rate, they could feel great pride in discharging their duties over the days that lay ahead” (RD 81). In spite of Stevens’ dedicated errand to be a perfect butler and commander for his staff, for the sake of his master, reading between the lines helps us to discover the notion of empathy as elaborated above. Yet, I would further argue that by his first person narration and the actions he allocates to himself, Stevens is not only empathic, when he wishes to be, but he is also observant. From my perspective, a protagonist who is able to respond to needs of his employer and able to translate moods (yet only in a master-servant context), explored on page 13, as in when he is trying to find the suitable moment to ask a favour of Mr Farraday or again, on page 85, when Lord Darlington asks him to introduce his 23 year-old godson to the “facts of life” (RD 85), i.e., sexuality, this character is not without emotional sensitivity. The psychological gap between the alerted, compliant, attentive manservant and the private man who is circuitous, arrogant and sallow is evident.

Summarizing narrative “gaps” and “silences” in this part of the narrative, it is not farfetched to say that Darlington Hall is stuck between its present and past, the only link being the loyal butler still serving the house. Therefore the only human who can bear witness to its past is the butler-narrator himself. In a bard-like narrative tone through his narration he is reinventing, reimagining and reconfiguring the house, from page to page recolouring the history book of Darlington Hall. I would venture in this respect that the proper noun of “Darlington Hall” has many connotations. It is a “dear” or “darling” place and on the other hand it is a “hall,” a gallery, a ballroom, a mansion, a manor, a public place with vast spaces. I claim that looking from this perspective “hall” could be interpreted as a special gap. The symbolic and prestigious “Hall” is described from the butler’s point of view. If we follow the narrator from room to room, throughout the novel the foyer, the drawing room, the back corridor, the library and the parlour are depicted

relatively frequently. There are little vertical moves within the house, only the servants are obliged to climb steps from downstairs to the attic rooms and vice versa. The master and the guests use the horizontal arena of the “Hall,” they move from the drawing room to the library or to the dining room. Servants also use the horizontal axis on their own level, from pantry to parlour; however, in most instances we find them using the back corridors, as servants were obliged to do. The “corridor” interpreted as a spatial gap from the perspective of the Ondek Laurence’s model is a crucial metaphor in the novel as some of the fights of Miss Kenton and Stevens are witnessed near the corridor, as if they are fencing (RD 82–84) between the narrow walls of an empty castle.

7.3 Being blanked

In “Day Two – Morning,” my analysis focuses on the notion of empathy and, one of the crucial themes of the novel, “dignity,” denials and combats. I suggest that the self-narrated monologue’s verbal eloquence can act as a defensive tool for hiding emotions and in my point of view the conference of 1923 is metaphorical for the narrator as this is where he provides his utmost in professionalism; yet he fails as a lover and as a son. Throughout his motoring trip, Stevens mostly encounters men, or from another perspective the narrator only concentrates on men. The letter from Miss Kenton is an excuse for him to recollect memories. Whenever the narrator is digressing from the topic, he goes back to this letter. The narrator returns to the spring of 1922 and recalls his first encounter with Miss Kenton. The previous housekeeper and the under-butler left the profession after getting married. Stevens views marital bonds as having a “disruptive effect on work” (RD 53). These are strong words and the reader gets to be suspicious: how are natural private bounds and family prospects deduced to be threatening? More elevated people, like Stevens, devote their life to a more sophisticated mission: to be perfect in their profession.

As for Stevens’ family bounds, Miss Kenton’s arrival coincides with Stevens senior’s employment in Darlington Hall. Miss Kenton is a young, apt woman in her twenties. Reading her dialogues with the staff and with Stevens, strictly from the perspective of a self-narrated dissonant mode, it is apparent that she is a sensible and sharp lady. The housekeeper and the father have a special relationship and they arrived at Darlington Hall at the same time. Old Stevens’ employer died and so he lost his job and his accommodation. The elderly servant who might have been in his seventies and was

ravaged by arthritis arrived at Darlington Hall with the recommendation of his son. Miss Kenton calls the old manservant by his given name “William,” against his son’s liking. When the narrator is recalling Stevens’ relationship with Miss Kenton, there is a constant tension of denial between the lines. Stevens reiterates: “Of course, she too eventually left my staff to get married, but I can vouch that during the time she worked as a housekeeper under me, she was nothing less than dedicated and never allowed her professional priorities to be distracted” (RD 53). Their romance is insinuated by a tender attempt (RD 54–55) on behalf of Miss Kenton, followed by a vivid argument between the second and third desperate revenges (RD 58–59) on behalf of the hurt housekeeper. Miss Kenton’s first approach was to put some flowers into the butler’s pantry “to enliven things a little” (RD 54), yet Stevens is mercilessly humiliating her by prohibiting the housekeeper to call old Stevens by his given name. The narrator, as he recalls the dialogues, seems to be very irritated and even offensive. From his perspective Miss Kenton’s attempt was intruding as he did not expect her to enter his premises. It is probably not farfetched to say that the narrator was intimidated by Miss Kenton’s entry to the pantry, interpreting it as a siege rather than an attempt at peace. However, Miss Kenton, though young, is not a person to be intimidated easily and she fights back. Their first argument involving Stevens Senior is meticulously described. She has a sensible argument on why she could call the under-butler “William,” yet Stevens’ argumentation (RD 56) is based on pure vanity. At the end of this verbal duel, coloured by Miss Kenton’s sarcasm and Stevens’ pompous and ostentatious remarks, the housekeeper is defeated, as she will always be when fighting Stevens. She leaves the “battlefield,” i.e. Stevens’ pantry, by agreeing not to call the old under-butler “William” ever again, yet then she starts to take revenge. From the perspective of the present the narrator does not comment on her behaviour, only collects factual reminiscences, e.g. Miss Kenton has started to address his father as “Mr Stevens.” He also recalls three episodes of trivial errors of old Stevens by which the son is intimidated. Firstly she finds the dust-pan deserted in the hall. Secondly she draws the attention of Stevens to the disturbing fact that the silver “bore clear remains of polish” (RD 59). To his credit, Stevens tries to retreat but Miss Kenton is now at her best. She attacks again claiming, in the third instance, that the Chinamen were “incorrectly situated” (RD 59). Stevens tries to react to these outbreaks calling them rightly a “childish affair” (RD 60). The writer gives the reader a chance to enjoy a little humour in the following lines, depicting the butler in his full armour prepared with a plan to outwit the housekeeper, she is fighting back ferociously:

Eventually, then, I decided the best strategy would be simply to stride out of the room very suddenly at a furious pace. I thus made my way as quietly as possible to a position from which I could execute such a march, and clutching my implements firmly about me, succeeded in propelling myself through the doorway and several paces down the corridor before a somewhat astonished Miss Kenton could recover her wits. This she did, however, rather rapidly and the next moment I found she had overtaken me and was standing before me, effectively barring my way (RD 61).

At the end of their second lengthy, in my opinion sexually overheated and frustrated, argument in which they do not only verbally fight but are also physically involved, Stevens surrenders after Miss Kenton uses his same weapon, mirroring Stevens' pompous attitude and words: "These errors may be trivial in themselves, Mr Stevens, but you must yourself realize their larger significance" (RD 61–62). However, Miss Kenton is not ready to give up: she claims old Stevens is overloaded by tasks not fitting to his age and brings up the sensitive topic of "a large drop on the end of his nose dangling over the soup bowls" (RD 62). One could imagine the humiliation of a man being accused of having a physically unfit servant, his own father of whom he is so proud within the staff. Miss Kenton is positively cruel and quite unfairly, giving the last blow states: "I would not have thought such a style of waiting a great stimulant to appetite" (RD 62).

We have been exploring these two arguments of the protagonists. With this I suggest that the verbal armoury and tension they represent are crucial in understanding the dynamics of the two main characters. This relationship will largely be determined by these combats. In other words their encounters, until Miss Kenton's leaving Darlington Hall in 1936, with few exceptions will follow the same pattern, as we will see on returning. After their fierce battle with Miss Kenton the narrator in his present tense narration tries to protect the housekeeper by disqualifying his memories and claiming them to be inaccurate. He believes he fails to remember and tries to find excuses for Miss Kenton: I am not sure she could actually have gone so far as to say things like: "these errors may be trivial in themselves, but you must yourself realize their larger significance" (RD 62–63). Recalling the character of Lord Darlington, a plea is prepared by the narrator, which itself makes the lord suspicious in the eyes of the reader. So far we only know that Lord Darlington has passed away and Mr Farraday has bought the old house, since Darlington had no heir. With the lines introducing the nobleman as "shy" and "modest" (RD 63) sitting all day in a

grand library reading the volumes of *Britannica*, give us a stereotypical picture of an English nobleman. Yet, the defending tone of the narrator alerts the reader: something is dubious about his lordship, as “great deal of nonsense has been spoken and written in recent years” (RD 63) an informative gap calling for an explanation. His recalling of the complex relationship he has with Lord Darlington starts with the premise: “Whatever may be said about his lordship these days – and the great majority of it is, as I say, utter nonsense – I can declare that he was a truly good man at heart, a gentleman through and through, and one I am today proud to have given my best years of service to” (RD 64). The exaggeration of Lord Darlington’s role played on “the whole course Europe is taking” is first highlighted on page 65 when the master asks the servant to reconsider the duties of old Stevens, as he fell “scattering the load on his tray – teapot, cups, saucers, sandwiches, cakes – across the area of grass at the top of the steps” (RD 66).

