

A Panoptic Approach To Diaspora In Kazuo Ishiguro's A Pale View Of Hills

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, one of the most challenging and explorable areas of literature was the Diasporic literature. In earlier days, the term diaspora dealt with the Exile of the Israelites, but in recent days the word signifies the "Displacement of any living groups". The Immigrant writers reveals the difference in their backgrounds as well as the contexts in which they have experienced. The Diasporic study deals with the issue of Dislocation, Quest for Identity, Discrimination, Survival, Struggle in Adaptation, Alienation, Cultural change and Nostalgia. This paper focuses to bring about the diasporic elements in Kazuo Ishiguro's "a pale view of hills".

A Pale View of Hills is a complicated novel, which weaves between present and past, reality and memories, major historical and private family events. Etsuko, is the narrator of the story, is a middle-aged mother who has transplanted her daughter Keiko from Japan to England in order that Etsuko can marry an English journalist with whom she eventually has a second daughter Nicki. Etsuko's narration focuses on her review of the troubling past, including the loss of her entire family during the bombing of Nagasaki, her unhappy first marriage, the strange relationship with a neighbour she met in Nagasaki during her first pregnancy, and the recent suicide of her daughter Keiko after their move to England. The novel moves with the issue of Dislocation, aloofness, Nostalgia, which was created by a family Suicide and a Nuclear Genocide.

Keywords: Displacement, Nostalgia, Quest for Identity, Aloofness, Discrimination.

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A PALE VIEW OF HILLS

One of the most challenging and explorable areas of literature was Diasporic literature. In Earlier Days, the term "Diaspora" was meant "to scatter" in Greek, but recently the term associates with the community of people who moved out of their ancestral origin and makes their livelihood in an alien land. This kind of exile can either be a voluntary migration or a forceful one. The former can be of those who had expatriated themselves for certain reasons like economic improvement, industrialisation, and political ambition or for any kind of adventure. The latter kind of exile can be of any reasons like Personal loss, Trauma, war, etc. which left the people to face social, economic, psychological distress.

Roger Caratini mentioned the term "Centrifugal Minorities" that the implication of the diaspora is that the homeland is the centre, and the host land is the periphery. For clear explanation, uses the solar system analogy of Michael Bruneau, that is, the Sun is the homeland and the Constellation of stars formed around the sun is the various diasporas. As they were dispersed from "Centre" to the "peripheral", they became the minorities in the

foreign land. The so called “minority” in the alienated land and they were also referred as refugees, immigrants, asylum seekers, nomads, and expatriates. At the end of II World war, there were millions of shift in population. Hence the people face many challenges socially and psychologically. They face the issues such as Dislocation, Identity crisis, Discrimination, Survival, and Struggle in Adaptation, Alienation, Cultural change and Nostalgia.

Kazuo Ishiguro utilizes memory as the focal point in his novels. He was Japanese by birth, but when he was at the age of 5, his family moved to Britain. This migration left him a sense of Emotional Bereavement or Emotional deprivation. This unhealed exile was expressed in his artistic creative works. He relieved his sense of sorrow and melancholy through his unreliable narrator and hence his works are preoccupied with memories, distress, distort, silence and haunt. The process of atoning for emotional and physical losses stems deeply from his own past and his novels demonstrate clearly that memory of the past enables an individual to come to terms with one's own identity. Hence memory is the means of finding solace in an often inconsolable world. His protagonists seek to overcome the chasms and the absences left by their loved ones and the lost family members by making sense of the past through the acts of remembrances. The traumatic events are skilfully composed around silences and repressions.. Ishiguro's novels are not attempted to render the past convincingly, but rather to pursue how the individuals interpret and re-construct their lives through their past history.

His first novel *A Pale View of Hills* was published in 1982 which was followed by “An Artist of the Floating World ”in 1986,“ *The Remains of the Day* ”in 1989,“ *The Unconsoled* ”in 1995,“ *When We Were Orphans* 2000 and “*Never Let Me Go* in 1984 which was made into a film in recent years. Ishiguro's fame reached to greater heights. His works earned him major literary prizes including the Whitbread Book of the Year Award and the Booker Prize for Fiction. Ishiguro is known for his narrative techniques. His technique of unreliable narration was first experimented in “*A Pale View of Hills*”.

A Pale View of Hills is a complicated story by which the story is narrated. The story weaves between past and the present, Reality versus memories, major historical and private life events. Etsuko is the narrator of the novel. She is a middle aged woman, whom the entire story revolves around. She migrated from Japan to England with her daughter Keiko, to marry an English Journalist and to be settled in England. She then has a second daughter Nicki, with whom she shares her past recollections. The story revolves around the Troubling past of Etsuko, which deals with her private and the historical events. Her private sufferings were resulted from the historical attack on Nagasaki. The genocide attack of Bombing Nagasaki resulted in the loss of her entire family. Her private life was also a failure one. The unhappy first marriage, suicide of her first daughter Keiko after their move to England brought her distress in her private life. Hence, her narration focuses on reviewing her happy past which she had experienced in Japan. She mentioned about her friend Sachiko and her daughter Mariko whose life paralleled with her own life.

