



The Role of Memory in Selected Works of Kazuo Ishiguro

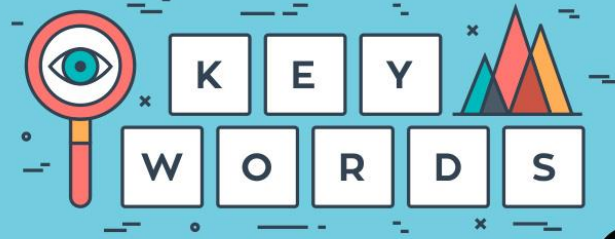
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Content

- The Concept of Memory
- Levels of Memory
- Memorable Episodes
- Forgetting
- Fictions of Memory
- Ishiguro's works – Denial versus Desire to Remember



- Memory
- Autobiographical memory
- Collective remembering
- Motivated forgetting
- Emotion

The Concept of Memory

- wide range of disciplines dealing with the notion of memory
- The problem of a consistent definition
- Focus: psychological and social aspects of memory

Levels of Memory

Autobiographical Memory

- Episodes recollected from an **individual's** life
- Several functions (both **self** and **social**)
 - maintaining personal identity
 - **sharing** memories – building relationships
- Emotion regulation

Collective Memory

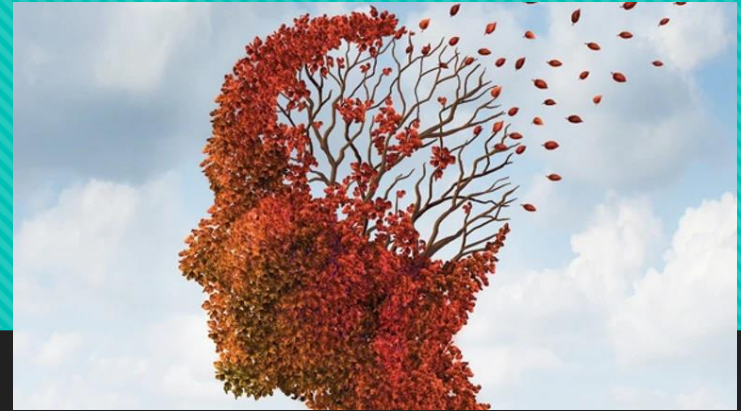
- **Social** frameworks of memory
- Maurice Halbwachs – **community** as the only place for recall
- Collective consisting of **individuals**

No strict line

Memorable Events

- Self-defining memories
- Traumatic experiences
- Involuntary recollections
- Key characteristics: **vividness** and **emotionality**

Forgetting

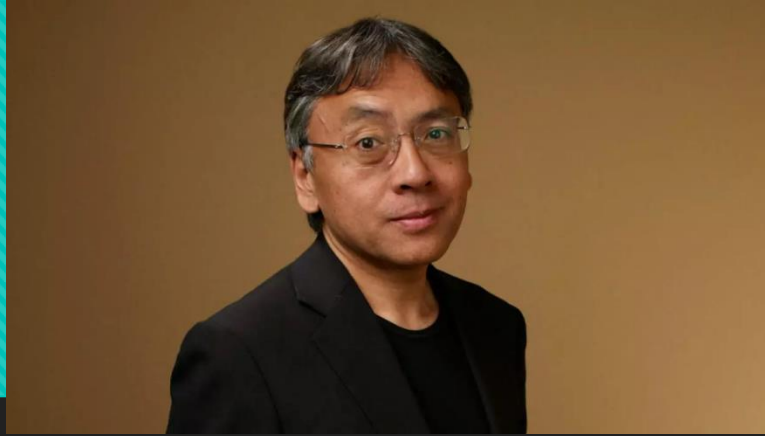


- Traditional views – forgetting as a **failure**
- BUT it can
 - be a dynamic and **constructive** process – something must be forgotten in order to give space to relevant information
 - occur as a form of **motivated oblivion**
 - **suppression**
 - **prescriptive forgetting**

Memory and Literature



- **Fictions of memory** – literary works that delve into the workings of memory
- Literature – constructs new models of the past with the help of aesthetically pleasing devices
- **Memory in literature** – literary representations of memory
- **Literature in memory** – literature embedded in the recipient's mind, influencing his/her perspective on the past