The distressing fall of the old servant is told in such a way that the narrator can be distanced from the painful memory of witnessing a humiliating fall of the powerful and robust man old Stevens once was, depicted via the butler’s stories on pages 36–41. In other words we are witnessing the fall as reported by Stevens but seen through the lenses of Lord Darlington: “His lordship had been entertaining two guests, a young lady and gentleman, in the summerhouse, and had watched my father’s approach across the lawn bearing a much welcomed tray of refreshments” (RD 65–66). The errand to ask the once powerful father figure, who now serves under his own son, to cease his duties as under-butler is a highly challenging one as the two are conversing less and less. After the arrival to Darlington Hall father and son exchanged job-related conversations with mutual embarrassment. It is with empathy, Stevens decides to conduct this conversation in the privacy of his father’s attic room depicted as a “prison cell” (RD 67). With this visit the quarters of the servants’ are elaborated with great detail as having a “rickety staircase,” and recalling the “smallness and starkness” (RD 67) of the room. Their conversation, in which son addresses the “Father” with a formal third person singular hinting both at respect and distance between the two of them, is brought to a halt by old Stevens’ professional obedience: the success of the conference comes first. What reads between the lines is the following: there is no trace of discernible emotion on the old man’s face and his physical appearance is obvious from the words of the narrator recalling the butler stories of pages 36–41: “Hunched over or not, it was impossible not to be reminded of the sheer impact of his physical presence – the very same that had once reduced two drunken gentlemen to sobriety in the back of a car” (RD 69). As already mentioned, plot-wise digressions are

often related to Miss Kenton's letter. After having his father agree on deduced duties, Stevens nostalgically and regretfully recalls a warm summer evening, almost mirroring the description and repeating the phrases from Miss Kenton's letter: "And as I walked on past those unused bedrooms, Miss Kenton's figure, a silhouette against a window within one of them, had called to me" (RD 69). These lines are clearly juxtaposed with the shabbiness of the attic room: this evening – one of the rare memorable ones – is obviously important for both him and the housekeeper, each of them witnessing old Stevens rehearsing his footsteps on the lawn to prevent further falls. Their memories coincide and with the painfully detailed description of the moment – even the breeze that was disturbing the old man's hair is recorded in the narrator's mind (RD 70) – marking this episode as a crucial one in the interpretation of the novel.

By avoiding major roads and taking the circuitous route, Stevens planned to see the sights, this gives a mirroring of the protagonist's avoidance of thinking too much about painful memories. A humorous episode, correlating to another humorous one²⁶⁹ highlights the narrator's carefully proportioned shifts from realistic descriptions through melancholic reminiscences to humorous episodes. A hen of a woman from the countryside encounters the butler's route depicted in the style of a genre picture. When memories shift back again to the enigmatic conference held in March 1923, the plot of the novel this conference marks is a turning point: Stevens could prove he is as professional as his father was, attaining the crucial quality of the narrator's favourite topic, "dignity." This conference will put the narrator under a lot of strain, stretching one's ability to its limit. Lord Darlington had a great German friend, Herr Bremann, who committed suicide after the Great War. This personal loss led the lord to work on talks between Britain and Germany in order to ease the burden of reparations to be paid for by the defeated Reich.

In my point of view, for the narrator the conference of 1923 is metaphorical. On one side he could prove his utmost professionalism; on the other hand he failed as a lover and as a son. The armour of the perfect butler kept him together for the years to come but it worked as an empty shell rather than armour he was about to use as protection from his emotions. During the conference (RD 95–100) one of the protagonist's many crucibles will take place. Stevens will be probed as being a son, a lover and a servant. Basically, all

²⁶⁹ Stevens is trying to fulfil the "mission sufficiently unusual" (Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*, 84.) and hides himself in a rhododendron bush waiting for Mr Cardinal, the lord's godson comes by. Yet, this errand started as a humorous one, it had fatal moments in Stevens' life as he is forced by the unobservant Mr Cardinal to respond to his naive questions and to pretend being fully present while his father has just passed away.

spheres of his life will be put under trial. During the few days of the meeting he will get the chance to be reconciled with Miss Kenton, whose compassionate care for the dying old Stevens (RD 97) was a clear sign of respect and love, yet these efforts of hers were denied by the butler. While the old man was living through his very last moments in the attic room, downstairs his son stretches his psychology to the limits by not abandoning his duties imposed by a disgruntled and demanding Frenchman, M Dupont and by which, albeit two short visits to the attic room, he refuses to be with his father in the final moments of life. Their dialogue is very formal. The son rigidly responds with five slightly alternating lines in his last farewell to his father. In the narrative a long vivid description follows the above syncopated dialogue which I interpret as being a long narrative gap of six pages. The narrator records everything from a busy kitchen to a “magnificent banqueting hall” (RD 102) but not referring back, with as much as a single sentence, to the conversation between father and son. The splendid banquet is meticulously recorded between pages 102 and 114 packed with the self-made decision-makers of high-society and pictures of the busy and tactful Stevens in the middle of serving dinner.

Clear shifts from self-narrated monologues and pathetic self-quoted monologues (examples of the textual places where “dignity” is explored in detail) to syncopated dialogues, from the conference murmur to grief silence, accelerating the rhythm of the second half of this chapter. While Stevens is busy in the attic room or in the hall, on the master level Lord Darlington is also put under scrutiny by an able and rational outsider, the American Mr Lewis, by being called “an amateur” (RD 100). Stevens is serving dinner, then brandy and cigars, he is present at the gentlemen’s discourses and he records them as he remembers in the narrative present. Stevens’ vertical rushing from upstairs to downstairs and his horizontal hurrying from the banqueting hall to the drawing room, finding “the kitchen on the brink of pandemonium” (RD 102), the both negative and positive movements in space relate to spatial silence. Throughout the evening the narrator pictures himself as being everywhere where he is needed. M Dupont’s sore foot will find temporary ease by Stevens’ careful assistance. This triviality juxtaposes the act that Miss Kenton is attending the dying old Stevens upstairs while the butler, downstairs, is obliged or thinks he is obliged to help out a grumpy guest rather than to be with his father.

Talking about crucibles, the most memorable ones as they are recorded by the narrator in full length, mark the stations of the butler’s long and painful passion. In the crucial moment of listening to the very final heartbeats of his father, the butler rushes downstairs in a panic, to the smoking room, to look after his guests, leaving Miss Kenton

and the cook with the old man. Climax two is described by the use of dialogue rather than first person singular narration. Here in the text Mr Cardinal attacks the gullible and worn-out butler with a, totally out-of-date and out-of-place, question about fish, mirroring the humorous episode on pages 92–93. Only via Mr Cardinal’s repetitious four questions asking if Stevens is unwell are we informed that the butler is on the verge of breakdown. Also from the perspective of Lord Darlington’s godson the reader gets to know that the butler is crying. At the very moment the narrator spots the housekeeper waving at him, climax three in the guise of M. Dupont, blocks his way. The French diplomat is still suffering from his sore foot. This time he asks for new bandages. Miss Kenton brings the news of the deceased father. At this point Stevens is still devoted to professionalism and the need to not abandon his duties. He calls a doctor for M Dupont, returns the German countess’ flirtation with a smile and considers generous the compliments offered on his professionalism, by the above mentioned German and French guests.

The final tension of the chapter mounts when Mr Cardinal is determined to have further conversation on “Mother Nature” (RD 112). Stevens still manages to maintain his composure, even joins the young man in his laughter. For the reader this discipline and self-control seems almost inhuman. However, a little remark on his scattered state of mind is deciphered. When climbing up to his father’s room, he finds the cook is still there. The narrator records the cook to have “grease marks all over her face, giving her the appearance of a participant in a minstrel show” (RD 114). I would endeavour that this meticulous recording of a piece of information and the relatively repulsive notion of it gives record to the narrator’s distress and breakdown. As many times in the text, a pale light of truth penetrating over the masks and silences of characters, the ending paragraph of “Day Two – Morning” is overshadowed by a capital lie and self-deception. Stevens regards his evening service as a professional success and pictures himself as almost as perfect and professional as the enigmatic Mr Marshall. After returning from the attic the narrator juxtaposes the chapter’s themes of “amateurism,” loss²⁷⁰ and humiliation²⁷¹ by labelling them as “professionalism,” “triumph” and “dignity.” These six major themes map the novel and give it coherent argumentation over what is silenced or denied.

²⁷⁰ I am referring to the death of old Stevens.

²⁷¹ I am referring to the always attentive presence on behalf of the butler and the constant strain created by untactful and self-centred masters, Mr Cardinal and M Dupont.

7.4 Trapped between dialogues

As the narrator records, via this chapter-length self-narrated monologue, meeting people other than the staff he finds these encounters more and more threatening. Stevens' vision is notably blurred as it is described on page 124 and on page 127, as much so as he will get lost (RD 127). Stevens is resourceful. He disguised himself as a gentleman and claimed "to be attached to a distinguished household" (RD 119). As for "greatness," Stevens' argumentation is highly logical and not for the first time. If we recall his sermon on Mr Marshall and "professionalism" and "dignity" in chapter "Day One – Evening," his premises and the conclusion he draws from them are sharp. Here via self-narrated monologue Stevens argues for five pages in length that it is a prerequisite of greatness to belong to a distinguished household (RD 119) and claims that his generation of servants concern themselves with the moral status of the employer (RD 120). From the recalled past the reader is not yet aware that the morals of Lord Darlington are soon to be questioned, at this moment in the narrative we could conclude that as the lord was a highly sophisticated and immaculate nobleman, the servant could claim the same qualities for himself. Upon meeting a chauffeur, due to a minor technical error of the Ford's engine, in the narrative genre-picture qualities are emphasized by the low-class language of the chauffeur clearly contrasting Stevens' mockingly elevated style. From their conversation a new sketch of Stevens' portrait is given when the straightforward ex-batman tells Stevens: "Couldn't make you out for a while, see, 'cause you talk almost like a gentleman" (RD 125). The narrator denies that he used to work for "that Lord Darlington" (RD 126). From question to answer a great leap was taken, in the structure however, only two sentences oppose each other. Hastily Stevens gets on his way and he gets lost (RD 127) on the twisting lanes. In my interpretation this is a metaphor, the result of the denial, his psyche is troubled. As he was never away from Darlington Hall it is obvious that he never had to encounter these insinuating questions and so he does not know how to react. A few pages earlier he was elaborating on the notion of morals and dignity, a marked gap is drawn here between the two narrative spaces. While seated on a bench to take some rest, he retrospectively evaluates his unpredicted denial calling it a "distinctly odd behaviour" (RD 128). To his credit, he accepts that this denial was not the first as he also failed to confess the truth to one of the visiting couples, the Wakefields (RD 129–132) in Mr Farraday's new mansion. The encounter with the snobby couple was devastating for Stevens. On the one hand he

denied having been in the service of Lord Darlington, and on the other, Mr Farraday embarrassed him as he bluntly explained he was trying to make a good impression on the Wakefields via “exaggerating the pedigree of this place” (RD 130) by introducing a real butler to them, later the employer was crossed when Stevens insisted he is new to the household.