The striking feature of this story is the ambiguity in story telling which is due to variety of perspectives. The critic, Cynthia F. Wong draws from reader-response theory argues that the ambiguity in the story stems from the nature of memory and Etsuko's divided narration "she [Etsuko] is a reader of her own life who is interpreting its significance from the distance of time and space" (Ishiguro 35). The critic Pico Iyer claims that the stylistic penchant for ambiguity in all the works of Ishiguro is identified as it derives from his roots in Japanese culture. Barry Lewis focussing on historical and cultural displacements concludes that the novel is a study of the unhomeliness and displacements created by a family suicide and a nuclear genocide. From psychological approach, Brian Shaffer examines that the story has a complex psychological impact of the trauma which Etsuko has experienced.

As a Diasporic writer, Ishiguro's writing traces the literatures of Japanese and British. Though he is considered as a British writer, his works has the Japanese touch. At the age of 5, his family moved to Britain, he then visited Japan after a very long time; he constructed his own Japan in his early novels. The characters in his novels adapted Japanese names. The characters were named in Japanese as Etsuko, Keiko, Sachiko, Mariko etc. Not only were the names in Japanese, but also the dialect which was in Japanese language. "The first woman said the stranger had spoken with a Tokyo dialect and certainly was not from Nagasaki" (Ishiguro 13).

He used his unique techniques to contemplate what it means to be British in contemporary era and also he has created an Imaginary Japan in his writing. His early writings established a pattern of creative historiography, personalised through the eyes of the flawed narrators, he also brought inconclusiveness and mistrust of nostalgia in his writings. . The Unreliable First- person narration brings about the individual and the cultural memory. History, Myth, Memory and Trauma plays a vital role in Ishiguro's novel. Ishiguro's early novels are pre-occupied by the histories. The novel has the impact of the historical event of war, and bombing of Nagasaki. This created the great destruction in the lives of many people, and also they left a biggest scar "...those with sad and terrible memories..... That their lives had ever held their tragedies and nightmares of wartimes". (Ishiguro 13)

Though they had bad experience about war, their memories revolves around their native place. Though Etsuko was the narrator, we could see the kind of retrospection in all the characters from different perspectives. Even the Jero, the father in law of Etsuko who still lives in his past memories recalls his days in Nagasaki. "In retrospect, I suppose it's rather amusing. I was at the library in Nagasaki, and I came across this periodical." (Ishiguro 30)

Homi K. Babha in "Post-Colonial Criticism" says "..... It is from those who have suffered the sentence of history- subjugation, domination, diaspora, displacement- that we learn our most enduring lessons"

The label of diaspora cannot be limited to the communities who had expatriated themselves of their own, it should be extended to those who are forcibly extruded due to any

kind of traumas such as political persecution, war, famine, ethnic cleansing. Here, the displacement was not a voluntary migration, it was a forced one. It made distress in the minds of the people and left them in bereavement. Etsuko, wished to get back to her native place, but the impact of the war reminded her loss which she has faced in Nagasaki “In those days, returning to the Nakagawa district still provoked in me mixed emotions of sadness and pleasure”(ishiguro 23).

Trauma, “is deeply tied to our own historical realities” (caruth 1996: 12) Sachiko’s life was just paralleled to that of the life of Etsuko, Sachiko daughter Mariko’s life was as similar to that of the life of Keiko. Hence, Etsuko had a very close bonding with Mariko, who resembled her daughter who was committed suicide. She couldn’t accept the displacement of Sachiko to America. This adds to her bereavement. Mourning and Trauma are interlinked. Freud’s perspective on Mourning is that, Mourning is regularly the reaction to the loss of a loved person, or the loss of some abstraction which has taken place of one’s country, liberty, and an ideal. Though they were in the alienated land, they transmit the cultural and religious heritage of their ancestral home.

Sachiko’s past life also associated with the war, she also faces loss in the genocide. “If it wasn’t for the war, if my husband was still alive, then Mariko would have had the kind of upbringing appropriate to a family of our position”. (Ishiguro 45) The displacement of Sachiko was concerning with her daughter’s future. Mariko was psychologically affected by the cruelty of the war. The Memories of the past still haunted their lives even they moved to a new place. The traumatic experience forced them to find shelter in other place. This kind of dislocation affected them physically and psychologically.

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

Living in the past, is a part of the Diasporic experience. The Characters of this novel experienced various sufferings due to dislocation. Each narration has different perspectives. But everyone brought unison in the Remembering their past life and living in it. Each character has the longing for the concept of Home and Belongings. The concept of “Hominess” was introduced by the Atomic Scientist Homi Babha. According to that he explains the concept with his own life, and explained in a nut shell, “East or West, Home is the Best”. Here, in this novel their hominess was about their native land “Japan” “I remember being taught all about how Japan was created by the Gods, for instance. How we as a nation were divine and supreme”(ishiguro 66).

The Diasporic Narratives deals not only with the experience or the historical memory, but also refers the tension between the host land and the homeland that is the concept of “hominess”, and also the “otherness” which refers to cultural alienation, losses, unusual

experiences, bereavement and maladjustments. An expatriate writer Andre Aciman quoted as “I think it is very hard to be a human being without having lost something that is very important, and we live partly to make up for that loss... But it defines who we are. Some of us have lost a country. Some of us have lost a family. Most of us are exiles from who we are or who we would like to be”.

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