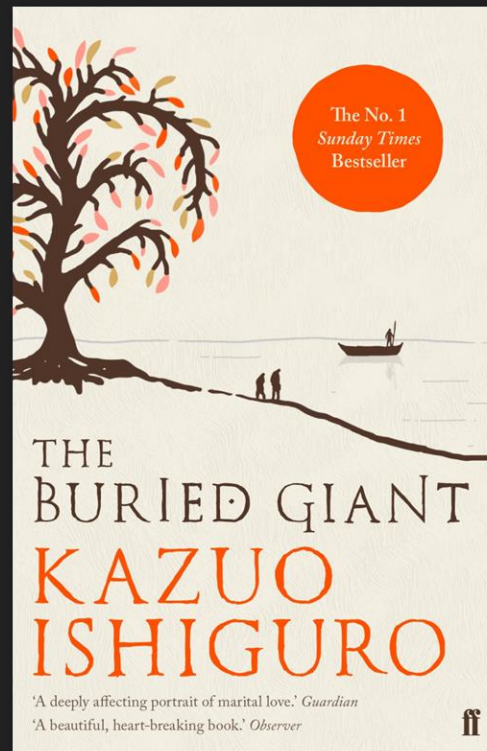
KAZUO ISHIGURO

and

MEMORY

Beatrice and Axl

- Going on a journey to find their son
- Desire to remember
- Clinging onto subtle remnants of memories
- Importance of shared memories

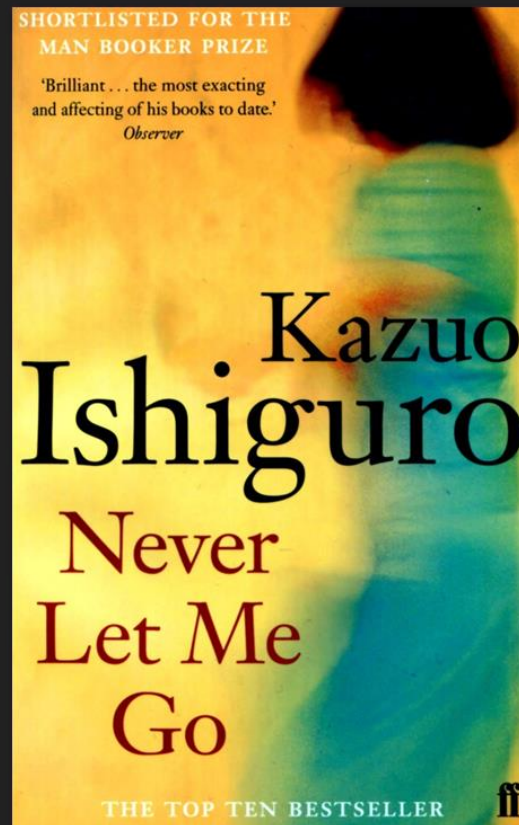


A whole nation

- Prescriptive forgetting
- Deleting people's memories in order to create peace
- Suppressing crimes committed in the past

Hailsham students – the clones

- Eagerness to interpret past experiences
- Clones sticking to their childhood memories
- Remembering Hailsham together – source of stability
- Collections of personal possessions

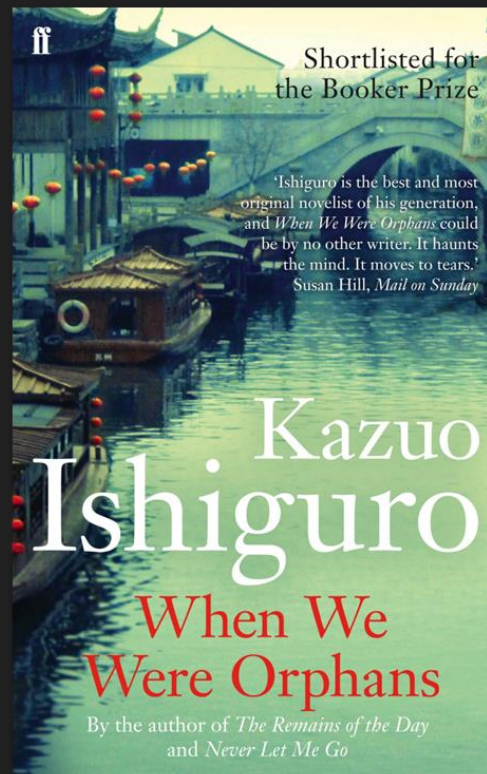


The public

- Denying the existence of the clones
- Exhibitions with pieces of art created by the clones → they have souls, therefore, they are not clones

Christopher Banks, the detective

- “solving the case”
- Obsessed with the past
- Recalling childhood memories in order to solve the mystery of his vanished parents
- Combating evil



Shanghai's elite society

- Deliberate forgetting
- Denial of responsibility
- Opium trade – embarrassing memory → suppression

Conclusion

- Ishiguro's works depict memory on **two levels**:
- - **individuals/smaller groups** – obsessed with memories, constantly trying to give meaning to their past, in quest of a child(hood)
 - *The Buried Giant* – an elderly couple searching for their son and lost memories
 - *When We Were Orphans* – Christopher Banks and the case of his disappeared parents – recalling childhood remembrances in order to solve the mystery
 - *Never Let Me Go* – Hailsham students sticking to their childhood memories
 - **society** that can be characterised by directed forms of forgetting: suppression, prescriptive forgetting, denial...

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