This dialogue marks Stevens’ total devastation as he denied his former employer and the decades working for him. His whole existence was put under threat by the visitors claiming that he was purely a “mock.” (RD 130) Now the narrator records the reality behind the dubiously portrayed character, Lord Darlington. His logic is simple and convincing, “as a great deal of nonsense is talked about his lordship,” Stevens chose to tell white lies about the relationship between himself and the lord. In a final effort, he vouches for him, but seemingly neither the reader, nor the narrator genuinely believes these words.

If the previous chapter’s self-narrated monologues and dialogues were mostly following lineal thought and the majority of the narrative structure was set in the 1920’s, this in “Day Two – Afternoon” stretches to the 1940’s and from my perspective reflects Stevens’ troubled conscience. I advance the idea that this troubled conscience is reflected by metaphorical plot-transgression.

7.5 “One”or “T” – a narration of interiority

Retrospectively, the narrator, Stevens records how he spent the night in an inn, he describes with clumsy sentence inversion: “have lodged here in this establishment” (RD 140). When he was having a light-hearted conversation with folks and the demand for bantering intimidated him: “And as I spoke, I was struck by the thought – the same thought as had struck me on numerous occasions of late in Mr Farraday’s presence – that some sort of witty retort was required from me” (RD 138). Bantering is a real threat for the narrator as he is anything but spontaneous, witty and impulsive. As we will see at the end of the novel, bantering does have a very important role in Stevens’ narration and in the self-portrait he is sketching during his five-day trip to the West. Firstly, I focus on the idea of “plea” and how the narrator has drafted it. Secondly, the silver metaphor will be discussed. Why does the narrator feel the need to defend his former employer insisting that “as for the British Union of Fascists, I can only say that any talk linking his lordship to such people is quite ridiculous” (RD 145).

As I noted earlier, the diary form, in my understanding, is the only way for the narrator to record his life. When engaging in talk, he is forced to banter, either with his employer or with folks in the Taunton inn. For him there is no other form of communication but the diary. In a diary there is only a narrator and an imagined audience, or the self, and in that uncontrolled notion, narrators of Ishiguro feel free to talk even if these self monologues are for their own defence. By Stevens' meticulously composed self defensive plea,²⁷² i.e., the diary, he also includes meta-pleas, such as in the plea for Lord Darlington (RD 144) when the narrator is talking about the now infamous visitor to the house in the thirties, Herr Ribbentrop.

In this instance, the plea is structured around two major allegations: the first is Lord Darlington's visits to Nazi Germany, and the other is about banning Jewish staff from the Hall. One prompt, and to be honest clever, premise of Stevens is notable, when he is trying to defend his lordship's choice of guests in the public eye of the 1950's: "I do not suppose they would speak quite so readily if, say, *The Times* were to publish even one of the guest lists of the banquets given by the Germans around the time of the Nuremberg Rally" (RD 145 Emphasis original) The legal plea related to Lord Darlington's Nazi involvement, on pages 144, 145 and 146, will be further elaborated on in the next chapter in which Lord Darlington's encounter with the Jewish maids will be portrayed In the words of the narrator (RD 153).

As in "Day One – Morning" the Hayes Society was used to portray the quality of the good old days, in this chapter we can concur that the exaggerated question of silver-polishing in which "figures like Mr Marshall, in particular, played a crucial part in making silver-polishing so central" (RD 142) is a metaphor of times past, i.e., Stevens' life itself. The minor "incident last April relating to silver" (RD 148) started the course of events – the planning of the trip and the misreading of Miss Kenton's letter – in the plot. The narrator's effort to bear witness to his old life is almost as comic as the portrayal of the Hayes Society was. Here in the text the once, Somerset-based, silver polish company, Giffen and Co.: "the finest silver polish available" (RD 141) is the symbol of a grand old life in which minor household routines had their very own importance. The firm, active in the 1920's is described for almost five pages, from 141 to 145 and continued on 146. By talking about Giffen, the narrator has an excuse to report on the grand old days again and

²⁷² In spite of his circumlocutions and exaggerations of his own importance, the narrator of *The Remains of the Day* confesses many times in the text that he was actually lying. See Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*, 63, 132, 144–146, 153, 157.

to do this an associative technique is used. From the “silver” the narrator shifts to the memory of the perfectly polished silver admired by guests of Darlington Hall back in the 1930’s, here the great conference of the decade is again highlighted. The reader cannot avoid the part that praise of the silver played in the course of world events: “the state of silver had made a small, but significant contribution towards the easing of relations between Lord Halifax and Herr Rippentrop that evening” (RD 144). “Silver” and its role played in human history (RD 147) according to Stevens, here also offering an excuse for the narrator to bring up his favourite topic on “professionalism”. As we have seen, it was juxtaposed with “amateurism” before. Now, from another aspect, it will be elaborated to its marked difference from servants of “mediocre employers” (RD 147):

As one has a right, perhaps, to feel a satisfaction those content to serve mediocre employers will never know – the satisfaction of being able to say with some reason that one’s efforts, in however modest a way, comprise a contribution to the course of history (RD 147).

As it can be noted, the pronoun of “one” was used by the narrator, which is frequently used when – in my point of view – there is a willingness to hide behind this identity. The neutral pronoun is employed almost all the way through this chapter. The reason, for this, I venture is because the silver and the error around it is closely related to Stevens’ wish to invite Miss Kenton back to Darlington Hall as this was the errand of the motoring trip. “One” is the pronoun of distancing the self from himself as it is clearly seen in the following extract:

In fact, one has to accept the distinct possibility that one may have previously – perhaps through wishful thinking of a professional kind – exaggerated what evidence there was regarding such a desire on her part (RD 149).

Yet, the narrator flexibly changes focus and accepts: “For I must say I was a little surprised last night at how difficult it was actually to point to any passage which clearly demonstrated her wish to return” (RD 149).

As we have seen in “Day Two – Afternoon,” a blurred vision, as the metaphor of his veiled conscience, will be reported by the narrator. From my perspective and more importantly, a metaphor for the grand old days, i.e. the question of the “silver” (RD

143,148) was only elaborated by the narrator to record the glory of the old days when perfection meant clear borders and boundaries. Stevens' dissonant narration is discursive, and the relatively distant narrating *I* is gradually blurred with a distant experiencing self, the *one* favoured in Stevens' narration. Etsuko blurs the two narrative modes with a sudden shift from "I" to "we." Ono, as well as Stevens utilizes the impersonal, objective *one* pronoun, which stands for the narrator or for all people who are like the writer or for the average person or for all people belonging to a class. In simple words, it blurs personalities, separates realities, marks a gap between inner and outer, in this way, I argue, the term has more control over the language and presentation of the inner life of the narrator.

7.6 Narrative ellipses

My discussion of the previous chapter followed the basic concepts of "plea," "professionalism" and the "silver-metaphor." Structurally speaking "Day Three – Evening" is one of the lengthiest chapters, and follows, echoes and re-discusses notions mentioned in "Day Two – Morning." Gaps in the narrative mark painful memories being distanced from the narrator. The narrative present is set in a small village of Moscombe and via meeting village people in the bar, the narrator tries to make a false impression and disguise himself. A short reference to "dignity" sharply juxtaposes his masquerade. As the narration proceeds, Stevens will record further crucibles. On the one hand, in the narrative present a well-respected doctor is going to reveal his secret, though avoids humiliating the aging butler in public. This painful memory of the recent present brings up further memories of humiliation back in the 1930's when Lord Darlington let his loyal servant down. Finally, on the last pages of the chapter, a plea of eight premises and a very pale conclusion is drawn by Stevens, as the narrator struggles to come to terms with a troublesome thought of how "undignified" (RD 211) it was to give his best years to Lord Darlington. My discussion of this part of the novel will also elaborate on the concepts of "dignity" and its antonym, "pretence" and "false impressions."

The opening lines of the previous narrative chapters were composed in the narrative present. The narrator recorded descriptions of his lodgings; a guest house in Salisbury and an inn in Taunton. In Chapter 3 the narrator started his lines by contemplating over the notion of a "great" butler (RD 119). Nonetheless, in the opening lines of "Day Three –

Evening” chapter the narrator returns to the question of Jewish maids back in 1932. The apropos of this *in medias res* start might be twofold. On the one hand Stevens is more and more passionate to prove his life was not wasted professionally, and as we will see from the plot, the Jewish maids’ episode did not only cause a drastic disappointment to Lord Darlington but also worked as a damaging factor in Stevens’ relationship with Miss Kenton. In short, Lord Darlington wanted to dismiss two Jewish housemaids, Ruth and Sarah (RD 158). His master ordered Stevens to do the dirty job for him. Stevens in the narrative present insists that the likes of him cannot judge the deeds of gentlemen (RD 157–158). Miss Kenton opposed, while Stevens was relatively neutral in this situation, the housekeeper was infuriated. Their heated dialogues are obviously marking the tension between a lady (who must be in her thirties at least by 1932, as she arrived sometime in the early 1920’s and was a housekeeper already) and Stevens, who might have been in his forties-early fifties at that time. From the perspective of Miss Kenton her prospects for getting married are weak, and the cocoa meetings in her parlour with Stevens do not offer more than some “overwhelmingly professional” (RD 155) small-talk between the two of them. A couple of years later, Lord Darlington admits he was unjust (RD 156) to the maids as well as to Kenton, she conveys to Stevens her deepest regret over her own cowardice (RD 161) regarding her awkward silence over the matter. During their dialogue the housekeeper uses an amiable tone, which Stevens returns with awkward laughter. Upon Miss Kenton’s accusation on why he always has to pretend (RD 162), Stevens distances himself from the situation by using the “one” pronoun when answering the woman: “Naturally, one disapproved of the dismissals. One would have thought that quite self-evident” (RD 162). Whether Miss Kenton then started to hope their relationship would become a happy marriage, there is no evidence in the text. Her sexual dissatisfaction mounts to a peak when Miss Kenton enters into Stevens’ pantry without previous notice and spots the butler reading a romantic love story. Their private encounter in a corner of the room Steven had escaped into probably has the most sexual connotation of the novel (RD 174–178).

The nearest description of Stevens’ living conditions can be taken from the dialogue in which Miss Kenton calls the room a “prison cell” (RD 174) in this dialogue she also claims that the book Stevens was reading was a “racy” (RD 175) one. The housekeeper’s siege does not halt and consequently the intimidated man retreats. The episode is not without humour: “But Miss Kenton was continuing to advance and I must say it was a little difficult to assess what my best course of action would be. I was tempted

to thrust the book into the drawer of my desk and lock it, but it seemed absurdly dramatic” (RD 175). Being ashamed of the sentimental love story he was reading, Stevens uses his old technique to pull himself together, he must be seen to “*inhabit* his role, utterly and fully” (RD 178 Emphasis original), he puts on the butler’s armour again and firmly showed the woman out of the pantry. As a proof to the narrator’s sensitivity, in retrospect Stevens accepts that this unfortunate affair had severe consequences in their life. From his narrative, it seems the narrator was unable to comfort the grieving woman after she had received the sad news about her only relative, her aunt. Instead, the shy butler was hovering over (RD 186) her corridor incapable to knock on the door. Retrospectively the narrator evaluated this event among “turning points” (RD 185, 188). Their intimate affair was never restored apart from one desperate effort when Miss Kenton announced her engagement with another man and upon Stevens’ pretended neutrality, as a final blow, she ironically mocked and ridiculed Stevens (RD 237).

Renata Salecl interestingly states that Stevens and Miss Kenton are too obedient to the social codes of their society; therefore their passion cannot be fulfilled. Her statement is that institutions prevent protagonists from loving: “The question is, however, whether it is really the institution that prevents love. Is it not actually the institution that, in a paradoxical way, produces love?”²⁷³ Pursuing this line of thought, Salecl argues that it is illogical to start from the common point of view that Stevens’ repressed emotions are due to “the rigidity of the social system.”²⁷⁴ She notably adds that the ritual should be taken seriously first and then determines the space love has in it:

It is useless to search in Stevens for some hidden love that could not come out because of the rigid ritual he engaged himself in – all of his love is in the rituals. Inasmuch as it can be said that he loves Miss Kenton, he loves her from the perspective of submission to the codes of their profession.²⁷⁵

Speculating on the title of the novel, she suggests that there is an analogy between the Freudian concept of “day’s residues” and the title. The Freudian residues are memory traces of life that serve as raw materials for the dream work. “By reading Stevens’ memories in the light of this Freudian concept”, Salecl asserts, “it could be said that the

²⁷³ Renata Salecl, *(Per)versions of Love and Hate* (London, Verso, 2000), 8.

²⁷⁴ Renata Salecl, *(Per)versions of Love and Hate*, 8.

²⁷⁵ Renata Salecl, *(Per)versions of Love and Hate*, 11.

remains of the day concern primarily the memory of his relationship with Miss Kenton.”²⁷⁶ She claims that for Stevens the cherished cocoa-meetings with Miss Kenton are “the remains of the day,”²⁷⁷ therefore for the butler the relationship with Miss Kenton is “the residue around which his unconscious braids, the residue that forces him to confront his desire.”²⁷⁸ Describing Stevens’ character, Salecl relates Lacan’s notion of “the Other” to Ishiguro’s main character claiming that an obsessive person, as Stevens is, puts himself into the place of “the Other” so as to avoid any encounter with his desire. In this logic he invents a lot of rituals. “The obsessive person”, says Salecl, “also delays decision in order to escape risk and to avoid the uncertainty that pertains to the desire of the Other, the symbolic other as well as the concrete other, the opposite sex.”²⁷⁹ She is equally hard on Miss Kenton, stating that the housekeeper is a “hysteric restrained by her paradoxical desire.”²⁸⁰ Miss Kenton has hysterical gestures when marriage or love is the subject of events and as Salecl claims, her desire is the institution. Salecl’s argument is that when Mr Benn, Miss Kenton’s husband leaves the institution his wife despises him. Eventually, in Salecl’s logic, Mrs Benn returns to the institution, to her family: “Nonetheless, this is her true desire.”²⁸¹ In conclusion it is indicated that Stevens and Miss Kenton needed codes, society, institutions, in Lacanian terms, the big Other “to prevent their love from being realized.”²⁸² My understanding of the characters’ dynamism is related more to failure in their communication and to the fact that Stevens stopped being an autonomous person when regarding self-perception he switched from “I” to, an empty, “one.” Therefore responsibility, commitment and emotions cannot be expected of him. Graham McPhee similarly writes that the relationship between storytelling and responsibility is inverted in a way that narration becomes a way of evading responsibility.²⁸³

Parallel to the disturbing memories related to the housekeeper, the narrator gives record of “discomforting” events of the recent present. After his petrol runs out, Stevens is obliged to walk and find shelter in the fading daylight. For some pages his uneasy wondering, through hedgerows and paths, marks the discouragement the protagonist might

²⁷⁶ Renata Salecl, *(Per)versions of Love and Hate*, 9.

²⁷⁷ Renata Salecl, *(Per)versions of Love and Hate*, 9.

²⁷⁸ Wai-chew Sim finds Salecl’s conjecture confirmed by Ishiguro in a *Paris Review* interview, though his argument is only supporting the Freudian concept of *Tagesreste* and not Salecl’s premise. In Wai-chew Sim, *Kazuo Ishiguro* (New York, Routledge, 2010), 135.

²⁷⁹ Renata Salecl, *(Per)versions of Love and Hate*, 9.

²⁸⁰ Renata Salecl, *(Per)versions of Love and Hate*, 12.

²⁸¹ Renata Salecl, *(Per)versions of Love and Hate*, 12.

²⁸² Renata Salecl, *(Per)versions of Love and Hate*, 30.

²⁸³ Graham McPhee, “Escape from Responsibility: Ideology and Storytelling in Arendt’s *The Origins of Totalitarianism* and Ishiguro’s *The Remains of the Day*.” *College Literature* (2011), 38:1, 178.

feel (RD 170–172). His landlord and landlady, the Taylors treat him as a precious jewel, misinterpreting his clothes and the elegant Ford he arrived in. For the very first time in his life, Stevens is not the servant but the master. A local middle-aged couple, the Smiths and Mr Taylor lament on the notion of “gentleman,” and Mr Taylor gives a final clue to who is certainly not a gentleman: “The trouble with his sort is they mistake acting high and mighty for dignity” (RD 195). As soon as Dr Carlisle, the local doctor arrives, the self-confidence and the acclaimed “dignity” (RD 200) of the old butler vanish. His humiliation is two-fold. On the one hand Stevens was forced to face reality, he is nothing more than a manservant. On the other hand he deceived the likes of Stevens. There is no dignity in that, claims the narrator, remembering another crucible when he was cross-examined by a pompous visitor of Lord Darlington. Harry Smith, one of the villagers has elaborated on the topic of ordinary people’s just improvement in world politics, which draws back disturbing memories. The humiliation Stevens had to suffer from Mr Spencer clearly confronts Harry Smith’s argument. Lord Darlington – who is described by Stevens as being “strained” and “haggard” (RD 207) – gives his guest permission to question the butler on a complex political situation, in which Stevens naturally fails. Spencer’s conclusion is that “our man is unable to assist us in these matters” (RD 206), yet Stevens in the narrative present regards it merely „an uncomfortable situation” (RD 206). He insists that a butler’s duty is to provide great service: “It is not to meddle in the great affairs of the nation. That fact is, such great affairs will always be beyond the understanding of those such as you and me” (RD 209). He describes Lord Darlington’s political involvement being “rather odd – even, at times, unattractive” (RD 209) which is in the narration as far as he goes with criticism.

A good professional’s best quality is loyalty. The narrator regards Harry Smith’s words on general franchise “misguided idealism” (RD 209). In the concluding lines of the chapter and in eight premises he argues: ordinary people will never understand politics and, believes that in the narrative present Lord Darlington’s deeds cannot be justly condemned:

However, if a butler is to be of any worth to anything or anybody in life, there must surely come a time when he ceases his searching; a time when he must say to himself: “This employer embodies all that I find noble and admirable. I will hereafter devote myself to serving him.” This is loyalty *intelligently* bestowed (RD 210–211 Emphasis original).

Stevens claims that the likes of him will never be in the position to intervene in great affairs. Secondly, he thinks employees must put trust in their employer. Thirdly, he recalls Mr Marshall as a perfect example for such an ideal employee. Fourthly, he asks a rhetorical question: what is undignified in true and devoted service. The argument is followed by a self-defensive question: how one (and the general pronoun undoubtedly refers to Stevens himself) can be possibly blamed for the sins his master once committed. For the sixth premise he comforts himself in that he confided only to himself things within the sphere of the professional realm. Finally the narrator concludes that even his lordship's life was a tragic waste, he should not regret anything on his own account. This clear argumentation is crucial in understanding Stevens' regretful self-judgement, juxtaposing a general stereotype of Stevens' interpretations in that he cannot talk straightforwardly. Only and when Lord Darlington is concerned, his hypophoras, his euphemisms and circumlocutions are placed in clear-cut logic and argumentation, a certain kind of narrative ellipsis, a "plea."

7.7 Omitted information and disguised denials

Exploring the complex set of events from the past, 1935–1936. In retrospect the narrator recalls challenged key topics of "dignity" and "loyalty." Stevens gives a full record of their last arguments and recalls how Miss Kenton wanted to resolve their former relationship six times. With silence and time related narrative simultaneity; a half-humorous, half-tragic conversation with Cardinal pursues Stevens causing him to freeze in a statue-like form. The chapter ends with the memory of recalling triumph over his emotions, this time the narrator finds it as comforting as in the case of his father's death.

After arriving in Cornwall, the narrative situation describes Stevens waiting for Miss Kenton to show up, for about forty minutes. During this time via self-narrated monologue Stevens laments on how he would greet the former housekeeper or if he will ever meet her again, he wonders back to the recent past at the Taylors' inn and further back to the mid-1930's. During the same morning the doctor collected him up. This is the first encounter – except with the vagrant on page 24 – when people during his motoring trip did not take him for a real gentleman. Stevens is relieved that no further pretence is needed. Yet, the doctor calls him a "pretty impressive specimen" (RD 218) and dignity is a

repeated topic of the conversation, through awkward auditory silences and pauses it is obvious that their conversation is uneasy. The devoted socialist, Carlisle asks Stevens' own views on dignity, the butler stumbles (RD 221). I claim, as a manservant and an inferior as such for long decades, Stevens is so puzzled and embarrassed when he is expected to deliver his ideas to someone other than his superior, he cannot respond smartly. Neither does he respond well, as the self-narrated dialogue below demonstrates, when Miss Kenton continues to provoke and challenge him in vain. The desperate woman tries to wind Stevens up. Kathleen Wall sees Stevens' raising awareness resulting in his deconstruction of the past. She also advances the idea that the critical reader cannot trust Miss Kenton either.²⁸⁴ After accepting a proposal Miss Kenton, in her final despair over Stevens' pretended neutrality cruelly mocks him:

“Am I to take it,” she said, “that after the many years of service I have given in this house, you have no more words to greet the news of my possible departure than those you have just uttered?”

“Miss Kenton, you have my warmest congratulations. But I repeat, there are matters of global significance taking place upstairs and I must return to my post.”

“Did you know, Mr Stevens, that you have been a very important figure for my acquaintance and I?”

“Really, Miss Kenton?”

“Yes, Mr Stevens. We often pass the time amusing ourselves with anecdotes about you. For instance, my acquaintance is always wanting me to show him the way you pinch your nostrils together when you put pepper on your food. That always gets him laughing.”

“Indeed” (RD 229–230).

To her fierce and unfair accusations Stevens has only formal answers, as if he was responding to some prestigious guests. In Earl G. Ingersoll's reading, desire and the female subject play a role in a “masquerade of femininity” by representing “lack.”²⁸⁵ Lack should be interpreted as an absence of privilege or power by both sexes while “Nowhere does it appear more clearly than man's desire”, according to the definition of Lacan, “finds its

²⁸⁴ Kathleen Wall, “The Remains of the Day and Its Challenges to Theories of Unreliable Narration”, *Journal of Narrative Technique* 24:1 (1994) 18–42.

²⁸⁵ Earl. G. Ingersoll, “Desire, the gaze and suture in the novel and the film, *The Remains of the Day*,” *Studies in Humanities*. 2001. 31(28). <http://find.galegroup.com/itx/start.do?prodId = AONE> (accessed June 16, 2010)

meaning in the desire of the other, not so much because the other holds the key to the object desired, as because the first object of desire is to be recognized by the other.”²⁸⁶ In Lacan’s understanding desire is always mediated by language, it is always dynamic, and is directed towards the other. Accordingly, the other holds the key to the object desired. Stevens’ desire is Miss Kenton and the novel itself is shaped by his desire. Miss Kenton confesses her desire in many ways (RD 239), to which I agree, „she not only intrudes and puts flowers into Stevens’ pantry, provoking him before her marriage deal, but and more importantly, she confesses at the end of the novel how much she wanted to spend all her life with Stevens, though the reader gets to know this only through Stevens. In the film adaptation, to which Ingersoll claims more “determinacy,”²⁸⁷ this crucial declaration of Miss Kenton is omitted.

In terms of narrative technique, Ingersoll draws interesting parallels between the narrative and the cinematic syntax, focusing on the camera-eye as an interpreting device. Stevens is longing for Miss Kenton and by the snapshots, as expressions of the male gaze, the spectator is allowed to visually grasp his dialogue gaps. Stevens is a repressed character “circumscribing heterosexual desire”²⁸⁸ in his subordinated servants. Ingersoll offers a provocative argument stating that the novel has a clear indication of homosexual desires between Lord Darlington and his German friend, Bremann, whereas the film cleverly plays with the issue leaving it dubious. Nonetheless, Darlington Hall is an “asexual” or “homosocial” world within which Stevens is “pre-sexual”²⁸⁹ and his desire is also masqueraded by his artificial language. In Ingersoll’s view his gaps and slips in language and the “camera’s male gaze,”²⁹⁰ meaning that the spectator watches the film on many occasions from Stevens’ point of view, enabling the reader/spectator to “read his desire.”²⁹¹ Using the narrative theory of Peter Brooks²⁹² Ingersoll argues that Stevens does not yet know the outcome of his story whereas in Brooks’ terms the ending of a narrative precedes the beginning of the storytelling.

²⁸⁶ Jacques Lacan, “The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis.” Trans. Alan Sheridan. *Écrits, A Selection*. (London, Tavistock, 1977), 58.

²⁸⁷ Earl. G. Ingersoll, “Desire, the gaze and suture in the novel and the film, *The Remains of the Day*,” *Studies in Humanities*. (Accessed June 16, 2010)

²⁸⁸ Earl. G. Ingersoll, “Desire, the gaze and suture in the novel and the film, *The Remains of the Day*,” *Studies in Humanities*. (Accessed June 16, 2010)

²⁸⁹ Earl. G. Ingersoll, “Desire, the gaze and suture in the novel and the film, *The Remains of the Day*,” *Studies in Humanities*. (Accessed June 16, 2010)

²⁹⁰ Earl. G. Ingersoll, “Desire, the gaze and suture in the novel and the film, *The Remains of the Day*,” *Studies in Humanities*. (Accessed June 16, 2010)

²⁹¹ Earl. G. Ingersoll, “Desire, the gaze and suture in the novel and the film, *The Remains of the Day*,” *Studies in Humanities*. (Accessed June 16, 2010)

²⁹² Peter Brook, *Reading for the Plot, Design and Intention in Narrative* (New York, Knopf), 1984.

This is consonant with Molly Westerman's claims. As a conclusion, Ingersoll notes that Stevens sitting in his employer's car with the rain falling down the windshield and the headlamps blinding the spectators' gaze, Stevens' devastating sorrow is blindfolded. In this moment both the camera and the viewer "see" the lack, that which was denied, the gap between desire and possible fulfilment. Interestingly, the narrator does not comment on Miss Kenton's (above noted) accusations, this narrative gap is filled from the plot, i.e., when Cardinal manipulates him into giving up information about the prestigious Nazi guests of the lord. In this, as well as challenging him to betray his master, he asks three times if Stevens feels all right. In other words, from Cardinal's point of view the reader is given a clue that Stevens had suffered a real emotional blow that evening. The climax continues as Mr Cardinal accuses Stevens with incuriosity and "indifference" (RD 236) and claims that Lord Darlington is making a fool of himself; he is "a pawn" (RD 235) and is manoeuvred by the Nazis.²⁹³ From my point of view, Stevens is trapped. He is deeply distracted by the news about Miss Kenton's marriage and the brutality with which she has treated him, as well as this, his loyalty to Lord Darlington was ridiculed. Basically his whole world is in danger and the narrator – via prompt and punctual dialogues – evades taking sides. In other words, via active dialogue he avoids a contemplating monologue. At a crucial point he goes to the housekeeper's door but cannot pull himself together to knock. Instead he takes up his usual position under the arch in the hall and, after some twenty years, the narrator proudly remembers: "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" (RD 239).

7.8 Empty silence of the future

The most lyrical of all chapters, "Day Six – Evening" will give full record of the final meeting in the gloomy light of the sentimentally named Rose Garden Hotel. Another uncanny meeting will take place on the pier in the evening light. A man on a bench will converse with the narrator on his remains of the day. Metaphorically speaking in this chapter the sun is starting to set but there is plenty of daylight left. By the end of the record of the Kenton-meeting, lights will be switched off and the foreign man on the pier will

²⁹³ This is the first time the actual word "Nazi" is mentioned in the novel. Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*, 233.

comfort Stevens saying that evening is the best time of the day. As his hopes started to die away, lights were fading too. Structurally speaking the two-day gap in the narration is suspicious for the reader as the narrator had been relatively predictable so far, starting the chapters in a linear way and not missing days. The question might arise, what happened between the two: did Miss Kenton turn him down? Their long conversation between pages 244 and 251 describes two aging people, yet as the narrator cleverly observed Miss Kenton aged “gracefully” (RD 244) and the middle-aged woman was filtered by the “grey light” (RD 244).

Stevens also scrutinizes that the woman appeared much slower (RD 245) and “could not escape the feeling that what I was really seeing was a weariness with life; the spark which had once made her such a lively, and at times volatile person seemed to have now gone” (RD 245). The narrator soon alters his opinion after recording the woman’s personality as being not “quite the same,” “lively,” “ironic” and “volatile” (RD 245). From the perspective of Miss Kenton there is no record of Stevens’ current appearance. His travelling outfits helped him to deceive village people but could they trick Miss Kenton? I venture that Stevens is such an austere person that people only recognized him via his style of talking and by the attributes of a car and some suits. Apart from Miss Kenton’s assurance, Stevens seems to be a man squeezed in a butler’s armoury, who echoes his master’s words and even attempts bantering, despite his loathing of it. From the dialogue of the mysterious man who can be interpreted as his self, a real personality is discerned, although a weak and defeated one.

From their vivid dialogue the narrator records that which does not allow too much space for contemplative monologue, their psychological hide-and-seek game is portrayed, this time Miss Kenton is more conceited. The narrator bravely asks if Miss Kenton was treated well by her husband, as the occasional letters written by her implied differently. With this Stevens has textual proof. The former housekeeper hastily denies but Stevens insists. After his bringing up the topic, the reported speech changes into active speech with some quotations from Miss Kenton’s letters, “the rest of my life stretches out like an emptiness before me,” cites Stevens. Kenton denies its implications but out in the “open country” (RD 248) in the rain they start to talk freely. After a long silence Stevens asks a most uncharacteristic frank question, if she was unhappy in her marriage. She denies it again, saying that her “life does not stretch out emptily” (RD 249) before her. However, gradually getting frightened by the fact that they might never meet again, she opens up: “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 may have had with you, Mr Stevens” (RD 251). Miss Kenton is brave in giving her account of her past (RD 251). Although it might not have been utterly satisfactory as she could summarize it in a mere twelve lines. Stevens is shocked and he cannot respond to the statement but confesses, his heart was breaking. He attempts to comfort her and himself in the following empty lines which neither of them believe: “We must each of us, as you point out, be grateful for what we do have. And from what you tell me, Mrs Benn, you have reason to be contented” (RD 252).

Following their final farewell in the pouring rain at a deserted bus stop, the narrator returns to the narrative present. Sitting on a pier – the lights have been switched off – he encounters (RD 253–256) a man, psychoanalytically speaking a “double.” During his trip he met a vagrant and this dialogue, with the unknown and “heavily built” (RD 253) man in his sixties echoes their conversation. The vagrant on page 24 was challenging him, this man or double comforts the narrator (RD 254). Stevens does not listen to his amiable talk, but as soon as the man says he was a butler in a small house, Stevens confides in him. He is “revealing his identity” (RD 254) and in reported speech the narrator gives record of his life in strictly professional terms. The man calls him “part of the package” (RD 255) going with Darlington Hall. Stevens gives his final confession to a complete stranger telling how he ruined his life by giving it “all to Lord Darlington” (RD 255), claiming that despite his ill-fated involvement in politics, the lord at least had his own mistakes:

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 (RD 256)?

The most eerie part of this confession, for me, is when he starts to convince himself that “evening is the most enjoyable part of the day” (RD 256) and his remaining days are worth only bantering, a light-hearted and empty witticism he loathes so much: “I will begin practising with renewed effort. I should hope, then, that by the time of my employer’s return, I shall be in a position to pleasantly surprise him” (RD 258). Stevens admits he did not even commit his own mistakes and dedicates himself to devote his fading days to the art of bantering, overwhelmingly denying to himself the last comfort he could hope for.

7.9 Conclusion

In assisting injurious details by becoming oblivious, “silences” and “gaps,” in my interpretation of Stevens’ life has metaphorically speaking been spent on the margins, both sociologically and intellectually. I pointed out that by revealing and concealing the narrator builds up his private and public history. I interpret his shifts in narration as avoidances and therefore I advance the idea that those chapters or rather parts of the narration with hope and prospect are narrated in “actual narrative presence,” whereas those giving the frame and episodes are in “pseudo narrative present” and those with the most painful memories are told in retrospect following the logic of latent memories making their way to the surface.

To summarize, Ishiguro introduces a complex structure mixing the linear with the elliptic and, plot-wise, using three junctions: the first one is of July at Darlington Hall, the second is Day Four, Little Campton, and the finishing point is chapter seven, “Day Six – Evening,” describing his present state at the pier and his future. These chapters are the pillars the narration is resting on and from where it departs and where it returns. More layers are added to that narrative coordinate system as within the “Prologue” and in all the seven chapters, retrospective and “pseudo narrative present narration” techniques alternate the elliptic net of memories and plots within the framework of “actual narrative present” texts. Chapters One to Five are told in an actual narrative time, the pseudo chapter is recalled via gaps or silences and uncertain memories.

So in terms set by my above argument on layers of distorted narration, it is logical to claim that the narrative layers can be peeled off following the logic of an ellipsis or could be interpreted in a linear structure. By whichever means in the matrix the axis is the missing report, Day Five. By constructing a meta-narrative on perfectionism and professionalism, the first person narrator built up a pseudo-world to confide in. Stevens is unable to remember as it is too painful for him, therefore the narrator’s discourse focuses on the previous and the current self in the dissonant narrative mode.

The narrator’s regret and pain are so overwhelming that he is paralyzed by trauma and cannot verbalize nor in any way express his emotions. In Ondek Laurence’s model paralysis is related to body silence. Etsuko’s body silence is represented by inertia, Ono’s by his fading health. Being reluctant to confront reality i.e. that the England portrayed in Mrs Symons’ book no longer exists, or probably never existed, and therefore by

constructing “doubles,” the narrator is forced to alter his perception of himself employing the turbulent dialogues set between village people, Dr Carlisle or the Taylors. Overwhelmingly denying the last comfort he could hope for, for Stevens narrating “hisStory” was a “ritual of truth.”

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 Summary of new findings

Basic to my analysis of Ishiguro's examined novels was the assumption that first person narration can be interpreted as a perception of the self. In all the examined narratives I found Barry Lewis' idea justified in that there is a marked gap between the self-space and life-space²⁹⁴ of narrators. I observed how narrators have not only perceived but interpreted themselves. This re-interpretation was completed via constructing a topical gap between their personae, their stories told and between the reader, giving various vantage points from where reinterpretation can be structured from the perspective of narrator, reader and writer.

My implications were the following. First person narrators of Ishiguro by stereotypical biography tropes (e.g. and especially in the narration of Stevens in *The Remains of the Day* when he laments on his failures (RD 256)) continuously reworks their narrative by the objectification of the self, i.e. talking about the "what" (breakdowns, misconceptions, failed missions of professions and families) rather than the "who." As Cynthia F. Wong rightly observed²⁹⁵ Stevens perceives himself rather as a "what," as he laments on the notion of his profession, the narrator asks "*what* is a great butler" (RD 256) rather than poses "who" is a great butler. Gaps were interpreted as drastic denials, whereas silences as deflections and absences as means of distortion were discussed. Informative and textual gaps along with metaphorical ones constructed the matrix of the narratives. The cat-drowning episode in *A Pale View of Hills* is a good example for a metaphorical gap as drowning is a gap in effective breathing. Further I claimed that while artistic manifestation in *A Pale View of Hills* was the torn Nagasaki calendar-pages, possibly marking a bomb-hole, destroyed her whole life, Ono's narrative can be seen as an empty canvas the painter is trying to colour and construct from his vague memories. The empty pages of Stevens' narrative are filled up during his motoring trip following Mrs Seymour's long outdated and old-fashioned travelogue. Rhetoric forms of gaps were categorized by "the bravura of ventriloquism,"²⁹⁶ ellipses and periphrasis. I subscribe to Cynthia F. Wong's argument that

²⁹⁴ Barry Lewis, *Kazuo Ishiguro* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2000), 84.

²⁹⁵ Cynthia F. Wong, *Kazuo Ishiguro* (Tavistock, Northcote, 2000), 80.

²⁹⁶ Barry Lewis, *Kazuo Ishiguro*, 93.

gaps can be sometimes genuine,²⁹⁷ but from my perspective they are more related to repression and therefore can be seen as lying strategies. My proposition was that in her estranged narrative Etsuko denies all her responsibility in her failed motherhood. While Stevens convinces himself with “falsified sincerity,”²⁹⁸ Ono attempts to convince the reader that in artistic terms he has risen above the mediocre. Analyzing the evolving sense of self, Etsuko does not comprehend fully who she really is and what mistakes she made in the past, whereas Ono in my understanding has an evolving sense of self but does not do anything with it. Stevens does face and perceive how and where he went wrong in the final pages of the novel, but avoids taking risky decisions, he remains a servile “professional.”

Summarizing the strata “silences” occupy in the narratives, deflecting injurious details of the past was marked by “silences” configured by Ondek Laurence on lexicon, punctuation, metaphor and space, while absences were regarded as being manifested in textual gaps. My method was to scrutinize one text in order to isolate gaps incorporated into narrated monologues and dialogues or silences surrounding them to determine the qualitative and quantitative nature of these silences and their content. I also focused on ellipses, narrative gaps facilitated by flashbacks and proleptic hoops, as well as on the role of the inarticulate and taciturn.

The main argument in this thesis was that gaps and silences were related to the Freudian concepts of repression and defence. In the textual analysis of *A Pale View of Hills*, *An Artist of the Floating World* and in *The Remains of the Day*, the narrative and the psychological notion of gaps and silences were explored. I venture that among the first-person narrators of the novels discussed, as stated above, Etsuko and Stevens use the defensive tool of silence differently. Stevens is trying to conceal his memories by *talking too much*, while Etsuko is struggling to say *as little as possible*. Etsuko’s conflict within her conscience (as we will see how Ono’s and Stevens’ conflict between their private/public conscience will create a growing tension throughout *An Artist of the Floating World* and *The Remains of the Day*), her incomprehension, which is also a very marked characteristic for other Ishiguro protagonists, her self-deception, omissions in the narration and the reluctance of admittance lead her into a mental state in which she splits the characters of her life into two, allowing herself some sort of distance from what she had done. As for audio effects, *A Pale View of Hills* (1982) revolves around “silence.” *The Remains of the Day* concerns itself with no audio effects but “smell” (AFW 114) if we

²⁹⁷ Cynthia F. Wong, *Kazuo Ishiguro* (Tavistock, Northcote, 2000), 55.

²⁹⁸ Cynthia F. Wong, *Kazuo Ishiguro*, 39.

think about Stevens' prose. On the contrary, *An Artist of the Floating World* apart from images is more engaged with "sounds." As the narrator of the prose records:

Today, when I try to recall that evening, I find my memory of it merging with the sounds and images from all those other evenings; the lanterns hung above doorways, the laughter of people congregated outside the Migi-Hidari, the smell of deep-fried food, a bar hostess persuading someone to return to his wife –and echoing from every direction, the clicking of numerous wooden sandals on the concrete (AFW 25).

If we concern ourselves with the characteristic of the narrator, we can assume that what Ono as well as the main protagonist and narrator of *The Remains of the Day*, Stevens cannot face is the fact that they are only mediocre. Probably it is not farfetched to say that all his life Ono wanted to rise above the average. In spite of Ono's pompous style I reckon that like Stevens, Ono does not lack compassionate observations. I venture in this respect that the "bridge" itself plays an important symbolic role in the Ishiguro text. It represents the link between present and past. From here the narrator has a good vantage point on his life, i.e. from one direction he can look back on the pleasure district as a symbolic part of his past and on the other hand he can spot the construction work of the new "apartment blocks for future employees" (AFW 99). This vantage point in *The Remains of the Day* is not static as we are introduced to the past of Stevens via accompanying him on a motoring trip.

Plot-wise I was particularly interested in Ono's involvement in Kuroda's betrayal. The only proof in the text that Ono and Kuroda have exchanged letters is known from the narrator and the self-narrated dialogue between Enchi and Ono is also only reported from the narrator's perspective. I considered the analysis of the process of self-narrated dialogues and narrated monologues of first person narrators vitally important as they provide psychological implications of their word-play, i.e. ambiguities and associations as well as their sentence structure.

Being unable to concur with Wai-chew Sim that "the lack of clarity about who said what as well as Ono's manner of being simultaneously blameworthy (but less so) might be said to reference these about-faces and disavowals,"²⁹⁹ I argue that Stevens is unable to remember as it is too painful for him. His regret and pain are overwhelming; he is blocked

²⁹⁹ Wai-chew Sim, *Kazuo Ishiguro* (New York, Routledge, 2010), 43.

by trauma and cannot verbalize or express his emotions in other ways. I interpret his shifts in narration as avoidances, as Margaret Scanlan³⁰⁰ reviews, and therefore I advance the idea that those chapters (or rather parts of the narration with hope and prospect) are narrated in “actual narrative present”, whereas the chapters giving the frame and events are in “pseudo narrative present” and those elements with the most painful memories are told in retrospect following the logic of latent memories making their way to the surface. Meeting Miss Kenton on Day Five is entirely missing from the narration. It is recorded later, in retrospect, as it brought a disastrous end to both of Miss Kenton’s and Stevens’ private lives.

The research questions that were posed in the thesis were the following: to what extent is “silence” provocative by deflecting injurious details of the past and how does Ishiguro’s artistic craft construct the layers of his protagonists’ distorted narration? “Silence” is provocative, as I stated in the *Introduction*, on the one hand, it is a deliberate call which shows that the individual is begging for attention. As Parkin-Gounelas puts it: “Ishiguro explores the way the imperatives of defence and duty may rage with savage cruelty against the ego, with devastating consequences.”³⁰¹ Looking at the above premise from another angle, if we consider the stories narrated by Ishiguro’s main characters, their deflective storytelling, their glossing over the truth, readers can be provoked and also wary about what they are told. In other words how does silence assist injurious details by becoming oblivious? Regarding the layers of distortions, with the dissociation of perspectives narrators have a different understanding of reality. What the narrators confess and what side characters reveal from the self-narrated dialogues are marked discrepancies in their storytelling. The main lines of inquiry were also to examine, how protagonists are trapped by their first-person narration. The notion of in-between-ness related to the stories revealed, concealed and perceived acts both as trap and gap for narrators. I also elaborated on the question of how first person narration, provokes the idea in psychoanalytical terms, that the protagonists use their self-reflective narration as a “talking cure.” Both secular and sacral confessional literature texts, autobiographies and diaries are good examples for easing, as Bo G. Ekelund writes about *The Remains of the Day*’s complicitous genre, the

³⁰⁰ Margaret Scanlan, “Mistaken Identities: First-Person Narration in Kazuo Ishiguro,” *Journal of Narrative and Life History*. 2–3 (1993): 139–154.

³⁰¹ Ruth Parkin-Gounelas, *Literature and Psychoanalysis. Intertextual Readings*, (New York, Palgrave, 2001), 38.

“theme of guilt that looms large”³⁰² in the fiction of Kazuo Ishiguro. The last question presented was how first person narrators build up their private myths by the application of narrative gaps and silences, and what is the function of reticence in distorting their public or private past? My findings proposed that by trivialization (Etsuko), and by exaggeration (Ono and Stevens), narrators are distanced from their texts by “linguistic betrayals”³⁰³ (Stevens many times reiterates that he should explain certain things), by blurred facts (Ono’s involvement in Kuroda’s betrayal), and condensations (shifting of the pronouns from first person singular to first person (PVH 13 and 177) plural).

8.2 Further research prospects

Though my discussion in this thesis followed psychoanalytical lines representing various kinds and strata of “silences” and “gaps,” I would further investigate the philosophical tradition of these along with the literary historical dimensions. Methods of narrating silence were in focus; nonetheless the different modalities of silence in all the seven novels (the new Ishiguro text, *The Buried Giant* in coming out in March 2015) indicate new openings in further research analysis. The notion of “silences” in the post-modern English novels can be further elaborated. Michael Wood in *Children of Silence* (1998) elaborates on the dilemmas of twentieth century fiction, ranging from Italo Calvino to Toni Morrison, such as the suspension between contrasted ideals, the power of fantasy, the quest for the silence beneath speech. Another important work is Vanessa Guignery’s *Voices and Silence in the Contemporary Novel in English* (2009). Essays analyse the poetics of speech and silence in fiction from the 1960’s to the present, with special focus on both expansion and retention, hypertrophy and aphasia in the works of John Fowles, Kazuo Ishiguro, Zadie Smith, Jamaica Kincaid, Ryhaan Shah and J.M. Coetzee. Pat Baker’s Regeneration-trilogy, i.e. *Regeneration* (1991), *The Eye in the Door* (1993), *The Ghost Road* (1995), silences and aphonia are markers of war-effected traumas. In a new scholarship it would be interesting to examine how silences flow out not only from and personal but also a collective memory, in the fiction of Hungarian-born British writer, Tibor Fischer.

³⁰² Bo. G. Ekelund, “Misrecognizing History: Complicitous Genres in Kazuo Ishiguro’s *The Remains of the Day*,” *The International Fiction Review*, 32 (1–2), 70–90.

<http://journals.hil.unb.ca/index.php/IFR/article/view/7801/8858> (accessed 15 October 2014)

³⁰³ Kathleen Wall, “*The Remains of the Day* and Its Challenges to Theories of Unreliable Narration.” *Journal of Narrative Technique* 24.1 (1994): 18–42.

8.3 A summary of the dissertation

This research concerns the contemporary fiction of Kazuo Ishiguro, the Japanese-born British writer. Using primary sources, *A Pale View of Hills* (1982), *An Artist of the Floating World* (1986) and *The Remains of the Day* (1989), I create a method employing various aspects of re-construction of the stories in the presentation of first-person singular narrators. For interpreting Ishiguro's "silenced" texts, Patricia Oudek Laurence's model was adopted in order to be able to locate the psychoanalytically interpreted "silences."

Therefore the research questions that are posed in the thesis are the following: to what extent silence is provocative by deflecting injurious details of the past and how does Ishiguro's artistic craft construct the layers of his protagonists' distorted narration? The main line of inquiry was to examine how protagonists are trapped by their first-person narration. I also elaborated on the question of how first person narration provokes the idea that the protagonists use their self-reflective narration as a "talking cure." It was clarified how first person narrators built up their private myth by the application of narrative gaps and silences and what the function of reticence is in distorting their public or private past.

My implications were the following. First person narrators of Ishiguro by stereotypical biography tropes (e.g. and especially in the narration of Stevens in *The Remains of the Day* when he laments on his failures (RD 256)) are continuously reworking their narrative by the objectification of the self, i.e. talking about the "what" rather than the "who." Analysing Kazuo Ishiguro's novels, I posit that in Ishiguro's oeuvre "silence" is not a figure but rather a symbol. Symbol for a stumbling block in the protagonists' minds, symbol for the ultimate trauma buried in a troubled psyche. It is not rhetoric but rather a discourse by which first person narrators reconstruct their public and private lives. I contend that it also functions as a strategy to keep troubled memories latent and, via narrative gaps, the dynamism of absences and presences reveal missing information of narrated stories. Furthermore "silence" is not a physical space but rather a psychological one. Oudek Laurence claims what Virginia Woolf does is to narrate and confront "silences between islands of speech, inviting the reader, us, to enter into the obscurity and to consult our own minds."³⁰⁴ It is consonant with my view that the process of revealing and concealing and to have perseverance in asking repeated questions about the information narrated.

³⁰⁴ Patricia Oudek Laurence, *The Reading of Silence: Virginia Woolf in the English Tradition*, 1.

8.4 A disszertáció összefoglalása

Jelen kutatás Kazuo Ishiguro, a Japánban született kortárs brit író szépirodalmi munkásságát vizsgálja. Elsődleges források felhasználásával, *A Pale View of Hills* (1982), *An Artist of the Floating World* (1986), és a *The Remains of the Day* (1989) olyan módszert teremtek, amellyel a narrátorok egyes szám első személyű elbeszéléseinek információs és szöveghelyi hiányai és elhallgatásai által újraértelmezik történeteiket.

A tézisben feltett kutatási kérdések a következők: milyen mértékig/mennyire provokatív a csend az által, hogy a fájdalmas emlékeket kimondatlanul hagyja. Értekezésem kitért arra, hogy Ishiguro hogyan épít fel művészi, mesterségbeli tudással az első számú elbeszélők által elhallgatott múltbéli információk titkos rétegeiből egy teljes, koherens és nagyon humánus emlékezőpalotát. A vizsgálat fő irányvonala az a kérdés, hogy miként kerülnek önellentmondásba a főhősök egyes szám első személyű narrációjuk során. Azt a kérdéskört is kifejtem, hogy az egyes szám első személyű narrátorok hogyan alkalmazzák önreflexiós narrációjukat pszichoanalitikus „beszédterápiaként”. Tisztázom, hogyan építik fel az egyes szám első személyben fogalmazó elbeszélők saját mítoszukat a narratív hiányokkal és a csenddel, és hogy mi az elhallgatás/tartózkodás szerepe saját- és közös múltjuk elhallgatásában és jelenük vákuum jellegében.

A következtetésem pedig az alábbiak. Ishiguro egyes szám első személyű narrátorai folyamatosan újraírják a narratívájukat a „self” tárgyiasításával. Azaz inkább a „mi”-ről beszélnek, mint a „ki”-ről. A narratív hiányok drasztikus tagadásként értelmezhetők. Információs és szövegszintű, valamint metaforikus hiányok építették fel a narratíva mátrixát. A hiányok retorikai formáit ellipszisek és parafrázisok jellemzik.

A kortárs brit író első három regényét elemezve, és az összes regénye ismeretében, megállapítom, hogy Kazuo Ishiguro életművében a „csend” inkább szimbólum, mint alakzat: szimbóluma a főhős gondolataiban az akadálnak, a végső trauma szimbóluma, elásva a terhelt pszichében. Továbbá a „csend” nem fizikai tér, hanem inkább lélektani, ezért értelemszerű a szerkezete. Nem retorika, hanem inkább előadás, mely által az egyes szám első személyű narrátorok újraépítik magánmisztériumukat.

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10. APPENDICES

*A Comparative Table***The map of gaps and silences in the examined Ishiguro texts via an adopted model of Patricia Ondek Laurence³⁰⁵**

I. Silence and Time: relates to the auditory including music, repetition, rhythm.	<i>A Pale View of Hills – 1982 (PVH)</i>	<i>An Artist of the Floating World – 1986 (AFW)</i>	<i>The Remains of the Day – 1989 (RD)</i>
A. Harmony: silence, pause, quiet, rest;	quiet, silence (154-155, 174)	quiet, silence (48)	pause, silence (182)
B. Disharmony: beat, gaps, gulfs, broken syllables, negation, fragments;	gaps, gulfs, negation “we shouldn’t keep looking back to the past” (111), “I found myself at a loss of any reply” (69)	information gaps (17, 81, 85), gaps related to silence (18), gulfs (85), “Hmm.” (30), negations	gulf between servants and masters, awkward silence (218-219)
C. Suspension (relates to simultaneity): suspense, fixed moment, moment of being; gaze;	moment of being, Etsuko is as if being in trance, gazing through the window (45), suspense/suicide = being hanged on a rope (84)	suspense = bridge (7, 27-28, 99), corridor (11), fixed in a moment by triumph (204)	fixed moment (under the arch: 115), gazing through the window, Stevens senior “frozen in a posture” (97)
D. Repetition: incarnation, echoes, simultaneity;	incarnation – the other woman as magical character (159), Niki’s semi-oriental name (9), Jiro’s looking himself in the mirror (133)	simultaneity (bridge – between past and present)	repetition (plot-wise: vagrant, man on the pier, emphasizing his “triumph”), echo: “a hammering noise echoing from somewhere distant” (49), repeated phrases: “I am very sorry, sir.” (93)
E. Degrees of auditory silence: mute, quiet pauses, interruptions, gaps, murmur;	interruptions – Jiro (bad), quiet pauses – Ogata-san (good), “Silence.” (85)	interruptions of Ono by Noriko (bad), quiet pauses by Setsuko “Noriko, really...” (13), quiet pauses by Setsuko, interruptions (in the Kuroda student and Ono dialogue ,113)	interruptions in communication (between Miss Kenton and Stevens, 229), “Ah” (186), dialogue with Dr Carlisle: “Oh? For instance?” (219)
F. Punctuation of suspension: use of ellipses and dashes to present incompleteness, haste and hurry as a theme or aspect of voice;	ellipses (between the two stages of Etsuko’s pre-war and post-war life)	ellipses (Sasaki is punished and called a “traitor”, 144)	ellipses (Miss Kenton’s and Mrs Benn’s life), Stevens’ vouching for Lord Darlington (132) is full of ellipses in the argumentation

³⁰⁵ Patricia Ondek Laurence, *The Reading of Silence: Virginia Woolf in the English Tradition* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1993), 112–113.

<p>II. Silence and Space via Psychoanalytic Concepts: relates to the visual, the spatialization of thought, and the body.</p>			
<p>A. Degrees of spatial silence: pale, night, absence, emptiness, nothingness, blank, blank space, void/abyss, beat, gap/fading;</p>	<p>each narrative chapter represents a gap i.e. a beat, pale outline of hills (99), absent mothers and fathers, night (83), abyss, fading(135), emptiness (99), nothingness (183)</p>	<p>each narrative chapter represents a gap i.e. a beat, night – floating world (147-151), absent/ghost like mother (44-45), absent deceased relatives (son of Ono), gap (gazing through the window), large gaps in the ceiling (129), fading lights –lanterns (140-11)</p>	<p>each narrative chapter represents a gap i.e. a beat, pale light (49), absent parents (Miss Kenton is an orphan), gap (gazing through the window), emptiness (Stevens' state of mind on the pier, 243), bantering as void or abyss (138-140), a butler as manservant must balance between "attentiveness and the illusion of absence" (75)</p>
<p>B. Movement in space (duration):</p>			
<p>Positive: surface, rise, up;</p>	<p>erected apartment blocks (11), up to the hill of Inasa with cable car (103)</p>	<p>erected apartment blocks (99), bridge = standing on the surface, a means of survival</p>	<p>Stevens' rushing up to the room of his father in the attic (111)</p>
<p>Negative: sink, fall, drop, down, deep;</p>	<p>bomb fell on Nagasaki: "charred ruins" (11), deep mud, dirty river (168)</p>	<p>bomb fell on Ono's family, ruins (99)</p>	<p>Stevens' perpetual rushing down to the hall, down servants' quarter from the attic (, the fall of Stevens senior on the steps (52), the metaphorical fall of Lord Darlington</p>
<p>C. Visual repetition: mirror, shadows, simultaneity;</p>	<p>shadows (doubles), i.e. Sachiko/Etsuko, Mariko/Keiko (27)</p>	<p>shadows (image of tortured Kuroda, "looking expressionlessly towards me", 77), doubles of Ono/Matsuda</p>	<p>shadows (when Stevens is lost in the countryside, 26), doubles of the vagrant (24), Lord Darlington, man on the pier (253-257)</p>
<p>D. Punctuation: ..., (), [], "";</p>	<p>About Mariko: "Well, she ran outside..." (85)</p>	<p>About Kuroda: "I haven't been in touch with him since ... since the war." (95)</p>	
<p>E. Body silence: dream, immobility, paralysis, death, sleep, illness, disease, inertia, peace, rest, still, quiet, lost in space and time.</p>	<p>suicide of Keiko (88), inertia of Etsuko (99), "wasteground" (99), Mrs Fujiwara's family killed, child-killing in the water, drowning of the kittens, Japan's lost people in the war, uncanny dreams (47, 55, 95)</p>	<p>illness of aging Matsuda and Ono, death of Ono's son and wife, Japan's lost (young) people in the war (56), "exaggerated shadows" (146)</p>	<p>Great Britain's loss in the war (Mr Cardinal), German loss: suicide of Herr Bremann, death of Stevens senior, death of Miss Kenton's aunt, stillness (Stevens under the arch), illness of Stevens senior, Stevens is paralyzed when Miss Kenton enters his parlour (172), Stevens is lost "down narrow, twisting lanes" (127) (169-172)</p>